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BLACK SCREEN

A title burns in:

"And fate? No one alive has ever escaped it, neither brave man nor coward, I tell you- it's born with us the day that we are born."

FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF LEXINGTON - MORNING

A horse drawn wagon lumbers down a long stretch of road. On either side, rolling hills of corn as far as the eye can see.

HECK (25, tanned, thin but solidly built farmboy) drives the wagon. He chews on a piece of straw.

Beside him is his brother PERRY (17, fair, not a care in the world, gorgeous). Perry greets the world around him with a perpetual smile.

Both wear overalls and white undershirts. Heck's are stained with the marks of a working man. Perry's shine as if they've never seen hard work, because they haven't.

A butterfly lands on Perry's leg. He tries to coax it onto his finger, succeeding.

He lifts it up to his face, tilting his head as he looks at it with a grin.

Perry holds the butterfly out to Heck, who shows no interest. Perry shrugs and turns his attention back to the butterfly.

The wagon bounces as it goes over a pothole. The butterfly flutters away. Perry watches it go.

A Model A Ford rattles up behind them, HONKING as it passes on the left-hand side.

Heck nods to the driver. Perry leans over and waves.

Heck elbows him back to his side.

PERRY

What?

HECK

You're on the reins, you'll pull them off the road if you keep on 'em like that.

PERRY
I was just being polite.

HECK
Horses don't care for polite,
Perry. Horses just care for
pointing them in the right
direction.

Beat.

PERRY
They care for apples.

Heck gives Perry a sideways look, then gives the reins a shake.

HECK
A-yup!

The horses pick up speed down the road.

EXT. LEXINGTON - DAY

Cobblestones replace the dirt and gravel road as they enter the city. More automobiles than horse buggies in the city.

They drive past a raid on a speakeasy. Two PROHIBITION AGENTS load MEN into the back of a patrol wagon as additional AGENTS carry whiskey and wine bottles to the curb.

Perry jumps as an AGENT swings an ax into one of the barrels, pouring bourbon into the storm drain.

An AGENT drive the butt of his Tommy gun into the BARKEEP's temple, knocking him to the ground. Perry's eyes go wide.

HECK
Pay that no mind. It's not our
business.

Perry watches as the agents bust bottles against the curb, despite his brother's words. He holds his satchel close.

EXT. SAVINGS AND LOAN - DAY

Heck parks in front of the bank and steps down from the wagon.

HECK
I won't be long.

PERRY
Grab me a candy if they have any.

INT. BANK MANAGER OFFICE - DAY

Heck drops a yellow envelope on the desk of WARREN DOUGLAS (40s, suit, mustache, glasses), who is otherwise occupied with his ledger.

The Bank Manager looks up over his glasses.

WARREN DOUGLAS
Mr. Troy.
(looking at the envelope)
That looks awfully thin.

HECK
It's all we can muster right now.

Mr. Douglas removes his glasses and cleans them with his handkerchief while he talks.

WARREN DOUGLAS
Mr. Troy, your family is four months behind on its loan payment.

HECK
I know, I know. With this prohibition, ain't as much need for corn since no one's makin' liquor. And then with Ma dying and the funeral expenses and all, well Pa just ain't been right.

WARREN DOUGLAS
The bank's only concern is repayment of the debt. We've been as lenient as we can on this matter.

HECK
I'm working on it, I promise. Just give me more time.

WARREN DOUGLAS
We've given all we can. You have until the end of the month, after that the bank has no choice but to foreclose on your property.

Heck nods, then points to the envelope.

HECK
Can I get a receipt for that?

EXT. SAVINGS AND LOAN - DAY

Perry is off the wagon, petting the horses when Heck exits.

HECK
Let's go.

PERRY
Did you get any candies?

Heck doesn't reply. Perry hops up onto the wagon, dejected.

EXT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

A giant statue of a horse looms over the entrance to the gym. Heck hitches the wagon to a post out front as Perry hops down.

HECK
Let me do all the talking in there.

PERRY
Pa said I get to talk.

HECK
No, Pa said I had to take you. I'll handle this.

Heck heads up the steps to the gym with Perry beside him.

HECK (CONT'D)
Where's the bag?

Perry looks down, sees he doesn't have it. He runs back to the wagon and slings the bag over his shoulder.

HECK (CONT'D)
Careful, we don't want that busting open.

Perry slows down to check out the horse on the awning. Heck grabs his overall straps and pulls him along.

INT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

A boxing ring sits in the middle of the gym. Around it, BOXERS of varying sizes and ages train. Some shadowbox while others work the heavy bag or do old-timey calisthenics.

Perry stops to watch, a curious expression on his face. He mimics some of their movements until Heck prods him along.

Heck points to the bleachers on the side of the ring.

HECK

There he is.

MATTHIAS (late 40s, thick, looks like he can still hold his own in a fight) and SILAS (50s, white hair) are having a heated argument ringside.

Heck and Perry make their way over.

MATTHIAS

When will I get what you owe me?

SILAS

You ask too much, Matthias!

MATTHIAS

I rendered a service to you, did I not?

SILAS

Yes but-

MATTHIAS

And I quoted the price for such services, correct?

SILAS

You did, but then you piled on additional fees!

MATTHIAS

Fees are part of doing business. Prohibition has been tough on all of us, Silas. Avoiding dry agents and lawmen takes a little greasing.

SILAS

A little? You call what you charge a little?

MATTHIAS

It's relative.

SILAS

It's robbery!

MATTHIAS

Why are you here then, Silas, if not to pay me what's owed?

SILAS
I thought I might interest you in a
wager. Five rounds, double or
nothing?

Matthias's interest is piqued.

MATTHIAS
Did you bring someone?

SILAS
I did.

Silas motions to the doors at the other end of the gym. When
they open ELIAS (20s, 6'5", built like a brick shithouse)
enters.

Everyone gawks as the monster of a man walk to the ring.
Elias steps over the ropes vs ducking under them.

Silas grins.

SILAS (CONT'D)
Allow me to present Elias Sandow.

Elias shadowboxes, showing off his punching prowess and
footwork.

Matthias watches, nodding.

SILAS (CONT'D)
I found him in Indiana. He was
fighting bears for a traveling
carnival.

Matthias looks over to Silas, smiling.

MATTHIAS
Bears you say?

Silas nods.

SILAS
Bears.

MATTHIAS
Oh, he will do nicely. I accept.

Matthias and Silas shake on it.

Matthias CLAPS.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)
GIDEON!

In another corner of the gym, GIDEON (20s, muscular like an MMA fighter) jumps rope with the speed of a modern day boxer.

He drops the rope and makes his way to the ring with a group of FIGHTERS following as his entourage.

On the way to the ring, Gideon and Heck make eye contact. Gideon smirks, then turns his attention to Elias, who is leaning against the ropes.

Heck grabs Perry and guides him to the bleachers.

Two boys in Gideon's entourage lace up his gloves. Gideon's eyes never leave Elias. There's a coldness to his gaze, as if he's looking right through him.

The REF enters the ring and motions for both fighters to join him. He checks their gloves and gives them both a pat down.

REF

Let's keep the punches up, okay
gentlemen? Nice clean fight.

Elias puts his gloves up. Gideon turns back to his corner.

DING!

The fight begins as Gideon circles the bigger, slower Elias.

Elias throws the first punch, a looping, powerful haymaker. Gideon dodges by stepping out of range, only feeling a light breeze as the glove passes his face, fluffing his hair.

Silas elbows Matthias.

SILAS

If he lands that, this fight is
over.

MATTHIAS

The key word Silas is 'IF'. Your
fighter will find Gideon is quicker
than a bear, smarter too.

Elias continues his attack, throwing powerful but slow hooks and jabs that Gideon dodges and blocks with ease.

Gideon makes no attempt to throw any punches yet as he toys with the big-man, waiting for his moment to strike.

Silas grows impatient at ringside.

SILAS

Is your boy gonna fight or just
dance?

(yelling at Gideon)

Come on and fight! What are ya,
yella?

Gideon disengages from Elias, leaning his head out through the ropes to give Silas a stink eye. Silas gulps.

REF

Back in the ring, come on now!

Gideon obeys the ref and re-engages Elias, moving with the speed and quickness of a modern day prizefighter.

After a wild hook from Elias misses, Gideon ducks inside and hammers his fists into the bigger man's ribs.

Elias ties him up. The ref separates them, but Gideon is back inside lightning quick, pounding the bigger man about his midsection and kidneys.

When Elias drops his hands to protect his ribs, Gideon goes after his jaw. A swift uppercut knocks Elias to the canvas.

Matthias smiles at a now concerned Silas.

REF (CONT'D)

One! Two! Three! Four! Five!

Elias is back up, pushing the Ref aside as he charges Gideon, furiously throwing punches that Gideon dodges with ease.

After dodging his flurry, Gideon dips back inside Elias's defenses. His boxing gloves are like scalpels, cutting down the bigger man with surgical precision.

A quick straight right hand lands with a CRUNCH, bloodying the big man's nose. Elias goes down a second time into the ropes but is back up before the Ref can count.

Unable to land any punches, Elias covers up, trying to protect himself to survive the round.

Gideon seizes his moment as he lands a solid punch to Elias's side with a loud CRACK, breaking his ribs.

Elias WHEEZES as he drops to one knee, holding his side.

Before the Ref can step in, Gideon delivers a sickening knockout punch to Elias's jaw that lands with a THUD!

Elias's head whips around violently as his body goes limp. He's out before he hits the canvas.

The Ref doesn't even bother with a count; he waves in the CORNER MAN with some smelling salts.

Gideon hops out of the ring without a second look at his fallen opponent. He heads back to his corner of the gym as his entourage unlaces his gloves.

Silas stares in disbelief at his hulk of a fighter, cut down in the ring.

MATTHIAS

So, next Tuesday, then? I believe you said double.

Silas nods, not looking away from the ring.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

If you'll excuse me, these two young men have business to discuss.

Matthias stands and walks over to Heck and Perry.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

You're Liam's boys, right?

Heck extends his hand to Matthias.

HECK

Yes sir. I'm Heck, this is my brother Perry.

Matthias shakes both boy's hands in turn.

MATTHIAS

Shame about your Mother. She was quite the woman. How's your Pa handling it?

HECK

He isn't, if I'm being honest.

MATTHIAS

Quite a shame.

(then)

On to business. Did you bring the merchandise?

HECK

Yes sir.

MATTHIAS

Good. Let's go to my office so we
can talk.

Heck follows behind Matthias as Perry lags behind, watching the ring where a punch-drunk Elias is finally up off the mat and sitting on a stool. Silas fans him with his hat.

HECK (O.S.)

Come on, Perry!

Perry quickens his step.

INT. MATTHIAS'S OFFICE - DAY

Matthias's office is ornately decorated with boxing trophies and belts won by his stable of fighters. He motions for the boys to sit across from him at his opulent marble desk.

PERRY

I like your horse out front. Big.

MATTHIAS

Man o' War, one of Lexington's finest champions. Twenty wins in twenty-one races. I saw him at Belmont back in '20, he kicked and fought his handlers all the way to the starting gate. Never seen a horse fight that hard. But when the gate fell, he was off like a shot! Won by twenty lengths. I tell my boys, if they fight with the same intensity as that horse, they'll win every time.

Heck and Perry nod in agreement.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

Alright! Let's see it.

Heck nods to Perry, who pulls two jars from his satchel. The jars are filled with a clear liquid.

HECK

It's the best moonshine you'll find
in Kentucky, I guarantee.

Matthias holds one of the jars up to the light.

MATTHIAS

So clear, not a hint of yellow.

HECK

We don't use crick or river water.
We got a natural limestone spring,
Pa always said there ain't no
better water for making shine.

Matthias unscrews the lid and pours himself a small taste. He
downs it without a shiver, closing his eyes.

MATTHIAS

The pride of Kentucky right here.
Oh, where are my manners? You boys,
have some with me.

Perry smiles and leans forward but Heck pushes him back.

HECK

Thank you, but we brought those
jars special for you.

MATTHIAS

Come then, men only drink alone
when we're sad. We're not sad, are
we, gents? Let's toast!

Matthias pours three glasses and offers them to Heck and
Perry. They hold out their glasses.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

To new beginnings!

They clink glasses. Matthias throws his back without even a
wince. Heck winces a little but keeps his cool.

Perry doubles over coughing.

Matthias laughs.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

A little green when it comes to
liquor, eh? I swear, this
prohibition is gonna lead to a
generation of skirt clinging mama's
boys. Country's going soft right
before our eyes.

Perry continues to cough under the desk.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

Does he need some water?

HECK
He'll be fine. So what type of
terms are you thinking for this
arrangement?

UNDER THE DESK

While Perry is doubled over, a SMALL WHITE MALTESE PUPPY
jumps up and licks his face.

Perry opens his eyes. The puppy sits, watching him. He tilts
his head. The pup tilts hers the same way. Perry smiles.

The puppy play bows, wagging her tail.

Matthias and Heck continue negotiations above the desk as
Perry shares a moment with the dog.

MATTHIAS (O.S.)
I see this one's all business.

Perry scratches the dog behind its ears. The dog leans into
Perry's hand, then playfully chews on his fingers.

HECK (O.S.)
I just want to make sure
everything's on the table and up
front. How about ten percent for
each shipment?

MATTHIAS (O.S.)
How big are the shipments?

The puppy rolls over, exposing her pink puppy belly. Perry
scratches it. She kicks her leg in response.

HECK (O.S.)
Thousand jars now, then a hundred
each week after.

Perry pulls his hand away and goes to sit up. The pup
whimpers and scratches at his leg. He stays down, smiling as
she play attacks his hands.

MATTHIAS (O.S.)
You've got that much already?

HECK (O.S.)
We can, and we will. If you can
move it.

MATTHIAS (O.S.)
 Bigger shipments, bigger headaches,
 requires a bigger cut. Twenty
 percent.

Perry blows in the dog's face. She rubs her paws against her snout. Adorable.

HECK (O.S.)
 We could do fifteen percent.

The puppy play fights with Perry, chewing his fingers and pouncing playfully.

MATTHIAS (O.S.)
 Seventeen five. Final offer.

Perry waits, listening to the conversation above the desk.

The dog sits, watching. The tag on the collar comes into view, revealing the pup's name: HELEN.

HECK (O.S.)
 Seventeen five, flat. And nunna
 those additional fees you charged
 that fella out there.

Perry looks up at the underside of the desk, listening to the conversation. Helen, rolls over and paws at the air playfully.

