

SECOND CHANCES

Written by

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FADE IN

EXT. RUGGED OVERLOOK, SERENITY ACRES - MORNING

Thirty something, DANI, focused -- poised -- sits with attitude atop her Quarter horse BJ. She looks over a Bronze Memorial -- SERENITY ACRES;

This land is devoted to bringing joy and healing to all animals and children in need of Second Chances.

Dani leads BJ to a tree line -- she perks to a raised voice -- stops -- listens.

Dani takes a few steps. One hand on the reins -- the other -- raises her rifle.

Her eyes land on HANEY, thirty-four year old dirt bag, in the ravine, stands over his downed horse.

HANEY

I said get up you worthless, good
for nothing pile of sludge.

He raises his rifle.

BANG!

Dani lowers her rifle, smoke waifs from her barrel.

Haney howls, as his gun lay shattered ten feet away.

Dani sits stoic in her saddle.

CUT TO:

EXT. HANEY RANCH - DAY

A flurry of activity, yard resembles a dumping ground, OFFICER BANKS, a young rookie, walks the grounds with Dani.

OFFICER BANKS

We get a lot of complaints on
Haney's treatment of animals.

DANI

Give me five minutes with him. I'll
put an end to it real quick.

OFFICER BANKS

That's what I'm afraid of.

Three horse trailers which display "SERENITY ACRES", line the driveway. Three husky RANCH HANDS round up stray horses.

A second officer, WAYNE, drags a filthy Haney, hand wrapped in a towel, out of the house.

They walk past Dani, Haney stops, spits a disgusting wad just missing Dani's foot.

She locks her steely eyes onto his.

DANI
You evil little pig.

OFFICER BANKS
Get him out of here before I let
her at him.

Officer Banks drags Haney away.

DANI
If you're done, I need to get these
animals to a decent home.

OFFICER BANKS
Will you be alright?

DANI
I will be as soon as I get these
horses away from here.

OFFICER BANKS
I'll have someone check on you.

Dani runs to the edge of the pasture to a trailer housing Haney's latest victim. She reaches in and rubs his neck.

The horse doesn't respond, black eyes stare ahead.

DANI
You, I'll call Chance.

CUT TO:

INT. SERENITY ACRES - HORSE STABLE - DAY

HANK, middle aged with a bad attitude, attempts to put a lead on Chance. The wounded horse neighs in terror.

HANK
Either you stand still or I'll....

A hand drops on Hanks shoulder, yanks him around.

Hank stares into Dani's fierce eyes.

DANI
Outside, now.

Chance jacks his head up and down.

EXT. HORSE STABLE - CONTINUOUS

Hank and Dani storm out. Dani grabs Hank by the shoulder and turns him towards her.

DANI
Don't ever go off like that again
around the horses or you'll be the
one out on your tail.

Hank whips out of her hold.

HANK
Your dad never had a problem with
the way I did things.

DANI
Well, now I'm in charge.

A tough, 18 year old CONNOR loads a pickup truck twenty feet away, listens, slams a bale of hay on the ground.

CONNOR
Hey!

Dani and Hank ignore Connor.

Hank storms off. Connor sneers at Dani and runs after him.

DANI
Go after him. Maybe you can talk
sense into that father of yours.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Filthy inside. Garbage strewn around, chairs tipped over, remnants of a fight.

Sheriff VINCENT, chiseled and handsome thirty something, shuffles through trash. He uncovers boxes of computers hidden under a blanket, speaks into his mic.

VINCENT

No sign of life here, but seems I uncovered a stash of the schools stolen computers. Over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

10-4. I'll get the county guys over there to tape it up.

A straggly male stands at the doorway.

NEIGHBOR

Been about three days since the last big fight. I should've called sooner.

Vincent walks in further, kicks trash out of his way. Muffled sounds come from a closed door.

He opens it revealing a filthy bathroom, listens. The sound get's louder.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He puts his ear up to another door, turns the handle.

INT. CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

On the floor, huddled in the corner sits an angry, dirty, fifteen year old boy JORDAN.

Vincent goes down on one knee. They stare into each others eyes. Upset, Vincent turns away.

The boy wrapped in a filthy quilt, kicks at him.

Vincent stays put.

VINCENT

I'm Vincent. I won't hurt you.

The boy turns away. Head snaps back, anger and fear fills his eyes and words.

JORDAN

Leave me alone.

Vincent stands and turns. He brings his radio up to his lips.

VINCENT

I need a social worker out here. Now.

He clenches his jaw, kneels back down, faces Jordan.

CUT TO:

INT. SERENITY ACRES - HORSE STABLES - DAY

Dani walks from horse to horse with PATRICK, middle age, Ranch Manager and good guy, workaholic.

They pass Hank who glares after them, mumbles...

HANK

Still sucking up to the boss I see.

They walk to a stall. Another rescue Quarter horse from Haney's.

PATRICK

We'll call this one Spirit. It's in her somewhere.

Dani kneels, checks out Spirit's blistered legs.

DANI

I had another run in with Hank.

PATRICK

Since I hired his son, that chip on his shoulder's gotten bigger.

They continue through the stable.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Anything planned for the 4th?

DANI

Make sure no idiot with fireworks gets any foolish ideas around here. You?

PATRICK

Hang around here I guess.

Dani shakes her head in disappointment.

DANI

Your daughter ought to love that. You need to bring her around more often.

Patrick ignores her. They reach the end of the barn.

DANI (CONT'D)

You need to get on the phone about that grain order.

PATRICK

It came a week ago.

DANI

The guys are complaining it's gone.

PATRICK

Impossible. There were forty tons delivered. I signed for it myself.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTH PASTURE - EVENING

The moon shines bright on two grungy MEN who haul branches through the woods. They cover something up.

They get into a pick-up and rattle out of the woods through an opening in the fence.

CUT TO:

INT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

MISS PEALE, uptight Social Worker ready to retire, stands before JUDGE MANNING a fair, kind hearted and mildly jaded man. Behind her, small and annoyed, sits Jordan with his filthy quilt. Vincent sits behind him.

MISS PEALE

Your Honor, this boy has been...

JUDGE MANNING

Does he have a name, Miss Peale?

MISS PEALE

Jordan your Honor. As I was saying...

Judge Manning addresses Jordan.

JUDGE MANNING

How old are you, Jordan?

Jordan stands. Miss Peale pulls him back down.

MISS PEALE

He doesn't speak your Honor.

Judge Manning walks out from behind his desk, sits next to Jordan.

JUDGE MANNING

I have a grandson about your age.
His favorite candy is sour gummy
worms.

He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a bag, holds it out to Jordan.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

Jordan glances in the bag grabs a handful, whispers....

JORDAN

Thanks.

Jordan stuffs a handful into his mouth. His eyes widen, his mouth puckers. Giggles echo out.

JUDGE MANNING

He speaks, Miss Peale.

Judge Manning returns to his desk.

MISS PEALE

Like I was saying, this boy,
Jordan's mom has been in and out of
rehab more times than you can
count.

JUDGE MANNING

I've read the report.

MISS PEALE

Of course, but it doesn't mention
he was abandoned in a rat infested
...

Crashing in through the doors, an unkept, straggly, PENNY
REDLIN, Thirty five and looks much older, staggering drunk.

PENNY

Where is he? You took my son.

Vincent leaps up, runs to Penny.

Judge Manning pounds his gavel.

TWO COURT OFFICERS hold her still. Vincent returns to his
seat.

JUDGE MANNING
Order. Officers, bring her up.

Judge Manning and Vincent glance at each other.

Penny fights the officers, turns, points to Jordan.

PENNY
Jordan. That's my son.

An angry Jordan stands and heads towards his mother. Miss Peale holds him down, he struggles.

JORDAN
That's my mom.

Judge Manning pounds his gavel again.

JUDGE MANNING
I said order, or you'll all be in
contempt of this court.

Penny reaches out to Jordan, he struggles, in front of the Judge.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)
You're Jordan's mother?

PENNY
Yeah. And I want him back.

JUDGE MANNING
Is that right?

PENNY
Look at him. You people are scaring
him.

The Judge leans over his desk, addresses Penny in a quiet but harsh tone.

JUDGE MANNING
Please state your name.

PENNY
Penny. And that's my son over
there.

JUDGE MANNING
Do you have a last name Penny?

PENNY
Redlin.

JUDGE MANNING

Penny Redlin.

He waves her off.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Take Penny Redlin and place her in a cell until she's sober. I'll deal with her then.

SLAM goes the gavel.

Penny goes crazy.

PENNY

You can't do this to me. Jordan, don't worry. I'll come back for you.

JUDGE MANNING

Get her out of my court room.

Vincent drops his head in his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. TACK AND SADDLE SHOP - DAY

A scruffy teen, BILLY(18) throws items into Dani's bag. She stands in front of a wall poster. COUNTY FAIR - RODEO

She turns away.

BILLY

Plan on entering a few of your horses?

DANI

Not this year.

BILLY

I'll be entering Daisy. She's come a long way since you worked with her.

Vincent enters the shop fuming, door SLAMS against the wall. Dani and Billy watch him storm past them, not a word.

Dani shoves her bag towards Billy.

DANI

Hold this.

She goes after Vincent.

INT. HARDWARE DEPT - CONTINUOUS

Dani walks up behind Vincent.

DANI
Someone having a bad day?

Vincent turns to her.

VINCENT
What gave you that idea?

DANI
You might want to put the door back
on it's hinges before you leave.

VINCENT
That obvious?

DANI
Care to talk about it?

VINCENT
Will you be home later?

DANI
Stop by after five.

CUT TO:

INT. HORSE STABLES - CHANCE'S STALL - EVENING

Dani leans on the gate. Chance doesn't move a muscle.

Patrick walks up, leans on the gate. Both in deep thought.

He takes a deep breath.

PATRICK
I'm calling it a night. A bunch of
us are heading down to Crazy
Harry's. You're welcome to join us.

DANI
Not tonight.
(pauses)
Patrick -- are you doing OK?

He turns, waves, walks off.

DANI (CONT'D)
Just thought I'd ask.

Dani grabs a horse blanket off the shelf, gingerly steps around outside of Chances' stall. He jerks in fear. She walks to the far corner, lays her blanket down, then herself, faces the wall.

INT. HORSE STABLE - CHANCES' STALL - NIGHT

Dani lay asleep. Chance lay motionless ten feet away.

The sound of a car door clicks, footsteps.

Dani's eyes flash open, she listens, hears giggles.

She bolts up, reaches for her rifle and eases out of the stall, creeps past the row of stalls.

Inside the last stall she hears wrestling around. Dani flashes her light on Hank's face, drunk as a skunk with some FLOOZY.

HANK
Whoa, hold on there. Is that you
Dani?

FLOOZY
Hank. Who's Dani?

Dani brings her rifle into site.

DANI
You have one minute.

Hank shuffles to his feet, brings the Floozy with him.

HANK
We're just having a little fun. You
know with the wife at home and
all....

The floozy smacks him.

FLOOZY
You didn't say anything about a
wife.

Dani checks her watch.

DANI
Thirty seconds.

They open the gate, grumble past her.

CUT TO:

INT. JUDGE MANNING'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Vincent paces, states his case to the Judge. Miss Peale perches across the desk.

VINCENT

We can't just throw him at the system. It'll never work.

MISS PEALE

I assure you he'll go to a good home with parents well trained in dealing with, this type of boy.

Vincent loses his temper.

VINCENT

Tell me. What type of a boy is he?

JUDGE MANNING

We won't accomplish anything this way.

Vincent gives Miss Peale a cold stare.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

I don't see any other choice. And Miss Ellie is retiring, she'll be closing down her home this summer.

Miss Peale smiles with smug superiority.

Vincent paces. An Aha moment. Stops, whispers...

VINCENT

Dani.

He turns to Judge Manning.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Judge, give me twenty four hours.

Miss Peale shakes her head in a condescending way.

JUDGE MANNING

You're too close to this Vincent.

Vincent leans over his desk.

VINCENT

Twenty four hours. I swear, if I
can't do it he's all hers.

The Judge looks from Miss Peale to Vincent.

JUDGE MANNING

Twenty four hours.

Vincent slams his hand on the desk

VINCENT

Thank you Judge.

He reaches over and shakes the Judges hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - HORSE STABLE - CHANCE'S STALL - DAY

Dani reaches over, pets Chance, he flinches, then bucks. Dani
jumps back.

A clearing of a throat, Dani turns. Vincent watches from the
door.

She walks to him.

VINCENT

Pretty mean horse?

DANI

Pretty scared horse.

(beat)

I'm glad you stopped by. Maybe
you'll fill me in on what's going
on with you.

