

RACE WITH THE DEVIL

Screenplay by
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Based on the 1975 film
written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

A small four-pump station, one OLD GUY working by himself, just off the highway.

He looks up at a sound, getting closer. Metal on metal, an engine being torn apart in overdrive, louder... louder...

An RV CRASHES into frame, moving fast.

Or at least, what's left of it. This thing's been trashed. Pieces stripped away. Gunshot holes pepper the body.

The RV hops the curb, and the Old Guy backs up, not sure it's going to stop. The RV slams on the brakes, sparks shooting out from underneath --

-- then barely stops in time, coming to rest against a pump!

JAKE FOX (40) stumbles out of the driver's seat, clutching a pistol. Blood-spattered, shaky like a hunted animal. Before the Old Guy can even get a word out --

-- Jake WHACKS the Old Guy in the head with the pistol!

INT. GAS STATION / OFFICE - NIGHT

Jake picks up the phone, stabs in a number. As he waits, he stares at his RV, reflected in the window.

OPERATOR (OVER PHONE)
911, what is your emergency?

Jake opens his mouth to speak, but stops, unsure what to say.

OPERATOR (OVER PHONE)
Hello? What's your emergency..?

From the smoking, ruined reality of the RV --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

An RV inches forward, trapped in mid-day traffic. Next to the freeway, tall office buildings.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

In one of those buildings, in one of what must be thousands of identical tiny offices, Jake Fox sits at his desk. Clean-cut. Well-dressed. Totally different than we just saw him.

SUPERIMPOSE: TWO DAYS EARLIER

He stares out the window at the freeway.

Traffic loosens up. The RV picks up speed. On its way somewhere. Anywhere but here.

Jake's printer spits out a report. As it does, Jake packs up his stuff, getting ready to go. He checks the clock. 4:49.

CHUCK, Jake's supervisor, sticks his head in the door.

CHUCK

Hey, Jake. TGIF, huh, buddy?

Jake shudders just a bit, forces a smile.

CHUCK

Got big plans for the three-day weekend?

JAKE

Yeah, actually, I do.

Chuck sees Jake's stuff in his briefcase, Jake putting on his jacket, keys already in hand.

CHUCK

Oh... 'cause I was hoping you could...

JAKE

It's a holiday, Chuck. My wife and I made plans. We're busy. Okay?

CHUCK

(not happy)

Right. Sure. Ummm... see you Tuesday.

Chuck steps back out of the office. Jake looks out the window at the freeway again, at the steady flow of traffic.

He can barely hide his smile.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jake on his way home in his two-year-old BMW, talking on his cell phone as he drives.

JAKE

You and Morgan should just go without me.

KATHLEEN (OVER PHONE)

But I don't want to go without you.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

KATHLEEN FOX (30), Jake's wife, washes and cuts vegetables for a salad as she talks on the phone.

KATHLEEN
I love my sister, but dancing with you's more fun.

JAKE (OVER PHONE)
It's just not my thing.

INTERCUT - JAKE & KATHLEEN

KATHLEEN
What is your "thing" lately, Jake?
Working on reports?

JAKE
Hey, that's not fair...

KATHLEEN
I know. You're working hard, and I know all about the big plan for making a million bucks before we're forty... but I miss you, Jake. We used to have fun all the time, and now, I can't even get you to go out on a Friday night.

Jake looks out his window. He sees an RV DEALERSHIP AND RENTAL CENTER, and an exit ramp coming up. Smiling, he puts on his signal, takes the exit.

JAKE
I'll make it up to you this weekend. I promise. I've got something planned.

KATHLEEN
Well, I hope so.

JAKE
Trust me... it's good.

EXT. RV DEALERSHIP - DAY

Jake walks slowly along a line of RVs. Monsters, apartments on wheels, tricked out with all the amenities.

A SALESMAN approaches Jake, who stares at one particular RV like a guy in the front row of a strip club.

It's the RV from the opening scene, but brand-new!

SALESMAN

She's a beauty. The most expensive set of wheels on the lot. It's not for someone who just wants an easy place to sleep overnight. A vehicle like this is a statement. It's a lifestyle.

Jake holds up a receipt he printed off the Internet.

JAKE

Good thing that's the one I reserved, then, isn't it?

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Kathleen's dressed for dancing, getting ready to go out. Jake walks in, grinning from ear-to-ear.

KATHLEEN

Great. You're back. There's still time to change your mind and go dancing.

JAKE

I can't. I've got some stuff to get ready for tomorrow.

KATHLEEN

Why? What's tomorrow?

JAKE

Come outside for a minute. There's something I want to show you.

She sees that nervous little boy smile on his face.

KATHLEEN

Jake... what did you do?

EXT. DRIVEWAY - EVENING

The giant top-of-the-line RV sits in the driveway. Actually, across the whole driveway and even part of the yard.

KATHLEEN

Oh. My. God.

Jake opens the side door and climbs inside.

KATHLEEN

You. Have. Lost. Your. Mind.

JAKE

What do you think?

Kathleen can't say anything. She just stares at it.

JAKE

You're surprised. I can see that. But think about how much fun this will be.

KATHLEEN

This is what a mid-life crisis looks like, isn't it?

JAKE

I didn't buy it, Kath. It's just a rental. But if we like it, then maybe we can think about getting one of our own.

KATHLEEN

We don't even have kids yet, and you want to skip straight to becoming fun-loving retired people?

JAKE

Come on. Jump in. You know you want to.

Kathleen tries to resist, but finally smiles.

INT. RV - EVENING

Jake drives. Kathleen tries to look unimpressed.

JAKE

Before I left work, I checked to see how much vacation time I've got. Guess.

KATHLEEN

Three weeks.

JAKE

(snorts)

Sixty-five days. What kind of freak lets sixty-five vacation days accrue?

KATHLEEN

You, baby.

JAKE

Exactly! And I don't want to be that freak anymore. So... where are we going?

KATHLEEN

Going?

JAKE
Tomorrow morning, crack of dawn. I'll
take care of everything tonight. I'll
pack, I'll buy groceries...

KATHLEEN
I'll have to cancel my plans with Morgan.
She'll be pissed.

JAKE
Then... invite her along.

KATHLEEN
Seriously?

JAKE
Sure. It'll be fun.

INT. ANDERSON CUSTOMS - GARAGE - MORNING

MORGAN TAYLOR (21), Kathleen's baby sister. Cute as a
button, desperate to seem more worldly than she is.

MORGAN
I told you last night... I'm not going.

Kathleen glances out the open doors of the garage, to where
Jake stands by the RV. He notices them looking and waves.

Morgan rolls her eyes.

MORGAN
He only said I could go to be polite.

KATHLEEN
Don't do it for him, then. Do it for me.
I think he's lost his mind.

EXT. ANDERSON CUSTOMS - MORNING

REESE ANDERSON (32) walks across the parking lot, amused by
the sight of Jake and his RV.

REESE
Let me guess... you want me to trick this
boat out. It's gonna cost you. Making
this thing cool will not be easy.

JAKE
What do you know about cool?

Reese stops next to Jake. Reese is lean and tattooed and
sexy, pretty much the opposite of Jake in every way.

REESE
Relax, Jake. I'm just busting your balls. This is nice.

JAKE
Yeah. It is.

REESE
When you gonna break her in?

JAKE
This weekend. Right now.

REESE
Wow, where you going?

Morgan and Kathleen walk up to join them.

KATHLEEN
Yeah, Jake... where are we going?

Morgan cuddles up to Reese, and Jake can't help but shoot them a disapproving look.

Jake closes his eyes and spins in a circle, then points before opening his eyes again.

JAKE
... that way.

MORGAN
(snorts)
Good plan.

REESE
No, I get it. The man just wants to get out on the road. I know the feeling. See those?

Reese points across the lot --

-- where two guys load four rebuilt offroad motorcycles onto a trailer. LLOYD WILSON and OLLIE KOVACS (early 20's) both look like they want to be Reese when they grow up.

REESE
Rebuilt all those engines myself. I was gonna take the guys out to test 'em this weekend... see what they can do.

JAKE
Y'know, you could just hook that trailer onto my hitch.

MORGAN

Oh... big man's got a trailer hitch.

REESE

Sure you got room for everybody?

JAKE

This baby seats four no problem.

He whistles, waves over Lloyd and Ollie.

REESE

No, I mean *everybody*.

Moment of truth for Jake. All eyes on him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

They're moving, doing almost 60.

The RV passes the Austin city limits sign on the way out of town, the trailer with the motorcycles attached to the back.

The OPENING TITLES begin.

INT. RV - DAY

Jake sits in the driver's seat, couldn't be any happier. Kathleen sits next to him, still not sure what to think.

Reese and Morgan sit together, just behind Jake.

All the way in the back, Lloyd and Ollie sit on a wide couch, watching a flat-screen TV built into the wall.

LLOYD

Dude, this thing's fuckin' sweet.

MORGAN

Sure is big.

JAKE

Biggest one they make.

MORGAN

Kath... is Jake compensating? Does Jake have a little weenie?

Shocked, Kathleen laughs in spite of herself.

JAKE

Why are we talking about my weenie?

REESE
You gonna ride with us, Jake?

JAKE
Sure.

KATHLEEN
No.

JAKE
(emphatically)
Yes. I'd love to.

KATHLEEN
You've never been on a motorcycle.

JAKE
Maybe I'll love it. Maybe I'll discover
that motorcycles are "my thing." I won't
know unless I try.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Lloyd and Ollie crest the hill first on their bikes, both
them hauling ass. They catch air, land hard, neck-and-neck.

Reese races up the hill next, makes a huge jump. In the air,
he waves at Morgan and Kathleen, who sit next to the RV in
lawn chairs, watching.

Morgan takes a long sip of her beer, enjoying herself.

MORGAN
Jake's gonna break his neck.

As if on cue, Jake finally rides up the hill going maybe half
the speed of the other guys, but still way too fast.

He almost wipes out a few times, but he manages to stay on
the bike. He does his best to keep up with the others.

KATHLEEN
(sighs)
No doubt.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Jake races along this narrow trail, barely able to see Reese
ahead of him. He loses sight of Reese for a moment, and when
he rounds a bend, he finds himself at a fork in the trail.

No time to react. He has to choose instantly.

He bears off to the right. He can hear the other
motorcycles, but he still can't see them.

He speeds up, taking a chance.

The trail narrows even further, and Jake has to work to stay upright as he rounds a few tight corners.

Suddenly, he comes to a clearing --

-- and lays the bike down, shocked at the sight of animal carcasses hanging from tree branches all around him!

Jake cries out, scrambles up off the bike, accidentally running face-first into one of the animals.

He backs off, but he's already got blood all over his face and his hands, and he runs into another as he tries to clear it off of him.

As he tries to regain his composure, Reese rides into the clearing, followed by Lloyd and Ollie.

REESE

Oh, man... we were wondering where you went. What the hell is this?

JAKE

I don't know... but I think we're a long way from the road.

Jake picks up his motorcycle.

JAKE

We, uh... we should get back.

Jake rides out of the clearing first, followed by Lloyd and Ollie. Reese takes an extra moment to look around at all the carnage, the gutted bodies hanging from thin cords, then heads out after them.

INT. RV - DAY

Everyone sits around the table, eating sandwiches and potato salad, drinking beer, relaxed.

Most of the blood washed off now, Jake holds up his beer.

JAKE

I want to propose a toast. I had no idea I'd be here this weekend, doing this, with all of you. Now that I am, I can't think of any place I'd rather be.

REESE

I'll drink to that.

Everyone drinks.

JAKE
And I'd like to officially christen this
vessel... *The Land Shark*.

KATHLEEN
Don't you think it's about time we get
The Land Shark back on the road?

EXT. BACK ROADS - AFTERNOON

The RV on a back road, pretty far from the freeway.

JAKE (O.S.)
I'm pretty sure there's a left...

INT. RV - AFTERNOON

Jake pushes buttons on the dashboard GPS as he drives,
frustrated. Kathleen flips through the manual.

KATHLEEN
It says there's supposed to be a CD that
comes with it. Did you see a CD?

Jake studies the road up ahead.

JAKE
Up here, I think. Do you guys remember
this billboard? Kath?

Kathleen sets the manual aside.

KATHLEEN
I wasn't paying attention, Jake.

REESE
Yeah, I was distracted when we drove in.

He runs his hand over Morgan's ass and she giggles.

JAKE
(exasperated)
I need gas before we get on the freeway.
I'll try left. Pretty sure it's left.

EXT. BACK ROADS - AFTERNOON

The OPENING TITLES end.

The RV passes a handmade sign, driven into the side of the
road, cardboard on a stake.

INT. RV - AFTERNOON

JAKE
Did you see that sign?

KATHLEEN
You were going too fast.

JAKE
Should I go back? There was an arrow.

REESE
Slow down. Check that out, man.

Reese points as Jake slows the RV down.

Another sign on the side of the road ahead.

This time, they get a good look at it.

A cardboard sign stapled to a stake, driven into the dirt:

H A P I N N E S S -->

JAKE
Happiness with one P? You know that's
got to be good.

EXT. BACK ROADS - EARLY EVENING

The RV creeps along now, slow enough to see another sign,
turning again to follow it.

INT. RV - EARLY EVENING

Now everyone looks out the windows.

MORGAN
I'm pretty sure this is the exact
opposite of the right way, Jake.

JAKE
Where's your sense of adventure?

They catch a glimpse of another RV, way up ahead of them, and
then it turns at a fork in the road.

As they approach the fork, they see another "HAPINNESS" sign
pointing in the direction the other RV turned.

KATHLEEN
Let's just find the freeway...

JAKE
Alright. Which way is that? Hmm?

He stops before making the turn.

JAKE
Which way, Kath? You tell me which way
the freeway is.

KATHLEEN
I don't know.

JAKE
So this way, at least we know we're going
someplace, right? Do we agree on that?

