

SURFACE TENSION

written by

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EXT. PLACID POINT - DAY

A pristine pool of water, ineffably blue and glistening. Hidden away inside a grove of the surrounding marsh. It doesn't belong. And yet, here it is. Tranquil. Silent.

Pitcher plants line its bank, keeping their distance, forbidden to enter. An oak branch stretches high overhead. It shakes gently. A pair of bare feet shuffle across...

JESSE (12), a raggedy cloth of prepubescent fearlessness, teeters. He extends his arms outward, regaining his balance. Takes a few cautious steps forward.

The branch groans. That's far enough.

Carefully, he lowers himself. Sits on the aching branch. Looks at his dirty reflection in the water below.

APRIL (O.S.)

You need a bath.

On the banks of the pool stands fellow 12-year-old APRIL GREENDALE. Her southern belle garb clashes with her brash New England manners.

JESSE

(deep-southern accent)

Bath's just a waste of time. To the extent we got water to spare, we ain't usin' it to lay around in.

His drawl amuses April.

APRIL

If you didn't get so dirty, maybe you wouldn't need one.

JESSE

Ain't no help gettin' dirty out here.

He notes her sundress. Spotless.

JESSE (CONT'D)

But you ain't been out here much, have ya?

APRIL

All my life. April Greendale.

JESSE

Jesse...

(beat)

You part of *them* Greendales?

APRIL

There any others?

JESSE

Not 'round here.

April plops onto a nearby boulder.

APRIL

And what family do you hail from?

JESSE

It don't matter.

APRIL

Sure it does.

JESSE

You've never heard of 'em.

APRIL

You don't know that. Tell me.

Jesse adjusts awkwardly on the branch...

SNAP! It begins to sag. Jesse holds tight.

APRIL

Oh! That branch isn't gonna hold.

Jesse tries to crawl back along the branch. It CRACKLES and SPLINTERS. Jesse freezes.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You'd better jump!

JESSE

I ain't learnt how to swim.

APRIL

I did. Mom taught me. It's easy. Just paddle like this.

She demonstrates doggy paddling. He replicates it.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You'll be okay! Leap on one...

Jesse looks down the long drop. The water shimmers. Beckoning.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Two...

He gulps... Braces himself...

CRACK!

The branch -- and Jesse! -- plummet to the pool below... SPLASH!

The ripples cascade to April, who watches the surface in horror.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Jesse??

No Jesse emerges.

April grows determined. She leaps up and dives...

-- UNDERWATER --

She whips her head around, searching frantically.

Jesse's limp body floats suspended in the water. Light dances around him. It's a beautiful, haunting sight.

April swims with expert form. She grabs hold of Jesse's waist.

A sharp rock catches her leg. Slices. Ripples of blood seep out the wound as she lugs him up to the surface.

Her blood lingers, as if the pool was savoring its flavor...

-- SURFACE --

April drags Jesse's unresponsive body up the shore. She leans close to his mouth, listens for breath. *Silence.*

APRIL

No... no...

She desperately pounds on his chest. *Nothing.*

APRIL (CONT'D)

Come on!

One more thrust -- He coughs up water! She sits him upright.

JESSE

(weakly)

How's that for a bath?

Relieved, April collapses on the shore. Jesse regains his senses. Notices the bloody gash on her leg.

JESSE (CONT'D)

That looks nasty. Lemme patch it up.

He gingerly holds her leg. She winces, newly aware of the pain.

He tears the fringe from the bottom of her dress and ties her a makeshift bandage.

The two assist each other up and stumble off together.

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DAY

The wretched gothic stain on the bog. Spires reach to God. Windows, wide and tinted, look upon man. Fruit trees scatter about the grounds.

A pair of peaches grow, connected at the stem. A wrinkled hand picks one, leaving the other on the vine.

MRS. HIEMAL (40s), a housekeeper for whom the term 'cold-blooded' may be too generous, drops the unripened peach with a bevy of others in her basket. Reaches for another.

She spots the children approaching the estate. April is limping.

Hiemal drops the basket and rushes to them.

HIEMAL

My god! What did you do this time?

APRIL

I'm fine, Mrs. Hiemal.

JESSE

She got a real bad cut on her leg --

Hiemal yanks April away.

HIEMAL

Did I address you, young man?

Jesse crows.

APRIL

Jesse walked me all the way back. I
couldn't have made it without him.

HIEMAL

Jesse? Your name is *Jesse*?

JESSE

Yes, ma'am.

Hiemal pales. She releases April.

HIEMAL

(weakly)

Go inside. Tell your mother. I need
to get... disinfectant and...

(to Jesse)

And you. Jesse. Take care of her.

Jesse nods. He helps April up the porch and through the grand
front door. He peeks back.

Hiemal stares after him. Shock and dread written on her face.
Jesse closes the door.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

The door swings open. 22-year-old April enters, followed closely
by a similarly aged Jesse.

10 years have passed.

JESSE

Lemme see it...

April nurses her bleeding left hand.

APRIL

It's not that bad! Hardly a scrape.

She flashes a playful smile.

APRIL (CONT'D)

If only I had something to protect
this hand. Like a big, fat ring...

JESSE

You'd still find some way to hurt
yourself. We need to roll you up in a
whole lotta bubble wrap.

APRIL

And let you pop my bubbles all day?
You wish.

She leans into him, flirting.

CATHERINE (O.S.)

Home so soon?

From the arched hallway into the manor struts CATHERINE GREENDALE (40s), the benevolent matriarch. She speaks with April's same Yankee affect.

The sight of blood causes Catherine to avert her gaze.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

April, I swear! It's a miracle your
hands are still attached.

APRIL

I've considered replacing them with
hooks. Think I'd make a good pirate?

JESSE

You gotta learn to sail a boat first.

APRIL

That's why I have you. Matey.

CATHERINE

Ah, so the trip's still today?

JESSE

You know she wouldn't let nothin'
like this gum up her works.

CATHERINE

(hesitantly)

I see. Mrs. Hiemal!

Hiemal, a decade older and none the warmer, enters.

HIEMAL

Madam?

CATHERINE

Clean and bandage April's hand.
They've an excursion this afternoon.

APRIL

Me maiden voyage.

HIEMAL

Certainly.

Hiemal catches Jesse's eyes. Her stare lingers.

CATHERINE

That will be all.

Hiemal nods and leads April off.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Oh, she really is quite the
character, isn't she?

Jesse gawks after Hiemal.

JESSE

I reckon... I don't think she's much
fond of me, though.

CATHERINE

Oh, Jesse. I think it's quite obvious
how you *both* feel about each other.

Jesse turns to her, confused.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I know my daughter like a fish knows
the water. She is positively
transfixed by you.

JESSE

Right... I'm a lucky man.

Catherine studies the boy.

CATHERINE

I need you to promise me something.

JESSE

Anything.

CATHERINE

You've the entire marsh to explore.
Sail anywhere you'd like. But stay
far from that pool. It's... Too many
accidents happen.

(beat)

Promise me.

JESSE

I'll keep her safe, Mrs. Greendale.

CATHERINE

Damn right you will. That's a full-time job. She's clever.

She smiles disarmingly.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

She's the last of the Greendales...
(meaningfully)

For now.

Jesse nods. Catherine kisses his forehead. Motherly.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - APRIL'S ROOM - DAY

Spacious and plush. A dwelling for one untainted by need. Hiemal tends to April's wound.

APRIL

Ouch!

HIEMAL

Hush...

(finishing up)

It won't scar.

APRIL

That's good. One more and I'd be hideous.

April lifts her leg to reveal her childhood SCAR from the rock. Hiemal finishes, her hands shaking.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You think today's the day?

HIEMAL

It could very well be.

Giddy, April leaps up and rifles through drawers and dressers. Hiemal watches her with an immense sadness.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DINING HALL

Large enough to hold a circus. Packed enough to feed one.

High overhead hangs a portrait of a regal woman. Her body is unfinished, but her face is clear as Placid Point's waters. A nameplate underneath reads "MARGARET CATHERINE GREENDALE".

Margaret's piercing gaze clocks Catherine leading Jesse in.

CATHERINE

I suppose it's finally time to invite
your father to the manor!

JESSE

Oh, that's... it won't be necessary.

CATHERINE

It's well past time to meet him. His
son's been a semi-permanent fixture
of the estate -- he should see why.

Jesse grows sullen. Catherine understands.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Oh... Oh, Jesse. Was it sudden?

JESSE

No. He's been battling a while.

CATHERINE

Surely he knew... we could've
provided anything...

JESSE

I told him. He weren't too receptive
to *Greendale medicine*.

CATHERINE

So, that means you... you no longer
have any...?

Jesse nods. Catherine embraces him.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Not much longer, Jesse. We're here.

Jesse embraces her back. A moment of tenderness.

He glances up. Margaret's eyes seem to judge him. He looks away.

Beside Margaret's painting hangs another portrait -- this one
much more unfinished. The face is indistinct, but what shows
through is morose and distant.

JESSE

Who's that?

CATHERINE

Hmm?

Jesse points her to the portrait.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Oh...

JESSE

In all the times I walked through
this room I only ever saw Margaret.

CATHERINE

Yes, mother had a way of commanding
attention. And father had a way of
going unnoticed.

JESSE

That's your pa?

CATHERINE

It was. Connor Taylor Greendale...

(pauses)

Oh, but it's hardly a story befitting
today. Come!

She quickly ushers him out of the room.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

High ceilings and dark oak. Walls lined with classic literature
and other useless drivel.

Seated in a lavish armchair is RICHARD GREENDALE (40s), a rotund
gargoyle. He flips through a newspaper of a city far from here.

Catherine shows Jesse in.

CATHERINE

I'll leave you to the formalities.

She sweeps off.

Richard, without looking up, motions Jesse to a massive chaise
lounge. Jesse obediently reclines.

RICHARD

Have you told April you love her?

He speaks with the same New England affect as Catherine and April, though it sounds forced. Put upon.

He sets the paper down. Notices Jesse sprawled. Scowls. Jesse bolts upright.

JESSE

I have, sir.

RICHARD

And you believe it to be true?

JESSE

Of course, sir.

Richard can hardly hold in his contempt.

RICHARD

I don't consider you a soft man,
Jesse. I'll speak plainly.

JESSE

Please do.
(beat)
Sir.

RICHARD

You're not in love. Not in the
slightest. You see this family as
your golden ticket out of that
shithole shack.

Jesse sits, stunned at the hostility.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I know your family well. Poor as mud.
Angry as alligators. And, above all,
cunning.

JESSE

I ain't nothin' like my family, Mr.
Greendale. There's a reason I'm the
only one left. I got sensibilities.

RICHARD

You've got this family keeping you
alive. Believe me, I'd prefer nothing
more than for you to leave this
estate and never return.

(pauses)
However...

Richard rises.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
It doesn't matter what I'd prefer --
doesn't matter you don't care for my
daughter. She's taken favor with you.

He searches a nearby dresser. Pulls out an ornate BOX.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
If half of a relationship is
satisfied... that's more than most.

He opens the box. Inside: an ENGAGEMENT RING.

Jesse looks for permission. He gingerly pulls the ring out.
Ogles it. He holds more money now than he has ever known.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
That is to be on her finger by
sundown. If I find you've run off
with it...

He looms over Jesse. He doesn't need to finish the thought.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Keep her happy, boy. Anything she
wants, you provide. Understand?

Jesse nods, admiring the ring once more...

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - APRIL'S ROOM - DAY

April spins around in a pretty sundress for Mrs. Hiemal, who
couldn't be paying less attention.

APRIL
What do you think? Mrs. Hiemal?

Mrs. Hiemal SNAPS into focus.

APRIL (CONT'D)
This decent? Does it scream *fiancée*?

Hiemal gives her a brief once over.

HIEMAL
It screams *April*.

April groans. Paces.

APRIL

Lord, I don't know whether to be
excited or terrified... I'm both!

HIEMAL

I don't suppose you could be talked
out of... *all* of this.

APRIL

How do you mean?

Hiemal pauses. She snags a PEACH from April's bedside platter.

HIEMAL

You, April Greendale, are like this
peach. You bloom fast. So damn fast
that you're pleading to be picked
early. Before you're fully ripe --

APRIL

I like peaches before they're ripe.

HIEMAL

Oh, sure. As does your mother. But if
you'd only stick to that vine for a
bit longer --

APRIL

I'm as ripe as mother was when she
was picked.

HIEMAL

And we see how well that...

Hiemal catches herself. Tosses the peach to April.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

Nevermind. Forget it. Nothing I say
could dissuade you with how goddamn
stubborn you are, anyway.

APRIL

It's part of my charm.

She takes a bite out of the peach. Hiemal grunts -- not agreeing
or disagreeing.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HALLWAY - DAY

Jesse timidly approaches a door. Knocks lightly.

JESSE

Umm, April... you ready?

The door opens. April peaks out.

APRIL

Aye aye, captain! Where are we
setting sail?

JESSE

Wherever would... make you happy.

APRIL

Placid Point it is!

She rushes past him.

JESSE

Oh... not there. Your momma said so.

APRIL

She won't be with us.

JESSE

She said it's too dangerous.

