

WHISPERS OF HUMANITY
Part I: Silence

Screenplay by Adam McKim

Based on the novel Whispers of Humanity by Adam McKim

FADE IN:

EXT. ABANDONED HIGHWAY - DAY

A dead road stretches into infinity. SAUL trudges along, the wind biting through layers of tattered clothing. The sun hides behind gray clouds, its warmth a forgotten memory. Burned-out cars line the roadside like skeletons, the remnants of a world long dead.

Saul's eyes scan the horizon with the hunger of a predator. Every breath fogs in the cold air. His movements are slow, each step a battle against the emptiness clawing at his insides.

He passes a gutted grocery store. The windows are shattered. Shelves stripped bare. A fading sign hangs: FRESH PRODUCE

SAUL

Fresh...

(a bitter laugh escapes his cracked lips)

The word tastes foreign — something from another life. He presses on, leaving the town's ruins behind. The wind howls across empty fields, carrying the faint scent of decay.

EXT. OPEN FIELDS - DAY

A small dark speck stands against the horizon — a house, barely visible. Saul steadies himself, then moves toward it, his steps slow and uneven. The closer he gets, the heavier the weight of hope becomes.

EXT. LONELY HOUSE - DAY

The door hangs ajar, creaking in the wind. Saul raises his rifle, nudging the door open. The sound echoes through the silence.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Light filters through cracked windows, illuminating dust dancing in the air. The house is dead — furniture rotted, floorboards warped and broken. Saul moves cautiously, every

creak beneath his boots loud enough to betray him.

He searches: kitchen – empty. Pantry – bare. Bedrooms – stripped of anything useful. His breath grows ragged, exhaustion shaking his frame.

He stops. Something smells... wrong.

He follows the scent to the corner of the last room.

A body slumps against the wall – thin, hollow, long dead. Eyes half-open, glassy. A man who simply... stopped.

SAUL

(whispers)

No one will know...

His stomach twists painfully. He falls to his knees, the knife trembling in his hands. A flicker of memory – his mother's voice, telling him to stay human, no matter what the world becomes.

But that world is gone. She's gone. And Saul is still here. He closes his eyes... and lowers the blade.

FADE OUT.

TITLE OVER BLACK: WHISPERS OF HUMANITY – PART I: SILENCE

FADE IN:

EXT. CRACKED HIGHWAY – DAY

The world is silent. The road beneath SAUL's boots is split and uneven, the asphalt cracked open like old skin. The sky above is pale and empty, offering no warmth, no mercy.

Saul walks, head down, his breath shallow. Hunger has become a constant companion, gnawing at him with quiet cruelty. He can't remember his last real meal – time has dissolved into one endless, starving day.

He pauses beneath the withered husk of a dead tree. The bark crumbles under his hand. The silence presses in around him.

SAUL
(to himself)
This can't go on much longer.

He digs into his coat and pulls out a piece of dried jerky. He chews slowly, the taste gone, replaced only by the salt sting on his tongue. It's gone too soon.

His eyes drift shut. Memories flash — faces of the dead, rules he swore he'd never break. He clings to those rules. They're all that's left between him and the monsters that still wear human faces.

When he opens his eyes, he sees something on the horizon — a faint curl of smoke rising into the sky.

EXT. BARREN PLAIN - DUSK

The sun dips low, casting long shadows. Saul watches the thin column of smoke. Fire means life — or death. He studies it, torn between instinct and hope.

SAUL
(quietly)
Maybe they have food...

He starts walking toward it. Every step is a battle. Hunger has already made the choice for him.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Three FIGURES huddle around a fire. Two men and a woman. Their faces are gaunt, their clothes patched and torn. A pot simmers above the flames, releasing a thin trail of steam.

Saul crouches in the dark, watching. The firelight flickers across his face. His stomach twists. He grips his rifle tighter.

SAUL
Hello?

The figures turn. The WOMAN raises a revolver, leveling it at him.

WOMAN

Who are you?

SAUL

A traveler. I saw your smoke.

One of the MEN steps forward, his expression hard.

MAN #1

We don't have anything for you. Move along.

SAUL

Please... just a little something, and I'll be gone. I'm no threat. I'm just trying to survive.

The woman hesitates. The silence stretches between them – fire crackling, wind whispering. Then, she lowers her gun.

WOMAN

Come closer.

Saul steps into the circle of light. The warmth hits him like a memory. The smell of stew makes his eyes sting. One of the men hands him a small metal bowl.

MAN #1

This is all you get.

Saul nods. He eats in silence. The taste is wrong – metallic, sour – but he doesn't stop. Hunger has no conscience.

They eat quietly, the fire between them crackling in the dark. No one speaks. They all know what it means to survive.

When Saul finishes, he sets the bowl down. He looks at them – three strangers surviving on the edge of the world. Then he nods once, turns, and walks back into the night.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. RUINED TOWN – DAY

Snow falls over the dead city, blanketing ruin and ash in

fragile white. The world looks almost beautiful under its thin disguise of purity. But beauty is a lie here.

SAUL moves through the snowfall, deliberate, cautious. His boots crunch through the frost, each step a whisper. The cold cuts through the worn fabric of his coat, numbing his body but sharpening his instincts.

He moves between collapsed buildings. The snow drifts in deep piles. The wind howls softly – the voice of ghosts.

EXT. ALLEYWAY – DAY

Saul slips into a narrow alley. The wind dies here. He steps carefully, eyes scanning the shadows.

A faint sound. Voices. Muffled. Angry.

He crouches, pressing his back against the wall.

He peeks around the corner. Five MEN move through the snow – armed, desperate. Their rifles glint in the gray light. They move with purpose, their breath visible in the cold.

The leader signals silence. One man steps ahead, checking behind a stack of crates. Then—A GUNSHOT cracks the air.

The man drops into the snow, red blooming across the white. The others scatter, shouting. Gunfire erupts – loud, violent, chaotic.

Saul flattens himself against the wall, heart pounding. He watches as both sides open fire. The snow turns crimson. Bodies fall.

The attackers press forward – another group of survivors, hard and cold-eyed. They move with brutal precision, closing in on the wounded, finishing what they started.

The killing turns to butchery. The survivors strip the dead – coats, boots, weapons – before dragging knives across flesh. Saul turns away, shutting his eyes.

The sound is worse than the sight – wet, tearing, final. When it's over, silence returns. The killers fade into the storm, leaving only bodies and blood behind.

EXT. ALLEY - LATER

Saul emerges from hiding. The snow is already covering the carnage, erasing the evidence. He moves quietly, eyes down, avoiding the faces of the dead.

The wind picks up, carrying the metallic scent of blood. Saul keeps walking — one man against the cold, against the world.

SAUL
(under his breath)
How much longer can this go on...

He pulls his coat tighter and disappears into the white — another ghost swallowed by the snow.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

The fire crackles weakly in the darkness. Its glow dances across SAUL's face as he sits alone, the night air thick and cold around him. He only risks a fire on nights like this — when clouds hide the moon and the smoke blends into the dark.

He eats from a rusted can of green beans. Each bite is mechanical, his expression hollow. The silence presses in on him — a silence filled with ghosts.

SAUL
(softly, to himself)
You can't escape them...

He stares into the flames, lost in memory.

FLASHBACK - EXT. SMALL MIDWEST TOWN - DAY (YEARS EARLIER)

A quiet neighborhood — rows of brick houses, tree-lined streets. Leaves wither and fall long before autumn. The birds are gone. The air feels wrong.

SAUL stands in his backyard, looking at the dying trees. His wife, LAURA, watches from the porch — calm, focused,

determined.

LAURA

We need to prepare. Stock up. Grow what we can.

SAUL

It's just a bad season. It'll pass.

Laura doesn't argue. She turns toward the garden and starts working – hands steady, eyes sharp. Saul watches her, uneasy.

INT. KITCHEN – NIGHT

A family dinner lit by candles. The news on a battery-powered radio fills the silence – voices trembling with panic.

LAURA holds Saul's hand. Their daughter, EMILY, sits beside her, wide-eyed.

EMILY

Why are the animals dying?

SAUL

They'll come back, sweetheart. They always do.

Laura looks at him. She knows he's lying, but says nothing.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD – NIGHT

Chaos. Riots in the distance. Fires burn. The sound of shouting, gunfire. Saul stands on the porch, shotgun in hand. Laura pleads with him from inside.

LAURA

Saul! Come inside! Please!

SAUL

They're just scared. Someone has to stop this.

The streets erupt in violence. Glass shatters. A fire spreads. Saul finally turns and rushes inside.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The family flees with what little they can carry. Fields of dead crops stretch for miles. The world is fading fast.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Laura lies in bed, feverish. Saul kneels beside her, feeding her water from a tin cup. EMILY watches, terrified.

LAURA

(weakly)

You have to keep her safe... promise me.

SAUL

I promise.

Laura's eyes close. Her breathing stops. Saul's hand trembles as he reaches for her - but she's already gone.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Two small graves marked with wooden crosses. Saul stands between them, hollow and still. The world around him is silent.

BACK TO PRESENT - EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

The fire burns lower. Saul sits motionless, staring into it. His face is lined with loss, with time.

He puts the fire out.

He pulls a tattered blanket from his bag and wraps himself in it. The night presses down, heavy and endless.

SAUL

(whispers)

Just let me sleep...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. ABANDONED TOWN - DAY

Grey skies hang low over the ruins. SAUL moves cautiously through the remains of another dead town. He sticks to the shadows, avoiding main roads and open spaces. His breath clouds in the cold air.

He searches quietly – basements, sheds, forgotten corners. Anything that might have been missed by scavengers long ago.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - DAY

The door creaks as Saul steps inside. The house is dark and still. He waits for his eyes to adjust, then moves forward – rifle raised, careful, silent.

In the kitchen, a single can sits on the counter. The label's worn away. He pockets it and keeps moving.

A faint rustle breaks the silence.

Saul freezes. The sound comes from the hallway behind him. He grips his rifle tighter.

SAUL

Who's there?

No answer. Just the quiet shuffle of feet on wood.

He turns – too late. A FIGURE lunges out of the shadows, swinging a pipe. Saul blocks the blow with his rifle, the metal clanging loud in the empty house.

