

THOU SHALT NOT

Written by

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Current Revisions by

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INT. A SMALL DARK ROOM - EVERNIGHT

Darkness is barely held back by the light of a small candle flickering for it's life. A PLAIN YOUNG TEEN GIRL rocks slowly while she softly sings to a tortie ragdoll cat.

YOUNG GIRL
This little light of mine
I'm gonna let it shine

A figure darker than the darkness looms over her from behind.

YOUNG GIRL (CONT'D)
This little light of mine...

The light is snuffed. Darkness descends.

INT. A SMALL DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Candlelight illuminates a mostly filled scrabble board. WILHELMINA SARKIS, a fit, handsome woman in her 30s, looks intensely back and forth between her tiles and the board. CORBIN TREACHER, an athletic, very attractive man in his twenties, sips wine as he taps on the top of the timer.

WILHELMINA
Hey! That's cheating.

CORBIN
No, it's not. Besides, my next move
will put you in your place. If
you'd just take your turn.

Wilhelmina's eyes get big as she double checks her discovery. She squeals with glee as she adds "ILLUMI" to the word "NATION." Then she adds an "S" to the end.

WILHELMINA
Oh my God! Do you see that? Have
you ever seen anyone get TWO triple
word scores in one move? EVER?!

Corbin is speechless as his eyes run across the board and the score sheet realizing his crushing defeat.

WILHELMINA (CONT'D)
Let's see. That's sixteen. Times
three. Then that times three. Plus
fifty for using all my tiles. One
hundred and ninety four in one
play. Oh, Corbin. I finally won
one. I love you!

Corbin clears his dry throat.

CORBIN
 "Illuminations?" That's not a word.

WILHELMINA
 What?

CORBIN
 I challenge. "Illumination" is
 already plural. There's no "S."

WILHELMINA
 Are you sure?

CORBIN
 Is the English Major sure? I don't
 know lawyer. Are you trying to pull
 some habeas corpus crap?

WILHELMINA
 But, Corbin...

CORBIN
 (indignant)
 I'll look it up. Just to be sure.

Corbin flips through his official Scrabble dictionary. He
 turns to "Illumination" and the plural is "Illuminations."

WILHELMINA
 Well?

CORBIN
 Nope. Not a word.

WILHELMINA
 I'll just take the "S" off then. I
 still get triple word score.

Corbin snatches her hand startling her.

CORBIN
 No you don't. I challenged. You
 lost. Your turn is forfeit.

She sinks as Corbin uses her hand to shove her tiles off and
 replaces them with his own.

CORBIN (CONT'D)
 Now this is the game winning word.

Corbin adds "CONTAMI" to "NATION."

CORBIN (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Triple word score and an extra
 fifty for using all my tiles.
 That's how you win, baby!

WILHELMINA
...that's a good one.

Corbin leans over and blows the candles out.

WILHELMINA (CONT'D)
What are you doing? I thought we were going to watch the new movie. I've been waiting all week.

CORBIN
I'd rather make our own movie.

WILHELMINA
You know I don't like that.

CORBIN
Are you fucking joking? I let you play scrabble with me when I should have been writing and now you can't give me the time to work out in front of the camera? I love you, Willy, but sometimes you can be a selfish bitch.

Corbin relights a candle.

CORBIN (CONT'D)
I'm going to Bobby's.

WILHELMINA
No. No. I'm sorry. Stay.
(Corbin pauses)
I finished the servant's costume.

CORBIN
I'm sorry, baby. I didn't mean to get angry. You know how I get when I'm writing.

WILHELMINA
What's this play about?

CORBIN
A romance. You'd like it.

Corbin blows the candle out. Darkness descends. Heavy breathing is heard as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK JOGGING PATH - MORNING

Mina jogs with NOA, her smaller, feistier little sister. Mina is stretch-wrapped into a "sexy" neon green and black jogging outfit. Noa is in orange sweats. Men ogle Mina as they go.

NOA
That's bullshit! I'm looking it up.

MINA
Noa...

NOA
And what are you supposed to be? A
Spirit Halloween alien sex-bot?

MINA
Corbin loves it.

NOA
Were they out of sexy lawyer?

MINA
Sometimes you have to give...

NOA
SOME times. Not ALL the time. He's
using you.

MINA
He's having a tough time trying...

NOA
Double bullshit! He's using you up.
You have nothing left for yourself.

MINA
I'm fine.

NOA
Fine? You can't even beat me to
that coffee stand.

MINA
Loser buys...

Noa takes off. Mina chases. Noa wins. They wait in line. Noa
pulls out her phone.

NOA
Cheating bastard! It is a word. No
wonder you never win.

MINA
Maybe it's not in the official
Scrabble dictionary.

NOA
Stop making excuses for him.

MINA
You don't know him like I do.

NOA

I know him all right. He's a taker. He's taken everything and what has he given? NOTHING. He even took your name, "WILLY!" Who changes someone else's name?

MINA

He says Mina is an uptight, ugly girl's name. Willy is more fun.

NOA

You know what would be more fun? I say we "Earl" his ass.

MINA

Dixie Chicks are your answer for everything.

They reach the front of the line. LYDIA, a heavily tattooed 39 year old woman, leans over the counter at them.

NOA

Café mocha and a blueberry muffin, my good woman.

MINA

Give me a Red-Eye. Better make it a Dead-Eye and bran muffin, please.

NOA

Trying to jump start both ends?

MINA

I thought Oompa Loompas were nice.

NOA

No, they're not. They sing life lessons while they roll your fat blue ass down to the juicing room.

(to Lydia)

You seem like a wise woman of the world. What do you think?

LYDIA

(still making their order)

I think the bar is over there if you wanted to hang out and get advice. This is a grab your coffee and go kind of place.

NOA

So...

LYDIA

That being said, your power is like your social security number.

(MORE)

LYDIA (CONT'D)

It's yours. No one can take it from you. But, if you give it to someone else, they will use it for whatever they can get out of it. He has your number. I'd "Earl" his ass.

NOA

Exactly! He's taken all your power - your time, money, energy, name - What's next?

Mina's phone chimes "Treasure" by Bruno Mars. She checks the message as she walks away. Noa pays and grabs the order.

CORBIN (TEXT)

Don't forget.

An ad for a blood drive to benefit Corbin's play posts.

MINA

Damn.

NOA

What now?

MINA

Nothing. The boss just wants to go over everything one more time.

NOA

You worried?

MINA

No. It's a homerun.

Mina grabs the food and runs.

NOA

Lock him up!

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Mina slumps on the steps. Noa rushes up to her.

NOA

What happened?

MINA

I don't know... I lost.

NOA

But, it was a homerun.

MINA

It should have...

JUDGE MERINO, a 47 year old African queen, interrupts.

JUDGE MERINO
What the hell was that?

MINA
Your honor?

JUDGE MERINO
It was like someone took all your
power plays and fed them to the
defense. You were set up.

MINA
Why? Who?

JUDGE MERINO
I'd talk to your boss about an
investigation into your firm.

MINA
Mr. Arnold saw the whole thing. He
was just as furious, your honor.

JUDGE MERINO
You mean the man laughing and
shaking hands with your defendant
and his father?

They turn to see MR. ARNOLD, a 64 year old man in a suit,
congratulating the DEFENDANT, a snot-nosed twenty something,
and HIS FATHER, a mirror image of Arnold. Judge Merino hands
Mina a business card.

JUDGE MERINO (CONT'D)
If you can prove it, call me.

Judge Merino exits. Mina gets up and straightens herself.

NOA
What now?

MINA
Only one thing to do.

Noa watches Mina walk up to Mr. Arnold as the defendant
drives away. Mr. Arnold puts on a disappointed face as Mina
speaks to him from a step above him.

NOA
(to herself)
Good job, Mina. You have the moral
high ground. Don't back down.

Mr. Arnold's face becomes angrier as Mina continues.

NOA (CONT'D)
 Don't let him pull the outrage
 card. You should be outraged. Don't
 let him out rage you.

Mr. Arnold becomes more animated as he steps up the stairs
 and Mina steps down so he is above her.

NOA (CONT'D)
 And... down she goes. Oh, Mina.

Mina walks away from Mr. Arnold as he storms off. Noa walks
 to meet her.

NOA (CONT'D)
 That did not go well.

MINA
 I'm fired.

NOA
 What!

MINA
 He fired me. Oh, no! Corbin's going
 to be furious.

INT. MINA AND CORBIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Corbin's photo sits beside the bed. Grunting can be heard as
 Corbin rises up to replace his photo.

Mina's photo sits beside the opposite side of the bed.
 Grunting can be heard as Not Mina rises up to replace her
 photo.

ISABELLE, a pretty 19 year old, is "working out" with Corbin
 as his cell phone rings. Corbin rolls to the upper position
 and answers his phone without stopping.

CORBIN
 Hey, baby! You're done early. Why
 are you early? What did you do?

MINA (OVER PHONE)
 It's not my fault, baby.

CORBIN
 Don't "baby" me. What happened?!

MINA (OVER PHONE)
 They set me up! I lost the case and
 when I stood up for myself...
 they fired me.

CORBIN
 You got yourself fired? How could
 you do that to me. You know I'm
 trying to put together a show.

MINA (OVER PHONE)
 I know, but I'm the one who...

CORBIN
 What's that noise? Are you alone?

MINA (OVER PHONE)
 It's just...

CORBIN
 Face time me. NOW!

Mina's face appears on Corbin's phone.

CORBIN (CONT'D)
 Now spin the phone around so I can
 see all around you.

The phone pans back and forth. Noa waves with a fake smile.

CORBIN (CONT'D)
 Hi, Noa. I should have know you'd
 be a part of this.

NOA (OVER PHONE)
 Part of what? Mina just got fired
 by an asshole, you asshole!

CORBIN
 Willy! Come home. NOW! Wait, first
 stop at unemployment. See what
 they'll give you until you find
 another job. And Pick up a
 newspaper.

MINA (OVER PHONE)
 Newspaper?

CORBIN
 Help wanted. Do I have to do
 everything? Just do what I said.

NOA (OVER PHONE)
 Hold on, jack...

Corbin hangs up and resumes his exercises.

CORBIN
 Can you believe her?

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

Mina hangs up and starts to walk off.

MINA
I have to go.

Noa grabs both her arms and looks into her eyes.

NOA
Yes, you do.

Mina weeps and leans into Noa.

INT. MINA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Mina and Noa enter the lobby as the MAILMAN sorts the mail.

NOA
111, please.

MAILMAN
You Corbin's woman?

NOA
No.

MINA
Yes. I am.

NOA
No. She's not. 111, PLEASE.

The mailman gives her the mail. It is covered in red stamps.

MAILMAN
Sorry. I'm used to Corbin grabbing the mail before I can even get it in the box. Says he doesn't want his woman worrying about things.

NOA
What things?

MAILMAN
None of my business.

The mailman leaves. Mina grabs the mail and sees all the "OVERDUE" stamps and one that reads, "EVICTION: LAST NOTICE."

MINA
Shit. Shit! SHHHIIITTTT!

Mina storms up the stairs.

INT. MINA AND CORBIN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Mina throws the door open. Noa follows.

MINA
Corbin! CORBIN!!

Corbin walks out in a towel brushing his teeth.

CORBIN
What? Did you get your job back?

MINA
Why are all these past due?

CORBIN
I was going to talk to you about that, Willy. You need more money.

MINA
I gave you plenty of money to pay every single bill, plus some. Where did it all go?

CORBIN
Don't yell at me. Do you know how hard it is to keep up with all the bills here AND the theater. I had to prioritize. No thanks to you.

Mina shoves past Corbin and begins to pack. Noa helps her.

MINA
So you spent all my money on your stupid play?

CORBIN
I decided how OUR money would be best spent. Once the play was running we'd have it all back, plus a bonus.

MINA
When? You're play isn't even finished. They're turning off the water now. The electric now. The gas now. We are getting evicted. NOW! What are we supposed to do until then? Live in the theater?

CORBIN
If you can't support me as an artist I don't think we can be partners anymore.

Mina and Noa shove past Corbin with her bags.

MINA

You don't even know what that is.

Mina exits. Corbin follows but is blocked by Noa.

CORBIN

Willy! You can make this right.

NOA

She's not Willy and she is right.

CORBIN

There's no way a little girl like you can out power a man like me.

NOA

That's why God gave men a pause button.

CORBIN

Pause button?

Noa knees him in the groin. He drops like a bad habit.

NOA

Now, that's a willy.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - MORNING

Montage of Mina on a long drive. The scenery changes from the city to the burbs to the country and finally to the mountains. A "get back to the country/simpler things" song plays.

NOA (V.O.)

You used to be a powerful woman. I admired you for that. Somewhere along the road you lost yourself and your power. But I know it's still there. You just need some time with no outside interference to find it again.

MINA (V.O.)

I could go visit mom and dad.

NOA (V.O.)

Are you that lost? The primary source of outside interference. Here. Take the keys to my cabin. No one will bother you there.

MINA (V.O.)

But...

NOA (V.O.)
 And don't say "App-ah-lay-shun."
 They hate that. Say "App-ah-latch-
 in." You're welcome.

Mina pulls up to Noa's cabin tucked away in the Appalachian mountains. She breathes in the fresh air and begins to run...

