

BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD

FINAL DRAFT

Written by

Lucy Alibar and Benh Zeitlin

Based on the stage play "Juicy and Delicious" by Lucy Alibar

EXT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - DAWN

An abandoned looking trailer sits on top of two 15-foot-tall oil drums. Distant thunder trembles through the peeling metal panels. The structure is in such disrepair, that surely no one lives here.

But then, a light goes on.

INT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - MORNING

A tiny hand sculpts the mud on top of a crawfish hole placed on the floor. We pan up to reveal a little girl examining a baby chicken that appears to be dead. This is HUSHPUPPY, an unkempt and seemingly uncared for six-year-old with a gaze of unmistakable wisdom.

Hushpuppy places the chick on the crawfish hole, like a queen on her throne and the chick twitches to life, cheeps twice. Hushpuppy's esoteric science experiment is interrupted by DISTANT THUNDER. Her eyes stand to attention.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - DAY

An eerie, harsh wind whips hay and dust through over a giant slumbering pot-belly pig.

Hushpuppy, donned in boys' underpants and a child-sized wife-beater, tip-toes behind the epic creature. She studies it, wonderful, is this the source of the thunder?

With the utmost delicacy, she lays a hand on the pig's belly. We hear his HUGE BEATING HEART.

CUT TO:

EXT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - VARIOUS

A series of glimpses of Hushpuppy's scientific method. She chases geese, chickens, ducks, dogs around the property- a cross between an abandoned farm and salvage yard.

Hushpuppy grabs a baby chick and puts it to her ear. A TINY HEARTBEAT. She listens with focused wonder and intensity.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

All the time, everywhere,
everything's organs be beatin' and
squirtin' and talkin' to each other
in ways I can't understand. Mosta
the time they probably just sayin'
"I'm hungry," or "I gotta poop,"
but sometimes they talkin' in
codes.

Hushpuppy's eyes dart up as a MAN'S VOICE yells-

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Get up, get out of here!

We hear a YOWL as a cat is flung across the room.

A window made from a gas station sign opens in a Robinson Crusoe style tree house patched together from storm debris and discarded appliances.

A wild man with severe features, a frazz of unkempt hair, and brawler's scars opens a window made from a metal sign. This is WINDELL EMMETT DOUCET, known to all as WINK (39).

WINK

Get your pants on, man!

Wink kills a beer and sends it out the hole in the wall into a basketball hoop attached to a fishing net that stretched 15 feet down to the ground. The net is overflowing with beer cans.

EXT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - DAY

Hushpuppy obediently climbs a series of increasingly bigger and bigger oil drums that function like a ladder, up to the door of her house.

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - DAY

We now see Wink in his morning ritual. He opens a cooler with a butchered chicken inside it and tosses the bird on the grill.

He goes to the front porch and pours down a bag of dog food.

He pulls a clothesline that leads to Hushpuppy's trailer. A BELL RINGS.

WINK

Feed up time! Feed up!

Hushpuppy, now wearing pants and a slightly more proper T-shirt, comes running down the oil barrels to her house. She echoes her Daddy.

HUSHPUPPY

Feed up time! Feed up!

INT. ABANDONED BUS - DAY

Hushpuppy devours the whole roast chicken with her hands, getting right in there like it was a candy apple. It looks really yummy.

Pigs, dogs, chickens, and cats are chowing down all around her.

A hatch opens above her and we realize we're in the bottom of the Shacko. Wink sticks his head through the hatch and throws corn to the chickens.

WINK

Share with the dogs.

Hushpuppy rips off a piece of chicken and flings it to a filthy chihuahua with no hair on the back half of its body. This is WINDELL, in spite of her circumstances, quite a handsome young pup.

EXT. BATHTUB MARSH WATER - THE TURCK - EVENING

WIDE, we see Hushpuppy and Wink drift through the marsh. They ride in a severed truck bed floating on top of oil drums. A motor is strapped to the back. A sign on the boat reads "The Turck", Hushpuppy's spelling of "Truck".

They look out to where the water goes all the way to a monolithic, 20 foot wall stretching infinitely into the distance. This levee, the first piece of modern construction we've seen, encloses the civilized world, protecting it from rising water. The Bathtub is on the wrong side of wall.

Wink stares out at the distant factories behind the wall with a peaceful and confident disdain.

Hushuppy matches his relaxed defiant expression.

WINK

Ain't that ugly over there?

He takes a long pull on his beer.

WINK (CONT'D)

We live in the prettiest place on earth.

Hushpuppy looks over the wall to the Dry Side. It's an endless sprawl of oil processing power plants without a tree or bird in sight. This is the engine that runs the Northern world.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

Daddy says, up above the levee, on the dry side, they're afraid of the water like a bunch of babies. They built the wall that cuts us off.

EXT. AERIAL BATHTUB - DAY

We fly over marsh and water, coming upon a tiny crop of shanties on an island perched at the very bottom of the land.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

They think we all gonna drown down here. But we ain't goin' nowhere.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAUSEWAY - PRE-FLOOD - DAY

CLOSE ON Hushpuppy letting out a WARRIOR SCREAM in a mass of HOLLERING people.

They stand on a long and crumbling road surrounded on both sides by water. The rag tag band of revelers charge forward WHOOPING and SHOUTING.

Hushpuppy kisses her hand and smacks the town sign. "Isle de Charles Doucet" is crossed out and someone has graffitied "The Bathtub." Each party-goer repeats Hushpuppy's kiss and smack in wild, ritualistic fashion.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

The Bathtub's got more holidays than the whole rest of the world.

EXT. LAFOURCHE ROAD - DAY

The townspeople charge in a rousing parade. Everyone drags trails of beer cans, boat parts, anything they can tie to themselves that makes a lot of noise.

They are the hard faces of fishermen and their feisty wives, downtrodden but with a sense of fortitude among them, a community of heart, spirit, passion, and reckless abandon.

We see none of the separations that we're used to in modern society. There is no evidence of politics, religion, class, race or any other divisive ideology. The Bathtub is a place of true and honest unity.

Megaphones sticking out a gutted mini-van broadcast the Cajun band playing inside. Fiddle, saw, guitar, and double-bass players struggle to hold onto their instruments and the truck bounces them down a dirt road.

They drive under a banner reading "Welcome to the Bathtub Storm Season!"

Wink and Hushpuppy rattle along on a float made from the front end of a pickup truck. Over the front cabin rears a giants sculpture of a horse-head made out of wooden spikes, metal plates, and heavy chains. Carnival-dressed maniacs clamber on top.

Wink hollers and waves to people. He fires jets of beer into the mouths of the crowd.

Hushpuppy dances on the back of the float. Though she's the tiniest member of this very adult parade, she's right in the thick of everything. No one is checking I.Ds Here.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

Daddy always saying, that up in the dry world, they got none of what we got.

EXT. LAFOURCHE SQUARE - DAY

The town dances around the band in a clearing in the woods. Everyone is bouncing to the music, smiling and joking with one another.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

They only got holidays once a year.

Six babies, each with a racing number pinned to their diaper, are placed by their enthusiastic mammas at a starting-line on a track marked by two adjacent crowds of onlookers. Bets are flying between the spectators as if they're about to watch a cock-fight.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

All babies to the race! Come up to
the starting line! The baby race
is about to begin.

Hushpuppy dances in the cheering crowd, swigging a bottle of something she probably shouldn't have.

A STARTING GUN fires, and the babies make a crawl for it. Most of them are paralysed in tears or bewilderment, but one brave soul toddles towards victory.

HUSHPUDDY (V.O.)

They got fish stuck in plastic
wrappers, they got their babies
stuck in carriages, and chickens on
sticks and all that kind of stuff.

Hushpuppy looks up at Wink who is dancing with his best friend WALRUS (60), a slack jawed, white haired, pinked nosed, handsome devil.

A baby crosses the finish line, ahead of the rest, victorious. The crowd goes wild.

EXT. MARINA PAUPIER NET - NIGHT

Wink opens his trawl net and dumps a massive catch into a picking pan. There's food to feed a hundred in the haul. No one is a bit fazed though, this is just your average night fishing in the Bathtub.

Shrimp, crabs, and small leaping fish struggle over one another for dear life.

Hushpuppy helps him sort the catch. Winks's hands move with virtuosic ease, separating the crabs from the shrimp. She studies Wink's every move and tries to measure up to her Dad's proficiency. He doesn't demonstrate or explain anything, but we sense there is a system of education in place here.

Hushpuppy focuses in on a tiny fish, wriggling and sucking it's last breaths of air.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

One day, the storm's gonna blow,
the ground's gonna sink, and the
water's gonna rise up so high,
there ain't gonna be no Bathtub,
just a whole bunch of water.

She pick up a crab, pets its belly. The DIN of the party fades down around her as she listens to its HEARTBEAT.

EXT. LADY JO'S CYPRESS FOREST - NIGHT

Explosions everywhere as Bathtubers rampage blasting fireworks down the street instead of into the air. Men dressed as women, women dressed as men, in some kind of reckless esoteric ritual.

The SCORE kicks in hard with a tinge of ominous forboding. We sense that in spite of the ecstatic energy, the unbridled joy, that a cloud hangs over this community. The people are parting like it's there last day on earth, and we feel viscerally, that it could be.

Hushpuppy runs in the thick of it behind Wink waving a fountain sparkler. Wink trips and falls.

Wink lies on his back on the ground. He sees his daughter watching him, holding the huge sparkler, and they both laugh with sheer joy.

Hushpuppy stops over him and points a bottle rocket in his face, the fuse burning. He nods his approval. They watch the fuse burn down to the last moment. She turns it upward, and they watch her rocket join a sky filled with pluming mortars.

Hushpuppy looks at the light flickering across Wink's faces. He's momentarily peaceful, admiring the spectacular display.

Hushpuppy smiles at him with pride. He doesn't see her.

They run off into the crowd, which is pulsating at the pinnacle of mayhem. The OMINOUS MUSIC shifts gears into a BLASTING PATRIOTIC HYMN of the Bathtub. Throw your fist in the air! These are the survivors, those who fight for their joy and their history to the last man.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

But me and my Daddy, we stay right
here. We who the earth is for.

Hushpuppy runs right at us with detonating fireworks in both hands, engulfed by light. She swings them toward camera and the screen is engulfed in an inferno of sparks. A white out. Black letters slam down.

BEASTS OF THE SOUTHERN WILD

INT. SCHOOLBOAT - MORNING

MUSIC CUTS abruptly as a basket of crawfish is slammed in front of camera. The crawfish squirming and struggling for life engulfs the screen.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Meat.

A fearsome, uncompromising leader, sexy like a lady bullfighter, peeks at Hushpuppy over a mass of squirming crawfish. This is MISS BATHSHEBA (36).

She points to three students, pushing their heads with her finger, each time announcing:

MISS BATHSHEBA

MEAT. MEAT. MEAT.

The twelve students follow her through a maze of creatures caged in mason jars, basins, and boxes with breathing holes—her educational tools.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Every animal is made out of meat.
I am meat, ya'll asses meat.
Everything is part of the buffet of
the universe.

Miss Bathsheba rolls up the leg of her skirt.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

This here, is an Aurochs.