The attacker slams him into the wall. Saul struggles, weak, exhausted. The weapon drops. Hands wrap around his throat – tight, relentless.

SAUL

(choking out)

This is it...

Then – a loud crack. The attacker jerks, blood splattering the floor. He collapses beside Saul, dead.

Saul gasps for air. He looks up – a WOMAN stands in the doorway, revolver still smoking. Her posture is steady, calm, practiced.

WOMAN

You alright?

Saul nods slowly, catching his breath.

SAUL

Yeah... I think so.

The woman holsters her weapon and steps forward. She's strong, sharp-eyed – a survivor.

WOMAN

You're lucky I showed up. He was about to make dinner out of you.

Saul manages a tired half-smile.

SAUL

Guess I owe you one.

She crouches beside the dead man, checking his pockets, pulling a knife from his belt.

WOMAN

What were you doing here?

SAUL

Scavenging. Looking for food.

She nods, not looking at him. She wipes blood from her hands with a cloth.

WOMAN

Same. This place looked empty.

A silence settles. Neither trusts the other, but neither makes a move.

WOMAN

I'm Hannah.

SAUL

Saul.

She studies him – reading the exhaustion in his eyes, the hunger in his face.

HANNAH

You look like hell. Eat something.

She tosses him a small bag of dried jerky. He catches it clumsily, then eats fast – too fast.

HANNAH

Slow down. You'll make yourself sick.

He pauses, breathing hard, forcing himself to stop. The food settles like warmth in his chest.

SAUL

Why'd you help me?

HANNAH

Didn't feel right letting you die. Besides,
I could use the company.

Saul stares at her, unsure what to say. The word 'company' feels foreign – dangerous – but comforting.

HANNAH

I've got a camp upstairs. You can stay the
night. Safer than freezing to death out
there.

Saul hesitates, then nods. He's too tired to argue.

SAUL

Alright.

Hannah moves to the stairs, motioning for him to follow. Saul grabs his rifle, keeping it close, his eyes still wary.

He follows her into the darkness, the faint light from the fire flickering behind them.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. FARMHOUSE – MORNING

A faint light seeps through broken windows. The fire from last

night has gone cold. SAUL wakes slowly, confused – until the memories return: the fight, HANNAH, the farmhouse.

He sits up, rubbing his eyes. Across the room, HANNAH crouches near the dead embers, sharpening her knife with steady, careful strokes. The sound is rhythmic – deliberate.

She glances up.

HANNAH

Morning.

SAUL

Morning.

A beat of silence. The air between them is heavy – unspoken caution and uneasy trust.

HANNAH

You ready to move?

SAUL

Yeah.

He stands, gathering his gear. Hannah slides her knife into its sheath and shoulders her pack. They move in quiet routine – survivors who don't need words.

EXT. TOWN RUINS - DAY

They move through the gray silence of the town. Snow threatens again. Saul keeps his rifle ready; Hannah's hand never strays far from her sidearm.

Their eyes scan constantly, marking shadows, windows, movement.

They don't talk. The silence feels safer.

EXT. COLLAPSED OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

They stop to rest. Saul leans against a concrete pillar. Hannah drinks from a canteen, her eyes never leaving him.

HANNAH

Where were you before all this?

SAUL

Small town. Midwest. Had a family... house.

She nods slowly, understanding without asking for more. Saul looks down, lost in thought.

SAUL

You?

HANNAH

City. Worked at a hospital. Stayed until there was nothing left to save.

Her voice hardens, carrying pain she doesn't elaborate on. Saul nods quietly.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - SUNSET

The light fades as they walk. Shadows stretch across the snow. Hannah scans the distance.

HANNAH

We should stop for the night. There's a farmhouse up ahead.

SAUL

Alright.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - DUSK

The structure stands intact, walls solid against the wind. Hannah signals for Saul to cover the front while she checks the side. They move like soldiers - cautious, efficient.

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

They clear the rooms quickly, then barricade the doors. The living room becomes their camp - old furniture stacked as cover, the fireplace long dead.

Saul takes first watch, sitting by the window. Hannah unrolls her bedroll and sits against the wall, her revolver in reach. They eat in silence.

The firelight flickers faintly. Saul studies Hannah – her calm, her guarded strength. There's something familiar in her stillness.

SAUL

(quietly)
You still believe in people?

HANNAH

I believe some of us still try.

He nods. It's not hope – but it's close.

They settle in for the night, strangers sharing the same quiet.

The wind howls outside, but for the first time in a long while, Saul doesn't feel entirely alone.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. ABANDONED FACTORY – NIGHT

The wind howls outside. Inside, SAUL and HANNAH sit by a small fire burning in an old oil drum. The crumbling walls offer little protection, but it's enough to hold back the cold – for now.

Flickering firelight dances across the concrete, casting ghostly shapes that make them both uneasy. But it's warmth – real, fleeting warmth.

HANNAH tinkers with a battered radio receiver, its casing chipped and one dial missing. She works with quiet focus, her hands steady.

SAUL

Think that thing'll actually pick up anything?

HANNAH

Maybe. Found it in an old comms station. Receiver still works. Worth a shot.

Saul studies her. The way she works – calm, determined – makes him wonder what she's hoping to find. The fire crackles. The only other sound is the faint hum of static.

SAUL

(quietly)

Most people stopped listening a long time ago.

HANNAH

Most people stopped hoping too.

She turns the dial slightly. The static rises and falls. Saul leans back against the wall, closing his eyes, trying to rest.

An hour passes. The fire burns low. Saul drifts on the edge of sleep – until he hears it. A faint crackle from the radio.

He opens his eyes. Hannah has fallen asleep beside him. The sound grows – faint, distorted, but human.

He leans in, adjusting the dial with trembling fingers. A VOICE emerges through the static.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

...repeat, this is... safe haven...
coordinates... three-nine point two...
negative one-twenty point one...

Saul freezes, heart pounding. He scrambles for a pencil and paper, jotting down the numbers.

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)

...safe haven... repeat... three-nine point
two... negative one-twenty point one...

The signal fades. Saul shakes Hannah awake.

SAUL

Hannah! Wake up – I've got something.

Hannah stirs, groggy, blinking against the dim light.

HANNAH

What is it?

SAUL

A message. A transmission. Someone said
there's a safe place – gave coordinates.

He hands her the paper. Her expression hardens – skeptical,
but curious.

HANNAH

Coordinates? Or a trap.

SAUL

No. It sounded real. Clearer than anything
I've heard in years.

HANNAH

And what if it's not? We could waste days
chasing ghosts.

SAUL

Then we'll know we tried. You said it
yourself – most people stopped hoping. I'm
not ready to be one of them.

Hannah exhales, weighing his words. She looks at the
coordinates again – the faint scrawl of numbers in the
flickering firelight.

HANNAH

Alright. We'll head that way. But if it
smells like a trap, we turn back. No
hesitation.

SAUL

Deal.

They sit in silence, the fire dying to embers. Outside, the
wind moans through the broken windows. Inside, for the first
time in years, something like hope flickers.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. FACTORY – MORNING

The last of the fire burns low in an oil drum. The walls of the factory groan against the wind outside. SAUL tends to the embers while HANNAH quietly packs the final supplies.

HANNAH

You still think it's worth it?

SAUL

I do.

She exhales, slinging her pack over her shoulder. The warmth fades as they step into the cold world again.

EXT. WASTELAND - DAY

The horizon stretches endless and gray. They move through it like shadows, each step crunching through frost and ash.

Hours pass. The wind cuts through their coats. Ahead, a faint shape emerges — a wooden fence, a forgotten settlement.

EXT. ABANDONED SETTLEMENT - DAY

A rotting gate creaks as they push through. The settlement lies silent — a ghost town of crumbling shacks and empty streets. At its center, a stone well sits half-frozen.

HANNAH

Looks abandoned.

SAUL

Has been for a while. They tried to build something here. Something better.

HANNAH

You think hunters found them?

SAUL

Maybe. Places like this never last.

HANNAH

People try to make something safe... but the world takes it back every time.

SAUL

We should keep moving. Still daylight left.

They pass through the town in silence. The gate creaks behind them as they leave.

EXT. ROAD - EVENING

The sun sinks low. The air grows colder. Their pace slows - exhaustion setting in.

HANNAH

We're not going to make the next town before dark.

SAUL

There's a van up ahead. We can use it for cover.

EXT. DITCH - VAN - EVENING

They reach an old van half-buried in snow and rust. Saul pries the door open - metal screeching as it gives way. The inside is filthy but dry.

SAUL

It's not much, but it'll keep the wind out.

HANNAH

It'll have to do.

They clear space and settle inside. The air is cold and still. Saul lights a small flame to fight the dark.

They share a single can of beans - passing it back and forth.

HANNAH

This isn't going to cut it. We're running too low.

SAUL

Next town's our best shot. There's always something left somewhere.

HANNAH

It has to be more than scraps this time.

They eat the last bite in silence. The fire dims. The cold creeps closer.

SAUL
We'll make it.

HANNAH
You really believe that?

SAUL
We have to.

They lie down in the cramped space, wrapped in worn blankets. Their shoulders brush – both tense at first, then still.

SAUL
Sorry.

HANNAH
It's fine. Warmer this way.

Outside, the wind howls. Inside, for a fleeting moment, there's peace.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. VAN - DAWN

Dim morning light filters through grimy windows. SAUL wakes to a warmth at his side – HANNAH pressed close in sleep. He lies still, the closeness unfamiliar and strange after so long alone.

HANNAH
(muttering)
Sorry.

SAUL
It's fine.

They climb out of the van into the crisp air. Saul stretches, muscles stiff from the cramped night. Hannah moves to the road and picks something up – a flashlight. Dead batteries.

HANNAH

Maybe someone passed by last night.

SAUL

Either that or someone's playing games.

They leave the road and cut through the trees. The forest is a hollow quiet, branches creaking. Suddenly, Hannah freezes and draws her revolver.

HANNAH

Listen.

A faint, desperate voice drifts through the trees:

VOICE

Help...please...

Saul and Hannah exchange looks, cautious.

SAUL

Could be a setup.

HANNAH

Or someone who needs help.

