

MORBIDLY

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INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - LATE MORNING

CHASE HARRIS, a stocky man in his early 30s, sits forward on his seat. He does his best to come off as cool and collected, as he watches DR. BRENDA BROADUS, a woman in her mid-50s, read over his resume.

DR. BROADUS

And you interned at County General.
That must have been quite a scene.

CHASE

I'd spent a decent amount of time
in hospitals and E.R.s over the
years, so I thought I knew what I
was getting into.

(chuckles)

I was wrong.

DR. BROADUS

You seem so young to be
hospitalized so many times.

CHASE

Oh, sorry. I guess I didn't make
that clear. It wasn't me in the
hospital. It was my grandmother,
actually. Emphysema. And then...
cancer.

DR. BROADUS

I'm so sorry to hear that. Was she
your impetus for choosing a career
in nursing?

CHASE

Definitely. After I... came back to
town, I wound up spending a lot of
time with her.

DR. BROADUS

(looking at resume)

You moved back to the area after...

CHASE

(tensing up)

...After I was released. Yes ma'am.

DR. BROADUS

I see.

CHASE

Since I didn't have any job prospects, I moved in with my grandma. But she was sick at that point, and needed a lot of care. I figured, getting a degree in nursing and physical therapy would kill two birds with one stone. So to speak.

DR. BROADUS

The nursing program at Melton is very tough. She must have been very proud of you. Graduating top of your class.

CHASE

She... She died a couple of weeks before I graduated. I'd like to think she knows how well I did. But she paid for my entire schooling. I wouldn't be sitting here with you right now if it hadn't been for her.

DR. BROADUS

That's a very inspirational story, Chase. Well, from everything I've seen and heard, you'd make a great addition to the staff here at Valley Medical.

Inside, Chase's heart soars. Finally... he's landed a job!

Dr. Broadus closes the file. Sighs.

Chase's enthusiasm dies. He can see it in her body language. He can hear it in her voice. He's about to get the "but" again.

DR. BROADUS

But, unfortunately, I'm not able to offer you the position.

CHASE

(crushed)

Dr. Broadus, I can explain...

Broadus holds up her hand, to stop him from begging.

DR. BROADUS

I'm sure you can. However, corporate policy forbids us from hiring former felons.

We're a facility that dispenses Federally controlled medications, so there are scores of complicated restrictions and laws.

CHASE

It wasn't a violent crime, Dr. Broadus. My brother made me think I was doing him a favor, but then when we got to the warehouse...

He can see she's not swayed.

CHASE

I'm not an addict, I swear! I've never taken anything harder than pain killers, for my back surgery!

DR. BROADUS

I'm sorry, Chase. Really, I am. My hands are tied. But I do wish you the best in your job search. You have a lot to offer a more... understanding employer.

She holds out her hand. Chase shakes it, weakly.

He gathers his stuff.

As he's stepping through the door, his frustration gets the best of him. He almost says something... then decides against it. He leaves.

Dr. Broadus watches him go with a look of sincere disappointment.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - AFTERNOON

Chase sips his second beer as Bon Jovi plays on the jukebox. The BARTENDER notices his glass is almost empty.

BARTENDER

Another?

CHASE

Nah. I'm good.

Chase glances at the TV. The "Where's The Beef" lady is complaining about her meager burger. Chase could care less.

He notices a discarded newspaper left on the bar.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER

"HUNT FOR MISSING JEFFERSON HIGH STUDENT ENTERS THIRD WEEK".

Underneath the headline is a photo of a smiling teenage boy, wearing a purple and gold basketball jersey.

CHASE

Drains his stein.

CHASE

Poor kid.

He opens and folds the paper to the want ads. Traces his finger along the job listings.

CHASE

(reading)

No... Nope... Too far away... Three years experience... Ah, screw it.

He tosses the paper aside. His bladder tells him he needs to hit the bathroom.

INT. BAR - LATER

On his way back to the bar, Chase stops off at the pay phone.

As he DIALS, he hums to himself. Looks over the band flyers, want ads, and business cards tacked up to the notice board on the wall.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - OFFICE - SAME

The PHONE RINGS. CLAIRE, a young blonde in a monogrammed sweater, snatches the receiver off the cradle.

CLAIRE

Good morning, Baucom's Department Store. How can I help you?

CHASE'S VOICE

Hi, Claire. Is Jill free?

CLAIRE

Just a moment.

(to Jill)

Hey Jill! It's lover boy!

JILL TROMBLEY, a perky brunette in her early 30s, grabs the phone out of Claire's hand. Gives Claire a playful raspberry.

Jill shakes her arm, adjusting a golden charm bracelet away from her hair and the phone cord.

JILL

Hello...

INTERCUT BETWEEN CHASE AND JILL

CHASE

Hi, babe.

JILL

Am I speaking to the newest physical therapist at Valley Medical?...

CHASE

No, you are not.

JILL

Chase! What happened?

CHASE

I'll give you three guesses. And the first two don't count.

JILL

Dammit. That's not fair.

CHASE

Tell me about it. I had a good feeling about Valley, but... Ugh. I guess I'm unhireable.

JILL

Don't say that! You're a good man, babe. You've paid your dues. Something will turn up.

CHASE

I wish I had your faith.

JILL

That's the problem with you godless heathens: no faith.

CHASE

Let's hope God doesn't make it an issue when we're at the altar.

JILL

No bride wants their wedding ruined by righteous lightning. Oh! Which reminds me.

That bed and breakfast... They finally got back to me. It's available!

CHASE
(suddenly nervous)
No kidding.

JILL
So I'm going to put down the deposit.

CHASE
Jill... Honey, that place was expensive.

JILL
Calm down. We'll make it work. We always do. And besides, it's the only place within a hundred miles that has space for a dance floor.

CHASE
Oh no! Not this again. I told you--

JILL
I know what you told me. I choose not to listen. You will dance, Chase Harris. Or else.

Claire waves a stack of invoices to get Jill's attention. She motions that Jill needs to sign them.

JILL
Claire's bugging me. I gotta go. Don't be blue!

CHASE
Easier said than done. I think my career might be over before it even got started.

JILL
No way, baby. Don't give up. God's going to send you a sign. Just keep your eyes open. Gotta run. Love you! Bye!

CHASE
Love you too. See you at home.

As he hangs up, Chase notices a misspelled and scrawled notice tacked up on the notice board next to the phone.

INSERT - AD ON NOTICE BOARD

*HELP NEEDED FOR
CARE OF DISSABELED PERSON
GOOD MONEY
MAILS ONLY
BOX 2557 RTE 56*

CHASE

Laughs at the primitive ad.

CHASE
"Mails"... Jesus.

He returns to the bar. Motions to the Bartender he's ready to settle his tab.

Reaching into his wallet, he pulls out his last couple of bills. The empty, money-less maw is a stark reminder that he's broke. He's unemployed. And he has a wedding in his immediate future.

His mind calculates for a moment.

Chase returns to the notice board. Takes down the crazy ad. Slips it into his pocket.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAY OUTSIDE OF TOWN - SAME

Behind the wheel of his Datsun, Chase heads into the Midwest farmland, looking for the address on the card. He's surprised by how far outside the city limits he has to drive.

The route leads him past a large quarry, and out into the rural countryside.

As he's driving along a lonely dirt road, he LOCKS THE BRAKES.

INSERT - MAILBOX

He spies a battered blue mailbox painted with the faded numbers "2557".

CHASE

Turns into the driveway. Finds himself on a long rutted dirt road that cuts through a good half-mile of brush-filled acreage.

Chase eventually slows to a stop. Parks.

Chase climbs out of his car. Scans the surrounding area.

POV

Before him is a small, run-down house. The shingles are worn and tattered. What paint used to be on the siding has mostly flaked off. A rusted heating oil tank is visible around the side.

Parked in front of the house is a beat-up Chevy, missing a tail light.

Several yards behind the house, a wooded area stretches out to the horizon.

Other than that, nothing. There isn't another house within sight. This place is out in the middle of nowhere.

CHASE

Navigates a short flight of RICKETY STAIRS to the front door. KNOCKS. From somewhere inside he hears SHUFFLING. Several LOCKS OPENING.

The DOOR CREAKS open a hair. HATCH, a sickly, pale man with a chipped front tooth, leans into view. Chase can see he's propping himself up with a cane.

CHASE

Uh, hi. I'm Chase Harris. I'm here about the ad?... For a health care worker?... Sorry to just show up, but there was no phone number...

Hatch glares at him. He isn't buying it.

Chase holds up the ad from the bar.

CHASE

I just got out of school, but... I've got experience working with people who have trouble with their mobility...

Hatch looks at the ad. Then he looks at Chase. Then the ad. Then Chase.

Hatch eventually decides Chase is telling the truth. Opens the door all the way.

Chase is taken aback when he finally sees Hatch fully. He's a gaunt, disheveled man, so pale he seems bloodless. He must be in his early 40s, but he looks like he's in his late 60s.

HATCH

C'mon in.

Hatch gestures with the cane. Chase slips by him into the house. Hatch CLOSES AND LOCKS the door behind him.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase finds himself inside a small, dirty, cramped house. He is instantly assaulted by a horrible odor. He tries to hide his reaction. Luckily Hatch isn't looking his way.

Chase can't believe how unsanitary the living conditions are. Dust and dirt cover every surface. The floors look like they've never been mopped or vacuumed. Piles of trash fill up the corners. Mold stains the bare walls.

A thin, flimsy tarp, rigged as a curtain, blocks off a majority of the living room. The shadow of a large rounded object is projected against the ratty fabric.

As Chase tries to covertly take in the chamber of horrors he's entered, Hatch hobbles to the other side of the room. He SCRATCHES at his chest, through his shirt.

CHASE

I'm sorry, I didn't get your name.

HATCH

Hatch. So... Ain't much to it. We just need someone to help with the cleaning, the ablutions...

CHASE

"We"? I'm sorry, from your cane, I just thought... Who are you talking about?

HATCH

My wife. Em.

He pulls back the curtain.

HATCH

Em, honey? This here's Chase. He's come to help us out. Like you asked for.

POV

Chase is horrified to see the giant shadow on the tarp belongs to EM, a bed-ridden, morbidly obese woman.

Naked except for a moth-eaten sheet that barely covers her bulk, Em lies on a mattress among rags and trash. Huge lymphedemas - masses of liquid-filled tissue - hang from her torso and legs. Scabby, scaly skin crusts her limbs. Her numerous folds are inflamed with irritation and infection. Thick flaking nails jut from the end of her swollen, crimson fingers and toes. Her face is almost lost in the mane of fat that encircles her head. A huge scar runs down the middle of her enormous stomach.

CHASE

Can't stop staring at Em. He's never seen anything like this.

HATCH

I ain't proud to say, it's gotten to be too much fer me to take care of her. I ain't as spry as I used to be, y'know?

Hatch takes Em's misshapen paw of a hand.

HATCH

She's everything to me. All I want is fer her to be healthy. So we can be together. Forever.

He bends down. Kisses her hand. Em doesn't make a sound. She merely stares at Chase.

Chase doesn't want to be here, but... these people need help.

CHASE

I... I can help you get her cleaned up, at least.

HATCH

God bless you! Moment I laid eyes on you, you were a good man!

CHASE

Don't thank me yet. We've got a lot of work to do. Can you get me some hot water?

HATCH

You bet!

Hatch hurries down the hall. Chase opens his bag. Sorts through his equipment. Retrieves a stethoscope.

Chase feels something. Like being watched. He realizes that Em's big, dark eyes are glued to him.

CHASE

Hello, Em. I'm Chase. How are you doing today?

No reply. Just intense staring.

CHASE

I'm just going to listen to your heart...

He places the stethoscope against Em's covered chest. His brow wrinkles at what he hears. He moves the drum around, but still gets the same odd heartbeat.

He takes her wrist. Checks her pulse. Again: confusion.

CHASE

Your pulse is very high. And erratic.

Silence.

CHASE

So, now I'm going to begin bathing you. With your approval, I'm going to use a cloth. But I'm going to have to take your cover off, if that's okay.

No reply.

CHASE

Em, I'm sorry, but I can't really get going until to you give me your approval.

Em says nothing. She just stares.

CHASE

Em? Can you answer?...

Hatch returns. Struggling with a bucket.

HATCH

She says it's okay. She's the one wanted me to put out the ad.

CHASE

Okay. Well, let's get started.

HATCH
You're the doc.

Chase soaps up a rag and begins to bathe Em.

Despite his reaction to her condition, he tries to be polite and make eye contact. But her eyes... her eyes are large, wet, sparkling... and they never leave him. They're fixed on him. Chase finds he can't look at her directly. She unnerves him.

EM'S HYGIENE ROUTINE - MONTHAGE

Over the next hour, both men sweat profusely as they tend to Em's needs.

Chase scrapes cracked skin from Em's calves and feet. He applies ointment and bandages to several open bedsores on the back of her arms and thighs.

Hatch is too weak to lift Em's large folds and masses, so Chase pulls them back and assists Hatch in washing and applying disinfectant.

CHASE

Makes a move to lift the shelf of fat covering Em's genitals. Hatch grabs his wrist.

HATCH
No!

CHASE
(surprised)
What?

HATCH
You can't touch her there!

CHASE
Hatch, if you want her cleaned--

HATCH
Let me do that!

Chase hands over the washcloth. Steps to the side. Lifts Em's heavy folds.

HATCH
Don't look!

Chase turns his head. He hears SLOPPPING as Hatch works the cloth around Em's nether regions.

HATCH
Okay. All done.

Chase gently lowers Em's stomach. He happens to glance back at her. Her big dark eyes are still locked on him.

Chase SQUIRTS some disinfectant onto a gauze pad. He lifts a fold on her leg. The skin breaks open. A thick greenish PUS OOZES OUT. Chase gags. He cleans her up and puts a bandage on the wound.

Chase has done his best to be professional. But he's only human. He feels his stomach churn.

CHASE
Excuse me for a moment. I'll be
right back.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Chasse steps out the front door. Hurriedly runs around the side of the house, to the bushes. He VIOLENTLY RETCHES into the weeds.

As he's collecting himself, he notices a worn path that leads from the crumbling steps at the back of the house.

POV

The path leads across the overgrown yard. Continues through a broken chain link fence. Disappears off into the trees.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

Chase takes a deep breath before he enters. Puts on a smile.

He returns to the living room. Finds Hatch holding Em's hand, leaning in close to her.

HATCH
(softly)
No, not yet... Not 'til he
leaves... He might not...

Hatch realizes Chase is behind him. He shuts up. Chase is creeped out by both Hatch and Em staring him down.

CHASE
Well... that's pretty much all I
can do for her today.

HATCH

You done more than enough, Doc.

CHASE

It's just "Chase". I'm not a doctor. Yet.

HATCH

Right. "Chase".

He vigorously claps Chase on the shoulder. SCRATCHES at his chest with the other hand.

CHASE

So, anything else I can do for you...

HATCH

Naw, we're good. It's time fer me to feed her, anyway.

Without warning, Em erupts into a SQUALL OF GRUNTS AND MEWLING. Chase jumps.

CHASE

Jesus! I'm sorry, I thought she was mute, or deaf.

HATCH

She's hungry.

An awkward moment hangs between them.

HATCH

She don't like people watchin' her eat. So...

CHASE

Oh. Right. Got it. Okay, well, I'll get out of your way.

He gathers his stuff. Hatch escorts him to the door.

HATCH

Hey, I just wanna say... I'm... I'm sorry about snappin' at you back there.

CHASE

Snapping...?

HATCH

You know. When you wanted to... You were gonna touch her...

He motions "cleaning his groin".

