

# **Backwoods**

by

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C Draft

INT. SECLUDED CABIN - TWILIGHT

Close on a Scrabble board. The word "SAFE" is spelled in tiles at the center of the board and a child's hand is placing the letters "-U-R-V-I-V-A-L" intersecting with the S to make the word "SURVIVAL".

We go wider to reveal KATE GENTRY, a seven year old girl sitting on a couch, leaning over a coffee table that holds the Scrabble board and a little aquarium with a frog floating in it. We see Kate has been copying the word off the cover a book that lies next to her called "Survival: Army Field Manual"

There is a rumbling of what sounds like a generator coming from below the floor, and a rustling of plastic from where a broken window has been covered by sheeting, duct-taped and nailed to the window frame.

Kate pensively looks toward her mother at the kitchen sink.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

*THE PILOT LIGHT CLICKS AND A BLUE FLAME BURSTS TO LIFE UNDER A POT.*

NATASHA GENTRY, (late thirties/forty) stands at a kitchen sink.

Her face is etched with anxiety and she looks exhausted, as if she hasn't slept in days.

Water runs from the tap. Mechanically, Natasha rings out some rags. As we focus in, we see the water running out of the rags is a deep red. She continues until the water runs clear, then starts on the next.

Behind her, dinner is cooking on the stove. A rumbling pot calls her attention away from the sink for a moment.

Back to the sink. Focused on the next rag. She looks up and out the window.

OUT THE WINDOW

A vast, empty, frozen wilderness lies beyond the streaked glass and snow falls in big flakes. Natasha looks closely, seemingly searching for something. In the distance, she sees two figures walking toward the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She studies them for a moment, then briskly shuts off the water.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The door opens and both Natasha and Kate look over at SAM GENTRY AND ALEX GENTRY entering the room. Alex, a thirteen year old boy, has no shirt on despite the cold. Steam rises off him and he is sweating and filthy... streaked with dirt and mud from head-to-toe and he looks drained. White iPod ear buds incongruously hang from his ears.

Behind him, his father is spent, run-down. His expression is hollow and blank.

NATASHA

(In a flat tone)

Take off those boots before you  
come in. I just cleaned this place.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - DUSK

The family sits at the dinner table, quietly passing the food around as the snow falls outside. The scene is lit by candlelight and the glow of the fireplace.

The silence is eerie... all we hear is the sound of dishes clinking, of food being chewed, the rumble from beneath them, and the sound of plastic sheeting rustling in the wind.

The frog aquarium sits by Kate.

After a moment, Sam looks up at Natasha and their eyes lock.

CUT TO TITLE

OVER BLACK - 6 WEEKS EARLIER

1010 WINS News Radio plays.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

...101-89 the final. It is the  
third loss in a row for the Knicks  
who have dropped 8 of their first  
10 on their way to what looks like  
another dismal season for the once  
storied franchise.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

In world news, the economic ripple effect continues as the Yen plunges in the wake of catastrophic failures of the Pound and Euro Wednesday...

INT. NYC LOFT BEDROOM - DAWN.

Close on Sam Gentry, in bed, eyes-open, lying on his side. He is still, distant as he listens.

A female hand sneaks up onto his shoulder and caresses him. He breathes in deeply and sits up out of our frame revealing his wife Natasha, owner of the hand, lying behind him. Her hand falls off his shoulder and onto the bed as he sits up.

NATASHA

Bad dream?

SAM

Yeah.

MUSIC BEGINS

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Sam brushes his teeth with the little TV on: the news. It seems like a continuation of what was on the radio. Sam splits his attention between the news and his somewhat disheveled image in the mirror.

TV ANNOUNCER

Gold is up a whopping 400% for the year and rising, as investors continue to seek refuge from plummeting currencies worldwide. As expected, The President announced, early this morning, the implementation of Congress' "triage bill" which some on the floor claim could bring an end to capitalism as we know it, while the bill's supporters deem it a necessary measure to quell mounting panic and shore up currency markets. Among other historic components, the bill is said to include a return to the gold standard.

Behind Sam, through the door to the bedroom, we see stacks of cardboard moving boxes. In fact, the only thing other than the boxes in the bedroom is Sam and Natasha's mattress and box spring. Sam shuts off the water.

## INT. HALLWAY

Sam walks down the hallway of this modest post war 3 bedroom (lowish ceilings, cheap parquet floors). He now has jeans and a tee-shirt on. He walks with purpose as he sips from a coffee cup. Deep in the background, we still hear the news playing.

We follow behind Sam as he walks: the whole apartment is packed up. Sam stops and opens a bedroom door, peeking his head in.

SAM

Hey, Alex... Big boy?

## INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM

Boxes everywhere. Only a remaining few unpacked remnants of the young teenage boy who lives there - but no teenage boy. Sam checks his watch.

## INT. OTHER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam sticks his head in his 7 year old daughter's room. She is in her underwear and a tee shirt and is singing a little to herself. She screams when her Dad opens the door.

SAM

(startled)

Jesus, Kate...

He holds his heart from the scare.

KATE

Don't say Jesus, Dad.

SAM

(laughing)

Well don't scream...

KATE

Hey, Dad can I sleep in a sleeping bag the whole time we're there?

SAM

I don't know, you might get uncomfortable. We'll see though.

KATE

"We'll see". You say that a lot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at the precocious little girl. She smiles and we see she is missing a couple teeth.

SAM

When are you going to get some teeth?

She rolls her eyes, unaffected by his teasing.

SAM (CONT'D)

When you're ready, come out. I got us some bagels before we hit the road.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Close on a TV. Someone is playing "Gears of War" on X-Box. Aliens getting shot left and right. We pull back to see ALEX GENTRY, Sam and Natasha's 13 year old son using a plastic gun controller to eliminate anything in his path. He's going to town on the game

Sam steps in the room and we see the scene a little wider: Alex has hooked up the game console to a TV that is sitting on top of a moving box. Sam's face falls.

SAM

Dude... What are you doing?

ALEX

(still playing)

What does it look like?

SAM

We already agreed we are not taking the x box.

ALEX

I know...

SAM

...Or your PSP.

ALEX

What?

SAM

We're giving that stuff to Mr. Sanchez, for his kids. You agreed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

Yeah, because what other choice did I have? It's like a socialist dictatorship around here... Redistribution of wealth is un-American, Dad. Seriously, this blows!

SAM

You're a smart boy. Now finish it up and get ready.

Alex doesn't even look at him, just shakes his head at the screen.

INT. BEDROOM

We can hear the TV from the bathroom playing throughout. Natasha stands in front of her barren closet, amongst a pile of shoes that she has pulled out to pack.

She pulls up her jeans as Sam walks in.

T.V. ANCHOR (O.S.)

...Former Al-Qaeda leader and now self-described 'Supreme Leader of Pakistan', Mullah Muhammad Omar, who seized power last year in a coup supported by local Taliban forces, has made another announcement early Thursday morning from the capital, Islamabad. In a fiery speech, Mullah Omar re-asserted his desire to unify the world under Islam...

NATASHA

Jesus, how much more depressing can the news get...

Sam looks down at the mountain of shoes.

SAM

Are you packing all those shoes?

NATASHA

Well, they're not going to walk there themselves...

She gives a little smile. He tries to eek one out in return. It seems forced.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Your son unpacked the X-Box and hooked it up sometime in the middle of the night.

NATASHA

Well, what do you expect? This is a big move, I think they are handling it pretty well under the circumstances. At least he didn't unpack all his clothes.

Sam nods. They look at each other for a moment.

SAM

I just hope we are making the right decision.

NATASHA

We've now been over this, what, a thousand times? And besides, we don't have a lot of choice. We certainly aren't going to make it just on my salary from the university. Let's just be glad I even qualify for paid sabbatical so there is some cash flow.

She bends down for an arm-load of shoes and throws them in a box.

SAM

That doesn't make me feel much better, Natasha.

NATASHA

I don't mean it like that. Job or no job, the city is too expensive for us right now. And, you said it yourself, the kids don't care where they are as long as we're all together. Besides they'll get to see how their Daddy grew up.

SAM

Hick central.

She stops and smiles.

NATASHA

It doesn't mean it's forever Sam.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

A beat as they look at each other.

NATASHA (CONT'D)  
We're going to be unplugged... You  
know, like that Eric Clapton album.

He smiles.

SAM  
Now you're really showing your age.

She nods and her expression changes ever so slightly.

NATASHA  
It'll be good for us too, Sam.

INT. BUILDING HALLWAY - AN HOUR LATER

Natasha is speaking with the super in front of their front door. She is showing him the keys and which locks they are for and he is nodding.

NATASHA  
We're having mail forwarded but if  
anything comes for us here could  
you just hold it and we'll get it  
next time we're in the city?

MR. SANCHEZ  
We are going to miss you around  
here.

NATASHA  
Oh, thanks Tony...We're going to  
miss you too. Oh, I almost  
forgot...

She hands him a bag with the X-Box and games in it.

NATASHA (CONT'D)  
We're kinda going old-fashioned up  
there. Tell your kids it's from  
Alex.

Tony is psyched.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF BUILDING.

Sam stands in front of a moving truck, talking to a brawny Mover, as boxes stream out of the building, hauled by similarly burly men. Sam is signing some paperwork on a clipboard.

SAM  
(handing the clipboard  
back)  
So, you guys know where you're  
going?

MOVER  
Yeah, we got it.

SAM  
The road is pretty rough up there,  
so take it easy on the last  
stretch.

MOVER  
That's what the insurance is for,  
Mr. Gentry.

The mover smiles. Sam doesn't smile back. He hands Sam the receipt and heads to the truck.

Natasha comes out holding one more bag, and a small aquarium with two little frogs in it.

NATASHA  
I think that's everything.

SAM  
Oh good, the frogs are coming...

NATASHA  
Well, they're not good on their  
own... no opposable thumbs.

She ducks by him to get in the car. He takes one last look up at their building and from there we go to:

OVERHEAD NEW YORK CITY

MONTAGE OF CAR LEAVING THE CITY AND ON THE ROAD.

As the family drives out of the city - sitting in traffic, etc. - WE SEE SIGNS OF SOCIAL COLLAPSE, as the kids look out the windows:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

People standing in a line that loops around the block - waiting to enter a bank. A couple of cops look on.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR/ EXT. CITY

Alex notices a homeless boy standing in front of a dirty cardboard-and-tarp shelter. Their eyes meet. Behind the boy, in an empty lot, is a little shanty town of tents and cardboard houses.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY

There are long lines at gas stations, and we see the price...\$8.00 per Gal. Squeegee men and beggars approach the car at traffic lights. A squeegee man smears their windshield with dirty water. Sam puts the wipers on and drives around him.

As they turn on to the West Side Highway, we see smoke rising from a building fire on the Upper West Side. There are a few abandoned and burned-out cars along the roadway.

*Note: It should look bad, but bad like the seventies, not quite apocalyptic. New York should still look like New York*

AS THEY GET AWAY FROM THE CITY, WE TRANSITION TO MORE NORMAL CAR TRIP IMAGES:

The Family singing with the radio.

Kids messing around in back.

Stopping to eat and gas up.

Finally, they turn onto a dirt road. Rolling the windows down, the kids stick their heads outside to take in the fresh, cold air, as they wind down the road. Trees fly by the windows of the car.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

*The camera pulls out to an over head shot as the car rolls to a stop.*

The back doors fly open and the kids jump out, laughing and chasing each other. Before Sam and Natasha get fully out, the kids are halfway to the woods. Camera keeps pulling back wider and wider...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
(yelling)  
Hey, you guys...get back here and  
put your coats on! ...and give me a  
hand!

Natasha comes over and puts an arm around Sam.

*The camera continues pulling back until we see the scene from high overhead, revealing the cabin isolated in a vast wilderness.*

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - LATE AFTERNOON

There is a fire going. Half the stuff is put away, and the other half is strewn about the living room.

Natasha is in and out of the kitchen, putting things away. She looks out the window.

OUT THE WINDOW

Sam is in the middle of the snowy yard splitting wood with an ax.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

ON SAM'S FACE. He sweats a little as he chops wood. Next to him we see a pile of wood he has finished splitting.

He brings his ax down, splintering the current log into three. He looks up and wipes his brow.

He breathes hard but looks happy. After a moment he bends down and picks up an arm full of wood.

INT. CABIN

The door opens and Sam walks in with the load of wood. He walks over to the fireplace tracking snow from his boots across the room.

SAM  
I'm kinda glad Brian didn't deliver  
it pre-cut. Feels good.

NATASHA (O.S.)  
They also left us a zucchini bread  
and a pie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

You can have the Zucchini bread...

Natasha enters.

NATASHA

Sam, you're boots...

SAM

Hey baby, that's how we do it up here. You're going to have to get used to the mess.

NATASHA

No that's maybe how you *did* it but it's not how *we're* going to *do it*.

Sam starts stacking the wood.

SAM

Fair enough.

Sam works his boots off and places them on the stone by the fireplace. She watches him.

NATASHA

But it is nice to see you happy.

He nods and starts stacking again. He doesn't look at her.

SAM

Yep. Trying to focus on the positive. No more banging pipes... horns... no CNN... no need to shave...

Natasha is going through some boxes.

NATASHA

Have you seen the school box? It has all my lesson plans for the kids?

SAM

I think that went with the movers.

NATASHA

Sam, I specifically put it aside for the car. Now I'm not going to be able to start them tomorrow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

Aww, Let them have a day of  
Vacation. I mean that's the upside  
of the fact that we'll be turning  
our kids into hippie home schooled  
freaks... We make the rules.

She looks at him.

NATASHA

Is that what you think we're doing  
with them?

SAM

I hope not. I just worry that  
they'll end up "those" kids, you  
know? The ones I grew up with.

NATASHA

No, I'm not sure I do know.

Sam has finished stacking and throws another log on the fire.

SAM

You know, the kind that make their  
own granola, wear fleece 24/7 and  
think the world was created five  
thousand years ago by a bearded  
sadist.

He smiles at her. She doesn't think it's funny.

NATASHA

But I'm flattered that's what you  
think of my teaching abilities.

SAM

I'm not saying that Tosh...

NATASHA

Then what are you saying?

SAM

Nothing.  
(Irritated)  
I'm kidding.

She looks at him.

NATASHA

Doesn't seem like it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Sam stands looking at her, wondering how the conversation got here.

SAM

No. I'm sure you'll be great with the kids.

(Pause)

You've always had a way with your students.

Natasha stops what she's doing and looks at him.

NATASHA

Oh, fuck you, Sam...that was really low.

Alex noisily walks through the front door.

ALEX

It's like forty-below-zero out there.

SAM

Where is your sister?

