“NEAR DARK”

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FADE IN:

A MOSQUITO alights on a human arm.
The stinger injects in the warm flesh.
The insectile body becomes full and red as it sucks the blood.
The fist of the arm clenches.
The forearm muscles tighten.
Trapping the stinger.
The mosquito struggles to pull its needlike appendage free.
The tendons of the arm hold it firm.
Forcing blood into it.
The insect struggles.
Blood engorges it, swelling its body.
It swells.
Swells.
POPS in a SPRITZ of blood.

CALEB
Dumb suck.

INT. FLATBED - FORD PICKUP - DUSK

CALEB COLTON is stretched out on the beat up, broke down '64 Ford Pickup.
Cowboy boots crossed on the transom.
Hat dipped low over his face.
He is a strapping young farmboy of 18.
Long, dusty, shoulder length hair.
An all-American, milkbread, midwestern farm kid.
Bored off his ass.
He yawns and swings off the back of the truck.

EXT. OKLAHOMA FLATLANDS - DUSK

The pickup is a funnel of dust on the thin strip of road.
The wide open, bleak emptiness of the fields as far as the eye can see.
An awesome country sunset spreading out across the sprawling, barren landscape in fingers of red shadows.

EXT. FIX, OKLAHOMA - NIGHT

The Ford Pickup drifts into town.
Sweeping past a dirty, disheveled metal sign reading, "Welcome to Fix, Oklahoma. Pop. 274."
Slowing down along the Main street which is a long strip of service road running off the highway.
A single gas station.
A Pit Stop Burger joint with cars parked outside.

A huge granary with tall, stilt silos.
If you're driving by and you blink, you miss it.
The boy in the Pickup cruises into the Pit Stop.

EXT. PIT STOP BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

Tacky bright orange day glo neon type of place.
Couple other FARM KIDS in pickups and jeeps pulled in.
Lounging around, smoking cigarettes, swigging beer.
The Pickup cuts a curve into the parking space in a shower of gravel.
Caleb jumps out.
Has a casual look around him.
Like he wouldn't piss if his pants were on fire.
He lights up a Marlboro.
Deep heels it up to the window.
Leans back on his elbows on the counter.
The orange haired WAITRESS behind the window looks irritatedly at the farmboy.

WAITRESS
You gonna stand there or you gonna order?

Caleb speaks over his shoulder.

CALEB
If I never see another burger again I'll be happy.

The waitress shakes her head.
The farmboy distractedly eyes the lanky, rangy kids loping up to him.
One with freckles on his face, LEVON, knocks Caleb's hat off his head.
Caleb catches his hat and socks the boy in the arm.

LEVON
What's eating' you?

CALEB
Your Mama. Y' oughta keep an eye on her, Levon.

LEVON
You wish.

CALEB
Wish I may, wish I might, wish I be hundred thousand miles from here tonight. Goddamn straight.

LEVON
Take off.

CALEB
Might just.

The farmboy's gaze drifts across the street to the...

EXT. TASTY FREEZE - NIGHT

Lit blue and white beneath bright fluorescent bulbs.
A GIRL turns from the window.
An ice cream cone in her hand.
A tiny line of the frosty cream dripping down the side of her mouth.
Caleb stares at the girl.
She runs a hand through thick, shiny brown hair, brushing it back off her forehead.
Exposing her face.
Heart shaped.
Impossibly pale skin in the fluorescent glow.
Wide eyes, a depthless ice blue like a sunny, summer sky.
A small mouth out of which a narrow red tongue swipes at the melting cone in her hands.
She looks to be in her late teens.
A faded cowboy shirt fits snugly across her chest.
A pair of Levis meet a dusty pair of black cowboy boots.
Those blue eyes lift and light on Caleb's face.

EXT. PIT STOP BURGER JOINT - NIGHT

A shiver runs up Caleb's spine.
A shiver that feels good.
He claps Levon on the shoulder, nodding his head toward the girl at the Tasty Freeze.

CALEB
I'm in love.

LEVON
I'm dreaming.

CALEB
Keep dreaming.

Caleb pushes away from the counter and walks across the street.

EXT. TASTY FREEZE - NIGHT

The fluorescent light catches the girl's eye and blazes as she turns her back.
Caleb pulls into position beside her.

He hesitates, suddenly loosing his nerve.
Then the swagger returns.

CALEB
Excuse me, but I'm a little lost. Could you tell me where the nearest Tasty Freeze is? I'm just dyin' for a cone.

The girl looks around.
Caleb's breath catches in his throat.
Those ice blue eyes gazing up at him.

GIRL
Dying?

Caleb gazes into that face that lights up the night.

CALEB
It's hot out.

GIRL
This is cold.

Referring to the ice cream cone.

CALEB
Could I have a bite?

GIRL
A bite?

Caleb shifts weight from one foot to the other nervously.
Working hard.
Mind scrambling.

CALEB
I never seen you before. You're not from around here are you?

GIRL
No.

CALEB
Got a name?

GIRL
Mae.

Caleb swallows.
His face turns hot.
Mae's eyes skate to his face.
And shimmer.

CALEB
Where you from, Mae?

She wipes her mouth with the back of her hand.

MAE
Ever hear of Sweetwater?

CALEB
That's down in Texas, ain't it?

MAE
Yeah.

CALEB
Who you here with?

MAE
Friends.

CALEB
Boyfriend?

MAE
Friends.

She looks Caleb in the eyes.

MAE
I'm staying out at the trailer park near the highway. I need a lift home.

Caleb looks at her a long moment.
Looking like he died and went to heaven.

EXT. FORD PICKUP - NIGHT

Caleb opens the door for Mae.
Helps her up into her seat.
Then climbs behind the wheel.

INT. FORD PICKUP - NIGHT

The farmboy FIRES up the engine.
Steers out onto the road.

CALEB
My name's, Caleb.

MAE
That's a nice name.

CALEB
Y'sure are pretty, but I guess a lot of people tell you that.

She looks away out the windshield.
Hard to read.
Soon it's just the two of them driving down the dark and deserted highway.
He looks at her.
His breath sticks in his throat.
Mae is unearthly beautiful in the haloish haze of the dashboard lights.
Her eyes shift to him.

CALEB
You got a boyfriend?

MAE
Sometimes.

CALEB
What about other times?

MAE
What about them?

CALEB
Well, I don't have a girlfriend.

MAE
Too bad.

CALEB
How long you planning to stay around here?

MAE
Not long.

CALEB
But you're not leaving tonight.

MAE
No.

CALEB
You th-

MAE
Shhhhhhhh.

They drive in silence for several moments.
The reassuring RUMBLE of the ENGINE.
The WHIZZ of the TIRES on the blacktop.
Outside, the long, far, dark.
The two of them together.

MAE
Stop the truck.

CALEB
Here?

MAE
Now.

CALEB
Sure.

He pulls the vehicle to the side of the road.
He turns to her.
Her icy blue eyes radiating heat.
His heart coming out of his chest.

CALEB
So...

MAE
Something I want to show you.

Her door is all at once open.
She is out of the truck.
He kills the engine and jumps onto the hard ground.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Mae stands alone.
A black silhouette against a blacker horizon.
A sky stretching high above her head.
Stars like from a shotgun blast.
He comes toward her.
The WIND whips the clothes around her soft, sultry form.
Her eyes shining in the night.

CALEB
What did you want to show me?

MAE
The night.

CALEB
What about it?

MAE
It's dark.

CALEB
Noticed.

MAE
It's also bright. It'll blind you.

CALEB
I can't see.

MAE
Listen.

CALEB
I'm listening.

MAE
Do y'hear?

CALEB
Don't hear nothin'.

MAE
Listen again. Do ya hear?

CALEB
What?

MAE
The night. It's deafening.

CALEB
Hold your ears.

MAE
Listen hard.

They are close.
Face to face.
His lips lowering to hers.
Her lips moist.
Wet.
Parting.
Caleb tries to kiss her.
Mae moves off.
He follows.

CALEB
Haven't met many girls like you.

MAE
You haven't met any girls like me.

CALEB
Maybe not.

He has a loose, game grin on his face as he walks after the girl.
She walks with an easy, lazy gait.
Plucking a cat's tail from the field.
Putting it between her teeth.
A sweet smile beneath the pale moonlight.
Mae casts a glance over her shoulder at the smitten boy behind her.

MAE
Look up.

CALEB
Stars.

MAE
See that one?

CALEB
First one I laid eyes on.

MAE
The light you just saw took a billion whole years to get from that star down here to earth... The light that's leaving that star right now, it'll be here a billion years from now...

She spins on her heel.
Fixes his face in her own.

MAE
Want to know why you never met a girl like me before?

CALEB
Yeah.

She casts a glance up at the stars.

MAE
...I'll be around to see that light when it comes down to earth a billion years from now.

CALEB
Sounds like fun.

MAE
It is.

CALEB
I'd like to be there, too.

MAE
Maybe.

CALEB
How?

MAE
Who knows?

She turns and heads back toward the Ford Pickup.
He catches her stride.

CALEB
Sure haven't met anyone like you before.

MAE
Sure haven't.

They climb in.
They take off.
The night is just as dark as it was before.
Maybe darker.

INT. FORD PICKUP - NIGHT

Caleb leans back in his seat, raising his right arm to Mae's shoulder.
Extending his fingers, he ruffles her hair.

CALEB
In any hurry to get home?

The truck drives on.
Mae lifts thoses shimmering eyes to his face.

MAE
I never hurry.

Caleb smiles and shakes his head, somehow now believing.

CALEB
...You want to listen to the radio?

His fingers twirl a ribbon of her hair.
He gives the knob a flick.
The speakers vibrate.
The Pickup speeds on into the night.
The lonesome road stretching into the horizon.
The RADIO playing.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The road forks.
The truck veers to the right.

INT. FORD PICKUP - NIGHT

Mae turns to Caleb.
The paleness of her skin almost luminescent.

MAE
Where're we going?

Caleb's eyes sparkle.

CALEB
You'll see.

MAE
I don't like surprises.

CALEB
You'll like this one.

MAE
What is it?

CALEB
Not what.

MAE
Who?

CALEB
You'll see.

MAE
I'm not sure I'm going to like this.

A smile in her eyes.

CALEB
I'm sure.

EXT. COLTON FARM - NIGHT

The Pickup barrels around a junction of the highway.
Funneling a cloud of dust onto a narrow dirt road.
RATTLING a broken down mailbox sitting atop a short post.
The farm sleeping still and dark.

INT. FORD PICKUP - NIGHT

Caleb steers past the house.
Braking in a shower of dust in front of the pasture behind the barn.
He kills the engine.

CALEB
We're here.

MAE
Where's here?

CALEB
C'mon.

He swings the door open.

EXT. PASTURE - COLTON FARM - NIGHT

Caleb races around the truck, cracking open Mae's door.
He extends his hand as she hops out.

CALEB
Close your eyes, take hold of my hand. You're going to meet my best friend.

She tugs his hand.

MAE
I don't want to be with other people.
I want to be with you tonight.

He gives her hand a gentle pull.

CALEB
It's not a person. Close your eyes.

She does.
Letting herself be led out of the vehicle.
He leads her blind back through a maze of fences out in the pasture.

EXT. HORSE PEN - NIGHT

In its pen, DIESEL, a massive black quarterhorse pricks up his ears.
Turning wide, dark eyes on Caleb and Mae.
Caleb gets behind Mae and puts his hand on her shoulder.

CALEB
Now I don't want you opening your eyes.

He puts his other hand over her eyes.
A big smile on his face as he edges her forward.
Suddenly the horse backs so abruptly it almost trips.
Eyes wild with fear.
The two people just stand there.
The farmboy pulls his hand away from the girl's eyes.
He walks up to the pen.

CALEB
Diesel, what the hell is wrong with you?

Mae opens her eyes.

MAE
Horses don't like me.

Caleb takes a rope and slings it over Diesel's head.

CALEB
Why not?

MAE
They just don't.

CALEB
Come on boy.

He gives the rope a tug.
Diesel rears back, lifting his chest, front hooves pawing the air.

CALEB
He's just acting up. He'll like you.
Just watch.

He vaults the fence.
Diesel shies.
Caleb tries to shush it.
The horse shakes its head back and forth, scared out of its skin.

Bewildered, the farmboy lifts the rope over its head.
The horse pivots on its back feet, tearing off.
Caleb heads back toward Mae.
Climbing back over the fence and standing beside her.
Her watching him with uncannily even eyes.
Smiling elusively to herself, she turns her back to him.
Moving off with an easy gait past the other pens.
Inside the fences, there is a SCURRYING of animals.
A sudden RUSTLING in the nearby tundra of the prairie.
Caleb scans the landscape, sets his eyes on Mae, then shakes his head and shrugs.
Mae is sauntering away, her back to him, running her finger along the fence posts.
The farmboy swings the lasso lariet style over his head.
Letting the loop fall over the girl's shoulders.
She looks over her shoulder at him.
Her eyes cool.
He smiles.
Starts reeling her in.
She backs.
A smile slipping across her face.

CALEB
You're pretty strong.

He gives the rope another tug.
Moving her closer.
The moon shines bright and high overhead.

MAE
Stronger than you.

CALEB
Show me.

She pulls back.
Pulling him to her.
He gives a gentle tug.
She comes within reach.
Then twists back.
A game of give and take.
He comes forward.
Gathering up the rope in his hands.
Their eyes wedded.
She is just in front of him now.
He gives one last tug on the line.
Drawing her in.
His face drifting toward hers.
Letting his lips brush over hers and stops.
Her eyes close.
His hands fold around her back.
A cloud passes over the moon.

A shadow crosses their faces.
Her soft, moist lips slide over his mouth.
Nuzzling down the side of his neck.
He lifts closed eyes to the sky.
Her breath warm on his skin.
His skin trembling with the touch.
Her lips start to draw back.
She jerks her head back, struggling with her instinct.
Lifting her arms, yanking the rope off her shoulders.

CALEB
What's wrong?

Mae hugs her arms.
Her eyes holding his.
Time standing still.

EXT. FARMLANDS - PRE-DAWN

Horizon lightening.
Just a tad.

EXT. FENCE - COLTON FARM - PRE-DAWN

A Rooster throws back its combed head and COCK-A-DOODLE-DOOS.

EXT. HORSE PEN - COLTON FARM - PRE-DAWN

Mae's ears perk at the rooster crow.
Her icy blue eyes skate up to the sky.
Her face focuses on Caleb's in alarm.

MAE
What time is it?

Caleb shrugs his shoulders.

CALEB
What time you gotta be home?

MAE
Before dawn.

CALEB
Dawn's a ways off.

Mae spins on her heel.
Heads off for the truck.

MAE
Take me home, Caleb.

CALEB
Huh?

He trots after her.
Lays a hand on her shoulder.
Stopping her movement.
Turning her around.
Her eyes blaze into his face.

CALEB
What's the rush, Mae?

MAE
I have to go.

She breaks free.
Keeps walking.
Reaching the truck, she opens her door.
His eyes search hers as she climbs into the seat.
Reading nothing.
He closes her door.
Resting his elbows on the open windowframe.
He starts to speak, she cuts him off.

MAE
Hurry, Caleb. Hurry.

He gazes into those eyes for a fleeting moment, then moves around to the driver's side and swings onto the seat.

INT. FORD PICKUP - PRE-DAWN

Caleb puts his hand on the keys in the ignition.
Giving her a good, hard look.

CALEB
I don't know what's goin' on, Mae.

She flits a peek out the window.

EXT. PASTURE - COLTON FARM - PRE-DAWN

The truck sits unshielded beneath the big sky becoming light grey.

INT. FORD PICKUP - PRE-DAWN

Mae shoots a scared glance at Caleb.

MAE
Let's go.

CALEB
We're going.

The farmboy TURNS over the ENGINE.
Upset, he shoves the stick into gear.
Swinging the truck around.
Stepping on the gas, he takes them out of there.

CALEB
Hope I didn't forget my manners or nothin'.

MAE
That's not it.

She casts a glance up out the windshield.

MAE
Move.

CALEB
Yes, Ma'am.

His brow furrows in confusion.
He swings the steering wheel hand over hand.
Driving out onto the road.

EXT. ROAD - PRE-DAWN

The truck burns down the tarmac toward the brightening horizon.

INT. FORD PICKUP - PRE-DAWN

Caleb keeps his hands on the wheel.
Staring straight out the windshield.
Hurt.
Mae sits rigidly beside him.
Perspiration like dew drops on her porcelain skin.
Real fear in her eyes.

MAE
Faster.

CALEB
I got her floored.

MAE
It's only a few more miles.

CALEB
Might even get there, you never know.

MAE
I didn't notice the time.

CALEB
What's got you so worried?

Mae's eyes never leave the windshield.
She answers him with silence.

CALEB
C'mon, what is it? Your old man
gonna whip your butt or somethin'?
I'll tell him the car broke down.

MAE
Just get me home.

CALEB
Maybe I will...

He puts his foot on the brake.
A playful gleam in his eye.

EXT. ROADSIDE - PRE-DAWN

The truck pulls to a halt.
Sunrise a matter of moments.

INT. FORD PICKUP - PRE-DAWN

Caleb yanks the keys out the ignition.
Sticks them down his shirt.
Sits back and crosses his arms.

CALEB
...But you have to kiss me first.

Anxiety squirms her pretty face.
She reaches over and tries to pull the keys from inside his shirt.
Her hands all over his chest.
He grabs her by the wrist.
Tugs her to him.
Grinning boyishly ear to ear.

CALEB
You got the idea.

She struggles.
He kisses her full on the lips.
Mae shuts her eyes.
Surrendering to something spasming inside her.

Her mouth moves to his neck.
Her lips pull back.
Her teeth fasten onto his neck.
Caleb cries out.
Tries to push her off.
She holds him firm by the shoulders in an iron grip.
Tears explode out of her eyes.
She rips her blood moistened lips from his neck.
Shearing herself away from him.
Plunging out the door of the truck.
Headfirst.
Caleb remains in the seat.
Rubbing his throat.
Fingering the pinprick of a wound.
Surprised and astonished, he jumps out of the parked vehicle.
Chasing after the panic-stricken girl scrambling away.

