

KODIAK

screenplay by

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based on a story by

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INT. ROY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

An old box TV casts light across a dark room.

TV SCREEN:

KODIAK BLACK (murderous mountain man, mostly frozen) looms over SHARON COOKE (37, bleeding) as she one-arm drags herself toward a snow-covered cabin. She grunts, painting a slow red brushstroke across the snow in her wake.

The monstrous killer grips a battered, death-stained ice axe and eyes her: a predator wary of his most dangerous game.

Sharon reaches the cabin, collapses against its ramshackle frame. She clutches a gaping wound in her side as life leaks from it. Consciousness slips from her.

Kodiak approaches, prods with the axe: nothing. Teeth **chattering**, he squats next to Sharon. He removes his goggles and tosses them to the snow.

He holsters the axe and peels the glove from his right hand, frostbitten flesh stripping from his fingers. Almost tenderly, Kodiak touches her exposed cheek.

Kodiak closes his eyes.

Howling violently, lunging, Sharon rips his ice axe from its holster and drives the blade up through his chin. His hand goes to her neck, reflexively squeezing the life from her.

Locked in the embrace of death, their cold breaths come slower and slower.

And then, as snow begins to fall, breaths don't come at all.

VOICE (V.O.)

(pre-lap)

If a horror movie can make you cry,
it has to be pretty good, right?

SCREEN CUTS TO:

A studio interview with GRACE EASTON (late 40s, spirited), introduced with the title of "Executive Producer."

GRACE

It was emotional! The end of
Slaughter Mountain, Sharon Cooke.
Kodiak Black.

SCREEN CUTS TO:

Behind-the-scenes footage shows Kodiak and Sharon, still in costume, embracing on a snowbound soundstage while the crew claps. Sharon laughs through tears that Kodiak kisses away.

BACK TO:

The living room is mostly bare, lacks lived-in personality: no memories on the walls, no souvenirs on the shelves.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
That's the big question, right?
He's been killed before.
Is he dead?

GRACE (V.O.)
Kodiak Black is dead.

A lonely La-Z-Boy sits before the television, slightly to the left. ROY BAKER (early 60s, grizzled, burly) sleeps shirtless in the chair, his body too large to fit comfortably. The scars of a life lived dangerously mark his torso.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Forever?

GRACE (V.O.)
Yes. Probably. *Probably.*

He dangles a burnt-out roach over an ashtray on an end table. Blistered skin next to a wedding ring shows where other nights' joints have been less kind. A kitchen knife, cell phone, and mug of water are on the coffee table.

GRACE (V.O.)
At least until there's a compelling argument to bring him back. Maybe.

The phone vibrates beside him: "Grace Easton." He shifts his weight, turning away.

GRACE (V.O.)
But at this point, Roy and Trish are as much a part of this as me, so...

Roy settles back into a contented slumber.

GRACE (V.O.)
No. He's gone. Roy is... Well...
(beat)
Kodiak Black is d-

LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Roy jolts awake to a **chatter**. He grabs the knife, bounding across the room. The TV remains on, stuck on a blue screen.

KITCHEN

In the doorway, Roy is perfectly still, ready to strike. A squirrel stands on a counter, nibbling banana bread.

Half a step and the squirrel dashes into the basement.

ROY

Fuck.

BASEMENT

Roy looks down into a cob-webby cellar. Unpacked boxes, half-packed totes, and a piece of luggage cover the floor. He sighs, tries to shut the door: it won't latch closed.

KITCHEN

He yawns, stretching back through a sparse kitchen. A Trona Pinnacles souvenir magnet sticks to the fridge.

LIVING ROOM

Roy sets the knife down, grabs his mug, powers off the TV.

KITCHEN

He empties the mug into the sink and pours coffee from yesterday's pot. Roy microwaves it; it spins, he watches.

EXT. ROY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

The house is unassuming, sharing a yard with the neighbors. Three lawn chairs surround a fire pit on the property line. A sedan is parked in Roy's driveway, before a garage.

Roy wanders around his side of the lawn, eyes down. He picks up a rock and tosses it into the road.

LATER

Roy plops into his car, ignoring another call from "Grace Easton." Next door, DIANE SERRANO (late 60s, bakes a lot of banana bread) offers a smile as she hoses her flowers.

He rolls down the window.

DIANE
Y'eat corn, yeah?

ROY
Good morning, Diane.
(beat)
Broadly, yes. I eat corn.

DIANE
Howdja like the banana bread?

ROY
I woke up to a squirrel eating it.
Second morning in a row.

DIANE
So ya didn't try any.

ROY
No. Sorry.

DIANE
Got a BB gun?

ROY
What?

DIANE
For the critter.

ROY
Oh. No. I've got a knife.

DIANE
Cripes, you're gonna stab a
squirrel?

ROY
You use what's on hand in times of
crisis. I'll see you later.

He waves and turns to back out.

DIANE
Roy.

Roy turns back, more amused than anything.

ROY

Diane.

DIANE

Can you be a sweetie and pick up some more of that wacky taffy?

ROY

It is perfectly legal for you to go pick up wacky taffy yourself.

DIANE

Oh, don't worry about it then. I don't need it, that's fine.

I/E. ROY'S CAR - MORNING (DRIVING)

Humming to small-town country radio, Roy cruises through idyllic Woodstock, Illinois. He slows as he passes an alley, waving to a POLICE OFFICER at the morning speed trap.

INT. MEL'S DINER - LATER

Roy sits in a booth at a teeming diner, watching the world go by out the window. Across the road, a grand church overlooks an empty parking lot.

BRITTANY (30s, also teaches 7th grade) sets a cinnamon roll in front of him and refills his coffee.

ROY

Thanks.

BRITTANY

You betcha.

She nods at the pastry. He smiles, takes a bite.

ROY

Still second.

BRITTANY

Damn. By sheer volume, one of these is gonna take the cake.

ROY

I appreciate the effort.

BRITTANY

Holler if ya need a top-off, 'kay?

He nods and digs in to the roll.

EXT. CITY SQUARE - LATER

Roy sits on a bench beneath the trees of a historic town square. He watches COOP (late 20s, vaping) unlock the front door of a dispensary called Reefer Gladness.

INT. REEFER GLADNESS - LATER

Roy browses while Coop prepares his order.

COOP
Just the joints today?

Beat.

ROY
And a bag of taffy.

COOP
Cool.

Roy's phone buzzes: "Grace Easton."

EXT. THE HEARTY PLATTER - DAY

Roy eats a piece of taffy by an outdoor ashtray. Two LOCALS (wearing trucker hats) spark a light nearby.

INT. THE HEARTY PLATTER - LATER

Baseball plays muted on the corner TV in a family restaurant. In the booth below, Roy places an order with a SERVER (15, awkward). A small, wooden strategy game with blue and red pegs sits on the table.

ROY
Grilled cheese and tomato soup.

SERVER
Bowl or cup?

ROY
How is it today?

SERVER
I don't try the tomato soup when I come to work. Sorry.

ROY
Cup's fine.

The Server fully writes out the order before leaving. Roy slides over the game, gives it a try once again.

Above him, the silent TV switches channels to *Slaughter Mountain 3-D*: Kodiak Black skewers someone with a ski pole.

I/E. ROY'S CAR (DRIVING) - LATER

Roy pulls into his driveway and pokes a button on the visor, opening his garage to expose a lawn mower.

Next door, DENNIS SERRANO (late 60s, Mexican, genial) swigs beer as he weed-whacks. He waves over.

EXT. ROY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MINUTES LATER

Roy mows the lawn. A **grind** gives way to a **thunk** as a rock shoots from the mower deck, glances off the rear window of his car, and careens away.

He shuts off the mower and walks over. Dennis turns off the weed-whacker, grabs his beer, and approaches Roy's car.

DENNIS
You walk the lawn before?

ROY
Yep.

DENNIS
You're either goin' dumb or blind then, pal.

ROY
Do you want to know what I'd say if the roles were reversed?

DENNIS
They wouldn't be.

ROY
I'd say, "I'm sorry that happened."

DENNIS
I check my lawn real good.

ROY
I'd say, "What can I do to help?"

Dennis pats Roy on the back.

DENNIS
You're a saint, Roy. A dumb, blind
saint. You get that taffy?

Beat.

ROY
Yeah, man, I got the fucking taffy.

LATER

Roy, Dennis, and Diane sit in the lawn chairs. A plastic bag yawns at their feet, chewed-up corn cobs and taffy wrappers spilling out. They look through binoculars, staring across the road into the windows of a huge apartment building.

DIANE
Oh lord, she's...
(laughs)
I'm not sure what she's doing.

DENNIS
Where?

DIANE
Five, four.

INTERCUT ROY'S BINOCULAR POV/THREE-SHOT:

The others count over and up to see what channel she's watching.

ROY
What is that?

Curtains open, "LINDSAY" spins poi. The balls are lit up and change colors. They stare, laughing intermittently.

DENNIS
When'd she move in?

DIANE
Last week. She's got a cat. I was
callin' her Lindsay, but I don't
know if Lindsay'd be...
(beat)
Doing whatever she's doing.

While they stare, an ambulance zips past with lights and **sirens** on. They don't pay it much attention.

ROY
Lindsay feels right.

Another window catches Dennis' eye.

DENNIS
Left two, quick. Raw moment. I
don't think Mohawk's girlfriend is
comin' back. Damn.

Roy glances over to see "MOHAWK" (30s, tattooed) crying,
punching the pillows on his couch. Uninterested, Roy searches
around for a better channel.

DIANE
He can do better. She was simple.

He lands on a new window: a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN pacing near an
OLD MAN who sits in a recliner, eyes open. The light of a
television plays across his still form.

As the old man's stillness begins to look like lifelessness,
the woman breaks down: a stark silent film for Roy only.
Three PARAMEDICS enter the room.

INT. ROY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Roy reclines in his chair, puffing a joint. The TV is on,
tuned to a vapid reality show. His knife, phone, and water
are on the table again.

He nods off. The joint burns down, **singeing** his fingers. Roy
grunts and sleepily ashes it before resuming his sleep.

With a **whir**, the VCR powers on. Reality television gives way
to the opening of the documentary: the Easton Pictures logo,
a slasher movie score over clips of Kodiak Black as he
brutalizes his victims, and the title card ("Elevated Horror:
the Slaughter Mountain Saga").

PETER ZITO (60s, irascible) smokes a cigarette, introduced as
"Director - Slaughter Mountain, Slaughter Mountain 2,
Slaughter Mountain VII: The Final Slaughter."

ZITO (V.O.)
I'll put it this way: if it wasn't
for Roy and Trish, Slaughter
Mountain would've been nothing more
than a shit-covered cash cow, tits
pumping the same diseased, sour
milk time after time. Dead teenager
trash pictures. Is that what you
wanted to hear?

LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Roy jolts awake to the **shatter** of glass. He grabs the knife, bounds across the room. The TV remains on, blue-screened.

KITCHEN

Roy reaches the kitchen to see the squirrel disappear into the basement. His coffee pot lies in pieces across the floor, yesterday's coffee pooling around them.

SERIES OF SHOTS - ROY'S MORNING

- Roy sets the knife in the **LIVING ROOM**, shuts off the TV.
- He sops up coffee, sweeps the glass from the **KITCHEN** floor.
- Coffee is brewed directly into Roy's mug: it spills over.

EXT. ROY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

As Roy exits his house, a fresh coffee stain on his jeans, Diane and Dennis back out of their driveway. They slow their truck near Roy's mailbox, rolling down the window.

DIANE
(shouting)
That critter still buggin' ya?

Roy crosses the lawn to converse at a reasonable distance.

ROY
Good morning.

DIANE
Critter still buggin' ya, Roy?

ROY
Yes.

Dennis taps his thumbs on the steering wheel.

DENNIS
Mass starts in 16 minutes. We have to get our seats before the Smiths.

DIANE
I think Father Tooley has some live traps left over from the raccoons that got in the rectory last year.

DENNIS
Have a good one, Roy.

They pull away.

DIANE
(shouting)
I'll ask him after mass!

Roy looks down to see a stone in his lawn.

ROY
Goddamnit.

His phone buzzes: "Grace Easton." He denies the call and kicks the rock out into the street.

MONTAGE - ROY'S DAY

- Roy backs out of **HIS DRIVEWAY**, tuning the radio to a wry country tune like "Pretty Good" by John Prine.
- He slows past the **SPEED TRAP** and throws a good morning salute to the officer.
- Inside **MEL'S DINER**, Roy surveys the empty restaurant. Across the street, church bells **ring** out over a crowded parking lot.
- Roy walks through **CITY SQUARE** toward the dispensary. People in church clothes bustle about a farmer's market.
- He exits a **DRUG STORE** holding super glue, a paintbrush, and a receipt. Next door is a busy auto shop.
- At **THE HEARTY PLATTER**, Roy stares intently at the peg game.
- Weed and household supplies in hand, he walks up to his **FRONT DOOR**. A live animal trap is propped against it with printed "Instructions For Use" taped to its frame.

INT. ROY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Roy grabs the instructions, noticing a handwritten note on the back: "Should get you close enough with the knife." He smiles and tosses the sheet into the trash.

He proficiently sets it using banana bread as bait and uses the trap to prop open the basement door.

LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Roy snores softly in his chair. The VCR **whirs** to life.

FADE TO BLACK.

KITCHEN - MORNING

Roy brandishes the knife over his trapped nemesis.

