

Salina Dreams

by

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FADE IN:

INT. PRISON CELL BLOCK - DAY

C.O. Pelly rifles in his bag as he walks with a careless sway. He pulls out a letter and stops in front of the first cell of the dimly-lit block.

CAROLINE WEST (early 30s), sits on her bed in the prison cell. She turns a page of a book.

C.O. Pelly extends a letter towards Caroline.

C.O. PELLY

West, mail.

Caroline stands up and takes the letter from C.O. Pelly. A large, red stamp of a pointing hand sits on the face of the envelope, it reads: "RETURNED TO WRITER, UNCLAIMED FROM ST. LOUIS, MO"

CAROLINE

(to C.O. Pelly)

What- this is the fourth letter returned.

C.O. Pelly ignores her, rifling through his bag once again.

C.O. PELLY

Hey lady, don't shoot the messenger.

C.O. Pelly walks away, sifting through letters and whistling.

Caroline plops back down on her bed and stares at the letter. Her eyes scan the recipient name: ROSEMARY WEST. She places it in her uniform pocket.

A beat.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRISON YARD - NIGHT

A siren rings through the night. Dogs bark and PRISON GUARD 1 yells furiously.

PRISON GUARD 1

Figures spotted heading towards the south fence! Hold the dogs steady!

EXT. PRISON YARD - NIGHT

C.O. Pelly rushes Caroline through the soaked, muddy prison yard. He holds the cold steel of a revolver to the back of her dingy prison dress with one hand, and tightly grips her hands with his other- rendering them useless. She wears a sack over her head.

C.O. Pelly pushes the revolver harder into Caroline's back, signifying for her to move faster.

The night sky around them is pitch black, rain pours down on them.

Caroline struggles to breathe with her head in the drenched sack.

She trudges along the mud of the yard.

EXT. PRISON FENCE - NIGHT

C.O. Pelly and Caroline arrive at the edge of the yard at a tall, expansive, chainlink fence.

The ground around the bottom of the fence is especially muddy, giving way under their feet.

C.O. Pelly loses his footing in the mud.

C.O. PELLY (CONT.)

Shit-!

In the wet darkness, he lets go of Caroline's hands to catch his fall. Without a moment of hesitation, she yanks the drenched sack off of her head, and takes in a deep breath. A single ray of moonlight illuminates her face, revealing long, blonde hair and a scar above her lip.

While C.O. Pelly slips around trying to get to his feet in the muddy yard, Caroline takes her chance to kick him while he's down.

He slips further into the mud.

C.O. PELLY (CONT.)

Ach- son of a bitch!

She continues to kick and punch before reaching for C.O. Pelly's revolver. In the struggle, C.O. Pelly lands a few punches. She winces and sputters as blood from her nose trickles down into her mouth.

Still slipping in the mud and darkness, and struggling for the gun, the revolver goes off loudly- but harmlessly, before disappearing into the mud.

C.O. Pelly covers his ears tightly.

C.O. PELLY (CONT.)

God! Fuck!

EXT. PRISON YARD - NIGHT

Prison Guard 1 jumps at the sound of the shot.

PRISON GUARD 1

That's a gunshot! Let those dogs
loose!

EXT. PRISON FENCE - NIGHT

Caroline halts, ears ringing.

Coming back to reality, she hears the barking of the dogs and the struggling of C.O. Pelly as he recuperates from the shot.

She wipes splattered mud and dripping sweat from her face, breathing frantically. She gropes around in the mud and finds the cold steel of the revolver. She bolts to the fence and begins to clamber over.

C.O. PELLY (CONT.)

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait!

C.O. Pelly lunges towards her, barely missing her foot. He begins to climb the fence himself but is met by the jaws of three guard dogs.

He screams in pain as the dogs drag him down by the leg, back into the mud.

Caroline vaults over the top of the fence and crashes down into the mud below, completely soaking the cheap canvas material of her prison uniform dress.

She glances back at the dogs as they ravage C.O. Pelly.

He screams.

PRISON GUARD 1 (O.S., CONT)

(shouting)

She's on the outside, boys!

The fast footsteps of the prison guards get louder and louder.

Caroline refocuses and dashes into the night.

A moment later, the guards arrive at the fence, out of breath.

PRISON GUARD 2 quiets the dogs.

PRISON GUARD 2

Woah woah, settle down now, girls.
Settle down...

The guards pull the dogs off of C.O. Pelly, who writhes in pain in the mud.

PRISON GUARD 1
(to Prison Guard 3)
Goddamnit, it's Pelly. Ring the
station and tell McGraw we've got a
runner for him.

PRISON GUARD 3
Yes, sir.

PRISON GUARD 1
That bitch ain't our problem now.

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

Caroline trudges through stalk after stalk of corn. Ears
smack her body as she ventures through.

Out of breath, she does not stop.

She peers back behind her; the lights of the prison are mere
specs.

Finally at the edge of the field, she slows from exhaustion.

Caroline drops to her knees, weeping, revolver still in her
hand.

She wipes the tears, rises, and continues to run in the
direction of a grouping of trees.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Caroline emerges from the trees, barely keeping upright. In
the moonlight stands an old, tattered barn.

She creeps closer.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Caroline pulls her ragged body into the dark barn. The floor
is soft with hay.

Moonlight pierces through a square window on the second
floor, illuminating the top deck of the barn and the ladder
that leads up to it.

She forces herself up the ladder and collapses in a pile of
hay.

She sleeps.

EXT. OPEN HIGHWAY - DAY

A shiny teal Cadillac zips past stalks of corn and continues
down a large empty highway. It passes a large sign saying
"WELCOME TO SALINA, HOME OF THE LARGEST FEMALE PENITENTIARY
IN THE U.S."

INT. WARWICK'S DISCOUNT WARES - DAY

RITA ABERNATHY (mid 20s) stands at a front counter wearing a bright, flowy sundress. Her crazy, voluminous hair falls down to her shoulders, and her face is highlighted by flashy 1960s makeup. An open steamer trunk sits by her feet, and a few articles of bedazzled clothing are draped over the counter.

ALAN WARWICK (50s) stands on the opposite side of the counter, annoyed.

RITA

Listen, just put one on the mannequin in the window, a couple on the shelves-

ALAN WARWICK

Rita, you're in here every week. And, every week my answer doesn't change-

RITA

Okay, one on the shelf-

ALAN WARWICK

No.

RITA

Mr. Warwick, selling fake handcuffs and prison uniforms is overplayed, tourism is an idea of the past. Imagine your wife in one of these dresses!

She picks up a spectacular, deep red slip dress.

RITA (CONT.)

I'm sure she's been asking for a date night- how about the girls going to K State in the fall? They're all going to want something new and fresh for-

ALAN WARWICK

Rita, no. It's too much. I was fine with you selling your kiddie clothes, but this is beyond me. And my wife is just fine, thank you.

Rita raps her finger nails on the counter in annoyance.

ALAN WARWICK

Please, take your business elsewhere.

Rita hurriedly grabs the dresses on the counter and stuffs them into the trunk beneath her.

RITA

Fine.

She shuts and latches the trunk. With a huff, she grabs the handle of the trunk and begins to drag it out of the store.

ALAN WARWICK

(under his breath)

And preferably out of Salina.

Rita does not hear him. She drags the trunk out of the store.

EXT. WARWICK'S DISCOUNT WARES - DAY

Rita exits the store and drags her trunk to the sidewalk. The store sits sandwiched between other buildings in the heart of the downtown.

Right outside of the store, a WOMAN (50s) staples a flyer to a bulletin board on the building wall.

Rita walks up to the woman, dropping her trunk. She takes a look at the array of papers on the board. It's all advertisement junk.

RITA

Putting up anything exciting?

WOMAN

Exciting for somebody, I'm sure.
Don't tell my daughter I forgot to
put these up sooner.

The Woman finishes stapling and walks away.

Rita takes a look at the flyer. It reads: "FASHION GALA OF THE YEAR, THE MERLANT, ST. LOUIS, 8 PM, JUNE 12TH." Her eyes light up.

Rita snatches the flyer and puts it in her dress pocket.

She once again grabs her trunk and drags it down the sidewalk.

EXT. BURKE'S HOME YARD - DAY

BURKE TANNER (30s), a tall man with blonde hair, walks up to the mailbox at the end of his front yard. He pulls out a stack of mail, and sifts through as he walks back up to his front door.

He stops on a letter from Caroline West. He sighs deeply.

INT. BURKE'S HOME STUDY - DAY

Burke enters his study and throws the stack of mail on his desk, besides the letter from Caroline. He pulls out a stamp and ink pad from inside one of the desk drawers.

ROSEMARY WEST (8), a sweet young girl, slowly opens the door to the study.

ROSEMARY
Hey, Uncle Burke...

At the same time, Burke slowly stamps the letter with the "RETURNED TO WRITER" stamp.

BURKE
What did I tell you about knocking, Rosemary?

ROSEMARY
(embarrassed)
Sorry... I finished cleaning the dishes. Is that another letter from my mom?

Burke sighs.

BURKE
She doesn't seem to get the message. It's better if you don't read them, who knows what delinquent filth she's spreading. Would you put this back in the mailbox?

ROSEMARY
Yeah.

Burke hands the letter to Rosemary. Rosemary leaves the room, and closes the study door softly.

EXT. BURKE'S HOME YARD - DAY

Rosemary walks up to the mailbox, staring at the letter.

She runs her finger over the sealed seam of the envelope. Her eyes scan the words "Caroline West."

At the mailbox, she hesitates- but puts it inside anyway and flips the flag up.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Cicadas buzz furiously as Rita drags her trunk on the side of a large, empty highway. The sun pounds down on her. Rita drops the trunk for a moment to wipe the sweat from her brow.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

TATE JOHNSON (30s), in a suit, sits at the wheel of the shiny teal Cadillac. He holds the wheel with one hand, and a lit cigarette with the other as music blares.

In the distance, he notices Rita walking along the road.

He turns the music down and rolls the Cadillac to a stop behind her.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Tate steps out of the Cadillac and walks in Rita's direction.

TATE
(yelling)
Hey, there!

Rita notices Tate but does not stop walking.

TATE (CONT.)
Hey, little lady.

Tate approaches Rita and walks beside her.

TATE (CONT.)
Need some help?

RITA
I'm fine, thank you.

TATE
No husband around to carry your bags?

RITA
Nope. He stayed home to tend the garden and bake a pie.

Tate laughs.

TATE
Oh, I bet. Say, what's in the trunk?

RITA
A little nosy, don't you think?

TATE
A little strange, don't you think? A lone woman carrying a trunk as big as her on the side of the interstate? The opportunist in me wants to know if you've got some goods to pedal, the moralist in me wants to know if you're lugging someone from the missing persons page.

Rita finally stops and drops the trunk.

She unlatches it and yanks the top open to reveal the articles of handmade clothing inside.

RITA

Happy? No body.

Tate takes a long stare at Rita's works. He pulls out a pair of striped wide-leg trousers and examines them, before putting them back and pulling out a dazzling top and examining it as well.

A beat. The cicadas buzz.

TATE

You know... My daughter's playing a clown in the school play...

Rita glares at Tate.

TATE (CONT.)

Kidding, kidding. Here.

Tate pulls out a business card and hands it to Rita. She gives it a once-over and slides it in her pocket with the flyer.

TATE (CONT.)

Tate Johnson, entrepreneur. That's my office number, I'll be back at my desk by tomorrow.

RITA

(sarcastically)

Thanks.

TATE

So, how much?

RITA

Excuse me?

TATE

Truly, your craftsmanship is... otherworldly. I've got a partner in St. Louis who'd pay top dollar for a Halloween costume designer, he's trying to get a leg-up before Autumn rolls around-

RITA

Oh, bother someone else.

Rita yanks the trousers back and throws them in the trunk, latching it back up. She then grabs the handle again and begins to walk.

Tate does not follow her.

TATE

(shouting)

Give me a call! We could be rich!

(MORE)

TATE (cont'd)
(under his breath)
Stick up her ass.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SALINA - DAY

BUD TRACY (late 20s), adorned in a police officer's uniform, stands at a phone booth. He inserts some coins, and dials a number.

TRACY
(softly)
How'd it go?

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S)
(staticky)
No-go boss. Went to shit.

TRACY
Wha- are you fucking with me?

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S)
Swear on my life. The girl slipped out. My guy's all chewed up and in police custody-

TRACY
Christ! All he had to do was throw her in a bag and drag her outta there-

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S)
I know, but don't worry, he ain't a rat.

TRACY
(furious)
That bastard says a single word and I'll chew him up myself!

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S)
Er, right. Unforeseen turn of events, boss. Happens to the best of us-

Tracy slams the phone down, hanging up.

TRACY
Fuck! FUCK!

He slams the phone repeatedly, harder and harder each time.

He exits the booth in disarray and storms off.

Passersby watch with curiosity.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Tracy walks in aggressively, a cigarette in his mouth.

CHERYL (50s) sits at a secretary's desk.

CHERYL

Mornin', Tracy. You're late.

He speeds past her.

Cheryl rolls her eyes.

INT. POLICE STATION DEBRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Tracy enters loudly into a smokey room full of other police officers. Officers DANIEL BROOKS (30s), TED NOVAKOWSKI (40s), SAM JESSEL (50s), and LASSER SMITH (late 20s) sit at a table around the police chief, VERN MCGRAW (60s).

CHIEF MCGRAW

Sit your ass down, newbie. And don't say a damn word. I'm already tired of your pansy voice and I ain't even heard it today. Missing the debriefing ain't gonna get you any good remarks, that's for damn sure.

Tracy scoffs and takes a seat, disheveled.

CHIEF MCGRAW (CONT.)

As I was saying, Brooks, you able to phone the homes nearest the prison?

Brooks flips through a manila folder.

BROOKS

Yeah, all of 'em. No word of her from anyone besides the Dee's going on about some ruffians in their cornfield. Called back later saying it was just the neighbor boy and some broad.

Chief McGraw grumbles.

Smith yawns ferociously.

Tracy and Novakowski let out puffs of smoke.

Jessel sips from a flask, reading a newspaper. It's a national headline, "FUNERAL FOR ST. LOUIS COP." He glances over words like "parade", "left an orphan behind", "wife behind bars", "partner missing from funeral, leaves St. Louis police force without a trace." He focuses on the last part especially, but moves on.

BROOKS (CONT.)

Let me see, let me see, let me see... Oh! The Abernathys. Off the
(MORE)

BROOKS (CONT.) (cont'd)
40 towards Great Bend- line's
disconnected. Just took me to the
operator.

