

# GROW A PAIR

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## **PROLOGUE**

**Don't Just Sit There.**

**DO SOMETHING.**

**EXT. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS - DAY**

Downtown. Current weather: Overcast.

The streets are still wet from last night's rain.

**INT. KIPFER & ASSOCIATES - DAY**

A cold law office. Fluorescent lights buzz.  
A copier whirs. Phones ring - all white noise.

At a cluttered desk sits **ARTHUR BANKS**. Mid-30s. The human equivalent of a shrug. Folds in on himself like it's second nature. A man people talk at, not to.

SCOWLING WOMAN

This is ridiculous! I paid you  
people to fix this!

**SUPER: Friday. 11:54 AM**

Arthur pushes up his glasses, sighs inwardly.

ARTHUR

I understand, but without your bank  
statements--

SCOWLING WOMAN

Don't blame me! You're the lawyers!

ARTHUR

(mumbled)  
Paralegal.

SCOWLING WOMAN

What?

ARTHUR

I'm actually a parale--

SCOWLING WOMAN

Why am I talking to you? I want to  
speak to Kipfer!

Arthur starts to argue, but his mouth shuts.

He nods, beaten.

SLAM TO:

**INT. KIPFER & ASSOCIATES - BREAK ROOM - LATER**

Arthur makes himself a coffee, eyes heavy with exhaustion.

SUPER: 1:37 PM

A **JUNIOR ASSOCIATE** (early 30s, polished, self-important) walks in. Glances at Arthur's steaming cup.

JUNIOR ASSOCIATE  
Perfect timing.

Arthur blinks. Watches his coffee walk away.

**INT. KIPFER & ASSOCIATES - ELEVATOR - LATER**

Arthur rides in silence. Clutching a folder to his chest.

DING. Doors open.

A group of **ATTORNEYS** pile in, talking over each other. One practically shoves Arthur into the back corner.

Arthur opens his mouth, but—

DING. Doors start closing.

Another **PARALEGAL** rushes down the hall toward them.

Arthur instinctively reaches for the button.

ATTORNEY  
(dismissive)  
They can wait.

Arthur freezes. The Attorney hits **DOOR CLOSE**. The paralegal is left behind.

Arthur stares straight ahead. Small. Invisible. Useless.

**INT. KIPFER & ASSOCIATES - LATER**

A cluttered desk. A ticking wall clock.

SUPER: 05:54 PM

Arthur furiously sorts documents. **STAPLE. HIGHLIGHT. STAMP.** Trying to catch up on an impossible workload.

An **CO-WORKER** (late 20s, cocky) strolls up. Casually dumps a fresh stack of files onto Arthur's desk.

CO-WORKER  
Hey, Artie!

Arthur winces.

ARTHUR  
It's Arthur, actually.

CO-WORKER  
(chuckles, like he just  
learned a fun fact)  
Is it? Huh.  
(beat)  
So, listen, I need you to serve and  
file these tonight.

Arthur glances at the thick stack, visibly overwhelmed.

ARTHUR  
But I'm supposed to--

The Co-Worker already has his earbuds in. Walking away.

CO-WORKER  
(with a thumbs up)  
Thanks, Artie!

Arthur watches helplessly as the coworker exits.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Arthur shuffles out of the office. Last one out.

**SUPER: Friday. 08:54 PM**

As he heads toward the train station, his phone BUZZES.

Arthur sighs. Answers.

ARTHUR  
Hey, Ben.

BEN (ON PHONE)  
Artie! What're you doing? It  
doesn't matter! Drop everything.  
Come to Bridgeport Brews. She's  
working tonight.

Arthur perks up a bit.

ARTHUR  
Sage?

BEN (ON PHONE)

What other super hot chick works at  
a Bridgeport dive bar that you  
absolutely stand no chance with?

Arthur eyes the glowing city skyline. Tempted.

A beat. His shoulders deflate.

ARTHUR

Nah... It's been a long day.  
Kipfer's up my ass again.

BEN

Your boss sucks a thousand butts.  
Who care? Come flirt with the girl.  
Maybe she'll touch your dick.

ARTHUR

Gross. Don't talk about my dick.

BEN

Someone should.

(beat)

Come out! Stop hiding from the  
world

ARTHUR

I'm not hiding. I--

Arthur stumbles, fumbling his phone-

-it lands in a deep, icy slush puddle.

ARTHUR (cont'd)

Shit!

Quickly fishing it out - it's cracked, lifeless.

ARTHUR (cont'd)

Awww. Come ON.

**INT. L TRAIN - NIGHT**

Arthur sits, drained. Eyes glued to his cracked screen.

Nearby, a volatile FATHER yanks his frightened SON's arm.  
Too tight.

FATHER

(gritted teeth)

I said sit still.

The kid freezes. Scared. Arthur tenses.

THREE COLLEGE GIRLS nearby exchange looks.  
One whispers to the other.

They look at Arthur. *Are you gonna do something?*

Arthur swallows hard. His chest burns with shame.

SON

Ow...

Arthur looks at them again.

The father senses the attention - locking eyes with Arthur.

Arthur doesn't look away. Neither does the father.

A silent standoff. The subway rattles.

The boy shifts slightly. The father's grip tightens.

Arthur's throat bobs. He wants to do something.

The father's unreadable. Not angry, not hostile - daring.

Arthur feels himself shrinking under the weight of it.

The father blinks. Smirks - *That's what I thought, pussy.*

Arthur looks down. Breaks the stare.

The train slows.

The father stands. JERKS the boy up. The kid YELPS.

The college girls shift, watching.  
Arthur stares at the floor.

The train stops.

The father roughly TUGS the boy.

The child look at Arthur - silent, desperate, pleading.

Arthur does nothing. Says nothing. Can't meet his eyes.

The doors open.

The father DRAGS the kid off the train.

The doors shut.

Arthur hears the girls WHISPERING. Then - *stifled laughter.*

Arthur closes his eyes. Lets the shame wash over him.

SLAM TO:

**PART ONE**

**The Girl In The Van**

**EXT. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS - DAY**

Downtown. Current weather: Overcast.

**INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

Arthur snores like a chainsaw.

**SUPER: Saturday. 11:07 AM**

The place is a disaster. A graveyard of takeout containers.

Arthur stirs on the couch. Fully dressed from last night. Groggy. Mouth like a desert.

He sits up. Drinks the last remains from a beer bottle.

Arthur pulls out his phone. CRACKED. BROKEN.

ARTHUR  
(flat)  
Right. Great.

Then-

CLICK. CLUNK. The front door swings open.

**DORIS BANKS** (70s, well-dressed, always vaguely disappointed) enters without knocking.

DORIS  
Jesus, Arthur. Have you been robbed.

ARTHUR  
Mom! That key is for emergencies! You can't just barge in.

DORIS  
It is an emergency! It's eleven o'clock and you haven't answered your phone all night!

ARTHUR  
That's not an emergency.

DORIS  
I thought you were dead in a ditch.

Arthur stands. Holds up his broken phone.

ARTHUR  
No but my phone fell into one.

**INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN**

Arthur walks past a mountain of dirty dishes. Doris follows.

DORIS

Oh my God. I raised you better than this.

Arthur rummages through the pantry-

ARTHUR

Did you?

-emerges with a plastic bag filled with rice.

Doris picks up an old Chinese takeout container - sniffs it, winces, tosses it in the trash.

DORIS

What kind of thing is that to say to your mother? You're a real wise guy, sometimes.

He dumps his phone in the rice. Shakes it. Still dead.

ARTHUR

What are you doing here?

DORIS

Dropping off mail. You still haven't changed your address on your registration. You gotta go to the DMV.

ARTHUR

I know, Mom. I'm on it.

He crosses back into-

**INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM**

Arthur makes a beeline for the couch. Doris hovers behind.

DORIS

Do you just collapse onto the nearest flat surface after work?

Arthur groans. Slumps back into the couch.

ARTHUR

Kinda. My hours are crazy.

DORIS

Why don't you ask for time off? Or  
tell them you have a weekly  
doctor's appointment and leave  
early.

Arthur turns on the TV. Ignoring her.

She wanders to the bookshelf. A handful of legal textbooks.  
A DVD box set of The X-Files.  
A layer of dust thick enough to write her name in. Then-

She spots something. Pulls out a book from under a pile of  
PS5 games. Examines it.

DORIS (cont'd)

Is this how you treat the things I  
buy you?

Arthur glances over. She's holding the book up:

*"Make It Happen: A Guide to Breaking Out of Your Rut."*

Arthur exhales a long, suffering sigh.

DORIS (cont'd)

You know, if you read this instead  
of using it as a coaster--

ARTHUR

(cutting her off)  
I know.

Doris plops on the couch next to him.

DORIS

Maybe we could read it together.  
You loved read when you were  
little. Such an adorable, curious  
boy.

She lets that linger.

DORIS (cont'd)

(reading)  
"Chapter One: Stop Making Excuses."  
(looks at him)  
This is good so far.

Arthur stares at the TV.

DORIS (cont'd)

You used to have a sense of humor.  
What happened?

ARTHUR  
I don't know.

DORIS  
I just worry about you, that's all.  
You're... you don't go out. You  
don't date.  
(beat)  
You know Cousin Steven? Little  
Stevey, Dot's son.

ARTHUR  
Kinda...

DORIS  
He has a house. A HOUSE, Arthur. He  
met a nice gal. I think she works  
in the entertainment industry.

ARTHUR  
(flat)  
Cool.

Doris' eyes linger on her son for a beat.

Then she put the book on his cluttered coffee table. Stands.

DORIS  
Okay. I'll leave you alone. I'm  
glad you're not dead. Please clean  
up, Arthur. You weren't raised by  
pig.

She moves to the door.

DORIS (cont'd)  
Are you still coming for dinner  
tomorrow?

Arthur nods.

ARTHUR  
Yeah.

DORIS  
Good. I'm going to make a salad for  
you. Love you, Art.

Arthur looks at her. Nods.

ARTHUR  
Love you too, Mom.

**INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Arthur's parked on the couch.

SUPER: 12:15 PM

Bowl of Coco Crisps. No milk. Just straight dry-munching.

On the coffee table - THE BOOK. He stares at it.

It taunts him.

He digs under some pizza boxes and finds a legal pad.  
He writes:

***"FIX LIFE"***

Arthur clicks a pen. Thinks. Writes:

***"1. Grow A Pair"***

Underlines it.

**INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER**

Arthur showers. Eyes drift to the list, taped to the mirror.

**INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Towel around his waist, Arthur catches himself in the mirror.

A belly. Not huge, but present.

He pinches his side. Frowns.

**INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER**

Arthur adds to his list:

***"2. Get in shape."***

He chews. Nods. Good start.

He slips on running shoes, and grabs the bag of rice.