APRIL

I'm dangerous.

JESSE

All the more reason to keep you away.

APRIL

Jesse, this is, I think, a very
special day. And I cannot imagine a
more appropriate spot to spend it.

She pouts sweetly. Jesse looks away.

JESSE

Well... what're you waiting for?
Batten down the hatches!

April squeals and grabs his hand. Leads him off.

-- APRIL'S ROOM --

Hiemal stands alone. Soaked in melancholy. She girds herself and strides out.

INT. ENTRYWAY - GREENDALE ESTATE - CONTINUOUS

Hiemal spots Catherine roaming about.

HIEMAL

Madam. I apologize for the inconvenience, but I'll need to excuse myself for the remainder of the day.

CATHERINE

But Mrs. Hiemal, the engagement party is tonight!

HIEMAL

Hors d'oeuvres and refreshments are downstairs. Everything should be set for when the guests arrive.

CATHERINE

Oh. I take it this is serious?

HIEMAL

Quite so.

Catherine nods. Hiemal rushes off.

EXT. WETLANDS - DAY

A CANOE cuts through murky water. Jesse sits rear, rowing with expert efficiency. April sits front, trying her best.

JESSE

Saw a picture of your grandad today. Never seen him before. Still don't rightly know what he looks like.

APRIL

Yeah, he died before it was finished. That's what mom says, at least...

JESSE

You ain't think that's the truth?

APRIL

She says Connor drowned out in Placid Point when she was a little girl. No

one ever found his body though. Dad's convinced he ran away. Says mom's too soft to handle the truth.

JESSE

Why would he run off?

APRIL

Couldn't stand being married to a Greendale, I guess.

April turns back and winks at him. The canoe veers off-course.

JESSE

Watch it!

They bump into a cypress tree, jutting out the cloudy depths.

APRIL

Sorry!

She smiles. A big, carefree smile. It's hard not to fall in love with her.

She pushes off the tree. A quiet PLOP on the canoe floor. Jesse looks down. The engagement ring lays -- fallen from his pocket. Sunlight glints off the word "Greendale," etched in the band.

Jesse checks on April. She didn't notice -- or at least pretends she didn't notice. He stuffs the ring back in his pocket.

EXT. PLACID POINT - DAY

The canoe glides atop clear, blue water -- the antithesis of the muddy slop they just sailed.

April stops rowing. She turns to face Jesse.

APRIL

I don't want you getting fat.

JESSE

'Scuse me?

APRIL

When... it happens. I want you to stay like this.

JESSE

Thin?

APRIL

Well... you can get fat. But you
can't lose that drawl.

JESSE

I can't help how I speak.

APRIL

Don't! I want you to stay exactly how
you are. Timeless Jesse.

A quiet moment. Not a chirp in the air.

Jesse reaches into his pocket. Hesitates.

JESSE

You think I eat too much?

APRIL

No! I think you... I worry... I don't
want you to become... Like us. You
know what I mean?

JESSE

Rich.

APRIL

It's not like that. Forget it.

Jesse nods. His hand stays in his pocket. April notices.

APRIL (CONT'D)

You got something there for me?

Jesse takes a deep breath.

JESSE

I reckon I do.

He pulls his hand from his pocket. Unfurls it. The ring sits in
the middle of his palm. More of an offering than a question.

JESSE (CONT'D)

April Greendale... marry me?

April stares at the ring for a long while. She quietly nods.
It's the first time she's shut up since we met her.

Jesse delicately slides the ring onto her BANDAGED FINGER.

April balls her hand into a fist. Squeezes tightly, as if beckoning the ring to merge into her. Then...

She TACKLES him!

The two roll in the canoe, giggling. They're engaged. April leans down and kisses him. He kisses her back. Tender. Loving.

APRIL

Hello, future Mr. Greendale.

Jesse imitates her family's accent:

JESSE

Hello, April dearest.

She smacks him playfully...

... and the ring goes FLYING!

APRIL

Shit!

It PLOPS into the pool's clear water and begins to sink.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Shitshitshit!

April dives after it, rocking the canoe. Jesse struggles to maintain his balance.

He watches April swim deeper and deeper after the ring.

SNAP! A loud noise from behind.

Jesse turns around. He scans the dense surrounding foliage. Nothing out of the ordinary.

He turns his attention back to the water...

No April to be seen.

He leans over the edge, combing the pool...

Not a trace.

He leans even further. The canoe topples over, sending him...

-- UNDERWATER --

Jesse frantically searches. No ring. No April. The water is clear and she's not in it

Jesse feebly paddles. His swimming hasn't improved much since childhood. He spins violently, looking for any sign.

WHACK! His head smashes into a rock, knocking him out cold.

EXT. PLACID POINT - EVENING

Jesse awakens. He coughs up some water. Gets his bearings.

He's lying on the shore. Still no sign of April. Oppressive silence surrounds him.

He spots lines in the mud from the pool to his feet. He was dragged out.

Narrow footprints line the soil beside him. Jesse studies their details. The high arches. The narrow gait.

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - EVENING

Dark, thin clouds overhead. Jesse saunters towards the menacing manor. It judges him.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - ENTRYWAY - EVENING

Commotion. Rich assholes plod about nervously. "CONGRATULATIONS" banners hang in empty corners. Catherine barks orders into a rotary phone.

Jesse tramps in. All eyes fall on him.

CATHERINE

Jesse? Thank god!

RICHARD

Where have you been?

CATHERINE

Where's April?

Jesse opens his mouth to answer. Nothing escapes.

The realization hits. Catherine covers her mouth and wails. Races to another room. Her moans echo through the house.

Richard stares daggers at Jesse. He looks on sheepishly.

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - MORNING

The sun shines. Birds chirp. The world keeps spinning.

Scattered peaches hang from trees. Riper than the ones picked earlier. Hiemal gathers them in her basket.

CATHERINE (O.S.)

Mrs. Hiemal.

Catherine approaches. She's wrapped in a thick, expensive blanket. She's sturdy, not a hint of hysterics from before.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

He wants to speak with you.

HIEMAL

I'm nearly finished.

CATHERINE

They can wait.

Hiemal nods. Sets the basket down.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - ENTRYWAY - MORNING

A pair of eyes methodically scan the room, searching. They belong to...

DETECTIVE APRICITY (60s), an indomitable man drunk with sobriety. His southern drawl has been sanded and refined.

Hiemal approaches him.

APRICITY

Ah, Mrs. Hiemal. Diligent as always.

HIEMAL

Detective Apricity.

APRICITY

I've been assigned April's case. Dad men combin' the bog daily. Important to gather anything we can.

HIEMAL

Of course. Let me know if I can help.

APRICITY

Well, I believe you just might. I hear you weren't on the premises the evenin' of the engagement.

HIEMAL

I was not.

APRICITY

It was quite the event, from what Mrs. Greendale told me. I imagine she was rather upset not to have her housekeeper present.

HIEMAL

I was feeling ill... So, I left.

APRICITY

It was my understandin' you live in the manor.

HIEMAL

I do.

APRICITY

Where'd you get off to, then?

Hiemal's in the spotlight. And she's burning up.

HIEMAL

Away. Nowhere in particular.

APRICITY

You got someone we can verify that with? A husband, perchance?

Hiemal shifts awkwardly.

HIEMAL

He's not been around for some time.

CRASH! From across the manor, a racket ensues. Apricity bolts towards the sound.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - MORNING

Richard wrestles with Jesse, shoving him against the wall. Books and trinkets fall to the ground.

He tosses Jesse over the armchair. Jesse lays, quivering.

Richard picks up the empty engagement ring box and pitches it at Jesse. BAM! Jesse moans.

Richard pulls open a drawer. Inside sits a rusty RUGER 22 SNUBNOSED REVOLVER. He checks it. Fully loaded.

He aims the revolver at Jesse.

JESSE

Please! I didn't... I couldn't...

Apricity bounds in the room. Assesses the situation in an instant. He grabs hold of Richard's hand.

APRICITY

Don't fire, Rick. I'd have to take
you in.

Richard loosens his grip on the revolver. He begins to weep.

Apricity holds the grieving man in his arms. Removes the revolver and tosses it away.

Hiemal watches Jesse's pitiful form writhe on the floor. *Is that pity on her face? Or satisfaction?*

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - VARIOUS

Scattered peaches sway gently in the tree...

-- TIME PASSES --

The peaches shrivel and die...

... frost collects on the branches and quickly melts away...

... spring returns... peach buds bloom...

EXT. JESSE'S SHACK - DAY

A shoddy amalgamation of wood and sheet metal, less stable than the bog it's built on. It sways with the nearby trees.

A window FLINGS open.

INT. JESSE'S SHACK - DAY

Jesse sets a potted WINTER SAVORY on the narrow windowsill and angles it towards the sunlight. He drips in a few droplets of water -- no more than necessary.

Jesse has lived a year but aged 10. Patches of gruff facial hair line his cheeks. Wrinkles populate his brow.

A KNOCK startles him.

He crosses to the front door. Slides a viewing hatch...

He's shocked by what he sees. Opens the door.

JESSE

Mrs. Hiemal?

She stands outside, holding a basket of unripened peaches.

HIEMAL

Hello, Jesse.

JESSE

What're you doin' here?

HIEMAL

Madam Catherine prefers her peaches harvested early. But she hasn't had much of an appetite lately. I wondered if you might want them.

She holds out the basket. An offering.

JESSE

Umm... Yeah. That'd be real good.

He accepts it. Glances back at Hiemal. She looks fantastic.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Would you like to come in?

HIEMAL

I thought you'd never ask.

She barges in. Examines the place.

It's small. Filled with junk scavenged and repurposed. A cheap facsimile of the manor.

JESSE

Can I make you somethin' to drink? I got some leftover tea these peaches could go in.

HIEMAL

Got anything stronger?

INT. JESSE'S SHACK - LATER

Jesse pours two old cups with a few shots of a clear alcohol. Drops in some jaggedly cut peaches.

Hiemal sits at a makeshift table. Jesse sets a cup before her.

JESSE

This might be a bit too--

She takes a swig like a champ. Not even a flinch.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Alrighty then.

Jesse sips. Coughs a bit.

JESSE (CONT'D)

How have things been?

HIEMAL

Remarkably normal. The property still needs tending to.

JESSE

That won't ever change, I reckon.

HIEMAL

One less mouth to feed makes meals a bit easier.

JESSE

I suppose it does.

Hiemal takes another drink.

HIEMAL

And how have you been?

JESSE

Oh, I'm doin' alright.

She looks around his abode. *Is that a picture of a fireplace?*

JESSE (CONT'D)

I mean, sure, thing's got... tight there. For a bit. But I'm alive.

HIEMAL

You working?

JESSE

Anywhere I can find. Little stuff. Here and there.

HIEMAL

Like what?

JESSE

Like I said. Little stuff.

She drops it.

HIEMAL

Seeing anyone?

Jesse avoids her piercing gaze.

JESSE

Course not.

(drinks up)

Mrs. Hiemal... There's something I've wanted to ask you.

HIEMAL

Shoot.

JESSE

How'd you get yourself involved with the Greendales?

HIEMAL

Not too different from how you did. I visited Placid Point in my youth. And one day, Madam Catherine -- she was just a sprout, mind you -- nearly drowned. I saved her and...

She stops herself. Takes another swig.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

What is this?

JESSE

I'm... not a hundred percent sure... you wanna know.

And for the first time, Mrs. Hiemal cracks a smile. And then a laugh. The two giggle a bit at the table.

JESSE (CONT'D)

That why they named her after you, then?

Hiemal's smile fade.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Apricity was sayin' her name. Her full name. April *Hiemal* Greendale. She'd never told me her full name.

HIEMAL

I believe... she wasn't fond of it.

A silence falls between them. Hiemal finishes her drink.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

I'd better get back.

JESSE

That's quite a lot you drank.

She stands. Not a hint of wobbliness. She's a pro.

HIEMAL

It's been good to catch up, Jesse.
Take care of yourself.

And with that, she leaves...

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DAY

TWACK! TWACK! TWACK!

Richard vehemently swings an AXE into a peach tree. It rains peaches below.

Hiemal dashes to him.

HIEMAL

Mr. Greendale! The peaches! They haven't ripened!

Richard halts for a moment. Wipes his brow.

RICHARD

And they never shall.

He strikes a final blow. The tree topples, SLAMMING into the ground in a flurry of leaves and peaches.

Hiemal stands in horror.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

A JAUNTY TUNE scratches on a record player. It skips and hops about the song.

Swaying with the beat -- a ghostly white HAND holding a bottle of pinot grigio.

The hand pulls the bottle to a pair of HUMMING LIPS. They chug the wine with fervor.

The lips belong to a DEAD-EYED Catherine. She's completely blank -- disconnected from reality. A full-on FUGUE STATE.

Hiemal bursts in.

HIEMAL

Madam! Richard has chopped down the peach tree!

Catherine looks to the sound. Can't register who it is.

CATHERINE

Peach trees... needed pruning.

HIEMAL

It's gone, Madam. It will take years to grow another.

Catherine only picks up select words.

CATHERINE

Years and years and years...

HIEMAL

Oh, Madam... another of your fits.