CHIEF MCGRAW
Hmm... Damn we need a lead here!

The Chief slams his fist on the table.

CHIEF MCGRAW (CONT.)
That woman's gettin' thrown back
behind bars if it takes us to Hell
and back. Small town like us could
use a spot in the big papers. And
for you, newbie-

He turns to Tracy.

CHIEF MCGRAW (CONT.)
It's a murder convict we're after.
Escaped McPherson's last night. I
already scanned her file but the
biggest things you outta know are
she's a tall broad with blonde
hair, and has a kid staying with
her brother in St. Louis.

Tracy is not surprised, he knows.

Jessel puts the newspaper down, takes another sip, and
drifts off.

NOVAKOWSKI
Say, Chief. Who'd wanna get that
broad outta there, anyway?

CHIEF MCGRAW
Hell, I've been thinking since I
got the call last night. Her file
doesn't mention anything about a
motive for killing her husband.
And, we've got that other bastard
in a cell right now, but he ain't
letting a word through.

SMITH
Sure, that guy's involved. But how
do we know they're accomplices?
What if he was getting her out for
something else?

CHIEF MCGRAW
The hell you saying, Smith?

NOVAKOWSKI

(to the Chief)

Yeah, yeah. She killed her husband,
right? Big city cop? Maybe someone
went all vigilante. Cowboy justice.

Tracy remains still, tense.

Jessel snores.

The Chief ponders.

CHIEF MCGRAW

Let's not rule it out. For now,
couple of you boys- take a drive
out to that farm. Who wants to
volunteer?

TRACY

Sign me up, chief.

CHIEF MCGRAW

Oh really? Compensating, are we?
Whatever, be my guest. All of ya,
get to work.

The police officers begin to file out.

TRACY

Chief, could I take her file with
me? Just in case.

CHIEF MCGRAW

Don't see why not.

Chief McGraw hands Tracy the manilla folder.

CHIEF MCGRAW (CONT.)

And take uhhh... Jessel with you.

Annoyed, Tracy gives Jessel a slight slap on the cheek, as
he continues to snore.

TRACY (CONT.)

(to Jessel)

Come on, you bum.

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Rita opens the mesh-screen back door and walks into a
quaint, farm-style kitchen, decorated with ceramic
wall-hanging views of chickens, cows, and other farm
animals. A small table sits in the middle of the room,
surrounded by three chairs.

Rita drops her trunk on the kitchen floor.

Rita's mother, SUNNY ABERNATHY (40s), stands at the kitchen
sink drying dishes, wearing a checkered apron.

Rita's father, CAL ABERNATHY (40s), sits at the kitchen table reading a newspaper laid flat on the table surface. With his left arm, he flips the pages and drinks a cup of coffee. The stump of his right arm hangs to his side.

When not reading the paper or drinking coffee, Cal attempts to peel an orange with his one hand.

Sunny puts the last plate away.

SUNNY

(to Rita)

Hi, dear. Any luck in town?

RITA

Uh, not particularly. I've been thinking though, maybe I outta expand to St. Louis. It's not a far drive, I could catch the next bus out.

Cal remains silent. He picks away at the orange, unsuccessful.

SUNNY

Sure, maybe. But that's a talk for another time, hm? Have something to eat, take a break.

Rita looks discouraged.

RITA

Thanks, Ma. Yeah, I'd love a-

CAL

(angrily to Rita)

Like hell you're going to St. Louis.

He stops fidgeting with the orange.

CAL (CONT.)

No little vacations while this family's on the line. While this whole farm's on the goddamn line!

SUNNY

Cal-

CAL

Ain't no truck, ain't no workin' phone line, ain't no goddamn cows! Get your ass to work doing something useful for once!

Cal holds the unpeeled orange.

Rita notices and motions to it.

RITA
 (to Cal)
 Here, I can peel it-

He swats her hand away.

CAL
 (angrily)
 I got it!

Rita stands in silence.

CAL (CONT.)
 (to Rita)
 Ain't good for nothin' besides
 pedalling clothes! And apparently
 ya ain't even good at that,
 neither!

He slams the orange on the table.

RITA
 Listen, I worked hard! The right
 person's just gotta come around and
 take an interest... St. Louis, Pa!

CAL
 Don't tell me about workin' hard,
 missy.

Sunny remains silent, her eyes to the floor.

CAL (CONT.)
 Do ya know how hard I had to work
 to make this farm what it is? What
 it WAS?

Rita says nothing, but stares at her father intently.

CAL (CONT.)
 Whole life's work- slippin' away
 and I can't do a damn thing about
 it!

RITA
 You say the same goddamn thing
 every time, Pa! How many times do I
 have to say it: I'M SORRY.

Cal grabs his ceramic coffee mug and furiously throws it to
 the linoleum floor, shattering it.

CAL
 Sorry doesn't buy me a new fuckin'
 arm, you ungrateful-

SUNNY
 Cal!

Cal whips around to Sunny. He points a furious finger in her face.

CAL
(to Sunny)
Stay in your place, woman. Don't
think you're any better. I see how
you look at me now. My own wife.

Sunny comes to tears.

He looks to Rita.

CAL (CONT.)
(to Rita)
My own daughter.

Cal storms out the back door past Rita.

Sunny wipes her tears. She promptly begins to pick up the ceramic remnants of Cal's coffee cup.

Rita bends down to put an arm around her mother.

RITA
Ma, you can't keep letting him-

SUNNY
(sternly)
Not a word.

Rita hesitates and takes a step back.

SUNNY (CONT.)
Your Pa's worried about the money,
is all. Just needs a warm meal,
maybe a bath...

Rita says nothing.

SUNNY (CONT.)
After all, if you hadn't of turned
on the-

Sunny takes a breath.

SUNNY (CONT.)
(quietly)
No, that's behind us now...

Sunny stands up and discards the largest shards into the trash can.

She sighs heavily.

SUNNY (CONT.)
Rita, dear. How many times do I
have to tell you to get married?

RITA

Ma!

SUNNY

Just- a strong young man, with a good head on his shoulders. To come help your Pa.

RITA

Ma, I'm not ready to- I'll make the money for Pa-

SUNNY

Curtis Stewart. From down the road. He's-

RITA

Ma! Curtis Stewart looks and smells like the backside of a steer! And he's the biggest momma's boy I've ever seen! What happened to fixing cars in Tulsa?

SUNNY

Seems like he decided to come on home and settle down too, Rita! He's a fine man! Mrs. Stewart and I talked at our Sunday tea and we decided it'd be a good idea for him to come to dinner.

RITA

No!

SUNNY

Mrs. Stewart wants to see her boy move on with his life too, Rita. He's changed since you all were kids, I hope... They'll be here at 6 tonight.

Rita stares at her mother with the eyes of a child betrayed by the one closest to her.

SUNNY (CONT.)

Please, for your Pa.

Rita says nothing to her mother.

She grabs her trunk and also exits swiftly through the back door- as fast as she can while dragging the trunk.

SUNNY (CONT.)

Rita!

EXT. BARN - DAY

Rita storms up to the hulking, decaying doors of the barn. She swings them open ferociously.

INT. BARN - DAY

Caroline sleeps silently in a pile of hay on the loft. She wakes up to the sound of Rita barging into the barn.

Rita makes a beeline for a specific, seemingly ordinary stack of hay bales, dragging the trunk.

The stack is only two bales high. Rita pushes the top hay bale off to reveal a hollowed-out center in the bottom bale. Within the hollowed hay bale sits a large, frumpy potato sack. Rita looks in the sack, as to check it's contents, then closes it back up.

She holds the sack in her hand, without a single breath.

A beat.

She hears a faint rustling of hay from above, and whips her head around.

A pigeon flies from the pile and out the loft window.

Unbeknownst to Rita, the two inquisitive eyes of Caroline watch silently from the loft above.

She turns back and refocuses, opening the trunk and dropping the sack inside, on top of the clothes within.

With a heave, Rita plops the top bale back onto the secret bottom one.

Rita begins to leave with the trunk, but stops. She lets out a sigh, and instead turns back around, leaving the trunk near the secret hay bales.

She leaves the barn.

Caroline remains hidden, eyes on the trunk. A moment later, she drifts back into slumber.

INT. POLICE CAR - DUSK

Tracy grips the steering wheel of the police car with one hand, the other hand holding a lit cigarette.

He takes a drag, then exhales.

JESSEL

Say, where you from exactly,
rookie?

Jessel takes a sip from his flask.

Tracy responds without a thought.

TRACY

St. Louis.

He trips over his words.

TRACY (CONT.)

Uh, and I'm not a goddamn rookie.
Just transferred. Are you looking
at that map? Where the hell are we
even going?

A beat.

Jessel puts his flask down.

JESSEL

Well, seems like we're looking for
an exit number 3-

He hiccups.

JESSEL (CONT.)

-yep, says so right here. Hey,
why'd you volunteer for this
joyride?

He lets out a huff and scratches his un-washed stubble and
'stache.

TRACY

(irritated)

Look, I just want to enforce the
law, do my job. We took exit 3 a
half hour ago. What the hell have
you even been looking at over
there?

Jessel's gaze tightens.

JESSEL

Now listen, after exit 3 we're
gonna turn on an unmarked road
'bout, mmm... 15 miles down.

TRACY

Un- unmarked road! It's getting
dark out! How am I gonna see an
unmarked road?

Tracy slams the steering wheel with his fist, cigarette
hanging from his lip.

TRACY (CONT.)

(angrily)

If you weren't a god-forsaken
drunk, maybe your vision would be
straight enough to read the damn
lines correctly! This is important!

JESSEL

Now, boy, don't raise your damn
voice at me like that-

He hiccups.

JESSEL (CONT.)

-we aren't partners, ya hear me? I don't know why the hell you came here, but just 'cause you're some big-city hot-shot doesn't mean you're gonna slap me around.

Tracy stares at the open road, grip tightening on the wheel. Jessel goes back to examining the map.

JESSEL (CONT.)

Settle down, rookie. And learn some respect.

He hiccups.

The tension in the car is like that of a bomb ready to detonate at any moment.

TRACY

Next road I see, I'm turning. Better be the Abernathys.

Jessel shrugs, folds the map up, and falls asleep.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Tracy and Jessel roll to a stop at the Abernathy farm.

Jessel steps out of the car, leaving his flask.

Tracy opens Caroline's file and flips directly to the page detailing Rosemary West. He takes the page, folds it up, and puts it in his pocket.

Tracy also steps out of the car.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Caroline sits with her legs hanging over the edge of the barn loft. She peers at the full moon through the glass-less window on the front of the barn, picking mud out of her long, tangled hair.

The beams of two car headlights slip through the crevices of the barn walls as a car slowly rolls up into the dirt of the farm.

Car doors opening and closing can be heard, as well as two male voices and a distinct jingling sound.

Caroline's ears perk up.

INT. FARM HOUSE, RITA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rita undresses from her beautiful, bold sundress in a bedroom covered head-to-toe with shelves full of books. She

changes into a modest blouse and long, checkered skirt.

Rita sits down at an antique wooden vanity, white paint chipped from its surface. A small lamp illuminates her face in the mirror.

On the vanity sits a worn book of sewing patterns, as well as other miscellaneous books like an auto repair manual and a guide to basic first aid.

Rita gazes at herself in the mirror- she is still wearing her bright flashy makeup.

A small picture of Rita with her parents sits tucked into an edge of the mirror. She is just a child in the photo, her father has both arms.

She glances at the picture.

She slowly takes the makeup off of her face and applies a fresh, much more tame look. She grabs a brush from on the vanity and also tames her hair. She then takes a simple headband from the vanity dresser and pushes her hair out of her face.

Rita stares at the portrait of her family. They smile in picturesque formation.

Deafening silence.

A beat.

SUNNY (O.S.)

(shouting)

Rita! Come help with dinner,
please!

Rita releases her breath.

RITA

(shouting)

Just a minute!

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rita enters the kitchen in her modest outfit.

Her mother darts around the kitchen, cooking and cleaning and preparing. She wears a quaint, checkered dress with low heels.

SUNNY

(to Rita)

Ohhh, you look so nice! I bet that
Curtis will be head over heels...

Rita flashes a forced smile to her mother.

Sunny pulls out an entire roast chicken from the oven.

SUNNY (CONT.)

Would you put out the good silverware in the dining room? You know, the ones with those pretty little carvings on them.

CAL (O.S)

(shouting)

Really? The good silverware?

Rita nods and helps her mother prepare.

INT. FARM HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

As Rita methodically lays down silverware and napkins, her father walks in.

He initially says nothing, but only watches Rita.

Rita does not make eye contact with him.

CAL

I'm gonna need your help fixing the barn doors tomorrow. Snagged myself on some exposed nails earlier. Can't let those stay.

Rita does not look up, but continues with the silverware.

RITA

(to Cal)

Alright, sure.

Cal snaps in Rita's face.

CAL

(sternly, with gritted teeth)

Look at me when I speak to you.

Rita stops and looks at him with a hurt, yet somehow unsurprised expression.

CAL (CONT.)

Tomorrow.

RITA

Okay, Pa.

The doorbell rings.

SUNNY (O.S.)

(shouting)

Oh! Oh, Cal! Cal, fix your hair!
Rita, smile and look pretty!

The Abernathys collectively move to the front room.

INT. FARM HOUSE FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sunny groups her family in front of the door.
She takes a deep breath, then turns the knob.

SUNNY (CONT.)
(excitedly)
Welcome to our humble-!

Tracy and Jessel stand in the doorway, clad in full police get-ups: badges, hats, and revolvers at the waist.

TRACY
Evening, Mrs. Abernathy.

Jessel tips his hat.

JESSEL
Evenin' Sunny.

TRACY
Beautiful family. Mind if we come
on in?

Sunny stares in complete shock, frozen.

She snaps back into focus.

SUNNY
Of-of course! Come on in, boys.
You're always welcome.

TRACY
Thank you, ma'am.

Sunny excitedly escorts Tracy and Jessel into the kitchen.

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sunny ushers Tracy and Jessel to the small kitchen table.
Jessel sits down, Tracy remains standing.

Rita and Cal follow behind, skeptical.

SUNNY
(to the officers)
Oh it's been so long, Sam. How's
about a couple glasses of warm
milk, hm?

TRACY
Don't bother, ma'am. Really we just
have a couple questions to ask ya'.

