

# HONEY

Written by

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**INT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

We drift through a small old house.

Past stacked crusty dishes and dust covered curtains. Through towers of old newspapers lining the halls.

There's a hum of a radio in the background--repetitive JAZZ meant for dinner parties.

But there's something off in this dark lonesome home, besides the creaking pipes and the peeling wallpaper. Something else...quiet and rhythmic--a soft SCRATCHING echoing through the rooms.

**EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT**

OFFICER MCGOWAN, smiling and cocky, a frat-boy just past his prime--slams a body against a police car. Tightens handcuffs around the perp's wrists.

OFFICER MCGOWAN  
Breakin' and enterin', really? At least  
go for an uncondemned house next time.

He pulls their hood back. This is MIA--20s, knotted hair, a street rat with soft edges. She struggles against the cuffs.

Officer McGowan grabs a wallet from Mia's pocket. Shoves her in the back of the police car and slams the door.

**INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT**

McGowan gets in the front seat. Plays with the radio. Quickly skips past the same jazz station we just heard. Shuts it off.

OFFICER MCGOWAN  
Shit as always.

MIA  
You made them too tight.

OFFICER MCGOWAN  
You'd know, wouldn't you?

He thumbs through her wallet. Pulls out an ID.

OFFICER MCGOWAN (cont'd)  
I've got a shit ton of paperwork  
tonight 'cause of you.

MIA  
Could save us both a lot of time and  
just let me out now.

OFFICER MCGOWAN

Give me a good reason why you shouldn't  
be locked up. Come on. I'll wait.

He looks at her chest. She catches him. Avoids his gaze.

MIA

I was just looking for a place to  
sleep.

OFFICER MCGOWAN

Not my problem.

MIA

Please I--

OFFICER MCGOWAN

--would do anything to not go in  
tonight. Right?

He winks at her. She's silent.

OFFICER MCGOWAN (cont'd)

Paperwork it is then.

McGowan switches the radio back on. Plays with the dial.

A red PICKUP TRUCK drives past them. We follow it out and  
away from the police car.

**EXT. DOWNTRODDEN CITY - NIGHT**

The truck drives slowly through desolate streets.

**EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

The truck pulls up to a small home on a worn suburban street.

FRANK, 60s and burly with a beer belly, parks the truck. He's  
the kind of guy you'd see sulking alone in a hardware store.

**INT. TRUCK - NIGHT**

The radio hums quietly.

RADIO PERSONALITY # 1

Can't believe everything you hear.

RADIO PERSONALITY #2

Unless you live on the Westside.

Frank fusses with his flannel shirt to smooth the wrinkles.

RADIO PERSONALITY #1  
This gang crime is gonna die down  
again by next week and then we'll be  
complaining about police violence or--

Frank shuts off the engine. Shakes his head. He grabs groceries from the truck. Walks towards the house.

The front door is lined with half a dozen bolts and locks.

**INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Frank looks around the dark dingy home and smiles. This is the home we started in and it's his palace.

FRANK  
Honey, I'm home.

A soft KNOCKING comes from a back room in response.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT**

He drops the groceries at the kitchen table. Dented canned goods tumble out onto the floor.

**INT. HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER**

Frank cooks at the stove. Sets up two neat plates for him and the Misses.

A bleached-white bony HAND curls around a doorway directly behind Frank. It's frozen, unnatural, and waiting--the nails bloody nubs. But he doesn't see it.

The lights flicker. Frank flicks the switch.

The lights steady. The hand is gone from the doorway.

FRANK  
Damn power.

**INT. HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Frank walks down the hallway towards a bedroom door. Open just a crack. He peeks inside to see a LUMP shift in the bed.

FRANK  
I'll be right there, Honey. We'll  
have our supper.

The lights in the house convulse and quiver.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I made your favorite. Just sit tight.

Frank stomps off to the basement door. Grabs a toolbox and flashlight by the stairs.

**INT. HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Frank stops at the bottom of the stairs. Pulls a string for the light--no luck. The bulb is shattered.

It's wet and cramped--an old cement cellar. The flashlight scans the space.

A stained bare mattress with torn blankets sits in the corner. Piles of clothes, toys, and books on the floor. Someone has lived down here before, but Frank doesn't react.

He swings the fuse box open. Wires have been ripped and cut. Thin sparks nip at Frank's fingers.

FRANK  
What the...

Frank runs to see--

The gangly outline of a woman at the top of the steps--  
SHARON. Her hair matted and clothes ripped.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Honey?

He takes one step towards her. She grabs the door. His face turns sour; his body stiffens--a current cutting through his veins.

FRANK (cont'd)  
YOU BITCH!

Frank charges up the steps. She slams the door closed. Loud locks CLICK shut from the other side.

He rams his body into the door. Can't break it down.

**INT. HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Sharon's bony unnatural hand glides along the sturdy metal locks on the frame. The fingernails are badly broken and bloody--the skin raw.

FRANK (O.S.)  
(whispers)  
You can't keep me down here.

**INT. HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT**

Frank digs through his toolbox.

He finds a CROWBAR and charges up the stairs again.

He whips the warped metal against the wood, splintering its edges. The door hinges fracture and pull at the frame.

**INT. HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Frank's thick arm punches through the ruined wood, digging deep cuts along his flesh. Unlocks a heavy bolt.

He stumbles out into the hallway--bleeding and savage.

Frank tosses the crowbar and rushes to the bedroom.

FRANK

Are you still here?

**INT. HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Frank swings the bedroom door open wide.

There is a lone sweat-stained mattress. Thick ropes and chains hang from the bed. Deep bloody scratch marks in a bedpost are filled with bits of broken nail and skin.

The windows are blacked out. This isn't just a bedroom--

It's a prison.

**INT. HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT**

Frank runs through the house, searching, until he sees--the front door wide open. He shrinks, steadies himself.

He goes to the door.

**EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

Frank wavers at the threshold. Searches the dark street.

FRANK

I made your favorite.

He stumbles down the steps. Across the lawn. Into the street. Tripping over himself. Calling out:

FRANK (cont'd)

Honey?

**INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT**

Officer McGowan tosses Mia's wallet. Bored. Still parked.  
Mia works at her restraints silently in the back seat.

POLICE RADIO

We have a report of a possible  
kidnapping at 342 Crescent Ave.  
Multiple units needed immediately.

Officer McGowan snatches the radio.

OFFICER MCGOWAN

B17. 10-4. I'm close and en route.

He switches the lights and siren on.

MIA

Hey, what are you doing?

OFFICER MCGOWAN

(to Mia)

Shut up!

He pulls away from the curb. Speeds up the street.

OFFICER MCGOWAN (cont'd)

(into radio)

Fill me in.

**INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Frank carefully locks each bolt. Barely able to stand. Rubs at tear-stained eyes...and looks at his dark empty home.

He turns a worn recliner to face the door. Sits with a SHOTGUN across his lap. And waits.

SIRENS can be heard in the distance. Frank stiffens in his chair. He switches on the radio.

Frank croons softly along with the music. He perches the shotgun between his legs. Thick tears stream down his face.

A car parks outside the house.

...swift FOOTSTEPS coming closer.

A loud KNOCK KNOCK on the door.

FRANK

Honey, is that you?

**EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

Officer McGowan is at the door. Smiling ear to ear. Looks like he's about ready to score that game-winning touchdown.

Mia's still in the back seat of his police car. Now parked in Frank's driveway.

She watches McGowan on the steps of the house.

OFFICER MCGOWAN

Sir?

No answer.

OFFICER MCGOWAN (cont'd)

Franklin Smits, I'm from the local PD. I just need to talk.

He cocks his gun.

**INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT**

Mia fidgets in her handcuffs. Kicks her legs through her arms. Steps through the cuffs.

She pulls out a PIN from her pocket. Works on the cuffs.

She checks to see that Officer McGowan is still on the porch. Through a window in the house, she spots Frank inside.

**INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

OFFICER MCGOWAN (O.S.)

Can you come out and talk to me, Sir?

FRANK

My wife's missing...

A long silence.

OFFICER MCGOWAN (O.S.)

That's what I came to talk to you about.

FRANK

You found her? She wants to come home?

OFFICER MCGOWAN (O.S.)

We need you to come down to the station to pick her up.

Frank softly sobs.

OFFICER MCGOWAN (O.S.) (cont'd)  
 I'm going to come in now, Mr. Smits.  
 Is that okay?  
 (a moment)  
 I'm going to come in and take you to  
 her. Do you have any weapons?

**INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT**

Mia watches Frank from the car. Sees the faint outline of the shotgun on his lap. It's aimed at Officer McGowan.

OFFICER MCGOWAN  
 I need to hear you, Franklin!

**INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Frank clears his throat. Stiffens his body to support the angle of the gun at the door.

FRANK  
 No. No weapons here, Officer.

OFFICER MCGOWAN (O.S.)  
 Good. Good. Coming in now.

The doorknob turns. Frank aims. Finger to the trigger.

**INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT**

Mia's eyes go wide.

MIA  
 STOP!!!

**INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

The doorknob stops and--

BANG. BANG! Frank shoots.

Thick bullets shatter the wooden door.

**EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

Frank throws the front door open. McGowan's on the front steps--back to the ground. Eyes wide in shock.

Frank rips his uniform open--a dent in his bulletproof vest. McGowan coughs, blood at his lips. Frank checks the Officer's collar. Finds a slit in the side of his neck.

**INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT**

Mia watches Frank drag McGowan into the house. She bangs at the car door, but it won't budge.

**EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

Frank comes back to the steps. Looks out to the cop car. Sees the OUTLINE of a woman in the back seat. Can't help but smile. He runs to her. Throws the door open.

**INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT**

Frank's face drops. Mia shrinks back from him.

FRANK  
You aren't...where is she?

MIA  
I don't. I don't know who--

FRANK  
WHERE IS SHE?

Frank roughly grabs Mia. Tries to pull her from the car. She kicks back. But he's larger. Stronger.

He drags her from the car to the house.

**INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Frank throws her to the floor. She stumbles onto Officer McGowan's body. His eyes dart to her. Soft gurgling coming from his throat. But his body is still.

Frank storms through the rooms. Tearing the house apart.

She tugs at McGowan's radio strapped to his chest.

MIA  
(into radio)  
There's an Officer down. Officer down  
at...I don't know. Please help--

Frank rips the radio from her hands. Smashes it on the wall.

FRANK  
NONE OF THAT.

He grabs a fistful of her hair. Mia fights back. Can't free herself from his grasp, but reaches for McGowan's gun.

In the scuffle, a single SHOT rings out.

Frank falls back. Mia curls to the ground--a bullet in her leg. Heavily bleeding.

SIRENS echo in the distance. McGowan squirms on the floor.

And BANG. Frank shoots him in the face. Mia screams.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Let's get going.

Mia doesn't move. She wouldn't dare.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I SAID LET'S GO.

He grabs Mia by the hair. Drags her from the house.

**EXT. HOUSE, FRONT YARD - NIGHT**

Frank pulls her down the steps. She trips behind him.

FRANK  
You took her! Shouldn't have done  
that. Stupid! STUPI--

MIA  
I didn't take anyone.

FRANK  
YOU'RE LYING!

He nuzzles the gun against her throat.

The neighborhood starts to wake.

The SIRENS in the distance come closer.

Frank throws open the passenger door of the truck. Tosses Mia inside. She tries to escape but he shoots through the window--narrowly misses her head.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Keep still.

He goes to the driver's side. Gets in. Rests his trembling hands with the gun TAP TAP TAPPING on the steering wheel.

Frank tosses her a withered rag from the ground.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Wrap that up, with you? Can't have  
you dying on me yet.

And with that, he speeds away.

Neighbors shuffle out from nearby houses, tying their robes and rubbing at sleep-deprived eyes.

Up the street, Frank turns at the first corner.

Police cars speed down the road. OFFICERS rush inside Frank's house.

We stay there outside for a while at a distance. Letting the police inspect the house. The street comes alive with neighbors and cops.

A lone black car comes up to the house. A man steps out, this is CAPTAIN MORRIS--50s and aging well, but worn at the edges. Wanting to get a personal view of the scene. He waits at the edge of the property.

A shaky YOUNG COP comes from the house and straight to Captain Morris. Careful not to get too close. We don't hear what he says, but his hands wring, head down and a single shake.

It's enough to see Captain Morris react. Stiffen, back on duty. He takes a moment before he walks towards the house and dares to cross the threshold.

#### **EXT. BACK ROAD - DAWN**

Dawn breaking on the outskirts of the city.

The BEEP BEEP BEEP of a tow truck backing up. Pulling a familiar RED TRUCK out of a ravine.

It's empty inside except a bloody passenger seat.

#### **INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Frank peers through a smudged window. Turns at a SOFT NOISE.

He's in an aging motel room. The kind only meant for late night flings--and it has the stains to prove it.

Frank follows the sound across the room to--

#### **INT. MOTEL ROOM, BATHROOM - DAY**

Mia's in the tub, unconscious. Down to her underwear and bra. Hands tied to a safety bar.

She squirms--just starting to wake. A large purple bump on her head. Tape on her mouth.

Her body is covered in old white SCARS and cigarette burns. The skin used and abused--someone else's punching bag.

She wakes up slowly at first, then jerks alive. Finds her hands tied above her head. Her injured leg bandaged and bruising. Her clothes gone--and her body exposed.

Then she sees Frank hovering. Waiting. Almost expecting her to talk first. He cleans his face at the sink.

FRANK

Thought you wouldn't make it for a little while there. Not enough blood in 'ya my mother would say. Too frail.

(beat)

I didn't do anything...you know.

Looks to her bandaged leg and frilly undergarments. He approaches her. Mia curls up in the tub, hiding herself.

FRANK (cont'd)

I'm a married man. Wouldn't do that. Ain't nothing I haven't seen before.

He carefully reaches for her, she flinches at his touch. Pulls the tape from her mouth.

FRANK (cont'd)

No one wants anyone runnin' in here getting hurt, right? So keep quiet.

MIA

I didn't do anything wrong. I'm...I'm not involved in any of this.

He slaps her hard. Quiet. Shoves a fat finger in her face.

FRANK

Back of the cop-car, yeah, I know. You're a criminal. The city's going to shit because of people like you.

He cuts her loose from the safety bar. Walks from the bathroom. She struggles to stand. Limpes after him.

#### **INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

The blinds are shut. Bits of garbage, clothes, and food spread on the bed. She eyes the door--a chair propped against the knob. Loud voices chat outside.

Frank notices. Plays with a switchblade. A handgun is tucked into his pants.

FRANK

Don't get any ideas.

He turns on the TV. Drowns out the voices. Frank motions her to sit in a chair. She listens.

FRANK (cont'd)  
What's your name?

MIA  
Why's it matter?

FRANK  
I'm not the bad guy here. They just wouldn't understand.

Mia works at her restraints. Stops when he looks her way.

FRANK (cont'd)  
They stole something that isn't theirs. She's my responsibility.

MIA  
Please, I can just leave. I'm--

FRANK  
--nobody, by the looks of you.

He stands. Fists clenched. She bolts up, tries to make distance between them. But can't match his gaze.

FRANK (cont'd)  
But I'm gonna get her back. And you're gonna help me.

**INT. POLICE STATION, OFFICE - DAY**

Captain Morris is at a large desk buried in paperwork.

There's a soft knock on the closed office door. INSPECTOR PHILLIPS on the other side, 30s with a buzz cut--closer to a military man than a cop and he likes it that way.

He enters. Waits for Captain Morris to look up.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
We've brought Ms. Williams from the hospital.

CAPTAIN PHILLIPS  
Her statement?

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
More to get, of course. Years more... but nothing else about where Franklin or Mia Estrella might be.

Captain Morris finally looks up from his desk.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

How is she?

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS

Wants to talk to you. You ready to finally meet her?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

I've been ready for ten years.

**INT. POLICE STATION, HALLWAY - DAY**

Captain Morris waits outside of a closed door. His hand hovering over a knob.

He catches OFFICERS staring at him.

**INT. POLICE STATION, BACK ROOM - DAY**

A pale gaunt face is pressed up to the window. Wide blood-shot eyes watching heavy rain splatter against the glass. This is Sharon again, barely recognizable as the gangly woman from before. Clean, hands bandaged, and hair cut short.

MR. and MRS. WILLIAMS--straight from a 50s sitcom, middle-aged. They sit at her side. Talk in hushed whispers.

Captain Morris walks in. Nods at them.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Mr. and Mrs. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS

It's been a long time, Sergeant Morris.

Captain Morris won't dare take another step.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Captain now.

Mrs. Williams cautiously leaves her daughter's side.

MRS. WILLIAMS

You found her.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

I just wish it could have been sooner, or under better circumstances.

Mrs. Williams embraces him. Only for a moment. Pulls away.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)

How is Sharon doing?

The parents trade an uneasy glance. Try a forced smile.

MRS. WILLIAMS  
We heard about that girl. Have you  
learned anything?

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Nothing yet...I actually wanted to  
talk to--

MRS. WILLIAMS  
--She's not ready for this.

Sharon looks away from the window. Straight through Captain  
Morris. He can't hold her gaze.

SHARON  
He has someone?

