

Haven

by  
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EXT. PRAIRIE - DANVILLE OUTSKIRTS - DAWN

Dawn over the prairie. Green and yellow grasses wave in the breeze; rays of golden light creep across the sky.

A BIRD darts after a bug hiding in the tawny grass.

Standing in a knot of trees watching the sunrise is DAX MORROW, a beast of a man with a graying beard and plenty of scars. He is chewing on a piece of prairie oat.

A dull THUMP echoes across the field. As the town of DANVILLE comes into view - RAT-A-TAT-TAT - we hear the percussive sound of automatic weapons.

DANVILLE

A collection of RAMSHACKLE BUILDINGS sits around a DECREPIT ROAD. Built from scrap, wood, and the remnants of old houses, it seems as though the town was put together with whatever could be found.

Tendrils of SMOKE rise from the buildings, many of which have had walls or roofs blown off. Mud EMPLACEMENTS surround the town, providing cover for the men firing on the settlement.

BEAR, Morrow's aptly named lieutenant, joins his boss. Morrow doesn't look at him and Bear doesn't spare the town a glance.

MORROW

Is the battalion in place?

BEAR

Just waiting for their signal.

Morrow checks his RADIO, a beat-up device from another era.

MORROW

The Barons still won't surrender?

BEAR

Yep.

MORROW

They should have given up days ago.

BEAR

We wouldn't get the glory if they'd surrendered.

MORROW

Fuck glory. Glory is for dead men and dreamers. I want the land.

THREE BURSTS OF STATIC on the radio - the signal.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Raise the men.

Bear nods, and strides back into the trees. Morrow gives the town one last look, then spits out the oat and follows him.

AT CENTRAL COMMAND

Half a dozen veterans crowd around a large MAP OF THE MIDWEST spread across a table. Little tokens mark out troops & companies. At the head of the table is WOMACK, a young man out of place leading the grizzled generals in this meeting.

WOMACK

That was the signal, right?

GENERAL

Aye. They'll be mounting up for the attack now.

WOMACK

And then they go?

GENERAL

And then they go.

THE TROOPS

Morrow's gang, the HELLCATS, run among a collection of motorbikes, ATVs and cars. All around, engines COUGH and SPUTTER to life. Some of the vehicles have weapons mounted on them; all of them look as though they were cobbled together from old parts. They are Morrow's MOTORIZED CAVALRY.

Morrow walks in front of his men, inspecting the troops.

MORROW

Tight formation into the town.  
We're pressing right to the heart;  
let the men in the field take care  
of the perimeter.

He walks over to his bike, a gorgeous Harley painted purple, a white tiger snarling along the gas can. Morrow runs a finger along it lovingly.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Boys, we've been sitting out in  
this field for a week freezing our  
nuts off.

(MORE)

MORROW (CONT'D)

Well today, it all becomes worth it. When we take Danville, it'll be purple from the ruins of Chicago to the Ohio River.

The Hellcats HOOT.

MORROW (CONT'D)

You are the toughest bastards in North America. Don't you forget it.

The men CHEER again. They're getting pumped.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Kill a Baron? I owe you a drink.  
Kill Kowalski? I owe you a case.  
Get killed while we take care of business? I'll have the Devil send you rotgut so strong St. Peter gets blisters handling it!

LAUGHTER.

MORROW (CONT'D)

(pointing at the town)

There is the last thing between us and the promised era. An era of tilled fields and new industry. An era where your sons and daughters can walk the land unarmed and unafraid, protected by a few simple words: I am a Hellcat.

The Hellcats CHEER. Morrow's bike ROARS to life.

ANGLE ON: DANVILLE

The YELLS and ENGINE NOISES echo across the prairie to the defenders' positions. Men with red headbands and insignias share frightened looks and clench their rifles tightly.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Stay strong. Do not waver. We have come too far to fail now.

He presses the button on his radio and leaps onto his bike.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Today, we remake the world!

The HELLCATS let out a deafening WARCRY. Morrow GUNS the engine and races down the road; his men, whipped up into a frenzy, are right behind him.

## ANGLE ON: DEFENDERS' POSITIONS

Filthy soldiers fire out of windows at the Hellcats in the fields. These are the BARONS, each man wearing red apparel.

Men carry MOUNTED MACHINE GUNS up to the makeshift ramparts. Others stay down behind cover, trying to catch a moment of rest among the siege.

One Baron spots the motorized cavalry emerging from the trees. We see his eyes go wide.

BARON

It's Morrow! Open fire!

Men scramble to positions and let loose into the Hellcats. The GUNFIRE only adds to the deafening scene.

## ANGLE ON: THE CHARGE

The Hellcats are far enough away that most rounds WHISTLE past or bounce harmlessly off armored cars and bikes. A few unlucky men catch bullets and tumble into the grass.

MORROW

(yelling)

Where are they?

BEAR

Coming in!

MORROW

I don't hear--

WHUMP. WHUMP. WHUMP.

## ANGLE ON: DEFENDERS' POSITIONS

The mounted guns are just coming online. Bullets are being loaded and sights are being taken.

BARON

Come on, come on, come on -

He locks eyes with Morrow across the prairie. For a moment, both men are frozen. Then, the grim smile creeps across Morrow's face and there's a high-pitched WHINE -

BARON (CONT'D)

Mortars!

The Barons dive for cover as the entire front of Danville suddenly EXPLODES--

ANGLE ON: THE HELLCATS

Who ROAR in bloodthirsty triumph as the shells hit just a few hundred feet in front of them, clearing the way into...

EXT. DANVILLE STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The HELLCATS swarm Danville. BARONS drop like flies, choking first on dust and smoke, then on lead. A few brave - or foolhardy - Barons get clear and try to man an emplacement.

Morrow raises his gun - far too large to be fired with one arm - and pulls the trigger. It has a massive recoil, but he treats it like it's a pop gun.

A halo of blood appears around the lead Baron's head, and he slumps out of sight.

Some Hellcats take up positions as the charge continues, and begin clearing houses. Men - soldiers or otherwise - are shot where they stand. Women are snatched from their children, who are left to cower as their families are torn apart.

Morrow continues to lead the main column, though they're losing momentum as the streets narrow. The fighting grows fiercer and bloodier, until Morrow rounds a corner and finds himself staring at a wall of debris. He turns and tries to lead the column a different direction, but the Barons have regrouped, and the cavalry are trapped.

BARON

Open fire!

The defenders let loose everything they have: grenades, rifles and a MOUNTED MACHINE GUN recovered from the mortar attack tear into the purple troops.

The Hellcats scatter, but many fall in the chaos. Their falling bikes make it even harder to escape. Morrow falls - is he hit? - but then he's on his feet and racing for cover. He ducks behind one of the armored cars, and finds BEAR -

MORROW

Holy fuck!

BEAR

That thing's cutting us to pieces.

MORROW

Well, they had to use their brains  
at some point.

BEAR

We can try and go around.

MORROW

No. They'll have barricaded  
everything. We go through here.

BEAR

What about the gun?

Morrow peers over the car at the defenses. The machine gun  
fires on anything that moves, so the Hellcats aren't moving.

MORROW

Easy.

He pulls a GRENADE off of his bandolier and pulls the pin.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Cover fire!

Suddenly, the Hellcats all pop out of their positions and  
fire on the defenders. The machine gun swivels wildly, trying  
to figure out whom to target.

Bear and Morrow pop up and hurl their grenades down the  
street. It's a long throw, and one falls short - bouncing up  
to the bottom of the wall. The other clears it, and then they  
both EXPLODE - SMOKE and DEBRIS is everywhere, the wounded  
are SCREAMING - and the machine gun has been silenced.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Charge!

The Hellcats swarm the Barons' line. It's tight quarters, and  
there is as much call for blades as there is for guns. The  
defenders fight desperately, falling back - they've got  
another gun emplacement - the Hellcats are exposed - Morrow  
looks up to see the Barons lining him up -

BOOM! A grenade goes off and wipes out the emplacement.  
Hellcats come swarming up from the far side of the Baron's  
defenses - a classic pincer movement!

The Barons' defenses collapse, the fight sucked from them.  
The guns have stopped. Morrow and his Hellcats have won.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Victory!

CHEERS erupt throughout the ruined town.

INT. WAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The assembled men CHEER and hug at SOUNDS OF VICTORY on the radio. WOMACK's got a big grin and he's shaking hands and clapping.

GENERAL  
We should celebrate.

WOMACK  
Yes. Yes! A feast! A feast to my  
father's greatest victory yet!

Another CHEER as the cigars and booze come out.

INT. DEPOT - MORNING

The home for all Hellcat vehicles and convoys. It's noisy, but MACHINE SOUNDS are giving way to excited CHATTER as the mechanics and drivers head out to the celebrations.

In the corner of one of the shops, tucked in next to an ARMORED WAGON, KATE argues with a DRIVER. She's in her twenties, hair pulled back, a little dirt on her face.

KATE  
It's not even out of your way. Just  
give me a lift to Lakeside  
Junction. I can get the rest of the  
way myself.

DRIVER  
I ain't going anywhere near there.

KATE  
Yes you are. You literally can't  
get to Toledo any other way.

DRIVER  
Oh. Right.

He's not really paying attention. He's too busy trying to see what's going on with the feast.

KATE  
I don't need a seat or anything.  
I'll sit in the cargo hold.



DRIVER  
Can't sit back there. That's where  
the cargo goes.

KATE  
There's always a little room. And I  
can pay.

DRIVER  
Yeah?

Kate drops a PURSE on the TOOLCHEST between them. It CLINKS.

KATE  
Yeah.

DRIVER  
(now paying attention)  
Three hundred.

KATE  
Sixty dollars.

DRIVER  
Three hundred. You'll cost a  
hundred in gas alone.

KATE  
Well that's crap. Gas is cheaper  
then it's been in my lifetime...

A pair of mechanics stroll out the door. One of them waves to  
the driver as they head out.

MECHANIC  
You coming?

DRIVER  
Be right there!  
(to Kate)  
Three hundred. I ain't arguing.  
Take it or leave it.

KATE  
Where am I going to get that much?

DRIVER  
Wherever you got that from.

KATE  
I've got sixty in the whole world.

DRIVER  
 (turning to leave)  
 Too bad. I'm not running a taxi  
 service.

KATE  
 Wait. Just look.

She pulls out a faded, battered MAP and lays it across the  
 toolchest. It's essentially an old road map of OHIO, though  
 it's been heavily marked up.

KATE (CONT'D)  
 You're gonna drive up the northway  
 right? I'm just trying to go here.

ANGLE ON: THE MAP

Kate points to a spot near one of the northbound highways. We  
 can see the major cities in the region--Columbus, Cleveland,  
 Pittsburgh--have all been marked out. In red, along the WV-PA  
 border, a circle has been drawn and labeled 'Haven.'

DRIVER  
 Ain't happening.

KATE  
 You sure?  
 (hesitating)  
 I could...sweeten the deal...

DRIVER  
 No thanks, kid. You're cute, but I  
 can get all that from the tavern  
 girls, and for a whole lot less.

KATE  
 Come on. I don't even need to make  
 the junction. Take me as far as my  
 money will get me. I'll walk the  
 rest of the way.

DRIVER  
 Look, if I drop you off, you won't  
 make it fifty yards. Erie's just  
 like Haven--it ain't real.

KATE  
 Haven? I don't--

DRIVER  
 And I don't need to have you on my  
 conscience. You or the kid.

He points at her stomach, and for the first time we see the BUMP that is just barely visible under her sweater.

KATE

Please. I...we can't stay here.

DRIVER

(leaving)

Seems like for you, there ain't nowhere else. Best get used to it.

EXT. LANCASTER - MORNING

Morrow's seat of power, LANCASTER is a city that looks as though it has been built from spare parts.

TABLES are coming out into the SQUARE, PURPLE BANNERS are being draped from buildings, and the DRINKING has already started. KATE winds through the proceedings, barely sparing them a glance.

INT. TOWN HALL - KITCHENS - MORNING

Only a single ray of sunlight shines through a filthy window, illuminating rusted appliances and stained floors. ALICE and NANDI, both roughly Kate's age, are peeling potatoes and chatting. In charge of the kitchen is MAIME, an older woman with a narrow, stern face. She wheels at KATE's arrival.

MAIME

Good morning, Katie.

KATE

Morning.

MAIME

Where have you been? The sun's been up for an hour.

KATE

I was just--

MAIME

Get breakfast going. Now, please.

KATE

Yes, Maime.

The other girls snicker at Kate.

MAIME

Now that you're all here...  
Womack's ordered a feast tonight.  
All the work today will be in  
service of that.

ALICE

Are we going to get to go?

MAIME

You can go after the toast. But I  
need someone to - we'll need to  
keep it open in case we run short  
of something.

NANDI

Kate was late. She should stay.

MAIME

You're late every other day.

ALICE

It's okay. We drew straws at the  
boarding house. Kate lost.

IN THE PANTRY

Kate can hear everything. She shakes her head at Alice's lie.

MAIME (O.S.)

Fine. Katie will stay. You and  
Nandi can go.

NANDI (O.S.)

Thanks, Maime!

Kate comes back with eggs, bread, and bacon while the girls  
LAUGH at her and celebrate Maime's decision.

MAIME

(sharply)

That's enough. Nandi, go find out  
what Bear needs. You're helping him  
today. Alice, help Katie out and  
for once actually wash a dish.

