

IN THE TALL GRASS

Screenplay by
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Based on the novella by Stephen King and Joe Hill

May 30, 2018
Production Draft

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A FIELD OF TALL GRASS seen from directly above. Hypnotic patterns form as a breeze caresses the countless blades. We come closer and the susurrations of the grass sounds like waves cresting on the ocean. ...Or a chorus of voices. Beckoning. Building. From a WHISPER ...Until they are DEAFENING.

EXT. ROUTE 400, KANSAS - MORNING

SILENCE and blinding sun.

We TILT DOWN TO an empty two lane blacktop, which bisects an expanse of Kansas prairie. Geometric in its flatness. Nothing out here but farmland and big sky.

The serenity is broken by the distant DRONE of a car engine, which grows into a RATTLY ROAR as a 2008 RED MAZDA blasts right over us.

INT. MAZDA, TRAVELING - MORNING

CAL (21) drives. Bespeckled and a little overweight, he looks like someone whose fingers rarely linger far from a keyboard. At this moment, however, one hand is firmly planted on the steering wheel, while the other struggles to maintain hold of an overstuffed hamburger.

Beside him is a pretty girl, BECKY (19). She seems like she might be out of Cal's league. She also happens to be SIX MONTHS PREGNANT. Her chair is set all the way back, giving her expansive belly the room it needs. In her hands is a dog-eared copy of *Jane Eyre*. But her eyes are on the road ahead.

SAM COOK on the stereo fills the silence between them:

"...just call my name, I'm not ashamed, I'll come running back to you..."

Becky casts a sideways glance at Cal's burger.

BECKY

I think I'm getting nauseous.

CAL

You gonna puke again?... Want me to pull over?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

It's your burger.... I can smell
the meat.

CAL

Then crack a window.

She rolls down her window all the way. Lets the fragrant
spring air caress her face.

BECKY

Ah, better.
(breathing it in)
What is that? Milkweed?

Cal shrugs.

BECKY

Smells like our old cottage.
Remember that field by the creek?
Where dad took us fly-fishing?

CAL

Took *you*. You know me and fish.

BECKY

Yeah. And yet you'd happily
consume the flesh of a fellow
mammal.

CAL

Like to keep it in the family.

Becky snorts her dissent, and we are suddenly and keenly
aware that Cal and Becky are BROTHER AND SISTER.

BECKY

Does dad think I'm an idiot?

CAL

He and mom were nineteen when they
had me.

BECKY

But they were "*MAR-ried*". ...Maybe
I gave up on Travis too easily.

Cal glances at her swollen belly, then at A SILVER
PENDANT that hangs around her neck.

CAL

I'd say he gave up on you.
Therefore, I say, fuck 'im.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BECKY

Right. Fuck 'im.

Becky kills Sam Cook mid-chorus. A calming silence. The rhythm of the road fills the car and her mind.

After a few moments...

CAL

How about some Permanent Waves?

BECKY

Not sure Geddy Lee and Kansas are a good fit.

CAL

All right, DJ B, you choose.

She turns back to the monotonous view.

BECKY

I don't know. What music goes with endless flat nothing?

CAL

Hey, look at that...

Ahead, a few boarded up houses leading to the wreckage of a "Bowl-a-drome", also derelict.

BECKY

Bet that was *the* place to hang in '76.

CAL

Oh, yeah. A real Disco Inferno.

Becky picks up her iPhone, scrolls through her music library.

BECKY

That's the ticket. The Trammps.
ABBA. KC and the Sunshine Band...
Earth Wind and Fire...

Further on is a clapboard church. A single spire, rotted, listing, peeling white paint. A sign out front designates it as "*The Church of the Black Rock of the Redeemer*".

CAL

What goes with *The Black Rock of the Redeemer*?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BECKY
Pull over.

CAL
What?

BECKY
Pull over!

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

The Mazda turns off to the side of the road. Becky opens her door and heaves onto the dusty ground.

Cal rubs her back as she gets the last of it out. Then hands her a bottle of water.

CAL
Here.

She takes it, grateful. Rinses and spits.

BECKY
Shouldn't I be over morning sickness by now?

CAL
I wouldn't worry. Every woman's body is different.

BECKY
What do you know about women's bodies?

CAL
Not enough. ...You're not worried are you?

BECKY
Nah. I'm just thinking... Is this the right thing?

CAL
What do you mean?

BECKY
Maybe... Maybe we should turn back.

CAL
What? We're half way to San Diego.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

It's been... It's so hard to know for sure...

CAL

Look, Beck, I know it's not in your nature to put yourself first but... But in this case, I don't think you should take mom and dad's feelings into account. You shouldn't take my feelings into account. I don't even think you should take the baby's needs into account. This is about *you*.

Becky processes this. Concedes.

BECKY

Yeah. ...Guess I have another fifteen hundred miles to decide, right?

CAL

Right. Let's just get back--

BECKY

You hear that?

CAL

Hear--?

Becky puts an insistent finger to her lips. And as she does so, we can hear a FAINT CRY carried on the wind...

BOY (O.S.)

Heeeeeelp...

Her eyes search the field.

BECKY

Hello? Someone out there?

Another long pause, then from the grass...

BOY (O.S.)

Help me! Help me!

She turns to her brother.

BECKY

Sounds like he's really in trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Becky's hand finds her belly. Something about the distress of this child harmonizes with her fears for her own baby.

BOY (O.S.)
Heeeeeelp... I'm lost in here...

Cal can see that his sister is truly concerned.

CAL
Oookay. Better haul him out.

Becky gets out of the car, gingerly side-stepping her vomit. The sun beats down on her, making her woozy.

BECKY
Awfully hot all of a sudden.

CAL
Be careful, don't fall down into that ditch. I'm gonna get this thing off the side of the road.

Cal pulls her door shut and drives into the church's parking area. There are other cars, a dozen or so. They are dusty, look as though they have been sitting here for quite some time. Months or longer. He finds a spot next to A DODGE MINIVAN.

Meanwhile, Becky turns her attention back to the field. It undulates under the influence of a hot wind, giving the impression that the countless blades of grass are components of a larger organism.

BECKY
Kid? Hey, kid! Can you hear me?

A beat.

BOY (O.S.)
Yes! Help me! I've been stuck in here for DAYS!

She looks down the embankment. There is an area of trampled grass. Probably where the boy went in. She starts down, careful because of her condition.

ANOTHER VOICE stops her mid-step. This one belongs to a WOMAN, brittle, panicked...

WOMAN (O.S.)
Tobin, stop calling. Stop calling, honey!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BECKY

Hello? ...What's going on?

BOY (O.S.)

We're lost. Please! Please help!

WOMAN (O.S.)

No! No, Tobin, no!

Becky continues to the bottom of the embankment. The grass is taller than it seemed from the road. It forms a wall of green at least six or seven feet in height. The air around it buzzes with an aggravated WHIR OF CICADAS.

She turns as Cal joins her in the gully.

BECKY

There's a woman in there with him.
She's being weird.

The boy's listless voice calls to them once more.

BOY (O.S.)

Where are you? Are you coming?

BECKY

Maybe we should call for help.

Becky fishes out her cell phone from her pants pocket. Checks the screen, a strong five-bar signal.

BOY (O.S.)

Please, I can't find my way out.

CAL

Kid, you're right next to us. Can you see the road?

BOY (O.S.)

(sounding very close)
*No, I can't see anything. Help.
Please!*

CAL

(to Becky)
He's right there.

Cal bounds into the grass.

BECKY

Cal, wait...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CAL

Hang on, kid. Captain Cal to the rescue. Da da da!

Somehow the thought of losing sight of Cal causes Becky's pulse to quicken. She dials 9-1-1 as she follows her brother into the grass.

BECKY

Slow down...

IN SLOW MOTION we see Becky cross the threshold...

And in an instant she is swallowed by the field.

INT. FIELD - MORNING

Becky struggles to keep Cal within sight as the line clicks and a ROBOT VOICE answers.

ROBOT VOICE

(on phone)

Emergency services. Please stay on the line. This call will be recorded.

BECKY

Hello?

A beat then...

OPERATOR

(on phone)

Kiowa County 9-1-1. What is your location and the nature of your emergency, caller?

BECKY

Uh... I'm on Route 400. I... uh... don't know the name of the town but there's a broken down roller rink... no, I guess it's a bowling alley, next to a church. Rock of the Redeemer or something... And some kid is lost in the grass--

OPERATOR

(on phone)

Caller, we've got a very bad connection here. Please restate your--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The operator's voice vanishes under a blanket of static. Becky looks at her phone again. One bar now... dwindling... then replaced with 'No Service'.

Looking up from the phone she realizes that she has lost sight of her brother.

BECKY

Cal?

She steps deeper into the field, feeling a wave of irrational panic.

BECKY

Cal?...

EXT. FIELD/WITH CAL - MORNING

Cal trudges through the muddy ground. The shade of the grass keeps everything wet and Cal curses as his sneakers fill with gritty water.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Go back to the road. Go back while you still can!

BOY (O.S.)

Mommy! Mommy! They want to help!

SCREAMS. BLOOD CURDLING. Cal stops in his tracks.

CAL

Kid?

The screams morph into LAUGHTER.

Then THRASHING SOUNDS.

Close. Right in front of him.

Cal takes a breath, smelling danger. And yet somehow emboldened. He bounds forward, swiping at the endless layers of grass.

He finds nothing. Just more green.

CAL

Kid? *Tobin?* You still there?!

BOY (O.S.)

Help me pleeeeeease!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cal reacts. "Help" comes from his right... but "Me" comes from his left.

CAL

What?...

Looking back at the path he cut through the grass, he sees the long stalks springing back to their full height.

Strong grass they have here in Kansas.

Cal is suddenly feeling ill at ease, suddenly cognizant that he can no longer see his sister.

CAL

Becky? ...Beck?!

Her voice sounds out from a short distance away.

BECKY (O.S.)

Chill, I'm right here. I lost the 9-1-1 chick. You have any bars?

CAL

I left my phone in the car... And my glasses.

(then, turning)

Tobin!

BOY (O.S.)

(faint now)

What? Are you coming? You have to keep coming! I can't find you!

CAL

Jesus, kid, you sound like you're headed for Nebraska. Stay still! Okay? I don't care how scared you are, DON'T MOVE! LET US COME TO YOU!

Cal looks around. Still no Becky.

CAL

Becky? Where the hell are you?

EXT. FIELD/INTERCUT BECKY AND CAL - MORNING

Becky is feeling the effect of the relentless sun and humidity. She is drenched in sweat, stomps wearily through the mud.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

I'm here. ...Cal, something's not right about this. I think we should go back to the road.

CAL

What about the kid and his mom?

BECKY

Let's get back together first. I'll keep talking and you work your way back to me.

CAL

All right. Yeah, good idea.

BECKY

Um... what do you talk about when you're lost in a field?

CAL

Thousands of miles of gabbing and now you can't think of anything to say?

Becky searches her mind, then...

BECKY

(reciting)

"There once was a guy named McSweeney, who spilled some gin on his weenie..."

Becky stamps her muddy sneakers in time.

BECKY

"...Just to be couth he added vermouth, then slipped his girl a martini."

CAL

Oh, that's charming.

BOY (O.S.)

Hey you guys! Are you looking for me? I'm scared!

CAL

YES! YES, OKAY! HANG ON! Becky? Becky? Keep talking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Becky cradles her swollen tummy, feeling her mouth getting parched. She gathers saliva, and belts out another one...

BECKY

"There once was a woman named
Jill, who swallowed an exploding
pi--"

CAL

Stop, stop. I overshot you
somehow.

Becky turns to his voice. Indeed, he moved past her without connecting.

BECKY

Quit fucking around, Cal. This is
not funny.

CAL

Becky?

BECKY

What?

CAL

You're right. There's something
wrong here.

BECKY

All right, let's do this. ...On
the count of three, we both jump
with our hands raised in the air.

CAL

Can you jump?

BECKY

Of course I can jump. What do you
think?

CAL

I think you're going to have a
baby this summer. That's what I
think.

BECKY

I can still... Cal, stop walking
away!

CAL

I didn't move.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BECKY

You did, you must have. You still
are!

CAL

I swear, I didn't--

BECKY

Forget it. Let's just do this.

She braces herself. Raises her hands.

BECKY

One! Two!... THREE!

Becky leaps upward, hands raised, impressively high given her stature and weighted belly. Clearing the grass, she glimpses Cal a short distance away. She lands, relieved.

BECKY

You're close. ...One more time.

CAL

(also relieved)
All right.

BECKY

One... Two... Three...

Becky leaps again. ***But this time Cal is at least a football field away,*** the church and the road a half a mile further on.

Impossible.

She lands hard in the muck, falling back on her ass, seriously confused now and starting to become frightened.

BOY (O.S.)

Careful! Don't you get lost too!

The boy's words are followed by LAUGHTER. Was it the boy... No... It wasn't a child's laughter. Doesn't sound like the mother either.

BECKY

Cal?!...

EXT. FIELD/WITH CAL - MORNING

Cal is equally unnerved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL
This is nuts. This is fucking
nuts? Becky?!

Cal starts to run. Directionless, irrational. Willing
himself to find her.

CAL
Becky?!

BECKY (O.S.)
Over here!

CAL
Becky!!!

Running. Grass whipping by. Scoring his face. Sharp.
Sticky like fly paper.

BECKY (O.S.)
OVER HERE!!!!

CAL
BECKY!

He trips and lands in the mud. The stuff is thick. Fecal.
It gets into his mouth and nose. He gags at the stench.
Then realizes the smell is coming from somewhere else.

He lifts his head up, sees something just a little
further on. Brownish. He crawls over to it, waving the
grass out of the way until he finds...

A DOG. Golden Retriever. Dead. "Freddy" on the dog-tag. A
shifting blanket of blue bottles decorates its matted
fur. The tongue, greenish-white, is lolled between
swollen gums. It is missing an eye.

