

Z FOR ZACHARIAH
by
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Based on the novel by
Robert C. O'Brien

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INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The sun streams through the window, casting bright, harsh LIGHT across the room.

YOUNG CHILDREN sit at desks, dressed in their Sunday best. They seem bright-eyed and attentive, with fair hair and unblemished skin, but their faces are hazy and indistinct.

Like in a dream or memory.

At the front of the class, a matronly TEACHER holds open a PICTURE BOOK.

TEACHER

Turn to the first page of your books. Read for me what it says.

CLASS

"A is for Adam."

TEACHER

That's right. Adam was the first man. God created him out of the dust from the earth.

One GIRL sits in back, by the window. She covertly flicks through her picture book, too impatient to wait. The second page reads "B is for Bethlehem." Then "C is for Christian."

TEACHER (CONT'D)

One night, when Adam fell asleep, God took out one of his ribs. Does anyone know what He did with it?

The girl turns to the very last page. "Z is for Zachariah." There's a crude illustration of a BEARDED MAN surrounded by a host of ANGELS.

Incongruous SOUNDS become audible. Rapid FOOTSTEPS. The CRUNCH of feet running over branches and leaves.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Ann? Are you paying attention?

Ann looks up, eyes wide with the fear of being caught. She quickly SLAMS her book shut.

SUDDEN CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A teenage girl tears wildly through a forest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

This is Ann, now 15 years old. Her eyes are wide with anticipation and alarm.

Nearby, a young FOX trots through the dense canopy of trees. Nose to the ground, sniffing for prey.

He FREEZES, as Ann approaches. Flattens himself against the ground, watching curiously, as she WHIZZES by.

EXT. BURDEN FARM - DAY

A small country farm, tucked away in the corner of a lush, sprawling VALLEY. But its charm has been diminished by obvious neglect.

A handful of COWS amble aimlessly about the pasture, while skinny CATS eye CHICKENS strutting around in a dirty coop.

A two-story HOUSE -- a modest colonial -- lies at the top of the farm, its porch overlooking the fields.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - SAME

Pink and girlish. PICTURES in heart-shaped frames. A laundry basket overflowing onto the floor. A plain wooden CROSS hanging on the wall.

Ann rifles through the closet, hurriedly stuffing essentials into a BACKPACK. Clothes. Childish underwear. Books. Tampons. A stuffed bear.

Then she leans under the bed, and takes out a HUNTING RIFLE. Checks the scope. Cocks the barrel. It's loaded.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

Ann pauses at the front door. Backpack around one shoulder. Rifle around the other. She WHISTLES.

ANN
Faro! Let's go!

A shaggy SHEEPDOG comes tearing in from the kitchen, tail wagging ferociously.

Ann glances back over the house. It's messy, dark and lonely.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

At the highest outcrop in the hills, Ann is concealed high up in the thick branches of an elm TREE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She raises a pair of binoculars to her eyes, and stares out, away from the valley, across flat plains that seem to stretch to infinity.

For the first time, we see the WORLD OUTSIDE the valley.

It's merely an expanse of dead land. No plants, water, or animals. Withered, leafless trees. Scorched earth. Barren. Annihilated.

Ann, however, pays no attention to the lifeless environment. Instead, she focuses upon one particular element within it.

A HUMAN FIGURE.

Walking slowly along a road, approaching the valley. Dressed from head to toe in a green synthetic BODYSUIT. A HELMET and MASK cover the eyes.

It's impossible to tell who or what lies underneath.

This stranger pulls a large WAGON behind him/her, also covered in the green material. Progress is slow and tortuous-- the suit and wagon are evidently heavy.

Ann stares at the figure. Each of its halting steps increases her agitation.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILLS - LATER

The sun is at its highest point in the sky. Its intense heat is palpable.

Ann has changed position. She now lies halfway up the hillside, concealed among rocks and boulders. The rifle in her hands. Fingers pressed tensely against the trigger. Eye fixed on the scope. Ready to fire.

ANN'S POV, THROUGH THE SCOPE:

The stranger has reached the rim of the valley, where the first signs of LIFE gradually appear, marking the end of the dead land.

Up ahead is a tree. Just a tree.

But the stranger reaches out and touches one of the branches, ever so gently, as if it were an alien species. Pulls off the leaves, and holds them up to the face mask wonderingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, from the covered wagon, the stranger pulls out a small metal BOX with dials and a glass TUBE protruding from it. A GEIGER COUNTER.

Walks up and down the road, several times, taking readings...

...then suddenly sinks to the ground, arms raised in triumph and exhaustion. Rips off the gloves and face mask, and SUCKS IN a breath of fresh air.

It is a MAN.

He collapses onto the grass. Staring up into the sky and sun, he lets loose an almighty SCREAM...

EXT. VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

...which ECHOES across the fields and forest.

ANIMALS and BIRDS dart their heads up, surprised at the intrusion into the silence.

EXT. HILLS - CONTINUOUS

The stranger's scream provokes a fit of GROWLING from Faro. The dog tenses his body, head forward, ready to charge. But Ann grabs him back by the scruff of his neck.

ANN

(whispered)

No, Faro! You gotta be quiet! It's
reeaaally important!

She drags her vowels noticeably, like a kid. She takes a treat from her pocket and drops it on the ground, and Faro's attention is suddenly focused elsewhere.

Ann looks back through the rifle scope, studying the man's FACE.

He's white -- painfully so. His parched skin is almost translucent. Emaciated face. A prominent nose, and thick beard. In his mid-thirties.

Now he's WEEPING. He rolls around in the grass. Inhales it. Rubs his body on it. Overwhelmed.

Suddenly, he FREEZES. His face becomes abruptly sober.

He jumps to his feet. Looks around suspiciously. As if it's dawned on him that someone might be watching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He walks backwards to the wagon, reaches in without looking, and pulls out a GUN.

Ann's body suddenly tenses.

The man straps the gun over his shoulder. Picks the wagon up by its handles, and starts down the road, into the valley.

For some moments, Ann doesn't move or breathe. Her fingers stay locked around the trigger of her rifle.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY ROAD - DAY

The heavy bodysuit has been taken off. Now clad only in thin, sweat-stained underclothes, the man basks in the sunshine.

He continues weakly through the valley, staring amazed at every commonplace sign of life.

Ann and Faro follow from a safe distance, confident and secure, familiar with all the valley's nooks and crannies.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The man walks through a tiny settlement in the heart of the valley.

There's a CONVENIENCE STORE with two gas pumps. A small SCHOOL, adjacent to which is a wooden CHAPEL, barely a story high. Little else.

The man looks around suspiciously. Everything is peaceful and quiet. Almost too quiet. There's not another soul to be seen.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

Up in the hills, Ann watches her house through the binoculars.

The covered wagon sits in the front yard. On the front porch, the man tries the door handle. It's locked.

Holding his gun up in front of him, he walks cautiously around the side of the house, peering in through the windows. Disappears around a corner.

Beat. Then a window pane SMASHES.

Ann JUMPS. Her face scrunches up in indignation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A moment later, the man opens the front door of the house, and walks out onto the porch. He scans the horizon, searching, wondering.

Suddenly, he looks up into the hills, right where Ann is hiding.

CLOSE ON: the man's eyes.

CLOSE ON: Ann's eyes.

They seem to meet for a second.

But then the man turns, stretches, and disappears back inside the house.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Concealed deep in the hills of the valley is a small CAVE.

Inside, Ann lies ensconced in a sleeping bag. She stares out into the night from her makeshift bed. The edge of the moon is just visible outside the cave.

The wind picks up from outside, and Ann SHIVERS. But her eyes are hopeful. She's no longer alone.

She WHISTLES, and soon there's the gentle sound of doggie BREATHING at her side.

ANN
Give me a kiss.

The dog, well-trained, leans in and bumps her face gently with his nose. She LAUGHS, and hugs him close.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILLS ABOVE HOUSE - MORNING

While the wagon still lies in the front yard of the house, the man himself is nowhere to be seen.

Ann scans every inch of the farm with her binoculars. Nothing.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Ann approaches the house, treading quietly, rifle in hand. She looks around cautiously, as if expecting a trap.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Ann walks through the empty house. Everything looks just as she left it.

Then she turns a corner, and sees the BROKEN WINDOW where he entered the house. Shards of GLASS lie across the floor.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Thin, coarse HAIRS line the inside of the sink. The trash can is half-full with clumps of thicker, longer hair. A pair of SCISSORS lie discarded by the mirror.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Ann scans the farm, lips pursed in confusion.

Then she hears a SCRATCHING sound in the yard. Faro crouches by the WAGON, pawing away, trying to get inside.

CLOSE ON: the wagon's cover. It's not locked, and seems easy to open.

Ann stares at it for a moment. Tempted to look inside.

EXT. FRONT YARD - SAME

Ann touches the wagon's cover. The unidentifiable material -- thick, green, reflective -- is almost futuristic.

Ann looks around again, a GUILTY look on her face. Sees Faro staring at her, head cocked, as if daring her to look inside.

Beat. Then Ann unzips the cover and opens the flap.

INT. WAGON - CONTINUOUS

It's small and compact inside, like a camping tent. There's a sleeping bag. Books. A tiny gas grill. The green synthetic BODYSUIT and its bulbous HELMET hang in the corner.

BOXES of provisions are spread across the floor. Most are empty, but a few contain canned food, water bottles, pills and underclothes.

A thin SHOULDER BAG rests in the corner. Almost by instinct, Ann reaches over and looks inside it.

A faded PASSPORT is tucked into one of the bag's pockets. Next to it is a laminated military I.D.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

card, the edge of which is just visible, reading "JOHN LOOMIS, NORTHERN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE."

Suddenly, there's the BOOM of a GUN being fired somewhere in the valley.

Ann JUMPS. Eyes flooded with panic, she quickly replaces the bag, and jumps out of the wagon.

IN THE FRONT YARD

Faro runs around in circles, BARKING like crazy, as the echo of the shot still reverberates around the farm.

Ann looks up. To the west, a flock of BIRDS have launched themselves in the sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY ROAD - DAY

Now on a bicycle, Ann pedals hurriedly down the road, the rifle around her shoulder. Faro gamely keeps up.

As they approach the forest, Ann comes to a stop and dismounts. Looks around, thinking. Trying to follow the man's trail.

Faro beats her to it. He sniffs the air, nose twitching, tail wagging. Then suddenly he takes off, weaving back and forward across the fields, nose to the ground.

At the EDGE of the forest, he suddenly stops, poking at a patch of leaves and twigs with his nose.

Ann crouches down next to him. There's a clump of FUR on the ground. A trail of BLOOD leads into the forest.

ANN

Good boy.

EXT. FOREST - SAME

Ann and Faro hurry through the forest, leaves and twigs CRACKLING under their feet.

It's dark and chilly under the protective canopy of the trees. Ann pulls the hood of her sweater over her head.

Soon, the trail of blood peters out. Faro loses interest, and instead sniffs around for a place to pee.

Ann pauses, wondering which way to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, from a distance, comes the sound of someone SINGING in an eerie, thin tenor.

Ann stands frozen to the spot, almost hypnotized by the sound of someone else's voice.

Another noise becomes audible. RUNNING WATER. Then little SPLASHES, as if the man was washing himself.

For some reason, PANIC suddenly crosses Ann's face.

She breaks out of her trance, and races in the direction of the man's voice.

EXT. FOREST - SAME

Ann dashes through the tightly packed trees, barely missing a few head-on collisions. She stumbles down a slope, at the bottom of which winds a shallow CREEK.

The man's VOICE is louder and clearer.

Ann follows the creek around a bend, although she takes care not to come too close to the water.

EXT. CREEK - SAME

Ann comes tearing out of the woods-- and FREEZES in her tracks.

The man bathes in the creek, his back to Ann, completely NAKED. A pile of CLOTHES and a dead RABBIT lie near the water.

Ann, rooted to the spot, can only stare. Her face turns RED.

Faro charges protectively between Ann and the man, and starts to BARK ferociously.

ANN

No, Faro! Come here!

The man whips around, then takes a step back in shock. His freshly shaved face scrunches up in amazement, as if Ann were an apparition.

ANN (CONT'D)

Hey! You have to get out of there!

She waves her arms frantically, but the man regards her with complete confusion. Suddenly remembering he's completely naked, he cups himself with both hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN (CONT'D)
GET OUT OF THE WATER! IT ISN'T
SAFE!

He notices the rifle around her shoulder. His eyes become skittish and nervous. He glances behind and around her, as if expecting to see others.

MAN
Who are you?

ANN
PLEASE LISTEN TO ME!

MAN
Okay, okay.

He holds his hands up, as if surrendering. He steps out of the water, carefully. Starts to dress.

MAN (CONT'D)
Calm down.

Suddenly, he whips out his GUN from underneath the pile of clothes. Points it right at Ann. She freezes. Faro growls.

MAN (CONT'D)
Who sent you?

ANN
Nobody.

MAN
Where is everyone?

Faro stares up at the man, teeth bared, GROWLING.

ANN
There's no one here.

MAN
Where are they?

ANN
I'm alone. I swear it.

The man stares at her intensely, as if trying to determine her trustworthiness. Beat.

MAN
What did you mean, the water isn't
safe?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANN
Everything in this stream dies. I
don't know why. The others in the
valley are fine.

The man looks back at the creek. First there's nervousness in
his eyes. Then fear. Beat.

MAN
Start walking.

ANN
Where are we going?

The man picks up the dead rabbit, and nudges Ann forward with
a point of his gun.

MAN
Stay in front of me.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

They push forward at a rapid pace, Faro keeping himself
between them. The man is still wary, scanning the bushes and
trees, on guard for a set-up.

Ann glances back at him guardedly. His smooth face makes him
look younger, healthier, more attractive. In particular, his
eyes stand out: deep-set, dark and intense.

ANN
If we're going back to the house, I
know a shortcut.

But her attempt to help only makes him more suspicious.

MAN
What do you know about the house?

ANN
It's mine -- I mean, my family's.

MAN
Then where have you been all this
time?

ANN
Hiding. I wasn't sure who you were.

MAN
Your parents?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN

They're...gone. They left about six months ago. Maybe a little more.

MAN

Where did they go?

ANN

Out *there*.

(beat)

They'll be back when they find other survivors.

MAN

Survivors?

He looks at her incredulously. But her expression remains earnest and serious: This belief means a lot to her. Suddenly, the man realizes that she's just a scared, harmless girl. His shoulders visibly relax. Beat.

MAN (CONT'D)

You've managed all by yourself?

ANN

It's not too bad.

MAN

There's food? Water?

ANN

As long as I take care of the animals and the farm, I've got whatever I need.

MAN

(skeptically)

You're saying that's a working farm?

Beat. Ann looks a little embarrassed.

MAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be rude. I'm sure you've done your best--

Abruptly, he stops walking. Closes his eyes for a moment, steadying himself. His eyes are glassy, and his forehead glistens with sweat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAN (CONT'D)
That stream. Its source comes from
outside the valley?

ANN
Yeah. I think so.
(beat)
Are you okay?

