

# LOW PLACES

A high strangeness murder-mystery.

screenplay by

Jackson Murray

**EXT. FIELD - DAY**

A cow, an unremarkable and content bull, chews wild grass under Wisconsin summer sun. Others do the same. Rolling hills and bluffs surround them.

Beat.

Otherworldly **buzzing** joins the chorus of gnaws, building in intensity until the world feels fit to burst.

Everything flashes out of focus as the buzz ceases.

**FADE TO PINK.**

**FADE BACK TO:**

The cow's quivering body is on its side; its severed head lies nearby.

**CUT TO:**

**ECU - COW'S EYE:**

His milky eye glows a soft, warm pink.

**CUT TO:**

**COW POV:**

The world is still, until...

We lift off the ground, tethered by some invisible cosmic force in the sky.

Below pass grazing land, crop fields, and winding creeks.

Two-lane blacktop slithers past a cemetery.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. CEMETERY - SAME**

One fresh hole interrupts mowed rows that run between squat gravestones: the decomposing severed hand of the spot's previous occupant rests beside its former repose.

Far above, the head continues its journey.

**BACK TO:**

**COW POV:**

Past the cemetery, orange dots of an overgrown pumpkin patch and a farmhouse soon give way to a large, dark figure crossing the road to enter a dense wall of forest.

Houses, signs of impending civilization fly by: a gas station, a trailer park, a baseball field, a hardware store.

A rural town unfolds around the highway.

The dusty brown snake of a bike trail slices through, hugged on either side by woodlands.

A man's **scream** stabs up from below.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. BIKE TRAIL - SAME**

STEVE OLSON (44, thinning hair, coached his daughter's soccer team) falls to the dirt, holding his neck as scream drowns into final, gurgled breaths. One of his shoes remains untied.

Black leather gloves clad THE MURDERER's shaking hands. Blood drips from their glinting, gold-hilted dagger, feeding purple-flecked soil that pulses with strange bio-luminescence below.

Smaller in the sky, the bovine dome soars overhead.

**BACK TO:**

**COW POV:**

The trail cedes to bars and churches and failing businesses.

Distant sounds of music – live, fast, simple – creep into earshot as blocks of blue-collar housing pass by.

It grows louder and coheres into **driving, lo-fi punk**.

At town's edge, the music blasts from an open garage below.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. WIN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - SAME**

Panting, dripping sweat like a coked-up revival preacher, WYATT "WIN" CZERWINSKI (18, queer, lanky) leans over a thrift-store amplifier, wielding a stickered, beat-up electric guitar to create a wailing feedback loop.

Hammering a frenzied finale behind him is LOLA CARREON (18, Chicana, buzzcut). She wears cutoffs and checkered slip-ons with gum soles, a drawn-on snake tattoo wrapping her calf between. The head of her bass drum is crudely christened "The Hospital Bombs."

Lola gives a final bash as Win tugs out the cord from his instrument: in the throes of musical violence, he unstraps the guitar and chokes the neck as if to smash it.

For a few seconds, the only movement is twisting, bug-covered ceiling flypaper that sways over the box-filled garage.

High above, the cow head hangs in the air for a moment before blinking from existence.

**CUT TO BLACK.**

**OPENING CREDITS OVER:**

**MOTIF SEQUENCE**

A past-season pumpkin, the first signs of rot beginning to take hold. Two worms wriggle around the soil below.

**L O W P L A C E S**

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER**

Win and his mother, CHLOE CZERWINSKI (51, placid, practices esotericism indiscriminately), sit at a small table in a sparse kitchen, eating grilled cheese and tomato soup. She shuffles tarot cards.

A half-spent joint and lighter rest in an ashtray, near a pair of scissors.

WIN

I always think I'm gonna smash it, but it always feels wrong. Like, it feels so destructive for no reason.

CHLOE

It's a rite of passage. And we'll get you a new axe before that one zaps you anyway. It's lasted...

She counts in her head.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
 ...33, 34 years now. It's on  
 borrowed time.

WIN  
 There are probably so many people  
 in the world who wish they had a  
 guitar and I'm just gonna destroy a  
 perfectly good one?

CHLOE  
 Not a very punk attitude.

WIN  
 I'm having trouble identifying with  
 punk right now. Anarchy, nihilism,  
 violence... it's starting to feel  
 kinda juvenile or... I dunno.

Chloe sets the shuffled tarot in front of her, grabs the  
 joint, lights it, and puffs lazily.

CHLOE  
 Punk doesn't have to be fueled by  
 anarchy, nihilism, and violence.  
 It's more about general discontent.

WIN  
 But I think I'm content.

CHLOE  
 With the world?

WIN  
 No, but-

CHLOE  
 With fuckin' Brookwood? With this  
 house and these people?

The smoke-yellowed paint on the wall is brighter in the cross-  
 shaped former places where Christian décor hung. A box -  
 filled with porcelain cherubs, Reagan-era Americana, and dead  
 moths - sits atop the fridge.

WIN  
 I don't think the people here are  
 that bad. They seem...fine.

CHLOE  
 You spend a couple months here and  
 you're an expert? I grew up here.

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
 Already escaped once. This place is  
 haunted.

She stares out the window while she takes a slow drag.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
 And it's not ghosts or demons or  
 spirits. It's the people.

Win watches her, waits for her eyes to meet his.

WIN  
 Mom, you gotta get outta this hole.

CHLOE  
 Who here have you had a real  
 conversation with? Outside Lola.

Chloe cuts the burning tip off the joint, returns it to the  
 ashtray, and takes dishes to the sink.

WIN  
 I'm gone in a few weeks. You're  
 stuck.

CHLOE  
 If we can find you a car.

WIN  
 When we find me a car.

CHLOE  
 If and when.

WIN  
 When I'm gone, I don't wanna have  
 to worry about you while I'm...

CHLOE  
 While you're what?

WIN  
 Hangin' with friends or whatever.

Win eyes faded, drawn-on X's on his hands. She returns to the  
 table, splits the tarot deck into three piles.

CHLOE  
 Dude, you know I support your  
 lifestyle choices. But I don't know  
 if sobriety's right for college.  
 People are gonna be weird about it.

WIN

In the words of my wonderful  
mother: my self-worth is unreliant  
on the opinions of others.

CHLOE

Sounds like a real hypocrite.

He sighs, gives a slow smile.

WIN

I am nervous about one thing and it  
might be stupid.

Chloe re-stacks the three piles into one once again.

WIN (CONT'D)

I don't know if I've, like, had  
enough life experiences to get what  
I should out of college...

CHLOE

You were raised by a single mother  
who's moved you nine times in the  
last 12 years. We're living in your  
dead grandparents' house that  
smells like Pall Malls and  
emphysema.

(beat)

You're queer in a world that too  
often equates ignorance with  
acceptance.

(beat)

You had that hornet go in your ear  
when you were little. That sucked.

(beat)

And you're so lanky.

Win bursts out laughing.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

What? I'm not gonna lie to my only  
son.

WIN

Maybe you're right.

She takes the top five cards and lays them face down in a  
horseshoe pattern. Chloe closes her eyes, channeling intent.

CHLOE

What are you up to today?

He shrugs.

WIN

I dunno. Lola and I might go to the cemetery tonight. Harness the creative energy of death to come up with a band name.

CHLOE

Still Hell Merchants?

WIN

The Hospital Bombs.

Chloe laughs softly, eyes still closed.

WIN (CONT'D)

What about you? Any grand plans?

She opens her eyes and flips the cards: The High Priestess, The Hermit, Two of Wands, Three of Cups, and The Tower.

CHLOE

Staying inside again, I guess.

WIN

Why?

CHLOE

It is very clear to me that if I go on a journey today, I'll be met with chaos and destruction.

WIN

Mom.

CHLOE

No thank you. Not today.

As if on cue, police sirens wail into existence; Chloe nods and chuckles, gesturing generally toward the sound.

### **WIN'S BEDROOM - LATER**

*Harper* is paused on a small TV: Paul Newman is in a tank top, wet and mid-drip. The consistent rubbing of unhurried under-the-shorts masturbation is the only sound.

Win's room is neat, personal: Agatha Christies, pulp sci-fi, and Stephen Kings line a shelf; band posters (Ezra Furman, Bikini Kill, The Replacements) adorn the walls; glow-in-the-dark plastic stars and UFOs look down from the ceiling.

Next to two half-drunk water glasses on his nightstand, his cellphone **vibrates**: Lola.



He lets it buzz.

**LATER**

Win stands at his window, observes the neighborhood.

Working in her perfect flower garden next door is SHERRY MACK (49, joyous, Gemini). She waves with dirty, bare hands and converses with an ELDERLY COUPLE on their walk.

OFFICER KIP LARSEN (35, divorced, listens to misspelled post-grunge bands like Staind and Puddle of Mudd) pulls into his driveway across the road and exits his squad car. He licks an unlit cigarette, massaging his temples.

Down the block, a church looms over a large parking lot. Its front doors are propped open, a distant organ version of "In the Hall of the Mountain King" ringing from within.

A few sporadic, far-off gunshots sound.

**LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Bad polka blares from an ancient record player. Dust is settled around downturned frames atop. One photo remains upright: Win and Chloe in front of a camper, wearing pajamas and laughing.

**KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Chloe rolls pierogi dough and giggles while Win angrily massages cheese and onions into a bowl of mashed potatoes.

WIN  
 ...don't turn this off right now,  
 I'll smash this glass bowl of  
 potatoes.

She can't stop laughing, dancing horribly to the awful music.

WIN (CONT'D)  
 You hate this as much as I do, turn  
 it off. Please.

Chloe continues her unpracticed routine. Win pulls mash-coated hands from the bowl and takes a step toward the sink. She steps between, taunting him.

He locks his jaw and moves toward the record player.

WIN (CONT'D)  
I'll do it myself.

CHLOE  
With mashed potato hands?

WIN  
Stop the fucking record.

CHLOE  
You wouldn't. I didn't raise a son  
who would.

WIN  
Mom.

Chloe bursts out laughing again.

WIN (CONT'D)  
*Chloe...Czerwinski.*

CHLOE  
You don't remember my middle name,  
do you?

#### **WIN'S BEDROOM - LATER**

Bava's *The Girl Who Knew Too Much* is paused on TV: Leticia Roman is frightened in a nightgown. The consistent rubbing of unhurried under-the-shorts masturbation is the only sound.

Next to three half-drunk glasses of water on his nightstand, his cellphone vibrates: Lola again.

Win groans.

#### **GARAGE - NIGHT**

Garage door open a foot, Chloe sits on Lola's drum throne and strums Win's unplugged guitar. She's good, whisper-singing sporadic words to a classic like Blondie's "Atomic."

Win, backpack on and dressed in black, peeks in to bid adieu.

He watches her play.

WIN  
Rhythm guitarist is open.

CHLOE  
Rhythm my butt, I had to tune this  
out of Drop D. Have fun at the  
cemetery.

WIN  
Thanks. I'll be home late.

CHLOE  
Cool.

WIN  
Cool. Love you.

CHLOE  
Love you.

He leaves.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
Oh yeah, Wyatt?

Win peeks back into the garage.

WIN  
Yeah?

CHLOE  
Stay off the bike trail. I think  
your plans crept into my intent  
when I did my reading and I'm still  
processing, but you should take a  
different path to Lola's.

WIN  
Okay. Thanks.

**FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER**

Win heads out, shutting the screen door behind him. He disappears a moment before walking his bike down the sidewalk and to the street.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Bug-buzzing streetlights unfold before Win like lighthouses in the night as he glides down the road.

He passes Sherry as she packs up. Her garden is symmetrical; immaculate; white, pink, and red.

WIN  
Hi, Miss Sherry.

She waves amicably, garden shears in dirty hand.

SHERRY  
Hey there, Mister Win! Enjoy the  
weather. Another beautiful night.

He waves back, continuing on his way as she gazes up into the night sky, smiling and inhaling deeply.

Win slows past Officer Larsen's house: the curtains are drawn and little light comes from within. A toppled memorial reads "R.I.P. LEONIDAS" in the front lawn.

He stops, stands it back up, and keeps on his way.

Win zips past the church, "In the Hall of the Mountain King" amplifying and receding as he passes.

#### **BIKE TRAIL - MINUTES LATER**

Where the trail crosses the road, a "CLOSED BY ORDER OF BROOKWOOD POLICE" sign has been stapled to a trail marker.

Crickets chirp, town dogs bark, streetlights hum.

#### **PUSH IN ON:**

Down the trail, ripped caution tape flails in the wind. A few dots of odd purple light pulse on the ground, just off-trail.

#### **BACK TO:**

Win speeds past, taking Chloe's advice without question.

Beat.

Crickets chirp, town dogs bark, streetlights hum.

#### **EXT. TRAILER PARK - ENTRANCE - NIGHT**

Lola rips shitty wheelies in the street, beat-boxing to score her stunts. Her bike is older than Win's: a scratched-up, spray-painted stunt bike with rusted pegs. A rubber band holds a clump of wildflowers in her water bottle holder.

She sees Win, rides out to meet him...

Circles him.