EXT. ROAD - PRE-DAWN

The girl is running as fast as her feet will carry her.
Her eyes wide and wild.
A dribble of blood dappling her white lips.
The farmboy is racing after her.
She moves with a speed that is leaving him rapidly in her wake.
The sky is becoming very bright indeed.
Mae stops in her tracks and squints ahead.
Up the road, fast approaching.
A ballooning cloud of dust.
A low to the ground funnel of dirt.
Caleb watches as the girl runs toward it, flagging her arms.
A vehicle inside the little twister SLAMS on its BRAKES.
Mae jumps inside the dirty haze.
The dust cloud swerves in a SCREECHING TIRE arc on the roadway, speeding back up the road.
The sun about to crack the edge of the world.
A faint wreath of smoke in the air where the girl last stood.
Caleb slows to a sprint.
Then a walk.
He stops and stands.
Watching the dust disintigrate up the road.
He scratches his head.
Touches the strange wound on his throat.
He regards the red wetness on his fingers.

CALEB
Some kiss.

He shrugs and hikes back to his truck.
Hops into the cab.

INT. FORD PICKUP - PRE-DAWN

Caleb turns the keys in the ignition.
WHINNNEEEEE.
WHINNNNNNNNEEEE.
WHINNEEEEE.
He checks out the gas gauge.
Empty.
He punches the dashboard.

CALEB
Shit.

He jumps out of the truck.

EXT. ROAD - PRE-DAWN

Caleb crosses the blacktop.
Leaving the truck on the side of the road.
Hiking into the dry fields.
His house a small speck on the field far away.
He heads toward it.
The sun near up.

EXT. COLTON FARM - PRE-DAWN

LOY and SARAH COLTON have come outside to start their day.
The father is a man in his middle years, with weathered skin and white hair on a face and body worn by a life on the land.
He is holding his six year old daughter in his arms.
Golden hair on a pretty, pug nosed face.
Loy is holding a cup of coffee.
Sippng it as he looks out on the morning lands with his baby girl.
Sky brightening.

EXT. FIELD - PRE-DAWN

The edge of the world turns white.
Caleb clomps through the field.
Squinting ahead to see the small shape of the farmhouse,.
The specks of two people standing out front.
Home a half mile away.
The boy trudges toward it.
The world brightening around him.
He hugs himself.
The light making his skin sore.
The sun crests the rim of the planet.
Spreading an infinite wall of light across the big country.
A wave of sharp sunlight splashing over the running boy.
He lets out a cry of pain.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DAWN

Loy Colton squints out into the lands.
Sees the stick figure way out there.
Sarah stretches her teeny arm and points.
Jumps up and down.

SARAH
Lookit, Daddy. Caleb.

LOY
Hey, Caleb!

The father waves at his son.
The sister stands by his side.
The two of them framed picture pretty in front of the house.

EXT. FIELD - DAWN

Caleb squirms in agony.
Staggering across the fields.
Blisters and burn marks scorching on his skin.
The sun roasting his flesh.
Searing his face and hair.
He runs drunkenly.
His arms stretched out.
His hands reaching for the two of his family members.
And his house.
Like a pastoral postcard of home a quarter of a mile away.
Smoke rises from his fingers.
His skin stinging.
His whole body burning up in the abruptly scarifying light of day.
He screams his lungs out.
His arms covering his face.
Sizzling.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DAWN

Loy stops waving.
His face falls.
Sarah snags his shirt sleeve.
Alarmed.

SARAH
Is something wrong with Caleb?

LOY
I'm not sure.

They squint into the distance.
Past the stumbling, smoking stick figure of Caleb.

Just past him.
Dust rising.

EXT. FIELD - DAWN

Tears stream down Caleb's cheeks.
His smouldering, raw hands outstretched.
Snatching, clenching for the too far figures of his father and his sister.
Fighting his way past the warring wall of the sun.
His feet becoming harder and harder to move.
Fighting a losing battle against the agonizing scorch of daylight.
The SOUND of an AUTOMOTIVE ENGINE behind him.
He looks desperately over his shoulder.
A balloon of dirt.
A pale, ghostly cream colored Winnegabo is bearing down on him.
Almost upon him.
He knows it is useless to resist.
He surrenders, his eyes rolling up into their sockets.
His legs giving out from under him.
Knees buckling.
The recreational vehicle lumbers by.
It's side door swinging open.
Three sets of hands clamping around Caleb's limp body as he drops.
Heaving the door shut.
Speeding off.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DAWN

Loy and Sarach are thunderstruck.
They see the Winnebago hang a sharp right in an explosion of dirt.
Greyhounding it for the strip of two-lane blacktop a quarter of a mile away.
Caleb being stolen away within.

SARAH
Caleb!

LOY
Sarah, you stay here.

Loy charges as fast as his aging feet will carry him across the farm.
Around the side of the barn.
Screeching to a halt in front of a Chevy Pickup.
The Truck is up on a jack, its tire off.
The father is white in the face.
Sarah is standing beside him with her eyes as big as saucers.
Watching the thin trail of dust disappear down the road.

The father picks up his daughter.
She hugs him, sobbing.
A steeliness appears behind his eyes as he looks out at the road.
The two of them stand small and alone on the farm.
Surrounded by the huge Oklahoma landscape.

INT. WINNEBAGO - DAWN

The sun is a twisted green ball through the glass windshield.
It's deadly rays leaking inside.
Caleb twists a groggy face upward, lifting his lids.
To see the sharp bladed rowel of a shining silver spur stuck against his throat.
It is connected to a boot.
Attached to a steamshovel of a leg in black jeans.
Part of the body of a stapping sinewy man with a mean, skullish face and eyes like dead meat.
SEVEREN VAN SICKLE.

SEVEREN
Howdy.

He puts pressure on the spur, pricking flesh.

SEVEREN
...I'm gonna separate your head from yer shoulders. Hope ya don't mindnone.

Caleb gags.
A snarl from somebody beneath a blanket behind the wheel.
Severen grunts and reluctantly looses the pressure on the spur a bit.
Mae heaves a blanket over Caleb who isn't moving a single solitary muscle.
His eyes jump to the driver, who is speeding the Winnebago at a flat-out 100.
JESSE HOOKER's head swivels over his shoulder, deeply hooded by a blanket and eyes covered by very black welding glasses.
A guantly handsome man with a face like the flip side of a nickel and a long mane of hair the color of burnished pewter.

JESSE
You fucked us up but good, Mae.

MAE
It was kinda an accident.

JESSE
This was sloppy, Mae, real sloppy.

Severen indents the sharp rowel of the spur in Caleb's throat.
The farmboy is scared beyond belief.

SEVEREN
Let me do it, Jesse, let me tap dance on it, woncha Jess? It'll be so good.

JESSE
Do it fast.

In the seat beside Jesse, another head rises.
The blanket parting to reveal a face to put a country boy in his place.
A head of metallic blonde hair over chiseled features as if from marble.
Her full, bloodless lips widen in a silky smile.
Her eyes, an intoxicating lethal lure.
DIAMONDBACK's studded denim and fringe jacket glints like snake eyes in the dark.
She whips out her wrist and a pearl handled blade pops into her hand.
She readies to use it.

DIAMONDBACK
Let the good times roll.

Mae grabs her arm.

MAE
No!!!

Caleb's eyes are wide and wild.
Severen draws his leg back, poising his spur.
The Winnebago hurtles at hi-speed.
The farmboy tries to make a move.
CLINK.
CHINK.
Handcuffs are thrown about his wrist and a bolt on the door.
He's caught tight.
His eyes find a .38 special aimed point blank in his face.
Held in a two hand grip by a seven year old boy.
Crouched in a corner.
A tiny face pinched, hair clipped in a crewcut.
His clothes probably procured at the Salvation Army.
HOMER.
He eases back the hammer.
Snaps his eyes possessively to Mae.

HOMER
Him?

MAE
No!

Spur.
Knife.
Handcuff.
.38.
Nuts.

CALEB
WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON?!!!!

SEVEREN
Ain't what's goin' on, son. It's what's coming off. Your face. Clean off.

Severen's face splits with a smile like a cut neck.
Slashing out with his spur for Caleb's throat to lay it wide open.
Mae suddenly puts her face in front of the farmboy's.
The Savage One stops his spur an inch from her pretty pale throat.
She holds his gaze.

MAE
Might as well kill me.

SEVEREN
How you figure that?

Mae yanks Caleb's head aside, displaying the red ringed teeth marks in his neck.

MAE
He's been bit but he ain't been bled.

That sinks in.

MAE
...He's turned by now.

SEVEREN
Aw shit, Jess. If he's turned...

JESSE
...He comes with us.

Caleb is perfectly still.
His eyes the only part of his body that moves.
Back and forth, back and forth.
Nobody talks.

Nobody moves.
Black nervous looks all around.
The vehicle drives on.

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - DAWN

The pale Winnebago takes a sharp right and grinds to a stop well within the darkened innards of a derelict, deserted garage.
A lightless chamber.

INT. WINNEBAGO - DAWN

Jesse and Diamondback pop back the front seats into almost horizontal positions.
Ready themselves for sleep.
Severen unhinges the bunks on the walls of the van.
He climbs into the top, WHIZZING a spur in Caleb's direction.
Homer shoves up into the one beneath.
Casting a grim eye on the farmboy as he pulls the blanket up over his head.
Mae rests a hand gently on the boy's shoulder.
He gazes up into her eyes.
Suddenly very tired.
Heavily weighted but somehow floating at the same time.
He fights to keep his eyes open.
They shut.
Mae covers both their bodies with the blanket.
Sleep steals her too.

EXT. FIELD - COLTON FARM - DAY

Sun burning hot and bright on a sign reading, "Loy Colton, Veterinarian."
A POLICE CAR sitting in front of the farmhouse.
Down in the field Loy cradles Sarah in his arms and gazes straight into SHERIFF EAKERS face.
The Sheriff tucks a couple of thumbs in the belt around his landslide girth.
Tilting an eye.

SHERIFF EAKERS
Kidnapped..? C'mon, Loy, your boy's eighteen. Might be he figured to take himself some time on his own. I see it all the day.

Sarah sniffles.
Loy looks down to the ground and the fresh tire marks in the raw earth.
Shaking his head.
Eakers glances down at the marks dismissively.
Shifting his weight from one foot to the other.

SHERIFF EAKERS
By the way, Doc, you mind taking a look at my mare? She's all swole up on her back, needs a shot maybe.

Loy looks at his watch in annoyance.
Then stabs the ground with the toe of his boot.

LOY
See these tire marks? That was four hours and nine minutes ago. Meanin' that if they're out there on the highway keepin' at a steady 55 that puts 'em clear into the next state by now. I wanna know what you boys are doin' about that?

Sarah digs her face into her stern father's jacket.
The Sheriff sighs.
The three of them very small on the very big stretch of land.

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - DUSK

The sun settles on the decrepit shell of a gas station off a lonesome road.
The sky dims.
The night begins.

INT. WINNEBAGO - NIGHT

Caleb's eyes blink open.
He keeps them almost closed.
Playing dead.
He fingers his burn wounds.
They are barely there.
Nearly healed.
The five silhouettes of the rest in the dashboard lights.
Huddling.
Low voices.
He listens close.

MAE
...I'll look after him.

HOMER
You can't Mae! I turned you! I taught you!

MAE
I turned him. I'm teachin' him.

SEVEREN
Risky as shit, Jess. He fucks up, it's our ass.

DIAMONDBACK
If it's our ass, Mae, it's your ass.

JESSE
Well...

The glint of Jesse's eyes passing around the others.

JESSE
...You want to call it a week?

Mae holds her breath.
Severen spits tobacco.
Homer keeps opening and closing the hammer of the gun.
Diamondback fingers the rhinestone studs of her frayed blue denim jacket.
Jesse clicks his teeth.
His eyes snap to Diamondback.
She nods.

JESSE
...Then it's decided. A week to see if we can call him one of us.

Caleb blinks.
Severen catches it.

SEVEREN
Cut the shit. I know you're awake. I can smell it.

All eyes turn to him.
Eyes that can see in the dark.
Caleb opens his eyes.
Severen gets to his feet.
Stands over him.
Whips out a straightrazer.
The farmboy's stomach tightens.
Severen spits on his palm.
Smears the saliva over his rough hewn face.
Starts shaving himself with the open blade, slicing whiskers.

SEVEREN
...Amazin' how fast they get dull.

The Savage One sticks out his hand.
Yanks the farmboy to his feet.

Homer unlatches his handcuff.
Caleb rubs his wrist.

CALEB
IF I'M SLEEPING SLAP ME CAUSE I WANNA WAKE UP!!!!

SEVEREN
Guess what?

CALEB
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?!

JESSE
I'm Jesse Hooker. I believe you've met Mae.

Caleb hears a sound which makes him turn his head fast.
ZZZZZZZZZZZzzzzzzzaaaaawww.
AzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzAAAAWWWWWWWZZZZZ.
Severen FILING his teeth with a metal tool.
Sharpening them.
Winking at the farmboy.

SEVEREN
Severen Van Sickle's the name.

Diamondback flexes her wrist.
Shooting her pearl handled blade out of her cuff and into her hand.
She flexes her wrist.
The blade drops back in her jacket.
She flexes her wrist again.
Blade in hand.

DIAMONDBACK
Diamondback.

Caleb is looking at her.
A teeny hand grabs him by the nuts.
Clenches hard.
He groans.
Falls to his knees.
Eye level with Homer.
Who puts his little face fiercely against Caleb's.

HOMER
I'm Homer. That's H-O-M-E-R.
Mispronounce it once and I wouldn't want to be you.

Mae takes the stunned, speechless Caleb and sits him down on a seat in the back.
He starts to say something.
She puts her finger to his lip.
The Silvered One turns over the ignition.

EXT. ABANDONED GAS STATION - NIGHT

The Winnebago rides out of the gutted garage.

EXT. USED CAR LOT - NIGHT

The Winnebago slows to a stop in front of the lot.

EXT. USED CAR LOT - NIGHT

Severen moves silently through the rows of vehicles in the safety of shadow with a well practised ease.

EXT. TWO-LAND HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Winnebago streaks through the night.
A light green TRAVELALL on its tail.
Small towns come and go.
Giving way to dust covered plains stretching to the horizon.

EXT. BARREN FIELDS - NIGHT

The Winnebago has been torched.
It is a smouldering skeleton of flickering flames.
The red taillights of the Travelall racing toward the road.
Shrinking from view.

EXT. KANSAS/OKLAHOMA BORDER - ROAD - NIGHT

The Travelall speeds across the state line.

EXT. HOPE, KANSAS - NIGHT

The Travelall weaves through the streets of the small city.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - HOPE, KANSAS - NIGHT

The Travelall pulls into the parking structure.
Zooming through the cement catacombs.
Swerving into a parking spot.
Shutting its engine.
All doors pop open.
They all climb out.
And stretch their legs.
Jesse turns a grey eye on the farmboy.
A faint grin wrinkles across that epic face.
Caleb swallows.

Mae comes up beside him.
Weaving her fingers through his hand.
The farmboy watches as the others take off into the night.
Each heading in separate directions.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Caleb and Mae walk along the empty, lonely street beneath the yellowish glow of the mercury vapor light.
City lights glisten up ahead.

CALEB
Where're we going?

MAE
I'll show you.

CALEB
Where?

MAE
There.

She nods toward the city in front of her.

CALEB
Why?

MAE
I'll show you.

His eyes dim.
A nausea welling up inside him.

CALEB
I don't feel too well.

MAE
I know.

He looks at her.
Probing inside those ice blue eyes.
Then down at himself.
The burns on his arms healed.
His clothes singed.
Another wave of nausea.
It makes him want to scream.
He stops in his tracks.

CALEB
Look, Mae, you got to understand. I'm gettin' outa here. I'm going to the nearest bus station and takin' the next one back home.

He takes a step toward the girl.
Holding her by the shoulders.

CALEB
I know you tried to help me. But I got to get home.

Touching a finger to her cheek.
He turns his back.
Taking off down the street.
A knowing passes behind the girl's eye.

MAE
Caleb, you won't get very far.

From halfway down the street he looks back.
Hurt, anger and fear streaking his face.

CALEB
We'll see.

MAE
You know where I'll be.

CALEB
Be seeing you.

Quietly.

MAE
Before long.

Caleb lifts a hand in a slight wave.
Casting a last look at the girl.
And her melting gaze.
Then he is gone.
The night moves on.
Mae stands still.

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

The depot in the middle of nowhere on the empty streets of the small midwestern town.
Caleb shambles along the sidewalk toward it.
Pushing through the double glass doors.

INT. WAITING ROOM - BUS STATION - NIGHT

The farmboy walks up to the ticket counter.
The TICKETER doesn't give him a second glance.

CALEB
Um, excuse me...

The man turns, not eyeing the worse for wear boy any differently than he would any of the other wierdos up and around at that time.

CALEB
...I'd like to know if you got any buses going through Fix, Oklahoma round about now?

The Ticketer just stares.

TICKETER
Where the hell is Fix?

CALEB
Well, nearest city is Lawton.

The man nods.

TICKETER
Gate 12. Fifteen minutes. 14 dollars.

Caleb opens his wallet and counts.

CALEB
I got 11 dollars.

The Ticketer pulls the ticket back, bored.

TICKETER
I got a bus ticket for 14.

CALEB
I gotta get home. Gimme a break, man.

TICKETER
You're three bucks shy.

CALEB
How 'bout it.

The farmboy exhales as the salesperson goes back to watching a portable television.

His shoulders slumped, Caleb walks past the rows of plastic seats with the pay televisions on the armrests.
Almost all empty.
He spies a man in a rumpled suit sitting across the room.
Looking at him laconically.
The boy goes over.

CALEB
Scuse me, Sir...

The man looks up.

CALEB
...I'm trying to get home and I'm three dollars short for the ticket. I was wondering if you had-

MAN
I have this.

He reaches into his jacket for his wallet.
Pulls it out.

CALEB
Thanks.

The wallet is flipped open.
A badge in it.
The PLAINCLOTHES COP puts his hand on the farmboy's shoulder.
The hand has a bandage.
The bandage has blood on it.
Fresh.

PLAINCLOTHES COP
Come this way, please.

CALEB
What's the problem?

PLAINCLOTHES COP
You.

INT. HALLWAY - BUS STATION - NIGHT

The boy is walked into the shadowy locker area by the Plainclothes Police Officer.

PLAINCLOTHES COP
You're not lookin' too good, kid.

CALEB
I'm not feeling too good.

PLAINCLOTHES COP
What're you on?

CALEB
You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

PLAINCLOTHES COP
Let me see your eyes.

He puts his hand on Caleb's face.
Squints into the boy's eyes.
Which are perfectly clear.
The blood on the small bandage near Caleb's nose.
Nostrils flare.
His nausea clearing for an instant.
The cop fingers the dark stain on the collar of the farmboy's jacket.

PLAINCLOTHES COP
You got blood on you.