Her quiet voice brings deafening silence to the room.  
Captain Morris approaches her.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Yes. A girl was being brought into  
custody when our Officer got the  
call. He shouldn't have gone in. She  
shouldn't have been there. You're  
captor--he...he killed our Officer  
and took...Mia. Her name was Mia.

MR. WILLIAMS  
Sharon shouldn't be hearing this.

SHARON  
You knew her?

Captain Morris stiffens, but gives a small nod.

SHARON (cont'd)  
And he'll...he'll come after me again  
too, won't he?

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
No, we won't let that happen. I  
promise. But right now, we need your  
help finding Franklin.

SHARON  
Frank. He goes by Frank.

**EXT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Frank closes the motel door and locks it. He's bundled in a  
heavy coat. His face hidden beneath a baseball cap.

Rains splatters the uneven gravel lot. Frank checks for any onlookers, but he's alone.

And just across the street is a POLICE STATION.

Cop cars fill its parking lot. News vans permanently camped near the door. Frank walks in the opposite direction.

**INT. POLICE STATION, HALLWAY - DAY**

Captain Morris exits the back room. Closes the door behind him. Takes a moment to collect himself.

Inspector Phillips approaches him. Keeps his distance.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Sharon wants to help us.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
That's good news. We'll find the girl, Captain.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You don't know that. She might be dead already. Or worse.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
I know it's personal for you. I get it. I don't need the details. But she can handle herself, more than most, right?

Captain Morris gets in the Inspector's face. Stiffens.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Mia? She's a child. Alone. Scared. Maybe tougher than most, but broken as hell, just like Sharon in there. Let's not wait to find out if she can "*handle herself*", shall we? Let's just do our jobs and get her back.

The Captain walks off.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Mia's in bed. Tightly wrapped in a blanket. Her whole body restrained. Tape over her mouth. She squirms violently.

The knob on the door stirs. She freezes. Frank enters. Shakes the rain from his coat.

He unties Mia's body. Uncovers her mouth. But leaves her hands restrained, touches the raw skin at her wrists.

FRANK

Shouldn't be trying to escape. Once I get her back I won't be keeping you around. And I won't be hurting you unless you give me reason to.

He goes to the television. Flicks between the stations. Stops on the Local News: REPORTERS outside of the police station. They wait around an empty podium. Huddled under umbrellas. A hum comes from the crowd.

Frank and Mia both watch in silence.

Captain Morris enters the screen. Takes a moment at the onslaught of cameras. There's a flash of recognition on her face at the sight of him. Frank notices.

MIA

Captain?

CAPTAIN MORRIS (TV)

21 hours ago a woman approached a patrol car near 342 Crescent Ave. She was dehydrated and malnourished...

Mia watches Frank. His face twists in anger. Fists balled.

FRANK

Lies!

CAPTAIN MORRIS (TV)

...but had no immediate life-threatening injuries.

Captain Morris collects himself, continues:

CAPTAIN MORRIS (TV) (cont'd)

Sharon Williams had been missing for almost 10 years. She has been under medical evaluation and was recently reunited with her family.

REPORTER #1 (TV)

Captain, is there any information--

CAPTAIN MORRIS (TV)

Questions after.

The crowd settles.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (TV) (cont'd)

While Ms. Williams was brought to the hospital, Officer Peter McGowan responded to the location that she had reported being held.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN MORRIS (TV) (cont'd)

At the time, a local girl, Mia Estrella, was detained in the back seat of his vehicle. McGowan was closest to the residence at the time and responded immediately. We had reason to believe that Sharon's captor was still at the location.

(beat)

Officer Peter McGowan was shot and killed at the residence.

The reporters speak up again. Louder this time.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (TV) (cont'd)

What happened leading up to his death and immediately after is still under investigation. But we believe that Mia Estrella was injured and taken from the scene before backup could arrive.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS**

REPORTER #2

I'm hearing reports that there were children and other women at the house.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Absolutely not. And I won't give those rumors any ounce of credibility.

(beat)

Ms. Williams was able to confirm the identity of the man as Franklin Smits, 57 years of age, 6' 1". We ask that anyone who hears or sees anything to report it immediately.

REPORTER #3

What can you tell us about the girl that's been taken?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Mia's background is not up for review. She is not a criminal or a suspect. She is a victim and only a victim in this case. Myself, this department, and Sharon herself want Mia back home safe. In fact, Mr. and Mrs. Williams would like to make a personal statement on their daughter's behalf.

The doors of the station open. Sharon walks out, timid to the flashing lights. Her parents at her side--nearly keeping her from floating away.

The reporters grow silent. As if their screams could wipe her from existence.

Sharon stands near the podium. Unblinking, doesn't dare look into the cameras. Her parents stand in front of her and address the reporters.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Frank goes to the window. Looks out at the surrounding street. Mia tries to see outside, but Frank whips the blinds shut.

MRS. WILLIAMS (TV)  
 (a nervous chuckle)  
 Our sweet Sharon could never do this in school...you know, stand up in front of the class. Not the public speaking type. She was quiet. And kind...she still is.

Frank's eyes lock on the TV, on his wife. Her frail figure. He walks towards the television.

FRANK  
 They changed her hair.

MR. WILLIAMS (TV)  
 We want to give our daughter a voice today. Because that's what Franklin Smits denied her for so many years. Our concern is to make Sharon comfortable now, but to also help the local police bring home another victim before it's too late.

A heavy glance between Mr. Williams and Captain Morris. Sharon comes up to the podium. Pushing past her parents.

SHARON  
 I have...something to say. It's mine to say. MINE.

MR. WILLIAMS  
 Sweetie?

SHARON  
 NO!

The crowd grows silent. Mrs. Williams tries to lead her from the podium but Sharon pushes her off.

Sharon freezes. Dead-locked on the cameras.

Frank traces her outline on the dusty glass of the TV.

Sharon breathes heavily. Almost like she can sense his touch. Feel him watching her. She sobs.

SHARON (TV)  
There's a girl. Missing...and she's gone--I'm...gone.

Frank's face drops--his palm clutching the screen.

Sharon tries to focus. Her eyes heavy and head cluttered.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS**

SHARON  
Frank took me when I was 17. I was scared. Helpless. Hurt. Every day.

Sharon tries to continue. Tears brimming over. And her gaze turns harsh and cold. It's only meant for one person.

SHARON (cont'd)  
Just let her go. Let her come home.  
Don't ruin another person's life.

The reporters ERUPT.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

The TV shuts off. Sharon's image fades to black.

Frank's motionless, stunned. Shaken to his core.

He starts to clean up the room. Not an ounce of emotion. Frank picks up Mia's bloody clothes on the bed. Feels them softly, playing with the material between his coarse hands.

She backs away from him slowly.

FRANK  
You did this!

MIA  
No--I didn't. I'm...I'm nothing.

He looks up. Tears dripping. Mouth twisted. Body trembling.

FRANK  
YOU TURNED HER AGAINST ME.

Frank violently throws furniture around the room.

There's BANGING on the wall--a neighbor angry at the noise.

With his back turned, Mia grabs for the knife on the bed.

He spins. Grabs her.

But she slices into his stomach. Kicks free from his grasp. Mia rushes towards the door. Her last chance--

MIA  
HELP ME! SOMEONE HELP ME!!!

She reaches the door. Nearly there. Fingers at the knob. When she's yanked back by her hair. Dragged away across the floor.

Frank beats her. Covers her mouth with tape. Ties her legs.

FRANK  
That was stupid. VERY STUPID!

He goes back to the TV. Rips the box from the wall. Drops it next to Mia's face. She flinches back.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Why'd they make her say those things?  
We were happy. I did everything for  
her. RISKED EVERYTHING! Tell me! How  
can they do that? Why would she--

There's a loud KNOCK at the door.

**EXT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

The MANAGER is at the door. Halfway through a collapsing burrito. He swings a large ring of keys. Checks a clipboard.

MANAGER  
Mr. Johnson, can I have a word?

The door opens a crack. The chain still on. Frank's sweaty hidden face on the other end.

MANAGER (cont'd)  
I've received multiple complaints in  
the last 24 hours.

FRANK  
Must've fallen asleep with the TV on.

MANAGER  
Just keep it down.

The Manager turns to go. But stops. Looks back to Frank and the thick chain in between their faces.

MANAGER (cont'd)  
Sir, I'm going to have to ask you to  
step out of the room for a minute.

FRANK

I'd really just like to go back to bed. I'll keep the volume down.

The Manager tries to peek into the room behind Frank. Kicks at the door.

MANAGER

If you think you're gonna squat here it's not gonna happen! Puttin' new chains on the door before we even get around to kickin' you out!

The Manager kicks again. The hinges on the door fracture.

MANAGER (cont'd)

You want me to get the police?

FRANK

No! I wasn't--I'll let you in.

Frank shuts it and unlocks the chain.

MANAGER

Faster!

The door opens slowly. The Manager storms in.

MANAGER (cont'd)

Get yourself packed up now. I'm serious--

He sees Mia on the floor. Tied and bloody. Eyes screaming.

MANAGER (cont'd)

What the--

He spins towards Frank. The tip of a knife cracks through the back of the Manager's head. He drops the burrito. Blinks one last time.

Frank tugs the knife from his thick skull. The Manager crumples to the ground and onto Mia.

Mia tries to push the body off, but it's no use. The dead eyes and bloody gaping hole stare down at her.

Frank kicks off the Manager's body. Pulls Mia up to face him.

FRANK

Do you see what you made me do? THIS IS YOUR FAULT!

He drags her to the window by her hair. Throws the drapes out of their view. Presses her face to the glass.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Yell a little louder next time.

Her eyes go wide at the sight of the police station.

There's loud BANGING on the wall next door--the original complainer. Frank drops her to the floor.

She tries to crawl away. Her arms and legs bound. Tears overflowing past the tape on her mouth.

Frank looks back to the window--out to the bustling station--like saying goodbye to a dear friend.

FRANK (cont'd)  
It won't be so bad. We'll get through this.

Frank stuffs the Manager's body under the bed. Drags Mia across the room by her feet.

He opens a small window in the bathroom. Climbs through.

**EXT. MOTEL, BACK LOT - DAY**

There's an old Chevy parked at the edge of the property. He looks around. Makes sure no one's in sight.

**INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY**

Mia's alone. She tries to crawl away again.

--But Frank reaches back inside to pull her out. Grabs her by the neck. Yanks her through the window.

**EXT. MOTEL, BACK LOT - DAY**

Frank places her on the muddy ground. Starts up the car. She kicks and tries to cry out.

The engine hums to life. Frank hovers over her. Twists a gold band on his finger--an old habit.

Her eyes scream. Can barely breathe. Restrained.

FRANK  
*Shhhhhh...*

Frank waits for her to calm. And he's patient. Around them, heavy rain batters the muddy ground, pounding. Silencing her muffled scream.

FRANK (cont'd)

Good.

He carefully picks up her small frame. She kicks. Squirms against him. But its no use. Frank forces her into the trunk.

FRANK (cont'd)

Let's go, Honey.

He slams it shut.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Cameras flash on Sharon. She flinches at them. Captain Morris takes the podium, raises a hand to block the blinding lights.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

No more questions for now, please.

Sharon's parents lead her back towards the station. She tightens her coat against a rising wind. Reporters' voices become muffled behind her. Just empty noise.

Sharon looks up at the dark sky. Heavy raindrops hit her face. She stops. Almost smiles. Life being breathed back into her.

She dares to look back at the crowd, but something catches her attention. An old Chevy pulls out from the motel across the street. Nothing remarkable about it, the driver shadowed.

**INT. TRUNK - DAY**

Mia screams at the top of her lungs. Bangs and kicks wildly against the trunk.

**EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY**

Sharon's gaze is locked on the Chevy drifting silently away from the roaring crowd.

Inspector Phillips urges her forward. She flinches at his touch--forgets the car. Follows him into the police station.

**INT. CAR - NIGHT**

Frank drives slowly down a congested highway. A hand pressed tight to his side, blood seeping through his shirt.

**INT. TRUNK - NIGHT**

Mia bangs at the lid of the trunk. Breathless. Exhausted.

**EXT. SUPERMARKET, PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Frank walks through a parking lot with a plastic bag. He passes rows and rows of empty spots.

The Chevy is parked in the far corner. He can hear soft KNOCKING coming from the trunk--a hopeless plea for help.

**INT. CAR - NIGHT**

Frank jerks awake in his seat. His car swerves on the road. He's sweating, tired, and weak.

The radio on the car reads 4:00am.

He feels for the wound at his side again and grimaces.

**EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT**

Frank watches TRUCKERS across a lot chatting. The trunk of his car is silent.

The Truckers drive off.

Frank grabs a bag of supplies and opens the trunk.

Mia's unconscious inside. Her tied hands are badly bruised.

Her eyes flutter open.

MIA

Please...

He pulls her from the trunk. Leads her to a small building.

**INT. TRUCK STOP, BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Inside, she stumbles. Blinded by the harsh fluorescent lights.

Frank follows her in. Barricades the door with a trash can. She moves away from him. He goes straight to the sink. Throws water on his face. Winces.

FRANK

Come here.

She doesn't listen. Frank lifts his shirt to look at his side. A poorly placed bandage, already bled through, taped to his skin. He lifts the bandage to reveal a deep open cut.

Mia slowly stands, tries to get a better look. Thin streams of blood come from Frank's side. He's hunched over, trying to get out a labored breath.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 Happy with your handiwork there?  
 (beat)  
 GET OVER HERE!

They lock eyes through the mirror. Mia bolts to the door.

Frank spins. Aims at the door. Finger to the trigger. Mia falls back. Doesn't dare leave.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 I SAID GET OVER HERE!

Mia approaches him, slowly. He drops the bag at her feet. Motions to a small sewing kit.

MIA  
 No. No I can't--

Frank shoves the barrel of the gun in her mouth. She freezes.

FRANK  
 I didn't ask.

A moment. She doesn't dare move.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 Do you know what kinda mess this will  
 make if I pull the trigger?  
 (beat)  
 Double wrap the thread. It'll hold  
 better.

Her eyes wide. Gun still in her mouth. Mia opens the sewing kit with trembling hands. Tries to pull the thread out.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 Double it up.

She listens. Doubles the thread but doesn't have the strength to break it from the spool.

Frank grabs the thread from her. Tears it with his teeth. Gives it back.

Mia tries to put it through the needle while staring down the barrel of the gun.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 My wife--she always said it was like a  
 bow n' arrow. Take a breath, release  
 and go.

She tries it. The thread goes straight through.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 She loved sewing. Did it whenever I  
 let her. Better than TV I always said,  
 doesn't rot the brain--Come on now!

Frank shoves the gun deeper into her throat. Her teeth  
 nearly at the trigger. Mia's hand trembles with the needle.  
 Close to Frank's wound but not daring to break the skin. A  
 flash of compassion across his face.

FRANK (cont'd)  
*Shhhhh...you can do this.*

He touches her hand. Guides the needle toward the open  
 wound. Squeezes her hand to steady it.

Tears stream down Mia's face. She starts sewing him up. He  
 grimaces at the pain but bares it.

He watches her carefully as she sews. Looks at her leg,  
 bandaged but still bleeding.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 We'll fix you up when we get there.  
 Be good as new.

**INT. TRUCK STOP, BATHROOM - LATER**

Mia throws up in a toilet. Frank checks her handiwork in the  
 mirror. Thick black thread crisscrossed at his side.

FRANK  
 First time, right? You'll get better  
 with practice.

MIA  
 I need to go to the bathroom.

He shoots her a wicked glance. Balls up his shirt and  
 changes it out for a fresh one from the bag.

FRANK  
 Not stoppin' you.

MIA  
 Please. I...

He approaches her. Holds her trembling bloody hands.

FRANK  
 Fine. You should wash up too though.  
 And be quick about it.

He packs the supplies back in the bag and leaves.

**EXT. TRUCK STOP, BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Frank exits.

He looks around the lot. It's still empty.

**INT. TRUCK STOP, BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Mia turns on the faucet. Throws murky water on her face. Goes back to the door. Listens for Frank on the other side.

She surveys the bathroom, looking for any escape--any hope.

Mia spots a small window near the ceiling. Drags her injured leg behind her toward it. She stands on the toilet. Pries at the lock, but it won't budge.

FRANK (O.S.)

Want me to come back in there? Hurry it up!

MIA

Coming.

Mia falls to the floor. Looks around hopelessly.

Her trembling fingers pound at the stained tile beneath her. And then she stops. Mia roughly digs her hand underneath the bandage on her leg, pulls at the wrappings. Her hand comes out bloody.

She crawls to a corner and moves her crimson hand swiftly across the tile. Steady. Precise.

Her eyes dart nervously to the door every few seconds.

She pulls away to see her handiwork. "HELP" is spelled on the ground in her own blood.

Mia reaches her hand inside her bandage one last time. Pulls it out and places her palm to the ground again--flat this time. A full HANDPRINT. Clear fingerprints.

**EXT. TRUCK STOP, BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Frank is getting impatient. He kicks at the crumbling asphalt. A truck pulls into the lot. He moves to open the door when Mia steps out. Blocks his view inside.

MIA

I'm ready.

FRANK

Well...good.