The sight of it prompts Cal to emit a clipped YELP of
revulsion.

EXT. FIELD/WITH BECKY - MORNING

BECKY
Cal? What is it?

CAL (O.S.)
*Nothing. ...Just slipped. ...What
should we do? I'm getting a little
freaked out here.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

It's okay, we're going to get out of this. We just have to keep our heads.

CAL (O.S.)

What about the kid?

BECKY

Forget the kid, this is about us now!

EXT. FIELD - DUSK

The sun creeps low over the horizon of grass. Faintly, we can hear Becky and Cal calling to each other.

Our VIEW drops and we find ourselves immersed in the green. From this vantage point a FIGURE approaches. It materializes through the grass like a fuzzy cathode ray image, resolving into...

BECKY

Her lips are chapped and a little swollen. She plods through the muck with increasing difficulty. She's been at this all day.

Her hands find her belly as she stops to rest, then looks heavenward as if for guidance. Nothing up there but a distant jet's contrail, slicing magenta sky.

Becky drops down heavily into the mud. She cradles her belly and rocks on the spot. Wondering. Wondering how she ever came to be in this place.

Behind her, the sound of footsteps. Becky is suddenly back on her feet. She sees...

A SHAPE

Moving towards her. She runs to meet it.

BECKY

Cal? Cal?!

The grass parts and she finds herself face to face with a middle-aged man.

ROSS HUMBOLT (late 40's). Friendly, soft features scream suburban dad. A stubbled chin and muck-crusting clothes imply he's been here for quite a while.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS

Hi there.

Becky steps back. Cautious.

ROSS

You all right?

Becky nods, still uncertain.

CAL (O.S.)

Becky? You there?!

BECKY

There's a man here.

ROSS

It's all right, Cal. This is Tobin's daddy.

(then to Becky)

You wanna get out? Just come with me.

CAL (O.S.)

Becky?!

Becky remains cagey.

BECKY

(to Ross)

If you could get out, why're you still *in*?

ROSS

I'm looking for my boy. And my wife. It'll be dark soon. You better come with me.

Becky doesn't respond, remains stubbornly where she is. Ross tries a different tact.

ROSS

I understand. You don't know me from Adam. Ross Humbolt's the name. Real estate's the game. Poughkeepsie. Wife's Natalie. Boy's Tobin.

CAL (O.S.)

Becky?!!! What's happening?!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BECKY

I'm okay, Cal!
 (to Ross)
 You can find my brother?

ROSS

Your brother... I'll try. Not like
 walking a straight line though.
 Nothing is 'round here.

Becky regards him, desperation trumping fear.

ROSS

Just follow me. But stay close,
 okay? Whatever you do, don't lose
 sight of me.

BECKY

Okay.

CAL (O.S.)

BECKY!!!

ROSS

Hang tight, Cal. We're coming for
 you!

He motions to Becky and leads her further into the grass.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

It's dark now. A pregnant harvest moon above. Swollen and
 orange. We find Cal wandering aimlessly in the murky
 light.

CAL

(weak)
 Becky?!

He looks up at the grass, defeated.

CAL

I'm never going to find her.

TOBIN (O.S.)

You can find things...

Cal turns to see an emaciated little boy standing right
 behind him.

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CONTINUED:

He is about ten years old, sporting a mud-splattered T-shirt with a picture of a ball of string, and printed over it "WORLD'S LARGEST BALL OF TWINE -- CAWKER CITY, KANSAS". He holds a dead crow by one yellow leg.

TOBIN

...But it's easier once they're dead.

CAL

Tobin?

TOBIN

The field doesn't move dead things 'round.

Tobin kneels on the ground and begins to bury the crow in the soft earth.

CAL

Tobin, did you lure us in here? Tell me. I won't be mad.

TOBIN

No. We heard someone else yelling. A man. He was calling for help. That's how we got in. That's how it works.

CAL

How long have you been here?

The boy shrugs.

TOBIN

I'm not sure.
(a beat, the flatly)
Becky... Your sister... she's gonna die soon.

A chill runs up Cal's spine.

CAL

How do you know she's my sister?

TOBIN

The rock. The rock teaches you to hear the grass, and the tall grass knows *everything*.

CAL

Then you must know where she is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOBIN

I could find out for you. No, I can do better than that. I can show you. Wanna go see her? Wanna check on her? Come on. Follow me.

Cal isn't sure what he should do. But Tobin doesn't wait. He simply turns and walks into the grass.

With no better option, Cal follows, pausing long enough to glance back at the half-buried bird. His own reflection stares back at him in its dead eye.

EXT. FIELD/WITH BECKY AND ROSS - NIGHT

Ross cuts a meandering path through the grass. Becky follows still maintaining a distance.

ROSS

How far you along?

Becky doesn't understand the question. Ross points at her tummy.

BECKY

Six months.

ROSS

That's nice. I remember when Natalie was pregnant. Those were the salad days. Enjoy it. Enjoy your baby because it goes fast.

Becky nods, a bittersweet smile. Ross sees this. Intuits.

ROSS

Dad not in the picture?

BECKY

He... wasn't ready for it.

Ross pauses mid-stride.

ROSS

Too bad for him. Family's everything. If there's one thing I know for certain, it's that simple truth.

Ross offers her an encouraging smile. Becky relaxes a little. He's beginning to earn her trust.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS

Now let's keep going. Sooner we
get to them the better.

He continues onward. Becky follows, feeling reassured.

But something stops her: Sticking out of the mud is A
NYLON PINK KANGAROO POUCH, the contents has spilled.
Among the items are an open bottle of Advil and some
manicuring scissors. And a little further, a BLOODY CLUMP
OF LONG AUBURN HAIR.

When she looks up Ross is gone.

BECKY

Mister?... Ross?

Becky spins, suddenly unsure what direction they came
from.

BECKY

Hello?

A welling sense of danger raises the hairs on the back of
her neck.

A SOUND behind her.

BECKY

Hello?!

Nothing there.

BECKY

Cal?!... Cal, can you hear
me?!...!

No response.

BECKY

CAL?!...!

EXT. FIELD/WITH CAL AND TOBIN - NIGHT

Cal is growing increasingly anxious and exhausted. Tobin
waves him on.

TOBIN

Just a little further.

The boy skips ahead, Cal struggles to keep up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL

Slow down, I'm--

Cal breaks through the grass into A CLEARING.

Tobin bounds towards A MONOLITHIC SHARD OF ROCK. It stands at least twelve feet high, lodged in the earth at an unnatural angle as if it had dropped from the sky.

TOBIN

Here it is!

Tobin places one little hand against the glossy surface. Shivers a little.

TOBIN

Boy, that feels good. Come on Cal, try it.

As Cal comes closer he can hear a low frequency hum, like the buzz of high tension wires, and he can see runes etched in its glossy surface... Or on closer inspection, primitive drawings. People. Holding hands. Dancing.

A suspended moment as the moon crests over the monolith and a hot wind blows through the ring of grass, making the blades look like spectators in an arena.

Cal finds his hand reaching to touch the stone...

Before he can make contact, A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM rips through the night air.

CAL

Becky?

The spell is broken.

BECKY (O.S.)

Get away from me! Get away!!!!

TOBIN

Sorry, Cal. Too late.

Another guttural cry from Becky sets Cal into motion. He runs back into the field. As he disappears into the grass he can hear Tobin calling after him...

TOBIN (O.S.)

Wait! You'll never find her that way!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

But Cal runs and runs, chasing the cries of his sister as they boomerang around him, sending him in one direction, and then another.

CAL

Becky? Becky?! **BECKY?!!!**

We PULL AWAY from him, RISING and RISING until he is a mere speck lost within a dark ocean of green.

EXT. ROUTE 400 - DAY

BLINDING LIGHT.

WE REPEAT THE EXACT SAME SHOT FROM THE OPENING, TILTING DOWN from sun to the 400.

Only this time...

A BEAT UP FORD RANGER, blasts by.

INT. RANGER, TRAVELING - DAY

TRAVIS MCKEAN (21) is at the wheel, his prize Fender guitar in the passenger seat. He has the ragged handsome looks of a hipster. But right now he's bone-tired. Looks like he has been driving for days.

His eyes flit to his gas meter. Riding dangerously close to the red.

EXT. GAS STATION, ROUTE 400 - DAY

Travis finishes pumping gas into his truck. He takes out a pack of cigarettes and taps one into his mouth.

The ATTENDANT inside the station BANGS loudly on the glass, points at a 'No Smoking' sign.

Travis nods to him and tucks the unlit cigarette behind his ear, then approaches the man, holding up a photo:

Becky before she was pregnant. Also one of Cal.

TRAVIS

I'm looking for these two. Ever seen 'em?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The man regards the photos. Then looks into the boy's eyes. Can tell there is a story here, but cares not to ask. He shakes his head, no.

INT. RANGER, TRAVELLING - DAY

Travis sucks on his cigarette. A map sits on the passenger seat. It's marked with a route leading from Portsmouth, New Hampshire to San Diego. Cal and Becky's route.

The photo of Becky is tucked into the passenger side sun visor. His eyes flit to her. Then back to the road where he sees a row of decrepit houses, followed by the rotting Bowl-a-drome. Then: "*Church of the Black Rock of the Redeemer*". A dozen or so cars are parked out front. ...Among them, a red Mazda.

TRAVIS

Holy shit.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT/ROAD - DAY

The Ranger pulls off the road and backs up into the parking area next to the church. The door opens and Travis jumps out.

He approaches the Mazda, checks the license plate. There can be no question, this is Cal and Becky's car. He looks inside. The sandwich that Cal left on the front seat is now a slithering mass of maggots.

He turns to the other cars. A Dodge minivan, a pick-up truck loaded with construction equipment, and other older rotting derelicts.

He turns to the expanse.

On the other side of the road, the tall grass sways in the breeze. Travis cups his hands together and belts out...

TRAVIS

BECKY?!

Waits.

No response.

His eyes fall on the church.

INT. CHURCH OF THE BLACK ROCK OF THE REDEEMER - DAY

Travis opens the door to the church. Surprisingly, not locked. He steps inside.

Dim light filters through a prism of stained glass, illuminating the rotting remains of abandoned pews. This place has not been used for worship in a very long time. And yet it seems untouched. No vandalism. No hint that any creature, human or beast has been here since the day its doors closed.

TRAVIS

Becky?

Travis moves deeper through the space. Where the altar should be there is only A BLACK DOOR.

Travis tries to open it.

Locked.

Peering around a corner, he sees a narrow stairwell. Decides to climb, even as a few of the rickety steps crack under his weight.

INT. BELL TOWER - DAY

Travis reaches the top of the church spire, home to a rusted bell. From here he has an unobstructed view of the surrounding landscape in all directions. The grass seems to extend forever.

TRAVIS

BECKY?!!!

He rings the bell at ear-shattering volume. A sound that should be audible for miles. Travis scours the horizon for any sign of life.

Nothing.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT/ROAD - DAY

Travis leaves the church behind. Next he tries his phone.

Dials 9-1-1. A moment later...

ROBOT VOICE

(on phone)

Emergency services.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROBOT VOICE (CONT'D)

*Please stay on the line. This call
will be recorded.*

TRAVIS

Hello?...

OPERATOR

(on phone)
*Kiowa County 9-1-1. What is your
location and the nature of your
emergency, caller?*

TRAVIS

I'm on Route 400. By a church.
Black Rock of the Redeemer. I
found--

OPERATOR

(on phone)
*Sir, your signal is very weak...
Can you repeat your location?*

TRAVIS

Route 400... Hello?...

Static fills the line.

TRAVIS

Can you hear me?...

Travis looks at the phone display: *No Service.*

He kicks the dusty road in frustration. Stares across the road at the field... Something catches his eye. An area where the grass has been trampled. Closer inspection reveals footprints. Two sets.

INT. RANGER - DAY

Travis stuffs a bottle of water into a backpack and places a baseball cap over his matted hair. Half considers bringing his guitar but thinks the better of it.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Travis scans the horizon of green. A hot breeze blows across the plane and the grass waves. An invitation to enter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He starts down the embankment, steps into the field and disappears from sight.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Travis's boots sink into the mud. He marches in a direction that he thinks is West. Towards the sun. No reason other than it is a *direction*. But he's smart. He marks his trail. Every ten feet or so he ties a blade of grass into a knot.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Travis continues his trek.

After some time, he pauses to sip from his water bottle. Then notices something is wrong. He looks to the sky. Did the sun move? He checks his shadow. It is cast to the right of him.

He readjusts his position so that he is once again facing the sun. He heads towards it. But as he walks, impossibly, the sun moves away from him again.

He consults his shadow. Now it is cast to his left.

What. The. Fuck.

EXT. FIELD, LATER - DAY

CLOSE on a cicada chirping merrily on a blade of grass.

A CROW snaps it up and swallows it whole. It scans the periphery with preternaturally intelligent eyes, then blurts out an angry SQUAWK, taking flight as Travis appears.

He finishes off the last of his bottle of water and taps out his last cigarette. Drops the crumpled cigarette pack on the ground.

TRAVIS

Becky?!

Takes stock of his situation. It's getting late. He decides to abandon the search and follow the markers back the way he came.

EXT. FIELD - DUSK

Travis, exhausted, follows his markers. He isn't at the road yet and we can tell from his expression that he is starting to get worried.

Something catches his eye. His discarded cigarette pack. He picks it up, confused. He has gone in a circle. Fuck.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

A big harvest moon hangs above, casting the field in pale light. Travis hikes aimlessly, now truly lost.

Finally, he comes to a rest. Utterly drained. He flops onto the soft, wet earth.

He gazes up at the stars. A breath. He takes out the photo of Becky. She looks down at him from that frozen moment.

His eyelids grow heavy. They begin to droop and--

A SOUND

Makes him sit bolt upright.