Caleb turns his neck to the man.
Exposing the small puncture wound.

CALEB
I got cut...

The sickness returning.
The farmboy close to tears.
The cop looks him in the eyes with some compassion.

CALEB
...I only have 11 dollars and I need three more or I'm never gonna be able to get back home.

The policeman thinks for a moment.
Then takes out his wallet.
Gives the boy three dollars.

PLAINCLOTHES COP
Get home an' be a good boy.

Caleb smiles a bright boyish smile.
The plainclothes cop pats him on the shoulder.
The farmboy moves off.

<u>EXT. CITY LIMITS - NIGHT</u>

The long silvery bus streaks down the highway.
A half moon watches from way on high.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Caleb is curled up in the backseat.
Buckled in pain.
His face smeared with sweat.
Clenching his stomach.
His veins and arteries screaming out for sustenance.
His eyes peer over the edge of the window sill.
He sees the parking structure pass by.
Jumping to his feet, he rushes down the aisle.
Screeching to a sneakered halt behind the Bus Driver.

CALEB
Stop the bus! I gotta get off!

The Bus Driver lifts his face to the sweat soaked farmboy.

BUS DRIVER
You get off, you're left.

The pain in Caleb's eyes needs no words.
The driver downgrades as he swings over to the curb.

EXT. STREETS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF HOPE, KANSAS - NIGHT

The huge, lumbering vehicle grinds to a stop on the empty street.
The doors heave open.
Caleb climbs down the steps in a crouch.
The Bus Driver shakes his head as the doors fold closed.
In a cloud of exhaust, the vehicle lurches away.
Caleb grabs onto the lamppost for support.
He swings his dimming eyes around.
Focusing on the parking structure in the near distance.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Caleb staggers out of the stairwell.
Stumbling toward the light green Travelall.
Sitting on the bumper, in bare feet, is Mae.
A soft smile crosses his face.
Caleb stops in front of her.
Losing his balance.
Weakening.

CALEB
I'm dying.

MAE
You're just in time.

In the shadow of the overhand Mae rises to her feet before Caleb.
Her ice blue eyes fix on his.
She lifts her hand to her mouth.
Turning a glistening white wrist to her lips.
And sinks her teeth into the skin.

CALEB
Wha--?

The red liquid runs down her arm as she raises the wrist to Caleb's mouth.
Shutting out his voice.
Fastening her skin to his face.

MAE
Drink.

The aroma filling his nostrils.
Giving him strength.
The strength giving him pleasure.
Seizing him.
Like two arms, kidnapping his senses.
As his lips look on the gaping wound of her wrist and her blood begins to fill his veins.
He clutches her with both hands, rolling the fabric of her blouse into his fists.
Hearing the pounding rhythm of her heart.
BABUM...BABUM...BABUMBABUMBABUMBABUMBABUMBABUMBABUM...BABUMBABUM..
Getting faster.
A kind of frenzy passing behind his eyes.
The blood in his own veins running hot.
Stimulated.
Stirred.

MAE
I asked you to listen to the night...
now listen to me.

BABUM...BABUM...BABUM...BABUM...BABUMBABUMBABUMBABUM
The roaring in his ears.
Smashing her into him.
Draining her.
Furiously.
The blood running like fire inside him.
Washing over him in waves of heat.
Head reeling.
Body spasming.
His own heart finding its way to his ears.
BABUMBABUMBABUM...BABUMBABUM...BABUMBABUMBABUMBABUM...
Both hearts now in syncopated rhythm.

A beating drum.
Growing louder and louder.
It's DEAFENING.
The SOUND about to shatter his system.
Mae beginning to pull back.
He yanks her tighter.
She summons the last of her strength.
And rips herself free.
Caleb's mouth drips with the dark, red liquid.
Replenished.
Restored.
Remade.
Caleb's face flushes and his eyes shine with unhealthy health.
Breathing hard.
Panting.
The new found strength swirling through his body.
He reaches for the girl.
She pushes his hands away gently.
Then presses the wound closed on her wrist.
Her eyes soft and knowing.
Walking forward, to the edge of the parking structure.
Looking out.
Caleb pulls himself together.
A control returning.
Standing beside the girl with a kind of gratitude in his eyes.
She points.
Gazing out upon the city on one side and wide expanse of flatlands on the other.
All beneath a velvety cloak of blackness.

MAE
Look... the night.

Caleb blinks.
Eyes bright.
Feeling fine.
Not sure of what to make of it.
He squints around him.
Never has the night looked as it does.
He stares spellbound.
A fine layer of lunar luminescence falls from the sky.
The city shimmering as never before.
The very electrical pulse visible as it travels through thin air.
He blinks.
Turning toward the fields.
He can see Owls in the air many miles away.
Coyotes on the run across the barren tundra impossibly far off.
Fieldmice scuttle.
Rabbits skiddadle.
Racoons clamber across the brushy flatlands.

Caleb whirls around and around.
Giggling.
Then laughing.
Unable to help himself.
In love with the newness of the night.
He stops.

MAE
Now hear it....

His head flicks back to the city.
Suddenly, VIBRATING with SOUND.
CAR HORNS.
ELECTRICITY TRAVELING ACROSS WIRES.
TICKING OF STREET LIGHTS.
HISSING OF GAS LINES.
He revolves his head.
To the fields.
He shuts his eyes.
Opens his ears.
A SYMPHONY of NIGHT SOUNDS sweep in on him.

MAE
Come on.

She leaps over the small barrier of the parking structure and runs out into the farmlands.
Caleb on her heels.

EXT. FARMLANDS - NIGHT

Mae and Caleb running deep into the fields.
Running like never before.
Limbs flying effortlessly, galloping like the wind, almost airborne, covering miles in a matter of minutes.
Caleb listening.
A RUSH of BREEZES and WINDS whipping along the plains.
The WALL of INSECTS in the AIR.
The SCUTTLING of small animal FEET on the DIRT.
The BRUSH of BUSHES swaying in the BREEZE.
The CRY of COYOTES.
Then again.
COYOTES CRY.
CRY.
CRY.
CRY.
Caleb throws his head back.
Cracks a grin.
He lets out a YIPPING CRY himself.
Mae's face widens in a smile.
Throwing her head back.
Letting out a trilling CRY.

The COYOTES yell back.
Caleb and Mae see them in a pack, scampering across the land.
They run after them.
CRYING out, loud as their lungs will allow.
A far off TRAIN WHISTLE.
The shadow of a big Freight Train on the horizon.
The boy and girl's legs propelling them forward with fierce speed.
Like two steel springs.
Their faces flushed with emotion as they catch up with the SIX COYOTES on the run.
The strong, tan canines regard their new escorts as a kindred spirit.
Flashing their dark eyes at them in scraggy acknowledgement.
YIPPING at them.
Caleb and Mae YIP back.
Barreling across the badlands with the running Coyotes.
The padding paws.
The cowboy boots slapping the ground.
Then suddenly catching up with the big Freight Train.
The boy and girl running side by side with the double engine locomotive.
The strange strength powering their limbs to stay abreast.
The lowered, brown maned wolfish heads at their heels.
The Coyotes YIPPING.
The train WHISTLE BLOWING.
Caleb and Mae's faces bright and hot blooded.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DAWN

Daylight twinkles.

INT. LOY'S BEDROOM - FARMHOUSE - DAWN

Loy Colton awakens at the top of his lungs.
Jackknifing up in bed.
He puts his face in his hands.
Cries quietly.
He peers out the window at the first traces of sunlight through the curtains.
He looks like he has slept poorly.
Loy regards the shape of a small body, an indentation on the mattress.
His daughter was sleeping beside him, but now she's gone.
His brow furrows.

LOY
Sarah?

Nowhere to be seen.
The father gets out of bed.

He has been sleeping in his jeans and shirt.
Rumpled and worse for wear, he goes out the door.

INT. HALLWAY - FARMHOUSE - DAWN

Loy walks down the hall in the morning light.
He knows where she is.

INT. CALEB'S ROOM - FARMHOUSE - DAWN

The father quietly pushes open the door.
Peeks in.
Little Sarah asleep on her big brother's bed.
Hugging onto his beat up cowboy hat.
Loy blinks away a tear.
He turns his back and starts to go out.
A small voice stops him.

SARAH
Good mornin', Daddy.

He comes over to her.

LOY
Mornin', Baby.

He puts his hand on her tiny hand holding the Stetson.

LOY
You sleep some?

SARAH
I sleep some. You sleep little?

LOY
Little. Bad dreams.

SARAH
Me too.

She meets his eyes.

SARAH
...He needs us.

Loy takes Sarah's hand.

LOY
I know.

They look at each other.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DAY

The Pickup truck is spewing a cloud of dust.
Off into the distance.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - FIX, OKLAHOMA - DAY

A hole in the wall.
A small computer bank on the desk by the telephone.
A few wanted posters and postal warrants on the board.
Sheriff Eakers shakes his head as he stabs a cigarette out in an ash tray full of butts.
He lifts tired eyes to Loy Colton, sitting across the desk.
Sarah in her father's lap.

SHERIFF EAKERS
It's not much, Loy, but Highway Patrol found what might be your Winnebago. Left in some field and torched. Nobody was inside. Probably switched cars. Could be your boy's fallen in with some trouble.

Loy speaks in a voice just below his breath.

LOY
What're your boys doing about it?

SHERIFF EAKERS
All we can.

LOY
That's not enough.

SHERIFF EAKERS
This is pretty commonplace stuff, Loy. Your boy is classified as a runaway.

Sarah pipes up, red in the face.

SARAH
You don't care about Caleb.

SHERIFF EAKERS
That's not true, honey.

SARAH
Don't call me honey. We don't need you police or nothing. Caleb don't need you neither. He needs us.

The little girl puts her hands on the table.
Leaning over to put her face by the Sheriff's, who is inclined to lean back a bit.

SARAH
We're gonna go an' get him ourselves.

The Sheriff gets up out of his seat.
He walks over to the water cooler.
Pours himself a cup.
Chuckling to himself.
His back to them.

SHERIFF EAKERS
Loy, you just have to bear with us for a bit.

He turns around with a sip of water.
The chair Loy and Sarah were sitting in.
It's empty.
He hurries to the door.

EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY

The brown Chevy Pickup is a speck disintegrating in the distance.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The Pickup is down the road like a bolt of lightning.

INT. CAB CHEVY PICKUP - DAY

Loy is behind the wheel.
His eyes riveted to the road.
He puts an arm around Sarah.
Brings her to him.
Hugs her close.
She looks up at him.

LOY
We're going to get our Caleb back, Sarah.

SARAH
I know we will.

She hugs her father's arm.
He ruffles her hair.
Then reaches under the seat.

INT. UNDERSIDE OF DRIVER'S SEAT - CAB - CHEVY PICKUP - DAY

Loy double checks with his fingers that the .38 Special is securely taped to the bottom of his seat.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The Pickup passes beneath an overhead sign.
Denoting the Interstate and two turn offs.
One heading North to Kansas.
The other heading South to Texas.
The Pickup bears South.
The sun lifting high in the sky.

CALEB (V.O.)
Operator, I'd like to reverse charges on a long distance call to Oklahoma, please...

INT. PHONE BOOTH - TEXACO TRUCKSTOP - KANSAS - NIGHT

The night drops.
A swelling moon in the rise of the middle of a blackening sky.
Caleb lifts a receiver to his ear and dials.

CALEB
That's (405) 826-7473. Could you make that to Loy Colton from his son, please, Ma'am?...

He waits while he is connected.
Waits.
Waits.
Waits.
In vain.
His face falls very far.

CALEB
Thanks, operator.

He hangs up.
Walks away with his head hung low.

INT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A long, two lane stretch of blacktop into infinity.
Broken white lines beneath the black void of the starless sky.
Caleb storms along the roadside.
The Texaco Truckstop receding behind him.
His tortured, conflicting emotions tearing him apart at the seams.
He shuts his eyes.

Puts his hands on his ears.
Screams.
His lungs out.
Hastening as fast as he can along the empty night road.
A pair of headlights brighten on him.
A truck THUNDERS past.
The AFTERBLOW sweeping his clothes.
It's passing headlights revealing the figure of a girl hurrying after him.
Mae rushes up the side of the road.
Keeping pace with the anxiety-ridden boy.
It is just the two of them way below the roof of the night.

MAE
I wanted to go home, too.

Mae stops and stands.
Caleb doesn't walk much further.
He turns to face her.

CALEB
I called, there was no one there. I just wanted to call and tell them I was alright.

He almost laughs or cries.

CALEB
Am I alright? I don't know. I'm scared.

Mae comes toward him.

MAE
So was I. But don't be... Feel it. Feel what's in you.

He meets her eyes.
Eyes like fire in the night.

CALEB
That's what scares me.

She puts her hands softly on his shoulders.

MAE
It'll take time. But you're in my hands, you'll be fine.

He looks at those hands, then into that face.

CALEB
What are we gonna do?

MAE
Anything we want.

She unveils her pearly whites in a sweet smile full of promise.

MAE
To the end of time.

His eyes travel up to the stars.
Hers follow his gaze.
Their eyes meet in a head on collision.
Lips coming together.
A truck RAGES past.
AFTERBLOW whippping up their clothes and hair.
Headlights exploding over them.
Heat of the moment.
The truck's taillights fade.
They are alone in the big dark wide open spaces.
Their lips part.

MAE
You have to learn to kill.

CALEB
I don't want to kill.

MAE
You want to die?

CALEB
I ain't no killer.

MAE
Don't think of it as killing. Don't think at all. Use your instinct.

A car passes.
Headlights flare.

EXT. SIDEROAD - NIGHT

Bright headlight beams sweep off the side of the road.
A MIDDLE-AGED MAN throws his door wide, leaping out.
Rushing over to the crumpled little form of Homer, lying on the road.
He bends down to see how injured he is.

MAE (V.O.)
...It's just something you do, night after night. It's only ever a question of how...

Homer's eyes blink open.
He throws his incredibly strong little arms around the man's shoulders.
Pinning him while he sinks his teeth into the startled passerby's neck.
The headlights of the car silhouetting them.
Homer has a bicycle laying on the ground nearby.
The tires still spinning.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Caleb and Mae walking along the shoulder of the road.

CALEB
Instinct?

His soft brown eyes searching hers.
That clear ice blue cutting deep into him.

MAE
Instinct.

EXT. ON RAMP TO INTERSTATE - NIGHT

A pair of drifting, distant headlights pin Severen standing at the side of the road with his thumb extended.
The crisp white shirt over his long, lean muscles, buttoned up to his throat, a string tie with a turquoise clasp at the collar.
An inviting grin on his face.
He runs a palm over his hair to smooth it back.
His black eyes gleam.
The headlights grow bright and flood his face.
His grin widens.
As he looks in through the windshield of an approaching dusty Black Pickup.
Severen nods.
The Pickup slows.
Kicking up dirt and gravel as it slams into the shoulder of the on ramp.

MAE (V.O.)
It takes time.

CALEB (V.O.)
That we got.

Severen cracks open the door of the Pickup.

MAE (V.O.)
Never know, might even get to like it.

SEVEREN
'Evenin'.

The two blonde, curly haired LADIES smile out at him with adventure in their eyes.
The one in the passenger seat slides next to the driver.
Her small, whispery voice floats out to the stranger on the road.

GIRL
Evenin'.

INT. DUSTY PICKUP - NIGHT

Severen swings onto the smooth plastic upholstery.
Slams the door shut.
Winds a long arm around the top of the seat
He turns a shining smile to his new found friends.

SEVEREN
It would be my pleasure and honor to invite you two, sweet, lovely ladies for a drink.

EXT. ON RAMP TO INTERSTATE - NIGHT

The dusty Pickup skates out onto the tarmac.
A hot WIND blows.

INT. CAB - U-HAUL TRUCK - NIGHT

Jesse gazes out the windshield with cool, even eyes.
Diamondback at his side.
Her platinum hair gleaming in the glow of the dashboard lights.
Equally transfixed by the road rolling under the wheels.

CALEB (V.O.)
The night, Mae. I can't take my eyes off it.

MAE (V.O.)
You can drown in it.

CALEB (V.O.)
I am. I can taste it. It's... It's making me shaky.

MAE (V.O.)
That's because you have to---

CALEB (V.O.)
--Kill.

MAE (V.O.)
The night has its price.

The Silvered One gives a glance to the Pale One.

JESSE
I believe this is where I had that flat tire. You pulled over.

DIAMONDBACK
There you stood by the side of that road, 'n I 'just knew you were trouble.

JESSE
You was right.

DIAMONDBACK
How many years ago was that?

JESSE
Disremember, huh? Don't remember the date of the night, neither, do you?

A sparkle in her eye.

DIAMONDBACK
Jesse.

The Silvered One keeps his eyes on the road, but lets go of a little smile.
She lays her head against his shoulder.
They drive on.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Two white cones of light from the approaching U-Haul Truck.
A lone HITCHHIKER suddenly illuminated.

INT. CAB - U-HAUL TRUCK - NIGHT

Jesse gives a glance to Diamondback.
He slows the vehicle.
The Semi-Truck comes to a stop beside the Hitchhiker.
A tall, thin, stringy haired boy with half a beard and a hollow, bruised face.
He waves a ragged smile into the cab.

HITCHHIKER
Whichever way you headin'. I'd 'preciate a lift.

Diamondback cracks open the rear door.

DIAMONDBACK
Climb in.

He jumps inside.
CLICK.
To the left of Jesse's ear.
As a pair of eyes bore down the barrel of a shotgun leveled at Jesse's face.
A HIGHWAYMAN behind the trigger.

HIGHWAYMAN
Turn off the car.

Jesse looks into his face.
A stubby grin widens across broken teeth.
CLICK.
The Hitchhiker in the back seat takes the safety off a Colt Python.
Pressing the cold metal nose against the nape of Diamondback's neck.

HITCHHIKER
Hey, mister. My pal here told you to turn off the car.

Jesse looks calmly over his shoulder.
Switches off the ignition.

HITCHHIKER
Now, you mind if I dance with your wife here? She's a real looker, this one.

He winds the nose of his gun up Diamondback's neck and into her soft pale hair.
Jesse gazes over his shoulder.
Diamondback looks him in the face.
Smiling calmly.
Jesse shifts his gaze to the Hitchhiker.

JESSE
You're not going to look so good with your face ripped off.

The Hitchhiker and the Highwayman look at each other in hilarious disbelief. They crack up.

HITCHHIKER
Boy did we get lucky tonight. She is beautiful and he is so, so stupid.