Catherine brings the bottle back up to her lips. Hiemal snatches it away. Catherine protests.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

Speak to your husband.

The removal of her wine seems to SNAP Catherine out of it.

CATHERINE

Change is necessary, dear. The place needs some sprucing up.

HIEMAL

Not the tree. That was off-limits.

Catherine collapses on the chaise lounge.

CATHERINE

Order a new damn tree then! I can't
un-chop it. My god!

She weeps. Hiemal stands by awkwardly.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I don't mean to snap at you, dear
Mrs. Hiemal. That cursed pool...
first my father, and now...

She takes note of the jaunty tune.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Oh, how she loved this song.

HIEMAL

She most certainly did not. *You* did.

CATHERINE

(through sobs)

I still feel her... through these
halls... She's here... She's *here*...

Her words devolve to moans. Hiemal backs away quietly.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HIEMAL'S QUARTERS - EVENING

Tight and cramped. Hiemal sits at the foot of her twin bed. Lost
in thought. She glances at a tiny clock. *It's time.*

She takes her own swig of the wine. Disrobes. Ruffles through
her drawers and pulls out a red LINGERIE SET. Changes into it.

She stands before a mirror. Checks herself out.

She drops to the floor. Rummages under her bed.

Hiemal pulls out a regal oak BOX. A thick layer of dust coats
it. She flips the lid.

Slowly, she pulls out a chain...

... it's looped -- a *necklace*...

... on which hangs April's ENGAGEMENT RING!

She slips on the necklace. Takes another look at herself in the
mirror. Grins.

INT. JESSE'S SHACK - NIGHT

SNAP! The clasp of a buckle. Jesse perches on his bed, settling in a pair of boots.

Another KNOCK at the door. Jesse waddles over and opens it.

Detective Apricity stands outside.

JESSE

Detective.

APRICITY

Jesse. You headed off somewhere?

JESSE

Thought I'd take a stroll.

APRICITY

Tonight's the night for it.
Absolutely beautiful. Shame this
day's as... tainted as it is.

JESSE

That it is, detective. A mighty
shame.

Jesse looks curiously at Apricity's face, as if noticing something...

APRICITY

I just wanted to tell you myself: the
investigation's officially closed.
You're no longer bound to our
jurisdiction.

(purposefully)

You're free to leave this place.

Apricity nods and trudges off.

JESSE

She *is* out there. Somewhere.

A heavy beat. Apricity takes a deep breath.

APRICITY

You should learn to swim, kid. Helps
to keep your head above water.

He's engulfed by the night.

EXT. PLACID POINT - NIGHT

Hiemal stands on the banks. A pretty dress flowing. She shines in the moonlight.

She watches her reflection in the calm waters. Clearer than the mirror in her room.

Jesse approaches. He stands at her side.

JESSE

These waters... they taunt me. Night after night, I dream they spit her ashore. And every mornin', all they do is present me with myself.

The moon shines overhead, bathing the two in an eerie glow. Jesse looks disgusted at his reflection.

JESSE (CONT'D)

How often I've thought about sinkin' beneath. Livin' under the surface. Maybe I'd find her there.

HIEMAL

You wouldn't.

JESSE

Who can say?

He unbuckles his boots. Steps out of them. Wades into the pool waist deep.

HIEMAL

She's not in there, Jesse.

JESSE

Well... maybe I am. Another me. Maybe I'll find Jesse Greendale.

He sinks further, up to his chest.

HIEMAL

Wait!

Hiemal begrudgingly takes off her shoes. Steps ankle deep into the water.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

One lifetime lost isn't cause for a lifetime wasted.

JESSE

I've already wasted a lifetime.

Hiemal takes a tentative step forward...

HIEMAL

Twenty years isn't a lifetime.

JESSE

It was for her!

Another painful step...

HIEMAL

Then who could mourn for her! Two decades of a cushy, coddled lifetime. No worries... No struggles...

Another...

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

It was, perhaps, the most ideal lifetime to live. She had everything one could wish for. Not least of all...

She reaches his level. Looks into Jesse's eyes. The ending is clear: You.

She wobbles, losing her balance. Jesse steadies her, keeping her from falling fully in.

The enormity of the water's expanse hits Hiemal. She hyperventilates. Freaking out.

Jesse pulls her close. Holds her tight.

Ripples from their bodies settle as she relaxes. She looks back up at Jesse. He looks down to her. Reflects in her eyes.

A moment of true, beautiful intimacy. And suddenly...

They KISS.

Their bodies entwine beneath the surface.

INT. JESSE'S SHACK - NIGHT

Jesse and Hiemal stumble in, intoxicated with lust.

Jesse sweeps off his "table." Sets Hiemal on it. His hand RIDES UP her leg as they kiss.

She REMOVES his hand and PLACES it on her waist.

JESSE

What is it?

HIEMAL

Nothing.

Jesse brushes it off and kisses her neck. His lips move dangerously close to the NECKLACE she wears...

Without a word, Hiemal stands. She leads him to the bed, candle-and-moonlight shining. Jesse tugs her dress as she leans over...

... and BLOWS out the candle.

-- BLACK SCREEN --

Moans... *silence*...

EXT. JESSE'S SHACK - MORNING

A quiet dawn, the living world has not yet awakened.

INT. JESSE'S SHACK - MORNING

Jesse's eyelids, closed. Peaceful.

A slight CREAK causes them to shoot open, spotting...

Hiemal. Fully dressed. Lacing her shoes. Stoic.

JESSE

(groggy)

Hi there.

Hiemal doesn't acknowledge him.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Is there... Did you...

(unsure)

Good mornin'.

Hiemal stands.

HIEMAL

I'd better get back.

JESSE

You don't... You can stay for a bit.

HIEMAL

No, I can't.

She storms out, slamming the door behind her.

Jesse sits up. *What the hell?*

Something on the floor catches his eye. His face contorts as he studies --

Faint, muddy footprints. Sprinkled along his floorboards. Familiar, narrow ones...

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

WSHH! WSHH! WSHH!

Hiemal, on hands and knees, aggressively SCRUBS the floor. Intensely concentrated, as if scrubbing her own psyche clean. She wears the outfit from the previous night.

Richard walks by. Lingers at her sight.

CATHERINE (O.S.)

Richard!

Hiemal looks back. Notices Richard's gaze. He sheepishly looks away. She pulls her dress down a bit, covering up.

Catherine marches in.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You cut down the damn tree!

RICHARD

I told you I would.

CATHERINE

You said you would prune it.

RICHARD

In a way, I did.

CATHERINE

That tree was special.

RICHARD

It was old and rotting. An awful eye sore on this estate.

(pauses)

Leave the aesthetics to me, dear. Your fits have grown worrisome. You should recuperate before you embarrass yourself.

Catherine shudders at the thought.

CATHERINE

Your right. Of course. They're...
I'll control them.

(pauses)

Oh, where are we to get peaches now?

RICHARD

Why peaches? There are thousands of
fruits to grow. Why not... cherries?

CLANG! Hiemal drops her scrubber into a metal bucket. The
Greendales go silent.

HIEMAL

Cherries don't grow here. This is
peach country. Nothing else will do.

CATHERINE

I will miss them so... Surely we can
scavenge a pit from one outside.

RICHARD

I've already disposed of them all...
But, Mrs. Hiemal -- you harvested the
early ones, didn't you? Catherine's?

HIEMAL

I did, yes. But they aren't here.

RICHARD

Where did you take them?

HIEMAL

(stammering)

It doesn't... I can get them back.
Plant a new tree. This afternoon.

Catherine smiles and plods off. Richard, suspicious, lingers.

RICHARD

Make it fast, Hiemal.

He bids her adieu. She gets back to scrubbing.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HIEMAL'S QUARTERS - DAY

Hiemal changes into gardening garb. Clunky boots. Overalls.

She slips off her necklace. Callously drops it in an open drawer. SLAMS it shut.

She turns to leave...

... and notices Richard's sly gaze through a crack in her door. He scurries off.

Quickly, she pulls the necklace out of the drawer. Places it in the ornate box. Slides the box back under the bed.

She steps back and ensures the box cannot be seen. Satisfied, she exits.

EXT. JESSE'S SHACK - DAY

Hiemal approaches the rickety structure. Looks around to make sure she wasn't followed. Knocks quickly at the door.

The viewing hatch SLIDES open. Jesse's eyes peek through.

JESSE

Oh...

He opens the door.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Hi.

The very air between them seems hold its breath. After an awkward pause:

HIEMAL

I need my peaches.

JESSE

You want 'em back?

HIEMAL

I need them back.

Jesse hesitates.

JESSE

Do you want to talk about... what that was last night?

HIEMAL

Absolutely not. I want you to return my peaches and let me on my way.

JESSE

Well, I can't.

HIEMAL

And why is that?

JESSE

I've eaten them.

HIEMAL

And the pits? Surely you haven't
eaten the pits?

JESSE

I'm not *that* poor, Mrs. Hiemal.

He trudges into his shack. Rustles. Hiemal takes another glance
around her, searching for prying eyes.

Jesse returns with a handful of peach pits.

JESSE (CONT'D)

You seem in an awful hurry.

HIEMAL

I am.

JESSE

I've got some things to discuss with
you. Got yourself any plans tonight?

HIEMAL

I'm booked.

JESSE

Not an hour to spare?

HIEMAL

Lots to do.

She reaches for the pits. He pulls back -- carrot on a string.

JESSE

Give yourself one less mouth to feed.
Lemme cook for ya.

HIEMAL

(incredulous)

Cook for me?

JESSE

Why the hell not?

HIEMAL

You've never... you didn't strike me
as the cooking type.

JESSE

It ain't gourmet but it's damn good.

He dangles the peach pits. Hiemal considers. Relents.

HIEMAL

Fine.

JESSE

Eight o'clock.

HIEMAL

You get one hour.

JESSE

Then don't be a minute late.

She snags the peach pits and carries them off.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DINING HALL - EVENING

Margaret Catherine Greendale's portrait eyes the room. Even
through oil paint splotches, her snootiness abounds.

Beside her, Connor Taylor Greendale. A faint outline of a man.

Next, a portrait of Catherine, flamboyant and dramatic.

After her, Richard's portrait, sullen and proud.

Finally, April's unfinished portrait. Only a carefree smile --
her most notable trait.

Other dead Greendales line the rest of the wall.

Catherine stands underneath her daughter's portrait. Admires the
little details.

Mrs. Hiemal BURSTS in the room. Removes dirt-stained gloves and
wipes a mound of sweat from her brow.

HIEMAL

Ah, Madam -- the pit's been planted.
I'll start on dinner at once.

CATHERINE

Oh, Mrs. Hiemal, spare a moment?

HIEMAL

Truthfully, I'm quite busy.

CATHERINE

Of course.

Nonetheless, Catherine stops Mrs. Hiemal in her tracks.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

It's just... I've been so enraptured by this painting. How I wish we'd have finished it sooner. I wonder -- do you believe she would age beautifully? The old adage of course is that all Greendale women do, but I can't help but think age would refine her more than any of us.

HIEMAL

I suppose there's no need to speculate. Considering...

She waits for Catherine to fill in the blanks. She doesn't.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

... we'll never find out.

Catherine's face grows dark. As if she had forgotten.

CATHERINE

Yes. You're right. It is all a great mystery, isn't it?

Hiemal nods curtly. Brushes by Catherine a tad too casually.

Catherine glances back to her daughter's smile. It seems suddenly far more haunting on her empty face.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - KITCHEN - EVENING

A broom closet compared to the dining hall. For good reason -- it's often only occupied by one. And never a Greendale.

Hiemal prepares a hearty meal of vegetables they didn't grow and animals they didn't raise. Tosses in bountiful seasonings without a care. She's not the one footing the bill.

The door opens behind her.

HIEMAL

I'm nearly finished, madam...

RICHARD (O.S.)

There's no rush.

Hiemal, startled, turns like a top to see Richard squeeze through the tight kitchen layout.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Truth be told, Mrs. Greendale's lost her appetite again.

Hiemal eyes the exit. Can't get to it but through Richard.

HIEMAL

That's unfortunate. I'm preparing plenty in case it returns. Would you ask her if there is anything else --

RICHARD

I, on the other hand, find myself to be quite... ravenous.

He approaches her, fingering ingredients on his way.

HIEMAL

(flustered)

As I said, dinner will be ready in --

RICHARD

Is there anything to snack on before?

He's upon her. Leans in. She smacks him away.

HIEMAL

My Lord, Richard... I thought you were finished with this behavior.

RICHARD

Mrs. Hiemal, this is my estate. I will act as I please. If you don't like it, you are free to find employment elsewhere.

Hiemal doesn't respond. She avoids his gaze. Richard looks through the ingredients he's been riffling through. Holds up a PEACH PIT.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Who did you give these to?

HIEMAL

No one of importance.

RICHARD

Then tell me.

HIEMAL

They're back, aren't they? Planted,
as instructed.

He glares at her. She finds the courage to glare back. Harder.
Richard relents. Turns and walks away.

RICHARD

Don't forget who you are, Hiemal.

He exits.

