

THREE MOONS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS, 1969 - DUSK

A boy's scuffed shoes trudge through wet leaves.

YOUNG JESSE, unkempt blonde hair framing a smudged face, carries a large hunting rifle. It's too big for him by far.

Ahead of him strides a tall man with tangled shoulder-length hair and a hooked nose. Black eyes sweep the dark trees. This is WILLARD, Young Jesse's father.

Willard stops. Young Jesse stops too, waits dutifully. He watches his father's back, his rounded shoulders.

Willard turns and approaches his son, bends to rearrange the rifle in his arms.

WILLARD

Like I told ya. Nice and strong
now.

Willard grasps Young Jesse's narrow shoulders.

WILLARD

No matter what y'see now. No
matter how scared y'are, I need
y'to aim strong.

Young Jesse nods, and Willard gathers him roughly into his arms.

WILLARD

Yer gonna do good. Y'hear that?

YOUNG JESSE

Papa?

Willard stands, tears stain the grime on his cheeks. He cups Young Jesse's face briefly then with a ragged breath, turns and walks away.

YOUNG JESSE

Papa?!

Young Jesse watches Willard stagger into the gray trees. Little by little, his father is swallowed by the woods until Young Jesse stands alone. He clutches the rifle to himself.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Night has fallen heavily and a full moon peeks through the high skeletal branches, Young Jesse a pale figure in the gloom.

A night bird titters.

YOUNG JESSE

Papa?

Something moves swiftly through the trees behind Young Jesse and he twists, scans the shadows.

Nothing moves.

A growl. Low, admonishing. Terrified, Young Jesse lowers himself to his knee and aims into the night.

A BLACK SHAPE flits between the trees.

Young Jesse cries softly. He lowers the rifle and turns on his knee.

The SHAPE, darker than night, watches him from afar. A murky shadow with long pointed ears.

Young Jesse raises the rifle and aims squarely at the thing. He takes a breath. Lets it out slowly. Takes another breath. Lets it out.

The shadow watches.

YOUNG JESSE

Strong.

Young Jesse's trembling finger curls around the trigger and the shadow GROWLS.

The boy sobs. He yanks the trigger too soon and the shot goes wild, splinters the bark off a tree.

The shadow silently heads for Young Jesse. Heavy footfalls rip at the soil.

Young Jesse WAILS, fumbles with the rifle, reloads it.

The rushing black shape is almost on him, hot breath blasting. The moon shines off its coarse black hair.

Young Jesse raises the rifle a moment too late. The monster leaps. Teeth gnash. The boy is hit with full force and they both land in the mud.

The rifle goes off with a deafening CRACK and the monster yelps. The air rushes out of Young Jesse as the thing goes limp and crushes him under its weight.

Silence follows. The impartial moon watches from above.

Young Jesse's eyes flutter open. Blood gushes from a terrible wound in his shoulder, soaks the soil.

Atop him, the naked body of his dead father.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEBRASKA, HIGHWAY, 1973 - MORNING

Scuffed sneakers tread the cracked edge of the highway.

JESSE, fifteen now and lean, wiry, watches the road ahead through glazed eyes. His once blonde hair is now dirty, tawny. Around him is the endless rise and fall of Nebraskan prairie land.

Jesse holds his gut. He knows what's coming, and dreads it. He doubles over and waits.

It comes. In a flood of vivid red, Jesse vomits a gout of blood onto the road top. He eyes a sticky clump of blonde hair mingled with the blood and he retches, drops to his knees and vomits again.

Done, Jesse eases himself onto his rump. He gazes down the eternal highway, wipes spittle from his lips.

SUPERIMPOSE: "NEBRASKA, 1973"

INT. DWYER'S PICKUP TRUCK - MORNING

A girl's hand tunes a car radio, finally settling on a station playing Country.

APRIL DWYER, fourteen, sweet face on the brink of womanhood, sits back in her seat.

Her father, FRANK DWYER, a sun-weathered, solidly constructed man, sits behind the wheel of the Pickup. He gives his daughter a wry sidelong look.

DWYER

We've settled on that one?

APRIL

Yes.

DWYER

I wouldn't like you to get bored now.

April smiles. Something up ahead makes Dwyer frown.

A plodding figure walks the edge of the highway. As they pass, April and Dwyer catch a glimpse of Jesse.

Dwyer watches the boy in the rearview mirror then sighs. He puts his foot on the brake.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jesse freezes when he realizes the Pickup is slowing. Dwyer reverses and comes to a stop next to the boy, smiles openly.

DWYER

You trying for a cross country record here, kid?

Jesse blinks.

JESSE

No sir?

DWYER

Why don't you jump in? We'll take you into town, if that's where you're after. We're headed there anyhow...

Jesse squints down the highway. It's a tempting offer, and there's nothing for miles.

DWYER

I don't think we'd sleep too well knowing we left you out in the middle of nowhere like this.

Jesse thinks. Finally, he shuffles for the passenger door.

INT. DWYER'S PICKUP - CONTINUOUS

As Jesse climbs in, he glances up. April smiles at him from the front seat. Dwyer tips his hat.

DWYER

My name's Dwyer, if you were interested to know. That's April.

APRIL

Hi.

DWYER

You got a name?

JESSE

Jesse.

Dwyer nods, turns forward, puts the Pickup in gear.

DWYER

Okay, Jesse.

They start away.

EXT. RUNDOWN PROPERTY / HIGHWAY - MORNING

Police tape flutters across the dirt driveway of a rundown house, abandoned for years.

