

The Fosterer

by Mark Lyons

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FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD - DUSK

ROBIN TIMLIN, mid-30's, drives her van down a secluded, wooded road.

Tools in the back of the van clang against each other as she hits miscellaneous bumps.

She slows down and looks for signs at various intersections.

Finally, she takes her phone out, dials a number, and listens intently.

ROBIN

Hey, Wayne. Where is this place?
I've heard of it, but I've never
been there.

WAYNE

(filtered throughout)

I didn't think you would have.
It's Washingtonville. A little
backwoods town. They haven't had a
doctor there for years.

Wayne's voice can barely be made out through static.

WAYNE

It's on Walnut and Main Street, off
of --

Wayne's voice is totally jumbled by static now.

ROBIN

Off what? You broke up.

WAYNE

It's on Walnut Street and Main, off
of Butcher Road. It's past the old
Timber Ridge Preserve.

Robin looks at a passing sign.

ROBIN

All right. I'm on Butcher now.

She drives on for a moment, the tools still clanging and shuddering in the back from the uneven road.

ROBIN

You said there hasn't been a doctor
there for years?

WAYNE

Everybody there drives up to Salem for the hospital now. I was surprised to hear somebody bought the office and was opening it back up again.

ROBIN

What's the problem, anyway?

WAYNE

The new owner said the MRI machine isn't working right. He doesn't know if it just needs repaired or if he has to get a new one or not. After nineteen years, what'd he expect?

Robin checks the signal strength on her phone because Wayne's breaking up more and more.

ROBIN

He's going to use the old MRI?

WAYNE

MRI's are MRI's, Robin. Things--

Wayne breaks up in static again.

WAYNE

-- more comfortable.

ROBIN

What'd you say?

WAYNE

I said things don't change. They just get more comfortable over time.

ROBIN

He couldn't wait until tomorrow? It has to be done tonight?

WAYNE

He's opening in a couple of weeks. He's just being cautious in case he has to get a new one. He probably wants time to put the order in.

Robin looks around and eyes the desolate, small town.

ROBIN

That's not what I'm talking about.

WAYNE

He's waiting for you with his daughter, Robin. If I thought it was dangerous, I would've sent any of the other guys first. You just happened to be closer. And the best.

ROBIN

(smiles)

That makes me feel a little better.

WAYNE

The wires are old. You'll probably just have to pop a couple new circuits into the mainboard and refilter a couple connections --

Wayne's been going in and out and he's finally gobbled up into static now. He's not coming back.

ROBIN

Wayne? Wayne? I gotta let you go. You're breaking up too bad.

Robin hangs the phone up and starts paying attention to the passing signs again.

The tools in the back of the van continue to clang against each other with every thud in the pock-marked road.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

There's very few businesses, and all of them have already closed and are abandoned for the night.

Robin pulls her van around a baby blue Lincoln Towncar and up to an office on the corner.

From the van, she tries to look through the open blinds.

Stenciled on the window, it already reads 'Patrick Stephen, M.D., D.O.'

Inside, Robin sees MAUDE, 13, sitting behind a desk.

Maude senses something and looks up from paperwork in front of her and out the window.

Robin smiles to herself, more eased now.

Robin gets out and walks to the back of the van. She opens up the rear door and takes out a tool box.

She makes her way to the office door, tool box in hand.

Maude already has the door open for her.

ROBIN

Hi.

Maude looks nervous. Her eyes are wide and she looks a little overwhelmed.

She takes a deep breath and settles herself.

MAUDE

Hi.

Maude swallows.

MAUDE

Are you the electrician?

ROBIN

Yes.

Finally, after a moment, Maude backs up and lets Robin inside.

INT. WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Robin walks in and stands in the doorway.

MAUDE

It's nice to meet you.

Maude's relaxing herself. She's more comfortable now.

ROBIN

(smiling)

It's very nice meeting you, too.

MAUDE

I'm Maude.

ROBIN

Maude?

Maude nods.

ROBIN

That's a very old-fashioned name for such a young girl.

MAUDE

My parents said they always wanted an old-fashioned name for me.

ROBIN

It's beautiful. My name's Robin.

Maude lets her in and locks the door behind her, and the padlock.

Robin looks around the office. She looks at the open folder with papers strewn that Maude was looking at.

MAUDE

I'm going to run the waiting room.

Maude closes the folder.

ROBIN

Wow. That's a really big responsibility. How old are you?

