

SCRIPT TITLE

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FADE IN

EXT. JAG'S TAVERN IN CRAG CORNERS, COLORADO - NIGHT

A muddy pick-up skids to a halt in the dirt parking lot. Three men tumble out, laughing, fake boxing with each other. They stumble up the tavern's steps, go inside.

INT. JAG'S TAVERN - NIGHT

A Country Western band plays on a stage festooned with Christmas lights. The female singer is singing the song "When Will I be Loved." PEGGY and ALLISON, married women, 40'ish, sit at a table near the stage.

The drunks pass behind their chairs. One trips, almost topples on top of Peggy.

DRUNK MAN

'Scuse me, darlin'.

She pushes him. The drunk men laugh, continue on their ways. Peggy scowls after them.

PEGGY

This place gets worse every time
we're here.

Allison searches the dark bar room.

ALLISON

Where did Josie disappear to?

The singer belts out the last verses of the song. JOSIE, an attractive brunette in her early 40's, clumsily sits down in a chair across the table from the two women. Peggy points.

PEGGY

There she is.

DARNELL, Josie's drunken would-be suitor, kneels on one knee next to her chair. They sing the last verse of the song together.

JOSIE AND DARNELL

(in unison)

When will I bee.... Loooovveddd.

DARNELL

I love ya, Josie!

JOSIE
The hell you do! You jus' want in
my panties!

DARNELL
I love them, too! Come home with
me, an' I'll show you how much.

Josie laughs, looks away, then back.

JOSIE
Are you a woodsman, Darnell?

Her girlfriends scoff. Darnell levels solemn eyes on her.

DARNELL
Why, Josie, yes I am.

He takes her hand, lowers it below the table's edge.

DARNELL (CONT'D)
There's my axe handle.

Darnell leers. Josie grins, squeezes. Pain contorts
Darnell's face.

PEGGY
Something wrong, Dar?

Darnell pulls himself out of Josie's grip, stands up. He
gulps the last of his beer, leans toward Josie.

DARNELL
You're crazy.

He walks away. Josie tips her empty beer bottle up, looks
inside, sets it back down. Allison motions for the waitress
(MEGAN).

ALLISON
Megan! Bring Josie another beer.
(to Josie)
Quit with that woodsman crap,
Josie. It's embarrassing.

Megan brings the beer. Josie takes a drink, turns in her
chair to watch the band play.

PEGGY
Good song! Let's go dance!

Josie waves her off. Her face is grim.

ALLISON

Come on, Jos'. Why can't we ever leave this place with you in as good a mood as when we came in?

JOSIE

Because I'm an ol' fuddy duddy, that's why.

She turns back toward them.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

Worse; I'm a single, 44-year-old fuddy duddy. Nobody wants me for more than a night.

PEGGY

Now, that isn't true! There's plenty of men who'd have you! Isn't there, Allison?

Allison nods vigorously.

ALLISON

Like that guy over there. Look how he's looking at you.

Josie turns clumsily in her chair, squints toward the bar. A man leers at her from his bar stool.

JOSIE

Tom McAlpine, yeah, he's the marrying kind. Just ask his wife.

Josie gulps the rest of her beer. She draws a picture of a bear paw print in the bottle's condensation.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

Doesn't matter. I'm waitin' for my woodsman, anyway.

Peggy sidewinds a look at Allison.

PEGGY

He's not real, Jos'.

ALLISON

Dreams are just made up in our heads. You're waiting for a man who doesn't exist!

JOSIE
 (loudly)
 He does, too, exist!

People stare at them. Peggy looks around, embarrassed.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
 Fine. Don't believe me, but he is
 real. I know it.

Someone walks past their table. Peggy glances up, then looks nervously at Josie.

PEGGY
 Uh, Jos'? Dean's here. With you-
 know- who.

Josie looks, locks eyes with a handsome man sitting down at a nearby table. He looks away first. A pretty, much younger blonde (CANDY) sits in the chair next to him. She grins, waves her fingers at Josie. Josie waves back.

JOSIE
 (under her breath)
 Screw you, too, Candy.

Josie's pager goes off. She looks at it, scowls.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
 Old man Patterson. His prize
 holstein isn't due to calf for
 another month. I better get over
 there and see what's up.

She searches for her purse.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
 Can you drop me off, Peg? I'm in
 no shape to drive.

PEGGY
 Wait. Aren't you going to start
 something with her?

JOSIE
 Start what?

PEGGY
 A fight! She stole your husband,
 she deserves it!

JOSIE
 A life with him is punishment
 enough.

PEGGY
Damn. Come on, then.

Peggy stands up, digs for her keys.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The three women walk to Peggy's car. Allison and Peggy walk ahead, talking, laughing. Josie follows, pulling her jean jacket on. She stops, struggling with one sleeve.

JOSIE
Wait up, girls! I'm havin' some
trouble here-

A noise comes from the trees nearby. She lifts her head, listening. She hears it again: a low-pitched, pitiful whine. She pushes her arm into the sleeve and walks toward the dark trees.

EXT. PEGGY'S CAR - NIGHT

Peggy unlocks her car door.

ALLISON
Hurry, I'm freezing!

PEGGY
Where's Josie?

She looks around the parking lot, sees her.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Josie! Come on!

EXT. JAG'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Josie looks at the trees, then trots to Peggy's car.

INT. PEGGY'S CAR - NIGHT

Josie settles into the back seat. Peggy starts the car. Allison turns the radio on; Bobby Darin's "Dream Lover" is playing. Josie leans forward between her two friends.

JOSIE
Hear that? That's a sign!

ALLISON
You're drunk, Jos'.

Josie curls up against the back seat. She looks out the back window at the stars.

EXT. PAVED ROAD - NIGHT

The car drives through the cold night. The song "Dream Lover" fades into the night.

INT. VETERINARIAN OFFICE - DAY

A pretty Native American woman (SUSAN) dressed in surgical scrubs adjusts the light above an operating room table where an anesthetized cat lies on it's back. Josie scrubs up at a nearby sink.

SUSAN

She's out.

Susan walks to the sink, holds latex gloves as Josie pushes her hands into them. She walks behind her and ties a mask over Josie's lower face.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

You look a little green around the gills.

JOSIE

That didn't take long.

Susan chuckles, ties a mask across her own mouth.

SUSAN

Mr. Patterson. He called first thing this morning, asking if we could knock some off his bill on account the veterinarian showed up drunk.

JOSIE

Subtract ten percent. That'll appease him.

She scratches the unconscious cat between it's ears.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

You ready for this, Petunia?

Susan positions herself on the other side of the table. She reaches up, adjusts the microphone that hangs from the ceiling. Josie speaks into the microphone.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

OK. Petunia. Female American Tabby. Four years old. Owner is, and I quote, 'damned tired of trying to give away kittens every four months.'

Susan wiggles her finger at Josie in mock scolding.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

Strike that. Petunia. Orange female tabby. We are spaying her today. Anaesthetic administered at approximately 0-900 hours. Time is now 0-915. Animal is prepped, and we're ready to begin.

Susan hands Josie a scalpel. Josie takes it, looks at the other woman.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

That better, mother?

Susan chuckles.

SUSAN

Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to work for a serious vet.

Josie concentrates on making the first incision.

JOSIE

Boring and predictable. Besides, I'm the only vet for fifty miles. You're stuck with me.