

THE HIDING

By

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1961.

1 EXT. RURAL ENGLAND - EVENING 1

Northern England. Cruel land. As beautiful as it is lethal.

Steep hills. Forest floors of moss-covered rocks. Farms where generations have lived, toiled, and died.

2 EXT. FARMYARD - EVENING 2

A stooped-shouldered boy of fifteen (going on fifty), stalks the long grass where the farmyard meets THE WOODS.

The boy is RAY. Nothing but muscle and bone. He wears grubby work clothes.

Ray drags the lifeless body of a DOG, a border collie. The animal's white and black fur is wet with blood. A violent death.

The corpse is dragged past the treeline, into the woods, its limp head bumping over railway tracks.

3 EXT. THE WOODS - EVENING 3

Ray stands over a pit dug into the earth, dirt piled at the hole's uneven edges.

After a moments thought Ray throws the dead dog into the hole.

He takes a COLLAR from his pocket. Attached to the collar is a bone-shaped brass name tag. Ray drops the collar into the black pit.

4 EXT. FARMYARD - EVENING 4

Ray emerges from the woods. He notices the blood on his hands, as if for the first time, and stares, contemplative.

SHANE (O.C)
Evenin' Ray.

Ray is startled by SHANE(55), silver hair and weathered face. A farmer. He smiles at Ray. Warm.

Ray hides his bloody hands in his pockets.

(CONTINUED)

SHANE
You seen Willy?

RAY
Willy?

SHANE
Damn dog. Chased after a coupla'
rabbits yes'day, and either he's
lost his appetite, his hearing,
or he's found his'self a bitch in
heat.

Shane holds a dog food bowl full of something brown,
mucky, and unidentifiable.

RAY
Let you know if I see him.

SHANE
'preciate it.

They nod and Shane turns away, heading for his own
farmhouse about a quarter of a mile away down the hill.

A small town sits behind it, occupying the valley floor.

Ray dunks his hands in the green water from the trough and
quickly washes them.

SHANE
Somebody break a window?

RAY
What's that?

Shane points to a BOARDED-UP WINDOW on the first floor.

RAY
Uh, yeah.
(Pause)
Well, see ya.

Ray waits for the other man to leave until finally Shane
waves and treks back across the field.

Ray makes sure that Shane is well on his way before
regarding the boarded up window, his face hardening at the
sight.

5 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

5

Stone walls. Warm firelight. Rustic.

A MOTHER and FATHER join Ray at a sturdy wooden table,
each with a plate of food steaming at their faces.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN (41) wears her hair tied up, tight at her neck. An apron, dusted with baking flour, is worn over her plain dress, the hem dirty.

ED (43), plaid shirt, sleeves rolled up, dungarees. Face like granite, forearms like tree stumps.

Ed and Gwen close their eyes and bow their heads in prayer. Ray follows suit, an obligation.

ED

Father, we speak to the roots of
guilt, shame, and condemnation.

Ray dares to open his eyes, watches his parents, fearful.

ED

We pray to be forgiven in your
sight, that your peace will fill
our hearts and our home. Amen.

Ray snaps his eyes shut.

RAY

Amen.

GWEN

Amen.

Ray obediently follows his parents' cue and picks up his knife and fork before a quick, curt look from Gwen stops him. A silent scolding, an unspoken instruction.

Ray understands what is expected of him; he gets up and takes a fourth plate of food from the room and towards the stairs.

GWEN

Our son, he's a good boy.

ED

...In time.

6 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

6

Ray mounts the top of the stairs. His feet land on bare floorboards.

He uses a key to unlock a door at the far end of the hall and a heavy bolt is heard snapping back.

The door swings open...

He flicks on a dim light...

An orange glow falls on a skinny, filthy boy. FREDDIE (11). No shoes.

(CONTINUED)

Freddie sits on the floor, knees to his chest, back against the wall. His cheeks are streaked with tears. A FRONT TOOTH IS MISSING.

FREDDIE
I don't like the dark.

A HEAVY CHAIN trails from his ankle to the bedpost. The window is boarded up from the inside with old, mismatched wood.

Ray lays the plate on the floor, amongst a handful of joyless TOYS. He looks the child over with a passing expression of sympathy.

Without a word, he turns to leave. He picks up a few scattered crayons, and some crude drawings. He almost steps on a PUPPET - PUNCH, Judy's abusive husband.

Ray leaves the drawings and crayons on a bedside cabinet.

FREDDIE
Please, let me go.
(Pause)
I just want to go home.

Ray closes the door behind him. Locks it.

FREDDIE (O.S)
(screams)
MUM! DAD!

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE UP: THE HIDING.

CUT TO:

7 EXT. FARMYARD - DAY 7

Ray stacks logs in a fire pit.

With the fire lit, he tosses BLOODY CHILDREN'S clothes into the flames. A girl's floral dress blackens and withers.

8 INT. FARMHOUSE, LOCKED ROOM - DAY 8

Freddie cries, pacing the room, barefoot, testing the limits of the chain tethered to his ankle.

The chain rattles across the exposed floorboards and summons blood and puss from the boy's ankle.

Ed's bulk blocks the open doorway. Frustratingly calm, he pays little attention to Freddie as he reads from a BIBLE.

(CONTINUED)

ED

The wickedness of man was great,
and that every intention of the
thoughts of his heart was only
evil continually. The Earth was
corrupt in God's sight and filled
with violence.

Freddie walks in one direction until the chain goes taught
and tugs at his flesh and bone. He then repeats in the
opposite direction. Repeats. Repeats.

His cries compete with Ed's prayers.

9 EXT. FARMYARD - DAY 9

Ray sits, deflated, haunted, scrubbing blood stains from a
hammer. The bucket at his feet is filled with pink water.

10 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY 10

Gwen is showered with noise from above; chains on
floorboards, booming voice in prayer.

She has the look of a person using every bit of will to
block out the world...and failing.

Gwen switches on a radio. A hiss of static and...

NEWSCASTER (O.S)

...Today marks the fifth day
since the sudden disappearance of
a school boy from -

Gwen shuffles the dial and settles on some music.

But it's not enough to drown out the cries and prayers
from above. She turns the volume up.

11 EXT. FARMYARD - DAY 11

Ray watches THAT window. In the narrow gaps between
boards, a flicker of movement.

From outside, his father's bellowing prayers are muffled,
distant ravings.

A train rumbles by behind the treeline.

Ray resumes work on a fence, hammering a length of barbed
wire to erected wooden posts.

12 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - DAY

12

Ed's eyes meet Freddie's.

FREDDIE

This isn't fair.

ED

Love, in its many forms, is rarely ever fair.

Ed turns away, closing and locking the door behind him. He recites his prayers to the locked door.

ED

The Lord saves the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.

(deep breath)

The glory of Israel will fly away like a bird, for your children will die at birth or perish in the womb or never even be conceived. The Lord will ask for wombs that don't give birth and breasts that give no milk.

13 INT. FARMHOUSE, LOCKED ROOM - DAY

13

ED (O.S)

Anyone captured will be run through with a sword. Their little children will be bashed to death right before their eyes.

Freddie grows more terrified. He bangs on the boards across the window, but they hold.

He claws at his chain but succeeds in only drawing more blood from his wounded ankle.

Crying, breaking, he reaches out...for anything. His clawed grip latches onto a STUFFED TOY and he brings it to his chest.

Freddie digs his fingers into the softness, loosening a plastic eye. It rolls on the floor, metal fastening pin pointing to the ceiling.

Freddie blinks tears from his eyes. Hopeful. Inspired.

He inspects the metal pin before using it against the padlock that tethers the chain to his leg. Freddie gets to work...

14 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - DAY 14

ALEX SUMMERS (39), appraises his appearance in a mirror. He wears a neatly pressed brown suit and tie.

Almost satisfied, he neatens the pocket square embroidered with his initials; A.S.

The finishing touch is the wedding ring he removes from a drawer and slides onto his finger.

15 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - DAY 15

Alex snaps the lids shut on a series of matching sample cases; rolls of Duct Tape, jars of Coffee Mate, Pampers, and Bibles.

The final case contains kids toys, among them PUNCH and JUDY PUPPETS.

He carries the cases to the front door. A brown Vauxall Victor sits in the drive.

Alex is about to close the door on his way out when a phone rings. He hesitates.

He dumps the cases on top of the newspaper that occupies his doormat and snatches up the phone.

ALEX

Alex Summers, sales and Marketing.

(tone shifts)

I'm busy. What do you want?

16 INT. PHONE BOX - DAY 16

GILLIAN (37). Her fingers wrap around the phone until her knuckles are white. Pretty, dressed down but wears bright colours.

NANCY (8) entertains herself with a book on the grass outside the phone box.

GILLIAN

You need to take Nancy for the day.

CUT BACK AND FORTH:

ALEX

When?

(CONTINUED)

GILLIAN

Today.

ALEX

I'm working.

GILLIAN

That makes both of us.

ALEX

It's Saturday.

GILLIAN

I have a meeting with the other teachers..these missing kids, it's hit everyone. I can hardly have Nancy sit in on it, can I?

ALEX

Since the judge awarded you custody and me a lifetime of payments...

GILLIAN

You seemed more than happy to offload our child. But some things you can't return for a refund. Your precious solitude comes with a price tag.

ALEX

Precisely. I need to work. It's what pays for her to have nice things.

GILLIAN

Your time, Alex. That's the cost. The "nice things" are for you to feel better, not her.

ALEX

I can't.

GILLIAN

Find a way.

ALEX

I'll be on the road.

GILLIAN

So take her with you. It's one day, Alex. One day. After that you can go back to your perfect, lonely existence. The tragic part is she'll just keep on loving you all the same.

(Pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GILLIAN (cont'd)

And Alex?

ALEX

What, Gill?

GILLIAN

At least pretend like you want to.

Gillian hangs up the phone and steps out of the phone box, catching Nancy's eye and eliciting an excited smile from the little girl.

GILLIAN

He can't wait.

Nancy smiles, delighted.

17 INT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - DAY 17

Alex retrieves the cases full of merchandise by their thick straps.

He closes the door, leaving the newspaper on the mat. The headline; "SECOND CHILD VANISHES. POLICE HAVE NO LEADS. COUNTY IN FEAR".

18 INT/EXT. VAUXALL VICTOR (MOVING) - DAY 18

Alex drives through the small rural town, passing a bakery, a butcher's shop, a barber's.

The car leaves town and travels rolling hills and patches of woodland before entering the winding streets of a similar, second town.

19 EXT. GILLIAN'S HOUSE - DAY 19

Alex is about to knock on the door when it opens.

DENNIS GORMAN (44), tall and lean and wearing a police sergeants uniform pauses for half a beat, caught by surprise. He and Alex regard each coldly other for a moment.

Dennis calls into the house.

DENNIS

Gillian. It's for you

ALEX

Dennis.

(CONTINUED)

DENNIS
Mornin' Alex.

The greeting is no more polite or pleasant than it needs to be. Dennis gets walking down the path to the street.

ALEX
When you gonna find those kids?

DENNIS
You just worry about one.
(pause)
We're doing everything we can,
ok.

Dennis keeps walking and Nancy bursts from the house, holding a stuffed rabbit, and throws her arms around her father's legs.

NANCY
Dad.

She releases one leg to wave at Dennis. She calls...

NANCY
Bye, Dennis!

Dennis' smile is no longer perfunctory. It is wide and sincere.

DENNIS
See you for supper, Petal. Don't
start readin' without me now.

NANCY
No way.

Gillian soon appears in the doorway. Her face remains stern, her disdain for Alex evident.

ALEX
You gonna sit quietly so Daddy
can concentrate?

Nancy nods enthusiastically.

GILLIAN
Please, don't suck the life out
of her too. You can bring her
back at five, no later.

Alex checks his watch.

GILLIAN
Jesus. Counting down the minutes?
Look, we both know you never
wanted a child, but I never
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GILLIAN (cont'd)
wanted grey hairs neither. So I
s'pose we both walked away from
our disaster of a marriage with
baggage.

She spots the ring on his finger.

GILLIAN
What, you couldn't sell it?

ALEX
Worth a lot more if I keep it.
Customers trust a married man.

GILLIAN
It takes talent to lie without
even openin' your mouth.

ALEX
How's Dennis?

GILLIAN
Working over time.

ALEX
It's ok when he does it?

GILLIAN
He's not selling crap from a
suitcase.

Alex looks down at his daughter, sees her watching him and
Gillian.

ALEX
I'll have her home at five.

GILLIAN
That's all I'm asking.
(Pause)
This business with those poor
kids has got everyone 'round here
on edge.

ALEX
(to Nancy)
...How about you be my assistant
for the day?

NANCY
Yes!
(pause)
What's an assistant.

Gillian stays on her doorstep, watching Alex and Nancy
climb into the car drive away.

20

INT. VAUXALL VICTOR (MOVING) - DAY

20

Alex drives. Nancy bounces her Bunny on her knees and holds the toy up so he can see out of the window.

ALEX

An assistant is a person who helps another person.

NANCY

Like a mum? Or a Dad?

ALEX

Not exactly. How's about you just smile at my customers for me?

NANCY

Sounds simple.

ALEX

Easy, right?

NANCY

Boring.

Alex smiles, perplexed. He's quiet, reading his daughter.

ALEX

...So, who's the rabbit?

NANCY

This is Alex.

ALEX

You named your rabbit after me?

NANCY

Mm-hm. We read together.

ALEX

...With Dennis?

NANCY

We're reading a book called Hansel and Gretel.

ALEX

Tell me all about it.