LOLA  
Yo, what the fuck?

WIN  
I was busy.

Win hops off and props his bike on its kickstand.

LOLA  
Doing what?

WIN  
I wasn't busy.

Lola's circles grow tighter.

WIN (CONT'D)  
This is aggressive.

LOLA  
Bitch, you're my best friend.

And tighter.

WIN  
Lola, I'm attempting to establish boundaries. Sorry for being passive aggressive, but here we are and I'm growing right in front of you, aren't I?  
(beat)  
I still love you and you're still my best friend.

Tighter.

LOLA  
That fuckin' sucks. But I loved watching you process that and I respect your goals.

WIN  
Thank you.

She brakes directly before him.

LOLA  
Steve Olson was murdered on the bike trail this morning.

WIN  
What?

LOLA  
Decapitated. Maybe worse. Depends  
who you ask.

**EXT. STEVE OLSON'S HOUSE - LATER**

Flowers line the front steps of a home. Red memorial fezzes hang off deck posts. Mozart's "Masonic Funeral Music" plays from within.

Lola and Win pause as they bike past; Lola tosses wildflowers to join the others.

**EXT. GAS STATION - LATER**

DEBBIE STEINBRINK (27, lazy eye, has worked at the station for 13 years) and MIRI BUNK (72, glaucoma glasses, has worked at the station for 57 years) converse on a bench outside the gas station.

Miri puffs a cig, ashing into a smoker's post; Debbie hunts bugs with a fly swatter and sips a giant-canned malt liquor.

They wear matching visors and blue work shirts.

DEBBIE  
...under a portal. Or maybe inside  
it, y'know? Seen goddamn phenomena  
that'll keep y'up at night.  
(beat)  
My cousin Luke works for the  
government and he says you wouldn't  
believe what they know. What  
they're not tellin' us.

MIRI  
Who?

DEBBIE  
Luke. My cousin. He's in the  
National Guard, I think. Says...

Win and Lola ride past, giving quick waves. Debbie and Miri return the gesture.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)  
 ...we're stuck somewhere between  
 strange and stranger, and that it's  
 only a matter of time before it all  
 starts unfoldin' and foldin' back  
 in on itself and we're nothin' but  
 flesh pancakes for the cosmic  
 fiends on the Other Side.

MIRI  
 He a Steinbrink?

The biking duo fade into the night.

DEBBIE  
 Plueger. My Dad's side.  
 (beat)  
 Oh shit. I ever tell y'about my  
 uncle Dinky Plueger? First off,  
 better not ever bleed around that  
 freak or he'll-

**COUNTRY ROAD - MINUTES LATER**

**TRACK WITH:**

Lola leading, they ride down a cracked-asphalt road. Fields  
 cede to dense, dark woods, and then a rotting, overgrown  
 pumpkin patch announced by a birdshot-riddled sign for "Burch  
 Valley Pumpkins."

LOLA  
 Didn't know pumpkins could stink  
 like this. Smells like death.

WIN  
 Holy shit, it's so bad.

LOLA  
 Someone's gotta-

A **laugh** rings through the night as they pass a farmhouse and  
 the rusted pickup truck before it. They grow silent as they  
 cruise past.

On the front deck, shadowed, PHYLLIS BURCH (63, wiry, won  
 "Best Pumpkin Pie" at the local 4H fair 18 years in a row)  
 sits on a porch swing and cackles at an unheard joke.

They keep going until they reach the cemetery entrance.

**EXT. CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS**

Win and Lola stow their bikes behind bushes. Lola pushes the wrought iron gate open: it creaks obnoxiously.

WIN  
I had a couple ideas on the ride.

They enter, close the gate behind them.

LOLA  
Shoot.

WIN  
Rotting Pumpkins.

Win unpacks a flashlight; Lola uses her phone.

LOLA  
Too close to Smashing.

WIN  
The Cackling Widows.

LOLA  
That's cool. Spooky as fuck.

WIN  
Too spooky?

LOLA  
Maybe. Probably.

They cross through grave rows, looking at the names, dates of death, inscriptions. Small American flags stick in the ground in front of some.

LOLA (CONT'D)  
Harvey and the Hand Grenades.

WIN  
Which of us is Harvey?

LOLA  
I'm the Hand Grenades, obviously.

WIN  
No. I don't wanna be Harvey.

Win crosses to a new row while Lola keeps on.

WIN (CONT'D)  
You think this is legal?



LOLA  
What? Being in a cemetery?

WIN  
Being in a cemetery at night.

LOLA  
Probably not? Who cares?

WIN  
Fair.

LOLA  
And, I mean, who else is gonna come here right now?

WIN  
Whoever cut off Steve Olson's head.

LOLA  
Why would a murderer come to a cemetery? Everyone's already dead.

A vehicle passes the gate, slowing soon after.

WIN  
Severed Head Parade.

LOLA  
Ooooh, that's good.

WIN  
Way spookier than Cackling Widows...

LOLA  
True. I still like it. Imagine the album covers.

WIN  
Severed Head Parade Presents Night of the Rotting Pumpkins.

LOLA  
We a horror band now?

WIN  
I'm open to the vibes.

A hideous **creak** interrupts them; they instinctively dive to the ground. Win squat-runs to Lola, who peeks over a grave. They whisper.

LOLA  
Looks like one person.

WIN  
Caretaker?

LOLA  
Murderer. Probably.

The FIGURE, cloaked in darkness, leaves the gate open as they scan a flashlight across the stones. They head in the general direction of Severed Head Parade.

WIN  
I would like to leave.

LOLA  
No shit, dude.

Win and Lola weave low through rows, keeping cover between them and the stranger.

The figure stops and shines the light toward them.

They freeze.

It approaches, looms. Their beam casts shadows over the frightened duo.

As the light moves away, they crawl to the next row and peek around a tall grave.

WIN  
I think we're good.

Eyes on the figure, they move for the entrance and—

Win almost falls in a hole. Lola catches him. They look down to find an open casket yawning up at them.

And the maggoty severed hand Win tripped over.

Beat.

They get the fuck outta there.

### **ON OPEN GRAVE**

The beam follows them as they tear away on their bikes.

Unperturbed, the stranger approaches the open grave, carrying a shovel and wearing black leather gloves.

They pause as fireflies come to life around them. The figure basks in the beauty of the moment.

Beat.

The stranger searches nearby and finds the goal: "HERB 'SCOOTER' DEGENHARDT (1939-2002) Loving Son, Uncle, Friend." Before it, a weathered blue trucker hat is nailed to a cross.

Shovel hits dirt.

**SMASH TO:**

**INT. OFFICER LARSEN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER**

**BIRD'S EYE:**

Larsen lies across kitchen linoleum, puffing a just-lit cigarette and blowing out smoke in long, steady streams.

**BACK TO:**

He flicks ash in a dog bowl with pieces of left-behind kibble. He wears a tank top and sweatpants. He's been crying.

Knocks at the door shake him from his sad stupor.

WIN (O.S.)

Larsen!? You awake? It's Wyatt  
Czerwinski from down the street.

Larsen groans, gets to his feet. He ashes his cig in the sink amidst many others and splashes cold water across his face.

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

Officer Larsen? We can hear you.

OFFICER LARSEN

Hold your horses, kid, I'm comin'.  
(under his breath)  
Goddamn midnight, Jesus Christ...

He grabs his police belt off a table, straps it on. On his way to the door, he checks his pistol is loaded and passes a shelf of trophies and baseball memorabilia: a wood bat - "Kip's First Dinger" - is preserved in a glass case.

Larsen takes a deep breath.

WIN (O.S.)

Officer L-

He swings open the door to Lola and Win crowding the entry.

OFFICER LARSEN  
What?

WIN  
Can we come in?

OFFICER LARSEN  
Take a step back.

WIN  
We—

OFFICER LARSEN  
Take. A step. Back.

**EXT. OFFICER LARSEN'S HOUSE - PORCH - CONTINUOUS**

They do. He steps out and shuts the door behind.

OFFICER LARSEN  
You don't hafta enter my home to  
tell me whatever it is you're about  
to tell me.

He shakes his head at Lola.

OFFICER LARSEN (CONT'D)  
Ms. Carreon. Good to see you again.  
Ropin' the new kid in quick, huh?

She gives an obnoxious fake smile.

OFFICER LARSEN (CONT'D)  
What's goin' on?

WIN  
We were out at the cemetery just  
now and—

OFFICER LARSEN  
Why?

WIN  
What?

OFFICER LARSEN  
Why were you at the cemetery in the  
middle of the night?

WIN  
We were visiting my grandparents.

OFFICER LARSEN  
 Fine people, God rest their souls.  
 Still against the law.

LOLA  
 Is it illegal to pay your goddamn  
 respects?

OFFICER LARSEN  
 Past 9 PM, yes.

WIN  
 Whatever. Sorry. We found a grave  
 someone dug up. And a...hand.

OFFICER LARSEN  
 A hand?

LOLA  
 A dead one.

WIN  
 And I think whoever did it was back  
 there again tonight. We ran, but...

LOLA  
 Graverobbing serial killer vibes  
 for sue.

WIN  
 They had a shovel.

Larsen leans back against his house and slides to the ground,  
 head in his hands.

OFFICER LARSEN  
 I'll look into it tomorrow mornin'.

WIN  
 But—

OFFICER LARSEN  
 My dog just died. And today there  
 was that horrible business on the  
 bike trail.  
 (beat)  
 My ex-wife's been tellin' everyone  
 I got lupus. Which I don't.  
 (beat)  
 Tomorrow morning.

Lola eyes the "R.I.P. LEONIDAS" memorial, toppled over again.

LOLA  
You Greek?

OFFICER LARSEN  
What?

LOLA  
Leonidas.

OFFICER LARSEN  
It's from a movie. Can you two  
please leave me alone?

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN**

Win and Lola sit with Chloe, the doomed tarot still out. Mostly-empty pierogi plates before them, Win and Lola are dumbfounded, processing; Chloe stares into space.

CHLOE  
Colten Kratky was always a bit off.  
Or Huggie Hobbs – he's had some  
incidents. Maybe Smudge Steinbrink.  
LT Calhoun was always weird with  
roadkill... Does make you wonder  
what they're doin' with the corpse.

**LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Lola and Chloe pass a joint on the couch while Win dozes on the floor between them. An evangelist preaches on TV.

LOLA  
...like I can't put my faith in,  
like, some big white dude in the  
sky. I can't even put my faith in  
big white dudes not in the sky,  
know what I mean? And these con men  
are out here preachin' trickle-down  
faith. Shit's whack.

CHLOE  
The original Hebrew translation for  
the "virgin" birth is actually  
"young" birth. Mary was a young,  
strong single mother and these  
ancient prudes are spinnin' on this  
stuff when, in reality...

LOLA  
Mary fuckin'.

CHLOE  
Exactly.

LOLA  
Think she came?

CHLOE  
Ehhh... Stable floor... 1st century  
so pre-foreplay, pre-vibrator...

LOLA  
Missionary for sure.

CHLOE  
Missionary...with a carpenter...

LOLA  
Good with wood. Savior swimmers.

CHLOE  
Still: slim chance. I think I'd  
have stuck out Catholicism longer  
if the answer was yes.

Win's head falls, hits Chloe's knee. He jolts up.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
You good?

WIN  
I'm good. Gotta hit the hay. Lola,  
you stayin'?

LOLA  
Yessir.

WIN  
Cool. Night.

CHLOE  
Night.

LOLA  
Night.

Win trudges down the hall, disappearing into his room.

Beat.

Lola winces, shifts in her seat.

LOLA (CONT'D)  
Oh shit, you got tampons? I'll be  
in a puddle in about 45 minutes.

CHLOE  
Bathroom closet.

Relieved, she sits back.

LOLA  
Sweet, thanks.

Chloe passes the joint back to her.

LOLA (CONT'D)  
What was it like? Playin' music?

CHLOE  
Dirty, fast, scary. Thrilling.

LOLA  
Miss it?

CHLOE  
Every day.

LOLA  
What a dream.

CHLOE  
Hard lifestyle for a kid. I... It  
didn't make sense to put Wyatt  
through that.

LOLA  
He's leaving. You could-

#### WIN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

LOLA (O.S.)  
-always get back into it.

Win, shirt off, listens in bed.

CHLOE (O.S.)  
Maybe. Maybe. I don't know, I...

He blinks, eyelids growing heavy.

**SMASH TO:**

#### MOTIF SEQUENCE

A daddy long legs crosses the pumpkin, the fruit collapsing into itself and browning as it surrenders to decay.

The low cosmic **buzz** vibrates into existence, joined by warped chords from "In the Hall of the Mountain King" and Phyllis Burch's cackling.



Each rises and falls in volume, as if attempting to drown out the other sounds.

**SMASH TO BLACK.**

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - CHLOE'S ROOM - MORNING**

Morning light illuminates Chloe, surrounded by empty boxes. She's in the closet, sipping coffee and looking through dead parent stuff.

She thumbs a rack of clip-on ties and brooches atop a dresser, lingering on a few before pushing the whole thing into the nearest box.

