

The Void  
by  
Zach Nelson

Brad Kushner  
Creative Convergence  
literary@creativecvj.com  
310-739-1480

FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

The opening credits roll over shots of vast wooded mountains peppered with mining sites and equipment.

A small town nestled in an ocean of trees. Leaves beautiful shades of orange, amber, and red as far as the eye can see.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #8

On the horizon, a LARGE WOODEN WATER TOWER and a FIVE STORY COAL BREAKER BUILDING with a pair of railroad tracks that lead all the way to the top.

SUPER: "OCTOBER 1990, THE POCONO MOUNTAINS... CARBON COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA..."

A DEEP THUNDEROUS NOISE PIERCES THE CALM.

INT. BOLGIA MINE #8 - ELEVATOR CAR

Dust and debris billow up the elevator shaft. The atmosphere, thick with coal dust. A planned explosion has just occurred.

A group of miners stand in the elevator car. Among them is PATRICK JOHANSEN, a mine supervisor and ELI HILL his best friend. Both middle-aged and grizzled.

Patrick pushes down on the control handle, it clicks into place. The car descends, jolts to a stop. The handle pops back to neutral.

PATRICK

Damn thing.

ELI

You've gotta hold it, Patrick.

PATRICK

Really now?

Patrick pushes the handle down, holds it. The elevator car comes to a stop at the bottom of the shaft. AN ENGINEER with a detonator box approaches them as they step out.

INT. MINE TUNNEL

PATRICK  
 (to the engineer)  
 You nearly brought the whole damn  
 ceiling down on top of us.

ELI  
 (to the engineer)  
 A little too much powder there,  
 sport.

The embarrassed engineer nods his head in agreement. Patrick and Eli walk down the tunnel towards a pile of debris.

RYAN OWEN, the cocky mine owner, age forty, dressed in khakis and a polo shirt, approaches.

RYAN OWEN  
 (to Patrick)  
 What the hell are your people  
 doing? Trying to destroy my God-  
 damned property?

ELI  
 Blasting isn't an exact science.

RYAN OWEN  
 Shut up, Eli. I'm talking to him.

PATRICK  
 These things happen, Mr. Owen.

A VOICE from down the corridor, it's-

RYAN OWEN SR.  
 Junior...

Ryan Owen brushes coal ash from his clothes.

RYAN OWEN  
 No blasting when we're down here.  
 Got that?

Everyone holds still until Ryan Owen walks away, towards the elevator shaft. From the miners, a COLLECTIVE SIGH.

ELI  
 (under his breath)  
 That guy is such a dick.

PATRICK  
(to the group)  
Get moving. Clean this up.

INT. ELEVATOR CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan Owen joins his father, late sixties, polished, in the elevator car, it ascends. An awkward pause, then-

RYAN OWEN SR.  
Well?

RYAN OWEN  
Nothing yet. We'll find more, it's just a matter of time.

RYAN OWEN SR.  
You've got to keep them on your side. That won't happen if you bark orders all the time.

RYAN OWEN  
Yes, father.

RYAN OWEN SR.  
How do you know they can be trusted?

RYAN OWEN  
They'd have no idea what they're looking at.

INT. MINE TUNNEL - LATER

THE MINERS shovel coal debris into a train car. Patrick and Eli take a closer look at the damage. Their flashlights trace back and forth across the mine walls.

ELI  
What's your excuse tonight?

PATRICK  
Don't need one.

ELI  
Right.  
(beat)  
Suppose you should have one though.

PATRICK

Don't need an excuse, don't need  
advice-

They continue to look over the debris, and then-

ELI

Patrick, over here. Look at this.

Patrick joins Eli.

PATRICK

What the hell?

Their flashlights on the wall as the surface chips and  
crumbles away revealing a hole several inches in diameter.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

The Johansen home sits alone, at the end of a block of row  
homes where the street turns into a gravel path. This is the  
other side of the tracks. The home is a comfortable size but  
in disrepair and backs up to the woods.

INT. KITCHEN

JACOB JOHANSEN, a meek schoolboy, age seven, with tattered  
clothes, at the table set for two, chases peas with his fork.

His mother, MAGGIE JOHANSEN, middle-aged, enters the kitchen,  
band-aids in hand. Her face is weathered, her clothes,  
modest. She is seven months pregnant and looks beat.

Broken pieces of a hand-made clay ashtray sit adjacent to his  
school bag and a PLASTIC LUNCH BOX.

MAGGIE

So what have you got there? Was  
that for papa?

His eyes drop. Maggie kneels down to her son's level. She  
tends to his cuts and scrapes.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Tell me what happened today.

JACOB

I was just playing on the way home  
and I fell is all. Honest.

MAGGIE

Jacob, did you shortcut through the woods again?

He nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Baby, I want you to promise me something. Can you do that?

He nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Promise me you won't play near the mines. No more cutting through the woods. Understood?

JACOB

Yes, momma.

MAGGIE

There are things in there that will hurt you.

She stands up, walks over to the counter, picks up a model boat kit wrapped in cellophane.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I got you a present.

She kneels back down.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I thought it would be a fun project for you and your dad. Go on, honey, open it.

JACOB

(reluctant)

I'll wait for papa.

She stands, puts the boat kit on the table, picks up a piece of the ashtray.

MAGGIE

We can glue this back together. It'll be okay.

(beat)

Baby, look at me.

He looks up at his mother.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It will be okay. Are you finished  
supper?

He nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

All right. Go get washed up and  
we'll take a look at your  
schoolwork.

He mopes into the living room. Maggie scrapes the remaining  
food from his plate into a tupperware container and sticks it  
in the barren refrigerator.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Maggie washes dishes at the sink. A lone place setting on the  
table. A car parks outside. Patrick is home from work.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is bathed in the light and odor from an OLD KEROSENE  
HEATER in the corner by the door. The furnishings are few and  
modest. Patrick is in a hurry.

INT. KITCHEN

Patrick enters with an arm full of rolled up surveyor charts.  
He sprawls them on the table and sits down.

MAGGIE

I put coffee on. Would you like a  
cup?

Patrick ignores the offer and stares intently at the charts.  
She pours a cup of coffee, places it on a saucer, and carries  
it over to her husband.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Here.

The cup slips, coffee spills onto the charts.

PATRICK

Damn it, Maggie, I said I didn't  
want one.

MAGGIE

Actually, you didn't say anything.

She attempts to wipe up the mess with a kitchen towel.

PATRICK  
You're making it worse.

She throws the towel to the floor.

MAGGIE  
Dinner was at five o'clock. It's in  
the refrigerator.

She's out of the room in a huff. Patrick looks up from the charts, notices Jacob's glued-together ashtray on the table. He pushes it aside for a note pad, continues to work.

EXT. BACK YARD - AFTERNOON

Jacob plays in the yard with his SUPERMAN DOLL like a fighter jet. The sun casts an orange glow through the naked trees.

JACOB  
It's a bird. It's a plane.  
Whoooosh.

INT. KITCHEN

A hand strikes a virgin match, lights a candle and carries it to the window sill that overlooks the back yard.

Maggie watches her son play as the sun gets low. He moves in and out of the billowing bed sheets as they dry on the clotheslines.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob strays farther from the safety of his yard, into the woods. LEAVES CRUNCH under foot. He approaches a wood fence. Signs posted read "Bolgia Mining Co. - Private Property".

A section of the fence is knocked over, on the ground. He approaches a baby bird trapped under the wood slats.

JACOB  
How did you get trapped under  
there? Are you hiding from  
something? Let's get you out.

He puts down Superman and struggles to pull up the fence. He steps over the fence to the far-side and pulls up on the slats. They break and the bird is released.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
 (to the bird)  
 Be careful next time!

He grabs Superman, turns- LEAVES CRUNCH UNDER HIS FEET - continues a few steps, then- THE SOUND OF HOLLOW FOOTSTEPS.

He stands on WOODEN PLANKS set into the ground that cover A HOLE TWENTY-FIVE FEET IN DIAMETER. This is the-

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT

It's a steep drop, thirty feet to be exact. He steps onto a plank, it gives way, tilts down, traps his foot. Superman falls, lodges between two pieces of wood.

He struggles to free his foot. Superman slips closer to the empty void below. He stretches out, can't reach it.

The wood cracks. The weight of his body pushes the plank down like a see-saw. Superman falls, swallowed by the blackness.

EXT. BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie pulls down and folds a bed sheet.

MAGGIE  
 Jacob, come on. It's getting late.

SCREAMS REVERBERATE THROUGH THE WOODS.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 Jacob!

She turns and runs towards the sound.

EXT. BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie consoles her son as they enter the back yard.

MAGGIE  
 You remember what I said? You've got to be careful.

JACOB  
 I'm sorry, momma. I'm sorry.

MAGGIE  
 Sorry doesn't cut it. What if-

A POLICE OFFICER steps out from behind a bed sheet, startles both of them.

POLICE OFFICER  
Maggie Johansen?

MAGGIE  
Oh my! Yes?

JACOB  
I'm sorry, I'm sorry!

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #8 - MOMENTS LATER

A MINING ACCIDENT HAS JUST OCCURRED. BLOOD AND SMOKE.

Black clouds billow from a mine entrance cut into the earth. Emergency personnel work on the injured. It's a war zone.

Jacob stands alone, two hundred feet away and takes in the surreal images. His face is devoid of emotion. SOUND SWIRLS IN HIS EARS as if he's underwater.

ASH FALLS LIKE SNOW, LANDS ON HIS CHEEK.

INJURED MINERS pour out in numbers- some with deep gashes, others without limbs.

Maggie approaches a miner on a stretcher. Eli, the left side of his face covered in gauze. He takes her hand, his mouth moves. She crumbles into his arms, weeps as reality sets in.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maggie tucks her son into bed, wipes the ash from his face. She walks over to the window, peers out at the mountains.

EXT. HOUSE - CHILD'S BEDROOM WINDOW

Maggie draws the curtains closed.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAYBREAK

First rays of the sun flirt over the mountain, through clouds of smoke and ash. As the light sweeps across the neighborhood-

THE HOMES DETERIORATE - TIME PASSES QUICKLY - EIGHTEEN YEARS  
IN AS MANY SECONDS

Many homes have been razed, others boarded-up. It's a  
wasteland. You'd think it was the 1950's if not for:

SUPER: "PRESENT DAY."

AN AIR RAID SIREN SCREAMS as NEIGHBORS pour out of homes and  
into the street. They hurry towards-

EXT. CONCRETE SHELTER

A circa 1950's fallout shelter under decades of chipped paint-  
now a refuge from the toxic smoke that billows out of  
fissures in the ground.

NEIGHBORS shuffle through the door. From the sky, what looks  
like snowflakes...

INT. CONCRETE SHELTER - MOMENTS LATER

THE SIREN CONTINUES as TWO DOZEN NEIGHBORS congregate around  
an OLDER RYAN OWEN, now in his late fifties, in the center of  
the room.

An OLDER JACOB, in his mid-twenties, enters with his sister,  
ASHLEY, seventeen and bookish.

ASHLEY

I have an exam in two hours.

JACOB

Ashley, you know the routine.

They shuffle next to MS. SCHULTZ, a feisty widow, middle-  
aged, with her son, CHARLES, age eight.

MS. SCHULTZ

Jacob, where's Hope?

JACOB

She's pulling a double again, Ms.  
Schultz.

She wipes ash from the face of her son, turns back to Jacob.

MS. SCHULTZ

He still thinks it's snow.

THE SIREN IS MUFFLED as a neighbor closes the shelter door. Ryan Owen, about to speak, is beat to the punch-

MS. SCHULTZ (CONT'D)  
 What are you going to tell us this time? That you still have everything under control?

Charles clings to his mother's side.

CHARLES  
 (to his mother)  
 Mommy, it's cold.

MS. SCHULTZ  
 (to Charles)  
 Shh, baby. It'll be over soon.

The crowd is half asleep and not happy.

RYAN OWEN  
 The accident has been a thorn in my side as well.

JACOB  
 The alarms go off almost every other night!

RYAN OWEN  
 The funny thing about coal, it likes to burn.

MS. SCHULTZ  
 A thorn in your side? We lost our husbands and fathers! What did you lose?

RYAN OWEN  
 My family's investment.

THE SIREN WINDS DOWN, GOES SILENT. THE CROWD SNICKERS.

MS. SCHULTZ  
 (sarcastic)  
 Yeah, I feel so bad for you.

A NEIGHBOR  
 It's burning as far as Bear Valley.

RYAN OWEN  
 I can ensure you this is still isolated. It's under control.

A NEIGHBOR  
Tell that to my mother in law in  
Bear Valley.

THE SIREN BLASTS THREE SHORT BURSTS.

RYAN OWEN  
All right, that's the all-clear.  
Get out of here.

A neighbor throws the door open.

EXT. CONCRETE SHELTER

Everyone pours out of the shelter, down the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

A roadside gas station. A BURNING OIL LAMP hangs on the porch by the front door. A pick-up truck parked on the side.

A hand lowers a pole into a hole in the ground. A measuring stick with hash marks that read "quarter, half, full".

Jacob pulls the pole out. It's wet below the quarter mark.

He watches a LATE MODEL VOLVO pull up to the pump.

EXT. VOLVO

The Volvo has snow on the roof and the windshield where the wipers couldn't reach. It's driven by a well-groomed man in his mid-twenties. He is EDDIE PASTORE. His ATTRACTIVE WIFE, same age, rides shotgun. Both right out of a magazine ad.

Two children in the back seat. A BOY, age seven, and A GIRL, age five. Luggage in the rear of the car.

A MAN in overalls approaches Eddie who intently studies a road map and doesn't look up.

A MAN  
What can I do you for?

EDDIE  
Fill it up. Unleaded.

INT. VOLVO

The man walks around the side of the car. Eddie produces a mobile phone, pushes buttons.

EDDIE  
No signal.

ATTRACTIVE WIFE  
Let's just go. Forget about it.

The man marries the pump nozzle to the car. The children watch him through the window. His back is turned to them.

A BOY  
(marvels)  
What do you think he keeps in all those pockets?

A GIRL  
Frogs!

They laugh. The man turns towards the window. The left side of his face is disfigured. It's ELI - now in his sixties.

A GIRL (CONT'D)  
Monster!

They scream and duck down, hidden below the seat back. Eddie's face buried in the map again.

EDDIE  
Kids. Please. They're just country-folk.

EXT. VOLVO

Eli returns to the driver-side window and stands as to shield his disfigurement from the family.

ELI  
Fourteen and a half gallons. That's \$42.20.

Eddie produces his wallet, pulls out a crisp bill-

EDDIE  
Ouch. Expensive. Here's fifty, keep the change.

ELI  
Thank you. You have a-

EDDIE  
Where is Locust Avenue?

ELI  
Oh, around.

Eddie finally looks up from the map.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Hold on.

EXT. VOLVO - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob arrives at the driver's window. Eli walks towards the gas station storefront.