MATTHIAS (O.S.)
 Deal.

Heck and Matthias stand up. Perry rushes to join them and smacks his head on the underside of the desk.

ABOVE THE DESK

Perry comes up rubbing the back of his head as Matthias and Heck shake hands.

MATTHIAS
 You alright? You were down there a
 long time.

PERRY
 I'm fine, I was just-

MATTHIAS
 HELEN!

Perry jumps.

HECK
Who's Helen?

MATTHIAS
My dog, I wanted you to see her.
Pain in the ass but got damn if she
ain't the cutest thing ever. Helen!
HELEN! Come here, girl!

Perry sees Helen dash into the corner under a table. She's scared, shivering. No one else sees her. He says nothing.

HECK
It's okay we should -

MATTHIAS
DORA!

DORA (40s, black, maid) enters through the back of the office.

DORA
You called Mr. Tate?

MATTHIAS
Where's Helen?

DORA
I ain't seen her since this
morning, sir.

MATTHIAS
I swear to Christ Almighty Dora, if
you let that dog shit in here one
more time-

DORA
I'll find her and put her out right
away, sir.

HECK
We should be heading back. It's a
long ride and we have to tell Pa
the good news.

MATTHIAS
Next time then.

Matthias claps Heck and Perry on the back and leads them out of his office. As they're about to exit, Perry circles back.

PERRY
Forgot my bag, I'm right behind
you.

Heck and Matthias exit, leaving Perry alone. Perry heads to the desk and grabs his satchel off the side of his chair.

Helen whimpers as she crawls out from under the table towards Perry. Perry kneels, petting her, thinking.

He picks her up and opens his satchel.

Dora re-enters the office with a dog lead.

DORA
Helen, where you get off to, little girl?

Perry freezes with Helen half in his satchel.

Dora looks him over.

Perry smiles.

Helen wags her tail.

Dora gives Perry a subtle nod and leaves the office.

DORA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Helen! Here pup!

INT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Perry makes his way down the stairs as Matthias watches Heck work the speed bag with a flurry of punches.

In the distance, Gideon watches.

MATTHIAS
You box?

HECK
Used to, but the farm keeps me busy now.

MATTHIAS
I've got a big fight competition coming up, winner gets \$200. You should enter; my Gideon is a strong favorite but you could give him a run for his money.

Gideon bristles at the mention of his name, turning away.

HECK
Thanks, I'll give it a think.

Perry walks over, his eyes are wide and suspicious.

HECK (CONT'D)
You okay Perrr?

PERRY
Let's go.

Perry zooms past him to the exit. Heck shrugs and shakes Matthias's hand one more time.

HECK
First shipment pickup this Monday.

Heck walks out of the gym. Gideon watches him go.

EXT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Perry is on the wagon before Heck is even out the door, holding his satchel in his lap. Heck unhitches the horses and climbs up in the seat beside him.

HECK
You sure you're alright?

PERRY
I'm fine. Let's go.

Heck shrugs and works the reins.

HECK
Step up! Hup!

The horses take to a walk.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF LEXINGTON - DAY

Heck drives with Perry beside him. From inside Perry's satchel, Helen WHIMPERS.

HECK
What was that?

PERRY
Nothing.

HECK
It wasn't nothing, it sounded like-

Helen WHIMPERS again from inside Perry's bag. Heck looks at the bag, then to Perry.

PERRY

Nothing.

Heck grabs for the bag but Perry holds it away from him.

HECK

Perry give it!

PERRY

No, it's nothing!

Heck hooks the strap over his hand and wraps it around his fist, pulling the bag free from Perry's grasp.

As he opens the satchel, Helen looks up at him and barks playfully.

HECK

What did you do?

PERRY

Heck, I can expla-

HECK

What did you do?!?

PERRY

I had to! She was afraid of him.
And look, she loves me.

Perry takes Helen from the bag and holds her up to his face. She licks his face and chews on his nose.

Heck cracks the reins, turning the wagon around.

PERRY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

HECK

We're going back.

Perry grabs the reins and pulls them taut. The horses circle back the other direction.

PERRY

No, we can't do that!

The wagon does circles in the road while the two boys fight over the reins.

HECK

You can't just steal someone's dog,
Perry!

PERRY

Why?

HECK

You just, you can't!

PERRY

Heck you heard how he treats her!
We can't bring her back!

HECK

What do you think's gonna happen
when he finds out you took his dog?

PERRY

She needs me, Heck. Look.

Perry again holds her up against his face. He and Helen look at Heck with pleading puppy eyes.

Heck circles the wagon back around with a heavy sigh.

HECK

Fine. We'll go home and Pa will
tell you to take her back.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - EVENING

A sign post next to the bridge reads "Troy Farms, est. 1826"

Heck drives the horse team onto a rickety bridge over a steep ravine. Once across, they raise the bridge.

The ravine creates a natural barrier, preventing unwanted entry onto the farmlands of the holler below.

EXT. TROY HOLLER - EVENING

At the bottom of the holler, the Troy family homestead sits nestled between the rolling fields of corn.

A barn, stable, and a handful of cabins round out the buildings at the bottom of the hill.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - EVENING

Waiting by the barn is ANDREA (24, bonnet, farm dress). Heck smiles and waves when he sees her.

She rushes up to the wagon to greet them. Heck hops down and gives her a kiss as his fingers wrap around hers, aligning their simple pewter wedding bands.

ANDREA
How was your trip?

Heck pulls back, looking up at his brother, who cradles a sleeping puppy to his face.

HECK
I'm not sure.

ANDREA
Did it not go okay?

Perry hops down with Helen and waves her paw at Andrea.

PERRY
Andrea, meet Helen.

Andrea pets Helen, who wakes and greets her in puppy fashion.

HECK
Perry stole a dog.

PERRY
I didn't steal her, I freed her.
From oppression!

HECK
Where's Pa?

ANDREA
In the house.

Heck grabs the pup from Perry's hands and heads to the house.

PERRY
Careful! She's a delicate flower.

INT. TROY FARMHOUSE DEN - EVENING

Heck stands in the den, looking down as his father LIAM (60s, lean, white hair) lays on his back as Helen crawls over his face, licking and nibbling at him as he laughs.

LIAM
She's so little!

Perry lies beside him on the floor, giggling along. Liam sits up and takes a swig from his ever present stoneware moonshine jug marked with three Xes.

Helen zooms around the room as fast as her tiny legs will carry her.

LIAM (CONT'D)
He-he! Look at her go! Here girl,
you wanna sip?

He offers his jug to Helen, who sneezes and barks after getting a whiff of the spirits.

PERRY
Ain't she precious, Pa? Did I do
good?

LIAM
You sure did, I'm happy for ya boy!

Liam mimics a play bow posture as Helen does the same. She barks at him, so sweetly adorable.

Heck has stood quietly for as long as he can muster. He picks Helen up, ending the fun.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Awww, why'd you do that?

HECK
We have to bring her back!

LIAM
Nonsense! I say she stays.

PERRY
Really Pa? You mean it?

LIAM
Course! We could use some cheerin'
up round here. Errbody so mokey.

HECK
Pa, when Matthias finds out the
deal will be off. We won't be able
to pay back the bank and we'll lose
the farm!

LIAM
We'll make another deal.

HECK
There is no other deal!

LIAM
Not with that attitude! Look, son-

Liam puts his arm around Heck as if he's about to lay down some fatherly advice. He takes a long pull from his jug before speaking.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Have you let her nibble on your ears yet?

Heck stares dumbfounded at his father.

LIAM (CONT'D)
It tickles!

Liam giggles, then takes Helen from Heck's arms and plops her down on the floor between him and Perry. They wrestle with her as Heck looks on incredulously.

HECK
Are you forgetting who his brother is?

LIAM
You mean Augie? Feh!
(to Perry)
Blow on her face again, son.

Perry blows in Helen's face. She paws at the air and rubs her legs on her snout. Liam howls with laughter.

EXT. LEXINGTON BUREAU OF PROHIBITION - ESTABLISHING

At a five story building downtown, all of the windows are dark except one on the top floor. The sign out front reads "Bureau of Prohibition, Lexington Office"

INT. AUGIE'S OFFICE - EVENING

AUGIE (50s, male, 1920s G-man) is behind his desk with his feet kicked up on the corner as Matthias paces in front of him.

AUGIE
They took your what?

MATTHIAS
They took my dog! Helen!

AUGIE
Why would they do such a thing?

MATTHIAS

Had to be the younger one, ain't
nothing but broken toys in that
attic of his.

Matthias taps his temple.

AUGIE

What do you want me to do about it?

MATTHIAS

Go out there and get her back!

Augie pulls out his badge and slides it across the desk
towards Matthias.

AUGIE

Does that say dogcatcher? I got no
jurisdiction.

Matthias slams a jar of moonshine on Augie's desk.

MATTHIAS

How's this for jurisdiction?

Augie holds the jar up to the lamp on his desk.

AUGIE

You want me to bust them? How do
you suppose I go about that without
exposing you and me in the process?

MATTHIAS

Are you saying we should just let
them get away with it? What the
hell am I paying you for, Augie?

Augie bristles at the mention of payment. He gets up and
checks that the hall is empty before shutting the door.

AUGIE

Let's get this straight. This is MY
show, MY business. You just run it
for me. I use my position here to
protect my business interests, and
my business interests ain't got
nothing to do with your God, DAMN,
DOG!

Augie sits back, picking up the jar. He unscrews the lid and
takes a swig, wincing at the bite.

AUGIE (CONT'D)

Bless my soul that's good shine.

MATTHIAS

That's what they're makin' down in
that holler.

AUGIE

That right?

MATTHIAS

Ayup. Says they have a natural
limestone spring.

AUGIE

How much they got?

MATTHIAS

Older boy says they got a thousand
jars ready to ship.

AUGIE

Thousand jars?

Matthias nods.

MATTHIAS

Ayup. That's what he says.

Augie takes another sip, staring contemplatively at the jar.

AUGIE

Tell me more about this dog a
yours.

INT. BARN - MORNING

Dust particles sparkle in the sunlight peeking through the
gaps in the old barn. Everything is quiet and still, except
for a soft THUDDING accompanied by sharp exhales of breath.

Further back, the thudding and breathing gets louder,
revealing Heck working over a heavy bag.

The bag swings on the chain as Heck takes out his
frustrations on the bag. He pummels it over and over again,
grunting as his punches grow in force.

After an intense flurry of punches, Heck leans onto the bag,
holding it as he catches his breath.

ANDREA (O.S.)

I thought I'd find you here.

Heck looks up to see wife standing at the door of the barn.

He smiles, wiping the sweat from his forehead as he sits on a bench near the heavy bag.

HECK
Couldn't sleep, and I didn't want
to wake you.

ANDREA
Everything okay, Heck?

Heck shakes his head.

HECK
This business with that dog, I
don't think they realize what
they've done.

ANDREA
Take it back, tell him it was a
misunderstanding. Your brother
ain't the sharpest tine on the
hayfork, I'm sure they'll
understand.

HECK
Pa already said he can keep it.

ANDREA
Your Pa don't have to be the final
word on everything, Heck. He's not
even running things anymore. You
are.

HECK
It's not that easy, Andrea.

ANDREA
It is that easy, you just gotta
stand up to your Pa and tell him
so.

HECK
He's still my Pa, Andrea. I can't
go against him, it ain't right.

Heck goes back to punching the bag, deflecting from the conversation.

HECK (CONT'D)
Besides, Pa is just as infatuated
with that dog as Perry is.

ANDREA

She is a cute little thing. Might be good if it'll get him away from that bottle.

HECK

So you're taking their side on the dog too, then?

Andrea pushes the bag aside and steps in front of her husband.

ANDREA

Hector Allen Troy, you know better than to ask me that question!

Now it's Heck's turn to back down. He shakes his head and sighs.

HECK

I'm sorry, it's just... this is gonna get messy before it ends. I know it.

Andrea walks up to her husband and goes to wrap her arms around him.

HECK (CONT'D)

I'm all sweaty.

Andrea gives a mischievous smile.

ANDREA

I don't mind sweaty. But listen to me please. This business you're getting into, the only way we're gonna make it is if we look out for each other. Okay?

Heck nods, smiling as he looks down into Andrea's eyes. He moves to kiss her when-

EZRA (O.S.)

You in here, boss?

Heck looks up to see EZRA (40s, black, overalls and straw hat) at the door of the barn.

HECK

Back here, Ezra.

Ezra makes his way back, removing his hat as he steps inside.

EZRA
Pardon my intrusion, bossman, Mrs.
Andrea, but there's a lawman up top
of the holler, wantin' to speak to
someone.

Heck sighs, shaking his head.

HECK
I'll be right up.

Ezra leaves. Heck looks down at his wife.

HECK (CONT'D)
That was quick.

Heck hugs her close then heads out.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - MORNING

Heck heads up the hill. On his way up, he sees his Pa standing in front of the farmhouse with his arms spread, eyes closed, and bare-ass naked. His XXX jug sits beside him.

HECK
Mornin' Pa.

LIAM
Mornin' Heck!

HECK
Whatcha doin' there?

LIAM
Air bath, good for the circulation!

HECK
Okay.
(then)
Ezra says the Feds here, you might
wanna get dressed.

LIAM
Bah!

Liam heads to the farmhouse as Heck continues up the hill.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - MORNING

Matthias and Augie appear over the crest of the hill, standing on the other side of the ravine.

Behind them is a patrol wagon with three PROHIBITION AGENTS, all holding Tommy Guns.

Heck nods to the agents then turns his attention to Augie and Matthias.

HECK
Mornin' Augie.

AUGIE
Heck.

A silent beat as they acknowledge the distance between them.

The gap in the ravine is over twenty feet wide with a steep drop on both sides.

Rocks and broken trees line the bottom of the ravine, an unpleasant landing for anyone who tries to cross the gap and fails.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
How about you lower your bridge
there so we can talk, Christian to
Christian.

HECK
Is that what this is? A neighborly
Christian visit?

AUGIE
It can be.

Augie smiles.

Heck eyes the agents holding their Tommy Guns.

HECK
We can talk like this just fine.

MATTHIAS
Where's my dog?

HECK
I'm sorry?

MATTHIAS
My dog you little shit, where is
it?

Augie holds his hand up to his brother to settle him down.

AUGIE

You'll have to forgive Matthias.
His dog went missing yesterday,
he's quite upset.

HECK

That does sound troublesome.

AUGIE

You haven't seen her by chance,
have you?

