

MAGGIE

an original screenplay by

John Scott 3

FADE IN:

EXT. PACE HOUSE - ROOF - EARLY MORNING

A bleak sky pours gray down onto the high roof of a lone farmhouse. The remnants of a large painted RED CROSS symbol are visible on the shingles.

The bare feet of a TEENAGE GIRL, her face unseen, move slightly on the shingles toward the edge of the roof. Scabs and puss spot her red and blackened legs.

Next to her feet, the binder of a book rests atop the shingles, pages appearing ripped from its core.

Slowly, the girl's arms raise to her sides, but as the wind catches her, she pulls them back in, wrapping them around herself.

The girl shivers as pieces of paper float on the wind.

THREE WEEKS EARLIER:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

A fox, its chest stark white against its red fur, trots down a long dirt driveway, stopping as a magnolia late-80s pickup truck kicks up dust, shimmying between two dead cornfields.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

WADE, weathered and aged with hints of rough attractiveness, wipes the sweat from his tanned face with his callused hands. He lights a cigarette with shaky fingers and glares across the cab at MAGGIE, who stares out the window through black, slightly-opaque sunglasses.

Wade turns back to the road as the teenage girl rubs at a patch covering a small section of her arm. Maggie notices, then stops and runs her hand through her hair. Finding a small strand still clinging to her hand, she flicks it off.

She sighs and lays her head on the window. Then, she puts her finger on the glass, drawing in the dust as the truck bounces up and down on the road.

WADE

Molly kept asking about you. You  
know what we told her?

Maggie continues to draw. Wade puffs a cloud of smoke.

WADE (CONT'D)

Had to say you went to stay with Allie for a few weeks. So don't say any different. We'll tell her when we're ready. Caroline thinks we should tell them both now. But I talked her out of it. And Bobby...well, the boy ain't said a word since you left.

Maggie pulls a cigarette out of her father's pack and tosses the pack back on the dash next to a small map with red-inked circles and a walkie talkie.

WADE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

She lights the cigarette. Wade reaches across and snatches the cigarette from her mouth and tosses it out the window. Maggie mumbles under her breath.

WADE (CONT'D)

What was that, young lady?

MAGGIE

I said what does it matter. I'm already dead.

Wade stares at the girl as she puts her head back on the passenger door window, rubbing her eyes from under her glasses.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

CAROLINE, a short-haired, earnest looking woman, sits and watches out of the bay window, as the pale truck draws nearer to the house.

The homely room around her bleeds of a dichotomous and blended decoration; the present decor slightly haphazard as framed photos on the walls hang slightly off-center, covering the ghostly remains of previous photos.

A land-line phone RINGS. Caroline stands and answers it.

CAROLINE

Hello?... Hi Linda...He's on his way home with Maggie. As soon as he drops her off, he'll run the two of them over to your house. Thanks again for taking care of them through this....I know. Well, the doctors said Maggie's got a good few months.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

And she's got an appointment with Vern next week. I'm just glad we found her and she's home...Well, I think if you want, come by sometime in the next week or two. It'd be good for her to see you...All right. You too.

Caroline hangs the phone up and closes her eyes, gripping a rosary.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, please...please have mercy.

MOLLY, short, cute, and curly-headed, runs through the living room in a white, blue-trimmed dress.

MOLLY

Mommy. Daddy's home!

Caroline scoops up Molly.

CAROLINE

Did you pack your bag?

Molly nods.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Molly?

MOLLY

Yeah.

CAROLINE

Pretty-Pony going?

Molly looks up, her expression in thought.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You're not going to take Pretty-Pony?

Molly squirms and as Caroline sets her down, the girl sprints up the nearby stairs past BOBBY, who stands in the doorway, near a pile of wood. He looks up at the nearby window and the fresh daylight pouring through a hole between two slats of wood.

Then the boy, twice Molly's height, picks up a backpack.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Maggie's here, Bobby. You want to see her?

Bobby stares at her a moment longer, nods, then walks into the next room.

EXT. PACE HOUSE FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

The truck slides up to the house and the engine clatters off. Molly sprints out of the front door and jumps into Wade's arms as he steps out of the cab.

WADE  
Well, hello there darlin'.

MOLLY  
Hi, daddy.

Wade looks back into the cab.

WADE  
You getting out?

Maggie yanks the handle and exits. She grabs a backpack out of the back. Then, she notices Caroline in the doorway of the house.

WADE (CONT'D)  
You got those?

MAGGIE  
Yeah.

She throws the backpack over her shoulder, grabs a bag from the bed and starts toward the house when Molly steps out from the side of the truck.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
(smiling)  
Hey, Mol.

Molly notices the patch on Maggie's arm.

MOLLY  
What happened to your arm?

MAGGIE  
(looking at Wade)  
I...got hurt.

MOLLY  
I scratched mine.

She shows her tiny, band-aid covered wound.

MOLLY (CONT'D)  
But mommy fixed it. Who fixed yours?

MAGGIE

The doctors.

MOLLY

You had to go to the doctor?

MAGGIE

Mine's a little more than a scratch.

WADE

Mag. We gotta go. Your aunt's taking them camping in her back yard for a while.

(to Molly)

Ain't that right, Mol?

Molly nods as Maggie takes in the news. Then she bends and shares a hug with Molly. They break and Molly smiles, eliciting a small smile from Maggie.

Molly sprints back to the doorway and Caroline bends and hugs her, then places a backpack on the little girl's back. She kisses Molly on the forehead and scoots her along. Molly hops into the truck, playing with a doll.

Bobby exits the house, walking right by Caroline and stopping suddenly as he notices Maggie.

MAGGIE

Hi, Bobby.

The boy stares at her a moment, apprehensively. Wade watches the two share a tense moment, then he walks over to Bobby.

WADE

Come on, kiddo. Let's go. Maggie, I'll be back shortly. Head inside and put your stuff in your room. Caroline's cleaned it out for you.

Caroline walks over to Wade with a big smile. They kiss, then Wade mumbles something which makes her smile grow. As Wade walks back to the truck and hops in, Bobby hesitantly waves to Maggie as the car drives away. She raises her hand, but the moment is gone.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

WADE

Bobby, you okay?

The boy nods.

MOLLY

Daddy?

WADE

What, baby?

MOLLY

What's this?

Molly points to Maggie's drawing in the dust on the passenger side window: the symbol for contamination.

Wade leans over and quickly wipes it from the window.

WADE

Nothing, baby. It's nothing.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie steps through the threshold of the door and stops, studying the kitchen. Caroline mindlessly clears the table.

CAROLINE

Want to get settled and help me with the dishes?

Maggie sets her stuff down and slowly picks a glass up from the counter.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You missed dinner. We had corn dogs again. Never thought Bobby and Molly would hate 'em but...

(beat)

Your father's been slaving in the fields, trying to get them back to life. He's talked to several people from different counties and no one's got any of the crops going. But then again--

Caroline stops suddenly, a dish in her hand.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Where did you go?

Maggie stills herself, surprised. She rubs at the patch on her arm.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You just up and left. Your father searched for you. He scoured the cursed city for two weeks. No phones. Out of walkie distance. And no one was supposed to be out of the house. You left us, and he went for you. Where did you go?

Tremors creep over Caroline's arms. Maggie stares hard at the ground.

MAGGIE

I didn't--

CAROLINE

Where, Maggie!

Startled, Maggie drops the glass in her hands and it crashes to the floor, SHATTERING.

MAGGIE

I was in a shelter. In K.C.

Silence befalls the kitchen. Caroline gathers herself.

CAROLINE

(breathy)

Why? Why did you leave?

Maggie raises her head slowly and removes her sunglasses. Pink, blotchy skin surrounds her bloodshot eyes. They glimmer with a gray tint as she stares daggers at Caroline. Caroline looks suddenly shaken.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Dear Lord. Dear Lord.

MAGGIE

I watched people die there.

(she chokes a cry)

I left to keep from hurting you.

Molly and Bobby. Dad.

CAROLINE

But--but we never asked that of you.

We would never--

MAGGIE

(pointing to her eyes)

And I never asked for *THIS*.

(to herself)

It doesn't matter.

Maggie grabs her bag and stalks past Caroline, who backs away.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - LATER

Maggie unpacks a small bag and stops as she reaches for a pamphlet with instructions on cleaning infected wounds. Her hands shake as she reads it. Then, she rips it in half.

She takes inventory of her room and soaks in the memories of a life before infection: pictures, books, clothes.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Bathed in the light of the bleakness outside, Caroline prepares a meager dinner from canned and other nonperishable foods. She looks down at a small clock on the counter, then leans across the counter to switch on a radio.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

--and up to five hundred and twenty eight thousand now, nearly all from inner cities and metropolitan areas. All infected or dead. Residents of rural areas were less affected, though it appears the nation's crops have died out. It would seem that while other countries were hit harder than ours, the nation has still fallen under the weight of this...outbreak. What will we do now? What can we do now? Tonight I have with me one of Washington's top--wait, I'm sorry. Can I even call it that anymore? Washington?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yes, of course.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

But it's a giant hole! Regardless. Tonight I have with me one of *government's* top political advisors to Homeland Security. Mrs. Jane Sandowski. Jane, you were talking to me before the show about your husband.

Caroline maneuvers through in a subconscious patterned repetition, using power-less kitchen tools. Post-it notes over outlets reflect circuit numbers.

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

Well my husband was recently infected, and after the allotted time he was allowed home, I did as was told and brought him back in for quarantine.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

But why are we still sending them home?

(MORE)

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I mean, there's still no magical cure, no way to prevent these infected people from spreading it, and we all know what happens after the virus takes full effect. And you're *allowing* them to just walk out of hospitals.

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

The decision to allow the bereavement time-period was not made rashly. Government personnel, security, doctors, teachers, police, fire department--everyone is aware of the disease and the precautions. And while we know little about the first few stages of the virus, we know that certain symptoms are triggers. They tell us that patients have days left before what we're considering the final stage.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

It seems counter-productive, that's all I'm saying. You're unleashing vile, rabid creatures onto the world.

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

But that's just it, they're not yet. And we have rules set in place to prevent that. Each infected person should receive an initial examination, at which point they are flagged in a database. Then, they have the option of going home for a period of time, to be brought back into quarantine at eight weeks or if trigger symptoms present themselves, whichever comes first. There's just no way for us to police each case. Ultimately, we need to be vigilant of this.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

So you're leaving it up to families. Friends. Strangers. You think that they'll honestly waltz back into your quarantine?

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

No. I don't. Some won't. Infection might spread. But we're human. What do you suggest? Round them all up as they come in for help, put 'em in a room and gas 'em?

Caroline stops preparing as the words linger in silence.

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'm just saying, we can think beyond the absolutes. We are a good people. We're already recovering. There's a reason we're at the top of the food chain.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

How can you say we're a good people? It's *people* that did this. But you're right. We are at the top of the food chain.

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

Oh Jesus--

Caroline powers off the radio and closes her eyes, praying. The rumble of a truck engine creeps through the room. Caroline looks out the window and watches as Wade's truck drives up the long drive.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Wade slides the truck to a halt, puts it in park and sits a moment. He stares over at the passenger window, at the smeared picture. Then, he wipes it again.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Wade comes through the door slowly, a .22 rifle hanging from his shoulder, and finds Caroline waiting for him. They embrace.

CAROLINE

I missed you so much.

Wade squeezes tighter, then releases. Caroline kisses him passionately, her hands on his cheeks.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

What took so long?

WADE

Stopped to get the fuel rations. Figured the generators would be about out.

Wade sits and begins pulling off his boots.

WADE (CONT'D)

That, and you know Linda. Woman could talk a shrink crazy.

CAROLINE  
How was it? The city?

Wade glances up at her and shakes his head, then continues with his boots.

WADE  
Where is she?

CAROLINE  
Her room.

WADE  
You leave her be?

CAROLINE  
Mostly.

WADE  
Mostly?

CAROLINE  
I asked her where she was.

WADE  
I asked you to leave her be.

Wade kneels to grab his boots and notices bits of glass on the floor. He looks up at Caroline.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Mostly...

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - LATER

Maggie sits on a thin bed, playing with a dying iPod. She throws it down, then searches through the nearby boxes and retrieves a cassette player.

She slides the headphones on, presses play and simply listens to a melancholic song, watching the clouds darken the dead fields surrounding the house.

WADE (O.S.)  
Knock, knock.

Maggie turns listlessly to the door and peels one side of the headphones away from her ear.

WADE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
You decent?

MAGGIE  
Yeah.

Wade slowly pushes the door open, his eyes looking over a collage on the door in the shape of a flower, pictures of Maggie, healthy and smiling, alongside numerous friends.