JACOB  
Yeah?

EDDIE  
Locust Avenue? We've been driving around for half an hour-

JACOB  
(matter-of-factly)  
Eddie Pastore.

Eddie, puzzled, then he realizes-

EDDIE  
Oh, hey, Jake! I didn't recognize you! You still living in town man?

JACOB  
Yeah, still living in town.

Eddie turns to his family.

EDDIE  
This is Jake Johansen, we went to school together.

He turns back to Jacob.

EDDIE (CONT'D)  
Damn, good to see you, man. We're cutting through on the way to Philadelphia and I thought I'd show the fam' the old digs.  
(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Where's all your snow? It's snowing like crazy upstate!

JACOB

Hell hasn't frozen over yet, Eddie.

EDDIE

Right, right. They never did put the fire out, did they?

JACOB

Your house on Locust would still be standing if they did.

EDDIE

Jesus. It's that bad? Then, forget it.

Jacob just looks at him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Well, if you're ever up in New York City come check me out. Maybe I could give you a job.

JACOB

Things are that good for you?

Eddie produces a business card, extends his hand.

EDDIE

My business card. I'm in real estate development.

Jacob looks at the card, the Volvo, Eddie's beautiful family.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Hope I'll see you. Take care of yourself, Jake.

Eddie puts the Volvo in gear, pulls out. Eli rejoins Jacob as the car disappears down the road.

ELI

I never thought I'd live to see the day someone from these parts could afford a car like that.

JACOB

And I bet his daddy didn't buy it for him. I'm going to clock-out.

Jacob walks back towards the station.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - AFTERNOON

A RUSTY 1969 CHEVY hugs the curves of the winding road. An orange sun throws long shadows across the landscape.

INT. CHEVY

Jacob turns on the radio, tunes a station.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

The Spartans beat the Bulldogs, the score twenty-three to twenty in overtime. In local news, still no end in sight for residents of Carbon County-

Jacob turns off the radio, looks up. A LARGE OAK TREE COLLAPSES ONTO THE ROAD TWENTY FEET IN FRONT OF HIM. He slams on the brakes.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD

THE CAR JOLTS VIOLENTLY as it passes over the tree branches. He looks down at his dashboard, then back at the road.

The ground disappears in front of the car. It nosedives into a MASSIVE SINKHOLE that swallows everything in fifty feet.

INT. CHEVY - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob slumped over the steering wheel, conscious but clouded. THE CAR HORN BLARES until he peels himself off the wheel.

He tries to open the door. The car is surrounded by rock and debris. The ground smolders, it glows red-hot. The air is thick and smoke rises from the hole.

EXT. CHEVY

Jacob climbs through the shattered front window of the Chevy, steam billows from under the hood. He stares into a dark void where the sinkhole broke through into a mine shaft below.

A DARK FIGURE MOVES THROUGH THE SMOKY MINE SHAFT. It stands nine feet tall, moves like a man repelled by the daylight. Jacob falls on his ass, backs away. A voice startles him-

SHERIFF

Are you all right, son? Jake!

Jacob snaps-to. The Sheriff points to a slab of roadway that rests on the back of the Chevy.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Climb up over there. Hold on, I'll fetch you a rope.

EXT. DINER - AFTERNOON

A roadside diner from a 1950's postcard. Its proud aluminum skin under decades of grime. It's easy to distinguish the locals - their clothes, and cars, blend into the background.

INT. DINER

A waitress clears dishes from a dirty table. She's in her late twenties, greasy but beautiful. She is HOPE- she is seven months pregnant. Her apron smeared with grape jelly.

HOPE

Twenty seven cents? On a nineteen dollar check?

An older waitress in her sixties approaches. She is BRENDA and she has a raspy smoker's voice.

BRENDA

Hope, I told ya, honey. Table full of men you gotta flash a little skin. Watch momma, I'll show ya how it's done.

Brenda flips her skirt back and forth like a can-can dancer.

HOPE

Thanks but somehow I don't think men want to see my skin.

BRENDA

Oh the men I know-

HOPE

Brenda, ew.

They walk behind the counter with trays of dirty dishes and clear them off into the sinks.

BRENDA

So what's the story kid? You stayin', you leavin', what?

HOPE

I don't know. It's tough right now. I'm trying to get all the hours I can while I still can.

Hope looks down at her pregnant belly and rubs it.

HOPE (CONT'D)

(to her belly)

You hear that? Stay in there another 3 months and let mommy work.

BRENDA

You know the more you do that the faster they come out.

HOPE

You mean "he" not "they". And besides, Jake's doing all right at the station. I mean, Eli helps us out here and there.

BRENDA

Honey, if there's one thing I know it's men start out little kids, and they always be little kids. You don't need two boys to watch after. You tell Jacob to straighten out. You should have your feet up.

HOPE

And be fed grapes while I watch my stories?

BRENDA

That's right, kid.

HOPE

Jacob will make very good father, and husband, someday. He's not perfect but I like to think of him as a work in progress.

Brenda clears off a plate, sneaks a bite of half-eaten cake.

BRENDA

I like to think of my waistline as  
a work in progress but this  
chocolate cake...

HOPE

Brenda!

INT. BASEMENT - EARLY EVENING

Jacob approaches A BOX THAT HANGS FROM A WATER PIPE. It has buttons and dials on the face and a label that reads "Air Quality Meter". The level is barely in the safe zone.

He looks down- a series of WIDE CRACKS IN THE CEMENT FLOOR. He follows them to the far side of the basement.

He rips clothing into pieces, jams cloth into the floor cracks. He feels the floor with his hand.

He runs a rag under a faucet until it's soaking wet, squeezes the rag over the floor. Water drops evaporate as they hit the cement. He feels the floor with his hand.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

THE DOOR BELL RINGS, Jacob walks up from the basement.

KNOCKS ON THE FRONT DOOR, ONE AFTER ANOTHER IN QUICK SUCCESSION.

He opens the door to find Ms. Schultz and her son, Charles, with his fist extended, ready to knock again.

MS. SCHULTZ

Charles, what did I tell you?

The boy settles down.

MS. SCHULTZ (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Jake, he's just excited.

JACOB

That's okay.

MS. SCHULTZ

I just wanted to stop and say good  
bye.

JACOB

Good bye?

MS. SCHULTZ  
We're finally pulling up the  
stakes.

Stunned, he doesn't respond.

MS. SCHULTZ (CONT'D)  
Is everything all right?

JACOB  
Yeah, I just sort of figured you'd  
always be there, across the street.

MS. SCHULTZ  
Jacob, you always were a sweet boy.

JACOB  
It's just such a surprise.

MS. SCHULTZ  
I know it is. I was digging around  
looking for my Henry's insurance  
papers when I found this.

She pours a rock from a CLOTH SACK into her hand. A shitty  
lump of coal. She holds it up to the light, the edge shimmers  
like a diamond, because that's what it is.

JACOB  
Wow, that's incredible.

MS. SCHULTZ  
I guess it was just his way of  
looking out for us.

Jacob, fixated on the rock. He's never seen anything like it.

MS. SCHULTZ (CONT'D)  
Who would've thought that our  
ticket out of this hell hole was  
packed in a box in the basement all  
this time?

She drops the rock into the sack, puts it in her pocket.

JACOB  
That's quite an insurance policy,  
Ms. Schultz.

Their attention is drawn to A LATE-MODEL PORSCHE with tinted  
windows as it drives from the gravel road that extends into  
the woods, onto the paved road in front of the Johansen home.

MS. SCHULTZ

Yes, it is. Well, we must be going. There's a lot of packing to be done. Here, this is for your little one.

She hands him a box wrapped in newsprint.

JACOB

Thank you. But this isn't necessary-

MS. SCHULTZ

Just a little something for your little guy.

JACOB

Thank you.

MS. SCHULTZ

You take care of him and the girls. Your folks would be so proud!

JACOB

Will do.

He closes the door as they leave.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Jacob sits on the couch, places the box on the coffee table. A headline on the newsprint reads "20 Years Later - Mine Fire Still Plagues Town".

He pulls the newsprint off the box, opens it slowly, his dirty hands stain the crisp white tissue paper inside. The box reveals a beautiful white baby sweater. He stops short of touching it with his dirty hands.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jacob at the table, pushes peas around, flips through the mail. Hope enters wearing a stained apron, band-aids in hand.

HOPE

Tell me what happened today.

JACOB

I'm driving along and the road opened up. Right in front of me. Unbelievable.

HOPE  
What about the car?

Jacob picks up a bill, looks over the envelope.

JACOB  
I don't know. It's in bad shape.

HOPE  
(stressed)  
We can't afford this.

JACOB  
What do you want from me, Hope? Do you think I like feeling trapped?

HOPE  
Your child is not a trap!

Jacob throws the bill on the table.

Ashley enters through the back door, book bag in hand. Jacob and Hope regain their composure.

Hope pulls a few dollars out of her apron, stuffs them into a mostly-empty GLASS JAR on the counter labeled "baby fund".

ASHLEY  
Whoa, what happened to you dude?

HOPE  
It's nothing, honey. Your brother just had a little accident.

ASHLEY  
Yeah, I can see.

Hope picks up the stack of mail and thumbs through it.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
(to Jacob)  
Big boy fall down go boom?

JACOB  
Don't you have homework or something?

ASHLEY  
A little.

JACOB  
Can you go do it?

ASHLEY  
Fine, I'm out.

Ashley leaves the kitchen. Jacob turns to Hope.

JACOB  
Look, I'm sorry. That's not what I meant.

HOPE  
The pediatrician sent another bill. I have an appointment with them on Monday. Will you go with me?

JACOB  
Eli needs me at the station.

HOPE  
(annoyed)  
Fine.  
(beat)  
Brenda is picking me up early tomorrow. There are some things for the baby that I want to put on lay-away.

Hope picks up an envelope.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
Ashley's college letter came. You wanna do the honors?

Jacob doesn't react.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
(sighs)  
You don't have to.

Hope walks past Jacob in a huff, out of the kitchen.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A knock on Ashley's bedroom door - Hope enters. The door swings shut on its own, but it doesn't close all the way. Ashley lays on her bed, covered in textbooks.

HOPE  
Honey, guess what this is?

Hope hands an envelope to Ashley.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Go on, open it.

Ashley sits up and opens the envelope. Her eyes dart back and forth as they scan the letter. Her expression dissolves from happy anticipation to disappointment.

ASHLEY

I didn't get in.

Ashley turns to stuff the letter into her bag. Hope grabs it, reads it aloud.

HOPE

Ms. Johansen, we have received and reviewed your application. We are pleased to congratulate you on being accepted to Carbon County Community College - Ashley, I don't understand.

ASHLEY

I changed my mind.

HOPE

Honey, look, this is your decision. If you don't want it, you don't want it. But I'm just saying, if you do, we'll find a way to make the tuition work. I promise. 'k?

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Jacob stands in the dark hallway and listens to their conversation. A sliver of light cuts across his face.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

All right.

HOPE (O.S.)

I'm going to make some hot chocolate. Want some?

Jacob walks downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob tosses the stack of mail into the trash can. He gathers the trash bag and carries it outside to-

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT

He lifts the lid of the trash can, it's full. He drops the bag on the ground, walks towards the rear of the yard to-

EXT. STORAGE SHED

Jacob opens the shed door to find boxes of junk, yard tools, a trash can and a RUSTY TEN-SPEED BICYCLE. He drags the trash can out of the shed. He rolls the bicycle out onto the grass, cleans off the cobwebs.

THE SOUND OF A WOODEN MINE DOOR BLOWN FROM ITS HINGES

Startled. Then it's quiet. He's frozen, listens...

THE SOUND OF A SCUFFLE IN THE WOODS

He backs up against a tree, drops the bicycle to the ground.

THE SOUND OF AN ANIMAL AS IT FEEDS ON ITS PREY.

He catches his breath, makes a run for-

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob flies through the door. He rummages through the cabinet under the sink, tosses cleaning supplies on the floor. Hope darts in from the living room.

HOPE

What's going on?

JACOB

Why is everything always a mess?

HOPE

What? Are you okay?

He finds a flashlight, turns it on. It flickers off, he smacks it until it regains power.

EXT. BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob crosses the back yard in the direction of the sound. IT IS QUIET- no sounds from nature.

EXT. WOODS

LEAVES CRUNCH under foot as he moves through the woods.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #9

A small mine entrance flanked by trees. EVERY TREE BRANCH HAS GROWN AWAY FROM THE MINE DOOR AT STEEP RIGHT ANGLES, AS IF REPELLING WHATEVER IS INSIDE.

He stops thirty feet out, shines his light on the shattered mine door. Heavy, broken chains on the ground. Nothing moves.

He moves slowly, stops twenty feet out, traces his flashlight through the twisted trees. Nothing moves.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob enters from the yard, out of breath. Hope organizes the cleaning supplies under the sink.

ASHLEY

I heard it too.

HOPE

What was it?

JACOB

Nothing. There's nothing out there.  
Maybe mine gas.

ASHLEY

Let's not have another discussion  
about your gas.

The joke releases some tension and then- AN EAR-PIERCING ALARM RINGS OUT.

They look towards the basement door, stuffed-up with rags.

JACOB

Not again.

He pulls the door open. THE SOUND GROWS LOUDER.

INT. BASEMENT

The atmosphere is thick and moist. A naked light bulb dangles from the ceiling. Cracks spider across the cement floor, stuffed with rags meant to seal them.

Jacob darts down the stairs and over to the Air Quality Meter. He pushes the "Silence" button, ALL IS QUIET.

INT. SCHULTZ HOUSE - LIVING ROOM / DOORWAY - NIGHT

Ms. Schultz pulls down the curtains that hang over the window, her reflection in the glass. Her son, Charles, bounces a ball in the empty living room. Boxes packed with belongings stacked all around.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. She peers through the sidelight window.

MS. SCHULTZ

Charles, take your ball up to your room.

She turns towards a shelf lined with family pictures, grabs the cloth sack that holds the diamond, drops it behind a picture to conceal it.

She cracks the door open, stands in the threshold.

RYAN OWEN

Good evening, Ms. Schultz.

MS. SCHULTZ

It's a fine evening. What do you want?

RYAN OWEN

To wish you well on your departure.

MS. SCHULTZ

Cut the shit.

He looks at his watch.

RYAN OWEN

You have something that belongs to me.

She opens the door farther, gets in his face. Charles fixates on his ball as it bounces down the hallway and through the open back door. His mother chatters on, oblivious.

MS. SCHULTZ

Tell me, how many good, hard-working men had to die? How many families destroyed? And live in squalor so you could make a buck?

The ball rolls into the back yard, through a pool of light and into the darkness.

RYAN OWEN

Do you know what the difference is between you and I, Ms. Schultz?

MS. SCHULTZ

Enlighten me.