They move in low, careful. Through the branches, a MAN slumps against a tree – pale, sweating, clutching his leg. CARL.

CARL

Please...my leg...I fell...they left me.

Saul and Hannah assess him. Hannah fashions a splint while Saul watches the perimeter. After a tense moment, they agree to move him to a nearby clearing to rest.

SAUL

We can get you to town in the morning. Rest now.

They help Carl to the clearing. He thanks them, exhausted.

Hannah keeps her hand on her gun. Saul studies Carl, something in him aching at the sight of another human in pain.

CARL

Thank you. I didn't think anyone would stop.

Night falls. They camp briefly. Carl rests. Saul sleeps uneasily, haunted by memory of their first meeting.

At dawn, Saul and Hannah step away to pack. When they return, Carl is gone from the clearing — and so are their packs. Panic and betrayal flash through Saul's face.

SAUL

Carl!

They hurry back to the tree line and find Carl stuffing their supplies into a sack, moving with no hint of injury.

HANNAH

Don't move.

Carl freezes, hands emptying the bag. He turns slowly, eyes wide with fear and pleading.

CARL

I... I needed it. I'm sorry. I didn't think you'd help if I asked.

Saul levels his rifle. Hannah raises her revolver. Tension hangs thick in the air.

SAUL

You lied to us. You played us.

Carl stammers, tries to explain. Saul's face hardens. In a single motion, Saul fires. The shot cracks through the trees. Carl staggers, then collapses.

HANNAH

He would've taken everything. He would've killed us if he had the chance.

Hannah moves to search the body. Saul watches, torn. The reality of what survival demands presses in on him.

HANNAH

We need to harvest him.

Saul recoils. The word hangs between them, unavoidable and terrible.

SAUL

No. We're not doing that.

Hannah grabs his arm, forcing him to face her. Her eyes are fierce, pleading with the cold logic that has kept her alive.

HANNAH

Listen to me. If we don't, we won't last.
We barely are as it is. This is the world
now.

Saul looks down at Carl's still form, at the ground already stained, and struggles with the choice before him – survival or the last thread of his humanity.

SAUL

I can't.

Hannah's face softens for a breath, then hardens again. She kneels beside the body and begins to retrieve what she can – clothing, a canteen – with practiced efficiency. Saul stands back, hands trembling as he grips his knife.

After a long, sick silence, Saul steps forward. He has made his choice not from hunger alone but from the pressure of the world pressing in on them. He grips the knife, the only sound his ragged breath.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST EDGE - DAY

Weeks pass. The sun lingers longer in the sky. The snow has receded, leaving behind damp earth and brittle grass. SAUL and HANNAH move quietly through the woods, their packs lighter, their faces lean and drawn.

They travel just inside the tree line, close enough to glimpse the open fields beyond but hidden enough to stay unseen.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - NIGHT

The two sit by a small fire. The warmth flickers against their faces. Their meal sits between them – what's left from their last grim harvest.

They eat in silence. The sound of the fire fills the air – crackling, alive, too loud in the stillness around them. Saul hesitates over his food. He can't look at Hannah. The guilt between them hangs heavy and unspoken.

SAUL

Hannah.

She looks up from her knife, sharpening it absently. The firelight dances across her face, highlighting the fatigue and the quiet sadness in her eyes.

SAUL

I've been having nightmares. Every night. I see them – the people I've killed. They're always there.

Hannah stops sharpening. For a moment, she's still. When she finally speaks, her voice is calm but raw.

HANNAH

Yeah. I see them too.

Saul's voice trembles. The firelight flickers in his eyes as he speaks again.

SAUL

Carl. The raiders. People who turned desperate and came after me. I see their faces every time I close my eyes. And my family... I couldn't save them.

The words catch in his throat. He hasn't spoken of his wife and daughter before. Hannah listens quietly, her gaze fixed on him, unreadable.

HANNAH

I know. I wasn't there when my family died. I came back from scavenging and... they were gone. I still see them every time I

close my eyes.

A long silence. The fire crackles between them – the only sound left.

SAUL

I'm scared, Hannah. That we're losing ourselves. Every time we kill, every time we take from someone... I feel less human.

HANNAH

I'm scared too. But we're still here. Still fighting. That's something.

SAUL

But for how long? How much before we're not human anymore?

Hannah stares into the fire, her voice softer now.

HANNAH

We're not monsters, Saul. As long as we care – as long as we feel guilty – we're still human.

The fire pops, sending sparks into the air. The orange glow washes over them. Saul's eyes find hers across the flames. Something fragile breaks between them – a wall neither knew was still standing.

Hannah stands, walks around the fire, and sits beside him. Their shoulders brush. The contact lingers.

HANNAH

We're still human.

Saul looks at her. The silence between them hums – charged, vulnerable. He reaches out, brushing a strand of hair from her face. She doesn't pull away.

The space between them disappears. Their lips meet – a desperate, human need rising from years of cold and fear. The kiss deepens, breaking the silence that's defined them for so long. The fire crackles softly. The night wraps around them. For a moment, the world beyond the trees doesn't exist.

Later, they lie together under the faint warmth of the firelight. Her head rests on his chest. For the first time in a long time, there's peace.

HANNAH
We're still human.

SAUL
Yeah. We are.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAWN

The fire has burned down to cold embers. SAUL stirs awake, stiff and sore. Beside him, HANNAH lies curled beneath her coat, her breathing soft and steady. The warmth of the night before lingers faintly – real, but now distant, like a dream slipping away.

Saul rises, scanning the clearing. The world is still, peaceful in the brief calm before dawn – a calm he knows better than to trust.

They pack in silence. The memory of last night remains unspoken, sealed by mutual understanding: survival leaves no room for reflection.

HANNAH
I'll be back in a minute. Nature calls.

She gestures toward the trees and disappears into the forest. Saul nods, staying behind. The quiet wraps around him like a shroud. He takes a deep breath, letting the cold air fill his lungs – until his instincts flare.

A figure stands at the edge of the clearing – an OLDER MAN, weathered, gaunt, dressed in a tattered coat. He watches Saul with calm, detached eyes.

SAUL
You alone?

OLD MAN

Alone. Been that way a long time.

Saul's hand hovers near his gun. The man doesn't move – just leans against a tree, relaxed, unsettlingly calm.

SAUL

What are you doing out here?

OLD MAN

Walking. Same as you, I imagine.

SAUL

Where are you headed?

OLD MAN

Nowhere. Everywhere. Doesn't much matter these days, does it?

Saul studies him. Something about the man's tone scratches at him – too calm, too sure. The old man tilts his head.

OLD MAN

You've been out here a long time. I can tell. You've got that look – tired, hungry, chasing something that might not even exist.

SAUL

What's that supposed to mean?

OLD MAN

You're looking for it, aren't you? The sanctuary. The place where the world didn't fall apart.

Saul freezes. The old man's knowing tone hits too close. He takes a step closer.

SAUL

You know where it is?

OLD MAN

No one does. It's a story. A dream people tell themselves so they can keep walking. But hope... hope's a dangerous thing. It

blinds you to the truth.

SAUL

What truth?

OLD MAN

That sometimes, there is no sanctuary. No safe haven. Just the world – broken and cruel. And chasing false hope will only get you killed.

Saul's jaw tightens. The man's words echo in his chest – too close to his own fears. The old man studies him, voice softer now.

OLD MAN

Be careful what you're chasing. Sometimes the things we want most aren't worth the price.

A sound behind Saul – footsteps. He turns. HANNAH emerges from the trees, confused.

HANNAH

Who are you talking to?

Saul spins back toward the tree line – the old man is gone. Vanished without a sound.

SAUL

No one. Let's go.

Hannah gives him a questioning look but says nothing. She knows when not to ask. Saul shoulders his pack. They start walking, the forest swallowing them once more. But Saul's gaze drifts behind him, searching the shadows.

SAUL

Let's keep moving. We're not turning back now.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT PLAINS - DAY

The ground shifts beneath their feet. SAUL and HANNAH move through an endless expanse of dust and sand. The world stretches wide and thin, the air dry and merciless.

HANNAH

This place... it's like it's swallowing us whole.

SAUL

Just keep going. We'll get through it.

The sand thickens into a sea of soft dunes. The sun beats down, bleaching the horizon to white and gold. Saul squints against the glare, sweat stinging his eyes.

HANNAH

Strange. A whole world stripped clean. Makes you wonder if maybe this is the end of everything.

SAUL

Not yet. Not while we're still walking.

They trudge onward, silent but determined. Each step a vow to keep moving, to stay alive. Wind picks up, whipping dust around them.

SAUL

Here. Take this.

He offers his scarf. Hannah takes it, wrapping it around her mouth and nose.

HANNAH

Thanks. Didn't realize the sun could be this unforgiving.

SAUL

Better get used to it. This place doesn't know mercy.

HANNAH

How long can we keep this up?

SAUL

As long as we have to. Stopping isn't an option.

HANNAH

No, I guess it's not.

They walk for hours in silence. The horizon wavers in the heat.

Hannah stumbles slightly, her face flushed from exhaustion.

HANNAH

Water.

Saul unhooks the bottle from his belt and shakes it – barely a sound. He takes a tiny sip before passing it to her.

SAUL

Not much left. Make it last.

HANNAH

We'll find more soon.

SAUL

Yeah. We will.

He doesn't sound convinced. His vision blurs and he falters. Hannah steadies him.

HANNAH

You alright?

SAUL

Fine. Just... need a minute.

Something catches his eye – a shape in the sand ahead. As they draw closer, the outline sharpens: a body, half-buried, sun-bleached and still.

HANNAH

Another one.

SAUL

Another one who didn't make it.

Hannah kneels beside the body and searches its tattered backpack. A knife, a torn map, a cracked bottle. Nothing worth keeping.

HANNAH

Nothing.

The sun sinks toward the horizon. In the distance, jagged rocks rise from the sand like bones.

SAUL

There. We can rest there tonight.

They push through the last stretch until they reach the rocks. The air cools as night descends. They collapse against the stone, exhausted.

The stars pierce the dark sky. Saul stares upward, lost in thought.

HANNAH

Do you think this place we're looking for is real?

SAUL

I don't know. But I need to believe it is. Otherwise... what are we doing?