CHASE

Oh! Right. Don't worry about it.

HATCH

It's just... She's my wife, and you're...

CHASE

I totally get it. No harm done.

HATCH

(brightening up)

Good! Good.

Chase puts his hand on the doorknob. He wants to get out of this nightmare so badly.

But his conscience won't let him leave. He leans in to Hatch, so that Em can't hear.

CHASE

(softly)

Hatch, look, we just met, and I don't want to insult you, or your wife. But... I can't walk out the door without saying something.

HATCH

What d'you mean?

CHASE

Em needs a lot more than a physical therapist. You really need to get her to a hospital.

HATCH

No sir.

CHASE

She's dangerously overweight. And her vitals... I've never seen vitals like hers. Her pulse isn't normal.

HATCH

(defensively)

Listen, I told you...!

(collecting himself)

I appreciate what you're sayin', Doc. That's mighty good of you. But...

we ain't got no insurance or nothin'. Besides, Em's embarrassed. She don't wanna get made fun of.

CHASE

It's not about being embarrassed. Her health it more important than what people think. I know a doctor--

Hatch actually tears up.

HATCH

Look, all we need is someone that can help keep her from gettin' sick. Once she gets back to feelin' good, we'll be fine. Just fer now, we need a little help. That's all. Just fer now. Please.

Chase is having a real problem with this set-up. He sees this frail man, enabling his morbidly obese wife, and he knows they need medical intervention. But he can't force them.

CHASE

Then I'm sorry, Hatch. If you won't help me help you, then I can't be a part of this.

He hands Hatch a bottle of disinfectant.

CHASE

Use this every day on the really irritated spots. It should last you a couple of weeks, until you can get some at the store.

Hatch looks at the bottle despondently.

CHASE

I'm sorry. Good luck with everything.

He steps out the door.

Hatch turns back at Em, looking deep into her unblinking eyes.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Chase leans against his car. This experience has overwhelmed him.

Hatch THROWS OPEN the front door.

HATCH

Wait! Wait!

Out of breath, he shakily makes his way to the car.

HATCH

Hey, Doc!

CHASE

I'm not a--

HATCH

Em really liked you. She said you was really good to her.

CHASE

(confused)

She "said"...?

HATCH

She wants you... We want you to come back tomorrow. Every day. Well, not the weekends. But she wants you to help.

Chase thinks for a moment. He took an oath to "do no harm", but if they won't listen to him...

CHASE

No, Hatch. Like I said--

Hatch pulls a huge wad of money out of his pocket. He peels off five twenty dollar bills. Puts them in Chase's hands.

Chase is stunned. A hundred dollars. Cash.

HATCH

(smiling)

See you tomorrow. Same time.

He returns to the house, absentmindedly digging at something under his shirt. Chase watches him go inside. The DOOR CLOSES. The LOCKS TURN.

Chase can't believe his last few hours. That man! That woman! What kind of a freak show is this?

He looks down at the money in his hands, and reality sets in.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EVENING

Chase, stretched out on the bed, regales a stunned Jill with his adventure from earlier in the day, as she changes out of her work clothes.

CHASE

...I mean, I've seen bedsores, but hers... Such a weird color. They're almost gangrenous.

JILL

She's how big?

CHASE

I'm not kidding... I wouldn't be surprised if she were over seven hundred pounds.

JILL

How does anyone get that fat?

CHASE

It could be a lot of things. She seems to be mentally underdeveloped. Her husband is enabling all her bad habits. She doesn't move, at all. They're completely isolated...

Jill picks up the crumpled ad from where Chase placed it on the bureau.

JILL

You're kidding! "M-A-I-L-S"?!?
Where do these Einsteins live?

CHASE

An hour and a half away. They're out past the quarry. Out in the sticks. If I hadn't seen their blue mailbox, I'd probably be in the next county right now.

Jill bounces onto the bed next to him.

JILL

Putting aside the fact that, despite being a good man, you have terrible judgment when it comes to people... What on earth would make you even consider answering this?

CHASE

You told me God was going to provide...

Chase pulls the money out of his pocket. Fans it out. Jill's eyes bug out. She tentatively takes the bills, as if they aren't real.

JILL

For a day?

CHASE

Not even.

JILL

Forget what I said about faith. You hit the jackpot!

CHASE

Oh, I forgot it all right. I'm not going back.

JILL

What?!?

CHASE

Honey, they're too repulsive. God, I hate myself for saying that, but...

JILL

All jokes aside... You got into this whole nursing thing because you wanted to "put some good out there in the world". Those are your words. Your grandma's words.

CHASE

I know, I know...

JILL

These people may be gross, but they obviously need your help. And they can pay, apparently. So... you get my stamp of approval.

CHASE

You're kidding.

JILL

I mean, Chase... Why not? You can maybe change their minds, get them to listen to reason. And make some good money while you're at it.

Until something better comes along.
 (remembering)
 Oh! Speaking of which...

She digs a scrap of paper out of her purse.

JILL

The lady who cuts Claire's aunt's hair... Her mother is a shut-in. She fell a couple of weeks ago. So Claire told you about her... and she's interested.

CHASE

Oh great. Now I start finding jobs.

JILL

You can do both. You're helping these weirdos in the afternoon? Then go see this sweet little old lady in the morning. Four or five hours a day, you get two paychecks.

CHASE

Yeah, but it's two separate jobs. Why don't you go get two paychecks?

Jill groans. Kneads her temples.

JILL

Ugh. I'm having a hard enough time with the one job I have.

Chase playfully, flirtatiously, fans her with the money. She cuts a side-eye his way.

JILL

(flatly)

What are you doing?

Chase places the bills on her blouse one at a time. Then slowly undoes one of the last buttons.

JILL

You can't be serious...

CHASE

You do have two jobs. During the day, you run a successful department store. And at night, you keep your fiancé happy...

He slips a hand into her shirt. Jill can't help herself. She starts laughing.

JILL
Baby, please... I'm so tired. And gross.

CHASE
Doesn't faze me at all.

His hand finds a sweet spot. She inhales deeply.

JILL
You're insatiable...

CHASE
Maybe "Natasha" could come out and play?

JILL
You've gotta be kidding...

CHASE
(rubbing her with the money)
Pretend it's three years ago. And these are rose petals. And we're in the honeymoon suite at the Clayton Resort...

JILL
That really rocked your world, didn't it?

Chase moves to her belt. Unbuckles it.

CHASE
Any woman who would dress up--

JILL
(vamping)
Like a complete slut...

CHASE
Yes... And steal me away from work, take me to a hotel, and have her way with me... That was when I knew you were something special.

JILL
(thick Southern accent)
Y'damn skippy.

She snuggles up to him.

CHASE

So will I still get that kind of treatment when you're "Mrs. Harris"?...

JILL

Oh, no. Never again. Once I legally own you, this all goes away. So you'd better get your licks in while you still can.

CHASE

Yes ma'am... Getting my licks in...

He slides down her body. A huge grin breaks on her face. She GASPS, as her back arches.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATE EVENING

Exhausted and content, Chase spoons Jill in bed. Jill SNORES lightly as she slumbers.

Chase can't sleep... he can't stop thinking about Hatch. And Em. With those big eyes of hers.

POV

The shadow he and Jill throw on the wall reminds him of Em's silhouette against her redneck-rigged curtain.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Chase arrives at Hatch's and Em's house a little early.

He KNOCKS on the front door. There's no answer. He tries the knob. It's open. He pushes the door slightly. The HINGES SQUEAK.

HATCH (O.S.)

Who's there?!?

CHASE

It's me! Chase!

Chase hears WET SOUNDS. FEET HITTING THE FLOOR. The CURTAIN BEING PULLED across the wire. FOOTSTEPS RUNNING away.

Then, from somewhere in the back of the house... a faint voice.

HATCH (O.S.)
Come on in!

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase tentatively enters the house. The flimsy curtain is pulled, so Chase can only see Em's immense shadow. Does he hear something - a WET SQUELCHING - coming from behind the curtain? He reaches for it...

Hatch appears from the back of the house. Shirtless. Buttoning his pants. He's disheveled. Sweaty. Out of breath. And he looks even more pale. More gaunt.

HATCH
(upset)
What the hell are you doin'?

CHASE
I'm sorry, I... I knocked. No one answered. The door was unlocked...

Chase pushes past him.

HATCH
(mumbling)
So stupid... Gotta keep her safe...

He opens the door. CLOSES it firmly. Secures the lock.

CHASE
I'm sorry, Hatch. I didn't know...
Did I interrupt something?

HATCH
(quietly)
We was havin' our special time.

CHASE
You were...

Chase doesn't get it. But then he sees Hatch look over at the curtain, a lecherous smile on his face. Then Chase gets it. Their "special time".

CHASE
Oh, wow... Hey, I'm really sorry.

HATCH
Yeah, well, don't let it happen
again.

CHASE
I won't. Promise.

INSERT - HATCH'S CHEST

With Hatch's shirt off, Chase notices a large angry pustule
on his chest.

CHASE

Leans in for a closer look.

CHASE
Jesus, Hatch, where did you get
that--

Hatch ducks his hand. Scratches at the bump.

HATCH
Caught myself on a branch. It's
nothin'.

Hatch grabs a shirt off a pile of clothes by the bed. Pulls
it over his head. It's a Jefferson High sports jersey. Bright
purple and gold. Ripped in several places. Covered in stains.

HATCH
Let's get a move on. She wants to
be cleaned up before she eats.

CHASE
Okay then...

Chase unzips his bag. Retrieves a pair of small weights.

HATCH
Hang on. What's those?

CHASE
Hand weights. For some light
exercise.

HATCH
Huh-uh. She ain't gonna do it.

CHASE
Look, my job here isn't just to
wipe her down and give her
medicine. Lack of exercise is only
going to exacerbate her condition.

HATCH

She don't got to "egg-zass-erbate" nothin'! She's got me! I take care of her needs!

CHASE

No, I mean if she doesn't move at all, she'll get worse.

(to Em)

Okay, Em, we're going to start out with some gentle weight work.

Chase puts a weight in her hand. She doesn't grab it.

CHASE

Don't be afraid. We're not trying to win Mister Olympia. I just want to get your muscles working.

Hatch watches with a hint of jealousy in his eyes as Chase manually curls Em's thick fingers around the weight. Chase lets go. The weight drops out of her limp paw.

HATCH

Haw! I told ya. She don't wanna do nothin' like that.

Despite his frustration, Chase has to remain positive in front of his clients.

CHASE

We'll come back to that later.

Chase begins his hygiene routine.

Chase's hands work against her pale, veined, crusty flesh. He does his best to clean in between and under the heavy flaps of skin that hang from her torso. Chase maintains a professional demeanor, but he's still overcome with revulsion at the state of her hygiene.

Throughout the session, Hatch never engages in conversation. He's completely wrapped up in Em's welfare. So Chase talks to Em instead.

CHASE

How are we doing, Em? Everything okay?

Her lips and jaw move, but no sounds come out. Her eyes are glued to Chase.

CHASE

We're almost done. A little more topical, and that should be it.

He moves around to her abdomen. He prepares to put more ointment on her. Stops cold.

INSERT - EM'S STOMACH

Em's scar. It's moist.

CHASE

Gingerly dabs at the weeping part of Em's scar.

CHASE

Holy... Hatch, I thought you said she hasn't been to a doctor or hospital in a long time.

HATCH

That's right.

CHASE

But her scar. It looks... fresh...

He places a couple of fingertips on either side. Gives it a gentle squeeze.

SPLORT! A thin stream of CLEAR LIQUID SQUIRTS out. A droplet lands on Chase's forearm.

CHASE

Ugh!

He grabs disinfectant. Pours it all over his arm. Wipes up with a clean gauze pad. Hatch doesn't react at all.

CHASE

Are you sure she hasn't had any surgery any time recently?...

HATCH

I told ya, no. She's had that since I first... Since I met her.

CHASE

Did she tell you what happened?

HATCH

Nah. That's her business.

Chase is even more perplexed. What kind of relationship do they have? But neither one of them seem concerned, so... he leaves it be.

CHASE
Okay, well, then, I guess we're done. Thank you, Em.

Em GRUNTS. And stares.

Hatch drops into the small chair he's wedged next to Em's mattress. He's spent. He can barely hold his head up. He scratches at the bump hidden under his shirt.

Packing his stuff, Chase takes notice of the high school logo on Hatch's well-worn shirt. He feels like he needs to make a connection with the jumpy husband.

CHASE
(chanting)
M! U-S! T! A-N-G-S!

HATCH
What?

CHASE
(pointing at shirt)
The Mustangs. You a Jefferson grad?

HATCH
Huh? Oh. Nah. Just... picked it up.

CHASE
You found that at a thrift store?
They're on the other side of the county! Talk about not being true to your school...

Hatch doesn't bite. He's holding Em's hand. Staring at her lovingly. Almost fanatically.

CHASE
I went to Andrews. We hated Jefferson. Stupid "Purple Wave".

HATCH
Yeah, well, I wouldn't know any of that.

CHASE
I envy you. So, where do you hail from? Originally?

Hatch shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

HATCH

A ways away.

CHASE

Huh. If you were lucky enough to be elsewhere, what brought the two of you out here?

HATCH

Just me. Em lived here.

CHASE

Here? This is her house?

Hatch is tense. He can't look at Chase.

CHASE

I may have gone to school with one of her family! Em, what's your...
Oh, sorry. Right.

(to Hatch)

What's her last name?

Hatch can't take it anymore. He balls up his fists.

HATCH

We ain't gotta...

Em SQUEALS. Loudly. Rapidly. Her eyes flash angrily.

Hatch's intense emotion softens into concern for his wife.

HATCH

You're right, baby... I know...
I'll get it for ya right now.

CHASE

What... Did she say something?

HATCH

(grimly)

She's hungry.

Hatch disappears into the kitchen. Closes the swinging door behind him.

CHASE

(to himself)

How did he know...

(dismissing his thoughts)

Whatever.

As Chase packs his gear away, he hears HATCH MOVING ABOUT. A REFRIGERATOR OPENS AND CLOSES. SOMETHING HEAVY DROPS onto the counter. An ELECTRIC KNIFE BUZZES to life.

Chase adjusts Em's large bedsheet, doing his best to cover her completely.

As he's SNAPPING OFF HIS LATEX GLOVES, he can't help but make eye contact with her again. This time, her staring... it's not as off-putting. He's able to really take notice of her face for the first time.

POV

Em is so big, her head is pushed back and to the side. Her throat is inflated like a spare tire, giving her no neckline. Her lips are surprisingly red, considering how pale the rest of her is. Her nose almost seems like it's been pushed back into her head. Her hair is thinning all over, as if her scalp has been stretched so thin from all the fat surrounding her skull. Her eyebrows are non-existent.

But her eyes... Her eyes, huge and dark and surrounded by unusually thick lashes, are rolled in his direction. And despite his best efforts... he finds himself drawn into them. For long moments they seem to be communicating with each other without a single word uttered.

CHASE

Obliviously scratches at his arm, where Em leaked onto him.

Em GURLGES. A thick stream of saliva drains out of the corner of her mouth.

Without thinking, Chase reaches forward, wiping at the spittle. But he lets his thumb linger on her lower lip for a moment. Her eyes widen imperceptibly.

Then he realizes: he's not wearing gloves! He pulls back, grabs some antiseptic.

CHASE

(to himself)

Can't believe I did that...

Hatch stumbles into the room. Chase pulls back. Fusses over his equipment.

Hatch plops down in his chair. Wipes a thick dark liquid off his hands with a dish towel.

HATCH
 Sorry it took so long, honey.
 Knife's gettin' dull. I keep
 meanin' to get us a new blade.