CUT TO:

EXT. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN TRAIL - MORNING

Mina runs along a path pacing to music with a strong beat playing loudly on her phone through ear buds. It is a beautiful day and a rejuvenating experience. Sun shines through the trees. Pretty birds fly by. A LARGE, DARK FIGURE in mountain clothes and hat stands on a ridge staring down at her.

Mina stumbles as she notices the man watching her. She slows to a walk.

A large black bear walks up behind her. Over the music she doesn't hear the bear growling as it approaches.

She tries to get a good look at the man but only sees darkness surrounded by sunlight. The bear rises up... but she sprints off.

The bear stops, shakes it's head, and walks off.

INT. PEARL'S, A SMALL COUNTRY DINER - MORNING

Mina's enters in her alien sex-bot jogging outfit and is stopped by a wall of stares. She looks around at the disapproving faces of both young and old.

ABBIE (O.C.)
 Well, kiss a pig. Ain't you a sight? Well, come on in and sit down. You're letting flies in and you're gonna shoot Jake straight through puberty.

Everyone turns to look at a MAN IN HIS EIGHTIES with a name patch, "Jake." They all laugh. Mina sits with ABBIE, a plain woman in her fifties with wisdom and care etched in her face.

MINA
 Thank you. I'm new here.

ABBIE

No shit. Don't mind them. They just ain't used to seeing no lil' flippy tailed girl with clothes painted on.

MINA

I didn't...

ABBIE

Hell, girl. I ain't your momma. As long as you don't have your tits and ass hanging out you're doing better than most. Look at Sara Hotchkins. She has hers served up on a platter. Bless her heart.

SARA HOTCHKINS, a buxom blonde in her early twenties, leans forward as she speaks with her cleavage about to burst free from her push up bra and buttoned shirt.

MINA

I just wanted some coffee. I didn't see any other place.

ABBIE

This is it, sweet cheeks. Welcome to Johnston. Just passing through?

MINA

I'm staying at my sister's cabin. The red one up on Pepper's Creek.

ABBIE

The old Gaines place? Probably got a good deal on it since both he and his wife died in it. That's how you die right there. In your sleep and take your husband with you. That way you both get to heaven at the same time so there's no confusion later on.

TERRI, a cute teen waitress, brings Mina coffee, eggs, bacon, grits and toast.

MINA

I didn't...

TERRI

Abbie gave me a wink to bring you what she was having.

ABBIE

You know I like my groceries. It ain't gonna bite ya. Eat it.

MINA

Thank you, again.

ABBIE

I'm just tickled slap to death to have someone new to talk to. Everyone here has already heard all my stories.

JAKE

More than once.

ABBIE

Hush up before I beat your eyeballs in. Mind your own.

MINA

Is everybody "okay" around here? I mean should I worry about anyone?

ABBIE

Every now and then someone will have a dying duck fit, but no one's pulled a gun in a while. Why? Someone giving you grief.

MINA

I was jogging on the trail by the creek and a dark man was staring at me from up on the hill. He gave me the chills.

ABBIE

Hell, dressed like that I'd stare at ya too. But it was probably just some lonely good ole boy. Just stay on the path, watch out for bears and snakes, and you should be fine.

MINA

Bears? Snakes? "Good Ole Boys?" Maybe I should jog somewhere else.

ABBIE

Darling, bears and snakes don't care one lick about you. And you shouldn't let some country boy with swollen balls scare you off. Anyone gives you trouble you just think, "What would Abbie do?" Than do something a little less than that.

MINA

I will.

ABBIE

Dad gum it. Look at the time. I've got places to be. What church you go to?

MINA

Ummm....

ABBIE

In-between churches right now? Come on down to the First Baptist Church on Main. We'll take care of you.

Abbie gets up and slaps money on the table. She stops and puts her hand on CHARLIE'S shoulder, a strong man in his twenties wearing dirty coveralls.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

Hey Charlie. How's Em doing?

CHARLIE

They want to run more tests again.

ABBIE

That's stupider than a two story outhouse. They done tested everything but her peach cobbler.

CHARLIE

I guess that's next.

ABBIE

I'll take 'em a slice of pie and a piece of my mind. Don't you worry.

SAM

Give 'em hell, pastor.

ABBIE

Don't you start Samuel. You better sit up straight this Sunday. Last week you were drunk as Cooter Brown. Almost tipped the pew.

SAM

Least I was there.

ABBIE

I appreciate ya. Ya'll have a blessed day.

MINA

(to herself)
Pastor?

EXT. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN TRAIL - MORNING

Mina runs along the same path with a strong bass song filling her ears. She sees the dark form watching her from above. This time she stops and removes her ear buds.

MINA

Hello. I'm Mina. I'm just visiting.

Mina waves. The darkness doesn't move. A large rattlesnake slithers towards Mina from the other side of the path.

MINA (CONT'D)

Hope my running isn't disturbing you. Helps clear my head.

The darkness stands unmoving, like a part of the mountain. A shiver runs down Mina's spine. The snake slowly rears up.

MINA (CONT'D)

Well... nice to meet you.

The snake rattles a warning. Mina turns. It hisses and sways. She runs backwards off the path and hits something hard. She turns. The darkness grabs her arms in a vice grip. The darkness closes in until there's nothing but an evil grin. Then nothing.

INT. A SMALL DARK ROOM - DARKNESS

Mina wakes on a bed in a small, damp, dark room. She can barely make out uneven walls by the only light, a small candle.

She sees motion on the wall. A large spider slowly crawls as it examines her. She backs up against the wall and pulls the covers up to her chin.

The spider suddenly thrusts at her. She gasps and hits the wall. Satisfied the spider skitters out through a large hole in the wall.

The door is thrust open. The doorway is filled by GIDEON ZARED, an imposing dark man in his forties. His voice is as deep as the darkness in his eyes.

GIDEON

Time for the awakening, child.

Mina stares up at him motionless. Then she notices ASENATH ZARED, a timid young teen girl, peeking out from behind him holding IZZY, her tortie ragdoll cat. She was the girl singing "This Little Light Of Mine."

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Get her cleaned up and let her know
what's expected of her.

Gideon leaves and Asenath enters.

ASENATH
My name is Asenath (Uh-See-Nith).

Mina stares straight ahead, lost in shock.

ASENATH (CONT'D)
Don't worry. We won't hurt you.
Daddy can be scary, but he uses
that to protect us from the evils.
He says he's not scared of the
devil. The devil is scared of him.
What's your name?

Mina is silent as tears roll down her face. Asenath puts Izzy
in Mina's lap.

ASENATH (CONT'D)
Don't cry. Here hold Izzy. She's a
good cat. She helps me when I'm
sad. You have a name don't ya?

Mina begins to pet the cat slowly and shakes her head, "Yes."

MINA
Mina.

ASENATH
Mina? That's a pretty name. I ain't
heard that before.

MINA
My boyfriend called me, "Willy."

ASENATH
I don't like that so much. Can I
call you Mina?

Mina slowly shakes her head, "Yes." RUTH, a skinny, skiddish
teen, pokes her head around the doorframe with wide eyes.

ASENATH (CONT'D)
That's Ruth. She's a good person.

Ruth brings Mina a cup of water. Mina puts it down.

RUTH
Don't you drink water?

ASENATH
Of course she drinks water.

RUTH
Of course. Just not right now.

Ruth leaves.

ASENATH
She's a good person, but she's a little off.

Mina starts to gather her wits.

MINA
Who wouldn't be?

ASENATH
She was always like that. Even before. In the outside.

MINA
Where am I?

ASENATH
You're in our bunker. Daddy says it's our protection from the evils of the outside. That's why he brought you here.

MINA
What?

ASENATH
To save you from the evils of the outside. Just in time, judging from whatever that was you were wearing.

MINA
My boyfriend got it for me.

ASENATH
The one who called you, "Willy?"

Asenath starts to brush Mina's hair.

ASENATH (CONT'D)
Don't worry. Daddy will get you right with God. That's his calling.

Mina pats down her side and realizes for the first time her clothes are gone and she is wearing a sack cloth dress.

MINA
Where are my clothes? My...

ASENATH

We sent that awful stuff away.
Daddy says you need to wear
sackcloth to show repentance. He'll
show you the way back to Jesus.

MINA

A megalomaniac with delusions of
grandeur. This is "Trump Country."

ASENATH

I don't understand what you just
said, but if I were you I'd do what
daddy says or he might get angry.
You wouldn't like him angry.

MINA

This is him not angry?

ASENATH

Um-hmm.

GIDEON (O.C.)

Girl! What's taking so long?

ASENATH

Coming, daddy. Now you just do what
you're told and...

MINA

NO! Men have been telling me what
to do for too long. You know what?
Your daddy wouldn't like me when
I'm angry. And right now I'm pissed
the hell off.

ASENATH

No!

Mina jumps up and storms out of the room. She enters

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mina stops as her eyes get used to the brighter light in the
main room. She is in an underground room carved from the
earth. It is modestly furnished and very orderly.

GIDEON

GIRL!

Mina's eyes adjust enough to see Gideon. She rushes him.

MINA

God damn it, you son of a...

Mina's head is jerked back by her hair. MARA ZARED, Gideon's female counterpart, drags Mina across the room by her hair.

MARA
Child! You will not use foul
language in this home.

Mina sees Mara's enraged face just as she jams a bar of soap into Mina's mouth.

MARA (CONT'D)
We'll just wash that filthy mouth
out, little missy. Maybe next time
you'll keep a civil tongue.

Mara tosses Mina back by her hair. Mina spits the soap out and then begins to vomit.

GIDEON
Thank you, mother.

MARA
Asenath. When she gets done see
that she cleans it up.

ASENATH
Yes, momma.

Gideon leans down to Mina as she continues to vomit.

GIDEON
Thou shalt not take the name of the
Lord in vain. That is lesson number
one, child.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - MORNING?

Mina sleeps fitfully. Something flits in and out of the spider hole in the wall. Glowing red eyes appear and a large snake slithers from the hole onto the ground. It climbs onto the bed and starts to crawl up between Mina's legs.

The door flies open and Mara enters grabbing the snake by the tail as Mina shoots up in bed and screams. Mara slams the snake against the wall. It falls limp.

MARA
You gonna sleep all day, child?

Mara leaves with the snake. Mina breaks down in tears. Asenath comes in with Izzy and puts her on the bed by Mara. Ruth spies from the door.

ASENATH
Bad dreams?

Mara collapses onto the bed sobbing. Ruth brings her a cup of water and tries to get her to take it.

RUTH
Drink. It's good for you.

Mara forces a smile and takes the cup.

MARA
I have to get out of here. To the outside. Don't you want to leave?

RUTH
No one can leave.

MINA
No escape? Except death.

Ruth and Asenath share a side glance.

ASENATH
'Cept the dog. He clawed his way out. But can't go that way.

MINA
Why not?

CUT TO:

INT. BUNKER PANTRY - MOMENTS LATER

ASENATH
Bees.

Mina, Asenath and Ruth look up at a hole, high in the wall. It's filled with a buzzing bee hive. A system is set up that collects the honey in jars.

ASENATH (CONT'D)
After the dog dug out, the bees moved in. Daddy said it was a blessing. Honey's good for you.

MINA
Your daddy is wrong. Someone needs to stand up to him.

ASENATH
Daddy is the pastor. No one stands up to the pastor. That's like standing up to God.

MINA
(to herself)
Pastor... What would Abbie do?

ASENATH

What?

MINA

Nothing.

Mara bursts in startling Mina. Asenath and Ruth don't react.

MARA

What are you doing in here?

ASENATH

Just showing Mina the bees, momma.

MARA

Show her how to be useful and get honey for the table. Breakfast is ready.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - MORNING?

The girls set the table. Unappetizing mounds of mushy white rice and rehydrated beans.

Ruth goes to a side room and comes back with ESTI, a pregnant older teen.

Mina sets the honey on the table and starts to sit, but is stopped by Asenath. Mara gives Mina the stink eye as she yells.

MARA

Gideon!

Gideon enters. He has a black eye and scrapes on the side of his head. It takes the edge off his scary visage a little.

MINA

(whispering to Asenath)

Trouble in paradise?

Asenath elbows and shushes her. Gideon takes the head of the table. Not looking at Mina. He keeps eye contact with Mara. He bows his head. Everyone follows.

GIDEON

Lord we ask you this day for strength. Strength to battle the evils that have crept into our lives over and over again. Strength to do what we must to cleanse us all from the evils that have hold of us. We thank you for the bounty you have provided and for the love and strength that is Mara.

(MORE)

GIDEON (CONT'D)

The heart and power you have sent
me for when my own is not enough.

ALL

Amen.

Gideon and Mara share a look as he sits. Then they all sit,
except Mina.

MINA

And Lord please deliver us from
evil men who think they are better
than women and use us to elevate
themselves. Amen.

Ruth pops up with a giggle.

RUTH

Amen.

Esti pulls her back down. Mara stands.

MARA

Child...

Gideon puts his hand up.

GIDEON

The Lord elevates me, child. He
lifted me up so that I could see
that you need to be saved.

MARA

You're the only thing I need to be
saved from.

GIDEON

You're wrong, child, but you're too
blind to see. You need to be saved
from yourself.