SUNNY
Now I assure you boys, no funny
business happens 'round these
parts. We'd never think of-

TRACY

Don't worry, Mrs. Abernathy. We know you're good people. See, the police force's been tasked with uh, "reclaiming", a certain escapee from McPherson Penitentiary-

JESSEL

-a murderer. Caroline West.

Rita's ears perk up.

Cal remains unfazed and uninterested.

Sunny gasps.

SUNNY

My word! I remember seeing that dreadful woman in the papers! Awful thing she did...

She puts her hands to her heart.

TRACY

Yes, truly awful. And unfortunately she's loose in our own backyards. Seen or heard anything?

JESSEL

She'd definitely have come this'a way, yep.

Eyes wide and mouth agape, Sunny is clearly spooked.

SUNNY

Not since reading about that parade in St. Louis for the officer-

CAL

(to the officers)
Ain't seen nothing, boys.

Jessel looks slowly over at Tracy. His gaze tightens.

Tracy's face solidifies to a stone-cold look.

SUNNY

It's been quiet on the farm lately-

CAL

Right, real quiet.

Tracy glances at Cal's stump, but says nothing.

SUNNY

(to Rita)
Rita, dear, anything to say?

Rita looks around at her mother and Tracy.

RITA
(to Tracy)
What does this woman look like,
exactly?

Tracy locks eyes with Rita.

TRACY
Tall broad, blonde hair, scar over
her lip...

Rita ponders.

Jessels remains with his vision locked on Tracy.

RITA
I'll keep an eye out.

Tracy gives her a sly, yet subtle, up-and-down. She looks away.

He pulls out a pack of cigarettes and smacks it against his hand.

TRACY
This woman killed a member of the
force- basically a brother. Sorry,
can I smoke in here?

Tracy puts a cigarette to his lip.

Sunny nods.

Cal groans.

He lights up, takes a drag, then exhales.

TRACY (CONT.)
So, you see why it means an awful
lot to us to catch this monster.

Jessel nods slowly.

JESSEL
An awful lot...

SUNNY
How could someone do something so
evil... Oh! Why don't we ask our
dinner guests if they know
anything? They should be 'round
soon-

The doorbell rings.

SUNNY (CONT.)

(excitedly)

Speak of the Devil! You boys make yourselves comfortable at the dinner table and stay for a warm meal- there's plenty food.

CAL

Plenty's a strong word, woman.

TRACY

Why, thank you ma'am. We'd be happy to join.

JESSEL

Never say no to a free meal, them's a smart man's words. Thanks Sun.

The lot begins to clear out of the kitchen.

SUNNY

That said, no hats and no guns at dinner! Table manners!

She flashes a big grin, her words said with an irrefutable motherly force.

Jessel shrugs and leaves his gear on the kitchen table before leaving for the dining room. Tracy waits a moment, deciding whether to comply.

INT. FARM HOUSE FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Sunny, along with Rita, opens the front door to reveal CURTIS STEWART (mid 20s) and his mother, MARGE STEWART (late 40s). Curtis stands slightly behind his mother, almost hidden behind her and her large yellow dress. Curtis wears a nice white button down and blue jeans, nothing fancy.

Sunny gives Marge a large, welcoming hug.

SUNNY

Marge! So glad to see you.

MARGE

Oh, our pleasure, honey. Sorry for being a few minutes late, I had to find another outfit for Curtis here after a little fiasco with some apricot jam- Sun, let me just say it was a downright mess.

The two ladies cackle like a couple of comedians.

SUNNY

No worries, darling. Come in, come in! We've even got some extra guests with us.

She leans in towards Marge's ear.

SUNNY (CONT.)
 (whispering)
 Sam Jessel, and a new strapping
 young officer!

MARGE
 (whispering)
 You're pulling my leg! I call the
 seat next to the young one!

The pair once again laugh.

Cal departs prematurely for the dining table.

MARGE (CONT.)
 Oh, silly me- where are my manners?
 Curtis? Boy-

Marge seemingly pulls Curtis into the limelight of the
 entryway.

Rita remains quiet, but tense with curiosity, as she watches
 Curtis emerge from behind his mother.

MARGE (CONT.)
 Say hello, son.

Curtis stands with his hands behind his back, clearly
 concealing something.

CURTIS
 Hiya, nice to see you, Mrs.
 Abernathy.

He gives Sunny a weak handshake.

SUNNY
 So nice to see you, Curtis. Golly,
 you've grown so much!

She maintains her same radiant, motherly smile.

Rita's curiosity fades.

Marge gives Curtis a nudge without looking away from Sunny
 and Rita.

CURTIS
 Oh-!

He pulls a bouquet of flowers from behind his back.

CURTIS (CONT.)
 And Rita, for you.

He holds out the bouquet to Rita.

She reluctantly accepts them.

RITA

Thanks...

He smiles without a thought behind his eyes.

Marge clasps her hands together violently.

MARGE

Right! Sunny, what's on the menu?

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rita enters the kitchen with the bouquet of flowers to find Tracy taking his holster off.

RITA

(to Tracy)

Sorry, my Ma's strict about table etiquette.

TRACY

No worries, little lady. Ma's word is as strong as God's, I'd say. My bad you had to walk in on me stripping!

He laughs.

Rita does not.

TRACY (CONT.)

Flowers? Let me guess, we just so happened to sit in on a dinner date?

Rita stands at the kitchen sink, snipping the ends of the flowers with a pair of kitchen shears.

RITA

You could call it that, yeah.

She does not look away from her task.

Tracy moves up next to Rita at the sink.

TRACY

Who's the guy? Strong? Handsome? Funny? Smart?

Rita stops snipping.

RITA

I- I don't really know. Haven't seen him since we were teenagers. Think he went to be a mechanic.

Tracy bends down to Rita's ear.

TRACY

(softly)

Well, if he's not your first
choice, let me know.

He brushes against her as he leaves for the dining room, swinging his keys on his finger. A small bell keychain swings with the keys.

Rita stares into the sink, eyes wide.

INT. FARM HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Abernathys, the Stewarts, and the police officers sit around a long wooden dining table. Starting with Cal at the head and going left sits: Sunny, Marge, and Curtis on one side, and Rita, Tracy, and Jessel on the other; with Rita sitting directly across from Curtis, and Tracy sitting next to Rita.

The group passes dish after dish of a classic, midwest, mid-century American meal. Roast chicken, mashed potatoes, collard greens, etc.

MARGE

So, Rita, your Ma tells me you've
taken up a little clothing
business, hm?

RITA

Yeah, I'm trying to get my pieces
in some windows. I'm thinking of
going to St. Louis. But, I've
always been pretty handy with a
needle. One of the cows got snagged
on a fence post once and I had to
sew her leg back up.

SUNNY

It's the only good to come out of
her nose always being in a book!
Must've read on how to stitch up a
steer!

The group, besides Rita and Cal, laugh.

MARGE

Oh, St. Louis is a big, confusing
place for a girl. Stay here so you
can sew up my Curtis's trousers,
hm? The poor boy hasn't seen new
pants since he left for Tulsa!

They laugh again. Curtis blushes.

SUNNY

Only if you want him looking like a
rodeo clown!

The group laughs once again.

MARGE (CONT.)

(laughing)

Kidding, Curty. Your hygiene's hopeless but you're quite handy with a wrench, aren't ya?

CURTIS

Y-yeah, I could get a lemon started.

Jessel laughs.

SUNNY

Oh, darn! Too bad the Ford's not around.

Cal's expression turns to irritation.

MARGE

Well, Curtis can always drive y'all into town for whatever you need in the meantime. Right, Curty?

CURTIS

Sure, yeah. I even saw some job postings at Warwick's if you want me to bring them back-

Cal gets up abruptly and leaves the room towards the front door.

They all jump a bit at the sound of the front door slamming.

Curtis blushes even more.

SUNNY

Oh, don't mind him, Curtis. Just a sore spot is all.

TRACY

We've always got open positions at the station, too. An office job's nothing remarkable, but...

Tracy spreads in his chair slightly, and angles his body towards Rita.

TRACY

(to Rita)

Sadly, our coffee girl position is all full.

The group, besides Rita, laughs.

Rita's expression shifts to irritation.

MARGE

That's right, Rita. You could strike up business sewing here and make Curtis an outfit that's not stained with oil for once!

The group, besides Rita and Curtis, laugh.

SUNNY

Or covered in mud! Remember when Rita and Curtis got into a scuffle right beside the pigsty?

MARGE

I still can't wrap my head around how Rita looked fine, and yet little Curty was cryin' his eyes out in the slop!

CURTIS

Well, that was unfair, she got me when I wasn't lookin'-

The table ignores Curtis.

Rita shrugs her shoulders.

MARGE

Yeah, I'd say my Curty is about ready to settle down.

She wipes a tear.

Curtis sinks into his seat.

SUNNY

Well, Rita's not goin' anywhere, and with Cal out of work we'd especially love to have Curtis around.

Curtis looks nervous.

CURTIS

Yeah, Rita, you wouldn't have to bother yourself with sewing when I'm around.

Rita looks panicked.

SUNNY (CONT.)

(to Rita)

Rita, I see that longing look you always have. Never smiling... Breaks my heart. Aren't you tired of being lonely?

Rita looks frantically to her mother.

MARGE

As much as I love having my Curty home, I do want some grandkiddies sometime soon!

SUNNY

Oh, well, that too!

Sunny and Marge laugh.

Curtis smiles faintly at Rita.

Tracy surveils the scene with a bit of annoyance.

Jessel eats.

SUNNY (CONT.)

Really, Rita. What would you say if Curtis got down on one knee right here and now?

Marge gives Curtis a nudge.

Curtis fumbles around in his jean pocket for something.

Tracy looks at Rita next to him.

MARGE

Make sure he does it in here and not outside, those are his only good jeans!

Sunny and Marge laugh again.

SUNNY

Come on, Rita. Stewart is a fine last name-

Rita shoots up from her seat.

RITA

(intensely distraught)
I can't do this.

She bolts towards the front door.

The rest of the guests sit in stunned silence.

Curtis holds an engagement ring in his hand, frozen.

EXT. FARM HOUSE FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Rita bursts through the front door.

Unbeknownst to her, Cal stands on the porch.

As Rita flies past, Cal firmly grabs her forearm and brings her to a quick halt.

Breathing heavily, fire in her eyes, Rita whips around to meet her father's eyes.

CAL
(with a quiet intensity)
Just be a damn woman for once.

Rita looks at her father with a face of mixed anger, sadness, confusion, and desperation- all of the utmost intensity. She does not speak. She does not even breathe.

Without severing eye contact, she yanks her arm from his grip and bolts in the direction of the barn.

Cal watches his daughter run into the night. He walks inside.

INT. FARM HOUSE DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cal walks up to the silent dinner group.

Marge rests her arm around a confused and distraught Curtis.

Tracy sits, alert.

Jessel eats.

CAL
She's gone to the barn.

Tracy shoots up.

TRACY
I'll- I'll go get her-

SUNNY
No, give her some time to cool
off... Just for a bit...

Sunny wipes a tear.

Cal just looks at his wife, no compassion in his eyes.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

Rita flings open the doors of the barn, taking care to grab around the exposed nails.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Out of breath and in shock, Rita flings herself towards the trunk.

She throws the top open- the sack of money is gone.

Suddenly, the cold steel barrel of a revolver presses into Rita's back.

She freezes.

CAROLINE

Turn around. Slowly.

Rita slowly turns around to meet Caroline's piercing eyes, her entire figure just barely illuminated by the moonlight pouring through the cracks in the barn walls.

Caroline keeps the revolver pointed towards Rita, holding the sack of money in her other hand.

Rita's eyes dart to the sack, then back to Caroline.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

I'm taking this, so don't try anything.

Caroline keeps the gun on Rita.

She takes one step backwards, towards the door.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

And don't make a sound, either-

Rita lunges and takes Caroline by surprise, swatting and knocking the revolver onto the dirt barn floor some feet away.

She pushes Caroline up against the barn door in a struggle to reclaim her money. In the near-darkness, Caroline scrapes and pushes at what she can feel. She maintains her grip on the sack.

The exposed nails on the barn door catch the light of the moon.

Rita gives Caroline another shove against the door, catching the skin of her upper shoulder on an exposed nail, tearing a few inches.

Caroline lets out a muffled yell through clenched teeth, managing to throw herself in the direction of the gun.

Rita grabs on to Caroline's prison dress, the one side now soaked with blood, dragging her to the dirt floor. A scuffle ensues as Caroline continues to reach for the gun.

Caroline shakes Rita off with a messy few elbows to the face, still holding on to the sack.

She takes the gun and stands with a huff and a wince.

Caroline cocks the revolver.

On the floor, Rita opens her eyes to stare down the barrel of the revolver.

A stream of blood leaks from her nose.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

(out of breath)

Don't think I won't.

RITA

(out of breath)

Right, and risk letting everyone in
the house know?

Caroline says nothing. She breathes heavily and stands in a perfect patch of direct moonlight.

In the silence, Rita scans Caroline. She sees a tall woman with blonde hair and a deep scar over her lip.

Rita's eyes widen.

A beat.

Suddenly, one of the barn doors slowly creaks open.

In an instant, Caroline lunges behind two stacked hay bales positioned behind Rita. From this position, Caroline is hidden, but just barely.

Rita stands helpless, dirty and bloody.

Tracy enters the dark barn slowly, his keys jingling.

TRACY

Rita?

Caroline's ears perk up.

Rita says nothing.

His eyes adjust.

TRACY

Holy hell, woman. What've you been
doing in here?

He walks up to her to inspect her injuries.

Rita stands in stunned silence.

TRACY (CONT.)

You're hurt... Your dad rough you
up? Funny, bastard's only got one
arm...

With his thumb, Tracy wipes the trail of blood away from Rita's nose, then wipes it on his pants.

TRACY (CONT.)

Listen, I don't know what the
hell's going on, but I won't tell-

Rita perks up.

TRACY (CONT.)
-if you don't tell.

Her stomach drops.

RITA
(voice cracking)
What- what do you mean-?

TRACY
Shhhhh, sh, sh sh, sh. Your shirt's
all dirty. Why don't you take it
off?

RITA
(shakily)
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no-

Tracy grabs one of Rita's wrists firmly, and attempts to
take her shirt off with the other.

She tries to push him away with her one free hand.

TRACY
Hey, play along.

He grabs both of Rita's hands and pushes her against the
barn wall, kissing her.

She tries to kick him with her little strength.

He then swiftly flips her around, forcing her face into the
wall. She begins to cry.

TRACY (CONT.)
I'll tell them- I found you like
this-

He starts to undo his belt buckle.