Hiemal ensures the door has fully closed. Catches her breath.
Returns to the meal.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DINING HALL - EVENING

Catherine sits at the head of an immodestly long table. An
extravagant meal lays before her -- squash and carrots and beef
and pork and a great deal more.

She looks upon it as if it was rat droppings.

Hiemal stands impatiently by her side. Notes her discomfort:

HIEMAL

Are you unsatisfied, madam?

CATHERINE

It looks wonderful. But I can't seem
to find my appetite this evening.

HIEMAL

Your appetite has been absent for
quite some time.

CATHERINE

It has... though, no fault of the
cooking! I presume.

HIEMAL

Indeed.

Hiemal begins clearing her plates. Glances down at the EMPTY SEAT on the far end of the table.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

If your husband won't be joining
us... I'd like to begin cleaning up.

CATHERINE

Why the rush?

HIEMAL

I've a commitment tonight.

CATHERINE

Oh?

Catherine leans for more info. Hiemal doesn't budge.

HIEMAL

I'll take that as --

Just then, Richard BURSTS through the door.

RICHARD

Pardon my tardiness...

He circles the table like a vulture, eyeing Hiemal the whole way around. PLOPS in his chair.

CATHERINE

What kept you, dear?

RICHARD

Spoke with Reginald from town.

(pointedly)

Confirming suspicions.

CATHERINE

Lord, you two and your riddles today.

Richard looks inquisitively.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Hiemal tells me she has a secret
rendezvous after dinner.

RICHARD

Is that so?

Hiemal's caught halfway between the two -- a ball tossed between two tennis players, miles apart.

HIEMAL

Hardly a secret... Personal business.

RICHARD

Personal business?

HIEMAL

I *am* permitted to personal errands,
am I not?

RICHARD

You reel in your tone, Mrs. Hiemal...

HIEMAL

There are elements of my life that
truthfully do not concern you.

RICHARD

(sudden southern accent)

Like hell they don't, bitch!

Richard pauses, horrified at the ugly drawl. He regains himself.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You are housed under Greendale
property. Fed Greendale bread.
Clothed in Greendale fabric.
Breathing Greendale air.

HIEMAL

If my gratitude was not clear --

RICHARD

Your gratitude rings hollow when one
observes the company you keep.

(pauses)

Reginald saw you, clear as day,
fraternizing with... him. The boy who
took our daughter.

Hiemal, caught, glows red as embers.

CATHERINE

Jesse? Is that who you're to see
tonight, Hiemal?

RICHARD

She's seen him a great many times.
Hell, he's who she brought our
peaches to.

He holds up a peach pit.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Still leaching off of us after what
he did...

HIEMAL

He didn't do a thing.

CATHERINE

Why didn't you invite him over? Lord,
how I miss him...

HIEMAL

I didn't believe that would be
appropriate.

RICHARD

Why not? If he's innocent, why not
bring him over? Why not serve him our
food? Pour him our wine? Why not give
him our name?

HIEMAL

I believe your behavior proves --

RICHARD

Why not spread your legs for him
under our staircase?

A hush falls over the hall. From above, dozens of painted
Greendale eyes fall on Hiemal. Judging.

Her ice melts.

HIEMAL

I receive no gratitude for this job.
Nor do I request any. I am keenly
aware of what I am -- the prop
holding up this manor. This name.
You're utterly incapable of living.
The both of you. What a pathetic pair
of Greendales you are. Consumed with
mourning. Each in your own way. It's

been a year. Believe me... I hold back tears for her each and every day. But I don't mourn. No, I'm not afforded the luxury. I soldier on. I maintain this estate. Not for either of you. But for the name. Greendale.

(pauses, to Richard)

I will return first thing tomorrow. There should be plenty of food left to gorge yourself -- fucking pig.

She hoists Catherine's plates and sets them with a CLATTER before Richard. Storms out.

The Greendales sit, shaken, under their ancestors' gaze.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HIEMAL QUARTERS - EVENING

Hiemal laces up a showy red dress. She fumbles. These are hands more acquainted with tying knots for others.

She gazes at her reflection in the mirror. Admires her silhouette. She looks killer.

With a cautious glance, she peeks back to the door. Closed.

Hastily, she moves to the bed. Drops to the floor. Pulls out the ornate box and removes the necklace. She admires the ring. Focuses on the "Greendale" etched in the band...

The door ROCKETS open! Hiemal is just able to hide the necklace behind her back before --

CATHERINE (O.S.)

My dear...

Catherine slumps in the doorway, diminutive.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

My... darling Mrs. Hiemal. I haven't any words...

HIEMAL

Good. For I'm not interested in any. Now if you'll please, I'd like to finish freshening...

But Catherine has already strolled into the room. This is her house after all.

CATHERINE

You are of great importance to this family. My mother praised you until her dying breath. Insisted, above all else, we keep you on.

HIEMAL

Your mother was very wise.

CATHERINE

In many instances, yes... But in this I'm not so sure.

She sits on the bed and motions Hiemal to follow. Hiemal complies, still hiding the necklace in her palm.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Your words tonight cut. But a blade only cuts if it's sharp... We Greendales have softened. If we were still vigilant, April would be just down the hall -- married, perhaps!

Hiemal nods, imagining.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Which is why Richard and I have decided that this manor would be best served to be occupied exclusively by Greendales.

The impact of this statement hits Hiemal like a waterfall.

HIEMAL

You're letting me go?

Catherine nods.

CATHERINE

We will of course assist you in find new employment. Something in town, perhaps. Close enough to visit.

HIEMAL

You don't know a thing about housework.

CATHERINE

We'll learn. Greendales adapt.

HIEMAL

I saved you. Pulled you from those waters at Placid Point... you would have drowned if it wasn't for me.

CATHERINE

Yes, and then I was taught to swim, and passed it to my daughter. Generation after generation, we strengthen. But with you... We've grown complacent. You enable the worst in us, I'm afraid.

HIEMAL

You can't... please don't do this.

Hiemal's eyes fill with pleading tears. Catherine looks upon her with pity.

CATHERINE

Oh, Mrs. Hiemal... if I could only express our immense gratitude...

HIEMAL

I don't want your gratitude. Or your pity. Not a drop.

Catherine frosts.

CATHERINE

Then I mean this as ungratefully as I can: enjoy your night, for tomorrow, I expect this room to be vacant.

She struts out the room, disappearing into the vast hallway.

Hiemal wobbles. She grabs hold the bed, steadying herself. Her vision darks, her ears ring.

Her breathing grows ragged and shallow. She pulls out the necklace. Rubs her fingers on the word "Greendale". Desiring.

She gets a handle on her breathing. Somehow that name seems to set everything right in her world.

She slips the necklace over her neck --

RICHARD (O.S.)

My god...

Richard looms in the doorway.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

You look radiant tonight.

Frantically, Hiemal slips the ring under her dress.

HIEMAL

I do.

He stalks into the room, careful to keep himself between her and the door. Predator instincts engaged.

RICHARD

Why don't you let him wait a bit...

He's upon her.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Lord knows how much better it is
after a wait.

He runs his hand over her neck, brushing the necklace. She bolts up, recoiling from his touch.

HIEMAL

Enough! You wife has already bid me
leave. I will not beg or demean
myself for my position. I would
rather watch you two struggle to...

But Richard isn't reacting to her words. Something else has caught his attention. Hiemal follows his gaze.

The ring has popped out.

RICHARD

That's... You have her ring...

HIEMAL

Richard, no, this --

Richard reels, working through his realization.

RICHARD

You left that night...You were
there... You and Jesse... Working
together...

HIEMAL

That's not how it --

RICHARD

You and he... I knew it! Oh, my poor
baby girl... What have you done?

Richard FLASHES through different emotions like a slide
projector... betrayal... rage... grief...

Hiemal approaches him with slow, melodic movements.

HIEMAL

I can lay it all out for you.

Richard can't control his southern lilt --

RICHARD

You're damn right ya can! For me and
Catherine and Apricity... and we'll
all round up Jesse too and...

A horrible thought.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

And then you're gonna show us...
where she is!

Hiemal nods, trying to diffuse.

HIEMAL

I will! I will tell you... everything
as I know it.

(pause)

But Richard... it won't bring you
peace. It brought none to me.

RICHARD

The hell you on about?

HIEMAL

Nothing about it makes sense... It
wasn't worth... trying to explain...

Richard grabs her. Forceful.

RICHARD

Where Is My Daughter?!

Hiemal gathers herself. Digs deep within for strength.

She leans close to Richard. Mouth to ear. Whispers something
breathlessly. She whimpers as she pulls back. Tears well.

Richard doesn't move. He's still as stone. But something within him has cracked.

For perhaps the first time, he looks in her eyes. Through the tears, she looks back at him. Gives a silent nod. Whatever she's told him... *it's the truth.*

He loosens his grip. Hiemal bolts out of the room in a flash.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard faces out a massive window. Thick, inky darkness blots the outside.

He takes a deep breath, savors it.

Turning to a drawer, he rummages with stiff, unnatural movements. His eyes match the oppressive darkness outside.

He seems to find what he's looking for. Closes the drawer...

CATHERINE (O.S.)

Honey?

Catherine strides to her silent husband.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I've been looking for you. We have
much to discuss. Come.

Without another word, she exits. Richard obediently follows.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DINING HALL - NIGHT

Catherine, eyes forward, bursts through the door. Richard follows, stiff-footed. A comfortable distance away.

CATHERINE

... and cleaning courses are but a
fraction of the price they once were.
I suggest you go in town tomorrow and
pick up --

BANG!

Catherine stops in her tracks. Somehow, subconsciously, she's immediately aware of what happened.

She slowly turns... Her eyes go wide... She opens her mouth, but no sound emerges... She falls to her knees...

April's unfinished portrait is splattered with brain and blood as Catherine's slow cries of anguish begin to rise.

And the dead Greendales hanging high above the room welcome another into their fold.

INT. JESSE'S SHACK - NIGHT

An EMPTY POT sits in the windowsill.

Minced morsels of winter savory scatter across the countertop.

A passable meal cooks over a wood fire stove. It's of much lower quality than the feast Hiemal prepared.

A knife lays on a wooden cutting board. Tiny droplets of BLOOD paint its blade.

Jesse bandages up his hand with used gauze. Ties it tight.

He grabs a juicy peach and bites into it. Checks his wrist. Squints through a cracked, antique watch. *She's late.*

Fervent KNOCKING at the door. Jesse answers. Hiemal barges in.

HIEMAL

Shitshitshit!

JESSE

Oh hi. Ummm... Dinner's almost ready.

HIEMAL

Forget about dinner! Jesse, we -- we need to leave!

JESSE

Where ya wanna go?

HIEMAL

Away. Far away. Somewhere the name Greendale isn't known.

JESSE

I don't know any place like that.

HIEMAL

Neither do I. But we must search.

She paces through the room like a madwoman.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

Gather up everything you can and
we'll set out tonight.

JESSE

Hold it. What's this all about?

HIEMAL

It's... It doesn't matter.

JESSE

It does to me. I ain't leavin' just
cause ya say so.

HIEMAL

You've got nothing stopping you. No
family -- nothing you couldn't carry
or rebuild.

JESSE

Rebuildin' ain't that easy. This is
my home. Can't just rebuild a home.

Hiemal grips him, desperation pulsating.

HIEMAL

We can rebuild *anything*. Together.
Please, Jesse. We need to go.

Jesse looks into her eyes. Searches for answers.

JESSE

What did you do?

Hiemal pulls away, frustrated.

HIEMAL

Why are you so goddamn indecisive?

JESSE

You ain't given one good reason why
we gotta leave! Somethin' happen with
the Greendales?

HIEMAL

What do you need me to do? Carry your
shit? I'll lug anything I can if
you'd *hurry*.

Jesse looks around the room, clocking his possessions. There aren't many.

JESSE

Before I say yes... *If* I say yes... I gotta know somethin'...

Hiemal is practically shaking.

HIEMAL

What? What do you need to know? What can I say that'll compel you to *move*?

JESSE

You were there when April went missin'.

Hiemal stiffens. No longer shaking. Hardly breathing.

HIEMAL

Why would you ask that?

JESSE

Ain't askin'. I seen your footprints. I recognized them. They were there that day.

Hiemal wobbles to the table. Holds onto it for strength.

HIEMAL

Oh, Jesse...

JESSE

You were there. You know what happened to her.

(pauses)

Did you... do somethin'?

HIEMAL

We were so close... we were so goddamn close...

JESSE

I need you to answer me.

She looks at him with blank eyes.

HIEMAL

We could've escaped. Been happy and ignorant. I could've picked you

peaches forever. You could've laid
beside me every night. It could've
been worth it. All of it.

JESSE

Mrs. Hiemal... why were you there?

HIEMAL

I... wanted to see what would happen.

JESSE

Where is she?

Hiemal prickles, icy once again.

HIEMAL

Don't act like you care. She was your
ticket to the Greendale name.

JESSE

That ain't true.

HIEMAL

(spiteful)

Oh? What've you done for her since
that day?

JESSE

I searched for her.

HIEMAL

How long?

JESSE

I ain't stopped.

HIEMAL

Did you dream of her?

JESSE

Every night.