Jesse chuckles.
The RADIO starts to play "STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT," sung by Frank Sinatra.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A Peterbilt Eighteen Wheeler SHUDDERS past.
"STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT" leaking out of the cab into the open air.

INT. CAB - PETERBILT EIGHTEEN WHEELER - NIGHT

Thick, gnarled fingers spin the knob of the RADIO in the dashboard.
A small, round CAJUN TRUCKER with long, curly hair gazes over the faces of his two passengers.
He has a thick accent when he speaks and his words of English are limited.
He zeros in on the station again.
The Sinatra song bleeding through the scratchy speakers.
The Cajun chuckles.

CAJUN TRUCKER
Sinatra. Good, huh?

Mae lifts her pale face to his.

MAE
Good.

Caleb smiles as the Cajun Trucker brings three bottles of beer out of a bag on the floor by his boots.

CAJUN TRUCKER
Here. We got Sinatra. We got good, solid truck. We got beer to enjoy open road.

CALEB
Great. Thanks.

CAJUN TRUCKER
Drink up.

He hands them both bottles of Bud.
They artfully pretend to drink.
He doesn't pretend.
Mae nudges Caleb in the ribs.

He looks in her face.
Her eyes say kill.
Sympathetically.
But soon.
The Cajun Driver looks at them both and Mae averts her eyes.

CAJUN TRUCKER
You kids, you run from home?

The girl nudges the farmboy.

CALEB
Sure.

CAJUN TRUCKER
That okay by me. Sometimes home is bad. Me, I got truck for home. Good truck, huh?

Caleb chews his lip.
He's on the spot.

CALEB
Some setup you got here. It's a real beauty. How do you fly it?

The Cajun points to the various gears.

CAJUN TRUCKER
You drive truck before?

CALEB
I've driven a semi.

The mind is working behind the farmboy's eyes.
The girl keeps her eye on him.
The Cajun Trucker puts his hand on one of the many shifts.

CAJUN TRUCKER
Semi, five gears. This, twelve gears. You got three go backwards, the rest, forward. Smoke?

He knocks one up out of the pack.
The Cajun Trucker lights it.
Caleb grimaces at the idea of having to kill this chummy man.
Mae keeps her hand on his hip.

CALEB
Thanks.

Taking a butt.
The Cajun Trucker lights it.
Mae smiles, Caleb seems to unwind a bit.

CALEB
The rest?

CAJUN TRUCKER
Shifting. You know how to shift. Is all. Watch.

He goes up the gears.
Steadily shifting, taking the speedometer up to 130.

CALEB
Wow.

Caleb shuts his eyes.
Gathers his courage.
Speaks.

CALEB
Can you show me how to brake and stop the truck?

The stocky man behind the wheel grins enthusiastically.
Starting to downshift.

CAJUN TRUCKER
Now, this is most important thing with truck. You got two brakes. You get one brake for cab. This. An' one brake trailer. An' when you stop truck, you always use brake for trailer first.

He throws that brake as he takes his foot off the gas.
The truck starts to slow.

CAJUN TRUCKER
Then you use brake for cab. Or...

CALEB
Or?

The truck decelerates onto the road shoulder.

EXT. ROAD SHOULDER - TWO LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Peterbilt glides onto the gravel shoulder.

INT. CAB - PETERBILT EIGHTEEN WHEELER - NIGHT

The Cajun turns his face to Caleb.

CAJUN TRUCKER
You jackknife. Cab stop. Trailer hit cab. No more truck. No more truck driver.

Caleb is looking at the man very oddly.
His eyes alarmed and anxious.
Now that he has to make his move, he has the shakes.
The Cajun Trucker is an easygoing guy, but the way this kid looks is weird.

CAJUN TRUCKER
You got a problem?

Mae clenches her fingers on Caleb's shoulders, urging him forward.
The farmboy looks like he's going to puke.
He shoves open the passenger door of the cab.
Leaps out.

INT. ROAD SHOULDER - TWO LANE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Caleb jumps down to ground level.
Stumbles to his knees in the gravel.
Heaving his guts with the gently bobbing oil pumps behind him out in the fields.
The Cajun Trucker leaps down and comes up behind the boy.

CAJUN TRUCKER
You can't drink and drive, huh boy?

Caleb gets to his feet.
The stocky man looks him in the face.
The farmboy bares his teeth, but it's no good.
He can't do it.
Then he sees her.
Mae.
Hovering up behind the Cajun Trucker's shoulder.
She uses her mouth.

EXT. HIGHWAYSIDE FIELDS - NIGHT

An oil pump dips and rises.
Mae stands before it.
A gentle WIND ruffling her dress.
Caleb is kneeling at her feet.
His lips fastened on her wrist.
Sucking.

Drinking.
Sucking.
Drinking.
The fury almost rocking his body.
A rabid fierceness with which he feeds.
Mae gently strokes his head.
Then nudges him away.
He is locked tight.
Draining her.
Hearts pounding.
She pushes with all her might.
Rips his lips free.
Her glistening eyes on his hungry face.

MAE
You could kill me if you drink too much.

His upturned eyes gaping at her face.
Mind spinning.
Gulping air.
The black night hangs heavy above.
Stars dapple the surface.
The oil pump keeps rising and falling.

INT. "BOB'S BIG BOY" - WACO, TEXAS - DAY

A cloverleaf of freeways through the window.
Sarah and Loy are eating breakfast at one of the booths.
The little girl clicks open a pen and starts sketching a rough but recognizable picture of her brother on the back of his horse.
She starts to cry.
Loy pushes away his plate of an uneaten hamburger and reaches across the table.
He cups her little face in his hands.

LOY
Shhh, honey. Come on, let's go make a phone call, see if anybody knows anything.

She sniffles and nods.

INT. PAY PHONE - "BOB'S BIG BOY" - DAY

Loy holds Sarah in his arms, the telephone receiver to his ear.

LOY
Eakers... Loy Colton here.

Pause.

LOY
...You did? It's a positive make?

His face brightens.
His little daughter wipes her eyes.

LOY
Where was he? Hope, Kansas bus station... Cop said he was going home...

Sarah winds her tiny hands around Loy's neck excitedly.

LOY (CONT'D)
...You check the house?... He shoulda been there by now... No, I'm down in Waco, Texas. Guess I'm headin' in the wrong direction. Think I'll turn around, head North... No, you can't talk me out of it, Eakers. Just glad to know he's still out there. Thanks for your help... I'll stay in touch.

He hangs up the phone.
Sarah wears a big smile on her face as she tightens her arms around her father's neck.

SARAH
We found him, Daddy?

LOY
Almost.

Hope flushes their faces as they head toward the Chevy Pickup.
Driving into the hot afternoon sun.

EXT. CHEVY PICKUP - INTERSTATE NORTH - DAY

TIRES ZOOMING over the tarmac.

SMASH CUT TO

TRAIN WHEELS RAGING across RAILS.

EXT. UNION PACIFIC TRAIN - KANSAS - NIGHT

Caleb's head pushed closer and closer to the spark spitting wheels.
Gritting his teeth, his eyes bulging up into Severen's face.
The Savage One's hand in a vice grip around the farmboy's neck forcing him halfway out of the open box car.
Sparks hitting Caleb's face.

He struggles beneath the remorseless grip.
His strength no match for Severen's.
In a ragged snarl Severen heaves the boy back up by the neck.

INT. FREIGHT CAR - UNION PACIFIC TRAIN - NIGHT

The Savage One throws the farmboy up against the wall, pinning him with that same vice grip around the throat.
Caleb sucks wind.
Looking around him at the semi circle of darkening faces.
To the icy blue eyes behind them.
To Mae.
His eyes plead.
Hers tremor.
She makes a move.
Jesse revolves his silver head and gives her a look.
Not a nice look.
She freezes.
Caleb stops breathing.
The Silvered One moves forward.

JESSE
One more night...!

Lifting a long slender finger toward the farmboy's face.

SEVEREN
Or I'm gonna get my wet dream, boy.

Caleb swallows.
Homer smacks his lips.

HOMER
Why wait, we're gonna do it anyway.
He ain't one of us, he don't belong!
Besides...

Turning an eye on Mae.

HOMER (CONT'D)
...He's so ugly it makes my gums ache.

The girl comes forward.
Squaring off in front of Jesse.

MAE
He needs more time, Jesse.

Those steely eyes shift from the quivering farmboy to Mae.
A lip curls back.

JESSE
I wonder about you, Mae... I shouldn't be wondering about you.

A shiver runs through her system.
Point taken.
That long slender finger of the Silvered One sweeps back to Caleb.

JESSE
Ain't right for Mae to be carrying you, Caleb. Tonight you make a kill. How you do it is your business. You do it, or you're done.

The Savage One takes his hand off the boy's throat.
Giving him a look like he can't wait for the boy to screw up.
Diamondback slides a harmonica out of her jacket and plays a slow, haunting melody.
Then stops.
Lifting her hypnotic eyes to the farmboy.

DIAMONDBACK
Done means dead without dying. Means you'll be real uncomfortable for a long, long time...

Her lips return to the small metal instrument.
The big rectangle of night rolling by the opening.
Caleb moves to the door.
Mae suddenly beside him.
A match strikes flint nearby.
Severen rolling a cigarette between his lips.
Then hold on a cluster of lights in the distance.
A big ROADHOUSE sitting not far from the tracks.
Caleb follows Severen's gaze.
And understands the Savage One's scarred face cracking into a smile like a hatchet chop.

EXT. UNION PACIFIC TRAIN - NIGHT

The freight hurtles by.
A hundred cars long.
Six figures leap off.
Landing in a heap in the middle of a wheatfield, beneath a rising moon.

EXT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

Six tall silhouettes approach.
A big, squat barn with a neon sign on the window.

A pickup, a tractor trailer, a Dodge Camper, and a chopped down motorcycle parked out front.
One look at the vehicles and you get a good idea of the clientele.
Bad Country Music TWANGS out of the bar.
The CLINK of pool cues on balls.
The six of them stand in the shadows looking at the nailed together roadside bar.

DIAMONDBACK
Let's hit the night in the face.

Caleb takes a deep breath.
They go in.

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

As soon as the six of them walk in, the place stops.
A BIKER at the jukebox keeps his quarter.
A fat, low to the ground TRUCKER at the bar turns a flattened face over thick shoulders to regard the fresh arrivals with a dull look.
A COWBOY TEENAGER lifts his pool cue.
The WAITRESS picks some empty glasses off the table in the booth.
The BARTENDER CLICKS his teeth.
A quiet comes over the joint.
Severen winks and elbows Caleb in the ribs.
Speaking in a voice loud enough for everybody to hear.

SEVEREN
Look, shitkickers. I'll be Goddamned. C'mon, Caleb. Let's get some liquor in us. Maybe they'll look a little less stupid when everything's blurry.

Caleb gets nervous.
He waves friendly to the Biker.
With the attitude of a sailor on a sinking ship about to submerge.
The Biker doesn't wave back.
Mae, Jesse, Diamondback, and Homer slide into the booth.
The Silvered One catches the Waitress' eye and gestures for a beer.
The Savage One and the farmboy belly up to the bar.
Severen slams his fist down.
Making the surly Trucker spill his drink.

SEVEREN
Bartender, gimmie two glasses of whatever shit you shove down these sucker's throats.

The Bartender makes a big point of not looking at him.
The Trucker looks at him though.

TRUCKER
You spilled my drink.

SEVEREN
You've had enough. By the way, were you born that ugly or is this your mama's idea of a joke?

The Trucker does a slow burn.
The temperature in the bar steadily rising.
The Cowboy Teenager chalks his pool cue with a SQUEAKING chalk cube.
Severen clears his throat.
Caleb starts to leave.
The Savage One pulls him back.
He picks up the glass of the Trucker.
Addresses the Bartender.

SEVEREN
Give him another.

The Bartender pours the Trucker another drink.
Severen nudges the Trucker.

SEVEREN (CONT'D)
Now, pay the man.

The Trucker does a faster burn.

SEVEREN (CONT'D)
Bartender, that'll be a double shot of your very best watered down shit over here.

He taps the bar.
The Bartender stares the two of them in the face.

BARTENDER
There's two ways you can leave this establishment. On your feet or on your back, asshole.

Severen sighs.

SEVEREN
Well, if you're not going to serve me a drink...

The Savage One picks up the drink of the Trucker.

SEVEREN
...I'll just hafta drink his.

He throws it back.
The Trucker rises to his feet.
Mad.
Severen makes a face.

SEVEREN
Ptooooooooeeee.

He spits the drink in the Trucker's face.

SEVEREN
...How can you drink that shit?

The Trucker throws a punch.
Severen grabs Caleb.
Swings him around.
The farmboy takes the piledriver punch square in the face.
He blinks.
Unfazed.
It was like he didn't even feel it.
Severen winks at the fuming Trucker.

SEVEREN
Do it again. Couple times. I'm tryin' to show him somethin'.

The Trucker connects two roundhouse blows to the side of Caleb's head.
A double combination to his belly.
The only thing that registers on Caleb's face is surprise at his sudden physical resilience.

SEVEREN
Now hit back, Caleb.

The Savage One releases the boy's arm.
The Trucker pulls his fist back to throw another.
Caleb strikes out in alarm.
His fist bulldozers into the Trucker's face.
Knocking him clean off his feet onto his back on the pooltable.
The Cowboy Teenager raises his stick to avoid him as the unconscious body scatters the balls.
Caleb regards his fists in amazement.

CALEB
Did I do that?

The Waitress is at the booth.
Setting a glass down in front of Jesse.
Three beers on the tray in her arm.
A beer in her fingers as she looks at the man on the pooltable.
The Silvered One whistles for her attention.

JESSE
Just the glass.

The Waitress shrugs.
Returns the beer to the tray.
She sets down the empty glass.
Jesse draws an antique Colt Peacemaker from his belt.
SHOOTS her in the Adam's apple.
She slumps in his lap.
He puts the glass under her throat.
Filling the glass.
Dumping the body on the floor.
Guzzling the glass, he gets up and goes to the door.
His pistol leveled.
Standing sentry.

JESSE
Nobody gets out of here alive.

The Cowboy Teenager is totally still.
Nothing but a scared kid.
Holding his pool cue in white knuckled hands.
Severen lets out a cowboy yodel.

SEVEREN
Good times!

He walks over to the bruising Biker standing like a statue by the jukebox.

SEVEREN
...This is the best time I had since I nailed your mother backseat of your Daddy's truck. He was there watchin'.

Severen taps him in the chest.

SEVEREN
...Tell you the truth, I think he liked it, too. Know she did.

The Biker snarls and grabs Severen by the throat.
Severen doesn't blink an eye.
He presses his two hands against the side of the Biker's head.
Applying pressure.
The Biker's eyes roll up in their sockets.
Severen whispers in his ear.

SEVEREN
Know what I said to your mother? I said, shhhhhh, honey, this won't hurt.

The Savage One buries his teeth in the man's neck.

SEVEREN
I said...

Severen uses his teeth.
The bar becomes sickeningly still.
The Savage One's face flushes and his sinewy body shudders and shivers as the dying Biker spasmodically quivers.
Severen's neck contracts as he GULPS and GULPS.
With a high, wild cry, he heaves the dead, limp body of the Biker onto the jukebox with a CRASH.
Revved up, he wipes his mouth off with the back of his hand.
His eyes afire.
Sated.
The Trucker bolts for the door.
Jesse blocks his way.
SNAPPING back the hammer of the Peacemaker.
The Trucker doesn't move a muscle.
The Bartender is white in the face.

BARTENDER
What do you people want?

JESSE
Just a couple more minutes of your time.

Caleb watches the whole scene with his mouth open.

JESSE
...Bout the same duration as the rest of your life.

The farmboy starts walking away from the bar, stuperuous.
He doesn't see the Bartender reach under the counter behind him.
Picking up a double-barreled sawed-off .12 gauge shotgun.
Vaulting the bar, landing on both feet, raising the weapon to his eye.
The boy hears him and whirls.

The Bartender gives him both barrels square in the chest.
Blowing a ragged rupture through his back and ripping a hole out of his chest.
Caleb blinks.
Smoke rises.
The boy looks down at his ravaged torso.

CALEB
Oh shit.

He's still standing.
He's still alive.
Utterly unhurt.
Severen walks over.
The Bartender is scared spitless, frantically trying to reload.
The Savage One claps his hand on the boy's shoulder.
Caleb's mouth tries to form words.

SEVEREN
This is a kick, ain't it? Go sit down, I'll finish this up.

Caleb dazedly has a seat on a barstool.
The Bartender is almost sobbing as he wrestles with his gun.
Severen wriggles his fingers at him.

SEVEREN
Yoo-hoo.

The Bartender looks up.
Severen leaps into the air, lashing out with his boot.
His razor sharp roweled spur slashing across the man's throat.
Laying it open.
The Bartender stumbles back, still on his feet.
Raising his shotgun.
The Savage One kicks out with his other boot.
Slashing the man's throat a second time.
The barman sways on his feet.
The shotgun dropping from his grasp.
With a rebel yell, Severen jumps into the air.
Hitting the Bartender smack between the eyes with both boots.
Knocking the nearly severed head off his shoulders.
The headless body sinks to the floor.
The Savage One wipes his hands on his pants.
Sings off key.

SEVEREN
"Maaammma don't let your babies grow up to be cowboys. Don't let them strum guitars, and drive them old trucks, let them be doctors and lawyers, and such..."

Caleb just sits on the barstool, fingering the ragged shotgun blast in his chest.
The Trucker stands by the booth.
Not looking very big now.
Fear terrible in his eyes.
Diamondback almost compassionate.
She speaks softly, sitting in the booth.

DIAMONDBACK
There's a fly on the ceiling.

The Trucker looks up.
Homer empties his .38 into the man.
Who falls on the floor.
The Pale One grabs a handful of his hair and yanks his head back.
Exposing the throat.
She produces her knife.
Flash of steel.
Caleb winces as he meets Mae's eyes.
She gets up out of the booth.
Walks up to the last remaining survivor.
The Cowboy Teenager.
Wetting himself as he holds onto the pool cue for dear life.
She puts her eyes on Caleb.
The girl takes one of the Cowboy's Teenager's hands in her own.
She puts his other hand on her waist.
Melds her eyes gently into his.
Severen KICKS the jukebox.
A ROMANTIC COUNTRY MELODY comes out of the old, glowing Wurlitzer.
The kid is so scared he is in a state of shock.
She whispers to him softly.

MAE
Please dance with me.