He starts walking again, even quicker this time, his face
pale. Ann lingers for a moment, worried.

MAN
Come on.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY ROAD - DAY

Ann pushes her bicycle, straining to keep up with the man's
long, hurried strides.

The tension between them is clearly thawing. His attention is
focused more on the valley than on her.

MAN
I don't understand how this valley
survived.

ANN
Dad used to say that we had our own
weather system, but I wasn't sure
what he meant.
(beat, suddenly)
Other places made it too, right?

The urgency in her voice can't be hidden. When he doesn't
answer immediately, she quickly keeps talking.

ANN (CONT'D)
You know, we'll have time to talk
about all this later! I haven't
even introduced myself. I'm Ann
Burden. You're John, right? John
Loomis?

The man suddenly STOPS. Looks at her strangely, with sallow
eyes. Ann blushes, realizing her mistake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I looked in your tent. I know it was wrong, I just wanted to find out who you were. I was scared.

LOOMIS

What did you look at?

ANN

Nothing. Just the name on your ID.

A sweat has broken out on Loomis' brow. He raises his hand, shielding his eyes from the sun's glare.

LOOMIS

Don't go in the tent. It's dangerous. There are things you--

His voice fades out. Ann waits for him to continue.

Suddenly, he sways. His knees buckle, and he falls toward Ann, collapsing onto the ground.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Damn. I can't--

Yellow LIQUID surges from his mouth onto the ground, as well as Ann's shoes. The rabbit drops from his hands, and Faro quickly moves in.

EXT. ROAD NEAR FARM - DAY

Ann half-supports, half-carries the very pale Loomis along the road, slipping with every step.

INT. ANN'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - DAY

Ann opens the door with her shoulder, and heaves Loomis into the double bed. Exhausted, she leans back against the wall, regaining her breath.

Loomis curls up in a ball. He GROANS and beckons Ann close.

LOOMIS

I need your help with something.

EXT. CREEK - EVENING

Ann stands back, carefully avoiding the water. She holds out the Geiger counter a foot above the creek.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The needle on the counter SHOOTS UP and keeps going.

INT. ANN'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

CANDLELIGHT illuminates Loomis' hollow face, as he stares up at Ann with burning eyes.

LOOMIS

I was in the water five minutes.
That's, like, 250 rems. Maybe more.

ANN

What does that mean?

LOOMIS

Radiation. Not good.

Ann touches his forehead. Her face falls.

ANN

You're really hot.

LOOMIS

I feel cold.

A long beat. Loomis blinks, suddenly disoriented.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Where am I?

ANN

My parents' bedroom.

His hollow eyes scan the room. Sees a pair of READING GLASSES on the bedside table. Two silver RINGS on the dresser. A thin layer of DUST over everything.

Then he GASPS, and VOMITS again. MOANING with each heave.

Ann just stares at him, paralyzed, overwhelmed. She can do nothing but stare at the pool of sick forming on the sheets.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Ann pumps water from a small, old-fashioned WELL. Moonlight GLISTENS off the sweat on her body.

INT. ANN'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Loomis is asleep now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ann hurries back in with the bucket of water and a sponge, and regards the situation with trepidation. Both he and the bed are filthy.

Ann takes a deep breath, then rolls the bedsheets out from under his body. Wrinkling her nose, she wraps them into a tight ball, and drops them on the floor.

She wets the sponge and gently wipes the man's face. Glances at his body, embarrassed. It too needs to be cleaned.

INT. ANN'S PARENTS' CLOSET - SAME

Ann takes out a pair of her father's folded plaid pajamas. His smell is still on them. She sniffs them closely.

INT. ANN'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Loomis sleeps, dressed in the fresh pajamas. A THERMOMETER rests in his mouth.

Ann sits on the bed next to him, stunned, overwhelmed. She stares at the sick man's face. His chest, rising and falling with shallow breaths. The curvature of his shivering body.

He stirs. Opens his eyes briefly. Regards Ann with confusion.

 LOOMIS
Elizabeth?

Beat.

 ANN
No. Ann.

Loomis scrunches up his face, then falls back into unconsciousness.

Ann removes the thermometer. Over 103 degrees. This is serious.

FEAR and HELPLESSNESS flood her face. She has no idea what to do.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ann huddles on her bed. Eyes red and exhausted. Fighting to stay awake. She dozes off.

Suddenly, through her window, a beam of LIGHT appears out of the dark. It gets closer. CAR HEADLIGHTS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ann jumps to her feet and races out of her room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Ann charges down the stairs. Her MOTHER, wearing a polka-dotted APRON, and brother, JOSEPH, 8, hurry out from the kitchen.

ANN'S MOTHER

Thank God.

A TRUCK pulls up into the front yard. Doors SLAM, then FOOTSTEPS.

The door opens. Ann's FATHER, strong and intense, walks into the house, followed by DAVID, Ann's older brother. Both seem dazed.

Ann watches as her parents talk quietly together, their heads bowed, fingers intertwined.

ANN'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

What did you find?

ANN'S FATHER

Just bodies.

ANN'S MOTHER

That's it?

He nods, his eyes haunted. David sits stiffly down on a chair, his hand TREMBLING uncontrollably. Young Joseph stares at his older brother, unsettled by how vulnerable he looks.

Ann, scared, looks away, out of the window. The light CHANGES to that of an early DAWN.

Faro starts to BARK outside.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAWN (FLASHBACK)

Ann, David and their parents walk across the yard, carrying PROVISIONS. They load up the truck, while Faro runs around them in circles, YAPPING.

There's a palpable sense of DREAD, as everyone except for Ann squeezes into the front of the truck. She stays outside. Tries not to show her fear.

Her father starts the engine. Rolls down the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN'S FATHER
Where's Joseph?

ANN
In his room. He won't come out.

ANN'S MOTHER
Be good to him while we're gone. He
needs you.

ANN
I wanna go with you.

ANN'S MOTHER
You have to stay here, Ann. It's
safer. Maybe someone will come.

Ann's mother kisses her. Her father touches her gently on the head.

ANN'S FATHER
We'll be back soon.

ANN'S MOTHER
God willing.

The truck moves away. Ann stands there, dazed.

Suddenly, she breaks into a run, following the truck. But it's too fast. Her father sees her in the rear view mirror, but doesn't slow down. They pull away into the distance.

Then a FACE appears like a GHOST in the back of the truck. Hidden among the provisions and blankets, it looks back out at Ann, sadly, apologetically.

It's Joseph, stowed away.

Ann, aghast, picks up her speed, frantically waving and shouting.

But the truck disappears over a hill. The NOISE of its engine recedes until, finally, there is only SILENCE.

Ann is left alone in the wide expanse of the farm. Her face is streaked with sweat and tears.

She looks up at the sky. Crisp and beautiful in the early morning light.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - DAWN (PRESENT)

Ann opens her eyes. A similarly perfect sky dawns outside the window.

INT. ANN'S PARENTS' BEDROOM/LOOMIS' BEDROOM - SAME

Ann brings her face close to Loomis. He is awake and conscious, but only just.

ANN
I don't want to be alone again.
Ever.

Loomis clutches his cold, pale hand. Then KISSES him gently on the forehead.

ANN (CONT'D)
You're going to get better. I know
it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STORE - DAY

Ann hurries down the dark aisles, taking PROVISIONS off the shelves. Aspirin, powdered milk, canned food, rubbing alcohol.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Ann feeds soup to the prone Loomis. He swallows some of the liquid, but most of it runs down his chin.

His face is white and his eyes flutter underneath their lids. He shakes his head, MURMURING incomprehensibly. His clothes and sheets are again soaked through.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ann lies in bed in the darkness, trying to sleep.

Anguished, eerie MOANS come from Loomis' room down the hall. He's in the midst of a NIGHTMARE.

LOOMIS (O.S.)
No...don't...
(beat)
Elizabeth?

His voice sounds unhinged. Like he's witnessing -- or doing -- something horrible.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh God.

He gives a series of eerie rhythmic MOANS. A pained WHIMPER.
Then SILENCE.

Ann closes her eyes, grateful for the quiet.

Beat. Then...

LOOMIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Elizabeth? Don't...

Ann sighs, and rolls out of bed.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - SAME

Ann walks in warily, holding a CANDLE ahead of her.

Loomis' eyes are closed, but his pale face TWITCHES in
consternation. His body SHIVERS under the covers.

LOOMIS
John. No, no, NO!

Ann steps toward him. Suddenly, she trips over something in
the dark, and there's a loud CLANG as she falls forward.

Loomis OPENS his eyes.

From his POV, delirious with fever, it is not Ann who
staggers toward him in the half-light, but ANOTHER WOMAN.

She's older. Darker. And half her face is MISSING, as if
blown away from the blast of a GUN.

Loomis' eyes widen with terror. He SCREAMS and bolts upright,
waving his arms wildly in front of him.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
NO!

Ann quickly restrains him, forcing him back down on the bed.
He struggles for a moment, but then his exhausted body goes
slack. He stares up at her like a scared child, SHAKING.

ANN
Ssh. It was just a nightmare.

She gently strokes his wet hair and forehead.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAWN

Ann stirs. Awakens. Looks around, disoriented.

She's still in Loomis' bed, having fallen asleep next to him. Over the course of the night, her body has wrapped itself around his.

Ann groggily extricates herself from the embrace, as quietly as possible, a vaguely guilty expression on her face.

She takes the thermometer. Holds it in his mouth with one hand, and holds his chin up with the other. His face is again coarse with stubble.

When she removes the thermometer, it reads 105 degrees. Close to the point of no return.

His cheeks are pale blue, his eyelids purple. Lips grey and cracked. Barely breathing.

Ann's shoulders slump. Hope fades from her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Without much enthusiasm, Ann plays the PIANO. She stumbles over the notes, not getting any help from the old, out-of-tune instrument.

INT. LOOMIS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The PIANO can be heard, muffled through the walls.

We CLOSE IN on Loomis' FACE as he sleeps. His eyes quiver fretfully under their lids.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ann chops up lettuce and tomatoes on a cutting board. Each SLICE of the knife gets progressively weaker, until it just hangs limply in her hand.

Beat.

The edge of the knife GLINTS in the setting sun. Ann stares at the sharp serrated edge. Its tip touches her wrist.

Suddenly, she PRESSES it down into her skin. Hard. A drop of BLOOD emerges. She stares at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Watches as it trickles down her wrist. She presses the blade again, and another thick red drop oozes out.

Suddenly, it dawns on Ann what she's doing. She GASPS, and drops the knife, a look of shame and embarrassment spreading across her face.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ann lies motionless on her bed. Eyes vacant, numb.

From the hallway comes the sound of paws TAPPING gently on the hardwood. Then Faro nudges the door open and walks into the room.

He stares at Ann impatiently, bobs his head. He's hungry. But she doesn't so much as glance up at him.

Faro cocks his head, perplexed. Steps forward. RAPS his paws against the floor.

Still no reaction from his mistress.

The dog walks right up to the edge of the bed. Stares at Ann, evaluating. Then he stretches. Makes a funny SNORTING sound. Shakes himself off, and SNEEZES.

Ann's eyes finally shift, although her body doesn't.

Faro looks at her with soulful brown eyes. Then he collapses to the floor with a THUD. Rolls over with his paws in the air.

Ann finally smiles. The dog hops back onto his feet, tail WAGGING.

ANN
Give me a kiss.

Faro leans in and bumps his wet nose against her face.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ann lays a dish full of food in front of Faro. While the dog hungrily attacks it, she leans over and pets him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

The old wooden door CREAKS as Ann walks in, Faro close behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The chapel is dark and musty. Dead, withered flowers sit on the altar. Rows of CANDLES burned down to the ends. Eerie FLAPPING NOISES come from the rafters.

Ann tiptoes down the tiny aisle, past half a dozen wooden pews, GUILT across her face. It's been awhile since she's been in here.

Ann replaces the old flowers and candles with fresh ones. Sweeps the floor. Dusts the altar and statues.

Then, work done, she falls to her knees. Hands clasped together, head bowed, praying intently.

ANN
(whispering)
Please God. I need him. I'll do
anything you ask, just don't let
him die. Please.

Meanwhile, a bored Faro is sniffing around the chapel. Suddenly, he spots something and GROWLS.

Ann looks up. Her eyes are wet.

Faro is crouched in a point, inching forward silently. Ann leans across to take a look.

At first it seems as though there's nothing there, as if Faro is stalking a spirit. Then she sees a young CROW, trapped under the corner of a pew, paralysed with fear. Small and black, it tries to flutter away, but can't free its wing.

Faro lunges for it. Ann grabs him by the scruff of his neck and stops him, inches short.

Ann looks up and spots a NEST tucked away at the side of one of the rafters. A big black CROW perches on it, looking down at Ann with nervous eyes.

Very gently, Ann frees the fledgling's wing. It stares at her, quite trusting.

Then it beats its wings and FLIES up to its mother.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAWN

Ann, asleep in the chair by the bed, opens her eyes as the early sunlight hits her face.

She gets quickly to her feet and leans over to check Loomis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a touch of color back in his cheeks, and his breathing is slightly more regular.

A touch of hope crosses Ann's face. She dips a cloth in a bucket of water and gently presses it to Loomis' head.

Beat. Then he opens his eyes. They are blank and unfocused, like those of a newborn.

LOOMIS' POV: Ann's face and body slowly comes into focus as he adjusts to the overwhelming WHITE light. She looks pure, innocent -- an angelic vision.

Ann's smile grow as they look at each other. Her eyes drift HEAVENWARDS, amazed and disbelieving.

FADE OUT

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Ann cleans up the house with renewed purpose. Sweeps the floor. Dusts the counter tops. Making amends for prior neglect.

She is dressed in shorts and an old grey t-shirt which reads GIRLS SOCCER. Her hair is up in a ponytail. She looks like any ordinary teenage girl.

EXT. FARM - DAY

With Faro's assistance, Ann herds back in the animals and the chickens. She milks the COW. Tends to a VEGETABLE GARDEN. Her face radiant with optimism.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The fields lay in furrows, but are dry and weed-ridden.

Ann hoes the hard, cracked earth in the midday sun. Dumps a wheelbarrow full of compost onto the soil. Digs it in with a spade. SWEAT pours down her face and stains her t-shirt.

She glances up at the house -- and abruptly breaks off her singing.

Loomis is watching her through the window, propped up in his bed. He smiles, and waves weakly.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Ann holds the thermometer up to the light. She wears her mother's polka-dotted apron, and the serious expression of a nurse.

Loomis peers over from the bed. Gaunt and sickly -- but alive.

LOOMIS

How much?

ANN

Hundred and one. Lowest yet.

LOOMIS

I still feel so damn weak.

ANN

It's gonna take time. You said so yourself.

Ann places a tray of food on his lap. A plate of eggs, and a small bowl of boiled custard.

ANN (CONT'D)

(shyly)

Do you want me to feed you again?

LOOMIS

Let me try myself.

They start eating. Loomis' hand shakes as he spoons some eggs into his mouth, and chews slowly.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

I used to hate custard.

He spoons his custard onto his eggs, and eats them together. Ann LAUGHS.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Delicious.