Vincent wanders around, inspects Chance.

VINCENT

Have I told you what a fabulous job
you do here?

Dani chuckles. Leads him outside.

EXT. RANCH - CONTINUOUS

DANI

What do you want, Vincent?

VINCENT
Why would you say a thing like
that?

DANI
Go on.

VINCENT
You've got a big, roomy home, barns
full of beautiful horses, land as
far as the eye can see.

DANI
And a transparent friend. Get to
the point.

VINCENT
You seem so lonely, never get out,
no close friend to laugh with at
night.

DANI
Is this a proposal?

They reach the porch, have a seat on the swing.

VINCENT
It's not what you think.

DANI
I'm listening.

He slings his arm around her.

VINCENT
Maybe I can explain better if I
showed you.

Dani grins, resigns herself to him, grabs her purse.

DANI
This better be good.

She hollers out.

DANI (CONT'D)
I'm heading out Patrick.

At the treeline stands Haney, watching.

CUT TO:

INT. BOY'S HOME - DAY

Large, older home with a warm feel. MISS ELLIE, a stout grandmother type, greets them, wipes her hands on her apron.

She and Vincent hug tight.

ELLIE
My sweet, sweet Vince.

She holds him away from herself.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Let me look at you. So handsome.

He turns to Dani.

VINCENT
Dani I want you to meet someone
who's been like a mother to me.

Two BOYS run through the room, argue.

ELLIE
Boys, I'm making fresh cookies, and
if you want any....

She turns back to Dani.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
So nice to finally meet you Dani.
Your mother did wonderful things
with the children she took in.

DANI
Thank you. You knew her?

ELLIE
After the accident, the foster
children she cared for in your home
moved here.

Dani looks over at Vincent.

DANI
Really?

ELLIE
Are you taking in children like she
did?

Vincent interrupts.

VINCENT

I brought Dani over to meet Jordan.

Ellie's mood drops.

ELLIE

It's so sad. Come with me.

They follow her up the stairs to a closed door. Vincent stands back for the women to pass.

Dani looks at Vincent as if to say, What's going on here?

Ellie quietly opens the door.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jordan lay on his bed, stares ahead motionless, wrapped in his quilt.

Ellie sits next to him, caresses his head.

ELLIE

I have someone here to meet you,
Jordan.

In the doorway stand Dani and Vincent.

Dani's eyes widen.

EXT. PORCH OF BOYS HOME - CONTINUOUS

Dani storms out the door. Ellie and Vincent follow.

Dani paces in anger, walks up to Vincent, points her finger in his face.

DANI

You did this on purpose.

Sarcastically.

DANI (CONT'D)

Just show the boy to Dani and
she'll agree to take him in.

VINCENT

I just couldn't....

DANI

What am I supposed to do with a kid
at my house?

She paces, rants.

Ellie comforts her.

ELLIE

Take your time. It's a big decision
to bring children back to your
home.

VINCENT

Ellie's right. I'm sorry.

Dani cringes at the hurt in Vincent's eyes.

DANI

I need some time to think.

They walk to the car, Vincent turns, winks at Ellie.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - DAY

Patrick and Dani ride the property, inspect the roaming
horses, they check on four RANCH HANDS who repair a downed
fence.

PATRICK

What happened here?

RANCH HAND

Probably just kids. Those tire
tracks go on for another thirty
feet.

PATRICK

Make sure you check for broken
bottles or any metal pieces.

Ranch Hand waves OK.

Patrick and Dani follow the tracks in a slow trot. They reach
a shaded area.

Dani scans the area, then suddenly ...

DANI

STOP.

Patrick yanks on the reins, his horse rears back.

Dani jumps off her horse, inspects the ground, spots a set
bear trap.

DANI (CONT'D)
It wasn't kids who did this.

She pokes a large stick in it and SNAP, it breaks in half.

She turns to Patrick.

DANI (CONT'D)
Any ideas?

PATRICK
Only that someone's got a bone to pick with you.

CUT TO:

INT. DANI'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Around the room hang pictures of Dani and her father, ranging in age. Rows of ribbons from rodeo competitions.

Dani walks to a wall covered with her mother's awards, Foster Mother of the years, 1995, 1996, 1997, and 1998, and pictures of her mom surrounded by children of all ages.

A sliver of paper sticks out from behind a picture, she slides out a newspaper clipping.

INSERT - CLIPPING, which reads:

*Prominent woman killed in crash with six foster children.
Driver arrested.*

She slides it back in.

A picture of herself as a little girl roping a calf.

Finally, pictures of she and Vincent at senior prom, riding horses together, Dani leaning up kissing him on the cheek.

Housekeeper GRACE peeks her head in.

GRACE
I'm heading up. Anything I can get for you?

Dani hesitates, takes a deep breath.

DANI
Thanks Grace. I'm OK.

Dani sits at the desk. In front of her lays the rodeo flier. She stares at it for a moment, RIPS it up.

She drops her head in her hands, startling her, the phone rings.

DANI (CONT'D)
Hello...I never stay mad at you...
I'll have the porch light on.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANI'S HOME-FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Dani and Vincent sit on chairs. Vincent holds a beer, Dani a glass of wine. She's wrapped in a cape.

DANI
I'm not convinced last night was
the first time we had intruders.

VINCENT
You should have told me.

DANI
Patrick told me about a few other
incidents.

VINCENT
I think I'll hang around tonight,
if that's OK?

DANI
You sure?

He gets up, taps on the cushion of the swing.

VINCENT
This should work.

A quiet moment.

DANI
Vincent, I'm really sorry I came
down so hard on you.

VINCENT
Which time?

Dani gives him a look of What-ever.

DANI
Today, at the boy's home.

VINCENT
Don't worry about it.

He takes a drink of beer.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I won't lie to you, when I saw that
boy cowering in that closet...

Dani places her hand on his, he squeezes hers.

DANI
It's OK. I've been thinking about a
lot of things lately.

She looks over the grounds.

DANI (CONT'D)
Every where I look, I'm reminded of
my father and his legacy.

Pauses, sips her wine.

DANI (CONT'D)
I've forgotten how generous my
mother was with bringing in
children.

VINCENT
If I'm correct, that was when we
first met, the christening of
SERENITY ACRES.

She laughs, looks up at Vincent.

DANI
I was only seven, and not afraid of
anything.

VINCENT
Still aren't.

They look out over the ranch in silence, still holding hands.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S HOME - LEXI'S BEDROOM - EVENING

LEXI(15), a cute girl with attitude sits at her computer
typing, wrapped in a tattered gray sweater.

Next to her computer sits a picture of a young woman wrapped
in the same gray sweater holding a young Lexi's hand.

Patrick taps at her door, enters.

PATRICK
I thought I'd run out to the ranch.

Lexi turns, not happy.

Don't forget, I'm leaving early
tomorrow.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Where to?

LEXI
Dad, leadership camp.

PATRICK
Does grandma know?

Lexi gets up, hands him a brochure.

LEXI
Just go to the ranch dad.

Patrick walks out. Reaches an open bedroom door, stops,
looks around.

Not a wrinkle on the bed, woman's toiletries on the dresser,
A wedding picture of Patrick and wife, A woman's robe on a
chair.

He slowly closes the door and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOYS HOME - DAY

Dani lingers on the large porch, peeks in the door window,
pushes the door bell.

Ellie opens the door all smiles, invites Dani in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BOYS HOME - DAY

DANI
How is he doing?

ELLIE
Last night he finally slept in his
bed. Just have to take things real
slow.

DANI
I understand.

ELLIE
All my life I've taken in boys.
Are you ready to see him?

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jordan sits on the shabbily made bed, an empty plate lays on the covers. He looks down.

Ellie and Dani walk in, Ellie takes the plate.

ELLIE
Jordan, this is Dani. She was here the other day.

DANI
Mind if I come in?

Ellie walks out the door, closes it.

DANI (CONT'D)
Miss Ellie tells me you won't come out of your room.

Jordan glances at her.

JORDAN
Where's my mom?

DANI
I'll check if you'd like.

JORDAN
Can you help her?

She kneels next to him.

DANI
Of course. Whatever she needs.

Jordan's looks at the floor.

JORDAN
My step-dad beats her up.

Dani tilts his chin up.

DANI
Remember Vincent?

JORDAN
The Sheriff who found me.

DANI
Yes. He'll make sure your mom stays
safe.

She stands, walks to the window.

DANI (CONT'D)
I was thinking that I could use
someone like you to help me on my
ranch.

She looks over to him, no response.

DANI (CONT'D)
I have a horse that could use a
friend too, like you.

He ignores her.

She walks to him.

DANI (CONT'D)
Would you like that?

He looks angrily at her.

JORDAN
I just want my mom.

He get's up, stomps to the window. The back of his shirt
raises revealing hideous welts on his back.

Dani winces in pain.

EXT. BOY'S HOME - DAY

Dani walks out, makes a phone call.

DANI
This is Dani. A woman by the name
of Penny Redlin is currently locked
up. Right, county. Can you send
someone there right away, give her
the option of your facility?
Alcohol, maybe more. Put it on my
account. Thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - HORSE STABLES - DAY

Patrick walks a young quarter horse off the trailer.

DANI

Thanks. I'll take her from here.

Vincent drives in, parks next to the truck.

Dani stands with attitude smiling, holds the lead rope.

Vincent steps out of his truck in full Sheriff garb.

VINCENT

Hey Patrick.

Patrick waves, walks off.

Vincent walks with an exaggerated limp, hand on his back.

DANI

What's with your back?

VINCENT

Couldn't you find a more comfortable swing.

DANI

You came all the way here to complain about my swing?

VINCENT

Actually, I wanted to let you know Haney is out.

Dani shrieks.

DANI

He's what?

VINCENT

Seems his own little band of thieves posted bail.

DANI

Wonderful.

Vincent walks to the new horse.

VINCENT

Doesn't look like a rescue.

DANI

She was at one time. I just got her back.

VINCENT

I thought your point was to rehab first and then find them a home?

DANI

It is. I figured I'd need a gentle horse for Jordan to practice on.

A big grin on Vincent.

VINCENT

Does that mean...

DANI

He'll be here in two days.

Vincent grabs her, whirls around, a big hug and kiss.

VINCENT

This is fantastic. I swear you won't be sorry.

Dani smiles coyly, Vincent steps back.

DANI

Well.

CUT TO:

INT. DANI'S HOME - JORDAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

An elegant, comfortable home, Dani and Grace prepare Jordan's room.

Dani replaces pictures of herself and family with pictures of the horses.

DANI

I hope it's not too girly for him in here.

GRACE

It wasn't girly when it was your room. Besides, I can just imagine what he was sleeping in before.

Dani pulls a box down from the closet. Pictures of her and a much younger Vincent spill out.

She picks one up, Vincent being pinned at Police Academy.
She holds it close to her heart, not overlooked by Grace.

GRACE (CONT'D)
I'll put these in your cedar chest.

Patrick shows up at the door out of breath.

PATRICK
You better get out here. We've got
a problem.

Dani drops the box, races out after Patrick.

EXT. HORSE STABLES - CONTINUOUS

A loud commotion, Hank and another FARM HAND roll around
yelling.

The horses become fidgety.

Dani runs over, yanks the farm hand off Hank, Patrick holds
on to Hank. They drag the sweaty men outside the stables.

Patrick throws Hank onto the ground, stares down at him.

PATRICK
Pack your things, Hank. I should
have done this a long time ago.

Hank stares up at Patrick.

DANI
Will someone tell me what happened?

RANCH HAND
He was kicking the horses. I tried
to stop him.

Hank sneers at the kid.

HANK
Watch what ya say kid.

PATRICK
Let's go Hank.

Dani walks towards the house.

DANI
This, I don't need.

Connor watches from his pickup.

CUT TO:

INT. DANI'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Vincent looks out the window, paces.

Dani's truck drives up.

VINCENT
Grace, they're here.

Grace runs out.

They all stand at the door.

In walks Jordan, then Dani. Jordan stops, looks around in awe.

DANI
Jordan, you remember Vincent.

Jordan makes eye contact with him.

VINCENT
Welcome home.

DANI
And this is Grace. She's a friend
and works at the ranch.

GRACE
Hello Jordan.

He looks up at Dani.

JORDAN
Can I see my room?

Vincent steps right up, ready to head upstairs.

VINCENT
Let's go my man.

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jordan sets his back-pack on the bed, looks around. He stares at the open closet where clothes hang, pajamas lay on the bed next to a basket of toiletries.

He feels the pajamas and looks up at Vincent and Dani.

JORDAN
Are these mine?