WADE  
Caroline's making you something to eat.

MAGGIE  
I'm not hungry.

WADE  
They said that'd happen.  
(beat)  
Allie called a few times.

She ignores him.

WADE (CONT'D)  
All right...

He turns. Maggie thumbs the stop button.

MAGGIE  
Two weeks?

He stops and turns to look at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
You spent two weeks out there?

WADE  
Yeah.

MAGGIE  
Why?

WADE  
Made a promise to your mother. To protect you.

MAGGIE  
It's your job to protect them. I'm contagious. More now. The doctor even said--

WADE  
Caroline and I know the precautions. We'll be fine. We've got time.

Maggie plays with the bandage. Up close, the skin around it glows with a red and black rash.

WADE (CONT'D)

Just eat something. Try. For me.  
Please.

Wade exits. Maggie pulls away the bandage, relieved to have it off. Then, she inspects the rotten patch of flesh on her arm, the shape and size of a quarter.

INT. PACE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Caroline and Wade sit across from each other at a short table. Maggie, to Wade's right, stares down at her food as they all sit in silence.

Wade scoops food into his mouth slowly, watching the two women. Caroline notices Maggie's arm.

CAROLINE

Maggie. Where are your bandages?  
If we're going to--

Maggie drops her fork and stands quickly, sliding the chair back. She heads up the stairs and SLAMS a door.

Wade stares at Caroline.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

I know. I know. But I can't look  
at it. I can't see it...knowing  
what's going to happen. I can't.  
Wade...

Wade stands and drags the side chair over to Caroline and sits next to her, holding her hand.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

I've asked Him and asked Him.

She looks down at their interclasped hands. A desperate smile flashes across her face.

WADE

He's there. He's not left us yet.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie, slumped across her bed, pulls a phone from a box. She plugs it into a jack and puts the receiver to her ear.  
DIAL-TONE.

She dials three numbers. The bandage on her arm is replaced.

OFFICIAL MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
 You have reached the Kansas City St.  
 Paul Hospital. If you need immediate  
 assistance, press one. If someone  
 you know has been infected with Strain  
 47, or the "Necroambulist" virus,  
 and requires an initial examination,  
 please dial two for Quarantine Center  
 Information. If you are infected  
 and are displaying any of the noted  
 trigger symptoms, please dial three  
 to speak with a representative of  
 Quarantine Center Information. If--

Maggie presses three on the keypad.

OFFICIAL MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Please note. All tracking and  
 positioning systems are offline.  
 When prompted, provide the operator  
 with your address, phone number, and  
 medical I.D. number, along with your  
 condition.

Music plays a long time before clicking off.

CONCERNED FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
 St. Paul Hospital, please tell me  
 your address.

Maggie hesitates.

CONCERNED FEMALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Hello? I need your address before I--

Maggie lowers the phone to the receiver. She exhales a large  
 breath and stands, her hand on her chest. Then, she walks  
 to the window and runs her fingers over a picture of a younger  
 Bobby with a baby Molly in his tiny arms. Past the picture,  
 through the window, she notices their swing-set outside.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MORNING

Maggie, seated on the swing-set, moves languidly back and  
 forth. She notices a small toy, a porcelain soldier, on the  
 ground. She picks it up, playing with it between her fingers.  
 A dark gray ring around the bandage and faint patches of  
 missing hair mark the spreading of the disease.

She pulls back on the swing and begins to sway higher and  
 higher.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline opens a deep freeze near the back door and, amongst an assortment of frozen goods, pulls out a large bin. She opens it and retrieves two large, frozen tomatoes.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Caroline exits the porch to the dead grass and straight up to a large generator. She evaluates the display, which reads 1/4 full. She then takes note of the switches, each with post-it notes associated to circuits.

Wade looks up at Caroline from the distance, an axe in one hand and a long piece of wood in the other.

She flips one of the switches and the generator vibrates to life.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline runs the tomatoes under hot water, watching Maggie on the swing. Then, she puts the tomatoes in the microwave. While it defrosts, she notices an inhaler under the table. She picks it up, reading the canister:

ALBUTEROL. PRESCRIPTION FOR: PACE, MARGUERITE JANE

The microwave BEEPS. She retrieves the tomatoes and begins to dice them.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie pulls back higher on the swing. She closes her eyes, basking in the gray sky, and for a short moment, she smiles.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline stares out at Maggie, intently.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie's bandaged arm shakes, then suddenly gives out and her hand slips from the chain. The swing twists and contorts. Maggie screams out, flopping back and forth before finally spilling out to the ground and crying out.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline darts out of the kitchen and into the:

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Lying on her face, Maggie pushes herself up. Caroline drops to her side.

CAROLINE  
Are you okay?

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
Maggie? Are you--

As she helps Maggie turn over, she notices the girl's broken finger.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
Your finger...

Maggie notices it and starts to shake.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
Come on. Come inside.

She helps Maggie up.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN

Seated at the table, a shaken Maggie winces down at her broken finger. Caroline fumbles through the cabinets.

CAROLINE  
I know it's up here somewhere. Your father is always hurting himself out in the fields.

MAGGIE  
Caroline?

CAROLINE  
I think he might have put it in the--

MAGGIE  
Caroline!

Caroline stops and notices Maggie's hand. A small amount of deep-red blood seeps out of her broken finger, before gooey black liquid replaces it.

CAROLINE (O.S.)  
I'll call the doctor.  
(shouting)  
Wade!

Caroline moves past the girl into the living room.

Maggie stands inches to the counter, staring down at the diced tomatoes.

CAROLINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
WADE! WADE!

Maggie picks up the large knife and stares down, in a trance, at her broken finger and the black puss seeping from it.

Caroline's low murmurs echo in through the kitchen. Maggie shakily lowers her finger to the cutting board. She raises the knife, near-spasms running through her.

CAROLINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I got through to Dr. Kaplan's office.

Maggie slowly lowers the knife, her face in terror. Then, in a flash she flings it up again, and in one fell swoop, the knife comes down and her finger lobs off, falling just next to the tomatoes.

Maggie sinks to her knees, weeping tearlessly and silently. She rises and stares down at the blackened finger. She picks it up and drops it into the sink, down the drain.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CAROLINE

(on phone)

Yes, she's infected. Can you please patch me through to Vern...Yes...Yes, I understand, but--

A GRINDING SOUND suddenly arises from the kitchen.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(on phone)

I'm here. Yes, he is. No. No, she's my stepdaughter. I'm her emergency...

The GRINDING SOUND continues. Caroline drops the phone, standing in the kitchen doorframe. The empty kitchen echoes the sound of the garbage disposal.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline inches to the sink. Up close, the GRINDING SOUND spurts and clatters. She flips a switch on the wall and the disposal stops. Leaning over, she notices a small, lined spatter of black liquid from the edge of the sink to the drain.

EXT. EMPTY FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie sprints through the dead field. Nearing the wood edge, she glances up at the sky, it, too, dead. She stops and kneels down, cradling her injured hand in her other. It drips an unusual dark red liquid from the wound of the amputation.

She scoops up a bit of dirt with her good hand and studies it.

The sound of tree branches SNAPPING echoes out of the wood edge. Maggie stands quickly, dropping the dirt. She stares into the gray woods, backing away slowly.

In the distance, a stone's throw away, two SHADOWS emerge, one taller and one shorter. Their tattered, dirty clothes and rotted skin shroud them from within the woods.

The shadows stop. Maggie, too, stops but her eyes stay fixed on the shadows.

They emerge from the wood edge in jerky motions. Maggie watches, paralyzed, as the lifeless body of a seemingly DEAD MAN pulls on the hand of a similar DEAD GIRL at his side, their bodies caked with blackened, decaying skin.

Maggie's mouth gapes as the dead man and girl begin to move closer to her with sad looks on their faces. A gray mist shrouds their pupils and their heads wobble slightly.

WADE (O.S.)

Maggie.

Maggie jumps, startled. She turns to find Wade, sweating and breathing heavily just behind her. His gaze, though, locks steady on the two dead bodies moving slowly closer to them.

WADE (CONT'D)

Get behind me.

He garnishes an axe hanging from one hand, his other clenched tightly into a fist at his side.

WADE (CONT'D)

Maggie. Get behind me. Now.

Maggie turns back to the man and girl stalking forward, then she moves behind Wade.

MAGGIE

Don't. Please.

Wade finally breaks his gaze to look at Maggie.

WADE

Go back to the house.

He simply turns his back on her.

She puts her hand on his sweaty shoulder and he pulls away from her grip.

WADE (CONT'D)

Go.

She backs away, leaving him pleading for a response from the seemingly dead creatures moving toward him.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie stumbles into the yard. Caroline quickly runs to her and puts a blanket around her shoulders.

CROAKING CRIES from the distance send crows scattering into the lifeless sky from the fields behind the two women. Caroline jerks her head in the direction only a moment before ushering Maggie toward the house.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - EVENING

A plump officer, RAY, leans against the railing as Wade puffs on a cigarette.

WADE

Hell, I don't know...

(beat)

Mag used to baby-sit her.

RAY

You had to do it. Ain't no one fighting that. Bonnie was wrong for what she'd done.

WADE

Was she?

RAY

She should have brought them into quarantine. I had damn near the whole station out there. And now we can't even find her.

(beat)

Wade. When the time comes--

WADE

Ray...

Wade flicks his cigarette out into the dirt and exhales.

WADE (CONT'D)

Remember when we was kids? How we had it?

Ray forces a smile.

WADE (CONT'D)

We go back a long ways, and you've always done us right, especially after Sarah passed, but I swear to God. If you come here with that quarantine shit--

(low)

Mag's stayin' right here.

The two lean on the rail in silence, neither looking at the other. Then, Ray stands and walks down the stairs to his police cruiser.

RAY

Trucks are in Owensboro tonight. I'll get 'em out here tomorrow morning to get the remains.

Wade watches Ray leave, then steps inside.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Wade walks through the doorway where, overhead, two hooks hold a rifle just out of children's reach. He sinks down into the couch, closing his eyes. A moment later, the stairs creak as Caroline descends slowly.

WADE

How is she--

Caroline shushes him. Wade opens his eyes.

WADE (CONT'D)

(lower)

Is she asleep?

Caroline nods, then sits down on the ottoman across from Wade.

WADE (CONT'D)

How's her finger?

CAROLINE

Well. It's gone. She made sure of that. But I got it bandaged up. She won't go to the hospital or the doctor.

WADE

I figured that. You think she--

CAROLINE

Wade. She's fine for now. How are you?

Wade lowers his head and Caroline takes his hands in hers.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Did you talk to Bonnie?

Wade shakes his head.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

What'd Ray say?

WADE

Said no one had seen Nathan in a long time. And since schools are shut down, they ain't seen Julia either.

CAROLINE

They're in a better place.

WADE

I killed his little girl. I used to bob her on my knee when Nathan and Bonnie came over. I killed her, Caroline.

CAROLINE

You did not. They'd already moved on.

WADE

There was something in their eyes. They were dead. But--but there was something there.

Caroline pulls Wade closer to her.

INT. PACE HOUSE - WADE'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

The low rumble of an engine bleeds into the room.

Wade's eyes open and he sits upright, taking note of a light penetrating the darkness outside. He goes to the window. Caroline sits up, fear in her eyes.

CAROLINE

What is it?

Wade notices headlights at the far side of the driveway. Wade picks up the phone and dials.

RAY (O.S.)

Hello?

WADE  
It's Wade. Get someone out here  
now.

RAY (O.S.)  
What--

Wade hangs up.

CAROLINE  
Wade--

WADE  
Stay here.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wade pulls on sweat-pants, then descends the stairs. As he approaches the doorway windows, the outdoor motion-sensor lights kick on, startling him. He grabs his shotgun from the hooks over the door.

He pulls one curtain aside to find a car parked at the house with a cloud of dust floating in the bright lights behind it. He opens the door and looks around.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH

Wade finds BONNIE, a distraught and frail woman, sitting in the rocking chair. Her dangling hand grips a pistol shakily, the hammer cocked back. Wade steps out.

WADE  
Bonnie.

She ignores him.

WADE (CONT'D)  
It's late.

Wade slowly moves to the bench next to Bonnie and sits, shotgun still in hand. Bonnie's finger moves to her trigger. Wade notices.

BONNIE  
How's Mag?

Wade's finger now moves to his trigger.

WADE  
'Bout as good as she can be.

BONNIE  
Good.  
(MORE)

BONNIE (CONT'D)

(beat)

You know, Nathan spent weeks in our fields. He tried everything. Sprays. Powders. Special manure. I didn't even know there was such a thing. He even joked about playing Beethoven. But nothing came.

