

The Sun Always Sets In The West

by

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FADE IN:

A dusty West Texas desert. The sun has just dipped below the horizon. Dark blue spreads across the rugged mountains, the scrub brush, the dirt, giving it all the hue of a corpse.

A GREY HORSE trots through the gloom.

Atop it, MARTIN TALBOT (50s), his seductively handsome face creased with wear, his eyes alert, but weary. He dons the leather hat and brown coat of a rancher.

Riding with hands on his hips is RUBY (8). Solemn, aged beyond her years. Her blue, dirt-stained dress tells us she's no stranger to labor in this unforgiving land.

The pair approaches...

ROCK SPRINGS. A bleak, dying town. 1910s. Last gasp of the old west.

An OIL DERRICK stands over the town, shuttered and quiet.

EXT. ROCK SPRINGS - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Martin and Ruby CLIP-CLOP past a wooden arch that reads "Rock Springs -- Warm Beds, Full Bellies, Bright Future"

The town is not as advertised.

Once bustling, it's mostly boarded up storefronts. Fancy dresses gather dust through one window. A barber's pole hangs crooked at another abandoned shop. Only THE PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT, a saloon and brothel, attracts business.

Martin narrows his eyes at the SEEDY CLIENTELE who gawk right back at him and Ruby. They're curiosities here.

The duo comes to a halt at

FIRST CHRIST CHURCH, a squat white building with a large cross jutting toward the heavens. A marquee in the front: "All are welcome."

INT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - SAME

PASTOR NATHAN (60s) kneels on the hard floor before the crucifix. Ruby cautiously approaches him.

As she grow closer, she sees that he holds a dust broom in his hand. He's not praying...he's angling in on a FAT MOUSE boldly chewing on the lectern.

WHACK. Pastor Nathan kills the mouse. Ruby jumps, which alerts him to her presence.

PASTOR NATHAN

Ruby, hello.

They both eye the dead rodent.

PASTOR NATHAN

One mustn't let them gain purchase, lest you tempt an infestation.

As he sweeps the mouse into a sack, we get a good look at him. Thin and bespectacled, white collar against a coarse black coat hanging from his slight frame.

RUBY

We need you. For mama.

Pastor Nathan darkens.

PASTOR NATHAN

Already?

MARTIN (O.S.)

It got bad fast.

Pastor Nathan is startled by the low voice. He turns to see Martin standing in the doorway. They lock eyes. *No love lost between them.*

PASTOR NATHAN

I'll get my things.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

Pastor Nathan, on his horse, struggles to keep up with Martin and Ruby. True darkness has fallen on the land now. Only the moon's glow lights the way toward a

SQUAT RANCH HOUSE. We'll call it PEARL'S HOUSE.

The ranch is centered on a rolling plain before a humble stretch of crops. A simple homestead farm.

The utilitarian structure is flanked by a rickety barn on one side, a rocky outcropping of hills on the other, a dingy outhouse behind.

They dismount. Martin and Ruby head right for the house, but Pastor Nathan stops at a PIGPEN. A handful of sleeping pigs...puncture marks along their jowls...

Pastor Nathan gazes at the wounds. *Curious.*

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - LATER

Martin enters through the front door into the

MAIN ROOM, an all-purpose kitchen/living room. Hard wooden chairs, pots and pans strewn on the walls, simple toys on the floor, fireplace. Desert plains living.

He walks down a short hall. To the left, **RUBY'S ROOM**, to the right

PEARL'S BEDROOM, just a dresser and a bed.

PEARL LOGAN (40s) lies in it. Her arms are palsied, hands uncontrollably balled. She has ALS, but they don't know what that is. All they know is her once-proud face is emaciated and her breaths are coming in death rattles.

Martin moves to her side. She tries to look at him, but can only move her eyes. She's in hell.

Pastor Nathan is stricken by the sight of Pearl. He glances at Martin with accusatory eyes.

Pastor Nathan takes Pearl's balled fist in his hand. Squeezes it. WHISPERS to her something we can't hear.

Martin narrows his eyes. Pastor Nathan feels his glare. Gets down to work. As he pulls out his cross, Martin discreetly moves out of his way.

Pastor Nathan raises the cross over Pearl.

PASTOR NATHAN

Oh holy hosts above, I call upon thee as
a servant of Jesus Christ...

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - LATER

Pastor Nathan gathers his coat and hat while Martin stands impassively. Ruby sits in a corner, sniffing.

PASTOR NATHAN

Will she be buried at the church?

MARTIN

No.

Martin and the Pastor share an uncomfortable silence.

MARTIN
I'll get your money.

PASTOR NATHAN
There's no need for payment. Pearl and I-

MARTIN
I'll get your money.

Martin moves to the **HALLWAY**, entering

PEARL'S BEDROOM

Rattles open a tin. Atop a pile of bills, a photo of Martin with a WOMAN and LITTLE GIRL. Not Pearl and Ruby.

IN THE MAIN ROOM

Pastor Nathan turns to Ruby.

PASTOR NATHAN
After your papa passed, your mother and I
grew quite close. She found great solace
at the church, before...

He casts a quick glance toward Martin, occupied in the other room. Pastor Nathan leans in close to Ruby.

PASTOR NATHAN
Is he treating you right?

He reaches out a hand to touch Ruby's shoulder --

-- **SNATCH**. Martin GRIPS Pastor Nathan's wrist, appearing at his side FASTER THAN HUMANLY POSSIBLE.

Pastor Nathan is UNNERVED. Martin bears down on the holy man...and then forces a few bills into his hand.

He releases his grip. Pastor Nathan rubs his wrist.

PASTOR NATHAN
A generous donation.
(buttoning coat to leave)
Will we be seeing you and Ruby at service?

MARTIN
Probably not.

PASTOR NATHAN
The good word is for all. Even you.

MARTIN

Pearl wanted her last rites. You've done your job, Pastor.

Pastor Nathan glances at Ruby. Can't let it go.

PASTOR NATHAN

Ruby will need guidance now tha-

MARTIN

She'll be fine.

Martin stares Pastor Nathan down. *He's had enough.* But Pastor Nathan has caught the scent of something wicked. Summoning all of his strength, he doesn't look away.

Instead, his trembling hand reaches into his pocket and pulls out a BIBLE. He extends it toward Martin.

PASTOR NATHAN

For Ruby.

Martin stares at the Bible. A LOW GROWL emits from Martin's chest. It's barely audible, but for Pastor Nathan, it's CONFIRMATION OF THE UNHOLY.

The stalemate is broken by Pearl COUGHING spasmodically. Pastor Nathan places the bible on the kitchen table.

PASTOR NATHAN

I must be going.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Pastor Nathan scampers away atop his horse as though chased by the Headless Horseman.

Martin watches his hasty retreat from the doorway. Ruby joins him. Sees Martin's hard face.

RUBY

Why don't you like Pastor Nathan?

MARTIN

He thinks I stole something of his.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - RUBY'S ROOM - LATER

Ruby sleeps in her bed beneath thick blankets, a flickering candle on her nightstand.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S BEDROOM - LATER

Martin sits beside Pearl, a heaviness upon him. Pearl looks at him, beseeching.

MARTIN

Are you sure you want to do this?

She opens her mouth to respond, but only drool comes out.

Martin knows what she wants. He lowers his head...and produces a KNIFE from his pocket.

He SLICES his palm. Blood drips from the wound.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - RUBY'S BEDROOM - LATER

A FIGURE stands in the doorway. As she moves toward the candlelight, we see that it's PEARL, COMPLETELY HEALTHY.

She leans over the sleeping Ruby and kisses her forehead. Ruby groggily awakens.

RUBY

Mama...?

PEARL

This is how I want you to remember me, sweetheart.

Pearl touches the half-asleep Ruby lovingly.

RUBY

You're so cold...

Pearl flashes a bittersweet smile.

PEARL

Don't worry about that. I love you. And I always will. Now go back to sleep.

She may remember this as a dream, but right now Ruby has a smile on her face as Pearl blows out the candle.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - LATER

Pearl stands in the crisp night, taking a deep breath. Her senses are alive.

PEARL

I can smell the honeysuckles down in the valley. I can hear the field mice hearts roaring like a train.

Martin watches her from beneath the brim of his hat.

PEARL
It's like this for you all the time?

Martin nods. The moment bittersweet.

A PANG in Pearl's stomach, and she doubles over. Martin comes to her side, holding her.

Pearl moans at the spreading pain, deeper than hunger. She gazes at Martin. A new understanding of him.

Martin looks to the pigs, but Pearl takes his head in her hands, bringing them face to face.

PEARL
It's His plan I go to Him tonight. I'm already running late.

Martin lowers his head.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - BARN - LATER

Pearl writhes in the hay. Martin gazes down at her.

PEARL
Please...it's starting...

Martin is frozen. Pearl looks up to him. Sees his indecision. Tries to allay his fears.

PEARL
I know you'll take good care of her...

They lock eyes. Even as she convulses, a tenderness.

PEARL
...such beautiful eyes...

Pearl curls in a ball. Martin takes a deep breath...

...and grips the AXE resting at his feet. He's about to raise it, but can't quite bring himself...

AN INHUMAN SHRIEK!

Pearl turns her head to reveal DEEP ORANGE EYES, her SNAPPING MOUTH revealing GROWING FANGS. Her arms and legs wriggle like a newborn's.

Martin lifts the axe. Brings it down on Pearl's neck.

THUNK.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - FIELD - LATER

Martin shovels the last bit of dirt over Pearl's grave.
Plants the shovel into the ground.

At the head of the grave, a simple headstone: PEARL
LOGAN, BELOVED MOTHER

Martin looks over his shoulder...

THE SUN is creeping over the horizon.

TITLE CARD: THE SUN ALWAYS SETS IN THE WEST**INT. DMITRI COYNE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

The end of a silver-plattered dinner for Rock Springs' leaders: E.B. TROTT (60s), the town's portly banker; JACK HASTINGS (50s), a beaten-down sheriff; DAVE MCDONOUGH (40s), the decent general store owner; and PASTOR NATHAN.

At the head of the table is DMITRI COYNE (40s). A rich oil man, waxed mustache, vest and pocket watch. He watches as ABBY, a YOUNG SERVANT, clears the dishes.

DMITRI

Wonderful, just top notch.

(to his company)

Gentleman, I'd like nothing more than to retire to the library for some Kentucky Cheroots, but we have business yet to discuss. Abby, the map?

Abby sets up an easel with a GEOLOGIC MAP of ROCK SPRINGS on it. "Property of Allied Oil" at the top. Tension.

DMITRI

As you know, Allied Oil has enjoyed a complementary relationship with Rock Springs for quite some time. But that time, unfortunately, is ending.

Dmitri turns to the map, marking X's with his pencil.

DMITRI

Our initial drill site here has run dry, and surveys here, here, and here have been fruitless. As a result, Allied Oil will be leaving Rock Springs at the end of the month.

The town council exchanges worried looks.

DMITRI

But I speak for the president of Allied Oil, Mr. William P. Conover himself, in extending our most heartfelt thanks for the years of prosperity we shared.

(beat)

Now, can I tempt anyone with some pie?

MCDONOUGH

So that's it? You squeeze us dry and then just move along to the next town?

DMITRI

We provided fair wages for a fair day's work. We didn't promise eternity.

MCDONOUGH

If you leave, the railroad will stop coming. The town will die, sir.

Pastor Nathan studies the map as E.B. rises.

E.B. TROTT

You sat us down right here and told us that first deposit was just the beginning. Now I got dozens of loans that are gonna default if those people can't keep working.

(to the other members)

If banks go, civilization goes with them.

SHERIFF HASTINGS

And I don't have the resources to control a town of desperate men. As bad as things are now, they're about to get worse.

DMITRI

I understand your concerns, but Allied Oil is not in the habit of losing money. If I can't present them with sound investments, they will fire me and find someone who can.

PASTOR NATHAN

What about there?

Pastor Nathan points at the map. He stands, still pointing, and walks until his pointer finger touches the one area on the map not marked off with X's.

DMITRI

A promising site. Unfortunately, private property owned by a difficult woman.

(MORE)

DMITRI (CONT'D)

Wouldn't even grant us access for survey.
What was her name?

PASTOR NATHAN

Pearl Logan. She's dead now.

DMITRI

Oh? There was man too as I recall.

PASTOR NATHAN

A squatter. He has no claim to that land.

E.B. TROTT

Could there really be oil up there?

DMITRI

According to our scouts, yes. But
frankly, for Allied Oil, it wouldn't be
worth the financial or legal trouble to
contend with hostile squatters.

PASTOR NATHAN

And if he was removed?

McDonough gazes at the group with growing unease.

MCDONOUGH

We're not really considering running a
man off his own land, are we?

Pastor Nathan stares McDonough down.

PASTOR NATHAN

Were you not just lamenting the departure
of our oil brethren? He has no right to
that land. Isn't that right, Sheriff?

SHERIFF HASTINGS

They weren't married. Land goes to the
daughter. But she's just a child. She
don't know what she's owed.

MCDONOUGH

As the sheriff, shouldn't you be telling
her what she's owed?

SHERIFF HASTINGS

That's a lawyer's job, McDonough. And we
ain't got none of them here.

Heavy silence. Dmitri stands, cutting the tension.

DMITRI

It may be prudent for me to excuse myself for the rest of this conversation. Liability concerns and the like. As of now Allied Oil will be leaving at the end of the month, but if there should be any new land developments, do let me know.

Dmitri leaves. The council hunkers. *Brass tax time.*

EXT. DMITRI COYNE'S HOUSE - PORCH - LATER

The council is disembarking toward their horses. McDonough looks over the group with sad eyes.

MCDONOUGH

It's over for Rock Springs if you do this.

E.B. TROTT

It's over for Rock Springs if we don't.

McDonough lowers his head. Mounts his steed. Rides off.

Sheriff Hastings leans toward Pastor Nathan.

SHERIFF HASTINGS

It's gonna have to be outsiders. I can only look the other way so far. I may be able to track some folks down but my wild days are long behind me.

(beat)

I suppose you don't know no body game for this kind of work, do you?

Pastor Nathan smiles wryly.

PASTOR NATHAN

You'd be surprised.

EXT. WEST TEXAS WOODED TRAIL - DAY

A black stagecoach lies tipped on its side. Its horse is down too, pathetically braying, mortally injured.

Trunks of clothes are broken on the ground, revealing tattered garments. Wrapped pieces of cured meat. *Provisions for a long journey.*

TWO DEAD BODIES. A HUSBAND and WIFE (40s).

The husband, blood-soaked pinstriped shirt, three holes in his chest, slumps against the wagon, still clutching a rifle. The wife, wearing a chintzy dress, lies face up, dead eyes covered in blood from her head wound.

A MANGY DOG'S SNOUT noses into the wound. Takes bloody licks. Starts nipping for some flesh.

A WHISTLE in the woods. The dog's head pops up. He trots to the side of his master. A SKINNY, DIRTY MAN with a SACK CLOTH MASK. They hunt through the trees together.

A few yards away, another SACK CLOTH MAN walks quietly, bandolier of ANIMAL PAWS, an S-shaped blade in hand.

BEHIND A ROCK

A TERRIFIED GIRL (17). She dares a peek from behind the rock. Can see the crippled stagecoach.

Yet another SACK CLOTH MAN passes close by and our girl retreats behind the rock. This man has his mask above his mouth to take swigs from a FLASK.

After he passes, our girl assesses. One direction, a free and clear path. All she has to do is run. But she turns back toward the stagecoach. *Why?*

She spies her dead father's rifle. Steels herself...then MAKES A RUN FOR THE GUN.

The world streaks by. She throws herself toward the rifle and RIPS it from her father. She whirls, pointing it...

...but no one's there. She gamely holds the rifle aloft.

A TONGUE CLICK from her blindside and she spins to find a SACK CLOTH MAN in suspenders and a green henley. A LIP POP from behind her and she spins to see a second SACK CLOTH MAN wearing the IDENTICAL OUTFIT.

Both have their hands on their gun holsters. As she whirls back and forth between them, each one appears closer to drawing. She settles on one of them to shoot --

-- but a hand SNATCHES the rifle away. Standing before her is a tall, imposing SACK CLOTH MAN. Brown vest, belt full of ammo, black handkerchief around his neck.

Our girl backs against the stagecoach in fear.

He pulls off his mask to reveal BLUE WADE CARWRIGHT (50s). Handlebar mustache over a craggy moon of a face. *A face that's done some things.* He smiles charmingly.

BLUE WADE

Hello darling. I'm Blue Wade Cartwright.
You ever heard of me?