Movement.

He spins, straining to see in the dark.

There... RUSTLING.

TRAVIS

Hello?

ANOTHER SOUND.

He whirls around. Something else behind him.

Cautiously, he crawls towards it. Closer... Closer...

Draws back the veil of grass to see

SHADOWS

Something moving in there.

Travis turns again, only to find himself confronted by...

A FACE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He jumps back.

Standing before him is TOBIN.

Even more gaunt than when we last saw him, covered in scrapes and bruises. Dirt has found its way into every fibre of his clothing and every pore in his skin. And yet he seems oddly at ease.

TOBIN

You okay?

Travis is still in a state of shock. His eyes flit nervously in all directions.

TRAVIS

Who are you?

Tobin puts a finger to his lips.

TOBIN

Do you hear that?

Travis, still stunned, shakes his head.

TRAVIS

Hear what?

Tobin cocks his head. The only sound is unceasing play of the breeze through the grass.

TOBIN

Everyone else. If you don't pay attention, they go away.

TRAVIS

Who do?

TOBIN

Other people who are stuck here, I think. But they're not connected to us, so it doesn't really matter.

TRAVIS

And we are connected?

TOBIN

Sure. 'Cause you know me.

TRAVIS

No, I don't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

 TOBIN
You don't remember?

 TRAVIS
We've never met before. I'm--

 TOBIN
Travis.

 TRAVIS
 (stunned)
How do you know my--

 TRAVIS
You're looking for Becky.

 TRAVIS
You *know Becky?*!

 TOBIN
Of course.

Travis cannot process this.

 TRAVIS
How could you possibly--? *Who the hell are you?*

 TOBIN
Tobin.

 TRAVIS
Tobin...?

 TOBIN
You really don't remember?

Travis shakes his head.

 TRAVIS
Do you know where she is?

Tobin considers this...

 TRAVIS
You do, don't you?

The child neither confirms nor denies.

 TRAVIS
You gotta tell me!

Tobin blinks. Sucks air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TOBIN

I can show you. But--

TRAVIS

But... what?

TOBIN

You *sure* you wanna see her?

TRAVIS

Of course! Please... Tobin.

TOBIN

All right. But you gotta stay close.

And without another word, he turns and slips deeper into the field. Travis scrambles after him.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Tobin moves briskly, erratically, following a twisted path until...

He sees something. Just a little distance up ahead.

TOBIN

There.

He points. Travis can make out the shape of someone, lying on the ground.

TRAVIS

Becky?!

Travis hacks through the grass. He can see her now, lying faced away from him.

TRAVIS

Becky!

She doesn't move. He comes up to her, his elation turning to concern as he reaches out...

...And turns her to face him.

She is dead.

In a state of decay. Her skin is fish-belly-colored. The eyes open and milky. Maggots have made a nest in her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The dried blood that colors her legs and the ground around her tells the story. A miscarriage. A hemorrhage. Her stomach is flat. The baby is gone.

TOBIN

The field doesn't move dead things. Makes 'em easier to find.

Travis cannot accept this. He raises Becky's head, willing her back to life.

TRAVIS

Oh... god... oh...

TOBIN

Now you sure you don't wanna see the rock? It'll make you feel better.

Tobin registers something on the periphery of his senses.

TRAVIS

Help...

But Tobin is gone.

TRAVIS

Tobin?...

He slumps next to Becky. Falls silent. Broken. Empty.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Travis lies on the ground next to Becky's body. The sounds of the night. The eternal susurrations of the field.

As his thoughts drift to the past, we hear...

BECKY (O.S.)

I'm not having an abortion.

INT. BECKY'S BEDROOM - THREE MONTHS EARLIER - NIGHT

Becky sits in a room crammed with the strata of her life. Stuffed animals and dolls compete for space with bookshelves filled with Jane Austin, Emily Dickinson and other staples of a burgeoning Women's Lit Major.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At this point, she doesn't look pregnant. But she feels it. Her hand rests on her stomach like a protective shield.

Travis stands at an uncomfortable distance.

TRAVIS

Things are good the way they are.
Why do we have to change anything?

Becky is too angry to cry, but she can tell the tears are coming, and she wants to get through this before they do.

BECKY

Because I'm not changing this.

TRAVIS

I thought you were like... pro-choice.

BECKY

I am. Doesn't mean I don't want this baby. The two aren't mutually exclusive.

TRAVIS

I don't understand how it's even possible. I was pretty damned careful.

BECKY

You saying it was someone else?

TRAVIS

No, of course not.

BECKY

There's never been anyone else, Travis. Only *you*.

TRAVIS

Just saying, I was careful.

BECKY

Ever hear of seepage?

TRAVIS

Seepage?

BECKY

Something leaked. Condoms tear. Sperm gets out! That's life. I feel it in me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BECKY (CONT'D)

If you knew what that was like,
you wouldn't dream of ending it!

TRAVIS

You wanna keep it down?

BECKY

My parents already know.

TRAVIS

They do?

BECKY

'Course. I can't keep something
like this from them.

TRAVIS

What'd they say.

BECKY

Exactly what they should. They
want me to make the right decision
for myself.

TRAVIS

And what about *me*? I can't start a
family now. I don't have any
money. I don't have a decent job.

BECKY

Then get one. I will. I'll do
whatever it takes.

TRAVIS

But you're only nineteen.

BECKY

And you're twenty-one. Take some
responsibility!

TRAVIS

Okay.... Say we did. Then what? We
get married?

BECKY

No... Maybe... Would that be such
a terrible thing?

An ugly pause.

TRAVIS

Maybe not. If it were just us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BECKY

Please, do *not* go there.

TRAVIS

It's hard to avoid when he's with us every minute of the day.

BECKY

I put up with your sub-norm friends. At least Cal's got more than a few brain cells to rub together.

TRAVIS

Maybe so, but my friends know what boundaries are. Your brother's always hanging over your shoulder. ...Over my shoulder.

CAL (O.S.)

Becky, you okay?

Cal stands there in the hall, where he has likely heard the entire exchange.

Travis blanches at this intrusion.

CAL

Sorry, were you having a private conversation?

Travis regards the two of them. Turns cold.

TRAVIS

It's over.

That does it. The tears come. Becky can't hold them back any longer and she hates herself for it.

CAL

I'll come back later.

BECKY

No. Stay.

Becky takes a silver pendant from around her neck and holds it out for Travis.

TRAVIS

Keep it.

And with that he pushes past Cal and stomps down the stairs.

EXT. BECKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A typical middle-class New England home. Travis comes out the front door, slamming it behind him. He crosses over to a beat-up Ford Ranger. Opens the driver's side door.

Pauses...

He looks back to the house. He can see Becky's lonely silhouette in her bedroom window.

Travis is having second thoughts.

He shuts the door to the Ranger... Looks as though he is about to have a change of heart... Then he sees Cal come over to Becky. She folds into his embrace.

This stops Travis.

He makes a final decision.

Travis climbs into his truck and drives off down the street.

EXT. FIELD - MORNING

The world reflected in A SINGLE DROP OF DEW. It slides languidly down a stalk of grass... Until it collides with another drop. The optics warp as two reflected worlds become one. And then warp again as they merge with a third. Gravity gets the better of this oversized globule of water and it detaches from the grass, landing on the face of...

TRAVIS

His eyes flicker open and he rises from where he slept next to Becky's lifeless body.

The memory of what is past and the agonizing discovery that lies before him are the twin swords that puncture his soul.

He takes the pendant from around her neck. We get our first close look at it. It's not real silver. A tacky trinket. A plastic GRINNING CRAB holding a sign, "Benny's Crab Shack" in its pincers. One leg is broken off.

Travis pockets it, stands, and with a parting look, disappears into the field.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Travis walks aimlessly. A purposeless, dazed quest for nothing.

The sound of A DOG BARKING stops him in his tracks.

TRAVIS

Hello?...

A beat...

MORE BARKING and then VOICES. Distant but distinct.

TRAVIS

HELLO?! HELP! HELP!

He strains to hear if there is a response.

TRAVIS

HEEEEEELP! I'M STUCK IN HERE!

Nothing... Then...

TOBIN (O.S.)

Hello? Is someone out there?

Travis looks in the direction of the voice. It sounds like Tobin, but different... sweeter, brighter...

TRAVIS

Tobin? Is that you?! ...Where are you?

Next, we hear a woman.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Honey? What are you doing? Don't cross the road!

TOBIN (O.S.)

(to the woman)

There's a man. I heard him in there in the grass. He knows my name!

Travis stands, calls out.

TRAVIS

Tobin, it's Travis!... What? You don't remember me now?

EXT. THE CHURCH OF THE BLACK ROCK OF THE REDEEMER - DAY

We change our perspective to outside the field. Back at the church. The parking lot of abandoned cars. Becky and Cal's car is conspicuously absent. But the DODGE MINIVAN is there and we realize now that it belongs to the HUMBOLTS.

TOBIN, rosy-cheeked, clean, unblemished, stands with his Golden Retriever, FREDDY, on the opposite side of the road. He gestures to the field of tall grass.

TOBIN

Over there, Mommy. You hear him?

He looks to his mother, NATALIE HUMBOLT, auburn hair, decked out in a colorful jumpsuit girdled by a pink nylon kangaroo pouch.

NATALIE

Where?

TRAVIS (O.S.)

*Hello? Are you on the road?...
Help me! Please... Get help! Call
somebody!*

Tobin has Freddy by the collar. He can barely hold on as the dog BARKS excitedly at the field.

TOBIN

He needs help.

Freddy breaks free of his grasp and bounds into the grass.

TOBIN

Freddy! Come back!

Tobin chases after him.

NATALIE

Honey don't go--
(turns)
Ross!

ROSS HUMBOLT appears from around the other side of the church. Freshly shaved, his clothes starched and spotless. A typical middle-aged tourist on a family vacation. He has his cell pressed to one ear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS

(on the phone)

...We'll close when I get back next week. No, no, I'm telling you don't back out of escrow, you're not overpaying... just a moment please...

Ross cups his hand over the phone, calls out to his son.

ROSS

Toby! Stay close! Don't go in there. That's private property.

(back to the phone)

I'm sorry, I was just-- Hello?

Apparently, the person on the other end of the line has hung up. Ross curses to himself, pockets the phone and heads for the field.

ROSS

Tobin!

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Travis is totally baffled. He hears someone stomping into the grass.

TOBIN (O.S.)

Hello, mister? Where are you?!

TRAVIS

Hey kid! If you're out of the grass, don't come back in!

NATALIE (O.S.)

Tobin! Where are you?

TOBIN (O.S.)

I'm over here, mommy.

ROSS (O.S.)

Tobin Humbolt! Didn't you hear your mother. Get back here!

NATALIE (O.S.)

Honey, can you see him? Where is he?

TOBIN (O.S.)

Over here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now the sound of two more heavier sets of feet.

ROSS (O.S.)
Sounds like he's right in front--

TRAVIS
Are you Tobin's dad?!

The footsteps come to a halt.

ROSS (O.S.)
...Yeah. ...Who are you? What's going on?

TRAVIS
Don't come in here!

ROSS (O.S.)
A little late for that, buddy.

TRAVIS
What about your wife?

ROSS (O.S.)
Got her right next to me.

Travis shakes his head as the first inkling of what is happening sinks in.

TRAVIS
Is there anyone else with you?
Anyone on the road that can hear us?

ROSS (O.S.)
Just us. Now, you mind telling me who you are?

TRAVIS
Travis McKean. You don't know me. Doesn't matter. Just don't move. Stay where you are. I'll try to come to you. Tobin, where are you?

TOBIN (O.S.)
Over here!

TRAVIS
Okay, hold on, I'm going to find you first.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROSS (O.S.)
Stay away from my son, you hear me!

TRAVIS
He's in a whole shitload of trouble, mister! We all are!

EXT. FIELD/WITH ROSS AND NATALIE - DAY

Ross and Natalie are genuinely afraid.

NATALIE
(to Ross)
Honey, I'm getting scared.

ROSS
(quietly to Natalie)
It's only a field. That guy though, I'm not so sure about.
(calling to his son...)
Tobin, don't let that man get near you. Don't talk to him. You see him, run!

TOBIN (O.S.)
I'm afraid, Daddy!

NATALIE
You hear that? He went right by us. ...Tobin!

She splits off from Ross.

ROSS
Honey! Wait! He went the other way.

He heads in the other direction.

TRAVIS (O.S.)
Stop! No one move! That'll only make it worse.

EXT. FIELD/WITH TRAVIS - DAY

He stands on the spot

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRAVIS

Hello!? ...I'm not going to hurt
you!!!

Desperate now, he starts to walk.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Seen from high above, Travis's path is marked by the displacement of the grass. He moves on and on into the expanse. We see Ross, Natalie, Tobin and Freddy the dog too. All of them headed in completely different directions. Hopelessly lost.

EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT

Night has come to the field again. Travis lies fetal in a damp bed of mud. He empties the water out of one water-logged shoe. Then an ugly urge takes hold of him and despite his revulsion, he removes his other shoe and chugs the water down. He instantly gags. Spits grit. A new low.

Above, the grass waves serenely at him. Travis can't help the feeling that it is sentient... that in some way it is enjoying his suffering.

TRAVIS

You're loving this, aren't you?
This is what you like to do? Drive
people crazy.

As Travis's despair turns to anger, a thought occurs to him... From his pocket he removes the BOOK OF MATCHES.

He grabs a fist-full of grass and yanks it out by the roots. Kneeling before it like a penitent before an altar, he strikes a match. The little flame cuts into the night, filling the air with sulfur and a promise of mass destruction. But when Travis brings it to the grass it fizzles under the dew-fattened fibers.

He tries again. Same result. Finally, he lights the whole pack. An orgasm of flame that quickly extinguishes to zero effect.

He looks up at the grass again. An undulating wall of indifference.