**EXT. WATERFALL GLEN - PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON**

A sign welcomes visitors: WATERFALL GLEN FOREST PRESERVE.

Arthur's blue sedan parks in the mostly empty lot.

**SUPER: 01:30 PM**

Inside the car – Arthur's gearing up.  
Headband adjusted. Fanny pack secured.  
Phone (dead) in the rice bag. He checks it. Still nothing.  
He tosses it in the glove compartment.

**EXT. WATERFALL GLEN - PATH - AFTERNOON**

**SUPER: 01:55 PM**

Arthur jogs. Well, let's be real – it's a pathetic shuffle.  
Deep breath in–

*A SCREAM RIPS THROUGH THE PEACEFUL SILENCE.*

Arthur yelps. Trips. Face plants.

*ANOTHER SCREAM.*

Arthur scrambles up, heart hammering. Listens. Silence.  
Then–

GIRL (O.S.)  
(muffled, terrified)  
NO!

Arthur's feet won't move. Every cell screams: HIDE.

GIRL (O.S.) (cont'd)  
HEEELP!

Then, against every fiber of his being... he steps forward.

**EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS**

About 200 feet away--

A TALL MAN (refrigerator build) wrestles with the young woman. She kicks, thrashes – desperate.

Arthur freezes.

The Tall Man wears a ski mask. Moves like he's done this before. Twists his body. And then – THWACK!

A sickening muffled impact. Air RUSHES from her lungs.  
Knees buckle. Eyes flutter. Then – dead weight.  
She crumples. Brunette hair hides her face.

Arthur winces. His stomach tightens just watching it.  
A small, broken sound escapes him. Barely a whimper.

His hand flies to his pocket. Instinct. Phone.  
Shit. Still dead in rice.

Arthur watches helplessly. A statue with a pulse.

The Tall Man hefts the girl over his shoulder.

Arthur's knees bend. Like maybe - *just maybe* - he'll move.  
Nope. Doesn't happen.

**EXT. WATERFALL GLEN - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur crouches in the bushes. Breath shallow. Watching.

The Tall Man stride past Arthur's car, the limp woman slung  
over his shoulder.

A TAN VAN waits. Engine running.

Tall Man yanks open the back doors - tosses her inside.

A SHOE falls from the back. Small. Lands in the dirt.

Arthur stares at it. Frozen.

The Masked Man pauses. Turns.

Arthur drops lower. Heart hammering.

The Tall Man scans the lot. Holds. Listening.

Beat. Then--

The van's engine REVS.

Arthur peeks out. The van pulls away.

His eyes snap to the shoe. A piece of her left behind.

Swallows hard. Guilt crashes in.

The van shrinks into the distance.

His hand hovers over the shoe. Trembling.

**DO SOMETHING.**

Arthur grabs it. Hands shaking. Then - BOLTS for his car.

**EXT. I-55 NORTH - MOMENTS LATER**

Arthur's sedan trails the van. Knuckles white on the wheel.

SUPER: 02:04 PM

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur hyperventilates.

ARTHUR  
(soft)  
The hell am I doing?

A CAR MERGES between him and the van.

Arthur jerks the wheel. Changes lanes. Keeps sight.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
Go to the police. Tell them what  
you saw.

He squints at the van's license plate. It's too far.

Arthur pushes the gas.

**EXT. I-55 NORTH - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur weaves through traffic.

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

He grabs his phone. Still dead. Useless.

ARTHUR  
Dammit.

Shoves it back into the bag of rice.

Look up as - THE VAN MERGES. Three lanes over.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
Shit!

**EXT. I-55 NORTH - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur's pulse pounds. The van signals right.

Exit ahead—I-355 North. Toward Wisconsin.

A choice. Arthur's grip tightens. Exit approaching fast.

Then - he JERKS the wheel.

TIRES SQUEAL. HONK! Metal blurs past.

Arthur grits his teeth. No turning back.

He exhales a breathless, disbelieving laugh-

ARTHUR  
Holy shit.

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur gives himself a manic pep talk.

ARTHUR  
Yes! Ha! Oh my God. Am I good at  
this?!

He locks onto the van's license plate.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
(trying to remember)  
6LBK319. 6LBK319...

Fumbles for a pen. No luck. The car swerves. He straightens.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
Never a pen...

Squints at the plate.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
Six. L. B. K...

He hits the side of his head, frustrated.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
Okay - Six... Lesbians. B is for...  
Bitch...  
(thinking)  
K. What's K?... Knowingly!

A beat. It clicks-

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
March 19th! Six Lesbians Bitch  
Knowingly on March 19th! HA!

Arthur clings to the van's tail.

**EXT. I-355 NORTH - LATER**

The van cruises ahead. Arthur stays three cars back.

SUPER: 03:49 PM

The cars in front exit. Arthur is exposed.

Then - A HIGHWAY PATROL CRUISER MERGES IN.

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur's eyes go wide. A cop! His out.

ARTHUR  
Yes. Yes! C'mon, notice me!

He edges up, honks. Twice. Nothing.

Arthur rolls down his window. Leans out.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
HEY! HELP!

The cop doesn't even glance over.

Arthur waves frantically.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
PLEASE!

**EXT. I-355 NORTH - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur's car drifts. Wheels scrape the lane dividers.

He YANKS the wheel. The cop finally turns.

Arthur locks eyes with him. Then - the cop's radio CRACKLES.

Arthur watches as - The cop grabs the receiver. Listens.

A beat. Then - SIRENS. The cruiser accelerates.

Flies past the van. Arthur's breath catches.

ARTHUR  
No. No, no, no...

The cop disappears into traffic. Arthur deflates.

His jaw tightens. Then - he PUNCHES the wheel.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
FUUUCK!

His chest heaves. Hands grip the wheel. He forces a breath. Rubs his face. Looks up.

The van. The taillights. His pulse steadies. *He's in this.*

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
Okay... just find out where he's going. That's it.  
(beat)  
Then - straight to the cops.

His fingers drum the wheel. A sign flashes past-

*WELCOME TO WISCONSIN*

**EXT. I-535 NORTH - LATER - NIGHT**

A sliver of moon. Endless highway.

**SUPER: 9:20 PM**

The van glides ahead. Arthur keeps his distance.

Another sign flashes past-

*WELCOME TO MINNESOTA*

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - LATER**

Arthur blinks hard. His eyes burn. Then - a glow.

His fuel light.

Arthur mutters, glances between the gauge and the van.

ARTHUR  
Just find out where he's going...

Another glance at the gas. Then at the van.

**EXT. MN-194 EAST - CONTINUOUS**

The van signals right. Arthur tenses. It exits.

Arthur hesitates. Fraction of a second - then follows.

**EXT. HOLIDAY STATIONSTORES - MOMENTS LATER**

A gas station. Bright. Empty.

SUPER: 09:48 PM

The van pulls up to a pump. Arthur parks at a distance.

**EXT. HOLIDAY STATIONSTORES - MOMENTS LATER**

Arthur swipes his card. Gas flows. Eyes locked on the van.

The passenger stays put. The driver gets out.

Arthur's grip tightens. This is it. Go inside. Tell someone. He shifts. Half-turns toward the convenience store.

A step-

Then - the van's ENGINE ROARS.

Arthur whirls back. The van pulls away. The moment is gone.

He jerks the nozzle out. Gas spills. Doesn't care.

Arthur dives into his car.

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Arthur's knuckles are white. No sign of the van.

ARTHUR  
SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!

Then - taillights.

Arthur SLAMS the gas. 65. 70. 75. 80.

**EXT. HIGHWAY 37 - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur gains on the van. A ghost chase down an empty road.

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Arthur checks his phone. Still dead.

He throws it aside. Looks up - the van exits.

Arthur follows.

**EXT. HIGHWAY 25 - NIGHT**

A two-lane stretch of nowhere. Arthur kills his headlights.

SUPER: 10:32 PM

The van turns into-

**EXT. BUHL, MINNESOTA - NIGHT**

A postcard town. Frozen in time.

Arthur's car creeps past a weathered sign:

*BUHL*  
*Abundant Water, Land,*  
*& Good People*

The good people are nowhere in sight. Just small houses. Dim porches. Silent streets.

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

The van glides through town. Slow. Deliberate.

No one notices. No one looks twice.

**EXT. BUHL, MINNESOTA - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur passes through town.

A dark motel. A sad dive bar. Old, stooped houses.

Then - a small church. A sign out front:

*"Rescue those being led away to death." - Proverbs 24:11*

Arthur barely registers it. Eyes locked ahead on-

A sheriff's station next. White columns. Red brick.  
One lonely patrol car.

His foot hovers over the brake. Then-

The van takes a turn. Arthur exhales. Follows.

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

The van disappears into trees. Arthur drives past. Slows.

He sees: A house. Hidden. Barely visible in the moonlight.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - NIGHT**

The van stops at a detached garage.

SUPER: 10:46 PM

The house is dark. No porch light. No movement.

**INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur parks down the road. Kills the engine.

*Now what?* His eyes flick back toward town...

The Sheriff's station. Just minutes away.

He checks his phone - still dead.

Arthur slips it into his coat pocket anyway. Then-

**EXT. DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur eases out. Careful. Quiet.

Up ahead - VOICES. Arthur FREEZES. Listens.

TALL MAN (O.C.)  
That took forever.

OTHER GUY (O.C.)  
Move the girl.

Arthur presses against a tree.

TALL MAN (O.C.)  
How about a little sympathy, Dad?

OTHER GUY (O.C.)  
Empathy. You want empathy, moron.

TALL MAN (O.C.)  
What-the-fuck-ever.

Arthur peeks through the brush.

OTHER GUY (O.C.)  
Just get her inside.

Other Guy disappears into the house.

Tall Man hauls the girl from the van. Then - he pauses.

Arthur flattens against the tree. A long beat.

The front door slams. Arthur RUNS.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LATER**

A frozen-in-time - wood paneling, ancient coffee machine.

SUPER: 11:03 PM

**SHERIFF SHELBY MEYERS** (50s). A small-town law dog who drinks weak coffee and knows everyone's business. She doesn't miss much.

Meyers leans back in her chair, phone to her ear.

SHERIFF MEYERS

(into phone)

It's a dead deer, Keith. Push it into the ditch and move on.

ARTHUR BURSTS IN - panting, wide-eyed.

ARTHUR

(gasping)

HELP! NOW!

Meyers barely reacts.

SHERIFF MEYERS

(into phone)

I gotta go. There's a... situation.

She hangs up. Studies Arthur.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)

(to Arthur)

Whoa there, cowboy. Slow it down.

Arthur's words tumble out too fast.

ARTHUR

PleaseKidnappingTheytookher!

Meyers leans back.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Name?

ARTHUR  
(frustrated)  
Arthur Banks.

She eyes him - dirty clothes, bloodshot eyes.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Rough night? You been drinking?