He grabs her by her arm and pulls her back to the car. Swings the trunk open. She hesitates.

MIA  
Please. Don't make me go back in there. I--

FRANK  
--Just till we're out of here.

He eyes the truck nearby. Looking for any hint of movement. Shoves the gun to her spine. Pushes her into the trunk.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I said, get in.

He slams it closed.

**INT. TRUNK - NIGHT**

Mia breathes heavily in the pitch blackness. She listens for Frank shuffling around outside. A small smile on her lips. But it gets quiet. And the car doesn't start just yet.

**INT. TRUCK STOP, BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Frank heads back into the bathroom.

He spots Mia's bloody message in the corner.

Her mark crisp and red. He kneels at it. Let's his own palm hover over Mia's small crimson HANDPRINT.

Something wells up inside him.

And then he touches it. Let's his hand fall on the cold red tile. He smears the bloody message.

**EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT**

Frank walks back to the car. Dries his freshly washed hands. He passes a TRUCKER on his way to the bathroom. Nods at him.

Frank gets in the Chevy and drives off.

**INT. POLICE STATION, OFFICE - DAY**

Captain Morris is asleep at his desk. Disheveled. His shirt wrinkled and coffee stale--he's been here a while.

A file for Mia is open in front of him, an old picture of her attached. Newspaper clippings spill out.

A SECRETARY knocks at his door. Captain Morris jerks up.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Yes? Anything?

She doesn't leave. He wipes at his red glassy eyes.

SECRETARY  
Your wife called again.

No response.

SECRETARY (cont'd)  
You should head home, Captain. We'll  
let you know if there are any updates.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
If I wanted to be home I'd be there.

SECRETARY  
Other Officers are starting to talk.

Captain Morris glances at Officers in the pen watching him.  
They shuffle back to work.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Have you sent the new photo for Mia  
out yet? The better one.

SECRETARY  
We'll get right on it.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Good.

She leaves. Captain Morris looks at the young photograph of  
Mia. Tucks it back into the folder.

**INT. TRUNK - DAY**

Mia wakes up in the trunk. Sweaty. Pale. She feels her  
injured leg and reels back at the pain.

She pounds at the lid. The car slows to a stop.

Loud FOOTSTEPS against gravel.

The trunk opens. Frank stares down at her. She blinks wildly.

FRANK  
Well, look who's awake.

She tries to talk. Her lips chapped and mouth dry.  
Dangerously dehydrated. Her condition deteriorating.

Mia shudders. He holds her face in his hands. She's disoriented. Tries to get out of the trunk.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Are you alright, Mia?

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

FRANK  
Hold on. Hold on.

He checks the road--an empty two-lane highway.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Come on.

Frank helps her out. She tries to run, but can't get more than a couple steps before she falls back onto him for support.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Don't worry. I got you. I got you.

He leads her to the back seat of the Chevy. Lays her down.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

He rips her pant leg. Opens her soaked bandage.

Her leg is discolored around a poorly closed bullet wound. She tries to push him off, but doesn't have the strength.

FRANK  
Dammit. It's infected. We're almost there. I told you I'd fix you up then.

Her eyes roll to the back of her head. Her lips smack.

Frank pulls a canteen from the front seat and puts it to her lips. She drinks eagerly, but coughs most of it up.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Shhhh. Drink slowly.

He makes her pace herself. She stops shaking. Eyes close.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Good.

Frank rummages in the front seat for the medical bag. Pulls out the sewing kit. Thinks better of himself.

He gags Mia's mouth with his old bloody shirt.

Frank carefully cuts a bullet with the tip of his knife.

He taps fresh gunpowder over her open wound. She writhes but doesn't wake up.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I'm so sorry, Honey.

He lights a cigarette. Holds it just over the gunpowder. Lets the faint flame lick at the gray powder and spark.

Mia jerks up. The pain startling her awake. Her leg sizzles. She desperately reaches for her burning flesh.

Frank holds her down. She claws at his face.

And she crashes. Eyes roll back in her head. Her body limp. Frank traces the freshly burned skin with his fingers.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I didn't want to hurt you. It won't happen again. We'll get you better.

Frank pulls out a small syringe and an old bottle of penicillin from the medical bag.

He hesitates. Pulls up his shirt and checks his own stitches. No sign of any discoloration.

Frank jams the needle into her leg.

**EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY**

Captain Morris pauses on the crumbling cement steps. Opens a rickety screen door and enters.

**INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY**

Captain Morris drifts through the dreary interior.

He tears open the blinds. Light pours in, touching the room for the first time in years. Dust unsettles.

He moves back into the living room. There's a dried blood stain on the carpet. He avoids it.

**INT. FRANK'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY**

Captain Morris stops. Stares at the bedroom. The bare mattress covered in books and tattered blankets. Chains still hang from the bedpost. A smashed TV in the corner.

Captain Morris tears down blackout curtains over the window. Blinding light pours into the room.

He digs through a desk in the corner.

A car door SLAMS outside.

**EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE - DAY**

Captain Morris exits the house.

Inspector Phillips is there. Leaning against his car.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
We've been looking for you, Captain.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You wanted me out of the station,  
didn't you?

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
We wanted you to get some rest. To go  
home. Sherry says you haven't been  
there since--

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
--you're calling my wife now?

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
What are you doing here again?

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You must have missed something.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
Come on, you know we've already  
checked the house. Every corner of it.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
No. Something's wrong. Frank Smits  
lived in this house since he was a  
child. But he didn't grab one thing  
when he left. There're no pictures  
inside. No deeds or paperwork.  
There's no suitcases--but empty  
closets and drawers. I think he was  
planning on taking Sharon away.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
Then he didn't tell her about it.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Can't figure that bit out.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS  
You need to stop this.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Excuse me?

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS

The broadcast backfired. And we don't have a lead. Whatever you're trying to do here isn't helping. You need to separate yourself from this.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

I'm trying to get Mia back.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS

We have an innocent girl home with her family right now. That's what we should focus on. We did that. Mia's not exactly a *victim*, she's a criminal. Give yourself this win.

Captain Morris punches him in the face. The Inspector stumbles back to the sidewalk. Feels at his broken lip.

Inspector Phillips pulls out Mia's file and throws it at the Captain. Not daring to take another step towards him.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS (cont'd)

Everyone knows where that girl came from. What she was going to become. She has no family. No one that'll miss her.

(beat)

And you think that just because you pulled her from a couple crappy foster homes that you're some big savior. Hero cop, right? Needed to focus on some other helpless girl all those years cause you couldn't find Sharon.

Phillips heads back to his car.

INSPECTOR PHILLIPS (cont'd)

Just go home, Captain. You're too close to this. Leave it to the rest of us.

He drives off. Captain Morris waits. Crumples up the file. Tears down caution tape hanging from the mailbox.

A NEIGHBOR comes outside dragging a bin of garbage to the curb. They nod at each other.

Captain Morris walks off down the street. We follow him. Past rows of downtrodden houses.

He turns at the end of the road. Not looking up from the ground--a familiar path.

**EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS**

The Captain walks to the end of the street and stops outside a small well-kept house. Walks up the drive-way. Pauses.

Decides not to go in.

He grabs keys from his pocket and goes to the garage. Drives out in a beaten up station wagon. A middle-aged woman stares solemnly at him from the front window of the house, SHERRY.

Captain Morris stops. Can't bear to look her in the eye. She doesn't expect him to.

He drives off.

**INT. GAS STATION, FOOD MART - DAY**

Frank wanders through the aisles of a gas station market.

He avoids a STATE TROOPER in the shop. Pours himself a cup of black coffee from a burnt pot. Heads to the counter.

The CLERK sees the deep scratch marks on Frank's face.

CLERK  
You okay, sir?

He gives her a warm generous smile.

**EXT. GAS STATION, FOOD MART - DAY**

Frank strolls across the lot. Towards the Chevy.

He peeks in the backseat. Mia's unconscious. Wrapped tightly in a blanket--just looks like she's taking a nap.

**INT. GAS STATION, FOOD MART - DAY**

The Clerk calls over the Trooper. Points at Frank. They talk in hushed whispers. Watch Frank drive off.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Frank's driving. Mia stirs in the backseat.

She wakes. Pushes off blankets. Finds her hands restrained.

FRANK  
You're looking so much better, sweetie.

Mia feels at her bandaged leg. Looks down at herself. She's dressed in fresh clothes. Floral prints 10 sizes too big.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 I have some nice clothes for you at  
 home. They should fit you better.  
 You're about her size.

He turns to look at her. Spots a vehicle coming up the road  
 behind him. He waits. Looks closer. It's a State Trooper car.

Frank stiffens.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 You're feeling better. Get back in  
 the trunk.

MIA  
 What? I didn't--

FRANK  
 Get in the back now!

He reaches back and squeezes her injured leg. She shrieks.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 Unlatch the seat and crawl back  
 there, now!

He pulls out a knife.

She shrinks back. Tries to unlatch the seat to the trunk.  
 Mia spots the Trooper's car at a distance. Hesitates.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 Don't make me come back there.

He pushes her into the trunk.

**INT. TRUNK - DAY**

She kneels in the trunk. Holds the latch on the seat from  
 locking. Frank speeds off.

FRANK (O.S.)  
 We'll be home soon. I'm sorry I  
 snapped at you, Honey.  
 (beat)  
 I won't do it again. I promise.

Soft SIRENS hum behind them. They grow louder.

Frank slows down.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

He makes room to let the Trooper pass.

--but the Trooper stays with him. Waves an arm out the window for Frank to pull over.

**INT. TRUNK - DAY**

FRANK (O.S.)  
...nothin' better to do.

Mia feels the car stop.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

He watches the Trooper pull up behind him. Frank checks his loaded handgun.

FRANK  
If I hear one peep...Do you understand me, Mia?

She doesn't answer. He's pissed, but can't show it. He slams a fist on the backseat. The trunk latch locks shut.

FRANK (cont'd)  
You don't want another death on your hands, do you? He'll just get in our way. We'll never get home.

**INT. TRUNK - DAY**

Mia pushes lightly on the seat, but it won't budge.

She waits. Listens for the Trooper's FOOTSTEPS.

**EXT. CAR - DAY**

The Trooper walks towards the Chevy. He's cautious. Talking on his radio. Keeps his distance for now.

Frank steps out of the car. The Trooper becomes alert.

TROOPER  
Get back in your vehicle, Sir!

FRANK  
Is there a problem?

TROOPER  
Just get back in.

Frank weighs the man in front of him. Resigns and gets back in the car. Closes the door behind him.

The Trooper approaches the car. Unlatches his holster.

**INT. TRUNK - DAY**

Mia hears them talk in the front.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Don't want any trouble. Just wondering  
what the problem is, Officer.

TROOPER (O.S.)  
No problem. You just have a brake  
light out.

FRANK  
It was fine last I checked.

The silence holds for a moment.

TROOPER (O.S.)  
I need to see your license and  
registration.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Fine, fine. Just give me a minute.

Frank shuffles around the front seat.

TROOPER (O.S.)  
I'm gonna need you to take the keys  
out of the ignition too, Sir.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Come on! This is ridiculous.

TROOPER (O.S.)  
Your keys, registration, and license.  
Please. Then we'll get you back on  
your way.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Really? Just like that?

TROOPER (O.S.)  
Just like that.

Mia pushes at the seat again, but the latch is locked. She  
collects herself. Takes a minute.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Here they are.

Mia screams and pounds at the seat with all her strength.

SHOTS FIRE OUT.

Mia kicks at the seat. SHRIEKS at the pain in her leg.

The latch on the seat splinters and breaks. She tumbles out into the back seat.

Frank stares at her. Waves a smoking handgun.

Mia rushes to the window and bangs on the glass. The Trooper is on the ground--a gaping hole in his cheek. He catches sight of her. Reaches out a hand helplessly...

Mia digs at the lock on the door but it won't open.

Frank backs up and drives over him. Mia screams.

He speeds off.

Mia attacks Frank. Wraps her restraints around his neck.

He swerves. Tries to keep on the road.

Frank SWINGS at the backseat. But she won't let go.

He SLAMS on the breaks.

She tumbles to the front seat. Her head HITS the glass. Eyes flutter and close.

Frank pushes her limp body to the floor of the car.

He looks back at the Trooper's body on the road. Then to his own bloody and cracked windshield.

Frank pounds the steering wheel.

He points the gun at Mia--about to boil over. But he can't bring himself to do it.

**EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY**

Captain Morris parks outside. Nods at a nearby police car. An UNSEEN OFFICER behind the wheel. A small group of PRESS nearby sip coffee.

He goes to the front steps. Hesitates, about to knock. But flexes his hand. Feels his bruised knuckles. When the door suddenly opens.

MR. WILLIAMS

We weren't expecting you, Captain.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Just wanted to stop by. See how she was doing.

MR. WILLIAMS  
As good as can be expected.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Good. Good.

Mrs. Williams comes up behind her husband. Smiles at them.

MRS. WILLIAMS  
Any news on the girl?

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
None yet. But I was wondering if I  
could speak with Sharon again.

Mr. Williams blocks the threshold.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
I just have a few more things I'd  
like to--

MR. WILLIAMS  
--She's sleeping.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Please, I--

MRS. WILLIAMS  
--We said no.

Captain Morris takes a step back.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Of course, I understand.

Mr. Williams nods and closes the door. The Captain waits on the steps. Uncertain of his next move.

He heads back to his car, but something catches his eye. In their backyard, Sharon sways on a tree swing.

He checks the house for any movement. None. Captain Morris dredges into the backyard. Across dewy unkempt grass.

**EXT. BACKYARD - DAY**

Sharon turns at his quiet footsteps. She's dazed. Her eyes unfocused and head heavy--very medicated.

SHARON  
Captain?

Her whimsical voice carries. She strangles the grass with her bare toes to come to a stop.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
It's good to see you again, Sharon.  
How are you feeling today?

Silence.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
Your parents said you were sleeping.

She smiles softly through a finger to her lips.

SHARON  
*Shhhh.*

He looks back to the house. Nods. Smiles back.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
*Shhhhh.*

Sharon giggles. Gets distracted for a moment. Drags her feet along the grass.

SHARON  
Have you found the girl?

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
No, not yet.

SHARON  
What if you don't find...umm--

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Mia. Her name's Mia.

SHARON  
What if you don't find Mia?

He collects himself. Ignores the question.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Do you want to know about her?

Sharon looks up, eyes red-rimmed. She nods.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
I met her when I was looking for you.  
(beat)  
I don't think I slept for a few months after you went missing. Worked myself silly. But there didn't seem to be much point being a cop if I couldn't help you.

SHARON  
So you stopped looking?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

No. Never.

She looks back to the ground.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)

But when I was looking for you I found her. This little girl no one would think twice about. Quiet. You know? You should have seen the way her foster parents treated her. And I saw it. Couldn't look away. It's probably because you were gone. And I needed something to fix.

SHARON

And?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

I couldn't help Mia as much as she needed. So she just went into another home. And then another, until she wouldn't trust anything with a roof and was too old for anyone to help anymore. And that's why she was there that night. That's why Frank has her.

SHARON

My parents will be looking for me.

He kneels next to her. Trying to catch her eye.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Do you understand what I just told you, Sharon?

SHARON

They're just worried. You know?

He stands. Straightens himself. Nods. Done with his penance.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

That's understandable.

SHARON

They're worried Frank is going to come back for me. Because of what I said.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

We won't let that happen.

SHARON

But I know he won't.

She twirls herself on the swing. A smile cracks on her face.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Why do you say that?

SHARON  
I know him better than anyone. He'll  
never come after me now.

He grabs the swing. Holds it taught.

SHARON (cont'd)  
He hates me now...and he has her.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
We'll find her. I promised you I--

SHARON  
No. Nothing can hurt him...Nothing can  
keep him away. Bars wouldn't have held  
him...so I had to protect myself.

He drops his hold on the swing. Watches her unsteady gaze.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You wanted him to leave with her?

SHARON  
I'll never have to see his face again  
now. People will just forget. Things  
will go back to the way they were.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Not for Mia.

SHARON  
She's not my responsibility.

She leans back--her gaze on the spiraling tree above. Takes  
a deep breath of fresh air.

He grabs Sharon roughly by the shoulders.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Do you know where he took her?

SHARON  
It's not my fault.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
TELL ME!

Sharon tears up.

SHARON  
I don't know. He'd just go.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You have to know something! He  
trusted you.

He tightens his grip on her.

SHARON  
You're hurting me!

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
WHERE DID HE GO?

SHARON  
I don't know! He'd say he was fixing  
it up for us. Said he hated seeing me  
locked up. Wanted a place for our  
family.

Captain Morris drops his hold on her, steps back. Sharon  
loses it. Tears spilling over. Shaking uncontrollably.

SHARON (cont'd)  
I didn't want to go. Ever. If she's  
there then I don't have to be. He has  
someone else. And he won't let her go.  
So I'm free, right? It's not my fault.

She looks to him for an ounce of sympathy--but he's not  
about to give it. Sharon tucks her knees to her chest.

SHARON (cont'd)  
I'm free, Captain. I'm free. I'm fr--

MR. WILLIAMS (O.S.)  
HEY!

Mr. Williams comes running out of the house.