LLOYD
Dude, this is shitkicker country. A sign
like that could mean anything.

OLLIE
We could be driving right into the middle
of the 15th Annual Fuck My Cousin Picnic.

MORGAN
I just don't want your little day trip to
end with my brain as the main ingredient
in some freak's chili.

JAKE
Duly noted.

EXT. BACK ROADS - EARLY EVENING

The RV creeps along, no more signs on the road now.

Jake rolls his window down and sticks his head out. He slows
the RV to a stop. Listens. Jake shuts the off idling
engine. Listens again.

JAKE
What's that sound?

Everyone else opens their windows. They all listen.

***Faint voices and music on the wind. Just on the other side
of the trees ahead.***

REESE
Sounds like... happiness.

Jake starts the RV, gets it moving again, following the
sounds around a bend in the road --

EXT. STARRETT CREEK - EARLY EVENING

-- and right into the small town of Starrett Creek, TX.

The entire town is about six blocks by three blocks, picture-perfect heartland America.

There are people on the sidewalks, all on the move, headed in the same direction.

Many of the businesses they drive by are the same. Davis Hardware, shut up tight. Wade's Grocery, closed.

And in each of those windows, the same sign:

"CLOSED FOR HAPPINESS"

INTERCUT - INTERIOR RV & EXTERIOR STARRETT CREEK

Several other RVs drive along Main Street, and Jake pulls The Land Shark into line with them.

JAKE

Look at this. It's like an RV convention. Must've been some sort of RV owner's sixth sense that kicked in, eh?

Ollie sees two very cute, very young girls on the sidewalk, both definitely still in high school. CARLY and MELODY.

OLLIE

It'd be worth it.

EXT. CAMPGROUNDS ENTRANCE - EARLY EVENING

Jake sees all the RVs turn onto a dirt road.

Reese sees VOLUNTEERS checking each car's bumper before they drive through a set of gates.

REESE

We might have a problem here.

All Jake sees are the covered dishes of food carried by everyone walking past the RV.

JAKE

Yeah. We didn't bring anything for the pot luck.

REESE

That's not what I meant, buddy.

They pull up to the gate, where HAL stands waiting. Big moon-faced guy, friendly, sweaty, a little frazzled.

HAL
Hey, folks. Cutting it kind of close,
aren't we? They're about ready to start.

JAKE
Well, here we are.

Hal walks around to the back of the RV.

REESE
Tell him we're just turning around.

JAKE
Relax. We're fine.

Hal walks back up to Jake's window.

HAL
I don't see your sticker on the bumper.

JAKE
This thing's a rental. Just picked her
up yesterday. I guess we forgot to put
the sticker on.

HAL
I hear you, but...

POW! POW! POW! A sound like gunshots goes off nearby, and Hal almost jumps out of his skin.

Hal spins to see a group of KIDS throwing firecrackers out the window of another car.

The kids duck back inside, laughing.

HAL
Damn it, I've gotta take care of this.
Take the empty space on row nine.

EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - EVENING

Almost every space in this place is filled. Jake's RV pulls into one of the only empty spots. Everyone piles out.

LLOYD
I need to stretch my legs a little...

OLLIE
I know what you mean.

Lloyd and Ollie start to walk away. Reese calls after them.

REESE
Hey, whoa, guys... I saw those girls.
How old were they?

OLLIE
Sixteen... if we're lucky.

Lloyd and Ollie laugh as they high-five each other.

REESE
Don't wander. We're not stayin' long.

Too late. Lloyd and Ollie are gone.

JAKE
Alright, who wants to help me set this
bad boy up?

REESE
I just said we're not staying.

KATHLEEN
Don't say "bad boy," Jake. You sound
like one of those rapping grannies.

JAKE
What? I'm not hip?

KATHLEEN
No, sweetie.

She kisses him on the cheek.

Arm-in-arm, Morgan and Kathleen walk away. Jake looks at Reese, desperate.

REESE
Alright. Fine. I'll give you a hand.

EXT. PICNIC AREA - EARLY EVENING

Long tables, overloaded with food, hundreds of pot-luck dishes set out. PEOPLE file past the tables, filling their plates, barely even denting what's there.

Morgan and Kathleen stand in front of a separate set of tables just for desserts, amazed.

KATHLEEN
Now I see why they call this Happiness.
I've never seen anything so beautiful.

A group of WOMEN approach, all of them carrying pies. A small, sweet-faced woman, in her 70's, walks in the middle of the group. The Queen Bee. Everyone hanging on her every word and gesture. "GRAMMA" IDA BIRD.

She sees Morgan and Kathleen. She sees their empty hands.

GRAMMA BIRD

Uh-oh. Ladies... do you see what I see?

Morgan and Kathleen, acutely aware of every one of the women suddenly looking right at them.

GRAMMA BIRD

No pies.

The women find places on the table to set their pies.

GRAMMA BIRD

Come with me. You can help.

MORGAN

Actually, I'd rather wait here for Reese.

The other women start to walk away.

KATHLEEN

I'll be right back.

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - EVENING

The trailer is long, extra-wide, lived in, every inch of it personalized. Everyone takes pies out of carefully stacked boxes, sets them aside.

GRAMMA BIRD

You're sweet to help.

KATHLEEN

I figure I should burn as many calories
as possible before we eat those desserts.

Kathleen glances at a curtain pulled to close off the back half of the trailer. The curtain stirs, as if from a breeze, and Kathleen catches just a glimpse of what's beyond.

She steps closer, pie in hand --

-- when the curtain is suddenly thrown back by GALE, six-foot-nine-inches of baby fat, soft but scary.

Kathleen cries out and drops her pie, stepping back suddenly, shocked. Gale flinches back when she cries out.

GRAMMA BIRD

Oh, honey, that's just my grandson Gale.

Gale pulls the curtain again, upset. Gramma Bird walks over, opens the curtain.

GRAMMA BIRD

Come on out here, boy.

Gale shakes his head.

GRAMMA BIRD

Gale, I'm serious. These are friends.

Cautiously, Gale walks out and tries a smile at everyone.

Kathleen looks past him and sees glass tanks stacked along one wall of the trailer. A flash of motion in one.

Kathleen looks closer. Snakes. Rows of glass tanks.

One of the larger snakes swallows a rabbit, pauses with it halfway down.

KATHLEEN

Oh... that's...
(looks at Gale)
... sweet.

GRAMMA BIRD

Grab a pie. We've still got loads to do.

EXT. PICNIC AREA - EVENING

Jake and Reese walk up to where Morgan stands. She's visibly relieved to see them, and grabs hold of Reese.

JAKE

Where's Kathleen?

MORGAN

She went to get pies.

JAKE

What? This wasn't enough for her?

MORGAN

Ask her when she gets back.
(to Reese)
I'm tired of waiting. Come on.

REESE

How can I argue with that?

As Jake waits, he spots a group of MEN all standing together. One man in particular seems to be the center of attention. BEN STURGES (50's). Powerfully built, tall and tanned.

All the men smoke cigars as they talk. Jake edges closer to the group, curious.

BEN

The Happiness Festival isn't easy, but you know what makes it worthwhile? It's the satisfaction.

Jake sees Kathleen approaching with the other women. Sure enough, she's carrying a pie. She sees him waiting and smiles at him, posing with the pie like in a commercial.

JAKE

Look at you. One day in an RV and you turn into June Cleaver.

Ben Sturges sees Gramma Bird and greets her warmly.

Kathleen looks around.

JAKE

Morgan took off with Reese. Looks like it's just you and me.

KATHLEEN

Perfect.

EXT. HAPPINESS FESTIVAL - EVENING

Quick cuts. Hand held. Everything natural, off-the-cuff.

JAKE AND KATHLEEN

walk around the fairgrounds checking out the various tables and booths. A fairly typical folk art festival.

REESE AND MORGAN

walk through another part of the festival. They stop at a tattoo booth. Two ARTISTS work at the same table, each putting the same symbol on different people.

JAKE

makes comments as he and Kathleen look at a display of bracelets that look like entwined snakes, both laughing.

REESE AND MORGAN

stop by another booth, where a FAT WOMAN paints faces. She paints the same symbol from the tattoo booth.

Morgan can't resist. She sits down to get her face painted.

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - EVENING

Ollie and Lloyd walk back the way they drove in, scanning faces in the crowd.

Up ahead, Carly and Melody stand together.

OLLIE

Get your game face on. Don't blow this.

LLOYD

Hey, I don't need my wingman telling me how to pull some tail.

OLLIE

Bitch, please. You're my wingman.

Ollie walks right up to the girls.

OLLIE

Excuse me, ladies, but I'm afraid you can't be out here alone.

MELODY

Oh, really?

OLLIE

This many people, anything could happen. Have no fear, though. My friend Lloyd and I are here to keep you company.

Both girls laugh. Ollie gives Lloyd a very pointed look.

CARLY

That's real sweet. Where y'all from?

LLOYD

Austin.

CARLY

Oh... city boys.

MELODY

Were you at the last Happiness Festival?

LLOYD

You know it. Never missed one yet.

MELODY

Wow. You guys are devout. Me, too.

OLLIE

Now that I think about it, I'm pretty sure I remember you from the last one.

MELODY

You have an excellent memory. I was 13.

OLLIE

Which makes you how old now?

MELODY

Legal.

OLLIE

Well, then, this really is going to be a Happiness Festival.

LLOYD

You really know how to throw a party.

CARLY

This ain't nothin'. You should come to the Youth Meeting.

LLOYD

We are all about the Youth Meeting.

EXT. HAPPINESS FESTIVAL - EVENING

As Jake and Kathleen walk together, they see Gramma Bird again, walking through the crowd, talking to everyone she passes, handing out small slips of paper.

She's with an OLDER COUPLE in their 70s. Both healthy, fit, happy. Everyone shakes hands with them, hugs them.

People write on the slips of paper, give them to Gramma Bird.

JAKE

So... who is she?

KATHLEEN

She made the pies, I guess. Her grandson's sort of... intimidating...

They walk closer so they can hear as Gramma Bird hands out paper and pencils to a group of CHILDREN.

GRAMMA BIRD
... so you all have your own piece of
paper, right?

CHILDREN
Yes.

GRAMMA BIRD
Write down something that troubles you or
that makes you sad or that scares you.

The children take this very seriously, really thinking about
it. Kathleen's moved by how cute they all are.

One LITTLE GIRL raises her hand.

LITTLE GIRL
What do we do with them?

GRAMMA BIRD
We're going to gather them all up, and
then later, we'll burn them, and your
unhappiness will go with it.

KATHLEEN
(low, to Jake)
That's really sweet, actually. I wonder
where the tradition came from.

GRAMMA BIRD
Okay, everyone... hurry now...

Kathleen walks up to Gramma Bird.

KATHLEEN
Excuse me... Miss Bird...

GRAMMA BIRD
Please, everyone calls me Gramma.

KATHLEEN
Can I get one of those slips?

GRAMMA BIRD
Of course, dear.

Kathleen writes something and then folds the slip, hands it
back to Gramma Bird.

Kathleen walks back over to Jake.

JAKE
What'd you write?

KATHLEEN
I'm not telling you.

JAKE
You have to. It's the law.

KATHLEEN
Noooo... it's like a birthday wish. You
can't tell, or it won't come true.

JAKE
She didn't say that.

As they walk away, Gramma Bird hands Kathleen's slip to the OLDER COUPLE, and we see what they're doing with all the slips... filling their pockets.

Each of them carries hundreds of the slips already.

EXT. TRAILS - NIGHT

Lloyd and Ollie walk with Carly and Melody along some narrow paths in the woods, the sounds of the Happiness Festival getting further and further away.

They follow a group of guys, including one fairly muscular, intense guy who keeps shooting Lloyd and Ollie dirty looks. This is CAIN.

LLOYD
So... Cain's your brother?

CARLY
My big brother.

LLOYD
Seems like a good guy.

CARLY
If he sees you lay a finger on me...
(pokes Lloyd)
He'll break it off.

Carly smiles at Lloyd, daring him.

Lloyd thinks about it for a moment, then extends one finger cautiously to Carly, touching her on the tip of her nose.

LLOYD
Guess I better run for the hills, huh?

EXT. HAPPINESS FESTIVAL - NIGHT

Reese and Morgan, both carrying plates. Reese's plate seems to be almost daring gravity to try something.

MORGAN

You're not really going to eat all that?

REESE

Yeah, and I'm going back for seconds.

On the other end of the fairgrounds, a stage, loudspeakers lining the front.

Onstage, a BAND plays. Part folk, part country, but in another language. Gaelic? Celtic perhaps?

JAKE AND KATHLEEN

stand near the stage, enjoying the music, the crowd, the atmosphere.

Kathleen sneaks a look at the smile on his face. She curls into his embrace, delighted, content.

All around them, people in the audience sing along in that other language.

As the band wraps up, Ben Sturges walks out onto the stage. The audience gets louder when they see him.

BEN

Wow. I wish you all could see what I see right now. It's beautiful, this many of us at the same time, in the same place.

MORGAN AND REESE

stand at the back of the crowd. They can hear Ben, but they can't see him very well.

MORGAN

So... when he says "us"... what do you think he means?

REESE

I've been watchin' the crowd, and I'm pretty sure I've got it figured out. I think they're llama farmers. Or meth manufacturers. Could be either or.

ONSTAGE

Ben continues.

BEN

This is my tenth Happiness Festival. I
feel so blessed to have seen that many,
and doubly blessed to be hosting the
event here in my hometown for the very
first time.

Ben raises his hands. All through the crowd, everyone raises
their hands the same way. Ben begins to sing in that same
foreign language. Everyone sings with him.

JAKE AND KATHLEEN

raise their hands and pretend to sing, smiling at each other
like they're sharing a private joke.

MORGAN

won't raise her hands, though.

REESE

Put your hands up, baby.