Arthur flinches. Just now realizing how crazy he looks.

ARTHUR  
No.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
ID?

Arthur fumbles out his wallet. Slaps it on the desk.

Meyers flips it open. Raises an eyebrow.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
Chicago, huh? Quite a drive.

She slides it back.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
So... you followed this car--

ARTHUR  
Van. A tan van.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
You followed it from Illinois?

ARTHUR  
(gritted teeth)  
YES, DAMN IT!

Meyers lets out a low whistle.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Wow.  
(beat)  
Got any proof?

ARTHUR  
What?!

SHERIFF MEYERS  
A picture. Video. Anything?

Arthur looks ready to explode.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 You tailed them for hours and never  
 snapped a pic?

ARTHUR  
 My phone broke, okay!  
 (then)  
 I memorized the license plate!

Meyers nods slowly, tapping her pen.

Arthur's eyes dart to the door. The clock. Back to her.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 (to herself)  
 Pretty convenient.

Arthur rakes a hand through his hair.

ARTHUR  
 Why would I make this up?!

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 I don't know you. Could be drunk.  
 Could be crazy.  
 (beat)  
 You on any medication, Arthur?

Arthur groans.

ARTHUR  
 NO! We're wasting time! She's  
 locked in a house, RIGHT NOW!

Meyers watches him. Then - she exhales. Closes her notebook.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 (humoring him)  
 Alright. Show me.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - MOMENTS LATER**

Arthur sits shotgun. Fidgety.  
 Meyers drives slow, one hand on the wheel.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 So... how do you know this girl?

ARTHUR  
 I don't.

Meyers side-eyes him.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 You chased a van across multiple  
 state lines for a stranger?

Arthur swallows. Gut tight.

ARTHUR  
 (quiet)  
 I saw it. I couldn't just...

He trails off.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 And you didn't think to call it in?

ARTHUR  
 (defensive)  
 I told you. My phone--

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 (interrupts, dry)  
 Broke. Yeah. Heard that part.

ARTHUR  
 It's up here. Turn right!

She signals the turn.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
 (pushing)  
 Shouldn't you be calling for  
 backup?

Meyers exhales.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 And say what? Some jittery little  
 guy from Chicago heard a scream and  
 followed a van?

Arthur's jaw tightens. She doesn't believe him.

ARTHUR  
 (small)  
 i'm telling the truth.

The radio crackles. A dispatch call. Meyers turns it down.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 (unreadable)  
 We're about to find out.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - MOMENTS LATER**

The cruiser rolls in behind the van.

SUPER: 11:15 PM

ARTHUR (O.S.)  
SEE?! It's there! I told you!

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - CONTINUOUS**

Meyers kills the engine.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Wait here.

Arthur nods. Meyers gets out. Adjusts her belt. Then-  
Arthur watches her casually strut to the front door. Knock.  
A long, unsettling creak - *the door was never fully shut.*

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - PORCH - CONTINUOUS**

Sheriff Meyers glances back at him.  
Holds up a hand. Mouths: DON'T MOVE.  
She draws her gun. Steps inside.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur waits. Gripping his knees. The clock ticks.  
*Five* seconds. Nothing. *Ten* seconds. Still nothing.  
*Fifteen*. No footsteps. No voices. No radio crackle.  
*Twenty*. Arthur leans forward. Stares at the open doorway.  
*Twenty-five*. The silence stretches.

Stretches.

S t r e t c h e s .

And

it

keeps

## S T R E T C H I N G.

Arthur grabs the door handle. Hesitates.  
 A voice screams: *No. Stay put.*  
 He opens it anyway.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - PORCH - NIGHT**

Arthur steps onto the creaking wooden steps.

ARTHUR  
 (whisper)  
 Sheriff?

The night is so still it's suffocating.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
*Sheriff?*

Nothing. Not a shuffle. Not a breath.

A BRANCH SNAPS BEHIND HIM. Arthur whirls around.

Nothing but trees. Just shadows.

He licks his lips. Turns back toward the house.

The front door looms. Wide open. Too dark inside.

He leans in, trembling--

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
 Sheriff?

A VOICE BOOMS OUT FROM BEHIND--

TALL MAN (O.S.)  
 You're screwed, boy.

THWACK!

Arthur BLACKS OUT.

SMASH TO BLACK:

**PART TWO**

**Chelsea's Big Day**

**EXT. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS - AFTERNOON**

Downtown. Current weather: Overcast.

**INT. PENTHOUSE - AFTERNOON**

A glass fortress in the sky.

**SUPER: Saturday. 11:30 AM**

**CHELSEA DEBARONCELLI** (28) - looks like a trust fund cliché: ponytail, yoga pants, iced coffee. But there's calculation behind her eyes. Every word, every glance, is sharpened.

In few hours, she'll be kidnapped.

CHELSEA  
(low, controlled)  
Say that again?

Across from her - a **LAWYER** (50s). Polished. Cold.

LAWYER  
Your father's assets transfer to  
you only on the condition you  
graduate--

CHELSEA  
With honors. Yeah, I heard you.

Her nails dig into her palm.

The Lawyer is silent. Chelsea leans in. Eyes sharp.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
So, let me get this straight.  
(beat)  
My father dies, and my money - MY  
MONEY - stays locked up until I  
meet his criteria?

The lawyer nods.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
And if I don't?

LAWYER  
The board holds the purse strings.

CHELSEA  
He actually thinks I'm gonna drop  
everything to take midterms while  
I'm RUNNING HIS FUCKING EMPIRE?!

The Lawyer says nothing.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
He doesn't give a shit about  
school. This is about *power*.

Chelsea crosses to the window. A decision made.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
Fix it.

LAWYER  
(beat)  
I... can't.

A beat. Icy silence chills the room.

LAWYER (cont'd)  
(nervous)  
I mean... it's impossible.

CHELSEA  
You speak like you have a choice.  
Figure it out.

She turns to leave

LAWYER  
Ms. DeBaroncelli.

Chelsea pauses in the doorway.

LAWYER (cont'd)  
(soft, almost pitying)  
You father only wanted what's best  
for you.

She smirks, doesn't look back.

CHELSEA  
No. He wanted a son.

**INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Dark. Curtains drawn. The air stale with sickness.  
Medical machines BEEP softly.

**NICK DEBARONCELLI** (60s), cancer-ridden. A king in exile.

Chelsea strides in. Nick barely reacts.

NICK DEBARONCELLI  
We don't knock anymore?

Chelsea rips the curtains open. Light floods in.

Nick winces. Eyes shut.

CHELSEA  
(cold)  
I spoke to your lawyer.

Nick exhales, tired.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
(mocking)  
Honors, Daddy? Really captures your  
total lack of trust.

Nick says nothing.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
I left school to take over *your*  
business! And you're punishing me  
for that?

NICK DEBARONCELLI  
You missed a part.

CHELSEA  
(icy)  
Oh? What part am I missing?

Nick finally meets her gaze. Stone cold.

NICK DEBARONCELLI  
The part where you earned it.

Silence. Then--

CHELSEA  
If I were a son, would I have to  
"earn" it?

Nick's tiny smirk says it all. Chelsea smiles back.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
Funny. You never wanted me to run  
things. Yet I'm doing it anyway.  
(beat)  
Better than you ever did.

Nick chuckles. A dry, ugly laugh.

NICK DEBARONCELLI  
Sure you are, baby girl.

His eyes close. Conversation over.

Chelsea watches him. A thousand things she could say.  
She doesn't. Instead-

CHELSEA  
Sleep tight, Daddy. Dream of a  
world where you still matter.

She exits. But doesn't slam the door. She doesn't need to.

**EXT. WATERFALL GLEN - PATH - DAY**

Quiet. Serene.

SUPER: 1:52 PM

**EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS**

CHELSEA - running. Focused. Music pounding in her ears.  
Her PHONE RINGS. Music cuts. Annoying.  
She exhales sharply, touches an earbud, and answers.

CHELSEA  
What!?

She slows, hands on her hips, irritated.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
I don't need protection everywhere  
I go. I'm not five.

She listens. Jaw clenches.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
(snapping)  
I don't care what he said. I don't  
need a babysitter.

She hangs up. Shakes her head.

A TWIG SNAPS behind her.

Chelsea freezes. A half second. That's all she gets.

A SHADOW MOVES - THEN HE'S ON HER.

She SUCKS IN A BREATH TO SCREAM-

SMACK! A backhand CRACKS across her face. Hard.

Her phone drops. She staggers but doesn't go down.

A BOOT CRUSHES HER PHONE.

She spins, ready to run-

CHELSEA (cont'd)

NO!

Tall Man GRABS HER HAIR. Her legs FLY OUT from under her.

Her nails DIG INTO HIS HAND. Drawing blood.

He GRUNTS. HAULS her up.

She SPITS in his face.

Tall Man's lip curls.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

(screaming)

HELP!

Chelsea lunges - aiming for his throat.

Tall Man catches her mid-move--

KNEES HER STOMACH. FISTS TO HER HEAD.

She DROPS. Out cold.

STILLNESS. Tall Man breathes hard. Watches.

Then - grabs her arms. Hoists her over his shoulder.  
A twisted knight carrying his prize.

He moves. Leaves the shattered phone behind.

Blissfully unaware of--

ARTHUR. Hiding behind a tree. He just saw the whole thing.

**INT. TAN VAN - DAY**

A '70s fever dream of fake wood paneling and matted shag carpet.

**SUPER: 02:01 PM**

**LEONARD GILL** (mid-50s) - broad-shouldered, low-simmering.  
Arms like tree trunks. Sweat beads along his temple.

The back doors swing open revealing--

Tall Man aka **KYLE GILL** (29) - built like a war crime and just as reckless. All muscle, no brakes.  
He tosses CHELSEA into the van like she's luggage.

Her shoe falls out of the van. No one notices.

Kyle scans the lot. No witnesses. He climbs in, yanks the doors shut, and rips off his ski mask.

KYLE  
Let's roll, pops.

Leonard throws the van in gear, peels out.

After a beat.

KYLE (cont'd)  
Why can't I sit shotgun?

LEONARD  
We been over this.

KYLE  
She's not gonna wake up.

LEONARD  
She *might*.

Kyle unzips a pouch, preps a syringe. Tap. Tap. Then-

HE JABS IT INTO CHELSEA'S THIGH.

Leonard clocks it in the rear view.

LEONARD (cont'd)  
The fuck are you doing?

KYLE  
What?

LEONARD  
What did you give her?

KYLE  
Just Valium. Chill.

Leonard tightens his grip on the steering wheel.

LEONARD  
Why?! She's already out!

KYLE  
And now she's staying out. I'm not riding back there like some creep.

Kyle rolls his eyes. He climbs into the passenger seat.

LEONARD  
Fuckin' idiot.

Leonard exhales, pissed. STOMPS on the gas.