HECK

What she look like?

Matthias fumes.

MATTHIAS

What she look like? What she look
like? Our deal is off! You hear me?
Off! Lower that goddamn bridge
right now you little-

Augie puts his hand on Matthias's shoulder and nods to one of
the Prohibition Agents.

AUGIE

Matthias, take a walk.

The agent escorts Matthias away.

AUGIE (CONT'D)

Little white dog about yay big
(hands about a foot apart)
Answers to Helen.

Heck looks back down the hill, then turns back to Augie,
shaking his head.

HECK

Only dog I know is Pa's old
bloodhound Rex, and he died a few
years back. Little dog like that's
got no business on a farm.

AUGIE

That so?

HECK

'Fraid it is.

Tense beat.

AUGIE

Are you sure I can't come over and
have a look around? Make sure she
didn't stow away in your wagon?

Augie smiles. His smile speaks volumes more than his words.

HECK

I wouldn't be a self-respected
Kentuckian iffin' I let a federal
onto my property without proper
cause or papers. You understand
that, don't you Augie?

Augie nods as he puts on his hat.

AUGIE

Yes I do. As a duly sworn
Prohibition Agent and Kentuckian
myself, I respect your right
against unwarranted search of your
private property. Just remember,
when the time comes to reap what's
been sewn, I did ask nicely.

Heck nods, knowingly.

HECK

Yeah, I know.

Augie tips his hat and waves.

AUGIE

Tell your Pa I said howdy. And do
give him my condolences about your
Ma.

Heck nods.

Matthias and Augie hop into the front of the patrol wagon.
The agents pile into the back and pull the door closed.

Heck watches them drive away.

HECK

(to himself)

That went well.

Heck jogs back down the hill.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - MORNING

The FIELDHANDS are gathered in front of the barn with Ezra as Heck returns.

EZRA
What's the word, boss?

HECK
Gonna need everybody up at the bridge today.

EZRA
The bridge? What for?

HECK
We need to build a wall.

EZRA
Wall, sir?

HECK
Take whatever wood we can spare from the stables, chop down some trees if we need it. But we need to wall off our side of the ravine.

EZRA
Why we building up a wall?

HECK
I think we're goin' to war.

Ezra turns to his workers.

EZRA
You heard the bossman, let's get after it!

The workers file out.

HECK
Where's Pa at?

EZRA
Him and Perry went out to the still. You should've seen them carrying on, they got this little white pup with them, it's the most precious little thing, I swear!

Beat.

HECK

The bridge stays up, no matter who asks. Make sure everyone knows.

EZRA

Yes sir, boss.

HECK

Thanks, Ezra.

Ezra heads off to join the workers. Heck heads back towards the hills behind the barn.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

A wooden door-frame sets in a rocky outcrop in the side of a hill. Heck pulls the door open and steps inside.

INT. MOONSHINE CAVE - DAY

Oil lanterns light a wooden staircase into an underground cave. Stalagmites and stalactites dot the cave floor and ceiling. It's dim, but it's enough light to work.

An underground stream runs through the middle of the cavern. Next to the stream sits a fifty gallon copper still and two wooden barrels (i.e. mash barrels).

Crates filled with moonshine jars stack floor to ceiling along the back wall.

Perry holds Helen as he lifts the lid covering one of the barrels. The surface bubbles with gas from fermentation.

PERRY

This is called mash, Helen.

Perry holds her over the barrel. She dog paddles and whines.

HECK

She doesn't like that, Perry.

PERRY

I wasn't gonna drop her. Here, girl, give it a smell.

He holds her close to sniff. She sneezes and pulls her snout away when a bubble pops near her face.

HECK

Where's Pa?

LIAM (O.S.)
Over here!

Heck walks around the still. Liam (now dressed) pulls a small sample of spirits from the collector. He gives them a taste, nodding approvingly.

HECK
I just had a run in with Augie and
Matthias at the top of the holler,
asking about that dog.

Perry holds Helen close on the words "that dog".

LIAM
How was Augie?

HECK
He said to say hi.

LIAM
Aw, that's nice. Anything else?

HECK
They had three Revenuers with them.
Oh, and our distribution deal with
Matthias is off, as if there were
any question.

LIAM
Well, that is a shame.

Liam takes logs from the woodpile and stacks them under the still. Heck walks over and takes one of the logs from his father's hands.

HECK
What are you doing?

LIAM
Makin' shine!

HECK
Didn't you hear me? The deal is
off! Anything we send over the
bridge is gonna get tossed and
searched. We can't move anything!

Liam contemplates for a beat, takes another sip, then shrugs.

LIAM
You'll figure it out.

He smiles at Heck, then returns to arranging logs.

Heck turns his focus to Perry, who is playing tug of war with Helen over a stick.

HECK
You've ruined everything I've
worked for just to keep that dog.

Heck eyes Perry, who avoids eye contact.

HECK (CONT'D)
Nothing to say for yourself?

Perry still doesn't look up.

HECK (CONT'D)
Fine, stay here and do nothing
while I fix the mess you've
created. As usual.

Heck storms off.

Perry watches him leave, his face shows the sting of his brother's words.

Helen playfully bites at the stick in his hand. When Perry looks down at her, she obediently sits and wags her tail.

PERRY
Pa, I got an idea!

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - DAY

Farmhands load wooden boards into the back of a wagon. Once full, a Worker drives the wagon the hill toward the bridge.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - DAY

The brush has been cleared around the lip of the ravine as Workers set posts for the new wall.

Heck and Ezra assist to hold the heavy boards against the posts as the Workers hammer them into place.

On the other side of the ravine, two Prohibition Agents sweat buckets in their hot wool suits as they lean against their patrol wagon.

Heck waves to them. They do not wave back.

HECK
How long they been there?

EZRA
Showed up an hour ago. They just
watchin' us work.

HECK
Few of 'em pass out from the heat
maybe Augie will rethink stationing
them out here.

EZRA
Not much they can do anyways if
they can't get across.

HECK
They're just here to send the
message.

LIAM (O.S.)
(yelling)
Heck! Anybody seen Heck?

Heck turns around to see his father at the bottom of the
hill. He cups his hands to his mouth to yell his reply.

HECK
Up here, Pa!

Heck waves. Liam waves back.

LIAM
Come down! Perry got somethin' ta
show ya!

HECK
(to Ezra)
This oughta be good. Y'all can
knock off once you finish this
side, doesn't look like they
brought anything to bridge the gap.

EZRA
Sure thing, bossman.

INT. TROY FARMHOUSE DEN - DAY

Heck enters and finds Perry and their father waiting. Helen
looks up, wagging her tail.

HECK
What's so important?

Liam nods to Perry.

PERRY

I know taking Helen has put us in a bind, and I wanted to do something to help so-

HECK

You're giving her back?

Perry gives his brother an indignant look.

PERRY

No, of course not. But, you know, since she's so cute and all, it gave me an idea.

Perry holds out a piece of paper.

On the paper is a drawing of Helen, her head tilted and looking adorable. Above the drawing in stylized lettering is the phrase LITTLE WHITE DOG.

HECK

What is this?

PERRY

That's our brand. Little White Dog.

LIAM

Little White Dog!

HECK

But what's it for?

PERRY

We're putting it on the jars.

LIAM

Little White Dog!

HECK

This? You want to put this, on all of our jars, of illegal moonshine?

Perry smiles and nods. Heck turns to his father, who also smiles and nods.

PERRY

That way people can ask for it by name. Little White Dog!

LIAM

Little White Dog!

PERRY
It's a good idea, right?

HECK
It's a terrible idea.

PERRY
Why? Pa said-

HECK
We're bootlegging! We're not
building a brand. Why would you
think putting that stolen dog on
the label is a good idea?

PERRY
I mean, she's cute! Who can resist
this face?

Perry holds Helen up to Heck's face. She wags her tail and
tilts her head to him.

HECK
Whatever. Label all of them up, I
don't care. Knock yourself out.

PERRY
You mean it?

HECK
Why not? At this point it's all
gonna stay in the cave.

An idea pops in Heck's brain. His eyes light up.

HECK (CONT'D)
Stay in the cave.

PERRY
What?

Heck ignores him and goes to the shelf, pulling down a map
and unrolling it on the desk.

HECK
Pa, where are the other exit points
to that cave system?

Liam stands next to his son and circles points on the map.

Perry leans over, looking at the map, trying to join in but
is oblivious.

PERRY
I'll get started with the labels.

Perry waits for an acknowledgment from Heck. When he doesn't get one, he rubs noses with Helen.

PERRY (CONT'D)
We'll get to labeling. Yes we will.
Yes we will!

Heck looks over the points marked on the map. He taps his finger on one in particular, smiling.

HECK
Apollo.

EXT. TROY HOLLER - DAY

The workers make their way down from wall construction duty. Heck approaches Ezra as he brings up the rear, wiping the back of his neck with his handkerchief.

EZRA
We callin' it for today boss. Got the one side done, we'll start down the rest of the way in the morning.

HECK
Ezra, what do you say about us going to see your cousin tomorrow?

EZRA
How we gettin' out with them federals blockin' the road?

HECK
We're going out the back.

INT. HAY LOFT - NIGHT

Heck stands at the back of the hayloft of the barn, staring out into the night. He strikes a match and lights a signal lantern on a tripod beside him.

CLICK-CLICK, CLICK-CLICK-CLICK, CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK

The signal lantern flashes as Heck types out his message.

When he finishes, he stares out into the darkness across the valley. The night sky is brilliant this far out in the country. All the stars of the Milky Way are visible.

Across the valley, a light appears on the horizon. It flashes out a response.

Heck smiles.

EXT. CAVE EXIT - DAY

A large stone on a grassy hillside.

A low murmur of voices grows louder.

The rock wobbles side to side as fingertips appear on the edge, wiggling as they grab hold and work the stone loose.

With a mighty heave the stone rolls away.

Heck emerges first from the cave. He reaches back inside to help Ezra, only to freeze at the sound of a SHOTGUN RACKING.

APOLLO (O.S.)
Turn around, slowly now.

Heck turns to see APOLLO (30s, black, overalls and a straw hat) flanked by two LARGER BLACK MEN dressed the same but with pump action shotguns at the ready.

Apollo looks Heck over, shaking his head.

APOLLO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Mmm, mmm, mmm, ain't this some
fertile soil. White folk poppin'
out of the ground like daisies!

A quiet pause as Heck and Apollo take inventory of the situation. It's broken by Ezra's flailing hand from the darkness of the cave exit.

EZRA (O.S.)
Got dammit, I'm stuck in this hole,
get me outta here!

Heck looks to Apollo, who nods, giving Heck the go ahead.

EZRA (CONT'D)
I don't know how I let you talk me
into going underground like that.
Dark as hell, man.
(sees Apollo)
Apollo! It's your cousin, Ezra!
This how you treat family?

Apollo taps one of his men on the shoulder to "be cool". They lower their guns.

APOLLO

Apologies for the unchristian
welcome, cousin Ezra, but when
arriving at a clandestine
assemblage in the middle of
nowhere, one can't be too careful.

HECK

A man's gotta right to protect his
and his own. That's why I wanted to
meet.

Heck and Apollo shake hands.

APOLLO

What say we head over to my temple
and talk business? All this heat,
Apollo could use a drink.

Heck nods. He and Ezra fall in with Apollo and his crew as
they walk towards a nearby truck.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

The faint sound of jazz music grows louder as Apollo's truck
pulls up in front of a tobacco barn out in the hills.

As they step down from the vehicle, Apollo holds out his
hands as he gestures to the building.

APOLLO

Behold! The Temple of Apollo!

INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

Apollo leads Heck and Ezra inside. A bar runs along one side
of the barn with a BARTENDER slinging drinks.

The end of the barn has been converted into a STAGE where a
BAND plays Dixieland Jazz.

About a dozen PATRONS, all black, sit at tables around the
bar. They eye Heck, the only non-black person in the barn.

APOLLO

We're far enough out in the hills
the federals don't pay us no mind.
Long as we stay out of their way,
they leave us be.

Apollo leads Ezra and Heck to the booth next to the bar.

APOLLO (CONT'D)
Gentlemen, what'll you have?

EZRA
Just water for me.

HECK
Water's fine.

Apollo motions to his bartender, who approaches.

APOLLO
I'll have my regular. Water for these two.

The bartender looks at Heck and Ezra, shakes his head, then leaves.

APOLLO (CONT'D)
So about this business opportunity of yours, does it have anything to do with them Revenuers situated on your doorstep?

HECK
Our previous distributor ended the business arrangement abruptly, and on hostile terms.

APOLLO
Word on the street is you stole his dog. Who steals a dog?

HECK
It's a long story. But I have product to move and you seem like the type who can move it without attracting attention.

APOLLO
Business with you might just attract the wrong type of attention Apollo's way.

HECK
I am willing to compensate you significantly for your services.

The bartender returns with Apollo's drink and two glasses of water.

APOLLO
How much you talking about?

HECK
A thousand jars.

Apollo almost spits out his drink.

APOLLO
Did you say a thousand?

Heck nods.

HECK
And more comin' if you can move it.

APOLLO
Oh, Apollo can move it. Question
is, how you gonna get it to me?

HECK
Through the caves. You and your
associates can pick it up where we
met this morning and distribute to
the juke joints and speakeasies in
the area.

Apollo fans himself with his hat.

APOLLO
With all this heat on your family,
it's getting hot just talking with
you. What's in it for Apollo?

HECK
How's thirty percent of the take
sound?

Apollo squints at the lowball offer. He leans forward.

APOLLO
Apollo taking all the risk while
you sit all cozy down in your
holler? Nah son. Thirty won't cut
it. I'm gon' need half.

HECK
Half?

APOLLO
Half.

HECK
But what if we di-

Apollo puts his finger to Heck's lip.

APOLLO
Shhhh. Half. Otherwise you can be
on your way.

Apollo sits back and sips his drink, nonchalantly.

EZRA
Half? You done lost your mind
cousin Apollo, disrespectin' Mr.
Heck when he comes here earnest.
(to Heck)
I'm sorry Mr. Heck. My cousin
forgets hisself sometimes. We best
be goin'.

Ezra stands to leave, but Heck remains in his seat as he
contemplates the offer.

Heck extends his hand to Apollo.

HECK
I'm over a barrel with the bank. If
you don't move it, I can't sell it.

They shake.

APOLLO
Fifty-fifty, we partners in this
now. This calls for celebration!
Did you bring any with you? Apollo
needs a taste.