As Ben begins to sway onstage, everyone in the crowd begins
to sway as well.

MORGAN

This looks like a crazy religious thing.

REESE

Yeah... sorta does.

MORGAN

Well, I don't do religious things.

Reese sees people sneaking disapproving looks at Morgan.

REESE

Just pretend, Morgan.

MORGAN

These people are freaks. Fuck this.

Exasperated, Reese takes Morgan's arm and hurries her out of
the crowd.

A burly bearded guy who was standing near them -- EARL --
waits a moment, then follows Reese and Morgan.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

The middle of the woods, surrounded by tall trees. An open-air pavilion, a concrete foundation with a roof but no walls.

Far enough away from the main festival that we can't hear the singing or the crowd anymore.

TEENAGERS everywhere. 40 or 50 of them at least. Some as young as 14, but none older than 20.

Music blasts from a parked car. Everyone's got beer, either in cans or from one of the two kegs, and several of the Teenagers openly smoke weed.

Lloyd and Ollie stand in the midst of the chaos, amazed. A herd of CUTE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS walk by, giggling.

OLLIE

Sell the car. Sell the house. Sell the kids. I'm never coming home.

LLOYD

Easy, Col. Kurtz. We already bagged our trout for tonight... here they come now.

Carly and Melody cut through the crowd, several of the teenage boys watching them as they go.

OLLIE

Aren't you afraid your parents are gonna show up?

MELODY

They don't mind.

Ollie sees two girls making out on the dance floor as a group of guys pass around a mason jar filled with a clear liquid, each of them taking long sips.

One SKINNY KID starts to spasm and jerk after he drinks.

OLLIE

Wow. You must have really cool parents.

Carly spots Cain carrying another jelly jar filled with the clear liquid. She runs over and steers him back to where Melody and the guys are.

CARLY

You guys ready for this?

CAIN
Careful, okay?

CARLY
Oh, like you can handle it but I can't.

Carly takes a belt of the clear liquid. Cain grabs the jelly jar out of her hand just before she drops it.

Her eyes roll back, her whole body trembles, and for a moment, she looks like she's going to throw up or collapse.

Cain offers the jelly jar to Lloyd. Lloyd takes the jar, sniffs it. Cain, Carly, and Melody laugh hard at this. Lloyd and Ollie trade a look: you sure about this?

Carly grabs Lloyd and plants a big ol' sloppy wet one on him.

CARLY
See? See how good it tastes?

Lloyd shrugs at Ollie, huge smile on his face.

LLOYD
Catch me if I fall.

Lloyd takes a big belt of the stuff. It's like a shot to the head. His whole system convulses, recoils.

Ollie takes the jar just before Lloyd drops it. Lloyd shakes it off, grins at Ollie.

LLOYD
God, it's worse than Everclear.

Ollie shrugs. No big deal.

OLLIE
Over the lips and past the gums...

As Ollie takes a swig of the liquid --

EXT. HAPPINESS FESTIVAL - NIGHT

-- someone cries out, ecstatic!

Onstage, Ben finishes his song, emotional.

BEN
I've said enough. It's time we begin.

Ben claps twice, sharp --

-- and two BONFIRES ignite, one at either end of the stage!

Behind Ben, several DRUMMERS step up to large tribal drums and begin to play, a pounding percussive rhythm.

JAKE

turns and looks as more bonfires are lit all the way around the festival grounds.

He sees where people are starting to leave the festival grounds, heading down a path into the woods.

Several CLOAKED WOMEN walk out onstage. One of them carries a cloak out to Ben, who slips into it.

KATHLEEN

Jake, is it just me, or is this getting a little weird?

Everyone onstage lights large red candles. As they do, the crowd goes silent.

BEN

This one night is so special. One time every five years, we come together, united by a simple desire for happiness. No matter how far apart we are, these moments make us a community. What we do here tonight defines us.

Onstage, Gale walks out carrying one of his glass tanks.

BEN

It is said that the serpent was sent to Earth to test us.

Gale sets the tank down and opens it. He takes out a seven-foot rattle snake. He handles it with complete confidence.

BEN

It can sense the sincerity of your faith.

Gale hands Ben the snake.

Ben doesn't flinch. He just takes the snake and holds it up so he's face-to-face with it.

BEN

Wise beyond our understanding, it watches over us with the eyes of our Father.

JAKE AND KATHLEEN

watch the display onstage, amazed.

KATHLEEN

I've seen this sort of thing on PBS.

JAKE

Isn't that dangerous?

KATHLEEN

Absolutely. You can get bit. But they're like Christian Scientists. They won't go to the doctor. They think God will heal them.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Cain and two of his BUDDIES stand at the back of a red pick-up. The tailgate down, they pull out a long box with a chickenwire top.

Cain flips the top open and lifts out a pair of five-foot rattlesnakes, one coiled around each hand.

Ollie sees the snakes first.

OLLIE

Oh, holy shit.

He and Lloyd both look obliterated, barely able to stand up. Even so, they both get real serious as Cain approaches.

LLOYD

Ollie, I hate snakes.

OLLIE

Yeah, they're freaky.

LLOYD

No, I mean, I hate them. Really.

Cain hands one of the snakes to Carly, who turns to Lloyd, excited and pleased.

CARLY

Check it out, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Oh, yeah. I'm... checking it.

Carly raises the snake towards Lloyd and he flinches back.

CARLY
Just relax.

She drapes the snake around his neck. He freezes, afraid to move a muscle.

She strokes the snake as it moves over Lloyd's shoulders.

Ollie watches, freaked out but also a little amazed. He doesn't notice Melody until she's right beside him.

She holds another snake, letting it crawl around her arms.

Before Ollie can protest, Melody begins to kiss him passionately, and he forgets all about the snake.

EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - NIGHT

Morgan and Reese walk back to the RV. She's still upset.

Neither of them notices Earl, the bearded guy, following them about thirty yards back.

REESE
You gonna tell me about it?

MORGAN
I don't want to...

REESE
C'mon. You freak out over the first hint of religion, of course I'm gonna ask.

They reach the RV, and Morgan heads up the steps first.

Reese finally notices Earl. Reese hangs back a moment.

Earl walks around the RV, checking its bumpers.

Reese closes the RV door, then waits on the steps.

Earl comes around the back of the RV and jumps a little when he sees Reese waiting for him.

REESE
Can I help you?

EARL
This your RV?

REESE
Yeah. Something wrong?

EARL
Where's your sticker?

REESE
We talked to somebody about that.

EARL
Yeah, well, you didn't talk to me.
Everyone's supposed to have a sticker.

REESE
Dude... it's fine. Really.

EARL
We've had problems with outsiders before.

REESE
That's really none of your business.

EARL
I can make it my business. I can make
sure you two don't drive out of here
tonight. That what you want, hoss?

REESE
Why would you do that?

EARL
'Cause we're freaks. Isn't that what
your bitch girlfriend said?

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

All around the community center, kids dance with snakes,
everyone taking gulps of that same clear liquid. Several
snakes crawl across the ground, ignored.

Ollie and Lloyd are completely smashed now, pupils dilated
like they're tripping.

Lloyd doesn't look nervous anymore. He handles the snake on
his arm casually as he slow-dances with Carly.

Carly turns to Melody, presses the glass to her lips. The
two of them dance very close as Melody drinks. She swallows,
shudders as it hits her system, then kisses Carly. Long.
Slow. Sensuous.

Melody turns to Ollie. He's got two snakes now, one on each
arm, staggers in a circle, obliterated.

She holds up the glass, and Ollie shakes his head, barely
conscious at this point.

OLLIE

No... no way... can't.

She basically pours the sip down his throat. He coughs, sputters, choking on it. He backs off, waving his arms.

One of the snakes he holds begins to rattle wildly, agitated. Ollie stops, his full attention on the sound. He looks at the snake as it twists its head back to face him.

For a moment, they both sway, almost in synch --

-- and the snake *STRIKES*, lighting-fast, biting his throat!

Ollie screams, but with the music as loud as it is, the only one who hears it is Melody. Ollie drops to his knees, reaching up with his other hand to pull the snake free --

-- when the second snake strikes twice, once on the cheek, once in the throat!

Ollie wrestles with both snakes, looking around for someone to help, but no one else seems concerned. Certainly not Melody. Lloyd's not even looking, too busy with Carly.

Melody looks at Ollie, completely unconcerned.

MELODY

You've been chosen to be tested.

Ollie screams again, louder. This time, Lloyd hears him and whips around.

LLOYD

... Ollie? What's..?

He sees the snakes hanging off Ollie, their fangs buried in him. He looks around, amazed at the lack of response from everyone else, like they're enjoying what's going on.

EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - NIGHT

Earl puts his hand into his jacket pocket, and Reese spots something heavy there in the pocket.

Reese takes a step back, without even meaning to. He realizes this isn't just an idle conversation.

REESE

Hey... relax... okay?

The unmistakable moment -- something bad about to happen --

-- when Morgan opens the door, face painted.

MORGAN

What's going on out here?

Whatever that symbol painted on Morgan's face is, it has an immediate effect on Earl. He stares at her, confused.

EARL

But... didn't you say...

REESE

See? Everything's fine.

Earl considers them both, shakes his head.

EARL

Unh-unh. I don't think so.

REESE

Then we'll just move the RV.

EARL

Maybe you should wait here. I'll get someone who can sort this out.

REESE

Really. It's no problem. We'll just move it and you can...

Earl pulls his hand out of his pocket. Reese sees the gun before Earl brings it up, points it in Reese's face.

EARL

Stay right where you are. Now you're gonna tell me what you're really doing here.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Lloyd shoves people aside, rushes to Ollie.

LLOYD

Hold on, man! CAIN! CAIN, HELP!

At first, no one pays any attention to Lloyd. They're all caught up in their own celebrations.

MELODY

What's wrong with you, Lloyd?

LLOYD

He's been bit! The poison...

MELODY

... is just the same poison you've been drinking all night. He'll be fine.

Lloyd looks around at the jars everyone holds full of the clear liquid, more freaked out than ever now.

Lloyd rips one of the two snakes off of Ollie. It whips around and tries to strike at him, but he hurls it away.

CARLY

What are you doing?! Stop that!

LLOYD

They're killing him, you crazy bitch!

Oops. That did it. Now everyone's paying attention to Lloyd, including Cain.

Cain cuts the distance to Lloyd and Ollie in a second.

CAIN

What the fuck did you just say?

Lloyd pulls on the snake that's still attached to Ollie. It doesn't come loose; instead, it holds on, shredding his cheek as Lloyd pulls.

Ollie shrieks, in blinding pain now.

Cain pushes Lloyd out of the way and takes hold of the snake.

It releases Ollie immediately and curls onto Cain's arm.

Ollie collapses, pitching forward, his face already swollen up to double-size, his neck turning black, his cheek open and bleeding and raw.

Lloyd moves to help him, but Cain pushes Lloyd back.

CAIN

You're not supposed to be here.

LLOYD

Okay, you caught us! Now call an ambulance! You can't just let him die.

CAIN

And you can't just walk into someone else's worship uninvited.

LLOYD

CALL THE MOTHERFUCKING AMBU--

POW! Cain punches Lloyd in the face hard enough to sit him on his ass, dazed.

Before anyone can react, Cain whips around and grabs Carly by the throat. The snake coiled around his arm inches closer to her face... closer...

CAIN
You picked up outsiders?!

CARLY
They ain't! They can't be!

CAIN
They are! And you brought them here! So
tell me what the fuck do we do with them?

He squeezes hard, and Carly struggles just to draw enough breath to answer as the snake crawls closer...

CARLY
We... we have... to tell... Dad.

Cain knows she's right. The answer terrifies him. He lets his sister go, and she scrambles back, out of reach.

CARLY
We could just... kill both of them. We
could just bury them out here somewhere
and be done with it.

CAIN
What if they weren't alone? What if
there's more of them back there at the
Happiness? What if they see it tonight?

He kicks Lloyd in the side, hard.

CAIN
Are you alone?

LLOYD
You can't kill us.

CAIN
Are you alone?!

Lloyd almost answers, then doesn't. He crosses his arms, furious and afraid in equal measure.

Cain kicks him again.

CAIN
Answer me, or I'll break your ribs.

LLOYD
Please. Please don't let him die. We
didn't see shit. We don't know shit.

WHACK! A perfect kick to the sternum, and Lloyd falls back,
unable to speak, unable to breathe.

CAIN
That ain't what I asked you, fuckwad. I
asked... are... you... alone?

EXT. RV - NIGHT

Reese can see how upset Earl is, how close to violence.

REESE
Look, whatever your problem is, I'm sure
we can work it out.

EARL
My problem is outsiders. You got no
right to be here, and just 'cause your
bitch painted her face as one of the
faithful don't mean...

MORGAN
What did you call me?

Reese sees some other people approaching. They haven't
spotted Earl or the gun yet. Reese turns and pushes Morgan
back up the steps, into the RV.

EARL
Stop right there. Don't you move.

REESE
You'll have to stop me yourself.

Reese walks up the steps into the RV --

INT. RV - NIGHT

-- and Earl walks up the steps after him.

EARL
Damn it, I told you to st--

WHACK! Reese spins around and punches Earl hard enough to
crack teeth. Earl slams his head back into the wall of the
RV and goes down, out cold.

MORGAN
OHMYGOD, REESE! What did you do?

REESE
He had a gun, baby.

EXT. HAPPINESS FESTIVAL - NIGHT

Jake moves so he can get a better look at the people who walk away from the festival grounds, into the woods.

They walk past a line of Cloaked Women handing out red candles to each person.

Up onstage, more and more people dance with the snakes.

Jake turns back to say something to Kathleen --

-- but she's not there.

Kathleen finds herself swept away in the crowd.

Jake calls after her, looks around for her, but it's no use.