NANCY

Well, it's about this brother and sister who live near these woods. One day, their mum and Dad don't want them no more, so they take them in the woods so Hansel and Gretel will get lost. But The brother leaves some breadcrumbs

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NANCY (cont'd)
 in the woods so they can find
 their way home again. But the
 birds eat the bread and they get
 lost and end up going to a
 Witch's house and the Witch wants
 to eat them.

ALEX
 You like that story?

NANCY
 I like the way Dennis reads it.
 We built a blanket fort, so it's
 safe.

ALEX
 You don't get scared?

NANCY
 You're there too.

ALEX
 Eh?

Nancy waves Alex the Rabbit, offering the answer to his question.

21 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY 21

A small, Victorian-era building. Grey stone and wrought iron. A pair of bicycles lean against the fence and a few, POLICE PANDA CARS are parked out front.

Dennis mounts the steps and goes inside.

22 INT. POLICE STATION - DAY 22

Dennis enters to the sound of the CHIEF INSPECTOR'S gruff but warm voice. CI Wallace (55) is tall, grey, and proud. His uniform is immaculate.

WALLACE
 Ah, young Gorman. Brew on your
 desk waitin' for ya. Thank Tommy.

Two CONSTABLES nod their greetings; TOMMY WACKERMAN(23), and BRIAN MULRONEY(60).

Brian gets back to a phone conversation after momentarily using his hand to cover the mouthpiece.

BRIAN
 No Jimmy, sorry. No further news.
 We'll keep you posted, speak to
 you later. My love to June.

(CONTINUED)

Brian hangs up the phone.

Dennis gets behind his desk and sips a cup of tea. He raises the mug an inch for Tommy's benefit, show his appreciation. Tommy raises his own in return.

Brian takes a huge gulp of his.

WALLACE

Right, right. With the pleasantries out of the way, maybe we can do a bit of work?

DENNIS

Yes, Gov.

WALLACE

It wasn't rhetorical.

TOMMY

No new leads yet, Sir. It seems little Sally Henderson and Bobby Mellor both went out to play and just disappeared.

Dennis looks down at an open CASE FILE and two school photographs of a smiling SALLY HENDERSON, and BOBBY MELLOR.

Sally, wears a necklace with a pendant shaped into her own name; SALLY.

WALLACE

Kids don't disappear, they're taken, by people.

BRIAN

Sick bastards.

WALLACE

And I don't wanna be looking for a third kid. Or a fourth. You get the picture?

BRIAN

Sick bastards.

WALLACE

Brian, how're the families? The parents?

BRIAN

They're not doin' too good, Gov. Nobody is, the whole county is feelin' this one.

(CONTINUED)

WALLACE

Now, time to face facts, Lads. The four of us can't possibly do all the searchin' needed to turn over every stone in the county in the hope of reuniting them kids with their folks. Some of our city boys are coming up to lend a hand. I'm talking door to door searches, garages, barns, lofts, shithouses, the lot.

BRIAN

We've always dealt with our own 'round here. Never needed city folk to tell us how to slap wrists.

WALLACE

I hear ya, but we need to widen our net. We find those kids, we find who took 'em, and believe me, when we do, he'll be our's to deal with.

DENNIS

I been wondering, Gov.

WALLACE

What you been wonderin'?

DENNIS

In the Henderson abduction, the girl, Sally, was last seen playin' in her own garden, and her toys left behind testify to that fact.

WALLACE

Go on.

DENNIS

We found a toy the parents didn't recognise, said they'd never seen it. A puppet. One of those creepy Punch and Judy things.

BRIAN

Ugly as sin.

DENNIS

What if whoever is takin' these kids is butterin' 'em up with toys, games, that sort of thing?

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

Sick bastards.

WALLACE

Find those kids and the devil
that's taken 'em, and you'll have
your answers, Gorman. But it's
gonna take good ol' fashioned
police work.

(Pause)

Good luck, lads.

Brian and Tommy get out from behind their desks, taking
their coats.

DENNIS

Never thought I'd see anything
like this. Gimme drunk husbands,
stolen bikes, broken winda's.

(Pause)

If we catch the fella' -

WALLACE

When.

DENNIS

When we catch the fella, what do
we do with him, one like that?

WALLACE

...Search teams will be here
before the day is out.

Dennis nods and follows the two Constables out the door.

23 INT. FARMHOUSE, LOCKED ROOM - DAY

23

Freddie's fingers are red, raw, and weeping. He tries to
unlock the padlock with the pin attached to the plastic
eye.

When he hears the key in the door he is forced to stop and
hide the pin between a crack in the floorboards.

Ray steps inside.

He finds Freddie even more red-eyed than the night
previously, looking as though he has not slept. The front
of his shirt is crusty with dried vomit.

A circular yellow stain on the mattress.

FREDDIE

You're not s'posed to be doing
this to me.

(CONTINUED)

Ray leaves the room and almost immediately returns with a pair of buckets. He puts them in a corner of the room.

RAY

We all have to do what's expected of us.

FREDDIE

But I just want to go home. I want to play, like other kids.

RAY

...I know. Sorry.

24

INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

24

The older boy exits, locking the door, and comes face to face with Ed, holding a drill.

RAY

We need to talk.

ED

Only talking you ought to be doing is with the Lord.

RAY

He ain't listening.

Ed's expression turns furious. He slaps Ray hard across the cheek.

ED

They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord; and everyone who would not seek the Lord was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

RAY

We're guilty now. All of us. 'Cept I can't decide which of us is worst.

ED

Go comfort your mother.

As Ray heads downstairs Ed begins drilling into the door and reciting more Bible verses.

ED

I will release wild animals that will kill your children and destroy your cattle, so your numbers will dwindle and your roads will be deserted.

25 INT. HOUSE 1 - DAY

25

Alex maintains his smile as he speaks, fighting to win the interest of a HUSBAND and WIFE.

ALEX

Now this here is a revolutionary new product they're calling Coffee Mate. This is going to change the way you make and drink coffee.

(pauses for breath)

What is it, you say? Well I'm glad you ask.

He holds the jar, turning it over in his hands for dramatic emphasis.

ALEX

Gone are the days of handing over your hard earned pennies to the milkman only for your cream to curdle and sour. This fantastic creamer comes in powdered form, so no need to concern yourself with refrigeration needs or expiry dates. It lasts a lifetime and tastes even better than the real thing. Simply add a teaspoon or two to your favourite coffee, depending on your desires and the sweetness of your tooth, and enjoy. So how many jars can I put you down for?

HUSBAND

We drink tea in this 'ouse.

26 EXT. HOUSE 1 - DAY

26

Nancy waits in the car, entertaining herself with the world outside. Alex steps from the house.

ALEX

Thank you for your time. You both have a fantastic day.

Nancy lights up when she sees her father returning to the car.

NANCY

How many did you sell, Dad?

He loads a couple of his cases of merchandise into the boot of the car.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

I was on the cusp, sweetheart. On the cusp.

NANCY

What's the cusp?

ALEX

Almost there.

He gets behind the wheel and smiles at his daughter.

ALEX

The next one, I'll make a sale. I can feel it.

He starts the engine and hits the gas.

27

INT. HOUSE 2 - DAY

27

An ELDERLY MAN'S spine obeys the contours of an old armchair while Alex perches on the edge of a neighbouring chair. He holds a roll of duct tape.

ALEX

No more tools. No more hammer and nails, no more screws, no more messy glue. Mark my words, they're gonna be putting together space rockets with this stuff.

Alex wins the Elderly Man's curiosity, who takes the roll of duct tape for a closer look. He holds it up to his glasses and turns the thing over and over and over again, feeling and searching for the start of the tape.

Alex knows this one is a lost cause.

28

INT. HOUSE 3 - DAY

28

A STRESSED OUT MUM paces her kitchen, one infant resting on her hip, another following her every step and pulling at her dress. It's as though Alex isn't even there.

He fights to be heard over the noise, resolve on the way out. He points from case to case, each of them open, displaying the various goods.

ALEX

Here we've got some, erm...Pampers. Nappies. For your, erm...little boy, little girl, baby. No fuss, just throw them out once it - your child - has done its business. Or, for

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (cont'd)
the older child, some fantastic
playthings.

He attempts a brief, tired demonstration with a PUNCH and JUDY puppet. He's no puppeteer.

He gives up and the puppets collapse, falling lifeless. Alex slams the lids shut on the cases, snatches up the two puppets, and shows himself out.

29

EXT. HOUSE 3 - DAY

29

Alex slams the door shut behind him and is about to return to his car - Nancy smiling from behind the window - when he sees a BOY (5), playing in next door's garden.

ALEX
Hello there.

The Boy squints up at Alex.

ALEX
Your parents home?

The Boy stays silent.

ALEX
Would you like to see something
special?

Alex teases the reveal of the two puppets, taking his time raising them clear of the fence. Judy in one hand, Punch in the other.

He watches the Boy for a reaction, smiling when the child smiles, winking right before showing Punch and Judy in all their glory.

Alex "walks" them along the fence, putting on a show and the Boy is hooked. He abandons his game and makes his approach.

Alex lets the Boy reach for one of the puppets.

ALEX
You like that?

The Boy nods but Alex withdraws the puppet, just an inch.

ALEX
Are your Mum and Dad inside?

DENNIS (O.C)
Alex?

Alex is startled. He turns, finds Dennis - notebook in hand - stood at the foot of the garden path.

ALEX

Dennis? You gave me a fright.

Dennis takes in the boy...Alex...the PUPPETS....Nancy, in the car.

DENNIS

What are you doing?

ALEX

Working. You?

DENNIS

Working...Nice puppets. You sold many of them?

ALEX

I was on the cusp of selling one more before you showed up.

DENNIS

You kept receipts?

ALEX

Of course.

Dennis waits.

ALEX

They're in the car. Want me to fetch 'em?

A fresh wave of noisy commotion erupts from the house. A child's wailing, a Mother's yelling.

Dennis chooses the house over the receipts and knocks on the door.

ALEX

Good luck.

DENNIS

You too.

Alex loads the rear of the car, gets behind the wheel and drives away.

Back at the house, Dennis watches Alex and Nancy peel away in the Vauxall Victor before stepping inside.

30 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - DAY 30

Ed tests his work; he unlocks and slides open a letterbox-sized hatch that he's built into the door to the captive boy's room.

Freddie finishes emptying himself into one of the metal buckets and stares back at Ed through the hatch, teary-eyed.

ED

Wipe off those tears, boy. I won't abide pity, least of all for yourself.

He slams the hatch shut and calls throughout the house.

ED

Gwen!

31 INT. FARMHOUSE, LOCKED ROOM - DAY 31

Freddie uses his fingernails to pry the pin from between the floorboards. It's a precarious job, millimetres to spare.

The sound of hurried feet on bare wood...With the pin in hand, Freddie tries the lock...

32 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - DAY 32

Gwen carries a plate of food and stops a pace short from Ed and avoids his gaze.

ED

What's on your mind?

Gwen remains silent, knowing better.

ED

Well, loosen your tongue.

GWEN

We've never done it like this before, not this far.

ED

You'd have us do different?

GWEN

This all seems... unnecessary.

ED

You been praying, like I told you?

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

I see nothing to pray for.

ED

You as well? It appears my family
is slipping from my grasp.

(Pause)

Nothing to pray for? God gave you
eyes, didn't he?

GWEN

To look upon the ones I love.

ED

So pray for them.

GWEN

My prayers will be only for you.
I fear you're misguided.

ED

Foolish woman, it's you who is
misguided. We're saving a soul.

Gwen steps in front of Ed and begins sliding open the
hatch...

33 INT. FARMHOUSE, LOCKED ROOM - DAY

33

Freddie freezes. The hatch opens an inch, stops.

He holds his breath and gives the pin one final twist. The
lock opens. Freddie pulls the padlock free from the chain
and begins unraveling it from his ankle...

34 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - DAY

34

Gwen is about to slide the plate of food through the
hatch, but Ed stops her with a strong hand around her
wrist.

Ed instead pushes the bible through just as Freddie
uncoils the final loop of chain...

Enraged, Ed storms the room and grabs a fistful of
Freddie's hair. The boy screams.

ED

That won't help you.

Ed presses the bible against Freddie's face until his
features are distorted.

(CONTINUED)

ED
But this can.
(pause)
What might feel like punishment
will be salvation.
(pause)
Gwen?

She loiters in the doorway, one hand clenched around the other.

ED
Bring the clamps.

GWEN
...Ed.

ED
And the sack.

CUT TO:

Freddie is tied to the bed with rope around his wrists. A cast iron clamp, old farm equipment, is closed around his neck and a chain connects the clamp to the wall.

Ed places an empty potato sack over Freddie's head.

FREDDIE
NOT THE DARK, NOT THE DARK.
PLEASE!

Ed exits the room and slams the hatch shut.

35 EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

35

Ray nails lengths of barbed wire to fence posts. Ed approaches.

ED
I'm taking your mother into town.
We need supplies.

RAY
Supplies?

ED
You know what the Lord says about
the curious?

Ed looks up at the boarded-up window.

ED
Watch the place.

Ray nods obligingly.