DANI
Yes.

Jordan looks down. Vincent pipes in.

VINCENT
Lets give him some time to check
out his room.

They agree.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
When you're ready just come down.

Jordan looks around the room as Dani and Vincent linger
briefly, then leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH - DAY

Dani and Vincent walk Jordan over to the young horse tied on
a post at the stables.

They watch Jordan's face as they near it.

DANI
Think you can handle her Jordan?

Jordan looks up at her.

JORDAN
Who's is this?

DANI
Just have to give her a name.

He thinks for a moment.

JORDAN
You're not lying? She's really
mine?

DANI
She really is.

A smile forms on his face.

JORDAN
My mom always said she was gonna
have a baby girl. Name her Chloe.

DANI
Sounds good to me. How about you
Vincent?

VINCENT
Chloe is good.

He caresses Chloe.

DANI
Wait Jordan.

She proudly brings out her camera.

DANI (CONT'D)
Smile big Jordan.

INT. JEEP - DAY

Dani drives Vincent and Jordan around, points out various
pastures and horses. Jordan remains quiet.

DANI
This herd has come a long way since
I picked them up.

VINCENT
Slow down. There's Patrick.

Patrick and Lexi walk to meet the jeep.

PATRICK
You must be the new man of the
house.

DANI
Patrick and Lexi, this is Jordan.

PATRICK
Howdy Jordan.

LEXI
Hey.

Jordan stares in amazement at the horses, then someone else
catches his eye, Lexi.

JORDAN
Hi.

Dani sees a twinkle in his eyes.

DANI
Jordan will be staying with me.

LEXI
Cool. Maybe we can ride together.

Jordan smiles, eyes look down.

JORDAN
Sure.

Dani and Patrick glance at each other with big smiles.

They drive off.

VINCENT
She's pretty cute, huh?

Jordan grins and looks away.

Vincent addresses Dani.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I'm not sure if you know, but
Patrick's been staying overnight in
the stables.

Dani slows down.

DANI
How do you know?

VINCENT
The night I slept on your swing I
saw a light, so I checked it out.
Looks like a regular sleeping
quarters in there.

DANI
I'll talk to him, How about we show
you the stables Jordan?

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Handlers work in stalls.

Dani, Jordan and Vincent, walk through barn.

In the first stall, the horse has a leg wrap on.

Jordan stops, stares.

Silence. Dani looks to Vincent for help.

VINCENT
His owner is in jail.

They walk to the next stall.

A handler rubs down scraped, bony ankles.

Jordan looks up at Vincent.

JORDAN
What happened to him?

VINCENT
I'm guessing shackles.

JORDAN
How can people hurt animals?

VINCENT
They're bullies. Cowards.

After passing the row of wounded horses they head into the large barn.

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Jordan looks over the massive room, his eyes lock onto Chances. He makes his way to the gate.

DANI
Don't get too close.

Jordan glances at Chance, Chance glances at Jordan. This exchange goes on for a minute.

Chance shows a semblance of peace.

Jordan sits outside the gate.

Dani takes a step, Vincent holds her back.

VINCENT
Wait.

He motions for her to leave with him.

JORDAN
What's his name?

Dani hesitates.

DANI

Chance.

Vincent leads Dani away.

VINCENT

It's OK.

Jordan and Chance sit alone, neither of them move, they appear relaxed.

EXT. LARGE BARN - CONTINUOUS

Vincent and Dani walk out slowly.

VINCENT

I'll assume you want me to hang
around a while.

DANI

That wasn't an assumption, you read
my mind.

Jordan races past them straight to the house.

Vincent and Dani take off after him.

INT. DANI'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Vincent and Dani run in the front door.

VINCENT

Should I go up?

DANI

I got this.

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jordan stares out his window.

Dani steps in.

DANI

You OK?

Jordan remains silent.

She sits on the edge of his bed.

Jordan mumbles.

JORDAN
What happened to Chance?

DANI
He had an abusive owner.

JORDAN
Where is he now?

DANI
Vincent took care of him.

Jordan sits on the bed.

JORDAN
Chance likes me.

DANI
Of course he does.

JORDAN
Was he bad too?

Dani's heart drops, She kneels down in front of him.

DANI
Chance was never bad. You were
never bad. He's good like you.

She takes him by the shoulders.

DANI (CONT'D)
Listen to me. You are a beautiful,
loving boy. Your step-dad was, he
wasn't well.

She embraces him in a tight hug.

CUT TO:

INT. HORSE STABLE - CHANCES' STALL - EVENING

Dani tends to Chance. Twilight sky.

Dani holds a long pole smeared with salve on the tip. She attempts to rub it over a deep gash on Chances' back, he bucks. Dani speaks in a soft voice.

DANI
It's OK. I won't hurt you.

She gingerly walks around to the other side.

DANI (CONT'D)
Some day you're going to have the
life you deserve.

She hums a tune, stops.

The sound of running. Chance spooks.

DANI (CONT'D)
Shhhhhh.

She lays the pole down, walks to the corner of the stall,
looks around, nothing. Goes back to Chance.

DANI (CONT'D)
Listen to the sound of my voice.

Hums again.

Jordan peeks out from behind a bale of hay.

Through a window, tail lights fade away.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH - FENCED IN CORRAL - DAY

Dani holds the end of the lead attached to Spirit's halter in
one hand, a long flexible pole in the other.

Jordan stands at the fence observing intently.

DANI
Come on girl. Now this way. See how
I get her to move. Just tug gently
on the rope. Never startle her by
yanking.

Jordan sits on the fence.

DANI (CONT'D)
Now this way Spirit.

Spirit gets out of control, Dani calms her down.

DANI (CONT'D)
See what I did Jordan, very gently.
Rub her all over. Let her know
you're her friend. Keep body
contact.

She stops in front of Jordan.

DANI (CONT'D)
Give it a try?

Jordan's eyes light up, without a word he jumps down, takes the rope and pole.

DANI (CONT'D)
That's right. Nice and slow.

Jordan rubs her gently. Then walks her. Looks up to Dani.

DANI (CONT'D)
You're doing great.

He leads her, she responds well.

DANI (CONT'D)
That's right. Now this way.

Spirit responds again and again...

JORDAN
Is this right?

Dani cheers him on.

BANG. A loud shot.

Spirit rears her head wildly. Jordan cowers down. Dani runs in, grabs the rope, ties Spirit to the fence and rushes back to Jordan.

DANI
I'm here Jordan. Come with me.

She and Jordan run to the house. She yells for Grace who meets them at the door.

DANI (CONT'D)
Grace. Take him inside.

INT. DANI'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Dani grabs her rifle and takes off.

EXT. RANCH - CONTINUOUS

On her horse Dani races in the direction of the shot.

She meets up with Patrick and three FARM HANDS.

PATRICK

You might want to see this.

They ride to the wooded area. Tied to a tree, a young HICK with a nasty attitude, bear traps lay at his feet.

Dani dismounts and runs over to him. Paces back and forth in an intimidating manor, rifle over her shoulder.

DANI

Apparently you get your jollies out of terrorizing my ranch.

HICK

I didn't do nothin'.

He spits through a few missing teeth, watches Dani circle him.

DANI

So you're here doing what, cleaning up my land?

Another spit.

Patrick wanders over.

PATRICK

Who sent you here?

HICK

You can't keep me tied up. I have my rights.

DANI

You left any rights you had at my property line.

She turns and walks back to her horse.

DANI (CONT'D)

Get him to the Sheriff's office.

A farm hand loads the traps into the truck.

HICK

Where you goin' with my traps?

FARM HAND

They're mine now.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH - EVENING

Dani greets Vincent in the driveway. He carries a cap.

DANI
He's up in his room. Had a little
scare.

VINCENT
I heard.

DANI
I'd swear there's a full moon all
week.

VINCENT
You need me to hang around again?

DANI
We'll be fine. It was interesting
today how Jordan came alive with
the horses.

VINCENT
They understand each other.

DANI
Broke my heart just watching him.

Vincent pauses, looks down at the ground.

Changes the subject.

VINCENT
That was some piece of work your
guys brought in.

DANI
Do you think he was working on his
own?

VINCENT
I doubt it. He's not bright enough.
But I do have a theory.

DANI
Care to share it with me?

He ignores her, pulls out a flier from his pocket.

VINCENT
Before I forget, take a look at
this.

The Brochure: *County Rodeo*.

DANI
Not this year.

VINCENT
It's been twelve years. Besides, it
might be good for Jordan.

She turns -- places the brochure back into his pocket.

DANI
You take him.

VINCENT
Don't think you're off the hook
that easy.

He waves the cap.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
A little gift.

He walks into the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. PATRICK'S FRONT PORCH - EVENING

A breeze rustles the leaves, the bark of a dog, a honk of a
horn. Patrick swings back and forth not hearing anything.

Lexi runs up the porch to Patrick. A kiss on his cheek. She
butters him up for something.

LEXI
What are you doing home already?

PATRICK
Just thinking.

LEXI
You came home to think?

PATRICK
How was camp?

LEXI
It was lame dad. Really. I skipped
out early.

PATRICK

That's nice. Grandma saved you some supper.

Lexi sits on the railing.

LEXI

Dad?

PATRICK

Yeah Lex.

LEXI

Remember how we used to skip out on Friday afternoons and see a movie?

PATRICK

It's pretty busy at the ranch.

LEXI

You never do anything. We never do anything.

PATRICK

I'm not such good company.

LEXI

Mom wouldn't want you to be so unhappy.

She jumps down.

LEXI (CONT'D)

And she'd want you to sleep in your own bed.

PATRICK

You better get in. Grandma's waiting.

Lexi mopes into the house, slams the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - STABLES - DAY

Dani stands beside Chloe. The ranch hands busy with chores around the stables. Jordan moseys out of the house with a new pair of boots in his hands, new cap on.

DANI

Ready for your first lesson?

JORDAN

I guess.

DANI

Problem with the boots?

JORDAN

Are they only for good?

Dani laughs.

DANI

Good. Not so good. Silly, they're just boots.

He sits on the driveway, slides them on, admires them.

Dani grins with camera in hand as he takes a few awkward steps.

DANI (CONT'D)

A real cowboy. Look at me now.

She hands the lead to Jordan.

DANI (CONT'D)

We'll start with the basics.
Getting to know your horse.

MONTAGE - DANI TEACHES JORDAN TO TEND TO THE HORSES

-- They take turns brushing/caressing the horse.

-- They laugh/fumble around getting the blanket and saddle on Chloe.

-- Jordan rides Chloe for the first time.

-- Jordan is on clean-up duty with a wheelbarrow and shovel. He's afraid to get dirty.

-- Jordan and Dani have a water fight while cleaning out the wheelbarrow.

-- Dani and Jordan ride at a slow pace. Jordan stiffens up as they pick up the pace.

-- Dani taking pictures of Jordan doing chores.

END MONTAGE

DANI (CONT'D)

Whoa. Pull back very gently on the reins.

As they continue the slow pace, Jordan relaxes while Dani points out a few areas of interest.

DANI (CONT'D)
Way over beyond that rock fence...
that's where we let the healthy
horses run free.

JORDAN
How do you know when they're
healthy?

DANI
I don't. But they do.

They reach a large fenced arena where a number of ranch hands train horses.

DANI (CONT'D)
Hi guys.

They ride to the fence and greet one of the trainers.

DANI (CONT'D)
Eric, this is Jordan.

Jordan's small hand get's lost in Eric's hand shake.

ERIC
Hi Jordan. Will you be working on
the ranch?

JORDAN
I guess.

He looks up at Dani.

DANI
He's moved in with me. I got tired
of being alone in that big house.

ERIC
Looks like you'll be in good hands
Dani.

DANI
So what are you working these
horses for?

ERIC
This bunch is going to the
Children's Rehab Center.

Dani eyes them up.

DANI
You're doing a great job guys.

ERIC
Nice meeting you Jordan.

They walk the trail, Dani's eyes lock onto something ahead. She stretches her arm out, stops Jordan.

DANI
Very slowly Jordan, I want you to turn around and ride back to Eric without stopping.

Jordan looks ahead.

JORDAN
I should stay with you.

DANI
No. Just go.

Jordan turns his horse and walks in the opposite direction.

Dani waits until Jordan is out of site. She turns off the trail.

Up ahead, two MEN load a truck with large bundles. Dani makes a call on her cell.

DANI (CONT'D)
Right. The North pasture.

She tucks her phone into her saddle and settles into the woods.

EXT. NORTH PASTURE - CONTINUOUS

A rickety, rusted out pickup truck, half loaded with barrels labeled FEED. Ten feet away, the two men haul branches off a site revealing tons of hay bales.