He pats Em's arm. She SQUEAKS AND MEWLS. Hatch laughs.

HATCH
 Em! You're too much.

CHASE
 You understood that?

HATCH
 'Course I do! She's my wife.

CHASE
 So what did she say?

HATCH
 Nothin'. It's a private thing.

Hatch realizes that Chase is staring at Em.

HATCH
 Hey!

CHASE
 Huh? What?

HATCH
 (motions to the curtain)
 Could you... you know...

CHASE
 Sorry. I forgot.

As Chase draws their living room divider, he cranes his neck so that he can peek around the edge.

Hatch puts his hand on Em's scar. He leans in close to her face.

HATCH
 (quietly)
 There's only a little bit left. I
 gotta go out and get more later.

Em SQUEAKS.

Chase sees her LIPS SMACK and pucker. A slender dribble of saliva and juice escapes the corner of her mouth. Slowly creeps down her bloated cheek. Hatch wipes at it with his bare hand.

HATCH
Just wait, honey. It's comin'.

She's not looking at Hatch. Chase realizes: she's staring right at him.

Chase can't take any more weirdness. He turns his attention to packing up his gear. Throws things into his bag in a hurry.

CHASE
Okay, um... I guess I'm gonna go...

Hatch slips out from behind the curtain. He's still clawing at the odd wound under his shirt.

Chase pulls a card out of his pocket.

CHASE
(quietly)
Listen, I can't make you go to the doctor. But here's my number. If there's an emergency, call me. I can get one of the doctors I know out here in two seconds. You hear me?

Hatch reluctantly takes the card.

HATCH
I do. I hear ya. Thanks, Doc.

CHASE
I told you, I'm not--

Hatch isn't listening. He wobbles to the front entrance. He UNDOES THE LOCKS. Opens the door. Chase gives him a wave and starts to leave.

HATCH
Hey, Doc! You forgettin' something?...

Before Chase can answer, Hatch slaps several folded bills into his hand.

HATCH
I put a little extra in there. Em said so. Maybe you go out and have a little fun this afternoon, huh?

CHASE
I wish I could. I've got an interview I have to go to.

(checks watch)
And I'm just barely gonna make it.

Hatch turns panicky.

HATCH
N-no... No! You're ours!

CHASE
Excuse me?

HATCH
You work for us. With us! With Em!
We need you here regular! She don't
want anyone but you! She says so!

CHASE
(taken aback)
Well, Hatch, that's flattering,
but... I'll just be honest with
you. I need steady work. I've got
major bills. I've got a wed--

Hatch pulls another wad out of his pocket. Stuffs it into
Chase's bag.

HATCH
Money ain't no issue. Just keep
showin' up. It'll make all of us
happy.

Hatch gives Chase a knowing nod. Grips his arm.

HATCH
See you tomorrow, Doc.

Chase starts to tell Hatch he's not a doctor. But he's
already turned on his heels.

Chase looks past Hatch, through the slit, to where Em lies,
immobile and immense. Her gaze is still fixed on him.

Is it his imagination, or... are her eyes sparkling a tiny
bit more...?

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Chase drives home.

He's distracted. Unaware that he's scratching his arm. His thoughts keep returning to Em. She's so repulsive, she's fascinating.

CHASE'S IMAGINATION

His mind's eye fills with images of Em. Her bloated arms. Her crusty feet. Her veined chest. Her eyes.

Her eyes...

HONNNNK!

CHASE

Swerves back into his lane. A truck driver leans on the horn as Chase almost runs into him.

He SCREECHES TO A STOP right at an intersection.

The adrenaline has snapped Chase out of his spell. Cursing his stupidity, he drives on.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STRIP MALL - EVENING

A gentle rain falls. With Jill riding shotgun, Chase pulls his Datsun into a parking lot. He points the car towards Café Carina, a restaurant at the far end of the building.

JILL

A night out at Carina's. It's been a while.

CHASE

I can't believe you suggested this. I was okay with putting my "tip" into the wedding fund.

JILL

The wedding fund is in the black, believe it or not. And I figured, why not go out and celebrate your new job as the physical therapist for The Munsters?

CHASE

You're not as funny as you think you are.

JILL

My mom says I am.

As they pull into their spot, Chase sees an older HOMELESS GUY out in front of Mello's, the bar at the other end of the strip mall. Disheveled from who knows how long on the road, he sits next to a beat-up orange suitcase, leisurely smoking.

Chase sees him hold out his hand to a COUPLE leaving the bar. They act like he's not there. Unfazed, he returns to puffing his cigarette.

CHASE

Poor guy. It's supposed to rain through the weekend.

JILL

He'll be fine. C'mon, I'm fiending for my one margarita a year!

She bounces out of the car and into the restaurant. Chase can't help but give the Homeless Guy one last sympathetic look before he follows her.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME

Jill picks at a large salad. Chase enjoys a giant burger and a stack of steak-cut fries.

JILL

And the caterer says they can do your precious pulled pork. But the building restrictions mean they can't do any grilling inside. So we'll have to rent a tent for the barbecue...

She's so wrapped up in her excitement about their wedding, she doesn't notice that Chase is only half-listening.

Chase bites into his burger.

CLOSEUP - THE BURGER

He finds himself captivated by the juice running from the meat. Down the bread. Along his hand. Onto his wrist.

CHASE

Scratches at his forearm as he watches the juice trickle.

Chase jumps. Jill is tickling him under his shirt.

JILL
 (playfully)
 What'choo thinkin' 'bout?...

CHASE
 Ugh! You know I hate that!

JILL
 That's why I do it.

CHASE
 Well stop it. What's the question?

JILL
 Do we do six? Or eight?

CHASE
 Oh, um... Six.

JILL
 The thing is, if my cousins do make it, they're gonna drink. A lot. Six might not do it.

CHASE
 Then eight, I guess?

JILL
 Yeah. You're right. Eight is better. But then that means...

Chase drifts off again. Stares into the pink insides of his burger. Loses himself in the texture. The moistness.

CUT TO:

EXT. STRIP MALL - SAME

Chase and Jill, arm in arm, walk to their car. She playfully swings a big doggie bag.

As he opens the door for her, Chase sees the Homeless Guy, still in his spot.

CHASE
 I think I'm gonna give that guy our leftovers.

Jill refuses to give up the doggie bag.

JILL
 (fake pouting)
 But this is my lunch...

CHASE
I promise I'll make you a salad for
tomorrow.

JILL
With the croutons that I like?

CHASE
Swear on my life.

She relents. Hands Chase the doggie bag.

JILL
And that's why I love you.

Chase starts across the parking lot.

A car pulls up next to the Homeless Guy. An older Chevy.
Chase notices one of the tail lights is out.

The DRIVER talks to the Homeless Guy through the passenger
side window.

The Homeless Guy opens the passenger side door to get in. The
overhead light comes on.

POV

Hatch is behind the wheel.

CHASE

Waves, trying to get Hatch's attention. But once the Homeless
Guy is in, the car slowly pulls away and out onto the road.

INT. CAR - SAME

Chase gets into his car. Hands Jill the doggie bag.

JILL
What's this?

CHASE
Just missed him. Someone gave him a
ride.

JILL
Well what do you know? There's
another decent man in this
godforsaken town.
(to herself)
I wonder if he likes to dance...

Jill pokes him in the side.

CHASE
Ha, ha, ha.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Chase drives back to Em's house. As he's pulling up the long driveway, something catches his eye.

POV

Hatch walks out of the wooded area. He's lugging a grungy plastic garbage can. He disappears through the back door into the house.

CHASE

Parks. Pulls his bag out of the passenger side.

He knocks on the door. From inside, FUMBLING NOISES.

HATCH (O.S.)
Hang on. Hang on...

The door flies open. Hatch looks terrible. Worse than usual. He's wiping his neck and chest.

CHASE
Are you okay? You look kind of flushed...

He reaches up to feel Hatch's forehead. Hatch blocks his hand.

HATCH
(impatiently)
Nah. I'm fine. C'mon. Em wants you to get to it.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase sets up his gear to start working on Em. He notices that she seems sweaty. He tries to take her temperature. She refuses to take the thermometer. Clamps her mouth shut.

CHASE
Em, I just want to see if you're running a fever.
(to Hatch)

Can you tell her I just need to check her temperature?

HATCH

Sorry. She don't wanna do it.

CHASE

I've told you, there's only so much I can do for her, if I can't even check her vitals.

HATCH

You should just give it up. We only need you to help with her ablutions.

Chase throws his hands up in frustration.

With that, the two men tackle Em's daily hygiene routine. They wash. They scrub. They disinfect.

Once again, Chase can't stand how silent everything is. He tries to strike up a conversation.

CHASE

What's with the trash can?

HATCH

(caught off guard)

Whaddya mean?

CHASE

When I pulled up, I saw you with a trash can. It looked like you were coming from the woods back there.

HATCH

(carefully)

We got... a ravine back through the woods. I dump the trash back there.

CHASE

You throw your trash in the woods? That can't be good for the environment!

HATCH

City trash don't run all the way out here.

CHASE

You need to move out of the sticks, my friend. For the city services alone.

Hatch doesn't get the joke.

HATCH

Em likes it out here. We can do what we want. Don't get bothered none. That's why she landed out here in the first place.

CHASE

Oh, she moved here from somewhere else? I thought she was a native, like me.

Chase waits for Hatch to reply. He doesn't. Chase knows him and his moods now. He decides not to push it. Maybe he can change topics.

CHASE

Well, wherever she's from, Em's lucky to have a good man like you in her life.

HATCH

(defensively)
How you figure that?

CHASE

I was at Café Carina last night. I saw you give that homeless guy outside Mello's a ride.

Hatch's mood goes ice cold. His jaw sets.

HATCH

Homeless guy?...

CHASE

Yeah. That old guy with the suitcase.

HATCH

You saw that...

CHASE

Sure did. And I'm impressed. Not a lot of people would let a complete stranger into their car. Not these days.

Hatch gets a weird look on his face. There's a strained moment between them. For a split second, Chase is afraid Hatch is going to come for him...

The moment is shattered when Em begins making her HUNGRY NOISES.

HATCH

Okay, baby. I'll get to it.

CHASE

You know, you look a little green around the gills. You want me to maybe make her--

HATCH

No! I can take care o' my wife! I'm the only one who knows what she likes!

Hatch quickly stands. He almost passes out. Chase catches him. While Chase is handling him, he can feel that Hatch is nothing but skin and bones. Hatch pushes him away.

HATCH

I just need a little somethin' in my stomach. You can pack up. We're done.

Before Chase can retort, Hatch makes his way into the kitchen.

Chase can't just walk out. He hurriedly puts salve on Em's folds and open sores.

CHASE

(softly, to Em)

You poor thing. It's a wonder you haven't had a heart attack yet.

He looks into Em's big dark eyes. They're locked on him. As usual.

CHASE

I wish you'd let me get a doctor out here. You deserve so much better...

As his hands work their way over her skin, he unknowingly handles her with a softer touch than before. He runs his fingers and palms along every curve, every groove, as if he's caressing a lover. His words trail off as he becomes rapt with the contours of her flesh.

In a trance, not cognizant of where his hands are moving, he accidentally brushes against her pendulous, sagging breast. Her entire body quivers.

He's taken aback... this is the first reaction she's had to any of his ministrations. He freezes, expecting her to begin screaming for Hatch. Or making it clear in some way that he's overstepped his bounds.

She doesn't. She just continues to gaze at him.

Chase looks over his shoulder, to see where Hatch is. But the SOUNDS FROM THE KITCHEN make it clear he's still wrangling Em's meal.

Nervously, Chase bites his lip. Hesitantly, he moves to make the same small move, to stroke her breast tenderly...

Chase shakes his head.

CHASE
What am I doing...

He throws the blanket back over Em.

Hatch returns from the kitchen, a half-empty soda in his hand. Chase doesn't realize he's picking at his forearm.

CHASE
(regarding the soda)
That's it?

HATCH
It's all I need.

CHASE
You need more nutrition than that!
It's all sugar!

Hatch hands Chase his pay for the day.

HATCH
If you're done, you should probably
go. Em's hungry.

He plops into his ratty chair. While he's drinking his soda, he puts his hand in Em's lifeless paw.

Chase sees them holding hands. For a split second, he feels a brief flash of jealousy. He shrugs it off.

CHASE
You know, Em's routine takes so
long, by the time I leave, I'm
stuck in traffic going back into
the city. Maybe I should show up
earlier in the day. Like in the
morning.

Hatch is exhausted. Light-headed. Almost asleep.

CHASE
Say, eight A.M.? Bright and early?

HATCH
(half-listening)
Mmm. Sure. Whatever.

And that's that. Chase turns to leave... when an idea comes to him.

CHASE
Hey, you know, if you need to get away during the day - go to the store, or whatever - I can look after Em. Just to help out.

Hatch looks up. The fog disappears from his eyes, replaced with anger.

CHASE
I'm a pretty good cook. I could make her meals--

Hatch springs out of his chair. Chase steps back in shock.

HATCH
You think you can steal her away!

CHASE
What? No!

HATCH
You think Em would want someone like you?!?

CHASE
Hatch! Come on! I have no--

HATCH
I knew it! You had all those sweet words! Actin' like you care! But you're like all the others! You just want her!

CHASE
You've got it all wrong! I'm just offering to help--

HATCH
Your job is to keep her healthy! I do everything else! Everything! Now get outta here! Go! Go on!

Hatch threatens Chase with his cane. Chase gets the hint. But he's been pushed too far. He's pissed too.

CHASE
(sarcastically)
You know what? Fine. You do
whatever you want. Good luck taking
care of her.

He SLAMS THE DOOR behind him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME

Chase and Jill make love.

Jill writhes in pleasure. Chase is going through the motions. But he's not as into it. His mind is elsewhere.

He moves his hand up onto her breast.

MEMORY FLASH

Chase has a strong, potent sense memory of touching Em's huge, fatty mammary.

The sensation is so strong, he gasps.

CHASE

Pulls back. Shatters their passionate moment.

JILL
(worried)
What? What? Are you okay?

Chase can't tell her the truth.

CHASE
Yeah... Just... My back...

JILL
Your back?...

CHASE
It's been bothering me... from all
the lifting...

Playing up his "pain", he rolls off. He GROANS, trying to "get comfortable".

JILL
Oh, my poor baby...

CHASE
Dammit... I'm sorry...

Jill cradles him. Hugs him tightly.

JILL
It's okay, baby. It's okay.

Chase throws his arms over his head as she snuggles up to him. Without thinking, he scratches at the angry scab on his forearm.

He looks away from Jill, so she can't see the guilt he feels for lying to her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Bright and early at eight A.M., as promised... Chase pulls up in front of Em's house.

He has a bounce in his step as he mounts the stairs. No sign of any back trouble from before.

He KNOCKS ON THE DOOR. But there's no answer. He KNOCKS again. Nothing.

He tries the door. This time, it's locked.

CHASE
Hatch? Hatch! It's Chase!

No answer.

Chase walks around the back of the house. He opens the wobbly screen door. Tries the weathered inner door.

It actually opens. He notices that the strike plate is worn down, so the door doesn't close all the way.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Chase steps into the filthy, uncleaned kitchen. There's a rusty, charred stove, with one big pot on it. He sees only one dirty plate in the greasy metal sink.

CHASE
Hatch! You here?

The HUM OF A MOTOR comes from a small room just off the kitchen. He peers through the half-open door.

POV

Two old, large, beat-up refrigerators loom against the far wall. The plastic garbage can is shoved into the corner.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase steps through the swinging door, into the living room.

The curtain is drawn. The light from the big window throws Em's shadow across the fabric.