Alex goes over to the fire.

ALEX

I called her, but she wouldn't come. She keeps saying she's a Woodland Fairy and she lives in the woods.

NATASHA

You can't just leave your sister out there. It's getting dark.

ALEX

I'm not her parent, you are...

NATASHA

Alex!

SAM

I'll get her.

CUT TO:

EXT. PATH THROUGH WOODS - DUSK

Sam is on the path. He switches on his flashlight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
(calling out )  
Kaaaate! Sweetheart, it's time to  
come in. You can run around all day  
tomorrow. You can be a woods girl  
all you want in the daytime.

No answer. The trees creek. A bird suddenly takes off,  
startling him.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Kate! Come in now, honey! Where are  
you?

Sam hears a rustling in the woods, as he now approaches the  
dark shape of the shed. He shines his light across the woods  
in front of him.

The light sweeps across the clearing and lands on the ghostly  
figure of his daughter standing still, looking pale and  
frightened in the doorway of the shed. Sam is jolted by the  
sight.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Jesus!

Sam holds the beam of the flashlight on his daughter and Kate  
brings her hand to her eyes to shield them from the bright  
light.

KATE  
Daddy?

Sam, realizes Kate is blinded by the beam of light and can't  
see him, so he turns it on himself, inadvertently lighting  
his face from beneath his chin, making him look like an old  
horror movie spook. Kate screams.

SAM  
Kate, honey, it's Daddy. I'm sorry,  
I didn't mean to scare you.

She runs toward him and into his arms and cries.

KATE  
(through tears)  
He's so mean. He said if I was a  
Woodland Fairy then I could find my  
way back, myself...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

SAM  
Honey. He's just a...  
(searching for the right  
words)  
A teenager.

KATE  
Well, I hate teenagers!

He picks her up and starts to walk back.

SAM  
Most people do, honey.

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOWY FIELD - DAY - 6 WEEKS LATER

We are close on TWO WIDE SMOOTH TRACKS THAT ARE BEING CUT THROUGH THE SNOW AND ICE AS SOMETHING IS DRAGGED AHEAD OF US. We cannot see what. The NOISE OF THE DRAGGING and the GRUNTS of the two people doing the dragging is at the forefront.

VERY WIDE on the snowy field. We see two figures dragging something that looks like stuffed white sheets behind them, creating the tracks in the snow. We are too wide to make anything else out.

EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - MINUTES LATER

Close on a sheet being opened on the ground. In it are TWO SHOVELS, A LARGE PICK AX AND A SMALLER HAND AX. A hand comes in and takes the pick ax. We hear Sam's voice off screen as we stay on the tools.

SAM (O.S.)  
Take the ax, first. Shovels won't  
get through the ground.

After a moment, a pair of hands enters frame and grabs hold of the handle of the ax. One of the hands is WRAPPED IN BLOODY BANDAGES. As the ax is dragged off the sheet, a streak of blood is left. We stay on the now bloody, dirty sheet and the remaining shovels for a moment. Off camera we here some rustling, then the sound of someone getting sick.

The camera turns and finds a pair of boots. We move up from the boots to the legs, and up further still, over a mud stained coat, and onto a close up of Sam's face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Almost a full beard. The exhaustion is palpable. Above his eye is a bandage that doesn't fully cover the gash underneath. He stares just past us. His face is frozen in a silent moment of realization.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - DAY - 4 WEEKS EARLIER

Close on a tiny silver dog.

Sam, Alex and Kate sit around a coffee table in the living room. There is a Monopoly board in front of them. Sam has a week or so of stubble. Kate's frog aquarium sits next to the board.

KATE  
I get to be the dog!

Alex tosses her the dog.

ALEX  
Take it... I'm the car.

SAM  
I'll be the ship? You can call me  
Admiral.

Sam makes a funny Pirate face.

SAM (CONT'D)  
ARRRRRR!

KATE  
Dad, you're embarrassing.

SAM  
(to Natasha off-screen)  
What about you Tosh?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Natasha stands by the sink in the kitchen, the window opened half-way. She furtively takes a drag off a cigarette, leans in and blows the smoke out the window before answering.

NATASHA  
What's left?...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam picks up the pieces that are left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
...the iron, wheelbarrow...  
thimble... the shoe...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Natasha takes one more quick puff then disposes of the butt in a coffee can. She seals the can, puts it up in the cupboard, then closes the window.

NATASHA  
What about the cannon?

KATE (O.S.)  
Alex lost it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ALEX  
I did not. You stuck it up your  
nose so I threw it out so we  
wouldn't have to play booger  
Monopoly.

KATE  
You're a liar.

Natasha enters holding a cup of tea.

NATASHA  
Tell me my choices again?

She sits on the floor at the coffee table.

KATE  
The iron, wheelbarrow, the sewing  
thing, or the stinky shoe.

Kate laughs.

NATASHA  
(picking up the iron)  
Great, I get to choose from the  
pantheon of domestic services...  
Who says women's lib is dead?

Sam looks at her without laughing. Does he smell it?

KATE  
What's women's lib?

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The woods are beautiful. We pan around the tree tops. When we come down we are on Sam. He is hiking. Small backpack on. Some frost stuck to his facial hair.

Though clearly pensive, he is peaceful and seems at home. The snow crunches under his feet.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - AN HOUR LATER

A small snow-covered two lane highway. We see Sam appear from the woods and start to jog across the highway. This is the way he gets home from his hike.

Just as he crosses to the other side of the road, a BUZZING noise above catches his attention. He looks up to see a FEW BIRDS FLYING OFF THE POWER LINE ABOVE just before sparks fly from an electrical box. First it's just a few, then a shower. More birds in nearby trees fly away.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER THAT DAY

Sam pulls a cord and a light pops on revealing tools, old furniture, shelves full of canned goods, an old generator covered in a blue tarp and an old coffin freezer...musty old camping gear...and Alex..

ALEX

You wanted to show me the *basement*?

SAM

I want you to know how to work things around here. You're old enough.

ALEX

But I'm not old enough to see "The Devil's Rejects"?

Sam ignores him. He pulls the dusty tarp off the generator. It looks like an engine from a 1932 Ford...it has a grill and a crank on the front.

SAM

This is the generator. When the power goes out, its what keeps us warm and the lights on so it is very important.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX  
(Disinterested)  
It looks old.

SAM  
It is...very old, and it is kind of  
temperamental... you got to know  
how to use it.

ALEX  
Why don't you just buy a new one?

SAM  
Because new ones are very expensive  
and this one works...but thanks for  
the suggestion, I hadn't thought of  
that.

Alex rolls his eyes.

SAM (CONT'D)  
So, what you have to do... Alex,  
are you paying attention?

Alex is looking at a 12 gauge shotgun leaning in the corner,  
touching the end of the barrel.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Alex... pay attention...  
what you do is ...in case it  
doesn't come on... just hit this  
switch over here and give this  
thing a crank.

Sam indicates to a switch on the big machine and a crank that  
juts out of a grill on the front.

SAM (CONT'D)  
That should get it started. ...the  
tank over there is full of diesel  
fuel... that's what makes this bad  
boy run until the linesmen get out  
to fix the lines.

ALEX  
What if the guys don't fix the  
lines?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM

They always fix the lines, but just in case the weather is bad and they can't get up here right away, we also have a reserve tank that is buried in the back yard.

Sam points to a line coming in through the concrete wall.

SAM (CONT'D)

Remember you helped me dig the hole two summers ago?

ALEX

Not really. I just remember sliding in the mud.

Sam smiles at him.

SAM

... Ok, hit that switch... yeah, right there... now come over here and turn this crank... put some muscle into it... there you go...

Alex hits the switch starts turning the crank and the thing rumbles to life. It coughs and sputters a bit and spits out blue exhaust... it is very loud. Alex puts his hands over his ears.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Natasha sits at the dining room table with Kate. They have a lesson and are studying by candlelight. The lights in the house flicker on, then off, then on again. Natasha and Kate look up at the lights. They clap a little.

NATASHA

Yay...

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

SAM

(yelling over the noise)  
OK, SEE THE BELT IS SLIPPING, AND IT WON'T WORK LIKE THAT, SO YOU HAVE TO...

Sam gets down on his knees and sticks his hand up under the generator.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)  
(yelling)  
...YOU HAVE TO JUST PUT A LITTLE  
PRESSURE HERE AND...SEE? YOU TRY.

Alex looks intimidated but he gets down and looks up at the spinning gears.

SAM (CONT'D)  
OK, DON'T BE SCARED...JUST PUT YOUR  
FINGER RIGHT THERE AND PUSH THE  
BELT OVER...GO AHEAD... YEAH, RIGHT  
THERE AND JUST A NUDGE... PERFECT!

The generator is still loud but runs more smoothly.

Alex gets up smiling, proud of what he's done. Sam looks at him and thinks for a second.

SAM (CONT'D)  
I have a treat for you.

Sam walks over to a shelf and pulls out a box. He walks over to Alex and hands it to him.

ALEX  
What is it?

SAM  
Open it. It was your grandfather's.

Alex opens it and pulls out an old .38 revolver. His eyes go big.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

Sam and Alex stand in a big expanse of snowy meadow. There is a target nailed to a tree at the far end and Alex is holding the .38, while Sam gives instruction. Alex is wearing ear and eye protection. Then, Sam backs away and puts his fingers in his ears. Alex looks deadly serious... concentrating... and then, BANG! A huge smile crosses his face.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM.

Natasha gets up and walks to the window. In the far distance she sees Sam and Alex standing in a meadow. Crack! Another gunshot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, the sound of Kate's screaming outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEADOW.

Sam is showing Alex something when he hears the screaming. He takes the gun from Alex, flicks on the safety, sticks it in the back of his jeans and sprints toward the house. Alex lopez after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE

As Sam and Alex arrive at the front porch, they see Kate crying and being consoled by Natasha.

Sam takes the porch steps in one leap and arrives at Kate and Natasha.

SAM

What's wrong? What happened?!

Kate is crying and holding the frog aquarium in her hands with two dead frogs floating in it. A thin layer of ice coats the top of the water. Natasha kneels by her side trying to console her.

NATASHA

She left them outside.

Not as serious as he thought.

CUT TO:

EXT. ON THE BANK OF A SMALL BROOK IN THE WOODS.

Kate and Alex kneel by a little brook. Kate is holding a wilted bunch of grasses and weeds. Alex holds the small plastic aquarium with both hands and peers in at two dead frogs floating inside.

ALEX

Sorry, little guys.

He stoically pours the water and the frogs into the brook. Their bodies are pale and silvery against the black water, as they slide down the eddies.

KATE

Do you think it hurt?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

ALEX

What?

KATE

Mario and Luigi...when they froze.

ALEX

I don't think so. They say freezing is the best way to go.

KATE

Why?

ALEX

I don't know... because you get numb I think... and you can't feel anything. You just kind of go to sleep.

KATE

I hope you're right.

Alex tosses a stick into the water and watches it float downstream.

ALEX

Hey, I brought this for you.

Alex reaches into his pocket and pulls out a slim paperback volume. On the front in big black letters it says SURVIVAL. Above that, FM 21-76 Department of the Army Field Manual.

Kate looks at the plain book quizzically for a moment, then sounds out the word. Her mood suddenly brightened.

KATE

S-U-R-V-I-V-A-L. Surv-ial?

ALEX

*Survival*... it's the Army survival guide.

KATE

Wow, where'd you get it?

ALEX

Ranger Brian gave it to me.

Alex flips to a page near the beginning. Again, on that page, written vertically are the letters S-U-R-V-I-V-A-L.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALEX (CONT'D)

See it says "survival" here again.  
But each letter stands for  
something... look...

Alex places his fingers on the first line and begins reading each phrase in order.

ALEX (CONT'D)

S...*Size up the situation.* You know  
what that means, right? Figure out  
what's going on. U...*Undue haste*  
*makes waste.* That means...  
basically, don't rush too much or  
you'll mess up. Get it?

KATE

Yeah... think first, right?

ALEX

Right! Want me to keep going?

KATE

Yeah.

Kate snuggles up closer to Alex so she can follow the words in the book.

ALEX

OK...R ...*Remember where you are.* V  
...*vanquish fear and panic.* That  
means don't be afraid. I...  
*Improvise...* hmmm... ok, that  
means think of something like...  
new, you know? Like something you  
haven't thought of before.

KATE

Like on the Piano.

ALEX

V...*Value living...* Brian said this  
means stay alive no matter what you  
have to do, you know?

Kate shakes her head "no".

ALEX (CONT'D)

You know, even if you have to do  
something scary or eat gross food  
or something....

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALEX (CONT'D)  
or hurt someone or even kill  
them...just stay alive. Get it?

She nods, still a little sad. Alex closes the book and hands it back to Kate.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Here, you can keep it for a while,  
ok? *Borrow it*, understand? Don't  
lose it.

Kate nods her head and holds the book to her chest, smiling. Alex smiles back.

FADE OUT/IN.

INT. PARENTS BEDROOM - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE.

*The only sound we hear is the sound of Sam and Natasha breathing, when SUDDENLY THERE IS A SHARP BANG.*

Moving very slowly, Sam slides out of the covers and feels his way across the moonlit room. He pulls on his jeans and a sweatshirt. He goes through the door and out into the kitchen area. BANG! The sound is like something heavy and hard falling on the floor.

Moving fast now, Sam hits a switch and light fills the room for a moment, and then pops off in a spasmodic flutter. In the brief, flickering light, Sam SEES A DARK FIGURE outside the window on the porch.

SAM  
(to himself, surprised and  
breathless)  
Oh, god!

Sam fumbles for the flashlight in a drawer and flicks it on, shining the beam through a window, illuminating the landscape outside.

He moves across the room parallel to the three picture windows, shining the light through them as he moves along. The beam of light moves over trees, rocks and grass, pulling objects out of the darkness and leaving them to fall back one by one, until the LIGHT FALLS ON THE FIGURE OF A SMALL BOY, about seven years old.

The boy is naked except for a pair of underwear. He is shivering in the cold night. Steam rises off his tender, hairless skin. He is ghostly pale and stares at Sam with vacant, coal black eyes - there is no innocence in them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam gasps and stares back at the boy a moment, as if his eyes are playing tricks and then he reaches for the door to go out. As soon as his hand grasps the knob, the boy takes off toward the trail to the shed.

Sam pulls the door open and runs outside.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Hey, come back! Hey, I won't hurt  
you!

EXT. NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE - CONTINUOUS

The stars blanket the clearing. Big hemlock trees loom, black and ominous all around.

Sam runs out of the front door with his flashlight, wearing only slippers and shivering a little from the cold. Pointing the flashlight on the little trail as he hurries to catch up, a glimpse of boy running in the distance.

