

Into the Sunset

an original screenplay by

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1 INT. BUS - MORNING

A hand rests quietly on the armrest of a worn seat, there is a scar forming on it from a recent burn. Shadows play across it as miles are ticking by. The seat is reclined, a beat-to-hell cowboy hat pulled down over the eyes of a lanky man, graying at the temples. Long legs, denim and leather boots. In the seat next to him is a long case, which is chained to his right wrist. The bus is mostly empty. Across the aisle and a row back from him a woman sits in the window seat. She looks at him intently. Eventually he stirs, pulls his seat into its upright position and shifts his hat back into it's natural attitude. He sits still for a bit with his eyes closed, letting them adjust to the bright sunlight before he finally opens them.

GWEN

Fifteen.

SAUL

Ma'am?

GWEN

Fifteen. The number of times you've adjusted your seat in the past half hour. Every two minutes. I timed it.

SAUL

Comfort is relative.

GWEN

The way I figure it you've traveled a half-mile farther than I have in the same amount of time just by sitting in that particular seat.

SAUL

You have a strange sense of etiquette when it comes to introductions.

GWEN

My mother always said I was a discerning and obstinate gnome.

SAUL

Your mother?

GWEN

My uncle always said my mother needed to keep out of the catnip. I'm Gwen.

SAUL

Good to meet you Gwen. Call me Ishmael.

GWEN

Serious?

SAUL

For now.

GWEN

Well Mr. Melville, as long as we're on this big ol' whale of a bus I guess I can live with that.

SAUL

(SAUL shifts in his seat, folding one leg up so he can face her more squarely.)

Well, I guess...

GWEN

See? Every two minutes. A girl could time an egg by you.

GWEN gets out of her seat and moves to the aisle seat directly across from him.

GWEN (CONT'D)

So, what's in the case?

SAUL

Bees. Hundreds of them. Trained to sting the lips of overly inquisitive muppets.

GWEN

You're not much of one for the truth, are you?

SAUL

This is my vest, whence I keep my hand close. I don't know you ma'am.

GWEN

Something I'm trying to rectify. It helps when we all play by the same rules. No draw, no wild cards. And I'm bored. Bored bored bored. You're more interesting than anything else within arms reach. Besides, my battery's dead. No more tiny computer distractions.

SAUL studies her for a moment and then looks out the window.

SAUL
Name's Saul.

GWEN
I like Ishmael better.

SAUL
To each their own.

GWEN
What happened to your hand?

SAUL
(looking at his left
arm)
Housework.

GWEN
I see. You know, I don't own much,
but at least I own my name. You don't.
It doesn't fit. Too Biblical.

SAUL
That's nice.

GWEN
That's settled. I'm going to call
you Ishmael until that other name
fits.

SAUL
And how will you do that?

GWEN
Discerning and obstinate gnome.
I'll observe.

SAUL
Don't you think that might take a
bit longer than the time we have
left us?

GWEN
Oh, I'm going where you are.

SAUL
I don't think so ma'am. Not to be
rude, but I don't think so.

GWEN
Cincinnati. The bus stops there.
End of the line.

SAUL grins to himself

SAUL

Touche'

GWEN

You're interesting. Not -that-
interesting. Besides, I already
know quite a bit about you.

SAUL

I think the lady exaggerates.

SAUL shifts in his seat again and prepares to lean it back.

GWEN

(pointing a finger to
her nose and motioning
at his seat)

Seventeen.

2 INT. BUS TERMINAL - DAY

SAUL walks with purpose across the bus station. He spies an official and walks over to him, says something to him and the man motions towards a set of doors leading outside. SAUL tips his hat and nods his head, and walks towards them. GWEN meets him just as he's walking out to the taxi stand.

GWEN

Where next, Ishmael?

SAUL

(not looking at her
and trying to spy a
taxi)

Gotta get my horse.

GWEN

Uh huh. And I've gotta get my hair
done. Where you headed next?

SAUL

West Coast. Might make a stop in
Reno.

GWEN

By taxi?

SAUL

I told you, I've gotta get my horse.

GWEN

You're no fun anymore.

There's a pause as GWEN looks at him, pondering.

GWEN (CONT'D)

I've never been to Reno. Never been to Vegas either. Don't think I'd like it. Too much...um...'muchness'.

SAUL

You should try it sometime.

GWEN

Reno, or Vegas?

SAUL

Muchness.

GWEN

(pointing at his case)

Ishmael survived by floating to safety on the coffin Queequeg had carved for himself.

SAUL

Hmm.

GWEN

It's humid here. I hate humid. Have you ever wondered why people stay put in a place like this? I do. I love travel. I hate taxis. Never around when you need one.

SAUL

I suppose the owners find more lucrative fare at the airport.

SAUL looks up and down the platform and sighs. He settles down on a bench lengthwise and kicks his boots up on the armrest. GWEN puts her suitcase down on the ground in front of his bench and sits down on it.

GWEN

You'd think I'd have had enough of sitting for a while, wouldn't you? Do you have any smokes?

SAUL

Don't smoke, sorry.

GWEN

Neither do I. You just look the type.

SAUL

When the first taxi gets here, you can have it. I'll wait for the next.

GWEN

Thanks, but no. I've got a rental car reserved around back. You want a lift?

3 INT. GWEN'S CAR - DAY

Saul and Gwen wind through city streets in her rented yellow sedan.

GWEN

...so that's what I get for taking in strays. My sister had to get a rabies shot, my uncle made me work all summer to get enough money to replace the aquarium and my mom swore off ground beef for three months.

SAUL

Are you sure you know where you're going? You've missed three turns.

GWEN

No, you're wrong.

SAUL

I don't think so.

GWEN makes a sharp left down an alley.

GWEN

as my mom always said, 'two wrongs don't make a right, but three lefts do'. We're here.

GWEN pilots the car onto a back street and pulls up to a large concrete Quonset hut with a metal retracting door. She stops the car and turns it off.

SAUL

Well I'll be...

GWEN

You flatter.

SAUL

...glad when you're out of my hair.

GWEN

No, -I'm- the one with the hair appointment. You're the one with the horse. Which I want to see, by the way.

SAUL

If you must.

4 EXT. GARAGE - DAY

SAUL gets out and comes around the front of the car. GWEN opens her door and swings a leg out. He goes over to the manager's door next to the main gate and keys in an access code on a beat-up security pad. The office door clicks open.

SAUL

Wait here.

GWEN stands up and shuts her door by leaning back against it in a half-pout before she is distracted by some birds fighting over worms in the lot next door. There are some clatters and bangs from inside the garage, then the main door rattles open, sending the birds scattering. GWEN stands up and looks inside. SAUL appears out of the darkness and motions her inside.

GWEN

Strange place to keep a horse.

SAUL walks over to a car covered by an old burlap drop-cloth. He grabs it by a corner and with a snap pulls it off, revealing a less-than-pristine '67 Mustang. He walks around it, checking the tires, running his fingers along the contours of the fenders.

SAUL

Just as I left her.

GWEN

I personally was betting on a Palomino.

SAUL

(opening the driver's
side door)

Maybe you *should* stay away from Vegas.

SAUL produces a key chain from his pocket and rifles through them until he finds the right one. He unlocks the case from his wrist and walks around to the trunk. GWEN follows him.

He opens the trunk and starts to place the case in it, then stops and looks at GWEN.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Do you mind?

GWEN look at him, taken aback.

GWEN

Um...no, no not at all.

GWEN steps back, looks into the car and slips into the driver's seat.

5 INT. MUSTANG - DAY

She looks at herself in the mirror, grabs hold of the steering wheel. She then rummages around in her purse.

GWEN

Nice car. You should take better care of it though. Not exactly a showpiece. Is that an 8-track player?

SAUL

She's not meant to be. A lot of miles have passed under these wheels.

GWEN

Hm. Still. I suppose character outlives beauty anyway. Time wins that race every time.

She checks herself in the mirror again, looks troubled for the briefest of moments and gets out of the car.

6 INT. GARAGE - DAY

She walks to the center of the floor and looks around the garage. There are a lot of old pieces of hardware, unidentifiable bits of machinery, all decaying and dusty. There is an old desk in a corner under a hanging bulb with a beat up metal reflector barely housing it. She walks over to it while SAUL fiddles around with something in the trunk. She turns on the light and sits at the desk. It is sparse, a couple of old paid invoices, a phone with a dial on it, an assortment of odds and ends in little alcoves and niches in an open shelf sitting on the desk.

GWEN

You have some interesting cubbies in these holes.

She finds an old pocketknife, a plastic box full of old bottle caps, a paperback mystery novel that, though dust-covered appears to have never been opened. There are bolts and spark plugs, a set of ledgers dating back 25 years, a large stack of state maps neatly arranged alphabetically and impeccably folded, a metal oil spout and an old photograph partially tucked under the lowest shelf. She pulls it out and looks at it, another troubled look crosses her face.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Is there a Mrs. Ishmael?

SAUL

Excuse me?

GWEN

(she puts the photo
back)

I don't get it. This place. Looks
like nobody's been in here for years.
But the power's still on.
Utilities must be getting paid. You
haven't been here in a long time,
have you?

SAUL

No. No I haven't. Priorities.
Commitments. Promises.

GWEN

Ah, I -knew- it! There's a story
here. I can usually smell a good
story from twenty paces. You've been
oozing it since I saw you at the bus
station in Philly.

SAUL

I don't think I have any more
narrative in me than the next guy.

GWEN

Seriously. Have you looked at
yourself lately? If it wasn't a
good story, it would have at least
been a dime novel.

SAUL

(shutting the trunk
and walking over to
her)

Time for you to go. I've got to get
on the road.

GWEN

Your hospitality matches your penchant
for the truth.

SAUL

I mean no disrespect, and I do
appreciate the ride. But I've got to
get going. It's a long drive and I'm
on a relatively tight schedule
already. Let's say I owe you one.

GWEN

I don't know if I like having you owe me anything, but as my mother always said, 'give 'em three chances and they'll surely spill the coffee.'

SAUL

I haven't given you three...

GWEN

I usually don't like being owed anything by anybody, but you never know.

SAUL

That's a change. I thought it was supposed to work the other way around.

GWEN

That would be boring. And predictable. I'm never predictable.

GWEN stands up, shakes his hand and smiles.

GWEN (CONT'D)

I have a feeling I'll be seeing you again. Safe journeys, Ishmael. I hope you find a safe port.

She turns and walks out of the garage, hops in her car and pulls away without another glance. SAUL looks after her, shakes his head. He walks back over to the desk to sort through some of his maps. He selects a few and then reaches for the light. Just as his hand touches the chain he sees the just-exposed corner of the photograph. His hand stops, and then drops down to almost touch it, but he doesn't. He just lets it sit where it is. He turns out the light and walks back to the car.

7 EXT. CITY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A shiny black Dodge Charger roars through the night. The city it drives through is unidentifiable, but there is a huge amount of industry as far as the eye can see. Fires belch into the sky from impossibly high smokestacks, there are welding sparks and construction on what appears to be a complex of new skyscrapers. The sparks and flames reflect madly off of the hood and fenders of the car.

8 INT. DODGE CHARGER - NIGHT

STETSON cruises along, a tight - but not necessarily unpleasant - smile on his face. He is wearing shades and is also dressed in black, the red and blue glow from the dashboard lights are the only illumination.

On the radio Johnny Cash is singing "Ring of Fire". After a moment STETSON presses a button on the wheel, the radio cuts out and a phone begins ringing.

SECRETARY

BD and E, how may I direct your call?

STETSON

It's Stetson. Get me Barron.

SECRETARY

Mr. Barron is busy at the...

STETSON

Get me Barron. Now.

There is a slight hesitation, then...

SECRETARY

One moment please.

The phone goes on hold and a brief MUZAK version of "The Girl from Ipanema" plays. Then there is a sharp 'click'.

BARRON

This better be good.

STETSON

I know where it is.

BARRON

Tell me.

STETSON

I'll have news for you in a couple of days. My standard rate applies?

BARRON

Of course.

STETSON

That's all I needed.

STETSON clicks off the phone and Johnny Cash resumes. He grins and pushes down on the accelerator.

9 EXT. CITY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Charger growls away into the dark night. Lighting flashes in the distance.

10 INT. GARAGE - DAY

Asleep in a low-slung folding chair, BIXBY dozes. He is a wiry and grizzled man with a scrub-brush beard and wild,

curly salt-and-pepper hair. An odd stack of auto mags, guitar catalogs and tennis digests sit on the counter behind him. The garage is resplendent in 50's gas-station memorabilia, not so much because it's cool as that it's been there that long. SAUL pulls up outside the garage in his Mustang. He gets out of the car and saunters up to BIXBY. He stands there for a moment taking in the scene, then kicks BIXBY on the sole of his shoe.

SAUL

Bixby! Bix! Hey, wake up man.

BIXBY opens his eyes, looks up at SAUL and shuts them again.

BIXBY

Oh. It's you.

SAUL

Need an oil change. And give her a once-over. She's feeling a bit sluggish.

BIXBY

Aren't we all. I should charge you extra. I was having a magnificent dream.

SAUL

I really don't want to know.

BIXBY

(opening one eye)

I was gonna take Wimbledon. Was about to beat Nadal in straight sets. Damn it man, why do you have to be such a spoilsport?

SAUL

Aw, you know me, Bix. It's my way. Let me help you up and we'll make some coffee.

BIXBY

I'll help myself up! You bring your car into bay 2 and leave the coffee outta it. Whaddaya think I am, drunk or something?

SAUL

I meant for me.

BIXBY

Oh. Oh. Never mind. Go get your damn car.

SAUL turns to get the car.

SAUL
Good to see you again, Bix.

11 INT. GARAGE - DAY

BIXBY has the Mustang up on the rack and proceeds to change the oil. He pulls the plug from the bottom of the car.

BIXBY
Hmm. Looks a little thick. How long
has it been Saul?

SAUL
Sixteen years.

BIXBY
Damn! Heh. The oil in your car is
old enough to drive itself to a real
garage.

SAUL
Yeah, that kinda paints the picture,
doesn't it?

BIXBY
I'm surprised you still own the old
girl. Nostalgia?

SAUL
I've got to make a delivery Bix.
One last delivery. Then I'm done.

BIXBY
Talk if ya wanna. Pass me the coffee.

SAUL pours BIXBY a cup of coffee from an old metal electric coffeepot and passes it up to him. He lounges back down in the chair.

SAUL
You ever stop and ask yourself why
you do what you do?

BIXBY
Every waking minute.

SAUL
What do you do about it?

BIXBY
I find solace in the here and "now
and then".

SAUL

(pointing at the car)

So you think you can keep her running
for one last cross-country dash?

BIXBY

I dunno. This ol' car isn't what she
once was. I can fix all the visible
bits. It's the parts you can't see
that worry me. Tell ya what, take
me with you.

SAUL

Love to Bix, not possible.

BIXBY

And why not? Car's got four seats.

SAUL

What about your business?

BIXBY

Look around you Sully, not exactly
booming at the moment. Besides, I'd
like to get out west one more time.
It'd be like old days.

SAUL

Yeah. Yeah, it would.

BIXBY

Look. you have no choice. I'm coming
along for the ride or you can fix
this piece of junk yourself.

SAUL starts to rebut, and then reconsiders.

SAUL

Ok then.

BIXBY

I knew you'd come around to my way
of thinkin'. Pass me that wrench.

12 EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

The blue Mustang drives along the highways heading through
the city, the sun is high in a brilliant blue sky. Sunlight
reflects hot off the glass and metal of the buildings of the
skyline. Traffic is mild and SAUL and BIXBY settle in for
the first leg of the trip. Soon they have left the city
behind and winding roads lead west into Indiana and beyond.
The trip has begun in earnest. Eventually the sun starts to
drop towards the horizon.

13 INT. MUSTANG - EVENING

BIXBY is munching on a bag of chips with a bottle of strawberry mango tea wedged between his knees. SAUL drives silently, seat tilted back a little further than practical. He appears relaxed. They hit a bump and BIXBY squeezes the bottle a little too hard. Drink burbles up out of it and drips down his hand. He puts the bottle between his knees and wipes off his hand with a wet-nap from the glove box.

BIXBY

Damn it Saul, of all the accessories you could have picked up for the trip, a cup holder would have been nice. These plastic bottles ain't exactly robust.

SAUL

It's all in how you do it Bix. For example, you'll notice I deftly wedge my bottle between the seat and the handbrake. Cup holders are for sissies.

BIXBY

Then paint my nails and call me Sue Ellen. I hate having wet knees.

SAUL

Pretty in pink, you're not.

SAUL laughs and just drives for a moment before continuing.

SAUL (CONT'D)

So tell me Bix. What the hell have you been up to all these years?

BIXBY

You've pretty much seen it. Keepin' the garage going. Keeping the local green grocer's malt beverage section afloat. Selling arms to the Canadians. You know the drill.

SAUL

No, there's more to it than that. I really expected to hear you had split years ago.

BIXBY

Naw. I like it here. Good for my complexion.

SAUL turns and looks at him as BIXBY looks out the window.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

You know how it was. I just couldn't clear out. It seemed wrong somehow. It seemed like someone had to stay around, you know? Preserve the memory, or something. You sure left in a hurry.

SAUL doesn't respond.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

So what the hell are we, and notice I say WE, delivering? You never did say.

SAUL looks around, fishing for something to say.

SAUL

How 'bout Benjamin Franklin's telescope.

BIXBY

(pausing and looking at SAUL with a ruffled expression)

Benjamin Franklin's telescope.

SAUL

Yep.

BIXBY

Where?

SAUL

West.

BIXBY

And that's important.

SAUL

Yeah. Yep. As important as anything is.

BIXBY

Ok.

SAUL

(Waiting for the rest)

Well, that was easy.

BIXBY

Like you said, sometimes you just gotta roll with it. You just lemme know when you want to tell me what we're really doing.

14 EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

The black Charger idles outside of the bus station SAUL and GWEN arrived at earlier in the day. A post-rain mist hangs in the air. Hazard lights on and tail lights glowing, both reflecting off of the gloss-black rain slick pavement of the terminal. A couple of tired souls huddle on a bench on the platform. Stetson walks past them, eyes connecting with each. They look momentarily startled, a brief shot of adrenaline coursing through their system.

After STETSON enters the building, they huddle a little more closely together.

15 INT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

STETSON walks in measured paces across the floor. A tight and strangely unpleasant smile crosses his lips as he sidles up to the counter. He pulls the constant toothpick out of his mouth, and gestures with it to the attendant.

STETSON

What time do you have?

BUS CLERK

Half-past one.

STETSON

You look tired. Double shift?

BUS CLERK

Yeah. Yep. Every little bit helps.

STETSON

I'm sure it does. Can I ask you a question?

BUS CLERK

Shoot.

STETSON

(chuckling to himself)
That'll happen soon enough.

BUS CLERK

Excuse me?

STETSON

This afternoon. Bus came in from Philly.