Now exposed behind it is a small hatch in the wall. Chloe opens it: under an ancient pack of half-smoked cigarettes and some old coins is an innocuous, corny-looking scrapbook labelled "Lake Winnebago - 1973."

She flips to the first page: a naked man bearing the magazine-clipped head of Ronald Reagan. Each page is the same: Jimmy Stewart, Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye, Gerald Ford-

**MOMENTS LATER**

Chloe stares at the open closet and the scrapbook toppled on the floor inside. She cries softly.

A knock at the door.

**HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Win stands outside his mother's bedroom door.

WIN  
Mom?

CHLOE (O.S.)  
Wyatt?

WIN  
Lola and I are headed out.

CHLOE (O.S.)  
Be open to new paths today. And  
keep an eye out for doubles.

WIN  
Doubles?

CHLOE (O.S.)  
Like deja vu or symmetry or twins.

WIN  
Alright.

He heads back down the hallway.

**KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Lola waits at the front door; they take their leave.

On the table, a four-card tarot spread is laid out: Two of Pentacles, The Tower, Two of Cups, and Two of Wands.

**EXT. STREET - MORNING**

Win and Lola, bikes against a tree, wait outside Larsen's house. Lola throws rocks at a road sign while Win paces.

LOLA  
You're takin' the whole boundaries thing a little serious, dude. Like, I'm not some overbearing partner or whatever.

WIN  
I know. I... We moved around so much, so it's... I can't become reliant on or too attached to someone I'll leave.

LOLA  
How many me's have you had?

WIN  
Like...six?

LOLA  
Six? *Dude.*

WIN  
You're my favorite you. So there's that.

LOLA  
You're the only you I ever had, bitch.

WIN  
That feels like slut-shaming.

LOLA

What am I supposed to do? Been here  
my whole life and I feel like  
you're the only one who ever-

Across the street, Sherry has begun her daily gardening. She wears a smock the same color as her flowers.

SHERRY

Hello! What're you two up to today?

Lola waves, annoyed. Win crosses the road to talk, relieved at the intrusion.

WIN

Helping Officer Larsen. He's late.

SHERRY

Oh. Huh. Police business. Serious  
stuff, I'm sure.

WIN

Very serious. Your flowers are  
beautiful by the way.

SHERRY

I appreciate that, Win. Sometimes I  
think no one notices. I don't do  
this for me, ya know?. It's for  
everyone on the street. There's an  
art to it I think, but I always  
found if you send out love while  
you care for them, if it's a pure,  
positive love, they'll respond with  
beauty and color and-

LOLA

Win!

Larsen has appeared, locking his door behind him.

WIN

Sorry. Police business.

Sherry offers a smile and a thumbs up as Win jogs back over. Larsen shares a wave with Sherry and notices the intrepid duo; he's had a rough morning.

OFFICER LARSEN

What're you two doin'?

LOLA

It's 8:43.

OFFICER LARSEN

Okay?

Larsen opens his cruiser, tosses in a bag lunch.

LOLA

Who knows what's been goin' on the last 43 minutes while you been sob-knobbin' to NCIS.

WIN

We wanted to follow you out to the cemetery, show you what we found.

OFFICER LARSEN

Y'know, I think "Scooby Doo bullshit" is in the police handbook under justifiable reasons to use mace and I-

An older man's voice comes over the police radio.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

Kip? Ya there?

He leans in, picks up the receiver.

OFFICER LARSEN

What's up?

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

Yer gonna wanna take a drive out to Dave Peterson's when ya get the chance. He's...uhhh...been havin' some trouble with his cows.

OFFICER LARSEN

Not my job. Have him call the DNR.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

You'll wanna head out there and talk to Dave either way. It's... it's different.

OFFICER LARSEN

Right.

Larsen returns the radio to its home.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

Kip?

He grabs it again, annoyed.

OFFICER LARSEN

Yeah?

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

How ya holdin' up? Doin' okay?

OFFICER LARSEN

I'm fine, Dad.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)

Cool deal, bud. Alright. Ten-four.

**EXT. STREET - MINUTES LATER**

Win and Lola follow Larsen on their bikes. They pass the gas station; Miri and Deb are outside.

**EXT. CEMETERY - MINUTES LATER**

Larsen sits against a grave, breathing long draws in through his nose and out through his mouth, holes dug on either side of him. The rotted hand sits nearby, as do Win and Lola.

Beat.

Win and Lola lock eyes, afraid to break the silence.

OFFICER LARSEN

You two head home.

WIN

You good?

OFFICER LARSEN

I'm fine.

WIN

You should talk to someone. Maybe—

OFFICER LARSEN

You two head home.

Lola nudges Win, leaving Larsen to his job.

**SERIES OF SHOTS - LARSEN'S DAY**

**SCORED BY LARSEN'S BREATHING, LOUDER WITH EACH CUT**

- Sitting in his **CRUISER**, he makes sure his gun is loaded. Larsen holsters it and pulls a salami sandwich from the glovebox. He stares off into space while he chews.

- Larsen looks down at the corpse hand in **THE CEMETERY**. Bugs crawl through it, over it. He slides on black leather gloves to handle the decomposed appendage.

- DAVE PETERSON (56, short, guts chewing tobacco) paces around the headless cow corpse in his **FIELD**, miming the predatory stalk and kill of something like Bigfoot. Larsen tries to write in his notepad, but his pen's dead.

DAVE PETERSON

...know Brookwood's had its share of weird shit, but this hadta be somethin' we haven't had around here before. Big frickin' sumbitch, too. Big'n mean'n dangerou-

- Flipping through stations, he stops on an AM radio preacher mid-sermon. A crusted puke stain adorns his collar. He tries to light a cigarette, but the lighter's dead.

EVANGELIST (O.S.)

...to keep pushing. You cannot stop; you must put your faith in the lord. He will endure, you can be assured of that. And if He is in you, you will endure. You do not need drugs or material possessions. You do not need to seek solace in anything or anyone but our savior-

- Larsen retches as he tries to put the severed hand in a plastic bag using a stick.

- Squatting by the bovine corpse, Larsen eyes its cauterized neck. Peterson still muses.

DAVE PETERSON

...was a frickin' mystery to me, too. Been hot, so maybe the sun? Or I seen some shows about these fellers in Utah who been-

- He talks on his cell on the **SIDE OF THE ROAD**, in the fetal position on his trunk. He smokes a cigarette burnt to an inch-long ash end.

OFFICER LARSEN

I don't. I don't have it. I know  
it's serious. It's very serious. I  
don't know why she's telling  
everyone that.

(beat)

I'm not lyin'.

(beat)

Why would I lie about that?

- Larsen naps in his CRUISER as a car flies by.

**EXT. TRAILER PARK - ENTRANCE - DAY**

Lola uses liquid eyeliner to draw a skull on her hand while  
Win spikes pop-pop snappers into the sidewalk.

WIN

I don't trust Officer Larsen.

LOLA

In what way?

WIN

To keep his shit tight in  
general... To do his job...

LOLA

That dude's so fucked up.

WIN

One cop in Brookwood and he has a  
breakdown when there's a murderer  
on the loose.

Win lies in the grass next to Lola.

WIN (CONT'D)

What if we stepped in?

LOLA

Like, as cops?

WIN

More like private investigators.

LOLA

The ol' teenage gumshoe racket.

WIN

Gumshoe. Sleuth. Dick. Whatever you  
prefer.

(MORE)

WIN (CONT'D)

Predators don't go into hibernation after one kill, especially if they don't feel threatened. You could be next. Me. My mom. Neighbors. Ladies at the gas station. Your abuela.

LOLA

Not like I got a lot goin' on right now anyway. Mostly lurkin'.

WIN

Lurking's an important part of any investigation. Maybe the most important.

Win gets to his feet and paces.

WIN (CONT'D)

You think the murder and the grave robberies are related?

Gunshots ring in the distance; they don't react.

LOLA

I know I said that stuff about murderers not goin' in cemeteries or whatever, but whoever that was felt pretty pretty murder-y to me.

WIN

Based on what?

LOLA

Vibes.

WIN

A hunch, I love it.

LOLA

Do you think it's all related?

WIN

Slim chance. But a dick isn't much of a dick if they don't follow hunches.

LOLA

And what are you if not a dick.

(beat)

You know what that means?

WIN

What?



LOLA  
We gotta lurk.

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Lola and Win lie on the couch. Chloe roots around in the kitchen.

CHLOE (O.S.)  
A stakeout, that's fun.

LOLA  
I think the murder and the  
graverobberies might be related.

CHLOE (O.S.)  
How interesting. Did you two end up  
seeing anything that made sense  
with the doubles thing today?

WIN  
I don't think so.

LOLA  
There were two holes in the  
cemetery.

CHLOE (O.S.)  
That doesn't feel right.

She enters the room, sets Win's backpack against the couch.

LOLA  
Anything fun tonight, Chloe?

CHLOE  
Nothin' planned.

WIN  
Mom, you need to leave the house.

Chloe sits on the arm of the couch, bites at her fingernails.

CHLOE  
Yep.

WIN  
You have to try to make some  
friends here.

LOLA  
Good luck.

CHLOE

(to Lola)

My son thinks very little of the fact that this is a horrible, strange, unnatural place.

WIN

It's not horrible.

LOLA

Dude, we're investigating a murder cuz the town cop is broken.

WIN

What about Sherry next door?

CHLOE

What about Sherry next door?

WIN

She seems genuinely nice. And she moved here a few months before us so she's not part of the town you knew. She's out in that garden all day. Bet she's lonely too.

CHLOE

I dunno. She's kinda...

LOLA

Weird vibes.

CHLOE

Diggin' up corpses to fertilize flowers vibes. Specifically.

WIN

You've only seen her through a window. And we have weird vibes too. Arguably way weirder.

LOLA

He does make a sound point.

CHLOE

Fuck you, Judas.

(beat)

I made you two banana bread for the stakeout, make sure you grab forks.

**MOTIF SEQUENCE**

The pumpkin is halfway to rot, withered and awful. Multiple daddy long legs crawl into its infected cavity.

The low cosmic **buzz** hums over a faint, distant few notes of "In the Hall of the Mountain King."

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK**

They pass dense woods, unaware of something dark and large moving through the trees.

Lola instinctively crosses to the wrong side of the road - away from the trees - and speeds up.

**EXT. PUMPKIN PATCH - MINUTES LATER**

Win and Lola pass the pumpkin patch, covering noses to avoid the stench. The door to Phyllis Burch's house is open, TV din drifting out from within. Win glances at the rusty pickup.

LOLA

Maybe she'd give you a deal.

WIN

I'll keep that in mind.

**EXT. CEMETERY - HILL - NIGHT**

On a low hill overlooking the cemetery and road, the gumshoes sprawl on a picnic blanket with binoculars, flashlights, sleeping bags, and pepper spray. They dig into a loaf of banana bread.

WIN

So what's the deal with the pumpkin hag?

LOLA

Phyllis Burch. She and her husband had the pumpkin patch long as I remember. Used to be a big thing to pick out your pumpkin and they had jack-o'-lantern contests and caramel apples and shit. Her husband died like, last year I think. Patch never opened back up.

WIN  
How'd he die?

LOLA  
Kids at school say she did it.  
Papers said heart attack. I think  
it's somewhere between, like  
everything else in this town.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. PHYLLIS BURCH'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY**

Phyllis sits on the corner of her bed, in shadow. She stares off into nothing, into the void of her future.

A landline phone on the nightstand rings and rings.

Knocks and muffled yells come from downstairs, outside.

Her husband, DENNY BURCH, lies in bed, dead.

**BACK TO:**

**EXT. CEMETERY - HILL - NIGHT**

WIN  
What's between heart attack and  
murder?

Lola shrugs.

WIN (CONT'D)  
She makes the list.

LOLA  
Number one with a bullet.

Beat.

WIN  
I'm worried about my mom.

LOLA  
She's got issues, but I don't think  
she's a murderer.

Win doesn't acknowledge this.

WIN

She barely leaves the house. I think shit's hittin' her harder than she lets on.

LOLA

I get it, Brookwood sucks. It gets to you. Things are different here.

WIN

It isn't that. It... The last few years have been rough on her, dude. We never stayed in one place long and we were out West when my grandparents started to get bad. She kept sayin' we didn't have money to make the trip and we would when we could, but we were livin' out of a goddamn camper. Wouldn't have been any different than any other move.

(beat)

She was afraid to come back. Then they were dead. And we got the house, which was great because the camper died too...

LOLA

R.I.P.

WIN

R.I.P.

(beat)

But there was no time to process and so much shame. And she's back in the house and the town that haunted her.

LOLA

Did somethin' happen to her?

WIN

Probably, but she doesn't talk about her childhood. I never knew 'em, but I feel like my grandparents were bad. Like, they fucked her up and never knew it.

A truck slows near the cemetery gate.

LOLA

Oh shit, here we go.

**BINOCULAR POV:**

They watch as someone throws garbage bags into the ditch.

LOLA (CONT'D)  
 Libertarians...  
 (yelling)  
 Hey, fuck you!