TRACY (CONT.)
Only got a couple minutes-

Caroline cocks her revolver up against Tracy's head.

CAROLINE
Back up, Tracy.

Tracy puts his hands up and back away from the two women,
slowly.

He focuses on Caroline, realizing who she is.

TRACY
(surprised)
Son of a bitch.

CAROLINE

You're still a dog. Nothing's changed.

Caroline darts her eyes to Rita- a small, cowering, scared woman.

Tracy stares with crazed eyes.

Rita watches in stunned silence. A flurry of contrasting emotions courses through her.

CAROLINE

Give me your keys. Or I shoot.

Tracy quickly reaches for his own gun, before coming up empty-handed. He looks at his hip, shocked at his forgetfulness.

His eyes dart back up to meet Caroline's.

With an exhale of the nose, she softly laughs at his blunder.

CAROLINE

Now, goddamnit! I heard that stupid keychain, I know you have them!

Rita slowly stands to her feet.

Without breaking eye contact, Tracy reaches for the keys hanging from a belt loop on his pants. He holds them in the air with his arms up.

In an effort, he throws the keys to the floor to distract Caroline's attention and lunges at her. He rips a portion of the bottom of her prison dress, it falls to the floor. Reacting in the chaos, Caroline pulls the trigger, grazing Tracy's left thigh with a semi-deep gash.

He lets out a scream and drops to the floor, instantly cradling his leg in pure shock.

TRACY

(screaming and crying)

YOU CUNT!

Amidst his screams, Caroline grabs the keys, still holding the sack of money and the gun.

Rita watches the scene in horror.

Caroline locks eyes with Rita. She sighs.

CAROLINE

It's him, or me.

A beat.

Caroline then turns to run out of the barn.

Rita's heartbeat deafens her own thoughts.

A beat.

RITA
(to Caroline)

Wait!

Caroline turns around.

Rita runs up to her.

The two say nothing.

Rita wipes her tears and fixes her blouse. She looks back at Tracy one last time as he writhes on the dirt floor.

Rita grabs her trunk and drags it out of the barn as fast as she can, following behind Caroline; all without sharing a word.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Caroline and Rita run to the unattended cop car. Caroline winces as she throws the door open and throws the sack of money into the back seat. She holds on to the revolver. Rita manages to hoist her trunk into the backseat as well.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Caroline peels out from the farm and speeds towards the highway. Rita says nothing.

Now on the highway, Caroline brings the car to a calm, yet still fast, cruise.

The two sit in silence, breathing fast.

The night sky is silent and full of stars.

After a moment of rest, Rita looks over towards Caroline.

RITA
Here, hand me the gun. You should
drive with two hands.

Caroline says nothing, eyes on the road.

RITA (CONT.)
You're also bleeding all over the
seat.

Rita pauses as if waiting for a response.

RITA (CONT.)
Listen, we've gotta pull over and
fix your-

CAROLINE

I'm fine. We don't have time to stop anyway.

RITA

Where are we even headed? Do you have a map? What's the plan-?

CAROLINE

Just- be quiet, please.

Rita is taken aback.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

What's your name?

Rita hesitates.

RITA

Rita.

CAROLINE

Okay, please, Rita. I am in quite the hurry to get to St. Louis.

(to herself)

So help me God, if this isn't the right direction.

RITA

St. Louis?

Rita pulls the folded flyer out of her pocket.

A beat.

RITA (CONT.)

That's where I'm headed. What's in St. Louis?

CAROLINE

Rosemary. My daughter. My sweet girl.

Caroline stares at the open highway.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

What are YOU headed for?

RITA

Uhm, there's a fashion show. I'm gonna see if anyone likes my work.

CAROLINE

Is that what that decrepit trunk's for?

RITA

Mhm.

CAROLINE

Well, I wouldn't expect anyone interested in country folk-chic to attend, but, if you know any shortcuts, say your piece.

Rita's face falls.

Caroline winces slightly at the pain.

Rita glances at the revolver still in Caroline's grasp.

RITA

How- how old is your daughter?

CAROLINE

She turns nine in three weeks. I thought about getting her an early birthday present... Maybe we could make a quick stop.

She laughs to herself.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Only thing that's desperate enough for a stop is this clothing situation. You're right- I'm soaked through.

RITA

You do look like a ravaged potato sack in that dress, er, prison uniform?

Rita tenses, worried for Caroline's reaction.

Caroline chuckles slightly, but goes silent.

A beat.

CAROLINE

(hesitantly)

Do you- do you know who I am?

Rita hesitates. She gulps.

RITA

A tall woman with a scar on her lip and a gun... Fits the description of Caroline West.

Caroline does not react. She only grips the revolver tighter.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Still yelling in pain, Tracy reaches for the scrap of Caroline's prison dress. The scrap includes the cut-off words "herson Penite." He thoughtlessly wraps it around his

left thigh and crawls his way out of the barn to meet the rest of the house guests sprinting over.

TRACY
Goddamnit! That whore!

He manages to stand up, covered in dirt and blood from the gash on his thigh.

Cal arrives first, followed by Curtis, Marge, Sunny, and Jessel.

CAL
What the hell's goin' on?

SUNNY
(out of breath, yelling)
Rita? Rita!?

Sunny takes off for the barn, still yelling for Rita.

With his one arm, Cal grabs Tracy by the collar and hoists him to eye level.

CAL
(through gritted teeth)
Talk, bastard. Where'd the shot
come from?

Curtis stands next to his mother, both watch the two men in shock.

Tracy sputters in pain.

TRACY
Hey, hey, hey, I've been shot
goddamnit, let me go!

Cal lets go and Tracy breaks free.

Jessel stands in silence, observing Tracy.

Cal doesn't take his eyes off Tracy either.

TRACY
(to Curtis)
Hey! Your truck, give me the keys!

CURTIS
Wha- what for? Look at your leg-

TRACY
Holy hell, keys! Now! Only need my
right to drive.

Curtis fumbles for the keys in his pocket, then hands them over. Marge then grabs him tight.

Cal steps up to Tracy.

CAL
 (angrily)
 She do this?

Tracy hesitates, eyes locked on Cal.

TRACY
 (calmly)
 She got a hold of my revolver.
 Didn't want me to take her back
 inside. She's gone crazy.

Cal takes a step back, shocked, but not in complete disbelief.

CAL
 (to himself)
 I didn't raise her to be a violent
 girl... I didn't...

Jessel continues to observe Tracy, focusing on the lack of a gun holster at his hip. He then looks at the scrap of Caroline's dress wrapped around Tracy's leg. He sees the words.

SUNNY (O.S.)
 Rita!

Curtis surveils the scene amidst the chaos.

CURTIS
 Hey- hey, those tracks... Did she
 take your car?

Tracy begins to hobble over to Curtis's truck parked near the house.

TRACY
 (through gritted teeth)
 Damn right she did. She's armed and
 on the road.

Tracy reaches the door of the truck. As he opens it, Cal approaches.

CAL
 If you find her, don't bring her
 back. We don't want anything to do
 with her.

Tracy locks eyes with Cal, but says nothing. He struggles onto the seat.

SUNNY (O.S.)
 Rita! Honey!

Marge hugs Curtis.

Everyone except Jessel steps out of the way of the truck.

Jessel walks purposefully up to the truck and throws the door open. He grabs Tracy by the collar, pulling him close.

JESSEL
(quietly, angrily)
St. Louis. I pieced it together.

Tracy remains silent.

JESSEL (CONT.)
You came here for her, didn't you?
The partner of the cop killed...
doesn't show up to the funeral,
skips town. Read the papers
sometime, rookie. National news
spreads far.

Tracy's eyes widen.

JESSEL (CONT.)
Were you responsible for this? Her
gettin' loose-

TRACY
Watch your mouth, drunk.

JESSEL
Haven't had a drop since you
mentioned St. Louis. Now you've got
an innocent girl involved and a
murderer out there-

Tracy shoves Jessel out of the truck and slams the door shut. Jessel falls to the ground. Tracy starts the engine and peels out in the direction of the tracks from Caroline and Rita.

Jessel watches from the ground, stunned.

Sunny runs back up to the group as Marge and Curtis help Jessel from the ground.

SUNNY
No sign of her- Sam? Sam, what was
that about?

Jessel brushes the dirt off of his trousers.

JESSEL
Follow me, Sun.

INT. FARMHOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

With Jessel at the lead, the entire group floods into the kitchen.

Jessel motions over to the kitchen table. Two police officer revolvers sit untouched in their holsters.

The group stares. A beat.

JESSEL

Sun, I need to phone the Chief.

SUNNY

Right, oh, well-

CAL

Phone's out. But you already knew that.

SUNNY

Cal, it's alright. Marge? Why don't we walk on over to your telephone? Sorry about your truck, too, Curtis...

Curtis looks at the floor.

MARGE

Splendid idea. It's just down the road aways, officer.

JESSEL

Thanks Sun, Marge.

Cal eyes Jessel.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Caroline pauses for a moment, eyes on the open road.

CAROLINE

Do you know anything about love, Rita?

Rita looks over at Caroline. She opens her mouth to speak, but says nothing.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

I suppose not, or you wouldn't have left the barn so easily.

A beat.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

My husband- he'd come home, stinking of liquor. He'd sit himself down in his La-Z-Boy, turn the television on, and take his gun out.

Rita listens attentively. She looks at the revolver in Caroline's hand.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

(sarcastically)

Oh, but don't worry! He'd never load it!

(seriously)

This was always the point I'd take Rosemary upstairs. I'd draw her a bath, comb her hair- probably until she was too old, if I'm being honest.

Caroline sighs.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

I'd then stay with her for as long as I could. I always envisioned myself just melting right into that bed.

Caroline slumps slightly, grip loosening. The car veers slightly.

Rita notices.

RITA

Hey-!

Caroline comes to and straightens back up.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Uhm, anyway. It was the funniest thing. One night, he decided to put some bullets in.

Another pause.

At this point, Caroline and Rita begin to drive through the outskirts of a town. They pass by sparse buildings, some boarded-up and abandoned, most at least decrepit. Dense greenery fills the gaps around and in between the buildings.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

How do you decide when to not take it? How do you ever decide when you finally feel strong enough?

RITA

I- I don't know-

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Well, I chose the wrong moment to decide I was strong enough.

Caroline stares at the road, discouraged.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

He always went out drinking with Tracy, at this stupid place downtown called...

Caroline places a hand to her head, she starts to fade from blood-loss.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Called, oh, I don't remember- Dear heavens, I forgot about Tracy!

RITA

Was that the man in the barn?

CAROLINE

Unfortunately. I am truly sorry you had to meet him.

Caroline winces, the pain from the gash in her back is not subsiding.

RITA

We should really stop and take a look at your-

CAROLINE

I'm fine. Leave it alone.

Rita notices the amount of blood expanding.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Lord, I'd argue Tracy's taken Lee's spot as the biggest dog in this whole country. They won some kind of drinking contest at the bar once, and Tracy wore that stupid jingling keychain ever since. Every time he came to the house- it pierced my ears. Rosemary would wake up crying...

Caroline adjusts the rearview mirror. She spots a truck behind them.

RITA

Thank you.

The truck distracts Caroline. It grows closer.

CAROLINE

Hm? Rita, I'd do that again ten times over, whether you were there or not. Wish I had left a bigger mark.

Rita cracks a small smile.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Consider it a favor for taking your money. What's it all for, anyway?

RITA

I wish I really knew.

Rita chuckles awkwardly.

RITA (CONT.)

Something had been eatin' at me. A few years ago I had a dream that I couldn't shake- I was in an alley, chasing after my Ma and Pa ahead of me, but the walls would get tighter and tighter. They would keep on walking- laughing and smiling. They'd call my name while the walls crushed my bones. The last breath was squeezed from my lungs until I woke up in a sweat.

Rita trails off into silence.

CAROLINE

Quite the vision.

Caroline looks at the truck through the rearview mirror once again, at this point they are almost bumper to bumper.

Caroline begins to fade even more, hands slipping from the wheel and the revolver.

RITA

Hey! Hand me the gun, you need to steer-

Caroline comes to, whipping the gun towards Rita.

Rita freezes in fear, locking eyes with Caroline. Caroline quickly snaps out of it, switching to an expression of embarrassment.

Caroline looks in the rearview mirror once again. She finally fades for real.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

(slurring)

Rita... Truck...

Caroline's foot slides off the pedal. The revolver falls to the car floor. The police car starts to slow.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Pedal down to the floor, Tracy's truck slams into the back of the police car.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Rita jolts forward from the impact.

Caroline's limp body jolts forward and slumps in the seat.

RITA

Lady? Hey!

The police car begins to both slow and veer off the road.

Rita cannot react fast enough to grab the wheel.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

The police car crashes into a dumpster flush up to the side of an abandoned brick building. The dumpster absorbs the brunt of the impact.

Tracy slams on the breaks, pulling up behind the police car.

Bruised, but mostly unscathed, Rita exits the police car.

Circling to the other side, she throws open the door and begins to drag Caroline out. She is also bruised, but not in any worse shape than she was before.

Rita finally manages to drag Caroline from the car, she flops out onto the gravel ground.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Tracy rifles around for a weapon of sorts. He opens the glove compartment to find a Bowie knife.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Limping, Tracy shuffles over to Rita and Caroline, knife in hand.

Rita sees his looming figure approaching and panics. She is not strong enough to run away with Caroline.

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Rita fumbles around for the revolver on the floor. She is unfamiliar, but cocks the revolver. She whips around, only to meet Tracy's hand.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Tracy grabs Rita by the hair and throws her to the gravel beside Caroline's limp body.

Rita yells in pain, but aims the revolver. She pulls the trigger- it's empty.

Tracy lets out a hearty laugh.

TRACY

Close one, Rita! You almost had me!

Tracy knocks the revolver from her hand.

He brings his knife to her throat, pressing it ever so slightly into her skin.

Rita winces, and begins to tear up.

TRACY (CONT.)
Aw, what happened to my friend
here?

Tracy disengages from Rita and gives Caroline a stiff blow
across the face. Unconscious, she does not react.

TRACY (CONT.)
Come onnnnnn, Caroline!

RITA
Stop it!

Tracy gives her another blow.

TRACY
(shouting)
Wake up! Wake up, Caroline West!

Rita makes an effort to stop Tracy's madness, scraping and
punching. She strikes right on his thigh wound.

Tracy lets out a blood-curdling yell. He grabs Rita by the
neck and slams her back to the ground, knife in his other
hand.