MARA

I need to be saved? You're the one
who gets his thrills burying girls.

Gideon looms over her.

GIDEON

I brought you here to save you from
the corruption of the outside. Just
like these girls.

MARA

I can save myself.

GIDEON

Really? When I found you, you were dressed like a whore listening to some kind of hellish noise and running through the woods with no destination. You were lost, child. Now you are found.

Ruth pops up again giggling.

RUTH

Amen!

Gideon knocks Ruth across the room. He stands over her as he takes his belt off and whips her as she cries out.

GIDEON

You think prayer is funny? THOU SHALT NOT BLASPHEME!

ASENATH

No, daddy!

Asenath and Esti cover Ruth. Gideon knocks them clear.

GIDEON

THOU SHALT NOT STAY THE HAND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS!

Gideon whips Ruth harder.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

THOU SHALT NOT...

As Gideon raises his hand again Mina breaks a chair across his back. He staggers more from surprise than impact.

Everything stops for a pregnant pause as all eyes look to the enraged, panting Mina.

ASENATH

Daddy?

Gideon recovers and raises his belt again. Mina launches onto him, hitting and scratching. No effect this time.

Gideon pulls her off, hanging her in mid-air by her hair. Then he flings her across the room like a rag doll. She skids to a stop by a dog bowl with the name "Lucky" written on the side.

Gideon approaches her, fire in his eyes. His arm is grabbed. He snarls as he turns to see Mara's intense stare. He relents.

Gideon grabs Mina's plate of food from the table and dumps it into the dog bowl.

GIDEON

If you're gonna act like an animal,
you can eat like one.

Gideon leans down to Mina's ear. She tries not to recoil.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Thou shalt not challenge God's
authority on earth. That is lesson
number two, child.

Gideon heads into his room. Ruth sits at the table.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

Manners! No one eats until our
guest has eaten. NO ONE.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - NIGHT?

The dog bowl sits untouched. Soft singing can barely be
heard.

Mina comes out from her room and crosses to Esti and Ruth's
room. She knocks softly. Asenath startles her from behind and
opens the door.

INT. ESTI AND RUTH'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A simple room with minimal furniture for two girls. A crib in
one corner. One stained doily is the only bright spot.

Esti gently rocks Ruth, singing "You Are My Sunshine" softly
to her.

ESTI

You are my sunshine
My only sunshine
You make me happy
When skies are gray.
You'll never know, dear
How much I love you.
Please don't take my sunshine away.

MINA

You have a lovely voice.

ASENATH

This is Esti. She is blessed with
child.

ESTI

Cursed.

ASENATH

Giving life is woman's gift from
God.

ESTI

I know. But it feels like a burden.

ASENATH

But God sent us Jesus to help carry
our burdens.

RUTH

I wish he'd carry Gideon.

They all giggle, but quickly stifle it when they realize the
noise is too loud.

CUT TO:

INT. GIDEON AND MARA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The nicest room in the bunker. Mara's feminine touches
brighten it some. One corner, next to Gideon's side of the
bed is dark and barren.

Gideon leans against the door listening. Mara sits in the
background reading her bible. Gideon starts to turn the knob.

GIDEON

You have to help me, Mara.

MARA

Lean on my strength, my husband.

Mara stands as Gideon kneels before her.

MARA (CONT'D)

Lord, grant me the strength to help
my husband free himself from the
demons that plague him.

Mara kisses his forehead and then begins to slap the devil
out of him. Back and forth, over and over again.

CUT TO:

INT. ESTI AND RUTH'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The girls now sit in a circle in the middle of the floor. The
atmosphere becomes that of a teen girl's sleepover.

ASENATH

Remember the footprints.

ESTI
I know. I'm never alone. None of us
are. The Lord he comforts me.

MINA
Footprints?

RUTH
In the sand.

Mina shrugs as her eyebrows raise.

ASENATH
It's my favorite. Jesus...

RUTH
I'm telling it!

ASENATH
I'm sorry. Go ahead.

RUTH
A man saw his entire life and there
were two footprints in the sand
where he had walked. His and
Jesus'. But when he was really sad,
or sick, or having a bad time...

ESTI
Or pregnant.

RUTH
Shush! It was a man! Ain't no
pregnant man!

ESTI
It's for a man or a woman.

RUTH
Well, it ain't writ like that.

MINA
Maybe it should be.

RUTH
You want the story or not?

MINA
I'm sorry. Go ahead.

RUTH
Well, the man was upset with Jesus
and asked him why he left him
during those bad times and you know
what Jesus said?

ASENATH
This is the best part.

RUTH
Hush!

MINA
No. What did Jesus say?

RUTH
Jesus said, "I would never leave you. You only saw one set of footprints because I was carrying you!" Ain't that incredible?

MINA
That is a great story, Ruth.

ESTI
It helps us through a lot.

ASENATH
Especially when daddy is in a "Thou shalt not" mood.

They all giggle softly.

MINA
I bet in your dad's version there's one set of footprints and a line in the sand.

The girls share confused looks.

ESTI
A line?

MINA
Where Jesus knocked you out and dragged your ass through the sand.

They all giggle louder.

ASENATH
Language!

MINA
Sorry.

ESTI
Shhh! Gideon.

Everyone gets quiet. Fun ruined. Mina starts to get up.

ASENATH
Who's Abbie?

Mina sits down and they all get closer.

MINA
She's a good person. A friend.

ESTI
Tell us about her.

MINA
She's definitely loud and proud. A
bit rough around the edges.

RUTH
Like you.

MINA
No. She's a pastor.

The girls look back and forth at each other amazed.

RUTH
Shut your mouth!

MINA
No, really. At the First Baptist
Church in town on Main.

ASENATH
(to herself)
Daddy's church.

RUTH
Women can be pastors?

MINA
Women can be anything they want.
Don't let some man have power over
you by telling you what you can and
can't be.

ESTI
Could a woman pastor stand up to a
man pastor?

ASENATH
Esthiru Tancy!

MINA
This one definitely could.

RUTH
How do we get her down here?

ASENATH
Ruth Tancy!

MINA

Why are you mad at them? They just want to be free from this prison your daddy keeps us in.

ASENATH

This is not a prison. This is our home. You take that back!

MINA

I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything bad by it.

Fun ruined again. Crushing silence.

RUTH

I'm hungry.

ESTI

We all are.

The girls drop their heads. Mina lights up.

MINA

I know! This is like a sleepover I used to have with my girlfriends. You know what we did at sleepovers?

RUTH

What?!

MINA

Makeovers.

RUTH

Ooh! What's a makeover?

MINA

That's where we do each other's hair and makeup.

ESTI

Gideon won't like that.

MINA

We'll just do it for us then. We'll clean it all up before he can see.

The three girls slump down again.

MINA (CONT'D)

Is this your home? Or a prison?

ASENATH

Maybe just the hair.

MINA
Great! I'm doing hair and make up.
Ruth get me a couple berries.

ESTI
No berries.

MINA
Then some of the dried beans, a
fork and a small bowl of water.

Asenath gets two brushes from the small dresser.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ruth sneaks in. She grabs the beans and water. She reaches for the fork and sends it clanging to the floor. She freezes.

Talking can barely be heard from Gideon and Mara's room. Ruth creeps over and listens at the door.

MARA
(muffled through the door)
...If anyone loves the world, love
for the Father is not in them...

CUT TO:

INT. GIDEON AND MARA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gideon kneels before Mara with his head on her lap. His face is battered and bruised. Mara strokes his head and reads from the bible.

MARA (CONT'D)
...For everything in the world -
"the lust of the flesh, the lust of
the eyes, and the pride of life -
"comes not from the Father but from
the world. The world and its
desires pass away, but whoever does
the will of God lives forever...

CUT TO:

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARA (CONT'D)
(muffled through the door)
...Dear children, this is the last
hour and as you have heard that the
antichrist is coming...

Ruth quietly backs away and grabs the fork.

INT. ESTI AND RUTH'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ruth enters. Mina sits behind Asenath brushing her hair. Esti sits behind Mina brushing her hair.

MINA

Now use the fork to crush the reddest beans in the water.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Joy can be heard overflowing from the girl's room. Darkness hates joy. Gideon bursts into the main room. His blackened eyes making their fire that much brighter.

GIDEON

What is that noise?!

Dead silence. Mara steps up beside Gideon.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

You will answer me!

The door opens slowly. Esti steps out.

ESTI

Sorry, Uncle Gideon. We were just... studying.

Ruth steps up to block the doorway.

GIDEON

Thou shalt not lie, child.

Gideon pushes Esti aside and drags Ruth from the doorway. Mina steps out with her hair done up with strings. She has reddened lips and cheeks from the smashed beans.

MINA

Leave her alone!

Gideon turns to Mina. He is taken by her beauty. Mara grabs his arm where he is bruised. He winces and then regains composure. Gideon grabs Mina and rips the strings from her hair along with clumps of hair.

GIDEON

THOU SHALT NOT LEAD THE CHILDREN
ASTRAY! LESSON NUMBER THREE, CHILD!

Gideon drags Mina to the bucket of water and jams her head in and out of it as he preaches his angry sermon.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believeth in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

ASENATH

STOP!

Gideon throws Mina to the side. She is drenched and gasping. He turns to see Asenath. Her hair is made up. His rage subsides at her beauty.

Mara sees the way Gideon looks at Asenath. Mara grabs the scissors and drags Asenath by the hair into the pantry. Her sermon continues in the other room.

MARA

If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

Gideon drops his head.

MINA

(gasping & heaving)

You speak a lot about sin, but what about what thou shalt not?

Gideon spins with rage in his eyes, but he hits a wall at the sight of the wet down Mina's heaving breasts.

MINA (CONT'D)

Let he who has no sin throw the first stone. Right, pastor?

GIDEON

You think I don't know I have sinned, deep and vile?

Gideon pulls the shirt from his back. He is covered in scars from self-flagellation.

GIDEON (CONT'D)

I pay my penance.

He pulls his belt loose. Mina braces for a hit. Gideon begins to whip himself vigorously. Mara rushes back into the room and gasps. She follows him into their room.

Asenath enters the room weeping. Her hair mangled.

MINA
There has to be a way. Please God.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - MORNING?

Mina lies in a fetal position on the bed and stares at the wall.

Asenath enters and puts Izzy next to Mina. Izzy purrs. Mina slowly starts to pet Izzy.

Ruth and Esti enter. As Mina turns to them she sees Asenath and begins to weep.

MINA
I'm so sorry. I didn't think...

ASENATH
Daddy is the pastor. You can't stand up to the pastor.

MINA
But he's a bad pastor.

RUTH
Is Abbie a good pastor?

MINA
Yes. But there's no way to get her here. If only...

ESTI
What?

MINA
He took my clothes.

ASENATH
Are you upset about the clothes? Or this box?

Asenath pulls Mina's cell phone from her pocket. Mina jumps up and grabs it.

MINA
Oh my God! You saved it!

ASENATH
What is it?

MINA
A cell phone.

The girls share confused looks. Mina turns on the phone.

MINA (CONT'D)
Please. Please. Please.

The phone comes on and has a 42% charge.

MINA (CONT'D)
Yes, Jesus! Come on. Come on.

Mina holds up the phone and tests every part of the room.

MINA (CONT'D)
No. Please, no.

Mina collapses on the bed.

ASENATH
What?

MINA
This is a phone, but it won't work.

ESTI
Of course not. There's nowhere to
plug it in.

MINA
It doesn't need a plug. But it does
need a signal. One it can't get
through the ground.

RUTH
That's crazy.

ASENATH
Ruth!

Pregnant pause.

RUTH
I'm hungry.

ESTI
Me too. And the baby.

MINA
I can't.

RUTH
Dog's been gone for a long time.

ASENATH
The bowl's clean. I cleaned it
myself... a while ago.

Mina turns the phone off and hides it under her mattress. She looks at each girl's face and then touches Esti's stomach.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gideon and Mara sit at the table, still set from the last uneaten meal. They whisper.

GIDEON
Maybe I was mistaken.

MARA
I still have faith God brought her to you to test you. So you could prove yourself worthy.

GIDEON
I have to do better if I hope to save us all. You know that's my only prayer.

MARA
I know. Patience, my husband.

The door to Mina's room opens. Mina steps out and keeps her eyes on the dog bowl. She kneels down to it. The other girls come out. Gideon smiles.

GIDEON
Good girl.

Mina stops and stares into his eyes as she picks the bowl up and sits down at the table. She sets the bowl in front of her like a formal place setting. The other girls join her. Mina uses her fork and knife to eat like it's just another meal. She never breaks contact with Gideon as his eyes burn.

MINA
Manners. Lesson number four.

The other girls eat until Gideon juts up.

ASENATH
She's eating just like you said, daddy. Dog bowl and all.

Gideon goes to his room. Mara follows, but he slams the door in her face. She burns at Mina as she goes into the pantry.

MINA
Not too bad.

INT. BUNKER PANTRY - AFTERNOON?

Asenath sits in a chair while Mara tries to fix her hair cut.

MARA
I wish you didn't make momma have to do things like this, baby.

ASENATH

I know, momma.

MARA

Well, you'll never do anything like this again, right?

Mara digs into a knot with the comb causing Asenath pain.

