

SCRIPT TITLE

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EXT. MAIN STREET, DOWNTOWN JEWEL - DAY

The bus pulls to the curb; it's doors open. Linda, returning to Jewel, descends the steps. She looks around, then helps her mixed-race young son (RICKY) to the sidewalk. The driver sets two suitcases on the curb, climbs back on the bus. He drives away. Linda picks up the suitcases.

People stare as the two walk up Main street. Ricky studies the hostile faces.

LINDA  
Stay close, Ricky.

They reach the town's hotel.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Three men loiter in the lobby. One MAN sees Linda, nudges the man next to him.

MAN  
Looky there.

Linda greets the desk attendant (CARL).

LINDA  
Hello, Carl. Still runnin' this hole, I see.

He doesn't answer. Linda side winds a glance at the men, then back at Carl.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
We need a room.

Carl flicks a look at the men.

CARL  
For how long?

LINDA  
Just for tonight.

Linda signs the registry. Carl eyes Ricky, hands Linda a key.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
Best room in the house, hey Carl?

CARL  
That'll be twenty dollars.

Linda hands him some bills. She turns away from the desk.

CARL (CONT'D)  
 Just one night, Linda.  
 (beat)  
 And no visitors.

The men laugh. Linda blanches, turns to face them.

LINDA  
 Won't be needin' a room after  
 tonight. Still got my place out by  
 the pines, unless your wife burned  
 it down after I left.  
 (beat)  
 Tell me, Carl. Did you ever get  
 that little problem you had fixed?

CARL  
 What problem's that?

LINDA  
 You know, that  
 (beat)  
 little one.

His grin falls away. The men laugh harder. Linda leads  
 Ricky toward the stairway.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

She closes the door, locks it. Ricky makes his way around  
 the dingy room, runs his finger across a table's dusty  
 surface.

Linda opens a suitcase across the bed, lifts out a photograph  
 of an African American soldier holding a baby. She runs a  
 finger over it's creased surface. She sits down, cries into  
 her hands. Ricky goes to her, lays his head on her knees.

EXT. LINDA'S CABIN - NIGHT

A thunderstorm threatens. A silhouette passes across one of  
 the cabin's lit-up windows.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

A radio plays, crackles when it lightnings. Ricky sits at  
 the kitchen table, draws a picture with crayons. Linda sits  
 nearby holding a glass. A whiskey bottle rests on the floor  
 next to her.

A car pulls up; it's engine cuts. Linda straightens, wary.  
 She sets her glass on the floor, stands as footsteps come up  
 onto the porch. There is a rap at the door.

LINDA  
Who's there?

No answer. She steps toward the door. Ricky follows her.  
She stops short, recognizes who it is.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
What do you want?

EXT. CABIN'S PORCH - NIGHT

EARL  
Now, you ain't bein' very polite,  
Linda. After I come all this way--

LINDA  
Leave.

Earl chuckles. Linda glances at Ricky.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
You got no business here. I don't  
do that no more.

EXT. CABIN'S PORCH - NIGHT

EARL  
That right?