

REAL GONE
(Draft 5)

by
Kris Krainock

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TITLE CARD SUPERIMPOSED ON BLACK:

"How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?" - Proverbs 1:22

EXT. RIVERBED - DAY

The BOOTS of an unidentified PERSON are shown from their prone perspective at the bow of a hand-carved canoe.

The canoe drifts down the river surrounded by wild, dead branches. It passes an old wooden sign posted on the side of the riverbank. The sign reads: "YOU ARE NOW ENTERING REAL GONE" in sloppy white paint.

EXT. OLD WEST TOWN - DAY

An old western town bustles with life. TOWNSPEOPLE go in and out of various SHOPS down the main stretch of town, which consists of a long dirt road. On one end of town, the road leads to a vast, dense forest known as "Real Gone."

The SALOON is boisterous with noise and is crowded by gunslingers, cowboys, prostitutes, gamesmen and the like.

INT. SALOON - DAY

While the saloon continues its various acts of debauchery, the focus becomes a card game in the rear of the barroom.

Multiple unnamed OUTLAWS sit around the table while one MYSTERIOUS MAN sits at the helm, dressed in black and shrouded in darkness. The tension is thick as the Outlaws gleam at each other uncomfortably. The Mysterious Man shows his cards and wins the hand.

The Outlaws unanimously grumble. The MAIN OUTLAW, sitting directly across from the Mysterious Man, stares a long, focused stare toward him, fuming with anger.

The other Outlaws begrudgingly push their money forward, but the Main Outlaw resists, continuing his deathly stare. The Mysterious Man's robust voice suddenly comes out of the darkness.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
(to Main Outlaw)
My money, sir...

MAIN OUTLAW

I won't pay. I've been cheated.

Tension filled pause. The Mysterious Man strikes a match and lights a CIGARETTE. It briefly illuminates the bottom portion of his face.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(after exhaling smoke)

How?

MAIN OUTLAW

I don't know, but I have been... If you want this money, you're gonna have to fight for it...

The Mysterious Man nonchalantly cocks the hammers of his pistols with his thumbs beneath the table.

We hear "clicks" from all around the table -- the other outlaws also cocking their firearms.

The Mysterious Man takes a long drag from his cigarette. It burns nearly to his lips. He exhales and blows the smoke directly into the face of the main outlaw. The tension is unbearable as everyone sits poised, ready to draw.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Okay.

The Mysterious Man suddenly and heroically draws both his pistols from their holsters. The Outlaws follow suit, knocking their chairs to the ground.

The Mysterious Man opens fire, killing the Main Outlaw.

A shoot-out now erupts with everyone firing toward the Mysterious Man. He flips up the poker table, shielding himself from the gunfire. He runs through the saloon, miraculously dodging a barrage of gunfire.

An assortment of PATRONS/PROSTITUTES are gunned down as the Mysterious Man passes them and exits the saloon, bursting through the swaying doors.

EXT. OLD WEST TOWN MAIN DRAG - DAY

The shoot-out pours into the dirt street. Townsfolk take cover behind barrels and horse troughs. The carnage continues as the Mysterious Man thoughtlessly kills a slew of Outlaws.

While the Mysterious Man stands unshielded in the center of the road, firing his five-bullet chamber an endless amount of times, a sudden and abrupt SHOTGUN BLAST is fired by an unseen assailant.

The blast strikes the Mysterious Man's back, fatally wounding him. His face reads a slight comedic tenor of confusion and disbelief before he falls to his death.

The gunman is revealed to be an old BARBER standing in his doorway. He then nonchalantly lowers his weapon, reenters his shop and resumes shaving the face of a CUSTOMER.

The entire town then resumes in normalcy. The hustle-bustle returns as the townspeople come out from behind cover.

TWO MEN drag the corpse of the Mysterious Man to the side of the road.

A young man (20s), dressed in a flannel-print suit and bowler hat, stands beside a CART sparsely decorated with a few peculiar items. This is YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE. He peers through squinted eyes, watching the shoot-out's aftermath.

EXT. OUTSIDE SALOON - NIGHT

Young Sullivan Lorre emphatically speaks to an OLDER GENTLEMAN.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
 You should have seen this feller!
 He was twenty feet tall! He had
 eyes peerin' out the back of his
 head! Men were droppin' like flies.
 It was a bloodbath!

OLDER GENTLEMAN
 You're full of shit, Lorre.

Lorre raises his right hand in the air.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
 God's honest truth.

A SALOON PATRON exits the saloon and stops at Lorre's cart, looking over the items. He picks up a BIBLE. Lorre takes notice, donning a "salesmen" tone in his voice.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 (to Saloon Patron)
 Another soul looking for the Lord's
 good news?

SALOON PATRON

Why yes I am! A good one to ya!

The Saloon Patron tucks the bible beneath his arm and begins to walk away. Lorre stops him.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE

Fifty cents, please.

Lorre grins a big, phony smile. The Patron puts the Bible down and walks off, disgruntled. Lorre redirects his attention to the Older Gentlemen.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)

(to Older Gentlemen)

So what was I sayin'?

The Older Gentlemen doesn't respond. He looks past Lorre, seeing something in the distance.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

Bill's come back.

Lorre turns and looks for himself.

EXT. OLD WEST TOWN - NIGHT

YOUNG WILLIAM NEWTON "BILL" CHILDS (30s) rides through town, surrounded by his posse -- other MEN on horseback. People crowd around them, cheerful for Bill's return.

Young Bill rides to the Saloon, dismounts his horse and begins tying the animal to a POST. Lorre approaches him.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE

The prodigal son returns... I thought you wadn't comin' back at all this time.

YOUNG BILL

I always come back, Sullivan. You know that. (short pause) I miss anythin' while I was gone?

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE

Oh, Bill, you shoulda seen it! There was this feller today. Might'a been the Angel of Death himself.

YOUNG BILL

Where'd he come from?

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
Rumor has it...from Real Gone...

Lorre points towards Real Gone. It looks dark, twisted and insidious.

YOUNG BILL
Now I know you're talkin' bull. No one goes in and no one comes out.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
That's what I'm tryin' to tell ya, Bill...This man, he was sumthin' else... Started a ruckus, killed pert near a hundred men. He seemed to just walk through the rounds, untouchable...Sheriff had to cut his head clean off before he'd quit.

Young Bill laughs to himself.

YOUNG BILL
Is that right?

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
(comically bashful)
Well...maybe I exaggerated one or two details, but he come from Real Gone. That part's cold fact. I swear on my mother's grave.

YOUNG BILL
Your mother ain't dead, Sullivan.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
No, but it can be arranged.

Sullivan lets out a crooked smile.

YOUNG BILL
Speakin' of, how's my mother? You check in on her like I asked?

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
Of course. She's still the meanest woman I've ever met.

YOUNG BILL
And Annabelle?

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
Right as rain. I tell ya, she's a spitfire that sister of yours.

(MORE)

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 She's gonna grow up to be a proper
 young lady.

YOUNG BILL
 And I'm going to make sure of it by
 keeping her away from you.

Sullivan laughs.

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
 So, how'd it go?

YOUNG BILL
 Well, I'm alive and I'm a few
 dollars richer...

YOUNG SULLIVAN LORRE
 Yeah, but you won't be after you go
 in there.

Lorre motions toward the Saloon.

YOUNG BILL
 Hey, I go to God for my judgin'.
 You I keep around for the news.

EXT. OLD WEST TOWN - NIGHT

The town is quiet. Young Bill stumbles down the road
 extremely intoxicated. He nearly falls, but catches himself.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bill's OLD MOTHER stands in the crack of her daughter,
 ANNABELLE CHILD'S bedroom door as Annabelle lies beneath her
 blankets in bed.

OLD MOTHER
 Good night, Annabelle.

ANNABELLE
 Good night, mama.

The Mother exits, closing the door behind her.

EXT. OUTSIDE BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Bill struggles to enter his house, still fumbling from
 intoxication.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annabelle's window lets the cool breeze flutter the curtains. Suddenly, the face of a mangy COWBOY appears out of the darkness. He looks inside and sees Annabelle asleep. He then quietly climbs into the room.

He proceeds to slip into her bed beside her. Annabelle's eyes snap open. She attempts to scream, but the Cowboy muffles her mouth with his hand.

He begins to undo his BELT BUCKLE. Annabelle squirms and fights, eventually shoving the Cowboy's arm hard enough to free her mouth and scream.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Young Bill hears the scream of his sister. He looks toward the sound, fear and anger in his eyes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Cowboy removes a KNIFE and holds it up to Annabelle's face. A moment passes before Bill abruptly kicks the door open, GUN in hand.

COWBOY
(to Bill)
I thought you was out.

Bill begins to fire wildly toward the Cowboy. It's not shown where the rounds land. One strikes the Cowboy in the leg. Bill's gun is empty, but he keeps pressing the trigger, the gun *clicking*, saliva foaming from his mouth.

The Cowboy falls out of the bed, moaning in pain. Bill then notices Annabelle's body is motionless. She is shot through the chest.

Bill freezes, his heartbreak evident on his face. He stumbles backward, slamming his back against the bedroom wall, sliding to the floor.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A YOUNG FRANK CHILDS, Bill's younger brother, holds his mother in his arms as she wails uncontrollably.

Bill continues to sit on the floor, his back against the wall, a glazed-over look in his eyes.

A YOUNG SHERIFF ARCHIBALD CLEAVER stands over the body of the Cowboy. He then bends down and talks to Bill, whose eyes are in a stagnant, fixed position.

YOUNG SHERIFF CLEAVER

(softly, remorseful)

Now what kinda justice would it be if I hauled you off in chains? Wouldn't do neither of us any good... You know they'll hang ya for this, you being full of drink... What am I gonna do, take two of her children away? ...You didn't mean to do it. Hell, I know that... I don't know what the world's gone come to when a Ma and Pa can't leave their windas open no more... Best I can figure, either we let ourselves get changed by it, or we try and snuff it out best we can...

Sheriff Cleaver gets to his feet, removes the REVOLVER from his holster, holds it over the Cowboy's head and fires into him.

EXT. OUTDOOR BURIAL GROUND - DAY

A wooden COFFIN sits in a six-foot-deep hole in the ground. A YOUNG PREACHER CALVIN ALDOUS helms the funeral service attended by various well-dressed people. Bill's Mother is there, as are Frank Childs, Sheriff Cleaver and Sullivan Lorre. Bill is nowhere to be found.

YOUNG PREACHER ALDOUS

We commit Annabelle Childs, a sweet thing, not yet twelve, to the ground in the hope that she will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us not forget how quickly our loved-ones can be taken from us and for reasons we may never be able to fathom. Annabelle Rose, daughter of Edward and Beatrix, sister to William and Francis, may your soul find peace and may your death serve as a reminder that we must live well, devoid of sin, for we never know when God will call us home... And it's home we want to go.

EXT. OLD WEST TOWN - DAY

Sullivan Lorre exits the funeral, walking toward the main drag of town. He takes notice of Young Bill standing at the edge of Real Gone.

SULLIVAN LORRE
(calling out)
Bill!

Bill does not acknowledge Sullivan's holler. Sullivan continues to study him, his face one of concern and sadness.

Real Gone looks daunting and hauntingly sinister as Bill stares into it. Tears run down Bill's face. Eventually he trudges forward into Real Gone, disappearing into the trees. Sullivan's eyes linger after him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OLD WEST TOWN - DAY

Sullivan's eyes fade from young to old. He stares out toward Real Gone. His once empty cart is now fully packed with weird trinkets and items for sale.

Another SALOON PATRON (2) exits the saloon and studies Sullivan's cart with his eyes. He picks up a BIBLE and begins to depart. Sullivan stops him and smiles a toothy smile.

SULLIVAN LORRE
One dollar, please.

EXT. OUTSIDE BOY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sullivan pulls his cart of eclectic items down the road. He comes across a young BOY playing outside of his house, pretending a STICK is a sword.

When the boy sees Sullivan, he quickly stops playing and pretends to be fiddling in the dirt.

SULLIVAN LORRE
(to Boy)
What do ya got there?

BOY
(hesitantly)
A stick...

SULLIVAN LORRE
It didn't look like no stick a
minute ago.

BOY
(bashfully)
I was pretendin' it was a sword.

SULLIVAN LORRE
Ah, was it Excalibur?

The Boy's face reads confusion.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
The sword that belong to King
Arthur...

The Boy still looks lost.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
When the king was a boy, not much
older than you, there was a sword
lodged in a stone that no man could
get free no matter how hard they
tugged. The biggest and strongest
men tried yanking, but it wouldn't
budge. Then one day, Arthur came
along and with ease removed the
sword from the stone, making
himself king... Your father never
told you that story?

The Boy shakes his head "no."

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
Well, he ought to.

BOY
Is it true?

SULLIVAN LORRE
(matter-of-factly)
Of course it's true.

Short pause.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
Hey, if you're tired of playing
with swords, maybe I can interest
you in something with a little more
firepower...

Sullivan suddenly draws a realistic TOY GUN on the Boy who is
startled.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 (imitating the gun)
 Bang!

Sullivan sees that the Boy is frightened. He pauses for a moment and then lets out a raspy laugh.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 (finishing his laugh)
 Don't be afraid, boy, this ain't likely to do you much harm. It's just a toy. The first of its kind. Traded for it with a feller over in Leadville a while back.

Short pause. Sullivan looks at the Boy earnestly.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 You ever fire a gun?

BOY
 No.

SULLIVAN LORRE
 Good. Aim to keep it that way.

Awkward pause. Sullivan shivers and pulls his jacket closed, indicating he's cold.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 Say, why don't we make a deal? You seem like a sportin' man. Whaddya say I trade you somethin' from my cart in exchange for a few minutes by your fire and some of that meal the lady inside's cookin'?

BOY
 (uncomfortably)
 I don't know...

Sullivan gets up and goes to his cart.

SULLIVAN LORRE
 Look, I've got lots of stuff on here, stuff I've got from swapping all around. Have a look...

Sullivan reveals a small wand and whips it through the air. Bubbles emerge and float to the ground, popping on impact.

The Boy looks unimpressed.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
I know. How about these?

Sullivan throws a "NOISEMAKER" (firework popper) to the ground and it pops with a tiny bang noise.

The Boy's face reads desire, but he catches himself.

BOY
My pa warned me never to trade with you.

SULLIVAN LORRE
Who Frank? ...And did he every tell you why he doesn't want you tradin' with me? Because Frank's a sore loser, that's why. He asked a favor of me. I held up my end of the bargain. He should have been more careful 'bout what he wished for...(long pause) You know, I was real tight with your pa... a long time ago. Your uncle Billy, too. You know about him?

BOY
Just the stories floatin' around.

SULLIVAN LORRE
Ah, no one around here knows how to spin a yarn... but the point being, I'm a friend. You can trust me, boy.

The Boy looks down at his feet.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
(serious tone)
I was there when your mama died...Sad affair...'n I hope you don't go blaming yourself. God works in mysterious ways. Sometime one person gotta go out in order for another to come in is all. A fair trade if ya care to see it that way.

Sullivan chuckles to himself rhetorically.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
You know, I probably know more about your family than you do...
(MORE)

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
(serious shift in tone) With these two eyes I watched your Uncle Bill vanish into Real Gone like-a shadow gettin' vaporized at noon, maybe the last person to ever see 'em alive. 'Course, people started to talk. Gossip grows like mushrooms when people are bored... but I knew the truth...he banished himself...

BOY

For what?

Sullivan looks at the boy with hesitant eyes.

SULLIVAN LORRE

Believe it or not, I know when to shut up.

BOY

What about Real Gone? Did he know what was out there?

SULLIVAN LORRE

No one really knows what's out there, but he had heard the stories same as me. No man had entered Real Gone ever to return. Some say it's just so damned big that people lose their way. Others say the savage Injuns scalp you for soup bowls. Some even say that the Devil himself lives there, that Real Gone is where the stained souls of earth go to sulk... You know Revelations?

BOY

No.

SULLIVAN LORRE

Yeah, well, I think Bill thought Real Gone's where all your worst deeds were punished, where nightmares fled out... Like I say, when he left, all sorts of ideas came about explainin' what had happened to 'em. The old timers thought him dead...

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - NIGHT

The terrifying trees of Real Gone are dark and ominous.

SULLIVAN LORRE (V.O.)
 ...but some among us thought that
 he made it, that in a way he became
 apart of them woods and that he's
 out there to this day...

EXT. OUTSIDE BOY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Boy is playing with the noisemakers, throwing one to the ground. It pops against the hard dirt.

BOY
 (to Sullivan)
 I think he made it. I think he's
 out there.

Sullivan smiles and pats the boy on the head.

SULLIVAN LORRE
 Let's go inside and get something
 to eat.

INT. BOY'S DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

Sullivan sits at the Boy's dinner table alone.

INT. KITCHENETTE - NIGHT

The Boy and his sister MARTHA are together in the kitchenette, far enough away from Sullivan to whisper about him.

Martha is a sixteen-year-old girl who carries herself strongly. She has forceful eyes and a pensive face.

MARTHA
 I don't like that you brought him
 here. Do you know how angry daddy
 would be if he knew?

BOY
 He won't know. He's out drinkin'.
 He never comes home until the
 middle of the night.

MARTHA
 Still. I don't trust this man. You
 don't know who he is. He's not a
 nice man...

INT. BOY'S DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

Sullivan suspiciously looks toward the direction of the whispers. He then slowly gets up from his chair and begins snooping around, opening drawers, etc.

He opens one drawer and finds a large stash of paper MONEY. His eyes widen. He then closes the drawer and returns to his seat at the dinner table.

INT. KITCHENETTE - NIGHT

The Boy looks toward Martha with a frustrated face.

BOY
He knew mama.

MARTHA
That don't matter none. He's not to be trusted. He goes around town, commiseratin' with the wrong folk, selling that junk he totes around with 'em wherever he goes.

BOY
Well, he's here now!

Martha looks toward Sullivan and huffs.

MARTHA
(angrily)
Go! I'll bring out the food.

The Boy exits.

INT. BOY'S DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

The Boy joins Sullivan at the table.