I/E. ROY'S CAR - MORNING (DRIVING)

Rural northern Illinois zips past Roy's car. He glances in the rearview at the growing crack in his rear window. The squirrel scurries around the trap on his backseat.

EXT. COUNTRY ROADSIDE - LATER

Roy pushes the last hunks of banana bread through the mesh frame of the trap; the squirrel munches. Hick music blaring, a muddy pickup stops in the road. A tobacco-chewing LOCAL (30s, shirtless) yells over.

LOCAL

You all good, fella?

ROY

All good.

LOCAL

Hey, where do I know you from?

Roy smiles.

ROY

Do you watch horror-

LOCAL

Corner booth at the Hearty Platter?

Beat.

ROY

Right.

LOCAL

Best hot beef in McHenry County.

ROY

I believe it.

LOCAL

Well. Good deal. Take 'er easy!

The man in the truck spits out some dip and pulls away, tall exhaust pipes **coughing** black smoke that hangs in the air. The pelts of slain critters pinball around his truck bed.

Roy opens the trap to release the well-fed squirrel.

EXT. ROY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

Roy squeezes glue along the fissure in his window, painting in the crack. Satisfied with the outside, he slides into his backseat to fill in damage that made it all the way through.

Dennis walks over, hands in pockets.

DENNIS

Hey, Roy. Quick question.

ROY

What's up?

DENNIS

You remember our grandkids, Amy and Holden?

ROY

Vaguely.

DENNIS

They're up from Chicago and...uh, they'd like to speak with you.

Roy looks over to his friend, who avoids eye contact.

ROY

Okay? Why are you being so weird?

DENNIS

They're fans.

MINUTES LATER

AMY (18, buzzcut) and HOLDEN (17, blue hair) gawk at Roy, who smiles back from the open door of his car. Once they start talking, one sibling's sentences spill over into the other's and back again.

HOLDEN

How'd they make the ski go through the dude's neck?

AMY
Practical effects obviously.

HOLDEN
Obviously.

AMY
But, like, how?

ROY
Movie magic.

AMY
Did they cut it in half and then,
like...

Holden mimes a ski impaling his neck.

HOLDEN
(to Amy)
Put something around...or, like, on
the dude's neck to hold its weight?

AMY
(to Holden)
Yeah and then you'd just cover it
up with make-up or whatever.

HOLDEN
(to Amy)
Fuck yeah. That's cool.

AMY
(to Holden)
So fuckin' cool.

They shift attention back to Roy.

AMY (CONT'D)
We're gonna be directors.

HOLDEN
We've been making short films. Any
chance you'd wanna be in one? We
can't pay you now, but...

AMY
You could be the monster.

ROY
I appreciate the generous offer.

AMY
You could be the hero.

Roy smiles amiably, changes the subject.

ROY
So you're Kodiak Black fans?

HOLDEN
Slaughter Mountain, yeah.

AMY
I mean, Kodiak's cool. He's...

HOLDEN
Scary as fuck. Obviously.

AMY
Obviously. But we're more into...

HOLDEN
At Flashback last year, we met
Tracy from Part IV.

AMY
You killed her with the corkscrew.

ROY
What's Flashback?

AMY
A con in Chicago.

HOLDEN
Horror convention.

ROY
Got it. Are those big now?

HOLDEN
To some people, yeah.

AMY
To us.

HOLDEN
Are you painting glue on your
window?

ROY
It's to fill in the crack.

AMY
Why don't you just get it fixed?

Beat.

ROY
Did you two want to talk about
movies or glue?

AMY
Oh, yeah, sorry.

HOLDEN
Sorry. Did you—

LATER

AMY
...actually film out in the snow?

In the Illinois twilight, two more lawn chairs have been pulled around the fire pit. Roy attempts to nurture a flame as Amy and Holden continue probing; he enjoys the attention.

ROY
For the first two. One crew member
lost his foot to frostbite.

AMY
Really?

ROY
No. But there was a real bear that
terrorized the set.

HOLDEN
A bear?

ROY
No. But it was really fucking cold.

They all laugh.

HOLDEN
How was it working with your wife?

Roy's laugh tapers as he focuses on the dying fire.

AMY
We're huge Patricia Quigley fans.

HOLDEN
She was such a badass as Sharon
Cooke.

AMY
Favorite final girl, hands down.

Dennis and Diane emerge from their house, saving Roy. Dennis holds a beer, Diane holds a beer and a glass of tea.

DIANE

Kids, go inside and grab drinks. I wasn't sure what you wanted.

She hands the tea to Roy as the grandkids head in. Dennis and Roy sit. Diane takes over the fire, bringing it back to life.

DIANE (CONT'D)

How'd the trap work?

ROY

Great.

DIANE

Didja stab it?

ROY

I took a drive and let it go.

DENNIS

You were gonna stab a squirrel?

ROY

I don't know. No. I guess I was afraid of it, if that makes sense?

DIANE

It doesn't, but that's fine.

DENNIS

Kids aren't botherin' ya, are they?

Roy gets up and heads toward his house.

ROY

No. I appreciate their enthusiasm. I'll be right back.

INT. ROY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The basement door swings, unlatched. Roy goes downstairs and re-emerges holding web-covered luggage. He sets it on the counter; a spider dashes across its surface.

EXT. ROY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Roy sprays the luggage off with a hose.

INT. ROY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Roy unzips the glistening luggage.

He exhumes a brown director's chair back. Below, a blood-stained ice axe sits atop the rugged fur snowsuit of Kodiak Black; a pair of antiquated snow goggles nestle beside.

His phone buzzes, startling him. Roy answers.

ROY

Please respect that I've moved on
and stop calling me.

Grace responds in a verbal flurry.

GRACE (O.S.)

Roy, *don't hang up*. I have—

ROY

Bye, Grace.

GRACE (O.S.)

—a producer coming to ask for y—

Roy hangs up. He walks to the basement door and tosses the phone down into the devouring darkness.

EXT. ROY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

All five sit around the healthy fire. Roy tends the flame, barely hearing a word while the others converse. The dry wood **crackles** and **pops**, throwing sparks into the night air.

HOLDEN

...feel about the remake?

He looks up, sensing he's been addressed directly.

ROY

What's up?

HOLDEN

How do you feel about the
Slaughter Mountain remake?

AMY

Do you know who's playing you?

Roy looks back to the fire, hiding his surprise at the news.

ROY

I haven't put much thought into it.

INT. ROY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Roy eyes the luggage against the wall.

He walks over to a closed door, opens it: his bedroom, boring as the rest. Roy shuts the door behind him.

The VCR **whirs** to life.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. DIANE AND DENNIS' GARAGE - MORNING

Garage door open, Amy and Holden rummage through their grandparents' stuff. Amy holds a saw.

Outside, a car pulls up to Roy's driveway; a young woman gets out, toting a travel bag and heading for Roy's house.

INT. ROY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Hard knocks **rattle** Roy's front door.

Shirtless and yawning, Roy ambles across the kitchen. He opens the door: MACY HAYES (25, always on, hair up) has her fist up to knock again.

MACY

Great, you're not dead.

(beat)

Macy Hayes, Easton Productions.

She offers a firm handshake, which he reluctantly returns.

MACY (CONT'D)

Did Grace get ahold of you?

ROY

No.

MACY

Oh. Okay. May I come in?

Roy steps aside and beckons her to enter; she slides past, going directly into the living room.

MACY (CONT'D)

We have to be on the road in 34 minutes. I can get you caught up in about four if 30 seems fair to pack.

ROY

What?

MACY

Worst case scenario, you listen to me for less than five minutes.

Beat.

ROY

I'll make some—

MACY

Coffee's in the car.

LIVING ROOM

Macy briefly surveys Roy's living room before turning to the blue-screened TV. She turns it off.

MOMENTS LATER

Macy sits in the La-Z-Boy, laptop on lap. No longer shirtless, Roy stands behind the chair and watches: the current presentation slide charts the box office success of the seven *Slaughter Mountain* movies.

MACY

...you look at this, you can see that box office receipts have direct positive correlation to your involvement in the franchise. *Slaughter Mountain Returns* and *Slaughter Mountain 666* took steep dips, while your return for *The Final Slaughter* significantly boosted the public profile of that film. Which is another reason why it would mean so much to the fans for you to be Kodiak Black again. In public. Not on the screen.

ROY

What do you mean?

MACY

Great question.

She moves to the following slide, where a United States map is starred with stops from Woodstock, IL to Los Angeles, CA.

MACY (CONT'D)
We will be stopping at horror
conventions—

ROY
Cons.

MACY
Cons, yes. And other fan events on
a promotional tour to help people
remember that the Slaughter
Mountain franchise is cinematically
important and to give back to the
fans who've never forgotten. At the
end of the tour, you stop by the
studio to meet with Grace.

ROY
With the press there, I assume.

MACY
Yes.

ROY
Right before the remake goes into
production.

MACY
Correct.

ROY
Which you're producing?

MACY
Yes.

ROY
How old are you?

MACY
How old are you?

Beat.

ROY
Keep going.

She skips to the next slide: data tables and graphs.

MACY
Another thing to take into
consideration is that we've
commissioned a number of...

Roy glances out the window to see Amy and Holden sawing a wooden baseball bat in half. He grins.

MACY (CONT'D)
...focus groups and demographic surveys to look into exactly how horror and film fans in general respond to...

Macy notices that Roy has stopped paying attention. She shuts her computer and stands to face him. He turns back to her.

ROY
Sorry, I missed that last bit.

MACY
Grace won't move forward with the remake without your public approval because she's...well, she's Grace. That's the reason I'm here. It's my movie to fuck up. My first.
(beat)
I know you don't know me, but I need you to come with me. Please.

He looks back out the window to see Amy holding the two halves of the bat to either side of Holden's neck. He sighs.

ROY
Who's your favorite actor of all time?

MACY
Trish Quigley.

ROY
Okay then.

Roy starts to pack.

MACY
You're coming?

ROY
I'm bringing my weed.

MACY
Fine. That's fine.

Macy pulls out her phone.

MACY (CONT'D)
What if I said Roy Baker?

ROY
I would have known you were full of
shit.

EXT. ROY'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

Macy leans against her rental, on the phone, as Roy exits his house. He walks to his car, loading a duffel bag and the luggage into the trunk.

MACY
(on phone)
...by Friday night. Saturday at the
latest. Yeah. Grace, I gotta go.

She hangs up. Not yet closing the trunk, Roy walks over and sets something on his lawn chair, by the fire pit.

MACY (CONT'D)
Roy, we're taking my rental.

ROY
I'll follow you.

He shuts the trunk: the rear window **shatters** completely.

MOMENTS LATER

Macy pulls away from the curb and the journey begins, Roy leaving Woodstock in the rearview.

On the lawn chair, Roy has left his regards: the chair back from his luggage and a taped-on note. Faded yellow words are visible on the chair back: "Patricia Quigley." The note reads "I believe in you. Thanks for everything."

EXT. INTERSTATE 88 - MORNING

The rental car speeds along, flanked by the flat, sprawling farmland and sporadic civilization of western Illinois.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

Roy stares out the window as the "Now Entering Iowa" sign flashes past and gives way to endless corn fields. On the radio, a personal development podcast zips by at 1.5x speed.

ROY
Can we put on some music?

Macy pauses the radio.

MACY

What would you like to listen to?

ROY

Anything but this. I hate talk radio. It puts me to sleep.

MACY

Podcasts aren't talk radio, but that's fine. What would you like to listen to?

ROY

What do you listen to?

MACY

Podcasts. Music makes me anxious when I'm driving.

ROY

I can drive.

MACY

You can't drive. I signed a contract with the rental company. And we're on a schedule.

ROY

I see why you get along with Grace.

MACY

We both understand that prudence is free, but time isn't.

ROY

You must have a lot of friends.

MACY

Enough for the amount of time I have to give.

He changes the subject.

ROY

What got you into the movies?

MACY

Tickets.

Roy bursts out laughing.

MACY (CONT'D)

My grandpa. Grandma took the rest of my family to her church. He took me to his.

ROY

And he was a horror fan?

MACY

Not specifically, no.

(beat)

I remember going to see your wife in The Queen and Four Kings. I was so obsessed with her and that ruby crown. He tried to make me one out of plywood and coat buttons for Halloween. It was horrible.

ROY

Are you still close with him?

MACY

He passed away a few years ago.

Roy drinks the last of his coffee and looks back out the window, avoiding eye contact.

ROY

I'm sorry.

MACY

Don't be. He lived a good life and doesn't have to deal with the rest of my crazy family ever again.

A "Rest Area Ahead" sign zooms past.

INT. REST STOP - BATHROOM - LATER

As he relieves himself, Roy reads an above-urinal advertisement for a seminar called "Manifest: Making Your Dreams Your Reality."

LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Roy puts two quarters in the slot of an old coffee machine. It spits out a cup and gives a grinding **groan**.

Beat.

He stares for a moment before inserting two more coins. Another cup drops, knocking both onto the floor. Coffee spurts out and splashes toward him.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - LATER

Roy slides in, splotches of coffee drying into his pants. He lays his head against the window as she leaves the lot.

ROY

You can turn on your talk radio.
Wake me up when we're out of Iowa.

He closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

I/E. RENTAL CAR - LATER

Roy wakes up as the driver's door is **shut**, to a breath-fogged window and drool on his lips. Macy holds a paper bag and sets a fresh coffee in the cup holder.

MACY

Meet me inside when you're done.

Sleepily accepting the bag, Roy watches Macy enter a salon. He checks the bag: a cinnamon roll.

