

Queens of the Apocalypse

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A BIG BLACK SKY... And stars. EVERYWHERE.

PAN DOWN to see the vast emptiness of the Mojave Desert.
Shaded in deep blues.

Sharp HOWLS sound far in the distance. A pack of coyotes
found their dinner.

Chyron: Mojave, CA. 1991.

CUT TO:

A large florescent light. Suspended high above... SPARK. It
goes out. We're in --

EXT. RAIL YARD - NIGHT

The light above fades, but the night sky lights up enough to
show a labyrinth of train cars.

There's a RUSTLE from inside a car. Then -- PLUNK PLUNK. A
tin can falls out. Followed by a lone COYOTE.

He checks the can. No dice. Then SNIFF -- something else in
the wind.

He trots along the tracks. Sniffing. Following the scent
around a bend, but STOPS. His muscles tense up --

There's something in the shadows just past a train car.

Teeth exposed. He GROWLS. Now BARKING. LOUDER, as we PUSH
into the dark spot. Then all sound CUTS OUT, and is replaced
with a GASP --

INT. TENT - MORNING

A teenage girl JOLTS up with a start. Sweating, her heart
racing.

She's sitting in a flannel sleeping bag in a tent. There's a
notebook opened to scribbled words laying near an acoustic
guitar.

This is LOLA, but more about her in a moment. As her heart
slows and she comes back to earth --

LOLA

Crap.

She checks her watch.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Crap. Crap.

She grabs her notebook, stuffs it in a backpack and --

EXT. MOON TOWER - MORNING

A giant old water silo in the middle of the desert hills. The word BORON painted in big white letters across the rust.

The tent rests at it's foot -- which Lola BUSTS out of. Heading down a dirt path.

NEKO (PRE-LAP)
She's late.

INT. NEKO'S HOUSE - GARAGE - MORNING

Three PUNK GIRLS (PJ, NEKO and BIFF) standing around a garage band setup. NEKO checking her watch.

PJ stands at the opening, staring at the street.

PJ
She'll make it.

BIFF
Maybe she stopped to get us donuts.

NEKO
(to PJ)
I'll bet you a record she's in her pj's eating egos right now.

BIFF
Or she's just getting us donuts?

PJ
Any record?

Neko nods as Lola RUNS INTO FRAME. Out of breath --

LOLA
Made it.

PJ
(to Neko)
I'll take your Adam and the Ants.
First issue.

NEKO

Whoah, wait, obviously we were
talking about re-presses only.

PJ moves to Lola --

PJ

Cutting it close.

A knowing smile between PJ and Lola, but Lola's smile fades
for a second. PJ sensing something --

PJ (CONT'D)

You ok?

LOLA

Yeah. Let's do this.

AND WE CUT TO A SERIES of quick SHOTS as --

a blank CASSETTE is unwrapped. JAMMED into a boombox. A
GUITAR plugged into an amp. FEEDBACK kicks in.

A hand grabbing drumsticks. Lola's notebook tossed onto an
old couch. It's a LISA FRANK original, and it's been through
war.

Then, two fingers SLAM PLAY and RECORD on the boombox. And we
DROP WIDE to --

our four PUNK ROCK GIRLS. Now that the band's together, let's
intro:

ASHLEY "BIFF" MOSELEY, 16. On bass. Preppy punk look: band-
tee under blazer. A dog sized grin. Just Riding that teenage
feeling.

NEKO HULLY, 15. Native American. On lead guitar. Hot pink
bangs. Laser focused. Observing. Calculating. Judging.

PAULINE JULISSA "PJ" SOLTERO, 15. Hispanic. On drums. Always
in a hoodie. Hiding from something, but never her group.
Spirit animal to --

LOLA CALLAHAN, 15. On vocals. Leather jacket stitched with
patches. Billy Idol snarl and Gwen Stefani swagger --
unpredictable, but infectious. Their fearless leader.

...Oh, also, there's SAMMY, 8. Who takes a seat in the
corner. A giant grin. This is Neko's younger brother and
their biggest fan. He bites a pop-tart.

LOLA (CONT'D)
 This is for you Sammy.
 (screaming into the mic)
 2 3 4.

And at once the band IGNITES into loud, passionate THRASHING. And they totally SUCK. Think of a blender. Filled with rocks. And glass. And on fire. And turn that up to eleven.

We can't even hear Lola singing as she flails around the garage. But none of this matters. They are completely lost in the moment. Because they love it. This is who they are. Raw and loud and together.

We FOCUS a little more on PJ. Her bright smile, and the way she watches her group, tells us she's the heart.

...Oh, and Sammy is head banging. Throwing up the HORNS.

A pulsating crescendo and finally it ends. Sound waves return to normal. Hearts still racing. All smiles... which fade when they see --

a GIRL SCOUT, 7. Standing outside the garage and staring in. All safe in her girl scout vest. Dragging a wagon of cookies.

GIRL SCOUT
 Wanna buy cookies? Tag Alongs are
 two for one.

LOLA
 (beat... into the mic)
 Girl scouts are a dated
 organization that promotes women's
 submissive role to the patriarchy.

The girl scout, processing this...

GIRL SCOUT
 Well. Your music SUCKS.

WOW. Off this -- We NEEDLE DROP and start the MONTAGE:

CLOSE ON LOLA'S NOTEBOOK, Lola writing "Dear, Eat Me --

LOLA (V.O.)
 Dear Eat Me Records. We hope this
 finds you well. Hello from Boron,
 CA.

Neko and Biff designing the CASSETTE in slashes of purple nail polish.

LOLA (V.O.)
Take your pick, we've heard em'
all. Boring, California. Moron,
California. And my favorite, oh my
god this place smells like meth
heads and shit. California.

Neko tosses the tape to PJ who puts it in an envelope. Lola rips
out the page. Hands it off.

LOLA (V.O.)
That smell would be the water
treatment centers... And the meth
heads.

And they're now --

EXT. SIDEWALK - MORNING

Backpacks over shoulders. Walking past sparse, one-story
ranchers. Dried out lawns waiting to burst into flames.

LOLA (V.O.)
We also have the country's largest
mine of borax. We still don't know
what it is either... Oh, and
there's a Dennys.

A CROSSWALK ATTENDANT waves them through.

LOLA (V.O) (CONT'D)
But the most important thing in
Boron, is us. Your new band.

As they cross, we SHIFT TO SLO-MO. Showing them in all their
glory. The attendant raises her sunglasses. Side-eye...

LOLA (V.O.)
Think a mix of death punk, gypsies
core, a little street ska and a
tiny dash of doom metal and that's
basically us.

The attendant's definitely not into their life-choices. They
turn to --

EXT. BORON HIGH - CONTINUOUS

An unassuming campus. All stucco. A US flag still in the dry
heat.

And of course a banner that reads GO BOBCATS!

LOLA (V.O.)
 You can say the madness calls to
 each of us. Or maybe in a small
 town, it's just momentum for
 momentum's sake.

The punks cross a group of CHEERLEADERS. One in particular,
 KELLI -- all beauty, and brains, and everything else --
 points to the punks and whispers.

The cheerleaders laugh. But our punks couldn't care less.

LOLA (V.O.)
 Or maybe we just all have something
 to prove. But we were built to
 play. And nothing will stop that.
 Enclosed is our brand new single.
 Also, other labels are like totally
 into us.

Lola drops the envelop in a mail box, as they head into
 school.

LOLA (V.O.)
 Respectfully yours, Biff, Neko, PJ
 and Lola. Collectively, The Queens
 of the Apocalypse.