Policemen, squinting against the sun, move about the dusty yard. Close to the house, a group of men huddle around a SHAPE covered over with a sheet.

HIGHWAY

A beat-up car, windshield opaque with dust, comes to a stop on the edge of the highway.

The driver extracts himself and surveys the scene. TERENCE HABERMAN wasn't built for this heat. He sports an academic beard and cheeks flushed an angry red.

Haberman wanders away from his car, tucks a notebook into the pocket of his denim vest.

He passes a group of policemen huddled at the open side-door of a VAN - a real hippie mobile - parked haphazardly on the road. His eyes fall on a bloodied HAND within the shadows of the vehicle. Nervously, he continues on.

Haberman stops at the mailbox. He studies the group of men concentrated around the sheet-covered shape. He ducks under the police tape and heads down the dirt drive.

Halfway down, ELLIS, a young harried cop, notices him and moves swiftly to intercept.

ELLIS

Sir.

HABERMAN

I'm sorry.

ELLIS

Back that way.

Haberman cranes his neck as Ellis leads him away.

HABERMAN

Were the victims torn apart?

ELLIS

Sir. Please. Help me out here, would ya?

HABERMAN

Are there any others?

ANGLE ON - SHERIFF GORDON, aging, carrying too much luggage around the middle. He crouches, a corner of the sheet lifted. He stares at the mutilated body underneath.

VIRGIL, Gordon's right-hand man, crouches beside him. His eyes flick unconsciously to strands of long blonde hair peeking out from under the sheet.

VIRGIL

What I think happened was the fellas in the van got done first, and she - least, I think it's a she - escaped and made for the house.

Sheriff Gordon nods, cocks his head. His weight shifts and Virgil notes the squelch under the Sheriff's boot. The ground is soaked in blood.

VIRGIL

Uh. Clearly she didn't get there.

Virgil watches Sheriff Gordon.

VIRGIL

I dunno, Sheriff. Ever seen anything like this outside a bear attack?

Sheriff Gordon doesn't answer. He lets the sheet drop. They look over to the driveway when they hear a commotion.

ELLIS (O.S.)

Sir, you can't be here.

Sheriff Gordon watches as an exasperated Ellis attempts to eject Haberman from the property. The Sheriff labors to his feet and limps over to them.

SHERIFF GORDON

Dammit Ellis.

(points at Haberman)

You. Get the hell outta here.

Haberman backs away, eyes fixed on the shape under the sheet.

HABERMAN

I'm sorry.

SHERIFF GORDON

If you're snoopin' for a story, you ain't gettin' one here.

HABERMAN

Oh, I'm not a journalist, if that's what you mean.

(extends hand)

My name's Terence Haberman.

Sheriff Gordon ignores Haberman's hand.

SHERIFF GORDON

Where you from?

HABERMAN

Michigan. Originally.

Sheriff Gordon nods over at Haberman's car.

SHERIFF GORDON

That your car?

HABERMAN

Yeah?

SHERIFF GORDON

You're just passin' through. I don't wanna see them plates again.

Done, Sheriff Gordon turns and strides back the way he came. Ellis urges Haberman away, then leaves too.

Haberman squints at the sheet once more. Defeated, he wanders back to his car.

EXT. LINDSAY, TOWN CENTER - DAY

Dwyer closes the door on his Pickup. He fishes in his pocket and hands April a bunch of change which she excitedly disappears into a nearby diner with.

They're in the town center of LINDSAY - a manicured park surrounded on four sides by general stores, a mechanic, a church and a barber offering "STILISH CUTS!"

Dwyer watches as Jesse emerges from the Pickup and takes in his surroundings, lost.

DWYER

April's got enough there for two root beers. You know, if you were dry...

Dwyer waits a diplomatic beat.

DWYER

How long you been running?

Jesse gives him a sharp look.

DWYER

I'm guessing your folks don't know you're all the way out here. How long's it been?

JESSE

Four years.

DWYER

Four years? Four years is a long time.

Jesse shrugs.

DWYER

You know, we got a nice home. Clean sheets. We need someone like yourself to do jobs 'round the place. If you were looking, that is. Just 'til you know which way you're facing...

Jesse squints up at Dwyer, uncertain.

DWYER

But something tells me you don't stay in a place long.
(off Jesse's silence)
I understand. Well...

Dwyer extends his hand.

DWYER

You take care of yourself now.

Jesse cautiously shakes the man's hand.

Dwyer pats Jesse's shoulder and wanders off down the street. Jesse turns and looks at this dry place.

INT. LINDSAY, DINER - MORNING

April stands at a large Wurlitzer jukebox at the far end of the diner. She runs her finger down the display glass, enters her selection.

CORAL, the kind of hardboiled waitress you'd expect in a place like this, stands behind the service counter, hand on hip.

CORAL

April Dwyer, you are gonna wear that thing out one of these days.

April wanders to the counter. She climbs up onto a stool and sips her root beer through a straw.

CORAL
Where's Frank?

APRIL
Over getting horse stuff.

April idly gazes through the window. Jesse stands on the street, his back to the diner.

CORAL
Is that brother of yours still
running around with that Nadelson
girl?

APRIL
(distracted)
I think so.

The doors open and a sweaty Haberman wanders in. He makes his way to the counter and sits, a crumpled map in his hands.

Coral walks over.

CORAL
What can I get for you?

HABERMAN
Water.
(beat)
Wait, I'm in Lincoln County?

CORAL
That's right.

HABERMAN
What town is this? I haven't seen
a sign for the last ten miles.

CORAL
You're in Lindsay. Where're you
after, hon'?

