

REVISED 5/29/79

Per Wes Craven

(Director)

"DEADLY BLESSING"

STORY BY:

GLENN M. BENEST

and

MATTHEW BARR

SCREENPLAY BY:

GLENN M. BENEST,

MATTHEW BARR,

WES CRAVEN

1 EXT. FIELDS - EARLY MORNING

1

We OPEN ON a beautiful sky, studded with clouds. The CAMERA PANS DOWN TO FRAME HITTITES carrying their simple farm tools out into well-tended fields. The WOMEN wear long, homespun dresses with white aprons and prayer caps, the MEN dark coats and wide-brimmed hats. The MEN all have beards but no mustaches.

A retarded HITTITE boy, WILLIAM GLUNTZ, leads along a horse-drawn cart as wind softly whips his clothing. Birds sing in the distance. We FOLLOW WITH William as he joins a group already working in a long, orderly row. The actions of the adults are synchronized, almost mechanical. As the horse FILLS FRAME we

JUMP CUT TO:

2 EXT. "OUR BLESSING" FARM - EARLY MORNING

2

A startling CLOSE SHOT of a huge diesel TRACTOR ROARING out of its barn.

JIM SCHMIDT, a good-looking, muscular man in his late 20's, is driving.

He moves out toward the fields adjoining the land where the HITTITES work.

3 EXT. FIELDS - EARLY MORNING

3

On one part of the HITTITE land a horse-drawn disc is turning over the soil. This work is being done by JOHN SCHMIDT, who we will subsequently learn is Jim's brother. He's a handsome young man, 18 years old. He's helped by a third brother, TOM ANTHONY, 15, who walks at the head of the draft animals, guiding them by their halters. Their work looks rough and time-consuming. When they hear the SOUND of the approaching diesel TRACTOR, they stop and look.

In the distance JIM SCHMIDT waves. His brothers, strangely inhibited, simply stare in fascination at his machine.

It's at this moment that ISAAH SCHMIDT strides up to his sons. A powerful, stern man of fifty, with the bearing of a patriarch, he stops the horses with an iron hand on their harness, and pulls John down from the cart, bending the young man's ear between vice-like fingers. John, despite his size and obvious strength, howls in pain.

CONTINUED

ISAIAH

Don't covet what he has --
don't even look at the traitor.
You seem to unlearn what I tell
you, boy. He's no son to me any
more -- nor brother to you. To us
he is dead.

Released at last, John holds his father's steely gaze,
but his own eyes are clouded with pain and suppressed
rage, and he does nothing but rub his bleeding ear.

JOHN

(low)

Yes, father Isaiah. I am sorry.

The CAMERA CATCHES the open anger with which Tom
Anthony watches his father, but when the man turns
to him, the youngster quickly averts his eyes. Both
brothers resume work, neither of them looking again
at his father.

The CAMERA DOLLIES with Mr. Schmidt as he walks with
an abrupt, military bearing back to the rest of the
HITTITES. All immediately go back to work.

CLOSER ANGLE on them as ISAIAH stalks by. Several
are dwarfish or malformed, and all have a haunted,
inbred look of unhealthiness.

EXT. "OUR BLESSING" FARM - EARLY MORNING

A modest, attractive farm house, brightened by flowers
in pots along the porch, flanked by a thriving vegetable
garden. From this exits MARTHA SCHMIDT, carrying a
lunch pail.

Martha is a beautiful young woman of 23, full-figured
and vital. She's humming a song to herself; clearly
she appreciates the beauty of the farm and the gorgeous
day. The gate she walks through has a sign fixed over
it proclaiming "OUR BLESSING" FARM. Martha continues
out into the field toward JIM.

ANOTHER ANGLE as she walks through lush, waving grain
to her husband's tractor. Jim throws the machine in
neutral, jumps down from the cab and kisses her.

JIM

Miss me already?

Martha laughs, nestling, and then shoves a lunchbox
at him.

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4

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4

MARTHA

Forgot your lunch --

He kisses her again, then brushes his finger along the side of her nose.

JIM

You've got paint on your face, Martha.
What're you up to?

MARTHA

(making a face)

Thought I'd finish up the kitchen
-- about time, don't you think?

He laughs and nods.

JIM

Here a year and we're still painting
and getting things out of boxes -- I
bet you didn't think farm life would
be this hard.

Martha, suddenly serious, touches his face.

MARTHA

It's worth it, Jim. You're worth it.

He brushes her hair, though fully watching her eyes.

JIM

Despite my family?

She simply holds him. Together they look over at the HITTITES laboring in the next field. She puts her arm around his muscular shoulders.

5

EXT. STOLLER FARM - MORNING

5

In a LONG SHOT from the other side of "Our Blessing" Farm, we SEE JIM and MARTHA standing next to the tractor, as seen in a HIGH POV FROM BEHIND.

CUT TO FAITH STOLLER, a very sensitive, vulnerable-looking young woman of about 18, as she watches down on Jim and Martha from the porch of her mother's farmhouse. The place sits on the crest of a hill which falls away directly down to "Our Blessing."

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5

Faith, large-boned and wide-eyes, moves in an exaggerated feminine manner, extremely aware of her bearing. She seems to watch herself as she moves and strikes poses of great glamor, despite her simple print dress.

Faith's mother, LOUISA STOLLER, opens the screen door and comes out onto the porch. Louisa is a large, powerfully built woman wearing jeans, boots and a thick wool shirt. Her long hair is tied in a bun atop her head. She is one of those immediately likeable farm women, who smiles easily and seems very much in touch with nature. She is, however, very masculine, and appears to dominate Faith. Louisa takes the girl by the hand.

LOUISA

What you looking at so hard, Faith?

FAITH

(straightening)

Nothing, Mama. Just the light in the trees... I thought I might paint a little.

LOUISA

You done all your chores?

FAITH

Yes, Lou.

LOUISA

(smiles)

You want Momma to help you get ready?

FAITH

Uh-huh.

Louisa leads Faith toward a workshed adjoining the house.

6

INT. WORKSHED - DAY

6

LOUISA unlocks the door and enters with her daughter. The workshed is a converted sheep slaughterhouse, with metal meat hooks running on conduit lines above. But the rest of the room has been converted into a gleaming artist's studio, scrupulously clean, its walls stacked with strange, bright and dark paintings of Van Gogh-like scenes -- writhing trees, dark lines of crows flapping around twisted scarecrows -- many others as well -- all with themes of great struggle and depth. It's clear that FAITH has a major, if unschooled, talent seething within her.

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6

Louisa begins to stretch a canvas for Faith's next painting.

Faith takes out a palette of colors, vigorously scraping away the excess paint with a long palette knife. Louisa watches her from the corner of her eye.

LOUISA

You happy up here, aint you Faith?

FAITH

Sure, Mama --

LOUISA

You got everything you need, right here on this hill. Aint no need to go off it, never.

FAITH

(scraping even harder)

No Mama -- I'll just stay here and paint --

(brightening suddenly)

Wait'll you see this next one I'm gonna do -- it'll be a Masterpiece -- just you wait -- !

Louisa beams proudly, pleased.

7

EXT. BARN OF "OUR BELSSING" - DUSK

7

JIM approaches the barn in his tractor, the machine shooting LOUD black clots of exhaust into the reddish air. We notice the front wheels of the thing are making a terrible screeching, as if a wheel bearing were giving out. Jim looks over and down in concern, then guns it into the barn.

8

INT. BARN - DUSK

8

JIM pulls the huge tractor over to its parking area, then brakes suddenly. The headlights of the machine have fallen across a freshly-painted hex sign sprayed on the wall, an evil-looking symbol beneath which is scrawled the warning: "GET OFF OUR LAND."

JIM

Damn!

CONTINUED

8

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8

He shuts the machine off, jumps down and looks angrily around until he finds the spray paint can. He immediately sprays over the hex sign and the message, then throws down the can in disgust.

DISSOLVE TO:

9

INT. MARTHA & JIM'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

9

MARTHA, wearing a long gown, her hair done up beautifully, brings in one more sumptuous dish and sets it before JIM, who is flushed from too much wine and food already. He also is dressed up as if for a special occasion.

JIM

(obviously stuffed)

Please, Martha, have mercy.

Martha smiles, setting the food down. The table has been set with cloth napkins and candles; the lights are dimmed. It's romantic in a homespun, natural way. Jim reaches out and squeezes her hand.

JIM

This is the best anniversary we ever had.

MARTHA

(laughing)

Also the first anniversary we ever had, silly!

(she remembers)

Oh, Jim!

She jumps up and brings over a photo album. He opens it up and laughs.

JIM

Oh my goodness - already it's history!

Martha stands beside him as they look through pictures. INSERT - a snapshot of them in Berkeley, Jim posed stiffly in the dress of a HITTITE, Martha with a silly grin. She shakes her head, smiling.

MARTHA

I never thought I'd meet a farmer in Berkeley.

JIM

(laughing)

I bet you never thought you'd marry a farmer -- and a HITTITE farmer at that -- who'd bring you back to a place like this!

CONTINUED

MARTHA

(touches him)

EX-HITTITE -- and I love this place!

Jim smiles almost sadly and flips the page. We see a shot of two beautiful YOUNG WOMEN standing on each side of Martha, laughing, their arms around her shoulders, mugging the camera.

JIM

You must miss your friends --

Martha nods, looking fondly at the picture, the memories flooding back.

MARTHA

Yeah... Well it was time to leave the city. Everything so crazy --

(beat)

You were what I thought the whole world had lost forever.

We see a picture of their first spring on the farm -- a snap of Jim and Martha holding a sign, saying: "OUR BLESSING FARM."

Something crosses Jim's face. He closes the album and puts it aside. Martha watches him refill his glass once again.

MARTHA

Something's bugging you... Is it your father again? I saw he was right in the next field this morning.

JIM

(straightening)

No. Nothing with him. Just trouble with the tractor's front end. I've already pulled the wheels -- I'll pack the bearings after dinner.

MARTHA

(teasing)

You're a little bombed, no? - 'sides, isn't there anything else you could do tonight except pack bearings.

Jim laughs, his eyes lighting.

He reaches down and with a move of surprising ease lifts her out of her chair into his arms.

9 CONTINUED:

9

JIM

The bearings can wait...

He kisses her lovingly and carries her out of the room.

10 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

10

The room is half-lit. JIM plops half-comically, half-drunkenly on the bed, MARTHA in his lap like a child. She kisses him tenderly, then slips behind and rubs his sore shoulders. He sighs with pleasure; she unbuttons his shirt and runs her hands over his chest, kissing the back of his neck.

MARTHA

(innocently)

Tired?

He grins ear to ear.

JIM

Not that tired.

They both laugh sensuously. Jim turns and begins to unbutton her blouse.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. "OUR BLESSING" FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

11

A HAND-HELD, SUBJECTIVE POV SHOT from SOMEONE quietly approaching the farmhouse. The person pauses by the front gate. The only sound is the FAINT CREAKING of the "Our Blessing" sign, rocking in the push of the wind. The gate eases open.

12 INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

12

JIM AND MARTHA now are under the covers making love.

13 EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

13

We CONTINUE the POV SHOT as the INTRUDER opens a window and begins to climb stealthily into the home.

14 INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

14

The INTRUDER passes through the living room, hearing the SOUNDS OF LOVEMAKING in the distance. In the SUBJECTIVE SHOT we move ominously THROUGH the house, to the entrance of JIM and MARTHA'S bedroom.

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14 CONTINUED:

14

The door is ajar. A hand reaches out, silently pushing it open for a better view. The Intruder watches the final throes of JIM and MARTHA'S lovemaking.

15 OMITTED

15

16 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

16

JIM rocks MARTHA in his arms, kissing her lovingly. Both close their eyes, Martha already nesting down into the beginnings of sleep.

17 INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

17

We CUT BACK TO the POV SHOT as the INTRUDER leaves the doorway outside the bedroom, moving back through the house.

18 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

18

There's a FAINT NOISE outside the room. JIM is suddenly awake, listening. He takes his arm from around Martha. She turns over, fully asleep.

Jim gets up quietly, pulls on his pants and leaves the room, curious.

19 INT. LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

19

JIM enters silently and sees the open window. His expression grows more serious. He crosses to the front door and goes outside, leaving the door open behind him.

20 EXT. FARMHOUSE AND BARN AREA - NIGHT

20

A storm is moving, somewhere on the far side of the horizon. Ignitions of distant lightning flash against the underbellies of the clouds, and a wind passes over JIM'S face, coiling around the porch, swirling dust and leaves across the drive and into the dark of the barnyard.

A hanging pot of flowers THUDS dully against a porch pillar, moved by the wind. Jim assumes this was the noise he heard. He's halfway back through the door inside when he HEARS the SOUND of the TRACTOR COUGHING

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20 CONTINUED:

20

to life. He stares incredulously toward the barn, listening to the rough POC POC POC of the diesel idling, then picks up an ax handle and walks cautiously toward the SOUND.

ANGLE AT THE DOOR OF THE BARN - He slowly opens the door, eases inside and disappears into the dark.

21 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

21

MARTHA sleeps fitfully. We HEAR the sharp DRONE of an insect. It apparently lands on her face, for she starts suddenly and slaps at it, her eyes coming open in good-natured annoyance. She stares up at the ceiling.

MARTHA

There's a mosquito in here -- did you leave a window open?

No answer. She turns to Jim, realizes he's not there, then HEARS the SOUND of the tractor. It runs a moment more, then gives a strange, GRINDING WRENCH of a SOUND, and FALLS SILENT.

Martha gets out of bed and grabs her robe.

22 INT. LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

22

MARTHA turns on the light and looks around the room. The open window. The front door open as well. She goes to the entranceway and looks out.

After hesitating, she goes outside.

23 EXT. "OUR BLESSING" FARM - NIGHT

23

MARTHA stands at the edge of the porch, trying not to be afraid.

MARTHA

Jim?! You in the barn?

The barn looms up in the moonlight, silent as a sepulcher.

Martha clutches her robe about her and walks across the darkened farmyard. The wind blows up dust all around her. We DOLLY WITH HER TO THE BARN.

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23

CONTINUED:

23

MARTHA (con'd)

Come on, Jim -- you working on that
dumb tractor?

(pausing by the dark gape
of the door)

Jim? You're scaring me!

There is no response. Then the wind slowly opens the door even wider. All the darkness inside pours over Martha like a tide. She steps back involuntarily.

MARTHA (con't)

(fainter)

Jim?

She forces herself to go into the dark place.

24

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Silhouetted just inside the doorway for a moment, hair floating in the wind, MARTHA gropes for the light switch. Deep inside the structure, somewhere in the black, a roosting chicken wakes and begins a LOW, RASPING ALARM.

When Martha finds the switch, the illumination is dishearteningly dim, the cobwebbed light throwing everything in the huge barn into a jumble of broken shadows. Something small SCURRIES away underfoot with a shrill little CRY. Then there is silence enough to hear the faintest SOUND, of some fluid spilling drop by drop onto the planks of the floor, a ways back in the dark.

MARTHA

Jim -- you in here?

Her eyes come to rest on the tractor. The big machine, its back to us, is nosed over as if its front tires have buckled beneath it. The DRIPPING SOUND is coming from there.

ANOTHER ANGLE. Martha reaches the tractor on a half-run, squeezing around between the wall and its side.

CLOSER ANGLE on her face as she stops, looking down -- her cheeks losing their color.

In HER POV we see the huge front engine section of the tractor crushed down into the floor of the barn, the two-inch thick planks buckled and splintered beneath its weight. And we see Jim's hand, stuck out, blood-red and bone-white, from beneath.

CONTINUED

Martha gives a little cry and climbs over to him, pulling and tugging at his limp body -- his head lolls over against her leg. She looks down at his glassy eye.

She stands, her whole body shaking, speaking as if to her own self --

MARTHA (cont'd)

How could this --

-- With a SUDDEN CRASH the wind SLAMS the huge front door of the barn, then with a GROANING WHISTLE pulls it open again.

Martha presses back against the wall -- her head jerking with spasms of shock.

MARTHA (cont'd)

I'll get help -- Baby -- hold on!

She wedges herself back between the machine and wall, heading for the door. Then she sees the HITTITE hex sign, scrawled into the dust on the side of the tractor's engine cowling.

MARTHA (cont'd)

Oh, my god...

25 EXT. "OUR BLESSING" FARM - NIGHT

25

MARTHA stumbles out of the barn in shock, staring around desperately.

26 EXT. "OUR BLESSING" FARM - NIGHT

26

From around the corner of the barn, we SEE a SUBJECTIVE HAND-HELD SHOT FROM KILLER'S POV. There's an eerie silence as the killer begins to stalk MARTHA. Martha staggers off towards the house, unaware of the killer's proximity.

27 INT. MARTHA'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

27

MARTHA runs in from outside and immediately begins searching desperately, pulling open drawers and cupboards. So frantic is her search that she knocks over the one lamp that's lit, smashing the bulb and darkening the room. Just as she's going to light the lamp, she HEARS the back DOOR CREAKING OPEN. She tears back into her search and fortunately finds what she's been looking for. She stands with a .41 Magnum revolver in her hand. She holds it out before her, aimed at the back doorway to the kitchen and backs towards the phone, lifting it off its cradle and dialing with her free hand.

CONTINUED

27 CONTINUED:

27

In the KILLER'S POV we SEE Martha react to the VOICE on the other end of the line.

MARTHA

Operator -- this is Martha Schmidt --
I need an ambulance right away -- and
-- and the police, too --

The POV moves away around into the dark of the kitchen.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. FARMYARD - NIGHT

28

An ambulance and police car SCREAMING into the drive of MARTHA'S home. MARTHA gestures frantically and runs off for the barn. Two AMBULANCE ATTENDANTS and a SHERIFF run after the woman.

CUT TO:

29 INT. BARN - NIGHT

TIGHT ON the face of SHERIFF DICK KRAMER, looking down with an impenetrable expression, and WIDEN as the MEDICS pull a sheet over the face of JIM. HOLD ON MARTHA, pale as death herself, as the realization of her loss begins to press its edge against her.

SHERIFF

(awkwardly)

Shame, young guy like that, cut off
in his prime by a dumb accident like
that --

Martha looks up sharply.

MARTHA

It wasn't any accident.

(she holds the Sheriff's
startled eyes as she walks
around to the side of the
tractor.)

There's a damned HITTITE hex sign
right ---

She stops, staring open-mouthed at the tractor. The hex sign has been removed.

She Sheriff looks at her quizzically.

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED:

29

MARTHA (cont'd)

(outraged)

There was a hex sign -- right here --
who wiped it out?

Martha looks dazedly from one man to the next. The Sheriff spits embarrassedly into the straw and eyes the medics.

SHERIFF

(quietly, to the Medics)

You boys wait here till the tow truck
comes. I'll take Mrs. Schmidt inside.

He takes Martha's arm and leads her out of the barn.

MARTHA

(fading)

I'm telling you, there was a hex
sign there...

30 EXT. MARTHA'S FARM - NIGHT

30

As we WATCH MARTHA and SHERIFF KRAMER walking toward her house, the CAMERA ZOOMS OVER TO TIGHT SHOT of FAITH and LOUISA STOLLER, standing on the edge of their property, watching the scene. Louisa calls down --

LOUISA

Anything we can do to help?

The Sheriff looks up and waves them away.

SHERIFF

Nothin, Lou -- I'll stop up tomorrow and
ask a few questions -- just go 'bout your
business till then.

He goes into the house with Martha. Louisa gives a shrug and walks away. Faith lingers a moment, fascinated.

31 INT. MARTHA'S LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

31

MARTHA sits once more at the dinner table, staring off into space. Despite the sweater clutched around her, she trembles uncontrollably. The SHERIFF takes a seat across from her, clearing his throat.

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED:

31

SHERIFF

(not looking directly
at her)

Soon as the tow truck gets here we'll
get him out from under there...

Martha makes no answer. She wipes the gleam from the
bottom of her eye with a rough weep of sleeve.

The Sheriff has noticed the wine bottles on the table.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Jim do much drinking tonight?

MARTHA

(turning her eye on him)

He had some wine. But he didn't
lay down and kick the jacks out from
underneath that tractor.

The Sheriff shifts in his chair.

SHERIFF

I know it sounds hard, Mrs. Schmidt,
but it happens pretty regular around
farms -- some machine or another --
hell, I had an uncle fall into a baler --
and we could've buried the poor bastard
in an orange crate --

(he shrugs in apology as he
sees her wince)

Anyways, drinkin and farm machinery
don't mix.