As the school bell RINGS, we --

TITLE CARD

EXT. CRAWFORD'S RANCH - MORNING

The seal of the Boron Police Department, plastered on a squad
 car door. It SLAMS shut.

SHERIFF GERALDINE (DINA) SOLTERO, early 40's. Hispanic.
 Probably wears the uniform to bed. She lifts her sunglasses,
 surveying the modest ranch.

A smug expression. She knows this town better than anyone.
 And she's proud of that. But now, she'd rather be anywhere
 else.

DINA
 (sighs)
 Ok.

INT. CRAWFORD'S RANCH - BARN - DAY

Rows of caged chickens. Shouting over the clucks --

WOODY
SEVEN. THEY TOOK SEVEN CHICKENS.

WOODY, a sun-baked farmer, motions to a row of empty cages.
Dina takes note.

WOODY (CONT'D)
YOU KNOW HOW MANY EGGS I'M LOSING?
(She doesn't)
A LOT.

DINA
MAYBE THEY WANDERED OFF?

WOODY
WANDERED OFF? WANDERED -- SUPERIOR
POULTRY OVER IN BAKERSFIELD WANT'S
DISTRIBUTION IN MOJAVE COUNTY. THEY
OFFERED TO BUY ME OUT. I SAID N.O.
I ACTUALLY LIKE PROVIDING A DECENT
PRODUCT TO MY COMMUNITY AND THEY
LIKE KNOWING WHAT'S IN THEIR
BREAKFAST. NONE OF THAT GENOME
MUTANT CRAP. THAT'S MY GUARANTEE.

Dina hides a smile, trying not to break.

DINA
SO WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

WOODY
I'M SAYING THIS IS SABOTAGE. WHO
ELSE WOULD TAKE ANOTHER MAN'S
CHICKENS?

Dina considering this. He's got a point.

INT. DINA'S SQUAD CAR - MORNING

Door SLAMS. Dina settles in. Thinking, then grabs the radio --

DINA
Hey, can I get an APB on chickens?
Over.

Beat...

DISPATCH (RADIO)
You want us to look for...
chickens?
(beat)
Over.

DINA
Use caution. They might be armed
and delicious.

But Dina can't hold it. She burst into laughter. Dispatch on the other side laughing too. Loving the dumb joke.

DISPATCH (RADIO)
You up at Woodys?

DINA
Yup. And now I'm hungry. How about lunch?

DISPATCH (RADIO)
That's a copy on lunch, chief.

As she starts the car, loving her job --

EXT. BORON HIGH - MORNING

A station wagon pulls up to the school. A boy comes into view, sitting in the front seat.

He glares at the campus. Pale, long unruly hair, and big dark eyes. But there's a quiet mysteriousness to them.

This is DARBY, 16.

INT. LOU'S CAR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Darby's father LOU, 40's, in the driver's seat. Wearing a tucked button up, wire rim glasses, and crew cut. Everything measured. Normal.

LOU
I'm gonna sit here until I see you
walk in.

Darby doesn't acknowledge. Keeps glaring.

LOU (CONT'D)
Darby?

He doesn't budge.

LOU (CONT'D)
I know being here is difficult for
you. This is a lot of change. For
both of us. But the kids will be
different here. Just give them a
chance.

(MORE)

LOU (CONT'D)

(beat)

I need you to try and fit in. And
it starts by walking through those
gates. Can you do that for me?

A moment... Then Darby opens the door. Gets out.

Lou watches as he walks up to the school. Darby stops at the
entrance. Waits... Then walks in.

Satisfied, Lou starts the wagon and drives away.

INT. BORON HIGH - SCIENCE CLASS - DAY

A milky violet. PULLING OUT --

MR. SPIELMAN

"The mountain borders of this seat
of care. Can question that thy
countenance is bright. Celestial
Power, as much with love as light."

Until we see it's an image of VENUS projected on a white
board. Mr. Spielman, a total nerd who owns it, paces.

MR. SPIELMAN (CONT'D)

And it wasn't just Wordsworth.
Shakespeare, Frost, everyone was
galvanized and inspired by the
mysteries of Venus.

Slack jawed students struggle to get excited, until we find
PJ. Whether admitting it, she's into it. Taking notes.

MR. SPIELMAN (CONT'D)

Ancient civilizations thought it
was actually two stars because of
it's peculiar rotation. And in 1639
astronomers discovered Venus
actually passes between the sun and
Earth in what we call a Transit.
Write that down.

PJ looks over, finding Lola in the back, headphones on.
Writing in her notebook. In her own world. PJ lingers.
Watchful. Protective.

Then notices fresh burn marks along Lola's wrist, just
visible under her jacket sleeve.

MR. SPIELMAN (CONT'D)

This happens only once every couple
centuries.

(MORE)

MR. SPIELMAN (CONT'D)

And it is coming up next week. Now Boron is a perfect spot for seeing this and the town is setting up a whole event. So people, if you miss this, I will so fail you.

PJ goes back to her work. Trying not to focus on the injustice.

EXT. BORON HIGH - QUAD - DAY

The watering hole. Cliques in their designated territories, eating lunch.

And find our punks at their table... Next to the dumpsters.

Biff and Neko sit atop. PJ next to Lola, who's writing in her notebook. All facing the quad. Isolated, but can see everything.

BIFF

So how long until we're famous?

PJ

Dude, we don't even have a record deal yet and you're already selling out?... But definitely soon.

NEKO

I can't wait till we're on tour.
Away from all these...

Neko glares at the campus. One kid is standing on a table doin the Running Man dance. His friends cheering him on.

NEKO (CONT'D)

Teenagers.

We FOCUS in on PJ and Lola. Lola still writing.

PJ

When can I see?

LOLA

The song is ready when it's ready.
You know the rules.

PJ hesitates, wants to bring up something...

PJ

So, where'd you sleep last night?

Lola, caught off guard by this --

PJ (CONT'D)
You're wearing the same clothes.

LOLA
Since when has laundry been one of
my strengths?
(avoiding eye contact)
I was home. Caught a game with dad.

PJ, feeling bad for prying --

BIFF (O.S.)
Whoa, who's the new kid?

BACK TO OUR GROUP. They all look across the quad. Darby is sitting alone at a table. Not eating, but sketching in a pad.

BIFF (CONT'D)
Kinda has an Edward Scissorhands
thing goin'.

NEKO
Into it.

PJ
Wonder who he is.

LOLA
(shouting)
Hey new kid, who are you?

Darby tries not to notice. Buries his head lower.

PJ
Lola, you scared him.

BIFF
Weird. Who moves to Boron?

NEKO
Meanwhile a black widow is
consuming her mate.

A few tables over school power couple KELLI and CAMERON hard core make out.

BIFF
Remember when she was into anime?

PJ
Then high school happened.

LOLA
And boobs happened.

Kelli catches them watching. Gives them the international sign for jerk off.

In sync, our punks flip her the bird.

PRE-LAP: BELL RINGS --

EXT. BORON HIGH - QUAD - DAY

Lunch over. Kids walking to class.

Find Darby, head low, walking, his sketchbook under his arm -- when two BOYS block his way.

One tall. One Short. Both bros. COLE and WESLEY, 17.

COLE
Watch where you're goin.

Darby tries to go around them. Cole puts a hand on his chest.

COLE (CONT'D)
Whoa whoa, what's this?

He grabs Darby's sketchpad. Flips through.