BUS CLERK

Like it does every other day.

STETSON
 (pulling a photo out
 of his breast pocket,
 which is only seen
 by the clerk.)
 Do you recollect this particular
 person?

The clerk looks at the photo, only for a moment.

BUS CLERK
 What's in it for me?

STETSON
 Maybe I won't blow this place up.

The BUS CLERK's eyes open wide.

STETSON (CONT'D)
 I'm kidding. Sorry. It's been a long
 day. My friends keep telling me my
 sense of humor needs...honing. How
 'bout twenty bones?

BUS CLERK
 Make it fifty.

STETSON
 Hard bargain for a simple answer.

BUS CLERK
 Like I said. Times are tough.
 Girl's gotta make some green.

STETSON
 Fair enough.

STETSON pulls a \$50 bill out of his pocket and drops it on
 the counter without taking his eyes off the BUS CLERK

BUS CLERK
 Yeah. I seen this one. Hard to miss,
 if you know what I'm sayin'.

STETSON
 There is a rather distinctive style
 there. I'll give you that.

BUS CLERK
 Left here around one. P.M., that is.

STETSON
 Bus?

BUS CLERK

Car. Something from the 70's.
Yellow. Big sedan. I'm not so good
with cars.

STETSON

Heading?

BUS CLERK

Who can tell? But they left through
the main drive, went west right after.
Big city, could have gone anywhere
after that.

STETSON

West. Good enough. Thank you.
You've been very helpful.

STETSON turns on his heel and walks away from the counter, the unpleasant smile replaced by one of mischievous joy. He exits the building out the same door that SAUL used 14 hours earlier.

16 EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

As STETSON exits the building, he turns and sits down on the same bench that SAUL did, next to the two people he spoke with on his way in. The couple of tired souls look his way and seem to shrink away from him. STETSON ignores them completely. He sits bolt upright, eyes closed, breathing steadily. He gently places his hand on the bench handrail, and turns his head slightly, as if he's heard something. Then he sniffs the air tentatively. He then smiles, opens his eyes and walks back over to his Charger. Getting in, he guns the engine, and with a rumble, the car slides back onto the street. He gives it the gas and the engine roars.

17 EXT. HIGHWAY MOTEL - NIGHT

A truck roars past the camera, revealing several semis and a half-dozen well-worn cars grace the parking lot of a neon-signed motel. A sign in the window flashes "w never clos" and another one claims 'vacancy'. SAUL's Mustang is parked outside one of the single-story rooms. Across the street a local bar buzzes with alcohol-fogged irrelevance.

18 INT. BAR - NIGHT

SAUL AND BIXBY sit at a table in the middle of the room. An old jukebox in the corner plays an unidentifiable tune, but a few drunken dancers wave beer bottles around and stagger against each other. There are a handful of folks at the bar. At a nearby table one more smartly dressed than the rest, wearing a pork-pie hat with a baby-blue hatband is playing cards with a couple of locals. He scrutinizes the

pair as he plays. SAUL and BIXBY sit with a bottle of whiskey between them, and three shot glasses on the table.

BIXBY

Damn jukebox. I hate loud bar music.
Ruins the way a good buzz saturates
the psyche.

SAUL

How many of those are you gonna drink?

BIXBY

Enough. Plus one.

SAUL

Morning's going to come mighty early.
I'm not hauling your hairy ass out
of bed.

BIXBY

You've got nothing to worry about.
I don't sleep so well these days. I
notice you haven't touched yours
yet.

SAUL

Beer's been enough. Waiting for the
right vibe.

BIXBY

When did you turn all hippie on me?

SAUL

When did you turn town drunk?

BIXBY

I -AIN'T- drunk!!! Dammit man, can't
a fella have a well manicured vice
anymore?

SAUL

(taking a drink from
his beer)

Of course not. Ill-mannered vices or
none at all.

BIXBY

So. how 'bout some cards? And beer
nuts. I need beer nuts.

Before SAUL can answer BIXBY gets up and heads over to the bar. SAUL takes another drink from his beer, and leans over to tap the bottle of whiskey with his finger tip. He looks over at the table of men next to him. The smart-dressed one nods his way, as he turns his head.

SAUL nods back and continues his perusal of the bottle. BIXBY finally returns dropping a big bowl of beer nuts between them, but no deck of cards. He gives the bartender a sidelong look.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

Who ever heard of needing a deposit
for a deck of cards?

SAUL

It's a strange world, Bix. Before we
turn in...

SAUL reaches for the bottle and pours a shot into the third glass. He tips his hat to BIXBY and offers a toast

SAUL (CONT'D)

To the future - that we don't take
it for granted.

He downs the shot quickly, and then picks up the extra glass

SAUL (CONT'D)

And to the past - that we don't expect
too much from it.

BIXBY

To the future. The past. The pretense.

The sharp-dressed man and his companions seem to have finished their game. The companions wave him off and get up, leaving him alone to collect his winnings. He quickly gets up and sidles up to SAUL and BIXBY's table. He pulls up a chair, spins it around and takes a seat, propping one elbow on the table and dropping a deck of baby-blue-backed cards on it.

JACK

Gentlemen! Might I join you? I didn't
mean to eavesdrop, but I understand
you were looking for a deck of cards.

BIXBY

I don't recollect inviting you to
the table.

JACK

(to SAUL, ignoring
BIXBY)

I heard you speak of the past, the
future. Did you know, sir, that a
poker hand can be read just as readily
as the tarot?

He fans the cards out, shifts them between fingers, deftly.

JACK (CONT'D)

Fortunes can be told by those that
can read 'em.

SAUL just stares at him.

SAUL

Are you offering a game, or a seance?
I've got no use for one of them.

JACK

Poker.

SAUL

Well. Why not.

JACK

For some men, you'd be surprised at
how slight the difference is.

SAUL nods to BIXBY and they start to get up. JACK stands quickly puts his hand on each of their shoulders, lightly and then pulls them off when both shoot him a look.

JACK (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, my apologies. I don't
mean to drive you off with
my...eccentricities. I'm seeking
some sport before turning in, and
you're my last hope. I'm not a polite
man, but I'll say it anyway.
Please?

SAUL sits back down and stares at the strange man.

JACK (CONT'D)

Good, good. The game is simple.
Five cards, no draw. One down, three
up, final card down. Wild cards. Let
me see. Jokers, One-eyed Jacks, the
Man with the Axe and a natural pair
of eights. Quick. Painless. (grinning)
Well, mostly painless. Depends upon
how sensitive the wallet is.

SAUL

Awful lot of wild cards. Any limits?

JACK

I just go with what manifests itself
in my brain. Limits? Whatever the
game will bear.

SAUL
 (nodding)
 Shuffle the deck.

JACK deftly shuffles the deck, obviously something he's done many, many times before. SAUL sits back in his chair, not taking his eyes off of JACK's.

JACK
 (looking at BIXBY)
 Are you in?

BIXBY
 No. My mother didn't raise any stupid children.

JACK
 Pity. What's your excuse then?

SAUL
 May I cut?

JACK
 But of course.

SAUL, still looking JACK in the eye, reaches out and cuts the deck twice, leaving three piles on the table. JACK picks them up in a mixed order, then deals the first two down cards.

BIXBY
 So, you the passing-through type, or are you just local color?

JACK
 According to my ex-wife I'm more of a scent, and not a complimentary one. Naw, I'm just here on a job. You interested?

SAUL
 Not at all.

JACK
 Hmm. Maybe you should be. No matter.

JACK deals the next two cards, face up on the table. SAUL draws the ace of spades, Jack draws the queen of hearts.

JACK (CONT'D)
 You have the dark one watching over you. I have the lovely lost lady. I like my company better. Your bet.

SAUL puts three twenty dollar bills on the table. JACK sighs and rolls his eyes a bit, then puts down the same from a wad

of cash he seemingly produced out of thin air. SAUL takes the moment to look at his down card. It is an eight of hearts.

JACK deals the next card. SAUL receives an eight of clubs, JACK receives an king of diamonds.

JACK (CONT'D)

I wonder who's story these cards are telling tonight. My pair against nothing. You're kinda on your own here.

JACK pulls five hundred dollar bills and drops them on the table. SAUL reaches into his wallet and pulls out five hundred in twenties and fifties. BIXBY watches on in quiet disapproval.

JACK deals the next card. Ace of clubs to SAUL, jack of hearts to himself.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ahhh. My namesake. One-eyed Jack.

BIXBY

Looks like you've got two to me.

JACK grins and taps on his right eyeball. It makes a clicking sound.

JACK

Glass. (then to SAUL) You're outnumbered here. Three of a kind showing. But are they? Are they? That might be a philosophical question to consider. I see your future, right here. One will play you, one will own you, one will save you. I can sense it.

SAUL

I see cards. You gonna bet on them?

JACK looks at SAUL with a little disgust.

JACK

No need to get all uppity, I'm just trying to add a little interest to the game. And here I took you for a gentleman.

SAUL

As long as you don't take me for a fool. Deal the last card.

SAUL doesn't take his eyes off of Jack's. Jack does the same - and deals the final two down cards.

JACK
It's still my bet.

JACK reaches to look at his final down card, but SAUL reaches across the table and stops his hand.

SAUL
No looking. And yes. It's your bet.

JACK gets an enormous grin on his face.

JACK
Oh...I take it back. You -are- a gentleman.

JACK sits back in his chair and considers. Then he throws another five hundred on the table. SAUL complies, and raises.

SAUL
Your five hundred. And fifteen hundred more.

JACK smirks.

JACK
Your fifteen and another thousand.

BIXBY looks at SAUL in amazement.

BIXBY
How much are you carrying???

SAUL ignores him and leans back in his chair, adding one last pile to the pot.

SAUL
Call.

JACK leans forward and steeplés his fingers in front of his lips.

JACK
Now we see.

JACK turns over his first down card - a joker.

JACK (CONT'D)
That's four of a kind right there.

He cocks his head to the left, expecting some kind of reaction from SAUL. He gets none. Then he turns over the other card. It's the second joker.

JACK (CONT'D)

Well there you have it. That would be five queens. All for the love of a pair of jokers.

BIXBY bristles at the jab but SAUL ignores it. He simply turns up his first down card - the eight of hearts, and his second down card - the ace of hearts.

SAUL

Unless I'm mistaken, five aces beats five queens.

JACK looks at the table and his wide smile narrows ever so slightly, his eyes harden almost imperceptibly. He pushes his chair away from the table, then stands up. BIXBY tenses as if there is going to be a fight. JACK looks at him hard for a moment, then lightens up, the friendly smile flowing back across his face.

JACK

Dead man's hand...yet not. Fate plays it's own hand here my friend. I'm always intrigued by the whim of the deck. (reaching down and arranging first SAUL's cards, then his own) You sir...you. You've lost something, but it hides in plain sight. Jack tells the fortune. The King holds all the cards, but doesn't know it. The Queen, she is not what she seems, and will be your ruin. (then smiling) Or mine. Like I said. They never lie, but sometimes reading them is difficult. Well. Well. (he sweeps the cards into his hand and pockets the deck) Goodnight, gentlemen. Goodnight. I feel certain we'll be seeing each other again, after a fashion.

JACK turns and walks away without another word.

BIXBY

That was damn peculiar.

SAUL casually collects his winnings and pockets them.

SAUL

Yep.

SAUL walks over and pays the bar tab, then the two of them leave the bar.

19 EXT. HIGHWAY MOTEL - NIGHT

SAUL walks into the hot night. The street is quiet and they seem to be the last ones leaving the bar. They cross the road, back to the motel.

SAUL
How long have you known me Bix?

BIXBY
Two or three hundred years.

SAUL
(chucking)
Feels that long, does it?

BIXBY
Yep.

SAUL
And I seem like a sane individual?

BIXBY
Mostly.

SAUL
Bix, I'm getting old. I feel it in my bones. Everything is grey, subtle. Quiet. I don't know. The world keeps spinning but I stand still.

BIXBY
Has this got something to do with the trip?

SAUL
Everything.

BIXBY eyes him.

BIXBY
Is there something you wanna tell me?

SAUL looks down the road.

SAUL
You ever do something that ain't quite kosher Bix? Even when you can look at it from the proper angle and justify it?

BIXBY
You're assuming I have that kind of conscience.

SAUL

Knock it off, you know what I mean.

BIXBY doesn't say a word, and waits for him to continue.

SAUL (CONT'D)

The package. The thing we're delivering. I stole it.

BIXBY starts to comment but SAUL silences him with a gesture.

SAUL (CONT'D)

It was mine to begin with. I lost it in a moment of stupidity. It took me five years to find it again. A long time ago I made a promise, and we're making good on it. Just to be up front with you, I wouldn't be at all surprised if the recent owner won't try to retrieve it. Kinda been watching over my shoulder since leaving Pittsburgh.

BIXBY

Man, that is so not your speed.

SAUL

Oh, I don't know. I'm not exactly squeaky clean on the best of days.

BIXBY

What the hell is it? The gold-plated spittoon of Edward Teach?

SAUL

A little porcelain box. Once owned by a queen.

BIXBY

Mhmm.

SAUL

I just want to get to the coast and be done with it.

20 INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

SAUL is woken up by a grinding, wheezing engine sound. He squints his eyes at the clock, tries to lay back down. The sound persists, coming from very nearby. He finally gets out of bed, pulls his jeans and boots on, grabs a shirt and slips it on without buttoning it. He walks outside. BIXBY remains snoring in the chair he collapsed into the night before.

21 EXT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

As SAUL walks into the daylight, he holds his hand up over his eyes, wincing a bit and muttering to himself about strong liquor and how it's maybe not the best idea anymore.

He walks towards the sound and discovers a yellow sedan parked next to his Mustang. Steam has just begun to roll out of the engine compartment. The vehicle owner is cranking the ignition for all she's worth.

SAUL
Isn't it a little early to be making
this much noise?

SAUL takes a couple more steps around the front of the car and stops dead in his tracks. Sitting in the driver's seat is GWEN, staring at the console in utter disgust. She looks up at SAUL as she's talking.

GWEN
I can't figure out what's going on,
it worked fine last..... Ishmael??!!

SAUL
What in the name of all that's holy
are you doing here???

22 INT. COFFEE SHOP AT THE MOTEL - MORNING

SAUL and GWEN sit opposite each other, pot of coffee between them. GWEN looks directly at SAUL as he leans back, stirring his cup lackadaisically.

GWEN
Small world.

SAUL
It would seem so.

GWEN
I wonder what the odds are. I mean
really - crazy!

SAUL
Yeah. The world can be a funny old
place. Come on Gwen, what are you
doing here?

GWEN
Heading west, young man.

SAUL
Really.

GWEN

Really. I don't think you've quite earned the story of my life, but let's just say that things got complicated enough where I was that I've decided to change where I am.

SAUL

I can relate to that, I suppose. Where west?

GWEN

I don't know, really. I just have the urge to see the sea, see?

SAUL

There's another one that is a helluva lot closer to where you started.

GWEN

Not the same, somehow. I don't know, kind of hard to explain. I'm drawn there. It's kind of like I have- to go there. What about you? You still have that case full of bees?

SAUL

(nodding and taking a drink of his coffee) I've got some business with the Pacific myself.

GWEN

Great minds. Do you still fidget in your seat every two minutes?

SAUL

Do you still give lifts to strange men?

GWEN

Strange men are more fun. Ask any girl.

SAUL

Well. I hate to cut this short, but I've gotta get going. Long drive still ahead.

GWEN

Before you go could you look at my car? I don't know from cars.

SAUL

Sorry, can't help there. Not my area.

GWEN looks frustrated.

SAUL (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 ...but I happen to know someone.

GWEN gives SAUL a quizzical look.

23 INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

BIXBY still lounges in the chair he crashed in the night before, one arm folded across his chest, the other dangling over the edge of the chair. His breathing is deep, on the edge of snoring. SAUL opens up the door and bright morning light fills the room. He walks over to BIXBY and kicks his shoe. GWEN follows him in.

SAUL
 Hey Bix, rise and shine. Got a customer here for you.

BIXBY stirs, then slowly unfolds into an enormous yawning stretch. He scratches his stomach and the back of his neck, not yet opening his eyes.

BIXBY
 I don't work on Sundays.

SAUL
 It's Tuesday.

BIXBY
 Ah. There's that.

BIXBY opens his eyes and looks around, registering SAUL and then seeing GWEN. He closes his eyes again.

BIXBY (CONT'D)
 Come back in an hour.

SAUL
 Bixby, meet Gwen. I shared a bus with her once. Car trouble. You willing to give it a look?

BIXBY looks at SAUL with annoyance, then over at GWEN.

BIXBY
 I suppose it couldn't hurt.

BIXBY finally rises out of the chair and trips over his own shoes. Groaning, he sits back down and starts to lace them up.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

You gotta get me coffee. Miss Gwen, pleased to meet you, I'm sure. You show me to the patient and we'll see what's what.

GWEN

Thank you, Mr. Bixby. I do appreciate it.

BIXBY

No...that won't work. Never "Mr.", just "Bixby". A man's gotta have standards.

24 EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - MORNING

BIXBY pokes around under the hood of GWEN's yellow sedan parked next to SAUL's Mustang. He whistles quietly to himself. GWEN stands by watching, SAUL comes up behind her with a tall cup of coffee.

SAUL

How goes it?

GWEN

I don't like the sounds he's making.

SAUL looks at the car.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Not the car. Bixby. He's not inspiring confidence.

SAUL

Don't worry about the sound effects. It's the story that's important.

BIXBY

This story is tragic. Shakespeare would approve.

GWEN

What do you mean?

BIXBY

I think your car has been murdered. Poisoned. Stabbed. There may even be witchcraft.

GWEN

What???

BIXBY

No, no kidding. And I think I have an idea of who did it.

BIXBY, without looking at either of them reaches down and plucks something from down inside the engine. He holds up a playing card. It's the Jack of Hearts.

SAUL

Well then. Look at that.

GWEN

I don't understand - does that mean something to you?

SAUL

We had a little encounter with a gentleman last night. You could say that's his calling card.

GWEN

And you think *he* did this?

SAUL

Can't say for certain, but maybe. He lost a chunk of change, maybe this was some kind of payback.

GWEN

So what - you mix it up with someone and they fucked up *MY* car? What kind of sense does that make?

SAUL

Guess he made a mistake.

GWEN

You've got to be kidding me.

SAUL shrugs, but is looking at GWEN curiously. GWEN quietly fumes for a moment looking from SAUL to the engine to BIXBY and back again. She suddenly brightens up and a smile returns to her face.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Silver linings.

She walks to the back of her car and opens the trunk.

SAUL

Silver linings?

GWEN
(poking her head from
behind the car)
Yeah. Silver linings. Or open windows.
You know. Door closes, window opens.
In this case, hood closes, trunk
opens.

SAUL
I'm not following you.

GWEN
You don't have to follow...

GWEN pulls out her suitcase and drops it on the ground at
his feet.