Riding her thigh, is tattooed a scene much like a cave painting in Lascaux. In thick black ink, it depicts a battle between early men wielding spears, and giant bull-like animals bearing down over them.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

A fierce, mean creature that roamed the earth back when we all lived in caves. They would gobble the cave-babies down right in front of their cave-parents. And the cavemen couldn't do nothing about it, because they were too poor, too stupid, too small. Who here thinks the Cavemen were sitting around crying like a buncha pussies?

Children stare blankly, no one raises their hand.

Hushpuppy watches a heroic crawfish crest the basket, fall to the floor, and make a run for it.

Miss Bathsheba snatches up the rogue crawdad and flings it back into the vat.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Y'all better think about that. Cause any day now, the fabric of the universe is coming unraveled. The ice caps gonna melt, the water's gonna rise, and everything south of the levee's going under.

She points to a map showing a ragged coastline. On the wrong side of a giant line marked "levee" is an island labeled "The Bathtub."

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Ain't gonna be no Bathtub, just a whole bunch of water. Y'all better learn to survive.

A mysterious COLD WIND fills the air. Hushpuppy stares into a wall poster of an ice cliff reading: THE SOUTH POLE.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

Way back in the day, the Aurochs was king of the world.

EXT. ANTARCTIC ICE SHELF - DAY

CRASH CUT to the PANORAMA of an ice cliff, but now it's real.

We CUT CLOSER to overwhelming white light accompanied by intermittent FROZEN CRACKS that build in frequency and volume.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

If it wasn't for giant snowballs,
and the iced age. I wouldn't even
be Hushpuppy, I would just be
breakfast.

The light dims in intensity to reveal, frozen deep inside the ice wall, barely visible- a fanged, hairy, bloated, stone aged creature, the same as on Miss Bathsheba's leg. This is an Aurochs.

INT./EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - EVENING

Hushpuppy climbs a metal ladder made from a railing, up to Wink's shanty in the trees. Windell, her dirty Chihuahua, follows behind.

HUSHPUPPY

Daddy? Feed-up time. Feed-up?

Hushpuppy bangs on the door of the shacko.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)

Daddy?

Nothing.

She goes inside.

The house is empty.

She checks the Shacko for food. Nothing.

EXT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Several hours later, Hushpuppy stands on a metal bin looking into the distance.

HUSHPUPPY

DADDY!?

Like some sort of animal call, she SHRIEKS.

INT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hushpuppy draws a picture of Wink on a foldout mattress...

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

Kids that got no Mamma, no Daddy
and nobody. They got to live in
the woods, and eat grass, and steal
underpants.

Hushpuppy lays down next to her drawing of Wink.

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - MORNING

Windell, the Chihuahua and the potbelly pig awake to greet
the day.

Hushpuppy peers into the ground floor of the shacko.

HUSHPUPPY

Daddy? Daddy?

No response.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If Daddy don't get home soon, it's
gonna be time for me to start
eating my pets.

EXT. SCHOOLBOAT - DAY

Kids walk home with their parents after a day at the
Schoolboat, which we now see is big a yellow houseboat
floating on the bayou.

Hushpuppy waits alone, no one has come to get her.

Miss Bathsheba locks up the door and heads for her small
motor boat tied off on the side of the school.

MISS BATHSHEBA

You need a ride, boo?

HUSHPUPPY

My Daddy's coming to pick me up.

MISS BATHSHEBA

How about food or something, you
hungry?

Hushpuppy shakes her head 'no'.

Miss Bathsheba's doesn't totally believe her, but she's not the type to coddle either.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)
Alright, well suit yourself.

Miss Bathsheba motors away.

Hushpuppy waits until she's out of sight and starts walking.

INT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Playing don't-touch-the-floor, Hushpuppy navigates her house.

The room has with holes in the walls blocked with old clothes and paper towels. Homemade toys fill every surface. This is the domain of a child at loose ends.

Hushpuppy leaps over her bed- a nook piled with clothes- and plugs in the Christmas lights.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O)
Everything we still got from Mamma,
we keep in my house.

We push in on a shrine to her mother:

A red basketball jersey. An apron. A sawed-off shotgun. A child's drawing of a beautiful lady.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Daddy says, the first time she
looked at me, it made her heart
beat so big, that she thought it
would blow up. That's why she swam
away.

Hushpuppy takes the jersey down. She puts it over a chair in the dining area.

Hushpuppy gets a can of cat food. A pot. Water in a bowl. Her actions have a sad sense of routine to them- she's been left alone before, and has her own self-invented system for feeding herself.

She opens a can of cat food, takes it out with her hand and throws it in a pot. She licks the remnants off her finger.

MARIETTA'S VOICE

Hi my sweet baby.

HUSHPUPPY

Hi momma.

MARIETTA, Hushpuppy's imaginary, invisible mamma, is speaking from the basketball jersey chair. Marietta functions like an imaginary friend- Hushpuppy is the only one who can see her. Hushpuppy takes the pot, puts it on the stove.

MARIETTA'S VOICE

Hushpuppy what you doing there?
You being good like I taught you?

HUSHPUPPY

Yes, mamma.

Hushpuppy turns on the gas.

Hushpuppy goes through her safety precautions: oven mitts, a helmet, she flips the table and hides behind it.

She aims the stove lighter: a flame thrower made from a cigarette lighter and a can of spray deodorant. A spray of flames ignites the stove in a FIREBALL.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER. Hushpuppy behind the bubbling stove. She ties on an apron and sways to the music. She is dressing like her mom.

Marietta's Voice sings to her.

MARIETTA'S VOICE

*You're good, you make me happy /
you're good, you make me happy.*

HUSHPUPPY

That's pretty Mamma.

MARIETTA'S VOICE

You're pretty Hushpuppy.

Hushpuppy stares into the floating islands of cat food frying in fat, which in her POV is a surreal churning vision, like the bubbling lava at the center of the earth.

She's SHOCKED out of her vision by a YOWLING CAT being flung across the yard.

WINK (O.S)

Get out of my way you fat animal!

Hushpuppy jumps down from the stove, grabs a bowl of water, and runs to greet Wink,

EXT. WINK'S COMPOUND - MORNING

She clambers down the oil drum ladder spilling her water everywhere in her excitement.

HUSHPUPPY

Daddy! Daddy, Daddy!

Wink doesn't turn to acknowledge her as he trudges across the field toward his Shacko. He's wearing a hospital patient's smock and no shoes, it seems he checked himself out.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)

I learned lots of stuff while you gone. If I drink all this here I can burp like a man.

Hushpuppy gulps down water, all of it. Wink keeps walking. Hushpuppy BURPS like a man, but he doesn't turn around.

Hushpuppy stops to examine the situation. Something's not right here.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)

How come you wearing a dress?

Hushpuppy tugs his patient's smock and he shrugs her off violently.

WINK

Leave me alone, Man.

She sees his hospital I.D bracelet still on.

HUSHPUPPY

You wearing a bracelet too?

WINK

Go in your house, you wouldn't understand.

HUSHPUPPY

I wanna come in your house.

Hushpuppy whacks Wink's butt.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)
I WANNA COME IN YOUR HOUSE!

Wink fakes like he's gonna smack her.

WINK
GO AHEAD!

Hushpuppy tears off.

Wink storms into the Shacko in the Backo.

INT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - DAY

Hushpuppy stomps inside. Her cat food is burning, with steam jetting up to the ceiling. She thinks about it for a moment, and turns the burner up. Smoke billows.

Hushpuppy grabs her basketball jersey off the chair and jumps over the breakfront counter. Behind her A MASSIVE GREASE EXPLOSION.

Hushpuppy ducks down, panicking. She check over the median. The stove is on engulfed in flames.

Hushpuppy scrambles under a cardboard box.

INT./EXT. HUSHPUPPY'S BOX - DAY

The walls of the box are decorated with years of her drawings. In here she feels a strange safety. The FLAMES and BREAKING WINDOWS feel distant and muffled.

She draws a hieroglyphic of herself sad and crying on an island with a sun and a palm tree.

She peeks out as Wink runs into the house, which is filled with black smoke, flickering flames.

WINK (O.S.)
(panicking from inside)
Hushpuppy!? Boss lady!? Hushpuppy
where you at!?

Hushpuppy drops the box closed. Smoke billows into the box, filling it up.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O)
If Daddy kill me, I ain't gonna be
forgotten, I'm recording my story
for the scientists of the future.

Hushpuppy draws a bigger figure giving her a hug as Wink's
panicked fury intensifies outside.

WINK (O.S)
HUSHPUPPY!? Where are you Boss!?

HUSHPUPPY (V.O)
In a million years, when kids go to
school, they gonna know that once
there was Hushpuppy and she lived
with her Daddy in the Bathtub.

Wink pulls Hushpuppy's drawings off the walls, he flings them
out the door to safety.

Hushpuppy coughs.

Wink has heard. He looks toward the box.

WINK
BOSS LADY?

Hushpuppy and makes a runs for it, flying out the door.

WINK (CONT'D)
Don't you run away from me. I
swear to GOD Hushpuppy!

EXT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - DAY

Hushpuppy runs out of Wink's compound into the woods, Wink on
her trail. In the background, the house is a towering
inferno.

EXT. TRAIL BEHIND WINK'S COMPOUND - DAY

They run deeper into the swamp.

HUSHPUPPY
I'm tearing off!

WINK
You ain't tearing off nothin', I'll
bust your ass!

HUSHPUPPY

I'm tearing off just like my Momma.

WINK

Come on!

Wink tried to yank her toward home and Hushpuppy refuses. She digs her heels in.

WINK (CONT'D)

See what happens. See what happens to you!

Hushpuppy hooks her leg around a tree and holds on.

Wink slaps Hushpuppy and she falls face down.

He looks away, disgusted with himself.

WINK (CONT'D)

See what you making me do? You're killing me!

He reaches down and tries to pick her up.

WINK (CONT'D)

Get up and now come on.

Hushpuppy jumps up on her own.

HUSHPUPPY

I hope you do die! And after you die, I come to your grave and eat birthday cake all by myself!

Hushpuppy punches Wink in the heart and suddenly EVERYTHING GOES QUIET, as if all the insects in the forest have hushed.

All at once, we hear-

A HUMAN HEART, beating until there is a SONIC BOOM, an earsplitting CRACK of glacial ice.

Hushpuppy turns toward the sound. When she turns back Wink's face has transformed, wrenches with fear and pain.

Wink keels over clutching his arm.

Hushpuppy stares, her breath accelerating.

Wink's eyes roll back in his head, he begins to seizure.

ANOTHER GLACIAL CRACK rings out. The SPLITTING builds to a DEAFENING ROAR. She covers her ears.

EXT. ANTARCTIC ICE SHELF / WOODS - DAY

Fissures appear like lightning through the massive ice cliff from the opening of the movie.

Hushpuppy runs from the sound, hands over her ears. We INTERCUT with shots of falling glaciers. The universe is coming unravelled.

An ice shelf COLLAPSES into the ocean in a MASSIVE AVALANCHE, a wave rolls toward camera.

EXT. GRAVEYARD BY THE WATER - DAY

The wave, now just a tiny ripple, hits Hushpuppy's feet. Suddenly, the water level rises around her. It overtakes her knees and keeps going. Hushpuppy backs up to shore, terrified.

Hushpuppy calls out to a distant beacon flashing on the horizon.