She nods her head. This pleases him. The rest of the posse remove their sack cloth masks.

BLUE WADE

Then I'm sure you heard of them too.

She takes in an eyeful of this rotten crew.

VIGGO (40s), Norwegian hunter, the one with knives and paws

BONE (30s), mouth lined with tribal tattoos, the skinny one with the dog, GUS.

KYLE and CARSON SCARBOROUGH (20s), identical twins, except Carson's tongue is missing.

HUGH (40s), scraggly beard, a set of six-shooters at his waist, perpetually drunk.

BLUE WADE

Of course you have. But what gets lost in translation is that we're really reasonable guys. I told your daddy not to draw on me, and then he did. I'd say it's pretty reasonable to retaliate, don't you? Now hopefully you can be more reasonable, though I fear obstinate traits tend to run in the family.

GIRL

Please...we don't have anything...

BLUE WADE

Hmm. The way I see it, you could've taken off down that trail and in all the commotion, there's a good chance we would've lost you. But instead, you came back. That makes me think there's something very valuable inside here.

Blue Wade peeks through the window of the stagecoach --

-- and the girl DRAWS A HIDDEN GUN FROM HER BOOT, pressing it against Blue Wade's head. This girl's got fight. She might just --

-- SLICE. Viggo CHOPS the girl's hand off at the wrist with his S blade. Her arm stays up for a moment, body not registering. She gazes in disbelief at her bloody stump.

Blue Wade, face spattered with her blood, smirks.

BLUE WADE

What did I tell you? Those family tree roots be mighty deep.

He throws a glance at the gang. They UNLOAD on her. She falls dead.

EDGARDO (30s), the final member of the gang, jumps onto the toppled stage coach. Shotgun in hand, he wears a dusty Federali uniform. *Either was one or killed one.*

He throws the door open. Stares inside. Motions to Blue Wade, who excitedly hops up. His excitement fades.

Staring up at them is a LITTLE BOY. The girl's brother. Blue Wade sighs.

EDGARDO

It's just a boy.

The posse deflates. They pick through the scattered boxes for anything valuable. Edgardo leers at Blue Wade.

EDGARDO

Third bust in a row.

BLUE WADE

Now hold on here.

Blue Wade reaches down into the stagecoach and produces a child's guitar. He shoves it into Edgardo's hands.

BLUE WADE

There you go. He who has music has all the riches in the world.

Edgardo shakes his head, disrespected, but enjoys plucking a few strings in spite of himself.

Blue Wade turns his attention back to the scared boy. Kneels. Looks at him with compassion.

BLUE WADE

Trust me son, I'm doing you a favor. You don't want to be no orphan out here.

Blue Wade raises his revolver. Takes careful aim. BANG.

EXT. PEARL'S RANCH - FIELD - NIGHT

Under the moonlight, Martin moves swiftly through the corn stalks of Pearl's farm. Undaunted by the dark.

EXT. PEARL'S RANCH - GARDEN - LATER

Martin digs with a trawl, laying seeds into the soil.

EXT. PEARL'S RANCH - FIELD - LATER

Martin gazes out at a field. Next to him, his grey steed Smoke, a plough affixed to its back.

But rather than mount the horse, Martin leans in close to the animal. Whispers words that we can't comprehend.

The horse stiffens...and then trots in a straight line, ploughing the field with no rider.

Incredibly, the horse makes a turn right and returns perfectly parallel to its first line. *Impressive.*

EXT. PEARL'S RANCH - SIDE OF THE HOUSE - LATER

Martin walks to the house after a long night's work. He passes the PIG PEN. The PIGS are GONE.

In the distance, a train whistle BLOWS. The rising sun is turning the night into day.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - DAWN

Martin takes one last look at the brightening sky before he yanks a STURDY WOODEN SHUTTER across a window. Not a ray of the light can make it through.

He fastens two IRON BOLTS, locking it into place.

Martin goes through the house, pulling across wooden covers over every window.

SLAM. SHUNCK. SLAM. SHUNCK. SLAM. SHUNCK.

Complete darkness.

Ffft. A match is struck, revealing Martin's face.

INT. RUBY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Martin places a lantern on Ruby's beside table. Gazes at her. She moans and squirms in her sleep. *Bad dream.*

Martin struggles with whether to wake her or let her sleep. Before he decides, Ruby awakens with a start.

She looks to Martin with groggy eyes.

RUBY

Mama?

The question is a stab in his heart.

MARTIN

No. Not mama.

EXT. CABIN - GROUNDS - MORNING

Blue Wade's gang sit around a fire, cooking up bacon and beans. Empty food cans are strewn all around them. Gus pulls meat off a bone. Looking closer, it's a HUMAN LEG.

KYLE

So I told that whore, "Double? You're the one who's getting the two-fer-one."

He wraps his arm around his TWIN BROTHER for effect. They all laugh, but Carson's come out as strangled wheezes.

Viggo taps Blue Wade. Points to a clearing...

...Pastor Nathan sits astride his horse. Blue Wade lets out an incredulous laugh.

Pastor Nathan trots closer. Viggo begins to draw one of his blades, but Blue Wade puts a hand on his shoulder.

BLUE WADE

Let's hold off on that just a minute. I believe there's some ink in the King James about brothers killing brothers.

Yep. Pastor Nathan and Blue Wade are brothers.

INT. CABIN - LATER

Pastor Nathan sits at a table inside the modest cabin. Blue Wade sits with him, filling tin cups with whiskey.

BLUE WADE

Not too much now. Don't want to unlock our bestial nature too early in the day.

Pastor Nathan's gaze is fixed on the floor behind Blue Wade. Blue Wade notices and turns to look at the DEAD TRAPPER lying on the floor, bullet wound in the head.

BLUE WADE

Previous resident.

He takes a sip of whiskey.

BLUE WADE
So, how'd you find me?

Pastor Nathan stares at the body with sick fascination.

PASTOR NATHAN
You don't exactly hide your tracks.

Blue Wade smirks. *True enough.* Pastor Nathan meets Blue Wade's eyes. Gets down to business.

PASTOR NATHAN
I've got a job for you.

Blue Wade lets out a single, guttural LAUGH.

BLUE WADE
Oh Lordy, I must've done something good
in a past life to have you sitting there
saying that to me. If ma and pop could
see us now. Too bad they're dead, huh?

Blue Wade SPITS. Pastor Nathan pushes on.

PASTOR NATHAN
I've a humble ministry in the town of Rock
Springs, which has fallen upon dire times.

BLUE WADE
Is that right? Is the Lord not providing?
I thought if you just believed, you get a
lifetime supply of bread and tunafishes.

Pastor Nathan glowers at Blue Wade. Starts to stand.

PASTOR NATHAN
Perhaps I've erred in coming here.

BLUE WADE
Come on now, can't you take a little
ribbing from your older brother?

Pastor Nathan considers leaving. Sits back down.

BLUE WADE
There we go. Now, with all due respect,
spare me your sob story and just tell me
who you want killed.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - DAY

A pan lands on a CAST-IRON STOVETOP.

An egg cracks into the pan, sizzling. A few strips of bacon drop beside it.

Martin works the wood-fired stove. He studies HAND-WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS on a piece of paper.

The eggs start to brown, then blacken. He tries to scrape them off the skillet, but breaks the yolk.

MARTIN

Shit.

Ruby waits at the table. Martin puts on a brave face.

MARTIN

Hungry?

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - LATER

In the candlelight, Ruby pokes at her burnt mash of eggs suspiciously. Martin sits across from her at the table, waiting for her reaction.

She cleaves some egg onto her fork. Tastes it. Swallows it. Neither smiles nor frowns.

MARTIN

Still getting the hang of your mama's instructions.

RUBY

I want you to eat with me. Mama ate with me.

MARTIN

You know I don't have no appetite until I do my work. And that ain't until you're long asleep.

Ruby nods, disappointed. Swallows another bite.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - LATER

Martin plunges dishes into a bucket of hot water.

Ruby sits at the table and reads J.M. BARRIE'S PETER PAN.

RUBY

"Nee...neever..."

MARTIN

Never.

RUBY

"Never say goodbye. Because goodbye means go...go...going away. And going away means forg...forg..."

MARTIN

Forgetting.

RUBY

"Forgetting."

MARTIN

That's real good, Ruby.

Ruby looks at the words, then up at Martin.

RUBY

I don't want to forget mama.

MARTIN

You won't. She's right there inside you.

RUBY

I won't say goodbye to mama. And I won't say goodbye to you.

Martin is amused at her childish calculations. Self-satisfied, Ruby goes back to her work.

EXT. CABIN - GROUNDS - DAY

Blue Wade walks Pastor Nathan back toward his horse, the rest of the crew watching and wondering.

PASTOR NATHAN

You're free to do as you wish to the man. But the girl must not be hurt.

BLUE WADE

I think killing her daddy's gonna hurt her plenty.

PASTOR NATHAN

She'll be provided for.

Blue Wade studies his brother. Picks up vibes.

BLUE WADE

Like I was provided for?

PASTOR NATHAN

They took you in out of grace.

BLUE WADE

Oh sure they did. Why else would they fix to raise a dirty devil like me? And their grace was rewarded when you came plopping outta ma's ring-dang-doo. Let me tell you, they never let me forget what a miracle you were, the honest to God flesh of their flesh.

Pastor Nathan meets Blue Wade's bitter gaze.

PASTOR NATHAN

Do you accept the job or not?

Blue Wade takes a glance at his dusty crew.

BLUE WADE

Sure. For \$5,000.

Pastor Nathan is taken aback by the cost.

BLUE WADE

I got a lot of mouths to feed. That won't be a problem, will it?

Pastor Nathan recovers, gives a pious smile.

PASTOR NATHAN

The Lord will provide.

Pastor Nathan mounts his horse as Blue Wade chuckles.

BLUE WADE

There's a first time for everything.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - LATER

Martin and Ruby lean over a map of North America.

MARTIN

There are 46 states now, but which ones were the first?

Ruby rolls her eyes. Points to the eastern seaboard.

RUBY

The 13 ones all knotted up over there. Let's talk about what's up north again.

She traces from West Texas up to the Yukon territory.

RUBY

The Yukon. We're still going, right? Like you and mama said we would?

Martin tries to hide his sigh. Lets himself lie.

MARTIN
After the next harvest.

RUBY
And the sun hardly ever shines there?

MARTIN
One of the darkest places on Earth.

Ruby stares at the spot in wonder.

RUBY
And there's hardly anyone there, so you
can do whatever you want. And how do we
get there?

Martin smiles, indulging the child in spite of himself.

MARTIN
You know that train that rolls in once a
day? It takes you way up north, and from
there, it's just a boat ride or two to
the Yukon.

Ruby beams at the possibility.

KNOCK KNOCK.

RUBY
It's Chen!

MARTIN
We always check first.

Ruby nods as she carries a foot stool to the front door.

She stands atop it and slides the eye slat open to see

CHEN (30s), a Chinese woman, black hair held up by a
long, metal hair pin, plain and practical grey dress. Her
bright smile cuts through years of hard frontier life.

CHEN
Hello Ruby.

RUBY
Hi Chen. Just a moment.

IN THE HOUSE

Ruby closes the slat as Martin retreats into the HALL.

Ruby looks to Martin for confirmation. He nods.

Ruby pulls open the door.

DAYLIGHT stretches into the dark room, momentarily blinding Ruby.

The long ray of light stops short of Martin's boots. *He's practiced this position.*

Chen walks in, holding a bag of provisions. Ruby closes and bolts the door behind her.

Ruby hugs Chen as Chen gives Martin a nod.

The young girl pulls Chen over to the map on the table.

RUBY

Where were you born, Chen?

Chen smiles to Ruby.

CHEN

Where I was born is not on this map.

Martin takes the bag from Chen. Pulls out a few hunks of meat wrapped in wax paper. Bags of seed and grain. She registers his disappointment.

CHEN

I know this wasn't everything on the list. Shipments have slowed since the oil dried up. Not worth the cost of delivery.

MARTIN

We'll make do.

Martin talks while putting the items away.

MARTIN

There were some hornworms in the tomato beds we best keep an eye on. And the corn stalks are just about ready t-

CHEN

Martin. I know. Get some rest.

He nods wearily.

EXT. PEARL'S RANCH - TOMATO BEDS - SAME

Chen and Ruby pick away at the hornworms nibbling on the tomatoes, depositing the pests in a bucket. The hot Texas sun beats down on them.

RUBY
I'm going to go feed Smoke, okay?

Chen nods, wiping her brow. Ruby heads toward the house. Pace quickening as she goes.

Chen casts a glance at Ruby, a knowing smile on her lips.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Martin sleeps in the bed, just like a normal person. A floorboard jiggles. Creaks. Then pops up...

Ruby squeezes her way through it. She is placing the plank back down when -- MEOW -- from under the house.

RUBY
Quiet, Rascal.

Ruby reaches into the hole and pulls out a fat tabby, giving it a few quick strokes.

She pushes the trick floorboard into place.

Ruby looks at Martin, who twitches, having a troubled dream. She climbs onto the bed, curling into his legs. Martin's bad dream persists...

EXT. ALLEY - FLASHBACK

DRIVING RAIN.

A TOUGH BUT SCARED WOMAN (30s) against the wall of the darkened alley, hand on her PIG-TAILED DAUGHTER (12). The WOMAN and GIRL from the PHOTO in Martin's tin.

SCREAMS and GUNSHOTS. The woman peeks around the corner. Whatever she sees makes her knees buckle.

On their blindside, a SHADOWY FIGURE snakes along the wall. A PALE, TALONED HAND reaches toward the girl...

...FWOOSH! A Molotov cocktail erupts against the creature's skull. We see fangs, orange eyes, but then just flame. It SCREAMS, skittering off past...

...MARTIN, human, skin alive. He holds a torch. The woman and girl embrace him. HIS FAMILY. A SHRIEK down the alley gets them moving through the

MUDDY TOWN SQUARE. Martin's torch lights horrific images. Union soldiers torn apart, hands clutching muskets. Women and children, split like sides of beef.

The family turns a corner -- two silhouettes. They turn back -- three figures approach. Surrounded.

Martin waves his torch. This elicits a ripple of hissed snickering from the pack. His torch dies in the rain.

WHAM! A BLOW to Martin's head, several more to his body. He's down. His WIFE and DAUGHTER are dragged to the pack.

Martin is held to the ground, but a pair of pale hands turns his head, forcing him to watch as the creatures feast on his family. Flesh torn from bone.

He lets out an ANGUISHED CRY. This pleases the vampires. One of them drags a nail against its skin, opening a wound. It forces the blood into Martin's mouth...

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S ROOM - SAME

Martin wakes with a start from the nightmare, FANGS OUT. Feels his extended fangs in his mouth with his tongue as he struggles to calm himself.

A movement from the corner pulls his attention -- Rascal struts by. Martin smirks.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - LATER

Pearl's chamber door opens and Martin emerges, fully dressed. Rascal skitters away.

Chen and Ruby sit with books at the table. Martin takes a moment, gazing at the two of them warmly.

Chen looks up at Martin. Sees the pallid skin. The dark eyes. *He's not well.*

MARTIN

Chen, a word.

He motions toward the corner of the room away from Ruby. Chen stands, straightening her dress. Approaches him.

CHEN

(in Chinese)

You don't look well. Have you been eating?

Martin looks down.

CHEN

(in Chinese)

What happened to the pigs?

He responds, surprisingly, in her native tongue.

MARTIN
(in Chinese)
I let them loose.

Chen eyes him warily.

MARTIN
(in Chinese)
I made a decision. Pearl's gone now, and
I can already feel the bad part of me
trying to get out again. I won't let it.
I won't drink another drop. My curse dies
with her.

CHEN
(in Chinese)
What about Ruby?

Martin looks to Ruby, who continues reading, oblivious.

MARTIN
(in Chinese)
There's money in the tin, enough to get
both of you out west. California. It's
beautiful. Ruby will love the ocean. And
so will you. We both know this town isn't
kind to outsiders. You can start a better
life out there, too.

CHEN
(in Chinese)
I have no love for this place. But Ruby
just lost her mother, and now you want to
leave her too. You promised her the
Yukon. You could still keep that promise.

MARTIN
(in Chinese)
Ruby deserves the sun. I won't have her
live in darkness for my sake.

Chen takes this in.

MARTIN
(in Chinese)
Please, just think about it.

Suddenly, Ruby tugs on Martin's shirt.

RUBY
It's time!

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

SHUNCK -- Martin unlatches the wooden shutter. Slides it open, revealing the dark night, the moon in the sky.