### **INT. CAR - DAY**

Frank pulls into a hidden driveway on a desolate back road.

A large rusted gate blocks his path. He gets out, moves it  
and drives through.

Weeds burst through old gravel on the forgotten path. Thick  
trees in every direction.

He looks down at Mia, still unconscious beside him.

An old hunter's cabin comes into view at the end of the  
driveway. Franks stops the car.

FRANK  
Told you we'd be here soon.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

Frank gets out of the car and goes to the passenger side. Pulls Mia out and cradles her in his arms.

He carries her to the cabin. Crosses the rotting porch.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Frank enters. Dust unsettles. Something small scurries off.

Guns and stuffed animal carcasses line the walls. This is the kind of place you go to get away--no solicitors or bible thumpers. Not even a neighbor.

The far side of the room is different though. Stacks of neatly packed boxes just waiting to be opened.

He gently lays Mia on a sagging couch. Opens the blinds.

FRANK

Finally home, Honey. Let's just get some fresh air in here for you.

(beat)

It's been locked up for too long. We should've moved here years ago.

Really. The city's gone to hell. The crazies there...it was dangerous.

We'll clean it up though. Sweep up the cobwebs and make it feel like home.

He walks slowly towards her. Feels the back of her head--sticky blood matted hair.

FRANK (cont'd)

You have to be more careful though. Less reckless. But you're very lucky.

(beat)

Do you know that? No one has this. What we have. We'll be happy. You'll have whatever you want here...

He holds her unconscious face in his hands. Lets his bloody finger trace her red lips.

FRANK (cont'd)

...and I'll have you.

Frank kisses her softly.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Frank cooks over the stove. He rubs at his tender neck.

Mia wakes up on the couch. Not quite sure where she is.  
Frank whistles loudly on the other side of the room.

She feels the back of her head--dried matted blood.

FRANK  
You must be hungry.

He sets the table for them. Two neat plates of food.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Hope you're not a vegetarian. Won't  
have that under my roof.

MIA  
Where...where are we?

FRANK  
Home. It's where the heart is. That's  
what mother always said.

He waits for a smile, but doesn't get it.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Come on before it gets cold.

Mia hesitantly stands. Finds her ankles in shackles.

FRANK (cont'd)  
It's just for now. Don't want you  
getting any silly ideas. But...I'm  
not a monster, I don't want you tied  
up in the back or in the basement. I  
want you out here with me. Free.  
That's why we came here.

MIA  
(shaky)  
That's very considerate of you.

FRANK  
I know that's sarcasm.

She stands. Shuffles through the room. Keeps her distance.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Come here.

Mia listens. Sits at the table. He comes next to her.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I got to check your head there. You  
got a nasty bang.

He pulls out a first aid kit. Stands over her. Pauses.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Well, you aren't one, right?  
A vegetarian?

MIA  
I, um...no.

FRANK  
Good. Then eat.

She takes a fork. Nibbles at the mushy food. He looks at her head. Starts to clean and bandage it as she eats.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Sharon was a great cook. Better than  
me at least. But you'll be good too.

He gives her a wide grin. Flattens a thick bandage on her head. She winces at his touch.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Almost...there.

Frank claps his hands together. Sits down across from her.

He starts eating. Shoveling down his food. Mia watches him in silence. Frank catches her look.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Tell me about yourself, Mia. Mia  
Estrella. What kind of name is that?  
Where does that come from?

MIA  
I don't know.

FRANK  
That's not an answer.

MIA  
I'm telling the truth. I don't know.

FRANK  
A mutt then. Look like it. That's a  
good thing. Healthy.

Her gaze hardens.

FRANK (cont'd)  
So why were you in the back of the  
cop car? What'd you do?

MIA  
Nothing wrong.

FRANK

Fine. We have plenty of time to get to all the details. About you. About me. But for now, let me guess.

(beat)

You probably think everyone's looking for you.

She's silent.

FRANK (cont'd)

But not by the looks of you. Not by the name, or the missing details you don't know to tell me. Is anyone really missing you, Mia?

Mia looks to her meal.

FRANK (cont'd)

That's what I thought.

He pushes his plate towards her.

FRANK (cont'd)

If you're done eating you can clean up. Sink's over there.

**EXT. GAS STATION, FOOD MART - DAY**

The Clerk talks to a LANKY TROOPER smacking gum. Captain Morris walks in.

LANKY TROOPER

Captain Morris?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Thanks for the call.

The Trooper nods and walks off.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)

You must be Annalee Wilson?

CLERK

Yeah.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

I have a few questions for you.

CLERK

I've already answered all 'yer guys questions.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Humor me then. I've driven a very  
long way.

CLERK  
It happened a few miles north of here.  
That's where all the other cops are.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Just came from there. It's a bloody  
mess. Couldn't look at it much more.

The Clerk looks away from him. He expected that.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
You recognized Mr. Smits then?  
Pointed the Trooper in his direction.

CLERK  
Didn't know he'd hurt him. I was just  
tryin' to help.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
It was good of you to say something.

CLERK  
His face is all over the TV. Someone  
else'll spot him too. They'll find  
that girl I bet.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
That's what we're hoping for. Didn't  
see any sign of her though?

CLERK  
Naw, but he had scratches on his  
face. Think a woman made them.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Just one more question. Frank Smits  
has never come here before, right?

CLERK  
So many people come in here. All  
sorts...

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I have dates...weekends he might have  
come through.

Captain Morris nods at a security camera in the corner.  
Blinking red.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
How far do those go back?

**EXT. GAS STATION, FOOD MART - DAY**

Captain Morris leaves, a box of tapes under his arm.

His cell phone buzzes. He looks at the caller ID: SHERRY.  
Dismisses it. Makes a call to someone else.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

(on phone)

Yes. Phillips? I'll be back in a few days. Taking some time off like you said...Just clearing my head...Yeah. Fine...Call me if there's any news on Mia...or Frank...Thanks.

Captain Morris hangs up. Walks to the road. He looks in both directions.

CUT TO:

**EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Frank's at the road, looks in both directions. Not a car in sight. He pulls letters from an overflowing mailbox.

He secures the metal gate and walks back down the driveway.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia trembles. Chained to a radiator. Her eyes red from crying. She peeks out a window, looking for any sign of Frank. Nothing.

She collects herself. Takes a breath. And screams:

MIA

HELP ME! SOMEONE. PLEASE!

She pulls at her restraints--no use.

Mia looks around the room desperately. Finds a rusted crooked nail in a buckling floorboard.

Crawls to it. But it's just too far away. She pulls. KICKS at the radiator--can just barely get her wrists to the nail.

Mia scratches the rope on the nail. Fraying the edges.

And then, soft rhythmic WHISTLING from outside.

Getting louder.

Her eyes wide, she moves faster. Desperately trying to cut through the bondage.

Kicking at the radiator to get herself closer.

Behind Mia, Frank looks through the window. Her body's arched across the floor. Trying to cut at her rope. He watches her.

And then, the whistling stops.

Mia notices. She shrinks back to the corner. Wipes the tears from her eyes. Frank slowly moves away from the window.

The door swings open. Frank stomps in, all smiles. He tosses the mail on the table. Goes to kneel next to her.

She eyes the nail again, but he doesn't notice.

FRANK

See, said I'd only be a minute.

He feels the frayed rope on her wrists.

FRANK (cont'd)

Must have rats.

He pulls out a knife from his pocket. Cuts the rope. It falls to the ground.

Frank turns his back to her. Goes to the kitchen. Hands to the sink. Thinking.

Mia reaches for the rusted nail again. Hides it in her palm.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - DAY**

A loud rushing spout fills a grime-stained tub. Frank feels the water. Satisfied with the temperature.

He tries to stand. Grips his side in pain. Lifts his shirt. The stitches are bloody and black but hold.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia's curled up on the couch. She glances at the open door to the bedroom. Pulls out the nail from her pocket and works it into the shackles, skillfully.

And CLICK, the shackles fall away. She rubs at her raw skin.

FRANK (O.S.)

This'll feel good for you.

Mia scans the cabin. Fumbling nervously with the loose shackles and nail.

The bathroom door opens.

FRANK (O.S.) (cont'd)  
And let's get you out of those bloody  
clothes.

She CLICKS the shackles locked again. The weight falling  
back onto her. Hides the nail in her mouth.

And Frank lumbers in to see--

Mia curled up on that old sofa. Eyes wide. Quiet. Mouth shut.

FRANK  
I'm a good listener, you know.  
Everyone always says so.

He takes a step towards her. She shrinks back. Frank kneels  
in front of her. Forces Mia to look up.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Washing up might make you feel a bit  
better. It's warm. But not too hot.

He waits for any sign from her. She stares at him. Stands.

FRANK (cont'd)  
It's in the back.

She walks towards the bedroom. He follows.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Mia hesitantly steps into the bedroom. It's dated: thick  
paneling and heavy flannel patterns. She stops short--a  
large bed staring back at her.

FRANK  
Didn't decorate it myself. Not much,  
I know. But we'll make it better.  
Dress it up.

He points to a bathroom in the corner.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Right through here.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - DAY**

Mia steps in. Broken tile beneath her bare feet. Frank  
hovers behind her in the doorway. Stares at her through a  
shattered mirror.

She turns. Tries to smile--just at the corners. He likes  
that. Smiles back at her and backs up.

FRANK  
 Sorry, I'll give you some privacy.

Mia moves to close the door, but his foot stops it.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 Not all the way, please.

Her hand tenses on the knob, but she gives in. Leaves the door open a crack.

The water pours loudly next to her. She waits. Listens for any sound of Frank outside--none.

Mia opens her mouth. Gags. The nail tumbles to her open palm. Traces of her blood on the rust.

She moves to a small upper window. Kneels on the counter to get a better lift. It's locked. Nailed shut from the inside.

She scratches at the frame with the rusty nail. Tugs at the lock, but no luck. Leaves the nail on the ledge.

Mia searches through the medicine cabinet. It's been cleared out. Under the sink is empty too, nothing to help her.

FRANK (O.S.)  
 How's it going in there?

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Frank waits at the door. His ear pressed to the wood.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - DAY**

Mia spins. Expecting him to enter. But the door is still.

MIA  
 Good. I'm good.

The water loudly GUSHES into the tub. She shuts it off.

FRANK (O.S.)  
 I left some clothes on the bed.

Soft footsteps outside the door. He's walked off. Muddles with something in the kitchen.

Mia takes off her clothes, gingerly. Aching all over. Bruised and battered.

She unwraps the bandages from her wounded leg and head. Winces at the pain. Checks herself in the mirror--but can't bear the sight. She covers herself.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Frank lightly traces a ribbon on a nightdress folded neatly on the bed.

Listens for any sound from Mia. Water lightly SPLASHES.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - DAY**

Mia steps in the tub. Splashes water onto herself. Sits. Letting the heat embrace her.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Frank fidgets impatiently, stands, and paces. He peeks through the crack in the door. Watches Mia in the bath.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - DAY**

Frank barges in, hand over his eyes. Mia curls back. Knees to her chest--covering herself.

MIA

You said I could have some privacy.

FRANK

Please...let me help.

Frank squints through his cracked fingers. Smiles sweetly.

He sits on the toilet. Pulls a bucket from the floor and fills it with water from the tub.

FRANK (cont'd)

Close your eyes.

He waits until she listens. Drips some water lightly over her wounded head. Lets it go slowly at first, a soft stream.

She gasps when the bucket is empty.

Frank waits for her to tell him to stop, but it doesn't come.

He fills the bucket again, pours it over her head and body.

Mia shudders at the warm water, taking it in. Letting it cover her. Her long dark hair sticks to her face and neck.

Frank reaches out. Touches the WHITE SCARS on her bare back.

FRANK (cont'd)

No one should have done this to you.  
I wouldn't have let them.

Frank starts with the bucket again. Carefully, like bathing a child. Douses her in warm water as she cradles her knees--not daring to stop him.

**INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX, HALLWAY - DAY**

Captain Morris walks down a long dingy hallway. Knocks on a nondescript door with peeling paint.

A female NURSE, 40s, opens the door a crack.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I'm looking for Edna Johnson.

She nods and lets him in.

**INT. APARTMENT - DAY**

It's dark and musty inside.

The Nurse holds a little boy on her hip, JESSE (3), timid with messy hair and ripped clothes--quieter than he should with those sharp eyes. He hides his face in her hair.

EDNA JOHNSON (O.S.)  
(*croaky smoker voice*)  
WHO'S THERE?

The Nurse leads the Captain into a crowded living room. The curtains drawn. Large withered furniture and piles of hoarded trash surround EDNA JOHNSON--80s. Obese and bitter.

NURSE  
(*thick accent*)  
Edna, someone's here to see you.

Edna locks onto Captain Morris. Quickly buttons up her shirt and settles a little into her monstrous chair.

EDNA JOHNSON  
Ain't proper to just bring them in without asking.

NURSE  
Yes, Ms. Johnson. My apologies.

EDNA JOHNSON  
Well, don't just have him stand there.

The Nurse moves newspapers from a stool. Motions for Captain Morris to sit. She goes back to the kitchen with the child.

Edna leans towards him. Smacks. Lipstick on her dentures.

EDNA JOHNSON (cont'd)  
Hard to find decent help.

Captain Morris watches the Nurse and the little boy in the kitchen. She plays with him gently. Kindly.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You're a difficult woman to find,  
Edna. Had to come a long way.

EDNA JOHNSON  
Well, was expecting one of you a  
while ago. Took you long enough.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You don't go by your married name,  
not since your husband passed.

EDNA JOHNSON  
Who wants "Smits" on their gravestone?

They let that linger.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I need to talk to you about your son,  
Edna. I want to help him.

EDNA JOHNSON  
Bullshit.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Excuse me?

EDNA JOHNSON  
You wanna string him up. Save whatever  
poor soul he's run away with.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
No, I--

EDNA JOHNSON  
--I ain't about to give him help. He  
threw me out, understand? Right out  
of my own house. Put me in this dump.  
He was always stupid. Weak. Couldn't  
even take care of his own mother. So  
he went and found himself a new toy.  
(she spits)  
Well, they can have each other.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I don't think you understand the  
situation, Mrs. Smits.

EDNA JOHNSON  
That's Johnson to you.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
When did he bring you here, Ms.  
Johnson? Ten...eleven years ago.

She purses her lips. Nods tight.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
I want to put him away for what he's  
done. Hurt him the way he hurt you.  
But I need your help.

She leans forward. Almost like a secret. Her eyes daggers.

EDNA JOHNSON  
He was a stupid and quiet boy.  
Couldn't do anything right. Sometimes  
just plain vicious if I looked away  
for a second.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
What about his father?

EDNA JOHNSON  
I thought about sending Franklin away  
when he father died. Needed to get his  
head straight. But he just held onto my  
skirt. Cryin' till you'd think he'd  
burst. And so scared that he wouldn't  
even step out the front door.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
How long was he like that?

She shakes her head. Shrugs. Leans back in her chair.

EDNA JOHNSON  
I don't know. Years...it's too long  
ago. He's grown now. Different. But  
after what I saw on the news I was  
surprised. Really. Surprised he had  
that in him. Wasn't so small and  
quiet after all.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You lived in that same house for  
forty years. Just the two of you. Do  
you have any idea where he would run  
to? Where he would hide?

EDNA JOHNSON

I don't know. All he had was that house, his job, and that girl in the basement. And I didn't even know that!

CAPTAIN MORRIS

You sound like you want to protect him.

EDNA JOHNSON

No! Never.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Is there anyone that would want to help him?

She coughs. Chuckles.

EDNA JOHNSON

Franklin wasn't ever too good with people.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

No friends at all?

EDNA JOHNSON

Besides the hem of my skirt?

(thinks on it)

Maybe one. A neighbor boy. Didn't like him coming around so much, but they were friends I suppose.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

What was his name, Edna?

EDNA JOHNSON

Starts with an "R" maybe. I don't know. It was so long ago. Over a decade since I've seen my son. Did you know that? Left me here to rot!

The Nurse stands and approaches them.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

What's his name? Franklin's friend.

EDNA JOHNSON

Roger, maybe. No, Robert. Definitely Robert. I'm sure. Moved to Warren County a while back I think.

Captain Morris stands.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Warren County, you sure?

EDNA JOHNSON  
Not if I were a bettin' woman.

His phone rings. "Sherry" on the caller ID. He silences it and stands. Edna struggles to sit up.

EDNA JOHNSON (cont'd)  
Leavin' already? We just got started.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I can't lose any more time.

EDNA JOHNSON  
Why're you so wrapped up in this?

He stops. Turns.

EDNA JOHNSON (cont'd)  
Don't you have a family? Someone of your own to worry about?

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I--yes. But this is my job. These victims are my responsibility. Sharon, now Mia. And all the ones in between that I couldn't help.

EDNA JOHNSON  
They're better things to do than dig up the past just to nail yourself in the coffin, Captain.

She let's that sit on him. He straightens his badge. Takes a moment. Edna settles in her chair. Stares at him.

He shakes her hand warmly in both hands.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I'm going to find your son, Mrs. Johnson. But if you hear anything, please reach out.

The Nurse walks Captain Morris to the door.

**INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX, HALLWAY - DAY**

Captain Morris stops in the hallway. Turns to the Nurse.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Did you ever meet her son?

She checks that Edna's still at her seat. The Nurse nods.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
When did you start working for her?

NURSE  
A few years back.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
So he's been by?

NURSE  
Yes. Seemed nice. 'Specially to her.  
Don't know if she'd remember it though.

He slips her his business card.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Please call me if he reaches out.

Jesse pulls at the Nurse's hair. Giggles. Reaches out and plays with the cuffs on the Captain's uniform. He smiles.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
Nice of Edna to let you bring him to work. But keep an eye out for the boy around her. He's sweet.

NURSE  
He's--

EDNA JOHNSON (O.S.)  
--WHAT'RE YOU YAMMERING ABOUT OVER THERE. CLOSE THE DAMN DOOR!

Captain Morris nods at the Nurse. Turns and walks off.

The Nurse looks at Jesse in her arms--then back to the Captain off down the hallway. Already out of earshot.

NURSE  
He's not mine.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mia steps out of the bathroom alone. In a towel. Her hair soaked and skin wet. A folded nightgown on the bed.

Outside the sky's turned dark. She dries her hair and gets in the gown. Hides the rusty nail in her palm.

Frank knocks on the closed bedroom door.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Would you like some tea before bed?

MIA  
No, thank you.

Mia checks the door. Listens for Frank.

She goes to the window. Pries at it. But it's nailed shut.

Mia searches the room for any kind of weapon. Digs through cluttered drawers. Stops at a framed PHOTOGRAPH of a woman and a baby. It's been ripped and taped back together.

FRANK

You weren't supposed to find that.

Mia spins. Frank's at the door. Cups of tea in each hand.

MIA

I'm sorry I didn't mean to--

He throws the mugs across the room. Mia drops the photograph. Steps back from Frank.

He holds his face in his hands. Rocks back and forth on his heels.

FRANK

I'm...I'm sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. I never want that. But--

He sits at the foot of the bed.

FRANK (cont'd)

--I don't want you to think badly of her. She had bad days.

MIA

That's...Sharon?

FRANK

The baby made her so sweet at first. I thought I could trust her.

(beat)

Maybe we should've moved here sooner. But she never wanted to leave...I didn't think she'd hurt him.

MIA

I'm sorry.

FRANK

Was just trying to make her happy. But she never let me. Not really. It has to be different this time. You're different.

He wipes tears from his eyes. Reaches for her closed hand. She tightens her fist around the nail.

Frank pats her hand. Stands.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Let's get to bed. Been a long day.

Frank leaves. Mia stares down at the bed. Her fear boiling to the surface. He comes back with an armful of heavy blankets.

FRANK (cont'd)  
It gets cold here at night.

He catches her look. Shamed.

FRANK (cont'd)  
We don't have to--I mean, I'm a gentleman. The bed is yours. I wouldn't...not until you ask me to. I'm going to be on the couch until you want me here.

He tenses. Angry at her silence.

FRANK (cont'd)  
SAY SOMETHING!

MIA  
I'd love some tea before bed, Frank.

Frank smiles a boyish grin. Happy to please.

FRANK  
I'd love to get you some.

#### **INT. RURAL MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Captain Morris unlocks the door. Turns on the lights. Throws a briefcase and box on the bed.

The room has seen better days. A back-road kind of motel that has more roaches than visitors.

He tosses tapes from the box. Pulls out paperwork.

Captain Morris organizes them on the bed. Unfolds a marked-up map. He's been busy: towns have been circled or crossed out.

He settles in for a long night.

#### **INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mia stirs in bed, wide awake. Her arms and legs restrained.

She hears a door open and close. And that's her cue--

Mia pulls out the rusty nail hidden beneath her pillow. Struggles to work at the shackles on her wrist. But the angle is impossible. And she can't get a good grip on it.

The nail SNAPS and falls behind the bed.

**EXT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Frank's on the porch. Looks to the driveway and dark trees. No movement.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Mia wakes up slowly. Groggy. Rubs her red eyes at the bright sun bleeding through the blinds.

It takes her a moment to remember where she is.

And her hands are untied. Her legs unrestrained. She slowly gets out of bed. Tiptoes to the closed bedroom door.

Loud pots and pans clang from the other side. She tries the knob. But it's locked.

Mia knocks lightly.

The pots quiet. Silence from the other side. Then footsteps. Frank opens the door a crack. A wide smile on his face.

FRANK

You're awake sleepy head.

(beat)

Well, come on out, don't be a stranger. You like eggs?

She walks out of the bedroom.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia sees chains and restraints on a chair--waiting for her. She shivers. He notices.

FRANK

Let me warm it up in here. Winter's dying out there, but with that frost it gets bitter.

He adds logs to a crackling fireplace.

FRANK (cont'd)

How'd you sleep?

MIA

Fine.

FRANK

You were having trouble nodding off.  
Wanted to give you something to help.

Mia notices a ring of KEYS looped in his belt.

She wanders around. He's been unpacking the boxes. The room looks different and staged. She lets her gaze linger on a stack of mail. The name "ROGER DILLMAN" printed on the front.

MIA

Who's Roger?

FRANK

An old friend.

MIA

Will he be coming by?

FRANK

No, he's retired.

MIA

Someplace warm?

She smiles at him. Frank doesn't--weighing her response.

Mia moves past the letters. Her fingers tickle the drooping petals of a fresh flower in a cup at the table.

MIA (cont'd)

How pretty...

She gives him a childish grin. He likes that. Drapes a blanket over her shoulders.

FRANK

So how do you like 'em?

MIA

Hmmm?

FRANK

Your eggs?

MIA

How do you like yours?

FRANK

Fried.

MIA

That sounds good for me too.

He gives her shoulder a squeeze. Goes to the stove.

Frank's back is to her. She tiptoes to the front door. Tries the knob. It's locked. Deadbolted.

She sits at the kitchen table.

MIA (cont'd)

Can I help?

FRANK

You any good?

She shakes her head shyly.

FRANK (cont'd)

Don't worry. We'll get you there.

He bends over for a skillet. Winces at the pain in his side. She notices.

MIA

Here, let me help.

She comes up behind him. Pulls the skillet from the drawer. He watches her cautiously.

FRANK

I should put the chains on.

She doesn't even look up.

MIA

Eggs?

He points to the fridge. She goes to it. Grabs the carton.

MIA (cont'd)

Do whatever you feel you have to. But the metal...it's probably very cold. Can we warm it up first?

FRANK

Yes, yes absolutely. Wouldn't want you to freeze your toes off.

MIA

Could I get some socks too?

FRANK

Yes, of course. I didn't even--I didn't think. I'm so sorry. Freezing you out of your new home.

Mia cracks an egg in the skillet. His face sours.

FRANK (cont'd)  
You got a shell in there.

He pushes her from the stove. Tries to scoop out the shell.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Just go by the fire and warm yourself.

MIA  
Sorry. I--

FRANK  
Just go.

MIA  
Can I set the table?

He's too focused on the eggs. Brushes her off.

FRANK  
Fine.

She searches through the cabinets. Pulls out dishes and utensils. He watches her like a hawk. She sets the table.

Frank comes over with the skillet. She stands. Intentionally gets in his way.

--Bumps his wounded side.

He WAILS. Drops the splitting skillet to the ground.

Eggs splatter on the floor.

MIA  
I'm so sorry. What did I do?

She tears up. Face in her hands. He's angry. Tries to control it. Fists at his side.

MIA (cont'd)  
I'm so sorry, Frank. I'm so sorry.

FRANK  
It's not your fault.

MIA  
Are...are you okay?

She points to blood spotting on his shirt. He sees it.

FRANK  
Shit! Clean this up.

He stomps off. Goes to the bathroom. She braces herself on the table. Letting her facade fade.

Mia slips a blunt butter KNIFE into her sleeve. Follows him.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - DAY**

Mia watches Frank in the bathroom through the ajar door. He looks at the discolored stitches at his side.

He catches her watching him.

FRANK  
Do you need something?

MIA  
Can I help?

He softens. Nods slightly. She comes into the bathroom.

MIA (cont'd)  
Can I take a look?

He's hesitant, but lets her. She leads him to the toilet. Sits him down. Kneels in front of him.

MIA (cont'd)  
It needs a fresh bandage. Something to help pull the skin together.

She opens the cabinet under the sink.

MIA (cont'd)  
This should work.

He winces as she lightly touches his wound. She tightens her grip on the butter knife tucked into her sleeve.

FRANK  
I appreciate this.

Mia rips the last bits of an old bandage from his side. He shudders in pain. Reaches for her hand. Grips it tight.

Frank looks at her warmly, then stiffens. Mia's eyes go wide.

His fist tightens on her wrist. The silverware in his grasp.

Her face hardens. She pushes forward with all her strength.

PLUNGES the blunt knife into Frank's stitches.

He HOWLS. She falls back--pulling the loop of keys at his belt with her.

Crawling away from him. He swings at her. Kicks. Scratches. Clings to her ankles.

But she heels him in the face. He drops his hold on her.  
She slams the bathroom door.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Mia runs through the bedroom.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

She desperately tries the ring of keys at the front door.

One by one she throws them to the ground.

Frank screams loudly from the bathroom. Splintering wood and angry cursing.

Getting louder.

Coming for her.

And a key CLICKS. Turns like butter.

She throws the door open.

FRANK (O.S.)  
You're going to have to try harder  
than that, Honey.

Frank barges through the bedroom.

She runs outside.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia rushes to the car. Fumbles with the keys. Desperate for one to fit in the door.

Shivering at the cold.

But no luck. Frank comes lumbering down the steps towards her. Fire in his eyes.

She pounds at the window of the car. No use.

He's closer. A gun at his side. Loading bullets.

He nurses his bleeding side. She chokes back tears.

MIA  
Please...

FRANK  
Better get inside.

He's on the other side of the car now.

She can barely breathe. Looks down at her bare feet...her thinly covered body.

He reaches for her.

Mia runs.

**EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY**

She sprints up the driveway. Fleeing as fast as she can.

Frank doesn't have a chance to catch her in his condition.

She tries to keep her pace up. No end in sight.

Then BEEPING behind her. Headlights flash. The Chevy speeds towards Mia. She stops, turn to see--

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Frank at the wheel. Revving. Petal to the floor. Handgun at the ready.

Speeding along towards the frail figure up the driveway.

Mia darts from the gravel path. Ducks into the woods.

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Mia tries to run, but can't quite get her footing. She stumbles through trees. Her feet cut and bleeding.

She looks back. Frank's at the woods edge. Staring at her. Gun in hand.

He aims.

Wood SPLINTERS off the bark of a tree next to Mia. She screams. Hides behind a tree.

Frank comes into the woods. Eyes trained for any movement.

Mia runs to a further tree. Hides again.

He comes up quietly behind it. Aims his gun, but--

No Mia.

He's lost her for a moment.

Mia hides in a frozen river bed, shrouded by brush and frozen mud. Just out of sight. Shaking. Her face white.

Soft FOOTSTEPS overhead. Thick boots. A CLICK of a reloading gun. Mia shakes uncontrollably. She covers her mouth to quiet her raspy BREATHING.

Utter silence. His boots shift on the frozen dirt.

A twig snaps nearby. Frank runs off.

She waits. Listens for him--but nothing.

Mia makes a run for it. Heading into a thicket of trees. Sprinting as fast as she can.

Stumbling through rocks.

Tripping over fallen branches.

BULLETS shred her path--but she won't stop this time. She wouldn't dare. He won't lose her again.

The woods thins. The gray sky darkening.

Something up ahead catches her eye. A barrier as far as the eye can see--blocking her path. A tall metal fence.

The bullets stop. RELOAD behind her.

Loud WHISTLING coming closer.

Mia stops at the fence. Eight feet high. Rusted through.

FRANK (O.S.)

The deer are bad 'round here this time of year. Will come straight through. You need to train them that they can't go wherever they choose.

She turns and sees Frank coming through the trees behind her. A smile that could crack a mirror.

FRANK

Gotta be careful out here. It's not safe. Better go home.

There's nowhere to go. She tries to climb the fence.

Frank comes closer.

She's nearly to the top. Tries to pull herself over--

And Frank's right there. Grabs her ankle.

Mia cries out. Yanks her leg back with all her strength.

Frees herself.

Topples over the fence to the other side.

Mia regains her footing. Stares at him through the fence. His gun trained on her chest.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Don't think you're going anywhere.

MIA  
Well, I'm not going back with you!

He's still smiling. Lowers his gun.

She's confused. Lingers for a second. Spins and runs off. But she doesn't get very far. Only a few steps and Mia--  
--falls hard. Shrieks.

She holds her legs. Pulls up BARBED WIRE buried beneath frozen leaves. The fence is surrounded.

Mia claws at it, but the wire just digs further into her skin. Tearing at her flesh like paper.

FRANK  
Deer can't jump if their legs aren't working. Gotta make them know where they can and can't go. They learn.

She stares up at him. Hopeless. Free but more trapped than ever.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Now don't go anywhere.

**INT. RURAL POLICE STATION - DAY**

Captain Morris sits in front of a large oak desk. It's not the side he's accustomed to, and he's been waiting a while.

He checks his watch. Thumbs through a folder in his lap.

SERGEANT GATES comes and sits behind the desk--40s and overweight, more accustomed to a bar fight than a shootout.

SERGEANT GATES  
You must be Captain Morris.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
You haven't been returning my calls.

SERGEANT GATES  
We've been busy.

Captain Morris looks around. The office is dead.

SERGEANT GATES (cont'd)  
What can I help you with?

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I need access to records about the town. Deeds. Deaths. Missing persons. I have an active investigation--

SERGEANT GATES  
--I called your precinct. Don't know why you'd be coming all the way out here. They said you should be home.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I'm following a lead. Look.

Captain Morris spreads printed SCREENSHOTS over the Sergeant's desk. Frozen black & white moments time stamped. A single recognizable man in all of them--Frank.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
I have surveillance footage that I've matched with Frank Smits credit card statements. He's been through here at least 4 times in the past months. Got off the highway at the same exit. Went to the same store. It's not just a coincidence.

He looks to the Sergeant for a hint of acknowledgment. Gets only pity.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
Now I've crossed off a few places. I have a 30 mile stretch where I think Frank Smits might be. And your town's smack in the middle.

SERGEANT GATES  
My town's smack in the middle of nowhere. This isn't much to go off of.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
That's not all. Frank had a close friend. I heard he moved to your county about a decade back. Name might start with an "R". That's all I know. And that might not even be true. But right after I learned that I hear about a State Trooper getting shot and left for dead in the road. And where does this happen? Right over the Warren county line. And a cashier confirmed it was Smits.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
 So if his friend is out here then I  
 need to talk with him. Cause he's  
 either in danger or knows something.

SERGEANT GATES  
 That's less than nothing. I don't  
 even know how I can help you.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
 I need town records. Any information  
 you might have.

SERGEANT GATES  
 People keep to themselves up here.  
 It's simple. Quiet. We like to keep  
 it that way.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
 Look, I don't have a real lead. I'm  
 grasping. I get that. I know how it  
 looks. But he's dangerous. And I'd  
 bet my life that I'm close. Close  
 enough that grasping at thin leads is  
 worth it. Because I can't just leave.  
 This case isn't cold yet. I've made  
 that mistake before.

They share a long look. Sergeant Gates takes one last glance  
 at the surveillance photos. Trying to find something there.  
 Anything. But there isn't. He shakes his head.

SERGEANT GATES  
 I can't help you, Captain.

**EXT. CABIN - DUSK**

Thick chains fasten around Mia's bloody ankle. Frank  
 tightens cuffs on her wrists. Mia tries to stand.

FRANK  
 Just remember whose fault this is.

She nods. Keeps her head to the ground.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 Say it.

Mia closes her eyes. Mumbles to the ground.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 WHAT?

MIA  
 It's my fault.

He comes closer to her. Feels the chains at her ankles.  
Makes sure they're tight--rubbing at the bone.

FRANK  
That's right. I wanted you safe. Got  
you away from the city. Gave you  
everything you could ever want and  
you try to leave? Leave me?

He lets his meaty fingers linger...up her leg.  
...tracing her spine.  
...gracing her lips. Her gaze is hard. Face muddy.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Don't look at me like that.

Frank twists her arm. A sharp SNAP at the elbow. She gasps.  
Falls into him.

FRANK (cont'd)  
You're filthy.

He grabs a hose. Turns on the spout. Sprays Mia.  
Icy water cutting--wet clothes clinging. Mia braces herself  
on the railing of the steps.  
She loses her footing. He catches her before she hits the  
ground. Mia stares up at him--blue in the face.

MIA  
I'm sorry.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mia changes into dry clothes--struggles with it. Her arm is  
tightly wrapped in a sling. Her ankles chained.

Frank watches from the other room. She goes to the door.  
About to close it.

FRANK  
No. Keep it open.

She turns off the light. Goes to bed. They stare at each  
other in the dark--motionless.

**INT. RURAL MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Captain Morris slams the door behind him.

He tears up the room. Tosses the mattress. Shatters a lamp.

He comes face to face with his large map taped to the wall. Areas have been crossed off and circled--a significant amount of work...leading to nowhere.