HUSHPUPPY

Momma!? Momma!? MOMMA!? I think
I broke something.

EXT. SCHOOLBOAT - DAY

Hushpuppy runs out of the woods toward school in a total panic.

In front of the school parents pile their children into a pickup trucks and vans.

HUSHPUPPY

Miss Bathsheba! Miss Bathsheba!
My Daddy fell down!

Miss Bathsheba takes Hushpuppy's hands as she tries to catch her breath to speak. Clutched in her hand is the hospital bracelet that Wink had been wearing.

Bathsheba turns over the diagnostic bracelet and reads it, her eyes widen in recognition and alarm.

INT. SCHOOLBOAT - DAY

Hushpuppy watches Miss Bathsheba frantically pull herbs and roots from her containers of medicinal oddities and pack it into a large medicine jar.

MISS BATHSHEBA
It's gonna be OK baby.

Bathsheba hands Hushpuppy the medicine jar.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)
Ok, Hushpuppy, here's what I need you to do. You take this medicine and run as fast as you can. Go!

EXT. SWAMP CLEARING - DAY

We see glimpses of nature protecting itself from the impending disaster. Flowers curl up, insects horde food underground, RUSTLING sounds fill the air. Black birds, and bats, and all manner of flying creatures fill the sky. They're all getting the hell out of dodge.

Hushpuppy, quaking with fear, runs through a menacing swamp clutching her medicine jar. The rising winds swirl the marsh grass all around her.

Hushpuppy runs to the spot where Wink collapsed.

He's gone.

Hushpuppy looks around the swamp, unable to understand.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
Daddy could have turned into a tree, or a bug. There wasn't any way to know.

Hushpuppy hides her medicine jar in her storage unit- a leather flap laid over the hollow of an oak tree. The hollow is filled with trinkets and objects she's collected over the years.

Hushpuppy flinches as a shrieking animal calls out.

She looks up to see a leaf covered in writhing caterpillars. One of them has been skewered by a beetle and is fighting for it's life.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

The whole universe depends on everything fitting together just right. If one piece busts, even the smallest piece, the entire universe will get busted.

EXT. ANTARCTIC ICE SHELF - DAY

Blocks of glaciers roll out of the avalanche and away from Antarctica like floating ice cubes. Embedded in each cube, is an Aurochs.

A single ice cube takes over the frame and the mammoth dead Aurochs' eye stares right at us. Its jaw wide, its fangs bared, the ferocious beast appears to have fossilized mid-pounce. THUNDER BOOMS.

We drift upwards into the cloud cover. As we rise above the white canopy, the spiral of a hurricane forms.

EXT. LAFOURCHE ROAD - DAY

STRINGS SWELL under HOWLING WINDS. We follow behind a little boy running down the road with an alarm bell as the people of the Bathtub mobilize in a frenzied evacuation.

BOY

The storm's coming! The storm's coming!

EXT. LADY JO'S BAR - DAY

Hushpuppy sulks out of the woods, feeling sorry for herself. She looks up and freezes like she's seen a ghost.

Wink hobbles down the road, looking shell-shocked. The traffic on the road moves in one direction: out. Wink walks back into town in the opposite direction.

In Hushpuppy's POV Wink arrives at Lady Jo's bar where a band of drunken sweethearts are in their regular positions. They are watching the evacuation go by like it's a Veteran's Day parade. They giggle and hurl good-natured curses out to a family making their way to safety.

LITTLE JO

Look at these assholes running
around all over the damn place.
C'est la vie assholes!

WINK

I know y'all with me. Y'all doin'
the storm.

LITTLE JO

Lady Jo's ain't never closed honey.

WINK

That's what I'm talking about.
Walrus my big man, you staying?

WALRUS

Wrong number buddy. I'm outta here
as soon as I finish my beer.

Wink dismisses him with a wave of his hand.

WINK

You ain't goin nowhere.

WALRUS

This ain't no sneeze comin' out the
gulf. I'm gone brother.

WINK

I'll see you tomorrow Walrus.
Lookit there, Winston's with me.

WINSTON is passed out on the stairs.

WINK (CONT'D)

What you doing about the storm
Winston?

Without opening his eyes, Winston raises an umbrella over his
head. Wink laughs.

WALRUS

Hey! It's Hushpuppy.

EVERYBODY

Hushpuppy! Hushpuppy's here.

They burst into a round of drunken applause.

WINK
Hushpuppy? Where you been?

HUSHPUDDY
What happened to y-

WINK
Shut-up!

He lifts her up by the britches and carries her away.

WINK (CONT'D)
You don't talk!

INT./EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - GROUND FLOOR - DAY

Through the bus window, Hushpuppy watches Wink prepare for the storm as branches and debris fly by him. He RANTS to himself and drinks. He ties the Turck onto the house.

Hushpuppy looks to where her animals lurch and freeze, run around in circles, pant heavily. They feel it coming.

Rain drops start to spatter the window and Wink trips and falls trying to catch a fleeing chicken.

INT./EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - 2ND FLOOR - NIGHT

Now, the full force of the storm HOWLS and CLATTERS the shutters. Rain screams against the corrugated metal roof.

Wink tapes padding over all sharp corners and plastic wraps the furniture. He's Hushpuppy-proofing everything.

He runs a piece of duct tape across the floor.

WINK
This side is still Wink's house.
No toys, and no girl stuff over
here.

Wink pushes charred toys from Hushpuppy's house across the line.

WINK (CONT'D)
So if I want to come over that side
and smack you in the face, that's
against the rules. So there's a
plus for you.

Hushpuppy is not able to see the bright side here.

WINK (CONT'D)

Now come on down here and get in
the boat, man.

He points to a trunk on the floor. Hushpuppy hops down and gets in. Wink sits on his air mattress.

WINK (CONT'D)

If the water get real high, we
gonna float to the top and we gonna
bust through the roof and we gonna
ride away, okay?

Wink puts a pair of mismatching water wings on her.

WINK (CONT'D)

You never NEVER take these off.
I'm your Daddy, and you do what I
tell you to do, because it's my job
to keep you from dying, ok? So sit
back and just listen to me...
Close your eyes and go to sleep.
CLOSE YOUR EYES!

Hushpuppy watches Wink pretending to sleep. The THUNDER scares the bejesus out of him again.

She looks to the ceiling where water is starting to pour in steadily.

Looks back at Wink who is sneaking a sip from his liquor bottle. He resumes his phony sleep.

A strong gust of wind JOLTS the entire room and he springs out of bed.

WINK (CONT'D)

Why you starin' at me like that? I
can't sleep with you starin' at me
like that.

Wink paces the floor.

WINK (CONT'D)

Listen. You need to understand,
you're a kid and I'm a man.

She doesn't understand.

WINK (CONT'D)

What, you scared?

Hushpuppy nods. THUNDER BOOMS and Wink is the one who flinches.

WINK (CONT'D)

Don't be scared, no storm can't beat no Doucet. I'm gonna show you. You watch.

But he can see she's still scared.

WINK (CONT'D)

I'm'll show you! We Doucets we're not scared of no damn storm.

Wink grabs a bottle of moonshine and climbs down the hatch in the floor into the storm.

Hushpuppy runs to the window and peeks out.

OUTSIDE. The frenzy of the hurricane propels Wink at full sprint through the 100 MPH winds. He tears his clothes off and guzzles moonshine as branches fall all around him.

WINK (CONT'D)

Look at me! Look at me Hushpuppy! Watch me kick butt.

Wink fires his shotgun at the heavens.

WINK (CONT'D)

Hell yea! I'm right here! I'm right here I ain't going nowhere. AHHHHHH!!!

A THUNDER CLAP shakes the house so hard a ceiling beam CRASHES down.

Hushpuppy runs to her bed as if it might keep her safe.

Windell, swinging from a basket tied to the ceiling, BARKS, panicking herself.

HUSHPUPPY

Mamma!? MAMMA!?

CUT TO:

EXT. PATAGONIAN COAST - NIGHT

Still in the rainstorm, a glacial cube SHATTERS, flopping a mammoth body onto the shoreline.

It's chest heaves and a LOW SNORT is heard. The animal begins to roll over.

Her dinosaur size hoof plants in the mud as she lifts herself up. We stare over the muscular haunch of her body as she stares into the distance.

The massive creature turns, testing her limbs after thousands of years of sleep.

She looks up to the storm and lets loose a GURGLING ROAR.

We sit close on one of her black eyes. There is something dangerously sad in her cold gaze. Her head moves from the frame as she starts forward on her journey.

EXT. AERIAL BATHTUB - DAY

Silence. The storm has passed.

The camera flies high over the Bathtub. The tops of houses poke out from the massive water like lily-pads in a pond.

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - FLOODED - MORNING

A slab of metal stares at us, surrounded by water.

Something under the metal BANGS TWICE and an axe dislodges a roof panel. The axe twists and leverages off the slab.

Wink hefts Hushpuppy on top of the roof. Then Windell. Dishevelled and hung-over, he pulls himself up too.

The three survivors stare in stunned silence at their new world.

EXT. FLOODED LAFOURCHE ROAD - TURCK - MORNING

Wink slowly navigates the Turck in through the flooded landscape where their town had once been. Neither he nor Hushpuppy can say a word. Everything is submerged. Every organism is dead or has fled. The quiet is overwhelming.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

For every animal that didn't have a
Dad to put it in a boat, the end of
the world already happened.
They're all down below, trying to
breathe through water.

They pass abandoned house, after abandoned house, the ones on
stilts have water up to the porches. Trees are bashed
through roofs, walls are blown through, bathrooms exposed.

EXT. WINSTON'S HOUSE - FLOODED - MORNING

Wink uses a pole to open a door.

WINK

Yo Winston?

No one answers. They push off.

EXT. EDISON'S HOUSE - FLOODED - THE TURCK - DAY

Wink enters an intact house with water up to the porch.

WINK (O.S.)

Edison? Ow-Wee!

Wink leans against the door frame. From his POV we see
Hushpuppy on the Turck. She picks a leaf and eats it. Wink
shakes his head in dismay, realizing all too clearly his girl
is not ready for survival.

EXT. SWAMP - THE TURCK - DAY

The Turck passes through a net of Spanish moss into the belly
of a swamp.

WINK

Some day when I'm gone, you gonna
be the last man in the bathtub.
You have to learn how to feed your
house.

Wink goes to the edge of the turck and sticks his hand in the
water.

WINK (CONT'D)

Now, stick your left hand in this water, stick it in there.

Hushpuppy puts her right hand in the water.

WINK (CONT'D)

Ok, what you do is you hold your hand steady and you just wait for your fish to come. You gotta ball your fist up, this is your punching hand. Ball your fist up in case you have to whack it when they come up.

Wink pulls a Catfish out with his bare hand.

WINK (CONT'D)

WHOOOOO YEA! Whooo lord, look what we got. I gotcha. Say "I gotcha!"

HUSHPUPPY

I gotcha!

Wink slams the fish down on the floor of the Turck and pins it.

WINK

Yea! Hold him down! Now, you hold it down like this, and whack him good with your fist.

Wink pins the fish and punches it in the face.

WINK (CONT'D)

Go ahead whack him! You whack him good. Hold him like that and whack him!

Hushpuppy pins the fish. She tries to whack it and it cuts her.

HUSHPUPPY

OW!