SULLIVAN LORRE
(to the boy)
It sure does smell good.

Short pause.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
(in a low voice to Boy)
Is that your kin in there or has Frank kidnapped another farm girl?

BOY
That's my sister, Martha.

SULLIVAN LORRE
She don't say hello?

BOY
She don't mean nothing by it.
That's just her way. Everyone's
always real understandin' and
saying how she had to grow up fast
'n all since my mama died.

Sullivan smiles a devilish grin.

SULLIVAN LORRE
Maybe this will cheer her up.

Sullivan removes a small item wrapped in a dirty cloth and places it on the table.

Martha brings a POT of stew and places it on the table. As she leans over, she sees the mysterious item.

MARTHA
(in reference to the item)
What is God's name is that?

Sullivan unwraps the item revealing it to be a small MONKEY SKULL.

Martha lets out a humorous snicker.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Is that...*a monkey?*

SULLIVAN LORRE
It is!

The Boy smiles.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
I traded for it with one of the
Chinamen just in from California.
They brought all kinds of good
stuff a man like me would be
interested in. But this especially
caught my eye.

Sullivan leans in close to the boy and whispers to him.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
(whispering to boy)
They say it's an important part of
some mystical ritual of theirs...

The Boy is transfixed by the skull. He runs his finger over its boney exterior. Sullivan scarfs down his food.

Martha stares at Sullivan, suspicion and dislike in her eyes.

MARTHA

Well, that's a very interesting story, Mister--

SULLIVAN LORRE

(cutting her off)

Oh, how rude of me. Name's Sullivan Lorre.

MARTHA

I know who you are, Mr. Lorre.

SULLIVAN LORRE

(surprised)

Oh?

MARTHA

Yes. And please excuse me if this sounds inhospitable, but I don't like that you're in our home.

Sullivan is taken aback by Martha's abruptness.

SULLIVAN LORRE

Excuse me, I--

MARTHA

(cutting him off)

You took advantage of my brother after he told you our daddy don't want either of us associatin' with you.

SULLIVAN LORRE

I just wanted to get something to eat.

MARTHA

Well, it looks as though you've gotten what you wanted.

SULLIVAN LORRE

May I ask what it is I've done to offend you?

MARTHA

It's not what you've done, Mr. Lorre, it's that man you associate with... This Crowley hearin' about.

Sullivan makes a face of understanding.

BOY
Who's Crowley?

MARTHA
He's a monster.

SULLIVAN LORRE
More of an abomination...

Martha looks toward Sullivan in surprise.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
He's a very sick man, Ms. Childs.
When a man like that rides into
town, a man like me must make
himself useful or he's liable to
end up dead.

Martha gestures uncomfortably as Sullivan eerily studies her
with his eyes.

BOY
What makes him so bad?

SULLIVAN LORRE
His nature, boy. (Long pause) He
came to town a while back after he
buried his sister. You see, the two
of them carried on in no way a
brother and sister should... He got
word of a train carryin' gold and
set out to rob it, leaving without
knowing he'd planted something in
his own sister's belly...

The Boy and Martha listen intently. Tension builds.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
It should have been a simple job,
one week ride to meet the train, a
few days on the lam, a week ride
back... but when they got there,
there wadn't any gold to be heard
of... (building intensity) Crowley
went mad, started firin' both his
pistols into the passenger car...
Women was screamin', coverin' up
their small ones, dyin' on top of
'em. His own man fired a round into
his leg just to stop it. They let
out, leaving him there bleedin',
prayin' he'd die.

(MORE)

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)

But somehow he patched himself up and got away... It wadn't till seven months passed and he had tracked down and killed every single one of his former *associates* that he made it back home to his sister... her belly big, a bastard child kickin' inside of it... Rumor is, when he saw her he nearly broke down in tears. Being a God-fearin' man, they couldn't do *that*, they couldn't bring *that* into the world. A soul with that burden was destined for Hell...so, he took out his huntin' knife and cut the baby from her stomach--

MARTHA

(angry, frightened)
That's enough!

The Boy's face is bewildered. Martha is visibly upset, her eyes glassy. She stares forcefully at Sullivan.

SULLIVAN LORRE

There ain't no more to tell...

He looks down at his empty bowl.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)

And no more stew to eat... So I guess I'll be on my way.

He gets up from the table, gathers his things, walks to the door and turns before exiting.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)

(to boy)
See you around, Boy.

He exits.

MARTHA

(loudly at Boy)
Don't you ever let that man into our home again!

BOY

Yes, Martha.

The Boy walks to the window and watches Sullivan haul his cart into the darkness. He then looks toward Real Gone.

BOY (CONT'D)
 (to Martha)
 How come Uncle Bill went into Real
 Gone?

MARTHA
 (composing herself)
 He didn't. You know what happened.

BOY
 But people say he's out there.

MARTHA
 Did that man plant that inside your
 head? Don't you believe it. Don't
 you believe a word of what he said!
 Uncle Billy is dead. He died long
 time ago. Now go to bed.

BOY
 Yes, Martha.

The Boy exits.

Tears surface at Martha's eyes, then roll down her cheeks.

EXT. OUTSIDE BROTHEL - NIGHT

Sullivan pulls his cart to a BROTHEL. He parks his cart
 beside the building, removing an unidentified item and
 stuffing it into his jacket pocket. He then enters the
 brothel.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sullivan approaches a door. He knocks.

EZRA CROWLEY (O.C.)
 (muffled)
 Come in...

Sullivan enters and finds a PROSTITUTE in bed looking well
 loved and EZRA CROWLEY in a chair beside the window, looking
 out of it, his face obscured.

SULLIVAN LORRE
 (to Prostitute)
 Don't you look fine...

Crowley continues to look out the window.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 (to Crowley)
 Ezra...I've got it.

Crowley doesn't respond.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 Whatch'a lookin' at out there?

EZRA CROWLEY
 The stars... How'd they get up
 there? ...And who put 'em there?

SULLIVAN LORRE
 You know who put 'em there. Now
 come on.

Sullivan reveals his item to be a small corked BOTTLE
 containing laudanum.

Crowley's right hand shakes uncontrollably. Sullivan takes
 notice.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 All right now. Drink up.

Sullivan gives Crowley the bottle. Crowley fires it down his
 throat.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 There. That should help.

EZRA CROWLEY
 You sure? I can't feel it no more.

SULLIVAN LORRE
 You gotta make do. There's nuthin'
 else 'n this stuff ain't easy to
 come by.

Crowley's eyes become glassy. They roll into the back of his
 head, his full face never revealed.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
 I've got some news I don't think
 you'd mind hearin', Ezra. I've just
 come from Frank Childs' place...And
 there's nothin' inside of it 'cept
 a pretty little girl... a boy
 between hay and grass... and a big
 pile of money with no one's name on
 it...

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Boy lies in bed asleep. His body convulses and he lets out unconscious groans indicating he's having a nightmare.

A loud NOISE comes from outside the Boy's bedroom window and he awakes suddenly from his nightmare. He cautiously gets out of bed and tip-toes to his window. Outside the window, on the street, is Crowley's long SHADOW. The shadow looks gigantic as it stretches nearly the entire road. Suddenly the shadow disappears.

The Boy lets out a quiet gasp of fright. He scurries to his bedroom door and quietly opens it. He sets one foot into the hallway, but the noise of Crowley entering the house is heard.

The Boy looks toward Martha's door and makes a concerned face, one of helplessness. He then creeps back inside his bedroom. Paralyzed in fear, he backs into the furthest corner and stands perfectly still.

Crowley's footsteps are heard outside the room getting louder as he gets closer.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crowley's walking toward the Boy's room. He gets right outside of it, quietly bringing his boot down onto a noisemaker left behind on the floor. A loud POP noise occurs.

INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Boy is startled by the sound of the noisemaker. A half a second later Crowley bursts into the room, nearly taking the door off its hinges. He grabs the boy and drags him into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Crowley holds the boy in one hand, a BAG containing money in the other.

Martha's door swings open and she enters the hallway.

MARTHA

What's all the commotion--

She sees Crowley and makes a face of terror.

BOY

No!

Crowley then rushes Martha and forces her into her room.

INT. MARTHA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Crowley is overpowering Martha, pushing her onto her bed. She fights with all her might, crying and wailing.

MARTHA

(to Crowley)

Please mister! Leave us alone! We didn't do nothin'! Please! Oh, God! Please!

Crowley belts Martha across the face and proceeds to undo his belt. The Boy charges Crowley but Crowley knocks him to the floor.

Crowley and Martha struggle a moment longer before FRANK CHILDS abruptly bursts into the room.

BOY

Pa!

Frank is holding a pistol and begins firing. He is drunk and misses Crowley by inches.

Crowley draws his weapon and fires one bullet toward Frank, missing and striking the wall behind him. The second shot hits Frank in the forehead, killing him.

Martha is screaming. Crowley reaches for a pillow and drags it over her face. The Boy gets up and runs out of the room. Crowley proceeds to fire his gun into the pillow, killing Martha.

EXT. OUTSIDE BOY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Boy, shoe-less, runs out of the house and takes off toward Real Gone. Crowley then emerges from the house and begins chasing after him on foot.

The Boy eventually reaches the rim of Real Gone and stops. He's out of breath and panting. He looks behind him and sees Crowley getting closer. He then, after a moment of hesitation, takes off into Real Gone, disappearing into the darkness.

Crowley reaches the rim of Real Gone a moment later. He stops and looks into the woods, squinting so as to see the Boy.

The trees loom and after a moment of contemplation, Crowley shouts.

EZRA CROWLEY
 (yelling into the woods)
 You've done my work for me, boy!
 You're dead!

Crowley stands for a moment longer, then departs.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - NIGHT

The Boy wanders aimlessly through Real Gone, crying heavily. Suddenly, there's a noise in the woods. He freezes and peers deeper into the trees, terrified. He begins to hyperventilate and blacks out, falling to the ground.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

PREACHER CALVIN ALDOUS stands before a crowded chapel. Crowley is among the people.

Preacher Aldous is a fanatic, using a "fire and brimstone" approach to his sermon, which he belts out accusingly to his constituency.

PREACHER ALDOUS
 (to crowd)
 We claim to live righteous lives,
 but do we? Do we not covet our
 neighbor's goods...our neighbor's
 wives? Do we not submit to
 temptation? We cannot afford to
 lose sight for a single, solitary
 moment, because our enemy is out
 there... As sure as the sun will
 rise, He's out there. What does
 Peter say? "Be sober-minded; be
 watchful. Your adversary the devil
 prowls around like a roaring lion,
 seeking someone to devour." But
 it's not always as clear as that.
 Sometimes he comes as a friend. A
 smile or look... I say he's already
 inside you! And we have to drive
 him out!

Preacher Aldous and Crowley lock eyes for a moment.

PREACHER ALDOUS (CONT'D)
 You are all sufferers of this
 disease, the disease of sin!
 (MORE)

PREACHER ALDOUS (CONT'D)

I can smell it coming off you and it turns my stomach... You may purify yourself by falling to the ground before the Lord our God and begging His forgiveness. And if you are one of God's chosen children, you will find the forgiveness in which you seek...or you can continue your parade of sin and be purified in Hell. We rectified will look down upon you in pity and in shame. One way or another...you will be purified...

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

The chapel is empty. Crowley remains seated in his spot surrounded by empty pews. Preacher Aldous emerges from the back.

PREACHER ALDOUS

(to Crowley)

There's talk of a particular bit of nastiness that occurred last night. Have you come to confess?

EZRA CROWLEY

I was feelin' good. No storm in my head.

PREACHER ALDOUS

But...

There is a long pause. Crowley seems emotionally disturbed.

EZRA CROWLEY

I killed a girl and her father. It was Frank Childs.

Preacher Aldous is undaunted by this.

PREACHER ALDOUS

Old Frank never was the sharpest spoon in the China cabinet. That's no trouble... What about his boy? They say he's gone missing. Don't tell me you let him get away.

EZRA CROWLEY

He wadn't there. He didn't see nuthin'.

PREACHER ALDOUS

So what's unsettling you? It ain't the law, they know you're one of my flock, 'n the killing certainly doesn't weigh heavily...

Crowley makes a face of genuine concern. He looks Preacher Aldous directly in the eye.

EZRA CROWLEY

It's gettin' worse, so as I can't control it. I can feel it bubblin' up, pushin' my thoughts out so alls I can see is red...

Tension filled pause. Aldous stares at Crowley with a judgemental gleam.

PREACHER ALDOUS

I've grown certain now, there is a demon inside of you, Ezra. He comes out in these ugly ways. I spoke of it in my sermon. We are all subjects of prey to Satan. We must find a way to exercise this dark force and the Lord God is the remedy. He is the only antidote...Purity is what we need! We're not as pure as we once were when we *inherited* this land. Now we're a cesspool of overlapping ideas. We're stirring our blood, sharing it with these outsiders. We got Chinamen coming in by the trainload. We've got these savages trying to get along with white men while their brethren are shooting us full of arrows every chance they get. God made us different for a reason and we're pleasing the Devil by consorting. No good can come of it, Ezra. Mark my words... No good can come of it.

EXT. OUTSIDE CHAPEL - DAY

Crowley exits the chapel, standing still and surveying the town. He looks down at his hand and notices it's beginning to tremble.

EXT. BROTHEL ROOM - DAY

Crowley bursts into his room. There is the Prostitute inside.

EZRA CROWLEY
Get out of here!

PROSTITUTE
What's the matter, baby?

EZRA CROWLEY
I said, get outta here!

She scoffs and storms out, slamming the door behind her.

Crowley's hand is shaking intensely now. His face is flushed, his eyes bloodshot. He looks at himself in the mirror. His breathing becomes heavy. Suddenly he lets out a painful groan. His limbs contort as he appears to be in extreme pain.

He then removes one of his pistols. He looks at it for a moment before cocking it and sticking it in his mouth. His finger slowly presses down on the trigger. The hammer clicks, but the gun jams. Crowley's eyes bulge. He throws the gun to the floor and breathes a sigh of disappointment and relief.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - DAY

The Boy's perspective shows an Indian looking down at him with a puzzled expression. This is ANTIMAN (An-tee-mawn).

ANTIMAN
(to himself)
What an ugly thing... (to Boy)
What's your name?

The Boy softly groans.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)
(under his breath,
disgruntled)
Stupid fucking whiteman.

The Boy falls unconscious again.

INT. TEEPEE - NIGHT

The Boy awakens inside a TEEPEE, a small fire roaring and Antiman seated beside it.

ANTIMAN
Ah, the Boy stirs.

Antiman's speaking startles the boy.

BOY
(timid)
You're not going to hurt me, are
ya?

Antiman rolls his eyes in annoyance. The Boy then looks down at his feet and finds them covered he dried blood. He reaches down and removes a THORN from the bottom of his foot, wincing in pain.

ANTIMAN
You must be pretty stupid to come
out here with no shoes. You must be
pretty stupid to come out here at
all.

BOY
I didn't have much choice. I was
running away.

ANTIMAN
Running away from what?

BOY
A man. He was lookin' to do me
harm.

ANTIMAN
Seems you're a burden on everyone
you meet.

Short pause. The Boy becomes serious.

BOY
He killt my sister and my Pa.

Antiman changes his attitude and shows sympathy in his eyes.

ANTIMAN
Who was this man?

BOY
His name is Ezra Crowley.

ANTIMAN
I do not know this name...

BOY
He would'a killt me too, hadn't I-a
run.

ANTIMAN
 (rhetorically)
 A squirrel knows when to scavenge
 and when to scurry...

Antiman gets to his feet and motions like he's about to exit the teepee, turning to the boy.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)
 You may stay here tonight, but that is all. Tomorrow I will bring you back through the trees as far as white men's eyes can not see. Your kind bring bad luck to my people.

Antiman turns to exit.

BOY
 (calling after Antiman)
 Then why did you bring me here?

Antiman stops, turns toward boy.

ANTIMAN
 It's not my way to let a boy die.

BOY
 Then help me.

ANTIMAN
 (laughing to himself)
 Is that not what I am doing?

BOY
 There's a man in these woods. A white man. A great warrior. He came here many years ago. They say he cannot be killed. That he is Real Gone. I need to find him.

Antiman makes a face contorted in thought.

ANTIMAN
 There is a man here. He used to be called Bill.

BOY
 Yes! That's him. Bill Childs.

ANTIMAN
 He no longer goes by that name and he is not as you say...

BOY
It must be him.

ANTIMAN
Nada is the only whiteman among
these trees.

BOY
Nada?

ANTIMAN
That's what we call him. He bothers
nothing, he believes in nothing, he
is nothing... Just an old man.

BOY
I don't believe you.

ANTIMAN
You don't have to believe me. He's
only a day's ride from here... You
can see for yourself...

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - DAY

Antiman walks beside his horse while the Boy rides atop it.
There is a moment of silence between the two of them.

BOY
Thank you.

ANTIMAN
For what?

BOY
Saving me and taking me to Bill.

ANTIMAN
This isn't only for you... The wise
buffalo knows when he is not
wanted.

There is an awkward comic beat.

BOY
Huh?

Antiman glances at the Boy.

ANTIMAN

...I am not well-liked among my own tribesmen for befriending the whiteman you seek. They think I want to be like your kind because I learned to use your words... Nada is the one who taught me to speak like the whiteman.

BOY

Is "Nada" Indian?

ANTIMAN

(small chuckle to himself)

No. That name was told to me by a Mexican man who liked to drink and sing songs. I met him on my travels Westward to the great waters where all rivers lead. He spoke of the crimes the whiteman had committed against his people. He said 'they had left them with nada' ...and in this we were the same.

The Boy is uncomfortable. There is an awkward pause.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

Nada is the first whiteman I've ever known who offered me something other than heartache and death. That's something my people don't understand...

Antiman stops walking and looks toward the Boy.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

I want to help you, because we are both outsiders, you see... and because whiteman or not, you are a brave boy... (long pause) You remind me of my own son.

BOY

Where's he?

Dramatic pause.

ANTIMAN

(matter-of-factly)

He's dead now.