Haberman's eyes flick.

HABERMAN
I was after Lindsay.

CORAL
Well then, everybody's happy.

Coral exchanges a look with April as she turns to get Haberman his water. April smiles then looks back out at Jesse, who hasn't moved.

EXT. LINDSAY, TOWN CENTER - LATER

April comes out of the diner and wanders over to where Jesse now sits on the curb.

When he doesn't acknowledge her, she steps forward and sits.

APRIL
You're gonna get sun struck, you know.

Jesse studies his own hands.

APRIL
Don't you have anyplace to go?

Jesse shakes his head.

April nods. She idly plays with a rabbit's foot hung around her neck. She holds it up and Jesse glances at it.

APRIL
It's a rabbit's foot. They're meant to be lucky. I guess not too lucky for the rabbit.

Jesse manages a small smile.

DWYER (O.S.)
April.

April turns. Dwyer loads horse feed into the back of his Pickup near by.

DWYER
It's time we got going.

APRIL
Okay.
(to Jesse)
Well. Bye.

April stands and hurries to the Pickup. Dwyer gives Jesse a troubled look as he gets in.

INT. LINDSAY, DINER - CONTINUOUS

Haberman gulps ice water, rubs the sweat from his face.

HABERMAN
Is it always this hot here?

CORAL
We don't get a lot of Arctic winds through, if you know what I mean.

Haberman sighs and turns to gaze out the window. He freezes when his eyes fall on Jesse, getting to his feet and wiping the dust from the seat of his jeans.

The color leaves Haberman's face.

EXT. LINDSAY, TOWN CENTER - DAY

Haberman hesitantly comes out of the diner, eyes fixed on Jesse's back. His hand fumbles at his back pocket for something.

HABERMAN

Hey kid.

Jesse turns and tenses, looks like he's about to flee.

HABERMAN

Wait a minute.

Haberman pulls out a creased photo and holds it out to Jesse. Jesse, already skittish, stares at a picture of a smiling TEENAGED GIRL.

HABERMAN

Do you remember her?

Jesse shakes his head, takes a step back.

HABERMAN

No, see...

Haberman comes in closer.

HABERMAN

You remember her, don't you? A year ago? She was walking home from work.

Jesse stares at the photo, transfixed. Haberman peers intently into Jesse's face, searches for any sign of recognition.

HABERMAN

(whispers)

I know what you are.

Their eyes lock. All sound fades away.

HABERMAN

I can help you end it.

Jesse backs away.

HABERMAN

I can make it painless.

Haberman stares after Jesse as the boy turns and hurries for Dwyer's Pickup, which still idles at the curb. With a brief word at Dwyer's window, Jesse climbs in.

Haberman watches the Pickup pull away and drive down the street.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DWYER FARM - DAY

Dwyer's Pickup rumbles onto the Dwyer farm. It kicks up dust as it comes to a stop between a modest two-story farmhouse and a large barn.

April and Dwyer jump out, followed by Jesse, who anxiously eyes the surrounding hills.

BENJAMIN DWYER, nineteen, long hair and lean figure, emerges from the barn. He rubs his hands through a rag. He nods at his father then his eyes fall on Jesse.

DWYER
How's the beast?

BENJAMIN
I'll get it runnin'. Who's this?

DWYER
This here's Jesse. He'll be staying with us a spell. We picked him up somewhere out along Highway Nine.

BENJAMIN
Is that so?

DWYER
This is Benjamin.

Benjamin nods at Jesse then smiles over at April.

BENJAMIN
How you doin', Horse?

He flicks her with the rag and she squeals, takes flight. Benjamin takes chase but she's too damn fast. Dwyer shakes his head and laughs.

Jesse watches curiously as the siblings cavort.

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - MIDDAY

April moves about the kitchen, brings bowls of food to the table. She puts a big glass of water in front of Dwyer.

DWYER
 April's the best cook in the
 house. Isn't that so?

April smiles modestly as she brings over a bowl of fried chicken.

Jesse sits, watches this domestic scene with interest.

Benjamin wanders in looking refreshed from a shower. He slumps into a chair as April sits and they all bow their heads in prayer. Jesse hastily does the same.

DWYER
 For food in a world where many
 walk in hunger, for friends in a
 world where many walk alone, for
 faith in a world where many walk
 in fear, we give you thanks, oh
 Lord, Amen.

APRIL
 Amen.

BENJAMIN
 Amen.

Everyone starts loading their plates. Jesse looks on until Dwyer holds out a basket of bread.

DWYER
 Don't be shy.

Jesse takes some bread then some chicken. This is all unfamiliar territory.

BENJAMIN
 So, ah, Jesse. Where you from? I
 don't pick up a local accent
 there.

JESSE
 Washington State.

Dwyer and Benjamin exchange a look.

BENJAMIN
 You're a long way from home. What
 about school?

DWYER
 Benjamin.

Benjamin shrugs petulantly. They eat in silence.

BENJAMIN
 Katie told me her Dad told her
 about that attack last night.

APRIL
 What attack?

Jesse stares at his plate.

DWYER

Okay, we don't need to discuss that over the table.

BENJAMIN

He said the police aren't telling anywhere near to what happened.

Dwyer sighs.

DWYER

Well, they think it was an animal. An escaped circus tiger or something.

BENJAMIN

A tiger? In Lincoln County?

APRIL

Dad?

DWYER

Let's talk about something else.

APRIL

What happened?

Dwyer is silent for a moment.

DWYER

A couple of folk were killed last night. Over in Quinton. Out on the highway.

April reacts. Dwyer puts up a placating hand.