SHUNCK -- Chen opens another window.

SHUNCK -- Ruby attends to the last one on her footstool.

Finally, Martin unlocks the front door. Pushes it open.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT

Martin steps into the night air, taking a deep breath.

Stretches. Free.

Ruby RACES out of the house, slapping Martin's thigh.

RUBY

You're it! Come get me!

Martin smiles. He chases after her.

MARTIN

Come back here you little skunk.

Chen watches Martin and Ruby play in the night. They tumble to the ground, laughing as he tickles her.

They are a carefree family, if only for a moment.

INT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - DAY

The pews are packed for Sunday service, waiting for Pastor Nathan's entrance. McDonough is there, on edge. E.B. Trott sits next to Sheriff Hastings.

E.B. TROTT

(whispering)

\$5,000? Where the hell does he think he can come up with that kind of money?

Sheriff Hastings shrugs. *He doesn't care about much.*

Pastor Nathan solemnly enters from a side door. He ambles to the lectern, taking his time. Finally...

PASTOR NATHAN

We all want the blessings of the Lord, don't we? I know I do. But what have you sacrificed for the Lord to receive those blessings? I can plainly see you sacrificed your time.

(MORE)

PASTOR NATHAN (CONT'D)

You're all sitting here. Sacrificed some comfort too; these pews are regrettably unforgiving. But is that the best you can do? Anyone here recently pluck out an eye because it led them to sin? Didn't think so.

Pastor Nathan produces a THIN BLADE. Directs the tip toward his open palm.

PASTOR NATHAN

Most sacrifices only go skin deep.

He pushes the tip against his skin.

PASTOR NATHAN

We stop before we draw blood.

He increases the pressure and the blade pierces the skin.

PASTOR NATHAN

But Jesus didn't stop there, did he?

The congregation buzzes with "No" and "He didn't", their perverse excitement growing.

PASTOR NATHAN

He didn't. He gave us His blood. He gave us His life. If we want His blessings, we put our skin in the game, don't we?

Blood runs down his palm as he digs deeper. The crowd shouts their "amens" at the sight of his blood.

PASTOR NATHAN

(to the heavens)

This is for you, Jesus. This is for all the ways I've failed you. All the ways I'm a miserable, irredeemable sinner.

Pastor Nathan works the blade, the crowd HOOTING in approval. He wraps his palm with a cloth bandage.

PASTOR NATHAN

Now when the collection plate comes around today, I want you to give until it hurts. I want you to give because it hurts. Through that pain, I want you to show Jesus how serious you are about wanting, about needing his blessings. You say you want to bring prosperity back to this town. Well Jesus says, "How bad do you want it?"

The crowd is primed to give when McDonough stands up.

MCDONOUGH

Why don't you tell these people what you're gonna use that money for, Pastor? How you're gonna hire some outlaws to go to the Logan ranch and chase an innocent man off his homestead.

This shocks everyone quiet. The pastor deftly redirects.

PASTOR NATHAN

An "innocent" man? You might want to take this blade to your tongue if it's calling a man like that "innocent." A stranger, an outsider, who enjoys the fruits of this town while only stalking the streets at night, never speaking to a soul, never setting foot inside these hallowed walls. A stranger who arrived in this town upon an ill wind that has dried the oil fields, soured the water, and crumbled the soil. Ask yourself -- is your life better or worse since that "innocent" man has come to town?

The crowd bubbles with dissent. A few "no's" shouted.

PASTOR NATHAN

I've been to the Logan Ranch myself. What I felt in that man wasn't right. It wasn't holy. How can we expect God's bounty when we let the snake slither in the garden unbidden?

MCDONOUGH

This is madness. We won't get back what we've lost by turning on each other. If the oil's dried, so be it, we need to adapt. We need to forge relationships with other towns. Create supply lines, infrastructure. I heard they even got electricity out in Grove City.

The congregation LAUGHS at the mention of "electricity."

PASTOR NATHAN

I trust electricity as a superior method for killing elephants, Mr. McDonough, but little else.

MCDONOUGH

(one last appeal)

Sheriff? You know this ain't legal.

The congregation waits on his response.

SHERIFF HASTINGS

Far as I'm concerned, with Pearl dead,
that man's squatting.

Pastor Nathan raises the collection basket.

PASTOR NATHAN

If you don't trust in me, then by all
means, let this basket pass you by. But
if you feel your heart beating faster at
my words, know that that is not my doing,
it is the Lord's. And whatever choice you
make is between you and Him.

With that, Pastor Nathan hands the basket to PAT (30s), a
spindly, destitute townie in the front pew, and TURNS
AWAY so that he can't see what Pat does.

Everyone else, including McDonough, waits for him to act.

Finally, he pulls the last crumpled dollars from his
pocket and puts them in the basket. He passes the basket,
and the next congregant drops money in as well.

MCDONOUGH

God help you all.

Still facing away, Pastor Nathan hears this and smiles.
McDonough storms out of the church. Sheriff Hastings and
E.B. Trott exchange an impressed glance -- *Nathan's good.*

EXT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The doors open and giddy parishioners flock out. But then
a few stop in their tracks. The signal spreads until
everyone from the church is still, staring at...

...BLUE WADE and his posse. Astride their horses,
fearsome as fuck.

Pastor Nathan emerges from the crowd, clutching the money
basket. He is unnerved. Blue Wade shifts him a grin.

Two weaselly townies, CLAYTON and ERIN ROSE (30s),
whisper to each other

ERIN ROSE

That's Blue Wade Cartwright.

CLAYTON

Well he's muscle and then some.

Pastor Nathan approaches Blue Wade.

BLUE WADE

Didn't think I'd get started without a
downpayment, did you?

Pastor Nathan shoots a nervous glance to the watching
crowd, speaking low.

PASTOR NATHAN

No. But I did expect you to be a bit more
discreet.

BLUE WADE

Discreet? Now what's the point in that
when the Lord sees all, right?

Pastor Nathan flashes a tight-lipped smile. He reaches
into the basket, but Blue Wade shakes his head, and
Pastor Nathan hands over the whole thing.

PASTOR NATHAN

The girl is not to be harmed.

BLUE WADE

I heard you the first time. What're you,
sweet on her?

Blue Wade was joking but he can see that he's struck a
nerve in his brother. Notes it with an "ahh" to himself.

He turns to head out, but Pastor Nathan suddenly shoves a
cross into Blue Wade's satchel. Blue Wade looks at it
incredulously. Pastor Nathan pins him with his eyes.

PASTOR NATHAN

If guns fail.

Blue Wade laughs.

BLUE WADE

If guns fail, I'll find bigger guns.

EXT. PEARL'S FARM - GARDEN - NIGHT

Martin is once again following his nightly farming
routine. Digging fresh holes in the earth for seeds.

Across the farm, a hundred yards away, he sees A FIGURE
sitting at his porch.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - NIGHT

Martin approaches the porch. Coming into view is VIGGO.

He lazily twirls a jagged knife between his fingers.

MARTIN

Can I help you, friend?

Viggo doesn't even bother to look Martin's way.

VIGGO

This is the home of Pearl Logan?

MARTIN

Was. If you're from the oil company, we ain't interested.

Viggo rolls his head to face Martin. His eyes narrow with interest upon getting a good look at the farmer.

VIGGO

So you must be Martin.

Martin nods. They're only ten feet away now. Martin at the edge of the porch.

VIGGO

And the girl. She's inside?

Martin stares Viggo down.

MARTIN

Pastor Nathan sent you?

Viggo doesn't answer. Doesn't have to. Martin shifts his gaze to the inky black horizon. Sees something we can't.

MARTIN

Who you riding with?

VIGGO

Blue Wade Cartwright.

Martin grunts. Knows the name, but won't be intimidated.

VIGGO

Don't worry. The pastor will care for the girl. He is a man of God.

Martin bristles. Men of God don't sit well with him.

MARTIN

He won't lay a hand on her. No one will.

Viggo carves chunks from the porch's wood beams.

VIGGO

I'm here for her sake, not for yours.
Your fate is already sealed. But you can
still spare her having to watch you die.
Make the right choice. The fatherly
choice.

MARTIN

We'll be gone soon. This isn't a fight
you have to pick.

VIGGO

That is not up to me.

The front door opens. Ruby stands sleepily at the door.

RUBY

I had a bad dream...

She freezes at the sight of Viggo.

Martin and Viggo lock eyes in a tense glare.

Martin's eyes dilate, just a bit. Defensive. Like an
animal in the night.

Viggo subtly holsters his knife. Holding his hands up in
peace as he stands. Backs away.

Martin stares Viggo down as he climbs atop his horse.

Viggo starts to ride out, but steals one last glance back
at Martin. Troubled by what he sees.

He disappears over the hill.

Martin watches him go as the horizon turns from the dark
black of night to the deep blue of early morning.

Ruby sidles up to him.

RUBY

Who was that?

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - LATER

Martin hastily packs clothes as Ruby watches, confused.

He looks to her with a forced smile.

MARTIN

How'd you like to go to the Yukon right
now? Leave today?

Martin grabs his TIN. *All he's got.* Into his sack.

RUBY

That's too far. We can't just go.

MARTIN

We have to. I'll explain later. It's best you pack what's important to you.

RUBY

What are you talking about? The sun will be coming up soon. You'll get sick.

MARTIN

We can make the train before sunrise. Get ourselves a nice sleeping car.

Ruby bursts into tears.

RUBY

I didn't even say goodbye to mama!

Martin stops packing and moves to her side. Holds her.

But his eyes fall on the horizon. The impending dawn.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - EARLY DAWN

Martin strides out of the house with his bag, Ruby stumbling behind him, trying to keep up.

INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Martin and Ruby stop dead in their tracks.

A bloody mess lies before them.

SMOKE -- disemboweled.

Ruby screams. Martin buries her head into his side, shielding her from brutalized horse.

He turns to the horizon. Daylight encroaching.

MARTIN

We'll get the train tomorrow.

EXT. WATERING HOLE - EARLY DAWN

Under the breaking morning light, Viggo rides up to the gang. Hugh, the Scarborough twins and Edgardo are washing up. Gus and Bone lap at the water.

Viggo dismounts. Blue Wade is cleaning up, shirt off. His back is SEVERELY SCARRED. A landscape of deep lashings. He sees Viggo approach and pulls on his shirt.

VIGGO

He lives alone with the girl. A lot of property though. They might have help.

BLUE WADE

And the man? How he seem?

Viggo moves closer to Blue Wade, speaking reverently.

VIGGO

When I was boy in Norway, I saw a lynx eating an elk. It made no sense. There should be no lynx in Norway. But there he was in the night. A phantom cat. With no rival, he was the apex predator. It was beautiful. That frightening power. I wanted to challenge it. To be it.

(beat)

In that man's eyes, I saw the phantom cat.

Blue Wade stares at Viggo for an intense moment. Then --

BLUE WADE

A phantom fucking cat?

(laughing)

Gee God damn it, maybe this'll be fun after all.

(to the posse)

Mount up!

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - DAWN

Martin frantically slides a window shutter shut against the rising sun. Bolts it. SLAM. SHUNCK.

Ruby doesn't join though. Just watches him, overwhelmed.

RUBY

What's happening? Why are you scared?

Martin SLAM-SHUNCKS the next window. Stops, catching his breath for a moment. He kneels next to her.

MARTIN

Some bad men want to take you away. I know it doesn't make sense to you right now. But I do know that your mama would not want you to go with those men.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

So I need you to trust me and do exactly
as I say. Do you think you can do that
for me?

She nods her head. Hugs him around the neck. Martin nods,
rubbing her back.

MARTIN

All right then.

Martin rises. Moves to the final window. SLAM. SHUNCK.

Through the door, he hears the train whistle BLOW as it
leaves. Their last chance at salvation, gone.

Martin peers through the door slat...

On the horizon, under the rising sun...

BLUE WADE and his GANG ride toward the house.

Trouble.

SUNRISE

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MORNING - SUNRISE

The sun sits on the horizon, streaming directly toward the front of the house.

The posse appraises the homestead. Hugh peers at the shuttered house.

HUGH

Looks boarded up for a hurricane.

BLUE WADE

(to Viggo)

Think they ran?

VIGGO

Not on horseback. I saw to that.

Kyle scans the grounds. Eyes the nearby BARN. The outhouse around back.

KYLE

No tracks. No cover except for the shitter and the barn, but both are flimsy as teepees. Nah, they're holed up in here all right.

Blue Wade motions for Hugh and Bone.

BLUE WADE

Make sure they don't run out back.

Bone whistles to Gus, but the dog stops dead in its tracks once it draws near the cabin.

BONE

Come on, Gus.

Gus isn't whimpering or barking. Just standing stock still. Bone looks to Blue Wade, concerned. Off Blue Wade's face, Bone keeps going around back.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S BEDROOM - SAME

Ruby makes her way to a cabinet. Opens it.

Produces Pearl's SHOTGUN.

Martin is upon her in a flash, SNATCHING the gun.

MARTIN

What do you think you're doing?

RUBY

Mama said if any bad men ever came, I
should use this to defend myself.

MARTIN

This is between me and them.

He shoves the gun back in the cabinet. Slams the door.

MARTIN

I've done enough killing for both of us.

RUBY

What if they get you? What should I do?

Martin doesn't have an answer.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SAME

Blue Wade dismounts.

Approaches the

PORCH

Climbs to the door. Gives it a rap.

No answer.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

On the other side of the door, Martin stands tense. Ruby
a few paces behind him.

BLUE WADE (O.S.)

Hello in there. I'm here to speak to the
man of the house. Mr. Martin Talbot.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

Blue Wade speaks with his face very close to the door.
Not afraid of what's inside.

BLUE WADE

Now, I know you're in there. I just want
to talk, that's all. I'm Blue Wade
Cartwright. And the rumors are true. I'm
a son of a bitch.

The eye slat SLIDES open. Martin's angry eyes fill it.

MARTIN

Go away.

Blue Wade looks into Martin's eyes. Amused and excited by what he sees in them.

But then, Blue Wade's gaze softens as he sees behind Martin -- Ruby.

BLUE WADE
Well isn't she precious.

MARTIN
Go away. Now. You don't want to come in here.

Blue Wade cracks a smile.

BLUE WADE
Trust me. You don't want me in there.

They stare at each other. Neither will budge.

Finally, Blue Wade spins on his heels.

BLUE WADE
Fine. Have it your way.

Blue Wade saunters off the porch. Signals to the Scarborough Twins.

BLUE WADE
Bring me that young lady in there, won't you? Go ahead and kill him while you're at it.

The twins approach. Kyle grabs Martin's bloody axe, embedded in a block of wood nearby. He yanks it out. Carson draws his six-shooter.

They stride up the porch, ready for a collision course with the door.

Kyle rears back the axe...

...and the door creaks open, just a bit.

Kyle lowers his axe. Looks to his brother quizzically.

They turn to Blue Wade. He waves for them to continue.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

The twins push the door open, spilling sunlight into the center of the room.

They stand in the doorway.

Just outside of the beam of light -- Martin. Ruby cowering behind him.

He raises his hands.

MARTIN

I am an unarmed man.

Carson raises his pistol to Martin.

KYLE

Well, that's your own damn fault.
Shoot'em Carson.

Carson smiles with murderous delight.

Unbeknownst to Carson, by raising his gun, his arm has broken the plane from light to shadow.

His finger starts to squeeze the trigger --

-- IN A BLUR, Martin GRABS his hand and CRUSHES.

BANG! The shot fires harmlessly into the floorboard.

Carson SCREAMS in agony, clutching his mangled hand.

KYLE

Carson!

Kyle lunges toward Martin with the axe, but Martin deftly avoids the swinging blade.

However, the force takes the axe right toward Ruby...

WHOMP. The axe CHOPS...

...into the wall just above her head.

Ruby SHRIEKS.

Martin turns toward KYLE, furious,

FANGS OUT.

An animal reacting to its little one being threatened.

Martin SLAMS Kyle against the wall. Mercilessly SMASHES his fist into Kyle's face.

Over and over. Blood splattering.

Carson watches this in horror. He stumbles past his twitching brother, running for his life.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

Carson scampers down the steps of the porch, practically crawling to the posse in the

FRONT OF THE HOUSE.

The gang approaches him with guns drawn.

BLUE WADE

What the hell happened in there?

Carson shakes, speckled in his brother's blood.

From the doorway of the house, Kyle stumbles out.

His face is a completely wrecked.

His comrades look at him in horror.

Kyle's legs can't carry him past the porch. He falls --

-- the axe is EMBEDDED IN HIS BACK.