INT. BARBERSHOP - LATER

The stylist, CONNIE (40s, chews Nicorette gum), spritzes and combs Roy's mane. Macy stares at her phone and instructs.

MACY

I'm looking for something between
"approachable" and "refined."

CONNIE

Are we keepin' some length up top?

MACY

Would that be "refined" to you?

CONNIE

It can be.

MACY

Let's go shorter. But too short
would read too serious.

Connie puts on a smile. Macy's phone vibrates in her hand.

MACY (CONT'D)
I have to take this.

The moment she leaves, Roy makes eye contact with Connie in the mirror. He gets up, grabs a hundred from his wallet, puts it in her tip jar, and sits back down.

ROY
Short enough I don't have to do
much with it, long enough I don't
look like a grunt.

Before Connie can get a word out, Roy points to a framed picture at her station of her and three small children.

ROY (CONT'D)
They look like a handful.

She cuts his hair as she gabs.

CONNIE
They are. They're at the pool right
now, no doubt bein' a handful for
my sister.

ROY
Tell me about them.

CONNIE
Trey's the oldest. He's 11. He's
been collectin' rocks lately, which
is fine, but I don't like havin'
dirty rocks around...

LATER

Roy stands at the counter with Macy, his hair and beard trimmed handsomely. Connie rings through Macy's company card.

ROY
Make sure Connie gets a good tip.

He winks at her.

CONNIE
Where are you off to then?

I/E. RENTAL CAR - AFTERNOON (DRIVING)

Macy slows into the parking lot of a chain hotel. On the marquee: "NEBRASKA SLASHCON 2023." All manner of Midwestern horror fans swarm the lot—some cosplay, most don't.

MACY

They were supposed to have a parking spot reserved near the door, but obviously someone doesn't know how to do their fucking job.

As Macy searches for a spot, Roy grabs his bag of joints and edibles from the glovebox.

MACY (CONT'D)

You can't smoke that in Nebraska.
And I hate you keeping it in there.

He pulls out a joint and slides it into his sock, stashing the bag back where it came from.

ROY

So what's this all about? I get a room to sign autographs in? Take some photos?

She finally finds a spot, pulls in.

MACY

It's about connecting with your fans.

ROY

I'm sure everyone is dying to meet a washed-up monster.

They get out, walk toward the entrance. A few PEOPLE they pass turn to stare at Roy, dying to meet a washed-up monster. Just ahead: a COSPLAYER (20s, large) dressed as Kodiak Black.

ROY (CONT'D)

What do I do?

MACY

I don't know. Say hi.

ROY

Hello!

The cosplayer tilts his head at Roy and chatters his teeth, raising a homemade ice axe toward him. With the other hand, he raises a black marker.

COSPLAYER

I love you.

Roy signs the axe handle.

ROY

Love you, too, man. Nice costume.

Macy and Roy pass him to head inside.

COSPLAYER

Kodiak Black loves me!

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The gathered fans whoop, Roy beaming through his red-faced unease as they approach the CHECK-IN PERSON (30s, trans).

MACY

(to Roy)

Don't sign anything else for free.

(to the Check-in Person)

Vendor check-in for Roy Baker. Are you a volunteer or do you work for the hotel?

They check the list.

CHECK-IN PERSON

Hi. I'm a volunteer and we don't have a "Roy Baker." I mean, I know who Roy Baker is and that he's standing right here.

(to Roy)

Hello, Roy Baker.

ROY

Hello...

He reads their name tag: "@BloodMage."

ROY (CONT'D)

...Blood Mage.

BLOOD MAGE

(to Macy)

But he doesn't have a booth.

BALLROOM - MINUTES LATER

RODNEY (40s, event coordinator, cosplaying as a corpse) walks Macy and Roy into the hotel ballroom, vendors seething about before the crowds are admitted.

RODNEY

I'm so sorry. I'm the Tuesday,
Thursday, Saturday guy. You must've
talked to Doug. He's the Monday,
Wednesday, Friday, Sunday guy.

(beat)

I...uh...I had some volunteers put
together a booth for you.

They stop at a thrown-together booth: the curtains are a different color than the rest, it's positioned in an awkward corner, and Roy's seat is a folding chair. A marker, two bottles of water, and a ticket jar are on the table.

Roy sits.

MACY

I had cardboard cut-outs and a
banner sent that should've come
last week, too.

RODNEY

I haven't seen anything. But
if...if it came on Monday, Wed-

MACY

I need you to stop talking.

She turns to Roy, who watches the situation with amusement.

MACY (CONT'D)

(to Roy)

I'll be right back.

(to Rodney)

Where are incoming packages kept?

The ashamed corpse escorts her away.

VOICE (O.S.)

I thought you were dead.

Roy turns to the source: TODD GRIER (late 50s, Black, charismatic) peeks through the curtain from the next booth.

ROY

Mr. Murder, in the flesh.

TODD

This your first con? Haven't seen you on the circuit.

ROY

It is. Yeah. Slaughter Mountain remake in the works. Promo shit.

TODD

I legitimately thought you were dead. A lot of us did.

The doors open and the crowds flood in.

TODD (CONT'D)

We'll catch up.

Todd ducks back into his booth. Roy grabs his marker.

BACK ROOM

Macy and Rodney stare at two bent, ruined cardboard cut-outs of Kodiak Black and a ripped *Slaughter Mountain* banner.

RODNEY

I'll have to call Doug.

MACY

Don't. This is very unprofessional. You should be ashamed.

She speeds out, already dialing her phone.

MACY (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Hi, can you do cardboard cut-outs?

(beat)

How fast?

BALLROOM

A queue has formed at Todd's booth as the crowds make their first selections. Roy sits alone, crammed into his corner.

In front of his booth, a patient FATHER (30s) walks his impatient SON (11) to the edge of the ballroom for a talk.

SON

I just wanna talk to him now. It's gonna be, like, an hour.

FATHER

I know, but we gotta wait in line
like everyone else if you wanna use
your ticket on Mr. Murder.

SON

We shoul'da bought more tickets.

FATHER

I know, buddy. I'm sorry.

The boy paces, fuming. He locks eyes with Roy and freezes.

SON

Dad. Kodiak Black.

His dad sees Roy.

FATHER

I thought he was dead.

The son speed-walks over, grinning. He drops his ticket into
Roy's jar without a second thought.

SON

You're Kodiak Black.

ROY

I was. What's your name?

SON

Shane.

ROY

And how old are you, Shane?

SHANE

11.

ROY

Your dad let you watch Slaughter
Mountain?

SHANE

It's okay, I know it's not real.

Roy smiles at Shane's dad and then back at the kid.

ROY

You're a smart kid. And you have a
smart dad.

Beat.

SHANE

I'm sorry.

ROY

For what?

SHANE

I didn't bring Kodiak.

He hands Roy a Mr. Murder action figure: Todd, wearing a red robe, a knife where his hand should be, swarmed by spiders.

ROY

That's okay.

(beat)

Can I tell you a secret about the guy who plays Mr. Murder?

Roy signs it: legible and contained, not the scribble of a more seasoned autographer.

SHANE

Yeah.

ROY

He's scared of spiders. Piss-his-pants petrified. All the spider stuff was a stunt double.

SHANE

What a wuss.

ROY

I know. Tell your friends.

FATHER

Now what do you say?

SHANE

Thank you.

FATHER

Thank you, Mr. Baker.

He offers Roy a grateful handshake.

ROY

Of course.

A CON-GOER from Todd's line notices Shane and his father.

CON-GOER

Who's over there?

SHANE
Kodiak Black.

CON-GOER
What?!

The Con-goer peaks over and makes eye contact with Roy.

CON-GOER (CONT'D)
Oh shit, Roy Baker is over there.

He jogs over to Roy and throws his ticket into the jar, handing Roy a horror magazine with autographs all over it.

CON-GOER (CONT'D)
I fuckin' love you, man.

ROY
I...thanks.

As Roy signs the magazine, a herd of HORROR FANS migrate from the other lines to the unmarked corner booth.

ROY (CONT'D)
Oh my god.

As soon as he hands the magazine back, another ticket flies into the jar and a hat is thrust into his hands.

VOICE (O.S.)
I. Love you.

Roy takes a deep breath, smiles, and signs the hat.

ROY
Thanks.

MONTAGE - SLASHCON

- In the **BALLROOM**, Roy interacts with fans: autographs, pictures, handshakes. The ticket jar is a quarter full.
- Roy chatters his teeth for videos, breaking into laughter at the situation. The jar is half full.
- Todd and Roy pose together with fans, having a blast.
- Roy attempts to sign an autograph back at his table, but the marker is dead.

INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - LATER

Macy strides through the crowd, a cardboard Kodiak under each arm. She reaches their table: the jar and both water bottles are filled with tickets, but Roy is nowhere to be found.

She sits. Her phone rings.

EXT. HOTEL - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Roy and Todd stand in a dark-lit alley. Todd puffs the joint.

TODD

Thanks. This is necessary.

ROY

I'm fucking exhausted.

TODD

Every time.

ROY

How many do you do a year?

TODD

10, 15. Depends if I need the money. I live here in Lincoln, so I never miss this one.

ROY

Pay's decent?

Todd laughs out a cloud of smoke.

TODD

Pennies in the fucking well, man. Know what I'm doing after this?

ROY

What?

TODD

Going to work.

ROY

Shit. I'm sorry.

TODD

All good. Bouncing's easy money if you can keep your eyes open. Never been much of a sleeper.

ROY
You still act?

TODD
If I was still acting, you think
I'd be living in goddamn Nebraska?

Roy hands Todd the roach.

ROY
Kill it.

Todd takes the last puff and snuffs it under his boot.

TODD
You should see some of these
motherfuckers realize who I am as I
drag 'em out of the club, though.
They're drunk and get a little too
rowdy and then, boom, a hand grabs
the back of their neck and they
look up at Mr. Murder himself.
(beat)
I never got past the monster, man.
(beat)
Had to sell the prop knives, or
else I could really fuck with 'em.
You keep all your shit?

ROY
I have the Kodiak outfit from the
first one with me. There's stuff
back in California, too.

TODD
Still living in Hollywood then.

ROY
Heading back that way. Perks of
marrying a movie star, I guess. And
she kept everything.

TODD
My wife kept everything, too. Fuck
that judge.

Roy and Todd laugh.

TODD (CONT'D)
You ever put it on anymore? Just to
feel the weight of the thing?

ROY
I don't need to put it back on to
feel the weight.

The cover **slams** open on a dumpster, cutting short the moment.

Beat.

TODD
This alley's creepy as hell.

INT. BALLROOM - LATER

Macy hangs up the phone and takes her head in her hands,
completely worn out.

ROY (O.S.)
Did you want any cookie?

She looks up: Roy, stoned, eats a cookie and holds a CD.

MACY
No, thanks. You smell loud.

ROY
I found this ancient artifact.
Thought you might be interested.

He hands her the CD: the soundtrack for *Slaughter Mountain
IV: Kodiak's Back*, "featuring 'See You on the Mountain' by
Silent Violence."

I/E. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT (DRIVING)

"See You on the Mountain", a late-80s hair metal screamer,
blares in the car. Roy hums until it gets to the chorus and
then sings the words at a low volume. The cut-outs stare
ahead from the back seat.

Macy fails to hide her amusement.

LATER

They pull into the driveway of a normal-looking house in a
normal-looking Nebraska neighborhood.

ROY
Are we staying with someone?

MACY

It's a home share. The owners rent it out when they're away. Homier than a hotel.

ROY

Cheaper, too, I bet.

MACY

Marginally.

EXT. NEBRASKA HOME SHARE - CONTINUOUS

They get out and survey their digs. Next door, a NEIGHBOR (40s, wearing blood-stained blaze orange) guts an antelope carcass. Roy notices and cringes.

ROY

Don't look next door. Jesus.

Macy looks over, is unaffected. She notices a compound bow sitting in his truck bed. She smiles, calls over.

MACY

Nice buck! And nice bow! What's in season here?

The neighbor walks to the edge of the garage, gesturing with a bloody knife while he talks.

NEIGHBOR

Thanks! Antelope of course, elk, deer, turkey. Good eats for sure. This fella's pushing 130, so he's gonna fill a freezer.

MACY

How far was the shot?

NEIGHBOR

50-55 yards. Clean.

MACY

Awesome. Well, we're staying next door, so it's nice to meet a friendly neighbor.

NEIGHBOR

Likewise. You guys have a good stay over there and give me a knock if ya need anything, alright?

With a one-finger wave, he returns to his gory work. Roy speaks low as Macy gets bags from the trunk.

ROY
What was that?

MACY
What?

ROY
Did you see how he was holding that knife? That man's going to murder us in our sleep.

MACY
You need to relax.

She heads into the house; Roy turns to watch the neighbor. With the carcass hanging from the ceiling, the man **yanks** the skin down its body to expose meat beneath.

INT. NEBRASKA HOME SHARE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A carpeted hallway—walls peppered with pictures of wildlife and nature—holds two doors. Light shines from beneath one door, darkness the other.

GUEST BEDROOM

Lights on, Macy—cross-legged and headphones in—sits on a bed and sips coffee. She's still at work, studying her laptop screen. She wears pajamas; everything else remains packed.

MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sprawled atop a king bed, Roy is completely out.

The TV flashes on, a woman's **scream** heard for that moment. Roy's breaths turn to steam as frost crawls up the window.

He awakens, drowsily puts on another layer, and snuggles back under the covers.