**EXT. I-355 NORTH - NIGHT**

The van cruises through the dark.

SUPER: 09:20 PM

Arthur follows. Three cars back.

LEONARD (PRELAP)  
Fuck.

**INT. TAN VAN - CONTINUOUS**

Chelsea's limp in the back. Up front--

The fuel light clicks on.

LEONARD  
You never filled up this morning.

KYLE  
I thought I did.

LEONARD  
Well, the light's on.

Kyle leans forward. See it. *Shit.*

KYLE  
Fuck. Sorry.

LEONARD  
You had *one* job, Kyle.

The van slows. Exit ahead.

KYLE  
I thought we weren't stopping?

Leonard says nothing. Just turns off into--

**EXT. HOLIDAY STATIONSTORES - EVENING**

A brightly lit gas station. The tan van pulls up to a pump.

SUPER: 09:48 PM

Arthur's sedan glides into a different stall, watching.

**INT. TAN VAN - CONTINUOUS**

Leonard cuts the engine.

KYLE

Grab us some waters, will ya?

Leonard exits the van without reply.

**EXT. HOLIDAY STATIONSTORES - CONTINUOUS**

Leonard swipes his card. Pumps gas. He glances at his reflection in the van window - worn, angry.

Just behind him, ARTHUR watches. Silent. Locked in.

**INT. TAN VAN - CONTINUOUS**

Kyle twists around to check on Chelsea. Still breathing. He snaps his fingers in her face. Nada.

KYLE

(muttering)

Toldja she's fine.

Leonard climbs in.

LEONARD

Let's go.

KYLE

Did you get the waters?

Leonard ignores him. Starts the engine.

IN BACK: Chelsea stirs. One eye cracks open... Then she slips back under.

**EXT. HOLIDAY STATIONSTORES - NIGHT**

The tan van rolls out - passing ARTHUR, who's frantically yanking his gas pump.

They never even see him.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - NIGHT**

The van Rolls to a stop beside the detached garage.

SUPER: 10:46 PM

**INT. TAN VAN - CONTINUOUS**

Leonard kills the engine. Kyle stretches, cracking his neck.

KYLE  
That took forever.

LEONARD  
Move the girl.

KYLE  
How about a little sympathy, Dad?

LEONARD  
Empathy. You want *empathy*.

KYLE  
What-the-fuck-ever.

They exit.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - CONTINUOUS**

Leonard unlocks the front door.

LEONARD  
Get her inside.

Kyle slings Chelsea over his shoulder - walks to the porch.

Something shifts in the trees.

Kyle stops. Scans the woods. Listens.

Nothing. Just wind.

He head inside. SLAMS the door.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - MOMENTS LATER**

Dark.

KYLE  
Can't see shit.

LEONARD  
 (annoyed)  
 Hang on.

CLICK. A lamp flickers on.

They're in a modest, lived in room. Sagging couch.  
 Scratched-up coffee table. A quilt over an old recliner.

No chains. No blood. Just... a house.

LEONARD (cont'd)  
 Downstairs. Hurry.

Kyle grunts. Chelsea stirs. Almost conscious.

HER POV: Blurry. A lamp's glow. A mantle lined with photos.

Then the Valium yanks her back. DARKNESS.

**INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Damp. Low ceiling. One bulb dangles.

Kyle stomps down the stairs. Chelsea slung over him.  
 She MOANS. Squirms.

KYLE  
 Easy, girly. Don't ruin the mood.

SMACK. Kyle slaps her ass.

Leonard shoots him a look of disgust.

LEONARD  
 Jesus, Kyle.

Kyle dumps her on the floor. She groans. Dazed.

KYLE  
 What's the problem?

He climbs on top of Chelsea.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 We got all night.

He reaches up her shirt--

Chelsea headbutts him - CRACK!

Kyle reels. Blood in his mouth. Leonard leans in to help--

Chelsea throws her head back--

KRAKK! Right into Leonard's face. Blood runs down his brow.

LEONARD

FUCK!

Chelsea scrambles up--

CHELSEA

(slurring)

What did you...

Falls. Her legs don't work. Still drugged.

Kyle wipes his mouth. Smiles.

KYLE

(to Chelsea)

Oh. She likes it rough. Me too.

Kyle roughly lifts her head.

KYLE (cont'd)

While you're down there--

Chelsea SPITS in his face.

Kyle explodes - WHOMP - a brutal PUNCH. Chelsea crumples.

KYLE (cont'd)

Spit at me again! See what happens.

He yanks her up by the hair.

Chelsea gasps. Eyes watering.

LEONARD

(yelling)

ENOUGH!

He slams a folding chair to the floor.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Tape her up.

He tosses Kyle duct tape.

Kyle manhandles Chelsea into the chair. He works fast. Binds her wrists. Her ankles. Too tight.

Chelsea closes her eyes. Breathes. Opens them--

Kyle's inches from her face.

KYLE  
(seething)  
You try that again, I'll cut your  
tits off.

She doesn't blink.

Leonard watches. Frowns.

LEONARD  
The fuck's wrong with you?

Kyle ignores him. Wraps tape around her arms too.  
Then over her mouth. He steps back, admiring his work.

Leonard checks his cut.

LEONARD (cont'd)  
Am I bleeding?

KYLE  
You're fine.

LEONARD  
Fuckin' hurts.

KYLE  
Then clean it.

Leonard hesitates. Kyle grins.

KYLE (cont'd)  
What? You don't trust me with her?

Leonard eyes him.

LEONARD  
Don't be stupid.

He heads upstairs.

Kyle stares at Chelsea.

KYLE  
Gosh, you're pretty. Bet you know  
that, though.

She stares. Unflinching. Unreadable.

Kyle spits at her feet.

KYLE (cont'd)  
Spoiled bitch.

Leonard returns. Now wearing a Band-Aid on his forehead.

KYLE (cont'd)  
(laughs)  
You look fuckin' stupid.

LEONARD  
Fuck off.

Leonard checks his cell.

LEONARD (cont'd)  
Nothing yet.

KYLE  
What now?

LEONARD  
Wait for the boss.

Chelsea struggles to stay awake. Fails. The Valium wins.

FADE TO BLACK.

**PART THREE**  
**WHO'S THE BOSS?**

**EXT. KNICKEY LAKE - MORNING**

Minnesota. It's cold. The lake's frozen.

**INT. SHERIFF'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

An ALARM CLOCK SCREAMS.

SUPER: **Saturday, 3:01 AM**

Sheriff Meyers slaps it off.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Morning, baby.

Zero enthusiasm.

She rolls to an empty pillow, hugs it, inhales.  
Still smells like him.

**INT. SHERIFF'S BATHROOM - LATER**

Steam clouds the mirror.

Meyer, wrapped in a towel, wipes the glass.

Stares at herself. Lifts sagging boobs. Sucks in her gut.

This is 50.

The cabinet opens - shelves of meds:  
DEPRESSION. ANXIETY. INSOMNIA. PAIN.

She pops one of each. Swigs them down with Listerine.

*This is life.*

**INT. SHERIFF'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

She suits up: shirt, pants, sheriff's star. Hat on.

Checks herself in a cracked mirror.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Let's do this.

She holsters her gun.

Eyes a framed photo: Her. A man. A boy. Smiling. Happy.

She touches it. Gently.

**INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

She walks past old photos - the same man, the same boy.  
Birthdays. Vacations. Frozen joy.

**INT. KITCHEN - LATER**

The kitchen's a mess. Dishes stacked. Air stale.  
She pours coffee.

Opens the freezer - One lonely bottle of vodka.

Closes it. The Freezer door swings shut, revealing--

A child's drawing: "ME, MOMMY AND DADDY."  
Stick figures. Holding hands. Smiling under a rainbow.

She stares. Beat.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Fuck it.

Opens it again. Pours a splash into her mug. Sips. Grimaces.

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - LATER**

Sheriff Meyers drives. TALK RADIO fills the silence.

RADIO HOST (ON RADIO)

...that's how you know he's a  
lizard person!

SHERIFF MEYERS

Jesus Christ.

She turns the radio off.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - MORNING**

The station's asleep under flickering fluorescents.

**SUPER: 04:06 AM**

LEONARD leans on the front desk. In a DEPUTY uniform.

Meyers enters. Clear-eyed. Focused.

SHERIFF MEYERS

You look like shit.

LEONARD  
Been here all night.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
I know. Gave Smith the weekend off.  
Necessary evil.

Leonard sips his cold coffee, forces a breath.

LEONARD  
Was gonna swing by your place.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
But you didn't.

A beat.

LEONARD  
Didn't feel right after...

Meyers tilts her head. Reading him.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
What happened?

LEONARD  
It's nothing. He's fine. Just...  
(beat)  
Kyle got drunk. Punched some guy at  
Holbrook's.

Meyers closes her eyes, annoyed but not surprised.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Christ, Lenny. You said he was  
ready.

LEONARD  
He is. Just got nervous, that's  
all.  
(beat)  
He's sleeping it off.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
What about today?

LEONARD  
He'll be fine. Little good, some  
coffee, he'll bounce back.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
You leave in thirty.

LEONARD  
 I know. I just think..  
 (beat)  
 Maybe we're rushing this.

She freezes. Slowly turns to him.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Excuse me?

LEONARD  
 Look... I know we're on the clock,  
 but maybe it wouldn't hurt to pump  
 the brakes. One more day.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 (icy)  
 Are you getting cold feet?

LEONARD  
 I'm thinking long-term. If this  
 goes sideways. We lose everything.  
 You, me. All of it.

She studies him. Then crosses the space between them - soft now, intimate. Hand on his chest. Her voice lowers.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 I picked you because I trust you,  
 Leonard.  
 (beat)  
 I trust *him* because I trust you.

He looks away, struggling.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 So if you wanna throw this away  
 because your boy had one bad night,  
 fine.  
 (beat)  
 But don't pretend it's for my sake.

Then - she leans in. Kisses him. Not affection. Leverage.

He **MELTS** into it.

She pulls away, eyes locked on his.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 (all business)  
 He up?

LEONARD  
 Probably. You want me to--

SHERIFF MEYERS

I'll do it.

(beat)

Get coffee. Some food. For Kyle.

Leonard nods. Starts toward the door, pauses.

LEONARD

Hey, Shelby...

She look back.

LEONARD (cont'd)

Thanks. For what you're doing. For him... for us.

She gives him the kind of smile that says everything and nothing.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Gotta look out for each other.  
Right, babe?

He softens. Leaves.

Meyers watches him go - expression unreadable.  
Already shifting gears. She heads for the holding cells.

**INT. HOLDING CELL - MOMENTS LATER**

The kind of place that never quite loses the stink of piss.

Meyers enters. The door CLANGS shut behind her.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Rise and shine.

KYLE stirs on the cot, groggy. He blinks up at her.

KYLE

Fuuuuuuck... You always this loud  
in the morning?