He sits on the edge of the bed. Face in his hands. He pulls out his phone. Plays with something. A familiar recording starts:

MIA (RECORDING)  
 "Officer down. Officer down at...I  
 don't know. Please help--"

A muffled VIOLENT SCUFFLE. A SHOT. Then CRACKLING. Silence...  
 Captain Morris plays the recording again. And again.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Mia wakes up. Coughs violently.

Frank's sitting at the foot of her bed. Watching her. She pulls the covers up to her chin. But WINCES. Gasps at the pain in her arm.

She nurses her sling to her chest.

FRANK  
 You slept for a long time. Didn't even  
 have to give you anything.

He swings his ring of keys in his hands.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 So what should I do with you?

MIA  
 You've already done it.

She cradles her arm. His eyes narrow. Fakes a smile.

FRANK  
 Look, I understand. No relationship  
 is perfect. But I've always gone the  
 extra mile. And what do I get for it?  
 Disrespect. Blame. That look in your  
 fucking eye. I could cut that look  
 right out you know.

She shrinks back into the bed.

MIA  
 I'm sorry. I shouldn't have left.

FRANK

Of course you're "sorry". Now. But only because I caught you. You're trying to ruin all this.

He stands and leaves. Slams the door behind him. She waits. Expecting him to barge right back in, but he doesn't.

Mia gets out of bed. Goes to the bathroom.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - DAY**

Mia winces. Unwraps her sling and carefully lifts an arm to the mirror. Looks at the dark discoloration and bruising.

But then she sees herself in the mirror. Her hair matted. Face pale and gaunt.

She pinches her cheeks for some color. Brushes the hair from her eyes and tries to smile. Small at first. Forced. Lips trembling. She tries again. Makes it natural and sweet.

**EXT. SMALL TOWN - DAY**

Captain Morris walks through a small crumbling town. He's in their poor excuse for a main street--an overused hardware store and dilapidated post-office.

He talks with some PASSERBYS, but no luck.

He goes into the hardware store and asks to hang a WANTED POSTER. We watch through the window. The OWNER shakes his head. Captain Morris leaves.

He hangs the poster on a cable pole. It's an old picture of Frank. The wind whips at the poster's edges--won't last long.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Mia startles awake in bed.

She feels her arm, but won't dare open the sling.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

She tiptoes into the main room. No sign of him. Mia rushes to the kitchen, opens the utensil drawer.

The front door opens. Frank peeks his head inside.

FRANK

Come here.

He goes back outside.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia gingerly steps out of the house. Frank tosses wood planks onto the porch steps.

FRANK

Things are gonna be changing around here. Do you understand me?

He pulls out a hammer and a box of nails. She glances up the driveway. He notices.

FRANK (cont'd)

Like to see you try and leave. See how far those little legs carry you this time.

Frank grabs a plank of wood and goes to the window. Places the wood against the frame and holds taught. Covers the glass. Hammering. Mia flinches at each WHACK.

FRANK (cont'd)

Shame it had to come to this. Won't need to hang those curtains anymore. I'd been saving them special for you.

The inside of the cabin slowly fades from view.

FRANK (cont'd)

My mother loved her drapes. Had one for every season it seemed. Always smelled fresh, and laundered. Ironed 'um too. Every stitch and thread. Only thing should be straighter than drapes is the pew, she always said.

MIA

I'd like to meet her sometime.

He gives her a curious look.

FRANK

Foul woman. Bad liar too. Like you. Only thing that should be straighter than a drape is a woman's spine, my father would say back. I said it too. Didn't know what it meant though. And she'd hit me for it. Whip right across the back. And he'd join in. Until it was just them against me.

(beat)

Come on over here.

Mia doesn't move. He roughly grabs her wrist. Pulls her to stand near the window.

FRANK (cont'd)  
But you're not like them. Spineless and hollow. Just full of fight and sharp words. You're more like me, except you're weak. That's why you're here. That's why you need me.

He holds her hand to the window.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Hold this for me.

He gives her a large nail. Forces her hand to the wood plank. Swings the hammer back and glares.

FRANK (cont'd)  
No. Not like that. You're not doing it right.

He rips the nail from her hand. Flattens her palm against the wood. Places the nail between her spread fingers.

She looks away. Not trusting what he'll do next.

FRANK (cont'd)  
No one gets it like us. We're different. Don't need anyone else to tell us so or put us down.

MIA  
Please I--

FRANK  
Hold it!

He pulls the hammer back and swings. She gasps. Closes her eyes. But doesn't pull her hand away.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Perfect. See. Just like that.

He offers her the hammer.

FRANK (cont'd)  
We deserve this 'safe space' don't we? A place we can call our own without everyone trying to tear us away?

Mia takes the outstretched hammer. Holds it with two hands.

Frank takes a seat in the chair.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I'm tired. How about you do the rest?

Her breath is hollow. Strained. She stares at the last open sliver of window.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Just like I showed you now.

She holds up a slab of wood. Puts the nail to the cross. Eyes unblinking. Hand shaking with the hammer.

FRANK (cont'd)  
DO IT!

Mia SLAMS the hammer down on the nail. One shot. All the way down. She gasps. Almost smiles.

He sees it and smiles himself.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Again!

Mia secures the board and POUNDS in another nail. Too hard. BEATING the hell out of it.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Okay now, that's enough. Feel good?

Mia hesitantly looks at him. Tries to catch her breath. Realizes she's just lost one more exit.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Good. You only have five more windows to secure.

MIA  
Me?

FRANK  
Can't have you trying to leave again.

He stands and offers her a plank of wood. She takes it.

Mia walks slowly to the next window.

She looks inside the cabin. Holds the plank to the window frame and WHACK--

Drives another nail into her coffin.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Mia sits motionless in the DARK room. On the bed. Shuddering. Shaking. Barely blinking. Her wrists handcuffed.

The darkness has closed in. The cabin sealed. She goes to the covered window. Stares at the thick wood barrier. Sees her reflection in the glass now. Slumped. Small.

In the bathroom, Frank showers. The water GUSHES.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - NIGHT**

Frank gets out of the shower. Dresses. Looks at himself in the mirror. Feels at his beard and hair. Pulls out scissors and a razor.

There's a soft knock on the door. He opens it. Sees Mia quiet and lingering on the other side.

FRANK

What is it?

She shrinks back. Shakes her head.

He goes back to the mirror. Roughly dries his hair, grabs the scissors at the counter. Tries to cut his own hair.

MIA

Can I help, Frank?

He's hesitant, but nods. Almost hands her the scissors.

FRANK

Wait.

He leaves the bathroom. Comes back with more chains.

Frank secures Mia to the radiator. Tosses the key back into the bedroom, far out of reach.

FRANK (cont'd)

Don't get any ideas. Understand what would happen if you even think about--

MIA

--I wouldn't dare.

She holds up the scissors. Waiting for his permission.

FRANK

Short and neat, please.

MIA

I can do that.

She starts cutting his hair. Slow and careful. Mia holds his head still.

He arches at her touch. She runs her fingers through his hair. He can't get enough of it.

She stops.

MIA (cont'd)  
Done. What do you think?

He looks at himself in the mirror. Nods--but he's more focused on her reflection.

Frank holds out the razor to her.

MIA (cont'd)  
You want me to...

FRANK  
I'm keeping the beard. A new look.  
Just keep it neat on the neck.

She takes the razor to his throat--and he gives her that. Exposes his whole neck to the blade.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Be careful.

He stares daggers at her. She can't match his eye. Goes to her work--holds her breath.

FRANK (cont'd)  
So, I was thinking of renovating the place up. Maybe digging up a plot outside for you to garden.

Mia carefully slices the hair from his neck. The razor grazing his rough skin.

FRANK (cont'd)  
You'd like that. Wouldn't you?

MIA  
Yes, that sounds very nice.

FRANK  
And I was thinking...maybe, maybe some window-boxes outside. A fresh coat of paint too.

MIA  
What color?

FRANK  
Whatever color you want.

She doesn't take her eyes from his neck as she shaves him. But inside, something's brewing.

MIA  
White maybe. With blue shudders.

FRANK  
That'd look great. Like a real home.  
Anything else?

He grabs her hand with the razor. Kisses it. She thinks about it. Shakes her head.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Come on, just ask.

MIA  
I'd like to get out.

He spins. She pulls back, almost slitting his throat.

MIA (cont'd)  
No, not like that. I want to see our neighborhood. Our town, there has to be a town, right? Little shops and restaurants?

His mind turns. She kneels before him. Tries her best smile.

MIA (cont'd)  
That's what I want. Dinner or lunch or breakfast outside of these walls. The two of us. Like a date.

He meets her gaze. Warm and smiling for the first time ever.

MIA (cont'd)  
You have to work on a marriage. Take time together. Don't you think?

He thinks on it. She turns him to the mirror. Frank looks at himself in the glass. Barely recognizable.

MIA (cont'd)  
Look. I'm done. You look good.

He almost smiles. Just at the corners. Then wipes his face roughly. Stands. Towers over her.

FRANK  
A date. White paint and blue shudders. A garden. That sounds lovely. Perfect really.

Mia hands him the razor.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I can do that.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

Frank opens the trunk. Checks on something. Catches Mia watching him from the doorway of the cabin.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Mia's in the front passenger seat. Watches the cabin drift into the rear-view mirror.

**INT. CAR - LATER**

Frank's driving down a rural road. Mia rubs at her raw wrists. Takes in every new sight.

Then in the distance, like a mirage at first, a small cropping of buildings comes into view. A poor excuse for a main street. They drive through.

Frank keeps one eye on her. She's impatient. Her eyes darting from person to person, building to building. But not able to call out for help.

They turn on a small road to the woods. Over gravel and to--

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

Frank pulls into a park. Drives to the corner of the lot.

He drums the steering wheel. Waiting for her to say something first.

MIA  
I...I thought we were going out for a meal. At a...

FRANK  
Restaurant?

She nods. He steps out of the car. Goes to the trunk. Pulls out a basket.

Mia steps out of the car. Collecting herself. Shaky.

She looks around the cut of land against thick trees. Nearby, a small playground sits idle.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I brought a picnic for us.

He lifts the basket. She doesn't seem convinced.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I'm doing you a favor here. Don't make  
me regret that. Now, are you hungry?

She nods, hesitant.

He grabs her arm. Leads her to a picnic table. Sits her  
down. Opens the basket and spreads out their food.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I've got a lot of yummy things here  
for us. Lots of choices. What do you  
want first?

She gingerly reaches for a sandwich. Takes a bite.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Good, isn't it?

MIA  
Very. Thank you, Frank. You know, for  
everything. Taking me away from the  
city, bringing me here today.

She stares off into the woods. And then back to him.

MIA (cont'd)  
I appreciate it.

She tries her best at a smile. He wipes some mayo off her  
lip. Shares the smile.

FRANK  
Nothin' I wouldn't do for you, Honey.  
You know that.

A station wagon drives up the gravel and stops. A HUSBAND,  
WIFE, and YOUNG CHILD exit.

The child runs to the playground. The parents follow.

Mia and Frank watch them without saying a word.

She stands abruptly. And CLICK--

The sound of a gun.

Under the table, Frank aims a handgun at her.

FRANK (cont'd)  
We aren't done with our meal. Sit  
back down.

She doesn't listen.

FRANK (cont'd)  
DID YOU HEAR ME?

Mia sits back down. The Husband at the playground turns to watch them curiously. Waves in their direction.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Now let the family have their fun.  
Don't want to go ruining their day  
now, do you?

Mia chokes back tears. Stares at the family--carefree, playing. She gives a broken wave to the Husband.

FRANK (cont'd)  
This is why I can't take you anywhere  
nice. You go and be stupid. You'd try  
to leave. But you don't understand  
yet. I'm doing what's best for you.

Frank watches Mia. Silent tears on her cheeks--a sad smile. He follows her gaze to the bubbly little girl playing on the swing.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

The front door swings open. Mia walks in--back to her prison. Frank's right behind her. But he stops at the threshold.

FRANK  
I need to leave for a while.

MIA  
Are...are you taking me with you?

FRANK  
Do you want me to?

MIA  
Yes.

FRANK  
You want to leave?

He's stern. She goes off his look--

MIA  
No, I don't, Frank.

FRANK  
Good.

Frank approaches her.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Don't want you getting any more ideas.

He tugs her arm. Pulls her to the fridge. Handcuffs her to the door.

FRANK (cont'd)  
If you get hungry. You know.

MIA  
How long are you going to be gone for?

FRANK  
Not long. A day, maybe two.

MIA  
You can't just leave me here!

He grabs a blanket/pillow from the couch. Tosses them to her.

FRANK  
I'll try to keep it quick.

Frank goes to the front door. Closes it behind him. Secures LOCKS on the other side.

Outside, the car hums to life.

Mia SCREAMS. Pulls desperately at her restraints.

#### **INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Pure darkness, except for a dim yellow glow from an open fridge. Like a lone fire in a cave.

Mia sits in the glow, her wrist above her head.

She nibbles at leftovers spread over the floor in front of her. Numb. Quiet.

#### **EXT. SMALL TOWN - DAWN**

Captain Morris shuffles through the small town. Dawn breaking as he sips a stale cup of coffee.

A BURLY MAN passes him by. Strolls across the street. He catches the Captain's attention.

The Captain watches him carefully. Studies him.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
'Scuse me?

The Burly Man gives Captain Morris an uninterested look. Gets in his truck and drives off.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)

Hey!

Captain Morris runs back to his car and jumps in.

**INT. CAR - DAWN**

The Captain follows the truck at a distance. Sees it turn off down a side-road. Follows.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia pulls at the fridge with all her strength. Cumbersome, but shifting slightly on the ground.

A pipe in the back SNAPS and the fridge goes dead. She keeps pulling. The fridge sways.

Mia jumps out of the way. The fridge CRASHES to the floor.

Its contents spill out. The hinges and handle fracture.

Mia pulls her hand free. Runs to the door to find it--

Locked. Bolted.

**EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY**

The Burly Man parks and heads inside. Captain Morris drives slowly towards the house. Parks his car behind a barn.

He tiptoes to the house. Gun drawn.

Captain Morris pulls out his phone. Makes a call.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Sergeant...I need you to come to 45  
Valley Lane...Now...I found--

The front door of the house swings open. The Burly Man is on the porch. Captain Morris hangs up his phone. Locks eyes with the man. Gun trained at him.

The Burly Man sees the Captain. Runs inside.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)

Frank Smits!

Captain Morris gets to the porch. Pauses. Tightens his bulletproof vest. He can hear NOISES inside.

There's a single SHOT through a nearby window. The glass shatters in every direction.

BURLY MAN  
GET OFF MY PROPERTY!

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
There's nowhere to run anymore,  
Frank! Just give her up.

Another SHOT cuts through the door. Wood splinters at the Captain's feet.

The Captain shoots at the knob of the door. KICKS it open.

It falls away. Crashes to the ground.

He rushes in.

There, in the foyer, is the Burly Man with a shotgun. Standing in front of his WIFE and YOUNG DAUGHTER.

Captain Morris drops his gun. Hands raised.

SIRENS speed up the driveway toward them.

#### **INT. CABIN - DUSK**

The front door is scarred, beaten and warped but holding strong.

And there's BANGING.

The floor is covered in broken glass.

Mia jams a large metal spoon into a crack in one of the wood-covered windows. She uses it like a crowbar.

The wood on the window bows. The spoon SNAPS.

#### **INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Mia pries a whole plank of wood off the window. The hole to the outside is small, but progress.

She throws the plank to the ground.

Mia starts work on the rest of the window. To make the hole larger for herself. When--

The sound of shifting GRAVEL.

Lights come up the driveway and cut through the trees. HEADLIGHTS bleed into the dark cabin through the cracks.

Mia crawls away from the window. Picks up the discarded wooden plank.

Outside, the car stops. Lights falter. And FOOTSTEPS.

LOUD. FAST. Up the porch.

Mia tests a sharp NAIL jutting out from the plank.

There's a key in the lock outside. BOLTS OPEN.

Mia takes her stand. At the door. Winds up for the pitch.

The door opens.

Mia swings hard. But--

there's a CHILD.

It's shrouded in the dark, holding dearly to Frank's mountain of a figure.

Blocking her path.

Mia freezes. Stumbles backwards.

Tripping over furniture. Dropping the wood plank.

The child WHIMPERS.

FRANK

It's okay.

The child peeks out from Frank's shoulder. It's Jesse, with tears in his eyes and soiled clothing.

**INT. CABIN - LATER**

Frank spurs embers at the fireplace.

Mia's curled up in a chair. Nearby, Jesse's on the couch. Shaking. Scared. They stare at each other in silence.

Frank watches them.

FRANK

Looks like you made a whole mess in here, Mia. Tomorrow I'm going to need you to clean it up. We can't all be living in a pigsty.

MIA

We?

Frank nods to Jesse.

FRANK  
He's going to be joining our family.

MIA  
Where'd you...  
(collects herself)  
What's his name?

FRANK  
What do you want his name to be?

MIA  
WHAT'S HIS NAME?

Jesse shrinks back on the couch. Away from her.

MIA (cont'd)  
No, I'm...sorry.

She reaches for him, but he pulls away.