HANNAH

Then we keep going. One more day. One more night.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. RIVERSIDE - DAY

The sound of the river is a lifeline. SAUL and HANNAH reach the bank, sunburned and exhausted. The rushing water cuts through the silence and brings a flicker of hope.

Saul kneels, cupping icy water into his hands and pouring it

over his face. Hannah fills her bottle, eyes scanning the treeline with wary focus.

HANNAH

We should rest for a bit. Refill, eat something... then we move.

SAUL

Yeah.

Saul sits on a fallen tree, leaning back as his muscles finally ease. The calm is rare and fragile.

A rustle from the treeline. Saul's fingers curl around his rifle.

SAUL

Hannah.

She's already seen it — seven figures moving through the trees. Ragged. Armed. Hungry.

SAUL

Raiders.

The raiders burst from the trees, charging across the river. Saul fires, hitting the leader in the shoulder. The man keeps coming. Hannah dives for cover and fires back.

HANNAH

Move!

Gunfire tears through the air. One raider drops. Another lunges from the side, grabbing Hannah's arm. Her revolver falls, splashing into the river. She draws her knife, striking fast and clean. The man collapses.

Saul fires again. A bullet grazes his arm. He grits his teeth, spotting a wild-eyed woman aiming at him. He fires — she drops her gun and falls back. Another attacker charges, swinging a pipe. Saul blocks it with his rifle, then slams the man to the ground.

HANNAH

Saul! Behind you!

Two more raiders rush in. Saul shoots one, but the other tackles him, hands on his throat. Saul's vision blurs – then Hannah's knife flashes. The raider collapses.

HANNAH

They're not letting up! We need to move!

SAUL

We're pinned!

HANNAH

I'll draw their fire. You circle around and take the ones in the trees!

Hannah bolts. Gunfire follows. Saul moves wide, circling behind the treeline. He fires into the brush, dropping two hidden raiders. Hannah fights hand-to-hand – quick, brutal, precise.

A raider aims at her from the side. Saul fires, taking him down. Silence falls. The river's roar fills the space where chaos had been.

Hannah leans against a tree, bleeding, exhausted. Saul steadies her.

HANNAH

We're clear... for now.

They move upstream, finding cover among the rocks. Saul presses a cloth to his wounded arm. Hannah tends to a gash on her leg. Their hands tremble – from pain, from adrenaline.

SAUL

You alright?

HANNAH

Better than you. But it's not deep.

Saul helps her wrap the wound. She binds his arm in return, their closeness quiet, almost intimate in the aftermath of violence.

HANNAH

They really came at us hard.

SAUL

Yeah. Didn't hold back.

She wipes blood from her face, looking at him. He meets her eyes – tired, but alive. They rise together.

SAUL

Let's move. Just in case more are coming.

HANNAH

Yeah.

He extends a hand. She takes it without hesitation. They walk on, leaving the river – and the dead – behind.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. ABANDONED TOWN – DUSK

The town is silent. Wind whistles through hollowed buildings. SAUL and HANNAH move down the cracked main street, eyes scanning the shadows.

The sun dips low. Supplies run thin. They pass the remains of an old grocery store. An open doorway leads to a narrow storage room half-collapsed under debris.

SAUL

Hold on. There might be something in here.

HANNAH

You think so?

SAUL

Worth a shot.

They duck inside. Rusted shelves line the walls. Boxes long since caved in. Saul scans the shadows.

SAUL

Nothing.

HANNAH

We'll find something. Somewhere.

As Saul turns, his shoulder bumps a shelf. It crashes to the floor with a metallic echo.

SAUL

Damn it. Hope that wasn't too loud.

HANNAH

Well... look at that.

A single can lies where the shelf had stood. Saul kneels, brushing away grime.

SAUL

No label, but it's intact.

HANNAH

That's a rare stroke of luck.

He slips the can into his pack. They step back into the street – small victory amid decay.

Saul unfolds a tattered map. The paper is torn and nearly unreadable.

SAUL

We need a new map.

HANNAH

Better find one while we're here.

They spot a brick building with a rusted satellite dish. A sign reads: COUNTY NEWS HERALD.

HANNAH

Journalists kept maps on hand.

SAUL

Worth a shot.

They enter. The air is thick with dust. The hallways echo with each step. Saul gestures toward a door marked 'NEWSROOM.'

HANNAH

Let's start there.

Inside, rows of desks buried in old papers. Screens coated in dust. Walls lined with headlines – a world's final screams frozen in ink.

HANNAH
I'll check the back.

Saul searches the front desks. Most papers are ruined. Then – an atlas. Torn, but usable. He tucks it into his pack.

A folder catches his eye: BIOGEN ACCIDENT – DRAFT.

HANNAH
What's that?

SAUL
Not sure.

He opens it – typewritten pages, photos, notes. Headline reads: EXCLUSIVE – BIOGEN'S ECO-STUDY PROJECT GONE WRONG?

SAUL
'Biogen's Eco-Study Project was meant to enhance sustainability... genetic modification of ecosystems... containment protocols weak... mutations spreading beyond control.'

HANNAH
This wasn't nature, was it?

SAUL
No. They made this.

He flips pages – photos of blackened fields and barren trees. Notes scrawled: 'Animal fatalities confirmed. Mutation uncontained.'

HANNAH
If it started here... we're standing on ground zero.

SAUL
They knew. And they hid it.

He scans a memo marked CONFIDENTIAL. Ink smudged: 'Containment

failed. Recommend full confidentiality.'

HANNAH

All for an experiment they thought would help.

SAUL

And the story died here with them.

He folds several pages and slips them into his pack. Night deepens beyond the windows.

SAUL

We stay here tonight. No one's looking for food in a newsroom.

HANNAH

A roof sounds good right about now.

Saul opens the can they found earlier – steam rises. Ravioli.

HANNAH

I can't remember the last time I had that.

They eat quietly, the glow of firelight soft on their faces. For a brief moment, the world outside doesn't exist.

Later, Saul lies awake, staring at the cracked ceiling. The discovery weighs heavy. Hannah sleeps beside him, breathing soft, unaware of the storm building in his mind.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. ABANDONED ROAD – EVENING

SAUL and HANNAH move cautiously down the cracked road. Their bodies ache from travel, hunger gnawing endlessly. The light fades as evening sets in.

Saul tightens his jacket against the cold. He stops suddenly, eyes narrowing on a thin column of smoke rising in the distance.

HANNAH

Smoke.

SAUL

Let's just keep clear. Give it a wide berth.

They veer off the road, slipping between the hollow ruins of buildings. The maze of debris funnels them closer to the source of the smoke.

Rounding a crumbling wall, they freeze — a small campfire ahead, surrounded by weary survivors. A handful of tents dot the clearing.

A tall man with long dark hair — DAVID — spots them first. His smile is calm, almost too calm.

DAVID

Hello there! Didn't expect to see anyone else out here.

Hannah grips her knife. Saul forces a polite nod, his unease growing.

DAVID

No need to worry. We're just passing through, same as you. Name's David. You're welcome to join us by the fire — it's safe here.

SAUL

Didn't mean to intrude. We're just moving through.

DAVID

No intrusion at all. Safety in numbers, right? Been a while since we met good folks on the road.

The tone feels rehearsed. Saul's jaw tightens.

SAUL

We'll be on our way.

DAVID

No need to rush. It's safe here... and it's
not often you find that these days.

He steps closer. The others' eyes track Saul and Hannah. The
atmosphere turns cold.

DAVID

You might be underestimating your options.
Out here, we make the most of whatever...
or whoever we find.

SAUL

Run!

Saul grabs Hannah's arm. They sprint. Shouts follow – David's
group giving chase through the crumbling streets.

They break into the forest. Branches whip past. Breath ragged.
Heartbeats thunder. Finally, silence.

SAUL

You alright?

HANNAH

Yeah... but that was too close.

They rest against a tree, gasping. Saul looks over – Hannah's
leg is bleeding again.

SAUL

Your leg – it's bleeding.

HANNAH

It's nothing. Caught it on something
running through town.

SAUL

That's not nothing. It's infected. You
reopened it.

He kneels, examining the wound. It's deep. Not gushing, but
dangerous. He presses a strip of cloth against it.

SAUL

We need to stop the bleeding.

HANNAH

Not exactly like we've got a first aid kit,
Saul.

SAUL

We'll make do.

He ties the fabric firm. She winces but stays quiet. Saul pulls the tattered atlas from his pack, studying it under fading light.

SAUL

Next town's a few miles through these
woods.

HANNAH

A few miles?

SAUL

Only a few.

They move through the forest. Twilight deepens. Hannah limps, jaw set against pain. Saul stays close, steadying her when she falters.

SAUL

We're close now.

They crest a hill. A ruined town spreads below. Moonlight gleams off a building ahead: ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL.

SAUL

There. We'll find something there.

HANNAH

Think they left anything useful?

SAUL

If we're lucky. At least supplies.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The interior is worse than Saul expected—walls black with mold, floors scattered with debris, the sterile corridors long decayed. Broken glass crunches underfoot as they move deeper inside.

He guides HANNAH through the hall. She leans heavily on him, trembling from exhaustion. They reach a small doctor's office with a broken desk and scattered charts. Saul helps her down onto a pile of old blankets.

HANNAH

Be careful.

SAUL

I'll find something. Bandages,
medicine—anything.

She nods weakly, half-asleep. Saul leaves the room, disappearing into the darkness of the hospital. The place feels haunted—an echo of when the world could still be saved by doctors and orderlies.

He searches empty exam rooms. Rusted gurneys, overturned chairs, brittle paperwork—nothing useful. Until at last, a door at the end of the hall. A storage closet.

Inside, dust blankets every shelf. The smell of mold and antiseptic hangs heavy. But Saul spots sealed bandages, a half-full bottle of rubbing alcohol, and a small tin of antibiotic ointment. He grabs them all.

Returning, he finds Hannah pale and shaking. He kneels beside her, setting the supplies down carefully.

SAUL

This is going to hurt.

HANNAH

Just do it.

He presses the soaked cotton to her wound. She tenses, gasping as the alcohol burns. Saul works quickly—cleaning, applying

ointment, then wrapping the gash with gauze. When he finishes, he exhales shakily.