Wait... did he see her body move? No, he couldn't have. She's immobile.

Chase continues looking for Hatch in the rest of the house.

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM - SAME

The bathroom is dark with dirt and mold. The toilet... dear God, the toilet. The small window is clouded with smut and grime. A tattered vinyl curtain is pulled around the claw foot tub. But there's no Hatch.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Chase pushes open the door to the small bedroom at the end of the short hallway.

It's almost a closet. There's a tiny filthy cot in one corner. There are rectangular clean spots on the grimy wallpaper where photos used to hang.

Several heaps of dirty clothes cover the floor. Chase toes them with his shoes. T-shirts, dress shirts, underwear, socks, a toddler's jumper... a motley collection of various styles and sizes.

In the far corner, between the cot and the wall, is a collection of suitcases. Including an orange one that Chase sort of thinks rings a bell...

A small bureau with lots of coins and keys and other little trinkets piled on sits against the wall. He picks up a tarnished keychain, noticing the Chevy key and the small novelty "DAVE" license plate on it.

He pokes his nose into the closet. The hangers are filled with an assortment of coats and shirts. Both mens' and womens' garments. In styles that span the 1930s through the present day.

EM'S NOISES from the front of the house divert his attention.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase draws back the curtain. He's startled to find Em staring right at him. Her mouth opens and puckers. WEIRD NOISES BURBLE out of her.

CHASE

Good morning, Em. I told Hatch we'd be starting early today. Is he around?

Em just GRUNTS AND SQUEAKS. He realizes she's not going to be able to help him.

CHASE

Okay, well, then how about I get started. And if I get done before Hatch shows up, then we'll...

His voice trails off. He catches himself. Realizes he's caught up in the dark sparkle of her eyes.

CHASE

Sorry. We'll... see what happens.

CLEANING EM - MONTAGE

Over the next couple of hours, Chase tends to her thoroughly. He gently applies ointments to her sores. He gets into her folds, soaping her up. He applies creams to the red inflamed skin around her folds and her lymphedemas. He's hot and sweaty, as he exerts more energy in moving her. Wiping her. Drying her.

CHASE

SNAPS off his gloves. He's finally done. He pulls a hand towel out of his bag. Wipes himself down.

He sees that Em still has her gaze fixed on him. He looks at himself, seeing the dark sweat stains all over his clothes.

CHASE

(laughing)

I guess I really got into it today.
You guys keep it so warm in here.

Chase opens up his padded lunch box. He takes a swig out of his water bottle. Unwraps the leftover roast beef from the other night. He's about to take a bite...

Em ERUPTS IN NOISES, startling him. Her eyes are wide open. Her lips pulse in and out.

CHASE
Are you hungry? Is that it? Okay,
give me a second.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Chase ventures back into the kitchen.

He checks the cabinets for food. But they're completely empty.

CHASE
(to himself)
Who doesn't have a can of soup or
something...

The only things he discovers in his search are a single plate, a single fork, and an old electric knife. No drinking glasses. No bowls. No food of any kind.

Then the hum from the other room reminds him: the fridges.

Chase checks them out. They're both incredibly filthy.

The first fridge has nothing but soda in it.

The second fridge, oddly enough, is empty. But he can tell that's where the food is kept. There are brown stains on the shelves and in the drawers. Next to the fridges, there are bloody wax papers and cling wrap wads in the trash. So he knows she's been eating. But apparently there's nothing left.

CHASE
(to himself)
Of course there's nothing left...

He gets the plate and fork. Tries to rinse them off as best he can. The water that comes out of the tap is rusty, as if the pipes haven't been used in forever.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase returns to Em. He spreads out a towel on Hatch's cherished seat. Gingerly sits.

CHASE

I have to be honest with you, Em:
I'm really concerned about your
weight. You're at a very dangerous
point. If you won't go to the
hospital, you've at least got to
let me help. I want to get you on a
diet plan. Show you and Hatch what
not to eat.

He dumps his leftovers onto the plate. Using the fork, he
cuts up his beef. He stabs a piece of meat.

CHASE

But for now, here's some lean meat.
Some vegetables. This is the kind
of stuff you should be eating. In
managed portions, I mean.

Chase tries getting her to hold the fork. Her hands just
dangle limp at the end of her bloated, useless arms.

CHASE

Come on, Em. You need to use your
muscles. You'll burn calories just
working your arms.

He lets go. The fork drops to the floor.

CHASE

(sigh)

Okay, we'll work on that later. I
have no idea when you last ate, so
I guess you could be pretty weak.
I'll help you out this time. But
just this once!

Chase puts the forkful right at her mouth. She almost inhales
it.

He offers her some of his raw carrots. She clamps her mouth
shut tightly. A frown creases her brow. He tries to give her
a bite of his roll. Again, she refuses.

CHASE

Not a vegetable person, huh? Well,
at least the protein's good for
you.

He feeds her a second piece of meat. Again, it disappears
almost instantly.

He starts to give her another, but then he gets the idea...
she probably wants more than just a bite.

Chase offers Em an entire slice. By hand. Her full lips part wide, allowing him to gently insert the meat into her mouth. He lets his fingers linger between her lips before she closes her mouth all the way.

Chase watches Em's face intently. Her lips pucker in and out. She NOISILY WORKS THE MEAT AROUND in her mouth. Then suddenly her mouth is empty. A RUMBLING GURGLE emanates from deep inside her distended, bloated torso.

She makes more HUNGRY NOISES.

Transfixed, Chase offers Em another slice. Again, she puts an amazing amount of effort into chewing. Watching her intently, he doesn't notice that he's scratching the bumpy, irritated spot on his forearm.

A small rivulet of red juice runs from the corner of Em's mouth. Chase reflexively moves to wipe it away... but the moistness of her lips, the ebony depths of her doe-like eyes...

He wants more.

Entranced, he rises from the chair. Leans over her. Takes in all the details of her face.

His breath is shallow. He leans in.

Touches his lips to the corner of her inviting mouth.

Chase pulls back. Licks the collected juice from his lips. He laughs, half from excitement, half from astonishment at his behavior.

Em's eyes call to him.

CHASE
(softly)
Em...

He leans in again. Hovers over her mouth.

The front door lock CLUNKS OPEN.

Chase is yanked back to reality. Their moment is shattered. He panics. Whips on his gloves. Arranges his gear like he's just finishing up. Gets everything squared away.

Hatch bursts in. He looks ragged, like he's been fighting. But he's already furious.

HATCH
What th' hell are you doin' here?!?

Does Chase hear fear in his voice...?

CHASE

Remember? Last week? We agreed I'd start coming in the mornings.

HATCH

What are you talkin' about?!?

CHASE

I'm sorry if you forgot, but... you were sitting right here...

Hatch dashes forward. Chase jumps up. Backs away as Hatch takes Em's hand.

HATCH

(to Em)

What'd he do to you, honey?

(to Chase)

What'd you do?!?

CHASE

What I normally do! Put antiseptic on her sores. The cream on her dermatitis. Bathed her.

Hatch's eyes flare.

CHASE

I didn't touch her "down there"! I was waiting for you to get here so we could finish!

Hatch looks between Em and Chase. Chase is pissed now.

CHASE

And besides, you hired me to look after your wife's health! So don't get mad at me if you weren't here to help out!

Chase's words strike a nerve. Hatch's ire subsides.

HATCH

I was out... gettin' food.

Chase takes a breath. Calms himself down.

CHASE

It's okay. If you need help, I can carry stuff in--

HATCH

No! No. I can take care of it.

There's an awkward moment between them.

CHASE

Well... then I guess I'm done here.
So... tomorrow, same time?

HATCH

Yeah. I guess so. Sorry if I got
het up--

Hatch sees, over Chase's shoulder, the plate of food. He
flips out.

HATCH

Did you feed her?!?

Chase realizes he forgot to put the plate away.

CHASE

She was hungry. I couldn't find
anything for her to eat. I had some
leftovers packed for lunch. And I
thought--

Hatch gets right in Chase's face. Again, the mixture of rage
and terror.

HATCH

You snooped around in her house?
Our house?!?

CHASE

(remaining calm)
I thought she was hungry! And part
of my responsibilities...

Hatch isn't hearing any of it. He's angry. He WHACKS Chase
with his cane.

HATCH

(out of control)
Lyin' piece o' shit!

Chase is caught off guard. He tries to protect himself, but
the weak-looking man is going nuts.

HATCH

Only I get to feed her! That makes
her happy! I make her happy!!!

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Hatch drives Chase out of the house. Chase almost falls down the stairs. Hatch tosses his bag after him.

HATCH
Get outta here! Piece o' shit!

CHASE
Hatch! Listen to me! I've been here
for over three hours--

Hatch angrily digs in his pocket. Pulls out several hundred dollars. Throws them at Chase.

HATCH
There's your goddamn money! Now go!
If you come back here I swear I'll
fuckin' kill you!

CHASE
Hatch, Em needs--

Hatch SLAMS THE DOOR CLOSED.

INT. CAR - SAME

Still processing what happened, Chase gets in his car and drives away. He checks his head in the rear view mirror. Hatch got in a couple of good licks with his cane.

Just before he goes around the bend in the driveway, his attention is caught by movement from the house.

INSERT - REAR VIEW MIRROR

Hatch opens the trunk of his car. Struggles with a bundle of something.

BACK TO SCENE

Then the driveway bends. Chase's view is obscured by the overgrown bushes and weeds.

He picks at the growing bump on his forearm as he heads home.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Chase winces as Jill applies some disinfectant to the scrapes on his temple. A half-empty bottle of wine sits on the coffee table.

JILL

You didn't put up much of a fight.

CHASE

He's just a sad little man. He wasn't really trying to hurt me, anyway.

JILL

Well, I guess a couple of boo-boos is a small price to pay to get you out of that house of horrors.

Chase grabs her hand away from his head.

CHASE

Jill! That woman needs help.

JILL

Oh my God. You can't be defending them? After they did this to you?

CHASE

She didn't do this. I feel sorry for Em. She's obviously being enabled by Hatch. He's not doing right by her.

JILL

You and I are going to have to agree to disagree, I guess.

CHASE

How so?

JILL

She's not enabling him! From the way you described their "relationship", if you can call it that, he waits on her hand and foot! She says "jump", he asks "how high".

CHASE

She doesn't say anything.

JILL

You know what I mean! She could get her shit together. Eat a salad. Walk around the block a few times.

She steps back. Indicates her figure.

JILL

You think I don't want to eat a whole pizza every ten minutes? Of course I do! But I've worked my ass off to lose those twenty-eight pounds.

CHASE

(almost to himself)

I liked you curvy...

JILL

No you didn't. But did you put all that weight on me? No. That was me, having zero willpower. All I'm saying is: she could get herself out of her situation. If she really wanted to. It's disgusting, if you ask me.

CHASE

But Jill, she could've had some sort of trauma as a young girl. Or she's got a genetic issue. It's not fair to just accuse her of being a slob... or whatever it is you're saying.

Jill drops into a chair across the room.

JILL

I can't believe it. You're taking their side... her side. Over me.

CHASE

No, I'm just... All I'm trying to say is that you never know what someone's story is. I mean, look at me. I've got a record. If no one asks for the details, they'll just assume I'm a murderer or something. But no, I was a dumb kid who let his older brother rope him into a stupid situation. That's why Valley Medical said "no". So who's to say what Em's situation is?

Jill mulls his argument.

JILL

I sort of see what you're saying.
But still... I don't know. I can't
really feel sorry for her.

Stalemate. Neither one of them is willing to concede the fight.

Chase is tired of this. He decides to defuse the situation. He fills her wine glass.

JILL

That's not fair. I can never stay
mad at a man who gives me free
drinks.

She playfully crawls across the floor to her glass. Takes a dainty sip.

CHASE

I've heard that about you.

Jill giggles.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Chase and Jill are having energetic semi-make-up sex.

Jill grinds on top of Chase. She moans. Grunts. Writhes in pleasure. Holding onto the headboard, her charm bracelet JANGLES with each thrust.

Chase doesn't seem to be as into as she is, though. He's barely moving.

JILL

(breathlessly)
Baby... bite me... please...

Chase sits up. Takes a nipple in his mouth.

Suddenly his brain flashes.

MEMORY FLASH

He has a strong, potent sense memory of his lips touching Em's flesh. The taste. The texture. The smell.

And the breast in his mouth... It's not Jill's perfect perky boob. It's a monstrous mound of veiny, pale flesh.

Chase looks up. Instead of Jill, Em straddles him. Crushes him. Saliva pouring from between her bulbous, crimson lips.

CHASE

Freaks out. Pulls back in shock.

JILL
(breathless)
Babe... Are you... okay?

CHASE
(off-balance)
Nothing... It's... my back again...

JILL
Can you... keep going? I'm so close...

CHASE
I'm sorry... It hurts...

Jill grips the headboard. Continues to grind.

CHASE
I've gotta stop...

JILL
Please, baby... I'm so close...

CHASE
Jill... I... can't...

JILL
So close...

CHASE
Stop!!!

He violently shoves her off of him. The shock of their separation physically hurts her.

CHASE
I can't... I...

He rolls over onto his side. Jill lays next to him. Panting. Confused. Upset. Unfulfilled. This time, she doesn't try to comfort him.

She turns to the opposite wall. Chokes back tears.

Chase obliviously scratches at his arm as his mind seethes with images of Em. Unaware that his skin is broken. Angry. Puckered.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

Jill runs out of the bedroom. Buttoning her shirt. Grabbing for her purse and coat.

JILL
I can't believe I overslept! Did
you forget to set the alarm for me?

Chase sits at their small table, reading the paper. He's not paying attention to her.

JILL
Chase?

CHASE
(no energy)
I forgot. I guess.

Something isn't right. She knows she can't press him. But she wants to find a way to connect.

JILL
Anything happening in the world?

POV

She looks over his shoulder. Another article about a missing person.

The accompanying photo: It's the Homeless Guy from the other night. From before he hit the skids.

JILL

Has a sense she knows him, even though she was tipsy that night at the restaurant.

JILL
Why do I think I know that guy...

Chase is ignoring her. He opens up to the want ads.

JILL
Hey, I was reading that...

Chase doesn't reply. She doesn't know how to reconnect with him.

JILL

I've got to go. Oh, hey, I put down some stuff on the grocery list. If you could go to the store, I'd love you forever.

CHASE

Sure.

JILL

...Everything okay?

CHASE

(indicating paper)
Looking for work.

Jill leans down to kiss him on the forehead... but refrains.

JILL

Okay. Well, stay positive. I'm sure there's something good waiting for you.

CHASE

Right.

Jill notices the open pustule that he's scratching.

JILL

Jesus! Chase! What happened?

CHASE

What? Oh, I dunno. The stove, maybe.

JILL

You need to put something on that!

CHASE

It'll be okay. Don't worry about it.

He rolls down his sleeve.

Jill is heartbroken that he's so cold. She wants to say more, but she's incredibly late. She runs out the door, leaving Chase with his thoughts. And his weird skin issue.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - AFTERNOON

Chase wanders up and down the aisles, listlessly pulling things off the shelves and dropping them into the cart.

He comes to the meat cooler. As he checks the dates on the packages, the texture and softness of the wrapped meat causes him to drift off.

Dreamily, he touches, squeezes, almost caresses the cellophane-wrapped meat. Blood pulses in and out of the tissue as he grips the packages.

He takes the biggest, squishiest cut in both hands. Lost in thought, he brings it up to his face.

BUTCHER (O.S.)

Excuse me!

Chase realizes he's being stared at by the BUTCHER.

BUTCHER

Can I help you with anything?