Martha shakes her head stubbornly.

MARTHA

You don't realize -- ever since Jim
was kicked out of his community for
marrying me they've been threatening and
badgering us to leave --

SHERIFF

(as if she's way off
the track)

-- The HITTITES may be unfriendly, but
they're about as law-abiding a bunch as
you're like to meet. Besides, I can't
see them hurting their own flesh and
blood.

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED:

31

SOUND of an arriving TRUCK. The Sheriff get up, relieved.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Well, I gotta get back out there --
tow truck's here --

(sees her shaking)

You got some friends you could call
to stay out here with you?

MARTHA

(grimly)

Among the HITTITES?

The Sheriff shrugs and leaves.

Martha sits at the table, looking absolutely abandoned. Her eyes cast over the remains of the feast. The candles melted down to nothing. The plates of cold food. The album...

She reaches out and touches its pictures. Her face alters. INSERT OF HER FINGER tracing across the snapshot of her with her two laughing friends.

Martha goes to the telephone and dials. By the time the OPERATOR responds, Martha's voice is breaking.

MARTHA

Operator -- I want to call Berkeley,
California -- 415-697-3302 -- hurry,
please.

We hear the DIALING as she waits. She looks down and sees the handgun lying on the floor. Then she looks at the album once more. It has fallen open to the page of "Our Blessing's" first days. Jim beams up at her. She shuts the album quickly, as if stung. Then suddenly someone is on the other end of the line --

VOICE (filter)

Hello?

Martha gives a start, jolted back to the present.

MARTHA

(controlled but slipping)

Lana?

LANA (filter)

Yeah? --

(recognizing her in astonishment)

Martha?!

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED:

31

MARTHA

Lana, listen -- I need you out here -- do you think you could come -- maybe get Vicky, too.

Her voice breaks --

LANA (filter)

Martha -- what's going on -- you okay?

MARTHA

Can you please just come for the weekend?

Martha begins crying uncontrollably. She sinks down along the wall, hugging the phone to her as if it were her friend already there. We HEAR Lana's concerned voice coming through the receiver.

LANA (filter)

Hey -- whatever -- we're on our way!

CUT TO:

32 INT. VICKY'S SPORTS CAR - DAY

32

TIGHT SHOT of the two girls from the photograph, LANA and VICKY, now speeding down a rural two-lane black-top, Vicky at the wheel.

Lana is a delicate, blonde beauty who dresses extremely chic and femininely.

Vicky, in halter top, tight Levis, and a lot of Indian jewelry, is a more vigorous girl, very pretty, a little boyish and rowdy. Her voice reveals the traces of a Southern drawl. She seems to be enjoying the drive, but Lana looks out at the rolling, green countryside as if she expects danger behind every tree.

LANA

I never realized Martha was so isolated out here, so far away from everything.

VICKY

That's how the HITTITES choose to live.

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED:

32

LANA
(shaking her head)
HITTITES -- who are they, anyway.
They part of the Amish or something?

VICKY
(laughs)
According to Martha, the HITTITES make
the Amish look like a bunch of swingers --
they split from them years ago -- got
kicked out of different states 'cause
they were so weird -- until finally they
settled here.

EXTERIOR ANGLE. The car ROARS past a barn with prominent hex signs painted on it. But there's something far more evil-looking about these than the familiar Pennsylvania Dutch designs, and one emblem in particular is nearly identical to the one scrawled on the tractor that crushed Jim Schmidt to death. Lana gives a shudder.

VICKY
Hex signs -- to keep away the devil.

Lana looks away.

LANA
(quietly)
I wish they would have kept Martha
away...

CUT TO:

33 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

33

An open grave, simple coffin at its bottom. A shovel-full of dirt rattles down onto the wooden lid.

WIDER SHOT, revealing an old hearse parked nearby, a small cemetery, and an OLD MAN completing the burial of Jim Schmidt.

MARTHA stands near the brink of the pit, her pale face even more striking against the black of her dress. Her expression is drained, yet somehow set and implacable as well. The old man pauses and wipes his sleeve across his sweating forehead, watching her.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED:

33

GRAVEDIGGER

Aint no need for you t'stay any longer,
Ma'am.

MARTHA

(set)

I'll stay till you're through.

The old man nods and goes back to work. Martha watches the rich black clumps of earth pitched down, hears the hollow THUDS, watches the hot sun lay across the stone with her husband's newly-cut name. Then a shadow rolls across it, coiling over the grave too. Something is moving across the sun behind her.

She wheels around and discovers ISAIAH SCHMIDT and all the rest of JIM'S estranged FAMILY, standing on the crest of a hill fifty yards beyond her. The old man is waving a dark censor above their heads, almost as a last farewell. They too are in mourning clothes, and the thick smoke spreading in umber blossom above them, with the orange disc of the sun punched through, all gives them the look of wraiths in a hallucination.

The old gravedigger has stopped, seeing them. He climbs up and stands beside Martha.

GRAVEDIGGER

They usually do that when one of
their own dies... Funny.

(indicates grave)

Was he kin to them?

MARTHA

(cooly)

Kin. But not one of them.

She turns and walks back to her pickup.

34 "OUR BLESSING" FARM - DAY

34

HIGH SHOT of MARTHA'S farmhouse, its shades drawn, and of the fields surrounding. In the section where Jim worked just the day before, the swath of cut grain stops mid-row, where he left it for dinner. We HEAR the SOUND of nearby MOVEMENT THROUGH BRUSH.

We PAN, and CAMERA, set on the hill overlooking the farm, REVEALS and ZOOMS TO a clump of thick underbrush. The SOUNDS are coming from here -- the SCRAPE of bodies crawling along the ground, and the BREAKING OF TWIGS.

CONTINUED

34

CONTINUED:

34

Next moment five HITTITE BOYS in their early teens poke their heads out.

We're close enough to recognize one of them, WILLIAM GLUNTZ, the boy who led the loose horse to work in our opening scenes. Slightly retarded, he is nonetheless no more frightened than the rest of his friends.

WILLIAM

(indicating solemnly)
That's where it happened.

In THEIR POV we ZOOM TO the dark bulk of the barn.

All of the boys stare down at it with fearful wonder. The boldest, LEOPOLD, inches forward for a better view, the most fearful, a FAT BOY, hunches back into the bush, shaking his head.

FAT BOY

I ain't gonna do it.

ANOTHER

You're a chicken if you don't.

FAT BOY

Better a live chicken than a dead duck.

LEOPOLD

(to William)

You first. You been here before...

WILLIAM

(swallows)

I ain't scared.

William gathers his strength and leads the others over the brink and down towards the barn, keeping out of sight of the house.

ANGLE AT THE BARN. They find the main doors guarded by a shining new padlock.

FAT BOY

(relieved)

Ain't no way we gonna get in there.

LEOPOLD

Always a way if you want one.

CONTINUED

34

CONTINUED:

34

Like little commandoes, they creep and dart from one door to the next. All are locked. At last, at a lower level, they discover an unlocked window. Leopold cocks an eye at William.

LEOPOLD

Well? You gonna do it, or you 'fraid your girl friend gonna come back and catch us.

WILLIAM

Ain't my girl friend --

LEOPOLD

(significantly)

Naw, you just come 'round and peek in her windows --

William grabs Leopold and shoves him against the wall of the barn --

WILLIAM

You watch it!

LEOPOLD

Then you must just be scared, scardeecat.

William lets go of Leopold in disgust, turns and climbs in the window. Leopold pulls his coat straight, biting his lip. The others stare around as if expecting lightning to plunge down any second.

FAT BOY

(scared stiff)

Father Isaiah said this place was of the Incubus -- if he knew --

William's head pops back out.

WILLIAM

Now who's the chickens?

He disappears back inside. The other start climbing in.

CUT TO:

35

EXT. MARTHA'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

35

MARTHA driving up to her empty farmhouse. She exits the truck, crosses the yard and mounts the porch. Just as she's at the door she hears NOISES coming from the barn. She turns and looks toward the building, which is approximately 30 yards away. ZOOM TO the window wide open. Then another FAINT NOISE.

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED:

35

TIGHT ON Martha's face. Drawn with fear and anger. WIDER as she slowly crosses the distance between the house and the barn. Once she stops, looking back towards the house, then proceeds.

ANGLE CLOSER as she reaches a side door at the end of the barn away from the window. She unlocks it and eases it open, listening.

CUT TO:

36 INT. BARN - DAY

36

The HITTITE BOYS, obviously unaware of Martha's entrance in the far end of the barn. They are creeping up a flight of stairs to the main level of the structure, and soon stand before the huge tractor, now up on heavy blocks in front.

TIGHT ON their faces, awed by the giant machine and the knowledge of what it did.

LEOPOLD

Wow. You ever...

ANOTHER

Big as a house --

FAT BOY

You never catch me on somethin like that -- must weigh a hundred ton or somethin.

WILLIAM

I'm gonna go look.

Before the others can stop him he darts around to the front of the tractor. Because of the heavy blocks, the thing is high enough to reveal the splintered planks where it crashed down, and the dark stain it left. The boys stare at this with open mouths.

LEOPOLD

I dare you to touch it.

William looks at Leopold, his eyes tightening with terror.

WILLIAM

I dare you.

CONTINUED

36 CONTINUED:

36

LEOPOLD
Double dares go first.

William sees there's no way out. He reaches out slowly. The eyes of all the boys are rivited to his hand as it lowers, then comes up shaking, the fingertips shining red.

LEOPOLD
Jee ---

At this split second Martha bursts through the door behind them. The effect is like a bomb exploding -- the boys scattering like shrapnel, ricochetting off each other in their panic for the window.

TIGHT ON Martha. In the darkness, she's not sure what or who is back there -- and she's scared.

MARTHA
(screaming)
GET OUT -- GET OUT OF HERE!!

CUT TO the BACK SECTION OF THE BARN - the boys spill down the stairs, falling over themselves in utter pandemonium. One dives head-first through the open window, then the fat boy lurches up and gets stuck, half-in, half-out. Leopold gives him a frantic shove.

FAT BOY
Hey! -- I'm stuck -- don't do that!

LEOPOLD
(running back a step)
I'll do better than that!

In pure panic Leopold charges and rams the fat boy through the window, then climbs through himself. But the door above is thrown open and Martha is already starting down the stairs. William sees he's not going to make it. He turns and looks around in desperation, then ducks into a tiny little coop.

TIGHT ON him, wedged into a tiny space, peeking through the chinks.

POV ANGLE on Martha, entering the room with a pitchfork at the ready.

CONTINUED

36

CONTINUED:

36

TIGHT ON William, petrified. AGAIN TO HIS POV through the chinks. We see Martha coming nearer, the dim light from the window glinting off the spikes of the pitchfork. William looks behind himself. He sees a tiny port in the wall, probably made for chickens. It leads outside, though, and that's enough for him. He dives for it, knocking over a pail as he does.

CUT TO Martha, jumping at the SOUND, wheeling around with the pitchfork, terrified, hysterical.

MARTHA
(screaming)

Who are you?!! GET OUT OF MY PLACE!!!
GET OUT OF HERE!!!

TIGHT ON William, stuck, his foot caught in an angle of boards. With Martha's incredible SCREAMS radiating his spine he gives a terrible yank and pulls free, falling down a chute to the outside and freedom.

But his right shoe remains behind in the terrifying barn.

36A

EXT. THE BARN - DAY

36A

No matter; one shoe off, one one, WILLIAM tears off across the barn yard, vaults a fence, and is gone.

CUT TO the other side of the barn. Martha exits, slams the door and relocks it. Then she sags back against it and stares up at the sky.

MARTHA
They'll never make me leave. Never.

CUT TO:

37

OMIT

37

38

INT. VICKY'S SPORTS CAR - DAY

38

FAST GO-BY of Vicky's sports car, now rattling down a dirt road.

CUT TO INTERIOR. VICKY slows at a crossroad as the car approaches a young HITTITE MAN.

A CLOSER ANGLE to him reveals he's JOHN SCHMIDT, younger brother of Martha's husband. Having remained within the bounds of the HITTITES, he's unused to such things as Vicky and LANA in their sports car. He stares at their approach as we would at a UFO. The bright, brief and tight clothes of Vicky are not lost on him either, as she leans out towards him, a blinding smile lighting her face.

CONTINUED

38

CONTINUED:

38

VICKY

Can you tell us where Martha Schmidt lives?

Somewhere behind his HITTITE mask he usually holds up to outsiders, John reacts. His face moves, softens.

JOHN

Jim's place?

(he points, a little stiff)
First left down the road, miss.
The house with the flowers in the yard. It's the only one.

Something passes between Vicky and him during the saying of these few words, then John looks away, as if ashamed of speaking so boldly to her.

VICKY

(smiling)

Thanks!

They drive off with a mellow WHUFF of exhausts.

ANGLE ON Vicky, smiling. She looks up into the rear-view mirror. INSERT of John seen through this mirror, staring after her.

VICKY

Cute.

LANA

(uneasy)

Forget it. His idea of a good time is probably to show his pig at the county fair.

Vicky laughs, but Lana, despite her having made the joke, is unsmiling.

39

EXT. STOLLER FARMHOUSE - DAY

39

FAITH STOLLER, wearing her best dress, slips from her house onto the front porch, making sure the screen doesn't slap behind her. She carries a large bouquet of wildflowers. Looking over her shoulder once to make sure she's free of her mother's eyes, she runs down the hill towards Martha's farmhouse, several hundred yards below.

ANOTHER ANGLE - Faith darts through a stand of Live Oaks, her long hair flying out behind her. She comes out onto the last crest above "Our Blessing" Farm.

CONTINUED

39

CONTINUED:

39

CLOSER, ON HER FACE. She closes her eyes and begins reciting, her face miming enormous concern.

FAITH

I know how it must hurt to have him gone. I had a pet die once -- well, it was just some stupid bird I found with its wing broke, but I cried for three whole days when it --

A sporty CAR HORN interrupts her. She opens her eyes. Her face falls and she steps back into the shade of a tree. In HER POV we ZOOM in on Vicky's sports car pulling up in Martha's drive. MARTHA breaks from the house as VICKY and LANA jump from the car. The three embrace, Martha obviously enormously relieved to see them.

CLOSER ON Faith. Her eyes watch with the immense concentration of a child observing something it's never seen before -- a parent cry, an animal give birth, an insect die between her fingers. She smiles faintly.

FAITH (cont'd)

(very quietly)

It's so good to have someone you can depend on. Someone always to be there, no matter what.

ANGLE ON HER FEET. The flowers begin falling over them one by one.

FAITH (cont'd O.S.)

No matter what, always there to watch out for you...

CUT TO:

39 A EXT. A FIELD - DAY

39 A

CLOSE UP on a strange, irregular MAN'S face. He has no hair on his entire head, the plates of his skull are only roughly joined, and his piercing eyes are without brows or lashes. He scowls directly INTO CAMERA. At last he speaks, impatiently, sternly.

MAN

I am not moving until you tell me what you have done with it.

CUT TO WILLIAM GLUNTZ. The young man stands before his father, transfixed on the man's gaze. He lowers his head, lying quietly.

CONTINUED

39 A CONTINUED:

39 A

WILLIAM

I lost it, Father, in the lower pasture...

MR. GLUNTZ

You lost your shoe in a pasture?
Do you know what the cost of a shoe is?

WILLIAM

I was fetching a calf which was caught in the mud -- my foot was stuck in mud, and when I pulled it out my shoe came off and --

The man's hand falls on the boy's shoulder. William Gluntz braces for a possible blow.

MR. GLUNTZ

There is no mud on the shoe you have.

WILLIAM

I washed it so --

The man shakes him hard, then lifts the boy's chin so their eyes meet.

MR. GLUNTZ

More than the cost of the shoe is the cost of the lie.

The boy looks down again.

WILLIAM

I will go get it. If I can find it...

The man tightens his hand.

MR. GLUNTZ

You will find it. If it takes you all night. And while you are searching, keep in mind the wages of sin.

The poor boy nods grimly and runs off. HOLD ON the father watching him, his expression cut from flint, and

DISSOLVE TO:

40

INT. MARTHA'S FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

40

CLOSE SHOT of fire snapping up hungrily. PULL BACK to REVEAL MARTHA, VICKY and LANA, now all wearing sweaters

CONTINUED

40

CONTINUED:

40

and long skirts, sitting around the blazing hearth drinking wine. Amid the jumble of half-unpacked suitcases and soft firelight on their faces, the scene is one of relief and renewed friendship. We feel the concern and love of Vicky and Lana, and the shared pain, too.

MARTHA

(restrained)

It... apparently shifted off the jacks while he was under it --

The two friends stare into the fire. Martha shakes her head.

MARTHA (cont'd)

The doctor up at the County hospital said he died instantly -- and the Sheriff said that an accident like that can happen to anyone...

Martha's voice trails off. She picks a piece of lint off her skirt. Lana studies her more closely, almost intuitively reading her.

LANA

It was an accident, wasn't it?

Vicky looks up now. Martha makes a smile.

MARTHA

Of course it was -- it's just that Jim's folks -- his father -- was so set against him for marrying me and staying on here. Does my paranoia show?

LANA

Not much.

MARTHA

(she shrugs it off,
changing the subject)

I'm so glad you guys could take off work a while -- how long can you stay?

LANA

Don't worry about it. I just finished a job.

(beat)

I'm free at least a week.

CONTINUED

VICKY

I took a week's vacation, too. We'll help you out -- we could use the exercise.

MARTHA

(laughs)

Well, you'll get that, all right -- there's still fifty acres to be mowed!

VICKY

No sweat, sugar, it'll be like old times. But listen, you are going to put this place on the market, aren't you?

Martha shakes her head, prodding the coals.

MARTHA

That would be just kissing goodbye a dream Jim and I worked too hard to build. I'm not ready to do that yet.

(she grabs the bottle)

Anyone for more wine?

She refills the glasses, looking at her friends with love. Toasting.

MARTHA (cont'd)

To you two, for coming -- I love you both.

They drink. Our ANGLE FAVORS LANA, and we see her eye caught by something gleaming on a table in the corner. The .41 Magnum pistol, left out as if in readiness by Martha. Lana drinks her glass down and holds it out for more.

CUT TO:

TIGHT SHOT of FAITH looking directly into camera. Rimmed by lantern-light closely matching the fire-light of the previous scene, it's as if she's in the room with Lana, Vicky and Martha.

FAITH

(brightly)

Hi, there. I'm your next-door neighbor. My name is Faith. F-A-I-T-H, like in believe. What's yours? Oh, that's a pretty name! The City? Sure, I been there lotsa times --

41 CONTINUED:

41

A DOOR BANGS behind her. WIDER SHOT, revealing Faith standing on the porch of her own home, with LOUISA advancing on her. The girl stiffens.

LOUISA

You weren't talking to yourself again, were you?

FAITH

No, Lou.

LOUISA

(smiles)

People will think you're strange if they catch you doing that. You don't want them thinking you're strange, do you?

FAITH

(petulantly)

There's nobody ever 'round here to catch me, anyway.

LOUISA

Got visitors down the hill. How 'bout them?

Faith suddenly is looking off into the dark, alert as an animal. In her POV we SEE William Gluntz, the HITTITE boy who lost his shoe, darting across their property line, down toward's Martha's.

FAITH

Little HITTITE runt from the farm over the hill -- Billy Gluntz, I think... Where's he going, anyways.

Louisa snorts in disgust.

LOUISA

Bunch of city girls come out here, an already we got a tom sniffin' out the place!... Come on inside. -

Faith hangs back, scowling.

FAITH

He shouldn't be goin' down there -- gonna get himself in trouble...

Louisa turns in the doorway.

LOUISA

Before I know it, all this will be r off on you. Now get in here, 'less t'get yourself in trouble.

CONTIN

41 CONTINUED:

41

Faith follows Louisa unwillingly, looking back over her shoulder one last time before she goes inside.

41 A EXT. MARTHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

41 A

We SEE the house in a HAND-HELD SHOT, through the screen of low bushes. Only one light is burning, in a second-floor window.

OUT TO the face of WILLIAM GLUNTZ, watching, the square of light from the window shining back from depths of his eyes.

CUT TO:

42 INT. LANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

42

LANA, in a nightgown, is flipping through the pages of a feed catalogue, unable to sleep. Finally she reaches over and removes a small pill from a prescription bottle and swallows it, managing surprisingly well without water. She stretches, puts the catalogue aside and crosses to the light. She turns it off, then pauses by the open window, looking out into the moonlight. A movement catches her eye.