WES
Looks like Boron's got a fancy
artist.

Darby tries to go for the pad. Cole pushes him back.

COLE
Hey, we're not finished.

Then something falls out of the pages. Darby goes for it, but Cole gets it first. He and Wes look at it.

COLE (CONT'D)
Dude, is this your girlfriend?

Turning it around. Showing us a picture of a smiling girl, 10. Darby tries to grab it, but they keep it out of his reach.

WES
That's messed up man. She's like
eight.

COLE
You're a total perv.

Cole crumples the photo and tosses it on the dirt.

COLE (CONT'D)
Let's get outta here.

And they leave to class, laughing. Darby goes to the ground and grabs the picture. Flattens it out.

Looks at it -- the smiling girl now worn and crinkled.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

LOLA
Did they come?

Our girls pressed up against the checkout counter, eager. The burnout working the cash register is IGGY (30's).

LOLA (CONT'D)
Iggy, did they come?

Iggy tracks a WOMAN in the store.

IGGY
Sorry kids, bathroom is for customers only.

JINGLE. The woman exits.

IGGY (CONT'D)
Al' right.

He grabs an envelope from beneath the register. Opens it and lays four ID's on the counter. The girls light up. Then --

BIFF
Ponomarenko? Do I look Russian?

IGGY
Ukrainian, actually. You're exchange students. Or daughters of foreign diplomats. I don't care.

NEKO
In Boron?

IGGY
Think up whatever you want. Not my problem.

BIFF
This is --

LOLA
Perfect. We'll take em.

Lola grabs them off the table.

IGGY
So what are you guys doin'? Seein'
R movies?

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The girls on the front curb. Smoking and ogling their fake
ID's.

LOLA
With these we can finally get in.

BIFF
I just don't think it's smart. We
don't know any of these people.
Like, what if some shit head
starts a fire and we can't get out,
because there's definitely not
gonna be a fire exit?

NEKO
Definitely sounds like you're
backing out.

BIFF
I'm just saying maybe we could, I
don't know, go to Dennys?

Lola puts an arm on Biff --

LOLA
Biff. What did Joan Jett say?

BIFF
Come on, I'm not --

LOLA
What did Joan Jett say?

BIFF
(half singing)
A girl can do what she wants to do
And that's what I'm gonna do. Cuz I
don't give a damn about my bad
reputation.

LOLA
If we're too afraid to go to a
punk show. What's next? We don't
wear the flags of our favorite
bands. We don't die our hair.
(MORE)

LOLA (CONT'D)

We stop pushing against what is fake, and embracing what is interesting. Next thing we know, we're all just a bunch of Kelli's, doin' mouth stuff at lunch. You want that? You wanna be Kelli?

PJ

Lola's right... Plus, you're the only one with a car. I say we do it.

PJ puts her hand in. Followed by Lola's and Neko's. Biff hesitates.

BIFF

FINE.

Hand in.

LOLA

Ladies and germs, tonight's our first punk show.

Then -- WOOP WOOP -- A COP SIREN.

PJ

Shit.

They DITCH their cigarettes. Trying to casually exhale as the squad car pulls up. Window rolls down -- it's Dina.

LOLA/NEKO/BIFF

Hi miss Soltero

PJ

Hi mom.

DINA

Girls. Staying out of trouble?

LOLA

Definitely, ma'am.

DINA

(to PJ)

Wanna ride home?

PJ

Oh, I'm ok. I'll just walk.

It wasn't a question --

INT. DINA'S SQUAD CAR - DAY

Mom and daughter drive in silence. Dina looks over. Wants to say something, and goes with --

DINA
What's your brand?

PJ
Huh?

DINA
Marlboro? Camels?

PJ
I don't know.

DINA
Chesterfields? I won't judge.

PJ
None, I guess.

DINA
Come on, wadda say? We'll stop and
buy you a pack. Hell, how about a
carton? Mom's buying. I mean, you
can't.
(direct)
You're underage.

PJ doesn't respond. Eyes fixed out the window. But Dina's satisfied, the guilt taking route.

BIFF (PRE-LAP)
What if we get caught?

EXT. PARK - DAY

Our other punks walk through the only green space in town. A park in the center of the downtown square.

NEKO
Dude, Biff, will you chill?
Draining Endorphins is playing near
our inbred landfill. That's once in
an inbred lifetime.

BIFF
You just wanna go so you can feel
up a sweaty punk.

Lola's attention is elsewhere.

LOLA
They're really doing this?

They all look. In the park gazebos are being set up by VOLUNTEERS. A banner is being strung up -- "Boron Community Presbyterian Welcomes Venus!"

BIFF
Apparently it's a big deal.

NEKO
Wish this town cared more about
cleaning the public pool than
something a trillion miles away.

Lola notices the two volunteers on either end of the banner. A MAN and a WOMAN. 50's. Midwest simple attire. And they are staring at her. Large grins across their face.

LOLA
Yeah, weird.

In unison they both bring up their hand... And wave to her.

NEKO (O.S.)
Lola? Lola?

Lola snaps out of it. Faces the girls.

NEKO (CONT'D)
Tonight. Eight. Meet at Biffs?

LOLA
Yeah -- sure.

Lola looks back -- the two volunteers busy with the banner. As if they didn't even know she was there.

BIFF
For the record, if anyone chucks in
my car, they're cleaning it.

And our punks disperse, heading off in opposite directions.

We stay with Lola. Kinda spooked, but shakes it off and carries down the path.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. PJ'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tomato sauce simmering. A spoon dips. Scoops. A man tastes it. Perfect. This is EDDIE, 40's. PJ's dad and a total beta.

EDDIE
(calling out)
Dinner.

INT. PJ'S HOUSE - DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

A home cooked meal, but PJ isn't eating. Just poking. Dina eyes Eddie.

EDDIE
So how was everyone's day?

Nothing from PJ.

DINA
Well I had to go up to Woody's Ranch. Couple chickens went missing.

Eddie laughs, nearly chokes on his food.

DINA (CONT'D)
We had a good laugh too. Probably just wondered off, but you know Woody.

No reaction from PJ.

DINA (CONT'D)
Something else happened today. Got a call from Vivian. You know Viv. At the RadioShack?

EDDIE
Oh, sure. She fixed our TV.

PJ knows, but wish she didn't.

DINA
Well she said the funniest thing. Apparently some kid stole a pack of cassette tapes yesterday.
(directs this one at PJ)
Why would anyone do that?

PJ
Probably because they don't get an allowance.

DINA
Probably because some parents believe their children need to learn the value of earning a living.

PJ not wanting to do this, still staring at her plate.

DINA (CONT'D)
PJ?

PJ
What?

DINA
Have you read the books?

PJ
I'm getting to it.

DINA
You need start thinking about your future. High school is gonna end, and you're not gonna be in a band forever.

PJ
I SAID I'M GETTING TO IT.

PJ, looking at Dina now. A tense standoff --

EDDIE
Not to ruin the moment, but I did bake a pie. Cherry?

Then -- the phone RINGS.

PJ
I'll get it.

And she's already running to the kitchen. Dina shoots Eddie a look --

DINA
A pie?

EDDIE
What? I saw it on TV.

PJ
(from the other room)
Can I go over to BIFF's to study
for the english test?

DINA
Who?

PJ
Ashley.

EDDIE
Be back by 9.

And SLAM. She's already out the door. Dina glares at Eddie.

DINA
She just yelled at us.

EDDIE
She yelled at you.
(excusing himself)
Well, I'm gonna have some pie.