MAUDE

I'm thirteen. But I might as well be fourteen. It's close enough.

Robin smiles, charmed by the young girl.

MAUDE

I grew up really fast. My dad taught me everything there was to know when I was younger.

ROBIN

He sounds like a great man.

MAUDE

He is.

ROBIN

Is he here?

MAUDE

He's in the MRI room now. He's trying to get it set up for you. Were you on the phone with Patrick? Could you understand him okay?

ROBIN

No. My boss was who spoke with him.

MAUDE

You have to listen close when he talks. It's hard to understand him and he slurs a lot because of his breathing.

ROBIN

Oh.

MAUDE

Don't be afraid of him when you see him. He is a regular person underneath everything.

ROBIN

(nods)

Okay.

Maude opens up a door to a back hallway.

MAUDE

The MRI room's still marked. It's this way.

ROBIN

Thank you, Maude.

Maude nods. Robin starts following her into the back hallway.

Maude stops and turns around mid-stride.

MAUDE

It is nice meeting you finally.

Robin laughs.

ROBIN

I know I'm late. I'm sorry. I got lost on the way here.

Maude shrugs.

MAUDE

Everyone gets lost. I'm glad you found your way.

Robin nods to her and looks at the doorway that Maude leads her to.

INT. MRI ROOM - NIGHT

The MRI machine's in the middle of the room. Feet stick out on a gurney shoved into the machine.

Maude knocks lightly on the door and opens it a crack.

MAUDE

Patrick? Is it ready?

Patrick responds from inside the machine, on top of the gurney.

His voice is distorted, and he wheezes deeply when he breathes.

PATRICK (O.S.)

Yeah. Can you help me out, Sweetheart? I can't move the gurney on my own. There's not enough room.

Maude hurries in and grabs the end of the hospital gurney, where Patrick's feet stick out the end of the machine.

Robin follows in after her and watches.

MAUDE

You ready?

PATRICK (O.S.)

Ready.

Maude pulls Patrick out of the MRI machine. His face is disfigured, eaten and corroded by acid.

He holds an aluminum panel from inside the MRI machine.

MAUDE

The electrician's here.

Patrick attempts to sit up on the gurney, but he needs Maude's help.

She takes the aluminum panel and sets it aside.

Patrick's hands are contorted, too, the skin shrivelled and shrunk and wrinkled. But he uses them to their fullest.

Patrick stands and faces Robin.

PATRICK

(to Robin)

The fuses are only accessible from the inside. It was originally built as a wall unit.

Robin has already been scouting the machine out.

ROBIN

I could tell from the mounting bolts.

Robin runs her fingers over a couple holes welded over on the side of the machine.

Patrick, weak but determined, stands and holds his hand out to her.

PATRICK

I'm Patrick.

Robin takes his hand immediately, not fazed by his repulsive looks or his dry, leathery hands.

ROBIN

I'm Robin.

Patrick lets go of her. Maude notices how Robin doesn't mind Patrick's disfigurement.

ROBIN

Thank you for taking the inside panel out. That was probably the hardest part of the job with that tight fit. I'd feel bad if I charged you now.

PATRICK

Don't worry about it. I can take screws out easily and I'm small enough to fit, but I don't know anything about the wiring. I just want to know if I need to get a new one or not.

Robin digs a couple fuses and circuits and a wire cutter out of her tool box.

ROBIN

Well let's see if we can figure that out.

Patrick carefully swipes a bang out of Maude's eyes and smooths it behind her ear.

Patrick mumbles something under his deep breaths to her.

She gives a shy smile and nods. She walks over and has a seat in the corner.

Patrick sees the tools Robin has gotten out.

PATRICK

Light comes in from the entrance of the MRI, but not enough to see the ceiling.

Patrick reaches in a pocket and hands her a tiny flashlight.

Robin prepares to get on the gurney and go into the machine.

She lays the tools and circuits and flashlight on her chest and tucks herself in, her hands straight by her side.

ROBIN

All right. I think I'm ready.

PATRICK

You're not claustrophobic, are you? It's real tight in there.

ROBIN

A little. But I think I'll be fine.

Patrick might be smiling.

PATRICK

It's too tight. You won't be able to move your hands from your side once you're in there. Put your hands on your chest, fetal-like.

Robin does.

Maude watches them.

Patrick stands at the foot of the gurney and prepares to push her in.

PATRICK

You ready?

ROBIN

Ready.

Patrick slowly pushes her in.