TRAVIS

Fuck you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He crumples into the muck.

TRAVIS

Fuck. You.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Somewhere else in the field. The sound of laboured breathing. Grass parts and Ross appears. He shouts with a hoarse voice...

ROSS

Tobin?! ...Natalie?!

He waits a moment, praying for a reply. None is forthcoming.

ROSS

Okay, Rossy-boy. Hold it together.
Positive thinking. That's how
you're getting outta this.

(a calming breath)

*The mind that's light sells right.
The mind that's light sells
right...*

Ross resumes his trek, but with each step finds his sales mantra deteriorating into despair and anger.

ROSS

*The mind that's light... the mind
that's light... The mind that's...
... Fuck...*

(muttering)

...Fucking kid. If he'd just
listened... Or if his mother
woulda acted like one for once and
kept an eye on him...

Ross belts out angry now.

ROSS

Tobin!!!! ...Natalie!!!!

He scans the darkness, hopelessly. But something else is visible to him now. Through the grass. Something big. He moves towards it. The grass gives way to reveal a clearing, and in its center:

THE ROCK.

CONTINUED:

BECKY

Hot all of a sudden.

CAL

Be careful, don't fall down into that ditch. I'm gonna get this thing off the side of the road.

Cal drives into the parking area by the Church. We recognize the Humbolt's Dodge minivan nearby.

Becky stares out at the field.

EXT. FIELD/WITH TRAVIS - MORNING

Travis hikes through the field. Lost as ever. He stops when he hears a VOICE, distant, carried on the wind...

BECKY (O.S.)

(very faint)

"There once was a guy named McSweeney, who spilled some gin on his weenie... Just to be couth he added vermouth, then slipped his girl a martini."

Then another voice, familiar...

CAL (O.S.)

Oh, that's charming.

TOBIN (O.S.)

Hey you guys! Are you looking for me? I'm scared!

CAL (O.S.)

YES! YES, OKAY! HANG ON! Becky? Becky? Keep talking.

Travis can hardly believe his ears...

TRAVIS

(to himself,
disbelieving)

Becky...?

BECKY (O.S.)

"There once was a woman named Jill, who swallowed an exploding pi--"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL (O.S.)
*Stop, stop. I overshot you
 somehow.*

Travis SCREAMS at the top of his lungs.

TRAVIS
 BECKY! CAL! **ARE YOU HERE?!**

Silence for a beat. Then...

BECKY (O.S.)
Hello? Is someone else out there?!

TRAVIS
 Becky?! It's Travis!

EXT. FIELD/WITH BECKY AND CAL - MORNING

She is frozen on the spot. Every fiber of her being vibrating with the absolute freakiness of this.

BECKY
TRAVIS?!

TRAVIS (O.S.)
I'm here! I'm here too!

CAL (O.S.)
What--?!!!!!!

BECKY
 How the hell did you--?!

TRAVIS (O.S.)
I don't know... But I'm here!

CAL (O.S.)
Why? Why the fuck are you here?!!!

TRAVIS (O.S.)
I came looking for you!

BECKY
 Then how did you get here before
 us?

TRAVIS (O.S.)
I don't know.

EXT. FIELD/WITH TRAVIS - MORNING

Baffled but elated.

TRAVIS

You're here now. We're all here.
So, it doesn't--

BECKY (O.S.)

I still can't believe--

TOBIN (O.S.)

Travis?! Is that you?!

He can hear Tobin crying.

TRAVIS

Tobin? You okay?

TOBIN (O.S.)

*I found Freddy. He's dead. Someone
killed him.*

CAL (O.S.)

Who's Freddy?

TOBIN (O.S.)

My dog ...His guts are all out.

TRAVIS

Tobin, are you with Freddy now?

TOBIN (O.S.)

Yeah.

TRAVIS

Stay where you are. We're going to
come to you. Don't stop talking.

(then)

You hear that, Becky?... Cal?

CAL (O.S.)

Yeah, but we've already tried...

BECKY (O.S.)

And it didn't work.

TRAVIS

This time I think it might. Just
follow Tobin's voice. ...Tobin?
Start talking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL

Becky!

...She runs to him first.

BECKY

(to Cal)

I didn't think I'd ever--

Travis can't suppress a pang of jealousy as she hugs Cal like she never wants to let go.

CAL

It's okay, now... It's okay.

Finally, Becky releases him. Cal looks to Travis and takes stock of events.

CAL

How is this possible?

TRAVIS

(indicating Freddy)

The field doesn't move dead things.

Cal reacts to the grisly sight.

CAL

That makes no sense.

TRAVIS

Name one thing here that does.

BECKY

So, what are we going to do?

TRAVIS

I don't know. I don't have a fucking clue.

(to Tobin)

Sorry, kid.

Becky lets out a little groan of pain. Cal's attention snaps back to her.

CAL

You all right?

BECKY

Yeah, yeah.

(off his look)

Really.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAL

There has to be a reasonable explanation for all of this.

TRAVIS

Like what?

CAL

Like maybe something that grows here... Something that causes hallucinations.

TRAVIS

I haven't seen anything but grass.

BECKY

Something airborne? Spores?

TRAVIS

That are giving all of us the same hallucination?

CAL

Who's to say if this is your hallucination or mine?

TRAVIS

It's nobody's. This is real. Real as anything. Things just... move around here.

POV through the grass of SOMEONE watching from a short distance away.

Becky senses this, looks back. Nobody there. Turns to Travis.

BECKY

So, explain to us again how *you* got here?

TRAVIS

I followed you.

CAL

You must have been right on our asses the whole way.

TRAVIS

No. I came after...

BECKY

After what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TRAVIS

After you didn't show up in San Diego.

CAL

We only left two days ago.

Travis's eyes flit between Becky and Cal.

TRAVIS

It was a bit longer than that.

BECKY

How long?

TRAVIS

More like two months.

CAL

Now that *really* doesn't make sense.

TRAVIS

You're officially missing. Cops couldn't do anything of course. So I decided to find you myself. I saw your car and came in here looking for you and...

BECKY

But we just got here.

TRAVIS

You did and you didn't.

CAL

What's that supposed to mean?

TRAVIS

I don't know how to explain it, but...

Travis struggles to articulate the incomprehensible. And the unmentionable. Cal eyes him. Senses he is holding back.

TRAVIS

Let's just focus on how the hell we get out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CAL

Well, I'm not making Becky blindly walk through Wonderland anymore. We need a plan of some kind.

TRAVIS

We can't just sit here. I think we should move.

BECKY

I agree.

Cal looks at her, a little hurt by her dissent.

CAL

In which direction?

BECKY

I don't know... Same one we've been headed in?

CAL

Why? What's the point?

BECKY

The point is I don't want to stay here.

(then, quietly so
Tobin won't hear)

Someone is watching us. I can feel it.

Cal and Travis look around. Nothing visible but grass.

CAL

It's going to be dark soon. We'll just be wasting our energy. We need to rest. Especially you.

TRAVIS

I think you should listen to your sister. We need to get moving.

CAL

And I think you should shut your pie hole. You of all people are in no position to...

Cal stops himself. But Travis has been through too much to let it go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TRAVIS

Wasn't my idea for you to go on a road trip. What exactly was the point of that anyway?

BECKY

Look, can we just not get into this right now?

Travis decides not to push it further. He takes a breath, gathering his thoughts. An idea strikes him. He crouches down to Tobin.

TRAVIS

Hey, buddy. Hop on my shoulders.

Tobin climbs on and Travis rises so that Tobin is now elevated well above the top of the grass.

TRAVIS

See anything other than grass?

We shift our perspective ABOVE THE GRASS, rising to Tobin's perspective. The boy scans the expanse in all directions.

TOBIN

Just grass and more grass... Wait--

Tobin squints against the afternoon sun. The horizon of green is broken by what is clearly a man-made structure.

TRAVIS

What?

TOBIN

A building, I think...

CAL

That church?

TOBIN

No. ... I can't tell. It's too far away.

Travis eyeballs Cal.

TRAVIS

(to Tobin)

Which way?

Tobin casts a finger in the direction of the structures.

EXT. FIELD - LATE DAY

The sun hangs low in the sky. Travis leads. Tobin rides his shoulders, a human compass, never taking his eyes off the building.

Becky and Cal trudge along behind them.

TRAVIS
(looks up to Tobin)
Still see it?

TOBIN
Getting closer.

CAL
(to Travis)
I don't suppose you told anyone
where you were headed?

TRAVIS
Sure. Not that it'll make much
difference.

CAL
Somebody'll look for us.

TRAVIS
There's about a hundred thousand
missing person cases at any given
time. That's just in the good old
US of A.

CAL
Yeah, but I'll bet ninety percent
of those people are messed up to
begin with... abused, drug
addicted, whatever. We're normal,
law abiding, educated. We can't
just slip through the cracks.

TRAVIS
Not so sure about that. Your folks
are worried sick. But what could
they do? Ask me, I don't think
anyone's coming.

BECKY
You did.

TRAVIS
Sure I did. And everyone thought I
was crazy for trying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Becky can't help but to be touched by this. Travis catches it. Cal notices it too. An awkward moment, Becky's eyes flit to her brother. She pulls out her phone.

BECKY

Been a while since I checked.

Sure enough zero bars. She winces a bit. Balances herself against Cal. The procession comes to a stop.

CAL

You okay?

BECKY

Fine. Just fine. A kick, I think.

TOBIN

Is the baby coming soon?

BECKY

She's due in three months.

She catches Travis's eye.

TRAVIS

She?

BECKY

I didn't want to wait to find out. Ginny is what I'm calling her. For now anyway. After my great aunt Virginia.

Travis tests the name.

TRAVIS

Ginny...

BECKY

You don't like it?

TRAVIS

It's cool. Old school.

BECKY

She's lively. Moves around a lot.

She can see that Travis is genuinely enchanted by her condition. It thaws her feelings a little more. She takes his hand...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BECKY

Here...

...And places it against her stomach. Travis reacts as he feels another kick.

TRAVIS

Lively is the word for it.

Travis registers Cal's disapproval. He pulls away from Becky and is about to continue the march when...

BECKY'S CELL PHONE RINGS.

The sound causes them to freeze on the spot. Becky reacts to the name on the display...

Rebecca DeMuth

Cal and Travis see it too. One more level of weird.

The phone keeps RINGING. They look at her expectantly.

With more than a little trepidation, she hits *accept* and brings the phone to her ear.

BECKY

Hello?

At first, she is greeted only with static. Then she hears HEAVY BREATHING.

Becky hits 'speaker' so that the boys can listen too. They gather close.

The signal is distorted, sounds like it's coming from a million miles away. Then a VOICE...

BECKY ON THE PHONE

Don't let--- (STATIC). He's gonna ruin everything-- (STATIC) Just don't leave--- (STATIC) --mistake again forever...

BECKY ON THE PHONE is interrupted. The sounds of struggle. Then SCREAMING.

BECKY

Hello? What's going on?...

The call cuts out. The bars have returned to zero. Becky looks to Cal and Travis, profoundly disturbed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BECKY

That wasn't a hallucination.

CAL

Okay, but *what* was it?

Travis can only shake his head. Cal senses that he is holding something back.

TRAVIS

One more reason to keep moving.

CUT TO THAT SAME POV AS BEFORE, watching from a short distance away as the group continue onward.

EXT. FIELD - DUSK

We GLIDE over the field. A perfect horizon of grass that seems to go on infinitely in all directions. This is not the field that was seen from the road. It is like a whole world unto itself.

Then, distantly, a speck breaks the horizon line. As we get closer, it resolves into TOBIN. He bobs up and down on Travis's (unseen) shoulders like a tiny boat on the ocean.

TOBIN

I can see it real close.

TOBIN'S POV: An expansive rooftop. An island of civilization.

TRAVIS

All right then. Let's pick up the pace.

Travis forges ahead with renewed fervour. But finds his gaze returning to Becky. Her condition... Her very existence is a marvel that he still can't fully allow himself to accept.

Becky catches his look.

BECKY

What?

Travis eyes Becky's pendant. The plastic crab.

TRAVIS

(covering)
You kept him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

He's cute.

Travis holds her gaze. He can read her.

BECKY

And yes, it reminds me of our first date.

TRAVIS

You're an odd one, Rebecca DeMuth.

BECKY

Look who's talkin'.

Becky slows. She feels other eyes on her. But when she looks around, there is nothing.

TRAVIS

You okay?

BECKY

I feel like a sack of amniotic fluid with legs. But I'll manage.

Cal steps up.

CAL

Maybe if you focus less on her and more on where we're going we'd all get there a lot faster.

Travis sees the dynamic forming here. Decides not to test it. He nods and continues onward.

CAL

You sure you're okay?

BECKY

Yes. I'm fine, Cal. Cross my heart.

Becky follows her brother, choosing not to walk beside him. He registers this but doesn't challenge her.

They travel this way for some time, three solitudes.

But Becky is hurting. She's trying not to show it, even as the environment grows increasingly hostile...

The grass slaps against her, leaving a sticky semen-like residue on her skin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The mud sucks at her feet.

Flies buzz around her ears, bite her, crawl into her nose and mouth.

It's like the field wants to get *INSIDE HER. LIKE IT WANTS TO DEFILE HER.*

Becky gags, a welling urge to vomit. Followed by sudden, shocking pain in her abdomen.

Becky stops mid-step. Trying to ride it.

CLOSE on her leg as a single rivulet of bloody mucus runs down her inner thigh and drips.

IN ULTRA-SLOW MOTION we watch the droplet fall. It lands on the earth and is absorbed with unnatural swiftness. As if the ground were hungry for it.

Becky's knees buckle. She crumples.

CAL

Beck?

Cal hunkers down next to her.

Travis lowers Tobin to the ground as he goes over to them.

TRAVIS

What happened?

She's MOANING now, awful, low, guttural.

CAL

Is she going to...?