**BACK TO:**

Win lies down, looking up at the stars.

LOLA (CONT'D)  
 Can I tell you a story that might  
 make you feel better?

WIN  
 Sure.

Lola lies next to him, vulnerable but measured.

LOLA  
 The year I moved in with my abuela,  
 right after Abue Raul died,  
 somethin' fucked me up. I was like  
 nine. One day, I was playin'  
 outside and like, I felt some shit  
 I still can't even explain, dude,  
 like it was fear and fuckin'... I  
 felt so...helpless... I felt  
 something that was in control, ya  
 know? Somethin' else. I saw this  
 big black shape, like it was made  
 of darkness but like if darkness  
 was 7-foot tall and tryna be human  
 and doin' a bad fuckin' job, and it  
 just watched me, dude. For like, I  
 dunno, it felt like a coupla  
 minutes but the scariest fuckin'  
 coupla minutes you could ever  
 imagine. Then it was gone and I was  
 alone and abuela was yellin' for  
 me. And it was night. I'd been gone  
 almost six hours. Don't know how to  
 explain it, dude. And like, I  
 fuckin' swear there were other  
 people there. Other kids. I wasn't  
 playin' alone. But I was alone when  
 it was over and the other kids said  
 I was makin' everything up, that I  
 spent the day with them and  
 everything was normal.

WIN  
That's fucked.

LOLA  
Dude, I know.

WIN  
Thanks for sharing that, that must  
have been hard.

LOLA  
Actually it was great.

WIN  
Oh. So do you like wanna talk more  
about it?

LOLA  
Fuck no. Never again.

WIN  
Quick question before "never again"  
officially starts: how was that  
supposed to make me feel better?

Lola bursts out laughing, riding the emotional high of  
unburdening something heavy to someone trusted.

LOLA  
Sounded more helpful in my head, I  
dunno. Like maybe your mom had some  
shit like that happen and then she  
escaped. Got away from it.

WIN  
And now she's back.

LOLA  
Yeah, not great.

An SUV passes on the road, swerving between lanes and  
stopping past the cemetery gate. Lola quickly re-enters  
detective mode and Win follows suit.

LOLA (CONT'D)  
This could be something.

**BINOCULAR POV:**

A DRUNK MAN gets out of the vehicle and takes a leak.

WIN  
Future manslaughterer at best.

**BACK TO:**

Lola breaks into a yawn.

LOLA  
Stakeouts suck, dude.

**LATER**

Win and Lola are passed out in their sleeping bags.

A humanoid shape, gigantic and darker than night, walks past. Its enormous, somehow silent footfalls leave huge imprints.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**EXT. WIN'S HOUSE - MORNING**

Chloe sips coffee and watches through her screen door as the neighborhood makes its Sunday exodus. Some walk, some drive. Church bells ring through the air, joined by a faraway "In the Hall of the Mountain King."

Satisfied she's alone, Chloe walks outside, sits on the curb, and lights a joint. In the distance, Win and Lola advance toward her.

She sips, puffs, takes in outside air until they arrive.

LOLA  
Can I throw this in your bins?

Lola has the garbage bags from last night tied to her bike.

CHLOE  
Sure.

Win sits next to his mother as Lola tosses the bags into the trash and disappears into the garage.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
You didn't see anything.

WIN  
No.

CHLOE  
I don't think you're lookin' at it the right way.



WIN

How so?

CHLOE

I'm not sure. My reading this morning was interesting. Had to do with earth I think. Things comin' from dirt. Growing. Life, not death. So not the cemetery. A seed or a tree or-

WIN

A pumpkin patch.

CHLOE

Or a pumpkin patch. And there's still something with doubles. Does that make any sense to you?

WIN

No. Not yet at least.

CHLOE

Stay intentional.

Lola reappears with her drum head - painted a new coat of white - and a red marker. In thick, confident letters, she writes out "SEVERED HEAD PARADE."

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - MINUTES LATER**

Chloe still enjoying her morning on the stoop, Win has his head down at his microphone as Lola counts off tempo.

LOLA

Uno, dos, moriremos!

She goes into a driving, bass-heavy beat. After two bars, Win comes alive and joins with a fuzzed-out riff, immediately sweating as he gyrates.

Win works his way up to the microphone and opens his mouth.

**EXT. OFFICER LARSEN'S HOUSE - LATER**

Win and Lola stand between Larsen and his front door when he gets home from church. His cigarette is halfway down and he looks exhausted, thumb tapping against his holstered gun.

WIN

What was up with Dave Peterson's cattle?

OFFICER LARSEN  
That is of no concern to you.

LOLA  
Somethin' weird then for sure.

WIN  
Anything that could be related to  
the other strange and violent  
happenings around here?

OFFICER LARSEN  
Don'tcha kids got somethin' better  
to do with your summer? Go underage  
drink in the woods. Egg someone's  
car.

WIN  
I don't drink.

LOLA  
And I'm vegan.

OFFICER LARSEN  
I don't give a shit whatcha do as  
long as you get off my porch.

WIN  
Is Phyllis Burch a suspect?

OFFICER LARSEN  
You two leave that poor woman  
alone, I'm not kiddin'.

Lola notices the gun tapping as it gets louder, faster.

LOLA  
You should talk to someone. Might  
help to get things off your chest.  
Process trauma. Discover new things  
that make you happy.

OFFICER LARSEN  
I put my faith in the Lord. He'll  
endure. And if He's in me, so'll I.

WIN  
That's a really unhealthy amount of  
pressure to put on yourself.

Larsen walks to his car, grabs his ticket book, returns, and  
fills out a citation.

LOLA  
You giving us tickets?

OFFICER LARSEN  
Trespassing.

Win and Lola back away, leaving Larsen's lawn.

WIN  
We're leavin', dude. Relax.

**STREET - CONTINUOUS**

The second he goes into his house, Lola flips him off. They almost run right into Sherry, also returning from church.

SHERRY  
Well, hello again.

WIN  
Hi.

SHERRY  
How's police business? You two are keeping Kip busy I hear.

WIN  
Got a couple leads.

SHERRY  
Well, good luck.

Lola steps up onto the curb and balance-walks.

WIN  
How's your day?

SHERRY  
Healthy, happy, and headed home so I can't complain.

WIN  
Hey, random question and I hope it isn't too forward. My mom's a little shy and she's been tryin' to get to know the neighbors since we moved in, but it's... she hasn't found the time to ask and...

SHERRY  
She's lonely. And scared. I understand that.

WIN

Would you be interested in having  
dinner with us so we can...be  
better neighbors?

Sherry throws a hug around Win; Lola stifles a laugh.

SHERRY

Of course! Of course, that is so  
sweet. I'd really love that.

WIN

Awesome! When does—

SHERRY

What about tonight?

WIN

Tonight. Uhh...

SHERRY

You two come over around  
dinnertime. I'll throw something  
together.

WIN

Cool. Yeah. Tonight's great. Should  
we bring anything?

SHERRY

You just bring yourselves and we'll  
get to know each other like good  
neighbors should.

WIN

Okay. Great! See you later then.

SHERRY

Will your friend be joining us?

WIN

Oh. No. Lola...

Lola hops off the curb.

LOLA

On the clock tonight.

SHERRY

There'll be plenty of leftovers if  
you're in the area.

LOLA

Oh, thanks! Save the hambone for me, love to slurp that marrow.

SHERRY

You... You're welcome.

She puts a hand on Win's shoulder.

SHERRY (CONT'D)

I'll see you later. I can't wait.

Sherry gives another sparkling smile, heads into her home.

LOLA

Dude, your mom's gonna be-

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER**

CHLOE

-*pissed*. I can't believe you'd do this without talkin' to me first. It's... I... This feels like a breach of the mother/son hierarchy.

Chloe paces through the room.

WIN

That's absurd.

CHLOE

You should've talked to me first is all I'm sayin'.

WIN

I know. I'm sorry.

CHLOE

What if I had plans?

WIN

Did you?

CHLOE

No. But how could you have known that?

WIN

Call it a hunch.

She takes a seat at the table, a three-card tarot spread laid out nearby: Three of Cups, The Tower, and Judgement.

LOLA  
Should I leave?

CHLOE  
No. I'm sorry.

Chloe takes a deep breath.

CHLOE (CONT'D)  
I'll go. It'll be nice. It'll be fine. I'll be fine. What'd she say to bring?

WIN  
Nothing.

CHLOE  
Bullshit. You can't bring nothing to a first dinner.  
(beat)  
Are you goin' back into town today?

WIN  
We were thinkin' about visiting the crime scene to in case Larsen missed anything.

LOLA  
Which he for sure did.

CHLOE  
Is he a bad cop?

LOLA  
Sad cop for sure. Bad cop probably.

WIN  
He's in a rough patch.

CHLOE  
When you're out, can you pick up some wine at the gas station? What do people drink? Maybe moscato. Feels like a good summer beverage.

WIN  
They sell wine at the gas station?

CHLOE  
This is Wisconsin.

WIN  
That's fair. I am underage though, so that might-

Lola and Chloe burst out laughing.

WIN (CONT'D)

What?

LOLA

Dude, no one here gives a shit.

CHLOE

Especially not a couple minimum-wage townies.

WIN

If they get weird about it, I'm abandoning the mission.

CHLOE

Could pick up somethin' for yourself too...

WIN

Mom.

CHLOE

I know, straight edge and all that.

**EXT. CHURCH - LATER**

The church doors are closed. FATHER (37, Black, turned to God after a failed marriage) stands in the lawn and stares up at the sky in a daze.

Win and Lola ride past.

**EXT. BIKE TRAIL - DAY**

Dislodged caution tape flutters in the wind, dragging across the bike trail. Off-trail dandelions are speckled with crusted blood. Next to them, a few odd, bulbous plants glow with deep purple light.

**SNAP ZOOM TO:**

Win and Lola approach on their bikes.

**MOMENTS LATER**

The sleuths loom over a dark patch of dirt in the middle of the crime scene; ants are hard at work making a macabre home in the dried blood.

LOLA

Well. This is definitely the spot.  
Think he saw it comin'?

Win looks back and forth along the trail.

WIN

He either did, and it was someone  
he wasn't threatened by, or he  
didn't and he was ambushed or  
caught from behind.

LOLA

No one caught Steve Olson from  
behind. His car has a bunch of  
those 26.2 stickers on it. Gotta be  
like the fastest dude in town.

WIN

Sound logic. Think he knew the  
person then?

LOLA

I don't fuckin' know, dude.

Beat.

WIN

I think we gotta, like, recreate  
the scene.

### **MOMENTS LATER**

Lola jogs down the trail, holding a stick; Win jogs toward  
her from the opposite direction. Lola lunges with her weapon.  
He reacts, backing off the trail and into the brush.

WIN

No.

LOLA

I coulda totally got you.

WIN

Maybe, but I wouldn't go down easy  
and I doubt there was much of a  
struggle if it was a clean lop.  
You'd have to be a real swordsman  
to get it all done that quick.

LOLA

Confession: I made up the severed  
head thing. Like, not completely.

(MORE)



LOLA (CONT'D)

The dude's dead and someone killed him and he got fucked up, but I definitely might have exaggerated. I was pissed you didn't pick up the phone, wanted my news to be shocking.

WIN

I get the urge to sensationalize. Still. Gut's tellin' me he never saw it comin'. I think he had to stop for some reason and didn't get the chance to flee. Maybe to...

LOLA

Pretend you're tying your shoes.

Win goes to a knee and mimes the action. Lola tromps off into the brush, as if to wait in ambush. From this vantage, Win notices a stream of dried blood that runs off the trail and leads to the purple-glowing plants.

He pinches off a bud; fresh blood coats his finger where he did. He smells it.

WIN

The fuck...?

LOLA

Win.

WIN

Yeah?

LOLA

Come over here.

He walks into the trees where Lola's chosen her hiding place. There's a small clearing, one recently cleared of vegetation.

WIN

Dude.

All around, the trees have been carved with what look like large plus signs; every large plus has a smaller plus in each of its four quadrants.

LOLA

Gotta be somethin', right? Hardcore zealot vibes.

WIN

You know what these are?

LOLA

Clues, dude. Fuckin' clues. Found  
by a certified hunch machine  
unaided by her lanky half-wit  
manservant.

She snaps pictures of the eerie carvings until Win hands her  
one of the purple buds.

WIN

How you feel about these then?

Lola holds it, dropping it as blood oozes into her hand. She  
spits on her palm and wipes it against her shirt.

LOLA

Some freakynasty shit. But  
unrelated freakynasty shit.

He picks up the bud and examines it further, its glow fading.

WIN

I think it's worth lookin' into.

LOLA

Yeah, I'm sure some weird plant  
narced Steve and these crosses are  
from some harmless area bear.

WIN

Our first hunch-off.

LOLA

May the best sleuth find the truth.

WIN

I think we hit up the church and  
talk to the minister or pastor or  
whatever about your carvings. You  
know anyone we could talk to about  
the plants?

LOLA

I got a guy.

They exit the clearing, hopping on bikes and riding away.

**PUSH IN ON:**

A treacly, sap-like substance is stuck mid-ooze on one of the  
etched symbols.