The forest seems dirty and menacing, as the circle of light moves across the ground revealing rocks roots, dead grass, fallen leaves, etc.

*A coyote calls from out across the lake, its voice echoing across the mountains.*

The trees rustle in the light wind. Sam stubs his toes on something, and curses.

SAM  
Shit! Come on, kid, I won't hurt  
you. Just hold up a minute!

It is inky black, and Sam can only see the narrow swath of light from the flashlight beam. He slows down as he approaches the shed, breathing hard. He shines the light on the shed - its door open like deep black maw.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Kid? Are you in there? Come on  
out, OK? You must be freezing!

Sam approaches the shed cautiously.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Kid?

The flashlight beam catches the pale figure of the boy in the back of shed, shivering uncontrollably - the steam from his frozen breath creating an eerie fog that licks his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His pale skin glows in the light. His eyes are deep, black pools of dread.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(under his breath at first)  
Jesus Christ!... I'm coming in, OK?  
I won't hurt you. Let's just get you out of the cold. Where did you come from, little fella? Your parents around here? Were you camping?

The boy just stares at Sam, and as he enters the shed and begins to approach the boy, SAM NOTICES SOMETHING DANGLING IN HIS HAND.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Whatcha' got there, little buddy?

Sam directs the beam at the object in the boy's hand, and sees that HE IS HOLDING A HATCHET. At that moment, the boy lunges at Sam, his eyes dead, his arms swinging up and down with both of his little hands on the hatchet.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - PRE DAWN

SAM SITS BOLT UPRIGHT IN BED, GASPING. He is bathed in sweat and breathing hard. Natasha is awakened, and reaches over sleepily to Sam. When she touches his wet skin, he flinches a little.

NATASHA  
Sam, honey, you OK? You're soaking wet, baby! Are you feeling alright?

SAM  
Bad dream.

NATASHA  
Oh, sweetie! Again? What was it about? Come here.

Natasha sits up and pulls him close like a child.

SAM  
A boy... tried to kill me.

NATASHA  
What boy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

I don't know... some scary little  
boy with horrible eyes.

NATASHA

Oh, honey, you're really soaking.  
Let me get you a towel.

Natasha gets up and goes to the bathroom to get a towel. WHEN  
SHE COMES OUT, SHE IS HOLDING THE HAND OF THE LITTLE BOY WHO  
IS SMILING UP AT HER HOLDING HIS FREE HAND BEHIND HIS BACK.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

This boy?

Sam's eyes go wide with fear.

THE BOY SWINGS THE AX AND BURIES IT IN NATASHA'S STOMACH. Her  
eyes go wide staring at Sam with pain and horror and her  
mouth hangs open noiselessly, blood spilling out.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

A FULLY BEARDED SAM awakens (for real this time) in his bed.  
Natasha is getting dressed next to the bed.

NATASHA

They still haven't fixed the lines.

We hear the hum of the generator. Sam is still dazed from his  
dream.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

You were moaning. F.Y.I.

Sam rubs his eyes.

SAM

I just can't shake these dreams.

Natasha is a little softer with him.

NATASHA

It's been over a month. Is it the  
same one?

SAM

Sort of, same cast of characters.  
(Pause)  
Same feeling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATASHA  
And what's that?

He takes a moment to define it.

SAM  
Dread.

She thinks for a moment then begins unbuttoning the shirt she has just put on.

NATASHA  
Well, I have an idea for something  
that might take your mind off it.

She kneels on the bed. He looks up at her still a little disoriented from the dream. She gets closer.

NATASHA (CONT'D)  
One of the advantages of living in  
the country..  
(she's almost on top of  
him)  
Kids are outside... no one can hear  
you scream...

She kisses him. He gives in for a moment, then pulls away.

SAM  
Natasha...

He pulls away. Hurt, she sits up and leans back against the headboard.

She looks away from him, gathering herself.

NATASHA  
You know, I was willing to accept  
you're anger... Your constant  
distance for a while, but Christ  
Sam, it's been... it's been enough  
time.

SAM  
So what? There is supposed to be a  
shelf-life for feeling like shit?

She gets a little angrier.

NATASHA  
How many times can I say I'm sorry?  
I don't know what you want!  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NATASHA (CONT'D)

This is only going to work if you  
want it to work. But if you keep  
blaming me for everything...

SAM

What does that mean?

NATASHA

You know what it means.

They look at each other.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

People make mistakes. I'm not  
riding you about us having to move  
here... about you losing your job.

SAM

You think I wanted that?! You think  
I wanted to be humiliated, to feel  
like a failure, to not be able to  
provide for my family? Trust me  
it's a ton of fun.

She is emotional.

NATASHA

Tell me you can't understand how  
this happened. Tell me you've never  
looked at another woman...

He tries to hold her gaze.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Or even more maybe...

Sam looks at her. Lot of conflicting emotions. A moment,  
then:

There is a BANGING on the window but the blinds are shut.  
They both jump.

Sam goes to the window and pulls up the blinds. Alex is  
standing there, yelling through the glass.

ALEX

Dad! Dad! There is somebody out  
here! Down by the brook.

Alex waves and points towards the woods.

CUT TO:



EXT. CLEARING - MORNING

Sam comes out of the house with Natasha following closely behind. He is wearing a pair of jeans and jacket hastily thrown on, with no shirt underneath. Natasha has grabbed the poker from the fire place. Alex and Kate begin to follow them.

SAM  
You guys stay here.

ALEX  
I'm coming with you. I found it.

KATE  
Who's gonna stay with me?

NATASHA  
(to Alex)  
No, stay here with your sister.

ALEX  
Come on! This is the first exciting  
thing to happen in weeks!

NATASHA  
Alex...

ALEX  
I fucking hate this place!

Alex storms back inside and Kate follows.

Natasha continues to follow, holding the poker by her side as they head down a trail, and into the woods.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS BY BROOK - DAY

Sam and Natasha come to a little clearing near the brook and come upon an orange tent. Natasha raises the poker and Sam sees it for the first time.

SAM  
Jesus, Natasha put that down.

NATASHA  
(in a tense low whisper)  
Sam, I don't like this. No one  
comes up here...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM  
Maybe they're lost... got turned  
around.

Sam approaches the tent and calls out.

SAM (CONT'D)  
( to the quiet tent )  
Hello?... This is private property,  
you can't camp here. Hello.  
Anyone home? Hellooo!

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

The generator rumbles along.

Alex pulls the chain of an overhead light.

KATE (O.S.)  
Alex! Alex! Where are you?

ALEX  
(yelling, annoyed)  
I'll be up in a few minutes!

Alex walks around the back of the generator and behind a cinder block wall that separates one side of the basement from the other. (We haven't seen this part of the house yet.)

Alex navigates around some stuff - lawn mower, badminton set, extra leaves for a table, and into:

A HIDDEN CORNER.

Alex removes a painter's tarp revealing a teenaged boy paradise: an old, dusty tube TV set sits on the floor with a an ancient Odyssey 400 game system leading out of it.

He leans down and hits the switch on the power strip and a game appears. The classic, "PONG". It's no "Gears of War", but it'll do.

He takes a seat in an old, nylon-slatted, aluminium-framed lawn chair he's rummaged. A can of soda sits by his side on a cardboard box, next to a well worn copy of 1986 Playboy with Cindy Crawford on the cover.

On the screen the PONG BALL DRIFTS. Alex opens up the Playboy, and for a moment we are privy to his view of Cindy Crawford's bare body.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then suddenly, over the top of the Playboy, Alex sees A SHADOW MOVE. THE MOVEMENT IS COUPLED WITH A SCRAPING NOISE.

Alex quickly closes the Playboy and kills the power strip. He hops up.

BACK SECTION OF BASEMENT

Alex uses the cinder block wall to hide himself. He peeks around the corner. This section of the basement has racks of supplies, a bunch of camping gear, and an old washer and dryer. It's easier to see in here because there are TWO SMALL HIGH WINDOWS that are letting daylight in.

Someone is lurking quietly in the shadows by the supply shelves.

CLOSE ON ALEX WATCHING.

As the figure moves we see it's a girl. Very beautiful, long hair. She wears a form-fitting, silk long underwear top. She takes a bottle of wine off a shelf and moves back into the light of the window to look at the label. She bends down to stuff the bottle in her pack, already packed full with canned food, a box of cigars, and other items from the basement.

Alex watches as she opens the window and starts to stuff her pack through.

As the glass in the window swings open, the angle reveals Alex to the young girl. She drops her pack, startled. She turns around but can't really see Alex clearly yet.

MEAGAN

Jesus... Hey, man. I'm sorry. I was just... I was hiking out of Panther Gorge and then that storm moved in and... I guess I got turned around. And when I saw the house... I was just hungry...

ALEX

Hungry for wine?

She didn't realize she was talking to a kid. Her shoulders relax and she steps toward him.

MEAGAN

You caught me. I just didn't want to bother you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALEX

So you were going to steal that stuff?

Meagan is now only a few feet from him. She smiles at his young, serious face.

MEAGAN

I guess you're a good detective. But you don't have to turn me in, you know. I wasn't going to hurt anyone...

She smiles at him.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

How old are you anyway?

ALEX

Old enough.

MEAGAN

I see.

She steps toward him and he's not sure what she's doing. She leans in close, but only to look around the wall to his secret area.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

Is that like, your club house?

ALEX

No.

She stays close to him now.

MEAGAN

Are those your magazines?

Alex is unsure if she knows what he has over there.

ALEX

Not really. They were down here.

She nods.

MEAGAN

So you come down here just to get away?

ALEX

Sort of.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEAGAN

We're pretty much alike then.  
That's what I was doing up in the  
mountains. Just getting away from  
everything and everyone. All the  
craziness of the world.

He can't help but be entranced by her. They still stand  
close.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

(without taking her eyes  
off him)

Sorry if I smell. I've been out  
for, like, two weeks.

ALEX

You don't smell.

MEAGAN

Thanks. But, I know you're a liar.

Upstairs, we hear the front door open.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

Any chance you'd help me out and  
keep this secret? I bet your  
parents wouldn't be as  
understanding as you are.

(She laughs)

Gosh, you're the first person I've  
spoken to in, like, 13 days. Feels  
funny.

She keeps looking at him. From upstairs his parents yell.

NATASHA (O.S.)

Alex...!

MEAGAN

Maybe you could just keep your  
folks inside so I could get back to  
my tent?

Alex nods.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

I'll put your stuff back.

From upstairs, his parents call:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM (O.S.)  
Alex...!

ALEX  
I'd better go.

She nods. Alex turns.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Sam and Kate lie on the floor in the living room, each with a book. Kate's head rests on Sam's stomach as she reads.

The door opens and Natasha and Alex come in from outside. They are bundled up.

SAM  
Ahh, it's the S.W.A.T. team, back from their mission. So, what'd you find?

They stamp the snow off of their boots.

KATE  
It's freezing. Close the door.

They fully enter the house and begin unlacing their boots.

NATASHA  
Nothing. You're son insisted I stay close to the house while he did a "sweep of the perimeter".

ALEX  
You don't both go in. Then you don't have any back up.

NATASHA  
Sorry, I'm not on level 47 on "Fear of War".

ALEX  
It's "Gears of War" and there aren't levels.

NATASHA  
(sarcastically)  
I must be an idiot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

You're both over-reacting. It's just a girl headed down from the pass who probably didn't even know we were here. I'm sure she's hiked out to the road and caught a ride, by now.

ALEX

(attention piqued)

How do you know it's a girl?

SAM

Cause your Mother and I found her panties in the tent...

Alex seems frozen by the excitement of this information. Natasha makes a face.

NATASHA

Oh, God, Sam, don't use that word...

SAM

Panties? That's what they were.

Kate covers her ears.

KATE

Dad!

ALEX

Who ever she is, Dad is right... she's gone, now.

SAM

You hear that? "Dad is right". Mark it down.

Natasha walks beside Sam's head on the way to the kitchen.

NATASHA

(half-teasing)

Trust me, we'll remember since it's the only time.

Sam grabs her ankle and pulls her down.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

(trying to get away)

Sam!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She can't help but laugh, as she falls on top of him. Sam holds her down as she tries to get away. Kate hops up so she won't get crushed.

SAM  
Panties, panties, panties...

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. Alex is lying in bed with his eyes open. He pulls off the covers and slides out silently. We see that he is fully-clothed, except for his shoes.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Alex is walking through the dark woods, lit only by the moonlight. He is moving from tree-to-tree and being very quiet until he comes upon Meagan's tent beside the brook. It is lit by embers of a camp fire.

Meagan sits, trying to keep warm, drinking from a WINE BOTTLE AND SMOKING A CIGAR. She looks like a spirit in the soft orange light with the smoke from the fire and from Sam's cigar wafting around her. She sings a little:

MEAGAN  
*"I've got stripes, stripes along my  
shoulders, I've got chains, chains  
around my feet."*

Alex drops behind a boulder just out of the reach of the fire light and watches.

After a minute Meagan flicks the cigar into the fire, takes another swig from the bottle and pours the rest over the embers making them sizzle and smoke. She stands up and kicks dirt onto the fire pit and then enters the tent.

A light is flicked on inside and the tent turning it into an over-sized Chinese lantern. The muted orange glow and reveals Meagan's silhouette. Alex is transfixed.

She pulls off her shirt and then her pants and we can see the black shape of her naked body cast against the wall of the tent, as she reaches around for something... clearly cold.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

She quickly pulls some kind of shirt on and gets into her sleeping bag. Then the light goes out, leaving Alex alone in the cold, dark woods.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Sam and Natasha are loading a few things into the SUV.

SAM

I want you to be careful...that's a long drive and those roads are rough this time of year. Don't speed.

NATASHA

I know these roads Sam.

SAM

Natasha, promise me... It's like a hundred and twenty miles on 22; almost all of which is going to be frozen.

NATASHA

I promise.

Then, half joking...

NATASHA (CONT'D)

... so does this mean you still care about me?

SAM

(faux surprised)

I guess it does...

Natasha looks into Sam's eyes and puts a hand to his cheek.

NATASHA

I'd be lonely without you, you know.

SAM

I would be, too.

They kiss tenderly.

SAM (CONT'D)

Tell your mom we miss her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATASHA  
(half kidding)  
So, now your asking me to lie?

She climbs into the car and starts it.

NATASHA (CONT'D)  
(flirty, from the car)  
Bet you wish you were coming.

SAM  
You know it. Bill O'Reilly on that  
big screen TV? Ooh, baby, you can't  
beat that!

NATASHA  
(laughing)  
...don't be mean.

He leans in the car and gives her one more kiss.

NATASHA (CONT'D)  
Be good. And take care of those  
little monsters.