ASENATH

No, Momma. Never again.

MARA

That's my girl. I know it's not you. And I know your daddy has his calling, but when I think of that whore in my home...

Mara twists the comb.

ASENATH

Ow.

MARA

Oh. Sorry, baby.

Mara trims Asenath's hair lovingly now.

MARA (CONT'D)

This won't look so bad. No, ma'am. I'll fix you right up.

Mara notices that Asenath is deep in contemplation.

MARA (CONT'D)

You okay?... Honey?

ASENATH

Yes, momma.

MARA

You're not still mad at me are ya?

ASENATH

No, momma.

MARA

Then what, baby?

ASENATH

Momma, can women be pastors?

Mara is taken aback.

ASENATH (CONT'D)

Cause Mina says the new pastor at daddy's church is a woman.

MARA
GIDEON!

INT. GIDEON AND MARA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Asenath sits on the bed as Gideon sits in a chair nose to nose with her. Mara paces behind him.

GIDEON
You sure she said the First Baptist
Church on Main?

ASENATH
Yes, daddy.

GIDEON
In town here?

ASENATH
Yes, daddy.

GIDEON
What was her name again?

ASENATH
Abbie.

GIDEON
You hear that, momma? Some no good
whore has taken hold of my church.

ASENATH
(softly to herself)
She's a good pastor.

GIDEON
And the lost soul the Lord sent us
knows her real well. Probably well
enough to seek her out and bring
her back here to help us poor
sinners.

Mara stops pacing and embraces Gideon.

MARA
The Lord sure does work in
mysterious ways, my husband.

GIDEON
He answers prayers, my love.

MARA
But, how?

GIDEON
Asenath. Are you ready to atone for
your sins, girl?

ASENATH
Yes, daddy.

INT. ESTI AND RUTH'S ROOM - DAY?

Mina sits with Esti and Ruth. Asenath enters.

ASENATH
Do you like my hair?

MINA
It looks nice.

ESTI
Very nice.

RUTH
It's a little short.

Asenath hangs her head as she sits on the bed.

ASENATH
Momma did her best.

MINA
It's fine. Here...

Asenath pulls away.

MINA (CONT'D)
It's fine. Isn't it?

ESTI
Real fine.

RUTH
It's...
(Esti nudges her)
Fine.

MINA
We were talking and maybe if I can
get in the pantry and hold my phone
up by the bee hive I could get a
signal and call for help.

Asenath's eyes light up.

ASENATH
Call Pastor Abbie?

MINA
Well, yea. But probably the police.

ASENATH
I'll help you call Pastor Abbie.

MINA
Oookaaaay. I'll probably have to talk loud for anyone to hear. Is there any time Gideon or Mara couldn't hear me?

ESTI
Yep.

They all smile slyly and giggle.

MINA
What?

ESTI
At least once a week Gideon gets REAL busy.

MINA
What about Mara?

ASTERATH
She's REAL busy too.

RUTH
Performing her wifely duties.

They giggle. Mina gets it.

MINA
Ewww!

RUTH
I know.

MINA
You're sure they won't hear us?

ALL 3 GIRLS
He's REAL loud.

INT. BUNKER PANTRY - WIFELY DUTY NIGHT

Gideon provides noise cover as the girls gather in the pantry. Mina starts up her phone and holds it up to the hive.

ESTI
Not too close.

No bars. Mina stands on a chair and holds her cell phone up against the hive. No bars. Finally, she just shoves the phone up as high as she can reach. She gets stung and drops down.

RUTH
She told you.

ESTI
You okay?

MINA
Yeah. I'm not allergic.

ASENATH
Well?

MINA
Nothing.

ESTI
Least you tried.

ASENATH
Can't you try anything else?

MINA
Phones aren't designed to work underground. Not this one anyway.

ASENATH
Then you have to get above ground.

MINA
What? How?

Asenath leaves and re-enters with cloth and string. She grabs a pair of long sleeve gloves made with the same material.

ASENATH
Momma made these gloves for when she needed to get honeycomb so she wouldn't get stung. We can wrap you in the same material.

MINA
They're bee proof? Why didn't you give them to me before I shoved my bare hand up there?

ASENATH
Sorry. I didn't think about it.

MINA
It really works?

ASENATH
Try it.

Mina hesitates. Asenath puts the gloves on and jumps up on the chair. She shoves both hands into the bees and waves them around before jumping back down.

ASENATH (CONT'D)
See? Have a little faith.

Mina looks at each girl's pleading face. She looks at the gloves and the bees swarming above her. Then Gideon lets out an extra loud grunt. She starts to put the gloves on.

MINA
Okay. Wrap me up.

Mina stands with her arms out as the girls get to work.

MATCH CUT TO:

Mina stands wrapped from head to toe like a mummy. Furniture is stacked up to reach the hole.

MINA (CONT'D)
Asenath, you and Ruth have to shove me up as far as you can as fast as you can. I'll have to do the rest.

ASENATH
Once you're up, keep going. Don't try to come back down. I think that will just be worse.

MINA
Great.

Asenath and Ruth climb up the makeshift tower. Esti helps Mina get up the stack as best she can. The tower falters under the weight of the three. It sways and shakes. Some of it comes crashing down with a bunch of pans making a huge racket. Gideon stops his exercises.

GIDEON (O.S.)
What's going on out there?

ASENATH
Nothing, daddy!

Esti helps stabilize the tower. Asenath leans into Mina.

ASENATH (CONT'D)
You run and never come back here. Whatever you do, don't bring Abbie back. There's nothing anyone can do for us. You save yourself.

Mina doesn't have time to respond as Asenath and Ruth shove her up into the bee hive as far as they can. Mina claws her way upward as the bee hum becomes deafening.

Mina looks down as the tower collapses with a thunderous crash. Mina pauses, but then triples her efforts as she sees Gideon arrive below.

She feels something grab her leg and start to pull her back down. She sees Gideon's evil grin with his hand like a vice on her ankle. Her hand finds a small, loose root and she uses it to stab down into Gideon's eye.

He lets her loose and she sees him strike his head on the counter as he falls, splitting it wide open. The hole closes behind her as she claws her way upward and, finally, into the daylight.

Mina runs from the beehive, shedding her "armor" as she slaps bees from her.

Mina goes full bore, tearing through anything in her way. She tumbles down hills, splashes through gullies, and breaks through briars until she finally reaches a road and collapses on it.

A car screeches to a stop just before hitting her. A man jumps out and leans over her.

MINA
(muttering)
Get Abbie. Save the girls.

Darkness takes Mina once more.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mina wakes up in a hospital bed with wires and hoses attached here and there. Her eyes struggle to adjust when she's startled by a loud snore. She looks over to see Abbie sleeping in the bed next to hers.

MINA
Abbie? Abbie. ABBIE!

Abbie bolts up.

ABBIE
Thank God. You had me plumb tore up! Passing out in the middle of the road covered in cuts and bee stings like that.

MINA
What happened to you?

ABBIE
Me? Darling, you're the one in a hospital bed.

MINA

So are you.

ABBIE

Oh, yeah. I guess worrying and praying on you got me worn slap out. Sometimes a good prayer will put you right down.

JANET, a seasoned nurse in her forties, enters.

NURSE JANET

Well, I guess both my patients are finally up. Should I admit you?

ABBIE

Just try it, wise ass.

Janet takes Mina's vitals.

NURSE JANET

How are we feeling today?

MINA

Sore. Tired. Dry mouthed.

ABBIE

Course you're tired. You've only been sawing logs for four days.

MINA

That long?

Abbie gives her a cup of water with a straw.

NURSE JANET

Not too fast, honey. You haven't drunk anything in a while.

MINA

Honey? The Girls. We have to get the police! There are three girls being held by a crazy pastor in an underground bunker.

ABBIE

We got the gist of all that. You know you talk in your sleep?

MINA

Did you find them?

NURSE JANET

Now calm down, honey. You don't want to pull any of these out. You'll make a mess of my nice room.

ABBIE

Bob!

SHERIFF ROBERT HUCKSTON, a strong, well-groomed man in his fifties, enters with DEPUTY CLARK, a pudgy, sloppy man in his twenties.

MINA

Did you find them, officer?

SHERIFF BOB

Sheriff. Is it all right, Janet?

NURSE JANET

Sure. She's fine, Sheriff. Better than patient number two over there.

ABBIE

Love you too, darling.

SHERIFF BOB

Ms. Sarkie, we combed every acre of woods from where you were found back to the path you disappeared from and then some and we couldn't find hide nor hair of anything remotely resembling any structure or person.

MINA

But they're out there. I spent a week buried underground with them. He has them trapped there.

SHERIFF BOB

Who has who trapped?

MINA

Pastor Gideon and his wife Mara. They're religious zealots. They have their daughter, Asenath, and two other girls, Ruth and Esti, locked in an underground bunker.

Clark takes notes. Sheriff Bob looks at Abbie and Janet.

SHERIFF BOB

Ring any bells?

Both ladies shake their heads, "No."

SHERIFF BOB (CONT'D)

Well, we'll run the names through our database, but you have to understand. Those woods are bigger than you can imagine.

(MORE)

SHERIFF BOB (CONT'D)

You could hide a brontosaurus out there and no one would ever find it. Let alone an underground bunker.

ABBIE

Hell, they can't even find one decent bigfoot.

SHERIFF BOB

You're not helping, pastor. Can you give us any unique markers or landmarks to go by?

MINA

There were trees... bushes... at least two streams... and mountains. Oh! And a beehive in the ground!

SHERIFF BOB

You see the difficulty, ma'am? Do you know how many hikers get lost up in them woods and are never seen again? And they want to be found.

MINA

But the girls are counting on me.

SHERIFF BOB

We'll run the names. Deputy Clark will get descriptions. We'll see if the police artist down in Charlotte can draw something up for you to look at. That's all we can do for now, ma'am. I'm sorry.

ABBIE

You boys are as useless as tits on a boar hog, Bob.

SHERIFF BOB

Abbie, I had every man and dog I could get hold of out there beating those bushes. You know I want to find them girls as much as anybody, but you also know them woods. Now come on.

ABBIE

I know. I'm sorry, Bob. I'm just snot slingin' mad.

SHERIFF BOB

Welcome to the club, pastor.

Sheriff Bob takes Deputy Clark aside.

SHERIFF BOB (CONT'D)
 I'll run the names. You stay and
 get descriptions of those people.
 And write down anything she can
 think of that might be helpful.

DEPUTY CLARK
 Got it, sheriff.

SHERIFF BOB
 And Clark, I want you to treat her
 gently and with respect. She's been
 through a lot. Treat her like you
 would your own momma.

DEPUTY CLARK
 Pam?

SHERIFF BOB
 Oh, yeah. Treat her like your
 grandma Sylvia that raised you.

DEPUTY CLARK
 Understood.

As Sheriff Bob leaves Deputy Clark goes to Mina's bedside.

DEPUTY CLARK (CONT'D)
 Are you up to giving descriptions
 of those people, ma'am?

NURSE JANET
 Better hurry, Clark. Doctor wants
 the bed by supper.

ABBIE
 Stitch 'em and ditch 'em.

NURSE JANET
 Ain't modern medicine grand?

INT. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH ON MAIN - EVENING

Abbie and Mina enter the healthy-sized, middle-class church.
 A "No Guns Allowed" sign is on the door.

MINA
 So this is your house? Nice.

ABBIE
 Ha.Ha. Better watch your mouth
 there girlie. This is the Lord's
 house. Mine's out back. Just
 picking up some notes from the
 office on this week's sermon.

MINA

Is it okay for me to be here?

ABBIE

Well, you ain't starting to smoke, so I guess so. Make yourself at home. Just refrain from blaspheming or devil worship till I get back. I just don't want to miss nothing.

Mina strolls around the church. She enters the side hall that Abbie went down. It is lined with family photos. When she gets towards the end of the hall she freezes.

On the wall is an old black and white photo of a group of people. A plaque reads, "Pastor Gideon Zared, Wife, Mara, and Daughter, Asenath, with his congregation. 1919-1937." The family is in front and Ruth and Esti are right behind them.

MINA

ABBIE! GET OUT HERE! NOW, DAMMIT!

Abbie comes rushing out of the office.

ABBIE

Golly bum! I'm coming. Ain't no need to be forking your tongue in the Lord's house, girl.

Abbie sees the look on Mina's face.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

What's wrong? You look like you seen a haint.

Mina points at the photo. Abbie reads it.

MINA

That's them.

ABBIE

Well, fuck me runnin'.

INT. ABBIE'S KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Abbie and Mina share beers and a pizza around a small table. The kitchen is simple but pretty. Mina stares at the picture.

ABBIE

So you spent the first week of your vacation buried under a bee hive with a family who's been dead for over 80 years? What was that like?

MINA

I'm not making this up, Abbie!
Those girls were real. And they
need our help.

ABBIE

So there's the Pastor Manson family
kidnapping joggers between dirt
naps. Plus they have a crazy girl
and a pregnant girl just for good
measure. AND a cat and dog the SPCA
don't know about. Just peachy.

MINA

Just a cat. Izzy. The dog got away.
Probably long dead.

ABBIE

Why would that stop him?

MINA

I know it sounds crazy, but you
have to believe me.