She hides her cut hand from Wink.

WINK

You OK? That's all a part of it.

Hushpuppy winces in pain.

WINK (CONT'D)
You wanna try it again?

Hushpuppy shakes her head no, trying not to cry.

WINK (CONT'D)
Come on. One more time.

INT. EDISON'S HOUSE - FLOODED - NIGHT

Hushpuppy has enclosed herself under a table with a tablecloth on it. She's drawing on the floor with charcoal.

Something alive hits the roof and scurries across. We hear the entire house MOAN, or was it a distant ROAR?

HUSHPUPPY
Daddy?

Wink's hacking cough, which has gotten worse since last we heard it, fills the room. Hushpuppy tries to shake him awake.

Hushpuppy looks through the gap in his shirt.

On Wink's chest, surrounding his heart, a corroded spider web of purple bruises shows through the skin, like varicose veins covering his entire heart.

Hushpuppy's eyes go wide with horror.

EXT. EDISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The beacon pulses on the distant horizon.

HUSHPUPPY
Mamma? Is that you?

The beacon does not respond.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)
I've broken everything.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A cloud of dust circulates particles. The Haze is blinding.
A distant RUMBLING grows.

Dark shapes tear through the haze in a deafening stampede.

HUSHPUDDY (V.O.)

Strong animals, they know when your
hearts are weak. That makes them
hungry and they start coming.

We see one at first, then more join rank around it. The
Aurochs are charging in a pack. They are a biblical terror;
the horsemen of the apocalypse.

EXT. LADY JO'S BAR - DAY

The turck moves through the cypress forest, signs are strewn
everywhere pointing to Lady Jo's bar. It appears abandoned.

Suddenly, the door SQUEAKS open. Walrus winces at the
sunlight and pops a beer.

He steps out the door and SPLASHES into the water.

WALRUS

Holy bowlegged Sarah!

WINK

Hey partner! Hey Walrus!

Wink pulls in the Turck and paddles to rescue the thrashing
drunkard.

They leverage Walrus aboard and lay him out on deck.

WALRUS

(gauging his surroundings)

I musta passed out.

Wink starts chuckling silently. His chuckle builds to a
laugh.

INT. LADY JO'S BAR - FLOODED - DAY

They enter the bar, empty bottles, half eaten crabs, and
general party debris are littered everywhere.

Little Jo is sprawled on the floor under a table. Is she dead or just wasted?

WINK

Little Jo!

She awakes with a start and bangs her head on the table.

LITTLE JO

Wink!?

Wink and Walrus run to help her up.

LITTLE JO (CONT'D)

(to Walrus)

You don't touch me you filthy bastard!

(to Wink)

Wink, you get me.

They both lift her.

LITTLE JO (CONT'D)

Goin' on all night 'bout how tonight's the last night on earth we gotta make it count. Talkin' dirty right in front of Peter T.

WALRUS

Sorry Peter T.

Peter T enters from the Bathroom.

WINK

Peter T, my man! I knew you wasn't gonna leave me man!

Peter T speaks in his polite, level-headed, soft sweet voice.

PETER T

Oh no, oh no.

WALRUS

(re: Peter T)

That is one classic dude right there.

WINK

Peter T, you are a titan! Glad you stayed man! RHHA AAA!

Wink jiggles Peter T's ample belly. Peter T giggles with glee.

Wink puts one arm around Walrus and the other around Peter T. He smiles to Hushpuppy.

She laughs too, the first smile in quite some days.

INT. LADY JO'S BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

The Bathtub crew are lolling in the later party stages. There is a rooster on the table looking like the most sober creature in the room by far.

WALRUS

If I had wings, I know I could have flown in that bad boy. But I would have probably bounced off a tree, or...

Hushpuppy lays on the table in pile of empty crab shells.

WINK

Hushpuppy! Did I ever tell you the story of your conception?

The bar crowd chuckles.

WINK (CONT'D)

When me and Hushpuppy's Mamma first met we was so shy, we used to sit around, and drink beer, and smile at each other. One day we was so shy we just napped...

Wink's voice FADES DOWN as Hushpuppy's fantasy takes over. She closes her eyes.

EXT. FANTASY HUSHPUDDY'S HOUSE - DAY

Wink, younger and prettier, naps in an uncharacteristically colorful lawn chair.

A LOW, GURGLING GROWL wakes him up.

There in the yard, crawling slow and lazy, is a massive 15-foot alligator, breathing the heavy, slutty way alligators breathe.

A topless woman steps in front. Sweat beading on her perfect shoulder blades, down her perfect, back ending in a pair of boys' underpants- just like Hushpuppy's.

Throughout Hushpuppy's vision, we never see Marietta's face, it's always covered, shot from the back, or out of frame.

Marietta cocks the shotgun with one hand, Terminator 2 style.

Lowers it on the gator...

BLAM. Wink sits up in SLOW MOTION- her panties, and her long naked legs are covered with gator blood.

She turns to Wink, her head ABOVE FRAME.

CLOSE UP on her eye. She winks.

INT. FANTASY HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We follow behind Marietta's supple curves as she walks into the kitchen. Her white slip is almost see through...almost.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

Back when Daddy used to talk about
Mamma, he'd say she was so pretty
she never even had to turn on the
stove.

She runs her fingers along the counter and the burners IGNITE one by one as she passes.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

She just walk into a room and water
start to boil.

Water starts to bubbles like a spontaneous volcanic eruption.

Marietta reaches into the frigidaire, and pulls out two ice-cold beers.

Ice melts down the bottles.

She opens them on the counter, flawlessly.

She walks over to Wink. Stands there. A hot mess.

Wink's voice FADES UP.

WINK (V.O.)
Your Momma battered that gator up,
and set it to fry.

CUT TO:

INT. LADY JO'S BAR - NIGHT

Wink tips his drink.

WINK
...and Hushpuppy popped into the
universe maybe four minutes later.

He empties the glass, sufficiently drunk now.

WINK (CONT'D)
I got it under control.

Wink looks away, lost in his own fantasy.

INT. FANTASY HUSHPUDDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Over Marietta's shoulder, beads of sweat form along the strap
of her slip. Good Lord.

Wink looks, and meets her eyes. The gaze of a proud and
smitten man.

Grits fall through the chimney vent, into the boiling water.
Dancing like all the invisible particles of the universe.

INT. LADY JO'S BAR - NIGHT

Hushpuppy stares hard, her face locked in pride and
determination. Filling with all the strength and heroism of
her long-lost mother. She's ready to snap into action.

EXT. FLOODED BATHTUB - THE TURCK - DAY

ENERGETIC MUSIC drops and we move in a semi-montage through
Hushpuppy's search for survivors.

Hushpuppy rows the Turck through the flooded Bathtub by
herself. In the distance she sees a lone horse. It stands
on a tiny island of land, the last high ground in an endless
stretch of water.

The horse holds Hushpuppy's gaze. She hears it's strong, resilient HEARTBEAT. They are one and the same.

EXT. SCHOOLBOAT - THE TURCK - DAY

Hushpuppy approaches Schoolboat, which has weathered the storm relatively intact.

HUSHPUDDY
Miss Bathsheba!?

INT. SCHOOLBOAT - DAY

Hushpuppy opens the door.

We hear RUSTLING and WHISPERING inside school.

It's three little girls left behind in the storm. JOY STRONG, a tall, wild-haired leader; LIZARD, a tiny thing in a giant man's tee shirt, and T-LOU, the muscle of this girl gang, looking very meek in her desperate condition.

The girls are huddled against each other, terrified, hungry, and alone.

EXT. LADY JO'S BAR - DAY

Miss Bathsheba, shell-shocked but steadfast, steers the boat toward the bar, the four girls now safely in her care. From the inside we hear CAROUSING, TOASTING, and RAUCOUS CAJUN MUSIC.

INT. LADY JO'S BAR - FLOODED - NIGHT

Wink pours a mountain of crab and shrimp at a great communal table, assembled from many different tables.

WINK
Come on lets go! Time to eat!
Come on children, feed up time!

He sends a feast sliding across the floor under the table, where Joy, T-Lou, and Lizard dig in.

Wink has decorated the bar with all the waterlogged relics of the Bathtub.

The room is a shrine of people's chairs, umbrellas, clothing. We're late in the game, and the party has descended into utter debauchery.

Jean raises a glass.

JEAN BATTISTE

To the last of the food!

WALRUS

To the last of the water!

LITTLE JO

You ain't drinkin' no water.

Miss Bathsheba pour shots and toasts.

MISS BATHSHEBA

Yea, tastes like more, alright!

Hushpuppy struggles to peel her shrimps, sitting on top of the table.

HUSHPUDDY (V.O.)

For the ones we'd never find, we
make a funeral the Bathtub way,
with no crying allowed.

Drunken Wink is giving drunken Walrus a bath as he eats.

WALRUS

When the water goes down, I'm gonna
French kiss the dirt!

MISS BATHSHEBA

Water's not goin' down man.

WINK

Nah, that's my beautiful place
under there.

MISS BATHSHEBA

Man you know they got plenty of
salt coming into that water,
everything beautiful is gone.
Trees are gonna dies first, then
the animals, then the fish.

WINK

I got it under control.

Hushpuppy picks up a crab. She tries to pound it open, tries yanking on a leg. She can't shell it.

JEAN BATTISTE

Come on Hushpuppy, come over here
lemme show you how.

Hushpuppy sits down next to Jean, a good pupil.

JEAN BATTISTE (CONT'D)

Here baby. You hold like this,
then you turn it over like that.

Hushpuppy follows instruction in deep concentration, but a bit tentative.

We see Wink look away from Walrus and Jo's bawdy humor extravaganza and focus in on Hushpuppy. His disdain is palpable for this froufrou shelling technique.

JEAN BATTISTE (CONT'D)

Don't be scared of it now. Now,
you take this knife, and you pop
this off.

Jean holds Hushpuppy's hand and guides a knife to open the belly of the crab.

JEAN BATTISTE (CONT'D)

Atta girl.

WINK

NO! Hushpuppy--

Wink POUNDS the table. And the party falls suddenly silent.

Wink pushes the utensil away. He grabs a crab, opens it in three virtuosic hand motions.

Grease and spice explode everywhere and Wink sucks the face of the crab clean. It is beautiful to watch.

He slams a fresh crab in front of Hushpuppy.

WINK (CONT'D)

Beast it!

Hushpuppy looks to Miss Bathsheba for guidance.

MISS BATHSHEBA

You heard your Daddy. Beast it.

Hushpuppy pulls on the crab shell with all her might. She doesn't have the power.

EVERYONE
(clapping along)
BEAST IT! BEAST IT! BEAST IT!

The kids jump out from under the table and chant.

Hushpuppy is turning blue, her eyes bulge with effort...

CRACK!

Hushpuppy opens the crab claw and sucks down the meat.

Everyone goes wild with applause! The kids too!

Hushpuppy stands up, ascending to the top of the table. She lets loose a WARRIOR CRY and flexes her muscles, deadly triumphant.

Little Jo gets so excited she starts dancing on the table. She CACKLES and jitterbugs wildly.

Walrus gets up to join her. Jean gets up and dances too. All the kids get up.

Wink glows with pride. Miss Bathsheba smiles.

WINK
Yea! You see what kinda family we got?! We got feeling!