CHASE

Ah, no. No. Thank you.

He drops the meat into his cart. Hurries away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EVENING

Jill sits at the table, watching Chase cook.

He browns the roast in a skillet. Watches the blood seep out.
SIZZLE.

The two of them aren't talking. Jill can feel the distance between them.

JILL

Hey, I've got a great idea. Why don't we go to the Clayton Resort. Get the honeymoon suite again...

The PHONE interrupts her thought. Chase doesn't budge. Jill gets it.

JILL

Hello?...
(to Chase)
It's for you.

Chase wedges the phone under his chin as he cooks.

CHASE
(dully)
This is Chase.

INT. OFFICE - SAME

Dr. Broadus sits at her desk. She's reading Chase's file.

DR. BROADUS
Chase? This is Dr. Broadus at
Valley Medical. Is this a good
time?

INTERCUT BETWEEN CHASE AND DR. BROADUS

CHASE
Oh. Uh. Hello. Yes, sure.

DR. BROADUS
Good, good. I was calling to see if
you'd secured employment since we
last talked.

CHASE
Yes, but... It didn't work out...

DR. BROADUS
That's good to hear! I'm sorry,
that came out wrong. I mean to say,
I'm glad you're still available.
I'm calling to offer you the
physical therapist position.

Chase turns to Jill with surprise in his eyes. She gives him
a "what's going on?" gesture.

CHASE
I'm sorry, but... I thought,
because of my record...

DR. BROADUS
The person that was approved by
corporate was caught stealing a box
of syringes. After a snafu like
that, they were willing to let us
make the decision. I discussed it
with the staff. And the result was:
you get the job.

CHASE

Oh, wow, well, I'm... I mean, thank you...

DR. BROADUS

Is that a "yes"?

CHASE

Sure. Yes. Yes! Of course.

DR. BROADUS

Wonderful! When can you start?

CHASE

Tomorrow, if that's not too early...

DR. BROADUS

Not at all! We're short staffed as it is. I'll see you at eight A.M.

"Eight A.M." reminds Chase of driving to the house... to Em...

DR. BROADUS

Chase? Is that okay?

CHASE

Sorry. Yes. Eight A.M. sharp. See you then!

He hangs up. Still in shock.

JILL

...Well? What was that all about?

CHASE

Valley Medical. They offered me the job.

Jill jumps up. Hugs him.

JILL

Babe, that's great!

CHASE

I guess so.

JILL

Just think! You'll have a steady schedule! You'll get benefits, finally! And best of all, you'll won't have to deal with those awful people anymore!

Jill holds him tightly, delighted that her love's ship has finally come in.

The far away look in Chase's eyes doesn't reflect Jill's enthusiasm.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - MORNING

Chase gets the grand tour of Valley Medical Rehabilitation Clinic by Dr. Broadus. She points out the room where their medicines are kept.

DR. BROADUS

And if you need the key for the cabinet, we keep it up at the front desk. We're pretty trusting here.

(whispering)

But don't tell the regulatory board.

Dr. Broadus can tell that something is on Chase's mind.

DR. BROADUS

You okay? You sort of switched off when we started the tour.

CHASE

It's just... I'm a little thrown by this whole thing. I didn't get the job originally because of one stupid mistake that put me in jail for a while. I was a "risk". But now...

Dr. Broadus leans back against the counter. Thinks for a second.

DR. BROADUS

My dad wasn't exactly "father of the year". He had an addiction that put him in jail. And in the emergency room. Multiple times. But somehow he found it inside himself to beat it. Completely turned his life around. He came to me, hat in hand, and apologized. And from that day until the day he passed away, he was my best friend.

She puts a hand on Chase's shoulder.

DR. BROADUS
Just because people do bad things,
that doesn't make them bad people.

Chase is overcome. He doesn't know what to say.

DR. BROADUS
Now that we've gotten all that out
of the way, let's put you to work.

She motions to JEFF, a young physical therapist who's out by
the front desk.

DR. BROADUS
Jeff! This is Chase, our new P.T.

JEFF
Good to meet you.

CHASE
Same.

DR. BROADUS
I've given him the grand tour, but
I think he's eager to "press the
flesh".

JEFF
I hear that. Come with me.

Chase gives Dr. Broadus a little wave as he follows Jeff down
the hall.

JEFF
You've started on a good day,
Chase. Dr. Broadus tells me you've
got experience with mobility
issues.

CHASE
Yeah. My grandmother. I did my best
to keep her flexible.

JEFF
Then you're gonna feel right at
home. Mrs. Davis is here today.

They turn the corner into the open rehab room. Sitting in a
wheelchair is MRS. DAVIS, an older woman with braces on her
legs. She is very overweight.

MENTAL FLASH

Chase sees Em sitting in the wheelchair.

CHASE

Blinks. Mrs. Davis is back.

JEFF

Good morning, Mrs. Davis. How are we doing this morning?

MRS. DAVIS

Fine as I can be, Jeff. My ankle's been a little prickly this past week.

JEFF

The left one? We'll get on that A.S.A.P. First, let me introduce you to my co-worker, Chase. He's going to help us out for a few days. How's that sound?

MRS. DAVIS

Oh. Will I not see you anymore?

JEFF

You think I'd let you come in my building and not say hello? You'll see me so much you'll get sick of my face. But Chase here's good. Probably better than me.

MRS. DAVIS

Oh, I doubt that.

JEFF

You just wait and see.

MRS. DAVIS' THERAPY - MONTAGE

Chase and Jeff spend the next hour working with Mrs. Davis. Flexing her legs. Working with hand weights. Having her stand and sit. It's repetitive work, but the three of them do their best.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Home from a long day at work, Jill plods up the stairs to their apartment door. She's tired and beat and sweaty.

She juggles her purse and a handful of mail as she goes through her overloaded keychain.

As she puts the key in the lock... she smells something. Hastily she opens the apartment door.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

When Jill walks in, she's pleasantly surprised to see Chase at the stove. Tending to SOMETHING SIZZLING in a pan. He waves to her with his spatula.

CHASE

You told me you'd be home late tonight. I figured you'd be hungry.

JILL

You know me so well.

She puts her arms around him at the stove. Inhales deeply.

JILL

Is that...

CHASE

Yep. Your favorite chicken pasta dish.

JILL

Oh thank God. Hey, hang on... You're the one who just started a new job! I should be cooking for you!

CHASE

Please. I don't mind.

He continues stirring. She stares at him. Makes comical big googly eyes at him. He finally realizes she's boring holes in him.

CHASE

What?

JILL

Jesus, do I have to beg? Valley Medical! Tell me how it went, you doofus!

CHASE

It was great. The facility is spotless. All the equipment is brand new. The people there are so friendly. Honestly, it was more like a vacation than a day at work.

He smiles. That makes her smile. She hugs him. Hard.

JILL

I'm so happy for you! You don't have that doom and gloom thing going on any more.

CHASE

"Doom and gloom"?...

JILL

Well, the last couple of weeks, you've been... a little distant. I thought maybe I'd...

CHASE

You'd what?

JILL

Maybe I'd done something wrong. Maybe you were, I dunno, falling out of love with me, or something.

Chase smirks. Kisses her. That's all she needed.

CHASE

Why don't you hop in the shower. And when you get out... maybe - just maybe - there'll be a glass of wine waiting for you.

JILL

Yes sir!

She returns his kiss. Gives him a playful smack on the butt. Disappears into the bedroom.

He hears the SHOWER. With a smile, he pulls the wine out of the fridge.

The PHONE RINGS.

CHASE

Hello?

HATCH'S VOICE

You need to come back.

Chase is thrown. He never expected to hear Hatch's voice again. In the background he hears TRAFFIC NOISE. The constant ROAR OF CARS AND TRUCKS. Hatch must be at a pay phone.

CHASE

Hatch?!?

HATCH'S VOICE

Please come back.

CHASE

Are you serious? I thought you never wanted to see me again.

HATCH'S VOICE

(voice breaking)

Em... She's mad at me. Real mad. For what I did. Kickin' you out.

CHASE

Boo-hoo. Why should I care?

HATCH'S VOICE

She told me to apologize. And I do. I'm sorry.

CHASE

Uh-huh.

HATCH'S VOICE

So... How's about it?

CHASE

"How's about" what, Hatch?

HATCH'S VOICE

Tomorrow? We'll see you here...?

CHASE

You must be out of your mind. Too little too late, "buddy". I have a job now. A great job. Where I don't have to fear for my life.

HATCH'S VOICE

(snapping)

Goddammit! I said I was sorry!

CHASE

I'm only going to say this once: Lose my number. Or I'm calling the county health services to send someone out there.

HATCH'S VOICE

You goddamn mother--

SLAM! Chase hangs up. Takes a deep breath to ease his tension.

CHASE
(to himself)
Stupid son of a bitch...

CHASE'S IMAGINATION

Chase sees Hatch's gaunt, pale face.

Hatch morphs into Em. Em and her dark eyes...

JILL (O.S.)
You talking to my dad again?

CHASE

Realizes Jill's back from her shower. She's holding together a towel that's barely covering her.

JILL
Was that the phone?

CHASE
Oh, uh... sales call. Of course,
they call when I'm in the middle of
your dinner.

He turns back to the stove. Brooding about Em.

Jill can tell that his entire mood has changed. And not for the better.

She sees the bottle of wine on the counter. Makes an "ahem" noise. He doesn't understand. She makes eyebrows at the wine. He pours her a glass. Hands it to her.

Jill takes a sexy sip. Bats her lashes at him over the rim of the glass.

JILL
So... shall we "celebrate" your
first day?...

She playfully starts to undo her towel...

CHASE
Maybe later. I've got to watch this
chicken. Don't want it to burn.

He's oblivious to her come-ons. Completely shut down. Whatever happiness was in him, it's gone. Again.

Jill feels embarrassed now. She puts down the glass. Pulls the towel tight around her body. Slinks off to the bedroom, confused and hurt. Wondering what's happened to them.

Unaware he's alone in the kitchen, Chase continues poking the SIZZLING CHICKEN with his spatula. Watches the yellow meat deform under his touch. The clear juice trickle out.

And as he picks at the bump on his arm, he finds himself drifting back to the living room of the small dilapidated house.

To Em.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - RECORDS ROOM - AFTERNOON

Chase looks over a patient chart, making notes. Dr. Broadus walks by.

DR. BROADUS

Chase! How are things?

CHASE

Hm? Oh, hi. Uh, things are fine.
I'm seeing Mr. Adamo today.

DR. BROADUS

You've been working with him for two weeks now. Are you seeing any improvement?

CHASE

Some. He's not pushing himself as far as I think he should. He's afraid he'll hurt himself. And he's easily frustrated.

DR. BROADUS

That's common. But just be patient. You'll find your way into his confidence. Anyway, good luck.

CHASE

Thanks.

Broadus leaves. Chase returns to his chart. Jeff pops his head in.

JEFF

Hey, Chase, Mr. Adamo is here.

CHASE

How's he doing?

MR. ADAMO (O.S.)
Is anyone gonna help me outta this
chair?!?

They both nod knowingly to each other.

JEFF
Have a great day.

CHASE
Easy for you to say.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - THERAPY ROOM - SAME

Chase watches MR. ADAMO, an elderly man, as he shakily makes his way down the parallel bars.

CHASE
Look at that. You've gone two feet
further than last week.

MR. ADAMO
(testily)
Just keep it to yourself.

Chase takes a deep breath. Counts to ten. It won't do him any good to snap at the salty old man.

A NOISE from across the rehab room catches his attention. Jeff is helping Mrs. Davis at the leg lift.

Chase loses his focus on Mr. Adamo, as he watches Jeff hold Mrs. Davis' thick, cellulite-pocked leg. Chase's breath gets shallow as he sees Jeff's fingers work her sickly flesh.

CHASE'S IMAGINATION

Em is sitting in the leg lift. Chase kneels before her, caressing and massaging her bloated limbs.

CHASE

One hand grips his pants in sexual frustration. The other scratches at the bandage on his forearm, the one hiding his odd wound.

Chase has completely forgotten about spotting Mr. Adamo. Unaware his therapist is no longer watching him, Mr. Adamo gets ahead of himself. His leg buckles. He topples forward. HITS HIS JAW against the support pole.

MR. ADAMO
AAAAAH! Goddammit!

Chase snaps out of his daydream.

CHASE
Oh God... Mr. Adamo! Are you
okay?!?

MR. ADAMO
(painfully)
My neck!... My neck!...

Jeff runs over to help.

JEFF
What happened?

CHASE
I... I was... He...

MR. ADAMO
You shit!... You were s'posed to be
watchin' me!...

Chase staggers backward, incapable of processing what just happened.

CUT TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - OFFICE - SAME

Chase once again finds himself sitting across the desk from Dr. Broadus.

DR. BROADUS
And you say he "twisted"? How did
he "twist"?

CHASE
Yeah. It was the weirdest thing. I
had my hand on his waistband. He
did this... this sort of pivot. I
let go just for a second, to adjust
my grip... and...
(mimes falling down)
It happened so fast. I feel
terrible.

Dr. Broadus takes off her glasses.

DR. BROADUS
Well, I hate to sound crass, but it
could have been worse. Nothing
appears to be broken.

He may have chipped a molar, but that's easily fixed.

CHASE

That's great.

Dr. Broadus studies Chase. As if she's looking for a particular response.

DR. BROADUS

So... we have to make some decisions.

CHASE

Sure. Of course.

DR. BROADUS

You've been a fantastic therapist, Chase. These last three weeks, I've been impressed. So I'm inclined to chalk this up to a one-time event. Something we'll all work hard to make sure doesn't happen again.

CHASE

Yes ma'am.

DR. BROADUS

Great. I do think we need to make some adjustments, though. Transfer Mr. Adamo's treatment to someone else. I don't think he'd be able to let bygones be bygones. So, how about you take the rest of the day off. I'll speak to the staff, see where we can use you. And we'll see you tomorrow morning.

CHASE

Thank you, Dr. Broadus.

He starts to leave. Pauses at the door.

CHASE

Um, you know... I'd be willing to take Mrs. Davis off of Jeff's hands. He'd probably be a lot better with Mr. Adamo, anyway. I've got experience with someone in her condition, thanks to my experience with my grandma, so...

DR. BROADUS
Really? She's a tough case. Jeff
tells me he's worn out after a
session with her.

CHASE
I think I can handle it.

DR. BROADUS
Okay. If you're sure...

CHASE
Yes ma'am. Thank you. See you
tomorrow.

DR. BROADUS
See you then.

Chase leaves the office with a big smile on his face. Dr.
Broadus shrugs. If that's what Chase wants...

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME

Chase ignores his coworkers as he leaves the building. He
JIGGLES HIS KEYS as he's walking to his car.

HATCH (O.S.)
Doc!

Chase spins on his heels. From across the lot, Hatch hobbles
towards him. Running his fingernails across his chest.

CHASE
(upset)
How the hell did you find me!?

HATCH
I had to see you.

CHASE
The last time I saw you, you
threatened to kill me!

HATCH
I was upset. I got a temper. I'm
sorry about that.

CHASE
"Sorry"? Just get out of here.

HATCH
Chase--

He grabs Chase by the arm. Chase wheels around, catching Hatch in the chest with his elbow. He falls back - hard - onto the pavement.

Chase takes a defensive stance above the helpless Hatch.

CHASE
Don't touch me!

HATCH
Please! You gotta come back!

CHASE
Why?

HATCH
Em. She needs you.

CHASE
Don't give me that bullshit! She can't even speak!

HATCH
You gotta come help us. Em ain't doin' well. She's sick. Real sick.

CHASE
Then call an ambulance! Get her to a hospital!