ALICE

Can I have the radio?

MAIME

As long as Katie is fine with it.

Nandi scoots off, and Alice turns to Kate, now cooking eggs.

ALICE  
 (not really asking)  
 You don't mind, do you?

KATE  
 No...I guess not.

Alice skips over to an ancient RADIO in the window and turns it on. CHEERFUL MUSIC fills the kitchen and the day begins.

#### THE FEAST

Looks like a lot of fun. There's plenty of drinking and dancing. KATE doesn't get to do any of it. Even when she has a chance to escape the kitchen, she barely has a moment to get food before being ordered off to do something else.

WOMACK seems to be enjoying himself. He may have been awkward among the generals, but he knows how to party. Plenty of booze, plenty of meat, a woman on each arm and a reckless attitude make him the life of the head table.

The party goes deep into the night, and it's not until MAIME finds Kate passed out next to a crate of vegetables and wakes her that Kate's workday is over.

#### EXT. TOWN HALL - KITCHENS - NIGHT

MAIME locks the kitchen while a tired KATE looks on.

MAIME  
 Thank you for doing the work today.

KATE  
 You're welcome.

MAIME  
 You should take the day off tomorrow.

KATE  
 You'll be able to manage?

MAIME  
 Of course. Nandi & Alice do know how to do the job, even if they're always trying to avoid it.

They walk down the dirt road. A rare streetlamp lights up the outside of the ramshackle buildings.

MAIME (CONT'D)

I heard you were hanging around the depot again.

KATE

Oh?

MAIME

Furtive meetings with drivers. Money exchanged. Promises of intimate favors?

KATE

It's not what you think.

MAIME

You're wasting your time. The drivers will just take your money and leave without you. Or worse, they'll take you with them.

KATE

It's not some barren wasteland out there. People travel, hitchhike, take care of one another.

MAIME

And other people rob, rape, and murder those people.

KATE

They do that here, too.

MAIME

It's safe here. I get it, you didn't want to come to Lancaster. But God wanted you to come here, and He delivered you into my care.

KATE

God had nothing to do with it. The Hellcats brought me here.

MAIME

What matters is you are here. You're not in bondage. You have a roof over your head. And you have people who care for you. Stop trying to cast us aside and let us help.

KATE

Maime, you're the only one who cares about me.

MAIME

That's not true. Nandi & Alice love you. So do the rest of the girls.

KATE

Nandi and Alice just use me. They're the reason I was in the kitchens all night, while they were off drinking and dancing and--

MAIME

Why do you have to be so difficult?

KATE

I'm not being difficult. This isn't my home, and you wishing otherwise isn't going to change that.

MAIME

Home isn't a house and a scrap of dirt. It's the people who care about you. And they're all here.

KATE

No they aren't. Dax Morrow saw to that.

They come to a BOARDING HOUSE, a three-story tenement made from corrugated metal and cinderblocks.

KATE (CONT'D)

Good night Mamie.

She storms up the porch and into the building, door slamming shut behind her.

MAIME

Good night.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - KATE'S ROOM - NIGHT

WOMACK is sitting on the windowsill when Kate walks in, a bottle dangling from his fingers.

KATE

Womack.

WOMACK

Where have you been? I was looking for you.

KATE

Kitchens.

WOMACK

Uh-huh.

KATE

It's my job.

WOMACK

Just as long as it's your only job.

Womack staggers to his feet and puts his hands on Kate's stomach. He's clearly drunk.

KATE

It won't kick. Not old enough yet.

WOMACK

I know that. You're taking good care of him, right? No drink, no smoke, nothing.

He pulls off Kate's coat and drops it to the floor. Kate steps back to the door and holds it open.

KATE

It could be a girl.

WOMACK

It'll be a boy. Ain't no such thing as a Morrow girl. Morrow men only make more men.

KATE

You should go home.

WOMACK

I was thinking...

KATE

I've been sick all day. I had to run the kitchens by myself.

WOMACK

Oh. Well, I could help you relax...

KATE

Good night, Womack.

Womack staggers out. Kate closes the door behind him.

LATER, IN BED

KATE stares up at the ceiling. SHOUTS echo through the night.



## FLASHBACK - HELLCAT OUTPOST - TWILIGHT

TRUCKS, crammed with captives/refugees, pull into a makeshift camp. Armed men march scared people and families to and from holding areas.

KATE & SAM, a handsome but bloodied man her age, are forced off of a truck at gunpoint. They try to keep together, but the soldiers have other ideas.

They're ripped apart. Kate is herded with the women and children. She can see as Sam is forced into line with the other men of age. A DRILL SERGEANT walks back and forth in front of the line.

## DRILL SERGEANT

You have benefitted from the protection of Dax Morrow and his Hellcats. Our great leader, first among men, has given up more than you can imagine so that you can tend to your patches of dirt and raise your ugly children. And now you will repay him.

They are chained together; a Hellcat BRANDS each man's shoulder while each conscript is held in place.

## DRILL SERGEANT (CONT'D)

We fight the enemies of Lancaster. Isaiah Cardale tries to take your homes from you. Garret Wicks wants to salt your fields. You are here because you cowered and ran. We are here to give you a spine.

Sam is forced to his knees and branded. He CRIES out in pain. Kate pulls free and runs for the fence that separates them.

## KATE

Sam!

## DRILL SERGEANT

Any man who cowers shall be shot.  
Any man who refuses to fight shall be shot. Any man who runs should hope that he is shot when recaptured, else he will live out a thousand lifetimes of agony, tortured for all to see.

Kate is forced back into line. Along with the other captive women, she is loaded into the back of a truck - her struggles nothing to the soldiers.

KATE

SAM!

Sam staggers to his feet

SAM

KATIE!

He tries to go after her, but a Hellcat rifle smacks him down into the mud, blood pouring from a new gash on his face.

DRILL SERGEANT

But each man who does his duty has nothing to fear! He shall be reunited with his family in Lancaster, the greatest city left in our ruined world!

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - KATE'S ROOM - PRE-DAWN

KATE jerks awake, GASPING. She barely makes it out of bed before morning sickness takes over, sending her to the floor in front of the trashcan.

KATE

(panting)

I'm fine... I'm fine...

She staggers to her feet. Pulling the blanket off her bed, she wraps it around herself before splashing some water on her face and slipping out of her room.

INT. TOWN HALL - GREAT HALL - DAWN

MAIME is sitting at one of the tables, poring over a ledger. The hall is trashed: tables overturned, garbage everywhere, even a Hellcat or two passed out in odd positions.

The door CREAKS open and KATE slips in. Maime doesn't look up at first, but just as Kate finishes crossing the room, she catches sight of her.

MAIME

Katie?

Kate stops and walks back over to the table.

MAIME (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

KATE  
 I couldn't sleep.  
 (beat)  
 I'm sorry about last night.

MAIME  
 It's all right. It was a long day.  
 I think we both just needed some  
 sleep.

KATE  
 Yeah...

MAIME  
 Why don't you take today off? Get  
 some rest.

KATE  
 Sure. Thanks.  
 (beat)  
 This place is a disaster.

MAIME  
 When Womack throws a party, it  
 always gets out of control.

KATE  
 He came to visit me last night.

MAIME  
 Oh, Katie. Did he--

KATE  
 He was drunk. And I was sober.

MAIME  
 I know I shouldn't pry. But are you  
 ever being...forced?

KATE  
 No. No, he listens when I ask him  
 to leave. But he keeps trying.

MAIME  
 You know you can tell him to leave  
 you alone for good. I can make sure  
 he does. One bad night shouldn't...

KATE  
 It won't work. He thinks it's his.

Maime purses her lips, thought crinkling her brow. Looking  
 around to make sure no one conscious is nearby, she leans  
 over and takes Kate's hands in hers.

MAIME

You haven't told him the truth.

KATE

No.

MAIME

Well, keep it to yourself. Morrow gets back today, he'll reel in the boy. But if you shame him...

KATE

I won't do anything. Womack treats me fine. Sometimes, he's even nice to me. And a lot of the men leave me alone for fear of angering him.

MAIME

He's not good for you, Kate. He's bad news.

KATE

Believe me, I know.

Kate squeezes Maime's hands and gives her a reassuring smile.

KATE (CONT'D)

But it's not so bad knowing you're watching my back.

EXT. PRAIRIE - HIGHWAY - DAY

The air above the highway is distorted from the heat of the sun. A RUMBLE grows in volume, climaxing when MORROW leads the COLUMN OF VICTORIOUS HELLCATS over the rise.

WIDE: THE COLUMN

Stretches from here to the horizon. Trucks, bikes, cars, and jeeps, all are loaded down with the spoils of war. Ahead is a

WATCHTOWER

It's a simple structure - a steel frame with a crow's nest reinforced with sandbags.

Of course, there's not much point in having a watchtower if there's no one to do any watching. There is no sign of anyone - just a purple flag flapping in the summer wind.

Morrow picks up his RADIO and pushes the button.

MORROW

Where the hell are my sentries?

BEAR, riding shotgun in a JEEP nearby, does the same.

BEAR

Don't know. We haven't lost the position. They're posted from Lancaster so we'll find out when we get home.

MORROW

They're posted from...are you telling me that Womack isn't keeping the guard up?

BEAR

Well, they'd report to the watch commander, but yes, your son is ultimately responsible.

Morrow's face is stone.

MORROW

I see.

He clicks the radio off and SLAMS it back on its hook.

EXT. LANCASTER - DAY

The streets are filling with CITIZENS OF LANCASTER. The news of Morrow's return has them flocking to the MAIN DRAG, purple and white out in force.

ANGLE ON: WOMACK

Who staggers, clearly hungover, out the front door of the BOARDING HOUSE. Slowly pulling on his jacket, he pushes his way through the crowd, the only grumpy person in town.

WOMACK

(shoving someone)

Move! Get out of the way!

ANGLE ON: THE KITCHEN STAFF

ALICE & NANDI are standing on barrels, both cheering and flirting. KATE & MAIME stand next to them, straining to see.

Lancaster is noisy with the chatter of the crowd. Slowly, the familiar RUMBLE of engines begins to swell, and with it the excitement of the masses. Then--

SENTRY

Hellcats approach! Open the gate!

The GATE swings open, the GRATE slides up, a BAND begins to play...then we see the HELLCATS and the crowd CHEERS--

EXT. LANCASTER - CONTINUOUS

Sun at his back, MORROW leads the HELLCATS home. People are waving banners and straining to get a better angle to see.

WOMACK slouches through the crowd and takes his place on the stairs of the TOWN HALL.

Morrow and his men roll into the TOWN SQUARE, the post-feast mess compounded by all the people. He steps off his bike, climbs a few stairs, and then turns and raises his arms. The people, and many of the engines, fall silent.

MORROW

People of Lancaster! Today is a glorious day! Today, at long last, our years of strife, warfare, and bloodshed are over. We have crushed Danville under heel, and removed the last threat to peace and prosperity in our lands!

The crowd CHEERS. Morrow raises his hands for silence.

MORROW (CONT'D)

But though the battle is over, our work is not done. Tomorrow, the real work begins. Tomorrow, we sue for peace.

CUT TO:

BIKERS ON A PRARIE HIGHWAY

The CHECKERS fly a black & white flag with a red emblem, and wear loads of tacky jewelry.

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

Even now, Isaiah Cardale rides north with the Checkers.

(MORE)

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

Garrett Wicks has been permitted to cross at Gallipolis with his Rattlers. They are headed here.

The RATTLEERS have no flag or color scheme, but their riders look the roughest of any of the gangs. Their bikes are covered with all manner of spikes and dangerous accessories.

MORROW (CONT'D)

I see concern on many of your faces. But you have nothing to fear. Even if our neighbors were a threat to us, they come to hear terms for peace. That we may forge a new path, and set a shining example in this terrible world. Tomorrow, we forge a new peace, the kind not seen since the Fall! So today, let us remember our brothers, our sons, our friends and family--all who have died to bring us to this moment. This moment, where we have peace--true peace--within our grasp. Today we remember. Tomorrow, we build!

The crowd CHEERS, flags are waved, and the band begins playing again. Morrow turns, and locks eyes with his son.

WOMACK

Hello, Father...

MORROW

Inside. Now.

INT. TOWN HALL - GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

The doors burst open to admit MORROW & WOMACK.

MORROW

Everyone out!

The few people cleaning, milling about, all scurry for cover. It's not until the last door SLAMS shut that Morrow begins circling his miserable son.

MORROW (CONT'D)

You look ill.

WOMACK

I'm fine.

MORROW

You seem pale.

WOMACK

I wasn't expecting you back this morning.

MORROW

And yet here I am.

Womack is clearly trying not to shake in front of his father.

WOMACK

It's good to have you back.

MORROW

Well, it's not good to be back!  
What the hell have you been doing?

WOMACK

You left me to run the town, and that's what I've been doing. The feasts have been very successful--

MORROW

You've been running this place into the ground! No sentries on watch, incompetent staff, no money, and a goddamn trash heap in my square. I should put you on the front lines, see how long it takes you to develop lead poisoning.

WOMACK

But the people are happy! You talk about winning hearts and minds--I was winning hearts and minds!

MORROW

Happy? Don't make me laugh. I bet if I spend thirty minutes wandering around out there I'll find out just how happy they are with your brand of leadership.

WOMACK

Extremely happy?

MORROW

What, because you gave them a bit of ale and a turkey leg one night? Think again.