FRANK  
His name was Jesse. But we're all  
starting over here.

She kneels next to Jesse. Careful not to get too close.

MIA  
Jesse, where'd you come from?

He just stares at her.

FRANK  
He's home. We're his family.

MIA  
No!

Mia grabs the little boy's hand. Frank stands. Goes to the kitchen. Starts cleaning up.

MIA (cont'd)  
Tell me. Where's your mother?

FRANK  
You're not listening to me. And  
you're scaring him.

MIA  
I'M NOT SCARING HIM. YOU ARE!

Jesse runs from the couch. Straight to Frank. Hugs his legs.

FRANK  
Mia, I need you to look at him. Hold  
him.

She shakes her head.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 We're his family. I didn't take him.  
 Steal him. Or hurt him.  
 (beat)  
 He's mine. Always has been. And he's  
 yours now too.

Mia sits on the couch. Looks away from them.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 I saw you at the park. The way you  
 looked at that family. And I want to  
 give you that. To make this feel like  
 home. Give you something you can hold  
 when you want to leave.

Frank lifts up Jesse. Holds him tenderly. Walks over to Mia.

MIA  
 Who is he?

FRANK  
 He's mine. I told you before. Sharon  
 and I--

MIA  
 --You said the baby was dead.

FRANK  
 I said he was hurt. Sharon couldn't  
 have lived with herself if she  
 actually...  
 (he can't continue)  
 So I separated them, at least until  
 she could become a mother.

He places Jesse on the couch next to Mia.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 And I was right. Wasn't I? I waited  
 just long enough. We can be a better  
 family than I ever dreamed possible.  
 We have a fresh start here.

Frank touches her cheek. Lightly. She flinches.

FRANK (cont'd)  
 Unless...unless you aren't ready.  
 Because I can get rid of him. We can  
 try another--

Mia grabs for Frank's hand suddenly. He shrinks back,  
 unaccustomed to her willing touch.

MIA

--NO!

*(voice breaking)*

No. I can look out for him.

Frank holds her hand to his cheek.

FRANK

That's what I wanted to hear.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - DAY**

Frank wakes up in bed, alone.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

He rushes into the main room. Finds Mia and Jesse curled up on the couch together. Asleep.

Frank smiles. Goes to the kitchen.

**INT. CABIN - LATER**

Mia wakes up on the couch. Finds Jesse in her arms. It takes her a moment to remember the night before.

CLANGING in the kitchen. Frank is at the stove.

Mia wraps a blanket around herself and goes to Frank. Sees him cooking breakfast. He doesn't look up.

FRANK

You didn't come to bed last night.

MIA

No, it was cold. We wanted to stay by the fire.

FRANK

And him?

MIA

Took him a while, but he fell asleep.

FRANK

Still cold now too, aren't you?

She shivers. Brings the blanket tighter.

MIA

A little, yes.

FRANK  
I'll start the fire again for you.

He goes to the fireplace, starts a fresh pile. It crackles and catches. Mia watches it burn.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I can teach you how to start one, if you're interested.

A log shifts and falls. Jesse wakes on the couch. Stares between Frank and Mia.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Hungry, Buddy?

Jesse nods. Goes to Mia and offers her a hand. But she doesn't take it.

FRANK (cont'd)  
What about you, Mia. You hungry? I made it just the way you like.

Jesse goes to the kitchen table. Sits.

Mia stands and follows. Sits at the table. Frank brings the food.

Jesse stuffs his mouth. No utensils. No patience. Mia watches him, barely touching her food.

MIA  
How old is he?

FRANK  
Three-ish.

MIA  
He doesn't talk much.

FRANK  
Always been like that. But he's not a mute if that's what you're asking. Just has to warm up to you.

Mia nibbles on a piece of her toast.

Frank cleans Jesse's face with a napkin.

Jesse runs off from the table. Finds something to play with.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Mia, you're quiet.

Mia cleans up the table. Goes to the sink and washes dishes. Her back to him.

FRANK (cont'd)

I know you're always quiet...at least with me, for now...but I need to know what's going on inside that head of yours. You need to talk to me.

MIA

Are we staying here? With him?

FRANK

His name is Jesse.

MIA

I KNOW WHAT HIS NAME IS.

She breaks a dish in the sink.

FRANK

That was my plan. Staying here. The three of us.

MIA

Then he needs a bed. A proper bed. Clean clothes and toys.

Frank's a little stunned by Mia's demands. He smiles.

FRANK

I think those are all great ideas.

MIA

And we need better food. A full fridge.

FRANK

You broke the fridge.

MIA

Then we need a new one. And I'll give you a list of groceries that I need for meals.

He puts up his hands in mock surrender. Mia's trembling hand grips a knife in the sink. Hidden from Frank's view.

FRANK

Fine, fine, Honey. Whatever you need.

She looks to Jesse near the couch playing with a toy. Slowly, she loosens her grip on the knife. Let's it drop to the sink.

FRANK (cont'd)

I'll go right now. Pick up a few things we need.

Mia finally turns to him. Tries her best smile.

MIA  
Can you bring him with you?

Frank looks at her curiously. Shrugs.

FRANK  
I suppose, if you want me to.

MIA  
Let me clean him up first.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - DAY**

Mia runs a bath for Jesse. Undresses him.

He splashes in the water.

Mia looks at the open bathroom door. Closes it.

She kneels next to a tub. Grabs a bucket of water and lifts it over his head.

They share a look. Long. Jesse reaches out for Mia's face and touches it lightly with his small hand.

They have a moment.

JESSE  
Mommy?

Mia shakes her head. Shrinks back from his grasp. And puts her hand to her chest.

MIA  
Mia. My name's Mia.

**INT. CABIN, BATHROOM - LATER**

Mia dries Jesse with a towel. He stares at her deeply. She can't quite bring herself to match his eye.

There's a loud KNOCK on the door. Mia jumps.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Everything okay in there?

MIA  
Yes. Could you get me some clean clothes? The smallest you can find.

FRANK (O.S.)  
I'll check the boxes.

Mia kneels next to Jesse. Wipes wet hair from his forehead.

MIA  
You're going on a trip. Just a quick  
one with Frank, okay?

JESSE  
Daddy?

Mia nods. Pulls Jesse close. Hands him a small folded note.

MIA  
I need you to do a favor for me,  
Jesse. It's really important. You're  
going to go to a store with...Daddy.  
When he looks away, even for a second,  
I need you to run and hide. As fast as  
you can. You can do that right?

He nods. Uncertain.

MIA (cont'd)  
You need to give this note to the  
person that finds you. No one else.  
Not Frank. Anyone but your Daddy. If  
you do that, then I can take you back  
to your Mommy.

Jesse points at Mia.

JESSE  
Mommy?

Mia's heartbroken. There's another KNOCK on the door.

FRANK (O.S.)  
I have some clothes.

MIA  
Just leave them out there.

**INT. CABIN, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Frank's about to go in. Thinks better of it. Leaves the  
clothes at the door and walks off.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia steps out of the bedroom with Jesse. He's dressed in  
huge clothes--folded around his wrists and ankles.

Frank comes in the front door. Already in his coat. Wipes  
his shoes at the threshold.

FRANK  
I need that list from you.

Mia leaves Jesse. Offers Frank a list. He reads it.

MIA  
I found some paper in the nightstand.

FRANK  
What's this?

MIA  
I need something to help me sleep.  
(*off his silence*)  
Don't you want me to be able to sleep?

Frank nods. Pockets the note.

FRANK  
I'll try, but won't make any promises.  
(*beat*)  
And I'm not taking the boy.

MIA  
What? But you--

FRANK  
--It's too soon. Anyway, you need to  
spend some time together. Alone.

MIA  
We'll have plenty of time for that.  
Just take him with you!

FRANK  
I'VE MADE MY DECISION.

Jesse runs to Mia and holds onto her leg. Mia unlatches his little hands from her.

MIA  
Then take us both.

She reaches for Frank's hand. Holds it close to her chest.

MIA (*cont'd*)  
We'll buy the paint for the house.  
White on the outside, blue for the  
shudders. Remember?

He pulls his hand away. Gruff.

FRANK  
Maybe another time.

**INT. CAR - DAY**

Frank drives down a rural woodsy street.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia's shackled to the radiator. She watches the embers burn in the fireplace.

Nearby, Jesse plays with a broken toy.

**INT. RURAL POLICE STATION, CELL - DAY**

Sergeant Gates waits outside of a single iron cell in the station. He's on the phone. Hangs up and looks to the Captain, sitting behind bars.

SERGEANT GATES

You're starting to become a pain in my ass.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

I knew those eyes. The way he walked. He looked just like--

SERGEANT GATES

--Save it! I don't want to hear.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

It won't happen again.

SERGEANT GATES

You're right. Cause you're leaving.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

I can't do that. You know I can't.

SERGEANT GATES

Not everything can be solved. Not every person found.

(beat)

You got a family, Captain? Yeah? And a good job. You can be helping people instead of chasing ghosts.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

It's not that simple.

SERGEANT GATES

'Cause it's personal?

Sergeant Gates unlocks the cell.

SERGEANT GATES (cont'd)

He's not pressing charges. But you better be on the road tonight.

Captain Morris nods. Stands. Starts to leave.

Sergeant Gates blocks his path. His features soften.

SERGEANT GATES (cont'd)  
 Look. If I see anything suspicious.  
 Any sign of Smits or the girl I'll  
 look into it. I'll give you a call.  
 You have my word.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia kicks at the radiator. But it won't come loose.

She catches Jesse watching her from the couch.

MIA  
 What are you looking at? Help me!

He crawls to her. Quiet. Stops just out of her reach.

MIA (cont'd)  
 I need you to go to the kitchen. Open  
 the drawer. Get me something sharp.  
 Okay? Do you understand?

He's silent. Motionless. Wide-eyed.

MIA (cont'd)  
 Come on. Please...

He shrinks back. Scurries away from her. Mia turns from him.  
 Kicks at the radiator again.

She kicks at it until her legs go limp. Pulls off her socks,  
 checks her feet. Bloody and blue at the nails. She groans.

Jesse taps her shoulder. He holds out the little paper note.

She takes it from him, gently. Tucks it in her pocket.

MIA (cont'd)  
 Don't worry, we'll try again. We have  
 time.

He reaches for her. But she stays still.

MIA (cont'd)  
 No, I'm not...not for you. I need you  
 to go over there.  
 (points)  
 Find something to get us out of here.

Jesse sits. Scoots towards her. She softens. He reaches for  
 her hand again. She offers it.

He plays with her palm. Turning it over and over in his hand.

She watches him curiously, moves, and he flinches back.

MIA (cont'd)  
Let me see you, sweetie.

Mia offers him her hand again. He's hesitant, but grabs it. She pulls him into her lap. Looks at his little arms. Faint bruises are up and down his skin.

MIA (cont'd)  
I'm sorry, I didn't notice earlier.  
I...

Mia lifts her shirt, exposes her stomach--faint white scars. Jesse traces his little finger along the marks.

MIA (cont'd)  
"I'm sorry", if you're lucky they say that. But then they do it again and again. And they stop saying sorry because they think you deserve it.  
(beat)  
But we don't deserve it, do we?

He looks up, his bright eyes shining.

MIA (cont'd)  
I won't leave you with him, I promise.

**EXT. RURAL POLICE STATION - DAY**

Captain Morris comes out of the police station.

Just out of his view, Frank drives the brown Chevy. It disappears around a corner.

The Captain sits on a bench. He tears down a WANTED POSTER from a pole. Stares at it like it might hold all the answers.

A BOY skateboards past.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Hey!

The Boy stops and turns.

BOY  
Yeah?

Captain Morris holds up a poster.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Have you seen this man?

BOY

What for?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

He's done some bad things.

BOY

Why would he be here?

CAPTAIN MORRIS

Just a hunch.

BOY

You wanna kill him?

Captain Morris laughs. Takes out his badge.

CAPTAIN MORRIS

I wish. But I'd settle for locking him up...Is there anyone that's missing? Someone you normally see around that isn't here anymore.

BOY

A few. What's in it for me?

**INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Frank comes in. Spots Mia and Jesse sleeping arm-and-arm near the radiator. He bolts the door behind him. Throws the bags on the table.

She startles awake. Rubs her sleepy eyes.

FRANK

Got some fresh food for us. Followed the list as much as possible.

Frank unlocks Mia's chains. Pulls Jesse from her arms.

FRANK (cont'd)

I want meat and potatoes. Well done. You got it?

MIA

Yes. Yes, I can do that.

FRANK

And the potatoes mashed. No skin.

Mia goes to the table. Looks through the bags. Finds a BOTTLE of pills. Checks the label.

Frank watches her, a little smile on his face.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Got something for you.

Mia pulls out a dress from the same bag, floral, dated. She smooths it in her hands. Traces the pattern. Faint tears in her eyes.

MIA  
It's very pretty.

FRANK  
What's wrong? I thought you'd...

He snatches it from her. Jesse wakes in his arms.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I'll get rid of it. Can't appreciate anything, can you?

MIA  
No. That's not it. I just...never--no one's ever bought me anything like this before.

Frank softens. Mia reaches for the dress, tender. Sweet. Just as he likes.

MIA (cont'd)  
Can I have it back? It's very pretty. I'd like to wear it for our special dinner tonight.

He hands it back to her. She holds the dress up to her figure, twirls it a little.

FRANK  
Yes, of course. Umm, special?

MIA  
It's our first family dinner. Of course it's special.

She gives him a warm smile. He shares it.

#### **INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Mia wears the dress. Cooks at the stove.

Frank watches her while pretending to read. She sets the table, carefully. Trying to make it perfect.

MIA  
Dinner's ready.

Frank comes and sits. She fills his plate.

Jesse climbs up to his seat. Starts nibbling at the food. Frank and Mia watch and wait. Both not eating.

FRANK

You first.

MIA

I think you'll like it.

She takes a bite. Smiles. Chews softly. He tries a bite of potatoes. Smiles.

FRANK

Very good. You're right. You should make this again.

MIA

I'd be happy to.

Frank cuts at the meat on his plate. Drinks from his WATER.

**INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Mia finishes cleaning up at the sink. She looks around.

The bedroom door is ajar. The light on inside. Mia throws an EMPTY PILL BOTTLE into the garbage.

She tucks Jesse in at the couch. Rubs his head.

MIA

Stay, okay? No matter what you hear.

**EXT. CABIN, BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Frank sits on the bed expectantly. Waiting. Hair combed and shirt tucked. A thin smile on his face.

Mia comes in. A glass of water in her hand.

FRANK

What'd I say? That dress is as lovely as I thought.

MIA

Thank you. It's very nice.

FRANK

Nicest you've ever had.

(beat)

Awe, come on. Don't just stand there.

He pats the bed lightly. She doesn't move.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Now don't be rude.

She gingerly walks over. Puts her water on the bedside table. Takes a seat on the bed. He scoots to be closer.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Dinner was lovely as well. You'll be quite the cook when you get more practice. Plenty of time for that.  
(beat)  
Might even have a green thumb in you too. When the season comes you can start that garden.

MIA  
I'd like that very much, Frank.

He tenderly reaches for her. Brushes her skin with his fingertips. She flinches.

He tries again. Kisses her cheek lightly.

Mia's breath hitches in her throat. Hands trembling. She stands up abruptly, stumbles from the bed. Closes her eyes--waiting for the storm.

He holds his palm to her chest. Eyes wide at the deeply intimate experience. She's motionless--fights back tears.

FRANK  
I can feel you.

He grabs her hand. Forces it to his own chest.

FRANK (cont'd)  
You can feel me too, right? We're the same. And together. Really together now. Everything will be alright.

MIA  
I'm tired...I'd like to go to sleep.

She pulls her hand back. He's stunned, shamed.

FRANK  
You're right. It's late.

Frank starts undressing. Untucks the blankets from the bed.

She dares to open her eyes. Chokes back a heavy breath. He stares up at her. Waiting.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Come on. It's time for bed.

MIA  
You're tired?

He leans on the bed. Eyes unsteady. Legs wavering.

FRANK  
Exhausted actually.

She watches him closely. He staggers to her. Holds her close to his chest.

FRANK (cont'd)  
We'll go to bed. Together. This is nice, right. I've been waiting for this. I've been patient...I've been kind.

Mia sits on the bed. Lays him down. Tender.

MIA  
Let's go to bed. Together.

FRANK  
I was worried it was too soon. But we deserve this. Both of us.

He gently brushes the hair from her face. She matches his gaze. Her eyes sharp.

FRANK (cont'd)  
I have to...to do something.

MIA  
What's that?

FRANK  
The locks. Or you'll leave.

MIA  
I won't leave. I promise.

She's sweet. He's drifting. His eyes fluttering.

FRANK  
You won't. Will you?

MIA  
Not till you sleep.

He shifts, confused. Sensing that something is wrong.

FRANK  
Honey?

MIA  
Don't call me that.

He touches his lips. Looks to the cup at the bedside table.

FRANK

What did you do?

MIA

I used to be so good at being quiet.  
Making myself small. Nobody, really.  
Maybe you could tell that. Maybe  
that's why you picked me.

He struggles to stand. Staggeres towards her.