EXT. REAL GONE - DAY

Antiman kneels in brush and stares a focused stare toward a RABBIT. The Rabbit nibbles on a leaf. The Boy curiously watches Antiman.

BOY
What are ya...

Antiman quickly quiets the boy with a "shh!"

ANTIMAN
(in a whisper)
You'll scare him away.

BOY
(whispering)
What are you going to do?

ANTIMAN
(whispering)
I'm going to surprise it, catch it
and snap its neck.

The Boy's eyes crinkle in sadness. He looks around on the ground and locates a medium sized ROCK. He begins moving toward the Rabbit, much to the dismay and surprise of Antiman.

BOY
(to Rabbit)
Here bunny bunny...

The Rabbit continues to chew its leaf.

BOY (CONT'D)
That's it...

Suddenly the Boy throws the rock toward the Rabbit, misses it and the Rabbit scurries off.

Antiman gets to his feet.

ANTIMAN
That was our dinner.

BOY
I'm sorry. I thought I could--

ANTIMAN
(interrupting the Boy)
You thought you could kill it with
kindness... Nature does not respond
to kindness, only brutality.
(MORE)

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

You have to be harder than your opponent. You have to be willing to do what they won't...*No matter how ugly you become in the process...*

BOY

Even a rabbit?

ANTIMAN

Especially a rabbit. See how fast it ran off? I'd been tracking it for an hour.

Long, awkward pause. Antiman notices the Boy staring at him.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

Something on your mind, Boy?

Pause.

BOY

What really happened to your son?

Antiman takes an emotional pause.

ANTIMAN

What do you think happened?

BOY

I think a whiteman killt him.

Antiman nods to signify the Boy is correct.

BOY (CONT'D)

Then I still don't understand. Why are you helping me? You say we're the same, that we're both outsiders, but we're nothin' alike. If an Injun had killt my pa, I wouldn't go help no Injun. I'd hate 'em. No Injun done anything to me and I'm still told to hate 'em.

Thoughtful pause.

ANTIMAN

I did hate the man who killed my son. I didn't know I could feel such hatred. But then I remembered my beliefs, which can get muddled in the face of hate... To have such a small view of yourself is dangerous, it leads to doing things you'll regret.

(MORE)

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

If not now, then soon. You have to always try and see yourself for what you are... insignificant... a small piece in a much larger reality. It is my belief that we are all one, connected in a way we don't quite understand. That no one's pain is unique to them and to think so is being small minded... And when you realize this, that in a different time, this man who took everything from me... we could have been friends, or one in the same, or never existed at all...I realized that blood was on my hands. That in this sense it was I who killed my son. When you come to understand this, there is nothing left but forgiveness.

The Boy is confused and emotionally frustrated.

BOY

No. That ain't right. You didn't kill your son. How could you have? That sounds like a coward talking. To Hell with what you say.

Antiman looks at the Boy with knowing eyes and gestures that he accepts the Boy's opinion.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - NIGHT

Antiman sits by a campfire. The Boy is over by a small stream. He's staring at his reflection in the water.

BOY

(to Antiman)

You ever think about your skeleton?

ANTIMAN

My skeleton?

BOY

Yeah, sometime I think about how its in there beneath my skin 'n all. (stretching the skin on his face) It's in there right now, and one day that'll be the only thing left of me...(thoughtful pause) Martha will be one soon...and Pa.

Short pause. Antiman studies the Boy as he walks back toward the camp fire.

ANTIMAN
Are you afraid to die?

The Boy ponders.

BOY
No more than the next person, I
'spose.

ANTIMAN
You shouldn't be.

BOY
How's that?

ANTIMAN
Because you should be dead, and the spirits saw fit to spare you... This man that was after you, you bested him... You are a friend of death. You walk beside it.. How most men are afraid of death, it seems death is afraid of you.

The Boy's eyes are wide. There is a short pause.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)
We believe that the sun is the provider of life. It warms our backs, it grows our food and like good children to our mother, we pay it respect... For the souls that pass on, we place their bodies in a canoe and let the river carry them out to sea... But for our greatest warriors, there is a blessing that forever provides reprieve from death. Once this blessing is spoken they cannot be wounded of spirit and when their soul finally seeks rest, they become the trees of this wood, growing eternally toward the heavens.

Antiman looks up. The trees stretch high into the sky. The Boy follows Antiman and looks up, his eyes full of wonder.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)
We should sleep now.

Antiman turns over and immediately falls asleep. Comically, the Boy is puzzled.

BOY
Okay, well-- Antiman? ...Antiman?

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - NIGHT

The Boy sleeps soundly on the ground. He twitches indicating a bad dream. Antiman, done-up in full Indian War paint then suddenly wakes the Boy. He stands over him.

BOY
(sleepy)
Antiman, what are ya--

Antiman gets the Boy to his feet and begins to spread make-up on the Boy's face, creating a ghoulish/skeletal Indian war design. He stares deeply into his eyes.

ANTIMAN
(authoritative)
From this day forward, you wear your skeleton above your flesh. Death is no longer of your concern. Now, your only enemy is yourself... And that is enough to undo any man... Use your immortality not as a means to destroy, but to create, for it is not dying that diminishes the man, it is the fear of dying that kills him long before he becomes one with the earth... When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life in such a way that if you are ever to meet your end, the world will cry and you will rejoice! ...You are about embark on a long, treacherous journey. On this journey you will lose yourself, find yourself, regain what was lost, and lose what is most precious. You will meet three fools, faith in all its corruptions, pass through them to truly know the wise man. Are you ready?

The Boy nods a determined, powerful nod.

EXT. OUTSIDE HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Crowley holds a LANTERN as he sneaks around the outside of an unidentified building. He looks over both shoulders and then enters.

INT. HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Crowley blows out his lantern making moonlight the only lighting source. He silently makes his way in front of a HOLDING CELL, then stands quietly and watches a sleeping MONTGOMERY BOOT, who's locked inside.

Montgomery Boot is a visibly insane man with long, straggly hair, an unkept facial mustache and beard, watery, wide, bloodshot eyes and a tattered sleep shirt.

Suddenly Boot breaks the silence.

MONTGOMERY BOOT
(to the darkness)
Who's there?

Crowley doesn't respond.

MONTGOMERY BOOT (CONT'D)
I can hear ya...moving around in
the dark...

Boot suddenly gets up from his bed and walks to the bars, sticking his face through them.

MONTGOMERY BOOT (CONT'D)
I can smell ya, too... You smell
like dried blood and... (sniffs)
horse shit.

Boot lets out a frightening cackle. Crowley steps forward into the moonlight. They can see each other.

EZRA CROWLEY
It don't matter my name.

MONTGOMERY BOOT
A man don't offer his name,
suggests he's hidin' somethin'...
Me? I've got nuthin' to hide.
Montgomery Boot. What do I owe the
pleasure, Stranger?

Boot cackles again.

EZRA CROWLEY

I heard about what happened to you.
You went off your head, drowned
your wife in the river.

Boot winces at Crowley's words.

MONTGOMERY BOOT

She was always hollerin'. I just--
I just wanted some quiet for a
while. I don't think there's
anythin' too crazy about that.

EZRA CROWLEY

They say the only reason you didn't
hang 'cause you're real good
friends with Sheriff Cleaver. Used
to run with the great Bill Childs
way back when...Word is, when you
gone nuts, Cleaver saved your life
and locked you up out here instead.

MONTGOMERY BOOT

Yeah, but what has he done for me
lately? (chuckles)

Ezra looks down and sees BOTTLES lined up outside of Boot's
holding cell. One of the bottles is pushed a little further
forward than the others.

Crowley's hand weakly trembles. Crowley then carefully slides
the bottle in line with the others with the tip of his boot.
The glass bottle scrapes across the hard floor. Boot's eyes
follow the bottle.

The tension is building.

MONTGOMERY BOOT (CONT'D)

Say, what is it you want outta me?

EZRA CROWLEY

They say you're possessed by the
Devil. It's why they gotta keep you
locked-up outside'a town. Like an
animal.

MONTGOMERY BOOT

They say a'lotta things, don't
they?

EZRA CROWLEY

So it's not true?

MONTGOMERY BOOT

Do you really think this place could keep the Devil locked-up? This is just a cell and I'm just a man... They're right about one thing, though.

EZRA CROWLEY

What's that?

MONTGOMERY BOOT

I'm-I'm sick... Same as you.

EZRA CROWLEY

What do you mean?

MONTGOMERY BOOT

You're like me. That's why you come here tonight, isn't it? Wanted a look at your future.

Boot chuckles. Crowley stares forward, listening intently.

MONTGOMERY BOOT (CONT'D)

They say it's the Devil, 'cause they don't-don't understand it... But it ain't that easy...it's sumthin' much worse...

Boot begins to become upset, his eyes water and tears run down his face. His body contorts, crinkling into a ball, his face is pained and twisted.

MONTGOMERY BOOT (CONT'D)

It's like there's something loose inside my head...an-and I can feel it movin' around in there. I-I think it's a snake... I hear voices and they're all talkin' at the same time, shoutin' for me to do things... Voices of my children. I can hear 'em cryin'. And that's the worst part...it's me. I can't explain it and no one will listen, but I know I'm the one doin' this... Ain't no gospel mill gonna clense what I done. Only the bone orchard for me...but I'm too scared, ya see?... I need help... I need you to help me, 'cause you understand. Please. Please help me...

There is a long pause. Silent tears run down Boot's face.

MONTGOMERY BOOT (CONT'D)

I don't believe in the Devil, but
don't let him get me.

Crowley and Boot's eyes meet. Crowley's concern face relaxes into one of cold indifference. The sound of Crowley's knife unsheathing is heard.

EXT. OUTSIDE NADA'S CABIN - DAY

Antiman and the Boy approach a CABIN on horseback. When they get close enough they demount the horse. The Boy, now carrying a new confidence in his step, trudges forward.

ANTIMAN

(calling out to him)

Stop!

The Boy freezes.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

Don't move.

Antiman approaches, looks around on the ground, picks up a stick and drops it into a BEAR TRAP in front of the Boy.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

Don't lose your wits about you.
Immortality is one thing, a bear
trap is another...

The sound of an old wooden door opening is heard.

Nada emerges from the house.

NADA

Who's out there?!

The Boy looks at Nada. Nada looks half-mad, weatherbeaten, old and disgruntled.

ANTIMAN

(to Nada)

It's Antiman.

NADA

Who's that you've got with ya?

ANTIMAN

A boy. He's traveled a long way to
see you.

Nada pauses, disturbed by this. His eyes read confusion and distrust. He studies the Boy for a moment.

NADA
(to Antiman, angrily)
A word. Now!

ANTIMAN
(to Boy)
Stay here.

Antiman walks to Nada. They both enter Nada's cabin.

INT. NADA'S CABIN - DAY

Nada closes the door behind him.

NADA
What in the hell do you think
you're doing bringing that boy
here?! Who is he?

ANTIMAN
He needed to find you. Has good
cause and you've been alone so
long, I didn't see the harm in
showing him the way.

NADA
Well, it's done plenty of harm! And
what's he done up as, some kinda
ghost?

ANTIMAN
I thought you didn't believe in
ghosts.

NADA
But I believe you'd paint him up
like one.

ANTIMAN
This boy's brushed shoulders with
death more times than any boy
should. I blessed him, told him not
to fear death any longer. It was
just some nonsense to calm his
heart.

NADA
You can't tell a boy those things!
It's not nonsense to him.

Nada looks out his window and sees the Boy dropping a stick into another hidden bear trap.

NADA (CONT'D)
What does he want?

ANTIMAN
That's for him to tell you. He's not to return with me.

NADA
Well, you can't leave him here! I'm not going to look after him.

ANTIMAN
You have no choice. I had to hide him, sneak him out just to bring him to you. It wouldn't be the first time I brought home an unwelcome whiteman.

Antiman and Nada share glances.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)
...He's wiser than you might think.

NADA
He's just a boy. How wise could he be?

Nada looks out the window again. He then turns to say something to Antiman, but he's vanished.

EXT. OUTSIDE NADA'S CABIN

Antiman walks back toward the Boy.

ANTIMAN
I have fulfilled my obligation. I have brought you to him. It is time for me to go...but before I do, I want you to have this.

Antiman removes his HEADDRESS and sets it on the Boy's head. It's much too large and the Boy's head disappears inside of it. The Boy tilts the headdress back so he can see.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)
You are brave beyond your years.

BOY
Thank you, Antiman.

Antiman smiles at the Boy.

ANTIMAN

Ah, yes, and I can't forget this.

Antiman removes a small POUCH and hands it to the Boy.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

If he ever gets too worked-up, put some of this in his drink.

BOY

What is it?

ANTIMAN

The weasel who talks too much is known to his fellows as a fool.

The Boy looks confused.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

Or something like that...

Antiman smirks and mounts his horse.

Nada comes out of his cabin and looks intently at Antiman.

ANTIMAN (CONT'D)

(to Nada)

Nada! ...The more you see, the less you see.

Antiman turns and rides into Real Gone.

INT. NADA'S CABIN - DAY

Nada pushes the Boy into his cabin, grumbling around in anger.

BOY

(to Nada)

What was it he said to you just then?

NADA

It was a riddle. It's sort of a game we play.

BOY

What's the answer?

NADA

I don't know. I have to think about it. That's the point.

The Boy looks embarrassed. There is an awkward pause. The Boy turns around and surveys the room. There are old Victorian WORLD MAPS on the walls, BOOKS sprawled open, a CHESS SET and a VIOLIN lying on a DESK beside a recently extinguished CIGAR. His eyes finally settle on a large BOOK SHELF packed with big, old leather-bound books.

BOY

You read all these books?

NADA

Yes.

BOY

Do you know the story of King Arthur and Excalibur?

Nada is surprised.

NADA

...Yes, I do... Do you know how to read?

BOY

No. My Pa never 'teached' me.

NADA

"Taught." He never *taught* you...

Awkward pause.

NADA (CONT'D)

Well, he should. When you get back to him.

BOY

He can't. He's dead.

Nada's forehead crinkles. There is a moment of silence.

BOY (CONT'D)

That's why I'm here. You knew him.

NADA

How's that?

BOY

He was your brother.

Nada is thrown off guard by this news.

BOY (CONT'D)

A man came in and killt him and my
sister Martha. He killt 'em both.

Nada composes himself, swallows hard.

NADA

What's that got to do with me?

The Boy looks at Nada with focused, serious eyes.

BOY

He was your brother 'n my pa!

NADA

(cold)

He was my brother. He's not
anymore. Now, like I say, what's
this got to do with me?

The Boy collects himself.

BOY

(matter-of-factly)

All right then. I want you to come
back to town with me and hunt the
man who done it... I'd offer you
sumthin' in return, but I ain't got
nuthin' to swap.

There is a tension filled pause.

NADA

Are you out of your mind? I'm no
bounty hunter. Who do you think I
am?

BOY

I'll be honest, I wasn't expectin'
for you to be as old as you are.

NADA

How could you be expecting
anything? ...What have you heard
about me?

BOY

There's all sortsa talk. They all
say somethin' different.

NADA

Who's 'they?'

BOY
The town. I had heard things
growing up...

Awkward pause.

BOY (CONT'D)
I know you come out to Real Gone
for sumthin' ya done. Sumthin' you
real ashamed of.

Nada gets furious. He gets in the Boy's face.

NADA
Who's telling you these things?!

Tears fill Nada's eyes, but linger in his lids.

BOY
So he wadn't lyin'.

NADA
Lying about what?! And who?!

BOY
Sullivan Lorre. The man with the
cart. He said you come out here
lookin' to die.

There is a tension filled pause as Nada's eyes are glazed
over in emotional thought.

Nada backs away and sits in a chair. He slumps down,
extinguishing his anger. His demeanor is melancholy.

NADA
What else he say?

BOY
That you'd be here. Still in these
woods after all these years. The
myths were true! You went into Real
Gone lookin' to die, but you
survived! The only man that ever
did! You're unable to be killt!

NADA
(angry again)
Enough! This is absurd! I won't
hear another word of it!
...Tomorrow I'm putting you on a
horse and sending you home...

BOY
 (upset, emphatically)
 But Crowley's still there! You
 gotta come back 'n help me--

NADA
 I said that's enough!

Nada takes a short pause, exhales and composes himself.

NADA (CONT'D)
 I don't know what kind of
 foolishness has been put in that
 head of yours, but I'm not what you
 think... You're going to leave
 tomorrow morning and you're not
 going to breathe a word of what
 you've seen. I'm not here. I'm
 dead. You understand?

The Boy fights back tears.

BOY
 I thought you was an odd stick the
 moment I set eyes on ya. I was
 hopin' it was a sign, 'cause I'm an
 odd stick, too... You ain't dead.
 You just forgot is all... Martha
 always told me a good man don't
 flaunt his grace, but if we don't
 flaunt it some there's no way of
 tellin' who's good and who's bad...

Nada studies the Boy with his eyes.

INT. BEDROOM IN NADA'S CABIN - NIGHT

The Boy is asleep on a PALLET on the floor, clutching his
 headdress and holding it close to his chest.

INT. NADA'S CABIN - NIGHT

Nada sits by the fire in a rocking chair. He slowly rocks,
 his eyes disconcerted in thought. He looks at his arm and
 rubs an old SCAR running vertically from his wrist to the
 middle of his forearm.

The fire reflects in Nada's eyes as they become focused.

INT. NADA'S CABIN - NIGHT

Nada bursts into the room where the Boy is sleeping. Nada's entrance wakes the Boy, who looks at Nada through one open eye.

NADA

(to Boy)

I'll do it. I'll go back with you.

BOY

You'll help me find 'em? You'll help me kill Crowley?

NADA

(hesitantly)

I'll help you... Now get up and get a move on before I change my mind.

EXT. OUTSIDE NADA'S CABIN - DAY

The Boy sits up on Nada's HORSE as Nada packs items on the animal's rear. Nada lays big fur COATS over the horse, made from bear hide. He secures his violin and corresponding bow, then sticks two large BOOKS into a SACHEL.