RYAN OWEN

I create opportunities. Opportunities for a man to work hard and provide for his family. On the other hand, people like you and your husband bitch and complain about the opportunity, but where would you be without it? Broke.

MS. SCHULTZ

My husband worked his hands to the bone for you and your daddy until the day he died, you prick!

RYAN OWEN

And did such a sloppy job at that. So, where is it?

MS. SCHULTZ

Go to hell!

She slams the door closed, regains her composure, turns off the light in the living room. It's dark except for light that spills down the staircase from the second floor.

She watches through the sidelight window as Ryan Owen steps down off the porch.

MS. SCHULTZ (CONT'D)

Charles, honey?

She turns, notices the open back door. Charles is nowhere in sight.

MS. SCHULTZ (CONT'D)  
Charles?

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Patrick at the table with surveyor charts sprawled about. His head in his hands.

PATRICK  
(sighs)  
How did this happen?

He rubs his eyes, stands up, pushes the chair in.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie folds laundry. Her back is to Patrick as he enters. He's still in his dirty work overalls, boots and all.

She looks at him over her shoulder.

MAGGIE  
(annoyed)  
Boots off in the house. Please.

PATRICK  
Done.

She pauses to regain her composure. Patrick sits on the edge of the bed, starts to unlace a boot.

MAGGIE  
I got a call from the school today.  
He failed another test.

This is the last thing he needs to hear.

PATRICK  
So what do you want me to do,  
Maggie? Tutor him in a subject I  
know nothing about?

MAGGIE  
You could try.  
(beat)  
I set up a meeting with his teacher  
for Tuesday at four o'clock. I want  
you to go with me.

PATRICK  
I don't know.

She stops what she's doing, turns to him.

MAGGIE  
You get off work at three thirty.  
You're supposed to get off work at  
three thirty!

PATRICK  
It's not that simple, Maggie. My  
back's against the wall.

MAGGIE  
Always when we need you.

Her voice cracks.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
You're not here when we need you,  
Patrick.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jacob in bed. His door is cracked open; a sliver of light from the hallway cuts across his bed. He listens to the muffled argument down the hall.

MAGGIE (O.S.)  
Tell me when it stops. Tell me when  
I'll get my husband back- when  
Jacob gets his daddy back.

Jacob pulls the sheets up to his eyes, pretends to sleep as-

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Patrick storms down the hall, shuts off the hall light, and tugs his son's door closed. He sparks a SHINY METAL ZIPPO, lights a cigarette, continues down the stairs. THE FRONT DOOR OPENS, SLAMS SHUT.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM

A CAR TURNS OVER, SHIFTS INTO GEAR. Jacob leaps from his bed to the window that overlooks the garden in the side yard.

His father's car PEELS OUT onto the gravel road. Jacob fogs up the window with his breath, obscures the fleeing car.

As the fog evaporates, it reveals- A DARK FIGURE IN THE GARDEN. Jacob fixated. It's a stand-off, until- THE DARK FIGURE BREAKS POSITION, STEPS TOWARDS THE HOUSE.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jacob darts out of his room, down the dark hall towards the light of the master bedroom. He slides around the corner in his socks and through the door, slams it behind him.

DISSOLVE TO:

SERIES OF INT. SHOTS - JOHANSEN HOME - NIGHT

- A. The kitchen bathed in moonlight through the curtains.
- B. A CUCKOO CLOCK TICKING on the living room wall.
- C. The second floor hallway dark and empty.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jacob and Hope, asleep.

AN EAR-PIERCING AIR RAID SIREN SCREAMS OUTSIDE.

He springs up. He is hyper-awake. Hope, sluggish, her face in the pillow.

HOPE  
(whining)  
Noooooooo...

JACOB  
This is beyond getting old.

The bedroom door opens, Ashley pokes her head in.

ASHLEY  
Are we going?

JACOB  
I'm so sick of this.

Jacob, on his feet.

HOPE  
Turn it off...

JACOB  
Ashley, go back to bed. Put the  
pillow over your head.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

THE SIREN CONTINUES. Jacob peers through the window as-

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

Sleepy neighbors stumble out of homes and down the street.

EXT. SCHULTZ HOUSE

Charles emerges from his back yard, run towards the street.  
He stops, turns- Ms. Schultz right behind him.

A DARK FIGURE BEHIND HER- DARKER THAN THE NIGHT. RAZOR-SHARP  
CLAWS SLICE THROUGH HER BODY- it falls in pieces, lands at  
the feet of her son who looks down in shock, then up at-

A CLAW PERCHED FOR ATTACK-

INT. LIVING ROOM

Jacob in shock, backs away from the window. He stumbles,  
trips over the furniture.

EXT. SCHULTZ HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

POLICE OFFICERS cordon-off the house. Jacob, Hope and Ashley  
join NEIGHBORS on the street. The sky glows a menacing red  
where it meets the mountain top. THE SIREN WINDS DOWN.

ASHLEY  
That's the Schultz's. Oh my God.

They rush to the Sheriff.

SHERIFF  
(into a walkie-talkie)  
I don't want anyone coming in or  
going out. Got that? No one.

JACOB  
Sheriff, I saw it. The attack-

SHERIFF

It's all right, calm down. It was just a wolf.

JACOB

There's no way that was a wolf. It was huge!

SHERIFF

Whoa, whoa, Jake. We don't want to cause a mass hysteria. We've just got a rabid wolf on our hands, nothing more.

Jacob's not buying it.

JACOB

Bullshit!

HOPE

Honey, calm down.

SHERIFF

Now, hold on. You nearly had a concussion today. I called your name two, three times before pulling you out of that sinkhole. You don't know what you saw, but I'm telling you, it was a wolf. I shot it myself in the Schultz's back yard.

HOPE

I'm sorry, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

That's all right. Now, if you'll excuse me.

The Sheriff turns, walks towards the Schultz house.

JACOB

(to Ashley/Hope)

Stay put.

They nod. Jacob sneaks around to-

EXT. SCHULTZ HOUSE - SIDE YARD

Jacob ducks behind a tree.

TWO POLICE OFFICERS investigate the shattered back door. The white paint stained with black coal dust.

Another POLICE OFFICER catches Jacob's attention.

POLICE OFFICER  
 (into his radio)  
 We've got another one here.  
 Juvenile. Age and sex... uncertain.  
 (to himself)  
 My God.  
 (into his radio)  
 I think it's the boy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Ashley and Hope on the sofa. A BOX LABELED "family photos" on the table. Jacob walks down the stairs.

HOPE  
 Did you sleep well, honey?

JACOB  
 I guess.

He plops on the stuffed chair.

ASHLEY  
 Take a look at this one.

Ashley holds up a photo of Jacob when he was young, in a panda bear Halloween costume.

HOPE  
 I haven't seen that picture in a long time. That's my favorite one.

JACOB  
 What are you doing?

HOPE  
 Look how cute you were. A bright-eyed panda bear.

She admires the picture.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
 Eyes are the window to the soul.

JACOB

I looked like an idiot. I was twelve years old.

ASHLEY

Mom dressed you cute. I was always a princess or a witch.

JACOB

I was the only sixth grader dressed like a panda bear. Did wonders for my popularity.

HOPE

I think it was adorable. And just think, you can embarrass your own son and dress him like a panda when he's twelve too.

She looks down at her belly and rubs it.

ASHLEY

That's a parent's job, to embarrass you. I bet he'll have your big Yoda ears too.

HOPE

(to her belly)  
Don't listen.

Ashley pulls out another photo, one of Jacob when he was a young boy in the arms of his father.

ASHLEY

I never seen this one before. I miss daddy.

She hands the picture to Jacob who only glances at it.

JACOB

You can't miss someone you never knew.

He throws the picture at the box.

ASHLEY

(to Jacob)  
What's your defect? News alert, it's not always about you.

Ashley storms into the kitchen. Hope repositions next to Jacob, takes his hand.

HOPE

Honey, the baby's going to be here soon. He's going to need his daddy to take care of him. You know?

Jacob nods, feels the pressure.

JACOB

I'm sorry.

HOPE

You don't have to be sorry.

JACOB

I just have a lot on my mind.

HOPE

The faster you run from your demons... You have to let it go. We're going to be a family. Me, you, our beautiful son...

A CAR HORN HONKS outside.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Crap, that's Brenda. I gotta go. You all right for dinner?

She stands. He nods. She kisses him on the forehead.

HOPE (CONT'D)

(jokes)

And it's okay if you have Yoda ears, baby. I still love you.

She walks to the door, opens it. The CAR HORN HONKS again.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Come on, Ash!

Ashley darts in from the kitchen with her book bag, right through the front door-

HOPE (CONT'D)

(to her belly)

Say good bye, daddy, I love you, daddy.

She smiles at Jacob, pulls the door shut behind her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GAS STATION - AFTERNOON

Jacob's ten-speed bicycle leans up against the side of the building. Eli's truck rolls into the station, parks.

INT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Jacob, behind the counter, his face in a magazine as Eli enters, dirty and covered in sweat. His hands are black.

ELI

I'm sorry that took so long.

Jacob looks up for a second, nods.

Eli walks directly to a utility sink, washes his face and hands.

ELI (CONT'D)

Did anyone call while I was out?

JACOB

Didn't ring.

Eli finishes up at the sink, coughs into a WHITE HANDKERCHIEF.

ELI

Good. That's good.

JACOB

If you don't mind, I think I'll cut out early.

ELI

Something on your mind?

JACOB

I'm just shaken from last night.

ELI

That's understandable.

JACOB

Ms. Schultz came by the house with Charles earlier in the day. She found a lump of coal in the basement. I've seen coal all my life, but never a piece with a diamond stuck in it.

Eli coughs into his handkerchief.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
What do you make of that?

ELI  
I suppose it's possible.

He coughs again.

ELI (CONT'D)  
It's carbon after all.

JACOB  
They were so close to getting out  
of here, after all these years.

ELI  
Go ahead and take the day.  
Sometimes bad things happen to good  
people. Try not to dwell on it.

JACOB  
All right. Thanks, Eli.

ELI  
You bet.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob walks through the door, over to the bicycle and mounts it. Rides-off down the mountain road.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

The gas station is one thousand feet behind him as he continues to pedal down the road.

His eyes follow a gas tanker truck as it passes him in the opposite lane. His head is turned to the side as-

He rides up and over a tree branch- small, but big enough to jolt the bicycle. He turns his head forward, stops the bike.

JACOB  
Shit.

He looks behind him at the tanker truck as it pulls into Eli's station. Jacob watches it for few seconds, then continues down the road.

Twenty feet later, the bicycle blows the front tire.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Damn it!

Jacob surveys the damage, looks down towards the station as-

The truck driver pulls a rubber hose from the tanker truck, approaches the refueling pipe that extends up from the ground. He's about to off-load hundreds of gallons of gasoline into the underground tank, until-

Eli stops him. They have a brief conversation, but Jacob is too far away to hear it.

Eli approaches a heavy canvas tarp, pulls it back to reveal another refueling pipe that extends up from the ground. The truck driver marries the hose to this pipe instead.

Jacob, confused by all of this, startled when-

The late model Porsche cruises towards the gas station. The driver slams on the brakes as it passes Jacob. It backs up, the driver-side window rolls down, a man lifts his sunglasses, it's-

RYAN OWEN

Need a lift?

INT. PORSCHE - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob pulls the passenger-side door closed. Ryan Owen turns the RADIO down. The car continues towards the gas station.

JACOB

Thanks.

RYAN OWEN

A little tire trouble on the way home?

JACOB

Yeah...

The car makes a u-turn in front of the gas station where the road is wider. Jacob gets a good look at the tanker truck and the secret refueling pipe.

## EXT. GAS STATION

Eli recognizes the Porsche, but can't see Jacob through the tinted window. He looks at his watch as the car completes the turn, coughs into his handkerchief. The truck driver watches the refueling gauge on the truck.

## INT. PORSCHE

The car continues down the mountain road. It's quiet except for the RADIO. These two have nothing to talk about. Ryan Owen turns off the radio, and then-

RYAN OWEN

I saw Ms. Schultz on your porch yesterday. What did she give you?

JACOB

A present for the baby. Clothing.

Ryan Owen clears his throat.

RYAN OWEN

She handed you a piece of coal, didn't she?

Jacob realizes that Ryan Owen is fishing, so he plays dumb.

JACOB

Yeah. So what?

RYAN OWEN

What did you do with it?

JACOB

I gave it back to her.

RYAN OWEN

So, where is it?

JACOB

How the hell would I know?

(beat)

Why don't you go ask her?

RYAN OWEN

Did she say where it came from?

JACOB

It's just a lump of coal, what's the big deal?

RYAN OWEN

The big deal is, it came out of my coal mine, it's my property.

JACOB

She probably just picked it up off the ground, Mr. Owen.

Ryan Owen looks over at Jacob, realizes his overreaction tipped his hand.

RYAN OWEN

Sure. You're right. What's a rock like that worth anyway?

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob closes the front door as the Porsche drives off.

JACOB

Ashley, you home?

Nothing. The house is quiet except for the CUCKOO CLOCK on the wall.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JACOB CONTEMPLATES

- A. He paces the living room floor.
- B. He peers through the living room curtains at the Schultz home across the street.
- C. He mixes a glass of instant iced tea in the kitchen.
- D. He paces the living room floor, peers through the curtains, chugs the iced tea, opens the front door.

EXT. SCHULTZ HOUSE - SIDE YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob crosses the police tape, approaches the house. Coal dust on the ground and smeared on the shattered back door.

He peers into the Schultz kitchen. Nothing moves.

INT. SCHULTZ HOUSE - KITCHEN

Jacob moves through the kitchen. Deep claw marks in the hardwood floor. He moves down the hall, into-

INT. SCHULTZ HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Moving boxes in the same positions as the night before.

He picks up a framed picture of the Schultz family from the shelf. Mom, Dad and Charles - smiles all around. The picture was obscuring- the cloth diamond sack. He reaches for it-

FOOTSTEPS ON THE HARDWOOD FLOOR ABOVE HIM.

He stops short, sets the picture down on top of the diamonds, leans into the staircase, looks up.

A shadow through the light on the staircase wall, and then-

A VOICE  
I haven't found it yet.

It's a telephone conversation. The VOICE GETS LOUDER as the shadow moves down the stairs. It's clear who's talking-

RYAN OWEN  
I understand, father.

Jacob panics, heads for the kitchen. He pauses, turns, eyes the picture on top of the diamonds- no time- RYAN OWEN ON THE STAIRCASE. Jacob darts for the open back door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob closes his living room door, leans against it, exhales. He peers through the window curtains. The SHERIFF'S TRUCK parks in front of the Schultz home.

EXT. BACK YARD - EARLY EVENING

Jacob approaches the trash bag from the night before. It's been torn to shreds by an animal. Garbage everywhere.

JACOB  
Damn it.

EXT. STORAGE SHED - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob grabs the empty trash can that he pulled out from the shed the night before. He drags it towards his house, then stops, looks-

Twenty feet away, where the yard meets the woods.