GWEN (CONT'D)
'Cause I'm coming with you.

BIXBY stops moving abruptly and pokes his head out from under
the hood.

BIXBY
What did she just say?

GWEN
Look, we're going the same direction.
Get me as far as you can and I'll
figure out the rest. Life's what
you make it, and right now I'm making
it 'convenient'.

SAUL
No. I don't think so.

GWEN
I can pay my way. I'll even cover
all of the gas.

SAUL
(looking away in mild
disgust)
I don't want your gas money.

GWEN
What do you want, Ishmael?

SAUL
I want a house in the country and no
women there to screw up my plans.

GWEN
Where's the fun in that?

SAUL looks down at her suitcase, and then walks closer to BIXBY at the engine compartment. BIXBY darts his gaze between the two. SAUL lowers his voice.

SAUL
Is it really that bad?

BIXBY
Yeah. Yep. That bad.

SAUL steps back, considering.

SAUL
Fine. Bring your bag. Welcome aboard
the Pequod, Mister Starbuck.

25 EXT. MUSTANG OPEN ROAD - DAY

The Mustang hits the highway, the car winds through the valleys of river-region Missouri, climbing up into the plains area. They make good time for now, the miles unroll behind them. City signs zip by.

26 EXT. QUICKIE-MART, SOMEWHERE RURAL - AFTERNOON

BIXBY fills the car with gas while GWEN leans forward between the front seats and checks what little makeup she wears in the rear-view mirror. SAUL has gone into the store.

Finally GWEN calls out to BIXBY.

GWEN
A little help here? Girls need to
stretch legs too.

BIXBY
Hang on a sec. Hold your horses.

GWEN
So what exactly are you?

BIXBY
(topping off the tank
and coming over to
let her out)
What's that supposed to mean?

GWEN
I dunno. You just hang out with him?
You some kind of navigator?
You do his laundry?

BIXBY

(opening the door and
helping her out)

Jeez no. Get out. He's an old friend.
Not something a fella like me has a
lot of. Known him most of my life. I
kinda keep my eye on him. And fix
this pile of junk on a regular basis.

GWEN

Uh huh.

BIXBY

Why is it everyone always assumes
there's more to an answer than there
is?

GWEN

Because. (she gets close to him and
whispers) There usually is.

GWEN looks him square in the eyes for just a moment longer
than is comfortable, then smiles and walks into the Mini-
Mart. BIXBY scratches the back of his head and goes to finish
with the fuel pump, but looks over his shoulder at her more
than once.

27 INT. QUICKIE-MART - AFTERNOON

GWEN walks into the minimart, slides her sunglasses up onto
her head. She pokes around up and down the aisles, looking
at everything and nothing. She picks up a couple bags of
chips, some chocolate, picks up a seedy romance paperback
and browses the back cover. SAUL comes around the corner
with a few roller-dogs in a translucent bag.

SAUL

Every one of those things'll kill
ya, eventually.

GWEN

Not a bad way to go. A little sensory
overload does a body good from time
to time. I like to indulge myself.

SAUL

You sure you don't want us to drop
you at a bus station somewhere?

GWEN

No. I like the pace of this trip.
It's been a long time since I've
been able to just sit back and let
the world happen to me.

SAUL

Well, don't get too used to it.
It's not going to last forever.

GWEN

Forever can be subjective.

SAUL

If you say so.

GWEN

So tell me, Ishmael, have you figured
out where you're going yet?

SAUL

I've known all along where I'm going.
It's called having a plan.

GWEN

Uh huh. I'm not talking about plans
and destinations. I'm talking about
where you're going to. You still
feel like a wayward Ishmael, not a
stalwart Saul to me.

SAUL

I see. Well, right now I'm going to
the cash register. I'm pretty sure
there's not a whole lot of 'maritime'
in that journey. But don't worry
Miss. I can always use these buns
as life preservers if I come across
any maelstroms between here and there.
Lord knows they'd work better at
that than their current purpose in
life.

GWEN

Joke if you want to. I know about
people. You don't add up yet. I think
you may become my pet project.

SAUL

You may become my pet peeve.

GWEN

Well. That's a start. Here. Buy me
these. And I'll take one of your hot-
dog things. We'll need drinks...

GWEN slips her arm into his and maneuvers him towards the
checkout counter. SAUL lets her lead him there, but doesn't
look particularly pleased about it.

28 INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

JACK sits in a chair at a table. His lip is bleeding, there's a cut on his cheek. He's breathing heavily and has been worked over hard but still has a look of defiance in his eye. A shadow looms over him.

JACK

I told you, I don't know what you're talking about.

STETSON

Sure you do, Mr. Hart. Sure you do. Shall we go over it again?

STETSON tosses something on the table in front of him. It's a Jack of Hearts, smudged with engine grease.

STETSON (CONT'D)

I can smell lies. You stink to me. Look. I'm a reasonable guy. I'm not asking for anything you don't readily have to give. But you will give.

JACK

There are other parties, sir, other than your employer who are interested in this game. I'm of no matter, but rest assured I'm not out of the game. You decide what you need to do. Just get on with it. My head hurts and I could use a long shower.

STETSON gently places a large and rather sinister looking knife on the table in front of JACK. JACK leans back and looks STETSON in the eye.

JACK (CONT'D)

(chuckling to himself)

You ever play cards, Mr. Stetson?

29 INT. MUSTANG - EVENING

SAUL and BIXBY are in the front seats, GWEN in the back.

BIXBY is dozing and SAUL is settled in for the long haul. GWEN is fidgeting in the back seat. She finally leans forward between the two. Everyone is getting a little irritable.

GWEN

I just remembered why I don't like not driving.

SAUL

Now who can't sit still?

GWEN

Funny.

SAUL

I'm a better driver than passenger.

GWEN

A trait Bixby here doesn't seem to share.

BIXBY's eyes pop open and he glares at her.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Sorry. Didn't mean to wake you.

BIXBY

Who's sleepin'? I'm counting bumps in the road. All eight hundred and forty thousand.

SAUL

Stock suspension. What do you expect?

GWEN

Why aren't we heading through St. Louis?

SAUL

I feel the distinct need to head not-quite west yet.

GWEN

That's kind of a specific sort of "vague".

SAUL doesn't respond.

BIXBY

You want me to tell her?

SAUL

(smiling a little)
If you'd like.

BIXBY

(turning in his seat
to look at her)
He hates Kansas.

There's a long pause as GWEN waits for the punch line.

GWEN

What?

BIXBY
Plain and simple.

SAUL
A lot of men hate a lot of things.
I'm pretty simple. I only hate three.
Beer with fruit in it.
Brand Managers. Driving through
Kansas.

GWEN
Wow. It's not just an act. You are a
strange one, aren't you?

30 EXT. MUSTANG - EVENING

The trio drive through a small town on the main road through the place. On the outskirts of town a ferris wheel can be seen above the trees, signature of a county fair in full swing.

31 INT. MUSTANG - EVENING

GWEN sees the lights and lights up herself, giddy as a schoolgirl.

GWEN
Oh! Oh, can we go? I mean, I know
you're in a hurry and all that...but
can we?

SAUL gives BIXBY a glance, BIXBY shrugs.

SAUL
Well, I wouldn't mind stretching my
legs a bit. Why not?

GWEN smiles a huge smile and stares up at the lights as they reflect in the windows of the Mustang.

32 EXT. FAIR - EVENING

SAUL and GWEN saunter through the fairgrounds, BIXBY close behind. GWEN slips her arm around SAUL's. He looks skeptical, but allows it. She closes her eyes and breathes in the fair, soaking in the ambiance. She guides him towards a cotton candy booth and nods at it. SAUL seems as if he's going to refuse, but then capitulates and digs into his pocket for loose change. As they haggle with the vendor, BIXBY stiffens and a concerned look crosses his face. He looks around, suddenly wary. It passes quickly, he shakes the feeling off and heads over to a corn-dog vendor.

33 EXT. FAIR PARKING LOT - EVENING

The Mustang sits in the moonlight, carnival lights refracting off of the tarnished chrome and worn paint of the stalwart vehicle. Yet there is more there - the ruts in the grass trace the tracks of multiple sets of tires. One in particular is the black Charger, just a few spaces away. A heat-haze still radiates from it's perfectly polished hood.

34 EXT. FAIR - EVENING

Dark boots walk along behind booths and tents, stepping over guy lines and wooden posts effortlessly. STETSON comes around the corner of one tent into the fair-light. Toothpick in his teeth, he closes his eyes and tilts his head to one side - listening. His eyes snap open and he steps out into the arcade.

35 EXT. FAIRGROUND ARCADE - NIGHT

GWEN munches on her cotton candy, poking her head into various booths, enjoying the moment. SAUL seems unmoved, tolerant. BIXBY hovers somewhere in the middle. She holds her hand up like a telescope and looks through it at SAUL.

GWEN

You're not a happy guy, are you
Ishmael?

SAUL

Happy enough, I suppose.

GWEN

Hmmph. I don't think you know how to
have fun.

She considers for a moment, then throws her arms wide and spins in a circle - embracing the night.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Oh! I needed this! You know, when I
was a girl I loved coming to the
fair. They're full of magic, you
know. Good old-fashioned magic.
Dipped in cornbread batter and deep
fried, of course, but magic
nonetheless.

Her spin is interrupted as she spies a YOUNG GIRL in jeans and a ratty t-shirt with a blue balloon clenched tight in her fist. Her bangs hang down low, covering her right eye. She is starring at SAUL.

SAUL

I used to know someone who thought like that.

GWEN

(looking back at SAUL)
There are a lot of us out there. Look around you. Didja treat this person's mania with the same enthusiasm you show mine?

SAUL

I married her.

GWEN

Wow. I didn't expect you to say that.

SAUL

I bet you didn't. Where to now? Care to take in the livestock?

GWEN wrinkles her nose at the thought and starts walking towards the carousel. Behind them the YOUNG GIRL follows. BIXBY comes up beside SAUL, twitchy, still looking around.

BIXBY

You feel that?

SAUL looks after GWEN, then turns to BIXBY, waiting for him to continue.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

I dunno - I'm not prone to having episodes, but the hair on my arms is standing up like it wants to take leave of the rest of me. Something's wrong. Storm's comin' or something. We should get out of here.

SAUL

And she said I didn't know how to have fun.

SAUL follows GWEN to the carousel, BIXBY reluctantly follows, eyes darting from shadow to shadow.

36 EXT. FAIRGROUND ARCADE - NIGHT

STETSON moves quietly and with purpose through the crowd, eyes darting from person to person, ignoring most, pausing at others, seeking - confident that he is getting close. He moves around the corner of a booth and walks up to the cotton candy vendor. He briefly talks to the man who ignores him at first.

STETSON passes a \$20 across the counter, and the man points towards the arcade area. STETSON tips his hat and moves off in that direction.

37 EXT. FAIRGROUND CAROUSEL - NIGHT

GWEN comes back from the ticket booth and drags SAUL onto the carousel. BIXBY looks on, unamused. SAUL seems to be unenthusiastic, but willing to get on with it to keep GWEN happy. She leads him over to a handsome pair of ponies and motions to SAUL to give her a leg-up onto one of them. He begrudgingly complies. Once up she motions for him to do the same. He eventually climbs into the saddle. The carousel starts to spin, machine noise and flashing lights and the sound of the one-man-band calliope fill the air. As the carousel takes them around the back side...

38 EXT. FAIRGROUND TICKET BOOTH - NIGHT

...STETSON walks into view, looking intently at the ground, then closing his eyes again, he cocks his head to one side. He turns until he is facing the carousel, and opens his eyes. A tight smile crosses his lips and he leans back against the ticket booth and watches the spinning ride -waiting. Just before SAUL and GWEN come into view a pair of cute high school seniors, perhaps a bit too made up and probably a little drunk come up to him and start flirting aggressively while a couple of their friends point and laugh. STETSON plays along for a moment and misses the pair on the carousel as they are carried around and away again. STETSON tries to crane his view over the girls, and finally shoos them away.

39 EXT. FAIRGROUND CAROUSEL - NIGHT

GWEN points at her pony and then holds up her hands like she's driving it. SAUL gets the joke and gives her a tight-eyed 'piss off' look. SAUL suddenly gets a confused look on his face and looks out at the crowd spinning by - searching for something, but not knowing exactly what. When he settles, his eyes are caught by the YOUNG GIRL, who is sitting on a pony right in front of him. She is staring at him relentlessly, blue balloon bobbing up and down as they continue their latest circuit around the calliope. He tips his hat, she sticks out her tongue, but doesn't stop staring. SAUL waves her off.

40 EXT. FAIRGROUND TICKET BOOTH - NIGHT

BIXBY paces back and forth along the edge of the metal railing surrounding the carousel, still nervous. He turns his back on the ride and looks into the crowd, then turns abruptly to his left and runs smack into STETSON. STETSON's concentration on the ride is shaken again and the two look at each other strangely for a moment, each trying to figure out if they know the other.

SAUL and GWEN come into view and leave it again before BIXBY and STETSON break eye contact. BIXBY smiles at the strange man and nods, but his grin instantly falters back into a concerned scowl. STETSON watches the ride for a moment or two longer, then gives up and walks away down the midway towards other attractions.

41 EXT. FAIRGROUND CAROUSEL - NIGHT

The ride comes to a stop and SAUL hops off of his pony. GWEN reaches out to him, wanting help off of hers just to be difficult. He again obliges and nearly drops her on her backside just to emphasize the point. She glares at him then starts laughing and jumps off the edge as the crowd disperses and the next crowd starts to embark. SAUL catches up with her just as she finds BIXBY. He looks at SAUL with an almost haunted look on his face.

SAUL

What is it Bix? You look like you've seen a ghost.

BIXBY

I don't know. Look, we gotta get out of here. I've got the heebie jeebies like nobody's business, and I swear i just came face-to-face with the most human version of a snake I've ever met. Can we get out of here now?

SAUL regards BIXBY, waiting for a punch line.

42 EXT. FAIRGROUND ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

STETSON's ears perk up. He turns his head, closes his eyes. He opens and with purpose starts to move through the crowd directly towards the trio.

43 EXT. FAIRGROUND ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

SAUL

Bix, you might want to lay off the mango...

BIXBY

(interrupting)

I ain't been...

The two are interrupted as SAUL is jostled forwards. He stumbles and turns around. Behind him the YOUNG GIRL, hair still over her right eye, is standing with a mischievous look on her face, still holding tight her balloon. SAUL looks at GWEN and then back. He hunkers down to get on her level.

SAUL

Well hello again little lady. Do I know you? You seem to know me.

The girl turns her head giving him the side-eye without really responding. She then steps forward and gets eye-to-eye with him. GWEN is amused, BIXBY is not.

44 EXT. FAIRGROUND ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

STETSON is moving with purpose through the crowd, pushing people out of his way.

45 EXT. FAIRGROUND ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

Just as SAUL is about to speak again the girl holds up a wallet right between their faces. SAUL looks confused, then startled. The girl giggles and bolts. The trio hesitate only long enough for it to sink in, then, yelling, they run after her. As they disappear into the crowd STETSON bursts into the open area they just vacated. He spins, frantically throwing his gaze this way and that.

SAUL jumps to get a better vantage over the crowd and sees the blue balloon bouncing along not far in front of them. He signals to BIXBY and GWEN, pointing. The dart in that direction, faces flying past, lights and shadow causing confusion.

STETSON growls and hurls himself blind into the crowd in the same direction the trio went.

As SAUL runs past an intersection of sideshow vendors and the main thoroughfare, he notices the balloon and a slight glimpse of the YOUNG GIRL off to the left, down a thin alley between the backs of carnival tents. He runs into the alley with BIXBY and GWEN just behind him. Jumping over guy wires and vendor supplies they burst into the next main drag, sparsely populated at this time of night. Spinning around they see the balloon just at the edge of a pool of light to the right, near some trees by the parking long. They run towards it, just as STETSON appears at the far end of the alley. He pauses, then runs off in the direction he was headed.

46 EXT. FAIRGROUND TREE NEAR PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

SAUL, GWEN and BIXBY run up to a large tree that stands just at the edge of the parking lot. In a lone pool of light right in front of it, the balloon is anchored to the ground by something dark. The YOUNG GIRL is nowhere in sight. GWEN walks to it while BIXBY and SAUL look around, trying to obtain the girl.

GWEN

Well look at this...

GWEN picks up the balloon. The string is tied tightly around SAUL's wallet. SAUL slowly walks up to her, and she hands it to him. He unwinds the string and opens the wallet.

SAUL

Looks to be all here.

A wind kicks up and blows the balloon from his grasp. As it floats up into the darkness past the tree the wind almost sounds like a small girl laughing.

47 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

SAUL reclines at the edge of the flickering firelight. It dances in his eyes as he stares into it, deep in thought. He is leaning against his pack, arms behind his head and his hat shifted back so he can see the abundant stars. He has a hayseed stalk in his mouth. BIXBY sits next to the well-proportioned campfire, beat-up pot of coffee brewing in the embers to the side. He plays with the fire, poking it with a long stick. GWEN squats down by the tent, looking up at the stars.

GWEN

So, tell me again why we're not in a hotel?

SAUL

(without looking at her)

Do you really need to ask? Look around you.

GWEN

I don't mind. I just wasn't expecting it. Surprise and confusion. You're good at generating both in a person.

SAUL

I do my part.

GWEN

And you always travel with a tent in your trunk?

BIXBY

Is that some kinda metaphor?

SAUL

Must go back to that whole boy-scout thing. Be prepared.

BIXBY
You were never no boy scout!

SAUL
(Standing up and
brushing off his
jeans)
Maybe not.

SAUL picks up his coffee in a tin cup, tips his hat to GWEN and walks off into the dark.

GWEN
Is he always like this?

BIXBY
Saul? He's an enigma wrapped in a
tortilla. He's OK.

GWEN
No, he's lost at sea. I could tell
that the first moment I met him.

BIXBY
What makes you say that?

GWEN
I dunno, something about him seems
sad.

BIXBY
We've all got our stories, miss.
Some are just a little less fairytale
than others. Want one?

BIXBY offers her a bottle.

GWEN
So, what is it he's delivering?

BIXBY
He won't tell me much, which is odd.
I have a hunch or two. I've honestly
never seen him like this. It's as
close to 'jumpy' as he's ever been
his whole life.

GWEN
(standing up)
Is that why you came with him?

BIXBY
See that ol' Mustang?
(MORE)

BIXBY (CONT'D)

It'll run for another twenny-thousand miles or so before it needs me for anything other than an oil change.

GWEN nods and heads over to the tent while BIXBY sighs and stirs the fire.

48 EXT. CAMPSITE FRINGE - NIGHT

SAUL walks through the scrub brush, not seeming to have a particular direction in mind. He takes a pull at his coffee. The stars are bright overhead. He looks down at his left hand - in the shadows the burn looks much more severe. He stares at it, firelight still seems to echo in his eyes...