Briefly, Nada's arm scars can be seen beneath his sleeve. Nada sees the Boy notice them and then quickly covers them.

BOY

(in reference to books)

Whatchu bringin' those along for?

NADA

Because I like to read them.

BOY

What are they, who-doneums?

NADA

Poetry.

BOY

Poetry? Ain't that for girls?

NADA

A phrase to suit your size, boy.

Short pause. Nada rolls his eyes.

NADA (CONT'D)
"Intend a zealous pilgrimage to
thee, and keep my drooping eyelids
wide open, looking on darkness
which the blind do see..."

Nada mounts the horse, the Boy behind him.

NADA (CONT'D)
Shakespeare.

BOY
Shakespeare?

NADA
Yes. He was a playwright. You never
heard of Shakespeare?

BOY
No.

NADA
You've been done an injustice.

Nada kicks the sides of his horse and it begins trotting.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - DAY

Nada and the Boy ride through the woods.

BOY
Where'd you get them books?

NADA
I found them.

BOY
Where?

Nada hesitates.

NADA
You were right about one thing... I
came into these woods looking to
die, 'n thought I had found what I
was looking for...I could feel the
forces of evil bearing down on me,
but then... nothing happened. To my
surprise, the trees were trees and
the soot beneath my feet, just
soot...

BOY
Whaddya do?

NADA
All I could do. I kept on.
Eventually I came across the cabin
ya saw back there. It was deserted,
left over from the Seven Year's
War. Inside were all sorta books;
poetry, literature, philosophy.
There were maps showing places I
never dreamed of, lands that
wrapped around the world and oceans
twice as big...What was a dead man
to do when there wasn't any death
to be had? I made a home for
myself. I took to reading.

Short pause.

BOY
You lonely much?

NADA
(harshly)
No! I like my peace just fine. I
didn't need no silly children
gettin' me mixed up in some
crusade...Besides, loneliness don't
end a man. Learn that now, boy.
You'll be happier for it. A man
needs food, water, music. And he's
lucky if he speaks a few sensible
words in his life time. But
company, that's just a confection.

EXT. BESIDE STREAM - EVENING

Nada and Boy continue to ride as the Sun begins to set.

BOY
Nada?

Nada looks at the Boy over his shoulder.

BOY (CONT'D)
That's your name isn't it?

NADA
All right.

BOY

What was that scar I saw on your
arm? I couldn't help but see it
when you was packin' up.

There is an awkward pause.

NADA

You never mind that, boy. Children
shouldn't go asking adults
questions like that.

Long pause. Boy looks bashful.

NADA (CONT'D)

(changing tone)

You gettin' hungry?

Nada turns and looks at the boy over his shoulder.

The Boy nods "yes."

NADA (CONT'D)

Me too. Come on...

EXT. STREAM - EVENING

Nada stands on the shore of the stream with a long TREE
BRANCH that's been snapped off and whose end is sharp and
jagged.

The sun is just about beyond the horizon. Shallow light fills
the sky.

NADA

Pretty soon it's going to be too
cold to fish.

Nada scans the water, squinting. Fish scurry in the water.

NADA (CONT'D)

(scoffing)

Ah, it's too dark. I can't see a
damn thing.

The Boy's eyes dart, then snap open wide with excitement.

BOY

Wait, that's it!

NADA

What's it?

BOY
 Darkness. That's the answer to
 Antiman's riddle. The more you see,
 the less you see. It's darkness.

Nada looks at the Boy blankly, shocked.

NADA
 (in disbelief)
 Huh...

Suddenly, Nada sees a fish out of the corner of his eye. He
 throws the branch down and pierces the fish.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - NIGHT

Nada and the Boy sit on either side of a fire. They eat their
 fish in silence. Nada peers at the Boy out of the corner of
 his eye.

NADA
 You really want to know about my
 scars, Boy?

BOY
 Uh huh.

NADA
 (hesitantly)
 I tried to commit suicide. You know
 what that is?

BOY
 ...You tried to killt yourself?

NADA
 A long time ago.

BOY
 But Preacher Calvin tells us you go
 to Hell for doin' that.

Short pause. Nada is deep in thought, scarcely blinking.

NADA
 I was already there... I don't
 expect you to understand, but after
 Real Gone turned out to be a hoax,
 there was nothing left for me. I
 was being judged, but not by God
 and instead of bars, I was locked
 behind these trees.

BOY

Why didn't you just come home?

NADA

I couldn't show my face. Not after what I had done. I stuck a blade in my arms. I guess I didn't plunge into my vines deep enough, 'cause Antiman happened by and found me in the mud twitchin' like a fool. He brought me to his tribe and against their wishes, nursed me back to health.

BOY

Nada?

Nada looks at the Boy in anticipation of his question.

BOY (CONT'D)

Why'd you come out here? Whaddya do that was so bad?

Long emotional pause.

NADA

Once you got somethin' in your mind, there's no gettin' it out, boy. I don't want to burden ya.

Long awkward pause.

BOY

(changing subject)

Antiman told me about a special way of buryin' their warriors. Put 'em in a canoe and send 'em down river to get swallowed up by the sun... Sounds pretty, don't it? I'd like a burial like that.

NADA

Antiman told me he'd blessed you, that you were never going to die.

BOY

(defensively at first)

I won't! ...But if I did, that wouldn't be such a bad way to go out.

NADA

No, it wouldn't. Not so bad at all.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - NIGHT

Nada and the Boy sleep on either side of the extinguished fire.

An odd noise within the woods startles the Boy. He gasps in fear.

NADA
What's the matter, boy?

BOY
(frightened)
What's out there?

NADA
There's nothing out there. Coyotes, maybe. They won't bother us. Go to sleep.

BOY
I can't.

NADA
Why?

BOY
I'm afraid of the dark.

Nada exhales loudly to show his annoyance.

NADA
"Fitley this life's compared to night, when gloomy darkness shades the sky."

Another odd noise comes from the woods. The Boy whimpers.

NADA (CONT'D)
(taunting)
What's the matter 'Death Kid?'
Frightened of what you can't see?

BOY
Stop it!

NADA
Okay. Look, I know I'm not your pa, but I got some advice that oughta be minded... (to himself) *Maybe then I can get some sleep...* Listen, the world doesn't get scarier just because it gets dark.

(MORE)

NADA (CONT'D)

There's nothing there now that wasn't there before. It's just your mind playing tricks. (short pause) (Nada gets a serious, reflective tone) Take it from me, scary things don't happen in the dark...they happen right out in front of you, when you can see them as clear a day... They make sure you can't forget them.

Nada looks over his shoulder and sees many LIGHTNING BUGS buzzing around the trees.

He gets up from his pallet and walks over to them.

BOY

Where are you going?!

NADA

Cool off, boy. I'm right here.

Nada reaches out his hand. He lets them hover for a moment as he tracks the movements of one of the lightning bugs. He then slams his hands around the insect, catching it.

NADA (CONT'D)

This is the last you'll see of these little fellers till next year. They'll all dyin' out.

The Boy gets up from his pallet and walks over to Nada.

NADA (CONT'D)

If it get's too dark, just look to him. It'll be like sleeping with the candle's lit. All right?

Nada hands the Boy the lightning bug. The Boy peeks into his folded hands and they illuminates. His eyes locked in amazement.

Nada returns to his pallet, rolling over and getting into sleep position.

The Boy walks back over to his pallet and gets into sleep position as well.

BOY

Thank you...

Nada doesn't respond. His eyes are open as he listens to the Boy nestle into his pallet. He closes his eyes a moment later.

EXT. BESIDE STREAM - NIGHT

The Boy sleeps, his closed eyes twitching and his face grimacing, suggesting he's having a nightmare.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - NIGHT - DREAM

The Boy wanders aimlessly through Real Gone.

A SHADOW rushes past him, startling him.

He turns around and notices a DEVIL'S TAIL wrapped around the base of a large tree. It suddenly begins to move, sliding around the back of the tree on the right side. From the left side of the tree emerges Crowley. The Boy opens his mouth to scream.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Crowley abruptly awakes in his bed, jumping up, revealing that the nightmare was actually his. He is out of breath, panting and nervous. He falls back on the bed.

EZRA CROWLEY
(under his breath)
Fuckin' hell...

INT. PREACHER CALVIN ALDOUS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Loud banging comes from outside the Preacher's door.

Preacher Aldous stomps to the door, half awake.

PREACHER ALDOUS
All right! All right!

He gets to the doors and unlatches it. Crowley hastily shuffles in.

PREACHER ALDOUS (CONT'D)
Ezra? What's wrong?

EZRA CROWLEY
(troubled)
It's gettin' bad, Preacher. I-I
can't sleep nights no more.

PREACHER ALDOUS
What the hell do you think you're
doing coming here at this hour?

EZRA CROWLEY

I need help! Can't you see that?
I'm starting to see things. I'm
unravelin', I can feel it.

PREACHER ALDOUS

This is the Devil playing his
games!

EZRA CROWLEY

Whatever it is, it's eatin' me up
from the inside!

PREACHER ALDOUS

You know *exactly* what it is. You
know as well as I do. Don't get
convoluted. That's how He leads you
astray.

EZRA CROWLEY

What can I do?! I'm searchin' every
damned place for an answer and each
time turnin' up zilch.

PREACHER ALDOUS

You're sick, Ezra. And what happens
when you're sick?

Ezra looks at Aldous with desperation in his eyes.

PREACHER ALDOUS (CONT'D)

You throw-up. You purge yourself of
the filth inside you... You're full
of this hatred, this disgust. You
see the way the world's fallin'
apart around you and it's making
you sick... You need to throw-up,
Ezra... Purge yourself of the
madness. You know the cause... We
know in our bones, it's the
pollutin' of our hearts, our minds,
our spirits, by these *outsiders*.
They are the cause of this demon
inside of you, the hoodooers
castin' their spells, the chinks
besmirchin' our God. They're trying
to make us like them, Ezra. Can't
you see that? ...And God's chosen
you to rebel from it. He's chosen
you, a killer, to carry out his
vengeance...I've known it all
along. He's chosen you because you
understand wrath.

(MORE)

PREACHER ALDOUS (CONT'D)
 You know exactly what needs to be
 done... what no one else can
 do...purge, Ezra.

Ezra stares deeply into Aldous' eyes.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - MORNING

Nada and the Boy sit around the campsite, a small fire still
 burns. Nada throws more fire wood into it, growing the flame.
 He then reaches his hands over the fire, warming them.

BOY
 I gotta relieve myself.

NADA
 Find a bush. I drink from that
 stream... And get a move-on. It's
 time to go see the elephant.

BOY
 You think we'll make it into town
 today?

NADA
 This afternoon.

The Boy trudges off and finds a bush. He unbutton's his fly
 and begins to urinate. He hears a rattle and parts the bush,
 finding a large SNAKE.

He jumps back in terror, yelping.

NADA (CONT'D)
 What's the trouble, Boy?

BOY
 There's a snake!

Nada nonchalantly walks over to the bush, removes an
 intimidating HUNTING KNIFE and cuts the snake's head clean
 off.

The rest of the snake's body slithers away. Nada turns and
 tosses the head into the stream. The Boy is stunned in awe.

BOY (CONT'D)
 That was the most game thing I ever
 saw.

NADA

Don't get excited. I've lived out in these woods three times as long as you've been alive. You get used to snakes... Now, get us some water.

Nada hands him two crude, make-shift CUPS. The Boy walks over to the stream, bends down, coyly removes the small bag Antiman gave him, pours the contents into Nada's cup and fills it with water. He then stands and walks over to Nada.

Nada drinks the water in one gulp, then removes a RAG from his pocket and wipes his blade clean of snake blood.

BOY

How come you don't ever use your guns?

NADA

Guns only lead to trouble. A man armed is a man ten-times more likely to get a round in him. I don't know about you, but that's one sensation I'm okay doin' without.

BOY

You any good with 'em?

NADA

Did ya listen to me, boy? They destroy, that's their purpose. Now, a knife on the other hand, it kills just fine when it must, but that's not its only business. There's beauty to them, too. Nuance. You can create, carve, whittle. You can make these...

Nada walks over to his satchel bag and removes a wooden KNIGHT CHESS PIECE.

NADA (CONT'D)

You know what this is?

BOY

A horse?

NADA

Yeah, a horse, but it's something else, too. It's a Knight piece for chess.

BOY
A knight. Like Arthur.

NADA
Close. Arthur was a King, there's them in chess, too. But Arthur did have what was called "The Knights of the Round Table." They were the bravest and strongest of all the Knights and they helped King Arthur search for the Holy Grail.

The Boy listens intently.

NADA (CONT'D)
I'm guessin' you don't know what that is... The Holy Grail was the cup which Christ drank from at the Last Supper. Drink from it and you will live for all eternity.

BOY
They find it?

NADA
Well, they're all dead. So what do you think?

The Boy kicks the dirt.

BOY
You think it's still out there somewhere?

NADA
Ah, I'm not sure it was ever out there at all.

Short, tension-filled pause.

BOY
You believe in God?

Nada gives the Boy an irritated look.

NADA
You ever get tired of asking questions? I don't know where you get this stuff, I swear.

BOY

Antiman told me you believe in nothin', that's why they gave you that name. I guess I been thinkin' on it ever since.

Nada looks toward the sky.

NADA

Oh, I look up from time to time, but I've never seen anything so as to be certain. Most of the time I figure, who cares? He don't play a hand, so why should I? ...I guess it comes down to, I rather be wrong than right and blind.

There is a pause. Nada gets light-headed for a moment and shakes it off.

BOY

(mischievously)
You all right?

NADA

Just dizzy is all... How about some music?

The Boy nods cheerfully.

Nada picks up his violin, sits down besides the fire and begins to play. The music is terrible. Nada is missing notes left and right. The Boy watches in comedic horror.

Eventually Nada stops.

NADA (CONT'D)

Ok. I'm no Mozart.

BOY

Where do you keep gettin' these funky names?

NADA

(comically appalled)
Oh, no... I could tolerate not knowing Shakespeare...and everything else you've never heard of, but not Mozart!

BOY

Nope. Never heard of 'em. But if he plays anything like you, I'll live.

NADA

(impassioned, closing his eyes)

No, no... Mozart...he was a true genius. The beginning and end of all music... You felt his melodies more than you heard them. Every note precise and devastatingly beautiful... When I was a boy, my father was a musician and he took me to see a symphony of Mozart's music... He was many years dead... but his music! It lived on. It was more alive than anything I'd ever witnessed!

Nada closes his eyes tight, insinuating he's imagining.

The beginning of Mozart's Piano Concerto in E Flat, K. 482; 3rd Movement is heard (plays throughout).

TRANSITION
THROUGH MUSIC:

INT. MUSIC HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

TEN-YEAR-OLD NADA sits besides his FATHER. Musicians continue to play Mozart's music.

Ten-Year-Old Nada is visibly overwhelmed by the music.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS - MORNING

Nada continues to imagine the music in his mind. He spontaneously gets to his feet, rushes over to the Boy, hoists him up into his arms and begins dancing around the camp ground. The Boy laughs.

The dancing continues until Nada trips on a piece of FIREWOOD, drops the Boy and falls into the fire.

He immediately scrambles to his feet and pats his trousers feverishly to extinguish them. The Boy laughs uncontrollably.

EXT. REAL GONE WOODS OUTSIDE OF TOWN - DAY

Nada and the Boy ride on the horse through the woods.

NADA

You know it was dangerous slipping
me that stuff. I could have been
hurt...

The Boy smiles, holds in laughter and covers his mouth with
his hands. Nada smiles a sideways grin.

NADA (CONT'D)

(reciting)

"This oak tree near me is the
favorite haunt of blue jays
chattering, chattering all the
day...

The Boy ponders for a moment, opens his mouth as to speak.

BOY

... "And why not? For my very dusk
is laughin'...uhh... for thinkin'
of the humorous thing called life."

Nada makes a face of robust pride.

NADA

(understated)

Good boy.

Nada and the Boy ride a little further, breaching the rim of
the Real Gone and entering the town.

Nada's face becomes one of horror as he notices streams of
blood on the ground and DEAD BODIES lying about everywhere.

He slowly rides through town looking at the carnage.
Everything is eerily quiet.

NADA (CONT'D)

Close your eyes, boy. Look away.

The Boy puts his hands over his eyes, but he cracks them and
peers through.

Nada gets to the center of town and finds a CHINESE MAN
crucified upside down on a MAKESHIFT CROSS in the middle of
the road.

Nada dismounts his horse and walks over to the Chinese Man.
He bends down and examines the body. The Chinese Man suddenly
gasps for air. Nada is shocked to find the man alive.

NADA (CONT'D)
 (to Chinese Man)
 Who's done this? Who's done this to
 you?

The Chinese Man struggles to speak, then dies. Abruptly, a gun is fired. The round hits directly beside Nada, kicking up dirt. Nada quickly turns around and gets to his feet.

There is a young DEPUTY standing before Nada, his gun drawn on him. The Boy wraps his hand around Nada's gun, but Nada darts a glance at him, shaking his head "no."

DEPUTY
 (to Nada)
 Who the hell are you?

NADA
 Just a visitor, friend. Take it
 easy.

DEPUTY
 Where'd you come from?

Nada hesitates and then points towards Real Gone.

NADA
 From there.

DEPUTY
 Impossible.

NADA
 I'm not the man who did this.

DEPUTY
 I know you ain't. I know exactly
 who done it.

NADA
 Who?

BOY
 (interjecting)
 Crowley.

The Deputy and Nada both look at the Boy. Short pause.

NADA
 (to deputy)
 Tell me what happened here.

DEPUTY
 A goddamn slaughter, that's what.

NADA

How could one man do all of this?

DEPUTY

I don't know. They say Crowley's got devil in his blood. I knew he was bad, but I had no idea he was capable of sumthin' like this.

NADA

Can we get the boy somewhere safe?

The Deputy eyes the Boy, seeing his make-up and looks befuddled.

DEPUTY

(to Nada)

What's your name?

Nada hesitates.

NADA

I'm--

An old female voice finishes Nada's words.

OLD WOMAN

Bill?