SHERIFF MEYERS

Only when I find one of my guys  
drooling in the drunk tank.

Kyle groans. Sits up. Rubs his temples. Shirtless.

KYLE

Had a roach on me last night. Big  
fucker.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Welcome to jail, sweetheart.

Meyers unlocks the cell. Slides it open.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
Up.

Kyle stands. Too fast. He grips the bars.

She waits. Arms crossed.

KYLE  
You always so cranky in the  
morning?

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Only when I'm deciding whether to  
kill you or not.

Kyle flashes a cocky grin.

KYLE  
God, I love it when you talk dirty.

Meyers just stares. Calculating.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
You sober?

KYLE  
I'm golden, baby.

He stands. A little wobble. She watches him closely.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
You better be. In case he gets cold  
feet.

KYLE  
You don't need him, Shelby. Not for  
this. Not for anything.

Meyers doesn't blink.

KYLE (cont'd)  
Don't look at me like that. You're  
the one who kissed *me* first.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
I need him because you can't be  
trusted.

KYLE  
 Sure you can. Last night was  
 nothing. I'm fine.

A slow smile curls across her lips. She gets very close.  
 There's *something* between them. Some unspoken thing.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 (flirty)  
 You wanna be trusted?

She presses her body against his.  
 Fingers lightly grazing his belt.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 Then stop acting like a frat boy  
 with mommy issues.

KYLE  
 You're not my mother.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 No... but you love when I  
 discipline you.

She grabs his jaw. Tight. He stiffens, then leans into it.

KYLE  
 (turned on)  
 Goddamn. I want you.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Don't fuck this up, and I'm all  
 yours.

KYLE  
 (twisted grin)  
 Then what? You'll put me back in  
 cuffs?  
 (beat)  
 You like me all locked up?

She steps close. A hair's breadth away. He's baiting her.  
 She wants to take the bait. We can *feel* it. Then-

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 You're a child. Go get cleaned up.

She heads for the door.

He watches her walk - wanting her.

KYLE  
 You keep playing it like this,  
 Shelby...  
 (beat)  
 Dad's gonna get real fucking  
 jealous.

She exits. SLAMS the cell shut.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - LATER**

Leonard hunches at his desk. Coffee clutched like a lifeline. A second cup waits.

**SUPER: 4:25 AM**

The door opens hard. Kyle strides in – freshly showered. Cocksure, despite the hangover.

KYLE  
 I think I broke the record for  
 fastest shower.

He snags the second coffee.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 Mine?

Leonard nods. Distracted.

SHERIFF MEYERS (O.S.)  
 Time to roll.

She enters. Sharp. Composed. The general on deck.

Leonard exhales. Rubs his jaw.

LEONARD  
 And we're sure about this?

Meyers doesn't answer. She and Kyle trade a glance. Leonard doesn't clock it.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 I didn't plan my own wedding this  
 thoroughly.

Leonard sighs. Turns to Kyle.

LEONARD  
 All gassed up?

KYLE

Yeah.

LEONARD

When? Before or after you blacked  
out in the Buick?

Kyle's grin fades.

KYLE

We don't have time for this.

He storms out. The door SLAMS. Leonard seethes.

SHERIFF MEYERS

(calm, detached)

He's still buzzed.

(beat)

You drive.

LEONARD

I swear, when this is done--

Leonard exhales hard. A quiet beat.

LEONARD (cont'd)

(quiet, firm)

We're leaving that little shit  
behind.

Meyers studies him. She takes his hand. A touch that says  
shut up and listen.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Today's the finale. Eye on the  
prize.

Leonard nods. Grounded. For now.

LEONARD

What would I do without you, Shel?

She flashes a smile that never reaches her eyes.

**EXT. SHERIFF'S STATION - EVENING**

The Sheriff's cruiser sits motionless out front.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - EVENING**

Meyers sits alone. Tapping her fingers. Waiting.

**SUPER: 06:34 PM**

She plays Solitaire. Click. Drag. Flip.

Glances at the clock. Seconds crawl.

Another car passes outside. Not them.

Back to Solitaire. Click. Drag. Flip.

Tension coils in her jaw. Her foot taps. Steady. Measured. Waiting.

**INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - NIGHT**

Meyers leans back, phone to ear, scribbling.

**SUPER: 11:04 PM**

SHERIFF MEYERS

(into phone)

It's a dead deer, Keith. Push it into the ditch and move on.

The door SLAMS open. Arthur BURSTS IN — panicked.

ARTHUR

(gasping)

HELP! NOW!

Meyers' gaze lingers. Then — she exhales. Annoyed.

SHERIFF MEYERS

(into phone)

I gotta call you back. There's a... situation.

She takes Arthur in. Dirty. Wild-eyed. Unraveling.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)

Whoa there, cowboy. Slow it down.

ARTHUR

(desperate)

Please! Kidnapping! They took her!

Her face doesn't move — but inside, alarms blare.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Name?

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - MOMENTS LATER**

The cruiser hums along, slow and steady.

Meyers drums her fingers against the door. Eyes flick to Arthur - shifty, wired, knee bouncing.

She's calm outside. Inside? Everything's off.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
So how do you know this girl?

ARTHUR  
I don't.

Meyers side-eyes him.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
You chased a van across multiple  
state lines for a stranger?

Arthur shifts, avoids her gaze. Meyers watches him.

ARTHUR  
(quiet)  
I saw it. I couldn't just...

He trails off. Meyers studies him. Not drunk. Not high.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
And you didn't think to call it in?

Arthur stiffens. Starts in about his phone.

But we stay on her - calculating, cold.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - NIGHT**

Sheriff's cruiser rolls up, slow and predatory.

SUPER: 11:15 PM

**INT. SHERIFF'S CRUISER - CONTINUOUS**

The cabin looms. Quiet. Still.

The van's there. Arthur leans forward, wired.

ARTHUR  
SEE?! It's here! I told you!

Meyers just exhales. No surprise. No relief.

*This wasn't supposed to happen.*

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Wait here.

Meyers steps out. Her mind racing.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - MOMENTS LATER**

She climbs the porch. Doesn't knock.

Just pushes the door open. It was never latched.

Draws her gun - for show. She steps inside. No hesitation.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - CONTINUOUS**

The moment Meyers steps inside, she holsters her gun.

LEONARD (O.S.)  
We got her.

She's on him in two strides.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
You dumb motherfucker.

Leonard recoils.

LEONARD  
Jesus, Shel-

SHERIFF MEYERS  
You had a TAIL.

Leonard freezes.

LEONARD  
...What?

SHERIFF MEYERS  
A. Tail. You stupid son of a bitch.  
How the *fuck* did you miss that?

Kyle leans against the wall, unbothered.

KYLE  
No way. We did the job clean.

Meyers' head snaps to him.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 THEN WHY THE FUCK IS SOME CHICAGO  
 NOBODY SWEATING HIS BALLS OFF IN MY  
 CRUISER RIGHT NOW?!

Leonard pales. Kyle shrugs.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 He saw everything. Every detail.  
 The van. The park. The abduction.

KYLE  
 Then why's he still breathing?

Meyers' eyes cut through him.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Because I had to make sure you two  
 morons weren't leading a whole  
 goddamn parade up here first.

Leonard grips the back of a chair. He's breathing fast.

LEONARD  
 Fuck.

KYLE  
 So, what now?

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 We handle it.

Then - a CREAK outside. All freeze. Arthur's voice, distant.

ARTHUR (O.S.)  
 Sheriff?

She signals to Kyle - back door. Flank him.  
 He melts into the shadows.

Arthur's footsteps crunch closer.

ARTHUR (O.S.) (cont'd)  
 Sheriff?

Leonard draws his gun. Meyers stops him.

ARTHUR (O.S.) (cont'd)  
 Sheriff?

A beat. Then--

THWACK! A sickening crack. Arthur hits the ground.

Kyle steps into view, holding a shotgun.

KYLE

Want me to shoot him?

SHERIFF MEYERS

Get him inside.

SMASH TO BLACK:

**PART FOUR**  
**Boy Meets Girl**

**EXT. KNICKEY LAKE - NIGHT**

Minnesota. It's cold.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

DARK. DAMP. A single flickering bulb.

SUPER: 12:11 AM

Chelsea sits bound and gagged. Duct tape. Chair.  
Calm but alert. Watching.

Across from her - ARTHUR, unconscious. Also taped up.  
Fresh bruise darkens his temple.

Arthur stirs. Pain slams into him. He groans. Sees--

Chelsea. Staring at him. Their eyes lock.

She jerks her chin to his wrists - a warning: *Don't move.*

He doesn't get it. Struggles. She shakes her head. *Stop.*

Above them - FOOTSTEPS.

Arthur panics. Chelsea closes her eyes. Breathes steady.

DOOR BURSTS OPEN.

Kyle saunters down the stairs, chewing a granola bar.

KYLE

Sleeping Beauty's up.

He rips the tape off Chelsea's mouth.

She gasps but stays silent.

KYLE (cont'd)

Not even a scream? Tough broad.

Chelsea stares daggers through him.

Kyle yanks the tape off Arthur. Arthur yelps.

KYLE (cont'd)

Jesus. You scream like a girl.

Arthur's breath comes fast. He's unraveling.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 Alright, hero. Who the fuck are  
 you?

Arthur swallows hard. Throat dry.

ARTHUR  
 (croaks)  
 Where's the Sheriff?

KYLE  
 (snorts)  
 Oh, buddy, you're so lost.

He crouches, face-to-face with Arthur.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 You know how fucked you are?

Arthur tries to answer - just a breathy whimper.

Kyle mocks it. Looks to Chelsea.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 This your boyfriend? The rescue  
 squad?

He SLAPS Arthur. HARD.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 Pull your shit together, pussy.

Kyle stands. Stretching.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 Play nice. I'll be back to torture  
 the shit out of you.

A wink. He heads upstairs. DOOR SLAMS. His footsteps fade.

Arthur hyperventilates. Chelsea leans in.

CHELSEA  
 Breathe. Calm down.

ARTHUR  
 Calm--?! They're gonna kill us

Arthur struggles against the tape again. Chelsea hisses.

CHELSEA  
 Not if we don't panic.

She's already working the tape loose.

ARTHUR

How--

CHELSEA

Chew. Twist. Spit. Slow and steady.

Arthur just stares.

ARTHUR

Jesus Christ.

CHELSEA

We don't have Jesus. We have each other.

Arthur nods. Swallows. A beat.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

What's your name?

ARTHUR

Arthur.

CHELSEA

How'd you end up here?

ARTHUR

I saw them take you. At the park.

CHELSEA

And?

ARTHUR

I followed the van. Tried to get the Sheriff.

Chelsea's getting impatient.

CHELSEA

*And?*

Arthur lets out a bitter, broken laugh. His face darkens.

ARTHUR

They got her too.