49 EXT. SAUL'S HOUSE - DAY

SAUL stands outside of a small ranch house, isolated down a long gravel drive. The windows are boarded up and the grass is overgrown. It's been a while since the house was painted and it exudes an air of not so much neglect as a place suspended in a daydream, in denial. He retrieves a key from his pocket and hesitates, then quickly inserts it into the lock and steps into the house.

50 INT. SAUL'S HOUSE - DAY

The room is dark, illuminated only by what light streams in around the edges of the plywood. He stands still, letting his eyes adjust to the dark. The living room looks lived in, but feels like it was abandoned long before it actually was. He walks down the hall and looks into the master bedroom. His eyes glance over the dresser, the night stand, an armoire. There is nothing remarkable about the room - other than the stillness in it.

He leaves the bedroom and pauses at a closed doorway just down the hall. His hand hovers on the doorknob and he rests his forehead against the door, breathing slowly, before opening it.

The room is a work-in-progress, stepladder still in the middle of the room, drop cloths on the floor and over some furniture. A wall, half-painted, shows the beginnings of a 'nursery' feel with a stylized sunset mural begun, very Van Gogh feeling. An open can of paint, hardened from too many days left open sits on the ground with a paint brush permanently embedded in it. His eyes soften, and his shoulders slump - but just for a moment. He turns and leaves the room.

He stops in the study. An old roll-top desk sits in the corner amidst abandoned banker's boxes full of papers. He walks over to it and lets his fingers glide across the curved surface, drawing vague hieroglyphs in the dust.

He then quickly reaches down and opens the desk top. Sitting in one of the cubby holes is a small ornate wooden framed photograph. It is lying on it's face. He stares at it for a moment, then reaches out and touches it, then ever so gently pulls it out. Never revealing the image, like a close-kept secret he turns it over and looks long and hard at the image. Time seems to stand still, the dust in the faint light static in the stale air. Just as slowly he returns it to the place it came from and gently closes the desk. He reaches up and roughly wipes away the moisture that is gathering in the corners of his eyes.

He turns and heads into the kitchen and looks around, wipes his fingers through the thick dust on the counter top, examining them with absent-minded disgust. Coming to a quick decision he walks out the front door and rips the plywood off of the kitchen window. The glass is still intact underneath it. He goes back inside and opens the window about half-way, checking the screen. He walks over to the pantry and opens it. Seeking something, he finds it, reaching up and grabbing a white plastic bottle. He looks at it for a moment, then sprays it's contents all over the counters and stove-top and cabinets. Setting the bottle down, he grabs a mostly-used roll of paper towels and unrolls it a bit, soaking up some of the liquid. He then steps back, pulls out a pack of matches and lights one. Without hesitation tosses it onto the counter. There is a 'whoosh' as the lighter fluid ignites. Flames erupt in front of him as he stands there, contemplative.

51 EXT. CAMPSITE FRINGE - NIGHT

SAUL considers the burn on the back of his hand, then drops it to his side and tips his tin cup to his lips, gets nothing. He taps it on a nearby man-sized boulder and holds it up to his eyes as if the act would knock some hidden java loose. Disappointed that the contents are gone he strolls around another stash of boulders and steps onto a rough gravel road, barely more than a cart-path, and stops, puzzled. Sitting behind the boulders is a black Charger, glistening in the dark. He rubs his hand along it and looks inside. He then hears voices raised back in the direction of the camp. He turns and runs.

52 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

STETSON stands on one side of the campfire, a look of bored menace on his face. BIXBY stands on the other, brandishing a flaming branch from the fire.

BIXBY

Awright, mister, how 'bout you just
turn yourself around and keep walking!
I don't mean to be inhospitable, but
house rules - no guests.

STETSON

Ya know, this just adds all sorts of levels of complexity to what really should be a simple situation. You do realize that, don't you?

BIXBY

(waving the branch)
Move. Along.

SAUL

This gentleman bothering you Bix?

SAUL walks out of the darkness, eyes locked on the stranger.

BIXBY

Nothing I can't handle.

SAUL

What do you want?

STETSON

I think you know exactly what I want.

SAUL

I'm not giving you a damn...

STETSON

Come out of the tent, Miss Defoe.
Nice and slow-like.

SAUL gives BIXBY a questioning look, BIXBY slightly shrugs his shoulders, as perplexed as SAUL is.

STETSON (CONT'D)

I don't have all night. Mr. Barron sends his regards.

There is a brief moment where nothing happens, then GWEN unzips the tent and comes out, shoes in hand. She looks at SAUL and BIXBY and kneels down to put them on. She addresses STETSON without looking at him.

GWEN

Barron, huh? I suppose I should have seen that coming.

STETSON

He is most anxious to talk to you.

BIXBY

(quietly to SAUL)
Did I miss something? I seem to be saying that a lot lately.

SAUL
(quietly back to BIXBY)
You and me both. (then to STETSON)
What do you want her for?

STETSON
That is between Miss Defoe here and
Mr. Barron. Don't fret yourselves
gentlemen, I can assure you she will
come to no harm as long as she
cooperates. And you do intend to
cooperate, don't you Miss?

SAUL
And if she doesn't?

STETSON
I kill everyone here.

SAUL
Now that's not very neighborly of
you.

SAUL starts to move towards STETSON quickly, a determined grimace on his face, GWEN holds up her hand as she stands up.

BIXBY
Saul!...

GWEN
No, don't. (glaring at STETSON and
then back to SAUL) Look, sometimes
things catch you up. I've just been
prolonging the inevitable. (looking
at STETSON) Am I allowed to bring my
things?

STETSON
We're not uncivilized here (looking
around at the campsite) despite the
present surroundings. Yes, bring
them along. I expect we'll find
what we're looking for in them, yes?

GWEN
You'll forgive me if I don't answer
that here.

GWEN goes over to the back of the Mustang and extends her hand towards SAUL. SAUL reaches into his pocket and throws her the keys. BIXBY's eyes go a bit wide. GWEN opens the trunk and pulls out her suitcase. She hesitates for a moment, then slams the trunk shut.

GWEN (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry about this guys.

BIXBY

Don't take it too hard, everyone makes mistakes.

GWEN

No, not that bit. This bit.

GWEN flings SAUL's keys into the darkness.

GWEN (CONT'D)

I don't want you involved. You've been kind to me and offered me a lift when I needed it. That's where our story has to end, though Bixby - this one *is* kind of a fairytale. I met a couple of knights in shining armor...though maybe a little polish is in order. Thank you.

GWEN picks up her suitcase and walks over to STETSON who turns and walks away with her into the darkness. SAUL and BIXBY listen to their footsteps until they can't hear them anymore. Then there is the sound of an engine starting and headlights flash on. The car drives away.

SAUL

You can put that down now.

BIXBY looks confused for a half-a-second, then drops the torch back into the fire.

BIXBY

What do we do now?

SAUL

Get some rest. We'll find my keys when there's light.

BIXBY

What? No - we need to go after her! We're going to lose them!

SAUL

Why? She seemed pretty clear on what she wanted. Good riddance. Women are nothing but trouble anyways.

BIXBY

You don't mean that! Come on, help me look!

SAUL
Pointless. Whatever happens next,
it's obviously without her.

BIXBY
You really need to give that a rest.

SAUL
What?

BIXBY
Your "woe is me, life done me wrong
once" attitude about everything.

SAUL
You need to watch it.

BIXBY
No. YOU need to get over it. Bad
things happen to people all the time.
They get on with life. Not 'cause
they want to, 'cause they have to.

SAUL
That is *not* what's going on here.

BIXBY
Bullshit. The Saul I used to know
would have hotwired his car and run
that sumbitch down already without
batting an eye.

SAUL
Maybe that man is gone. Maybe I
don't have the energy for him anymore.
(BIXBY starts to talk) No please
Bix, leave it. I'm tired.
I'm really tired. I just want to get
this over with.

SAUL turns and walks away from him. He pulls the tent flap
and kneels down to get in, but stops short. BIXBY stares a
hole into his back then throws his arms up in disgust and
paces back and forth by the fire. SAUL's shoulders start
shaking, as if he's sobbing. BIXBY glares at him again, but
his face softens. He walks over and reaches out to touch
SAUL, but can't quite do it.

BIXBY
Saul, I'm sorry. I'm just frustrated.
I didn't mean....

SAUL rocks back on his heels out of the tent, holding
something in his hand. He is laughing.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

What....?

SAUL

Bix! Grab a flashlight! We've got some keys to find!

He hands BIXBY the device he found. It is a GPS tracker, with a note stuck to it. The words "FIND ME!" are scribbled on it. BIXBY looks at it, puzzled.

BIXBY

Well I'll be... Sneaky little...This is a nice one, what the hell is she doing with...?

SAUL

(interrupting)

Time to ask those questions later. Unless you'd rather get some shut-eye and worry about it tomorrow...

BIXBY

Nope! Nope...I'm with ya!

BIXBY sets the GPS on the front seat of the Mustang, and the two of them head off into the brush with flashlights. The GPS map screen shows a red dot flashing and slowly moving up the interstate.

53 EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

The Mustang flies up the interstate, which is sparsely populated due to the time of day. The lines on the highway keeping time with the beat of an imaginary song.

54 INT. MUSTANG - MORNING

SAUL and BIXBY drive on in silence, BIXBY chewing on his lower lip, gazing down at the GPS tracker now and again.

SAUL

Any change?

BIXBY

No, seems to have stopped in Denver.

SAUL

Good. We're only a couple hours out.

BIXBY

Why do you suppose she has this thing in the first place? Kinda like finding a mouse with a microwave.

SAUL

Got me.

BIXBY

What do you propose to do when we get there?

SAUL

Won't be able to work that one out til we see where she is. Care for some music?

BIXBY

No. Care for some jerky?

SAUL

Pass.

BIXBY looks out the window, chewing on his lip.

BIXBY

I figured the dude was after you.

SAUL

Yeah. So did I.

55 EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

The Mustang continues on it's way, disappearing into the glaring light of a hazy morning.

CUT TO:

56 EXT. ESTATE GATE - DAY

The Mustang sits off to the side of the road in a sparsely populated apparently quite wealthy neighborhood. BIXBY and SAUL lean against the car and gaze across the street, bemused.

BIXBY

Well, I sure as hell wasn't expecting *that*.

Across the street from them is an ivy-walled estate with a crest adorning the massive cast-iron gate at the drive.

SAUL

Maybe we should have.

BIXBY

What do we do, wait til night?

SAUL

Naw. We just go in.

BIXBY
Just ring the front doorbell?

SAUL
Pretty much.

BIXBY
That seems to lack subtlety.

SAUL
The direct approach yields the
quickest results.

BIXBY
Hm.

They get back into the car and drive up to the gate. There is a call button on a small pole near the end of the drive. SAUL pushes it. Finally there is a click and the gate starts to open.

57 INT. MUSTANG - DAY

BIXBY
You're kidding me.

SAUL
Maybe they're expecting someone.
Luck happens, you know.

BIXBY
Not to me it doesn't.

58 EXT. ESTATE DRIVE - DAY

They head up the long drive. The house is enormous and has a vaguely sinister feel - old-school Gothic mixed with Hollywood pretense, smoke, and mirrors. Wrought iron and stone gargoyles glare down from corners of vine-shrouded tile roofing. SAUL pulls up and parks next to the black Charger not too far from the main entrance. SAUL points at it and gives BIXBY a look. BIXBY contemplates for a moment, then grins, reaches under the seat and pulls out a wrench.

SAUL
You've got ten minutes.

BIXBY
Won't need more than three.

SAUL gets out of the car and walks up to the front door.

59 EXT. ESTATE - DAY

SAUL rings the bell. A moment later the butler appears.

BUTLER

May I help you?

SAUL

I'm here to pick up Miss Defoe.

BUTLER

I'm sorry, who?

SAUL

Mr. Barron gave me explicit orders.
Pick up Miss Defoe and take her
downtown.

The BUTLER looks at him, confused for a moment, then it registers.

BUTLER

I'm sorry sir, the lady arrived very early this morning. I hadn't the opportunity to discover her name yet. If you would, please make yourself comfortable. It may take me a few minutes.

SAUL

Thank you, much obliged.

60 INT. ESTATE FOYER - DAY

SAUL wanders through the foyer and walks into the great room directly ahead of him.

61 INT. ESTATE LIBRARY - DAY

It is adorned with artifacts from across history, some biblical, some military, some cultural, all seem very rare. The room is bathed in a red glow from the curtains over the windows and the tapestries on the walls. There is a balcony overlooking a larger room below.

As he examines a very old book enclosed in a museum case, a quiet voice attracts his attention.

BARRON

It's a first edition of Henry VIII
'Great Bible'. Paris pressing,

BARRON walks into the room. He is an imposing figure, barrel-chested with an odd gait that seems almost canine. His attire is impeccable, greying at the temples and a razor-thin aviator's mustache he exudes the ambiance of an empire-age British Lord, accent and all, but something about the whole picture doesn't seem right - as if he's a caricature of himself, but a carefully crafted one.

SAUL

Mm. Best seller.

BARRON

Our good King Henry was such a misunderstood man. History is never kind to the scandalous, is it?

SAUL

I suppose that's true enough.

BARRON

Mm. (chuckling to himself over a private joke). I do have some experience with that. He had the right idea about wives, I think. Or at least women in general. I'm not saying I necessarily approve of his...methods...of moving from flower to flower, but the principle is sound.

SAUL

You're a man of unique vision.

BARRON walks over to one of his treasures and picks it up, his eyes take on a mesmerized glow. As his fingers trace the contours of the object he talks, his voice distant.

BARRON

I am many things. I have many names, many of them not terribly flattering and given to me by jealous nobodies. Of those names one thing I most definitely am, sir, is a collector. I collect the remnants of lives. Artifacts. Resonances. All of this, and so much more than you can imagine, come to me because that is the order of things. They come to me and I will have them.

He then comes back to himself and sets the bauble down.

BARRON (CONT'D)

So. Why is it you are here? Hmm? Inquiring after Miss Defoe? What interest do you have in her? How did you know she was here in the first place? That last one - the "how" - I think is top of my list. I didn't know she was here myself until just a short time ago.

SAUL

I have a knack.

BARRON

Hmm. You should feel honored. I don't let just anyone see my collection. Though I have to admit it does often make for a somewhat hollow gloat. I suppose fresh eyes can be useful. (waving his arm at the room) What do you think?

SAUL

I suppose they're nice.

BARRON

(chucking in a vaguely disturbing way)

Oh, you have no idea. Enough though. What do you know about our Miss Defoe?

SAUL

Hardly a thing.

BARRON

Really? So. You don't know that she's in my employ?

SAUL hesitates for a moment before starting to answer.

BARRON cuts him off.

BARRON (CONT'D)

I can see you didn't. Did you know that she is a compulsive liar and has been known to struggle with bipolar disorder? That she has a habit of leaving a wake of destruction in the lives of the dozens of men she...i guess 'consumes' is as good a word as any...on a regular basis. I've actually had to perform a bit of an intervention more than once to keep these little dramas disrupting my business. She can't be trusted. She can't be loved. She can barely function on a level that is consistent with moral social behavior. So, you can understand my surprise that you're even here in the first place. Well, maybe not surprise. I do get the feeling she has one or two talents that the less civilized human male can have a hard time letting go. Is that it?

(MORE)

BARRON (CONT'D)

Are you one of those Cro-Magnons?

SAUL

I see you're a man of too many words.
Most of 'em empty.

BARRON

Well, whatever the reason, she's mine now, you can't have her. She stole something from me and in just a few minutes I'll be retrieving it from her own hands. Then we'll have a chat. *Nobody* steals from me Mr..? No, never mind. You're not important enough to warrant a name. So what do you propose to do next? I gather you're a confident man, and probably not lacking in "clever", despite your aging hayseed ambiance. But as I said, Miss Defoe won't be leaving. Ever. She's mine - just as much as the rest of this (motioning again at the room) is - and I'm having quite a hard time imagining what you think you could possibly do to change my mind.

SAUL

I'm looking at a whole room of possibilities.

BARRON's eyes narrow just as the BUTLER brings GWEN into the room.

BUTLER

Miss Defoe, as you requested sir.

GWEN

Ishmael???

SAUL

(nodding his head)
Miss Defoe.

GWEN seems to almost blush, as if she's not terribly pleased that he knows her full name.

BARRON

Miss Defoe, who is this man and why is he here?

GWEN

He's nobody. Someone who gave me a lift.

BARRON

And you expect me to believe that?

SAUL

Your turn to believe what you will. Happens to be the truth though.

BARRON

And our young lady here has so touched your heart in such a short time that you feel the need to rush to her aid? How marvelous!

SAUL

I don't appreciate anyone walking into my camp and taking something without asking.

BARRON

So it's pride, is it? Hm. What a letdown. You almost had my faith in the hearts of men restored. A pity. Stetson! Get in here!

STETSON comes into the room from a far door, sandwich in hand and a bite in his mouth.

STETSON

What the hell are you doing here?

SAUL

I came for an apology. And the girl.

STETSON

Wow. I mean seriously. Wow.

SAUL

Alright, enough screwing around.

SAUL steps over to display case and picks up an ornate porcelain tea cup, one from a set of eight. He holds it in his hand like an egg and starts to squeeze. BARRON steps forward a look of concern.

BARRON

Now why don't you give that to me before I get quite irritated?

SAUL

Gwen, how 'bout you leave now. Just go right on out the front door.

GWEN hesitates, looking from SAUL to BARRON and back.

BARRON
Stay put, Miss Defoe. Don't move a
muscle.

SAUL squeezes.

SAUL
I don't relish the lacerations I'll
probably endure, but you need to
understand I'm willing. Gwen, the
door.

BARRON
Go ahead. It's only a cup.

SAUL
One of eight. You say you're a
collector, I'm betting this is more
than mildly important to you.

SAUL squeezes harder, the muscles of his forearm tensing.
BARRON's eyes widen as both he and STETSON move forward.
SAUL points at them, and smiles.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Gotcha. Gwen. The door.

GWEN looks at BARRON who nods. She runs past SAUL, pausing,
then continues out the door.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Let's give the little lady a moment,
shall we?

STETSON
Boss?

BARRON tries to maintain a calm demeanor, but his eyes are
hard and the redness creeping up his neck betrays him.

BARRON
Hush. Hayseed, your mamma never
explained to you about biting off
more than you can chew, did she?

SAUL
I've always been a disappointment to
my mama.

The three stay in stalemate, STETSON starts to move wide
around SAUL. SAUL looks at the cup.

SAUL (CONT'D)

You know, this is a very nice piece.
Hate to see it broke. Ok, you win.
Here ya go.

SAUL whips the cup high in the air, somewhere between STETSON and BARRON. He turns and bolts from the room as the two converge on the rapidly descending cup. BARRON leaps over a low ottoman more gracefully than his form would suggest and snatches the cup out of the air and cradles it to his chest, breathing heavily. STETSON stands by. BARRON, without looking hisses at him.