She trails off, but remains stolid.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Doctors gave us all these special rules and papers for children with her condition. "Avoid touching the *subject* without gloves." "Lock the *subject* in a room at night." Subject...He never once said her name.

(lovingly)

Julia.

(beat)

She's just four. She was scared, and slept with us most times as it was. So we'd--we'd take turns with her through nights. But then she got worse. And one night Nathan went in...and he didn't wake me up for my turn. Next morning, the door was locked. He'd...He'd locked himself in with her. I pounded and pounded on that damn door. And I screamed 'til I couldn't no more. And still he never answered. But he knew. He knew what he was doing.

She looks at him for the first time.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Show me where they're at.

Wade and Bonnie look deep into each others' eyes. Then, Wade nods, stands and walks out into the field. Bonnie stands and follows, pistol still in hand.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Wade steps in front of Bonnie and leads her through his field. Then, he stops. Bonnie stops, just behind him. They stand there for a tense moment, Wade's back to Bonnie. The sound of her gun cocking breaks in the silence.

WADE

Out by the edge.

He slowly lowers the shotgun to the ground and waits for a long moment. Then, she moves forward past him and out to the field's edge in the distance. He watches her stop and hover over the remains of Nathan and Julia. She sinks to her knees, drops the gun, and she explodes into tears.

Wade simply watches. Moments later, red flashing lights dance over his face as the police cruiser arrives.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAWN

In the far distance, the gray sky, barely lit, casts ghostly shadows of the emergency unit bagging the pieces of Nathan and Julia. Haz-mat symbols cover the vehicles.

Just beyond the porch, Wade and Caroline observe the event. Caroline pulls the blanket around her in closer and grabs Wade's hand.

The emergency unit slams the doors on the wagon and shuts off the flashing lights. Then, it pulls away and back onto the dirt road.

Bonnie stands just behind Ray's police car door, glaring out at Wade and Caroline with glossy eyes. Then, her gaze turns upward toward the house.

Wade follows Bonnie's gaze and looks up at the rooftop, where Maggie sits, staring back out at the field. Bonnie climbs into the back of the cruiser and it slowly pulls out of the field and onto the dirt road, exiting the Pace land.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The fox, a warm color amongst the dying foliage, stands watch as her family of kit frolic near the den. The fox growls lowly and the kit return to her, then move inside the den. The fox eyes the forest, then she too moves inside.

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Caroline leans on Maggie's door.

CAROLINE

Will you let me help?

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I just want to be alone right now.

CAROLINE

Please let me in. I just want to talk with you.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I'm not going to be home schooled  
just to up and die in a few months.  
I don't think Washington or Chief  
Sitting Bull can help with that.

CAROLINE

Come on. You don't *know* you're going  
to die. The Lord works in mysterious  
ways. I've been praying. Matthew  
eight, two to three says that a man  
with leprosy came and knelt down  
before Jesus and said, "Lord, if you  
are willing, you can make me clean."  
And Jesus reached out his hand and  
touched the man. "I am willing," he  
said. Then he shouted, "Be Clean!"  
And immediately, the man was cured  
of his leprosy. There are so many--

Maggie swings the door open and rips the sleeve of her shirt  
up, revealing a gaping wound on her arm.

MAGGIE

You know why I wear long sleeve  
shirts? Because of this. This ain't  
leprosy. It isn't cancer.

Maggie's angry eyes are purely dilated and glossed over with  
gray. Dark rings envelop them from forehead to lower cheek.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

This isn't some freak case of...  
whatever! I'm dying Caroline.

CAROLINE

How can you say that? You're standing  
there. You're talking to me. I  
don't care how many times you say  
it, you're not--

MAGGIE

Yes I am. I feel it. No, wait. I  
don't feel anything anymore. That's  
the point. I lost that a week ago.  
I don't feel pain. I don't feel  
heat or cold. I don't taste. I  
don't *feel*.

CAROLINE

But your finger...

MAGGIE

I was in shock, Caroline.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Shock that my finger was pulled half  
off my hand.

A brief silence pangs.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
What do you want?

CAROLINE  
I just want to help.

MAGGIE  
You can't.

CAROLINE  
But He can. He can heal--

MAGGIE  
Him?!? He did this to me. God did  
this to me. He damned me. I spent  
my whole life in church, after momma  
died, then when you made me go. And  
I know exactly where I'm going.

Caroline's eyes flood with tears.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
And I can't do *that* anymore either.  
I've been trying.

She slams the door in Caroline's face. The woman exhales  
loudly and it quickly becomes a choked cry.

EXT. FOREST - LATER

Wade trudges through a thicket of trees, carrying his axe.  
His soil-covered hands grip a seed bag.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - LATER

Wade paces up the dirt road, back to the house. He glances  
up at the sky, then out at his dead field, scanning his  
acreage in frustration.

His house, on a slight hill, stands alone, dark against the  
barren sky. Behind it rests the shed and generator. And  
something else. Someone in a seat in the middle of the back  
yard. Caroline.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Wade approaches, noticing Caroline's posture. She's wrapped  
in a blanket, clutching at her rosary.

WADE

Caroline?

CAROLINE

She's gone to us. They're all gone.  
All of them. The world. We're all  
sinners. And they...those poor  
things...are going to Hell.

WADE

Caroline...

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Dad!

Wade turns to see Maggie standing in distant doorway of the house.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

There's a man on the phone for you.

WADE

I'll be in in a minute, Daisy.

Maggie retreats back inside. Wade turns back to Caroline.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline. I'm going to say this to  
you only once. My daughter is not  
going to Hell. I don't know what's  
gotten into your head. But I need  
you to snap out of it. I'm hanging  
on by a thread, and that means she's  
already falling. So, please. Don't  
do this. She needs you. I need  
you.

Caroline ignores him.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline!

She turns to him, seemingly awake now.

WADE (CONT'D)

I need you. Please.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie hands Wade the land-line receiver.

MAGGIE

Dad, what's going on?

WADE

I don't know. She--

MAGGIE

The bank says they're going to foreclose.

He slowly takes the phone out of her wounded hand.

WADE

Let me be, Dais.

MAGGIE

What--

WADE

Maggie! Let me be.

Maggie disappears into the living room.

WADE (CONT'D)

Hello?

BANK MAN (O.S.)

Hello, Mr. Pace. I'm George Garmen. I'm calling on behalf of Evans Bank. There appears to be an outstanding balance on your mortgage and your three home equity loans are past due. Now, given the situation and the...outbreak, the government has issued what's called a Leniency Policy which grants every citizen a two month grace period. Now, this covers--

WADE

A two month...

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

Grace period. Yes, Mr. Pace. This covers all debt, whether outstanding or not. Did you receive the letters and pamphlets about this policy from the post office? I know there's been a large mixup with the mail and it wasn't running for nearly two weeks, but I see there were five issued and two were postmarked several weeks ago.

Wade stands, paces, and shakes his head.

WADE

I'm sorry, Mister...

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

Garmen.

WADE

Mister Garmen. Have you ever seen the infected? In person?

A pause.

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

Yes. Yes, sir.

WADE

And you know that my daughter's infected. Right? That's in your papers?

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

Yes, sir.

WADE

Concerning the...equity loans.

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

Yes sir.

WADE

Mister Garmen, I used most of that money to track down my daughter. And when I finally found her, I used the rest of it to pay for a group of doctors to tell me that my baby girl is already dead.

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

I--I'm sorry, Mister Pace. The insurance companies can provide more information on--

WADE

I'm not finished. You ever wonder where you get your corn? Your bread? I'm guessing you noticed it ain't been showing up lately in the grocery store? See, while the *outbreak* was killing my daughter, it was also killing my crops. All the crops. And believe me, Mr. Garmen, I've been trying to bring them back to life. But I can't. So thank you, Mr. Garmen. Thank you for the two month grace period. Thank you for reminding me of all of this. I appreciate the bank's concern.

(MORE)

WADE (CONT'D)

And now...well, hell, you can have  
your goddamn land back. You figure  
it out.

Wade slams the phone down on the receiver and huffs out a  
breath, quietly shaking.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Bank?

WADE

Yeah.

Caroline enters, more coherent now, and sits next to him.

WADE (CONT'D)

Cockroaches and banks. Seem to be  
the only things that survive.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie sits on the center of the couch, listening to Wade  
and Caroline, picking at the black hole in her arm.

Maggie carefully pulls her long sleeve down over the  
disgusting wound and closes her eyes. She unconsciously  
plays with her hair, but suddenly stops, realizing that  
strands have been pulled from her head.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Wade smokes a cigarette as Maggie stares out the window at  
the half-dead foliage of the woods.

She pulls her sunglasses off her face briefly, her eyes,  
along with noticeable patches of missing hair, denote her  
furthering condition. She blinks rapidly at the bright  
daylight before finally replacing the glasses.

EXT. SMALL TOWN - LATER

Wade's truck shimmies through. Signs denoting closed  
businesses litter the windows of the buildings.

Wade turns the truck down a small road, bypassing a boarded-  
up movie theater.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Wade notices Maggie as she studies the theater in the long  
distance.

EXT. SMALL TOWN - CONTINUOUS

The truck pulls past a police cruiser and ambulance, rolling up to Ray, who studies a building.

WADE

Ray.

Ray pulls a small smile as he turns and steps to the truck.

RAY

Wade.

Ray squints and leans in, looking at Maggie.

RAY (CONT'D)

Maggie.

WADE

What's going on?

RAY

It's Grace. Another heart attack. They're in there with her right now. She's pretty bad off, but Chris said she'll survive to have another.

Wade steps out of the truck and joins Ray in looking up at the building.

RAY (CONT'D)

Her third since Gerald died. Hell, he was infected for three days before his heart gave out. Probably better that way.

Ray cringes ever so slightly, staring in at Maggie, though she still ignores him.

RAY (CONT'D)

Took Bonnie in.

WADE

She wasn't infected, was she?

RAY

I don't know how she's not. Guess she'd had them locked up for a while. When the boys went in, they found over twenty pounds of raw burger in the fridge. Turns out she never even took 'em in. No records or anything.

WADE

She all right?

RAY

In custody. Hell, who knows how  
it'll pan out. They're considering  
it a felony. Ask me, they ought to--

Ray notices Wade's eyes on him. Then, Ray nods toward Maggie.

RAY (CONT'D)

(quieter)

How is *she*?

WADE

Heading to the doctor's now.

RAY

Well, all right.

(leaning in)

Maggie. You take care, okay?

Maggie turns her gaze to him, her expression blank through  
the sunglasses, and then back out the window.

MAGGIE

Yeah.

Wade nods toward TWO PARAMEDICS exiting the building, wheeling  
out a stretcher with an ELDERLY LADY strapped to it. Ray  
notices, slaps the truck and walks toward the medics.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - WAITING AREA - LATER

Maggie's sunglasses sit atop her head as she looks out the  
waiting-room window at a group of teenagers in a distant  
parking lot chatting and laughing.

She frowns and sits next to Wade, who reads a newspaper.  
The headline reads: INFECTED TOLL EXCEEDS CDC PREDICTIONS.  
Posters on the walls hint at a healthy lifestyle, one in  
particular detailing the recent infection through pictures  
and a "Top 5 Things to Know..."

Maggie notices two children a few feet in front of her with  
toys in their hands, staring up with wide eyes. She smiles,  
but in doing so, the red, cracked skin around her eyes begins  
to open. One of the kids begins to cry.

A distressed woman, LAURETTA, notices.

DISTRESSED WOMAN

James. Carrie. Get over here.  
Right now.

Maggie realizes and pulls down her sunglasses. The kids move back to the woman. Maggie sits back hard, slamming the chair against the wall. Wade lowers the paper, looking at the woman.

WADE

Lauretta.

LAURETTA

(flashing a fake smile)

Wade. How are you?

WADE

Been better. You?

Lauretta glances at Maggie then back.

LAURETTA

Fine. How are Molly and Bobby?

WADE

Good. Staying with my sister for a while.

LAURETTA

Oh?

Maggie folds her arms.

LAURETTA (CONT'D)

Maggie. How are you doing?

WADE

Tip top, aren't you, Daisy.

MAGGIE

Peachy.

Lauretta frowns. A NURSE opens a door and steps out, holding a clipboard.

NURSE

Maggie?

Maggie stands quickly. The nurse smiles.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Follow me, dear. Wade, you can come too.

Wade stands, drops the paper on top of a stack of magazines on a stand near Lauretta, the headline bold and exposed.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAMINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie sits with patient garb tied around her. A light KNOCK rattles the door.