THIEF 1
Hurry. We ain't got all day.

Thief 2 flings a couple bales towards the truck with all the force his scrawny arms can muster up.

THIEF 2
You ain't the boss of me.

From the woods Dani watches what looks to be a comedy act.

The thieves fall over each other, push and shove.

Vincent rides up along side Dani. They look straight ahead.

VINCENT

Kind of a shame to break up their
little two man act.

Dani pauses.

DANI

We don't have to.

VINCENT

Took the words right out of my
mouth.

He takes out his phone.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Wayne. I need you to stand-by at
Serenity Ranch's north drive.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES DRIVEWAY - DAY

A Sheriff's car pulls in followed by the rusted pickup. Dani,
Vincent and Jordan trail them on horseback.

The vehicles park. Officer Banks get out of the squad car.
Patrick wanders out of the barn and sees the grain.

PATRICK

I guess I wasn't losing my mind.
Unload it back there.

The two thieves slink by, Wayne between the two.

Vincent dismounts, advances on the men.

VINCENT

Hold it, you two.

They turn to him.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Thanks for assisting them here
Wayne.

WAYNE

I figured they'd know just where to
unload the goods.

VINCENT

When they finish here you can show them our accommodations back at the station.

Wayne tips his hat at Vincent and Dani, then back to the guys.

WAYNE

Let's go you two.

A car creeps up the driveway. Dani and Vincent watch as Miss Peale steps out.

Vincent cringes.

DANI

Who is she?

VINCENT

Our waking nightmare.

Miss Peale struts up to them, hand out to Dani.

MISS PEALE

You must be Danielle?

Dani ignores the hand.

DANI

It's Dani. And you are?

MISS PEALE

I'm Miss Peale from Social Services, and I'm in charge of Jordan.

Vincent stands back, arms crossed, big grin.

DANI

That's where you're wrong, Miss Peale from Social Services. I happen to be in charge of Jordan.

Miss Peale slides her hand down, backs up, addresses Vincent.

MISS PEALE

Vincent. Would you explain the situation to...Dani?

Vincent throws his hands in the air, laughs.

VINCENT

You're on your own.

MISS PEALE

Any time we have a situation like this an expert is assigned to overlook things.

DANI

And this situation would be, Jordan?

MISS PEALE

Well, yes.

Vincent stands back -- shakes his head.

Miss Peale pulls out a card and hands it to Dani.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)

Be sure and call me if you have any questions or trouble.

DANI

You'll be the first one I call. You know your way out, right?

Miss Peale turns and leaves the same way she arrived.

Dani turns to a smiling Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)

What was that?

VINCENT

You don't want to know. I'll explain later.

They turn their attention to Jordan and Lexi who ride up.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

After work I plan on heading out to the fairgrounds.

Lexi jumps down from her horse, Jordan struggles.

Dani and Vincent both jump to help him.

Jordan stops, looks at both of them.

JORDAN

I can do this.

They step back. Lexi giggles.

DANI

I know. I know.

VINCENT

It's cool.

Jordan hops down grinning.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

About the fairgrounds Jordan. Lexi,
you're welcome to join us.

LEXI

I think my dad wants me home.

Jordan looks over for Dani's approval.

DANI

If you two are going, make it after
supper.

VINCENT

That's my next question.

Dani yells to Patrick.

DANI

Before Wayne hauls them in, there
are a couple more loads waiting for
them in north pasture.

She focuses back to Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)

The Chinese Restaurant is on your
way.

VINCENT

I see. Grace's night off?

Jordan stammers around.

DANI

Go ahead you two. I'll finish up
with Chloe. Introduce Lexi to
Chance.

INT. STABLES - CHANCES' STALL - DAY

Standing alone in his stall, Chance. The sound of footsteps.

Chance flinches.

Jordan and Lexi step up to the gate.

JORDAN
You have to be very gentle with
him.

LEXI
Can I ask you a question?

JORDAN
Sure.

LEXI
Is it true, you know, about your
parents?

Jordan sits on a bale of hay, Lexi next to him.

She takes his hand. With a surprised look he smiles. She
smiles back flirty.

They lay back, hold hands, look up in silence.

JORDAN
They aren't so well.

Patrick yells in from outside. Lexi pulls her hand away,
Jordan jumps up.

PATRICK
Ready Lexi?

Lexi takes his hand back.

LEXI
See you tomorrow?

A smile from Jordan.

JORDAN
Yeah.

Lexi quickly leans up, pecks Jordan on the cheek, turns, runs
out. Jordan sits, hums the tune Dani was humming.

Jordan falls back, stars at the ceiling. A big smile, he
gets up and walks around to the front of Chance. He holds his
hand out, offers Chance a carrot.

Chance lowers his head and takes the treat. As he does this,
Jordan rubs between his ears. Chance remains still.

They understand each other.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
She's pretty cool isn't she?

Chance gives out a little nicker.

Jordan walks around inside the stall, rubs Chance all over.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to the fair with Vincent.

Chance responds, shakes his head.

Faint voices are heard, then footsteps.

Jordan quiets.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I'll be back later.

He crawls out from the stall.

Patrick and Connor walk up to Jordan.

PATRICK
Jordan, this is Connor. He's one of
our ranch hands.

CONNOR
Howdy.

Jordan nods.

PATRICK
Connor doesn't spend too much time
in here. These fellas are still
pretty skittish.

CONNOR
Nice place to take a little siesta.

Patrick snaps his head to Connor.

PATRICK
I'll take that as a joke.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - EVENING

A group of FIVE BOYS, budding cowboys, show off to a GROUP of
GIRLS.

CHUBBY BOY
I roped my first calf when I was
just ten.

SKINNY KID
I was eight.

The chubby boy pushes the skinny kid.

CHUBBY BOY
You were not.

One boy plays awkwardly with a rope, watches the girls as he twirls.

The girls laugh and walk on.

Jordan and Vincent walk up to them, stop. Vincent knows them.

VINCENT
Having fun boys?

ALL IN UNISON
Hi Sheriff/Yeah/Who's that?

VINCENT
This is Jordan.

CHUBBY BOY
You new here, Jordan?

JORDAN
Kind of.

SKINNY KID
Maybe you can hang out with us
sometime.

Jordan looks up at Vincent for approval.

VINCENT
Sure. You boys taking the next
training class?

BOYS
You bet.

Vincent explains to Jordan.

VINCENT
Dani teaches the kids in town how
to handle horses. Her next class is
in two weeks.

They dance around like a bunch of idiots.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Behave yourselves now.

Vincent and Jordan walk into the crowd. The boys continue showing off to the girls who pass.

A group of five not so nice KIDS hang out by the Ferris wheel poking fun at those in line. Haney lingers nearby.

ADAM(18), gritty smart mouth with attitude has his arm slung around Lexi. Connor hides within the group.

Jordan stares at an uncomfortable Lexi.

ADAM

Hey there Sheriff. That little turd
your new side kick?

Lexi coughs and blows out a puff of smoke.

VINCENT

Does your dad know what you're up
to Lexi?

LEXI

Maybe. If I was a horse.

The rough kids laugh.

CONNOR

See ya round Sheriff.

Lexi looks down to hide her eyes, Jordan notices.

Adam leads Lexi, Connor and the rest of the lost kids away from a disappointed Vincent, Haney slinks behind.

Vincent's eyes don't leave Haney's.

Jordan moves his eyes from Lexi to the Tilt-A-Wheel.

VINCENT

Think you can handle it?

Jordan manages a grin.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - STABLES - DAY

Dani and Jordan ride in from the North pasture.

Outside the stable, Vincent talks to Patrick, who sits on a large hay bale, shakes his head from side to side.

Vincent hears the horses, pats Patrick on the shoulder. He turns and walks out to meet Dani and Jordan.

DANI
Everything OK?

VINCENT
We ran into Lexi last night and she wasn't hanging out with the girl scouts.

DANI
Just what he doesn't need.

VINCENT
Mind if Jordan and I take a hike around the ranch?

DANI
Not at all.

Vincent walks to Jordan.

VINCENT
Care to join me?

DANI
Go ahead Jordan. I've got the horses.

Jordan dismounts his horse, they walk off.

From a distance, Patrick leans on the stable door. He watches Vincent and Jordan walk off.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S HOME - LEX'S ROOM - EVENING

Through the half open door, PATRICK peers in, Lexi talks on her phone.

A light tap on her door. He steps in.

LEXI
Gotta go... Yes, I promise.

With a roll of her eyes.

LEXI (CONT'D)

What dad?

PATRICK

Can we talk?

LEXI

Now? I'm kind of busy.

Patrick sits on the bed.

PATRICK

What's going on with you?

LEXI

Nothing.

PATRICK

Hanging out with Adam isn't nothing.

Lexi gets in his face.

LEXI

You had Vincent checking on me?

PATRICK

That crowd is nothing but trouble.

LEXI

We're just friends.

PATRICK

You're fifteen. You have other friends.

LEXI

They can never do anything.

PATRICK

Consider yourself in the same boat. In fact, we'll be spending a lot more time together.

Lexi stands in tears.

LEXI

I wish mom were here.

She storms out, knocks the picture of her mother off the desk. Footsteps bang down the stairs.

Patrick picks up the broken picture.

Patrick stares at the picture of his deceased wife.

CUT TO:

INT. STABLES - MORNING

The sun peeks out. Jordan, in his pajamas, gingerly slips into Chance's stall.

Chance peers over at Jordan, comes to life.

With a smile on his face, Jordan rubs over Chance's shoulders and nose. Chance responds with a nudge.

JORDAN
I missed you too.

Jordan sits on a bale of hay, faces Chance.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Last night Vincent took me to a
real carnival. I went on the
coolest rides.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out chunks of apple.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I brought you something.

Chance eats the morsels out of his hand.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
It had caramel on it but I ate it
off.

Jordan flops down on the hay, saddened.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
You're gonna like Vincent. I think
he's like us.

He grabs another piece of apple, feeds it to Chance.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I gotta go now. Don't worry cause
everyone here is nice.

He leaves through the back door.

The door closes. CONNOR steps in, mocks Jordan.

CONNOR
Everyone here is pretty nice.

CUT TO:

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM - MORNING

On his dresser, propped up on a stuffed bear leans a snapshot of Vincent and Jordan on the Tilt-A-Wheel.

Jordan dresses, hears a loud commotion outside, runs to his window.

EXT. RANCH - CONTINUOUS

CHAOS. Horses run in the driveway, fields, pastures.

Ranch hands chase the horses, try to lasso them.

INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jordan sees Connor chase a limping Chance with a rope.

EXT. RANCH - CONTINUOUS

Jordan flies out the front door straight to Chance.

DANI
Jordan, stay in the house.

Dani and five other RANCH HANDS circle the horses -- lead them to a corral. A few strays run wild.

Jordan catches up to Connor, pushes him down, rips the rope out of his hand.

JORDAN
Stay away from Chance.

Patrick rides up on his horse.

PATRICK
That's enough boys.

CONNOR
He's crazy. Keep him away from me.

PATRICK
Jordan, go help with Chance. Connor stay here.

Jordan turns in a huff. Storms off.

Patrick climbs off his horse, heads for Connor.

Connor gets in another dig.

CONNOR

Are you jealous Lexi was with us
last night? She'd never go for a
nerd like you.

Jordan runs off, past Patrick.

PATRICK

Care to tell me what happened
Connor?

CONNOR

What are you gonna do? Fire me like
you did the old man?

CUT TO:

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Six skittish horses wear ace bandages on their legs,
corralled. Dani, Jordan, and the four ranch hands stand along
the fence.

Patrick walks over to Dani.

PATRICK

Can we talk?

DANI

What have you got?

They walk over to the barn.

PATRICK

Connor claims he saw Jordan unlatch
all the doors. Then saw him run
out.

Dani snaps at him.

DANI

That's crazy. Jordan was in his
room all morning.

PATRICK

Hold on a minute.

DANI

And what was Connor doing at the time? I told you when you hired him I didn't think it was a good idea.

PATRICK

And we both agreed we'd give him a chance because of his dad.

DANI

Well, we gave it a try.

(PAUSE)

Now we're going to go back out there and not say a word about this to Jordan.

Dani storms back to the corral.

EXT. CORRAL - CONTINUOUS

Dani walks over to Connor, Jordan, and the others.

DANI

Jordan go in and get dressed.
Connor, I'd like to have a word with you.

Jordan mopes into the house.

Connor steps up to Dani.

CONNOR

Hello Miss Dani. Anything I can help with?

DANI

Can you tell me what you saw?

CONNOR

I was just walking in with some fresh shavings and there was Jordan.

