

THE LAST OF US

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by

Scott Lupar

Based on the '*Naughty Dog*' video game *The Last Of Us*:

by

Neil Druckmann

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FADE IN:

A little girl's face. Asleep on the couch. This is SARAH, 12, lost in a sweet dream.

We're inside a...

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Keys jangle in the front door's lock. JOEL, 31, a bear of a man, enters. A long day of work behind him, still on his phone, speaking with a Texan drawl...

JOEL
(into phone)
Tommy, listen to me... he is the contractor... I can't... Tommy, I can't lose this job.

Sarah stirs awake and sits upright.

JOEL (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Okay, can we talk about this in the morning? Yeah, okay... goodnight.

Joel slumps on the couch next to Sarah.

SARAH
Fun day at work, huh?

JOEL
What are you still doing up? It's late.

SARAH
(suddenly realizing)
Oh crud, what time is it?

She glances up at the wall clock. It's almost midnight.

JOEL
It's way past your bedtime --

SARAH
But it's still today.

She reaches under the couch. Pulls out a small, wrapped gift. Gives it to Joel.

JOEL
What's this?

SARAH
Your birthday.

He opens it up. Inside, a silver wrist watch. He smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You kept complaining about your
broken watch, so, you know...

He puts it on.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You like it?

He furrows his brow. Taps the watch.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What? What is it?

JOEL
Honey, it's... it's nice, but... I
think it's stuck. It's --

SARAH
No, no, no...

She grabs his wrist, checking the watch -- but she sees that
it's working just fine. Joel laughs at his own little prank.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Oh, ha-ha, very funny.

She pushes him away. Lies back down on the couch.

JOEL
Where did you get the money for
this?

SARAH
Drugs. I sell hardcore drugs.

JOEL
Oh, good, you can start helping out
with the mortgage then.

He switches on the TV.

Sometime later: Joel scoops Sarah up in his arms, now fast
asleep, takes her to her bedroom. Pulls the sheets over her.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Goodnight, baby girl.

He kisses her forehead.

CUT TO BLACK:

Sometime later still, the phone on Sarah's night stand *RINGS*, waking her. She answers.

SARAH

Hello?

TOMMY (V.O.)

Sarah, honey, I need you to get your daddy on the phone.

SARAH

Uncle Tommy, what... what time is it?

TOMMY (V.O.)

I need you to get your dad now, there's something wrong --

The call cuts dead.

SARAH

Uncle Tommy? Hello?

She hangs up, confused. Hops off the bed. Wanders into the hallway. Pushes open the door to her dad's bedroom. The TV is playing. The local news channel illuminating the room.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Daddy? You in here?

But he's not. Just an empty bed.

On the TV, a female reporter faces camera. Behind her, a raging fire. Police and soldiers trying to control the situation.

REPORTER (V.O.)

...seems to be connected to the nationwide pandemic. We're receiving reports that victims afflicted with the *INFECTION* show signs of increased aggression --

A soldier grabs the reporter's arm, attempting to push her away.

SOLDIER (V.O.)

We need to move everybody out of here now. There's a gas leak --

-- the raging fire behind the reporter PULSES brighter --
filling the frame -- the reporter's SCREAM lasts just a
second before the screen goes black.

Sarah spins, turning to the window, seeing a huge EXPLOSION
erupting in the distance.

SARAH

Oh, god...

She dashes out of the room.
Down the stairs.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Dad? Daddy, where are you?

In the kitchen, her Dad's cell phone vibrates as another text
message arrives. She picks it up.

8 missed calls. On screen, three messages from Tommy read:

"Where the hell r U? Call me."

"Why aren't U answering your phone?"

"I'm coming over."

The power in the house fails -- every light cutting dead.
She drops the phone in shock.
Fear taking over. Her world just got creepy.

From outside -- the sound of something SLAPPING -- again and
again. She peers out the back windows. Just the neighbor's
screen door blowing in the wind.

Then -- a noise from within the house -- from her dad's home
office. She slowly peeks inside: the desk chair lying on
its side. Paperwork scattered on the floor. A total mess.

The sliding glass door WIDE OPEN. The noise: just vertical
blinds RUSTLING in the wind.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Dad? You in here?

-- Sarah flinches -- as JOEL rushes inside from the backyard,
panicked. He slides the door shut. Locks it.

JOEL

Sarah, are you okay?

SARAH

What's happening?

JOEL

Has anyone come in here?

SARAH
No. Who would come in here?

Joel reaches into a draw and pulls out a lock-box.
Dials in a code. Removes a REVOLVER.

JOEL
Don't go near the doors. Just...
just stand back.

SARAH
Dad, you're kinda freaking me out.
What's going on?

He drops bullets into the gun's chamber, one by one.

JOEL
It's the Coopers, something ain't
right with 'em. I think they're
sick.

SARAH
What kinda sick?

-- *WHAM* -- a man crashes against the outside of the glass
door.

JOEL
Jesus!

As the man pounds the glass, Joel drops the last bullet into
the chamber, snapping it closed.

Sarah grabs her dad, hiding behind him as he backs away --
just as the glass door *SHATTERS* -- the man breaking through.

Eyes blood red. Face twisting with rage. His movements
staccato and frenzied -- *INFECTED!* --

JOEL (CONT'D)
Jimmy... I'm warning you, stay
back.

The man bolts at Joel -- *BLAM!* --
-- he puts a bullet through its chest.

Sarah screams. Joel pulls her away.

SARAH
You... you... you shot --

JOEL
Listen to me. We have to get outta
here, outta town, right now. Do
you understand me?

She's in too much shock to answer him.

CAR HEADLIGHTS shine through the front windows. Someone
pulling into the driveway.

JOEL (CONT'D)
That's Tommy, come on.

Joel and Ellie rush outside...

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

...as TOMMY, Joel's brother, pulls up in his pickup.

TOMMY
Where the hell have you been? You
any idea what's going on out here?

JOEL
I got some notion.

TOMMY
Shit, you got blood all over you.

Joel puts Sarah inside the car. Then slides into the
passenger seat.

EXT./INT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

JOEL
It ain't mine. Let's just get
outta here.

Tommy hops into the driver's seat.

TOMMY
They're saying half the people in
the city just lost their minds.
Some sort of parasite or something,
I don't know.

Tommy backs out of the driveway. Takes off down the street.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Hey, Sarah, how you holding up?

Joel turns on the radio. Flicks through channels...
...but there's nothing but static.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
No cell phone, no radio. Yeah,
we're doing great. Minute ago, the
newsman wouldn't shut up.

JOEL
They say where to go?

TOMMY
He said army's putting roadblocks
on the highway. No getting into
Travis County.

JOEL
That means we need to get the hell
out. Take 71.

Tommy makes a sharp turn, following a sign to the highway.

SARAH
Are... are we sick?

JOEL
No. No, of course not.

SARAH
How do you know?

TOMMY
They say it's just people in the
city. We're good.

Police cars race past them in the opposite direction.

JOEL
How did all this happen?

TOMMY
We ain't the only town. At first
they were saying it was just the
South. Now they're going on about
the East coast, the West coast --

To their side, they see a farm house burning in the distance.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Holy hell. That's Louis' farm. I
hope that son of a bitch made it
out.

Tommy spots a car on the side of the road.
A small family trying to wave them down. He slows...

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Let's see what they need.

JOEL
What do you think you're doing?
Keep driving.

TOMMY
They got a kid, Joel.

JOEL
So do we. Keep driving, Tommy.

Reluctantly, Tommy does keep driving.

Further ahead, just as they're about to join the highway, they see that all lanes are FULL. Grid-locked traffic as far as the eye can see.

TOMMY
Everyone and their mother had the
same damn idea.

JOEL
We could just backtrack a little
and --

Outside the car, an angry man jumps out of his vehicle, shouting to traffic further up ahead.

ANGRY MAN
Hey, come on, let's move it.
What's the damn holdup?

At that moment, out of nowhere, an INFECTED runs at the man, smashing him against his car. Biting and clawing at him.

JOEL
Jesus Christ, get out of here!

Suddenly, MORE INFECTED, racing through lines of traffic, smashing at windows, dragging passengers from their cars.

One infected sprints right at us -- smashing his fists at the windshield. Tommy quickly backs away into a turn --
-- another infected smashes Sarah's window. She screams --

Tommy tears away just in time, leaving them in his rearview.

TOMMY
What the fuck just happened back
there?

He heads into town, turning corner after corner, until...

...an RV blocks most of the road. Tommy slams on the brakes. Tries to ease around it, but non-infected people crowd the streets, panicked, running in every direction.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Come on, people, move!

JOEL
Get us out of here!

Tommy, still edging forward, trying to go around it.

TOMMY
I'm trying.

JOEL
We can't stop here --

TOMMY
I can't fucking drive through them.

JOEL
Then back up then.

TOMMY
They're behind me too.

As the crowds momentarily thin-out, Tommy squeezes past the RV, then picks up speed again, moving straight ahead...

...but from a side-street...

SARAH
Look out!

...a speeding car hits the pickup side-on -- sending Tommy's truck tumbling, over and over and over...

CUT TO BLACK:

Sarah's eyes snap open. She looks around, confused, unfocused. Quickly realizes the pickup is lying on its side.

She tries to move, but blood pours from an open wound on her leg, where a shard of BONE is sticking out. Tears bubbling through her eyes.

The echo of people's screams all around the vehicle. Dozens of people racing past, running for their lives.

Sarah reaches into the front seat, waking up Joel. Tommy is nowhere to be seen.

Joel's eyes slowly open. Through his cracked windshield, he sees the other crashed car. Inside it, an infected is biting and clawing at the female driver, ripping her to shreds.

Joel kicks out the windshield. Crawls out onto the...

EXT. STREET - DAY

...Joel gets to his feet -- just as an INFECTED runs at him. He desperately tries to hold it back as it slashes its hands at him --

-- Tommy smashes a brick over its head, knocking it out.

Joel pulls Sarah out through the windshield. She tries to stand, but howls in pain.

JOEL
What... what is it, baby?

SARAH
My leg.

Tommy, seeing more crowds of running people...

TOMMY
We're gonna need to run.

Joel takes out his revolver, handing it to Tommy.

JOEL
Keep us safe.

He picks Sarah up in his arms.

They race down the street, swept up into the massive crowds.

Left and right, infected appear -- jumping out -- slashing at victims -- Joel adjusts course onto another street --

-- just as a burning car rolls past, missing them by inches.

Another out of control vehicle heads straight at them -- they side-step it --

-- the car careens into a gas station -- EXPLODING --

-- the force almost knocking them off their feet. Sarah's eyes go wide, seeing flames enveloping people, thrashing and screaming for their lives.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Don't look, baby. Just keeping
looking at me.

Tommy, ahead of them...

TOMMY
Come on, keep moving.

More cars crashing ahead of them, forcing them to make another turn.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Where now?

Joel spots an alley.

JOEL
This way.

He races to it, kicking open a chain link gate.

INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Ahead of them, an infected, biting the neck of its dead victim. It jumps to its feet, teeth gnashing and gnawing.

Tommy blows a hole through its chest.

They double time it, weaving and turning down the long meandering alley, moving past a tall chainlink fence to their left -- just as a wave of infected on the other side of it lunge at them --

-- but they can't get through it. Instead, they start climbing over it.

The first several jump from the top, landing like cats, giving chase.

Joel rushes into an open doorway, into the rear of a...

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Tommy rushes inside, slamming the door shut -- just as the infected reach it --

-- he desperately tries to hold it shut, but there's too many pushing against it.

TOMMY
Get to the highway.

JOEL
But --

TOMMY

Go. You got Sarah. Get out of here. I can outrun them.

Joel, reluctant to leave his brother, but knows he has to...

JOEL

I will meet you there.

Joel dashes out through the front of the...

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

...across its courtyard.

SARAH

Daddy, we can't leave him.

JOEL

He's gonna be fine.

They climb over a wall, and head out onto dry...

EXT. DIRTLAND - NIGHT

...slogging up and down small hills.

In the distance, he sees the HIGHWAY bridge. Their way out.

JOEL

We're almost there now, baby.

Military helicopters sweep over them, kicking up a sea of dust.

Minutes later: Joel staggers up a steep hill -- when out of nowhere, three infected rush him.

SARAH

Daddy!

-- but they're cut down by MACHINE GUNFIRE --

-- Joel spins to see a SOLDIER, gas mask over his face, rifle in hand. Joel moves over to the soldier.

JOEL

Hey... hey, we need help.

SOLDIER

Stop!

JOEL

It's my daughter, her leg's broken.

The soldier raises his rifle.

SOLDIER
I said stop right there!

Joel eases away.

JOEL
Okay... we're not sick.

SOLDIER
(into radio headset)
Got a couple of civilians in the
outer perimeter. Please advise.

We don't hear the other side of the soldier's conversation.

SARAH
Daddy, what about Uncle Tommy?

JOEL
We're going to get you to safety
and go back for him. Okay?

SOLDIER
(into radio headset)
Sir, there's a little girl.

After a moment...

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
But, sir, I said there's a little
girl.

JOEL
Listen, buddy, we've just been
through hell. We need to --

The faceless soldier raises his rifle at them again.

SOLDIER
I'm sorry.

Shit! Joel backs away... he knows what's coming. He SPINS --
as the soldier fires a burst of gunfire -- desperately trying
to avoid bullets, but that's impossible --

-- a shot hits Joel's arm, knocking him and Sarah hard to the
ground -- each of them rolling down a steep hill.

The soldier scurries down after him. Points his rifle at
Joel -- *CLICK!* -- out of ammo.

He quickly reloads. Aims it again --

JOEL
No, please, don't --

-- *BLAM!* -- a bullet rips through the soldier's head.
Instantly dead. A bullet from the gun in TOMMY'S hand, who's
now caught up to them.

Only a brief moment of relief, before Tommy looks on at Sarah
with horror.

TOMMY
Oh, no...

Joel turns. Sees blood on her shirt. Crawls to her.

She squeals in agony, holding her STOMACH, tears pouring down
her cheeks.

JOEL
Oh my god, baby, move your hands.

He puts pressure on her wound, trying to stop the bleeding.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Listen to me, I know this hurts,
but you're gonna be okay. Just
stay with me. I'm gonna pick you
up now.

But she screams every time he moves her. The pain
unbearable.

JOEL (CONT'D)
I know, baby, I know it hurts.

He looks to Tommy, not sure how he's going to get out of this
one. But before he turns back to Sarah, her body has already
gone limp.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Sarah... baby... please god, no.
Don't do this to me, baby girl,
please. Don't do this to me.

His tears are impossible to fight back.

JOEL (CONT'D)
No, no, no, no... please.

He hugs her so tight he might never let go. As we pull away,
his words fade, echoing softly into the night.

JOEL (CONT'D)
 Don't leave me, baby girl. Please
 don't leave me. Come back, baby
 girl. Don't leave me.

The longest moment we've ever experienced.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER TITLE:

THE LAST OF US

Opening titles: extreme photomicrographs of FUNGUS flash
 across the screen. Infinitesimally small.

Far too close for comfort.

Time-lapse sequences of rotting infection. As disgusting as
 they are beautiful.