BARRON

Get him!

62 EXT. ESTATE - DAY

SAUL flies out of the house and races to the Mustang, BIXBY and GWEN are sitting inside waiting, motor running. With a spray of gravel they careen down the drive and through the gate. A moment later STETSON is out of the house and leaps into his Charger. He turns the key and is rewarded with the grinding sound of a dead starter motor. He tries again, and then pounds his fists on the steering wheel, just as BARRON comes out of the house, still holding the teacup. He glares at STETSON.

BARRON

Did you check her luggage?

STETSON

Yep. It's not in there.

BARRON scowls and glares out at the gate.

BARRON

(suddenly quite calm)

Then I think I know how Mr. Hayseed
fits into the equation. Get this
thing fixed.

BARRON turns abruptly on his heel and marches back into his house, the heavy doors close behind him with a low boom, seemingly by themselves.

63 INT. MUSTANG - MOMENTS LATER

SAUL guides the Mustang down the street, making multiple turns on his way to hit the highway. He finally gets onto the interstate and gives it the gas. BIXBY sits in the passenger seat, half turned so he can talk to GWEN. GWEN sits quietly in the back seat, an uncomfortable look on her face.

SAUL
(tight lipped and in
a quiet voice)
You got something to tell me?

BIXBY
(under his breath)
Lucy...you got some 'splainin' to
do...

GWEN
It's a lie. I didn't work for him.
I dumped him.

BIXBY
That piece o' work? You and he...?

GWEN
He can be charming. A bit. He's
also loaded - you've seen his place.
A girl could do worse. Don't give
me that look. Well...at least that
was how I thought about it at the
time. Truth is, it *would* be hard to
do worse.

SAUL
You expect us to believe that he
tracked you down across the country
just 'cause his ego was bruised?

GWEN
You've met him, what do you think?

SAUL
But you live in Philly.

GWEN
Exactly. And when he's in town, he
goes out on it. Often. I used to
frequent the same haunts, for the
same reasons. We made a connection.
It happens. Does it really bother
you that much?

SAUL
No. There's way more to this.

GWEN
Think what you want. Maybe I'm just
that good, that he couldn't bear
that I walked away. Bussed away, to
be precise. So put that in your pipe
and smoke it.

SAUL just shakes his head and glares out the window.

SAUL

I don't like being played.

BIXBY

I'm still waiting to hear something like a 'thank you'.

GWEN

I'm not playing anybody. You realize you did more than bruise his ego, you left a mark. He won't forget that. (she pauses and looks away) I am glad you came after me.

SAUL

I don't have a thing to lose. Look, I'm tired. How 'bout we just shut our mouths and experience the wonders of silence for a bit, shall we?

GWEN glares at him hard and then looks over at BIXBY, who looks away from her and chews on his fingernails.

64 EXT. HIGHWAY MONTAGE - DAY

The trio cruise out of Denver and head west as fast as caution will allow. The car carves a route through valleys and along rivers, through tree-clad mountains along winding roads, across arid expanses of dirt and rock. Day turns to evening, to twilight, to night.

65 EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

They stop at a gas station to fill up, GWEN pushes past SAUL as he exits the car and races into the station. SAUL spreads a map out on the hood of the car while BIXBY tends to the gas, eventually pushing SAUL out of the way so he can check under the hood, SAUL grumbles and resumes looking on the car roof. GWEN returns from inside the station. She tosses a plastic bag full of junk food into the car and commences hopping around and stretching long sinuous stretches, trying to get the feeling back in her tired legs and arms. SAUL tries not to notice. BIXBY does and mutters something to himself as he ducks back under the hood.

66 INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

BIXBY snores slightly as SAUL continues putting miles behind them. GWEN finally leans forward and folds her arms on top of the front seat. Passing lights pull them in and out of shadow, a soft blue light from the dash is sometimes all that illuminates them. She rests her chin on her arms and just looks at SAUL for a moment.

GWEN

So you ever gonna talk about whatever
it is that's bothering you?

SAUL

Nothing's bothering me.

GWEN pauses, considers, waits for more. It doesn't come.

GWEN

So, what did she do to you?

SAUL

Excuse me?

GWEN

The woman who gave you this sunny
appreciation of "my team".

SAUL just keeps driving. GWEN pushes on.

SAUL

You don't think the past few hours
are enough?

GWEN

Maybe. No. Deep roots here, anyone
can see that, but you're all
conflicted about it. You want to be
pissed at me, but there's still this
vague chivalry thing draped around
your shoulders like a ratty poncho.
I think that explains the guilt.

SAUL looks at her sharply in the rear-view mirror

SAUL

Guilt!?

GWEN

Yep. A 5-gallon bucket full of it.

SAUL

Is this your "obstinate gnome" thing?

GWEN

More on the "discerning" side. When
did she dump you?

SAUL laughs and shakes his head. He puts on the brakes and
pulls over to the side of the road, stopping the car.

SAUL

You have no idea what you're talking
about.

GWEN

Then TELL me.

SAUL

No. I don't think so. Now if you'll excuse me, nature calls.

He yanks on the parking brake and gets out of the car, and stalks away from it. GWEN doesn't hesitate, climbs over the seat and follows him into the dark. The moon is low and huge on the horizon casting long shadows, giving the landscape a strange glow. He keeps walking, she comes after him.

67 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

GWEN

Tell me! I can go on making stuff up. All night. I can be quite persistent.

SAUL stops, without turning towards her. She slows her pace and stops a good distance away from him.

SAUL

You know, all I wanted was to see the world, me and Jimmy Stewart. I didn't exactly come from a background that made that an easy proposition. So as soon as I was able, I headed east in that car. Got into the courier business. Little jobs at first, but they got bigger fast. My client list read like American royalty. Most of it highly secret, a lot of it not strictly legal...but I did get to see the world. Mission accomplished.

GWEN

You were a smuggler. A pirate.

SAUL

Of sorts.

GWEN

That doesn't fit at all.

SAUL

I considered myself "the pony express".

GWEN

Of course you did.

SAUL

Either way, I talked myself through it. If people wanted to pay me to transport their little secrets, I had no qualms taking their money to do it. And yes, there was a woman. Loud fast love. A damn fine team. But the job....the job. Days I'd be away. Weeks. After a couple years of it she started to fade, I could see it and couldn't stop it. She wanted a family. I didn't want to be an absent father. I ignored her. She played it quiet.

GWEN

Uh huh. So did she have the affair, or was it you?

SAUL turns around and comes back at her fast, his face unreadable. He comes right up to her, seething.

SAUL

What? NOBODY had an affair. Dammit Gwen. You gotta stop watching so much TV.

GWEN's demeanor changes, no longer quite so cavalier.

GWEN

I'm just trying to help.

SAUL

I don't recall asking for any help.

GWEN

But you need it, Ishmael. More than anyone I've ever met. Your whale is your past, and instead of chasing it you're running from it...But same result, it'll kill you either way.

SAUL

If I recall it was Ahab after the whale. Ishmael was just along for the ride.

GWEN

I'm starting to see why she left you.

SAUL

She didn't leave me. She died.

GWEN is about to say more and comes up short. She seems taken aback and it surprises her.

GWEN

I...um.. Oh jeez. I didn't know.

SAUL

No, of course you didn't. You're too busy being clever.

SAUL glares at her and finally softens a little. He steps back and surveys the landscape around them. GWEN seems unsure what to say, if anything.

SAUL (CONT'D)

It finally made it through my thick skull that I had two choices. Find a new way to live, or let her go. I got all poetic one night and wrote a letter to her. Never sent it. I'm not much of a talker, but I knew this had to be face-to-face. Had to leave for a job, told her we'd talk when I got back. I think she sensed change was in the air. She lit up. Apparently she bought paint, wallpaper. Started converting the spare bedroom into a nursery while I was away. She was going to spring it on me as a surprise. The investigator said she must have overreached, the ladder toppled. Freak accident. One in a million. One in a million. She wasn't even up that high.

GWEN

Jeez, I'm sorry. I talk too much.

SAUL

Yes. You do. No matter. Shoulda done it sooner. Mighta made a difference.

SAUL gets down on his haunches and rocks back into a sitting position. His whole appearance slumps.

GWEN

It might not. You don't know.

SAUL

Doesn't matter what people know. It's what they believe that drives them.

GWEN

The delivery?

SAUL

The only thing she ever asked - she wanted to see the sun set over the ocean. Let's just say I'm keeping that promise.

GWEN stops talking, considering. She moves around behind him and reaches for his shoulder. She hesitates, but then touches him, then kneeling down behind him she puts her arms around him, almost protectively. He stiffens. She drops her head down so it almost rests on her own arms, then tilts it up slightly, but enough. She moves her lips close to his ear.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Please don't.

GWEN sits back a bit.

GWEN

Like my mama always said, "The struggle doesn't matter. It's how you fold the cookies that counts."

68 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The trio drive under hot Nevada skies along a desolate two-lane highway.

69 INT. MUSTANG - DAY

SAUL and BIXBY drive along in silence. GWEN is asleep in the back seat.

SAUL

We're going to have to pull over for gas, among other things. Bix, you might want to take a look at the front tires too. She's pulling a little.

BIXBY

Did you break my car?

SAUL

Your car?

BIXBY

You heard me.

70 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

The car starts to shimmy, SAUL looks annoyed.

71 INT. MUSTANG - DAY

The car starts to shake more severely. SAUL mutters something and pulls to the side of the road. He stops and throws the door open. BIXBY does the same, GWEN opens her eyes and shields them from the glare, yawning and stretching. The sky is a strange shade of orange.

GWEN

Are we there yet? What's going on.

72 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

BIXBY stands by the front passenger tire and cocks his head.

BIXBY

Flat tire.

SAUL walks around to the other side of the car to take a look. The tire isn't completely flat, but it's barely inflated.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

Musta picked up a nail or something on the interstate. Suppose we're lucky she didn't blow out.

SAUL

Luck's got nothing to do with it.

BIXBY chuckles.

BIXBY

You gonna get the spare and the jack, or am I?

SAUL walks back around to the drivers side door.

73 INT. MUSTANG - DAY

He reaches into the car through the open window and pulls the keys out of the ignition. GWEN scrambles out of the car after him.

74 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

GWEN follows SAUL to the back of the car. He pops the trunk.

GWEN

Did he say flat tire?

SAUL

See what you miss when you sleep?

GWEN
Is there anyplace around here to
pee?

SAUL looks around at the desert and points across the ditch
on the north side of the road.

GWEN looks at them in dismay.

GWEN (CONT'D)
I think I'll wait.

SAUL
Suit yourself.

GWEN
Can I help?

SAUL begins unbolting the spare tire from the trunk
compartment. He hands her the lug wrench, it's filthy.

SAUL
You can hold this.

She takes it from him and rather absent-mindedly throws it
on the ground. SAUL ignores her and yanks the spare out of
the trunk, revealing the case in its "smuggler's compartment".

He glares at her and rolls the tire around to BIXBY, GWEN
picks up the lug wrench and follows. BIXBY hunkers down and
starts loosening the lug nuts. SAUL walks back and grabs
the jack. GWEN pulls the keys out of the trunk and flops
back into the car, waiting.

DISSOLVE TO:

75 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

BIXBY wipes his hands on his pants, stands up and kicks the
new tire.

BIXBY
That oughtta hold a while, anyway.
Might want to get some new ones ASAP
though.

SAUL
I suppose that wouldn't be a bad
idea.

Suddenly the car starts, tires spin and gravel sprays. GWEN
tosses BIXBY's backpack out of the window just before getting
the car back onto the road. With surprising speed she fades
into the distance and disappears.

BIXBY and SAUL stand there in the middle of the road in silence. BIXBY nudges his backpack with his toe.

BIXBY

Well. I sure as hell didn't see that coming.

76 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

SAUL and BIXBY walk along the road in silence - it stretches out for miles in either direction. A couple hundred yards off to the south of the road a long freight train idles.

BIXBY

I wasn't built for this much walkin'.

SAUL

We all have our crosses to bear.

BIXBY

You seem pretty calm.

SAUL

No point in being otherwise.

BIXBY nods his head to the side and holds up one hand with a shrug and an expression of "can't argue with that" on his face. They continue walking in silence for a moment.

BIXBY

So, you wouldn't happen to have a plan in your breast pocket, would you?

Somewhere far ahead a lone train whistle blows and there is a loud 'clunk'. Dust rises from the boxcars as they jerk backwards slightly and then settle. SAUL gets a grin on his face.

SAUL

How fast can you run?

SAUL turns and takes off at a sprint towards the train.

BIXBY looks startled for a moment, then realization hits. He yells after SAUL.

BIXBY

And I sure as hell wasn't built for running!

He groans seeing his cry goes unanswered, and takes off after him.

77 EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS BOXCAR - DAY

SAUL climbs into an open boxcar and gives BIXBY a hand. He also scrambles in and dusts himself off, breathing hard.

78 INT. BOXCAR - DAY

BIXBY

How long you suppose we've gotta
wait before this thing gets moving?

The whole car jerks, SAUL and BIXBY both lose their footing and collapse on the floor.

SAUL

Not long at all. Apparently.

BIXBY

Timing is everything, they say.

The train pulls away from the switch yard, slowly picking up speed. SAUL gets to his feet and stands in the open doorway, holding on to the frame. He watches as the country slides past. BIXBY stays seated on the floor, absentmindedly drawing in the dirt.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

So just how the hell are we supposed
to find her?

SAUL doesn't answer, just keeps looking out at the landscape.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

I don't understand. I thought that
thing was important. Of course, how
would I know? You won't tell me.

SAUL

It needs to get to the coast.
That's where it's headed. Besides, I
didn't tell you. The radiator light's
been coming on for the past hour.

BIXBY

What?

SAUL

I'd give the old girl another couple
hundred miles at best in this heat
before she coughs up her spleen. We
just need to get to a town with a
rental service. We'll find her easy
enough after that.

BIXBY starts to laugh, quietly at first.

BIXBY

Now that's what I call poetic justice.

A voice replies from the shadows of the front of the car.

INDIGO

First time on the rails, ain't it boys?

BIXBY turns with a start, SAUL too turns towards the voice.

INDIGO (CONT'D)

I can always tell the new ones. Too damn squeaky clean. Smell of society. Smell of perfumed decay.

SAUL

You wanna come into the light there, mister? I don't like talking to ghosts.

INDIGO

Hmm. Ghost indeed. Maybe you do know something after all.

A wiry man of impossible-to-determine age limps into the light. His face is weathered and carved with deep wrinkles, like a blend of old leather and burlap. A shadow covers his sunken right eye, his ragged clothing seems to gather round him like some kind of magical familiar, an extension of his soul. His shirt is open almost to his waist, his chest littered with tattoos. A turquoise necklace around his neck and similar cuff bracelet are the only vaguely elegant things about him. His dark straight hair is pulled back into a ponytail, a baby-blue shred of fabric holds it in place. He is missing two fingers on his right hand.

BIXBY

Naw, no ghost. Mebbe a rat.

INDIGO

I don't think I like you.

SAUL

You been doing this long, have you?

INDIGO

Longer than you been alive, most likely.

SAUL

So guess we should get acquainted. Looks like we've got a long journey ahead of us.

INDIGO

I don't think so. This is my train.
I think I'll be throwing you off the
way you came.

BIXBY

And how do you propose to do that?

INDIGO

I'm a tough old fuck.

BIXBY starts laughing as INDIGO suddenly walks towards him limp-less and straight-arms him across the windpipe. BIXBY collapses in a pile gasping for breath. INDIGO turns on SAUL and pulls off his shirt revealing a rock-hard sculpted torso. SAUL circles to the right, keeping space between them.

SAUL

Not the sharing type?

INDIGO

You're a pretty-man. I'm gonna hate
mussing you up.

SAUL

I'm going to hate being mussed up.
Why the anti-social behavior?

INDIGO

My business. My life. My train. You
ain't earned a passage yet. Get off.

SAUL

Sorry, no can do. Got a meeting,
can't be late.

INDIGO launches himself at SAUL with a vicious jab at his head. SAUL sidesteps it gracefully, grabbing his wrist as it whistles past and pulling him off balance, sweeping his ankle as he passes and sending him careening to the ground.

INDIGO smiles and lets a hissing laugh escape from tight teeth as he gets up unnaturally fast and dives for SAULS midsection. SAUL tries to sidestep again but INDIGO manages to get one arm around his waist. He manages to grab a belt-loop on SAUL's jeans and yanks hard, using his own momentum to add power to the attack. SAUL is spun around and trips over his own feet. He crashes to the ground and slides perilously close to the open door, stopping with his head and shoulders on the outside of the train. INDIGO whirls around and tries wildly to get hold of SAUL and push him the rest of the way out. SAUL flips himself around and rolls to the center of the car where the two collide in a blur of limbs and dust. SAUL connects a hard right to INDIGO's jaw, and it rocks him backwards.

INDIGO staggers for a moment, regaining his feet. He puts a hand to his mouth and spits out a tooth, a slight trickle of blood dripping from between his lips.

INDIGO

Oh pretty-man, that's gonna cost
you.

SAUL doesn't waste time with words, he stands still, ready, arms extended away from his sides slightly, palms towards his assailant. INDIGO attacks again and again SAUL uses the man's own force against him. INDIGO crashes face-first into the wall of the car and turns with a howl of fury. He begins swinging wildly at SAUL, who avoids or deflects each blow with quiet grace.

SAUL

I can do this all night. You wanna
knock it the hell off and we can
talk like civilized men?

INDIGO

If there's one thing I ain't, it's a
civilized man.

SAUL

(nodding)

A man should know his limitations.

INDIGO takes a step back and becomes strangely calm.

INDIGO

You're about to learn yours.

INDIGO abruptly steps forward. SAUL takes a swing that should have connected, but strangely finds himself way off target, as if INDIGO closed with him in the space between the blink of an eye. While he tries to adjust the trajectory of his punch, INDIGO's fist, hammer hard, lands hard on his chin. SAUL's knees buckle, but never hits the ground. A snake striking, INDIGO's hand clamps onto his throat and holds him there, half-way to the ground.

INDIGO (CONT'D)

You seek passage. I ain't heard
nothin' that gives me any inclination
to offer it. And now you done pissed
me off. Time to say good-night.

INDIGO, still with SAUL dangling from his one hand, drags him over to the same opening they climbed into. SAUL weakly tries to get out of his grasp but consciousness is tenuous at best. His sweaty fingers can't find purchase on INDIGO's forearm. INDIGO begins pushing him out the opening.

INDIGO (CONT'D)

Come back when you know something.

Just as he readies the final push, a shape moves behind him. There is a loud thud and INDIGO collapses into a disjointed pile on the floorboards like someone turned off a switch. BIXBY grabs SAUL just as he's about to fall out of the boxcar and pulls him back in. The two stumble backwards and SAUL's head connects hard on the floor. Everything goes black.