He smiles. She mouths "I love you". He mouths it back.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Natasha's car whizzes past us.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Natasha sings with Lucinda Williams. There are no other cars,  
just trees frozen meadows and mountains. It's starting to  
flurry a little.

Natasha turns around a bend and:

SUDDENLY must swerve to miss SOMETHING SITTING IN THE ROAD.  
She can't quite turn away in time and glances it with her  
car.

She slams on the breaks and fishtails to a stop. She is  
breathing hard. She tries to see what it is in her rearview  
mirror, but can't make it out. She throws the car into park  
and gets out.

EXT. ROAD

Natasha closes her car door and begins walking toward the object. As she gets closer it's revealed to be AN ARMCHAIR, just sitting there as if placed. She looks at it for a moment, trying to understand, then leans down and begins pushing it to the side of the road. She pushes it over the side and the incline is steep enough that it tumbles end-over-end.

OVERHEAD as Natasha gets back in the SUV and continues down the twisting road.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUR LATER

Sam is setting up the lesson plan for the day, laying out books, reading the sheets that Natasha has set out.

SAM  
"Pre-algebra..." Where's the pre-  
algebra book?... What the hell is  
pre-algebra?

Sam looks through everything laid out on the table.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(yelling toward the front  
of the house)  
ALEX! WHERE'S YOUR MATH BOOK?

No answer. He looks back to the table.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
This teaching-shit is hard.

All of a sudden, a male voice from the kitchen:

BRIAN  
They're out back, building a fort.

Sam looks over and jumps.

SAM  
Fuck... Brian!

Sam holds his heart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)  
Are you trying to give me a heart  
attack?

BRIAN  
(a little out of it)  
They're building a fort out there.  
They remember everything I taught  
them.

SAM  
Well, you're a great teacher. Do  
you know any algebra?

Sam smiles at him and walks over to greet him. Gives him a  
hug.

SAM (CONT'D)  
I didn't think you were coming up  
til the weekend.

BRIAN  
(almost emotional)  
You've got such great kids.

SAM  
(light hearted)  
Try living with them sometime.  
Lemme make you a cup of coffee.

Brian doesn't move for Sam to get by.

SAM (CONT'D)  
You alright?

The closer we look at Brian the more he doesn't look good.

SAM (CONT'D)  
You look gray, man. What is it?

BRIAN  
(shaky)  
It happened...

Brian swallows. His mouth is dry.

SAM  
What happened buddy?

Sam reaches his hand out and lays it on Brian's arm. Brian  
cringes and pulls away when Sam touches him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SAM (CONT'D)  
Are you hurt?

Brian steps into the kitchen. Sam watches him.

BRIAN  
It just doesn't seem real.

SAM  
Brian, talk to me. What?

A little scream from outside. Sam walks by Brian and over to the window to look out on the kids. They're having fun.

OUT THE WINDOW

The kids play. They are fine.

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

Sam looks back at Brian who is now standing by the refrigerator. Sam sees there is blood dripping down the sleeve of Brian's jacket and dripping onto the floor.

SAM  
Bri... you've got to let me look at you.

BRIAN  
It's gone, Sam.

Sam approaches him more assertively.

SAM  
What is gone, Brian?

He looks into Sam's eyes, lost.

BRIAN  
New York...

CUT TO:

INT. SUV

NATASHA PULLS INTO THE LITTLE TOWN OF KEENE VALLEY. All the stores are closed. The little General Store has a broken window, and there is an alarm sounding from somewhere inside.

NATASHA  
What the hell....?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Natasha rolls up a block or two and takes a left. Looking back and forth, in confusion.

She drives up to a little farmhouse and pulls into the drive. All the houses on the street are quiet. There are no signs of people. It's a ghost town.

Natasha gets out of the car and slams the door. A dog barks from inside a house down the street. She walks up to the front porch, looking around her as she goes, and peers in the window.

The house is quiet. She pulls a key out from under the mat, pushes the key into the lock, but it's already unlocked. She steps inside.

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

It is very neat, but outdated and lived in. Natasha enters cautiously.

NATASHA

Mom? Mother? It's Me...

Natasha hears the TV on upstairs.

NATASHA(CONT'D)

...Mom?

She heads toward the stairs and calls up.

NATASHA(CONT'D)

Mom? Are you asleep? Mother?

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE, TOP OF THE STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

She moves down the hall toward the sound of the TV and the blue light spilling into the dark hallway from the bedroom.

NATASHA

Mom?

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Turning into the bedroom we see that Natasha's mother sits motionless in front of the big flat screen TV, out of place in its quaint surroundings. The TV is showing only the station logo and repeating this announcement:

TV

This is the Emergency Broadcast  
System. This is not a test.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TV (CONT'D)

Stay in your home. State and Federal authorities have declared marshal law. There is a daily curfew in effect from 6 pm until 6 am. This curfew will remain in effect until further notice. This is the Emergency Broadcast System. This is not a test.

On Natasha, as she looks at the TV.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Sam has Brian's coat and shirt off and has him sitting at the kitchen table. Sam is attending to what looks like a gun shot in his shoulder.

BRIAN

They fucking shot her, Sam. Trying to take our stuff. And I tried to get in the way.

(Looking to Sam desperately)

... I tried... You know I wouldn't just let that happen... You know...

SAM

Of course I know. I know...

BRIAN

(He looks into Sam's face)

I can't believe she is gone.

Brian puts his head in his hands and cries. Sam can't do anything but try to comfort his friend.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

It's total chaos. You can't stay in the towns... people are running, taking everything they can... All the cities are empty. We have to stay here. I loaded the truck with everything I could take...

He breathes deeply.

SAM

There's got to be something to do...

BRIAN

You don't understand what's going on?! Do you hear me?!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRIAN (CONT'D)

People are shooting each other...  
taking from the stores, banks...  
The whole fucking world is  
turning... turning.

He seems like he's about to hyper-ventilate. He bows his head.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I gotta keep it together... We're  
going to help each other Sam,  
right?

Sam looks at his friend and nods. Alex peeks his head in the door. He sees Brian.

ALEX

Hey, Brian? Can you help us  
build...

Brian turns and Alex sees his wound.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(totally taken aback)  
What happened?

BRIAN

(covering badly)  
I'm okay, Alex. Hunter thought I  
was a bear.

Brian tries to smile through it. Alex doesn't bite. He just looks from his Dad to Brian.

SAM

Go outside and don't let your  
sister come in.

Alex lingers.

SAM (CONT'D)

Do it.

Alex just stands there. He knows something's wrong.

ALEX

Is Mommy okay?

Sam remembers.

SAM

Shit... Natasha...



INT. MOTHER HOUSE - SAME TIME

Natasha presses the power button on the TV, silencing it.

INT. MOTHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Natasha steps into the bedroom and sees her Mother sitting in a rocking chair, facing away from her toward the window. She slowly walks up to her mother.

Her Mother doesn't move. Her cane rests on the floor.

NATASHA  
(Tentatively)  
Mom, wake up. Mom, we've got to go.  
I don't think it's safe here.

Natasha moves around to the front of her Mother. The old woman's face is ashen and slack. She lightly shakes her, but her head flops loosely on her shoulders and Natasha steps back in shock.

NATASHA (CONT'D)  
Mom...?

Natasha gets down on her hands and knees and puts her arms around her Mother. She cries.

As we're focused on Natasha, we see a closet door begin to open very slowly, almost imperceptibly, in the background. Natasha is rapt in disbelief and sadness, and doesn't hear.

First, just a hand appears around the door frame. Then a foot. A leg. And then the shadowy blurred figure steps out and begins to creep toward her.

A floor board whines and the figure stops moving.

Natasha suddenly stops crying with a tiny gasp and brings her head up.

We see her face nearly fill the screen, eyes wide with fear, THE BLURRED FIGURE FROZEN MID-STEP IN THE DISTANCE BEHIND HER.

There is a momentary pause, as the world seems to stop. All we hear is Natasha's clipped breathing.

NATASHA'S EYES FLIT AROUND THE ROOM AS SHE REMAINS CLUTCHING HER MOTHER. SHE SEES SIGNS OF LOOTING that she missed before. A jewelry box on the dresser, opened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The dresser drawers pulled out, rummaged through. Boxes yanked from under the bed and rifled through.

And then the calm is over in a blur of action.

AS THE LOOTER LUNGES TOWARD HER, NATASHA WHEELS AROUND, SPINNING JUST AS THE LOOTER IS UPON HER.

There is a loud sickening CRACK then a grunt as the intruder falls back, slamming against the TV and into a bookcase full of photographs, books and little porcelain sculptures, all of which crash to the floor.

A broken piece of wood flies across the room, rattling against the wall and Natasha stands HOLDING THE JAGGED REMAINS OF HER MOTHER'S CANE. The man is dazed and is sprawled on the floor covering his face.

NATASHA(CONT'D)  
(enraged and standing tall  
clutching the broken  
cane)  
WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY MOTHER, YOU  
SON OF A BITCH!!

She takes a step toward the man, clearly aiming to strike again. She is shaking with rage and adrenaline.

LOOTER  
(holding a hand up to  
block the expected blow)  
I didn't do it! I didn't do it!  
Stop! I found her this way, I swear  
to god! Jesus, lady!

Natasha stands ready to do more damage.

NATASHA  
(screaming)  
You're a fucking liar.

The intruder brings his hand to his face where there is a huge, ugly, swelling red welt across his cheek bone, and some blood.

LOOTER  
I found her this way. Jesus, I  
swear I found her this way! Look,  
by her chair...

Natasha glances over at the floor by her mother's chair and sees a nearly empty bottle of pills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LOOTER (CONT'D)

I was just looking for money,  
something to sell... some food.

He nods at the corpse in the chair, probing his jaw gently,  
feeling for broken bones.

LOOTER (CONT'D)

A lot of the old people are doing  
that... downing whatever medication  
they got or a bag of rat poison,  
use a gun if they have one.  
Probably smart, cause it could be a  
lot worse...

The man starts to get up slowly and shakily.

NATASHA

What are you talking about? What is  
going on?

LOOTER

Where have you been? Do you watch  
TV? Are you a part of the fucking  
world?

Natasha looks at him. She doesn't know anything. The looter  
almost looks indignant, or maybe jealous that she doesn't  
know.

LOOTER (CONT'D)

New York is a hole... London is a  
hole... And that's when they  
stopped telling us...

NATASHA

(screaming at him)

Tell me the truth! Tell me what is  
happening!

LOOTER

(Yelling back)

No one knows what is happening, YOU  
FUCKING CUNT!

The man takes a vase from the dresser and hurls it at  
Natasha. She ducks, giving him the chance to dive back to the  
a duffle bag and an antique-looking revolver, which he points  
at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LOOTER (CONT'D)

*Here it is...didn't want to have to  
use this, but...now you gonna get  
the fuck out of my way?*

The man walks straight at Natasha training the pistol on her the whole way.

When he gets close, Natasha smashes him in the face again with the cane. He reels back in agonizing pain. Then stands still pointing the gun. He takes a deep breath and pulls the trigger on the revolver. CLICK. Nothing. She stands as he clicks a couple more times.

NATASHA

*That's my daddy's gun... It's  
ornamental, you idiot. NOW DROP  
THAT FUCKING BAG AND GET THE FUCK  
OUT OF MY HOUSE!*

The looter's face goes pale, he looks at the pistol and then drops it and the bag.

LOOTER (O.S.)

*(on his way downstairs)  
You're going to end up just the  
same as everyone else; dead or in  
one of their "safety centers",  
which is just as bad.*

The looter runs past her.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Brian and Sam stand in the driveway having unloaded a ton of supplies from Brian's truck.

SAM

*You shouldn't go, I should.*

BRIAN

*I want to go, Sam. I've got no more  
to lose. You get those kids inside  
and safe. Just keep calling her  
mother's. If you get her, tell her  
to head to the Shell station at  
Route 22. There is a group holed up  
in the basement there. She'll be  
safe with them.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam looks ashen.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
She's going to be okay. You married  
a strong women, Sam.

SAM  
We both did Brian.

Brain wells up. They hug.

BRIAN  
I didn't know how lucky I was.

SAM  
None of us ever do.

Brian shakes off the emotion.

BRIAN  
I'll be back with Natasha.

He gets in his truck.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE

Natasha is kneeling in front of the refrigerator, bathed in the white door light in the otherwise dimly lit kitchen. There are 4 or 5 bags of various kinds: a rolling luggage, duffle bag, day packs, etc. - some full, some empty - scattered around her.

Natasha is rifling through the fridge, taking what she can.

She moves onto the cabinets and cupboards, throwing boxes of pasta and cereal, rice, cans of coffee, sugar, cake mix into the bags. Liquor cabinet next. SHE GRABS A BOTTLE OF JACK DANIELS AND TAKES A LONG SWIG, re-caps it and throws it into the bag. Gin, Vodka, a few bottles of wine.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT

Natasha walks down the dark basement steps carrying a big, empty duffle bag. She jerks on the overhead light which swings dizzily about, as she searches for something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATASHA  
(to herself)  
OK, Daddy, where the hell did you  
put that thing?

Natasha is throwing aside boxes of papers and scraps of wood, cans of dried up old paint, occasionally dropping something in the bag - an extension cord, an ax, a length of rope, hammer, box of nails, a can of paint thinner, glue.

She kicks over a cardboard box and an old photos fall out. SHE KNEELS DOWN TO PICK THEM UP AND FINDS A PICTURE OF HER FATHER IN UNIFORM, LOOKING YOUNG AND STRONG.

She looks deeply at the picture for a moment.

Next, she finds a picture of her parents together with the kids. Alex is about 8, and Kate is an infant carried in the arms of her smiling, but very frail and old-looking father - clearly sick.

Tears in her eyes, she stuffs the pictures into her shirt pocket and moves on, finally coming upon the old military trunk she was looking for.

She wipes the dust from the surface to reveal the stenciled words, US MARINE CORP. 3RD FORECON. SGT. STANLEY PINCKNEY. Natasha opens the box.

TAPED TO THE INSIDE OF THE LID ARE PICTURES OF HER DAD IN VIETNAM WITH HIS UNIT, HOLDING THEIR WEAPONS, POSING WITH LOCALS, ETC.

Also, there are pictures of him at various ages, with his hunting buddies standing next to a dead black bear hanging from a tree, various bucks and birds.

THERE IS ONE OF NATASHA AS A LITTLE GIRL, HOLDING A RIFLE TUCKED UNDER HER ARM. HER PROUD FATHER HAS HIS ARM AROUND HER SHOULDER.

Natasha carefully pulls this picture off the lid and tucks it in her pocket with the others.