HIEMAL

Did you mourn for her?

JESSE

'Til my eyes were dry.

HIEMAL

Did you love her?

JESSE

Yes! God yes!

HIEMAL

Then why would you sleep with me?

The room falls still. Even the cooking seems to hold its breath.

JESSE

I... don't know.

Hiemal gives him a chance to elaborate. He can't.

She straightens herself out. Takes a few calming breaths.

HIEMAL

If anyone comes... Please, tell them
you haven't seen me.

She hightails it for the door.

JESSE

You reminded me of her!

Hiemal stops.

JESSE (CONT'D)

You two ain't nothin' alike. But that
night... it felt like I was holdin'
her again. Like she was right there.
And this last year never happened.

Hiemal soaks this in.

HIEMAL

Is that true?

JESSE

Every word.

HIEMAL

Oh, Jesse...

She fingers her necklace.

JESSE

I know it was foolish. But it felt so
good to touch someone again.

HIEMAL
(whispering)
I'm so glad...

JESSE
Please say somethin'.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)
I'm so glad... you didn't get fat.

She turns to him. Unveils the RING.

Jesse looks at it in astonishment -- recognizing it immediately.

JESSE
That's... You took her ring?

HIEMAL
No.

With a mighty pull, she YANKS the ring from its chain. The necklace falls to the floor.

Studying Jesse's reaction, Hiemal carefully slides it onto her ring finger.

It's a perfect fit.

She balls her hand into a fist. Squeezes tightly, as if beckoning the ring to merge into her...

EXT. PLACID POINT - DAY - ONE YEAR AGO

April squeezes her fist, admiring the ring. She looks up at Jesse, her newly betrothed. A small smile creeps up her face.

She TACKLES him!

They roll in the canoe. Giggle. Kiss.

APRIL
Hello, future Mr. Greendale.

JESSE
Hello, April dearest.

She smacks him playfully...

... and the ring flies off her bandaged finger. Sails through the air.

APRIL

Shit!

It sinks into the shimmering water below.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Shitshitshit!

Instinctively, April reels back and DIVES into the pool.

-- UNDERWATER --

April SLICES through the vibrant, blue water. She searches desperately for the ring.

She spots it resting on the sandy floor. The sunlight provides it an otherworldly shine.

She paddles to her precious and snags it from the depths.

She admires it for a moment. Slides it back on her finger.

A commotion from above catches her attention. A SILHOUETTED FIGURE flails in the water -- sunlight obscuring their identity.

April jets upward, swimming towards the figure. As she approaches, their features sharpen...

... strands of long, wavy hair...

... short, petite physique...

... the figure isn't Jesse... it's a YOUNG GIRL!

April halts, stunned. The young girl spots April, her panicked eyes plead for help.

April grabs the girl's waist and hoists her to

-- SURFACE --

where the two catch their breath. April surveys the scene.

An overturned canoe... and no Jesse!

APRIL

Where is he??

The young girl holds on tight, struggling to keep her head above water. April can't search with her like this.

April swims quickly to the shore, despite her passenger restricting her movement. The young girl collapses on the sandy banks, exhausted.

April dives back in.

The young girl pants, her breathing ragged. Staring into death's eyes takes its toll.

April pops back up.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Can you see him? Is he up there??

YOUNG GIRL

Who?

APRIL

Jesse! My fiancé. He was in the canoe. He can't swim.

The young girl sits up, shocked.

YOUNG GIRL

There's nobody else here.

APRIL

I know! He's not underwater, so he's gotta be on the shore.

(shouting)

Jesse!!

Her shout echoes hollow through the marsh.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Here. Help me flip this over.

April grabs hold of the overturned canoe and swims it over.

The young girl struggles to her feet. The two flip the canoe right-side up.

April stares at it, puzzled. It looks different. Cleaner. Newer.

APRIL (CONT'D)

(brushing it off)

Come on. He must've been swept up. We gotta find him. Can you paddle?

YOUNG GIRL

I guess... Not very well.

APRIL

That makes two of us.

April hops in. One wet paddle sits tucked under her seat.

APRIL (CONT'D)

There's only one?

YOUNG GIRL

Yeah?

Strange response. April doesn't press it.

She motions for the young girl to hop in.

YOUNG GIRL (CONT'D)

Mom says I shouldn't go with
strangers...

APRIL

I'm not a stranger. I'm April. What's
your name?

YOUNG GIRL

Catherine.

APRIL

Catherine? That's a beautiful name.
My mother's name, in fact.

CATHERINE (YOUNG GIRL)

Really?

APRIL

Yeah. See? Not strangers anymore.
Now, please, we have to find Jesse.

Catherine nods. Climbs in. April pushes off against the shore
and paddles off.

EXT. WETLANDS - DAY

April struggles to keep them steady and straight. She bumps into
tree after tree, all the while calling out:

APRIL

Jesse!!

No response. Cicadas lightly buzz in the distance.

Catherine sits pensive in the canoe. Looks to April.

CATHERINE

Please don't tell mom I was out here.

APRIL

Are you not supposed to be?

CATHERINE

She said it was wasn't safe... I just wanted to see it for myself.

APRIL

She's right, you know. You gotta be careful. It's awfully dangerous.

CATHERINE

I know.

APRIL

And maybe you should learn to swim...

BAM! They hit another tree.

CATHERINE

Maybe you should learn to paddle...

APRIL

Hey! I'd make you help me, but I don't know where my other oar went.

CATHERINE

Do you carry one with you?

APRIL

No, it was in this canoe. With Jesse.

CATHERINE

But... this is *my* canoe.

Shocked, April stops the canoe.

APRIL

No, it's not. Jesse and I sailed out here in it.

CATHERINE

Nuh-uh. See?

Catherine reaches for the oar. Spins it. Sure enough, on the blade is etched "CATHERINE."

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Mom bought it for me for my birthday.

April gawks at the oar. She examines the rest of the canoe.

APRIL

Jesse must have... taken the canoe...
back to the manor...

(pauses)

Why would he do that?

Catherine doesn't have an answer.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I'll take us home. Mom will call for
someone to pick you up.

April paddles with newfound gusto.

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DAY

April and Catherine sprint up the yard. April slows, puzzled.

The grounds have changed. No fruit trees sprout. The grass seems
greener. Newer.

Catherine continues ahead, plodding up the steps.

APRIL

Catherine, wait!

But she's already flung the door open and slipped inside.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - ENTRYWAY

April creeps in. No sign of Catherine.

She gawks at the interior -- shiny, well-maintained. As if the
entire manor was rinsed in the waters of Placid Point.

A CLATTER sounds from further inside. April follows the noise.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM

April cracks the door. From inside, a voice:

GLAMOROUS WOMAN (O.S.)

... absolutely irresponsible, young
lady! I've been positively batty...

April peeks further and spots Catherine standing in the center
of the room, head held in shame.

A shadow rears up behind April. She turns to see --

A shiny dog tag that reads "HANS". April follows its chain up. It hangs from the neck of a mammoth of a man. His thick, burly beard hides a mouth few words escape from.

Hans grabs April's arm and forces her into the room. April lets out a shriek:

APRIL

Let me go!

She struggles but can't escape his grasp.

GLAMOROUS WOMAN (O.S.)

And who might you be?

Hans turns April sharply. April gasps.

Standing before her is a GLAMOROUS WOMAN (40s). Effortlessly chic, her shifts are probably lined with silver. She's familiar, however -- we've seen a few of her features before.

Her cat-like eyes scan April, who buckles under the gaze.

APRIL

I...

CATHERINE

That's the lady who rescued me, mama.

GLAMOROUS WOMAN

Ah. I see. Your name, young lady?

April, overcome with confusion, looks about the room. No sign of her parents or Jesse.

Hans squeezes her arms. Rough.

HANS

Answer.

GLAMOROUS WOMAN

Hans. Enough.

Hans releases April. His handprints glow red on her arms.

APRIL

April.

GLAMOROUS WOMAN

Your *full* name.

APRIL

April Hiemal Gr --

GLAMOROUS WOMAN

Ms. Hiemal. I'm not familiar that name. But I thank you for returning my daughter safely to my estate.

APRIL

I beg your pardon? This is *my* estate!

The Glamorous Woman bristles. Being spoken back to is a new and unwelcome experience.

GLAMOROUS WOMAN

Oh, child, you must be confused.

APRIL

These walls have housed my family for generation.

GLAMOROUS WOMAN

This manor has and will always belong to the Greendales.

APRIL

Yes. Exactly. So where are they?

GLAMOROUS WOMAN

My dear -- you're standing in their presence.

(pauses)

Margaret and Catherine Greendale.

April's jaw drops. Her grandmother has seemingly sprung from her portrait and in into her manor.

April glances at Catherine... the pieces snap in place...

The room begins to spin. Her vision darkens. April stumbles, struggling to maintain balance.

Margaret steps protectively in front of Catherine.

MARGARET (GLAMOROUS WOMAN)

Hans.

Hans snags April with the strength of a python.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It's been a pleasure, Ms. Hiemal.

She turns. Places her hand on Catherine's shoulder to lead her daughter away.

April spots a familiar shimmer on Margaret's finger.

APRIL

You have it too...

Margaret pauses. Shoots a glance at Hans: *hold*.

MARGARET

What do I have?

April motions down to her own hand. Wiggles her ring finger.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

How did you...?

She rushes to April.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Where did you get this?

APRIL

It was passed down through my family.

MARGARET

Impossible! This is uniquely
Greendale crafted. Only one exists.

APRIL

So it is.

Margaret pales -- another new experience for her.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Margaret Catherine Greendale. Born
during the height of springtime.
Married Conner Taylor... who drowned
shortly after their wedding.

MARGARET

Quiet...

APRIL

That's my grandmother. Her portrait
hangs above the head of our table.
She passed before it was completed.

WHACK! Margaret slaps April. She shuts up, stunned. Margaret avoids her gaze.

MARGARET

(evenly)

Hans, show Catherine to her room.
Read her something pleasant.

HANS

But Mrs. Greendale...

Her glassy eyes show no sign of being convinced otherwise. Hans releases his grip and leads Catherine away.

MARGARET

Come.

Margaret zips off. April follows, dazed.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DINING HALL - DAY

Margaret treks in. April follows close behind.

MARGARET

The locals in town insist their
ancestors maintained groves on the
land where this manor now stands --
they argue this gives them claim of
the estate. I've turned away
hundreds. But that's not you, is it?

(pauses)

That ring... it's uncanny. I've
studied every detail, every angle of
mine. It is as much a part of me as
my fingers themselves. I'd recognize
it in an instant.

April takes off her ring. Holds it in her palm. They share an
unspoken glance.

Margaret removes hers too. They exchange rings. Slip them on...

Both are perfect fits.

Margaret nearly faints. April sets her down at the table.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

One of a kind, and yet the same.

(pauses)

You called me your grandmother.

APRIL

My mother spoke of you.

MARGARET

Your mother -- Catherine. My daughter. What sorcery is this?

APRIL

I can't explain it. But this is my house. I slept here. Ate here. Grew up here. Saw your portrait every day.

MARGARET

Until you rescued Catherine from Placid Point...

(pauses, piecing together)

That pool... Connor...

APRIL (CONT'D)

You know what's happened to me?

Margaret stands, agitated.

MARGARET

I know exactly what has happened to you. You're the universe's piss-poor parting gift for what it has taken from me. Well, I do not accept. Best of luck to you.

She heads for the door.

APRIL

I've nowhere to go. Please. This is the only place I know.

Margaret isn't swayed.

APRIL (CONT'D)

And I've a fiancé. He may be here as well. And if he is, he'll look for me here. Please.

MARGARET

Return to the pool. Wait for him there. That's what I've done for the last ten years.

She storms away, leaving April alone in the dining hall.

High overhead, Margaret's unfinished portrait stares blankly at her granddaughter.

EXT. PLACID POINT - EVENING

April sprawls on the shore, staring blankly into an empty sky. Heavy, oppressive silence in the clearing, as if the world held its breath while passing through.

She scans the tree line. No creature stirs. It too is blank.

She casts her eyes to the pool. Eyes her reflection and also what's underneath -- Nothing. A deep, empty lagoon.

April stands. Wades into the waters.

-- UNDERWATER --

The setting sun paints the water with orange streaks. April sits on the seabed, resting her hands on the sandy floor as if in deep meditation.

The ring glistens on her finger.

The orange morphs to purple. The pool grows dark. April uncrosses her legs, preparing to return to the surface...

But she's STUCK!

Her left hand sinks below the sand, only the ring visible. April pulls and pulls but cannot remove it.

Bubbles escape from her lips. She hasn't much air.

She digs sand out from around her hand, but it only sinks deeper. Her vision begins to fade.

With great effort, she wedges her legs under her body and pries her hand from the floor.

-- SURFACE --

April BURSTS from the water, catching her breath. Panicking, she swims to the shore.

She scrambles several yards from the tranquil water and nurses her left hand.

Her ring stayed on tight.

April gives a weary look to the dark pool and sprints away.

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - NIGHT

April, soaking wet, pounds on the door.