Heck pulls a jar from under the table. Apollo opens it,
swirls it under his nose, and then takes a drink.

He smacks his hand against the table and LAUGHS.

APOLLO (CONT'D)
Oh... this is the stuff right here.
(leaning out of the booth)
'ey! Charlie! Charlie! Come get a
sniff of what this white boy been
cooking.

One of Apollo's bodyguards (CHARLIE) steps over to the booth.
He knocks back the entire jar, emptying it in four gulps.

Heck and Ezra look on, impressed by the feat.

Charlie sets the jar back on the table and gives Heck an
approving nod before returning to his post.

APOLLO (CONT'D)

Oh, Charlie's gonna like you. When can I expect the first delivery?

HECK

It'll all be down behind that rock where we met come Monday morning.

APOLLO

We gonna make a lot of money together, Heck. A lot of money.

HECK

Might even say a 'Heck' of a lot of money.

Heck chuckles at his attempt of a joke. It doesn't land with Apollo.

APOLLO

What?

HECK

A heck of a lot, because, you know, because my name is-
(giving up)
never mind, just forget it.

INT. MOONSHINE CAVE - NIGHT

WORKERS carry crates of jars to a table where their WIVES glue on labels. They sing the African-American spiritual "O Rocks Don't Fall On Me" while they work.

Perry watches with Helen, who barks excitedly and wags her tail.

Empty crates are passed down to the end of the table and refilled with the newly labeled jars. When full, a worker carries the crate to a small wagon in the back of the cavern.

INT. DEEPER IN THE CAVE - NIGHT

Lanterns hang along the walls as a Worker trudges through the darkness, singing as he pulls a wagon loaded up with moonshine crates.

When the cave narrows to the point where it can no longer proceed, another worker picks up the lyrics as he reaches through a narrow pinch point.

The crates are passed fire brigade style through the narrow point in the cavern and stacked beside the exit point.

EXT. CAVE EXIT - MORNING

Apollo approaches the cave exit with his guards and WORKERS of his own. They roll the stone away, revealing the cache of moonshine behind it.

Apollo smiles, turning back to his workers with a spin of his finger in the air.

The spiritual song continues as Apollo's workers pick up the lyrics as they load up his cart.

EXT. LEXINGTON BACK ALLEY - MORNING

One of APOLLO'S WORKERS in overalls approaches a door in the alleyway. He knocks, using a particular knocking rhythm.

A PHARMACIST (40s, white, apron, glasses) answers, cautiously looking around to ensure the coast is clear.

The Worker holds up a crate with dried tobacco leaves on top.

The Pharmacist flips up one of the leaves, seeing the bottles underneath. He nods and motions him inside.

When he returns, the pharmacist hands over a yellowed envelope before closing the door.

The Worker opens it, thumbing over the stack of bills inside.

He nods approvingly and stuffs it in his overalls.

EXT. BACK OF SPEAKEASY - MORNING

Two WORKERS approach the back entrance of a Lexington speakeasy. One pushes a cart while the other knocks on the door.

The OWNER opens, peeks outside, then ushers the workers in with their crates. The door closes.

When the door opens, the Workers emerge with a roll of money and a handshake from the owner.

INT. JUKE JOINT IN THE HILLS - MORNING

An old tobacco barn converted into a drinking establishment.

Another of APOLLO'S WORKERS sets a crate on the bar near the BARTENDER.

The bartender pulls a jar, opens it and takes a swig. He stomps on the floor in response, letting out a WHOOP.

They shake hands and exchange money.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

The Pharmacist from before stands behind his counter. The BELL RINGS as a PATRON (male, white, 30s, suit and hat), enters.

PHARMACIST

Good day sir, how may I help you?

The patron looks side to side before speaking.

PATRON

I'm looking for a little white dog,
have you seen one?

The patron smiles knowingly.

The pharmacist watches a UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICER pass the window of his shop. He waits until he's past the window, then lifts the hinged section of the counter.

PHARMACIST

Follow me.

The patron steps behind the bar and follows the pharmacist to a back room. He opens the door, revealing FOUR MEN playing poker as a BARTENDER serves them drinks.

The patron hands money to the pharmacist and enters the game.

EXT. CAVE EXIT - EVENING

Apollo fans a thick wad of money to Heck, then hands it over. Heck counts out a good portion of the money and hands it back to Apollo.

Apollo nods approvingly.

APOLLO

We keep this up Apollo may have
enough money to become respectable.

HECK

Next delivery on Monday?

APOLLO
We'll be waiting.

HECK
Oh, can you leave a horse here
tomorrow morning? I have to make a
trip into town.

Apollo nods. The two men shake hands before Heck disappears
back down into the cave.

INT. HECK'S CABIN - EVENING

Andrea is at the sink, washing dishes. The door opens and
Heck enters the house.

ANDREA
That you, hon?

Heck doesn't answer. He comes up behind her and wraps his
arms around her and kisses her on the neck.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
(playful)
Careful, my husband will be home
soon.

HECK
Your husband has been very busy.

ANDREA
Oh? Has he now?

Andrea closes her eyes as his kisses move up her neck. She
dries her hands on her apron before reaching back to run her
fingers through his hair.

HECK
Indeed. Wheelin' and dealin'.

ANDREA
Mmmm, my husband is quite the
business man.

HECK
Things keep on like this we should
have the farm paid up by the end of
the month.

ANDREA
Just like you said.

Heck kisses down her shoulder. Andrea leans into him, a soft moan escapes her lips as she runs her hand through his hair.

HECK

I'm heading into town tomorrow, you need me to pick anything up?

Andrea's eyes open, jolted out of the moment.

ANDREA

Into town? Is it safe?

Oblivious of Andrea's mood shift, Heck continues his kisses.

HECK

I have to make a loan payment.

Andrea spins around, ending the embrace.

ANDREA

Can't someone else go?

HECK

Like who? Perry?

ANDREA

Yeah, or Ezra. Let someone else risk their neck for once.

Heck shakes his head, unsure.

HECK

I can't put that on them.

ANDREA

Heck, you can't take everything upon yourself for your Pa-

HECK

For the family, Andrea.

ANDREA

What about our family, Heck? It's high time we start doing what's best for the two of us.

HECK

This is what's best for us. The farm is all we have.

ANDREA

I don't wanna lose you for doing something foolish. I need you, Heck.

HECK
I'm going out the back way,
shouldn't run into any issues.

ANDREA
You better not.

Heck embraces Andrea, but her worried look doesn't go away.

EXT. SAVINGS AND LOAN - DAY

Rather than his usual farm clothes, Heck is dressed in a suit and hat in an attempt to blend in as he rides into town.

He ties the horse up out front of the bank and gives a few cautious glances about before ducking inside the bank.

INT. BANK MANAGER OFFICE - DAY

Heck drops a thicker envelope on the desk. The Bank Manager picks it up and nods approvingly.

WARREN DOUGLAS
This is more like it. A few more
like this and your family will be
back on track.

HECK
Thank you.

WARREN DOUGLAS
I suppose you'll be wanting another
receipt.

HECK
Of course.

EXT. SAVINGS AND LOAN - DAY

Heck exits the bank and gets back on his horse. He unknowingly passes alongside Gideon, who looks up at the horse and rider as they go by.

Gideon watches with a look of recognition on his face, then looks back at the bank.

INT. AUGIE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Augie whittles a piece of wood with his feet kicked up on his desk as Matthias enters. He's fuming as he slams an empty jar of Little White Dog on Augie's desk.

MATTHIAS

Look at this! Just, look at this!

AUGIE

Where'd you find that?

MATTHIAS

In the locker room at the gym.

Augie leans in to read the label.

AUGIE

Little White Dog. That's cute.

MATTHIAS

Those bastards are mocking me!

AUGIE

You think those Troy brothers are behind this?

MATTHIAS

Who else?

(pointing)

That's my dog! That's Helen!

Augie tilts his head, curious, studying the drawing.

AUGIE

Them boys are dug in like a tick in that holler. Ain't no one crossed that bridge, my men would've seen 'em.

MATTHIAS

They're getting it past you somehow. They're making a mockery of the both of us!

Augie thinks for a beat.

AUGIE

Let's figure out where it's coming from then.

INT. MATTHIAS'S OFFICE - DAY

Matthias sits behind his desk. There's a knock at the door.

NICHOLAS (19, gym clothes) opens the door.

NICHOLAS
You wanted to see me?

MATTHIAS
Nicholas, come in, sit.

Nicholas steps into the office and sits in front of Matthias.

NICHOLAS
What's this about, sir?

Augie enters the office from the rear. Nicholas looks up at him, worried, then turns his attention back to Matthias.

MATTHIAS
I need you to tell me where you got this.

Matthias places the Little White Dog jar on the desk.

Nicholas bolts from the chair, only to find Gideon blocking his path to the door.

AUGIE
Son, you're not in trouble yet. But we're gonna need a name.

Nicholas eyes Augie, then Gideon.

NICHOLAS
I can't, I promised.

MATTHIAS
Gideon, did you say something about needing a new sparring partner?

Gideon cracks his knuckles as the color drains from Nicholas's face.

NICHOLAS
My brother! He gets it from a pharmacist on 3rd Street. Tell him you're looking for a little white dog. There's a room in the back.

Augie and Matthias share a look, then nod approvingly.

EXT. FRONT OF PHARMACY - DAY

PEOPLE go about their daily business, minding their own when-
CRASH!

The Pharmacist flies through the plate glass window and
tumbles on the sidewalk.

He crawls around, searching for his glasses. He sees them
near the steps. As he reaches for them-

CRACK!

A boot steps down, crushing them as the wearer grinds his
heel. The pharmacist looks up and sees Gideon.

Gideon lifts him off the ground and throws him back through
the hole in the window.

INT. PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

Augie searches behind the counter, tossing the place. He
pulls out a crate of Little White Dog moonshine.

AUGIE

Well, well. Lookie here.

The pharmacist crawls to the wall, cowering as Matthias
kneels beside him.

MATTHIAS

I'm looking for a little white dog,
have you seen one?

The pharmacist looks from Matthias to Gideon.

EXT. FRONT OF PHARMACY - DAY

Matthias and Augie leave the pharmacy with Gideon a few steps
behind. As they leave, Prohibition Agents storm the shop.

AUGIE

Apollo Douglas. He runs a juke
joint out in the sticks. Must be
some back way out of the holler we
don't know about.

MATTHIAS

I want to hurt them for this Augie.
How dare they!

AUGIE
Apollo's place is out of my
jurisdiction, so I can't move on
it, not officially at least.

MATTHIAS
But unofficially?

Augie rubs the back of his neck, thinking.

AUGIE
Seems like the sort of thing a
group of concerned Christian men
could handle, removing this den of
sin and debauchery.

MATTHIAS
A group of concerned Christian men?

AUGIE
A mob, even. You know where we
could find one?

Matthias looks to Gideon and smiles.

MATTHIAS
I know just the place.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - NIGHT

Lights emanate through the cracks of the old barn, along with
the sounds of Jazz music, voices, and laughter.

Unbeknownst to the patrons inside, a mob of hooded men
(burlap sacks, not Klan hoods) assembles with torches, clubs,
and Tommy Guns outside the establishment.

A PATRON exits the barn. His smile quickly dissipates as he
sees the mob gathered.

A hooded Gideon steps forward holding a Tommy Gun.

The patron dives to the ground as he opens fire, peppering
the building with bullets.

INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - NIGHT

Apollo sits in his booth with his drink and a WOMAN as
GUNFIRE tears through the building. He turns his table on its
side and ducks behind it.

The band dive from the stage onto the bar floor with the other patrons.

Bottles and glasses shatter on the bar. Lights explode.

The bullet storm stops. Everything is quiet.

An eerie calm overtakes the once jubilant establishment, only broken by the ragged breathing of the scared patrons.

Apollo sits up behind his table, yelling to the attackers.

APOLLO

Hey friend! Surely we can come to
some agreement here, end these
hostilities before anyone get hurt.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - NIGHT

Gideon steps in front of the assembled mob, removing his hood.

GIDEON

Words cannot undo what destiny has
ordained. Your fate is upon you.

INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - NIGHT

Apollo peeks over the top of his table.

APOLLO

(quietly)
The hell that supposed to mean?
(yelling)
Hey! Hey! What's all that about-

Apollo scrambles down behind his table as GUNFIRE again rips through the building, sending everyone back to the floor.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - NIGHT

Gideon stops firing as other mob members step forward to light fire bottles. They surround the front of the building, tossing them at the dried wooden structure.

The old barn takes the flame quickly - WOOSH!

INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - NIGHT

The crackling of the wood announces the fire to the people inside. The patrons scream in fear.

APOLLO
Fire! Fire!

Flames crawl up the roof of the barn, lighting up the inside. They have no choice but to flee.

Apollo runs to the bar, still hunkered down as he pries open a latch on the wall and slides open the old barn door with the help of the bartender.

The influx of oxygen feeds the fire. Flames spread down the walls as ash and flaming pieces of wood fall to the floor.

Apollo motions everyone to the exit.

APOLLO (CONT'D)
Outside! Run for it, get to the
hills! Go on, git!

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - NIGHT

At first the mob doesn't notice the trickle of people through the side exit. Their focus is on the front door.

Then a MOB MEMBER points to the side of the building.

MOB MEMBER
Over here! They're headed to the
hills!

The mob is on the escapees quickly. Women are wrestled to the ground. Men are beaten down with clubs and kicked.

Apollo, the last to exit, walks out slowly, taken aback by the display of brutality. A tear slides down his cheek.

APOLLO
We men are wretched things.

Apollo goes down hard as Gideon THUMPS him from behind with the butt of his Tommy Gun.

Gideon stands over the fallen Apollo. Behind him, the roof of the barn CRASHES down as flames consume the building.

INT. MOONSHINE CAVE - MORNING

Heck tends to the still while Perry plays on the floor with Helen. Liam is also on the floor, snoring as he cradles his jug.

A WORKER approaches as Heck adjusts settings on the still.

WORKER
Shipment still in the hole, boss.

HECK
All of it?

WORKER
Just how we stacked it. Ain't been touched.

Heck furrows his brow. Perry snatches up Helen and stands beside his brother. Liam snores and scratches his ass.

PERRY
What's going on?

Ezra pokes his head through the cave entrance.

EZRA
Bossman, something goin' on up at the bridge, you should come take a look.

Heck shares a look with Perry then heads up. Perry follows, then turns to hand Helen to the worker.