An echo of "In the Hall of the Mountain King" plays and the **buzz** returns.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. POND - DUSK**

A pond, serene and beautiful under the new sun, lies just off the bike trail. A few faint ripples spread from its depths.

Up the shore, a closed Bible sits alone on a bench.

**INT. PARSONAGE - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Father jolts awake, sweaty and out of breath.

**BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER**

He futilely attempts to put in contacts at a mirror. He's shirtless, pre-seminary tattoos peppering his body.

**KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER**

Wearing glasses, a black shirt, black slacks, and a priest's collar, Father cracks eggs into a buttered cast iron skillet. The yolk of the second has a blood spot in it.

**EXT. POND - MORNING**

Father sits on the bench, staring over the pond in the morning light. His Bible rests under his right hand, open to a favorite passage (Isaiah 1:16).

He picks up rocks, rolls them into the water.

**EXT. CHURCH - MORNING**

Father trudges to the front door, keys in hand, as if following eternal obligation.

**INT. CHURCH - ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

He dips a hand into a font, crossing himself with holy water.

**SACRISTY - LATER**

In a cramped room, Father puts on a long red robe and ties it around him with a golden rope. It catches on his glasses: they fall to the ground.

**ALTAR - LATER****CHOKER CU - FATHER'S FACE:**

Prismatic light from stained-glass windows shines across Father's cracked glasses. The voices of unseen parishioners join as he sings a hymn.

**ENTRYWAY - LATER**

Parishioners trickle out, shaking Father's hand and offering a polite "God bless you" or "Have a blessed day."

**ALTAR - LATER**

Only a few members of the congregation left in the pews, Father prays before a rack of lit, red candles.

**CONFESSIONAL - LATER**

Father kneels on his side of the confessional, cloaked in shadow, his hand in the Bible next to him to mark his page. The door to the other side of the booth opens and closes.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Bless me father, for I have sinned.  
It has been twenty-three days since  
my last confession.

FATHER

What are your sins?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

I have felt anger against my  
husband. Most days. I have taken  
the Lord's name in vain a bunch. I  
have wished harm on my husband. I  
have failed in my wifely duties.

(beat)

I've lusted. I...I don't know how  
to stop...lusting...

FATHER

It's okay.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

I... That's all I can remember. I am sorry for these and all my sins.

FATHER

As penance, you will pray 10 Hail Mary's and five Our Father's.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to..

**LATER**

Father stares at the cobwebs on the ceiling.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

...been lyin' more'n I should I think. I know y'ain't supposed t'ever lie, but I think sometimes it's-

**MOMENTS LATER**

He examines the crack on his glasses.

FATHER

As penance, you will pray 10 Hail Mary's and five Our Father's.

**LATER**

Father takes deep breaths, rubbing his eyes.

FEMALE VOICE 2 (O.S.)

...find it so tough to stop, ya know? It's like lightning runnin' up from my toes all the way to-

**MINUTES LATER**

FATHER

As penance, you will pray 10 Hail Mary's and five Our Father's.

**LATER**

A subtle, warm pink glow through the partition as a new confessor enters. Father sighs softly, blind to the glow and readying for more of the same.

The voice is unidentifiable, androgynous and shifting.

MYSTERY VOICE (O.S.)  
 Forgive me father, for I have  
 sinned. It has been 40 days since  
 my last confession.

FATHER  
 What are your sins?

MYSTERY VOICE (O.S.)  
 I murdered a heathen two days ago.  
 Only one though.

Beat.

Father turns to the partition he can't see through by design. To him, the other side of the confessional is hellish – red, smoking, hot . He reaches out, debates sliding it open, but he's too afraid of the fire within.

MYSTERY VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Father?

He lowers his hand, puts it over his mouth.

FATHER  
 Yes.

MYSTERY VOICE (O.S.)  
 I am sorry for my sin.

Father takes off his glasses and tosses them aside. He tugs at his collar as sweat beads on his temples.

FATHER  
 As penance, you...

He puts his head into his hands, mumbling the rest.

FATHER (CONT'D)  
 As penance, you will pray 10 Hail  
 Mary's and five Our Father's.

The sound drops out to nothing as a rising **buzz** morphs into "In the Hall of the Mountain King", which plays over the rest of this sequence.

**SACRISTY - LATER**

Father is crumpled in the tiny room, colored vestments littering the floor around. Sweat streams down his face.

**ENTRYWAY - LATER**

Habitually dipping into the font of holy water as he exits, he's surprised to find it bone dry.

**EXT. CHURCH - LATER**

He locks the door to the church in a daze, stumbling down the steps. Once he reaches the bottom, he stares up at the sky and prays for rain that never comes.

Win and Lola ride past on their bikes.

**INT. PARSONAGE - KITCHEN - LATER**

Father sits at the dining room table, failing to catch his breath. He white-knuckles the rosary around his neck and reaches for a glass of water, which he knocks to the floor.

**BATHROOM - LATER**

Father hugs his knees to him in the bathtub, still fully clothed as no water runs.

**EXT. POND - AFTERNOON**

Father stares down at the water. He breathes in sporadic shudders, jaw hanging slack and nose running. His Bible sits down the bench, away from him, closed.

Behind, Win and Lola turn off the trail. Win's voice is muffled, barely there.

WIN

Excuse me?

He doesn't respond, doesn't even hear the inquiry.

They walk their bikes down to the bench. Win nudges the shattered man. The song drops out.

WIN (CONT'D)

Hey.

Father turns slowly.

WIN (CONT'D)  
You good?

He slowly, sadly shakes his head before he catches himself and turns it into an exaggerated nod.

WIN (CONT'D)  
I... Can we ask you something?

Father nods, barely. Lola holds out her phone, upon which is a picture of the symbols from the clearing.

LOLA  
What are these?

FATHER  
Jerusalem Crosses.

LOLA  
Whatta they mean?

Beat.

Father looks back to the water, tears filling his eyes.

FATHER  
The wrath of God approaches.

Lola gives a subtle fist pump and whispers to Win.

LOLA  
Fuckin' told you, dude.

Win ignores her and watches Father a concerned moment.

WIN  
You should talk to someone about  
whatever's...goin' on. I mean, not  
us. But someone you trust.

FATHER  
I would like to be alone.

Beat.

WIN  
Thank you for helping us.

Father says nothing.

They walk their bikes back up to the trail and take off, the songs crashing back into the world at deafening volume.



Father stands, knowing now what he must do. He disrobes and drops his glasses to the grass before walking headlong into the water's purifying depths, leaving only a few brief, fading ripples behind.

The pond and world around are still, beautiful.

The song comes to an end.

All is calm once again.

The Bible remains.

Waiting.

**SMASH TO:**

**INT. THE TRADING POST - OFFICE/STOCK ROOM - AFTERNOON**

ROGER WHITEHAWK (34, Indigenous, gaunt) holds shears in each hand, deftly trimming marijuana in an indoor bed. Rolled-up sleeves reveal band-aids running up a tattooed forearm.

A bell rings out in the store, followed quickly by another.

He rolls down his sleeves, sets down the shears, and locks the door behind on his way out.

**COUNTER - CONTINUOUS**

Roger takes a seat at the cash register as the heads of two customers peek over aisles.

**EXT. THE TRADING POST - CONTINUOUS**

Win and Lola prop their bikes against the wall.

LOLA

...tellin' you, if anyone can tell us anything about this shit, it's Roger. He's a genius with plants.

WIN

He's your drug dealer.

LOLA

Exactly - a genius with plants. And he's an entrepreneur, which I got a lotta respect for.

INT. THE TRADING POST - COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

The bell heralds Win and Lola.

                  ROGER  
The usual?

Win sets the purple bulb on the counter.

                  LOLA  
Not today. Ever see somethin' like  
this?

Roger scans the youths, puts on reading glasses, and picks it up. His face betrays no emotion as he rolls it in his palm.

                  ROGER  
Where'd ya find it?

                  LOLA  
Bike trail.

The store owner looks up, intrigued. Lola lowers her voice.

                  LOLA (CONT'D)  
Near the murder scene.

                  ROGER  
Probably somethin' in the soil.

                  WIN  
Like what?

                  ROGER  
They used to run weapons tests up  
the road at Fort McKay. Chemical  
shit. Wouldn't surprise me if the  
creeks still carried run-off.

                  WIN  
It bleeds.

Win presses on it, the red liquid seeping. Roger shrugs.

                  ROGER  
Probably somethin' in the soil.

Roger sets the bud down and wipes his hand on a tissue as a customer gets in line behind the gumshoes.

                  ROGER (CONT'D)  
Anything else I can help ya with?

LOLA  
No. Just that.

WIN  
Thanks.

ROGER  
Be seein' ya, Lola.

Lola and Win turn to exit. The customer behind them is Phyllis Burch, who gives them an eerie grin.

Win catches a look at her basket: an array of chemicals (borax, bug spray, turpentine), air fresheners, and bladed implements (scalpel, buck knife, needles).

He practically pushes Lola out the door as Phyllis puts her basket on the counter.

Roger scans the items, eyes flicking up to Phyllis: she still smiles. The other customer, Sherry, steps in line, holding only a box of fertilizer and keeping her distance.

As if compelled, Sherry takes another step back.

One by one, Roger scans the bladed items. The **buzz** hums through the air and rises in volume.

#### **OFFICE/STOCK ROOM - MINUTES LATER**

Roger shuts the door behind him, setting the bud left by Win and Lola into a water cup. He rolls up his sleeves, walks back to his plants. Roger grabs shears and slices the sharp edge into his skin below the lowest band-aid.

He squeezes blood to the surface and walks to the last plants in the bed. Roger lets his blood drip.

Glowing purple plants, these much larger, pulse with hunger as blood hits soil.

#### **EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DUGOUT - AFTERNOON**

Win and Lola ride past the town baseball field.

Officer Larsen sits in the dugout. He holds the splintered handle of his baseball bat in leather-gloved hands, shards of wood scattered around.

LARSEN  
The house stinks so dang bad. Don't  
even know what it is.  
(MORE)

## LARSEN (CONT'D)

Comin' from in the vents. Probably a squirrel died or one of those crows. But I looked. I frickin'... I looked. I don't know. I don't know. There's gotta be someone somewhere laughin' at me right now. Or else it's all bull anyway.

(to the sky)

I hope I'm amusing you down here, goddammit. Sorry. Sorry. Shit, I'm sorry. I know you're testin' me. But can't ya stop? I can't be your soldier anymore. I am not strong. I am not courageous. I am fucked.

(beat)

Gimme somethin'. Help me see what ya want me to see. *Was Peterson's cow the sign?* What's it supposed to mean? Please. Please. Ple-

Phyllis' truck drives past the field.

**SMASH TO:**

**MOTIF SEQUENCE**

Turning a dark grey, the pumpkin is almost rotten, fuzzy mold now at the edges of the cavity. A writhing, fleshy ball throbs inside, a daddy long legs crawling across it.

The **buzz** tails off into a static growl.

**CUT TO BLACK.**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT. GAS STATION - DUSK**

Win leans against the gas station, between firewood and propane tanks. He swaddles paper-bagged moscato and drinks a styrofoam fountain drink.

Lola spikes a bouncy ball off the asphalt, hunting it out and catching it over and over.

WIN

"The wrath of God approaches."

LOLA

Gotta be some religious nut. Maybe one of those John Welch Society creeps. Or a drifter. Or...

WIN

Why'd they kill Steve Olson?

LOLA

Probably 'cause he was a shriner.

WIN

The fuck's a shriner?

LOLA

Shriners are like a mystical fraternity for rich white dudes. Like freemasons. Steve was, like, the Grand Poobah or whatever. Always wearin' the fezzes and drivin' in the parades and shit.

WIN

Think I could pull off a fez?

LOLA

Maybe. I don't know if it would be for sure, but it would 100% feel like cultural appropriation.

WIN

I could pull it off.

LOLA

Dude, I've been thinkin' about it a lot and I'm not sure about Severed Head Parade anymore.

WIN

We're not metal enough.

LOLA

We're not metal enough. That's like some Norwegian torture metal shit.

WIN

I know.

LOLA

How you feel about Worm Cult?

WIN

Not bad. Built-in aesthetic.

LOLA  
Not a home run, though?

WIN  
Like, a solid double. A hit for  
sure, but...

LOLA  
What about Night Trash?

He mulls it over.

WIN  
Like white trash. But spookier.

LOLA  
Or sexier.

Win sucks dry his last pop gurgles and heads for the garbage.

WIN  
Not sold on either, but I like  
where your head's at.

After trashing his drink, he notices Miri and Debbie on the  
bench. From this perspective, they look like near-identical  
ladies in blue.

DEBBIE  
...of Iridium in the soil. If  
y'ever see the dirt catch blue in  
the sun, s'what it is. Iridium.  
From a meteor. From space. And it's  
right underneath our-

Win walks back over and catches Lola's bouncy ball.

LOLA  
Nice snag.

WIN  
Doubles.

LOLA  
What?

WIN  
My mom said to keep an eye out for  
doubles. Two ladies over on the  
bench might fit the bill.