Hans answers. Looks her pitiful visage over. Welcomes her in.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

The fireplace CRACKLES. April clutches a thick, dirty blanket and drinks in its heat.

Margaret sits in a lush armchair. Hans stands behind her.

MARGARET

It seems the universe has dumped you
into my lap. This manor stands as a
haven for Greendales and, as such, I
feel compelled to allow you to stay.

April looks to Margaret with big, grateful eyes.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

There is one condition, however.

APRIL

Anything.

MARGARET

You will not speak to Catherine about
this matter. She's fragile. What
happened to her father nearly broke
her. To her, you shall be Ms. Hiemal.

She notes April's ring.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

My apologies -- *Mrs.* Hiemal. We were
so grateful for your rescuing her
that we have offered you a position
as assistant housekeeper under Hans.
You will be provided meals and
lodging. Am I understood?

April nods vigorously.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Hans -- show *Mrs.* Hiemal to her new
quarters.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HIEMAL'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

The door flings open. A cramped living space -- identical to how the room will look in 30 years.

April lays on the stiff bed. Hans hardly fits in the doorway.

HANS

Be up early. Plenty to do.

APRIL

Yes, sir.

Hans closes the door behind him.

April pulls the blanket close. Her breathing becomes ragged -- panic sets in.

She pulls the ring off her finger and studies the "Greendale" etched inside the band.

APRIL (CONT'D)

(whispers)

April Hiemal *Greendale*... April
Hiemal *Greendale*...

Her breathing slows. She relaxes. Settles into bed, still admiring the last token of her identity...

-- MORNING --

BANG BANG BANG!

April leaps up, dazed, groggy. Thin cones of light peak through the curtain. More POUNDING emanates from her door.

HANS (O.S.)

(through door)

Up! Time for work!

APRIL

Be right out!

April opens the dressers. They're all empty.

She gives herself a once over in the mirror. Her sundress is stained and ripped. *This will have to do.*

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - MORNING

Hans leads April in.

HANS

Normal day consists of tidying rooms,
cooking for madam and little
Catherine, and maintaining grounds.
Which do you know most?

APRIL

I know none... at all.

HANS

Dust duty it is, then.

He rummages through a cabinet and produces a FEATHER DUSTER.
April looks curiously at it.

HANS (CONT'D)

Easiest job. Just wipe dust.

APRIL

And... where is the dust?

HANS

Everywhere.

Hans hands her the duster. April gawks at it.

She approaches a long set of oak drawers. April sets the duster
on its surface. Drags the feathers across...

And dust EXPLODES upward. April coughs some up.

Hans watches, amused.

HANS (CONT'D)

Slower. Attract, don't attack.

April opens one of the drawers. She waggles the duster inside.
Only a bit flies out this time!

She opens the next drawer -- inside sits the RUGER 22 SNUBNOSED
REVOLVER. She notes it, stunned. Slowly dusts all around it.
Perfectly catches it all. Closes the drawer slowly.

HANS (CONT'D)

You are natural. During time in army,
sergeant would force recruits to dust
barracks with steel wool. Be thankful
for tools you're given.

April reaches up towards a high shelf. She can't quite reach it.

APRIL
Assistance please.

HANS
Madam tells me Greendales know to
adapt. You are housekeeper now.
Figure it out.

April scans the room. Spots a stool. She plops it under the shelf and steps up on it. Now she can reach!

... and now Hans can peek up her dress, which he does with glee.
Margaret enters and assesses the scene.

MARGARET
Mrs. Hiemal... That dress is not
suitable for a housekeeper. Come.

She trots off. April hops down and follows.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - KITCHEN - DAY

April wears a conservative dress. She seems weathered -- Some time has passed and she's molding into her role.

She tosses assorted vegetables in a stew.

APRIL
I'm surprised your mother doesn't
have any fruit trees planted.

Young Catherine sits atop the counter.

CATHERINE
Hans says he can't grow them by
himself.

APRIL
Well, now he has some help.

April tries the stew. Gags. Adds seasonings.

CATHERINE
What would you grow?

APRIL
Peaches.

CATHERINE
I've never had one.

APRIL

I know you'll love them.

She tastes the stew again. It's passable.

Hans bursts in. The behemoth has to hunch to get through the doorway.

HANS

Hiemal. Ready?

APRIL

It's not perfect, but I think paired
with the right...

Hans tests the stew. He winces.

HANS

Catherine. Tell madam supper delayed.

Catherine obediently pitters out.

He throws in some beef. Some chicken. Lots of protein.

APRIL

I suppose your sergeant forced you
recruits to cook in a steel bathtub?

HANS

No. I'm just exceptionally good cook.

April chuckles.

APRIL

I'm going to start an orchard.

HANS

You'll try. Caring for trees much
harder than cooking stew.

(pauses)

Go. Set table. More up your alley.

Hans cackles. Frustrated, April grabs dinnerware and exits...

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DAY

April tills the ground. The hot sun beats on her. She sweats.

Catherine stands beside her, holding a parasol.

CATHERINE

Do you know what you're doing?

APRIL

I used to watch my housekeeper...
Picked up a lot from her.

She drops some seeds in the earth. Picks up a watering can and sprinkles some droplets on them.

CATHERINE

How long until we get peaches?

APRIL

They'll grow when they're ready.

April leads Catherine inside...

-- SEASONS FLY --

as a tree slowly grows...

... it buds and blooms...

... a single PEACH balloons. And at just the right time...

... a hand PICKS it. April's. She inspects the peach. It's ripe.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

An ADOLESCENT Catherine waits, giddy. April enters.

APRIL

Behold!

She presents the PEACH like a trophy.

CATHERINE

Let me try!

She takes a bite. Winces.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Too sweet.

APRIL

We'll pick the next one a little earlier. Less ripe.

Hans and Margaret trek in, arguing.

HANS

... he says if you cancel again,
he'll not return.

MARGARET

Good riddance!

APRIL

Madam?

MARGARET

The portrait artist. He's not capturing me correctly.

CATHERINE

Oh, that's a shame...

APRIL

You only say that because of his son.

Catherine blushes.

APRIL (CONT'D)

See? She ripens like a peach whenever I mention him.

MARGARET

Is this true, dear?

CATHERINE

Richard? He's... fine.

APRIL

Fine! You hear her?

(impersonating her)

He's... *fine*.

MARGARET

And what do you think of him, Mrs. Hiemal?

APRIL

I think... the two of them would make a beautiful couple.

Margaret beams.

MARGARET

I suppose it's settled, then. Why don't we invite him this weekend?

CATHERINE

Mother! So soon?

MARGARET

What? I won't be around forever. And
I have no need for this anymore.

She takes off her ring.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

It's high time I passed it on.

CATHERINE

Oh, wonderful! Then Mrs. Hiemal and I
can match.

An awkward hush falls.

MARGARET

I'm sorry, darling?

CATHERINE

The rings. Yours and Mrs. Hiemal's.
They're the same, aren't they?

April fiddles with her ring.

APRIL

Oh, Catherine...

MARGARET

They aren't the same ring...

APRIL

No! They're just...

MARGARET

Very similar.

APRIL

Indeed. What a coincidence. Honestly,
I only wear mine to... protect my
hand while working.

CATHERINE

But you were married, weren't you?

APRIL

Engaged.

Catherine, sensing the uncomfortable air in the room, drops it.

CATHERINE

I'll write to Richard. Could you
bring him the letter, Mrs. Hiemal?

APRIL

Of course.

She fakes a cheery smile and trudges off.

Hans watches her go, a glint in his eyes.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HIEMAL'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

April, pajama-clad, scours the room. Pulls out drawers. Opens
the closet. Nothing seems right.

She peeks under her bed. Spots a loose panel. Perfect.

She empties out a small JEWELRY BOX. Removes her ring. Stares
longingly at the word "Greendale" before placing it inside.

She sets the box under the loose panel...

HANS (O.S.)

Hiemal.

Hans stands in her doorway.

APRIL

Hans! I --

HANS

Meet outside.

APRIL

Why?

HANS

You have done good work here. I'd
like to help you.

His stare lingers on her LOW-CUT shirt. April notices.
Repositions.

APRIL

I don't believe I need your help.

HANS

I won't take no for answer. Come.

He creeps out of the room.

April ensures the box is safely under the panels. Reluctantly exits.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

The house is silent. April, led by the soft glow of the fireplace, tiptoes in.

She beelines for the drawers. Opens one up. Rummages.

HANS (O.S.)

Hiemal?

From the doorway, he looks puzzled at April.

APRIL

Coming.

She silently closes the drawer and follows him out.

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - NIGHT

The two sneak out the front door.

APRIL

What is this about?

HANS

You think of fiancé often?

The directness of the question causes April to falter.

APRIL

I... still love him if that's what you're asking.

HANS

It is not.

APRIL

He has been gone so long --

HANS

Mrs. Hiemal --

APRIL

And I have been called *Mrs. Hiemal* for so many years that he has of late slipped my mind, yes. But don't mistake that for --

HANS

Would you like to find him?

April, shocked, falters again.

APRIL

I... would. Yes.

Hans trudges away from the estate. April follows.

EXT. PLACID POINT - NIGHT

Hans and April stand on the shore. A silver moon illuminates the pool's glistening surface.

HANS

Remarkable, yes? Amidst mud and shit,
a pocket of purity.

APRIL

Eerie is the word you're looking for.
Why are we out here?

HANS

You lost fiancé out here, yes?

APRIL

It's not quite as simple as that.

Hans gazes at his reflection in the water.

HANS

My sergeant was a piece of shit. Vile
man. But he told me something that
always stick with me.

(pauses)

He said 'Hans! You are not soldier.
You are man. Don't mix the two up.'

(pauses)

It was not true, mind you. I am
soldier, not man. And so was he. But
you... I fear you have forgotten who
you are.

APRIL

I have forgotten nothing. Including
that you said we were going to find
Jesse, not analyze me.

HANS

You are key. This pool sent you here,
separated you two, for a reason. It
could bring you back together.

APRIL

How?

Hans cups a handful of the water.

HANS

By repeating how it stole you in the
first place. Immerse yourself in the
waters, and maybe...

He lets the water run through his fingers.

HANS (CONT'D)

You'll be returned.

APRIL

Oh no... You don't understand. Those
waters... they're monstrous!

Hans plods towards her -- she backs away.

HANS

It is only way...

APRIL

It doesn't return. It only takes...

She looks to the calm waters with terror... she begins to
hyperventilate... panic seeps in... She reaches instinctively to
her ring finger for comfort... it's empty...

HANS

You must try. Or lose self forever.

He takes a step towards her. She's jumpy.

APRIL

Stay back!

Hans takes another step. He's within lunging distance.

HANS

Please... calm...

APRIL

I said BACK!

She pulls out the RUGER SNUBNOSED REVOLVER. It's heavy for such a small package. She aims it with shaky hands.

Hans tentatively puts his hands up.

HANS

Do not aim gun at me...

He slowly reaches for the revolver... April, terrified, shouts:

APRIL

Stop!!

She screams... squeezes the trigger...

It CLICKS.

No bullets fly. No blood splatters. Just a click. It's empty.

Hans goes stiff. His face, blank. Trauma unexpressed comes pouring in.

April takes a few steps back. DROPS the revolver. Hans' quietness rattles her.

APRIL

Hans?

Hans SNAPS BACK INTO IT! His eyes are apoplectic, fiery, aimed at April. He CHARGES at her.

April narrowly DODGES him. He turns back to her -- a bull facing down its matador.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Hans! I'm sorry!

He mutters something in his native tongue. His mind is off somewhere far away...

... he marches towards her, this time SNAGGING her arm...

... he drags her back to the pool. She tries to pull away, but he's too strong...

... he tosses her into the shallow water. She tries to flee but he's already upon her...

... he grabs hold of her head and shoves her down...

-- UNDERWATER --

April struggles against his massive hands. The water's surface distorts Hans' face.

HANS (CONT'D)
(distorted)
... human scum...

April searches for anything around her to use... *nothing*...
... she digs her hands into the sand... frantically hunts...
THUMP! She's hit something!

She TUGS... pulls out a sturdy ROCK...

... and THRUSTS it upwards, striking Hans in the temple... He staggers back...

-- SURFACE --

April bolts up, gasping for air.

Hans, dizzy, holds a bleeding temple. He goes for her again...
... and is struck once again by April...

He falls onto the shore. Driven by adrenaline and fear, April climbs on him and continues SLAMMING the rock into his head...

... blood splattering on her... he stops reacting long before she stops slamming...

Shaken, April slowly REALIZES what she's doing. She drops the rock into the water. It sinks quickly, leaving behind a misty CLOUD OF BLOOD. It lingers.

April crawls up the shore, away from the water. She curls her knees into her chest... Slows her breathing...

She can't bring herself to look at the body.

She clambers back to the water. Scoops just enough in her hand to rinse the blood off her face...

Averting her gaze, April moves to the body. Pats around his chest. Her fingers brush his DOG TAG. She snaps it off his neck.

Still looking away, she SHOVES his body into the waters. It consumes him quickly.

She stumbles to the revolver. Picks it up. Runs off.