Chelsea processes all this. Then:

CHELSEA

So... no one's coming.

A beat. Then – she inhales. Steels herself.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
 Anyone know where you are? Anyone  
 looking for you?

ARTHUR  
 No one.  
 (long beat)  
 You?

CHELSEA  
 No one knows where to look.

Arthur lets that sink in. Chelsea works the tape.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
 We're getting out of here.

Arthur nods, but doesn't believe it. Then--

ARTHUR  
 What about you? What's your name?

CHELSEA  
 Chelsea.

ARTHUR  
 Why'd they take you?

Her face hardens.

CHELSEA  
 Doesn't matter. We need to get  
 free.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Leonard paces. Caged energy. Restless.  
 Kyle casually tosses the shotgun to Meyers.

KYLE  
 Pulled this from your cruiser.  
 Knocked our tailgater out cold.

Leonard stops mid-step. Stares at the gun.

LEONARD  
 This is bad, right?

Meyers inspects the gun. Unconcerned.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 It's leverage.

LEONARD  
It was supposed to be the girl.  
Quick grab, hold, trade. That's it.

KYLE  
Dad. Chill.

LEONARD  
(sharp)  
Fuck off, boy! This is serious!

Kyle bristles. Takes a step forward.

KYLE  
Stop acting like we're already  
caught.

Meyers doesn't raise her voice – she doesn't need to.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Enough.

Her voice slices through the tension. Both men stop cold.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
We're on a clock. Nobody's dead  
yet. That means we still have  
options.

LEONARD  
What if someone's looking for him?  
That guy.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
They're not.

LEONARD  
How do you know?

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Because I talked to him. He's no  
one. No badge, no backup, no one  
expecting him. You got lucky.

Leonard doesn't look reassured. He rubs his jaw.

LEONARD  
This feels like a line, Shelby.  
We're supposed to be better than  
them.

A pause.

KYLE  
 (chuckles)  
 I'm not.  
 (beat)  
 And there never was a line. You  
 just told yourself there was so you  
 could sleep at night.

Meyers sits. Calm. The shotgun resting across her knees.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 He's useful. She doesn't know him,  
 but he came for her. We can use  
 that to fuck with her head.

LEONARD  
 (muttering)  
 This wasn't the plan.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 No. It's better. We don't need to  
 lay a finger on her now.

Leonard stares at her. Trying to read her.  
 Something in her calm unnerves him.

LEONARD  
 But he's got nothing to do with  
 this.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Exactly. Which makes him the  
 perfect pressure point.

Kyle gets where she's going. Nods.

KYLE  
 Yeah. She's a rich girl with a  
 conscience.

Meyers smiles. Small. Calculated.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Bingo. Rich girl. Big heart. Soft  
 insides. She'll fold fast.

Kyle grins. Leonard doesn't.

LEONARD  
 You really think this'll work?

SHERIFF MEYERS  
She's not built for this, Lenny.  
She's never had to fight for  
anything.

Meyers leans back. At ease. Confident.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
Trust me. She'll break.

Leonard rubs his face. The weight of what they're doing  
settles deep in his bones.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur and Chelsea. Right where we left them.

Above them, MUFFLED VOICES leak through the floorboards.  
Three of them. Tense. Sharp.

ARTHUR  
Can you hear what they're saying?

Chelsea doesn't answer at first. Head tilted, listening.  
Calculating.

CHELSEA  
No.

Arthur exhales. A bad attempt at steadying himself.

ARTHUR  
Someone's coming, right? A rescue  
team? I mean... the Sheriff - she's  
a cop. There has to be people  
looking.

CHELSEA  
You think this town has more than  
one cop?

Arthur's face falls.

Chelsea watches him. A flash of pity. Then resolve.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
I need to tell you something.

Arthur looks at her, startled.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
I know what they want. But they're  
not gonna get it.

ARTHUR  
What is it?

CHELSEA  
My father.

ARTHUR  
And your father is...

CHELSEA  
Nick DeBaroncelli.

Arthur blinks. Zero recognition.

ARTHUR  
Should I know who that is?

Chelsea half-laughs. Bitter.

CHELSEA  
Only if your money's got money.

Arthur just stares at her.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
They think he's going to save me.  
That he's capable of caring. Or  
paying.

ARTHUR  
Huh?

She doesn't elaborate. Arthur doesn't press. But her mask slips just slightly. Sadness beneath the steel.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
So what do we do?

Before she can answer - THE BASEMENT DOOR CREAKS.

Heavy FOOTSTEPS descend.

Leonard. Kyle - carrying a toolbox. And Sheriff Meyers.

Arthur locks eyes with her. Relief surges-

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
Sheriff?

Then he sees her face. Her calm. Too calm.

KYLE  
(grinning)  
How's the honeymoon suite?

Meyers grabs a chair. Sits across from Arthur like it's a job interview.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Arthur. I need you to listen.

ARTHUR  
Wait - what's happening?! Why are you--

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Gag him.

Kyle doesn't wait. Arthur thrashes - useless. Kyle shoves a filthy rag in his mouth.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
Oh, Arthur. You poor, sweet idiot.  
(beat)  
Stay very quiet, or Kyle's gonna drag you outside and beat you to death.

KYLE  
(to Arthur)  
Ugh. Please make noise.

Meyers turns to Chelsea.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Do you know who I am?

Chelsea tilts her head. Cool. Composed.

CHELSEA  
Should I?

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Your father does.

Chelsea gives her nothing.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
You've got some fight. I'll give you that.

She gestures to Arthur.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
But this kind man is only here because of you. He's bleeding for you. He's going to die because of you.

Arthur thrashes again. Muffled, panicked noises.

CHELSEA  
 (soft)  
 Please don't...

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Yeah. That would feel awful, right?

She nods to Kyle.

Kyle SLAMS his fist into Arthur's gut. Arthur writhes.  
 Gasping through the rag.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 (to Chelsea)  
 The good news is, you're in control  
 of Arthur's well-being.  
 (beat)  
 Call Daddy. Tell him to come.

CHELSEA  
 If it's money--

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Oh, he's going to pay. But I don't  
 want his money.

She nods to Kyle again. He hits Arthur. Again. Harder.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 I want your father. Here. Alone.

CHELSEA  
 He's sick. He can't travel.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Call. Him.

Chelsea just stares at the ground.

Meyers sighs.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 Well, Arthur, you're *not* the hero  
 of this story. But you're still  
 useful.

KYLE  
 Time to pull some teeth?

Meyers nods.

Kyle grins as he digs in the toolbox. Pulls out pliers.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 (annoyed)  
 Little help, Dad?

Leonard doesn't move right away.

Meyers shoots him a look.

Leonard swallows hard. Moves behind Arthur. Holds his head.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 Yeah. Just like that. Say "ahh."

Chelsea looks away.

It happens fast. A SAVAGE YANK.

BONE. TEARING. CRUNCH.

Arthur's SCREAM shakes the walls.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Twenty-seven more to go.

KYLE  
 (giddy)  
 When I run out of teeth, I can cut  
 off his nose.

Kyle is laughing. Arthur moans. A dying animal sound.

LEONARD  
 (quiet; to Meyers)  
 This wasn't the plan...

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 It's better.

Leonard looks at her. He sees something now. Something he should've seen before.

Meyers nods to Kyle again. Kyle leans in--

Leonard flinches. A half-step forward - then nothing.  
 He stops himself. Swallows it. Buries it.

Another gut-wrenching yank.

Arthur's TOOTH CLATTERS to the floor.

Kyle goes for another--

CHELSEA  
 STOP! STOP! I'll call him!

Kyle pauses. He looks disappointed.

KYLE

Boo. It was just getting fun.

Meyers pulls out her cell.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Number?

CHELSEA

212-555-4178.

Meyers dials. Puts it on speaker.

Ring.

Ring.

Voicemail.

Meyers holds the phone out.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Say something that'll make him care.

CHELSEA

(beat)

Daddy... it's me. Please call back.  
They're going to kill--

CLICK. Meyers ends the call.

SHERIFF MEYERS

If he doesn't call back in five,  
smash the rest of his teeth out  
with a hammer.

The captors head upstairs. Door SLAMS.

Arthur groans. Chelsea leans forward.

CHELSEA

Arthur.

He's fading.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

Arthur, stay with me.

He looks up. Bloody. Hollow.

ARTHUR

We're dead.

Arthur sobs. Chelsea watches him. Her gaze hardens.

CHELSEA

Not yet.  
(beat)  
I have a plan.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Leonard paces. Fingers drumming nervously against his thigh. Eyes darting to the clock.

LEONARD

It's been more than five minutes.  
No call.

Meyers leans back, unbothered.

SHERIFF MEYERS

He'll call.

KYLE

For the love of Christ, quit  
pacing!

Leonard ignores him. His hands flex into tight fists.

LEONARD

Every extra minute increases our  
risk.

KYLE

Jesus. Dad. Breathe into a bag or  
something.

Leonard spins toward Kyle, eyes blazing.

LEONARD

This was supposed to be in and out!  
Just us and the girl! Not some  
random schmuck getting his teeth  
pulled like a goddamn horror movie!

KYLE

So? The fuck do you care? He's  
nobody.

Leonard boils over.

LEONARD

THAT'S NOT THE POINT, YOU LITTLE  
PSYCHO!

Meyers rises smoothly, her presence commanding.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
(softly)  
Lenny...

She glides over, places a palm to his chest. Soothing and controlling. And just like that - she has him.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
(intimate)  
You know how much this means to me.

Leonard's anger wavers, replaced by uncertainty.

LEONARD  
But Shelby...

Meyers' fingers press slightly harder against his chest.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Kyle's right. Arthur's *nothing*.

LEONARD  
But he's inno--

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Checked him myself.  
(beat)  
No wife. No kids. Parents in LA. A  
literal nobody.

Leonard's breathing becomes shallow, panic edging in.

LEONARD  
It's not about getting caught. It's  
about goddamn soul.

Kyle chuckles darkly.

KYLE  
We're drawing lines now? Where was  
that line when we snatched her?

Leonard's jaw tightens. He has no answer.

Meyers' eyes narrow, sensing his vulnerability.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Do men like *them* have souls?

Leonard hesitates. A flicker of doubt.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 You think think her father does?  
 (beat)  
 You think she's some doe-eyed  
 victim?

LEONARD  
 She's barely twenty-five.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Born into blood money. Running *his*  
 empire.

LEONARD  
 Yeah, but we're not them.  
 (beat)  
 We're cops.  
 (beat)  
 Torturing a guy makes us...

Meyers leans in closer, her voice a whisper.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 It makes us righteous, Lenny.

Leonard exhales shakily, his resolve crumbling.

Then - Meyers PULLS him into a deep kiss. Dominant.

Kyle's eyes flare with jealousy and rage.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 (pulling away)  
 You're right about one thing, Len.  
 (beat)  
 We need to stay smart.