From this vantage, differences in age are more evident.

LOLA  
They do both have blue shirts.

WIN  
Her readings aren't always like  
totally spot-on.  
(beat)  
I'm gonna go talk to 'em.

LOLA  
And say what?

**MOMENTS LATER**

Win stands before the ladies; Lola lies in the grass nearby,  
jaw locked through menstrual cramps.

WIN  
You two notice anything strange  
recently?

Miri and Debbie stare at him, silently communicating whether  
or not they reveal the secrets of life to this kid.

Several gunshots ring from the nearby woods; no one reacts.

DEBBIE  
Maybe.

WIN  
Like what?

DEBBIE  
Lotsa things.

WIN  
Things of what nature?

DEBBIE  
Things ya wouldn't believe. Things  
ya couldn't comprehend. Things most  
people aren't ready for.

WIN  
Try me.

DEBBIE  
Whatta ya know about Dave Peterson?

WIN  
I know something's up with his  
cattle.

Debbie snort-laughs. She swats a fly and takes a swig of her malt beverage. Miri smokes her cigarette.

DEBBIE  
Aliens're stealin' Dave Peterson's  
cows' heads.

Lola perks up, suddenly interested.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)  
Gatherin' information. Learnin'  
about the creatures of Earth.  
Started with a coupla coyotes out  
off the highway. Then it was them  
deer. A doe n'her fawns, done up  
same way over at Eli Borntreger's.

MIRI  
What'sat kid's name again?

DEBBIE  
Eli's?

MIRI  
Yuh.

DEBBIE  
Quentin.

MIRI  
Quentin.

DEBBIE  
They were all done up the same way.  
Decapitation. With surgical  
precision. And y'wanna know the  
coolest part?

WIN  
What's that?

DEBBIE  
Neck was cauterized each time. No  
blood outside the body. Not a drop.

Lola calls over, invested now.

LOLA  
Whatta they do with the heads up in  
space?

DEBBIE  
I dunno. Who's to say what's in the  
minds of those we can't fathom.

(MORE)



DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I do know what happens to the heads  
when they're done with 'em, though.

Win sighs and paces, losing faith in his hunch.

LOLA

What?

DEBBIE

They send 'em back. No return  
address. Lookin' same as they took  
'em.

LOLA

They send the heads back to Earth?

DEBBIE

Yep.

LOLA

How do you know that?

DEBBIE

For one, I saw one of the coyote  
heads myself when I was on a vision  
quest up to Wildcat Bluff. Me and  
my cousin Dinger found a buncha  
Robitussin behind the pharmacy and-

MIRI

Dinger Big Tom's boy?

DEBBIE

No, yer thinkin' of Petey. Works  
down at the co-op. Dinger's dad was  
the one who rode his mo-ped into  
that thresher out on County W.  
Uncle Meatball. What a mess.

Miri nods, takes a drag. Debbie turns attention back to Win  
and Lola.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

And fer another, Miri's seen it.

Debbie whispers something to Miri.

MIRI

Yuh, s'fine.

A grin spreads across Debbie's face.

DEBBIE

Wanna see somethin' I think the two  
of you'll find pretty cool?

LOLA

Fuck yeah we do.

Debbie looks to Win. He nods, humoring her.

Miri ashes her cig, spits, wipes her mouth, and takes off her  
glasses.

**ECU - MIRI'S EYES:**

Her milky eyes glow soft, warm pink as the **buzz** returns.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. SKY - DUSK**

Low in the sky, the sun sends shades of pink streaking across  
the horizon and staining the clouds. Everything vibrates  
along with the cosmic **buzz**.

**SMASH TO:**

**EXT. STREET - MINUTES LATER**

Win and Lola walk their bikes along the road.

LOLA

Dude, I can't believe that lady  
showed us her pink eye.

WIN

Didn't touch her, did you?

LOLA

Gross, no.

WIN

Me neither. Sorry. Bad hunch.

LOLA

That was wild. If that lady had a  
podcast where all she did was spout  
conspiracy bullshit, I'd never turn  
it off. I think I met my two new  
best friends once you abandon me.

WIN  
 Happy for you, but the point is  
 they didn't give us anything  
 regarding our current  
 investigation.

Streetlights blink on as sunlight fades.

LOLA  
 It's Phyllis Burch.

WIN  
 You think so?

LOLA  
 From the tip of my clit to the nips  
 of my tits, dude. It's her.

WIN  
 All of it?

LOLA  
 Straight-up Ed Gein shit. Her  
 husband dies, she goes crazy,  
 starts hearin' voices, thinks it's  
 God... Then she totally breaks.

WIN  
 You might be right.

LOLA  
 Let's go there tonight. Look  
 around, take some pictures. Lurk.

WIN  
 I gotta do the dinner with my mom,  
 but then we can lurk, yeah.

LOLA  
 Would you be mad if I got a head  
 start? Did a little solo recon?

WIN  
 What if you're right? If she's a  
 deranged, violent necrophiliac or  
 whatever?

Lola doesn't hide disappointment.

WIN (CONT'D)  
 Let's meet at your place in, like,  
 two hours.

LOLA

Fine.

They come to a cross street, Win continuing straight while Lola veers left.

WIN

Cosmic Coyote.

LOLA

I like Worm Cult.

WIN

Two hours.

LOLA

Yeah, yeah, whatever.

Win gives a thumbs-up as he heads on his way.

**EXT. LOLA'S TRAILER - EVENING**

Lola locks her bike to barely-hanging-on metal railing that runs along concrete steps to her front door and steps to the entrance, opening it quietly.

**INT. LOLA'S TRAILER - MAIN SPACE - EVENING**

Lola enters a kitchen/living room area, closing the door delicately behind. A tiny box TV is on and plays black-and-white telenovelas; her abuela, ITZEL (83, flowing white hair, plagued by arthritis), naps in a rocking chair. She tiptoes over and pulls a fallen blanket back onto Itzel.

Lola keeps on her way and enters a cramped bathroom.

**BATHROOM**

She rinses her hands, sits on the toilet, rolling out half-ply toilet paper. Lola sighs in relief as a used tampon goes into the garbage. She opens a drawer, grabs out another.

**MAIN SPACE - MINUTES LATER**

Mouth-drumming to herself, Lola scans the fridge and grabs a carton of eggs. She grabs pinto beans from the pantry.

LOLA

Huevos con mierda once again.

**INT. SHERRY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Sherry sits at her dinner table, beaming over an already-prepared meal: funeral potatoes, ham sandwiches, pasta salad, and deviled eggs. It's laid out with a meticulous eye for symmetry, glassware twinkling under a too-bright chandelier.

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Chloe takes a deep breath as she puts on shoes. Win is outside, watching through the screen and holding the moscato.

She takes off the first pair and tries another, stalling.

WIN

Mom.

CHLOE

Wyatt.

WIN

I love you.

CHLOE

I love you.

WIN

You have so much wisdom and love to offer. Be you. She likes you and you like her, you have a friend. She doesn't or you don't, free dinner. That's it. No pressure. Just be you.

She closes her eyes and centers herself.

CHLOE

Thank you.

(beat)

Okay, you ready?

WIN

Yep.

Chloe joins her son and they get on their way.

Left on the dining room table is a two-card spread: The Chariot and The Tower.

**INT. SHERRY'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Sherry opens the door to Win and Chloe. The front hall is spotless, mostly white.

SHERRY  
Hello! Welcome! Great to see you!

She hugs Win, to Chloe's surprise.

WIN  
Hey, Miss Sherry.

CHLOE  
I'm Chloe.

SHERRY  
Sherry. Pleasure to finally meet.

Sherry hugs Chloe as well.

SHERRY (CONT'D)  
Come in, make yourselves at home.

Chloe offers the moscato as she and Win kick off shoes, Win's leaving dirt on the carpet.

CHLOE  
I...thought you might like  
some...moscato?

SHERRY  
Oh darlin', I'm so sorry: I only  
drink reds. But that's so nice!  
Thank you so much. Go on in, have a  
seat. Supper's ready.

CHLOE  
Okay. Okay.

The guests file toward the dining room.

Smile never leaving her face, Sherry sets the Czerwinskis' shoes outside.

**INT. LOLA'S TRAILER - MAIN SPACE - NIGHT**

Lola nudges Itzel awake and hands her a heaping plate of food. She plops onto an ancient couch, holding a less-full plate as well as a few pieces of paper towel.

**ALL DIALOGUE IN ITALICS IS IN SPANISH.**

ITZEL  
*Lola, this smells great. Thank you.*

LOLA  
*Want somethin' to drink?*

ITZEL  
*Water.*

Lola sets down her plate before taking a bite, grabs Itzel a glass of water with a straw, returns.

LOLA  
*Anything else?*

ITZEL  
*No, no, this is perfect.*

LOLA  
*You sure?*

ITZEL  
*Eat!*

Smiling, Lola digs into her meal. Itzel watches TV, Lola watches Itzel. After a few bites, Itzel dribbles food down her chin and Lola wipes it up.

ITZEL (CONT'D)  
*Thank you so much.*

LOLA  
*Don't worry about it, Grandma.*

Itzel's fork falls from her grip. Lola gives Itzel her own utensil and grabs a new one for herself.

ITZEL  
*Thank you so much.*

LOLA  
*Don't worry about it, grandma.*

Lola finally begins to eat, patiently watching Itzel.

**INT. SHERRY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - SAME**

Sherry sits at the head of the table, Win and Chloe on either side. The guests have full plates, foods touching; Sherry's is portioned and separated.

The host prays, eyes closed.

SHERRY  
 ...and bless us as we dine together  
 for the first time, the-

Win mouths "sorry" to Chloe, who shakes her head at her son.

SHERRY (CONT'D)  
 ...first of many between new  
 friends, soon to be old friends.  
 Thank you for this bountiful meal  
 and the blessed opportunity to  
 share it. Deus le volt, Deus le  
 volt, Deus le volt.

Sherry opens her eyes and looks up, inhaling deeply as if  
 receiving divine blessing.

CHLOE  
 That Latin?

SHERRY  
 Beautiful, isn't it?

CHLOE  
 Beautiful, yeah.

They all dig in.

WIN  
 What brought you to Brookwood?

SHERRY  
 My husband.

WIN  
 I didn't know you were married.

SHERRY  
 I was. Irwin went to meet our maker  
 a few years ago now.

CHLOE  
 I'm sorry, that's awful.

WIN  
 Sorry to hear that.

SHERRY  
 Me, too. He was my knight. My one.

CHLOE  
 Was he from around here?

SHERRY  
 No, we grew up together. Far away.  
 Feels like a different world, a  
 thousand years ago.

(MORE)



SHERRY (CONT'D)

He was a missionary. A modern crusader. A rare being of pure, beautiful light. I was lucky to see his strength. I always wished I had more of it. After Irwin passed on, he left a darkness, a hole that pulled into it everything we ever were, ever had together. Pretty soon, I crawled in too. And somewhere in that hole, I saw a light and I followed it here. I was called to Brookwood. Now, I find grace in the dirt below and the sky above. I find Irwin too sometimes. And I listen hard to what he has to say.

WIN

Wow. That's...that's very profound. So you're a...missionary?

SHERRY

Well, I don't know if I'm there yet. But I'm trying to find the strength. I'm trying. I'm open, I'm listening. And I think that's what's important.

**EXT. TRAILER PARK - ENTRANCE - NIGHT**

Liquid eyeliner cap in her mouth, Lola finishes drawing a UFO on her forearm. She sighs.

Lola looks out at the street, beckoning her.

**INT. SHERRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Sherry refills she and Chloe's glasses with red wine.

SHERRY

I'm so sorry about your parents. I only knew them a short while, but you couldn't find finer people. Honest, kind, devout. Loving-

CHLOE

They were devout.

SHERRY

...parents and grandparents, who-

CHLOE  
Super devout.

SHERRY  
...I'm sure left a hole and, and...

CHLOE  
And now we're livin' in it. It's  
our hole now. All the mice and the  
mold and the memories infected by-

Win clears his throat.

WIN  
Excuse me, where's your bathroom?

SHERRY  
Second door on the right.

She gestures down the hall; he heads that way.

WIN  
Thanks.

#### **HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Win passes shelves stocked with cherubs, doves, and crosses.  
He enters the bathroom, shuts the door behind.

#### **BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The bathroom is white, blindingly lit. Win opens the medicine  
cabinet: pills of all sorts, most under the name Irwin Mack.

#### **DINING ROOM - SAME**

Sherry tries to establish eye contact with Chloe as she  
talks; Chloe bites her nails, gets caught in Sherry's gaze.

SHERRY  
Why do you shut yourself away from  
the world, Chloe?

CHLOE  
I'm not "shut away", I'm...

SHERRY  
You take offense to that  
characterization?

CHLOE

No, it's...it's fine. It's... I'm processing. Recharging. I'm not clinically depressed or avoiding trauma or pretendin' everything's okay. I'm awake, I'm in it. I'm up to my fuckin' eyes in it. There'll be a point, soon I hope, when The World comes knockin' at my door and the cards tell me it's time for change. And I'll be ready. Maybe tomorrow morning, who knows?