SAUL

It's not much, but it'll help.

HANNAH

Thank you, Saul.

Her breathing steadies as sleep overtakes her. Saul watches, guilt and fear pressing on him. Outside, rain taps the cracked windows—a hollow rhythm against the silence.

SAUL

I'm sorry. I should've protected you.

He leans back, eyes on the ceiling, haunted by memories—their long journey, the fires, the cold nights she had kept him from giving up. Now she's fading, her fever rising.

Rain falls harder. Hannah murmurs in her sleep, her breath uneven. Saul takes her hand, holding it tightly.

SAUL

I can't lose you. Not like this.

HANNAH

You won't... we've been through worse.

He stays awake through the night, watching her face in the dim light. When she stirs again, her eyes are clearer but tired.

HANNAH

You need to sleep.

SAUL

I'm not leaving you.

HANNAH

If you don't rest, you'll be no good to either of us.

He hesitates, then leans back against the wall beside her, still holding her hand.

SAUL

I'll rest... but I'm not letting go.

Their hands remain entwined as he drifts into a light sleep. Rain fades to a drizzle. The two of them lie side by side, holding onto the only light left to them—each other.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL - MORNING

Saul stirs from restless sleep. He sits up, rubbing his neck, and glances at HANNAH—still asleep, her breaths shallow but steady. The fever has broken, leaving her weak but alive.

Saul stands, wincing as his stiff muscles protest. The small doctor's office is dry but suffocatingly stale. He crosses to the cracked window and peers out.

The rain has stopped. Heavy clouds linger low over the gray horizon. He exhales, fogging the glass, lost in thought. They can't stay here much longer.

Hannah needs rest, but supplies are gone. Food—gone. Medicine—low. Every choice feels like a losing bet.

As he turns from the window, something catches his eye—a faint flicker in the mist outside. He squints. Through the haze, the world is dead and colorless. But there, faintly—green.

His heart quickens. On a distant hillside, a patch of color shimmers through the fog. Green—alive, real, or imagined. He blinks, but the vision fades.

He forces himself to turn away. Hope can be dangerous. He can't afford illusions. Not when Hannah still lies half-conscious on the floor.

He kneels beside her as her eyes flutter open. She blinks, disoriented, then focuses on him.

HANNAH

Saul?

SAUL

I'm here. How are you feeling?

HANNAH

Better, maybe. Did you find anything? Food?
Supplies?

Saul hesitates, the image of the green hill flashing in his mind before he shakes it away.

SAUL

No. Nothing left here.

HANNAH

We can't stay here much longer.

SAUL

I know. But if we move too soon, that leg
could kill you. You need rest.

Hannah meets his gaze, frustration clear. She's not used to waiting—never has been. But she finally relents.

HANNAH

Alright. One more day. But then we move.

SAUL

We'll leave soon. I promise.

HANNAH

We're out of food, Saul.

SAUL

I'll go find something. A few hours, that's
all. I'll come back.

HANNAH

Be careful.

SAUL

Always.

He slings his pack over his shoulder and steps into the hallway. The air is cold, damp. The hospital hums with quiet decay as he moves toward the exit.

At the door, Saul pauses—his eyes flicking once more to the horizon. The memory of green lingers, faint but insistent. A promise he doesn't dare believe.

He pushes outside into the dead world, leaving Hannah behind—safe for now, but alone.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Saul and Hannah push through the forest as shadows deepen around them. The night air is heavy and cold. Saul watches Hannah's face—tight with pain but determined. Her limp has nearly vanished, the infection finally behind her.

They've been moving since morning, their rations long gone. Saul stumbles, catching himself against a tree.

HANNAH

You alright?

SAUL

Just a little dizzy. Running on fumes.

HANNAH

Feels like we've been running on fumes for years.

Before Saul can respond, a sharp SNAP of a branch echoes through the forest. They freeze. Another sound—footsteps. Then, hands grab them from behind. Saul fights, but a gun presses against his skull.

VOICE (O.S.)

Stop struggling. We don't want to hurt you.

They're forced forward through the woods, bound and silent. Their captors move with purpose—organized, not wild. After what feels like hours, they emerge into a clearing.

A camp rises before them—walls of tin and wood enclosing dozens of makeshift shelters. Survivors move between tents, wary but alert.

PETER

You're not raiders. Raiders don't travel in twos. So... what are you?

SAUL

Just trying to survive. That's all.

EVELYN

I'm Evelyn. This is Peter. We don't take chances with strangers.

HANNAH

We're not here to cause trouble. We're just passing through.

Evelyn studies them, then nods to a guard. The ropes are cut. Saul rubs his wrists, watching her carefully.

PETER

Come sit. You both look like you could use a meal.

They sit by the fire as Peter ladles out steaming stew. Saul takes a bite—real meat. His eyes widen.

SAUL

What kind of meat is this?

EVELYN

Freeze-dried beef. Stockpiled before the fall.

SAUL

You were prepared for all this?

EVELYN

Some of us saw the signs. We did what we had to.

HANNAH

How have you kept it going this long?

PETER

Most of the stockpile's hidden underground. We bring back what we need each day.

Saul and Hannah exchange a look. A stockpile like that could make this place a target—or a trap.

SAUL

What happens when it runs out?

EVELYN

Then we adapt. Like we always have.

The group eats in silence. The fire flickers against faces worn by years of endurance. The camp feels safe—but only on the surface.

PETER

Just out of curiosity... have you ever... you know...

SAUL

Yeah. But never killed for it.

The silence that follows is heavy. Saul and Hannah exchange a quick glance—both remembering what they've had to do to survive.

Later, the camp quiets. Most have gone to sleep. Evelyn remains by the fire, her gaze sharp.

EVELYN

If you plan to stay, know this—we protect what's ours.

SAUL

We understand. We're just passing through.

Peter nods. They bed down near the fire but keep their distance. Saul whispers to Hannah.

SAUL

We're leaving at dawn.

HANNAH

Agreed. This place feels... unstable.

Morning breaks. As they pack quietly, Peter appears, watching with calm understanding.

PETER
Leaving so soon?

SAUL
Yeah. We're not the staying kind.

PETER
I get it. But remember—trust is rare. Don't
lose it completely.

Peter steps away, returning with their weapons. He hands them
back with a small smile.

PETER
Hope you don't mind we held onto these.

SAUL
No problem. Thanks.

Peter unlatches the gate. Saul and Hannah step out, the forest
before them bathed in pale light. They give one last nod
before disappearing into the trees.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

The sun climbs high as Saul and Hannah follow a narrow path
through the forest. Their steps are slow, their silence heavy
after leaving Evelyn's camp.

HANNAH
You think we're far enough from Evelyn's
camp yet?

SAUL
Maybe. But I've had a feeling for a while
now...

HANNAH
What kind of feeling?

SAUL

That we're being followed.

Hannah stiffens, hand moving to her knife.

HANNAH

How long?

SAUL

Since this morning. Could be someone from Evelyn's camp. Could be someone else.

HANNAH

You think it's her?

SAUL

Maybe. But we can't let them keep tracking us.

HANNAH

We set a trap. Figure out who it is.

SAUL

Exactly.

They slip off the trail, circling back to wait. Time drags. Saul grips his rifle tight as faint footsteps approach.

A figure emerges—BETH, the quiet woman from Evelyn's camp. She moves nervously, unaware she's being watched.

HANNAH

Beth!

Beth freezes, hand half-raised to her knife, then lowers it when she recognizes them.

SAUL

Why are you following us?

BETH

I wasn't... I mean, I didn't mean any harm. Evelyn sent me.

SAUL

Why?

BETH

She didn't want you to leave. She thinks you could help her... build something.

HANNAH

Build what?

BETH

A new society. Her vision of it, anyway. She sent me to bring you back.

HANNAH

And you came alone?

BETH

I volunteered. I thought maybe I could talk to you... not fight.

Saul studies her. She's scared—hands trembling, eyes darting—but not lying.

SAUL

You found us. What now?

BETH

I don't want to go back. I want to leave. Evelyn's not building safety—she's building control.

HANNAH

You want to come with us?

BETH

Please. I can help. I'll do whatever you need.

SAUL

No. It's too dangerous. We can't take that risk.

BETH

I swear I'm not like them!

HANNAH

It's not about you, Beth. It's about survival.

Beth's eyes well with tears. Her voice trembles as she whispers:

BETH
I understand.

SAUL
You're safer there for now. When the food runs out... be ready to leave.

HANNAH
Tell them you couldn't find us. Don't follow again.

BETH
Okay. I promise.

Beth turns and disappears into the trees. Silence follows. Hannah exhales, tension easing from her shoulders.

HANNAH
You think she'll be okay?

SAUL
I don't know. But we made the right choice. She's not built for this world.

They move on, but Saul's expression darkens. His words echo in the quiet forest. Deep down, he's not sure he believes them.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. BARREN RIDGE - DAY

The sky hangs low with heavy clouds, mirroring the exhaustion gripping Saul and Hannah. They move across a jagged ridge, the wind cutting at their faces. The terrain is merciless—stone, dust, and silence.

Saul's steps falter. Every movement is a battle. His vision blurs, his breathing shallow and uneven.

HANNAH

Saul! You doing okay?

SAUL

Yeah...

His voice is weak. Hannah glances back, concern etched on her face, but says nothing. They press on along a narrow ledge hugging the cliffside. The wind howls, tugging at their balance.

Then Saul's foot slips. Gravel shifts beneath him. His eyes widen as the ground disappears.

He tumbles down the ridge—rocks tearing at his skin, his body slamming against stone again and again until he hits the ravine floor with a bone-jarring thud.

HANNAH (O.S.)

SAUL!

He tries to call back, but can barely breathe. Blood fills his mouth. The world tilts and spins.

Moments later, Hannah scrambles down the slope, sliding and stumbling until she reaches him. She kneels beside him, eyes wide with fear.

HANNAH

Saul, can you hear me?

SAUL

I'm... alive.

He winces as she checks his ribs—each touch sending waves of pain through him.

HANNAH

You're hurt bad. We need shelter.