PERRY
Watch her for me, please?

WORKER
Yes sir, Mr. Perry.

The worker scratches Helen behind the ear as she licks his face.

WORKER (CONT'D)
Awww, ain't you just a cutest little thing.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - MORNING

A horn HONKS from the other side of the bridge as Heck, Ezra and Perry climb the hill. Over the newly constructed rampart they see Augie flanked by two patrol wagons.

Augie waves.

AUGIE
Mornin' Heck. Love the wall, by the way.

HECK
(nods)
Augie. What's all the fuss?

Augie gives his Agents the high sign. They open the rear doors on the patrol wagons.

Twenty men and women, patrons from Apollo's juke joint are led out, chained together with leg irons and shackles.

Perry's face goes slack, stunned at the display of beaten men that trudge along the other side of the bridge.

AUGIE
An illegal juke joint, selling booze to the good citizens of Fayette County. That's at least a year in federal prison. Can you believe it?

The last one out is Apollo. His face is bruised and swollen. Apollo looks at Heck, shaking his head but not saying a word.

Heck lowers his head as he struggles to hold back his anger. Ezra sees Heck struggling and leans over to him.

EZRA
Bossman, you can't help these people, but you'll hurt a lot more includin' your family if you don't straighten up and talk.

Heck looks at Ezra, who nods to him. Heck stands up straight.

HECK
That is a shame. Did they give up any of their suppliers?

Augie laughs.

AUGIE
Ain't a one of them talking, honor among thieves and all that. No, I just wanted them to see what a lovely farm you have down there. Farms they're going to won't be as hospitable.

Augie lets out a sharp WHISTLE. The Agents lead the chained prisoners back into the wagons.

Apollo and Heck maintain eye contact until he disappears.

Augie turns his attention to Perry who stares off at nothing.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
You're Perry, right?

The mention of his name snaps him back to reality.

PERRY
What?

AUGIE
Yeah, that's you. I don't think you realize what you started with all this.

PERRY
What did I do?

Augie LAUGHS.

AUGIE
Nah, of course you don't, what am I saying. Well, I'll let you get back to your breakfast. See ya, Heck.

HECK
Bye, Augie.

Augie waves, then hops in the cab of one of the patrol wagons. They drive off down the road.

Ezra looks to Heck.

EZRA
What're we gonna do now, boss?

Heck thinks for a moment.

HECK
I'll make the deliveries myself.

EZRA
You sure about that, bossman?

HECK
We need the money. There's not as much this time, I can manage.

EZRA
If you say so, boss.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Heck and Ezra approach the doorway to the moonshine cave.

ANDREA (O.S.)
Hector Allen Troy!

Ezra's eyes pop. Full name means she is PISSED.

HECK
Go on, I'll be down in a bit.

Heck turns as Andrea storms up to him.

ANDREA
You're makin' deliveries today?

HECK
Apollo got pinched. We still need
to pay the bank so someone's gotta
do it.

ANDREA
So your bright idea after seeing
your business partner carted away
in chains is to rush out and get
caught yourself? You're smarter
than this!

HECK
We need money. I have to do this.

ANDREA
No you don't! Heck, I love you, but
this is over. Bust it all up, get
rid of everything before it's too
late.

HECK
And give up the farm?

ANDREA
That ain't your doing. You took
over for your Pa and did what you
could, but, Heck, if you keep this
up you could lose more than the
farm.

Heck contemplates. He reaches for Andrea, pulling her close.

HECK

With no distributor taking a cut,
we get to keep all the money. Two
weeks and we'll have all we need.

Heck smiles, but a look of sadness spreads across Andrea's face.

ANDREA

I already have all I need. Is this
not enough for you?

HECK

Andrea, please. I can do this.

Andrea pulls away and storms off, knocking into Perry.

Perry watches her, then turns to Heck as she disappears around the barn. He gives Heck an accusatory look.

PERRY

What did you do?

INT. MATTHIAS'S OFFICE - MORNING

Matthias sits behind his desk, eating his breakfast of bacon, eggs and grits. Gideon enters without knocking.

MATTHIAS

What is it?

GIDEON

I want to be paid for my services.

Matthias shoves a piece of bacon in his mouth, waiting for Gideon to continue. When he doesn't, Matthias chews and swallows before speaking.

MATTHIAS

Services?

GIDEON

Last night, the dirty work out at
that juke joint. Where's my cut?

Matthias puts two cubes of sugar into his coffee and stirs.

MATTHIAS

You forget your place, Gideon,
barging in here without permission,
demanding money for me.

GIDEON

I did my part and I expect my
reward.

MATTHIAS

You're not a mercenary, you're a
dog. You don't fight for money, you
fight because it's all you're good
for! Now get out of my office!

Gideon eyes are wide with fury and his fists balled up, ready
to throw punches if needed. But he stands down, walking away,
leaving the door open as he goes.

Matthias returns to his breakfast.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

Dora!

Dora enters from the back.

DORA

Yes sir?

He points to the door with his fork.

MATTHIAS

Close my office door.

Dora looks at him, then the door.

DORA

Right away sir.

EXT. CAVE EXIT - MORNING

The horse Apollo left for Heck is hitched near the exit to
the cave. Heck loads up the panniers (i.e. over-sized
saddlebags) with as many jars of moonshine as he can fit.

EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - MORNING

Heck leads the horse past the ruins of the barn, pausing as
he take in the destruction.

INT. JUKE JOINT IN THE HILLS - MORNING

Heck sets a line of jars on the counter.

The bartender looks at him, suspiciously, then offers up
payment.

The bartender shakes his head as Heck leaves.

EXT. BACK OF SPEAKEASY - MORNING

Heck carries a satchel as he approaches the back door. He knocks.

The owner opens, looks out suspiciously, then waves him in.

Heck exits, his satchel empty, but holding a roll of money.

EXT. LEXINGTON BACK ALLEY - MORNING

Heck knocks on the back door of the pharmacy. No answer.

EXT. FRONT OF PHARMACY - MORNING

Heck peers out of the alley, looking both ways before stepping around to the sidewalk.

The window has been boarded up and a sign hangs from the door
- SEIZED BY AUTHORITY OF THE U.S. PROHIBITION AGENCY.

Heck disappears back down the alley.

EXT. SAVINGS AND LOAN - DAY

Heck hitches his horse, now with empty panniers, to a post in front of the bank.

Across the road, Gideon leans against a streetlight, watching. Heck doesn't see him.

As Heck enters the bank, Gideon approaches his horse. He reaches into the pannier and pulls out a torn Little White Dog label.

He ducks behind one of the parked vehicles as Heck exits.

As Heck rides away, Gideon looks at the label, then to the bank. He turns towards the bank and walks up the steps.

INT. HECK'S CABIN - DAY

Heck enters as Andrea trims vegetables into a pot in the sink. He approaches as he did earlier, but she turns before he can embrace her.

Heck gets the hint, she's in no mood.

HECK
Deliveries went well, in case you
were wondering.

ANDREA
Good. Horse stalls need cleaned.

HECK
Can't one of the farmhands do it?

ANDREA
I don't think you can trust someone
else to do that. This is something
only you can handle.

Andrea glares at Heck, her eyes piercing him like daggers.

Heck looks away first with a scoff.

HECK
I know what you're doing.

ANDREA
I used to know what you were doing.
Now I'm not certain.

Andrea goes back to the sink for her vegetable pot.

ANDREA (CONT'D)
Dinner will be ready at six.

She leaves with the pot, heading towards the main house.

INT. TROY FARMHOUSE DEN - EVENING

Perry sits in the chair with Helen. She's asleep on his lap
as he strokes the back of her head.

PERRY
People are getting hurt because of
us.

Helen whimpers and lifts her head, looking up at Perry.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Right, because of me. You're
innocent in all of this, aren't you
Helen?

Helen wags her tail at the mention of her name. She crawls up
Perry's chest, licking and biting at his nose.

Through the window, Perry sees Heck walk back towards the barn carrying a pitchfork. His clothes are soaked with sweat.

Heck wipes his hands down the front of his shirt, leaving behind streaks of what we hope is dirt. His nails are chipped and caked with muck. His hands calloused, scarred.

Perry looks reflectively at his own hands. Pink, soft, not a callous to be found. Perfect cuticles.

He carries Helen to the desk, setting her on top. She watches curiously as he pulls out a sheet of paper and a pencil.

Perry manages to write 'Dear Heck,' before Helen growls and attacks his pencil.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Helen, stop!

Perry sets her on the floor. She whines and scratches at his leg, then grips his pant leg to play tug of war with it.

INT. HECK'S CABIN - MORNING

It's before dawn. The door to Heck's cabin opens quietly.

Perry enters, carrying Helen.

Heck and Andrea sleep in the loft above. Heck snores loudly, prompting a whimper and bark from Helen. Perry shushes her.

He sets her on the floor of the cabin and tiptoes to the table where he sets his letter.

He looks up and smiles at his sleeping brother.

Perry gives Helen one last pet on the head before leaving.

PERRY

(whispers)

Be a good girl, Helen. I'll be back soon, hopefully.

Perry exits as quietly as he entered.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - MORNING

The bridge lowers with a clatter. A horse and rider cross and head out down the road.

INT. HECK'S CABIN - LATER

Helen scratches at the door, whining. Up in the loft, Heck stirs from his sleep.

He walks downstairs, his bare feet step lightly on the cold hardwood floor.

Up in the loft, Andrea sits up.

ANDREA

What is it?

Heck picks up Helen, she snuggles into his arms and nips at his fingers as he pets her.

HECK

The dog's here. Perry must've -

Heck sees the letter on the table and picks it up. Helen bites at the page as he reads.

He sets the page down and hands Helen to Andrea as she comes down from the loft.

ANDREA

Heck? Heck, what's-

The door slams as Heck leaves in a hurry. Andrea looks over the letter as Helen nibbles at her robe.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - MORNING

Heck runs to the barn and sees Ezra coming down the hill.

HECK

Have you seen Perry this morning?

EZRA

No sir. But the bridge was down and a horse gone missing from the stable.

HECK

Any Federals over there?

EZRA

Nah, must be shift change.

HECK

Dammit, Perry.

EZRA
What Mister Perry do this time?

HECK
Something honorable. And stupid.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - DAY

The bridge lowers as a second rider tears off down the road.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF LEXINGTON - DAY

Perry leisurely rides into town, waving at cars as they pass.

EXT. WINDING ROADS - DAY

Heck pursues Perry, traveling at a much higher rate of speed.

EXT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Perry stops his horse in front of one of the posts out in front of the gym.

Unsure how to properly secure the rope, Perry ties it in a bow.

PERRY
Wait here.

He heads to the steps of the gym, again admiring the horse statue on the awning.

INT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Perry enters, scanning the gym for Matthias. He sees him in the ring, giving instructions to PATRICK (17).

In the back of the gym, Gideon and his entourage are idly lounging against the wall.

Gideon eyes Perry. He elbows his compatriots to watch.

Perry steps into the boxing ring, getting tangled in the ropes and stumbling in the process. Matthias doesn't notice and continues with his instructions.

MATTHIAS

Don't drop your elbows, keep em up.
You give away your punches when you
do that. Punch from there.

Matthias holds up padded mitts for the kid to punch. The kid punches as instructed.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

Punch, punch, punch, punch, punch.
You got it, keep your elbows up and
in. Up and in.

Perry walks up behind Matthias as this is going on. He clears his throat to get his attention. Matthias doesn't notice.

Perry taps him on the shoulder. Matthias does a double take.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

You. You!

Perry throws a linen glove onto the ground at Matthias's feet.

Matthias looks down at it, then up at Perry.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

What the hell is this?

Perry squares his shoulders, sticking out his chin in an attempt to look unafraid. It's not working.

PERRY

I challenge you. To a fight. A lot
of people are getting hurt, and I
want it to stop. So I'm challenging
you... and to the victor... goes
the spoils.

MATTHIAS

What in God's name are you
prattling on about?

PERRY

We have a fight. And whoever wins,
wins.

MATTHIAS

So I beat the shit out of you and I
get my dog back? Is that what this
bullshit means?

PERRY
I mean, well I was, the way I said
it sounded more...

Perry trails off talking then nods, nervous at first, but then re-assumes his chin up shoulders back pose of defiance.

Matthias eyes Perry, who won't maintain eye contact. Matthias quickly thrusts his head towards Perry to make him flinch.

Perry stumbles backwards, almost falling through the ropes. All of the boxers and trainers around the ring LAUGH.

Perry stands up and dusts himself off self-consciously.

MATTHIAS
Oh kid, you have no idea the
beating that's coming to you.
(yelling)
PATRICK!

PATRICK steps up next to Matthias.

PATRICK
Yes, Mr. Tate?

MATTHIAS
Fetch my gloves from the office.

EXT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Perry's horse has worked itself free from the post as Heck arrives. He hops down and snatches the reins.

HECK
Whoa. Whoa. Come back here Tulip.

Heck secures both horses to the post and runs up the steps.

INT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Heck hurries in, looking for Perry. Gideon spots Heck from his back corner. The two men make eye contact briefly before Heck's attention is drawn to the ring.

In the ring, Perry has been fitted with gloves and boxing trunks. The trunks are comically too big on him.

Matthias has on gloves, trunks and a white undershirt.

Heck jumps into the ring before the fight can start.

HECK
What the hell is going on?

PERRY
Don't worry, I got this.

HECK
Shut up.
(to Matthias)
What's happening here?

MATTHIAS
Your idiot brother here challenged
me to a fight.

Heck pushes Perry back into his corner.

HECK
Why would you do that?

PERRY
It's my fault people are getting
hurt. I want it to stop.

HECK
Then,
(through his teeth)
then give him his damn dog back.

Perry thinks for a beat, then shakes his head. Frustrated,
Heck turns back to Matthias.

HECK (CONT'D)
I don't care what he agreed to,
this is off.

PERRY
No it's not.

HECK
Shut up, Perry!

MATTHIAS
You heard your brother, step aside.
This is for all the, was it
marbles?

PERRY
To the victor goes -

PERRY (CONT'D)
The spoils.

MATTHIAS
The spoils. Yeah, that's
right.

Heck looks to the Ref, who shrugs.

HECK
Fine! If you insist on going
through with this, I'll be in your
corner.

Perry jumps in happiness.

PERRY
Yes!

MATTHIAS
Gentleman, does that mean we can
fight now?

Perry nods. Heck shrugs.

INT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - LATER

In Perry's corner, Heck puts his fingers in a tub of petroleum jelly, smearing it thick on Perry's face.