She stumbles out of her home, walking toward Nada.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Bill Childs, is that you?

She gets closer.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh my Lord, it is!

An Older Man follows out of the house.

OLDER MAN

Who's that?

OLD WOMAN

It's Bill Childs, back from the dead!

DEPUTY

Is it true, you Billy Childs?

NADA

Uh, no...I--

OLD WOMAN
Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!

The Old Woman clinches onto Nada's arm. He tries to escape her grip, but she nearly falls down to hold onto him. He begins to inch toward the Boy.

OLD WOMAN (CONT'D)
(getting louder)
You've come back to save us in our hour of need! Oh, thank you, thank you! Praise God!

OLDER MAN
The Lord's sent you here to protect us. Praise God!

NADA
No, I'm not--

The Deputy grabs Nada by the arm.

DEPUTY
You better follow me.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

SHERIFF ARCHIBALD CLEAVER sits behind his desk. Nada enters with the deputy.

SHERIFF CLEAVER
Who ya got there, Eddie?

DEPUTY
Someone I think you'll want to see.

Nada shuffles in front of the deputy. Sheriff Cleaver studies him for a moment and then his eyes go wide.

SHERIFF CLEAVER
Bill? Is that you? By god I've seen a ghost!

Sheriff Cleaver gets up and trusts his hand out to shake. Nada hesitantly reaches out his hand.

SHERIFF CLEAVER (CONT'D)
I don't believe this! Come in, come in.

Cleaver sits down at his desk, Nada sits down on the other side of it.

SHERIFF CLEAVER (CONT'D)
So, how long has it been?

NADA
I really don't know. You lose track of time out there.

SHERIFF CLEAVER
We was all young men when ya left. Now look at us. I hardly recognized ya!

Sheriff chuckles. An awkward silence fills the room.

SHERIFF CLEAVER (CONT'D)
I suppose you seen what's happened out there... Be honest with ya, when I saw you standing in that doorway just now I couldn't help but feel it was a blessin'.

NADA
What are you talking about?

SHERIFF CLEAVER
Well, can't you see? I'm dealing with a goddamn massacre here, Bill, and then after thirty some years, not hearing a word from ya, you show up on my doorstep the morning after it happens... There are some bigger powers at work here, buddy.

NADA
It's just bad timing is all. I'm not--

SHERIFF CLEAVER
You're Bill Childs for Christ's sake. The man who, at long last, survived Real Gone. I'll be square with ya, pal. I made my peace with your death a lifetime ago, but now ya come back to me like a gift in the wake of the worst tragedy I ever done heard of.

NADA
(upset)
Not you too.

SHERIFF CLEAVER
Yes, me too. I'm seein' it with my own eyes.

(MORE)

SHERIFF CLEAVER (CONT'D)

I ain't much of a bible man, but I'm certainly a God-fearin' man and right now I'm scared as ever. It's clear you come back here for a reason.

NADA

Yes, I did... To turn myself in.

SHERIFF CLEAVER

Excuse me?

NADA

I've come to turn myself in for...(emotional pause, struggles to say it) the murder of my sister, Annabelle Childs, and to accept the punishment which *is* mandatory...

SHERIFF CLEAVER

Bill...I wadn't gonna hang you then and I ain't gonna hang ya now...I need ya. And this town's seen enough death.

The Deputy comes in.

DEPUTY

Sheriff, a crowds forming outside. They're askin' to see Bill.

NADA

(to Sheriff)

You tell those people to scat. I don't want a reunion, I want what's right. I want to hang for my crimes, to end this.

DEPUTY

What about your boy?

SHERIFF CLEAVER

What boy?

NADA

He's not my boy.

DEPUTY

I couldn't tell at first, he's wearin' some kinda Injun get-up, but it seems to be the boy that went missin'.

SHERIFF CLEAVER

(to Bill)

What the hell ya doin' with him?

NADA

He found me in Real Gone. I just brought him back, he got mixed up and he needed someone to bring him home.... I figure it was time I come back, too. See about paying a debt I left long outstandin'.

Sheriff Cleaver stares at Nada with judging eyes.

NADA (CONT'D)

Listen, it's not my job to look after him. I know what I'm doing here, I thought about all the angles. I'm tired of carrying the weight of my sins around. Can't you understand that?

SHERIFF CLEAVER

So redeem yourself.

NADA

That's what I'm trying to do.

SHERIFF CLEAVER

No. Not in this way. I ain't gonna hang you. You're a legend, Bill. Pure and simple. We've been hearin' stories about ya since ya left. Mothers tell their children about ya so they won't be afraid of what's under the bed... How the hell am I gonna hang ya? ...But I will offer you a deal.

NADA

You a salesman or a sheriff?

SHERIFF CLEAVER

In this town you gotta be both, Bill. I ain't gonna lie to you and say I ain't done things I've regretted, but when the table is tilted you gotta bend the rules just to stay even.

NADA

So what's the deal?

Sheriff pauses for a moment.

SHERIFF CLEAVER

You hunt this man, this Ezra Crowley and you shoot him dead for what he done here...and all is forgiven in the eyes of the law. You on the hook for one life? So square it by delivering another. Fair trade... Then you find your peace.

NADA

What is twisted in you people? How the hell did I get matched up with this feller Crowley? I've never seen the man, I never heard his name till a week ago and yet I'm always after him. My cross ain't with him.

SHERIFF CLEAVER

You see what he done. You seen it with your own eyes. Don't you care about the horror he brought to the place you once called home? Where your mama's buried?

NADA

Why don't you hunt him yourself?

SHERIFF CLEAVER

I don't have the man power. Crowley killed four of my men. Fifteen others in town. Men, women and children. He ripped the guts out one young man who claimed to be a soothsayer, or some such nonsense. A con man, same as 'em all. We found his heart out in the weeds behind the blacksmith's. Just the boy's heart, like an apple that'd fall from a tree...

NADA

All right. I get the photograph just fine.

SHERIFF CLEAVER

This town is devastated and I gotta look after who's left... Not to mention I don't got a chance 'gainst him. He's quick and ruthless and worst of all, he ain't afraid of dyin'.

DEPUTY

I shot him in the arm. I think I hit 'em pretty good. So he should be bleedin'.

NADA

Where is he?

SHERIFF CLEAVER

We don't know. After this spree of his, he turned out, rode out of town. The coward. He knew not even Preacher Aldous could save his sorry ass this time... and then you miraculously come walkin' through my door while the screams of the recent dead are still echoin'. A ghost outta Real Gone. Come on, Bill...what am I supposed to think? ...Maybe you just can't see is all, but not every man knows his purpose.

Nada glares at the Sheriff.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Nada and the Deputy walk toward the exit.

DEPUTY

You can stay at the inn across the way. I'll make sure they done-up a room for ya and your boy.

Nada hesitates for a moment, then nods.

EXT. OUTSIDE SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

A large crowd of people await Nada to exit. They clamor around him, all tugging at him and shouting out.

CROWD

Praise the Lord! He's returned!
He's come to save us!

Bill fights his way through them.

NADA

(to Boy)

Come on, Boy. Don't pay them any mind.

MAN

You're gonna help us, aren't ya
Bill?

WOMAN

You're gonna kill that yellow dog!

Nada, the Boy and the Deputy walk to the inn, all the people following behind, still clamoring. They reach the inn, get inside and slam the door behind them.

Sullivan Lorre is shown peering out from a porch, watching the commotion.

INT. BOARDING ROOM - NIGHT

Crowley crashes into the room, removing his jacket, revealing his undershirt to be covered in blood, originating from the right arm. He falls to his knees beside a bucket of fresh water. He rips his shirt off and begins splashing his wound with the water.

He then removes his knife and sticks the tip into the fire of a nearby CANDLE. He proceeds to then stick the knife into his wound, squirming in pain. Blood drips into the washbasin, followed by the smashed round with a *clank* noise.

EXT. INN ROOM - NIGHT

Nada sits beside the window in his room at the inn. The Boy is asleep on the bed.

There's a quiet knock on the door. Nada eyes one of his GUNS that's sitting on the table. He then gets up and cracks open the door. He sees that it's Sullivan Lorre. He opens the door wider and lets him in. They speak in whispers.

NADA

Sullivan, come in.

SULLIVAN LORRE

It's been a long time, Bill.

NADA

Yes, it has.

SULLIVAN LORRE

I'll be square with ya at the risk
of sounding sentimental...it does
me good to see ya. Makes me feel
young again.

NADA

Wish I could say the same. Seein' you as something other than the boy I knew makes me feel even older.

SULLIVAN LORRE

We had some good times, though. Didn't we?

NADA

They were criminal. Quite literally.

Sullivan smirks. They take a seat at a small table.

SULLIVAN LORRE

Well, enough pleasantries. Where the hell ya been, Bill?

NADA

In the trees a ways, is all. Living secluded.

SULLIVAN LORRE

But how? I mean, in Real Gone, the stories--

NADA

(cutting him off, angry)
They're all lies. I'm fed up with this nonsense. There's nothing out there.

SULLIVAN LORRE

Then why'd you stay so long?

NADA

Because that's exactly what I was looking for...nothing.

SULLIVAN LORRE

Well, seems you got yourself in quite the jackpot now.

NADA

That's just what I was thinking about. I'm trying to wrap my head around it. Is the world as strange as this?

SULLIVAN LORRE

They'll callin' for Crowley's blood out there...and they want you to deliver it.

NADA

Don't they know I can't? That I'm not...

SULLIVAN LORRE

They've forgotten who you was, Bill. Most of 'em don't even know you, 'cept the stories they been told and those would be flatterin' if you'd had the sense to stay gone.

Short pause.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)

So what are you gonna do? You gonna go after him?

NADA

I don't know.

SULLIVAN LORRE

He's bad, Billy. Bad as they come.

Nada looks over at the Boy. The Boy sleeps soundly.

NADA

Have you heard from Desdemona?

SULLIVAN LORRE

Not for a time.

NADA

How was she?

SULLIVAN LORRE

You know her. All smiles... As beautiful as ever...

NADA

Where's she living these days?

SULLIVAN LORRE

She's over in Hammerville. About two weeks ride away from here. A wicked little town, though she made good for herself. I saw her while passin' through. I make it a point to stick my head in... Boy, the two of you was thick once upon a time.

NADA

I'm certain I loved her. If I'm capable of such a thing, that's the closest I've come.

SULLIVAN LORRE

You know, you should forget all this Crowley business and make your way over there to pay her a visit.

NADA

Think you've used enough salt?

SULLIVAN LORRE

I just want you to know what you're up against. He'll kill ya, Bill. The boy, too.

An awkward pause. Sullivan looks at the Boy.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)

Darling child... Well, I won't keep you. I just wanted to see hows you were holdin' up.

Nada nods.

The walk to the door. Sullivan turns.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)

Don't go doin' anything stupid like becoming a martyr. We already got J.C. and he's enough for the damn world.

NADA

Thank you, Sullivan. Good night.

Nada closes the door. He turns and finds the Boy awake.

NADA (CONT'D)

What are you doing up?

BOY

I thought I heard ya whisperin'. Who was that?

NADA

Sullivan Lorre came to pay us a visit.

The Boy gets panicked.

BOY
He ain't a nice man! He works for
Crowley!

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sullivan presses his ear to Nada's door.

INT. BOARDING ROOM - NIGHT

Nada and Boy continue their conversation.

NADA
Sullivan? Nah. He's an old friend.

BOY
He ain't the way you knew him no
more. Crowley never paid us no mind
until Sullivan showed up. Now my
sister and pa are dead and so are
all those people in town!

NADA
All right, calm down.

Pause.

BOY
What are you gonna do?

NADA
That seems to be the big question.

BOY
(sternly)
Well, it don't matter what everyone
want. You made me a promise.
Remember that. You told me you'd
help me kill Crowley. It just so
happens the town wants the same
thing.

NADA
How does a boy your age bite down
so hard? Rotten things are gonna be
done to you, boy. You can rectify
all of them.

BOY
Don't you want to see Crowley dead?

NADA

No! I want to see him in jail, but I ain't the man the put him there. That's what none of you seem to understand!

Pause.

BOY

...If you don't hunt 'em, you'll go back to Real Gone and leave me here... I knows you will... I don't want this to end.

Tension-filled pause.

NADA

Everything ends.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Preacher Aldous stands before a packed chapel, Sullivan Lorre among the crowd.

Two ATTENDEES whisper to each other.

ATTENDEE 1

Did you hear what they're sayin' 'bout the Childs' boy? Why he wears that make-up?

The other Attendees audibly moan in agony through Aldous' sermon. Their hands are in the air, their eyes shut.

PREACHER ALDOUS

Now we've seen it! We've seen God's wrath! The warning signs were everywhere, but no one among you would listen! ...The animal, the monster lived right here among us, Satan himself roamed the streets where you raise your children! Why does it take catastrophe to awake you? Your adversary is not lazy, he is not dormant, he is actively pursuing your souls! You have to cast him out! And instead you opened the door to him! You wandered from the steeple, from God, from me! You are the lambs that have gone astray.

(MORE)

PREACHER ALDOUS (CONT'D)

Those questions in your heart,
those doubts in your mind, those
curiosities, they are planted there
by the Evil One himself. We as a
town have now experienced the
culmination of his efforts. You can
not deny it any longer...but there
is hope, little lambs. A savior has
come! A man unburned by Hellfire! A
man sent directly from God to
avenge us and the one's we've lost!

Suddenly Nada, followed by the Boy, bust into the chapel. The
room goes silent. Nada walks slowly down the center of the
chapel and gets to the alter. Everyone's eyes on him.

NADA

(to Aldous)

Step aside, Preacher.

Aldous does so. Nada turns toward the crowd.

NADA (CONT'D)

(to crowd)

All right. I've decided to hunt the
man who's done this to your town.

Sullivan listens intently, worried.

NADA (CONT'D)

I'll find him and I'll kill him.
And for a while that will bring you
peace, but some day, and sooner
rather than later, that piece of
your heart that died along with
your loved-one is gonna go cold
again... You call me a savior, and
it just ain't so... You're afraid
and I understand that, but don't go
believing in things that ain't true
'cause it's easy. This isn't
supposed to be easy....

Nada pauses and looks toward the Boy for a moment.

NADA (CONT'D)

(to crowd)

I killed my sister thirty-two years
and forty-seven days ago... I shot
her while she was lying in her bed.
Does that sound like a hero to you?

(MORE)

NADA (CONT'D)
 (tears roll down Nada's face)
 Listen to me now, death for death
 ain't fair, it's just more folks
 fertilizing daisies... You will
 live to regret what you've asked me
 to do here today, 'cause you think
 you're gettin' justice, but there's
 something greater gettin' lost.

Nada looks at the Boy.

NADA (CONT'D)
 (to Boy)
 Come on, boy.

Nada and the Boy walk out of the chapel. The townspeople murmur. Sullivan watches Nada and the Boy exit.

EXT. OUTSIDE CHAPEL - DAY

Sullivan wrangles an DIRTY OUTLAW that's sanded near by. He leans in close and speaks into his ear inaudibly.

INT. INN ROOM - DAY

Nada and the Boy enter.

BOY
 Is it true?

NADA
 We'll leave in the morning. I need
 one more night in a honest-to-
 goodness bed before settin' out on
 the trail.

BOY
 Should I go get supplies?

Nada thinks to himself, seeing that the Boy is excited.

NADA
 Yeah. Go down to the sundry and
 pick up a few things.

BOY
 (excited)
 Okay! I'll be right back.

The Boy runs out of the door, closing it behind him. A moment later, the doorknob twists and the door slowly opens.

NADA

Did you forget some coin?

It's Sullivan Lorre and he has a gun drawn.

NADA (CONT'D)

Sullivan? What the hell are you doing?

SULLIVAN LORRE

I warned you, Billy. I told you not to go after Crowley.

NADA

Why you sidin' up with him? He's a murderer.

SULLIVAN LORRE

And I'll be one, too, if you think about movin'.

NADA

I'm going no place.

SULLIVAN LORRE

Good. Now we're gonna sit right here and chat for a while... (to himself) He'll be so proud of me. I killed Bill Childs, the fuckin' man that couldn't be killed... (to Bill) Now come on. Get up against the wall.

Nada pushes a chair against the window and sits down. Sullivan pulls up a chair directly in front of him, his back to the door.

INT. INN HALLWAY - DAY

The Boy walks up toward the door, counting loose CHANGE in his palm. He hears Sullivan's voice coming from inside, muffled. The Boy begins to creep outside of the door.

He hesitates for a moment and then silently enters the room.

INT. INN ROOM - DAY

The Boy creeps into the room unbeknownst to Sullivan. Nada sees the door open, but doesn't move his eyes.

SULLIVAN LORRE

Crazy it come to this.

NADA

What exactly do you plan to do?

SULLIVAN LORRE

Well, I'm thinkin' about killing ya, but I haven't fully decided yet. Maybe I'll just hold ya until Crowley comes around. He might want ya for himself. (short pause) You know, I asked him once...

The Boy sees Nada's gun on the table. He begins moving toward it.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)

I says, "Ezra...why you gotta kill damn near everyone ya meet?" Ya know what he said? He said "'Cause I want their soul. The thing that makes 'em who they are. A man has nothin' but his name and what he done. If that man has done a great thing and I kill 'em, then that great thing don't matter no more. It's like I done it instead... Killin' is the only path to greatness." That's what he said.

NADA

Sounds like the rambling of a madman.

The Boy gets the gun and points it at Sullivan. Nada takes notice and breaks his cool exterior.

NADA (CONT'D)

No!

Sullivan whips his head around and sees the Boy.

NADA (CONT'D)

Don't, boy!

The Boy fires the gun. The round enters Sullivan's back. Sullivan makes noises of agony. Nada stands up.

NADA (CONT'D)

(angry, to Boy)

What in the hell did you do that for?!

BOY

I thought he was gonna kill you!

Nada is disturbed. His face is saddened. He pauses and breaths heavily, trying to find the words.

NADA
Boy...You were clean.

Another pause. Nada looks at Sullivan and then at the Boy.

NADA (CONT'D)
I tried not to give you too much of
my vinegar toward everything, but
Manhood went and found you
anyhow...