TRAVIS

I don't know. I've never--

From Becky's POV: Travis's voice is swallowed by the growing CHATTER of insects, the SWISHING of grass against grass. And MURMURS of something else, immense, like tectonic plates shifting beneath her.

IMAGES FLASH through her mind:

CROW WINGS FLAPPING AT AN EVER INCREASING RATE.

ROOTS GROWING AT TIME-LAPSE SPEED DEEP INTO THE EARTH.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

*GINNY'S TINY HEART VISIBLE THROUGH TRANSLUCENT SKIN
BEATING IN DOUBLE TIME.*

These sounds and images fill her head, grow in intensity and volume until they are OVERWHELMING. She SCREAMS as she sees:

ROSS step out from of the grass.

He throws himself onto her.

TRAVIS

Hey--!

Travis moves to stop him, but Cal holds him back when he sees...

Ross goes to work like a lifeguard. He pumps Becky's chest, breathes into her mouth...

Travis and Cal can only watch as he works feverishly to save her.

At last, Ross draws back from Becky.

A terrible moment of silence.

And then Becky hauls air, coughing and sputtering. She snaps back into awareness. Looks up at the stubbled face that hangs over her.

ROSS

It's okay.

Startled and confused, she shrinks away from him. Travis and Cal gather her into their collective embrace.

Travis puts a hand to her belly.

TRAVIS

Baby's moving.

Ross gathers himself, winded, but energized.

ROSS

Probably just her condition and a touch of heatstroke. That's all. She's gonna be fine. We all are.

TOBIN

Daddy!

Ross gathers Tobin in his arms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ROSS
Thank God, Toby, thank God.

TRAVIS
(realizing)
You're Ross? You're Tobin's dad?

Travis eyes him, trying to make sense of it all. Tobin looks at his father, hopeful.

ROSS
Don't worry, your mom... She's out there. We'll find her and then we're leaving.
(he looks to the others)
All of us.

CAL
You found a way out?

Ross nods.

ROSS
Got to the road, but I wasn't about to leave without my family.

TRAVIS
How?

ROSS
It's not a straight line, I'll say that much. Which way were you headed?

TRAVIS
Towards that building.

ROSS
Building?

TRAVIS
We're almost there.
(to Tobin)
Step up buddy.

Travis boosts Tobin onto his shoulders. We rise above the grass with him and see...

TOBIN
It's gone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

In every direction there is nothing but grass. They are lost at sea once again.

Ross shakes his head knowingly.

ROSS

That's how things work around here. But I got the golden ticket for any takers.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Night has returned to the field. That same pregnant moon casts her gaze on the world below.

Travis and Cal flank Becky, who has grown delirious and feverish. Ross leads with his arm around his son. He serenades their trek with some off-key R&B.

ROSS

(singing)

Gonna be some sweet sounds coming down on the nightshift. I bet you're singing proud, oh I bet you'll pull a crowd, gonna be all night, it's gonna be all right, on the nightshift..."

TRAVIS

That The Commodores?

ROSS

Very good.

(Ross eyes him)

Let me guess, lead singer in a band? Four piece with a weekly gig at the local?

TRAVIS

(impressed)

Kinda.

ROSS

I'm a good judge of people. Gotta be in my field. ... Field. Funny, huh? ...I'm in sales. Real Estate's the game.

Travis nods, Ross looks the part.

TRAVIS

You live in Kansas?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS

New York State. Poughkeepsie. We were on a little family vacay through the Heartland. It was a pretty good one until we ran into you.

TRAVIS

Tried to warn you.

ROSS

Just giving you a hard time, kid. I know it's not your fault. Fate conspired. Doesn't it always?

Ross turns reflective.

ROSS

Believe it or not, before I ended up here, before Real Estate was my game, waaaaay back when I was your age, I played a *mean* guitar. Gospel band. Me, my Gibson and Jesus were gonna rock the world. But I got married, had a kid and you know... Those were the days though.

This strikes a chord in Travis.

ROSS

Hey, don't worry, kid. You're not gonna end up like me.

TRAVIS

I wasn't thinking--

ROSS

It's okay. No offence taken. I've been facing a lotta hard truths lately. Real Estate biz is a tough one. Lots of competition and demanding clients. Irony being, I gave up my dream for something a little more solid.

TRAVIS

Yeah, what's more solid than the earth under your feet?

Ross offers an ironic chuckle, looks back to Becky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROSS

I can see your deal. Just be glad
you got a sweet thing like her.
Who needs solid when you got that.

Travis nods. True enough.

Ross takes a big breath, stretches. Gets his bearings.
Travis regards him, how does he know where to go...
following the stars?

Ross alters his course slightly. The others follow suit.

ROSS

Magical place Kansas, doncha
think? No wonder this was the
launching pad for Oz. ...Not to
mention, Atlas thermonuclear
warheads. We saw some amazing
things, didn't we Toby?

Ross thumbs Tobin's shirt.

ROSS

Made our manners with the world's
biggest ball of twine. That was
surprisingly impressive. Still,
nothing but nothing compares to
this...

He takes few more steps and pulls back a curtain of grass
to reveal:

THE ROCK

It stands in the clearing. An ominous presence. At odds
with all the flatness that surrounds it. The others
react. Shared looks.

TRAVIS

What the hell is it?

ROSS

See for yourself.

Travis regards him. How did he know the rock would be
there? Becky looks weirded out too.

ROSS

*"Twenty years of schoolin' and
they put me on the gray shift."*
That's some real old rock, ain't
it, Travis? Dylan.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROSS (CONT'D)

Child of Yahweh. Bard of Hibbing
and I ain't ribbin'.

He ushers them forward. Travis is beginning to have doubts about Ross's intentions, he hangs back as Cal enters the clearing and approaches the rock.

CAL

There's carvings on it. Look
really old. Those native?

ROSS

Rock's been working the gray shift
since before red men hunted on the
Osage Cuestas. Older than the
hills. Been here before the
glaciers came and *carried the
hills* away. You realize we're in
the contiguous center of the
United States? Smack dab in the
middle of the continent. In fact,
I'd hazard this stone is the
center of *the center*.

Becky, exhausted, exasperated, suddenly explodes.

BECKY

We didn't come with you for a
goddamned sightseeing tour. You
were going to show us the way out.

ROSS

But darlin', I have.

Ross places a hand on the rock. Seems to get a little charge from the contact.

ROSS

You only gotta look.

Cal steps a little closer to the rock. It almost seems to vibrate at his presence. He sees the figures carved into its surface.

CAL

Does it have a map on it or
something?

Travis looks to Becky. They know something's up... but what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ROSS

Just put your hand on it and
you'll know.

TRAVIS

What's that supposed to mean?

Cal feels the rock's pull. Subconsciously, he's drawn to
touch it.

VOICE

STOP!

A FEMALE VOICE calls out from somewhere outside the
circle.

Everyone turns, startled. Ross included. Tobin recognizes
the voice instantly.

TOBIN

Mommy!

NATALIE appears from the other side of the rock. As she
steps into the clearing, we see her jumpsuit is mud-caked
and torn. Her hair is matted and bloodied. She looks like
she's been through hell and back, her eyes brimming with
fear.

ROSS

Nat. I've been looking everywhere
for you. Thank god you're all
right.

He takes a step towards her.

NATALIE

Stay away!
(then, to the others)
Whatever he said... whatever he
told you, he's lying.

ROSS

What are you talking about?

NATALIE

You *know*.

ROSS

All I know... All I care about is
that we're finally together.
Everything's gonna be all right
now, honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Natalie registers Becky. She turns another shade of pale. Ross picks up on this.

ROSS

Now what is it?

Natalie becomes even more flustered. She can only stare fixedly at Becky.

ROSS

What is it, honey?

NATALIE

(Looking at Becky)

I saw her. She was...

(trails off)

ROSS

She was what?

Natalie can only shake her head in disbelief.

ROSS

She was what? Just say it.

NATALIE

She... wasn't alive.

Becky looks to Travis and Cal, becoming more than a little unsettled by the presence of this tortured woman.

NATALIE

I saw her on the ground. Some ways back... I-- I'm sure--

Ross offers a her consoling look.

ROSS

See, Toby, your mommy is just a little confused. Why wouldn't she be? No food or water for days.

NATALIE

I'm not confused. I saw her. And you... you were going to...

ROSS

I was going to what?

Natalie can't quite say it.

NATALIE

...Hurt me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

This just makes Ross laugh.

ROSS

Hurt you? How can you even think that?

Ross turns to the kids. A smile pasted across his face.

ROSS

Come on, we're all in this together. We're like family now. Right, Travis? We *solid*?

Travis is less than convinced. And now Becky too. Cal backs away from the rock and joins them at the edge of the clearing.

TRAVIS

Thanks for your help, mister, but I think we'll find our own way now.

(then to Natalie)

You wanna come with us?

Natalie nods. She edges towards them, but Ross steps in her way.

ROSS

Just a minute. Hear me out. This rock, once you touch it... you'll know. It's like a... a... *whoosh*... Better than anything you ever felt. Better than accepting the Host. I know that sounds like blasphemy, but it's the truth, honey.

(then, to the others)

You think this is just chance? Folks end up in the grass for a *reason*. We're here because we've all got stuff to work out. And that rock, in its wisdom, brought our two families together to help us do just that. All it's asking for is a sign of faith. Five little fingers on its face. And you'll be *redeemed*. All your sins, all your trespasses... all your regrets melt way and the world opens up like a flower. It's a beautiful thing. You gotta trust me on this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

TRAVIS

You should let her go.

Ross feverish enthusiasm quickly fades as he focuses on Travis. A glint of murderous intent shining through the salesman mask.

ROSS

Or what?

The muscles tense in his jaw.

Travis holds his ground.

The air becomes super-charged with impending violence.

A warm breeze blows the grass into an excited dance.

TRAVIS

I don't think you got the
advantage here.

ROSS

That a threat?

TRAVIS

It's pretty simple math.

Travis casts a look to Cal, hoping he's got his support. Cal looks less than ready to fight.

ROSS

If you thought I was doing the
soft sell because I was afraid to
go the other way, well you got
another thing coming. Better that
you come to the rock on your own.
Open your heart to it, like I did.

(then, turning back
to Natalie)

What I really want to know is how
you got here? 'Cause the rock
would only let you find us if it
wanted you to.

And then a realization.

ROSS

Unless this isn't about *you*.

Now his attention drifts to the rock. He speaks to it as if it was just another person.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

ROSS

...Right, I get it. This is about
me?

The others regard Ross, no question he is totally unhinged. He cocks his head as if receiving an answer from the rock. The smile returns.

ROSS

Looking for the *hard* sell? Yeah.
Sure. I'm game.

Travis takes advantage of Ross's momentary distraction and throws himself bodily against him.

BECKY

Travis!

They land hard. Travis fights to gain advantage.

TRAVIS

(to Natalie)

Go!

But Natalie is too frightened to move.

Ross is stronger than he looks. He elbows Travis in the face. A string of crimson shoots out into the night air.

BECKY

Cal!

Cal is also frozen to the spot, even as he feels his sister's eyes bore into him.

Ross easily flips Travis over his shoulders and wrenches one hand behind his back.

ROSS

I'm no fibber. When you touch The Rock, you'll know everything I know, everything *the grass* knows. Including how to leave.

SNAP!

ROSS dislocates Travis's arm.

Travis SCREAMS and instantly curls into a ball of agony.

ROSS

Only you won't want to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

That does it. Natalie finds the gumption to make a break for it... too late. Ross easily catches her by the ankle and together they go down in to the mud.

Becky turns to Cal, who remains unable or unwilling to take action.

She and Tobin can only watch as Ross scrambles on top of his wife. He straddles her, pinning her to the spot.

The grass shivers with excitement.

Ross faces Tobin.

ROSS

Don't worry, son. It's only flesh.

And then he takes hold of Natalie's head in his hands and SQUEEZES.

ROSS

...And all flesh is grass.

Veins bulge in Ross's neck and arms as he strains.

Becky covers Tobin's eyes and although we don't see it, we hear the sickening crunch of compressing flesh and bone.

TOBIN

Mommmmmmy!

Horrified, Travis finds his feet. He hobbles over to the others, his left arm dangling hideously from its socket. He gathers them.

TRAVIS

Cal!

Cal grabs Tobin and drags him away as Ross rises from Natalie's body. He raises his hands like a blood-stained prophet, exultant, amazed by his own strength.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Grass whips past as Travis and Becky stumble forward terror-stricken. Cal and Tobin are close behind, careful not to lose sight of them. As they run they hear a guttural ROAR.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS (O.S.)

*Save your breath, kids! You can't
run from Redemption!*

Becky stumbles, tugging on Travis as she goes down. He
CRIES OUT in agony. Cal gets to them. Shoulders each one.

CAL

He's right, you know. Where are we
going to go?

As if in answer, something appears between the flickering
blades of grass. Something with four legs...

A DOG.

Its golden coat catches the moonlight.

Through a cloud of pain, Travis sees him. Could it
actually be?...

TOBIN

Freddy!

With uncanny deliberateness, the dog stares back at them,
just before it bounds further into the grass.

Travis intuitively knows they should follow.

TRAVIS

Come on.

He forces himself to his feet. Pulls at Becky.

BECKY

I can't.

TRAVIS

You have to.
(to Cal)
Help me.

Together, they shoulder Becky's weight, Tobin getting
ahead of them.

Freddy looks back expectantly, as if he had been waiting
for them to catch up.

Then he leads the kids further, following a meandering
path, until the muck beneath their feet gives way to a
harder material ... CONCRETE and then CRACKED ASPHALT.

They pass through a veil of grass to find...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A PARKING LOT

Freddy is nowhere to be seen but directly ahead of them is a building. The same one they had spotted before. Giant, tacky bowling pins, rotted, flank the entrance.

THE BOWL-A-DROME.