SHERRY

The night's still young. Why wait?

CHLOE

This is my first proper social interaction in about a month so I don't wanna get greedy. I'll probably let the cards lie tonight.

SHERRY

What happened to your husband?

CHLOE

What?

SHERRY

Win's father.

Chloe mulls over deflections and deceits before settling on authenticity:

CHLOE

I got pregnant with Wyatt when I was on tour. Some guy in some town in Colorado with some powerful swimmers. Brad somethin' or other. Tall. Kind. Married. Well, divorced now. I looked him up a few years back, but Wyatt didn't seem to give a shit, so why worry about it, ya know?

Sherry's smile remains, but her gaze feels sharp as a knife.

**EXT. PUMPKIN PATCH - NIGHT**

Full moon above, Lola stows her bike and creeps across the rotten patch toward Phyllis Burch's. She covers her mouth and nose against the smell.

At the rear of the farmhouse, she peeks in a window: two OLD MEN and Phyllis sit before the TV in a living room.

**INT. PHYLLIS BURCH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Baseball blares as the three watchers rock or recline in their respective chairs.

PHYLLIS	ANNOUNCER (O.S.)	*
-a play. Make a play. Make a-	-slicing foul, but Marlowe's	
	on the trail and-	*

Phyllis glances to the window.

**EXT. PUMPKIN PATCH - CONTINUOUS**

Lola ducks just out of sight, waiting a moment before advancing around the house.

She notices cellar trap doors and tests them: unlocked. Lola turns on her phone flashlight, steps down into the darkness, and pulls the doors shut behind.

**INT. SHERRY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Back at the table, Win attempts further conversation.

WIN  
Any plans after we leave?

SHERRY  
Might dig around and get my hands a little dirty, keep doing what I can to keep the neighborhood beautiful. Not to mention it's a rare pleasure to sow under a full moon.

WIN  
Night gardening sounds...spooky.

CHLOE  
I figured your flowerbeds would be about full by now.

Sherry just smiles.

SHERRY  
(to Win)  
What about you? Any plans to take in the beautiful night?

Chloe pours herself another glass of wine.

WIN  
Might take a bike ride.

**INT. PHYLLIS BURCH'S HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT**

Lola searches a musty basement, wincing at the smell, weaving through old gardening equipment and cobwebs. She takes pictures of everything: a wheelbarrow, an old popcorn machine, long-forgotten cans of pickles and jam.

Stairs lead to a closed door upstairs. Sporadic muffled voices, cackling, and the TV din come from above.

Lola reaches the far wall: bladed implements hang from hooks, many stained with sticky residue. Below sit a dirty shovel, black gloves, and a workbench covered in fingernail clippings, hair, and a few rotten teeth.

She stalks toward a battered wooden door, the smell worsening as she nears. Lola puts ear to the wood, listening. Satisfied, she turns the handle and pushes: nothing.

Lola shoulders the door, throwing some weight behind it. It falls open, **thumping** against the wall behind it, and—

Two ancient-looking corpses stare back at her.

They're set up in rocking chairs, surrounded by special possessions like Egyptian mummies. A half-finished game of checkers is between them.

The TV turns off and **footsteps** approach the cellar door.

Lola is petrified, confused, panicking, turning to make a mad dash back outside until—

The upstairs door opens, casting light across her path.

PHYLLIS (O.S.)  
Pa? That you?

Beat.

PHYLLIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Ma?

Phyllis starts down the stairs.

Lola retreats, hiding behind the corpses, watching Phyllis through a mirror on the back wall.

One hand over her mouth and the other frantically calling Win, Lola attempts to slow her breathing.

Phyllis regards the door, left open in haste and fear.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)  
Who's there?

The darkness-cloaked woman grabs a dagger-like carving knife off the wall. Phyllis wields it and heads into the room.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)  
Ya shouldn'ta come here.

She closes in on Lola, like a shadow.

Lola is frozen.

**INT. SHERRY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

Win and Chloe pick at tapioca puddings.

Sherry hums, polishes hers off, and notices the other two haven't finished much of theirs.

SHERRY  
You don't like my tapioca.

CHLOE  
I'm... I'm full. From all the other good stuff.

WIN  
Same.

Win's phone pulses in his pocket: Lola. He silences it, texts her "BOUNDARIES" in all caps.

SHERRY  
That's alright. Kip always appreciates leftovers.

**INT. ED LARSEN'S HOUSE - DISPATCH ROOM - NIGHT**

ED LARSEN (73, bald, spills potato salad down his chin) wears a headset, sitting at a computer in a guest room that doubles as home to Brookwood's emergency dispatch.

Officer Kip Larsen lies on a twin bed, lamenting the recent events of his life.

OFFICER LARSEN

...seems like there's somethin' new  
and terrible every day. I don't  
feel like gettin' outta bed, or  
eating, or talkin' to anybody.

(beat)

I almost called a shrink yesterday.

ED LARSEN

Shrinks are fer people who can't  
help themselves.

OFFICER LARSEN

I know it, Dad. I know it. But I  
feel so lost. I don't know what to  
do. I know depression and all that  
crap's just a state of mind, but  
sometimes it's hard to keep goin'.

ED LARSEN

Gotta have faith. In the lord and  
in yerself. Ya don't need any of  
that therapy crap, bud. They tell  
ya what y'already know, dope y'up,  
and send y'on yer way with a bill  
that's more'n yer car.

Larsen takes a long breath, wiping tears before Ed can see.  
He springs from the bed.

OFFICER LARSEN

I should probably head home. Get  
some shut-eye. Pray.

ED LARSEN

You'll wake up tomorrow a new man,  
I guarantee it.

OFFICER LARSEN

I know. I... I know.

**EXT. SHERRY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Win and Lola leave Sherry's, awkwardly putting on shoes on  
the front porch. Sherry watches, grinning silently.

WIN

Later, Sherry. Thanks for the meal.

CHLOE

Bye.

Sherry gives them a nod.

**STREET - CONTINUOUS**

Heading back to their house, they speak low.

CHLOE  
She still watchin'?

Win peeks over his shoulder:

WIN  
Yep.

CHLOE  
I wasn't... That wasn't me, right?  
Who made it, like...

WIN  
I don't know why she got so weird.

CHLOE  
I can never leave the house again.

WIN  
Dramatic.

Win checks his phone: 37 unread messages from Lola – all pumpkin emojis – and 10 missed calls.

WIN (CONT'D)  
Oh fuck, oh no.

CHLOE  
What?

WIN  
I gotta go.

CHLOE  
Everything good?

WIN  
I'm not sure.

He runs to his bike, mounts up, takes off.

WIN (CONT'D)  
I'll see you soon or else Phyllis  
Burch murdered me and Lola.

CHLOE  
Sounds good. Be safe!

Win's off to the races.



**EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS****INTERCUT WIN'S POV/SNORRICAM COUNTERSHOT:**

Win whips down the street, pumping legs as fast as he can. He dials and redials Lola, to no avail.

Passing the church, he almost collides with Officer Larsen as the cop heads home.

Win turns onto the bike trail, breaking through the remaining piece of caution tape and throwing it to the wind.

Past the gas station, he heads out of town; Miri and Debbie remain in their spot.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS**

Win reaches the woods as his back tire pops, air leaking.

WIN

Fuck.

He keeps at it, pedals harder.

Something unseen, darker than the night and about 7-feet tall, silently tries to keep pace in the woods.

Win's rusted bike chain breaks, slowing him as furious pedaling ceases to drive him forward.

WIN (CONT'D)

Fuck!

He tries calling Lola again as he pulls onto the shoulder: still no answer. Win examines the bike until he feels something, compelled to look up: the colossal, blacker-than-night shape is before him.

Frozen with fear and helplessness, Win stares at the entity. It takes a huge step, covering half the space between them.

WIN (CONT'D)

No. No.

Win breaks free of the dread, takes off at a dead sprint down the road toward Lola and the pumpkin patch. He doesn't turn to see if he's being followed. He knows he can't.

**EXT. PUMPKIN PATCH - CONTINUOUS**

Exhausted, dread-filled, Win creeps up the same way Lola did, bolder, more urgent in his pace. He looks through the window: the TV is off and two male corpses are in recliners.

WIN

Fuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuck...

He calls Lola again: her phone lights up, on the coffee table in the living room. Phyllis enters, cackling and chipper.

Win ducks, sweating, mental wheels breakneck-spinning.

He creeps along the house, reaching the cellar door. Win opens it, is hit with a burst of foul air. He shakes it off, flips on his cell flashlight, and goes in.

**INT. PHYLLIS BURCH'S HOUSE - CELLAR - CONTINUOUS**

Sneaky, efficient, he notices the disturbing things Lola did.

Voices trickle from above, one in distress.

He shines the light into the corpse room, barely acknowledges them, and stops at the bladed implements.

Win chooses his weapon: a rusted handheld scythe.

Testing each step for creaks, he ascends.

Slowly...

He puts his ear to the door: at first, nothing. Then, a piercing **shriek**.

Win shoulders through, at the ready.

**KITCHEN**

The kitchen is empty save a pitcher of lemonade and a few glasses. Stuffed critters – squirrels, bats, raccoons – watch from atop the cabinets.

Another **scream**, from upstairs.

**STAIRS**

Scythe at the ready, Win advances upstairs, Phyllis' mad cackling filling the air from above.

**HALLWAY**

At the top, he turns to a closed door at the end of the hall. Win runs to it, barging in, and-

**BEDROOM**

Phyllis and Lola jump, scared of the blade-wielding psycho.

LOLA

It's okay! It's okay, relax.

A snake slithers across the floor, past Win and out the door.

Hands up in surrender, Phyllis slides past, corralling the pet reptile. She puts it back in its terrarium.

Win, dumbfounded, sits on the bed; he still grips his weapon.

LOLA (CONT'D)

Win, this is Phyllis Burch.  
Phyllis, Win.

Phyllis offers a handshake, a warm smile, and twinkling eyes. Win returns the gesture, still a hair dubious.

PHYLLIS

I know I got explainin' to do and  
I'd love to provide ya answers, but  
I'd also love to do that over some  
lemonade and cookies if that'd be  
agreeable.

Win and Lola make eye contact; she nods.

WIN

Lemonade sounds fine.

**EXT. PHYLLIS BURCH'S HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT**

A plate of shortbread cookies between them, Lola sits by Phyllis on the porch swing. Win leans against the railing, wariness fading with each sip of lemonade. He eyes the rusted truck in the driveway.

PHYLLIS

How is it?

LOLA

Great, thanks.

Beat.

WIN

It's unbelievable how good this  
lemonade is.

PHYLLIS

Glad t'hear it, glad t'hear it.  
Well...

Phyllis clears her throat and speaks with wet-eyed  
vulnerability punctuated by nostalgic cackles.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

My parents didn't raise me with the  
values and beliefs of most people  
'round here. The earth was our  
church and we didn't wait fer  
Sunday to worship. When I was a  
kid, I realized that wasn't  
somethin' to give anyone else to  
wield. Other kids'd call me "devil"  
or "witch" or whatever word their  
parents told 'em meant different.  
So I kept quiet. Until I met Denny.  
He encouraged me, respected my  
spirituality, respected me. Learned  
from me. Taught me. Loved me. Loves  
me...

She wipes tears.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

I do not believe death's the end.  
And the thought of burnin' up my  
husband or my parents, or plantin'  
'em like seeds, puttin' 'em down  
with the worms feels... It feels  
disrespectful to me. Profane. Like  
a real easy way to forget someone.  
I never wanna forget them. I don't  
wanna be forgotten.

Phyllis' hands shake; Lola grabs the nearest and squeezes.  
Win softens, watching fireflies blink to life around her.

LOLA

It's okay.

PHYLLIS

Sorry. I...I haven't told anyone  
about any of this in years. I know  
how crazy it must sound. My...

WIN

It's not crazy.

With a few deep breaths, she's composed herself.

PHYLLIS

My parents died in their sleep the same night, in that bedroom upstairs. I knew it too. Felt it. I was so happy for 'em. They hadn't been out in years and most the people who ever knew 'em were already gone. So Denny and I filed paperwork, lied about their burial, and that was that. They been here ever since, together. Remembered.

(beat)

But when Denny died, I couldn't lie. People knew him. People loved him. They expected to cry while they watched him sink into dirt in a \$10,000 box. And no one'd listen to me about what he woulda wanted. Or what I wanted. Beliefs only matter when they're the "right" ones, I guess.

(beat)

So I went along fer awhile. I visited him every day. I tried. Tried to understand, but I couldn't. Started feelin' so guilty and ashamed. I was... I was breakin' down.

Phyllis fiddles with her wedding ring.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

I needed my person. I needed Denny here with me.

Win walks over, puts a hand on her.

WIN

I'm so sorry you were goin' through that alone. I can't imagine how horrible that must've been.

PHYLLIS

Thank you.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

And then I hadta go pick up Scooter. He was my husband's best friend fer 40 years. But that's it.

(beat)

Wouldja like to meet Denny?