Voices ECHOING over these haunting images.

FIRST VOICE (V.O.)
*The number of confirmed deaths has
 passed two thousand. The Governor
 has called a state of emergency...*

Another voice bleeds through...

SECOND VOICE (V.O.)
*There were hundreds and hundreds of
 bodies lining the streets...*

THIRD VOICE (V.O.)
*Panic spread worldwide after a
 leaked report from the World Health
 Organization showed that the latest
 vaccination tests have failed...*

Organisms growing -- speeded-up to a blur -- slowed-down to a
 heartbeat -- spreading for eternity. An aggressive invasion
 on a cellular level.

FOURTH VOICE (V.O.)
*With the bureaucrats out of power
 we can finally take the necessary
 steps to...*

FIFTH VOICE (V.O.)
*Los Angeles is now the latest city
 to be placed under Martial Law...*

SIXTH VOICE (V.O.)
*All residents are required to
 report to their designated
 quarantine zones...*

The sounds of *fighting -- shouting -- screaming -- police
 sirens BLARING*. We hear the world coming to an end.

SEVENTH VOICE (V.O.)
*Riots have continued for a third
 consecutive day and winter rations
 are at an all time low...*

EIGHTH VOICE (V.O.)
*A group calling themselves the
 Fireflies have claimed
 responsibility for both attacks...*

NINTH VOICE (V.O.)
*Their public charter calls for the
 return of all branches of
 government...*

This macro, biological landscape breaks apart as SPORES wisp
 away into the air.

TENTH VOICE (V.O.)
*Demonstrations broke out following
 the execution of six more alleged
 Fireflies...*

Then, a sweet, gentle, female voice...

ELEVENTH VOICE (V.O.)
*You can still rise with us.
 Remember, when you're lost in the
 darkness, look for the light.
 Believe in the Fireflies.*

Fungus vanishes from screen, leaving nothing but black.

SUPER:

SUMMER

Joel snaps awake, sitting up in bed, waking from a bad dream.

Sunlight tries to break through the wooden planks over the
 windows of this...

INT. DINGY APARTMENT - DAY

In shadow, it's hard for us to see that Joel is much older now. Grey tints running through his hair. A changed man. He gave up on the world after it gave up on him.

SUPER:

20 YEARS LATER

The sound of *knocking* at his door.

He staggers out of bed. Opens it to find TESS, late 30s, standing on the other side. An emotional support that he can't get anywhere else. A tough bitch with a big heart.

An ugly BRUISE on her cheekbone.

We can already feel their relationship is strained as she enters, pours herself a drink. Knocks it back in one.

TESS
You want one?

JOEL
Where were you, Tess?

TESS
West End district. We had a drop to make.

JOEL
'We'. 'We' had a drop to make.

TESS
Yeah, well, you wanted to be alone, remember?

JOEL
So, I'll take one guess. The whole deal went south, and the client made off with our pills. Is that about right?

TESS
The deal went off without a hitch.
(pulling out ration cards)
We have enough ration cards to last us a couple of months, easy.

Joel points to her facial bruise.

JOEL
You want to explain this?

TESS

I was on my way back here, and I
got jumped by two assholes.

She wipes her bruise with a cold washcloth.

TESS (CONT'D)

They got a few good hits in, but...
look, I managed...

Joel takes the washcloth. Tenderly touches her bruise.

JOEL

Are these assholes still with us?

TESS

(not any more)
What do you think?

JOEL

Did you at least find out who they
were?

TESS

They were a couple of nobodies,
they don't matter. What matters is
that Robert sent them.

JOEL

Robert? Our Robert?

TESS

The payment he owes us. He knows
we're after him. He figures he's
gonna get us first.

Joel steps back. Throws the washcloth down.

JOEL

That son of a bitch.

TESS

He's smart, but not smart enough.
I know where he's hiding.

JOEL

Like hell you do.

TESS

Old warehouse in zone 5. Can't say
for how long though.

Joel takes a moment.

JOEL
Well, I'm ready now.

TESS
Oh, I can do now.

They head out the door...

EXT. BOSTON QUARANTINE ZONE - STREETS - DAY

...and step outside, into a HIGH-WALLED community. A suburb of old Boston, now a slum town. Soldiers patrolling every street. Chaos masquerading as order.

A sign reads "ZONE 4".

JOEL
Only got a few hours left until curfew.

TESS
We better hurry this up then.

A humvee with a LOUDSPEAKER rides past them.

LOUDSPEAKER
Attention. Citizens are required to carry a current ID at all times. Compliance with all city personnel is mandatory.

Joel and Tess pass a line of people waiting outside a store. The sign above it: "RATION DISTRIBUTION CENTER".

TESS
Ration lines haven't opened yet. Must be running low again.

JOEL
So just like usual.

They pass soldiers in hazmat suits, dragging disgruntled people out of a condemned building.

DISGRUNTLED MAN
Are you fucking kidding me. This is three weeks in a row, now.

HAZMAT SOLDIER
Move, or I'll break your fucking face.

The soldier binds the man's hands behind his back. Turns to the other soldiers.

HAZMAT SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Scan them.

Another soldier takes a hi-tech SCANNER off his belt, puts it against the disgruntled man's neck, taking a sample.

TESS

Seems like more people are getting infected.

JOEL

That just means that more people are sneaking out.

Joel and Tess approach a...

SECURITY CHECKPOINT

...guarded by armed soldiers. A civilian and vehicle gate. The point of entry into ZONE 5.

She passes Joel an ID paper.

TESS

I got us all new papers. They shouldn't give us any static up here. Just play it cool.

The armed guard holds out his hand.

ARMED GUARD

Let me see your ID's.

They hand them over. The guard takes a long hard look at their papers. Then studies their faces. A long moment.

To their side, a TRUCK passes through the vehicle gate.

ARMED GUARD (CONT'D)

What's your business here?

JOEL

Got a day off. Visiting a friend.

The guard holds his suspicious eyes on them. Then...

ARMED GUARD

Go on through.

The citizen entry gate opens --

-- just as the truck EXPLODES -- Joel and Tess hit the ground. Suddenly, gunfire erupts all around them.

ARMED GUARD (CONT'D)
Fireflies!

The guards return fire to nearby doorways, where hooded members of the FIREFLIES, considered terrorists, take cover.

The guard shuts the gate on Joel and Tess, not allowing them to go through.

Joel pulls Tess to her feet, and races away.

Nearby loudspeakers blast out messages.

LOUDSPEAKER
*Attention. Checkpoint 5 is now
closed until further notice. All
civilians must clear the
surrounding area immediately.*

Tess points to the...

INT. PELMONT APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

...and races inside the lobby, taking cover.

JOEL
God damn Fireflies.

TESS
So much for the easy route.

They move down the hallway.

TESS (CONT'D)
They're gonna close all the
checkpoints. We're gonna have to
go around the outside.

JOEL
Outside the walls?

TESS
Or we could just let Robert go?

DANIELS, 34, sitting guard in the hallway, stands up.

DANIELS
Hey, Tess, what are you doing here?

TESS
How's the east tunnel looking?

Daniels walks with them.

DANIELS
It's clear. I just used it. No
patrols. Where you off to?

TESS
Gonna pay Robert a visit.

DANIELS
You too?

TESS
What? Who else is looking for him?

DANIELS
Uh, Marlene. She's been asking
around, trying to find him.

JOEL
Marlene? What the hell do the
Fireflies want with Robert?

Daniels unlocks the door to an empty apartment. Steps in
with them.

DANIELS
You think she'd tell me?

TESS
Well, what did you tell her?

DANIELS
The truth. I got no idea where
he's hiding.

Daniels and Joel push a large bookshelf out of the way,
revealing a HOLE in the wall behind it.

Joel and Tess grab their go-bags/backpacks from under an old
bed. Checking the magazines of the pistols in each one, then
tucking them in their belts.

They climb inside the hole, dropping down into a vertical
brick shaft into an underground...

INT. BASEMENT/TUNNEL SYSTEM - DAY

DANIELS
You guys take it easy out there.

Daniels pushes the bookshelf back, closing up the hole,
plunging them into darkness.

Joel flicks on his flashlights as they move through the
tunnels.

TESS
Marlene looking for Robert. What
do you make of that?

JOEL
I don't like it. We better find
him before the Fireflies do.

INT. DINER - DAY

A fragile trapdoor on the floor lifts, as Joel and Tess climb
out of a hole, back above ground.

They step out onto...

EXT. OVERGROWN STREETS - DAY

...now reclaimed by nature, like a jungle. Outside of the
quarantine zone.

TESS
We've not been out here in while.
It's like we're on a date.

JOEL
Well, I am the romantic type.

TESS
You have your ways.

Moving from street to street to street.

Hidden in tall grass, they uncover an old, rusty ladder.
Put it up against an old building.
Climb up it to a large hole in the side of the wall...

INT. OLD BUILDING - DAY

Joel inside first. He reaches back, pulling Tess inside.
They move down the stairwell.
Into a basement area. Floorboards creaking under them.
They spot a dirty yellow, cloud-like MIST further ahead.

TESS
Spores!

They pull gas masks out of their backpacks and sling them on.

JOEL
Where the hell are all of these
coming from? The place was clear
last time.

TESS

Well, they're coming out of something. Stay alert.

Joel sees an infected CORPSE propped up against a door, rotting against the wood. Stalks and mushroom-like FUNGUS growing out of it. Fine dust-like SPORES floating off it.

JOEL

There's our culprit.

TESS

Body's not that old. Better keep your eyes and ears open.

Joel pulls the body away from the door, breaking the fungus that has fused it against the wood. They move through the doorway. Along another corridor.

Then, they find another body: a man, gas mask over his face too, lying under a pair of filing cabinets and heavy wooden beams that have collapsed on him, pinning him to the floor.

TESS (CONT'D)

He still alive?

Joel kneels by his side. Sees that the visor over his mask is cracked open.

JOEL

I don't know, but this guy's still fresh. He's not been here long. Looks like his mask is broken --

Suddenly -- the man LASHES out at Joel, who flinches back, just out of the reach of his swinging arm. The man's eyes blood red. A bloodcurdling SCREECH emanating from him.

Not exactly human any more.

-- BLAM! -- Tess puts a bullet through its head. She pulls Joel back up onto his feet.

TESS

The poor bastard must have breathed in these spores.

JOEL

Yeah... probably.

TESS

Come on, let's get out of here.

As they disappear down the corridor.

TESS (CONT'D)
You were scared there, for a
second, right?

JOEL
Not at all.

TESS
Sure you weren't.

EXT. BOSTON QUARANTINE ZONE - STREET - DAY

Tess and Joel's feet hit the ground, dropping from a window
of another derelict building.

A sign behind them reads "ZONE 5".

They move through the underbelly of the...

EXT. ZONE 5 SLUMS - DAY

Space is at a premium. Condensed housing, shipping
containers, shacks, wooden huts. Tighter than tight.

They stagger through market areas.
Stall owners trying to sell them anything they can.
Past a cage with bare fist fighters beating the shit out of
each other. People taking bets using ration cards.

Tess spots a man she knows standing on a corner.

TESS
I'm looking for Robert.

MAN ON CORNER
I hear he's looking for you too.

TESS
He come through here?

She holds out a ration card as payment for information.

MAN ON CORNER
Half hour ago. He went back to the
wharf. He's there now.

The man takes the card.

EXT. BOSTON DOCKS - DAY

Joel and Tess, hiding behind cargo crates, peek out over the
dockyard. A skeleton crew of people moving cargo.

Tess points to a group of men, standing in the distance.

TESS
There's our boy.

In the middle of them, ROBERT, giving his men orders. He then heads into the dock warehouse/offices -- but just before he closes the door behind him -- he stops -- turns around, as if sensing someone watching him from afar.

After a moment, he dismisses it, closing the door.

JOEL
Let's do this.

Joel and Tess sneak around the dock, in separate directions, moving from crate... to crate... to crate...
...ducking as Robert's dock workers loiter past.

Joel finally works his way around to the...

INT. DOCK WAREHOUSE/OFFICES - DAY

...and creeps inside. He waves Tess to follow. They move down the hallway, ducking below windows into office spaces. But the place is seemingly empty.

They turn a couple of corners.
Reach a closed door at the end of the hallway.
Joel and Tess stand either side of it.
Slowly turn the handle, pushing it open --

-- *BLAM!* -- *BLAM!* -- *BLAM!* -- Robert, ready and waiting, fires several shots their way.

TESS
We just want to talk.

ROBERT
We ain't got nothing to talk about.

TESS
Put your gun down.

ROBERT
Go fuck yourself!

His pistol runs empty. He races away through a rear door.

Joel and Tess give chase.
Barely catching sight of him as he dashes around corners...
Through doorways...
Hopping through an open window, out into an...

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

...where he comes face to face with a locked chainlink gate. Joel and Tess appearing behind him. He's got no where to go.

TESS
Hello, Robert.

ROBERT
Tess. Joel. No hard feelings,
right?

Tess picks up a STEEL PIPE.

TESS
None at all.

Robert tries to make a break for it, running around them -- but Tess swipes the pipe across his knee, dropping him hard.

ROBERT
Goddamn... goddamn it... look,
whatever it is you heard, it ain't
true. I just want to say --

TESS
The guns. You want to tell us
where the guns are?

ROBERT
Yeah, sure... but... it's
complicated, alright? Just... hear
out me, okay?

Joel, becoming impatient, KICKS Robert across the face. He kneels beside him, grabs his arm, taking hold of his FINGERS.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Stop, stop, stop --

TESS
You better start talking.

ROBERT
Okay, okay... I sold them.

Tess, almost insulted, kneels beside him...

TESS
Say again?

ROBERT
I didn't have much of a choice. I
owed someone.

JOEL
You owed us.

ROBERT
I just need more time. Just give
me a week.

TESS
You know, I might have done that,
if you hadn't tried to fucking kill
me.

ROBERT
C'mon, it wasn't like that --

JOEL
Who has our guns?

Robert takes a long pause.

ROBERT
I can't.

Joel SNAPS his finger. He howls in agony.

TESS
Who has our guns?

ROBERT
It's the Fireflies. I owed the
Fireflies.

TESS
What?

ROBERT
Look, they're basically all dead.
We can just... we can go in there
and finish them off. We get the
guns. What do you say?

Tess and Joel stand, glancing at each other.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
C'mon, fuck those Fireflies, let's
go get them.

TESS
That is a stupid idea.

Tess pulls her pistol -- *BLAM!* -- executing Robert.

JOEL
Well... now what?

TESS
We go get our merchandise back.

JOEL
How?

TESS
We explain it to them. Let's...
let's go find a Firefly.

A voice, behind them...

VOICE (O.S.)
You won't have to look very far.

They turn to see MARLENE, late 30's, leader of the Fireflies.
Her hand placed over a serious WOUND on her stomach, blood
trickling through her fingers.

JOEL
There you go. Queen Firefly.

MARLENE
Why are you here?

TESS
Business.
(re: stomach wound)
You don't look so hot.

MARLENE
Where's Robert?

Joel stands aside, letting her see Robert's corpse on the
ground.

MARLENE (CONT'D)
I needed him alive.