- 36 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - DAY 36
- Ed and Gwen climb into a battered and paint-chipped 1957 SEDDON SERVICE VAN with "KING'S FRUIT AND VEG" detailing on the side panels.
- The exhaust pipe chokes and sputters as the engine stumbles to life. Ed drives the van up the long gravel driveway.
- 37 EXT. FARMYARD - DAY 37
- Ray watches the distant twin trails of exhaust and dust as the van heads for the hilltop road.
- 38 INT/EXT. VAUXALL VICTOR - DAY 38
- Frustrated, Alex pores over a local map stretched over the steering wheel. He wrestles with the folds and creases in the paper, tracing roads with a finger.
- NANCY
Lunch time now.
- He looks at his daughter.
- NANCY
Everything will be better once
you've had something to eat.
- He gives in, smiles.
- ALEX
You're right. What would I do
without my trusty assistant?
- She smiles back at him and he ruffles her hair affectionately.
- 39 EXT. GOODE'S GOODS - DAY 39
- A quaint, modest-sized general store. Hand-painted signs and charmingly simple window displays.
- 40 INT. GOODE'S GOODS - DAY 40
- Wide-eyed, Nancy takes in all the sights the store has to offer. Rolls of electrical wire, cereal boxes, canned foods, toys, jars of boiled sweets, chocolate, and tools tower over her.
- Alex hands her a small, white paper bag, rolled over at the top.

(CONTINUED)

NANCY
What's this?

ALEX
Lunch.

Nancy unrolls the top of the bag and peers inside.

NANCY
Dad, you can't have sweets for
lunch.

ALEX
You tried one yet?

NANCY
No.

ALEX
Then how'd you know? That there
is good for breakfast, lunch, and
dinner. You got apple, rhubarb,
custard, lemon, blue raspberry.

From behind the counter, wearing a neatly pressed
shopkeeper's apron is MR. GOODE, silver-haired,
friendly-faced (64).

Alex flashes Mr Goode his wedding ring. Winks.

ALEX
Just don't tell your mother.

Mr Goode's smile grows wider in anticipation as Nancy is
about to sample one of the hard sweets.

An amber-coloured swirl disappears on her tongue. Her eyes
grow big and round and the corners of her lips curl into a
smile.

MR GOODE
What do you say to that then,
little miss?

ALEX
Mister Goode, I presume?

Alex drops a sample case on the counter and offers his
hand. Mr Goode has no choice but to shake it.

ALEX
If I may say so, this is a fine
establishment you have here.

MR GOODE
...Thanks. Thank you.

ALEX

Looks like you stock almost everything. Almost.

Alex opens up his case as Nancy sucks down another sweet, wandering the aisles. Rows of shelves form long, narrowing avenues.

Outside, a VAN pulls to a stop at the curb. The Van's side is painted with the words; "KING'S FRUIT AND VEG".

BACK AT THE COUNTER:

Alex brandishes a roll of duct tape, a miracle to be marveled at.

ALEX

No more tools. No more hammer and nails, no more screws, no more messy glue.

The bell above the door chimes as Ed enters. Gwen follows.

ALEX

Mark my words, they're gonna be putting together space rockets with this stuff.

While Gwen loads a wicker basket with food, Ed opts for the gardening tools and hardware.

Nancy bumps into Ed's leg. He's slow to react.

NANCY

Sorry.

He smiles down at her.

ED

Sweet things for a sweet thing.

A little shy, she keeps moving, eating her sweets and taking everything in.

Ed keeps his eyes on her as he selects a pick axe. Next, a shovel. A set of padlocks. He inspects different thicknesses of rope and chains, each one wound around a spool.

ED

(To Mr Goode)

Sir, how much for six feet?

Mr Goode raises a hand, a flustered gesture as he's caught between the two men.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

This is the strongest sticky tape ever invented by man, or that ever will be invented, and you, Mr Goode, can be the first retailer and merchant in the county to stock it.

Mr Goode repeats the same flustered gesture, but Alex doesn't let the man speak. Or think.

ALEX

Go on, try it. Strong as steel, flexible as rubber.

Ed looks Alex over.

ED

How much for a roll?

Alex allows his surprise to show, just for a moment, before he gestures from Ed to the duct tape and to Mr Goode; "What'd I tell ya?".

41 EXT. GOODE'S GOODS - DAY 41

Alex and Nancy climb into the Vauxall, parked behind Ed and Gwen's Van.

42 INT/EXT. VAUXALL VICTOR - DAY 42

ALEX

You must be my lucky charm.

NANCY

Really?

ALEX

It was your idea to stop by for lunch, weren't it?

NANCY

You really think I'm a lucky charm?

ALEX

Mine, at least. So lucky in fact, I'm gonna let you pick where we go next.

He shows her the map and her eyes wander. After a while she looks instead to the window and points to the distant hills.

(CONTINUED)

NANCY
(Points)
There.

ALEX
The hills?

NANCY
Yeah.

ALEX
But there's nothing there.

NANCY
Exactly. With all the shops being
in the towns, it must be really
far the folks that live out there
to come for all their stuff.

Alex ponders, come to agree.

ALEX
Lucky and clever. You're
promoted.

He starts the engine and starts driving.

43 INT/EXT. VAUXALL VICTOR (MOVING) - DAY

43

Nancy pops another hard-boiled sweet in her mouth.

NANCY
What's promoted?

ALEX
It's when you prove yourself and
you're rewarded with something
good, something you deserve.

Nancy sucks on her sweet for a while.

NANCY
What's self-centered?

Alex is caught off guard.

ALEX
Did your Mum say that?

NANCY
...can I come and live with you?

ALEX
....Sweetheart, it's not -

NANCY

Or you could come and live with me and mum again?

ALEX

I don't think Dennis would like that.

NANCY

But he's not my Dad. Aren't Dad's supposed to be with their children to play games and read?

ALEX

We can do all those things.

NANCY

But Mum says you're always busy working. I can see why, it is fun.

ALEX

It's not always this fun.

(pause)

Only with you.

Nancy smiles and starts sucking on another sweet from the bag.

ALEX

May I have one of those?

NANCY

Please.

ALEX

Please.

Smiling, she drops a peppermint coin into his open palm. Alex puts it on his tongue.

The car mounts a hill before a dozen others rise into view, and with them, a distant FARMHOUSE.

44 EXT. FARMYARD - DAY

44

Ray bashes the final fence post into the earth and heads back towards the house, hammer swinging at his side.

A glint from the ashes of the fire pit catches his eye. Squatting, he inspects the burned remains of the CHILDREN'S CLOTHES.

Ray brushes aside a charred patch of denim to reveal a NECKLACE. He hooks a finger under the delicate chain. A pendant, the name SALLY in silver, dangles in his grasp.

He stuffs the jewellery in his pocket and heads for the woods. As he approaches the treeline a STEAM TRAIN thunders by.

45 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - DAY 45

Alex stops the car in the shadow of the old house.

46 INT. VAUXALL VICTOR - DAY 46

Alex shuts off the engine and turns to Nancy.

ALEX

Tell you what, since we've both worked so hard, maybe we'll need a break. How about we read that story of yours tomorrow night?

NANCY

But mum doesn't like you coming over?

ALEX

Well, what if you stayed over with me then?

NANCY

Really?

ALEX

You, me, and Alex The Rabbit.

He touches a finger to stuffed Alex's plastic nose.

NANCY

The whole night?

ALEX

The whole night.

NANCY

Promise?

ALEX

Promise.

Alex is unprepared when Nancy leans across the seats and poises for an embrace. He tries it on for size, uneasy at first. He kisses the top of her head.

ALEX

Wait here, ok?

(CONTINUED)

NANCY

Ok.

47 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - DAY 47

Alex gets out of the car and takes a couple of cases from the boot. He approaches the old farmhouse.

ALEX

Hello? Anybody home?

The house quietly groans in response. Alex steps to the front door and knocks. Waits.

ALEX

Alex Summers, you want it, I've got it.

48 EXT. GOODE'S GOODS - DAY 48

Ed carries a satchel of shopping, a pick axe, and shovel to the van. Gwen struggles with her own load of food.

She spills a sack of potatoes onto the pavement. They roll in all directions.

49 INT. FARMHOUSE, LOCKED ROOM - DAY 49

Freddie, hearing the knocking from downstairs, suddenly makes as much noise as he can. Like his life depended on it.

50 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - DAY 50

Alex knocks again, turns away, disappointed.

A muffled, anguished cry...

FREDDIE (O.S)

HELP! HELP ME!

Alex drops his cases of merchandise on the drive, tries the door, but finds it locked. He tugs on the handle, pounds on the door.

FREDDIE (O.S)

UPSTAIRS, UPSTAIRS.

Alex circles the house, heading for the farmyard at the back.

- 51 INT. FARMHOUSE, LOCKED ROOM - DAY 51
Freddie fights to free himself. One wrist pulls free of the rope looped around it, but not without burning his skin.
- 52 EXT. FARMYARD - DAY 52
Alex looks in windows and bangs on glass.
Upstairs, a small, bloody hand slaps the glass, just about visible between the wooden boards.
ALEX
Shit.
He takes a rock from around the fire pit and smashes a small window in the back door.
- 53 EXT. THE WOODS - DAY 53
Ray approaches the pit, Sally's necklace in hand, ready to throw it in.
Glass breaks in the distance.
Ray suddenly he takes off RUNNING, necklace still in hand.
- 54 INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY 54
Alex reaches in through the broken window, CUTTING HIS HAND, and unlocks the door.
He steps inside and takes in his surroundings at lightening speed.
He finds himself in a family home. Muted and reserved expressions look back at him from family PHOTOS.
Alex races through the house and up the stairs.
- 55 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - DAY 55
Alex pushes on every door he comes up against. But only one holds.
He opens the hatch and finds Freddie, tied to the bed, save for one wrist, and a FOX NECK CLAMP around his neck.
ALEX
Oh Jesus. Jesus Christ.

(CONTINUED)

The key is still in the lock. Alex unlocks the door and throws it open, sending dirty and depressing toys sliding across the floor.

The sight of Freddie stops him in his tracks; the urine-stained mattress, the buckets of human waste, the incongruous toys. It's the child's room from a nightmare.

Broken glass litters the floor from a smashed mirror.

Alex moves fast. He pulls the sack from Freddie's head, unties the boy's ankles and wrist, and is left struggling with the neck clamp.

The clamp is held in the closed position by coils of chain around the handles.

Finally, he frees Freddie.

ALEX
Come on, I'll get you out of
here.

Alex takes Freddie by the hand and together they run down the corridor, down the stairs and through the house.

56 INT/EXT. SEDDON SERVICE VAN (MOVING) - DAY 56

Gwen and Ed travel in silence. Their own home appears and disappears behind the hills as the van climbs and dips along the road.

57 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - DAY 57

Nancy starts as Alex and Freddie burst from the house. She's frightened and perplexed.

Alex runs ahead and opens the door on the Vauxall for Freddie, helping him into the car.

ALEX
It's ok, sweetheart. This boy
needs our help.
(pause)
What's your name, son?

FREDDIE
Freddie.

ALEX
Freddie, this is my little girl,
Nancy. We're gonna get you out of
here.

Freddie is timid, cautious. He settles on the back seat of the car, eyes on Nancy.

Alex is half way in the car...

FREDDIE
You can't go. Not yet.

ALEX
What? Why?

FREDDIE
There are two more.

ALEX
Two more kids?

FREDDIE
A boy and a girl.

ALEX
Oh shit. You sure?

Freddie nods.

ALEX
Those kids from town?

FREDDIE
Back in the house.

Alex takes stock - Nancy, Freddie, the house, the road.
The Van is in the distance, approaching.

He throws the keys in the car and they land on the seat
next to Nancy's.

ALEX
Lock the doors. I'll be back.

NANCY
DAD!

...but Alex is already running back inside the farmhouse.

58 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - DAY

58

Alex runs down the corridor.

ALEX
Anyone trapped inside? I'm here
to help.

He finds himself at the doorway to the room Freddie has
been held in.

Alex takes in the sight of the Punch puppet, the broken
mirror...

59 INT. VAUXALL VICTOR - DAY 59

Nancy anxiously watches the house before turning to the grubby boy over her shoulder.

Freddie attempts a smile.

FREDDIE
Want to be my friend?

60 INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY 60

Alex spots a row of coloured, faded cubes, each one bearing a letter of the alphabet, arranged on a shelf to spell a name; FREDDIE.

Alex's mouth struggles to form the words racing through his mind, each one stuck on his lips...until...

ALEX
No.

He turns to leave and finds the stack of drawings; two crude figures walking through the woods, standing by a pond, walking along train lines, one figure apparently battering the other with a rock.

ALEX
Nancy.

He runs from the room.

61 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 61

As Alex runs past the framed family photos hung on walls and placed on the mantel.

Ed, Gwen, and Ray, all sullen, are joined by Freddie, smiling his gap-toothed smile.

62 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - DAY 62

Alex emerges from the house and finds his car EMPTY, save for the stuffed bunny. He's frantic.

ALEX
NANCY? NANCY?

Ed and Gwen's van clears the final rise and pulls into the drive, blocking Alex's car.

Ray emerges from the woods, hammer in hand.

Gwen and Ed climb from the van and Ed removes the pick axe.

(CONTINUED)

Everybody eyes everybody, cautious, anxious, and hesitant.

Alex tries for his car door but Ed puts a hand against it, eyes on the keys and bunny inside. He smiles.

GWEN

Can we help you?

ED

I know you.

ALEX

...Yeah?...I know you too.

Alex notes his bleeding hand. Blood drips into the dirt so he shoves the hand in his pocket.

ED

The man who has everything.

GWEN

What do you want?

Alex thinks. Tries to. He finds his cases right at his feet, right where he dropped them. He picks them up and shoulders the straps.

His voice comes out shaky...

ALEX

It's not what I want, it's about what you want.

He tries to steady it.

ALEX

...But I wouldn't want to take up any more of your time.

He starts loading his cases in his car.

ED

First time I ever see the salesman walk before the customer.

Ed takes a step closer, pick axe in hand. He, Gwen, and the approaching Ray form a triangle around Alex.

ED

That duct tape you sold me is real good. I wanna see what other surprises you've got.

Alex hesitates.

ED

You got somewhere else to be?
I'll make you a better offer. One
you can't refuse.