Beat. He steals a glance at Ann as he eats, and his eyes crinkle in wonder.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

You're real, right?

ANN

I think so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS
How do I know I'm not dead or
dreaming?

ANN
Don't people usually pinch
themselves?

Instead, he reaches out and pinches her. Ann laughs and
yelps, drawing away from him. She's BLUSHING.

ANN (CONT'D)
See?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Leaning on Ann for support, Loomis walks slowly down the
hallway. Each tentative step is painful -- as if he's
learning to walk all over again.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Loomis sits in the bathtub, staring into a small portable
mirror, SHAVING.

There's a small, inscrutable smile on his face. He brings the
razor down his face very slowly, deliberately, in a perfect
straight line.

ANN (OVER)
Where are you from?

EXT. FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Ann and Loomis sit on the porch-swing, close but not
touching. Loomis' face is cleanly shaven and his hair neatly
combed. His legs are covered with a thick blanket.

LOOMIS
Up north. Born and raised.

Faro, sitting at Ann's feet, YAWNS and stretches himself out.
Ann waits for Loomis to offer something more. He doesn't.

ANN
You were living there when the war
started?

LOOMIS
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN
Working?

Loomis nods. Lapses into a pointed silence. But Ann can't keep her curiosity under wraps.

ANN (CONT'D)
And...you were a scientist?

Loomis shifts, noticeably uncomfortable, then nods.

LOOMIS
For the government. That suit I was in when you first saw me? We made it.

ANN
We?

Beat. Loomis seems to be debating whether to continue. Then he sighs.

LOOMIS
Me and two others. We were hired to design a suit that could withstand the effects of WMDs. Even nuclear ones. It would have saved millions of lives. You never read about it in the papers?

Ann gives a hesitant shrug, a little embarrassed.

ANN
I'm not much of a reader.

LOOMIS
Well, we ran out of time. Mine was the only one we perfected. Thanks to that I survived.

ANN
What happened to the people you were working with?

Loomis closes his eyes, evidently disturbed. Ann immediately regrets her persistence. She touches his arm apologetically.

LOOMIS
Maybe another time.

Beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANN
Who was Elizabeth?

Loomis' body involuntarily jerks, as if receiving a mild shock. His eyes are suddenly wide and intense.

LOOMIS
How do you know about Elizabeth?

ANN
You called out her name when you were sick.

LOOMIS
Oh.

Beat.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
(quietly)
She was my wife. One of the other scientists.

ANN
(startled)
You have a wife?
(beat)
What happened to her?

But Loomis doesn't reply. Just stares into the distance, lost in thought.

ANN (CONT'D)
John?

He makes no indication that he's heard her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRONT YARD - DUSK

Using a cane, Loomis limps slowly and painfully across the grass.

He reaches his wagon. Unzips the cover. Stares inside, his face blank. His gaze comes to rest on a SEALED BOX.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Unbeknownst to Loomis, Ann is watching through her binoculars from the living room window.

EXT. FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Sitting down in the grass, Loomis opens and looks through the box. His face is wracked with emotion as he sifts through various objects -- letters, diaries, photographs -- handling them with great care.

He pulls out a WEDDING RING. It's very distinctive -- a BLUE JEWEL in the center, around which a FAMILY CREST is adorned.

AT THE WINDOW

Ann knows she should look away, but she can't. There's sympathy in her eyes, but something else as well.

A flash of ENVY.

Loomis slips the ring over his finger. It's now too big for his skeletal digit. Despondent, he lets it drop back into the box.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Ann rakes the fields, preparing them for planting. The sun shines off her hair, casting an angelic glow around her face.

She SINGS as she works, in a pure and clear voice.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Loomis is awakened by Ann's voice, drifting in through the window on the breeze. He strains his neck up so that he can see out of the window.

Now she's dancing too. Loomis watches with an amused grin.

Suddenly, Ann looks up. Sees his face in the window. Freezes and turns bright red with embarrassment.

Loomis APPLAUDS. Shouts out at her.

LOOMIS
You sound great.

Ann smiles, embarrassed. Shouts back.

ANN
You're pretty good too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS
What do you mean?

ANN
At the stream. I heard you singing.
Remember?

Now it's Loomis' turn to look embarrassed.

He beckons her over. She drops the rake and hurries
compliantly toward the house.

LOOMIS
You're doing all the work by hand?

ANN
Yeah. I have to plant the corn. I
was meant to do it before summer
started, but...

Her voice trails off. Loomis frowns.

LOOMIS
Is it too late? It's important that
we have corn.

ANN
We've planted it this late before.
It'll be fine.

LOOMIS
Didn't your father have a tractor?

ANN
(nodding)
It's in the barn.

LOOMIS
Why don't you use it?

ANN
There's no gas.

LOOMIS
What about those two pumps at the
village store?

Beat.

ANN
Yeah, but they won't work without
electricity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOOMIS

You can take the motors off the pumps and work them by hand. It's pretty easy.

(beat)

There might be a couple of thousand gallons there.

Ann blushes, feeling exceedingly stupid.

ANN

Oh. I guess I don't know much about pumps or motors.

LOOMIS

Did your Dad have any books about how to run a farm?

ANN

I dunno. The library at the school might have some.

Loomis looks over the farm. It's clearly not in the best condition.

LOOMIS

How cold does it get here in the winter?

ANN

Reaaaally cold.

LOOMIS

Then we need to get things up and running. It's the only way we're going to survive.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Ann walks through the stacks in the small, musty room, passing the various sections. Periodicals. Fiction. Religion.

She reaches the SCIENCE section. It is pretty paltry. Finally, she spots and removes a couple of old books: THE FARM MECHANIC, THE FARMING GAME NOW, and FAMILY FARMING.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Clutching the books under her arm, Ann walks down the hallway toward the exit, passing empty CLASSROOMS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

For a moment, she thinks she hears the faraway SOUND of children's VOICES.

She stops, and glances inside one of the classrooms. It looks identical to the one at the beginning of the story.

For a brief moment, Ann SEES HERSELF as a young girl. Sitting at her desk in the back, by the window, flipping through her religious picture book.

Then she blinks, and the vision is gone. The classroom is again deserted.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Loomis intently studies the farming books, making notes in a precise hand on a pad of paper. Faro dozes on the bed next to him.

Ann emerges from the walk-in closet, and places a stack of men's CLOTHES on the bed.

ANN
These are for you.

Loomis eyes them neutrally.

LOOMIS
They're your dad's?

ANN
(nodding)
I think they'll fit you.

LOOMIS
I couldn't, Ann.

ANN
It's not like he's going to need them anymore.

She tries to smile, but she can't fully hide how much it still hurts. Beat. Loomis looks uncomfortable.

LOOMIS
I was thinking...maybe now that I'm a little better, I should move out of this room.

Ann looks alarmed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN

Why? You're not leaving, right?

LOOMIS

(chuckling)

No! I'd just feel more comfortable
in the guest room.

Ann's puzzled. But then she catches Loomis glancing uneasily at her parents' possessions throughout the room. Eyeglasses, rings, books resting half-open. As though they still lived there.

Suddenly, she feels ashamed -- as if she's a little girl who can't face the truth. Quietly, she starts to tidy away her parents' things.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

You don't have to do that.

ANN

You're not a guest. This is your
room.

She refuses to look at a FAMILY PORTRAIT as she takes it off the side table.

ANN (CONT'D)

You'll take the clothes?

Loomis acquiesces with a shrug, then goes back to studying.

ANN (CONT'D)

How's the reading going?

LOOMIS

Good. Almost done.

EXT. STORE - DAY

A quick succession of SHOTS showing Ann struggling at the gas pumps. She kneels on the ground, grimy, sweaty and frustrated, trying to follow a page of Loomis' hand-written instructions.

But she sticks to her task, and finally manages to unscrew one of the pumps.

She pushes her hair out of her eyes with a filthy hand, and turns a knob expectantly. Nothing happens. So she turns it the other way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's a GURGLING sound from inside the pump. Then a RUSHING sound through the tubes. A moment later, GASOLINE spills out of the nozzle of the hose.

Ann places a container under the nozzle, and CLAPS her hands together in triumph.

EXT. LARGE BARN - DAY

Ann opens up the huge doors. The TRACTOR lies inside like a dormant giant.

INT. LARGE BARN - DAY

Ann transfers gas from the container to the tractor's tank.

CLOSE ON: Under the hood of the tractor, she grips the CRANK with her hand and pulls up on it, hard.

The tractor's engine SPLUTTERS to life.

EXT. FARM - SAME

In a split second, the quiet, natural sounds of the farm are rudely crushed by the powerful ROAR of the engine.

The animals look around, startled. The chickens and hens flap in consternation.

Faro, lying lazily on the porch, jumps up excitedly and dashes down to the barn.

EXT. FIELDS - SAME

Ann drives the tractor, beaming triumphantly. Faro runs around the machine in circles.

Ann looks up at Loomis' room, hoping to see him. After a beat, he appears in the window, drawn by the noise. He waves, gives a thumbs up.

Ann waves back, clearly full of gratitude and hope.

She holds her glance and wave longer than she should. But he doesn't look away from her either -- a small, enigmatic smile on his face.

Ann's heart skips a beat.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

It's still dark outside when Ann's battery-powered alarm clock BEEPS.

She opens her eyes and stretches. Springs coltishly out of bed, glowing with energy and purpose.

INT. BARN - DAWN

Dressed in worn jeans, Ann expertly milks the cow. The silver bucket beneath the udders slowly fills up with milk.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Loomis lies flat on the floor, rehabbing his body. He determinedly hoists himself up on his arms. His upper body muscles strain and tighten. He grits his teeth.

INT. CHICKEN COOP - DAY

Ann collects and inspects the eggs laid by the dozens of hens.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Loomis' weakened body shakes with adrenaline as he tests himself with vicious push ups and crunches.

He lowers himself down on his hands until he is mere inches off the ground. Then holds the position for what seems like an eternity. SWEAT pours down his face.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - DAY

Ann hoes the hard, cracked earth. Dumps a wheelbarrow full of compost onto the soil. Digs it in with a spade.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Loomis' body trembles. He's in agony. But he just grits his teeth, refusing to make a sound. The intensity in his eyes is unsettling.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - DAY

Ann chops wood with an axe. Each slashing movement is focused and accurate.

Then she stores the wood in the back of an old truck, the sun beating down on her, soaking her vest through with sweat. Her adolescent body looks taut and sinewy.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Loomis' body finally gives out. He crumples to the floor.
Lies there exhausted, recovering his breath.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Ann carries two glasses of fresh lemonade up the stairs.
Working in the sun has given her face a healthy, sensual
glow.

ANN

John?

She peers into Loomis' room, but it's empty.

AT THE BATHROOM DOOR

Ann puts her ear against the closed door. There's the sound
of WATER splashing gently around Loomis' body as he washes
himself.

Ann listens intently, barely daring to breathe.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Ann and Loomis eat dinner on the porch. Both of them SWEAT in
the palpable humidity.

Insects BUZZ around them. Faro gives chase, his jaws SNAPPING
shut, but never quite quickly enough.

Somewhere in the distance, THUNDER rumbles gently.

LOOMIS

That's strange. The sky looks
clear.

Ann sneaks a glance at Loomis as he looks out across the sky.
The fading sun highlights his jawline, making him look
especially noble and kind.

Her attraction to him is palpable.

Loomis suddenly catches her eye. He grins, as if he knows
exactly what she's thinking. Ann quickly looks away,
blushing, embarrassed at being caught out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An awkward beat. Eventually, Ann glances back. He's still staring at her. His expression is playful, but his eyes are intensely studying her.

She smiles shyly, and quickly turns back to her food.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The house is quiet. Ann washes the dishes in a bucket by the sink, illuminated by soft candlelight.

Suddenly, Loomis' hands come out of nowhere and touch her waist gently.

Ann turns around, surprised. Loomis puts his fingers to his lips -- *Ssshh*.

He envelopes her in a soft embrace. Her eyes widen, her breathing accelerates. Amazed that it's happening. Scared but thrilled.

His hands move across her body, ever so tenderly. He touches her breasts delicately. Then he kisses her neck, her cheek, and finally her lips.

It feels beautiful. Innocent. Pure. Loving.

Ann's back arches in pleasure. Tingling. Her body shudders. She closes her eyes...

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

...but it's just a FANTASY.

In reality, Ann is lying in bed, her head peeking out from under the covers. Eyes closed, face flushed.

Underneath the covers, her hand moves between her legs. Inexpertly, hesitantly.

FLASH ON: Loomis' hand, moving UNDER HER DRESS.

Ann shifts positions in bed. Opens her eyes. Glimpses the CROSS hanging on her wall, highlighted by the moonlight.

She pauses, a guilty expression on her face. Her hand stops moving.

Beat. Then she sinks back into bed, conflicted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her eyes scan the room, full of nervous energy. Taking in the pink wallpaper and stuffed animals. The POSTERS on the wall -- bland young men, striking chaste but suggestive poses.

It's the room of a child.

Ann blows out the candle. Turns on her side, and closes her eyes.

On the ceiling above her, tiny glittery stick-on STARS glow in the dark.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARM - DAWN

The beginnings of a beautiful day, calm and clear. The WIND CHIMES on the front porch are completely still.

AT THE CHICKEN COOP

A FIGHT suddenly erupts between several BIRDS. Feathers fly in the violent SQUAWKING.

IN THE SKY

The orange light of dawn slowly turns a clear BLUE. There's not a cloud to be seen.

AT THE BARN

One of the cows BELLOWS urgently. The others soon join in.

Suddenly, a gust of WIND blows across the farm, trailing dust and hay in its wake. The chimes strike each other in a cluster of sharp contrasting notes.

The animal CACOPHONY increases in intensity.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

The front door opens and Ann steps out onto the porch, still in her pajamas.

Immediately she hugs herself. The hairs on her arms are standing up. A bewildered expression crosses her face.

ANN

John!

Her BREATH is visible as she talks. It's freezing cold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Faro appears from out of the house. Hearing the rest of the animal noise, he joins in by HOWLING.

ANN (CONT'D)
Sssh, Faro!

Ann shivers. Rubs her arms. Looks out across the farm with uncertainty.

A thin RESIDUE has started falling from the sky. Rain? Ash? As it collects on the ground, Ann squints in disbelief.

It's SNOW.

LOOMIS (O.S.)
What the...?

Loomis emerges from the house, looking amazed.

ANN
Where's it coming from? There
aren't any clouds.

They watch with amazement as patches of white form on the ground around them.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Later in the day, Ann stands at the window, staring out nervously.

ANN
It's already melting. Must have
just been a freak shower.

Loomis, at the table, shakes his head dismissively.

LOOMIS
The whole planet's been thrown out
of joint, Ann. Crops and animals
dead. Air full of poison. In some
places you can't see the sun
through the smog and haze.
(beat)
It's a miracle that the valley's
survived for so long. But
eventually it'll catch up with us.

Ann tries to look fearless.

ANN
What happens when it does?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS

I'm not sure. But we have to be prepared. There's going to be a lot of work for you, at least until I'm better.