TESS
The guns he gave you, they weren't
his to sell. I want them back.

MARLENE
It doesn't work that way, Tess.

TESS
The hell it doesn't.

MARLENE
I paid for those guns. You want
them back, you're going to have to
earn them.

Tess turns to Joel, trying to ascertain an answer from him.

TESS

How many cards are we talking about?

MARLENE

I don't give a damn about ration cards. I need something smuggling out of the city. You do that, I'll give you your guns back, and then some.

JOEL

How do we know you got them? The way I hear it, the military's been wiping you guys out.

She nods, but doesn't want to admit it.

MARLENE

I'll show you the weapons.

Suddenly, military *RADIO CHATTER* nearby.

MILITARY RADIO (O.S.)

Search the area. She had to have come through here.

Marlene backs away.

MARLENE

I gotta move. What's it gonna be?

Joel and Tess look to each other for an answer.

TESS

I want to see those guns.

They race away, following Marlene.

Moments later, they emerge from a fire escape up onto...

EXT. ROOFTOPS - DAY

...hopping from building to building.

In the distance, outside of the quarantine zone, half-destroyed skyscrapers loom over downtown Boston.

Tess points down at a nearby raging fire within the zone.

TESS

Is that your people?

MARLENE

What's left of them. Why do you think I'm turning to you guys?

JOEL

You must have someone who can smuggle what you need out --

MARLENE

No one left with any experience like what you guys have.

They tread along a fragile roof.
Slates cracking under their feet.

JOEL

But why now?

MARLENE

We've been quiet. Been planning on leaving the city, but they need a scapegoat. They've been trying to rile us up.

JOEL

Looks like they did.

MARLENE

We're trying to defend ourselves.

On the streets below, they hear:

LOUDSPEAKER (V.O.)

Attention! Curfew is in full effect. Anyone caught without proper authorization will be arrested and prosecuted.

They climb through an open window into a...

INT. RUNDOWN BROWNSTONE BUILDING - DAY

Empty inside, seemingly.

They move down the hallway to an apartment with a metal door. Marlene unlocks it. Struggles with the weight of it as she pushes it open, then collapses inside the...

INT. SAFE HOUSE - DAY

Joel takes hold of Marlene, to pull her to her feet...

VOICE (O.S.)

Get the fuck away from her.

A young girl, ELLIE, 14, charges at Joel, swinging a FLICK KNIFE -- but Tess catches Ellie's hand mid-air.

MARLENE

Let her go.

Ellie pulls away. Mature beyond her years. Headstrong. Too much energy to burn.

JOEL

You're recruiting kinda young,
aren't you?

MARLENE

She's not one of mine.

Ellie runs to Marlene's side, pulling her to her feet.

ELLIE

Shit! What happened to you?

MARLENE

Don't worry. This is fixable. I
got us help. But I can't come with
you.

Ellie, almost lost for words...

ELLIE

Well... then... I'm staying.

MARLENE

Ellie, we won't get another shot at
this.

JOEL

(re: Ellie)

Wait... we're smuggling her?

MARLENE

There's a crew of Fireflies that'll
meet you at the Boston Capitol
building.

TESS

That's not exactly close.

MARLENE

You're capable. You hand her off,
come back here, the weapons are
yours. Double what Robert sold
you.

TESS
Speaking of which, where are they?

MARLENE
Back in our camp.

Tess exhales, unimpressed.

TESS
We're not smuggling shit until I
see them.

Marlene takes a breath.

MARLENE
You'll follow me. You can verify
the weapons. I can get patched up.
(re: Ellie)
But she's not crossing into that
part of town. Joel can watch over
her --

JOEL
Whoa, whoa, I don't think that's
the best idea --

ELLIE
Bullshit! Marlene, I'm not staying
alone with this guy --

MARLENE
Ellie, stop!

Ellie, reluctant, thinks for a moment.

ELLIE
How do you know them?

MARLENE
I was close with Joel's brother
Tommy. Said if I was ever in a
jam, I could rely on him.

JOEL
Was that before or after my brother
left your little militia group?

MARLENE
He left you too, Joel.

Tess steps over to Joel.

TESS
Look, just sit tight, I'll be back
here before you know it.

Joel shakes his head at the absurdity of it all.

TESS (CONT'D)
She's just cargo, Joel.

JOEL
Fine.

Tess heads for the door.

Marlene kneels beside Ellie, stroking her hand over her face.

MARLENE
I need you to do this. I need you
to be strong for me.

Ellie looks down at the floor. Tears building in her eyes.
In Marlene's too.

MARLENE (CONT'D)
Can you do this for me?

Ellie finds the courage from somewhere.

ELLIE
I can.

Marlene hugs Ellie tight.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Am I going to see you again?

MARLENE
Of course you're going to see me
again. I can't say when exactly.
Might be a long time, but I will
see you again. I promise.

Ellie nods. Hugs her one last time.

Marlene heads out the door with Tess.

An uneasy, awkward moment as Ellie and Joel are left alone
together in the room.

Joel lies on the couch. Shuts his eyes. Leaving Ellie
standing, with nothing to do.

ELLIE
What are you doing?

JOEL
Killing time.

ELLIE
Well, what am I supposed to do?

JOEL
I am sure you will figure that out.

Ellie looks around. Not sure what to do. She notices something...

ELLIE
Your watch is broken.

Joel doesn't need to look. It's been broken for a long time.

HOURS LATER

Day has long since turned to night. Joel's eyes snap open. Ellie, still awake, is sitting by the window gazing out at the rain.

ELLIE
You mumble in your sleep. I hate bad dreams.

He stands.

JOEL
What on earth do the Fireflies want with you?

The apartment door opens. Tess enters, soaking wet.

TESS
Hey, sorry it took so long.
Soldiers fucking everywhere.

ELLIE
How's Marlene?

TESS
She'll be okay. Probably.
(to Joel)
I saw the merchandise. It's a lot.
You wanna do this?

JOEL
Doesn't look like we have much choice.

TESS

This will only take a few hours,
and then we're home free.

Tess heads into another room. Opens a closet door.
Removes floorboards revealing a deep hole with a ladder.
She starts climbing down.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE QUARANTINE ZONE - NIGHT

A large sheet of wood on the rain-soaked ground lifts up.
Joel peeks out at the CRUMBLING landscape in front of him.
Like a war zone. That's because it once was.
Concrete debris littered everywhere.

Joel spots a military patrol up ahead.
He waves down at Tess, telling her to pause.
When the patrol eventually passes, he climbs out.
Pulls Tess and Ellie up after him.

TESS

Stay close. Whatever happens. We
can't split up.

We follow as they hike through a devastated concrete maze.
Trudging up crumbling streets.
Through urban caverns.
Around abandoned vehicles.

Joel staggers up through an 18 wheeler's trailer, lying on
its side, and steps out the end --

-- WHACK! -- just as a FEMALE SOLDIER, wearing a gas mask,
SWINGS the butt of her rifle over his face, dropping him.

Tess and Ellie can barely react, before they realize they've
been flanked by a MALE SOLDIER behind them, pistol in hand.

MALE SOLDIER

Move!

They raised their hands, and move out to join Joel.

FEMALE SOLDIER

Turn around. On your knees. Now.

They kneel with Joel, placing their hands on their heads.

FEMALE SOLDIER (CONT'D)

You scan them. I'll call it in.

The male soldier takes a hi-tech SCANNER off his belt,
placing it against their necks, just under their ears.
On Tess First. Holds it for a moment.

FEMALE SOLDIER (CONT'D)
 (into radio)
 This is Ramirez on the perimeter,
 in sector twelve. Requesting
 pickup for three stragglers.

Tess looks up at the soldier scanning her.

TESS
 Look the other way. We can make
 this worth your while.

MALE SOLDIER
 Shut up!

He scans Joel next.

MALE SOLDIER (CONT'D)
 I'm so tired of this shit!

He holds the scanner against Ellie. Turns to the female
 soldier...

MALE SOLDIER (CONT'D)
 What's the ETA?

FEMALE SOLDIER
 Couple of minutes.

Hidden in Ellie's palm: her FLICK KNIFE.
 In a flash, she spins, STABBING it in the male soldier's leg.
 He screams, pitching forward in agony --

-- Joel leaps, tackling him to the ground.

The female soldier snaps her rifle up --

FEMALE SOLDIER (CONT'D)
 Get the fuck off of him!

-- *BLAM!* -- a bullet rips through the female's head -- from
 Tess' smoking gun.

Joel rolls, pushing the male soldier's pistol against his gas
 mask -- *BLAM!* -- killing him.

Ellie, in shock, backs away.

TESS
 Are you okay, Ellie?

ELLIE
 Fuck, I... I thought we were just
 going to hold them up or something.

Tess picks up the scanner. Double-takes at what she reads.
Passes it to Joel. The word: INFECTED flashes on its screen.

JOEL
Jesus Christ!

Joel stares at Ellie, knowing she's infected.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Marlene set us up. Why the hell
are we smuggling an infected girl?

ELLIE
Wait... no... I'm not infected.

JOEL
No? Is this thing lying?

He drops the scanner to her feet.

ELLIE
I can explain.

TESS
You better explain fast.
(brandishing pistol)
We're not in the habit of letting
infected people live.

Ellie pulls up her sleeve, exposing a BITE MARK on her wrist.

ELLIE
Look at this.

JOEL
I don't care how you got infected.

ELLIE
It's three weeks old.

TESS
That is bullshit. No one has
lasted longer than a day, maybe
two.

ELLIE
It's been three weeks, I swear.

JOEL
I ain't buying it.

Joel spots a military vehicle approaching. He grabs Tess.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Tess, move!

He turns to Ellie...

JOEL (CONT'D)
You're on your own. Get out of
here.

Joel drops down into a...

EXT. ROAD CHASM - NIGHT

...with Tess. A long length of street that has collapsed
into the ground, like a deep trench. But Ellie follows.

Soldiers up top find the dead soldiers.

SOLDIER #1
(into radio)
I got two dead uniforms. I repeat,
I got two casualties on the
perimeter. We're in sector twelve.
Requesting immediate backup.

Huge FLOODLIGHTS on the quarantine zone's perimeter wall
flicker on, sweeping over the area.

Joel and Tess race through puddles of rainwater. Ellie
trailing them. Soldiers up top spread out, shining their
torches down into the maze of collapsed roads.

SOLDIER #2
Anyone see them?

SOLDIER #3
I can't see shit up here.

Ellie loses sight of Joel and Tess as they move around a
corner. She picks up speed, but still can't spot them again.

A soldier up top peers down -- almost seeing Ellie -- just as
an arm pulls her into shadow -- out of the soldier's view.
Tess holds Ellie tight -- as the soldier eventually moves on.

Joel, across the way, inside a large, underground, broken
pipeline, waves them to follow him.

EXT. END OF PIPELINE - NIGHT

They emerge, but remain low.
Ellie takes a seat, catching her breath.
Tess kneels next to her.

TESS

Look - what was the plan? Let's
say we deliver you to the
Fireflies, what then?

ELLIE

Marlene, she said that... that they
have their own little quarantine
zone, with doctors there, that are
still trying to find a cure.

Joel, as cynical as ever...

JOEL

Oh yeah, sure, we've heard that
before, huh, Tess?

ELLIE

And that... whatever happened to me
is the key to finding a vaccine.

Joel, unbelieving...

JOEL

Oh, Jesus...

ELLIE

It's what she said.

JOEL

Oh, I'm sure she did.

Ellie jumps to her feet.

ELLIE

Fuck you, man! I didn't ask for
this.

JOEL

Me, neither. Tess, what the hell
are we doing here?

TESS

What if it's true?

Joel turns away, shaking his head.

TESS (CONT'D)

What if, Joel? We've come this
far, let's just finish it.

He grabs Tess by the arm.

JOEL

Do I need to remind you what is out there?

Tess doesn't answer him.

She takes Ellie by the arm, and keeps on walking.

TESS

If we cut through downtown, we can hit the Capitol building by sunrise.

Joel exhales a long, tired breath.

Reluctantly follows after them.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BOSTON - NIGHT

The trio roam through city streets.

Every footstep echoing around this empty city.

Ellie gazes up at the skyscrapers with awe.

ELLIE

I can't believe how damn tall these buildings are up close. What happened here?

TESS

They bombed the hell out of the surrounding areas to the quarantine zone, hoping to kill as much of the infected as possible. It worked, for a little while.

In the distance: an ungodly -- *SCREECH!* -- the *DEATH CRIES* of the infected, echoing through the night.

ELLIE

Jesus, are you hearing this?

JOEL

Let's just keep moving.

As they move deeper into this concrete jungle, it becomes more difficult to navigate. Buildings squashed up against each other, some tilting, some leaning drastically, some fallen flat.

They reach the end of a road, where it drops like a CLIFF EDGE. A straight drop into a bottomless pit. No obvious way around this butchered wasteland.

Lightning above illuminates dark storm clouds.

INT. LEANING SKYSCRAPER - NIGHT

They climb through this drastically leaning skyscraper. Trying to stand straight as they scramble up sloping floors. The entire building *CREAKS* and *STRAINS* like it was alive.

Moving through a door way, Joel almost slips in a pool of BLOOD. The blood of a dead soldier, ripped limb from limb.

TESS
The body's still fresh.

ELLIE
Is... is that bad?

JOEL
It's not good.

ELLIE
Maybe we should find another way around.

TESS
No, let's just... keep on moving.

Shuffling along another corridor, Joel find the corpse of an infected. No real face left. Just flaps of mushrooming-like FUNGUS covering most of it.

This is a later stage form of an infected, known as a **CLICKER**.

JOEL
We got a clicker over here.

TESS
Spores?

JOEL
No, we're good.

ELLIE
Jeez, what's wrong with its face?

TESS
That's what years of infection will do to you.

Joel wrenches the body away from the door. Most of its flesh fused to the wood.

ELLIE
So, what, are they blind?

TESS
Sort of. They see using sound.

ELLIE
How?

TESS
They make a clicking sound. Our
best guess is it acts like some
kind of echolocation.

ELLIE
Oh, like a bat, right?

Joel forces the door open -- bursting into a room --

-- just as a live CLICKER runs at him, appearing out of
nowhere, wrestling him to the floor -- teeth gnashing toward
his face as he desperately tries to hold it back --

-- Tess KICKS it off of him. Pulls her pistol -- putting two
shots through its head. The gunshots *ECHOING* forever.

Somewhere below them, the *DEATH CRIES* of more infected,
attracted by the sound of their gunshots.

JOEL
We gotta move, now!

They race through the room.
Along another corridor.
About to run down the slanting stairwell...
But they hear the FOOTSTEPS of infected below, running up it.

So Joel, Tess and Ellie go UP instead of down.
Emerging on a new floor several stories above.
The sound of pursuing infected footsteps not far behind.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Are we heading the right way?

TESS
Just stay on me.

They hit a dead end in the corridor. Joel kicks open a door
to an office and they race inside. Half the wall is gone,
exposing it to the outside, looking out over the city.

Down the sloping side of the building, three floors below,
Tess spots a long WINDOW-WASHERS PLATFORM. Not just one, but
two, side-by-side.

Tess climbs out...