DWYER

In Quinton. It's a town over and we have nothing to worry about.

BENJAMIN

Katie's Dad says a man did it.

Dwyer shoots Benjamin a warning look.

DWYER

As I said, this is not something we're going to discuss over the table.

APRIL

Do you think... do you think whoever did it went the other way? Followed the highway and went in the opposite direction to us?

DWYER
Maybe, April, you can take Jesse
to see the horses this
afternoon...?

April looks across at Jesse. She nods.

APRIL
Okay.

DWYER
Good.

Dwyer sits back and watches his son, who actively avoids his eye.

EXT. DWYER FARM, CORRAL - DAY

April and Jesse approach a large high-fenced corral. April scales it and hooks her feet in, overlooking the enclosure. Jesse clumsily follows.

Inside the enclosure, a herd of horses catches sight of Jesse. Alarmed, they thunder away and huddle at the far side.

April watches them bewildered, then shrugs.

APRIL
They get a little goofy 'round
new people. They'll get used to
you.

April points across to a MARE, a dainty and skittish creature on the edge of the herd.

APRIL
That one there - the brown one -
she's mine. I've had her since I
was eight.

She points out another horse.

APRIL
And that one there is Benji's.
When they were breaking her in,
she threw Benji and broke his
collarbone.

April smiles at Jesse.

APRIL
You ever ridden a horse?

JESSE

I never had much reason to.
Animals don't seem to like me
very much.

APRIL

I dunno. I think horses are like
people sometimes. You need to
make friends with them first.

April watches Jesse's profile.

APRIL

Where are your family?

Jesse doesn't answer.

APRIL

(sheepish)
Sorry.

JESSE

I don't have one. My father died
four years ago. I didn't ever
know my mother.

APRIL

I miss my Ma. I mean, I love Pa
and Benji but sometimes there are
girl things I'd like to ask her,
you know?

April plays idly with her rabbit's foot.

APRIL

So you just wander around? Like
we found you today?

Jesse nods.

APRIL

Does it get lonely?

Jesse gazes knowingly across at the horses.

JESSE

My Dad told me every living thing
has a desire to survive.
Everything wants to continue on,
no matter how wretched its
existence.

(shrugs)

I don't have a choice.

April studies him. With the sun shining through her blonde
hair, and the faintest freckles across the bridge of her
nose, she's beautiful.

INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Jesse stands with Dwyer in the small bathroom. Dwyer leans over and rattles the shower handle.

DWYER

You gotta jiggle the handle 'til hot water comes. Old pipes. And there're fresh towels up there. Okay?

Jesse nods and Dwyer turns to leave.

JESSE

Why?

Dwyer stops, confused. Then he realises.

DWYER

Hasn't anyone ever just helped you out?

Jesse says nothing. Dwyer nods.

DWYER

Don't forget to jiggle the handle.

Dwyer closes the door behind him.

Jesse removes his shirt, stares at himself in the speckled mirror. His eyes trail down to his shoulder, fingers coming up to trace a long ragged scar there.

EXT. FARMHOUSE, PORCH - AFTERNOON

April stands on the porch, covertly listening through the kitchen window as Dwyer and Benjamin argue inside.

BENJAMIN (O.S.)

I can't believe this!

DWYER (O.S.)

Please lower your voice.

BENJAMIN (O.S.)

We have no idea who he is. I don't know why you couldn't leave him with the Sheriff.

DWYER (O.S.)

Is this how you're going to go through life? Benjamin, he's a kid. What kind of Christians would we be?

BENJAMIN (O.S.)
 What use will that be if he kills
 us in our sleep?

Benjamin stomps through the house toward the back door.

DWYER (O.S.)
 Benjamin Dwyer, you get back
 here!

April hurries to the porch steps and sits, just as Benjamin shoves his way through the screen door. He's dressed smartly in a tight shirt and jeans - dating clothes. He angrily comes down the steps.

BENJAMIN
 Later, Horse.

APRIL
 You smell like a drug store.

Benjamin stops and watches her. He finally walks back.

BENJAMIN
 Hey Horse, do me a favor?

APRIL
 What?

BENJAMIN
 Lock your door tonight, huh?

April frowns as Benjamin walks for his truck.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE, HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

A blurred silhouette appears in the ornate glass of the front door. There comes a gentle knock.

Dwyer emerges from the den. He looks down the dim hall.

DWYER
 April?

When April doesn't answer, Dwyer walks to the front door and opens it. He squints through the screen door at Haberman's back. Haberman turns and tries on his most accommodating smile.

HABERMAN
 Afternoon.

DWYER
 Can I help you?

HABERMAN

My name's Terence Haberman. I was wondering if I might take a moment of your time.

Dwyer nods but makes no move to open the screen door.

HABERMAN

I'm sorry. Would you mind if I stepped inside? I wasn't built for this heat.

DWYER

No offence but what's this concerning?

Haberman nods, adjusts his glasses.

HABERMAN

You have a kid staying with you.

DWYER

That's right.

HABERMAN

Around fifteen. Sandy hair.

DWYER

Are you a relation?

HABERMAN

No. No, I...

Haberman's eyes focus on a point over Dwyer's shoulder. Dwyer turns to see April watching silently from the far end of the hall. Dwyer turns back to Haberman.

HABERMAN

(lowers his voice)

Listen. I don't mean to frighten you or your daughter but there's something you need to know... He's dangerous. I know he doesn't look it but I've been tracking him for a year now.

Dwyer studies Haberman carefully.

DWYER

How do you mean dangerous?