EXT. SCHOOLBOAT - FLOODED - VARIOUS

A DRIVING SCORE kicks in as we MONTAGE through the transformation of the Schoolboat into a ramshackle Ark.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
It wasn't no time to sit around
crying like a bunch of pussies.

The survivors whittle sticks into spears, bend metal debris into spikes.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
We was gonna build a camp right on
top of the Bathtub.

Jean Battiste, cackling wildly, hauls a thrashing goat onto a floating animal pen. Chicken coops, snake cages, a pig pen are stacking precariously.

HUSHPUPPY

We got enough animals to eat until
the water goes down.

Rafts are lashed to the sides of the school. Every floating structure left in town is hauled in and added to the Ark.

Peter T ties on a floating vegetable garden.

In WIDE we see what looks like a small village of floating structures forming.

INT. SCHOOLBOAT - DAY

Miss Bathsheba puts Lizard's head in her lap, Lizard is playing as if she's unconscious after hyperventilating.

MISS BATHSHEBA

(teaching a lesson)

Come here, like this.

She takes Hushpuppy's hand and places it on Lizard's chest. She moves her hand in a circular motion.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Like this. Tee-Lou get some water.

Tee-Lou runs to get a handful of water.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

Quick little circles. Good for the
heart. Joy Strong?

Joy turns her back. Miss Bathsheba shakes her head.

Tee-Lou returns and pours water on Lizard's head, cooling her.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)

This is most important thing I can
ever teach y'all. You got to take
care of people that's smaller and
sweeter than you are.

Hushpuppy registers this advice, takes it to heart. She rubs Lizard's chest with delicacy and affection.

Lizard's breathing returns to normal, and she sits up peacefully. Hushpuppy is awestruck. Bathsheba gets to her feet.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)
That's better.

INT. SCHOOLHOUSE - NIGHT

Hushpuppy watches Wink sleeping. His breathing has gotten worse.

She tiptoes up with her red basketball jersey and lays it down on Wink, tucking him in just right.

A DISTANT RUMBLING is heard. Cutting off suddenly as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. BRAZILIAN FAVELLAS - DAY

A quiet town, not unlike the Bathtub, but with tangled powerlines, electrical towers, and layered hills.

A stone flies from behind a house and bounces down the street, denting the silence.

Slowly, the peaceful morning transitions into MORE RUMBLING, a distant CRACK.

Suddenly the house in the foreground explodes to smithereens and the head of an Aurochs drives through it.

Without breaking step, Aurochs maraud the village, trampling it into oblivion. We settle close on an Aurochs eye, emotionless and relentless in its calm.

EXT. BATHTUB MARSH WATER - TURCK - MORNING

Wink, Hushpuppy, and the Bathtub crew pole the Turck through a lake blanketed with carcasses, pushing through the dead fish, dead porpoises, dead alligator garfish like they were lily pads. There is no wind, only dense wet heat searing on the faces of the characters. The once green foliage has gone brown and thirsty.

HUSHPUPPY V.O.

Two weeks later, everything started to die.

WINK

(to the water)

Come on fishes, where y'at?

Wink empties his net- nothing but a pile of carcasses. He tips it back into the water. Wink pulls himself to the edge and sticks his head under to look for fish.

Hushpuppy looks at him with an air of doubt for the first time. Wink looks ridiculous, a dead fish drifts off his head.

HUSHPUPPY

(whispering)

You wanna leave the Bathtub, Walrus?

WALRUS

(without thought)

Nah.

Wink pulls his head back up.

WINK

I heard that.

Hushpuppy fidgets guiltily.

WINK (CONT'D)

Nobody's leaving the Bathtub! You don't know nothing!

Wink lowers his net back in the water.

WINK (CONT'D)

(to Walrus)

This water gonna kill us here. We gotta do something 'bout this. I ain't starvin' to death while them people go grocery shopping up there.

INT. SCHOOLBOAT - FLOODED - MORNING

The kids sleep on Miss Bathsheba in a big pile on the floor.

Hushpuppy wakes hearing SHIFTING and a SNAP behind her.

Peter T is uncapping a shotgun shell and pouring black powder into a small jar.

She looks out the window where Jean Battiste is unhooking a propane container from Miss Bathsheba's burner. He opens her chest freezer and hefts out a 12-foot garfish, dropping the container in the water.

JEAN BATTISTE

Shit!

Wink sneaks up and whispers to Hushpuppy.

WINK

Boss, Daddy's gotta take care of something.

Hushpuppy is instantly concerned, she's heard this line before, and it always leads to trouble.

WINK (CONT'D)

I'm gonna fix everything back how it was.

HUSHPUPPY

Everything gonna go right back?

WINK

Hell yeah, we gonna win.

Wink pounds his chest in solidarity. Hushpuppy matches his pound, but without confidence.

WINK (CONT'D)

Boss, anything go wrong, Walrus is Daddy.

Wink and Hushpuppy look Walrus-- the face of doddering drunken bewilderment. A goat licks him.

Hushpuppy is not comforted.

WINK (CONT'D)

You're gonna be the king of the Bathtub, I promise that.

Wink can see he's getting nowhere.

WINK (CONT'D)
Just sit here I'll be right back.

The DOOR CLOSING wakes Miss Bathsheba up. She scans the room, noticing the three missing people.

WALRUS
(an unconvincing lie)
I think they be gone. I-I really
can't say where.

MISS BATHSHEBA
Walrus, don't make me slap your
ass! They go to the levee!?

Walrus is intimidated into silence.

MISS BATHSHEBA (CONT'D)
You so much as piss on that wall,
you know what them people gonna do?
They gonna smoke us out and stick
us in a damn shelter.

Hushpuppy watches Miss Bathsheba go for her boat keys.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
Daddy says, brave men don't run
from their home.

Hushpuppy scurries out the side window, escaping outside before Miss Bathsheba sees her.

EXT. UNDER THE TURCK TARP - DAY

Wink, Jean Battiste, and Peter T keep their heads above water as they float under the tarp behind the truck bed. Peter T is wearing a life jacket and still has his top hat on.

WINK
(whispering)
Peter T, don't hold onto me, hold
onto the boat. You gonna be fine.

Jean Battiste duct tapes fireworks around the bomb: a propane tank with an igniter made from a battery and a pouch of black powder.

He inserts the bomb into the stomach cavity of a giant garfish carcass.

Wink shoves two propane tanks inside the belly of the garfish.

He hands a rope attached to the igniter to Peter T.

WINK (CONT'D)
Peter T, you hold the trip-line.

PETER T
(Soft and sweet)
Ok then.

WINK
Just don't pull 'til I say.

PETER T
Ok then.

WINK
You can do it. I have complete
faith in you.

PETER T
Ok.

Jean Battiste is hesitant.

Wink gives Jean Battiste a confident nod.

JEAN BATTISTE
Lock and load.

Jean Battiste carefully unravels the string that leads to the fuse. He shoves the igniter down the mouth of the garfish.

EXT. LEVEE WALL, IN THE WATER - DAY

The Turck pulls into an enclosed segment of the levee, Wink bobs out from under the Turck and latches a pre-made tether running out of the garfish to a handle on the wall. He bobs back under the boat.

EXT. SCHOOLBOAT - DAY

Hushpuppy dives under the fishing net on a motor boat just before Miss Bathsheba charges outside and keys the ignition.

Hushpuppy peeks out and the boat roars to life and rips across the water.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

The entire universe depends on everything fitting together just right. If you can fix the broken piece, it can all go right back.

INT. UNDER THE TURCK TARP/SANTA MARIA - DAY

WINK

Peter T hand me the-

He looks, Peter T has both hands on the Turck.

WINK (CONT'D)

Peter you didn't drop the trip-line?

PETER T

No I did not.

Peter T thinks a moment.

PETER T (CONT'D)

Oh, yes I did.

JEAN BATTISTE

Oh, Peter T.

PETER T

I'm sorry.

Wink dunks under water.

EXT. LEVEE - DAY

Wink surfaces in front of the igniter rope.

As he grabs the rope, Bathsheba's snake catcher snares his hand and pulls his arm against the side of her Jon boat.

MISS BATHSHEBA

Here's how we do with wild animals.

WINK

AHH! Get off me woman! I'm trying to save the Bathtub

Hushpuppy watches the struggle in hiding.

Bathsheba wrenches the rope out of Wink's hand and chucks it.

The igniter rope lands in front of Hushpuppy under the net pile. She grabs it. She reels it in.

MISS BATHSHEBA
Get in the Boat! I'm hauling
you're ass back home, little boy.

Jean Battiste swims out of hiding.

JEAN BATTISTE
Wink!?

WINK
Jean Battiste, get the trip line!

Suddenly, Hushpuppy pops out from under the nets, holding the rope taught. She stumbles and almost sets if off by accident.

MISS BATHSHEBA
Hushpuppy!?

JEAN BATTISTE
She got it! Pull! Pull!

WINK
NOW BOSS!

MISS BATHSHEBA
No! Hushpuppy!

Hushpuppy, contemplates in an eerie peace.

The screaming chorus FADES and she is alone in her quiet, eyes darting between Bathsheba and Wink. Courage and certainly clench inside her her. *You listen to your Daddy.* She pulls the rope.

EXT. LEVEE WALL IN THE WATER - DAY

The trip-line releases the detonator.

EXT. LEVEE - NORTH SIDE - DAY

The levee DETONATES. Shattered wood and cement fire towards camera.

Debris propels Hushpuppy backwards.

Her quiet resumes as she lands on the deck of the boat in slow motion. She watches in a daze as smoke, water, and flaming dust cycles above her. All the beauty of the universe.

EXT. FLOODPLAIN - THE BATHTUB - DAY

Water recedes in the Bathtub, revealing the tragic, mud-soaked remnants of their paradise.

Hushpuppy slogs through the muck, each step going two feet down into the stinking filth.

The crew trudges behind her in silence.

EXT. ARK WRECKAGE - DAY

The blow-up crew crests a hill and sees the remains of the ark sprawled across an open field.

Wink's and Hushpuppy's eyes well up as they behold the state of their island. The water has drained. Everything is dead.

More striking than the ripped-up houses, the land surrounding the island has disappeared. Trees are gone. Shards of marsh that had been attached float in the distance. What was a dense, green landscape is barren. The Bathtub is a scorched hell.

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - POST-FLOOD - EVENING

Hushpuppy picks through the rubble of the Shacko in the Backo. She finds their grill, and a window made from a dryer door and brings them to Wink.

The Shacko has crash landed under the stilts of a house that's been entirely washed away. Wink has done some work reassembling the walls and broken parts into a semi-functional enclosure.

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - POST-FLOOD - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hushpuppy find nails and brings them to Wink, who leans wall panels against the stilts from the previous house.

He hammers nails wearily. His strength is sapped. He HACKS out bile.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

It didn't matter that the water was gone. Sometimes, you can break something so bad, that it can't get put back together.

INT./EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - POST FLOOD - EVENING

Hushpuppy climbs the stairs of the original house to get to the top of the Shacko.

She looks down through the hole in the floor.

In her POV Wink climbs into bed, he painfully takes his shirt off. The bruise on his chest has extended all the way across his stomach.

Hushpuppy looks out on the water for some sign that Marietta's still with her. The light shining on the water is off. She sees nothing but dead trees and a defunct oil rig.