(pause)

Come on, give us your best
patter. Your most convincing
lines.

GWEN

Let's all step inside, shall we?

(pause)

Ray, bring the things from the
van.

Ed gestures for Alex to lead the way and he and Gwen
follow him inside the house.

Ray brings the sack of potatoes and bag full of chains and
padlocks from the van.

63 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

63

The four of them file into the living room. Alex stares at
the double barreled shotgun on brackets above the
fireplace.

Ed leans the pick axe against the wall.

ED

Take a seat? Would you like
anything to drink?

ALEX

No, thank you.

ED

Gwen, bring us some tea, would
ya.

64 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

64

Gwen goes to the kitchen and finds the broken window. Ray
follows her into the room.

GWEN

Go upstairs, check on your
brother.

65 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

65

From the corner of his eye, Alex watches Ray climb the stairs. His footfalls are heavy, deafening. They reverberate through the house.

Ed scrutinizes Alex's nerves.

ED
Kids, eh.

ALEX
Huh?

ED
Make all sorts of trouble, if you let 'em.

He sees Alex's bleeding hand.

ED
You ok?

ALEX
Yeah. Fine.

Alex takes his personalised, embroidered pocket square and wraps it around his hand.

ED
Whatever you say. Now, what can we do a deal on?

Alex's attention seems to be everywhere but on what he's doing. He clumsily lays the cases on the coffee table at his knees, one of them nudging another framed family picture of Ed, Gwen, Ray, and Freddie.

Ray's heavy footsteps come to a definitive stop overhead.

66 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - DAY

66

Ray stands at the threshold to Freddie's empty room, knows a storm is coming. He grips the edges of the door frame until his knuckles turn white.

67 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

67

Alex opens up each of his cases as Gwen lays a tray of mugs on the table.

Alex reaches for a mug but Gwen selects one for him.

Does he see the last remnants of a fine white powder dissolving? He stares into the swirling tea but it offers no answers.

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

Drink it while it's hot.

She stands back, tray resting against her front and smile stretching her face.

Ray descends the stairs and catches the attention of Gwen and Ed. He shakes his head.

Ed turns his attention to the open cases, eyes widening when they come across the stack of bibles.

ED

May I?

ALEX

Go ahead...sure...please do.

ED

Any favourite passages?

ALEX

Er, I -

ED

Surely you know what you possess?

(pause)

You disappoint me, mister?

ALEX

...Summers.

ED

Mister summers. Are you not obliged to demonstrate an intimate knowledge of that for which you are responsible?

ALEX

Listen, I -

ED

No. You listen.

All wait anxiously while Ed opens the bible and casually scrolls through pages, apparently seeking out a specific text. He finds it, reads.

ED

Samuel six, verse seven; Uzzah reached out his hand to the ark of God to steady it, for the oxen were making it tip. But the Lord was angry with Uzzah; God struck him on that spot, and he died there before God.

(pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ED (cont'd)
Do you know what this means?

ED
...N-no.

ED
What the good book tells us,
Mister Summers, is that you have
interrupted the natural order of
things. You have intervened where
you have no business intervening.
You. Are. Not. Welcome.

Alex throws his tea at Ed, who turns away to avoid the scolding drink, but instead is burned on one side. He screams and drops to the floor.

As Ed writhes in pain, Alex shoots to his feet and flips the coffee table over and on top of Ed.

Ed grabs Alex's legs, bringing him down on top of him. The two men grapple and fight amongst the smashed contents of the table.

Ed gets the better of Alex, overpowering him, pinning him to the floor and looming over him.

Alex knocks a table leg loose, swings it like a club, and drives a nail through Ed's cheek. Blood spurts over Alex's front.

Ed lets go of Alex to paw at his fresh injury.

Alex runs for the door but Gwen smashes him in the face with the tea tray, splitting his lips. He spins and falls to his knees.

Alex attempts to get to his feet and Gwen hits him again with the tray.

Ray stands, fixed to the spot, frozen, watching. Fear? Confusion? Intentional apathy?

From down on the floor, Alex kicks Gwen in the stomach and she doubles over. He kicks her in the jaw.

The point of the pick axe slams down, missing Alex but piercing his suit jacket and pinning it to the floor.

Alex sees Ray stepping away from the handle of the pick axe.

Gwen recovers and lunges towards Alex, bites his cut hand, eliciting a scream from the salesman.

Alex squirms and wrestles but Gwen sinks her teeth further into his wound. He headbutts her and she lets go.

(CONTINUED)

Alex tries to get up but is forced to shake free of his jacket, which remains skewered to the floor.

He runs for the door but a portion of it explodes above his head, showering him with splinters.

Ed cocks the other barrel on the shotgun and takes aim.

Alex darts from the door and rounds a corner, disappearing from view.

Silently, Ed gestures with a thrust of his chin for Gwen and Ray to take one route while he takes another.

Gwen pries the pick axe from the floor.

THEY STALK THE HALLWAYS...

Ed, hole in his cheek and burns on his face, carries the shotgun while Ray follows his mother as she wields a pick axe.

68

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

68

The Anti Waltons reconvene silently in the kitchen and find Alex trying to pry an ancient sickle bolted to the wall.

The groan of a floorboard. Alex turns. The family members close in on him.

ALEX

Who are you?

ED

Loving parents. You understand.

Ed points the shotgun at Alex's face.

RAY

Don't...remember the sixth commandment.

Ed is visibly torn. His finger eases on the trigger, conviction now slippery.

RAY

No more killing.

Nobody moves.

Alex, petrified, dares not breathe.

Ed lowers the shotgun...He then swings the butt of the weapon against Alex's head and neck, knocking him unconscious.

69 EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

69

Nancy walks ahead of Freddie. She looks back, past the boy, peering into the distance.

The house has gone from sight. Nothing but trees. Freddie blocks her view when he steps into it.

FREDDIE
Keep going.

NANCY
I don't know why we can't go
back?

FREDDIE
You saw that van coming? They're
the ones that kept me chained up.
They're bad people.

NANCY
My Dad will keep us safe.

FREDDIE
Not all Dads are good.

NANCY
But...I want my Dad.

Freddie keeps walking, stops when he sees that Nancy is still fixed on the spot, looking back in the direction they came.

FREDDIE
I know these woods. We'll be fine
if we stick together.
(pause)
That's what friends do.

Reluctantly, Nancy follows.

FREDDIE
I'll show you something,
something to cheer you up.

70 EXT. SHANE'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

70

Shane is showing PC Tommy Wackerman out the door, the two men smiling. Tommy carries a notepad.

A train rumbles in the distance.

TOMMY
Thanks for letting me 'ave a look
around. Much obliged.

(CONTINUED)

SHANE

Whatever it takes. Hope you find 'em. Can't imagine what their folks must be going through.

TOMMY

Right with ya. My wife is working on our first.

SHANE

Kinda makes me feel a little stupid for getting worked up about Willy.

TOMMY

Willy?

SHANE

My dog.

TOMMY

He's missing?

SHANE

Into thin air.

TOMMY

Recently?

SHANE

Coupl'a days. Funny, I asked around and it seems I ain't the only one. Dogs an cats 'av been disappearing from all over the hills and from around town too. Cats I ain't choked up about, but dogs, they's a man's best friend. Know what I mean?

Tommy loiters on the doorstep for a moment, slapping his palm with his notepad. He points to the neighbouring farmhouse up the hill.

TOMMY

Know much about your neighbours?

SHANE

The Kings? Moved in just a bit back. I see 'em about, should say hello more often, I s'pose, do the neighbourly thing.

(pause)

There's Ed, his missus, and their two lads. The older one, he's a good worker, ya know. The younger one, I see him goin' in and out of them woods, playin' by

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SHANE (cont'd)
hissself, sometimes got a friend
with 'im, sometimes not.

TOMMY
Nothing odd?

SHANE
Nothin' odd about a lad showin'
an appreciation for the
outdoors.

Tommy shows his appreciation with a nod and climbs back into the police panda car. He starts the engine and drives towards The King Farmhouse.

71 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 71

Ray carries Alex by the legs while Ed bares the weight of the unconscious man's upper body.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

Gwen sees the silhouette of a policeman's helmet through the screen in the front door.

GWEN
Ed.

HARD CUT:

72 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY 72

Ray opens the front door and smiles thinly at Tommy.

RAY
Afternoon constable.

Tommy eyes the ruined top corner of the door (from the shotgun blast).

TOMMY
Everythin' alright here?

RAY
Yeah. You should've seen the rest
of the place when my Dad first
bought it.

Tommy nods. Good enough.

TOMMY
Mind if I come on in, speak to
your dad?

(CONTINUED)

RAY

No problem.

Tommy puts one foot in the door.

From upstairs, a heavy bout of coughing.

Tommy hesitates.

RAY

But I should warn you, he and my
mum are both awful sick.

Tommy eyes the ceiling.

RAY

Both ends.

73 INT. FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY 73

Pressed to wall, poised behind the door, Ed holds the
shotgun. The muzzle of the weapon hovers but six inches
from Tommy's head.

74 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY 74

Gwen stands with one heel against Alex's throat. He lies
unconscious. She keeps her focus on him, ready to strike,
as she coughs and flushes the toilet.

75 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY 75

Tommy slowly nods as he comes to his decision.

TOMMY

Well, I guess that makes you the
man of the house on this
occasion. I understand you got a
younger brother?

RAY

That's right. Freddie.

TOMMY

You look out for him now, you
hear? I'm sure you've been
following the news, these missing
kids?

RAY

I've heard.

TOMMY

It's not my business to scare ya,
but there's some messed up people
in this world. So remember what I
said, if he goes out to play,
make sure he's with friends. Look
out for him. A brother's love is
a brother's love, eh?

Ray nods and Tommy shoots the boy a smile.

Ray watches Tommy head for his panda car before stopping
and turning to Alex's Vauxall Victor.

Ray tenses.

Ed tenses.

Tommy looks the Vauxall over but carries on towards the
panda car.

TOMMY

You wish your mum and dad well
now.

He gets behind the wheel and Ray watches the vehicle head
back up the drive and towards the road.

76

INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

76

Alex lies unconscious in the bathtub. Ray, Ed, and Gwen
breathe heavy.

ED

Strip him.

Ray says nothing.

ED

Boy? You hear me?

RAY

This isn't right.

ED

Honor thy father and mother.

RAY

We can't keep covering for
Freddie, cleaning up after him.

GWEN

He's a good boy.

(CONTINUED)

RAY

Mum, please. He takes kids into the woods and they don't come back.

ED

You love your brother?

RAY

Be easier if I didn't.

ED

You want to save him, body in this life, soul in the next?

GWEN

I best go clean that mess up downstairs.

RAY

I don't even know what it means to have a soul any more?

ED

It means making tough choices. Now strip him.

GWEN

I'll have to get started on supper too.

Alex begins to groan, stir, eyes still shut.

ED

I said strip him.

Ray, with heavy resignation, begins pulling Alex's bloody clothes from his body.

77 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

77

Gwen, her face now bruised, clears away the last remaining evidence of the fight.

Ed treats his burn with honey, cleans the hole through his cheek, and covers the wound with a bandaid.

78 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

78

Ray throws Alex's clothes and bloody pocket square onto the fire pit and douses them with fuel. He uses a match to light the garments.

He watches them darken and curl.

Rain falls and wets Ray's face and puts out the fire. The clothes are left intact, wet, and smoking.

79 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

79

Alex comes to, stripped to his underwear, lying awkwardly in the bathtub with his ankles and wrists bound to pipes with duct tape.

Ray sits on the toilet lid, Freddie's crude drawings in his hands. Tears wet his cheeks. A broken mirror above the sink.

RAY

My brother isn't all bad. He likes to ride his bike, play games, gets excited for Christmas. He wants to be good, it's just not easy for him.

ALEX

Where's my daughter?

RAY

If she was with you, she's with Freddie.

ALEX

Where?

RAY

...Freddie has tried to make friends but doesn't take rejection well.

ALEX

What does that mean?

RAY

Not all of them get hurt. Not the one's who do what he wants.

80 EXT. THE WOODS, POND - DAY

80

Freddie and Nancy emerge into a small clearing with a pond. Little piles of garbage float here and there.

NANCY

What are we doing here?

Freddie wades in. He gently splashes water onto his wounded ankle.

(CONTINUED)

FREDDIE

It's great, isn't it? The quiet.
Helps me think.

NANCY

What about my Dad?

FREDDIE

What places do you like to go?

NANCY

I went to a castle once, that was
really fun. Mum and dad took me,
but that was forever ago.

FREDDIE

Do you like your parents?

NANCY

Of course. Don't you love your
mum and dad?

FREDDIE

I know I'm s'posed to.

(pause)

You know when everyone at school
is laughing, but you don't know
what's funny, and you laugh along
anyway?

NANCY

Kind of.

FREDDIE

And when you're hungry but
whatever you think of eating
makes you feel sick?

NANCY

Nope.

FREDDIE

Well, that's how I feel.

NANCY

I like pretty much anything.
Except Brussels sprouts.

(pause)

Where are we going?

FREDDIE

My favourite hideout. Where I
take all my friends.

NANCY

Where?

(CONTINUED)

FREDDIE

A little way, along the tracks.

NANCY

Are you sure?

FREDDIE

Trust me. We'll be safe there.

81 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY

81

Ray wipes away a tear.

A vein in Alex's neck throbs.

ALEX

Your little brother is the one responsible for the missing children?

RAY

They're not missing.

ALEX

You know. You know and you do nothing.

RAY

We've had to move twice already. All Freddy wants is to go back home.

(pause)

But we can't go back. Not after what he did.