EXT. BACK YARD

He stops at a gutted deer carcass. Blood splattered on the leaves and the trees, but the carcass is dry, devoid of entrails, mostly bone and fur and little else.

Something catches his attention. Someone is walking through the woods towards him. It's-

ASHLEY

What's up?

JACOB

Ashley, what did I tell you about short-cutting through the woods?

ASHLEY

I know the woods like the back of my hand, relax. I'm seventeen, not seven.

The carcass is at their feet, she looks down.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

What the hell happened to Bambi?

JACOB

That's what I'm trying to figure out. Probably black bear although it's early in the season for them to be so aggressive.

He takes a closer look.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I've never seen a bear do this. Even with cubs it wouldn't leave so little behind. Just bone and fur.

Jacob notices patches of black ash in the fur. He wipes his finger through it and takes a closer look.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Coal dust.  
(beat)  
Come on.

ASHLEY

Where are we going? I have homework you know.

They set off through-

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

LEAVES CRUNCH UNDER FOOT as they dodge trees and branches.

JACOB

You know, I'm proud of you about school. You got right in and I never even tried to.

ASHLEY

Thanks, but it's not an option. After graduation I'm outta here. Maybe California.

JACOB

California.

ASHLEY

Maybe Delaware, man, anywhere.

JACOB

Come on, Ashley. That's not realistic.

ASHLEY

Neither is paying for college!

She drops her tone.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

When mom died, I thought we'd finally leave all of this behind.

JACOB

Houses cost money, Ashley. Cars. Cost money. I make five fifteen an hour. I'm doing the best I can.

ASHLEY

What would dad say if he saw the kind of man you are?

JACOB

Come on, I want to show you something.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #9 - TREEHOUSE

Jacob and Ashley through the woods, stop at a dilapidated treehouse across from the small mine entrance.

The same location Jacob investigated the night before, twisted trees and all.

ASHLEY

What? You dragged me out here to show me the retard trees?

JACOB

No, Ashley.

He walks over to the treehouse.

ASHLEY

(sarcastic)

Great. We can live in a fort when our roof finally caves in.

JACOB

I can't believe this is still here. Looks pretty solid.

ASHLEY

Dad looked like the kind of man who would build a quality treehouse. And it's mine shaft adjacent! Think of the re-sale value!

JACOB

He didn't build this treehouse, Ashley. He was never home long enough to do anything-

ASHLEY

So dad was working instead of building you a treehouse. At least you have memories of him. All I have are pictures you hide away in the basement and pretend they don't exist.

JACOB

Well, I have a lot of memories I'd like to forget.

ASHLEY

What would mom say if she heard you like this?

That stung.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Do you ever think about her?

JACOB  
Every day, Ashley.

A GUST OF WIND rushes through the trees. The shattered mine shaft door blows open, reveals a pit of darkness. The orange sun lowers behind the mountain. Very little light left.

A flurry of embers billow from a Monitoring Well pipe like a furnace. They approach cautiously.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Jesus. This thing's hotter than hell.

A CREATURE SNARLS- Jacob and Ashley turn-

A WOLF TWENTY FEET AWAY- with slow, calculated steps.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Ashley, don't run.

ASHLEY  
Jacob?

JACOB  
If you run, it'll chase you. You can't out run it. Just...stay calm.

Jacob and Ashley back up so the Monitoring Well is between them and the wolf.

ANOTHER WOLF APPEARS ON THEIR FLANK, SNARLS.

TWO WOLVES CLOSE IN- slowly, as if to toy with them.

ASHLEY  
Jacob...!!!

THE CLOSEST WOLF HOWLS, LUNGES, GOES FOR THE KILL-

A MASSIVE ROAR OVERSHADOWS THE SOUND OF THE WOLVES-

It's not a wolf, it's something else.

The wolves stop dead in their tracks, turn their heads towards the SOUND OF A CREATURE AS IT PANTS.

IT APPEARS AS DARKNESS, THROUGH THE TREES TOWARDS THEM.

THE WOLVES CRY LIKE PUPPIES in the presence of an alpha male.

A MASSIVE ROAR FROM THE CREATURE as it stops twenty feet away. The wolves scatter. The creature steps forward, nine-inch claws at the ready.

JACOB

It's a black bear. Keep still.

It's blacker than black, as if it absorbs all adjacent light.

It's too dark to know exactly what it is, but it's huge.

Embers billow from the Monitoring Well, the creature halts.

The creature smells the night air. When the embers die-down, it steps forward. When the embers flare-up, it steps back.

Headlights through the trees from five hundred feet away.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Come on, we have to move.

They run towards the headlights and arrive at-

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #9 - ELI'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

The truck is parked so the headlights flood the mine entrance. The engine's still running, the driver's side door, wide open. The back is full of gasoline cans.

JACOB

What's Eli doing out here?

Jacob approaches the mine door.

INT. BOLGIA MINE #9

Jacob, cautious. A decade since he last ventured into a mine.

It's dark except for splinters of light from the headlights. Each breath visible in the moist atmosphere.

Jacob, over to wooden rafters that support the mine shaft. Long gashes in the wood surface like cat's scratching post.

A ray of light on a long, sharp object in the wood like a dagger.

Jacob approaches, realizes it's the claw of an animal, stuck, torn from its body. Blood down the rafter, on the ground.

Jacob, loses his nerve, backs out...

ELI'S TRUCK

Jacob, startled, bumps into-

JACOB

Eli? What are you doing?

ELI

Sheriff asked me to set up some  
wolf traps.

Eli coughs into his handkerchief.

ELI (CONT'D)

And what are you doing?

JACOB

You can set up some bear traps  
while you're at it. We were just  
chased by a pack. A black bear  
scared them off.

ASHLEY

I never thought I'd be so happy to  
see a bear.

Jacob looks at the mine entrance.

JACOB

The mine door is smashed...what the  
hell is going on?

ELI

Bored teenagers do that. Shocked to  
see some beer bottles, too? Come  
on, you know what kids do in the  
woods.

ASHLEY

No comment.

ELI

Jacob. Jake. Go home, make a nice  
dinner for your family-

ASHLEY

He's not allowed to cook.

ELI

Take the day off tomorrow-

ASHLEY  
He boiled the pop-tarts.

Eli coughs into his handkerchief.

JACOB  
I don't need a day off.

ELI  
There's a wolf out here. We'll  
catch it. I'll talk to the Sheriff  
about the bear, too.

Jacob doesn't move, and then-

JACOB  
All right.

Jacob and Ashley through the woods towards the house as Eli  
watches from behind.

ASHLEY  
You're not allowed near the stove.  
You'll burn the house down.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Eli behind the counter. A car drives off as Jacob enters.

ELI  
Nice kids. Did they say where they  
were from?

JACOB  
New Jersey. Looking for a good time  
in the mountains.

ELI  
Aren't we all?

Jacob's in no mood and Eli catches on.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Do you want to talk about it, son?

JACOB  
I feel like my life is caving in.  
I'm about to be a father and I have  
no idea what to do or how to do it.

ELI  
Yeah, what do they say? Babies  
don't come with instruction  
manuals.

JACOB  
I have to get out of here.

ELI  
You want my truck?

JACOB  
No, I mean this town.  
(sighs)  
I don't know.

ELI  
We all have to find our own road in  
life. Sometimes we just need a  
little help reading the map.

JACOB  
Ryan Owen came looking for you  
yesterday. I forgot to tell you.

Eli coughs into his handkerchief, watches a Porsche pull up.

ELI  
Speaking of forgetting, I forgot to  
pay you, didn't I?

He pulls cash from the register, hands it to Jacob.

JACOB  
(puzzled)  
This is more than you owe me.

Eli dismisses him with a wave of his hand as he coughs again.

ELI  
I think this cough is getting the  
better of me.

JACOB  
Do you still have those buckets of  
tar patch? The cracks are getting  
worse.

ELI  
Fire cooking again?

JACOB  
The basement feels like the devil's  
frying pan.

Ryan Owen walks through the door.

ELI  
(to himself)  
Speak of the devil.

ELI (CONT'D)  
(to Jacob)  
There's a bucket of patch around  
back. Why don't you take my truck  
into town? Get your mind off all of  
this?

Eli slides the keys across the counter to Jacob. Ryan Owen  
stares daggers at Eli.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Take your time.

An uncomfortable situation. Jacob leaves through the door.

EXT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob puts the bucket of patch in the back of Eli's truck  
next to three gasoline cans.

He gets in, starts the engine, notices that his hand is  
stained black with coal dust from the keys.

EXT. MAIN STREET - AFTERNOON

Jacob walks down a snow-dusted Main Street. He passes a  
realtor office and walks into-

INT. JEWELRY STORE - CONTINUOUS

JACOB  
Excuse me.

SALESWOMAN  
Yes? May I help you?

Her eyes scan his modest appearance.

JACOB  
I have two hundred dollars.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob exits, RING BOX in hand. He passes the realtor office, stops, backs up, walks in.

INT. REALTOR OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

JACOB  
I'm looking for Mr. Williams.

SECRETARY  
Have a seat. I'll ring.

He sits in the waiting room, pulls the ring box from his shirt pocket, flips the lid and eyes the modest ring.

SECRETARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Mr. Williams there's someone here for you. Just a minute.

INT. REALTOR OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob stands as MR. WILLIAMS, approaches.

MR. WILLIAMS  
So what can I do for you today?

JACOB  
You can sell my house. You can return my phone calls.

MR. WILLIAMS  
I'm sorry did we-

JACOB  
Six weeks ago. Jacob Johansen. Carbon County.

MR. WILLIAMS  
Oh, right right right. I think I met your wife this morning. Waitress, right?

JACOB  
Girlfriend.

MR. WILLIAMS  
My apologies, I assumed.

He thinks about how to say this, but there's only one way-

MR. WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

I'm just going to cut right to the chase and level with you.

JACOB

Please.

MR. WILLIAMS

You don't have a snowball's chance in hell of selling that place. I guess that's funny actually, given the circumstances. No pun intended, of course.

JACOB

You could at least have the decency to return my phone calls.

MR. WILLIAMS

Look, you're young enough to just walk away from that house. If I were you, I'd scrape-up whatever money I could, pack the car and hit the road. See where life takes you. Set the world on fire.

JACOB

I have a sister finishing high school and medical bills from my mother - before her passing. I wish it were that easy.

MR. WILLIAMS

I'm sorry, but there's nothing we can do to sell that house, Mr. Johansen. There just isn't.

(beat)

I'm sorry.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - LATER

Jacob drives down the curvy road, slows down. He parks the truck, exits, stands at the foot of the giant sinkhole, flanked by detour signs.

A ROAD CREW pumps concrete into the massive hole. He looks up to the water tower atop the mountain.

EXT. WATER TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob parks the truck, exits, approaches the tower.

A TWELVE INCH PIPE MARKED "SOURCE" extends from the base of the tower, into a brick PUMP HOUSE. A SIMILAR PIPE MARKED "FLOW" runs out of the pump house, down through a two-foot wide vertical shaft, into the mines below.

Large valves on the pipes, rusted but they turn smoothly as Jacob applies pressure. Nothing happens.

He approaches the pump house, pushes on the padlocked door.

EXT. WATER TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob backs up the truck, smashes the pump house door.

INT. PUMP HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob follows the pipe marked "SOURCE" as it enters the building. It connects to a large reciprocal pump.

He throws a breaker, the pump struggles but sparks to life. He looks at his hand, stained with coal dust.

A sign on the wall reads "NO SMOKING". He flips the breaker, the pump goes quiet.

He approaches the "SOURCE" pipe, unscrews a nut, removes a metal casing. He removes a cylindrical filter, brings it to his nose.

He recoils from the odor, turns the filter in his hand, it reads "Fuel Filter". It's clear what the pump house is for-

JACOB  
Gasoline?

EXT. HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Eli puts his truck in park. Jacob is shotgun.

INT. TRUCK

ELI  
We have arrived, my good man.

JACOB  
Thanks for the lift, Eli.

ELI  
 Hey, you're doing the right thing.  
 Your pop would be proud.

JACOB  
 I don't care. I just hope she likes  
 it.

ELI  
 She'll love it.

Jacob nods, gets out of the truck.

ELI (CONT'D)  
 Don't forget the patch.

Jacob grabs the bucket of patch from the back, stops at the driver-side window.

JACOB  
 Speaking of forgetting, I forgot to  
 log the gas levels the other day.

ELI  
 No problem. Do it in the morning.

JACOB  
 The levels were lower than I  
 expected. A lot lower - we have  
 less than a quarter tank.

Eli coughs into his handkerchief.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
 Why do you think that is?

ELI  
 Had a convoy of eighteen wheelers  
 come through the other day. Thirsty  
 sons'a'bitches. I'll call-in a  
 refuel when I get back to the  
 station. You go propose to your  
 little lady.

Eli pulls out. Jacob walks back towards the house.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Grocery bags on the counter. A pot boils water on the stove. Jacob sets the table for two with a pair of used, long-stem candles. Ashley enters from the living room.

ASHLEY

And what is all this? You feeling okay?

JACOB

Ash, would you mind if Hope and I ate alone tonight?

ASHLEY

Why? Are you cooking? What are you cooking?

JACOB

Spaghetti.

ASHLEY

You don't do Italian. I do Italian. And I don't remember you having permission to use the stove.

She rummages through the grocery bags.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Do you even have the right stuff? I swear if I see poptarts in this bag...

JACOB

Cut me some slack.

She pulls out several ingredients, sets them on the counter.

ASHLEY

Pasta? Check. Parmesan? Check. Sauce? Where's the sauce? Spaghetti without sauce is like...

Jacob produces a jar of sauce from another bag.

JACOB

Sauce.

Ashley fishes around inside a bag, pulls out-

ASHLEY

Diapers? You bought diapers?

JACOB

Yeah? So?

ASHLEY

I don't know if I should hug you or smack you upside the head.

JACOB  
 We'll need diapers soon. So... I  
 picked some up. No big deal.

Ashley unfolds one, holds it up.

ASHLEY  
 Who did you buy the diapers for?  
 The baby or yourself?

The diaper is huge - toddler size. Jacob, embarrassed.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
 This is a riot. I can't wait to  
 show Hope. She'll pee herself.

THE PHONE RINGS, he answers.

INTERCUT - KITCHEN/DINER

JACOB  
 Hello?

HOPE  
 Hi, honey. Hey, listen. Brenda  
 asked me to cover her late shift  
 tonight.

Jacob produces the ring box from his shirt pocket, flips the  
 lid.

JACOB  
 It's already ten o'clock. I was  
 hoping that we could...

ASHLEY  
 Tell her about the diapers!

HOPE  
 Honey, she really needs me to  
 cover. It's Brenda, ya know?

JACOB  
 (to Ashley)  
 Shut up.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
 (to Hope)  
 Yeah, I know.