43 EXT. MARTHA'S YARD - NIGHT

43

ANGLE LOOKING UP at LANA, TIGHT ON her at first as she peers into the night, NOT AT CAMERA, then ZOOM back and - CUT TO:

Face of WILLIAM GLUNTZ. He fades back a bit deeper into the shadows, still looking up.

44 INT. LANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

44

LANA looks down a moment more, then steps back away from the window. She goes to her Designer's traveling case, takes out a silver flask of brandy and fills its cap. She drinks it down, shivers in the cold and jumps into bed, pulling the covers around her. Lana looks up at this strange room like a child locked in a closet. She sees something that makes her recoil. There is a spider in the corner between the walls and ceiling. Lana hates spiders. She reaches for the flask again, this time not bothering to pour her shot into the cap first.

45 EXT. BARNYARD - NIGHT

45

WILLIAM scoots along the edge of a fence until he's across from the hatch which served him for escape the day before. The barn looks even spookier in the moonlight, but he knows that if he returns home shoeless he'll not sit for a week. He jumps the fence and dashes to the little ramp leading up to the chicken hatch.

There he crouches breathless against the wall. Maybe, he thinks, the Evil One sleeps at night like everybody else; so far no demon has lept out to pitch him into Hell. William creeps up the shaky plank and sticks his head into the small opening.

46 INT. BARN - NIGHT

46

The boy is squeezed in to the shoulders when he HEARS the low, CREAKING of the barn's timbers, still contracting from the day's heat. WILLIAM clenches his teeth and hurriedly reaches around for his lost shoe, groping in the dark. On or about the third fumble he puts his hand square on a sleeping barn cat -- the animal erupts from sleep with a spitting YOWL, and William recoils so hard he smashes his head on a beam. Nevertheless he does manage at last to find his shoe. Prize in hand, he tries to back out, gets his coat caught on a nail -- tugs, rips loose and scrambles as fast as he can back outside.

46 A EXT. BARN AND HOUSE - NIGHT

46 A

WILLIAM jumps the fence, carrying his shoe like a trophy, and darts across the barnyard, skirting the house. He's half-way across the front yard when a light comes on in a down-stairs room. It stops him as surely as if he'd run into a net.

He turns, rubbing his sweating palm on his pants leg, then creeps across the yard until just outside the window. He eases round, mouth slightly open, until the light from within lays across his eyes.

46 B INSERT OF HIS POV: INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

46 B

MARTHA, her dress partially open, moves OUT OF THE FRAME formed by the window, then RE-EMERGES, carrying a thin robe. She begins removing her dress.

46 C BACK TIGHT ON the face of WILLIAM GLUNTZ, eyes even wider than when he saw Jim Schmidt's blood gleaming on his fingertips. He licks his lips. It's the last move he makes -- something blurs out from behind him

CONTINUED

46 C CONTINUED:

46 C

accompanied by a tremendous MUSIC STING -- a dark sleeve snakes around his face and snaps his head back. The boy is heaved off his feet backwards and UP OUT OF FRAME.

46 D INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

46 D

Martha turns, pulling her robe around her. After a pause, she moves to her dresser, obviously preoccupied rather than alarmed. From this interior, stable MEDIUM SHOT, we CUT BACK OUTSIDE TO:

46 E HAND-HELD POV rising up until we're looking through the window at Martha, who now has her back to us. The light from her dresser silhouettes her body through the sleeping gown, rims her hair. She turns profile an instant, and her beauty and vulnerability are even more evident as we see the sheen of tears on her face. She stares blankly at the empty bed, then turns out the light. The SCREEN GOES TO BLACK.

46 E

A BEAT of SILENCE yields to the SOUND of WATER SPLASHING, FADING UP WITH PICTURE ON:

47-52 OMIT

47-52

53 INT. STOLLER KITCHEN - NIGHT

53

A long, delicate hand soaping a massive, smooth back. PULL BACK to REVEAL LOUISE sitting in a large tub pulled close to the wood stove, her BACK TO the CAMERA. FAITH bustles over her, finishing scrubbing, now fetching hot water from the stove, shampoo from a cupboard -- happy to be on the good side of Louisa for the moment.

LOUISE

What would I do without you, honey?

FAITH

Grow longer arms.

LOUISE

I need you here to help take care of this place. That's why I can't let you go.

Faith thoughtfully tests the heat of the water on her forearm.

FAITH

I know, Lou. Anyways, they'd just make fun of me.

CONTINUED

53 CONTINUED:

53

LOUISA

What's there to make fun of? You're perfect.

Faith stops, touched.

FAITH

You're not just saying that?

Louisa turns round in the tub and peers at her daughter as if she must be crazy to think otherwise.

LOUISA

You're perfect in every way. I made you that way, I should know.

FAITH

I'm glad. 'Cause if anybody laughed at me...

LOUISA

Long as you stay with me, nobody'll laugh... Now wash my hair, honey.

Faith pours water over her head.

FAITH

You have the prettiest hair.

LOUISA

Not as pretty as yours.

FAITH

Well, almost.

54 EXT. MARTHA'S FARM - EARLY MORNING

54

Up on the hill at the Stoller place a late rooster rings like a bell. Dew still tips the grass of Martha's yard, and out in the low field with the unfinished cut a pall of mist floats over the grain, drifting up with the sun.

We HEAR the HOOVES and CLATTER of a wagon, and the long shadow of the horse slips over the drive. Then suddenly we SEE the surry bearing ISAAH SCHMIDT and MATTHEW GLUNTZ, William's father.

Even before the wagon's fully stopped Mr. Gluntz jumps down and makes for the house.

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED:

54

ISAIAH
(sternly)

Matthew.

The man stops, coming back apologetically as Isaiah steps down from the buggy. The patriarch lays a hand on his arm.

ISAIAH
It's best I speak to this one.

He strides up onto the porch; Matthew Gluntz stands obediently by the wagon, his face gaunt from a sleepless night.

Isaiah KNOCKS LOUDLY, staring into the grain of the door with the expression of one forced to do a particularly distasteful task. He's about to knock again when MARTHA opens the door. She stares at him in sleepy astonishment, a little hung over.

ISAIAH
Good day.

Martha involuntarily draws her robe more tightly around her, leaving her hand over her breast. Her eyes spark.

MARTHA
You're a bit late to be wishing me
a good day, don't you think?

Isaiah seems caught off-guard by this.

MARTHA (cont'd)
I mean, he's in his grave now, he --

Seeming to realize what she's saying for the first time, the man brushes it aside with an impatient gesture.

ISAIAH
I did not come to talk of him, I came
as a service to one of my flock --

MATTHEW (O.S.)
It's my boy --

Isaiah turns, irritated. Matthew Gluntz has ventured to the foot of the porch stairs, hat in hand, speaking quickly before Isaiah can silence him.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
He went out last evening on an errand --
(his eyes flinch)
I sent him.. and he has not returned.
We have asked everyone -- have you seen
him?

CONTINUED:

54

Martha softens immediately, and though frightened by the strange appearance of the man, speaks with genuine concern.

MARTHA

No... I'm afraid I haven't been really too aware -- there were some kids by here yesterday morning, I think...

MATTHEW

(shaking his head)

No, no. I spoke to him late in the afternoon. It would have been later, in the evening, maybe.

MARTHA

I'm afraid not. I'm sorry.

MATTHEW

Well if you see him --

Isaiah takes the man's shoulder and leads him away, back to the wagon without another glance at Martha.

MARTHA

(calling after to Matthew)

If I see him I'll drive him by -- where's your farm?

MATTHEW

(eagerly)

By the river, just --

Isaiah again pulls him around, facing him towards the horse. CLOSE ON THEM, Matthew confused, Isaiah shaking his head slightly, a grim smile playing across his lips. He pretends an adjustment to the harness as he speaks quickly and softly.

ISAIAH

See how quickly the glib tongue of the serpent deceives you, Matthew -- would you put your son in her ungodly machine?

MATTHEW

(dumbfounded)

If it would bring him home --

ISAIAH

-- She is with Incubus -- she would not speak the truth if she knew it.

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED:

54

MATTHEW

We should leave no stone unturned --

ISAIAH

(sharply) .

That is one stone even the Angel Gabriel
could not turn --

ISAIAH (cont'd)

(seeing the look of
desperation, he seems
to relent)

But I will have one more word with
her -- you wait in the wagon. Go.

Matthew climbs in the wagon, watching anxiously. Isaiah
stalks back to Martha, who glares at him, arms folded
in front of her.

ISAIAH

If you should see the boy, notify
me -- I am the Elder.

(he turns as if to go,
then comes back)

One other thing.. (quietly) I too
have lost a son, and I am certain
in my heart he would want this land
to stay with his people.

Martha is instantly enraged.

MARTHA

His people! His people turned their
backs on him! You ordered it!

ISAIAH

One woman cannot work a farm.

Martha smiles grimly.

MARTHA

There are three of us now -- I have
friends who've come to help me.

ISAIAH

(carefully)

Men?

MARTHA

Women. But we'll manage.

Isaiah lets just the trace of a smug smile show.

CONTINUED

54 CONTINUED:

54

ISAIAH

Our people are prepared to offer a very good price...

MARTHA

(trembling with rage)

You want an answer right away?

ISAIAH

(a little surprised)

If you like...

MARTHA

Very well...

She takes a step back into the house, seizes the door with both hands and slams it with such fury that the horse rears in the drive, nearly throwing Matthew out of the wagon. Only Isaiah is unmoving in that moment, like a man hewn from granite, a look of terrible, smoldering hatred clutching his face.

IN CLOSE UP he turns and looks up at the heavens, even more frightening, as if he can barely wait an instant more for his god to strike this woman from his life forever.

CUT TO:

55 HOLD

55

56 INT. FAITH STOLLER'S ROOM - MORNING

56

EXTREME CLOSE-UP as a surge of blood-red fluid spills out, flooding the screen with scarlet.

FAITH (O.S.)

Damn!

MUCH WIDER SHOT -- we see FAITH in her room, scrambling to set the bottle of nail polish back upright. She does so with all her fingers outstretched except for the thumb and forefinger she must use. The nails gleam, wet and red.

FULL SHOT - as Faith abandons the accident, moving across her room with a SIGH of exasperation. We're suddenly aware of the place itself, an incredible mix of mess and brilliance.

The mess - empty Tab bottles everywhere, strewn among heaps of Teenage Rock Magazines and dirty clothes. The brilliance -- the astonishing paintings; half a dozen

CONTINUED

56 CONTINUED:

56

of them, propped against the wall or painted directly onto the crumbling plaster itself. But unlike those we saw in her studio, of trees and crows and electric skies, these are all of women's faces. Powerful, haunting, achingly beautiful eyes watch her from every direction.

Faith is now EXTREME FOREGROUND, poking through her small hoard of mostly half-smoked cigarettes. She lights up, takes a quick drag, then leaves the cigarette behind and darts to the open window. She thrusts her fingers splayed out before her in the bright morning air, stealing a look down at the chicken house below her.

56 A STOLLER YARD AND OUTBUILDINGS - MORNING

56 A

IN FAITH'S POV WE SEE LOUISA plod by under the window, lugging two pails of feed. She disappeared into the huge chicken coop nearby.

56 B INT. FAITH'S ROOM - DAY

56 B

BACK CLOSE on FAITH - the girl reacts in dismay.

FAITH

She would, wouldn't she!

She troops back to her bed like a forlorn princess locked in her tower, then looks at her shiny new nails.

FAITH (cont'd)

How do you like my nails?

She moves her fingers back and forth as if they were talking back to her.

FAITH (cont'd)

(in a different voice)

How do you get them so long?

(with natural voice)

Oh, I don't do anything. They just grow like that. I cut 'em and cut 'em but it hardly does any good...

Her fingers begin moving again; she assumes another voice.

FAITH (cont'd)

Those aren't real. Those are fake.

Faith's expression changes. She makes a clawing motion with her bright nails.

FAITH (cont'd)

Oh, yeah? I'll show you fake!

She runs out of the room.

57 EXT. STOLLER FARM - MORNING

57

LOUISA exits the chicken coop carrying two chickens by their legs. She disappears into a shed. Immediately FAITH exits the house and ducks into the chicken coop.

57 A INT. CHICKEN COOP - MORNING

57 A

FAITH grabs a basket from the wall and hurriedly begins filling it with eggs, looking around suspiciously to make sure her mother isn't sneaking up on her.

CUT TO:

58 INT. MARTHA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

58

CLOSE ON eggs breaking into a skillet, and PULL BACK to REVEAL MARTHA, still wired from the visit of Isaiah, pacing back and forth watching VICKY make breakfast. Vicky, in jogging shorts and tight t-shirt, looks terrific and happy to be part of an adventure.

MARTHA

You don't have to do that, you know,
I'm not an invalid.

VICKY

I want to do it. Now just sit down
and try to relax.

Martha stops and stares at her friend.

MARTHA

(deadpan)

You've become even more disgustingly
well-adjusted since I've seen you last,
you know that? What do you do, gobble
sunshine pills every morning?

VICKY

Nope. I run three miles every morning.
Now nothing bugs me ever. Sit.

Martha slumps down at the table, nerves still jumping.

MARTHA

I shouldn't have let him get to me
like that --

(getting mad all
over again)

-- but the day after his son dies, and
he's pitching me for the property! What
kind of parent would do that?

CONTINUED

Vicky skids a plate of bacon in front of Martha, stealing a piece.

VICKY

If I owned a piece of property like this, the day I died would be the day my parents built Condominiums over every square inch of it -- here, eat.

She slips two perfect fried eggs onto Martha's plate. Martha prods one with her fork.

MARTHA

... And that poor mishapen man who'd lost his son...

ENTER LANA, sleepily.

LANA

Lost his son? If it's male, Vicky will find it.

VICKY

Oh, my god. Look what the cat dragged in.

Lana stretches good-humoredly. She's wearing a Giorgio Armani cotton shirt and a pair of skin-tight, perfectly-bleached Lee Wranglers. Rumpled and bleary-eyed, she's still effortlessly smashing.

LANA

Does this restaurant serve real coffee?

She slides into a chair opposite Martha, studying her across the table.

LANA (cont'd)

(her voice abruptly caring)
How's the Champ?

MARTHA

I'm fine. Vicky's doing everything but inject me with chicken soup.
(looking back more closely)
What about you? Your eyes are a disaster.

Lana claps a hand over them.

LANA

Oh, god, I knew it -- I couldn't find a mirror --

58

CONTINUED:

58

VICKY

You couldn't find a mirror?

Vicky slaps down Lana's order of coffee, then leans closer, examining the eyes. .

VICKY (cont'd)

Beyond bloodshot. And you're up before noon, too. You must be sick.

Lana gulps the coffee, relieved to find it's strong, a little embarrassed at the attention of her friends.

LANA

Just couldn't get to sleep, that's all. There was this humunculus spider on the ceiling last night...

(she holds her hands apart to indicate bulk)

About the size of a pie plate, just waiting for me to go to sleep so he could fall on my face.

(she helps herself to Martha's bacon)

Then, around 3 A.M., I met your mouse. You do have one, you know.

MARTHA

(nods, wrinkling her nose)

One or two have been known to pass through. I'm sorry --

LANA

It's all right, I like animals. If I hadn't become a model, I'd've been a Vet. The thing that got me was that when I finally did fall asleep I had this really creepy nightmare right out of Bergman where...

She stops. Her two friends look at her.

LANA (cont'd)

Never mind.

VICKY

Lana!

LANA

(giving a look)

Skip it, Vicky.

Martha leans forward, quiet and warm.

CONTINUED

MARTHA

It's all right. After the last couple days, I know a little of what Bergman's about. What happened.

Lana looks at her own hands. Her voice is too casual.

LANA

Well... I dreamed Death came to my house -- I mean, not my apartment, but the house I was living in, in my dream...

MARTHA

This house?

LANA

No! It didn't look anything like this house.

(she removes something invisible from her coffee)

Anyway, he came, and knocked super loud, and then he just said my name. Real quiet. But the word penetrated the entire house. Over and over, he just kept calling... (whispers)

Lana. Lana. Lana.

There's a beat of spooked silence.

VICKY

Lana, what a bummer you can be.

Vicky turns back to the stove, annoyed. But Lana isn't quite through. She's taking the telling more seriously now, her voice excellerating imperceptibly.

LANA

Then it was like I was in the military, and I took this big cannon, a howitzer, I think they're called, and I aimed it right at the door and I pulled the string --

VICKY

-- AND it didn't work, naturally.

LANA

(totally sincere)

No, it did. It went off with this tremendous sound -- BLAMM!! And when the smoke cleared he was gone, but...

Vicky gives her a disgusted look.

CONTINUED

VICKY

(primly, tongue-in-cheek)

You can choose to look at the shadows,
or --

(she sits and gasps the
closed window curtain)

-- you can choose to look at the
light.

She pulls the curtains apart with a quick, dramatic sweep. There is a person's face mashed right up against the window glass, staring in at her.

All four persons jump as if jabbed with cattle prods, Vicky screaming even louder than Lana.

VICKY

OH JEESUS!!!

She falls backwards, stumbling over her chair. Lana is halfway across the kitchen, spilled coffee all over her. The person outside, FAITH, gives a little wave and smiles, calling through the glass.

FAITH

Sorry -- didn't mean t'peek.

She shrugs with a grin and marches to the back door, peering through its glass.

FAITH

May I come in?

58 A INT. CHICKEN COOP, STOLLER FARM - MORNING

58

The SOUNDTRACK EXPLODES with the FLUTTERING and CACKLING of HENS.

LOUISA is trodding through hundreds upon hundreds of chickens. She pours out grain for them and checks to see which chickens are laying and which aren't. As Louisa storms through the flocks of chickens, they scatter in all directions. We SEE the chickens THROUGH their barbed wire enclosures, as prisoners would be seen through bars. It is here, among her chickens, that Louisa is in supreme command and happiest of all. All at once she kicks chickens out of her way, talks endearingly to them, and threatens them.

CONTINUED

58 A CONTINUED:

58 A

LOUISA

(while working)

You're hungry, are you? Momma's here. Yes, Momma's here... You get out of my way, you. You're the dumbest, stupidest creatures alive. You others wait your turn, I'll get to you. Don't worry. And don't let me catch a rooster in here. I'll pluck him and have him setting on the table before he can say cockle-doodle-do. And don't trust a word a rooster says. He's got one thing and one thing only on his filthy, chicken brain...

(she whispers)

And that I'm not even going to say 'cause it's too disgusting for your virgin minds.

Louisa checks to see if a particular chicken has been laying. Nothing in this next either.

LOUISA (cont'd)

You better do better than that, old girl, or we're gonna have to put you on Social Security

(she rears up and bellows
at them all)

Fact is, you all better knuckle down and give me some eggs. This is pitiful!

She jams the chicken back down on its next.

CUT TO:

58 B INT. MARTHA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

58 B

FAITH puts a huge basket of eggs down and begins taking them out, laying them on the kitchen table. The young girl is so fascinated by the kitchen and everything in it, that one egg after another rolls for the edge of the table, only to be caught at the last split second by her quick, red-tipped fingers. Her dialogue begins on the cut.

FAITH

(fast and nervous)

Look how many I brought you -- they're all Grade AA Large, too. We'll never miss them. In fact I'm sick of eggs. I really am. Egg this and egg that. I'd rather eat dirt sometimes.

CONTINUED

58 B CONTINUED:

58

She sees LANA, VICKY & MARTHA are just staring at her.
She snatches two eggs and puts them in Vicky's hands.

FAITH (cont'd)
Feel 'em. Aren't they big? And don't
worry, I candled 'em all. Aren't gonna
be no little beady eyes starin' up at
you out of your sunny-side ups!

VICKY
Terrific...

FAITH
(brightly, to Martha)
Do you like my nails?

She holds up the long things for Martha to see. Lana
and Vicky exchange looks, about to crack up, but Martha
studies them with all seriousness.

MARTHA
They're beautiful.

FAITH
(delighted)
I thought they'd look nice against
the white of the eggs.

She looks away quickly when Martha meets her eyes, over-
whelmed.

MARTHA
(kindly)
You live up on the hill, right?

Faith nods, even more pleased that Martha knows of her.

MARTHA
I've seen your mother...