She spots a small cave nearby and helps him to his feet, his arm draped over her shoulder. They stagger toward the cave, every step a test of will.

Inside, Hannah lowers him gently to the ground. His breathing is shallow. She rummages through their packs, pulling out what

little remains of their medical supplies—bandages, antiseptic, a few painkillers.

She works quickly, cleaning and wrapping his wounds. Saul groans but doesn't resist. When she finishes, she sits back, shaking from exhaustion.

Her hand brushes against something in her pack—a ration pack. Then another. Confusion flashes across her face.

HANNAH

What...? These shouldn't be here.

She realizes what it means. Saul has been slipping his food into her bag—starving himself so she could eat.

HANNAH

Damn it, Saul... why didn't you tell me?

Her anger breaks into guilt. She kneels beside him, brushing his hair back from his forehead. His skin is pale, cold, but his heartbeat is still there.

HANNAH

You don't have to do this alone. We're in this together.

She settles beside him as night falls. The wind howls outside the cave, but inside, the air is still. Saul's breathing is faint but steady.

Hannah rests her head on his chest. His heartbeat is weak but rhythmic—enough to keep her anchored. Her eyes flutter closed as exhaustion overtakes her.

Outside, the storm rages on. Inside, two survivors cling to what little warmth they have left—their faith in each other.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. CAVE - MORNING

Pale light creeps into the cave. Outside, the wind is still.

Inside, the silence is thick. HANNAH sits with her knees to her chest, eyes fixed on SAUL, who lies motionless but breathing—barely.

She hasn't slept. The memory of his fall replays in her mind—the sound of his body hitting rock, the terror that she'd lost him. He's alive, but weak. Every shallow breath reminds her how close she came to losing him.

Her eyes fall on the ration packs beside her. She knows now what he did. The realization aches deep in her chest.

She looks at him—the man who's carried her through hell—and the truth hits harder than any storm. She loves him.

But love means nothing if they don't survive. She reaches for a ration pack, fingers trembling, determined not to let him starve again.

Saul stirs, grimacing in pain as his eyes flutter open. He squints against the light.

HANNAH

Hey. How are you feeling?

SAUL

Like I've been hit by a truck. But... hungry.

Hannah smiles faintly, handing him a ration pack. He takes it with shaking hands, forcing himself to eat small bites.

HANNAH

Saul... I know what you've been doing.

SAUL

What do you mean?

HANNAH

The rations. I found them in my bag. You've been giving me your food.

Saul hesitates, guilt flickering across his face. He looks down.

SAUL

You needed it more. You're stronger.

HANNAH

You didn't need to do that. We're supposed to be in this together.

SAUL

I know. But if something happened to you—

He trails off. Hannah stares at him, seeing the fear behind his eyes—the fear of losing her.

HANNAH

You don't have to protect me from everything, Saul. We protect each other.

Saul exhales slowly, head resting back against the wall.

SAUL

I don't even know if we're doing the right thing anymore. Maybe we're just running because we don't know what else to do.

HANNAH

We can't stop now. We've come too far. We've survived when we shouldn't have. That has to mean something.

SAUL

What if there's nothing out there? No sanctuary, no better life—just this?

HANNAH

Then we keep moving anyway. You were the one who heard the radio signal. You believed there was something more. I still believe that.

Saul's gaze softens as he looks at her. Doubt fades, replaced by a fragile glimmer of hope.

HANNAH

I'm not letting you give up. If we die, we die together—but not here. Not now.

Saul looks down at their intertwined hands. The silence between them hums with emotion. Then Hannah leans forward and

kisses him—soft, hesitant, full of everything they've never said.

For a moment, Saul doesn't move. Then he kisses her back. The world outside vanishes. The storm, the hunger, the fear—all gone.

SAUL
Hannah... I didn't know.

HANNAH
Neither did I. Not until now.

He looks at her with something new in his eyes—peace. Warmth. A promise.

SAUL
I couldn't lose you. I think I've felt this way for a long time.

HANNAH
Then don't. We'll keep fighting. We'll find something worth living for—together.

SAUL
Together.

They sit in silence, the morning light spilling across the cave floor, a faint warmth cutting through the cold. For the first time in a long time, it feels like hope.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. BARREN PATH - DAY

The path stretches before SAUL and HANNAH—narrow, uneven. Saul still limps slightly from his fall, but he moves with new strength. Hannah walks beside him, alert and watchful.

HANNAH
You're lucky nothing was broken. That fall could've been a lot worse.

SAUL

Yeah. When I hit the ground, I thought that was it. Guess I have you to thank for making sure it wasn't.

HANNAH

Don't mention it. Taking care of you was hard—but... nice, too. Just being there.

SAUL

Thanks, Hannah. I know I haven't been the easiest to look after.

HANNAH

We've both done our share of looking out for each other. That's why we're still here.

SAUL

Thinking back—it's strange how different everything feels now. Like it's not just about surviving anymore.

HANNAH

Yeah. It changed somewhere along the way.

They share a quiet look. The world feels lighter for a fleeting moment.

HANNAH

Come on. Let's keep moving.

SAUL

Right beside you.

Ahead, a lone FIGURE appears in the distance, walking toward them. Saul's hand tightens around his rifle.

HANNAH

Saul.

SAUL

I see him.

The man—LUKE—approaches with a casual wave. He's tall, rugged, armed but relaxed.

LUKE

Hey there! Didn't mean to startle you.

SAUL

Who are you?

LUKE

Name's Luke. I'm scouting for a settlement nearby. It's safe, fortified. We've got room for more.

HANNAH

A settlement? We haven't seen anything like that in months.

LUKE

It's hidden. Strong walls, real community. You two look like you've been on the road a long time.

SAUL

We're not interested. We've got our own direction.

LUKE

Fair enough. But at least meet Marcus—the leader. Hear him out. If it's not for you, walk away. No strings.

HANNAH

What's the catch?

LUKE

No catch. Just... options.

Saul glances at Hannah. They're tired, hungry, out of choices.

SAUL

Alright. We'll talk to Marcus. But that's it.

LUKE

Good. Follow me.

They follow Luke through the wilderness until the settlement

risers into view—massive walls of steel and wood, topped with barbed wire. Guards patrol the towers.

LUKE
Impressive, huh?

The gate creaks open. Inside, streets bustle with activity. People work in silence—repairing, hauling, scavenging.

Everything is organized. Too organized.

Luke leads them to a large building at the center. The air inside is clean. Too clean.

LUKE
Marcus will see you now.

MARCUS stands behind a desk—tall, composed, his clothes spotless. His calm smile feels practiced.

MARCUS
Welcome. I'm Marcus. I run this settlement.

SAUL
Luke said you've built a system here. A way to stay safe.

MARCUS
We have. Order and discipline. Everyone has a role. Scouts bring in supplies. We rebuild what's worth saving.

HANNAH
And the people you bring in? What happens to them?

MARCUS
They join, if they choose. The more hands we have, the stronger we become.

Saul doesn't like the way Marcus speaks—too clinical, too detached.

SAUL
We're not staying.

MARCUS

Ah, chasing the dream then? The safe haven?

SAUL

You've heard of it?

MARCUS

Many times. An island. A city underground.
A paradise no one ever finds. They're all
the same. My advice? Don't waste your lives
chasing ghosts.

HANNAH

So you don't believe it exists?

MARCUS

No. But I believe in what's real. This.
Structure. Survival.

SAUL

We'll take our chances.

MARCUS

So be it.

Marcus opens a cabinet, hands them a few cans of food.

MARCUS

For the road. Consider it goodwill. If the
world breaks you down, you know where to
find us.

They leave the office. Saul's gut twists. The place is too
quiet, too controlled.

Then he sees her—BETH. Her face in the crowd. Fear etched in
her eyes.

SAUL

Beth...

HANNAH

Is that—?

SAUL

Yeah. It's her.

Beth's gaze meets his. The terror in her expression says everything.

SAUL

We need to go. Now.

They walk fast toward the gate, leaving the settlement behind. The image of Beth's fearful eyes stays with Saul long after the gates close behind them.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

A small fire crackles weakly between SAUL and HANNAH. The silence is heavy, the air thick with unspoken thoughts. Saul stares into the flames, haunted by the image of BETH's terrified face.

HANNAH

You've been quiet. What's on your mind?

SAUL

Beth. Seeing her at that settlement... it doesn't make sense. Why is she there?

HANNAH

Maybe she left Evelyn's camp. Thought Marcus's place would be better.

SAUL

No. The way she looked at me—she was scared.

Hannah tosses a stick into the fire. Sparks rise and vanish into the darkness.

HANNAH

Maybe she is. You said Marcus's place felt wrong. But we've got enough problems. Do we really need to get involved?

SAUL

I can't just walk away, Hannah. Not when we know something's wrong. Beth doesn't deserve to be left there.

HANNAH

You want to go back.

SAUL

I do. I have to.

HANNAH

You can't go alone. If Marcus finds out—

SAUL

I'll be careful. I just need to talk to Beth. Figure out what's really going on.

HANNAH

Then I'm coming with you.

SAUL

No, you're not.

Hannah glares at him, stunned.

HANNAH

You can't seriously expect me to stay here while you walk into a trap!

SAUL

It's too dangerous. If something happens to both of us, we're finished. I need you safe.

HANNAH

I'm not a damsel, Saul. We've survived because we've stuck together!

SAUL

This isn't about that. If something goes wrong, I need to know you're waiting for me here.

Hannah's fists tighten, but her eyes soften.

HANNAH
Promise me you'll come back.

SAUL
I promise.

The fire burns low as the night drags on. Hannah lies down,
her back to Saul.

HANNAH
Just... be careful.

SAUL
I will.

EXT. ROAD TO SETTLEMENT - DAWN

Saul moves quickly through the pale morning light. The world
feels colder now. His mind is set—he's going back.

When he reaches the gate, LUKE stands guard with his rifle.

LUKE
Back already? Thought you two were heading
somewhere else.

SAUL
Wanted another look. Hannah's still on the
fence.

LUKE
Marcus'll like that. Go on in.

The gate creaks open. Inside, the settlement hums with eerie
precision—people move like machines, blank-faced and silent.
MARCUS appears before Saul can reach the main building, his
practiced smile in place.