SAUL comes to with a start, a blurry BIXBY is the first thing he sees looming over him.

BIXBY

Hey. Hey man, you still with me?

SAUL slowly sits up, wincing as he does and feeling the back of his head. BIXBY sits next to him, a brick on the ground next to him.

SAUL

That could have ended better.

BIXBY

You'll be ok.

(pointing at the brick)

The things you find when your face-down on the floor. Door wedge. And Hobo dispatcher.

SAUL

Is he also still with us?

BIXBY

Yeah. Out like a light tho.

SAUL

How bout you?

BIXBY

Been better. Been worse. Same old same old.

SAUL

(nodding towards the unconscious INDIGO)

We should get him under control before he rejoins us.

BIXBY

Don't know about you, but I left all the camping supplies in my other pants.

SAUL
Nothing in your pack?

BIXBY shakes his head. SAUL sits and looks at the man, and motions towards him with one hand.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Looks like a nice sturdy hunk of rope holding those trousers on. You could use it.

BIXBY
What do you mean "You"? Besides, that might be all that's holding them pants on, you know. I don't think I'm too keen on finding out his preference in men's undergarments, (then under his breath) if any.

SAUL
A risk we'll have to take, I think.

BIXBY pauses.

BIXBY
Well, you're as capable as I am.

SAUL holds up his fist. BIXBY rolls his eyes and does the same.

SAUL
(With BIXBY)
One, two, three...

BIXBY throws rock, SAUL throws paper.

BIXBY
Dang it.

BIXBY scrambles up and gets to work of obtaining the rope belt and tying up the vagabond.

SAUL lays back down and puts his hand over his eyes.

79 INT. BOXCAR - LATER

SAUL sits near the open door, watching the desolate country go by. BIXBY sits opposite him, back against the wall with his eyes shut. Against the far wall INDIGO lays motionless, staring at SAUL intently with dark eyes, arms secured behind his back.

INDIGO
(motioning to his
ropes)
You gonna get me outta these?

SAUL
If you're good. Promise.

INDIGO
I was mistaken to try and throw you
off my train.

SAUL
Well, now that's mighty neighborly
of you.

INDIGO
I've been watching you. I see you
now. You're already dead. Dead inside.
Empty. No life. Your travels are
ash. Your destination, ash. You are
ash. I'm the one speaking with ghosts.

SAUL shifts uncomfortably.

INDIGO (CONT'D)
So what are you going to do when you
find her? The one you spoke of?

SAUL
I haven't given it much thought.

INDIGO
Lies. You've been thinking of nothing
else. Let me give you some advice.
Trust her.

BIXBY
(laughing in spite)
Why should he do that?

INDIGO
(motioning at SAUL)
He is dying. She is dead. Sometimes
it takes the dead to guide what's
left of the living. Otherwise - you
might as well just give up and fade
away.

SAUL
Nice words. Kinda have to find her
before I can even consider them.

INDIGO spits and grins.

INDIGO

The universe provides. Always.

The train jerks and a definite change in speed occurs. It starts to slow down and signs of civilization start to crop up. Soon they are passing through a small town. Trailers and low-slung small ranch houses huddle around the tracks, occasional chain stores show that the place isn't completely off the beaten track. As they creep past a gas station/motel complex BIXBY stiffens.

BIXBY

Saul!!!

SAUL looks up, BIXBY is pointing out the door, looking like he's either seen a ghost or won the lottery. SAUL follows his finger and sees it. The Mustang, or one just like it is parked at the edge of the lot between the gas pumps and the building.

SAUL

Why not.

SAUL pulls a jackknife from his pocket, opens it and looks at INDIGO.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I suppose a promise is a promise.
Even if it is between ghosts.

He cocks his arm and with a quick flip of his wrist embeds it in the floor in the middle of the car, then turns to BIXBY.

INDIGO

(his voice cracking
like dry leaves)

You leavin' this train on the south side? That's crossing the tracks. No going back after that. No going back. Things are likely to get a little strange from now on.

SAUL

Couldn't get much stranger. Hell, we'll probably break our necks just jumping.

INDIGO

Just doing my job.

SAUL waves him off and steps nearer the open door.

SAUL

Ready?

BIXBY nods and the two jump from the train and land hard, rolling down the grade, through gravel and brush..

80 EXT. GAS STATION/MOTEL - EVENING

SAUL and BIXBY stroll across the couple hundred yards towards the gas station, the Mustang in view but still too far away to know for certain.

BIXBY

If it's her, what are we going to do?

SAUL

I have some thoughts on that.

BIXBY

Good thoughts, or bad ones?

SAUL

I'm not sure I know right now. Kinda depends on how she responds.

BIXBY

You still keep a spare set of keys in the front wheel well, don't you?

SAUL

Yep.

BIXBY

We could just grab and go.

SAUL

That would be the smart thing.

BIXBY

But you're feeling stupid tonight?

SAUL

I need to know.

BIXBY starts to speak, but decides against it. The pair walk in silence, getting closer and closer to the car. SAUL starts to smile as they get within about thirty yards.

SAUL (CONT'D)

It's her.

81 EXT. GAS STATION/MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING

They come up to the Mustang. There is a water residue stain where the hood latch is, but the hood itself is cold. BIXBY puts his hand on it.

BIXBY

Been here for a while. She's got a problem tho...look at the hood. You were right. Overheated. Bad, it looks like.

SAUL

Do I know my car, or don't I?

BIXBY

(looking around)

Doubt there are a lot of auto parts shops open right now. Gonna have to wait til tomorrow.

SAUL

Grab the case out of the trunk and go get us a room. I'm going to hit the bar and see what I can see. Join me when you're done.

BIXBY

I'm gonna pass on that. I'm all sorts of wiped out. Gonna get me a mango tea and crash.

SAUL

I won't be long.

SAUL walks down to the far end of the motel and heads into the bar.

82 INT. MOTEL BAR - NIGHT

There are almost no people inside, just a couple in a booth in a corner and a nearly passed out biker on a bar stool. At the far end with her back to the door, GWEN is sitting nursing a mixed drink, head in her hand and lazily swirling the drink with a straw. SAUL stands in the doorway for a moment, considering his next move. He walks over and stands right behind her, then pulls up a bar stool and sits down next to her. She turns her head to look at him, and as the thick haze of alcohol lifts enough for her to understand what she is seeing, she stops stirring and stares at him. The bartender comes around and he orders up without looking at GWEN.

SAUL

I'll have what the lady is having.

The barkeep nods and sets about the task. SAUL still doesn't look at GWEN, and she can't look anywhere else. The barkeep finally brings over the drink and sets it in front of him. He picks it up in one hand and holds it in front of his eyes, turning it this way and that.

SAUL (CONT'D)

You broke my car.

GWEN

(in a tiny voice)

Ishmael?

SAUL

It's ok, it was bound to happen eventually. Bix will fix. It's what he does.

GWEN

Bartender! Am I asleep?

BARTENDER

No ma'am.

GWEN

I thought so. Bartender! Am I drunk?

BARTENDER

Yes ma'am.

GWEN

Well alright then. Now we're getting somewhere. What are you doing here?

SAUL

Came to get my car.

GWEN

Stop talking about that stupid stupid car. Piece of crap blew up on me.

SAUL

That's what you get for stealing a man's horse.

GWEN

Do you have any idea how miserable you made me? Make me? Um. whichever tense fits...just use that one.

SAUL

How exactly did I do that?

GWEN

By not being you. I mean who you were supposed to be. You know.

SAUL

Sorry. No.

GWEN

(getting mad)

Look, quit interrupting. You're not even here, and that's just rude. You were SUPPOSED to be some damn petty crook, someone who didn't matter, some punk kid I could dazzle and get under the sheets with if I had to so I could get back my property.

SAUL

Doesn't seem like your style. Excuse me...your property?

GWEN

The box, you idiot. You stole it from me.

SAUL

I most certainly did not.

GWEN

Cards on the table. Deal. You tell me I tell you. Deal?

SAUL

Shoot.

GWEN

Where were did you get the box, hmmm?

SAUL

Barr..

GWEN

Barron Swink and Elder. Yep. Do you know where I work?

SAUL

Ba..

GWEN

Barron, Swink and Elder. I'm the damn curator. Assistant curator. Same thing. I take pride in my coll...collec... stuff. You don't know what a bastard Barron can be. He's obsessive. So I don't take kindly to some THIEF (poking him in the chest) ripping me off!

GWEN pauses and just looks at SAUL, eyes squinting a little.

SAUL waits for her to finish. He finally interjects.

SAUL

And?

GWEN

You're kind of cute for a thief. In a great big ol' bastard sorta way. No. That's not what I was going to say. Where was I?

SAUL

You saw me take the box.

GWEN

That's right! How did you know that? Nevermind. I saw your face. You were surprised. No, stunned. You looked at that stupid little box like it had stung you. Then you just grabbed it and left. It wasn't even supposed to be there. Stupid mix up. I was supposed to box it right back up and send it to Denver. So I figured I could call the cops or follow you and get it back myself. Give me a chance to use my spy stuff.

SAUL

Spy stuff?

GWEN

I like spy stuff. I'm a techno-geek when it comes to stuff like that. Heh. Daddy was a spyyyy. Mama always said...

SAUL

I don't understand...why didn't you just call the police?

GWEN

Where's the fun in that? Besides, if I could have caught you, just think how impressed Barron would have been. Instead, you heard him, he thought it was ME who stole it. ME!!! After all those months of working my ASS off in that stupid horrible gallery. The nerve. I was about to explain the whole thing to him yesterday when you busted in and rescued me.

SAUL

I thought we were supposed to do that. You kinda implied it.

GWEN

Yeah. You were. I was going to hand you over to him on a silver platter, but you got there too damn early, and now he STILL thinks I've got it. Well...at least now I -do-.

SAUL starts to laugh. Quietly at first, but it builds up.

SAUL

You *really* over complicate things. Have you always been this way?

A confused and somewhat irritated look crosses her face.

SAUL (CONT'D)

So wait a minute - you're telling me that all this time he never even KNEW I had it? Good lord...

GWEN glares at him as much as her state will allow.

GWEN

Why don't you go screw yourself.

SAUL

I'm sorry - I don't mean to make light of your own situation, but damn Gwen, that's funny! I've been looking over my shoulder when I should have been looking over yours.

GWEN keeps giving him the eye, then finally starts to giggle a little herself, finally collapsing into a body-shaking laugh...which then morphs into something else. Soon tears roll down her cheeks.

GWEN

Why did you have to be...?

SAUL

Pardon?

GWEN

Dammit Saul, I think I started falling for you all over again all the way back on that stupid bus. You had to go and be...YOU...and wreck everything. I'm so confused. The real reason I didn't tell Barron was I hadn't made up my mind if I was gonna. You vex me, Ishmael. Well, hell with it. I can't play both sides anymore.

(MORE)

GWEN (CONT'D)

What'd you say? Never mind. I want you to take me. Take me away now and to hell with cars and boxes and stupid jobs and everything.

GWEN stands up from her seat and staggers back against the bar and falls into SAUL's arms, almost sending him to the floor as well. She regains her balance just enough to look deep into his eyes.

GWEN (CONT'D)

You shouldn't have oughtta come here.

GWEN leans in to kiss him, misses and staggers against him. She leans away and looks at him with confusion

GWEN (CONT'D)

Stop moving.

SAUL

I think you need to get some sleep.
Come on.

SAUL gets out of his chair, grabs some cash from his pocket and tosses it on the bar. GWEN smiles at him and weaves a bit as he takes her by the arm and directs her out.

83 EXT. MOTEL BAR - NIGHT

SAUL guides GWEN down the sidewalk, she quietly giggles.

GWEN

You don't even know what room I'm in.

SAUL

Enlighten me.

GWEN

You gotta guess.

SAUL

Where are your keys?

GWEN

In my pocket.

SAUL

May I have them?

GWEN

Get 'em yourself. If you can.

SAUL
I really don't have time for...

GWEN
Chicken.

SAUL rolls his eyes and steps away from her. She turns her back to him and falls backwards into his chest. She cranes her neck and tries to whisper into his ear, but due to angles it doesn't quite work.

GWEN (CONT'D)
Front right pocket. All yours.

She throws her arms back up and around his neck. SAUL shakes his head and finally reaches into her jeans pocket. She pushes back against him, trying to be seductive, but the alcohol has other ideas. He staggers back a step. It takes him a moment longer than he's comfortable to realize he keys aren't there. He pushes her away.

SAUL
Come on. Where are they?

GWEN
Is that any way to treat a lady?

SAUL
You're about as much a lady as I am
a toaster oven.

She pulls the motel room key from her purse and throws it at him. He looks at the key, looks up at the room numbers and steers her down to one of the doors.

84 EXT. GWEN'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

He fumbles the key in the lock and finally gets the door open. He waves an arm at the open door, trying to usher her in, but she won't budge.

GWEN
I'm not going in there alone. It's
dark.

SAUL
Dammit Gwen...

GWEN
I'm serious. You found me, who else
might be here?

SAUL looks exasperated, but finally walks in ahead of her...

85 INT. GWEN'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

...searching for the light switch. She comes in quickly after him. He turns around just in time to have her throw her arms around him and lock him in a deep kiss. Saul steps back, and tries to get out of the embrace, but his protests grow weak, quickly, and in a moment he throws his arms around her and kisses her back, hard, finally pushing her up against the wall by the bed. Almost as quickly he stops and removes her arms from around his neck. He holds her by the wrists and anger grows in his eyes. Then he stops himself, releases her and steps back from her.

SAUL

Gwen, I can't do this.

GWEN looks at him as she still leans against the wall, and starts unbuttoning her blouse.

GWEN

If I can, you can.

SAUL

You don't understand...

Gwen finishes with the blouse and then reaches up to unclasp the front of her bra. Her fingers fumble and she's unable to do it.

GWEN

(fighting through
slurring speech and
struggling to keep
focused)

I don't have to understand. Do you understand?

SAUL seems dismayed, a strange look in his eyes. He holds one hand up, slightly, but doesn't move.

GWEN pauses and walks over to him again and embraces him. He doesn't respond. She rests her head on his chest, smiles and closes her eyes...and passes out. SAUL catches her gently as she slumps against him, and carries her over to the bed.

He lays her down and looks at her for a moment, a brief look of tenderness crosses his face. He swings her legs into the bed and pulls the sheets over her.

86 INT. GWEN'S MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Pencil thin rays of light shine through the heavy drapes in the otherwise dark room. GWEN opens her eyes and instantly shuts them. A low groan escapes her lips and she just breathes for a moment.

She tries twice to throw the covers off of herself and finally succeeds on the third attempt.

She bites her lips and runs her tongue over her teeth. Her hair is a mess and she tries to push it into place by force. She finally gives up. She kicks her legs around and stands up, almost losing her balance. She slips off her blouse, tosses it aside and walks towards the shower. She reaches to take off her bra, but slows down, a look of puzzlement crosses her face, as she feels a half-remembered wave of deja-vu sweep over her.

SAUL

What is it with you and taking off
your shirt in front of people?

GWEN gives a little shriek and spins around, covering herself and wincing in pain at the sound of her own voice all at the same time. SAUL is sitting in the corner armchair, feet up on another chair.

GWEN

What the hell are you doing here!??
Get out of my room!

SAUL

Now don't get yourself all worked
up. I don't think your head will
thank you for it. I couldn't afford
to have you slip out on me, so I
decided to make sure it didn't happen.

GWEN

Out!

SAUL

I'm not going anywhere til we have a
little talk. One where we're
both...unaltered.

GWEN

What are you talking about? I.....

A look comes over her face as she remembers a fragment or two of the previous night.

GWEN (CONT'D)

Oh crap. Oh crap.

SAUL

Don't worry. I rarely take the
ramblings of the town drunk seriously.
Or take advantage of one.

GWEN
How the hell are you even here?

SAUL
Magic carpet and three wishes.

GWEN shakes her head and sits back down on the bed.

GWEN
So what are you going to do?

SAUL
It really depends upon you. Last night you said it was time for cards on the table. I agree. What's in it for you? Why give the case back to Barron? You don't seem to like him. You don't seem to like the job much. So. Why do it?

GWEN
Nobody makes me look like an idiot, whether I like what I'm doing or not.

SAUL
No. Nope. There's more to it than that. You don't strike me as the type who would bury herself in a stack of shot glasses just because your car overheated. What gives?

GWEN doesn't say anything and looks uncomfortable, maybe a little embarrassed.

GWEN
(getting agitated)
How about if you get the hell out of my room and let me get a shower?

SAUL
I will be taking the case and the car back. Thought you should know.

GWEN
(quietly, less forceful)
Please? My head hurts, I'm filthy and I really need to get out of these clothes. Can we talk after?

SAUL
I'll be waiting outside.

SAUL gets up and walks out the door. GWEN follows him and shuts the door gently behind him.

She leans her face against it and closes her eyes, letting the cool of the wood soothe her. She locks the door and heads to the shower.

87 EXT. MOTEL SIDEWALK/BIXBY'S ROOM - MORNING

SAUL walks down to his room and bangs on the door, harder than is necessary.

SAUL
Hey! Bixby! Time to get going! We
gotta....

He pauses as he looks out at the parking lot. Down not too far from the bar is the black Charger.

SAUL (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Shit!

He gets closer to the door and knocks lighter, but with urgency.

SAUL (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Bix! Come on man, we gotta get out
of here.

There is a muttering followed by a crash, then some shuffling. BIXBY opens the door and squints at the bright light.

BIXBY
Where the hell did you end up last
night?

SAUL
Not now. We gotta go. Grab the case
and go get the car started.

BIXBY
Hell, what's the rush?

SAUL points at the Charger, and BIXBY grows quiet.

BIXBY (CONT'D)
Ok.... Ok. Hang on a sec.

BIXBY goes back into the room and comes out with the case. SAUL points him towards the Mustang and he nods. SAUL gives him the keys and then walks back down to GWEN's room and tries to open the door. He then knocks. There is no answer, and he realizes he can hear the shower running.

SAUL
Dammit!

He turns and runs back down the walkway, and has to dodge around the housekeeping cart as they begin their rounds. At the end of the walk he darts around the corner to where BIXBY is slipping the case back into the trunk compartment.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Will she run?

BIXBY

I checked, if we can fill up the radiator we can get some miles out of her without too much trouble.

SAUL

(pointing at the gas station)

Do it. Wait for me there. And keep the car outta the line of sight from the rooms.

SAUL turns and runs back to GWEN's room and knocks again.

Still no answer. He looks indecisive, looks at the Charger and then his watch. He knocks. Still nothing. He slowly starts to walk away from her room, unsure. He picks up speed towards the Mustang, but slows and looks over his shoulder.

He pauses, debating whether to wait for her or just bolt...and then spies the housekeeping cart. He walks down to it. The housekeeper is oblivious to the world, changing sheets while listening to her iPod. The master key is still in the door. In a snap decision SAUL grabs it out of the lock and runs back down to GWEN's room and lets himself in just in time for GWEN to come out of the bathroom in a towel, trying to beat the dust out of her clothes. She just stares at him.