Jacob closes the box, puts it back in his shirt pocket.

HOPE  
Oh, that realtor came into the  
diner today.

JACOB  
What did he have to say?

HOPE  
Keep the coffee coming.

JACOB  
I don't know what the answer is.

HOPE  
We just have to get through the  
fire. We'll figure it out. I'll  
catch a ride home in the morning so  
don't worry.

JACOB  
All right.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

HOPE  
Okay, gotta go. Love you. Bye.

Hope hangs up the phone as Brenda passes her.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
Thanks Brenda. I really need this  
double.

BRENDA  
No problem, doll. I could use the  
night off. I'll go over to my  
man's, may not come back in one  
piece.

HOPE  
You - are a dirty old lady.

BRENDA  
And you - love me.

They laugh, Brenda leaves. Hope rubs her belly.

HOPE  
(to her belly)  
Come on kiddo, back to work.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

The kitchen reflected in the window glass like a mirror.  
Jacob and Ashley have just finished dinner.

JACOB  
I'll wash, you dry.

ASHLEY  
Roger that.

Ashley grabs a towel, dries some dishes.

JACOB  
That was really great spaghetti,  
Ash, thanks.

ASHLEY  
And the house still stands.

JACOB  
I'm sorry for what I said to you  
about college and all that.

ASHLEY  
It's okay. I'm sorry for making fun  
of your diapers. I didn't mean to  
make you feel bad, but you've got  
to admit, those things are huge!

JACOB  
It's not that college isn't a good  
idea-

ASHLEY  
I know.

JACOB  
I just-

She grabs his arm.

ASHLEY  
Jakey, it's all right. Really. I  
have to do this myself. This is my  
thing, I'm totally cool with that.

JACOB  
You sure?

ASHLEY  
Yeppers.

JACOB  
Why don't you get your books and  
I'll help you with your homework if  
you want?

ASHLEY  
Really?

JACOB  
Yeah, it'll be fun. Let's see how  
much I remember.

ASHLEY  
Okay. Cool. If you think you can  
keep up. Give me ten.

JACOB  
Roger that.

Ashley dries her hands on a towel, walks out of the room.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The cracks in the floor are now several inches wide. Jacob  
does his best to fill them with the bucket of tar patch.

On the shelf, the BOX OF FAMILY PHOTOS. Next to it, his old  
plastic lunch box. Behind it, a large vertical crack in the  
foundation wall.

He places the lunch box on the floor, patches the wall.

The lunch box melts from the heat of the floor. He picks it  
up- long strands of molten plastic, like melted cheese on a  
slice of pizza.

JACOB  
This has got to stop.

INT. KITCHEN

Jacob enters from the basement with the box of family photos.  
The model boat kit sticks out of the top.

The kitchen reflected in the window glass. The back yard  
cannot be seen.

He pivots to set the box on the counter, his shadow crosses  
the window, the back yard comes into focus-

A DARK FIGURE IN THE YARD THROUGH THE KITCHEN WINDOW.

He pivots back just as fast, the dark figure lost in the reflection of the kitchen, unnoticed.

He approaches the back door, grabs the door knob, turns it. Ashley darts in from the living room.

ASHLEY

Ready?

He lets go of the knob, it rotates back to locked position.

JACOB

Yeppers.

INT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

The PHONE RINGS. Eli looks at his watch, picks up the phone.

Silence and then-

ELI

I'm tired of fighting with you.  
I've thought about it, and I'm  
done.

A VOICE

Maybe you should think again.

Eli coughs into his handkerchief.

ELI

How much longer do you think I can  
do this? I'll be dead in a few  
years, what difference does it make  
if I stop now?

A VOICE

Because there's still people in  
this town that you care about.

MONTAGE - INT. / EXT. PUMP HOUSE - NIGHT

-- Jacob approaches the pump house, flashlight in hand.

-- He wrestles a pipe wrench, removes a nut that connects the "SOURCE" pipe to the gasoline supply.

-- He reconnects the water line from the tower to the pump.

-- He throws the switch, the pump comes alive.

-- He opens the water valve, it begins to flow.

-- Steam rises from the hole in the ground where the "FLOW" pipe extends down into the mine.

EXT. BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob approaches from the woods, ten feet from the back door.

A DISTANT WOLF TRAP SNAPS. THE SOUND OF A BEAST IN AGONY.

Jacob darts across the yard, his flashlight back and forth.

EXT. WOODS

He dodges branches as he probes deeper into the woods. His flashlight flickers off, then back on. The sky is red as far as the eye can see. Burning embers drift on a breeze.

He stops at the trap. It's a mangled piece of metal. A chunk of black flesh is stuck in the teeth of the trap.

THE SOUND OF A BEAST IN AGONY THIRTY FEET AWAY.

Jacob looks up and around, backs up against a tree. Headlights in the distance, about two hundred feet away. He gathers his courage and runs towards the light. It's-

EXT. ELI'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Empty gasoline cans on the ground. The truck is parked so the headlights flood-

INT. BOLGIA MINE #9

He stands in the entrance. Amber truck light pours in from behind. He can see down the corridor for a few feet.

INT. MINE CORRIDOR

Jacob moves through the mine with slow, calculated steps. The headlights don't reach far. It's almost dark. His flashlight flickers out, he smacks it... nothing.

He continues, comes to a junction, turns. It's pitch black, quiet except for his ERRATIC BREATHING and the WATER DROPS from the ceiling.

He smacks the flashlight. It flickers, dies. He discards it.

JACOB  
Piece of shit!

He moves slowly through the darkness, stops to catch his breath, he swallows, he's okay.

He moves forward, kicks something - THE SOUND OF METAL ON ROCK. He's startled, but recognizes the sound.

He fumbles through his pockets, produces a Zippo. It ignites and reveals an oil lamp on the ground. He tries to light the lamp - it won't take the flame.

He moves forward with only the Zippo light. THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS, A CREATURE BREATHING BEHIND HIM.

He runs, the Zippo flame blows out. He slides up against the wall of the mine, feels his way forward. THE SOUND OF HIS BODY SLIDING AGAINST THE ROCK.

THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS, SNARLS. He starts to panic.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Shit...

THE SOUND OF HIS HANDS SLIDING AGAINST METAL.

He lights the Zippo, it reveals a chamber behind a large rusted metal door. This is-

INT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT

He's at the bottom of the shaft where he lost Superman.

He closes the door behind him but can't secure it. Moonlight spills in through wooden planks set into the ground above. It's enough to see unaided. The atmosphere, thick and smoky.

Corridors branch-off like spokes on a wheel with walls that smolder and glow red-hot. The ground is wet, littered with little pieces of burnt paper.

He picks up a piece. It's a SCORCHED PHOTO of him and his mother. A man is in the picture, but the edge of the paper is burned-away where his face would be.

THE SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS on the other side of the door. They stop. THE SOUND OF A CREATURE PANTING.

A door swings open. His weight against it. He looks for an escape. All of the corridors smolder, red-hot, except for one that is pitch black.

The door thrusts open, knocks him to the ground. The ring box spills out from his pocket, lands next to the photo.

He runs top speed for the pitch black corridor, realizes his pocket is empty but he can't turn back now.

INT. MINE CORRIDOR

He's in the dark, no time for the Zippo.

A BURST OF FIRE LIGHT REFLECTS OFF THE CORRIDOR WALLS IN FRONT OF HIM FOLLOWED BY A WAVE OF HOT AIR.

He's knocked back but has enough light to see now.

A SHADOW CUTS THROUGH THE LIGHT REFLECTING OFF THE WALLS.

A DARK FIGURE TURNS THE CORNER IN FRONT OF HIM.

HE'S FACE TO FACE WITH- Eli, with a flashlight in one hand, and a Molotov cocktail in the other.

ELI

Jacob? Come now.

JACOB

What the hell are you doing?

ELI

I can explain.

JACOB

You're feeding the fire?

A SHADOW CUTS THROUGH THE FIRE LIGHT REFLECTING OFF THE WALLS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER. THE SOUND OF CREATURES IN PURSUIT.

ELI

I'll explain, but we need to move.  
Jacob! Now!

Jacob, reluctant, but the urgency convinces him. They run down the corridor. Eli ignites, tosses the Molotov cocktail behind them. It explodes into a wall of flame. He pulls Jacob into a room behind a heavy metal door.

INT. MINE ROOM

Eli closes the door, slides a heavy latch to secure it.

ELI  
There, that'll buy us some time.  
Let me explain-

JACOB  
You're stoking the fire! How could  
you possibly explain that?

ELI  
Shut up and look.

Eli traces his flashlight across the floor. Animal skeletons scattered everywhere.

JACOB  
So what?

ELI  
Small animals mostly. Look over  
here...

He aims the light at a skeleton, it appears-

ELI (CONT'D)  
Human? Take a closer look.

The light reveals claws where fingers should be. The skull is without eye sockets.

JACOB  
What am I looking at?

THE SOUND OF CLAWS AS THEY SCRAPE THE METAL DOOR.

ELI  
We don't have much time.

Eli steps between Jacob and the door.

JACOB  
Get the hell out of my way.

Jacob makes for the door as-

CLAWS PIERCE THE DOOR, HUGE GASHES IN THE METAL.

Jacob recoils.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Holy shit!

ELI  
Don't think - just move-

Eli aims the light on an air shaft cut into the wall where it meets the ground. The opening is three feet in diameter.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Through that air shaft.

Eli hands his flashlight to Jacob.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Keep the light on me.

Eli drops to the ground, squeezes through the opening.

CLAWS RIP THE METAL DOOR FROM TOP TO BOTTOM, SHRED IT.

Jacob squeezes into the hole. The flashlight, erratic.

INT. AIR SHAFT

ELI  
Keep the light on me!

THE DOOR TORN FROM ITS HINGES, SLAMS ON THE GROUND.

Jacob's legs stick out of the hole. He scrambles forward. He aims the flashlight, looks behind him.

A CREATURE STORMS THE ROOM, BEELINES FOR THE VENT SHAFT.

The flashlight provides enough light to see the creature clearly for the first time.

It stands nine feet tall like a human, but it surely is not. Its face is without eyes. Its skin, like ash. Claws where fingers should be. If Hell has demons, this is one of them.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Keep moving forward! Don't look back!

Jacob wiggles forward, pulls his legs in just as-

THE CREATURE SWIPES AT HIS LEGS, HOWLS IN FRUSTRATION.

They squeeze further up the shaft. The creature retreats.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Eli pulls Jacob from the hole where the air shaft pierces the ground. They slide a metal grate over the hole, rest against the mound of earth to catch their breath.

ELI  
I have to rest for a bit.

JACOB  
What just happened?

ELI  
If there's a Hell, those are its demons.

JACOB  
Jesus.

ELI  
Now would be a good time to pray they don't get out.

JACOB  
They? There's more than one of those things?

ELI  
We have to get back to my truck.

EXT. WOODS

They move cautiously through the trees. The flashlight back and forth.

ELI  
Don't move so fast.

Jacob slows down.

ELI (CONT'D)  
Stop.  
(beat)  
Listen.

THE SOUND OF DISTANT FEET THROUGH LEAVES.

Jacob turns off the flashlight.

ELI (CONT'D)  
(whispers)  
Over there.

Eli gestures to a collapsed section of wood fence. They approach, huddle underneath it.

THE FOOTSTEPS GET CLOSER.

ELI (CONT'D)  
(whispers)  
Not a sound.

Jacob and Eli penned-up beneath the fence, surrounded.

THE FOOTSTEPS ARE IMMEDIATE, THEN STOP.

Jacob holds his breath, then slowly exhales. Shadows from the moonlight filter through the fence slats.

THE SOUND OF CREATURES BREATHING. A CREATURE CROSSES IN FRONT OF THEM IN THE MOONLIGHT, FOLLOWED BY MORE.

THEY ARE SURROUNDED. THE CREATURES SNARL AS THEY HUNT.

A bright light sweeps through the trees. THE SOUND OF CREATURES AS THEY RECOIL.

A truck slides to a stop thirty feet away. A man jumps out with a deer hunting light and rifle.

A MAN  
You out here?

Eli and Jacob emerge, blinded by-

ELI  
The light...

The man aims the light into the thick woods behind them.

A MAN  
Sorry about that.

As their eyes adjust, they realize who the man is-

SHERIFF  
Had you in a quite a spot.

ELI  
Thanks for the assist.

SHERIFF  
Get in over your head?

Eli nods.

ELI  
I'm parked just over the mountain.

SHERIFF  
Come back for it in the daylight.  
Let's go. Jacob, why don't you hop  
in the back?

Jacob hops in the back of the truck as Eli and the Sheriff climb into the cab. They drive-off.

EXT. HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Jacob jumps off the truck, walks towards his house as the truck pulls away. First rays of the sun over the mountain.

INT. SHERIFF'S TRUCK

The Sheriff turns off the radio.

SHERIFF  
So, how much does he know?

ELI  
Enough.

SHERIFF  
I guess eighteen years is a good  
run. But you're in over your head  
now.

ELI  
Tell me when I was ever in total  
control of the situation.

SHERIFF  
Maybe so.

Eli rolls down the passenger-side window.

ELI  
Do you remember the day?

SHERIFF  
Never forget it.

ELI

Well for me, it was just yesterday.  
Watching my friends torn apart. And  
the others suffocate.

SHERIFF

Damn shame.

ELI

A little too much powder there,  
sport.

SHERIFF

So it's like that?

ELI

I'm just saying. If you had  
followed procedure...

They arrive at Eli's truck. The Sheriff slams on the brakes,  
puts the truck in park, turns to Eli.

SHERIFF

Not a day goes by I don't think  
about what happened, and my role in  
all of it.

ELI

That may be. But while you're  
playing law dog, I'm running  
through mines with gasoline and  
torches...

SHERIFF

And I'm picking up pieces of our  
neighbors from their backyards.

ELI

We've made a terrible mistake. It's  
time to put an end to it.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAYBREAK

Jacob stops at the top of the stairs. Ashley's bedroom door  
is cracked open. He approaches slowly.

He stares through the crack, pushes the door open with one  
finger. The room is empty. He turns, startled-

JACOB

Ahh!

ASHLEY  
Sheesh, chill out. Where were you  
all night?

Ashley steps out of the bathroom in her robe, toothbrush in  
hand.

JACOB  
Ashley, where's Hope?

ASHLEY  
At the diner still, duh.

She walks into her bedroom, he follows.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM

ASHLEY  
Uh, a little privacy?

JACOB  
We have to get out of here. We're  
in a lot of trouble.

He looks out the bedroom window to see if the coast is clear.

ASHLEY  
Why? Where were you last night?

JACOB  
(frantic)  
Ashley, pack your things. Tell Hope  
to do the same. See if you can stay  
with Brenda for a few days, okay?

ASHLEY  
I have school, dingbat.

JACOB  
Will you do that?

ASHLEY  
Why?