(MORE)



MORROW (CONT'D)

A feast doesn't matter when the people can't feed their families and your thugs beat them for just meeting their gaze.

WOMACK

Some of the men have been overstepping. It's not my fault.

MORROW

Don't pass the buck. You run the men, you're responsible for them. How are you going to make it right?

WOMACK

I-I held the feasts. We can punish the men. Or give restitution to--

MORROW

Oh? And how are we supposed to pay for your extravagance?

WOMACK

We have the money for it.

MORROW

I have the money for it. And it's staying in my pocket. You will pay back every cent yourself.

WOMACK

That's not fair.

MORROW

Not fair? Who the hell do you think you are, talking to me about fair? Everything you see, every purple flag, your entire goddamn life, I built from nothing. And you have the gall to bitch about fair? You've been living in the lap of luxury your whole life.

WOMACK

I didn't mean-

MORROW

One thing. Name one thing you made for yourself.

WOMACK

My son.

Morrow freezes. Then he takes his seat at the high table and pours himself a drink.

MORROW  
(sighing)  
What did you do?

WOMACK  
I'm having a baby.

MORROW  
Who's the mother?

WOMACK  
One of the kitchen girls. But it's all right. The doctor is confident it's a boy. Our line will continue.

MORROW  
Our line...

He drains the glass and pours himself another. Getting up, he walks over to the mural on the wall, sipping slowly.

MORROW (CONT'D)  
Have you promised to marry her?

WOMACK  
Of course not.

Morrow glares at Womack, who backs down a bit.

WOMACK (CONT'D)  
(quietly)  
No.

MORROW  
No question it's yours?

WOMACK  
(hesitating)  
No.

MORROW  
Well, you fucked up. But in this case, you might have done so to our benefit. Tainted blood is still worth something. A bastard is still a Morrow of Lancaster. He'll still be a Hellcat.

WOMACK  
I will raise him to be strong.  
He'll be a warrior worthy of you.

MORROW

Don't bother. I want him for his name, not his fighting arm.

WOMACK

Father, I--

MORROW

Clean yourself up. Be back in time to meet with Wicks and Cardale.

Womack bites his tongue and nods in acquiescence.

WOMACK

I won't fuck it up.

MORROW

And bring your woman.

WOMACK

Father?

MORROW

You've done something useful for once. Let's show everyone.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

The house is a frenzy; it seems like every available stove and oven is being used to heat BUCKETS OF WATER. The women living there filling, heating, and carrying with mechanical efficiency. The buckets travel up the stairs and into a--

TILED BATHROOM

Where the water is dumped into a steel BATHTUB, steam curling off the surface. KATE dumps a final bucket of water in and starts to strip down. MAIME comes in with a BATH KIT. She sets it on a shelf near the tub and tries to help Kate, only to be waved off.

KATE

I can take a bath myself.

MAIME

All right. I'll find you something to wear.

Maime retreats, and Kate slides into the tub. She lies in the warm water, looking up at the ceiling. A KNOCK at the door announces the return of Maime.

MAIME (CONT'D)  
 (holding up a dress)  
 How's this?

KATE  
 It's... fine.

Maime hangs the dress on the door. Opening up the kit, she hands Kate a bar of HANDMADE SOAP.

MAIME  
 You scrub you and I'll do your hair. Hurry up!

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - KATE'S ROOM - DAY

A dirt-free KATE is brushing her hair in front of her mirror when MAIME comes in with a battered TIN BOX.

KATE  
 What's that?

Maime opens it to reveal the last dregs of a MAKEUP KIT.

KATE (CONT'D)  
 Makeup? Maime, that must cost a fortune. I don't need it.

MAIME  
 And I have no use for it. You do.

KATE  
 I barely know how to put it on.

MAIME  
 I do. Bring your face over here.

Kate scoots her chair over to where Maime is sitting. Maime pulls a brush out of the kit and starts to apply the makeup.

KATE  
 Thank you.

MAIME  
 It's all right. This meeting is a big deal, and I want you to be as ready for it as you can be.

KATE  
 Womack just wants to show off.

MAIME

It's more than that. You've caught the interest of Dax Morrow. I was hoping he'd just get Womack to leave you and the girls alone. But under his wing, you could have a great life. No kitchen work, no sharing a house with all these other girls. Just you and your baby.

KATE

And Womack.

Maime smudges the eyeliner.

MAIME

Maybe Morrow will see things your way. Hold still.

KATE

Morrow wouldn't deign to speak with me. And he'd take his son's side in an argument with a kitchen girl.

MAIME

You put too little faith in others.

KATE

I put no faith in the people who kidnapped me. The best thing I can do for me and my child is leave.

Maime switches tools, sighing as she does.

MAIME

Have you ever heard of Haven? Supposed to be this mythical city, hidden in the Appalachians. Far side of Rattler territory. Only remnant of life before the Fall.

KATE

Sure. Everyone has.

MAIME

My son spent four years looking for that place. All it got him was a bullet in the head.

KATE

I'm sorry.

MAIME

I don't want your sympathy. I want your understanding. There's nothing out there for you.

She finishes with the makeup and closes the tin.

KATE

What is there for me here?

MAIME

There's a struggle. There's life. There's whatever you make of it.

She points at the mirror. Kate turns and sees herself, clean, dressed, and beautiful - a completely different person than the dirty kitchen drudge.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

WOMACK has cleaned himself up - no stubble, slicked hair, and clothes that are actually clean. He's pacing back and forth on the front steps, checking a pocket watch.

KATE comes around the corner, MAIME in tow, and she looks stunning. Womack stares, breath catching.

WOMACK

You look... you look great.

KATE

Thanks.

When Kate reaches him, he actually drops to a knee and kisses her hand.

KATE (CONT'D)

I...oh!

MAIME

Oh my!

WOMACK

Ready to be a princess?

Kate nods, and Womack grins.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

Then let's go.

He leads Kate into the hall.

MAIME

You'll be great Katie!

## INSIDE THE GREAT HALL

MORROW & BEAR are conversing at the head of the room, while Hellcat Generals float around socializing. Most of them turn when KATE & WOMACK enter, sizing up the couple.

WOMACK  
Hello Father.

MORROW  
Womack. Is this her?

WOMACK  
This is Kate. Kate, meet my father,  
Dax Morrow, our fearless leader,  
the Boss Cat, King of the Midwest.

KATE  
(curtsying)  
It's an honor to meet you, sir.

MORROW  
No need for titles. Morrow is fine.

He sizes her up.

MORROW (CONT'D)  
You're healthy? Getting enough to  
eat? Womack treats you well?

KATE  
Yes sir.

MORROW  
How far along are you?

WOMACK  
(proudly)  
Three months.

Morrow raises an eyebrow.

MORROW  
You're showing a lot for someone  
only three months along.

Kate laughs uncomfortably.

WOMACK  
The doctor says it's a sign of my  
virility. That it will be a big,  
healthy boy.

MORROW

Does he...Well, welcome, Miss Kate.

The sound of ENGINES floods the hall through the open door.

BEAR

They're here.

MORROW

Let's go meet our guests.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

The CHECKERS & RATTTLERS have arrived and have parked on either side of the SQUARE.

MORROW leads his men out onto the front stairs of the TOWN HALL. All around, the people of Lancaster watch in various states of curiosity, fear, and excitement.

MORROW

Welcome, my friends, to the halls  
of the Hellcats! Thank you for  
being here on this historic day!

GARRETT WICKS leads the Rattlers, and ISAIAH CARDALE leads the Checkers. Wicks is a greasy, balding man with black teeth and a nasty sneer. Cardale is a young man, dressed impeccably save for his ostentatious gold jewelry. They both lead their men up to meet Morrow and the three leaders all shake hands.

CARDALE

Pleasure to be here, Morrow.  
Congratulations on your latest  
victory.

WICKS

Aye. I hope you have something good  
for us. Your messenger showed up  
right in the middle of my sessions.  
So this shit better be worth it.

MORROW

It will be. Would you like to come  
see your quarters before we feast?

WICKS

No. I'd like to get it over with.  
We can eat while you talk.

MORROW

Cardale?



CARDALE

(shrugs)

Fine with me. I can't stay all that long anyway.

MORROW

So be it. Follow me.

BACK INSIDE

WOMACK and KATE meet the negotiators as they find their places at the table.

CARDALE

Well, if it ain't Morrow Junior.

WOMACK

Good afternoon, gentlemen.

WICKS

Who's the bitch?

MORROW

My son's concubine.

WOMACK

She's not my--

WICKS

She's got no business here. You can't be talking serious with Trixie batting her eyelashes at ya.

CARDALE

C'mon, Wicks. Let Junior have his little prize. You're drinking their beer after all.

(to Kate)

Does you have a name?

KATE

Kate.

CARDALE

And I am Isaiah Cardale. It's a pleasure to meet you.

Cardale bends forward and kisses Kate's hand.

CARDALE (CONT'D)

I have many wives, but none of them are as lovely as you.

(MORE)

CARDALE (CONT'D)

If you'd care for a change of scenery, you will always have a place in my castle.

Eyes roll, Wicks glowers, and Womack scowls.

WOMACK

Back off, Cardale.

WICKS

This is exactly the crap I'm talking about. I want her gone.

CARDALE

Oh, lighten up, the pair of you.

MORROW

Are we done?

Cardale shrugs.

WICKS

As soon as Womack gets rid of his bitch, we can--

WOMACK

Call her a bitch again. I dare you.

MORROW

Are you trying to set terms in my house, Garrett Wicks? After I have shown you my generous hospitality?

WICKS

Women are a source of agitation, Morrow. I want her gone.

MORROW

My meeting. My rules. Got a problem with that?

The tension is palpable. Wicks is gnashing his teeth, but Morrow is clearly the one with the power here.

WICKS

No. No problem.

MORROW

Good. Let's get started.

Spread across the table is a giant MAP, centered on OHIO. The map covers most of the Midwest & Northeast.

Towns and settlements are marked with various flags. The Hellcats control most of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. The Checkers control Kentucky along with parts of Indiana. The Rattlers control a chunk of Pennsylvania & West Virginia.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Gentlemen. Our three nations own the Midwest. We have been fighting one another for the better part of the last decade, but if we worked together, we could bring a huge portion of the country into line. I ask for a permanent peace with friendship, with territory divided as you see here.

WICKS

We've seen this already. And there's promise to it. But there ain't nothing backing it up. I say yes to you, drive back with a scrap of signed paper, and then BAM! We're shooting at each other at Gallipolis, Haven's crushing my flank, no one's getting across the river, and I lose all credibility.

CARDALE

Wicks has a point. This is a lot better for you than it is for us.

MORROW

Which is how you know I mean to keep my word.

CARDALE

Yeah, but it seems as though we're just second fiddle to your ambitions. I have other borders, Morrow. They see weakness, think I'm just your whipping boy, they're gonna get bold.

MORROW

They won't see weakness when they see Hellcats shoulder to shoulder with Rattlers. But I understand your concerns. Which is why I propose to make our covenant more binding than scratchings on paper.

WICKS

How?

MORROW

Just like they used to do it back  
in the olden days.

He turns to Cardale.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Your sister is still unattached?

CARDALE

Who, Esther? Have you seen her? The  
only way I'm getting rid of her is  
if I pay someone to take her.

MORROW

Well, my boy is also unattached. If  
their betrothal was part of the  
agreement...?

WOMACK

Father!

MORROW

Quiet.

CARDALE

Bind the families, huh? I can't say  
I don't see the sense in that.  
It'll have to go both ways, though.

MORROW

We are prepared to pay a bride  
price for her. Thirty thousand  
bushels of wheat, fifty cases of  
silver and four hundred casks of  
eight-year rye or better.

CARDALE

(whistling)

That's a hell of a wedding present.

WICKS

So Cardale gets a bone while I go  
hungry?

MORROW

Of course not.

He walks around to where Kate is sitting and pulls her up by  
her arm. Both she and Womack PROTEST, but it falls on deaf  
ears. Morrow marches her to stand in front of Wicks.

WICKS

I have plenty of women already.



MORROW

I'm not going to arm you forever,  
Garrett. I'll do a year if it's a  
girl. Nothing if it's a boy.

WICKS

Three years if it's a girl. Two if  
it's male.

MORROW

One if it's male. And you halve the  
tolls across the Ohio River.

Wicks mulls it over for a moment.

WICKS

I'll take them down by a quarter.

MORROW

A third. No raises for five years.

WICKS

All right. You have a deal.

MORROW

Then we are agreed? Isaiah?

CARDALE

(eyeing Kate)  
What'll happen to the girl?

MORROW

Do you care?

CARDALE

No, I suppose not. I never thought  
it would happen, but goddamn. Dax  
Morrow, you'll have your peace.

Morrow uncorks a dirty BOTTLE and pours out some BOURBON.

MORROW

(raising his glass)  
Excellent. Let it be a long and  
prosperous one.

CARDALE, WICKS

Cheers!

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - LATE AFTERNOON

MORROW, WICKS, & CARDALE shake hands in front of the whole town, which is going nuts.

WOMACK glowers at his father, ignoring those around him. KATE pushes her way through the crowd, red with anger and fear.

INT. TOWN HALL - KITCHENS - CONTINUOUS

KATE slams the door, grabs a stack of POTS AND PANS and hurls them to the floor, SCREAMING.

KATE

FUCK!