INT. BOWL-A-DROME - NIGHT

Creaky double doors are thrown open as the four tumble inside. They take in the cavernous space. Cracked lanes. Dust-coated bowling balls that rest in neat rows as if patiently waiting for the next bowler. No windows in here. The only light filters in from a partially collapsed ceiling.

Cal, still freaked out, fastens a deadbolt. Becky takes hold of Tobin. Holds him close.

BECKY

It's okay, Tobin. It's okay.

Tobin looks up at her, expressionless. Clearly, he is far from okay.

CAL

What're we going to do? He'll find us. For sure, he'll find us.

Travis cradles his unhinged limb.

TRAVIS

First thing, take hold of my hand.

Cal doesn't quite understand. Travis looks at him, fighting back tears of pain.

TRAVIS

Do it.

Cal takes hold of the dislocated limb. A deep breath and then Travis wrenches his arm back into its socket. He releases an ungodly wail and slides to the ground, whimpering.

That done, Cal turns his attention to his sister. Dusts off an old plastic chair, offers it to her.

CAL

Here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

I'm fine.

Cal feels her dismissal.

CAL

I didn't know what to do.

TRAVIS

You sure didn't.

Cal spins on Travis.

CAL

I'm not built for that, okay? Look at me. What good would it have done?

TRAVIS

We could've taken him. We still can.

CAL

Are you out of your mind? Did you see what he did? Did you?! That's not humanly possible.

Becky presses Tobin closer. Casts her brother a scolding stare. He tries to change the subject.

CAL

And what about all that other shit he was talking about? He knows things... And you know too. Don't you?

Travis can't deny it. Becky registers this.

CAL

What are you not telling us, Travis?

Travis simply shakes his head. A welling lump of dread rises in Becky's throat.

BECKY

Is it something to do with what Toby's mom said?

TRAVIS

Just forget about it, okay? She was hysterical.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BECKY

But why would she say that she saw me... my body?

TOBIN

'Cause my daddy's right. Isn't he? We're grass. We keep dyin' and coming back. ...Like Freddy did.

BECKY

Is that true? Is that what you saw?

Travis just looks at her. He doesn't want to say.

BECKY

Tell me!

Travis doesn't have it within him to put the truth to words. He answers by taking something out of his pocket.

Becky's pendant. Benny the Crab.

The sight of it sends a chill down her spine. She takes it from him and compares it to the one that hangs around her neck. Identical. One crab leg broken off. It could only be hers.

She drops it like a hot coal.

CAL

Oh, we're fucked. ... We're so fucked.

TOBIN

Does this mean my mom'll come back?

Travis picks it up off the floor.

TRAVIS

I don't know. But I'll tell you one thing, we are getting out.
(looking to Cal)
We just have to be strong.

That does it, Cal can't hold it back any longer.

CAL

We wouldn't be in this mess if it wasn't for you. *None of this* would've happened if you didn't do what you did.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BECKY

Blaming each other isn't going to solve anything.

CAL

Well, all indicators are that there is no way to solve them. If we're just going around and around in circles at least I'll feel better saying what we all know.

BECKY

It's not that simple.

CAL

How can you defend him? How can you take his side?

BECKY

There are no sides.

CAL

Are you forgetting the little detail that he completely abandoned you? That he totally threw you away. That he wanted you to abort your own baby!

Becky would cry if she had the tears, but she doesn't. She just sinks a little further into despair. Cal realizes he's gone too far.

CAL

I'm sorry. Becky... I just want--

BECKY

To look after me? To protect me? I need food. I need water. I need to sleep. What I don't need is any more brotherly love.

Cal takes it like a slap on the face. But Becky isn't done yet. Now she turns her ire on Travis.

BECKY

And why didn't you tell me what you saw? I have a right to know. ...What makes either of you think you know what I need or don't need?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TRAVIS

You're right, I should have said something. I just didn't know how...

(then, to Cal)

This is my fault. I was an asshole. I made a mistake. A big one. No one gets that more than I do.

Cal looks to Travis, surprised by this admission. Only Travis isn't finished.

TRAVIS

...But that's not the real reason you don't like me, is it, Cal?

CAL

It's a good start.

TRAVIS

It's a good *excuse*. But it's not the reason. You didn't want me around even before there was a baby. The truth is there's *nothing* I could do to make you like me. Because no one is ever going to be good enough for your little sister.

CAL

Someone with a high school diploma would be a start.

TRAVIS

You know, I'm not quite the fuck up you think I am.

CAL

Oh, no? Just give it a few years. You'll make a great real estate salesman. That lunatic actually had a point. You've sacrificed everything for that ridiculous infantile fantasy. And now we're all suffering for it. Yeah, Travis, you're a real rock star all right. Left your own baby so you wouldn't have to miss band practice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TRAVIS

And you're a real hero. Playing
hubby to your sis. Next best thing
to fucking her, which is what you
really want, isn't it?

Cal snaps. He throws himself on Travis and they go
tumbling. Travis cries out as his wounded shoulder makes
contact with the floor.

BECKY

Stop it! STOP IT!

BANG! The doors heave.

That does the trick. Travis and Cal freeze, react to..

BANG! BANG! BANG!

The doors look like they might give...

Travis finds another door. Pushes it open to reveal a set
of stairs leading up.

TRAVIS

Over here.

INT. STAIRWELL, BOWL-A-DROME - NIGHT

Travis, Cal and Tobin help Becky up the stairs. It's a
task. Distantly they hear the main entrance doors SMASH
open.

EXT. ROOF, BOWL-A-DROME - NIGHT

A service door opens onto an expansive roof.

Travis and Cal help Becky through and let her rest on the
ground. Tobin is the last one up.

TRAVIS

Hurry!

He shuts the door. Finds a discarded pipe and shoves it
through the door handle.

TRAVIS

He's not getting through that
without a goddamned sledge hammer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL

Who says he doesn't have one?

Becky lets out a pained WHIMPER. She's in bad shape.

TRAVIS

Listen to me! When I drove here, I
saw this building from the road!

Through her pain, Becky finds his logic.

BECKY

We saw it too. ...The church was
just on the other side...

TRAVIS

Question is which side?

Travis takes her weight, helps her to her feet, Tobin follows, Cal last of all.

TRAVIS

Watch where you're stepping. It's
a long way down.

They come around a service shed, find their way to the lip of the roof.

CAL

Careful...

Travis and Cal lower Becky to the ground. Tobin sticks close to her.

BECKY

See anything?

Travis turns from her amazed when he spies a short distance away...

THE ROAD

And beyond the Church of the Black Rock of the Redeemer.
Between them and it is a narrow gulf of grass.

CAL

Oh, God. There it is. Spitting
distance. I think I can see my
car!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRAVIS

Only problem... We walk into that grass and we'll be back to square one.

Something else catches Travis's eye. Moving through the parking lot. *FREDDY*.

He pauses mid-stride, as if anticipating Travis's gaze. He turns and look back to him.

Cal sees him now.

CAL

Jeez.

Freddy makes a deliberate path between derelict cars. He passes behind an old Chevy... But he doesn't come out the other side. It's as if he vanished into thin air.

CAL

Where'd he go?

TRAVIS

(to Cal)
Spot me.

Travis hops onto the ledge so as to get a better view. No sign of Freddy anywhere.

Then...

TRAVIS

There!

He indicates the church. Somehow Freddy has materialized on the other side of the road. Impossible for him to have traversed the distance so quickly, and yet there he is.

Travis realizes...

TRAVIS

A hole...

He leans precariously. Straining to see.

CAL

A way out?

Travis marvels at the strangeness of it all.

CAL

You think *that's it*?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TRAVIS

Maybe. We're not there yet.

Those words hold extra significance for Cal. He looks back to Becky and Tobin, they are only partially visible on the other side of the shed. He seems to be weighing a decision.

CAL

No, we're not.

And without warning, he pushes Travis. Just enough to throw him off balance.

Travis seems to hang in space for an instant, a shocked expression frozen on his face, before the weight of his body drags him earthward. He falls into the grass over twenty feet below.

Cal backs away from the ledge as surprised as Travis by what he has done. His heart beats heavily in his chest.

Then freezes as he hears something move behind him...

Tobin

From the child's expression, it's clear that he saw everything.

CAL

Tobin... I...

Tobin backs away from him, at first out of a sense of betrayal... then *fear*.

ROSS (O.S.)

Holes are everywhere, Calvin my boy.

Cal whips around to find a shadowy figure emerging from the collapsed portion of the roof. ROSS lifts himself to a standing position with the uncanny grace of a gymnast.

ROSS

Life's full of 'em.

Cal stumbles back and gathers Becky who remains delirious and uncomprehending. He hoists her to her feet and awkwardly leads her to the service exit.

Tobin is already there. He pulls the pipe out of the service entrance door. He throws it open and disappears down the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CAL

Tobin, wait!

But he's already gone. Cal shoulders Becky's weight and stumbles down the steps.

EXT. BOWL-A-DROME - NIGHT

Cal helps Becky through the parking lot, she is dazed, half-aware, only now realizing...

BECKY

Cal, what happened to Travis
...Tobin?

CAL

Lost sight of them. Tobin's dad
showed up.

BECKY

But we can't just leave...

CAL

I'll come back if I have to. But
first we get you to the road... I
saw a way... from the roof.
It's...

Ahead he spots the Chevy.

CAL

There!

He drags his sister towards it. Becky is struggling, she can't keep moving like this.

CAL

Just a little further, Beck.
Please.

BECKY

It hurts. It hurts so much...

She can hardly stand, let alone run. Ross is sure to catch up with them any moment.

CAL

It's so close.

BECKY

But Travis...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAL

For once think of yourself. And what about your baby? I'm your brother and I'm telling you right now to forget about that asshole.

Becky looks at him, realizing...

BECKY

Did you do something?

CAL

Why do you even care about him? All he's done is treat you like shit.

She pulls away from him.

BECKY

Answer me!

No response. She just stares at him, the truth sinking in.

CAL

I love you, Becky. More than he ever could.

He moves to her but she backs away.

BECKY

Get away from me. GET AWAY!

She stumbles back the way they came.

CAL

Becky, no!

Cal moves to follow, but a restraining hand falls on his shoulder.

ROSS (O.S.)

You thought that you would lose your sister when you got out of here.

Cal whirls around, his head still reeling, now confronted with ROSS.

ROSS

The baby would bring her and Travis together and shut you out in the cold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Cal looks back to where Becky was but he's lost her to the grass.

ROSS

You're probably right on that score. Your mistake is thinking that you're ever leaving.

He offers Cal a toothy grin. That's all the encouragement Cal needs. He bolts.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

We follow Cal running like hell in the direction that Becky disappeared. The grass slaps him as he pushes through it. He hazards a look over his shoulder. Ross closing in on him. He's got the advantage of following in Cal's footsteps, the path already cleared for him.

The gap closes.

ROSS

Good work there, sport. I'm impressed. 'Course I was a bit of a track star back in the day. Played some ball too.

Ross makes a running tackle and the two of them go down hard in the muck.

Cal screams for help, fights uselessly.

ROSS

Not getting it, are ya?

Cal struggles under his weight while Ross presses his hands on either side of Cal's skull.

ROSS

Gates of Hell are the Gates of Heaven. Just a question of which way you're headed.

Cal notices something a short distance away from him. A BODY. His body. Rotted and staring back at him through sightless eyes.

Our view widens and we see that Cal's corpse is ONE OF DOZENS that litter the field. All of them Cal. All in various stages of decay, grass sprouting from gaping mouths and empty eye sockets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Indicating that this act of impending murder has occurred many times before over a long period of time.

EXT. BOWL-A-DROME - NIGHT

The derelict parking lot. We find Travis in a nest of grass. Clotted blood covers one side of his face. We might assume he's dead. But when we hear Becky's voice...

BECKY (O.S.)
(distant)
Travis!... Travis!

...He stirs. Her voice brings him back. The next thing he feels is a wave of pain.

With considerable difficulty he sits up.

TRAVIS
Becky?...

EXT. FIELD/WITH TRAVIS - NIGHT

Travis limps through the field.

TRAVIS
Becky!

He is hurting badly. Disoriented. Beginning to wonder if he only imagined her voice.

BECKY (O.S.)
Travis?!

She's out there... somewhere.

TRAVIS
You okay?!

EXT. FIELD/WITH BECKY - NIGHT

She's sitting in the mud, also in considerable pain, clinging to the sound of his voice.

BECKY
I'm afraid...

TRAVIS (O.S.)
Where's Cal?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

I lost him. And Tobin. Where are you, Travis? What *happened*?

EXT. FIELD/WITH TRAVIS - NIGHT

Memories of Cal's betrayal flood back.

TRAVIS

Your brother... I think he loves you a little too much.

Travis shuts his eyes, conjuring her image in his mind.

TRAVIS

But this isn't his fault. It really isn't. I did this. I had my chance with you. And I threw it away.

BECKY (O.S.)

Forget about it. It doesn't matter any more.

TRAVIS

This place won't let me forget. I think that's why I'm here. Why we're all here. Cal was right. When I walked out on you, I damned all of us.

BECKY (O.S.)

You can't think like that.

TRAVIS

Maybe. But... This field... it wants to freeze us in the same moment forever. And that's exactly what I tried to do. I didn't want to grow up, Beck. I wanted us to stay the way we were. ...Now all I want is to grow old with you.

(a beat)

Whatever happens, I want you to know, I'm glad you didn't listen to me. I'm glad you kept Ginny.

No response.

TRAVIS

Becky?

EXT. FIELD/WITH BECKY - NIGHT

Becky's crying. Something buried deep inside her is finally surfacing.

BECKY

There's something I didn't tell you... I was going to give her up. I got scared. Didn't think I was ready to be a mom. ...That's why we were going to San Diego. There was a family there...

TRAVIS (O.S.)

But you don't want that anymore?