PERRY
What's that for?

HECK
So his punches slide off your face.
Also keep moving so he doesn't
punch you in the face. He's a lot
bigger and stronger than you, but
you're faster. Say it.

PERRY
I'm faster!

HECK
Don't get trapped in a corner. If
he does that, you will get punched
in the face. Tire him out, make him
chase you. Got it?

Perry nods.

HECK (CONT'D)
Good. When he drops his hands, duck
in, throw a punch and get out. If
you try to throw a second punch he
will punch you in the face.

Perry nods.

REF
Boxers to the center.

HECK
Do it just how we used to practice
in the barn. Elbows in, guard up,
and keep moving. I'll be over here
shouting instructions.

Perry heads to the center of the ring, turning back to his brother.

PERRY
Heck?

HECK
Yeah, Perry?

PERRY
Pa's gonna be so proud of me.

Perry smiles and gives a thumbs up with his glove. With his over-sized trunks, boxing gloves, and jelly-smeared forehead, he looks quite ridiculous.

A thick goop of jelly slides off his face and lands with a splat!

Heck tries to smile but it's not all that convincing. He shoots back a thumbs up of his own.

Matthias and Perry stand toe to toe in the ring. Matthias towers over the smaller Perry, a good six inches taller and at least a hundred pounds heavier.

Matthias's shoulders and arms are covered in dark black hair. He looks like a bear. Perry, a porcelain doll.

The ref checks the two fighters' gloves. Matthias attempts to stare down Perry, but Perry won't look him in the eye.

REF
Keep the punches up, when I say
stop go to a neutral corner. Let's
have a nice clean fight.

PERRY
I will, thank you sir.

Ref gives Perry a double take, then returns to his instructions.

REF

Touch gloves and when the bell
rings come out fighting.

Perry puts his gloves up. Matthias pounds his fists on top of Perry's, driving them back to his sides.

Perry's face is STUNNED as he returns to his corner, now realizing what he signed on for.

Heck sees the glazed look in his eyes.

HECK

Perry, you okay?

Perry shakes his head no. Vigorously.

The bell rings. DING! DING!

Perry's eyes go WIDE, paralyzed in fear.

Heck spins Perry around as Matthias walks slowly to the middle of the ring.

HECK (CONT'D)

Remember what I said. Keep moving!

Perry doesn't move.

HECK (CONT'D)

Move!

Heck gives Perry a shove, breaking his catatonic state.

The two boxers circle in the ring, Perry moving much faster and staying out of Matthias's range every time he takes a step closer to him.

HECK (CONT'D)

Keep circling! Watch the corner,
watch the corner!

Matthias traps Perry in the corner. Realizing he's trapped, Perry dives between Matthias's legs, popping up behind him. Matthias turns around in disbelief.

HECK (CONT'D)

Okay! That worked apparently!

Matthias ups his pace to match his elusive opponent. He cuts Perry off every time he tries to circle away from him.

MATTHIAS

You're going nowhere, I got you, I
got you-

POW! Perry punches Matthias in the nose, not particularly hard, but it lands. Matthias shakes his head, stunned more that it landed not so much that it hurt.

HECK

Nice one Perrr! Keep it up!

Perry turns to Heck and smiles. While he's smiling, Matthias refocuses on Perry, rearing his fist back.

Heck sees it. Perry doesn't.

HECK (CONT'D)

Perry lookou-

Matthias delivers a gut punch that folds Perry in half, lifting him off the ground.

The gym lets out a collective "OHHHH!"

Heck holds the sides of his face, unable to do anything but watch.

Perry stumbles back into the ropes, bent over as he gasps for air like a braying donkey.

Matthias lifts Perry's head and delivers a second punch to the gut. Not as hard as the first, but still devastating.

Perry doubles over again, holding onto the middle rope as he tries to pull himself away from Matthias.

Perry gags. He leans his head outside the ropes as the heavens overtake him.

HECK (CONT'D)

You good, Perrr?

A cascade of vomit pours from Perry's mouth onto the gym floor.

The gym lets out a collective "EWWWWW!"

The bell rings. Matthias returns to his corner. Perry makes his way to his corner on rubber band legs.

Heck puts the stool out for Perry. He collapses in it.

HECK (CONT'D)

What did you eat?

PERRY
Eggs, bacon, biscuits, three
apples, glass of milk, some-

HECK
Shut up. Have some water.

Heck ladles out water for Perry to rinse his mouth.

PERRY
Heck?

HECK
Yeah Perry?

PERRY
I made a mistake. Get me out of
this.

HECK
Give him back his dog!

Beat.

PERRY
No. Something else.

HECK
Dammit Perry!

DING! DING!

Matthias makes a beeline to Perry before he's even out of his stool.

Heck rips the stool out from under Perry and pushes him out of Matthias's path. Matthias points his glove at Heck.

MATTHIAS
No outside interference. He's a big
boy, let him take his medicine!

Heck throws his hands up.

Perry is up dancing again as Heck instructed him in the first round. Circling, keeping his distance.

Matthias throws a hook, Perry dodges it and lands a punch of his own.

HECK
Bob, weave, stick and move Perry!
He can't hit what he can't catch!

Matthias stays on the prowl, eyeing Perry. He throws a left jab. Perry bounces to his left and throws a right hook.

Left jab. Perry bounces left, right hook.

Left jab. Perry bounces left, right hook.

Matthias fakes the jab. Perry bounces left, running face first into a straight right cross that levels him.

Perry goes down. Hard.

HECK (CONT'D)
Oh, sweet Jesus.

PERRY'S POV

Everything is out of focus and sounds like he's underwater.

Perry looks up at the blurred form of the ref counting. The numbers are muffled and indiscernible.

Between the Ref's legs, Helen appears, wagging her tail.

END PERRY'S POV

Perry smiles and tries to reach for the imaginary puppy.

REF
Two! Three! Four!

HECK
Get up Perry! Get up!

Perry shakes his head.

PERRY'S POV

Sound comes back with a POP, as does his vision. Helen disappears.

END PERRY'S POV

Perry scrambles to the ropes, pulling himself up as the referee gets to-

REF
Seven! You okay, kid?

Perry shakes his head no.

REF (CONT'D)
Are you giving up?

Perry again shakes his head no.

REF (CONT'D)
Okay then. Fight!

Matthias charges at Perry, rearing back to throw a punch that would take Perry's head off.

Perry lunges between the ropes, out of the ring.

His foot catches on the bottom rope, leaving him hanging upside down.

Matthias grabs for Perry's foot and tries to pull him back in.

In the back of the gym, Gideon and his crew laugh.

MATTHIAS
Where do you think you're going?
Huh?

The Ref tries to push Matthias away but Matthias gives him a shove.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)
You work for me, remember?

Perry wiggles free of Matthias's grasp and disappears from sight as he crawls under the ring apron.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)
What the hell is this?

Matthias and the Ref both lean over the ropes looking for him.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)
Where'd he go?

As they're looking down, Perry pops up from the floor on the other side of the ring behind them, eyes wide like a startled deer.

Heck sees him before Matthias does.

Perry looks at Matthias, then Heck. He tosses his gloves aside and runs for the door. Heck runs after him.

Matthias turns, seeing Perry and his brother fleeing.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)
They're getting away! Stop them!

Gideon's crew stands to give chase. Gideon stands as well, only to direct them to sit back down. He gives Matthias a dirty look as he sits defiantly.

Matthias points to a handful of YOUNGER BOXERS (15-18 age range), including Patrick, the one he was training earlier.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

You, you, you, and you. With me!

EXT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Perry and Heck bound down the steps to their horses. Heck unties as Perry gets on his. Heck mounts up and they ride off.

EXT. STREETS OF LEXINGTON - DAY

Perry and Heck gallop through the streets, dodging cars and pedestrians alike as they hightail it out of town.

EXT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Matthias trails his younger cohorts as they run down the steps after Perry and Heck.

MATTHIAS

The truck! Get in the truck!

The boys pile in the back of an old style pickup truck as Matthias gets in the cab. They peel out in pursuit but are held up by traffic. Matthias honks impatiently.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF LEXINGTON - DAY

Perry and Heck gallop away from the city, putting as much distance between them and Matthias as they can.

EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

The horses hang their heads low, tired from the escape as they walk down the side of the highway.

Heck looks behind them. Not a vehicle in sight.

Perry's left eye is swollen and he holds his arm to his side.

HECK

What did you think you'd solve
challenging him to a fight?

PERRY

I don't know. I was just, just-

HECK

Didn't want to give the dog back?

PERRY

I just wanted to clean up my own
mess. And- I wanted Pa to be proud
of me.

HECK

What are you talking about? Pa is
proud of you.

Perry shakes his head.

PERRY

When I do things, Pa says 'I'm
happy for you.' He doesn't say he's
proud of me, he's only ever proud
of you. And- I wanted you to be
proud of me too. I just can't be
good at the things you're good at.

They ride in silence for a bit.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Heck?

HECK

Yeah, Perr?

PERRY

I don't like getting hit in the
face much.

Heck LAUGHS as Perry rubs his face.

HECK

This is the first time I'm the
better looking one between the two
of us.

Perry chuckles, then winces in pain.

PERRY

Don't make me laugh it hurts too
much.

Lights appear on the horizon behind them. Heck turns to look.

PERRY (CONT'D)
Think that's him?

Heck nods.

HECK
Probably. Let's get moving, we're
almost home.

They speed up their horses as they approach the winding road down to their holler. Matthias's truck appears shortly after.

EXT. WINDING ROAD - EVENING

Heck takes the lead as the pursuit vehicle looms behind them, trying to gain ground on the uneven, twisting back-roads.

Hooting and hollering of the boys in the back echo over the sound of the truck.

Heck kicks his heels into his horse.

HECK
Come on girl, giddyup!

They pick up speed, putting some space between them and Matthias's truck.

They make their way around the turn for home, only to see the road blocked by a patrol wagon.

HECK (CONT'D)
Whoa!

Heck and Perry slide to a stop.

The Prohibition Agents scramble to the cab as Heck turns his horse around and heads back up the road.

HECK (CONT'D)
Double back!

Perry follows.

The Prohibition Agents peel out up the road after them.

Heck and Perry charge up the winding one lane road.

HECK (CONT'D)
Just do what I do, Perry! Follow
me!

Perry nods, his horse on his brother's tail.

They make another turn and see Matthias's truck bearing down on them. Heck rides at the truck hard.

Matthias revs the engine, picking up speed to ram them.

Before they collide, Heck turns his horse off the road and into the trees, heading out into the foothills. Perry follows.

Matthias slams on the brakes, throwing the boys in the back around. No one falls out but they are jostled violently-

But not as violently as when the patrol wagon clears the corner and SLAMS into Matthias's truck.

The boys in the back are tossed clear, all except Patrick, who was holding tight to a bar along the back of the cab.

The rest of the boys are rolling on the ground in pain.

The Agents get out, as does Matthias.

AGENT #1
Where'd they go?

MATTHIAS
They took off into the woods.

The second Agent fires his Tommy Gun wildly into the trees.

Out in the woods, Heck and Perry duck down on their horses as bullets spray around them.

A bullet hits a rock and ricochet's back, clipping Matthias in the shoulder.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)
You shot me! You shot me you dumb
sonovabitch!

Matthias beats the agent about the head and neck with his hat and his good arm.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - EVENING

Perry and Heck re-emerge on the road just before the bridge. As they approach, Heck whistles. The bridge lowers.

HECK
Finally.

Patrick steps out from the shadows near the bridge. He's sweaty, looking like he ran all the way there.

PATRICK

This is as far as you go.

HECK

Friend, I'm in no mood for any more nonsense today. Let us pass.

Patrick gets into a boxing stance. Heck sighs and dismounts his horse, handing the reins to Perry.

HECK (CONT'D)

So we're doing this? Alright then.

Heck puts his hands up to fight.

Patrick charges at him and unleashes a flurry of punches.

Heck blocks or ducks all but one that catches him on the mouth. He touches his lip with his finger, giving a grin.

HECK (CONT'D)

Not bad.

Patrick swings an arcing left hook. Heck ducks underneath and catches Patrick in the ribs with a solid punch.

Patrick lowers his right elbow to guard his ribs, opening up his face for a solid left hook that puts him down.

The bridge drops with a CLUNK! Heck motions Perry across.

Heck goes to follow but is spun around by Patrick, back on his feet and wanting more.

His discipline gone, Patrick throws wild punches that Heck easily dodges and blocks. Heck puts him down again with another one-two combo.

HECK (CONT'D)

Stay down.

He doesn't.

Patrick screams as he spears Heck in the back, taking him to the ground, punching him in the back of the head and ribs.

Heck catches him with a hard back elbow that sends blood and teeth flying as he scrambles out from under Patrick.

Patrick charges him again, this time Heck sees it coming and sidesteps, tripping the boy to send him face first into the dirt.

As Patrick tries to get up, Heck grabs him by the hair and just beats the ever-loving dogshit out of him.

All of Heck's pent up anger and frustration is unleashed on the boy.

Ezra runs across the bridge.

EZRA

He's had enough, let off 'im!

Heck is practically foaming at the mouth with anger.

Then he sees Patrick's bloodied face.

His expression changes, shocked to see what he had done.

HECK

Oh my God, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry.

A horn announces the approach of the patrol wagon.

EZRA

Come on bossman, we gotta go!

Heck and Ezra run back to the bridge, but not before Heck steals one more look at the broken face of Patrick.

The bridge is fully up by the time the Prohibition Agents arrive. They load Patrick into the back of their wagon.

INT. HECK'S CABIN - NIGHT

Heck enters his house in a huff. Helen looks up from the loft bed where she is sleeping with Andrea.

Andrea sits up.

ANDREA

Heck?

He goes to the sink, turning on the faucet. His hands are bloody.

Andrea eases herself down the steps from the loft with Helen in her arm.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

What's going on?

HECK
Nothing, go back to sleep.

Heck scrubs his fingers, continuing even after all of the blood has rinsed away. His knuckles are raw.

Andrea approaches, seeing the trail of blood in the sink.

ANDREA
Heck, your hands. What happened?

HECK
Perry snuck off, I went to get him back. It's fine now.

ANDREA
This is not fine!

HECK
A couple more weeks to pay back the loan. Just gotta hold on until then. Everything's gonna be fine. Everything's gonna be fine.

ANDREA
Look at me, Heck.

Heck turns away, unable to look at her.