WADE (O.S.)  
Dais?

MAGGIE  
Yeah.

He enters and notices her arm and black spider veins spreading from the wound and also on her legs.

WADE  
(whispered surprise)  
Jesus, Maggie.

He grabs her wrist lightly and examines it.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Maggie. Baby.

MAGGIE  
I don't feel it.

He looks up at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
It's okay.

Another rap on the door. DR. KAPLAN, a tall, distinguished, but warm man, enters slowly.

DR. KAPLAN  
Afternoon, Wade.

WADE  
Vern.

He shakes Wade's hand and smiles at Maggie.

DR. KAPLAN  
Maggie, how are you doing today?

MAGGIE  
Good. I guess.

DR. KAPLAN  
Good.

Dr. Kaplan pulls some gloves on and steps in front of Maggie. He feels her neck then evaluates the sores on her head.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)  
You eating?

MAGGIE  
Yeah.

WADE  
No.

Dr. Kaplan smiles down at Maggie.

DR. KAPLAN  
It's okay. I know you may not want to. But the best thing you can do is try to get some food in you. Some nutrition. Not sure yet if any food has any affect on it.

MAGGIE  
I'm never hungry.

DR. KAPLAN  
You have to eat, Maggie.

He breathes heavy on his stethoscope and places it on her back.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)  
Take a deep breath in.

She does.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)  
Now let it out.

She does.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)  
Again.

Wade's eyes flinch as the doctor performs a physical on Maggie.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)  
Okay. So. Lungs are clear. Scans show that it looks like the asthma receded already. And your heartbeat is abnormally strong. That's a good sign.

He whips off the gloves and places new ones on.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)  
Now let's see about that scratch.

She looks up at him as he lifts her arm again. He traces the spider veins up to a collective, raised center under her armpit.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Hmm. Looks like the origin site is spreading. Maggie? You been picking at it?

MAGGIE

No.

WADE

Yes.

DR. KAPLAN

I know it itches. But you have to leave it alone. Unfortunately there's no antibiotics for this. So you have to just ignore it as best as possible, okay?

She nods. Dr. Kaplan notices Maggie's missing finger and stops short.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Maggie.

He examines closer.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

What happened here?

WADE

She broke it--

MAGGIE

I cut it off.

DR. KAPLAN

Why? Maggie...

He evaluates the amputation wound.

MAGGIE

I--I don't know.

DR. KAPLAN

Those decisions should not be yours to make. Let me make those.

MAGGIE

What did it matter? What good is a finger if my arm is falling off?

DR. KAPLAN

Maggie, your arm isn't going to fall off. We don't know a lot about this virus yet, but we know that while the original bite sites may decay, they eventually stop. There could be...

He looks up to see Maggie's scared face.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Listen. If something happens, please just call me.

He pulls a small scraper from a drawer.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to take a sample, okay. I want to send it off to K.C. for evaluation.

(beat)

Now it shouldn't, but tell me if this hurts at all.

He slowly scrapes away a piece of the flap of skin hanging from her arm.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Doing okay?

She nods and he continues to scrape and put the samples into a medical bag.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Allie's been asking about you. She said she's tried calling a few times.

Maggie remains silent.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

You two should go do something. It's been hard around here. On everyone. And I think it'd be good for you.

Dr. Kaplan scrapes once more, puts it in the dish, then pulls off his gloves, carefully.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

All done. Last thing to do is put some dressing on it. I'll have Judy come in and take care of that. I have to see a few other patients. But before I do that. Wade, can you give us a minute?

Wade nods.

WADE

I'll be right outside, Dais.

He exits and the doctor pulls up the stool and sits across from Maggie.

DR. KAPLAN

Maggie, I want to go over a few things with you again. Is that okay?

She nods.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

I know you're aware there's no cure. But the more you stick to my directions, the longer you'll have. You understand?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

DR. KAPLAN

And as the infection wears on, you're going to get more fragile. We've found that the bones become less dense. Lots of cases in the city about folks fallin' or gettin' pushed and hurtin' themselves pretty bad. Some fatal. So, I need you to be careful. You can still be active and do things, and I highly suggest it, but no big tumbles, okay?

She nods again.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Have you been able to get out and do things?

She hesitates, avoiding eye contact.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Maggie. You have a while left. Give Allie a call and go do whatever it is that you girls do. She knows what's going on here. She knows the transfer methods of the infection just as you do.

She nods. He grabs her hand with his.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

I know it's dark right now. I know.

He shakes his head.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to give you a few notes with what I've said. I want you to follow them, okay? And keep that arm bandaged. Remember, it's saliva and blood that transfers, so this infection can still spread. And Maggie. When you come back, I want to see all nine of your fingers.

She smiles.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Wade notices Dr. Kaplan walking up to him and blows the smoke from his mouth.

WADE

(mumbling)

Shit.

DR. KAPLAN

How many times do I have to tell you?

WADE

Everyone's got their vices, Vern.

DR. KAPLAN

Well, try to pick one that doesn't involve cancer.

(beat)

She's getting dressed. I just wanted to talk to you a minute. You know the deal, right? Transfer methods?

WADE

News has been going on and on--

DR. KAPLAN

But you know?

WADE

Spit to spit. Blood to blood. Blood to spit. So on.

DR. KAPLAN

Yes. Just make sure they know that. Last thing you want are close family members backing away from her. She needs all the love she can get right now.

(MORE)

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

I told her in there what she needs to hear. Now I'm gonna tell you what you need to hear.

Wade avoids eye contact.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

At some point, she ain't gonna want food anymore. She's gonna want living tissue. When she can't hold down normal food, she's only gonna have days left before she isn't gonna be Maggie. And based on other cases I've seen, it's progressing faster in her. But that's not what my report to K.C. will say. She ain't going anywhere. So when it happens...

(more intense)

Wade, when it does happen, you're gonna need to do something.

Kaplan notices Maggie in the foyer of the building.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Come here.

Dr. Kaplan leads Wade to the side of the building.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Give me one.

Wade pulls a cigarette out and lights it for him. They share a short silent moment.

WADE

Remember when me and Sarah would meet you and Karen out back of the school to do this?

DR. KAPLAN

It's a wonder I got into med school as many classes I missed.

WADE

When's the last time you had one?

Kaplan takes a deep drag and exhales the smoke.

DR. KAPLAN

The funeral.

Kaplan takes another long drag.

WADE

I just...I just swore to Sarah I'd never let anything happen to Mag. But we fought. And I pushed. I told her to leave. I'm why she went to the movies.

Kaplan drops the cigarette and smothers it with his shoe.

DR. KAPLAN

Hey.

Dr. Kaplan places a hand on Wade's shoulder.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

She loves you more than you can know. Her body's dying but her heart ain't. Spend time with her. As much time as you can. Because there's not much left.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie slides her sunglasses on. She watches as the teenagers in the distance skateboard and play as if nothing has happened.

NADINE, a tall teenage girl in a letterman jacket, notices Maggie and taps the arm of HOLLY, a shorter, rounder teenage girl.

NADINE

Maggie?

Nadine and Holly make their way over, intercepting Maggie at the truck.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Hey, Mag.

MAGGIE

Hey.

Maggie secretly notices Holly twirling her hair.

NADINE

Where you been?

MAGGIE

Went away for a while...

A brief silence.

NADINE

It's good to see you.

(MORE)

NADINE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Hey, Kip's having a party this weekend. You should come.

MAGGIE

Yeah, I'll see.

Maggie notices Wade walking up.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I have to go.

Maggie grabs for the handle of the truck.

HOLLY

(rushed)

We missed you.

Maggie stops.

HOLLY (CONT'D)

You should come by school and see the team, too. We've been meeting at the pool on Tuesdays. There's just a few of us though. Coach said she'd start back with us next week. You know...if you want.

Maggie nods as Wade approaches and acknowledges the girls.

WADE

Ladies.

Nadine smiles at Wade.

HOLLY

Hi, Mr. Pace.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - LATER

The tires lapping over the concrete slices into the silence between Wade and Maggie. Wade notices Maggie staring out the window again, and the smear on the window itself.

Then, Wade begins to rustle through garbage in the truck. He finds a tape and slides it into the tape-deck and the hissing sound of the tape header bleeds through the speakers.

Then, the synthesized sound of Michael Jackson's THRILLER beats through the speakers. It plays for a while, until Jackson's voice kicks in, before Maggie stops the tape and returns her gaze out the window.

Wade glances over to see Maggie smile. His own lips curl into a slight smile.

INT. PACE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING

Wade, Caroline and Maggie all sit at the small table eating.

WADE  
It's good tonight.

Maggie covertly laughs as Caroline takes her empty plate to the sink. Maggie pushes the rest of her food into a napkin.

CAROLINE  
Well, I had to microwave most of it.  
I told you that stove needs--

MAGGIE  
(mischievous)  
No, no. It is good. *Tonight.*

Caroline looks back to see the two smiling. Maggie tries to conceal her grin while pushing her plate away. She pockets the napkin full of food.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Done.

INT. PACE HOUSE - ROOF - NIGHT

Maggie lies back on the roofing, reading a book. She looks back through the window at a KNOCK at the door.

MAGGIE  
Come in.

Wade enters notices an iPod resting on a nearby desk, a post-it note reading "8%."

WADE  
I ain't intruding am I?

He makes his way to the window.

MAGGIE  
No. Just reading.

WADE  
Oh yeah?

MAGGIE  
Found it in one of Mom's boxes.  
"Slaughterhouse Five." It's weird.

Wade climbs out and sits down next to Maggie.

WADE

She was always a bookworm. To this day, I don't know what she saw in me at the get-go. She had it all: brains, looks, legs--

MAGGIE

(playful)

Dad!

WADE

...and a heart of gold.

(beat)

Maybe it was that old truck.

He smiles.

WADE (CONT'D)

The whole time we dated, she'd always push books on me. I didn't have time with the farm and all. When she was pregnant, we used to lay in bed at night watching TV and just talking. And one night, your mother turns to me and says, "Are you ever going to read to her?"

(beat)

Next day, I brought home a big bag of baby books. But I ended up reading the same one over and over. "A Daisy's Journey." I wanted to call you Daisy.

(smiling)

But your mother didn't like it. We went round and round, and in the end, we both got what we wanted. Marguerite. It's what they call daisies.

Maggie smiles.

WADE (CONT'D)

She kept that garden out back in those woods for about a year after you were born.

Wade sits a moment longer, then rests his hand on Maggie's leg. Then, he climbs back through the window but turns to rest his arms on the sill.

WADE (CONT'D)

Thank you. For tonight.

(MORE)

WADE (CONT'D)

I know Caroline's cooking can taste like pig shit at times, but it meant a lot to me that you ate it. Or tried to.

MAGGIE

I have a secret weapon. I can't taste anything.

Wade smiles.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

The fox stealthily stalks through the forest.

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - LATER

Maggie evaluates her patchy head of hair for a long moment. She grabs a pair of clippers from a shelf and sits down on the toilet.

She reaches over, turns the water on full blast, and switches the clippers on. Then, she angrily buzzes all of the remaining hair from her head.

Finishing, she goes to the mirror, notices her buzzed head and sighs through a small smile.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Maggie paces down the stairs and notices Caroline sitting on the edge of the couch, next to the radio.

MAGGIE

Caroline?

Caroline throws out a hand to shush her.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

Though a cure has yet to be officially developed, the Chinese have created a vaccination intended to prevent the virus from spreading.

Maggie sits across from Caroline in a chair.

MAGGIE

So you guys can be safe?

Caroline shrugs, then notices Maggie's hair. Unbeknownst to Maggie, Caroline studies the girl with sympathy in her eyes.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

The vaccination, developed from traces of the virus itself, and of other unstable viruses, such as the rabies virus, and a compound of synthetic chemicals, has produced nearly an eighty eight percent survival rate in all test cases. However, while the results of the test cases seem optimistic, the virus itself has been characterized to cause different results in different species. Rats, for instance, become catatonic almost overnight, and when given the opportunity, will eat until they burst. Rabbits take nearly three weeks and die of starvation before changing. Humans, as we've seen, vary, taking up to months to change. They also experience a craving for meat just prior to what scientists believe is "the turn."

Maggie stands, running her wounded hand over her buzzed head. Caroline nods to Maggie's head.

CAROLINE

(smiling)

I like it.

The phone RINGS. Maggie smiles.

MAGGIE

I got it.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie grabs the receiver.

MAGGIE

Hello?

MOLLY (O.S.)

Maggie?

MAGGIE

Hey, kiddo. How are you?

MOLLY (O.S.)

Good. Aunt Linda took us to get ice cream today.