DINA
Yup, cuz that's how parenting
works, Eddie.

She gives up. Can't even finish her dinner.

DINA (CONT'D)
You know they're not studying,
right?

EDDIE
So they're watching a movie.

MUSIC BUILDS AND WE SLAM TO --

INT. PUNK CLUB - NIGHT

A narrow room. Walls covered in graffiti. The smell of beer,
sweat and years of dust soaked into every inch.

Large enough to barely fit the thirty flailing PUNKS, all
surrounding DRAINING ENDORPHINS who RAGES on a small stage.

BIFF (O.S.)
Holy --

REVERSE to find our punks. In awe.

PJ
Shit. This --

LOLA
Exists?

NEKO
Me first.

Neko RUNS into the eye of the storm. PJ and Lola don't hesitate. Biff, trying to psyche herself up. Finally --

BIFF
AHHHHHHH

Runs in, and we --

CUT TO:

Everyone shoving, banging, stomping. This is MOSHING. One homogenous leathered being.

And find our punks dead center, moshing with the best of them. In their element. Even Biff, who gets shoved HARD --

BIFF (CONT'D)
THIS IS AMAZING.

As the music POUNDS --

EXT. RAIL YARD - NIGHT

The BURNT OUT LIGHT from our opening. A SERVICE MAN eyes it.

SERVICE MAN
They don't pay me enough for this.

Uniform reads South West Electric and he lugs his equipment through the yard. Flashlight in hand. Then STOPS, noticing --

SERVICE MAN (CONT'D)
Hell is that?

He moves closer -- it's our coyote. DEAD. Head caved in.

SERVICE MAN (CONT'D)
Jesus.

He moves closer, examining, when he looks up. Just past the coyote. To the DARK SPOT. He raises the flashlight, his eyes try to process what he's seeing --

PINK HAIR (PRE-LAP)
That is so sick.

EXT. PUNK CLUB - NIGHT

PINK HAIR
A chick band out of Boron?

Punks coming up for air. Smoking. Drinking. Neko, mid convo with one boy, 17, in long PINK HAIR.

NEKO
Yeah, Queens of The Apocalypse.

PINK HAIR
Formidable name.

NEKO
Thanks.
(regarding the punks)
I didn't know there were this many punks out here.

PINK HAIR
It's kids from all over the southwest. If you build it, they will come, and trash it.
(beat)
I like your hair.

NEKO
I like *your* hair.

As they stare into each other's eyes, connecting on a supreme level --

BIFF (O.S.)
Yeah, you both have cute hair.

Biff standing next to them.

BIFF (CONT'D)
Not that anyone cares what I think. Also, this place smells like an ash tray. And butts.

Then --

LOWLIFE (O.S.)
So what's your deal?

A LOWLIFE saddles up.

BIFF

Excuse me?

LOWLIFE

I mean, like, what's your name?

BIFF

Biff.

LOWLIFE

Is that short for something?

BIFF

I don't know, is ass that short for something?

LOWLIFE

Dude, just, are you cool, or like a dyke?

BIFF just smiles...

CUT TO:

PJ AND LOLA. A few groups down. Lola hands PJ a cigarette and lights it with a Zippo.

PJ

Dina gave me so much shit for smoking.

LOLA

Doesn't she smoke?

PJ

Add that to the list of hypocrisies I have to live with. She won't even leave me alone about the SAT's. It's three years away.

LOLA

Maybe she just wants you to get as far away from this town as possible.

(teasing)

Away from all of us bad girls.

PJ

What, and quit the band?

LOLA

Of course, we're gonna be super famous and do European tours and have tons of groupies, but she's just looking out for you.

PJ

We could go together. A lot of these schools, they offer scholarships, and --

LOLA

I don't think my application essays would exactly scream future achiever.

(off PJ, not biting --)

Dude, I'll be fine. I'll explore the country. Go to... Florida. I don't know. Just be --

PJ

Homeless.

LOLA

Free. It just feels like I have no control. Over any of it. The screw up from the trailer park, who's dad works at the mine.

(going to a dark place)

Who's mom never even gave a shit. Nothing is gonna change that here.

(laughing to herself)

Such a cliché, right? One day I'll leave it all... But yes, technically homeless.

PJ, sensing there's more. Wanting to reach out, but not knowing how, when -- A BOTTLE SMASHES. SHOUTING.

They turn to see a mob forming where Biff and Neko are --

EXT. RAIL YARD - NIGHT

SLAM. Dina gets out of her car. DEPUTY AMA MIKASI, 40's Male, Native American, exits the other.

The service man just down the way, approaches --

SERVICE MAN

It's just over here.

He points past some trains.

DINA
Ama, you mind?

Ama walks the service man to the car, as Dina heads towards the dark spot. She switches on the flashlight. Spots the coyote. Winces, but keeps walking.

She lights up the way. Sees BLOOD. And... a FEATHER. A few more. Then -- a chicken body, DECAPITATED.

DINA (CONT'D)
Shit.

A few more steps, and there's the head.

DINA (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Think we found Woody's chickens.

Dina drags her flashlight to the far end of the dark -- CHICKEN CORPSES scattered around. All MUTILATED.

Slowly, she raises her flashlight to find a train car marked in BLOOD. It's some kind of symbol -- A FIGURE EIGHT WITH A CROSS EMERGING FROM IT.

As Dina tries to understand what she's looking at --

EXT. PUNK CLUB - NIGHT

A full on BRAWL. Fists and knees flying. PJ and Neko fending off punks, flanking Biff who has the lowlife in a HEAD LOCK.

BIFF
SAY IT. SAY MY NAME.

A PUNK goes to grab her off -- but PJ and Neko PUSH him to the ground.

PJ
(to Biff)
Thank us later.

The girls stand their ground. Adrenaline pumping. Giant grins. Enjoying their first punk fight. Then PJ realizes something --

She looks through the crowd. Sees Lola. She's on top of a punk and WAILING on him.

PJ (CONT'D)
LO.

She moves towards her --

PJ (CONT'D)

LOLA.

And tries to grab her off. But Lola doesn't register this. She keeps POUNDING on the guy. Blood pouring from his nose. His eyes swelling.

PJ (CONT'D)

THAT'S ENOUGH. COME ON.

PJ struggles to grab Lola off. Finally, she breaks her away. Lola looks at her. Breathing heavy. Her eyes glassy. Distant. Not the same.

PJ sensing something's off --

PJ (CONT'D)

Lola?

And then Lola's eyes ROLL BACK and she COLLAPSES. Her head HITTING the pavement HARD.

PJ stands there, shocked, not knowing what to do --

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. RIDGECREST REGIONAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

A cold florescent waiting room. The place is empty, except for PJ and Neko sitting, as Biff paces.

BIFF

A stupid idea. A supremely stupid idea. I told you guys we shouldn't go. Now we're probably going to jail.

(getting more worked up)
And Lola might have like brain damage. We could have just been at Dennys. Drinking coffee.

Neko grabs Biff's hand, pulls her down to the chair next to them. She buries her head in Neko's chest.

NEKO

(to PJ)
Did you see her. Did she get hit?

PJ

I don't know.

Then Dina walks in. PJ immediately goes in for a hug.

DINA

Thank you for calling.

PJ needed this. They release and --

DINA (CONT'D)

It's the first smart thing you've done all night. Are you all idiots?

PJ's face falls.

DINA (CONT'D)

A rock concert, really?