ABBIE

And you want us to take our happy
asses out into the 500,000 acre
Pisgah National Forest to look for
dead people? Dead people who are
zealots and want nothing more than
to crush the spirits, literally, of
little ol' girls like you and me.
Dead people, an entire county of
able-bodied men, mostly,
(to God)
- bless their hearts -
couldn't find.

MINA

That's it. It was all men. He's a
coward. He won't face a man. But he
thinks he's so much better than
women that they're no threat to
him. I bet we could find him.

ABBIE

Why would we want to?

MINA

For the girls.

ABBIE

A trio of haints?

MINA

Haints?

ABBIE

Ghosts.

MINA

If they are ghosts, then he's keeping their souls captive and they need us to release them so they can move on.

ABBIE

Why us?

MINA

Saving souls is your job, isn't it?

ABBIE

Don't pull that lawyer bullshit on me, girl.

MINA

Well, isn't it?

Abbie looks at the girls in the photo.

MINA (CONT'D)

They don't have anyone else.

Abbie looks at the cross with Jesus hanging on it on the wall. She sucks down the rest of her beer.

ABBIE

Get your shit in a sack and let's go. God help us.

EXT. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN TRAIL - MORNING

Mina and Abbie stand at the spot where Mina saw Gideon.

ABBIE

Well, ain't this some shit?

MINA

Those girls need us. Over 80 years trapped underground. Locked away from the light.

ABBIE

Question is. How long we gonna be trapped underground?

MINA

Do you know what their life is like?

(MORE)

MINA (CONT'D)
They're lost and terrorized by a man who rules over them claiming to be saving them from evil. They will never be free unless we free them.

ABBIE
I can live with that.

MINA
Abbie!

ABBIE
Well shitfire, girl. You want me to march off after a Holier-Than-Thou haint you gotta let me get my britches on straight.

Abbie adjusts her pants.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Let's go save us some good haints from some bad haints.

EXT. PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST - DAY

Abbie and Mina stop for a break.

ABBIE
How far did this idiot drag you?

MINA
I don't know. I was unconscious.

ABBIE
Well, how bout I get unconscious and you drag me.
(laying back)
Wake me when we get there.

Mina pulls out her phone. No signal.

MINA
This thing is useless.

ABBIE
Maybe you ain't holdin' your mouth right. Give it here.

Abbie tosses it back to Mina, who drops it.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Damn thing ain't worth a hill of beans. Musta been on sale at the Walmart.

Mina picks up the phone and notices a honey bee. Then another. Then another. She begins to follow them.

MINA
Come on. It's this way.

ABBIE
How you figure?

MINA
Remember? I climbed out through a big bee hive.

Mina and Abbie follow the bees until they lose them in a clearing. They look around until a shadow falls over them and they hear a sinister laugh. They look up and the dark form of Gideon blocks the sun.

ABBIE
Now listen here...

Mina and Abbie are sucked down into the ground. Gideon laughs as he disappears into the ground.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - MORNING?

Mina wakes in her old room. She begins to weep when an arm comes across her. Abbie sleeps next to her and rolls over to cuddle.

Mina screams. Abbie screams. They both jump from the bed. Mina sees Abbie's face and embraces her. Abbie sees the dark, damp room.

ABBIE
Well, shit to bed.

MINA
You can't talk like that here

ABBIE
Bull...

Asenath, Ruth and Esti rush in. Abbie sees their faces intercut with them in the photo from the church.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
...shit.

RUTH
You're back!

The girls embrace Mina.

ASENATH

(whispers)

I told you not to come back.

MINA

I couldn't abandon you to him.

ASENATH

There's no hope for us. You could have lived a good life.

Mina looks into Asenath's eyes.

MINA

There is always hope. For all.

The door swings open. Gideon darkens the doorway. He steps in and his head is fine. He smiles at Mina.

GIDEON

I knew you'd come back, child. And you brought a friend. Abigail?

Abbie steps up to Gideon. He towers over her.

ABBIE

Only my momma ever called me that. You call me pastor, Gideon Zared.

GIDEON

I am the only pastor here, woman.

ABBIE

You ain't been a pastor in a month of Sundays. Hell, a year of Sundays. I'm the pastor of the First Baptist Church.

GIDEON

How far the church has fallen.

ABBIE

How far you've fallen. Lower than dirt, even. Looks like you've joined the two hundred, "pastor." Now two hundred and one.

Abbie notices Mara standing in the doorway.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm sorry, ma'am. How rude of me. Two hundred and two.

MARA

You watch your mouth, missy.

ABBIE
I'm not a lil' flippy tailed girl
you and Goliath can intimidate. I
know my place in God's world.

GIDEON
No, you don't. But you will learn.

ABBIE
You'll learn I got me a nifty
slingshot. Know how to use it, too.

Gideon smiles and leaves.

GIDEON
Girls.

The girls leave. Asenath weeps as she closes the door.

ABBIE
That went well.

MINA
I don't understand. I jammed a root
into his eye. His head was split
wide open.

Gideon's head, as described appears between them, smiling.

GIDEON
Like this?

They jump back. Gideon laughs as he melts into the blackness.

ABBIE
I will stomp a mudhole in your ass,
girl. Bringing me into this.

MINA
He wasn't like this before

ABBIE
Now he knows you know he's dead. No
need to put on airs.

MINA
But you can stop him? Save the
girl's souls?

ABBIE
Only God can do that. The best we
can hope is that we are the vessels
he chose to do it. And not the ones
he chose to keep them company until
the ones he did choose show up.

Abbie pulls out a bible.

MINA
What are you doing?

ABBIE
Looking some shit up. You think I have an old sermon that would cover this? Here lawyer, research. Maybe there's instructions on how to make a slingshot.

Abbie gives Mina a pocket bible and they read.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - DAY?

The family stands around the table set with food. Asenath knocks on Mina's door. Mina slowly opens it.

ASENATH
Daddy wants you to join us.

ABBIE
He got his head on straight, so to speak?

ASENATH
He just wants to talk.

MINA
But is he saying anything worth hearing?

ASENATH
You're hungry ain't ya?

ABBIE
You know I like my groceries.

Mina and Abbie come to the table. They bow their heads.

GIDEON
Lord, we thank you for gathering us together so that thy will be done. We ask for your guidance to help those who are lost to find their way. We ask for the strength to do what needs to be done.

ABBIE
Lord, we pray that you send your light into the darkness. That your love acts as a beacon to lead us all to the path of your righteousness and salvation.

GIDEON
Amen.

ALL

Amen.

They all sit and eat as Gideon and Abbie face off.

ABBIE

How come you hid from those boys
who were all friendly like, but let
us crotchety ladies right in?

GIDEON

Think I'd let those perverted boys
find these innocent young girls?

ABBIE

So you get to be the only pervert
in this little paradise?

GIDEON

Manners, girl. I hid my family away
in here to protect them from people
like you. Infiltrating my church.
Slowly poisoning it. Nibbling away
at God's word like vermin. At first
preaching that little sins are
acceptable. Then, bigger and bigger
sins were met with acceptance. But
ALL sins are equal in God's sight.

MINA

What about lust?

GIDEON

(ignoring)

Peddling the devil's logic, casting
a fog over God's word and confusing
good folks' minds. Saying drunks
and thieves and addicts and whores
weren't sinners. They were just
"victims." Absolving them of their
sins with no divine intervention or
guidance. Acting like God has as
little to do with healing them as
they claim to have to do with their
own sins.

ABBIE

They weren't trying to separate
them from God. Just from people
riding around on their high horses,
like you, who condemn them and act
like they're God's hand on earth
meting out a living hell in the
name of heaven.

GIDEON

A pastor is God's hand on earth.

ABBIE

You've gotten too big for your britches. A pastor shouldn't be so prideful, but you ain't been a pastor for over 80 years.

GIDEON

And you have never been a pastor.

ABBIE

Son, we're about to have a come to Jesus meeting.

GIDEON

"But I suffer NOT A WOMAN TO TEACH, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

ABBIE

"The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, TEACHERS of good things."

GIDEON

Finish it. FINISH IT! "That they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be HOMEMAKERS, OBEDIENT TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS, that the word of God may not be BLASPHEMED." A woman pastor blasphemes the word of God.

MINA

(softly to Asenath)
What's happening?

ASENATH

Bible battle. Going quote to quote.

ABBIE

"Deborah, a prophetess, would sit under the palm tree in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment." By the will of God.

GIDEON

"Let your women KEEP SILENCE in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

ABBIE

You got it all cattywampus. "We entered the house of Philip the evangelist.

(MORE)

ABBIE (CONT'D)

Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied." What is speaking prophecy if not speaking the word of God?

GIDEON

(standing)

ENOUGH! Thou shalt not speak! Women are to serve men in SILENCE!

ABBIE

(standing)

I'm fixing to paint the stripes on the polecat, PASTOR Gideon. "if anyone does not provide, ESPECIALLY for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is WORSE THAN AN UNBELIEVER."

GIDEON

I gave up EVERYTHING for my family.

ABBIE

You buried them alive in a community grave.

GIDEON

Woman, shut your mouth! You are an abomination before the Lord!

ABBIE

The Lord sent me. "because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the OPENING OF THE PRISON TO THOSE WHO ARE BOUND."

GIDEON

The Lord did not send you for them. He sent you for me.

ABBIE & MINA

What?

GIDEON

When I saw Mina in the forest I thought the Lord had sent her to test my faith. To see if I could save her soul and thus prove that we deserved salvation. But when I heard that some woman had corrupted my very church, I knew that He sent her here that I might sew a seed in her mind so she would bring you back to me.

MINA

You used me? To get to her!

GIDEON

What is saving one lost whore when
I could save an entire church, by
freeing it from your influence. You
will denounce your pastorship and
me and mine will be saved.

ABBIE

That dog won't hunt.

GIDEON

Then die in darkness. Your church
will still be free and my work here
will be done. Thou shalt not
preach. New lesson number one.

ABBIE

You do knock my dick in the dirt
and God's word will be on my lips
when I drop as hope for these
children. My light will burn away
your darkness so they may be saved
and you'll have this haint up your
ass forever and ever, amen.

GIDEON

I'll be living with my family in
the house I have built for us in
heaven while you rot in this tomb.
The false prophetess and the whore
cursed to haunt each other for
eternity.

Gideon disappears in a smoky grin. Mara smiles and
disappears. Abbie yells to nothing.

ABBIE

Your works haven't even built you
an outhouse in hell.

Abbie drops in her chair and pounds the table.

RUTH

I think he likes you.

ASENATH

Ruth!

RUTH

Well, he didn't knock her clean
across the room.

ABBIE

He wants to break me spiritually.

MINA

He can't do that. Can he?

ABBIE

Only if my deacon's gone fishing.
Why didn't you pitch a fit?

MINA

Me? What was I supposed to do?

ABBIE

Get mad as all get out. Stand up to
him. Tell him the sun don't come up
just to hear him crow. Something.

ASENATH

You did it before.

MINA

That's when I thought he was just
another asshole. Not a supernatural
asshole.

ABBIE

Well, he's meaner than a two-headed
snake. I'll give you that. But
we're gonna have to take him down a
few notches.

MINA

That's what I brought you for.

ABBIE

I ain't the living savior, darling.
We ALL have to fight him. You girls
too.

ESTI

We can't.

ABBIE

Can't never could do nothin'. You
need to stop subscribing to his
paper. Stop believing that he's the
only one who has the power of God
with him.

ASENATH

You haven't seen what he can do.

ABBIE

Aw, bat shit! Are you all saved?

They all shake their heads, "Yes."

ABBIE (CONT'D)

You really believe it?

They shake their heads again, "Yes."

ABBIE (CONT'D)

Then you have Jesus in your heart.
You have the same power as he does.

ESTI

What should we do?

ABBIE

Get your big heads out of your
little asses. Do you believe what a
man tells you? Or what the bible
tells you?

ASENATH

This little light of mine.

ALL 3 GIRLS

I'm gonna let it shine.

ABBIE

Amen.

MINA

What about me?

ABBIE

Your heads the farthest up there.
You need to stop looking in those
funhouse mirrors and get a real
look at yourself. You're the prize
bull, sweetheart, and you need to
start acting like it. Now, let's
finish these groceries and get some
sleep. Tomorrow is going to be a
long day.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - NIGHT?

Abbie, Mina, Asenath, Ruth and Esti hold hands and pray.

ABBIE

Lord, we have no strength save that
what you've given us. We pray that
you multiply that strength and make
it equal to the task before us.
Save these girls from whoever would
keep them from the light of your
love, Lord. Lift us up and bless
our efforts. This we pray in your
name. Amen.

THE GIRLS

Amen.

They all embrace.

The girls head out the door as Abbie and Mina settle into their bed. Asenath looks back in.

ASENATH

Thank you for coming to help us. I know this has been a hard day for you.

ABBIE

Tomorrow is a new day. One full of hope.

Asenath smiles and closes the door behind her. Abbie rolls over on her side.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

I hope we make it through it.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - LATER

Abbie and Mina sleep restlessly. A man's hand reaches up and shakes Abbie's shoulder. Abbie's eyes slowly open and she let's out a startled gasp that wakes Mina.

ABBIE

Thank God. Seeing you makes me wanna slap my momma.