The television flashes on again, this time accompanied by **chattering** teeth and heavy **breaths**. Static warps into a dark figure with white eyes and a massive black axe.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - MORNING (DRIVING)

Macy talks on the phone and drives; Roy stares with quiet awe at the snow-capped mountains blanketing the horizon, their majesty drowning out her call.

The rolling Colorado hills, distant Rockies, and a cathartic country ballad like "My Proud Mountains" by Townes Van Zandt welcome them as they cross over from Nebraska.

She exits the interstate and pulls into a gas station, finishing her call.

MACY

...going to be so excited about it. Absolutely. Kodiak Black will be in attendance.

(beat)

Yep. I will. Thanks again.

(beat)

Bye.

She hangs up, cringes at Roy.

MACY (CONT'D)

Sorry for volunteering you like that. I should've asked.

ROY

Macy. If I listened to half your phone calls, I'd have jumped out of the moving car by now.

MACY

I said you'd be fine to suit up as Kodiak in Vegas tomorrow night.

Beat.

Without a word, Roy gets out.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

He walks until he has a clear view of the mountains, wipes off the ground, and plops to a seat.

Macy gets out, throwing a glance at Roy before she pumps gas. At the next pump, a LITTLE GIRL stares through a car window.

The girl smiles, Macy smiles back. The girl sticks her tongue out, Macy does the same. They trade faces back and forth until Macy's pump clicks done.

She gets back in, drives over to Roy.

Beat.

He stands, wipes off his pants, and gets in.

SERIES OF SHOTS - COLORADO HIGHWAYS (DRIVING)

- They drive through beautiful Colorado.
- The Rockies encroach, then loom.
- Mountains swallow them up.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

Macy speeds down a scenic mountain route. They come to the cozy, offseason ski town of Crested Butte: a snowglobe village waiting for snow.

ROY
What's the opposite of deja vu?

MACY
Reality.

ROY
That makes sense.

Beat.

MACY
When's the last time you talked to Peter Zito?

ROY
1995.

MACY
When's the last time you were here?

ROY
1995.

MACY
You never came back?

Macy stops at a four-way intersection at the edge of town. Roy's eyes widen in recognition.

ROY
Turn right.

MACY
We're on a schedule.

ROY
Turn right.

MACY
Why?

INT. FRANNIE MAE'S - DAY

They sit at a small table in a traditional bakery. Roy looks around, beaming. Macy, foot tapping, watches him.

Two gigantic, steaming cinnamon rolls are set before them.

ROY
Try it.

MACY
It looks too hot.

ROY
It isn't. It's perfect. Try it.

MACY
If I don't like it, do you want me
to lie?

ROY
It's the best fucking cinnamon roll
in the world.

MACY
I'll lie.

She takes a bite.

MACY (CONT'D)
Don't watch me.

ROY
Sorry.

She covers her mouth while she chews, smiling. Roy looks back at her as she swallows.

MACY
It's good.

ROY
The best.

MACY
Genuinely good.

He looks down at his pastry.

ROY
I've been thinking about this
moment for 25 years. We had one of
these almost every day. We sat
right here and...
(beat)
I was happy.

Roy digs in.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SKI RESORT - DUSK

The rental turns up into a narrow drive announced by a sign for "Slater Peak Ski Resort" in large letters, "Home of Kodiak Black" in smaller ones below.

EXT. SKI LODGE - EVENING

Roy stares up at an enormous ski lodge, the peak of a snow-capped mountain protruding behind it.

Embedded in the ground ahead, a plaque proclaims "As seen in: *Slaughter Mountain, Slaughter Mountain 2, Slaughter Mountain 3-D, Slaughter Mountain VII: The Final Slaughter.*"

The front doors of the lodge open to reveal Peter Zito, now 85, already smoking a cigarette. An ATTENDANT (20s, male) follows him out.

ATTENDANT
Sir, there's no smoking out here
either. We're a smoke-free
facility.

ZITO
Fuck you there's no smoking
outside. It's *outside*.

ATTENDANT
I'm going to have to ask you to put
out your cigarette.

ZITO
In your eye?

ATTENDANT

Excuse me?

ZITO

I'll put my fucking cigarette out
on your fucking eyeball, you
fucking blunderbuss.

Roy walks up, puts his arm around Zito, grabs the cigarette,
and snuffs it under his boot. The old man's reaction is rage,
until he sees who it is.

ZITO (CONT'D)

Who the fu—

ROY

(to Attendant)

I'm so sorry. He was in Vietnam.

ATTENDANT

I don't care. He was threatening to
snuff his cigarette on me.

ZITO

On your fucking eyeball.

ROY

Don't you support our troops?

The attendant grows flustered. Zito grows amused.

ATTENDANT

Of course I do.

ROY

Do you know the smell of burning
flesh? The *sound* of it?

ATTENDANT

No, I—

ROY

Thank him for his service.

Beat.

ATTENDANT

(to Zito)

Thank you for your service.

ROY

Thank you. I'll make sure he
doesn't smoke anymore.

ATTENDANT

Fine. Fine.

The attendant disappears back into the lodge.

ROY

Z.

ZITO

Roy. You've gotten better.

ROY

At what?

ZITO

Acting.

ROY

Fuck you.

ZITO

That moron'll be pissed when he finds out I dodged the draft. Are they putting you up in here tonight, too?

ROY

Yep.

Zito pulls out a cigarette and lights it.

ZITO

I wanted to be there and it was selfish of me not to.

ROY

I know.

ZITO

It would have been worse for everyone if I came. I didn't want to bring tension to a fucking funeral. You didn't need that. Trish didn't need that.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Roy.

ROY

I know.

ZITO

How long's it been now?

ROY
Seven years next month.

ZITO
You doin' okay?

ROY
Most days.

Beat.

ZITO
I didn't know you'd be here.

ROY
I didn't either.

ZITO
Oh. Well, it's good to see you. You
wouldn't believe how many people
think you're dead.
(beat)
You look healthy.

ROY
You look bad. Brittle. Ear hair's
filling in nicely, though.

ZITO
It's to filter out bullshit.

ROY
How's that working?

ZITO
I can still hear you, so pretty
fucking bad.

EXT. SKI RESORT - EVENING

Macy efficiently sets up chairs in an empty, flat area near the lodge with a few RESORT WORKERS.

MATCH TO:

EXT. SKI RESORT - NIGHT

An array of chairs are set up for worship: a makeshift drive-in with a mountainous backdrop.

Macy stands at the foot of the aisle, observing the proceedings with minor interest whenever she looks up from her phone. The chairs are filled with eager HORROR FANS, equipped with plastic chattering teeth.

Zito and Roy are seated up front, in the places of honor.

LADY BLOOD (30s, dressed in red, tattooed) vamps before the movie screen, introducing the film into a microphone.

LADY BLOOD
Sons of sin, daughters of darkness,
my beastly brood of freaks and
fiends...

ON MACY

She smiles as the crowd responds with yells and **chattering**. At the end of a nearby row, an empty chair waits for her.

ON ROY AND ZITO

ZITO
I always hated those goddamn teeth.

ON LADY BLOOD

LADY BLOOD
Tonight, we turn to page 666 in the
Gospel of Gore for a cold, cold
look at life on...

Every set of teeth **chatters**.

LADY BLOOD (CONT'D)
Slaughter Mountain!

The crowd cheers. Lights dim and the projector awakens. Lady Blood leaves the stage as a familiar opening theme sweeps through the air.

ON MACY

Macy's phone buzzes in her hand. A MAN (30s, appalled) at the end of the near row glares over at the sound. Macy smiles at him and pockets her phone with an apology wave.

ON ROY AND ZITO

Roy smiles at Zito, whose face is locked in an amused wince.

ROY

Not bad for a "dead teenager trash picture."

ZITO

Watch the movie, you fucking ogre.

Roy turns to the screen. A smile breaks across Zito's face.

ON THE SCREEN

A huge, snowy mountain overlooks a small town at night.

It grows larger, closer, until a sprawling ski resort can be seen. Near the lodge, exactly where the moviegoers are right now, there's a campfire. A group of SKI INSTRUCTORS (young, sexy, soon to be dead) gather around, flirting and drinking.

OLD CARL (60s, groundskeeper) quiets the group with a story, one hand stroking his mustache and the other clutching a paper-bagged bottle of booze.

OLD CARL

'Fore the resort laid claim to the peak, a family lived in that old ruin of a cabin off the south slope. Went by the name Black. A father, a mother, and two boys, twins: one strong and quick to temper like his pa, the other a tremblin' cub never seen without his teddy bear.

As Carl narrates, the scene **DISSOLVES TO** a series of shots illustrating his tale.

OLD CARL (CONT'D)

One mornin', a businessman come callin'. Told Pa Black his home wasn't his no more, that they could "vacate or be vacated." Pa Black grew furious, cacklin' mad with murder in his eyes. When the visitor tried to flee, he drove an ice axe through the back of the man's skull as his family watched through the window.

ON ROY AND ZITO

The crowd erupts, popcorn spilling over Roy and Zito.

ON THE SCREEN

OLD CARL

Blood on his furs, Pa told 'em they needed to leave 'cause the man he killed was the first of many evil men to come who'd ride mechanical monsters that run faster'n any beast. Evil men that'd kill the mountain and everythin' on it. Ma Black and the twins packed fer the cold road ahead while Pa buried the dead man in an icy grave. Night fell. Sleep didn't come easy.

ON THE CROWD

Spectators drink hot chocolate, an audible buzz sweeping through the cinematic congregation.

ON THE SCREEN

OLD CARL

'Bout dawn, the mechanical monster's roar shook the world awake: two troopers on snowmobiles. The strong twin woke first, caught one by surprise, buryin' an ice axe in 'im. *Bang! Bang!* The other put the boy down. Stupid with rage, Pa Black rushed out to meet the same fate. *Bang! Bang! Bang!* Then come the wind and snow and frostbite cold. Some say the mountain itself was angry. The trooper looked inside to see Ma Black shieldin' her child, the cub cowerin' in the corner with his teddy. Cop told 'em they best be gone 'fore he got back. They were.

THAD (30s, head instructor) strums a guitar as if on cue.

THAD

(singing)

It was a cold, cold day for Kodia-

Old Carl whips his bottle at Thad, barely missing.

OLD CARL
Story ain't over, you goddamn egg!

ON MACY

Macy is getting into it. The Man at the end of the row offers her popcorn; she takes a handful, gives him a smile.

ON THE SCREEN

Back around the campfire, the counselors react: some boo and jeer, others scream in fear.

OLD CARL
Some say the boy, now a man,
cacklin' mad with murder in his
eyes, still lives in the old ruin
of a cabin off the south slope,
ready to take revenge on anyone
fool enough to tread 'cross the
snowy graves of his family.

(beat)

If you hear the chatter of teeth
and feel a chill in the air, you
can run, you can hide, you can
fight if you dare. But you're
deader than dead, it's too late to
turn back. From the cold, metal
vengeance of Kodiak Black.

As the rest of the instructors take this all in with solemn respect, a younger, less battle-hardened Sharon Cooke bursts out laughing, unfazed by the story. She smokes a joint.

SHARON
Sounds like a total chickenshit.

Old Carl **chatters** his teeth at her angrily.

THAD
He's *real*, Sharon. If you're gonna
last around here, you better start
taking things seriously.

SHARON
Bite me, Thad. I'm not afraid of
you. Or some teddy bear named
Kodiak Black.

ON ROY

Roy tears up at the sight of his wife onscreen.

The rest of the world disappears.

For a moment, it's only her.

Freckles and brown eyes.

Her smile.

Her.

CUT TO:

ON ROY AND ZITO

The seat next to a slightly concerned Zito is empty.

ON MACY

Roy walks up the aisle, past Macy. He gives her a teary-eyed smile and thumbs-up as he passes.

ON ROY

He walks away from the gathering, pausing to retrieve the joint from his sock.

Once far enough away to feel alone, he lights up. Roy stares at the stars, blows smoke up into the night sky.

The show goes on behind him.

CUT TO:

ON MACY - LATER

Macy sits in her chair, shaking her head and grinning at the carnage onscreen. The audience buzzes.

ON THE SCREEN

In the dark night, Thad and Sharon ski down to the base of a hill and come to a snow-throwing stop. They turn to look behind them, their headlamps slicing through the darkness.

THAD

She was right behind us. Vickie!
Vickie! Vi-

SHARON

Shut it, Thad. Listen.

Beat.

Two skis, each with a severed foot strapped snugly into the boot, zigzag down the mountain and come to rest before them.

THAD

Oh no. Are those-

Vickie's head, still locked in death's scream, rolls down to meet them. Thad covers his mouth with a shaking hand.

THAD (CONT'D)

Vickie...

A **chatter** echoes through the air. Sharon looks up to shed her light on Kodiak Black, stalking down the mountain. Fresh blood stains his furs and his axe.

ON ZITO

Everyone screams around Zito; even he jumps a little.

CUT TO:

ON ROY - LATER

Roy paces slowly in back, half-watching from the end of the aisle where Macy was earlier.

ON THE SCREEN

Inside Kodiak's cabin, looking the exact same as it did in the opening as if it was preserved as a shrine, Thad's hand slips from Sharon's as he's dragged down through a fresh hole in the cabin floor. He screams until he doesn't, a gurgle followed by silence.

Sharon stumbles back against the wall, brandishing her ski pole. She finds a doorknob and backs into another room, never taking her eyes off the hole. She backs into something, turns: the bed where Kodiak's parents slept.