HUSHPUPPY

Mamma!?

Nothing.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)

Mamma where you at!?

As if in response, we hear a HELICOPTER LOUDSPEAKER.

PILOT

This is a mandatory evacuation area, you can no longer live here. Everyone in this area, has to leave. I repeat....

EXT. DEAD FOREST - MORNING

Hushpuppy wades through the muck in what used to be a lush forest, now reduced to toothpick trees and mud.

She finds her storage unit in the tree hollow, and lifts out the medicine jar.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
 When you're small, you gotta fix
 what you can.

INT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - POST FLOOD - NIGHT

She pours the crushed up roots into Wink's mouth, careful not to disturb him. Wink does'n't move.

Hushpuppy gently folds in the orange fungus. Quiet, quiet--

WINK
 GUUAAAHH!

Wink spews up an explosive cloud of medicine.

WINK (CONT'D)
 God damn!

Wink grabs her medicine jar and threatens her with it.

WINK (CONT'D)
 What you doing!?

He smashes it against the wall.

WINK (CONT'D)
 What the hell's wrong with you!

Hushpuppy is so upset she doesn't know what to do. She screams in anger.

HUSHPUPPY
 Raaaaaaaaaaaaahhhh!

Raging, Hushpuppy breaks everything she can get her hands on, ruining everything Wink's reassembled, tipping shelves, pans, walls. She grabs a fishing pole and starts bashing Wink's grill over and over.

WINK
 You wanna throw things? Come on!
 I can do that too. You want to
 play that game? Let's throw stuff!

Wink joins in, breaking stuff too, channeling all his anger into the destruction.

Wink throws himself into the wall. It breaks off and dumps a series of shelves all over the floor.

Hushpuppy can't believe it.

Suddenly it's cathartic, they start throwing objects at each other and laughing.

WINK (CONT'D)
Come on! Come on!

Wink pegs her in the face with a stuffed animal and she grins.

Hushpuppy throws a pillow!

WINK (CONT'D)
AAAAH!!! COME ON! COME ON!

Hushpuppy throws a shoe.

WINK (CONT'D)
AAAAAHHHHH!!!!!! YEAH!! COME ON!

Hushpuppy and Wink destroy everything in the house.

Something goes off in Wink chest. He grabs his heart and collapses on the floor.

Hushpuppy realizes something's not right. She throws a life-jacket at her father.

Wink continues to force a smile at her. Hushpuppy won't return the smile.

HUSHPUPPY
Man. You think I don't know.

Hushpuppy's bottom lip starts quivering.

Wink's smiles disappears.

WINK
Hey. No crying. Don't you cry
man. Don't you cry!

He threatens her with a shoe. Hushpuppy hides behind an overturned chest.

WINK (CONT'D)
HEY! Don't cry damn it!

Wink hangs his head and catches his breath against the wall.

WINK (CONT'D)

Shit.

He pull himself to his feet and grabs a bottle of moonshine.

He sets up two cups on the table.

WINK (CONT'D)

Come on get a drink.

Wink pours Hushpuppy a shot.

Hushpuppy sips. Winces. Looks suspiciously at her father. Sips again.

Wink takes one straight from the bottle.

WINK (CONT'D)

This counts as I'm sorry for a whole buncha things. Lord.

HUSHPUPPY

You gonna be gone?

WINK

What? No!

HUSHPUPPY

You gonna leave me alone?

WINK

I ain't gon' leave nothing.

HUSHPUPPY

Cause if you be gone, I be gone too.

WINK

Hushpuppy, that is not how it works.

HUSHPUPPY

I will. Sometimes in the bed I start shaking and can't stop. I got what you got.

WINK

No man. That's just a side effect of being a stupid little girl.

HUSHPUPPY

I ain't gonna be dead?

WINK

No. You? No! You gonna live a hundred years more. You know what, show me the guns.

Hushpuppy shoves Wink.

WINK (CONT'D)

Show me them guns man.

Wink clears everything off the table with one sweep.

WINK (CONT'D)

Show me the guns! Guns! guns! guns!
guns! guns!

Hushpuppy flexes her biceps. She begins to chant, fierce and triumphant--

HUSHPUPPY

Guns! Guns! Guns! Guns!.....

WINK

(overlapping)

Guns man, give to me! Guns! Guns!

Wink holds up his hand to arm-wrestle. They SCREAM in tandem as Hushpuppy pins him hard.

WINK (CONT'D)

Ooooo, Hushpuppy you the man. Who the man?

HUSHPUPPY

I'm the man.

WINK

Who the man!?

HUSHPUPPY

I'm the man!

WINK

TELL ME LOUDER WHO THE MAN!!!!

HUSHPUPPY

I'm THE MAN!!!!!!!!

WINK
YOU THE MAN, RIGHT?!

Wink is overcome with love. It's too much for him to bear.

WINK (CONT'D)
Fuck this table!

In a violent euphoria, Wink grabs the table and hurls it across the room.

This scares Hushpuppy. She stares silently at her wild animal father, longing for something more than rage.

Wink takes a step toward like he's going to comfort her, then stops, turning back.

WINK (CONT'D)
I gotta lay down hear? I gotta be strong. Don't be scared.

Wink lays down in the corner.

Hushpuppy doesn't go to bed, she just stands there.

WINK (CONT'D)
What?

Hushpuppy waits, not backing down.

WINK (CONT'D)
(giving in)
Come here.

Hushpuppy goes to Wink.

WINK (CONT'D)
Lay down.

Wink pats his heart for her to put her head down on it.

A long beat.

WINK (CONT'D)
Hey.

HUSHPUPPY
Yea?

WINK
You ain't the one who's sick.

She listens to his BIG HUGE HEART.

EXT. WET SAND MUCK EXPANSE - DAY

The Aurochs move into a desolate, barren, wasteland, looking exhausted and starved.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
Strong animals got no mercy.

Cold wind blows them backwards. An old Aurochs falls behind the pack. Its legs give out and it lays down. It's not going to make it.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
They the type of animals that eats
their own Mommas and Daddies.

CUT TO:

The Aurochs cannibalize their fallen comrade, ripping skin and organs in a storm of flesh and gore.

The CRIES of the screaming mother melt together with another, sound, more MECHANICAL...

INT./EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - POST FLOOD - MORNING

The SOUND becomes recognizable as a HELICOPTER PROPELLER.

Hushpuppy opens her eyes, still tucked in Wink's arm. Through the wall she sees FOUR WELL-DRESSED men. They are out of place like aliens exiting their space ship.

She rouses Wink, he hears the FOREIGN SOUNDING VOICES and yanks Hushpuppy up. He instinctively pulls him and Hushpuppy behind the over-turned table and grabs a broken chair leg to defend them with.

EVACUATOR (O.S.)
(from outside the door)
This is a mandatory evacuation
area. Everyone in this region has
to leave.

Wink hurls the chair leg at the intruders as they try to enter.

WINK

We ain't going nowhere!

Hushpuppy grabs a chair leg as well. It's a standoff.

INT. LADY JO'S HOUSE - POST FLOOD - MORNING

Three evacuation workers ram the door of Little Jo's house.

Little Jo greets the intruders brandishing a cutting knife and civil war era pistol.

LITTLE JO

You gonna have to shoot me cause
I'm not going.

EVACUATOR 2

Ma'am we're not gonna shoot you.

LITTLE JO

I ain't never left here and I won't
never will.

She spits. They get closer.

LITTLE JO (CONT'D)

Son, don't make me cancel your
birth certificate.

The Muscle grabs her by the weapons and in the struggle, slam her to the ground. It's horrible.

EVACUATOR 2

Relax, relax ma'am.

LITTLE JO

YOU SON OF A BITCH!

They drag Little Jo out of the house.

INT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - MORNING

MATCH CUT to Wink and Hushpuppy pinned and being dragged out.

WINK

Get your hands off of her! I'm
gonna kill you! Let her go!

EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - DAY

CRASH CUT TO an off-white monolithic community center surrounded by a cement parking lot. Stressed, amateur looking doctors from the real world move in and out of the glass doors.

A makeshift sign reads "Open Arms Processing Center."

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - COTS - DAY

The interior of the refugee camp is violently, fluorescent-lit and painted white in an attempt to maintain a facade of sterility.

Hushpuppy stares at the strange and modern ceiling like they've descended from another planet.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

It didn't look like a prison, it looked like a fish tank with no water.

The Bathtub residents walk through the gymnasium which has been converted into a holding tank/hospital for refugees. Student doctors are examining, treating, feeding people. The abandoned souls, the sick, and the old are lined up waiting for assistance.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - KITCHEN - DAY

A processed egg patty jiggles weirdly as it hits Hushpuppy's tray.

WINK

Don't eat that.

DR. MALONEY, a clean-cut, over-extended handsome young doctor hustles toward the lunch line.

DR. MALONEY

Mr. Doucet, can I have a word with you, we found something in your test. It's-

WINK

Whoa whoa whoa, not in front of my kid. Stay, Hushpuppy.

Wink pulls Maloney out of earshot.

DR. MALONEY

Mr. Doucet, there's no easy way to say this...

Hushpuppy struggles to hear more, only a couple words come through the din of refugees.

DR. MALONEY (CONT'D)

...require surgery immediately...you need to think about what you want for your daughter...you could die.

In Hushpuppy's POV: Maloney puts a sympathetic hand on Wink's shoulder and Wink pushes it off violently. Maloney puts up his hands in peace and Wink shoves him through one of the curtains and is assaulted by a flood of orderlies.

WINK

I don't need nothing from you! You keep your hands off her! I don't need nothing from y'all! Let me go!

Hushpuppy is snatched as she fights to come to his rescue.

HUSHPUPPY

Daddy!

They tackle Wink to the ground. He goes limp as he falls.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - COTS - DAY

We TRACK with Wink as he comes to consciousness rolling through the cots. He is sedated and being pushed in a wheelchair.

He looks through an open door.

In Wink's POV- Joy, Tee-Lou, Lizard, and the rest of Bathsheba's original school class play in a room with a BABYSITTER.

She tickles Hushpuppy, who has been given new clothes and looks like a normal little girl for the first time. Her boots and boys underpants have been traded for a delicate blue dress. The image is jarring.

BABYSITTER
Hushpuppy needs a hug.

HUSHPUPPY
I don't want your hug!

The Babysitter squeezes Hushpuppy. Hushpuppy tries to squirm away.

BABYSITTER
Hushpuppy, that's not how nice girls act. Say "I'm sorry ma'am."
Hey! Say it. Say it or you're going to corner time.

Hushpuppy's eyes meet Wink's and she freezes at his horrifying appearance.

Wink grabs a sofa trying to stop the wheelchair as it rolls by. His fingers slips off, too weak to hold on. He tries to scream and nothing but a SEDATED MOAN comes out of his mouth. He tries to pull the tubes out of his arm.

ORDERLY
(gently moving Wink's hand away)
There there, sir.

Hushpuppy stares in shock as Wink is wheeled away.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - WINK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Hushpuppy watches in hiding as a hand covered in a rubber glove changes the bandage on a surgical scar; it looks infected and mishandled.

The same hand puts pills in Wink's mouth.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - TERMINAL WARD - DAY

Hushpuppy stands over an old man on an artificial respirator. She's creeps closer, examining him. She puts her head on his chest. His heart is beating.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
When an animal gets sick here, they plug it into the wall.