DANI

What was he doing?

CONNOR

That's the thing. He was sneaking around, so I just stopped and watched for a minute.

DANI
Just tell me what you saw.

CONNOR
He was opening the latches.

Connor hems and haws. Dani stares at him.

DANI
What about the other stable?

Connor fidgets.

CONNOR
I don't know. I guess he was in
there first.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She whips her hat down, heads for the kitchen.

Jordan shamefully walks up the stairs. Dani runs to him. She
wear a worried frown.

DANI
Jordan. Wait.

Half way up Jordan stops.

Dani runs up the stairs and comforts him.

JORDAN
I didn't do it.

DANI
I need to ask you a few questions.

Dani sits on the step.

DANI (CONT'D)
What were you doing in the barn?

JORDAN
I go out there to visit Chance.

DANI
Did you see anyone else out there?

JORDAN
No. Just me. Is Chance OK?

DANI
Chance is fine.

Big hug. Dani gets up close.

DANI (CONT'D)
Jordan listen to me. I am not angry
with you. I believe you.

Jordan looks down.

Dani lifts his chin.

DANI (CONT'D)
Do you understand? I could never be
mad at you.

Grace walks around the corner.

GRACE
They need you out there again Dani.

DANI
I'll be right there. Jordan, wait
inside.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dani paces while talking to Vincent.

DANI
What do you know about Connor?

VINCENT
He wasn't a bad kid. But now he's
got that same chip on his shoulder
as his dad. Hangs with a rough
crowd.

DANI
He seems, too polite.

VINCENT
I worry about Jordan. He doesn't
need more troubles.

Jordan sneaks down the staircase, overhears the conversation.

DANI
This is more aggravation than I
need.

VINCENT
Maybe I should take him on the
delivery tomorrow.

Jordan hangs his head, sneaks out the front door.

DANI
Vincent?

He turns to her.

DANI (CONT'D)
Jordan's mom is in rehab.

VINCENT
You arranged it?

DANI
I did. I'm going to visit her
tomorrow.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Chance stands in the back of his stall, head down, untouched
bag of feed.

Jordan slinks into the gate, walks up to Chance and pets his
face. Chance doesn't move.

JORDAN
I'm sorry about what happened.

He reaches into his pocket and brings out a carrot, puts it
up to Chance's mouth.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I think I'm causing trouble around
here.

He holds Chance's face with both hands.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Don't worry. They're not mad at
you.

Chance's ears shoot up. He gives Jordan a soft nicker.

Jordan chuckles and offers him another carrot.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I just heard I'm going away with
Vincent tomorrow.

He walks around, strokes Chance all over.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
 Maybe I shouldn't have come here.

He walks to the front of Chance. Hugs him tight around the neck.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
 Just don't break out again. Dani's pretty mad.

He grabs the blanket off the shelf, smooths it down behind Chance and lays down.

CUT TO:

INT. DANI'S KITCHEN - MORNING

The sun peaks out, the coffee perks, Grace prepares breakfast.

Dani walks in wearing her robe and slippers, pours herself coffee.

DANI
 I won't be going with the guys today.

GRACE
 You won't?

DANI
 It'll be Vincent and Jordan. Could you throw on another plate for Vincent?

The doorbell rings, she looks at her watch.

INT. ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Dani opens the door to the stone face of Miss Peale.

MISS. PEALE
 Danielle?

DANI
 It's Dani. What can I help you with?

Miss Peale marches in past Dani.

MISS PEALE
Is he here?

DANI
Of course he's here. He's in bed.

MISS PEALE
May I see him?

Dani does a double take.

DANI
Excuse me? I just told you he is
still sleeping.

MISS PEALE
I don't mind.

She walks to the staircase. Something on the hallway table catches her eye. Pictures.

She reaches down, snatches them, flips through.

Dani grabs them out of her hands with a snort.

DANI
I do!

MISS PEALE
Looks like child labor to me.

Miss Peale looks at her watch.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)
It's almost 8:00. He should be...

DANI
He should be sleeping.

Vincent walks in the door, stops abruptly, angered.

VINCENT
What's she doing here?

MISS PEALE
I've come to check on Jordan. So if
you don't mind...

She walks to the stairs.

DANI
I'll get him.

She runs up the stairs. Vincent pulls Miss Peale aside.

VINCENT

I swear, you do anything to
jeopardize this I'll personally dig
something up to throw your sorry
self in jail.

MISS PEALE

This is the thanks I get? If it
weren't for me...

VINCENT

If it weren't for you, I might have
had a half way normal childhood.

INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dani opens the door to an empty bed. Panicked, she whispers.

DANI

Jordan?

She searches the closet, under the bed, out the window. No
Jordan.

INT. ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Dani sashays down.

DANI

I'm sorry. Jordan just got into the
tub.

She goes to Miss Peale and leads her to the front door.

DANI (CONT'D)

How about you come back tomorrow
and I'll see he's up and dressed
when you get here?

Miss Peale hesitates.

MISS PEALE

I don't mind....

Dani opens the door and nearly pushes her out.

DANI

Tomorrow Miss Peale.

Door closes. Dani runs to Vincent, grabs his arm and leads
him up the stairs.

DANI (CONT'D)
He's gone.

VINCENT
What do you mean?

INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

DANI
I mean Jordan's not here.

Vincent does a search.

INT. ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Miss Peale gingerly opens the door, peeks around. Empty, she sneaks up the stairs.

INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

VINCENT
Let's figure this out.

Through an opening of the door, Miss Peale listens.

DANI
He was fine when I checked on him
last night.

VINCENT
The barn.

Vincent swings the door open revealing Miss Peale.

MISS PEALE
Where is he? I demand to know.

Ignoring her they shoot past her down the stairs.

Miss Peale gets out her notebook. She follows close behind.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)
If his life is destroyed, it won't
be because of me.

Dani turns, gets in her face.

Vincent stops her.

VINCENT
She isn't worth it.

They run out the front door.

EXT. BARN - MORNING

Dani runs in.

DANI
Vincent, check the pastures.

Patrick runs over.

PATRICK
What's going on?

DANI
Jordan's missing.

PATRICK
I'll check the corral.

A scramble to look for Jordan.

Miss Peale defiantly writes in her book, her lips pursed.

MISS PEALE
They should have known better than
to hand him over to a single woman.

She peeks into the stables. Notices the bandaged horses.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)
What ever does she do to her
horses?

Writes in her little book.

We hear Dani and the others yell for Jordan.

DANI (O.S.)
Jordan... Jordan.

MISS PEALE
I've seen quite enough.

Off she stomps.

Dani runs to the second stable, huffing and frightened.

She notices Chance lying down, slows her pace, she reaches the gate, stops.

She brings her hands to her mouth.

Vincent runs in.

Dani motions for him to be very quiet as he approaches.

Lying, curled up behind Chance and wrapped in his quilt, Jordan. Sound asleep.

Vincent drapes an arm around Dani.

She looks up to Vincent.

DANI

Do you think he's been...

VINCENT

Sleeping here most nights? Yes.

Patrick runs in, Dani quiets him.

A look of surprise on his face.

PATRICK

Look at that Chance. Looks like he's found himself a friend.

Dani snaps her head up.

DANI

Miss Peale. We need to let her know.

VINCENT

Never mind. I'll deal with her later.

Jordan stirs, opens his eyes wide, sits up.

JORDAN

What's wrong?

They all laugh.

Chance stirs.

Jordan gets to his feet and moves out of Chance's way.

Dani and Vincent help him out of the stall. Dani hugs him hard.

PATRICK

Looks like you have yourself a good friend little buddy.

Jordan acts shy.

JORDAN
I guess. Aren't you mad at me?

DANI
Why would you ask that?

JORDAN
Last night I heard you say things.

Dani gives a puzzled glance to Vincent, kneels down in front of Jordan.

DANI
I'm not mad at you now, or last night.

Vincent joins her.

VINCENT
She's right. I don't know what you heard, but it wasn't about you.

Dani stands.

DANI
Let's get you inside. And before I forget, you had me worried sick.

They all laugh.

Patrick watches the three of them walk out.

CUT TO:

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE - DAY

A group of professional looking people work at their desks.

Miss Peale stands at her manager, MR. MARTIN'S door.

MISS PEALE
Last I heard she'll be getting out in a week. That should give me time to relocate Jordan.

MR. MARTIN
Good job, Miss Peale.

She whispers loudly.

MISS PEALE
If you ask me, Dani hasn't gotten over her fathers accident.

She looks around the office, a smug grin.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)
I heard it was her fault.

Everyone in the office ignores her, a couple whisper behind her back, obviously not well liked.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - EVENING

At a distance, a woman sits in front of a headstone.

It's Dani, sits having a serious conversation.

THE HEADSTONE READS: *CHRISTIAN R. WALTER - Loving father, husband and friend. You will always be missed. DATES: 1950 - 1998. Next to his is her mothers. ELEANOR H. WALTER - Beautiful wife, loving mother. DATES: 1952 - 1995.*

DANI
Now that he's living with me, I've found myself getting attached to him. I know you'd be proud of him dad.

She takes a deep breath.

DANI (CONT'D)
But I'm worried. Things are happening around the ranch and sometimes I'm afraid the horses are in danger. Or worse, Jordan and I.

She stands and paces.

DANI (CONT'D)
Then there's Vincent. Where do I start?
(pauses)
I'm wondering what it would be like if we had gotten married. I know it sounds crazy, but I think he feels the same way I do.

She flops down in front of the headstone.

DANI (CONT'D)
I'd like to talk to him about this, but what if I'm just imagining that he has feelings for me again?

She lays down, looks up to the sky.

DANI (CONT'D)
I wish you were here mom.

CUT TO:

EXT. STABLES - CHANCE'S STALL - DAY

Chance lowers his head for Jordan to kiss.

Dani stands, arms crossed, shakes her head in awe.

DANI
What can I say? You two are
amazing.

Patrick moseys over.

PATRICK
Never seen anything like that
before.

DANI
Maybe their parallel lives have
something to do with it.

The sound of a car drives up. They pause.

Dani cusses under her breath.

DANI (CONT'D)
I've got to handle this. Could you
hang out with Jordan.

PATRICK
Sure thing.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

She walks over to meet Miss Peale, who steps out of her car,
looks for trouble.

DANI
Nice of you to check on Jordan.
He's doing fine.

MISS PEALE
I trust you found him.

DANI
Of course I found him.

Dani stops.

DANI (CONT'D)
What can I do for you?

Miss Peale looks around the ranch.

MISS PEALE
Is there somewhere we can talk?

DANI
Just tell me your business. I've got work to do.

MISS PEALE
Alright then. I'm thinking about permanent placement for Jordan. A stable home.

DANI
You mean like the one he came from?

MISS PEALE
A place where he'll have a mother and a father.

Dani faces Miss Peale.

DANI
When I agreed to take Jordan in, it was no secret I was a single woman.

MISS PEALE
I wasn't informed of this arrangement until he was already here.

DANI
Well he's here now. And adjusting very well.

MISS PEALE
I saw how he was adjusting. Running away and all.

DANI
What's this really about Miss Peale?

MISS PEALE
Jordan's mother will be getting out of jail in four days.

DANI
Apparently you have no idea she's
been in rehab all this time.

MISS PEALE
Well ... I knew.

Dani stares at her, no sense of humor.

DANI
And maybe nobody thought it was any
of your business.

At first Miss Peale speechless.

MISS PEALE
You'll be seeing more of me, soon.

Dani stands firm. Eyes could slice right through Miss Peale.

Miss Peale turns, marches to her car.

Leaving, her car nearly careens off the driveway.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANI'S HOME-FRONT PORCH - EVENING

The moon shines bright. Dani and Jordan sit on the porch,
Dani on the swing, Jordan on the step.

Vincent walks up from his squad car.

VINCENT
Nice to see you two hanging out.

Jordan stands showing a lack of confidence.

DANI
Go ahead Jordan.

VINCENT
Let's see what you've got.

Dani gives Vincent a look of, we need to talk.

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Jordan leads Vincent and Dani to Chance's stable, grabs a
blanket and drapes it over Chance's back.

VINCENT
Sure that's safe?

Dani elbows him.

Jordan walks to the front of Chance, gives him a big hug.

JORDAN
Good boy.

He pulls out a carrot, dangles it in front of Chance who takes it and munches away.

VINCENT
Is this the same horse?

DANI
Watch now.

Chance leans down, his ears go up, he nuzzles Jordan.

VINCENT
I'll be darned.

Proud now, Jordan looks up at Vincent. A big grin on his lips.