JACOB  
Just promise me you'll do it!

ASHLEY  
Fine. Whatever.

He darts out of the room.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Cray-zeee...

INT. GAS STATION - MORNING

Eli gathers supplies from the shelves as Jacob enters.

JACOB  
Are you going to level with me?

ELI  
I suppose the cat's out of the bag.

JACOB  
What the hell were those things and why are they in the mines? And what were you doing down there if you knew about it?

ELI  
All very good questions.

JACOB  
Cut the shit, Eli!

ELI  
What? They're all very good questions, I just don't have very good answers for you.

JACOB  
Why is the water tower pumping gasoline from the station?

ELI  
The accident left me in pieces-

JACOB  
Stop calling it an accident!

ELI  
When they pulled me out I was barely able to walk, let alone carry a pick axe. They set me up with this station. We had to keep the fire going and this was the perfect cover.

JACOB  
I took care of that.

ELI

What?

JACOB

I filled the water tower and dumped it.

ELI

Jacob, you have no idea what you've done-

JACOB

I know exactly-

ELI

-and the ramifications - we need to keep the mines burning, Jacob!

JACOB

Why?!

ELI

The fire is the only thing protecting us from them!

It makes sense now. Eli climbs a step-stool, reaches for boxes on a high shelf.

JACOB

Then why keep it a secret? Why didn't someone call the government, get the Army in here and take them out?

ELI

Do you know how much money is in these mountains? The Owens would lose mining rights worth millions of dollars if the left-wing nut jobs in Harrisburg caught wind. Sure, maybe we should've blown the whistle years ago, but we didn't know what we were dealing with. Once you cover something up it's easier to keep going than to come clean.

JACOB

This is crazy.

(beat)

Why can't we fight them?

ELI

You never come between the Owen family and their money.

JACOB

No, the creatures.

ELI

Fight them? We can barely contain them. Here, take this.

Eli hands down a box of explosive fuses.

ELI (CONT'D)

After the accident, the mine had to be shut down. Even Ryan Owen Sr. knew it was too risky. Operations moved to the other side of the mountain. If they couldn't exploit this mine, at least they had the others. So, I became keeper of the flame, so to speak.

Eli steps down.

ELI (CONT'D)

But, I'm not as young as I used to be. And you flushing all that water down into the mines just made things a lot worse.

Eli picks up a box of explosives, sets it on the counter.

ELI (CONT'D)

But I have a plan.

INT. GAS STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Eli unrolls a MINING MAP on the counter.

ELI

Lucky for us, there's only a few ways in and out of the mine.

Eli points to several locations on the map.

ELI (CONT'D)

Here. Here, and here. These are the remaining mine entrances. We'll blow them up and seal them off for good.

JACOB  
We'll never get away with that.

ELI  
We'll raise attention, but I figure  
we have no other options.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Hope enters through the front door. A car drives-off outside.  
All is quiet.

HOPE  
I'm home.

She sets down her keys, walks into-

INT. KITCHEN

She pulls cash from her apron, stuffs it into the baby jar.  
The curtains over the kitchen window and door are drawn shut.

HOPE  
Jake? Ash?

A DISTANT BOOM RATTLES THE HOUSE.

Pain through her abdomen. She sets the jar on the counter, it  
teeters on the edge of the sink. Clutches her belly.

HOPE (CONT'D)  
Ouch. Watch the kicking, little  
boy.

She looks up - A LOUDER BOOM. The jar breaks in the sink.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #9 - CONTINUOUS

An explosion has just occurred in the shaft. Eli and Jacob  
approach the rubble. Jacob inspects the debris.

JACOB  
We need more. I can still see  
through.

ELI  
The stone is thicker than I  
expected.

JACOB

At this rate, we may not have  
enough.

ELI

We'll have enough. Pack another  
charge.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Hope gathers coins, bills and glass from the sink.

ANOTHER BOOM - loudest of the three. Coins spill onto the  
floor and into the sink. She clutches her belly again.

HOPE

Come on, baby. Please give mommy a  
break.

AN EAR-PIERCING ALARM RINGS OUT.

She looks towards the basement door, stuffed-up with rags.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Hope approaches the Air Quality Meter, pushes the Silence  
button, it goes quiet.

THE ALARM RINGS OUT again. Hope pushes the button again, it  
goes quiet. She turns towards the stairs.

The ALARM RINGS OUT again. She flips the unit over and takes  
out the batteries. It goes quiet.

She turns towards the stairs. The cracks in the foundation  
are now several inches wide.

ANOTHER BOOM - The concrete slab under her feet gives-way and  
drops two feet down. Smoke rises from the rubble. She  
struggles to gain her balance.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #9 - CONTINUOUS

Smoke and debris everywhere.

ELI

That ought to do it.

JACOB

I hope we're doing the right thing.

ELI  
We couldn't be making it any worse.

INT. BASEMENT

Hope climbs over the concrete debris and up the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN

The house is in disarray from the explosions. Walls are cracked, debris on the floor. It's not a safe place to be.

Hope closes the basement door behind her, heads for the phone. Dials, puts it to her ear, other hand on her belly.

It rings... and rings...

HOPE  
Come on, come on.

... and rings. Finally, someone answers -

A VOICE (O.S.)  
Yes?

HOPE  
Oh, thank God.

A VOICE (O.S.)  
What can I do for you?

HOPE  
Eli?

A VOICE (O.S.)  
Hello, Hope.

HOPE  
Who is this?

Then it becomes clear-

RYAN OWEN (O.S.)  
This is Mr. Owen.

HOPE  
Where is Jacob? I need to talk to him.

RYAN OWEN (O.S.)  
As do I. Where are you right now?

HOPE

I'm at home.

RYAN OWEN (O.S.)

Good... good... stay right there.

HOPE

Why? Where is Jake? Hello?

The line goes dead. She hangs up the phone.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #8 - LATER

Jacob stands two hundred feet out - the same spot where he stood as a boy on the day of the mining accident.

ELI

Jake! Let's go.

Jacob snaps-to.

JACOB

Sorry.

Eli rolls-out the mining map. Points to several locations.

ELI

All right. That leaves the two entrances here at the main site. The personnel shaft and the production shaft.

JACOB

And the number six in the woods.

Eli, puzzled.

JACOB (CONT'D)

With the wooden planks...

ELI

Right. Now the production shaft should be easy enough. I figure we send some coal cars down on the rails-

JACOB

Ka-boom.

ELI

Exactly. But the personnel shaft may be tough. It has an elevator.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Hope stops at the top of the stairs. Ashley's bedroom door is cracked open. She approaches slowly.

She stares through the crack, pushes the door open with one finger. School books on the bed but Ashley is gone.

She turns, down the hall, into-

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Hope approaches the closet door, it's cracked open. Reaches for the handle, opens the door slowly...the closet is empty.

HOPE  
(to herself)  
What's wrong with you, Hope?

She grabs a suitcase from the top shelf, closes the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hope dumps clothes into the suitcase, zips it up.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hope drags the suitcase down the stairs. She gathers photos and framed pictures from the room, stacks them on the suitcase by the door. Walks into-

INT. KITCHEN

She gathers the coins and bills from the sink, slides them back into her apron pocket. Back into-

INT. LIVING ROOM

She grabs the suitcase and pictures, reaches for the door knob, turns it to find-

Brenda in the threshold, her hand on the knob. Both startled.

HOPE  
Ahh!

BRENDA

Oh my! Honey, I'm too old for shocks like that. I'm liable to end up in the hospital.

HOPE

Brenda, what are you doing here?

BRENDA

When I got home, Ashley was waiting for me. She said I had to come back to get you.

HOPE

Was Jake with her?

BRENDA

No, it was just her, why? Is something the matter?

HOPE

There was an earthquake and the house is falling apart.

BRENDA

Then let's get out of here.

HOPE

Just let me grab my suitcase.

Hope turns towards the suitcase, looks through the living room, into the kitchen as-

A DARK FIGURE SILHOUETTED THROUGH THE KITCHEN WINDOW CURTAINS. Hope grabs the suitcase.

THE FIGURE THROUGH THE KITCHEN DOOR CURTAIN. THE KNOB TURNS-

Hope darts through the front door, pulling it closed just as-

INT. KITCHEN

Ryan Owen enters through the back door, sees the front door swing closed.

INT. BOLGIA MINE #8 - ELEVATOR CAR - LATER

Eli's truck, parked at the entrance, floods the mine with amber light. Jacob carries a box of explosive to Eli who stands in the elevator car.

ELI

All right. I figure that's enough.  
That should do it.

JACOB

This elevator looks fifty years  
old. I doubt there's even power.

ELI

Let's see if gravity still works.

Eli disengages the emergency brake handle, pushes down on the control handle, it clicks into place. The car descends four feet, jolts to a stop. The handle pops back to neutral.

ELI (CONT'D)

Damn thing.

The elevator car is now four feet below ground level. Too high for Eli to climb out. He peers down into the shaft, then back at Jacob. THE SOUND OF CREATURES AS THEY MOVE below.

ELI (CONT'D)

See? Old, but it still works.  
Double-check the detonators.

Jacob traces the fuses back to the detonators as Eli wires-up the charges.

JACOB

Fuses look good.

THE SOUND OF CREATURES CLIMBING THE WALLS OF THE SHAFT.

ELI

Help me wire-up this other box.

The two sit in the elevator car, wire fuses to detonators, shove them into sticks of explosive.

ELI (CONT'D)

Permission to bring up a sore  
subject?

Jacob nods.

ELI (CONT'D)

You feel like your father put his  
work before everything else, and  
you're right. It was difficult to  
provide for a family back then -  
with a dead-end job.

JACOB

Still is.

ELI

He thought he was doing the right thing.

THE SOUND OF THE CREATURES GROWS LOUDER. Eli peers down into the shaft, then back at Jacob.

ELI (CONT'D)

You'd look out your window at night, at the stars, and pray it all away.

JACOB

Every night.

Eli's words strike a chord.

ELI

Then one day your wishes came true. I'm sorry it meant losing your father.

JACOB

I didn't lose much.

THE SOUND OF CREATURES RIGHT BELOW THEIR FEET - CLAWS AGAINST THE UNDERSIDE OF THE ELEVATOR CAR.

ELI

There's nothing a father won't do for his son. He gave his life to save yours.

Jacob bites his lip.

ELI (CONT'D)

Sometimes we have to make difficult decisions from limited choices.

A CLAW TEARS THROUGH THE METAL FLOOR BETWEEN THEM.

JACOB

Watch it!

ELI

Jacob, listen to me carefully. Run back to the truck. Back it out of the mine.

JACOB  
What about you?

ELI  
Grab two sets of rope. One so I can rig this damn control handle, and the other to haul my ass out of here. Got that?

JACOB  
Yeah.

ELI  
All right, son. Go!

Jacob climbs up and out. Eli watches as he runs top speed down the mine corridor towards the daylight, then focuses on THE CREATURES AS THEY CLAW BENEATH HIS FEET.

ELI (CONT'D)  
You remember me, you sons of bitches?

The elevator car goes dark as Jacob backs the truck out.

THE SOUNDS OF: THE CONTROL HANDLE AS IT CLICKS INTO PLACE - THE ELEVATOR CAR DESCENDS - CLAWS TEAR THROUGH METAL.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #8

Jacob in the truck, drives away from the entrance. The truck comes to a stop, the driver-side door opens, Jacob steps out-

A THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION FROM THE MINE. A COLUMN OF SMOKE.

JACOB  
Eli!!!

Jacob stands two hundred feet out - the same spot where he stood as a boy on the day of the mining accident. The scene is just as surreal.

INT. SHERIFF'S TRUCK - MOUNTAIN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff drives along the mountain road, around a bend. The trees reveal the column of smoke from the explosion.

SHERIFF  
(to himself)  
Christ, what are they doing?

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #8 - COAL BREAKER BUILDING - LATER

A pair of railroad tracks extend out of the mine to the top of the five-story coal-breaker building. A chain belt runs the entire length of track.

Jacob rigs boxes of explosives, detonators and fuses in the mine car, then pushes down on a lever. The car locks into place on the chain belt.

INT. COAL BREAKER BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob climbs a long metal staircase that leads to the top of the breaker. Parallel to the stairs is a mountain of coal debris that leads all the way up.

At the top, he throws a switch on the engine that drives the chain belt. The machine starts, then puffs-out.

INT. COAL BREAKER BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob pours gasoline into the engine, reaches for the switch but stops short-

A VOICE

I can't let you do that, son.

Jacob turns around.

JACOB

Sheriff?

SHERIFF

That's enough of this. Step away from the machine.

Jacob steps to the side.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Where's Eli?

JACOB

He didn't make it.

The Sheriff surveys the situation.

SHERIFF

So what was your plan? Run a coal car into the mine and blow everything to shit?

JACOB  
Yeah, pretty much.

SHERIFF  
See, that's where we have a little  
problem.

Jacob steps towards him.

JACOB  
Sheriff, you know what's going on.  
We can't let those things get out!

The Sheriff puts his hand on his firearm.

SHERIFF  
Now, that's far enough.

Jacob halts.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)  
This isn't the way, son. Come with  
me.

Jacob walks past him, then down the staircase.

Jacob trips, goes down on one knee. The Sheriff grabs him by the shoulder. Jacob flips the Sheriff over his head, into the pile of coal.

The Sheriff tumbles down, his firearm lost in the debris. The old man is down for the count...

Jacob returns to the top, throws the switch on the engine. The chain belt drags the heavy mining car to the top.

Jacob sparks his Zippo, lights a long fuse in the car.

The Sheriff emerges atop the pile of coal, catches Jacob off-guard. He lands a punch on Jacob who falls to his knees.

The fuse is burning...

The scuffle continues until Jacob lands in the mining car on top of the explosives. The Sheriff has Jacob in a head-lock.

The fuse, still burning...

SHERIFF (CONT'D)  
Settle down. Settle down!

Jacob notices the fuse... it could explode any minute. His body goes lax. The Sheriff eases up a bit.

JACOB

A little too much powder there,  
sport.

Jacob breaks the head-lock, knocks the Sheriff to the ground. As Jacob stands up in the mining car, the Sheriff's foot comes to rest on the emergency brake, releasing it.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #8 - COAL BREAKER BUILDING

The mining car plummets down the five-story track with Jacob inside, knocked back on top of the explosives.

Not much fuse left...

Jacob regains his composure. The mining car races towards the mine entrance.

The fuse is almost history...

Jacob dives out of the mining car, scrambles away as the car disappears into the mine shaft.

The Sheriff watches from the coal breaker building as-

A THUNDEROUS EXPLOSION. Smoke and debris fill the air. The entrance is reduced to a pile of rubble.

Jacob pulls himself to his feet, kisses his Zippo.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT - AFTERNOON

It looks familiar, and it should. This is where Jacob lost Superman. The same wooden planks set into the earth to conceal the pit below.