MARCUS
Saul. Back so soon? Changed your mind about
joining us?

SAUL
Not yet. Just wanted to see how things work
before I talk to Hannah.

MARCUS

Take your time. We're always open to those who appreciate structure.

Saul nods, walking away as Marcus's eyes follow him like a predator's.

He searches quietly until he spots BETH near a statue, lost in thought. When he calls her name, she jumps.

BETH

Saul? What are you doing here?

SAUL

I had to talk to you. What's going on here?

BETH

You shouldn't have come back. It's not safe.

SAUL

Tell me. Why did you leave Evelyn's camp?

BETH

I thought this place was better. I was wrong. Marcus isn't what he seems. People disappear, Saul. He kills them.

SAUL

What?

BETH

If scouts fail, or people question him—he executes them. Then he uses their bodies to feed the settlement.

Saul goes pale, horror sinking in.

SAUL

You're saying they're eating—

BETH

Yes. That's how he keeps everyone alive. Fear and flesh.

SAUL

We need to get you out.

BETH

If he catches me, he'll kill me.

SAUL

Meet me here tonight. I'll bring Hannah.
We'll get you out.

BETH

Okay. Just... be careful.

Saul leaves quickly. As he reaches the gate, MARCUS waits, his smile razor-sharp.

MARCUS

Had time to look around? What do you think?

SAUL

Impressive. I think I'm in favor of
joining, but I need to talk to Hannah
first.

MARCUS

Of course. Take your time. The gate's
always open.

Saul nods and exits fast. His pace quickens once he's out of sight.

EXT. CAMP - EVENING

Saul returns to find HANNAH waiting, her face tight with worry.

HANNAH

What did you find out?

SAUL

Beth's in danger. Marcus is killing
people—feeding his settlement with their
bodies.

HANNAH

Oh, my God...

SAUL

We're getting Beth out tonight. Then we're gone.

HANNAH

I don't like this, but I'm with you. We leave tonight.

They share a look of grim determination as the last light fades. The fire dies, leaving only the sound of wind in the dark.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. MARCUS'S SETTLEMENT - NIGHT

The night cloaks SAUL and HANNAH as they move through the dark terrain. The cold air sharpens their senses. SAUL grips his knife—no rifle this time. Silence is their weapon.

SAUL

Stick to the plan. Wait for the guard switch—then we move.

HANNAH

Got it.

They crouch behind a row of rusted vehicles near the gate. Minutes drag into hours until—movement. The guards switch, backs turned.

SAUL

Now.

They move fast, silent. SAUL slips behind the first guard, knife flashing—one strike, clean and quiet. HANNAH mirrors him, dropping the second guard. They drag the bodies into shadow and slip inside.

Inside the settlement, silence reigns. The structures loom in the dim light, the air thick with tension.

SAUL

I'll go for Marcus. You find Beth by the statue.

HANNAH

Be careful.

SAUL

You too.

They split. SAUL moves through narrow alleys, steps soft but steady. His heartbeat pounds in his ears as he nears Marcus's quarters.

He pushes open the door—and freezes. MARCUS stands waiting. Beside him, BETH, pale and trembling, tears streaking her face.

BETH

Saul... I'm so sorry.

MARCUS chuckles, stepping forward with calm cruelty.

MARCUS

Ah, the hero returns. You should've been more careful, Saul. I saw you talking to Beth—plotting. It was only a matter of time before she told me everything.

BETH

I didn't want to! He said he'd kill me if I didn't. I had no choice!

MARCUS

You think you can come here and change anything? You're just another fool chasing hope in a dead world.

SAUL

It's over, Marcus.

MARCUS

Over? Without me, these people would devour each other. I give them purpose. I give them survival.

SAUL

You're not saving them—you're enslaving them.

BETH

Saul, please—

SAUL

It's okay, Beth. This ends tonight.

MARCUS lunges with a knife. SAUL dodges, the blade slicing the air. The two men crash into each other, grunting, struggling for control.

BETH

Saul, watch out!

Their knives clash. MARCUS's rage is wild, but SAUL's movements are precise, cold. Sweat and blood mix as they fight for survival.

MARCUS

You think you're different? You're just another corpse waiting to fall.

SAUL

Maybe. But not tonight.

With a surge of strength, SAUL twists his knife, driving it deep into MARCUS's chest. The man gasps, blood on his lips.

MARCUS

You think this changes anything? Fear never dies.

SAUL

Then I'll kill that too.

MARCUS collapses. Stillness. Only the sound of SAUL's breath remains.

BETH

I'm sorry, Saul. I never meant for this.

SAUL

You did what you had to. Now we get out.

HANNAH appears at the door, knife in hand. Her eyes move from MARCUS's body to SAUL, then BETH.

HANNAH
Are you both okay?

SAUL
It's over.

Outside, murmurs spread through the settlement. People emerge, confused, frightened. SAUL steps forward, voice loud over the growing noise.

SAUL
Marcus is dead! You're free!

The crowd stares, uncertain. A man steps forward, his voice trembling.

MAN
What do we do now?

SAUL
Whatever you have to. Leave, rebuild—just know he doesn't control you anymore.

A beat of silence. Then a single voice rises from the crowd—

VOICE
Thank you.

SAUL turns, leading HANNAH and BETH through the gate. The night air greets them, cool and vast.

HANNAH
They won't make it.

SAUL
Maybe not. But at least now—they're free.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

BETH sits closest to the fire, her knees drawn to her chest. The flames reflect in her eyes as though she's searching for something she'll never find. HANNAH and SAUL sit nearby—silent, distant, the weight of survival pressing heavy.

SAUL cleans his knife, each motion deliberate. Blood stains the steel, catching the firelight. His jaw tightens with every pass of the cloth. Killing Marcus had been necessary... but necessary doesn't mean easy.

HANNAH watches him quietly, sensing the burden he carries. The fire crackles softly between them.

BETH

Why did you come back for me?

Her voice isn't angry—just hollow, disbelieving. She doesn't look at them, only at the fire.

BETH

You didn't have to. You could've just left... I wouldn't have blamed you.

SAUL stops cleaning the knife. He exhales, glancing toward HANNAH before answering.

SAUL

When we left you at Evelyn's camp, I thought it was the right call. But afterward, I couldn't stop thinking about it. I knew we'd made a mistake. When I saw you again... that fear in your eyes... I couldn't walk away twice. Not again.

BETH wipes a tear, quickly hiding it. Her voice trembles.

BETH

I thought I was going to die there.

HANNAH

We weren't going to let that happen. We weren't just saving you, Beth—we were saving ourselves too.

BETH

Thank you. For coming back. For everything.

SAUL

You don't owe us anything. We're in this together now. We look out for each other.

BETH nods, but her eyes darken with unease.

BETH

What if the world doesn't get better? What if this is it? Just surviving until there's nothing left?

SAUL

I don't know. But we can't stop now. If we stop believing, we've already lost.

HANNAH

We keep moving forward. Together. Whatever comes, we face it side by side.

BETH

Together.

The fire crackles softly as exhaustion takes hold. BETH curls near the flames and drifts into sleep. HANNAH and SAUL remain awake, the forest silent around them.

HANNAH glances at SAUL, studying his face in the flickering light. He's distant again, his eyes haunted.

HANNAH

Saul.

SAUL

Yeah?

HANNAH

Come with me.

She takes his hand—warm, steady—and leads him from the firelight. They move quietly into the woods until the glow is only a faint shimmer behind them.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The moonlight cuts through the trees. HANNAH stops, turning to face him. Her breath trembles in the cold night air.

HANNAH

I need to tell you something.

She hesitates, then looks up, emotion breaking through the wall she's held for so long.

HANNAH

Saul... I love you.

SAUL freezes, the words hitting harder than any blow. He steps closer, his hand rising to her face.

SAUL

Hannah... I love you too.

Relief floods her expression. She leans in. Their lips meet—gentle at first, then deep, desperate, full of everything they've lost and everything they're still fighting for.

For a moment, the world outside disappears. No ruin. No fear. Just warmth, human and real.

They hold each other close as the night wraps around them—two souls still burning in a world gone cold.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. WASTELAND - DAY

The days stretch endlessly. The sun beats down, merciless and hot. SAUL, HANNAH, and BETH trudge through the rocky terrain—bodies worn, spirits thin. Every step feels heavier than the last.

BETH has gone quiet. Her face is pale and gaunt, her eyes vacant. The silence between them grows as heavy as the heat. Ahead, a jagged canyon cuts through the earth. Wind howls through it like a warning.

SAUL

We're getting close to the pass. It's not going to be easy—we'll need to climb.

HANNAH

We'll make it. We've done worse.

SAUL glances back. BETH's hands tremble as she grips her water bottle like a lifeline.

SAUL

Beth. We're almost there. Just stay close, okay?

BETH

I don't know if I can... it's too much. I can't breathe...

HANNAH

You can do this. Stay close—we'll help you.

BETH

What's the point? Why are we still going? There's nothing out there. We're chasing a dream that isn't real.

SAUL

We don't know that. We can't stop now. We've come too far.

BETH

I'm so tired. I'm so scared.

SAUL

It's not for nothing. We're still here. That's what matters.

They reach the base of the pass. The canyon rises before them, steep and cruel.

SAUL

It's steep, but we can make it if we're careful.

He climbs first, testing the rock. It holds. HANNAH follows—steady and strong. BETH hesitates, frozen at the

bottom.

BETH

I can't... I can't do it!

SAUL

You can. Focus on your hands and feet.
Don't think about the rest.

HANNAH

We're right here, Beth! You're not alone!

BETH takes a trembling breath and climbs. For a moment—hope. She's moving. Step by step. But halfway up, her foot slips.

BETH

I can't! I'm going to fall!

SAUL

You're not going to fall! Just hold on!

But her panic takes over. Her breath quickens. Her grip weakens.

HANNAH

Beth! Listen to me! You're almost there!

Her hands slip. Time slows. Her scream echoes through the canyon as she falls—hard. The sound of impact ricochets off the stone walls.

HANNAH

Beth!

HANNAH scrambles down, SAUL close behind. They reach her. BETH's body lies twisted among the rocks—lifeless, still.