She pulls back a length of royal blue felt to uncover an M-40 SNIPER RIFLE nestled in a royal blue compartment. It is surprisingly shiny and practically looks brand new. Natasha lifts the compartment holding the rifle and peeks underneath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Reaching in, she pulls out 4 OR 5 BOXES OF AMMO and tosses them in the bag, then she wraps the rifle in the blue felt and carefully lays it in the duffle.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE

Sam and the kids are in the living room. Sam is dressed for a hike.

KATE  
Don't go Daddy.

SAM  
I have to baby. Got to get in touch with your mother in case Brian misses her. It's a five-mile hike to the Ranger outpost. There should be someone there with information and a radio, or something.

ALEX  
You think Mom is OK?

SAM  
Just stay around the house. And be good to your sister. I am counting on you.

Alex looks stunned by all this.

SAM (CONT'D)  
OK, Alex, you're the man now. Kate, you listen to your brother.

He pulls Alex to the side.

SAM (CONT'D)  
...I should be back in a few hours....if I am late, do not look for me... just stay put, OK?

ALEX  
OK, Dad.

Sam pauses as if to consider his next words.

SAM  
Alex, I want you to load the .38 and keep it handy.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)

Now listen, do not fire it, do not play with it, do not let your sister anywhere near it, you got me? But if anyone one comes down that road you get it and be ready to use it.

Alex looks at him and nods solemnly. Sam's eyes well up but he stifles his emotion and draws his son to him. They hug.

SAM (CONT'D)

You're a good boy. I love you, Alex.

ALEX

I love you too, dad.

Kate pulls out a little Ziplock bag of peanuts and holds them out to her father.

KATE

Here, Daddy...in case you get hungry.

Sam smiles, gets on his knees and gives Kate a hug.

SAM

Oh, thank you, Sweetheart... Don't worry guys, everything's going to be fine. OK? I'll be back soon.

Kate nods as Sam kisses her forehead. He stuffs the peanuts into his pocket and picks up his daypack. Sam nods to Alex.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK OF MOTHER'S HOUSE. IT IS STARTING TO GET DARK.

We hear labored breathing, thumping and grunts, and finally the back door is kicked open. Natasha emerges with her Mother's body over her back, in a lifeguard carry.

She still has the sniper rifle over her shoulder on a strap, and she is weeping quietly from sorrow and effort.

She gets the body to the middle of the yard where there is a PILE OF KINDLING AND NEWSPAPER. Natasha DRAGS THE BODY ONTO THE WOODPILE and kneels down next to it.

Natasha fixes the position of her mother's body - tenderly attempts to straighten her clothes, her hair.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

She folds her mother's arms in front of her, and kisses her on the forehead. After a moment, she steps away from the body, bends down, and picks up TWO LARGE CANS OF CHARCOAL LIGHTER FLUID and begins to pour the fluid from both cans onto the woodpile and her mother (carefully avoiding her face), until the cans are completely empty.

She angrily throws the cans aside and stands silently for a moment, tears in her eyes, snowflakes curling around her.

NATASHA

I'm so sorry, Momma. You deserved better. You were a fine woman and a wonderful mother. May god keep you in his care. I love you. Kiss Daddy for me.

NATASHA STRIKES A KITCHEN MATCH ON HER JEANS AND DROPS IT ONTO THE BODY, AND IT BURSTS INTO FLAMES.

She watches for a few seconds. We hear nothing but the crackle of the fire and the distant barking of the dog. Then, Natasha walks off, leaving the burning corpse.

FADE OUT/IN.

EXT. WOODS

Sam is hiking through the woods with purpose. He is in a dark Hemlock grove when HE DETECTS SOME MOVEMENT UP AHEAD. He slows his pace. As he gets closer a large BLACK BEAR APPEARS FROM BEHIND A THICKET.

The bear grunts but doesn't see him.

SAM

(under his breath)

Oh, fuck... What are you doing out this time of year, big fella?

The bear sniffs the air and grunts again. Sam slowly backs away, never taking his eyes off the bear.

After a minute the bear turns and lumbers away.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PORCH

Alex is fiddling with a radio and getting nothing but static. Kate joins him on the porch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATE  
I'm cold.

ALEX  
Go back inside, then.

KATE  
It's cold inside, Alex.

ALEX  
Well, turn up the heat.

KATE  
I did, it doesn't work.

Alex gets up.

ALEX  
Generator must be out. Don't worry,  
I know how to fix it.

They both head inside.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN BASEMENT

Alex pulls the light chain, and the room is bathed in the sixty-watt glow. Kate stands near him looking slightly afraid to be in the dark room with the loud generator.

Alex can immediately hear that the generator is running rough.

Alex looks at the gears and turbine. The belt has slipped off.

ALEX  
(yelling over the noise)  
I HAVE TO FIX SOMETHING.

KATE  
WHAT?

ALEX  
I HAVE TO FIX THE BELT!

KATE  
WHAT?

Alex waves her off and gets down on his knees next to the machine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sticks his hand along side the belt to make the adjustment as his father had shown him and THE SLEEVE OF HIS JACKET GETS CAUGHT AND PULLS HIS HAND INTO THE TURBINE.

Alex begins screaming.

ALEX  
KATE, MY HAND. TURN IT OFF! TURN IT  
OFF!

KATE'S EYES ARE SCRUNCHED CLOSED AND SHE IS COVERING HER EARS SO SHE CAN'T HEAR HIM.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
KATE! TURN IT OFFF ...AHHHHHHH!!  
KATE!!

Kate's eyes pop open and she sees what is happening. She runs to Alex. Who is screaming.

KATE  
What do I do? What do I do.

ALEX  
TURN IT OOOOFFF!! THERE, RIGHT  
THERE!

Kate sees Alex indicate to the switch and she hesitates afraid to touch the roaring machine.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
*DO IT!!!*

She shuts it off.

The generator grinds to a halt and Alex flops back on his back holding his mangled and bloodied hand. His ring finger is bent at an impossible angle, blood pulsing out of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANGER OUTPOST.

A crow caws and flies off the roof of the little one room cabin nestled deep in a clearing.

Sam hikes up to it and as he approaches he sees the front door is ajar.

SAM  
Hello? Anyone home?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pushes the door open and steps inside.

INT. RANGER OUTPOST

Sam stands in the cabin and looks around. SOMEONE LEFT IN A HURRY.

There's a trunk on the floor where the Ranger kept his clothes and it stands open and empty. There's a pair of dirty socks hanging from a clothes line that is strung across the exposed rafters. There is a spilled box of oatmeal...ravaged by mice... or the crow... lying on the table next to a dirty bowl.

In one corner there is a little desk where a log book lies open. Sam looks at the last entry...

*Tue. Dec. 15 6:12 AM... Received radio call from dispatch requesting immediate return to base. State of Emergency in effect. All state employees under federal jurisdiction. I am to report to base and then on to Plattsburgh Airport for reassignment. Fuck that, I'm going home. God help us all. - Dell Simon, Lt., Northern District.*

Sam sees the radio on the desk, flicks it on and picks up the mic.

SAM

Hello...can anyone hear me? Hello?

There is nothing but static.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hello? Anyone? This is Sam Gentry.  
I am at the Wolf Pond  
outpost...Hello?...Hello?

Nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Alex is sitting on the bathroom floor looking nearly as white as the tile around him. He looks like he might pass out.

Kate holds a blood-soaked towel to his hand and is digging frantically through a very big, floral printed toiletry bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Blood pools on the floor and there is a trail of blood that leads out the door.

Kate is throwing things off to the side...bobby pins, tampons, hairspray, Q-Tips, sample-sized bottles of shampoo... trying to find what she is looking for.

Kate seems either unable or unwilling to really grasp the gravity of the situation, despite the fact that she is smeared with her brother's blood. She is in Nurse-mode.

She pulls out a brown bottle of peroxide.

KATE

Mommy always uses this when I have a boo-boo. She says it cleans it... keeps it from getting 'fected. It's going to be OK, Alex. I'll take care of you.

Alex is too out of it to respond. He's fading. Blood is dripping onto the floor through the towel. It's drenched with blood.

Kate looks at Alex and for the first time, there's recognition in her eyes that this is really bad.

She pulls the blood-soaked towel from Alex's hand and drops it on the floor.

What she sees is truly awful:

Alex's ring finger is hanging by a small piece of jagged flesh. The bone has been completely severed at the knuckle. Blood pulses out of wound.

Kate goes pale but steels herself to the task.

She opens the peroxide bottle, closes her eyes tight and pours the peroxide over the whole hand. Alex moans in pain and the whole hand bubbles.

Kate starts to wrap the hand with a roll of gauze.

Not sure what to do about the hanging finger, she holds it up gingerly as Alex gasps, and wraps the gauze around it so it seems sort of back in place.

The wrap job looks like it was done by a seven year old, but seems to help staunch the blood a bit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She tapes it up like she would wrap a present. Tearing a little piece of tape off with her teeth and sticking where she think it's necessary to keep the bandage on.

When she is done, the hand is at least twice its normal size and she sees that Alex has passed out.

She lays her head in his lap and begins to cry.

They lie there on the bloody bathroom floor. They look like murder victims.

*The camera pulls back all the way outside above the roof until the house is just a speck in a vast wilderness.*

FADE OUT/CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE

Sam walks in the front door.

SAM  
Hello? Kids?

Sam hangs his coat on the hook and walks into the living room.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Hey guys? Where are you? Alex?  
Kate? I'm home!

Sam walks down the hall as the camera follows. He pokes his head in the bedrooms and then notices blood on the floor leading to the bathroom. He begins to run.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Oh, my god!

He runs to the bathroom doorway and sees his kids laying there, covered in blood. Blood all over the place. The contents of the toiletry bag scattered about. A blood soaked towel and a giant bloody bandage on his son's hand that looks like some kind of satanic beehive.

Sam can only whisper.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Kate?

Kate looks up at her dad sleepily. Alex's eyes open too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATE  
Alex hurt himself.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

The generator rumbles in the distance.

Sam is at the table frantically flipping through a HOME MEDICAL ALMANAC. He stops and reads a few lines and then flips more pages.

There is a bottle of Rum and a litre of coke on the table.

Alex is lying on the couch his hand has been re-wrapped and looks much better. He sips a glass of what looks like coke and makes a face. Kate sits on the floor leaning against the couch looking at her father pensively.

Sam slams the book shut.

SAM  
Drink that whole thing. I'll be  
right back.

Goes into the kitchen and pulls out a chopping block and big knife and lays them on the counter. He puts a pot of water on to boil then disappears down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN

*A few minutes later.*

Sam is at the sink rinsing the chopping block with rubbing alcohol.

On the counter: more gauze and tape, a bottle of Krazy Glue, a Ziplock bag, and a roll of paper towels.

The boiling pot of water sits on the stove with the knife handle sticking out.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN

*A FEW MINUTES LATER.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam has propped Alex up in a chair near the counter. He is alert now but very pale and weak. He watches Sam with hooded eyes as he drinks his second Rum and Coke, more easily now. His left arm has tourniquet at the elbow and his sleeve is pushed up above it.

Kate sits next to Alex and watches her father.

Sam looks very grave as he scrubs his hands in the sink.

The chopping block sits atop the counter with the gauze and tape at the ready.

The knife still sits in the pot.

SAM

Kate, I want you to go outside. Go out and play, OK?

KATE

But, Daddy, I don't feel like playing...

SAM

Right now, Kate.

Kate looks at her brother and then walks over to the front door, retrieves her coat. She looks back at Alex and Sam before she exits the house.

Sam turns his attention to Alex, lifting the knife out of the boiling water.

ALEX

(slurring his words a little)

Dad...it'll be fine till we get to the doctor. You wrapped it up good.

SAM

Give me your hand.

Alex begins to cry but he flops his hand drunkenly on the counter.

ALEX

Dad, no... I like that finger...please.

Sam unwraps the bandage using the knife to slice away the tape.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

The hand looks grey and is covered in cuts, but it is clean. Sam unwraps the ruined finger...and the grey finger just hangs off the back of his hand.

Alex is crying and hanging his head drunkenly.

SAM

Just don't look, OK? It will be over in a second.

Sam holds his son's hand at the wrist and flattens it on the chopping block. He gently lays the finger out and curls the other fingers away as best he can.

He holds the knife on the flap of skin and tendon and muscle holding the it to the hand. Sam's hand shakes and he is almost as pale as his son. He presses down. Shhk.

Alex cries out. Sobbing with pain and fear.

Quickly, Sam rinses the stump with peroxide and blots it with a paper towel. He picks up the crazy glue and puts a few drops on the skin around the stump and holds them together for a few seconds, closing off the end. He wraps gauze around the whole hand again and tapes it off.

Alex is silent now. Still sitting upright, but delirious. Sam removes the tourniquet, scoops him up like a baby and carries him to his room.

*The camera stays in the kitchen.*

After a moment Sam returns, picks up the severed finger, drops it in a Ziplock bag and sticks it in the freezer.

Then he walks over to the sink and puts his hand on the edge. His whole body shakes with emotion and he gags, spitting into the sink.

He is overcome, but he tries to stifle his anguish and keep quiet. He looks out the window, his face a mask of anguish.

EXT. PORCH

Outside, Kate is looking up at the grey sky. A light snow falls. She is spinning around slowly, her hands stretched out.

Almost in a reflex Kate puts her head back to catch a few snowflakes on her tongue. There is no joy on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Alex lies in his bed, a blanket over him; he looks as pale as a corpse. Sam sits pensively on the edge of the bed.

Sam looks at his son, deeply mournful. Alex's eyes flutter open.

ALEX  
I'm sorry, Dad.

Sam's eyes darken even more and he is on the verge of tears. His voice is a soft croak.

SAM  
Alex... I never should have left  
you guys alone. Will you ever  
forgive me...?

They are silent a moment as the sky darkens outside.

ALEX  
(his voice very weak but  
sober now)  
What did the Ranger say? Did you  
call Mom?

Sam seems to struggle for words.

SAM  
Honey...I...there was no one there.  
No one on the radio, nothing.

Sam sees Alex's concern.

SAM (CONT'D)  
... she'll get back here. I bet  
she's on the way right now.  
She is really strong...she'll be  
OK. I promise. You remember Grandpa  
Pinkney?

ALEX  
A little. He smelled bad.

Sam laughs weakly.

SAM  
Yeah, well he was old and he was  
sick there at the end. But he was a  
really tough guy, Alex, and he  
brought your mom up that way.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM (CONT'D)

She knows how to take care of  
herself... she's tough like you...

A tear escapes from Sam's eye and rolls down his cheek.

ALEX

What are we going to do, Dad?

Sam looks away.