Two rotting corpses, Ma and Pa Black, lie in bed with the blanket pulled up in cozy repose. She panics, runs into the next room to find Kodiak's brother in his bed as well.

Shaking, horrified, she backs up against Kodiak's childhood bed. A tattered teddy bear lies on the floor.

Her breath turns to steam. Teeth **chatter**.

She turns: Kodiak rises from under his covers on the bed.

Sharon screams, attempts to flee, takes an axe slice to the leg, falls, scrambles against the wall: she is trapped.

Cacklin' mad with murder in his eyes, Kodiak stands over her, raises his axe, and—

FREEZE FRAME.

"S L A U G H T E R M O U N T A I N"

ON MACY

The entire crowd is on their feet, whooping and hollering around Macy. Popcorn flies, teeth **chatter**, the *Slaughter Mountain* theme plays over the credits.

Macy claps and yells right along with them.

FADE TO:

EXT. SKI RESORT - LATER

The lights are up and the screen is black.

Roy and Zito sit onstage, fielding audience questions. Lady Blood moderates. Macy holds a microphone and walks over to a MIDDLE-AGED MAN as Zito answers the previous question.

ZITO

...actually had to live off the fucking mountain so it only made sense for him to use a normal, functional ice axe. Studio hated it. Grace Easton hated it. Said it wasn't "cinematic enough".

(MORE)

ZITO (CONT'D)

She wanted some big, shiny, black metal hunk of junk that "glinted in the moonlight." I said "Of course, Ms. Easton. Of course." Then I did what I wanted anyway.

Everyone laughs. They look expectantly at Macy, who hands off the microphone.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

This one's for Mr. Baker. Will we see you in a movie again anytime soon? Are you in the remake?

Macy barely hides a wince.

ROY

Anything could happen.

(beat)

I will say this: I don't think you'll ever see me in Kodiak's furs again. I think that's...I think I'm done with him. Or maybe he's done with me.

INT. SKI LODGE - LOBBY - NIGHT

The lobby is rustic, filled with stone, wood, and leather. The Attendant dozes at the check-in desk, fingers inches from a coffee mug. A fire **crackles** in the hearth below a TV that plays helmet-cam POV skiing highlights on repeat.

STAIRS

Leading up to the visitor rooms, a wide-set stairway is watched over by the mounted heads of beastly guardians.

HALLWAY

Doors line a wall, broken up by antlers and vintage ski equipment on the wall.

A man's **scream** stabs through the silence.

Beat.

The final door opens, Roy peeking out. He steps into the hall and looks down to see light beneath the next door. He knocks.

ROY

Macy.

(beat)

Macy, you awake?

He tries the door, sees it's unlocked. Roy peeks in: Macy is asleep, headphones in, laptop still open beside her bed. Roy flips off the light and steps back into the hall.

ZITO (O.S.)

What the fuck are you doing?

Roy catches his breath before exhaling in relief at the old man in his long johns outside the next room.

ROY

Did you hear a scream?

ZITO

I heard you. Bumbling.

ROY

I heard a scream. Downstairs or outside, I think.

Zito heads back into his room, re-emerges with a revolver.

ROY (CONT'D)

Why do you have a gun?

ZITO

I have enemies.

They creep down the hall.

STAIRS

They sneak down the stairs, the creatures up on the wall now more like predators than guardians.

LOBBY

Once downstairs, they search the lobby. Everything looks as it was: the fire still **crackles**, the Attendant still dozes.

Zito gestures for Roy to stay put. He disappears out the front door, gun at the ready, to check the parking lot.

Roy stands below the TV, before the hearth. His breath turns to steam; the fire abates and whips against a cold wind.

He looks up at the screen: the world is upside down as the helmet-cam POV shows the skier dragged down the slope, **gulping** out blood and feebly clawing at the snow. The body stops; two black-booted feet and the blade of a black axe move into frame.

ZITO (O.S.)
Not a goddamn thing.

Roy, pale and alarmed, turns to Zito for a moment and then back to the TV: the normal highlights have resumed, the fire burns strongly, his breath doesn't steam.

Zito heads back toward the stairs, scratching his belly with the barrel of the gun.

ZITO (CONT'D)
Disappointing.

Roy takes a long look at the TV before following the old man.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SKI LODGE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Roy and Macy carry their luggage down the hall.

ROY
I'll catch up.

He knocks on Zito's door as she continues.

Z. ROY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Roy tries to door: unlocked.

Z? ROY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

The room is messy, empty.

EXT. SKI LODGE - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Macy gets out to the car to see a set of toy teeth on their trunk. She smiles and puts them into one of her bags.

INT. SKI LODGE - LOBBY - MORNING

Roy stops at the desk.

ROY
Did Mr. Zito already check out?

ATTENDANT
Yeah, said to give you this.

He cedes a note on lodge stationery: "See you at my funeral."

ROY
Thanks.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 - MORNING

As the sun peeks over the peaks, they leave the Rockies behind for the sandy buttes and mesas of Utah.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - MORNING (DRIVING)

Macy guzzles gas station coffee like it's water.

MACY
I hate Utah.

She rubs her eyes and stretches her jaw.

ROY
I can drive.

MACY
You can't.

ROY
You could take a nap. Sleep right through.

MACY
Even if you were driving, I couldn't.
(beat)
Can I tell you something horrible?

ROY
Sure.

MACY
And you can't judge me.

ROY
Wouldn't dream of it.

MACY

Last night was the first time I
watched Slaughter Mountain.

Roy laughs, bellows, caught off guard.

ROY

That's so *fucked*.

MACY

I've read the scripts, watched the
trailers and the documentary. Post-
audited the financial documents. I
just never watched the movies.

ROY

Why the hell did Grace give you the
job then?

(beat)

She has no idea.

MACY

It's my chance to show her I can do
this. I'd do the same thing again.

ROY

Fucked.

MACY

I only told you because I thought
you wouldn't be a dick about it.

ROY

You obviously have no clue what
these movies mean to some people.

Macy simmers, white-knuckles the steering wheel.

MACY

While you were holed up in your
little cave in Illinois forgetting
about Slaughter Mountain, I was
fighting to keep it alive.

ROY

Without even seeing the movies.

MACY

I have now.

ROY

One. You saw one. 90 minutes. I was
Kodiak for 15 years.

She takes this in, cools off a bit.

MACY

I did enjoy it last night. It's fun. I get why people love it.

(beat)

I'll watch them all as soon as we get back to L.A.

ROY

Sure you will.

Macy boils over. Her words bite, but her tone stays even.

MACY

You have no idea how much work I actually do, do you know that? No idea. None of this would be happening without me. All you have to do is be there and most times you can hardly do that.

Before Roy can respond, a **knocking** from the engine immediately precedes smoke pouring from the vents into the car. They squint and cough, rolling down their windows.

ROY

Pull over!

She pulls to the side of the highway and lets out a general noise of frustration, followed by a calming exhale. Once she shuts the car off, the smoke stops and dissipates.

They get out.

EXT. INTERSTATE 70 - MORNING

ROY

Should you call someone?

MACY

Why don't you?

ROY

I don't have my phone.

MACY

Where is it?

ROY

In my basement.

Macy stares at him, deeply annoyed and at a loss for words.

ROY (CONT'D)
What's the plan then?

She gets back in and speaks through the open window.

MACY
There's a rental place in
Richfield, a couple miles ahead.
We'll drive with the windows down.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - MORNING (DRIVING)

Roy side-eyes Macy as they drive in smoke-filled silence,
accompanied only by the **knocking** of the engine.

I/E. RENTAL CAR - MORNING (DRIVING)

Macy parks at a rental agency, the lot filled with vehicles.
She just sits with the smoke. She closes her eyes.

ROY
Shut the car off, Macy.

Beat.

ROY (CONT'D)
Macy.

MACY
I hate Utah.

Roy stares at her, confused.

VOICE (O.S.)
Oh my heck, is that Macy Hayes?

EXT. CAR RENTAL AGENCY - CONTINUOUS

COUSIN ELI (30, skinny, clean-shaven) stands outside the car,
waving away smoke, coughing. He wears a button-up white T-
shirt, a tie, and slacks.

ELI
How've you been?

Macy shuts off the vehicle, gets out, and begins emptying the
car of travel contents. Roy exits, starts moving luggage and
bags onto the sidewalk.

MACY
Hi, Eli. I've been better.

ELI
That's great to hear.

MACY
I need a new car. This one smokes.

ELI
Oh. Nasty habit.

Eli approaches Roy, offers a hearty handshake.

ELI (CONT'D)
Eli Hayes. Macy's favorite cousin.

ROY
Roy Baker. Macy's favorite actor's
husband.

MACY
Eli. I need a car.

Eli releases the shake and looks back to Macy.

ELI
We, uhhh...we're all booked up,
though, unfortunately. Bum luck.

Macy stops unloading and gestures to the vehicles all around.

MACY
What about *these*?

ELI
Booked.

MACY
By who?

ELI
It's against company policy to say.

MACY
There isn't one rental car
available? Not a single fucking
thing?

ELI
We're all booked up. Unfortunately.

Beat.

MACY
Can you at least give us a ride
somewhere?

ELI
It would be against company policy
to do that as well.

MACY
Why?

Eli shrugs. Macy crosses to the passenger seat and slides in.

ELI
How long has it been?

MACY
I don't know.

ROY
Can you grab my CD?

She ejects the CD.

MACY
Where's the case?

ROY
I don't know.

ELI
What are you up to these days?
Still a secretary?

Macy reaches to check the glovebox.

ROY
Macy, don't—

She opens it: Roy's weed falls into her lap. Eli stares at it, wide-eyed.

I/E. COUSIN ELI'S VAN - DAY (DRIVING)

In the passenger seat, Eli takes a deep toke before hacking up a lung. Macy drives; Roy is packed into the backseat with their bags, two cardboard Kodiaks, and a few empty baby seats. They pass out of Richfield, taking backroads.

Once he stops coughing, glassy-eyed Eli looks to his cousin.

ELI
Would you ever put me in a movie?

MACY
You're not an actor.

ELI

That's a good point. But what about, what are they called? The, uh, the people in the back? *Extras!* Could I be an extra?

MACY

They're still actors.

ROY

I think he's got the right look.

Macy locks eyes with Roy in the rearview mirror as he smirks.

ELI

I do, don't I? I've heard that.
(short beat)
Did you know I ran for mayor?

ON ROY

Roy watches the vast Utah landscape pass them by, contented by the view and the familial small talk in the front seat.

MACY (O.S.)

I wasn't informed, no.

ELI (O.S.)

I lost. Against Tim freaking Welch.

MACY (O.S.)

That's too bad.

ELI (O.S.)

Tim Welch is not fit to be the mayor. He's dishonest. He lacks integrity. And he's so darn short. Not that that makes someone a bad person, I just think a leader...

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - DAY

Macy and Roy finish unloading bags from the van in front of a large, unremarkable farmhouse. Eli sits in the driver's seat, stoned and zoning out.

Five crappy vehicles are scattered about the yard.

ROY

You sure you're good to drive?

Eli snaps to and looks around inside the van.

ELI
The kids aren't in here.

Roy looks at Macy. She shrugs.

ROY
Okay.

ELI
Good luck. Tell Ma I said hey.

They exchange waves and he backs out, barely missing a car.

ROY
He's going to crash that van.

MACY
Don't get my hopes up. Can you stay
right here for five minutes?

ROY
Where are we, exactly?

MACY
Where I grew up.

Roy takes in the gorgeous world around him.

ROY
It's beautiful.

MACY
You'd think so.

Macy heads around the house, toward the sound of **machinery**. AUNT SARIAH (50s, strong, flowing gray hair) loads bales from a flatbed wagon onto a hay elevator that disappears up into the second story of a barn. Macy gathers herself.

Sariah notices her visitor and gives a slow nod. She hoists one more bale onto the elevator, lets it drop into the mow, and turns off the machine.

At its stop, COUSIN BART (10, shirtless, sweaty) pokes his head from the hay mow above. Sariah steps to Macy, taking off her gloves. She motions Bart to come down.

SARIAH
(to Bart)
Let's take five!
(to Macy)
I wasn't expecting you again.

MACY

Hey.

Bart runs out of the barn and stops next to his mother. She puts her arm around him.

SARIAH

Remember your cousin Macy?

BART

No.

SARIAH

She used to live in our house when you were just a little nugget. Why don't you give her a hug.

Bart hugs his cousin, who pats the sweaty child's back. He goes back to Sariah, staring up at his mother as she talks.

SARIAH (CONT'D)

Bart's 10 now. Eli and Noah are working in town and your uncle's on a mission trip, but we can-

MACY

I need a car. I can pay you.

Beat.

SARIAH

You try Eli down at the rental?

MACY

He dropped me off here. Said everything's booked.

Sariah smiles sharply.

SARIAH

Bum luck. Still a secretary out in Hollywood?

MACY

Assistant. And I'm a producer now.

SARIAH

That's a "name on the poster" kind of thing, isn't it? Pretty lucky.

MACY

No. I worked very, very hard.

SARIAH
Do you help pick out the actors?

MACY
Sometimes.

SARIAH
Are you ever looking for children?

Macy looks at sweaty Bart; he still stares up at his mother.

MACY
We do mostly horror, so kids get
killed. Gruesome stuff. Not for
everyone.

SARIAH
No, that's perfect. Watch this.
(to Bart)
Show cousin Macy how you die.

The child walks into the grass. His eyes widen and he grasps
at his throat, foamy spit dripping down his chin through
gritted teeth.