Nada walks the Boy over to Sullivan and makes him sit down.

NADA (CONT'D)
Look at him.

Blood begins to trickle from Sullivan's mouth. Nada stands behind the Boy and watches.

BOY
(to Sullivan)
Does it hurt?

SULLIVAN LORRE
(in pain)
Not much.

Sullivan looks past the boy toward the open window. Snow begins to fall from the sky.

SULLIVAN LORRE (CONT'D)
(through a crooked smile)
Ah, first snow.

Sullivan coughs up more blood. The Boy turns his head.

NADA
(to Boy)
Don't look away.

Sullivan tilts his head up toward the ceiling.

SULLIVAN LORRE
(to God)
So how 'bout it... Shoot, Luke, or
give up the gun...

Sullivan dies. The Boy gets up from his chair and walks away. Nada takes Sullivan's pistol from his hand. He examines it for a moment before breaking it in two, revealing it to be one of Sullivan's toy guns.

EXT. OUTSIDE INN - DAWN

Nada wears is large bear-fur coat, as does the Boy. Sheriff Cleaver is standing beside Nada.

SHERIFF CLEAVER
So what happened exactly?

NADA
Sullivan pulled a gun on me.

SHERIFF CLEAVER
(skeptical)
And you shot him in the back?

NADA
This is a bloody task you laid upon me. I'm after one man, but I wouldn't be surprised if he isn't the only one turned cold by it.

SHERIFF CLEAVER
Well, I can't say there won't be plenty of folks pleased to see that Mr. Lorre got what was comin' to him.

Cleaver looks at the Boy and leans close to Nada, speaking in a whisper.

SHERIFF CLEAVER (CONT'D)
You sure it's a good idea to bring the kid along?

NADA
You said it yourself. He's got no one now. Who's gonna look after him if I don't? You? He should be with kin.

SHERIFF CLEAVER
All right then. Last we heard Crowley was headed West. Better get a move-on.

Nada mounts his horse. The Boy wraps his arms around Nada's waist. Nada looks at Cleaver.

SHERIFF CLEAVER (CONT'D)
Tell the Devil I said hello.

NADA
Tell him yourself.

Nada and the Boy ride off.

EXT. OPEN TERRITORY - DAY

Nada and the Boy ride through open territory. The horse paces himself.

BOY

Shouldn't we go a little faster? We don't want him to get so far away we lose the trail.

NADA

Don't worry yourself. We've got some stops to make.

BOY

Stops? Where?

NADA

There's a few gentlemen I want you to meet...You seem so damned fascinated with folk heroes, I figure you'd like to meet some gen-u-ine ones. These boys are known from Timbuktu all the way to California... (hesitant pause) Maybe they'll help ya understand why we can't hunt Crowley.

The Boy is taken off-guard by this.

BOY

What?! But you said--

NADA

Yeah, I said and I lied. I lied to you and I lied to those people back there, 'cause you want somethin' from me that I can't do.

BOY

What are you talking about? You're Bill Childs, you--

Nada pulls the reins on his horse violently, bringing the animal to a sudden stop. He gets off the horse and turns to face the Boy.

NADA

Look at me. Go ahead, look! I'm an old man! I'm nobody!

(MORE)

NADA (CONT'D)

...This Crowley character, he's going to kill us if we go after him. Ya understand? He's going to kill us... He was still on his mama's milk when I walked out into those forsaken woods! We don't got a chance! And let's say we did, what's the best thing that could come of it? We kill him. And then what? ...Revenge don't quell the pain, it makes it burn hotter. It makes the guilt (frustrated, unable to find the words) (emotional pause)...I'm broken-up, can't you see that? I'm an old man with nothing left...

Pause. The Boy studies Nada with stern eyes.

BOY

You think 'cause you killt your sister you gotta be yellow to prove you ain't a monster.

NADA

(sarcastic, flustered)

Well, you're a regular Socrates, ain't ya?

The Boy looks at Nada with a hurt, confused face.

NADA (CONT'D)

Listen, I've been dead for a long time already, but you, you're just startin' out. There's no reason you gotta meet a bad end.

The Boy fights back tears.

NADA (CONT'D)

Now you got a choice. Either you can fend for yourself, or you can continue on with me.

Short pause. The Boy snuffles.

BOY

Where ya goin'?

NADA

I planned on taking you to an old friend of mine. She's a good woman. Make sure you got plenty to eat.

BOY
How about you? Where you gonna end
up?

Pause.

NADA
I see no reason why I couldn't
stick around for a while.

The Boy lets out a small smile.

INT. BOARDING ROOM - DAY

Crowley has a BANDAGE wrapped around his wounded arm. He puts
on a clean SHIRT followed by his jacket. There's beating on
the door.

EZRA CROWLEY
(to door)
Who's there?!

Crowley puts his hand on his gun.

DIRTY OUTLAW (O.C.)
(through door)
I-I-I been-been sent by Sullivan
Lorre.

EZRA CROWLEY
Get in here.

The Dirty Outlaw enters, panting for breath.

DIRTY OUTLAW
I-I..I been sent-sent-sent...

EZRA CROWLEY
Spit it out!

DIRTY OUTLAW
Bill Childs is back from-from the
dead. I seen-seen it with my
own...eyes. He-he's after ya. Him
and the Childs boy.

Crowley is surprised to hear this detail.

DIRTY OUTLAW (CONT'D)
There's--there's talk through the t-
town that the b-boy's be en-en-
enchanted. Got-got the souls of-of
a thousand de-dead Injuns in 'em.
(MORE)

DIRTY OUTLAW (CONT'D)
 That-that he wants re-revenge...
 They're-they're-they're headed this
 way right...right n-now.

Crowley eyes read anger and concern.

DIRTY OUTLAW (CONT'D)
 You better get after 'em.

EZRA CROWLEY
 How will I know 'em?

DIRTY OUTLAW
 A-accordin' to Su-su-llivan, the B-
 boy is dressed-up like some kinda
 sp-sp-spooky In-Injun. Feather-hat
 'n all.

Crowley ponders, concern in his eyes.

DIRTY OUTLAW (CONT'D)
 W-what ya doin', Crowley?

EZRA CROWLEY
 I'm thinkin'! Ever heard of it?

EXT. OUTSIDE BOARDING HOUSE - DAY

Crowley mounts his horse with some trouble. The Dirty Outlaw
 is standing beside him.

DIRTY OUTLAW
 So-so-so I done good?

EZRA CROWLEY
 Very good.

The Dirty Outlaw is pleased, nodding and being unable to
 contain a smile.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)
 Does anyone else know you've come
 to see me or where you are?

DIRTY OUTLAW
 No, sir. Just-just you and Mr.
 Lorre.

EZRA CROWLEY
 Good. Now do me a favor would ya?

Crowley rapidly pulls out his pistol and fires into the Dirty
 Outlaw, killing him. The body falls to the ground.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)
Take it to the grave.

Ezra hastily rides off.

EXT. OUTSIDE LAZARUS' ESTABLISHMENT - EVENING

Nada and the Boy ride up to an establishment with a SIGN on the front of it, which reads "LAZARUS -- KNOWER OF ALL THINGS."

BOY
Is this the place?

NADA
Yes. Now, I want you to go in there.

BOY
Alone?

NADA
Yes, alone. But I'll be right outside.

BOY
What should I do?

NADA
Trust me, you won't have to do much.

INT. LAZARUS' ESTABLISHMENT - EVENING

The Boy walks in and finds a bizarrely dressed man surrounded by even more bizarre trinkets. Conflicting religious symbolism decorates the walls.

This man is LAZARUS a.k.a Ferdinand. He sits in the center of the room behind a small table decorated with candles and burning incense. His legs are missing and are instead two stumps. Lazarus speaks in an unidentified accent.

LAZARUS
Hello, little boy! I like the get-up. Flamboyant.

The Boy seems cautious, uncertain.

LAZARUS (CONT'D)
I don't mean to frighten you. What do I owe the pleasure?
(MORE)

LAZARUS (CONT'D)

Perhaps you'd like to put a hex on a girl who's broken your heart. I'll just need a fingernail or a locket of her hair. Or maybe you'd like to know your future. I do it all, and for a small fee... Whatever you long for I can provide. I'll make a wish, I'll cast a spell, I'll have a dream, they'll burn in Hell. I died for your sins, but I've come back for the fun, so end your searching, for I'm the one.

Nada abruptly enters the room. Lazarus becomes terrified and panicked, falling off his chair, revealing that he has legs and his "stumps" were a trick. He immediately loses his accent.

LAZARUS (CONT'D)

(speaking in normal voice)

Oh, fuck...Bill...it's you.

NADA

Relax, Ferdinand. I haven't come to claim what you owe me...

LAZARUS

You haven't?

NADA

No... You're lucky the world ain't fair... I come to let the boy see what a real fraud looks like... and to forgive you.

Lazarus is puzzled by this.

NADA (CONT'D)

You hold onto hate so long you forget what's been done to ya. Then you just live every day hurtin' without knowing why. So I've come to forgive you. Maybe one day we'll all get lucky and you'll die. But until then I'm not hangin' onto it anymore...

Nada and the Boy exit.

EXT. OUTSIDE LAZARUS' ESTABLISHMENT - EVENING

Nada and the Boy get onto their horse.

BOY
That man had legs.

NADA
Don't believe everything you see.
That's what I've been tryin' to get
across to you.

BOY
You gotta be suspicious of
everythin'... Won't that start to
work on ya after a while?

Pause.

NADA
Yeah...it will.

They ride off.

INT. LAZARUS' ESTABLISHMENT - EVENING

Lazarus puts himself back together, repositions himself so
his legs are hidden.

LAZARUS
(in normal voice, under
his breath)
Fuckin' asshole.

The sound of someone entering is heard.

LAZARUS (CONT'D)
(in fake accent)
Hello, sir! What do I owe the
pleasure?

Crowley emerges out of the darkness.

EXT. OPEN TERRITORY - NIGHT

Nada and Boy ride on their horse.

BOY
Where we going next?

NADA
Well, it's getting pretty late. We
could stop and make camp for the
night or we can keep on. The next
town is a few hours ride away. I
got a friend there, a magician.

BOY
A magician! Oh, can we keep going?
It's just a few hours.

NADA
If that's what you want.

Nada pets the horse.

NADA (CONT'D)
(to horse)
How ya doing, boy?

BOY
Nada...will you tell me a story?

NADA
I'm not sure I know any.

BOY
Then tell me something true...

Nada pauses for a moment.

NADA
All right then...

INT. LAZARUS' ESTABLISHMENT - NIGHT

Crowley sits across from Lazarus, his gun pointed at him.

EZRA CROWLEY
An old feller and a little boy
dressed like an indian come this
way. They was spotted visitin' you.

LAZARUS
(nervous)
I'm sorry. I haven't the faintest
clue of what you're talking about.

EZRA CROWLEY
Don't your sign say you're a wise
man? A fortune teller?

Long pause.

LAZARUS
I don't know where they went.

EZRA CROWLEY
(taunting)
Make a prediction.

LAZARUS

How do I know if I tell you, you
won't just kill me anyway?

EZRA CROWLEY

You don't. But if you tell me
nuthin', I'm going to kill you, so
it looks like you're in a little
bit of a jackpot here.

LAZARUS

They was just here. You just missed
them.

EZRA CROWLEY

Where they headed?

LAZARUS

They didn't say.

Crowley gestures strangely, is frustrated.

LAZARUS (CONT'D)

You don't get it. Bill and I ain't
friends. I thought he was gonna
pull a gun on me too, before he
went ahead and gave me some speech
about forgivin' me.

EZRA CROWLEY

Forgivin' ya? That don't sound like
the the vicious outlaw turn tall
tale.

Awkward pause. Crowley cocks his pistol. Lazarus trembles.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Well, it seems I run outta
questions.

LAZARUS

(scared)

Wait, wait! Maybe I can offer you
something in exchange for my life.

EZRA CROWLEY

What could you have that I'd want?

LAZARUS

Well, you musta heard of me. My
name comes from bible times. I can
tell you your future, just like the
sign say...or maybe you're hurtin',
I can help...

Crowley is intrigued. Lazarus picks up on this.

EZRA CROWLEY

How?

Lazarus looks at Crowley's fingernails. They're stained beneath the nail with dried blood.

LAZARUS

You done something that's eatin' at ya? You're sufferin'. I can sense it... There's a man..he's...your father? Yes...(closing his eyes) I see blood...lots of blood.

Crowley's hand begins to tremble.

LAZARUS (CONT'D)

You can't forgive yourself!

Crowley suddenly fires his pistol past Lazarus' head. Lazarus freezes. Crowley looks at him strangely and then begins to laugh uncontrollably.

EZRA CROWLEY

You almost had me going!

Lazarus lets out an uncomfortable laugh.

Crowley then notices a BIBLE in the room.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)

What do you have that for?

LAZARUS

What?

EZRA CROWLEY

The Bible.

LAZARUS

Ah. Most my customers are simple, God-fearin' folk. Whatever they believe, I believe. And vice-versa. Let me show ya somethin'...

Lazarus lifts up the blanket on his knee, revealing his legs to Crowley, who peers beneath the table. Crowley's hand starts to shake again.

LAZARUS (CONT'D)

The faithful are the easiest to fool, 'cause they're searchin' for an answer.

(MORE)

LAZARUS (CONT'D)

It don't matter who's got it...
They're willing to believe any
damned thing. They just gotta feel
a little pity first... I mean, who
ain't gonna believe a cripple?

Crowley's eyes shift from pain to rage, then cold
indifference. He unexpectedly lifts his gun to Lazarus'
forehead and fires a round into him.

Lazarus lifelessly drops his head to the table. Blood begins
to leak out of the wound. Crowley looks under the table and
studies Lazarus' boots.

EZRA CROWLEY

(to corpse)

Those are some nice boots ya got
there.

EXT. OUTDOOR CARNIVAL - NIGHT

Nada and the Boy ride up onto a carnival. It is predominately
dead, with very few people walking around, but noise comes
from a tent over yonder.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Nada and the Boy enter the packed tent. A magic show is
transpiring. There is a Magician LEONARD OSWALD and his
assistant, a dwarf named LONNIE, on stage conducting the
show.

They finish a trick and the audience breaks into applause. As
Oswald and Lonnie bow, Oswald takes notice of Nada at the
back of the tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The tent is emptied as Nada and the Boy sit quietly. Oswald
and Lonnie enter and greet Nada and the Boy warmly.

LEONARD OSWALD

Billy, I can't believe it's you.
You wouldn't believe the things
I've heard about you over the
years, and to see you standing
there in one piece...Ah, I'm so
pleased.

Oswald looks toward the Boy

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)
 And who is this *festive* young
 gentlemen?

Nada looks down at the child. He hesitates for a moment.

NADA
 I'm just looking after him on the
 way to Hammerville.

LEONARD OSWALD
 Oh, that's no place for a child.

NADA
 Desdemona is there. I'm hopin'
 she'll take him in.

LEONARD OSWALD
 Ah, I see. And you decided to stop
 in and see an old friend along the
 way. Well, splendid.

Oswald takes notice of Lonnie standing quietly behind him.

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)
 Oh! I almost forgot. This is my
 third, and best, half, Lonnie.

NADA
 Hello, Lonnie.

BOY
 (to Lonnie)
 Hi. (then directed at Leonard)
 How'd you do that trick with the
 cards?

Leonard smiles.

LEONARD OSWALD
 A magician never gives away his
 secrets...even an old magician like
 me, but I can tell you, *believing*
 it can be done is the most
 important part to successfully
 pulling off any trick. Okay?

BOY
 Okay.

LEONARD OSWALD
 (to Nada)
 Why don't we take a seat.
 (MORE)

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)
 You must be exhausted. How long you
 been riding?

NADA
 Today's our first day. Mind if we
 make camp around here?

LEONARD OSWALD
 Of course not! You can spend a few
 days if you like.

NADA
 We better not. The further away we
 get from where we left, the better.

There is an awkward pause.

LEONARD OSWALD
 Lonnie, why don't you go show the
 boy here one of our new tricks...

LONNIE
 Sure will! Come on, boy.

Lonnie and the Boy depart. There is an awkward pause between
 Nada and Leonard.

NADA
 (breaking the tension)
 So, still doing the same old
 tricks?

LEONARD OSWALD
 Oh, no. Illusions are like
 memories. The older you get, the
 more you have.

NADA
 I wish I had a few more tricks. I
 have enough memories.

LEONARD OSWALD
 I'm sure you do.

Leonard smiles at Bill.

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)
 I must say it's a welcomed surprise
 having you here, and as flattered
 as I am that you'd stop to see an
 old magic man like me, I'm sensing
 there's more to it than that.

NADA
Just riding through, Leo.

LEONARD OSWALD
I may be an old man now, Bill, but I'm not as gullible as I was once was. What brought you here? Now of all times?

Long pause. Nada struggles to find the words.

NADA
That boy, he looks up to me.

LEONARD OSWALD
I can see that.

NADA
My aim was to drop him with Desdemona. I know she'll take him in.

LEONARD OSWALD
Where's his family?

NADA
They've all been killed by some blood-drunk lunatic.

LEONARD OSWALD
(troubled)
My word.

NADA
It's a foul affair I don't feel much like going into, but trust me he's better off with Des.

LEONARD OSWALD
Is this man after you?

NADA
No. No. Everyone in town thinks *I'm* after *him*. But I just let them believe that so they can have some kinda peace.

LEONARD OSWALD
So what's the trouble?

NADA
I've started to feel a sense of responsibility for him.

(MORE)

NADA (CONT'D)

He don't know it, but I'm gonna have to hightail it as soon as I know he's safe.

LEONARD OSWALD

Why? Where you plan on going?

NADA

I've been alone, Leonard, for a longer time than I wadn't. I don't know how people work anymore. I don't know where to start. That boy thinks I'm as big as a house. It's gonna destroy him when he finds out I'm not...I'm getting crushed by my own shadow... When we ran together, Leonard, I still had some spark left. That's why I wanted to see ya. I thought maybe I'd feel some of that spark kickin' up again when I set eyes on you, but I know now it's hopeless... You're the only friend I got left, someone worth sayin' goodbye to. And I thought that was something worth doing.