EXT. SIDE OF LEANING SKYSCRAPER - NIGHT

...sliding down the to the platform -- the rusted metal cable at each end of it rattles as she hits it, shaking violently.

TESS
Come on, hurry.

Joel helps Ellie climb out too. She slides down -- just as two infected rush into the office room, crashing into Joel --

-- he tumbles out with the infected, down the side of the building --

-- all hitting the platform so hard that one of the cables SNAPS -- the platform hangs vertically -- both infected falling to their deaths --

-- but Joel grabs hold just in time. He looks up at Tess and Ellie, each gripping the top end...

JOEL
Don't wait for me. Go!

Tess and Ellie hop across to the other horizontal platform.

Joel begins to climb -- but more infected, on the other side of the windows, smash their fists through trying to grab him.

He kicks them away. Desperately climbs up the vertical platform to the top -- jumps across to the horizontal platform -- as the infected climb out of the smashed windows.

He shoots the single cable holding the vertical platform -- and it falls, taking the mass of infected with it.

TESS
Everyone okay?

No time to answer -- as this platform suddenly gives way -- it FALLS as the cable at each end rapidly spool out from the crane on the roof --

-- before jerking to a sudden stop again ten floors below -- but one side snaps -- sending this platform vertical too --

-- Ellie and Joel barely retaining their grip -- but Tess plummets down the building's steep side -- sliding against the glass -- too steep to stop herself --

JOEL
Tessssssss!

-- but she falls inside an open window several floors below...

INT. LEANING SKYSCRAPER - NIGHT

...crashing back inside another office, on top of a desk that collapses under her weight.

She groans as she sits up, her back aching -- but more infected SCREECH nearby. She jumps to her feet, pulls her pistol just in time -- as the infected race into the room --

-- BLAM! -- BLAM! -- BLAM! --

Several floors above, Joel and Ellie climb back inside the building, hearing her gunshots echoing.

They stumble around in the darkness.
Find a door out into the corridor.
Hop down another slanting stairwell.
Hearing Tess' screams as she fights for her life.
They race to her position...

Joel bursts into the room, firing at the last infected that Tess is desperately trying to hold back.

He pulls her to her feet, hugging her tight.
She collapses in his arms, exhausted.
They take a well-earned rest, catching their breath.

Later, as night begins to turn to day... a long PLANK of wood is pushed out of the building's window, across to the...

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAWN

...of a smaller building.

Ellie takes her time, moving slowly across the gap.
Tess out next. She wavers her arms, adjusting her balance.
Joel trudges across it last.

They stare out across the view of Boston, seeing the CAPITOL BUILDING in the distance.

TESS

Well, is that everything you hoped for?

ELLIE

Jury's still out. But man... you can't deny that view.

Suddenly, all around them, a *LOW, DEEP RUMBLING* sound invades their senses. The leaning skyscraper behind them *COLLAPSES* in on itself -- disintegrating into a cloud of dust.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
You've got to be kidding me.

JOEL
Welcome to the outside world.

Tess puts her arm around Ellie.

TESS
You okay?

ELLIE
Define okay?

Joel, cold...

JOEL
Are you still breathing?

ELLIE
Do small, panicked breaths count?

TESS
Yeah, they count.

ELLIE
Alright then, I'm okay.

EXT. FLOODED STREETS - DAY

The trio wade through water which is steadily getting deeper.

TESS
It's not far now.

ELLIE
Umm... just so it's out there, I
can't swim.

TESS
It looks like it's shallow over on
the right side. Just follow me.

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Minutes later, they climb the steps of the building.

JOEL
It's too quiet.

Tess pushes open the front door and steps inside...

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY

Tess spots a fresh body with gunshots to the chest.
A Firefly corpse. Then a second. Make that a third.
She rushes over to them...

TESS
No. No, no, no...

She frantically searches the bodies as Ellie watches.

ELLIE
So... what happens now?

Joel looks down on Tess, shaking his head.

JOEL
What are you doing, Tess?

TESS
Maybe they... um... maybe they had
a map or something to tell us where
they were going.

Joel rolls his eyes.

JOEL
How far are we going to take this?

TESS
As far as it needs to go.

She looks up at Ellie.

TESS (CONT'D)
Where was this lab of theirs?

ELLIE
Oh... Marlene never said. Just
that it was someplace out west.

JOEL
What are we doing here? This is
not us.

Tess stands, angered.

TESS
What do you know about us? About
me?

JOEL
I know you're smarter than this.

TESS
Really? Guess what, we're shitty people, Joel. It's been that way for a long time.

JOEL
No, we are survivors.

TESS
This is our chance --

JOEL
(shouting)
It is over, Tess.
(beat)
Now we tried, but it's over. Let's just go home.

Tears in Tess' eyes.

TESS
I'm not... I'm not going anywhere.
This is my last stop.

JOEL
What?

TESS
Our luck had to run out sooner or later.

JOEL
What are you going on about?

He grabs her arm -- but Tess violently pulls away from him.

TESS
No, don't... don't touch me.

Ellie, realizing even before Joel does...

ELLIE
Holy shit. She's infected.

Joel backs away, hardly believing it.

JOEL
Let me see.

TESS
I didn't mean for any of this --

JOEL
Show it to me.

Tess pulls the collar away from her neck, revealing a BITE MARK. Joel's world begins to crumble. His heart sinks.

Tess grabs Ellie's arm, pointing at the bite mark on her wrist.

TESS
This was three weeks. I was bitten
an hour ago and it's already worse.
(pointing at Ellie)
This is fucking real. You've got
to get this girl to Tommy's. He
use to run with the Fireflies.
He'll know where to go.

JOEL
No, no, no, that was your crusade.
I am not doing that.

Tess takes hold of Joel.

TESS
Yes you are. Look, there's enough
here...
(between me and you)
...that you have to feel some sort
of obligation to me. To us. So
you get her to Tommy's.

Suddenly the sound of VEHICLES outside, splashing through water. Tess races to the window, seeing ARMED SOLDIERS outside, jumping out of a truck, spreading out.

TESS (CONT'D)
They're here. I can buy you
sometime, but you have to run.

ELLIE
What? You want us to just leave
you?

TESS
Yes.

JOEL
There is no way that --

TESS
I will not turn into one of those
things.

Tess stares deep into Joel's eyes.

TESS (CONT'D)
Come on... make this easy for me.

His mind racing. Tess pushes him hard.

TESS (CONT'D)
Just fucking go!

After a long moment...

JOEL
Ellie, come on.

ELLIE
I'm sorry, I... I didn't mean for
any of this.

He backs away, fighting back tears. Reluctant to leave. But he does. He takes off through a rear door with Ellie.

Tess closes her eyes. Whispers to herself...

TESS
Thank you, Joel.

She turns to face the main doors, as the voices of soldiers shout through it.

ARMED SOLDIERS (O.S.)
We know you're in there. Drop your
weapons and come out with your
hands up.

The soldiers kick open the door, BURSTING inside.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Joel and Ellie hear the *GUNSHOTS* between Tess and the soldiers. Joel stops -- wanting to turn back when he hears Tess' SCREAMS, but it's too late now. Hates himself for it.

EXT. FLOODED STREETS - DAY

Ellie and Joel wade through the water, putting as much distance between them and the soldiers as possible, before taking a much needed rest. Joel sits. Tears in his eyes.

ELLIE
Hey, look... about Tess. I don't
know where to --

His tears give way to anger, snapping at her...

JOEL

You listen to me. Here's how this thing is going to play out. You don't talk about Tess. Ever.

ELLIE

I'm sorry --

JOEL

I don't want you to be sorry. I don't want anything from you. All I want is you to shut your mouth. You do what I say, when I say it. That's all, you got that?

Ellie wants to cry, but doesn't let herself.

ELLIE

Sure.

JOEL

Repeat it.

ELLIE

What you say goes.

Joel stands. Continues walking. But stops again.

JOEL

She just died for you. You remember that.

He marches away. Ellie clears her tears. Solemnly follows.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER:

FALL

A lonely, desolate highway, stretching forever into the night. Rain hammering down. Car wrecks lay strewn along it for miles.

In one of those broken, old wrecks...

INT. OLD CAR - NIGHT

...Ellie, in the backseat, head against the window, asleep.

She slowly stirs awake, hearing something nearby... something *CLICKING*...

She springs awake -- but a hand grabs her mouth -- Joel's hand -- in the backseat with her, desperately trying to keep her quiet as...

...CLICKERS slowly stagger past -- sniffing the air, hunting for prey -- their gruesome faces moving close to the glass --

-- Ellie's eyes go wide as they get REAL close.

Dozens of them swarming the car...
...before slowly moving on again.

Joel releases his hand. Ellie breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Later, Joel and Ellie amble along the rain drenched highway. Stopping to test various car ignitions. The engines squeal to life, before failing again. They move on.

ELLIE

Look, why... why don't you just
take me back to Marlene?

JOEL

If she was up to the task, why'd
she drop you off on us?

ELLIE

Well, maybe she's better now.

JOEL

Kid, I hate to break it to you, but
your friend's chances of survival
weren't too high to begin with.

Ellie glares at him as they walk. Hates him for saying that.

Joel hops inside a Lexus, turns the key, and the engine comes to life -- but strains with an endless chug.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Looks like we have a winner. The
cells are still alive, just need to
push this thing to get it started.

ELLIE

You know, Marlene's a lot tougher
than you think.

JOEL

It don't matter much, kid, because
I doubt I good get either one of us
back to Boston in one piece.

(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)
Trust me, I wish there was some
other option --

Suddenly -- *DEATH CRIES* -- behind them.

Joel grabs Ellie, pushing her into the driver's seat.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Start the engine!

Joel pushes. Ellie fumbles with the key.
Turns it -- but nothing.
Turns it again -- still nothing.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Come on, hurry...

She turns the key again -- and it *SQUEALS* to life.

We see INFECTED racing towards them, gaining speed.
Joel desperately pushes harder... and harder...
Sneaks a look over his shoulder at the oncoming horde.

He pushes harder still -- finally the engine ROARS.
Enough power to carry itself.

Joel jumps into the passenger seat.
Ellie hits the gas -- just as infected reach the car --
-- smashing their fists through the windows...

But Ellie peels away, leaving the infected in her rearview.
Way too close for comfort.

INT. LEXUS - NIGHT

Joel, now driving, making good time on long stretches of
road. Ellie, lying on the backseat, sits upright with a
comic book in her hand.

ELLIE
Oh, man!

JOEL
Hey, what happened to sleeping?

ELLIE
Okay, I know it doesn't look like
it, but this here is not a bad
read. There's only one problem
with it.

She points at the last words on the last page of the comic.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Right there - "to be continued!"
How am I ever going to find out how
this thing ends?

She throws it in frustration.

JOEL
Where'd you get that?

ELLIE
There's a whole load of crap back
here.

She finds a music tape cassette on the floor.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Hey, does this make you feel all
nostalgic?

Joel takes it. Reads the name on the side.

JOEL
You know, this is actually before
my time. That is a winner though.

He slides it into the tape player. Some kind of 'country
music' plays.

ELLIE
Better than nothing I guess.

Ellie reaches down, finding a homo-erotic men's magazine on
the floor.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Look at this. Light on the
reading, but it's got some
interesting photos.

Joel, realizing what it is...

JOEL
Um... Ellie, that ain't for kids.

She opens the centerfold.

ELLIE
Oh my god! How the hell would he
even walk around with that thing?

JOEL
Get rid of that.

Joel reaches back, trying to take it from her.

ELLIE
Hold your horses. I want to see
what all the fuss is about.
(beat)
Oh... um... why are these pages all
stuck together?

Joel, unable to answer the most EMBARRASSING question ever
asked... but Ellie laughs.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
I'm just fucking with you.

She rolls down the window, tossing the magazine out. Then
climbs into the front passenger seat. Turns up the music.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
You know what, this isn't that bad.

She smiles. Something Joel doesn't see her do often.

She yawns, and closes her eyes.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD / INT. LEXUS - DAY

The Lexus comes to a slow stop. Ellie stirs awake.

JOEL
Had to quit on us some time. I'm
surprised it made it this far.

They hop out, seeing a sign: "JACKSON COUNTY, WYOMING"

ELLIE
Jackson County. Means we're close
to Jackson city, right?

JOEL
Shouldn't be more than a few miles.

ELLIE
You ready to see dear old brother?

EXT. RIVER - DAY

They hike up river, along its banks.

Ellie can barely keep up with Joel's stride.
Until he stops further ahead of her, staring at something.
Three MOUNDS of earth. Wooden crucifixes in them.

ELLIE
What is it?

He doesn't answer at first. A long moment.

JOEL
They're too small.

Indeed, they are SMALL graves. Small enough for children.
Joel shakes it off. Continues hiking.

Further along their hike, they come across a large, gated compound...

...a HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT - that the river runs through.

ELLIE
Maybe we can cut through it?

He tests the gate, pushing against it hard --

-- when he hears the *CLICK* of guns -- looks up to see people appearing on top of the wall, pointing rifles down at him.

One of the blonde females up top...

BLONDE FEMALE
Don't even think about reaching for your weapon.

JOEL
Okay... okay, we're not looking for trouble.

BLONDE FEMALE
Please tell me you're lost.

JOEL
We didn't know the place was occupied. We're just trying to make our way through.

BLONDE FEMALE
Through to where?

A voice, from behind the gate...

VOICE (O.S.)
They're alright.

BLONDE FEMALE
You know these people?

VOICE (O.S.)
I know him.

The gate opens, and we see TOMMY.

TOMMY
He's my goddamn brother. Holy
shit!

Joel, shocked...

JOEL
Tommy?

Tommy steps out, throwing his arms around Joel.

JOEL (CONT'D)
How you doing, baby brother?

Tommy stands back, looking Joel up and down.

TOMMY
Let me look at you. You got
fucking old.

JOEL
Easy - it's going to happen to you
too.

The blonde female steps out.

TOMMY
This is Maria. Be nice to her, she
sort of runs things around here.

JOEL
Ma'am, thanks for not blowing my
head off.

MARIA (BLONDE FEMALE)
Would've been embarrassing...
considering you're my
brother-in-law.

Brother-in-law? Joel, confused, looks at Tommy.
Tommy puts his arm around Maria, pulling her in tight.

TOMMY
We all gotta get wrangled up at
some point.

Maria turns to Ellie.

MARIA
And what's your name, sweetie?

ELLIE
Uh... it's Ellie.

MARIA
Nice to meet Ellie. What brings you through here?

ELLIE
It's... kind of a long story.

Tommy takes Maria's hand.

TOMMY
Why don't we bring them inside.

MARIA
Yeah. You guys hungry?

ELLIE
Starving.

They follow Maria inside. Tommy closes the gate.

EXT. HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT - FENCED GROUNDS - DAY

Inside the grounds, they stroll past the myriad of community members.

MARIA
False alarm everyone. They're friendlies.
(to Ellie and Joel)
We've been dealing with raids.
Lots of bandits in this area.

TOMMY
It's been quiet for a few days.

JOEL
What the hell are you doing here, Tommy? I thought I'd find you in Jackson city.

TOMMY
Been trying to bring the plant back to life.