Kathleen turns around, struggles against the tide of people, until someone reaches out, grabs her arm --

-- and Gramma Bird pulls Kathleen close, like she's plucking her out of a raging river!

GRAMMA BIRD
You look the way I feel, dear. People
get so caught up, so carried away.

KATHLEEN
I want to get back to my husband.

GRAMMA BIRD
He'll catch up with us.

Kathleen can't really argue. She holds onto Gramma Bird's arm as they move with the crowd, into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

As they're swept along, the woods seem to crowd in on both sides, more and more narrow, until suddenly, they step into a clearing.

Kathleen finds herself facing the biggest bonfire of all, surrounded by people. This close, Kathleen can see a wide firebed, blisteringly hot.

JAKE

tries to push his way through the crowd, tries to follow after Kathleen, but he can't see where she went.

KATHLEEN

sees the Older Couple again, next to the fire. The Husband carries a wicker basket holding all the slips of paper.

Everyone hugs them, shakes their hands. Warm, emotional.

BEN

looks out at the crowd around him, desperate.

BEN

People do not understand us. Some people even fear us. But those of us gathered here tonight know the truth. We know that Our Father watches over us. He protects us. And for this protection, we offer him our greatest gift.

CAIN

runs up to the festival grounds. He looks across the rolling mass of people and the distant stage.

BEN

smiles, ecstatic, as he continues.

BEN

Let the Happiness begin!

GRAMMA BIRD

steps forward, Kathleen still arm-in-arm with her.

Gale and several other men stand close to the flames, stoking the bonfire so it grows hotter and hotter.

Gramma Bird and Kathleen are handed plastic cups. Gramma Bird scoops liquid from an open barrel and pours it over the head of the Older Woman.

GRAMMA BIRD

Now you, dear.

Kathleen dips her cup into the barrel. She pours the cup over the head of the Older Man.

Kathleen steps back to join Gramma Bird as more people step up to pour liquid from the barrel over the Older Couple.

Kathleen smells her hands, disturbed by the scent.

The Older Couple holds the basket between them as they step up to the edge of the wide firebed, everyone finished dousing them in the liquid now.

In that last moment, Kathleen realizes what's going on. She smells her hand again.

KATHLEEN

Ohmygod...

She looks at Gramma Bird, who beams, positively ecstatic.

Kathleen looks around. Gale stands behind her, protectively towering over them, intent on the Older Couple. There's nowhere for her to go.

JAKE

continues to fight his way forward, but there are just too many people, and he can barely move.

THE OLDER COUPLE

steps forward, calmly, ready for this --

-- directly onto the firebed, where they both instantly ignite in flames!

As they are engulfed, their hair and skin burn like paper, fast, and they barely make it two steps before they drop.

KATHLEEN

is right there, close enough to look right into their eyes in the few seconds before they burst from the heat.

She can see it, hear it, smell it. She shuts her eyes.

The Older Couple twist and contort in terrible pain. Their hands melt together. Yet somehow they don't scream. They embrace this, at peace with it.

Finally, Kathleen turns away from the fire, soul-sick at what she's witnessed. No one around her sees how upset she is.

JAKE

does, though. He's not close enough to see what's happening in the bonfire, but he spots Kathleen when she turns around.

He calls her name, but it's lost in the noise of the crowd.

CAIN

pushes his way past everyone onstage, right out to where his father stands. He puts his hand on his father's shoulder --

-- and Ben Sturges turns around!

BEN

Where have you been, Cain? You all missed the start of the Happiness. Hope you've got a good reason.

CAIN

(whispers)
Outsiders.

For a moment, it looks like Ben's going to strike Cain.

BEN

How many?

CAIN

Two. Just two. They're out at the Community Center.

BEN

Damn your Youth Meetings. They're about as secure as your sister's underpants.

Ben glances out at the immense crowd of people.

Who out there doesn't belong? Who out there just witnessed something they shouldn't have?

Ben closes his eyes... angry, determined.

BEN

You better pray they were alone.

EXT. HAPPINESS FESTIVAL - NIGHT

Even crazier now.

JAKE

struggles with the crowd. He keeps catching glimpses of Kathleen in the crowd, then losing her again.

KATHLEEN

looks around at all the faces, everyone caught up in religious ecstasy, and she struggles not to weep.

Kathleen walks very slowly away from the bonfire, back through the woods, focused on keeping her composure.

Someone bumps her as they race to get closer to the bonfire, and for a moment, she's turned back towards it.

She sees the Older Couple, almost ash by now.

And when she turns away again, the tears flow freely.

JAKE

spots her again, sees that she's alone.

JAKE

Kathleen!

She can't hear. She's too focused on walking away.

Jake hurries to catch up with her, desperate now.

JAKE

KATHLEEN!

She stops, turns back, scans the crowd. When she sees Jake, she can't hold back the rush of sudden emotion, the horror of what she just witnessed, and she bursts into tears.

She runs for Jake --

-- until Gramma Bird and Gale step into her path!

One gesture from Gramma Bird, and Gale grabs her, picks her up off the ground easily.

There's no time for Kathleen to even wipe away her tears. Gramma Bird reaches up and puts her hand on Kathleen's face.

GRAMMA BIRD

I think we should talk about what you've seen tonight, dear... don't you?

Gramma Bird leads Gale away, carrying Kathleen. She offers no resistance.

Jake's too far away to do anything but watch them go, screaming Kathleen's name to no avail.

Frustrated, he takes off running in a different direction, back towards the RV.

EXT. RV - NIGHT

Jake comes running up. The door opens and Reese looks out.

JAKE
Reese! You're not going to believe what happened!

REESE
I might. Hold on a minute.

Reese ducks back in, then rolls Earl out of the RV, down the steps, leaving him sprawled on the ground.

Jake looks down at Earl, confused.

JAKE
What the hell?

REESE
Long story. You should get in now.

Jake hurries up the steps, still confused.

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Kathleen sits on the small pull-out sofa, still in shock. Gale hovers nearby, towering over her.

Gramma Bird carries over a tea tray, sets it down on the coffee table, fixes two cups.

GRAMMA BIRD
This was your first Happiness, wasn't it?

KATHLEEN
... yes.

Gramma passes Kathleen one of the cups of tea.

GRAMMA BIRD
Let me show you something.

Kathleen takes a sip of the tea to steady her nerves as Gramma Bird heads into the back of the trailer.

She emerges with a huge overstuffed photo album, and she dismisses Gale with a wave as she sits down again.

GRAMMA BIRD

I keep this so I'll always remember how many people are part of this tradition. This book connects us to our history.

Gale heads back out to the festival grounds, closes the door behind himself.

Gramma Bird opens the book across both their laps, turns it all the way back to the start, past black and white snapshots, color pictures, Polaroids fading to pink.

They flip through a few pages and stop on a black & white 8x10 from the late 40's of a pretty girl in her teens.

GRAMMA BIRD

That's me. I was 15. My first Happiness Festival.

She turns to another picture of herself at 15, but this time with a STERN-FACED COUPLE.

GRAMMA BIRD

That man and that woman... it was their day to give their lives. I'll never forget them. I'll never forget any of them, or what they've done for us.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Reese practically throws Jake into the driver's seat.

JAKE

I don't understand. What's going on?

REESE

We'll figure that out once we get out of the campgrounds and back into town. Right now, I think it's a real bad idea for us to be here.

Jake sits in the driver's seat, still dazed.

MORGAN

Where's Kathleen, Jake? Where's my sister?

JAKE
They... they took her.

MORGAN
They? They, who?

REESE
We'll discuss this later. Right now,
both of you just buckle up.

MORGAN
Reese, we can't just go.

Jake takes out his keys.

REESE
That's right, Jake. We've gotta go.
We'll figure this out, do what we need
to, but right now... we have to move.

EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - NIGHT

Jake steps on the gas. The RV's still all plugged in, but Jake guns it, yanking all the connections loose. The RV drives away, leaving Earl unconscious on the ground.

EXT. JENNY'S DINER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The RV drives down the street, looking for something that's open. Jenny's Diner is lit up, several people inside, and there's a good-sized parking lot adjoining.

The RV pulls in and stops.

INT. RV - NIGHT

As the full weight of the evening catches up to Jake, he starts to break down a bit.

JAKE
I don't understand what happened. I have
to go back for Kathleen.

REESE
No problem, man. We just had to move the
RV someplace safe. Whatever's going on
at that campground, those people don't
want us watching. Come on.

Jake and Morgan follow Reese outside --

EXT. JENNY'S DINER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

-- where Reese unhooks one of the motorcycles from the trailer. Jake starts to do the same.

REESE

We'll ride back on these. We find Kathleen, we find the guys, we get out of there. Quick as we can.

JAKE

What about that guy back at the campsite? What if we run into him?

REESE

We gotta hope that doesn't happen. The way that guy acted, I get the feeling this isn't a real big "talk first, shoot later" sort of crowd. Morgan... stay inside and out of sight.

She doesn't argue. Jake and Reese hop on their bikes, start them up, and take off. Morgan watches them disappear into the night, then heads back inside the RV.

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Gramma Bird and Kathleen, still on the couch. Gramma Bird flips to the back of the book.

On the last page, Gramma Bird lays in a new photo --

-- the couple who just burned themselves!

GRAMMA BIRD

So you see, dear? There is a continuum here. Uninterrupted. Sacred. You can look at tonight as an ending, but in the larger scheme of things, this is just one more page in the book.

She closes the book, but she can see that Kathleen's still troubled, still in shock.

GRAMMA BIRD

Let me ask you... would you do it?

KATHLEEN

Do what?

GRAMMA BIRD

Would you lay down your life for the good of the community?

It's a test. And Kathleen knows it.

The door opens to the trailer, and Gale steps up, still covered in ash and soot from the bonfire.

He stops at Gramma's signal, stands there over them, shovel still in hand.

KATHLEEN

For the good of the community... of course. Absolutely.

Gramma Bird smiles, and Gale smiles in response, not sure what's going on but happy anyway.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Once they're close enough to hear the noise from the festival grounds, Jake and Reese slow to a stop so they can talk.

JAKE

Okay... what if we can't find Kathleen?
Or what if something's happened to her?

REESE

This town's gotta have a sheriff, right?
These people may have permits for
whatever kind of freaky-ass party they're
throwing, but someone disappearing's
gotta get his attention. You ready?

Jake nods, and Reese leads as they drive out onto --

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

-- where this friendly gathering is out-of-control.

Everyone doing whatever they want. A few COUPLES brazenly fuck out in the open, right on the ground.

Jake and Reese drive slowly, crawling along so they can look around. They split up, each taking a different side of the festival grounds.

Jake shakes his head, unable to believe what he's seeing, increasingly freaked out.

JAKE

KATHLEEN?!

A few people with PAINTED FACES lurch out of the crowd at Jake and Reese, laughing, but there's nothing mirthful about it. They seem menacing, deranged.

JAKE
KATHLEEN, WHERE ARE YOU!?

A STRANGE WOMAN grabs Jake from behind, almost pulling Jake off his motorcycle. She's nude, out of her mind.

She grabs the front of Jake's pants as she tries to climb on the bike with him.

STRANGE WOMAN
I'll help you find her. Then we can both have her.

Jake elbows the woman in the jaw, hard, and she stumbles back.

JAKE
What's wrong with you?!

Jake guns it, drives off, and the Strange Woman just laughs.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Cain and Ben walk up, Ben still fuming. When Carly sees her father, she bursts into tears, sobbing uncontrollably.

CARLY
We didn't know they were strangers,
daddy. Honest, we didn't.

Ben gently caresses her face, wipes away the tears.

BEN
Everything's going to be alright.

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Reese rides his bike slowly, on the edge of things.

He rides past the main bonfire on his motorcycle and spots Gale and a couple other guys working with shovels. He rides closer for a better look.

Reese sees them work over piles of embers in the smoldering pit. Gale chips away at them with his shovel.

With a start, Reese recognizes a human skull in the embers.

Gale smashes the skull with his shovel, grinding it up completely, not reacting to it at all.

Reese sees a few people look his way, so he guns the motorcycle and keeps moving.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Ben kneels down beside Ollie, checks him out. Ollie's not quite dead yet, but he will be. He's bloated, grossly bruised, skin blistered from poison, retching.

Ben looks over at Lloyd, who's been hog-tied.

BEN

What's your name?

LLOYD

(weak)

Go to hell.

All the kids look at Lloyd like he's insane.

BEN

What's his name? Anybody?

CARLY

L-Lloyd... I think.

BEN

Lloyd... I know this is difficult for you, but there's more at stake here than you and me. A entire community's safety is at stake. The lives of families and children might be in jeopardy.

(pause)

I'm going to ask you some questions, and you're going to answer them. All of them. Truthfully. Agreed?

Lloyd doesn't respond. He just stares at Ben, simmering.

BEN

I'll take that stare of doom as a yes. You and your friend here... are you alone? Did you come with anyone else?

Lloyd spits in Ben's face.

LLOYD

I'm not answering shit until you help my friend. He's dying.

Ben and Cain walk away. They stand together, twenty yards from anyone else, speak in low whispers.

BEN

Of all the times for this to happen. Dammit... send someone to get Gramma.

INT. RV - NIGHT

There's a noise outside. Morgan hears it. Footsteps? She stops what she's doing and listens.

Nothing. Just silence.

MORGAN

Reese?!

No response. She looks over at the door. Unlocked.

MORGAN

Shit.

She cautiously walks over, inching her way toward the door. She reaches out, puts her hand on the deadbolt, and turns it.

She breathes a sigh of relief and goes up on her tip-toes to peek out the small window in the door.

A FACE fills the window suddenly!

Morgan cries out, jumps back from the door. The face vanishes, only to be replaced by a badge.

VOICE (OUTSIDE)

Ma'am? I'm a deputy sheriff.

Morgan looks at the badge, unlocks the door and opens it.