TRACY (CONT.)
Enough!

Rita grasps at both his massive hand and for air. In what is
seemingly her last moments, she looks over at Caroline.
Caroline lies on the ground, motionless- almost peaceful.

All of a sudden, a large, built drag queen by the name of
BIG O (30s) adorned in high heels, a blonde wig, and a dress
with a pearl necklace exits from the abandoned building. She
exits from what looks like a boarded-up door, however, it
swings open normally; it is a decoy.

BIG O
What in THE hell?

She cocks a sawed-off shotgun.

Another drag queen enters the scene from behind Big O- by
the name of EDDY LASTARR (20s), she is adorned in a slip
dress and a brilliant black wig.

Tracy stops dead in his tracks.

BIG O (CONT.)
Aw, hun, you're twisted.

EDDY LASTARR
Jesus, Joseph, AND Mary!

Big O aims the shotgun at Tracy.

Tracy does not make a move or a sound. He does not even breathe. He only eyes the two drag queens in front of him.

Big O surveils the scene, she sees Caroline lying some feet away.

BIG O
Git. Before I end you.

Tracy lifts both of his hands up, knife still in one hand. He slowly backs away to the truck.

Big O keeps the shotgun aimed at Tracy until the truck leaves her view.

BIG O (CONT.)
(to Rita)
Come on.

She extends a hand to Rita and helps her up.

Rita says nothing, she is stunned.

BIG O (CONT.)
I'll help your friend here.
(to Eddy Lastarr)
Hold this.

Big O hands the shotgun to Eddy Lastarr, who holds it delicately and unfamiliarly in a huff.

Big O hoists Caroline's limp body into her arms.

BIG O (CONT.)
Inside. You'll be okay, baby.

She quickly walks towards the fake boarded-up door and enters the building. Eddy Lastarr and Rita follow.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Tracy slams his fist on the steering wheel, crying furiously. When not slamming the wheel, he aggressively wipes his tears.

In tandem with his tears, Tracy laughs maniacally.

Flying way past the speed limit, he suddenly pulls the car over to the side of the road.

Laughing and crying, he fumbles to pull a photo out of his shirt pocket. It is a photo of him in his police uniform next to another police officer.

His laughter fades as he stares at the picture.

Still holding the photo, he drops his head on the steering wheel and weeps.

INT. MARGE'S KITCHEN- NIGHT

Sunny, Jessel, Cal, Marge, and Curtis are collected in Marge's kitchen. The telephone hangs on the kitchen wall.

Sunny sits at the kitchen table, anxious.

Marge passes out glasses of milk to her guests.

Curtis sulks in the corner.

Cal stares out the window into the night.

Jessel stands with the wire telephone to his ear.

JESSEL

Er- Tracy, sir, we need to get on the road pronto- he's most likely following the convict-

INT. CHIEF MCGRAW'S HOME, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chief McGraw sits on the edge of his bed wearing a matching pajama set. His wife sleeps peacefully next to him. He holds the telephone on the nightstand to his ear.

CHIEF MCGRAW

Where's that broad even headed to? Think she's after her daughter?

INTERCUT.

JESSEL

Damnit, daughter's in St. Louis, right?

INTERCUT.

CHIEF MCGRAW

I'd say that's our only lead, file doesn't mention much else- Christ! Tracy has the file!

INTERCUT.

JESSEL

It's certain, then. He's a vengeful man I've learned... Hold on a moment, Chief.

Jessel lowers the phone from his ear.

JESSEL (CONT.)

Sun, anywhere Rita would head to? They're together, after all.

SUNNY

You can't mean she went with that woman willingly!

JESSEL

We can't rule it out, Sun.

SUNNY

My Rita... that head on her
shoulders is just too good!

CAL

Always talked about that pipe dream
of going to the city.

JESSEL

St. Louis?

CAL

Maybe, never listened to all of it.

Sunny looks at Cal with a betrayed expression.

Jessel puts the phone back to his ear.

JESSEL

Chief, the girl Caroline's with
possibly had business in the city,
as well. I say it's our main guess
for their destination.

INTERCUT.

Chief McGraw sighs deeply.

CHIEF MCGRAW

The clock's ticking. Get a ride out
to the St. Louis station. I'll
phone them first thing in the
morning.

INTERCUT.

JESSEL

Right.

CHIEF MCGRAW (O.S.)

Good luck, Sam.

The phone disconnects.

Jessel hangs up.

SUNNY

Sam? What's going on?

JESSEL

I'm headed to St. Louis. Marge, I'm
afraid I need your car.

MARGE

Guess this family's not meant to
get around...

She sighs, but complies and grabs the keys.

Sunny looks to Jessel with doe eyes.

SUNNY

Just, get my girl back safe, okay-?

CAL

Like hell. That good-for-nothing's not welcome back. I'm done having my name dragged through the goddamn mud.

SUNNY

Cal!

CAL

Enough, Sunny! We tried! She's lost to us now. And that's the end of it.

Sunny opens her mouth to protest, but then backs down.

Jessel grabs his things, and heads out the kitchen back door.

EXT. MARGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jessel walks towards Marge's car until Sunny catches up to him.

She places a gentle hand on his shoulder, he turns around to face her.

SUNNY

(holding back tears)

Sam, please. Bring my girl home. If you find her, phone Marge. I'll get the news. Just, please-

Jessel places a hand to Sunny's cheek.

JESSEL

I know, Sun. I know.

He walks off towards Marge's car.

Sunny watches him go, and begins to cry.

INT. QUARRY'S - NIGHT

Rita follows Big O into a stunning setting- inside the seemingly abandoned building is a gloriously-decorated drag queen bar called Quarry's- obvious from the large neon sign on the back wall.

Patrons of all shapes, sizes, and colors fill the joint. On the right side of the room, a man out of drag tends the bar. An empty stage sits at the back wall. On the far left wall

are some stairs that lead up.

Each window in the building is boarded up to prevent any leak of light.

60s club music fills the place, but at a level quiet enough to keep the bar hidden.

Big O rushes to the bar, holding Caroline. Rita and Eddy Lastarr still follow.

At the bar stands an enormously tall, black drag queen adorned in a red slip dress by the name of RUBY CHEEK (late 20s). She talks to an unidentified man in a black suit- Tate Johnson, entrepreneur- sitting at the bar.

Rita stands next to Big O and Ruby Cheek, dwarfed by the queens. Eddy Lastarr dissolves into the crowd.

RUBY CHEEK

-I told her that La Petite Mort was a much prettier name, but she insisted it was a mouthful- oh! Look who it is. What's all this?

BIG O

Did you not hear all the ruckus outside? Some pig was harassing these poor girls. She's bleeding out!

RUBY CHEEK

(panicked)

Are they here? Are we a bust?

BIG O

No, no-

RUBY CHEEK

Thank GOD.

She seems to finally notice Caroline.

RUBY CHEEK (CONT.)

You're right, she is leaking all over my clean floor, and you. Take her upstairs, yeah? Red is not your color, O...

Big O rolls her eyes, then hurries with Caroline up the stairs. Rita follows.

RUBY CHEEK (CONT.)

(under her breath)

It is hers, though.

INT. QUARRY'S UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Unlike the dazzling bar below, the upstairs of the bar seems mostly un-renovated- a hallway, three bedrooms, and a bathroom. It looks abandoned and drab, like the outside of the building, however, it is obviously cleaned and tidy.

Big O carries Caroline into one of the bedrooms, Rita behind her.

INT. QUARRY'S UPSTAIRS, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Big O sets Caroline down gently on a bed. The bedroom is furnished with only a bed, a nightstand, and a chair in the corner. Once again, the window is boarded up.

BIG O

She was starting to get heavy.

She chuckles.

Rita does not, she only stares at Caroline.

BIG O (CONT.)

(awkwardly)

Uh, here-

She grabs an empty glass from on the nightstand and hands it to Rita.

BIG O (CONT.)

The bathroom tap's good. Put pressure on her wound 'til I get back. I'll get some stuff to help her.

Big O hurries out of the room.

Holding the cup, Rita stares at Caroline's angelic face as she lies in the bed. She watches as Caroline's chest moves up and down with her breath.

A beat.

Rita quickly exits the room.

INT. QUARRY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Rita fills the glass in the bathroom sink.

As the glass fills, she looks at herself in the dingy mirror. She sees a girl with disheveled hair, a dirty face, and a slight cut across her throat. She looks as though she is going to cry.

Rita stops the water. She sets the glass down.

She hurriedly searches for the cleanest section of the edge of her blouse and rips off a sizeable piece. She runs it

through the water.

She leaves the bathroom.

INT. QUARRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rita enters the bedroom to find Caroline awake and sitting up slightly in the bed.

Rita rushes over to her side.

RITA

Here, have some water.

She hands the glass to Caroline. Caroline manages to take a few weak sips before dropping the glass. It doesn't break, but the water soaks the floor.

Rita scrambles to pick up the glass.

CAROLINE

(groggily)

I'll clean it up...

She slumps back down.

Rita sets the glass on the nightstand. She moves Caroline slightly and pushes the scrap of her blouse heavily against the wound to absorb the blood still leaking out.

With her other hand, Rita places her hand on Caroline's chest. Her hand moves up and down with Caroline's breath. Rita sighs.

Big O enters the bedroom.

BIG O

(out of breath)

Good thing Pearl's a doctor during the day.

She sets down a leather doctor's bag.

BIG O (CONT.)

Too bad she passed out an hour ago... Now, I don't know nothin' about being a doctor but surely-

RITA

It's alright. I can take care of her.

Big O shoots Rita an inquisitive look.

BIG O

(confused)

Alright- I'll just leave you two. Holler if you need me. Good luck, babe.

Big O leaves the room.

Rita takes a deep breath.

Caroline stirs and wakes up once again.

Rita helps her sit up. Caroline winces.

CAROLINE

(groggily)

This is a crypt.

Caroline places her hand to her head.

Rita rifles around in the doctor's bag. She pulls out a pair of scissors, forceps, a needle, a suture spool, a bottle of hydrogen peroxide, and a cotton ball.

RITA

Caroline, I need you to sit up straight.

(nervous)

Please.

Caroline sits up fully in the bed with a struggle.

Rita grabs the chair from the corner of the room and pulls it over.

RITA

And turn your back to me.

Caroline turns her back towards Rita, sitting on the edge of the bed.

Rita sits in the chair.

RITA (CONT.)

Hold still.

Rita cuts the strap of Caroline's dress and pulls it off of her shoulder, revealing the gash in all its glory.

Caroline remains still.

CAROLINE

Be gentle.

Rita grabs the blood-soaked scrap of her blouse and soaks up the remaining blood around the still-oozing wound.

Caroline winces again.

RITA

Sorry.

Rita places the blouse scrap down.

She takes the bottle of hydrogen peroxide and dabs some onto the cotton ball, cleaning Caroline's wound. Caroline winces once again.

Rita then takes the suture spool and cuts off a sizeable piece. She threads the needle with it.

With the forceps in one hand, Rita holds the edge of Caroline's gash. Caroline bites her lip to stifle a cry. With the other hand, Rita inserts the needle into Caroline's skin.

Methodically, Rita weaves the suture in and out, stitching up Caroline's wound. Rita does not breathe or blink as she stitches.

Caroline grabs the edge of the bed with all of her strength.

Rita's eyes dart down to see Caroline's hands clenching tightly.

She looks back up to tie the last stitch and close Caroline's wound. She snips the end of the suture. Rita rifles around in the doctor's bag and pulls out gauze and medical tape.

Caroline loosens her grip.

First she wipes away residual blood, it is no longer oozing out. She then folds a square of gauze and rips a piece of tape. Gently, Rita bandages Caroline's wound.

RITA (CONT.)

There, all done.

CAROLINE

That was hellish.

Caroline lies back down in the bed.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

I'm just going to close my eyes.

She drifts into slumber.

Rita looks at Caroline as she lies angelically.

She takes a hold of her hand.

A beat.

Rita lets go- but Caroline squeezes back, eyes still closed.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Thank you.

Caroline then lets go. Rita leaves the room, closing the door gently.

INT. QUARRY'S - NIGHT

Rita slowly enters back into the main bar. She walks through the crowd of patrons, taking in the view. The colors and sounds seem to swirl around her as she floats through the room and towards the front door.

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

Rita floats over to the crashed police car. She finds the revolver on the ground and picks it up. She opens the car door and collects the trunk and sack of money. The revolver, however, she leaves on the seat. She stares at it, then slams the door.

INT. QUARRY'S - NIGHT

Rita drags her trunk and sack in through the door. Patrons of the bar briefly stop to look, then resume their activities.

Tate, sitting at the bar, notices Rita.

TATE

Didn't think this was your kind of scene, lady!

Rita whips her head up, then sighs.

TATE (CONT.)

You and this trunk, congrats to the lovely couple.

He gives Rita an up and down.

TATE (CONT.)

Crafting a new outfit with those contents? You look rough, babe.

RITA

Please, keep your thoughts to yourself. And, if you're gonna attach yourself to my hip, why don't you help me carry this up the stairs?

Tate sighs. He drags the trunk and sack to the stairs.

INT. QUARRY'S UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Rita and Tate stop right outside the door into Caroline's bedroom. He places the trunk up against the wall, but hangs onto the sack.

RITA

(whispering)

Thanks, and keep your voice down.

Rita motions to the bedroom.

RITA (CONT.)
She's sleeping.

TATE
(loudly whispering)
Right. Who? Doesn't matter, doesn't matter. Say, what's in this, Rita?

He opens the sack, then quickly shuts it in shock.

TATE
Why didn't you say you were loaded?!

RITA
Ach- it doesn't concern you!

Tate hands Rita the sack.

TATE
Alright, alright... Come back down when you're ready, let's chat.

Tate makes his exit. Rita scowls behind his back.

Rita carefully closes her sack back up.

Rita opens the trunk and looks through her wares. She eyes patterned dresses and frilly tops, all made with the utmost care. She then pulls out what seems to be the most tame of her tops and slacks, and perhaps the most novice. She eyes them as if gauging their measurements. She then pulls out a stylish, patterned dress.

INT. QUARRY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rita places the top and slacks gently on the chair next to the bed, still holding the dress. She takes a look at Caroline, then leaves.

INT. QUARRY'S - NIGHT

Rita walks back to the bar, now decked out in a fresh dress.

Tate notices.

TATE
Ah! Take a seat.

Rita joins him, Ruby Cheek, Big O, and some other queens at the bar.

TATE (CONT.)
Lovely dress.