MARIA
We had it working, but one of the turbines went south.

TOMMY
We have electricity, Joel. Well...
had electricity. We'll get it
running again.

Ellie stares in awe at a group of horses in the compound.

ELLIE
You guys have horses.

She pets one of them.

MARIA
You ever ride?

ELLIE
Yeah, lots of times. I love to
ride.

JOEL
When have you ridden a horse?

ELLIE
Winston, this soldier back in the
zone, he gave me lessons.

MARIA
If you want, we can take him riding
later.

ELLIE
That'd be awesome.

They enter the...

INT. HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT - DAY

On Maria's walkie-talkie...

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
Maria, we're in the control room.
Steve's about to start it back up.
You wanna check it out?

MARIA
(to Tommy)
I'd rather eat with Ellie.

TOMMY
It's my turn anyway, I'll go.

JOEL
(to Tommy)
I'll come with you.
(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)
(to Ellie)
Go with Maria and put some food in
you.

Ellie, nervous around new people...

ELLIE
But... Joel...

MARIA
Come on, Ellie, let's give the boys
some space.
(into radio)
I'm sending Tommy over. Stand by.

Joel and Tommy stroll through the main...

INT. CONTROL ROOM AREA - DAY

...along a catwalk. Below them, WORKERS in hard hats turn
heavy bolts, securing a panel back onto a massive turbine.

TOMMY
These geniuses are the ones who are
going to bring this plant back to
life.

WORKER #1
We think we got it this time. Just
give me one more minute.

Tommy laughs.

WORKER #2
Oh, you don't believe us?

TOMMY
I didn't say that.

WORKER #2
I'll bet you a million bucks it
works.

TOMMY
Sure. Make it two.

As the men work below, Tommy turns to Joel.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Hey, I got something for you.

He rummages through his bag.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Couple of months back, I went back
home to Texas. Most of our stuff
was long gone, but I did find some
old photos.

He hands Joel a PHOTOGRAPH: an old picture of Joel hugging
his daughter Sarah.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
It's a little faded, but still
looks pretty good.

It's hard to read Joel's expression at first. His face
blank. Something not right with him. Too hard for him to
process those memories. He hands the photo back to Tommy.

JOEL
I'm good.

TOMMY
You sure? I mean --

JOEL
I said I'm good.

Tommy doesn't force the issue.

TOMMY
Okay, well, I'll hold onto it for
you.

Down below...

WORKER #1
Okay, we're ready to go here.
(into radio)
Hit it.

The turbine slowly starts to spin -- LIGHTS throughout the
power plant FLICKER on.

TOMMY
Let there be light. Nice work,
boys. Someone get on the horn and
give my wife the good news.

Joel taps Tommy on the shoulder.

JOEL
We need to talk. In private.

INT. TOMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Tommy pours a couple of drinks.

JOEL

It's quite the crew you got here.

TOMMY

They're good men. This place gives them a second chance. It gives us all a second chance.

(beat)

So, why'd you leave Boston?

JOEL

I've been on quite the adventure, little brother.

TOMMY

I reckon it's got something to do with that little girl.

JOEL

It's got everything to do with that little girl.

TOMMY

Well, go on then.

JOEL

She's immune.

TOMMY

Immune to what?

Joel sits down. He doesn't even need to say it.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Oh, come on...

JOEL

I wouldn't have believed it either. But I can show you.

Tommy sits down.

TOMMY

Alright, I'll bite. Why bring her here?

JOEL

I was supposed to deliver her to the Fireflies. The way I figure it, they're your boys.

(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)

You finish the job, and you collect the whole damn payment.

TOMMY

I haven't seen a Firefly in years.

JOEL

But you know where they are. Now I'm not asking for much, Tommy. I just want some simple gear, and I'll head out of here back to Boston.

TOMMY

What makes you think I'd do this for you?

JOEL

This isn't for me, Tommy. This is for your damn cause.

TOMMY

My cause is my family now. You ain't talking about some walk in the park here, you know?

JOEL

Jesus boy... have Maria get some of your born again friends to do it then.

TOMMY

They got families too --

JOEL

Tommy, I need this.

Tommy takes a pause.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Tommy, I'm... I'm tired, you know. Real tired.

TOMMY

Look, you want some gear, to set you on your way, sure. But I ain't taking that girl off your hands.

Tommy gets up to leave.

JOEL

This is how you're gonna repay me, huh?

TOMMY
Repay you?

Joel, angry, stands.

JOEL
For all those goddamn years I took
care of us.

TOMMY
Took care? That's what you call
it? I got nothing but nightmares
from those years.

JOEL
You survived because of me.

TOMMY
It wasn't worth it.

Joel PUSHES Tommy hard against a filing cabinet.

JOEL
I bring you the cure for mankind
and you wanna play the pissy little
brother?

TOMMY
We ain't back in Boston. You lay
your hands on me again, it won't
end well for you.

The stare off begins. Like two gorillas ready to fight.

Suddenly -- *ALARMS BLARE* throughout the power plant.

JOEL
What the hell is that?

TOMMY
I don't know.

Tommy grabs his rifle and heads out the door. Joel follows.

EXT. HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANT - FENCED GROUNDS - DAY

Tommy and Joel race to the north gate -- it's opened wide,
allowing two of the community's people, a man and woman on
horseback, to ride back inside --

-- GUNSHOTS whizzing past them, into the compound -- shot by
bandits with rifles in the distance --

-- almost hitting Maria and Ellie --

-- but Joel runs at them -- pushing them to the ground -- shielding them as shots kick up dirt all around them.

As the man and woman ride inside...

TOMMY
Close the gate! Now!

...the gate is pushed closed and locked

The woman jumps off her horse -- but the man falls off his horse -- badly injured.

WOMAN
No, no, no, please no.

The woman applies pressure to his wound.

TOMMY
We need to get him to our doctor.

A group of men lift the injured man and carry him away.

Joel, shielding Maria and Ellie, stands up, pulling them both to their feet.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Jesus, Maria, are you okay? Are you hurt?

MARIA
I'm fine.

Tommy holds Maria tight. He looks over to Joel, knowing he probably just saved her life.

TOMMY
Maria, I need to talk to you.

LATER

...elsewhere in the grounds, in mid-conversation...

MARIA
Absolutely not. You tell your brother to go find somebody else.

TOMMY
Maria, I can't have this hanging over my head.

MARIA

Do you have any idea how many
people we've lost already? Have
you kept count, because I have?

Joel watches them argue from a distance.
Ellie comes up behind him.

ELLIE

Hey, what's that all about?

Joel doesn't answer.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Does that have anything to do with
me?

JOEL

We'll talk about it later.

ELLIE

They are talking about me, aren't
they?

Joel, aggressive...

JOEL

I said we'll talk about it - later.

Ellie, sensing the negative situation...

ELLIE

Later... yeah right.

She slinks away.

Maria and Tommy, still arguing...

MARIA

It takes one, just one fuck up.
One fuck up and then I turn into
one of those widows.

TOMMY

I have to do this. I don't know
what else to say.

Maria, too angry to speak to him anymore, darts up to Joel
instead.

JOEL

(to himself)
Here we go.

Maria SLAPS Joel across his face.

MARIA

You have no right. We have a life here.

(beat)

If anything... anything at all happens to him, it's on you.

She storms away.

TOMMY

Sorry about...

JOEL

It's alright.

TOMMY

I'll take that girl of yours to the Fireflies. You don't have to worry about it.

JOEL

It's best this way.

TOMMY

Maybe some real good will come of this.

JOEL

I hope so. I need to talk to Ellie first though. Explain it to her.

Joel wanders off. Tommy's radio screeches with chatter.

TOMMY

(into radio)

Say again, I didn't hear you.

As Joel walks, Tommy quickly catches up to him again.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Hey, Joel, that girl of yours, she took one of our horses and rode off.

JOEL

Goddamn it.

AT REAR GATE

Tommy and Joel race over to a horse wrangler holding two horses.

HORSE WRANGLER

I just saw her riding out of here.

Tommy and Joel hop up onto the horses.
They exit the compound into...

EXT. FOREST - DAY

...riding fast along mountain trails through thick forest.

Tommy points at the ground.

TOMMY

There! See the tracks?

They race through wet mud.
Jump over fallen trees.
Thunderous hooves hitting the ground.
They come to a dead end. Huge boulders blocking their way.

JOEL

Goddamn it, where the hell did she
go?

Tommy spots more tracks.

TOMMY

There! Into the woods.

They bolt into dense woodland.
Snaking around clumps of trees and bushes.
They come to a stop, scanning the ground...

JOEL

I don't see any tracks.

Tommy spots a ranch in the distance through the treeline.

TOMMY

This way.

He bolts off. Joel follows.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

They trudge up the path to the property.
A single horse is tied up outside.
Joel jumps down. Enters the house.
Tommy waits outside.

TOMMY

Make it quick. There are still
bandits in the area.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Joel eases his way through, gun in hand.
All rooms empty.
Moves up the stairwell.
Finds a closed door, pushes it open.

He sees Ellie sitting at a window seat, inside a little girl's bedroom, reading a diary.

ELLIE

Is this really all they had to
worry about? Boys. Movies.
Deciding which shirt goes with
which skirt. It's bizarre.

JOEL

Get up. We're leaving.

ELLIE

And if I say no?

JOEL

Do you even realize what your life
means? Huh? Running off like
that, putting yourself at risk.
It's pretty goddamn stupid.

ELLIE

Well, I guess we're both
disappointed with each other then.

JOEL

What do you want from me?

ELLIE

Just admit that you wanted to get
rid of me this whole time.

He can't answer that. He won't.

JOEL

Tommy knows this whole area better
than --

ELLIE

Oh, fuck that.

Ellie snaps the diary shut. Stands up.

JOEL

Well, I'm sorry, I trust him better
than I trust myself.

ELLIE
Stop with the bullshit. What are
you so afraid of? I can't get
infected. I can take care of
myself.

JOEL
How many close calls have we had?

ELLIE
Well, we seem to be doing alright
so far?

JOEL
(shouting)
It's called luck, and it's gonna
run out.

Joel takes a breath, calming himself down.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Look... you'll be doing even better
with Tommy.

He goes to leave...

ELLIE
I'm not her, you know?

JOEL
What?

ELLIE
Maria told me about Sarah --

JOEL
Ellie, you are treading on some
mighty thin ice here.

ELLIE
I'm sorry about your daughter,
Joel, but I have lost people too.

JOEL
You have no idea what loss is.

This hits Ellie hard.

ELLIE
Everyone I have cared for has
either died, or left me.

She pushes Joel. Fights back tears.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Everyone except for you. So don't tell me I would be safer with someone else, because the truth is I would just be more scared.

JOEL

You're right...

(anger behind his eyes)

...you're not my daughter, and I sure as hell ain't your dad. Now we are going our separate ways whether you like it or not.

Tommy calls from outside...

TOMMY (O.S.)

Joel, come on, let's move already.

Joel leaves the room.

Ellie wipes away a tear that she didn't want to let him see.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Ellie steps outside.

Tommy immediately senses the tension between them.

Ellie unties her horse.

TOMMY

You want a hand up?

ELLIE

I got it.

She climbs on top.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The three of them slowly trot back down mountain paths. A solemn ride. Joel, at the rear, looks forward at Ellie, reading her disappointment even though he can't see her face.

Sometime later, they reach a...

EXT. RIDGE - DAY

...overlooking the power plant. The whole place lit up like a Christmas tree. A beautiful sight.

TOMMY

Would you look at that. The kids will be watching movies tonight.

Joel thinks for a moment.

JOEL

The Fireflies - where is this lab
of theirs you told me about?

TOMMY

It's all the way out. University
of Eastern Colorado.

JOEL

Go Big Horns.
(to Ellie)
Ellie, get off your horse, give it
on back to Tommy.

Ellie's eyes go wide with confused joy.

Joel pats the horse he's sitting on.

JOEL (CONT'D)

(to Tommy)
I'm gonna hang on to this fella, if
that's alright with you.
(to Ellie)
Go on, don't make me repeat myself.

Ellie hops on down. Tommy, also confused...

TOMMY

What are you doing?

JOEL

Your wife kinda scares me. I don't
want her coming after me.

Ellie hands the reigns to Tommy.

ELLIE

Sorry for stealing your horse.

TOMMY

Look, why don't you both come back
to town, Let's discuss it at least.

Joel pulls Ellie up onto his horse. She sits behind him.

JOEL

You know me. My minds all made up
now. University Eastern Colorado.
Easy as pie.
(beat)
You take care of that wife of
yours.

TOMMY
There's a place for you here. You
know that.

Joel nods.

JOEL
(to Ellie)
You good?

ELLIE
I'm good.

JOEL
Adios, little brother.

Joel and Ellie slowly head away as Tommy watches them go.

FADE TO BLACK.

Joel and Ellie on horseback, gently trotting along...

EXT. CAMPUS ROAD - DAY

...in Colorado Springs.

ELLIE
Okay, let me see if I got this
straight. If you mess up your
fourth down, then you give the ball
to your other team?

JOEL
Right. It's called turnover.

ELLIE
And if you clear the ten yards then
you're back at... first down?

JOEL
First down, that's right.

ELLIE
Man, it's confusing.

JOEL
You just gotta play it a couple of
times. It'll all make sense.

They reach the main gate of the college campus -- but Joel
stops.

ELLIE
What's the matter?

JOEL
Whoever's in there, they left the
gate open.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS GROUNDS - DAY

Joel hops down off the horse, ties it to a fence.
Helps Ellie down.

As they explore through the grounds, Ellie calls out...

ELLIE
Hello?

Joel grabs her.

JOEL
Quiet! We don't know who's around.

They move deeper through the campus.
Spot a SYMBOL on the outer wall of the science building.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Firefly symbol.

INT. SCIENCE BUILDING - DAY

They gently push the door open into the lobby.
The whole place is trashed.
Shuffle up the stairs to a mezzanine level.
Walk along corridors, checking room, after room, after room.
Joel can't hide his disappointment..

JOEL
There's no one here.

ELLIE
Maybe... maybe they're somewhere
else nearby --

JOEL
There's nobody fucking here!

He kicks over a stack of boxes in frustration.

They keep on searching.
Move up the stairwell to the fifth floor.
He opens the door to an office...

...and sees a SKELETON sitting in a chair.
A hole through its skull. A gun on the floor.
A tape recorder sits on a desk.
Joel picks it up. Presses play.

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (V.O.)
 If you're looking for the
 Fireflies, they all left.

ELLIE
 Yeah, no shit.

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (V.O.)
 I'm dead, or I will be soon. Got
 me some time to reflect.

Joel fast-forwards. Presses play again.

TAPE RECORDER VOICE (V.O.)
 ...been years that felt like we
 were...
 (>>> fast-forward)
 ...fucking thing was a giant waste
 of time...
 (>>> fast-forward)
 ...not gonna do this anymore...
 (>>> fast-forward)
 ...the Fireflies are still trying
 to save the world. Good luck to
 them, but they're wasting their
 time.

The tape ends. Nothing but white noise. Joel's eyes fall
 closed. His hope gone. He slumps down.