DEPUTY VAUGHN stands there, young guy, good-looking, smiling.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

I'm so sorry to scare you.

MORGAN

It's okay. I just... my boyfriend...

DEPUTY VAUGHN

Ma'am, you can't park your RV here. Makes it hard for people to get in and out of the diner. Shouldn't you be over at the campgrounds?

MORGAN

No. We're not with them.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

Oh... really?

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Jake and Reese spot each other and regroup.

JAKE
No sign of Kathleen, but I'm pretty sure
these people are crazy.

REESE
Y'think? I just saw a skull in one of
the bonfires, man.

JAKE
Excuse me?

REESE
A human skull... in the ashes.

Jake tries to process this, but can't. He shakes his head.

JAKE
(whispers)
What the hell is wrong with these people?

REESE
At this point, who cares? We need to
tell someone what's going on. We should
go back to town and...

Jake reacts to something off-camera, points.

JAKE
Him. He's the one who had Kathleen.

Reese turns to see who Jake's pointing at and spots --

-- *Gale, walking across the festival grounds.*

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

A knock on the door. Gramma Bird answers it.

A NERVOUS YOUNG MAN stands there.

NERVOUS YOUNG MAN
Ma'am, I apologize, but Ben Sturges sent
me to get you. It's urgent.

GRAMMA BIRD
Then I suppose you'd better come in.

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Jake and Reese follow Gale at a distance. He finishes gathering up his snake crates from the stage and starts back toward Gramma Bird's trailer.

REESE

He's the one I saw crush that skull.

JAKE

This just keeps getting better.

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Gramma Bird moves quickly around the apartment, gathering up a few things. A knitting bag. Her shawl.

The door opens and Gale comes stomping up the steps, pushing past the Nervous Young Man.

In that moment while the door is open, Kathleen looks past Gale and sees something outside --

-- Jake and Reese, in the shadows, watching the trailer!

A desperate look washes over her face, like she wants to cry out to them, but before she can, the door closes again.

KATHLEEN

Listen, you've been kind, but I really should be getting back.

GRAMMA BIRD

Oh, we're not finished yet, dear.

KATHLEEN

Really, I just want to...

GRAMMA BIRD

Really. Sit down.

Gale hears a particular tone in Gramma's voice, and he turns to face Kathleen, no smile on his face.

Kathleen sits.

GRAMMA BIRD

We'll keep talking when I get back.
(to Gale)
Keep her here.

EXT. FESTIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Jake starts toward the trailer, but Reese practically tackles him, drags him back into the shadows, out of sight.

Jake struggles, but Reese holds him still.

REESE

Wait! Just wait, okay?

A moment later, the door opens again, and the Nervous Young Man helps Gramma Bird down the steps and into his car.

Gale watches them drive away. He turns around and closes the door, sealing Kathleen inside.

JAKE

Okay... now what?

REESE

Now we figure out how to get your wife out of there without getting killed by that gorilla.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Morgan sits across from Deputy Vaughn.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

I know the guy you're talking about. I'm sure he deserved whatever your boyfriend did to him. It's no problem. Really.

MORGAN

We just figured we should move the RV. We didn't mean to pull in there.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

It was an accident.

MORGAN

Exactly.

Deputy Vaughn stands up, ready to leave.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

How 'bout I check in with the sheriff, make sure Earl's okay, then help you gather up your friends?

MORGAN

We didn't want any trouble, but you know how these religious nuts can be.

Vaughn's smile never wavers. He stops just short of the door, though, and turns back.

Vaughn keeps smiling as he walks back toward Morgan.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
Religious nuts, eh?

MORGAN
That's what it looked like.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
I wouldn't know. I figure someone's religion is a private issue. Don't you?

MORGAN
Sure. I guess.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
Are you religious?

MORGAN
No... not since I was very young.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Ben sees the Nervous Young Man reappear at the edge of the crowd. He nods at Ben, who stands over Lloyd and Ollie, looking down at them.

BEN
Last chance.

Ollie's stopped moving altogether now. Every now and then, he makes a horrible wheezing sound as he gasps for air.

Lloyd lies motionless but wide awake. No response from either of them. Ben sighs and steps aside.

Gramma Bird steps forward, knitting bag held close.

GRAMMA BIRD
Oh, sweetie... look at you. Look at this mess you're in. I'm so sorry.

LLOYD
Help me. Please.

GRAMMA BIRD
That's why I'm here.

LLOYD

Thank God. These people are crazy. My friend is dying.

GRAMMA BIRD

And I want to help him. Who can we call? Who are you with?

Lloyd looks past Gramma Bird to Ben, Cain, Carly.

LLOYD

No one. It's just me and him.

Gramma Bird sets her knitting bag next to Lloyd, sighs.

GRAMMA BIRD

You must not want my help.

LLOYD

I do. I do, please.

Gramma Bird reaches out, brushes Lloyd's hair back gently from his face --

GRAMMA BIRD

Well, then...

-- and grabs hold of his hair, jerking his head back!

Lloyd cries out, frustrated, in pain.

GRAMMA BIRD

... tell me the truth. Tell me who you came here with.

LLOYD

I'M TELLING YOU THE TRUTH, YOU OLD BITCH!

Gramma Bird opens her knitting bag. She draws out a long gleaming KNITTING NEEDLE.

GRAMMA BIRD

That's no way to talk. Gramma Bird's gonna have to teach you some manners.

Lloyd reacts sharply, struggling to get free.

LLOYD

I JUST WANT SOME GODDAMN HELP! PLEASE!

**Gramma sticks the knitting needle deep into Lloyd's shoulder!
It slides in easily, clean!**

Lloyd howls in pain and fear.

LLOYD
OHGODPLEASE!

GRAMMA BIRD
Tell Gramma about your friends.

Gramma Bird twists the needle again, deeper

GRAMMA BIRD
Tell Gramma everything.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Deputy Vaughn opens the door for a moment, looks outside.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
The thing about religion is... it gives
you strength. It connects you to power.

MORGAN
Religion isn't about power. It's about
weakness. People who can't handle their
problems turn to God to do it for them.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
You just don't have faith.

MORGAN
You're right. I don't. I don't have any
faith at all, because I know there isn't
a God. I know it's just a fairy tale
people tell themselves. My mother and my
father were in a car accident when I was
eight years old. They didn't die right
away. They lingered, suffering. It took
nine hours for my father to die. Another
four for my mother. And that whole time,
you know what I did? I prayed. I prayed
as hard as I could, with my whole heart.
I believed. I believed God would save
them. But He didn't. Because He
couldn't. Because... he isn't.

Deputy Vaughn chuckles.

MORGAN
What?

DEPUTY VAUGHN
Who said our religion had anything to do
with God?

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Gramma Bird leaves the first needle in place as she reaches back into her bag, brings out another needle, just as sharp.

LLOYD

Ollie and I are here by ourselves! Our car is parked in town! I swear!

Gramma drives the second needle into Lloyd's other shoulder.

LLOYD

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!

GRAMMA BIRD

Your friend is already dead. I've got a dozen more needles in that bag and worse.

EXT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Gale walks out to his truck, around the far end of the trailer. Jake sees his opportunity --

-- and he sprints out of the shadows!

REESE

(hisses)

Jake, no, don't!

Jake darts across the grass toward the open door of the trailer, staying low. Reese watches Gale closely, terrified.

Jake scrambles up the steps --

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

-- and grabs Kathleen by the hand.

Her first reaction is to embrace him, shaky, on the verge of tears. Just as quickly, though, she pushes him away.

KATHLEEN

Jake, you're crazy.

JAKE

Come on. Now. Let's go.

KATHLEEN

Go where? He'll be right back.

JAKE

So what? Just stay here? Fuck that. Come on. Right now.

EXT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Reese moves so he can see Gale rooting around in the bed of his truck, amidst all the long snake boxes.

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Kathleen pulls free and pushes Jake toward the door.

KATHLEEN
I don't want to make him angry. I don't
think I'm in danger... yet.

JAKE
Kath, this is crazy.

EXT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Gale brings out a toolbox. Reese moves back so Kathleen can see him and points to where Gale is, frantic.

Gale starts back toward the front door.

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

KATHLEEN
If you want us to get out of this alive,
then get in that pantry. Move!

It's the last thing Jake wants to do, but he steps into the oversized pantry --

-- just as Gale steps back into the trailer!

Kathleen sits back down on the couch.

Gale stops, looks around. He knows something is wrong.

KATHLEEN
Will Gramma Bird be back soon?

Gale holds his toolbox like a baby with a blanket, nods.

Kathleen picks up the photo album and leafs through it, trying to look nonchalant.

Gale watches her closely, sets his toolbox on the counter.

JAKE'S POV

Jake peers out through the slots in the pantry door.

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Gale opens his toolbox. Kathleen doesn't glance over. She just turns another page in the photo album, calm, head down.

Gale reaches in, takes something out. A glint of silver from the overhead light.

Kathleen steals one quick look. Her hand trembles.

Gale's eyes narrow and he steps toward her.

She looks again, and this time, she sees --

-- a custom-made surgical-grade BLADE!

Kathleen snaps to her feet.

Gale roars at her, bristling.

She takes one step, and he grabs her by the throat, his hand dwarfing her head.

He raises the knife.

Jake explodes out of the pantry!

Jake slams a can into Gale's head as hard as he can! Blood sprays from the gash in Gale's head as he staggers sideways, releasing Kathleen!

Jake stays on Gale, swinging the can again with full strength, right at Gale's wrist.

Gale's custom knife hits the floor of the trailer and sticks.

Jake swings one more time --

-- and Gale catches the can mid-swing, squeezes it so hard the can ruptures!

JAKE

Aw, fuck!

Gale picks Jake up and hurls him across the trailer with frightening ease --

-- and Jake smashes into Gale's tanks, sending snakes and glass everywhere!

Gale steps on one of the snakes as he steps toward Jake --

-- and the snake STRIKES, sinking its teeth into Gale's leg!

Gale howls, tries to shake the snake loose.

Jake sidesteps a few snakes as he stands up again. He lays into Gale, throwing several punches right at his face.

Gale punches Jake in the chest once and Jake practically caves in. Gale punches him again and Jake goes back down.

Gale turns back toward Kathleen --

-- and Kathleen slams Gale's blade into his chest!

Gale backhands her so hard --

EXT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

-- that Kathleen flies out the door, down the steps of the trailer, landing on the ground hard!

Reese bursts from the shadows and charges over to Kathleen.

REESE

Jake?!

She points back up the stairs --

-- as Gale staggers onto the top step, pulls the knife free.

REESE

Goddamn, you're even bigger close-up,
aren't you?

Gale lurches forward --

-- and then jerks back as Jake grabs him from behind, around the neck, using his full weight to hold Gale in place!

JAKE

Get her out of here, Reese! Go!

Reese drags Kathleen to her feet.

KATHLEEN

No, Jake!

Gale manages one more step.

JAKE

GO! FOR GOD'S SAKE!

Reese and Kathleen run, him dragging her against her will.

KATHLEEN
NO! JAKE! PLEASE!

Gale roars again as Reese and Kathleen disappear from view. He slashes Jake's forearm, causing Jake to release him.

Gale whips around as he jumps off the steps --

-- and Jake kicks him in the face, hard!

Gale staggers, dazed now. He slashes at the snake still dug into his leg. Once. Twice.

The snake releases Gale, but he keeps cutting it, furious.

Jake backs up a few steps, then runs and dives at Gale --

-- who catches Jake and lifts him like a doll, shakes him!

Jake tries to punch Gale in the gash in his head, lands one or two hits, but Gale barely notices.

He throws Jake at the trailer, shatters one of the windows.

Jake cries out as he lands.

REESE & KATHLEEN

climb onto Reese's motorcycle, and Reese kickstarts it as quickly as he can.

REESE
Hold on!

GALE

looks around at the sound of the motorcycle. He looks at Jake, who isn't moving, and runs for his truck.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Reese almost wipes out as he pulls onto the road.

EXT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Jake tries to get up as Gale's truck rumbles to life, peeling out after the motorcycle.

He can't quite make it to his feet, though, and ends up collapsing again.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Kathleen holds onto Reese. She glances back and sees Gale's headlights as he pulls onto the road behind them.

KATHLEEN
He's coming!

Reese opens it up, the motorcycle picking up speed... faster... faster...

KATHLEEN
He's still coming!

Reese looks back. Sure enough, Gale's truck steadily approaches, gaining little by little.

Reese sees a crossroad ahead.

Gale's truck gets even closer. So close now that Kathleen can look back and see Gale's face. Kathleen closes her eyes and leans in close to Reese.

At the last moment, Reese turns onto the crossroad and Gale's truck misses the turn!

Reese and Kathleen gain a little ground, but Gale gets turned around quickly and ends up right behind them again.

Gale gets so close he bumps the back end of the motorcycle.

Kathleen screams. Reese struggles to control the bike.

Reese steers the motorcycle off-road. He's got no choice. Gale follows closely behind.

EXT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Jake finally stands up, groggy.

Jake sees a YOUNG COUPLE walk by on their way to the festival grounds, and he goes after them.

JAKE
Excuse me... hold on...

They stop, let him catch up.

JAKE
Do you live in town?
(off their nod)
Great. Can you tell me where the Sheriff's office is?

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Reese steers the bike across a wide uneven field, zig-zags to keep Gale off his tail.

Gale cuts across the field to try and cut them off.

Reese cuts around the back of Gale's truck and heads down a steep slope at the far end of the field.

Gale drives his truck along the top of the slope, trying to keep pace with Reese.

The woods ahead are too dense to drive into, so Reese rides parallel to Gale, who stays on top of the slope.

Gale edges closer to the slope, keeps his eye on Reese.

Gale gets a little too close to the slope, and his truck starts to slide sideways, about to tip over.

Reese looks back, sees what's happening.

He runs the motorcycle halfway up the hill so Gale gets a good look at him.