RUBY CHEEK
Yeah, little miss girl, you'd stick out like a sore thumb anywhere but here. Where'd you get it?

TATE

She-

RITA

I made it, thank you.

RUBY CHEEK

Well! Might need you to do some work for my girls in here!

RAINA (20s), in a cowboy outfit sitting at the bar, butts in.

RAINA

Come on, Rube, I make my own stuff just like this chick-

RUBY CHEEK

Exactly! This ain't no hoedown!

The group at the bar laughs, Rita chuckles.

RUBY CHEEK (CONT.)

And I told you- don't call me Rube, you honky.

Raina waves her off, taking a sip of a drink.

BIG O

All in good fun, Ruby.

The laughing dissipates.

TATE

Now, don't eye her too much, Ruby. We're gonna be driving to a gala in St. Louis tomorrow night, ain't that right?

Rita snaps her head towards Tate.

RITA

The Merlant?

TATE

Oh, so you're already acquainted! Perfect.

RUBY CHEEK

Oh, The Merlant. Old news. Bunch of stuck-up, snortin' show-boys. If you wanna get spat on, be my guest.

TATE

She's just a spoilsport.

(to Rita)

I want you to meet a partner of mine at the event.

RITA
 (unenthused)
 The one who needs the Halloween
 costumes-?

Tate chuckles.

TATE
 No, no. He's from the Big Apple,
 works at Harper's Bazaar. Just got
 a call from him today or I would've
 told you on the side of the road.

Rita ponders.

RUBY CHEEK
 On the side of the road? Whooo boy.

Tate waves Ruby Cheek off without looking away from Rita.

TATE
 Thing is- he charges a pretty penny
 for any sort of consultation. I'd
 ask if you're in, but it would
 crush my soul to see talent like
 yours squandered, so, you're in.

RITA
 Well, I'm not so sure-

TATE
 Here, hold tight, I'm gonna make a
 call- we'll leave in the morning.
 What's your last name?

RITA
 Abernathy.

Tate gives a quick thumbs up while downing the last of his
 drink, then abruptly leaves the bar.

Rita sits in slight shock.

RUBY CHEEK
 (to Rita)
 Want anything to drink, doll?

RITA
 Maybe just a, uh... glass of
 whiskey, thanks.

RUBY CHEEK
 Tough girl, I see.

Ruby Cheek motions to the BARTENDER.

RUBY CHEEK (CONT.)
 (shouting to bartender)
 Whiskey!

RITA

So, is he being truthful?

RUBY CHEEK

That fool? He may be slimy but he's got one eye for talent, and another eye for cash. Otherwise, he wouldn't stick around here...

BIG O

No stiffs ever do, I scare 'em away before they reach the door.

Rita chuckles.

BIG O (CONT.)

(chuckling)

That, and the neighbors think the quarry's haunted. Helps keep the pigs away, too.

RITA

Quarry?

RUBY CHEEK

Shit, where do you think the name comes from?! It's out back a ways, through the woods.

BIG O

Yeah, watch your step, doll.

They laugh.

The bartender hands Rita the glass of whiskey.

Rita takes one sip, and puckers.

RUBY CHEEK

Anyway, Abernathy's your last name, what's your first?

RITA

Rita.

RUBY CHEEK

Rita Abernathy...

Ruby looks unimpressed, then smiles.

RUBY CHEEK (CONT.)

You need a stage name, Rita. If you ever come back, I'll give you one.

Rita smiles awkwardly.

RITA

It better be a good one.

The two laugh. Tate returns.

TATE

Alright, called my guy at the Park Meadows Motel. It's not glamorous, but it's close to The Merlant. He's expecting you tomorrow night.

RITA

Thanks, Tate. Really.

Tate smiles.

TATE

All business, babe.

Rita's face falls back.

Ruby puts a hand on Rita's shoulder.

RUBY CHEEK

You can take the room next to your friend's. First timer's stay free.

Rita smiles at Ruby Cheek.

RITA

Thank you. Goodnight.

Rita adjourns to the room upstairs as the lights and sounds of the bar permeate the air.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Tracy wakes up with a jolt. He wipes his eyes and takes a frantic look at his surroundings- the truck sits on the side of a road covered in lush greenery. Cicadas buzz. The Bowie knife sits on the passenger seat.

Tracy takes a long look at himself in the rearview mirror. He looks rough.

Snapping back into focus, he pulls the folded up piece of paper from his pocket. It's the file page about Rosemary. Tracy scans the page, then starts the truck, and drives off.

INT. ST LOUIS POLICE STATION - DAY

Exhausted, Jessel bursts through the doors of the police station. He walks up to the SECRETARY (40s) at the front desk, passing by a picture on the wall of Lee West, saying: "SERVICE, INTEGRITY, LEADERSHIP AND FAIR TREATMENT TO ALL. ALWAYS IN OUR HEARTS. GOD BLESS"

JESSEL

(to the Secretary)

Officer Sam Jessel of the Salina, Kansas police force. I need to

(MORE)

JESSEL (cont'd)
speak to the commanding officer,
immediately.

SECRETARY
Right through that door. Watch out,
he hasn't had his coffee yet.

Jessel speeds through the door.

INT. ST LOUIS POLICE STATION, OFFICE - DAY

Jessel enters the office, where CHIEF ROMANO (50s) sits at his desk.

JESSEL
Sir, my name's Sam Jessel. I'm with
the Salina, Kansas police force-

CHIEF ROMANO
Ah, McGraw called me just a few
minutes ago. I've got all the local
stations writing a story up as we
speak.

JESSEL
That's dandy, sir, but we need some
officers sent out-

CHIEF ROMANO
Woah, woah, woah, hold your horses.
The sun's barely come up.

Chief Romano yawns.

JESSEL
Sir, this is a matter of
importance! A murderer's out there,
along with a man who might just
follow in those same footsteps if
we ain't quick! And Rita, the poor
girl that's been dragged into all
of this, I've gotta-

CHIEF ROMANO
Alright, alright. Sam, was it?
Listen, Sam. I understand your
concern for all parties involved.
Us boys here know Tracy and
Caroline West better than anybody.
But see, that's the problem.

Jessel takes a step back.

JESSEL
What're you talking about?

CHIEF ROMANO

Tracy's always been a temperamental man. Getting in the way of that never did nobody good. And hell, I'd love to see that woman in the dirt. Lee was a good cop.

JESSEL

You're just gonna let that deranged boy chase after-

CHIEF ROMANO

Hey, now. Don't put words in my mouth. I'll send some boys out to the little girl's house at some point. That's where you think Caroline's at, right? Tracy's just keeping his head start.

Jessel looks at Chief Romano with a face of absolute disgust.

JESSEL

And what about Rita? She has no part in this.

CHIEF ROMANO

The farm girl? Hell, I hope she keeps her nose down until we get there.

JESSEL

Disgraceful.

Jessel turns to leave just as fast as he came.

CHIEF ROMANO

(shouting)

This is our case, Sam! Always has been!

Jessel slams the office door behind him.

INT. QUARRY'S UPSTAIRS - DAY

Dressed for the day in one of her works, Rita knocks softly on the door to Caroline's bedroom.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Come in!

INT. QUARRY'S UPSTAIRS, BEDROOM - DAY

Rita slowly enters the bedroom. Caroline finishes buttoning up her shirt.

RITA

Hey, how are you feeling?

CAROLINE

Quite well. My arm seems to be a bit out of commission still, but...

Rita smiles shyly.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Is this your work?

Rita pauses a moment.

RITA

Yeah, does it fit?

CAROLINE

Mhm. It's more... beautiful than I envisioned. You're really an artist.

Rita blushes.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Well, maybe the inseam is a tad too short...

Caroline points at her legs.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Long legs.

She chuckles.

Rita smiles.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Rita, Tate, and Big O- out of drag- push the busted police car through the thick woods, with Rita mainly steering and the other two solely pushing.

Caroline follows behind, sipping a glass of whiskey in the morning.

BIG O

(struggling)

Just a little bit further!

EXT. EDGE OF QUARRY - DAY

Rita, Tate, and Big O push the police car up to a cliff at the edge of the quarry. The giant pit sits gracefully in the center of the lush forest, with still water sitting at the far away bottom.

Tate wipes his brow dramatically.

TATE

Well, we have come upon this vehicle's final resting place.

Caroline raises her glass.

CAROLINE
May it sink.

RITA
Forever.

BIG O
On my word, we'll give it one last
running push.

Caroline walks up slowly to the edge of the cliff.

CAROLINE
I want to see it fall.

Rita, Tate, and Big O brace themselves against the back of the car, assuming pushing position.

A beat.

BIG O
GO!

The trio pushes with all their might, launching the police car over the edge.

They all gather to watch it plummet.

BIG O
There she goes.

TATE
Like an eagle.

The splash of the police car echoes against the quarry walls.

At the edge, Caroline takes another smooth sip of her glass, before handing it to Rita.

Rita obliges, taking a sip with a sputtering struggle. She quickly hands it back.

RITA
(chuckling)
Here.

Caroline laughs. Rita smiles.

Tate walks up to Caroline.

TATE
(to Caroline)
I just realized, Miss, I never
caught your name.

CAROLINE
Hannah. Hannah Gaffney.

Rita perks up. Big O joins the group.

BIG O
Hey, Rita! I've been dying to ask
you about your hems!

RITA
(to Tate)
Pardon me.

BIG O
So, I have this satin dress that I
just can't seem to...

Rita and Big O walk out of earshot.

Tate scans Caroline, noticing the scar over her lip.

TATE
Lovely name. Will you be joining
Rita and I for the gala? I'm sure
she doesn't want me as her date.

Caroline laughs.

CAROLINE
Sadly, no. I'll be making my exit
elsewhere in the city. Would it be
too much trouble to drop me off?

TATE
Ah, I see. No problem at all.

Tate looks back to Rita, then back at Caroline.

TATE (CONT.)
Well, shall we?

The two turn away from the quarry, and the group exits the scene.

INT. BURKE'S HOME LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rosemary sits in front of the television set, watching Saturday morning cartoons. Burke walks up and abruptly changes the channel.

BURKE
Enough of that. I need you to get
started on the pie for brunch
tomorrow.

Rosemary gets up and exits the room without a fuss.

BURKE (CONT.)

Father Damien will be there,
remember? He likes cherry!

Burke sits down on the couch and watches the news.

NEWS ANCHOR

Infamous murderer Caroline West
escaped from McPherson Penitentiary
last night, re-opening the case
that shook the nation only a couple
short years ago. The Salina, Kansas
police force has reported sighting
her nearby at a family farm, but
her current whereabouts are
unknown. If sighted, please call...

Burke stares at the screen, holding his breath.

Rosemary quietly slinks back into the room, out of Burke's
sight. She focuses on the screen as well. A mugshot of her
mother pops up smack in the middle of the screen.

ROSEMARY

Mom!

Burke jumps.

BURKE

Jesus!

Rosemary edges closer to the image of Caroline.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

Authorities say West may be on the
hunt for her daughter in St. Louis,
Missouri... Any other possible
leads are unknown at this time...

The News Anchor fades into the background and becomes
unintelligible.

ROSEMARY

Do you think... She's...

BURKE

I don't know where she's at, but we
aren't staying to wait for her.
Pack a bag.

ROSEMARY

What? Where are we going?

BURKE

Rosemary, I've told you time and
time again- that woman's trouble.
And you oughtta know that better
(MORE)

BURKE (cont'd)
 than anyone! You best disconnect
 her from being your mother
 altogether, if you're a smart girl.
 She can't let things lie, but you
 will. You will.

ROSEMARY
 But, what if she-?

BURKE
 Rosemary! Upstairs, now!

Rosemary does not protest. She stares at the image of her
 mother one last time, tearing up, before leaving the room.

Burke gets off the couch with a huff. Right as he's about to
 turn the television off, the phone rings.

A beat.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Tate, Rita, and Caroline pull up to a dingy gas station.

The group exits the Cadillac.

TATE
 We're about ten minutes out, so I'm
 gonna fill her up real fast.

Tate heads for the pump where an ATTENDANT sits, dozing in a
 chair.

Caroline leans against the car, smoking the last of a
 cigarette. She notices a payphone against the wall of the
 gas station.

Rita opens the back door and opens the lid of the trunk. She
 grabs a couple of dollar bills from her sack of money.

RITA
 I figured you need more cigarettes?

Caroline stubs out her cigarette.

CAROLINE
 Ah, you're a sweetheart. And
 correct.

Caroline looks to the payphone again.

CAROLINE (CONT.)
 Rita?

Rita wraps up what she's doing in the car.

RITA
 Yeah?

CAROLINE

Could I borrow some change? I need to make a quick call.

Rita pauses a moment.

RITA

(quieter)

Do you think it's safe? Will the police be expecting it?

Caroline freezes. Her face falls.

CAROLINE

Right... No, you're right. I wasn't thinking.

RITA

Sorry, I didn't mean to- I'll be back.

Rita leaves quickly to get cigarettes.

As soon as Rita disappears into the gas station, Caroline swiftly pulls a dime out of the money sack and heads to the payphone.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Rita walks up to the counter where a scruffy GAS STATION WORKER stands.

RITA

Uh, hi. Do you have any filter cigarettes?

The gas station worker grumbles and digs around on the shelves behind him.

Rita looks around at the shelves, and sees a pristine teddy bear sitting all alone at the very top.

RITA

Uh, how much is that up there?

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Caroline puts the dime in the pay phone, then dials a number.

BURKE (O.S.)

Burke Tanner.

CAROLINE

(softly)

Burke, it's Caroline.

No response.

CAROLINE
I'm... I'm stopping by.

INT. BURKE'S HOME LIVING ROOM - DAY

Burke stands with the phone to his ear.

BURKE
(whispering sternly)
If you come to this home, I will
call the police, Caroline.

Burke looks around, as if scouting for Rosemary.

INTERCUT.

Caroline's expression grows desperate as she holds the phone tightly to her ear.

CAROLINE
Please, Burke. Just for a few
minutes, I'm begging you.

BURKE (O.S.)
We're packing our bags. Leave us
out of your mess. I won't call the
authorities now, but if I see your
face...

CAROLINE
Please, Burke. I- I need to talk to
her-

INTERCUT.

Burke grows angry.

BURKE
No. I don't need your poison
seeping into her young brain. I
lost you, Caroline. I will not lose
her.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The line disconnects. Caroline begins to weep as she slowly hangs up the phone.

Unaware, Rita walks out of the gas station holding a pack of cigarettes and the teddy bear. She notices Caroline at the payphone.