ALEX

What will he do to Nancy?

RAY

Every time we thought we could keep him in, he found a way to get out. Every time we prayed...he did it again.

ALEX

What's your name?

RAY

Ray.

ALEX

Ray, my name is Alex. I can tell you're not like them, not like your parents.

Ray shies away from Alex's intense stare. He slides Freddie's sketches onto the edge of the sink and looks to the smashed mirror that grants him a partial reflection.

RAY

My brother doesn't like to see himself.

ALEX

Just phone the police, you don't even have to say who you are. Just get someone out there looking for my little girl, please.

RAY

The nearest phone is more than four miles from here.

ALEX

Those other kids, the two from around here, they're somebody's son, somebody's daughter, sister, brother. Families.

RAY

...Freddie is my brother. Freddie is family. I'm sorry, mister, I really am. You just knocked on the wrong front door, tha's all.

ALEX

The wrong door? The wrong fucking door?

RAY

Mum will keep on pretending, Dad will pray. For Freddie, for Nancy. For you.

(pause)

You believe in praying, mister?

Alex stares, petrified into silence.

RAY

Me neither.

Ray goes to leave.

ALEX

Ray?...Wouldn't you do whatever you possibly could for someone you love?

Ray listens, hesitates before leaving.

The draft from the door blows the small collection of crude drawings from the basin to the floor.

Ray leaves and Alex is left peering at a child's rendering of scenes of mutilation.

82 EXT. THE WOODS, POND - DAY

82

NANCY
Will there be grown ups there, at
your hideout?

FREDDIE
Come here.

Nancy shuffles a little closer to the edge of the pond.

Freddie matches her step, closing the gap between them.

FREDDIE
Closer.

The toes of Nancy's shoes are now an inch from the water.

FREDDIE
Closer.

NANCY
I can't.

FREDDIE
Please.

Nancy inches forward until the tips of her shoes disturb the water.

FREDDIE
Now lean forward.

She bends at the hips until her face is reflected back at her.

Her face is soon joined by Freddie's as he leans in to meet her and the pair address each others rippling reflections.

FREDDIE
Tell me what you see.

NANCY
You. Me.

FREDDIE
Look harder.

Confused, she looks, not exactly knowing what she is supposed to be looking for.

The image of her own face and Freddie's distorts and breaks as a FISH swims by.

(CONTINUED)

NANCY

FISH!

She beams, pointing excitedly, happy and proud. Freddie's smile matches her own.

FREDDIE

Told you it was good here, didn't I?

Nancy runs away from Freddie, doing her best to match the fish's pace and keep track of it in the water. Freddie's smile vanishes.

FREDDIE

Didn't I?

Nancy is joyfully oblivious, too engrossed.

Freddie wades over to one of the patches garbage tangled in reeds. He discards a can, a bike wheel, and selects a glass jar.

He pulls the jar from the water and carries it towards Nancy.

83

INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - EVENING

83

Alex fights desperately against his duct tape bonds, sweating and exhausted.

He rests to catch his breath and his focus finds its way to the scattered drawings on the floor.

One drawing depicts a boy (wearing rectangle shorts) and a girl (wearing a triangle dress) walking a set of railway tracks.

Another sketch shows what looks like a HOUSE ON STILTS.

Bulbous blue tears now spring from the boy's over-sized head and onto the girl lying prone and bloodied at the his feet.

Gwen steps inside, washes blood off her hands.

ALEX

I need to piss.

GWEN

So piss.

Ed enters wielding the shotgun.

(CONTINUED)

ED

Mister Summers, my faith forbids me from taking a life. I believe that murder is a mortal sin. This is why I pray for the soul of my own son. I know what he is, and it's why I also keep him the way I do, to protect others. Innocents. I believe life is God's greatest gift.

ALEX

So then let me go.

ED

But I'm also a father who would do everything in my power to protect my children. My duties to the Lord and my obligations as a parent leave me conflicted.

ALEX

Your son is a murderer.

ED

I have wrestled with my conscience and sought His guidance.

ALEX

I can still save her.

ED

And He showed me who you are; a sinner, mister Summers.

ALEX

What?

ED

Gluttony.

(pause)

No immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

ALEX

What are you talking about?

ED

I know now what I must do.

Ed raises the shotgun.

(CONTINUED)

ED

If only you had not thought
yourself the Samaritan.

Alex tenses, looks to Gwen.

ALEX

Stop him.

But Ed breaks open the barrel and removes the
cartridge...and then then other, pocketing them both.

ED

I don't have to kill you. I need
not ever lay a finger on you.

Ed takes a roll of duct tape from his pocket, tears off a
strip.

ALEX

Wait! I just want to save my
child.

ED

As do I.

Ed presses the tape across Alex's mouth.

ED

Your money and your material
possessions count for nothing
now. You'll leave this world
exactly as you entered it,
reliant on air in your lungs and
food in your belly.

(pause)

You're in God's hands now. I'll
pray for you.

Alex struggles and thrashes, screams behind the tape.

Ed offers Gwen his hand, waits for her to take it. She
kisses his hand and smiles.

GWEN

I'll be right down.

Gwen watches her husband leave, turns to Alex, and listens
as Ed's footsteps fade. She then turns on the shower over
Alex's head and plugs the drain.

Water pelts Alex in the face and begins to fill the tub.

Gwen turns out the light and shuts and locks the door
behind her.

84 EXT. THE WOODS, POND - EVENING

84

Nancy watches the rain fall from the sky and hugs her sides while Freddie lures and captures a Frog in the jar.

NANCY
Can he breathe?

FREDDIE
Don't you want it? I got it for you.

Tentatively, Nancy reaches for the jar but Freddie pulls it away, a casual move, not a snatch.

He holds it up to the light, a curiosity. He shakes the jar a little.

NANCY
Don't do that, that's mean. You might hurt him, poor thing.

Freddie stares at Nancy, his face utterly blank. Finally, he breaks into a smile and clutches the jar to his chest as if it were a treasured possession.

FREDDIE
We follow the train tracks.
C'mon.

Nancy allows Freddie to lead. She reaches into a pocket, pulling out a handful of sweets.

She drops one, walks a few paces, and drops another, forming a trail.

85 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING

85

Ed finds Ray in the kitchen and returns the shotgun to its place above the fire.

Gwen comes down stairs and turns up the volume on the radio. She resumes preparing dinner.

ED
Son, we best go look for that brother of yours. We'll find him where we did last time.
(pause)
Don't forget the shovel.

Ray shouts, let's it all out.

RAY
Freddie is fucking dangerous.
(to Gwen)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAY (cont'd)

You hear that, Mum, your little Freddie hurts other kids. Kills them.

GWEN

I won't have this talk in my kitchen.

RAY

He kills them and we let him. And pretending that everything is normal or praying for things to stop won't work. We have to stop him. Us.

ED

He needs to open his heart to God and embraces his teachings.

RAY

Enough.

ED

You want to be the man of the house? What do you propose?

RAY

I don't pretend to know. But maybe if we talk we can figure it out. But that means talking. To each other. Not to God. And it means no more killing.

GWEN

Freddie never hurt a soul.

RAY

What does the Bible say about liars, Mum?

ED

Get. The. Shovel.

RAY

No.

ED

Anyone arrogant enough to reject the verdict of the judge or of the priest who represents your god must be-

RAY

I said no.

SHANE (O.C)
Not interrupting am I?

Ray, Gwen, and Ed look to the living room and the front door. Shane loiters, half inside half out. He holds a steaming pie.

SHANE
The missus baked a pie, rhubarb.
Me apologies, four months and no
housewarming.

Shane lets himself in.

86 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - EVENING 86

Water from the shower head sprays Alex in the face and the tub begins to fill.

Alex tries reaching for the tap above his head but the duct tape holds fast.

87 EXT. WOODS, TRAIN TRACKS - EVENING 87

Freddie and Nancy walk along the tracks, he in front, she behind. Nancy drops another sweet in the dirt, out of Freddie's sight.

His eyes are on the captive frog.

NANCY
Where do these tracks go?

FREDDIE
If you walked them for long
enough you'd get to the city. But
that would take days. We're going
to the signal box.

NANCY
What's the signal box?

FREDDIE
It's my hideout. It's where the
men who work for the train
company pull these levers and
push these buttons so's the
trains don't crash into each
other. You wait 'til you see it.

NANCY
How far is it?

FREDDIE
Little while longer.

NANCY
You said it's where you take your
friends?

FREDDIE
Yeah.

NANCY
Who are they?

FREDDIE
Who?

NANCY
Your friends? Will they be there?

FREDDIE
...They upset me.

NANCY
They weren't nice to you?

FREDDIE
They didn't want to play my
games.

NANCY
What kind of games?

Nancy hears a distant rumble. She looks back over her
shoulder and after a few moments sees black plumes of
smoke rising above the trees.

She steps from the tracks.

NANCY
Train.

She's dismayed to see Freddie still standing on the
tracks, awaiting the coming train.

NANCY
Freddie, the train is coming. Get
off the tracks.

FREDDIE
Name him.

NANCY
What?

FREDDIE
Name him. The frog.

NANCY

The train!

FREDDIE

That's no name for a frog.

NANCY

Freddie!

FREDDIE

That's my name. It's taken.

NANCY

I don't want to.

Freddie puts the jar containing the frog on one of the lines. It vibrates and dances.

FREDDIE

Name him.

NANCY

No, no, no.

FREDDIE

Funny names you keep sayin'. You think he's a boy?

NANCY

Yeah, whatever.

FREDDIE

So how about Frank? Or Robbie?

NANCY

Yeah, yeah, ok. Now come on, get off the tracks.

The train emerges from between the trees. It barrels towards them.

FREDDIE

Well, which one? Frank or Robbie?

NANCY

Robbie.

FREDDIE

Come on then Robbie, let's do what Nancy wants.

Freddie picks up the jar and joins Nancy to watch the train speed by.

The Frog hops against the sides of the jar as the train thunders into the distance.

(CONTINUED)

NANCY

What did you do that for? That was horrible.

FREDDIE

Just playing a game.

Nancy stares, trying to figure this boy out.

NANCY

I want to go be with my Dad now.

FREDDIE

Sooner we get to the signal box, sooner we can get help. Then you can get back to your Dad.

NANCY

Promise?

FREDDIE

We're friends, aren't we?

88 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - EVENING

88

The water laps at Alex's chin. Struggling to breathe through just his nose, he fights like hell, arms and legs tensing and flexing.

A pipe begins to wobble, loosen.

89 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING

89

Gwen draws a huge, sharp KNIFE from the kitchen counter...

She turns and drives the point of the blade into...

The pastry-topped pie on the table.

Ray, Ed, and Shane sit quietly, each with a plate in front of them. They watch Gwen cut four slices of pie.

Shane notes Gwen and Ed's facial injuries.

SHANE

You both ok?

ED

We had an accident.

SHANE

Must have been some accident?

(CONTINUED)

GWEN

I'll brew ya some tea to wash
that down.

Gwen turns her back on the men and gathers a mug, the
kettle, and a BOX OF RAT POISON.

Shane picks up on the eerie lack of chatter but doesn't
seem fazed. He keeps on smiling.

The radio dominates.

SHANE

Any chance of hearing myself
think?

RAY

Mum likes the radio.

Gwen slides a slice of pie in front of Shane without
looking up, her face solemn.

SHANE

...I think I get the picture.

GWEN

Tea's just comin'

Shane looks from person to person, chair to chair. As if
suddenly noticing what should have been obvious...

SHANE

I must be sittin' in someone's
seat? Has Freddie misbehaved?

ED

What are you saying?

SHANE

If my folks were sat around the
kitchen table, eating supper
without me it always meant I'd
done somethin' bad.

He shoves a forkful of pie in his mouth.

SHANE

If it were dessert I were missin'
out on, it musta been somethin'
really bad.

The sound of banging from upstairs.

SHANE

Looks like I was right, eh?
What's the poor lad done to
deserve missin' out on my wife's

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SHANE (cont'd)
 pie. Or maybe he's the lucky one?
 What's the verdict on her rhubarb
 and blackberry?

Shane becomes uneasy when his question is not met with an answer.

Gwen stirs the white powder into the mug of tea until it disappears. She puts the cup in front of Shane.

SHANE
 'ppreciate it.

Ed and Gwen both chew their pie like automatons, eyes rolling towards the ceiling. Ray stares at Shane, fearful, pleading.

90 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - EVENING 90

The water level rises above Alex's nostrils. Holding his breath, he thrashes until a pipe breaks free.

Water stops spraying from the shower, instead spilling from the broken pipe and onto the floor.

91 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING 91

Shane is about to sip his tea...

The noise from above distracts him.

ED
 Bad pipes.

SHANE
 That right? Want me to take a look?

GWEN
 That won't be necessary.

SHANE
 I'm a dab hand with a spanner.

ED
 We couldn't inconvenience you.

RAY
 Maybe he should take a look, Dad.

Ray shoots his son a fiery look.

RAY

What harm could it do, right?

SHANE

It'd be no trouble.

ED

Please, I insist.

SHANE

If you change your mind...

Shane raises his mug to his lips when water drips onto his hand.

Another drop hits the table in front of him. Ray, Gwen and Ed also begin to notice the water dripping from the ceiling.

SHANE

Bad pipes? Damn right.

Shane pulls a rag from his pocket and wipes his hand. He's up from his chair and heading for the stairs.

SHANE

Should've brought over me toolkit instead of fresh pie, eh, Eddie boy?

Gwen and Ed watch, transfixed, as Shane bounds up the stairs.

GWEN

Do something, Ed.