HABERMAN

He was involved in that incident on the highway last night.

DWYER

They said that was an animal.

HABERMAN

So it seems. But I assure you,
it's something far worse than any
animal...

Dwyer sighs impatiently.

DWYER

Forgive my brass, but I don't
know who the Devil you are. And
if you know anything about what
happened to those poor folk, I
suggest you take that to the
Sheriff. Good day.

Dwyer closes the door. He watches Haberman's blurry
silhouette hesitate, then move away.

APRIL (O.S.)

He's been in there a long time...

Dwyer turns and looks at his daughter.

INT. FARMHOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Dwyer knocks on the bathroom door. April waits behind him.

DWYER

Jesse?

There's no response. Dwyer knocks again.

DWYER

Jesse? Everything okay in there?

They listen. Dwyer nods at April, who hurries away.

DWYER

Jesse, we're unlocking the door
now. You've been in there an
awful long time.

April returns with a butter knife. She steps forward,
slipping its tip into the door handle. She carefully turns
it and the door unlocks.

INT. FARMHOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dwyer opens the door and they peer into the empty bathroom.
April moves forward and looks around. No sign of Jesse. His
clothes are gone, the towels untouched.

Dwyer sighs, leaves April to stare at the open window.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HABERMAN'S CAR - DUSK

Haberman sits in his car. He watches the sun set over the horizon, casting an orange hue across his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PRAIRIE LAND - DUSK

Jesse runs full pelt. Before him, endless prairie land.

He stops at the crest of a hill and turns to stare at the sun, orange and massive, as it slips beneath the horizon.

Jesse moans and clutches his chest. A terrible CREAK emits from the bones in his arms. The joint in his elbow pops loudly. He sobs. Stumbling, he continues on down the hill.

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

April stands at the back screen door. She gazes out into the night, listens to the trill of countless crickets.

There comes the scuff of Dwyer's shoe behind her as he enters the kitchen. For a silent moment, he watches her.

DWYER

Come on sweetpea. Let's get cleaned up for bed.

April nods, distracted.

INT. FARMHOUSE, APRIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

April, dressed in a sunny yellow nightgown, climbs into her bed. Dwyer stops at her door.

DWYER

Say your prayers?

APRIL

Yes.

DWYER

Say one for your Ma?

APRIL

Yes.

DWYER

Okay, well... Sleep tight.

Dwyer closes the door and April pulls the covers over herself. She turns on her side and stares at the rabbit's foot sitting on her bedside table.

INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

Dwyer wanders along the hall, turns out the lights as he goes. He enters his bedroom and wearily closes the door.

EXT. DWYER FARM - NIGHT

The FULL MOON sits bright in a clear sky, bathing the Dwyer farm in a flat light. The shadows are all the more crisp, deep.

Benjamin's truck makes its bumpy way towards the house, the muffled sound of his 8-Track thumping from within. Benjamin stops the truck messily near the barn and jumps out.

Smiling, he wanders toward the house, a kick in his step. As he approaches the porch, he stops and gazes out toward the corral. As he listens, a horse BRAYS restlessly.

Benjamin waits. Silence. He heads inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Benjamin opens the refrigerator, grabs a bottle of milk. Standing in the brilliant light, he drinks.

He hears the distant thunder of hooves.

Benjamin wanders to the back door and opens it. Clearer now, frightened cries from the herd in their enclosure. Benjamin hurries back through the kitchen, dumping the milk bottle on the table.

INT. FARMHOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Benjamin heads for the downstairs hall closet, pulls it open, and brings out a hunting rifle. He adeptly loads it then grabs a flashlight.

Benjamin stops at the base of the stairs, briefly contemplates waking his father. No time. He heads for the back door.

EXT. FARMHOUSE, PORCH - NIGHT

Benjamin turns on the porch light and hurries down the steps. He strides purposefully across the dark expanse towards the corral, rifle nestled securely in his arms.

He flicks the flashlight on. The light catches the sheen of glossy coats as the herd circle the inside of the fence.

CORRAL

Benjamin approaches the fence and deftly steps up it. He passes the light over the horses - a large skittish mass on the far side.

BENJAMIN

What's gotten into y'all?

Benjamin scans the enclosure. Aside from the horses, it's empty. No coyotes, no feral dogs. He traces the fence with the flashlight's beam, searches for any breaches.

He double-takes at sudden movement, directs the flashlight across the way. Something BIG moves stealthily along the outside of the fence.

BENJAMIN

What the hell?

Benjamin leaps down off the fence. He circles out and away, aims his rifle and flashlight into the shadows gathered beside the corral.

A dark SHAPE emerges and Benjamin is momentarily dumbstruck. The light catches two bright EYES, large teeth. Tawny fur.

He makes a choked sound and aims his rifle blindly, squeezes the trigger off.

INT. FARMHOUSE, DWYER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dwyer snaps awake as the shot CRACKS in the night.

EXT. DWYER FARM - CONTINUOUS

Benjamin lowers the rifle, staggers back in disbelief. He missed. He hurriedly reloads as the MONSTER stalks out of the shadows, its intelligent eyes weighing the situation.

Shaking badly, Benjamin looks down the length of his rifle. He sobs, finger finding the trigger.

The thing growls.

Benjamin fires. The slug thuds the dirt an inch from the monster.

Benjamin drops his rifle and bolts for the house.

Swift and low to the ground, the monster takes chase.

Benjamin hears rapid footfalls behind him. He groans, lengthens his sprint. The porch light shines ahead of him, like a beacon.

BENJAMIN

Oh God.