HANNAH drops beside her, her hands trembling as she touches Beth's shoulder.

HANNAH

No... Beth, please...

SAUL kneels beside them. The light in his eyes fades as the reality settles. They hold each other in silence while the wind howls over Beth's body.

SAUL

We have to go. We can't stay here.

HANNAH wipes her tears, nodding weakly. They stand. One last look at Beth. Then they turn away.

There's no time for words, no time for graves. The wasteland takes her—like it's taken so many before.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

The world feels quieter now. SAUL and HANNAH move through the barren landscape, the memory of BETH's fall still haunting them. The silence presses down like a weight too heavy to shake.

Their movements are slow, tired. The heat bears down relentlessly. Their supplies are nearly gone—one can of peas and a few sips of water left between them.

HANNAH

We need to find food soon.

SAUL

I know.

He pulls the last can from his pack and offers it to her.

SAUL

Here. Take the rest.

HANNAH

No—we split it.

SAUL

You need it more than I do.

HANNAH

Saul... we split it.

They divide the meager portion and eat in silence. The peas are cold and flavorless, but it's food—and that's enough. As they walk, the horizon shimmers. A dark shape emerges in the distance—a structure, faint against the dying light.

SAUL

Look—there. You see it?

HANNAH

A cabin?

SAUL

Could be dangerous. Could be something else. We'll check it out.

The sun dips low as they approach. The cabin is small, weathered, its door half open and creaking softly in the wind. It looks abandoned—but looks can lie.

SAUL

Stay close.

He pushes the door open. The hinges groan. Inside—dust, decay, silence. It hasn't been lived in for years.

HANNAH

Looks empty.

SAUL

Check for food. Anything useful.

They search the cabin top to bottom—drawers, shelves, cupboards. Nothing. Just dust and time. SAUL's frustration shows in his clenched jaw.

HANNAH

There's nothing here.

SAUL paces, desperate. His boot hits something hollow. He freezes, crouching. Beneath a rug—one loose floorboard.

SAUL

Hannah. Come here.

He pulls back the rug, revealing a trapdoor. A narrow staircase descends into darkness.

HANNAH

A cellar?

SAUL flicks on his flashlight and descends. The beam cuts through the dark—and stops on rows of shelves. Stacked with cans. Dozens—no, hundreds.

SAUL

Hannah. You need to see this.

She joins him, eyes wide. The shelves gleam with cans—vegetables, fruit, soup. Food. Real food.

HANNAH

Oh my God... we found it.

For the first time in forever—they laugh. They cry. They eat. Warm soup, canned vegetables, real flavor. For one night, they're human again.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

The stars spread above them as they rest inside the cabin. The fire crackles. The smell of food lingers.

INT. CABIN - LATER

The bed is small, the blankets thin—but it's comfort. SAUL and HANNAH lie together, her head on his chest. Their breathing syncs—slow, steady.

SAUL

We're close to the coordinates. What we found here... it'll keep us going.

HANNAH

We're so close.

They drift into sleep—safe, fed, together. The firelight flickers softly across their faces. For now... peace.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. HILLSIDE - SUNSET

The sky burns orange and violet as SAUL and HANNAH approach the final stretch. The land grows rugged, marked with stone and shadow. Ahead, a steep hill rises against the fading light. The air hums with anticipation.

SAUL
Just over that hill.

HANNAH's breath quickens. The long journey has brought them here—one final climb.

HANNAH
Feels like it's taken forever.

SAUL
Too long.

He checks the worn map one last time—the coordinates etched into his memory. They climb. The hill is steep, the ground loose beneath their boots. Each step is harder than the last, but their hope pulls them upward.

HANNAH
Do you think it's there?

SAUL
It has to be.

They reach the crest side by side. The horizon opens before them—vast, endless. But there is nothing. No sanctuary. No safe haven. Just the same barren earth stretching into forever.

SAUL
This can't be right...

He checks the map again. The coordinates match. The truth crushes him like a wave.

SAUL
It's not here. It's not here...

His voice cracks. Desperation takes hold. He starts running—down the hill, across the plains.

HANNAH

Saul! Stop!

He doesn't stop. His boots pound the cracked ground. The horizon stays empty. Lifeless.

SAUL

It has to be here! It has to be!

His voice echoes, swallowed by the vast silence. He stumbles, falls to his knees, fists digging into the dirt. Tears carve lines through the dust on his face.

SAUL

Marcus was right... it was just a dream.

HANNAH catches up, falling beside him. She wraps her arms around him as he shakes with grief.

HANNAH

But what about the radio? You heard the voice.

SAUL

But you didn't. None of it was real. Hallucinations. False hope for starving survivors.

HANNAH

I don't believe that.

SAUL stares at the horizon—haunted. He remembers the hospital window, the field of green that wasn't there.

SAUL

It was never real. The field... the voice... all of it.

HANNAH

Even if it was a dream... we can't give up. Not on each other.

She wipes a tear from his face. He meets her eyes, broken but

still breathing.

HANNAH

I love you, Saul. Don't give up on me.
Don't give up on yourself.

He takes a trembling breath, nodding. Together they stand—two silhouettes against a dying sun. They walk again, slower now, but still forward.

EXT. TREE LINE - DUSK

A weathered shack appears in the distance, half-hidden in shadow. Shelter.

SAUL

Looks like a hunting shack.

They enter—one room, sparse and still. A bed. A table. Quiet peace.

SAUL

We can stay here awhile. We've got enough
to last.

They collapse onto the bed, exhausted. HANNAH rests her head on his chest. The world outside fades to silence. For a while, they just breathe.

SAUL

All this time... we thought we'd find
something to save us.

HANNAH

Maybe we did.

He looks down at her. The truth sinks in. The haven was never a place—it was each other.

SAUL

If I hadn't found you... I wouldn't have
made it.

HANNAH

Neither would I.

SAUL

We found it, Hannah. The safe haven... it was us.

She kisses his hand, tears glinting in her eyes. They hold each other close as night swallows the world outside.

HANNAH

We'll be okay.

The wind sighs softly outside the shack. Inside, their breathing slows. The world remains broken—but for the first time, they're at peace.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HUNTING SHACK - MORNING

A week passes in silence. SAUL and HANNAH have found rhythm within the stillness. The world outside remains gray and lifeless, but inside the shack, there's warmth and routine. Small rituals that make life bearable.

Mornings arrive with muted light and quiet air. Evenings fade to the glow of a fire. SAUL studies the old map sometimes, not as a guide, but as a memory of their journey. HANNAH tidies, gathers kindling, and keeps order in their fragile peace.

EXT. HUNTING SHACK - DAWN

On the seventh morning, SAUL steps outside as the first light creeps over the horizon. The land lies still, endless and pale beneath a pink-tinged sky.

He breathes deeply, letting the calm settle through him. Then—something moves on the horizon.

SAUL

(softly)

What the hell...

He grabs a pair of old binoculars hanging by the door—dusty relics from whoever lived here before. Raising them, he peers into the distance.

Through the lens—a flicker of motion near the dead treeline. A living creature, gliding through the field.

SAUL

Hannah! Wake up! You need to see this!

INT. SHACK - CONTINUOUS

HANNAH stirs, half-asleep. SAUL pulls her toward the door, excitement lighting his face for the first time in months.

HANNAH

Saul, what's going on?

SAUL

Just look. Out there. Past the field.

EXT. FIELD - DAWN

They stand together, the air cold and sharp. SAUL hands her the binoculars and points.

HANNAH

There's nothing—

She adjusts the focus. Her breath catches. A deer grazes near the trees. Its body is lean but strong, its coat glimmering faintly in the morning light.

HANNAH

(whispers)

It's real... Saul, it's real.

SAUL

It's alive.

The deer lifts its head, ears twitching. It gazes toward them briefly, then turns and slips back into the woods.

The silence that follows feels different—warmer, alive with the echo of what they just witnessed.

HANNAH

I never thought I'd see something like that again.

SAUL

Maybe life's been hiding. Waiting for its
chance to come back.

They share a small, stunned smile. For the first time in a
long time, hope feels tangible.

INT. SHACK - LATER

They sit by the fire, quiet but changed. The moment lingers
between them like an unspoken truth—life endures.

SAUL

That deer... it means something.

HANNAH

Yeah. It means we're not alone.

They sit together in the quiet warmth, hands clasped. Outside,
the first signs of wind ripple across the field. The world,
broken as it is, feels alive again.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. CABIN - LATE AFTERNOON

A year has passed since SAUL and HANNAH saw the first signs of
life. They've moved on from the shack, deep into the woods.
The cabin they found is remote, hidden—a quiet sanctuary far
from the plains.

The air is cool and still. The sun hangs low, bathing the
clearing in gold. HANNAH kneels in the dirt, hands deep in the
soil as she tends to a small, struggling garden. Most plants
are weak, but a few—just a few—show signs of life.

She leans back, wiping sweat from her brow. The faint rustle
of the forest surrounds her. It smells alive again—earthy,
damp, fresh.

For a moment, she pauses, lost in the quiet. Then her gaze
drifts toward the trees, thinking of SAUL. He's been gone
since morning, hunting as he does most days.

Their life has become simple—hunt, gather, tend, survive. And somehow, that simplicity has become peace.

A faint sound breaks the silence—a rhythmic noise from the distance.

HANNAH stands, wiping her hands on her pants. Her eyes search the treeline. Her breath catches. SAUL emerges from the forest, dragging a deer behind him.

It's the largest animal he's caught since they've been here. The deer's sleek body glints in the dying sunlight. Blood marks the fur, but it's life—proof of life. HANNAH's eyes widen, relief flooding her face.

SAUL
(smiling, breathless)
We're eating good tonight.

HANNAH crosses the clearing, closing the distance between them.

She throws her arms around him and kisses him. His arms wrap around her, steady and strong.

When they part, they hold each other for a beat, the golden light catching in their eyes. There's pride, exhaustion—and something deeper. Understanding.

HANNAH
(softly)
You did it.

SAUL
We did it.

They stand in the clearing, the forest humming softly around them. The garden, the deer, the faint breeze—small signs that the world isn't dead after all. The whispers of silence that once haunted them have faded. In their place—whispers of hope.

FADE OUT.

END OF PART I