MAGGIE

That's great.

MOLLY (O.S.)  
My scratch is better.

MAGGIE  
That's good, Mol.

MOLLY (O.S.)  
Is your scratch all better?

MAGGIE  
No. Not yet.

MOLLY (O.S.)  
When can we see you?

MAGGIE  
I don't know. You guys want to come visit?

MOLLY (O.S.)  
Yeah.

MAGGIE  
Want to come this weekend?

MOLLY (O.S.)  
Yeah.

MAGGIE  
Molly, there's something--

MOLLY (O.S.)  
Is Mommy around?

MAGGIE  
Yeah, she is. Hold on.  
(yelling)  
Caroline. Phone.  
(into the phone)  
Molly, she's coming. I have to go,  
okay? I love you.

Maggie lays the phone down on the counter and walks to the door. Caroline enters.

CAROLINE  
Who is--

MAGGIE  
Molly.

EXT. FIELD'S EDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie walks to Wade as he kneels down in the dirt, sweating. Farm instruments and traps lay next to him in disarray.

MAGGIE

I think it's time to tell Bobby and Mol.

Wade jumps in an almost imperceptible startle.

WADE

Mag--

(notices her head)

What did you do to your hair?

MAGGIE

Dad. They need to know why they're with Aunt Linda. They need to know how sick I am. I want 'em to come over this weekend. Tell 'em then, okay? Please?

Wade nods. Maggie begins backing away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

And what? You don't like it?

WADE

No. I mean, yes. I do. But--

Maggie playfully shushes Wade and walks away.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie's eyes flicker open in the dark. She sits up in bed and stares around her room before fumbling with the bandage on her arm, ripping it off.

She rushes out through a hallway and into:

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie flips on the light to find three maggots pulsing atop the wound on her arm.

MAGGIE

No. No.

She thrusts her arm under the sink and washes the maggots, along with pieces of dead skin, down the drain. She lathers the wound with soap and rubs her arm continuously. Finally, she collapses to the floor, clutching her arm as the water continues to run.

INT. PACE HOUSE - ROOF - MORNING

On the thick roofing, Maggie listens to her iPod through one ear-bud. A fresh, tightly secured bandage covers her wound.

A KNOCK echoes through her room.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

You awake?

Caroline enters and walks to the window, where she stands just out of eye-sight of Maggie.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Molly and Bobby are here. And your Aunt.

(beat)

Maggie?

Maggie looks up eerily, a few blisters on her scalp. Then, she places the second ear-bud in.

MAGGIE

Give me a minute.

CAROLINE

Okay. Take your time.

Caroline exits. Maggie looks out at the dead field for a long moment. Then, she gazes down at the hard stony walkway below.

BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)

Are you dying?

Maggie turns to find Bobby in the window.

MAGGIE

Hey.

BOBBY

Dad said you were sick. But you're dying...

Maggie nods and pull out the ear-buds. Bobby climbs out on the roof. They both lie back on the shingles.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

A few kids at my school got infected. I knew one of them. Stephen. I didn't like him much. But I don't think he deserved to die.

MAGGIE

Yeah.

BOBBY

Does it hurt?

MAGGIE  
No. Not anymore.

Bobby looks at Maggie, then studies her face and body.

BOBBY  
How come we're staying with Aunt  
Linda?

MAGGIE  
Because I'm contagious.

BOBBY  
Contagious.  
(beat)  
Is that why you left?

MAGGIE  
...Yeah.

BOBBY  
Mom's afraid we'll get it.

MAGGIE  
It's because she loves you.

A moment passes.

BOBBY  
But why's she mean to you?

MAGGIE  
(playfully)  
You want us to get along? Oh God,  
what would you do? We could both  
take you to church and sit in the  
front row, singing all the hymns  
together. I know how much you love  
doing that. Me on one side, her on  
the other.

Bobby fakes a vomit. Maggie pokes him in his side.

BOBBY  
I miss you.

MAGGIE  
I miss you too.

A moment goes by before Bobby climbs back into the window.  
Maggie watches with precaution.

BOBBY  
Don't tell her I came up.

MAGGIE

I won't.

Bobby turns and walks out. Maggie leans back on the roof, staring up at the looming clouds overhead.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Maggie walks downstairs and looks at the family outside on the front porch.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MOMENT LATER

Caroline, Wade, and LINDA, a small woman with hints of Wade's features, all sit chatting.

Bobby walks around the yard poking at things with a stick. Molly, on the edge of the porch, plays with her small toy horse.

Maggie catches the eye of Linda, who stops mid-sentence, gets up and goes to the girl, hesitating a moment, then hugging her awkwardly, without touching skin, for a long time. She lets go and looks the girl over. Her rubber-gloved hands hold each side of Maggie's face with gentle love.

LINDA

You look beautiful.

Maggie smiles.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Come sit.

Maggie sits next to Linda. Molly walks up and before Maggie can grab for her, Caroline quickly walks over and puts gloves on Molly's hands. Then, she sets her gently on Maggie's lap.

LINDA (CONT'D)

So, what'd Vern say?

WADE

Said she was progressing well.

LINDA

Well, she's strong. It's her mother in her.

WADE

Truth.

Caroline forces a uneasy smile at Molly. Linda flicks Caroline on the arm.

LINDA  
You been feeding her?

WADE  
(subtly)  
Lin.

CAROLINE  
(interjecting)  
When she'll eat.

LINDA  
Well, you probably ain't fixin' the  
right stuff.  
(to Maggie)  
Ain't that right, hun? Mac and  
cheese. Blueberry waffles. And  
what was it you had me keep buying  
when you were staying with me?

Maggie looks at her, perplexed.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
The Danishes. The cakes that you  
loved so damn much.

MAGGIE  
The coffee cakes?

LINDA  
Yes. Coffee cakes. Bought 'em in  
bulk, just for you. You fought with  
me to get coffee, too, but I knew  
your mother would kill me if I did.  
'Course now I've seen you swallow  
down whole cups..

Maggie smiles.

CAROLINE  
The pamphlets did say that she should  
eat more greens. I've been trying  
to--

LINDA  
Oh, hell, what's it gonna hurt? Let  
the poor girl eat what she wants.

The front yard grows tensely quiet for just a moment.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
(to Maggie)  
So, what else have you been doing?  
Besides eatin' like a rabbit.

MAGGIE

I...I--

WADE

She's been helping out around here.

LINDA

Let the girl talk, Wade. I swear.  
And what have you got this poor thing  
doing around here? She should be  
out with her friends. Having fun.

(to Maggie)

Go 'head, baby.

MAGGIE

I haven't been able to do much.

(beat)

Started reading mamma's books.

Molly points at the blisters on Maggie's head.

MOLLY

You hurt yourself again?

CAROLINE

Molly, don't touch.

MAGGIE

Yeah, Moll. I'm...I'm sick.

Linda recognizes Maggie's discomfort and pulls Molly onto her own lap. She grabs Maggie's hand in hers and shares a short glance with her.

LINDA

She's dying, Moll. But what have we  
always said about dying?

MOLLY

You get to go to heaven. And ride  
horses.

LINDA

That's right.

MOLLY

(to Maggie)

You can be with your mommy.

Maggie nods.

LINDA

Moll? You want to help your father  
grill up the hot dogs?

Molly nods ferociously. Maggie plucks Molly off Linda's lap.

MAGGIE  
All right, Moll. Helicopter time.

Molly starts to make sputtering sounds. Maggie twirls her around.

CAROLINE  
Maggie, watch--

Maggie twirls Molly, following Wade to a nearby grill. Halfway there, she stumbles, nearly dropping Molly.

Caroline stands, but Linda grabs her arm. Maggie lowers Molly.

MAGGIE  
Ran out of gas.

WADE  
You all right?

MAGGIE  
Yeah.

WADE  
(to Molly)  
Come help me with the hot dogs.  
(to Maggie)  
You sure?

She nods and watches Molly run to Wade. He stares back at Maggie with repressed fear, pulling the gloves from Molly's hands. The two begin to lay the hot dogs on the grill.

Bobby grabs Maggie's hand out of the blue. Maggie notices the glove on his hand.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - EVENING

Maggie hugs each of the kids and watches in sadness as Caroline and Wade help Linda routinely pack her van and buckle in the kids.

Linda stands before Maggie, eye-to-eye. She slides her glove off her hand and rests it on Maggie's cheek.

LINDA  
You get your skinny ass out to visit me, okay?

MAGGIE  
I will.

Linda's eyes water, but she quickly goes in for a hug.

As the van pulls away, Bobby turns in the back window, his eyes heavy on Maggie. Maggie waves. Bobby returns it. The two share the moment until the van shrinks into the distance.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - LATER

Maggie sits on the sill of the window, listening to the radio and painting her nails. As she strokes each dark nail, her eyes linger over her missing digit.

She looks up to find Caroline in the doorway.

CAROLINE

Hey.

MAGGIE

Hey.

CAROLINE

Allie's here.

MAGGIE

Can you tell her...

Caroline sits on the bed.

CAROLINE

Listen. There are things that we just can't deal with on our own. Things that--

MAGGIE

Oh God, are you really doing this?  
Fine.

Maggie stands and moves to the door, but Caroline grabs her hand.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry.

Maggie looks at Caroline's hand still clinging to hers. Caroline smiles at Maggie then lets go. Maggie looks down at her, a tinge of curiosity in her eyes, then she exits.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie descends the stairs to see the beaming smile of ALLIE, a thin, radiant teenage girl with thick-rimmed glasses.

MAGGIE

Hey!

ALLIE  
Oh my God. She lives.

MAGGIE  
Shut up.

Allie immediately goes in for a hug, and aside from avoiding touching skin, she embraces her friend deeply.

ALLIE  
*Pace! Where have you been all my life?*

MAGGIE  
(playful)  
Haven't been *feeling* well.

ALLIE  
Well, how are you feeling *right now?*

MAGGIE  
Now?

ALLIE  
Trent and Candace and a few other people are heading out to the reservoir for the night. I know it's not a trip into K.C. or anything. But it's the last few weeks before school starts up again. And I don't think any of our parents are going to let us out much further than that.

MAGGIE  
Trent?

ALLIE  
Yeah. You heard?

MAGGIE  
How's he doing?

ALLIE  
Seems okay. But don't take my word for it. Come see for yourself.

Maggie conceals a look down at her missing finger.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
How come you two never went out again?

MAGGIE  
How'd you ever notice, being with Mike the whole time. The vanishing girl.

ALLIE  
Hello pot. I'm the kettle. You're  
black. I haven't seen you in weeks.

Allie thwaps Maggie on the arm.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Come on. Everybody misses you.  
(beat)  
All right, fine, I miss you. And  
I'm not going without you.

Maggie hesitates.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Paaaace...

MAGGIE  
All right.

ALLIE  
Great. Now go. Go get ready.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie slams open the closet doors and looks at her wardrobe. She picks a few items out and looks them over, throwing them on the bed. She finds a dress and lays it out.

She throws on some makeup and touches it up several times, attempting to cover the blisters on her scalp.

Removing her pants, she notices a few pieces of dead skin on her leg. She stares up at the dress, then down at her leg.

She plops down on the bed and stares at herself in the mirror: her face narrow from weight loss, her eyes seem larger; the small amount of hair on her head unable to cover the blisters; the blackened wound under the bandage worsening.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie, in jeans and a sweatshirt, grabs her sunglasses, despite the night, and slides them on. Then, she puts on a pair of gloves and a hat.

Wade comes in through the kitchen, his boots muddy.

MAGGIE  
Dad, I'm--

He smiles and waves approval.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Thanks.

She ambles out the front door. Wade watches her go.

INT. ALLIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Allie nods to Maggie.

\*

ALLIE  
What's with the buzz cut...and the  
sun glasses, Corey Hart.

MAGGIE  
You don't want to know.

Allie smiles.

ALLIE  
How are you?

MAGGIE  
How do I answer that?

ALLIE  
With words. My dad *is* a doctor.  
Your doctor.  
(beat)  
Five weeks in: occasional loss of  
motor functions; olfactory failures;  
loss of feeling; tear ducts...I know.  
So, what I'm really asking is, how.  
Are. You?

MAGGIE  
Other than all that? Absolutely  
fantastic.

Allie and Maggie laugh.

ALLIE  
Pace. You're the strongest girl I  
know.

MAGGIE  
Oh yeah?

ALLIE  
But I was wondering one thing.

Allie stares at her, a small smirk on her face.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I didn't want to ask Dad--

MAGGIE  
No, I don't have my period anymore.  
It's gone. Officially.

ALLIE

Lucky.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - WADE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wade, shirtless, sits on the edge of the bed watching Caroline undress.