92

INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - EVENING

92

Shane stomps cheerfully through the house. He peers into a bedroom, a second, smaller bedroom. And next, Freddie's room.

He stares at the dark spectacle.

SHANE

Christ.

He then realises the noise comes from the door at his back. The bathroom.

Water leaks from beneath the door.

SHANE

Freddie? You in there, lad?

93 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - EVENING 93

Alex thrashes in the bathtub, making noise.

94 INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS - EVENING 94

Shane tries the door, finds it locked, and shoulder barges it.

He throws his weight against the door, again and again, until the wood around the lock splinters and gives.

The door slams against the wall.

SHANE

Blimey, what's going on 'ere?

Seeing the desperate look in Alex's eyes, Shane hauls the man above the water, rips the tape from his mouth and gets to work on the tape around his limbs.

His chest explodes. Blood and gore erupt from his front and back, showering Alex in viscera.

Shane falls to floor with a crater in his chest.

95 INT. FARMHOUSE - EVENING 95

Ed stands at the foot of the stairs, paused, mid-step, regretful expression on his face.

Ray hits his father across the back of his head with something dark, bulky, and heavy. He drops the Bible onto the stairs, where Ed now lies sprawled, unconscious.

96 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - EVENING 96

Gwen stands in the doorway, smoking shotgun in her hands. She pulls back the second hammer and takes aim at Alex.

Alex rips at the last bit of remaining tape that binds one wrist to the piping.

Ray slams into his mother, pinning the shotgun across her chest and her back against the wall.

RAY

No.

GWEN

Your brother.

(CONTINUED)

RAY
 I'm doing this for all of us.
 (to Alex)
 Go.

Alex angrily pulls free of the tape and falls from the tub.

He snatches up Freddie's drawings as he runs from the room and pauses briefly to regard Gwen.

He gives Ray a once over and runs away and down the stairs.

RAY
 Too late, Mum. Too late.

GWEN
 I carried you inside of me.

She knees him in the groin, doubling him over.

RAY
 ...This isn't the way.

GWEN
 What is?

Gwen takes off running.

Ray, angry, climbs shakily to his feet and rips the shreds of duct tape from the pipes.

97 INT. FARMHOUSE, FREDDIE'S ROOM - EVENING 97

Ray kicks at the makeshift hatch in the door to Freddie's room until it is destroyed.

He rips the boards from the window, throws them outside.

Next he tosses the chain out the window, the neck clamp.

98 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING 98

Alex steps over a knocked-out Ed and runs for the back door.

99 EXT. FARMYARD - EVENING 99

Alex runs for the treeline, where the woods meet the farm, trudging barefoot through mud.

Back at the house, Gwen fills the open doorway and shoulders the shotgun. She aims, fires.

(CONTINUED)

A pair of jeans hanging on a line are torn to shreds as Alex ducks under it. He darts right.

Gwen reloads as she runs, making a beeline for Alex and attempting to cut him off.

She stops dead without warning, her midsection jerking to a halt as she doubles over.

Her knees give and she sags, but the LENGTH OF BARBED WIRE embedded in her abdomen keeps her suspended.

The fence takes her weight as blood spills from her torn guts in steady streams and her eyes turn lifeless.

Alex breaks through the treeline and enters the woods.

100

EXT. THE WOODS - EVENING

100

Alex runs for his life, leaping over fallen branches and snapping twigs with his bare feet.

The ground disappears beneath him and he falls through open air before crashing down on a bed of rotting animal carcasses. He has fallen into THE PIT.

Alex puts his fingers through soft, decaying flesh, through hollow eye sockets, and through rib cages.

He is surrounded by the bodies of dogs and cats. He brings a hand to his face and finds it wrapped around a leather collar, "WILLY" engraved on the tag.

Alex vomits.

He struggles to his feet, unsteady on the mass of bones and decay and finds himself looking up at a wall of soft earth.

Alex tries climbing out of the pit but his fingers rake wet soil and he repeatedly falls.

He's desperate. Uncoordinated. Chaotic. His hands tear fruitlessly at the dirt.

A HAND reaches down from above and grips his wrist. Alex looks up at Ray and the teenager helps him climb from the pit.

Breathless, Alex can only stare at Ray. He offers him a pair of dungarees, a flannel shirt, and a pair of work boots.

RAY

Let's go.

101 INT. GILLIAN'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING 101

Gillian looks outside as she prepares a dinner. The sun is setting, the sky golden. She looks to the clock; 5:39.

The table is set with empty plates in front of empty chairs. A child's novelty drinking glass is full with orange juice, untouched.

102 INT. POLICE STATION - EVENING 102

Dennis snatches the ringing phone up from his desk.

DENNIS
Oakingham constabulary, Sergeant
Gorman speaking.

103 EXT. PHONE BOX - EVENING 103

Gillian nervously coils the line around a finger.

GILLIAN
Nancy isn't home.

CUT BACK AND FORTH:

DENNIS
I wouldn't worry, she's not due
back until -
(checks watch)
Oh.

GILLIAN
I know she's with Alex, but...

DENNIS
...I'm sure he's got caught up
and he's on his way with her now.

He's not even convincing himself.

GILLIAN
I'm gonna kill him.

DENNIS
Don't, I'd have to arrest you.
I'll see you later tonight and
we'll all have dinner together,
the three of us.

GILLIAN
Love you.

(CONTINUED)

DENNIS

Love you too.

Dennis hangs up the phone and is left troubled by his own thoughts. Brian sits at his desk, reads Dennis's expression.

BRIAN

All good?

DENNIS

Gillian's ex-husband had Nancy for the day. He was supposed to have her home nearly forty-five minutes ago.

BRIAN

He probably got caught up, is all.

DENNIS

Maybe.

BRIAN

What is it?

DENNIS

I saw him earlier today, saw him talking to a young lad, all on his own, asking if his parents were home.

(pause)

He had a toy with him, just like the one we found in the Sally Henderson abduction.

Brian leans back in his chair, chews on the anecdote.

104

EXT. WOODS, TRAIN TRACKS - EVENING

104

Nancy watches Freddie intently, eyes on the back of his head. She drops a sweet by the side of the tracks.

NANCY

It's cold and it's dinner time.

FREDDIE

Almost there.

NANCY

Like on the cusp?

FREDDIE

What?

(CONTINUED)

NANCY

Never mind.

A joyful scream travels through the woods.

Nancy snaps her head. After a beat, a BOY swings into view, distant, visible between trees. The Boy sits on a car tyre tethered to a tree branch by a length of rope.

With a smile, Nancy leaves the tracks behind and heads deeper into the woods, almost skipping as she runs.

Freddie is unaware that he walks alone.

FREDDY

What's your favourite food?

Nancy?

He turns, enraged to find he has been abandoned. Nancy is already some distance away.

105 EXT. WOODS, TYRE SWING - EVENING

105

The boy on the swing, CHRIS (13) is pushed enthusiastically by RONNIE (13). They don't hear Nancy's approach, too busy enjoying themselves.

NANCY

Hello.

Ronnie stops pushing Chris and the swing's momentum slows.

NANCY

I'm lost and I need to get home.

Chris climbs down off the tyre. His toes barely reach the ground.

NANCY

Can you help me, please?

CHRIS

Sure.

He picks Nancy up. Ronnie helps. Nancy writhes in their grip, pleads for them to stop.

NANCY

No, no, please, this isn't fair,
I just want my mum and dad.

Ronnie and Chris thread Nancy's legs through the tyre until she is sitting in it, her feet dangling above the ground.

Before she can hop off the swing, the two boys push her.

(CONTINUED)

Ronnie and Chris laugh, amused by their own cruelty, the tyre swinging higher and beginning to spin.

Nancy's pleas grow more desperate. She starts crying.

NANCY

Let me down, I want to get off.

Chris picks up a stone and throws it. It hits Nancy in the middle of her back.

Ronnie picks up a handful of pebbles.

RONNIE

Five points to you.

Ronnie lands one on Nancy's foot. She grabs it and flinches.

Chris hits her in the arm with a throw and Ronnie winds back and takes aim when a rock the size of a fist hits him in the temple.

Chris sees his friend lying sprawled in the dirt with blood pooling from his skull in a widening circle.

A log to the mouth knocks out Chris' teeth and he drops to his hands and knees.

Freddie raises the log overhead and brings it down on Chris's neck, snapping it.

With his head at a crooked angle and eyes rolled to the back of his skull, Chris spasms violently.

Freddie jumps on his neck with both feet and the spasms stop.

Ronnie moans and rakes the dirt with limp fingers until Freddie retrieves the fist-sized rock and drops it on his head.

Nancy watches, terrified, the pendulum-like back and forth of the tyre swing now coming to an end.

Freddie calmly walks to the swing and steadies it, stops it.

FREDDIE

Are you ok, Nancy? They were hurting you.

She has no words.

With one hand holding the tyre in place, he offers her the other and helps her down.

She trembles. Welts are already beginning to show on her arms and feet.

Freddie brings the jar and frog into view. He puts the jar in her hands and she holds it close to her chest.

He gently kisses her hand.

106 EXT. WOODS, TRAIN TRACKS - EVENING 106

Freddie and Nancy hold hands as they walk. She keeps the jar against her chest. Tears wet her cheeks.

They round a bend in the tracks and the SIGNAL BOX appears in the distance. Freddie points to the small building and they make their way towards it.

107 EXT. WOODS, POND - EVENING 107

Alex kneels at the waters edge and washes the gore from his arms and hands. He pulls on the clothes Ray gave him.

RAY

Did you ever pull the legs off a spider?

(pause)

You never really hated the spider, but you did it anyway, just to see what happens. It's like that for Freddie.

ALEX

We're not talking about a spider, we're talking my daughter.

RAY

It's all the same to my brother.

ALEX

Why are you helping me? Why now?

RAY

I realised I only had one option left to take, an obvious choice.

ALEX

How about a phone?

RAY

(pointing)

It's four miles to town, which is where you'll find the nearest phone.

ALEX
You weren't lying?

Alex brandishes Freddie's self portrait of himself standing over a dead girl at the foot of the signal box.

ALEX
How about here? Where's this place?

RAY
That's where we found the kids, it's where he takes them. The signal box.

Ray now points in the opposite direction from town, pointing to the tracks.

RAY
This way, along the tracks.

Alex gazes down the length of the tracks and spots something, small and white, glistening.

He approaches the small object and picks up a PEPPERMINT COIN, turning it over in his hands.

ALEX
How far?

RAY
About four miles.

Alex looks from one direction to the next.

ALEX
An obvious choice.

He starts running and Ray joins him. They follow the tracks and soon pass another sweet.

108 EXT. SUMMERS RESIDENCE - EVENING

108

A police car pulls to a stop out front of Alex's home and Dennis climbs from behind the wheel.

As he walks up the path to the front door he takes in the empty drive.

Dennis knocks on the door and is left waiting. He peers in through windows, cupping his hands around his eyes, but the house is dark.

109 INT/EXT. PANDA CAR - EVENING

109

Dennis gets in the car and gets on the radio.

DENNIS

I'm at the Summers residence.
Alex doesn't appear to be home,
no sign of Nancy either. Over.

BRIAN (OVER RADIO)

Is this like him? Over.

DENNIS

He's a shitty parent, if that's
what you mean.

110 INT. POLICE STATION - EVENING

110

Tommy and Brian man the radio.

TOMMY

What vehicle does he drive?

WE CUT BACK AND FORTH:

DENNIS

Vauxall Victor, couple of years
old.

TOMMY

...Is it brown?

He and Brian eye each other knowingly.

TOMMY

I saw one just like it parked
outside one of the farms I
checked out earlier today.

DENNIS

You remember the address?

TOMMY

I must have visited thirty odd
farms up and down the whole
county.

DENNIS

You wrote down the address
though, right?..Right?

Tommy's expression says he didn't.

BRIAN

Stupid lad. You and him go see if
a little drive can't jog your
memory.

- 111 INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - EVENING 111
Ed comes to, shaking his head, stiff and in pain. He wakes to a quiet, creaking house and retrieves the heavy bible that was used to knock him unconscious.
- 112 INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT 112
Ed stands over Shane's ruined body.
- 113 EXT. FARMYARD - EVENING 113
He runs his hands through Gwen's hair, sad. Angry. He collects the shotgun that lies at her feet.
Ed then grabs a shovel from the back of the house.
- 114 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - EVENING 114
Ed throws the bible, shotgun, and shovel into the van.
He turns the key in the ignition but the van whines and chokes, doesn't start.
He then looks to Alex's car, still sat in the drive.
Ed pushes his van and it rolls silently to one side of the drive, clearing the way for the Vauxall Victor.
- 115 INT/EXT. VAUXALL VICTOR - EVENING 115
Ed takes the car to the end of the drive and pauses at the road. To the right, the distant lights of town, to the left, the woods.
He eases on the gas and leaves the town in the rearview mirror.
- 116 INT. SIGNAL BOX - EVENING 116
Nancy follows Freddie up the few steps to the door. She crouches to place the final sweet, just in time before Freddie turns.
Freddie holds the door as she step inside.
The place is dark and dusty. Half the equipment and levers have been ripped out.
- NANCY
(surprise)
It's empty. There's nobody here.

(CONTINUED)

While Nancy takes a disappointed look around, Freddie discreetly puts himself between her and a potential view of a rotary phone.

Freddie unplugs the phone and hides it behind a dusty cabinet.

NANCY

You never told me the place is abandoned. You said there'd be grown ups here.

FREDDIE

You trust me, don't you?

Nancy's silence is her answer.

FREDDIE

Does your arm and foot hurt?

She nods, can't stop the tears.

FREDDIE

Sit down.

Nancy sits with her back to the wall and her knees to her chest, jar at her feet.