She leads him in a simple, shuffling, slow dance.
Winding her hands down his back.
Tenderly.
The side of her face by the side of his.
She turns him so that she can see Caleb over his shoulder.
The farmboy looks at her.
Not liking that she is dancing with the other boy.
He stands up off the stool.
The COUNTRY MELODY permeating the abattoir of a barroom.
The two of them dancing.
She fingers the Cowboy Teenager's hair.
His eyes are blank.
Caleb comes toward them.
Behind the boy's back.
Mae slowly bobs and weaves with the boy on the floor.

Her eyes fixed to Caleb over his shoulder.
Her lips turn up in a smile.

MAE
He's for you, Caleb.

The farmboy looks around him to see all the eyes of the others on him.
He looks at Mae.
Knows it's now or never.
He puts his hand on the boy's shoulder.
The Cowboy Teenager screams his lungs out.
He rips free of Mae.
Covers his head with his arms.
Dives headfirst through the neon Budweiser sign on the window.
Caleb jumps out the window after him.

MAE
Get him, Caleb.

The others grab her and get busy.
Homer picks up the book of matches and strikes them one by one, chucking them onto the sawdust on the floor.
Fires shoot up.
Severen and Jesse make Molotov Cocktails out of the bottles on the bar.
Hurling them in combustion explosions of alcohol fire against the walls.
They torch the place and steal out the front doors.

EXT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

The Cowboy Teenager running hell for leather.
Caleb on his heels.
The big, squat barn of a Roadhouse going up in flames.
Five silhouettes emerge from the smoking structure.
Moving to the black Dodge Camper in the parking lot.
Severen hot wiring the vehicle with that smooth, practiced efficiency.
The others jumping in.
The Camper quickly accelerating to the road.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Caleb's strong limbs flying over the blacktop.
The Cowboy stares over his shoulder in terrific fear, choking for breath.
Caleb gaining on him.
The Camper and the others way way behind.
The farmboy reaching out with his hand.
Clamping down on the Cowboy Teenager's shoulder.
Spinning him about with superlative strength.

Baring his teeth.
Face to face with one his own age.
He sees himself how he once was.
Caleb freezes.
He can't do it.
Suddenly headlights from behind.
The Dodge Camper bearing down.
The Cowboy Teenager looks up.
Through the glass to Jesse's grim face.
He looks like he wants to cry.
Then another pair of lights.
This time from the other direction.
A small SEMI with a flatbed wheels around the bend in the road.
In a burst of speed, the Cowboy Teenager breaks for it.
The Camper almost on Caleb's heels.
Braking in a SQUEAL of smoking tires.
As the Teenager leaps onto the flatbed barrelling by.
Caleb runs fast as he can after the receding Truck.
The Dodge Camper starting to make a U-turn.
Suddenly blocked by an oncoming rush of Cars.
Caleb's feet slap the dirt on the side of the road as the Semi picks up speed and leaves him in its dust.
Caleb pulls up.
Looking from the disappearing Semi to the Dodge Camper stopped on the other side of the road.
Then back to the Semi.
Watching the red taillights of the Truck swallowed up by the night.
Traffic passing him.
Then the Camper is abruptly at his side.
A door cracks open.
Long arms snatch him off the road.

INT. DODGE CAMPER - PRE-DAWN

Jesse squints into the faint light beginning to pale the edge of the world.
Vicious hands tug Caleb inside.
Black looks.
The Silvered One twists the Camper around and punches the pedal.

JESSE
Shit. You fucked us up for the last time, boy...

The Camper hurtling across the flatlands.

SEVEREN
Now, Jess?

Clicking very sharp teeth.
Jesse's eyes boring through the windshield.

JESSE
Fuckin' sun!

Mae clings to the farmboy.
Homer gives him a sickening face.

HOMER
I think we should just leave your boyfriend out on the road and let him get hisself a suntan.

Diamondback stares out the glass toward the gently paling sky.

DIAMONDBACK
We better move our ass.

The Silvered One fixes the boy's face in the rear-view mirror.

JESSE
Boy, you screwed us up this time. We got five minutes before sunup and we ain't found us a place to stay.

He punches the steering wheel.
Smearing his foot to the floor.
Horizonline becoming more and more distinct.
The road ahead absolutely empty.
Caleb stares down into his hands.
Mae looks at him with soft eyes.

JESSE
This rate we'll be lucky to make it at all. Goddamn kid you let get away's made this vehicle, he's gonna go straight to the cops and they're gonna be combin' the area.

A deadly silence.
That epic face straight front.

JESSE
You both fucked us up.

Mae closes her eyes.
The Dodge Camper streaking down the road.
The sun now just ducking below the horizon.
A tremor of fear rippling through every face.
Blankets being tossed around.
Tentacles of light piercing the glass.
It looks like it hurts.
Mae breathes deep.
Lifts a strong face to the front.

MAE
You gonna talk, Jess, or you gonna get us out of the sun?

Jesse looks at her through low lidded eyes.

JESSE
...Okay.

Soft and sweet.
Mae shakes down to her bootstraps.
Severen CRACKS his knuckles.
Homer WHISTLES.
Diamondback gives Mae a soul shaking smile.
Then through the glass a Travel Court complex of little bungalows off to the side of the road.

JESSE
'Bout time.

Lifting his foot off the gas.

EXT. HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - PRE-DAWN

The Dodge Camper pulls up in front of the registration office.
The sun just about to peer over the edge of the world.

INT. REGISTRATION OFFICE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - PRE-DAWN

Jesse bursts into the empty room.
He taps a finger on the desktop bell.
Nothing.
A pale beam of light creeps in through the curtains.
He sweats.
Finally the white haired MANAGER still in pajamas moves across the floor with the assistance of a cane.
A smooth smile graces Jesse's lips.

JESSE
I'd like to rent one of your bungalows, Sir.

The old man presses his hearing aid, nudging his head forward.

MANAGER
Wha...?

The Silvered One notices the slow rise of light crawling across the countertop toward his hand.
He lays down a fifty dollar bill.

JESSE
The key.

A flicker of understanding in the Manager's face.
Plucking a set of keys off the desk.
Jesse grabs the key from him just as the sunlight lands upon the counter where his hand just was.
He turns to go.

MANAGER
Hey, you were here b'fore once,
wasn't ya? Lotsa years back?

The Silvered One gives him a friendly grin as he walks out.

EXT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - PRE-DAWN

A picture pretty little box with windows and a door.
Jesse hurriedly unlocks the door.
The six figures hasten in.
Slamming the door shut behind him.
The reflection of the sliver of sun in the window slicing like a knife across the sharp side of the planet.

EXT. HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

The sun high in the cloudless sky.
In the courtyard between the bungalows, a DOG barks, playfully.
And scampers after a stick.
He brings it back in his mouth to a bright and bushy tailed SMALL BOY in sneakers and shorts.
An ELDERLY COUPLE rock back and forth on the front porch of one of the bungalows.
A laid-back, lazy morning.
The Dodge Camper sits behind one of the quiet bungalows.
The black paint baking in the hot sun.
The little boy hurls the stick.
It soars through the air.
The pooch scrambles after it.
The stick lands.
The dog pads after it.
A hand picks it up.
The dog wags its tail.
A POLICE OFFICER with a shotgun under his arm is holding the stick.
Three Patrol Cars creep into the courtyard, tires CRUMBLING the gravel.
The Policeman hurls the stick way in the other direction.
The dog runs after it out of harm's way.
The small boy is motioned onto the porch of his Grandparent's cottage.

The Elderly Couple rise to their feet, holding the small boy to them.
The Police Officer gestures for the three Patrol Cars to follow him.
The Cowboy Teenager is sitting in the backseat of one of the cars, pointing nervously to the Camper and nodding.
The Police Officer aims his eyes at the bungalow at the end of the Travel Courts.

EXT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

The three Patrol Cars mobilize in a fan formation around the front porch.
One more PATROL CAR moves into position out back.
The doors are flung open.
Assault rifles are readied in the arms of SEVEN COPS.
Aiming at the walls and windows of the sleeping bungalow.
Everything so quiet and calm on this nice summer morning with BIRDS TWEETING.
The Police Officer walks up to the front door.
And KNOCKS.

INT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

Blackness.
Curtains pulled tight.
A deathly quiet.
Six slumbering bodies.
Caleb sprawled out on an overstuffed chair.
Mae curled up in his arms.
Jesse and Diamondback in the only bed.
Severen sleeping standing up, leaning against the wall.
Through the open bathroom door, Homer flat on his back in the bathtub.
A pillow over his face.
A hard KNOCK on the front door.
Homer throws the pillow from his face.
Opens a sleepy lid.
A VOICE from behind the door.

POLICE OFFICER
This is the police! Come out with your hands up!

Severen's eyes pop open.
Jesse leaps out of bed.
Mae raises her head.
Homer runs into the room.
Diamondback rises to her feet.

POLICE OFFICER
(O.S.)
You are surrounded!

All eyes travel to Caleb.
Caleb gets up.
Worry in his eyes.
Severen walks to the window, lifts a finger to the curtain and pulls it back a crack.
A single ray of sunlight explodes across his face like a burning spear.
He jumps back.
Screaming.
Skin smoking.
Hands pawing at his face.

SEVEREN
FUCKIN' DAYTIME!!

Jesse yanks the Colt Peacemaker out of his belt and cracks the glass of the window with the butt.
Caleb stands, head going back and forth as he watches the others burst into action.
Mae produces a small, pearl-handled .22 and a box of ammo out of her jacket.
Diamondback has a sawed off twelve gauge in her coat.
The Pale One swings up alongside one of the windows, smashing out the glass with the stock.
The Savage One plants his eyes on the farmboy as he grabs the two pieces of a disassembled rifle out of his jacket.
He screws on the barrel.
Then he yanks a .357 Magnum out of his pocket.
Fury scars his face as he holds it by the barrel for Caleb to take.
The farmboy reaches for it.
Severen flips the pistol and catches it by the handle.
Meaning to use it on the new boy.

SEVEREN
Oughta give you this end of it.

Jesse shoots him a stern glance.

JESSE
Give him the piece, Severen.

Severen sighs.
Hands over the gun.
Caleb feels the weight and heft of the pice.

POLICE OFFICER
(O.S.)
THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING!!! COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP!!!

Severen steps right in front of the door.
The rifle leveled in one hand at his waist.
Finger on the trigger.
Barrel fixed on the door.
He plugs one ear with his finger and winks at the rest.

SEVEREN
Rock n' Roll.

He BLASTS a round through the door.

EXT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

The Policeman standing in front of the door takes the heavy calibre round square in the chest.
It blows him clear off his feet.
A shaft of sunlight shoots through the bullet hole in the door.

INT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

The shaft of sunshine streams through the door.
Striking Severen smack between the shoulder blades.
He is flung back against the wall and slides to the floor.
His shirt smoking.
The others open FIRE out the windows.

EXT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

The Seven Police Officers let loose with their assault rifles.
Ravaging the walls and shattered windows with SHOTS.
The air split by a DEAFENING DIN of gunfire.

INT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

A RIFLEBLAST rips two holes in the walls by Jesse's head as he reloads.
Pinpricks of light blaze across the room.
The Silvered One dives out of the way.
A mirror on the wall fractures the light.
Homer gets hit on the hand by a deflected ray.
Skin bursts into flames.
He yelps, running out of the way.
Homer lifts his .38 to the window and starts pumping off ROUNDS.
Jesse shoots out the mirror to splintered glass smithereens.
Bullet holes swiss cheese the walls and roof.
EXPLOSIONS of GUNFIRE rip through the wallpaper.
Needles and lances of bright sunlight cats cradle the room.

The day comes through the holes and punctures in a maze of tiny funnels.
The six inside desperately keep up their volleys of gunfire.
They dodge, dive, duck and avoid the laser beams of light that continue to cordon off the areas of the room they can move and fight back in.
Caleb's gun isn't loaded and while he is popping in shells, a stray round from outside hits the box and scatters the cartridges.
He glances over, while he frantically retrieves the bullets, to see Mae emptying her cute little .22 out the window alongside Homer.
BULLETS RICHOCHET around the room with a piercing WHINE.
The farmboy looks up and sees the rear window.
The Camper is parked outside it.
He thinks fast.

EXT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

A hot sun burning overhead.
A Police Car being RIDDLED with bullets.
Cops diving for cover in a cloud of dust.

INT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

A momentary lull, the frantic reloading of guns.
Caleb looks up into Jesse's sombre face.

CALEB
I'm gonna go out there to get the Camper.

Severen almost laughs.

SEVEREN
That's a good one, asshole!

A wall starting to splinter open with another round of GUNSHOT BLASTS.
Light burning across the floor.
The others pressing back into dark corners.
FIRING back as best they can.
Jesse turns a narrow eye on Caleb.

JESSE
You go outside, boy...

He squeezes off a SHOT.

JESSE
...They gonna be servin' you on a bun.

CALEB
It's the best chance we got.

Jesse barely blinks.

JESSE
We'll cover ya.

The farmboy nods.
Severen shouts.

SEVEREN
Asshole's gonna get himself killed.

The Silvered One smirks at the Savage One.

JESSE
So what do we got to lose? Git goin', boy, we'll cover ya.

Jesse throws the car keys into Caleb's open palm.
The farmboy yanks the bedspread off the bed and throws it over his head.
Mae reaches out with her hand, touching Caleb's arm.
BULLETS flying left and right.
She looks into his eyes.
Caleb meets her gaze.
Another EXPLOSION of GUNSHOTS.
The farmboy spins on his feet, racing for the back window.
He leaps through the air and dives through the glass.

EXT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

Caleb lands in a heap in the dirt.
The sun attacks him beneath the bedspread.
A single Policeman staking out the back starts SHOOTING at the figure under the blanket.
Caleb jumps to his feet and dodges bullets as he hurries for the Camper with the blanket flowing behind him like a cape.

His hands holding the cover beginning to burn as the wicked sun hits them.
He starts to scream.
The Camper only a few feet ahead.
He claws forward.
The Policeman takes careful aim.
A bullet glances Caleb in the chest.

He keeps moving.
Reaching the vehicle as the skin of his hands starts to smoke.
Ripping the door open and bursting inside.

INT. DODGE CAMPER - DAY

Caleb kneels down behind the dashboard to shield himself from the direct sunlight.
He grips the steering wheel and slams the keys into the ignition.
The engine FIRES up.
He smashes his foot into the gas pedal.
The sun blazes through the darkened windshield.
He moans as the subdued light hits his face.
Blackening the skin on his forehead.
He ducks below the dash.
Steering the vehicle straight ahead for the wall of the bullet-riddled bungalow.

EXT. REAR OF COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

A tidal wave of deadly white light as the Camper breaks through the wall.
Wood and glass raining down.
The others wrap themselves in blankets they scrounge off the bed as the light spreads through the room.
The black Camper, covered with wallpaper and plaster, sitting in the middle of the floor.
Caleb throws open the doors.
Everyone is yelling loudly as they tear towards the vehicle.
Slinging their guns in the back compartments, they all help each other in.

INT. DODGE CAMPER - DAY

Jesse heaves Diamondback onto the floor, covering her with his body.
Severen gathers up his guns, clambering into the back compartment.
Caleb hauls Mae into the seat beside him by a tug on her arm.
Homer grabs onto the rear bumper, crawling up the back for the open rear window.
Screaming his lungs out as the bare sunlight bathes his small body.
BULLETS RICOCHET off the front and sides of the Camper as the assault continues from outside.
One bullet cracks the window into a giant spiderweb.

JESSE
Let's go!

Caleb drives his foot down on the accelerator.
The car starts going.
Homer claws his way onto the back of the vehicle, crying out as he loses his grip in the agonizing sunshine.
Severen reaches out and drags him safely through the back window.
They all duck down as the Camper piledrives through the front of the building.

EXT. COTTAGE - HIDE-A-WAY TRAVEL COURTS - DAY

The nose of the Camper breaks through the front of the cottage like a huge black beast.
Felling the screen door and powderizing the flower pots in its path.
The Policemen hold their fire for a moment and stare incredulously.
The Dodge Camper lurches forward, carrying the frame of the cottage on its back like a shell.
Ramming head on into a Police Car parked directly in front.
The Policemen regain their senses, getting out of the way of the Camper.
Pivoting and FIRING as they go.
A deafening SOUND of SHEARING METAL as the Police Car crumples beneath the impact of the Camper.
As the Camper charges out into the parking lot.
Bullets dappling the sides of the vehicle, whose solid steel reinforced bodywork protects those inside like armor.
The Camper kicks up thick trails of dust and gravel.
Fragments of the building raining off the roof of the vehicle.
They hurtle toward the tarmac of the open road.
The Policemen jumping into their three remaining vehicles.
The Camper streaking out onto the blacktop.
The Elderly Couple standing on the front porch exchanging glances of complete awe.
The police cars swerving into single file formation and speeding out of the area with their cherrytops flaring.
The Small Boy wide eyed in wonderment as he walks onto the driveway and watches them disappear in the settling dust.
The Dog trots around with the stick between its teeth, tail wagging excitedly.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - DUSK

Three patrol cars swoop after their fleeing quarry like birds of prey.
The object of their pursuit driving away from a setting sun.
Red cherrytops igniting the livid sky.
Two of the cop cars fan out.
Windows rolling down.
Shotguns aimed out.

INT. DODGE CAMPER - DUSK

Caleb is pummelled by the daylight piercing through the tinted glass windows.
Blackening his skin in burned splotches.
His hands fixed on the steering wheel, smoking.
His foot hard on the gas pedal.
Squinting over the dashboard, ducking down against the assault of the sunshine.
A SHOTGUN BLAST blows a spiderweb out of the windshield.
The five figures are huddling down under the blankets pulled over them.
The boy struggles to keep the Camper on the road.
Another SHOTGUN BLAST splinters the side mirror.
Several loose pellets puncture the tinted glass.
Needlelike lances of light pricking Caleb's skin.

CALEB
Somebody do something!

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - DUSK

The Camper charges down the road.
The three Police Cars hurtling after it.
Dust settles in a streak of red cherry tops.

INT. DODGE CAMPER - DUSK

The shield of the four walls of the vehicle are being breached by the shotguns.
Laserlike beams of light shoot through the bullet holes.
Severen and Jesse poke their heads up out of the blankets.
Peering over the backseat.
Recoiling from the sunshine singeing their faces.
They duck down and grab up rifles.
FIRING off round after round through the shattered glass of the back windshield.

EXT. POLICE CAR #1 - DUSK

It advances.
Shotgun barrel poking out the window.