Vincent and Dani clap.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I'm proud of you, Jordan.

Jordan displays a BIG grin.

JORDAN
Did you see the way he nuzzled me?

VINCENT
Sure did, big guy.

They walk out.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Vincent drapes his arm around Dani.

VINCENT
Quite the young man you've got here.

DANI
He's been working hard this week.

JORDAN
Thanks, but it was Chance.

They all laugh.

DANI
You're a natural. You'd better get
ready for bed. There's a lot more
work tomorrow.

Jordan runs off with a smile.

Dani turns to Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)
Ready for that talk?

VINCENT
What's up?

They walk to the porch, Dani heads into the house.

DANI
Can I get you anything?

VINCENT
Surprise me.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Vincent is not happy. He stands at the railing, takes a swig
of beer.

VINCENT
That woman is trouble.

DANI
Shhhh. We can do this Vincent. I've
got an idea.

Vincent continues to fume.

VINCENT
I hope it's a good one.

Dani goes to Vincent.

DANI
Hey. I said we'd work this out.

Vincent turns to her - very worked up.

DANI (CONT'D)
You need to calm down.

They stare into each others eye, Vincent looks away.

VINCENT
What's this idea of yours?

Dani leads him by the arm to the swing.

DANI
Jordan loves his mother, right?

VINCENT
Yes.

DANI
Since I've had her in Rehab, she's been improving tremendously. I'll start looking into a day trip for her.

Vincent is taken aback.

VINCENT
Sounds like you've been handling things just fine by yourself.

DANI
It's what I'm good at.

CUT TO:

INT. BOY'S HOME - DAY

Dani visits Ellie.

DANI
I'm worried about Vincent. He's so angry about this whole thing.

Ellie stands.

ELLIE
Maybe I can shed some light for you.

She leads Dani up the stairs into Jordan's old room.

DANI
This is where Jordan stayed.

Ellie opens the closet door. On the shelves sit old puzzles, model cars, a baseball in a glove.

Dani looks around.

DANI (CONT'D)

Toys?

ELLIE

Look closer.

The woodwork has marks gouged in, an age written. Underneath, a name.

Dani looks closer.

DANI

V.I.N.

She turns to Ellie.

DANI (CONT'D)

Vincent?

Ellie nods her head.

DANI (CONT'D)

You mean OUR Vincent?

Ellie nods her head again.

Dani faintly sits on the bed.

DANI (CONT'D)

I had no idea. Ellie, does this mean you...

ELLIE

Raised him as my own.

DANI

He never said a word. I've known him for years.

They sit quietly. Dani tries to take it all in.

DANI (CONT'D)

That's why he's taken so much to Jordan.

Ellie lays her hand on Dani.

ELLIE
He was Jordan.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF STATION - DAY

Vincent talks on the phone. Wayne hands him a fax.

VINCENT
I'll have to call you back.

He hangs up the phone and reads the note. Crunches it in his fist, waves it in the air.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
You're joking, right?

WAYNE
According to Miss Peale, she has proof Dani has him working as a farm hand.

VINCENT
Will she ever go away.

WAYNE
Want me to ride out and let Dani know?

VINCENT
I'll handle it. She's got enough to deal with now.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - Paddock - DAY

Jordan walks Spirit around the circle as Patrick stands at the fence.

PATRICK
That's right, now turn him this way.

Dani walks up.

DANI
He's looking good.

PATRICK
I plan on bringing Chance out into the corral one day this week.

DANI

I was meaning to ask you about Chance. He might do better with his own personal trainer.

Patrick furrows his brow.

PATRICK

The guys are pretty stretched with work now.

DANI

I was thinking more in the lines of Jordan. We can have Lexi over to tend to Chloe.

Patrick furrows his brow.

DANI (CONT'D)

Besides, it'll give you a chance to spend time with her.

PATRICK

I don't know. Can Jordan handle Chance?

A commotion from the stables. Dani and Patrick run in.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Connor has a rope around Chloe's neck, he tugs on her with one hand, whips her with a long crop in the other.

Dani runs up and yanks the rope out of his hands.

DANI

Stop. You never handle a horse this way.

CONNOR

I swear, I didn't know.

Dani motions for Patrick.

DANI

Handle this.

Patrick shakes his head.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S HOME - NIGHT

An infomercial plays on TV for a sleeping Patrick.

The front door creaks open, Patrick startles.

PATRICK

Lexi?

Lexi sneaks up the stairs.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Lexi?

LEXI

Dad, I'm tired.

She keeps going.

Patrick follows her.

PATRICK

It's a little late, isn't it?

LEXI

Dad, just go to bed.

Patrick sniffs her.

PATRICK

Were you smoking?

LEXI

No dad. It was my friends, not me.

PATRICK

Get some sleep because tomorrow
you're coming to work with me.

LEXI

Are you serious?

PATRICK

We're leaving at seven sharp.

Lexi stomps off mumbling.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - MORNING

Lexi prances out in white shorts, pink top and sandals. Dani walks out.

DANI
So nice of you to help, Lexi.

Lexi looks at her dad, whatever.

PATRICK
Where would you like her?

Dani looks her up and down.

DANI
I'd start with a change of clothes.
Follow me.

Lexi follows Dani inside with attitude.

CUT TO:

EXT. STABLES - HITCHING POST - DAY

Jordan brushes K.C., a young quarter horse with scrapes on rear.

Connor manhandles MAGIC, quarter horse with wounds on legs. He brushes over the wounds, Magic to rears.

CONNOR
Stand still.

He swats her.

Jordan throws his brush down, body slams Connor to the ground.

JORDAN
Leave her alone.

Jordan gets up, Connor to tackle him, spits and sputters.

Dani and Lexi stroll around the corner, see them fighting.

DANI
Hey. That's enough you two.

CONNOR
He started it.

He quickly gets up, brushes himself off.

Jordan does the same.

JORDAN
Sorry for this.

Dani stares at Connor.

DANI

If you two are finished, Lexi will be helping out for a while.

CONNOR

Hey Lexi.

DANI

Jordan, would you show her around? I'd like her to start working with Chloe.

JORDAN

Sure.

DANI

If you need anything, I'll be out in the north pasture with Patrick.

Dani leaves, Connor steps in.

CONNOR

Was your dad waiting up last night?

LEXI

Why do you think he dragged me here? So where's that great place you were bragging about?

CONNOR

Let's go.

He throws Jordan a rope and takes off with Lexi. She turns back to Jordan, smiles coyly.

INT. STABLES - DAY

Connor shows off to Lexi.

CONNOR

I don't come in this stable much.

He passes Chance. He turns to see Jordan peeking in, watching.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

When nobody's around, look out.

LEXI

When did you get this job?

CONNOR

Before they fired the old man.
Shouldn't have messed with him.

They pass another horse. Connor stomps in front of the horse,
waves his arms.

The horse screeches in fright, rattles around in his stall.

LEXI

Why do you do that?

CONNOR

For fun. Try it.

LEXI

You're sick.

Connor takes her to his hiding place in a side room.

Puts his arm out to stop her, looks around.

CONNOR

Make sure that little reject isn't
around.

He brushes hay off a trap door in the floor, lifts it.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

You first.

LEXI

What's down there?

CONNOR

Somewhere no one will bother us.

Lexi hesitates, then climbs down into a dark room.

Connor follows, closes the door behind him, flips on a flash
light.

INT. SECRET ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lexi looks around in awe. Cases of wine and beer line one
wall, a small table loaded with open bags of snacks, empty
beer bottles strewn around.

Six gas containers line another wall behind an old mattress.

LEXI

This happens to be your idea of a
great hideout?

CONNOR
The one and only.

LEXI
How did you find this place?

CONNOR
The old man. Figured I'd finish
what he started.

He grabs a beer, opens it, hands it to Lexi.

LEXI
I better not.

CONNOR
Go ahead. Who'll know?

LEXI
My dad.

Connor sits on the mattress, takes a swig, pats the mattress
next to him.

CONNOR
Have a seat. Adam won't care.

LEXI
I don't like Adam.

She heads for the stairs.

CONNOR
What's your hurry?

LEXI
I'm going up. It smells really bad
in here.

Connor chugs his beer.

CONNOR
Hold on. Watch and learn.

He grabs a bottle of wine, tucks it under his sweatshirt,
heads up.

He gingerly lifts the trap door, peeks around.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
GO.

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Lexi climbs out, comes eye to eye with Jordan, stops.

CONNOR
Hurry up.

LEXI
Jordan. Hey.

She climbs out, Connor pops his head up and sees Jordan.

CONNOR
It's the little freak.

They're both out, he covers the door, scatters the hay.

Connor walks over to Jordan, drapes his arm around him, Jordan FLINCHES, cowers, drops his hat.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
Whoa there. Little jumpy aren't
you?

This takes Lexi by surprise.

LEXI
Are you alright, Jordan?

Jordan stares up at Connor.

CONNOR
Come on. We should get back out. At
least look like we're busy.

They walk by Jordan.

Connor turns.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
Look, if you know what's good for
ya, nobody will find out about our
little secret.

He gets in Jordan's face with a quick start.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
HAH.

Jordan flinches.

LEXI
Lay off Connor.

CONNOR

Cool.

Connor laughs, Lexi walks out.

Lexi turns back, a look of concern.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Go ahead, I'll catch up.

He grabs her backpack and stuffs the bottle of wine in.

EXT. LARGE PASTURE - DAY

FOUR RANCH HANDS work a group of horses.

PATRICK

Time we move this group out.

DANI

Set it up. I've made arrangements for them to go to Hope Ranch.

They mount their horses.

DANI (CONT'D)

Vince is bringing pizzas over tonight. You and Lexi are welcome to join us.

PATRICK

I'll check with Lexi.

DANI

How is she doing?

PATRICK

You know girls.

DANI

I know what she's going through.

Patrick ignores her.

DANI (CONT'D)

Or have you forgotten, I was her age when my mom passed.

PATRICK

Let's head west. I've been meaning to check the irrigation system.

Dani lets it go, for now.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

Connor and Jordan each brush a horse.

Lexi braids pink ribbons into Chloe's mane, peeks over to Jordan, he watches her.

Dani and Patrick ride up, the first thing they see, Chloe.

PATRICK

What the...

DANI

Looks like we've got ourselves a pampered princess.

They erupt into laughter.

She proudly grins, ear to ear.

LEXI

Look at her hooves.

Chloe has pink, glittery polish on her hooves.

Dani and Patrick get down off their horses.

DANI

Now I've seen everything.

Lexi stands proud, wears a huge grin.

Patrick points to four horses standing at the hitching post.

PATRICK

Looks like someone's been busy.

CONNOR

I finished all four. Figured you'd want them done today.

Jordan grimaces at him.

Lexi stands with attitude.

LEXI

Connor, get a life.

Connor runs up to Patrick.

CONNOR
Before I leave, I'll put those
deliveries away.

PATRICK
You know where they go?

CONNOR
You bet.

He turns, winks at Lexi, takes off.

Dani and Patrick tie their horses.

DANI
Lexi, I was asking your dad if you
two could stay for pizza.

She looks at her dad.

LEXI
Can we?

PATRICK
Sounds good to me.

DANI
Great. I'll give Vincent a call.

They head into the house.

Lexi drops her pack inside the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. - FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Lexi and Jordan sit on the steps, eat pizza. Patrick and Dani
sit in the background.

JORDAN
Where's your mom?

Lexi looks down.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Did she leave you?

LEXI
She died five months ago.

JORDAN
Sorry.

Teary eyed, she turns away.

LEXI
Want more pizza?

JORDAN
Sure.

Lexi gets up and runs into the house.

Dani wanders over and sits next to Jordan.

DANI
Having fun?

JORDAN
Can I ask you something?

DANI
Of course.

JORDAN
Could we maybe give Chloe to Lexi?

Dani laughs out loud.

DANI
You don't like her glittery polish?

JORDAN
Not really...

DANI
A horse is a pretty big gift.

JORDAN
It's just, she's a girl's horse.
And I have Chance.

Dani looks into Jordan's innocent eyes.

DANI
You sure make it hard for me to say
no.

JORDAN
So we can?

DANI
I'll let you break it to her.

Lexi comes bouncing out with more pizza.

Vincent yells from inside the house.

VINCENT (O.S.)
More root beer anyone?

He gets near the front door.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Diet or...

A loud yelp.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
OUCH. What have you got in this?

A bottle of wine rolls out of Lexi's back pack.

A look of surprise on all. Lexi's eyes widen, jaw drops.

Vincent holds up the bottle.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Looks like one of yours Dani.

Patrick stands, sees red.

LEXI
I swear. I didn't put it there.