Sheriff Bob leans over the two.

SHERIFF BOB

Time for the awakening, Abbie.

Now Deputy Clark and Jake from the diner can be seen

ABBIE

That all you brought? They're about as useless as a screen door on a submarine.

SHERIFF BOB

You were supposed to save us.

Abbie's eyes adjust and sees that the room is now larger and filled with HER CONGREGATION.

ABBIE

What the hell?

SHERIFF BOB

Why'd you lie, Abbie?

Red cracks begin to glow in the ground. Steam rises.

SHERIFF BOB (CONT'D)
You pretended to be a pastor when
you knew it wasn't a woman's place.

ABBIE
What brand of horse shit...

The cracks break open spewing lava. The room glows red.

SHERIFF BOB
We trusted you.

JAKE
You laid us down with the devil.

SAM
You let me drown in the bottle.

SARA
You took life from me.

NURSE JANET
You damned us all.

ABBIE
No!

Flaming claws grab them and drag them down through the cracks.

Mina screams. A hand grabs Mina's shoulder and spins her around. Corbin stands next to her.

CORBIN
You were never good enough for me.
You failed me. You failed your
clients. You failed yourself.

Corbin is dragged down. Noa stands behind him weeping. Mina reaches for her, but a flame spurt blocks her.

MINA
Noa!

NOA
It's your fault you know. You're
weak. You just let them run all
over you. You're useless.

Noa is pulled down in flames. Mina collapses on the bed.

JOSEPH, a strong man in his 50's, walks from the flames.

ABBIE
Joe. Not you, Joe.

JOE

Abbie. Why didn't you save me?

ABBIE

You were a good man, Joe. Don't give up. I'll save you. I'll save all of you.

JOE

How can you save us? You can't even save yourself.

Abbie weeps as she looks at her husband's face.

ABBIE

Joe? Fuck you!

Abbie punches Joe right in the face. He stumbles backwards. His visage melts away to reveal Gideon. The people moan and wail as they are engulfed in the flames and melt away.

GIDEON

You know it's true. You can't save your own soul, let alone the souls of an entire congregation. Thou shalt not lead my church.

ABBIE

There's your problem. You're concerned about YOUR church. I'm concerned about God's.

GIDEON

I think it's time you left God's church.

ABBIE

God doesn't give a damn about what you think. And I only give a damn about what He thinks.

Gideon howls and charges forward. Mina pops up and smashes Abbie's bible into his face. Gideon flies into the opposite wall. All of his illusions disappear. Gideon rushes out of the room. Mina and Abbie look at each other, shocked.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

The power of the Word.

MINA

Amen, sister.

INT. GIDEON AND MARA'S ROOM - NIGHT?

Mara attends to the wound on Gideon's face.

MARA
The bible did this?

GIDEON
Those women did this.

MARA
Just calm down and smooth it away.

GIDEON
I tried. It's more than physical.
They've injured my very soul.

MARA
They're just women. You're God's
rightful servant. Or is your faith
failing?

GIDEON
Woman, I need you to believe in me?

MARA
I'm in this hole 80 years ain't I?

GIDEON
You are my rock. I shall persevere.
I shall overcome. I shall find the
way.

MARA
I know you will, my husband.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - NIGHT?

Abbie studies her bible. Mina paces.

ABBIE
We're barking up the wrong tree.

MINA
There's got to be something.

ABBIE
Maybe. Somewhere. In books we'll
never see.

MINA
Dammit Abbie!

ABBIE
Why're you spittin' at me? It's not
like this is youtube where I can
just type in, "how to destroy evil
spirit in underground lair!"

MINA

I'm sorry.

ABBIE

No, I'm sorry. I just don't know what to do. I'm old and wrinkled. I'm just give out. Maybe we are just here till the real saviors show up.

MINA

That's like nipples on a bull frog!

ABBIE

What?

MINA

People, MEN, have told me I'm not capable. Tried to snuff my light. Steal my power. Men afraid of losing their power, so they try to keep everyone else weak.

ABBIE

Nipples on a bull frog?

MINA

But you know your power. You have enough power to lead a church in a place where they do their best to keep a woman from doing anything more than making jam.

ABBIE

I like jam.

MINA

Stop it. You know you can do this. Your faith is stronger than his. You're here to save souls. He's here to use them.

ABBIE

But I...

MINA

Not everything's about you.

ABBIE

(laughing)

I know that's right. God did send us to help these girls. We're not the goal. We're the tool.

MINA

Now you're talking.

ABBIE

Hell, these ain't wrinkles. They're power lines!

MINA

That's the spirit.

ABBIE

Besides, I'd rather die with no regrets. Cept that one tattoo we ain't gonna talk about.

MINA

Die? Who said anything about dying?

ABBIE

When the Lord decides it's your time, ain't nothing going to stop you from going. Whether you're fighting a jack ass in a hell hole or shooting the shit at the diner. But I know the Lord ain't done with me yet.

MINA

What if you're wrong and the Lord decides now is your time?

ABBIE

Good Christians don't say shit like that.

The door slowly opens. Mina and Abbie brace themselves. Asenath comes in carrying Izzy.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

This must be Izzy, the kitty haint.

Asenath gives them a hand carved doll that looks like Gideon.

ASENATH

I brought you this. It's not voodoo or nothing. But it does feel good to give it a jab every now and then when he's being... extra stern.

MINA

Thank you.

ABBIE

Did you girls think about what I said at supper?

ASENATH

I saw what you did to daddy. How'd you do that?

Ruth falls through the door. Esti is right behind her.

ESTI
Sorry. We want to know too.

ABBIE
Well, close the door. You're
letting all the good air out.

MINA
I hit him with the bible.

ASENATH
The bible did that?

RUTH
All I ever did was read it.

ABBIE
You see he's not God's gift. Even
he has to answer to a higher power.
And that power is in each of us.

ASENATH
I don't know. Daddy's faith is
stronger than anyone I know.

ESTI
There's chinks in his heavenly
armor.

ASENATH
Hush!

ABBIE
Don't hush her. Don't you get it?
We're peas in a pod. Either we all
get out or none of us do.

MINA
All we have is each other. If you
know something that will help...

ASENATH
It's personal.

ABBIE
Nothing's more personal than
sharing a hole in the ground,
darling.

ESTI
It's the baby.

ABBIE
Holy shit.

MINA

And he's still your spiritual leader?

ASENATH

It was just a moment of weakness. He's tore up about it.

ABBIE

Tore up enough to hide it away in a hole six feet underground?

ASENATH

It's not like that.

MINA

So his faith has faltered. What if we strengthened our faith?

ESTI

How do you mean?

MINA

I felt strength when we prayed together last night. What if we formed our own congregation? Our souls united could defeat him. If only we had a pastor.

They all look at Abbie.

ASENATH

A woman pastor?

MINA

You have to stop looking at the world through your father's filters. Women are just as worthy of God's gifts as men.

ABBIE

I'm willing to lead you in your faith and, if necessary, die to defend your souls.

ASENATH

Gideon won't kill you. He just kills your spirit and watches your body slowly die.

ABBIE

Darling, I only care about your souls. He may have trapped them down here, but he can't harm them.

Abbie hugs Asenath. They all come in for a hug. Abbie opens her eyes and Asenath is now a rotting corpse.

Abbie gasps and backs away.

Mina opens her eyes and all three girls look as they would after rotting in the ground for 80 years. The baby's corpse is visible through Esti's rib cage. Mina backs away.

Asenath begins to weep and leave, but she is caught by a hand. Abbie pulls her in for a hug again. She motions for the other girls to join. Mina slowly rejoins the group.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
This is just flesh. I've seen your
souls. They're beautiful.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - MORNING?

The girls, looking normal, set the table for breakfast. Mara and Gideon enter.

GIDEON
(to Mina's door)
You girls afraid to leave your
room?

Mina and Abbie join them.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
Have a nice night?

ABBIE
It broke me from sucking eggs, but
I've had worse.

MINA
How's the face?

GIDEON
I've had worse.

ABBIE
Well, you just had to go and show
your natural born ass, didn't you?

GIDEON
Language, girl. Though you're not
much of one for niceties are you?

ABBIE
I give what I get.

Gideon circles Abbie like a shark, taking bites out of her as he goes.

GIDEON

You risk the souls of your entire congregation through your blasphemy and ignore the sins running rampant through your own church and even help cover them up. You slept with Jake to help him over the loss of his wife. You helped Sara get an abortion without her parent's knowledge. You let Sam drink until he passes out in the church office. Your own husband died because he was high on illegal drugs.

Abbie hangs her head and cries. Gideon smiles. She raises her head and we realize the crying sound is actually laughter.

ABBIE

Stop looking for the spec in everyone else's eye and work on the log in your own, dumb ass.

GIDEON

WOMAN!

ABBIE

You are a dumb ass. The "sins" you rattled off were all in God's service.

GIDEON

Thou shalt not lie, woman.

ABBIE

Is compassion a lie? When Jake lost his wife, I just laid up in the bed beside him. Both fully clothed. Until he could sleep without her.

Sara was forced into sex and her parents would have hunted that boy down and killed him.

GIDEON

He deserved no less.

ABBIE

Whatever he deserved, Sara's dad would have wound up in prison for the rest of his days. I worked with Sheriff Bob and that boy is serving his time. I visit that young-un in prison because he deserves God's mercy as well. Judge not Gideon, lest ye be judged as harshly. That poor girl is still struggling to deal with it all.

(MORE)

ABBIE (CONT'D)

And Sam, well Sam is a mean drunk. He's been doing his best to quit it, but sometimes he falters. So I let him sleep it off in the church, rather than go home and take it out on his wife while he is not in control of himself. He is working for God's healing, but it is a long path for him.

GIDEON

Explain away your husband's death with your pastorly duties.

ABBIE

Who licked the red off your candy?

GIDEON

Well?

ABBIE

I loved Joe. He was funny as all get out. But the Lord saw fit to strike Joe with epilepsy. The only thing that helped him at all, our beloved politicians saw fit to keep illegal so their drug buddies could take their pound of flesh. So, yes, I got Joe his marijuana illegally. Legal and right don't always stroll hand-in-hand.

When Joe died he was having a particularly bad day and took more than usual. I was doing my part at the church and he wandered out of the house. He got tired and laid down for a nap. On the railroad tracks.

GIDEON

Had you followed the law he would still be alive.

ABBIE

That ain't no life. Filled with seizures and pain. Least he had some peace and dignity while he was alive, rather than live a little longer to satisfy some lawmakers.

GIDEON

Sin is sin.

ABBIE

I know my sins. Me and God chewed the fat for hours over them.

(MORE)

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Especially that last one. What
about your sins?

Gideon shows his scars. Mara touches them lovingly.

GIDEON
I know my sins. I assure you, my
discussions with God about them
have been a little more intense
than yours.

ABBIE
Self-flagellation?

RUTH
Ew. He does that?

MINA
It means beating yourself.

RUTH
I know.

ASENATH
Shush.

ABBIE
That's your problem. You weaponize
your faith. Jesus is not a weapon.
He is a balm.

RUTH
A bomb is a weapon.

ASENATH
Balm. B-A-L-M. Now hush.

GIDEON
You question my faith?

ABBIE
I question any faith that requires
you to do bodily injury to feel
like you have connected with God.
This is not in service to God.
Keeping these girls buried in your
serpent's nest is not in service to
God. You serve only you.

GIDEON
I serve God's will.

ABBIE
Was it God's will that you let
loose your serpent on Esti?

Gideon howls in rage. The whole bunker shakes and rocks fall. The girls huddle under the table.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
I'll take that as a "No."

Mara grabs Gideon and screams over the rumbling.

MARA
You can't save a corpse.

The rumbling subsides and is replaced by dishes and jars being hurled about. The girls stay under the table until the sounds finally end and Gideon's legs appear at the table.

GIDEON
Let's see how much you run your mouth with no "groceries" to fuel it, girl.

Gideon storms out. Mara follows.

MARA
You will learn your place.

Abbie and the girls come out from under the table. All the food and dishes are gone. Asenath and Ruth check the pantry.

RUTH
It's all gone.

ASENATH
Even the bee hive.

MINA
I'm sorry girls.

ABBIE
Why? Haints don't need food.

MINA
Holy shit! You're right. What the hell? I ate from an old dog bowl because "the baby is hungry!"

ESTI
Sorry. We really did feel hungry.

ABBIE
It's a "ghost pain." Like a man feeling a really bad itch on his elbow when his arm is missing.

MINA
I'm gonna give them a ghost pain.

ASENATH
We're really sorry.

RUTH
Thank you?

Abbie heads to the bedroom.

MINA
Where are you going?

ABBIE
To read the bible. The Lord, He
nourishes my soul. And I'm very
hungry right now.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - NIGHT?

Mina sleeps in the bed and Abbie sleeps in the chair, both with open bibles on their chests. The bible is lifted from Mina's chest. She slowly opens her eyes. Ruth is staring right in her face. Mina jumps, causing Abbie to start awake.

RUTH
Can I sleep in here?

MINA
What's wrong?

RUTH
I'm used to the bees humming me to
sleep. Now they're gone, the
silence is too loud.

ABBIE
We left the light on for ya.

Mina notices something moving on the wall just at the edge of the candle's light. She pushes the light closer.