Cloudy sky. Embers billow from a Monitoring Well, ignite leaves on the ground. A smoldering flame that would grow into a forest fire if the trees weren't already scorched black.

Eli's truck parks. Jacob hops out, carries a box of explosive from the passenger side to the rear of the truck.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob backs the truck to the edge where the wooden planks meet the earth. He ties a rope around the tow hub, grips the rope tightly as he steps backwards onto the first plank.

He bounces up and down, tests the wood- IT CREAKS UNDER HIS WEIGHT, but it holds. He steps onto the next plank- it holds.

He steps onto the next plank, IT CREAKS- shifts his weight- THE PLANK DISINTEGRATES- he slips, grips the rope tightly, steadies himself, pulls his foot out of the hole.

He moves gingerly towards a hole created by rotted planks in the center of the sea of wood.

He breaks-away the edges of the wood creating a larger hole. He drops the rope into the pit, then lowers himself down into-

INT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT

It's thirty feet to the bottom. Planks crack above his head, splinters rain down.

The walls of the vertical shaft formed by hundreds of wooden planks stacked together, tied into the earth with metal rods.

Down the rope, slowly, cautiously... Touchdown.

Corridors branch-off like spokes on a wheel. They glow red-hot. The atmosphere is thick and steamy. He makes quick work of finding the lost ring box.

He puts the box into his shirt pocket, rethinks the idea, stuffs the box into his pants pocket. Back to the rope...

A few feet up the rope, he spots something on the ground, drops back to his feet.

He admires a photo of himself as a young boy on his father's shoulders, then stuffs it into his pocket.

Turns towards the rope-

A DARK FIGURE SILHOUETTED BY THE FIRE LIGHT.

He darts to the rope, scrambles up hand over hand. Ten feet up. THE FIGURE RUSHES HIM. The rope swings wildly.

Thirteen feet up. The plank that the rope rests on crumbles away. The rope drops down three feet. He's only inches from the creature as its claws slice through the rope under him.

Jacob frantic, scrambles up. Every few feet he ascends, the planks above him crumble and release more rope, and he drops back down closer to the creature.

CREATURES STORM THE ROOM - DOZENS OF THEM BELOW HIS FEET.

Exhausted, hand over hand up the rope, only ten feet from the top, almost there...

TIRES SCREECH - THE ROPE DROPS TEN FEET. THE TRUCK BACKS OVER THE PLANKS, CRUSHES MANY OF THEM UNTIL THE WHEELS ARE LODGED.

Creatures nip at his heels as he dangles- halfway from the opening above him, halfway from certain death below.

Jacob, exhausted, musters the strength, hand over hand, he reaches the top of the rope, pokes his head out to find-

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT

Eli's truck stuck in the sea of wooden planks. The back wheels burn rubber as they spin against the wood.

Ryan Owen in the cab of the truck, floors the gas.

Jacob pulls himself up and out of the hole.

JACOB  
Son of a bitch.

Jacob climbs over the gate, into the back of the truck.

EXT. TRUCK

Ryan Owen throws the driver-side door open.

RYAN OWEN  
What is it with your family? Always  
a pain in the ass.

Jacob grabs him, pulls him into the rear of the truck. The impact causes some planks to break, the truck sinks closer to the pit below. The tailgate is below ground level.

JACOB  
You're the reason my father died.  
You soulless prick.

Ryan Owen back to his feet.

RYAN OWEN  
You're father died because he was  
weak. What kind of man aspires to  
be a coal miner?

Jacob kicks him in the chest. He twists as he falls back, grabs onto the only thing he can- a plank of wood, his feet dangle into the pit.

RYAN OWEN (CONT'D)

You want money? Help me up and I'll give you anything you want!

JACOB

You can never bring my father back.

Jacob throws an empty wooden explosives box at Ryan Owen's knuckles. He drops into the shaft like a stone.

The truck pivots, drops until it comes to a rest on the open driver-side door. Only the cab of the truck is above ground.

Jacob climbs up, opens the window into the cab, squeezes through.

INT. TRUCK

Jacob grabs a stick of explosive, jams a detonator into it. He lights the fuse, throws it into a box of explosives in the rear of the truck.

He grabs the passenger-side door, pushes up to open it. It's jammed. The fuse burns- the truck continues to slip-

Jacob, frantic, grabs the window handle, rolls down the window, climbs out onto the door panel.

EXT. TRUCK

The truck pivots, rights itself as it slips further.

Jacob climbs from the door panel to the grill. He pushes off, jumps to the edge where the shaft meets the earth. He lands short, his fingers dig into the mud. If only he could pull himself up and over the edge-

The fuse - still burning...

The truck comes to rest on the driver-side mirror, a half-inch metal bracket. It bends from the weight, the mirror shatters.

Jacob dangles above the passenger-side window, still open. His fingers tear through the muddy earth. He's tapped-out, drops, threads the needle, lands inside the cab of the truck.

The mirror bracket snaps from the impact. THE SHIP IS GOING DOWN- swallowed by the black hole in the ground.

INT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT

Sticks of explosive, wooden boxes, suspended in air as the truck flips over, plummets towards the ground.

Fifteen feet from the bottom- A MASSIVE EXPLOSION.

The planks that form the walls of the shaft shatter- thousands of splinters through the air like wooden daggers.

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT

A COLUMN OF SMOKE AND FIRE STRETCHES TO THE SKY.

THE EARTH SWALLOWS EVERYTHING IN FIFTY FEET.

EXT. DINER - INT. BRENDA'S CAR - AFTERNOON

The engine still running. Brenda behind the wheel, Hope shotgun, exhausted.

BRENDA

Let me see if I can get an advance  
on my check and we'll get some  
groceries.

HOPE

Sounds good.

Brenda exits. Hope leans back, relaxes...

A truck pulls up... Hope and the Sheriff, window to window.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Here for your afternoon coffee,  
Sheriff?

Somber, he doesn't respond, and then-

SHERIFF

What would you do with fifty  
thousand dollars?

HOPE

I don't know if it's because I've been up for 24 hours, but that's the funniest thing I've heard in a long time.

Silence - they look at each other, chuckle at the prospect.

Hope clutches her stomach.

SHERIFF

Is everything all right?

HOPE

Yeah, we just want to know where daddy is.

INT. BOLGIA MINE #6 SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

A mountain of debris, wood and rock. The air is thick. A single beam of sunlight penetrates from above.

Jacob, trapped in the twisted metal cage of a truck, wounded but in one piece. He slips through the shattered front window, onto the floor of the mine.

Back on his feet, there's just enough light to see- A CLAW PROTRUDES FROM THE PILE OF RUBBLE. It doesn't move.

He looks for an escape, the chamber is packed thick with debris. He steps over Ryan Owen's mutilated body, deep gashes through his torso. A death befitting the prick.

Out of the corner of his eye- there it is, his old Superman doll, it's seen better days. He picks it up.

JACOB

Oh my God. Look at you.

He stuffs it into his pocket.

Dirt rains down until the beam of sunlight is snuffed out. It's dark except for an orange glow twenty feet away.

THE SOUND OF WOUNDED CREATURES STIRRING.

Jacob makes his way towards the only source of light-

## INT. FIRE TUNNEL

The stone walls of the tunnel are incandescent. It's a fucking furnace. Jacob runs as fast as he can considering his injuries- but the tunnel only gets hotter the deeper he goes.

Fifty feet down the tunnel, his clothes begin to smoke. His body flush with sweat. He stops, considers turning around, looks behind him to the far end of the tunnel-

A CREATURE, WOUNDED, BUT TEN FEET TALL- AND PISSED- LETS OUT AN AWESOME ROAR- so awesome the air from its mouth stokes the fiery tunnel walls - they glow white hot like the sun.

It's hotter than hell, but the fire protects him. He bolts further down the tunnel.

His clothes catch fire, he beats out the flames, runs until- A dark spot ahead, salvation. He reaches-

## INT. WATER TUNNEL

Thick fog. Moonlight through water as it pours down from above, evaporates from the heat of the adjacent fire tunnel.

He stands under the water- just what the doctor ordered.

JACOB

There's got to be a way out.

His hands across the stone wall, probe for an exit.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Bingo.

A twelve inch pipe that extends up and out of the mine. It's slippery, but Jacob grabs onto the rivets, pulls himself up.

The pipe continues upward through a two foot wide opening cut into the earth. It's tight, but easy to navigate. Jacob squeezes between the pipe and the earth, emerges at-

## EXT. PUMP HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

DRIZZLE. He drops onto his back, the rain on his face.

JACOB

It's over.

He lays on the ground, relaxes. He deserves it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS - EARLY EVENING

Jacob through the woods as the last rays of the sun peek over the mountain. LIGHT RAIN. Peaceful.

He sits at the base of a large tree to rest, checks his pocket for the ring box. It's not there-

JACOB  
Oh no. Oh my God.

He checks his other pocket. There it is.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Pheew.

He cracks the case, the ring catches the remaining sunlight. He puts it back in his pocket, pulls the photos out. A smile on his face as he looks at them and remembers being small.

A photo of him in a panda bear Halloween costume. He laughs.

He pulls out the Superman doll, wipes the dirt off. The sun is almost gone.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
(to Superman)  
I'm sorry it's been so long.

A BRANCH SNAPS IN THE DISTANCE. He looks up, startled.

He stuffs everything into his pockets, stands up, listens...

Stillness. The rain has stopped. A flurry of embers in the wind, smoke.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Are you kidding me?

FEET GALLOP TOWARDS HIM. He backs up against the tree, slides around until the tree is between him and the sound.

A herd of deer run past, disappear into the dark.

A CREATURE HOWLS IN THE DISTANCE.

Jacob has no idea where to run. He's surrounded by THE SOUND OF CREATURES THROUGH THE WOODS. He picks a direction, bolts-

Runs top speed through a snow-storm of embers from a wild-fire just feet away. An oppressive red sky above.

He stops, puts his hands on his knees, tries to catch his breath. He stops breathing so he can swallow, it's quiet-

A CREATURE SNARLS fifty feet behind him.

He doesn't look, he runs, top speed through the woods until-

The ground disappears in front of him. He falls into a pile of earth and rubble, the remnants of what was-

EXT. BOLGIA MINE #9

He's on the ground. THE SOUND OF CREATURES CLOSING IN FROM EVERY SIDE. Out of the corner of his eye-

EXT. TREEHOUSE

He jumps to his feet, darts to the treehouse, scrambles up the ladder nailed to the tree trunk, throws open the hatch to the treehouse, climbs inside.

INT. TREEHOUSE

His weight on the hatch to keep it closed.

THE SOUND OF CREATURES STIRRING OUTSIDE.

THE SOUND OF A CREATURE AS IT FEEDS ON ITS PREY.

He looks through the window of the treehouse. Wolves gather around a deer, it struggles to survive as they lunge at it.

He sighs, relaxes.

JACOB

It's going to be a long night.

He gets comfortable in the corner nook of the treehouse, closes his eyes. Opens them- pulls the Superman doll from his pocket, snuggles-up with it. Closes his eyes-

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAM - EXT. BACK YARD - AFTERNOON

Maggie pulls down and folds a bed sheet.

MAGGIE

Jacob, come on. It's getting late.

No response.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Jacob...

He appears from behind a billowing bed sheet. Superman like a fighter jet in and out of the sheets.

JACOB

Zooooom. Whoooooosh.

MAGGIE

Come on now, honey. Time to go in.

JACOB

Yes, momma.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

The table is set for three. Jacob enters from the living room as Maggie tends to pots on the stove. She picks up a model boat kit wrapped in cellophane.

THE SOUND OF RAIN AGAINST THE KITCHEN WINDOW.

MAGGIE

Are you all washed up and ready for supper?

JACOB

Yes, momma.

MAGGIE

I got you a present.

She turns to Jacob.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I thought it would be a fun project for you and your dad. Go on honey, open it.

JACOB

I'll wait for papa.

MAGGIE

Okay, I'll just put it right here.

She places it on the table and returns to the stove. THE FRONT DOOR CLOSES. Patrick enters the kitchen.

PATRICK  
(to Maggie)  
Hello, dear.

He gives her a kiss, turns to Jacob.

MAGGIE  
You're all wet.

PATRICK  
It's really coming down out there.

He takes off his rain coat.

PATRICK (CONT'D)  
(to Jacob)  
Hi, sport.

MAGGIE  
How was work, sweetheart?

He sits at the table, loosens the laces of his boots.

PATRICK  
It was work. Like every other day.

He notices the model boat kit.

PATRICK (CONT'D)  
And what's this?

JACOB  
My boat. I mean, our boat. Momma got it for us.

PATRICK  
Well, that was very nice of her.

JACOB  
Can you help me with putting it together?

PATRICK  
Well...  
(beat)  
Why don't you get it started and see how far you get? What do you say? Do you think you can do it?

JACOB

Uh-huh. I mean, I guess so. The glue is tricky.

PATRICK

And sticky. Well, give it shot. If you get stuck and need my help, let me know. But, I think you can handle this by yourself.

JACOB

Okay, papa.

MAGGIE

You boys ready to eat?

THE SOUND OF THUNDER. The lights flicker.

PATRICK

It's really coming down.

END OF DREAM - INT. TREEHOUSE - EARLY MORNING

THE SOUND OF THUNDER. Jacob jolts awake in the middle of a rain storm. The roof of the treehouse leaks like a sieve.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

A dark, overcast sky, DRIZZLE. Jacob walks through a smoldering mess that was a wild-fire hours earlier.

SERIES OF INT. SHOTS - MORNING

A. The kitchen in shambles, bathed in shadows.

B. A CUCKOO CLOCK TICKING on the living room floor.

C. The second floor hallway dark and decrepit.

INT. KITCHEN

A DARK FIGURE SILHOUETTED THROUGH THE KITCHEN WINDOW CURTAINS.

THE FIGURE THROUGH THE KITCHEN DOOR CURTAIN.

THE KNOB TURNS, THE DOOR OPENS...

Jacob enters, closes the door behind him, flips the light switch - the power is out. The house is dark.

He lights both of the long stem candles on the kitchen table, carries them one in each hand, into-

INT. LIVING ROOM

He places one of the candles on the table, continues-

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

He looks into the bathroom. Empty.

He pushes Ashley's door open with one finger. Empty. The door swings closed on its own.

He continues down the hallway and into-

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Dresser drawers half-open, clothes on the floor.

He approaches the closet door, it's cracked open. Reaches for the handle, opens the door slowly...the closet is empty.

JACOB

Good girl.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jacob barrels down the stairs. Turns the corner, stops-

The candle is gone from the table. He looks through the living room and into the kitchen.

A DARK FIGURE STEPS INTO THE THRESHOLD BETWEEN THE KITCHEN AND THE LIVING ROOM - HOLDING THE CANDLE.

As the figure steps forward, Jacob realizes who it is-

JACOB

Sheriff, I don't want any trouble.

SHERIFF

Sit down, son.