EXT. GAS STATION - AFTERNOON

Natasha's car pulls into the desolate station. She waits a moment before getting out. Just sitting, surveying. She can't see anyone. Behind her the vehicle is loaded with stuff from her mother's.

Close on her hand as she pulls the handle and opens the door.

EXT. GAS STATION

Wide. There is nothing around. We can hear the wind. Deep in the background we can see a pick up truck that has been abandoned in the middle of the field.

Natasha makes her way around to the side of the car, pulls the pump and hopes.

She squeezes and the pump whirs to life.

NATASHA

Yes...

As she pumps, she looks around nervously, waiting for something to happen. We are close on her... very close on her face.

We cut to her from the front now so we can see the station in the background.

At the bottom of the station there are TWO CELLAR WINDOWS THAT MEET THE GROUND. THOUGH HARD TO SPOT THERE ARE THE FACES OF TWO CHILDREN PEERING OUT. Natasha doesn't see them.

INT. GAS STATION, CELLAR

A normal basement. Two children stand on crates looking out the window. Behind them is a group of about 16 others who are all hiding out together. The place is filled with whatever supplies they could get in there and a couple of makeshift beds. A few rifles...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Mother comes up behind the kids and looks out the window at Natasha who has finished pumping and is getting back in her car.

MOTHER

Come a way from the window.

She helps the kids down, and takes one last look to make sure that Natasha has gone.

FADE OUT/IN.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Kate and Sam sit at the table with a Scrabble board between them. It is dark outside the windows and still snowing. Sam is fiddling nervously with his tiles while Kate leans forward, her head down on her folded arms, seemingly asleep. The generator rumbles.

Alex is curled up on the couch, also asleep.

After a few moments Kate pops her head up.

KATE

Do you hear that?

SAM

What?

KATE

Car!

Sam listens a second and then leaps up, grabs his coat and heads for the door.

Kate jumps up and claps her hands together in joy.

KATE (CONT'D)

Mommy!

Alex throws the blanket off him and staggers to his feet, he stumbles toward the door and follows Sam out, with Kate trailing behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORCH/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

*The sound of a car can be heard faintly up the road and headlights are visible.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The three stand there watching as the lights get bigger and the car gets closer. As the car approaches it rumbles ominously from a busted muffler.

ALEX

... that's not our car, Dad... Dad,  
that's not our car! Listen!

SAM

I know. It's not Brian's either.  
Alex can you take Kate inside and  
bring me the shotgun. Can you do  
that?

ALEX

Yeah...

SAM

Hurry...

The joy falls from Kate's face. Alex, suddenly seeming stronger, grabs her hand and the two disappear inside.

The car keeps rolling toward him, as Sam stands watching. After a few seconds, Alex runs back out with the shotgun. He hands it to his dad. The .38 is tucked in his bloodstained jeans.

SAM (CONT'D)

Now go inside. Lock the door.

ALEX

No, Dad. I'm staying with you!

The car pulls to halt about 50 feet from the cabin. It is a beat up, old Subaru and the motor runs rough like there's a hole in the muffler. It just sits there in the dark as the big flakes fall and sparkle in the headlights.

Alex raises the .38 with his good hand. Sam glances behind him.

SAM

(yelling)

Alex! Put that away and get inside!

Alex drops the gun to his side but stays put.

Kate comes back out, curious. The Subaru's motor idles ominously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KATE  
Daddy, who is that?

SAM  
(angry now)  
Goddamnit! Alex, get her inside,  
now!

Sam walks a few feet towards the car. He holds the shotgun across him ready to raise it if need be.

He is focused on the car and doesn't look back to see if the kids have obeyed him.

ALEX  
(whispering angrily)  
I told you to stay inside, Kate!  
Go!

KATE  
(whispering back)  
No!

Kate's eyes fall on the .38 dangling by his leg.

KATE (CONT'D)  
(still whispering)  
What are you *doing*?

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Only the porch light and the Subaru's headlights illuminate the scene as snow drifts down, melting on the ground.

SAM  
(yelling at the car)  
This is private property!

Silence.

The passenger side door creaks open, activating the dome light inside. We see two figures, but distance and shadow obscures their faces from Sam.

Sam raises the gun and points it toward the car.

Two hands pop up over the door as the driver stands up to reveal herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEAGAN

Don't shoot.

She looks banged up and disheveled even from a distance. Her face is dirty as are her clothes. Meagan speaks into the car.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

Jim, get out of the car.

The driver's door creaks open and JIM emerges. He is a bit crazed looking and his face is battered. He has a bruise under one eye and some scratches and scrapes.

He is wearing a ratty parka (clearly not his own) over a destroyed business suit. The sleeves of the parka are a few inches too short and it has dark stains on it. He wears a pair of similarly incongruous work boots.

He looks like he has been through hell.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

Please, don't shoot.

Sam keeps the gun up.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

My name is Meagan. This is my brother, Jim.

Sam clocks Jim's bizarre attire.

SAM

What are you doing here?

Meagan looks over at Alex and locks eyes with him a moment and then looks away.

MEAGAN

Please, we just need a safe place for a little while.

Sam lowers the gun a bit, but stays cautious.

There is a "click". Alex is pointing the .38 at Jim.

JIM

Jesus, kid!

Sam looks behind him and sees his son holding the .38 in front of him with his good hand and steadying it with the wounded one. His hands shake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Alex says nothing. His face is etched with anxiety and pain.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Put the gun down Kid. You don't  
want to do something stupid.

Jim looks over at Sam as if to say "do something".

SAM  
Alex, it's OK. Put the gun down.  
I'm putting mine down now, see?

Sam drops the barrel of the shotgun so that it points at the ground.

ALEX  
Dad, we shouldn't let them in. We  
don't know anything about them.

Sam is looking very worried now. Kate is on the porch behind Alex, frozen. Even in this cold, sweat is trickling down Alex's forehead as he tries to steady the gun.

MEAGAN  
Alex... it's okay

Alex's eyes flit over to Meagan.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)  
(trying to calm him)  
What happened to your hand, Alex?

Sam is confused by her familiarity with Alex. Alex doesn't take his eyes off Meagan now.

ALEX  
She was the one in the tent Dad. I  
caught her in the basement stealing  
your wine.

SAM  
What?

ALEX  
She made me promise not to tell  
you. She said she put it back, but  
she didn't. I saw her drinking it.  
She took some cigars too...

MEAGAN  
What? How the hell did you...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (3)

SAM  
(To Meagan)  
You shut up!  
(To Alex)  
Alex, lower that weapon, right now!

Alex won't drop the gun. His face is set.

ALEX  
No, Dad! Make them go away!

JIM  
(To Sam and getting angry)  
OK, now this kid is starting to  
piss me off.

MEAGAN  
Jim relax... They don't know us.

JIM  
You said this would be fine, that  
you could handle this... And  
clearly you can't, so I'm going to.

Jim levels his stare at Alex.

SAM  
Calm down, he's just scared.

JIM  
Well, that makes me feel a *whole*  
lot better!  
(Getting aggressive)  
I tell you what... that kid doesn't  
take that fucking gun off me in  
about two seconds I'm gonna break  
his other fucking hand.

MEAGAN  
Jim!

Sam points the shotgun at Jim.

SAM  
(to Jim first, angry)  
You stay where you are! Alex, put  
the gun down. I can handle this,  
OK? Everything is fine.

Alex is shaking his head "no" and holding the pistol on  
Jim... his hand shakes and he looks weak again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JIM  
What is this, Swiss fucking Family  
Rambo?! WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU  
PEOPLE? DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON  
OUT THERE?

Jim snaps and wheels on Alex.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(Furious)  
GET THAT FUCKING GUN OFF ME!

ALEX JUMPS AND THE GUN GOES OFF. *BANG!*

Everyone dives out of the way. The bullet ricochets off the Subaru, breaking a window.

Sam and Meagan are on the ground, the shotgun has fallen between them and Kate is crumpled in a ball on the porch crying.

Jim jumps up and looks at his shoulder...it is bleeding.

JIM (CONT'D)  
OH, THAT IS FUCKING *IT!!*

He lunges for Alex who is momentarily frozen at the shock of what he has done.

His eyes go wide as he sees Jim rushing him. At the last second, he fumbles with the pistol ...but it is too late.

Jim reaches Alex, grabs the barrel of the gun and knocks him down, hard.

As this is happening, Sam is scrambling to his feet.

By the time Sam gets up JIM HAS ALEX FACE DOWN ON THE GROUND. He has his foot resting on the back of Alex's neck and THE PISTOL IS POINTED AT SAM.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(stunned)  
This fucking kid shot me!

The shoulder of Jim's coat is ripped and he is bleeding.

JIM (CONT'D)  
*I am so tired of this bullshit!*  
Pick up that shotgun, Meagan!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

MEAGAN

Jim!

JIM

Pick it up!

Meagan picks up the shotgun but does not point it.

Sam is looking from Jim to his terrified son in the dirt with Jim's foot on his back and his daughter cringing on the porch behind them.

Teeth gritted and choked with rage Sam starts to charge Jim.

SAM

You son of a bitch. Let him up!

Jim cocks the .38 and points it at Sam.

JIM

... I am in no mood...

Sam stops short.

JIM (CONT'D)

Now be a good host and show us  
inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMPTY ROAD - NIGHT

A light snow is falling. Natasha is driving, her face hard and set with determination. Like a companion, the SNIPER RIFLE leans against the passenger seat.

The road is desolate. The headlights illuminate the black tarmac in front of her and the bottoms of the thick trees and vegetation on the side of the road.

After a moment, the lights fall on a big dead buck lying across the yellow lines and she slows down to drive around it.

*THE CAMERA PANS OVER THE EMBANKMENT TO REVEAL BRIAN'S RANGER TRUCK, SMASHED INTO A TREE JUST OUT OF SIGHT, as the tail lights of Natasha's SUV disappear around the next bend.*

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Alex, Sam and Kate sit on the floor in the living room. Kate is curled up in her father's lap.

Jim sits across from them in an armchair. He has the .38 in his right hand and the shotgun leans against the wall behind him.

His trashed dress shirt is unbuttoned and pulled back over his left shoulder as Meagan looks at his wound and dabs at it with a wet washcloth. He looks exhausted.

MEAGAN

It's not too bad. Just took a chunk with it as it went by...

JIM

Well, it hurts...

She negotiates his shirt down further. We see his TATOO. Sam does too. It an AMERICAN FLAG WAVING IN THE WIND.

MEAGAN

I know it does, Babe. But I've got to clean it.

Jim closes his eyes and winces as she works on him.

JIM

(to Sam)

We are going to stay here for a bit... Let's not have any more gunplay, OK?

SAM

Why did you come here? What about her house?

Sam nods at Meagan.

JIM

You don't seem to get it... somebody beat her roommate to death with a fucking pipe. When I found her half the houses on her street were on fire and Meagan was hiding in the goddamn garage!

(Faux composed)

So I think we'd prefer to stay here instead... If you have room that is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Meagan extracts a piece of glass.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(In Pain)  
FUCK. Just leave it.

Meagan backs off. Sam and Alex exchange a look. Kate who has dozed off in Sam's lap awakens when Jim yells.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(to Meagan)  
Take her in the bedroom.

Megan is clearly stressed and exhausted.

MEAGAN  
Jim, no... Let her stay with her  
Father.

JIM  
(pointing at Kate)  
Take *her* into the *bedroom*!

Meagan gets up and walks over to Kate.

MEAGAN  
(whispering)  
Come on honey, it's OK. Let's go to  
bed.

As Meagan leans down to take Kate, Sam moves her to his other side. Meagan looks at Sam.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)  
It's OK, I won't hurt her.

SAM  
Yes, but I will hurt you if you try  
to take her.

The sound of a GUN BEING COCKED. Then we see it enter frame and press against Sam's chest just past Kate's face.

Pull back to see Jim standing over Sam holding the gun.

JIM  
Apologize to my sister. And then  
give the girl to her.

A moment of silence. Kate whimpers a little.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEAGAN

Jim...

JIM

You forget, I don't know you. The world would be the same place to me if you weren't in it.

After a long beat.

SAM

I'm sorry.

JIM

Meagan is her name.

SAM

I'm sorry... Meagan.

Jim nods to Meagan who tentatively goes in to take Kate from Sam. Sam holds on for another moment. Meagan is very close to him.

MEAGAN

I'll just put her to sleep. She'll be safe... I promise.

Sam loosens his grip on her.

SAM

It's okay sweetheart.

Meagan scoops Kate up from Sam's arms and walks down the hall toward the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. KATE'S ROOM

Meagan lays Kate down on the bed and pulls a blanket up over her.

KATE

(in a very small voice)  
What are you going to do?

Meagan looks worn.

MEAGAN

I don't know. Just go to sleep.

Kate closes her eyes for a moment, then opens them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATE

I can't sleep. Please don't kill  
me...

MEAGAN

My God, sweetheart... I would  
never. We just need a place to  
stay. We're not going to hurt you.

Meagan begins to stroke Kate's hair.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

I was a little girl once. My  
brother's just like you're brother,  
and I'm just like you.

KATE

I don't want to be like you...

Meagan digests this.

MEAGAN

Sleep... Just try.

After a moment of stroking her hair, Meagan begins to sing.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

*"If you go out in the woods today,  
you're gonna get a surprise, if you  
go out in the woods today, you  
better wear a disguise, for all the  
bears who've ever been born are  
gathered here..."*

The song seems comforting and ominous at the same time.

Kate drifts off.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

Jim stands and walks over to the kitchen carrying the 38. He  
places the shotgun on the counter and pulls a beer out of the  
fridge.

Sam and Alex watch him from the living room floor.

SAM AND ALEX'S POV

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jim goes from the fridge over to some drawers in the kitchen. They can only catch glimpses of him but can HEAR HIM RIFLING THROUGH THE DRAWERS.

As Sam cranes his neck to see.

ALEX  
I'm sorry Dad.

Sam looks over at his Son who is emotional.

SAM  
What are you talking about Alex?

ALEX  
I did this too us...

SAM  
Alex you didn't do anything wrong.

Alex chokes back some tears. He leans on his Dad.

ALEX  
What are we going to do?

SAM  
We've just got to keep calm, keep  
him calm, keep talking to him.

Silence for a moment as we hear Jim continue to rifle through the kitchen drawers.

ALEX  
I mean after that.

Sam understands. He doesn't know what to say to his son.

JIM ENTERS. He is carrying a roll of duct tape.

JIM  
I knew you'd have it.

He half smiles.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Everyone has duct tape. Isn't that  
fucking amazing?

He approaches them.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Wish I invented this shit.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

He stands right over them with the tape.

SAM  
You don't have to do that, we're  
not going to do anything.