With that, the cabin door SLAMS SHUT as we

SLAM TO BLACK**EXT. HARBOR TOWN - MAIN STREET - NIGHT - FLASHBACK**

A gentle snow falls upon a knot of WELL-TO-DO TOWNSFOLK. They stand around the town's FIRST ELECTRIC STREET LAMP. A steamliner blows its horn in the nearby port.

The lamp LIGHTS UP, along with A DOZEN OTHER LAMPS lining the street. The crowd "oohs" and "ahhs". A CURIOUS TEENAGER moves closer to the wondrous light source.

Then the lamps FLICKER OUT. Disappointed groans. A MAN in a TOP HAT fiddles with some wires in the lamp.

BWANG. The lights come back on. But now, standing amongst the crowd...SIX DARK-COATED VAMPIRES.

In a flash, it's a MASSACRE. The vampires BITE and SLASH. Blood in the snow. Splattering on the lamp's bulb.

The CURIOUS TEENAGER makes a run for it, but is cut off by...MARTIN. More animal than man. Stares the kid down with pitiless orange eyes. He STRIKES.

The TEENAGER hits the ground as Martin tears chunks from his neck. TWO OTHER VAMPIRES join, smiling in orgasmic delight as they jockey for position at the buffet.

Martin feasts, lost in his hunger...

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - PRESENT - DAY

Martin huffs, amped up. Fangs in full view. *Feels good.*

Blood is spattered on the floor, the walls. He stares at the dripping blood, entranced. Salivating.

But then, snapping out of it, his eyes scan the room. Panic seizes him.

MARTIN

Ruby?

She's nowhere to be seen.

He sniffs the air.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ruby is curled up beneath her mother's bed, eyes tightly shut. She hears approaching FOOTSTEPS and scrunches further.

Martin's boots come into view.

He crouches and peeks beneath the bed -- his fangs receded, his eyes their normal hue.

MARTIN

Ruby, you scared me. Don't disappear on me like that, you hear?

She doesn't respond.

MARTIN

Don't be scared. Those men can't hurt you. Come out from under there.

He reaches for her. She recoils.

Martin lowers his eyes. His fears realized.

It's him she's scared of.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - FRONT OF HOUSE - SAME

Carson sits on the ground in a daze while Viggo examines his hand. Other members of the posse have gathered around him out of concern and confusion. Gus barks.

Edgardo drags Kyle's body toward the group.

Under inspection, Viggo sees Carson's hand is crushed into a pulp. No bones to set -- just a mass of fractures.

Viggo gazes into Carson's eyes.

VIGGO

He did this to you?

Carson stares off, still in shock. Viggo and Blue Wade exchange concerned glances.

HUGH

God damn it, just say something!

EDGARDO

Tu idiota, he got no tongue.

Blue Wade places a calming arm on Carson's shoulder.

BLUE WADE

Hey buddy. Tell us what you saw in there so we know who we're dealing with, okay?

Blue Wade pulls out a scrap of paper and a pencil. Places it in Carson's lap. Carson doesn't move. Blue Wade sighs.

Viggo stands up, leaning into Blue Wade.

VIGGO

I have never seen an injury like that.
Bone ground to powder. No blunt force.
Did not even break the skin.

Edgardo flops Kyle's body before Viggo and Blue Wade.

EDGARDO

You're gonna want to see this.

He yanks out the axe from Kyle's back. Rolls him over.

Kyle's face is CAVED IN. Smashed beyond recognition.

Even these hardened outlaws can't help but grimace.

The sound of pencil SCRATCHING paper.

Blue Wade turns to Carson, who is suddenly animated. Writes with a trembling hand.

The pencil falls to the ground.

Carson holds the piece of paper aloft.

Blue Wade snatches it from him. Edgardo crowds to look.

They both read.

Edgardo recoils, a muttered Spanish prayer on his lips.

Blue Wade stares. A twist of concern crosses his face.

We see the single scrawled word on the paper:

DEVIL

BLUE WADE

(sotto)

Brother, what have you gotten me into...

Blue Wade CRUMPLES the paper in his hand.

INT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - BACK ROOM - DAY

Pastor Nathan sits at a small desk, smiling at a PRUNED WOMAN (80s) seated across from him. She opens a leather bag. Removes two stacks of bills, neatly bound.

She admires Pastor Nathan as she hands the stacks over.

OLD WOMAN

This is all I have. I wish it was more.

PASTOR NATHAN

It's easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, my dear, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

He puts his hand tenderly on hers. She smiles.

OLD WOMAN

They'll kill that son of a bitch up there, won't they?

PASTOR NATHAN

It is God's will, I assure you.

She smiles.

OLD WOMAN

Good.

She struggles to stand. Pastor Nathan moves to her side, helping her to her feet.

As he walks her to the door, we see that a LINE OF TOWNSPEOPLE in the church waiting to enter back room, each holding what MONEY they could scrape together.

Cutting ahead of them, holding a bag of laundry -- CHEN.
Pastor Nathan is annoyed, as she enters.

PASTOR NATHAN

Just put the robes on the table. I'll
tend to them later.

She does. Then pauses.

CHEN

A word, Pastor?

Pastor Nathan glares at her.

PASTOR NATHAN

Yes?

CHEN

It's about Martin.

Pastor Nathan sighs. He takes his seat back at his desk.

Chen remains standing, nervous.

CHEN

You're wrong about him.

PASTOR NATHAN

I'm simply seeing with the Lord's eyes.

CHEN

You're going to bring hellfire down upon
us, one way or the other.

The holy man smirks, unimpressed.

CHEN

Leave this alone, please. Martin and I
have an arrangement. He'll be gone soon.
And I'll take Ruby away from here.

Pastor Nathan's eyes widen.

PASTOR NATHAN

You'll do no such thing. Ruby is native
to this land. Unlike some. She must be
shielded from corrupting influences.

Pastor Nathan puts the cash into a satchel in the CLOSET.
He's surprised that she's still there when he looks back.

CHEN

The one good thing about being a foreigner in this land is that when you are not being harassed, you are not noticed at all.

Pastor Nathan tilts his head, growing concerned.

CHEN

I was there the night you asked Pearl to marry you. I came in the back to deliver your clothes.

PASTOR NATHAN

That is a matter that does not concern you. There was no impropriety.

CHEN

You will not heal the wound the mother gave you by taking the child.

Pastor Nathan's eyes bulge in anger. He appears ready to strike her...but he composes himself.

PASTOR NATHAN

"Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked."

Chen stares at Pastor Nathan. There's no reaching him.

PASTOR NATHAN

Leave. Before the Lord turns his eye toward you.

Chen turns around. As she walks, she calls over her shoulder.

CHEN

I couldn't get all the blood out of your robes this time.

Pastor Nathan stiffens. Shoots a nervous glance to his cracked open closet.

Inside, almost out of view, hangs a FLOGGER. Metal barbs inserted at the tips. Dried blood on the leather.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - DAY

The sun is higher in the sky, hitting both the front and side of the house now.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S BEDROOM - SAME

Martin sits on the floor, back against the wall. Ruby still hides under the bed.

MARTIN

I never wanted you to see that side of me.

Silence. Then --

RUBY

Who are you?

Martin sighs. *Where to begin.*

MARTIN

I'm Martin. I love you.

(beat)

You remember how Peter Pan just stayed the same age and lived a different kind of life. He didn't always do nice things.

RUBY

Peter Pan's just a story.

MARTIN

Some stories are true.

A long moment...then...

Scuffling under the bed. Ruby crawls out.

Settles a few feet from him.

Martin looks at her, appreciative.

They sit in silence.

RUBY

Can you fly?

Martin smirks.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - FRONT OF HOUSE - LATER

Edgardo watches Hugh down swig after swig of whiskey.

EDGARDO

You want to slow down, cabron? We got a bit of a situation, if you didn't notice.

HUGH

You know I shoot best when I'm drunk.
Whiskey calms my nerves.

EDGARDO

That's just some bullshit a drunk says.

IN A FLASH, Hugh pulls out his six-shooter and BULLSEYES
a passing crow. Edgardo shrugs. *Okay, keep drinking.*

Meanwhile, Blue Wade and Viggo stare at the cabin.

BLUE WADE

Who would shut himself so tight from the
world like that?

Viggo gazes at Martin's structure. The BOARDED WINDOWS.

VIGGO

Birds build nests in trees to spare them
the tooth and claw of the land dweller.

Blue Wade smiles.

BLUE WADE

Well if he wants those windows shut, then
we want'em open.

Blue Wade whistles to his posse. They fall in line...

...except Bone, who kneels next to Gus. The canine emits
a low growl, still not crossing some invisible threshold
near the cabin.

BONE

Gus wants to leave.

Blue Wade joins them, petting Gus.

BLUE WADE

Well sure, what happened is liable to put
a fright in any animal. But I've gotten
you out of worse scrapes, haven't I?

Bone strokes the lines of the tattoos on his face.

BLUE WADE

And we repaid those injuns what marked up
your face, didn't we? So what say we do
the same to the man that just killed our
friend?

Bone looks to his furry companion. Then to Blue Wade. *Who
does he trust more?* He nods to Blue Wade. Joins him.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Martin and Ruby sit astride each other now. Ruby almost recovered from the shock --

-- BANG.

They both snap to attention. The sound coming from the main room.

Martin turns to Ruby.

MARTIN

Stay here.

Martin moves to the

MAIN ROOM

BANG BANG BANG.

Sees the covering to the SIDE window RATTLING as it is STRUCK by...

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

...the butt of Edgardo's shotgun. He strikes the heavy wood over and over again.

Nothing but a few scratches.

He turns to the crew, shrugging.

HUGH

Outta the way, Mexican.

Hugh pulls out his six shooter. BANG! BANG!

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin ducks as two bullets pierce the window covering.

The two bullet holes now stream FOCUSED BEAMS OF LIGHT across the room.

Ruby wide-eye stares at Martin.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Blue Wade yanks Hugh's arm down, lowering his weapon.

BLUE WADE

Whoa, whoa, you're gonna shoot the child, you maniac! She's our meal ticket.

Hugh throws up his arms.

HUGH
Well then I don't know.

Bone marches over to the bloodied, discarded axe.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin motions for Ruby to retreat, but she runs to Martin's side.

RUBY
The sun'll-

MARTIN
I know.

SHUNCK.

From the side window again. Martin and Ruby look to it, growing dread.

SHUNCK. SHUNCK.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Bone CHOPS away at the window's covering.

Chunks of wood spray. Deep gashes. Making progress.

BLUE WADE
Now we're getting somewhere!

Viggo takes out two small HATCHETS from his belt. Rounds the corner to the

PORCH

And approaches the FRONT WINDOW. SHINK SHINK SHINK.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin watches the front window barricade shake and crack. Unsure what to do other than hold Ruby close.

SHUNCK.

The axe splits through the wood of the side barricade.

A sliver of light slices across the room --

-- right across MARTIN'S ARM.

He GRUNTS in pain as the arm BOILS and BLISTERS. He scampers out of the way.

Martin holds his injured arm, smoke rising from it.

RUBY

Stop it! You're hurting him!

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Bone receives the sad plea with delight.

BONE

Hear that, Gus? Fresh meat!

Gus BARKS excitedly. Bone chops faster.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin watches as a wider beam of light pours through the expanding hole.

From the front window, Viggo's hatchets make headway, scraping open a small opening.

Martin scans the room in a growing panic. Sunlight criss-crossing it like razor wire.

Suddenly, he does the last thing we'd expect -- he scurries across the room, dodging the beams, and sidles up beside Bone's window. The one with the largest hole.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Bone chops another chunk from the covering.

He can see through the hole now. Spies Ruby, cowering in the corner. Smiles a sickly smile. Raises the axe.

SHUNCK.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

This last blow cuts open a hole big enough for Bone to fit his head.

He moves close to the hole, scanning the room.

His eyes fall back on Ruby.

BONE

Hey little girl. Where's your pop pops?

Martin GRABS Bone's head.

But instead of snapping it, he GAZES INTO HIS EYES.
Forehead to forehead. WHISPERING.

It's barely audible, an OTHERWORLDLY LANGUAGE.

Bone fights it.

BONE
W-what's...you...snaking around...

Bone's eyes GLOSS OVER.

Enraptured.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Hugh notices Bone's face in the hole, body rigid.

HUGH
Bone?

Bone turns away from the hole, facing Hugh. A faraway
look in his eyes.

He drops the axe.

Pulls out his six shooter.

Hugh recoils, hand at his hip for his own piece.

HUGH
What the hell are you doing?!

This catches the attention of the rest of the posse.

With everyone at attention --

-- Bone places the gun under his own chin.

The crew tenses.

Bone looks to Blue Wade with cloudy eyes.

BONE
(hushed, strange tone)
Leave now. I don't want to hurt anyone
else.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin, back against the wall, mouths Bone's words. Bone,
his puppet. He SWEATS with EFFORT, controlling a full
human being.

MARTIN
Go and you will all live.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Bone slowly turns his neck, looking at his compatriots one by one.

BONE
(hushed, strange tone)
Stay and you will all die.

Blue Wade is the last to meet Bone's gaze. Sees his intent.

BLUE WADE
No no no n-

BLAM!

Bone's head ERUPTS, bullet through his head.

He crumples in a heap. The crew stares in confounded horror. Gus whimpers.

Hugh steps towards the fallen man, but Edgardo holds him.

EDGARDO
Don't get too close.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin exhales, dripping sweat. Slides to the floor, exhausted.

Ruby races to his side. Touches him softly.

He holds his injured arm. Looks at the hole in the window.

Desperately hoping this has been enough.

INT. MCDONOUGH'S GENERAL STORE - SAME

A simple shop of grain bags, tools, cured meats, etc. Dave McDonough stands behind the counter while his wife EMILY (40s), loyal and proud, takes inventory.

The door chimes open. E.B. Trott struts in, flanked by TWO BIG GOONS (20s). The McDonoughs tense.

E.B. TROTT

I am hereby presenting you with notice
that payment on your delinquent loan is
required at once.

E.B. places a bank document on the counter. McDonough is
stunned.

MCDONOUGH

You know we don't have the money. Every
business owner in this town is under
water. You collecting from them too?

E.B. TROTT

My arrangement with other bank customers
is strictly confidential.

McDonough peers at E.B.

MCDONOUGH

This is about the Logan Ranch, isn't it?

E.B. TROTT

You've failed to fulfill your financial
obligations. I don't need anymore reason
than that.

(leans in close)

But a word to the wise. When you're in a
rainstorm, don't piss off the umbrella.

The goons roughly grab inventory, loading their sacks.

McDonough comes charging from behind the counter, but
Emily gets between him and the goons.

EMILY

Let them. We'll manage.

E.B. smiles. Gently takes Emily's hand.

E.B. TROTT

A wise woman is worth her weight in gold.

He kisses her hand...and REMOVES her wedding ring.

E.B. and the goons head out, leaving the McDonoughs
filled with impotent rage.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Blue Wade stares at Bone's dead body, trying to wrap his
mind around what he just witnessed.

Edgardo quietly mutters prayers. Viggo stares at the carnage, adrenaline coursing through his frame. Carson is in a daze.

Gus scurries over to his former owner...and laps at his spilled brains. Blue Wade gives Gus a kick in the ribs.

Gus whimpers and scampers away. Gives one last look at his fallen master. Takes off into the plain.

Hugh turns to Blue Wade, freaking out.

HUGH

What the hell? How'd he get in his mind like that? It don't make no sense!

Blue Wade stares off, contemplating.

HUGH

It ain't possible, Blue Wade. He really is the devil.

In a flash, Blue Wade KNOCKS Hugh's whiskey flask from his hand.

BLUE WADE

That's enough, you drunk!

This frightens Hugh. Blue Wade stares out at his crew. An inner fire stoked.

BLUE WADE

I don't know how to explain what just happened. But ain't the devil supposed to be all powerful? Ain't he everywhere all at once, whispering in everyone's ear? You think with that power, he'd be living in some shack with a little girl? Afraid to face us eye to eye?

EDGARDO

Look at the signs, Blue Wade. We're dealing with the unholy. If you don't see, it's cause you don't want to see.

Blue Wade absorbs this.

BLUE WADE

Okay, well, the bible says the devil was born up there in heaven. Pretty good starting spot, I'd say. So, if that's him in there, sure doesn't look like he made the most of his advantages.