NEKO

Actually, a punk show. It's a subgenera of --

DINA

Neko, shut up. How could you? You're not even...

(realizing)
Give em' to me.

Shit. The girls reluctantly hand over their ID's.

DINA (CONT'D)
Hope you didn't spend too much.

Dina takes a breath, burying her disappointment.

DINA (CONT'D)
How's Lola?

INT. RIDGECREST REGIONAL - PATIENT'S ROOM - NIGHT

LOLA
When can I leave?

Lola lying on the hospital bed. Her head wrapped up. A NURSE looks over a chart.

NURSE
We stitched up the cut, but we're gonna have to monitor you for a few days. Sorry, protocol when someone passes out and splits their head open.

LOLA
Is that supposed to comfort me?

The nurse opens the door.

NURSE
(calling out)
You can come in now.

The nurse exits as PJ, Neko and Biff rush in. Surrounding their friend.

BIFF
Wow.
(regarding the bandages)
Are you gonna have like a big, gnarly, permanent scar?

LOLA
I wish.

NEKO
What happened? Did someone knock you down?

BIFF
Yeah, need us to kick someone's butt? Cuz we'll totally do it.

LOLA
Last thing I remember is saving
your butt.

BIFF
Me? Did you hear that jerk. He was
crying for his mom.

They laugh. A sweet moment.

NEKO
We should go. Before we're even
more grounded. Feel better, bud.

Neko and Biff head out, PJ hangs around...

PJ
You scared me. Out there.

LOLA
Yeah, the doctor said I was lucky I
didn't break my neck.

PJ
No, before that. You didn't seem
like you. You looked -- I don't
know. Different. Like I was looking
at someone else.

LOLA
(joking)
Totally creepy.
(PJ, not into it)
Sorry. Last thing I remember is
running into the fight.

PJ wants to push, but doesn't. Instead --

PJ
Dina's waiting, so.

LOLA
In that case, I think I'm the one
getting off easy.

PJ smiles goes to leave, then --

LOLA (CONT'D)
Moon tower. By the way.

PJ, stops, turns --

LOLA (CONT'D)

It's where I slept last night. The past couple nights, actually. I like it. It's peaceful. Except the bugs.

PJ shares a warm smile, knowing that wasn't easy. And heads out.

We stay on Lola as her smile fades. Her eyes filling with worry --

INT. DINA'S SQUAD CAR - NIGHT

Dina drives. PJ stares out the window.

DINA

Sneaking out at night. Getting into fights. And now fake ID's? What black market ties can fifteen year olds even have?

PJ doesn't respond.

DINA (CONT'D)

PJ, I don't pretend to know exactly what's going on in your head, but I know this isn't you.

PJ

No, it isn't you. I don't dress like you. I don't act like you and I don't want to go to college so I can transfer to the Kern County Police academy. Like you. I'll find my own way.

DINA

Like you did tonight? You all could have been hurt. Lola, worse. She's lucky that kid isn't gonna press charges. It won't be the same next time. I'm tired of overlooking the influence she has on you.

PJ

Just leave her out of it. She's dealing with enough right now.

Dina knows there's more.

DINA

What does that mean?

PJ
Just forget it.

DINA
I can't help unless you talk.

Nothing. Then PJ notices --

PJ
Where are we going?

EXT. YUCCA HILLS - NIGHT

Not exactly hills, but a cramped mobile home park. Dina exits the car. Turns back to PJ --

PJ
I don't wanna be here.

DINA
Then stay in the car.

PRE-LAP KNOCK KNOCK

EXT. YUCCA HILLS - FRANCIS'S MOBILE - NIGHT

Dina stands opposite a mobile. TV blaring through the window. The door opens. FRANCIS, 40's. Still in his work dickies.

DINA
I called, Francis.

FRANCIS
Sheriff. Sorry. Must be important to bring you all the way out to this side of paradise.

A loaded statement. Dina buries it.

DINA
Lola fell, hit her head.

This get his attention.

FRANCIS
Is she ok?

DINA
Nurse said it should stitch up fine. She's at Ridgecrest Regional now. They'll keep her a few days.
(MORE)

DINA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Her friends went to a concert
tonight. Did you know about this?

DINA (CONT'D)

No, but wouldn't doubt it. Haven't
seen her in the past couple days.
Thought she was with you guys.

This hits Dina. Then she sees through the open door -- a
nearly empty bottle of whiskey. Francis blocks the view --

FRANCIS

Where was this at again, where she
hit her head?

DINA

That club off 58.

FRANCIS

I know it. It's a mess. They let in
underage kids? Serve her alcohol?

DINA

I'm not sure yet --

FRANCIS

No way that place is up to code.

DINA

What, you're gonna sue em', Frank?

FRANCIS

I'm asking questions. Could have
been your daughter. I just want to
make sure it doesn't happen to my
Lola again.

PJ (O.S.)

SCREW YOU, DICK.

Dina and Francis turn to find PJ.

DINA

PJ?

PJ

Sorry. Screw you, dick-sir.

INT. PJ'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Front door SLAMS. PJ and Dina move in. Eddie waiting by the
stairs, concerned.

EDDIE
Hey, everything ok?

PJ goes straight to her room. Door SLAMS.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Dina?

Dina, disregarding Eddie --

DINA
I gotta work.

And walks towards the kitchen. Eddie alone --

EDDIE
Will someone tell me what's going
on?

INT. PJ'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

A manila folder opened to a photo of the BLOODY SYMBOL. Dina studies it. Smoking a cigarette over the sink. Ashes --

DINA
What are you?

She can't place it. Frustrated, she turns on the faucet, letting the running water drown the embers.

INT. RIDGECREST REGIONAL - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Another running faucet. Lola takes a handful and splashes it in her face. Gazes into the mirror.

Into her eyes. The same eyes she's always sees. The worry fading, when -- something starts to come up from her stomach. She convulses. Then -- HURLS UP BLACK BILE into the porcelain.

A goopy mess. She slowly looks back into the mirror. BLACK GOO dripping from her lips. Her eyes glassed over again. A milky white. Almost like glaucoma.

She blinks. And is they're back to normal. She looks down at the sink. Seeing the mess.

LOLA
Shit.

Freaked. She starts the faucet again, washing the evidence down the drain.

INT. PJ'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

PJ walks in, ready for school. Grabs a Coke from the fridge. Then, sees something --

the photo of the symbol. Lying next to the sink. Weird. She shakes it off.

INT. BORON HIGH - SCIENCE CLASS - DAY

Students busy cutting cardboard. Glue sticking edges together. Mr. Spielman going through the aisles --

MR. SPIELMAN

We all remember what happened when
Aaron Dabrowski stared into the sun
at lunch. These viewing glasses
will protect your eyes when we look
at Venus. Guys, wear them. Don't be
Aaron Dabrowski.

Find PJ. Hands not busy, but her mind going a mile a minute.

KELLI (O.S.)

How's your friend, Soltero?

Kelli sitting behind, talking loudly. PJ doesn't want to take the bait.

KELLI (CONT'D)

Heard she OD'd. Was it paint
thinner this time?

Ok fine. She turns.

KELLI (CONT'D)

Small town. Loose lips.

PJ

More like gaping mouths.

KELLI

What were you mutants up to,
anyways? Listening to the Devil's
music with other freaks?

PJ

A sacrifice, actually. To our lord.
And now he demands a blond
cheerleader. Hail Satan.

PJ turns back to her cardboard. Done with it --

KELLI (O.S.)
 (whispering loudly to her
 friends)
 I told you they're sick. I mean,
 Lola's mom actually abandoned her.
 How awful do you have to be for
 your own mother to leave you.