ANN

(nodding, eager to please)
Okay.

LOOMIS

We have to start planning for the future. It's just two of us now, but maybe soon there'll be more.

Beat. Ann looks puzzled.

ANN

You think other people might come?

Loomis gives her his usual cryptic smile, but it's shyer than normal.

LOOMIS

That's not what I meant.

Suddenly, it dawns on Ann what he's implying. She turns red, and quickly looks away. Scared. But also thrilled.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Ann bathes at the edge of the shallow river. Sunlight dances across the water, and she turns her body up to absorb the warmth.

ANN

What do you think, Faro?

The dog chases minnows on the bank, his paws wet. Everything is peaceful and idyllic.

ANN (CONT'D)

You like him too, don't you?

She LAUGHS out loud, excited and childlike, and splashes Faro playfully with water.

Suddenly, a decent-sized TROUT swims by, surprisingly close. Ann freezes, her eyes opening in anticipation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She quickly drops into a crouch. Starts to track the fish, her body tense, causing nary a ripple in the water.

Clearly, she's done this before.

As the trout negotiates its way around a rock, Ann calmly slides her hands under the water and traps it in a corner. She strokes its belly gently. As if hypnotized, the fish becomes calm and still.

Then, with a SNAP of her wrists, Ann flings the trout out of the water. It flies through the air and lands on the bank nearby, flopping and writhing agonizingly.

Faro makes a move toward the trout, but Ann holds him back.

They stand together quietly, watching the fish as it slowly dies.

ANN (OVER) (CONT'D)
My Dad taught us how to do it.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The fire over the hearth is CRACKLING.

ANN (OVER)
(with a hint of pride)
But I was the only one who ever
caught anything. My brothers would
get so mad at me.

Without batting an eyelid, Ann guts the trout on the kitchen counter. Places the fish in a pan, and throws it onto the stove with a HISS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ann and Loomis eat happily. Loomis inhales each bite with a SIGH.

LOOMIS
I never thought I'd eat fresh fish
again.

ANN
The streams are full of them.

LOOMIS
Enough to last through the winter?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN

Yeah, but the water freezes over
and they swim down deep. They're
reaaaally hard to catch.

LOOMIS

We could stock up before it gets
cold.

ANN

But the freezer--

LOOMIS

(nodding)

--doesn't work. Yes.

They chew for a while. Loomis is deep in thought. Suddenly,
he gets up, and limps silently out of the front door.

A long beat. Faro stares inquisitively at Ann. She shrugs
back.

Then Loomis impatiently pokes his head back in.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Come on!

INT/EXT. TRACTOR - DAY

Ann drives the tractor through the valley. Loomis, a blanket
over his legs, directs her with his cane.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Loomis emerges from the trees, and limps excitedly toward the
deadly, radioactive stream that almost took his life.

ANN (O.S.)

John! Be careful!

Out of breath, she struggles to keep up despite his handicap.

LOOMIS

Up there!

He points with his cane, following the creek as it winds up
into the hills to where a cluster of rocks and boulders have
created a small WATERFALL.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

It's like a natural dam! A good flow of water...if I could add to it somehow, make it a little stronger -- it's enough to run a small generator. We'd have electricity.

ANN

I'm not sure we have a generator.

LOOMIS

You can make one out of any electric motor. I've seen some lying around the farm.

ANN

Would the lights in the house work?

LOOMIS

I think so. They might flicker a bit. But the fridge and freezer for sure. Maybe the heater.

ANN

(sighing ecstatically)

Hot water!

Loomis fearlessly strides up to the very edge of the creek. Regards the water like an enemy about to be vanquished.

ANN (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter that the water's radioactive?

LOOMIS

Not at all.

ANN

But how will you build around the dam?

LOOMIS

With lumber and some sort of axle. Then scrap metal for the water wheel.

ANN

No...I mean what happens if you get wet by mistake?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOOMIS
I'll be in the safe-suit.

Beat. Ann looks nervous.

ANN
It's too dangerous. You can't get
sick again.

LOOMIS
Don't worry.

ANN
I could do the work. In the suit.

Beat. Loomis shakes his head.

ANN (CONT'D)
I'm strong enough. Just 'cause I'm
a girl, it doesn't--

LOOMIS
I know. But I can't let you use the
suit. It's too complicated--

ANN
It looked pretty easy to--

LOOMIS
--and it's dangerous--

ANN
I'll be careful.

Loomis sighs, losing patience.

LOOMIS
No, Ann. It's the only thing that
connects us to the world out there.
Just stay away from the suit and
the wagon.

His smile is friendly but firm: the matter has been decided.
He turns, and limps back toward the tractor.

ANN
(under her breath)
Okkaaay...

INT. TRACTOR CAB - DAY

Ann steals a glance at Loomis as she drives, but he's too preoccupied to notice. He stares out of the window, across the fields. Visibly thinking. Planning. Taking charge.

They approach the turn-off for the farm, but Loomis indicates that they keep going on the main road.

LOOMIS

The village. I think I know where
to find some lumber.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The tractor comes to a halt on the side of the road.

Loomis dismounts awkwardly, and makes a beeline for the chapel. His eyes run up and down its exterior.

LOOMIS

They're perfect.

He points his cane toward the WOODEN BEAMS that make up the tiny chapel's foundation.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Well, almost. Might need to saw
them down a couple of feet.

ANN

Saw them down? For what?

LOOMIS

The dam. What else?

Beat. It slowly dawns on Ann what he means.

ANN

How much wood do we need to build
it?

LOOMIS

A lot. Every one of these beams.

Ann tries to hide her astonishment. Beat.

ANN

Why don't we just use trees from
the forest?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Loomis is wandering around the side of the chapel, the very picture of confidence. He shakes his head dismissively.

LOOMIS

You gotta cut them down, chop them
up -- it's too much work.

He RAPS the side of the chapel with his cane, hard.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

This is much easier.

Ann looks crestfallen. She wants to argue, but can't bring herself to. She glances up guiltily at the small, frail chapel.

INT. TRACTOR - DUSK

Ann and Loomis ride back in silence, as the sun falls behind them in an eerie pool of red and yellow.

Ann's quiet. Loomis glances over at her.

LOOMIS

You're upset.

ANN

No.

But her voice sounds childishly indignant. Beat.

ANN (CONT'D)

It's just that -- I've been going
to that chapel since I was little.
My Dad helped build it. We had
weddings and baptisms there.

Loomis gives a little sigh, and fixes her with a pragmatic look.

LOOMIS

You want to survive, Ann. Right?

ANN

Of course.

He makes his point with a gentle shrug. Ann looks surprised. Hurt. She expected sympathy.

LOOMIS

You're worried we'll be punished if
we knock down a church?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Clearly, it's exactly what she believes. But it still embarrasses her.

ANN
(quietly)
It sounds silly when you say it
like that.

LOOMIS
It *is* silly.
(beat, then quietly)
Take a look at the world out there.
There's no God.

ANN
Just because all this bad stuff
happened, it doesn't mean there's
no God.

LOOMIS
That's just what they tell you at
Sunday School.

Ann's getting upset.

ANN
I prayed for someone to come, and
you came. I prayed that you got
better, and you did.

She really believes it. There's a long beat. Then Loomis,
realizing how much it means to her, shrugs.

LOOMIS
Okay, Ann. If you say so.

Ann's face reddens. She's being patronized and knows it. The
ROAR of the tractor engine blessedly covers the awkward
silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ann and Loomis eat dinner. There's a slight but noticeable
tension in the air.

Loomis feeds table scraps to a grateful Faro. Ann chews her
food nervously, hating every second of the silence.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

As she dries and puts away the dishes, Ann peers out of the
kitchen window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Loomis sits on the porch swing, dog at his feet, reading a technical book by candlelight.

Ann wills him to come to her, but he doesn't even look in her direction.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Ann walks out onto the porch. It's a still, warm night. WHIPPOORWILLS cry from the forest. FIREFLIES blink on the hillside.

Ann hovers by the door, waiting for Loomis to say something. But he's immersed in his book. Finally, she walks toward him.

ANN

You were right about the church. I
shouldn't have got so upset.

Loomis glances up at her. He nods, but his eyes are kind and sympathetic.

ANN (CONT'D)

I just want things between us to be
good.

LOOMIS

So do I.

Beat.

ANN

Well, good night.

LOOMIS

Good night, Ann.

She turns to leave. But suddenly, instinctively, she reaches out and TOUCHES him gently on the shoulder.

She freezes, mortified at her actions. But before she can pull away, he places his own hand on top of hers, and PATS it gently.

Ann sucks in her breath sharply. The gesture could be truly affectionate or merely paternal. But her body is on fire.

Then Loomis withdraws his hand, and returns casually to his book. Ann steps backwards and silently slips back into the house. Her hand where he touched her is TREMBLING.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ann sits on a chair, her eyes closed. Loomis holds out a stale CUPCAKE with a tiny candle and the number "16" written in frosting.

LOOMIS
Happy birthday, Ann.

Ann opens her eyes. Laughs.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
I don't know how to bake a cake.

Ann takes a deep breath, and blows out the candle.

EXT. CHICKEN COOP - DAY

Ann carefully inspects the chickens, then grabs one of the smaller ones. The bird tries to struggle free, but Ann expertly keeps hold of it, and SNAPS the chicken's neck with a sudden twist of her hands.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ann places the plucked chicken into a roasting pan, and sets it on top of the roaring hearth.

On the counter next to her lie fresh fruits, greens and vegetables.

A birthday feast in the making.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ann rifles through her closet on her hands and knees, examining clothes, then tossing most of them into a large pile of rejects.

There's nervous anticipation in her eyes and movements. An excited giddiness, but also some trepidation.

Finally, she finds what she's looking for. A STRAPLESS DRESS. Beautiful. She holds it up against her body, and looks in the mirror. Trying to see how she might look to somebody else.

She's bashful at first. But then she straightens up and stands tall. Strikes a pose or two. Traces the outline of her breasts and hips.

She seems surprised how good and mature she now looks.

LATER

Ann has put on the dress and her hair is in rollers. She regards her face in the mirror on her dressing room table.

There's a PIMPLE on her forehead, and a small SCAR under her chin. Her EYEBROWS are dark and unruly. Traces of baby fat in her cheeks.

Her mother's MAKE-UP KIT lies open in front of her.

Ann rummages through it. She takes out a pair of small scissors and a tweezer. Mascara. Lipstick. Eyeliner. Blush.

Then she sighs, wondering where to begin.

LATER

Ann stares at her reflection, horrified by the final result.

Her lips are glossy and red, and there's too much powder on her face. Her eyebrows are raw from tweezing, and her eyelids look dark and ghoulish.

She removes the rollers from her hair, and it bunches around her shoulders in a mess of Shirley Temple curls.

Ann's eyes fill with tears. She bites her lip and composes herself. Then she takes out a large pair of SCISSORS.

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Loomis is filling Faro's bowl with water, when the stairs CREAK. He looks up to see Ann walking down toward him.

Her hair is cut short. Her make-up has been redone. Understated. Better.

The dress reaches barely halfway down to her knees. She holds her back straight, and her legs look strong and shapely.

She's still a teen playing at being an adult. But her beauty is undeniable, even if she seems unsure of it.

Ann reaches the bottom of the stairs and stands before Loomis. She tries to seem casual. But she desperately wants his approval.

LOOMIS

What did you do to your hair?

Ann looks away. Unable to hide her disappointment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
It's nice. It's just...different.

Ann swallows and nods, trying to smile.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ann, wearing a silly party hat, sets the table for a special occasion. The candlelit room glows with romance.

Loomis walks in, a bottle of red WINE in hand. He also wears a party hat.

LOOMIS
I found this. I don't know much
about wine, but...

He opens the bottle and pours two glasses. Ann brings out the food: delicious-looking roast chicken and salad.

Loomis raises his glass.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
To your sixteenth. The first of
many birthdays together. And to
adulthood.
(beat)
You know in some places, tonight's
considered your coming of age.

That inscrutable little grin reappears on his face. He raises his glass to his nose, sniffs, and takes a sip.

Ann imitates him to the letter, but makes a face as she swallows the wine.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
Don't like it?

ANN
It's great.

Beat.

LOOMIS
You have drunk before, right?

ANN
(lying)
Oh, yeah. 'Course.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The wine's gone quickly to Ann's head. She finishes her chicken, and drops her knife and fork on the plate with a CLATTER.

ANN
(laughing)
Whoops.

Faro ambles up, perplexed by her loudness. Ann takes off her party hat, and tries to put it on the dog. Faro quickly paws it off, and hurries away.

Ann drains her glass of wine. Immediately pours another.

Loomis shoots her an amused glance. She raises her eyebrow coquettishly in return as she drinks again.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ann finishes peeing. She stumbles off the toilet seat. Leans on the sink. Stares at herself in the mirror.

In the candlelight, her eyes look as startled and unready as a deer in headlights. She shivers with anticipation.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ann hits PLAY on a battery-powered CD player, and an old romantic POP SONG starts up.

ANN
My parents would sing this song to
me when I was little.

Giggling, she beckons to Loomis, who sits on the couch with a glass of wine and a grin on his face.

ANN (CONT'D)
Dance with me.

LOOMIS
I can't.

ANN
It's my birthday.

LOOMIS
My legs aren't strong enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ann frowns. Downs more wine and shyly starts to sway to the music. Eyes closed. Lost in the song's heady romance. She SINGS along with the words.

She opens her eyes, glances over furtively at Loomis. To make sure he's watching her. He is. She smiles. Quickly looks away. Keeps dancing.

Then the song ends. Everything is SILENT. Even outside, the crickets have ceased their chirping.

Ann stands in the middle of the room, feeling a little foolish. Loomis hasn't moved his eyes from her body. His stare is intense and penetrating.

Suddenly, the reality of the moment hits Ann like a left hook, and she sobers up.

Before she knows it, Loomis is on his feet, coming toward her, grabbing her, KISSING her.

Ann GASPS. Her body tenses. Overwhelmed.

ANN

Wait...

But he doesn't stop. He presses her body against his, gripping her firmly.

Ann tries to relax, to kiss back. But she feels like she's suffocating. She SQUIRMS in his grasp.

Loomis tightens his grip. His hands move down her body to her waist. Then lower.

Ann flinches. Ducks. Slips out of his hands. Steps away, dizzy, BREATHING hard.

There's a horrible, awkward moment. Loomis looks at her silently, strangely. Ann's eyes are clouded with confusion and embarrassment.

ANN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I...

Out of nowhere, she starts to LAUGH. Uncontrollably.

Her laughter grows. So too does the affront in Loomis' eyes. Ann knows she should stop, but she can't. She turns away, hand over her mouth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANN (CONT'D)
The dishes...

She scurries away to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Ann scrubs the dishes as hard as she can, in a whirl of nervous energy, trying to calm herself down.

She places the dishes in the drying rack. Stares back into the living room.

The edge of Loomis' body is just visible. He sits motionless in a chair, a half-drunk glass of wine in his hand.