BECKY

What difference does it make now?

Becky looks up at the starry sky.

BECKY

I lived by the ocean my whole life. No light out there, so you couldn't really tell where the sky finished and the water began. Always thought it would be nice to die in it. You know. Become part of something bigger than me. This is a kind of ocean too.

TRAVIS (O.S.)

No it's not. We're getting out. I'm going to find a way. Our kid deserves to live.

BECKY

She's a strong one. I feel her kicking.

Becky caresses the orb of her stomach.

BECKY

Travis? ...If I hadn't gone into this stupid field. If I had told Cal to turn around and drive back to Portsmouth. Would you have been waiting for me?

TRAVIS (O.S.)

I was. But you didn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

That's the worse part. I wanted to. Just before we stopped here. I thought about going back home. But then I thought I was being weak.

Becky tries to digest this bitter irony.

EXT. FIELD/WITH TRAVIS - NIGHT

Travis reaches out his hand in the direction of her voice.

TRAVIS

I wish I could touch your hand.

BECKY (O.S.)

It's right here.

His hand touches air. Eyes closed, he gives into the illusion.

BECKY (O.S.)

Get away! GET AWAY FROM ME!

Travis's eyes, snap open.

TRAVIS

Becky?! What's going on?

No response.

EXT. FIELD/WITH BECKY - NIGHT

Ross has Becky in his arms. She fights him uselessly.

ROSS

Funny, this is where I had my first tussle with Natalie.

She manages to get a hand into one pocket of her jeans. Comes up with a set of keys, angled like a weapon. Ross easily swats them out of her grasp.

ROSS

I tried to show her the way. But she just wouldn't listen.

His stubbly chin mashes into her ear. His breath stinks of freshly mowed lawn, his teeth are pinky-green.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSS

You wanna see the rock, *darlin'*?
Wanna lay on it naked, and feel me
in you, beneath the pinwheel
stars, while the grass sings our
names? *Poetry, eh?*

Becky is frozen with terror. She tries to get a knee into his groin but her foot responds lazily, hoofing the mud, up-down, up-down...

ROSS

Blood is nice. Tears are better
for a thirsty old rock like that.

He bends her back like a blade of grass. They sink to the mud.

ROSS

And when I fuck you on the stone,
it'll have some of both. Has to be
quick though. Don't want to do it
in front of the kid.

Becky sees something lying on the ground next to her... A PINK NYLON KANGAROO POUCH. The one that belonged to Natalie. The contents are spilled out, among them, a pair of manicuring scissors.

Becky's hand swipes for it. Ross turns, catching the move a little too late this time.

She jams the scissors into his right eye.

She draws back her hand, Ross blinded and yipping in pain. Or does it sound like *laughter*? Becky can't really tell because now she's stumbling away as fast as her feet will carry her.

The grass enfolds her and Ross vanishes from her life as quickly as he entered it. All she is left with is pain. A searing, horrifying pain that tugs at her very being.

EXT. FIELD/WITH TRAVIS - NIGHT

The low RUMBLE of an approaching storm. A THUNDERHEAD rolling over the plane.

Travis calls out Becky's name over and over. To no avail.

TRAVIS

Becky?!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He spins. Looks at the grass, at the infinite possible paths, all of which certainly lead to nowhere.

And yet he knows he has to pick one.

EXT. FIELD/WITH BECKY - NIGHT

Becky stumbles through the grass. Pain stabbing her with every step she takes. And with each flash of agony REALITY FLICKERS.

For a moment, almost subliminally, she sees that where the grass stood there are now MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN. Shadowy. Naked. Their eyes directed at her.

Becky understands now, the field is composed of people...

Flicker...

Now grass....

Flicker...

Now people.

People from a multitude of eras

Times and Civilizations unknown

FIBROUS GREEN TENDRILS penetrate them and connect them in a dance of agony and ecstasy. *Just like the little figures on the rock.*

Another contraction hits. This one is a doozy. White fire agony ripples through Becky's brain as COUNTLESS DISEMBODIED ARMS reach through the grass.

Becky finds herself lifted into the air.

The hands guide her as if she were a stage diver in a mosh pit. She passes bodies and grass conjoined in obscene configurations. The undulations of thousands synchronized into the regulatory system of a single massive organism.

She is carried through this seething river of horror...

Until she falls at the feet of

THE ROCK

EXT. FIELD/WITH TRAVIS - NIGHT

The sky opens up and rain hammers down. Lightning FLASHES revealing Travis, wounded, starved, dehydrated. He drinks in the storm even as he fights through it.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Becky is drenched, hunkered down at the outer rim of the circle. The rock close by. An ominous rain-slicked sentinel. She is too exhausted, in too much pain to even try to escape its gaze. This is the end and she knows it.

In a last desperate bid, she takes out her cell phone. Miraculously, it has retained the last bit of its charge.

She dials her own number. A long pause and then she hears RINGING. It seems to go on forever. Then finally the CLICK of someone answering and the sound of her OWN VOICE.

BECKY ON THE PHONE

Hello?

BECKY

(into the phone)

Listen to me. Don't let Cal hurt Travis. He's gonna ruin everything. Just don't leave him. Stick together. Or we'll keep making the same mistake again. Forever...

A SOUND. Someone bursts through the grass. Becky screams, dropping the phone in the mud.

Hands grab her but when she whips around she sees...

TRAVIS

She can't believe her eyes. And he can't believe his either.

They embrace. In the rain. In the madness. In the face of the immutable obelisk of black stone.

A flash of lightning reveals another form in the grass.

ROSS

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Blindly searching. Somehow sensing their presence. He HOWLS like an animal, his voice merging with CLAP OF THUNDER.

TRAVIS

Can you stand?

Travis helps Becky up. It's hard on her. Very hard. But her determination to save her child eclipses her body's limitations.

Together, Travis and Becky stumble away from Ross.

But the ground has become a quagmire that sucks at their feet. It's like the earth is wrestling them every step of the way and before they can escape the circle, something loosens beneath them.

The water-saturated ground gives. A SINKHOLE forms and Becky finds herself sliding down the slick embankment. She lands painfully on the craggy bottom.

When the sky lights up again Becky sees that she is in a bed of HUMAN REMAINS. Skulls, rib-cages, clavicles, femurs, scapulas and bones that she has no names for. They are tangled within a complex root system.

The remains are a mulch upon which the field has grown.

The ground throbs. That same low vibration she heard before now follows a rhythm, like the exhalation of a great lung or the beating of a heart, and she can see that the sinkhole has exposed the base of the rock, revealing...

THE ROCK IS NOT A ROCK

It is ORGANIC... A POD... AN ORGAN... OR A BRAIN

The root system for the grass converges at its base. A fulcrum for the entire field.

Entwined within is a seething mass of bodies. They straddle the lower decaying strata of remains, feeding on or being fed on by the field... Decaying and reconstituting in the primordial soup.

Flesh and Grass as one.

Travis scrambles through the web of bones and roots, reaching her, hauling her over the slick, muddy slope, only for the mud to give away again, sending them both sliding back into the chanel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They can hear Ross getting closer.

Travis takes her weight, using everything he has, clambers up the side of the pit, heaves her over the edge.

They lie there breathless for an instant... trying to discern which way to turn... detect movement... Ross?

No, something else.

FREDDY

Travis and Becky find their feet. Freddy turns, guides them through the grass.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

It's a struggle to keep the Freddy within sight. Rain and mud and the grass itself conspire to keep them apart. But they are driven by their united will and they forge ahead, further and further through the field, until the grass thins. And distantly through the flickering light of the storm, they glimpse:

Freddy waiting for them by THE ROAD

TRAVIS

Come on!

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Travis leads Becky out of the grass.

They step past the threshold, clamber up the embankment. Before them is the Church and the parking lot.

They stumble forward, Freddy at their heels.

Becky hazards a look back. The grass waves violently in the storm as if enraged at having lost its prey.

EXT. CHURCH OF THE BLACK ROCK OF THE REDEEMER - NIGHT

Travis and Becky weave through the old wrecks, come up to THE MAZDA. Becky is suddenly crestfallen.

BECKY

I lost my keys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Travis manages a smile.

TRAVIS
It's all right.

EXT. 400 - NIGHT

Travis's Ranger blasts by through the storm.

INT. RANGER, TRAVELING - NIGHT

Travis drives through the night. The wipers clear the rain -- *SWOOSH-SWOOSH, SWOOSH-SWOOSH*. Freddy dozes between them.

Travis glances over at Becky. Traumatized, exhausted, drenched but alive. He did it. He got her back.

Becky looks out at the field. All that she is leaving behind. Cal and Tobin.

Travis, rests a hand on her shoulder, as if reading her thoughts.

TRAVIS
There's nothing you could have done.

SWOOSH-SWOOSH, SWOOSH-SWOOSH

TRAVIS
You have Ginny.

Becky looks at him, fearful.

TRAVIS
She's gonna be okay. And that's all that matters now.

The thought warms her.

BECKY
We have her.

She puts her hands over her abdomen feeling the life within. The profound meaningfulness of its existence envelops her heart and her mind.

SWOOSH-SWOOSH, SWOOSH-SWOOSH

She shuts her eyes.

INT. BECKY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Becky opens her eyes.

She is in her bed. In her house.

Only her room has been stripped of her childhood trinkets. In their stead a baby's bassinet sits empty beside her.

A soft breeze wafts from an open window. Morning sunlight shines in.

The SOUND OF A BABY COOING.

She looks out the window.

Below, in the backyard, Travis plays with NEWBORN GINNY.

EXT. BACKYARD, BECKY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Becky's bare feet step on freshly mowed lawn.

She approaches Travis, who sits next to a blanket on which BABY GINNY wriggles happily. She is a perfect, rosy-cheeked cherub.

TRAVIS
Mornin', sleepy-head.

BECKY
What time is it?

TRAVIS
Ten.

She sits next to him, seeks comfort in the boney part of his shoulder, her eyes never lingering from Ginny.

TRAVIS
Don't feel bad. You've earned it.

Although months have passed since their experience in the field, the trauma lurks just under the surface.

TRAVIS
You having one of those mornings?

She nods.

TRAVIS
At some point, it's going to stop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Becky looks into the eyes of her daughter.

BECKY

I don't know if I want it to.

Travis considers this.

TRAVIS

You're right. It's a choice. ...I choose to move on.

BECKY

I want to, believe me I do, but... Cal was on that trip because of me. We stopped at the field because I told him to.

TRAVIS

He was your older brother. He was supposed to look out for you. Not the other way around.

BECKY

Doesn't matter.

All this while, she has not broken her gaze with Ginny. But now, as she puts to words to her feelings, she turns to face Travis.

BECKY

To leave... I had to give him up. That was the deal. I left a part of myself there. I traded him. Him for...

Becky pauses...

Suddenly aware that Ginny is no longer on the blanket.

BECKY

Where's Ginny?

TRAVIS

What do you mean?

BECKY

I was... she was just...

Becky looks around. No sign of her baby.

BECKY

Travis...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She turns back to him.

But now Travis is also missing.

She senses something behind her, turns slowly to discover...

THE GRASS.

It surrounds the edge of her property.

Becky stands and confronts the wall of green. From within she hears a GROAN. Then PANTING

She comes closer as the panting turns into SHORT, SHARP BREATHS.

She can see SOMETHING moving behind the veil of green. A profound sense of dread overtakes her. Even so, she reaches out...

The STACCATO BREATHING BUILDING IN RHYTHM

...and pulls back the curtain of grass to reveal

HERSELF

Pregnant

On the ground

Legs parted

Animal-like

Heaving, in labor.

Becky, the one on the lawn, is lanced with a searing pain in her abdomen...feeling what her other self feels...

She shuts her eyes SCREAMING AS

Pregnant Becky's head drops back in agony.

And we cut to BLACK.

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Becky opens her eyes.

Damp air. Muddy earth. The whispering of the grass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She is still in the field.

She gradually realizes that *she never left*.

The storm has passed and now she lies on the ground muddy and waterlogged.

When she feels her stomach. She finds that it is flat.
The baby is gone.

CAL (O.S.)

Becky?

She looks up at a blurry shape hanging over her. Male.
The identity vague.

It lowers closer and we see it's Cal.

BECKY

(barely able to
speak)

The baby...

He holds a rag drenched in water. He presses it to her parched lips and she greedily sucks in the moisture.

CAL

Not too fast. I don't want you to
get sick.

BECKY

Baby...

Cal breaks out into a grin.

CAL

Isn't she great? I've got her. Out
of the oven. Baked just right.

Cal reaches to one side and holds up a bundle, something swaddled in a shirt. A blue nose peaks out. Her blurry vision allows her only a glimpse.

CAL

Aren't you the *Mother Mary*? Wonder
when the Wisemen will show? Wonder
what gifts they have for us?

Becky's lips form the trace of a smile before she passes out.

Under BLACKNESS we hear Cal reciting a limerick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAL (V.O.)

*There once was an old farmer from
Leeds...*

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Becky opens one eye. It's coated in pus. Her breathing is more laboured than before.

She feels something being pressed to her lips again.

CAL (V.O.)

Who swallowed bag fulla seeds...

It's syrupy. In the darkness hard to discern. She takes it in hungrily.

CAL (V.O.)

*Big bunches of grass sprouted out
his ass...*

More is fed to her. She bites down. Something crunches like a chicken bone.

CAL (V.O.)

*And his balls grew all shaggy with
weeds.*

She swallows it. Her jaws working even when there is nothing there.

CAL (V.O.)

*That's a good girl. You ate it all
up. Yum.*

Becky smacks her lips, jonzing for more of whatever it was. The other eye cracks open looking up through the pus.

CAL

*Want some more, huh? All right
here's another piece....*

A sticky sound... like flesh rending.

Something going into Becky's greedy lips. All of a sudden she chokes.

Her eyes open wider, she manages to wipe away the pus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BECKY

Cal, what is that?... What am I eating?