Nope. PJ turns and -- SMACK. PUNCHES Kelli right in her
 pretty face. Hook. Line. And sinker.

INT. BORON HIGH - COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Desk plate reads: Richard Lindsey, Guidance Counselor.

A grinning ORANGUTAN. Printed below, "I am who I choose to
 be". PJ stares at this poster above the desk. Fuck off.

The door opens. RICH, 40's. Sits behind his desk. Sports coat
 over sweater screams fun-casual. A total boomer.

RICH
 (looking over a pink slip)
 So. Assaulted fellow student, Kelli
 Mitchel.
 (looks up)
 PJ, can I ask you something?
 Seriously?

Here it comes.

RICH (CONT'D)
 How'd it feel?
 (beat)
 To pop her right in the face?

PJ smirks. They have a history together.

EXT. BORON HIGH - QUAD - DAY

RICH
 There's only one great. Janis. No
 question.

Rich and PJ walk through the quad.

PJ
 Please, Janis is so overrated.

RICH
 What? Have you heard Piece of my
 Heart? Like actually heard it.

PJ

Janis is a poor man's Patti Smith.

RICH

Wow. Hey, I'm sure whatever you're listening to these days is totally rad, but without Janis, you don't have Patti. She's the foundation.

A vending machine. Rich drops some quarters. CLANK CLANK. Two Dr. Peppers role out. Handing her one. Their routine.

RICH (CONT'D)

So have you thought any more about joining some of the campus tours? We're doing Davis next month. Not sure if you've been to Davis, but it is pretty cool.

It isn't.

PJ

Was there a meeting I wasn't aware of? Everyone's trying to force their agenda on me.

RICH

Look, I get it. You're an artist.

This hits PJ. No one's called her that before.

RICH (CONT'D)

School's overrated. Like Janis, right? What can it teach you that you don't already know? Or want to know. I felt the same way. But just having other experiences opens up your world in ways you couldn't even imagine. I would hate to see all this energy stay trapped here. It'll only explode. On other Kelli Mitchels.

PJ is happy for the vote of confidence.

RICH (CONT'D)

I just want the best for you. All of you. I worry.

PJ

You're paid to.

RICH
And not enough. So detention or
suspension?

PJ
Which one involves not calling my
mom.

RICH
Neither.

PJ
Detention, then.

They clink cans.

PJ (CONT'D)
To the black eye Kelli's waking up
to.

INT. BORON HIGH - BOY'S BATHROOM - DAY

TWO TEEN STONERS. Sharing a joint and giggling as one carves
something into a bathroom stall door with a switch blade.

STONER #1
Don't forget the pubes.

A few more gashes. They back away. Take a hit and worship...
A carving of a dick.

STONER #1 (CONT'D)
This might be your masterpiece.

STONER #2
Should I write Mr. Spielman's phone
number next to it?

STONER #1
Dude, you know Mr. Spielman's phone
number?

STONER #2
Forget it.

They stomp out the joint. And leave the bathroom.

A beat... The stall door creeps open. Darby peers through.
Coast is clear.

EXT. BORON HIGH - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Darby hurries across the end-zone. Determined. He gets to the perimeter gate. Throws his backpack over. Puts one foot on the chainlink, hoists himself up and -- A WHISTLE.

COACH (O.S.)

HEY.

Darby's face falls.

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

Yoo-hoo. Come on.

And he steps back down to Earth. Turning to find the football COACH, arms akimbo -- and the ENTIRE VARSITY FOOTBALL TEAM behind him, having just arrived for practice.

COACH (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're going?

The team chuckling, and Darby's fate is sealed.

INT. RIDGECREST REGIONAL - PATIENT'S ROOM - DAY

Lola sits up in the hospital bed. Her backs to us, but we can see she's writing something.

We PUSH IN slowly as the writing becomes FEVERISH. CLOSE ON HERE EYES. Glossed over. She's somewhere else --

DINA (O.S.)

Lola?

Lola turns to find Dina. Eyes back to normal. She quickly closes her notebook.

DINA (CONT'D)

Just me. Ok if we talk?

Lola nods and Dina takes a seat on the bed.

LOLA

Look, about the other night. It was all my idea to go to the show. PJ didn't even want to, and I --

DINA

I'm not here about PJ. How are you?

LOLA

Better. I just need to get outta here.

DINA
I mean at home, how's everything?

Lola caught off guard. Recovers --

LOLA
Fine. I mean the hot water's busted again, but dad says he's gonna fix it. So...

Dina chooses her next words carefully --

DINA
I remember when I used to take you and PJ to the fair. PJ was always too scared to ask those clowns for the little balloon animals. So you would always go and ask for two. One for you, one for PJ.
(beat)
It's ok to be scared sometimes. And confused. As long as you have someone looking out for you.

Lola taking this in --

DINA (CONT'D)
There's a person here I want you to talk to. It will only take a moment and I think it would be really good to have her in your corner.

Lola takes a beat...

LOLA
Sure.

Dina smiles, rubbing Lola's leg.

DINA
One sec.

We FOLLOW Dina as she walks out of the room into --

INT. RIDGECREST REGIONAL - HALL - DAY

A WOMAN stands outside. Business suit. Clipboard with forms in hand.

DINA
(quietly)
She didn't say much, but I can tell she wants to talk.

Dina motions her over and they step back into --

INT. RIDGECREST REGIONAL - PATIENT'S ROOM - DAY

But Dina stops. The bed is empty. Her face falls as she spots the open window.

LOLA'S GONE.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. PARK - DAY

The park, scattered with apathetic STUDENTS picking up trash.
A TEACHER oversees.

TEACHER

The faster we get this done, the
sooner we can all get outta here.

An empty soda can. PJ picks it up and spots Darby a few feet
ahead. Alone. She approaches --

PJ

So what are you in for?

Darby, surprised that someone is talking to him. It's still
hard for him to make eye contact.

DARBY

Skipping.

PJ

On your first day? Impressed.

DARBY

How about you?

PJ

Just a friendly argument.

They walk together, picking trash along the way.

DARBY

So what does someone do around here
for fun?

PJ

Boron isn't exactly known for fun.
Unless you count the Boron
Community Museum, which covers the
history of Borax mining. Don't miss
the gift shop.

(beat)

Most people are trying to get out
of this town.

DARBY

My dad's decision. Said we needed a
new start. I didn't have a choice.

PJ

Well at least you get a change of scenery. Must be nice. Even if everything here's dead.

DARBY

The names of the towns changed, but the people, they're always the same.

PJ getting it --

PJ (ALT)

The best way out of the school is behind the lunch room. There's a split in the fence. It'll shoot you right onto the highway.

Darby looking at her now.

DARBY

Thanks.

Then -- SMACK. COLE runs into Darby, knocking his backpack off and spilling it's contents everywhere.

COLE

I don't think he's your type, Soltero.

Cole rejoins his friends, laughing. PJ goes to help Darby with his stuff.

PJ

Don't worry about them. The boys in this town don't have many brain cells left.

Darby quickly grabs the crinkled picture before PJ sees it, but she's noticed something else --

his sketchpad opened to the drawing of a SYMBOL. The same symbol she saw in her mom's photograph. Albeit a much nicer rendering.

He quickly grabs it.

DARBY

It's just a drawing.

And stuffs it in his pack. He gets up to go, embarrassed --

PJ

Of what?