HATCH
She don't want all the fuss. She wants you!

CHASE
I tried to get you help when I first met you! But you said no! This is exactly what I said would happen!

Hatch weakly tries to sit up.

HATCH
(tearfully)
I'm sorry... She needs help... I love her... I love her...

CHASE
(freaked out)
I'm tired of all your weird codependent bullshit! If you love her so much, get the fuck out of here and call someone to help you.

And if I see you again, I'm calling
the police!

Chase gets into his car. PEELS out of the parking lot.

Hatch watches him leave, tears streaming down his pallid
cheeks.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - EVENING

Chase halfway watches Jill throw yet another 7-10 split.
She's not concerned. She's too busy going on about their
upcoming wedding.

JILL

...But county regulations say the
grill has to be in a well
ventilated area. I thought the tent
would be fine, but apparently it's
too flammable. So if you're dead
set on this barbecue thing, then
we'll have to...

Her words blur together in Chase's mind. He's not paying
attention to her at all.

His mind is laser focused on the OBESE WOMAN three lanes
over. As her SON and HUSBAND bowl, she straddles two plastic
seats.

Chase watches her shovel greasy bowling alley food into her
mouth. He is rapt with every detail of her eating. The loose
skin flapping and wrinkling as she raises her arm. Her
swollen neck swelling and shrinking as she swallows. Her
thick fingers wiping the cheese and oil from her chin and
lips.

CHASE'S IMAGINATION

The Obese Woman slowly transforms into Em.

Chase imagines himself feeding her slices of pizza. Corn
dogs. Nachos. Giggling with glee as he takes care of her
needs.

He delights in Em's presence. Her mottled flesh. Her
elephantine limbs. Her dark eyes.

Her eyes...

JILL

THUNKS her beer bottle down on the console.

JILL
You definitely have a type.

Chase comes crashing back to reality. Jill stands next to him, her ball in her hand. He hasn't heard a word she said. And she looks upset.

JILL
(indicating the woman)
Now I wonder why I've starved myself since August.

CHASE
It just... upsets me. To see someone unhealthy like that.

JILL
Uh huh. You look really upset.
So... do you have an opinion?

CHASE
About what?

JILL
The tent. Your stupid grill. Jesus!
Weren't you listening?

Chase realizes he has to say something. But deep down... he just doesn't care anymore. And he's not sure why.

CHASE
If the barbecue's not going to work out, I'm okay with letting it go.

JILL
You're kidding. You wanted that pulled pork more than you wanted me.

CHASE
Look, it's causing problems. I don't care about some stupid grill. Consider it gone.

Something about the flatness of his delivery doesn't completely convince her. But she's glad he at least has an opinion.

JILL
Okay. Thank you. I'll call them tomorrow.

Relieved, she gets in position to throw her next ball.

At that moment, the Obese Woman belts out a piercing shriek of laughter at her Husband's bad throw. He turns and curses her out. She tears into him as well.

Chase doesn't see Jill celebrate picking up her spare. He's too caught up in watching the Obese Woman's body jiggle and roil as she yells at her Husband.

Unable to take his eyes off her, Chase scratches at the wound hidden under his sleeve.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - LATE MORNING

Chase adjusts Mrs. Davis' leg in the exercise chair. He's being very gentle with her.

CHASE

Okay. Does that feel secure?

MRS. DAVIS

I think so.

CHASE

Good. Now, lift up...

Mrs. Davis slowly, shakily raises her leg. Chase positions his hands under her calf, as she reaches her limit. He catches her so she doesn't drop straight down.

The feel of her fat-filled skin sends a quick jolt through his system.

CHASE

That was great. Now, do it again.
But try to hold it for a count of
five.

MRS. DAVIS

I don't think I can.

CHASE

Sure you can. C'mon. One more.

Gritting her teeth, Mrs. Davis elevates her leg again. But just as she reaches her full extension, she gives out. Chase helps her lower her leg again. This time... he doesn't take his hands off her.

MRS. DAVIS
Oh, it hurts so much.

CHASE
Okay, we'll take a break. Let me
see if I can loosen your muscles up
a bit.

He begins kneading her calf. Working his fingers into her
mole-covered flesh.

MRS. DAVIS
All I want, is to dance with my
granddaughter on her birthday...

Chase is no longer listening. He's entranced with her bulk.
Sweat breaks out on his upper lip as his hands caress and
mold her. He continues up past her knee. Along her quads.

CHASE'S IMAGINATION

Mrs. Davis' leg morphs into Em's lymphedema-riddled limb. She
stares lovingly down at him from her perch in the wheelchair.

A look of serenity spreads across Chase's face as he goes
higher. Further. Em's eyes tell him that she's letting him go
as far as he wants. Under Em's huge flap of flab that covers
her private area. The most intimate part of her, the part
that he can't believe he desires...

MRS. DAVIS (O.S.)
What do you think you're doing?!?

CHASE

Snaps back to reality. He's horrified to find his hand is
under Mrs. Davis' dress.

In her crotch.

He yanks his hands back. She pulls at her dress, trying to
shield her nether regions.

CHASE
(thinking)
Oh, that's... part of the therapy.
I wanted to see if maybe your
femoral artery was blocked.

MRS. DAVIS
(not believing him)
"Blocked"...?

CHASE

Yeah. The muscle pain could be from reduced blood flow.

MRS. DAVIS

I've never heard of that!

CHASE

It's very common. It could lead to a stroke.

The look on Mrs. Davis' face tells him she's not buying it.

MRS. DAVIS

I want to speak to your supervisor.

CHASE

Mrs. Davis, I'm sure we--

MRS. DAVIS

I want to see Dr. Broadus!

Chase collects himself. Gives her a warm smile.

CHASE

Yes ma'am. Let me go get her. I'll be right back.

He strolls out of the room. Does his best to look unconcerned.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - SAME

When he gets into the hallway, Chase quietly locks the door. Flips over a sign that reads "INTENSIVE SESSION - DO NOT DISTURB".

Making sure no one sees him, he hurries down the hallway.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - BREAKROOM - SAME

Chase runs into the break room. Grabs his bag out of his locker.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME

Chase hurries out of the building. Makes a beeline for his car.

Chase sits behind the steering wheel for a long moment, his mind racing.

He stabs the key into the ignition. His brain is on fire. He can't stop himself.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Chase SLIDES TO A GRAVELLY STOP at Em's house.

He runs up the stairs. POUNDS on the door.

The door cracks open. Chase is about to beg Hatch to take him back...

HATCH
(teary eyed)
Oh man! I'm so glad you're here!

Something's not right. Chase is gripped by panic: Em!

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase pushes his way in. Throws back the curtain.

Em is under her blanket. But Chase can tell something's wrong with her. Her complexion is ashen. A fine sweat covers her face. The sheet is damp with wet, discolored spots.

At the sight of him, she begins MEWLING.

Chase whips off the sheet. Em's skin is dry. Brittle. Flaking off in huge sheets. Veins and arteries crisscross her translucent body like angry lightning. Her feet and hands are purple.

But her mass... she looks smaller. Wrinkled. As if someone let air of out her.

CHASE
(incredulous)
What... what did you do to her!?!?

Hatch stands behind him, tears in his eyes, scratching his chest.

HATCH
(emotional)
Nothin'. I didn't do nothin'...

Chase grabs him by the shirt. Shakes him.

CHASE
How did this happen?!?

HATCH
We... We run outta food a few days ago. I couldn't... couldn't go get her none...

CHASE
Why not?

HATCH
I didn't wanna leave her! I love her so much! She's... She's everythin' to me... I couldn't... I just couldn't...

He sags into his chair. Bursts into body-wracking sobs.

Chase inspects one of Em's lymphedemas. The skin CRACKS OPEN under his grip. Clear liquid seeps out.

CHASE
Jesus!

HATCH
I'm sorry, honey... I'm sorry...

CHASE
Have you been cleaning her?

HATCH
I can't remember... So tired...

Chase rips off his jacket. Unzips his bag.

CHASE
Snap out of it, Hatch! You have to help me!

CLEANING EM - MONTAGE

Chase and Hatch spend the next hour bathing Em. Cleaning her sores. Applying creams and antiseptics and bandages.

CHASE

Bathes Em's feet. He's exhausted. As he gently rubs the soap onto inflamed skin, he happens to look up at her.

She's staring right at him. Hungrily.

Chase notices that Hatch is nodding off in his chair. Keeping his eye on his rival for Em's attention, Chase takes the opportunity to run his hand down inside Em's thigh. His hand disappears under the pockmarked shelf of skin that covers her groin.

Em SQUEAKS. MOANS. Chase inhales sharply.

CHASE
(whispering)
Do you like that?

Em's lips pucker and pulse. He watches them with delight.

Hatch almost falls off his chair. Catches himself. Snorts awake. Chase quickly pulls his hand back.

CHASE
Okay. I think we've done all we can
do for now.

Now that he's slowed down, Chase realizes he's more spent than he realized. He retrieves his bottle of water from his lunch bag. Takes a swig.

Hatch rubs his forehead painfully. Chase offers him the bottle. Hatch waves it away.

CHASE
You know how bad it is for your
body if you never drink water?

HATCH
Soda's good enough fer me.

Em bursts in a CACOPHONY OF HUNGRY SQUAWKS. Hatch weakly gets up.

HATCH
I hear you, honey. I promise. I'll
go now. I will.
(to Chase)
Okay, I gotta go get her somethin'
to eat.

Chase doesn't feel like leaving. Hatch stares him down.

CHASE
She's not out of the woods yet. Why
don't I stay here and watch--

HATCH
No! No. You can't stay. C'mon. Get
your stuff packed up.

Hatch lumbers into the kitchen.

Chase collects his gear. But Em's appearance hurts him. She's still not well. Something is very wrong.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Chase pushes through the swinging door. Hatch, propped up against the stove, drinks a soda.

Chase is tired of Hatch's defiance. Then it dawns on him: he has to make it personal.

CHASE

You know, if you're not hydrated, it's going to make you weak. Like you are right now. Too weak to take care of Em. And if you can't look after her...

That strikes a big scary chord in Hatch. He reluctantly takes the water.

He takes a drink. Then another. Then another.

CHASE

Listen to your body. It knows more than you do.

Hatch takes a moment to let his body enjoy the first water it's had in ages.

CHASE

See? I told you.

HATCH

I gotta admit, that's good.

CHASE

And you need rest. When was the last time you got a good night's sleep?

HATCH

I do fine.

CHASE

You can't fool me. You look like you're about to fall over. Tell you what. Why don't you go take a nap? I'll run to the store. Get whatever she--

HATCH

No! No. That's my job. Mine. She only likes it when I feed her.

CHASE

Really?

HATCH

Yeah. Can't nobody feed her but me.

CHASE

All I'm saying is, she'd be better off if you were rested.

HATCH

I'd have to be knocked plumb out before I couldn't look after her! I love her! Love her...

Hatch takes another big gulp from the water bottle.

Hatch's words have given Chase an idea.

CHASE

(deliberately)

"Knocked plumb out", huh?

HATCH

Yessir. She's my wife.

A plan forms in Chase's mind. A deceitful, potentially deadly plan.

It makes him smile.

CHASE

Okay, well, then, I guess I'll get going.

For the first time, Chase holds out his hand for his money. Hatch is surprised. But he dutifully pays.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase picks up his bag.

Making sure Hatch doesn't see, he kisses his fingertips. Puts them against Em's sodden lips.

CHASE

(softly)

Tomorrow.

He winks at her. Her eyes widen. Sparkle. Almost caress him.

Chase leaves with a storm raging in his brain. If his plan works, he and Em can be together...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Jill is awakened by SOUNDS from the bathroom. Through bleary eyes, she looks at the clock: 6:57 A.M.

She drags herself out of bed to see what's going on.

INT. APARTMENT - BATHROOM - SAME

Jill finds Chase frantically going through the medicine cabinet and drawers.

She slinks over to him. Slides her hands under his shirt.

JILL
(playfully)
What'choo thinkin--

Chase angrily shoves her away.

CHASE
Would you stop it with that shit!

Jill backs away, hurt.

JILL
What the hell is wrong with you?

CHASE
Where are they?!?

JILL
Where's what?

CHASE
My pills! For my back!

JILL
...Why?

CHASE
WHERE ARE THEY!!!

JILL
(stunned and hurt)
You... hid them in your underwear
drawer--

Before she can finish her sentence, he pushes past her into the bedroom.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME

Chase rifles through his clothes until he unearths a small orange bottle. He shakes it. Several PILLS RATTLE inside.

JILL
Why do you need those?

Chase doesn't answer her. Stuffs some clothes into his bag.

JILL
Chase, you're scaring me. This is
like what happened with your
brother!

Chase slings his bag over his shoulder. Leaves without saying goodbye.

She hears the DOOR OPEN. SLAM SHUT.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Chase sits in his car outside Em's house. He grips the steering wheel. His mind churns.

He opens up his water bottle. Drops one of his pills into it. Gives the bottle a good shake.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

CLEANING EM - MONTAGE

Chase goes through his entire cleaning and treating routine. But he takes his time. Enjoys his physical interaction with Em... a little too much.

He also keeps a close eye on Hatch. He is really struggling. He seems to have become weaker by the day.

Chase watches him with an almost sick sense of anticipation. As if he's got something planned.

HATCH

Drops into his chair. It's been hours. He's exhausted.

Chase reaches into his bag. Pulls out his water bottle. Offers it to Hatch. He waves it away. But Chase insists.

CHASE

Come on, man. You asked me back to help. That means helping both of you.

Hatch is surprised. Touched. He takes the bottle.

HATCH

Thank you.

He takes a sip. Then another. Then he chugs. His body's thirst takes over.

HATCH

Oh, man, I'm sorry...

CHASE

Not to worry. I've got another one. You needed it more than I did.

Hatch takes a deep breath. Licks the drops of life-giving water from his lips.

HATCH

I gotta say, I really appreciate you comin' back. Em's my everything. If I didn't have her...
(choking up)

I know acted like a damn fool before. You didn't deserve that.

Hatch is so tired, his defenses crumble a bit.

HATCH

I gave up everything to be with her, you know? I had a... a company, or somethin'... So hard to remember... but I walked away, 'cause I knew she was it. She was the one I'd love forever... But when Em told me she wanted me to find someone to help me take care of her... I'm a jealous man. Before you and God, I'll admit that.

I didn't know if I could trust
anyone with my wife.

Hatch slaps Chase on the thigh.

HATCH

But you, Doc... You proved
yourself. And then some. You're a
good man.

He thirstily drains the rest of the water. Chase watches him
drink with a devilish grin. Hatch sits back in his chair,
sated, digging at the pustule under his shirt.

Em blurts out her HUNGRY NOISES.

HATCH

I hear ya, honey. I'll get your
food ready.

He stands. He's unusually woozy. He catches himself.

HATCH

(chuckling)

I'm more tuckered than I thought!

He slowly makes his way through the swinging door into the
kitchen.

Chase sits perfectly still with Em. He decides to take a
chance. Reaches out. Takes her puffy, misshapen hand. He
bites his lip, trying to stifle an excited giggle.

He listens to the SOUNDS in the kitchen. There's a CLANG OF
METAL ON METAL.

CHASE

You okay in the there, buddy?

HATCH (O.S.)

I'm fine. I'm fi--

BANG. THUD. Silence.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Chase peeks into the kitchen. Hatch lays passed out on the
floor. Blood runs from a small cut on his forehead where he
hit the edge of the stove as he went down.

On the counter is a hunk of meat, like a pork shoulder, with
the electric knife halfway cut through it.