RITA
Caroline! What are you-!?

Rita stops. Caroline does not look at her, she only cries softly.

RITA (CONT.)

Hey-?

Caroline delicately wipes her tears.

CAROLINE

God, how embarrassing.

Caroline finally turns to look at Rita.

RITA

Goddamnit, Caroline! I hope your call was important! Who knows if they're after us now!

CAROLINE

Rita, please, keep your voice down-

RITA

God, how stupid could you be?

CAROLINE

Listen, you chose to tag along with me and my personal business. God forbid I try and call my daughter who's childhood I have largely missed thus far! How stupid could you be, Rita, truly?

Rita pauses in shock.

RITA

(quieter)

Yeah? Well I didn't choose to be in that barn with Tracy. And at least I didn't choose to kill my husband, either.

Caroline looks at Rita with disgust.

CAROLINE

Rita! Ugh! You backwoods Kansas rube!

Rita's mouth now hangs agape.

TATE

(yelling)

Hey! She's ready to go!

RITA

Here.

Rita forces the teddy bear to Caroline. Caroline looks at it, shocked.

RITA (CONT.)

For Rosemary.

Rita walks a few steps, tosses the pack of cigarettes to Caroline, then continues walking to the car.

Caroline begins to weep quietly once again.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Tate sits inside the Cadillac, waiting for Rita and Caroline. Rita slides into the passenger seat with a huff.

TATE

My mother taught me better than to eavesdrop, but sometimes a man can't help it.

Rita looks to Tate, worried.

TATE (CONT.)

Caroline, is it?

RITA

Tate, listen-

TATE

Hey, it doesn't matter. My mother also taught me not to pry. I just want her gone as soon as we're in the city. She's bad for business.

Caroline opens the door and slides into the backseat.

CAROLINE

Sorry for the wait. Unfortunately I'm in a bit of a hurry now.

A tension fills the air within the car as the trio leaves the gas station.

INT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Tracy pulls the truck to a stop. He rifles through the glove box, finding a grimy roll of duct tape. He takes the roll and the Bowie knife on the passenger seat, and exits the truck.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

In the alley, Tracy also pulls the file page on Rosemary out of his pocket once again. He scans the page.

Tracy then makes his way down the alleyway with a furious, determined, limping stride.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Tate, Rita, and Caroline roll to a stop in front of Burke's house. The house is one amongst a tight row of homes, and the neighborhood is sandwiched in between other city districts, with tall buildings dotting the skyline.

CAROLINE

Well, this is me.

Caroline collects herself, teddy bear in her hand.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Thank you for the ride, Tate.

TATE

Anytime, Miss Gaffney.

Caroline puts a quick hand on Rita's shoulder from the backseat.

CAROLINE

It was nice meeting you, Rita.

Rita does not react.

Caroline exits the car. Tate does not drive immediately, but instead takes a look at the map.

Rita stares out the window, a tear falls down her cheek.

TATE

I'm just gonna chart the best course to The Merlant real quick. And hey, start thinking about your outfit, some of those guys need a little eye-candy before they really start listening.

Rita does not respond.

EXT. BURKE'S FRONT YARD - DAY

Unaware of Caroline walking towards the house, Burke and Rosemary exit the front door, luggage in their hands, with Burke leading. They do not notice Caroline.

BURKE

(to Rosemary)

I already called your teacher, Miss Shulman, right? I told her we'll pick up your homework for the next week before we-

Burke stops. Rosemary runs into him from behind.

Burke and Caroline lock eyes. Rosemary slips from out behind Burke and also locks eyes with Caroline.

A beat.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Tate folds up the map.

TATE

Alright, on we go. Away from whoever that woman really is. You know, Rita, if there's something I truly don't have time for it's snakes like her.

Tate begins to drive away.

Rita takes a glance out of the other window, on the driver's side. She jumps up, as she sees Caroline and Rosemary stare at one another.

TATE (CONT.)

I'm telling you, business partners like us gotta have a solid foundation in truth and integrity-

He notices Rita's gaze.

TATE (CONT.)

Hey, I have a nice profile, I know.

Rita extends herself suddenly over Tate to get a better look.

TATE (CONT.)

Hey, hey, hey! I'm trying to drive here, woman.

Rita clammers every which way to watch Caroline and Rosemary. As Tate continues to drive, the two leave Rita's vision.

TATE (CONT.)

Hey, none of this shit tonight, alright?

Rita sits back in her seat, another tear falls.

TATE (CONT.)

Are you even listening?

EXT. BURKE'S FRONT YARD - DAY

Rosemary looks at the teddy bear in Caroline's hands.

Burke pulls Rosemary back behind him.

BURKE

I was not bluffing, Caroline.
(to Rosemary)
Back inside, now. To your room.

Rosemary hesitates, but leaves her luggage and runs inside.

Burke then darts back to the front door, leaving his luggage as well.

CAROLINE

Burke! Wait!

Caroline follows.

INT. BURKE'S HOME, ENTRYWAY - DAY

Burke scrambles to close and lock the door, but Caroline manages to keep it open.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Burke, please! I am your sister! I would never hurt you!

Rosemary is half-way up the stairs at this point. Still climbing, she stops at the top.

Burke makes a beeline for the living room.

INT. BURKE'S HOME LIVING ROOM - DAY

Burke scrambles for the telephone on the wall.

BURKE

Yes, hello? I'd like to report a disturbance, it's urgent.

INT. BURKE'S HOME, ENTRYWAY - DAY

Rosemary turns around to look at her mother, standing in the doorway, from the top of the stairs.

Caroline only looks back at her daughter, tears welling. Caroline walks towards the stairs.

CAROLINE

Rosemary, I-

Burke bursts back into the entryway.

BURKE

They're on the way-

Burke notices Rosemary descend the stairs.

BURKE

(to Caroline)

Goddamnit! Get away from her!

He moves in front of Rosemary, shielding her and moving her away from Caroline.

BURKE

(panicking)

Are you armed? Don't hurt anybody, Car, please-

CAROLINE

No, Burke, I just want to talk-

Suddenly, a knock at the front door.

Burke, Rosemary, and Caroline freeze.

Still shielding Rosemary, Burke makes his way to the front door, never breaking eye contact with Caroline.

He opens it to meet Tracy standing in the doorway.

BURKE

Thank you for getting here so fast,
officer-

Tracy greets Burke with a firm fist to the face, knocking him to the floor. Tracy then raises his knife to Caroline and Rosemary.

TRACY

Back.

Caroline dashes for Rosemary and pulls her in close, dropping the teddy bear.

Burke groans on the floor, holding his face.

TRACY

Into the kitchen! Now!

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Rita stares out the window and at the row of houses passing by. The neat row seems to almost hypnotize her until she sees it- Curtis's truck tucked away in the alley.

Rita perks up. She whips her head back to get a better look, but they've already driven back.

RITA

(frantic)

Go back! Go back! Go back! Tate, go
back!

The car screeches to a halt.

TATE

God damn, babe! Now you speak up!

Tate slowly reverses the car.

Rita scans the row like a hawk.

RITA

Stop!

There it is. Curtis's truck.

RITA

Tate, we need to go back right now.

TATE
 Woah, slow down, now. We've got a
 gala to prepare for-

RITA
 Now, Tate!

TATE
 I'm not going back for that lady!

RITA
 I don't care! Give me the wheel.

Rita lunges across Tate and grabs the wheel.

TATE
 Alright! Shit! Keep this fiery
 energy for tonight, will you at
 least?

RITA
 Please, shut your mouth for once,
 Tate.

Tate begins to turn the car around in the street.

TATE
 You could be nicer, you know. I'll
 leave your pretty ass at the bus
 stop.

Rita does not react. Her eyes are laser focused on the road
 ahead.

TATE (CONT.)
 And I'm staying outside!

EXT. BURKE'S PORCH - DAY

Rita and Tate slink up to the front door, passing by the
 abandoned luggage.

Unintelligible yelling can be heard from inside.

Rita slowly turns the door handle.

TATE
 (whispering)
 Whatever's going on, wrap it up
 quick! We're on a schedule!

Rita begins to take a step through the doorway, when Tate
 grabs her arm.

TATE (CONT.)
 (whispering)
 But remember, holler if you need
 me, Rita.

Rita smiles at Tate, genuinely.

Rita then steps slowly and silently into the house.

INT. BURKE'S HOME, ENTRYWAY - DAY

Rita closes the door. Holding her breath, she steps towards the direction of Tracy's voice.

TRACY (O.S.)

You bitches are in my hands now!

BURKE (O.S.)

Please, we haven't done anything-
Rose-Rosemary and I haven't done
anything, she's just a child and
I'm- I'm just-

The sound of a firm punch can be heard as Burke cries out.

TRACY (O.S.)

Shut the fuck up!

INT. BURKE'S HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy stands with the knife pointed at Caroline, Burke, and Rosemary as the three of them kneel on the kitchen floor with their hands bound by duct tape. He shakes slightly like a crazed animal. His back faces the entrance to the kitchen, which connects to the entryway.

TRACY (O.S.)

God, your whole family is just as
irritating as you, Caroline!

Burke's nose gushes blood.

Tracy takes a strip from his roll of duct tape and covers Burke's mouth. Burke struggles, his cries muffled.

Rosemary cries quietly.

CAROLINE

Tracy, leave them be. We can go
somewhere alone.

TRACY

Don't worry, that's on the agenda,
too.

Caroline's face remains stone cold.

TRACY (CONT.)

Bet you're excited to see this one
again, hm?

Tracy uses the knife to gesture towards Rosemary.

TRACY (CONT.)

(to Caroline)

If it were up to me, she'd already have forgotten your face. The only image she'd be able to conjure up in that tiny brain of hers is your corpse, decomposing six feet under my boot. Maggots, crawling through your eye sockets. Your skin, disintegrating... Then you'd be as ugly on the outside as you are on the inside.

Rosemary cries even more.

Caroline locks eyes with Tracy.

Tracy crouches down to meet Caroline's eyes. He traces the scar on her lip with the edge of his blade. He laughs to himself.

Quietly, Rita slinks through the doorway of the kitchen. She is only several feet behind Tracy at this point. Burke and Rosemary remain silent, but watch Rita. Caroline is not able to see her.

Tracy stares into Caroline's eyes. Caroline breathes calmly.

TRACY (CONT.)

This Lee's work?

Tracy now traces Caroline's scar with his finger tip.

TRACY (CONT.)

I always thought I could do better.

Rita watches with fear, frozen.

Tracy brings the knife up to Caroline's face again. He grabs her tight, holding her still as she attempts to squirm away.

Caroline's eyes widen with fear as she watches the blade.

CAROLINE

(quivering softly)

No, no, no, no- Rosemary, close your eyes, darling-

Tracy begins to carve a new vertical gash over Caroline's eye. She tries her best to hold in a scream.

Rita lunges towards Tracy with all her might, knocking the knife from his hand and across the kitchen tile.

Caroline's one good eye comes to tears at the sight of Rita.

Rita and Tracy struggle.

RITA

Tate! Tate!!!

EXT. BURKE'S PORCH - DAY

Tate stands slumped against the house wall, smoking a cigarette. He instantly jerks up at the sound of crashing and Rita's voice. He dashes for his Cadillac parked in the road.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Tate reaches directly for the glove box, pulling out a small pistol. He checks that it's loaded- it is.

INT. BURKE'S HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

Scrambling on the ground now, Rita takes several blows from Tracy's fists. She returns a blow to his injured leg. Tracy yells through gritted teeth. Rita manages to inch herself towards the knife, it sits just barely out of reach.

Tate enters the room, pistol drawn.

TATE

Rita!

Tracy whips around and freezes. Rita grabs ahold of the knife and immediately begins to cut Caroline loose.

TATE (CONT.)

Back, freak.

Arms up, Tracy backs away to the kitchen counter.

Rosemary dashes to her mother, collapsing in her arms.

CAROLINE

Oh, my sweet Rosemary.

The two cry together, reunited.

All together, the group congregates against the furthest wall from Tracy. The wall has a large window that faces the street.

Tate remains with his pistol pointed at Tracy. Tate trembles slightly.

Tracy stands in silence, analyzing the group. He notices Tate's trembling.

Rita uses the Bowie knife to cut a portion of her dress. She then balls it up and approaches Caroline.

RITA

Here, we need to stop the bleeding quick-

CAROLINE

Rita! Goddamnit, that's your work!

Rita stares into Caroline's eyes with a confused expression of admiration, fear, and relief. Rita presses the cloth to Caroline's eye, pushing the hair out of her face.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

You should know better...

Burke plugs his bleeding nose.

BURKE

Who is this guy, Caroline?!

Caroline takes the scrap from Rita. She continues to hold onto Rosemary. Rosemary wipes her messy face.

TATE

I'd like to know the same.

Tracy remains silent, eyes darting from person to person.

CAROLINE

He's not worth knowing.

The sound of tires screeching can be heard. Burke looks out the window.

BURKE

Thank God! The real police.

The group looks out the window.

In this brief moment, Tracy whips behind him to grab a kitchen knife from the knife block. With all his might, he launches the knife directly at Caroline and Rosemary.

Without hesitation, Tate leaps in front of the path of the knife, catching it deep in his chest. Tate falls to the floor, motionless. The kitchen tile turns red. Tate's pistol lands in the pool of blood.

RITA

(screaming)

Tate!

Tracy darts out of the kitchen.

Caroline watches Tracy go.

Rita falls to Tate on the floor. She hovers her hands over the knife buried in his flesh.

RITA (CONT.)

(crying)

Tate... Come on now... I need you to speak for once.

Caroline briefly comforts Rita, but then grabs Tate's pistol and chases after Tracy.

Rosemary chases after Caroline.

ROSEMARY

M-Mom!

Rita gives Tate's body a slight shake.

RITA (CONT.)

H-how am I supposed to make it to
the gala tonight? I can't go alone.

Rita weeps. She closes Tate's eyes.

RITA (CONT.)

(whispering, choked up)
I can't go alone...

A beat.

Rita darts out of the room as well.

Burke stands in a stunned silence, hovering over the grisly scene.

INT. BURKE'S HOME, ENTRYWAY - DAY

Rita's legs fly past the teddy bear, abandoned on the floor.

EXT. BURKE'S FRONT YARD - DAY

In Marge's car, Jessel screeches to a halt outside of the home. He hops out and runs in the direction of the commotion.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Winding through the neighborhood, Tracy flies as fast as his damaged leg can carry him, taking advantage of his head start.