Benjamin scrambles for the porch steps, legs pumping, eyes wide. He's almost there.

In a surge of bestial speed, the monster closes the distance. It has him. Claws rip through shirt and flesh.

Benjamin ROARS in horror.

INT. FARMHOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dwyer hurries down the stairs, pulling on an overcoat. He stops when he hears Benjamin's distant SCREAMS.

DWYER

Benjamin?!

He stumbles down the last few steps and hurries out.

EXT. FARMHOUSE, PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Dwyer dashes through the screen door and onto the porch.

DWYER

Benjamin?!

He stumbles off the porch and comes to a dead halt.

Benjamin stares at his father from the ground, a last rasping breath escapes him. The monster tugs at the boy's steaming entrails.

Dwyer's face goes slack.

The WEREWOLF looks up. Gore dangles from its teeth. Blood coats its fur.

Dwyer stares at this beast, processes every terrifying detail: sinewy arms, claws that grip what's left of his son. Large pointed ears and sharp eyes. Tawny fur that covers a body built for speed. Built to kill.

The Werewolf creeps over Benjamin's carcass, moans territorially, even as it sizes Dwyer up as its next meal.

APRIL (O.S.)

Pa...?

The Werewolf looks toward the house.

Dwyer's eyes widen. He takes the chance to dash onto the porch. He ducks around the screen door and inside.

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dwyer slams the door shut, presses his back to it. He tries to draw a breath into his constricted chest.

DWYER
My son. My son.

He looks over when April appears in the kitchen doorway, rubbing her eyes.

APRIL
I heard noises.

Dwyer jolts as the Werewolf SMASHES the door from the other side. April blanches.

APRIL
What is that?

Dwyer braces himself against the door.

DWYER
Go! Lock yourself in your room.

APRIL
Pa?

Dwyer hurries forward and hoists April off her feet. The door crashes again.

APRIL
Pa?!

INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dwyer carries April up the stairs. Distantly, the Werewolf continues its assault on the porch door.

APRIL
Pa? What is it?

Dwyer labors across the landing and puts April inside her bedroom doorway.

DWYER
Lock the door.

INT. FARMHOUSE, APRIL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dwyer reaches for the door handle and April desperately pulls on his arm.

APRIL
What's happening?! Where's Benji?

Dwyer kneels and hugs her tight.

DWYER
Oh April.

APRIL
(crying)
Pa. You're scaring me.

Dwyer looks up at her, eyes stricken. He runs a hand over her hair. They both flinch when the back door gives out in an almighty CRASH.

April looks from the sound to her father's face.

APRIL
Pa, don't.

Dwyer stands, grabs the doorhandle. April clutches at him.

APRIL
Don't leave me alone! Please, Pa!
Please don't.

Steely faced, Dwyer shoves her and she stumbles back. He pulls the door closed but she catches the handle, yanks on it, wails.

DWYER
April. Let go.

APRIL
Why?!

Dwyer pulls on the door and it slams shut. April wrenches on the handle but it won't budge.

INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dwyer stoically holds the door shut, listens to his daughter's cries. He turns suddenly - a low thumping ascends the stairs. Hand fastened around April's door handle, he shakily lowers himself to his knees.

He watches the stairs. Long pointed ears appear first, then the Werewolf's eyes.

Dwyer averts his eyes, crosses himself.

INT. FARMHOUSE, APRIL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

April puts her ear to the door.

APRIL
(whispers)
Daddy?

DWYER (O.S.)
Cover your ears, sweetheart.

A horrible ROAR and Dwyer SCREAMS. High-pitched. Terrible.

The door shakes violently and April backs away. Her father's screams seem endless, and through them, she can hear words.

DWYER (O.S.)
Don't. You. TOUCH HER! OH GOD
HELP ME!

April covers her ears, collapses against her bed, as her father's screams turn to agonized shrieks. Then he suddenly falls silent.

April waits. She shakily crawls over to the door and listens.

Stealthy movement in the hall. A soft growl.

On autopilot, April gets to her feet and staggers to the window. She pushes it open, glances back at the door then sits up on the sill.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Trembling, April braces herself against the sill and lowers her bottom half through. Her feet scrape to find purchase on the house's siding.

She stops to stare at her bedroom door. Silence.

April peers over to a drainpipe running down the side of the house. She reaches out. Her hand falls shy.

She slips and yelps, grips the windowsill with one arm but she can't hold on. She slips further then drops, seems to fall forever. She lands messily in the dust and cries out in pain.

She sits up, winces, nurses a sore elbow. She casts a nervous eye to her bedroom window.

As she gets to her feet, she hears something, an approaching engine. She limps toward the front yard.

FRONT YARD

April rounds the house into the front yard. Past the white picket fence and garden, headlights flash. April lets out a cry of relief. She runs across the yard.

APRIL
Help me!

She passes through the gate as the car comes down the dirt drive. She doesn't see the dark SHAPE move silently from around the side of the house to intercept her.

The car stops and Haberman gets out.

HABERMAN

Are you okay?

April staggers towards him.

APRIL

Help me.

She freezes when she spots the Werewolf coming straight for her. She screams, runs back through the gate and across the yard.

Haberman turns and watches the Werewolf dash through his headlights, heading after April.

HABERMAN

Oh jees!

EXT. DWYER FARM, FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

April runs across the grass. She glances back, sees the Werewolf right behind her, and turns instinctively to fend it off.

It leaps, grabs her, pins her to the ground.

She screams in revulsion as it violently sniffs her, runs its blood-soaked snout across her stomach, over her limbs, into her neck.