The anger gives way, and she sinks to the floor, SOBBING.

KATE (CONT'D)

Oh god...oh god...

Putting her hands on her stomach, she curls into a ball.

KATE (CONT'D)

What am I going to do? They want to take you away from me.

Her breathing starts to even, and she catches sight of herself in the REFRIGERATOR DOOR.

KATE (CONT'D)

No...no. Fuck this.

Slowly, unsure at first, she gets to her feet and pulls a CANVAS SACK out of a drawer.

KATE (CONT'D)

I won't let them. Not again.

DRAWERS & CABINETS FLY OPEN

As Kate loots the kitchen for supplies. BREAD, VEGETABLES, CURED MEAT all end up in her bag; things in her way just end up scattered on the floor. She's whipped herself into a frenzy, and doesn't see--

MAIME

What the hell are you doing?

Kate jumps, and pulls the bag close.

KATE

I-I'm...

MAIME

What has gotten into you, Katie?  
Are you stealing food?

KATE

I can't stay. I'm leaving, and I  
need supplies.

MAIME

You're leaving? You can't! You'll  
die out there!

KATE

Better dead out there than enslaved  
to Garrett Wicks!

MAIME

(going white)  
What?

KATE

How do you think Morrow got his  
peace? He sold me like I was a side  
of pork! Maime, he sold my baby!

MAIME

He can't do that.

Kate goes back to packing her bag.

KATE

He already did.

MAIME

No. No. I will fix this.

KATE

It's too late.

Maime turns to run out of the kitchen.

MAIME

Stay here. Don't do anything rash.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

WOMACK is sitting at a bench, slurping down beer in a TIN  
TANKARD. He's clearly drunk, glowering at the revelers  
between gulps.



Across the square, he can see into his father's suites.  
MORROW is visible in the window.

INT. TOWN HALL - MORROW'S SUITES - NIGHT

MAIME comes barreling into the suites, despite the efforts of the guards to stop her. MORROW is alone, drinking a glass of BOURBON and reviewing a ledger.

MAIME

What have you done?

Morrow waves off the guards, struggling to restrain Maime.

MORROW

Leave us.

The guards retreat.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Maime.

MAIME

You sold one of my girls!

MORROW

I bought peace through marriage.

MAIME

You can't do that!

MORROW

It's done.

MAIME

It's slavery.

MORROW

It's nothing of the sort.

MAIME

You're selling a human being!

MORROW

Maime, you run my hall and my hearth. You do not tell me how to run my family.

MAIME

Kate is not part of your family!

MORROW

No, but my grandchild will be. So his mother will go with the Rattlers until she pops.

MAIME

And then what? She'll just waltz back home? You know that won't happen. Wicks will use her up and dispose of her. You know what he's like. I won't let you take her.

MORROW

You won't let--?

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

WOMACK snorts in disgust as MORROW & MAIME argue in the window. He finishes his BEER and staggers towards the hall.

INT. TOWN HALL - MORROW'S SUITES - CONTINUOUS

MORROW slams the GLASS down on the table and wheels on MAIME. It SHATTERS, glass and bourbon flying, but he doesn't care.

MORROW

--I lose men every day to pointless fights with the Checkers and the Rattlers. Dozens more go hungry or get ill because they burn our crops and raid our homesteads. I have put a stop to all of that.

MAIME

Katie is innocent. She's a good girl. She doesn't deserve this.

MORROW

No. She doesn't. And neither does my son, for all his idiocy.

(sighing)

But I'm not in the business of fair. The world ain't fair. I'm in the business of keeping my people safe and fed. If your girl wanted to stay in the kitchens, she should have stayed away from Womack. But she didn't, and her baby will save lives.

MAIME

She should have stayed--Morrow,  
she's where she is because you and  
Womack put her there!

BANG! The door bursts open, and WOMACK staggers in.

WOMACK

Father!

MORROW

(to Maime)

Excuse us a moment.

WOMACK

You can't let her leave.

MORROW

You're drunk.

WOMACK

If I am, it's because my father  
just sold me into slavery.

MORROW

We're not discussing this, boy.  
What's done is done.

WOMACK

Fuck. You.

Fire in his eyes, Womack charges his father. Morrow is far larger, but caught off guard by the assault. He trips over the table behind him and goes down, Womack pummeling away as they fall.

Maime YELLS at them to stop and tries to pull them apart, but she's a old woman and these are two large men. They scuffle-- Womack's winning for a moment-- Morrow hits him-- they're both on their feet-- Womack charges-- Morrow throws him onto the table--

Womack lies in the WRECKAGE of the table, beaten for the moment. Morrow examines his knuckles, completely unfazed by the tussle.

MORROW

You're pathetic. That we share the  
same blood defies belief.

He turns away from his son. Womack slowly picks himself up.

MORROW (CONT'D)

Maybe I should get me a new bride,  
and make a boy who can replace you.  
One that isn't a disappointment.

That's it. Womack snaps. He lunges up off the floor, grabbing the first thing at hand - a CLAY PITCHER - and swings it at his father. It connects right on Morrow's temple, and the older man goes down without so much as a groan.

WOMACK

Who's a fucking disappointment now?

When there is no response, both Womack and Maime pale.

CU: MORROW'S HEAD

A small bead of BLOOD forms at the corner of Morrow's mouth. His temple is dark and bruised; the side of his head scratched by the shattering clay. His eyes are wide open and unfocused; he looks faintly surprised to be on the floor.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

Father?

Maime kneels puts her hand to Morrow's mouth. Her face is ashen, and she quickly rises and backs away from Womack.

MAIME

What have you done?

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - KATE'S ROOM - NIGHT

KATE is collecting her things on her bed. The sack of food sits next to clothes and the MAP, rolled in a special tube. ALICE comes in, holding a beaten up BACKPACK.

ALICE

Here, this should do.

KATE

Alice?

ALICE

Nandi saw you. Says you're leaving.  
I want you to have it.

KATE

I can't...

ALICE

Yes, of course you can. I'm never going to need it.

Kate takes the pack. It's a real backpacker's pack, with a hip belt and everything.

KATE

Why?

ALICE

Nandi and I, we could be nicer. Shoulda been nicer. But you've always been kind, and even though it's too little too late, we wanted to try and return the favor.

Kate puts it down on the bed and gives Alice a hug.

KATE

Thank you. It means a lot.

ALICE

That's okay. Don't let any assholes out there push you around, okay?

KATE

Okay. I promise.

They're still hugging, now in tears, when MAIME bursts in. The girls quickly break apart.

KATE (CONT'D)

Maime!

MAIME

Oh, here you are. Thank God! Why didn't you stay in the kitchens like I told you?

ALICE

The amount of bullshit raining down on her head? You're lucky she's in town long enough for you to say goodbye.

MAIME

Alice? Why are you... never mind, I don't care. Kate, Womack just killed Morrow.

KATE

What?

MAIME

You need to leave town tonight.

KATE

Morrow's dead? Womack...how?

MAIME

He hit him in just the wrong place.  
Alice, can you help her?

Alice starts packing the backpack.

KATE

What does that mean for me?

MAIME

I don't know. But it's not good.  
People will be looking for you. The  
Rattlers especially. You're their  
golden ticket. You need to get away  
from here.

KATE

Where would I even go?

MAIME

Where were you going to go before?

KATE

Erie. I was going to find Sam.

MAIME

Then do that. Do you know how to  
get there?

KATE

I have a map.

Alice scoops up the tube and holds it out.

ALICE

Here it is.

MAIME

Alice, help with her bag. I have  
one more thing I want to give her.

KATE

I'm fine. I don't need--

But Maime has vanished back into the hall. Kate stands and  
Alice helps her put it on and adjust the hip belt.

ALICE

Here. Make sure you're not squashing your baby.

KATE

Do you think this is a bad idea?

ALICE

I don't know. I don't think you have a choice anymore.

Maime comes back in, clutching a small TWO-WAY RADIO.

MAIME

Where's she got room?

ALICE

Right on top. There's some space.

KATE

Maime, I'm--

MAIME

Now listen. All hell is about to break loose. So you run as fast and as far as you can. You have to be tough, Katie.

ALICE

You can do it.

Kate wraps her arms around the older woman.

KATE

I'm going to miss you.

MAIME

I'll miss you too.

Maime breaks the embrace.

MAIME (CONT'D)

Now go.

EXT. LANCASTER - NIGHT

KATE slips out of the boarding house and creeps along the street. It's fairly empty, but any sight of a person or sound sends her scurrying for cover. She's constantly looking over her shoulder, and avoids streetlights like the plague.

Winding her way through filthy alleys and narrow lanes, she makes it to within sight of the OPEN GATE --

--which has FIVE ARMED MEN standing in front of it. They're laughing and drinking under a streetlamp.

Kate ducks behind some barrels and watches them, looking around for an angle.

INT. TOWN HALL - WOMACK'S SUITE - NIGHT

MORROW'S BODY hasn't moved from where it fell. WOMACK paces back and forth, trying to wipe the blood off his hands.

WOMACK  
Shit...shit...

Frustrated, he chucks the bloody towel to the floor.

WOMACK (CONT'D)  
I'm so screwed...

He starts to loot his father's body. He tries waving Morrow's SHOTGUN, but quickly drops it, jumping at the CLATTER.

WOMACK (CONT'D)  
Shit!

Rummaging through Morrow's vest, he pulls out a PURSE, which he stuffs in his pockets. He also grabs the massive KNIFE off his father's belt; checking the blade, he re-sheathes it and runs out of the apartments, pale as a sheet.

THE CORRIDORS

Are empty. Womack runs, his footfalls thudding on the worn carpet. He comes around a corner and a door SQUEAKS open--

Throwing himself against the wall, he watches as a woman in a robe strolls out of a room further along and into a different room. As soon as she's gone, Womack starts creeping along again, picking up speed as he passes her room. By the time he reaches the stairs down he's practically sprinting...

DOWNSTAIRS

There's still some energy in the GREAT HALL. The stairs end in a back corner and Womack slips from them straight into another dark corridor. That passage has a door at the end of it, propped open so he can see the alley outside. Womack hurries along...he's almost there...reaching for the door--

CARDALE  
Going somewhere?



Cardale is face to face with the terrified Womack, and he can see something is up. Womack backs away, turning to run--

CARDALE (CONT'D)  
 (snapping his fingers)  
 Ah ah ah!

Two big CHECKER GUARDS appear out of nowhere. Womack is trapped, and Cardale starts forcing him back

CARDALE (CONT'D)  
 You seem unhappy, Womack.

WOMACK  
 No, I'm--

CARDALE  
 Come, have a drink with me. We're going to be family soon.

WOMACK  
 I'm full, actually. I just need--

CARDALE  
 Would you disrespect me like that to my face? That's...what is that?

He's pointing at Womack's sleeve.

WOMACK  
 This? Oh, I just spilled my beer. I was going out to clean it up.

CARDALE  
 It's red, not brown. Is that blood? Why do you have blood on you?

WOMACK  
 Don't remember. Probably got into a fight while drunk--

A SCREAM from upstairs kills the MUSIC and the party in the GREAT HALL. Cardale is done fooling around.

CARDALE  
 The fuck was that?

Cardale walks past them towards the hall. He's craning his neck, trying to see what's going on.

PARTYGOER (O.S.)  
 Call the doctor! Help!

CARDALE  
 (spinning)  
 Hold him!

The guards reach for Womack, but they don't realize he's armed. MORROW'S KNIFE comes free - Womack slashes! - the guards YELL, clutching fresh wounds - and Womack is running!

CARDALE (CONT'D)  
 Stop!

Cardale goes for his GUN. He gets two rounds off, sending SPLINTERS FLYING -- but Womack is through the door and gone.

EXT. LANCASTER - CONTINUOUS

The COMMOTION coming from the party is audible even over by the GATE. Heads turn - even those of the drunken men KATE is watching.

OVER THE ROOFTOPS

A single FLARE arcs into the sky. The men drop their bottles, grab WEAPONS off the BIKES nearby, and run down the street. They pass within feet of Kate, who presses herself down into her hiding spot as they go by. No one sees her.

The street is empty. Slowly, Kate peers over the barrels, then gets to her feet. She tiptoes along to the bikes, keeping low and out of the light.

Making her choice, she pulls up the kickstand and rolls it forward. The bike is a big, heavy one, she's having trouble--

Her foot slips on a patch of mud and she's going down -

CRASH - BANG - CRUNCH! The bike falls and catches the rest of the bikes, which go down like dominos!

Kate looks around frantically, scrambling to her feet. It doesn't seem that anyone's seen her -

CUT TO:

EXT. LANCASTER - TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

The partygoers have turned into a MOB, crowding the front of the TOWN HALL. WICKS & CARDALE, along with their men, are right in the middle of it. BEAR is trying to regain order.

BEAR

People, please! We don't know anything yet.

WICKS

You know who did this. Bring out Womack. Let him answer for his crimes!

The crowd ROARS in approval.

BEAR

It is an internal matter. We will handle it.

WICKS

I shook Morrow's hand. What happens to this family matters to me.

CARDALE

You aren't part of the family yet, Wicks. Don't get ahead of yourself.

BEAR

We aren't saying anything until the doctor has finished. In the meantime, I am taking command of the Hellcats and acting as steward of Lancaster and the lands under the tiger.

CARDALE

Bullshit. Womack is heir, not you.