Impulsively, Ann walks back into the living room. Loomis raises his head slowly and stares at her. There's a slight grin on his face, but his eyes are deadly serious.

LOOMIS
Come here, Ann.

But she's rooted to the spot. She looks away from him.

ANN
I...
(beat, then suddenly)
Good night.

She turns and heads up the stairs, trying not to hurry.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ann lies in bed, unable to sleep. Self-loathing in her eyes.

There's a SCRATCHING coming from her closed door. Faro. Ann ignores it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MORNING

Ann's head peeks out of her room. The morning sun hits her face, and she raises a hand to shield her tired eyes and throbbing head.

Suddenly, Loomis walks out of his room up ahead. Ann jerks back. Hides behind her door. Watches nervously through the crack, as he shuts his door sharply and strides down the stairs. Clearly not in the best of moods.

INT. TOP OF STAIRS - SAME

Ann looks down warily across the living room. No sign of Loomis. She moves down the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Ann takes out some Ibuprofen from the cabinet. Swallows it dry.

LOOMIS (O.S.)
It's ten o'clock.

Ann JUMPS. He stands in the doorway, watching her.

ANN
I'm sorry. I don't feel too good.
Guess this is a hangover, huh?

She's trying to be light, to test the waters. But he doesn't so much as raise the corner of his mouth. He looks tired, his eyes red and bloodshot.

LOOMIS
How's the garden looking?

ANN
It's starting to come up. But I need to hoe it again today.

LOOMIS
The beets?

ANN
Needs some more fertilizer. The corn too.

LOOMIS
They'll be ready to harvest before winter?

ANN
I think so.

LOOMIS
That's not good enough.

He turns his back on her and leaves the room. Ann's face falls.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - DAY

Swinging a HOE high above her head, Ann attacks the weeds in a frenzy. Each swipe is delivered with cathartic ferocity.

INT. INSIDE THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Loomis stands at the window, hidden behind the curtains, staring out into the yard. His eyes are focused on Ann, as she carries bales of hay to the barn. He watches her, intently but without discernible emotion.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

A heavy bucket in her arms, Ann walks methodically across the fields, adding fertilizer to the soil.

She glances back at the house. Barely noticeably, the curtains at the window stir.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DUSK

Ann eats dinner alone, miserably, barely concentrating on her food.

EXT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Candle in hand, Ann walks to her bedroom.

She glances at Loomis' door: it's closed, but flickering LIGHT can be seen underneath it.

Beat. Then she knocks timidly at the door.

ANN

John?

She waits, but there's no response.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Ann, in silhouette, crosses her room and steps into bed. Her candle immediately goes out.

On the other side of the house, Loomis' figure is visible in his own bedroom. He sits on the edge of his bed, utterly still, as his candle continues to burn.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

All is quiet. The moon casts just enough light to glimpse Ann, sleeping in bed, and Faro, curled up on the ground.

A barely audible TAP comes from the hallway. Then another.

Ann opens her eyes abruptly.

Another tap. FOOTSTEPS. Approaching her room. Beat. Another. Now at her door.

Ann can't see through the darkness, but there's a slight CREAK as the door is pushed open.

Suddenly, she's afraid. She sits up in bed, eyes wide.

ANN

John?

It comes out as a croaked whisper. No response.

STEPS on the wood floor. The air moves. The shallowest of BREATHS.

Then Loomis appears out of the darkness, at the foot of her bed. He crawls onto it. In a split second, he's next to Ann. He breathes unevenly across her face.

LOOMIS

Sshh.

Loomis pulls back her hair. Touches her cheek. His movements are mechanical but clumsy, as if he's had too much to drink.

Ann's bewildered.

He kisses her perfunctorily, without meeting her eye. Then he places one hand on her belly, holding her in place, face up on the bed. With the other, he lifts her nightgown.

ANN

Please slow down.

She tries to relax. But when his hand moves between her legs, she squirms, her eyes wide and confused.

This should be fun. Gentle. Loving. But it isn't.

He UNZIPS his pants. Ann bites her lip, squints, tenses her body. Getting herself ready.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But still she's not prepared for how much it hurts. A surprised GASP and then a WAIL leak out of her throat. She winces in agony.

Loomis' face looms down from above. His eyes are half-closed as he thrusts.

Ann turns her head. Sees Faro, peering up at her from the floor. His expression is as befuddled as her own. He puts his head back down on the floor, and goes to sleep.

Ann closes her eyes, surrendering. Time passes. A minute, or an hour. It's hard to tell.

Then Loomis SIGHS, and his body slackens.

It's over.

He's blushing. Ashamed. Embarrassed. He kisses Ann on the lips without looking at her. Zips himself up.

A moment later, he is gone. The door closes gently, and his FOOTSTEPS recede down the hallway.

Ann curls her body up into the foetal position and hugs herself. There's a trace of blood on the sheets.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY - DAWN

Sunrise.

Summer has taken its toll on the valley.

The air seems somehow thicker, less clear. The greenery has turned a shade of brown. A STREAM runs almost dry.

In the forest, the young fox is sick. He lies curled up on a bed of dead leaves, thin and weak.

EXT. FARM - DAWN

The farm's golden luster has faded to a dusty monochrome.

Short stalks of corn, soybeans, and beets have started to emerge from the parched, cracked earth.

Spinach, lettuce and peas grow in the vegetable garden. Apples and pears ripen on the trees.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ann appears at the top of the stairs. Hesitates, then starts to descend them stiffly.

Her hair is uncombed. Eyes ringed with dark circles. The soft features of her face creased with tension.

She reaches the bottom of the stairs, and pauses again.

The fireplace in the living room is smoldering, and SOUNDS are coming from the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Ann peers around the door, her head bowed defensively.

Loomis stands at the counter, spooning eggs from a pan into two plates.

Ann freezes. She doesn't want to face him yet. She turns quietly to leave, but he notices her. He smiles, friendly but a little nervous.

LOOMIS

I made you some eggs.

Loomis puts the plate in front of her. Adds a little salt and pepper. It looks delicious.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

I never told you that I could cook,
did I?

Beat. Ann sits down and takes a bite.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

What do you think?

ANN

It's good.

He smiles, pleased, then leans down and KISSES her gently on the shoulder. Then he sits down and tucks into his own plate. Every so often, he shoots her a fond grin.

Faro comes padding in, nose twitching. Loomis feeds him some eggs from his fingers.

Ann's caught off guard. This isn't what she expected.

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Standing next to the tractor, Ann fills the planter with corn seed and fertilizer. It's heavy, messy work.

She looks up. Loomis is approaching with a glass of lemonade. He still walks with a slight limp.

LOOMIS

Thought you could use a drink.

Ann nods, and takes the drink from him, taking care not to touch his fingers. She gulps it down, and wipes her mouth.

Beat. He looks at her and smiles nervously.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

You've got dirt on your face.

He reaches out, and gently wipes the dirt and sweat off her face. His fingers linger on her features, their softness highlighted by the sun's glow.

Ann draws back from him, confused. She hands him back the empty glass.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In bed at night, Ann can't sleep.

There's a CREAK from the hallway outside her door. A footstep?

She freezes. Waits, barely daring to breathe.

But it's just the sounds of an old house. Still, her eyes stay wide open.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELDS - MORNING

Loomis sits in the tractor cab, HONKING the horn.

After a beat, Ann appears on the front porch, a quizzical expression on her face. Loomis beckons to her.

LOOMIS

Ready to go?

ANN

Where are we going?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS

To the church. We've got work to do.

ANN

The church?

Then she remembers, and her face falls.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Ann stands at the door, peering sadly up into the rafters. The crow's nest has long since been abandoned.

She quickly crosses herself, and walks back outside.

EXT. CHAPEL - DAY

Loomis sets a LADDER against the side of the chapel, and adjusts it so that it stretches to the very top. A TOOLBAG lies open on the ground.

LOOMIS

Use the sledgehammer to break through the wood. Then put the crowbar in, and yank out the beam. It should come out pretty easily, but you may need to loosen the nails first.

He shakes the ladder, testing its stability.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Just make sure you're steady up there. I'm not sure I can catch you if you fall off.

Ann swallows, nervously.

ANN

I don't think I can do this.

LOOMIS

It can't wait any longer.

Ann looks up the ladder, dubiously. She begins her climb. One small, hesitant step at a time.

She makes it to the top. The view is spectacular -- the rolling green hills of the valley stretch for as far as she can see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
(from below)
Aim right in the corner!

Unhappily and unwillingly, Ann regards the task at hand.

The wooden beams stretch horizontally across the body of the chapel, their paint chipped and peeled away. Heavy rusty nails keep the whole thing hanging together.

It's a heartbreakingly small and simple structure.

Ann looks crestfallen. She fingers the old wood, then takes a deep breath.

She raises, then SWINGS the sledgehammer into the corner of the highest beam. But it's half-hearted, and it barely leaves a mark.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
Try again.

She does. With the same result. Loomis waits, trying to be patient, but he's clearly getting irked.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
You're pretty strong. You must be
able to do better than that.

Ann tries a few more blows, but each time the sledgehammer bounces back without inflicting any damage.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
I don't think you're trying.
(beat)
Ann? Are you going to do this, or
not?

She clenches her jaw. A long beat. Then she shakes her head. An outright refusal to continue.

Loomis walks right up to the ladder and stares up at her with a furious expression -- veins in his neck throbbing, eyes suddenly as cold as ice. His voice is quiet but deadly.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
You're nothing but a spoiled little
girl. All the time I've spent
helping and teaching you, and you
can't even do the one simple thing
I ask.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He speaks slowly, and each word hurts Ann. Her face turns red, her anger and frustration growing.

ANN

What do you want from me?

LOOMIS

I want you to grow up!

Ann bites her lip, refusing to let herself cry. Loomis throws up his hands in disgust.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

You child.

Suddenly, Ann swings the sledgehammer, hard. It chips the wood. Then she swings again, using all her might, making a DENT.

Furious, sweating, almost crying, Ann SMASHES away at the wood with all her might. Finally, she breaks through. The wood SPLINTERS, creating a small hole in the top of the chapel.

She lowers the sledgehammer, letting it dangle limply from her hand. Her shoulders droop.

Loomis allows himself a satisfied smile.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Good.

Her eyes deadened and exhausted, Ann slots the crowbar into the hole. After some struggling, she wrenches the beam loose.

She removes it, and lets it fall to the ground. It lands with a loud, dull THUMP. Dust rises around it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHAPEL - EVENING

The wooden beams have been stripped away and the chapel has been dismantled. Only its exoskeleton remains -- a sad shell of its former self.

Loomis hauls the wooden pews onto the tractor. Ann just sits under a tree, numb.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

At the stove, Ann serves dinner, clearly upset. She angrily spoons out potatoes, hitting the ladle HARD against the plate. Then she takes the tray of food, strides past the dog into the living room--

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--and drops Loomis' dinner down in front of him. The plate spins and RATTLES, then settles.

LOOMIS
Not eating with me?

ANN
I'm not hungry.

She storms back petulantly into the kitchen. Loomis' eyes turn cold.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ann moves the pots and pans from the stove to the sink, making as much NOISE as possible. Loomis appears at the threshold of the kitchen, frowning. He's angry but trying to stay under control.

LOOMIS
Come back and sit down at the table.

ANN
I have to clean up.

LOOMIS
You can do it later.

She walks past him, not even bothering to make eye contact, and strides outside.

Loomis' face reddens. He seems about to snap. But he forces himself to calm down. After a beat, he follows Ann outside.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Ann hurries across to the well, carrying an empty pail. The WIND picks up, blowing her hair across her face.

AT THE WELL

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Still bristling with indignation, Ann pumps the handle of the well, fast and rhythmically, filling the pail.

Suddenly, she catches a glimpse of her reflection in the barn window. Loomis is behind her, silently watching. He steps forward, hands open in a conciliatory gesture.

LOOMIS

Let's go inside. It's been a long day. We're both tired.

Beat. Ann keeps pumping the water in silence.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Ann. I don't like being disobeyed.

ANN

I don't care.

Loomis' face darkens. There's a long pause. He stands very, very still. There's just the faintest hint of his BREATHING. Ann just keeps pumping the water mechanically.

LOOMIS

You shouldn't have said that.

ANN

You'll get over it.

Before Ann can react, Loomis SNAPS. He darts toward her, arm raised. Ann GASPS. Tries to dodge him. But he's too fast. His palm catches her across the face sharply -- THWACK! She's thrown back against the well, then topples to the ground.

A shocked SILENCE ensues.

Ann crouches defensively, disbelief in her eyes. Loomis stands over her, arm still raised, SHAKING, fighting to regain control. Both look scared.

Then Loomis turns and storms back into the house, his figure barely visible in the darkness.

Ann lies motionless. Stunned. Trembling. Faro is suddenly at her side, pawing at her, licking her face, but she doesn't seem to notice.

Eventually, she gets to her feet. Sways unsteadily, dazed. She picks up the pail of water which she'd dropped as Loomis hit her. Fortunately, it hasn't spilled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She staggers back to the house, her legs as unsteady as a newborn foal. Faro darts around her, nipping at her feet.

Suddenly, her legs buckle, and she stumbles over the dog. The pail falls from her hand. Water SPILLS all over the grass.

ANN (CONT'D)
Damn it, Faro!

She erupts with frustration and anger. Swings her foot and kicks Faro in the side. Hard.

Faro gives a short, sharp WHINE of surprise and pain. He stares at Ann in bewilderment, then turns and flees.

Ann freezes, unable to believe what she's done.

ANN (CONT'D)
No, wait!

She chases after him, but he's ensconced himself in a small hole under the house. Ann leans down and peers in. She can just see his body, curled up into a small, sad ball, PANTING.

ANN (CONT'D)
Baby, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean
it. Please come out.

But he doesn't.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Loomis has got his wish. He and Ann sit at the table, food in front of them. But both are silent, and neither looks at the other.

Ann picks at her food without enthusiasm. One side of her face is noticeably raw and red.

Loomis chews absently, staring off into space with a distant, disturbed expression.

Suddenly his chair SQUEAKS against the hardwood, and he gets to his feet. Ann flinches, tenses. He walks over to her. From behind, he takes hold of her shoulders.

LOOMIS
I'm sorry.

His voice is extremely soft. He leans down and KISSES her on the cheek. His eyes look tortured and remorseful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
I'm trying hard. Sometimes I...

His voice fades out, and he swallows. Then, in a whisper:

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
I don't want that to happen again.

He takes her hand. Squeezes it. Kisses her again, tenderly. Moves his hand onto her body. Touches it possessively, as if claiming it his own. Ann shudders.

INT. LOOMIS' ROOM - NIGHT

Ann lies passively on her back, as Loomis has sex with her.

Her eyes scan the room numbly. Her parents' dresser. The contours of the ceiling. The window, slightly open, leading out into the night.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ann locks her door for the first time, barricading herself in. She flops down on her bed. Catches her reflection in the mirror, and stares at it with numb self-hatred.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

There's a loud RAPPING at Ann's door.

LOOMIS (O.S.)
Ann? Are you awake?

Ann opens her eyes, immediately on edge. Loomis KNOCKS again.