FAITH
At the market, prob'ly -- those are
her eggs they sell there. Louisa.
(she swells a little)
I'm Louisa's daughter, Faith. F-A-
I-T-H. Faith, like in believe. My
mother is very old-fashioned, soooo
protective it's annoying.

Martha smiles gamely, indicating her friends.

MARTHA
Well, Faith, this is Lana, and Vicky,
and I'm Martha. Good to meet you.

CONTINUED

58 B CONTINUED:

53 B

LANA

You... you're not a Hittite, are you?

FAITH

Me? Don't you ever say that. I hate HITTITES! All they done is try to push us out like they did everyone else. But my momma don't budge.

(beams at Martha)

like you don't. Well -- gotta scoot. But first, I'll take a look at your house, if you wouldn't mind?

Faith is already moving by the time Martha speaks.

MARTHA

No -- I'll show you around --

59 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

59

FAITH leads MARTHA, gawking, speaking like an old friend. Behind, LANA and VICKY bite their lips to keep from laughing.

FAITH

I'll bring some more eggs soon.

MARTHA

That's sweet, but we have plenty now.

FAITH

No trouble.

Faith stops short in the entranceway of Martha's bedroom.

FAITH

(vacantly)

I have to bring them. It's only right and proper...

Martha sees that the girl is staring raptly at the bed.

MARTHA

(unnerved)

Okay. You bring them.

59 A INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

59 A

Before Martha can stop her, Faith stops at the bed, sits and bounces on its edge with a strange look on her face.

CONTINUED

59 A CONTINUED:

59

FAITH

Miss 'im? You must. I had a pet once.
Well, it was just some stupid bird...

Something constricts in Martha's belly. Her throat is suddenly bitter. The girl continues to bounce slowly on the bed, her eyes locked into Martha's.

MARTHA

(faintly)

Please don't do that.

Faith jumps up as if on a string.

FAITH

(faintly)

I just love your room. Those two visitors?

MARTHA

They'll be staying a while.

She extends her hand to the door knob. Faith gets the hint immediately, walking brightly back into the living room --

59 B INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

59 B

FAITH

(to all)

I do paintings, of people and stuff.
I'll paint you sometime!

Without another word she EXITS the front door and is gone.

There's a beat of silence, then Vicky flops into a chair, shaking her head in amazement.

VICKY

And I thought LANA was nuts.

The three women burst into laughter, all of it having a rather forced edge to it.

LANA

Maybe I am. Maybe I hallucinated
that entire visit.

Martha smiles and then discreetly closes the door to her bedroom until the latch hits home.

60 EXT. ROAD & COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

60

FOREGROUND a black horse and buggy is standing on the shoulder of the road. A HITTITE WOMAN sits rigidly in the cab, a HITTITE MAN, undoubtedly her husband, is down on the ground with one of the horse's hoofs pulled up between his legs, prying out a cinder. IMMEDIATELY UPON THE CUT we HEAR the RAPID APPROACH of a MOTOR. A moment later a pickup truck looms up behind, veering suddenly as the driver sees the wagon. It ROARS by, narrowly missing. The horse dances sideways, the man hanging onto the harness for dear life. Both man and woman stare after the car in stupified fear.

QUICK CUT TO:

60 A INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

60 A

LANA at the passenger's window, VICKY driving, MARTHA between, yelling.

MARTHA

Slow down, for Petesakes! You can't see these people until you're right on top of them!

Vicky slows dramatically.

VICKY

Sorry, sorry. I'm slowing, see? But we missed them by a mile.

LANA

Did you see the look on their faces? My god, you damn near drove up their backs and down their shirts!

MARTHA

Pull over. Really. I'll drive.

VICKY

I'm doing twenty! Besides, you can't drive without your wallet. You don't have any kind of license.

LANA

What kind do you have, a hunting license?

VICKY

Very funny. Hand me my camera, would you? There's another buggy coming.

Lana passes the camera across Martha to Vicky.

MARTHA

I have a license. I just can't find it today.

CONTINUED

60 A CONTINUED:

60 A

VICKY

Try telling that to the Highway Patrol.
Grab the wheel a sec', would you?

Vicky leans out her window, aiming the camera at the approaching buggy. Martha grabs frantically for the wheel.

MARTHA

You maniac!

VICKY

(hanging out)

Hold it steady, would you?

The HITTITES see her just as they draw abreast, and all avert their heads and cover their faces. Vicky slides back in, perturbed.

VICKY

What they do that for -- ruined
a perfectly good picture.

Martha simply points, trying not to loose her temper.

MARTHA

Pull in there -- right now!

She's pointing to a shambling market's parking lot, sprawled across one corner of a cross road. There's nothing else in sight but road and fields. Vicky pulls in. Martha and Lana get out immediately, glad for solid ground. Martha walks toward the dilapidated place.

VICKY

(calling out her window)

Hey -- where you going? I thought
you said we were going to go shop in
Coopers Junction!

MARTHA

(turning at the door)

This is Coopers Junction.

She turns and goes into the store, followed by Lana.

Vicky looks around. There are several HITTITE buggies pulled up outside, and suddenly Vicky is a little uneasy. Something rattles up behind her and shoots by the pickup's tailgate. Another buggy reins up in a cloud of dust, blocking Vicky's door. She's about to make some comment when the man she'd nearly run off the road swings into view, jumping down inches from her door.

Vicky sinks down in her seat OUT OF FRAME BOTTOM.

CONTINUED

60 A CONTINUED:

60 A

VICKY (O.S.)
 (meekly, to herself)
 I do not believe this...

The MAN and WOMAN, pale as death with their coating of dust, stare after her a moment, their retarded expressions full of a dull, animal hatred, then turn and head for the store.

CUT TO:

61 INT. COOPERS JUNCTION MARKET - DAY

61

This is a typical, ramshackle market as found in any rural backwater. It has a few noisy freezers full of Nihi Orange Drink and Bud, several aisles crammed with canned goods, and a lot of dying flies. What makes it unusual is that it's the one place that HITTITES can find coal oil, candles, bulk rolls of black cotton and wool, and their one allowed vice, chewing tobacco.

At this particular moment, LANA and MARTHA are the only non-Hittites in the place. There are at least a DOZEN ADULT HITTITES, and all seem icily aware of Martha and her friend.

CLOSE ON Lana and Martha standing rather stiffly in line, a rusty wire cart pushed before them. With the exception of John Schmidt, she's not seen a HITTITE up close before, and she doesn't like what she sees now. She looks out of the corner of her eye.

IN HER POV -- we glimpse the hand of a HITTITE WOMAN paying for her food. It has six fingers, and hair grows from between half of them.

Turning away too quickly, Lana knocks over the paper sack of a squat young BOY who stands with his back to her, just behind. Half a dozen apples roll out along the counter.

LANA
 Oh -- sorry, honey!

It's a dwarf that turns around, with a terrible angry-red birthmark over half his face. The startled Lana replaces one apple before he snatches the sack away and does the rest himself. The ADULT HITTITES stare rudely at Lana's discomfort.

Lana looks away, not quite believing what she's seen. There's a beautiful LITTLE HITTITE GIRL watching up at her. Lana smiles down in relief. The LITTLE GIRL smiles back. She takes something dark out of her mouth and sticks out her tongue. It's coal-black. Lana forces a smile.

61 CONTINUED:

61

LANA

(softly)

Like licorice?

The LITTLE GIRL smiles up even wider. Lana fishes in her pocket, then holds her hand out to the LITTLE GIRL, the surprise still hidden. The child thrusts out her hand palm up. Lana drops a dime into it.

The girl stares at it a moment, then quickly hides it in her shoe. The ADULT HITTITES look even sterner, and one MAN says something quickly to the child in a strange language.

The LITTLE GIRL looks down a moment in deference, then smiles again, and reaches into her own pocket.

She reaches down deep as she can, groping around for something she at last finds. She proudly holds it out to Lana as her hidden present.

Lana glances at the ADULTS. Their faces are blank masks. Lana looks back to the child and holds out her hand. The child shyly opens her fist.

INSERT CLOSE UP as a writhing beetle drops into Lana's palm, belly up, legs flailing.

There's a split-second when Lana's senses are jammed with the realization. Then she jumps back with a cry. The bug thuds onto the floor. The little girl stamps on it with a guttural exclamation, then turns and runs away.

Martha, who had been turned away to pay the cashier, turns back to find Lana white as a sheet, scraping her palm over and over against her leg, as if to scrub it of some awful invisible presence.

MARTHA

Lana?

Lana turns and walks blindly out the door. Martha looks once at the impassive faces but knows they will offer no clue. She runs after Lana.

61 A EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

61 A

The pickup truck ROARS by, even faster than before.

61 B INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

61 B

MARTHA'S driving, with a lead foot. VICKY eyes the speedometer.

CONTINUED

61 B CONTINUED:

61 B

VICKY

If this truck had wings we'd be airbourne.

Martha jams it into high, ignoring her. LANA stares out the window.

VICKY (cont'd)

What happened back there, anyway?

LANA

Nothing.

MARTHA

Whatever somebody did or said to you, it was probably directed at me, really. Jim always felt I'd be accepted by them eventually. But I never was.

Lana turns to her, her eyes angry.

LANA

I'd never have asked you this before, but --

MARTHA

(having heard it before)

But why did I marry a HITTITE?

LANA

Yeah. Something like that.

MARTHA

I didn't. I married JIM.

(beat)

The rest I thought were just some sort of harmless religious eccentrics.

LANA

And now?

Martha

Now I'm not so sure.

Vicky, caught between these two, shakes her head in dismay.

VICKY

If I don't jog pretty soon, I'll kill myself, just from listening to you two paranoiacs.

62

EXT. MARTHA'S DRIVE - DAY

62

VICKY bounds out the front door and down the porch stairs, dressed in running clothes. She pauses at the truck, where MARTHA is poking around under the front seat.

CONTINUED

62 CONTINUED:

62

VICKY
(running in place)
Any luck?

MARTHA
Uh-uh...
(seeing her clothes)
My god, you really going to run?

VICKY
Use it or loose it.

MARTHA
(grins)
You're incredible. Well, watch out
for loose dogs. You're fair game out here.

Vicky pulls a little cannister of compressed gas from
the waist of her shorts.

VICKY
Don't worry, I've got this stuff.
One spray and they turn inside out.

With a wave she runs off. Martha turns back to the house.

MARTHA
(to herself)
Incredible...

VICKY (O.S.)
(calling excitedly)
Hey! Martha!

Martha turns. Vicky has stopped in the middle of the
road and is chasing little bits of paper. She catches
the last and runs back, a big grin on her face. She
holds out Martha's wallet to her. Martha's face lights
up.

VICKY
Here it is! Musta fallen out of your pocket --
everything there?

Martha counts the few bills, credit cards and papers,
nodding in relief. But then,

MARTHA
My driver's license isn't here...
Must be over there still
(shooing Vicky away)
You go do your running, I'll find it.
I want you back here so I can put you
to work.

CONTINUED

62 CONTINUED:

62

VICKY

(happy for her)

Okay, Marth. See ya in about thirty minutes.

She again runs off. Martha walks over to begin the search for the license, wondering when it was that she was out on the road on foot, losing her wallet.

63 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

63

Vicky has found a beautiful dirt road traced only by wagon rims, lined by graceful Black Walnut trees. She runs easily, her stride supple and smooth. She is a natural.

ANOTHER ANGLE - VICKY runs dodging easily through a light stand of Pepper Trees, cutting towards an even smaller road she's spotted.

CLOSE ON a large, SHAGGY MASTIFF. The ill-tempered mongrel is breaking the bones of a small animal it's run down, big yellow teeth crunching through easily. When it HEARS the CRACKING of TWIGS it looks up with an evil curl of exposed teeth. IN ITS POV we SEE Vicky running right at us.

ANGLE ON VICKY - she suddenly stops, seeing the dog. The dog flattens its ears and stands, the hair along its spine burred up, a low warning rasping in its chest.

VICKY

Easy, fellah. Let's be friends...

Vicky backs away slowly, never taking her eyes from him. The dog takes a step towards her, flattening into a stalking posture. Vicky looks around her. No humans in sight.

VICKY (cont'd)

(calling)

Hey! Anybody? This your pooch?

There's no human answer, but she HEARS the sudden SNARL of the big animal behind her as he makes his move.

Vicky whirls round to face the charge. She shows no panic as she drops into a slight crouch, the small canister of repellant already in her hand. When the dog is ten feet from her he leaps -- she unleashes the spray and sidesteps. The dog, caught full in the face, catapults past in a blinded somersault, howling already. He lands in a heap, runs round in a circle, then tears off in a yipping, howling panic.

CONTINUED

Vicky watches, scared but composed.

VICKY (cont'd)

(calling after softly)

It'll wear off in a few minutes, hot-shot. But you'll think twice next time, no?

She laughs, blows the hair out of her eyes and trots off in her original direction.

ANOTHER ANGLE, TRUCKING WITH VICKY on the small dirt road.

Rounding a bend she overtakes a mule-drawn wagon. She gives it a wide berth, but can't help casting a sidelong glance at the driver. No cretin dwarf here -- Vicky finds herself in the clear gaze of an incredibly healthy and clean-cut young man of 21, with straw colored hair and blue eyes. We recognize Jim's next younger brother, JOHN SCHMIDT. Vicky recognizes the young man she met when she first drove to Martha's. By this time she's running blind, so intent on checking him out she misses her footing, nearly falls, barely catching herself.

He smiles at her as she quickly recovers composure.

JOHN

(shyly)

Where is your red car? It's easier than running.

Vicky grins, cocking her head.

VICKY

You remember me?

He laughs outright, then forces himself to be more sober.

JOHN

There are not many like you around here to remember. You find the Blessing Farm?

He watches her walk closer, catching her breath. Her look is so straightforward, and her clothes so revealing by his standards, he feels for a moment like his heart is going to surge right out of his chest. He jumps down, so he can stand even closer.

VICKY

I get the feeling you're familiar with the place. Are you?

CONTINUED

JOHN

Jim was my brother.

(he makes a slight, awkward
bow)

John Schmidt.

Vicky reacts in astonishment, then recovers enough to stick out her hand to him.

VICKY

Vicky Anderson.

He takes her hand in his, not knowing what to do with it except feel its incredible fineness. She shakes his hand. He shakes back vigorously. Then they both take their hands away. Vicky makes to go, then turns back.

VICKY (cont'd)

You didn't hate him, did you?

John is clearly stung by this. His mouth tries to form words, but only an awful expression of hurt forms.

VICKY (cont'd)

I've got a big mouth.

I --

JOHN

(blurting it out)

My father shunned him. For leaving the ways. What my father says will always be the law.

(he touches his chest
over his heart)

But here, there isn't law. Just that he was my brother.

His jaw works, his feelings so near his surface that suddenly it's scary to Vicky.

VICKY

I... I'm sorry. I guess I should go...

He looks at her with a face that's as frighteningly innocent as his eyes are complex.

JOHN

Why?

He swallows, then grins. Vicky reaches out and lays her hand along the smooth warm neck of the mule.

In one heady rush of understanding she FEELS why Martha abandoned herself to Jim.

63 CONTINUED:

63

VICKY
(quietly)
No special reason, I guess...

CUT TO:

64 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

64

A large black wagon pulled by a tandom team CLATTERS
DIRECTLY AT CAMERA and OVERHEAD.

CUT ON this movement to the implacable face of ISAIAH
SCHMIDT. He whips the horses as they lean into a sharp
grade.

WIDER SHOT. In the wagon is the rest of John Schmidt's
family as well: his mother, RUTH, his younger brother,
TOM ANTHONY. And seated next to ISAIAH is a pale,
instense young woman of sixteen, MELISSA M., her long
hair spread in the wind like an aura. Suddenly a bolt
of energy seems to course through her. She winces and
clutches ISAIAH'S arm. He takes one look at her and roughly
reins in the team.

ISAIAH
What is it, Melissa M.?

The girl straightens enough for her face to be seen.
Her skin has turned chalk, there's a glisten of spittle
at the corner of her lips, and her eyes seemed focused
on a whole other dimension.

RUTH
(frightened)
Stop her, Father. She must not
be allowed --

Melissa's arm rises as if she were a puppet, pointing.
She speaks in a strange, thin voice.

MELISSA AM.
Over the rise, Uncle ISAIAH... Danger
to John.

RUTH
(to Isaiah)
This is the devil's talk. We must --

Before the woman can finish, Melissa jumps up with incredi-
ble agility and leaps to the ground. She stands leaning
into the wind ever so slightly, now revealed as a tall,
full-figured young woman beneath her stringent costume.
She falters, touching her face, as if coming out of a
dream. Isaiah is beside her in an instant, and she
sags against him, dazed.

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED:

64

MELISSA M.

(weakly)

What was it?

RUTH

(stern)

One of your fits -- you should come
back up here...

Isaiah merely takes the girl by the arm and begins
walking in the direction she pointed. Ruth and Tom
Anthony follow.

65 EXT. FIELD NEAR ROAD - DAY

65

VICKY and JOHN sit just below the crest of a hill,
talking. The YOUNG HITTITE MAN has dared to take off
his coat. The mule grazes unfettered. Vicky is
sitting quite close, chewing on a piece of grass,
staring off at the view all around them.

VICKY

I feel like I've gone through a Time-
Warp. No sound of cars, no jets, no
telephone poles or power lines.

JOHN

What is a warp?

VICKY

(smiles)

It's where a person from the 20th
Century wakes up one morning back in
the 18th Century.

JOHN

It's more peaceful in this Century,
I think.

VICKY

(gently)

Really.

JOHN

I --

ISAIAH and MELISSA have broken the crest of the hill
behind, and the shadow of the man falls over the shoulders
of his son. Isaiah strides down, appearing larger and
larger, reaching epic stature, as if not merely from
another century but from another epoch -- something
akin to Moses leading his people.

John is immediately on his feet, scrambling back into
his black coat, finding his hat.

CONTINUED

VICKY

What's wrong?

JOHN

My father.

John's entire demeanor has changed. He's become remote, frightened. His father stops just uphill from him, and never does the man acknowledge the presence of Vicky.

ISAIAH

John, you don't work?

JOHN

No sir... I mean yes sir.

ISAIAH

Something troubles John?

Vicky and Melissa exchange eye contact for one laser shot of an instant. RUTH and TOM ANTHONY stare at the stranger.

VICKY

It's my fault, really. I was asking --

ISAIAH

(still not looking
at her)

These things are not for us, John.
You be working now.

John looks once at Vicky, then bows his head and walks up to join his family. Isaiah turns his back on Vicky. She plants her fists on her hips, furious.

VICKY

We were just talking, is something
wrong with two people talk --

Isaiah wheels around, his bulk and rage so strong that even Vicky is driven back before it.

ISAIAH

You listen to me now. We are the
kindren of God. We have no business
with the Serpent, nor do we seek amuse-
ment. We get on with our work. You
be getting on your crooked road, now.
We spurn ye from now till God's day!

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED:

65

FAMILY

Amen.

Vicky looks at John. The young man stands with his back to her, staring at the ground.

VICKY

(to Isaiah)

Back to you.

She turns and walks away.

ANOTHER ANGLE - Isaiah climbs to his son and sternly roughs his hair.

ISAIAH

The field is all, Ja John?

JOHN

(not looking up)

Yes, father.

All the others have gone back except for Melissa. She stands on the very crest of the hill, watching down on Isaiah and John with fretful glances.

Isaiah lingers, stepping closer,

ISAIAH

Do you feel right for your wedding next month?

JOHN

Yes Father.

Isaiah claps the young man on the back.

ISAIAH (cont'd)

Good. Your cousin is a sound woman.

He strides off. John follows, glancing up once; seeing Melissa watching him, he keeps his eyes on his footing.

CLOSE ON MELISSA M. -- she turns her sharp eyes after Vicky.

66 EXT. FIELD - DAY

66

MARTHA is driving the tractor along the edge of a field. LANA hitching a precarious ride behind, trying to memorize which lever runs what. Suddenly there's a sharp METALLIC SNAP somewhere on the disc they're towing.

CONTINUED

LANA

Hey! Hold it!

Martha stops the tractor. Both women jump down and inspect the mechanism, discovering that one of the armatures of its main brace has pulled loose and begun dragging.

MARTHA

(wiping sweat from her eyes)

Damn. Looks like one of the bolts worked loose.

Lana looks back at the long field behind them.

LANA

Do you have another?

MARTHA

In the barn...

Martha very nearly flinches at the word.

LANA

(carefully)

You been in there since...?

Martha shakes her head, chilled.