INT. DODGE CAMPER - DUSK

Caleb is slammed against the sidedoor as a BLAST of buckshot taps him on the shoulder.
He loses control of the wheel for a second.
The vehicle swerves wildly beneath him.
He regains command of the Camper.
Blood trickling from the hole in his shirt.

Using up all his will and strength to keep driving in the excruciating sunlight.
The wound in his shoulder already healing up.
The boy holding up as well as he can.
Beneath the blankets in the backseat by the floor, Mae, Diamondback and Homer huddle for security against the flying bullets and piercing sunshine spears.
Jesse and Severen return the fire out the back windshield.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - DUSK

The Police Cars are flanked over both the outgoing and oncoming lanes.
Shots going every which way.
A hay truck is approaching in the opposing lane, barreling down, HONKING its HORN.
The patrol cars retract into the outgoing lane, resuming a single file formation behind the Camper.
The truck goes on by.

INT. DODGE CAMPER - DUSK

Severen throws a glance to Caleb in the front seat.
Shouting at the top of his lungs over the ROAR of the ENGINES and the WHINE of the BULLETS.

SEVEREN
CALEB, I'M GONNA GET THOSE COPS!
WHATEVER HAPPENS YOU JUST KEEP ON
GOIN'! GOT THAT!

CALEB
YEAH!

Diamondback hands the sawed-off shotgun to Severen.
The Savage One cracks open the weapon in his hands.
Slams in a fistful of shells.
Gives an eye to the Silvered One.

SEVEREN
Nice knowin' ya, Jess.

With that Severn leaps over the backseat.
Kicks open the rear door.
Hovers in the wind and white hot sunshine for a fraction of a second.
His hand holding the shotgun is on fire.

EXT. DODGE CAMPER - DUSK

The Savage One brings up the weapon.
Staring at the three Police Cars looking him in the face.

The direct sunlight making his skin smoke.
BULLETS speeding past his face.
Severen jumps off the back transom of the Camper at 90.
Vaulting through empty air.

EXT. POLICE CAR #1 - DUSK

The Savage One lands first on the hood.
The POLICEMEN in the front seat stare at him in awe.
Severen points the sawed off shotgun in their faces.
Firing the first barrel through the windshield.
The unmanned patrol car jars violently around the road.
The Savage One climbs up on the roof.
Using the cherrytop blinkers for leverage, he heaves himself through the air.
Leapfrogging from one Police Car to the other.

EXT. POLICE CAR #2 - DUSK

The cops inside are shocked.
Severen lands smack dab on the hood on all fours.
The sawed off shotgun in his hands.
His face afire.
His hair smouldering.
His shotgun blazing.
Punching twin holes through the windshield.
Blowing the men away behind it.
The car speeding off the road.
Severen scrambling atop the roof before it's too late.
Plummeting spread-eagled over the open road toward the third Police Car coming right toward him.

INT. POLICE CAR #3 - DUSK

The Cowboy Teenager in the backseat ducks down.
The POLICEMEN don't react fast enough.
Severen EXPLODES through the windshield in clouds of cubed glass.
Breaking the second cop's neck as he lands in his lap.
The cop behind the wheel grabs for his gun.
The Savage One takes it from him and shoots him in the side with it.
Severen shoves him out the door as he slides behind the wheel.
Taking over the Police Car.
Stepping on the brake.
Slowing to a stop in a SCREECH of TIRES.

EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - DUSK

The sun sinking below the smouldering horizon.
The Camper comes to a halt.

The third Police Car stationary in the road several hundred yards to the rear.
The second Police Car flipped over on its side in a field of wheat.
In flames.
The field on fire around it.
The first Police Car a crumpled heap of metal and glass all over the two lanes.
Sundown.
Nighttime.

EXT. DODGE CAMPER - NIGHT

The door opens tentatively.
Caleb climbs out of the bullet-riddled vehicle onto solid ground.
A little unsteady on his feet.
Looking every bit the wounded warrior who has returned in one piece.
His skin charred and seared.
Injuries that will heal.
He lets out a sigh and blinks his eyes.
A sort of smile as he sees Jesse, Mae, Diamondback and little Homer step out of the rear door and onto the road.
They all regard one another with relief.
Mae runs to Caleb and they embrace.
Jesse claps his hand on the boy's shoulder.

JESSE
Not too shabby.

A CAR DOOR SLAMMING spins their heads around.

EXT. POLICE CAR #3 - NIGHT

A scorched, worse for wear Severen leans against the side of the car.
His hair cindered.

His smile a white sickle in his blackened, charred features.
His eyes wickedly bright.
He lights up a cigarette.
He makes eye contact with the farmboy.
The farmboy starts to smile.
Breathing again.
The Savage One strides on back to the others standing beside the Camper.
Caleb glances up at the black roof of night.
Drowning in that depthless space.
Taking some steps off the road into the fields.

EXT. FIELDS - NIGHT

The farmboy holds the moment.
Spying that last sliver of sunlight hovering on the horizon.
Like the last sunlight he will see for a long long time.
He swallows.
Finding some kind of solace.

INT. POLICE CAR #3 - NIGHT

The rear door opens.
The car is empty.

EXT. DODGE CAMPER - NIGHT

Parked at the side of the lonesome road.
Five shadowy silhouettes milling around the front of the vehicle.
All is quiet at the back.
Where a pair of hands reach up to the metal container of gasoline attached to the back.
They pry it off noiselessly.
Silent feet pad around to the front.
Trembling fingers unscrew the cap.
Suddenly dousing the five figures with the amber liquid.
GASPS all around.
The Cowboy Teenager backs quickly and strikes a match.
The Savage One swipes at his wet jacket.
Jesse whirls a deadly eye on the kid.
Diamondback stares at the match, lips quivering.
Homer gulps.
WWWFFFFFFFFFFTTTTT.
The match is blown out.
The Cowboy spins.
But Caleb already has him by the throat with a set of clamping fingers.
Caleb locks his teeth on the Cowboy Teenager's neck.
The kid's feet kick and thrash in the air.
Then they stop kicking.
Quit thrashing.
Hanging limp.
Caleb heaves the drained body of the boy into the bushes.
Returns to the others.
They pile into the Camper.
And go.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

A white STATION WAGON accelerates past the abandoned black Dodge Camper parked at the side of the road in the middle of nowhere.

EXT. BORDERLINE OF KANSAS AND NEBRASKA - NIGHT

The white Station Wagon whips past a roadsign saying, "You are entering the state of Nebraska."
Red taillights shrink.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF GODSPEED, NEBRASKA - NIGHT

The moon is big and bright above this one road town.
The White Station Wagon cuts past a sign reading, "Godspeed. Pop 327."
One gas station.
And one Motel.
The white Station Wagon pulls into the parking lot of the Motel.

EXT. BORDERLINE OF KANSAS AND NEBRASKA - NIGHT

The Chevy Pickup drives past the roadsign.
The small figures of Loy and Sarah inside.

EXT. GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

The Station Wagon comes to rest before the run down Motel.
The "Godspeed" sign in bright, white, electric neon.
Somewhere in the distant black horizon, a rooster CROWS.

INT. ROOM #7 - GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

Jesse closes the door behind him.
Severen drops into a chair, kicking his feet up on a low table.
Diamondback rubs at the blackened smoke along her arms.
Homer plops down on the bed.
Caleb and Mae sink into a couch.
Relief and quiet fall over them.
The farmboy feels everybody's eyes on him.
In a good way.
That isn't good at all.
Diamondback leans over and claps her hand on his knee.

DIAMONDBACK
Welcome.

Mae smiles up at her, proudly.
Severen reaches to his cowboy boot and rips off one of his spurs.
He looks over to Caleb.
A razor blade wink.

SEVEREN
Catch.

He tosses the spur to Caleb.
With the warmest grin Severen has ever worn on his broken face.
The farmboy closes his palm over the silver spur.
Having to grin.
Homer bounces off the bed and comes up to Caleb.
He reaches out with his hand.
Looks Caleb square in the face.

HOMER
Shake.

Caleb takes hold of his hand.

CALEB
Thanks.

Homer smiles up at Caleb with those ageless eyes in his little boy face.
Jesse looks down at the farmboy, his silver hair gleaming in the yellow lamplight.

JESSE
Glad to have y' with us, son.

Caleb gazes at him a long moment.

CALEB
Jesse, there's a question I been meaning to ask you.

JESSE
What might that be?

CALEB
How old are ya?

The Silvered One stares off, remembering.

JESSE
Let's put it this way, I fought for the south.

CALEB
South?

JESSE
We lost.

Mae comes to her feet.

MAE
Caleb, let's go take a look at the night.

He follows her out the door.
Diamondback watches them leave with a smile on her face.
Homer flicks on the television set.
A late night religious program flickers across the screen.
Severen pulls a deck of cards out of his jacket and begins shuffling them.
Jesse lights a fresh cigarette, taking a seat across from Severen.
The Savage One starts to deal a hand.

EXT. GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

The silver spur CLICKS softly as Caleb walks beside Mae along the narrow walkway of the Motel.
They veer off the parking lot and head out into the green pasture behind the building.

EXT. GRASS PASTURE - GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

A burst of stars.
One falls.
Mae takes hold of Caleb's hand.

MAE
Well you're one of us now, Caleb.

CALEB
What does that make me?

MAE
Ain't exactly sure.

CALEB
But it's good, right.

Pause.
A half smile.

MAE
Guess so.

He looks at her.
They walk on.

INT. ROOM #7 - GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

A poker game going strong between Severen, Jesse and Diamondback.
Smoke hanging in the air.
Homer glances over his shoulder as he opens the front door.

HOMER
I'm going to take the air.

Diamondback nods as Homer closes the door behind him.

EXT. GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

Homer whistles happily as he walks the narrow walkway of the Motel.
He hears the soft CLICK of a coin being deposited in the soda machine up ahead.
He lifts his eyes.

EXT. SODA MACHINE - GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

Sarah Colton is dressed in her grey flannel pajamas.
She gazes at the soda machine, trying to decide which one to have.
The cold flourescent light bathes her small, heart shaped face.
Her golden hair touseled around her face from sleep.
She hits the Orange Crush button.
The dull THUD of a can hitting the deck.
She lifts it out.
Pops it open.
Turns her face to the small boy staring at her several feet away.
She furrows her brow.

SARAH
It's impolite to stare.

Homer's face cracks open in a wide smile as he takes a step toward her.

HOMER
Howdy.

He begins to tremble as he walks.
Sarah POPS the top of the Orange Crush can.
Gulps down some of the cool liquid.
It spills onto her chin.
She swipes at it with the back of her hand.
The boy comes to a stop in front of her.
She looks at him curiously.
The ragged striped t-shirt.
Faded blue jeans.
High top sneakers.
Kind of cute dust smile.
He gazes at her, all dewy eyed.

HOMER
My name's Homer. What's yours?

SARAH
Sarah.

HOMER
What are you doin' down here all by yourself?

SARAH
I do what I want to when I want to do it.

She turns and starts for the stairs.
His eyes follow her.

HOMER
You want to watch TV?

She stops.
Thinks it over.

EXT. GRASS PASTURE - GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

Heat lightning in a sky like some enchanted landscape.
Caleb and Mae very small beneath as they walk hand and hand.

CALEB
The day... you miss it?

MAE
I'm beginning to forget what it was like. You.

CALEB
I can see better at night.

They stop.
Embrace.

INT. ROOM #7 - GODSPEED MOTEL - NIGHT

Homer smiles from ear to ear as he enters the room.
A blonde haired little girl beside him.
Looking like an angel in her healthy, mortal glow.

HOMER
I'd like to introduce y'all to Sarah.

Sarah gazes up curiously into the faces of Jesse, Severen, and Diamondback as they put down their cards.

SARAH
Boy, you people sure stay up late.

Severen grins slyly.

SEVEREN
We keep odd hours.

Homer shows Sarah to a chair by the television.
His face beaming with True Love and Devotion.
He looks pretty silly.
The others roll their eyes.
The television is playing the station signoff.
The NATIONAL ANTHEM reverberates around the room in a bugle refrain.
Sarah has plunked herself down in front of the TV and notices nothing else.
She giggles.
Homer flashes her a look of pure love.
Behind Sarah's back, Severen catches the Little One's eye with a wink.
The Savage One slips his hand under his shirt and feigns a pumping heart.
Homer blushes.
Jesse leans back in his seat, watching the girl, puffing on his cigarette, smiling.
Diamondback casts a bemused but worried eye on Homer.

DIAMONDBACK
Homer, sweet darlin'... Homer, you look at me when I'm talkin' to you, now.

HOMER
What?

His voice is sharp, almost dangerous.
Diamondback's mind is working beneath her good ol' gal manners.

DIAMONDBACK
Sarah, you here with your family?

The little girl tears her eyes away from the TV and the last moments of the station signoff.

SARAH
Just my daddy.

Jesse's gaze brushes over her small face.

DIAMONDBACK
What room you stayin' in, honey?

Sarah thinks for a second.

SARAH
Un, number three.

She goes back to the television.
Jesse gives a look to Severen.
The Savage One rises to his feet, laying his cards face down on the table.
And slips out the door.
The television screen turns to blank fuzz.
Homer spins the knob on the television.

HOMER
There'll be somethin' on another channel.

Only fuzz.
Sarah shakes her head, rising to her feet.

SARAH
I better be going' anyhow.

She takes a step toward the door.
Homer jumps to his feet.

HOMER
Sarah, wait!

Sarah is at the door when it opens and someone walks in.
Almost bumping the little girl in the chest.
She looks up.
Her eyes widen.
Her breath sticks in her throat.
Her gaze lifting to her big brother's astonished face.
Mae just behind him.
Looking past his shoulder to the little girl in front.
Caleb sinks to one knee in front of Sarah.
Stroking his hands across her face and hair as if to reassure she is right there before him.
She stares up in his eyes.
Tears.
Speechless.
The rest of the room stone cold.

CALEB
Sarah.

The little girl's lip quivers.

SARAH
I oughta punch your lights out.

CALEB
Guess you oughta.

SARAH
Oh...

She throws her arms around him, sobbing happily.
The farmboy clutches her to his chest with all he's worth.
His lips form words.
With a smile that passes from the world of the dead to the land of the living.
It takes a moment before he acknowledges all the strange looks he is receiving.

CALEB
She's my sister, people.

Activity outside the door.

LOY (V.O.)
So that's where she went to. Got a mind of her own, that little girl of mine. I'll get her out of your hair.

Caleb spins around at the sound of his father's voice.
Looking into the face of Loy Colton standing in the doorway, face puffy from sleep.
Severen hovering behind the man like the sickle of his namesake.
Father and son make some serious eye contact.
Words just don't express the feelings.

CALEB
Hello.

LOY
Been looking for you.

CALEB
Tried callin' you.

LOY
We been out a lot. Drivin' in the truck. Tryin' to track you down.

CALEB
Dad.

LOY
Son.

Severen shuts the door.
Shaking his head with a savagely sardonic smile.

SEVEREN
Round and round and round she goes,
and where she stops, nobody knows...

He throws the latch.
Locking the latch.
Jesse pulling the window blinds.

SEVEREN
...But it's 'bout time for that 'ol
wheel to stop rotatin'.

Loy swiftly moves over to Sarah and retrieves his daughter in his arms.

LOY
Who are these people?

Caleb notices the others assuming attack formation against the walls.
He positions himself to Loy and Sarah's maximum advantage between them.
Acting as a buffer.
He looks his father in the face.

CALEB
I'm with them now.

The farmboy shoots a knifeblade glance to the others standing around with a certain redress in their eyes.

CALEB
Let them go.

He returns his gaze to his father and sister.

CALEB
Go.

LOY
You comin'?

Caleb watches Mae's glance.
She wants him.
She's in him.
He won't be without her.
She touches him on the sleeve and that's all she wrote.
Sarah watches this other woman closely.
Caleb turns to his family.
Shakes his had softly.
Eyes firm.

CALEB
No. But you're going'.

The farmboy feels tension in the air like a trip wire on a time bomb.
He takes his father carefully by the hand.
Moving him slowly, step by step toward the door.
Severen is standing in front of it with his arms crossed.
Caleb looks him in the eye.
The Savage One looks him back.
The farmboy puts his hand on the doorknob.
Turns it.

HOMER
Noooooooooooo!!!!!!!!!

The Little One jumps off the bed like a trampoline.
Snatching Sarah in his arms.
Stealing her away.
The small girl kicking and screaming.
Desperate satisfaction in Homer's face.

HOMER
Mine.

Caleb takes a step toward him.
His hands out.
Knowing full well the unstable little bag of bones necklocking his tiny sister could snap her spine like a twig.
Caleb speaks softly.

CALEB
Gonna have to give her back, now.

HOMER
I'm gonna nip her.

CALEB
Can't do that. Not to her.

Homer begins to nuzzle her neck.
The Little One looks up at the farmboy with dead calm in his eyes.
A smile widens slowly along his mouth.

HOMER
I turned Mae. She went off an' turned you. Now I'm turnin' your little sister. That makes us even steven.

Caleb's face turns black.
His knuckles whiten.

CALEB
Homer, you give her back or I'm going to hurt your body.

Severen subdues Caleb in an armlock.
As confining as a steel vest.

SEVEREN
Now you just settle down there, cowboy, 'Member which side of your bread the butter's on.

CALEB
GODDAMMIT ALL OF YOU, THEY'RE MY FAMILY AND YOU'RE GONNA HAFTA LET 'EM GO NOW!

Jesse's face has a sad gait to it as he steps forward.

JESSE
Question is whether they'd let us go. They tracked us this far. Now they know our faces. Doesn't look like they'd leave off after following us all the way here.

The Silvered One puts a firm hand on Caleb's sweaty shoulder.

JESSE
I say kill 'em.

Diamondback taps the toe of a white cowboy boot on the floor.
Looks straight into Caleb's face.

DIAMONDBACK
Quick.

The farmboy's pupils dilate.
Sarah starts to scream but Homer puts his hand over her mouth.
Loy abruptly reaches into his jacket, pulling out a .38.
He backs off to a strategic corner of the room.
Aiming the pistol in a two hand grip at the others.

LOY
That'll be just about enough of this shit. Let go of my boy. Let go of my little girl. Now y'all jus' get away from the door.

He COCKS back the HAMMER of the GUN with his thumb.

LOY
...And we'll be on our way.

Caleb speaks through clenched teeth.
Severen holding firm.

CALEB
Put that away, Dad. Won't do any good.

JESSE
Listen to your son...

The Silvered One comes forward, his boots squeaking along the carpet.
The father trains the handgun square between his shoulder blades.
Chuckles.