He drops the tape in Sam's lap, then backs up holding the  
gun.

JIM  
Tape you're Son up. I'll let you do  
it.

After a moment Sam takes the tape and begins.

SAM  
Put your hands in front of you  
Alex.

Alex does. Jim sees.

JIM  
Nah ah. Behind. I can't risk  
"psycho-tween" getting free.

Sam takes Alex's hands and puts them behind his back. Alex  
winces every time his injured hand touches anything. Sam rips  
some tape and begins.

Jim paces with the gun. While he paces he is not always  
looking directly at Sam and Alex. He seems agitated.

JIM (CONT'D)  
I wish I trusted you Sam. I'd like  
to trust you know. But it's really  
your fault, not mine. I mean I  
don't have much of a choice now.  
You'd do the same thing.

Sam carefully watches Jim. While Jim is not looking, Sam  
takes a JAGGED PIECE OF KINDLING FROM THE FLOOR BY THE  
FIREPLACE. SAM SECURES THE PIECE OF KINDLING BETWEEN ALEX'S  
HANDS and tapes around it so only the jagged part sticks  
through, pointing up toward the ceiling. Sam tries to keep  
the conversation going.

SAM  
How'd you get out?

Jim takes a sip of beer. He sits on a chair facing them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SAM (CONT'D)  
You worked in the City, right?

Jim takes another sip of beer, debating if he wants to answer. Sam is done with Alex's hands.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Can I sit him on the couch before I  
do his feet?

Jim thinks for a moment then nods. Sam stands and lifts his son.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Up we go.

Alex winces. Sam guides him to the couch. As he does he whispers to Alex.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(low whisper)  
Don't turn your back.

Alex back up onto the couch and sits.

Sam takes the tape and starts on his legs. Jim takes another sip of beer.

JIM  
I swam.

Sam turns and looks at him in disbelief.

JIM (CONT'D)  
I wouldn't believe it either.  
(Pause)  
But I did. Across the East River...  
after the bridges and tunnels were  
blown.

SAM  
So it's true? Did you see it?

Jim ignores the question.

JIM  
No. You couldn't see shit. Just  
people running.

Sam continues taping.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JIM (CONT'D)  
(in his own place)  
Surprising how strong those  
currents are during the winter.  
Surprising how many people aren't  
as good at swimming as they think  
they are.

He swigs the beer. Sam checks in on Alex to see how this is  
affecting him. Jim takes a long moment looking away.

JIM (CONT'D)  
People are so stupid. So fucking  
stupid.

Jim puts his forehead down on his knees for a moment. He  
seems distraught. Sam quickly scans the room to see if there  
is anything he could use as a weapon. Jim sits up.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Now you're turn. Hands behind you.

Jim polishes off the beer and gets up. Sam knows there is  
nothing to do. He relents.

As Jim tapes, he talks. Sam faces Alex this whole time.

JIM (CONT'D)  
I just did what I had to do, and it  
was... surprisingly easy. Just  
swim.... push other people down to  
stay up, no problem... whatever it  
takes. There's not as much thought  
about what is right and what is  
wrong as you'd think there would  
be... just doing...

No one says anything for a moment. Jim seems to break out of  
his reverie.

JIM (CONT'D)  
My sister is what I have left in  
this world, this fucked up world.  
And she is relying on me.

He spins the tape around Sam's legs.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(To Alex)  
The same way you were relying on  
your Dad, and he let you down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Alex spits venom.

ALEX  
Fuck you.

SAM  
Alex...

Jim looks at Alex for a second.

JIM  
That's good, that's what you are  
going to need from now on, that  
fight... Cause the whole worlds  
going to be like this soon.  
(Motioning all around him)  
A... a fucking backwoods... all of  
us just animals, looking to  
survive... what ever it takes.

A tear escapes down Alex's cheek. Jim pats his arm.

JIM (CONT'D)  
...but you know what, though? Still  
breathing...still fucking  
breathing. We all are, give  
yourselves a pat on the back.

He stands and after a moment turns back to Sam. He seem  
almost perplexed by how he got into this.

JIM (CONT'D)  
You know we were just looking for a  
place to be safe, man. Was that too  
much to ask for?

INT. BEDROOM

Meagan lies on her side facing Kate. She sees Kate is asleep.  
Meagan slowly gets up.

INT. SAM AND NATASHA'S BATHROOM

Meagan opens the medicine cabinet. She scans. Nothing. Then  
she opens the drawer. Inside there are a couple prescription  
bottles. She takes them.

INT. LIVING ROOM/HALLWAY

Meagan comes out of the bedroom. She looks over at Jim and  
then over at Sam and Alex.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEAGAN

She's fine... a little scared, but  
she'll be OK.

Jim gets up and grabs a chair from the dinner table and walks over to Kate's door. He slides the back of it up under the knob.

Meagan walks over to him. (They have this discussion just in the mouth of the hallway at the far end of the living room. Sam and Alex can still hear but it's not right in their face)

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing Jim?

JIM

I don't want any surprises.

MEAGAN

She's seven. What's she going to  
do?

JIM

She won't even know...

MEAGAN

Have you completely lost your  
mind?!

JIM

I am trying to fucking keep you  
safe!

He looks down and sees she is holding a 2 bottles.

JIM (CONT'D)

And gimme that shit in you're hand.

He wrenches away a couple prescription bottles. We see it's Xanax and Tylenol 4. Meagan loses it on him.

MEAGAN

(yelling)

I'm not a little girl anymore!

He won't let her avoid him.

JIM

Yeah? Well stop acting like one,  
then!

(Shaking his head)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JIM (CONT'D)

You think anyone is going to help  
us? It's just us... just us Meg.

MEAGAN

(Despondent)

But it's not just us, it's them  
too.

He looks at her.

JIM

Since when did you start giving a  
shit?

Meagan looks into his eyes for a moment, then turns and walks  
down the hall and into Sam and Natasha's bedroom. She slams  
the door.

Jim walks back into the living room. And sits.

JIM (CONT'D)

I've got to sleep now. Please just  
let me sleep.

He slides down in the chair and starts to close his eyes.

CLOSE ON JIM'S EYES CLOSING.

FADE OUT/IN.

INT. CABIN - DAWN

CLOSE ON SAM'S HANDS

His taped hands are rubbing up and down against the SHARP  
POINT OF THE KINDLING that he taped between Alex's hands  
earlier. The tape is starting to rip.

We pull back wider to reveal the room:

The weak gray light coming from the dawn gives the room an  
eerie feel.

Jim is slumped over sleeping with the shotgun next to him.

INT. KATE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kate's eyes open. She gets out of bed and walks over to the  
door and tries to open it but it won't open. She rattles the  
handle a bit and then goes back to sit on the bed.

After a moment she notices the Survival Guide on the night  
stand. She flicks on the light and starts to turn the pages.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are diagrams and drawings of various survival skills and techniques; snares for catching small animals, water gathering using plastic to catch dew, various shelters, fire building, edible plants and so forth.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On the couch Alex and Sam are back to back as Sam continues to try and free himself using the kindling.

Some blood soaks though Alex's bandages as Sam works at the tape.

Sam keeps an eye on Jim as he does it. Alex chokes back a groan of pain as tears roll down his cheeks.

SAM

(Under his breath)

I'm almost there, can you hang on?

ALEX

(Quietly in deep pain)

Keep going...

The tape is about to rip. Sam goes faster.

Jim adjusts his position in the chair.

Sam is almost through the tape.

CUT TO:

INT. KATE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kate turns to the "S-U-R-V-I-V-A-L" page and traces her finger over the words. She stops on "V - Vanquish fear and panic" and then on "V - Value Life".

KATE

(whispering to herself)

Vanquish fear... Don't be afraid...

She puts the book down and walks quietly back toward her closet, where she picks up her Polar Fleece jacket and puts it on.

As silently as possible, she stuffs her red gloves and a bag of peanuts into her pockets.

She walks to the window, carefully pushes aside the little night stand that sits in front of it, and as quietly and carefully as she can, she pulls the window open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She reaches out, but a storm window blocks her way. She looks up behind the window to see the storm mechanism.

She fiddles with it a little, but can't get it to open.

Then, she forcefully starts to push on it.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The tape breaks.

Sam doesn't bother with the tape on his legs. HE ROLLS SILENTLY FROM THE COUCH AND INCHES HIS WAY ACROSS THE FLOOR TO THE RIFLE, dragging himself by the elbows as quickly and quietly as he can, keeping an eye on Jim.

Alex sits frozen.

JUST AS SAM REACHES THE CHAIR AND BEGINS TO PULL THE SHOTGUN TOWARDS HIM, THERE IS A BANGING SOUND AND THEN A LOUD CRASH FROM KATE'S BEDROOM.

SAM LOOKS UP IN SURPRISE TO SEE THE BUTT OF THE .38 LAND ON THE SIDE OF HIS FACE WITH A CRACK.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. CABIN - MINUTES LATER

There is the unmistakable ripping sound of gaffers tape as Sam opens his eyes.

SAM SITS UP AWKWARDLY ON THE COUCH, HIS HANDS TAPED BEHIND HIM AGAIN. HIS LEGS TAPED AT THE ANKLES AND KNEES.

JIM IS JUST FINISHING RE-TAPING ALEX.

Sam has a terrible bruise on the side of his face and his eye is very swollen...

Alex sees his father's eyes open. The white of his damaged eye is blood red.

Sam looks over at his terrified son but can't say anything yet.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JIM  
I knew I couldn't fucking trust  
you.

Meagan is standing a few feet away putting on her parka. She looks very upset. Kate's door stands open.

SAM  
(very groggy, slurring his  
words)  
Whuuurr's Kay...?

JIM  
She took off... out the fucking  
window. You people are  
unbelievable!

Meagan is heading for the door, zipping up.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Take the gun.

MEAGAN  
What? Why?

JIM  
Just take it. You never know...

Jim hands her the .38 on the way out the door.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Careful, safety's off.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - EARLY MORNING

Kate is running through the winter woods adjacent to the road in the anemic early morning light.

Her blood red gloves are a blur at the end of her pumping arms, her frozen breath dancing around her like ghosts.

As Kate runs we hear only the sound of her footsteps crackling and the sound of her breath.

After a minute she stops to rest.

MEAGAN (O.S.)  
Kate! Where are you?! It's cold out  
here...Kate! It's not safe!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kate looks behind her and sees Meagan a few hundred yard off, up on the driveway, carrying the .38.

She starts running again.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY, MEAGAN'S P.O.V.

Meagan is walking up the dirt road and catches a glimpse of movement off in the woods.

MEAGAN

Kate! Come back! I won't hurt you,  
Honey. Come on!

Meagan starts jogging and cuts down into the woods.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS

MEAGAN (O.S.)

KATE! STOP!

Kate is running as fast as she can. She is glancing behind her as she runs.

As she is looking back, she stumbles and falls hard. She is stunned for a moment and just lies there. Then she picks herself up and charges on.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS

Meagan is running. It is tough-going and she keeps stumbling and getting whipped by branches.

MEAGAN

Kate! STOP! PLEASE, HONEY! COME  
BA...

ALL OF A SUDDEN, SOMETHING HUGE AND BLACK HITS MEAGAN FROM THE SIDE, KNOCKING HER FROM THE FRAME WITH A WHUMP!

The camera pulls back to reveal A LARGE BLACK BEAR ON TOP OF MEAGAN, MAULING HER.

Meagan has her arms in front of her, across her body, futilely trying to deflect the bear's attack. Her coat is being shredded and bloody feathers fly around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The bear swipes at her face, ripping her ear to shreds. It bites into her arm and shoulder. Meagan screams.

DESPERATELY, WITH HER ONE FREE HAND, MEAGAN POINTS THE GUN AT THE BEAR AND PULLS THE TRIGGER. BANG!

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS

As she runs along, Kate hears an echoing gunshot in the woods. She flinches, thinking she is being shot at and she heads up the embankment toward the road.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

Hands bound behind them, Sam and Alex sit awkwardly on the couch. Jim is in the kitchen, holding his shotgun and rummaging through the kitchen cabinets.

THERE IS A DISTANT, ECHOING GUN SHOT.

The sound freezes Jim. He looks over at Sam and Alex. ALL OF THEIR FACES SHOW SHOCK AND DREAD.

They are motionless for a second...

... AND THEN THERE IS ANOTHER SHOT.

This time the sound sends Jim sprinting out the door.

Sam and Alex frantically try to get their bindings loose and Alex falls to the floor, smashing his head with his own body. He screams in pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - SUNRISE

Jim is sprinting through the woods, carrying the shotgun. He comes upon Meagan lying on her back. She is covered in blood.

JIM

Oh my god! MEAGAN!!

Jim falls on his knees by her head. There are bloody down feathers all around her from her shredded coat.

Meagan tries to say something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM (CONT'D)  
Meagan, what?

MEAGAN  
(In a shocked whisper)  
Bear...

JIM  
(distraught)  
What! Oh, Jesus! Oh GOD!

Jim frantically examines Meagan's wounds. Blood flows from a wound on her head. Her shoulder has been torn into as well and she's covered in scratches.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(hysterical)  
Meagan... Oh, Jesus.

Jim takes the .38 from Meagan's hand and puts it in his pocket, still holding the shotgun, he scoops Meagan up like a child and starts running for the cabin.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Kate is running along the road. Only her short breaths and the rhythmic sound of her feet on the dirt as she runs can be heard. The giant trees of the surrounding forest bare down on her like blue black spirits reaching to pull her in.

She looks pale, cold, and tiny, but determined. She does not look behind her. She runs steadily forward, her little arms pumping back and forth, the steam of her frozen breath escaping in front of her.

CUT TO:

INT. SUV

Natasha is flying down the driveway.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Kate is still running, her eyes wide with fear.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY

SUV is speeding down the dirt road on a collision course.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Exhausted, Kate slows down and walks backwards, looking behind her to see if Meagan is following. She does not see the SUV coming around the bend.

CUT TO:

INT. SUV

As Natasha comes skidding around a bend, SHE SEES THE FIGURE OF KATE WALKING BACKWARDS TOWARD HER like a tiny, pale apparition.

Natasha stomps on the brakes and skids, fish-tailing and coming to a halt just inches from the little girl.

Natasha shrieks in surprise and for a second, through the dirty windshield, the two stare at each other in shock.

Natasha rushes out of the car toward her daughter and embraces her.

NATASHA  
(frantic and out of  
breath)  
What are you doing out here,  
Honey!? I almost killed you! Oh,  
Sweetie ...Kate... what is going  
on? What's wrong, honey? What  
happened?

Kate can't talk. She grabs onto her mother for dear life.