Chase scoops the unconscious Hatch up off the floor, noticing just how scrawny and light he is.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Chase carries Hatch to his filthy small room in the back of the house. Drapes him across his grubby cot.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Chase retrieves the meat from the counter. He's about to take the entire thing, but then he realizes: if he feeds all of it to Em, then Hatch will know he was out for a while.

He TURNS ON THE KNIFE. Finishes cutting off a thick piece. He struggles with the dull knife and the tough, stringy meat.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase returns to the living room.

CHASE

I'll go ahead and make your lunch.
It'll take me a few minutes to get
the stove going to cook your steak.

Em SQUAWKS. Her eyes flash angrily. At first Chase can't figure out what's happened. Then he realizes...

CHASE

You want it... raw?

Em's NOISES become her usual hungry GRUNTS.

CHASE

You can't eat raw meat. You'll get
sick--

Em's eyes seem to be communicating with him. For a long moment he stares into her dark orbs.

CHASE

Okay then. If that's what you
want...

He sits next to her. Balances the plate on his lap as he cuts up the meat. She BURBLES.

CHASE

Oh, he's out cold. We have all the
time in the world together.

Chase doesn't realize: he's understanding Em perfectly.

Em GRUNTS. Glares at the plate.

CHASE

I can't feed you the entire thing.
He'll know I've been up to
something. He'll kick me out again.
For good, this time. And I'll never
get to see you again.

He places a piece of meat in her eager mouth.

CHASE

So for now, this is a little treat.
Just to tide you over.

He watches her mouth. The way the juices run down her chin.
Pool up in her folds and her pockmarked skin.

He offers her more bites. Places each one in her mouth
slowly. Lovingly. Sensually.

As she chews up the last piece, the pooled juice overflows.
Runs down her bloated, veined breast.

He watches transfixed as the juice hangs from her distended
nipple... then drips to the floor.

DRIP. DRIP. DRIP.

Chase gets butterflies in his stomach.

CHASE

(softly)

Let me get that for you...

Using his bare hand, he wipes the juice from her nipple. Em
MOANS. Like the other day. A deep, animalistic sound.

CHASE

Did that feel good?

Her only response is her intense stare.

Chase is so excited, his breath comes in spasms. He's
transfixed by her breast. The juice. The dripping.

Not taking his eyes off hers, he slowly slips out of the
chair, onto all fours.

Trembling, he sticks out his tongue. Catches the falling
juice.

CHASE

Oh my God...

He continues, running his tongue up her breast, along her chin, up to her jowls.

When he reaches her mouth, he stops. He lets his fingers trace the path the rivulet of juice took, back down her body.

CHASE

So soft...

Chase gently collects as much of her breast in his hands as he can. He brings it up to his face. Exhaling with relief, he presses his cheek against her skin. His eyes roll back into his head in delight as he lets the sensation wash throughout his body.

Chase gently kisses her skin. He looks up for her approval, finding her sparkling dark eyes on him. He kisses her again.

His passion finally overtakes him. He is almost devouring her. Kissing. Biting. Tasting.

CHASE

(moaning)

Oh God oh God oh God...

Em's NOISES change, dropping in tone.

CHASE

What?... Oh, Em... I can't... I mean, Jill and I... I shouldn't...

Em's eyes bore into him. He seems to lose all control of his faculties. He begins undoing his pants.

CRASH! Something loud and heavy hits the floor in the back of the house.

CHASE

Dammit... Didn't use enough...

Their moment is lost. He reluctantly lets go of his beloved Em.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

Chase hastily washes off the plate. Gently places it back in the sink. He does his best to cut into the remaining hunk of meat just like it was when Hatch passed out.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase grabs his bag. Heads to the back bedroom.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Hatch is sitting on the floor. Rubbing his head. Completely disoriented.

HATCH

What th... What the hell...

Chase pulls out antiseptic and bandages. Begins treating Hatch's wound.

CHASE

You passed out, buddy. I put you to bed. You were exhausted.

HATCH

But... Em... She--

CHASE

She's fine. I finished up. She's all taken care of.

HATCH

(panicking)

Her food! I didn't make her food!
She's gotta be hungry!

Chase finishes with Hatch's injury.

CHASE

Go ahead. She's been waiting for you.

Hatch tries to stand, but he's unsteady on his feet. Chase helps him get his balance.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase helps Hatch into the living room, where Em awaits him.

HATCH

Oh Em! Em! I'm sorry, honey!

He drops into his chair. Takes Em's hand. Almost weeps into it.

Chase observes Hatch and Em. He finds himself wishing that he and Jill had the same closeness.

CHASE
Listen, I'll leave you guys alone.
See you tomorrow.

HATCH
Hang on...

He pulls a wad of money out of his pocket. Puts it into Chase's hand.

HATCH
Thanks again, buddy. You're a lifesaver.

Chase sees that Em's big eyes are focused on him. Not Hatch. Him.

CHASE
Don't mention it. It's my pleasure.

He smiles. Past Hatch. To Em.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATE AFTERNOON

Chase raids the aisles. His cart is filled with a lot of heavy food. Potatoes. Cole Slaw. Sour Cream. Bread. All the stuff Jill never gets.

He find himself at the meat section. This time, he gropes all the cuts shamelessly. One hunk looks like the meat on the counter at Em's house: red and bloody, covered in a pale skin.

From inside the windowed meat prep area, the Butcher sees Chase molesting his cooler. He throws down his cleaver. Pushes through the plastic strip door.

BUTCHER
Hey! You're gonna tear the wrapping!

Chase grabs a couple of big packages and hurries off.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Jill drags herself through the door.

Chase is pouring her a glass of wine at their table. A table set with plates. Place mats. Candles. A rose-patterned table cloth.

JILL
What's all this?

CHASE
What? Can't a man treat his woman like a queen when he wants to?

He brings Jill the glass of wine.

JILL
Have you been drinking?

CHASE
No. Well, a little.

He kisses her passionately.

CHASE
I know I've been a bit of a dick lately.

JILL
A "bit"? You've been horse cock levels of dick...

CHASE
Okay, a lot of a dick. I've just been so... frustrated. Like, I didn't know what I really wanted. But now...

He kisses her again.

CHASE
I know exactly what I want.

JILL
I am so glad to hear that.

She hugs him. Over his shoulder, she notices that there are bowls and plates filled with food on the counter.

JILL
Chase... That's a lot of food!

CHASE
Oh come on! We can splurge for one night!

A TIMER GOES OFF.

CHASE

The pork's done! Go put your stuff away. I'll have everything ready in five minutes.

Before Jill can protest, he kisses her again. Scampers off to the stove.

She has no idea what's gotten into him. But she's glad to see Chase being himself again.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Chase watches intently as Jill chews her last piece of pork shoulder. He secretly thrills as she wipes at the moist corners of her mouth. His fingernails scrape at the irritating bump on his arm.

JILL

Oh my God... I'm going to have to starve myself for a month to make up for all this.

CHASE

Here. Have some more.

Before she can stop him, he plops two more cuts of pork shoulder on her plate. More potatoes. Another roll.

JILL

Baby! No more, please! Don't get me wrong, it's delicious. But I am stuffed.

CHASE

I slaved over a hot stove for you! Have some more.

JILL

What about you? You've barely eaten!

CHASE

This isn't about me. It's for you.

He ladles a heaping spoonful of mashed potatoes onto her plate. She exhales in discomfort.

CHASE

Just another few bites. Please. If you love me.

Reluctantly, Jill cuts off a piece of pork. Scoops up some potatoes. Puts them into her mouth. Chase watches her every move with delight.

She starts to take another bite... but drops her silverware onto the table.

JILL
No more!

CHASE
Jill...

JILL
I starved myself for a year to fit into my dress! I'm this close to running into the bathroom and sticking my finger down my throat.

Chase reaches over the table to her plate. Hacks off a big piece of meat.

CHASE
(playfully)
You can eat a little more...

JILL
No, I'm done...

Chase stabs the meat with her fork. Holds it up to her mouth. She half-heartedly tries to deflect him. But Chase gets aggressive.

CHASE
(grimly)
Eat some more...

JILL
Chase...

CHASE
Eat it...

JILL
Would you quit it?!?

CHASE
Eat it!

Now Jill's pissed. She slaps the fork out of his hand. The meat splatters against the tile floor.

JILL
I said I don't want any more
goddamn food!

Jill stares at Chase in shock, as if she's seeing him for the first time.

An interminable strained silence hangs between them.

Chase then silently grabs their plates. Takes them to the kitchen. DUMPS THEM NOISILY into the sink.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

Chase dumps the leftover pork into a plastic bag. He realizes a sleepy Jill watches him from the bedroom door.

JILL
Where are you taking the leftovers?

CHASE
(tersely)
Why do you care? You didn't like
it.

JILL
You're going to eat all that?
Yourself?

Chase doesn't answer. He goes back into the fridge for more food.

Jill sits at their kitchen table, still set for the disastrous meal from the night before. Chase doesn't look well. His eyes are frantic. His mouth twitches. She doesn't want to cry, but she's having a hard time holding back her tears.

JILL
Chase... Chase... Chase!

Her sharp tone stops him. For just a moment.

JILL
What happened?

CHASE
What do you mean?

JILL

To us? I've been feeling it, for weeks now. Ever since you... you started helping those people...

Chase's leg gyrates with impatience. He digs at his forearm. She can't tell if she's getting through to him.

JILL

And then, you went hunting for those pills...

CHASE

Jesus, Jill. Just spit it out.

JILL

Are you... in some sort of trouble?

CHASE

What? What do you mean?

JILL

Those people... The fat woman you were helping...

CHASE

(defensively)

What about them?

JILL

Are you... dealing to them?...

CHASE

Oh, for God's sake... No! I thought you knew me better than that! Thanks for the support!

JILL

Well look at it from my point of view! You start pulling away, you're obsessed with your old pills...

CHASE

(sarcastically)

Well, you can rest easy. I'm not doing anything to threaten my job. Don't you worry... I'll keep bringing home all that precious money you want so bad.

This hurts Jill. Wounds her deeply.

JILL

That's not fair and you know it!
You make it sound like I'm some
greedy gold digger! I just wanted
us to have the greatest wedding
ever! Not me! Us!

CHASE

Sure you did.

JILL

Is that what's making you so weird?
The wedding? Then forget the band!
Forget the tent! Forget all that
crap! I just want to spend my life
with you!

CHASE

You've got a funny way of showing
it! You've done nothing but make me
feel like a loser since we met!
"You didn't go to college"? "You
don't have a job"? How do think
that shit made me feel?

JILL

That's not what I meant and you
know it! You told me you had
dreams, and I wanted them to come
true for you! But you couldn't make
them happen unless-

CHASE

Unless I became your perfect man!
Well guess what, sweetheart? That's
a two way street!

JILL

What's that supposed to mean?

CHASE

You used to make me think I was
special. Maybe things would be
different if you tried a little
harder!

With that, he SLAMS THE FRIDGE CLOSED. Scoops up his bag.
STORMS out of the apartment.

Jill holds her head in her hand. This entire exchange has
rattled her beyond words. She's so angry and confused, she
can't cry.

She has her head down over the table. Her thoughts and emotions racing. She absent-mindedly fingers the charms on her bracelet.

Her eyes roam about, tracing the rose pattern on the tablecloth.

The rose pattern.

She grabs the phone. DIALS.

CLERK'S VOICE

Good morning, the Clayton Spa And Resort. How may I help you today?

JILL

I was wondering: is the honeymoon suite available for tonight?...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Chase arrives at Em's house.

This time he crushes several pills. Scrapes them into the water bottle with a grim smile.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

Hatch opens the door to find an incredibly upbeat Chase waiting for him.

CHASE

Goood morning!

HATCH

Damn if you don't look like the happiest man alive.

CHASE

What can I say? It's a great day!
Well, time's a 'wastin'! Good morning, Em...

He strides past a bemused Hatch into the small dark house.

INT. RESORT - SAME

Jill enters the lobby of the Clayton Resort, carrying an armful of roses and a bottle of champagne. A young CLERK greets her at the front desk.

CLERK

Ooh, those are beautiful! Is this a special occasion?

JILL

If he knows what's good for him. I'm Jill Trombley. I called about the honeymoon suite earlier?...

CLERK

Ah, yes! Welcome back, Ms. Trombley!

The Clerk gives Jill a knowing smile as she punches up the room info.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase works his hands over Em's distended, pale, bloated flesh. He lets his fingers linger between her folds. Lets his palms rest against her vein-riddled growths.

He maintains eye contact with her the entire time, watching her for any sign that his touch is exciting her.

INT. RESORT - SUITE - SAME

Jill places the champagne in a bucket of ice. She spreads rose petals all over the room.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

While Hatch is looking the other way, Chase kisses Em's thigh. He winks at her.

INT. RESORT - SUITE - SAME

Jill slips into a sexy outfit. Bustier. Garters. Heels. She admires herself in the mirror.

JILL

Just try and ignore this.

She throws on a long coat as she leaves the suite.

CUT TO:

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CLINIC - LATE MORNING

Jill parks her car in front of Valley Medical. Checks her makeup in the visor mirror. Slips on her sunglasses.

She strides into the building. The MED TECH manning the front desk is surprised by Jill's movie seductress appearance.

MED TECH
Can I help you?

JILL
(vamping)
Please tell Chase Harris that
Natasha is here.

MED TECH
Sorry. Chase?...

JILL
Harris. He is a physical therapist
here.

MED TECH
I'm sorry... I'm looking at the
staff sheet for the day, and
there's no "Chase Harris".

JILL
But... he should be--

DR. BROADUS (O.S.)
Excuse me!

Dr. Broadus approaches Jill.

DR. BROADUS
Do you know Chase?

Jill wasn't expecting a confrontation like this. She suddenly feels very exposed. Very silly.

JILL
(normal voice)
I'm sorry. I was just here to--

DR. BROADUS
Do you know where he is?

JILL
Is... is there a problem?

DR. BROADUS
Oh, I'll say there's a problem. I
thought he might like to come pick
up his last paycheck.

JILL
Last?...

DR. BROADUS
Since he walked out on us without a
word. And locked Mrs. Davis alone
in the back therapy room for over
an hour.

She hooks a thumb over her shoulder. Through the glass walls,
Jill sees Fred working with the overweight Mrs. Davis.

DR. BROADUS
You know, on second thought, I
should just tear the damn thing up.
Or sign it over to his replacement.

Dr. Broadus looks to Jill for answers. But she's too
flabbergasted. She can't even speak.

DR. BROADUS
Well, when you see him, tell him I
was wrong. Maybe some people are
just bad people.

She gives Jill one last disdainful look up and down before
turning on her heels and returning to the therapy room.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - SAME

Jill cries in her car. Not understanding.

Her thoughts are a jumble: Chase... Lost his job?... Lied to
her!... Abandoned the fat woman... Fat woman...

JILL
That woman!

She FIRES UP HER CAR.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase and Hatch are wrapping up their cleaning routine. Chase watches Hatch like a wolf. He sees how exhausted the gaunt Hatch is. He slumps in his chair, barely awake.

Trying to contain his anticipation, Chase offers Hatch the water bottle.

CHASE
C'mon. "Doctor's orders".

With a tired chuckle, Hatch takes the bottle and begins chugging. Chase watches Hatch's throat hungrily as he gulps the tainted water.

Hatch suddenly stops drinking. Scrapes his tongue against his teeth. His eyes wrinkle like he's sucked on a lemon.

Hatch looks into the water bottle. He holds it up to the dim light.

CLOSEUP - THE BOTTLE

Tiny particles swirl about.

HATCH

Realizes he's been drugged.

HATCH
(to Chase)
You son of a bitch...