Reese cuts back down toward the lower path. Gale pulls his wheel hard to the right, trying to follow --

-- and his truck rolls over onto its side!

Reese realizes the truck is rolling directly at them. There's nothing they can do.

Reese twists the front end of the motorcycle, so they're pointed straight down the slope, into the trees.

The truck makes one final roll, slamming sideways into the wall of trees with a thundering CRASH!

Reese lays the bike down to avoid a crash, both he and Kathleen tumbling out of the way.

Reese jumps up almost immediately, checks to make sure they're okay.

REESE
Kathleen?! You okay?!

KATHLEEN
I think so, yeah.

Reese walks closer to the truck. The only sound is the hissing of a broken radiator. Reese can't see through the spiderweb of the windshield.

He walks around to the driver's side.

Gale leans sideways, his head pushed through the broken-out driver's window, glass sunk deep into his neck and face.

He tries to move his head, but his neck looks broken. Even worse, when he moves, hot arterial spray hits Reese.

Gale draws one ragged breath... one more...

... then dies.

EXT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Down the block from Jenny's Diner and next to the hardware store, this is a double-wide two-story building.

Jake stands several storefronts away, trying to be discrete as he watches the front of the Sheriff's Department.

Nothing. No traffic in or out. Jake steels himself and heads for the front door.

INT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake looks around the lobby, not sure what to expect.

There's no one around. No phones ringing.

JAKE
Ummm... hello?

A long moment passes, and then SHERIFF BECK emerges from the back, wiping his mouth with a napkin, still chewing.

SHERIFF BECK
Hi, there. Sorry 'bout that. I was just having a little pie.

JAKE
I need your help. My wife was kidnapped.

SHERIFF BECK
... excuse me?

JAKE
I know. Sounds crazy. We pulled in tonight, looking for gas, and one thing sort of led to another...

SHERIFF BECK
Where is your wife right now?

JAKE
She was on a motorcycle with Reese...

SHERIFF BECK
Who's Reese?

JAKE
Her sister's boyfriend.

SHERIFF BECK
So he kidnapped her?

JAKE
No... that was after...

SHERIFF BECK
So she's not kidnapped anymore?

JAKE
No. There was a fight. The big guy who kidnapped her... he attacked me when I was in his closet...

SHERIFF BECK
You were in his closet? Did he kidnap you, too?

JAKE
No. Sheriff... I'm sorry. I know this sounds crazy.

SHERIFF BECK
Yeah. Little bit.

JAKE
Maybe. But I'm not. Let me explain. We were over at the, uh, the Happiness Festival...

SHERIFF BECK
Oh. Okay. You were invited?

JAKE
No. Like I said, we just got turned around. Honest mistake.

SHERIFF BECK
Yeah. I'm sure.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Deputy Vaughn stands leaned across the front of the door.
Just stands there, arm folded, smile in place.

Morgan sits at the table, visibly uncomfortable now.

MORGAN

If I offended you earlier. If you're
religious, then, really... I apologize.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

Don't apologize. You can't help the way
you feel. Faith isn't easy. In my
experience, I've found that faith is
something you have to work for.

MORGAN

Maybe that's true.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

Oh, I'm sure it's true. Faith can be a
process that lasts your whole life.
Or... sometimes... faith can be something
that comes to you in one blinding
lightning bolt, some defining moment.

Morgan's a little surprised by his fervor.

MORGAN

... okay...

DEPUTY VAUGHN

I can see you don't know what I'm talking
about. Let me try and explain...

Deputy Vaughn reaches down and unsnaps his holster.

He doesn't take out his gun. He doesn't even touch the gun.
He just unsnaps the holster so it's open. Ready.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

You have faith, whether you know it or
not. Life is all about faith. At the
very least, I assume you have faith in
yourself. God let you down. Your
parents died and left you alone. You
can't trust other people. You can't
count on them. But you've learned that
you can count on yourself... right?

MORGAN

... you don't know me.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

You're right. But I know what you've told me today, and I don't think I'm really going out on a limb when I say... you have faith in yourself. Right?

MORGAN

... of course. Absolutely.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

That faith could be wrong. If you were really put to the test, you might crumble. You might not be good enough to do whatever you need to do.

INT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Beck walks around to the front of the counter, where he can stand next to Jake.

SHERIFF BECK

I can see something's happened tonight. Obviously. You're cut. You're bleeding.

JAKE

Right. If you want, you can just come with me, and I'll show you where she was.

SHERIFF BECK

Oh, we'll definitely do that.

There's a squawk from the other room, a blast of static on the radio.

SHERIFF BECK

But first... you'll excuse me.

Sheriff Beck walks into the other room.

Jake can hear him on the radio, but he can't make out what Sheriff Beck's saying.

After a moment, Sheriff Beck goes silent.

Jake stands waiting, straining to hear anything.

He sees Sheriff Beck glance over at him, around the corner.

When Sheriff Beck starts speaking again, he's quieter than before, so there's no chance Jake can hear him.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Deputy Vaughn takes his gun out of the holster.

Morgan flinches away, but he doesn't point the gun at her.

Instead, he sets it on the floor between them, steps back.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

Call it a practical experiment in faith.

MORGAN

I... I don't get it.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

You better hope you get it. Because if I reach it before you do... I'm gonna blow your goddamn head off.

He never stops smiling. Morgan can tell he's serious.

INT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Sheriff Beck walks out from the back room. Not smiling now.

SHERIFF BECK

Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to come with me back to my office.

Jake notices the gun in Beck's hand, stands up suddenly.

JAKE

Wait a minute...

SHERIFF BECK

Sir, let's not do anything stupid.

JAKE

What are you talking about? Are you arresting me?

SHERIFF BECK

Of course not, sir. We just need to talk about what happened to you tonight. I want to help you.

Jake backs away from Beck, towards the front door --

-- which opens, as several DEPUTIES start to file in.

JAKE

Wait a minute. This is all a huge misunderstanding.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Morgan eyes the gun. She sizes up the distance between them.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
So close, huh?

Morgan looks at the gun, tries to muster the courage.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
BOOM!

Morgan jumps, cries out. Vaughn laughs.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
I don't know about you, but the suspense
is killing me. What do you say? I'll
count to three, then we go for it.

MORGAN
Why are you doing this?

DEPUTY VAUGHN
One...

MORGAN
This is crazy.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
Two...

***Morgan suddenly leaps for the gun! Vaughn stomps Morgan's
hand before she can get to the weapon!***

Vaughn grabs the gun and violently pushes Morgan's face into
the floor. He gets on top of her, puts the barrel of his gun
to the back of her head.

DEPUTY VAUGHN
... three, bitch.

INT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Everyone hangs back from Jake, who stands in the center of
the room, panic really setting in.

SHERIFF BECK
Maybe you can help me tie up a few loose
ends. You can explain why Gale Bird's
sitting behind the wheel of his truck
with his throat cut. You can explain why
two boys are lying dead out at our
community center.

Both of these things cause Jake to react. He's not even sure what Beck is talking about.

SHERIFF BECK

And while you're at it, you can explain how someone thinks they're just going to walk into the middle of someone else's private worship without so much as a hello-how-d'ya-do?

Jake realizes Beck keeps getting closer and closer.

Jake grabs a heavy paperweight off one of the desks and holds it up, threatening Beck.

JAKE

I told you. We didn't mean to do anything. We were just looking for...

SHERIFF BECK

... for a place to gas up. Right. That's what you keep saying.

Jake swings the paperweight, but Sheriff Beck's faster.

Beck knocks the paperweight away. Grabs Jake by the neck. Whips him around. Slams his head into the wall.

SHERIFF BECK

What do you think you're doing?

CRACK! He does it again, even harder.

Jake tries to pull loose, but Beck grabs his arm and twists it, driving Jake down to his knees.

SHERIFF BECK

I'll break it, you son-of-a-bitch.

Beck pushes Jake's arm up further.

Jake howls in pain. Struggles to get free. Looks around, desperate. Sees Beck's gun in the holster, inches away.

Jake grabs it. Fumbles back the hammer. Jams the barrel into Beck's crotch!

JAKE

Do it and I'll blow your balls off, you son-of-a-bitch.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Morgan struggles as Vaughn sits on her, enjoying this.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

Now, see... you failed. Does that one failure mean that you shouldn't have any faith in yourself at all?

Morgan spots a fork on the floor.

DEPUTY VAUGHN

Of course not. Because faith isn't about getting everything you want. It's ab--

Morgan grabs the fork and swings at Vaughn's face --

-- *stabbing him in the eye!*

Blind, in extreme pain, Vaughn howls as he rolls off her. He drops his gun, focused on getting the fork out of his eye.

Morgan leaps up and looks around for a weapon, anything, reaches for the deadliest thing within arms reach --

-- *then raises a fire extinguisher above her head and brings it down on Vaughn's skull with a loud CRACK!*

INT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Beck's deputies charge the door.

JAKE

STAY BACK!

Beck waves them back as he lets go of Jake.

JAKE

Now turn around.

Beck turns his back on Jake, who stands up and wraps an arm around him, putting the gun to his head.

JAKE

We're going to walk out of here right now. We're going to go to your car.

SHERIFF BECK

Ain't gonna happen.

JAKE

Then you die.

SHERIFF BECK
Alright. Do it.

JAKE
I'm not kidding.

SHERIFF BECK
Neither am I. Do it. Shoot me. You
think you're going anywhere? You'll be
dead before I hit the floor.

Jake's so angry, so frustrated, close to tears.

JAKE
All I want to do is find my wife.

Beck relents, nods.

SHERIFF BECK
Alright... we'll walk out there together.
You and me.

He moves cautiously, disconnecting his keys from his belt.

SHERIFF BECK
Take the car if you think it'll help.

JAKE
What's the catch?

SHERIFF BECK
No catch. Go ahead. See what good it
does you.

Beck gestures for his deputies to fall back. Jake takes the
keys, slowly walks toward the door, leading Beck ahead of
him, gun pressed to his head.

EXT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake bursts out the front door of the SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT,
pushing Beck through first. Beck's cruiser is parked at the
door.

The deputies standing outside all back off.

Beck opens his driver's side door. Jake lets go of Beck.

JAKE
I'm letting you go.

SHERIFF BECK
Of course you are.

Jake climbs into the sheriff's car.

SHERIFF BECK
Just remember... if you're gonna race
with the devil, you better run like hell.

INT. SHERIFF BECK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jake fumbles with the keys, nervous. All of Beck's deputies hang back. Jake gets the car started, sobs from relief.

EXT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Jake backs the car out as the front door opens again --

-- and a deputy steps out and hands Sheriff Beck a shotgun!

He raises it to his shoulder and opens fire.

SHERIFF BECK
Time's up!

BOOM! BOOM! Both shots hit the windshield.

INT. SHERIFF BECK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jake freaks out and stomps the gas pedal, but loses control as the car reverses.

JAKE
Shitshitshitshit...

EXT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

The car makes a wide reverse arc as Beck continues to fire. The deputies join him, peppering the car with bullets.

Beck's car SMASHES into a parked car, stops. The deputies move closer, still firing.

INT. SHERIFF BECK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jake throws the car into drive and hits the gas.

EXT. HOSPITAL / PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Beck's car plows right into a YOUNG DEPUTY, who hangs on. He claws at the hood, trying to get a grip on it.

The other deputies FIRE at the wheels.

WHAM! Jake HITS a tree, pinning the Young Deputy! Blood sprays, his stomach and chest completely CRUSHED!

INT. SHERIFF BECK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jake moans at the sight.

JAKE
Oh, God, no.

A TALL DEPUTY appears at the passenger window, sidearm drawn.

Jake puts it in neutral by mistake, hits the gas.

The Deputy SHOOTs, blowing out the window!

EXT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Beck's car revs loudly but doesn't move. The Tall Deputy moves to the front of the car, gun up.

INT. SHERIFF BECK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jake panics, not sure what he did to the car.

JAKE
Whywon'tyougoyougoddamnpieceofsh--

He drops the car into drive by accident.

EXT. STARRETT CREEK SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

The car lurches forward --

-- and the Tall Deputy gets crushed beneath the wheels!

All the other deputies dive out of the way --

-- and Jake runs into a parking meter!

The car crumples around the meter and dies right there.

INT. SHERIFF BECK'S CAR - NIGHT

Sheriff Beck runs up and SMASHES OUT Jake's side window with the butt of his shotgun!

Beck jams the barrel against the side of Jake's head.

SHERIFF BECK
(calm)
Step out of the fucking vehicle.

Jake can barely hold back angry tears.

JAKE
I just want my wife...

WHACK! Beck SMASHES Jake in the face with the butt of his shotgun, knocking Jake out!

SHERIFF BECK
You have the right to remain unconscious.

EXT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - DAWN

Ben Sturges outside, smoking while the sun comes up.
Carly picks up the yard, putting glass into trash bags.

INT. GRAMMA BIRD'S TRAILER - DAWN

The aftermath of the fight. Cain gathers the snakes and returns them to the tanks that are still intact.

Gramma Bird sits on the couch, on the phone. In shock. Finally, after listening for a moment, she hangs up.

Ben walks in. Gramma Bird can't even look at him.

BEN
One of them showed up at Sheriff Beck's office.

GRAMMA BIRD
One is not enough.

BEN
We're working on that.

GRAMMA BIRD
And?

Ben doesn't want to answer. She stands up, slaps him hard enough to rock him back a step. Cain looks over, surprised.

GRAMMA BIRD
My grandson is dead! Tell me what you're doing about it.

Ben shoots an embarrassed glance at Cain, who studiously avoids looking at either of them.

BEN
Whoever did this will not leave Starett Creek alive.

GRAMMA BIRD

For all you know, they've already made it back to the highway.

BEN

As long as we have one of them alive, we have control. He's our bargaining chip.

GRAMMA BIRD

Who wants to bargain? I say we just kill him. An eye for an eye. Like in the old days. Like it should still be.