PATRICK

If you get uncomfortable, let me know.

ROBIN

Thank you.

Her head disappears into the mouth of the machine, then the rest of her body.

Only her feet stick out on the gurney.

PATRICK

Are you okay?

ROBIN (O.S.)

I'm okay.

Patrick hears slow movement, then the flashlight taps against plastic and metal as Robin tries to position it.

PATRICK

Are you able to move?

ROBIN (O.S. THROUGHOUT)

It's tight. It'll just take me a minute to get the circuits positioned how I want them. The old ones are corroded. That looks like it might be the only problem.

Patrick looks over to Maude and she looks back at him. She swallows.

Patrick walks over to a wall and puts his hand by the lightswitch.

He flicks the switch down and the light goes off in the room.

ROBIN

Did something happen out there? I don't see the light at my feet anymore.

Patrick doesn't answer.

He walks over and bends down at the foot of the gurney.

He picks up the straps hanging from the side and quickly thrusts them around Robin's ankles.

ROBIN

Hey. What are you doing?

She tries to kick, but can't because of the enclosed space.

Patrick, his arthritic and shrivelled hands not slowing him down at all, secures Robin's legs to the gurney tight so that she can't slide down.

ROBIN

What's wrong?

Maude, sitting in the corner, watches Patrick.

Patrick, with one quick flick of a lever with his foot, locks all four wheels of the gurney into place.

ROBIN

What's going on? What are you doing?

There's no answer, and Patrick just stands and looks at the MRI machine. Robin's feet dangle out and try to kick free.

ROBIN

Please answer me.

No response.

ROBIN

Maude? Are you there?

PATRICK

Shh. Please. No more for right now.

ROBIN

Please tell me what's going on.

Patrick doesn't answer. He just picks up a drill and loads a long bit into it. Very thick.

Patrick walks to the head of the MRI machine, around where Robin's head would be, and gently lines the drill bit up against the side of the machine.

He pulls and holds the trigger and the drill bit easily rotates into the metal side of the machine.

Patrick pulls the bit back out and begins the next one a little further down the machine.

ROBIN

What the hell are you doing?

PATRICK

You're doing so well, Robin. Even better than you did before. Don't ruin it now.

ROBIN

What are you talking about?

Patrick's quiet. He just keeps on drilling holes into the side of the MRI machine.

Every now and then, the flashlight from inside the machine shines out of one of the holes by Robin's chest.

Maude watches quietly from the corner.

Patrick drills more holes.

Robin's gone quiet. Her feet, however, have been kicking and trying to get grip to slide out.

It's not working.

The tools have been shuffling inside the machine from Robin trying to push herself out.

PATRICK

I was wondering if you'd be able to recognize my voice after my attack or not.

The tools stop shuffling now and Robin's quiet. She stops struggling to think.

ROBIN

What?

PATRICK

Guess not.

He drills another hole, in the side, going up and down the machine.

PATRICK

I am surprised, though, that you didn't recognize my name. I didn't think just switching around my first and last name would be enough.

Silence as Robin has to think from inside the machine.

ROBIN

(whispers to herself)
Patrick Stephen.

PATRICK

Guess so.

ROBIN

Stephen Pat-? Dr. Patrick?

PATRICK

Hi, Robin. The years haven't been good to me. I'm sorry for that.

ROBIN

God.

Patrick stops drilling the holes finally and leans down to one close by where her head would be.

PATRICK

It's been a while.

ROBIN

What are you doing?

PATRICK

I've got a new practice.

ROBIN

Why are you doing this?

PATRICK

Because I don't have very much time left.

Patrick makes eye contact with Maude, who visibly saddens.

ROBIN

What does that mean?

PATRICK

I don't have very much time left to live.

It's quiet. Finally, Robin responds.

ROBIN

What's that have to do with me?

Patrick stands back up away from the hole he was peeking through.

PATRICK

I want you to know the truth. And I want to know what kind of person you've become since your last visit with me.

ROBIN

Why?

Patrick doesn't answer that one.

ROBIN

Why?!

Patrick still doesn't respond. Just waits.

Robin finally realizes she's not going to get an answer.

ROBIN

I'm different. I'm not that lost little girl when I came to you. And I'm clean now. It took a long time, and I had to figure out who I was, but I'm clean.

Maude looks to Patrick to see what he's going to do.

ROBIN

And I'm so sorry for what I did back then. I wish I wouldn't have come to you and got that done. It still makes me sick.