WICKS

(to Cardale)

Womack is headed straight for the rope. Your own testimony will put him there!

CARDALE

I didn't see anything.

WICKS

What about your goons? You were crying about a few paper cuts just a minute ago!

CARDALE

It was dark and I'd been drinking. Could have been anyone.

WICKS

So then where is your precious fiancé? Why isn't he here?

CARDALE

Bear? Where is Womack?

BEAR

I...we can't find him.

CARDALE

What the hell does that mean?

WICKS

I think it's obvious, Isaiah. Womack is laying low. Maybe he's got a guilty conscience.

ELSEWHERE

WOMACK creeps through the streets. Unlike Kate, he has no one to avoid (yet) but he's still taking every precaution.

THE DOCTOR EMERGES

And his grim expression says it all.

BEAR

Morrow?

DOCTOR

I'm sorry. He didn't stand a chance. It was a one-in-a-million shot. He would have died instantly.

A GASP goes up through the crowd. A few SOBS are heard.

BEAR

Thank you, doctor.  
(turning to a Hellcat)  
Find Womack. Bring him here.

WICKS

Bring the girl too. Our deal does not end with Morrow's death.

CARDALE

It does when Womack Morrow is responsible for his father's death.

WICKS

What's wrong? You were thinking that all this could be yours, weren't you? I guess it's too bad that you bet on the wrong horse.

CARDALE

I'm not walking out of here empty handed. You either give up the girl or no one goes home at all.

BEAR

No one is taking anything. We will renegotiate once we find the truth.

WICKS

Like hell we will! I made a deal with your nation, and you will keep it! This fairy's new son-in-law doesn't change a thing.

CARDALE

(drawing his gun)  
Say one more thing!

SHRIEKS and SHOUTS, and suddenly everyone is pointing their weapons at one another. The crowd scatters.

BEAR

Stop! Stop! Put them away!

WICKS

Whatcha' gonna do? Crawl back to your ruins and cry?

CARDALE

I was thinking I'd put you in the ground, old man. The world could use fewer assholes like you.

BEAR

Drop your goddamn weapons!

For a moment, it's a Mexican standoff. Then someone cracks--

BANG! BANG-BANGBANGBANGBANG-BANG!

Bullets fly and carve up the mob. People scream and flee the carnage in all directions.

Cardale's men take bullets for him so he can scurry to safety. Bear takes a round to the gut and staggers back into the hall. Wicks is unscathed but retreats anyway, whooping with sadistic glee.

EXT. LANCASTER - CONTINUOUS

The SHOTS and SCREAMS echo throughout the town. KATE, struggling to get the bike back up as fleeing townsfolk begin to trickle down the street.

KATE  
Shit, shit, shit--

The bike's up and she's on it - but now it won't start!

KATE (CONT'D)  
Fuck! Come on!

LANCASTER IN CHAOS

Shooting, pillaging, buildings being set alight. Some hide, some run, some fight.

WICKS leads his men through the streets. He's reloading his gun and barking orders to a core group of soldiers with him.

WICKS  
Take your group and secure our transports. You--with me! We're going to find the girl.

ELSEWHERE

CARDALE and the CHECKERS are in disarray. They run through the streets, firing and dying as they do.

CHECKER GRUNT  
We need to get out of here.

CARDALE  
We can't leave without Womack.

CHECKER GRUNT  
He's probably gone. They'll go for our bikes--

CARDALE  
Then you go guard them! The rest of you-- we can still stake our claim. Find Womack Morrow!

WOMACK MORROW

Is running full tilt away from the chaos. He comes around a corner and sees KATE...

...who has just managed to kick-start the BIKE.

KATE  
(over the engine)  
Yes!

WOMACK  
Kate? KATE!

Kate's head snaps around to see Womack.

KATE  
...Womack?

WOMACK  
Wait!

He starts running towards her. Kate hesitates. The bike is roaring. The gate is open. No one is in her way; but anguish and indecision fight across her face. Then the chaos spills into the street behind Womack - torches, gunfire, terror...

...and Kate chooses. She kicks the bike into gear, spins it round, and races out the gate. Womack sprints after her, running down the road as she fades into the night.

WOMACK (CONT'D)  
Kate! Kate! KATEEEEE!

MONTAGE: THE FALL OF LANCASTER

What fragile peace Morrow thought he had won has disintegrated with his death. In his capital, buildings burn; brother turns on brother, and the Hellcats fracture.

NANDI is chased through the street and run down. ALICE & MAMIE take shelter in the TOWN HALL, where they watch both the destruction and the DOCTOR tend to the dying BEAR

WICKS and his men pillage and loot the town. They load their spoils up and drive off.

CARDALE is already gone; his men scour the countryside, looking for WOMACK, hiding in the mud among the grasses. One rider stops nearby and begins walking towards him...

KATE rides on through the night. Terror has turned to exhaustion, and it's not until the bike runs out of gas that she pulls off and passes out under a tree.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

KATE walks along the empty road, a mix of ancient asphalt, dirt, and stone. She's clearly not used to either the pack or the sun; she looks hot and miserable.

AROUND NOON

She eats a simple, cold lunch and listens to the RADIO:

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

...overnight the Hellcats have collapsed. Dax Morrow was murdered on the eve of his peace summit by his fugitive son, Womack Morrow, who remains at large. Bear Nowitski, commander of military operations, died during the rioting and the gang has fractured into a number of factions...

IN THE AFTERNOON

A drop of rain PLUNKS on her head. A few moments later the drizzle is a rainstorm. Kate covers herself as best she can and pushes on.

THAT EVENING

KATE begins pitching her TENT--really just a TARP and some string. The rain hasn't stopped, and the wind has picked up. Kate gets the tarp tied down in two corners...

...when a GUST OF WIND catches it and blows it back into the trees. Kate chases after it, slipping in mud and crashing through bushes before she can rein it in.

Finally, the tent is secure. Kate crawls under it, puts a blanket down on the wet leaves, and curls up to sleep, cold and exhausted.

FLASHBACK - KATE'S COTTAGE - SUNSET

KATE is hanging laundry outside a COTTAGE amid amber grains.

In the distance, a small stream of DUST is moving closer. Kate doesn't see it; she is pinning the next sheet in place.



The dust is closer now, and it's clear it belongs to a MOTORBIKE. Kate sees it. Setting down the basket, she walks towards the road, watching the approaching bike.

As it closes, the rider can be identified as SAM. He pulls up to Kate, who runs to embrace him. He GRUNTS in pain, and Kate pulls away with blood on her dress.

KATE

Sam?

SAM

Get your bag. We need to go!

KATE

You're hurt. Let me see.

SAM

I'm fine.

(slapping her hand away)  
Leave it!

KATE

Sam, what's going on?

SAM

Morrow took the ford. We're leaving.

KATE

What? Where are we--

A RUMBLE in the distance. Kate is still trying to process.

SAM

KATE! Get your bag! NOW!

END FLASHBACK

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

KATE jolts awake, wide-eyed. It takes her a moment to realize the RUMBLE hasn't stopped. Not only that--

The noise is getting louder.

KATE

Shit!

ANGLE ON: THE ROAD

A CONVOY is headed towards Kate. The crews are filthy, armed to the teeth, and covered in spikes: RATTLEERS.

Kate pulls down her tarp and stuffs it in her bag, mud and water soaking everything. At the last possible second she gets it stowed, chucks the bag into a ditch and slides in after it.

The trucks are the same slatted cattle trucks Sam had been transported in. CAPTIVES peer from between the slats, dead, hopeless eyes looking at nothing.

KATE (CONT'D)

Sam...

The convoy passes. Kate climbs out of the ditch and begins walking down the road after them.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

On the road coming towards her is a MAN WITH A CART. We watch them haggle for a few minutes, then KATE trades some of her things for some of his things, including a bright red APPLE.

FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD

Kate chomps on her new acquisition and listens to the RADIO - not news, but an old, scratchy FOLK BALLAD.

At a fork, she pulls out the MAP. Squinting at it a few times, she squints at a sign, checks something, then picks a path and tucks the map away.

THAT EVENING

Kate builds a fire. She struggles to light it; the tinder doesn't seem to want to catch. BLOWING on it, rearranging the twigs, burning herself once or twice - it's all part of the process that leads to a bright, warm CAMPFIRE.

BEANS in a can cook over the flames. She takes it off, the contents steaming, and sniffs it. She digs in - then spits out the mouthful in disgust. But she's hungry, and she's eating for two.

She looks down at her stomach.

KATE

You're lucky you don't have taste buds.

Kate digs in again, grimacing with every bite. The moment she's done, she drops everything, gasping for air.

KATE (CONT'D)

Ugh!

She follows it with a long pull from her canteen, and then sits back against a stone and watches the sunset.

EXT. PRAIRIE ROAD - DAY

Patchwork highway has been replaced with dirt road. The grasses are wild, as tall as a person. KATE walks along in the sunshine.

A ROAD SIGN

Faded almost to nothing, but "ERIE: 3 MILES" is still visible. Kate passes without acknowledgement.

ERIE

Sits in the middle of a rolling plain. It was little more than a collection of five or six buildings. Now, it's nothing more than abandoned husks, ash, and rust.

As Kate nears, things seem to get QUIETER. The silence is eerie, oppressive. No birds, no bugs, not even a breeze.

The town has been stripped of anything useful. Weeds and moss have started to take over, growing through broken windows and missing roofs.

At the center of town is a FOUNTAIN - or what's left of one. Sun-bleached FLAG TATTERS fly from a POLE nearby. Kate stands in front of the fountain for a moment, contemplating the ruins.

In the dirt at her feet, she sees a COIN. Kneeling, she scoops it up and runs it through her fingers.

KATE

(quietly)

I pray for wisdom, for strength,  
and for the courage to face  
whatever comes ahead.

She spins twice and casts the coin into the fountain. It CLANKS against the dry brick and rattles down into the basin.

Kate stares at it for a moment, then turns and heads down a side road. It's only a few steps until she's back among the tall grasses and it's not until a solitary OAK TREE comes into frame we realize we've FLASHED BACK to

EXT. ERIE OUTSKIRTS - DAY

KATE is wearing a plain but well-made pastel sundress, a daisy-chain crown and clutching a bouquet. SAM walks arm in arm with her, wearing a clean shirt and shiny shoes. They can't keep their eyes off one another.

SAM

It's just up here...wait a second.

KATE

What's wrong?

Sam pushes a loose strand of her hair back into place.

SAM

I love you so much.

KATE

I love you too.

She goes up on tiptoes and kisses him deeply. Then Sam grins mid-kiss and spins Kate halfway around, putting his hands over her eyes.

KATE (CONT'D)

Sam!

SAM

It's supposed to be a surprise.

They start walking to the top of the hill.

KATE

I already know where we're going.

SAM

Where are we going?

KATE

We're going to our house.

SAM

Nope. That's not where we're going.

KATE

What? Then where are we going?

They reach the top of the hill and Sam pulls his hands away.

SAM

We're going to our home.

IN THE VALLEY BELOW

A small COTTAGE sits among golden waves of grain. It is painted in bright, cozy colors; flowers grow on every windowsill.

SAM (CONT'D)

I hope you like it.

Kate is gobsmacked, tears of joy filling her eyes. She can't find words, so she just turns and wraps Sam in a hug that sends them both rolling into the leaves under the tree--

END FLASHBACK

EXT. PRAIRIE - PRESENT DAY

KATE stands atop the hill, next to the SHATTERED STUMP of the oak tree.

IN THE VALLEY BELOW

Her COTTAGE still stands. The flowers are gone, the paint has faded and peeled, but it is still there.

Indecision, doubt and so much more wash across Kate's face.

THE COTTAGE

Clearly hasn't been lived in for months. Vines have started creeping across the front door. Kate's hands are shaking, and it takes all her strength to force it open.

INSIDE

Sunlight cuts through dust and darkness as the door swings open. Kate puts one foot inside, then the other.

KATE

Hello?

Nothing.

KATE (CONT'D)

(louder)

Hello?

(pause)

Sam?

Unlike Erie, the cottage remains relatively untouched. A few spiders have webbed across corners and windows, but the house still has a table in the kitchen and a sofa by the hearth.

She tries one of the doors. It's stiff, but she gets open and walks into

THE BEDROOM

Which, apart from a fine layer of dust, looks completely untouched. There's even a stuffed FROG sitting on the bed between two quilted pillows, smiling at her.

Kate loses it. Tears pour down her face as she staggers to the bed and collapses on it. Reflexively, she reaches out and pulls the frog to her chest, hope crushed by the empty house.

INT. KATE'S COTTAGE - DAY

RAIN rattles the house. There are some leaks-- just drops here and there-- adding to the generally dismal atmosphere.

KATE adjusts pails and dishes throughout the cottage, positioning each to catch the rain. The RADIO squawks at her as she works.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

...It's been a week since Dax Morrow was brutally taken from us, and chaos rules the Midwest. The Hellcats have fractured into a number of factions. Bandit attacks have tripled; travelling alone or in small groups is highly discouraged.

A peal of THUNDER echoes across the prairie. Kate begins stocking the hearth with logs.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Heaviest fighting is taking place  
 in and around Gallipolis, where  
 both Garrett Wicks and Isaiah  
 Cardale are trying to take the  
 river crossing from the Hellcat  
 garrison. Wicks is supported by  
 reinforcements coming out of West  
 Virginia, but there are reports of  
 those troops taking large loses to  
 an unknown army with pre-Fall  
 technology...