ANN
Yeah?

LOOMIS
Come on. We've got a lot of work to do.

Ann shakes her head in disbelief.

ANN
(to herself)
We?

Loomis walks off down the hallway. Ann's eyes harden with defiance.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Loomis is waiting by the front door, when MUSIC starts BLARING from Ann's room upstairs. He twitches angrily, but forces himself to sit down and be patient.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Ann scampers out of her window, and down the side of the house. She hits the ground with a THUMP, stumbles, then makes a break for it across the farm.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

The MUSIC continues to wail. Loomis storms up the stairs, no longer patient, and KNOCKS hard at Ann's door.

LOOMIS

Ann? What are you doing in there?

No response. His jaw tightens. He tries the door handle. It's locked. His face reddens with anger.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

(threateningly)

Ann?

Beat. Suddenly, he slams the door violently with his shoulder. It doesn't give. He unleashes a powerful KICK, and the lock shatters.

The door swings open to reveal an empty room.

BREATHING hard, Loomis stares inside. Sees the open window. The music swells. His face darkens.

He rushes the CD player and SMASHES it to pieces with his fist, silencing it for good.

Immediately, he restrains himself. He closes his eyes, regretting losing control.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY ROAD - DAY

The leaves have started to fall from the trees and collect in piles at the side of the road.

Ann walks through the valley, despondent. Its beauty no longer gives her the same enjoyment that it once did.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Ann floats on her back in the narrow river, eyes closed, trying desperately to recapture the enjoyment of her old comforts.

But now her eyes are hardened and strained. It's not the same without Faro. And there are strange, unfamiliar SOUNDS all around her.

A bank of clouds move in and cover the sun. The valley is plunged into cold, grey shadow.

Ann hurries out of the WATER. She throws her dress back on without drying off, then runs back toward the road.

LOOMIS (OVER)
Where did you go?

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Ann walks toward the house. Loomis glares at her from the front porch, arms folded in displeasure.

ANN
Nowhere. I was working in the last field.

LOOMIS
You're lying.

Inside the house, Faro scratches at the screen door, tail wagging. He gives Ann a friendly WOOF. She smiles gratefully: all is forgiven.

ANN
So what if I am? You're not my dad.
You're not my husband. I can do
what I want.

She stiffens, anticipating his reaction. But he just looks away, shrugging.

LOOMIS
I just want what's best for the
valley.

ANN
My valley.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS

Yes. It is your valley. Then I'll leave, if that's what you want.

Ann says nothing. Loomis raises a surprised eyebrow at her.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

There's no one else left, Ann. Not in this country. Maybe not in the world. Do you want to go back to being by yourself? Alone, for the rest of your life?

Ann trembles. The truth of each word hits her like stabs from a knife. But she stares at him defiantly.

ANN

There are worse things than being alone.

LOOMIS

You don't really believe that.

Beat. She sets her jaw defiantly.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Okay then. Goodbye, Ann.

He turns and walks into the house. Ann is left alone on the porch. She stares out into the overcast sky, conflicted.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - DAY

Ann walks up to the door and peers in. Loomis is busy laying out his clothes and belongings on his bed. He glances up at her, hurt and defensive. Beat.

ANN

You don't have to leave if you don't want to.

LOOMIS

It's not up to me.

Beat.

ANN

I'm asking you not to go.

He stops folding his clothes, but he seems to be waiting for something more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN (CONT'D)
Please.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Ann sits at the piano, HITTING the keys one by one. She presses down the sustain pedal, and the notes hang in the air like ghosts.

LOOMIS (O.S.)
You played the piano when I was sick.

Ann turns around, surprised. Loomis stands at the bottom of the stairs.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
I was someplace cold. Floating away. But I could hear it. It helped me.

Ann nods. They share a conciliatory look. Beat.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
If I'm going to stay, you have to trust me.

ANN
Then don't hurt me.

LOOMIS
I already said I was sorry. I just lost control--

ANN
Not just that.

LOOMIS
Then what?

ANN
You know.

Beat. Loomis looks away, embarrassed.

ANN (CONT'D)
It doesn't feel right. This can't be how it's meant to be.

Loomis sighs. He reaches out and touches her gently on the face. She flinches, and steps away from him. Beat. He looks at her, surprised, genuinely wounded.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS

How am I meant to know you're unhappy? You've never said anything before.

ANN

I shouldn't have to.

LOOMIS

You're still a kid, Ann. There are so many things you don't know.

He reaches out for her hand. This time, she doesn't pull away. They stare at each other. His eyes seem sincere, hers still uncertain.

He kisses her gently on the lips.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Does that hurt?

ANN

No.

He kisses her again. Fuller. Deeper. With what feels like genuine passion. He draws back, and looks in her eyes.

LOOMIS

Is that how it's meant to be?

Ann hesitates, clearly unsure. But when he moves in for another kiss, she doesn't turn away.

INT. LOOMIS' ROOM - DAY

Loomis and Ann lie sleeping in bed. Both are naked. Ann's head rests on Loomis' chest. Her face looks peaceful and calm. Faro dozes on the floor next to them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Ann rocks gently back and forth on the porch-swing.

She regards everything around her intently, as if seeing them through new eyes. Insects BUZZING. Butterflies circling. Leaves blowing gently in the wind.

Her hair is growing back. Her face tanned. Her body lean and ripe. A newfound, slightly self-conscious sensuality.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Not quite a woman. But no longer a girl.

Loomis emerges from one of the barns at the edge of the farm, carrying a wooden beam from the church over his shoulder.

Ann smiles and waves. He waves back, then beckons her over. She hops quickly off the porch-swing.

INT. BARN - DAY

Loomis is crouched next to a rusty old Dodge Dart, unscrewing the hinges of one of its doors.

Ann kneels down next to him, pecks him on the cheek.

LOOMIS

Can you go to the library for me
today?

He disengages the door from the car, and heaves it into the corner of the barn, where a pile of scrap metal collects.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

I need some help with this damn
water-wheel. Look in the Science
section -- books, articles,
whatever might help.

EXT. VALLEY ROAD - DAY

Ann bikes up and down the hills of the valley, backpack around her shoulders. More carefree than we've seen for some time.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Ann opens the windows, letting some much-needed fresh air into the room. BIRDS can be heard SINGING outside.

IN THE SCIENCE SECTION

She scans the stacks, pulling out appropriate books.

AT THE PERIODICAL SECTION

She finds a shelf full of magazines entitled SCIENCE TODAY. Takes out a large pile of yellowing back issues and, one by one, glances diligently through their contents.

LATER

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's halfway through the pile, having a hard time staying awake. She yawns and stretches, bored, grabs another issue--
--and STARTS, almost falling out of her chair from shock.

LOOMIS' FACE stares out at her from the cover.

Beat. Ann squints, staring closely, convinced she's seeing things.

But no. It's him -- younger and healthier, wearing longer hair and a white lab coat.

Ann breaks into incredulous LAUGHTER.

There are TWO others on the cover with him. A serious-looking MAN in his fifties. And, in the middle, a beautiful WOMAN in her thirties.

Then Ann looks at the byline, and her laughter quickly ceases. **TRAGEDY STRIKES RENOWNED WEAPONS RESEARCH TEAM.**

And then in smaller letters at the bottom, under the picture of the older man:

JOHN LOOMIS 1954-2007

A long beat. It's suddenly very quiet. Even the birds seem to have stopped singing.

Ann stares at the magazine. Something is very wrong.

She turns to the article. Her eyes run across the paragraphs of text. PANIC and FEAR grow increasingly across her face.

We get QUICK FLASHES of what she reads:

scientific community last week when John Loomis, 57, was shot dead alongside his wife and assistant Elizabeth

top assistant on the project, Taylor Goode, 34, has disappeared, along with the prototype of the much-publicized "safe-suit" that the team had

timing especially unfortunate, considering the recent escalation of conflict that is threatening an all-out

whether Goode is a suspect in the murders, but his keen interest in Mrs. Loomis, described by a colleague as "unwelcome and obsessive", had created tension in the laboratory. Goode's whereabouts are unknown, but police have asked that

Two PHOTOGRAPHS accompany the article.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

One is of the murder victim -- the real John Loomis. Holding hands with his wife. On his finger is the distinctive WEDDING RING that we have seen earlier.

The other is a picture of the man Ann has known as Loomis all this time. Staring into the camera with typical intensity. The caption underneath reads **TAYLOR GOODE**.

Ann clutches the magazine with TREMBLING hands. Sits frozen to the spot, unable to move.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SIDE OF BARN - DAY

Through the barn window, Ann watches Loomis -- or, rather, Taylor.

He attacks a sheet of metal with a gas-powered BUTANE TORCH, fashioning the shell of a water-wheel. His eyes are invisible behind a protective MASK.

Ann studies him with trepidation. Re-evaluating everything she knows about him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

As they eat dinner together, Ann does everything she can to appear normal and casual. But her face is tense, and she keeps the corner of her eye fixed on Loomis.

He looks so innocent. So calm. Doubt and confusion fill Ann's eyes.

ANN
(impulsively)
You've never told me anything about
Elizabeth.

Beat. Loomis gives her an uncomfortable glance.

LOOMIS
There isn't much to talk about.

He offers nothing more. Ann hesitates. She's scared. But she has to find out for sure.

ANN
Who was Taylor?

Beat. His head turns slowly, and he looks at her quizzically.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN (CONT'D)

You shouted his name out when you
were sick. Over and over.

LOOMIS

Oh. Him.

He's noticeably paler, and there's a hint of panic in his
eyes, although it's well concealed.

ANN

Is something wrong?

LOOMIS

Of course not.

Beat. Ann knows she should back off. Instead, she draws
closer to the flame.

ANN

So who was he?

Loomis exhales, clearly not happy.

LOOMIS

Another scientist at the lab.

ANN

A friend?

LOOMIS

Not really.

ANN

An enemy?

LOOMIS

People aren't simply friends or
enemies, Ann. He wasn't a bad guy.
He was just...lonely. I don't want
to talk about him.

Beat.

ANN

In your sleep, you made it sound
like he was in love with Elizabeth.

Loomis stares at her. Then he smiles. His usual inscrutable
grin. But now it looks dangerous.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOOMIS

What else did I tell you in my
sleep?

ANN

Nothing. That was it.

Loomis is clearly rattled. He narrows his eyes, as if trying to determine if she's telling the truth. Then he sits back and keeps eating. He has nothing more to say. Beat.

ANN (CONT'D)

Did she love him back?

Loomis SLAMS his hand on the table. Leans forward angrily.

LOOMIS

No, she didn't. If she had, she'd
still be alive. Anything else you
want to know?

Ann shakes her head, trying not to look scared. Loomis grunts, and goes back to eating. Every now and again, he shoots her a wary look. The wheels in his head are turning.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ann sits on the toilet seat, her entire body SHAKING uncontrollably. She bites her lip, and tries to calm herself down.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ann only has time to grab the essentials -- clothes, soap, a torch -- and stuff them into a bag. She removes the RIFLE from under her bed. Straps it around her shoulder.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DEAD OF NIGHT

Ann tiptoes down the hallway. Faro follows. Each TAP of his little claws on the hardwood makes her nervous.

As she passes Loomis' room, she puts her ear to the door. It is silent within.

ON THE STAIRS

Ann glances down into the living room. Only the vague outline of the furniture is visible in the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anticipating a walk, Faro tries to hurry noisily ahead. Ann grabs him by the scruff of his neck, and stares him down angrily.

They reach the bottom of the stairs. Only ten feet away from the door. So close. She moves slowly, quietly, although each step feels like a mile.

LOOMIS (O.S.)
You know, don't you?

Ann FREEZES. His soft voice comes out of the dark, from somewhere close by.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
How did you find out?
(beat, off Ann's silence)
I guess it doesn't matter.

Ann's eyes move across the room, trying to determine where exactly he is. She's only a few feet away from the door.

ANN
Why didn't you tell me who you
really were?

LOOMIS
I'm not really sure who I am
anymore. And when you assumed I was
Loomis...well, why not? I liked
him. I looked up to him.

ANN
Then why did you kill him? And his
wife?

LOOMIS
I never mean for bad things to
happen.

Beat. Ann takes a step toward the door.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
What does it matter who I used to
be, Ann? It's who I am now that's
important.

ANN
You can't just change who you are.

LOOMIS
You've changed since I came here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANN
That's different.

Ann takes another step forward. Reaches out for the door handle.

LOOMIS
Don't. You can't leave.

It's hard to tell if it's a plea or an order.

Ann suddenly LUNGES for the door. Loomis jumps up out of the darkness, right at her. He catches Ann's wrist just as she grabs the handle. The door opens for a second, but just as quickly SLAMS shut.

As Faro scrambles around, BARKING, Ann tries to free her wrist. She leans down and BITES Loomis on the hand. He GRUNTS in pain, and releases his grip on her.

Ann turns and dashes up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ann races along the hallway, Faro nipping at her heels. Then the sound of Loomis' FOOTSTEPS, running up the stairs.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ann sprints toward the window. She flings it open, with such force that the glass SHATTERS.

She looks down. It's a long drop to the ground. She can make it. But Faro? No.

Ann hauls herself out of the window feet first, RIPPING her nightgown on the jagged shards. Hangs on the ledge by her fingertips. Stares back into the room.

She and Faro hit eyes. The dog looks mournful, as if knowing he's about to be abandoned.

Then Loomis comes tearing around the corner, and she has to let go of the ledge. By the time he makes it to the window, she's halfway across the front yard.

EXT. FIELDS - NIGHT

Ann zigzags wildly through the wet grass, the moon glinting off the sweat on her face.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Ann kneels in the water, her nightgown bunched around her waist, shaking uncontrollably.

A HOOT comes from nearby. Ann looks up. An OWL watches curiously from a treetop. His eyes are like beacons in the night.

INT. STORE - NIGHT

Using a lit match for guidance, Ann hurriedly fills a shopping basket with canned food and provisions.

INT. STORE, BACK ROOM - SAME

In a small bedroom in the back, Ann throws blankets and clothes over her shoulder.

INT/EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

Ann is back where she started -- alone inside the dark, cold cave. She lies on the cold hard ground, wrapped in the blankets, the rifle inches from her fingers.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILLS ABOVE HOUSE - DAY

A tired and weary Ann lies concealed in the brush, watching the house through her binoculars, waiting.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Soon, Loomis strolls out onto the porch. Stretches in the early morning sun.

He walks down into the front yard, and stares up into the hills above the farm. A small grin crosses his face. He knows Ann is watching him.

Beat.

Loomis WHISTLES for Faro, and pours out some food into the dog's bowl.

After a beat, the dog pokes his head out from the house. He glances at Loomis suspiciously at first, but the food is enough to entice him down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Faro eats, Loomis takes off his BELT, and slips it gently over the dog's head. He fastens the buckle and tightens it, effectively creating a COLLAR.

Faro shakes his head once or twice, but carries on eating.

Loomis picks up a long green ELECTRICAL CORD that lies in the grass nearby. He slips it through the belt, knots it, and binds the other end to the porch rail.