Freddie takes off a shoe and a sock, balls the sock, and kneels in front of her. He uses the sock to dab at her wounds.

FREDDIE

I wish I wasn't like this. I wish I could be like you. But I don't know how to hold it in, how to hold in the bad Freddie.

(pause)

Sorry if I scared you.

He cleans her wounds.

FREDDIE

Is that better?

NANCY

(nods)

...Thank you.

FREDDIE

So do you trust me?

NANCY

(shrugs)

I think so.

He smiles and points to the frog.

FREDDIE

How about we let him go now?
Yeah?

NANCY

Ok.

She starts to get up but he takes the jar and eases her down with a hand to her shoulder.

FREDDIE

I'll take him.

Nancy watches Freddie carry the jar to the door, step outside, and descend the steps until only the top of his head is visible.

117 EXT. SIGNAL BOX - EVENING 117

Freddie unscrews the lid and lowers the lip of the jar to the grass. The frog hops away to freedom.

Freddie sees the sweet placed at the foot of the steps. Curious, he walks on until he finds another.

He knows.

118 INT. SIGNAL BOX - EVENING 118

Freddie returns, smiling.

FREDDIE

Let's see how much we trust each other.

119 EXT. WOODS - EVENING 119

Alex and Ray run side by side along the tracks. Every now and then Alex will see another sweet left on the ground.

ALEX

How long has this been going on?

RAY

It started with animals at first. Birds and rabbits in the garden, neighbour's cats and dogs. Then other parents wouldn't let their kids play with Freddie any more, said he wasn't right. Mum and Dad ignored it until it couldn't be ignored. So we moved, but that only seemed to make it worse. Then kids started disappearing.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Except they didn't disappear, did they? He killed them.

(pause)

Where are they?

RAY

Buried, out here, in these woods. Just like the animals.

ALEX

Why?

RAY

It's like I said, that's who he is.

ALEX

Why did you let it happen?

RAY

You know what it's like to love and hate someone?

(pause)

He's my little brother.

ALEX

He's not human.

RAY

He's very human.

(pause)

He really does want to be her friend.

ALEX

What if she doesn't want to be his?

They run on.

120

INT. SIGNAL BOX - EVENING

120

Nancy stands with her eyes closed and arms pressed to her sides. She falls back, straight as a log, and lands in Freddie's open arms.

She opens her eyes and they both smile.

FREDDIE

See.

CUT TO:

Nancy and Freddie stand at opposite corners, a makeshift obstacle course separating them. Freddie shuts his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

NANCY

Ok, take two steps forward and stop.

Freddie steps towards a wooden crate, stopping just short of it.

NANCY

Turn left and take one step.

He steps around a chair with three legs.

NANCY

Turn right and crawl.

He ducks under a wire hanging in a U-shape from a hole in the ceiling.

NANCY

Now stand and come forward two steps.

He avoids a second wooden crate and comes to a stop just half a pace away from Nancy.

NANCY

Open your eyes.

The two are left giggling at each other.

FREDDIE

Your turn. Close your eyes.

Nancy stops giggling, keeps smiling, and shuts her eyes.

FREDDIE

Put your hand out.

Her fist extends straight out.

FREDDIE

Open it.

Her palm faces the ceiling.

Freddie reaches into his pocket before placing three of Nancy's sweets into her hand. Her smile slips from her face.

FREDDIE

Open your eyes.

Nancy discovers that Freddie's smile has also vanished.

FREDDIE

You're just like all the others.

Nancy tries pulling her hand back but Freddie's fingers are dug into her wrist.

He stretches his jaw, flashing his gap-toothed mouth, and bites into Nancy's arm. She screams as blood appears around Freddie's lips.

121 INT/EXT. VAUXALL VICTOR (MOVING) - EVENING 121

Ed drives Alex's car. He speeds along winding roads and the tyres squeal as he pulls onto a single lane track.

The car rocks and bounces as it bumps over ruts and dips.

Twigs and branches hit the windscreen and thorns scrape the sides. This road has not been used in years.

Eventually, the headlights fall on a gate fitted with a faded sign; "BRITISH RAIL".

122 INT. SIGNAL BOX - EVENING 122

Nancy thumps Freddie over the head but he keeps his jaw locked onto her arm. She slaps his face and he lets go.

She shoves Freddie into the wall and runs outside.

123 EXT. SIGNAL BOX - EVENING 123

Nancy jumps down the steps, stumbles in the dirt. She gets up and follows the tracks until she sees a light up ahead, off to the side.

She runs for the light, dashes through the remaining stretch of woods, and is stopped by the locked gate.

CAR HEADLIGHTS.

Nancy recognises her father's car.

NANCY

DAD!

Ed steps around the front of the car.

She backs away from the stranger and, unwittingly, towards Freddie, who stands at her back.

Ed watches in horror.

124 INT/EXT. PANDA CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

124

Dennis stops the car at the entrance to a DAIRY FARM.

Tommy, from the passenger seat, looks the place over and shakes his head.

TOMMY

Nah, nah, this isn't it. The place was run down, shitty.

DENNIS

Yer bleedin' idiot, you.

Tommy looks to a map spread across his lap and to the darkening sky outside. Distant farmhouses dot almost every hill top.

When his focus returns to the map he sees the markings indicating a railway line.

TOMMY

The train!

DENNIS

What about it?

TOMMY

I remember hearing the train behind the house.

(points to map)

And look, the line runs parallel to this road here.

DENNIS

So all we have to do is stop at every house that runs parallel to the tracks?

TOMMY

Yeah.

DENNIS

Bleedin' idiot.

Dennis hits the accelerator.

125 EXT. WOODS, TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

125

Alex and Ray are slower, sweatier, and panting for breath.

ALEX

Got to almost be there by now?

(CONTINUED)

RAY

Almost.

ALEX

I'm on the cusp, Nancy, Dad's coming.

RAY

Eh?

They round the curve in the tracks and the signal box comes into view in the distance.

Alex mentally checks off each and every sweet they pass as they run, looking around when the trail suddenly stops ahead of the signal box.

He stops running, prompting Ray to do the same.

RAY

What?

ALEX

They stopped here.

RAY

You don't know that.

Alex points to the last in the line of sweets, still with a quarter of a mile to go before the steps to the signal box.

Ray joins Alex looking into the depths of the woods, scrutinising the spaces between trees.

RAY

I don't see anything. Nobody.

ALEX

That's what scares me.

RAY

For what it's worth, I'm sorry.

ALEX

Sorry for me, for Nancy? For the other families?

RAY

Just sorry.

126 INT. SIGNAL BOX - NIGHT

126

Alex is the first to charge through the door. But he finds the place empty.

Child sized handprints and footprints can be seen in the thick layers of dust everywhere.

The moment Ray files in behind Alex the salesman pins the teen against the wall with a hand around his throat.

ALEX
Where are they?

RAY
I don't know.

Alex pushes harder against Ray's throat.

RAY
I saved your life, remember.

ALEX
For nothing if anything has happened to Nancy.

RAY
I don't want any more people to die.

ALEX
I'll kill him.

RAY
...We'll split up, search the woods. If neither of us find them, we meet back here in twenty minutes and we get to a phone and call the police. Ok?

Alex releases Ray.

ALEX
Back here in twenty minutes, regardless.

Ray nods.

127 EXT. SIGNAL BOX - NIGHT

127

Ray and Alex run back out to the train tracks.

Ray points back the way they came...

(CONTINUED)

RAY

You search that way.

...points further down the tracks.

RAY

I'll go this way.

They part and head in opposite directions.

128 EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT 128

129 ALEX. 129

Alex returns to the last sweet of the trail before breaking through the treeline. He's frantic, desperate.

ALEX

Nancy! Nancy!

130 RAY. 130

Ray marches through the woods with a sense of purpose and direction. He knows where he's heading.

He comes up against a chain link fence and follows it to the gate.

He squeezes through a hole in the gate, crosses the dirt road, passing the Vauxall Victor, and pushes through another treeline.

Under a canopy of trees, Ray finds Freddie.

The boy kneels in the dirt, sobbing quietly. His hands are soaked with blood, as are his chin and lips. The bible rests on his lap.

Nancy lies among the fallen leaves.

FREDDIE

I'm sorry, I just wanted to play.
I didn't mean to.

Ray is startled by the sound of Ed driving a shovel into the dirt a few feet away. He digs a grave.

ED

Let God into your heart...embrace
scripture...submit to his
will...and seek forgiveness.
Salvation lies within God's Holy
word.

ALEX (O.S)
 (distant)
 Nancy! Nancy!

FREDDIE
 Do you hate me?

RAY
 We're brothers.

FREDDIE
 I don't know how to stop it, I
 don't know what to do.

ED
 Read it.

With shaking hands, Freddie slips open the bible.

FREDDIE
 Make it go away.

ED
 Read it and repent.
 (pause)
 They will have no mercy on
 helpless babies and will show no
 compassion for the children.

Freddie attempts to read as Ed starts digging a hole.

Ray stops his father's shoveling with a hand on his. He
 takes the shovel from him.

RAY
 The killing stops.

131 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT 131

A CARGO TRAIN journeys along the tracks, slowing and
 slowing before stopping for a moment, hissing steam, and
 slowly climbing back up to speed.

132 ALEX. 132

Alex is alone and in the dark. His desperate calls for
 Nancy are met only by sounds of wildlife and the distant
 cargo train.

ALEX
 (to himself)
 We're going to read together, go
 to the park together.
 (pause)
 I'm gonna be the Dad you need.

133 EXT. SIGNAL BOX - NIGHT 133

Alex returns to the signal box. No sign of Ray.

ALEX
Ray? Nancy? Freddie?

He stumbles along the train tracks calling name after name.

Alex presses on until the trees part for the dirt track and gate...

And his very own VAUXALL VICTOR CAR.

It is parked part way along the track.

He tentatively gives the car a wide berth as he heads towards it, cautious

ALEX
Hello? Anyone there? Nancy? Ray?

He slowly approaches the car, checking back over his shoulder, as if anticipating an unwelcome surprise.

He throws the door open fast and wide.

The keys dangle from the ignition and every seat is empty.

ALEX
What?

He double checks the back seat before getting in. Once his mind is made up, he moves fast. He jumps in, slams the door shut - locks it - and fires the engine.

134 INT/EXT. VAUXALL VICTOR (MOVING) - NIGHT 134

Alex turns the car around and speeds away.

The car races down the single lane track, hits a wider road, and Alex steers the vehicle towards the lights of town.

135 INT/EXT. VAUXALL VICTOR (MOVING) - NIGHT 135

Alex, filthy, bloody, and sweaty, grips the wheel, frenzied and frantic.

The FARMHOUSE appears on the dark horizon and looms closer until Alex identifies POLICE CARS outside.

He swings the Vauxall Victor into the drive and behind a couple of Panda cars.

(CONTINUED)

The headlights pick out Dennis and Tommy.

A handful of POLICE CONSTABLES move in and out of the house.

The car skids in the drive and barely stops before Alex jumps out running.

136 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - NIGHT

136

Alex trips and recovers and runs for the front door.

ALEX

Nancy? Have you found her, is she here, is she ok?

Dennis and Tommy are already walking towards Alex, Tommy removing the handcuffs from his belt, Dennis with "calming" hands.

DENNIS

Alex, let's talk.

ALEX

Just tell me if you've found Nancy.

DENNIS

We found Gwen King and her neighbour. Both dead.

ALEX

The kid, the kid.

DENNIS

We didn't find any of the kids. But we did find traces of you all over the place.

ALEX

Look for the boy, Freddie.

DENNIS

No Freddie, no Ray. And no Nancy. And to the best of our knowledge, you were the last person to see any of 'em.

Tommy gets one of the cuffs around Alex's wrist.

TOMMY

You could save us all some time and tell us what you've done with 'em, eh?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

What are you doing? What's happening?

DENNIS

Alex, you're being arrested -

ALEX

What?

Dennis helps Tommy cuff Alex's other wrist and together they get him up against the side of a police car.

Alex is too confused to resist or fight.

ALEX

Dennis, I don't understand.

DENNIS

Neither do we, Alex.

TOMMY

Why'd ya do it, you sick bastard?

ALEX

All I want is Nancy.

DENNIS

That's a lie, always has been.

TOMMY

You just go mad, eh?

ALEX

I haven't done anything.

Tommy searches Alex's pockets, stopping dead before slowly pulling out the "SALLY" necklace. Alex is horrified.

TOMMY

Tell us what you did with 'em.

ALEX

These aren't my clothes.

Tommy dangles the incriminating necklace in front of Alex. Tommy smiles, but it's anything but pleasant.

DENNIS

Alex, tell us what happened?

137 INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

137

Other CONSTABLES watch while Tommy marches Alex, cuffed, throughout the house. Dennis, pained and restrained, takes up the rear.

DENNIS

We already figured you broke in through the back door.

They walk him past the broken bit of glass by the back door. Dennis lightly touches the cut on Alex's hand.

DENNIS

The cut on your hand all but confirms this.

ALEX

Yes, I broke in because I heard the boy upstairs -

TOMMY

You were doin' your rounds, found the parents weren't home and saw an opportunity?

ALEX

No, Freddie was crying for help.

DENNIS

Freddie?

ALEX

Yes.

DENNIS

The boy who lives here?

ALEX

Yes.

DENNIS

Was asking for your help, why? Why would he need your help if he were already home?

ALEX

He's the one that's been killing the children from town.

DENNIS

Freddie, the eleven year old boy?

Dennis stops them at the fireplace, points to the family photo on the mantle of Ed, Gwen, Ray, and Freddie, showing off the missing tooth from his smile.