88 INT. GWEN'S MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

GWEN

Don't you ever knock?

SAUL

Barron is here.

GWEN's eyes get wide.

GWEN

I swear - I didn't...

SAUL

You've got to make a decision, and make it right now. You can stay here with Barron, or you can come with me and see how this story plays out. But you gotta decide now.

GWEN walks over to SAUL and seems to weigh options in her head.

SAUL (CONT'D)

I really need...

GWEN puts her finger on his lips to quiet him, leans up and gives him a single kiss. Not a seductive kiss designed to manipulate - just a simple, small kiss. She then takes a step back, her eyes closed for a moment, thinking. SAUL waits.

GWEN

You'd trust me? I wouldn't.

SAUL

It's got nothing to do with trust. I'm not even sure why I'm making the offer in the first place. I should just leave you. But. If you want a ride out of here, this is your chance.

GWEN

(still holding her blouse in her right hand and staring at it)

Do I have time to dress or do I have to break local decency laws?

SAUL

Hurry.

SAUL turns to the door and looks out warily.

89 EXT. GWEN'S MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

He scans the row of rooms, there is no movement. GWEN comes up behind him pulling a comb through her hair. He looks at her and notices how disheveled and dirty her clothing has gotten.

SAUL

New look?

GWEN

It's all I've got. You forgot to rescue my wardrobe when you came for me.

SAUL nods his head in a 'touche' manner.

90 EXT. MOTEL SIDEWALK - MORNING

The two start to walk down towards the gas station. They get about four rooms from the end and the door opens up.

STETSON walks out trying to balance a danish on top of a cup of coffee in one hand while trying to pull the door shut with the other. The three almost run into each other. They come up short and stare. STETSON has an almost comical grin on his face that fades into confusion and instantly into recognition.

STETSON

Well I'll be a son of a...

SAUL

Oh Hell.

SAUL rushes him and gives him a mighty shove. STETSON trips backwards into the parking lot and yelps as hot coffee explodes all over him. SAUL grabs GWEN by the arm and starts running. She almost falls, but gains her legs quickly, startled by the abrupt burst of speed. STETSON scrambles to his feet trying to brush the hot coffee off of himself and burning his fingers at the same time.

STETSON

BARRON!!! Barron! They're here!

He runs to the door next to his and starts pounding on it.

BARRON opens it with annoyance, still in his bathrobe.

BARRON

What are you blathering about? I told you we'd leave in...(looking at his pants) You piss yourself or something?

Before STETSON can answer the Mustang roars out of the gas station parking lot, BIXBY at the wheel. BARRON's eyes go wide with surprise.

BARRON (CONT'D)

(strangely calm)

Get the car started.

91 INT. MUSTANG - MORNING

BIXBY drives like a madman, SAUL sits sideways in the passenger seat trying to get a look behind him. GWEN too looks out the back window.

BIXBY

Where to?

SAUL looks out the window and points towards an old road that winds up into the hills.

SAUL

There. That big old sedan can't handle corners like we can.

BIXBY

Sounds like some kinda plan to me.

92 EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - MORNING

BIXBY punches it and slides the Mustang around a corner and heads out a long straight gravel road towards the foothills.

93 INT. MUSTANG - MORNING

SAUL

Shit. I must be losing my chops.
We're sending up a damn signal flare.
Big ol' arrow of dust pointing right
at us.

GWEN

You can't let him catch us.

BIXBY

Ah. The horsethief speaks. Aren't we supposed to string her up at the nearest gallows tree?

SAUL

It'll wait Bix. We don't have any commissioned mourners.

BIXBY slides around another corner as they start to climb out of the valley, gravel spraying at high velocities as the tires scramble to find a grip. GWEN sits back and looks quietly out the window, trying not to slide around on the slick vinyl.

BIXBY

Man, this is like my old dirt-track days. I haven't had this much fun in years.

SAUL

Don't break my car.

BIXBY

My car.

SAUL

That's what I said. My car.

BIXBY

Pish posh.

Just as they crest the hill, they can see the Charger reach the approach to the hill far below.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

Man, he's gonna hate hisself for having a nice car. I don't envy him the paint-job touch ups this gravel is gonna cost him.

94 EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - MORNING

The Mustang winds round corners and along the ridge above the valley, and finally turns away from the town below. They drive through scrubbish trees and long abandoned attempts at farming. They come to an asphalt crossroad, and BIXBY looks at SAUL, holding his arms crossed on the top of the steering wheel, each hand pointing in the opposite direction and a question in his eyes. SAUL shrugs slightly and points to the westward stretch. BIXBY turns and guns it. For a moment they drive in silence.

95 INT. BACKROAD - MORNING

BIXBY

Alright, now that we've lost 'em...

SAUL

(muttering to himself)

Maybe.

BIXBY

(ignoring him)

...is somebody going to explain to me why she's with us?

SAUL

Seemed the thing to do.

BIXBY

(shaking his head)

I don't know from that.

GWEN

If I'm that much of a headache why don't you just let me out here.

BIXBY

Works for me.

GWEN

Dammit, I don't need this. I already had this conver...

SAUL

Enough. Bix, we need to find the interstate eventually. I'm gonna get some shut-eye, I didn't sleep much last night.

BIXBY gives GWEN a sardonic look in the rear view mirror. She sticks her tongue out at him. He tries to conceal a smile. SAUL leans back in his seat, puts his hand over his brow and closes his eyes. They travel on in silence for a little while, only the sound of the engine and the road. A red light flashes on the console. A second later steam starts to sputter out from under the hood.

BIXBY

Oh, that's not good.

GWEN is looking out the back window again, and sees a car crest a rise a couple miles back. It appears black, and appears to be moving fast.

GWEN

Hey...!

SAUL opens his eyes.

SAUL

It's gettin' so a man can't rest his eyes without angst happening.

BIXBY

What?

GWEN

There's a car behind us.

SAUL tries to look in his rear view, so does BIXBY. More steam rolls out from under the hood.

SAUL

Bix?

BIXBY

I can't tell, but it don't matter much. We're kinda out of options. I'm going flat out and she's losing power.

Just as they round a shallow bend, an old, disused road appears on their left between pine trees and some mountain rubble.

SAUL

(pointing)

Bix...

BIXBY

I see it.

96 EXT. SIDE ROAD/CULVERT - MORNING

BIXBY slides the car into a snap turn and runs the Mustang up and over a rough patch of washed-out road. The car groans in protest. BIXBY spins the wheel around frantically to avoid rocks and tree trunks. The steam is so bad it's hard to see, he flips on the wipers which smear the brownish liquid across the glass. Branches crash against the windshield, bits of leaves and pine needles gumming it up even worse. Finally there is a loud metallic thud as the steering wheel whips out of his hand. The car jerks to the right, goes nose-first into a culvert, and stops moving.

BIXBY starts to try to push his door open, GWEN tries to pick herself off the floor behind the front seats, but SAUL puts his hand on both their shoulders. He puts his finger to his lips and points out the back window. They all look and see the Charger fly past the entrance to the road. They all relax and collect themselves. SAUL tries to open his door, but it's stuck shut. He rolls down the window and climbs out. BIXBY manages to force his door open and GWEN follows him out. They gather in front of the car and assess the damage.

SAUL

You killed her.

BIXBY

You told me to turn.

SAUL

Hmmm.

BIXBY walks over to the side and climbs down so he can see under the car. He doesn't have to look for long.

BIXBY

Wheel bearing is sheared off and the steering linkage is in pieces. Oil is leaking from more than one place, and I smell gas.

SAUL stands still for a minute, then turns and kicks a small branch lying near him. He then limps away, sits down and rubs his ankle, then turns his back to the car and everyone else. BIXBY stands up and grabs the keys out of the ignition. He grabs his backpack, and goes back and pulls the case out of the trunk as GWEN watches. He takes the case, walks over to SAUL, and sets it down next to him, then walks into the trees a little bit and also sits down. GWEN still stands near the car, unsure what to say or do. Finally SAUL speaks.

SAUL

Well. I guess we hoof it. It's not that far back to town, maybe five or six miles as the crow flies. Maybe we can find something to rent. Might be for the better anyways, different car will be harder to track.

BIXBY

(quietly)

She's not dead, Saul, just temporarily out of commission. We can always come back for her, get her fixed up.

SAUL

Maybe. Maybe. Well. Day's not getting any younger. Gwen, you up for a bit of a hike?

GWEN

I suppose there's not much of a choice.

She starts to walk back towards the blacktop.

SAUL

Nope. Not that way. At some point our friends are going to figure out we gave 'em the slip and are going to come back. I don't want to be out in the open. We go cross-country.

BIXBY

Seems like I picked the wrong decade to give up physical fitness.

GWEN looks back towards the blacktop and then at SAUL

SAUL

(giving her a questioning look and motioning into the brush)

Shall we?

GWEN throws up her arms in surrender and walks over past the car, past the two of them and starts into the trees. She then stops and turns, impatient, arms across her chest and waits. SAUL grins, gets up and picks up the case - and starts walking in a different direction. BIXBY dusts himself off and winks at GWEN and heads after him. She mutters something under her breath and follows.

97 EXT. HILL COUNTRY - DAY

GWEN stumbles along behind BIXBY and SAUL over uneven rocky ground spotted with pines and scraggy trees. A coarse grass tries to cover the ground and is only partially successful.

The going is less than easy, but far from impassible, and they seem to be making pretty good time considering the situation. They come upon a stand of tangled weed-trees that effectively make a natural windbreak. SAUL starts to push through them and stops dead. GWEN runs up next to him and tries to push past, but he throws his arm out hard enough to nearly knock her down.

GWEN

Ow! Hey...

SAUL

Next step's a doozy.

She looks where he's pointing and there is a dark hole just beyond the toes of his boots. Piled rocks define a sort of wall around it, some wooden planks rotting away on the far side.

GWEN

What is it?

BIXBY

Old homestead?

SAUL walks around the perimeter of the old foundation and the other follow. They climb down a short slope and around a dirt ridge that divides the edge of what might have once been the boundary of the structure's "yard" from what lays beyond. As they climb over it they stop. BIXBY lets out a low whistle.

SAUL

And the man said we were ghosts...

A scattering of foundations litter the landscape, an old collapsed shed, the remnants of a few larger structures that may have been businesses, bits of nearly rusted away machinery. The long-dead town seems to be waiting for something to happen.

BIXBY

What do you think? Old mine?

SAUL

Yep. Look over there, probably the mine entrance.

(MORE)

SAUL (CONT'D)

Knowing the area I bet they tapped into natural gas or something. Nothing would have cleared a town faster in those days than some unexplained deaths deep in the mines.

GWEN

I wonder how long it's been here?

SAUL

Maybe a hundred fifty years, give or take.

GWEN

Creepy.

They pick their way through the debris, and then hear the snap of a branch and the sound of gravel sliding down a hillside.

SAUL

(hissing to the others)
Quick! In here!

They scramble into the mouth of the old mine and wait. At first nothing happens, then two men appear around the wall of trees at the edge of the dead town.

98 INT. MINE ENTRANCE - DAY

GWEN

You think they saw us?

SAUL

We'll know in a minute.

BIXBY

How do these bastards keep finding us?

GWEN

The guy in black. He is, among other things, Barron's personal 'tracker'. I don't know his story, but I know the legend. I think he sees in infrared.

BIXBY

Aw hell, nobody's that good anymore.

SAUL

Maybe not. But we're hiding in a cave, and there he is.

BIXBY raises an eyebrow and concedes.

99 EXT. GHOST TOWN - DAY

BARRON and STETSON pick their way through the scrub and rubble. While BARRON has to pick his way carefully, often nearly misstepping and seems less than happy about the situation. STETSON on the other hand moves with a quiet sense of confidence. He knows exactly where he's going, his eyes playing over the landscape, scanning. He has his toothpick tight between his teeth again.

BARRON

You are sure they went this way?

STETSON

You ask me that again and we're done.

BARRON

You press your luck sometimes, Mister Stetson. Don't forget who's employ you're in.

STETSON

Luck's got nothing to do with it.
(then loudly) Miss Defoe!!! I know you're here. You and your friends need to come out now, and bring the package with you. I'm done horsing around. It's hot. I'm tired.
I want to go home.

BARRON comes up beside him.

BARRON

(quietly)
Where?

STETSON

Let's see how good you are. I got you here, you figure it out.

BARRON looks at him with contempt and steps ahead of him.

BARRON

Gwen! Come on Gwen. You've got something I want. You stole it from me and now you can give it back. Two choices. I get what I want, or things are going to get ugly.

100 INT. CAVE - DAY

SAUL gets up and walks out of the cave.

GWEN
 (in an urgent whisper)
 No...!

BIXBY
 (almost at the same
 time)
 What are you doing?!

101 EXT. GHOST TOWN - DAY

BARRON doesn't see him at first, when he finally does he stumbles a little as he turns to face him.

SAUL
 It's about time you figured out who you're really after.

BARRON
 Chivalrous, my friend, but pointless.
 I know what I'm looking for.

SAUL
 Do ya now? You sure about that?

BARRON
 Look at me. What do you think?

SAUL
 I think you're an idiot. I stole your precious box. It was mine in the first place, so I don't feel any urgent need to comply with your wishes.

BARRON
 (tilting his head in the general direction of STETSON and speaking quietly, almost an aside)
 Is this true? Could we have been barking up the wrong tree all this time?

STETSON shrugs.

STETSON
 You told me to track the girl, which obviously I have done. There's no "we" to be discussed here.

BARRON
 I see. I see.
 (MORE)

BARRON (CONT'D)

Well, metaphorically speaking, she was the logical suspect in the...um...theft. No matter - the point is utterly moot. Its here, now. I can smell it.

102 INT. CAVE - DAY

GWEN looks out at SAUL and then back at BIXBY, urging him with a look of exasperation to come up with something. BIXBY just shrugs. Finally GWEN gets up, grabs the case and runs out of the cave with it. BIXBY shouts in alarm and chases after her.

103 EXT. GHOST TOWN - DAY

GWEN runs straight towards BARRON. SAUL is even taken by surprise, but STETSON just leans back against a tree and laughs to himself.

GWEN stops right between the two and holds the case up over her head, and shouts to BARRON.

GWEN

If I come with you will you leave him alone?

BARRON

(to SAUL)

Perhaps. Perhaps.

GWEN

You know, over the past few days I've been ignored, patronized, kidnapped, rescued, beaten up, broken down and damn near mortally embarrassed, and I could REALLY use some freaking fresh clothing. Saul, this is now up to you. I give this to him, and you never see me again.

SAUL

Now why would I want that?

GWEN sags, a look of frustrated exasperation crossing her face.

GWEN

You need to quit playing with me. You think I've been nothing but trouble for you, but everything I've done has been FOR you! I'm trying to save your life!

BARRON

What do you think, Hayseed? You think that's likely? I think you're experiencing the real, delusional, bipolar, non-medicated Gwen Defoe. Tell you what. Make an accord with me. Let her come with me. With the box. Name your price. I can be a very reasonable businessman.

SAUL

(to GWEN)

Miss, you're going to just have to forgive an old fool his temperament. I can be a bit crusty around the edges at times. (to BARRON) Look - you can have the stupid box. I really don't give a damn about it. I need what's inside. That's what's important to me.

BARRON

You mean the ashes of your dead wife? Sir, why do you think I want it?

SAUL stares at him, dumbfounded.

BARRON (CONT'D)

You may not know me well, but surely you understand that as a collector I am very particular about the...particulars of my artifacts. This one comes with a soul, as it were...

BARRON levels his gaze at GWEN and the box

BARRON (CONT'D)

...and a vessel to contain it. No, I'm afraid it's all or nothing. And it won't be nothing. Come Miss Defoe. Playtime is over. Time to go home.

SAUL walks towards GWEN, ignoring BARRON.

SAUL

Look Gwen, I have a promise to keep. I need the box to do it. No point in giving up now. You can still come along if you want.

BARRON

Brave offer.

(MORE)

BARRON (CONT'D)

She'll only skip out on you again.
What all has she stolen from you?
Your car, your peace of mind, what's
left of your wife for crying out
loud. She'll whittle away at you til
all that is left is a husk. While I
find that thought quite appealing,
I'd rather cut to the chase and be
done with it. Alright. Alright.
I've had enough. Stetson!

STETSON nods from where he sits, hat over his eyes. BARRON pulls a pair of white gloves from his pocket and puts them on with patience and deliberation.

BARRON (CONT'D)

As much as I'd like to add you to my
collection, Hayseed, I think I'll
pass. Lately I've been more interested
in the pure - or at least the mostly
unblemished. It's all a matter of
taste. Take our Miss Defoe here. She
tastes of honey and dust. A bouquet
I quite fancy. You, however, are
brackish water.

Looking at BIXBY he grimaces.

BARRON (CONT'D)

And I don't do clowns.

BIXBY

Oh fuck off.

SAUL looks at BIXBY, startled. STETSON starts to laugh.
BIXBY shrugs.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

Seemed like the appropriate response.

As the five square off, the sky starts to darken as if late dusk has come several hours early. All around them the ground is strewn with small jagged chunks of rock, sparse scrub grass and deep dark vents that may have once been natural air sources for the mine.

BARRON

So what's it going to be?

SAUL

Got a deck of cards?

BARRON looks startled.

BARRON
Excuse me? Cards?

SAUL
Single card draw. High card takes
all.

BARRON
Intriguing. Intriguing. And if I
refuse? Seems to me I'm in the
position of power here.

SAUL
Three on two.

BARRON
You can hardly walk without your
bones creaking like an old door.
She's wiry, but dismissible. The
clown is no threat whatsoever.

SAUL
We're tenacious.

104 EXT. GHOST TOWN - NIGHT

BARRON considers for a moment, and holds his hand out to his
side, palm up. STETSON walks forward out of the deepening
gloom and places a deck of cards in the open hand. On the
horizon a full moon begins to rise, bloated and huge and
such a deep septic orange it's almost red.

BARRON
Your rules?

SAUL
Like I said. One card. High card
wins. No wilds, no exchange.
Simple. Quick.

BARRON takes three steps forward and places the deck on an
outcropping of rock that almost seems like it was placed
there for exactly such a purpose.

BARRON
If you win, I have your word that
you will give me the box. You will
place it in my hand with no
conditions.

SAUL nods. BARRON nods back and shuffles the deck. He then
places it gently on the rock dais.

BARRON (CONT'D)
Your cut.

BIXBY, GWEN and STETSON all move in closer, all eyes on the table.

BIXBY

You sure this is a good idea?

SAUL cuts the deck once, then twice. BARRON picks up the piles in reverse order, squares the deck and places it back down on the rock. He very gently runs his gloved fingers along the edges of the deck until it is so perfectly aligned it looks like a solid piece of plastic.

BARRON

You go first.