Haberman appears at the gate. He steadies himself, raises a deadly looking rifle and fires. The blast is deafening.

Blood erupts from the Werewolf's shoulder. The monster yelps and tumbles off April, comes up onto its haunches. It GROWLS at Haberman.

Haberman keeps the rifle trained on the beast. A trembling finger reaches up to cock the weapon.

The Werewolf turns and runs into the night. Haberman keeps the rifle aimed, waits. When it seems the monster won't double back, he hurries over to April, crouches beside her.

HABERMAN

Is there anyone in the house?

She sits up, flings her arms around him and bawls.

HABERMAN

Okay. It's okay.

Haberman helps her to her feet. A terrifying HOWL and he urges the girl onward.

HABERMAN

My car. Go.

He sweeps the rifle around as they make their way to his idling car. He yanks the door open for April and she gets in. He rounds the hood, watches the farm over his aimed rifle.

Something moves in the yawning black abyss between the farmhouse and the large barn. It's there, watching. He can feel its eyes on him.

HABERMAN

(shouts)

I'll shoot you again!

He's answered by a low growl.

Haberman slides into the driver's seat, slams the door.

INT. HABERMAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He stops, hand on the ignition.

Through the windshield, on the very edge of the headlights' reach, the Werewolf hunches. A nightmarish shape, face hidden in darkness.

Haberman fires up the car, punches the gas.

EXT. DWYER FARM - CONTINUOUS

Haberman's taillights dwindle into the distance, leaving the Dwyer farm to the dead.

The Werewolf HOWLS.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOOKOUT POINT - DAWN

Haberman's car sits on a lookout point, facing the sun as it rises dreamily over a distant mountain range. Light seeps into the valley below.

INT. HABERMAN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Haberman slumps behind the wheel, gazing at the sunrise. He looks over to where April sits, eyes half-open, catatonic.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOVE NEST MOTEL - DAY

Haberman comes out of a motel room on the second floor balcony of the Love Nest motel. He looks around at the highway cutting past, the surrounding hills.

He locks the door to his room.

INT. LOVE NEST MOTEL, FRONT OFFICE - DAY

Haberman pushes his way into the motel's front office.

The motel's buck-toothed PROPRIETOR sits behind the wood veneered desk, noisily eating an apple.

PROPRIETOR
Somethin' broke?

HABERMAN
You got a phone?

PROPRIETOR
Sure. S'right behind you.

Haberman walks to a payphone sat on a corner table. He fishes in his pocket, lifts the phone's handset and feeds it some coins. He stops with his finger on the dial, glances at the Proprietor.

The Proprietor, who's been watching this whole time, shrugs and turns his attention to a magazine.

Haberman dials.

INT. LINDSAY, POLICE STATION - DAY

Virgil, turning his hat in his fingers, sits on the edge of a pretty young SECRETARY'S desk. He says something low, confidential and the Secretary giggles.

SECRETARY
Don't you just wish.

The phone on Virgil's desk RINGS. He gives the Secretary a wink then stands, walks to it. He picks up the handset.

VIRGIL
County Police.

HABERMAN (O.S.)
(hushed)
Hello?

VIRGIL
This is Officer Ellsworth. How can I help?

HABERMAN (O.S.)
Go to the Dwyer farm. There's
been another attack.

VIRGIL
Who is this?

HABERMAN (O.S.)
Never mind that. Go to the farm.

VIRGIL
Wait just a minute now--

The connection cuts and Virgil frowns. He hangs up.

INT. LOVE NEST MOTEL, FRONT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Haberman stands, hand resting on the phone. He looks over to where the Proprietor stares at him, contemplatively chewing a piece of apple.

Haberman leaves the office.

INT. DWYER FARM, BARN - DAY

Jesse awakens naked, deep in a mountain of hay. He winces, touches a wound shoulder wound. Groggily, he sits up.

EXT. DWYER FARM - DAY

Jesse comes out of the barn. He nervously eyes feathers scattered over the ground, follows them to the mutilated remains of chickens.

He gazes at the farmhouse in dread.

INT. FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Jesse steps through the smashed porch door. The house is silent, tomb-like. He gazes from the spilled bottle of milk on the table toward the dark downstairs hall.

He tries to call out but his voice cracks.

INT. FARMHOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Jesse treads slowly up the stairs. As the upstairs hall comes into view, he stops, chest heaving.

Dwyer, or what's left of him, lies on the carpet. Coagulated blood saturates the wallpaper. Jesse's first reaction is to flee but he forces himself to look.

Lying on the carpet near by, fingers curled rigidly, is Dwyer's mangled hand.

Jesse gags. He lowers himself to the stairs and screams.

INT. FARMHOUSE, DEN - LATER

Somewhere, Jesse cries wretchedly.

The mantle is covered with framed photos of the Dwyers: April and Benjamin riding horses; Dwyer with April as a baby on his knee; the whole Dwyer family, including the late Mrs. Dwyer, smiling happily.

Below these photos, Jesse sits against the mantle, tears streaking his face. He looks down into the dark muzzle of a shotgun. His finger edges towards the trigger.

Jesse closes his eyes, places the muzzle up under his chin. His finger trembles on the trigger, waits for the courage to squeeze. It doesn't come.

With a disgusted cry, Jesse throws the gun away and buries his face in his hands.

JESSE

Papa. I'm sorry. Oh Papa.

As he sobs, he becomes gradually aware of the sound of an approaching vehicle.

Jesse climbs to his feet and hunches to the window. A police car turns off the highway and into the Dwyer farm.

He tenses.