SARIAH (CONT'D)
The boys taught him this. It's from
one of them violent shows, I think.

Bart drops to his knees, to the ground, and stops moving with
a final twitch. His eyes remain open.

SARIAH (CONT'D)
He gets into it.

MACY
I need a car. There are five parked
out front.

SARIAH
They're all spoken for.

MACY
Is one Bart's?

A few ants crawl across Bart's faux-dead face.

SARIAH
Yes.

MACY
He's 10.

Sariah shrugs.

Macy paces, clenches her jaw, gears turning. She stops, moves in close to Sariah like she's confessing a deep secret.

MACY (CONT'D)

Look, no one's supposed to know, but I'm driving a movie star back to California for a big premiere. I could introduce you to him, get you an autograph. But I need a car.

SARIAH

He's here?

MACY

Out front.

SARIAH

And he's big?

MACY

Huge.

MOMENTS LATER

Sariah, Bart, and Macy round the house to find Roy pissing into the bushes. He sees them, zips up, gives a flush-faced smile. He offers a nod as he wipes his hands on his pants.

I/E. BART'S CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

In their new, shitty car, Macy and Roy pull away from Sariah, Bart, and an autographed cardboard Kodiak; the starstruck relatives wave after. Roy holds a dusty box in his lap.

ROY

I wouldn't have pegged them as Slaughter Mountain fans.

MACY

They're not. But the whole state of Utah will soon know the Hayes family is good friends with a movie star. That's enough for them.

ROY

Movie star, huh?

MACY

That's what I told them.

Roy beams.

ROY
 I'll take it.
 (beat)
 What's in the box, anyway?

EXT. RICHFIELD CEMETERY - LATER

Bart's car idling behind her with Roy sitting shotgun, Macy stands at a grave that reads "Louis Hayes 1936-2009, Beloved Father & Grandfather." She holds the crown.

She sets it atop the stone and heads back to the car.

I/E. BART'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

For a moment, she just sits. Roy gives her silence and space.

She presses play on the CD player, the opening chords of "See You on the Mountain" filling the air. Roy grins.

They pull out, leaving Richfield behind.

EXT. INTERSTATE 15 - DUSK

As day turns to evening and desert swallows the horizon, they pass into Nevada. The song keeps playing.

I/E. BART'S CAR - NIGHT (DRIVING)

The chorus of the 80s hair metal anthem hits as they crest a hill; the Vegas Strip paints the horizon before them.

SERIES OF SHOTS - SIN CITY (DRIVING)

- They reach **VEGAS**; sand cedes to concrete and neon.
- The **STRIP** opens before them, majestic and grotesque.
- A bazaar of light dances around Roy and Macy.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL & CASINO - BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Vegas shines up over the backside of a second-tier grand hotel and casino, as Roy and Macy are escorted to the private entrance by a SECURITY GUARD (30s, tattooed) and DEZ (20s, Black, talent coordinator).

Macy wheels Roy's luggage and carries the cardboard Kodiak.

DEZ

...thankful to have gotten your call last week and so happy you could make it to Demon Nights on such short notice. People are pretty excited. You see the line out front?

ROY

No. Pretty long?

DEZ

We're sold out.

ROY

Does that happen often?

DEZ

Yes.

ROY

Oh. Good for you.

DEZ

Follow me, please. It's just ahead.

The Security Guard holds the door as they enter the bowels of the building, staying behind. Macy struggles to fit in the door; Roy gestures to the cut-out.

ROY

Let me help.

She hands it off, keeps the luggage.

INT. HOTEL & CASINO - BACK HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The corridor is concrete, dimly-lit; pipes snake along the walls and ceiling. A bit too far ahead now, Dez leads them like a pace car.

ROY

So Demon Nights is a big deal.

MACY

A biggish deal.

ROY

I'm nervous.

MACY

Don't worry. You were fine at
SlashCon, you'll be fine here.

ROY

This is Vegas, not goddamn
Nebraska. Look, I was a stuntman
until someone put me in the monster
suit and called me an actor. There
was always a layer of latex between
me and the spotlight.

MACY

Yes, and that layer of latex is
right here.

Roy throws a glance at the luggage.

Ahead, their guide has stopped outside a door. Dez pushes it
open and gestures in with a smile.

DEZ

Mr. Baker.

MACY

Your stop. I need the cut-out.

GREEN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Roy's in an empty green room, luggage trailing behind.
Serving tables are set up by the door: the picked-over
remains of cheese spreads, delivery pizzas, veggie trays, and
a party sub. Drink coolers line a wall.

At the edge of the table, a closed takeout box is labelled
"Roy Baker." He grabs it, opens it up: a grilled cheese and
tomato soup in a styrofoam cup with crackers and a spoon.

BACK HALLWAY

Macy and Dez continue through the hotel arteries.

DEZ

You were late.

MACY

I know, I'm sorry.

DEZ

Very unprofessional.

MACY

I should be ashamed.

They turn down a hallway, running into a door marked "BACKSTAGE." Dez scans a keycard and opens it.

STAGE - CONTINUOUS

They emerge into a blocked-off area that leads to the stage. A long table sits before a stage-length photo banner covered with "Demon Nights" logos. Macy looks over a large ballroom, populated by VOLUNTEERS who finish prepping the space.

A dull murmur can be heard, the crowd outside the doors.

MACY

What's the lighting set-up?

Dez points out things as she speaks.

DEZ

Spotlight up in the balcony,
running lights along the stage and
aisle, overheads here.

MACY

Do you have fog machines?

DEZ

Not out.

MACY

Where are they?

GREEN ROOM

Roy eats his sandwich and stares down at the luggage.

The door opens and in flood four familiar faces to Roy, from *Slaughter Mountain*: special effects artist VINNIE THOMAS (60s, mischievous, jovial), co-star ROGER LIEBERMAN (70s, gay, voice actor), co-star TRINITY NEWKIRK (late 50s, Black, popular kid's show mother), and co-star WALT KEACH (70s, mustache, retired real estate agent).

Vinnie fast-walks up, bear hugging him off the chair and kissing him on the forehead. Roy grins from ear to ear.

VINNIE

A decade later and you're still
handsome as ever.

ROY
Missed you, Vinnie.

Roger gives Roy a quick hug.

ROGER
Good to see you, Roy.

ROY
You, too.

Trinity gives him a peck on the cheek and a long hug.

TRINITY
You doin' okay?

ROY
Better. Thanks.

Walt gives a firm handshake.

WALTER
Roy.

ROY
Walt.

They all step back and stand for a bit, smiling at the reunion. Walt wanders over to the spread.

A VOLUNTEER peeks in.

VOLUNTEER
Doors just opened. On in one hour.

STORAGE ROOM

Macy rummages through a storage room, Dez standing in the doorway. She pulls a few boxes off the shelf.

MACY
You have the juice for these, too?

Dez points to jugs of clear liquid on a shelf.

BATHROOM

The luggage sits on the ground, open. An ice axe handle and clumps of brown fur stick out.

Roy struggles to fit into Kodiak's first layer: the thermals and sewn-together pelts fit more snugly than they once did. He stomps into worn leather boots.

BALLROOM

Macy gives a thumbs up as she walks away from the SOUND GUY in the corner of the room. He holds the toy teeth.

GREEN ROOM

Vinnie does Roy's make-up, applying a layer of torn, ragged flesh on top of frostbitten skin.

Trinity sits nearby, watching, smiling.

BALLROOM

Macy sets up an extra chair at the end of a row, watching the FANS who file in around her.

BATHROOM

Roy, in full make-up, squats over his luggage and grabs out the rest of its contents.

He slides his arms into a brown fur jacket: a Kodiak pelt. The snarling, bloody-toothed head of the bear sits just below the back of his neck.

Roy slides his hands into blood-stained trapper's gloves.

He pulls on a crude fur mask, followed by old ski goggles.

Prosthetic teeth fit into his mouth: receded, discolored gums leading to nubby chompers, cracked and fissured.

Roy stares at Kodiak in the mirror.

He looks down at the final piece: the ice axe.

Roy picks it up and gets into character. He paces, huffing and breaking into mad cackles, teeth **chattering** intermittently. His gait grows more aggressive, feral.

He barks in rage, catching his eye in the mirror. His reflection warps into something larger, darker, scarier.

CUT TO:

BALLROOM - LATER

The huge room is dark and full. Fans buzz impatiently.

Fog rolls through the audience; running lights glow to life along the stage and aisles.

A **chatter** cuts through the air, disappears just as fast.

Hooting, the crowd's anticipation grows even more.

The *Slaughter Mountain* theme enters the fray, quiet at first, rising in volume. It's joined by the **chattering** of teeth that grows to an almost deafening **roar**.

All sound cuts out.

The spotlight **thunks** to life: Kodiak Black, teeth **chattering** and axe raised. He stands over Vinnie Thomas, who screams.

Kodiak drives the blade into Vinnie's chest; blood gulps from the wound and the victim's mouth. Screams of fear turn into wild cheers.

Vinnie slumps dead as Kodiak removes the blade.

The stage lights turn on to show Trinity, Roger, and Walter behind a Q & A table, clapping with the hysterical crowd.

KILLER POV:

Through the eyes of Kodiak, the crowd shows pure adoration. He crosses to the main aisle, remaining in character.

Once he sees the smiling faces of everyone, people of all ages and types, people there because they deeply love what he was a vital part of, he stops and takes it in.

BACK TO:

In front of everyone, Roy breaks down.

First, there are only a few tears. Few turn to many as the moment washes over him.

He covers his face with his hands and walks down the aisle.

By the time he gets on to the stage, he's composed himself enough to give the fans a wave of the axe.

CUT TO:

BALLROOM ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Macy, drained but proud, sits against the wall outside the closed ballroom, listening to the fans inside. A cardboard cut-out sits beside her.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DIVE BAR - LATER

Roy, Macy, Vinnie, Trinity, and Roger surround a table in a Halloween-themed dive bar peppered with DRUNK HORROR FANS. A BARTENDER (20s) sets a drink before Roy; the others already sip beer and mixers.

Roy is content, in street clothes; overlooked remnants of Kodiak makeup still streak across his neck and jawline.

BARTENDER
...and an Arnold Palmer for Roy
Baker.

ROY
Thank you.

He reaches in his wallet and passes the Bartender a 20.

BARTENDER
Thank you.
(to the table)
Let me know if ya'll need anything
else!

MACY
Can you grab me another Old
Fashioned? No rush.

Macy downs most of her first drink.

ROY
Does this mean I'm driving?

She passes the keys over.

VINNIE
You're sober?

ROY
I lost the taste for it.

VINNIE
How long?

ROY
Seven years next month.

The others look at their drinks, doing math in their heads.
Trinity changes the subject.

TRINITY
Where'd you disappear to, anyway?

ROY
Illinois.

ROGER
Illinois?

MACY
Woodstock, Illinois. Specifically.

She finishes the rest of her drink, as the Bartender
reappears with a fresh one.

VINNIE
Where the fuck is Woodstock?

ROY
Near Chicago. It's quiet.

MACY
Silent.

VINNIE
Headed back there after this?

ROY
No. West. Home.

VINNIE
Do I smell a comeback?

ROY
Anything could happen.

Roger gestures to Roy and talks to Macy.

ROGER
How'd the two of you end up on the
road together? You kidnap him?

MACY
Do you think I could?

VINNIE
He's a goddamn teddy bear.

ROY
Try another species.

ROGER
Vinnie, he identifies as a Kodiak.

VINNIE
(to Roy)
Show me. Give us your war face.

ROY
Right now?

VINNIE
Right now.

Roy attempts to compose himself but keeps chuckling it away, unable to take the exercise seriously.

ROY
It's not the right environment.

Vinnie grabs the shoulder of a random SIR walking past.

VINNIE
Excuse me, sir.

SIR
Yeah?

VINNIE
I was wondering if I could see your war face.

The Sir breaks into an intimidating scowl.

SIR
Good?

VINNIE
Perfect.

He leaves with a thumbs up. Vinnie looks at Roy, shrugs exaggeratedly, and turns to Macy.

VINNIE (CONT'D)
Teddy bear. He always needed the mask. Trish was the one you had to watch out for.

ROGER
She was a fuckin' killer.

TRINITY

She had to be. You gotta have that instinct to deal with all the Hollywood bullshit.

ROGER

I miss the Hollywood bullshit.

Trinity puts her hand on Roger's.

TRINITY

Honey. You never had it.

ROGER

Blow me, hag.

TRINITY

What would your husband say?

ROGER

Oh, he'd be there, too.

Macy makes eye contact with Roy, who smiles and shrugs.

VINNIE

This is why Walt left.

ROGER

Fuck Walt.

MACY

Who's Walt?

ROGER

Exactly. So, you kidnapped him?

MACY

I couldn't find a bag big enough to fit over his head.

VINNIE

And what was plan B?

MACY

Since you asked.

She straightens up in her chair, clearing her throat.

MACY (CONT'D)

As I'm sure you all know, our friend Roy here ghosted the world. Dropped his agent and manager. Moved out of his house. Didn't leave a forwarding address.

Roy watches with amused interest.

MACY (CONT'D)

Unfortunately for him, I understand how to use the internet. I figured out what county he was in because he got a citation for speeding, which is public record.

VINNIE

Street racing?

ROY

Obviously.

MACY

I flew into Chicago a week ago. After that, it was a matter of asking the right questions to the right people. I said I was a worried daughter looking for her dementia-addled father, knocked on a few doors, and pretty soon ended up at the right one.