Leonard blinks, disoriented.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 Arthur's car is still at the  
 station.  
 (beat; soft smile)  
 Ditch it for me?

Leonard nods slowly, like a puppet on strings. Exits.

The door closes behind him.

KYLE  
 Pathetic.

He glances at Meyers. She doesn't even look up.  
 He's not her favorite yet.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur trembles in his chair. Pale. Breath ragged.

Chelsea picks at her bindings. Calm. Controlled.

Muffled voices from above. Too far to make out.

ARTHUR

Think they're talking to your dad?

Chelsea doesn't respond. Keeps working the tape.

ARTHUR (cont'd)

They'll probably kill me though,  
right?

Still nothing.

ARTHUR (cont'd)

Chelsea?

She looks up. Eyes sharp. Calculating.

ARTHUR (cont'd)

Are we gonna die?

A beat.

CHELSEA

Not yet.

(beat)

But probably someday.

Arthur laughs. Bitter. Broken.

ARTHUR

They pulled my teeth out. You think  
I'm walking out of here?

(beat)

There's no "someday" for me.

Chelsea studies him. Then - a test.

CHELSEA

Why did you follow the van?

ARTHUR

I told you. I--

CHELSEA

Cut the white knight crap.

(MORE)

CHELSEA (cont'd)

(beat)

You could've just reported the plates to the cops.

(softer)

That's more than most people would do. But you followed them. Why?

Arthur lowers his eyes. Blood splatter near his shoes.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

You're not a hero. Not a soldier.

(beat)

Ever even thrown a punch?

No answer. Then - FOOTSTEPS. Heavy. Rushed.

The door swings open. Leonard STOMPS down. Sweating. Fuming.

LEONARD

Keys.

He yanks Arthur forward. Digs through pockets. Finds them.

LEONARD (cont'd)

(to Chelsea)

Daddy never called. Better hope he does.

He storms back upstairs. SLAM. Gone.

Arthur hyperventilates.

ARTHUR

That's it.

(spiraling)

No car. No phone. No evidence. No body. They're erasing me-

CHELSEA

(sharp whisper)

Quiet.

Her hands are FREE. She clamps one over his mouth.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

I told you to trust me.

He stares at her. Bloodied. Broken. But also - hopeful.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Kyle eyes a bloodstain on his shirt - Arthur's blood.

KYLE  
Dammit. Ruined my shirt.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
(flat)  
We'll get you another.

Kyle smirks, rubbing the stain.

KYLE  
Yeah? You got a secret stash of  
men's fashion here?

Meyers' eyes flick to him. Just a flick. Enough.

The temperature drops. Kyle clocks it.

KYLE (cont'd)  
(defensive)  
Didn't mean it like that.

She says nothing. Just returns to the phone. Ice cold.

KYLE (cont'd)  
(pivoting)  
So, uh... what's our Plan B if her  
daddy ghosts us?

SHERIFF MEYERS  
He'll call.

Kyle tilts his head.

KYLE  
You sure? Her voicemail was suss.  
You trust that number she gave?

Meyers presses her thumb to her bottom lip. Thinking.

KYLE (cont'd)  
(pushing)  
And even if that was legit, he's  
one cold-blooded motherfucker.  
Maybe he just leaves her here.

Meyers drops her hand. Walls up.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
I know who we're dealing with.

KYLE  
Do you?

She finally meets his eyes.

SHERIFF MEYERS

You think I don't know the monster  
he is?

KYLE

I think you do.

(beat)

But I also think this isn't just  
about money like you told, Lenny.

Kyle smirks. He's not wrong.

KYLE (cont'd)

Tell me what it's *really* about.

Meyers exhales. Slow. Grabs a cigarette from the table.  
Lights it. A drag. When she exhales, she's controlled.

KYLE (cont'd)

Come on. Don't make me beg.

She stares at the coffee table. Thinking. Finally--

Meyers stubs out the cigarette. Stands.

SHERIFF MEYERS

You want some coffee?

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Chelsea sees the last of Arthur's bindings.

CHELSEA

We need to move.

Arthur rubs his wrists. Blood stains his chin.

ARTHUR

They're gonna kill us.

CHELSEA

Not if we go first.

She's already on her feet. Light. Ready.

Arthur's still frozen.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

Arthur.

He stares down at his blood.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
Get your shit together.

Arthur exhales sharply. Looks up.

ARTHUR  
I... I don't know how.

Chelsea grabs his face.

CHELSEA  
Figure it out. Right now.

Arthur blinks. Then--

ARTHUR  
My phone.

CHELSEA  
You have your phone?!

ARTHUR  
It was dead. Kept it in rice.

He pulls out a plastic bag. Chelsea grabs it, powers it on.

The screen flickers. It works.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
Holy shit.

CHELSEA  
Shh.

Arthur watches as Chelsea dials.

ARTHUR  
Call the cops.

CHELSEA  
They *are* the cops.

ARTHUR  
Then other cops.

She rolls her eyes.

CHELSEA  
I have a plan.

ARTHUR  
You keep saying that, but it feels like improv.

She ignores him. Someone picks up.

CHELSEA

(whisper)

It's me. We'll need a cleaner. It's bad. Two cops. Maybe three.

(beat)

Yup. I'll call you from this number.

She hangs up. Tosses Arthur the phone.

ARTHUR

Who the hell was that?

CHELSEA

Put it on silent.

ARTHUR

You had a lifeline this whole time?

Chelsea doesn't answer.

ARTHUR (cont'd)

What else are you hiding?

CHELSEA

Arthur. Focus. I just gave us a way out.

ARTHUR

You. Not us. You gave yourself a way out.

That one lands. But before she can answer - FOOTSTEPS.

Chelsea moves. Arthur freezes.

CHELSEA

(whisper)

Arthur. Get up.

He doesn't. She gets in his face.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

(hissing)

Arthur, look at me.

He does.

CHELSEA (cont'd)

Either sit there and wait to die, or fucking grow a pair and help me fight.

Arthur trembles.

ARTHUR  
They have guns.

CHELSEA  
Then we make sure they don't get to  
use them.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
You want out?

He nods.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
No more waiting. No more hoping. We  
act. *Now.*

Arthur nods.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
Yeah?

He nods again. Firmer.

ARTHUR  
Yeah. But do we do?

CHELSEA  
We lay a trap.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER**

The kitchen is a wreck. Dirty dishes. Stale air.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
My husband worked Organized Crime.

KYLE  
Yeah. Dad mentioned you were  
married to a cop before.

Meyers nods.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
We had a son too. Caden.  
(then; to herself)  
He would have been fourteen next  
week.

She grabs the coffee tin. Measures it out - steady hands.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
Anyway, there was an off-duty BBQ  
with his unit. Monthly thing.  
Beers, burgers. Kids running wild.  
The cop wives would sit and gossip.

She pours water into the machine.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
I was supposed to be there.

Kyle watches her. Knows where this is headed.

KYLE  
But you weren't.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Caught a double homicide. Had to  
work.

She clicks the coffee machine on.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
The shooters hit at 2:28 PM.  
(beat)  
Ring cam caught them pull up. Black  
Escalade. Four men. Ski masks.

Kyle eyes drift to the freezer.

A child's drawing: *ME, MOMMY, AND DADDY* - stick figures.

We've been here. It's not just a safe house. *It's her house.*

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
Six bullets in Matt.  
(beat)  
Caden was face down. Still holding  
his juice box.

KYLE  
Jesus...

Meyers opens the freezer. Grabs a half-empty vodka bottle.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
The surviving guys knew who ordered  
it. But they couldn't prove it.

KYLE  
Nick DeBaroncelli.

Kyle blows out a breath. Scrubs a hand down his face.

KYLE (cont'd)  
 ...Shit.

She nods. Pours a cup of coffee.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Buried my husband and my kid. Then  
 I tried to use the system.

She adds a splash of vodka.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 Everything by the book. Nothing  
 stuck.  
 (beat)  
 Nick was untouchable.

Kyle doesn't speak. He gets it.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 So I disappeared. Ended up here.  
 (beat)  
 And now you know the rest.

Kyle lets that sit. Then—

KYLE  
 Now you've got *his* kid.

Meyers takes another sips her coffee.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 His *only* child.

A long beat.

KYLE  
 So the ransom?

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Still plan to collect. Disappearing  
 again is gonna be expensive.  
 (beat)  
 Plus, you and your old man earned  
 your cut.

Kyle lets out a low chuckle. Runs a hand through his hair.

KYLE  
 And here I thought we were just  
 shaking down some spoiled rich  
 bitch.

Meyers leans against the counter. Eyes on the ceiling.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Yeah. If only.

Silence. But now it's shared.

KYLE  
Guess we better hope Daddy calls.

He walks toward the living room. Pauses in the doorway.

KYLE (cont'd)  
Or what the hell are you gonna do  
next?

Meyers doesn't answer. Kyle smirks and disappears.

RING.

Meyers jumps. Whips to the phone on the counter.  
Kyle leans back into the doorway.

KYLE (cont'd)  
That him?

She checks the screen.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
(deflated)  
Leonard.

KYLE  
What the hell does he want?

Meyers answers.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Yeah?

She listens. Expression hardens.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
You've gotta be fucking kidding me.

Kyle tenses.

KYLE  
What?

She waves him off.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
Stop rambling. I'll be right there.

She hangs up. Rubs her temple.

KYLE

Well?

SHERIFF MEYERS

He's stuck at the lake.

KYLE

(snorts)

Let'em walk.

She grabs the vodka. Drinks straight from the bottle.

KYLE (cont'd)

Whoa. Easy.

She lowers it. Shoots him a deadly look.

SHERIFF MEYERS

Go down there and cut off whatever  
you have to. Get Nick here. NOW.

She hurls the empty bottle into the sink. Shatters.

Meyers storms out. Kyle watches her go, smirking.

SMASH TO BLACK:

**PART FIVE**

**1. ~~Grow A Pair~~**

**EXT. KNICKEY LAKE - NIGHT**

Minnesota. Colder now. Storm's almost here.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Arthur and Chelsea still in their chairs. Listening.

A muted CRASH upstairs (vodka bottle in the sink). Then - FOOTSTEPS. A DOOR SLAMS.

Kyle THUNDERS down the stairs. Toolbox in hand.

KYLE

Daddy never called.

(beat)

Time to pay the piper.

They don't react. Kyle squints. Something's off.

KYLE (cont'd)

What, you give up?

He steps closer to Arthur.

Arthur keeps his head low. Palms sweating around the pliers he's hiding behind his back.

Then - Arthur's phone RINGS.

KYLE (cont'd)

What the fu--

Chelsea EXPLODES from her chair. PALM STRIKE to Kyle's nose.

CRACK. Blood sprays. Kyle STUMBLES. The toolbox drops.

Arthur MOVES - TACKLES him. They CRASH into stacked chairs.