He stops. Looking back --

DARBY
The alchemical sign for brimstone.

As if everyone knows this. And then he hurries away.

PJ
(calling out)
Wait.

But he doesn't stop. He hurries out of the park.

PJ, confused, wondering exactly who Darby is --

INT. DINA'S SQUAD CAR - DAY

Dina on the radio.

DINA
(into the radio)
Hey, anything on Lola Callahan?

DISPATCH (RADIO)
Nothing yet. We talked to her dad.
Hasn't seen her.

DINA
What a surprise. Well, let me get
this over with.

EXT. CRAWFORD'S RANCH - DAY

Dina steps out of the car back at Woody's.

WOODY
Sheriff.

Woody hurries up.

WOODY (CONT'D)
You find the freaks who killed my
chickens?

DINA
Not yet. But we're working on it.
It's an... Odd one. But you didn't
call me about chickens.

Off Woody's pissed expression.

DINA (CONT'D)

Did you?
(smelling something)
What is that?

WOODY

What I called you about.

EXT. CRAWFORD'S RANCH - OUTSIDE THE BARN - DAY

FLIES BUZZ over BLACK. The lid of a trash can is taken off.
Dina and Woody look inside at --

DINA

What the...?

Then the SMELL hits her. She doubles over, gagging..

WOODY

Now you know my morning.

As Woody closes the trash, we see it's filled with UNBORN
BABY CHICKS, all matted in CHUNKY BLOOD.

DINA

What the hell is that?

WOODY

Fertilized eggs. All of em.

DINA

Why?

WOODY

That's your job to find out, isn't
it?

Dina, not following...

WOODY (CONT'D)

Well it's obviously related.

DINA

Sorry. Let's backup, you think a
competitor came out here and
fertilized your eggs? Is that even
possible?

WOODY

It's big poultry.
(Dina, not following)
Ever heard of organized crime?
(MORE)

WOODY (CONT'D)
They have their fat mitts in every
industry. And they have the means.
Believe me.

Dina trying to wrap her head around it --

INT. BORON COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN - DAY

PUSHING IN along the pews of a quaint church.

GLENN
(singing)
Satan is real. Working in spirits.

PREACHER GLENN, 60's, bald, jolly. Setting up a circle of
folding chairs at the front. Singing an old tune.

GLENN (CONT'D)
(singing)
He can tempt you and lead you
astray. A prayer was led by an old
country preacher --

AMA (O.S.)
Glenn.

He turns, finding Ama approaching, case file in hand.

GLENN
Is that Ama? How've you been, sir?

A friendly hand shake.

AMA
Keeping busy. Got something for
you.

Ama opens the case file. Hands him the photo of the bloody
symbol.

GLENN
This is what you mean by busy?

AMA
Any idea what it is? We got a bet
goin' at the station. Fellas think
it's some gang sign. Kinda looks
like a cross to me.

GLENN
(studying it)
No cross I've seen.

SOMEONE walks in from a side room. Holding pamphlets. It's Lou.

GLENN (CONT'D)
(noticing)
Oh Lou, come here.

Lou walks over.

GLENN (CONT'D)
Ama, this is Lou Baker. He's our
new grief counselor. Came in from --
where's it again?

LOU
Buford, Virginia.

AMA
Never heard of it.

LOU
No one has.

AMA
Traded in one small town for
another?

LOU
Always wanted to live in the
desert.

GLENN
Well this is about as desert as it
gets. Look at this.
(regarding the photo)
You ever seen this before?

Lou takes the photo. Gazes at it. The bloody symbol staring
back. Then --

LOU
No, can't say I have.

AMA
You sure about that?

Lou caught off guard by this. A beat...

AMA (CONT'D)
Cuz I really don't wanna be out
twenty bucks.

LOU
(smirks)
Sorry. But it is making me
reconsider Boron.

GLENN
Probably just some bored kids
taking things too far. That's what
happens when they don't take
advantage of all the activities the
church offers.

Ama packs up his file.

GLENN (CONT'D)
Speaking of, Ama we gonna see the
family at the Venus celebration?
We'll be grillin'...

AMA
Wouldn't miss it.

Ama heads out. Lou watching him go...

EXT. PARK - DAY

PJ aimlessly wondering for trash.

TEACHER
Ok, wrap it up.

Finally, she goes to dump her bag when a hand GRABS her. She
turns to find --

WOMAN
The seven bowls are upon us.

A WOMAN, 60's. Eyes wild.

PJ
Excuse me?

WOMAN
Revelation 16?
(reciting)
Then I heard a loud voice from the
temple saying to the seven angels,
"Go, pour out the seven bowls of
God's wrath on the earth."

PJ
Right. *Those* bowls.

WOMAN

When Venus crosses the sun it will
be too late.

PJ doesn't know what she's talking about.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

The beast is coming. They are
celebrating the end, dear. Take a
pamphlet.

The woman forces a paper in her hand, and starts off in the
other direction.

PJ looks at the pamphlet -- "Alliance of Evangelical
Congregations." Nope.

And dumps it in the trash bag.

EXT. MOON TOWER - DAY

The quiet desert. The lone tower. And Lola walking up from
the brush. Her leather jacket over the hospital gown.

She's made it home. Goes into her tent --

PRE-LAP: A guitar strumming.

INT. TENT - LATER.

Lola laying down, guitar on her chest. Humming. Messing with
chords. She hits one she likes.

She's working on a song, when -- CRACK. A noise from outside
the tent...

LOLA

Hello?

Nothing.

LOLA (CONT'D)

PJ?

Still nothing.

LOLA (CONT'D)

If it's you guys --

Then another CRACK...

Shit. Lola, her heart starting to pound. Beginning to panic. But then from somewhere deep, she musters --

LOLA (CONT'D)
Hey perv, you better get out of
here cuz... I have a gun... And
it's loaded.

The wind blows. The brush crinkling just beyond the tent. Screw it -- Lola MOVES. Unzips the flap. And is --

EXT. MOON TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Outside. Her eyes SHOOT OPEN. And we see what she see -- A HELL-SCAPE.

WHAT WAS A DESSERT HILL IS NOW A DECAYING EMBERY MESS. THE TREES NOW WITHERED BONES JUTTING OUT FROM A CRACKING AND BUBBLING EARTH.

AS LOLA GOES TO SCREAM, we --

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. NEKO'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Neko, Biff and Lola sit around their instruments. Neko reading a Rolling Stone magazine.

BIFF

What the hell is Vanilla Ice?

NEKO

Rolling Stone has gone so down hill. I'm telling you we need to start our own zine. We can plaster it all over Mojave and --

PJ

And we would probably just be fined for littering.

Sammy runs in from the house.

BIFF

Sup, little man?

SAMMY

Is Lola here?

NEKO

Dude, are you still crushing? She's way outta your league.

PJ

She'll be in the hospital for a couple more days, Sammy.

SAMMY

No, she's not there.

The girls paying attention now.

PJ

What do you mean?

SAMMY

Mom's talking to the police. They're looking for her.

The girls share a look. Confused.

NEKO

If she's not here, where'd she go?

Off PJ, having an idea --

EXT. HILLSIDE - DUSK

The girls run towards moon tower.

PJ
(calling out)
LOLA.

NEKO
LO.

Biff sees something --

BIFF
Is that smoke?

EXT. MOON TOWER - DUSK

The girls run up, mouths nearly dropping when they spot
Lola's burnt tent surrounded by FIREMEN AND POLICE.

BIFF
Oh, shit.