VINNIE

You Sherlocked that shit.

MACY

I prefer Nancy Drew-ed.

Macy finishes her drink.

TRINITY

I see why you get along with Grace.

MACY

Roy says the same thing.

ROY

They both understand that prudence is free, but time isn't.

Macy raises a glass.

MACY

To prudence.

I/E. BART'S CAR - NIGHT (DRIVING)

Roy drives through a housing division surrounded by undeveloped desert: the last bastion of civilization before the sands take over.

Macy navigates, attempting to mask her inebriation.

ROY
Pretty off the path, isn't it?

MACY
Turn here.

Roy does: a wraparound driveway takes them to the rear of a newly-built home. A patio leads to glass doors; the desert swallows the world around them.

Macy opens the glovebox, pulls out a joint and a lighter.

MACY (CONT'D)
I would like to share this with
you.
(beat)
I need to tell you something.

She gets out and lights it immediately, taking in a lungful. Roy scrambles out to join her, surprised and a bit worried at this development. Macy passes it to him and exhales deeply.

MACY (CONT'D)
I lied to you.

Roy takes a puff, watches her struggle to find the words.

MACY (CONT'D)
When I said why I came to get you,
why you had to come with me. Grace
did say she wouldn't move forward
without your public approval. But
only because I told a journalist we
already had your blessing. That Roy
Baker was "so excited about our
bold new vision." It was my first
interview for my first real job and
I...
(beat)
I panicked. I fucked up. I said
something without thinking and I
had to fix it.

She beckons for the joint, takes a long drag. Roy chuckles.

ROY
Grace must really love you.

MACY
Why?

ROY

Because she didn't fire you the moment she read the quote.

(beat)

What if I say no? If I don't give you my blessing?

MACY

Then I do get fired.

CUT TO:

KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM

Roy sprawls on a sectional and runs his fingers over the ice axe as if remembering the curves of an old lover. He hums the *Slaughter Mountain* theme.

All around, windows and glass doors frost up from the bottom. His breath steams. The TV flashes to static. Awake and expectant, Roy watches the screen, white-knuckling the axe.

Static goes black and then suddenly a hulking figure lumbers through a desert at night, **breathing** heavily. Only bright white eyes and the glint of metal in its hands stand out.

The lumbering speeds to a jog, then a sprint. It heads straight for the glass doors of a house, the one Roy is in right now.

Teeth **chatter**, on the TV speakers and outside.

Roy gets to his feet and spins to the glass door behind him. It is completely frosted over. He looks back to the TV to see the figure winding up with the axe to smash through.

He assumes a defensive position toward the monster's apparent point of entry.

The TV screen **shatters** outward with the impact of the axe.

MASTER BEDROOM

Macy jerks awake from an inebriated slumber, reaches over to find her water cup empty. She groans, throws off the covers, grabs the cup, and drags her feet to the door.

HALLWAY

The guest bedroom door is ajar; she peeks in, finds it empty.

KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM

The TV is fully functional, powered on and volume high: Mr. Murder hisses over a screaming victim as they're swarmed by spiders. Macy flips it off, sees Roy asleep on the couch.

He shivers and shakes, in the throes of a nightmare. Roy cradles the ice axe against his heart like a teddy bear. His bedroom comforter rests in a pile on the floor.

Macy tiptoes over and puts the blanket over him. When she gets it up to his torso, she delicately removes the blade from his grip and sets it aside.

She finishes tucking him in and gives a huge yawn.

CUT TO:

I/E. BART'S CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

Macy sleeps against her window. Roy drives. He looks out the window to see a blue "Welcome to California" sign coming up.

EXT. CALIFORNIA STATE LINE - CONTINUOUS

They speed past the sign, Bart's car shrinking into the horizon of the Golden State until it's gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. INTERSTATE 15 EXIT - DAY

Bart's car is a speck in the distance, travelling forward. Looking over the opposite lane is a sign for the "Trona Pinnacles Next Exit."

The car approaches, slowing to an exit.

Beat.

It reappears on the other side, speeding back the other way.

I/E. BART'S CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

Roy peeks over at Macy while she slumbers. She barely stirs. He pulls off the interstate, onto a desert highway.

His fingers drum against the steering wheel. Roy looks over at Macy once more and turns on the radio at a low volume; she still slumbers.

Roy slowly turns it up to a respectable volume and skips around the frequencies until he finds something he likes: a song like "Hold On" by Tom Waits, something raw that gives you the right kind of goosebumps.

Quiet enough so as not to wake his passenger, his voice joins in with the chorus.

His eyes, glassy with emotion, keep to the road ahead.

I/E. BART'S CAR - DAY

Macy awakens, swimming through the post-drunk-sleep daze. She's alone in a parked car. She squints out the window to orient herself: great spires of rock erupt up out of sand like remnants of a different world, a different time.

She gets out.

EXT. TRONA PINNACLES - CONTINUOUS

Up ahead, in the middle of the unusual rock forms, is Roy.

ON ROY

Roy sits on the ground, taking it all in.

Macy approaches. When he notices, Roy dusts off a spot for her. She sits.

ROY
You ever see the movie Destry
Returns?

MACY
Is that a western?

ROY
Yeah.

MACY
Then no. It's a dead genre.

ROY
The climax of Destry Returns was
filmed here.

He looks around at the pinnacles.

ROY (CONT'D)

There's a scene at the end where the black hat gets shot off his horse and drags behind for a good 40, 50 yards. I was the stunt double, my first job in the movies. If you watch closely, you can see three teeth shoot out as my head smacks against the ground. Once they got the horse to stop and I dusted myself off, I walked the trail to find the damn things. Found two right away. The third, I looked for for, I don't know, had to be at least a half hour. And, you know, in production time that's a goddamn eternity. Pretty soon, the director says I need to get the fuck off his set or he'd find someone else to be subjected to grave bodily harm for low pay. So I stop looking because I need the job. And I'm sitting off to the side, making peace with the fact that I'm going to have a hole in my smile for the foreseeable future. After a couple minutes, one of the lead actresses, this girl with freckles and brown eyes, comes up to me, hardly keeping it together. Every time she goes to talk she just cracks up. I'm thinking someone put her up to it, like "go laugh at the ogre because he's an ogre" type of thing. Fucking with me. But no one else is laughing. No one else is even paying us any attention. And the instant before I'm about to go off on this batshit crazy girl, she holds out my other tooth. Apparently she picked it up right away and just watched me struggle, in front of everyone. I figured, this girl's a goddamn lunatic, a certifiable psychopath.

(beat)

And then she asks me to take her out that night.

(beat)

I ask her why. She says to me, "I've been dreaming about this tooth since I was a little girl. We're meant to be together." I said "Really?" And she said...

He pauses, savors the memory.

ROY (CONT'D)
She said "No, but that would be a
hell of a story, wouldn't it?"

They both burst into laughter: the type that goes on for too long, stops, and starts again for no good reason.

ROY (CONT'D)
This was our favorite place in the world. Our spot. I needed to see it again, but I don't think I could have ever come back here alone. I think in some way that's why I agreed to go with you on this trip. I'm glad you're here with me, Macy.

MACY
Me, too. I wish I could've met her.

He meets eyes with Macy for a bit before staring back off into the distance.

ROY
I wish I remembered her like I could before. I used to be able to see everything, feel everything happening, the sights and sounds and smells and the dirt and the sky. And her.
(beat)
Now it's just little pieces. Pictures. Even here, I can't remember where exactly we met. It all looks the same.
(beat)
I thought if I never stopped thinking about those moments, they'd stay whole in my head, but at some point they just weren't.

MACY
You still have her movies.

Roy stares into the distance.

He nods, processing this.

Roy smiles at Macy.

ROY
Who's playing Kodiak?

Macy laughs, wiping the corners of her eyes.

MACY
You really want to know?

ROY
Yes.

MACY
Right now?

ROY
Quick, before I change my mind.

MOMENTS LATER

They amble back toward the car, the California summer sun baking the vertical rocks behind them.

"Hold On" by Tom Waits cuts back into existence from the moment it previously stopped, a crescendo of catharsis and bittersweet memory washing over the world.

They get to the car and drive off, finally ready to go home.

The pinnacles stab into the air like prehistoric superstructures.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DUSK

Modern monoliths of metal and concrete scrape the sky, the sun setting into a dusk horizon painted orange and purple.

I/E. BART'S CAR - DUSK (DRIVING)

Roy pulls up to a gate at the end of a tree-lined driveway. An overgrown privacy fence hides the property within. He leans out the window to punch a quick code into a keypad: it **beeps**, the gate opens.

A concrete drive leads to a detached garage and a beautiful ranch-style home, much of the property reclaimed by nature. He parks, admiring the new plant growth.

Beat.

ROY
What about me?

MACY

What?

ROY

I could be Kodiak again.

Macy sighs back into her seat.

ROY (CONT'D)

You saw how much they loved me. I mean, I probably wouldn't be able to do the stunts anymore, but I think I could play the part.

MACY

No.

ROY

Why not?

MACY

It's too late.

ROY

It's my role. I made that goddamn character.

MACY

Roy.

ROY

I could do it.

MACY

You couldn't. It's a different movie, a different Kodiak.

ROY

Then I don't know if I can give you and Grace my blessing. Your choice.

MACY

Are you serious right now?

ROY

I thought he was gone, but I put on the mask and...maybe he's not.

MACY

Fuck.

ROY

Don't act like I should feel bad.
If you hadn't put words in my
mouth, we wouldn't even be having
this conversation.

Macy gets out and paces beside the car.

Roy turns the vehicle off, exits, and unpacks his stuff.

EXT. LOS ANGELES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She finally explodes, every suppressed emotion from the trip coming out at once.

MACY

You don't get to do this. You don't
get to change your mind now, out of
fucking nowhere. It's not a choice
when the options are to hire you or
lose my job. A few days ago, you
wanted nothing to do with any of
this, but then I dragged your mopey
ass across the country and now you
want to play Kodiak again? You know
what this means to me. And what
will happen if you don't show up
tomorrow.

(beat)

That's so fucking easy for you,
isn't it? To not show up. To
disappear. You are a selfish,
pitiful old man who's been living
in a bubble for a fucking decade
and I hate to burst it, but the
rest of the world kept moving
despite you. Do not fuck me with
this. Do *not*.

Macy roars in exhausted frustration.

ROY

I'm sorry, Macy. That's how I feel.

She stares him down, takes a breath, crosses around the car,
and hugs him. Macy pulls back.

MACY

You are a good person. I know that.
But you're not playing Kodiak. If
you don't show up, my dream is
dead.

(MORE)

MACY (CONT'D)

And I know it's my fault for getting into this mess, but I need you. Please don't disappear again.

He watches Macy drive away.

Roy wheels his luggage to the garage, setting it inside the door. He grabs the rest of his things and heads to the house. He tries the door: locked.

He looks to the nearest window. He walks over, tries to open it from the outside to no avail. Roy scans the ground and finds a fair-sized rock.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The rock flies through the window, glass **shattering** into the space. "I'm Sorry For Your Loss" cards cover the floor of he and Trish's bedroom, unread and left behind, originating from a toppled bin. His large frame slumps in after; he's scratched up, but generally fine.

The room is the antithesis of the blank simplicity of his Illinois home: warm, homey, and decorated with personality.

He plugs his nose at a putrid smell, stepping around the glass to sweep the cards back into the bin before stepping into the closet, still filled with her clothes. He looks around to find a gray suit and a small humidior; he opens it and pulls out a joint, setting it behind his ear.

He picks the bin back up and exits the bedroom.

LIVING ROOM

Wincing at the stench, he sees the source: dead flowers, still in their pots, spread about the space. The house is well decorated, stylish for when it was last inhabited.

He sets down the cards, walks to the front door, opens it, and brings in the rest of his things. The streetlights over the road blink on as night falls.

At the back of the room, a **squeaky** glass door leads out into the backyard. Roy props open the door with a *Slaughter Mountain* snowglobe and systematically whips the clumps of withered funeral flowers into the night.

Once finished, Roy grabs the bin and steps outside.

BACKYARD

The yard is fenced off, the garage on one side. Wind-blown blossoms blanket the overgrown area, withered ghosts of the sorrow they once represented. A grill sits off to the side.

Roy sets down the cards, grabs the grill lighter, and sparks his joint. He looks down at the grill area: lighter fluid.

After soaking the cards, he lights them up: a quick fire burns up the past. Soon, the whole works are nothing more than a charred mess in melting plastic.

He heads back inside.

LIVING ROOM

Roy moves aside the snowglobe and walks through the house.

KITCHEN

Roy crosses a well-furnished, dusty kitchen. Empty dishes—the former homes of green bean casseroles, funeral potatoes, and miscellaneous baked goods—are stacked beside the sink, next to a knife block.

He opens the pantry and scans the shelves: canned goods, sweets, popcorn. He shuts the door, heads across the space.

STORAGE ROOM

He enters a storage room, wall-to-wall with the souvenirs of he and Trish's—mostly Trish's—career. Roy rummages until he finds a box labelled "The Queen and Four Kings." He tucks it under his arm and steps out.

KITCHEN

Roy heads back toward the living room and stops, staring at a closed door. He beelines to it.

SCREENING ROOM

He flips on the light: a projector screen looks out at a few rows of theater seats. At the rear, two chairs straddle the center aisle: a backless director's chair to the right, a La-Z-Boy to the left.