Blind with rage, Caroline follows Tracy's direction.

Rosemary follows behind her mother, straggling.

Rita follows at the caboose, in a line of hectic sprinting.

Only their huffing can be heard.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

Tracy turns down the first available alleyway.

Caroline turns as well, remaining about 20 feet on his tail.

Now at a straight shot, Caroline takes aim, pulling the pistol trigger and striking Tracy's gut.

He falls to the ground, screaming and writhing.

Rosemary and Rita round the corner into the alleyway as well, reconnecting with Caroline.

CAROLINE
(out of breath)
He's- I-

Caroline drops the pistol. She cries.

Rita takes Rosemary's hand, and leads her to join Caroline in a group embrace. Rosemary cries as well.

Rita disconnects, leaving mother and daughter to embrace.

Caroline crouches down to Rosemary and wipes her tears.

CAROLINE (CONT.)
You've grown into such a beautiful young girl. I am so proud to call myself your mother.

Rosemary slows her tears.

CAROLINE (CONT.)
Have you been brushing your teeth? And doing your homework? And combing your hair?

ROSEMARY
(sniffling)
Mhm.

Rosemary wipes her nose.

ROSEMARY (CONT.)
Mom, please stay.

Caroline looks into her daughter's eyes. She smiles.

CAROLINE
Rosemary, I- I have to tell you. I am so sorry for everything. I hope you don't hate me and everything about me, but I know you should.

Rosemary cries again. She hugs Caroline.

CAROLINE
(choking up)
Rosemary, your father- everything was an accident- I never meant to do this to you.

ROSEMARY
I know, Mom.

Rita watches silently. Tracy's screams fade into grunts and moans of pain.

Caroline and Rosemary embrace again, before Caroline lets go and stands back up. Caroline wipes her own tears.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

Gosh, you're getting so tall, too!
Just like me at your age. Make sure
you drink milk with your meals,
okay? It'll keep those growing
bones strong.

Rosemary nods, sniffing.

Caroline looks to Rita. Rita smiles. Caroline smiles back.

Caroline picks up the pistol. She looks over at Tracy still writhing in the distance, and begins to walk towards him.

Rita follows her, Rosemary stays.

Rita and Caroline stop a couple feet from Tracy. He continues to moan.

RITA

Caroline-

Caroline stops.

CAROLINE

Rita, will you take care of
Rosemary? For me?

Rita takes a step back.

A beat.

In the distance, at the other end of the alley, several police cars screech to a halt.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chief Romano exits one of the police cars along with several other officers.

They all set up post at the end of the alleyway. OFFICER MORELLI holds a large rifle.

CHIEF ROMANO

Take a look, boys.

MORELLI

She's got a gun in her hand, sir.

CHIEF ROMANO

Precisely, probable cause. Take aim.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Caroline points the pistol at Tracy, trembling. She looks at him with pure hatred in her eyes.

A beat.

Defeated, Caroline lowers the pistol. She lets out a laugh. Rita only watches, stunned.

Caroline sighs.

CAROLINE

I wish I could.

Rita steps closer to Caroline.

RITA

No, you don't.

Caroline looks into Rita's eyes. Rita looks back.

A beat.

A shot rings through the air. Caroline drops the pistol, blood immediately gushing from her stomach.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chief Romano stands with the police officers.

CHIEF ROMANO

Oo! Bad shot, Morelli. She's not gonna go straight down with that one.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Caroline falls the ground, stunned. Rita is equally as stunned, as she tries to catch Caroline's limp body.

CAROLINE

(struggling)

Where's Rosemary? Did she see?

RITA

I- I don't know-

Rosemary's footsteps can be heard running.

Rita presses her hands to Caroline's wound in an attempt to stop the bleeding.

RITA (CONT.)

I promise I'll take care of Rosemary, I'll- I'll- I'll make sure she does her homework, and gets a job, and goes to college-

Caroline smiles at Rita.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chief Romano and Officer Morelli watch Caroline on the ground from afar, the faint glint of her red blood catches the sunlight.

OFFICER MORELLI

At this rate she'll just bleed out, Chief.

CHIEF ROMANO

Then let her bleed out. Morelli, grab some cuffs for the other woman with her, but don't spook the kid. The less paperwork, the better.

MORELLI

Right.

CHIEF ROMANO

The rest of you, circle 'round to the other end and cut 'em off.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rosemary arrives, collapsing to the ground.

ROSEMARY

MOM!

Rosemary presses her hands to Caroline's wound as well, copying Rita in the chaos.

CAROLINE

Rita, take Rosemary now. Please.

RITA

No, no, no, no, no, no- we can't-

CAROLINE

Please, Rita.

Rita eases up her pressing.

RITA

Do you remember what you said to me in the police car? That I wouldn't have left the barn if I knew what love was? Well, I can't seem to bring myself to leave now.

Caroline looks into Rita's eyes.

CAROLINE
(whispering)

Rita...

Rita leans in.

RITA
Wha-what?

With her remaining strength, Caroline gently takes Rita's face and pulls her in for a kiss. They remain embraced, crying at the same time.

A beat.

Officer Morelli arrives, mercilessly yanking Rita off.

OFFICER MORELLI
Alright- come on now-

Rita fights back, shaking Morelli's grip with an elbow to the nose.

OFFICER MORELLI (CONT.)
GOD-!

He immediately holds his face with his hands, groaning and stunned for a moment.

In the chaos, Caroline's words manage to reach Rita's ears.

CAROLINE
Please, take her.

Caroline hugs Rosemary tight one last time, before letting go.

Rita grabs Rosemary's hand and darts down the opposite direction of the alleyway.

Rosemary sobs.

CAROLINE (CONT.)
(whispering)
My sweet, sweet girl...

Rita runs down the alleyway with Rosemary, leaving Caroline behind.

Snapping back, Morelli follows.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rita runs as fast as she can, almost dragging Rosemary behind with her. Her tears fly.

Almost at the end of the alleyway, and preparing to turn the corner, Rita is stopped abruptly by Jessel.

Jessel grabs Rita's shoulders, holding her.

JESSEL

Rita! You need to tell them you
were a hostage! You and Rosemary!

Rita does not seem to comprehend, she inhales and exhales
furiously, still holding Rosemary's hand.

JESSEL (CONT.)

Listen to me, Rita! Tell them that
you've been a hostage this whole
time. That's the only way to avoid
a criminal charge-

Rita shakes her head over and over.

RITA

No! I can't! I wasn't!

JESSEL

It doesn't matter! I swore to your
mother-

Officer Morelli exits the alleyway, gun drawn and out of
breath.

OFFICER MORELLI

HANDS UP NOW!

Rita and Jessel slowly put their hands up.

Chief Romano and the rest of the police officers arrive.

CHIEF ROMANO

Morelli, nice work, but I got this.

Officer Morelli sheathes his gun.

CHIEF ROMANO (CONT.)

(to Jessel)

Sam! looks like you beat us to it.

Jessel says nothing.

CHIEF ROMANO (CONT.)

Alright, cuff her until we get to
the station.

Rita gently lets go of Rosemary's hand. Morelli puts Rita in
handcuffs. Rita complies, in pure shock.

He leads Rita away.

Chief Romano gestures to Rosemary.

CHIEF ROMANO (CONT.)

This her kid, right?

Chief Romano looks down at Rosemary, who cries softly.

CHIEF ROMANO (CONT.)
What's your name, girl?

JESSEL
Ease up, Chief.

Chief Romano grumbles.

CHIEF ROMANO
You take her, Sam.
(yelling)
Alright, boys. Scan the area, then
we'll head back to the house.

Chief Romano and the police officers disperse.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

Out of the alleyway now, and out of earshot of Jessel, Chief Romano pulls a POLICE OFFICER (20s) aside.

CHIEF ROMANO
Go scoop up Tracy and take him to
St. Luke's. Phone me when you get
there.

POLICE OFFICER
On it.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jessel crouches down to Rosemary.

JESSEL
Come on, little one.

He grabs her hand and leads her away.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Rosemary and Burke sit on a bench outside of the interrogation room. Rosemary holds the teddy bear tight.

Jessel stands at a telephone on the wall and dials a number.

INT. MARGE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Marge and Sunny chat at the kitchen table, drinking whiskey.

MARGE
-so I told her, "Janine, your kid's
a skin-biter. Filing down those
teeth is one thing but he's gonna
be a terror at Sunday school-

The phone on the kitchen wall rings.

MARGE (CONT.)

Oh hang on, I'll get it.

SUNNY

Now whoever could that be at this time of night?

Marge walks over and picks up the phone.

MARGE

Stewart residence, this is Marge.

JESSEL (O.S.)

Hi, Miss Stewart. This is Officer Jessel from the Salina police force. Would you be able to give Sunny a message from me?

Marge looks back at Sunny, shocked.

MARGE

She's actually here with me now, Officer. I'll hand her the telephone.

Marge gestures to Sunny to take the phone. She mouths the words "police" and "Jessel" while furiously pointing to the phone.

Sunny gets up in a flash and takes the phone.

SUNNY

Sunny speaking.

JESSEL (O.S.)

Hi, Sun. I got her, she's safe.

Sunny does not respond. She only unleashes a waterfall of happy tears.

Marge looks over, inquisitively.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Rita sits at a table, opposite two INVESTIGATORS. She wears a fresh pair of clothes, sweats and a sweatshirt.

INVESTIGATOR 1

Well, I think that's all we need from you right now, Miss Abernathy.

Rita stares at the table surface.

INVESTIGATOR 2

We've cleared that big trunk of yours. I'll have it pulled from the evidence locker on your way out.

Rita gets up solemnly and leaves the room.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Dragging her trunk, Rita passes by Rosemary and Burke.

Rita smiles at Rosemary. Rosemary uses the teddy bear's arm to wave. Rita waves back.

Burke only stares.

Rita also passes by Jessel, still on the phone.

Jessel notices and makes eye contact with Rita, phone to his ear.

Rita stops.

JESSEL
(on the phone)
Yeah, Sun. She's alright.

Rita walks out of the station.

EXT. PARK MEADOWS MOTEL - NIGHT

Rita exits a cab.

RITA
(to cab driver)
Thanks.

She grabs her trunk and drags it into the door of the motel.

INT. PARK MEADOWS MOTEL, FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Rita drags the trunk and herself through the door of the motel.

At the front desk sits the attendant, wearing a nametag that says JESSICA (50s). She flips through a magazine and loudly chews a wad of gum, ignoring Rita.

Rita approaches.

RITA
Uhm, there should be a room under
Abernathy.

Jessica puts the magazine down.

JESSICA
First name?

RITA
Rita.

Jessica searches through the motel logbook.

JESSICA
Ah.

Jessica grabs a key from the key rack.

JESSICA (CONT.)
Room 162. On the left.

Rita takes the key.

RITA
Right. Thanks.

Jessica looks back down at the magazine.

JESSICA
Have a nice stay.

Rita begins to drag her trunk away.

JESSICA (CONT.)
Wait a second. Abernathy, right?

Rita turns back around.

RITA
Yes.

JESSICA
Call came for you earlier. Some man
by the name of H. Morris? I wrote
down the number for you.

Jessica hands a note to Rita.

RITA
Alright, thank you.

JESSICA
You can go ahead and use the desk
phone, I don't mind. Just watch the
front, would you? I've gotta
relieve myself.

RITA
Uhm, sure-

Jessica gets up from her spot behind the desk and leaves the
front waiting room.

Rita plops her trunk down and dials the number on the note.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ruby Cheek sits in bed, smoking a cigarette and watching the
television. A man sleeps beside him, half naked.

RUBY CHEEK
Harry Morris speaking.

INTERCUT.

Rita hesitates with the phone to her ear.

RITA
Uh, hello. This is Rita Abernathy.

INTERCUT.

Ruby Cheek shoots up in the bed.

RUBY CHEEK
Rita! So nice to hear back,
darling.

The man beside Ruby Cheek stirs.

INTERCUT.

RITA
Ruby?!

RUBY CHEEK (O.S.)
The very same. Sorry, didn't mean
to scare you with my real name.

Ruby chuckles.

RUBY CHEEK (O.S.)(CONT.)
I had this vision earlier that
simply would not stop pestering me.
I kept looking in the mirror and
imagining myself in one of your
gorgeous dresses. I cannot continue
on living if you do not create
something for me.

Rita pauses, mouth agape.

RITA
I- I would love to.

RUBY CHEEK (O.S.)
Oh, thank God. My one fault is not
being able to take no for an
answer. Would you be able to stop
by sometime next week? I want to
start drafting right away.

RITA
Yes, absolutely.

RUBY CHEEK (O.S.)
Perfect. Get a piece of paper, I'll
tell you the address.

Rita grabs a pen and paper from on the desk and begins to write, the phone between her shoulder and ear.

RITA
 (to the phone)
 Mhm, got it. I'll stop by in the
 afternoon. Alright, bye.

Rita hangs up. She smiles, but it quickly fades.

Rita grabs a pen and another sheet of paper from on the desk before leaving the waiting area.

INT. PARK MEADOWS MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Rita enters her motel room. She sets her trunk down.

Rita sits down on the bed, buries her face in her hands, and cries.

EXT. BURKE'S FRONT YARD - DAY

A taxicab pulls to a stop in front of Burke's house.

Rita exits, wearing one of her dresses. She holds her sack of money.

She motions the DRIVER to roll down the window.

RITA
 I'll be back in just a second.

EXT. BURKE'S PORCH - DAY

Rita walks up to Burke's front porch.

She places the sack of money on the front doorstep, then turns around and leaves.

INT. BURKE'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Burke sits on the couch, watching the news.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)
 A saddening update to the story that's gripped the nation: reports from St. Luke's hospital say that local St. Louis hero Budd Tracy has succumbed to injuries sustained in a deadly shoot-out with the killer, Caroline West. West died at the scene, resulting in two total casualties. The St. Louis police force has organized a vigil for the fallen officer outside of the station downtown. This years-long violence has now claimed the lives of two St. Louis officers-

Burke turns the television off.

The doorbell rings.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Rita slips back into the cab.

RITA
(to the driver)
Thanks for waiting. I'm headed to
522 North 20th, downtown.

The driver starts the cab again, and drives off.

EXT. BURKE'S PORCH - DAY

Burke opens the door. He looks down to see Rita's sack of money sitting on the doorstep.

He picks it up. On the sack reads a note that says:
"Rosemary's college fund."

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

The taxi cab drives down the neighborhood streets, getting smaller and smaller until it disappears into nothing.