PATRICK

It was sick what you did. It's disgusting anyone would do that.

Robin gets defensive.

ROBIN

You were the only one who would perform abortions on somebody that late. Everyone knew it. Why'd you do them, then?

PATRICK

I didn't.

ROBIN

Don't blame your nurses. You did the examination to make sure it was safe to perform it at that stage and I'm sure you examined the dozens of girls before and after me. You knew what you were doing.

ROBIN

Just because you didn't do the dirty work doesn't mean you're not at fault.

Patrick picks up a long, slim metal rod and examines it. He checks to see if it'll fit through the holes.

PATRICK

There were only four girls who came to me for late-term abortions. Including you. And after I put you girls to sleep, I did all the dirty work. I never let the nurses in the room for the procedure. I wouldn't allow it.

ROBIN

So you have no reason to act all 'holier than thou' right now.

Patrick slowly slides the metal rod through one of the holes at the head of the MRI machine and taps Robin on the side of the cheek with it.

ROBIN

Ow. What are you doing?

PATRICK

Checking. Making sure it fits. Like I had to check you to see when you were dilated enough.

Robin is quiet inside, assessing the situation.

ROBIN

Please don't do whatever you're planning to do.

PATRICK

I'm not.

In the corner of the room, Maude swallows. She's either nervous, or excited.

PATRICK

Do you know how abortions are performed, Robin?

ROBIN

A little bit. Not exactly. I just came in and was happy you were going to put me to sleep. And afterwards, I made sure I would never find out. I don't think I could take it. Even now, sober, it would kill me. You really don't know how sorry I am.

Patrick slides the skinny rod in and touches it to Robin's neck.

PATRICK

It's a lot like this. They stick a metal rod in and tear up behind the baby's neck, making sure they smush the soft skull.

Patrick presses firmer and more aggressive with the rod.

ROBIN

Why are you doing this?

PATRICK

Then, after they're sure the skull's collapsed and torn away, they-

ROBIN

Is it because of your attack?

PATRICK

My attack?

ROBIN

The protestors, when they threw acid on you? I saw it on the news.

Patrick slides the rod out of the hole.

PATRICK

Why would you think that?

ROBIN

Because you're angry at what they did to you. They took away your face. And your hands.

PATRICK

I'm using my hands just fine. I can adapt.

Patrick listens intently.

ROBIN

They threw acid on you because of the abortions you did on me and the other girls. And now you're taking it out on me.

PATRICK

I'm not angry at them. In theory, I agree with them.

ROBIN

What does that mean?

PATRICK

I don't agree with them in stopping violence with more violence. I understand it in the sense that hate breeds more hate and anger breeds more anger until you fight back with violence. I don't agree with what they did to me. But I agree with why they did it. They thought I was doing wrong. And I agree with them. Abortion is repulsive.

ROBIN

Then why'd you perform them if you're so repulsed?

PATRICK

I told you, I didn't. Saying I was performing abortions was the only way to stop the abortions.

ROBIN

You don't make any sense.

PATRICK

That's why I only took the girls who wanted late-term abortions. Those were the only ones I could save.

Inside the MRI machine, Robin's quiet, trying to put everything together.

ROBIN

I don't understand.

Patrick backs away from the machine. He motions for Maude to come to him.

Maude stands up and walks over next to Patrick and the MRI machine.

ROBIN

Maude? You're still here, sweetheart? Please try to talk with your dad.

PATRICK

Before I put you to sleep fourteen years ago, I asked you if you had a name picked out.

ROBIN

I remember.

PATRICK

You didn't. Almost eight months and you didn't have a name. You knew you weren't going to keep the baby the whole time. Even if you did birth it, you were going to throw it in a trash.

ROBIN

I was in such a different place back then.

PATRICK

But you said you'd choose an old-fashioned name. You liked them.

Robin gets quiet.

Patrick pulls another bang out of Maude's eyes and slides it behind her ear.

PATRICK

I think Maude fits perfectly for her.

Maude gives Patrick a small smile.

Robin gasps inside the machine. She begins breathing deeply over and over, like she's hyperventilating.

ROBIN

(to herself)

Maude?

MAUDE

Why'd you want to kill me, Robin?

Robin's breaths only get heavier and faster.

ROBIN

I didn't, sweetheart. I promise I didn't. Oh my god...

Patrick and Maude leave Robin quiet with her thoughts for a moment.