MARTHA

I had the mechanic park this thing outside after he fixed it...

LANA

It's okay, I'll get it --

MARTHA

(relieved)

In the place where the tractor used to be parked... there's a tool box. Bring the whole thing -- here, you'll need this.

She produces a key from her pocket.

LANA

Be right back -- take five!

Lana runs off for the barn. Martha plops down in the shade of one of the huge back wheels, facing away from the barn.

67 EXT. BARN - DAY

67

ANGLE ON the barn, Lana approaching. She slows as she nears the big wooden door, dwarfed by its dimensions.

She unlocks it and swings it wide open, flooding as much sunlight in as possible. It only serves to make the shadows deeper. Telling herself that only children are afraid of the dark, she goes in.

68 INT. BARN - DAY

68

LANA crosses directly to the parking area, skirting the place where the boards still jut up in thick splinters. She lifts the toolbox, forced by its unexpected weight to use both hands. As quickly as she can she drags it towards the door, but halfway there she feels the warm sunlight edging off her body. The huge door is swinging lazily closed.

Lana puts down the toolbox and half-runs, but the door beats her by a step. It bumps closed. She leans against it. It bows out several inches, then pushes her back.

She thinks she Hears a CLICK of something. Very faint. But it could be a lock being eased shut...

She jumps against the door with all her might. It swings open six feet with a GROAN of rusted hinges. She leans against its press, blinking in the sunlight, amazed at her silliness.

Still holding it, she stoops and rolls a rock about the size of a bowling ball up against it. She eases off, the door presses against the rock, the rock digs in and holds.

Pleased with her resourcefulness, she claps the dirt off her hands. She HEARS the ENGINE of the tractor start up. In her POV we SEE MARTHA bent into the engine housing, adjusting something. Lana smiles and goes back for the toolbox.

She's just bent over to lift it when the door slams shut behind her -- the heavy stone that held it bowls across the floor of the barn, cannonading off in the dark.

Lana runs against the door. It doesn't budge. There is the unmistakeable CLICK of a padlock closing through a hasp. She bangs against the boards. Some sort of shadow moves across the chinks.

LANA

Vicky? Vicky if you think this is funny or something it's not!

68

CONTINUED:

68

She goes to the one window on this level, but because of all the boards Martha nailed across it to keep the kids out, she can barely see through it, let alone use it to get out.

LANA (cont'd)

HEY MARTHA!!

The steady DRONE of the tractor's ENGINE tells her there's no way she'll be heard.

She turns and looks down into the lower level. Some sort of SOUND coming from there... Like SQUEAKY PULLIES or something, she thinks.

LANA (cont'd)

Vic? You back?

The SOUND stops. But strangely, a square of bright sunlight edges out across the dirty straw down there. Somewhere, just out of sight, there must be a door she hadn't known about, swinging open in the wind.

She goes to the top of the stairs leading down - then stops. A huge barn spider has strung its web straight in the middle of the door frame. The ugly insect hangs in the very center of its trap, embalming and stinging a struggling fly.

Lana tries not to look at the disgusting thing, but somehow finds herself fascinated by it, as if it embodies all the dark forces she senses around her. Despite herself, she reaches out and feels the corner of the web. At the touch the big spider darts over at her fingers. She jerks back in panic, surprised at the insect's aggression and speed - and at her own stupidity. Part of the web still clings to her fingers.

Shaking now she grabs a handful of straw from a bin next to her head and wipes her hand. Something small and dark rolls out from the hole she made, and falls with a THUD at her feet.

She recoils almost back against the web, then looks down. She stoops and picks up a single boy's work shoe, plain black.

Then there is a soft, husky male voice, coming from just off to her right in the dark --

VOICE

Lana. I've come for you.

CONTINUED

68

CONTINUED:

68

Lana jerks round horrified -- SOMEONE big in a dark cowl looms out of the deep shadow at her --

Lana SCREAMS, turns in blind panic and runs straight into and through the huge spider web, plunging down the flight of rough plank steps into the lower barn.

LOWER LEVEL - LANA lurches up with the power of full human panic, ripping and tearing at the web across her face. The big spider scurries out from beneath her shirt and over her chest. With an animal sound of loathing and hate Lana smashes at it -- there's a sudden blossom of dark blood and plasma on her hand. She shakes it off with a bone-springing snap of her hand, pulling her blouse away from her body, letting the legs fall out.

The door at the head of the stairs BLASTS shut.

More like a beast in a deadly trap now than a thinking human, Lana turns towards the light. There in clear view is the second door, flung open, pouring in sunlight.

There's a LOUD KNOCK on the door at the top of the stairs. Lana turns round against her will. The voice eases through, soft and insistent.

VOICE

Lana. Come back up here now...

Lana gives a half-hysterical laugh and turns away from the stairs, stumbling, then stops, listening breathlessly.

MARTHA (O.S.)

(calling from a distance)

Lana!? You need help with that?

Lana smiles insanely, stumbling forward. At the moment her foot strikes the block of sunlight in the straw there's a blur of movement from above -- the corpse of WILLIAM GLUNTZ plunges down before her from a hay trap overhead -- strikes the end of the rope around its neck and does an obscene dance in the air right before her, its shoeless foot jerking and kicking two feet off the floor, a look of hideous surprise locked on its engorged face.

Lana leaps back with a horrendous, gut-deep slaughterhouse-bellow of a scream. The door to the outside SLAMS shut, and she's pitched into darkness.

We can only HEAR her SCREAMS as we

CUT TO:

71 EXT. MARTHA'S DRIVE - DAY

71

BLACK SCREEN. THE SCREAMS FADE UNDER A MIXTURE of STRANGE GUTTERAL CHANTING and a POLICE CAR 2-WAY RADIO.

PICTURE FADES UP on MATTHEW GLUNTZ carrying the lifeless body of his SON to the buggy where several other chanting HITTITE MEN wait to lift him up. He's followed by SHERIFF DICK KRAMER and a MEDIC. The Medic leans to the Sheriff.

MEDIC

He says he ain't gonna let me touch him.

SHERIFF

I'll talk to 'im...

Matthew Gluntz stops directly before Martha, who stands alone, watching the man with a look of confusion and sorrow.

MARTHA

I'm sorry. I'm sure the Sheriff --

MATTHEW

He never hurt no one. He was touched.
He never hurt a soul.

He turns and lifts his son up to the waiting arms of his friends.

MARTHA

Wait a minute!

Before Martha can go to the man the Sheriff steps between, turning Matthew gently but firmly around.

SHERIFF

Mr. Gluntz, ain't no use making accusations 'til we have an autopsy an --

Matthew shakes off the Sheriff's hand with a terrible look of malice.

MATTHEW

I'll have none of your knives in my boy. He's suffered enough --

SHERIFF

Now hold on, you can't --

At this point someone takes the Sheriff's arm, and with a steady but powerful force, turns him around. He finds himself facing ISAIAH SCHMIDT.

CONTINUED

71 CONTINUED:

71

ISAIAH

The fact is, Sheriff, this is our matter. We will bury the boy.

SHERIFF

And how the hell am I supposed to find out who killed him if you go off with him -- that just --

ISAIAH

We already know who did this.

The Sheriff is taken back by this.

SHERIFF

You do?

ISAIAH

The Incubus.

HITTITES

(low)

Amen.

SHERIFF

(amazed)

You tell me you ain't pressing charges?

The Sheriff looks at the father of the boy. Matthew looks at Isaiah.

ISAIAH

Your law cannot crush the Incubus.
(he looks at Martha)

Ours can.

He mounts the wagon with the others. Matthew applies the lash to the horse with a CRACK like a pistol shot. The animal bolts forward and soon the dark wagon with its victim, jury, judge and executioner is gone.

SHERIFF

Well I'll be damned.

He turns and looks at Martha with a weak grin.

SHERIFF (cont'd)

Those boys eat nails for breakfast and brimstone for lunch, I swear.

MARTHA

You letting them get away with that?

He starts to walk back to his car; she overtakes him.

CONTINUED

MARTHA (cont'd)

They threatened me -- you heard him!

He scratches his head.

SHERIFF

They threatened ol' Incubus, whoever
the hell that is. That you?

He walks over to the ambulance. Martha stares after,
interrupted from response by VICKY exiting the house and
approaching.

MARTHA

How is she?

Vicky looks shaken, though she puts on a bright front.

VICKY

She'll be okay. She had some kind of pill
she took. She's pretty much out of it now.

MARTHA

She still talking about...

VICKY

Omen spiders and Death coming after her
in a black bathrobe?

(she shrugs)

Naw. She'll be good as new tomorrow, you
watch.

The Sheriff has been watching them both.

SHERIFF

If I was you I'd get out.

MARTHA

You mean run.

The Sheriff spits into the dust of the drive.

SHERIFF

Call it anything you want. HITTITES
is nuts or they wouldn't live the way
they do --

(lower)

'Sides, not meaning to be crude, but
you got nothin out here left to fight
for. You and your friends belong back
in the city anyways.

MARTHA

(violently)

Nobody is pushing me off this place!
It's up to you to catch whoever is doing
this, because I'm not leaving!

CONTINUED

71 CONTINUED:

71

MARTHA (cont'd)
 (she sees something hidden
 in his face)
 Or do you think I did it?

The man shakes his head and opens his car door.

SHERIFF
 Little thing like you or your friends
 couldn't've snapped that boy's back the
 way it was, or held him up and tied him
 at the same time, neither. Whoever it
 was was big. No one you'd like to tangle
 with, believe me. Now, you saw how long it
 took me t'get out here today -- 'bout
 twenty minutes with my foot through the
 floor.

He gets in and slams the door, nodding out the window
 at her.

SHERIFF
 I'm gonna go talk to the Judge down in
 Stuartville, see if I don't have a right
 to have that boy taken a look at --
 (starts the car)
 Meanwhile, think it over what I said
 about twenty minutes. That's if I ain't
 got a shootin' or somethin' else distractin'
 me. You two talk it over tonight.

He pulls away, followed by the ambulance, then stops at
 the road, calling.

SHERIFF (cont'd)
 'Course if you like, we could all come
 camp out here every night and ride shot-
 gun for you...

The ambulance driver grins. Martha folds her arms,
 her face pale.

MARTHA
 (low)
 You bastard.

The words are lost in the ROAR of the two vehicles taking
 off. And somewhere in that noise can distinctly be HEARD
 muffled male LAUGHTER.

CUT TO:

72 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

72

TIGHT ON LANA. Despite the sedative she stares straight
 up as if the lids of her eyes have been stolen from her.

CONTINUED

MARTHA and VICKY enter and look down at her sympathetically. Martha sits and takes her hand.

MARTHA
Feeling better?

LANA
(very weakly)
Never felt better...

She manages an attempt at a smile. Martha nods, giving her friend's hand a squeeze.

MARTHA
You've got more guts than I gave you credit for.

VICKY
She's the champ.

Lana looks from one friend to the other.

LANA
Did... the Sheriff find any clues?

Martha shakes her head in disgust.

MARTHA
You didn't see anyone?

LANA
(beat)
Nothing. No one, really.

Martha and Vicky exchange glances. Martha smooths Lana's hair.

MARTHA
You just get some rest now, kid. And don't be scared if you hear a little noise. I just want to show Vicky something, okay?

Lana nods weakly. Vicky looks curiously at Martha. Martha stands and heads across the room. Hold on Vicky.

MARTHA (O.S.)
Get some cotton out of the medicine chest and meet me outside.

72 A EXT. MARTHA'S FARM - LATE AFTERNOON

72 A

MARTHA struggles towards us carrying an old five-gallon paint can, spilled rusty red all around its side from years ago. From its apparent weight we can guess it's mostly full.

CONTINUED

72 A CONTINUED:

72 A

As she lugs it past VICKY, who still looks completely puzzled, our PAN brings the ominous bulk of the barn looming into view. FOREGROUND to it is the plank fence WILLIAM GLUNTZ had to scale. Arranged along the top are half a dozen smaller cans and wine bottles.

Martha swings the can up and slides it onto the top of a post.

MARTHA

This is just in case we're really pitiful.

She marches back to Vicky, wiping her palms on her jeans. Set.

MARTHA

Got the cotton in your ears?

VICKY

I don't need that. Just show me how.

Martha nods, stoops and comes up with the .41 Magnum. She swings out the cylinder and begins dropping in the six long steel cartridges.

MARTHA

Ever shoot a magnum before?

VICKY

Never shot anything before. I hate guns. But it can't be that hard.

Martha hands her the gun, almost immediately having to push it away from being accidentally pointed at her.

MARTHA

(sternly)

Never point it at anyone you don't intend to kill. Never aim except to kill. Always assume it's loaded --

VICKY

--Martha.

(laughs)

You're sounding like a Marine firing range instructor, for gosh sakes.

Martha sags a little, smiling just a bit.

MARTHA

It's just the speech Jim gave me once. He said it's awfully powerful.

Vicky does a delayed reaction.

CONTINUED

72 A CONTINUED:

72 A

VICKY

'Said'? You've shot this thing, havn't you?

MARTHA

(making a face)

I hate the damn things as much as you.

VICKY

Good grief.

She hefts the weapon a moment, then thrusts it out before her, supporting its weight with both hands.

VICKY (cont'd)

Well all you do, I think, is pull this trigger thing. See that big wine bottle?

She pulls the trigger. There's an enormous flash and DEAFENING BLAST -- the big pistol bucks back and up, jerking Vicky's arms over her head and knocking her back so hard she finds herself sitting flat on her fanny. Her eyes are like buttons.

MARTHA

Holy...

VICKY

(in shock)

My ears. My god, I'm deaf!

MARTHA

What?

Both women scramble for the cotton and stuff it into their ears. Then Vicky sees that the bottle is gone.

VICKY

I got it, though!

She runs up to the fence and looks around, then picks up the bottle from the grass and looks at it in confusion. It's quite whole.

VICKY

It wouldn't have bounced off, do you think?

She trots back to Martha, who now holds the pistol. Martha waves her behind.

MARTHA

Jim said you have to really aim with a pistol...

(she lifts the gun,
remembering)

You line up the front sight so that

CONTINUED

72 A CONTINUED:

72 A

MARTHA (cont'd)
it's just between the notch of
the back...
(she aims)

VICKY
(shoulders pulled up)
What you aiming at?

MARTHA
(through her teeth)
The paint can. I'm not taking any
chances.
(cock the hammer)
Anyway, it's about the size of a man's chest...
Now squeeze...

She squeezes. The gun fires, again with tremendous ferocity. But Martha is braced well and has a clear view of what happens to the paint can. It literally disintegrates as the big slug BLASTS through. The lid sails off in a lazy spiral, shreds of metal fly in all directions, and there's a huge explosion of the paint itself--some smoking off into vapor, the rest collapsing onto the post, coursing down its sides in thick rivulets of blood red.

Martha and Vicky simply stare in wonder at what the gun can do. Vicky takes her hands off her ears.

VICKY
God...

Martha hands her the pistol, pale but pleased.

MARTHA
You next.

VICKY
I don't think I can take the noise...

Martha looks around the farm with defiance.

MARTHA
The louder the better.

Vicky takes the gun.

73 EXT. HITTITE CHURCH - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

73

MELISSA M. stands at the edge of the church yard, facing out at the fields and the tree-line beyond. She's listening to the distant roll of GUN FIRE. JOHN crosses behind her, seeing her.

CONTINUED

73

CONTINUED:

73

JOHN
(calling)
Melissa? You should come inside.

She turns and crosses to him. They go into the building.
We HEAR a low HYMN from inside.

74

INT. SCHMIDT LIVING ROOM (HITTITE CHURCH) - DAY

74

The church is almost Shaker in its severity, furnished with hard plank benches divided into two sections, men and boys in one, women and girls in the other. It must be nearly all of the HITTITES of the community that are now here. And it's ISAIAH that stands before them, leading the high German HYMN.

The CAMERA PICKS UP JOHN and MELISSA as they take their respective places. The HYMN ends.

All eyes are on Isaiah as he steps up onto a low box. He looks at MATTHEW and MRS. GLUNTZ, who sit opposite each other in the front rows of the sections. Mrs. Gluntz is weeping. Matthew is pale as marble. Both wear deep purple bands tied to their sleeves.

ISAIAH
This is a most grievous day.

A MURMER of affirmation rumbles from the men. Mrs. Gluntz rocks slowly in her place.

ISAIAH (cont'd)
An Incubus has crept into our fold and defiled our flock. William T. Gluntz, an innocent child, is dead.

A low KEENING escapes the diaphragm of Mrs. Gluntz. The women near her lean to comfort her. Isaiah gives them a hard look and they all sit back straight, clasping their hands before them.

ISAIAH (cont'd)
We were not strict enough with William. We forbade passage onto that cursed farm - but were not vigilant enough with this child.

(raising his voice)
The Outsiders take pleasure in finding out our sins. We must find them first ourselves, and scour them clean -- who will tell us of other transgressions?

CONTINUED

Isaiah's last words have a chilling ring to them. Something electric between dread and excitement passes through those gathered. An ELDER starts the passing of a small, slotted box down the first row.

It passes quickly from one man's hand to another's, as if it's scalding hot. DOLLY BACK to FRAME the second row as the box is handed back to its far end. This row contains the half-dozen boys who went into the barn with William; LEOPOLD is FOREGROUND. All look terrified.

They are passing the box along so quickly that it's fumbled and dropped with a loud NOISE to the floor. The FAT BOY picks it up. But he doesn't pass it. He's staring at it dully.

ISAIAH (O.S.)

(sharply)

Remember that lying is the sin of the serpent, and that the wages of sin is death.

The Fat Boy closes his eyes, slips a small piece of paper into the box's slot, then passes it.

TIGHT ON Leopold, seeing this. His face drains of color. The box is before him. Before he can take it, the huge hand of Isaiah Schmidt is on it.

Leopold closes his eyes; he slips his hands under his thighs and sits on them.

ANGLE ON ISAIAH, back in front of his people. He reads the note, nodding with a terrible grimness, then looks up.

ISAIAH

Leopold Smith, you will now step forward.

Leopold steps out in front of the congregation and kneels before Isaiah, lowering his head.

ISAIAH (cont'd)

Leopold Smith, confess thy wrong-doing.

LEOPOLD

I went into the forbidden barn. I...
I have shamed us all...

ISAIAH

And more...

A tear strikes the floor at Leopold's knees.

CONTINUED

LEOPOLD

(low)

It... was me who dared him to go in --
I... humbly ask God forgiveness.

The Elder appears and hands a long birch rod to Isaiah.

ISAIAH

There is only one way to drive away the Incubus. You beat him off. We shall make it impossible for the devil to rest comfortably in your soul. One boy we have lost, another now shall we save.

CONGREGATION

Amen.

Leopold, shaking, holds out his hands. The congregation begins a sonorous HYMN, its eyes glued to Leopold's shaken fingers. Isaiah raises the rod above his head and strikes downward.

CAMERA ON the faces of Leopold's friends when the blow lands. It's as if it has struck each of them instead.

We HEAR a second blow WHISTLE and STRIKE over the faces of Mr. and Mrs. Gluntz, a THIRD on the face of Melissa, pale as porcelain, a FORTH on JOHN, fists white-knuckled on his lap. On the FIFTH BLOW he bolts up and out the door to the outside.

ANGLE ON ISAIAH, his arm raised for another blow, distracted. The Elder steps up and diffidently touches his arm. Isaiah stops the beating, his face glazed with sweat. The HYMN DIES OUT.

ISAIAH

Seat him with the women.

TWO MEN drag the sobbing boy by the arms and sit him with the women and girls. None dare look at him. Arms crossed over his chest, hands buried in his armpits, Leopold looks a lifetime older.

ISAIAH (cont'd)

(voice steadier)

And all that believed were together, and had things in common, and sold their possessions, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

CONGREGATION

So that we HITTITES came together, departing from Incubus and the people

CONTINUED

74 CONTINUED:

74

CONGREGATION (cont'd)
of Incubus. And we worked and we married
together in God's name. Amen.

ISAIAH

Amen.

Isaiah looks over the heads of his flock to the open door at their backs. Outside, framed in the doorway but all the way across the yard, John stands, hands in pockets, looking off with his back to his father's eyes.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. MARTHA'S FARM - DUSK

75

FAITH STOLLER, dressed as well as she can manage, carrying a casserole bowl, approaches Martha's farm. The dish must be extremely hot, for she holds it with pads, and it steams in the cool evening air.