CAROLINE

...still need to shut off the generator for the night. I forgot. And we need lighter fluid. Think you could head to Rusty's tomorrow--

She heads into the bathroom and the faucet turns on, drowning out her voice. Wade just watches with longing, intimate eyes. When she returns, she goes to the mirror, still rambling.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

...and we're still not getting the paper.

Wade stands and walks behind Caroline.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

I thought they said that Tess and Jenn had found a way to get the press--

Wade kisses her neck. Her words fade to a moan. Then, she closes her eyes. His hands run down her bare arms.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(breathy)  
Wade...

He moves his hand further down, onto her hips, and she steps away from him.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

...I can't.

He stares at her a moment, then plops down on the bed.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

The minute my mind stops for a second, I think about her.

WADE

She's with her friends. She'll be fine.

CAROLINE

Not just tonight.  
(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Wade. She nearly dropped Molly.

WADE

Molly's fell down those stairs and laughed. A two foot fall ain't gonna kill the girl.

CAROLINE

I don't care. I just don't think--

WADE

Let it go.

CAROLINE

Wade--

WADE

Let it go! She's experiencing all kinds of hell we don't even know about, and probably never will. Even the damn experts don't know exactly what happens and when. Fed me all kinds of bullshit. But no one knows. Bonnie had Nathan and Julia locked up for weeks and they--

Wade stands abruptly and walks to the window. In the reflection, he watches Caroline lock their bedroom door.

WADE (CONT'D)

You ever wonder what's going to happen when it comes time? You ever wonder how you're going to feel about it?

Caroline sits on the bed.

WADE (CONT'D)

How will you feel? Hmm? What are you going to feel when that girl out there, that girl who has tried repeatedly with you...how are you going to feel when you won't be able to talk to her. When she's gone.

Wade grabs Caroline's face in his hands. Her eyes mist.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline. I love you. And there ain't nothing gonna stop that. But she's my firstborn. She's all I have left of that--

Wade pulls on his shirt and grabs his cigarettes.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wade, walking through the living room, spots a small light source. As he approaches, he recognizes the iPod, plugged into an outlet with a post-it note that reads "Don't use."

WADE

God dammit.

He snatches up the iPod, ripping the cord out of the wall. As it does, the screen changes from the battery symbol to a photo of Sarah. Wade's heat begins to cool as his eyes lay heavy on the beautiful woman.

He falls back into the chair, in darkness, and flips through the iPod pictures; family pictures, and even some of Caroline.

EXT. RESERVOIR CAMP-SITE - LATER

A group of TEENAGERS sit around a campfire. Maggie and Allie sit next to BARBARA, a tall, awkward girl. Across from them, CANDACE, a short, tanned girl buries herself into the chest of a stocky boy, MASON.

A little further away, but somewhat alone, sits TRENT. The average looking teenager exhibits similar features as Maggie, albeit a little less: Dark ringed eyes, blotchy skin, dead in areas, and a large bandage over his neck.

ALLIE

I think so. But my dad said that Mister Moore and Miss Hawks aren't coming back.

MASON

I don't see why they're opening the schools back up this soon.

CANDACE

We need to get back to normal sometime.

Maggie watches Trent as he pokes the fire with a stick.

MASON

Baby, come on. This ain't normal. Trent, you tell them. Are you coming back?

TRENT

No. My dad pulled me. He said what's the point.

MASON

See, baby. How's that normal?

BARBARA

She said we *need* to get back to normal. And we do. Sorry Trent, but--

(to Mason)

how long do you think we should wait to go back to school?

MASON

I'm just saying now ain't the time. It's too soon. There are still some running around out there.

CANDACE

And so you bring me out here?

MASON

Baby. There are a ton still out there. But there ain't many left up here. I'm saying we should wait until all the school districts can start back up again. At the same time.

BARBARA

Well, what about the Andersons?

Allie looks at Maggie.

MASON

They were the last ones.

MAGGIE

What about me? What about Trent?

The group goes silent.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Well?

MASON

Come on, Mag. They were something else.

MAGGIE

I'm not? I was bit. Just like all the rest.

MASON

But, you're not one of them. Not now.

MAGGIE

But I will be. What then?

MASON

I'm sorry. I was just saying--

Lightning strikes in the far distance, startling everyone but Maggie and Trent. Trent gets up and walks away, out to the reservoir's edge.

CANDACE

(to Mason)

What did I say? What did I say? I said no talking about it. Didn't I?

Maggie gets up and follows Trent.

EXT. RESERVOIR - CONTINUOUS

Maggie sits next to Trent on the edge of a cliff.

MAGGIE

Mason's a dick.

TRENT

He's just afraid.

MAGGIE

Doesn't mean he's not a dick.

TRENT

You know he stayed over the night before it happened? We played video games and got into all of dad's beer. He put me to work out in the field.

(beat)

That's when I saw her. Out there just staring at me. I mean, I heard that you shouldn't go near 'em, but she wasn't trying to do anything. And she looked pretty bad. I stayed with her, just holding her hand. But when I turned back to call for dad, she bit me. Just once. Like she was curious how I'd taste. As if she regretted it. A few seconds later my dad shot her in the chest and she dropped. Then he put another one in her head.

Maggie shifts, turning to Trent, grabbing his hand, but he doesn't notice.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Now they're about to open up the schools again. And everyone's getting back to normal. But not us. Not her.

Trent looks at Maggie, realizing her hand is on his.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry.

TRENT

It's not your fault.

MAGGIE

I meant about *us*. About not calling you back.

Trent turns, facing Maggie.

TRENT

I thought I'd done something wrong.

MAGGIE

You didn't. I was just--I was scared. I am scared.

TRENT

Me too.

Silence.

MAGGIE

I found a box of my mom's old books. You know, some of the classics Mr. Brooks used to assign that we'd just look up on the internet. Well, I'm reading one now. And I just wish I could go back in time and see my mom. I think if I'm gonna miss anything other than my family, it'd be her books.

Maggie looks bashful at the revelation.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

What about you?

TRENT

(smiling)

I'm gonna miss video games.

Maggie laughs.

TRENT (CONT'D)

And school. And all of us coming out here.

(beat)

And you.

MAGGIE

Aw. You must say that to all the infected girls.

EXT. CAMP-SITE - MORNING

Maggie crawls out of a sleeping bag. The rest of the group still asleep, she quietly steps out of the woods, to the edge of the reservoir's cliff.

Barely visible through the haze, the sun gleams a dawn orange. Maggie stares out at it, just creeping above the horizon. Squinting, she slides on her sunglasses. She sits there a long moment, staring at the sun as the sky fades back to gray.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

Maggie steps around Allie's car and leans into the driver's side window.

MAGGIE

Thanks.

ALLIE

Shut up. You promise you'll hang out this weekend?

MAGGIE

I promise.

ALLIE

All right. I'm holding you to it.

MAGGIE

When don't you.

Maggie smiles then backs away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

See ya this weekend.

Allie watches Maggie begin to walk away, then gets out of her car and jogs over to her. She stands before her, gets ready to hug her, then doesn't. They stare at each other a tense moment.

ALLIE

I love you, Pace.

MAGGIE

I love you, too, Kap.

Allie backs away and wipes her eyes.

ALLIE  
 (lovingly)  
 Shut up.

Maggie smiles. Allie jogs back to her car and hops in, waving and backing the car out.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie enters. Caroline, pulling the last few slats of wood off the windows, pauses to look up at her, then returns to the job at hand.

MAGGIE  
 Where's dad?

CAROLINE  
 Went to town.

Caroline yanks a slat off the window. Maggie starts upstairs.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
 Well, did you have fun?

MAGGIE  
 Yeah. Yeah, I did.

EXT. BONNIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Wade's truck sits idling in the driveway of a quaint little farm house. Broken yellow police tape flutters in the light breeze on the porch.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

A bag of supplies sits next to Wade on the cab's bench. He stares grimly up at a small wooden decorative attached to the front siding of the house that reads: "BONNIE, JULIA, ...AND NATHAN. A HEN HOUSE."

EXT. BONNIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The driver's side door of Wade's truck opens and he slowly steps out. Leaving the door open and the engine idling, he slowly approaches the porch as if taking it all in for the first time. The truck's door indicator DINGS in the silence.

INT. BONNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wade pushes the front door open and stands as a silhouette against the stark gray light behind him. He walks in and studies the room. A photo album, three opened cans of beans, and a handful of shotgun shells rest on the coffee table.

A shotgun lays open, readied for loading, on the couch, next to a sweat-stained pillow and blanket.

Wade takes note of the family photos in the open album, one in particular radiating the warmth of Bonnie and Nathan holding Julia as the girl bear-hugs a large GREY CAT.

INT. BONNIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Wade puts his hand up to his nose and closes the refrigerator. Then, he leans in to read a welcome-letter from the town's kindergarten, attached to the refrigerator with playful magnetic letters. His stolidity begins to fade.

The sound of curtains rustling catches his attention.

INT. BONNIE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Wade moves through the dark, thin passage, through more photos of a once-blissful threesome hanging on the wall, to a final door. Two makeshift locks sit unevenly screwed to the door, busted away from the wall.

Wade puts his hand on the wood of the door, between the police tape adorning it, and pauses. Then, slowly, he pushes it open...and the last vestige of his emotional defenses are torn away.

INT. BONNIE'S HOUSE - DESTROYED DEN - CONTINUOUS

Blood and aged ground-beef litter the floor of the trashed room, caked with the stuffing of two torn-apart chairs. Splintered wood from a nearby desk is jammed into walls and a few spots on the floor.

Shards of glass shine at the base of a window near two torn dolls and a handful of ten-penny nails, all beneath broken boards; remnants of Bonnie's failed security measures.

Wade chokes out a cry, breaking down, as the bloodied curtains of the broken window in the distance flap in the melancholic morning breeze.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The grey cat stalks through a small clearing into view, its collar pendant JINGLING, betraying the feline's stealthy movements.

Tiny fox yelps call out from the nearby den. The cat takes note, stilling itself. Suddenly, the silver-breasted fox blurs out from a log and places itself between the den and the cat lets out a hiss.

The fox shows its teeth in a growl and the cat backs away slowly. The fox jerks forward, but the cat springs back and darts into the forest. The fox eyes the woods for a long moment.

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

In just a tank top and sweat-pants, Maggie leans into the mirror, examining the patches of hair growing around her scabbed scalp.

MAGGIE

(yelling)

Dad! Where are the eye drops?

Caroline drifts into the bathroom.

CAROLINE

There's no need to shout. They're downstairs.

(looking at her buzzed head)

You did a pretty good job.

Caroline slides on some gloves, then puts her hands on Maggie's face, near the girl's eyes.

MAGGIE

Not too close.

CAROLINE

I'll be fine.

Caroline leans in and analyzes Maggie's eyes, her neck close to Maggie. Maggie sniffs once, then again.

MAGGIE

You smell that?

Caroline sniffs.

CAROLINE

No.

MAGGIE

You sure?

They both sniff.

CAROLINE

I don't smell anything. Maybe your father is cooking up something he shouldn't be. I tell him and I tell him.

MAGGIE

Smells like...I don't know.

Caroline finishes looking at Maggie's eyes.

CAROLINE

Looks okay. Still really dilated though. I'll get eye drops.

Caroline exits. Maggie leans into the mirror, widening her eyes with her fingers, staring at the enlarged pupils.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Caroline stops halfway down the stairs, staring at Wade asleep on the couch. She glances up the stairs a long moment, rubbing her neck, realization on her face.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Caroline? You find the drops?

Caroline shivers, still holding her neck.

MAGGIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Caroline?

CAROLINE

No. No. Hold on a sec.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Why? You gonna go yell at Dad for cooking this late?

Caroline's faces quivers.

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie splashes her face with water and, coming up, sees Caroline in the mirror.

MAGGIE

Did you find 'em?

Caroline nods. She hands Maggie the eye drops. In her other hand, Caroline grips tightly to a pair of scissors.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

(noticing the scissors)

And you ain't touching my head with those things. I'll just buzz it again.

Caroline stares at the girl.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
What's dad cooking?

Caroline's white-knuckled grip on the scissors tightens.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Caroline? Hello?

Caroline's grip tightens, then suddenly eases.

CAROLINE  
Nothing. I--I told him he doesn't  
need to be eating this late.

MAGGIE  
You know he's just going to sneak  
something in the middle of the night.

CAROLINE  
Yeah.

MAGGIE  
Thanks by the way.

Maggie drips the solution into her eyes. Caroline stares a moment, then she sets the scissors on the counter as she exits. Maggie studies the scissors a moment before continuing with the eye drops.