The wall crawls with all kinds of spiders. Mina jumps up onto the bed.

The spiders form Gideon's smiling face and then start crawling towards the bed. Mina and Abbie scream.

Ruth stands on the opposite side of the room. She furrows her brow and the spiders move to her, covering her in an undulating sea of legs. Ruth starts to twitch. Mina and Abbie grab things to squash the spiders.

MINA
Hang on, Ruth. We're coming.

They get closer and hear Ruth is giggling.

RUTH
Hurry up. They tickle too much.

ABBIE
You're okay?

RUTH
Of course. Spiders are my friends.

MINA
Could you ask them to leave?
Politely.

RUTH
Don't you want to play tickle?

MINA & ABBIE
We're good.

The spiders crawl down and out the hole in the wall.

RUTH
Bye.

Asenath and Esti come in. Izzy swats at a leftover spider.

ASENATH
We saw the spiders.

ESTI
Are you all right?

ABBIE
Can you all control the animals
like your father does?

The girls share a look.

ASENATH
Not as good.

MINA
Ruth just overrode his little
spider death squad.

ASENATH
Ruth is better with the spiders. I
do the snakes the best.

ESTI
I'm good with dirt.

ABBIE
I'm madder than a wet hen. When
will you girls stand up to Gideon?
You're stronger than you think.

MINA

Gideon has no real power over you.
He uses fear and intimidation to
control you.

RUTH

Yea, but he's really good at it.

MINA

You mistake his physical strength
for actual power. The true strength
is inside each of you.

ABBIE

Strength of the spirit.

ASENATH

But how do we use it?

ABBIE

Stop seeing him as your only path
to heaven. Pastor Numb Nuts has
nothing to do with you getting into
heaven. If you are right with God
nothing can stand in your way.

Asenath drops her head.

ASENATH

What if you're not right with God?

ABBIE

Girl, you've been buried six feet
deep most your life. What sins
could you have committed?

ASENATH

Sometimes I have impure thoughts.

MINA

Most kids your age have impure
search histories. You're good.

ABBIE

If you've asked for forgiveness
then you're fine as frog hair.

ASENATH

I have, but what about daddy. It's
wrong for me to go against him.

ABBIE

Your daddy is a jack ass. He is
keeping you from the Lord and you
have to put on your big girl
panties and take him down.

(MORE)

ABBIE (CONT'D)

Jesus said, "You must love me more than your father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters – even more than your own life!" And I know you do, because you did as God commanded and obeyed your shitty parents even when they brought you down here to die.

MINA

You gave your life in service. Now it's time to move on to the afterlife you were promised. Daddy be damned. And he will.

ESTI

But how?

MINA

If you all work together do you think you can dig us out of here?

ESTI

We never thought to try to get to the outside. What good would that do us?

MINA

Why doesn't he want you to go into the light?

ABBIE

That son-of-a-bitch. He's keeping you hidden away from the light because, even though you've earned a place in heaven, he has not.

MINA

That's why he tried to "save" me.

ABBIE

And is trying to stop me from preaching. He thinks that will make him right with God after what he's done to Esti. And to all of you.

ASTENATH

You mean if we get into the light we'll go straight to heaven?

ABBIE

Sure enough.

RUTH

Well, let's go! I've been wanting to meet Jesus forever. I have his statue in my room you know.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - NIGHT?

The door to Mina's room slowly opens and Mina's head sticks out and looks around. No one. All the girls quietly cross to the pantry.

INT. BUNKER PANTRY - CONTINUOUS

Mina examines the spot in the ceiling where the bee hive was.

MINA
This has to be the weakest spot.
How do you...

ASENATH
It's like moving a muscle that's
not attached to your body.

MINA
Can you all "flex" together.

ASENATH
We'll try. Wait! Izzy.

ABBIE
I've got your baby. You concentrate
on your mojo.

The girls hold hands like a prayer ring and concentrate. The wall shakes and dirt comes down to make a ramp up the wall as a hole forms in the ceiling. The girls crawl up the hole. Mina gives Abbie a boost up. When she does Abbie's shirt goes up a little and her pants go down a little revealing a tramp stamp, "Faith Like A Mustard Seed."

MINA
Found the regret.

Abbie swats at Mina and adjusts her clothes.

ABBIE
Hush up while we're trying to
escape.

They all move slow but steady upward, forming a longer ramp as the dirt gives way before them. They start to see a little light peeking in through the dirt in front of them.

The light is shut out as a large boulder fills the space in front of them knocking them backward. They regroup and push harder. Rocks begin to fill the space in front of them as the ramp begins to dissipate behind them. They all slide back down to the floor of the pantry in a heap. The hole fills completely with rock.

They look up and Gideon and Mara hover over them.

MARA
Foolish girls.

Asenath, Ruth and Esti are lifted into the air.

GIDEON
Thou shalt not disobey thy elders.
I will give you a day to think on
what you've done before I decide on
your punishment.

Ruth and Esti are dragged to their room. The door slams shut.

MARA
My own child.

GIDEON
Thou shalt not believe the lies of
these false prophets. There is only
one preacher here who can take you
on to the promised land. Put your
faith in your father. Not these
misguided whores.

Asenath is dragged to her room. The door slams shut.

MINA
You like that word, don't you?
Makes us objects. Easy to see as
less than. Easier to keep down.

GIDEON
You keep yourself down. I am trying
to raise you up.

MINA
Because we need YOU to do that.

ABBIE
If you really want to help us - to
help these girls - you need to
start with love, not fear, pastor.
Remember Paul's letter? "Let All
that you do be done with love."

MINA
And Paul's song, "All you need is
love."

GIDEON
Every thing I do is with love.

MINA
I think you're confusing love with
lust, pastor.

ABBIE
 (whispers to Mina)
 Will you stop your hissy fit?
 You're not helping.

Gideon steps towards Mina. Abbie gets between them.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
 Love does not harm the innocent.
 Love does not take advantage. Love
 does not hide in the ground from
 the light of God. If you love them,
 pastor, let them go into the light.

Gideon looks to their doors and then to the blocked up hole.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
 Set their souls free. Let them join
 their father in heaven. Then, Lord
 willing and the creek don't rise,
 you'll find your path there.

Gideon looks at her sideways.

GIDEON
 You speak of love? Right after you
 tried to take away the love of my
 family. You try to turn them
 against me, but you will fail.

Abbie and Mina rise off the floor and float into their room.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
 My family will stay strong. It is
 you who will break. And my family
 will walk into heaven arm in arm,
 TOGETHER. Thou shalt not take the
 love of my family from me.

ABBIE
 You love them like a tick loves a
 red bone hound, pastor.

The door slams shut.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - MORNING?

Abbie wakes and sees Mina pouring through the bible.

MINA
 There's no answers in here. No
 miracle cures. No salvation.

ABBIE

It's all in there. "Have you eyes,
but not see?" We're like a blind
hog rooting for what we think
things should be rather than
finding what they truly are.

MINA

I see that we're stuck in a hole
with Pastor Pennywise and three
girls who will play his victims
till they die... even long after.

Mina weeps. Abbie comforts her.

ABBIE

You're a strong, modern woman. You
can't understand us old-fashioned
country folk. Those girls've lived
over eighty years under his
"guidance." He's convinced them
he's their superior. That their
value and hope lies in him. That's
not easy to break free from.

MINA

I do understand.

Mina leans into Abbie, spent.

ABBIE

What's that?

Soft singing can be heard. They go around the room and
realize it's coming from Asenath's room next to them.

ASENATH

This little light of mine I'm going
to let it shine.

MINA

I wish they'd let the light inside
them shine. Strong and bright. Just
one time.

ABBIE

(getting an idea)

Not all of them. Just Esti. Shit! I
ain't got the sense God gave a
rock.

MINA

What?

ABBIE

Help me find a thin spot between us
and the two girls.

Abbie and Mina inspect the opposite wall until they find a thinner spot. Abbie yells into the dirt wall.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Esti! Ruth! Ya hear me?

Mina breaks the chair and hands Abbie a leg. They use them to dig a small hole in the wall to Esti and Ruth's room.

INT. ESTI AND RUTH'S ROOM - MORNING?

Esti rocks holding her belly lovingly. Ruth mimics Esti with a wooden doll.

ESTI
I wonder what she'll look like?

RUTH
Mine looks like Punch or Judy.

Dirt starts to fall in on the wall.

RUTH (CONT'D)
What now? Moles?

ESTI
Gideon?

RUTH
He said a day.

The girls huddle together. A chair leg flies through the hole, clambers to their feet and startles them.

RUTH (CONT'D)
That's a new one.

Ruth inspects the hole. A hand thrusts out at her. She bites it. Abbie screams in pain. Ruth looks through the hole.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Abbie?

Abbie and Mina widen the hole with Ruth's help.

ESTI
Given up and renovating now?

RUTH
Adjoining rooms. Yea!

Abbie leans out of the hole.

ABBIE
You been carrying that little
bundle of joy for over 80 years.
(MORE)

ABBIE (CONT'D)
How about it, honey? You want it
out?

 ESTI
Lord, yes.

INT. ASENATH'S ROOM - MORNING?

Asenath brushes the hair of her doll as she sings softly.

 ASENATH
This little light of mine. I'm
gonna let it shine.

The top half of Ruth comes busting through the wall.

 RUTH
Wanna see something neat?

 ASENATH
What are you doing? Gideon will
kill us!

 RUTH
Again? Come on. We need your help.

INT. MINA'S SMALL DARK ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Abbie gets Esti into position on the bed. Mina, Asenath and
Ruth pile furniture against the door. Izzy jumps on top.

 ASENATH
Are you sure?

 MINA
The answer WAS in the book. Love.

 ABBIE
Ain't no greater love than a
mother's. Ain't no brighter light
than a newborn baby's.

 ASENATH
But Gideon...

 ABBIE
"Submit yourselves therefore to
God. Resist the devil and he will
flee from you." No man flees faster
than from a baby he don't want to
be responsible for.

 ASENATH
Shouldn't we get hot water and
towels and...

ABBIE

This ain't no medical birth, honey.
This is one of them miracle births.

MINA

You and Ruth need to keep Gideon
out until the baby's born. Be
strong. For Esti. And for the baby.

ABBIE

You mean "we," sweetheart. They
need your strength to keep them
resolute as they stand up to
Gideon. You're they're example.

MINA

I'm no match for Gideon.

ABBIE

All mouth and no gumption? You keep
telling them they have the strength
in them. Heal thysself, doctor.

MINA

I'm more like them than I want to
admit. I've let men run over me and
keep me in the dark.

ABBIE

Bullshit! Maybe you did once, but
you've stood up to Gideon over and
over again.

MINA

Only to be knocked back down.

ABBIE

And get back up. Hell woman, you
crawled through a live beehive. NOT
a ghost beehive. The real shit.

MINA

To get away from him.

ABBIE

Then, AFTER you found out he was a
haint from hell, you drug this
tired old bible beater back here to
light his ass on fire and get these
girls free. If that ain't strength
I'll suck your ass on main street!

MINA

You are a strange woman.

ABBIE

But you know I'm right. Now show them girls the three of you are strong enough to yoke any jack ass.

Mina helps Asenath and Ruth to reinforce their barricade. Abbie gets Esti set up like a regular birth would be.

ABBIE (CONT'D)

You comfortable? Enough pillows?

ESTI

Is it going to hurt?

ABBIE

I ain't gonna lie, a real baby hurts like hell. But I got no reference for this here. For all I know it'll be biscuits and gravy.

ESTI

Either way. I'm ready to see her face.

ABBIE

How you reckon it's a girl?

ESTI

God wouldn't curse this world with another Gideon.

ABBIE

Amen, darlin.

Mina, Asenath and Ruth inspect their handiwork.

ASENATH

Daddy will get through it.

MINA

Just, please God, no more spiders.

ASENATH

The spiders. The snakes. He uses them because he knows your fears. You have to rise above your fear or he'll win.

RUTH

I think they're cute. All fuzzy.

ABBIE

I don't like spiders and snakes, but that ain't what it takes to love me.

Mina turns to Abbie's smile. Mina smiles and shares a look of strength with Asenath and Ruth.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Everybody ready to bring this child
into the world? Ready or not here
it comes.

ESTI
What do I do?

ABBIE
Relax. If you feel it moving. Push.
Normally, a baby that ain't come
out we'd induce with some herbs,
but I think the only thing that's
gonna get this baby out is prayer.

ESTI
You start.

ABBIE
Lord, you know I ain't right, but I
have a good heart. And I would have
never in a million years thought
I'd be praying this prayer, but
please Lord, help me get this
little haint baby birthed.

RUTH
Amen.

ESTI
Our father, who art in heaven.

Esti's stomach glows.

ESTI (CONT'D)
Hallowed be thy name.

The ground begins to rumble as the glow brightens.

ESTI AND ABBIE
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.

Esti groans at a labor pain. Rumbles and glow increase.

ALL
On earth as it is in heaven.

Esti howls with pain. Earth falls from the roof. They stop.

ASENATH
Maybe...

ABBIE
 Don't stop! Give us this day our
 daily bread.

Esti grabs the sides of the bed and pushes. The room rumbles
 with her pain and effort as she goes through birth

ALL
 And forgive us our trespasses.