After Robin's breathing finally slows, Patrick speaks.

PATRICK

And now, just like you had one-

Patrick hands the metal rod over to Maude.

PATRICK

Maude has a choice.

Maude takes the rod, determined.

Patrick leans down and peeks through one of the holes he had drilled.

PATRICK

Are your arms still curled by your chest?

Patrick tries to look through the holes again.

PATRICK

I think you should know, I'm not very good at saving fetuses anymore.

And with that, Patrick takes the seat in the corner.

Maude steps up closer to the MRI machine.

She's calm, but confident.

MAUDE

Why'd you want to kill me?

ROBIN

I didn't want to, Maude-

Maude jams the metal rod hard through one of the holes in the middle of the machine and into Robin's ribs.

Robin yells.

MAUDE

Yes you did. Please don't lie to me. I deserve the truth.

Maude puts the metal rod to one of the holes again, this one by Robin's head.

ROBIN

No, I didn't want to. I was a different person.

MAUDE

We're always the same person, Robin.

Maude slams the rod in again and Robin takes a violent poke to the cheek.

A tooth cracks and the sound reverberates through the room.

MAUDE

People don't change. We just get more comfortable with ourselves over time.

Robin recovers from the last blow. She tries to crack her jaw back into place, but can't.

ROBIN
(slightly distorted)
I was selfish, Maude. I was so
selfish. I didn't care about
anything else but me.

Instead of being comforted, it just makes Maude angry again
and she slams the rod into another hole.

Right into Robin's shoulder. Robin yelps in pain again.

ROBIN
But I'm not like that anymore. It
took me a long time, but I don't
think like that anymore.

Maude looks to Patrick and finally shows a first sign of
gentleness since she's taken the rod.

Maude looks back to the MRI machine.

MAUDE
How do you know?

ROBIN
I just do.

Maude loses it again. She slams the rod in again, this time
towards Robin's head.

This one brushes against Robin's sclera and jams into the
bridge of her nose, cracking it.

Robin's eyeball rolls back into her head.

MAUDE
That's not an answer. I told you I
deserve to know things. How do you
know you're not like that anymore?

Robin needs a little time to recover from the last blow.

Unable to use her hands, she strains her eyes open as far as
she can.

It finally pops back in and her eye scrolls back down into
place.

She shakes and squints the tears out and regains what vision
she can in the cramped space.

ROBIN
Because I'm not mad at you for what
you're doing. I don't blame you.
Not for a second.

Robin chokes up.

ROBIN

I'm just so happy you're alive,
Maude. I've thought about you
every day.

Maude slams the rod in the same hole again. This one hits
Robin square in the jaw.

MAUDE

(calm)

No you haven't Robin. I asked you
please not to lie to me.

Robin's gums begin to bleed and she has to spit blood out
her mouth to talk.

It dribbles down her cheek.

But Robin hurries and is quick to answer.

ROBIN

Not at first I didn't think of you,
no. When I was selfish? But when
I sobered up, yes I did. I
absolutely thought about you every
night I laid down, Sweetheart.

Maude doesn't know if she likes being called that by her.
She's not sure whether to strike or not.

ROBIN

And how sorry I was.

Maude hesitates to take the words in.

ROBIN

That's why I don't care what you do
to me, Maude. I deserve it. I'm
just so relieved to know you're
alive and that you've been very
well taken care of.

Maude takes another moment to put things together inside her
head.

MAUDE

What if I came into your life?
Right now. What would you think
then?

ROBIN

I'd absolutely want it. You don't
know what it would do to me to have
you. I'd feel like I was cheating.

Maude swallows.

Slowly, she puts the rod down by her side, turns, and walks
down by Robin's feet sticking out of the machine.

Maude looks at Patrick and places a hand on Robin's ankle. It's a signal.

Patrick looks at it. He looks up to Maude.

PATRICK

Are you sure?

Maude deliberates for just a moment, then quickly nods.

MAUDE

I'm comfortable.

Patrick nods and, after a moment, gathers the strength to stand up.

MAUDE

Are you?

Patrick looks to the body in the MRI machine.

PATRICK

Yes. I am.

Maude gives a small smile. She throws the rod off to the side and it bounces across the floor.

They prepare to pull Robin out. Maude grabs the foot of the gurney, Patrick waits by the opening to grab Robin's hands.

With a flick of her foot, Maude unlocks all four wheels of the gurney and begins to pull it out slowly.