MINUTES LATER

Roy sits in the recliner, grinning and eating expired popcorn, as jaunty western music plays over the titles of *Destry Returns*.

EXT. LOS ANGELES HOUSE - NIGHT

The **howl** of a coyote cuts through the night.

A full moon hangs in the air.

Snow begins to fall.

INT. LOS ANGELES HOUSE - SCREENING ROOM - NIGHT

Roy sleeps in the chair, the popcorn bowl slipping from his grasp. The projector screen glitches. A familiar film score trickles from the speakers, growing in volume.

His breaths turn to steam. The screen glitches again: cold, stilted **breathing** joins the music.

The popcorn bowl slides from his grasp and **clatters** to the floor, waking him.

Chattering teeth join the spooky symphony. The screen flashes to Kodiak stalking a young Sharon Cooke through the ski lodge in the first *Slaughter Mountain*.

Roy stands, notices a darkness in the open doorway. Roy side-eyes the room around, grabs the nearest blunt instrument: a speaker stand. He wields it like a baseball bat, the sounds still coming from the mounted speaker.

Behind him, a metal blade pokes through the top of the projector screen. It slides down, cutting a slit vertically down the middle, through classic Kodiak onscreen.

Beat.

In a mad rush, REMAKE KODIAK BLACK (bigger, scarier, younger) charges through the slit at his surprised prey. Roy spins, swings the stand instinctively: the speaker flies off, its cord **ripping** through drywall, and **smashes** into Kodiak's face.

Three teeth shoot from his mouth as he goes to his knees.

Roy scrambles out. Kodiak recovers, roars, and lunges after, wielding an oversized black metal ice axe.

LIVING ROOM

Roy runs for his front door. He reaches the exit as the business end of Kodiak's axe slices through a chunk of his arm on the way to embedding in the doorhandle.

Roy turns to see his assailant inches from him, totally visible for the first time: more monster than man, this Kodiak is dressed in tattered black furs, frostbitten skin blending in beneath. His eyes are bright white.

Kodiak grabs Roy's neck with one hand and easily yanks the axe out of the door with the other. He hoists his prey into the air, cackling and snarling and staring madly.

Roy positions his feet against the door behind and springs forward, tackling the monster.

The axe slides across the floor.

Roy throws a few stiff punches to Kodiak's face; by the third strike, Kodiak headbutts Roy's fist which **cracks** with the breaking of small bones.

Kodiak throws him off and goes for the axe.

Roy retreats when the monster turns his back, stumbling to the bedroom.

BEDROOM

He enters and slams the door behind him. Roy grabs a nearby dresser, dragging it to block the way as the axe **smashes** through the door and sends splinters across the room.

Roy throws the mattress, nightstands, and whatever else he can find between him and the monster, the axe **bashing** wildly through the door the whole time. Roy grabs the rock from earlier, readies to throw in defense.

Everything stops. Roy backs toward the shattered window.

The exposed wall where the dresser was **crashes** inward with a shower of wood and insulation, Kodiak barreling through. His momentum takes him across the room into the opposite wall.

Roy takes off for the new door, a wild swing of the axe barely missing his heel, which Kodiak is already hot on.

LIVING ROOM

He heads toward the back patio, but stops short when he sees nothing behind him in the reflection of the frosting-up-from-the-bottom glass door. Roy turns to an empty room.

Behind him, Kodiak jogs through the backyard. The monster exits from view as Roy turns back.

Roy creeps to the front door, opens it: Kodiak stands about 10 feet away, staring, grinning.

He **slams** the door. Roy looks around for a hiding place and sees his knife block through the kitchen door.

Wary of the front door and the back, he heads that way.

KITCHEN

He sets down the rock and replaces it with a chef's knife and a meat cleaver, one in each hand. Roy tries to grip the cleaver in his left, but can't get his gnarled, broken fingers to close properly and it drops to the ground, embedding at the blade tip.

The patio door **squeaks** open behind him.

Roy tip-toe runs into the pitch-black storage room and shuts the door to a crack, to watch as Kodiak enters the kitchen.

Kodiak stares down at the cleaver in the floor. He squats, pulls it out, and looks up at the storage room door.

STORAGE ROOM

Kodiak enters, scanning the area with a weapon in each hand. Light from the kitchen slices through the room.

In a mirror, a figure catches Kodiak's eye; he spins, bringing the axe cleanly through the neck of a Sharon Cooke cardboard cut-out. He regards it, smirking.

Roy charges from hiding, screaming with rage, tackling Kodiak back into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Kodiak lifts his axe to block the blow; Roy's **stabs** directly through the monster's wrist and pins it to his chest, but he doesn't drop the axe. Kodiak swings with the cleaver in his other hand and **buries** it in Roy's ribs.

Roy stumbles back against the wall, a broken heap of blood and bone with a cleaver in his side. Kodiak just sits in the middle of the kitchen, bleeding.

They stare each other down, both willing the other to make the first move or pass out or die.

Roy reaches to remove the cleaver from his ribs, thinks the better of it, and stops.

Kodiak reaches his free hand over to remove the knife from his wrist and **slides** it out with a grunt. Blood pours from the wound. His seemingly dead hand drops into his lap, fingers loose around the axe handle.

The monster's eyes flicker and his body leans to the side. His breaths slow.

Kodiak slumps forward.

Beat.

ROY
Don't fuck with me.

Kodiak doesn't move.

Roy reaches up, wincing, to grab the rock off the counter. He throws it as hard as he can muster, directly at Kodiak. It **thunks** off the monster's head and **clatters** to the ground.

He studies the totally unresponsive mountain man with blood pooling below him.

Roy gets to his feet, never taking his eyes from Kodiak.

He sticks to the edge of the kitchen, just out of reach.

Once he gets around behind the still-unmoving monster, he moves as quickly as his body will allow to the back door.

LIVING ROOM

He opens the door, propping it open again with the snowglobe.

BACKYARD

Roy picks up the lighter fluid and heads back inside, not registering a growing blanket of snow on the dead flowers.

LIVING ROOM

He crosses the room.

KITCHEN

Roy soaks Kodiak with lighter fluid. When there's no more left, he tosses it to the side and searches for a lighter.

As he shuts a drawer, he sighs and shakes his head.

On his way out of the kitchen, Kodiak's head raises.

LIVING ROOM

Kodiak's dark figure and the glint of the axe fills the kitchen doorway behind Roy, who moves for the patio.

Roy sees the reflection in the door, grabs the snowglobe and fires it at the oncoming slasher. It **shatters** across Kodiak's blocking axe.

BACKYARD

Roy snatches the lighter and turns as Kodiak's axe catches him in the foot. He screams, ignites, and thrusts the flame at Kodiak.

It catches.

The flames spread, Kodiak writhing and roaring.

Roy kicks off his bloody shoe and the axe with a cry of pain. He throws himself back into the snow, away, scrambling toward the garage, unable to take his eyes off the flaming monster. The cleaver dislodges and blood flows from Roy's side.

Kodiak falls to the side, into the snow, **sizzling**.

Roy knows what happens next and doesn't wait around to see. He one-arm drags himself toward the garage.

Behind him, Kodiak rises, his teeth **chattering** as the snow **singes** against his hot flesh and bone. Steam rises from him, up into the full moonlight.

Roy grunts savagely, painting a slow red brushstroke across the snow and withered flowers in his wake.

The monstrous killer grabs his black metal ice axe and eyes Roy: a predator ready to destroy its most dangerous game.

Roy reaches the garage, lunging through the door.

Kodiak catches his foot, taunting him with a chattering cackle before dragging Roy out to meet his fate. Roy's hand is in his bag of luggage, which comes out with him.

Howling violently, spinning, Roy drives the blade of his own ice axe up through Kodiak's chin. Kodiak's hand goes to Roy's neck, reflexively squeezing the life from him.

Together in death's embrace, they lock eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. EASTON PICTURES - ELEVATOR - DAY

Roy stares at his warped, mildly scratched up reflection in the metal of a rising elevator. He wears a sharp-looking gray suit and holds the box labelled "The Queen and Four Kings" in his blistered, cut-up hands.

The elevator halts and opens with a **ding**.

LOBBY

He steps out into the Easton Pictures lobby. The space is medium-sized, clean, and home to a wall dedicated to *Slaughter Mountain*.

Roy stops at the wall and looks across these pieces of his past: posters, action figures, scripts, pictures, props.

VOICE (O.S.)

Can I help you?

A SECRETARY (20s, male) smiles behind the front desk.

ROY

Roy Baker. For Macy Hayes.

SECRETARY

Shoot. I don't think she was expecting you to make it. I'll be right back.

ROY

Thanks.

Roy sits on a chair against the *Slaughter Mountain* wall as the secretary disappears down the hall.

He watches three INTERNS (college-aged) wheel out an empty mail cart. They begin to remove all *Slaughter Mountain* merchandise from display and set it in the cart.

INTERN

Sir, I'm so sorry, but could I have you move. We're, uhhh, in a bit of a time crunch. I'm so sorry.

ROY

You're good.

Roy stands and steps to the side while they remove him from the wall, piece by piece. He glances around: the secretary isn't at the desk and no one is in the main hall.

MAIN HALL

He walks past offices until he spots "MACY HAYES, PRODUCER." Roy tries the door: unlocked.

MACY'S OFFICE

The office is a vision of information and purpose: budgets, call sheets, and immaculately labelled callback numbers are all over. A huge TV has been set up hastily across from the desk. A poster for *The Queen and Four Kings* graces the wall.

Roy sets his box on the desk and notices pictures of Macy and her grandpa. A box set of the *Slaughter Mountain* series, Kodiak and Sharon Cooke on the cover, sits nearby.

MACY (O.S.)

...called and he's feeling a bit under the weather, so Roy Baker-

MAIN HALL

He exits and interrupts Macy, who escorts MEDIA MEMBERS.

ROY

Has made a miraculous recovery.

Roy smiles, waves to the assembled media.

ROY (CONT'D)

Hello.

They wave back collectively.

MACY
 Okay. Let's all head down to
 Grace's office.

Roy steps out beside Macy, knowing the way. They speak in low
 voices, to each other. She eyes him suspiciously.

MACY (CONT'D)
 You were in my office.

ROY
 Looking for you. Here you are.

MACY
 What happened to your face?

ROY
 I had to break into my own house.

MACY
 You couldn't call a locksmith?

Roy shrugs. They reach Grace's office and move aside,
 gesturing the press to file in. Macy locks eyes with Roy.

MACY (CONT'D)
 Does you being here mean...?

ROY
 Macy, I come in peace.

MACY
 Thank you.

Roy smiles and nods. She heads in; Roy follows.

GRACE'S OFFICE

The room is huge, a combination cinema-happy office and
 conference room. Macy begins addressing the media with
 details on the remake.

Roy smiles wide as he sees Grace (70s, twinkly-eyed,
 commanding). They share a long hug.

ROY
 Were you actually going to fire
 her?

GRACE
 Doesn't matter. You're here now.

ROY
Never change, Grace.

GRACE
Would you like to meet your
replacement? He's an improvement.

Roy laughs as Grace puts her hand on his back and steers him
across the room.

ROY
Most people get more kind and
compassionate as they age.

GRACE
I stopped that nonsense.

ROY
Compassion and kindness?

GRACE
Aging.

They stop and Roy reaches out a hand to his REPLACEMENT. A
larger hand grasps his.

ROY
Nice to meet you.

REPLACEMENT (O.S.)
Likewise. You get in a fight or
what, old man?

ROY
Something like that.

REPLACEMENT (O.S.)
How's the other guy looking?

ROY
Like you.

Beat.

MACY
Everyone! Let's get a group photo.

Macy and Roy congregate before the media, Grace and the
Replacement off to the other side.

JOURNALIST
Can everyone list their names and
titles for us?

MACY

Sure. Macy Hayes. Coordinating producer on Slaughter Mountain.

ROY

Roy Baker.

JOURNALIST

And what are you?

Roy glances over at Grace, his Replacement, Macy. Macy's jaw locks with worry. Roy grins.

ROY

Still alive.

LOBBY - LATER

Macy looks over the new wall. So far, only a poster for the new *Slaughter Mountain* sits in the center. She notices the previous decorations on the mail cart: a gun-toting, snowshoe-wearing Trish Quigley action figure sprawls atop the heap.

MACY'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

She sets up the figure in an action pose beside the TV.

Macy sees the box Roy left. She walks around the desk, sits in her chair, reads the label, and smiles.

She opens it: her ruby crown.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: FIVE YEARS LATER

EXT. FILM SET - DAY

Roy, slightly older and dressed in a firefighter's uniform, sits in a director's chair and runs lines. A fire axe leans beside him.

ROY

...the whole county. So choose your weapon and get in the goddamn truck.

He sets down the script and stands, pacing.

ROY (CONT'D)

We can't run anymore. We can't run anymore. We can't *run* anymore.

(beat)

We can't run anymore. We have to stand. We have to fight. If we don't stop it now, that thing could destroy the whole town. Hell, it could destroy the whole county. So choose your weapon and get in the goddamn truck.

Half a decade older, Holden (still blue-haired, now bearded) clutches a viewfinder and calls over. Amy is behind, setting up a shot. Green rubber tentacles are hauled onto the set.

HOLDEN

Ready on set, Roy!

Roy nods, grabs the axe, touches the chair, closes his eyes, takes a breath, and leaves to be the hero.

The brown chair back has two lines in yellow. Faded and worn is "PATRICIA QUIGLEY." Below, new and shiny, is "ROY BAKER."

"K O D I A K"