Patrick grabs the bottle from Vincent, waves it at Lexi.

PATRICK
This was in your backpack?

Lexi gasps.

LEXI
Of course you don't believe me,
dad.

She breaks down crying.

Dani goes to her, shoots Patrick a snide look.

Vincent tries to calm the whole bunch.

VINCENT
Look, let's everyone just

Jordan stands and interrupts.

JORDAN
She didn't do it.

They all stop, look at him.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
She's telling the truth. I saw...

He looks down, unsure if he should finish.

DANI
Jordan, what did you see?

JORDAN
It was Connor. He put it in there.

Lexi cries. Lashes out at her dad.

LEXI
Now do you believe me?

She runs off crying.

Jordan runs after her.

Patrick turns, Dani stops him.

DANI
Let Jordan talk to her.

Dani turns to Patrick.

DANI (CONT'D)
I DON'T want him back on my ranch.

PATRICK
I'd like to go over there right
now.

VINCENT
Just hold on. There isn't a thing
we can do tonight. I'll pay him a
visit tomorrow.

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Jordan and Lexi sit outside Chance's stall, Lexi cries.

Jordan comforts her, laying his arm around her shoulder.

LEXI
He's like, not even my dad anymore.

Jordan quietly listens.

Lexi lays her head on his shoulder. Sniffles.

JORDAN
I think your dads just worried
about you.

LEXI
Do you really?

She looks up to him, into his eyes.

He looks into her eyes, pause, his eyes look down shyly.

She sits up.

LEXI (CONT'D)
What's with your parents? Are they
really in jail?

JORDAN
Yeah.

Lexi's interested.

LEXI
Did they kill someone?

JORDAN
Might as well have.

LEXI
I thought my dad was bad.

JORDAN
Why do you say he's bad? You don't
see how good you have it.

Lexi turns, falls back onto the hay.

LEXI
He's annoying, or something. I
don't know.

JORDAN
At least he loves you.

She squirms up.

LEXI
What's with this horse?

JORDAN
It's Chance.

She turns to him.

LEXI

My dad told my grandma that you
were the only one that could go
near him.

Jordan grins.

JORDAN

I guess.

He reaches over and takes her hand in his.

She looks at their hands, up at his face.

She leans over to him shyly.

LEXI

It's OK if you kiss me.

JORDAN

I've never...

LEXI

It's OK. Should I start?

Jordan chuckles, takes her hand, leans over and gives her a
kiss on the lips. They both just sit for one quick kiss.

JORDAN

Was that OK?

She leans her head on his shoulder, both smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - NIGHT

Not a sound except an owl's hoot, and darkness. The stars
light up the yard. Then, shadows.

A person runs out of the stable carrying a long ladder, sets
it up at one of the bedroom windows, drops an item next to
it.

This person runs back to the barn.

CUT TO:

INT. DANI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Flashes of light flicker through the windows, the whinny of
horses gets louder, smoke seeps in with the breeze.

Dani stirs, BOLTS upright, springs out of bed to the window, screams.

DANI
Grace! Jordan!

She races to their rooms in a panic.

DANI (CONT'D)
Fire. Get up.

Grace runs out.

GRACE
What's wrong?

DANI
The barn's on fire. Where's Jordan?

She runs into his room. Empty.

She panics now.

DANI (CONT'D)
Jordan. Oh my God. Grace, call 911.
Jordan must be in the barn.

She's out the front door, running, phone to her ear.

DANI (CONT'D)
The barn's on fire. I think
Jordan's inside.

INT. CHANCE'S STALL - CONTINUOUS

Dani runs through dark clouds of smoke, straight into Jordan.

DANI
Jordan.

Jordan runs out coughing, very upset.

JORDAN
I got Chance and Chloe out.

DANI
Stay with them.

JORDAN
I'm coming with you.

DANI

Lets get the rest of the horses
out.

They run to the stalls, shoo the horses out.

Horns and sirens roar.

Vincent, first to arrive, fire engines behind him.

The firemen jump off, drag their hoses into the burning barn.

Vincent races to Jordan, looks around frantically.

VINCENT

Thank heavens you're safe, Where's
Dani?

JORDAN

Taking horses to the corral. I
can't find Grace.

Vincent turns to the firemen.

VINCENT

Grace is in there. We need to get
her out. Jordan, go help Dani. Keep
her at the corral.

Jordan takes off.

Vincent runs into the gnarly darkness.

Flaming beams explode from the ceiling.

Firemen run by, yell through their air masks.

FIREMAN 1

Bring those hoses around back.
Place is like a tinder box.

Vincent runs out, takes a breath, runs back in. A masked
fireman stops him.

FIREMAN 2

You can't go in there.

Vincent wrestles away.

VINCENT

Give me your mask.

FIREMAN 2

What?

VINCENT

Your mask.

The fireman reaches up, takes off his mask, hands it to Vincent.

The fireman runs back for a new mask, hurries in after Vincent.

They run back out. Vincent carries Grace.

FIREMAN 2

Get that ambulance over here. Now.

More loud cracks as they load Grace into the ambulance.

Dani runs around the corner in a panic, right to Grace. Vincent catches her.

VINCENT

She's OK! Some smoke inhalation, they've got her on oxygen. They're taking her in.

DANI

I'm going with her.

She looks up at a coughing, soot stained Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)

Vincent!

VINCENT

Where's Jordan?

DANI

He's with Patrick, You need to be seen at the hospital too.

She turns to the ambulance, Vincent takes off the opposite direction.

At a distance, a dark figure just barely leaves Dani's eyesight.

PARAMEDIC

We've gotta go, Ma'am!

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - MORNING

Dawn. The large barn smolders. The smaller barn, partially intact.

An exhausted fire crew roll up hoses, some poke at smouldering debris.

Vincent and Jordan, exhausted, filthy, look over the charred mess.

A squad car pulls in, drops Dani off. She runs to Vincent and Jordan.

VINCENT
How's Grace?

DANI
She'll be fine. They want to observe her today.

The Fire Chief approaches them.

VINCENT
Hey Chief. What's up?

FIRE CHIEF
Looks like all the horses made it out.

DANI
Thank God for that.

FIRE CHIEF
But, you might want to see this.

They follow him to the side of the house where a ladder leans up against Jordan's window.

Anger ramps up in Dani.

DANI
What's this?

Vincent stops her.

VINCENT
Hold on a minute. Chief?

The Chief picks up a pair of gloves and ball cap, hands them to Vincent, who smells them.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Ooooh!

Dani grabs them from Vincent, smells them and looks at Vincent.

DANI
Whose are these?

Then to the fire Chief.

DANI (CONT'D)
Now just a minute. Jordan did not do this.

The Fire Chief addresses Jordan.

FIRE CHIEF
This your cap and gloves, son?

Jordan's eyes grow wide.

JORDAN
Yeah.

Dani steps in front of Jordan.

DANI
We're done here. Jordan, get in the house.

Jordan looks at Vincent.

VINCENT
Go ahead, Jordan. We'll be right in.

Jordan takes off towards the house.

FIRE CHIEF
I'll have to put it in my report.

DANI
You can't think it was Jordan.

VINCENT
Dani, he has to document what he found.

Vincent pounds his fist on the side of the house.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
And once I get my hands on that...

DANI

You work on finding who did this.
Jordan needs me now.

CUT TO:

INT. PATRICK'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

A filthy, exhausted Patrick trudges in the front door, Lexi greets him.

LEXI

Dad, what happened?

He flops down on his chair.

Lexi prods for information.

LEXI (CONT'D)

You smell. Was there a fire?

PATRICK

Dani's ranch. The stables are gone,
the horses are traumatized, and
poor Dani...

She runs up to her dad.

LEXI

Jordan. Was he hurt?

PATRICK

No, but...

LEXI

...What about Chloe, Chance?

PATRICK

Their fine, Lexi -- but...

LEXI

We have to go back there, dad...

Patrick stands, takes Lexi's hand.

PATRICK

Listen to me Lexi.

She looks at him wide eyed.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

It's Jordan, they think he did it.

Lexi freaks out.

LEXI
What? No, dad. Why?

PATRICK
That's all I heard.

She stands frozen, whispers.

LEXI
Connor.

Now angry, she turns to her dad.

LEXI (CONT'D)
We have to go there.

Patrick trudges to the stairs.

PATRICK
As soon as I shower.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He stands at his bedroom door. Lexi behind him.

PATRICK
What the...

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A new bedspread covers the bed, a few pictures displayed on the dresser, the robe hangs in the closet.

PATRICK
Lexi?

Lexi walks over to the closet and opens the door. On the top shelf sits a plastic bin labeled, MOM'S TREASURES.

Patrick stands in awe.

LEXI
I had to do something, Dad. Jordan thought that if I made these changes, you'd maybe want to be home.

Patrick turns and gives her a big hug.

PATRICK

Thank you.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - FRONT PORCH - DAY

A solemn atmosphere as Miss Peale walks Jordan to her car.

An exhausted, angry Vincent leans on the porch railing.

VINCENT

This is so wrong.

DANI

Do you think he did it?

Vincent gets irritated with Dani. He turns to her and snaps.

VINCENT

You don't believe he actually
started the fire, do you?

Dani glares at Vincent.

He walks off.

Dani follows, gently takes his arm.

DANI

Vincent?

VINCENT

Boys like him...

He struggles. Turns away from Dani.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

...don't do this type of thing.

DANI

Aren't you overreacting a bit?

Vincent doesn't turn back.

DANI (CONT'D)

Let's just go down there and
explain to them that he didn't do
anything.

Vincent turns to her, intense eyes, face is red.

VINCENT

And that will make everything fine?
Can you just try and imagine what
Jordan's going through? You have no
idea. How could you?

He turns from her.

She takes him by the arms, turns him to her, looks into his
eyes.

DANI

Listen to me Vincent. I know.

Vincent looks away from her.

She pulls his face back.

DANI (CONT'D)

I KNOW.

VINCENT

You know what?

He looks into her tearful eyes.

DANI

I saw your room. The marks on the
closet. Your old toys.

He begins to speak, she hushes him.

DANI (CONT'D)

It's OK. We all have things in our
past. I, have things.

Vincent stares at her in disbelief.

DANI (CONT'D)

Vincent?

He turns, angry.

VINCENT

Were you spying on me?

DANI

Of course not. I went and saw
Ellie.

VINCENT

Is that why you took Jordan in,
because you felt sorry for me?

DANI
Are you kidding?

VINCENT
Not really something I'd kid about.

Dani marches up to him. Now she's mad.

DANI
I brought Jordan in because you
asked me to.

VINCENT
You still had no right questioning
Ellie.

DANI
And if you trusted me as a friend
you would have told me.

Vincent throws up his hands, he's had it.

He stomps off. Then turns back.

VINCENT
You know what I think?

Dani stands, confused.

Vincent turns back, walks to his truck, storms out the
driveway.

Patrick and Lexi pass him on the drive way, park in front of
Dani.

PATRICK
What's with Vincent?

Lexi runs to Dani.

LEXI
Dani. I need to talk to you.
Where's Jordan?

Lexi and Dani walk to the porch.

EXT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Patrick stands sullen, looks over the mess, picks up a stick
and pokes around.

LEXI (O.S.)
Dad!

Patrick turns as Lexi and Dani run up to him.

LEXI (CONT'D)
I'm going with Dani. We'll be back
later.

DANI
Lexi may have just solved the case
for us.

They run off leaving a confused Patrick.

CUT TO:

INT. JUDGE MANNING'S COURT ROOM - DAY

Miss Peale stands next to a sulking Jordan at the front
table.

Behind them stands Vincent, alone, looking back at the doors.

JUDGE MANNING
According to your report Miss
Peale, Jordan's had a little
trouble with fire starting.

MISS PEALE
Yes, your Honor.

JUDGE MANNING
Care to tell me what happened?

Miss Peale starts in, excited.

MISS PEALE
This boy...

JUDGE MANNING
Surely you haven't forgotten his
name again, Miss Peale.

MISS PEALE
No, your honor. Jordan, has not
only run away from his current
living arrangements, he has
maliciously -

The court room doors FLY open.

Vincent stands.

Low murmurs.

Dani and Lexi storm down the isle, Dani drags an angry, hog tied Haney, Lexi drags Connor.

An eruption in the room.

Vincent bolts up, runs to Dani.

VINCENT
How in the world...

Dani gives him a look of, Nice work, huh?

Judge Manning pounds his gavel.

JUDGE MANNING
Order. Order everyone.

No order in this courtroom, a three ring circus.

DANI
Your Honor?

JUDGE MANNING
Dani, do you realize I could order you in contempt of court? And what have you done to those men?