INT. PACE HOUSE - BACK PORCH - MORNING

Wade hammers a nail into the top of two adjoining wooden boards. Maggie holds the bottom one while Wade hammers another nail into the top.

MAGGIE  
What's it called again?

WADE  
A tap joint.

MAGGIE  
Tap joint?

WADE  
Yeah. Hold it still. See, these  
two keep it from moving while those  
keep it locked in place.

Maggie holds the boards still as Wade raises a few more and they all come up together, revealing a section of a fence.

MAGGIE  
A fence?

WADE

A fence.

MAGGIE

What for?

WADE

A little project I have going.

MAGGIE

Oh? Secret project?

A shrill howl bellows through the yard. Wade stands.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Traps?

WADE

I'd bet.

MAGGIE

Fox?

WADE

Sounds like it. I'll-

MAGGIE

I can get it.

Wade stares at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I've been doing it since I was ten.  
Besides, you have your little secret  
boy's club to build.

WADE

Funny. Funny girl.

She saunters off backwards, kicking dirt up at him.

WADE (CONT'D)

Dais. Take the twenty two.

Maggie turns, limping slightly, but sauntering her best.

MAGGIE

I know.

EXT. FRONT FIELD - LATER

The thin rifle in her hands, Maggie makes her way slowly through the dead earth. She grunts in frustration.

MAGGIE

Where are you?

She stops, looking around her, squinting through her sunglasses. She hears a scratching noise and drops to her haunches, breathing heavily.

She readies the gun quickly, then realizing her index finger is missing, she rests her middle finger over the trigger. Only the wind is heard through the field.

She slowly stands and the scratching sound echoes again. She moves forward, rifle readied and shaking.

In front of her she notices the trap and we recognize its captive...the white-breasted fox scratching the bark of a nearby tree through the metal gratings.

Maggie lowers the .22 and slowly walks up to the trap. The fox begins to whimper.

Maggie stares down at it intently, her body completely still. She sniffs once and then sets the .22 on the ground. Kneeling to her hands and knees, she crawls to the front of the trap and sits, studying the fox's fear and its frightened eyes.

She sniffs again.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Wade hammers two more nails into a thick section of wood. He looks up and finds Maggie walking quickly up to the house.

WADE

Dais?

She ignores him, walking faster, her shirt covered in red.

WADE (CONT'D)

Mag? Maggie!

He rises and walks, then runs after her.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie bursts through the door and quickly makes her way through the kitchen and just before reaching the living room, Wade slams the kitchen door open.

WADE

MAGGIE!

She stops, her father now breathing heavy behind her.

WADE (CONT'D)  
What's going on? Are you hurt?

She remains still and silent.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Maggie.

CAROLINE (O.S.)  
What's going--

Caroline comes around the corner in front of Maggie, with the girl between her and Wade, and stops, frightened.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
Oh God, what happened to you?

She moves forward, but Wade raises his hand.

WADE  
Caroline! Stop! Don't.

CAROLINE  
What are you talking about?

Caroline grabs the girl before she suddenly goes limp and cradles her in her chest.

Wade slowly steps forward, shock on his face as he notices Maggie's broken glasses and a deep cut beneath her eye. Her shirt is covered with fresh blood.

WADE  
Oh my God. Mag...

He kneels to them and Maggie suddenly convulses and shouts, sliding away from them. They stare with horrified looks. Maggie shivers in the corner.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Baby. Dais. What happened?

Maggie begins to cry tearlessly. Realizing it, she SCREAMS.

CAROLINE  
I'll call the doctor.

Caroline begins to stand, but Maggie juts an arm forward.

MAGGIE  
(shouting)  
NO!

Caroline hesitates, then continues toward the phone.

WADE  
Caroline. No.

CAROLINE  
What?!

WADE  
Just give her a minute.

CAROLINE  
We have to--

WADE  
PLEASE! Give her a minute. Please.  
Just one minute!

Caroline nods quickly, nervously. Wade nods back, then turns his attention to Maggie.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Daisy, just look at me.

Maggie lifts her head and looks up at her father.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Good, baby. Good.

Wade slowly moves forward.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Now. What happened out--

She moves away. Wade stops abruptly.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Okay. I'm not...I'm not moving. I  
just need to know what happened.  
Tell me what happened.

MAGGIE  
(jittering)  
It was afraid of me. I didn't know  
it. I didn't know it. I didn't. I  
swear.

WADE  
What was, the fox?

Maggie nods jarringly.

WADE (CONT'D)  
It's okay.

MAGGIE

(jittering)

I...I could smell it. It smelled like--I...I...I couldn't stop. I couldn't stop. I just wanted to help it. I just wanted to...but...

She looks up at him suddenly, her deep-set, dry, dark red eyes piercing. A drop of blood dribbles down her pale chin.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Daddy. Please help me.

Wade slowly moves forward, then he grabs her and pulls her into him with a giant embrace, a tear streaming down his cheek.

WADE

It's okay. It's okay.

She sobs in his chest.

WADE (CONT'D)

It's okay.

He looks at Caroline, whose eyes gleam with tears. Caroline's hand still holds the phone, unconsciously. Wade shakes his head and Caroline's hand comes off the phone.

EXT. FRONT FIELD - LATER

Wade trudges through the dirt and finds the trap. He walks past the discarded .22 and studies the trap for a long moment, his hand over his mouth and nose.

Claw marks rake the back of the trap and the tree behind it. Inside, the fox, lying on its side, is relatively clean, save for a single bite, a small hole in its side. Its stomach rises and falls slowly. Saliva bubbles lightly around its mouth.

Wade kneels, never taking his eyes off the animal, and retrieves the .22. The fox's eyes look at him and its lips curl back, revealing a sharp set of small teeth.

Wade brings up the .22, aims and fires. The shot echoes loudly in the field. The fox dies instantly, a bullet hole in its head. Wade's eyes seem to bore a hole through the fox, which lays there, motionless, dead.

WADE (O.S.)

But I'm only a flower, said the daisy.  
I don't have any legs.

(MORE)

WADE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 The caterpillar laughed and said,  
 you don't need legs to go with me.  
 Just hop on my back. The daisy said,  
 thank you caterpillar, and together  
 they walked to the garden.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - EVENING

In the yard, TODDLER-MAGGIE jumps in the air reaching out for a firefly. She barely misses, smiling around as fireflies hover like speckled lanterns in the fading sunlight.

On the porch, a YOUNGER WADE leans across the threshold of the house's front door. He smiles in and beckons SARAH, a young and beautiful woman.

WADE (V.O.)  
 Finally, at the garden, the daisy met a honey badger. Have you seen my mother, asked the daisy. Why yes, said the honey badger. She has been looking for you. I'll take you to her. Burrow with me. But I'm only a flower, I don't know how to burrow, said the daisy. The honey badger laughed and said, just hop on my back. Deep in the soil, the honey badger said, she's right up there. The daisy said, thank you, honey badger.

From the doorway, Sarah observes her young daughter in the midst of swarm of fireflies. She clasps hands with Wade.

Then, Maggie trips and falls to her stomach. Sarah steps forward, but Wade holds her back and nods for patience.

WADE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 And the daisy wiggled and wiggled and wiggled and finally he popped up, out of the soil, and there was his mother looking down at him. There you are, little daisy, said his mother. Where have you been?

Picking herself up off the ground, Maggie notices a daisy in the soil. She pulls the flower up and out of its root.

WADE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Then, he said, I was with cricket,  
 and caterpillar, and beetle, and  
 (MORE)

WADE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 honey badger. And what did you learn,  
 asked the daisy's mother. I learned  
 to walk and to jump and fly and to  
 burrow. And the daisy--the dais--

Wade's voice breaks off, unable to finish.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Maggie's red, swollen eyes slowly open. She finds herself  
 under her covers in her bed. She notices Wade in the chair  
 next to her.

Pale and asleep, Wade breathes heavily, his hand within reach  
 of the .22. In his lap rests a children's book. Maggie  
 pulls back the covers to find herself in night-clothes. She  
 checks her skin and it, too, is clean, save for the dead  
 skin in areas.

Wade stirs, dropping the book. Maggie leans over the bed  
 and picks it up. She thumbs through it, then sets it on top  
 of SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE.

WADE  
 Mag, you all right?

MAGGIE  
 Are you...

He notices his arm around the .22 and then moves it out of  
 the way, setting it in a corner.

WADE  
 No. Never. I came straight from  
 the field.

MAGGIE  
 What happened?

WADE  
 You passed out.

MAGGIE  
 Did I...did I hurt anyone?

WADE  
 No. Everyone's all right.

MAGGIE  
 Where's Caroline?

WADE

She went to stay with your Aunt for  
a while.

(beat)

My decision. She wanted to stay,  
but...

Maggie's attention wanes.

MAGGIE

I'm so hungry.

WADE

I know.

MAGGIE

We just saw Dr. Kaplan. He told me  
things were okay.

WADE

They are.

MAGGIE

No they're not.

(beat)

I don't want to hurt anyone.

WADE

You won't.

MAGGIE

How--

WADE

Because I'm here. I won't let that  
happen. Are you dizzy? Can you  
walk?

Wade stands and helps her out of bed.

WADE (CONT'D)

Let's get you something to eat.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Wade and Maggie sit at the table. Maggie devours a plateful  
of sausage and bacon. Wade drinks a cup of coffee.

MAGGIE

Where did you get this?

WADE

I froze some a while back. Hid it  
from Caroline.

He smiles sadly.

MAGGIE  
It tastes so good.

Wade sips.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
She was afraid of me, wasn't she.

Wade nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
When did she actually leave?

WADE  
Yesterday.

Maggie stops eating and looks up at him.

WADE (CONT'D)  
You...you were out for about a day.

She drops a piece of bacon into the plate.

WADE (CONT'D)  
You passed out, here in the kitchen.  
Yesterday morning.

MAGGIE  
I don't feel well.

WADE  
Okay. Let's get you back up to bed.

Wade stands, leans over and helps Maggie up.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wade helps Maggie into bed, kisses his hand and touches it to her forehead.

WADE  
Your mother would be proud of you.  
You know that?

Maggie curls into a ball toward Wade.

MAGGIE  
Will you stay with me a while?

Wade nods, then seats himself against the wall, on her bed. She places her head in his lap.

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sprints into the bathroom, shuts the door, flips the toilet seat up and vomits heavily.

Completely drained, she stands, shaking and goes to the mirror. Her darkened features exaggerated now, she finds herself a ghost of what she used to be. The few sores on her head are larger.

She hangs her head over the sink.

INT. PACE HOUSE - WADE'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Wade, shirtless and asleep in his bed, breathes heavily. The room is splashed with a dim, gray morning light.

In the doorway, Maggie's silhouette stands, staring in at Wade. She stands there for a long moment, unmoving.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MORNING

Wade nails a few pieces of wood together. Maggie steps out of the doorway.

WADE

What are you doing down here?

MAGGIE

Tired of being in bed. I just want to be out here with you.

WADE

Pull up a chair. I could use the company.

She drags a chair near him and sits down.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline called this morning. Wanted to know how you were doing.

He slams the hammer down into another nail.

WADE (CONT'D)

And Bobby.

He finishes nailing the piece in.

MAGGIE

He talked to me.

Wade stops, looks up, then goes back to hammering.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

When they were over. He came up and talked to me.

WADE

I know. Talked to me, too. Made me promise not to tell Caroline. Thought he was trying to prove something to her. The boy's smart...and stubborn.

MAGGIE

Wonder where he gets it.

WADE

Yeah, look who's talking.

MAGGIE

You tell her about him?

WADE

She's his mother, Mag. Of course I did. She was worried sick about him. And you. I know you and her never got along so well. And I know deep down, you resented me getting with her. But I love her. Not like I loved your mother. This...this is different. But she's a good woman. And despite what you might think, she loves you.

MAGGIE

I know.  
(beat)  
I know.

Maggie remains a moment longer, then stands and walks away.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sits on the couch, picking at a small piece of dead skin on her hand. The headphones running from her red ears to her iPod, play a tinny alternative tune in the silence.

Wade walks in.

WADE

I got dinner made. Let's...

He looks down at her and her eyes stare off into the distance.

WADE (CONT'D)

Hey.

He waves his hand in front of her face.

WADE (CONT'D)

Maggie.

She snaps out of it and looks up at him.

MAGGIE

What?

WADE

You hear any of that?

MAGGIE

No. What did you say?

WADE

Dinner's ready. Let's go eat.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie breathes heavy, eating a plateful of meat.

Maggie drops her fork and stares down at her food, her red eyes pained.

WADE

Dais?

