

Haven
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. APPALACHIAN WILDERNESS -- AFTERNOON

There is no sign of human habitation in this rugged section of the eastern United States. Pines and firs blanket the ridgeline, hiding all but the largest ridges and ledges from sight. 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.

A YOUNG WOMAN is attempting to scramble up the back of the ridge. She is wearing worn clothes, carrying a large backpack, and is muddy and wet.

The scramble is 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.

Close to the top, a SMALL TREE is growing up between the rocks. When the woman reaches it, she stops to catch her breath. It is the first time we see her standing upright, and for the first time we can see that she is a several months pregnant.

Leaning against the tree, she gently rubs the bump on her stomach, a worried expression on her face. Eventually, her breathing stills, leaving us only with the sound of the rain in the trees.

The woman takes a long drink of water from a BATTERED STEEL BOTTLE, and returns it to her pack. Drying her hands as best she can, she takes a single deep breath, and returns to her climb.

AT THE TOP

The woman pulls herself up the last few feet and staggers over to a pine with high branches. She unhooks her pack and plops down on a rock.

KATE

We made it.

Reaching into her coat pocket, she fishes out a PACKET OF BEEF JERKY. The packet is nearly empty; only one tiny piece and a few crumbs remain in the plastic wrap.

She eats the large piece first, savoring every bite, before pouring the crumbs into her mouth. She washes the pitiful meal down with a mouthful of water, then gets to her feet and walks over to the ledge.

THE VALLEY BELOW

is as rugged as the rest of the forest. At first there seems to be no sign of anyone. Sighing, 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.

Relief washes over Kate's face. She digs out her BINOCULARS--a children's toy made of chipped yellow plastic--and tries to get a better look.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS

The UTILITY POLE is covered in moss, and one of its arms has snapped clean off. A single wire dangles loosely from the remaining arm. The lenses of the binoculars are neither clear nor powerful, but they are strong enough that Kate can see a cracked section of ROAD, being reclaimed by the forest. She lets out a WHOOP of joy.

IN THE CLEARING

under the cover of a tree, Kate pulls out a MAP. It is covered with her notations, and is falling apart at the creases.

CU: THE MAP

Sections have been marked out with red, particularly around major population centers.

A blue line snakes west, with X's marked every few miles. Kate extends the line with a marker, ending it with a new X.

A mile further west, at the bottom of the ridge, a yellow line marks the presence of a county road. She traces that to a small box drawn in pen: HAVEN.

KATE (CONT'D)

You see that baby? We're almost there.

EXT. CLEARING -- EVENING

KATE begins pitching her TENT. The wind has picked up, and even in the shelter of the trees, she has to fight it to get her STAKES into the ground.

Her RAIN FLY is just a battered blue tarp. She gets it tied down in two corners...

...when a GUST OF WIND catches it and blows it back into the trees. The two corners of the tent come up with it, and while Kate wrangles the tarp, the tent flops back and forth, perilously close to the edge.

Kate lashes the tarp to a low branch and runs back to the tent. With considerable effort, she gets it back into the ground, and places two LARGE ROCKS over the stakes.

With the tent secure, she gets the fly in place. Just in time too: THUNDER echoes through the valley, and the heavens open up. Kate throws her PACK into the tent and follows it in.

INT. TENT -- EVENING

KATE shucks off her coat and her boots, laying them both out neatly against the tent wall. Next come her socks, and finally her pants, each of which find their place against the wall.

On the other side of the tent, Kate pulls her SLEEPING BAG out of its waterproof sack, and unrolls it, keeping it as far from her wet clothes as she can.

Sitting in her sleeping bag, Kate pulls her PACK over to her and digs through it. She pulls out a CAN OF RAVIOLI, along with a small CAMP STOVE.

Using her SWISS ARMY KNIFE, Kate opens the can. She tries to light the stove, but the flint must have gotten wet. It CLICKS and HISSES, but refuses to light.

Kate dabs it with her sleeve, and tries it again, but she can't get it to start.

KATE

Damn it.

The stove goes back in the pack.

INT. TENT -- EVENING (LATER)

The light is all but gone when KATE reaches the last chunk of cold pasta. She eats it, licking off the fork, then grimaces at the cold sauce left in the can. As distasteful as it is, Kate is eating for two. She looks down at her stomach.

KATE

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

Kate chugs the sauce. The moment she's done, she pulls the can away and shudders, gasping for air.

KATE (CONT'D)

Ugh!

INT. TENT -- NIGHT

Night has fallen, and the rain has only gotten louder. KATE sits in her sleeping bag, singing a LULLABY to her unborn child. It is a haunting melody, barely audible over the storm.

As she finishes the last bar, her watch BEEPS. Kate rolls up her sleeve and silences the alarm, then pulls her PACK over.