Patrick prepares in case Robin's hands lash out once they're free.

Robin's lower part of her body appears undamaged.

Once her arms are free, Patrick places his hands over hers.

But Robin doesn't struggle. She just stretches her arms out for comfort and freedom.

Her face is a mess. Blood dribbles out her mouth. Her jaw is contorted and her nose is crooked.

Patrick leans down close to her face.

PATRICK

You want ether?

Robin shakes her head no.

ROBIN

I don't take anything.

PATRICK

You sure you want this?

Robin nods her head assuredly.

ROBIN
Yes. Absolutely.

Patrick places both shrivelled hands on the side of Robin's face. In one quick motion, he slams the sides of his hands together and pops Robin's jaw back into place.

She yelps.

PATRICK
Your jaw will be fine, just sore for a day. You have to go to the hospital for your eye and your nose, though.

ROBIN
I'll tell them I was hiking and fell. I landed face first into a branch.

Patrick lets Robin's hands completely go and leaves one on her shoulder for comfort. He trusts her.

PATRICK
Keep your shoulder and rib bruises covered up, though. They won't ask any questions.

Maude begins undoing the straps around Robin's ankles.

ROBIN
Okay.

Patrick leans his head closer to Robin and whispers.

PATRICK
My cancer's getting worse.

Patrick motions to Maude.

PATRICK
The three other fosters are bright, but not like Maude is. And their mothers aren't as brave as you are.

Robin nods.

PATRICK
I'll have to find different, good agencies for each of them. But I trust you. And most of all, Maude trusts you. Thank you for the person you've become.

Patrick stands back up and Robin reaches for his arm.

Her voice isn't as contorted now with her jaw back into place.

ROBIN

Thank you.

Maude brings the wheelchair over for Robin.

Robin tries to get up on her own.

ROBIN

I don't need it. I'll be okay.

PATRICK

Just in case. I don't know if you got hit in the temple or not.

Patrick and Maude help the beaten and bruised Robin into the wheelchair.

She winces, but makes it without much trouble.

Maude takes the handles and pushes Robin out of the room. Patrick follows them.

INT. WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Maude pushes Robin in while Patrick follows.

MAUDE

I'm not worried about the others, I know they're strong.

She turns back around to Patrick.

MAUDE

Do you think Isaac will be okay?

Patrick nods immediately.

PATRICK

With Isaac I'll find the best home. You know I watch him closer.

Maude nods.

MAUDE

I know.

Patrick picks the file up off of the desk and hands it to Maude.

PATRICK

You need your papers... So there's no questions.

Robin looks behind her in the wheelchair and smiles at the file she had seen Maude looking over earlier.

She sees the phone on the desk, also.

ROBIN

When I get back into range, I have to call my boss.

Patrick and Maude nod.

ROBIN

He'll be surprised I'm taking my vacation next week. But I'll tell him I wanted to enjoy the Timber Preserve. It'll explain the bruises and scratches, too. He knows I get clumsy when I'm excited.

Patrick and Maude look at each other and smile.

Maude holds her hand out. Patrick takes it gently and squeezes.

Patrick opens and holds the door open and Maude pushes Robin out the door.

FADE TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Maude pushes Robin to the passenger side of the van. Patrick follows them.

Maude asks Robin something MIT OF SOUND.

Robin reaches in a pant pocket and pulls out a set of keys. She hands them to Maude.

Maude unlocks the door and Patrick helps her guide Robin from the wheelchair to the passenger's seat.

Maude closes the van door. Patrick walks the wheelchair back, pushes it inside the building and closes the office door behind him.

He locks it and makes sure it's shut tight.

Patrick turns back to Maude and walks her around to the other side of the van.

They speak MOS for a moment, then give each other a long embrace.

Finally, he opens the driver's side door for her and Maude gets in.

Patrick closes the door firm behind her and gives a last loving wave.

He walks to the back of the van and turns to watch it go.

The van roars to life and the lights come on and 'Have You Ever Seen the Rain' begins to blare out the speakers.

After a moment, it pulls into gear and drives skillfully onto and down the road.

Patrick watches it disappear down the main street and into darkness. The music fades with the van.

Once out of sight, he turns around and walks back the other way.

After a few more moments, another engine roars to life and the Creedence Clearwater Revival song continues where it faded off.

Soon, the baby blue Lincoln Towncar drives down the street.

After a while, the car's gone and the small town sits desolate again, waiting for something to happen next.

FADE