Vincent grabs the rope from Dani. For just a second they stare into each other's eyes, a smile.

Haney yells, struggles to get out of the ropes.

Lexi looks over to a stunned Jordan, winks.

HANEY
She kidnapped me. I'll sue you for everything.

Two court officers run in, one grabs Haney, the other Connor.

Miss Peale stands like a priss and huffs at the whole thing.

Dani grabs Lexi and drags her to the Judge.

DANI
Jordan's innocent. Haney and his band of delinquents are the guilty ones.

HANEY
Look what she did to me.

The Judge sits, conceding defeat. Waves Dani and Lexi forward.

The court quiets.

JUDGE MANNING

Will someone tell me what's going on?

Dani puffs, out of breath.

DANI

Your Honor, I have proof that Jordan is innocent.

JUDGE MANNING

I take it these two have something to do with that proof?

Dani nudges Lexi.

DANI

Go ahead Lexi, tell the Judge what you told me.

Miss Peale stands.

MISS PEALE

Your Honor, this girl...

JUDGE MANNING

Miss Peale. Sit down.

Miss Peale sits with attitude.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Can we get on with this?

DANI

Lexi, tell the Judge.

LEXI

It was Connor and Haney. They had cans of gas and wine and he said it was for when he needed it. And it was in the secret hole in the floor.

JUDGE MANNING

OK. Let's slow down and start from the beginning.

Lexi takes a deep breath, looks up at Dani who nods to her.

LEXI

OK. I had to go to Dani's with my dad. I guess cause he was mad at me.

The Judge leans back on his chair, preparing for a long one.

LEXI (CONT'D)

When I got there, Connor was there. He's friends of Adam's.

Dani leans down and whispers to her.

DANI

Get to the cellar door.

LEXI

Anyway, Connor showed me this secret room. It wasn't really that much of a secret cause his dad and Haney hung out there too.

JUDGE MANNING

And what was in this "secret room"?

LEXI

First, it really smelled bad. Like gas, and maybe dirt. On one side, there were cases of wine stacked up, and other stuff.

JUDGE MANNING

Would this other stuff be gasoline?

LEXI

About ten cans.

She walks over and climbs on the edge of his desk, looks eye to eye with him.

LEXI (CONT'D)

He said bad stuff about Jordan. And he also said I should run away with him because my dad is so mean.

Now Vincent gets up.

JUDGE MANNING

Have a seat. Let her finish.

Vincent sits.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Is that so?

LEXI

I used to think so, but then Jordan told me he was just sad, and that I should just love him.

She turns to Jordan.

LEXI (CONT'D)

Isn't that right, Jordan.

The Judge nods his head.

JUDGE MANNING

Jordan, come up here please.

Jordan stands, walks next to Lexi.

JORDAN

Yes sir.

JUDGE MANNING

Did you have any knowledge of this secret room?

JORDAN

Just when I found Lexi and Connor crawling out. Then one night when I was sleeping in the barn, I watched Haney and a couple guys go down there.

The Judge addresses the court officers.

JUDGE MANNING

Would you kindly take Haney back and book him. The other one too.

Haney struggles.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Don't bother to untie them until you get him in his cell.

He turns to Dani, Lexi and Jordan. Vincent joins them.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

I'd say you did some pretty amazing police work, Dani. Wouldn't you agree Vincent?

VINCENT

Yes sir, I would.

He and Dani glance at each other. She smiles at him, he's relieved.

JUDGE MANNING

Jordan. How are things going for you, other than the fire that is?

He looks up at the Judge.

JORDAN

OK. I miss my mom though.

He glances at Dani.

JUDGE MANNING

Are you happy living with Dani?

JORDAN

She's like my mom used to be, before. And Vincent comes over to visit. Just not enough.

JUDGE MANNING

Would you like to have visitation with your mother?

JORDAN

It might help her, you know, get better.

Vincent puts his arm around Dani.

JUDGE MANNING

Thank you Jordan, Lexi. We could all learn from you two. Have a seat.

They do.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Dani, I'd say you and Vincent are just what Jordan needs. And give Lexi's dad a message from me. Tell him he's very fortunate to have such an insightful daughter.

Miss Peale stands, raises her hand.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Miss Peale, sit down. I'll make arrangements to have you officially off the case. And Dani, I'll see to it that someone helps you with visitation.

DANI
Yes your Honor.

He slams his gavel one last time.

JUDGE MANNING
Court adjourned.

CUT TO:

EXT. DANI'S FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Dani sits on the swing, grins as she watches Vincent stroll up the sidewalk to the house.

VINCENT
Well, I rounded up the rest of the gang. They'll be spending a lot of time together for a while.

DANI
That's great. Now, care to finish our earlier conversation?

Vincent leans on the porch railing.

VINCENT
Nope.

DANI
Discuss what happened at the courthouse?

VINCENT
Uh uh.

Dani gets up off the swing and sashays over to him.

DANI
What could you possibly want to talk about?

Vincent leans down and kisses her.

DANI (CONT'D)
Finally, we agree on something.

VINCENT
Yup.

This time, they kiss a little longer.

Dani pulls away.

DANI

Now what?

Vincent's eyes grow wide, grins.

Dani smacks him.

DANI (CONT'D)

I mean about Jordan.

VINCENT

We could finally have that talk about things you've been keeping from me.

DANI

Now?

VINCENT

Why not? And I've got just the place.

They walk to his car.

INT. VINCENT'S CAR - COUNTY FAIR GROUNDS - EVENING

Vincent turns off the motor, turns to Dani.

VINCENT

You can open your eyes.

Dani opens them, looks around wide eyed.

DANI

What's going on?

VINCENT

It's been twelve years. It's time we both get some things off our chests.

Dani stares ahead.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Are you with me on this?

Dani takes a deep breath, looks up to the heavens.

Vincent stares at her.

DANI

Never mind.

EXT. HORSE STABLES - COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

A clear, calm night. Dani hesitates when she reaches stall fourteen.

VINCENT

You OK?

She sits on a wood bench outside the stall, looks around.

Vincent snoops around.

DANI

It's ironic. My dad brought me for my first Rodeo competition, and this is the very place he died.

VINCENT

He was the best.

DANI

He won more calf roping competitions than anyone. Still holds the record.

Vincent walks back to her.

DANI (CONT'D)

All these years, I've blamed myself.

A confused Vincent sits next to her.

VINCENT

What do you mean you blamed yourself?

DANI

I was the one who cinched up his horse. I never rechecked it.

VINCENT

He took care of it himself. It wasn't your fault.

DANI

Instead I was hiding behind an outbuilding waiting for you.

Vincent stands, takes her hand.

VINCENT

Let's walk.

Dani looks around, reminiscing.

DANI
I thought for sure those old stands
would be replaced by now.

VINCENT
They've put the money into kids
programs instead.

Dani spots something ahead, stops. Smiles playfully.

DANI
Let's go.

They run to the large, metal swing set and both settle into
their own swing.

DANI (CONT'D)
Remember the nights we all came
here after the school dances?

VINCENT
How could I forget, all the trouble
we got into.

Vincent jumps off his swing, she follows.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
This way.

They head for the out buildings. Once there, Dani slows down -
- Vincent disappears behind one.

VINCENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Back here.

He turns, goes back and takes her hand and leads her behind
the building.

Dani stops, reflects.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
You remember?

DANI
I never forgot.

VINCENT
The day before your dad's
competition, I privately met him at
his stall.

DANI
I don't understand.

VINCENT
I asked him for his blessing, to
marry you.

Tears well in her eyes.

DANI
Are you...

Vincent stops her.

VINCENT
He asked me to meet him out here at
the stables the following night. He
said there was something he wanted
me to have.

He pulls something out of his pocket.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
You were with him when he saw me
coming, so in order to get you to
leave, he shooed you along and said
he'd check the horse himself.

Dani remembers.

DANI
I was so wrapped up in meeting you,
I took off without a second
thought.

Vincent speaks quietly.

VINCENT
I knew he needed help, so I offered
to recheck the horse.

A wide eyed Dani turns to Vincent.

DANI
No Vincent. It wasn't your fault.

Vincent stops her again.

VINCENT
It's taken me all these years...

He holds out his, a beautiful, antique ring sits on it.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Your dad gave me this.

Dani takes it, her teary eyes meet Vincent's.

DANI
My mother's ring?

Silence as she looks from the ring to Vincent.

Vincent pulls Dani up, kneels down.

VINCENT
I've been waiting for twelve years
to do this.

Dani caresses his cheek.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Now, I'd like to keep my promise to
your dad.
(pauses)
Will you marry me, Dani?

She cries in joy.

DANI
Of course I will.

They kiss.

CUT TO:

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - MORNING

It's a new day. Patrick and Lexi show up early, Lexi dressed in jeans, boots and gloves. Her hair pulled back and ready to tend to Chloe.

Jordan runs out to greet them.

JORDAN
Ready Lexi?

LEXI
You bet.

PATRICK
Hey you two. We have work to do.

LEXI
That's where we're going, dad.

PATRICK
Don't forget, I'm your boss now.

Lexi and Jordan laugh loudly.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Pretty sure that means you too,
Jordan.

DANI (O.S.)
What's all this talk about being
the boss?

Patrick turns to her.

Standing with her, Jordan's mother, Penny. She's nicely dressed in jeans and boots. Sober and very attractive.

Patrick's eyes light up, takes off his hat and bows to her.

PATRICK
Mornin', Ma'am.

Jordan and Lexi turn, Jordan drops his hat and races open arms to his mother.

JORDAN
Mom.

Penny kneels and they embrace each other.

Jordan tries to hide his sobs.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
You came back.

Penny holds him out from her.

PENNY
Let me look at you. I've missed you
so much.

She embraces him again.

JORDAN
Are you staying for good, Mom?

PENNY
No, sweetheart. Dani arranged for
me to go into a great rehab
facility.

DANI

That's right, and I'll bet there are family visitation days.

Jordan runs over and hugs Dani.

JORDAN

Thanks so much, Dani.

PENNY

And while I'm there, Dani and Vincent are going to take very good care of you.

JORDAN

Mom, today's the rodeo, can you come along?

Lexi pushes her dad.

LEXI

Ask her, dad.

PATRICK

I happen to have an extra ticket.

He looks down shyly.

Penny looks down at her clothes.

PENNY

I'm dressed for it.

Jordan jumps up and down.

JORDAN

Will you Mom?

She and Dani look at each other and wink.

PENNY

I wouldn't dream of missing your first rodeo.

All cheer.

Vincent walks out of the house wearing brand new cowboy duds. Stops.

Everyone looks at him, chuckling.

VINCENT

What?

Dani goes to Vincent, pulls off a tag off his shirt.

JORDAN
We're ready.

Grinning from ear to ear, Vincent brings out a framed certificate from behind his back. He holds it up to Dani.

INSERT: *It is my honor to present this Letter of Certification as a Foster Parent, to Dani Walter at SERENITY ACRES.*

Dani brings her hands to her face, tears stream down her face.

DANI
This is just like my moms.

VINCENT
And there's a place right next to hers I can hang it.

They hug and kiss.

The kids moan, then all clap.

They all turn. Jordan and Lexi hold reins of six horses.

Chloe, decked out in her fancy ribbons and nail polish and bows. She stomps a foot.

Penny walks over to her, admires the ribbons.

PENNY
Who is this?

Jordan smiles brightly.

JORDAN
Chloe.

Penny turns to Jordan, a big grin.

PENNY
You remembered.

Jordan grins shyly.

DANI
I almost forgot. Penny, this is for you.

She hands her a photo album.

Penny pages through it, speechless.

DANI (CONT'D)

A little something to remind you of
what you have to come home to.

Penny hugs Dani.

JORDAN (O.S.)

Mom, let's go.

EXT. END OF DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

All ride under the Serenity Acres sign, Dani bringing up the rear.

Dani stops, turns, and looks back at the ranch and sees...

Vision from the past

A large archway stands to greet guests. A white covering hangs over the middle.

A teenaged Patrick stands under it, rope in hand, in anticipation to reveal what hides beneath it.

Standing with her mother ELEANOR, her father CHRISTIAN, seven year old Dani, holds a ten year old Vincent's hand.

CHRISTIAN lifts his glass.

CHRISTIAN

A toast, everyone, to new
beginnings and second chances.

A group of people cheer!

Patrick pulls the sheet off to reveal a sign which reads:

"SERENITY ACRES".

Fade to Present

Dani sits on her horse. A tear in her eye.

DANI

You started something pretty
amazing, Mom and Dad.

She turns and catches up to Vincent.

FADE OUT