She whispers in his ear.

HUSHPUPPY
They're coming for you.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - TERMINAL WARD - A DIFFERENT BED - DAY

She repeats the process with another vegetable.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)
Daddy says, if he ever got so old
he couldn't drink beer, or catch
catfish, that I had to put him in a
boat, and set him on fire, so no
one could come plug him into the
wall.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - WINK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Hushpuppy peeks through the curtains at another terminal bed.

She sees two orderlies force pills into Wink's mouth. He's
regaining his strength and is able to hold them off
momentarily before submitting, and going limp.

Hushpuppy bolts, unable to take it.

We stay in the room as the orderlies walk away.

Wink peeks to make sure they're gone, then spits his pills on
the floor.

Wink stares at the ceiling for a long beat. Then, with a
burst of energy he grabs his morphine drip and topples
himself onto the floor. He pulls his wires out.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - KID'S ROOM - MORNING

Hushpuppy lies asleep in a pile with Tee-Lou, Lizard, and
Joy. Wink enters and jostles her awake.

WINK
Boss. Let's go.

HUSHPUPPY
Where we goin'?

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Wink and the girls hustle to the entrance of the Refugee center.

Walrus comes running down the hall, pushing Peter T on a gurney.

Wink looks bewildered, the rest of the team seems to have their own plan afoot.

INT. REFUGEE CAMP - COTS - MORNING

Jean Battiste and Little Jo charge through the cots riling refugees into revolt as the orderlies chase them trying to maintain decorum.

JEAN BATTISTE

Go home! Everybody get up! Don't
you want to go home? Lets go!
These people don't care about you!

Little Jo fights off an orderly with a syringe.

LITTLE JO

You live in this hell hole!

INT/EXT. REFUGEE CAMP - EVACUATION BUS - DAY

Wink runs the kids toward the bus, they pass two busses labeled for Salt Lake City, Des Moines.

Wink helps Joy, Tee-Lou, and Lizard get on. Then Hushpuppy.

Suddenly Wink's hand slips out of Hushpuppy's. He steps away from the evacuating bus. Hushpuppy turns and the bus door slams between them.

WINK

(from outside the door)
Make sure you put her somewhere
good ok?

Wink sags. He's giving her away. He turns to leave..

HUSHPUPPY

(banging on the door)
NO! I ain't running! No!

Wink walks away from the bus, his chest heaving, his face clutched in the horror of what he's done.

Behind him, the bus pulls forward, then veers violently.

Hushpuppy charges the driver clawing at her face, punching and kicking.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)

Let me go!

The driver pulls the break and Hushpuppy bangs the doors open.

She charges Wink from behind, gives him a diving shove.

He topples over.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)

You trying to get rid of me! You trying to get rid of me!

WINK

No!

HUSHPUPPY

Why you trying to get rid of me?

WINK

I ain't trying to get rid of you.

HUSHPUPPY

You is.

WINK

No. Hushpuppy... I can't take care of you no more.

HUSHPUPPY

Yes you can.

Hushpuppy stares him down, accusing.

WINK

Daddy's dying!

Hushpuppy's chest heaves up and down.

WINK (CONT'D)

My blood is eating itself. You know what that means?

HUSHPUPPY

Don't be sayin' about dying.

WINK

Everybody's Daddy dies.

HUSHPUPPY

Not my Daddy.

WINK

Yes, your Daddy!

Her defiance is broken and the information starts to sink in. It hurts Wink as much as it hurts her.

WINK (CONT'D)

I didn't want you to watch that,
ok? You understand?

Wink doubles over hacking. He COUGHS horribly.

Hushpuppy looks down and sees blood spotting the grass, dripping from his mouth.

The Bathtub gangs charges out the door!

Across the parking lot they go in a spree of euphoria, coming to a halt around Wink.

Hushpuppy is trying to drag his limp body across the parking lot.

HUSHPUPPY

Come on! Come on!

Little Jo hold Hushpuppy away from him.

WINK

Walrus, get me home.

EXT. LAFOURCHE ROAD - DAY

The Bathtub crew carries Wink through the entrance to town. His arms slug over Walrus and Jean Battiste, he's barely able to help walk.

We sense from the weary faces and silent eyes that it's been a long journey home.

INT./EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - DAY

They drag Wink through the Shacko entrance.

Everyone goes in except Hushpuppy who stops outside the door as they lay him down in convulsions. She stays and tries to watch.

Wink tries to say something to Walrus and can't. Blood bubbles out of his mouth. Wink catches Hushpuppy's eye then looks away as fast as he can.

Reeling, but steady, Hushpuppy backs out the door.

EXT. LAFOURCHE ROAD - DAY

Hushpuppy walks down the road in an almost eerie state of calm. She takes in the remnants of rusting houses and flipped boats, her lifeless ghost town.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

Everybody loses the thing that
made them, it's even how it's
supposed to be in nature.

EXT. LAVA RIDGE - DAY

Now with her three friends, she tip-toes past several humongous footprints up to a gruesome fox carcass. Something gigantic has ripped open its stomach and gutted it.

She leans over, unafraid, trying to understand it's meaning. Flies swarm and nibble, their movement almost elegant. Seen in close up, the gory mess has a strange beauty to it.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

The brave men stay and watch it
happen. They don't run.

A SONIC BOOM springs her upright, she looks around for the source of the sound. Is it an Aurochs?

She looks towards the muddy bayou. The SONIC BOOM sounds again and the entire body of water quivers with the impact.

EXT. DARDAR RIDGE - EVENING

The beacon blinks out on the water.

Hushpuppy stares towards it. The children are gathered behind her.

Something has changed in her eyes. The eerie calm has given way to a hardened determination. Though unclear to us, her internal path of action is certain.

She takes a deep breath, and lets out a WARRIOR CRY. She runs straight into the water with her girl gang charging behind her.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - EVENING

Joy, Tee-Lou, Lizard, and Hushpuppy swim through open water, pulling each other forward. They head in the direction of the beacon.

HUSHPUPPY

Come on! Keep going!

They try to kick toward the light but are getting nowhere, the current pulls them backwards.

We hear a BOAT HORN and they look to where an ANCIENT TUG BOAT with a cabin that towers into the sky like a giraffe head, appears through the mist.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - SERGEANT MAJOR'S BOAT - EVENING

The girls climb aboard, lifting each other onto the deck.

They look up to the sound of FOOTSTEPS on the upper deck.

Hushpuppy looks up to see SERGEANT MAJOR (60) -

A big, timeless looking man with a salt and pepper moustache, saunters up to the rail. He stares down, examining these runts with an air of suspicion.

HUSHPUPPY

I'm going by my Mamma.

He smiles broadly, as if this was the secret password. Him and Hushpuppy stare at each other and immediately there is understanding. Two lost souls in the wilderness.

SERGEANT MAJOR

That's a good place to go.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - SERGEANT MAJOR'S BOAT - EVENING

Hushpuppy sits adjacent to the Sergeant in the tug's elevated wheelhouse. They are two stories up, and the white walls create a glow that makes us feel like we're almost in another dimension.

HUSHPUPPY

Which way are we going?

SERGEANT MAJOR

Don't matter baby, this boat'll take you exactly where you need to be. It's just that type of boat.

Hushpuppy and Sergeant Major share an ease unlike anyone else we've seen Hushpuppy interacted with. They speak like an old teacher with his favorite disciple. They let their silences last.

SERGEANT MAJOR (CONT'D)

You want a chicken biscuit?

Hushpuppy shakes her head 'no'.

SERGEANT MAJOR (CONT'D)

They're good for you.

A deep, far away melancholy settles over him. He munches on a chicken biscuit, then tosses the wrapper on the floor. The wheelhouse is wall to wall with chicken biscuit wrappers.

SERGEANT MAJOR (CONT'D)

I been eating these all my life. I keep the wrappers in the boat, 'cause they remind me who I was when I ate each one. The smell make me feel cohesive.

HUSHPUPPY

I wanna be cohesive.

SERGEANT MAJOR

Oh you will be, I got no doubt in my mind.

They let this thought settle, then Hushpuppy turns her swivel chair back toward the water

The beacon appears through the mist. Hushpuppy's eyes go wide.

As they approach, another boat comes into view. A half-sunken barge that looks as though its been rusting in the same position for a century. As we move in we see a lit up sign: "Elysian Fields Floating Catfish Shack GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS."

EXT./INT. ELYSIAN FIELDS - ENTRANCE - EVENING

Hushpuppy, Joy, Tee-Lou, and Lizard disembark onto the barge with Sergeant Major following behind. They circle around a hatch in the floor with light pulsing out of it. Far-away JAZZ echoes up from the bowels of the ship. They look to each other in wonder.

INT. ELYSIAN FIELDS - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Hushpuppy descends a ladder into a glimmering wonderland. Christmas lights swallow the ceiling, and a light smoke facade encompasses everything. We feel like we're looking at a portal into the past, a Belloq-esque turned New Orleans Jazz parlor. The regulars are all oil-workers wooing their ladies of the night.

There is a stage with a DJ and two singers, karaokeing along with "Until the Real Thing Comes Along" by Fats Waller.

The hyperactive MISS FRANKIE, the matriarch of this establishment, comes a'hoppin'.

MISS FRANKIE

Holy crap you have toddlers!

SERGEANT MAJOR

Good afternoon, Miss Frankie.

MISS FRANKIE

Well butter my butt and call me a biscuit! How you, Sergeant Major? You need some grits?

SERGEANT MAJOR

Yes ma'am.

MISS FRANKIE

Holy Sugar, they are so precious!
Y'all just as cute as a tub of
puppies!

Women descend on the kids who recoil, not knowing what to do with all this affection. Joy Strong puts up her fists.

Hushpuppy pushes through the crowd nonplussed by the flurry of doting ladies. They are not who she is looking for. They are not who she is looking for.

She scans pictures of strippers through the ages pasted up all over the ceiling, each of them with a bra hung on it, none of them right.

Bar patrons nod and tip their glasses to her as she passes, ladies smile and return to their drinks, drunk flirtatious dancers giggle at her, but she remains unfazed.

She reaches two swinging doors that lead to the kitchen.

Hushpuppy stops. Sniffs. Heaven.

SLOW MOTION: in Hushpuppy's POV, smoke curls through the swinging doors, the light illuminating the dust particles. It's a magic kitchen. Her POV tilts down to the floor where a pair of well-pedicured feet in flip-flops walks towards the swinging doors. They open.

Hushpuppy holds her breath.

A gorgeous COOK (35) wearing a baseball cap and an apron comes out the double doors. She wipes some sweat off her brow. She watches the band and kills a bottle of ice-cold beer.

The Cook looks down. Sees Hushpuppy.

COOK

You need something baby?

Hushpuppy nods, holding her breath. She still can't speak.

COOK (CONT'D)

Well whatchu want? You alone?

Hushpuppy shrugs.

She's too stunned, too shy to speak.

The Cook takes stock of the helpless creature in front of her. Like a butcher shop owner with a pesky hungry puppy, she submits to Hushpuppy's longing gaze.

COOK (CONT'D)
Get in here, I'm'll show you a
magic trick.

Hushpuppy follows her into the magic kitchen, knocking her head against the swinging doors on her way in.