INT. PHYLLIS BURCH'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Win and Lola in the doorway, Phyllis finishes spraying air freshener over Denny and Scooter. She caps it, stows it in the TV stand next to many others. Denny holds the TV remote in his one remaining hand.

PHYLLIS  
Honey, I got a few friends here  
who'd like to meetcha.

She turns back to Win and Lola.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)  
He can hear ya. Scooter can too,  
but he's a bit...

Phyllis shrugs, taking a seat. Lola walks in first, sinking to the floor near Denny. Win sits beside.

	LOLA		WIN
Hi, Denny.		Hey, Denny.	

Beat.

WIN (CONT'D)  
Thanks for lettin' us into your  
home.

LOLA  
What's, uhhh... How you like bein'  
dead and shit, dude?

Win subtly jabs Lola, giving her a look.

PHYLLIS  
How'd you two figure all this out  
anyway? What were ya lookin' for?

Win's energy turns frantic.

WIN  
Lola, we gotta go. Your darkness  
monster thing stole my bike and I  
believe you and I understand you  
and I love you and we can compare  
notes later, but I...

He turns to Phyllis, ignoring Lola's confusion.

WIN (CONT'D)  
Can I please borrow your truck?

INT. SHERRY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sherry sits at the edge of her bed, cross-stitching furiously. The moscato left by her guests sits on her nightstand, near a radio tuned to a sermon.

IRWIN (O.S.)

...up to us to be the will of our creator, to act as his hands. Make no mistake, beasts walk among us. There are serpents in the garden who infect with lust and idolatry, with sinful thoughts and actions. It is up to us to act as servants, to perform our holy duty.

SHERRY

I know what I have to do, Irwin. I do. And I need your strength. I need your firm hand. I... I...

IRWIN (O.S.)

Divine flame glows eternal in the hearts of the pure. Yours is a fire raging. That is why this mission of purification rests on you. That is why you've been chosen.

SHERRY

Chosen. I have been *chosen*. I have been *chosen*.

IRWIN (O.S.)

Go now. Drag the heathen into the abyss of unclean things.

Sherry pricks a finger from frantic needlework, blood dripping onto her project: a Jerusalem Cross. She stands, sucks her wound.

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

Deus le volt.

SHERRY

Deus le volt.

**SHERRY POV:**

The wall ahead is covered in similar cross-stitches. In the middle is an oil painting: a fierce knight surrounded by dead infidels. **Clashing** swords echo over **screams** of the tortured and dying; pink bathes the scene from the sky above.

**BACK TO:**

Sherry grabs the moscato, stopping at a shrine beneath the painting to grab black gloves and a gold-hilted dagger. As she steps out, we linger: the radio is unplugged, a warm pink glow coming from within.

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Chloe sits at the table, eyes closed, shuffling her deck. Her cell phone rings on the counter, silent and ignored.

Through the screen door, Sherry approaches and watches Chloe. She speaks forcefully, filled with righteous adrenaline.

SHERRY

You forgot your wine.

Chloe jumps in surprise, sets down the cards, and walks over. She stays a few feet from the door.

CHLOE

Sherry, I'm not feelin' well. Can you just leave it on the-

Sherry steps in and closes the door behind her, offering the moscato with shaking hands.

SHERRY

You forgot your wine.

Chloe takes a step back.

CHLOE

Yeah. Sorry.

As Chloe reaches for it, Sherry drops the bottle and it shatters across the floor. She locks the front door behind her back at the same time, covering the sound.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oh shit. It's okay. All good!

She disappears, reappears with paper towel and a broom. Sherry eyes Chloe as she gathers the glass.



Sherry's hand ceases shaking. A low **buzz** hums into existence.

She takes a seat and scans the house of the heathen with building hatred. Unseen by Chloe, the dagger sticks up from a sheathe on her back, gloves hanging from her back pocket.

Chloe finishes cleaning, side-eyeing Sherry, who glares at the tarot deck.

SHERRY

What do you call this?

CHLOE

The tarot.

The **buzz** rises.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

It's for gaining clarity and understanding.

SHERRY

Show me.

CHLOE

I'll do a reading, but then you have to go. I'm really not...not feelin' well.

Chloe takes a seat and shuffles. Sherry closes her eyes, takes a few deep breaths.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Clear your mind. Focus on somethin' you'd like perspective on.

The **buzz** continues building.

Chloe splits the deck, re-assembles it, and reveals The Tower. She grimaces, sees Sherry's eyes still closed, and quickly re-shuffles to give a more positive reading.

The Tower, again. Sherry breathes faster, eyes still closed.

Once more, the tarot is shuffled and Chloe flips a card.

The dreaded, unceasing Tower and the now-deafening **buzz**.

Locking her jaw, Chloe gives one more try. She closes her eyes, focuses on willing a positive card, and sets the shuffled deck before her.

The buzz drops out suddenly and-

SHERRY

You've profaned this house and mine. Defiled sacred spaces.

Chloe opens her eyes: the Death card is face-up atop the deck. Sherry stares at her, black gloves already on.

CHLOE

Sherry, what the fuck...?

SHERRY

You are a whore and a sorceress. An unclean thing.

Sherry unsheathes the dagger.

Chloe narrowly dodges a fatal blow as Sherry lunges across the table, the dagger gashing her shoulder.

She kicks at Sherry, shoving the woman away with her foot and overturning the table.

Front door blocked, Chloe runs for the garage.

CHLOE

Help me! Help! Help!

Sherry follows, deadly calm.

SHERRY

You won't feel so lonely in the abyss with the others.

### **GARAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Chloe hits the garage door opener, throwing things between her and Sherry as it leisurely opens.

CHLOE

Somebody help! Help!

Sherry is on her, thrusting the dagger into the meat of Chloe's upper back.

Chloe falls, scrambles away.

### **EXT. OFFICER LARSEN'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS**

Larsen sits in his cruiser, an angsty post-grunge shit-ballad like "Headstrong" by Trapt blaring as he sucks in the last puff of his cigarette and presses his temples.

Muffled screams of help and sounds of destruction come from down the street; the Czerwinski's garage door rises.

**INT. WIN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS**

Sherry looms over Chloe, the horrified woman reflected in the metal of her blade. The door is halfway open now.

CHLOE

Help!

SHERRY

Requiem æternam dona ei, Domine.

As Sherry closes in, Chloe sees the guitar.

SHERRY (CONT'D)

Requiescat in-

She kicks Sherry in the shin, lunges for the guitar, stands, and swings it in a Pete-Townshend-special arc: it slams across Sherry's face with a sickening **thunk**.

Sherry reels, spins, woozily swinging the dagger. She spits blood across the "Severed Head Parade" kickdrum and pulls down ribbons of flypaper, becoming wrapped in them.

She drops the dagger and falls into boxes filled with religious décor.

Beat.

Chloe, heaving and wide-eyed, still holds the guitar: the axe remains in one piece. She watches Sherry a suspicious moment.

**EXT. WIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Chloe walks out of the garage, into the night. A half-block down the street, she stops and yells.

CHLOE

Help!

Officer Larsen lunges from his cruiser, sprinting to her.

She drags her feet back toward her house, slinging the guitar across her back.

When Larsen reaches her, his gun's drawn. He spits a burnt-to-filter cigarette to the street, yelling instead of talking.

OFFICER LARSEN  
What happened?!

CHLOE  
Sherry. Our neighbor. She's the  
murderer. Hate crime.

OFFICER LARSEN  
What?!

Chloe points to Sherry in the garage, who has begun to stir. One of her eye sockets is ruptured and the side of her face is horrifically swollen.

Larsen approaches, levels the gun at her.

OFFICER LARSEN (CONT'D)  
Miss Sherry! Stop movin'! Now!

Sherry mumbles, slurring as she crawls to the dagger. She cranes her neck to the sky, speaking to something above.

SHERRY  
...strength... Give... Give  
me...strength...

OFFICER LARSEN  
No! No!

Chloe speaks with what little energy she can muster.

CHLOE  
Don't shoot, dude. Look at her.  
She's...

Looking like a half-assed flypaper mummy in a concussed stupor, Sherry reaches her weapon.

OFFICER LARSEN  
Oh God, no!

Sherry attempts to grab it and pull herself to her feet.

She wobbles.

The dagger falls from her weak grip.

CHLOE  
See, she—

Officer Larsen fires seven shots. The sixth one finally hits her, sending blood and skull fragments across the garage.

Beat.

Chloe attempts to comprehend what's happened.

Larsen, tears running down his face, drops his gun and heads back up the street in a traumatic fugue.

Chloe trudges past Sherry's body and puts the guitar back in place before she disappears into the house.

Moments later, she exits through the front door with a joint behind her ear and sits on the curb.

Blood drips down her shoulder and back.

A rusted truck speeds down the road, past the blank-eyed Larsen. It skids to a stop before Chloe: Win drives and Lola rides, her bike is in the truck bed.

They get out, not immediately noticing the dead body. Win throws a hug around his mother, sees the blood.

WIN

Are you okay?!

CHLOE

You found a vehicle.

WIN

What the fuck happened?

Lola walks her bike to the garage, stopping at the corpse.

LOLA

That Sherry?

Beat.

CHLOE

Really fuckin' weird vibes.

She lights her joint.

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. PUMPKIN PATCH - DAY**

**SAME SHOT AS MOTIF SEQUENCE:**

The pumpkin is rotten, covered in mold and desiccated. The fleshy ball inside the grotesque cavity hatches: hundreds of spider babies crawl out.

A wheelbarrow filled with bad pumpkins enters frame, along with checkered slip-ons.

LOLA  
Fuuuuck. Dude, you gotta check this out!

**BACK TO:**

Lola stands over the pumpkin, wearing garden gloves. Win meanders over, dressed for the same.

WIN  
Oh shit. That's wild.

Phyllis walks over and crouches to get a closer look as spiders journey from their moldy womb.

PHYLLIS  
It's beautiful.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**EXT. WIN'S HOUSE - DAY**

Boxes filled with Chloe's parents' stuff are stacked on the curb. Chloe sits nearby, shuffling tarot. Lola loads a laundry bin into Phyllis' - now Win's - rusted truck.

Win walks out the front door, carrying his TV.

LOLA  
Dude, this sucks.

He sets the TV in the truck.

WIN  
It runs.

LOLA  
You know I'm not talkin' about the fuckin' truck.

Win shuts the door. Lola tears up, averts eye contact.

WIN  
I'm an hour away, you can visit anytime. If you call first.

LOLA  
You never answer my calls.

She sniffles, wipes her nose on her sleeve.

WIN  
Let's not make this a big thing.

CHLOE  
You're abandoning us.

WIN  
I'm not gonna say sorry for tryin'  
to better my life.  
(beat)  
I left the guitar. It's probably  
evidence. And I also thought maybe  
Worm Cult could use a new  
frontperson.

Chloe eyes him, then glances over to Lola.

WIN (CONT'D)  
She's better at all of it than I  
ever was anyway and actually punk.

LOLA  
Maybe. I'll think about it.

CHLOE  
Worm Cult's dumb. Hate it.

LOLA  
What about Spiderbabies?

CHLOE  
We'll talk.

Win pulls keys from his pocket. Before he can say anything,  
Lola wraps him in a bearhug.

LOLA  
I hope you don't find anymore me's,  
bitch.

WIN  
I won't.

LOLA  
Love you.

WIN  
Love you too.

She pats him tenderly on the cheek and heads to the garage.  
Lola sits at her drum throne, going into a sad, steady beat.

Chloe stands. She plants a kiss on his forehead.

CHLOE

I'm proud of you. I'll miss you. I  
love you. I'll see ya soon.

WIN

I love you so much, Mom.

They share a long hug. Win breaks off, breathing away tears.

WIN (CONT'D)

Okay. Okay. I gotta go.

**I/E. WIN'S SHITTY TRUCK - DAY (DRIVING)**

He gets in, puts on sunglasses, and cruises away to the sound of Lola's drumming. In the rearview, Chloe waves.

Win drives through town: past the church and the bike trail; past Steve Olson's house, the store, the gas station where Miri and Deb still hang outside; past the woods, Phyllis and her pumpkin patch, the cemetery.

He reaches a straight highway out of town.

A low **buzz** vibrates into existence.

Win passes someone riding back toward town, a dark, gigantic shape on a familiar bike. He tries to ignore it, but can't stop glancing back at it in his mirrors.

The **buzz** builds and builds.

Everything flashes out of focus as the buzz ceases.

**FADE TO PINK.**

Tires **squeal**.

**SMASH BACK TO:**

A cow head smashes into Win's truck as it screeches to a halt. It rolls off the front and stops about 20 feet ahead.

Win throws off his sunglasses and rubs his eyes. He looks in the rearview mirror to see a pink glow pulsing in them.

He sits back in his seat, dumbfounded.

Beat.



## L O W P L A C E S

CLOSING CREDITS OVER:

INT. WIN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Chloe and Lola slay their debut performance as if they've been playing together for decades. The bass drum reads "Unclean Things."

As Lola thrashes into a booming finale, Chloe grasps the guitar by the neck and lifts it high over her head and-

CUT TO BLACK.