The pliers go flying.

Kyle scrambles on top. Hands CRUSHING Arthur's throat.

Chelsea GRABS the pliers-

LUNGES - DRIVES them into Kyle's thigh.

KYLE (cont'd)

FUUUUUCK!

Arthur and Chelsea turn to the stairs-

But Kyle's hand SHOOTS OUT - GRABS her ankle.

YANK. SHE HITS THE FLOOR.

CHELSEA  
 (to Arthur)  
 Run!

Kyle drives an elbow into her throat. Scrambles up.

KYLE  
 Not so fuckin' tough now!

KICK. Straight to her ribs. Chelsea GASPS

KYLE (cont'd)  
 I'll kill you, cun--

Arthur SNATCHES the toolbox-

SLAMS it into Kyle's skull.

Kyle crumples. Arthur pants. Adrenaline pumping.

CHELSEA  
 I told you to silence your fucking  
 phone.

Chelsea checks Kyle's body.

ARTHUR  
 I'm sorry... sorry...

CHELSEA  
 Too late. Let's go.

They bolt up the stairs.

Kyle GROANS. Bloodied. Furious. Still alive.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

They burst in. Chelsea leads-

Grabs a paring knife from the counter.

Arthur follows. Spots a BUTCHER KNIFE - grabs it.

The house is dead silent. Arthur white-knuckles the handle.

They move. Quick, quiet. Into-

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Still. Empty. Chelsea heads for the front door-

Then - HEADLIGHTS sweep the window.

Meyers' cruiser pulls into the driveway.

ARTHUR

Fuck.

Chelsea spins. New plan forming.

FOOTSTEPS. FROM THE BASEMENT. FAST.

CHELSEA

MOVE.

She grabs his wrist - drags him into the hallway.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS**

They pass framed family photos. A man. A woman. A boy.

Arthur chokes up - *this is Meyers' home?!*

Chelsea kicks a door open - shoves them inside.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Messy. Walls dented. Mirror shattered. Unmade bed.  
Empty vodka bottle on the nightstand.

Chelsea scans the room. Knife tight in hand.

Arthur takes in more framed photos. Meyers. Matt. Caden.

Chelsea freezes. She hesitates for the first time.

Arthur notices. Then HEARS:

THE FRONT DOOR OPEN.

Chelsea's eyes are locked on Caden's picture.

Arthur moves. No thought - just instinct. Grabs her wrist.

She turns - startled - as he pulls her into the closet.

SLAM TO BLACK.

**PART SIX**

**You're A Hero**

**EXT. KNICKEY LAKE - NIGHT**

Minnesota. Current weather: SNOWSTORM!

Sleet and snow whip through the darkness. BLAST OF THUNDER--

SMASH TO:

**INT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

Leonard stomps in. Boots soaked. Jacket dripping.

SUPER: **Monday. 01:13 AM**

LEONARD

Damn storm. Came outta nowhere.

Meyers follows. Slower, scanning the room.

LEONARD (cont'd)

(then)

Kyle? You here?

Kyle limps out of the shadows. Bloodied.

KYLE

(low)

Shh.

LEONARD

What happened to your face?

KYLE

You didn't see'em?

He spits blood on the floor.

KYLE (cont'd)

They're in the house.

SHERIFF MEYERS

(hissing)

Where?

Kyle shrugs. He and Leonard look at her.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)

We do this right. No screw-ups.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - CONTINUOUS**

The storm RAGES. Wind howls.

Meyers pops the cruiser's trunk. Grabs a SHOTGUN.  
 And a second weapon. No hesitation. Eyes cold. This is war.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Meyers bursts in. Shotgun up. Hands the second gun to Kyle.  
 Leonard draws his sidearm.

KYLE  
 Let's gut that little twat.

Meyers shuts him down with a look that could freeze lava.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
 Box them in. Shoot first.

**INT. CLOSET - CONTINUOUS**

Arthur and Chelsea crouch in the dark, barely breathing.  
 Outside - FOOTSTEPS. The door CREAKS open.  
 THROUGH THE SLATS: Meyers enters. Gun up. Sweeps the room.  
 Something's off. Her eyes snap to the window - open.  
 She pauses. Thinks. Then crosses over. Leans out.  
 Nothing. Just storm and snow. No tracks.  
 Inside the closet: frozen silence.  
 Chelsea's eyes flick. Senses it.  
 Then, Meyers WHIPS UP the shotgun-  
 BOOM! A deafening BLAST TEARS through the door.  
 Wood SPLINTERS -inches from Arthur's face.

*THEY'RE OUT OF TIME.*

CHELSEA  
 (barely a whisper)  
 Now.

**INT. SECLUDED CABIN - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

SLAM! Chelsea and Arthur EXPLODE from the closet.

Arthur lunges at Meyers.

BLAM! Another shot - MISSES - blows a hole in the ceiling.

Chelsea moves in a blur. KNIFE slashes Meyers' wrist - DEEP.

Meyers GRUNTS. Her grip loosens-

Arthur YANKS the shotgun free - but DROPS IT.

Meyers ELBOWS him. Arthur goes down HARD.

Chelsea and Meyers BOTH grab the shotgun. *Brutal tug-of-war.*

Kyle raises his gun. Chelsea in his sights. Arthur sees it-

TACKLES Kyle. They HIT the floor. Kyle's gun skids loose.

Chelsea and Meyers clock it-  
But Meyers is already moving.

Chelsea pivots - LUNGES for Kyle.

Arthur sees - tries to stop her - Too late.

Chelsea PLUNGES the knife into Kyle's neck. Twists.

Kyle THRASHES. Gurgles. Bleeding out.

Arthur stumbles back. Shocked.

Chelsea pulls Arthur. They dive towards the window-

- Meyers aims the shotgun. BOOM!

The blast HITS Chelsea's foot. GLASS SHATTERS.

**EXT. SECLUDED CABIN - BACKYARD - NIGHT**

They SLAM into the ground.

Chelsea groans, clutching her foot. Blood darkens the snow.

Inside - MEYERS RELOADS. *Time to run.*

Chelsea grits her teeth, struggling up. Her foot is FUCKED.  
Arthur HELPS HER, steadying hands under her arm.  
Chelsea stiffens... but doesn't pull away.

FOOTSTEPS. LEONARD emerges from the storm. CLOSE.

LEONARD (O.S.)  
GOT'EM! BACK HERE!

Gun in hand. On edge.

Arthur's breath is ragged. Pulse HAMMERING.  
Chelsea crouches, knife ready.

Arthur sees it. Grabs her wrist. Stops her.

He STANDS.  
Chelsea's eyes: WHAT THE FUCK?

Arthur raises his hands - no weapon.

ARTHUR  
Leonard. You don't have to die for  
this.

Leonard's gun SNAPS UP. A reflex.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
You're a cop, right? You swore to  
protect people. Is this really who  
you are?

Leonard's grip tenses. A harsh exhale. A long, frozen beat.

He laughs. Bitter.

LEONARD  
You really don't know who you're  
standing next to, huh?

Arthur stiffens. Something in Leonard's tone.

LEONARD (cont'd)  
She ain't worth saving. These are  
bad people. The apple don't fall  
far from the tree.

It's not a threat. *It's a warning.*

BOOM. A shotgun blast TEARS through Leonard. Blood sprays.

SHERIFF MEYERS  
You talk too much, Lenny.

Arthur lurches forward - instinctively - to HELP.  
Chelsea YANKS HIM BACK.

Arthur stares at Leonard's crumpling body.  
Chelsea stares at Meyers - shotgun still smoking.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
(low, steady)  
It's over, little girl.  
(MORE)

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 (beat)  
 Call Daddy. Last chance.

Chelsea doesn't move.

SHERIFF MEYERS (cont'd)  
 (losing it)  
 I'm not fucking around!

BOOM. A shot tears into Arthur's shoulder. He DROPS.  
 Gasping. Blood soaks his shoulder.

Chelsea dives for Leonard's gun-  
 SPINS-

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

SHOTS SLAM INTO MEYERS' CHEST. She drops. HARD.

Stillness. Snow swirls between them.

Chelsea stands. Smiling. A cruel flicker.

CHELSEA  
 (soft, amused)  
 Oh, Sheriff. That was never gonna  
 happen.  
 (beat)  
 And this was *never* about him.

Meyers wheezes. Bloody. Chelsea steps forward. Predatory.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
 You think I don't know who you are?  
 (beat)  
 You think that fucking *invalid* did  
 it? How stupid are you.

Meyers props herself up. She needs to hear it.

Arthur tries to stand. Shoulder wrecked.

Chelsea keeps going.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
 I wanted to impress him.  
 (beat)  
 So I did more than just give the  
 order.

Chelsea inches closer.

Arthur freezes. Realizing... he wanted to save someone.  
 But - *he saved the wrong girl.*

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
 I was *there*.  
 (low, gleeful)  
 Wanna know the best part?  
 (beat)  
 It didn't even work. He could care  
 less.

Chelsea watches Meyers. Sees the rage building. *She's won.*

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
 Your kid died for nothing.

Meyers trembles. Tears well in her eyes.

CHELSEA (cont'd)  
 All that planning for this?  
 (beat)  
 Total fuckin' waste.  
 (smirks, shrugs)  
 Eh. Like mother, like son.

Meyers doesn't move. Something inside her cracks.

Chelsea lifts the shotgun.  
 Traces the barrel along Meyers' cheek. And then-

ARTHUR FUCKING TACKLES HER. They SLAM into the snow.

ARTHUR  
 You're a fucking monster!

Arthur struggles. Shoulder SCREAMS. This isn't heroic.  
 It's messy. Raw. Desperate.

Chelsea climbs on top of him. UNLOADS. Fists pound his face.  
 Then-

BOOM. A SHOTGUN BLAST RIPS THROUGH CHELSEA'S THROAT.

Her hands fly to her neck. Blood pours between her fingers.  
 Her mouth moves. Nothing escapes but a wet gasp.

Then - she falls. Still. Gone.

Meyers collapses again. Shaking. Exhausted.  
 Rolls onto her side. Stares at Chelsea's corpse. Then-  
 She laughs. A broken sound. Almost a sob.

Arthur watches. Slowly pulls himself up. Shoulder wrecked.

But alive.

He looks at Meyers. The woman who saved him.  
Finally understanding.

ARTHUR (cont'd)  
I'm sorry... about your family.

Meyers meets his eyes. *Smirks.*

SHERIFF MEYERS  
(raspy)  
...sorry about your face.

And then - she's gone.

Arthur just stands there. Bleeding. Shaking.

Two bodies in the snow. Arthur between them.

He spits out a tooth.

Laughs. Not from joy. Just disbelief.

He *survived.*

He stares down at his broken phone. Then at the road ahead.

A pause. Then - he starts walking.

FADE TO BLACK:

**THE END.**