Kate sits in front of the radio and switches the dial. She  
 picks up the RECEIVER and presses the button.

KATE  
 Uh...Lancaster Mama, this is  
 Homeward Bound. Lancaster Mama,  
 this is Homeward Bound. Are you out  
 there?

INT. MOVING TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The RADIO squawks to life among a truck full of REFUGEES.  
 It's barely audible over the roar of the diesel engine.

KATE (O.S.)  
 Come in Lancaster Mama, this is  
 Homeward Bound.

ALICE  
 Oh my god! Maime!

Alice scoops up the receiver and clicks the button.

ALICE (CONT'D)  
 Katie? Is that you?

KATE  
 Alice?

ALICE  
 Right here!

KATE  
 Are you okay?

ALICE  
 Yep! I'm all in one piece. And I've  
 got someone with me.

She hands the set over to Maime.

MAIME  
That isn't Katie?

KATE  
Hi Mamie!

MAIME  
Oh my lord. Where are you? Are you  
all right?

KATE  
I made it. I made it to Erie.

MAIME  
That's wonderful! Is Sam there?

KATE  
(hesitating)  
No. No, no one's here. Just me.

There's an awkward pause.

MAIME  
At least your home is still there.  
Is everything as you left it?

KATE  
Somehow. Are you all right?

MAIME  
Well, we're alive.

ALICE  
Lancaster's basically gone. We're  
homeless.

KATE  
Oh no. Is everyone all right?

ALICE  
(tearing up)  
Everyone on the truck is.

Mamie takes the mic back.

MAIME  
Nandi didn't make it out of the  
city.

KATE  
Oh.  
(pause)  
Where are you headed?



MAIME

East. Some of the girls think that we can get to Haven. That Haven is a real place. That they'll take us in.

KATE

And you're going along with it?

MAIME

Not much choice, I'm afraid. I've been outvoted. But they have hope. And I'm not so attached to where I am, so long as I have my family with me.

Alice wraps her arms around Maime and puts her head on the older woman's shoulder.

KATE

Yeah...Maime, I--

FZZT. The radio cuts out.

KATE (CONT'D)

Hello? Mamie?

Kate slaps the radio, shakes it, turns it on and off, but nothing happens. In frustration, she throws the receiver across the table.

KATE (CONT'D)

Fuck!

FLASHBACK - KATE'S COTTAGE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The wind howls across the prairie; branches SCRATCH at the windows and the side of the house.

KATE lies in bed and stares up at the ceiling. She hears DULL VOICES in the next room. Light comes through under the door.

KATE

Sam?

No response. Shivering in the cold, Kate gets up and wraps herself in her robe. When that's not enough, she grabs a blanket off a chair and wraps that around her.

INT. KATE'S COTTAGE - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SAM and ED sit at, sipping whiskey. Ed has wet, gray hair, and is wearing rain gear dripping with water. Sam is Kate's age, still in pajamas with a leather jacket on his shoulders.

SAM  
When will you know?

ED  
Few days, maybe. You got a radio?

SAM  
Yeah?

ED  
Check it at five past when you can.

SAM  
All right. One more for the road?

ED  
Better not.

They both swivel when Kate walks in, blinking at the light.

KATE  
Sam?

SAM  
Hey, Katie. One sec, okay?

Ed gets to his feet, and Sam follows suit.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Be safe out there.

They shake hands.

ED  
Will do. I appreciate the  
hospitality.  
(tipping his hat)  
Miss.

The door slams shut behind him. Sam bars it and then comes over and puts his hands on Kate's arms.

KATE  
What was that?

SAM  
The Hellcats are coming north from  
Lancaster.

KATE

Oh, no...

SAM

I'm sure it's nothing. Let's go  
back to bed.

SAM holds KATE. They're cozy under the covers, and wide  
awake, staring out the window at the storm on the prairie.

KATE

Are you being called up?

SAM

Maybe.

KATE

I don't want you to go.

SAM

I don't have a choice.

KATE

We can leave. Go somewhere safe. Go  
somewhere peaceful.

SAM

Those places don't exist. Haven't  
since before we were born.

KATE

We could go to Portia. Or Danville.

SAM

Morrow's fixed on them both. We'd  
just be putting off the fight.

KATE

We could go to Haven.

SAM

It's nothing but slavers once you  
cross the river. I won't risk it.

KATE

We'll be careful. Travel through  
the backcountry.

SAM

They'd catch us and split us apart.  
We're in a bad spot, but we'll get  
through. I'll go, and I promise  
I'll come back.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. KATE'S COTTAGE - DAWN

RAIN still trickles down, though the worst of the storm is over. KATE lies asleep, lying as though her husband was beside her.

A sudden KNOCKING jolts her awake.

KATE

Sam?

Nothing. Kate slips out of bed and picks up a POKER from the fireplace as she passes.

The KNOCKING happens again. Someone is beating down the door - which to the pregnant woman alone in her house is terrifying. Kate slowly approaches the door, hands shaking.

KATE (CONT'D)

Who is it?

STRANGER (O.S.)

Kate! Kate, are you there?

Kate's breath catches and she freezes in place.

KATE

Sam?

STRANGER (O.S.)

Kate! Open the door!

The poker CLATTERS to the floor. Kate rushes to unbar the door, and yanks it open, ready to leap into the arms of her beloved--

--only to find WOMACK leaning against the door frame. He's an absolute mess: pale & blue with signs of hypothermia, completely soaked, covered in mud and filth, and sporting plenty of half-healed cuts, scratches, and bruises.

WOMACK

Can I come in?

Kate considers it.

KATE  
(reluctantly)  
Yes.

Womack staggers through the door. It's clear he can barely keep his feet.

WOMACK  
I'm so cold...

KATE  
Get your wet things off, then.

Womack shucks his jacket off and drops it in the middle of the floor. Shivering, he begins to strip down.

INT. MAIN ROOM - LATER

WOMACK, bundled up in the quilt, sits on the sofa, a mug of something in his hands. KATE is cooking something in a pot over the roaring FIRE.

KATE  
How did you find me?

WOMACK  
I guessed where you were headed.

KATE  
How did you even know about this place?

WOMACK  
I had one of my men find out your deal after we first met.

KATE  
Your men?

WOMACK  
My father's men, I guess. They're not mine, at least not anymore.

KATE  
Maime said you killed him.

WOMACK  
(hesitating)  
Yeah. I did. I didn't mean to. I just got angry about him sending me with Isaiah, and we started fighting, and I hit him, and he died.

KATE  
Just like that?

Womack's got a thousand-yard stare.

WOMACK  
He was the strongest man alive.  
Whole armies couldn't stop him. He  
was going to rebuild the country.  
Make it how it was before we fell.  
(pause)  
And in the end, all it took was a  
clay pitcher and a terrible son to  
ruin that dream.

KATE  
Womack.

WOMACK  
Hmm?

Kate hands him a BOWL she had just scooped out.

WOMACK (CONT'D)  
Oh. Thanks.

KATE  
How did your man find this place?

WOMACK  
He didn't. He never left Lancaster,  
as far as I know. He just checked  
the refugee manifests and figured  
out where you came from.  
(taking a bite)  
Hot. Ow...

KATE  
I wasn't a refugee.

WOMACK  
Technically, you were. You fled  
combat. You had a husband, right?

KATE  
Have. Have a husband.

Womack gives her a look.

KATE (CONT'D)  
Is he... for sure...?

WOMACK

I mean, I'm not certain. But he was pressed into service, right?

KATE

Yes...

WOMACK

So he would have been sent to Weirton or Youngstown. And those units were mostly wiped out.

KATE

Oh.

WOMACK

...I'm sorry.

KATE

Do you know for sure?

WOMACK

Not one hundred percent. But pretty close to it.

KATE

And you knew back then? Why didn't you tell me?

WOMACK

I didn't want you to hate me. I wanted you to like me.

KATE

And how's that working out for you?

Womack sets the bowl down, barely having touched anything.

WOMACK

Do you hate me?

CUT TO:

INT. KATE'S COTTAGE - DAY

WOMACK is back in his clothes, and he's helping to tidy and repair the place up. He's actually pretty handy with a hammer and works on patching up the holes in the roof.

KATE does washing, sweeping, cleaning. It's a weirdly domestic scene, though perhaps a little Rockwellian seeing as Kate pointedly ignores any attempt Womack tries to make conversation. And nowhere is this tension more apparent than

## AT THE DINNER TABLE

Kate & Womack share a pot of STEW and what look like biscuits. Kate is focused on eating; Womack keeps trying to make eye contact - and barely seems to be touching his food.

WOMACK

This is great.

KATE

Hmm.

WOMACK

What's in here?

KATE

Meat. Beans. Vegetables.

WOMACK

It's good. Don't you think it's good?

KATE

No. I hate beans.

Silence, apart from spoons scratching against bowls.

WOMACK

How long are you planning on staying here?

KATE

This is my home. I'll stay here forever.

WOMACK

Here?

KATE

Something wrong with that?

WOMACK

Doesn't seem like a great place to raise our kid.

KATE

My kid.

WOMACK

(pressing on)

There's no one in town. Nothing's been farmed.

(MORE)



WOMACK (CONT'D)

All you've got here is whatever's in your pack plus the cans we found under the basin. There's no electricity, no water--

KATE

There's a mechanical pump outside.

WOMACK

I don't think that's drinkable. I'm pretty sure I could taste the lead.

KATE

This is my home. All I wanted was to be back here.

WOMACK

Maybe it was, once. Doesn't seem like that to me now.

KATE

Where else would I go?

WOMACK

Come with me.

KATE

(derisively)

You? Wander around a war zone with the most wanted murderer for thousand miles in any direction? I don't think so.

WOMACK

Why not? I can protect you. Take care of you and our son. It's better than staying in this dump.

Kate looks like she's about to say something. Then without another word, she gets up from the table and walks out the door.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

Wait, I didn't mean...

But she's gone, leaving Womack alone with his thoughts.

EXT. ERIE - EVENING

KATE walks down the dirt road to what is left of the town. The SUNSET is spectacular. Oranges, purples, reds, and yellows arc across the sky.

She's all alone, picking through the wreckage of the village. A smashed cabinet in a burnt-out store yields a few nameless cans. And, in what's left of the sheriff's office, buried under a smashed desk and some rubble, Kate finds a RIFLE.

The motion of the weapon seems smooth enough. Kate isn't a gunslinger, but she knows the basics. She digs through the debris a bit further and finds some BULLETS.

CUT TO:

CRACK-PLINK!

A piece of BROKEN GLASS SHATTERS. From where it stood a moment ago, we see Kate aiming down the barrel of the RIFLE.

CRACK-PLINK!

A second piece DISINTEGRATES in a puff of dust and silica.

CRACK-PLINK!

Third shot, third hit. A small grin of satisfaction crawls across Kate's face as she lowers the weapon - only to be replaced by surprise and concern -

KATE  
(hand on her belly)  
Hello?

She shudders again, and finds her way to a seat, the moment she's having with her passenger drowning out everything else.

KATE (CONT'D)  
Hello there. This is your mama. I  
can feel you there.  
(pause)  
I'm sorry if the gun woke you up.  
I'll try not to do that again.

One more kick, and then silence.

KATE (CONT'D)  
I can't wait to meet you.

She sits, hands on her stomach, alone in the empty street. The sounds of twilight - crickets, grasshoppers, birds - are all too quiet to be heard over the HISS of the breeze. And so is one other sound...at least at first. But it builds, and builds, and then we hear it...and then Kate hears it:

ENGINES.

Picking up the rifle, Kate gets to her feet. The RUMBLE is growing louder, and the wind is picking up. Concerned, she starts walking across the street, then she's jogging, then practically running -

GANGSTER

Boo!

A well-armed, ratty member of the CHECKERS appears in Kate's path. She SCREAMS, and swings the RIFLE like a club. The Checker clearly wasn't expecting that reaction, and his eyes can barely register surprise before the butt of the gun connects with his head and he goes down hard.

Kate doesn't break stride. She sprints down the path, looking back only when TWO MORE CHECKERS appear on the road behind her. They SHOUT and begin chasing her; though her lead is large they begin to reel her in.

EXT. KATE'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Kate's not the only one with a Checkered problem. WOMACK is trading blows with one of the RAIDERS, each man trying to get a weapon free. Behind him, the cottage BURNS; smoke billows up into the sky.

Womack has the upper hand for a moment, then the raider trips him-- they both go down-- the raider is on top-- he's got a free hand - Womack manages to catch him in the neck-- they separate, staggering to their feet-- they go for their hips-- the raider has his gun up--

RAIDER

AHH!

MORROW'S KNIFE sprouts out of the raider's chest. Shock is written all over the man's face, and he sinks to the ground, firing his PISTOL harmlessly into the dirt.

Panting and checking his wound, Womack barely has enough time to reclaim the blade and the gun when KATE comes running over the hill, still clutching the RIFLE -

KATE

WOMACK!

ANGLE ON: THE HILL

Kate's about halfway down when the pursuing CHECKERS come over the top. Womack sees them and starts running to intercept.

WOMACK

Behind you!

Kate looks back and sees them closing. For a moment, it seems like she's running harder-- then she spins, aims, FIRES-- one of the Checkers trips and falls, tumbling down the hill.