(beat)

(MORE)

BLUE WADE (CONT'D)

Me, I was in my mama's belly up in Fort Oswald when the whole camp got attacked by injuns. Slaughtered nearly everyone there, including my mama. By all accounts, I should have been dead too, dead before I even opened my eyes. But some folks came along and cut me out. Even then, I wasn't breathing or nothing. Came out all blue, like a bruise. Just before they was about to get rid of me, I take a big gulp of air, screaming like I was ripped from the other side. Outta all that death, Blue Wade was born.

He pins Edgardo with his gaze.

BLUE WADE

Devil or not, whoever's in there ain't ever met anyone like me.

Hugh scoops up his flask, taking another swig.

HUGH

Well that's all fine and well for you, but I ain't like you. I was born in the back of a wagon like a normal person. So you can count me out.

BLUE WADE

You think that's doing right by Bone?

HUGH

Bone would want me to live, Blue Wade!

Hugh turns to leave, but then Viggo is in front of him.

VIGGO

There is no alternative my friend. The sun keeps him bound. Once it goes down, do you think he will not come for you?

Hugh's eyes go wide. Didn't think of that. Blue Wade nods.

BLUE WADE

It's true. As long as the sun's up, we have the high ground.

Hugh lowers his head, resignation taking over.

BLUE WADE

Now let's get a few paces away and clear our heads before we make our next move.

Blue Wade heads toward a shady spot. Viggo and Carson fall in. Hugh has one last shred of hesitation. Edgardo passes him, not breaking stride.

EDGARDO

It don't matter what you chose. We're all damned already.

Hugh takes this in. Falls in line with the posse.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin, against the wall, holds his stomach in pain. He tries not to let Ruby notice, but it's grown unbearable.

RUBY

What's the matter?

MARTIN

I'm hungry. Doing what I did...makes me hungrier.

Ruby looks to Martin, then to a hunk of bread on the counter.

RUBY

I could make it to that bread.

He puts a restraining hand on her, but she slips away.

MARTIN

No Ruby, stay here.

She darts over and snatches the bread. Tumbles back beside him.

RUBY

Wasn't that fast?

She presses the bread into his hand. Martin nods.

MARTIN

Real fast.

He doesn't eat the bread. Ruby stares at him. Trying to understand.

She looks at him tentatively. Almost afraid of what she's about to say.

RUBY

When you first showed up, mama said a fox got loose in the barn and tore up the chickens. But I ain't seen a fox around here.

Martin gazes at the floor.

MARTIN

We both know there was no fox.

Ruby absorbs his meaning.

INT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - DAY

Pastor Nathan kneels in the empty church, gazing at the HUGE CRUCIFIX on the wall. Three candles burning.

He bows his head in prayer.

PASTOR NATHAN

Dear Lord, please guide my wayward brother to your light. Transform him from the miserable sinner he is into your archangel of justice. I know that I too have been made unclean by lying with the serpent, and I present my suffering to you in the humble hope that you will deign to purify me once again.

Before Pastor Nathan is his METAL-TIPPED FLOGGER.

He unbuttons his white shirt, revealing his flabby, bare back. Marked with SCARS, the same ones we saw on Blue Wade's back. He grips the flogger. Steels himself.

SNAP. He whips over his shoulder into his back. Leaves a bloody trail.

PASTOR NATHAN

Through my suffering, purify my flesh.

SNAP. Digs deeper.

PASTOR NATHAN

Through my suffering, purify my flesh.

Pastor Nathan's teeth are clenched tight.

Face fixed in painful, righteous ecstasy.

SNAP.

SNAP.

SNAP.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - FIELD - NOON

The sun is now directly overhead.

THREE BUZZARDS circle in the sky. Attracted to the smell of death in this place.

The sun blazes down on mashed face. Splattered brains.

While Blue Wade slowly walks the grounds, examining the house in relation to the landscape, the rest of the crew sit under a tree.

HUGH

Well I think he's some kind of witch.
Some kind of albino man-witch.

EDGARDO

You fool. Read your bible. Revelations.
From the earth rose the second beast.

HUGH

Aww, that thing ain't no beast. He's
handsome.

EDGARDO

The devil's the Great Deceiver, hombre.
He makes it so nothing is as it seems.

While Edgardo and Hugh argue, Viggo quietly unfurls a cloth from his pack. Knives of different lengths and materials lay before him.

HUGH

I did hear about a thing called a Wendigo
from a squaw once. Said she'd use her
Injun magic and send one to bite off my
dick if'n I mistreated her. You think
that's what this is all about?

EDGARDO

I truly doubt it.

Hugh notices Viggo.

HUGH

What the hell are you doing?

VIGGO
(calmly)
Picking which weapon I will use to cut
that thing's hand off and add to my
bandolier.

Viggo scans the knives for the right tool. He pulls out
an IVORY BLADE, carved of a single tusk.

Hugh looks at it with wide eyes.

HUGH
I'd hate to be the Wendigo that pissed
you off.

Just then, Blue Wade rejoins the group.

BLUE WADE
What'd you say, Hugh?

HUGH
(embarrassed)
Nothing. Just talking.

Blue Wade motions toward the house. A smile on his face.

BLUE WADE
I've got an idea.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - NOON

**The beams of light coming through the holes in the
windows have dissipated with the sun's new position.**

Martin has taken up a position against the wall, peeking
out the window through one of the small holes.

MARTIN'S POV

Blue Wade draws in the dirt with a stick, his gang
gathered around.

IN THE ROOM

Martin's eyes narrow. *What are they up to?*

Ruby sits across the room, clutching her doll.

Meow.

Ruby lifts her head. The sound coming faintly from
Pearl's bedroom.

She looks to Martin, who is still intently staring through the hole.

Ruby stands. Quietly makes her way to the hallway.

Martin suddenly turns toward her.

MARTIN

Where are you going?

RUBY

To get a brush. For Ginger.

She holds up the doll. Martin nods.

MARTIN

Hurry back.

Ruby makes her way to

RUBY'S BEDROOM.

She stands still, scanning the room.

RUBY

Pss pss.

Meow.

Ruby moves to the wall.

MEOW.

The sound is coming from outside.

Ruby looks up at the shut window. Looks back to the hallway.

CUT TO:

Ruby is on a stool, reaching up to the window.

SHUNCK.

Quietly unlatches the covering.

Slowly slides the window shutter open.

Diffuse light spreads into the room.

Ruby peeks over the ledge.

RUBY'S POV

Rascal playfully rolls on the ground, several feet from the window.

No outlaws in sight.

IN THE ROOM

Ruby leans halfway out the window, extending her arms as far as they will go.

RUBY

Come here, Rascal. Come here boy.

Rascal stands. Saunters toward Ruby.

Almost within her grasp...

But then Rascal JUMPS away, lands up on his haunches. *He wants to play.*

Ruby waves her arms for him. Rascal moves and sways excitedly. Not interested in coming without a chase.

Ruby steels herself. CLIMBS over the ledge.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Ruby lands on the grass. Rascal skitters under a bush.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - FIELD - SAME

Blue Wade sketches a square in the dirt. Then a line going into the square.

He looks up. Sees Carson is barely paying attention. Fidgeting. Shifting his weight between his legs.

Blue Wade grows impatient.

BLUE WADE

If you have to go, then go.

Carson nods gratefully and scampers toward the

OUTHOUSE.

The outhouse that will put him in eyeshot of RUBY.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - BUSH - SAME

Ruby reaches for Rascal, who recoils under the bush.

She reaches her fingers as far as they can go.

Rascal BATS them playfully.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - CLOSER - SAME

Carson heads toward the outhouse with a singularity of purpose --

-- not noticing the slight rustling of the bush only a few yards away from the outhouse.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - BUSH - SAME

Ruby has got a hand on Rascal's tail --

-- MEOW!

Rascals slips away and scampers under the house.

Ruby sighs. She stands up and tromps toward the house.

INT. OUTHOUSE - SAME

From inside the outhouse, through the seam of the door, we spy Ruby!

But Carson, sitting on the toilet, has his eyes fixed on a nudie magazine. His eyes widen at a buxom lady.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Ruby gingerly approaches the house. Ducks to slide under after the cat.

INT. OUTHOUSE - SAME

Just then, Carson looks up through the seam. But no one's there.

He goes back to the task at hand.

EXT. UNDER PEARL'S HOUSE - SAME

Rascal is scrunched against a beam.

Ruby flattens out on her belly. Crawls through the dirt.

Closer and closer...

Rascal makes a break for it --

-- but this time Ruby GRABS HIM by the scruff of the neck.

Pulls him to her.

The cat grows docile in her arms.

RUBY

Bad kitty.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ruby backs out from under the house, Rascal in hand.

She stands up --

-- JUST AS THE outhouse door opens.

Carson stares at Ruby with wide eyes. Ruby stares back.

For a moment, neither can believe what they are seeing.

And then, in an instant,

THE CHASE IS ON.

Ruby takes off toward the window, Carson hard charging.

She hears his SICKLY, MUTED CRIES from behind.

As she runs, Rascal squirms in her arms, frightened.

And just as she reaches the window...Rascal JUMPS free and disappears back under the house.

Ruby watches him run, powerless, as Carson closes on.

With no choice, Ruby pulls herself up into the window.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - WINDOW - SAME

Ruby is almost all the way in when --

-- Carson grabs her ankle with his good hand. YANKS her hard.

She slides halfway out, holding on by her fingertips.

Looking desperately into the room...she sees MARTIN appear in the doorway.

He RACES to the window. Grabs Ruby's hand.

Even with sun's rays diffuse, his skin starts to BURN.

He PULLS her through the window. She lands on the floor with a THUMP.

The force takes Carson's arm through the window as well.

CLOSE ON CARSON -- abject fear as he locks eyes with Martin.

Carson tries to pull his arm from the window --

-- as Martin grabs the shutter and SLIDES it shut.

CRUNCH.

Carson's good hand is MASHED by the force of the shutter.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - RUBY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Martin can't quite close the latch with Carson's hand jammed into the covering. He opens it slightly, allowing the hand to slide out.

SLAMS the covering shut.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - WINDOW - SAME

Carson falls to the ground. Looks to his two ruined hands.

Cries a tongueless cry.

Just then, Hugh rounds the corner. Finds Carson on the ground, shellshocked. Furrows his brow.

HUGH

You done with the shitter?

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - RUBY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Martin glares at Ruby, smoke still rising from his burned flesh. In pain.

MARTIN

Why would you do that? Do you want to get yourself killed?

RUBY

I was trying to get Rascal...for you...like the chickens. So you'll get better.

Martin breathes a long sigh.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - FIELD - LATER

The men stand in their huddle around Blue Wade's plans drawn in the dirt. Carson nurses his newly mangled hand.

EDGARDO

Well that's all well and good, but how do we get him to the window?

Blue grins wickedly.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - LATER

Ruby snuffles on the ground, eyes red with tears.

RUBY

So we were never going to go to the Yukon? You were just going leave me and let yourself starve to death.

MARTIN

I want you to have a better life, with Chen. Out west in the sun.

RUBY

I don't want Chen. I don't want the sun. I want you.

Martin saddens.

MARTIN

You ain't safe with me.

Ruby bristles.

RUBY

You think you know what's best for me, but I am eight years old, and now that mama's gone, I get to decide.

MARTIN

Oh, Ruby, you ain't lived the life I've lived. Seen how dangerous the world really is.

RUBY

I ain't safe out there. I ain't safe in here. Guess I ain't safe anywhere.

Martin is struck by this. Her childish wisdom hanging heavy in the air. *Where is she safe?*

HUGH (O.S.)

Woohoo! I hit pay dirt!

Martin snaps his head to attention.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S GRAVE - SAME

Hugh and Edgardo stand over Pearl's grave holding shovels, a pile of dirt on their side.

Hugh clears the dirt away from the lid of the coffin.

EDGARDO

What kind of woman lets a monster like that into her bed?

Hugh pulls the lid off. Edgardo, Hugh and Carson all recoil at the sight.

HUGH

Oooh. This one went ripe.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin moves to the window. Trembling with anger.

Through the hole in the window covering, Martin watches the defilement.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S GRAVE - SAME

Edgardo stares in disgust.

EDGARDO

Dear God, what did he do to her head?

HUGH

Let's pull her out. Give everyone a good look.

They both move to lift her body from her coffin.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Martin's eyes flash with RAGE.

He lets loose an

INHUMAN ROAR

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S GRAVE - SAME

The sound startles the outlaws, who freeze in fear.

EXT. ROCK SPRINGS - SAME

The ROAR echoes through the town. Stopping every townsman in their tracks.

-- SHERIFF HASTINGS looks up from his desk.
-- E.B. TROTT freezes inside the bank vault.
-- THE MCDONOUGHs turn to each other in the store.
-- DMITRI COYNE sits upright in a bubble bath.
-- PASTOR NATHAN gazes at the crucifix and smiles.
-- CHEN pauses in the street, laundry sack over her shoulder. Concern takes hold of her. *What have they done?*

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

CLOSE ON MARTIN'S FACE, mad with rage when --

BLAM!

A BULLET STRIKES MARTIN DIRECTLY IN THE FOREHEAD.

He hits the floor.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - ROCKS - SAME

We follow drifting smoke to a rifle, Blue Wade smiling behind it.

He's crouched on the large rocks at the edge of the property.

BLUE WADE

Got'em!

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Ruby runs to Martin, who is motionless on the floor. Blood seeps from the shot in his head.

She turns his head toward hers. His eyes are open, but not blinking.

CHUNCK. CHUNCK. CHUNCK.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

Viggo wields the axe with steely precision at the hinges of the door as the rest of the posse race to join him.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Ruby sees the door giving way. Desperate tears form in her eyes. She frantically searches the room.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

The crew HOOT and HOLLER as Viggo makes headway.

CHUNCK. CHUNCK.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

WHOMP.

The door is finally chopped off its hinges and collapses into the house.

Diffuse light spreads into the room.

Viggo stands in the doorway, admiring his handiwork.

Blue Wade pushes past him. *This is his score.*

He surveys the room. Martin lies on the floor, blood pooling around his head. Ruby cradles him.

Blue Wade smiles wryly at the little girl. Takes careful steps toward Martin's body.

The rest of the posse cautiously file in. Edgardo's eyes widen at the sight of Martin.

EDGARDO

Helluva shot, Blue Wade.

Blue Wade reaches out tenderly to Ruby.

BLUE WADE

Hey pretty girl. Come here. It's okay.
It's all over now.

She doesn't respond. Only cries.

Blue Wade reaches out a hand toward Ruby. She crawls backwards, scared.

We watch her fearful retreat through the reflection of Martin's open eyes.

WE FLASHBACK TO**EXT. MEXICAN VILLAGE - NIGHT**

Bodies lie strewn on the dusty streets. Another massacre. The fighting's over though, so now it's a vampire feast.

INT. ADOBE HUT - SAME

Martin tears into a fallen MAN, his simple home WRECKED.

A soft cry from the closet. Martin's ears perk up.

He stands, throws open the door to find a MEXICAN WOMAN... clutching an INFANT.

WOMAN

(whispering)

Por favor no mates a mi bebe.

Martin bares down...but then softens. The innocent baby too much for him even in his animalistic state. His fangs retract.

He hears commotion outside. Thinking fast, he motions for them to escape out a BACKDOOR.

The woman doesn't believe him at first, but has no choice. She takes off, clutching her baby. Martin stands in the hut, unsure of what he's done.

A SHRIEK from outside. Martin goes to the back door.

The woman lies on the ground, bloody, dying, reaching for her baby...who is being DEVoured by three vampires.

WOMAN

Mi bebe...

Something breaks in Martin. He turns from the vampires.

Starts walking, slow and steady, away from the carnage.

INT. PEARL'S CABIN - PRESENT

Martin's dead eyes stare at us.

Hugh sees a framed PHOTO of PEARL on the shelf. Takes it off and looks at it lasciviously.

HUGH

Oooh, damn. I'd love to have a go at this old broad. Dead or alive.

Blue Wade kneels so that he and Ruby are face to face.

BLUE WADE

It's okay. It's all over now.

CRACK.

The photo falls to the floor, the glass breaking.

Blue Wade turns to Hugh.

BLUE WADE

Have a little respect, won't...you...

Hugh is white. Jaw dropped.

Blue Wade cranes his head...

And over his shoulder...

We see Martin PAINFULLY RISE to his knees...

He braces himself against the table...

DRAGS himself to his feet...

The posse stare, dumbfounded. Even Blue Wade can't believe what he's seeing. Ruby's eyes widen with hope.

Martin's body shakes with effort. His return to "life", unglamorous and agonizing.

He looks up at the outlaws, his face a mask of pain.

From Martin's skull wound, the bullet slowly ejects.