When Faro finishes eating, he tries to move away. The cord SNAPS his neck back toward the rail, and he falls down.

He stands up, shakes himself off. Tries again, with the same result.

Loomis watches until he's satisfied the dog can't escape, then turns and disappears back inside the house.

EXT. HILLS ABOVE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ann watches nervously, as Faro tries to pull the collar off with his paws. When that fails, he chews on the cord. But it's too thick. Nothing works.

The dog's face falls, and he starts to CRY. Piercing, high-pitched YIPS that can be heard all the way into the hills.

Ann bristles with indignation.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Loomis returns, holding a piece of dark fabric, and presses the material close to the dog's nose.

Ann's eyes widen. It's her grey GIRLS SOCCER t-shirt. Faro sniffs it excitedly, tail wagging in recognition.

Loomis unties the electrical cord from the porch rail, and walks away from the house, pulling Faro along.

The dog is bewildered at first, but he gets the idea quickly. Soon it is he that pulls Loomis along -- toward the road, nose to the ground, in search of Ann.

EXT. VALLEY ROAD - DAY

Faro and Loomis makes their way erratically down the road in her direction.

They're an awkward double act. Faro pulls in all directions, not used to a leash, while Loomis still has a mild limp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ann watches from her hiding place. She crouches, on edge, ready to bolt if they get too close.

Suddenly, Faro spots a RABBIT at the edge of the fields. He points, then springs away with all his strength.

Loomis, taken aback, releases the leash. Faro charges into the fields, happy to be free.

LOOMIS
Faro! Come back!

Loomis hurries after him, but the dog is too fast. After a moment, Loomis turns and heads back to the house, frustrated.

Ann sighs, relieved.

EXT. CAVE - DUSK

The evenings have become cooler. The sun sets in an eerie pink haze.

Ann's got the fire going. She warms herself around it, eating with her fingers from a can of foul-looking processed meat.

Suddenly, the wind picks up around her. She shivers, pulls her sweater around her.

Then she looks up, and her face falls. The smoke from the fire is being blown high into the sky -- high enough to be seen from the house.

Ann panics, and immediately pours dirt onto the fire. The flames eventually die out, but the smoke continues to rise. Ann, COUGHING from the fumes, does her best to divert it.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Ann huddles under the blankets. Freezing, miserable, and unable to sleep. Something SLITHERS around near her body.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Ann walks nervously toward the house, her eyes peeled for signs of Loomis.

Faro is again tied to the porch. Upon seeing Ann, he leaps to his feet, WHINING, but the leash keeps him in place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Loomis opens the front door and emerges onto the porch, seemingly relaxed and calm. He smiles at Ann.

LOOMIS
I thought you'd come back. I hoped
you would.

ANN
I'm not coming back.

Loomis' face falls. Immediately he looks hurt and defensive.

LOOMIS
Where will you go?
(off Ann's shrug)
Winter's coming. You'll freeze to
death out there by yourself.

He holds his hand out to her, as he has before.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
This is your house, Ann. You belong
here. We belong here.

Ann stares at him, trying to determine whether he is serious. His dark eyes look soft and vulnerable. Behind him, the house looks more inviting and comfortable than ever.

Home.

For a moment, Ann is tempted. But then Faro whines again. She glances at the shackled, miserable dog, and her eyes harden.

ANN
There's still work to do if we're
both going to stay alive. I'll do
it, if you leave me alone. I'll
bring you food every day, but
you'll have to cook for yourself.
(beat)
And since I'm not going to be
living in the house, you'll have to
finish the dam by yourself.

Loomis shakes his head, disappointed.

LOOMIS
You're still such a child.

Ann sets her jaw. She's not falling for that again. Beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
(suddenly, quietly)
Come back.

Ann shakes her head, nervously.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
Why not?

ANN
You know why, Jo--

She catches herself, and turns to leave.

LOOMIS
Ann--

ANN
Please. I'll do the work. Just let
me be.

Ann walks away. Faro jumps to his feet, BARKING pleadingly.
Loomis steps forward, shaking his head unhappily.

LOOMIS
This isn't what I had planned.

Ann doesn't turn back. Loomis smiles thinly, but his eyes
suddenly turn cold as ice.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
The valley's not that big, Ann. You
can't hide forever.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The house is completely still and silent. As if time has
stopped.

Loomis sits at the table alone. The vastness of the quiet
seems to unnerve him.

CLOSE ON: His face. Tense, tortured, hollow.

There's a sudden FOOTSTEP on the floor behind him.

He spins around. But nobody's there.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Illuminated only by the thinnest flicker of CANDLELIGHT, Loomis stares out into the night.

Out of nowhere, SOMEONE SPEAKS.

VOICE (O.S.)

Taylor.

Alarmed, he scans the living room with his eyes, and FREEZES. It looks as though SOMEONE is lurking in the corner.

He peers closer. It's just a shadow in the darkness.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Loomis dunks his head into a basin full of water, then stares into the mirror. Kneads his temples. Clearly not trusting his own mind.

INT. LOOMIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Loomis is half awake. His body is restless, his face disturbed. The VOICE comes again. Mocking, disdainful, cruel.

VOICE (O.S.)

Taylor.

Loomis opens his eyes. Again, it looks as though there's a FIGURE there, this time sitting on a chair by the desk.

Loomis takes a match from the bedside table and lights it, casting a tenuous glow through the room. He FREEZES, terrified.

An older MAN sits in the chair. Motionless, staring right at him. Half his face a mess of blood and bone.

LOOMIS

(trembling)

John?

The real John Loomis. The man he murdered.

Loomis closes his eyes tightly, rubs them, then opens them again. The ghost stares back at him.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

No...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly the match goes out, and the bedroom is plunged back into darkness. Shaking with fear, Loomis pulls the covers over his head and shuts his eyes tightly.

CUT TO:

EXT. VALLEY - DAWN

The sunrise is no longer clear and brilliant. Instead it snakes up, dulled at the edges, over a flat, grey horizon.

INT/EXT. CAVE - SAME

Ann awakens, COUGHING. The ground around her is damp with dew, and a thin mist lingers around the cave.

Suddenly, she scrunches up her face in distress. Scrambles to her feet, stumbles toward the bushes, and VOMITS.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELDS - DAY

Ann drives the tractor across the fields, cultivating the crops. The corn, beets and beans have grown to knee height.

She glances toward the house, in time to see Loomis emerge onto the porch. He seats himself in the swing, and observes her stoically from behind his sunglasses.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - DAY

Ann finishes watering the plentiful-looking garden -- rows of nearly-ripe lettuce, carrots, tomatoes and squash.

She crouches down. Checks over her shoulder to make sure that Loomis can't see her. Plucks a carrot out of the ground, wipes it off, and eats it.

EXT. SIDE OF BARN - DAY

Ann cleans and plucks a freshly-killed CHICKEN. Without batting an eyelid, she HACKS it up with a hunting knife. Then she divides the meat equally into two plastic containers, and seals them with foil.

INT. BARN - DAY

Ann removes a full pail of fresh milk from under the cow, then pours it into two gallon-sized bottles until both are full.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - AFTERNOON

Ann sets down the dishes of chicken and bottles of milk at the foot of the porch steps, and glances up at Loomis nervously.

ANN
Half of this is yours.

LOOMIS
Thanks.

An awkward beat. Loomis looks like a wreck. His unshaven face has a sallow, sickly hue. He gives Ann a tired smile.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
Do you want to take anything from
the house? Clothes? Blankets?

Ann looks at him warily. His eyes are invisible behind the sunglasses.

ANN
I'm fine thanks.

LOOMIS
Come on, Ann. If you're going to
continue this silliness, you should
at least have what you need.

Beat. Ann shrugs, then nods.

ANN
I'll be quick.

LOOMIS
Take your time.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - SAME

Ann ransacks her room for heavy clothes, books, even her journal.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Shampoo, face cream, hairbrush -- all go into the bag. Ann grins, gladly anticipating even these modest luxuries.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - SAME

Ann reemerges from the house. Loomis sits casually in the same position as before. His eyebrows lift with amusement as he regards her sack of loot.

She walks down the steps. Picks up her portion of the food and water. Nods to him.

ANN
See you tomorrow.

Loomis nods back, but says nothing. There's a faint grin on his face. Suddenly, Ann feels uneasy.

She starts to walk across the farm, toward the main gates. But she can still feel his eyes on her.

She pauses. Leans down to tie her shoes. Sneaks a glance back.

He's now on his feet, leaning against the porch rail, still staring at her. As if debating whether to jump down and follow her.

Ann starts walking again, now at a much faster pace.

EXT. CAVE - DUSK

Using a pocket knife, Ann whittles sticks and branches into thin MEAT SKEWERS.

A small fire CRACKLES in the dirt nearby. She gets up and checks the heat. Perfect. Smiles in anticipation of the meal to come.

Ann walks over and picks up the container of chicken. She casually removes the foil. Reaches for the skewers. Puts her hand into the container--

--and SHRIEKS with revulsion.

The chicken is covered with DIRT and MANURE from the farm. Little BUGS crawl through the filth.

Ann drops the container to the ground. Stunned. Disgusted.

She hurries over to check the milk. Holds it up to the light. The color looks off. She opens the bottle. Sniffs it. Recoils, almost GAGS.

Like the meat, it's been tainted by Loomis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ann's eyes blaze with rage and injustice. She gives a YELL of anger, and hurls the bottle as far as she can.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARM - MORNING

Hungry and still angry, Ann scans the farm for Loomis, but he's nowhere to be seen.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - SAME

Without making an attempt to conceal herself, Ann ravenously feeds herself with as many fruits and vegetables as she can manage. She licks the juices off her chin.

INT. BARN - DAY

In the tractor cab, Ann reaches to start the engine. But the key is not in the ignition.

Frowning, she hops down and walks across to the door, where a couple of KEYS hang off hooks. One hook is empty. She gives a frustrated SIGH.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Ann strides up and BANGS on the front door.

Almost instantly, she hears Faro SCRATCHING excitedly, but it takes a few moments before Loomis opens the door and pokes his head out. She stares at him angrily.

ANN

I need the key to the tractor.

Beat.

LOOMIS

I've decided to keep it in the house, Ann, just to be safe. I don't know if I trust you with it.

ANN

(incredulous)

Why would you say that?

LOOMIS

I mean, it would make your life easier if you had the tractor. Beats walking all the way across the valley each day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANN

Maybe I'm not as far away as you think.

Loomis grins, sizing up how serious she is, then LAUGHS. But Ann doesn't so much as crack a smile.

ANN (CONT'D)

The key, please. The corn has to be cultivated today.

LOOMIS

Maybe I'll do it myself. I'm much stronger now. I can do what I need to do to survive.

(beat)

But there are things you're not going to have. It won't be easy to live without them.

ANN

And I'd get them if I came back?

LOOMIS

You will come back. If not voluntarily, then some other way.

ANN

Like what?

He doesn't reply. But there's an unsettling confidence in his silence. She's had enough.

ANN (CONT'D)

Are you gonna give me the key, or not?

Loomis considers for a beat, then disappears back inside the house, closing the door in Ann's face.

She waits. After a while, it's pretty clear he's not coming back out.

Her face turns crimson with humiliation. She stalks back across the front yard, stomping her feet like a teenager throwing a tantrum, her emotions spilling out uncontrollably.

ANN (CONT'D)

(shouting)

You may as well give up trying to find me! I can hide out there for years! DO YOU HEAR ME?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

IN THE HOUSE: Loomis watches through the window as Ann's rant continues. Then, with merciless eyes, he draws the curtains.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT/EXT. CAVE - DAWN

As grey light appears around her, Ann awakens early and starts to exercise.

Push-ups. Crunches. Sprints. Sweat pours down her face. Brutal. She pushes herself as far as she can go.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Ann bathes. The sun has not come out from behind the clouds, and she shivers in the cold water. She looks around constantly, as if expecting Loomis to appear at any moment.

Then a faraway NOISE cuts through the quiet. It is the TRACTOR, distant, but getting closer.

EXT. HILLS - DAY

Ann hides in the brush, the rifle at her fingertips.

ANN'S POV:

The tractor ROARS down the valley road. Loomis is in the cab, his gun at his side. He passes the empty space where the church used to be.

EXT. STORE - SAME

Loomis pulls up and jumps out of the tractor.

He unloads a wheelbarrow full of TOOLS and heavy planks of WOOD and pushes it into the store.

Soon, loud KNOCKING and HAMMERING sounds come from inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STORE - DAY

The noise of the tractor recedes into the distance. Then all is quiet again.

Ann emerges from her hiding place, and approaches the store warily.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Loomis has been thorough. Both the front and back doors are shut and locked with thick, heavy PADLOCKS. All the store's windows have been boarded up from the inside.

There is no longer a way in.

Ann walks to the front door, tries to force it open. But it won't give.

Beat.

She aims the rifle at the padlock on the front door, and FIRES. With dull PINGS, the bullets harmlessly ricochet off the heavy metal.

Beat.

Suddenly, Ann explodes. She swings the rifle back like a baseball bat, and methodically SMASHES all the store's windows.

Then, charging over the broken glass, she attacks the heavy wooden planks with her hands, shoulders, elbows, and the butt of the rifle.

She slams her body hard against the wood, SCREAMING in frustration and anger, trying to break her way in.

But to no avail. The store is impenetrable.

Finally, Ann staggers back and collapses on the ground. Her body is bruised, her fingers bloody and covered with splinters.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREAM - DAY

Ann overturns a stone by the water's edge, and finds a few small wriggling WORMS underneath.

She attaches them to a makeshift fishing pole, fashioned from a sapling, and dips it into the stream.

EXT. CAVE - EVENING

Ann walks back to the cave, empty-handed. She checks her stockpile of food. Only one can of meat left.

SAME - DUSK

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As the sun sets, Ann's fire is prepared but not lit. Her last box of matches lies crumpled up on the ground, empty.

Ann sits on the ground, desperately rubbing and hitting two stones together, trying to create a spark.

ANN
Come on, you bastards.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Ann lies huddled up in her blankets, shivering, freezing cold. She is sleepless and close to tears.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARM - DAY

Red-eyed and pale, Ann walks purposefully into the farm through the main gate, no longer caring if Loomis sees her.

She stops near the house, glares up into the bedroom windows, and shouts at the top of her voice.

ANN
I want the key to the store!

No response.

ANN (CONT'D)
You can't do this! It's not fair!

Then she notices the sun GLINTING off something in one of the bedroom windows. Something METALLIC.

Ann peers at it closely.

Suddenly, there's the CRACK of a gun shot.

Ann SCREAMS. She falls down, grabbing her ANKLE with both hands. Writhes on the ground, shocked, YELPING in pain.

Then there's another shot. It misses her left ankle, but not by much.

From inside the house, Loomis can be heard SCRAMBLING down the stairs.

Ann pulls herself together. She turns and hobbles away on one leg, as fast as she can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Loomis runs out of the house, holding his rifle. He bolts toward the tractor, and WHISTLES for Faro to follow.