Andrea grabs him by the face and gets him to look her in the eye.

Staring her in the face, Heck bursts into tears, sobbing as he leans into his wife.

HECK
I'm sorry, I'm so sorry!

Andrea consoles him, her eyes wide with disbelief.

INT. BOXING CLUB TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

Matthias sits on a table. His boxers help as he removes his jacket, exposing his bleeding shoulder.

MATTHIAS
The rubbing alcohol!

One of them hands him a glass bottle. He yanks the cork with his teeth and pours the alcohol over the wound, sucking his teeth from the burn.

Augie enters, looking at the wound. Matthias points at him.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)

Was one of your agents what did this!

AUGIE

It barely broke the skin.

MATTHIAS

We would've had 'em if it wasn't for your men bungling it up.

AUGIE

From what I hear you did have them. Had them both, right here in your gym. And rather than fetch me, you decided to box the younger one. Have I got all that right?

MATTHIAS

He challenged me!

AUGIE

Will you listen to yourself? You've been as crazy as a soup sandwich since that boy took your dog.

MATTHIAS

So you agree he took it?

AUGIE

That's not the point!

Two Prohibition Agents carry in a stretcher holding Patrick.

They set him on another training table. The rest of the boys in the gym gather around.

Gideon pushes his way through, leaning down, almost in tears as he looks at the bloodied face of Patrick.

AUGIE (CONT'D)

Looks like ol' Heck put quite a hurtin' to your little cousin there, Gideon. Sure is a shame you weren't there to stop it.

Patrick wheezes through broken teeth. Gideon reaches down for his cousin's hand, who grasps his fingers weakly.

Gideon roars with rage.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - MORNING

Three patrol wagons with at least a dozen Prohibition Agents have blocked off the road to the holler.

Heck and Ezra stand at the top of their hill above the bridge, watching.

No one says a word, just hard stares.

Augie steps to the front. Matthias is beside him with his arm in a sling. Behind them, Gideon paces like a caged lion.

Heck nods.

HECK

Morning.

AUGIE

What'd you do to your hand there?

Heck looks down at his busted knuckles and slips them into his pockets.

HECK

Scuffed 'em up. You know how farm work is.

AUGIE

How 'bout we skip the cat and mouse nonsense, okay Heck? Let's just put all the cards on the table.

HECK

Alright.

AUGIE

We know about this.

Augie holds up the Little White Dog label.

HECK

Little White Dog. Cute.

AUGIE

We also know about the bank, Heck. The loan, your family's debt predicament?

On his side, Heck's face twists in anger, but says nothing.

AUGIE (CONT'D)

You made a good run at it, and I commend your efforts, but the time has come to reap what's been sewn. I've got the papers right here, all official, for the search of your property. Lower the bridge, son.

HECK

Augie, if you'd just-

AUGIE

The time for talk is over. People already been hurt, my brother included. Not to mention what you did to that boy last night.

Matthias grabs his shoulder self-consciously as Gideon paces.

AUGIE (CONT'D)

And seeing as we're the only ones came prepared for a shootout, how 'bout we do this peacefully?

Heck takes a deep breath as he turns away from Augie. He looks on the verge of panic.

Ezra grabs him by the shoulder.

EZRA

Bossman, whatcha thinkin'? You got a plan?

HECK

No. Ezra, I-, I don't know.

AUGIE

What's it gonna be, son? You going in easy, or you going down with a fight?

Heck lifts his head as he hears the word "fight". He spins back around.

HECK

Matthias, you still having that boxing competition at your gym?

Augie and Matthias exchange a look. Matthias nods.

MATTHIAS

What of it?

HECK

What do you say to a wager?

Augie and Matthias exchange another look. Augie nods.

MATTHIAS

What are the terms?

HECK

Iffin' I win, we go back to our original agreement, plus another ten percent for you.

MATTHIAS

And iffing you lose?

Heck shrugs.

HECK

Then I'll go peacefully.

Matthias and Augie sidebar as Ezra leans over to Heck.

EZRA

What game you playin' here, bossman?

HECK

The only one I have left.

Matthias and Augie exit their sidebar.

MATTHIAS

Noon today. We'll pick you up. Only you.

Heck nods.

Augie and Matthias head back to the patrol wagon. Augie puts his arm around Gideon and whispers in his ear.

EZRA

You sure about this bossman?

HECK

Don't have any other choice, do I?

EZRA

Guess not. What's Mrs. Andrea gonna think of this plan of yours?

INT. HECK'S CABIN - DAY

Andrea smacks Heck across the face.

ANDREA
No.

HECK
Andrea-

ANDREA
No!

HECK
I have to do this.

ANDREA
No you don't!

HECK
There's no other way.

ANDREA
Yes there is! We leave right now!
It doesn't have to go like this.

HECK
Andrea, you know I can't.

ANDREA
You won't.

HECK
I can't.

ANDREA
You won't. Say it.

HECK
I can't.

ANDREA
Say it!

HECK
I won't! Alright?! Is that what you
want to hear? I won't run out on my
family. If I can fix this-

ANDREA
You can't fix this, Heck.

HECK
I have to try.

ANDREA

You said so yourself, this would
get messy before the end. But
you're the one making it so.

Heck tries to hold her, but Andrea shrugs him off and turns away.

HECK

If I'm not back tonight, Ezra is
gonna get you out of here through
the caves. He'll see that you get
to your Ma's place.

Andrea doesn't turn around.

HECK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry Andrea, but I gotta see
this through.

Heck exits the cabin. Andrea holds her head in her hand as tears overtake her.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - DAY

Liam, Perry, Andrea and Ezra are there to see Heck off. Heck has his boxing gloves over his shoulder and a satchel with his ring gear.

Ezra offers his hand.

EZRA

Good luck, bossman. Hope you know
what you're doin'.

HECK

Thanks Ezra.

Heck goes to his Liam, whose hands are shaky as he embraces his son.

LIAM

Go make me proud, son!

Leaning in to hug his father, Heck sees Perry's reaction to their father's words.

Perry feigns being preoccupied with Helen to mask his hurt feelings when Heck approaches.

HECK

You're gonna be in charge while I'm
gone, you know that, right?

Perry's eyes go wide.

PERRY

Really?

HECK

Yeah. Make me proud, okay?

Heck gives Helen a scratch behind the ear.

HECK (CONT'D)

(to Helen)

Look after him while I'm gone.

Last but not least, Heck moves to his wife.

HECK (CONT'D)

Andrea, I-

She walks away, having already heard and said all she has to on the matter.

Heck and Ezra head up to the bridge alone.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - MORNING

Two patrol wagons remain but are no longer blocking the road. One is turned facing up the hill.

Ezra lowers the bridge.

Heck walks out on it, hopping off the end before it's fully down. Ezra quickly raises it back.

Heck approaches the patrol wagon on the road on the passenger side, opening the door.

HECK

Thanks for the lift, fellas.

EXT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

The patrol wagon stops in front of the gym for Heck to hop out.

INT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - MORNING

When Heck enters, the gym is empty and quiet. No one training. No one sitting in the stands.

A lone boxer stands in the ring.

Gideon.

ECHOED FOOTSTEPS as Heck turns to see Matthias and Augie walk down the stairs from the office.

HECK
What's this?

MATTHIAS
We skipped ahead to the finals. Get
your gear on.

Behind him, the two Agents who drove him into town chain the door the shut and block the exit.

INT. BOXING CLUB TRAINING ROOM - DAY

Heck wraps his hands, preparing for his fight.

The door opens as Augie enters. Heck looks up, watching him as he continues his hand wraps.

AUGIE
You know this was never about that
damned dog, right?

Heck just watches, says nothing. Augie continues.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
You know what happens when the
Prohibition Office seizes property
used in the make or distribution of
alcohol?

Heck keeps wrapping his hands.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
It goes up for auction.

Heck tests his wrist by punching his palm. He moves to the other hand.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
This prohibition experiment has run
its course. There's already talk
about repealing. It's got what,
four, maybe five years left?

Heck watches Augie, still wrapping but going slower as he processes his words.

AUGIE (CONT'D)

And there you are, with that spring of yours, producing some of the cleanest corn liquor I've ever tasted. Well, I'd say the person that owns that property stands to make a lot of money after prohibition ends. Only then it'uh be legal.

Heck stops wrapping his hands.

AUGIE (CONT'D)

So whether the bank forecloses or my office seizes it, you're looking the highest bidder once it goes to auction. Only question is, do I wait on the bank, or do I move on it with my boys first?

Augie heads back to the door.

AUGIE (CONT'D)

Have a good fight, Heck.

The door closes.

Heck finishes wrapping his hands, his face a mask of anger.

He jumps up, grabbing the stool by the leg and throwing it against the wall. It shatters as he screams in frustration.

INT. MAN O' WAR BOXING CLUB - DAY

Heck and Gideon stand on opposite corners, staring each other down.

The Ref motions them both to the center. Heck and Gideon don't break eye contact, even as the ref pats them down.

Matthias and Augie sit in the stands next to the ring.

REF

Let's have a clean fight, if there's a knockdown go to a neutral corner. Any questions?

Neither of the fighters break their stare.

REF (CONT'D)

Touch gloves and come out fighting.

Heck puts his gloves up. Gideon just walks away.

The Ref calls for the bell. DING! DING!

The fighters fly out of their corners at one another, circling, bobbing their heads, looking for openings.

Gideon throws first, testing Heck's defenses with a jab. Heck blocks and counters. Gideon parries the counter and swings a hook that Heck ducks under and slides to the side.

They reset, back to circling, closing in - POP!

Gideon throws a quick right jab that slips between Heck's gloves, landing square on the nose. A trickle of blood runs from Heck's left nostril.

Heck thumbs his nose with his glove, seeing the red stain.

Gideon smiles and throws another jab. This time Heck blocks and counters with shots to the body, landing two solid blows to Gideon's ribs before Gideon ties him up.

REF (CONT'D)

Separate, separate!

Gideon pushes Heck into the ropes as the ref tries to pull them apart.

GIDEON

This is for my cousin!

Gideon headbutts Heck on the temple while the Ref is occupied.

Gideon drops the tie up and steps back. The ref restarts the fight, unaware that Heck is still dazed.

Gideon closes the gap and throws a hook that connects solidly on the same temple he just headbutted. The punch opens up a cut over Heck's eye.

Heck ties Gideon up, putting a glove to his face to prevent another headbutt.

MATTHIAS

We got a bleeder! Death by a thousand cuts.

The ref separates them. Heck goes on the offensive as his head clears, punching from cover to keep Gideon out of reach.

Heck manages a couple more body shots before Gideon laces another lightning quick jab between Heck's gloves. The trickle of blood from Heck's nose gets bigger.

DING! The round ends.

Gideon pushes Heck towards his corner. Heck collapses onto his stool, catching his breath.

Gideon stands in his corner. He isn't even winded.

At ringside, Matthias and Augie watch with glee.

DING!

The energy is just as high as the first round. They circle one another, this time Heck testing his jab at Gideon's defenses when-

WHAM! Gideon lands a solid right hook that buckles Heck's knees. He doesn't hit the canvas but takes to one knee.

REF

One, two, three, four, five, six,
sev-

Heck is back up. The Ref checks him, gives the high sign and the boxers are at it again.

Heck's defenses are failing as Gideon lands more punches.

POP POP! Two quick jabs to the face.

THUD! A hook to the ribs.

Gideon smirks. He's picking him apart.

Heck flails a wild punch. Gideon leans out of the way, then counters with a solid right cross that sends Heck to the mat.

Heck drops like a ragdoll. He grasps at the ropes, using them to pull himself up.

The Ref stands over him, counting.

REF (CONT'D)

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven, eight-

Heck gets back to his feet as the ref hits 'eight'.

DING!

Heck stumbles back to his corner, splashing water over his face. He's panting, unable to get his breath.

In the opposite corner Gideon paces, again not taking a seat.

Ringside, Matthias grins with delight.

DING!

Any ideas of Heck mounting a comeback are immediately squashed as Gideon pushes him back into his corner and works him over. Hook to the ribs, uppercut to the jaw.

Heck falls into Gideon, who steps back and drops him with another hook to the chin. Heck lands face first on the mat.

The Ref stands over him.

REF (CONT'D)
One, two, three, four-

Heck tries to lift himself up but his arms give out.

REF (CONT'D)
Five, six-

Heck tries again, but he can't will himself off the canvas. He's dazed, unable to answer the count.

REF (CONT'D)
Seven, eight, nine-

A beat passes.

And another.

The gym is quiet.

The Ref should've said ten. He never does.

Heck slowly lifts his head from the mat. He looks at the Ref, who is looking out of the ring.

Heck follows his gaze to Matthias, who is holding his hand up.

MATTHIAS
Fight's not over 'til I say so.

Across the ring, Gideon bounces, still full of energy. He does a "come on" motion with his gloves, smirking.

Heck slowly gets to his feet. The Ref looks him over.

Matthias gives the high sign. The Ref signals the fight to restart.

Heck tries to tie Gideon up, but Gideon throws him into the ropes.

Gideon pummels Heck's ribs, working him over like a heavy bag. Heck tries to defend himself but he's unable to stop Gideon's onslaught. At this point he's a human punching bag.

Gideon lifts Heck's head with his glove and levels him with a hook. Heck goes down hard, again.

The Ref doesn't even count, they all just watch as Heck tries pull himself up. When he doesn't, Gideon picks him up off the canvas and props him up in the corner.

Gideon smacks Heck in the face with his gloves, taunting him.

GIDEON
Anybody home in there?

Heck catches Gideon off guard with a headbutt of his own, his forehead catching Gideon on the bridge of his nose.

It stuns Gideon for a moment as he shakes off the blow, checking for blood, but nothing.

Heck laughs as blood pours down his face. Gideon doesn't find it funny. He removes his gloves and pummels Heck with his bare fists until Heck collapses to the ground.

But that doesn't stop Gideon. He grabs Heck by the hair and keeps at it.

AUGIE
That's enough.

Gideon looks at Augie, then continues his beatdown.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
That's enough!

One last punch from Gideon flattens Heck to the canvas.

HECK'S POV

Everything is hazy as he stares up into the lights. Matthias and Augie step into the ring, looking down at him.

Augie leans over Heck, shaking his head.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
Well, that is a shame.

MATTHIAS
So what's the plan? We gonna wait
for the bank to foreclose on the
farm?

AUGIE

No, I don't think I will. Question
though. Just how stupid is that
brother of his?

MATTHIAS

Nothing 'tween those ears but a
pretty face.