BEN

The world is changing, Ida. If we don't change with it, we'll be discovered sooner or later.

GRAMMA BIRD

The old way... is the only way.

EXT. JENNY'S DINER PARKING LOT - MORNING

Reese and Kathleen ride up and stop at the edge of the parking lot. Vaughn's police cruiser is parked next to the RV, and the passenger's side door stands open.

REESE

You need to wait here, Kathleen.

He gets off the motorcycle, leaves her with it.

He hurries up the steps of the RV and pulls open the door --

INT. RV - MORNING

-- but stops short of stepping inside. He sees Vaughn's body laid out, his head caved in.

REESE

MORGAN?!

Gripped by sudden panic, he steps over Vaughn and heads for the sleeping space.

He stops short when he sees Morgan crouched into a corner, holding Vaughn's gun, the barrel trained on Reese and following him as he moves.

REESE

Morgan? Baby?

She doesn't blink. Doesn't react. Just sits there, almost catatonic, holding the gun.

REESE
Morgan. What happened in here?

He moves closer to her, trying to be very calm.

CLLLICK! She pulls back the hammer of the gun.

Reese backs out of the RV slowly, hands up --

EXT. JENNY'S DINER PARKING LOT - MORNING

-- and only turns to Kathleen when he's all the way out.

REESE
Kathleen, maybe you can talk to her.

KATHLEEN
What's wrong?

REESE
I... I don't know how to...

Kathleen can see how upset Reese is, and she pushes past him, up the steps --

INT. RV - MORNING

-- and then almost buckles when she sees Vaughn's body.

KATHLEEN
Jesus. Jesus.

She looks over, sees Morgan with her gun still up.

KATHLEEN
Morgan, are you okay?

No response. No sign of recognition.

KATHLEEN
Sweetie. It's me. It's Kath.

She moves closer, but Morgan keeps the gun on her.

KATHLEEN
Morgie, stop that. Stop pointing that at me. Whatever happened, it's over now.

She stops, nervous about getting any closer, acutely aware of how close that gun is.

KATHLEEN

I know how you feel. I saw two people die earlier tonight. I was as close to them as I am to you now. There were people all around us. And no one did anything about it.

Finally, Morgan seems to react. Just a bit. Just a twitch. But enough to show that she's listening.

KATHLEEN

Earlier, I saw those two people walking around, collecting slips of paper from everyone, and everyone was writing down the things that kept them from happiness. Those slips went into the fire with those people tonight, burned up with them.

For a moment, Kathleen's overcome by the memory, filled with emotion, but she wrestles herself back under control.

KATHLEEN

One of those slips was mine.

Kathleen lapses into silence, and Morgan can't resist.

MORGAN

What did you write?

Kathleen looks at the gun. It's not pointed at her anymore, but the hammer's still back, and Morgan's finger is still on the trigger.

KATHLEEN

When Mom and Dad died, I know it was hard for you. I know how scary things were for you, but you always handled it. You adapted so well. You were always so strong. The only reason I could ever do any of the things I needed to do for you was because of how strong you were. Do you know how many nights I cried myself to sleep after you were in bed?

MORGAN

... no.

KATHLEEN

I wasn't just afraid... I was afraid you would find out I was afraid. Fear is like cancer. It spreads. It eats into everything.

Reese steps up into the RV, but hangs back.

MORGAN

What did you write, Kathleen?

KATHLEEN

Give me the gun, and I'll tell you.

Crying now, Morgan hands over the gun, and Kathleen hands it off to Reese, so he can put the hammer down.

Kathleen moves in close, pulls Morgan to her, embraces her.

KATHLEEN

I wrote down "fear." I'm so tired of being afraid, Morgan. I want to be like you. I watch how you live, how you make your choices... and you're the bravest person I know.

MORGAN

I had to do it, Kathleen. He didn't give me a choice.

Reese takes the gun, heads back outside --

EXT. JENNY'S DINER PARKING LOT - MORNING

-- and stands by the open door of Vaughn's police car, where he can listen to the chatter on the police radio.

He takes the portable radio out of the car, turns it down for a moment, listens to the town itself.

The town is strangely quiet.

Reese looks down the street where he sees one person moving, dressed in black, along what appears to be a church.

Aside from the sheriff's department, it's the biggest building in town. Completely black.

INT. RV - MORNING

Reese peeks back in.

REESE

Kath, close this door, okay? I'm going down the street for a minute.

Reese sets the police radio down.

REESE

Turn this on. Listen to see if there's any mention of Jake or Lloyd and Ollie. Don't open the door for anyone but us. And if I'm not back in a half-hour, then you two get the hell out of here.

KATHLEEN

We're not leaving you guys.

REESE

You may not have a choice. Just take care of Morgan, okay?

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Reese heads down the street to the church. Reese scrutinizes the building as he approaches. Ominous. Foreboding.

Reese walks up to the front door. He tries it. Locked.

He walks around to the side of the church and finds another door. He tries that one. Unlocked. He opens the door. Slips inside.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Dark. The windows completely blacked out. Tapestries hang along the walls, evenly spaced. Reese takes a closer look.

The images are disturbing, foul. Extreme violence. Depraved sex. All of it rendered in exquisite detail. Dumbfounded, Reese walks further in, forgetting to be afraid.

It's not like any church he's ever been in. The centerpiece is an UPSIDE-DOWN CROSS.

REESE

(low)

What the hell?

Reese sees a body on the cross. He walks up under it. Blood drips down onto his face. Reese jerks away, stumbles back. His eyes finally adjust to the light and he sees --

-- Lloyd hanging on the cross!

REESE

Oh, my god... Lloyd? LLOYD?!

WHACK! Someone hits him from behind, drops him into darkness!

EXT. STARRETT CREEK - TIME LAPSE

The streets of Starrett Creek, still empty. Morning gives way to day, which then gives way to dusk. No one seems to come or go at all.

INT. RV - DUSK

Kathleen and Morgan still sit together.

MORGAN

Reese isn't coming back. Neither is Jake. No matter how long we wait.

KATHLEEN

You don't know that, Morgan.

MORGAN

I do know that. So do you. You just don't want to admit it yet.

EXT. STARRETT CREEK - DUSK

On top of the church, a bell tower begins to ring.

Three rings together. Stop. Three rings together. Stop. Three rings together. Stop.

People emerge from various buildings. All dressed now in dark robes. All headed for the church.

EXT. CHURCH - DUSK

Sheriff Beck leads Jake inside.

Jake tries to be cautious as he walks down the center aisle, but Beck pushes him, causes him to stumble.

When they reach the front row, Beck shoves Jake onto a pew.

SHERIFF BECK

Move and I'll shoot you in the face.

Beck vanishes into the gloom.

INT. CHURCH - DUSK

Even darker now. Jake's unable to see anything.

Suddenly, one candle flares to life.

Ben Sturges holds the candle so it illuminates his face. He wears face paint, the same design Morgan had on earlier.

BEN

Sorry it had to come to this, Jake.

Another candle flares to life next to Ben. Then one on the other side. Then another. Then another.

Thirteen ELDERS stand in a circle, each holding a candle, each with the same design painted on their face.

Gramma Bird. Sheriff Beck. Faces Jake doesn't recognize.

Jake looks around behind him, and jumps, startled.

The entire church is full, CULT MEMBERS in black robes. Everyone from the Happiness Festival. Everyone from town. The place is standing room only.

All of them silent. Waiting. Watching.

In the candlelight, Jake can see Lloyd's body on the upside-down cross. He doesn't even try to hide his revulsion.

BEN

You and your friends made a mistake when you came here.

JAKE

Yeah. I keep hearing that.

BEN

You don't understand why our community is so tightly bound. You don't understand because you're not part of something like our Family.

Jake can't take his eyes off the upside-down cross.

JAKE

Unreal. I thought you were a bunch of holy rollers. But you're not. You're...

BEN

Don't try to label us. Whatever name you'd give us, it wouldn't begin to describe what we are or what we believe. You can't comprehend because you don't have real faith. We would die for our beliefs. We are all willing to sacrifice for each other.

JAKE

We didn't ask to be part of this. Ollie wasn't a sacrifice. That was murder.

Ben shakes his head. Behind him, one of the Elders steps up to Lloyd and, using a knife, slashes his shoulder.

The Elder collects blood in a cup as it runs out of Lloyd.

BEN

Did we go looking for you or your friends? Did we come into your homes?

JAKE

No, but...

BEN

No, but you came into ours.

The next Elder steps up, fills his cup. He slashes Lloyd again to keep the blood flowing.

BEN

We have to make things right. You've disrupted our Festival. You've killed our friends... our family...

One after another, The Elders fill their cups, slashing Lloyd whenever they need to.

JAKE

Stop it. You're killing him.

BEN

You're still not getting it. No one person matters compared with the needs of the community. Haven't you ever belonged to something, Jake?

JAKE

I belong to my wife.

BEN

Something bigger.

JAKE

Satan gives your life purpose? Who are you... Dio?

BEN

Don't mock me, Jake...

Ben cuts Lloyd's throat in one quick move and holds his cup underneath to catch the rush of blood. Ben turns back to Jake and holds up the cup.

BEN
... I'll cut that uncivil tongue right
out of your mouth.

All the Elders raise their cups and, together, drink.

JAKE
Goddamn you!

BEN
God has nothing to do with this, Jake.
He doesn't live here.

Ben hands his cup to one of the other Elders and walks down
to where Jake sits.

He raises the sacrificial knife they used on Lloyd --
-- and holds it out so Jake can take it.

BEN
Help me make this right.

Jake won't reach for the knife.

BEN
I'm giving you a chance here.

JAKE
Kill me yourself. I won't do it for you.

BEN
I think you misunderstand. You're going
to walk out of here unharmed.

JAKE
Then... what..?

BEN
Show us you understand sacrifice. Show
us you can do what has to be done.

The doors behind the altar open and two Cult Members in robes
lead Reese in, bound in chains.

REESE
Jake... what the fuck is going on?!

BEN
Do you love your wife, Jake?

JAKE
Of course.

BEN
We'll let you leave here with her. We'll
trust you. After all, you'll have a
secret of your own.

Ben offers the knife again.

This time, Jake takes it.

BEN
This is your salvation.

Jake walks over to stand in front of the altar as Cult
Members hold Reese down across it.

Ben stands right behind Jake.

BEN
Who is he to you? Is he your blood?

JAKE
No.

BEN
Then you know what you have to do. This
is how the world works, Jake. Cause and
effect. One action... one moment... and
you take control of your life again.

REESE
Jake, this is fucking crazy! Don't listen
to this sick asshole! You can't do this!

Jake tests the weight of the knife in his hand.

REESE
PUT THAT GODDAMN KNIFE DOWN RIGHT NOW!

BEN
It's going to happen, one way or another.
Either you reap the benefits, or you
share his fate.
(pause)
Do you really have to think about it?

Jake turns the knife so it reflects the candlelight.

REESE
... Jake?

Jake finally makes eye contact with Reese. Ice cold.

REESE
Jake, you can't.

JAKE
I'll tell Morgan that you saved us.
She'll never love another man the way
she'll always worship you.

REESE
WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

JAKE
If I do this... am I part of your cult?

BEN
That's an ugly word, Jake.

JAKE
So what are you, then?

BEN
A family. A community.

JAKE
Does this make me part of your family?

BEN
Is that what you want?

Jake turns the knife, gets a firm grip on it, moves so he's got the perfect angle on Reese.

Reese goes nuts, thrashing, trying to get loose.

REESE
YOU CAN'T! JAKE! YOU CAN'T DO THIS!

Jake raises the knife.

Cain emerges from the nearby gloom with a video camera.

JAKE
What's that for?

BEN
It's our insurance policy. You can't tell anyone anything that might lead them back to Starrett Creek. If you do, they'll find this videotape waiting.

Jake trembles, emotional, trying to keep control.

JAKE
Fine.

REESE
Jake, please. Listen to me. Stop.
Please. Please.

Jake roars and backhands Reese!

JAKE
SHUT UP! YOU THINK THIS IS EASY FOR ME?!

Jake shakes, so angry that Reese just shuts up.

Jake glares at the camera, at Ben, at the rest of the Elders.

JAKE
Make sure you get the shot. I'm only
going to do this once.

He raises the knife again, eyes locked with Reese.

JAKE
I'm sorry.

REESE
... just don't miss.

Reese closes his eyes, ready.

Ben steps closer, eager to see it happen.

Jake moves, brings the knife down --

-- and throws it at Ben, full-force!

Ben jerks back, and the knife misses him!

BEN
I'm disappointed, Jake.

JAKE
Yeah... me, too.

Beck steps forward, shotgun up.

No one has a chance to move.

The RV CRASHES through the side wall of the church!

***Several of the Elders are killed immediately, splattered or
crushed by the RV!***

Everyone scatters as the RV grinds to a halt.

Gramma Bird's the first one back on her feet.

GRAMMA BIRD
ENOUGH TALK! KILL THEM!

Kathleen shoots Gramma Bird in the shoulder as she climbs out of the RV, and Gramma Bird goes down.

KATHLEEN
Reese! Jake! MOVE!

Jake unhooks Reese from the altar.

Sheriff Beck climbs to his feet.

BLAM! His wrist explodes and he howls in agony!

Morgan looks over as Kathleen lowers the gun.

Morgan and Kathleen duck in as Jake and Reese run for --

INT. RV - NIGHT

-- and pull the door closed behind them.

JAKE
Strap in!

He heads up front, passing Morgan as she heads back to Reese.

Kathleen jumps up and embraces Jake for just a moment.

He slides into the driver's seat, slams it into reverse --

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

-- causing debris to fly as the RV fights for traction.

Cult Members and Elders climb to their feet, and more guns come out. Everyone opens fire, peppering the body and the windshield with bullets.