Wrapped tightly in bubble wrap and secured with a rubber band is a RADIO. Like the binoculars, it is made of brightly colored plastic and is more appropriate for a child.

Kate turns it on. STATIC fills the tent.

She turns the knob, lining it up with a notch in the casing. A voice crackles to life.

BAD HAND (V.O.)

...it's another wet day in the good new U.S. of A. We've got a storm right now that swept in from the west and crashed right into our happy little valley. But never fear good citizens! Your ever faithful Bad Hand Paddy is here!

(MORE)

BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And while I can't make the rain go away, I'm gonna keep broadcasting anyway! Cause you know what they say friends:

KATE/BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Radio Free Haven is powered by Lucky Charms and good old fashioned insanity!

Kate LAUGHS while Bad Hand plays a track of KOOKY SOUND EFFECTS over the airwaves.

BAD HAND (V.O.)

And what better to get from a madman than the news? Remember friends, some of it is rumor, some of it is speculation, but all of it comes straight from the heart.

Kate turns on a small pocket FLASHLIGHT. Holding it in her mouth, she pulls out her map.

BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

First up folks, I'm pleased to report that the production of hot lead has fallen to all time lows, after an accord between those scrappy Hellcats and our hometown heroes, Doc G and his Rough Riders. Great news for travelers and the settlements all along the Ohio River, except for those sorry folks in Harper's Ferry who got to host the summit.

CU: MAP

Quite a ways south of her current position, Kate finds the town of HARPER'S FERRY, and puts a line through it.

BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Doc G was kind enough to comment on the proceedings:

(growling)

Ain't you that Paddy bastard from the radio? Get him boys!

GUNSHOTS ring out over the tape, along with a few YELPS and SHOUTS. A moment later, there is only static.

BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Doc G, ladies and gentlemen! Such
 inspiring stuff. It really just
 tugs at the heartstrings to see
 such a tough man really let out his
 feelings like that. Don't try that
 at home though--it only takes one
 badly aimed feeling to ruin your
 whole day.

The flashlight falls out of Kate's mouth as she laughs. It
 rolls across the tent floor before she recovers it.

BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Also folks, I should tell you that
 we've seen a few drones cruising
 about the valley south of Haven.
 According to my reports, they are
 believed to be benign, but you know
 the drill with UAVs:

KATE/BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Out of sight, stay alive. Step in
 the day, the drones, they will
 slay.

BAD HAND (V.O.)
 That's it for the news. This is Bad
 Hand Paddy, your voice of insanity
 in a world that never made sense in
 the first place. Coming at you from
 Radio Free Haven--nineteen hundred
 and eighty-three days without our
 internationally mandated dose of
 lethal radiation. Now, for some
 music...

MUSIC starts to play, then cuts off as the radio dies.

KATE
 Come on...

She turns it off and on again. The radio crackles, then dies
 again. Sighing, Kate turns off her flashlight and tries to go
 to sleep.

EXT. CLEARING -- MORNING

The storm has come and gone, washing the valley in sunshine.
 Kate's WET CLOTHES are stretched out in the sun, drying,
 while KATE packs up camp, barefoot, wearing her underwear and
 her sweater.

She shakes the TARP out, and rolls it up. The TENT POLES are next, along with the STAKES and the LINES. Just as she is about to start rolling up the flat tent, Kate freezes.

WIDE -- VALLEY

The sky is nearly cloudless. A pair of turkey vultures soar on the updrafts. There is no sound.

In the distance there is a small SPECK moving slowly above the far ridge. Kate looks at it, curious

A faint HUMMING sound becomes audible. The speck is growing larger. It's turning towards Kate.

Her curiosity is replaced by fear. She knows what it is.

KATE

Shit!

IN THE CLEARING

even though there are plenty of trees, Kate is completely exposed. As fast as she can, she crams the tent into its sack. The humming gets LOUDER.

KATE (CONT'D)

Shit, shit, shit!

The speck is now clearly visible. It's a DRONE, one of the ones Bad Hand had mentioned. The humming is its propeller, and it's heading straight for Kate.

KATE (CONT'D)

Fuck! Come on!

Finally, she gets the tent into its sack, and she slings it into a bush. The drone is almost on her.

Kate sprints for the cover of the forest. Twenty feet and she'll be safe.

The drone ROARS up and over the ridge, just as Kate slides out of sight.

She hides in the mud while the drone circles around. One pass, two passes, three. Then it loses interest and turns off, flying down the valley to the south.

The humming fades into silence.

A moment passes, then two. Finally, Kate stands up, breathing hard. The combination of pregnancy and terror proves too much, and she loses control of her stomach. She vomits, holding on to the tree to steady herself.