A loud bang hits the door.

GIDEON (THROUGH DOOR)
 What's going on in there?

ALL
 As we forgive those who trespass
 against us.

Repeated banging on the door as the blockade gets pushed
 back. Mina, Asenath and Ruth lean into the barricade.

GIDEON (THROUGH DOOR)
 Girls! Open this door!

ALL
 And lead us not into temptation.

The door splinters. The girls are pushed back. Izzy bolts.

ALL (CONT'D)
 But deliver us from evil.

Esti screams as she bears down.

ABBIE
 PUSH!

GIDEON (THROUGH DOOR)
 What are you...? NO!

The door explodes inward splaying the barricade and flinging
 the girls. Gideon's darkness fills the doorway. He starts to
 step, but Mina jumps up in front of him.

MINA
 For thine is the kingdom.

MINA AND ASENATH
 And the power.

MINA, ASENATH AND RUTH
 And the glory.

GIDEON
 STOP!

Gideon pushes them with a force. Asenath and Ruth push back. Esti howls.

ABBIE
Girls! DUCK!

The girls hit the floor and Esti lets out a wave of power that knocks Gideon across the main room and through his own door.

Mara helps him up as the place goes dark except for one candle next to Esti.

The girls regroup around Abbie.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Get back there. He's not done.

The girls stand guard at the door. Abbie turns to Esti.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
That was good, but you need to stop pushing him and push this baby. There is nothing else more important. Our father...

Esti nods and begins to push. Everything shakes.

ABBIE AND ESTI
Who art in heaven...

Esti howls in pain and the earth rumbles as Abbie continues the prayer. Mina and Asenath relight the candles by the door.

In the darkness of the main room something BIG moves. The dark form steps into the candlelight. It is Gideon wrapped in hundreds of spiders to form one huge spider. Mina gasps. Gideon smiles and slowly moves forward.

MINA
Abbie!

ABBIE
I'm busy. Deal with it! You got this! ...thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven....

Gideon Spider raises up and screeches. Mina falters.

ASENATH
We're all God's creatures. Spiders aren't evil. Just... different.

RUTH
Different and cute.

Mina locks arms with the girls and steps forward. Gideon Spider skitters back and forth smiling. He starts to lunge forward, but then stops.

Gideon's face shows confusion. He falls as the spiders come apart and cover the ground. They all roll over on their backs with their eight legs twitching sporadically in the air.

MINA

What the...

Ruth smiles and wiggles her fingers towards them.

RUTH

They're so fuzzy.

MINA

What are you doing?

RUTH

Tickling them. See 'em laughing?

MINA

That's the most wonderful and disturbing thing I have ever seen.

ASENATH

That's enough, Ruth.

RUTH

Aw.

Ruth stops and the spiders all skitter off into the dark. The girls lock arms again and step forward into the doorway.

MINA

You now know the strength of these girls' spirits, so you try to attack us physically. Hoping your false power will crush our real power, but you're wrong.

GIDEON (O.C.)

You are wrong little girl.
SSSSSSoooo wrong. Tickle this.

A rattle is heard. Then another. Then another. Waves of snakes begin to crest in the darkness.

MINA

(to herself)

Snakes. Shit!

(to Gideon)

You're desperate, Gideon. You know you've lost. You can't take our power anymore. We won't let you.

GIDEON

You want to see real power?

The waves of snakes roll back and forth around Gideon as he transforms into a giant snake. The same snake as the one in Mina's bed. Gideon Snake shakes his rattler creating a deafening noise. The girls all cover their ears.

Abbie prays as Esti growls and pushes. The whole bunker shakes. The bright light moves down her body.

ABBIE

Hold on a little longer. She's coming. Just a gnat's ass more.

Gideon Snake rises up and strikes.

Asenath steps up to meet him. Gideon stops short.

ASENATH

NO, DADDY!

GIDEON

You've chosen. God help you, girl.

Gideon Snake hisses and rears back to strike again.

He lunges forward, but is stopped. As Asenath wrings her hands the snakes wrap around Gideon creating one big knot of writhing bodies. Gideon becomes a man again.

MINA

You're no longer in control here. Our fates are our own.

Asenath and Ruth look distressed and breathe heavily. Gideon scowls as he backs away into the darkness.

MINA (CONT'D)

(to Asenath)

Hope he stays back. Can't think of anything else to do but flash him.

Asenath and Ruth grab Mina as they double over in pain.

MINA (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

Asenath and Ruth cry out as they grab their stomachs.

MINA (CONT'D)

What's he doing to you?

Mina feels her stomach. Asenath and Ruth fall back into the room on the ground. Mina steps forward searching the darkness for Gideon.

MINA (CONT'D)
What did you do to them?

ABBIE
Oh my God!

Mina turns expecting to see Esti's baby, but Esti is still in birth pains.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
(to the Darkness)
YOU BASTARD!

Asenath and Ruth both lie on their backs with swollen glowing bellies. They raise their legs up and howl in birthing pain.

MINA
What's going on?

ABBIE
Esti isn't the only family secret
Gideon was trying to bury.

Abbie throws two pillows to Mina.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Try to make them comfortable while
I take care of this one.

Mina helps Ruth to her bed.

MINA
Hold on. Abbie's coming.

Mina helps Asenath to her bed. Izzy jumps up beside her.

INT. GIDEON AND MARA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mara grabs Gideon and looks in his eyes.

MARA
What's going on, husband?

GIDEON
We have to stop them.

MARA
Stop what?

GIDEON
Damn it, woman. Know your place.
Help me stop them.

Gideon and Mara cross to Mina's room.

Esti lets out one final ground rumbling howl and the little room fills with light. A crying that sounds like calming chimes rings out. Abbie turns holding a glowing baby girl. She hands her to Esti. The ground stops rumbling.

Asenath howls and Gideon rushes to the hole to Asenath's room. Mara is right beside him.

ASENATH
I didn't know.

MINA
I know. It's going to be okay. This isn't your fault.

ASENATH
I know. It's his! THOU SHALT NOT!

Gideon is thrown out of Mina's room and across the main room into the pantry. Mara crosses to Asenath.

MARA
Momma's here, baby.

ASENATH
You were here the whole time and you did nothing.

Asenath cries out in pain and Mara is thrown against the far wall of her room. She slumps into a pile on the floor.

Abbie crosses to Ruth in her room.

ABBIE
Look at you, all glowin.

RUTH
Just like a jack-o-lantern.

ABBIE
But is it a trick or a treat?

RUTH
My baby will be a treat. She won't look like no Punch or Judy.

ABBIE
She'll be beautiful.

Ruth howls in pain. Asenath echoes her.

ABBIE (CONT'D)
Let's bring 'em home, girls! Our father...

ALL
 Who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy
 name. Thy kingdom come.

Abbie, Esti and Mina continue the prayer as Asenath and Ruth
 moan, groan and howl in pain. The place rumbles again.

ABBIE
 Keep pushing ladies. We got three
 birthdays to celebrate today.

Gideon steps from the pantry and sees light glowing from the
 doors to Asenath's room and Ruth's room. Happy chimes sing
 out to announce the babies' arrival. Abbie And Mina step into
 the main room smiling.

GIDEON
 Damned Whores. I should have left
 you to rot in your corrupt world.
 You turned my family against me.
 Against God.

ABBIE
 You truly believe that horse-shit?
 That you are so entwined with God
 that anyone who doesn't follow you
 blindly doesn't follow God?

MINA
 They tried to follow God and you
 convinced them that meant following
 you. They finally realized that you
 stood between them and God. No man
 may do that.

GIDEON
 I am their pastor! Thou shalt not
 disobey me!

Gideon crosses to Asenath's Door.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
 Girl! Open this door! NOW!

Light flares and the door blows off it's hinges. Gideon is
 smashed up against the far wall.

Asenath steps out of her room holding her glowing baby. Esti
 steps out of Mina's room holding her glowing baby.

Gideon throws the door from him and makes a stand in the
 center of the main room.

GIDEON (CONT'D)
 I AM IN CHARGE HERE!

Light flares and Ruth's door blows off it's hinges. Gideon is smashed up against the other wall.

Ruth steps out of her room holding her glowing baby. The three new mothers meet in the center of the room and admire each other's babies smiling at one another. They all embrace with Abbie and Mina.

MINA

Three beautiful baby girls.

The mothers look up and the earth opens to reveal a beautiful sunny day. The mothers' glow now matches their babies. They are clothed in white robes.

ABBIE

Go with God.

ESTI

Thank you.

Esti ascends.

RUTH

She is beautiful.

Ruth ascends.

MINA

I'll miss you.

ASENATH

I'll see you again soon.

Asenath ascends. Izzy sleeps in the train of her robes.

The mother's lights are gone, but sunlight fills the bunker. It almost looks homey.

ABBIE

Ya done good, kid.

MINA

What'd she mean, "soon?"

They laugh. A darkness blocks the sun from them. Gideon, beaten and battered looks up into the light.

GIDEON

I am the father.

MINA

They found something stronger than a father's anger. A mother's love.

ABBIE

Now they'll stand judgement before God for their actions and their actions alone. I believe God will embrace them and their children with the unconditional love they gave Him. I wouldn't give a chicken's pecker for your chances.

MINA

"Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

ABBIE

Nice.

MINA

I've been saving that one.

Gideon howls to the sky sending Mina and Abbie staggering backward. The ground shakes violently and the bunker threatens to cave in.

GIDEON

Those are my children. All of them!

Gideon is slung across the room so hard he embeds in the wall. Mara stands panting at Asenath's doorway.

MARA

OUR OWN DAUGHTER!!!!!!

Gideon pushes free from the wall and stands shakily.

GIDEON

Woman!

MARA

ENOUGH!

Mara flies across the room slamming Gideon into the wall again. The ground cracks open and fire shoots up. The bunker glows red. Mara grabs a knife from the nearby table.

MARA (CONT'D)

Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee.

Mara castrates Gideon. Gideon screams Fissures of lava form around the ground they stand on.

MARA (CONT'D)
 You won't need that where you're
 going.

GIDEON
 (pleading)
 Wife...

Mara grabs him and drags him screaming down into the fiery pits of hell. An evil laugh shakes the bunker until it is cut off as the ground closes.

Sunlight fills the room. Birds can be heard singing.

EXT. PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST - DAY

A beautiful day in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Grunting can be heard as two hands grab the edge of a hole in the ground. Mina climbs out. She reaches back into the hole and helps Abbie climb out. They lie exhausted on the ground.

ABBIE
 I guess he'll find out if hell
 really hath no fury like a woman
 scorned.

MINA
 He's gonna get the best of both
 worlds.

They laugh together.

ABBIE
 We just ain't right.

MINA
 Bless our hearts.

INT. BUNKER MAIN ROOM - DAY

Sunlight fills the main room of the bunker. Mina stands in the center of the light. Abbie is let down on a rope.

ABBIE
 Dammit Bob, I will snatch you bald-
 headed. Go slow. This is the second
 time I almost died down here.

Mina helps Abbie out of the rig. They walk into Asenath's room. A young woman's skeleton lies on a bed holding a baby's skeleton. Sheriff Bob and Deputy Clark enter.

SHERIFF BOB
 I'll be damned.

ABBIE
Thought I was crazy, didn't ya?

SHERIFF BOB
I know you're crazy, lady. But this
is some next level shit.

ABBIE
Just trying to keep things
interesting for ya.

SHERIFF BOB
Clark grab one of the stretchers.

Mina crosses and gently embraces the skeleton.

MINA
Rest in peace, baby. Finally.

Clark enters with the stretcher. He starts to grab the
skeleton, but Mina stops him.

MINA (CONT'D)
I've got this.

Mina gently picks Asenath and her baby's skeleton up and lays
them on the stretcher.

MINA (CONT'D)
Be careful with her. She's already
been through a lot.

Sheriff Bob and Clark pick up the stretcher.

MINA (CONT'D)
Hold on.

Mina picks up a cat's skeleton and lays it beside Mina.

SHERIFF BOB
You want them all buried next to
each other.

MINA
Don't you dare separate them!

ABBIE
They won't. We got a special place
for them in the church cemetery.
They're family.

INT. ESTI AND RUTH'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Esti and Ruth lie with their babies in their beds. Abbie and
Mina gently embrace each of them. Sheriff Bob enters with
another stretcher.

MINA
Make sure they all stay together.

SHERIFF BOB
All of them?

ABBIE
You heard her.

SHERIFF BOB
Did the church cemetery go condo?

ABBIE
Just hush up and be careful. This is important.

MINA
Through all the darkness they always had each other. Don't separate them now. They deserve that much.

CLARK (O.S.)
Sheriff! Come take a look at this.

ABBIE
Hellfire, what now?

INT. GIDEON AND MARA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Bob enters with Mina and Abbie. In the bare corner of the room lie two skeletons with their hands around each other's throats.

MINA
(to Abbie)
Looks like they're enjoying that outhouse built for two.

SHERIFF BOB
What about these two?

ABBIE
I don't give a shit. Don't they have a cemetery for assholes?

SHERIFF BOB
I'll check into that, pastor.

MINA
But definitely bury them together. They deserve that much.

ABBIE
Amen, sister.

FADE OUT.