Finally, the RV's tires get a grip and the RV rockets back --

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

-- in a semi-circle, almost tipping over!

The RV stops, then lurches forward, picks up speed.

Cult Members and Elders run out and fire shots at the RV until it's gone. Ben Sturges is last to emerge from the hole in the wall, coughing, choking on all the dust.

Everyone turns, waiting for him to speak. He struggles to keep his emotions in check.

BEN
Kill them.
(snaps)
KILL! THEM! ALL!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Jake drives like a maniac, looking for a way out of town. In back, Morgan flies across the RV, slams into the cabinets.

MORGAN
JESUS, JAKE! SLOW DOWN!

REESE
NO! GO FASTER!

EXT. STARRETT CREEK - NIGHT

People dive out of the way to avoid getting hit.

The RV jumps the curb, takes out an row of parking meters!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Jake slows to a stop as they reach one intersection.

JAKE
Okay... which way do we go?

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

MEN with guns erupt from every direction and open fire!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Everyone ducks as the front windshield explodes! Glass rains down all over Jake, gets in his hair!

REESE
It don't matter! JUST GO!

Still ducking, Jake mashes the gas pedal with his hand.

The RV jumps forward like a shot. Morgan and Reese tumble all the way to the back of the RV.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

A couple of Cult Members can't get out of the way fast enough and Jake runs them over!

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Cain's truck screeches to a halt. Ben climbs in --

INT. CAIN'S TRUCK - NIGHT

-- and buckles up. Cain looks scared.

CAIN

Dad... I...

Ben holds up one hand, silencing Cain.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The RV takes a dirt road out of the city proper.

Two cars ride up on either side of the RV. Two Cult Members jump from their vehicles onto the RV.

Even more cars pour into the road behind them.

INT. RV - NIGHT

They look up at the sound of men landing and running across the top of the RV.

JAKE

Shit! What's that?!

REESE

They're on the roof!

Reese shoots his gun at the ceiling, firing blind.

JAKE

Morgan! See what else we have in here that you can use as a weapon!

MORGAN

Like what?

JAKE

HOW THE FUCK DO I KNOW!? JUST DO IT!

Jake turns the wheel hard, trying to shake them off.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

One of the Cult Members loses his grip and flies off --

-- falling under the wheels of the pursuing cars!

The other Cult Member manages to hang on.

INT. RV - NIGHT

The Cult Member peeks in one of the side windows.

Reese sees him, raises his gun, and --

-- BLAM! Shoots the Cult Member in the face, point blank!

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Cult Member drops off the side and falls under the wheels of the RV.

His body gets pulled up around the wheel and axle, twisting then EXPLODING into several pieces!

The road and pursuing cars are showered with gore!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Reese shakes, pumped up on adrenaline.

REESE
Jesus. Jesus. Did you see that?

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

As two more cars try to box Jake in, he begins to pinball back and forth between them, forcing them off the road.

One of the cars hits a tree so hard it crumples.

Another car leaves the road for a moment, then comes roaring back even faster --

-- and slams into the side of the RV, full-force!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Everyone reacts except Jake. He's just focused on the road.

Kathleen sees the crazy look in his eyes, the set of his jaw.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Jake pulls ahead just slightly, then swerves --

-- causing the motorcycle trailer to whip sideways into the closest pursuing car!

The car and the trailer get tangled, and the entire trailer rips free with a thunderous sound, destroying the car.

A sports car races up next to the RV --

-- and the PASSENGER leans out with a shotgun and starts firing, over and over!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Morgan hits the deck. The shotgun blasts through the side of the RV. Reese remains standing, fires out the broken window.

Jake looks pissed. He cracks the wheel hard towards the car.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The RV pulls so close that it drives up, over the sports car, crushing it and killing both passenger and driver!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Jake smiles, grim, determined. Then he notices something in the side view mirrors --

JAKE'S POV (MIRRORS)

-- two trucks, men with axes and picks in the flatbeds, ready to tear the RV apart.

INT. RV - NIGHT

One sharp pick end pierces the RV wall right beside Reese's head! He recoils as a strip of the RV is peeled back!

REESE

SHIT!

Reese shoves the barrel of his gun through the hole --

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

-- and shoots the guy with the pick in the chest!

As he falls back, another guy pops up to take his place, hammering the side of the RV.

INT. RV - NIGHT

On the other side of the RV, an axe head tears through the wall and slams deep into Morgan's shoulder!

Reese turns to help, but Morgan waves him away.

MORGAN

No! Pay attention to them!

She struggles to free herself, crying out from the pain.

Reese bellows as he fires out at the truck.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Two guys on a motorcycle race up in front of the RV. The Passenger turns around and aims his gun down, at one of the front wheels of the RV.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Jake sees this and speeds up.

JAKE

Wanna play?! Huh?! Wanna play with me?!

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Passenger OPENS FIRE --

-- but the RV gets closer, going faster. The shots miss the tire completely, taking one of the headlights.

The RV bears down on the motorcycle, coming up fast.

The Driver tries to steer the bike away, but Jake keeps coming.

The front fender of the RV hits the back tire of the motorcycle, causing the bike to wobble.

The Driver can't recover and --

-- the motorcycle and both riders vanish under the RV!

INT. CAIN'S TRUCK - NIGHT

At the back of the pursuing vehicles, Cain swerves to avoid the remains of the guys on the motorcycle.

BEN

Sons-of-bitches will pay.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Kathleen unhooks herself from the passenger seat and heads into the back.

She helps Morgan to her feet, and the two of them break out the back window so they can shoot the pursuing vehicles.

She shoots out the tire of one car --

-- and it FLIPS, rolling and tumbling end over end!

INT. CAIN'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The car tumbles right at them! It's going to hit them!

BEN
LOOK OUT!

Cain turns the wheel hard, and the car misses them by just inches! Ben looks like he just lost 20 pounds, all brown.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Another truck races up. A guy gets on the hood and leaps --

-- grabbing on to the back of the RV!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Kathleen can't get a shot at the guy, who reaches out and grabs the barrel of her shotgun.

Kathleen sees a jagged piece of glass still in the window frame and grabs it, cutting her hand in the process. She yanks it out of the frame --

-- and STABS it into the guy's throat! A geyser of arterial blood sprays Kathleen's face!

The guy lets go of the shotgun and the RV. Kathleen catches the weapon as the guy's body hits the road.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The truck he jumped from has to swerve to avoiding hitting him, and SMASHES into a tree!

Another car pulls alongside the RV.

A GRINNING REDNECK leans out with a fully automatic ASSAULT RIFLE in his hands. He holds it so they can see it for a moment, then turns it toward them and opens fire --

INT. RV - NIGHT

-- tearing through the wall and cutting Reese in half!

Both Kathleen and Morgan are splashed with his blood.

MORGAN

REESE!!!

Reese keeps firing for a moment, unaware he's been hit.

In a moment, though, he slides apart.

All Morgan can do is watch in horror.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Kathleen fires on one of the last remaining cars. She hits the fuel tank and --

-- KA-BLAM! The car explodes in a fireball!

INT. RV - NIGHT

Reese smiles at Kathleen and Morgan.

REESE

That was... beautiful...

That's it. He comes apart completely, trying to clutch his guts as they spill out onto the RV floor.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Only two vehicles left now. Jake's RV and Cain's truck.

Cain tries to get up beside the RV, but each time he tries, Jack swerves and blocks his way. The truck may be big, but the RV is like a tank compared to it.

Cain finally sees an opening and guns it. He drives up on Jake's side of the RV, barely scraping the trees on the side of the road.

INT. RV / INT. CAIN'S TRUCK - NIGHT - INTERCUT

Jake looks down, sees Ben Sturges. They make eye contact.

Ben rolls down his window and raises a pistol, takes aim at Jake's head.

BEN

IT'S OVER!

Kathleen suddenly appears out of nowhere! She leans across Jake's lap, shotgun pointed out the window and right at Ben!

Ben's face goes ashen.

KATHLEEN
GO TO HELL!

BLAM! Kathleen squeezes off a shot! It grazes Ben's face and blows out Cain's side window!

Ben loses his pistol, shaken by the near-miss.

BEN
Shit, son, did you see how close that...

Ben looks over and sees --

-- the back of Cain's head is missing, splashed all over the back wall of the cab!

BEN
NOOOO!!!

Cain slumps against the wheel, his foot holding the accelerator all the way to the floor.

Ben's trapped. He can't get out. The truck's going at least 90 mph. He looks back up and Jake and Kathleen.

Kathleen laughs and screams at Ben, out of her damn mind.

KATHLEEN
NOW IT'S OVER, YOU MOTHERFUCKER!

Cain's truck swerves and --

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

-- CRASH!!! Hits a huge tree on the side of the road!

Ben launches out of his seat and flies through the windshield! For a second, he hangs there in mid-air, keeping up with the RV, before --

-- WHAM! Ben hits a tree head-first! His entire body crumples around the truck, every bone in his body broken!

INT. RV - NIGHT

And then, just like that, Ben's gone, nothing more than a red spot vanishing quickly in the rear view mirror.

Jake's shaken, relieved. Kathleen drops the gun and grabs him in a ferocious embrace.

JAKE
It's over, baby. It's over.

Up ahead, Jake sees the highway and an entrance ramp.

JAKE
I don't believe it...

Jake lets out a whoop and punches the ceiling of the RV.

JAKE
HOLY SHIT! WE MADE IT!

KATHLEEN
Jake, Reese... he...

JAKE
He what?

Jake looks back --

-- *sees the pool of blood on the floor in the back.*

Jake's smile fades.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The RV races onto the highway, in bad shape, still running.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Morgan tends to Reese. He barely clings to life. He's so pale he's almost transparent. He doesn't appear to be in any pain, though. He's calm, at peace.

Morgan tries to hold his spilled guts inside.

MORGAN
Hold on... just a little bit longer...

REESE
(weak)
... don't worry... it don't hurt.

Up front, Jake spots a lit-up sign in the distance. Three words catch his attention: "gas - phone - food."

JAKE
There's a gas station up ahead. We can call for help there.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

The RV comes down off the highway and pulls in --

-- and the film comes full circle as we see the Old Guy from the beginning!

Jake climbs out and approaches the Old Guy, gun in hand.

INT. GAS STATION / OFFICE - NIGHT

Jake's on the phone, staring out the office window at the RV.

OPERATOR (OVER PHONE)
Hello? What's your emergency?

JAKE
We need an ambulance! We just escaped
from a town called Starrett Creek!
They're murderers! People are dead!

OPERATOR (OVER PHONE)
Slow down, sir. *Who* is dead?

INT. RV - NIGHT

Morgan holds his lifeless hand. He's fading quickly. All Kathleen can do is watch.

MORGAN
It'll all be over soon.

REESE
... love... you... Morg--

Reese can't get the rest of her name out. He dies, his eyes fixed on her.

Morgan erupts in furious tears. She pulls Reese close to her, holds him tight, but he's gone.

INT. GAS STATION / OFFICE - NIGHT

Jake's worked himself into a frenzy.

JAKE
These fuckers put him on an upside down
cross and cut his goddamn throat! Is that
emergency enough for you?!

OPERATOR (OVER PHONE)
Sir, calm down and tell me who killed
your friends.

JAKE
ALL OF THEM! THE WHOLE TOWN IS CRAZY!

-- Jake suddenly stops --

-- he hears an approaching sound --

Engines. Lots of them. Getting close.

OPERATOR (OVER PHONE)
Sir...

JAKE
No...

Jake runs for the RV, leaves the phone dangling --

INT. RV - NIGHT

-- and now Kathleen and Morgan hear it, too --

-- the engines... closer... closer --

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

***Garage doors fly open like sudden thunder! CHUNKACHUNKA-BOOM!
And three of the Old Guy's GRANDSONS step out with guns!***

Jake sees a flag inside the garage. That same symbol we've seen throughout the film. The flag of the cult.

JAKE
NOOOOOOO!!!

They open fire on the RV, shredding it. Jake gets caught in the crossfire, torn to pieces.

INT. RV - NIGHT

Glass and metal rain down on Morgan and Kathleen.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

As the Grandsons reload, the cult comes rolling off the highway, dozens and dozens of cars.

INT. RV - NIGHT

KATHLEEN
(in tears)
This is it.

Morgan seems to accept this. She gives Reese a goodbye kiss.

MORGAN
I won't be long, Reese.

Morgan grabs a shotgun, loads it.

KATHLEEN
They'll kill us.

MORGAN
Maybe. But you're not afraid... are you?

GRANDSON (O.S.)
GET ON OUT HERE! NOW!

Kathleen realizes she's right.

Morgan heads to the door.

GRANDSON (O.S.)
DON'T MAKE US COME IN THERE!

Kathleen grabs her gun, too. They lock eyes, exhilarated, high on the adrenaline.

MORGAN
Love you, sis.

KATHLEEN
Love you, too.

EXT. RV - NIGHT

Morgan's the first one out the door. Kathleen jumps out right behind her, guns blazing!

Jake cries out from where he lies on the pavement, horrified, helpless to do anything but watch it happen.

INT. GAS STATION / OFFICE - NIGHT

The phone receiver still dangles off the desk. The sound of the gunfight clearly audible in the background.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

It's short but spectacular. Doomed and sad.

In the end, Jake, Kathleen, and Morgan lie on the asphalt, dead, riddled with hundreds of bullet holes.

As the dust settles, a car pulls up. The back door opens --
-- and Carly Sturges steps out.

Everyone watches as she walks out to stand over Jake, Kathleen, and Morgan, face like stone.

CARLY

You can't beat us. You can't beat faith.

She looks around at everyone else, flushed, daring anyone to challenge her authority.

CARLY

Clean this garbage up.

As she walks back to her car, everyone else sets to work to clean up. Erase all evidence...

... as if Jake and Kathleen and Reese and Morgan never even existed at all.

FADE TO BLACK