MIA (cont'd)

But, I learned to be patient too.  
Because I kept waiting for someone.

He reaches for her. She keeps her distance.

MIA (cont'd)

I shouldn't have waited. Shouldn't  
have been in the back of that cop car  
either. But that's where we are. And  
I'm going to get us out of this.

FRANK

Us?

MIA

Myself and that little boy. Cause he  
isn't even gonna remember you. And I'm  
gonna walk right out the front door.  
Walk. Not run. I won't even look back.

Frank can't quite understand what she's saying. He reaches  
for the glass on the table.

She leans in close to him.

MIA (cont'd)

Look at you, Frank. You're weak.  
Nothing really. What are you gonna do?

Frank's face turns. He matches her harsh gaze. She notices.  
Steps back just as--

Frank SHATTERS the glass against her temple.

Mia stumbles. He grabs her by the throat.

Punches her hard across the face. Her eyes roll back in her  
head. Nose broken and gushing blood.

FRANK

What was that?

MIA

Please. I...

FRANK

Too much spirit in you, gotta iron that out. But we have time. I'm patient too.

Frank yanks off his belt. Wraps it tight around her throat.

MIA

Stop. I--

He comes up behind her. His teeth at her ear--

FRANK

You don't tell me what to do.

Mia sobs. She claws at the belt on her neck.

He drags her from the bedroom.

Her voice gone. Her hair bleeding and mangled in his taught grasp. The belt unyielding at her neck--face pale and bloody.

#### **INT. CABIN - NIGHT**

Frank drags her from the bedroom. Jesse runs towards them. Pulls at Mia's arm, but Frank throws him off, hard.

Jesse crashes to the floor. Cries. Nurses his arm.

Frank drags Mia to the radiator. Locks her in. Throws the keys into the fireplace. She watches, powerless.

The metal keys glow in the flames. They melt and deform.

Mia's writhing body goes limp in his hands.

He whips her around to face him. His features rough and twisted by the shadows.

FRANK

I'm gonna make you happy here. You've gotta learn first though--learn just how bad it can be.

He grabs a fistful of hair. Brings her closer--almost a kiss.

FRANK (cont'd)

I'll make you beg for it.

Her eyes go wide. Mouth open and horror-struck.

And then, slack on the leather at her throat. Frank's eyes roll back. He crashes to the ground. Unconscious.

Mia rips off the belt. Gasps for air. Coughs violently.

MIA

Frank?

Frank stirs on the floor but settles.

She pulls at her shackles. Kicks at the radiator.  
Desperate--but her strength gone.

There's a soft WHIMPERING.

Mia spots Jesse. Holds out her arms to him. He crawls over,  
careful to avoid Frank. And goes to her.

She rocks Jesse. He cries softly.

MIA (cont'd)

*Shhhhh. Shhhhh.*

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia sits with a drawer spread on the floor in front of her.  
Jesse hands her utensils.

Mia works at the lock on the shackles. They've been at this  
for a while. And without any luck.

Jesse pokes at Frank.

MIA

Don't do that.

(off Jesse's look)

No, I can't hurt him. Not until I  
know I can get us out of here.

A fork snaps in her hands. Cutting her palm.

MIA (cont'd)

SHIT!

Mia throws the fork. It clatters to the floor.

MIA (cont'd)

He's going to wake up soon.

She thinks. Head in her hands. Kicks at the floorboard. CREAK.

She kicks it again. CREAK.

Mia looks down at the floor. Taps it with her foot. Picks up  
a butter knife. Jams it between the slits in the floor.

MIA (cont'd)

Jesse, I was little once. Just like you. Some people will see you as small and fragile and they like that. Bad people.

She works the floorboard loose. Pries out a nail. Looks inside the little hole. A crawl space with a dirt floor. Small and dark.

MIA (cont'd)

They always want something too. Want to hurt you...or--it makes them feel big to do whatever they want. Take whatever they want. And it's easy to be scared and stay small. To stay quiet and try to be invisible.

Mia starts working on the next board.

MIA (cont'd)

So I got good at hiding. If they can't find you, then they can't hurt you.

Frank stirs on the floor.

Mia hands Jesse the plank. Works on the next board. Pulls it loose.

She lowers herself into the hole. Reaches out to Jesse.

MIA (cont'd)

Come here.

He shrinks back. Frank stirs again.

MIA (cont'd)

We don't have time. Please.

Her gaze doesn't waver. She reaches for Jesse again. He's hesitant, but crawls to her. Looks into dark hole.

MIA (cont'd)

Are you scared?

He nods.

MIA (cont'd)

Me too.

She pulls him down into the crawl space next to her.

Mia watches Frank. Puts the floorboards back into place at the base of the radiator. One by one. She feeds her shackles through a small hole.

**INT. CABIN, UNDER THE FLOOR - DAY**

She secures the last floorboard. Holds a trembling Jesse close to her chest.

Above her, there's LOUD BREATHING. RUSTLING.

Mia cover's Jesse's mouth as he squirms in her arms.

A moment of complete silence, and then SCREAMING. Frank, as loud and angry as we've ever heard him.

There are HEAVY FOOTSTEPS. Dust and light falling through the slits above.

Mia covers her face from it, looks and finds--

a SKELETON, barely held together with clothes and sinew. Mia gasps. Covers her mouth. Choking back a scream.

She reaches into its pocket. Pulls out a wallet. An ID falls out: "ROGER DILLMAN".

**EXT. RURAL HOUSE - DAY**

Captain Morris talks to an ELDERLY COUPLE at their front steps.

They shake their head. He walks off. Back to his car. He crosses off a name from a list.

**INT. CABIN, UNDER THE FLOOR - DAY**

Jesse is asleep in Mia's lap. She's blue, her skin prickled by the cold. Above them, Frank is sobbing, crying.

Mia keeps quiet until, CRASH. Frank starts throwing things. Breaking everything in sight.

She works at her shackles with a nail. Jesse suddenly wakes. Mia's shushes him.

Heavy STEPS above them.

A gun CLICKS.

Mia freezes.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Frank looks around the cabin. Shotgun at his side. His face is red and snotty. Eyes fiery and looking for a kill.

But his home is quiet. He's alone--his worst nightmare.  
Frank rushes out the front door.

**INT. CABIN, UNDER THE FLOOR - DAY**

Mia breathes a sigh of relief. Tries to undo the shackles again, but the nail snaps in her hands.

A car engine REVS and speeds on gravel.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia peeks her head out from the floorboards. Lifts Jesse up. She crawls out behind him.

The room is destroyed. Bits of shattered glass and broken furniture everywhere.

MIA

Jesse, I need you to run.

(beat)

You need to go out that door. Run up the driveway. Follow the road.

Jesse holds onto her. Cries. Tears flowing down his chubby little face. She pushes him away. Towards the door.

MIA (cont'd)

He'll hurt you if you don't leave.

Jesse stumbles away from her.

MIA (cont'd)

I'll hurt you if you don't. GO!

He goes towards the door. Hand on the knob.

MIA (cont'd)

Please.

**EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Captain Morris drives down a rural street. Pulls into a familiar driveway. Stops at the gate. Gets out of the car.

A padlock secures the gate. It's new, unrusted.

He checks off the last name on his list: "ROGER DILLMAN".

Captain Morris lifts himself over the gate and starts off down the driveway. Not a soul in sight.

He crunches along the loose gravel. Up ahead, there's a brown Chevy stopped. Parked.

He checks the car. Empty. But notices the shattered windshield. Runs his fingers over the spiderweb of glass and hints of blood.

The Captain continues on. Just around a bend, the trees clear and the cabin comes into view.

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Frank steps through the woods, following the fence, shotgun in hand. Looking for any movement.

He side-steps a METAL TRAP hidden beneath leaves and snow. But then he stops. Looks back.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

Captain Morris goes to the front door. About to knock, but hesitates. Notices the wood-covered windows.

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Frank kneels at the trap. Pulls at the metal chains holding it to a tree. But they're solid. Unbreakable chains.

He lets his hand softly brush the leaves from the ground, revealing the frozen dirt beneath. Exposed.

He smiles. A realization hitting him.

**EXT. CAIN - DAY**

Captain Morris walks to a tool shed. Locked. He checks around the house. Feet sinking in the fresh snow.

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Frank scurries through the woods. Shotgun at the ready. Rushing towards the cabin.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

Captain Morris peeks in the windows.

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Frank watches something. Aims.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

There's a RUSTLING behind the Captain. He spins, gun drawn. Ready for a fight. Turns to--

a child, Jesse. Shivering, scared.

A moment of hesitation, then recognition.

A SHOT rings out.

Captain Morris checks himself, then Jesse. But they're fine. The shot wasn't for them.

Mia SCREAMS from the cabin.

**EXT. WOODS - DAY**

Frank cuts a fresh deer on the forest floor. Gives it a quick merciful death. Smiles.

FRANK

You couldn't leave me, could 'ya?

He swings his shotgun over his shoulder. Stands and continues back to the cabin.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

The door flies open. The doorknob SHATTERED.

Captain Morris rushes in. Jesse in his arms.

Mia's wide-eyed. Crying. Terrified and bloody. But sees the Captain. Almost smiles.

MIA

How...

(beat)

I don't...

He runs to her. Kneels at her side.

MIA (cont'd)

I heard--

CAPTAIN MORRIS

--I found you.

MIA

I heard a gunshot.

He brushes it off.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Must've been a hunter or something.

She shakes her head. Furiously.

Mia reaches for Jesse. Captain Morris gives him to her.  
Watches her curiously.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
Where's Frank?

MIA  
He left...he'll be back though.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Don't worry. It's over. I'm going to  
get you out of here.

MIA  
No. No!

She checks Jesse. Makes sure he's okay. Captain Morris sees  
the shackles. Pulls at them--no give.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
Cover him.

He takes out his gun, aims it at the shackles. Mia covers  
Jesse with her body. He SHOTS.

The shackles dent. But hold. Mia wipes tears from her eyes.  
She hands Jesse back to the Captain.

MIA  
Please take him.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I...I can't just leave you here.

MIA  
Once he's safe you can come back for  
me, okay? Promise me.

He nods. Hesitant but agreeing.

MIA (cont'd)  
Good.

She reaches for Jesse. Kisses his forehead.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
I'll be right back for you.

MIA  
I know.

He goes to the door, cradling Jesse close to his chest, and looks back to her. On the floor.

She nods, he leaves. Runs up the driveway.

**EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Captain Morris gets to his car. Carefully places Jesse in the back. Uses the radio in the front seat:

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
*(into radio)*  
 I'm at 546 Willmore Road. I need immediate assistance. I've found Mia Estrella. There's a child, he's safe. I need immediate assistance.

He looks to the road, and the child in the backseat, crying.

CAPTAIN MORRIS (cont'd)  
*(into radio)*  
 I'm going back in to pull her out before Frank returns. Please hurry.

Captain Morris locks the infant in the back seat. Opens the trunk, pulls out metal cutters.

**INT. HOUSE - DAY**

Mia pulls at her shackles. But it's no use.

There are footsteps at the front porch. She breathes. Trying to find some courage.

Captain Morris opens the door. Metal cutters in hand.

MIA  
 You shouldn't be here. You promised you would get him safe.

CAPTAIN MORRIS  
 I couldn't just leave you.

She breaks, crying. He smiles. She shares it, until--

BAM. His face breaks. Forehead splits. Blood spraying the room and Mia.

She SHRIEKS.

The Captain's body teeters through the threshold and crumples to the ground.

There, behind him, is Frank with his shotgun.

He steps inside. Kicks at the Captain's lifeless body. Barely looks to Mia.

FRANK

A man has a right to protect his home, wouldn't you say? Protect his family.

Mia can't look away from the Captain's gaping head.

Frank kneels next to her. She sobs uncontrollably.

FRANK (cont'd)

Now, what kind of mother lets their child be taken?

MIA

I...I didn't. I couldn't--

FRANK

--You don't deserve any of this. Anything I've given you.

He holds her chin in his hands. She meets his gaze.

FRANK (cont'd)

But I'll give it to you again and again, Honey. I won't give up on this.

She curls into a ball, lost. He unshackles her ankles.

FRANK (cont'd)

We have to leave now though, find someplace new. Safe.

Frank puts the gun down. Picks up Mia. Holds her close.

FRANK (cont'd)

See, it'll be all right.

(lifting her)

*Shhhhhhhh...*

He wipes the blood from her face. Carefully. Sweetly.

FRANK (cont'd)

We have to go. There might be more coming.

MIA

They aren't going to find me in ten years.

FRANK

What?

MIA  
I'm not going to get out.

FRANK  
Mia?

Mia pushes him away. Tries to stand. Steadies herself.

MIA  
It took her ten years to get away.  
But not for me, It won't be ten  
years. It'll be forever...

FRANK  
Stop it!

MIA  
I can't hurt you. And I can't leave.  
But I don't deserve this.

He stiffens--anger boiling over.

MIA (cont'd)  
I might be weak, but I don't need  
you. You need me.

He takes one heavy step towards her. Crunching broken glass  
beneath his feet. She points--a strict bony finger.

MIA (cont'd)  
Stop.

He does. Almost surprised by his own actions.

FRANK  
You don't know what you're saying.

MIA  
They're coming. You can walk out that  
door alone and get away or try to  
take me and regret it.

He thinks on this. His mind turning. Balls his fists.

FRANK  
You're mine.

He takes another step towards her. She doesn't back up.  
Doesn't blink. Resolved.

Mia spots a large broken SHARD of glass on the ground.

She grabs it. Puts it to her throat, dipping it into the  
skin. Small droplets of blood break the surface. A threat.

MIA

No. I'm not.

They're motionless across from each other. Until...SIRENS.  
Faint in the distance. Mia turns and--

Frank charges. Breaks her through the table.

Her head spins. She tries to crawl away.

But Frank yanks her back, roughly SNAPS her leg.

She screams. Struggles away from him. Pulling herself up by  
the kitchen counter.

FRANK

You're mine. We're gonna be happy.

Frank tears her down. Mia crashes to the floor, switching  
the stove on--a dish towel on the rim.

She thrashes the glass at him.

He pulls her closer. Inch by inch.

She goes for her own throat again with the glass. But he  
holds it back--slicing his palms. Not letting it hurt her.

A bloody standstill as they just stare at each other.  
Pulling as hard as they can until...

Mia goes limp. Weak. The glass slides from her grip and  
straight into--

Frank.

Gutting his stomach.

He shudders. Stares at his bloody hand. Blinks and gasps.  
Rolls to the ground.

Mia stumbles back. Trips over shackles. Her shackles.

Frank coughs on the ground. Eyes roll back in his head.

She locks his ankle in the chains.

Behind them, the kitchen towel burns. The counter catches  
FIRE and smokes.

Mia kneels over Frank. Watches him go. She grips the glass  
in his stomach. Starts to pull when--

Frank shoots up. GROWLS. Seizes her arm.

Grabs her throat. Choking the life out of her.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Where do you think you're going,  
Honey?

Mia's eyes wide. His blood dots her lips.

FRANK (cont'd)  
No one's gonna separate us, ever.  
Especially you.

Mia grabs for the glass again, twists it deep.

He SCREAMS. Loosens his grip.

She scrambles away. But he's just behind her, about to--  
CLANK.

Frank gets to the end of his metal leash. His body falls  
back to the ground. The shackle at his ankle taught.

He lunges for her throat again. But she's just out of reach.

He pulls at the shackles. Not understanding.

Mia rushes to the Captain's side. Rips the gun from his  
holster. Points it at Frank.

She steadies herself to stand. Not taking the gun off him.

They stare at each other. Long. Hard. Behind them, the  
kitchen burns. The FLAMES whip at the floor and ceiling.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Well, go on. Do it then. That's what  
you are right? A criminal, a nobody.

He spits blood at the floor. Holds his gashed stomach.

Mia's hand trembles with the gun.

FRANK (cont'd)  
DO IT.

Mia lowers the gun to her side. Looks around the cabin.  
Watches the fire burn and spread. Frank follows her look.

She kneels at the Captain's lifeless body. Carefully turns  
him over.

MIA  
No.

Frank's face drops. Struggles against his shackles. Kicks at  
the radiator.

MIA (cont'd)  
Not today, Honey.

Mia drags Captain Morris to the door. Over the threshold.

FRANK  
Don't you dare leave me!

She doesn't look back. Closes the door behind her.

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

Mia hauls the Captain's body down the porch steps.

Inside, Frank SCREAMS.

Mia unclips keys from the Captain's belt.

She limps up the driveway.

**EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY**

Mia's slow, careful with each painful step. Until she can't anymore. Can't wait to be free.

She hurries. Getting fast and faster. Tripping over herself. Barely able to keep going.

At the end of the driveway, she spots the police car. Runs for it.

SIRENS coming closer.

**EXT. POLICE CAR - DAY**

She gets to the car. Jesse is at the window. Crying. He bangs on the glass when he sees her.

Mia fumbles with the keys. Opens the door and sits in the back seat. Closes it behind her.

SIRENS come up the road. Police cars speed towards them.

We move away from the car slowly.

MIA  
*Shhhh.*

She holds Jesse close.

MIA (cont'd)  
*Shhhhhh.* We're gonna be okay.

FADE TO BLACK