ELLIE
 Look, we can still find them. We
 have to keep on looking --

JOEL
 They could be anywhere by now.

ELLIE
 Look, we... we can't give up --

JOEL
 What do you want me to do?

ELLIE
 I want you to get up.

Joel does get up -- spotting something over Ellie's shoulder.
 A MAP on the wall. He pulls it down. Traces his finger
 along a red line from the campus -- all the way to:

"Salt Lake City." The words: "Saint Mary's Hospital"
 scribbled next to it.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
You think that's where they are?

JOEL
I... I don't know. It's as good a
place as any I guess.

ELLIE
You know where it is?

JOEL
I know the city.

ELLIE
Is it far?

JOEL
It ain't exactly close --

Joel spots something through the window, moving in another
building across the campus square. People. Flashlights.

ELLIE
Fireflies?

The flashlights shine directly at them. Joel grabs Ellie,
pulling her down -- *BLAM!* -- a gunshot shatters the window.

Joel grabs Ellie, rushing out of the room, staying low.
They head down the corridor...
Back to the stairwell.

They go to move down it, but they see BANDITS moving up.
Joel checks his revolver. Only FOUR shots left.
They quickly back away down the corridor.

Down below, we follow the bandits.
Only a couple of them have guns, the rest use bats or knives.
They split off onto different floors, hunting their prey.

One bandit emerges on the fifth floor, branding a sharp pair
of scissors. Edging slowly along, checking each room.

He startles ELLIE, who is casually standing in a classroom --
he rushes at her -- but Joel, hiding to the side of the
doorway, swings a fire extinguisher, breaking his face.

Ellie and Joel sneak-run back to the stairwell, going down
one floor, when a bandit above them, up on the sixth floor,
shouts down...

BANDIT #1
HEY...

Joel and Ellie freeze -- putting their backs against the wall. Were they seen?

BANDIT #1 (CONT'D)
...any of you guys see these
assholes? Where the hell are they?

From further down, another bandit looks up...

BANDIT #2
When I do, you'll be the first to
know.

When the bandits leave, Joel and Ellie sneak across the fourth floor, moving into another classroom --

-- they duck low as a bandit strides past the doorway.

After a few moments, Joel and Ellie sneak out into the corridor, moving around a corner -- just as a bandit steps out of a nearby room, unknowingly missing sight of them.

Joel spots another rear stairwell, rushing through its door --

-- but unintentionally crashes against another bandit.
Joel, shocked, grabs the bat in the man's hand,
wrestling him for control, dropping his own gun as he does...

They TUMBLE down the stairs, locked in each other's arms.
Rolling down onto the third level.
The bandit's neck BREAKING as they hit it.
Ellie quickly follows down after him.

A bandit on a lower floor hears the rustle above.
He quickly races up, following the sound.

Joel and Ellie dash away, out onto the third floor, as the bandit emerges up the stairs, seeing the body of his friend.

BANDIT #3
Hey, over here! Mike's dead! The
motherfuckers just killed Mike!

Bandit #1, above, races down to meet him.
They both rush out, spotting Joel and Ellie racing away.

Bandit #1 lights his Molotov cocktail. Bandit #3 pulls back the bolt on his rifle -- fires a shot -- just missing Ellie.

Joel spins -- returning a slew of shots --
One hitting the Molotov -- liquid fire vomiting over both men. They thrash and wail in agony.

Bandit #5 appears behind Joel, swinging a heavy chain, wrapping it around Joel's gun hand. Joel slams his free hand into the man's throat -- caving in his windpipe.

Ellie and Joel race to the main stairwell -- just as another man is steps through it -- but Joel kicks him, knocking him back down the stairs to the next floor -- following him down and STAMPING on his head, again and again and again.

More FOOTSTEPS below, coming up the stairwell -- Ellie and Joel bolt away, down the corridor, through double doors, out onto the mezzanine level overlooking the lobby --

-- but a bandit, knife in his hand, right on their heels, rushes out a millisecond behind Joel -- crashing hard against him -- Joel's revolver dropping over the side of the railing.

-- Ellie thrown hard off her feet to the floor --

-- Joel barely catches the knife in the man's arm -- struggling to push it away as the bandit pushes it toward his face --

-- each of them leaning hard against the railing --

-- which suddenly BREAKS away -- Joel and the man falling into the lobby below --

-- Joel IMPALED on a sharp piece of rebar -- sticking up through his abdomen. He howls in agony.

The man next to him unconscious, or dead.

Ellie quickly lowers herself from the mezzanine level, dropping into the lobby. Runs to his side.

ELLIE

Jesus, Joel... what should I do?

More bandit VOICES nearby, closing in fast. Joel reaches for his gun -- pushes Ellie out of the way -- -- as two bandits kick open a door, rushing inside -- -- BLAM! -- BLAM! -- Joel shoots both men dead.

Then, it's over. Silence. The building seemingly empty of anyone more bandits. Ellie crawls back to Joel.

JOEL

(struggling to breathe)

I'm... I'm gonna need... you to... to pull me up.

She takes his hand.

ELLIE
Okay, okay. You ready? One. Two.
Three.

She pulls his arm -- he SCREAMS as he's heaved off the metal rebar. Blood pouring from him.

He throws his arm over her shoulder, using her as support.

JOEL
Just get to the damn horse.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS GROUNDS - DAY

They slowly limp away from the science building.
Joel's face rapidly losing color.

ELLIE
Come on, Joel, come on, it's not
far now, you can do it.

Over by the main gate, they find their horse.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Can you get on?

She helps push as he pulls himself on top.
She climbs up behind him. Pulls on the horse's reigns.

EXT. CAMPUS ROAD - DAY

Joel and Ellie gently trot down the street.
Ellie peeks behind for any more bandits, but doesn't see any.

ELLIE
I think we're safe.

Joel's vision going in and out of focus. Everything blurs.
He tilts to the side, FALLING off the horse.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Joel!

She jumps off after him. Tries to pull him back up to his feet, but she's not strong enough.
Tears building in her eyes.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Joel, please, you got to tell me
what to do.

But he doesn't respond. His body going limp.
She puts her arms around him, trying to prop him up.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Joel, please, you need to tell me
what I have to do.

She cries a flood of tears.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Please, don't leave me, Joel.
Please... please don't leave me. I
can't do this by myself...

As we pull away, her cries fade into the oncoming night...

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Don't leave me, Joel, please,
please don't leave me...

The longest moment we've ever experienced.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER:

WINTER

Snow. Endless. Glistening in the sun. Wind howls through massive mountain ranges. A beautiful, ethereal landscape.

A small area of snow begins to shuffle. Something moving below its surface. A small RABBIT breaks out the top, sniffing the air --

-- out of nowhere, an ARROW spears it. Perfect shot.

A pair of feet enter frame, lifting up the dead rabbit. ELLIE pulls the arrow out. Sizes up her catch.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
This won't last very long.

She stuffs it in a bag on the side of her horse that's tied to a tree. Then, she spots a DEER moving in the distance. She grabs her bow and heads out after it.

Up on a ridge, Ellie moves silently, stalking the deer, as it grazes further down the hill. She takes aim. Breathes slow and steady. Lets the arrow fly -- HITS it --

-- but the deer bolts away, still very much alive.

She exhales, frustrated. Moves fast, trying not to lose it.

She follows a trail of blood in the snow.
Jogging through dense forests. Up hills. Across fields.

Then, Ellie finds the deer, now dead on the ground.
She inspects her kill, circling around it.

But -- she hears a *NOISE* -- twigs breaking under footfall.
She spins, snapping her bow and arrow up.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Hey, who's there?

From behind a boulder, a frail looking OLDER MAN steps out,
late 60s, rifle slung over his shoulder, and a YOUNGER MAN,
early 30s, both holding the palm of their hands high.

The older man, softly spoken...

OLDER MAN
We just want to talk.

ELLIE
Any sudden moves and I put one
right between your eyes. Ditto for
buddy boy there.

OLDER MAN
My names David. This here is
James. We're from a larger group.
Women. Children. We're all very,
very hungry.

ELLIE
So am I. My group's big. Women
and children too. All hungry.

DAVID (OLDER MAN)
Well, maybe we could, uh... trade
you something for some of that meat
there. What do you need? Weapons,
ammo, clothes --

Before he can finish...

ELLIE
Medicine. Do you have any
antibiotics?

DAVID
We do. Back at the camp. You're
welcome to follow us --

ELLIE
I'm not following you anywhere.
James can go get it. He comes back
with what I need, the deer is all
yours. Anyone else shows up --

DAVID
You put one right between my eyes?

ELLIE
That's right.

David turns to James.

DAVID
Two bottles of penicillin and a
syringe. Make it fast. Go on.

James, almost reluctant to leave, heads away.

Ellie eyes the rifle over David's shoulder.

ELLIE
I'll take that rifle.

David takes it by the strap. Places it on the ground. Backs away. Ellie picks it up, checking that it's loaded. Keeps it trained on him.

DAVID
James is probably going to be a
while. You mind if we take some
shelter from the cold?

He gestures toward an old, wood cabin, half of it collapsed.

ELLIE
(re: deer)
Bring him with us.

David drags the deer across to the...

INT. CABIN - DAY

David drops another piece of wood on the roaring fire. Ellie stands in the corner of the room, trying to keep the rifle steady, but her hands are cold.

DAVID
You know, you really shouldn't be
out here all on your own.

ELLIE
I don't like company.

DAVID
I see. So, what's your name?

ELLIE
Why?

DAVID

Look, I understand it's not easy to
trust a couple of strangers like --

-- suddenly, from outside, the sound of a *CLICKER*.
It rushes inside the cabin. Frantically hunting with it's
clicking sound.

David and Ellie FREEZE, knowing it can't see them. But Ellie
tries to slowly back away -- her boot *SCRAPING* the floor --

-- the clicker DASHES toward her -- she aims the rifle,
hitting it in the shoulder -- but that doesn't stop it --

-- it screams its *DEATH CRY* as it lunges at her -- she pulls
the bolt back, but the rifle JAMS -- shit! --

-- *BLAM!* -- a bullet blows through its head -- from David's
PISTOL -- putting the creature down for good.

ELLIE

You had another gun?

DAVID

Sorry.

LATER

Ellie watches as David drags the clicker's corpse outside,
away from the cabin.

She warms her hands over the fire.
David re-enters again. He removes the pistol from his belt.

DAVID

I can't give you this, but if it
makes you feel any better, I'll put
it over here.

He places it on a wooden box by the wall.
Then sits by the fire with Ellie.

ELLIE

What's taking your friend so long?

DAVID

I don't know. I don't imagine
he'll be too much longer now.

(beat)

Maybe this is too personal for me
to ask, but... do you have any
parents? Any guardians looking
after you?

Ellie, saddened, doesn't want to answer, but she does.

ELLIE

No. I never knew my dad. My mom died when I was just a year old. Her friend Marlene looked after me. Raised me. But I've not seen Marlene in a long time. I don't even know if she's alive.

DAVID

I'm sorry. That's got to be tough.

ELLIE

I wish... I wish I could remember something... about my mom, you know. I don't even have a photo of her.

David reaches into his pocket. Pulls out a photo. Hands it to Ellie.

DAVID

My son. I never leave home without it.

ELLIE

That's your son? How old is he?

DAVID

Twenty two. His name's Andrew. Was... Andrew. He had his whole life ahead of him. Our doctor did everything he could, but...

ELLIE

I'm sorry.

DAVID

That's okay. I believe that everything happens for a reason.

She hands the photo back.

ELLIE

I'm not so sure.

DAVID

Oh, I am. And I can prove it to you. Now, this winter has been especially cruel.

David leans forward, telling his story...

DAVID (CONT'D)
A few weeks back, I sent a group of
men out, my son included, to a
nearby town to look for food.

Ellie listens closely. His slow, soft voice almost
hypnotizing as he tells his tale. The glow of the fire
reflecting in his eyes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Only a few came back, very badly
injured. They said the others had
been... slaughtered... by a... a
crazy man. And get this, he's a
crazy man travelling with...

He points at Ellie.

DAVID (CONT'D)
...with a little girl.

Ellie, fear taking hold of her, begins backing up.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You see, like I said, everything
happens for a reason.

Ellie GRABS the rifle, stands up straight, pointing it at
David.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Now, don't get upset. It's not
your fault. You're just a kid.
Lower the gun.

ELLIE
I'm not lowering shit.

DAVID
I wasn't talking to you.

Ellie spins, seeing JAMES standing in the doorway behind her,
holding a revolver.

JAMES
No way. I'm not letting her go --

DAVID
Lower the gun. Do it now.

James reluctantly lowers his weapon.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Now give her the medicine.

James throws a brown paper bag filled with antibiotics to her feet.

JAMES

The others aren't going to be happy with this.

DAVID

Yeah, well, that's not your concern.

Ellie picks up the bag. Carefully backs out of the cabin.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You won't survive long out there.
I can protect you.

EXT. SNOWY FOREST LAND - DAY

Ellie races away,
Backtracking all the way back to her horse.
She finds it still tied against the tree.
Climbs up on its back, and bolts away.

EXT. TOWN OF WHITEFISH LAKE - DUSK

As night fast approaches, Ellie rides into a suburban ghost town. She reaches a maroon colored house...

INT. MAROON HOUSE - DUSK

With the horse inside the garage, Ellie pulls the door down. Quickly shuffles down the stairs into the basement. JOEL lies on a mattress on the floor, covered with thick blankets. But he's motionless. Pale white.

ELLIE

Joel?

After a moment, we see cold breath escape his lips. He murmurs, lost in a fevered dream. Ellie stokes the fire in a metal oil drum that keeps the room warm. Kneels by his side.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I only managed to get a little bit of food. But, I did get these.

She removes the syringe from the bag. Draws medicine from a vial. Uncovers Joel's stomach wound. Injects him. He groans in pain.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

All done.

She re-covers Joel with blankets.
Then curls up next to him, trying to share her body heat.
Drifts off to sleep.

Before we know it, it's DAYLIGHT again.

Ellie's eyes snap open, hearing *DISTANT VOICES* outside. She climbs on a washer dryer, looking out the basement window, down the street. She sees a GROUP of men searching the town.

SEARCHER #1

There's too many tracks around this part of town. I don't know where she is.

SEARCHER #2

She's gotta be somewhere close. We search every house until we find her.

SEARCHER #3

There's too many.

SEARCHER #2

Shut your mouth! Keep looking.

Ellie hops down. Panic taking hold. She kneels by Joel.

ELLIE

Joel, they must have tracked me.
I'm... I'm gonna draw them away
from here. I'll come back for you.

EXT. TOWN OF WHITEFISH LAKE - DAY

Outside the house, Ellie gently pulls the garage door down. Walks with her horse, sneaking through the neighborhood. A few houses away, she climbs up on its back. Slowly trots on -- but, off to her far-right, she spots some of the men exiting a house in the distance, arguing --

-- she freezes, hoping they don't see her -- but out of nowhere, another searcher GRABS her from her left-side.

SEARCHER #4

Hey, over here, I got this bitch!

Ellie pulls free from him, kicking him to the face, breaking his nose. She rides away fast.

SEARCHER #4 (CONT'D)

Stop her!