SAUL levels a gaze at him and reaches out. He slides his card from the top of the deck and without looking at it he places it face-down next to the rest of the cards. BARRON smiles, and does the same. The two lock eyes. BARRON finally looks down and reaches to turn over his card.

BARRON (CONT'D)

You should know I don't lose.

SAUL

Immovable object, irresistible force.

BARRON flips his card and smiles at the Jack of Diamonds.

SAUL (CONT'D)

(glancing up at BIXBY)

Well looky who shows up again.

BIXBY flashes a nervous near-grin. He is too concerned to be amused. STETSON's eyes narrow as he gazes upon the card. SAUL stares into BARRON's eyes again, and flips his card. It's the Queen of Hearts.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Not much of a win, but a win.

BARRON's eyes are riveted on SAUL. A freak wind kicks up scattering the deck.

BARRON

I don't think I like the way you play.

SAUL

Deal's a deal. Winner takes all.
Stetson, I want your keys.

STETSON looks up in surprise, not expecting that. The wind is getting steadily stronger.

STETSON

Now wait just a minute here.

BARRON

(in a much louder
voice, cracking with
restraint, he's about
to lose it)

I DON'T think I like the way you
PLAY!!!

SAUL

(also raising his
voice to compete
with the wind)

I don't give one goddamn what you
think. Give me the keys, and give us
a ten-minute head start before you
start humping your own sorry asses
back down to the motel.

BIXBY and GWEN huddle towards each other as bits of twigs,
brush and dust become airborne. STETSON takes a step towards
BARRON

STETSON

Boss, I don't like this anymore than
you do...but you -did- make the deal.
With witnesses. Sorry man, you're
screwed. You lost.

BARRON seems to have gotten larger, his chest is heaving
under heavy breaths, his eyes have a wild look in them, hair
blowing crazy in the wind. He looks at STETSON and raises
his hand as if to strike him. STETSON just stares him down.

STETSON (CONT'D)

You -don't- want to do that.

BARRON seems to calm down a bit, and a moment later is nearly
back to normal. The wind has died down, mostly. He shrugs
his shoulders and pulls on the tails of his shirt,
straightening it out. He then runs a hand through his hair,
pausing halfway through it for emphasis. Without looking at
the rest of them he retrieves a cigarette from a golden case
in his breast pocket. He then takes three measured steps
backwards until he is standing directly next to one of the
dark vents in the ground. He motions at STETSON.

BARRON

Give them the keys.

STETSON reluctantly pulls them from his belt-chain, holds
them up before his eyes in a moment of longing, and then
flings them straight at SAUL's head.

SAUL catches them easily. BARRON sighs and places the cigarette between his lips, and reaches for a match. Just then STETSON looks at the vent, and at BARRON, and his eyes go wide. He tries to break into a run to get over to the man, but his feet slip on the loose soil.

STETSON

NO!!!!

He regains his footing and reaches BARRON just as their eyes lock, BARRON strikes the match, and the night explodes.

A huge violent pillar of flame erupts out of the vent in the ground enveloping both of them. The fire leaps up into the night sky, twisting and convulsing like a living thing.

SAUL, BIXBY and GWEN try to shield their eyes from the brightness of the fire and are torn between trying to seek shelter and somehow save the two men from their fiery grave. The undulating column of flame reaches it's ultimate height, and for a strange moment seems to take on the aspect of a tortured almost-human, mouth open in rage to the night sky, burned-out eyes turned towards the blood-red moon...and then as quickly as it started, it was gone. Silence falls.

There is no sign of BARRON or STETSON - the fire consumed them completely. The trio stand dead still, soon cricket sounds begin filling the night air.

105 EXT. SIDE ROAD/CULVERT - NIGHT

The trio burst out of the woods right where the Mustang still steams away in the culvert. SAUL runs around to the side of the black Charger parked a few dozen feet back up the path and jumps into the drivers seat. BIXBY and GWEN climb in the other door.

106 INT. CHARGER - NIGHT

SAUL starts the machine and throws it into reverse, backing as quickly as he can back towards the main road. His face looks grim, as do the other two. The moon has risen high and is as full and blue-white as it's ever been. GWEN stares at it, lightly tapping her fingers against the glass as if she's trying to touch it. For the moment they travel in silence.

BIXBY

I don't quite understand what just happened.

SAUL

Trick of the light. We're all exhausted.

BIXBY

Trick of the light my ass. I mean...
 what the hell -was- that?
 How long were we out there? By my
 reckoning it's not even gol-darn
 noon yet.

He looks distraught, trying to stare an answer out of SAUL, who just stares at the road. BIXBY finally turns away and looks out of his window, occasionally glancing into the rear-view mirror.

GWEN doesn't say a word, and keeps staring at the moon as it follows the Charger down the road, darting behind stands of scrubby pines but never giving up the chase. Finally she speaks.

GWEN

So, what next?

SAUL ponders for a moment.

SAUL

We go back into town, drop this crate
 off at the motel and find ourselves
 a bus ticket to the coast.

GWEN

Yeah. (then quietly to herself)
 ...yeah.

She goes back to tracing the path of the moon on her window.

BIXBY and SAUL drive on in silence.

107 EXT. BUS STATION - MORNING

SAUL stands with BIXBY outside of an old Greyhound bus, generally agitated. BIXBY has a wad of clothing tucked under his arm.

SAUL

Are you sure you want to do this?

BIXBY

Never moreso.

SAUL

Look man, I need you. I can't finish
 this without you.

BIXBY

Sure you can. Besides, I think you
 need some time alone with the little
 lady to sort some things out.

SAUL starts to protest but BIXBY cuts him off, pushing the bundle of cloth into SAUL's hands.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

Here, you don't want to forget this. Look. I'm a mechanic, and there's a damn fine old lady scared, alone and desperately in need of my one talent up in those hills. I'll get her back down and fixed up. I'll see you back home in no time. My mind is made up.

SAUL

What if folks start asking questions?

BIXBY

About Barron? I dunno. I've got this weird feeling that we're the only ones who know he was here, if you know what I mean. Go on. She's waiting for you, and I suck at goodbyes.

SAUL shakes his hand - but then gives him a sharp, brief hug. BIXBY steps back, looking a bit awkward, and wiping the back of his neck with his hand waves SAUL off as he turns and wanders back towards the motel. SAUL watches him leave and then turns a nervous eye towards the bus.

108 INT. GREYHOUND BUS - MORNING

GWEN sits in a seat against a window holding the case, almost oblivious to SAUL as he shuffles up the aisle. There are very few other souls on the bus, but the ones that are there are all older, some quiet and content, others already asleep, some with a vague hunger on their face - eager to reach whatever destination they may have. GWEN looks at him with a smile, then nods her head with a cocked eyebrow at the pile of clothing he carries. He reaches over to the case and places it across her lap and opens it, revealing an empty form-fitted slot where a ceramic box once resided. Her eyes grow wide.

GWEN

Saul... I didn't..

SAUL doesn't respond, he just begins unwrapping the bundle of clothes, handing each peeled layer to GWEN until he reveals his treasure - a small ornate porcelain box. He gives her a sidelong almost-wink and fits the relic into the slot, closes the case, and sets it next to her against the wall of the bus. She just stares at him.

GWEN (CONT'D)

When?

SAUL

At the gas station the afternoon before Barron had you snatched from us. I stuck it in Bixby's pack.

GWEN

Why?

SAUL

I didn't trust you. You were perfumed in 'coincidence' from the start.

GWEN

Wow. I think I'm insulted.

SAUL

I was right though, wasn't I?

GWEN looks at him and opens her mouth to speak, but turns in her seat and doesn't say a word.

109 EXT. BUS STATION - MORNING

The bus pulls away from the station. Back by the motel BIXBY is nowhere to be seen, and the parking lot is empty except for the black Charger.

110 INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

GWEN

What are we going to do with it?
Why are you taking it West?

SAUL hesitates, but answers.

SAUL

Back before my wife died, before things got complicated with the job, she used to say "I'll never ask you for anything - not one single thing - if you promise to take me west. I want to watch the sun set over the ocean before I die." Such a simple request. One I could easily have granted. I kept putting it off. "After the next gig, or the one after that. No, I promise." Hell, I had plenty of jobs that actually took me to the coast, but I was too stubborn, didn't want to mix business and pleasure. Well. I never got to it, and she died. I can still keep the promise...even if it's too late.

SAUL looks across the aisle and out the window, almost whispering.

SAUL (CONT'D)
Far too late.

GWEN gives him a strangely bright-eyed look.

GWEN
It's never too late. Trust me on this one.

SAUL seems on the verge of sinking into a funk. GWEN refuses to let him do it. She leans over close to his ear with a mischievous grin on her face and whispers...

GWEN (CONT'D)
Hey. Ishmael. I just have one question to ask you.

SAUL doesn't answer right away, but finally nods.

SAUL
Shoot.

GWEN
Are you going to squirm in your seat every two minutes all the way?

SAUL considers it for a moment, and almost unconsciously shifts in his seat. He lowers his head and shakes it almost imperceptibly. Without looking at her directly whispers...

SAUL
One.

111 EXT. EDGE OF CLIFF - EVENING

SAUL and GWEN stand near the edge of the cliff, the ocean glitters below them as the sun dips closer to the horizon. A stiff breeze throws GWEN's hair into her eyes and she combs it away with her fingers. She squints into the light and looks back at SAUL. Behind them a low rolling hill defines the small chunk of earth that they occupy, seeming like an island in the air. SAUL holds the porcelain box in one hand, testing it's weight. GWEN looks expectant.

SAUL
You know, all I've wanted to do for longer than I can reckon was to get here. Now... Now...

GWEN
Not sure you can do it?

SAUL

No, it's not that. It kind of puts a great big period at the end of a huge part of my life. I've never been so great at punctuation.

GWEN

I can't help you with this.

BARRON

Oh, but I can.

SAUL and GWEN turn with a start - BARRON is standing on the crest of the hill behind them, seemingly undamaged and in remarkable shape.

SAUL

What the Hell...??

BARRON

Precisely.

GWEN

No. NO! You don't get this. This is his moment! It's MY moment!

BARRON

I'm not really interested in what either of you want. I have rules to follow. Principles. Rituals, almost. I have an inventory to update, and I'm missing a very important piece. You will give me what I need.

SAUL

Haven't we been all through this?

BARRON

You. You don't even know why you're here. Not really. You think throwing that box into a puddle will absolve you of all the self-serving arrogance that drove you here in the first place? Well believe me. It won't. There's only one person in the whole of the universe that can give you what you need. And that's me.

SAUL

Not a chance.

BARRON advances halfway down the hill and stops.

BARRON

How would you like your wife back?

A strange look comes into SAUL's eyes - on the verge of mesmerized.

SAUL
That's a low blow.

BARRON comes closer.

BARRON
I am a maker of deals. It's what I do. I don't offer what I can't deliver.

GWEN
Don't listen. Don't look at him.

BARRON comes right up to SAUL with a thin smile on his face, almost like his lips are being stretched too wide, his pupils too big, his skin too tight. He looks at the sea, then straight into SAUL's eyes.

BARRON
You have what I need. I can give you what you want.

SAUL gets very still, his hand holding the box begins to lower. BARRON puts his hand out to intercept it when the time is right. GWEN takes a step closer, facing SAUL but looking away from him.

GWEN
(very quietly now)
Please Saul. Don't listen. You're almost there.

BARRON presses closer, his hand almost shaking as he reaches towards the box, his voice level and hypnotic.

BARRON
Give me the box. Willingly. Give me the box, and I'll leave with the girl. You don't want her. She's a nuisance, a hanger-on, a poor substitute. How could you ever be happy with this (nodding at GWEN) knowing you could have the real thing? It would eat at you. Burrow in and suck the marrow til your dry bones ache at the very sight of her.

SAUL's hand lowers slowly, his eyes locked on BARRON's. His whole appearance seems to wither and age, as if BARRON was draining him. GWEN holds one hand over her lips, staring at the setting sun, not saying a word.

BARRON (CONT'D)
 ...and every waking day will taste
 of ash, of regret, of longing, of
 half-remembered promises you will
 never, ever be able to keep.

When BARRON says "promises" SAUL comes back to himself a bit.

SAUL
 (his voice cracking
 and dry)
 What did you say?

BARRON looks startled, but tries to regain control.

BARRON
 ...and even if you do keep her -she'll
 never...

SAUL
 No. No. I don't know who the hell
 you are, but I know why I'm here.
 DAMMIT.

SAUL seems to gain energy, and BARRON looks at him with some dismay. GWEN steps away - afraid to speak but with a look of unwilling hope crossing her face, eyes glistening and wide.

BARRON
 ...but...

SAUL looks down at his hand, fractions of an inch from BARRON's. He slowly raises it back up, this time it's he who stares down BARRON, then pivoting on his heel and with a yell he launches the box over the edge of the cliff. BARRON reaches empty fingers out towards where it was moments ago, then drops his hand to his side. GWEN steps forward and watches as the box tumbles through the air. White birds dart around it, as if they are shepherding it towards the waves below. In a burst of reflected sunlight the box shatters mid-air, and the ash inside swirls in a great cloud, the wind scattering it in a sweeping arc, catching the last few rays of the sun.

GWEN turns to SAUL and touches his face.

GWEN
 Saul - oh, my Saul. My brave
 Ishmael...

As SAUL looks at her, dust starts to drift from her hair, her outstretched arm, her fingers, and the breeze carries it past SAUL and out into the open air.

Faster now, GWEN is fading away, dissolving into golden ash just as the sun slips under the waves on the horizon. Just before she disappears from sight completely, two words drift like the ash to SAUL's ears.

GWEN (CONT'D)

...thank you.

And she is gone. SAUL stands at the edge of the cliff with a perplexed look on his face, head canted slightly to the right, brows furrowed, struggling to accept what just happened. BARRON walks up beside him and gazes out at the ocean. He looks like a tired, defeated old man. They stand in silence for a moment. BARRON purses his lips and touches steepled index fingers to them. Without looking at SAUL he speaks.

BARRON

Well. Well. Can't win them all, I suppose. And I had it so well planned. Well. You know what they say. The Devil's in the details...

He chuckles at an inside joke, then suddenly turns and looks at SAUL quizzically, pointing at his burned arm.

BARRON (CONT'D)

Not getting any better, is it?

SAUL

Excuse me?

BARRON

You know, you should really try to get out of the house more often.

...and SAUL is standing on the edge of the cliff, alone. He stifles a cough, then another. Darkness gathers as the stars come out, faster than reality can bear. He coughs again and dark clouds begin to obscure the night sky, coming in from all directions. He coughs harder, and falls to his knees. He slips towards the edge of the cliff, just as strong arms reach around his chest and pull him away from the edge.

112 INT. SAUL'S HOUSE - DAY

Dark grey smoke is choking the view, there is the crackling of heat and splintering wood. SAUL waves his arms around him in a disoriented fight-or-flight panic. Someone is dragging him across the floor.

BIXBY

I -knew- you'd do some damn-fool thing like this! Stay still dammit!

BIXBY drags SAUL out of the burning kitchen of his house, SAUL's arm badly burned. Flames race up doorjambs and spread across the ceiling like a living thing. SAUL tries to get to his feet and BIXBY obliges, in one mighty heave throws the confused SAUL over his shoulder in a classic fireman's hold, and carries him out the door and into the front yard.

113 EXT. SAUL'S HOUSE - DAY

The two collapse on the lawn as an ambulance and fire truck scream around the corner and pull into the yard. In slow motion firemen pull gear from vehicles, some directing the action, others taking the battle straight to the burning house. A pair of EMT's gather around SAUL and BIXBY who are sitting at the base of a large Oak, both covered in sweat and soot. One tends to SAUL's arm while the other checks out BIXBY. SAUL stares at the burning house, trying to reconcile everything that is careening through his head, trying to make sense of it all. One of the EMT's points at the ambulance with a query in his eyes, SAUL raises his hand slightly, acknowledging the question, and with help raises to his feet. They walk him over to the ambulance, BIXBY close behind, and help him climb in.

114 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

SAUL lays down on the stretcher as an EMT affixes an IV to his arm and an oxygen mask to his face. He lays down as the ambulance pulls away, shadows racing across his face as the siren starts to howl. He lays back, trying to keep his eyes open. BIXBY sits alongside him, concerned. He tries to say something, but succumbs to sleep.

115 INT. GARAGE - EARLY MORNING

SAUL sits in a chair. His right arm is bandaged but beyond that he seems no worse for the wear. He flexes his hand and winces a bit. BIXBY stands by, sorting through papers on the desk. He seems more than a little preoccupied.

BIXBY

Hey. You gonna be ok?

SAUL

Doc says yes.

BIXBY

That's not what I mean. What the hell were you thinking?

SAUL

I wasn't. Bix, I just couldn't stand it.

BIXBY

It's only been a few months. Look, I'm no expert, but you'll get through this. You'll be ok. It's just gonna take some time.

SAUL looks from his hand then over at the old Mustang, half-covered in a tarp.

SAUL

Time. I've still got a bucket full of that, I suppose. You think the old girl will still start?

BIXBY eyes SAUL and then the car.

BIXBY

That'd be a minor miracle. Why you ask?

SAUL

I've got a notion to head west. At least for breakfast.

SAUL walks over to the car and yanks the tarp off. He reaches into his pocket for the key and comes up dry. BIXBY whistles at him. Without looking at SAUL he picks a key ring from the desk and flings it his way. SAUL grabs it. BIXBY is absorbed by the object in front of him on the desk.

116 INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

SAUL settles into the car, wiping the dust off of the steering wheel. He slides the key into the ignition and the old Mustang fires up on the first attempt. He closes his eyes and smiles. The passenger door opens and BIXBY settles in beside him with a padded shipping envelope in his hand. SAUL looks at him with a question in his eyes.

BIXBY

What? I ain't allowed to be hungry as well?

SAUL

(motioning at the envelope)

You got something to mail?

BIXBY chews on his lip before answering.

BIXBY

I wasn't sure I was going to give this to you.

(MORE)

BIXBY (CONT'D)

But I dunno, it's probably not my place to make that call. They gave it to me while you were still in the hospital.

BIXBY passes the envelope to SAUL.

BIXBY (CONT'D)

Someone recovered it from the house. Pretty much the only thing that survived. Weird, really. I don't know. I suppose the things that really matter have a way of staying with you.

SAUL removes a photograph from the envelope. The frame is slightly charred, but the photo is intact. His fingers touch the glass. In the photo a somewhat younger Saul and Gwen standing next to the old Mustang, "Just Married" scrawled on the back window.

SAUL

Maybe, Bix. Maybe. At least until you let them go.

He looks on the photo a moment longer, then leans over and puts it in the glove box, next to an old deck of cards with the Jack of Diamonds showing on top.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Hungry, you say?

BIXBY nods.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Then let's get on with it.

117 EXT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The two pull out of the garage and turn down the long street heading towards the river, into the hazy glare of the morning sun.

THE END