She FIRES again, but this shot misses. The second Checker ducks and pulls his GUN; one shot WHIZZING past Kate is enough to make her drop the rifle in surprise and sprint down the hill to Womack, who is SHOOTING at the man, now hiding behind a rock -

KATE

They've found us!

Backpedaling and firing, Womack makes his way back towards the idling BIKE - the former property of the late raider - and gets on.

WOMACK

Come on!

Kate doesn't need to be told twice. She runs and jumps on the bike behind Womack, who throws it into gear and GUNS it.

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

WOMACK & KATE speed down the highway. Prairie grasses and the occasional farm plot line the road.

KATE

They're getting closer!

Sure enough, a large group of CHECKERS are a few hundred yards back and seem to be narrowing the gap.

WOMACK

I don't think this thing will go any faster.

KATE

They're going to catch us!

WOMACK

Not if we can hide. Look!

He points at a STAND OF TREES.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

We just gotta make it there.

Kate nods, and Womack tries to squeeze more out of the bike.

## THE PURSUING CHECKERS

have beefy, souped-up motorcycles that are deafeningly loud. They're fixated on the groaning bike in front of them. One or two even fire on the fugitives -

## KATE &amp; WOMACK

duck at the GUNSHOTS. Their pursuers are within 50 yards now.

KATE

Where's your gun?

WOMACK

I don't--

Kate grabs Womack's PISTOL off of his leg. She fumbles it and nearly drops it, but then she's back in control. She takes sight at the nearest raider and FIRES--

Nothing. The Checkers keep closing. She FIRES again -

## THE NEAREST CHECKER

takes a bullet straight between the eyes. He slumps backwards, his bike catching and rolling over. Checkers swerve, but some are too close and a pile up is inevitable. Bikes, cars, riders go everywhere - but there are plenty who evade the wreckage and chase Kate & Womack into

## A FOREST

The trees are tight; bushes and branches lash out at KATE & WOMACK. They're leaving a trail but the dirt bike is much more maneuverable than the massive warbikes the CHECKERS ride.

One rider appears out of nowhere, gun pointed at their bike-- WHAM! He smashes into a tree.

Twisting & turning, they press on. A clump of rocks hold a fallen tree across their path; Womack cuts the brakes and manages to spin the bike ninety degrees. He jams on the throttle just as two more appear! They both try and pull the same move as Womack & Kate race off, but one bike is just too heavy and goes down.

The last rider is hot on their heels. They come racing around a blind corner - there's a bridge that's out - Womack tries to change direction - the bike goes out from under them - they tumble into the ravine after the bike.

CUT TO BLACK

EXT. FOREST - DAY

POV: KATE

Vision blurred, darkness coming and going in waves, KATE grabs a moment of consciousness and sees two CHECKERS pull over and walk towards her...

...the ground swings back and forth; her hands are BOUND; only the feet of the man carrying her are visible...

...She's sitting beneath a tree. Next to her, she can see WOMACK, YELLING something at their captors. A TRUCK pulls up and ISAIAH CARDALE hops out, smoking a cigar...

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

CARDALE

Well, look who we have here.

KATE is still fighting for consciousness. WOMACK is furious.

WOMACK

You son of a bitch. I'll fucking kill you if you touch her.

CARDALE

Now, why would I do that?

He reaches out and puts his hand on Kate's head.

KATE

No...no...

CARDALE

Oops. Guess I'm a dead man.

A few of the assembled CHECKERS laugh.

WOMACK

Fuck you.

CARDALE

Please. You have no business telling anyone what to do.

(MORE)

CARDALE (CONT'D)

This is entirely your fault.  
Believe it or not, murder has  
consequences, even in this mudhole.

WOMACK

You going to kill me?

Cardale takes out his GUN and holds it up.

CARDALE

I really should. Justice and all  
that. Dax Morrow was my friend, and  
soon to become my father. The law  
of the land demands it.

He points the gun at Womack's face.

CARDALE (CONT'D)

Any last words?

WOMACK

Fuck. You.

CARDALE

Not what I would have gone with -

Cardale is interrupted by one of his men whispering something  
in his ear. Nodding, he gives some hushed orders and the man  
runs off.

WOMACK

Do it then. Don't be a chickenshit  
dragging it out because you like  
the sound of your own voice. I've  
been sitting here for hours and I  
can't take any more of your fat  
mouth.

CARDALE

(lowering the gun)

We're not waiting around here as a  
favor to you, moron. Wicks is  
trying to get across his own bridge  
and that gives the Checkers a  
chance to get rid of a big thorn in  
our side.

WOMACK

So you're keeping me alive?

CARDALE

For now. If you make it back to the  
Red and White, I'll hang you just  
as a father-killer deserves.

(MORE)

CARDALE (CONT'D)

But for now, you're one of my two  
new bargaining chips.

(to his men)

Load them up.

The men comply, and though Womack and the groggy Kate resist, they're put into the truck and shackled among a group of other prisoners.

As soon as they're secure, Cardale hops back into his seat in the cab.

CARDALE (CONT'D)

Let's hope Garrett Wicks is happy  
to see us. Roll out!

EXT. GALLIPOLIS - DAY

A crossing of the Ohio River, Gallipolis' most striking feature is a number of bridges hopping between little islands from one bank to the other. That, and the hail of GUNFIRE being traded between the banks.

Men scurry for cover and die in the streets. MORTARS blast holes in buildings and make craters in the mud.

A COMMAND BUNKER

Has been set up on the western bank. WICKS is barking out orders as his LIEUTENANTS and messengers run in and out.

LIEUTENANT

We've lost the bridge back to the  
third pylon.

RADIO OPERATOR

Still no word from home group.

WICKS

Someone get a goddamn line across  
the river! Where are the Hellcats?

LIEUTENANT

Sector three, sector five, and  
there's obviously still the  
holdouts in the redoubt. We're  
shelling the shit out of it, but-

WICKS

Keep doing it. We crush them  
quickly, we can take everyone and  
push back across the river.



RADIO OPERATOR

Sir! Scouts report movement to the west!

WICKS

The fuck are you talking about?

RADIO OPERATOR

Convoy. They're headed towards Gallipolis.

WICKS

Who is it?

RADIO OPERATOR

Looks like Cardale's boys.

WICKS

A Checkered loot wagon?

Wicks actually licks his lips. He peeks out of the bunker and turns back to his men.

WICKS (CONT'D)

Can we hold as we are?

LIEUTENANT

Depends on Home Group. But the third pylon is well fortified, and the Hellcats can't do anything but be shelled and wait for death.

WICKS

Excellent. Everyone holds. Keep trying to get a line across the river--though if it's those freaky spec-ops guys that keep showing up Home Group's probably dead by now.

LIEUTENANT

Sir? Where are you going?

WICKS

Going to settle a score.  
(pointing at two men)  
You. With me.

EXT. CHECKERS PRISON TRUCK - NIGHT

A gray sky--clouds illuminated by a FULL MOON. On the horizon, a LIGHT appears. It's followed by another, and as it nears they split out into multiple lights.

ANGLE ON: THE CONVOY

Two TRUCKS led and tailed by JEEPS with mounted MACHINE GUNS and flanked by half a dozen MOTORBIKES and bikes with SIDECARS. The single bikes all have two RIDERS; anyone not driving is clutching a weapon. A few of them have LIGHTS scanning the fields for threats.

IN THE BACK OF THE TRUCK

CAPTIVES of all races, genders, and ages are seated on the floor. CHAINS snake between them, RATTLING with each bump.

KATE slowly comes to. Her feet and hands are chained to the floor. Across from her WOMACK is in exactly the same situation.

WOMACK

Hey.

KATE

Hey.

WOMACK

Are you all right? Anything broken?

KATE

I think I hit my head.

WOMACK

We got lucky.

Kate waves the chains at him.

KATE

Yep. Real lucky.

WOMACK

I meant with the crash.

They sit in silence for a few moments.

KATE

How did they find us?

WOMACK

I don't know. I think we just happened to be in their way.

KATE

They burned my house down.

WOMACK

Yeah.

KATE

They burned down my home.

WOMACK

I'm sorry.

KATE

No...

Kate clearly needs a few moments to process, and Womack gives them to her. Eventually, she regains her composure.

KATE (CONT'D)

Where are we going?

WOMACK

East. Cardale said something about crossing the Ohio River.

KATE

And then what?

WOMACK

I don't know. But we'll have escaped by then, so it doesn't matter.

Kate gives a small, defeated laugh.

KATE

We won't escape. We're going to die. You, me, and my baby.

WOMACK

I won't let that happen.

KATE

Right.

Another silence. Womack clearly has something on his mind that he's trying to put into words.

WOMACK

(blurting it out)  
Kate, I love you.

KATE

...oh?

WOMACK

Really. I love you. I want to protect you. And I won't let Cardale - or anyone else - hurt you or the baby.

KATE

I don't love you. I barely trust you.

WOMACK

I know. And I know it's not my kid.

That actually does catch Kate off guard.

KATE

How long have you known?

WOMACK

The whole time. I'm not dumb - I can count. And you're clearly further along than three months.

KATE

And you still want to be with me that badly?

WOMACK

Yeah. It's not my kid. But I kinda hoped that it could be ours.

It's a lot to mull over. Kate sits with it for a few moments.

KATE

Where would we go, in this fantasy of yours?

WOMACK

The only place we can go. Haven.

Kate actually LAUGHS.

KATE

It's not a real place.

WOMACK

Of course it is. He doesn't realize it, but Haven is the reason Wicks agreed to deal with my father in the first place. They have food, tech - real tech, from before the Fall - doctors, and high walls. They're hidden, and don't like visitors.

(MORE)

WOMACK (CONT'D)

But if we made it there, our son would be safe. He could grow up and have an actual childhood there.

KATE

It sounds nice. But it doesn't matter. We won't make it there.

WOMACK

We will. I promise.

Kate thinks it over.

KATE

(slowly)

I don't want to be with you. But right now I'm stuck with you. So if we do make it out of here, and find a quiet place where we're not constantly looking over our shoulders, we can have a conversation. That's it. We can have a conversation about us, and I will be honest. And that's all I can offer you.

WOMACK

That's all I want.

EXT. PRAIRIE - NIGHT (LATER)

The CONVOY continues on. The riders look as rough as their machines. Few faces are visible behind wraps, masks, and goggles.

They race through an ABANDONED HOMESTEAD. The buildings are burnt out and stripped of metal. Nature is reclaiming the structures.

The fields turn abruptly to FOREST. The convoy slows a bit and bunches together. The road is still straight but the trees are thick; the effect is claustrophobic.

WOMACK

Anyone know how much longer we have to go?

All he gets in response are a set of tired, defeated looks.

## AT THE FRONT OF THE CONVOY

one of the riders spots something. He BARKS a command and SIGNALS to the group. The formation tightens.

## UP AHEAD

a tree has fallen across the road. The convoy slows, then stops a few lengths short of the obstacle. Two men get out of the nearest JEEP carrying CHAINS and walk over to the log.

## IN THE TRUCK

some of the prisoners WHISPER among one another. Kate presses her eye to the crack and tries to see what is going on.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

Can you see anything?

The men wrap the chains around the end of the log and clip them together. One of them waves over the jeep.

KATE

There's something in the road.

A man near the truck lights a cigarette, pulling Kate's attention just in time to see a DISTURBANCE in the brush.

The jeep REVS, and slowly pulls the log out of the way. The riders shout orders at one another.

Kate stares into the brush. The riders unchain the jeep. They're wrapping the chains back up

THUNK, THUNK THUNK--

--BLACK CANISTERS tumble into the midst of the convoy. The men are caught off-guard, but Kate has enough time to react--

KATE (CONT'D)

GET DOWN!

BANG! A tremendous, deafening CRACK and a blinding WHITE LIGHT disorients everyone. The captives are SCREAMING AND YELLING; the Checkers are SHOUTING ORDERS and FIRING into the darkness. Bullets are flying everywhere, thudding into the side of the truck; a few prisoners take hits through the paneling; blood is everywhere inside; it's pure chaos--

The Checkers are disciplined, and have plenty of grit. Trucks, cars, and bikes are thrown into gear. CARDALE BARKS an order, and the convoy motors away from the ambush.

## AROUND THE CORNER

WICKS and another RATTLER are holding RPGS and standing on a rocky outcropping. Before anyone can react, there is a PUFF of smoke from the tubes--

BANG! The lead jeep and the truck ERUPT IN FLAMES. Kate, Womack, and the other prisoners are thrown around inside the back as the truck tumbles over, panels splintering.

The Checkers are in complete chaos. They try to defend the convoy, but they're being fired on from all directions.

Kate has hit her head. She's covered in blood-- some hers, most others'. She fights her way to her feet, then collapses, still chained to the floor...

...but the damage to the truck has clearly loosened the bolt holding her. There's only one thing to do. Gritting her teeth, she wraps the chain around her upper arm. A few deep breaths, then Kate YANKS the shackles, SCREAMING in pain. The bolt tears free, and she's off, staggering out of the smouldering hole in the side of the truck.

Rattlers have started to appear at the edges of the clearing, hiding behind trees and rocks. They're closing, advancing on the Checkers who are steadily losing men.

Kate presses herself up against an overturned jeep, and watches for her moment. Two men rush past her to close with the riders on the machine gun. This is it-- but then Kate sees Womack, pinned under an overturned bike.

WOMACK

Kate! Help!

She hesitates. The coast is clear, but for how much longer? She starts for the cover of the trees...