LOY
Whadya mean it won't do any good?
I'd stop where y'are if I was you, Mister.

JESSE
Not likely.

Loy FIRES.
Reaming a hole in the middle of Jesse's chest.
The Silvered One coughs.
Spitting the used bullet into the palm of his hand.
Reaching out and putting it in the pocket of Loy's shirt.
Patting the pocket for safe keeping.
His other hand closing on the normal man's hand on the gun.
Jesse squeezes.
Loy screams in agony.
The bones in his hand beginning to snap against the metal of the gun in the crushing grip of the hand clamped around it.
Caleb screams.

CALEB
GODDAMITT, JESSE!

Sarah shrieks.
Rage funneling her strength.
She whirls around on Homer, drawing her hand back into a fist and connecting with the little boy's jaw.
Hard.
Reeling Homer.
Sarah tears free.

Bolts for the door.
Grips the knob in both her teensy hands and turns.
Flinging the door wide open.
Her small figure is backlit in an explosion of sunshine.
New morning sun flooding into the room.
Rimming Sarah like a halo.
The shaft of white light burning hot across the floor.
Hitting those inside like an atomic blast.
Severen, closet to the door, is blown off his feet.
Jesse's grip loosens around Loy's hand, the skin on his grasping hand smoking as he lets out a loud groan.
The father spins around in surprise and alarm at the scene around him.
Nursing his numb hand.
Jesse and Diamondback scramble for cover behind the bed.
Homer just standing in the sunlight, tears pouring out of his eyes as his face burns.
The Silvered One grabs him and throws him down on the carpet.
Caleb covers Mae with his body.
Ripping the blankets off the bed.
Keeping her shielded.
Loy stands, shell-shocked, unable to believe his eyes.
Sarah revolves slowly, her eyes gradually widening.
The bright day framing her in silhouette.
Her shadow rising up the wall of the room.
She puts her hand on her mouth.

SARAH
Daddy, did I do that?

Caleb wrenches a blanket off the bed.
Covers himself with it.
He grabs his father and sister in his arms.

CALEB
C'MON LET'S GET TO THE CAR!!!

He shephards them to the door.
Looking over his shoulder just once.
Mae ducking behind the bed.
Twisting her hear around.
Her tear-soaked eyes shooting into Caleb's face.
He almost stays.
Severen takes a leap for them into the direct sunlight.
He reaches out with his long arms.
Fingertips tearing the blanket as the flesh burns.
The farmboy ducking out the door with his own.
A fist of sunlight punching the Savage One in the face.
Knocking him to his knees.
He slams the door shut.
Soothing darkness, sweet relief.

EXT. PARKING LOT - GODSPEED MOTEL - DAY

Loy and Sarah hustle Caleb's blanketed body to the Chevy Pickup.
Pulling open the darkened rear compartment.
The farmboy clambers in amongst all the veterinary equipment.

CALEB
Go, Dad!

Loy and Sarah jump into the Pickup and tear off outa there.

INT. REAR COMPARTMENT - CHEVY PICKUP - DAY

The farmboy stretches himself in the shadows among the medical supplies.
A little window to the front seat by his head.
He ducks down below it to avoid the shaft of sunlight streaming through.
The vehicle bucks like a bronc.

CALEB
Dad?

INT. CAB - CHEVY PICKUP - DAY

Loy's face is white.
Foot flat on the pedal.

LOY
What in goddamned hell's goin' on, son?!

Sarah starts to cry.

SARAH
What's the matter with you, Caleb?

Pedal to the metal.

EXT. GODSPEED COUNTY LINE - DAY

The Chevy Pickup RIPROARS in a cloud of dust.
Dust settling on the county line of the tiny Nebraska town.

INT. REAR COMPARTMENT - CHEVY PICKUP - DAY

Caleb rests his head against the metal wall below the window slot.
Sweating is not the word.

CALEB
Dad... I tried calling you, Dad. You weren't home... Dad... Sarah... You got no idea, either of you. You're not going to believe it. I ain't sure I believe it myself. I ain't the same person I was. I ain't even a person... I'm sick.

Loy looks through the window.

LOY
We'll get you to a hospital right away.

CALEB
You do I'm dead.

LOY
Caleb... Those people back there, they wasn't normal. Normal folks, they don't spit out bullets after you shoot them. Normal folks don't burn up in everyday sunshine... Now tell me what the fuck?

CALEB
I got bit... Now I gotta bite.

LOY
You're going straight to the hospital!

CALEB
You want me killed, Dad?! I ain't goin' no Goddamn hospital.

LOY
Bullshit you ain't!

CALEB
Hospitals fix <u>this</u>?

The farmboy sticks his hand up in front of the window by his father's face.
A thin clear shaft of sunlight across the skin.
Skin beginning to smoke.
Loy recoils in shock.
Caleb pulls his hand down and nurses it.
They drive on in silence.

The farmboy's eyes fall on the rubber tubing, glass beakers, shelves of medicines, instruments, and other medical equipment stored in the compartment.
He fiddles with the apparatus.
His mind working.

CALEB
Dad, you ever transfuse a person?

EXT. ACCELERATION RAMP ONTO FREEWAY SOUTH - DAY

The Chevy Pickup SCREECHES its TIRES up the ramp.
Heading due south.
The sun high in a milk white sky.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DUSK

The sun like a red balloon resting on the edge of the sky.
Sinking behind the old homestead, cozy and familiar in the lazy farmlands.
The Chevy Pickup is a chute of dust funneling up the driveway.
Coming to a full-brake stop in front of the farmhouse.

INT. VETERINARIAN OPERATING ROOM - COLTON FARM - NIGHT

The windows are curtained and shuttered.
Caleb is stretched out on the operating table, his skin abnormally pale and translucent under the lights.
Loy standing by him in his shirtsleeves.
Metal stands by the operating table with bottles attached to them.
Long, perilous needles on rubber tubes fitted to the bottles.
The father lifts a hypodermic syringe and fills it with a heavy tranquilizer.
Loy looks real worried as he poises the hypo.

LOY
I don't like doing this. I don't really know what's going on. You might not come out of this.

CALEB
I wouldn't want to stay like this.

Loy takes a deep breath.
He uses the hypo.
Caleb is knocked out.
The father takes a seat pulling a metal stand to his side.
Pumps up the veins on his right arm.
And inserts the needle.
Draining the blood into a bottle.
His eyes begin to dim.

Just before he loses consciousness he stops.
Looking down at the bottle of blood on the floor.
Loy lowers his head to his hands.
Trying to get the blood back into it.
The room beginning to spin.
He breathes deep.
And gets to work.

EXT. COLTON FARM - NIGHT

A moon a day shy of being full casts a bright lunar glow over the farmlands.
The farmhouse sits.
Everything still and quiet.
Maybe too quiet.

INT. VETERINARIAN OPERATING ROOM - COLTON FARM - NIGHT

Caleb lies motionless.
His right arm injected with a needle and tube which is running his blood out into a bottle on the floor.
Bad blood.
His left arm also injected with a needle and tube being fed from a bottle of his father's blood hung on a stand.
Loy feels for his son's pulse.
His own body in a state of complete collapse.
There is a dull beating.
It is enough to blur Loy's eyes with tears.
The bottle drains.
He gently removes the needles from his son's arms.
He slaps the side of Caleb's face.
No reaction.
He shakes the boy's shoulders.
Nothing.
He hangs his head in a moment of exasperation.

EXT. COLTON FARM - NIGHT

The moon lowering in the sky.
Far away a star twinkles.
Maybe a star.

INT. VETERINARIAN OPERATING ROOM - COLTON FARM - NIGHT

Loy is stroking his boy's head with a wet cloth.
His own body severely weakened from loss of blood.
He slumps in a chair.
Trying to fight the urge to sleep.
Sheer will keeping him awake.
He stares down at his boy.
And prays.
He tries one last time to wake his son.

Lifting him on his chest.
Caleb's head lolls to one side.
Loy starts to weep.
His hands trembling.
The kitchen door cracks open.
Two small eyes peer up.
Loy snaps his eyes to the door.
Sarah starts to cry.

SARAH
Daddy...

Loy lets his son back down on the table.
A rage reddening his features.
He turns his back on the boy.
Sarah rushes to his side.
Winding two arms around his leg.
Sobbing.
Loy scoops his daughter up in his arms.
Walks toward the back door.
And throws is open.
Taking a big gulp of the new morning air as a bolt of sunshine falls in a clean stripe across the floor.
Hitting Caleb on the face.
He moans.
Loy and Sarah turn.
Their faces widen.
The farmboy clutches his face with his hands.
The sun hot on his skin.
Then something happens.
Nothing.
His skin isn't burning.
There is no smoke.
He slowly draws his hands away looking at them unhurt in the light of day.
Slowly sitting up.
Staring into the daytime sky.
Blinking.
Hardly believing.
He's come home.
From the warmth seeping through his haggard features, he's been away a long time.
His sister runs to his side.
Eyes wandering up to his.
His hand strokes her hair.
The two of them in the rising flood of sunshine.
Tears in his eyes.
Loy walks over.
Putting his hand on his son's shoulder.
Smiling.
Spent, wrung-out, but wearing a shiteating grin on his face.

He pulls his son to him.
They share a hug.
Sunlight streaming in as it rises about the horizon out the open door.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DAY

Dawn's early light.
The ROOSTER'S CROW carries across the lands like a bugle blown.
The farm awakening.
Skies clearing.
The screen door of the house CREAKS open.
Caleb walks out into the wide open world.
Unsure at first.
Squinting into the sunshine.
The very real daylight hitting his face.
Like he's never seen it before.
It's becoming more familiar by the moment.
The smell of grass and straw in the air.
The bright blue sky.
He embraces it all with his eyes.
The world that he grew up in returning to give him strength.
That strength washing over him.
The world so simple and clean.
And his, again.
He takes off his shirt as if meeting the daylight head on.
He winds his arm around his little sister.
She regards the unsinged, healing skin on his bare chest and arms.
She worriedly runs her small fingers on the barely discernable white marks of the healed shotgun wound scar tissue.
The farmboy looks down and sees the apprehension on the girl's face.

CALEB
I'm okay, Sarah. I'll tell you what happened one day. Just promise me you won't ask till then.

SARAH
'Kay.

CALEB
Let's go ride a horse.

He throws her atop his shoulders.
She giggles and kicks up her feet.
He smiles in the bathing sunshine.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

The sun is low.
The horse gnawing at the grass in the wide, open field.
Caleb and Sarah lie in one another's arms, fast asleep on the ground.
Unaware of the time.
The farmboy's eyes drowsily open.
Focusing blurrily on the ghost of a moon visible in the blue day sky.
Suddenly he sits up with a start.
A shiver running through him as he sees the sun is well on its way down.
Day has become his friend now.
Night worse than his worst enemy.
Bringing more than mere darkness with it.
Night still a few hours off.
But the horizon is darkening.
Caleb squints in the distance.
There seems to be some sort of shadow on the horizonline.
The farmboy blinks and it is gone.
He picks up his little sister.
Frightened, he wakes her up and places her on the back of the horse.

SARAH
What's wrong, Caleb?

CALEB
It's getting dark, we gotta get home.

SARAH
Why?

CALEB
We just do.

Caleb quickly heaves onto the horse.
Digging his heels into its flanks.
He and Sarah riding like wind toward the farm way, way, away.
The roof of the world losing its light.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DUSK

Dusk drops like stone.
The two stick figures on horseback gallop into the pen.
They dismount and get indoors fast as their feet will carry them.

INT. KITCHEN - FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Loy is standing by the stove.
Dinner cooking.
The smells seeming to rejuvinate him, although his appearance remains weakened and worn down.
The screen door SLAMS.
Caleb and Sarah enter the room.
Loy smiles at the boy.

LOY
Why don't you set the table, Caleb?

Caleb smiles at the reassuring old ritual.
He opens the cupboard.
His eyes slip to the window as he takes the dishes down.
The light of day dying fast.
Loy catches his son's gaze.
Sees the apprehension.
Caleb is still.
Day blackening.

LOY
Caleb?

The farmboy shifts his eyes to his father.
Erasing the memory.
Thought being blocked out.

CALEB
Cooling off some, huh? Almost feel the fall comin' on.

A tension moves between father and son.

LOY
Days are getting shorter.

Caleb looks his father in the face.

CALEB
Nights are getting longer...

He looks past Loy back to the window and the coming darkness.
A shiver runs through him.

EXT. COLTON FARM - NIGHT

The farm sits quietly on the lone flat land.
The last light of day winks on the horizon.
Then is gone.

INT. KITCHEN - COLTON FARM - NIGHT

They all eat in silence.
An exchange of looks.
Caleb eating very slowly.
Sarah draining a glass of milk with a straw.
Then blowing bubbles.
Loy and Caleb look over.
She smiles up at them mischievously.
A breeze blows through the kitchen window.
The curtains flutter.
Sarah yawns.

SARAH
I'm tired.

Her dinner almost completely devoured.
Loy looks over at his daughter with tired eyes.

LOY
Put your dishes in the sink. I'll be up to read to you in a minute.

Sarah gathers up her plate in a small fist.

SARAH
I want Caleb to read to me.

CALEB
I'll be up in a minute.

The little girl's face brightens.
She dumps her dish in the sink with a loud CLATTER.

LOY
Don't forget to brush your teeth.

Sarah groans audibly, taking the stairs two at a time.
A stronger wind blows through the window.
Caleb's eyes skate to the open windowframe.
he rises to his feet.
Crosses to the window and reaches out to close it.
Something catches his ear.
A faint SQUEAKING SOUND.
The swing on the porch.
He turns an eye to his father.
His father notices the anxiety on his son's face.
The farmboy tries to hide it.

CALEB
Oughta oil that swing.

LOY
I'll wait.

CALEB
Could use the air.

Loy nods.
Shrugs.
Drains his glass of milk.
As Caleb walks out of the room.

EXT. PORCH - COLTON FARM - NIGHT

Caleb cracks open the front door.
A slash of yellow light pours onto the wooden boards of the porch.
He swings open the screen door.
The swing rocking back and forth on the rafters.
The girl sitting on it.
Waiting for him.
Mae's eyes like a clear, sunny summer sky.
The farmboy stands there.
Listening to his heart beat.
His face opens in a smile.
Her voice like a bell.

MAE
Hi, Caleb.

Caleb's soft brown eyes float over the girl's face.
She rises to her feet.
The swing becomes silent.
A cool breeze blows through the porch.
Mae starts to walk to Caleb.
The farmboy stiffens.
His blood starts to pump in his veins.
Hot.
He quivers at the sight of her.
She advances.
Caleb takes a step back.
Mae stops.

MAE
Caleb? What's wrong?

He can't take his eyes off her.
Something shatters across the farmboy's face.
His eyes becoming wet.
He grits his teeth.
Coming forward like a rush of air.
Gathering the girl tight in his arms.
She winds her hands around his neck.

They hold onto one another as if for life's breath.
Reunited.
They stare into each other's eyes.
Her hand touches his.
She pulls her arm back like she was stung.
Wrestling away from him.
Her eyes stabbing into his face.

MAE
Your skin, it's warm!

She glances down at her hands that just withdrew from the touch.
Caleb swallows.
Takes a step toward the girl.
It's her turn to back.
Down the steps of the porch.
Onto the dirt driveway.
Her eyes blank, fixed on him.
Caleb remains on the edge of the porch.
Night long and black all around them.

CALEB
I belong here... I miss you...

Mae's eyes are ice.

MAE
What's it going to be, Caleb?

Caleb starts to speak.
Then stops.
The wind picks up force.
Mae takes one last look at him.
She spins on her heels.
And moves off into the night.
A ferocity carrying her limbs out of sight.
Caleb lifts his head to the sky.
Pinching his eyes closed.
Opening his mouth.
And screaming her name.

CALEB
MAE!!!

To deaf ears.
Eyes straining into the blackness.
The girl is long gone.
On the empty fields, only the CHANTING WHIRR of insects.
Caleb turns back to the house and walks with heavy steps.
He rips open the screen door.
And goes inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Loy is nursing a cup of coffee on the couch and reading the paper.
A radio plays softly on the counter.
He lifts his head to his son with a gentle smile.
Sees the anguish in Caleb's eyes.

LOY
Caleb?

Caleb crosses to him and puts his hand affectionately on his old man's tired shoulder.
Torn in two but keeping it inside.

CALEB
How you feelin', Dad?

LOY
Nothin' a day or two's takin' it easy won't remedy. How you doin'?

CALEB
I'm going to bed.

Loy starts to ask.
Then lets it go.
Caleb heads for the stairs.

LOY
Get a good night's sleep, son. You could use it.

The farmboy stops at the stairs.
Looks over his shoulder with a lengthening smile.

CALEB
It's good to be home.

The father smiles firm.

LOY
Good to have you home.

Caleb goes up the stairs.

INT. HALLWAY - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Caleb pauses in front of Sarah's door and gives a small knock.

CALEB
Sarah, you ready for bed?

No answer.

CALEB
Sarah?

Silence.
Caleb tightens.
Slamming his palm flat against the door and shoving it open.
A cool breeze hits him in the face like a fist.
The window wide open.
Curtains blowing wildly.
In the empty room.

CALEB
SARAH!

Caleb's eyes race to the window and beyond.
The town of Fix, Oklahoma glittering in the distance.
And then
one by one
the lights of the town
begin to go off
A last one winks.
And goes out.
The wind comes in through the open window.
Something mythic on the wings of the wind.
Caleb Colton stands by the window, staring out.
His hair and clothes blown about.
His eyes riveted on the black shadow of the town of Fix against the night skies.
Those who have taken his sister are there.
He knows he must face them.
His eyes hard.
His face firming in resolve.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - COLTON FARM - NIGHT

Caleb runs from the Ford Pickup to the Chevy.
All tires have been slashed.
The farmboy punches the side of the vehicle.
Taking off for the animal pens as fast as his feet will carry him.

EXT. HORSE PEN - COLTON FARM - NIGHT

Caleb flings the saddle atop Diesel.
Quickly buckling up the cinch.
Putting the bridle over the horse's head.
Grabbing a fistful of reins and hurling himself onto the animal's back.
As if sensing the urgency, Diesel takes off like a shot into the night.

INT. LIVING ROOM - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Loy is sound asleep on the couch.
Out the window, the black horse and its rider disappear into the night.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Caleb gallops on the soft shoulder running beside the two-lane blacktop.
The darkened town of Fix lying in wait in the distance.
Diesel's hooves pound the dirt.
A gigantic full moon spotlights the town of Fix.
In a dead black swirl of sky.
The stars have been blown out.
The luminescence glints off Caleb's iron eyes as he THUNDERS down the road on the back of his steed.