(CONTINUED)

TOMMY

Nobody ever said them kids is
dead? Why is it you say
different, Alex?

ALEX

He wanted to get free, he got
Nancy, he took her.

DENNIS

You need to start making sense.

ALEX

The family kept the boy locked
up. There's a chain tied to the
bed, boards on the windows, it's
all upstairs.

138

INT. FARMHOUSE, FREDDIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

138

Tommy and Dennis walk Alex into the room.

Alex's attention is on the bed, the window, expectant. But
Tommy and Dennis only watch, Alex, deadpan.

There is no chain. No boards on the window.

ALEX

The hatch! The hatch in the door!

Alex turns and points to the door but finds it completely
kicked in.

TOMMY

Did quite a number on it didn't
ya? What'd you use? The shotgun?
You kick it in? Was he hiding
from you when you broke in?

ALEX

No, no, no, no. I thought I was
saving him. But he was bad.

DENNIS

Nobody believes that an eleven
year old boy is capable of
murder, Alex.

ALEX

You're wasting time. You've got
it all wrong.

Dennis picks up the PUNCH PUPPET from the floor.

(CONTINUED)

DENNIS

Do we? 'cause right now it looks like you're the one that's been luring little kids to do God-knows-what to 'em; Bobby Mellor, Sally Henderson - whose jewellery we just found in your pocket -

ALEX

No no no.

DENNIS

- and unlucky number three was little Freddie King. But mum and Dad came home, didn't they?

TOMMY

Spoiled your plans.

DENNIS

You fought, they lost.

TOMMY

What did the neighbour do? Did he come to help when he heard the shots?

DENNIS

Whatever she saw scared Freddie's mother so bad she set off running and impaled herself on the fence outside. Or did she die trying to save her little boy? Did Ed and Ray go out the same way?

ALEX

No. No.

DENNIS

What did Nancy do to tick you off? Or did she turn you on?

TOMMY

Where'd you take the little ones, Alex?

ALEX

Dennis, I know you love Nancy, I know you do. Just help me find her. Please.

DENNIS

You tell us everything down at the station, Alex.

139 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - NIGHT

139

Tommy ushers Alex towards the waiting Panda car while another CONSTABLE holds the back door open.

A second CONSTABLE approaches Dennis, carrying Alex's blood-soaked, partially burned clothes in a gloved hand.

CONSTABLE

We found this in the fire pit out back.

The Constable handles the clothes for Dennis's benefit. He sees the pocket square with Alex's initials.

DENNIS

Too much blood on them for it to all be his.

He gives them a sniff.

DENNIS

Paraffin.

TOMMY

Trying to destroy evidence, were we?

ALEX

Do what you want to me, just find Nancy.

Finally, Dennis gets in Alex's face.

DENNIS

Where is she?

ALEX

I don't know.

DENNIS

She was with you all day.

ALEX

The boy took her.

DENNIS

If you're gonna steer suspicion from yourself you're gonna have to do better than a school boy who wets the bed. Where's Nancy?

ALEX

I tried to save her. I tried to stop it.

Alex headbutts Dennis and the two get into a fight.

(CONTINUED)

With Alex handcuffed, it doesn't take long for Dennis to have him sitting on the ground, back propped against the wheel of the car.

DENNIS

Now that we've got you, Alex,
what do we do with you?

Alex bleeds from his nose and lips.

ALEX

...Look...for the boy.

TOMMY

Dennis? Come here.

Dennis peels his eyes away from Alex and finds Tommy staring at the back end of Alex's Vauxall Victor.

DENNIS

What is it?

Dennis gets to his feet and joins a handful of other police officers now gathered in a semi circle around the rear of the car.

A half-inch bloody piece of fabric hangs from the trunk. A girl's dress.

DENNIS

...Keys?

A Constable puts the car keys in his hand. Dennis unlocks the boot and the men look inside at Nancy's body, small and delicate.

ALEX

What? What's in there?

Tommy leans into the trunk to lift out the SHOTGUN.

TOMMY

Don't get much more smoking gun
than a smoking gun.

With his head in the trunk, something catches his eye. A small detail that disturbs him.

Written with a child's finger, scrawled in blood on the inside of the trunk lid, are the words; "DADDY BAD".

ALEX

Nancy?

Dennis charges at Alex but a couple of police officers hold him back.

DENNIS
YOUR OWN DAUGHTER! YOU FUCKING
BASTARD, YOUR OWN FUCKING
DAUGHTER!

ALEX
(screams)
NO.

DENNIS
YOU NEVER EVEN WANTED HER!

ALEX
IT WAS THE BOY, IT WAS THE BOY,
IT WAS THE BOY!

140 INT. CARGO TRAIN (MOVING) - NIGHT

140

Ed, Ray, and Freddie have stowed themselves on one of the carriages of the cargo train. They shelter amongst wooden crates of canned foods, fresh vegetables, and rails of clothing.

Ed searches through the men's clothes while Ray washes blood from his finger using a canteen of water.

Freddie huddles in a corner reading the bible.

RAY
Moving won't be enough this time.
We need new names.

ED
We left your mother behind.

RAY
There wasn't time.

FREDDIE
Mum's gone?

ED
You keep your nose in that good
book, boy.

Scolded, Freddie does as he's told. His head snaps back towards the pages of the bible open in his lap.

141 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - NIGHT

141

Dennis uses one of the police car radios.

DENNIS
You spoken to Chester over at the
funeral home?

142 INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

142

Brian and Wallace are huddled around the radio. The cops from the city move around the place, spurred into action by the night's events.

BRIAN

Woke the old boy up. He'll be waiting for ya. And little Nancy.

(pause)

I'm sorry Dennis. We all are.

Wallace fights back tears. And anger. The big man bites down on his lip.

CUT BACK AND FORTH:

DENNIS

Has anyone spoken to my wife?

BRIAN

We thought you might want...we can go over there if you want?

DENNIS

No, no. I'll tell her.

Wallace takes the radio from Brian.

WALLACE

Do what you need to do, Gorman. Brian's on his way to take over the crime scene.

Wallace puts down the radio and speaks to Brian in a hushed, conspiratorial tone.

WALLACE

Send the city boys back here, I'll keep them busy.

Brian understands, nods. He watches Wallace approach the uniformed constables and address them with his booming, baritone voice.

Brian picks up the phone, dials.

BRIAN

Jimmy? It's officer Mulroney...Brian. No, no news on your Sally. Not exactly.

(pause)

Would you like to meet the guy we've been looking for?

143 INT. FUNERAL HOME, FOYER - NIGHT

143

Dennis and Gillian sit in the excruciatingly peaceful foyer, surrounded by plastic flowers. She has the stuffed bunny on her lap and sobs into Dennis' shoulder.

CHESTER (70), the funeral director and county coroner, fixes his black tie as he appears from another room. He speaks softly.

CHESTER

Dennis?

Dennis eases away from Gillian and she attempts to follow.

CHESTER

Gillian, it's probably for the best that you wait here.

GILLIAN

She needs me.

DENNIS

Sweetheart, we -

CHESTER

You'll be able to see her after a little while. She'll look like she's sleeping.

GILLIAN

...Is she cold?

Chester is about to respond but he can't find the words.

DENNIS

I'll be with her.
(to Chester)
Let's go.

Gillian sits as Chester and Dennis disappear into the other room.

144 INT. CARGO TRAIN (MOVING) - NIGHT

144

Ed watches the world rush by through an open loading door.

Freddie peruses the goods in boxes and crates. He's disappointed to find a bunch of knitting paraphernalia before looking sideways at his own, warped reflection in a row of tinned cans.

He nervously pokes holes in a potato sack with his fingers when Ray approaches.

(CONTINUED)

FREDDIE
Why did you do it?

RAY
Do what?

FREDDIE
Help me?

RAY
...Wouldn't you do everything you
could for someone you love?

Freddie stares at his brother.

RAY
Big brothers have to look out for
little brothers.

He puts his arms around Freddie.

145 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - NIGHT

145

Alex is a mess. He's bloody, filthy, tearful, and
murmuring...

ALEX
Theboydidit. Theboydidit.

Tommy ignores him.

A PANDA CAR pulls into the drive and parks beside the
others. Brian climbs from the car.

BRIAN
Listen up, constables. Chief
Inspector Wallace thanks you all
for your time and hard work. He
wants you all back in town to
report back to him with what you
got. Now that our suspect has
been apprehended, you're free to
return to the city and to your
regular duties. Go on lads, off
you go.

The half dozen constables climb into two cars between them
and drive towards the lights of town.

Brian opens up his car doors...

BRIAN
Alex Summers, I'd like you to
meet Jimmy Henderson and Benedict
Mellor. Sally Henderson and Bobby
Mellor's fathers.

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY and BENEDICT rise from the car and approach Alex.

ALEX
Theboydidit. Theboydidit.

146 INT. FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

146

Nancy is laid out on the mortician's table, concealed with a sheet.

Dennis regards his feet while Chester performs the examination. He carefully draws back the sheet.

CHESTER
Well, initial observation
suggests a heavy blow to the head
as the cause of death.

DENNIS
Anything else?

CHESTER
I'll know more as I proceed. But
based purely on what I can see
externally, the poor soul had the
life knocked from her. From
behind. She never saw it coming.
That, or she trusted her attacker
enough to turn her back.

147 EXT. FARMYARD - NIGHT

147

Alex crawls in the mud in an effort to escape Tommy, Brian, Jimmy, and Benedict.

Tommy easily catches Alex and lifts him to his feet. He surprises Alex when he removes the man's handcuffs.

ALEX
Thank y -

Tommy punches Alex in the stomach, knocking the wind out of him.

Alex crawls away from the farmhouse and towards the woods. Jimmy kicks him in the ribs.

Benedict punches him in the head.

Tommy and Brian keep pace with the moving trio, walking as Alex crawls, gets knocked down, and resumes crawling.

His fingers are crushed beneath a boot.

Teeth are kicked from his mouth.

(CONTINUED)

His check is split open. Ribs are cracked.

BRIAN
Where are the kids, Alex?

Alex leads them past the treeline.

ALEX
Theboydidit. Theboydidit.
Theboydidit.

148 INT. FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

148

Dennis massages the bridge of his nose, his temples. He hears Gillian crying through the door.

DENNIS
We're reading Hansel and Gretel.

Chester rearranges and straightens Nancy's dress, peeling layers of wet fabric from her skin.

CHESTER
I'm sorry Dennis. You were the
father she needed. I -
(pause)
Hang on.
(pause)
We've got a bite mark.

DENNIS
(looks up)
Bite mark?

CHESTER
Small one too.

Dennis approaches the body, sees the bite mark on Nancy's arm.

CHESTER
Early teen, maybe. He or she is
missing a tooth though, you see?

Chester points out the small bit of unbroken skin in the midst of the teeth marks.

Dennis runs from the room...

149 EXT. FUNERAL HOME, NIGHT

149

...And runs from the building to his Panda car. He gets on the radio. Gillian watches, perplexed.

(CONTINUED)

DENNIS

Brian, Tommy, come in, come in.

150 EXT. FARMHOUSE, DRIVE - NIGHT

150

The police panda cars sit empty, unattended, nobody to hear the radios...

DENNIS (O.S)

Alex was right. It's the little kid, Freddie. Somebody fucking respond!

151 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

151

Alex is broken. He crawls through mud, Tommy, Brian, Benedict, and Jimmy a constant presence at his heels.

They beat him relentlessly.

TOMMY

What'd you do, Alex, bury them out in these woods?

BRIAN

Sick bastard.

Alex falls into THE PIT, again landing on the pile of rotting animal carcasses.

He looks up at the dirt walls, four faces staring down at him.

Jimmy begins pushing the dirt in on top of Alex, wrenching a guttural scream from deep in his gut.

TOMMY

Whoa, whoa, shouldn't we -

BRIAN

Tommy, go watch the road.

TOMMY

But -

BRIAN

Aren't you about to be a dad, Tommy?

Tommy heads back towards the house and Brian and Benedict join Jimmy, each of them raking the piles of mud into the pit and onto Alex.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
HELP ME!

A fist-sized clump of soil lands in his mouth. He coughs and spits.

152 INT. CARGO TRAIN (MOVING) - NIGHT 152

Ray and Ed sleep.

Freddie examines his reflection in the food cans.

Ed is stirred awake by the sound of two small, approaching feet.

He looks up at Freddie, wearing the potato sack over his head with two small eyeholes poked in the fabric.

FREDDIE
I did just as you said, Dad. I
read his holy word and embraced
his teachings.

Ed wears a haunted expression.

FREDDIE
Cursed be he who does the Lords
work remissly, cursed he who
holds back his sword from blood.

Ed is about to speak when Freddie feeds him the pointed end of a knitting needle.

FREDDIE
Aren't you pleased?

With half the needle dripping blood from the back of his neck, Ed chokes and gasps.

153 EXT. THE WOODS, PIT - NIGHT 153

Alex screams and begs as he is buried alive. But his pleading does nothing to slow the three men piling soil in on top of him.

Alex is tiring, submerged up to his neck, one hand free and raking fruitlessly at the dirt around him.

Soil enters his mouth, catches in his throat.

And still the men proceed to bury him.

154 EXT. FUNERAL HOME, NIGHT 154

Dennis yells into the police radio from inside his car...

DENNIS

It's not Alex! You hear me? It's
not him!

155 EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT 155

The police radios inside the car continue to voice
Dennis's desperate calls...

DENNIS (O.S)

Come in! Come in! Tommy? Brian?

Tommy breaks through the tree line at the edge of the
farmyard...

156 EXT. THE WOODS, PIT - NIGHT 156

The dirt rises, piling around Alex and framing his face...

THE END.