Hatch throws the bottle at Chase. He explodes from his chair.

HATCH
You're tryin' to poison me!

He takes a step forward, but he falters. He's dizzy. He's losing consciousness.

HATCH
You... you...

He drops to the ground in a heap.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - SAME

Driving along the county road, Jill notices the sign for the quarry.

She HITS THE GAS.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Chase drapes Hatch across his filthy cot. Chase has a weird look on his face. His mind somewhere else, he digs at the wound on his arm.

CHASE

Em doesn't need a weakling like you. She needs a strong man to take care of her. To love her. To satisfy her.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - SAME

Jill drives slowly, looking for the next landmark.

She SLAMS ON THE BRAKES when she sees the blue mailbox. Making a wide loop, she turns her car into the overgrown driveway.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase kisses all over Em's nude body. She MEWLS. Chase has no trouble understanding her now.

CHASE

(dreamily)

Oh, Em... I knew when I first saw you... No, there's no one more beautiful than you... I've never been so happy... Wait... Really?

He stands at the foot of her mattress. Tears fill his distant eyes.

CHASE

Yes, of course... I want you too... I'm aching to be with you...

He begins taking off his clothes. Slowly.

CHASE

All I want is to be with you. Forever.

She makes a new noise, a LOW TRILLING. A clear liquid begins to seep from her large scar. He steps towards her hungrily. Lustily.

Suddenly her trill becomes an ear-shattering high-pitched SCREECH.

JILL (O.S.)

Chase!

Jill stands in the hallway. She stares at Chase. Then Em. The entire bizarre scene horrifies her.

CHASE

(furiously)

You shouldn't be here!

JILL

(sobbing)

What... what the hell are you doing?!?

Chase grabs her. Yanks her towards the door. She struggles, but he's too strong. Em continues her PIERCING SCREAM.

CHASE

Get out of here! I don't want to see you anymore!

JILL

Chase! What's happened to you?!?

CHASE

You are not welcome here! Get out!

Jill grabs the corner of the wall, stopping their movement.

JILL

I don't understand! What is all this? What is that... that thing?!?

She stabs a trembling finger at the shrieking Em.

CHASE

Don't you dare! She's everything to me!

JILL

Is... Is this why you've been so weird? Did these people drug you or...

From the look in his eyes, she knows that he's lost his mind.

JILL

(crying)

Chase... I don't understand! What about us? Our wedding? I... I love you!

CHASE

I don't give a shit about you! I
love Em! I love Em!!!

JILL

Chase, please...

HATCH (O.S.)

AAAAAAAAAH!

Hatch flies out of the back of the house, brandishing a large rusty knife over his head. Dazed from his drugging, he stabs downward in a clumsy strike.

Chase jerks back. The knife misses him.

It plunges right into Jill's face. Chase lets go of her. She falls against the wall, GURGLING.

Caught off guard, Chase can't defend himself from Hatch's frantic slashing. The knife SLICES his shoulder. His arm. He tumbles over a pile of dirty clothes. As he falls, he grabs Hatch's shirt, RIPPING it. Chase hits his head against the wall.

Hatch looms over him. Panting. Crying. Swaying. Blood dripping from his blade. The pustule on his chest oozing.

HATCH

I knew you was garbage! You come in
here and ruin our lives!

He turns to Em. Her big dark eyes glare at him balefully.

HATCH

How could you? After all I done for
you? I came out here... I was gonna
buy all this property... And I
found you here with that loser
Dave. Goddamn weakling, couldn't do
a single thing for you! And you
knew it! You told me I was better!
You told me I was the only one
could keep your secret safe! You
told me I was the one you loved!

Hatch pounds a fist against his temple. Sobs wrack his emaciated frame.

HATCH

The things you made me do... All
them horrible things... But I did
it because I loved you. All the
ones I brought to you...

The hobos... The whores... That
high school kid... He coulda been
my son... The son I left so's I
could be with you, forever...

Hatch spasms. The wound on his chest POPS. A small, dark
chunk of organic material emerges from his skin. Drops to the
floor. Instantly crusts over. Dries up.

Hatch inhales sharply as the trance he's been under for years
fades.

HATCH

I remember... My son... Bobby...
He'd be seven by now... Marjorie...
Probably remarried... My real
estate company... Gone by now...
Everything gone... So I could spend
the rest of my life... with you...

He looks down at the bloody knife in his hand. Then the hole
in his chest. Then at Jill, where she lays gasping. Crying.
Bleeding.

HATCH

Oh my God... what... what have I
been doing? It's like... like I was
someone else... Your voice in my
head, telling me what to think...

His tears become a seething rage.

HATCH

But it was all a lie! I spent three
years killin' myself to make you
happy! To keep you filled up! But
you... you were just using me...
until I couldn't do it anymore...
and you tricked me into bringin'
you your next slave!

He raises the knife above his head. Em SCREAMS.

HATCH

Fuck that! You're not gonna do that
to anyone... ever again!

He tenses for the killing blow.

WHAM! Chase hits Hatch from behind with his own cane. Hatch
falls against the small table.

Unsteady on his feet, Chase brandishes his weapon.

CHASE

You leave her alone, you hear me?
She's mine! Mine!

The mania is gone from Hatch's eyes. He's woken from his long horrific dream.

HATCH

She's gonna do the same thing to
you! Don't you get that?

Chase doesn't care. He charges at Hatch.

Bleeding out on the floor, Jill has a front-row seat to the battle for Em's love.

The two frantic men fight in the tight, small space.
PUNCHING. KICKING. CLAWING. BITING.

CHASE

Em loves me!

HATCH

She's evil!

CHASE

Shut up! Shut up!!!

HATCH

She ain't human!

CHASE

Liar! Liar!!!

Chase grabs one of the therapy weights he left for Em. He CLUBS Hatch in the temple. Hatch drops onto his ratty chair and the side table, knocking them both over.

Hatch's arm flails out, catching Em's hair. It comes off in his grip. A wig. Underneath, her skin is mottled. Pulsing. Textured. Like a brain.

Hatch tries to get up. Chase kicks him hard, knocking him on his back.

Chase straddles Hatch's bony torso. He beats Hatch with the weight. Blood splatters everywhere. All over Chase. All over the room. All over Jill.

CHASE

(out of breath)

She loves me! She loves me! SHE!
LOVES!! MEEEEEE!!!

He stops when Hatch's head has been turned to pulp. He sits back, panting. There's a smile on his face. He won.

A NOISE from Jill draws his attention. She's gasping her last breaths. Tears stream down her face, mixing with the blood pumping out of the knife wound.

Chase has a moment of clarity. He chokes up at what's happened to his fiancée.

Em SQUAWKS at him. His eyes glaze over. He crawls to her. Holds her claw of a hand. Leans his head against it.

CHASE

I want to be with you, my love! Let me please you!

Em MOANS, a deep unsettling noise.

From where she lays in heap against the wall, Jill watches as Chase stumbles to the foot of the bed. She sees him from behind as he pulls off his pants, standing nude before his new love.

Jill gapes in horror as Em's stomach rumbles. Undulates. Rises. She hears something LARGE AND PULPY MOVING.

What looks like a piece of pale liver wraps around Chase's right hip. Another curls around his left hip. Then a third muscular appendage slips up his buttocks from between his legs.

Em suddenly spasms. Chase spasms. He leans backward, supported by the unseen organ that's emerged from Em's groin.

CHASE

Oh my God... I never thought... Oh Em... It feels incredible...

The veins in Chase's back and arms and legs darken. Pulse.

Jill tries to scream. But she's too weak.

And then it's over. The palps retract. Em's torso settles. Chase wobbles, drained from his moment of ecstasy.

Em BARKS. Chase turns to gaze down at Jill. He converses with her as she makes her unintelligible noises.

CHASE

No, my love... She means nothing to me... I am completely and utterly in love with you... Of course, I'll do whatever you wish...

Em's grunts take on a sinister tone. Chase understands her "words". His eyes flick over at Hatch's lifeless body, the pool of blood growing around it.

CHASE

But... I've already brought you food... You can't be hungry... No, I would never disobey you... It's just that...

Em SCREAMS. Three short bursts of angry noise.

CHASE

(beaten down)

Yes, my love! I'm sorry! Anything for you.

Chase painfully rises to his feet.

Barely alive, Jill watches as Chase drags Hatch into the bathroom. She hears a dull THUD as his body is dumped into the tub.

Chase returns to the living room. Em SQUEAKS at him. He closes the flimsy curtain.

CHASE

You offend her. Em doesn't want to see you.

He grabs Jill by the wrist.

CHASE

Not until I'm done.

JILL

(almost dead)

No...

CHASE

Em is hungry. I can't bear to see her hungry.

Straining, Chase pulls Jill down the hall, her charm bracelet JINGLING with every strained tug...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - AFTERNOON

Spring has arrived. Green has returned to the trees. The fields are filled with new crops.

A young runaway, KRISTI, saunters down the main street. She wrestles with a big purse and an overstuffed duffle bag slung over her shoulders.

She gazes into the windows of the stores along the way. A deli. A clothing store. A hardware store.

She stops in front of a pawn shop.

POV

Her attention is caught by one object nestled amongst all the other items for sale: a golden bracelet.

Jill's charm bracelet.

KRISTI

Stares at it longingly. Feels her forearm, covered with various metal and hand-woven bracelets.

She realizes, from inside the store, the PAWN SHOP OWNER is glaring at her.

Kristi flips him off. Then continues sauntering.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE - SAME

Kristi steps inside, soaking up the air conditioning.

The STORE OWNER, an older balding man, watches her disapprovingly, as she walks up and down the aisles, leisurely browsing.

A CUSTOMER drops a six pack on the counter. The Store Owner rings him up.

Taking advantage of the distraction, Kristi slips a bottle of malt liquor into her bag.

She scoots out of the building.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN - LATE AFTERNOON

Kristi stumbles along the shoulder of the road. She takes a sip from the almost-empty malt liquor bottle.

As CARS WHIZ BY, she holds out a thumb. Her multicolored bracelets glitter in the sunlight.

To her surprise, a car slows down. Pulls over. A Chevy. With one broken tail light.

She trots up to the car. Leans into the window.

KRISTI
Thanks, Mister.

She tosses her stuff into the back seat. Climbs into the passenger seat.

The CAR PEELS AWAY before she can even shut the door.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

BUGS CHIRRUP and BIRDS SING as the sun slowly rises over Em's dilapidated house.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Chase stands at the mirror. Looking at himself. His thinning hair. His drawn skin. His sunken eyes. Covered in sweat. And blood. He absentmindedly picks at the large angry growth on his forearm.

He rips open a velcro wallet. Pulls out a clutch of bills.

He slides open the bottom drawer of the small bureau. The drawer is stuffed with money. Ones. Fives. Twenties. Hundreds. Some are rolled. Some are crumpled. Some are stained with dark spots. Thousands and thousands of dollars.

Mixed in among all the cash are drivers licenses. "Edward Hatchcock". "David Barnes". "Slocum Shepard". Dozens of IDs.

Chase stuffs his latest score into the drawer. He briefly looks at the drivers license in the wallet.

INSERT - LICENSE

Kristi's picture in the corner.

CHASE

Throws her ID into the cash drawer. Tosses the wallet into the trash.

A HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL from the living room calls to him.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Chase emerges from the bathroom. With a supreme effort, he drags the big plastic trash can out of the bathroom and into the hall. It's heavy. Filled with something red. Something wet.

Em GURGLES and SQUEAKS as he maneuvers the bin into the living room and around the curtain.

Lit from behind by sunlight from the grimy window, the shadows of Chase and Em play across the fabric of the suspended bedsheet.

CHASE (O.S.)
Here, my love. Just for you.

Chase muscles something out of the trash can. A thick shape. Like an arm with a hand attached.

Something JINGLES as he swings it out of the garbage bin. He runs his hand down the object. From underneath the curtain, several blood-covered bracelets drop to the filthy rug.

Em BARKS and SQUEALS. Her torso quivers. Bubbles. Opens up, like an unholy flower. A long thick flexible appendage - a tentacle, or a tongue - rises up to the delicacy being held by Chase. The fleshy appendage coils around the offered food, then pulls it down into Em's torso. The entire bed rocks as wet, SLURPING, CRUNCHING, GRINDING NOISES fill the room.

The shadow of Chase continues feeding pieces of Kristi to Em's shadow.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Chase leaves the house through the back door, carrying the plastic trash can. Something RATTLES AROUND inside it.

Chase walks to the edge of the property. Framed by the late day sunlight, he continues on the path through the woods.

EXT. WOODS - SAME

Chase emerges from the forest at the edge of a secluded ravine.

He turns over the plastic trash can.

A disjointed collection of wet, slimy bones cascade down the incline. Ribs. Vertebrae. Femurs. They all tumble into the ravine. Bounce end over end.

They come to a stop atop an entire mound of bones. Some new and gray. Some bleached and weather-beaten. Hundreds of disassembled skeletons. Decades of discarded victims. A hidden graveyard.

Chase gives the trash can a final strong shake. A skull rolls out. It tumbles into the ravine. Across the grisly heap.

The skull SKIDS TO A NAILS-ON-A-CHALKBOARD STOP next to another bleached skull. A skull with a chipped front tooth. Hatch's skull.

Both craniums rest atop a smooth, silver surface. The shiny metal skin of an object embedded into the ground. Partially covered by the bones and the undergrowth. Several dozen yards wide. Disc-shaped. Damaged. Scorched.

A crashed vehicle... unlike anything on earth.

The craft is wedged into the end of a ravine. A ravine that looks less like a result of erosion, and more like an aged, mile-long scar in the earth. Created when the silver ship plummeted from the heavens.

The shiny surface is adorned with what looks like a large, faded "M". A stylized symbol from an unknown language.

Chase notices none of this. His mind has only thing to focus on: Em. He hurries back to the house.

To his love.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE

The seasons pass. Summer sears the land. Fall turns the trees to explosions of color.

Winter arrives.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - AFTERNOON

WES, a young nurse, drives through the countryside, looking at a scrap of paper and a map. He makes sure to keep one eye on the snow-covered country lanes.

He passes a large quarry. He continues out into the rural farm land.

As he's driving along a dirt road, he spies a battered blue mailbox painted with the house numbers from the ad.

He turns in. Finds himself on a long icy dirt driveway that cuts through a lot of unkempt brush-filled acreage.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

He eventually arrives at a small, run down house. Parked in front of the house is a dirty Chevy.

Wes mounts the treacherous stairs. KNOCKS on the door. He hears SHUFFLING. Several LOCKS OPENING from inside.

The DOOR CREAKS open. A gaunt OLDER MAN looks through the opening.

WES

Hi there. Um... I'm Wes Bartlett. I saw your ad?... You need a health care worker?... I know this is kind of rude, to just drop in like this, but, there was no phone number...

He holds up the hand-written ad. The Older Man looks long and hard at the ad. Then he looks at Wes. Then the ad. Then Wes.

The Older Man eventually decides Wes is telling the truth. He opens the door all the way.

Wes is taken aback when he finally sees the Older Man fully.

It's Chase.

But not the Chase who first came to this out of the way place. He's disheveled. Dirty. Scrawny. So pale he seems bloodless. Although he's in his early 30s, he looks like he's in his late 60s. Chase holds a half-empty soda bottle that he scratches against large dark stain on his flannel sleeve.

CHASE

(weakly)

Come on in.

Chase gestures with the bottle. Wes slips by him into the house.

Wes reacts with a start to the smell, as Chase CLOSES and LOCKS the door behind him.

CHASE (O.S.)
Right through here...

WES (O.S.)
(gasping)
Oh my God...

CHASE (O.S.)
This is my wife, Em...