She stops by the gateway sign of "Our Blessing", spying MARTHA and VICKY still working far out in the field with the tractor. Faith looks to the house, as if undecided what to do, then goes towards the back.

76 INT. MARTHA'S KITCHEN - DUSK

76

FAITH appears in the kitchen door WINDOW, looks to see if anyone is in the room, then awkwardly opens the door, balancing the hot dish in one hand. She steps in shyly.

FAITH

Hello?

No answer. She puts the covered casserole on the kitchen table. Now she can hear the DISTANT SOUND of the SHOWER. She moves quietly towards it.

77 INT. BATHROOM

77

ANGLE ON LANA - her face turned up into the flow of water, eyes closed, allowing the thick foam of the shampoo to wash away. Somehow we sense she's found some shred of peace in this little tent of hot water spilling down over her. Her body is wrapped in folds of steam.

CUT TO BATHROOM OUTSIDE SHOWER - the steam even thicker here in the cooler air. Faith moves through the white vapor until she's just visible, wraith-like, silent as a dream, her eyes on the glass shower stall.

CONTINUED

77 CONTINUED:

77

IN HER POV - we SEE Lana turn, feeling the draft from the door.

CUT INSIDE SHOWER -- Lana is suddenly alert. She slashes the water from her eyes, listening.

LANA

Is someone there? Martha?

She tears open the sliding door. The steam bellies and parts. The door is open. No one is there. Lana grabs her robe.

78 INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

78

Lana walks into the kitchen stiffly, feeling her way in the half-light. She sees the casserole, touches it -- immediately jumps back, sucking her burned finger.

She takes a dishtowel for a hot-pad and lifts the lid. The bowl is heaped with cooked squabs, their heads still attached to their bodies.

Lana drops the lid back on and steps back, nauseated.

Someone bursts through the kitchen door -- Lana jumps around -- Vicky hits the light switch, seeing she's startled Lana.

VICKY

Oh, sorry, babe -- what you doing in the dark?

Martha troops in, nose in the air.

MARTHA

Oh, god, whatever that is, it smells incredible! Lana -- you're amazing!

She grabs the towel and lifts the lid.

VICKY

Yuck. Nasty.

LANA

I didn't do that.

VICKY

Well then who did?

LANA

It was just there when I came in...

Martha looks up from the dish and snaps her fingers.

CONTINUED

MARTHA

It was that girl up the hill -- Faith.
Had to be --

(smells them again, hungry)
A little like eating a trout with the
head on. Probably taste delicious.

VICKY

(Queen of Tarts)

Off with their heads! I'm starving.

Martha gets out dishes merrily. Lana sinks into a chair and pulls the curtains closed at the window. Vicky sits down across, watching her friend take her flask from the pocket of her robe.

VICKY

Get any sleep?

Lana shakes her head no, pouring. We can HEAR Martha methodically snipping off heads over at the counter. As Lana drinks, Martha brings over the casserole.

MARTHA

(gently)

People will only frighten you when
you let them... Come on, we're gonna
be okay. Have something to eat.

Lana stares down at the steaming little bodies, gets up and goes into Vicky's bedroom, closing the door behind her.

Martha starts after, but Vicky pulls her back.

MARTHA

I should talk to her a little, see if
I can't make her feel a little better...

VICKY

Just let her alone for a while longer.
She'll snap out of it.

Martha sits. They both dig in to the casserole, talking as they do.

MARTHA

I feel like I kinda forced you both into
coming. Maybe it wasn't a good idea.

VICKY

We wanted to come, Lana included. As
for me, I'm here till the end of this
business. I'll call and take a leave
of absence if I have to. It's a dumb
job anyway.

CONTINUED

78

CONTINUED:

78

Martha smiles appreciatively but not without getting the hidden message.

MARTHA

Do you think I should leave?

VICKY

I think you should do what you want. There's a lot of beautiful things out here...

MARTHA

And the HITTITES?

VICKY

(smiles a little)

They're not all so terrible. Everything depends on how you look at it.

Vicky smiles and pops a chunk of squab into her mouth.

CUT TO:

79

EXT. COOPER'S JUNCTION - MORNING

Vicky's sportscar barreling at us. It brakes and swings into the parking lot. There are a few other gas vehicles, and one or two HITTITE buggies. Martha and Vicky get out. Vicky is wearing a halter top and short shorts, and a HITTITE WOMAN exiting the store scowls disapprovingly at her HUSBAND until he averts his eyes. Vicky ignores them both; smiling at the gangling young GAS ATTENDANT, she pops her trunk and pulls out a five-gallon gas can.

VICKY

Fill this and just stick it back in there, okay Stretch?

They go in.

80

INT. STORE - DAY

80

JOHN and MELISSA are examining a Sears catalogue when John sees something he likes.

JOHN

(smiling)

That one is good.

INSERT - HIS FINGER points to a wedding dress with a daring décolletage.

Melissa laughs and bites her lower lip, turning the page. John meanwhile has seen something in the store far more interesting.

CONTINUED

MELISSA

(indicating catalogue)

This one is proper. You think?

John looks back, distracted, smiles off-kilter.

JOHN

Whatever you like, Melissa -- why don't you surprise me. I'll fetch the flour while you choose.

He excuses himself. Melissa watches after him a moment then goes back to searching for her wedding dress.

ANOTHER AREA OF THE STORE -- VICKY and MARTHA FOREGROUND. We SEE John at the far end of the aisle, surreptitiously glancing at Vicky. Vicky sees him. He looks away, examining a display of rope with great seriousness.

VICKY

(smiling, low)

Be right back, Marth.

She walks over to John directly, leaning against the next display.

VICKY (cont'd)

Come here often?

He looks at her with an awful imitation of surprise, confused by her joke.

JOHN

I... was just thinking of buying some new rope for...

He falters, seeing she is on to him. His neck turns red.

VICKY

It's nice seeing you, too.

John looks at her, his voice catching in his throat at her friendly, sexy manner.

JOHN

(straightening)

Look, I just wanted to say that I'm sorry, about what happened yesterday. We're really not that unfriendly...

VICKY

That's alright. I suppose to your Father, jogging shorts and a t-shirt must look like what Jezebel wore when she seduced Ahab.

CONTINUED

His face lights in a grin.

JOHN

You know about Jezebel and Ahab?

VICKY

(nods wryly)

My father was a real Bible-thumper,
almost as bad as yours.

(seeing him flinch)

I mean, not that your father is so
bad...

JOHN

He shouldn't have treated you that
way.

He says it so fervently that even Vicky doesn't know
what to say. He looks at her a longing moment, then
turns suddenly, afraid of where his feelings are taking
him.

VICKY

(calling after softly)

Hey.

He stops. TWO HITTITE WOMEN walk down the aisle. John
turns and studies a shelf full of udder salve. The women
eye Vicky suspiciously and go on. As soon as they're gone...

VICKY

(quietly)

You want to do something together some-
time? You know?

John turns scarlet. He doesn't know what she's suggesting,
but his guesses apparently are pretty wild. Vicky laughs.

VICKY (cont'd)

Just a movie or something, silly. I
won't bite.

JOHN

Oh. No -- of course you wouldn't.
That is -- I mean, we can't. Movies
are considered sinful...

VICKY

The one in Warrensburg? It's just
some silly kids picture -- Benji Meets
Godzilla, or something -- can't be sinful.
No one would know.

CONTINUED

80

CONTINUED:

80

Before he can answer, there's a LOUD SLAM of the store's door. John jerks around, seeing Melissa storming off across the street.

JOHN

Oh, no...

He runs out of the store, nearly knocking the two clucking women over.

81

EXT. COOPER'S JUNCTION - DAY

81

JOHN runs from the store, catching MELISSA half-way across the parking area. He tries to take her arm, she violently shakes loose and runs around the corner of the building, away from staring eyes.

ANGLE BEHIND THE STORE, EDGE OF FIELD - Melissa shaking with anger as John catches her on the second time. He turns her around gently. Her face is down, hidden.

JOHN

I'm sorry, Melissa...

Melissa doesn't say anything. John lifts her face to him. Her eyes are full of tears. She looks away.

MELISSA

(mournfully)

She's prettier than I am...

JOHN

She's not --

Melissa turns and fixes him with a sudden stare.

MELISSA

Swear it.

John gulps, frightened by her look.

JOHN

I'll never talk to her again -- I was weak -- it's just hard... waiting.

He reaches out and touches her face.

MELISSA

(weakly)

You'd better take me home.

JOHN

It's not her I want. It's you.

CONTINUED

81 CONTINUED:

81

John takes off her prayer cap. Her long, brown hair comes tumbling down. He puts his hand on her shoulder, bringing her to him, her mouth to his. She pulls back.

MELISSA

I can't...

John impulsively grabs her by the shoulders, kissing her hard. He kisses her neck and throat, pulling her into the grass. Melissa succumbs for one quick moment, then we HEAR her dress rip. She panics, throws John off, scrambles to her feet and runs towards the front.

John drives his fist into the earth, shaking from what he's almost done.

DISSOLVE TO:

82 EXT. SCHMIDT HOUSE - DAY

82

Melissa walks alone up the dirt road, clothes white from dust, her face streaked crying. She turns into the drive of the Schmidt farm. ISAIAH, half-way across the porch with a pail of milk, stops dead in his tracks, seeing her.

Melissa quickly straightens her torn dress and wipes her face, half running for the back entrance to the house. Isaiah intercepts her. She tries to move past. He stops her, holding her firmly by the arm.

ISAIAH

Melissa M., who did this?

Melissa tries to talk, can't then runs into the house.

There's the SOUND of a BUGGIE RACING into the drive. Isaiah turns to see John leaping down.

JOHN

Have you seen...

He sees the look in his father's eye and stops.

ISAIAH

(cold)

You will follow me to the shed.

JOHN

Father, please --

ISAIAH

Obey!

He turns and stalks away.

INT. A WOODSHED - DAY

The door swings open and JOHN enters. ISAIAH waits inside, the birch rod in his hands. The young man looks at him almost beseechingly one last time.

JOHN

Father, please, I need to talk --

ISAIAH

You need the fear of God in thee.
Kneel.

John turns in desperation and kneels over an old sawhorse. We get the feeling that this ritual, though perhaps not enacted in some time, is painfully familiar.

Isaiah raises the rod and strikes down. MEDIUM CLOSE on John's face as he takes the BLOW.

JOHN

Father!

CLOSE ON ISAIAH raising the rod again, his face mad with fury. He strikes down again, harder. The BLOW, a CRY of pain. He raises the rod again.

CLOSE ON JOHN. Something snaps in his face. He twists round just as the blow falls.

CLOSE ON ISAIAH'S HAND striking down with the rod -- it COLLIDES with and is caught by John's.

The old man struggles to free his arm, but it's as if he's struck into a bear trap. He presses down with all his considerable strength, but ineluctably, steadily, the strength of his son's arm prevails. Both men's faces are horribly distorted, the older's by rage and impotence, the younger's by terrible fear of what he's doing.

John presses the man's arm back until the rod falls. Then he looks pleadingly at his father, almost begging, despite his physical advantage.

JOHN

No more. Please.

He turns and walks out of the shed. Isaiah stands for a moment in shock, shaking so hard it looks as if he might suffer a stroke.

ISAIAH

(weakly)

The devil take him.

He turns and bursts through the door, screaming, as we PAN DOWN to the broken birch rod on the floor.

CONTINUED

83 CONTINUED:

83

ISAIAH (O.S.)

You are a stench in the nostrils
of God!

CUT TO:

84 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

84

CENTER ON VICKY, smiling, entering the room and crossing.

VICKY

You guys sure you don't want to come
along?

Vicky plops down on the couch next to MARTHA and
LANA. Lana, still in bathrobe, cradles a drink.
Her hair is unkempt, her entire appearance frayed.

LANA

You won't catch me out after
dark.

MARTHA

Guess I'll stay with Lana.

LANA

You don't have to treat me like I'm
so delicate --

She stops, surprised by the sharpness of her own voice.

MARTHA

Really. I don't feel like going out
anyway.

Vicky looks from one to the other.

VICKY

We'll, I've got to get out for a while.

MARTHA

If you're going all the way to Warrens-
burg you'd better have a full tank. No-
thing will be open by the time you get out.

VICKY

(assuringly)

I've got tons. Okay, mama?

MARTHA

(laughing)

Get out of here, then!

Vicky goes out the back door. Beat. There's a KNOCK
at the front. Lana jerks up; Martha moves to a drawer
and has the revolver in her hand. The whole sham of
relaxation and casualness suddenly has a hairline crack.

CONTINUED

MARTHA

Who is it?

VOICE (O.S.)

Louisa Stoller. From up the hill.

Martha relaxes, hiding the gun once more, then opens the door. LOUISA stands squinting in the brightness of the room's electrical lights.

MARTHA

Mrs. Stoller... Nice to meet you finally...

Louisa smiles.

LOUISA

Just call me Louisa or Lou... Can I come in?

MARTHA

Oh, sure -- sorry!

Martha ushers her in, locking the door behind, indicating Lana. Vicky's sportscar flashes by outside, on its way.

MARTHA

I'm Martha... This is my friend Lana, she came out to spend some time with me-- and you just missed Vicky--

Louisa sticks out her hand and shakes with Lana.

LOUISA

Please t'make your acquaintance, Lana, pretty little thing, an' hands soft as puppies.

Lana nods, a little embarrassed by the odd compliment, but somehow reassured by the pure bulk and manner of Louisa.

MARTHA

Louisa's Faith's mother. You remember Faith...

LOUISA

(answering for Lana)

It's hard to forget her once she's said hello, she goes on so. That's why I come down, mostly. I thought maybe she'd snuck down...

MARTHA

She's been very generous.

CONTINUED

LOUISA

Generous?

MARTHA

Well... With the eggs, and the cassrole.

LOUISA

(quieter)

That's where they disappeared...

Martha's afraid now she's gotten the girl in trouble.

MARTHA

They sure cheered us up -- I'll go get the bowl.

She EXITS to the kitchen. Louisa smiles at Lana.

LOUISA

Sorry about all the trouble down here.
Don't suppose the Sheriff's been much good.

LANA

I'm afraid not. He just tells us to get out.

LOUISA

(snorts)

Wouldn't be surprised if he was a HITTITE hisself. Men round here is hopeless.

(sees Lana watching her closely, shrugs)

I guess my old man made me hate the whole breed. Soon as Faith came, he was over the fence and gone. I swear, if Faith'd been a boy, I think I'da stuck her in the river like a sack of kittens.

Lana smiles thinly, not sure what to make of Louisa.
Martha returns with the bowl.

MARTHA

I hope you don't scold her for coming by...

Louisa smiles.

LOUISA

Nothin' personal. I just like to keep an eye on her. She's impressionable. 'Sides, the damn HITTITES might try to convert her, or somethin. What would I do with her runnin' round in black, mumblin' 'bout hellfire and prayin' for my sinful soul.

CONTINUED

84

CONTINUED:

84

She makes both the girls laugh. Pleased she's cheered them some, she stands and gives an almost shy wave.

MARTHA

Nice you came down...

Louisa watches Martha unlock several locks, then says quietly.

LOUISA

You don't never turn your back on none of those HITTITES. They keep to themselves 'cause they got things to hide.

(turns, halfway out)

Now your husband, he was decent. But he was the exception.

MARTHA

Thanks...

Louisa goes out. Martha shuts the door and leans against it.

85

INT. SCHMIDT HOUSE - NIGHT

85

CLOSE ON ROASTED SUCKLING PIG, HEAD IN TACT, BODY HALF-EATEN.

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP ON ISAIAH SCHMIDT AND PULL BACK TO FULL SHOT of the Schmidt family, MRS. SCHMIDT, MELISSA M., and TOM ANTHONY, eating their evening meal. There is one unoccupied chair. John's. The mood is tense. Contained.

ISAIAH

Tom Anthony, we will repair the broken fence in the lower section tomorrow. Gather the materials by sunrise.

TOM ANTHONY

Yes, Father.

ISAIAH

Melissa, you must eat.

Melissa puts some food in her mouth, as if it's poison. She can't swallow.

MRS. SCHMIDT

Father, perhaps --

ISAIAH

-- She must eat. She --

CONTINUED

There is a STEP outside the door. Next instant JOHN ENTERS. Utter silence in the room.

John removes his coat and goes to his place, a determined, strained energy in his moves.

JOHN

Good evening, Father. Good evening,
Mother.

The mother is clearly afraid to speak. John looks from her to the empty place before him -- no plate or glass -- then back to her.

JOHN (cont'd)

Mother, may I have dinner, too?

His mother looks painfully at him, then back at her food. Tom Anthony looks over sympathetically, his eyes communicating wordlessly. Isaiah grasps the boy in his chin and turns him back to his plate.

ISAIAH

Keep eating.

The entire family, except John, begins eating once more.

JOHN

(to Melissa)

This is not necessary...

Nobody responds. Melissa looks like she might faint.

JOHN

Well, I'll get something for myself...

ISAIAH

(in a low, terrifying voice)

Do not profane our food.

John stops, eyes flashing, voice tight.

JOHN

I am not profane, Father.

Isaiah lays down his knife with a shaking hand, turning his head but not his eyes to John. His voice shakes with barely-contained rage.

ISAIAH

I shun the harlot and you be talking
to her today.

CONTINUED

JOHN

Only to apologize for your unChristian
treatment of her --

Isaiah rises in a violent fury, the knife once again
quivering in his hand.

ISAIAH

And your treatment of Melissa today --
was that Christian?

John twists around -- Melissa turns her face away from
the violence in the air.

JOHN

That's our business!

ISAIAH

I am the Father -- it is my business!

(roaring)

IF YOUR RIGHT HAND OFFENDS YOU -- CUT IT
OFF...! NOW YOU ARE SHUNNED FROM US ALL!

MRS. SCHMIDT

(terrified)

Father --!

Isaiah smashes the shaft of the knife against the table
with all his strength. The frightened family draws back,
petrified, never having seen him so enraged. His burning
eyes are locked on John's pale face, a mad, nearly insane
smile curling his lips as he speaks this malidiction.

ISAIAH

Your brother won't turn his face to you.
Your Mutter won't feed you. Nor will
Melissa reach her hand to you again --
How dare you spit your arrogant sinfulness
in the face of thy father -- you are no
more son of ours -- get out -- go to thy
whore!

John stands and pushes back from the table, shaking like
a tree in a hurricane. He looks to Melissa. Her eyes
are full of tears, the veins on her neck pulse, but she
doesn't look at him.

JOHN

(voice breaking, quietly)

Melissa. Come with me.

The tears splash down her cheeks. Her whole body quivers.
But she doesn't move.

CONTINUED

89

CONTINUED:

89

ISAIAH

(with cruel pleasure)

She is too pure to hear the Devil. All
our ears and hearts are stone to you now.
Be gone.

John turns and walks out of his home. On the SLAM of
the door we

CUT TO:

90

EXT. WARRENSBURG CINEMA - NIGHT

90

The "downtown" of Warrensburg isn't much more than a
sleepy Mainstreet, lined with brick buildings that have
seen more prosperous times, a few wearing the masks of
fast-food chain fascades. A beat-up pickup truck
bears out of the darkness at the edge of town and
pulls near the curb. JOHN SCHMIDT jumps from the bed
in back, waves thanks to the DRIVER, and walks to the
sidewalk. It's the first time he's ever been in a
motor vehicle, or in Warrensburg, and it shows.

He's abandoned the wide-brimmed black hat of
his sect, as well as the heavy wool jacket. It's enough
to let him blend into the flow of KIDS and YOUNG COUPLES
that move past him. He looks at each in turn with a
particular attention, walking slowly against the current.

WIDEN as he reaches the marquee of the Warrensburg Cinema.
A horror film has just let out, and the LAUGHING, BUZZING
audience of YOUNGSTERS, many holding hands or walking arm
in arm, are a striking contrast to everyone he has just
left.

But he still has not seen the person he has come for.

The last COUPLE comes out, the BOY chasing the GIRL,
making MONSTER NOISES as she SHRIEKS with delight. They
FADE in the distance, John looking after them in wonder.

VICKY exits the theater behind him.

She sees him, starts away, then stops, recognizing him
even from behind. Unbelieving that he's there, she
comes round to his front just as he turns and sees her.

JOHN

Vicky!

VICKY

(amazed, delighted)

John. How'd you get here? You didn't
drive your buggy...

CONTINUED

90 CONTINUED:

90

JOHN

(trying to remember the
phrase)

I hitched a... I hiked and I hitched.