She JUMPS over fences.
Into backyards.
Through front yards.
Back out onto the town's streets.

More of the searchers all over the area, drawing their
rifles... firing shots... bullets whizzing past her.

SEARCHER #4 (CONT'D)
No, David wants her alive.

SEARCHER #5
Fuck David. She killed our people.

She jumps over a fallen tree blocking the street.
Weaves around abandoned vehicles.
Another man grabs her as the horse slows to take a corner.
He desperately hangs onto the side.
But she side-swipes him against an overturned truck.

More bullets skimming past...
...as she races down sloping streets.

Then, a bullet HITS her horse through the neck.
The horse and Ellie violently TUMBLE down a steep snowy hill,
off to the side of the road. Hitting the ground hard.

The horse instantly dead, but Ellie is still alive.
She pulls herself up out of thick snow. Staggeres away.
But her vision blurs as she tries to hold onto consciousness.
She only makes it a few steps before she collapses.
Her eyes too heavy to keep open.

FADE TO BLACK:

An eternity later, Ellie slowly stirs awake.
Her head aching. She sits upright, realizing she's in a...

INT. HOTEL - KITCHEN - DAY

...within a purpose built CAGE.

She sees JAMES with his back to her, using a meat cleaver to
chop meat -- no, scratch that -- to chop off a human ARM from
its corpse. Adding it to a growing pile of human LIMBS.

She sees massive slabs of meat, human torsos, hanging from
hooks from the kitchen ceiling.

James, sensing her eyes on him, turns around and leers at
her. Then he leaves the room. Ellie quickly tries to force
open the cage's gate, but it won't budge.

DAVID enters the kitchen, carrying a tray of food.

DAVID
How are you feeling?

He slides it under the gate.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Here. You should eat. I know you
must be hungry. You've been out
for some time.

She looks down at the food with disgust.

ELLIE
What is it?

DAVID
It's deer.

ELLIE
With some human helping on the
side?

DAVID
No. No, I promise it's just the
deer meat.

ELLIE
You're a fucking animal.

She kneels to the floor, begins eating it.

DAVID
That's awfully quick to judgement,
considering your friend killed -
how many of my men exactly?

ELLIE
They didn't give us a choice.

DAVID
And you think we have a choice? Is
that it? In this world, you kill
to survive, and so do we. We have
to take care of our own. By any
means necessary.

ELLIE
So now what? You gonna chop me up
into tiny little pieces?

David chuckles.

DAVID
I'd rather not. Please tell me
your name?

She SLINGS the tray back under the gate.
Stands up, holding onto the bars of the cage.

ELLIE
You're so full of shit.

DAVID
On the contrary, I've been quite
honest with you. Now I think it's
your turn. It's the only way I'm
going to be able to convince the
others.

ELLIE
Convince them of what?

DAVID
That you can come around. That you
have heart. That you're loyal.
And you're special.

He gently strokes her hand that clasps the bars of the gate.

She forces a smile, places her other hand on his -- but she
grabs his finger - SNAPS it. He howls.

She uses the moment to try and grab the KEYS that hang on his
belt, but --

-- he grabs her by the hair, smashing her head against the
inside of the cage. She collapses to the floor, blood
trickling down her face.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You stupid little girl. You are
making it very difficult to keep
you alive. What am I suppose to
tell the others now?

ELLIE
Ellie.

DAVID
What?

ELLIE
Tell them that Ellie is the little
girl... that broke your fucking
finger, asshole.

David glares at Ellie, giving her a sly smile.

DAVID
How did you put it exactly? Tiny
little pieces.
(beat)
See you in the morning, Ellie.

David leaves. Ellie nurses her bloodied face.

INT. MAROON HOUSE - DAY

Joel's eyes snap open, fully alert. Healthy color returned to his face. He wrenches the covers off himself -- but groans in agony, clutching his stomach wound. Still painful.

JOEL
Ellie?

He gets up. Looks around. Almost collapses again, but not for long. He stands, finding his legs.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Ellie? Where did you go?

He grabs his backpack. Staggeres upstairs into the kitchen. Puts his mouth under the faucet, but nothing comes out.

But a MAN outside (searcher #6) cups his eyes against the dirty, stained windows -- in a flash, Joel ducks low, under the counter, avoiding his line off sight.

SEARCHER #6
I don't see shit.

After a moment, the man moves on.

Joel grabs a steel pipe, opens the door to follow the man, silently stepping outside...

EXT. MAROON HOUSE - DAY

...but ANOTHER MAN (searcher #7) grabs Joel from behind, pulling back his arms, holding him in place...

SEARCHER #7
I got this motherfucker!

Searcher #6 turns to face Joel, pulling out a KNIFE.

SEARCHER #7 (CONT'D)
Stick this fucker. Finish him.

But Joel KICKS the knife guy in the crotch, dropping him.

Then reverse-headbutts searcher #7's face.
Joel breaks free from his grip. Slams him into a wall.

Searcher #6 scrambles for the knife on the ground, but Joel kicks him to the face, knocking him out.

INT. MAROON HOUSE - DAY

Searcher #7 wakes up, tied to a chair. Behind him, Joel beats on his pal on the floor, pounding him, fist after fist.

Joel grabs another chair, placing it in front of the tied up man. Sits on it. Pulls out the KNIFE.

JOEL
Now, the girl, is she alive?

SEARCHER #7
What girl? I don't know no girl.

Joel STABS the knife down into the man's leg.
He screams. Bowing his head. Joel slaps his face.

JOEL
Focus, right here, right here. Or
I'll pop your goddamn knee off.
The girl?

The man tries to shake off the pain.

SEARCHER #7
She... she's alive. She's David's
newest pet.

JOEL
Where?

He doesn't answer. Joel TWISTS the knife.

SEARCHER #7
The town. She's still in the town.
Over on the other side.

Joel pulls the knife out. Places the handle of it in the man's mouth. Then holds up a MAP.

JOEL
Now, you're gonna mark it on the
map. And it better be the same
exact spot your buddy points to.

The man points on the map using the end of the knife, then drops it from his mouth.

SEARCHER #7

There. Right there. You can
verify it. Go ask him. He'll tell
you. I ain't lying.

Joel stands up. Slowly walks around the man's chair -- then
circles his arm around his throat -- CHOKING him to death.

Searcher #6, on the floor, sits up, trying to back away from
Joel, who picks up the steel pipe.

SEARCHER #6

You killed him. He told you what
you wanted and you killed him.
Fuck you, I ain't telling you shit.

Joel raises the pipe high...

JOEL

That's alright. I believe him.

...SWINGS it down hard --

INT. HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

Ellie, asleep, is suddenly thrust awake as David and James
grab her, pulling her up off the floor, out the cage.

DAVID

Wakey, wakey.

ELLIE

Let go! Get off of me!

They pull her onto the chopping table, face up, holding her
arms down. David picks up a MEAT CLEAVER.

DAVID

I warned you.

He raises it above his head, about to swing it down...

ELLIE

I'm infected! I'm infected!

David and James freeze -- looking to each other.

DAVID

Bullshit!

ELLIE

Roll up my sleeve. Look at it.

David doesn't know what to make of what she's said.
 He SLAMS the cleaver down into the table --
 -- missing her face by an inch.

DAVID
 I'll play along.

He rolls up the sleeve of the arm he's gripping.
 Sees her BITE MARK.
 James, scared by what he sees...

JAMES
 What the hell is that?

DAVID
 She would have turned by now. It
 can't be real.

JAMES
 Looks pretty fucking real to me.

Ellie rips her other arm free from James' grip -- grabbing
 the cleaver -- swings it at James, slicing off his HAND --

-- she swivels on the table -- hacking the cleaver at David --
 wedging it into his shoulder -- knocking him to the floor.

Ellie jumps off the table. Races for the door.
 David pulls his pistol, fires a slew of shots, barely missing
 her -- hitting slabs of human meat hanging from the ceiling.

She rushes out into the hotel's...

RESTAURANT

...filled with rows of seating booths -- knocking over an OIL
 LAMP -- a sea of LIQUID FIRE spreads across the carpet.

KITCHEN

David pulls the meat cleaver out of his shoulder.
 Crawls over to James, but James faints from shock.

DAVID
 James, wake up, stay with me. Wake
 up.

RESTAURANT

Ellie scrambles to the main entrance, trying to get out, but
 the double doors are locked shut.

The raging fire growing. She tries other doors, but they're
 locked too.

The only way out is back through the kitchen. She coughs, as SMOKE fills the room.

KITCHEN

David wraps a dishcloth over James's severed arm.

DAVID
I'll be right back.

He grabs a MACHETE, steps out into the...

RESTAURANT

It's hard for him to see anything through the smoky haze --

-- when Ellie, out of nowhere, slams a VASE down on his head. He falls -- his machete sliding away from him under a seat.

She kicks him, but David grabs her leg, pushing her to the ground. He pulls her up, hits her with the back of his hand, slams her onto a table -- but she knees him in the crotch.

He howls in agony -- THROWS her over seating booths. She crashes to the floor -- plates and cutlery raining down with her. She lies motionless and limp.

DAVID
You still with me, honey? I ain't
finished with you yet.

He bolts around to her. Drags her up again -- but she swings a FORK, lodging it into his cheek -- he THROWS her back over the booths again.

Goes around to her, kicking her to the ribs.

But somehow she keeps on moving. She spots the MACHETE, hidden in shadow, under some seating. Something David doesn't see. Slowly crawls toward it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I knew you had heart, but not this
much heart. You know, it's okay to
give up. Ain't no shame in it.

All around them, FIRE engulfs the entire room, but she keeps on crawling.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I guess not. Just not your style,
is it?

He kicks her in the ribs again.
Climbs on top of her. Pulling back her hair.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You can try begging.

ELLIE
Fuck you!

He turns her over, face-to-face with him.
Puts his hands around her throat.
His eyes, wide and evil, glaring down at her, like he was
possessed by the devil.

DAVID
You think you know me? Well, let
me tell you something, you have no
idea what I'm capable of.

Ellie reaches her outstretched hand for the machete, hidden
in shadow, barely an inch away -- grabs the handle -- SWINGS
it, hacking at his arm -- he screams -- rolling off her.

She rolls on top of him -- slamming the machete down into his
FACE -- again -- and again -- and again -- and again --

-- an endless onslaught -- blood splashing up at her -- like
a rabid dog -- never stopping, even when there's nothing left
of his face to hack -- her FIRST KILL --

-- but she's GRABBED from behind...

JOEL
Ellie, it's me, it's me.

ELLIE
Get off of me! Get off of me!

She struggles and squirms in Joel's hands.
He turns her around.

JOEL
Look at me. Look. It's me. It's
Joel.

She cries, for the first time in a long time, collapsing into
his arms.

JOEL (CONT'D)
You're okay now, you're okay. I've
got you.

He pulls her to her feet, both disappearing from frame -- as the entire room COLLAPSES under blazing flames.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER:

SPRING

Ellie -- staring at the shape of a deer, artfully emblazoned on a concrete wall, lost in thought. Suddenly, behind her, very loud...

JOEL (CONT'D)

Ellie!

She turns to Joel, who's standing on the same...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

...as her. We get the impression he's been calling her name for some time now.

JOEL

Didn't you hear me calling you?

ELLIE

No. What?

Joel points at a sign for the "Hospital".

JOEL

Look. Hospital. This is where we get off. Come on.

She follows him down the off ramp.

Further down, on the...

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

They stroll through the streets of Salt Lake city.

JOEL

You feel that breeze, huh? I tell you, on a day like this, I'd just sit on my porch, pick away at my six-string. Once we're done with this whole thing, I'm gonna teach you how to play guitar. I reckon you'd really like that.

Ellie nods along, not really listening.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Whaddya say, huh?

Still no response from her.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Ellie? Ellie?

She snaps out of her daydream.

ELLIE
What?

JOEL
Is everything alright? You just
kinda seem extra quiet today.

ELLIE
Oh, sorry.

JOEL
No... it's fine.

Joel stops. Turns to her.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Talk to me. Tell me what's wrong.

ELLIE
What's going to happen when you
hand me over?

JOEL
What do you mean?

ELLIE
Is that the end? We just go our
separate ways?

He stares into her eyes. Not sure what to make of her.

JOEL
You know... we don't have to do
this. You know that, right?

Ellie, somewhat confused...

ELLIE
What's the other option?

JOEL
Go back to Tommy's. Just... be
done with this whole damn thing.

ELLIE

After all we've been through.
Everything that I've done. It...
it can't all be for nothing.

Ellie shakes her head. Continues walking. Joel follows.
But Ellie stops again. Pulls something out of her pack.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I got something I want you to have.
Tommy slipped it in my pack with a
note saying I should hang onto this
for a while, because even though
you don't know it yet, sooner or
later you're gonna want it.

A PHOTOGRAPH of Joel and his daughter Sarah.

He's reluctant to take it at first.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I want you to have this. I don't
think I should be the one carrying
it any more. Please take it.

Finally, he does. His eyes swelling with tears.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

She's beautiful.

JOEL

Yes, she is.

He wipes his eyes dry.

ELLIE

Don't be mad at Tommy. He just...
he wanted you to...

JOEL

My brother was always wiser and
smarter than me. I'm still gonna
kick his butt when I see him again.

Ellie laughs.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Well, no matter how hard you try, I
guess you can't escape your past.

Ellie puts her arms around him, hugging him tight.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He slips it in his pocket. They continue walking, moving down into series of underground tunnels...

INT. NETWORK OF STREET TUNNELS - DAY

Signs above the road read: "East Tunnel - St. Mary's Hospital ahead."

A sea of wrecked vehicles in front of them.
Shafts of sunlight breaking through holes in the ceiling.
They climb up over the trailer of a truck.
Drop down on the other side.

As they trudge through the long stretch of tunnel -- *DEATH CRIES* -- sound behind them, coming from adjoining tunnels.

They see a wave of INFECTED racing toward them.

JOEL

Run!

He grabs Ellie, pushing her to move fast.
Racing as fast as their legs will carry them.
Muscles burning as they sprint.
Dozens of infected catching up fast, too many to count.

Ellie slides to a stop, climbing inside a wrecked police car.
Joel runs back for her.

JOEL (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

She tries to pull a pump action SHOTGUN that's mounted vertically to the dash. But she can't pull it free.
Joel wrenches it away, pumps it -- turns
-- *BLAM!* -- blowing away the first infected -- and the second
-- and the third.

Ellie races away, up steps into a...

INT. MAINTENANCE AREA - DAY

Joel follows her to a cage door -- luckily its open -- but no way to lock it.

Joel fires at the first few infected -- before his weapon runs empty -- swings the shotgun -- smashing the face of an infected -- before turning and tearing away again.

Ellie races down narrow maintenance side-tunnels.
Reaches a large room with a steel roll-down shutter.
She pulls on a reel of chain and the shutter begins to lift.

Joel catches up, grabbing the chain, taking over from her, lifting the shutter by a couple of feet.

JOEL

Go, go, go.

Ellie climbs under the gap. She holds it open on the other side for him. Joel quickly climbs under -- just as a whole WAVE of infected reach it -- Ellie drops the shutter --

-- the infected hammer against the other side -- screaming with rage.