EXT. WILDERNESS -- DAY

--Kate packs her backpack and puts her clothes on

--Carefully, she makes her way down the front of the ridge, using a rock formation as a sort of staircase

--She presses through the forest, heading for the patch of road

--Upon arriving at the road, she heads north

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE -- DAY

It's a rundown HOUSE nestled among the pines, just barely visible from the road. The house is covered with vines and moss, surrounded by tall grass. The windows are boarded up, and the paint is peeling. A BARN sits a little further back, and a GARAGE is falling down next to what used to be the driveway. There is no sign that anyone has been here in a while.

Compared to the rubble up the back of the ridge, the steep driveway is a cakewalk. KATE makes her way up to the house, wary eyes looking for any sign of company.

She reaches the front door and KNOCKS. No response.

KATE

Hello?

Silence. Kate tries the handle. The door is stuck, but with a bit of effort she gets it open.

KATE (CONT'D)

Hello?

INSIDE

The house is musty and dark. Some furniture remains, along with a few odds and ends, all covered with cobwebs. It looks as though the previous occupants left in a hurry.

KATE (CONT'D)

Anyone here?

ROOM BY ROOM

Kate begins searching the house for anything of use. She pulls open closets, looks in drawers, and under beds. Most of them have already been emptied, but she does manage to find:

--a half open pack of BATTERIES

--two tins of BEANS

--a small bag of RICE

--a working BUTANE TORCH

OUTSIDE

She collects water from a rain barrel in a pot. The water is stagnant and full of plant matter, but it's clear.

IN THE KITCHEN

The water begins to boil, heated by the torch which is held upright in a wire rig.

Kate is swapping out the batteries in her RADIO with the ones she found.

KATE (CONT'D)
Come on, come on...

The radio crackles to life!

KATE (CONT'D)
Ha!

A CHEERFUL TUNE fills the kitchen, while Kate makes a hot meal.

A scoop of rice goes in the boiling water, while she reseals the bag and puts in her pack, along with one of the cans.

While the rice sits, the torch is used to heat the other can. Once they begin steaming, the beans are dumped over the rice, still in the pot, and Kate wolfs it down hungrily.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE -- DAY (LATER)

The meal didn't stand a chance against the hungry KATE. Sitting back in her chair, she wipes her face and licks her fingers before putting her hands on her belly.

KATE

How was that? Did mommy do good?

It is a tender moment, and perhaps the first time we've seen Kate relax. A hot meal and a full stomach goes a long way...

...but the moment is interrupted as the RADIO goes SILENT. Kate sits forward, concerned. A moment of DEAD AIR is followed by the voice of BAD HAND. This time however, a note of concern tinges his usual rapid-fire speech.

BAD HAND (V.O.)

Watch out, my wilderness warriors!
It's Bad Hand Paddy, the one, the
only, coming to you live on Radio
Free Haven with a special news
update.

Kate reaches for her pack and fishes out her MAP, which she lays out on the kitchen table.

BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It seems that yesterday's agreement might just have seized the record for shortest truce in America-- though my first grade apple pie accord would probably give it a run for its money. Reports of Hellcats moving up and down the old county road have been coming in since dawn, and folks, it looks like they aren't fooling around. We have unconfirmed reports of slaver cars, so unless you want to finish up your days on a bait chain in what's left of Baltimore, I suggest you get off the road.

On the map, Kate extends the line of her progress. She's on the road, but according to her chart she's not far from Haven.

BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The raiders are believed to be moving north, hitting Camp 47, Elk Crossing, Nitro--

Kate ticks off the settlements one by one, coming closer and closer to her position as she listens.

BAD HAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

--Orson, Demille, and Hawthorne.

The last settlement puts the raiders within striking distance of Kate. She folds up the map and jams it into her PACK.

KATE

Shit!

BAD HAND (V.O.)

You know how those warlords are, with the burning and the looting, so folks, I suggest you get your asses to Haven, our fair city, hide in a ditch somewhere, or hope that your gun is big enough to scare the Hellcats off. But then again, those Virginia boys are crazier than ol' Bad Hand, so there's no telling what they might do!

A low RUMBLE can be heard in the distance. Kate FREEZES, and listens to it as it gets louder. It only takes a moment before the sound of engines is clearly recognizable.

KATE

Oh fuck.

She turns the radio off and puts it in the pack. She throws it over her shoulders--no time for the hip belt--and sprints out the front door.

OUTSIDE

The SOUND OF ENGINES is almost deafening. Kate SPRINTS for the cover of the forest, but she's only a few feet from the door when the RAIDERS appear. They're tough, brutish men, dressed for battle, and the convoy itself consists of cars, trucks, bikes, and ATVs--anything that they can get their hands on.

Kate ducks behind the BARN. She looks over at the trees, but there's maybe fifty feet of exposed ground between the barn and cover. With the raiders going past, it might as well be fifty miles.

The raiders continue past. No one shows any sign of stopping.