CL-CLINK. It hits the floor and rolls away.

Everyone in this small western house takes stock of what has just happened.

Martin blinks -- his eyes ORANGE.

Reality sets in.

BLUE WADE

Shit.

With surprising speed, Hugh draws on Martin. Unleashes all six bullets from his gun.

But as the smoke clears, we see his hand is shaking wildly at the sight of Martin...and he's missed every shot. He locks eyes with the frightful beast.

HUGH

(sotto)

Shoulda drunk more.

In a flash, Martin's hand is around HUGH'S NECK.

CRACK. He snaps it.

Hugh crumples to the floor, DEAD in an instant.

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM!

Blue Wade and Edgardo fire at Martin, but he ducks and dodges.

Martin unsteadily comes back to his feet. Blue Wade gets a clean look.

CLICK. Out of bullets.

Martin glares at Blue Wade. Murder in his eyes.

But suddenly, Viggo wedges between them, bone knife at the ready.

Martin grabs Viggo's neck -- Viggo counters by JAMMING his blade into Martin's forearm.

Martin GROWLS and THROWS Viggo against the wall, knocking the wind out of him.

He looms over Viggo, baring his teeth.

Viggo looks at Martin's visage in awe, almost swooning at the perfect killer.

Blue Wade stares at this monster about to kill his friend. Orange eyes. Fangs. Demonic.

His hand falls to his belt. Around Pastor Nathan's CROSS.

He pulls it out. Looks at it. *Worth a shot.*

CLOSE ON MARTIN

As his jaw opens toward Viggo...

SHUNCK.

Martin freezes, orange eyes wide with panic.

WE SEE

Blue Wade standing behind him.

The cross JAMMED into Martin's back.

Martin SHAKES, tremors spreading from the cross out through his entire body.

He COLLAPSES.

Violently spasms on the floor.

The crew gather around the convulsing creature. Martin's eyes and ears now bleeding.

Blue Wade watches Martin's reaction with sick fascination.

BLUE WADE
Je-sus Christ...

C-CLICK.

Their eyes slowly fall to the hallway...

Ruby stands, hands trembling around her mother's shotgun.

She's trained on Carson.

Blue Wade gives the little girl a once over. She's desperately trying to hide her fear.

He smiles to her.

BLUE WADE
Sweetheart. You don't want t-

BLAM!

Carson's head explodes.

Blue Wade is covered in his blood.

Carson's body collapses...

To reveal CHEN holding a smoking shotgun in the doorway.

She cocks it.

CHEN
Ruby! Get down!

Ruby ducks beside the squirming Martin.

BLAM! Chen fires another spray of shrapnel.

The outlaws SCATTER. Viggo down the hall, Blue Wade and Edgardo behind the KNOCKED-OVER KITCHEN TABLE.

Chen slings her shotgun over her shoulder and produces a SIX-SHOOTER.

BLAM BLAM! She fires at the table.

Chen catches eyes with Ruby and motions with her head toward PEARL'S ROOM.

Ruby understands and begins dragging the ailing Martin as Chen lays down suppressing fire.

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM!

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

Chen spins, back to wall, and reloads her six-shooter.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Blue Wade and Edgardo poke their heads up from behind the table and RETURN FIRE.

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM!

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

Wood EXPLODES around Chen. She ducks under the volley of bullets.

A chunk of shrapnel SLICES her cheek, but she's got no time for pain.

At the first break in fire, she spins back into the

ENTRANCE

And OPENS FIRE once more.

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM!

Meanwhile, Ruby and the hobbled Martin crawl closer and closer to his chamber...

BLAM BLAM!

EDGARDO

Gah!

BEHIND THE TABLE

Edgardo takes a bullet through the ARM. He grabs it, grimacing.

ENTRANCE

Chen sees Martin and Ruby cross the threshold of Pearl's room.

She catches eyes with Martin for a moment. He gazes back, barely conscious. She nods dutifully.

SHUNCK.

Chen's face grows white. Stricken. Her body shudders.

Behind her, Viggo. His knife deep in her back.

Martin and Ruby watch in horror as Viggo moves his blade inside her, until at last, she falls. Viggo wipes his knife clean.

RUBY

Chen!

Viggo's attention snaps to the duo. He STOMPS toward them, and Martin has no choice but to SLAM THE DOOR SHUT.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S ROOM - SAME

Martin bolts the door locked and crumples into a heap, Ruby in hysterics.

The cross sticks from his back, the skin around it blackened, bubbling and blistering. He writhes in pain.

Ruby, gathering herself, approaches, scared. She reaches for the cross. Delicately grabs it. Slowly pulls.

Martin's back arches as he lets out a PRIMAL SCREAM.

The cross comes out with a spray of blood.

Ruby pulls a handkerchief from her pocket, wrapping the cross within. Slides it under the bed, out of sight.

Slowly, Martin's pained breathing begins to relax.

Blood spills from his wounds, dark pools on the floor.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

Blue Wade hammers at Martin's door with his fists.

Edgardo looks to Blue Wade, a smug smile on his face.

EDGARDO

Got him good with that cross, Blue Wade.

Blue Wade looks out the window.

The sun's rays are weakening as it lowers in the sky.

Edgardo catches on.

Joins in with mighty KICKS into the door.

As his comrades assault the door, Viggo BREAKS the legs off of the TABLE. Holds them together, forming a cross.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S ROOM - SAME

BANG. BANG. BANG.

Ruby lights a candle. Moves close to Martin. Clings to him. His blood making her as red as her namesake.

Martin groans in pain on the floor.

Gazes at Ruby, at what he's wrought. His vision focuses on her blood-speckled face...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Martin staggers through a thicket. A BLOODY GASH torn through his side.

He stumbles and trips as SOMETHING BIG crashes through the brush behind him.

Ahead, Martin spots a candlelit window in the darkness.

PEARL'S HOUSE.

He pushes toward it with every ounce of strength he's got, THE THING on his trail getting closer.

Just yards from the solitary structure, Martin's legs give out. He falls to the ground.

Martin looks up and the thing reveals itself -- A GIANT GRIZZLY BEAR. It ROARS, ready to end him.

Martin braces for the death blow...

BLAM! BLAM!

The beast goes down with a CRY.

Behind Martin...

PEARL, smoking shotgun in her hand.

She is robust here. Framed in the moonlight, she looks like a hardened, Western angel. She eyes Martin with caution as he passes out at her feet.

INT. BARN - DAYBREAK - FLASHBACK

Martin lays in a pile of straw, barely conscious.

Pearl tends to his slashed side with a wet rag.

She's surprisingly tender for treating a strange man.

Then we see what allows her this luxury: an even younger Ruby stands with a shotgun trained on him. *They're no helpless maidens.*

PEARL

I'm gonna need to stitch this.

Pearl gets up to leave.

Martin's woozy eyes widen as he sees sunlight creeping in through the barn door.

MARTIN

...the sun...I can't...

Pearl looks at the approaching rays. Then at Martin.

MARTIN

...please...

Martin panics, struggling to move, but far too injured.

Pearl turns to Ruby. Both tense, unsure of what to do.

With a sunbeam inching toward Martin, Pearl decides.

PEARL

Keep that gun pointed at him.

Pearl grabs Martin under his arms. Their faces close.

She hoists him up with great effort, then drags him away from the streaming sunlight.

Pearl rests him in a darkened corner of the barn.

Martin's labored breathing slows as he calms. Pearl's soft eyes give him comfort.

INT. BARN - LATER - FLASHBACK

Pearl walks in with a plate of mashed potatoes and gravy.

Stops in her tracks.

Before her, a bloody trail. A mess of feathers.

She follows it to the corner.

Hears grunting and snarling.

Pearl cautiously approaches the sounds, rounding a stall to find --

Martin DEVOURING A CHICKEN.

His face and hands soaked in blood. His fangs extended. Eyes orange.

She SCREAMS. Drops the plate of food, covering her mouth.

Martin looks up at her. Drops the chicken and scampers behind a hay bale.

Pearl deftly swings the shotgun strapped to her shoulder into firing position.

She slowly rounds the hay bale. Expecting the worst.

Instead, she finds Martin cowering like a wounded animal.

Pearl again looks at the blood all around. The blood on his lips.

Sees his wounds -- impossibly healed.

And his face, no longer monstrous, looks utterly ashamed.

Her finger still on the trigger...

Releases.

She lowers the shotgun. Gazes at Martin with compassion.

INT. BARN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Ruby leads Smoke to his stall, but he bucks and pulls against her.

RUBY

Stop it, Smoke! Get in there!

The horse rears back, sending Ruby into the mud.

He grows more and more agitated. Ruby's frustration bleeds into fear.

She crawls on her back, trying to avoid the horse's POWERFUL HOOVES crashing down on the ground beside her.

Now in great danger, Ruby freezes up, terrified.

CLOP CLOP! CLOP CLOP! Inches from crushing her...

Suddenly, Martin stands before her. Shirtless, wounds mostly healed.

Smoke falls still at Martin's powerful presence.

Saying nothing, he approaches Smoke. Gently pets the creature, leaning in close. Whispers something inaudible into the animal's ear.

Martin turns to the shaken Ruby. He offers his hand to her. After a long moment, she takes it, their hands touching for the first time.

He pulls her up and offers her the reins. Gestures toward the stall.

Ruby nods. Leads Smoke in, closing the gate behind him.

Martin watches, satisfied. He looks over his shoulder.

There, through the window of the house, stands Pearl. She has been watching the whole time.

She smiles.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK

Ruby sitting at the kitchen table next to Martin. She efforts to sound out a passage from Peter Pan.

RUBY

The mo...mo...

MARTIN

Mo-ment.

RUBY

Moment you do..dub-ta

MARTIN

Doubt.

RUBY

You doubt that you can fly, you kee--

MARTIN

Cease.

RUBY

You cease for ever to be able to do it.

MARTIN

Good job, Ruby.

RUBY

Is that true?

Martin looks up. Pearl watches Martin's delicate interaction with her girl. Face aglow.

MARTIN

I think so.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Pearl tucks Ruby into her bed. She kisses Ruby goodnight. Moves to blow out the candle.

RUBY

Martin too.

Martin looks at Ruby, taken aback. Seeks permission from Pearl. She grants it with her eyes.

Martin leans and places a gentle kiss on Ruby's forehead.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - FLASHBACK

Pearl and Martin stand near each other. Speaking in hushed tones.

PEARL

I was thinking. If you're going to stay much longer, you really shouldn't be out in that barn. Not with the cold coming.

She moves past him, their bodies close. Motions near the fireplace.

PEARL

We could set you up right there.

Martin throws a glance at the window above. Pearl smiles.

PEARL

We can do something about that.

Martin doesn't return her smile. Instead, his face hardens. He walks away.

Pearl furrows her brow, confused.

Martin stands by the sink. Pearl joins him.

PEARL
Have I offended you?

Martin shakes his head.

MARTIN
It's hard. Being close. I've lost a lot.

He places the photo of his WIFE and DAUGHTER on the counter. Pearl leans in close.

PEARL
So have I. Whose coat do you think you're wearing?

Martin meets her eyes, recognizes her own loss.

MARTIN
But I've done things in my grief that can't be forgiven.

PEARL
Ain't nothing that can't be forgiven, if you're asking the right person.

Martin looks away. Pearl won't let him go.

PEARL
Whatever you did, that's not who you are anymore.

She holds him close. He's resistant. Eyes her neck.

MARTIN
You shouldn't. I can't control myself.

PEARL
You can.

He holds her back...but she can't see that his fangs have emerged. His eyes orange. He trembles.

He moves his face toward her neck, slower and slower...

...fangs against her flesh, almost poking through...

...when Pearl gently moves his mouth from her neck. Guides his mouth toward her own mouth.

PEARL
You can.

THEY KISS.

When they release, his fangs are gone, eyes human.

She gazes at him.

PEARL

I still see a man in there.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S ROOM - PRESENT

Martin gazes at Ruby's blood-speckled face.

MARTIN

You were right, Ruby. You do get to choose. And so do I.

(beat)

If you want me and you want the Yukon, then I promise that's what you'll get.

BANG BANG BANG.

MARTIN

But right now...you have to run...

Ruby only squeezes him tighter.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

The outlaws keep up their assault on the door, the hinges shaking with their desperate strikes.

MARTIN

Run to the barn...wait until dark...stay out of sight...

BANG. BANG. BANG.

RUBY

I can't.

MARTIN

You can, Ruby...go to the McDonoughs... they're good people...they'll understand...

Ruby looks at Martin, tears welling.

RUBY

They'll kill you here.

Martin looks to Ruby gravely.

MARTIN

Nothing will keep me from you, Ruby. I
promise.

BANG. BANG. BANG.

MARTIN

Go...

BANG. BANG. BANG. The door is almost off its hinges.

Ruby moves to the TRICK FLOORBOARD.

Takes one last look at the depleted Martin.

MARTIN

We're getting on that train...

Ruby nods. Lowers the floorboard and disappears.

Martin leans over and BLOWS out the single candle.

DARKNESS.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - MAIN ROOM - SAME

The gang continues pounding on the door.

Finally, the wood CRACKS and SPLINTERS.

BLUE WADE

Here we go.

He rears back, KICKING the door in with a final blow.

INT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PEARL'S ROOM - SAME

The door BREAKS OPEN. Light spills from the hall into the
darkened chamber.

The outlaws stand silhouetted in the door frame.

Blue Wade steps in, narrowing his eyes in the low light.

And after a long moment...out of the shadow...staggers
MARTIN. Barely able to stay on his feet.

Still, he is defiant.

MARTIN

Get out of my house.

Blue Wade takes in the ailing man. Motions to Viggo and
Edgardo.

They produce MAKESHIFT CROSSES: broken wood from the day's events, nailed and tied together.

Martin steels himself, then LUNGES at the men --

-- WHAM.

Edgardo strikes Martin's face with his cross. Martin stumbles to his knees, blood dripping from his mouth.

Martin SWATS at Edgardo's legs with his hands, but Viggo follows up with a cross-aided BLOW to Martin's back.

Martin HOWLS in pain.

Now crawling...Martin tries to grab Blue Wade's boot with his shaking hand.

Blue Wade looks down at the futile effort. Smiles.

SMASHES into Martin's skull with his cross.

Martin's head hits the floor. He falls still.

Blue Wade gazes at the defeated Martin, a cautious smile on his lips.

Just then, Viggo THROWS the cabinet over. Edgardo flips the bed. They turn to Blue Wade.

VIGGO

The girl is not here.

Blue Wade grits his teeth.

He scans the room. His eyes focus upon the SEAM IN THE FLOOR.

He slides his hand under it, revealing the TRICK FLOORBOARD.

Blue Wade looks to the ailing Martin, then to his remaining crew.

BLUE WADE

Get me my rope.

EXT. PLAIN - SAME

Ruby desperately scrambles through the SCRUB BRUSH, the brittle branches scratching through her skin. Tears stream down her face.

In the distance, she spots a saddled BLACK HORSE. Empty rifle holster. An outlaw's horse, wandered from the fray.

She moves toward it, toward her deliverance.

Ruby is only a few yards from the black horse when --

BLUE WADE (O.S.)
(calling out)
Oh Ruby...

Ruby stops in her tracks. Slowly turns her head back toward the ranch.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

The sun is behind the house now, casting a shadow several feet beyond the porch.

Blue Wade stands beyond the shadow, calling out into the open range.

On the porch stand Edgardo and Viggo. The both grip a LENGTH OF ROPE leading into the house.

BLUE WADE
Ruby! Come on out now! You're only hurting your papa at this point!

EXT. PLAINS - SAME

Fear creases Ruby's face. She parts the brush to get a view of the house.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

Blue Wade waits for a response...

Then waves to Viggo and Edgardo.

Together, they YANK the rope...

The BATTERED MARTIN is dragged through the entrance. Noose around his neck.

They pull him DOWN THE STEPS OF THE PORCH until he is just inches from where the shadow meets the light.

EXT. PLAINS - SAME

Ruby gasps. The sight of Martin helpless striking her to her core.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - PORCH - SAME

Viggo and Edgardo take position in front of the porch.
One good yank will pull Martin into the sunlight.

BLUE WADE

All right little girl. I'm giving you to
the count of three. Then papa's taking a
sun bath. One...two...

RUBY (O.S.)

No!

Ruby emerges from the scrub brush, several dozen yards
from the house.

Blue Wade smiles.

Ruby gingerly approaches the outlaws.

RUBY

Please. Just leave him be.

Blue Wade encourages Ruby with open arms. Walks toward
her to meet her halfway.