After holding Kate close for a moment, Natasha holds her out at arms length and looks in her eyes.

NATASHA(CONT'D)  
(in a firm, controlled  
tone)  
Tell me what's wrong, Kate.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

Both Alex and Sam are on the floor, and Sam is unsuccessfully attempting to rip off Alex's bindings with his teeth. Alex's bandage is very bloody and he looks to be in considerable pain.

The front door is thrown open and Jim enters, cradling Meagan. They are both covered in blood.

SAM  
Where is Kate! WHAT THE FUCK IS  
GOING ON! UNTIE ME!

Jim ignores Sam and carries Meagan to the bedroom.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

The SUV rolls very slowly to a stop behind an outcropping of trees. The cabin is a couple of hundred yards away, smoke coming from the chimney.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

For a moment, Natasha sits with her hands on the wheel, staring at the cabin just visible through the trees. From the passenger seat, Kate sits wordless, focused on her mother.

NATASHA  
(whispering and turning to  
Kate)  
OK, so you are sure there are only  
two of them, right? Meagan and her  
brother? There is no one else in  
the house? Just Meagan, her  
brother...

KATE  
(also whispering)  
Jim.

NATASHA  
Right, Jim...so it's Meagan, Jim,  
Daddy and Alex in the house... no  
one else. No one came later while  
you were in the bedroom, you're  
sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATE

No, just two.

NATASHA

It's going to be OK. I need you to do something for me now. I need you to lie down in the seat.

Natasha reaches across and maneuvers the seat controls until the seat is fully reclined.

NATASHA(CONT'D)

...there we go... now lie back and stay perfectly quiet, OK? Do not come out of this car till Daddy or I or Alex come back...do you understand me?

KATE

Yes, Mommy.

NATASHA

You are not to come out of this car, Kate.

KATE

I know.

Natasha pulls an old blanket out of the back seat and tucks it around Kate.

NATASHA

(All business)

OK, good girl. I am going to get out now and go get Daddy and Alex.

Kate is silent. Looking scared, like she might cry, but she doesn't. She nods her head silently. Natasha leans over, hugs her and kisses her forehead.

NATASHA(CONT'D)

Oh, my brave girl. It's going to be just fine, sweetie. I promise.

KATE

(in an almost inaudible whisper)

Mommy, are you going to hurt those people?

Natasha puts her hand lovingly to her daughter's cheek.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NATASHA  
Only if I have to, baby.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

Alex and Sam are still tied up. They are sitting on the floor in the middle of the living room with their feet straight in front of them, and their hands still behind their backs.

They are looking very tired and uncomfortable. Alex is ashen and there is a puddle of blood on the floor beneath him from his re-opened wound and his bandage is soaked in blood.

There are muffled voices coming from the bedroom.

SAM  
Are you OK, Alex? Are you with me?

Alex nods his head.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Good, I need you to stay with me  
pal, OK?

Alex nods again.

SAM (CONT'D)  
I love you, Alex. Its going to be  
OK. Kate will be alright...we'll  
get her back. Mom will be here  
soon.

Alex stares ahead blankly. He is as pale as a ghost and looks to be going into shock.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Meagan is sitting on the bed holding a bloody towel to her ear. Her parka's shredded, ripped at the shoulder and stiff with black blood. Pallor complexion, she lies down.

After a moment Jim comes out of the bathroom with another wet washcloth and the bottle of peroxide and walks over to the bed.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JIM

Good, you need to rest. Let's get that jacket off.

Jim begins to peel the bloody, torn material away from her shoulder exposing a nasty looking series of very deep tears in her skin.

Jim pours the peroxide over the whole thing and pats it with the washcloth.

Meagan sits up grabbing the towel away from Jim and holding it to her shoulder. The wound on the side of her head is visible now and it looks ugly.

MEAGAN

No!... Jim you have to let those people go. Enough! This is crazy! We have to stop this right now. RIGHT FUCKING NOW, JIM!...she will die out there if we don't get her back...do you want that little girl's blood on your hands?

Jim looks at Meagan, stricken.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)

*DO YOU?*

JIM

I am just trying to protect you Meg. I don't want to hurt anyone.

MEAGAN

Do I *look* protected Jim?

Jim touches Meagan's wounded face gently and then puts his head in his hands. When he looks up...a tiny smudge of Meagan's blood is left on his cheek.

JIM

(breaking down)

Oh God *damn* it! I don't know what to do! I really...I don't! What are we going to do Meagan!?

Meagan flops back on the pillows, spent and bleeding...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEAGAN  
(whispering)  
Just let them go, big brother.  
It'll be OK. Just let them go.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Natasha is lying prone in the snow on a little rise about 100 yards from the cabin. SHE IS HOLDING HER FATHER'S RIFLE EXPERTLY IN FRONT OF HER (she has done this before) and is breathing steadily, her breath creating little white clouds. Her finger rests alongside the trigger.

THROUGH THE SCOPE, Natasha looks into the living room and sees her husband and son through the cross-hairs, bound on the floor.

ON NATASHA as she tries to push emotion out of this and focus.

THROUGH THE SCOPE we see Jim enter the room carrying Sam's 12 gauge.

Natasha'S FINGER SLIDES ONTO THE TRIGGER and pulls back, just slightly.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

Jim walks into the living room carrying the shotgun and puts it down on the kitchen counter. He goes into the little kitchen area and rummages through the drawers and comes up with a large kitchen knife.

Sam's eyes go wide and he stares at the knife in Sam's hand.

JIM  
I am going to cut you guys loose.  
Don't worry.

Jim is gesturing with the knife as he talks...kind of pointing at Sam and Alex as he makes his point.

SAM  
How is Meagan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM  
She was attacked by a fucking bear,  
how do you think she is?

He walks around the counter and looks at Sam. HE SOFTENS HIS TONE.

JIM (CONT'D)  
... she needs a hospital...I want  
you to go get Kate before anything  
happens to her.

SAM  
Oh, thank god...untie Alex first...  
his hand.

Jim walks toward Alex with the big kitchen knife and Alex looks back warily.

JIM  
She shot that bear, but it took  
off, so be careful out there.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATASHA'S SCOPE P.O.V.

*Natasha's cross-hairs move onto JIM:* he walks over to the kitchen, lays the shotgun on the table and pulls a knife from a drawer.

He holds up a big kitchen knife and says something to Sam and Alex... he points the knife at the two captives.

*Cross-hairs shift to Sam:* His eyes seem to go wide and he looks over at Alex saying something to Jim.

*Cross-hairs back on Jim:* Jim says something and then begins to walk around the counter. He moves into the living room talking and stands in front of Alex.

JIM LEANS TOWARD ALEX WITH THE KNIFE, SMILING AND SAYS SOMETHING TO HIM. ALEX SHAKES HIS HEAD, "NO".

Natasha takes a deep breath, holds it, and pulls the trigger back.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN.

Jim leans in to Alex with the knife, smiling now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIM  
Ok, you're not gonna shoot me if I  
let you go, right?

ALEX SHAKES HIS HEAD AND THEN THERE IS A "CRACK", GLASS  
SHATTERS AND THE SIDE OF JIM'S HEAD EXPLODES SENDING BLOOD  
AND BRAIN MATTER CASCADING ACROSS THE ROOM.

He falls in a lump right in front of Alex who pushes himself  
away in horror.

Jim lies face first on the floor and even though his head is  
destroyed his legs kick reflexively as if he is trying to get  
up and he is making terrible, wet, animal-like gagging  
sounds.

MEAGAN COMES SCREAMING IN FROM THE BEDROOM WAVING THE .38  
AROUND THE ROOM IN A PANIC.

She is an hysterical, bloody mess.

MEAGAN  
WHAT THE FUCK! WHAT JUST HAPPENED!  
JIM! OH MY GOD! JIM!

Stunned and confused, she looks over at Sam.

MEAGAN (CONT'D)  
What is happening, Sam?

SAM  
(frantic)  
Get down! Get fucking down!! PUT  
THE GUN DOWN!

Meagan just stares at him, confused, the pistol pointed  
roughly in his direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATASHA'S SCOPE P.O.V.

Natasha quickly pulls the bolt back, releases the shell and  
chambers another round sliding the bolt back in place. She  
sites back in.

*The cross-hairs move onto Meagan: she is flailing the gun  
around the room and screaming as Jim's body kicks reflexively  
on the floor.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Natasha tries to follow. Then Meagan stops and says something to Sam. He yells at her and Meagan raises the gun a little towards him.

Natasha pulls the trigger again.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

SAM  
(frantic)  
MEAGAN THROW THE GUN! GET DOWN!

ANOTHER "CRACK!" AND MEAGAN TAKES A BULLET TO HER CHEST, KNOCKING HER FLAT ON HER BACK AND SENDING THE GUN SKITTERING ACROSS THE FLOOR.

Meagan is silent, her left hand rattling against the floor in reflex for a second and then she is still.

Sam looks over at the terrified Alex who is extremely pale, blood is spattered on his face and clothes.

ALEX'S EYES GO GLASSY AND HE FALLS OVER ON THE FLOOR WITH A THUD.

CUT TO:

EXT. NATASHA'S SCOPE P.O.V.

Natasha is starting to pull away from her position and sees Alex fall over.

NATASHA  
( getting hysterical)  
Oh, no, no, no, no, no... oh my god  
no, no, no, no...

Natasha leaps up and sprints for the cabin.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN.

The cabin door bursts open and Natasha rushes into the room. The scene is macabre.

There is glass scattered about from broken window. Jim is lying with the side of his face in a pool of his own blood. His eyes are open wide but unseeing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A tiny bit of breath escapes, frozen by the frigid air coming in the broken window. His legs are still moving reflexively, but less so now, as the life leaks out of him.

Meagan lies across the floor, and there is blood on the wall and floor behind her. She is not moving.

Natasha drops her rifle, and rushes to Sam and Alex. Sam is clearly dazed and starting to shiver.

SAM

Untie Alex! Quickly!

Natasha rushes to her son. She sees the kitchen knife on the floor where Jim dropped it, picks it up and begins cutting off the tape. Alex's bandaged hand is bloody and ugly-looking.

NATASHA

His hand, what happened?!

She gets him unbound and rolls him over on his back.

NATASHA (CONT'D)

Oh, Honey. Oh, Sweetie... oh my god, oh my god! Sam, what happened!

SAM

(dazed)

I don't know ...

NATASHA

(touching his face where  
there is a bruise,  
listening to his chest)  
Alex, Honey, wake up. Wake up,  
Sweetie. Oh my god!

KATE

Mommy, Daddy?

Kate is standing at the doorway, behind the screen door. Natasha looks up.

NATASHA

(Very sternly)

Kate! Just stay there, Honey! Do not come in! Do you hear me?! It's OK. Just stay right there. Mommy and Daddy are OK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Natasha looks over to her husband who looks devastated.

THE CAMERA MOVES BACK AND WE TAKE IN THE WHOLE SCENE:

Natasha is bent over Alex who starts to wake up and move. Sam is still bound. Kate is at the doorway, looking in and Jim lies face down in a widening pool of blood, his legs twitching just slightly now in a dying reflex. Meagan's body lies motionless.

FADE SLOWLY TO  
BLACK AND HOLD.

FADE IN:

INT. CABIN - TWILIGHT

Close on a Scrabble board. Kate finishes spelling the word "survival" as we saw in the beginning.

INT. KITCHEN

Natasha squeezes out bloody rags in the sink. Same as before.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN.

*A flock of geese that fly over head like a traveling scar.*

Wide we see the snowy meadow and the two figures making their way across it dragging what we now know to be bodies behind them.

Close on the TRACKS the bodies make in the snow.

We see Sam and Alex stoically making their way forth.

They are struggling mightily, pulling him a few feet then stopping and then pulling again. Sam and Alex look pale and grim, and make no sound except the grunts and heavy breathing that come from effort.

Alex struggles with his bandaged hand, but does not complain.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN

Natasha sits on her knees in the middle of the living room with a bucket and a pile of white rags.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She is scrubbing and blotting the floor with the rags, trying to clean up the grim and bloody mess that surrounds her: blood, hair, tissue, brain matter.

FADE TO:

INT. KATE'S ROOM

Kate is lying on her bed, fast asleep with Alex's Army Survival Guide laying open on her chest and a stuffed animal under her arm. There is a pile of peanut shells on the night stand and she breaths deeply and peacefully with sleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE SHORE

Natasha sits at the edge of the lake, her hand on her forehead, trying to gather herself. The white mop bucket sits at her side with a couple of inches of bloody water at the bottom.

She is crying a little, trying to compose herself. She looks out at the lake which is a giant black mirror and then looks down and gazes at her reflection in the blackness for a moment when a little green frog swims across and stops right in her reflection, rippling it into oblivion.

Natasha stares for a moment at the miraculous sight and then crouches over very carefully, holding the bucket, and quickly scoops the frog into the bucket with a splash.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVE SITE

Sam and Alex are struggling up to one of the graves with Meagan's body now, having created a parallel track in the snow. Meagan's face is obscured by her hair, which is a tangle of matted blood.

Alex is gagging a bit and spitting off to the side as he labors stoically to get the body to the hole. Again, he is struggling with his injured hand, but keeps on task without complaint.

When they reach the grave, Sam takes both arms and, straddling the pit, pulls Meagan into the grave with a big yank and a thud. Alex falls to the ground with exhaustion and distress and wrethces onto the ground in front of him.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Sam looks mournfully at his son from across the brown-black pit. Alex has removed his shirt, which is soaked in blood, sweat, vomit and dirt.

He stands there with steam rising off his tender, hairless skin. His eyes are coal black and dead, as he stares at his father. WE REALIZE THAT THE SIGHT OF HIS SON MIRRORS THE IMAGE OF THE BOY IN HIS NIGHTMARE.

Alex pulls his iPod out of his jeans pocket, and puts his earphones in. Presses play. He picks up his shovel and starts burying Meagan.

INT. CABIN - EVENING

The family sits around the little dining table, passing dishes and eating. NEXT TO KATE'S PLACE SITS THE LITTLE PLASTIC AQUARIUM WITH A FROG FLOATING IN IT.

Each family member seems lost in their own thoughts. There is the clanking of dishes, and the scraping of silverware on plates and the sound of plastic sheeting rustling in the wind. No one speaks.

SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS FLICKER AND THEN IT GOES BLACK. The family is in shadow against the gorgeous view out the window... the sky is a deep purple bruise.

All is quiet for a moment and then there is a deep rumbling as the generator re-starts from beneath the floor. A steady hum and the lights come up to dim glow, chasing away the purple sky.

Sam and Natasha look at each other across the table. Sam reaches out to hold Natasha's hand.

CUT TO BLACK.

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