A GIGGLE.

CAL

Grass. Becky, honey... just grass and seeds and so on. Cows do it all the time.

Becky knows something is wrong, she focusses harder on Cal's face. Something weird about it.

BECKY

It tastes like...

CAL

Like what?

BECKY

Like...

SUDDENLY THE WORLD SNAPS INTO FOCUS and Becky sees that it's not Cal hanging over her...

It's ROSS's bloodied face

ROSS

(finishing)

...You.

EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT

Travis stumbles through the grass. His clothes are drenched. He is chilled and profoundly weak.

He continues this way for what seems like an interminably long time until...

EXT. ROCK/CLEARING - NIGHT

...The grass gives way and Travis finds himself once again facing THE ROCK.

And in its shadow he finds...

TRAVIS

Becky...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Travis drops down to his knees next to her. She lies in a pool of blood and rainwater. One hand frozen over her flat stomach. An empty vessel.

Travis cradles her head in agony. ...As he had before. He wills her to life. But as he already knows, *dead things are easier to find.*

TRAVIS

Please, please...

Travis is so lost in the horror of the moment that he fails to notice the diminutive figure that has just stepped in front of him.

TOBIN (O.S.)

My daddy killed her, didn't he?

Travis looks up. Tobin is there.

TOBIN

And he killed the baby?

Travis nods his head slowly.

TOBIN

I found Cal. He killed him too.
This isn't ever going to stop.
He's gonna kill all of us and he's
gonna keep doing it forever.

Travis sets down Becky's head, ever so gently. He struggles to find the strength. Then places his hands on Tobin's thin shoulders.

TRAVIS

I won't let him hurt you.

TOBIN

But he's watching us *right now.*

Travis stands, surveys the edge of the clearing.

TRAVIS

You out there, Ross?

Nothing but darkness and grass.

TRAVIS

Why hide? You want to finish us
off, just do it. See? I'm here.
I'm waiting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROSS (O.S.)

No, I don't see...

Something cracks Travis across the back of his skull. He lands in the mud. Turns back to find Ross standing behind him. A splintered bloody femur in his hand. It belongs to Freddy, whose remains are visible a short distance away.

Ross stares at him through one good eye. But he doesn't act wounded. He's brimming with positive energy.

ROSS

Your honey took my eye. But you know what? Eyes are deceiving 'round here. I'm better without it.

Travis attempts to rise and Ross pounces. He forces Travis's face into ground. Travis struggles uselessly. He's drowning in three inches of mud.

ROSS

Too bad. I liked you, kid. Saw a seed of myself in there.

Travis uses the slick mud to his advantage. He slips free and manages to plant a sneaker in Ross's face. Ross is sent reeling with a broken nose.

Now it's Travis's turn to pounce. He throws himself on Ross. Only Ross is faster, and he drives the sharp end of the broken femur into Travis's gut.

Travis tumbles backward, the bone still lodged in his abdomen.

Ross gets up, wiping the blood from his face.

ROSS

All I wanted was to help you find redemption. God knows, you're the one who needed it the most.

Then he reaches down and pulls out the bone, allowing blood to flow freely.

ROSS

Maybe next time.

Tobin can only watch as Travis drops into the mud and Ross turns to face him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROSS
(to Tobin)
Ready for yours?

Before Tobin can move, Ross sweeps him up in his arms and carries him towards the rock.

ROSS
Gorgeous, isn't she? Like a pearl.
Know where pearls come from, Toby?
Just a bit of grit in the mouth of
an oyster. Same with *family*. We
come together to make something
greater than ourselves. ...Makes
you wanna touch it, don't it?

Ross takes Tobin's tiny hand in his.

ROSS
It wants you to. It's what this
field needs. More than rain. It's
so easy, Toby. Redemption is so
very, very *easy*.

Ross brings Tobin's hand up to the rock.

But before Tobin makes contact, Ross senses a presence behind him. He turns and sees

BECKY

She's still alive... barely...

But she has enough strength to jam the sharp end of her pendant into Ross's remaining eye

He howls and drops Tobin, who instantly scrambles away from the rock.

Ross lashes out blindly, searching for her. Instead he finds

TRAVIS

Who grabs him by the hair and smashes his face against the the serrated edge of the rock.

Again

And again

Ross's blood sprays over his god

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

But Ross not done in yet...

He whirls on Travis and makes contact in a sloppy embrace. Together they careen to the edge of the circle and collapse in the mud.

They grapple with each, neither one able to gain advantage. The distinction between the two men blurring as they roll through the mud.

Finally, Travis manages to flip the older man onto his stomach. He takes a fist full of grass and wraps it around Ross's throat.

Ross struggles violently, bucking and squirming as he is garroted from behind.

Travis holds fast, grinds his knee into Ross's spine, and twists the grass like a tourniquet.

TRAVIS

I'm not coming back here.

Blood wells where it digs into Ross's neck. He grows weaker. His grasp on life slipping away.

TRAVIS

And neither are you!

Our attention drifts away in a sprawling 360 degree PANORAMIC MOVE: from the fight... to the field, the grass dancing ecstatically in the wind... to the Rock presiding over the violence as it has so many times in the past... Ross's blood is absorbed into its slick surface, and we sense that this is the sacrifice it has been wanting all along.

Finally, we return to Travis and Ross. Travis realizes he is only throttling dead weight. He releases the rope of grass and lets Ross's lifeless body to drop face-first in the muck.

Travis stumbles back, victorious but mortally wounded. Blood continues to spill from his gut.

Still, he manages to find his feet. His eyes meet Tobin's. The boy is shell-shocked. A mixture of horror and relief. But Travis's mind is on one thing:

He finds Becky on the ground, unmoving.

Travis staggers over and drops next to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TRAVIS

Becky...

But she's gone.

He allows her head drop ever-so-gently down to the earth. Despair overwhelms him, and yet...

And yet...

A realization comes...

Something resolves in Travis's mind.

With effort, he lifts himself to a standing position.

Travis shuffles to the rock. His gaze fixes on the runes, those figures trapped in their eternal dance.

A breath.

And he reaches out to touch it.

TOBIN

Travis, don't--

Travis places his hand on The Rock...

His body stiffens as he feels something akin to fire coursing through his veins.

He SCREAMS.

And we see from Travis's POV:

The glyphs CHANGE.

For an instant, each one has a face.

Thousands and thousands of screaming faces, trapped in an endless dance of ecstasy and agony... And among those faces... Cal's... Becky's... and his own.

The rock turns cool and Travis drops his hand. Spent but exhilarated.

He turns around to find the grass is suddenly animated. It undulates, snakes in all directions, a million tendrils reaching out, stretching into the heavens and entwining in a mandala of pathways. The field is an open book... a map... and Travis can see every avenue with crystal clarity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Tobin senses what is happening to him.

TOBIN

Travis?...

TRAVIS

I know what redemption is.

Travis grabs him. Hauls him up into a vice-like grip.

TRAVIS

There's nothing easy about it.

EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT

Travis follows a winding route. He seems possessed. Drawn by some inexplicable vision of precisely where to go.

Finally, he comes to a rest. Spits out a mouthful of blood. This is the end of the line.

TRAVIS

It won't let me leave.

He thrusts something into Tobin's hand. BECKY'S PENDANT.

TRAVIS

But you... you don't belong here.
And neither does Becky.

And for an instant Tobin can see Travis is fighting something within himself. A murderous desire that wants him to hold onto the boy.

TRAVIS

Don't let them in.

A final effort, and Travis drops Tobin.

Only when Tobin's feet meet the ground, they are greeted not by mud but by a hard surface.

DARK, ROTTED WOOD.

TRAVIS (O.S.)

...Don't let them in, Tobin.

Tobin turns back.

Travis is gone. ...The field is gone.

He is alone in A ROOM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's nearly pitch black in here. Tobin feels along the walls for a way out. Finally he comes to...

A DOOR

There is a deadbolt.

He gingerly slides it free.

Takes a breath.

No idea what might be waiting for him on the other side.

He opens the door and steps into...

INT. THE CHURCH OF THE BLACK ROCK OF THE REDEEMER - DAY

Tobin passes through A BLACK DOOR and into THE CHURCH. The same black door that Travis had seen when he first came here.

The space remains devoid of life. But it is bright. Stain-glass windows glow colorfully in a mid-day sun.

Tobin creeps past the nave and down the aisle, past rotting pews.

He reaches the exit and open the doors.

EXT. CHURCH OF THE BLACK ROCK OF THE REDEEMER - DAY

Blinding daylight. It takes a moment for Tobin's eyes to adjust.

He sees the parking area filled with cars, including his family's minivan.

And across the road is A RED MAZDA, parked by the field,
the motor running. From inside comes a familiar voice...

BECKY (O.S.)

Hello? Someone out there?

A long pause, then Tobin hears from the grass HIS OWN VOICE...

TOBIN IN THE GRASS (O.S.)

Help me! Help me!

EXT/INT. MAZDA/ROAD - DAY

We shift our perspective inside the car where we find Becky, just as she was before the ordeal. Cal next to her...

We are right back to where we started.

BECKY

Sounds like he's really in trouble.

CAL

Oookay. Better haul him out.

Becky opens the door and steps awkwardly out of the car. She reacts when she hears...

TOBIN (O.S.)

Don't go in there!

Cal, still in the car, turns to see through his side window Tobin running down the steps of the church, waving his arms.

TOBIN

Stay away from it!

Cal looks totally perplexed.

CAL

Wasn't... Didn't we hear him in--?

Then from the grass...

TOBIN IN THE GRASS

Help me! I've been stuck in here for DAYS!

Becky and Cal look back and forth, confused, as Tobin runs across the road and comes around the front of the Mazda.

TOBIN

Don't pay attention to him!

Tobin looks like he's been through hell and back, emaciated, covered in muck, drenched to the bone. Becky crosses over to him.

BECKY

Oh, my god. Are you okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOBIN

Get back into the car. Please, you have to go!

CAL

Where are your parents?

TOBIN

It doesn't matter. We just have to leave!

Becky looks to Cal.

BECKY

What do we do?

TOBIN IN THE GRASS

Heeeeeeeelp!

CAL

Sure sounds like he's in trouble.

Cal starts crossing the road.

TOBIN

Don't let him go in! If he goes in, you'll go in, and you'll never get out!

Becky is confused. Unsure what to believe or do with this disturbed child. She notices something in his hand.

Her pendant. Benny's Crab Shack mascot grinning back at her.

BECKY

Where did you get this?

TOBIN

Travis.

Becky can't process this... the pendent, the boy who knows Travis. It sends a chill down her spine.

NOW WITH CAL

As he steps down the embankment and is confronted with the wall of green. It waves at him. From within he hears...

TOBIN IN THE GRASS

Are you out there? Please. You gotta help.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Cal finds himself inexorably drawn to the field. He takes a step. Feels his foot sink in the damp earth. The other foot is about to cross the threshold when...

BECKY

Cal, wait!

Becky stands precariously on the ridge. Tobin beside him. She holds THE PENDANT in her hand. It is identical to the one around her neck. One leg missing.

BECKY

Get back here. Now!

The urgency in Becky's voice pulls Cal away from the field. He steps back on to safe ground.

BECKY

Look at this!

He climbs back up the embankment.

BECKY

He says Travis gave it to him.

CAL

What--?

TOBIN

I'll explain later, I promise.
But we have to go right now.
Please!

Becky and Cal exchange looks. Cast their gaze back to the field. The sight of it fills her with an inexplicable sense of dread. It strikes her in her gut. She reflexively reaches for her swollen belly. Has to steady herself against the car.

CAL

Are you all right?

Becky shakes her head, no.

BECKY

We have to go.

CAL

But that kid--

BECKY

Something's not right. We need to
leave now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Cal can read her fear. He's never seen his sister look this frightened. He makes choice and opens the back passenger door of the Mazda.

CAL
(to Tobin)
Get in.

Tobin's face washes over with relief. Without further prompting, he jumps into the back seat.

CAL
(to Becky)
We'll find a hospital for him. And then we'll send for help.

Becky nods.

INT. MAZDA - DAY

With a little difficulty Becky climbs back into the car, shuts the door. Cal gets behind the wheel. He looks back at Tobin.

CAL
We can drop him off in the nearest town on the way.

He starts the car. But as he eases back onto the road, something strikes Becky. Something about the presence of Tobin. Another level of intuition that brings her closer to a deeper truth about herself and her own baby.

Something she hadn't been clear about or was perhaps too fearful of to articulate until this moment.

BECKY
Stop!

Cal hits the breaks. Turns to his sister.

CAL
What is it now?

BECKY
Let's take him to Topkeka.

CAL
But that's back the way we came.

BECKY
I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cal takes the implied meaning of this.

CAL

I thought we decided to keep going.

Becky cradles her belly in her hands.

This time her response is different.

BECKY

We should never have left.

CAL

But... Are you sure? ...What about that family?

She catches Tobin watching this exchange with anxious eyes.

BECKY

I've got my own family now.

Becky turns back to the field one last time. She senses something... Someone there...

EXT. FIELD/ROAD - DAY

POV from within the grass looking towards the road: The Mazda is some distance away, Becky visible through the driver's side window.

Reveal it is TRAVIS who is watching her. He is caked in a mixture of blood and dirt.

Somehow he has found his way to the border of the field. But at a price. He is bleeding out.

Although he is fading, Travis is visibly relieved when the Mazda makes a U-turn and drives back up the 400, headed East. Headed home.

As the car recedes into the distance, he lowers himself to the soft earth, his life ebbing away. Alone now in a nest of green, he has found his peace.

His redemption.

The earth enfolds him, and slowly, almost tenderly, he is swallowed by the field.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We RISE, drifting away as the last vestige of Travis vanishes, and all that remains is grass.

Endless.

Eternal.

It waits patiently for the next arrival.