PJ looks. Underneath and all around them -- THE GROUND IS
ASH.

DINA
You shouldn't be here.

Dina walks up.

PJ
(frantic)
Where's Lola?

DINA
It's ok. She's not here.

The girls relived.

DINA (CONT'D)
This is where she's been staying?

PJ can't formulate a response.

DINA (CONT'D)
Have any of you heard from her
today?

They shake their heads. A FIREMAN walks up.

FIREMAN

(to Dina)

Fire started just over there,
chief. It'll take a couple more
days, but my guess is it was man
made. Found this.

He holds up a zippo. Dina takes it.

DINA

Stay here.

The fireman walks Dina away, pointing out the debris.

BIFF

(incredulous)

Do they think she did this?

NEKO

There's no way, right?

The conversation fades into the background as PJ notices something a few feet away, underneath loose dirt and leaves. Hidden, just out of sight.

It's Lola's NOTEBOOK. Perfectly intact.

As the fireman douses the last embers --

INT. DARBY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

An opened fridge. Nearly empty. A loaf of wonder bread and some Skippy.

Looking in, is Darby.

CUT TO:

A peanut butter sandwich. Darby takes a bite. There's boxes around. They're half moved in.

He hears something...

INT. DARBY'S HOUSE - HALL - NIGHT

Through a cracked door, Lou sits on a chair reading from a book. Leather bound, thin pages. Looks like a bible.

LOU

In this arid wilderness of steel
and stone I raise up my voice that
you may hear. To the East and to
the West I beckon. To the North and
to the South I show a sign --

Lou SPOTS Darby, watching through the crack. He puts the book
down and walks over, opening the door.

LOU (CONT'D)

Missed you at the meeting today.

DARBY

I'll go to the next one.

LOU

It'll be good for you. To be with
others. Talking about it... Makes
it easier to move on.

(beat)

Ya know I've been seeing more of
the town. Meeting the people. I
think your sister would've liked it
here.

Darby glares back --

DARBY

She liked where we were.

And turns around, walking back down the hall. Leaving Lou
alone.

INT. PJ'S HOUSE - PJ'S ROOM - NIGHT

The SAT books siting on a desk. PJ stares at them. Normal
life feeling miles away.

KNOCK KNOCK. Dina walks in.

DINA

Hey. Checked Lola's trailer. Her
dad hasn't seen her.

PJ's not surprised. Dina, trying to find the words...

DINA (CONT'D)

You know, I only really had one
friend when I was a kid. Martha
Garwacki. I used to give her my
quarters so she could play the
games at the alley.

(MORE)

DINA (CONT'D)
We were inseparable. Until she
could drive. Then she ditched me
for Tommy at the Oil N' Lube.
Didn't fare well after that till I
met your dad.

Dina takes a seat at the foot of the bed, closing the space.

DINA (CONT'D)
I understand how special your
friendship with Lola is. But I've
seen this before. These kids, they
start acting out, they run away.
Things just get worse from there.
She could end up hurting herself or
someone else. I mean, we were lucky
we got to the fire when we did.
(beat)
I know you want to protect her, but
that's my job.
(beat)
Let me help you get your friend
back.

PJ looks at Dina. Can tell her mom really cares.

DINA (CONT'D)
If there's anything else, anything
she said or did that could tell us
where she went...

PJ shakes her head, her eyes starting to swell.

DINA (CONT'D)
Hey...
(pulling her into a hug)
That's ok. This is not your fault.

PJ nods. Dina, caressing her cheek --

DINA (CONT'D)
We'll talk in the morning.

Dina leaves. PJ waits, hearing her walk down the hall. Her
smile fades. She wipes the tears. Determined.

She gets up and goes to her window. Opens it and --

EXT. DENNYS - NIGHT

A classic Dennys. The holy, neon 24 hour sign proudly lit in
the window.

INT. DENNYS - NIGHT

BIFF

Ok, what are we doing at Dennys?

Our three girls at a corner booth. Leaning in close.

PJ

I wanted a safe space.

NEKO

For?

PJ

I need to show you something.

But waitress PHYLLIS, 70's, interrupts. The girls break away from their huddle --

PHYLLIS

The usual.

She puts down four coffees and a plate of fries.

GIRLS

Thanks Phyllis.

PHYLLIS

(noticing)

Hey, your missing one.

(going for the coffee)

I'll just take this back --

Phyllis grabs the coffee and walks away. The girls watch. Gut punched.

NEKO

She really left us.

PJ

No.

PJ removes Lola's notebook from her bag. Places it on the table. They stare at it...

PJ (CONT'D)

She didn't. I found it at Moon Tower. She would never leave without it.

BIFF

She would if the place was on fire.

PJ
 (pointing to the book)
 Then why does it look like this? If
 there was a fire.

Biff and Neko don't have the answer. PJ, decision made --

PJ (CONT'D)
 Ok, you are all my witnesses. I'm
 only opening this because we have
 no other options. Understood?

BIFF/NEKO
 Understood.

PJ
 (to herself)
 Sorry, Lola.

And she opens the notebook. Starts flipping through the
 pages. Lyrics, scribbles, doodles. Nothing that could help
 until she gets to the last page. They all lean in to see --

In dark heavy ink -- THE SYMBOL.

NEKO
 What's that?

BIFF
 Our next album cover?

PJ
 (hitting her)
 Brimstone.

BIFF
 What the hell does that mean?

PJ can't figure it out.

BIFF (CONT'D)
 Look, maybe we just need to start
 asking ourselves what if? What if
 Lola got into some weird shit and
 she just kept it from us?

PJ
 (remembering)
 What did Joan Jett say?

BIFF
 PJ --

PJ

Joan Jett said punk is about being an individual and going against the grain and standing up and saying this is who I am. If Lola's dealing with some heavy crap right now, it doesn't mean we abandon her. Or judge her like she's different, or weird. I'm weird...

(to Biff)

You're weird...

(to Neko)

You're definitely weird.

NEKO

Guilty.

PJ

Look, the police can't find her. And no one else even cares. She's gone and this --

(pointing to the symbol)

Is all we have.

(beat)

We're all she has.

PJ puts her hand in.

PJ (CONT'D)

We need to help our friend.

Waits... Then Neko's hand. They both turn to Biff, who hesitates...

NEKO

Seriously? After that speech?

BIFF

FINE.

She's in. Three hands over a plate of fries.

NEKO

Where do we start?

PJ looks at the symbol.

PJ

With the new kid.

Off the symbol we hear the sound of SIZZLING --

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

An egg cooking on a pan.

A glass of OJ is poured. DING. Toast pops out of a toaster.

A perfectly balance breakfast.

INT. HOUSE - STAIRS - MORNING

We follow a tray, the meal nicely laid out on doilies. It's being carried up the stairs by older, dry hands.

A song is being hummed. Sweetly. It's a nice tune. Familiar even.

We see the person from behind. He gets to a door. Pulls out a large ring of KEYS tied to his belt. Finds the one, and unlocks --

INT. HOUSE - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens. The shape of a man coming through... It's preacher Glenn.

Then the tray FLIES out of his hands. SLAMMING into the ceiling.

He slowly looks down from the mess. To the other side of the room. And smiles.

GLENN

Good morning.

And we REVERSE to find Lola on the bed. Tied up to the post. Squirming.

CLOSE on her EYES. Glassy. Milky white. Something different entirely.

As JOAN JETT'S "BAD REPUTATION" drops FAST and HEAVY, we --

END OF PILOT