And despite the water's clarity and the moon's light, no body could be seen in the waters of Placid Point that night.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

April replaces the revolver. Closes the drawer silent as a fox.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HIEMAL'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

April holds her ring in her fingers. It somehow doesn't seem as bright as before.

She's cleaned up. Aside from her brow which seems permanently furrowed, you wouldn't guess anything had happened that evening.

She slides the engagement ring onto the DOG TAG CHAIN. Slips it on over her neck.

She lays down in bed... attempts to calm her breathing...

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

The door bursts open! In prances Catherine, leading an adolescent RICHARD by the hand. She's giving him the grand tour.

CATHERINE

Voila! The drawing room.

(donning British accent)

Sounds perfectly excessive, doesn't it darling?

RICHARD

(southern accent)

Sure does... darlin'.

They giggle and flirt. Perhaps the only time in their lives they're actually in love.

Richard isn't at all as we remember him -- he's wiry, floating. His drawl hasn't yet been corrupted by aristocratic expectations. In a word... he's *himself*.

Catherine notices something.

CATHERINE

Mrs. Hiemal?

Standing opposite the room is April. She's frozen, mid-dusting, transfixed by the closed drawer holding the revolver.

Catherine's voice jolts her out of it.

APRIL

Catherine...

(turns)

Oh! Richard. Welcome.

RICHARD

Hello, Mrs. Hiemal.

CATHERINE

I'm touring Richard around the manor.

April smiles. It's like looking in a hazy reflection.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Come, sir -- we've a bevy of peaches
and I'm sure you'll adore them.
They're too sweet for me.

RICHARD

I like sweet.

CATHERINE

Don't I know it.

(to Hiemal)

If mom asks, we're in the kitchen!

APRIL

Take care.

RICHARD

Pleasure seein' you again, Hiemal.

He gives the slightest of leers. Catherine doesn't catch it, but to April it's as loud as a train whistle. The couple trots off.

April shivers. The room goes cold, and April along with it.

Margaret enters the room with enough heat to warm it back up. She plops in the grand armchair, huffing and puffing.

APRIL

Madam?

MARGARET

(mocking)

Madam? Listen to yourself.

APRIL

What's all this then?

MARGARET

My lord, April. The children may be
in the manor but they're miles away.
Take a seat.

April crosses to the chaise. Stands dutifully beside it.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Sit.

She sits rigidly.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I swear to the Lord above if you
don't relax...

April lounges. Breathes into it. Remembers herself.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

What are your thoughts on Richard?

APRIL

It doesn't matter what I think.

MARGARET

It does to me.

APRIL

He's what Greendale women are always
after. Young, poor, grateful... Not
too unlike Connor.

Margaret nods.

MARGARET

Or Jesse.

Touché.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

No. He's not at all like Connor. He's
too content here. Too willing to
absorb the Greendale name. I
overheard him practicing a *Greendale*
accent. Truly horrific.

APRIL

It gets better.

MARGARET

Connor didn't wanna change his name.
He'd never admit it, but I think he
regretted marrying into the family.

APRIL

I suppose it's a blessing, then, that
Jesse didn't make the same mistake.

If Margaret agrees, her face doesn't show it.

MARGARET

May I confide in you?

April nods.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

First, may I just say you've done
tremendous work around the house.
Especially through this whole fiasco
with Hans' disappearance.

April does best to hide her emotions at his mention.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I say this to preface the fact that I
absolutely despised you when you
first arrived.

(pauses)

I hated that you brought me hope.
Hope that maybe that pool would spit
Connor back onto its shores.

(pauses)

Is there any reason you can imagine,
any reason at all, that those waters
would send you here in his place?

April ponders for a long moment, then...

APRIL

For so long, I've hoped to see the
big picture. The intricate plot that
requires us to be in one specific
place and time...

(pauses)

But there isn't one. We just weren't
meant to live the life we thought.

Margaret takes this in.

CRASH! A clatter from the other room pulls their attention.
GIGGLING from through the walls indicates it's the new couple.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I'll say this -- no matter Richard's
issues, he and Catherine make one
hell of a kid together.

Margaret chuckles weakly. April joins. It's tender moment.

Abruptly, Margaret begins deep, guttural coughing fit. It
subsides quickly, but her breathing grows raspy.

MARGARET

I suppose it's time to try and finish
my portrait, huh?

APRIL

(Hiemal mode)

I'll have Richard invite his father
over at once.

April exits.

Margaret looks around the room's vast, meaningless trinkets
before devolving into another series of coughs.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DINING HALL - DAY

Heavy rain pelts the massive windows. Darkness crowds their
borders. Distant thunder booms.

Margaret's portrait hangs high overhead, her face still
incomplete. Connor's unfinished visage seems to stare at her,
and her back at him. They're together once more.

April, Catherine, and Richard stand underneath, clad in black.
Not a word exchanged between them.

April places her hand on Catherine's back, comforting.

Catherine pulls away. Turns to Richard and buries her face in
his chest. Her ENGAGEMENT RING shining brightly on her finger.

April retracts her hand. Catherine has made her preference
clear. She exits obediently.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

April tidies up, absentminded. Still adorned in mourning attire.

A KNOCK at the door startles her. She answers.

Outside stands a familiar, if younger, man...

APRICITY

Mrs. Greendale?

Apricity, now only in his forties, still speaks with a refined, dutiful southern accent. April simply nods, dazed.

APRICITY (CONT'D)

Reginald Apricity. I'm so sorry to hear 'bout your mother. She was a fine woman.

APRIL

Oh she isn't... I'm not Mrs. Greendale, sir.

APRICITY

My apologies. You are...?

APRIL

April Hiemal. I maintain the estate.

APRICITY

I see... Are you familiar with the previous housekeeper, Hans?

APRIL

Yes... what about him?

APRICITY

Well, I've been assigned his case.

(pauses)

May I come in?

April welcomes him into the estate. He scans the room.

APRICITY (CONT'D)

The Greendales must be awfully grateful for all the work you do.

APRIL

The work is thanks enough.

APRICITY

I'm sure. Now, Mrs. Hiemal, I'll keep this brief -- do you know of anyone who might wanna hurt Hans?

April stiffens.

APRIL

I was under the impression he'd left.

APRICITY

I think that's quite clear. It's a question of if he did so willingly.

Apricity pulls out Hans' battered DOG TAG, sans chain.

APRICITY (CONT'D)

Family out in the marsh found this while they was out fishin'. We're runnin' a full canvas sweep now.

APRIL

Oh that's... that's terrible.

Suddenly, a CRY from within the manor pulls their attention. They rush off.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Catherine -- her face emotionless, blank -- calmly moves to the table. Slowly reaches out... and grabs a KNIFE!

She steps up on a chair... then onto the table... walks down its sturdy frame... pulls her arm back... and FLINGS the knife...

... the knife BOUNCES off her mother's portrait, its blade unable to pierce the thick canvas.

So, she picks up another knife... FLINGS it... grabs another...

A pair of hands grab her shoulders... spin her around... It's Apricity... he holds her firm, seemingly unafraid of the KNIFE she still holds...

April and Richard watch from the corner of the room, Richard nearly in hysterics.

Apricity leans into Catherine... whispers something in her ear... she SNAPS OUT OF her trance... drops the knife... Collapses onto the table in sobs.

Apricity grabs the knife... and several others. Walks them out of the room.

April goes to the grieving woman. Richard stays back, shaken.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

April diligently dusts, as her body seems programmed to do. The stress of maintaining an entire manor has caused wrinkles to spill onto her face and hands.

She deftly avoids the drawer the gun is held in.

Catherine lounges on the chaise, pregnant. Very pregnant. About-to-burst-pregnant.

Richard sits in the grand armchair, reading a snooty magazine.

CATHERINE

God, what I wouldn't give for some wine right now...

RICHARD

That poor child will suffer enough without you bathing it in alcohol.

Richard's drawl has started to fade. He's adapting.

APRIL

I'll fetch the peaches, madam.

She heads for the door...

RICHARD

Let me help.

He grins and follows April out.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - KITCHEN - DAY

Richard follows closely behind April. He brushes against her.

APRIL

Enough! My Lord, Richard. I don't know where you've gotten the idea that these advances are welcome but remove it from your thoughts.

RICHARD

Watch your tone, Mrs. Hiemal. You work for me now.

APRIL

I am a Greendale as much as any. I ensure this manor remains upright and functional for no one's benefit but my own.

RICHARD

You will do as you're told and not offer a word in response!

Before she can respond, Catherine SHRIEKS from the other room!

CATHERINE (O.S.)

Ohhhhh God!!

April realizes what's happening.

APRIL

Phone the doctor.

She hikes off, leaving Richard to do as he's told.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

Exactly as spacious and extravagant as you'd expect.

Catherine lays on the massive bed, sheets damp with sweat. This is the only labor she's ever had to do, and it's been difficult.

April stands at her side, holding her hand. She winces in pain as Catherine squeezes through a contraction.

This is only the second time April's ever been in this room. The first is very nearly about to occur.

Richard storms in the room, alone.

APRIL

Where is he??

RICHARD

Still miles out.

Catherine lets out a deep moan of pain.

APRIL

She isn't going to wait much longer.

CATHERINE

Oh God... Oh... It's happening!!

She arches her back. April is ready to be born.

APRIL

Shit! Richard, take my place.

RICHARD

What am I supposed to do?

APRIL

Comfort your goddamn wife!

Richard begrudgingly takes Catherine's hand. She squeezes hard. He's brought to tears.

April rushes to the foot of the bed. She kneels and takes hold of Catherine's legs.

APRIL

Catherine, I need you to listen to me... Relax...

Another contraction. Another moan. Baby April is inbound.

RICHARD

You know how to deliver a baby?

APRIL

My mother taught me the basics.

She focuses. Catherine squirms in pain.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Breathe, Catherine...

April demonstrates with a few calming breaths.

-- MEMORY FLASH --

April's hand trapped underwater, ring protruding...

-- RETURN TO --

April's naked hand positioned to guide the baby...

APRIL (CONT'D)

Just breathe...

-- MEMORY FLASH --

April's face, full of terror, unable to escape...

-- RETURN TO --

Catherine's face, full of anguish...

-- MEMORY FLASH --

April, free from the depths, bursting to the surface...

A child's CRY rises...

-- MOMENTS LATER --

April swaddles the screaming NEWBORN in some regal cloth. She holds the child tight.

Catherine lays exhausted in a pool of bodily fluids. Even for the wealthy, it's an absolute mess.

April looks down at her own shrieking face. Tear well in her eyes. Knowing this child's future hardships makes this moment of innocence a tender sight.

Richard stands to the side uselessly.

The newborn's fits grow louder. April bounces her in her arms.

APRIL

Shhh, quiet now, April...

The newborn calms ever so slightly. A moment of connection. Both Aprils smile.

CATHERINE (O.S.)

April?

Catherine stirs.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

My Lord, that's... heavenly.

April lays the newborn into her mother's waiting arms.

CATHERINE

My heavenly April...

Catherine glances up.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

... *Hiemal* Greendale.

She coos to her child, calming her. Even Richard steps forward to get a glimpse.

April catches sight of Catherine's engagement ring sitting prominently on her hand. She fingers her own ring, dangling from the necklace she wears.

The child makes a fuss. April quietly exits.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HIEMAL'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

April sits on the floor, dangling her engagement ring on its chain. She studies it -- the color, the brilliance...

Her eyes focus on the inscription. *Greendale*.

She makes a silent decision. Drops the necklace into the box. Slides it back under the bed before climbing under the sheets...

-- TEN YEARS LATER --

The box remains untouched under the bed under a blanket of dust.

A pair of FEET plop onto the floor. They slip into some bedside shoes. WE RISE to reveal April has grown into the HIEMAL we recognize from her first introduction.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - HALLWAY - DAY

Hiemal ambles across the floorboards. A stack of magazines rest haphazard on a console table. Without missing a beat, Hiemal straightens them and keeps on trucking.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - APRIL'S ROOM - DAY

Hiemal peeks in: *Empty*. Neatly kept bed. Clothes perfectly folded. A room more suited for an adult than a child.

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Hiemal dusts, as always. Avoids the second drawer.

She makes her way to the door, where she hears faint ARGUING leaking through.

She turns and takes an alternate door out.

EXT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DAY

Mrs. Hiemal diligently plucks half of the peaches off the fully grown trees. She dumps these unripened ones in a basket.

She looks to the horizon and spots two young children approaching the estate. One limps, a gash on her leg.

Hiemal drops the basket and rushes to them...

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

Flames dance in the fireplace, lighting Hiemal's face with a haunting glow.

She watches young Jesse sleep on the chaise under a heavy blanket -- more comfortable than he's been in his entire life.

She studies him, remembering a lifetime.

An adult Catherine enters the room.

CATHERINE

Let the boy rest, Mrs. Hiemal.

HIEMAL

He shouldn't be here.

CATHERINE

No, he shouldn't. Thank God we've taught April to swim so well or he'd be in the bottom of that pool.

HIEMAL

Maybe he'd be better off.

Jesse stirs. The women hush. Catherine drags Hiemal away from the sleeping boy.

CATHERINE

My Lord, Mrs. Hiemal, what a terrible thing to say!

HIEMAL

That boy doesn't have a place here.