JACOB

That was a complete misunderstanding back there.

SHERIFF

Yes, it was. Sit down.

Jacob sits on the sofa, the Sheriff on the stuffed chair.  
Both candles on the table in front of them.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

You have your father's fight in  
you. I wish you could've known him  
like I did.

Jacob, somber.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

It killed me to go home every night  
and see my children knowing that  
your father couldn't do the same.  
I'm truly sorry.

Jacob, choked up, nods forgiveness. The Sheriff takes a deep  
breath, and then-

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

I owe you the truth. There was no  
coal mining.

Not sure what to make of it...

JACOB

I don't understand.

SHERIFF

We were looking for these.

The Sheriff produces a cloth sack, tosses it to Jacob. He  
doesn't need to open it, he knows what it is-

JACOB

Diamonds.

SHERIFF

A coal mine will make you rich, but  
diamonds will make you wealthy. And  
Ryan Owen's greed was insatiable.

JACOB

He's dead.

SHERIFF

I can't say I mind. He got what was  
coming to him.

JACOB

My father never told us about the diamonds.

The Sheriff continues over the following:

SERIES OF SHOTS - RYAN OWEN'S GREED

- A. He inspects a lump of coal, holds it up to the sun light.
- B. The coal glistens like a diamond.
- C. He berates the miners, orders them to work harder.

SHERIFF (V.O.)

You can't tell them from any other rock in the dark. It was dumb luck really. But once Owen had a taste, he sold his soul to the devil for another. He pushed us harder and harder, drove us deeper into the earth.

INT. LIVING ROOM

SHERIFF

That's when it happened. I was exhausted, overworked. We all were. I packed too much powder in the holes. When the dust settled we had blown the wall to shit. It should've been solid rock, but it wasn't.

FLASHBACK - INT. MINE TUNNEL

Patrick and Eli approach the hole in the wall, their flashlights back and forth. The hole is now several feet in diameter, big enough to walk through.

PATRICK

Much bigger overnight.

Patrick shines his flashlight into the void, leans in.

THE ASHY FACE OF A CREATURE- IT RECOILS FROM THE LIGHT.

Patrick jumps out of his skin. The flashlight falls to the ground, the tunnel goes dark.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ. I need light!

THE SOUND OF MEN AS THEY SCRAMBLE IN THE DARK.

ELI  
 (to the other miners)  
 Light!

Beams of light through the air as the miners focus their flashlights down the tunnel.

Patrick produces a Zippo from his pocket, sparks it.

PATRICK  
 Holy hell.

ELI  
 Are you all right?

PATRICK  
 What the fuck was that?

Eli extends a hand, pulls Patrick to his feet. They turn-

The hole in the wall is much larger now. A CREATURE STEPS THROUGH INTO THE MINE TUNNEL. IT STANDS NINE FEET TALL.

Patrick and Eli scramble. The Zippo flame goes out. The flashlights, erratic. Patrick re-sparks the flame-

THE CREATURE TOWERS OVER THEM, RECOILS FROM THE FLAME.

PATRICK (CONT'D)  
 (to himself)  
 It's the fire.  
 (loud)  
 I need fire!

ELI  
 (to the others)  
 Bring the fuel!

Patrick steps towards the creature, his Zippo like a weapon. THE CREATURE SNARLS, SNIFFS THE AIR, BACKS UP.

A mine transport vehicle races down the tunnel, slides to stop. Patrick, focused on the creature.

ELI (CONT'D)  
 Dump it. All of it.

The miners grab fuel containers from the transport vehicle, dump the contents on the mine floor. It pools like water.

ELI (CONT'D)

Patrick!

A stream of fuel runs across the floor, over to Patrick. He kneels down, lowers his hand. The Zippo kisses the surface of the liquid. It ignites, a wall of flame rises to the ceiling.

THE CREATURE PINNED IN THE CORNER. ITS FLESH TURNS TO ASH. Patrick, boxed in by the wall of flame.

ELI (CONT'D)

Patrick, let's go!

He looks at the creature writhing in pain, turns to Eli on the other side of the flames.

PATRICK

It's too late.

Eli runs into the fire. It burns the left side of his body, he recoils, falls to the ground.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

It's too late my friend.

The miners grab Eli, pull him back from the flames.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Tell my wife I love her. Tell my son-

He coughs from the thick, black smoke.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Tell my son I'm proud of him, to be strong, and take care of his little sister. Give this to him.

He tosses his Zippo through the fire to Eli who catches it.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Now get out of here.

The miners pull Eli onto the transport vehicle. It speeds away from the fire.

Patrick slumps up against the mine wall.

THE CREATURE, JUST A PILE OF BONE AND ASH NOW.

Patrick produces his wallet from his back pocket, pulls out a photograph of Jacob on his shoulders. His eyes well up- and then the smoke overtakes him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM

SHERIFF

I can't bring your father back, but now you know the man he was. I hope that's enough.

JACOB

Thank you.

SHERIFF

That bag of rocks is your fresh start.

The Sheriff stands, walks towards the door. Jacob follows.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

I need you to lay low for a while. Owen had powerful friends and you caused quite a shit storm. Do you think the house is stable enough?

JACOB

We'll make do.

SHERIFF

All right. Don't answer the door or the phone for a few days. I'll be in touch.

The Sheriff opens the door, leaves. Jacob closes the door, locks it, takes a deep breath.

JACOB

Freezing in here.

He tries to light the kerosene heater on the floor by the door. It's-

JACOB (CONT'D)

Empty.

He carries a candle from the table into-

INT. KITCHEN

He places the candle on the counter, walks out the back door.

He returns a moments later with a kerosene can. Back into-

INT. LIVING ROOM

He fills the heater with fuel, grabs the second candle-

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. He puts the candle on top of the kerosene heater, stops dead in his tracks...

JACOB  
(whisper)  
Shit.

A LOUDER KNOCK. Then it's clear-

ASHLEY (O.S.)  
Open the door, dingbat.

He unlocks the door, opens it slowly, looks around. She pushes her way in.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
Come on, I need my books.

He swings the door closed, but it remains opens a few inches.

JACOB  
Ashley, did anyone see you come home?

He looks at her. She's frozen. He follows her eye-line. Turns towards the kitchen-

A CREATURE SILHOUETTED BY THE CANDLE ON THE COUNTER. IT SWIPES AT THE CANDLE, DISINTEGRATES IT. NOW IT'S EVEN DARKER.

THE CREATURE LETS OUT AN AWESOME ROAR.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
(deadpan)  
Ashley. Run.

ASHLEY  
(whisper)  
Oh my God.

THE CREATURE RUSHES THE LIVING ROOM. CLAWS AT THE READY.

Ashley flies up the stairs. Jacob grabs the candle from the kerosene heater, throws it at the creature.

End over end until it hits and bounces off. The creature flinches, but keeps coming.

Jacob bee-lines for stairs, runs up two steps at a time. He flies into-

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM

Ashley's nowhere in sight. Jacob pins himself up against her door to keep it closed.

JACOB  
Ashley, where are you?

A voice from the closet-

ASHLEY (O.S.)  
What the hell is going on?

JACOB  
Get out of there.

The closet door swings open.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Climb out onto the roof.

A CLAW PIERCES THE WOODEN DOOR, MISSES JACOB BY AN INCH.

She makes for the window, opens it, climbs out. Jacob backs away from the door, slides a dresser up against it.

A CLAW SHREDS THE DOOR.

THE CREATURE STANDS IN THE THRESHOLD, STARES AT JACOB, THE TWO SEPARATED ONLY BY A MEEK WOODEN DRESSER.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Let's go you bastard.

THE CREATURE LETS OUT A BATTLE CRY, SMASHES THE DRESSER.

Jacob dives for the window, lands on-

EXT. ROOF

Rain. Dark. Ashley and Jacob on the roof.

THE CREATURE SWIPES THROUGH THE WINDOW FRAME, BREAKS THE PANES OF GLASS.

As its claw passes through the window, a ray of sun light burns its arm, it recoils.

Jacob looks over the side of the roof, surveys the situation.

JACOB  
Climb down over here. You can land on the picnic table.

ASHLEY  
Yeah right!

JACOB  
Ash, we can't stay up here with that thing.

She moves to the edge of the roof.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
Careful. Try not to slip, it's wet.

ASHLEY  
Thanks, Captain Obvious.

She climbs over the edge, drops down onto the picnic table. Looks up at her brother still on the roof.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)  
That wasn't so hard.

Jacob climbs over the edge, slips, falls onto the picnic table.

EXT. BACK YARD

Jacob on his back on the picnic table. The fall was painful.

ASHLEY  
Big boy fall dow-

JACOB  
Save it.

He climbs to his feet, then over to the back door. He grabs the knob, turns it slowly, cracks the door open, peers in, listens. The coast is clear. He stumbles into-

## INT. KITCHEN

Smoke rises through the floor boards as the house shifts, walls crumble, ceilings crack.

He grabs the box of family photos from the counter, returns to the doorway.

JACOB

Ashley...

No response, then her head pops through the door frame.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Take this. Get away from the house.

He hands her the box. The house is coming apart. Back into-

## INT. LIVING ROOM

The diamond sack is still on the table, but Jacob has to get to it before the house caves in.

The foundation of the house shifts, walls crumble, floor boards drop into the basement.

As Jacob reaches the coffee table, the floor opens up, the table drops into the basement, end over end taking the diamonds with it.

Jacob slips, slides down a tilted floor board into-

## INT. BASEMENT

A SMOLDERING PIT WHERE THE BASEMENT FLOOR USED TO BE.

Jacob gets to his feet, looks down into the pit.

DOZENS OF CREATURES BELOW HIM- CLAWING THEIR WAY TO THE SURFACE THROUGH THE SMOKE.

No time for this shit- his eyes on the prize, the diamonds.

He stretches out his arm across a gap in the concrete floor, can't the diamond sack. Looks up, spots the Air Quality Meter that hangs from a pipe.

He jumps, grabs onto the pipe. Hand over hand across the pit.

He reaches out his hand, grabs a shelf, tries to stabilize. The shelf pulls away from the wall.

As the shelf tips over, everything slides off, lands on a chunk of concrete. Some contents tumble into the void. The diamond sack teeters on the edge.

He drops onto the concrete. The impact causes it to tilt, the diamond sack slips, he reaches out, catches it just in time.

THE CREATURES JUST FEET AWAY - LOCKED IN ON HIS SCENT

He stuffs the diamonds into his pocket. Back to the pipe, hand over hand, across the pit. Top speed over to the staircase, up and into-

INT. KITCHEN

The floor has broken away between the basement door and the back door. The only way out is through-

INT. LIVING ROOM

A gaping hole in the center of the room. Jacob navigates around the perimeter floor boards. Nothing moves, and then-

CLAWS REACH UP FROM THE PIT. A CREATURE PULLS ITSELF UP ONTO A FLOOR BOARD IN THE LIVING ROOM.

Jacob is silent. Not a breath. Only the SOUND OF THE TICKING CUCKOO CLOCK on the floor and the HOUSE SETTling.

THE CREATURE PROBES THE AIR.

A single board connects Jacob to freedom, the front door. Jacob fights the urge to cough, but the smoke overtakes him.

THE CREATURE LEAPS OVER THE HOLE IN THE FLOOR, ITS CLAWS POISED TO STRIKE. As it lands, the force causes the floor boards to crumble, it slips and is pinned between two boards.

Jacob darts for the front door. He grabs the kerosene heater, tips it over, the fuel spills everywhere.

THE CREATURE STRUGGLES TO GET LOOSE, SNEERS AT JACOB.

Jacob reaches into his pocket, produces his Zippo, sparks the flame, ignites the fuel. The fire races across the floor boards, engulfs the creature.

THE CREATURE HOWLS IN AGONY, ITS CLAWS CUT THROUGH THE AIR.

An arm grabs Jacob by the shoulder, pulls him out through the front door just as-

THE CREATURE SWIPES AT HIM, SLICES HIM ACROSS THE LEGS.

Jacob falls backwards into the arms of-

HOPE

Are you all right?

Jacob, falls onto the porch, looks up at Hope, dazed.

The house goes up in flames, crumbles in, fills the pit in the basement with smoldering debris plugging the final hole.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

A beautiful day, the blue sky, trees are in-bloom and birds chirp in the distance. The back of a granite tombstone.

A YOUNG BOY, about seven, runs from the distance and stops at the stone. He's on the other side of the stone, the engraved side. He hugs the corner of the granite.

YOUNG BOY

(to the stone)

Do you know who I am?

(beat)

I'm Patrick.

A woman approaches in a beautiful sun dress that billows in the breeze. She is visible only from the waist-down and carries a bouquet of red roses.

WOMAN

Honey, slow down and wait for mommy.

YOUNG PATRICK

We were just talking.

WOMAN

Yes, I see.

YOUNG PATRICK

(to the stone)

When I'm bigger, I want to be just like you. I want to-

WOMAN

Come on, honey, let's give him some time.

YOUNG PATRICK

Okay, mommy.

She takes the boy by the hand, they walk back in the direction they came. A moment passes and A MAN limps forward, stops at the stone. He kneels down, it's-

Jacob, still wounded but in one piece. Now it's clear who the woman and young boy were - Hope and their son Patrick.

It's also clear that he stands at his father's tombstone. A bouquet of red roses lay atop his mother's adjacent stone.

He wipes dirt and leaves off the top of his father's stone. His eyes get misty as he soaks-in the cold chunk of granite.

He doesn't need to say anything. He makes peace in one move-

He places a completed model boat atop the stone. He positions it so the sunlight graces the surfaces just right.

EXT. CEMETARY - MOMENTS LATER

A LATE MODEL VOLVO WITH NEW YORK PLATES drives out of the cemetery.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - LATER

Jacob grabs a backpack from the trunk of his Volvo as a moving van parks nearby.

JACOB

They're here, guys.

Young Patrick runs to his father who hands him the backpack.

JACOB (CONT'D)

It's my old catcher's mitt and some baseballs.

YOUNG PATRICK

What's a catcher schmidt?

JACOB

Take it up to your room. I'll show you how to use it once we're settled.

Young Patrick runs off towards an ATTRACTIVE NEW HOME. Hope instructs TWO MEN who hop out of the moving van.

Jacob approaches a sign attached to a post in the front yard. It reads "Lot Sold". He struggles to pull the post from the ground, it finally gives and he carries to-

EXT. PORCH

Jacob leans the sign up against the house, reaches down into a box, pulls out a hammer and a nail. He pounds the nail into a freshly-painted column on the porch.

He sparks a flame on his Zippo, hangs a burning oil lamp from the nail and turns- looks across the street at his old burned-out home, a pile of debris with a stone foundation.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

A grand sign flanks the entrance to a housing development. It reads "Spring Ridge - A Pastore/Johansen Development".

Then it's clear-

After years in NYC, Jacob has come back to become the keeper of the flame. To protect and rebuild his town.

FADE OUT.