At her feet, Kate notices a section of IRON PIPE. She picks it up.

The convoy begins to thin. The seconds tick by.

And then it's gone, the sound of engines FADING into the distance. Kate breathes a sigh of relief, and heads for the forest. Thinking the danger has passed, her guard is down...

...when three RAIDERS ride up the driveway. They're on DIRT BIKES, armed to the teeth, and dressed in leather. Purple insignias hang all over their bikes and their bodies.

Kate ducks back behind the barn, clutching the pipe.

ANGLE ON: THE RAIDERS

The raiders pull up in front of the house. One of the men sports a tattoo on the side of his face, while the other wears a purple bandana.

BANDANA

Looks deserted.

LEADER

No shit.

(to both his men)

Split up. See if you can find anything of value.

ANGLE ON: KATE

Carefully, Kate backs up along the barn. She can see the leader and the bandana walking to the house.

She's not watching her feet though, and she steps on a STICK. The SNAP is loud, and she FREEZES. The two raiders have stopped at the door.

They look around. Kate holds her breath. Do they see her?

No. After a moment, they disappear inside the house. Kate makes for the woods, creeping at first, then walking, then running. She comes to the edge of the barn--

TATTOO

(grinning)

Hello.

Kate SCREAMS, but her momentum keeps her moving forward. The tattooed raider reaches out to grab her, but he wasn't expecting her to be armed.

CRUNCH! Kate smashes him straight in the face with the pipe. The raider goes down hard. She sprints for the forest.

SHOUTS from behind her! The other raiders come running out of the house, to see Kate bolting from the trees. They give chase, drawing their GUNS as they do.

LEADER

Stop her!

They FIRE. Bullets HUM past Kate, smacking into trees, sending splinters everywhere. But she's almost out of sight. Just a few more paces--

THUD! A bullet catches her in the shoulder. Kate CRIES OUT and goes down, tangled up with her pack and the undergrowth. The raiders WHOOP at their success, and head after her.

Frantically, she struggles to free herself before they catch her. Her left arm is useless, and covered in blood. She tugs, and tugs, crying in pain and fear. Finally, she frees herself, and she's on her feet, staggering deeper into the forest.

The raiders reach her pack. The bandana starts after Kate's retreating form, but the leader stops them.

BANDANA

Shouldn't we go after her?

LEADER

She'll bleed out before we can sell her. Go see if Lynx is still breathing.

EXT. WILDERNESS -- DAY

The raider's assessment of KATE's condition looks like it might be accurate. Out of breath, she leans against a tree, and tries to examine her shoulder.

KATE

That's a lot of blood.

Even though she's lost her pack, she still has her SWISS ARMY KNIFE. She awkwardly pulls off her coat and sweater, and then uses it to cut off her sleeve.

The bullet must have passed clean through her arm, because there are two holes, front and back. Blood runs from both of them, dripping off her fingertips.

As best she can with one hand, she uses the cut-off sleeve to bandage the wound. It almost immediately turns red--the bandage isn't going to do much.

KATE (CONT'D)

Oh fuck, oh fuck, oh fuck.

Kate pulls her sweater back on and slips into her coat. She starts trudging through the forest, doing up the zipper as she goes.

EXT. WILDERNESS -- AFTERNOON

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

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

KATE
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 pain jolting what's left of her adrenaline.

The momentum is only good enough for a few yards. Kate stops again.

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 baby. 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 baby? 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. There's nothing nice about this place. A hot meal shouldn't be worth its weight in gold.

(mimicking Bad Hand)

When you snooze in your shoes because of your booze you we can't excuse and you're just gonna lose because you missed the news. That's right folks, its me, the voice of our brave new world, Bad Hand Paddy, coming at you from Radio Free Haven, your voice of insanity in a world that never made sense in the first place.

A dull BOOM echoes through the forest. Kate pauses and looks up. A second follows, then a third.

KATE (CONT'D)

Hooray. More shooting.

She puts her hand down on her stomach.

KATE (CONT'D)

Haven. I'll get you there baby.
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 a few meters.

Kate has nothing left. She knows it.

KATE (CONT'D)

Sorry baby. Guess you aren't gonna see Haven after all.

Her eyes shut, and she gives in to her fatigue.

EXT. WILDERNESS -- DUSK

The sound of CRUNCHING LEAVES heralds 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 the tree where she fell.

SOLDIER
(pointing)
Sir, I've got something.

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

SOLDIER (CONT'D)
Is she--

MEDIC
Warm. And pregnant.

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
patrol, requesting immediate
medievac...

CU: KATE

As the voice of the commander fades out, we see that Kate is completely still. There is no sign of breath, or color, or life.

And yet, as the medic tends to her, there is a flicker of movement around her lips. Was that...did she...?

CUT TO BLACK