BLUE WADE

That'a girl. You're doing great.

Martin, coming to, painfully lifts his head up to see --

BLUE WADE wraps his arms around RUBY. *A nightmare.*

Ruby looks up at Blue Wade.

RUBY

Now let him go.

Blue Wade gazes at Martin. Considering his fate.

Martin puffs up one last time. A LOW GROWL escapes his
throat.

MARTIN

I will kill you.

Blue Wade coldly nods to Viggo and Edgardo.

Together, they YANK THE ROPE.

RUBY

No!

Martin is jerked into the SUN'S DESTRUCTIVE RAYS.

His skin is ON FIRE before he hits the ground.

The IGNITION causes the posse to SCATTER. The reality of a man bursting into flame overcoming them.

But even as Martin is consumed by fire, he CRAWLS toward his daughter. Inch by painful inch.

Until even his incredible will is not enough...

The sun charring his flesh until he is still...

His flaming hand almost touching Ruby...

Ruby sobs as she watches the final twitches of life escape him.

The outlaws stare at the dead body in disbelief. *It's really over.*

Blue Wade lets out a breath he didn't know he was holding as he gazes at the flaming beast.

After a moment, the fire dies down to low burning embers.

Viggo approaches the blackened body, kneeling beside it.

He seems almost disappointed as he draws his bone blade.

VIGGO

Rest now, phantom cat.

He pulls Martin's arm out from his body. Readies his blade.

And in one swift movement, CHOPS off Martin's hand.

He pulls the scorched hand from the ground. Hooks it into his bandolier, joining his other mementos.

Blue Wade peeks at the spectacle from over Viggo's shoulder.

BLUE WADE

Sicko.

CUT TO:

Blue Wade sits astride his horse. Viggo holds Ruby on his, her eyes vacant, shell-shocked.

Edgardo, favoring his wounded arm, hands Blue Wade Martin's TIN OF MONEY. The last item of value in this place.

Blue Wade opens it. Inside, the photo of Martin with his wife and daughter. Blue Wade smirks.

BLUE WADE

(sotto)

Well that ain't Ruby. How many little girls you got running round?

He flips over the photo. Can't believe what he sees. Scrawled on the back:

Fort Oswald, 1862

Blue Wade stares, flabbergasted.

BLUE WADE

(sotto)

Fort Oswald...

He struggles to process. Looks back to Martin. *Too late for questions.*

Edgardo calls out from ahead.

EDGARDO

You wanna give him a funeral?

Blue Wade tucks the photo into his pocket. Looks to Edgardo as though they've been having a conversation.

BLUE WADE

Fucking Fort Oswald.

Blue Wade starts his horse trotting back to town. Edgardo is left perplexed. He follows Blue Wade and Viggo...

...leaving Martin's body to blister in the setting sun.

INT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - LATER

Pastor Nathan stands at the lectern. Behind him on a table, a bulging bag of cash. The pews are filled with most of the town. All can feel something is brewing.

PASTOR NATHAN

You feel that tingle? That is the Lord's spirit moving through this town as we speak. You know why? Because of you. Because of the fine, decent people of Rock Springs sacrificing and suffering for what is righteous. And soon, we will dine on the fruits of righteousness. And eat until our bellies are-

The door of the church swings open.

PASTOR NATHAN

-full.

Blue Wade stands in the door way.

Behind him, Edgardo, arm bandaged, holding Ruby by the shoulders. Viggo close behind.

The noisy energy of the congregation falls silent.

BLUE WADE

Service is over.

The congregation stares at him, dumbstruck. They look to Pastor Nathan for guidance, but he too can't find words. Edgardo pulls out his shotgun.

EDGARDO

You heard him. Vamanos!

BLAM! Edgardo fires into the ceiling. This gets the people moving out the door.

A few congregants makes eyes at the shellshocked Ruby as they leave, but they're too scared to ask questions.

Everyone's gone. Viggo closes the door.

Blue Wade stares at Pastor Nathan. He wears the look of a soldier returning from war. Shuffles down the aisle. Motions to Ruby.

BLUE WADE

There's your girl.

Viggo holds the BLACKENED HAND high for Pastor Nathan.

BLUE WADE

And there's your monster.

Pastor Nathan stares at the hand. His suspicions confirmed. Blue Wade bears down on his brother.

BLUE WADE

You knew what you were sending us into, didn't you?

PASTOR NATHAN

Would you have believed if I'd told you?

Blue Wade considers. *Fair enough.* Deep waters roil inside the mercenary.

BLUE WADE

So what was this about? Giving me one last chance to find faith?

Pastor Nathan smirks, shaking his head.

PASTOR NATHAN

It's about money. It's always about money with you.

Pastor Nathan grabs the bag of cash. Hands it to Blue Wade. They both hold it for a tense moment, staring.

Finally, Blue Wade pulls the bag fully into his hands. He hands it to Edgardo who opens the bag. SMILES WIDELY. More money than he's ever seen.

He leads Ruby to Pastor Nathan. Pastor Nathan stares at Ruby like the cat who swallowed the canary.

Pastor Nathan embraces Blue Wade. Whispers in his ear.

PASTOR NATHAN

You've seen true evil, and the power of the Lord to combat it. You can still accept Him like father and mother taught us. You can still be saved.

Pastor Nathan breaks the embrace. Smiles.

PASTOR NATHAN

Pray with me, brother.

Pastor Nathan gets on his knees before the cross. Blue Wade gives it a long look. *What will he do?*

He spits.

BLUE WADE

Nah. I'm good.

Pastor Nathan sneers at Blue Wade, gives up.

PASTOR NATHAN

This concludes our transaction. Feel free to enjoy Rock Springs hospitality.

He leads Ruby away to the side room. Blue Wade remains, staring at them, then looking up at the CRUCIFIX.

Edgardo nudges Blue Wade.

EDGARDO

You heard the man. Fiesta.

Blue Wade offers a creaky smile.

BLUE WADE

Yeah. Fiesta.

EXT. PEARL'S HOUSE - FRONT OF HOUSE - SAME

Snapshots of the carnage.

Bone's body, hole through his head.

Kyle's face, left to the flies.

Chen on the porch in a pool of blood.

Martin's BLACKENED CARCASS. Baking in the setting sun.

The three omnipresent buzzards circle lower toward Martin...and finally land.

They move into position. Peck...peck...peck...

The snap up pieces of the charred flesh. Legs, arms, chest.

One curious buzzard, hops onto the

PORCH.

Bounces toward Chen.

Leans over to take a bite of her juicy eyeball.

GASP.

Chen's eyes POP OPEN as she takes a RAGGED BREATH, frightening the buzzard.

It flaps away, and the others follow suit.

Chen looks down at her bloody body. Taking in the inevitable. *Mortally wounded.*

Rolls her head to the side. Sees MARTIN'S BURNED BODY.

She blinks back tears.

Then, using all of her strength, she turns over to her stomach. Begins to CRAWL toward him.

She leaves a bloody smear behind her as she works her arms and legs across the porch...

Down the steps...

Until at last...

She is beside him.

Chen takes a long look at his blackened face. *What have they done to you?*

She hooks her arm under his shoulder.

With the sun half-hidden by the horizon,

Chen pulls him to the LENGTHENING SHADOW OF THE HOUSE.

Now out of the sun, she collapses by his side. Almost out of life herself.

Shaking, she raises her bloody arm to Martin's mouth.

Holds it there.

A few drops of blood trickle from her to him.

As she holds her wrist to his mouth, her body gives out. She collapses.

Stillness for a moment...

Until...

CLOSE ON MARTIN'S MOUTH

We see his FANGS extend of their own accord.

Puncturing Chen's wrist.

And as more blood spills, Martin unconsciously SUCKLES like a newborn.

Filling his mouth with blood.

WE SEE

His arms regain strength. They grip Chen's wrist as he sucks.

His mind still foggy. Animalistic. He sucks.

Until his entire body is animated once again.

Given new life through Chen.

Finally, his consciousness returns, and he realizes what he is doing.

He pulls his mouth away in horror. Turns to cradle Chen's head.

Chen looks back with a weak smile.

CHEN

Ruby needs you...

With that, she dies.

Martin stares at Chen for a long moment. Deep pain in his eyes. Almost too much to bear, if not for...

MARTIN

Ruby.

Slowly...

Painfully...

MARTIN RISES.

Burned, bloody-faced...angry.

He looks at the sun low in the sky. His gaze then follows the LONG SHADOW OF HIS HOUSE.

It now stops precisely at PEARL'S OPEN GRAVE. *Instruction from above...or below.*

Martin's eyes narrow.

SUNSET

INT. PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT BROTHEL AND SALOON - DUSK

We peer down through an ORNATE, WROUGHT IRON CHANDELIER at a RAUCHOUS PARTY.

Alcohol flows. Prostitutes hang off drunken bar-goers, leading them upstairs to have a go. Rowdy and joyous.

Leaning on a chair, surrounded by a few beautiful ladies, is Blue Wade. *The king of the castle.*

But he doesn't enjoy it. *The king is troubled.*

INT. PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT - PRIVATE ROOM - SAME

Edgardo playfully throws a SPRY PROSTITUTE onto the bed. SHOWERS her with cash. She glares back, lust in her eyes.

He takes a swig of whiskey.

EDGARDO

It's been a long fucking day.

He slides onto the bed as the prostitute eagerly unbuttons the shirt of the handsome outlaw.

PROSTITUTE

Then let me help you relax, baby.

Edgardo smiles.

INT. PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT - THE ROOM NEXT DOOR - SAME

A NERVOUS PROSTITUTE stares, confused.

Viggo sits at a desk. Examining MARTIN'S BURNED HAND with fascination.

The prostitute eyes the disgusting appendage warily.

NERVOUS PROSTITUTE

I'd rather not...get that thing involved.

Viggo looks up to the prostitute as though he'd forgotten she was there.

VIGGO

You can leave.

The prostitute sighs in relief. Quickly makes her exit.

Viggo takes to gazing at the hand again. Enthralled.

INT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - PASTOR'S CHAMBER - SAME

Ruby sits in a chair, catatonic.

Pastor Nathan settles beside her as though a doctor.

He lifts up her chin, exposing her neck. No bite marks.

He lifts her lips. No fangs.

He pulls back her eyelids, examining the whites. Nothing abnormal.

PASTOR NATHAN

Have you taken part in any satanic rituals?

She doesn't reply.

PASTOR NATHAN

This is important, Ruby. Please, be honest. Have you promised your soul to Satan?

She says nothing. Just stares forward.

He gently leans over to her.

PASTOR NATHAN

You look so much like your mother. She was a beautiful, beautiful woman. But beauty brings many temptations. And your mother could not resist those temptations. She could have walked the righteous path with me.

(beat)

But now you will.

He looks at Ruby, sacrilegious attraction roiling below.

He tamps it down.

Pastor Nathan stands. Makes his way toward his closet.

PASTOR NATHAN

Through no fault of your own, sin has touched you.

He opens it. Pulls out his FLOGGER. Still wet with his blood.

PASTOR NATHAN

You have the power to expunge that evilness from your flesh and start anew.

He places the flogger on the desk before her.

PASTOR NATHAN

Take it. Use it. Free yourself of sin.

Ruby still just stares. Pastor Nathan sits back down into his chair.

Leans in close.

PASTOR NATHAN

I know you're scared. I was scared once too. But only through cracks in our flesh can the light get in.

Ruby looks up at Pastor Nathan for the first time. Locks eyes with him.

Then LUNGES FOR HIS EAR, TAKING A POWERFUL BITE.

Just like her daddy.

She TEARS LOOSE a CHUNK of EAR FLESH.

Pastor Nathan SCREAMS, clutching his wound.

He PUSHES Ruby to the floor and leaps up from his seat.

Ruby GROWLS back at Pastor Nathan, SPITTING out his bloody skin on the floor.

Pastor Nathan glares back at Ruby in shock.

PASTOR NATHAN

The devil has taken deep root in you. But by all that is holy, I will shake him loose.

INT. MCDONOUGH GENERAL STORE - LATER

McDonough watches the festivities at the Playful Pussycat through his shop window. Emily sidles up next to him.

EMILY

What type of people celebrate this kind of barbarism against their own neighbor?

McDonough is aghast.

MCDONOUGH

I think we need to leave Rock Springs.

INT. PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT - LATER

The party rages on. A JOLLY MAN has taken up at the piano, banging out party music.

Dmitri Coyne and E.B. Trott are at the bar, celebrating.

DMITRI

I don't know how you folks did it and I don't want to know. But I've been informed that the Logan Ranch is now open for drilling and I'll be pleased to inform Mr. Conover of our new prospect. Looks like Rock Springs has been brought back from the dead.

E.B. TROTT

To rebirth. And higher interest rates.

Edgardo struts in, refreshed, his lady friend on his arm.

He makes eyes with Blue Wade, showing off his pretty lover.

Blue Wade counters by kissing the woman on his left, then the woman on his right. He cocks his eye at Edgardo.

Edgardo raises up his arms. *You beat me.*

They both smile and laugh.

But after Edgardo turns away, a shadow falls over Blue Wade.

INT. PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT - PRIVATE ROOM - SAME

Viggo's eyes are transfixed by the BURNT HAND before him. Wheels turning in his mind.

He grabs the hand.

Beads of sweat on his brow.

Brings it to his mouth.

Oh God.

HE SINKS HIS TEETH into the unholy flesh. Tears off a bite. Swallows it down.

A Satanic communion.

EXT. PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT - NIGHT

Some PARTIERS drink and yell in the street. Dmitri and E.B. join them, puffing celebratory cigars.

CLIP-CLOP. CLIP-CLOP. CLIP-CLOP.

A few townsfolk turn toward the sound.

We watch as they grow quiet.

The hush spreading down Main Street.

EXT. ROCK SPRINGS - MAIN STREET - SAME

Hooves trot slowly in the earth.

We move up the BLACK STEED to find NO RIDER upon its back.

There's a saddle, however...and from it, two taut lengths of rope on either side...

trailing behind it to...

A COFFIN. Pearl's coffin.

Dragged over the dirt.

The horse stops in front of crowd of spectators.

INT. PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT - SAME

The quiet spreads through the saloon as the patrons press up against the window. Edgardo steps outside, investigating.

Blue Wade is the last to notice the chill upon the party. He stands up. Peeks over shoulders through the window.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - SAME

A few more onlookers gather outside to gawk.

Then, the unthinkable but inevitable...

The coffin's door slowly swings open.

A burned, booted foot swings out. Then another.

And standing up from the deathly box --

MARTIN.

One-handed. Burned. Bloody. A demon from hell.

He looks over the petrified onlookers with his orange eyes, fangs extended.

MARTIN

I'm looking for my daughter.

The townsfolk are stunned. Terrified. Unmoving.

Dmitri leans over to E.B.

DMITRI

(whispering)

Do we know who this is?

E.B. TROTT

(whispering)

I think it's him. From the Logan Ranch.

DMITRI

(whispering)

You told me he was dead.

E.B. TROTT

(whispering)

He sure looks dead to me.

Dmitri is displeased. He looks around and sees no one else knows what to do. Considers the situation. Then straightens his jacket, puts on a smile...and approaches.

DMITRI

Martin, isn't it? My name is Dmitri Coyne of Allied Oil and I'm in the position to put quite a bit of mon-

IN A FLASH

Martin GNASHES INTO DMITRI'S NECK. A bloody, horrid spectacle.

As the onlookers watch in horror, Martin drains Dmitri dry. ENERGIZING HIMSELF.

Drops Dmitri on the ground, skin taut, white as a ghost.

Martin stands before us and the crowd, for the first time in his full power.

THE TOWN ERUPTS INTO CHAOS!

People run in every direction, trying to escape THE BEAST.

A GUNMAN draws on Martin, but the vampire is too fast. He TEARS the gunman's arm clean off.

He snatches the gun from the ground and HURLS IT full force at another drawing TOUGH GUY. The barrel goes THROUGH HIS EYE.

E.B. Trott watches the carnage in horror. He sneaks along the sides of the buildings to the

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Where Sheriff Hastings is handing deputy badges out like candy.

E.B. TROTT

You've got to do something, Jack!

SHERIFF HASTINGS

I am! I'm giving every able-bodied man in town Uncle Sam's approval to kill on sight.

He tosses E.B. a BADGE and a REVOLVER. E.B. looks at both odiously.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - SAME

Martin RIPS THE GUTS out of a TOWNIE. Sees EDGARDO standing in the door of the saloon. Stalks toward him.

Edgardo retreats, hiding behind others in the bar.