EXT. FIX - NIGHT

A lone figure of the boy on horseback slows to a trot.
Going past the sign of the town line.
Caleb gives a flick on the reins.
The horse walks down the street.
Past the closed down burger joint.
Diesel's shadow passes across the silent and still Tasty Freeze.
Trotting on.
Caleb alert and aware, riding loose limbed, coiled for action.
Eyes moving left and right.
Seeing nothing.
The hooves on the asphalt.
The animal snorting.
Silence so strong you could read by it.
The whole little town deathly deserted.
Like the boy is the last person in the world.
Gathering the reins as he passes the Mini-Market and the Sheriff's station.
All closed.
Caleb thinks he hears something.
The horse shies.
A blur of action.
The animal rears.
Severen Van Sickle connects a steamshovel roundhouse punch to the side of the animal's head.
The horse is knocked cold.
It collapses in a heap.
Hurling the farmboy head over heels onto the hard blacktop.
The Savage One hikes across the asphalt.
A single SPUR JINGLING.
Wearing a big old grin.
Caleb is now human and the fall hurt.
It takes him a while to get to his hands and knees.

When he looks up, there's Severen standing over him.
Holding out his hand real friendly like.

SEVEREN
Your horse fell down.

CALEB
Where's my little sister, Severen?

SEVEREN
Lemme give you a hand, ol' buddy.

Severen grabs Caleb's hand and gives him a pull.
Full strength.
Hurling him over his shoulder twenty feet through the air.
Caleb comes down with a loud noise on the pavement.
His single SPUR grinds against the tarmac in a shower of sparks.
The wind really knocked out of him.
Severen smiles.
Spitting on his fingers.
Pointing one of them.

SEVEREN
You got one of two choices, you come back with us or you don't come back.

Caleb sees the rangy, sinewy cowboy coming at him.
A laconic stride down the deserted strip of road.
His SPUR RINGING through the shut down town.
The farmboy hears an ENGINE THUNDER in the other direction in the distance.
Big, big headlights.
A KENWORTH EIGHTEEN WHEELER tractor trailer rig is coming down Main Street on its way to the highway.
Caleb jumps to his feet and tears off for the vehicle.
Standing directly in its onrushing path.
It HONKS its HORN.
Caleb flags his arms.
The gigantic truck BRAKES to a halt in a HISS of AIR and GRINDING GEARS.
The farmboy clambers up on the passenger side.

INT. CAB - KENWORTH EIGHTEEN WHEELER - NIGHT

Caleb throws open the door and climbs anxiously in.
He is sitting beside a big, built for diesel REDNECK TRUCKER.
Giving the boy one heck of a serious look.

REDNECK TRUCKER
Git the fuck outa my truck.

CALEB
Get going before we get killed!
Believe me!

REDNECK TRUCKER
Gonna give you to the count of five.
One... Two... Four...

CALEB
Sorry 'bout this.

The farmboy hits the redneck trucker in the face.
Knocking him cold.
He throws open the driver's door and pushes him out of the cab.
Edging over behind the wheel.
Wide eyed at the mind-boggling array of gears and controls.

CALEB
I'm not going to be able to drive
this truck...

Caleb looks out the windshield.
Severen is approaching the front end of the truck.
Bright as a beacon in the headlight beams.
His expression calm and incredibly cold.
Like if he gets his hands on the truck he'll turn it upside down.
Caleb does a fast study of the truck's control panel.

CALEB
I'm going to be able to drive this
truck.

He puts one hand on the steering wheel.
Throws the shift.
He steps on the gas.
The ENGINE SURGES.
The truck lurches forward.
Lunging like a fifteen foot high, eighteen-wheeler behemoth.

EXT. KENWORTH EIGHTEEN WHEELER - NIGHT

Severen tries to duck out of the way.
The titanic front grill and bumper bash into him.
Knocking him off balance.
Twenty tons of truck draggin him under the wheels.

INT. CAB - KENWORTH EIGHTEEN WHEELER - NIGHT

Caleb grits his teeth.
Taking his foot off the gas.

Scared spitless behind the gigantic machine he is trying to restrain like breaking a wild mustang.
It tools treacherously and powerfully down the darkened road through town.
His eyes level through the windshield at the hood of the truck.
The ENGINE RAGING in the night.
Severen's head abruptly sticks up over the hood.
Half of his face raked with tire tread marks.
One of his steel sinewed hands comes smashing onto the hood with such force his fingers put holes in it.
Caleb gasps.
Trying to maintain his control on the steering wheel.
Severen singlehandedly rips the hood off.
Exposing the titanic 12 cylinder motor.
The Savage One begins to shear off pieces of the engine.
Showers of sparks.
Spewing gas.
Electrical shorts.
Severen puts his fist through the motorworks.
Ripping out a handful of gears and cylinders amid geysers of oil spraying the windshield.
The ENGINE HOWLS and SHRIEKS.
The Eighteen Wheeler is giving up the ghost.
Caleb sees the truck is about to stall.
Severen is halfway onto the hood and is attempting to bust his fist through the windshield.
The farmboy knows he is about out of time.
His hand goes to the twin brakes for the cab and trailer.
His eyes harden.
His other hand opens the driver's door.

CALEB
...Jackknife.

Colton throws the brake for the cab.
SCREAM of STEEL on STEEL.
The cab jarring.
Caleb leaps out the door.

EXT. KENWORTH EIGHTEEN WHEELER - NIGHT

The farmboy goes jumping out onto the roadbed.
Rolling head over heels a few times.
Then he looks up.
And sees it.
Severen clinging to the cab as it skids to a complete stop.
The trailer it is carrying continues to travel at 40 MPH.
Colliding with the cab.
Crumpling it like an accordian.
The air TORN with the EAR-SPLITTING COLLISION.
The truck crushes like a tin can.
EXPLODES into a million pieces.

Spreading the remains of Severen Van Sickle across half the state.
Caleb rises to his feet.
The rowel of the Savage One's silver spur flips in the air end over end, dropping down on the tarmac, spinning on the ground like a nickel.
Caleb flips it like a coin and sticks it in his back pocket.
His awed face framed with flames.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The fires burn down.
Smoke fanned and thinned by passing WINDS.
Caleb raises his head.
Looks out beyond the smouldering wreckage.
Through the smoke.
Down the darkened street, silhouetted by a pair of headlights of an idling station wagon, stand Jesse, Diamondback, and Mae.
They are standing side by side and facing the straw haired farmboy.
Caleb takes a deep breath, closing his fists at his sides.
Jesse's eyes blacken as they land on Caleb's face.
A rage passes behind his eyes.

JESSE
You fucked us up again.

Caleb's voice vibrates off the buildings.

CALEB
WHERE'S MY SISTER, JESS?!

Jesse's lips curl in a sneer.

JESSE
I'm gonna hafta kill ya a few times.

Caleb stares at the row of faces.
Moving from Jesse to Diamondback.

DIAMONDBACK
Your sister for Severen.

CALEB
MY SISTER'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!! IT'S BETWEEN US!! LET HER GO!!

He turns a desperate eye on Mae.

CALEB
MAE??!!

Mae whirls on Jesse with a fierceness in her eyes.

MAE
Jesse, let him come back!

The silvered hair ripples with a slight toss of his head.

JESSE
Too late for that, Mae.

CALEB
WHERE'S MY SISTER???!!!

Suddenly the hi-beams pop on on the Station Wagon.
Caleb's eyes dart to the vehicle.

INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Sarah takes her fingers away from the hi-beam switch.
Turns her tear soaked face to Homer.
Who is crawling over the front seat.
Trying his level best to be charming.

HOMER
Sarah, everything's gonna be okay.
Don't be scared.

The Little One pins the little girl down in the seat.
She makes like she likes him for a minute.
Curling her hand around a large flashlight on the dashboard.
Homer smiles lovingly as he inches forward.
he wraps his hand over Sarah's wrist.
And bears down.
Happily.
She gulps.
Homer's face drifts toward hers.
His lips curling back in a smile.
His teeth near her neck.
Sarah quakes.
Tears streaming down her cheeks.
Fear paralyzing her.
The little boy starts to fasten on her neck.
His eyes close.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Caleb's face turns leathery.
He moves on Jesse.

CALEB
I'm takin' her back.

JESSE
Sure you will.

The Silvered One smiles.
Watching the stark form of Diamondback appear behind Caleb's back.
Quietly dropping the pearl handled blade out of her cuff into her hand.
Raiseing it to throw.
Jesse silences Mae with a hand over her face.
Caleb keeps coming on.

INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Sarah clubs Homer over the head with the flashlight.
A startled Homer breaks his grip for an instant.
In that instant, Sarah rips open the Station Wagon door and tears outside.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Caleb almost has his hands on Jesse.
Diamondback raises the blade behind her head.
Mae is too scared to speak.
The car door bursts open and the little girl runs wildly down the street.
The farmboy spots her.
She spots Diamondback in the nick of time.

SARAH
Caleb!!! Look out!!!

Caleb ducks.
Diamondback throws the knife.
It plunges through the air.
Imbedding in Jesse's face.
The Pale One gasps.
The Silvered One snarls in anger, pulling out the blade.
Caleb dives through the burning wreckage of the truck to sweep his baby sister up in his arms and carry her off into the night.
Jesse takes one handed aim on their fleeing figures with the Colt Peacemaker.
Finger closing on the trigger.
Mae knocks into him as the gun GOES OFF.
Bullet hitting air.
The Silvered One whirls on the girl in a red-faced rage.
She averts her eyes.

EXT. FLATLANDS - NIGHT

Caleb takes off into the flatlands that surround the town.

Sarah in his arms with her own arms wrapped around his neck.
Burying her scared face in his chest.
Full moon high and mighty.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Jesse squints into the fields and sees them hurrying off.
He bounds to the Station Wagon and shoves Diamondback in alongside Homer.
Mae stands alone on the road.
Her face a maze of emotions.
The Silvered One slides behind the wheel and REVS on the ENGINE.
HONKS the HORN.

JESSE
MAE!!!

She hesitates.
Her eyes spill with tears as she ducks into the car.
It takes off in a SCREECH of TIRES.
Rocketing off the road.

EXT. FLATLANDS - NIGHT

The distant frantic YIPPING of coyotes.
Tall grasses bending in the wind.
Dust trailing up beneath Caleb's footsteps as he plunders forward.
A flat black twist of sky that shows signs of paling at the edges.
Sarah is tight in his arms.
His breathing in loud gasps.
He gulps air.
The terrain dipping and rising.
Holes and ruts.
He trips.
Falling face first in the dirt.
Sarah goes sprawling to the ground in a heap.

CALEB
Keep running!

Sarah races off.
Caleb scrambles to his feet.
A shattering pain in his leg.
He clutches his ankle.
Watching the little girl go.
Moonlight glistening on her shiny blonde hair as it flows in the air with her flight.
The farmboy staggers after her.

Losing sight of her in the darkness of night.

EXT. STATION WAGON - FLATLANDS - NIGHT

The vehicle pitches and leaps over the rough land.
Two white cones of light floating over the ground.
Dust rising in the headlights.
Then the figure of a small girl.
Running.
Smack into the light.
Suddenly stopping.
Pinned in the lights.

EXT. FLATLANDS - NIGHT

Caleb, running with a limp, scans the blackened land.
He forages ahead.
Listening to a lone shrill cry beneath a slowly brightening sky.

SARAH (O.S.)
CALEB!

Caleb swings his head around.
Sees a pair of red taillights streaking toward the highway in the distance.
His face explodes in a bloodthirsty scream.

CALEB
NOOOOOOOOOO!!!

INT. STATION WAGON - PRE-DAWN

Jesse's hands tighten around the wheel as he accelerates toward the road.
Diamondback glances toward the back seat.
Homer hugs a struggling breathless Sarah to his chest.
Face beaming.
Mae turns her eys to the back window.
Jesse's gaze flits to the sky.

JESSE
We'll take care of him later. No time now.

He steers the vehicle up over the last of the fields and out onto the tarmac.
The Wagon picks up speed.

EXT. ROAD - PRE-DAWN

Caleb lurches onto the highway.

In a dead run.
Mouth sucking air.
Feet pounding the pavement.
The taillights moving steadily down the blacktop.
He looks up at the sky.
Growing paler by the minute.
He shakes his fists at the coming day as if beckoning it forth.

INT. STATION WAGON - PRE-DAWN

Mae's eyes still holding out the back window.
She sees the speck that is Caleb running after them.
Rapidly receding.
An agony races behind her gaze.
She glances over at Sarah.
Homer holding a hand over the little girl's mouth and pushing the hair from the sun warmed skin of her neck.
Mae turns back to the window.

EXT. ROAD - PRE-DAWN

Streaks of light bleaching the sky.
Caleb scrambling along the blacktop and broken white lines.
Running full steam ahead after the speeding Station Wagon.
Lungs almost bursting.

INT. STATION WAGON - PRE-DAWN

Jesse looks worried as he eyes the sky.
Mae returns her sight to Caleb, a mere spot on the road.
Something in her erupts.
She leaps out of her seat.
Ripping Sarah from Homer's grasp.
Scrambling over the backseat.
Smashing her arm into the back window.
Glass spiderwebbing.
She dives out of the moving vehicle with the little girl in her arms.

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

Sunrise.
Mae slams onto the pavement.
Shielding Sarah from the impact with her body.
The Station Wagon brakes in an ear-splitting SCREECH of TIRES.
Mae and Sarah claw to their feet and start to run to Caleb.
Sunlight beginning to singe Mae's skin.
Caleb's face widens in an unbelieving stare.
He takes off for them as fast as his feet will carry him.
Lungs bleeding.
Mae and Sarah putting some yardage between them and the Wagon.

Caleb getting close.
From out of the rear window of the Station Wagon, Homer appears.
Leaping onto the pavement and breaking into a dead run.
Skin beginning to smoke.
Mae's skin starting to smoke.
Her eyes starting to close.
Her feet staggering along the asphalt.
The sun cresting the rim of the world.
A wall of light like a blazing wave.
Her eyes roll up in their sockets.
Sarah scampers with all her strength toward her approaching brother.
Homer overtakes Mae, screaming in anguish.
His hands stretch out to snatch Sarah.
Shimmering rays of sun alighting on his body.
Igniting like the head of a match.
The sparks licking into the air.
Then dissolving into pure ash.
Inches away from the little girl.
As she throws her arms around her brother.
And he sweeps her up in his own.
Mae is smoking in the sun.
Her legs give out from under her.
She collapses on the pavement.
Caleb throws off his jacket and dives on top of her with it.
Using his coat and his body to completely shield her from the sun.
Stroking her hair with his hand.
Shushing her.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAWN

Light streaking the windshield.
Diamondback covering her face with a blanket.
Jesse letting his skin blacken as his face grows steadily grim.
He cranks the wheel savagely, turning the vehicle around.
Slamming his foot down on the accelerator.

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

Sarah buries her eyes in her hands at the sight of Homer.
Caleb adjusts himself so that he covers every bit of Mae's body.
Tucking his jacket around her face and kissing her hair.
An ENGINE NOISE makes him lift his head.
He looks into the nose of the Station Wagon bearing down on him.
He sucks wind.
Shouts to his sister.

CALEB
Sarah, get out of the way!

She backs onto the road shoulder, panic in her eyes.
Caleb stares into the windshield of the Wagon.
And locks eyes with the silver haired driver.
A venom passes between that look.
The sun rising in the sky.
Heating up the blacktop.
Caleb folds his arms around the still body of Mae on the ground.
A single tear drops to the dust.
The light grows bright.
Day has arrived.
Caleb stares steel into the Silvered One's eyes through the sunshiney windshield.
The Wagon nears.
Sarah screams.

CALEB
Roast...!

The daylight, like a nuclear afterburn, ripping through the transparent windshield.
Hitting Jesse square in the chest.
A fire begins to glow in the driver's seat.
A fire that was Jesse Hooker.
The Station Wagon blows to smithereens.
A silence falls.
The lone road stretching for miles and miles.
Sunlight rising up over the land.
A shaken farmboy huddles on top of the young girl in the middle of the road.
A little girl comes over and cries into her big brother's arms.
A small fire burns beside a larger fire.
Smoke curling up.
A gentle breeze blowing down.

THE SCREEN SLOWLY FADES TO COMPLETE BLACKNESS.
NOTHING BUT DARK.

INT. VETERINARIAN OPERATING ROOM - COLTON FARM - DAY

Blinding eruption of blazing daylight.
A pair of hands have thrown open the shutters.
The sun so high in the sky splashing the room with light.
Caleb stands aside, anxiously watching someone on the table.
Mae is spread out.
The blood transfusion apparatus rising above her.
A bandage on her arm.
The weakened, wearied farmboy fingers a bandage on his own arm.
Sarah and Loy stand by, waiting.
Caleb walks over to the girl and lightly shakes her.
After a moment her eyes open.
She sees the sun staring her in the face.

She cries out.
Mae grabs onto Caleb's shirt and clings to him desperately.
Then she realizes.
She isn't burning.
Her eyes jump to Caleb's.
The farmboy gives his sister and his father a smile.
He hugs his girl to him.
Her breathless whisper in his ear.

MAE
What's happening?

CALEB
I'll show you.

He takes her by the hand.
Mae blinks with the attitude of a newborn infant.
Not believing she is still alive in the face of the sun.
Getting off the table, she walks with Caleb to the window and stands.
Gazing out in wonderment at the sprawling fields and sunny flatlands.
The bruises and welts on her face are beginning to heal.
There is a tear in her eye as she looks over to Caleb.

CALEB
C'mon outside.

She goes with him out the door.

EXT. COLTON FARM - DAY

A wall of sunlight on the pastoral fields at high noon.
The animals in the pens.
Dogs scampering about.
Caleb walks through the fields with Mae on his arm.
She just starts giggling.
Looking around her.
Smelling the fresh air.
Seeing all the daytime farm sights.
Caleb puts his arm around her.
He's been there.

CALEB
Kinda nice, huh?

They lean back against a fence.
Their eyes meet.
And their lips.
A loving embrace.
Long and warm.

The farmhouse small behind them.
The front door opening.
Somebody small, smiling out.
Sarah taking off in a dead run for her brother.
Beneath the bright sun in a talcum blue sky.
She yelps.
Jumps back inside.
Recoiling into the cooling darkness of the farmhouse.
Looking at the wisp of smoke rising from the skin of her arm.

FADE OUT.