CATHERINE

Well, I'm afraid it's not up to you who belongs here and who doesn't.

HIEMAL

His family is poor as mud and angry as alligators. Go on. Ask your husband. He'll know.

CATHERINE

So, a young, poor, polite boy meets a wild, carefree Greendale girl. Where have I heard this story before?

(pauses)

Mrs. Hiemal, I assure you, that boy
is no danger to this family.

She smiles and motions for Hiemal to follow her out.

Hiemal looks back at Jesse once more...

APRIL (PRE-LAP)
What do you think?

INT. GREENDALE ESTATE - APRIL'S ROOM - DAY - 10 YEARS LATER

APRIL (O.S.)
... Mrs. Hiemal?

Mrs. Hiemal SNAPS into focus. It's the day of the disappearance.

APRIL (CONT'D)
Is this decent? Does it scream
fiancée?

Hiemal gives her a brief once over.

HIEMAL
It screams *April*.

April groans. Paces.

-- LATER --

A KNOCK on the door. April bounds to answer.

JESSE (O.S.)
Umm, April... you ready?

APRIL (O.S.)
Aye aye, captain! Where're we setting
sail?

JESSE (O.S.)
Wherever would... make you happy.

APRIL (O.S.)
Placid Point it is!

Hiemal vision darkens. Her breathing swells.

April and Jesse chat distantly, wrapped in their own world.

Hiemal grips her chest and slows her breaths, regaining control.
She calms herself.

JESSE (O.S.)

Well... what're you waiting for?
Batten down the hatches!

And the two are off on their final voyage.

Hiemal stands alone, soaked in melancholy...

... But not for long. Her brow grows determined. She strides out the room...

INT. JESSE'S SHACK - NIGHT - ONE YEAR LATER

Hiemal loosens her gripped hand -- engagement ring still resting on her ring finger.

Jesse, stunned beyond words, can't draw his eyes away from her face. He seems to notice the familiar features.

JESSE

It can't be...

Hiemal wordlessly lifts her leg and sets it on the table. Pulls up her dress.

A prominent SCAR paints her calf.

JESSE (CONT'D)

You were there the day she... the day
you...

Hiemal nods.

HIEMAL

I had to see it for myself.

JESSE

And?

EXT. PLACID POINT - DAY - FLASHBACK

Hiemal, hidden behind a tree, waiting...

She hears the familiar SPLASH as April dives in. Hiemal leans out to get a view...

CRACK! A stick underfoot slices through the eerie silence.
Hiemal ducks behind a tree.

After a moment, she leans back out... as Jesse TOPPLES over...

JESSE (V.O.)

I never was a good swimmer.

HIEMAL (V.O.)

No. No you weren't.

Hiemal eyes the surface of the water...

No Jesse emerges.

HIEMAL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

For a moment I forgot how awful that pool was...

Hiemal sprints fearlessly into the waters...

HIEMAL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All that mattered was that you lived.

She drags Jesse's limp body onto the shore...

Listens for breathing... It's there...

Jesse STIRS. Hiemal, spooked, scampers off, leaving muddy footprints in her wake...

INT. JESSE'S SHACK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

JESSE

Why didn't you say something? After all this time!

HIEMAL

Jesse, you were... are still so young. And April -- God, nothing would keep her from that pool.

JESSE

Not even herself?

HIEMAL

No, not even herself.

She looks away in shame.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

And madam Catherine... much too fragile. She'd fall apart. She already has, mostly.

JESSE

But Richard? Surely he'd hear you.
Wouldn't work you to death.

Hiemal's voice grows grave.

HIEMAL

I told Richard. Saw his life drain
from his eyes as he remembered all
the nastiness he inflicted on me...
on his daughter...

She paces, nervous energy sparking off of her.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

I must go! Who knows what it has
driven him to?

JESSE

Where ya headed?

HIEMAL

Far away. To one of those towns from
the newspapers Richard used to read.

She heads for the door...

JESSE

Mrs. Hiemal, wait!

HIEMAL

There isn't time!

JESSE

Mrs. Hiemal...

She reaches for the knob...

JESSE (CONT'D)

April!

She freezes, that name knocking the wind out of her.

JESSE (CONT'D)

I'm comin' with you.

HIEMAL

Oh, Jesse...

JESSE

It won't take but a moment... not
much here to pack.

He reaches under his bed and pulls out a MAKESHIFT DUFFLE BAG,
as raggedy as him. He tosses in some clothes.

HIEMAL

You can't. Not anymore.

He stops.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

I spent decades answering to
"Hiemal." Longer than I ever spent as
"April." This is who I am. April
is... it's not me.

Jesse continues packing.

JESSE

You came out here fixin' for me to
join ya and that's what I'm gonna do.

HIEMAL

When you didn't know it was me. I
can't live up to April. I'm too ripe.
(pauses)
Your fiancée drowned in Placid Point.

JESSE

If that's true... then why is it you
still got that ring?

Hiemal looks down at her ring, shining brilliantly even in the
low light.

HIEMAL

I...

A KNOCK at the door interrupts them. Hiemal, terrified, backs
away. Looks to Jesse for help.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Just a moment!

He motions for Hiemal to hide behind him. She does so.

Jesse makes his way to the door. Slides open the viewing hatch.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Oh...?

He cracks the door. Standing outside is a blank-faced, unnervingly calm Catherine Greendale.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Mrs. Greendale -- what a treat.

CATHERINE

Jesse...

Her voice is flat, betraying nothing. She's in her fugue state.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

JESSE

Course not.

CATHERINE

Good...

Hiemal, uneasy, shifts a bit...

... A tiny CREAK escapes from the floorboards beneath her...

... Jesse looks down towards it... then back to Catherine...

... who now holds the REVOLVER, aimed straight at him!

Before he can react, Catherine POPS two shots into his shoulder. He tumbles back. Hiemal shrieks.

Catherine steps into the doorway. Spots Hiemal.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Dearest Mrs. Hiemal...

Catherine aims the gun at her. Sets the hammer. CLICK.

Hiemal freezes. Hands up.

HIEMAL

Mrs. Greendale... Please...

CATHERINE

What did you do to him?

HIEMAL

Who?

CATHERINE

My poor Richie... he's...

She remains disconnected. Eerily calm. As if her surface won't give way to the emotions underneath.

HIEMAL

I... told him...

The words catch in her throat. She begins to HYPERVENTILATE.

CATHERINE

Told him...

Hiemal tries taking several deep breaths to calm herself. It isn't working.

SMOVE from the BURNING DINNER begins filling the room...

HIEMAL

Madam...

CATHERINE

Told him...

HIEMAL

I... told him... something we should've told you. A long time ago.

CATHERINE

We...

Hiemal takes a cautious step forward.

HIEMAL

Put the gun down and we can...

Catherine FIRES again into Jesse's shoulder. He hollers in pain.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

Jesse!

CATHERINE

Who... is... we?

HIEMAL

Your mother and I.

Catherine seems to rack her memory...

CATHERINE

Mother...

HIEMAL

Margaret. God, she worried about you.
We both did. After what happened with
your father...

CATHERINE

Father...

Hiemal does her best to sound soothing.

HIEMAL

Yes. Connor. When he went missing...
she nearly lost you. So she... we
coddled you... hid things from you...

CATHERINE

Mother...

Her words devolve into a desperate chant.

HIEMAL

I became your housekeeper...

CATHERINE

Father...

HIEMAL

You, my madam...

CATHERINE

Mother...

HIEMAL

But you know who I am...

CATHERINE

Father...

HIEMAL

You must see it...

CATHERINE

Mother...

HIEMAL

I am...

CATHERINE

Father...

HIEMAL

Your daughter.

Catherine stops, suddenly. Stares blankly at Hiemal.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

Mom. It's me. April.

A tear runs down Hiemal's cheek. Catherine doesn't react. Smoke billows behind her.

Jesse moans in pain. He's losing a lot of blood.

Hiemal timidly approaches her mother.

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

Put it down, mom...

She reaches for the gun, putting her HAND in the line of fire...

HIEMAL (CONT'D)

You always said it's a miracle I
still got both of these.

She motions to her hands. Catherine glances at them...

... and fixates on the RING.

CATHERINE

Greendale...

Hiemal tracks her gaze...

HIEMAL

Yes.

CATHERINE

The last of the Greendales...

HIEMAL

Yes.

CATHERINE

Was April...

HIEMAL

Was *me*.

Catherine turns her attention to Jesse. An emotion finally bubbling up from within:

Rage.

CATHERINE

And you took her...

JESSE

I swear I didn't --

CATHERINE

You killed her!

HIEMAL

No, mom!

Hiemal LUNGES for the gun...

Catherine SHOOTS her hand. Hiemal shrieks. Crumples to the floor, nursing her wound.

Jesse lays quivering in fear.

JESSE

Please... don't...

BANG BANG! Catherine fires two shots into Jesse's head. His blood paints the dirty floor.

Hiemal's ears RING. She screams silently.

Catherine blinks rapidly, SNAPPING OUT OF IT. She looks puzzled by the gun in her hands...

... then mortified by Jesse's lifeless body on the ground.

CATHERINE

Oh Lord... Jesse... No!

The shack catches flame from the burning dinner. The two Greendale women hardly notice.

Through the thick cloud of smoke, a figure enters the room: Detective Apricity. He surveys the scene efficiently.

He gently plucks the gun from Catherine's hands. She feverishly tries to explain. He nods and leads her out of the shack...

... Hiemal, broken, crawls to her beloved's corpse...

... She cries into his chest. Takes his hand into her's...

... The ring juts upward, a beacon through the dense smoke...

... Apricity returns. Yanks Hiemal off. She resists, but he pulls her from the burning shack. She lets out a final cry as Jesse's body is consumed by the flames...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Bright and impartial. Hiemal sits still at a chrome table. She's lost love for the second time.

Apricity enters and sits across from her.

APRICITY

We recovered as much of him as we could. His remains'll be turned over to you, should you want 'em.

Hiemal doesn't react. For as cold as the room seems, she's infinitely colder.

APRICITY (CONT'D)

Mrs. Greendale's lawyers are making a mighty convincin' argument that she wasn't in sound mind when she entered that shack. And unless you've got somethin' to refute that, I'm assumin' she ain't seein' the inside of a jail cell.

Hiemal remains stoic. Nurses her BANDAGED HAND.

APRICITY (CONT'D)

Very well. You're free to go.

Hiemal stands. Heads to the exit...

APRICITY (CONT'D)

Oh, almost forgot...

Hiemal turns back. Apricity lays the ENGAGEMENT RING on table.

APRICITY (CONT'D)

Greendale original. Right? Suppose it also belongs to you then... April.

Hiemal puzzled, sits back down at the table.

HIEMAL

How did you...

APRICITY

There's only one of these rings in existence, and I don't believe a Greendale woman would ever let it out of her sight. Not even in death.

Hiemal, as if confirming this, instinctually puts the ring on.

APRICITY (CONT'D)

Took me a bit to recognize you. Lord how you've changed. Guess that's what getting away from that name does to you, though. Greendale...

HIEMAL

You're... a Greendale?

That draws a distinct sadness from Apricity.

APRICITY

I was once...

EXT. PLACID POINT - NIGHT

Small, uneven wheels roll along the ground...

Hiemal pulls a wagon containing a WRAPPED CORPSE to the water's edge. She stares at its glistening surface.

APRICITY (V.O.)

It took years before I knew that life weren't right for me. But by then, I had a wife, a daughter...

The water reflects Hiemal back at herself -- a distorted, imperfect image. She takes this in.

APRICITY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Bein' a Greendale wasn't my callin'. I couldn't adapt. I loved my family, but when is that ever enough...?

Hiemal pulls out her ring. Notes the etched word "Greendale."

APRICITY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But that pool... it knew who I was. Gave me the one thing even I didn't know I needed...

She looks back to the water...

APRICITY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Escape.

She TOSSES it into the pool. The water SWALLOWS it up.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Hiemal puts the pieces together...

HIEMAL

Connor?

Apricity nods, sullenly.

APRICITY

It's strange hearin' it... after all this time.

HIEMAL

More like an old acquaintance than an old self?

APRICITY

Exactly.

Hiemal pauses. Stands to leave, before...

HIEMAL

Why stay? You said it yourself: this was your escape.

Apricity thinks on this for a long moment.

APRICITY

The same reason I suppose you did.

EXT. PLACID POINT - NIGHT

Hiemal lays the wrapped corpse onto the water's surface. Gives it a PUSH. It sinks quickly as well.

APRICITY (V.O.)

I owed it to someone...

She gazes at the empty spot where the body once was. In its absence, the moon's reflection shines brightly, as if it stole the body away.

APRICITY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I didn't know who... Or when...

Hiemal takes a single step into the water...

APRICITY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But I hoped, deep down, those waters
knew what they were doin'...

... braces herself for panic to creep in...

APRICITY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And you know what?

And none does.

APRICITY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They did.

She smiles, content with the mystery.

Hiemal trods further into the water, step-by-step, until she
disappears under its surface.

And despite the water's clarity and the moon's light, no bodies
could be seen in the waters of Placid Point that night...

THE END