He smiles. She doesn't. She's read his eyes.

VICKY

What's happened? Something's wrong.

The MANAGER of the theater comes out, shutting off lights,
locking doors, eavesdropping.

JOHN

I... There has been trouble... Between
my father and me... I

The Manager fusses by with a broom.

VICKY

Come on -- I'll drive you back --
we'll talk. Come on.

He goes with her across the street to her car. The
manager watches them, mumbling to himself.

MANAGER

HITTITES in sportscars. An' I thought
I'd seen it all...

91 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

91

The two WOMEN sit close together, near the fire. MARTHA
is reading a novel, LANA sitting crosslegged, trying to
salvage what she can from her splintered nails. Her
hands aren't too steady, though, and when the telephone
bursts in RINGING, she jumps noticeably.

Martha sees this, and as she answers the phone, she
watches over LANA FOREGROUND.

MARTHA

Oh, Hi, Sheriff. Yeah, we're okay.
You find anything? ... Well what about
getting somebody to come look for finger-
prints or something. Oh. You will...
Okay -- yeah. Okay, Bye.

She hands up. Lana gives a grim smile.

LANA

He says he's doing his damndest and
to be patient, right?

Martha sits back down.

CONTINUED

MARTHA

Close enough.

(studies Lana)

You okay? You jumped a foot when that thing rang.

LANA

Yeah, fine.

She pours herself another half glass of Jack Daniels.

MARTHA

(gently)

You need that drink?

Lana

Don't treat me like a child! Or an alcoholic!

(she puts the drink down,
shoving it away clumsily)

I'm just bored.

She pouts. Martha stares dumbfounded at her. Lana realizes what a ridiculous thing she's said and giggles.

MARTHA

Jesus, I'd hate to see what it takes to keep you amused!

Both laugh. Lana reaches almost instinctively for her drink, downing half of it before she realizes what she's doing. She puts the glass down and looks away.

MARTHA (cont'd)

(more soberly)

Maybe you should go back. Tomorrow if you want. I could drive you to the bus station in Warrensburg...

Lana seems to have been wanting this offered for some time. But now she's unsure...

LANA

What about you?

MARTHA

Vicky says she'll stay a few more days. It'll be okay.

Lana looks at Martha as if trying to see through the eyes of a mask.

CONTINUED

91 CONTINUED:

91

LANA

(low)

I guess I've just been bumming you out...

MARTHA

Look, you're no barrel of sunshine like Vicky, but...

(quieter)

I will say that ever since I've known you I've always felt you were the one who knew what was really going on.

Lana leans closer, looking into Martha's eye as if the person she was looking for has at last been recognized. Suddenly, she shakes her head.

LANA

It's the three of us -- one for all and all for one, right? You're not getting rid of me that easy.

She holds out her hand. The two shake. Martha is abruptly open, clearly relieved her friend is staying.

MARTHA

Well, good! I would've hated to see you go!

LANA

I knew it. It was all a big front. You're scared. You're scared as I am.

MARTHA

I'm not --

LANA

You are! Look at you --

(seeing)

You're shivering -- and your hand was cold as ice!

MARTHA

(annoyed)

I'm not scared of anything. It's just --

(realizing)

There's a draft or something in here...

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS her as she gets up and crosses the living room, following the cold slip of air.

She stops in the doorway at her bedroom, her hair lifting gently away from her head as if a lover were passing his hands through.

92 INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM - DAY

92

IN HER POV we SEE that all the windows of the room are open, the wind pushing the curtains.

Martha rushes in, slamming them angrily.

Finished, she turns. Lana looks on from the doorway, her face saying it all.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

93 EXT. HILLSIDE ROAD - NIGHT

93

VICKY'S SPORTSCAR as it lurches up this dark country road by stops and starts. The MUSIC CUE is ominous from the previous shot, and as it CARRIES OVER and FADES beneath this shot, it only enhances the feeling of something wrong. The car veers toward the shoulder of the road.

VICKY (overlapped - O.S.)
Aaaiighhh!!!!

CUT TO:

93 A INT. SPORTS CAR - NIGHT

93 A

JOHN is in the driver's seat, getting his first driving lesson. VICKY, laughing so hard she's practically crying, grabs the wheel, giving another SQUEAL of amusement as the car narrowly misses going off the road.

VICKY
Thaaat's better -- much smoother when
you stay on the road --

The car bucks --

VICKY (cont'd)
Now shift -- like I showed you --
third!

John shifts. There's a LOUD GRATING of GEARS. Vicky makes an awful face and puts her hand over his, guiding the car into proper gear. John drives with one hand now, his other remaining beneath Vicky's on the gear-shift lever.

JOHN
This is wonderful! Much better than
a horse, really!

CONTINUED

93 A CONTINUED:

93 A

VICKY

A whole lot better than worrying about
your father, don't you think?

He nods gratefully.

JOHN

Thank you for listening. And for cheering
me, too. I've learned to laugh with you --

VICKY

Ooooppss!!!

She grabs the wheel and wrestles it around. Too late.

93 B EXT. HILLSIDE ROAD - NIGHT

93 B

The car leaves the road at about twenty miles an hour,
bumps across the shoulder, skids thorough a patch of
grass and comes to rest on a shoulder overlooking
the entire valley of HITTITE farms below.

94 INT. VICKY'S SPORTSCAR - NIGHT

94

Both laugh hysterically. VICKY peeks over the dash and
down the hood at the valley.

VICKY

Close, but no cigar.

JOHN

I'm not so good a driver, I guess.

VICKY

You kidding? For the first time, you
did great.

JOHN

What do you do to start it running
again?

VICKY

What's your hurry? The view is great.

She gives him a devilish smile. The same smile dawns
slowly on John.

JOHN

Is this where we say we are out of gas?

CONTINUED

94 CONTINUED:

94

VICKY

(laughs)

Afraid I can't say that -- I've got
most of a tank plus a five gallon
can in the trunk. Maybe a flat tire...

There is a silence. Vicky reaches over John and locks
his door, touching his right shoulder for support.

VICKY (cont'd)

(nearer, lower)

Promised my friends I'd be careful.

There is a vein throbbing on John's forehead. His voice
is husky.

JOHN

(quietly)

How did you say in the store -- I
won't bite...

He brings her hand before his face, looks at it
solemnly and then kisses it gently.

VICKY

I... wouldn't mind if you did...

John reaches over and kisses her mouth. She responds
openly. As they press together we

CUT SUDDENLY TO:

95 INT. MELISSA'S ROOM - NIGHT

95

MELISSA M. sits bolt upright INTO FRAME, CLOSE UP. PULL
BACK to REVEAL her in her bed, SCREAMING right INTO CAMERA
as she wakes from her nightmare.

MELISSA

JOHHNNNNNN!!!

She leaps out of her simple bed and runs from the room,
repeating John's name several times in horrified dis-
belief.

95 A INT. SCHMIDT KITCHEN - NIGHT

95 A

The girl rushes to the center of the room as if following
an unseen vision. There on the counter by the little hand
water pump, something catches her eye.

She reaches down in horror and picks up a large boning
knife. The moon glints off its keen blade, slashing a
strip of boney light across her eye.

CONTINUED

95

A

CONTINUED:

95 A

MELISSA

John...

She snaps her head around wildly -- MRS. SCHMIDT has come to the door of her room, having heard the sounds of the girl, now frightened at the sight of her niece, standing so strangely in the florescent wedge of moonlight, wraith-like in her white sleeping gown, the gleaming spike of steel held before her face.

MRS. SCHMIDT

Child... what is it?

Melissa blinks at her a moment, then with incredible speed wheels and bursts through the door and out into the night.

Mrs. Schmidt turns back to the dark doorway of her room --

MRS. SCHMIDT

Isaiah!!

96

INT. VICKY'S SPORTS CAR - NIGHT

96

JOHN and VICKY are kissing with the passion and invention of teenagers just discovering the act. The roof of the convertible has been drawn up for warmth, and now the windows of the car are phosphorescent with steam and moonlight.

Vicky unbuttons John's shirt and slides her hand over his chest. It's clear that John has experienced such things only in the middle-of-the-night fantasies -- his nostrils flare with a sudden intake of air -- his head stretches back, his face registers intense, almost unbearable pleasure.

VICKY

Like that?

JOHN

(softly)

Gott in Himmel...!

97

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

97

MELISSA runs desperately through the trees, MOANING, stumbling, clawing her way through briars, tearing her clothes and skin without notice. OUR SHOT is either SO LONG or SO CLOSE we cannot SEE if she's still armed with the knife. She trips and falls, staggers up and keeps going.

98 EXT. SCHMIDT HOUSE - NIGHT

98

TOM ANTHONY, John's younger brother, stands on the porch, in his night shirt, staring out after MELISSA in the dark. Inside the house we can HEAR MRS. SCHMIDT CALLING frantically for her husband.

MRS. SCHMIDT (O.S.)
Isaiah! Where are you?!

The woman runs out of the house, seizing her son by the shoulders.

MRS. SCHMIDT (cont'd)
Tom Anthony -- where is your father!

The startled boy stares back at her, confused.

TOM ANTHONY
I don't know mother --
(looking off in alarm)
What is wrong with Melissa M.?

The woman throws up her hands.

MRS. SCHMIDT
One of her fits -- God be with us --

She runs off the porch, then seeing the boy about to follow wheels on him with startling severity.

MRS. SCHMIDT
You stay here -- there is nothing
you should see!

She turns and runs off. The boy calls after, suddenly truly afraid.

TOM ANTHONY
It's John, isn't it!

The woman is already gone.

99 INT. VICKY'S SPORTS CAR - NIGHT

99

JOHN is kissing VICKY down her neck, both of them moaning and sighing softly, when suddenly Vicky stiffens. A shadow has passed across a back window of the car.

John looks up at her confused.

JOHN
(breathing heavily)
What?... Something I did was...?

VICKY
No... I thought I saw something out
there...

CONTINUED

John laughs.

102.

JOHN

Nothing out there. Everyone around here's in bed by dark...

He moves toward her, then stops. Both of them HEAR something SNAP outside. There's a BEAT of silence, then...

JOHN

Probably a raccoon or possum...

VICKY

(beat)

Maybe we should go...

JOHN

(beat)

I'll just go scare it away.

Before she can stop him he's out of the car --

100

EXT. CAR & ROADSIDE - NIGHT

100

JOHN takes a few steps away from the car and looks around at the bushes and trees, and down into the valley below. OUT SHOT MOVES IN SLOWLY FROM BEHIND. He turns to CAMERA, thinking he might have heard something. Then he gets back into the car.

100 A

INT. VICKY'S SPORTSCAR - NIGHT

100 A

Vicky locks the door after him, relieved.

VICKY

See anything?

JOHN shakes his head no, grinning.

JOHN

Only ghosts and goblins.

He reaches for her tenderly. At that same split second someone's hand plunges a boning knife straight down through the cloth top of the car -- it happens with the suddenness of a snake strike, a sudden RIPPING of fabric, flash of blade -- and the thing THUDS into the back of Vicky's seat, missing her by a hair.

Vicky SCREAMS in surprise and fear -- the knife is jerked back outside. John throws himself instinctively over Vicky -- the next instant the knife rips down again. CLOSE ON John's face -- it contorts with pain -- we know he is mortally wounded. His body slumps over Vicky, pinning her arms and body.

Vicky HEARS the SOUNDS of the trunk opening with a RIPPING of STEEL, HEARS the SOUND of the five-gallon GERRY CAN being UNSCREWED. Suddenly gasoline is SPLASHING over the windows and hood of the car, SLAPPING over the roof, pouring down through the knife slashes.

CONTINUED

100 CONTINUED:

100

VICKY somehow manages to pull from under John's body -- it's all made doubly awkward by the fact that he's in the driver's seat. The empty gerry can CRASHES hollowly over the hood. Vicky is screaming --

VICKY
GET AWAY -- DON'T!!

Cramming herself between John and the wheel, Vicky manages to get her feet to the pedals -- gets the clutch in, turns the ignition -- the little car fires to life, engine ROARING. Vicky throws it into reverse, SQUEALS backwards wildly --

VICKY
NOOO!!!

101 EXT. ROADSIDE & ROAD - NIGHT

101

VICKY'S CAR, soaked and gleaming with the gas that pours off it, lurches halfway up onto the road, SLAMS into first gear, and surges forward, then slows, its left rear tire caught in soft earth. We HEAR the WAILING of the spinning tire as the car slides forward five feet, ten feet. Suddenly there's a leap of orange flame twenty feet behind. The fire blooms up and begins running in a straight line for the car, following the trail of spilled gas.

VICKY (O.S.)
Oh, Goooodddddd!!!

102 EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

102

WE SEE MRS. SCHMIDT scrambling up the hillside, panic-stricken, HEARING VICKY'S DISTANT SCREAMS.

MRS. SCHMIDT
Isaiah! Melissa M!

She stops at the crest of the hill, her breath rasping in her throat. Suddenly she's still, hearing the DRONE of a CAR HORN in the distance. CLOSE ON HER FACE. She now HEARS the CRACKLING OF FIRE and a frightening SCRAPING OF METAL. Her face picks up an orange flush. She walks forward and steps out onto the deserted blacktop, staring in confusion as the bend in the road before her glows a more and more garish orange, and the BLARE of the HORN grows louder. Suddenly the flaming pyre of Vicky's car rolls ominously into view, slowing, slewing to one side on its collapsing tires. It veers crazily until it crashes into a stone containment wall.

CONTINUED

102 CONTINUED:

102

MRS. SCHMIDT

Oh, mine Gott...

The car explodes, its own gas tank having finally ruptured.

Mrs. Schmidt runs over, horrified, trying to get near to help, finding the heat too much. She's driven back.

CLOSE ON HER FACE as she eyes focus on something a bit farther away. IN HER POV WE ZOOM TO MELISSA M., standing back in the curve of the road, her thin night gown orange and billowing in the convection of the flames.

Like a zombie the girl walks towards the burning car from the far side, her eyes alive with the reflection of fire. It seems she is determined to walk directly into the flames. But abruptly there's movement in the dark behind her and we SEE ISAIAH SCHMIDT dart out and grapple with the girl.

CLOSER ANGLE -- despite his strength Melissa twists around, nearly, nearly free, her face twisted again with that extraordinary power --

MELISSA

You did this, Isaiah!

ISAIAH

No!

MELISSA

You have killed your second son too!
You and the Incubus are lovers in league!

ISAIAH

(horrified)

Child, you don't know what you say --

With a sudden, incredible surge of strength the girl breaks her wrists free, and with a DEEP, ANIMAL-LIKE HOWL throws Isaiah down. She stands over the startled man, her eyes alive, her hair tangled with firelight altogether a different person, frightening and unstoppable.

MELISSA

Soon the fire will burn you, Isaiah.
But I will kill the Incubus. She will not live out this night.

She turns and runs swiftly into the night. Isaiah turns to find his wife looking at him.

CONTINUED

102 CONTINUED:

102

MRS. SCHMIDT

Isaiah...

ISAIAH

God be my witness.-- I didn't!

MRS. SCHMIDT

Where were you, then!

ISAIAH

I could not sleep. I was in the field
praying when I heard her scream... I
swear... My own son? ---

He looks at the fire and breaks, great sobs heaving
his chest. He falls to his knees, groaning. We MOVE
SLIGHTLY IN to the woman's face.

CUT TO:

103 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

103

CLOSE ON the hearth - the fire now down to glowing coals.

ANGLE ON MARTHA and LANA. Martha puts down her book,
too nervous to read any more. She looks at the clock.
1:16 A.M.

LANA

Don't worry, she'll be home soon...

Martha sighs in annoyance at herself.

MARTHA

Even when we were in college I used to
wait up for her like a mother hen.

They both laugh, trying to ease their anxiety.

LANA

Want a snack or something? I'll fix it.

MARTHA

(considering)

Peanut-butter and jelly sandwich would
be nice. And a big glass of cold milk.

LANA

You got it.

104 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

104

LANA opens the refrigerator and takes out a milk carton
and jars of strawberry jam and peanut butter. Fetching
bread and two glasses, she opens the carton to pour the
milk first. She pours, but instead of milk, it's blood
that gushes out into the glass, dark red.

CONTINUED

104 CONTINUED:

104

Lana drops the carton with a SCREAM. The carton pitches to the floor. MARTHA rushes in, seeing first her friend, huddled in the corner, then the bright pool of scarlet moving at her feet. Her SCREAMS instantly mix with Lana's.

Then, somehow, despite her terror, Martha has presence of mind enough to see that her screams have only tipped Lana into full, mindless panic. She rushes across to her friend and grabs her, shakes her.

MARTHA

Lana! Lana! Stop it!

Lana suddenly is silent, quaking as if a premonition of rigor mortis were being fought by her entire body. Her voice is suddenly childlike, deeply offended in an insane sort of way.

LANA

Who did that to me?

MARTHA

(fighting her terror)

Someone's idea of a joke, maybe, I don't know -- just don't flake out on me -- come on -- I need your help!

She half-draws Lana with her, both slipping, then falling as they forget the awful puddle in their haste. Martha scrambles up, hauling at Lana, who stares at the gouts of red on her knees and fingers with dumb horror.

105 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

105

MARTHA checks the locks on the front door, finding one unlocked. She locks it, looks apprehensively out the front window, then pulls the shade. LANA watches, petrified.

LANA

(in a small voice)

You can't lock him out. He comes in whenever he wants.

Martha turns and looks at Lana, seeing with shock how much her thin veneer of control has torn away.

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED:

105

MARTHA

What're you talking about...

LANA

It's death. He's after me.

MARTHA

(disgusted, scared)

Jesus -- will you get hold of yourself.

Martha heads for her bedroom, rushing; we can see Lana's craziness is starting to get to her, goading her own urge to scream -- Lana grabs her by the shoulder, whispering in mad confidence --

LANA

He tried to get me in the barn...

Martha stops, looking at Lana.

MARTHA

What're you talking about...

LANA

(her eyes shining)

He was there. He spoke to me like in the dream. He held out his hand to me and tried to touch my face...

Lana holds out her trembling fingers and has them almost in Martha's face -- Martha steps back, pushing the hand away. She looks downright frightened now of Lana, afraid she's lost her mind.

MARTHA

Don't do that...

Martha backs toward the bedroom a step.

LANA

(crying like a child)

He was there. You don't believe me but he was...

MARTHA

Just... go sit down. I'm going to check the windows in the bedrooms.

LANA

For what? If there's nothing to be afraid of?

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED:

105

Martha stops, then points to the couch like a parent.

MARTHA

Go sit down.

Lana turns obediently for the couch. Martha turns and pushes through the bedroom door.

106 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

106

SOMETHING big and dark swings down at her, catching her mid-stride -- something like a big man in a dark coat, arms outstretched, black, wide-brimmed hat -- it strikes her full in the face and chest before she can even scream, knocking her backwards as we're hit simultaneously with a terrifying MUSIC STING.

She rolls around with a SHRIEK, smashing up against the wall, then backs up. LANA is up and wailing behind her like an infant seeing its mother terrified --

LANA

Oooohhh -- what is it Marthaaaaa!!

MARTHA scrambles up and dives for the drawer with the pistol. She has it out, turns and faces the doorway.

She sees what it is.

MARTHA

Oh, Jim...

She goes up to the thing, a crudely-fashioned scarecrow-like dummy, twirling and dancing on the end of a wire, hauntingly reminiscent of William Gluntz.

Strangely, Martha goes up to it and touches the clothes almost lovingly a moment, then pulls the thing down in fury, bursting into angry tears, pulling the clothes off it.

LANA

What is it Martha...

MARTHA

These were Jim's clothes.

Martha has a look of strange anguish as she stands.

107 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

107

MARTHA moves past LANA to a closet. She takes out a jacket and begins to put it on. Lana panics, rushing to her.

CONTINUED

107 CONTINUED:

107

LANA

Where do you think you're going?

MARTHA

I've got to go to the cemetery.

Lana stares at her incredulously.

LANA

You're joking -- you can't leave me --
what the hell do you want to go to the
cemetery for in the middle of the --

MARTHA

Those clothes on that thing, Jim's
clothes...

LANA

So they're his old HITTITE clothes.
So what? For that you have to visit
the grave?

MARTHA

That's right. Because I personally put
those clothes in his coffin with him the
day I buried him.

She hands the pistol to Lana, who just stares at her.

LANA

But then, how can they be...

MARTHA

That's what I damn well intend to
find out.