INT. ELYSIAN FIELDS - KITCHEN

With the smooth fanfare of a circus performer, The Cook lifts an egg, opens a beer bottle with her teeth, SPITS the cap at the egg and it cracks over the grits.

Hushpuppy's face is joy beyond all measure. She watches the Cook's flying hands, she prepares everything in a single motion, it's like a dance. She slaps a fresh alligator tail on the table and begins sawing through the scales.

COOK
Lemme tell you somethin', when
you're a child people tell you that
everything's gonna be all hunky-
dory and all that bullshit, but I'm
here to tell you that it's not. So
get that out your head right now.

She removes the knife from the gator and aims it at Hushpuppy like its a pointer.

COOK (CONT'D)
Life's some big old feast, yeah,
but you? You ain't nothin' but a
stupid little waitress.

She scales a gator, strips the bones, dredges, fries.

COOK (CONT'D)
Everything you got on your platter
gonna fall on the floor and ain't
nobody gonna be there to pick it up
for you. Someday it's all gonna be
on you.

She stirs the grits. Grits on plate. Gator on plate. Plate in front of Hushpuppy. Lemon is squeezed all over everything.

COOK (CONT'D)
So smile, girl.

Hushpuppy tries to crack a grin. She barely remembers how to smile and it comes out all wrong. The Cook shakes her head, opens another beer on her teeth, and heads for the pantry.

COOK (CONT'D)
Nobody likes a pity-party-having-
ass-woman.

Hushpuppy stays behind staring into the floating particles of dust in the incandescent light-- stars of the universe. The golden bubbling fry pot-- lava of the molten core.

INT. ELYSIAN FIELDS - KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Four perfect gator nuggets are placed next to a sumptuous dollop of grits.

COOK
The gator's magic.

Hushpuppy looks up from her food-hypnosis.

COOK (CONT'D)
(encouraging a smile)
Awwwwwwwww.

A real smile emerges across Hushpuppy's face.

COOK (CONT'D)
Mmm-hmm.

INT. ELYSIAN FIELDS - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Magic soars as the couples rock back and forth on the dance floor. Strippers cradle their dates. It's all very sweet and tender. This seems to be the M.O of this strip club, slow-dance not pole-dance.

The kids are each dancing with a stripper, glowing with love. They are orphans in a heaven of mothers.

We float back to Hushpuppy, the camera dances with her and the Cook.

The Cook squeezes Hushpuppy and spins her. Each time we catch their face their eyes are wetter and wetter.

HUSHPUPPY

You can take care of me. Me and
Daddy.

After a long beat.

The Cook shakes her head 'no.'

COOK

I don't know nothing bout your
Daddy, I can't take care of nobody
but myself.

This sinks into Hushpuppy.

COOK (CONT'D)

You can stay if you want.

Hushpuppy considers this for a moment, squeezes the Cook.

HUSHPUPPY

This is my favorite thing.

COOK

I know.

A far-away look has come over her. Her mind is somewhere else.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

I can count all the time I've been
lifted.

INT. HUSHPUPPY'S HOUSE - DIMLY LIT ROOM - DAY

We look up at a face that's slowly coming into focus- it's Wink, younger and healthier.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

I can count all the times I've been
lifted on two fingers.

He is the first sight of the slimy newborn baby girl tucked in his arm. Baby Hushpuppy stares up at him as he carries her.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S)

Wink! Bring my baby here! They need to wash her off.

WINK

Naw, that waits.

Baby Hushpuppy's huge-eyed, warped facial expression ogles Wink. She coos.

WINK (CONT'D)

(to Hushpuppy)

Alright fatso, breathe some air.

They pass through a doorway and sun washes over Baby Hushpuppy. She smiles and smiles at the world.

INT. ELYSIAN FIELDS - DANCEFLOOR - NIGHT

Back in reality Hushpuppy gathers herself. She's suddenly not hugging back, just being held.

HUSHPUPPY

I need to go home.

COOK

(whispered)

No.

Hushpuppy cups her hand to the Cook's ear and whispers something inaudible.

The Cook squeezes her tight, seeming on the verge of adopting her. But she can't. She spins Hushpuppy around and around, then puts her down without meeting her gaze.

Hushpuppy watches her disappear into the crowd of swaying couples.

All goes quiet, and we sit behind Hushpuppy's head, a sea of light like a crown around her.

MUSIC SWELLS. Decisively, with the force of a charging general, Hushpuppy turns and runs toward camera.

EXT. DEAD OAK RIDGE - DAY

MATCH CUT to Hushpuppy leading Joy, Tee-Lou, and Lizard across a ridge dotted with Dead Oak trees, she's come back to the Bathtub.

EXT. DEAD OAK RIDGE - WATER - DAY

The camera moves over the water, past the dead oaks.

We turn the corner past a stretch of marsh, and come upon the Aurochs, four of them, now suddenly and viscerally in the landscape of the Bathtub, swimming steadily toward solid land.

INT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - DAY

The Bathtub crew sits by Wink's bed. His eyes are open, but everyone is silently waiting for the inevitable.

EXT. ARK WRECKAGE - DAY

The children crest the ridge.

The RUMBLE of Aurochs hoofs is suddenly and violently audible.

Hushpuppy turns. She catches a glimpses of something massive moving behind the distant oaks.

The kids turn and hustle down the ridge.

Hushpuppy, Joy, Tee-Lou, and Lizard hustle down hill with increased urgency. The DISTANT TRAMPLING is growing louder.

Behind Hushpuppy the dark shapes of the Aurochs crest the ridge in a deafening STAMPEDE. Joy, Tee-Lou, and Lizard scream and sprint out in front of Hushpuppy.

Hushpuppy walks steadily forward, refusing to run. Her face locked with determination, she is unafraid. Her eyes shoot toward the shacko.

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - DAY

Wink, with all his strength looks toward Hushpuppy, their eyes meet.

In Wink's POV, Hushpuppy stops dead on the bridge, waiting for her fate, staring toward her father.

EXT. ARK WRECKAGE - DAY

The Aurochs bear down on Hushpuppy from behind, their footsteps rattling the frame. They grow inconceivably large, the camera has to tilt to hold the frame.

Hushpuppy balls her fists and stands her ground. Suddenly, she turns.

The Aurochs ROARS. Then, inches away from Hushpuppy, she stops. She SNORTS, blowing Hushpuppy's hair back. Hushpuppy doesn't flinch.

The Aurochs stares face to face with Hushpuppy. Sniffs.

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - DAY

Wink is frozen in wonder, unable to believe his eyes.

EXT. ARK WRECKAGE - DAY

Hushpuppy raises her chin in confident defiance.

Now in full profile, we see the Aurochs towering 15-foot tall, she takes a step forwards, sniffs again. A low SNORT, or is it a purr?

The Aurochs lowers her head with respect.

Her eyes well with emotion, recognizing one of her own. A ferocious warrior.

The Aurochs steps back, takes a knee, and with a BELLY FLOP that rattles the very earth, she lays down. Her three companions follow suit, their fat tummies settling into an almost joyful, lazy, repass.

A strange calm has settled over Hushpuppy. Almost a smile, but more of a peace and an affection for her equal. They're both children in their way.

HUSHPUPPY

You're my friend, kind of.

Mother Aurochs grunts, a sentence only Hushpuppy can understand.

HUSHPUPPY (CONT'D)

I gotta take care of mine.

With weary and clumsy steps, the Aurochs stand and retreat.

EXT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - DAY

Hushpuppy approaches the shacko. It's like walking the plank, but she's unafraid, at one with her destiny.

The Bathtub crew look on her in awe. They part ways to let her pass.

She reaches the door, steeling her reserve.

Hushpuppy opens the door.

INT. SHACKO IN THE BACKO - DAY

Wink is curled up on Hushpuppy's bed-- very, very thin. His eyes are closed. His chest heaves up and down in short violent breaths. Hushpuppy stands and stares.

Wink looks at Hushpuppy in reverence. He knows it's the last time.

Wink motions for her to come closer.

Hushpuppy inches toward him. It takes all of her might. She sits on his bed.

Hushpuppy takes her to-go container from Elysian Fields out of a paper bag and pops it. She unwraps a gator nugget, dips it in hot sauce, and holds it out for Wink to take a bite.

Hushpuppy watches as Wink chews weakly. She eats one herself.

Wink and Hushpuppy draw it out. They don't want it to end. It takes a full minute for him to swallow the first bite, and she paces herself to finish when he does.

WINK

(barely audible)

Real good.

Wink's chest heaves up and down, harder and harder. A tear rolls down his face.

WINK (CONT'D)
 (choking up)
 No crying, you hear?

She holds them back, being tough for her Daddy.

HUSHPUPPY
 No crying.

Hushpuppy's face hardens, and even as the tears fall, we see a strength and composure that only Wink could have put there.

She falls into his arms and he embraces her.

Hushpuppy squeezes Wink. She does not let go. She stays strong.

Wink's hand trembles on her back.

She holds him as his deep, warm, heartbeat slows, slows, and stops. His weight slumps over her. She keeps on holding him, but she knows.

EXT. GRAVEYARD BY THE WATER - DAY

Steadfast, Hushpuppy holds a torch on the edge of the Bathtub. The Turck, piled with branches, floats in front of her.

She lowers the flame and lights a cloth covering Wink's body aflame. She pushes the funeral pyre out into the current. We watch the boat flames drift into the foreground, covering Hushpuppy face with flames. She looks into them in all her grief and wisdom.

The group begins a funeral prayer, playing quiet in the background as Hushpuppy contemplates the pyre.

PETER T
 As I stand by the bayou,

Everyone else joins him.

EVERYONE
 A ship at my side starts her motors
 and sails for the gulf. I watch
 her until she disappears. "There!
 (MORE)

EVERYONE (CONT'D)

She's gone!" Gone where? Gone from my eyes, that's all. She's just as big as when she left me. And somewhere else, other voices are calling out, "Here she comes!" And that is dying.

They raise their drinks to the sky and shout in unison.

EVERYONE (CONT'D)

HERE! SHE! COMES!

Hushpuppy gazes into the sparks leaping off the top of the fire are foregrounded in front of Hushpuppy, particles of Wink jumping into the sky. HORNS ENTER, droning low, and building into an funeral dirge.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

When I relax behind my eyes I see everything that made me flying around in invisible pieces. When I look too hard it goes away, but when it all goes quiet, I see they are right here.

The Turck almost disappears over the horizon. The HORNS take a hopeful turn, the melancholy of the dirge mixing with the anthem of the Bathtub.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

I see that I'm a little piece of a big, big universe, and that makes things right.

Hushpuppy stands tiny on the ledge of the Earth, framed in front of an expanse of endless water.

EXT. CAUSEWAY - POST-FLOOD - DAY

The Bathtub gang marches across the marsh road. Hands touch the town sign, saying goodbye.

HUSHPUPPY (V.O.)

When I die, the scientists of the future, they gonna find it all. They gonna know, once there was a Hushpuppy, and she lived with her Daddy in the Bathtub.

We CUT WIDE to reveal that the water is rising and washing over the road. Our heroes are marching on the final sliver of land. The camera flies backwards, and our view of the road disappears into mist and churning waves. They appear to be walking on water.

Hushpuppy leads them forward, into the future.

CUT TO BLACK.

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