She ignores him.

WADE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

She retches a small amount of her food into her plate and Wade quickly backs his seat away. She gets up immediately and runs outside, vomiting.

Wade makes his way to the doorway and hesitates, helpless.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Wade leans down to help her up off her knees.

She looks up at him with pleading eyes.

MAGGIE

Let me go. I can't do this. I can't do it anymore.

He picks her up in his arms and carries her back to the house.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Wade carries her through the living room, puts her on the couch and runs his hand down her mouth, cleaning off the remaining fluid.

MAGGIE

Please. Make it stop. Please.

Choked up, Wade puts a blanket over her.

WADE

You want the blanket? I know you can't feel it, but--

MAGGIE

Daddy, please just--

WADE

Did you know that when you were only a year old, your mother dropped you?

MAGGIE

I can't...

Wade smiles through tears.

WADE

It wasn't bad. You fell from the couch to the carpet. But your mother was hysterical. She called Vern and told him what had happened. And you know your mother. When it came to you, it was a huge deal. He came out immediately and he looked you over--

MAGGIE

Daddy.

Maggie closes her eyes.

WADE

And he told her there was nothing wrong with you. Just a little shock on her part, that's all.

Wade stares down at Maggie, silent a moment.

WADE (CONT'D)

I was in K.C. When she told me, I started to cry. And I only cried around your mother twice. But when she told me Vern had to come out to see you, I...

Tears stream down his face.

WADE (CONT'D)

I...

He places his forehead against hers.

WADE (CONT'D)

I love you.

He leans back and sits in the chair across next to her. He wipes his eyes and stands, heading to the stairs and up.

Maggie's chest rises and falls barely noticeable. She wheezes through her breathing and it becomes a slight groan. Her mouth opens and her jaw closes, tightening, then opening again.

Wade returns with the .22, walking back to the chair and sitting, staring down at the rifle. Then, he stands and readies it, barrel pointing at Maggie's head.

Wade's face turns angry, tears streaming. He MOANS loudly in disgusted pain. His aim begins to waver and he shakes his head, moaning again.

MAGGIE

(eyes closed)

Why...why were you there?

Other than her words, she looks unconscious. Wade begins to shake violently and lowers the gun. He falls back into the chair, dropping the gun to the ground.

WADE

(sniffing)

I was buying seed. It was your mother's anniversary present.

MAGGIE

(eyes closed)

Seed?

WADE

(sniffing)

Daisies. For her garden.

Wade and Maggie sit in silence.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK PORCH - LATER

Hose in hand, Wade sprays water over the vomit on the back porch, pushing it out into the dead grass. He grabs a bucket and a scrub brush and scrubs the wood.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Cleaning gloves still on his hands, Wade sits next to Maggie and strokes her buzzed hair, avoiding the sores. She stirs.

MAGGIE  
I feel so...weird. I feel like a  
stranger to myself. Everything seems  
foggy.

Silence.

WADE  
I want to show you something.

She looks up at him, her features morbid.

WADE (CONT'D)  
Come on.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Wade helps Maggie out of the back door, her motor functions  
failing. They walk down the back section of the driveway  
and into the dirt.

MAGGIE  
I can do it.

WADE  
All right. Just hold my hand.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

MAGGIE  
Where are we going?

WADE  
Through here.

They exit the forest into a small clearing.

EXT. SMALL CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Maggie lets out a groan of surprise. In front of them, in  
lines of splendid flourishing, sits a small garden of daisies,  
enclosed by Wade's handmade gate.

Maggie steps forward.

MAGGIE  
Daddy.

She runs her hand over the petals of a daisy, then its stem.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Momma's garden? How...

WADE

I don't know. I came out here last month and there was a small section growing back there. I planted some more last week and they grew.

Maggie smiles ever so briefly.

MAGGIE

It's the most beautiful thing ever.

She sits down to the earth below, running her rotted fingers over more petals. Wade sits down next to her, putting his arm around her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Wade pulls her closer into him, his eyes closing.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER

Wade helps Maggie through the yard, a daisy in her ear and two in her hand.

WADE

I'm going to call Caro--

Maggie stops and her face goes cold, stressed.

WADE (CONT'D)

Mag?

She grunts in pain, doubling over and breathing rapidly.

MAGGIE

So hungry.

WADE

Let's get you inside and I'll cook some--

MAGGIE

Not that.

She shakes her head, her eyes tortured. She pulls her hand from his. Wade grabs her hand again, but she pulls away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

No! Tell me you'll do it. Tell me you'll make it stop.

WADE

I'll...

MAGGIE

Please!

WADE

I'll...make it stop.

Maggie nods solemnly and grabs Wade's hand.

Her grip tightens on his hand.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sits at the table, the phone pressed to her ear. Her eyes appear heavy, unfocused. It rings a few times until it reaches Linda's voice-mail. Maggie's hand slacks on the phone as the BEEP sounds.

MAGGIE

Hey, munchkins.

Silence.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I just...I just wanted to say that I  
love you guys...

More silence.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

And...to listen to dad. He's a pain,  
but he loves you. And your mom...your  
mom...

The back porch light flickers and Maggie's coherence begins to fade.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

The lights. Mom, the lights...they're  
pretty...Why--why do the bugs light  
up like that...they're so pretty.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

An old, dusty, rotary phone sits next to an answering machine. In a long silence and through the nearby window, a front porch light illuminates a tent where flashlight beams flick playfully throughout.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

(whispering)

Where are you? Mommy, where are  
you?

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Wade pulls a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket and shakily lights one. He puffs on it multiple times, rolling a bullet between his fingers.

Low yelps emit from the dark field. Wade's fingers stop on the bullet as he slowly exhales smoke. He readies himself, but as the yelps grow, he notices three small foxes scurrying past, their long ears darting back and forth.

The sound of the phone crashing to the ground inside sends the tiny foxes darting into the darkness. Wade turns quickly and sprints back to the house and inside.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wade drops the bullet, running past the gun and into the kitchen.

WADE

Mag?

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Wade finds Maggie in the chair, staring out at nothing as the phone, laying on the floor, burps the disconnected beeps.

She turns toward him slowly, her eyes distant.

WADE

Baby?

She grabs for his arm, and he backs away, tears in his eyes.

WADE (CONT'D)

Maggie! MAGGIE!

He grabs her quickly and spins her around, pinning both her arms beneath his.

WADE (CONT'D)

It's me. It's me. Come on. Snap out of it.

She moves slightly in his grasp and he shushes more.

WADE (CONT'D)

Come on! Snap out of it. Don't do this! Not now! God dammit!

MAGGIE

Daddy?

WADE  
Oh God. That'a girl. Come on.

MAGGIE  
What'd I do?

Wade bursts into a long, exhaled sob.

WADE  
Nothing, baby.

He spins her back gently and looks into her coherent eyes.

WADE (CONT'D)  
It's okay. We're through it.

He hugs her.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Maggie rests on her father's lap. He breathes lightly in his sleep, slouched into the couch. She sets her foot down and notices something. She leans forward, plucking a bullet from beneath the coffee table. She studies it, her face emotionless.

Slowly standing, she looks him over, quizzically. Then, she leans in, near his neck, but stops and moves up to his forehead. She puckers her lips, avoiding saliva contact. She kisses him softly.

She puts a blanket on him, then slowly and very shaky, she walks up the stairs.

ONE MONTH EARLIER:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Wade sprints through the hallway, stops and evaluates a directory. Then he notices a HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE.

WADE  
(to employee)  
Hey! Where are they keeping all the...sick people? The infected.

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE  
They're using the E.R.

WADE  
Where the hell is that?

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE  
Second floor.

Wade looks over the directory quickly and then sprints down the hall, dark stains covering each wall, as if some liquid had been recently cleaned from them.

INT. HOSPITAL - E.R. - MOMENTS LATER

Wade bursts through the doors and a WOMAN IN SCRUBS with a mask stops him.

WOMAN IN SCRUBS  
Sir, you shouldn't be down here.  
All the people here are very badly  
sick. I need you to--

WADE  
My daughter is down here. Somewhere.

She hands him a mask and he holds it over his face.

WOMAN IN SCRUBS  
What's her name?

WADE  
Magg--Marguerite. Marguerite Pace.

The woman leans over to a MAN IN SCRUBS.

WOMAN IN SCRUBS  
(to man)  
You have a Marguerite...

WADE  
Pace. Pace.

WOMAN IN SCRUBS  
(to man)  
Marguerite Pace?

The man looks over his clipboard.

MAN IN SCRUBS  
Hmm. Pace. Over there, I think.  
There's a lot of--

Wade sprints away, evading people and looking around him at the infected people. Many seem only slightly infected, but he passes one room with three men in dingy yellow scrubs, tightening the restraints on a hysterical, nearly-turned man.

Wade searches each bed.

WADE  
Maggie? Baby?

MAGGIE

Daddy?

Maggie, sitting on the edge of a makeshift bed, stares up dumbfounded at her father as he sprints up to her. He drops the mask and picks her up in a hug. She hugs him back. His face slacks with utter relief.

WADE

Oh God. Where have you been? I searched everywhere for you.

MAGGIE

(crying)

I'm sorry, daddy. I'm so sorry.

INT. HOSPITAL - STERILE ROOM - LATER

Maggie sits on a bed as Wade talks with a DOCTOR in the distance.

WADE

Nothing?

DOCTOR

I'm sorry. The blood samples only show so much. Though, this isn't conclusive. We don't know anything but what we've seen so far. The best I can do is release her and contact your family doctor. This will all be in the pamphlets, but please remember: she's now flagged in the system. Quarantine is eight weeks from infection, or if she cannot hold food down, excessive regurgitation, you need to bring her in. Whichever comes first. Also note that she will acquire new cravings, particularly meat and--

Wade looks at Maggie.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Pace. Your daughter's bite was severe. Punctured an artery, which managed to transfer the virus faster. We've seen similar cases go months. But again, this is new to everyone. Most patients admitted now show signs of human bite wounds.

Wade's heavy gaze remains on Maggie.

WADE  
Human? You say it so casually.  
Like it happens everyday.

DOCTOR  
With all respect, it has been.

They share a silent moment.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Well. Make sure that she doesn't  
aggravate the wound. I'll send all  
the necessary paperwork to...

He looks at a clipboard.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Dr. Kaplan, is that right?

WADE  
Vern. Yes.

DOCTOR  
He can go over everything with you.

The doctor notices Wade study Maggie.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
I'm extremely sorry, sir, but I have  
several other patients.  
(beat)  
I truly am sorry.

Wade turns to watch the doctor leave, then goes to Maggie.

MAGGIE  
What'd he say?

WADE  
You know doctors. Sky's either always  
falling or everything's peachy. But  
from what I got, we got a while.

MAGGIE  
A while.

WADE  
Yeah.  
(beat)  
Let's go home.

He grabs her head gently in his hands, runs them back through her long hair, avoiding the small, missing patches. He looks deep into her beautiful eyes.

WADE (CONT'D)

Don't you ever leave me again. You hear me?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

WADE

Never again.

MAGGIE

I promise.

They embrace for a long moment.

NOW:

EXT. PACE HOUSE - ROOF - EARLY MORNING

Maggie's red eyes open, staring out at the gray sky and the farm around her. She's seated on the roof in a long t-shirt and boxers. She sits for a long moment, ripping the pages out of the Daisy book and letting them float off in the wind.

When finished, she sets the binder of the book down next to a pen. She stares off at a small patch of cloudless sky. In it, the moon shines.

She slowly stands, steadying herself. Her long shirt waves in the wind. She extends her arms out to her sides. The wind catches her and she shakes, staring down at the long drop. Then, she closes her eyes.

Her toes wiggle over the edge of the roof. Scabs and puss spot her red and blackened legs. A few of the daisy pages drift around on the morning breeze next to her.

She opens her eyes once more and they stare distantly out at nothing. A gray mist shrouds her pupils and her head wobbles slightly. Her foot comes up and moves out over the edge.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Wade lies on his side, on the couch, in the empty living room. He stirs to life, then darts upright.

WADE

Mag?

He runs to the kitchen, then up the stairs, leaving the empty living room, the pictures on the wall, and the iPod on the coffee table.

WADE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Maggie! MAGGIE!

Wade cries out from the distant upstairs. His screams echo through the empty house. He barrels down the stairs and through the living room, bursting through the front door.

His silhouette and anguished cries pass by quickly outside the window near the stairs, between two family photos, casting a brief shadow over the two daisies, in a vase, sitting atop the living room desk.

For a long moment, the living room remains soaked in silence and the twinkling golden light of the sun trying to peak through clouds.

FADE OUT.