Joel and Ellie catch their breath.
Quickly move on through more rooms.
Exiting the maintenance area.
Back out again, further along the...

INT. NETWORK OF STREET TUNNELS - DAY

...where they find the whole place FLOODED. Water moving fast like a raging river. Nothing but fear in Ellie's face.

ELLIE

Joel, I... I can't swim.

JOEL

We can't go back. That shutter back there's not gonna hold forever.

Joel pushes her along.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Come on, we don't need to swim.

They climb up onto the roof of a car, jumping onto the next one... and the next... and the next.
But the water gets deeper the further along they move.

They stagger up onto trucks and larger vehicles.
Ellie hops onto the rear end of a bus, lying on its side, that crosses most of the lane.

The front end touches up against a maintenance CATWALK, high off the ground, that runs the length of the tunnel.

Joel jumps onto the bus too -- but the entire vehicle SHAKES violently -- becoming dislodged...

JOEL (CONT'D)

Ellie, move, move!

Ellie runs, jumping onto the catwalk -- just as the bus shifts hard --

-- Joel, about to reach the catwalk, is thrown off his feet -- falling into the bus's open door.

INT. BUS - DAY

The bus is swept up by the force of the raging river. Filling with water, pushing Joel to its rear end. Too powerful for him to fight against the strong current.

Ellie races along the catwalk, keeping pace with it.

ELLIE

Joel!!!

The bus twists and turns. Smashes against other vehicles in the stream.

Joel, fully submerged, spots a sealed rear door above him. He reaches up, trying to pull it open. But it won't budge. He hammers on it desperately.

Suddenly, Ellie LANDS on top of it -- having jumped from the catwalk, in a daring bid to save him. She pushes down on the door as Joel pulls it. The smallest of air pockets allows Joel to catch a breath.

JOEL

Ellie, get off this thing, it's going down.

ELLIE

Come on, Joel, just help me.

The door finally gives in -- -- but the bus JERKS violently, tipping onto its roof -- -- throwing Ellie into the fast moving water.

The bus submerges completely, tumbling with the current, hitting the tunnel's walls.

Joel swims out through an open door. Desperately searches for Ellie in the murky waters. He comes up to breath.

JOEL

Ellie!

He can't see her. Goes under the water again. Spots her this time, lying motionless under the surface.

Swims over, pulling her limp body out, at the far end of the tunnel where the roadway slopes upwards out of the water.

Joel puts his ear to her chest, checking her breathing. Nothing. He presses down on her, trying to pump the water out of her lungs.

Then, a voice...

VOICE (O.S.)
Hands in the air!

He turns, seeing three men in body armor, approaching with assault rifles trained on him. But he doesn't stop.

JOEL
She's not breathing.

He breathes air into her mouth.

MAN IN BODY ARMOR
I said hands in the fucking air!

Joel ignores them. Continues pressing on her chest.

The man SWINGS his rifle, knocking Joel unconscious.

CUT TO BLACK:

Joel slowly stirs awake. It takes him a moment to get his bearings, and realize he's lying on a bed inside a...

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

...room. The man in body armor standing over him. Joel turns to his side and sees...

...MARLENE sitting by the bed.

MARLENE
Welcome to the Fireflies.
(beat)
Sorry about the...
(points at his head)
They didn't know who you were. We
can't be too careful.

JOEL
And Ellie?

MARLENE
She's alright. They brought her
back.

Joel lies back, relieved. Marlene, admiringly...

MARLENE (CONT'D)
You came all this way. I figured
you were long dead for sure.

JOEL
I thought the same about you.

MARLENE
How'd you do it?

JOEL
It wasn't me. It was her. She
fought like hell to get here.
Maybe it was meant to be.

MARLENE
I lost most of my crew crossing the
country. I pretty much lost...
everything.

Marlene stands.

MARLENE (CONT'D)
And then, all this time later, you
show up, and somehow we were just
in time to save her. You're right,
maybe it was meant to be.

JOEL
Take me to her.

MARLENE
You don't have to worry about her
anymore. We'll take care of --

JOEL
I worry. Just let me see her.

Marlene looks to the man in body armor. Then back to Joel.

MARLENE
You can't. She's being prepped for
surgery.

Joel sits up on the edge of the bed.

JOEL
The hell you mean, surgery?

MARLENE
The doctors tell me that the
infection inside her...
(MORE)

MARLENE (CONT'D)
has somehow mutated. It's why
she's immune. Once they remove it,
they'll be able to reverse engineer
a vaccine.

JOEL
But... the infection grows over the
brain.

Marlene nods.

MARLENE
It does.

Joel realizes the ugly truth of that, knowing that it means
death for Ellie. Angered...

JOEL
Find someone else.

MARLENE
There is no one else.

Joel stands, aggressive...

JOEL
Listen, you are gonna show me --

-- the man kicks out the back of Joel's knee, dropping him to
the floor.

MARLENE
Joel, I get it. But whatever it is
you think you're going through
right now, it's nothing to what
I've been through. I knew her
since she was born. I promised her
mother I would look after her.

JOEL
Then why are you letting this
happen?

MARLENE
Because this isn't about me. Or
even her. There is no other choice
here.

Joel shakes his head.

JOEL
Yeah, you keep telling yourself
that bullshit.

MARLENE
 (to man in body armor)
 March him out of here. He tries
 anything, shoot him.

Marlene heads out the door.

JOEL
 Please don't do this. I'm begging
 you.

She turns back to him.

MARLENE
 You kept up your end of the
 bargain. I'll keep mine. Go back
 to Boston and collect your payment.
 (beat)
 You said it yourself, Joel. She
 was just cargo, that's all.

Marlene leaves the room. Joel's eyes drop closed.

MAN IN BODY ARMOR
 Get up.

MINUTES LATER

Joel and the man, pistol in hand, are moving down a corridor.
 The man pushes Joel from behind as they walk.

MAN IN BODY ARMOR
 Move it. I don't got all day.

Joel purposely slows...

MAN IN BODY ARMOR (CONT'D)
 What the fuck are doing? Keep
 walking.

He pushes the gun into Joel's back -- but Joel spins with
 lightning speed -- clocking the guy with his elbow -- he
 wrenches the gun from the man's hand -- pistol whips him.

Joel puts the gun against the man's stomach.

JOEL
 Where is the operating room?

The man glares at Joel, too defiant to answer.

JOEL (CONT'D)
 I ain't got time for this.

Joel blows a hole through his stomach.
The man screams, dropping to the floor in agony.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Where?

MAN IN BODY ARMOR

The... the top floor... far end.

The man's eyes roll to the back of his head. If not dead, he soon will be.

Joel picks up his assault rifle.
But behind Joel, there's movement at the end of the corridor.
More Fireflies in body armor stepping out.

FIREFLY #1

I heard gunshots, I know it.

FIREFLY #2

I didn't hear shit.

As they move along the corridor, they spot the corpse --
-- but Joel emerges from a doorway behind them -- opening
fire, wasting them in a flash.

But even more Firefly VOICES and radio chatter nearby,
alerted by Joel's gunshots.

He moves quickly through a large...

CAFETERIA

...with Fireflies on his heels, bursting through the door
behind him, opening fire. He hits the deck -- rises again --
taking out his pursuers.

STAIRWELL

Running up, taking two steps at a time. He stops by a
doorway -- just as two more Fireflies burst through it --
cracking one across the face, knocking him out --

-- but the other man charges at Joel in this confined space --
they wrestle for control of his rifle -- accidentally firing
the gun until the magazine runs empty --

-- Joel slams his hand into the man's throat -- caving in his
windpipe. He picks up the unconscious man's shotgun instead.

Exits out onto the...

TOP FLOOR

...racing down corridors, making left and right turns.
Moving along the west wing --

-- just as a group of Fireflies ahead of him step out --
-- but they don't see him anywhere as they scan the area.

The group pass a reception desk in the corridor.
Where Joel hides on the other side, low to the floor, waiting
for them to pass. After a few moments, he rises back up.
Seemingly all clear. He moves out again.

He stumbles through a makeshift...

QUARANTINE AREA

...lined with plastic tarp hanging down the walls and over
doorways. Hand written signs read: "restricted area -
authorized personnel only"

He spots a sealed room with an electrical power generator
outside, power cables running into it.

OPERATING ROOM

Joel kicks open the door -- a Doctor and two nurses flinch,
each wearing surgical masks and clothes.

DOCTOR

What the... what are you doing in
here? Who are you?

Joel doesn't answer. He just stares at ELLIE, lying on a
gurney in a surgical gown, unconscious, oxygen mask over her
mouth. Medical equipment *BEEPING* all around her.

The Doctor grabs a scalpel, holding it up like a knife.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I won't let you take her. This...
this is our future.

Joel's eyes angered...

JOEL

She has a name.

DOCTOR

I can't let you take her.

Joel points the shotgun at his face.

JOEL

You don't have a choice.

-- but a FIREFLY soldier bursts into the room -- opening fire
-- Joel ducks -- rolls -- blows the Firefly away --

-- the Doctor RUSHES at Joel swinging the scalpel -- but Joel
snaps the butt of the gun across his face, breaking his neck.

The female nurse grabs a bone saw -- races at him -- Joel
turns -- blows a hole through her chest -- her body flying
across the room.

The male nurse pisses himself. Flees the room.

Joel rips the mask from Ellie's face...

JOEL (CONT'D)

Come on, baby girl.

...and scoops her up in his arms.

Then, he looks to the dead Firefly soldier -- focusing in on
a set of GRENADES on his belt.

MOMENTS LATER

Joel moves along the corridor.
Enters another stairwell, races down floor after floor.
But he stops, hearing FOOTSTEPS below.

Several Fireflies moving up it, guns raised... when they hear
a noise -- THUNK! -- THUNK! -- THUNK! --

A pair of grenades hopping down the steps...

-- BOOOOMMM! -- the entire building shakes.

Joel races down a second later, carefully stepping over pools
of blood.

At the bottom, Joel emerges into an underground...

PARKING GARAGE

..where MARLENE stands, pistol held out with both hands,
pointing it right at him. Joel slides to a stop.

MARLENE

You can't save her. Even if you
get her out of here, then what?
How long before she's ripped to
pieces by a pack of infected?

(MORE)

MARLENE (CONT'D)
That is if she hasn't been raped
and murdered first.

JOEL
That ain't for you to decide.

MARLENE
It's what she'd want. You said it
yourself, she fought hard to get
here, for this very reason. So she
could make a difference.

This hits Joel. He thinks hard about what she says.

MARLENE (CONT'D)
And you know it.

Marlene slowly spreads her arms apart, pointing the gun away
from Joel, safely off to the side.

MARLENE (CONT'D)
Look, you can still do the right
thing here. She won't feel a
thing. Let her make the difference
she's destined to make.

A long moment, as Joel considers what he's being asked.
But before we know it, we're in a...

CUT TO:

INT. JEEP - DAY

...driving along a freeway. Joel staring out into infinity,
lost in turmoiled thoughts. Doubt etching away at him.

Then, a gentle *MURMUR* from the backseat.

ELLIE slowly stirs awake with sluggish eyes. She glances
down at her surgical gown.

ELLIE
What the hell am I wearing?

JOEL
Just take it easy. Drugs are still
wearing off.

ELLIE
What happened?

That question isn't easy for Joel to answer.

JOEL
We found the Fireflies.

Joel has a QUICK FLASHBACK of the hospital parking garage:

Marlene directing her gun away from Joel.

We jump back to the present:

JOEL (CONT'D)
Turns out there's a whole lot more
like you, Ellie. People that are
immune. There's dozens actually.

QUICK FLASHBACK: *Marlene slowly approaches Joel, hands held out, so she can take Ellie from him.*

JOEL (CONT'D)
Ain't done a damn bit of good
either.

QUICK FLASHBACK: *Just as Marlene is about to take Ellie -- a flash of light -- Marlene is thrown backwards to the floor. We hear no sound.*

JOEL (CONT'D)
They've stopped looking for a cure.

Joel peeks through his rearview at Ellie, reading her disappointment. She closes her eyes. Rolls up into a ball, facing away from him.

JOEL (CONT'D)
I'm taking us home. I'm sorry.

LONG FLASHBACK, back in the...

INT. HOSPITAL PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

-- *BLAM!* -- a gunshot *ECHOES* -- the gun, in Joel's hand under Ellie's knees, hidden by her draping surgical gown.

Joel gently places Ellie on the backseat of a jeep.

He walks back to Marlene, squirming in pain on the floor, in a pool of blood. Gunshot wound to her stomach. She raises her hand...

MARLENE
Wait!

Joel pauses.

MARLENE (CONT'D)
Let me go. Please!

Joel points the gun down at her head.

JOEL
You'd just come after her.

-- *BLAM!* -- pulls the trigger.

CUT TO BLACK:

A long, beautiful green landscape.

We're on the side of the road, somewhere back in...

EXT. JACKSON COUNTY - DAY

...Wyoming, where Joel has the hood of the jeep open, looking at the smoking engine.

Ellie sits in the backseat, with the door open, tracing her finger over the bite mark on her wrist.

Joel slams the hood closed.

JOEL
Looks like we're walking from here.

Ellie, solemn, starts to follow.

They clamber over a rural, barbed-wire fence.
Slog through a valley.
Cross a shallow stream.
March over fields.

They stop on top of a ridge overlooking Tommy's hydroelectric power plant.

TOMMY
Just a little bit further now.

Joel continues on, but Ellie doesn't. He turns to her.

ELLIE
Back in Boston, back when I was bitten, I wasn't alone. My best friend was there, and she got bit too. We didn't know what to do.

Joel, not sure where this is going...

ELLIE (CONT'D)

So, she says "Let's just wait it out. You know, we can be all poetic and lose our minds together".

(beat)

I'm still waiting for my turn.

JOEL

Ellie --

ELLIE

Her name was Riley and she was the first to die. And then it was Tess. For all I know Marlene is dead too.

JOEL

Ellie --

ELLIE

Do you know how many people have died for me? Died because of me? My friends. My family. Countless people out here on the road.

JOEL

None of that is on you.

ELLIE

But when is it my turn? You said sooner or later our luck was going to run out. Well, guess what, mine never did.

JOEL

I struggled for a long time with surviving. And you... no matter what, you keep finding something to fight for.

Ellie turns away.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Now, I know that's not what you want to hear right now, but it's --

ELLIE

Swear to me. Swear to me that everything you said about the Fireflies is true. Because if they've stopped looking for a cure, then all of this was for nothing --

Joel grabs her, looking deep into her eyes.

JOEL
It wasn't for nothing. None of
this was for nothing.

Ellie steps back.

ELLIE
Was what you told me true?

Joel, hard for him to lie directly to her face, but he knows
he has to...

JOEL
Yes. I swear it.

Ellie, doubtful. Joel puts his arms around her.

JOEL (CONT'D)
You're going to live a long, long
life. And I don't care how bad you
feel about that.

She stares up at him. Finally...

ELLIE
Okay.

They gaze down at the power plant.

Joel takes Ellie by the hand.

JOEL
Let's go home.

She nods. Smiles even.

They continue walking, unsure of what the future will bring.

FADE OUT.