WOMACK (CONT'D)

Kate! Please! Help me!

Kate changes her mind. She runs back to Womack and throws her weight against the bike. Together, they manage to lift it off him, and then they're clear -

RAT-A-TAT-TAT! A line of bullets sends dust flying right at their feet! CARDALE is marching towards them, GUN BLAZING.

CARDALE

You little bitch! I should have killed you before. I mean to rectify that mistake.

Cardale is focus on Womack, who is pressing down behind the bike. He doesn't see Kate scrambling towards a fallen Checker, or the gun that his man had dropped - he's in front of Womack, gun pointed at his face.

CARDALE (CONT'D)  
Bye-bye, Womack.

BANG!

Cardale turns in surprise, and sinks to the ground. Kate is pointing her new gun at the former gang leader.

KATE  
Bye-bye, asshole.

Womack isn't quite sure how to process what happened.

WOMACK  
Thanks.

KATE  
Sure.

They sprint for the darkness, covering their heads as they runs. He's almost there, when Wicks spots them. Raising his rifle, he starts unloading into the trees. Splinters fly as they run, but then they're out of sight of the ambush.

WICKS  
That was the girl! She's got my  
Morrow! Someone get after them!

But the fighting is too fierce and the Rattlers aren't that well organized. No one, it seems, is going after them.

EXT. GALLIPOLIS - NIGHT (LATER)

The river is jet black. KATE & WOMACK make it to the riverbank, just north of the fighting.

KATE  
Shit.

The fighting is still going; TRACER BULLETS arc into the sky around the bridges. BOATS race up and down the river.

WOMACK  
Now what?

KATE  
We have to get closer. Maybe we can  
steal a boat.



## EDGING ALONG THE BANK

Is slow going. The night makes it hard to see the path, and every so often a SPOTLIGHT scanning the brush forces them to duck.

KATE (CONT'D)

I was wrong. This is a bad idea.  
Let's just go north.

WOMACK

We just were north. It's all  
fighting. Haven is the only place  
we're going to be safe.

KATE

Doesn't matter if we get killed  
crossing the river.

WOMACK

We won't. Look.

## UNDER ONE OF THE BRIDGES

They can see a number of BOATS pulled up on shore. A number of RATTLEERS stand around guarding the boats and shooting at the PATROL BOATS on the water.

WOMACK (CONT'D)

We just need one of those. Float  
down the river, find somewhere  
quiet to bank, and go from there.

KATE

They'll see us.

WOMACK

We have to chance it. I'll go down  
and deal with the guards. Stay here  
and keep an eye out.

KATE

(hissing)  
Womack!

But he's gone, creeping down the slope towards the unsuspecting guards below. Kate watches with bated breath as he nears - one guard looks his way - Womack hides - the guard turns back - Womack closes the gap - the KNIFE comes free -

The first guard is down - but a group of bikes has just rolled up to the base of the bridge - and at the head of the group is GARRETT WICKS.

## UNDER THE BRIDGE

Womack dispatches the second guard and begins to untie a boat. He turns, about to signal Kate - and freezes as Wicks walks down the slope towards him.

WICKS

Is that the Morrow boy? Well, we can't have you acting like that, now can we?

He pulls his gun. Womack panics--

WOMACK

Wait, no--

THUNK-THUNK. Wicks puts two in his chest.

KATE

SCREAMS, but manages to get her hands over her mouth and muffle the noise.

WICKS

walks over to Womack and kicks him to make sure he's dead.

WICKS

(turning to his men)

If he's here, the girl is here too.  
Split up and find her. I want -

## ANGLE ON: THE BRIDGES

A FIREBALL erupts on the bridge, followed by a series of explosions along it's length. SOLDIERS start running towards the pyrotechnics as all the fighting gets focused there.

Wicks YELLS and rallies his men, who immediately go to reinforce the bridge, Kate forgotten. Wicks heads back into the town, BARKING ORDERS as he goes.

KATE also sees the explosion. The bridge is still standing, but it's now swarming with men. The far bank is unloading into the town, with the besieging forces taking advantage of the night to attack.

She breaks cover and runs down to the bank, the occasional stray bullet smacking into the dirt nearby.

One comes perilously close, and she falls, skidding down into the shallows of the river. CRYING OUT, Kate presses herself into the shelter of the bank and keeps her head down.

From her spot among the river plants, KATE spies a rickety ROWBOAT. Carefully, doing her best not to be seen, she creeps over to it.

The sound of soldiers passing further up the slope causes her to lie flat. Then they're gone, and she starts trying to push the boat into the water.

KATE

Come on...

Flashes of light. Kate stops, eyes trained on the river. The battle is still raging on. But it's not the bridges or the banks that she's watching--

Something's moving out in the water. No lights, no nothing. And then a WHIRRING sound. A silhouette takes shape - a BOAT, crossing under the cover of darkness.

KATE (CONT'D)

Fuck!

She dives into the reeds, just as the boat lands a few yards away. FIGURES jump from the craft and splash ashore. GUNFIRE erupts just above Kate's hiding place, as the motorboat spins and drives back out into the dark waters.

It's now or never. Kate pushes the rowboat into the water.

BANG!

CRYING out in pain and clutching her arm, Kate goes down. WICKS is standing a few yards away, lowering his gun.

WICKS

ARGH!

He starts advancing, while Kate staggers to her feet and tries to back away.

WICKS (CONT'D)

You thought you could run away with my property? I made a deal, and your runt belongs to me.

He grabs her by the neck and lifts her up, choking her.

WICKS (CONT'D)

But he's worthless now. Morrows are out.

(MORE)

WICKS (CONT'D)

Garrett Wicks and the Rattlers are in.

(gesturing)

Look at all this. The Hellcats have been smashed. Dax Morrow is dead. Womack Morrow is dead. Isaiah Cardale and his pathetic excuse for a gang? They're all dead! Morrow wanted peace through cooperation. I say you get peace only through dominance.

His face is so close to her purpling face that he could bite her nose off if he wanted to. Kate kicks and fights for air, but it's nothing to Wicks.

WICKS (CONT'D)

Struggle all you want. You are the only thing left for me to take care of here. I will squeeze the life out of you, and then I will go burn the Hellcats to the ground.

Kate manages to grab on to one of Wicks' decorative spikes.

WICKS (CONT'D)

Just die already. Why fight? I hear Hell is great this time of year.

Then one of Kate's feet catches Wicks in the side. He grunts, grip slackening - the spike has torn from his clothes - Kate is swinging it at his head -

KATE

YAH!

The point catches Wicks right on his temple. BLOOD splashes as Wicks' eyes pop open in shock. As Kate staggers back, gasping for air, Wicks keels over face first into the mud.

Once she has her breath back, Kate SPITS on him. All around her, the Rattlers continue to battle. No one seems to know that Wicks is dead.

The boat is still there, half in and half out of the water. Shivering, Kate wades in, frees it, and lets the current carry her out into the river. The pull is constant but not rough, however without oars Kate is at its mercy.

Slowly, Kate drifts away from the site of the battle, watching as LIGHTNING arcs among the tracer rounds and the explosions. RAIN begins to fall.

## EXT. OHIO RIVER - DAWN

Shivering, soaked through, and exhausted, KATE makes landfall in West Virginia. She drags herself out of the river and slogs into the cover of the trees.

There is no sign of human habitation in this section of the country. There are only trees, plants, and a rocky bluff standing between Kate, still oozing blood, and her goal.

She takes a moment to tie off her bad arm, ripping a sleeve from her shirt with her teeth and good hand. It's an agonizing, messy process, made worse by her bouts of shivering. Once she's done, she takes one look back and then starts for the ridge.

## EXT. APPALACHIAN WILDERNESS - DAY

RAIN falls from low gray clouds, not hard, but enough to quiet the birds and leave everything slick and muddy.

We hear the sound of LABORED BREATHING. Filthy hands scabble on mossy rocks dripping with water, fighting for every inch. KATE is climbing the back of a ridge, scrambling up a slag heap. It's steep, and would be difficult in ideal conditions. In the rain, it's almost impossible: rocks come loose in her hands, and the ones that don't are too slick to hold on to.

Her hands slip and she falls hard, crashing against the rubble. She GRUNTS in pain, then gets back to her feet and keeps going.

A rock comes loose under her feet and she falls again. This time, she cries out, though it is more frustration than anything. She is a little slower to get back to her feet, but eventually she pushes on.

## AT THE TOP

Kate pulls herself up the last few feet and staggers over to a pine with high branches. Clearing the lip, she gets to her feet and walks over to the ledge.

## THE VALLEY BELOW

is as rugged as the rest of the forest. Kate turns to leave, but just as she does she catches sight of a UTILITY POLE at the bottom of the valley, sticking up through the trees at an awkward angle. And below the utility pole is a little strip of cracked gray ROAD. Seeing it, she lets out a small CHEER.

KATE

You see that, baby? We're almost there. Just a little further to a hot shower and a real meal.

MAKING HER WAY DOWN

KATE is in bad shape. She staggers from tree to tree, fighting to hold herself upright. Her face is ashen, and her arm is slick with blood.

Each pause gets longer and longer. Her eyes are heavy.

KATE (CONT'D)

No...can't fall asleep.

It seems like it's only a matter of time before she does pass out. Against the next tree, she slumps against her wound. She lets out a PITIFUL CRY and staggers forward. The momentum is only good enough for a few yards.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm dying, baby.

CU: KATE'S STOMACH

Her good hand rubs her bulge. Spots of wet blood smear along her jacket.

KATE (CONT'D)

I hope you're warm. I'm so cold.

She presses on again.

KATE (CONT'D)

They shot me. Can you believe that?  
I got shot.

Kate's eyes are losing focus.

KATE (CONT'D)

It's not fair. I wanted to see you smile. Meet the person I've been hauling around. Why'd they do it? Who shoots a pregnant woman? This world makes no sense.

She picks her way past some rotting logs and branches.

KATE (CONT'D)

Maybe they did you a favor. You shouldn't have to grow up here.  
(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

There's nothing nice about this place. A hot meal shouldn't be worth its weight in gold. You can't call anywhere home.

A dull BOOM echoes through the forest. Two more follow.

KATE (CONT'D)

Hooray. More shooting.

She puts her hand down on her stomach.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'll get you there. I'll get you there!

Her resolve is strong, but her body is defeated. She slips on the wet leaves and falls backwards, sliding down the slope.

Kate has nothing left. She knows it.

KATE (CONT'D)

Guess you aren't gonna see Haven after all.

Her eyes shut. Kate finally gives in to her fatigue, her losses, and her wounds.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DUSK

CRUNCHING LEAVES herald the arrival of a UNIT OF SOLDIERS. They are dressed in uniform, led by a man in a RED BERET.

One of the men spots KATE, lying under a tree.

SOLDIER

(pointing)

Sir, I've got something.

The commander motions to a MEDIC and the three of them walk over to Kate. The medic puts his hand against her neck.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Is she--

MEDIC

Warm. Just barely.

RED BERET

How far out are we?

SOLDIER

About two clicks.

RED BERET

Do what you can.

(pulling a radio out of  
his pack)

Haven control, this is Bravo group,  
requesting immediate medevac...

EXT. APPALACHIAN WILDERNESS -- AFTERNOON

POV: KATE

Light flickers, blurry at first, then sharpens. We're looking up at the sky through a canopy of pines and firs. At first, there's only the sound of KATE'S BREATHING. Then muted SHOUTS as our vision flickers and FADES TO BLACK

FADE IN:

It's the same view, but we're MOVING now, jostled by whatever we're lying on. The dull roar of an ENGINE is the only thing we can hear.

The MEDIC leans into view. He has a red cross painted on his helmet, and is holding an IV BAG in one hand.

MEDIC

(muted)

Hey! Hey lady! Stay with me!

Our vision begins to go dark. He reaches out and SHAKES the patient, but there's no response.

SOLDIER (O.S.)

She's not gonna make it.

MEDIC

Get Control; she will if they send  
someone to meet us...

The last thing we see before we FADE OUT is the bag being handed off, while the medic looks for something in his pack.

SILENCE. Then COMMOTION.

INT. BATTERED HOSPITAL

POV: The PATIENT

FADE IN to DOCTORS, NURSES, and the MEDIC all clamoring around. The doctors give orders, the nurses call out status reports, and the medic is still holding the bag of fluid.



Fluorescent lights flash past - we're being wheeled down a hallway.

DOCTOR

Prep the O.R. and get Dr. Connors out of bed.

NURSE

There aren't any rooms. We've got wounded pouring in.

MEDIC

She's wounded! She needs a room!

DOCTOR

Who the hell is running triage?

NURSE

Dr. Burns, sir.

DOCTOR

Damn it. Well, find me a room. We'll do this in the bathroom if it's sterile enough.

The medic notices that the patient is awake.

MEDIC

Hey! Hey, she's awake!

DOCTOR

Miss? Miss, can you hear me?

Things start to FADE.

KATE

Baby...my baby...

MEDIC

It'll be fine. You'll be fine. Stay with me lady!

NURSE

BP's crashing. Pulse is fading.

DOCTOR

She's coding. I need a bed now!

There's a new member of the medical staff. SAM is looking down, worry written all over his face.

SAM

Stay awake.

KATE  
Sam?

                  SAM  
I'm here. Stay awake Katie.

                  KATE  
Am I...am I home...?

FADE TO BLACK

END CREDITS