EXT. VALLEY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Ann makes it out onto the road, just as she hears the dreaded sound of the tractor's ENGINE warming up.

EXT. TRACTOR - CONTINUOUS

Faro bolts away, hot on Ann's trail. Loomis jumps into the tractor and follows closely.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Ann seems to be safe. She sits at the water's edge, sweating, trying to catch her breath.

She washes out her ankle in the pond, then takes a close look at her wound.

She's been lucky. The bullet only went through the top layer of the skin. But it's a deep graze. Already the ankle is red and swollen twice its normal size, and clearly painful.

Ann leans down and splashes her face with cold water.

As the water drops over her eyes and ears, she once again hears the RUMBLE of the tractor approaching.

Ann grimaces. Her options are limited. Keep running. Or fight back.

She gets gingerly to her feet, and hobbles away into the hills, leading Loomis toward the cave.

EXT. CAVE - DAY

As Ann reaches the cave, the tractor suddenly stops. She looks down and sees Loomis jumping down from the cab and following Faro into the brush.

She runs inside the cave. Grabs a blanket and the rifle. Everything else she leaves.

EXT. VALLEY HILLTOP - DAY

Ann crawls up to the top of the hill, wincing from the pain, her ankle the size of a baseball.

The deadness stares at her from over the crest of the hill. There is nowhere higher to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She drops her possessions, lays down on the ground, and draws up the rifle. Through the eyepiece, she watches the cave.

ANN'S POV:

Faro emerges from the brush and darts toward the cave, looking around excitedly for signs of Ann.

Loomis, slower and out of breath, is right behind. He notices the cave. Walks inside, his rifle trained ahead of him.

He's carrying something else. Ann focuses on it, and GASPS. It's a can of GASOLINE. Loomis empties it throughout the cave, all over her possessions, and lights a match.

Everything burns. The frame around the photograph of Ann and her family SHATTERS, and the print quickly disintegrates.

Loomis strides back out of the cave. Grey smoke wafts out in his wake. He scans the hills above him.

LOOMIS

Faro!

The dog comes running over. Loomis puts Ann's T-shirt on his nose again.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Fetch!

Faro runs around, tail wagging, sniffing, searching.

CLOSE ON:

Ann's eyes, as she cocks the rifle. She has a clear shot at Loomis. She aims for his head. Beat. Places her finger on the trigger. Wills herself to shoot. But she can't.

Down below, Faro BARKS and happily shakes his butt. He's found her scent. He looks at Loomis, then heads up the hill.

Loomis moves confidently forward, still perfectly in Ann's sight.

Ann FIRES her rifle -- up into the air -- a warning shot.

Loomis flinches, but keeps moving forward.

Ann fires a couple of feet in front of him. Close enough that Loomis can hear the bullets WHIZZ by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He freezes in shock. Beat. Then he looks up toward Ann, and smiles. He knows her too well. She won't hurt him. He keeps walking forward.

Ann keeps firing, but nothing stops him.

Then the brush thickens around him as he starts to scramble up the hill, and all she can see is an occasional flash of his hair.

LOOMIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Keep going! Good boy!

Faro pauses halfway up the hill, and looks back at Loomis impatiently.

Ann stares at her beautiful dog, her unwitting betrayer, as he leads her enemy straight to her.

And suddenly she knows what she has to do. She bites her lip.

She swings the gun around, and points it at Faro.

The dog seems to sense Ann. He looks up, directly into the sight of the rifle.

Faro cocks his head and smiles right at Ann. His tail wags.

Ann's lower lip BLEEDS as her teeth tear into it.

Then Loomis catches up to Faro, and the dog darts forward.

Ann pulls the trigger.

Faro gives a surprised YELP and crumples to the ground.

Loomis freezes in shock. He stares at Faro. Prods him with his foot. He looks up, his mouth wide open.

Ann's face collapses. Tears and blood pour down her cheeks. She fires her rifle three more times, and SCREAMS.

ANN
GET AWAY FROM ME, OR I'LL KILL YOU!

Beat. Then Loomis turns, and flees down the hill. A moment later, the tractor STARTS and drives away.

Ann lies on the ground, devastated, her body heaving, her hands gripping the rifle tightly.

INT/EXT. CAVE - DAY

The cave is a smoking hole. The charred remains of Ann's remaining possessions float away on the breeze.

Ann sits by the cave, cradling Faro in her arms.

The dog is just barely alive. Every now and again his small chest gives a shuddering heave.

His eyes are still open. He stares at Ann, hurt, confused, in pain. But above all -- with undying love.

Ann, crying, stares back into his fading eyes.

ANN
Give me a kiss.

He tries, but he's too weak to move.

EXT. HILLTOP - NIGHT

Ann covers Faro's body with stones. Then she turns and looks down into the valley, toward the house. Her eyes harden with resolve.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Ann staggers aimlessly through the forest, wrapped in a blanket, looking for a place to hide.

She is sweating and her eyes are feverish. Her ankle has swelled up to huge proportions -- blue on one side, red on the other.

Entering a particularly dense part of the forest, Ann trips over an exposed tree root, and falls to the ground.

She lies on her back, looking up at the ominously overcast sky. Too weak to move any further.

The TREE over which she fell looms above her. It's tall and majestic, its huge HOLLOW shielded by low-hanging branches and leaves. Ann crawls inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BARN - DAY

Tools scattered around him, Loomis puts the finishing touches to the wheel for the dam.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Loomis walks across the fields, inspecting the crops. They are tall, healthy, and nearly ready to be harvested.

A ROAR of THUNDER comes from somewhere in the distance.

Loomis looks up, and concern grows across his face. The sky is turning an unnaturally dark hue.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Ann sleeps, curled up in the hollow of the tree, cocooned in her blankets. Her face and hair is streaked with dirt.

A gentle PITTER-PATTER begins. Rain falling into the forest.

CLOSE ON: Ann's sleeping face.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The same classroom from the very beginning of the story.

This time, it's nearly empty, except for one CHILD sitting at a desk. A young BOY.

He sits patiently, waiting for someone or something. His demeanor is friendly. A good kid. His clear blue eyes seem to tear into the screen.

BACK TO:

INT/EXT. TREE HOLLOW - DAY

Ann opens her eyes and looks around, disoriented. The dream was so vivid it takes a moment for her to realize where she is.

The RAIN is coming down hard above her, RATTLING against the tree tops. She's dry in the hollow, but she's also thirsty. She gets up, and limps toward an opening in the forest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, out of the corner of her eye, she notices something strange. As the rain hits the ground, it is BLACK. As thick and dark as oil.

Horrified, she stumbles back into the safety of the trees before the rain can touch her.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Loomis, wearing the safe-suit, herds the animals back into the barn, as the black rain falls around him. One CHICKEN runs away from him, evading capture.

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

The rain has stopped. But the chicken, its feathers streaked with black, lies dead in the grass.

Loomis stands on the porch, grimly regarding the farm and the valley.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The young FOX darts through the trees. Recovered after his sickness, he is now a tougher and leaner creature. His eyes are merciless, focused only on survival.

INT/EXT. TREE HOLLOW - DAY

In the hollow, Ann has become part of the forest's environment. Spiders build their webs around her. Insects scuttle under her blanket to stay dry.

She lies in a FOETAL BALL, gently massaging her stomach.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

After the rains, the creek is higher and faster than ever before.

Loomis, again in the safe-suit, lumbers through the water with the wheel in his hand. He positions it directly under the new dam, and BOLTS it into place.

The wheel begins to spin as soon as the water hits it.

EXT. HILLTOP - DUSK

Ann's ankle is healing. She limps through the bushes, foraging for food. All she finds are some berries, which she greedily scoffs down.

As she pushes aside the bushes, Ann gets a view of the house and farm in the fading twilight.

Her face drops in disbelief.

The LIGHTS in the house are being turned on, one by one.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Ann crouches outside the main gate, hiding.

The light in Loomis' room goes out, and the farm is plunged back into darkness.

EXT. VEGETABLE GARDEN - SAME

Ann runs through the garden silently, ripping out all the ripe vegetables and cramming them into her pockets.

INT/EXT. CHICKEN COOP - SAME

Like a fox, Ann creeps on her belly into the coop. The chickens and hens explode into an uproar of SQUAWKING.

Ann quickly grabs one of the chickens, a couple of eggs, and sneaks out.

EXT. FARM - SAME

Ann hurries back across the farm, her clothes stuffed with food. As she passes Loomis' tent, she suddenly FREEZES, as if struck by an idea.

Beat, as she stares at the tent, and thinks. Her eyes open wide with enlightenment.

Inside the house, the lights in Loomis' room TURN ON again: the chickens' commotion has awakened him.

Ann turns, and sprints for the road. There's a confident look on her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY HILLTOP - DAWN

Ann stands at the highest point of the valley.

She looks pale and emaciated, with bags under her eyes -- yet somehow more striking. There is barely a hint left of the young girl we started with.

She stares out across the deadness. It's infinite and terrifying.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Loomis, clad in Ann's father's bathrobe and slippers, walks down the stairs, WHISTLING jauntily.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

The fridge and freezer HUM with life.

Loomis opens the fridge and pulls out a pitcher of cold milk, then drinks directly from it.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - SAME

Loomis opens the front door and walks out onto the front porch, stretching in the early morning sunlight.

Then he notices a piece of PAPER left at the threshold of the door. He picks it up, and reads it:

I am sick of hiding and want to come back. Come to the creek at noon. Leave your gun. I won't hurt you.

Loomis rubs his chin and looks out over the fields, deep in thought.

EXT. HILLS ABOVE HOUSE - DAY

Ann hides in her usual spot, keeping watch on the house through her binoculars.

Loomis ambles out of the farm gates and turns south on the valley road, walking toward the creek.

Ann takes a deep breath. So far, so good. But then her face drops.

CLOSE ON: Loomis' gun, strapped around his shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXT. FARM - DAY

Ann runs across the farm toward the house--

EXT. WELL - DAY

She transfers fresh water into as many containers and bottles as she can find--

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Removes every last item of canned and tinned food from the cabinets, and throws them into burlap feed sacks--

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Allows herself a last look around her room--

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Walks down the stairs, passing framed PHOTOGRAPHS of her family in happy times.

VOICES suddenly come from the kitchen. Ann reaches the bottom of the stairs and peers in.

Her MOTHER is chopping onions next to the sink. Her FATHER passes by, and leans down to kiss her neck.

Outside, a dog BARKS. Ann walks to the window.

DAVID and JOSEPH, her brothers, wrestle in the front yard with FARO.

The dog seems to glance up and smile at Ann. His tail wags faster.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

Ann walks out of the house and SHUTS the front door. All the voices and sounds abruptly disappear.

INT. WAGON - DAY

Ann finishes packing the wagon with water, food and supplies.

Loomis' SHOULDER BAG still lies in the corner. On an impulse, Ann turns it upside down, and empties its contents on the floor.

She spots the I.D. card which led her to assume that he was Loomis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

If only she'd been able to look at the whole thing, she would have seen the likeness of a completely different man in the picture. She grins ruefully.

Then Ann notices that something else has fallen out of the bag.

It's a faded, crumpled PHOTOGRAPH of John, Elizabeth and Taylor, taken candidly at a formal occasion.

The Loomis' are wrapped around each other. The very picture of bliss.

Taylor stands to the side, forlorn and ignored, his eyes fixed on the stunning Elizabeth. His envy, hurt and anger are palpable. He couldn't look smaller, more alone.

Ann stares at the picture. A flicker of sympathy crosses her face.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Ann picks up Loomis' wagon by the handles. It's heavy. There's a flicker of panic on Ann's face, as she realizes the Herculean task ahead of her.

EXT. FARM GATES - DAY

Ann pushes the wagon out of the farm. She does not look back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY ROAD - DAY

Ann is already exhausted, soaked with sweat. She sets down the wagon, and takes a drink of water from a hip flask.

She scans the landscape -- so far, no sign of Loomis.

EXT. EDGE OF VALLEY ROAD - DAY

Ann slowly pulls the wagon uphill, until the lushness of the valley starts to recede.

Ahead lies the deadness. The point of no return.

Ann opens the wagon and disappears inside. A moment later, she re-emerges with the safe-suit in her hands.

It takes a few awkward moments before she is able to figure out how to put it on and seal it. Then she practises hitching the wagon and the suit together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's ready to go.

There's a NOISE from afar. The TRACTOR. Getting louder each second. Here he comes.

Ann attaches herself from the wagon, and takes out her rifle. Then she waits.

INT. TRACTOR CAB - DAY

Loomis drives the tractor at full speed.

He catches sight of Ann, wearing the suit, up ahead. His eyes turn murderous.

EXT. EDGE OF VALLEY ROAD - DAY

Loomis hits the brakes hard. With a SQUEAL, the tractor comes to a stop across the road from Ann. He jumps out of the cab, and points his gun in her direction.

Ann raises her rifle. She looks terrified but stands her ground.

They face off on opposite sides of the road, each aiming at the other's head. Beat.

LOOMIS
Take off the suit.

Loomis takes a step forward. Ann takes a step back, shaking her head.

ANN
I'd rather die than be your
prisoner.

LOOMIS
So be it.

He cocks his gun. Ann's eyes widen with desperation.

ANN
If you kill me, it'll be like you
said. You'll be alone forever.

LOOMIS
There are worse things than being
alone.

ANN
You don't really believe that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOOMIS
I've always been alone.

He trains the gun on her head.

ANN
(desperately)
If I find others, I'll tell them
about you. They'll come.

LOOMIS
There aren't any others.

ANN
I have to take that chance. You've
left me no other choice.

She lowers her rifle. Picks up the handle of the wagon and
attaches it around her waist.

Loomis shakes his head. His eyes are deadly.

LOOMIS
You're not leaving. Not after
everything I've done for you.

Ann knows she's about to die. There's only one thing that
might save her now. She stares into Loomis' eyes.

ANN
Please. You can't kill us.

Beat.

LOOMIS
Us?

Ann clutches her belly tenderly. It seems fuller than before.
Suddenly, it hits Loomis what she means. An eternity passes.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)
You're lying.

Ann shakes her head. They keep looking at each other. Through
the eyes. All the way to the soul. Loomis' knees seem to
buckle.

ANN
Goodbye, Taylor.

Ann walks toward the very edge of the valley. Loomis keeps
the gun aimed at her head. But his hand is now SHAKING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOOMIS

Ann. Don't make me do this.

His voice is suddenly thin and weak.

Ann puts on the helmet. Adjusts the mask around her face. She takes a deep breath. Walks toward the deadness, slowly, fearfully, anticipating the bullet that will end her life.

It doesn't come.

Ann keeps walking. Around her, the green of the valley gives way to brown dirt and grey dust.

Then she hears Loomis' VOICE behind her. She turns back, and sees him pointing frantically.

LOOMIS (CONT'D)

Birds! I saw birds circling west of
the valley! I lost track of them.
But I saw them -- they were alive!
Go to the west!

Ann raises her hand in acknowledgment. She walks on, awkward in the enormous, ill-fitting suit. Dark clouds loom overhead.

Her eyes are just visible through the mask. They look hopeful.