Leonard's eyes are watery.

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Crowley is seated beside a campfire. He examines Lazarus' BOOTS and puts them on. He is pleased with how they fit.

Crowley then examines Lazarus' bible. He opens it up, looks at the words and then closes it. He suddenly jerks his head and closes his eyes, physically trying to keep thoughts out of his head.

INSERT:

--Preacher Aldous emphatically speaks with Crowley.

PREACHER ALDOUS

We mustn't lose our grasp, Ezra!
This town will slip through our fingers. Be the instrument of God you were meant to be!

INSERT:

Crowley is covered in blood during the massacre, surrounded by bodies. He moans, delirious.--

Crowley shakes his head, shaking the images from his mind. He studies the bible one last time and then sets it into the campfire. The pages buckle and burn.

EXT. OUTDOOR CARNIVAL - DAY

Nada and the Boy prepare to head out. Leonard and Lonnie stand, watching Nada pack. There's snow on the ground.

NADA

Thank ya, Leonard.

LEONARD OSWALD

No trouble, Bill. I don't have my first performance for a few hours, you can stay for a little breakfast.

NADA

No, no. We better get goin'.

The Boy and Lonnie hug.

BOY

Goodbye, Lonnie.

LONNIE

Goodbye, Boy.

BOY

(to Leonard)

It was nice meeting you, Mister.

LEONARD OSWALD

And you.

Leonard smiles a warm smile. The Boy goes to turn away, but Leonard's words stop him.

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)

Would you like to know how I did that trick last night?

BOY

I would!

Leonard gets to his knees and whispers something inaudible into the Boy's ear. He then holds him at arms length.

LEONARD OSWALD

Remember, believing is the most important part... The audience knows I'm trying to trick them, that it's all an illusion, but if you can get them to forget, to *believe*, just for a moment, then that cheap trick becomes something else entirely... magic. People will believe anything if they want to badly enough...

Leonard glances at Nada for a moment and then focuses back on the boy.

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)

And it's those who *want* to believe that see the things they thought they couldn't see and do the things they never thought they could.

Leonard makes a DECK OF CARDS "appear" and he hands them to the Boy. Nada softly grabs the Boy the shoulder and turns him away from Leonard. They mount their horse and start riding off. Leonard and Lonnie wave to them.

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)

(calling after Nada)

So long, Bill! We'll meet again!
Stay warm!

INT. TENT - DAY

A spotlight hits a closed red curtain and drums roll. The crowded audience buzzes in anticipation.

Lonnie then emerges from the curtain and speaks to the audience.

LONNIE

(to crowd)

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, I have the pleasure of introducing to you...the world famous magician who for forty years has changed the art form of magic from a game of mere trickery to an otherworldly experience you must see to believe. Please welcome, THE MAGNIFICENT LEONARD!

The crowd erupts into applause. Leonard enters.

LEONARD OSWALD

(to crowd)

Thank you, thank you, dear souls.
I'm so glad to see you again.

From Leonard's perspective, he scans the crowd. Crowley is among the people.

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)

I'd like to begin tonight by earning your trust. My profession relies entirely on your ability to believe everything that I say...so that I may do the exact opposite.

The crowd laughs.

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)

So, I'll turn it over to you, my friends. Call out a trick and I will perform it. Go ahead, any one you like.

The crowd buzzes. Then, suddenly, Crowley's voice rises above the rest.

EZRA CROWLEY

The bullet catch.

The room goes silent. Lonnie rushes out to the stage.

LONNIE

No! That trick is too dangerous!

LEONARD OSWALD

(to Lonnie)

It's all right, my little Lonnie.

LONNIE

(in a forceful whisper)

But the curse!

LEONARD OSWALD

(to Crowley)

Sir, that is a very treacherous illusion.

EZRA CROWLEY

Then maybe you'll need a hand.

Crowley slowly makes his way to the stage, removing his gun from its holster. Leonard looks at the gun.

LEONARD OSWALD

I won't tell you where they've gone.

EZRA CROWLEY

It doesn't matter. I'll find them. I found you, didn't I?

LEONARD OSWALD

(to audience)

Ladies and Gentlemen, it's been my pleasure performing for you...

Leonard stares deeply into Crowley's eyes and gives him a small, knowing smile.

LEONARD OSWALD (CONT'D)

And now for my final trick...

MONTAGE -

Various images depicting Nada and the Boy riding westward and bonding further are shown. The Boy attempts to read one of Nada's books. Nada easily defeats the Boy in a game of chess, etc.

Crowley is shown close on their tail. He studies the remains of a watered-down campfire, etc.

The weather is getting colder. Snow falls. Steam rises from Nada's horse's nostrils.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - DAY

Nada and the Boy ride their horse into town.

BOY

(to Nada)

Are we here?

NADA

Not yet. We have one last stop to make.

INT. BENOIT'S HOME - DAY

Nada and the Boy enter BENOIT BADEAUX'S home.

Benoit is seated at a table with a CHESS BOARD fully assembled. He speaks with a fairly thick French accent and is up in years.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Sit down...if you feel like embarrassing yourself in front of the boy.

BOY

He'll beat you. He's the best player I ever saw.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Oh, is he now? Let's find out, shall we?

Nada sits down at the table. He and Benoit are staring each other down. The tension fills the room.

BENOIT BADEAUX (CONT'D)

I'll even make it easy for you.

Benoit turns the board around so that Nada is white.

BENOIT BADEAUX (CONT'D)

Your move.

Nada never breaks eye contact with Benoit as he makes the first move and they begin to play. The Boy watches intently.

Both Nada and Benoit make four moves. Benoit moves his BISHOP into checkmate position.

BENOIT BADEAUX (CONT'D)

Checkmate.

They stare at each other for a moment longer and then, simultaneously, burst into laughter.

The Boy is confused.

BENOIT BADEAUX (CONT'D)

I can still beat you in four moves, Billy! Whatever you've been doing for thirty years, it wasn't playing chess.

NADA

(to Boy, through laughter)

I'm sorry, boy... This is Benoit Badeaux, 'the fastest guns in the west.' He's an old friend, the man who taught me how to play chess.

BENOIT BADEAUX

That's a poor reflection on me, Billy (chuckles) and I don't know what he's told you, but we weren't only old friends, we were business partners. I was the partner of "The Cleverest Criminal is Six Counties."

NADA

That's why I'm here, to apologize for leaving you all those years ago.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Save your words. They are useless on me. Grudges are for foolish men, Billy. I made do without you.

NADA

What have you been doin' with yourself?

BENOIT BADEAUX

The only thing I can do, live, Billy. I hustle this game in saloons with fucking monkeys. There's not a decent player in town. That's what I've been reduced to, *the great gunslinger*, HA!

Nada turns to the Boy.

NADA

(to Boy)

Why don't you let us catch up for a bit. Go outside and play. Fiddle around. Be a kid for Christ's sake.

The Boy does as he is told and exits.

BENOIT BADEAUX

He's a good boy. He yours?

NADA

By the process of elimination.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Well, God has a plan. Believe in that, Billy.

NADA

God? That don't sound much like you.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Yes. You're not the only one who's changed, Billy. When you get to be our age, it gets easier to accept Him. Maybe it's the thought of going nowhere when you die.

NADA

Or going somewhere with a less agreeable climate than Kansas.

Benoit smiles.

NADA (CONT'D)

Ain't it hard to figure? I mean, you gotta bite off a lot.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Billy, after searching my whole life I found what I was looking for in God.

NADA

What were you looking for?

BENOIT BADEAUX

Peace, Billy. All of us old timers, we're looking for peace. If all I gotta do is look up in the sky and believe He's up there somewhere to get my peace, then fine.

NADA

You think we deserve it?

BENOIT BADEAUX

You don't?

NADA

I don't know.

BENOIT BADEAUX

It's only those who first trespass who can then be forgiven.

NADA

Don't spit that preachin' at me.

BENOIT BADEAUX

(lightly laughs)

Same old Billy. Hard as stone. I won't preach anymore.

(MORE)

BENOIT BADEAUX (CONT'D)

I don't want to do anything besides talk like two old fools with a few marbles left upstairs... It's good to have you back.

EXT. OUTSIDE BENOIT'S HOME - DAY

The Boy stands outside, waiting for Nada, playing with the cards he received from Leonard. He tries to stick one up he shirt sleeve.

Behind him Crowley rides through town on his horse. Neither of them see each other.

INT. BENOIT'S HOME - DAY

Benoit and Nada speak.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Why don't you talk? Is there something wrong, Billy?

NADA

You ever get the feeling like the mistakes you've made are catchin' up with you?

INT. BAR - DAY

Crowley enters a BAR, walks up to the bar itself and takes a seat beside a tall, thin, balding man with large, eerie eyes and a skeletal face. This is CHESTER BOGGS. Chester fidgets, looking at Crowley out of the corner of his eye.

CHESTER BOGGS

(to Crowley)
Hello.

EZRA CROWLEY

Howdy.

CHESTER BOGGS

You seem lost.

EZRA CROWLEY

Actually, I'm looking for someone, but I need a drink.

CHESTER BOGGS

Who are you looking for?

EZRA CROWLEY

You wouldn't happen to have heard of Bill Childs?

CHESTER BOGGS

Of course I have. He's more famous around here than Santa Claus.

EZRA CROWLEY

You wouldn't know what the feller looks like?

CHESTER BOGGS

Can't say that I do. Story is no ones seen 'em in a long time. But an old friend of his lives in town. A Frenchman that used to be part of his gang.

EZRA CROWLEY

(in shock)
Benoit Badeaux?!

CHESTER BOGGS

You've heard of him.

EZRA CROWLEY

They say he was the fastest in all territories.

CHESTER BOGGS

I wouldn't know. I'm not much of a gunsmith. My talents lie elsewhere.

Abruptly, a short, stocky BARTENDER rushes over to them in huff.

BARTENDER

(to Boggs)
Boggs! How many times I gotta tell you, you ain't welcome here! Get the FUCK outta my bar!

Boggs looks at Crowley without breaking his eerie cool.

CHESTER BOGGS

(to Crowley)
Shall I show you where you can find Badeaux?

INT. BENOIT'S HOME - DAY

Nada and Badeaux continue their conversation.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Why don't you stay with me for a while, Billy. You've been riding hard. Relax. Get your mind straight. Sleep in a bed.

NADA

I think I'll take you up on that... Do you know where I can get a drink around here?

BENOIT BADEAUX

There's a bar just across the way. I'd join you, but I've given up drink.

NADA

Boy, things have changed...

EXT. OUTSIDE BENOIT'S HOME - DAY

Nada locates the Boy behind Benoit's house.

NADA

(to Boy)

Keep playin', boy. I'll be back.

BOY

Where you goin'?

NADA

Just over yonder. Stay close.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - DAY

Nada walks toward the Bar while Crowley walks toward him, on his way to Benoit's. They pass each other without knowing who one another are.

INT. BENOIT'S HOME - DAY

Crowley enter's Benoit's home. Benoit has his back turned.

EZRA CROWLEY

So you're the great Benoit Badeaux.

Benoit is startled. He turns around and faces Crowley.

BENOIT BADEAUX

'Great' may be a bit of an exaggeration. What can I do for you?

EZRA CROWLEY

I'm lookin' for an old friend of yours. A man by the name of Bill Childs. He's got a boy with him.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Sir, Billy's been dead for over 30 years. Less you're huntin' ghosts, you're not gonna find him.

EZRA CROWLEY

I know you ain't gonna sell your buddy down the river. Everybody likes to talk, 'cept the people who know anythin'. But it don't matter. ...I thought he was supposed to be a great tracker. He couldn't find his pecker in the morning to take a piss.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Very rarely does the man live up to his name... (awkward pause) Do you plan to kill the boy? Is that what all this is about?

EZRA CROWLEY

About? Since when was anythin' about anythin'? ...The further I go along...the more I find... the more lost I get. Now I'm searchin' for more than just blood.

Crowley examines a PAWN on the chess board. Tension builds in the silence. Benoit looks frightened. Their eyes meet.

BENOIT BADEAUX

Come now. We're both God-fearin' men. I never did anything to cross you.

EZRA CROWLEY

But you did.

BENOIT BADEAUX

What?

EZRA CROWLEY
A small thing. You lived a big
life.

Crowley removes his gun.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)
Can I do you the honor of making
you immortal?

BENOIT BADEAUX
(thinking quick)
I challenge you to a game.

He points to the chess board.

EZRA CROWLEY
I ain't gonna play ya. I'm gonna
shoot ya.

BENOIT BADEAUX
You can't ignore a challenge.
There's a code among men. If I win,
I live. If you win...well...

EZRA CROWLEY
Code? There's no code, no rules,
just two men and a gun.

BENOIT BADEAUX
Then at least let me fight for my
life. Let's draw on each other,
like honorable men.

EZRA CROWLEY
You mean I get to draw against
Benoit Badeaux, the fastest guns in
the west?

BENOIT BADEAUX
Yes. That's right.

EZRA CROWLEY
You just say when...

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - DAY

The Boy puts his playing cards away and starts walking in the
direction of Nada. He stumbles through the town, drawing
strange looks from the passerby.

He gets close to the bar. He hears a voice that stops him.

CHESTER BOGGS
How ya doin' there, Boy?

BOY
Hi.

Chester walks up to him.

CHESTER BOGGS
I like your get-up. Do you like
playing dress-up? You know, I got
all sorts of fancy clothes you can
try on if ya like.

Chester rubs the Boy's cheek with his thumb.

CHESTER BOGGS (CONT'D)
I'm Chester. What's your name?

The Boy doesn't respond.

CHESTER BOGGS (CONT'D)
Where's your pa?

INT. BAR - DAY

Nada sits at the bar, staring at a SHOT GLASS of whiskey. He
looks out the window and sees Boggs talking to the Boy.

NADA
Ah, shit!

He gets up from his stool and heads toward the door.

INT. BENOIT'S HOME - DAY

Crowley and Benoit sit across from each other at Benoit's
table.

EZRA CROWLEY
So how ya wanna do this?

Benoit removes a small wand and whips it through the air,
releasing bubbles.

BENOIT BADEAUX
I bought this from a odd little man
who come through here some time
ago. The delicacy is what struck
me. How something so fragile could
be so perfect. Is there anything
more beautiful than a bubble?

EZRA CROWLEY
Quit stallin'.

BENOIT BADEAUX
All right then. I'll quit stallin'.
When the bubble pops...

Benoit takes a CIGAR, puts it to his mouth and takes a long drag. He then puts his lips up to the bubble wand and blows the smoke into a bubble.

A cloudy, smoke filled bubble lingers in the air for a moment and then begins to descend toward the ground.

Crowley and Benoit look at each other back and forth as the bubble drifts downward, tension building. It finally pops and releases the smoke from within it. The sounds of two gun shots follow.

Benoit is dead, his corpse propped against his chair. Crowley puts his gun back in its holster and departs.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN - DAY

Chester is still harassing the Boy. Nada confronts him.

NADA
What the hell do you think you're doing?

CHESTER BOGGS
(to Nada, intimidated)
Just asking the young gentlemen how he got to be out here by himself.

NADA
(to Boy)
I told you to stay at Benoit's.

CHESTER BOGGS
He's such a handsome boy. You shouldn't leave him by his lonesome. There's no tellin' what can happen to him.

Nada angrily grabs Boggs by his shirt and pulls him close.

NADA
You sick son of a bitch!

Nada puts his other hand on the stock of his gun.

Suddenly a gun shot is heard.

Nada is surprised. Boggs eyes go dead. His body slumps out of Nada's hand, hitting the ground.

Crowley is revealed to be the gunman. The Boy sees Crowley and moves close to Nada, grabbing his hand.

EZRA CROWLEY

(to Nada)

So I finally caught up with you,
Bill. You just go around in circles
like a lost dog... I thought the
Great William Childs was after me.
Turns out I've been chasing a
washed-up old man instead!

NADA

Then let's call it even. You go
your way and we'll go ours.

EZRA CROWLEY

How about the boy? He let out into
Real Gone and came back. When he
gets older and his hate turn to
stone, I reckon he won't forget my
name...

Suddenly, from behind the town's SHERIFF walks up to Crowley and hits him with the stock of his rifle in the back of the head, knocking Crowley unconscious.

SHERIFF 2

Stupid sombitch.

Nada and the Boy walk over to Crowley's body. The Boy studies it suspiciously.

NADA

(to Sheriff)

What are ya going to do with him?

SHERIFF 2

He killt two men out in the open.
We're gonna hang him.

NADA

Two men?

SHERIFF 2

He killt a Frenchmen not ten
minutes ago. Walked right in and
shot 'em where he sat.

Nada's eyes become heavy. The Sheriff kicks Crowley's body.

SHERIFF 2 (CONT'D)

You better get outta town, you and
your boy.

Nada nods to the Sheriff.

NADA

(to Boy)
Come on, Boy.

The Sheriff watches them go and then speaks with a fellow
LAWMAN after looking up at the clouds.

SHERIFF 2

(to Lawman)
Storm's comin'.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Crowley sits in a jail cell alone. There's a window and he
peers out of it, watching an execution by hanging take place
outside.

HANGMAN (O.C.)

(to Crowley)
You're next, you know.

Crowley looks at the direction of a voice. A man about equal
in size sits there, studying him.

EZRA CROWLEY

Who are you?

HANGMAN

I'm the man who's gonna do it. And
you know what else? I'm gonna enjoy
it. Tomorrow mornin' you'll be
roastin' like a little piggy.

The Hangman lets out a raspy laugh.

Crowley chuckles facetiously along. He then looks at the LOCK
of the jail cell, which is incredibly old and rusted. Crowley
lets out a small, but devilish grin. He then looks at the
Hangman's boots.

EZRA CROWLEY

Say, how big would ya say them
boots are?

EXT. WESTERN TOWN/HANGING STRUCTURE - MORNING

Snow falls steadily to the ground.