Martin is mid-stride when

BANG

He's shot in the back. But unlike last time, he's at full strength. The shot does little but anger him.

He turns to face the coward who shot him and finds Sheriff Hastings, flanked by his HONORARY DEPUTIES.

Martin marches toward them. They UNLOAD on the vampire. He just takes the bullets until they're all out of ammo.

This happens fast -- Martin slashes one deputy's face down the middle, rips the other's throat out, and finishes by biting into SHERIFF HASTING'S SKULL.

CRUNCH. Martin spits out the piece of skull. Hastings feels where the missing skull is with his hand...then collapses. Martin finishes him by STOMPING on his head.

E.B. witnesses all of this. Throws down his badge and gun. He realizes he's the only person left outside.

E.B. scampers for a safe haven. Tries a door to a boarded up shop. Locked. Tries another. Locked.

He reaches MCDONOUGH'S GENERAL STORE. It too is locked, but E.B. spots McDonough through the window. Bangs on the glass, Entreating McDonough with his eyes.

McDonough solemnly approaches. Gives E.B. a long look. Then turns the OPEN sign around to CLOSED.

Martin appears behind E.B., Who turns to face him.

SPLAT! BLOOD splatters on McDonough's window. E.B.'s body slides to the floor. Martin and McDonough make eyes for a tense moment...

...the vampire moves on...

EXT. PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT - MOMENTS LATER

PAT, the spindly goon from church, is the last to try to get inside. He's halfway in when Martin GRABS his arm.

Martin SLAMS Pat's face into the wall of the entrance while Martin himself remains outside of it.

Pat's body is inside the saloon, but his arm is in Martin's clutches.

MARTIN

Invite me in.

Pat tries to slither away, to no avail.

Martin TWISTS Pat's arm with his one remaining hand. Pat SCREAMS.

MARTIN

Invite me in.

The rest of the townsfolk inside the saloon watch the scene unfold with dawning understanding.

ERIN ROSE

Don't do it, Pat!

Tears well in Pat's eyes as Martin TWIST-CRACK-TWISTS.

PAT

Oh God! It hurts!

CLAYTON
Somebody cut off Pat's arm!

CR-CR-CRACK. The blubbering Pat can take no more.

PAT
C-come in...

Martin drops Pat to the floor, leaving him to nurse his ruined arm.

Martin pushes through the saloon doors.

The SEVERAL DOZEN townsfolk stand at attention as Martin's heavy steps come to a halt.

Through the crowd is Blue Wade. He stares at Martin with new eyes.

Blue Wade lifts his sack of money in the air.

BLUE WADE
This to anyone who kills that thing.

The townsfolk, though shaken, can't resist.

Guns are drawn. Trained on Martin.

Martin's animalistic eyes narrow.

THE BARTENDER watches this from behind the bar. Can't bring himself to join.

As Martin CHARGES into the crowd --

-- we follow the bartender as he ducks down

BEHIND THE BAR

Back against bottles of whiskey, hidden from the carnage.

BANG! BANG! SMASH! SCHRIP!

ROAR!

CLOSE ON THE BARTENDER

The sounds of horrible violence echo through his bar. The bartender stares forward, not wanting to see.

A SPLATTER of blood paints the wall in front of him.

He can hear

--gunshots
--broken tables
--broken bones
--torn flesh
--the cries of the dying
--and the cries of the undead

A CACOPHONY OF DEATH.

Finally, an eerie stillness falls upon the saloon.

The bartender can only hear his own shallow breathes.

Against his better judgement, he pulls himself up.

THE BARTENDER'S POV

The saloon is destroyed.

Tables, chairs, windows all broken. Blood covering nearly every surface. A knocked over lantern has started a SPREADING FIRE.

Eviscerated bodies lie everywhere. Broken bones jutting from skin. Brains splattered.

Remarkably untouched:

BLUE WADE.

And in the center of the carnage is Martin, COVERED IN BLOOD, heaving.

CLOSE ON THE BARTENDER

He swallows.

Martin and the bartender lock eyes for a moment. His fight or flight finally kicks in.

The bartender runs out of his saloon with all he's got.

Martin lets him run. Reaches down and picks up a bloody SIX-SHOOTER.

Casts a glance toward the window. Then stares at Edgardo.

He points the gun at the window and FIRES without looking, SHATTERING the GLASS.

IN THE STREET

The bartender freezes as a bullet goes through the back of his head and out his forehead.

He collapses, dead.

IN THE BAR

Martin throws the gun aside. Bears down on Blue Wade. Blue Wade backs away slowly as Martin approaches. He motions to the bloody bodies around him.

BLUE WADE
Is this what it looked like?

Martin narrows his eyes, not understanding. More flames engulf the bar.

BLUE WADE
Fort Oswald.

Blue Wade tosses Martin's photo onto the floor.

BLUE WADE
Where you killed my parents.

Martin pauses at his precious photo, staring at it longingly. Looks to Blue Wade, who keeps backing away.

BLUE WADE
You really are a monster, aren't you?
Leaving piles of bodies like this
everywhere you go. Making more monsters
out of everyone you touch. Me. Ruby.

Martin SNARLS. Blue Wade pulls out his knife and spins, slicing the ROPE holding the CHANDELIER.

WOMP! Martin is CRUSHED underneath the chandelier. The flames are everywhere now.

Blue Wade whips out his gun...but pops open the cylinder. Slides OUT a bullet. *What is he doing?*

Blue Wade takes his knife and digs into the tip of the bullet. He SLOPPILY PRAYS. In the face of death, he finally asks God for help.

BLUE WADE
Oh holy Lord God Jesus please do your
thing and bless this bullet with your
grace and all that love and divine ass-
kicking.

The chandelier rattles as Martin starts to stand.

Blue Wade hurriedly finishes his work.

BLUE WADE

And Virgin Mary, you can do whatever you
do too, big mama.

He blows the bullet and we see he has carved A CROSS into
the tip.

The chandelier FLIPS over.

Blue Wade loads the bullet.

He points...

...MARTIN IS STANDING IN FRONT OF HIM. He grips Blue
Wade's wrist and BREAKS it. The bullet fires harmlessly
through the burning roof.

Blue Wade stares into Martin's pitiless eyes. Sees his
own death coming.

BLUE WADE

You really did kill my parents, you know?

Martin stares Blue Wade down.

MARTIN

I killed a lot of people. Get over it.

Martin RIPS Blue Wade's throat open with a mighty CHOMP.

Blood sprays. Martin feasting.

But then, in his hyper sensitive ears, the CL-CLICK of a
turning doorknob.

THE BRASS DOORKNOB TURNS

And a CLOSET DOOR flies open --

-- Edgardo JUMPS OUT AND FIRES his SHOTGUN at Martin...

...but Martin isn't standing there anymore. Edgardo is
perplexed.

The closet door swings back closed...

...REVEALING MARTIN.

HE PUNCHES HIS FIST THROUGH EDGARDO'S BACK AND OUT HIS
CHEST.

Edgardo COLLAPSES.

Martin stands for a moment, watching his beloved photo MELT in the fire.

Then, in Martin's attuned ears, RUBY SCREAMS.

INT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - SAME

Ruby defiantly SCREAMS and SNARLS in a corner. A gash down her back. Beside her, PASTOR NATHAN.

PASTOR NATHAN
(singing)
There is a fountain filled with blood
drawn from Emmanuel's veins...

He calmly tightens his grip on the BLOODIED FLOGGER.

Steps toward Ruby. Towers over her.

PASTOR NATHAN
(singing)
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
lose all their guilty stains...

Pulls back his arm.

THWIP.

Ruby SCREAMS again.

EXT. ROCK SPRINGS - MAIN STREET - SAME

Martin strides out of the FLAMING PLAYFUL PUSSYCAT. Framed in the firelight like a shadowy demon.

WHOOOMP!

A body KNOCKS Martin down.

He comes to his feet, disoriented.

Standing before him...VIGGO.

His eyes, ORANGE like Martin's.

His mouth, now replete with FANGS.

A NEWLY TURNED VAMPIRE. The apex predator he always wanted to be.

VIGGO
It's so much more than even I imagined.

Martin looks over the creature before him. Then CHARGES.

Takes a swing at Viggo -- but Viggo AVOIDS the blow and SLAPS Martin across the face.

Martin stumbles, then spins back to face Viggo.

He rushes again -- this time Viggo CATCHES his fist, powering Martin to his knees.

Pushing desperately with all the force in his legs, Martin BARRELS into Viggo's body and takes him CRASHING through the BEAMS of a nearby PORCH.

Wood SPLINTERS around them as they trade FEROCIOUS BLOWS.

Viggo kicks Martin away from him and they face off for a moment.

Viggo reaches to his belt -- produces two JAGGED BLADES.

He spins them in his hands excitedly.

Martin takes deep, seething breaths. CHARGES.

SCHWIP. SLICE.

Viggo spins and tears two wounds into Martin's side.

Martin grips them, blood seeping.

Martin CHARGES AGAIN.

SCHWIP. SCHWIP. SLICE.

This time Viggo carves three wounds into Martin's torso.

Martin staggers. Reaching even his supernatural limit for punishment.

Martin tries to land a PUNCH on Viggo, but he easily gets position behind Martin, jabbing ONE BLADE into his back.

He presses the other against Martin's NECK, threatening decapitation.

VIGGO

How selfish of you to keep this gift to
yourself. To keep it from the one you
call a daughter.

Viggo tightens his dual grip. Pushing the knife deeper into Martin's back. Drawing blood from Martin's neck.

VIGGO

Perhaps, after you are gone, I will give her the gift you have denied her.

Martin CRIES OUT in anger and finds a new reserve of strength.

He raises his arm with the missing hand...jagged bone protruding...

And JABS the bone of his arm into Viggo's neck!

Viggo HOWLS in pain as Martin flips him across the porch.

For a moment, they are both flat on their backs.

Martin's hand feels on the ground. Grips a length of SHARP WOOD as he stands.

Viggo sees this. Does the same.

Martin wobbles as he moves. Viggo, much steadier and cat-like.

They peer at each other, now ten paces apart.

Gunfight distance.

Each wait for the other to make the first move.

The moon is directly overhead, framing the combatants.
High noon for vampires.

Wait...

Wait...

Wait...

DRAW!

Viggo THROWS his STAKE with inhuman force...

But Martin is able to dodge it just as he throws his own stake...

STRAIGHT INTO VIGGO'S HEART.

Bang. He's dead.

Viggo grabs the stake in his heart, crumpling to the ground. His eyes wide in disbelief.

He shakes.

Skin turning to ash.

He looks to Martin desperately. As a kindred spirit.

Martin turns away.

Viggo falls still.

A gust of wind blows his remains.

INT. FIRST CHRIST CHURCH - SAME

Pastor Nathan WHIPS Ruby again. Heaving in exertion. A smile spreading on his face.

The back of Ruby's dress now tattered and bloody. The girl whimpering.

Pastor Nathan's body pulses with righteous ecstasy.

He stops for a moment, gazing at a stained-glass image of Jesus Christ above him, basking.

PASTOR NATHAN

It hurts now, but in the kingdom of
heaven, we'll be together forever Ruby.

CRUNCH.

A candleholder SMASHES into Pastor Nathan's face.

He hits the floor with a THUD.

Ruby stands over him. His cheekbone grotesquely dented.

As Pastor Nathan unsteadily comes to his feet, Ruby runs for her life.

Ruby races down the aisle of the church, Pastor Nathan right behind.

He gets a hand on her shoulder and forces her to the ground, tumbling on top of her in the process.

Pastor Nathan is straddling Ruby, eyes wild with sanctimonious anger.

BOOOOM!

The church doors are SPLINTERED open.

Pastor Nathan looks up in horror.

In the entrance -- Martin.

Pastor Nathan can't believe his eyes. The foul, burnt demon-creature lives.

But in Ruby's eyes, joyful tears. Her daddy is alive.

Pastor Nathan shakes his head in disbelief.

PASTOR NATHAN

No...no...begone beast...you're not
welcome in these halls...

Martin gazes up at the MARQUEE: "All are welcome."

HE STEPS INTO THE CHURCH.

Pastor Nathan skitters backwards, holding Ruby between him and Martin.

Martin marches toward the unholy holy man.

Then, his gait falters.

He keeps walking.

Stumbles into a pew.

Pulls himself back up.

Pastor Nathan looks at Martin's struggle with confusion, then turns back to the HUGE CRUCIFIX on the wall, dominating the church.

A thin smiles forms on his lips.

PASTOR NATHAN

You think you can walk into a house of
GOD, demon? You truly have the pride of
Lucifer himself.

Martin keeps trying to walk, but his body is betraying him. Blood pooling in his eyes.

Pastor Nathan grips his flogger. Pushes past Ruby.

He SLASHES Martin's face, leaving a bloody trail. Pastor Nathan is worked into a frenzy.

PASTOR NATHAN

Pearl could have had the Lord! How dare
she chose a minion of sin! Return to the
fiery pits of hell from whence you came!

THWIP THWIP THWIP!

Pastor Nathan tears Martin's visage apart even further.

Ruby tries to grab Pastor Nathan, but he SLAMS her into a pew, dazing her.

Martin is on his knees now. The beating, the cross, the resurrection all having taken their toll on his body.

He's at the end of himself.

Martin looks to Ruby, who is on the floor. They lock eyes for a brief moment.

MARTIN

"Never say goodbye."

With that --

Martin grabs Pastor Nathan and FLIES STRAIGHT UP INTO THE AIR LIKE PETER PAN HIMSELF.

Pastor Nathan stares at Martin's monstrous face in horror as they SOAR.

Until with all his remaining strength --

Martin IMPALES PASTOR NATHAN UPON THE TOP OF THE CROSS.

Contact with the cross sends Martin careening from the air. He CRUMBLES to the floor.

Pastor Nathan shudders upon the cross.

Dies.

Martin falls still on the ground.

Ruby crawls to him. Holds him.

Martin looks to her. His breath intermittent.

Ruby tries to hold back the tears.

RUBY

You can fly.

Martin smiles...

MARTIN

So can you.

Martin closes his eyes.

Ruby holds him, sobbing.

INT. PLAYFULL PUSSYCAT - LATER

Clayton, Erin Rose, and Pat, broken arm limp at his side, nervously step through the BLOOD and GUTS of the saloon.

Pat approaches a body, kicks it over, revealing...

...the sack of blood money.

Pat looks back and forth his compatriots.

PAT

Now don't start fighting with me over this. I lost my arm tonight!

ERIN ROSE

You're the one what let him in!

They start to tussle. Clayton breaks it up, motioning toward the doorway.

They are turn around.

RUBY.

She stares down Pat. He sees a lot of Martin her. Gulps.

CUT TO:

Ruby walks alone down MAIN STREET, clutching the bag of money.

She heads toward THE TRAIN STATION.

A train JUST ROLLING IN.

EXT. TRAIN CAR - DAWN

The sun breaks over the horizon, casting its rays over the town of Rock Springs.

Ruby stands in the doorway, looking longingly out to Main Street. Her dress in tatters. Blood caked on her face.

A gregarious CONDUCTOR (40s) strolls down the aisle.

CONDUCTOR

Tickets! Tickets please!

He appears behind Ruby. Taken aback by her appearance.

CONDUCTOR

Are you okay, young lady?

Ruby hands her ticket over to him while keeping her eyes fixed on the dusty road.

Uncertain what to do, he examines the ticket. Eyes widen.

CONDUCTOR

Yukon Territory? That's quite a few connections for a girl all by herself. You sure you don't need any help?

She turns to him. Pins him with her stare.

RUBY

I'm not by myself.

Just then, a riderless BLACK HORSE comes into view.

It drags MARTIN'S COFFIN behind it.

The conductor is stricken by the sight.

Ruby, however, looks at it with joy.

RUBY

Put it with my luggage.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SUNRISE

Ruby looks out the window, the sun now over the horizon.

The train rolls past

PEARL'S HOMESTEAD.

Ruby watches the only home she's ever known speed by.

The fields. The barn. The house.

She mouths "goodbye" as they pass Pearl's grave.

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

We see Ruby's room, but it is empty.

INT. LUGGAGE CAR - DAY

We pass through stacks of leather-bound bags of every shape and size...

Until we stop upon Martin's coffin...

Ruby soundly asleep on top of it.

INT. LUGGAGE CAR - DUSK

Ruby, awake, gazes out the window **as the sun finally disappears over the horizon, darkening the car...**

And in the reflection of the glass...

A figure appears...

Ruby sees this...

Turns...

And upon seeing who it is...

Smiles.

FADE OUT