AUGIE

That so?
(beat)
I know how we're gettin' in.

INT. TROY FARMHOUSE DEN - EVENING

Andrea paces in the farmhouse, looking up the hill as she
waits for Heck's return. Perry plays on the floor with Helen.

ANDREA

He should be home by now.

Andrea leans to the window, seeing movement at the top of the
hill. One of the FARMHANDS waving his arms, yelling.

ANDREA (CONT'D)

Something's going on!

Andrea runs out the door. Perry stays playing with Helen.

Ezra enters.

EZRA

Mister Perry, we need you up the
hill. Somethin' awful queer up that
way.

PERRY

Can someone else do it?

EZRA

Normally I'd take this to Mister
Heck, but he's gone and he said you
in charge.

Perry's head pops up.

PERRY

I'm in charge. Yes. What is it?

EZRA

It's up at the bridge.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - EVENING

The patrol wagons are gone. No Agents.

On the other side of the bridge is a wagon with the GIANT STATUE of MAN O' WAR strapped to it. It's the horse statue from the awning of Matthias's gym.

EZRA

What do you make of that, Mister Perry?

Perry stares at the horse statue, tilting his head.

EZRA (CONT'D)

Looks like there's something on the wagon, a note or something.

Perry sees the envelope tacked to the wagon.

PERRY

Lower the bridge, I'm going over.

EZRA

You sure, Mister Perry?

Perry nods.

Ezra lowers the bridge.

Perry approaches the wagon, and removes the envelope, reading the letter inside.

PERRY

It's a trophy! Heck won the tournament!

Perry jumps for joy. Ezra still looks puzzled.

EZRA

That giant horse, is a trophy?

PERRY

It was outside the gym! Heck won! Heck won! Get the horses, let's pull it over!

Perry runs back across the bridge down the hill motioning Ezra to join him. Ezra still looks puzzled.

INT. HORSE STATUE - EVENING

Two MEN sit uncomfortably inside the horse statue. One is a Prohibition Agent. The other is Gideon.

PROHIBITION AGENT
That boy is a special type of
stupid, ain't he?

Gideon gives a hard stare as he puts his fingers to his lips.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - EVENING

Andrea waits at the bottom of the hill as Ezra drives the wagon with the horse statue down the hill. Perry rides the statue in the back of the wagon, triumphantly.

Helen growls at the approaching wagon, cowering behind Andrea's legs.

ANDREA
What's this?

PERRY
It's a trophy! Heck won!

Andrea's brow furrows.

ANDREA
But, where is he?

Perry stops and thinks for a second.

PERRY
He musta stayed in town so he can
pay the bank in the morning. Come
on, Helen, let's tell Pa!

Perry scoops up Helen and runs inside. Andrea and Ezra stare at the horse statue, both puzzled.

ANDREA
Ezra?

EZRA
Yes, Mrs. Andrea?

ANDREA
Heck said you'd take me out through
the cavern if he didn't make it
back tonight, right?

EZRA
Yes ma'am he did.
(then)
You still wanna skip?

ANDREA
Yes please.

EZRA
Uh-huh. That sounds like a good
idea.

Heck and Andrea walk off, leaving the giant Horse Statue sitting in front of the barn.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - NIGHT

All is quiet.

The tail of the horse lifts as Gideon and the Prohibition Agent exit the ass end of the horse. They creep quietly up the hill.

EXT. TROY HOLLER BRIDGE - NIGHT

Patrol wagons wait on the opposite side of the bridge as it lowers into place. Augie drives the lead one across the bridge down into the holler.

INT. PERRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Perry sleeps cuddled up with Helen. A bright light shines through the front window, followed by a POLICE SIREN.

Perry bolts upright.

AUGIE (O.S.)
(bullhorn)
By the authority of the United
States Prohibition Agency, I hereby
order you boys to come on out! Only
ask once, then we're comin' in!

EXT. TROY FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Liam makes a crooked walk in an old timey nightgown and cap as he holds his jug above his head. A PROHIBITION AGENT whisks him into custody as another wrestles his jug away.

AUGIE
(bullhorn)
Alright now son, don't be foolish.
Tell me you have the sense to
follow the orders of an officer of
the law.

Perry exits, but only one hand is up.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
Grab that sky with both hands, son!

Perry's other hand shoots into the air, holding Helen high
above his head.

Augie leans away from the bullhorn to Matthias (sitting in
the patrol wagon). He points to Perry.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
That your dog?

Matthias storms from the wagon and rushes over to Perry.

Helen growls at him.

MATTHIAS
Give her here! Give her to me you
little twit!

Perry hands Helen over to Matthias, holding her in his good
arm. She whimpers for Perry as the Agents lead him away.

The Agents sweep the other houses and barn. Everyone else is
gone.

PROHIBITION AGENT #1
Everyone else must've lit out,
ain't no one here but these two.

AUGIE
What about the moonshine?

Another AGENT approaches carrying a crate full of jars. He
holds out one of the jars of Little White Dog.

PROHIBITION AGENT #2
It's all back in the cave. The
still, barrels, jars, everything.

AUGIE
Well, I'll drink to that. Round
everything up, it's evidence.

PROHIBITION AGENT #2
Aren't we gonna bust these up?

AUGIE
Not this time. Not this time.

Helen squirms in Matthias's arm.

MATTHIAS
Behave!

Helen growls and bites him on the thumb. He drops her.

MATTHIAS (CONT'D)
Ow, you little bitch! Catch her!

Helen barks. Perry looks over his shoulder, trying to find her.

PERRY
Helen?

Helen barks and whimpers as she runs to him.

Lacking any better judgement, Perry pulls away from the two Agents leading him and runs to Helen.

PROHIBITION AGENT
Runner!

Agents raise their guns on Perry.

AUGIE
(bullhorn)
Do not shoot! Do NOT shoot! Stand down!

Perry doesn't run away. He runs straight to Helen, crouching down so she can hop up and paw at his face.

AUGIE (CONT'D)
Damn kid was just saying goodbye to the dog.

PERRY
I'm sorry girl. I gotta go away.

Helen whimpers as if she understands.

Gideon pushes through the Prohibition Agents and grabs Perry by the elbow, dragging him away.

Helen growls, baring her teeth.

She charges, all seven pounds of white puffball fury, lunging at Gideon's heel.

It's not a hard bite, but it makes Gideon stumble and fall face first onto a pitchfork propped up against a bale of hay.

We don't see him land, only a sickening SHICK sound as his face impales on the tines. Perry cringes.

MATTHIAS

He alright?

Augie shakes his head.

AUGIE

No. No he is not.

Helen wags her tail and looks up at Perry.

PERRY

You tried to save me! Good girl.

The Agents walk past the impaled corpse of Gideon to collect Perry.

Helen growls. They don't turn their back to her as they lead Perry to a patrol wagon.

PERRY (CONT'D)

It's okay Helen, I have to go now.
I love you!

Helen sits, wagging her tail playfully.

INT. PATROL WAGON - NIGHT

As the patrol wagon doors open, Perry sees a battered Heck shackled inside. His face is purple and bruised with dried blood around his eyes and nose.

Perry smiles in spite of their predicament.

PERRY

I hear congratulations are in
order.

Heck looks at his brother but doesn't speak. Perry continues.

PERRY (CONT'D)

You won the boxing tournament!

Heck doesn't respond. Instead, he lays down on the bench.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Heck sit at the defendant's table in a striped prison jumpsuit next to his lawyer.

His face shows the passage of time as it has mostly healed from the beating he received at the hands of Gideon.

Perry shuffles in. His hands and feet are shackled.

He attempts to wave at his brother but the chain connecting his wrists and ankles pull taut, yanking his feet out from under him as he falls to the floor.

The courtroom chuckles. Heck shakes his head.

Perry sits beside his brother. They whisper to one another before court convenes.

PERRY
Mornin' Heck.

HECK
Perry.

PERRY
I got a plan, Heck. Follow my lead
and everything will be just fine.

Heck gives Perry an inquisitive look.

HECK
What?

PERRY
I got an idea last night.

HECK
What are you going on about?

PERRY
Just watch.

The BAILIFF enters followed by the JUDGE (50s, jowly with a thick Southern accent).

BAILIFF
All rise. Court is now in session,
the honorable Justice Willard
Maynard Stockton presiding.

JUDGE
Be seated.

Everyone sits except Perry.

PERRY

Your honor, if I may address the court. I have a statement I'd like to enter into the record.

JUDGE

This is not the time for that, young man. Counsel, please advise your client to take a seat.

PERRY

Your honor, if it would please the court, at this time I would like to, um, well, I want to... how do I say that I want to get blamed for everything so my brother goes free?

JUDGE

Are you saying you want to commit perjury, Mister Troy?

Perry smiles, nodding.

PERRY

Yes, your honor I do. I, Perry Alexander Troy do hereby wish to commit perjury and throw myself on the mercy of the court.

Perry throws his shoulders back, standing proudly. The judge narrows his eyes at the oblivious Perry.

JUDGE

Counsel, instruct your client to sit down so we can get on with the proceedings.

PERRY

But judge I-

JUDGE

Sit your dumb ass down before I find you in contempt!

Perry nods and is about to sit but-

PERRY

When you say contempt, what-

The Judge POUNDS his gavel.

JUDGE

SIT!

Perry sits. Heck leans over to him and whispers.

HECK

What are you doing?

PERRY

I was trying to get you off the hook.

HECK

Perry, this is a sentencing hearing.

PERRY

What?

HECK

We both pled guilty to keep Pa out of jail, remember?

A perplexed look on Perry's face as he processes.

PERRY

Was it? Was that what that was?
(nodding)
Oh. Okay. Huh.

JUDGE

Would the defendants please rise.

Perry, Heck, and their lawyer stand up.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Hector Allen Troy, you have been found guilty of the manufacture, sale and transportation of intoxicating liquors, tax evasion, and felonious theft of a dog. The court hereby sentences you to a term of three to ten years at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary.

Heck nods.

As the judge speaks, the COURT STENOGRAPHER (female), smiles at Perry, giving him a wink. Perry smiles back at her.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Perry Alexander Troy, you have been found guilty of the manufacture, sale and transportation of intoxicating liquors, tax evasion, and felonious theft of a dog. However, as you are still a minor, and clearly lacking the competency of a grown adult, the court sentences you to three months in Fayette County Juvenile Detention Home, after which you will be released into your father's custody.

Heck's face shows disbelief.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

You are both remanded into custody.
Court is adjourned.

The judge BANGS his gavel. Murmuring from the galley as people file out of the court room.

PERRY

Did you hear that Heck? I only got three months. Heck? Heck?

Heck doesn't respond, still in shock. It takes a BAILIFF prodding him along to break his stare.

On their way out of the courthouse, Heck sees Andrea sitting in the back row, staring down at her hands.

HECK

Andrea! Andrea!

She sees him. He smiles at her.

She doesn't return the smile. Instead, she walks away.

Heck's smile fades.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Two patrol wagons sit outside the courthouse as the Bailiffs lead Heck and Perry to the curb.

HECK

Can we have a moment?

The Bailiff nods.

HECK (CONT'D)

This is going to be goodbye for a while, Perry.

PERRY

What do you mean? Aren't we both going to prison?

HECK

We ain't going to the same jail, Perry. Were you even listening- never mind. Look after Pa when you get out, okay? He's gonna need you.

PERRY

I will. Thanks, Heck.

(then)

This is all my fault, ain't it? I messed up everything takin' Helen. I'm sorry for being so selfish.

Perry drops his chin. Heck sighs.

HECK

No, Perry, dammit, listen. This ain't your fault. Moonshinin', bootleggin' that was all my idea. I did this. All you wanted to do was help... in your own way. I'm the selfish one. It had to be me, I had to be the one who saved the day, had to do it my way. Look how that turned out. I still lost the farm. I lost-

PERRY

Andrea.

HECK

Yeah, I lost Andrea.

PERRY

(pointing)

No. Andrea.

Heck follows Perry's finger, turning to see Andrea on the curb behind him. He approaches with a Bailiff as his shadow.

His mouth hangs open as he fumbles for words. Andrea speaks before he finds the right ones.

ANDREA

Three to ten?

HECK
Lawyer says I might get out sooner
with good behavior. More like
eighteen months.

Andrea nods, her face shows no emotion.

ANDREA
They allow visitors down there?

HECK
I believe so.

Contemplative beat. Andrea still masks her emotion.

ANDREA
Atlanta might be good for us. A
fresh start.

HECK
Us?
(then, smiling)
Yes it might be. Andrea, look, I
know I made a mess of things, and
I'm sorr-

Andrea puts her hand up, cutting him off.

ANDREA
You are still my husband, for
better or worse. My stupid,
stubborn husband. Guess that makes
me a real Troy. We stick by family,
even when they act a fool.

Andrea smiles. Heck leans in to kiss her but the Bailiff
coughs unapprovingly behind him. Instead, Andrea laces her
fingers into his, lining up their wedding bands.

HECK
I'll make it up to you, I promise.

ANDREA
You can start by behaving yourself
in there. I've proven to be a
patient woman, Hector, but you are
really testing my limits.

HECK
Yes ma'am.

Heck goes for it and kisses her. The Bailiff initially moves
to stop it but shrugs and decides to let it happen.

When the kiss ends, the Bailiff pulls Heck toward the waiting patrol wagon.

Andrea holds on for as long as she can until their fingers pull apart, then follows alongside on the sidewalk.

ANDREA

Not sure if you realized, but
you're free now, Heck.

Heck gestures to his prison jumpsuit and shackles.

HECK

Don't much look like it.

ANDREA

That weight hanging over you, all
the obligations, the pressure? It's
gone now, do you feel it? It's a
new start for you. For us.

Heck stops as he ponders Andrea's words. Very subtly, Heck stands taller, nodding his head with a smile.

Bailiffs lead Perry to the other wagon, passing in front of a smug Matthias. Helen sits at his side on a leash.

Perry stops in front of her. She wags her tail and barks happily at Perry.

Perry smiles. The Bailiff prods him to keep moving.

INT. PATROL WAGON - DAY

Heck looks out at Andrea through the bars of his window. She waves to him from the sidewalk. He waves back.

As they pull away, Heck sees a throng of PROTESTERS holding signs calling for the repeal of the 18th Amendment.

PROTESTERS

We want our beer!
The end of prohibition is here!
We want our beer!
The end of prohibition is here!

Heck leans his head back against the wall of the patrol wagon, smiling as he closes his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

END