Crowley, disguised as the Hangman (unknown by audience), already wearing the hangman's mask, escorts a flailing and kicking masked man to the hanging structure. The masked man is the Hangman himself. His hands are tied and he's kicking wildly, trying to get loose from Crowley's grip.

Crowley knocks the Hangman unconscious with a CLUB. With the help of a few LAWMEN, they prop the Hangman up and put a NOOSE around his neck.

A crowd looks on.

EZRA CROWLEY
(speaking to the Hangman)
Ezra Crowley, you have been
sentenced to hang until you are
dead for the murders of Benoit
Badeaux and Chester Boggs. May God
have mercy on your soul.

Crowley pulls the lever, sending the Hangman through the floorboard, killing him.

EXT. WESTERN TOWN/HANGING STRUCTURE - MORNING

The Lawmen drag the Hangman's body over to the side and remove the hood, revealing that the body does in fact belong to the Hangman and not Crowley. The Hangman's mouth is gagged.

All the deputies react in shock and horror.

EXT. OUTSIDE WESTERN TOWN/OPEN TERRITORY - MORNING

Crowley rides his horse like a bat out of Hell. He removes his hangman's mask and looks back toward the town.

EXT. OPEN TERRITORY - DAY

Nada and the Boy are stuck in a heavy snow storm. The Boy sits on the horse as Nada leads the horse on foot. It's a whiteout and they're near blind.

Nada peers out into the distance. He makes a face of disbelief as he sees the outline of Crowley.

NADA
(to Boy)
Stay here. I'll be right back.

Nada trudges forward, getting closer to Crowley.

NADA (CONT'D)
Crowley is that you!? You're
supposed to be dead.

EZRA CROWLEY
So are you. Seem no one likes to
stay dead around here.

Nada hesitates, is hand over his pistol. He removes it and begins firing wildly into the white. Crowley returns the gun fire. They move around, firing aimlessly, missing each other. The rounds zing past their heads.

Nada then hears his horse making loud noises. He panics. Both he and Crowley are out of ammunition. Nada disappears into the whiteout.

Crowley removes his knife. He sees what he believes to be Nada and starts trudging toward him. He stabs forward, landing the knife into the trunk of a tree.

Nada is shown escaping into a nearby forest with the Boy in tow.

EXT. SNOWY CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Nada and the Boy are wrapped up in their heavy coats, shivering.

BOY
Can't we build a fire?

NADA
Not if we don't want Crowley to
know exactly where we are.

BOY
We'll freeze to death.

NADA
It's a possibility.

Long pause.

NADA (CONT'D)

"It is snow that causes swells in her chest and her smile is what always stirs mine. A flower at worst, an angel at best, she stands, warm in winter, frozen in time."

Long pause.

BOY

This lady friend of yours...You got history, huh?

NADA

Yeah.

BOY

If we survive this 'n you two hook up ways again, maybe all this won't be in vain.

NADA

You think this was all in vain?

BOY

It wadn't for me.

NADA

...Well, it wasn't for me, either...But you didn't get what you were after.

Short pause.

BOY

No. (looking at Nada) I got something else.

EXT. HAMMERVILLE - EVENING

Nada and the Boy ride into Hammerville. The approach a boisterous brothel.

INT. INSIDE BROTHEL - EVENING

Nada and the Boy enter the brothel. Beautiful PROSTITUTES parade themselves before mangy COWBOYS.

Nada and the Boy walk to the center of the room.

NADA
 (to room)
 Excuse me! (louder) Excuse me!

The room quiets down.

NADA (CONT'D)
 (to room)
 I'm looking for a woman by the name
 of Desdemona. Does anybody know
 where I can find her?

DESDEMONA appears at the top of a staircase. She is middle-aged (50s) beauty dressed in a provocative, yet elegant dress.

DESDEMONA
 Bill?

She gets Nada's attention and he looks up at her. He removes his hat and gives her a gracious nod "hello."

NADA
 Hello.

There are tears welling up in Desdemona's eyes.

INT. WASHROOM - NIGHT

A few Prostitutes pour buckets of hot water into a bath. The Boy sits inside the tub. One Prostitute begins to pour a bucket of water over the Boy's head. He ducks forward, avoiding getting his head wet.

BOY
 (referring to face paint)
 Not my face, please.

The Prostitute pours the water into the tub.

INT. DESDEMONA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Desdemona and Nada sit across from each other. Nada's hair is wet and his face is clean.

NADA
 (to Desdemona)
 Thank you for letting us get
 cleaned up.

DESDEMONA
 Sure.

There is awkward, emotional tension between them.

NADA

Des, I've thought about what I wanted to tell ya for thirty years...

DESDEMONA

(fighting tears)

Don't, Bill. A lot of false words have been spoken in this room, I don't need any from you. It don't matter where ya been or why ya left.

NADA

I wish I had the time to explain myself, but I don't. The longer I sit here the more I put you and the boy in danger.

DESDEMONA

Danger? What have you got yourself into?

NADA

If all goes well, I'll be able to tell ya the whole damned story, but right now I need two things from you, 'n I know it's presumptuous as all Hell for me to come back here all these years later, after what I put ya through and impose, but--

DESDEMONA

(cutting him off)

Get to it, Bill.

NADA

I came here so you can look after him.

Nada motions in the direction of the washroom.

NADA (CONT'D)

He got nobody left to take care of him.

DESDEMONA

He got you, don't he?

NADA

You know better than anyone, that ain't sayin' much.

DESDEMONA

I always thought you was big as a mountain, Bill. Still do.

Awkward beat.

NADA

There's a man after him. The feller won't quit and I can't protect him, but with you, he'll get a home... a mother.

They lock eyes. A tear rolls down Desdemona's cheek.

NADA (CONT'D)

(bashfully, timid)

I know you always wanted a child. So, I finally come to make good on my promise... Will you look after him?

DESDEMONA

(hesitating)

He'll be safe here...

Desdemona wipes her tears away with the back of her hand, composing herself.

DESDEMONA (CONT'D)

What do you plan to do about this man?

NADA

I've been thinkin' on it. If I know you, 'bout everyone in town owes you a favor. I need you to point me in the direction of a man with nothing to lose.

Short pause.

DESDEMONA

Everybody got sumthin' to lose, Bill. What you need is a man who don't mind losing it and I know just the feller...

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nada spots TERRENCE "DEADEYE" LYNCH in the back corner of the bar, sitting by himself, peeling an ORANGE. Nada approaches him.

NADA
(to Lynch)
You Terrence Lynch? They call you
'Deadeye?'

TERRENCE LYNCH
(makes unhappy noise)
I hate that name. I miss often
enough.

NADA
I'm--

TERRENCE LYNCH
I know who you are, Mr. Childs.
Word is you're back from the dead
and word like that travels fast.
Have a seat.

Nada sits down.

NADA
I don't have the luxury of going
into the particulars. But I told
Desdemona I needed a man who knows
how to kill. She said you'd oblige
me.

TERRENCE LYNCH
Why? You need a man dead?

NADA
He hasn't left me a lot of choice.
If he don't die... my boy will.
This man Crowley has made killing
his profession.

TERRENCE LYNCH
Hold it, the man who's after you is
Ezra Crowley?

NADA
You heard of him?

TERRENCE LYNCH
Hell, he's almost as famous as you
these days. I heard about the
massacre. Brutal thing. Is there
nuthin' a man won't do anymore?

NADA
So you'll take it on?

Terrence pauses. He eats some of his orange.

TERRENCE LYNCH

I'll help you kill him, but I want somethin' in return. You agree to do something for me and I'll make sure you and your boy can keep breathing.

NADA

What did you have in mind?

TERRENCE LYNCH

I'm drawin' tomorrow with some stupid asshole who's bent about me ballin' his sister. He wants to settle it with guns. Fine by me. He wants to die in the sun, that's his road... But I know for a fact that silly boy's got it cropped up in his head to get one of his buddies perched up on a roof with a rifle. No matter what happens tomorrow, I'm going to be six feet under...What I want you to do is put a gun on that rifleman and send him to Hell before he gets a chance to send me. If you do that, I'll take ya on.

NADA

You're asking me to kill a man.

TERRENCE LYNCH

You're asking the same. Fair is fair. One life for another. Even swap. Whaddya say?

Nada thinks. His eyes are pained and stressed. He looks up toward Desdemona's room.

NADA

I'll do it.

TERRENCE LYNCH

Fine. How long till Crowley grants us the pleasure of his company?

NADA

He could be here already for all I know, but we lost him in last night's storm. It should've slowed him down.

Terrence pauses for a moment, contemplates.

TERRENCE LYNCH
All right. Here's what we do...

EXT. OUTSIDE BROTHEL - NIGHT

Nada and Terrence speak with a RIDER who is propped up on Nada's horse.

TERRENCE LYNCH
(to Rider)
I want you to ride like Hell to the next town. When you get there, ditch the horse, wait three days and then come back. Ya hear?

The Rider nods.

TERRENCE LYNCH (CONT'D)
All right. Get riding.

Terrence then walks over to an OLD MAN sitting in a ROCKING CHAIR outside of the brothel.

TERRENCE LYNCH (CONT'D)
(to Old Man)
You. A man's gonna be headed this way. When he starts asking about this man (motions to Nada) and a little boy, you tell 'em they already left out just moments before. Tell 'em they was in hurry.

The Old Man nods in agreement.

TERRENCE LYNCH (CONT'D)
(to Nada)
Now, when Crowley rides through, he'll think he's right on top of ya. He'll let out and find nothing but darkness. Then tomorrow after the duel, we'll set out and be behind him.

NADA
Good.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - NIGHT

Terrence stands at the window looking down at where the Old Man in the rocking chair is sitting.

Crowley approaches on horseback. He converses with the Old Man who points in the direction out of town. Crowley begins to ride in haste.

TERRENCE LYNCH
 (to Nada, Desdemona and
 Boy)
 Looks like he fell for it.

BOY
 What happens when he doesn't find
 us out there?

TERRENCE LYNCH
 He'll ride all through the night,
 thinkin' he's just one step behind
 ya. By the time Bill and I head out
 tomorrow, he should have half a day
 on us, but don't worry, we'll catch
 up to him.

NADA
 (to Boy)
 Why don't you get some sleep now.

DESDEMONA
 (to Boy)
 Yeah! I made up a bed, 'specially
 for you. Come on.

TERRENCE LYNCH
 (to Bill)
 Can I buy ya a drink?

Nada nods in acceptance.

EXT. OUTSIDE BROTHEL - NIGHT

Nada and Lynch sit outside in rocking chairs drinking
 whiskey.

NADA
 That was thinkin' quick.

TERRENCE LYNCH
 I ain't just fast with pistols. I
 like to imagine they call me
 'Deadeye' 'cause I got vision...

NADA
 Are you nervous about tomorrow?

TERRENCE LYNCH

You mean the dueling? Nah. It's a common enough occurrence around here. You?

NADA

I'd be lying if I said I wasn't.

TERRENCE LYNCH

People die every day...and as unnatural as can be. This country has a high price...

NADA

I guess there's no escapin'.

Long pause.

TERRENCE LYNCH

(somewhat timid)

So is it true what they say about ya?

Nada noisily exhales.

NADA

...I don't know.

INT. WASHROOM - MORNING

Nada gets sick in the washbasin.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - MORNING

The Boy and Desdemona sleep side by side, Desdemona's arm over the Boy's head as he's snuggled into her.

Nada emerges from the washroom. The Boy and Desdemona stir. Nada begins to walk to the door.

BOY

You goin'?

NADA

Yeah...

DESDEMONA

Come back, ya hear.

Nada nods.

NADA

What are you two gonna do?

Desdemona looks at the Boy and smiles.

DESDEMONA

Get to know each other.

NADA

All right. It's time. This won't take long.

Nada and the Boy's eyes meet. Nada hesitates for a moment and then exits.

INT. SECOND BROTHEL ROOM - MORNING

Crowley is sitting in the dark in the adjoining brothel bedroom, his hand trembling.

EXT. HAMMERVILLE - MORNING

A crowd is beginning to form in the city. Lynch is standing on the side of the road, picking his teeth with a TOOTH PICK. His OPPONENT stumbles into the road.

Nada walks through the street and makes eye contact with Lynch. He slips behind a building and finds a rifle leaned up against it. He then looks around and spots the RIFLEMAN taking position on a rooftop.

The town's CLOCK reads eight to noon.

Nada sees that Terrence and his opponent have taken positions in the road. The Townspeople wait in anticipation.

Nada then steps out a little bit from behind his cover, making himself visible to the Rifleman.

NADA

(quietly)

Look...look...over here...look...

Eventually the Rifleman takes notice and gets panicked, turning his gun toward Nada. The clock reads five to noon.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - MORNING

Desdemona lounges in bed.

DESDEMONA

Don't worry. It'll all be over soon.

The Boy nods to Desdemona, then attempts to put his headdress on. It's too small. He looks at it funny.

The noise of the door opening is then heard. Desdemona and the Boy look toward it, the color leaving their faces. A gun cocks. Crowley enters the room and aims toward the Boy.

Desdemona gets up from the bed. She opens her mouth to say something, but Crowley fires and kills her. The Boy slumps beside her corpse and begins to cry. Crowley walks toward him.

Crowley points his gun toward the Boy again, his finger pressing the trigger. The Boy composes himself, gets to his feet and wipes his tears away, clearing some of his make-up off, revealing his normal face.

BOY

(strong)

Go ahead if ya must...

Crowley looks at the Boy crooked, seeing his young face for the first time.

EXT. HAMMERVILLE - MORNING

The tension builds for the duel. The Clock strikes noon.

Terrence and his Opponent draw. Terrence shoots his opponent, killing him. The Rifleman on the roof immediately turns his gun away from Nada and fires down at Terrence, killing him. Nada shoots his rifle toward the Rifleman, but misses. The Rifleman quickly turns back toward Nada and fires a round into his shoulder, knocking Nada to the ground.

The dust settles, the town is quiet, the Rifleman has disappeared and everyone else is dead. Nada struggles to his feet and looks toward the brothel. A muffled GUNSHOT coming from Crowley is heard. Nada makes a face of panic.

INT. BROTHEL ROOM - MORNING

Crowley has fired his gun past the Boy, shattering the window beside him. There is a long intense moment as Crowley continues to point the gun at the Boy. Crowley begins to crack, his eyes are conflicted. He lowers his gun.

EZRA CROWLEY
 (under his breath, to
 himself)
You're a kid...

The Boy silently cries thick tears as he tries to keep a strong face.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)
 (to Boy)
 Ya know, I come a long way to kill ya, 'n a'lotta men died by my hand that were far better than you.

BOY
 Why don't you quit stallin' and get it over with?

EZRA CROWLEY
 You're tough as nails, that much is true. But what have ya done? Not a damned thing far as I can see... All this time I was expectin' to catch up with a phantom, "The Boy who returned from Real Gone." You know they're sayin' you inherited the souls of a thousand dead Injuns? (laughs to himself, followed by reflective, serious pause) ...but now that I'm lookin' at ya, I see nuthin' but a scared little boy with no name for himself. And Bill, he ain't half what the world thinks he is... He ain't worth the lead... That paint you wear don't make a bit of difference, boy. You can't be somethin' you're not.

BOY
 If I'm just a boy... then you're just a man. I heard what they say about you. You're no devil.

Pause.

EZRA CROWLEY
 I'm sick... It's me.

Long pause. Tears surface at Crowley's bloodshot eyes.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)
 I'm bettin' you'd like to see me dead.

(MORE)

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)

That you'd shoot me where I stand
if you had half the chance... Well,
here.

Crowley hands the Boy his gun. The Boy examines it. He then slowly raises it and points it at Crowley. The intensity is unbearable.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Do sumthin'.

The Boy intently aims. His finger twitches over the trigger, but then he lowers the gun. Crowley looks at him in a way that conveys an understanding.

EZRA CROWLEY (CONT'D)

Come and find me when you got a
name.

Crowley turns to exit.

BOY

(halting Ezra at the door)
I forgive you.

Ezra turns and looks at the Boy, surprised, puzzled.

BOY (CONT'D)

...For tryin' to kill me...for
everything ya done... I forgive
you...(long pause. Ezra listens
intently) You ain't gonna see me
again. I'm not gonna call on ya,
not for blood... not for
anything... this is the last time
I'm even gonna think about
ya...(long pause) You're gonna have
to live with what ya done... 'n I'm
not gonna live with it, too.

Ezra looks at the Boy, shaken by his words. He then turns and exits.

The Boy looks at the door for a moment, processing the event. He then looks at Desdemona on the ground and kneels beside her.

Moments later Nada bursts into the room and finds them. Tears are in his eyes. They then roll into the back of his head and he collapses to the floor, his shoulder wound heavily bleeding. The Boy rushes to 'em.

NADA
 (weak)
 What happened? I thought--

BOY
 It's over. Crowley's gone and he's
 gonna stay gone.

Nada tilts his head back and sees the corpse of Desdemona. He winces in emotional pain.

BOY (CONT'D)
 I'll get you outta here...

EXT. OPEN TERRITORY - DAY

The Boy is riding the horse, Nada behind him, blood still trickling from his wound. He is weak, his eyes half open.

NADA
 (in a weak whisper)
 Where we headed?

BOY
 Home.

Long pause.

NADA
 I'm sorry. I let you down. I let
 'em all down.

BOY
 They was let down long before you.

Tears roll down Nada's face. He coughs a deathly cough.

NADA
 I don't want this to end.

Pause.

BOY
 Everything ends.

Nada's eyes widen and then go dead.

EXT. OLD WEST TOWN - DAY

Rainy snow falls to the ground as the Boy rides through the center of town, Nada's corpse propped up behind him.

The Townspeople begin to exit their homes and watch them.

At the rim of Real Gone stands Preacher Aldous. He watches as the Boy rides past him, a symbol of his corruption and failure. The Boy stares deeply into Real Gone, determination in his eyes.

Preacher Aldous makes a slight face of confusion as he peers towards Real Gone, the wood no longer twisted and sinister, but appearing normal.

The Boy and the corpse of Nada vanish among the trees.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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