Martha starts unlocking the front door. Lana throws
the pistol on the couch and grabs onto Martha for dear
life, terrified of being left alone. But Martha is
far stronger. She opens the door against all of Lana's
protestations, and could bear her out onto the front
porch at will. She stops, though, and somehow makes
Lana listen.

MARTHA

You can come with me or your can stay,
but I'm going.

(her face twitching once)

For all I know the bastard left him
lying out there in the cold and wet --

CONTINUED

107 CONTINUED:

107

LANA
(suddenly the more rational
of the two)
Jesus, Martha -- cold and wet -- he's
dead -- what does it matter -- I --

Martha jerks away --

108 EXT. MARTHA'S PORCH - NIGHT

108

MARTHA exits the house, throwing on her jacket as she crosses the porch and runs towards her truck. Lana is right after her, but only to the edge of the porch. She seems unable to go into the dark.

LANA
(calling after)
What about me?! Martha?

Martha stops and turns at the truck.

MARTHA
Go back inside and lock the door. The cemetery's just five minutes from here -- I'll be right back -- hang on to that cannon if you're afraid. It can stop an elephant!

Martha jumps into the truck and guns the engine.

ANOTHER ANGLE, HAND-HELD, THROUGH BRANCHES, as Martha pulls out of the drive and races off down the road. We FOLLOW WITH her taillight for the few seconds it takes them to disappear behind a grade in the road, then PAN back to Lana. Lana looks around with sudden loneliness and rushes back into the house. We HEAR the distant SOUND OF LOCKS CLICKING SHUT. PAN 180 DEGREES. We find ourselves in a startling CLOSEUP of the FACE and EYES of MELISSA M., watching the house from the same shelter of trees used by William Gluntz not many nights before.

109 EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

109

The headlights of Martha's pickup FLARE into our lens as she pulls into the little cemetery and cuts the engine. It's absolutely silent except for INSECTS. MARTHA gets out and comes towards us in the light of her headlights, carrying a flashlight.

She slows as our SHOT WIDENS slightly; she stops as she sees what's just come INTO FRAME -- a pile of dirt FOREGROUND. Into this is driven a long stake on which is set a huge pig's head.

CONTINUED

109 CONTINUED:

109

Martha rushes at it and wrestles it over, throwing it down despite her horror at it. Then she turns and looks into the open grave of her husband

IN HER POV we look down to its bottom. The coffin is exposed.

CLOSE ON MARTHA. She looks around, poking the beam of her light among the stones. No body. She again looks into the grave.

ANGLE IN THE GRAVE -- Martha drops in her feet ringing on the wooden top of the casket. Dirt rains after her, showering over her shoulders, down her back. A big white moth bangs clumsily against the lens of her flashlight. Martha sets the light down to her side.

As she does she finds the little pile of brass wood screws. INSERT OF ONE IN HER HAND. CLOSE ON HER eyes looking to the head end of the top with its separate, hinged cover.

She reaches down and tests the lid. It's loose. The moth blunders into her face, then is caught for a moment in her hair, fluttering against her neck. She tears it away, returning her attention to the coffin. She steels herself, then lifts the head-section lid, swinging it fully open before she loses her courage.

It's too dark inside to see anything. She reaches back and finds the light, leans over and thrusts it inside the coffin. There's a GARBLED FRACTURED SCREECH from the hole - a ghost-white hurricane of FLAPPING wings and bodies erupts from the coffin. Martha falls back as a SHRIEKING cloud of panicked CHICKENS flails over her. She blindly hits out at them, struggling desperately to get out of the grave.

CUT TO:

110 EXT. MARTHA'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

110

FULL TELESCOPIC as Martha's pickup ROARS up over the crest of the road at full throttle.

ANOTHER ANGLE -- she skids into the drive, jumps out and runs for the porch. As she reaches it she stops, HEARING MOVEMENT in the trees across the lawn. SOMEONE is WALKING away through the dry brush. MARTHA looks back at the house, then her eye is drawn down to her feet. She steps back, seeing what's she's been standing on. IN HER POV we SEE the floor of the porch has been covered with a hastily scrawled, giant hex sign.

111 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

111

CLOSE ON the bolts as they unlock, one by one, and PULL BACK as MARTHA ENTERS.

MARTHA

Lana? Vicky?

The living room is undisturbed. And empty.

Martha crosses to the hallway door. There's a light seeping out from LANA and VICKY'S room. She opens the door.

112 INT. LANA & VICKY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

112

It's the bedside light that's on. It's shade is knocked slightly askew, and allows a harsh sliver of light to fall over the four-poster bed where the body of LANA is sprawled face down.

CLOSE ON MARTHA - she moves across the room to the bed, stopping as she sees the gun lying on the floor just beside. She can't see Lana's face because the girl's hair has spilled over, completely obscuring it. Martha's own face registers grief.

MARTHA

(softly)

Oh, baby, I should never have left you here alone.

She reaches over with both hands to roll the body over. As soon as she touches it, Lana wakes with a jolt of nerves, jerking around in drunken terror --

LANA

Whaa --!

Martha is startled, to say the least. Then she sees the empty bottle which Lana had been curled around. She's instantly furious at the shape Lana's in.

MARTHA

You've gotten smashed - Jesus!

Lana is absolutely ashen. And in no mood to be reprimanded.

LANA

(sitting up a little)

Vicky's dead.

CONTINUED

112 CONTINUED:

112

LANA

(tries to recall)

Nothing else.. except some sort of
angel talk while she was drawing out
there, sort of gobble-dee-gook, y'know...
this and that, and a lot of faithful sort
of talk.

MARTHA

What do you mean, 'faithful talk'?

LANA

(barely conscious)

I dunno... Just kept repeating the
word a lot, that's all.

Martha shakes her again.

MARTHA

What word?

LANA

Faith.

Martha looks up, out the window, up towards the hill.

113 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

113

MARTHA EXITS the bedroom and crosses to the telephone.
She picks it up, reacts in annoyance and fear, punching
at the cradle buttons, trying to get a dial tone. Then
it dawns on her that the line is dead. She lowers the
telephone.

114 INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

114

MARTHA rushes back in. Already LANA is fallen over,
dead to the world. Martha shakes her roughly until
she's somewhat conscious. Then she takes the pistol
and lays it on the bed next to her.

MARTHA

I'm leaving you this, just in case.
I'll be right back. Now don't you let
anyone in, not even if she's got wings
and a harp!

LANA

Okay -- hey -- where you going?

MARTHA

I've got to go see something...

115 EXT. MARTHA'S FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

115

HIGH SHOT, DIRECTLY DOWN - MARTHA EXITS the front door and locks it, caught in the hex sign. She walks out into the yard.

LOWER ANGLE, JUST ABOVE THE PLANE OF MARTHA'S EYES - she's stopped. She looks up the hill. IN HER POV -- we SEE the distant porch of the STOLLER FARM. A bright, naked bulb is burning on its ceiling. The window of Faith's room is also similarly illuminated.

Martha goes forward, her face grim.

116 EXT. STOLLER FARM - NIGHT

116

MARTHA walks up the rutted drive of the place, passes through a crude gate with "Stay Out" sprayed on it, the bright porch light, even at this distance, setting her out against the dark.

Now she can SEE and HEAR the chicken house. The restless, endless RUSTLING and CACKLING of hundreds of chickens.

There's a SNAPPING OF TWIGS in the woods off to the side. Martha freezes. Listens. No other sound now but the CHICKENS scrabbling. There's a light in their coop.

Martha moves toward the coop, keeping as much as possible in the shadows. The MUSIC has slid into this scene as subtly as surgical steel blade, and now shifts to a more ominous direction.

ANGLE BY THE CHICKEN ENCLOSURE - The bright light within is fractured into a hundred jagged splinters by the slats and wires of the enclosure, and the restless shifting of the BIRDS sends scores of dark shadows darting and pitching over the bushes outside. Martha slips into this light, moving quietly along a wall.

CLOSE ON HER as she stops and peers in. IN HER POV we SEE the hundreds of CACKLING, SCRATCHING WHITE CHICKENS. EXTREME CLOSE UP ON MARTHA'S EYES. IN THEIR LENS we SEE the black hole of Jim's coffin erupt with white chickens. This is synchronized with a MUSIC CUE that thrusts up with them, and indicates the realization inside the mind of Martha. Martha darts into the shadows again.

ANGLE AT THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE/STUDIO -- Martha darts across the exposed area and flattens against the wall of this building. She slides along it, keeping the house ever in sight. She reaches a window and, just to be sure no one by any chance might be in there to see her, looks in. Whatever she sees stops her cold. She swallows, clutches herself, then, despite her inner warnings, she tries the door. It's unlocked.

117 INT. FAITH'S STUDIO - NIGHT

117

MARTHA ENTERS. The bizarre studio is lit by just a few candles, and these are arranged in just one place in the room, around the easel upon which rests a large canvas. It's to this that Martha is drawn with horrified fascination. As she stops before it she simply shakes her head for a moment, then sees something pinned to the edge of the canvas. She takes it off and looks at it with amazement.

CLOSE INSERT on the object in her hand, her own lost DRIVERS LICENSE; and SLIGHT ZOOM IN to her photo on it. Her face caught in a haunting, unguarded moment.

CUT TO CLOSE OF HER OWN FACE, looking up from the license, to the canvas, her horror growing.

CUT TO HER POV OF THE CANVAS -- A stunning portrait of Martha, her face wreathed with a bridal veil, is what we first see. A ZOOM BACK TO INCLUDE ALL OF THIS -- a large, enormously powerful wedding portrait.

But the face of the groom is not yet painted in.

Martha backs up, away from it, saying only a single word.

MARTHA

Faith...

She backs another step and into a stiff, white outstretched hand, jamming it right into the hair of the back of her neck.

She jumps around and bites savagely into her own fist to stifle her scream, seeing JIM'S BODY staring back at her, arranged in a chair as if waiting his turn to pose.

It's then that she hears the strange VOICE outside, a wailing, low yet female enchantation.

VOICE

Innnccuuubussss. Come out! Inncuu-bussss!!

Martha goes to the window, near panic, peeking out like a trapped animal.

IN HER POV -- Someone all in white is emerging from the shadows in front of the Stoller house, coming out onto the front lawn, moving slowly towards the house. Now we can SEE it is MELISSA M. Possessed with her spirit.

118 EXT. STOLLER FARM - NIGHT

118

MARTHA silently EXITS the studio, slipping into shadow, watching with paralyzed fascination as MELISSA crosses the lawn towards the porch. The girl, despite her small size, fairly BELLOWS at the silent house.

MELISSA

I COMMAND THEE, WHOSOEVER THOU ART,
THOU UNCLEAN SPIRIT, AND ALL THY COM-
PANIONS POSSESSING THIS LAND, THAT BY
THE MYSTERIES OF THE INCARNATION,
PASSION, RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST...

She has reached the stairs to the porch by this line.
CUT TO VERY CLOSE on MARTHA'S FACE.

MELISSA (cont'd O.S.)

...BY THE SENDING OF THE HOLY GHOST,
AND BY THE COMING OF OUR LORD TO JUDGE-
MENT...

CUT BACK to MELISSA and SLOW ZOOM IN as she crosses
the porch, her arms out before her --

MELISSA (cont'd)

... THOU TELL ME THEY NAME, THE DAY,
AND THE HOUR OF THY GOING OUT.

OUR ZOOM IS COMPLETE. OUR SHOT IS FRAMING HER HEAD-TO-
TOE, FROM THE SIDE, THE SILENT, DARK SCREEN of the
Stoller House LEFT FRAME. No answer.

Melissa falters, as if losing power. She begins her
incantation once more.

MELISSA (cont'd)

I COMMAND THEE ---

SOMEONE big and fast smashes out through the screendoor
and snatches Melissa up in a bearhug -- we SEE it's
LOUISA -- she lifts the girl up and spins her around,
breaking the breaths out of her lungs. Martha screams.

MARTHA

AAAAIIIIIIIIIIIGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH!!!

The scream comes out almost as with an independent will.
Martha claps her hand over her mouth. Too late. Like
some huge grizzly provoked into a killing rage, Louisa
drops the limp body of Melissa onto the boards of the
porch and turns towards Martha. She starts after her,
at a slow, lumbering walk.

Martha backs up, turns and runs directly into the outstretched
arms of FAITH.

CONTINUED

118 CONTINUED:

118

Faith grabs her -- pounces on her -- Martha SCREAMS even louder and gets slammed against a wall for it.

FAITH
(her voice insane)
Can't let you go now, little mouse.

Martha goes for the eyes, driving her fingernails into Faith's face. Faith stumbles back, dropping her hold to protect herself. Martha runs, SCREAMING.

ANGLE ON THE DRIVE -- Martha runs like the wind, SCREAMING. Faith runs even faster, closing the distance, her face bleeding. She tackles Martha near the gate.

The two roll over in the dusty moonlight, Faith desperately pinning Martha's shoulders.

FAITH (cont'd)
I won't hurt you -- I love you!

INSERT -- MARTHA'S HAND finds a rock.

Martha swings up with all her might, catching Faith along the side of her head. Faith rolls off just as Louisa crashes into view BACKGROUND. Martha scrambles up and runs for her life.

Louisa runs to Faith, lifting her up. Faith's dress, torn in the fight with Martha, falls away, revealing Faith's body to the waist. We SEE a thin, hairy man's chest. Faith clumsily pulls it back over himself, stuffing his padding back into place. But it's all over.

LOUISA
You ain't got no secret no more, Faith,
not if she lives.

Faith abruptly leers at his mother. He reaches down and pulls up his dress. Strapped to one of his wirey legs is a crude sheath. He pulls out the boning knife.

FAITH
(his altered voice even
more chilling)
Then she won't live...

119 EXT. MARTHA'S FARM - NIGHT

119

MARTHA runs and stumbles across the front yard, her clothes and hair torn, her face wild. She runs directly to her pickup truck. Then she sees the tires are all slashed.

CONTINUED

119 CONTINUED:

119

She runs frantically to the porch, dropping her keys in her haste. They scatter.

On her hands and knees, little CRIES of insane panic coming from her throat, she scrabbles over the hex sign, finding the right keys.

120 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

120

MARTHA locks the door with a double bolt. She turns and runs SCREAMING into VICKY and LANA'S room.

MARTHA

Lana!

121 INT. MARTHA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

121

She runs to the bed, snatching up the pistol, slapping crazily at LANA, who lurches up, frightened.

LANA

What? What?

MARTHA

Get up! Wake up, Lana!

She half-drags Lana out of her bed, then runs back into the living room. Lana stumbles after.

122 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

122

The instant MARTHA and LANA are in the room the POUNDING begins on the front door, the force of the blows so severe that the thing jumps in its frame.

Lana stares at it as if its the portal to her very doom.

LANA

(screaming)

It's him! He's come for me!

Martha turns around and slugs her. Lana collapses, Martha looks down in horror. The KNOCKING STOPS.

MARTHA

Oh, Lana... I'm sorry...

She stoops over her friend. The same instant a SHOTGUN BLAST rips through the front door, blowing its middle section into the living room, smashing a light, the debris and shot flying over Martha's head. The room is dropped into half-light. A huge hand reaches through the hole in the door for the knob.

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED:

122

Martha stands and fires at the door. The SOUND of the gun is deafening -- the white muzzle-flash illuminates the room. The door bucks against its frame, the slug slamming through.

There's no sound from outside.

Martha backs up to the telephone, which is right by the window to the drive. She looks through the window, sees nothing, and pulls the shade. Then in desperation picks up the telephone. We clearly HEAR the DIAL TONE just as she does. With shaking fingers she dials '0'.

VOICE (filter)

Operator, may I help you?

Martha sags with relief, almost in tears.

MARTHA

Operator, this is --

The window blind bursts in with a CRASH of SPLINTERED GLASS, and the head and shoulders of FAITH plunge through, his hands making a blind stab for Martha with the big knife. Martha falls backwards and FIRES. The telephone explodes into a million fragments on the first shot, Faith pinwheels back outside on the second.

There's a CRASH of the DOOR and LOUISA, holding a shotgun, is inside, her face twisted in incredible rage -- she hears the WILD, SCREAMING VOICE of the wounded Faith somewhere outside, obviously wounded --

FAITH (O.S.)

Get her, Mamaaa!!! She hurt meee!!!

LOUISA

(to Martha)

You bitch!

She raises the double barreled shotgun and FIRES as Martha dives for cover. The table Martha dives behind takes most of the blast, but Martha hits hard and the pistol goes skidding clear across the wooden floor and under the couch.

ANGLE ON LOUISA. She throws down the empty shotgun and smiles hideously.

LOUISA (cont'd)

Sounded to me like you lost your pistol, little Miss Muffit.

She starts for Martha.

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED:

122

LOUISA (cont'd)

That's good, 'cause I want to use my hands to take care of you anyways...

She moves with surprising speed between the couch and Martha. Martha gets up and runs into the hall, terrified. She darts into Lana and Vicky's room. Louisa is close behind. Both women are SCREAMING; one in rage, one in terror.

123 INT. VICKY'S ROOM - NIGHT

123

MARTHA slams the door, throwing the flimsy privacy lock. She runs across the room to the dresser, grabbing out Vicky's jogging bag. Almost immediately the door splinters open and LOUISA is inside.

CLOSE ON MARTHA at the dresser -- hysterically searching through Vicky's jogging gear --

TIGHT INSERT as her hands close over the little belt cannister of dog repellent --

WIDE as Louisa crashes over her, pinning Martha's arms to her side, crushing the wind from her. Martha's face turns crimson, the veins of her neck seem about to burst.

In desperation Martha pulls her head back as far as she can, then drives her brow forward into Louisa's face.

Louisa staggers backwards a step, her hands grabbing at her smashed nose.

Martha brings the cannister up in a flash and lets Louisa have it right in the eyes with the powerful repellent.

Instantly Louisa convulses, clutching at her eyes, BELLOWING like a stricken bull -- but the next instant she's crashing after Martha, blinded but triply infuriated.

Martha leaps over the bed. Louisa crashes over it, ripping off one of the posts, swinging it wildly before her. By pure luck she has Martha trapped. Martha makes a desperate scramble for it -- Louisa stabs out and catches her by the leg, still coughing and choking and HOWLING like a banshee.

Louisa raises the club-like bed post over her head, holding Martha pinned. The instant before she strikes down there is a TREMENDOUSLY LOUD SHOT and Louisa goes flying.

CONTINUED

123 CONTINUED:

123

CUT TO LANA in the doorway, holding the smoking gun in both hands, half-drunk, half-petrified, shaking like a leaf.

Martha struggles up, holding her throat, looks from Lana down to the motionless Louisa, then back in disbelief to her friend.

LANA

When I'm sober I'm even better...

She tries to smile. Drops the pistol. Sags against the doorway.

Martha rushes to her and they hug tearfully.

MARTHA

Let's get out of here.

124 INT. MARTHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The two cross the deathly-quiet living room each supporting the other. MARTHA and LANA stop, listening. We HEAR the SOUND of a horse's HOOFS and STEEL BUGGY WHEELS. They stop out front. The two girls cross quietly to the couch listening. A DISTANT HORSE SOUND, then quiet.

SUDDENLY with no warning FAITH leaps up from behind the couch, his/her face wild and bloodied, hair tangled and matted, the big boning knife in his hand, SCREAMING for their blood.

The two girls fall backwards, stumbling over each other. Faith runs over and raises the knife over them with a FIERCE SHOUT of triumph.

A DARK SLEEVE darts out -- a BIG HAND grabs Faith by the wrist.

WIDER SHOT - ISAIAH SCHMIDT presses the arm down and takes the knife.

SEVERAL other HITTITE MEN, including MATTHEW GLUNTZ are just behind him, and help subdue Faith, who now breaks down completely, crying and trembling.

The HITTITE MEN take him out.

Isaiah turns to Martha. His expression is unlike any he's had before. It is broken, human, feeling.

CONTINUED

123.

124 CONTINUED:

124

ISAIAH

Please...

He extends his hand and helps them up.

Martha looks at him a long moment, then puts her arms around him and embraces him.

125 EXT. COOPER'S JUNCTION - MORNING

125

Martha and Lana drive by, the truck loaded with Martha's belongings. As they pass a family of HITTITES, Lana leans solemnly from her window with an imaginary camera held to her eye and "clicks" a picture.

The HITTITES cover their faces with their wide-brimmed hats.

FREEZE FRAME.

THE END