EXT. DWYER FARM, PORCH - DAY

Jesse, now in a pair of jeans, runs from the porch door. He pulls on a too-large shirt, glances at the mess on the ground that used to be Benjamin.

The police car pulls up in the front yard. Sheriff Gordon gets out and looks up at the house.

Jesse runs unseen towards the hills.

INT. LOVE NEST MOTEL, MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Haberman sleeps in a chair in the corner of the motel room. The sun seeps through the curtains, bathes him in a dim dusty light.

April sleeps fitfully in her yellow nightgown on the bed near by.

There comes the approaching WAIL of sirens, and Haberman awakens. He sits up and draws the curtain aside, watches as two police cars scream past on the highway, lights flashing. They disappear, sirens fading away.

Haberman rests back in his chair, thinking. His eyes flick to the bed.

April lies on her side. She watches him silently.

APRIL

Where is this?

HABERMAN

A motel outside of town... Are you hungry? I got Slim Jims.

She shakes her head and rolls onto her back, rubbing the sudden tears from her eyes.

HABERMAN

Do you remember anything from last night?

He shrugs when she glances at him.

HABERMAN

Sometimes people forget. Maybe that's a good thing.

APRIL

You tried to warn my Pa. How did you know?

Haberman gets out the photo of his sister, contemplates it, then holds it out to April. She sits up and takes it, looks at the smiling girl, a year or two older than herself.

HABERMAN

That's my sister. Was my sister. They found her in a disused office building with her... Dead.

April reacts.

HABERMAN

She'd been walking home late one night from the movie house where she worked. The police were no help. They even tried to tell me it was a rabid dog.

Haberman laughs humorlessly.

HABERMAN

Well, I asked around for myself and a couple people told me they'd seen her with some kid with sandy colored hair.

April looks up from the photo.

HABERMAN

A month after, I heard about two people who were killed in a trailer park outside a town two hundred miles away. It sounded kind of similar so I go there and this waitress I speak to says this kid - looks like a runaway - has been skulking 'round, stole food out of their stockroom. After that, it was like a game of connect-the-dots. I just had to keep my ear out for any alarm bells. Sometimes I'd lose his scent for a month or two but then a couple hikers would turn up dead, people'd file it under a Grizzly attack and forget about it but I knew.

Haberman thinks.

HABERMAN

Then I realized these murders'd only ever happen three nights out of every month. When the moon was at its fullest. I went back and sure enough, my sister was killed during the Waxing Gibbous.

April stares at Haberman.

HABERMAN

Listen. I could take you out of here if that's what you wanted. But April, tonight's the Waning Gibbous and I've never known where he was going to strike before... Do you know what I mean when I say that?

April is silent for a long while.

APRIL

He'll find me.

Haberman nods. April stares down at the photo again then hands it back.

APRIL

I want you to kill it.

Haberman watches her carefully.

HABERMAN

I'll be ready. But you need to be
too.

April nods then turns away. She lies down, her back to Haberman. Haberman sits back and gazes at the window.

DISSOLVE TO:

BEGIN SUNSET MONTAGE.

LINDSAY

The sun sets over Lindsay, bathing the buildings in a brilliant orange light.

DWYER FARM / CORRAL

Sheriff Gordon stands near the corral, gazes in at the bodies of the mutilated horses.

He turns when an ambulance circles the yard and heads off the property, carrying the remains of Dwyer and Benjamin.

The Sheriff makes his way towards a waiting police car, Virgil stands at the driver's door. They both get in and leave the farm to the growing darkness.

LOVE NEST MOTEL, MOTEL ROOM / BATHROOM

Haberman stands in the narrow motel bathroom, cleaning his rifle. He opens the chamber and loads a pointed bullet.

He snaps the weapon shut.

HIGHWAY

Jesse trudges along the edge of the highway. He hears the approaching rumble of an engine and he turns despondently, thumb out.

A car passes him, whipping his hair. He lowers his thumb and watches after the car. His eyes turn to the sun, which slips behind the hills. It's almost night.

Jesse sways on the spot.

END SUNSET MONTAGE.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOVE NEST MOTEL - NIGHT

The Love Nest motel sits beneath the Waning Gibbous moon.

The motel's Proprietor stands at the door, looking onto the night. He turns when he sees headlights appear on the highway. Discreetly, he closes the door, locks it.

INT. LOVE NEST MOTEL, MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Haberman sits in his chair, squarely facing the door. His eyes are bright, skin clammy, his knuckles white around the rifle.

April sits on the bed with her knees drawn to her chest. She looks up when a slant of light moves across the ceiling. The sound of tires over gravel.

Haberman listens, alert.

EXT. LOVE NEST MOTEL, CARPARK - NIGHT

Car doors slam and someone walks across the gravel, stops near Haberman's car.

Sheriff Gordon cocks his head at Haberman's number plates then turns to his men - Virgil, Ellis and a stocky blonde cop, JENKINS. He gestures for Ellis to circle the building. Ellis heads off.

The Sheriff looks up to the second floor balcony.

INT. LOVE NEST MOTEL, MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Haberman stands peering down through the curtains, rifle in hand.

HABERMAN

Darn it.

He lets the curtain drop, turns to look at April. She stares back at him.

APRIL

What is it?

HABERMAN

Why didn't I see this coming?
Small town cops. Darn it!

He gestures to her, walks to the bathroom.

HABERMAN

I'll get rid of them.

April walks into the bathroom and Haberman closes the door. He rests the rifle against a cupboard.

Sheriff Gordon bangs on the door.

SHERIFF GORDON (O.S.)
Haberman! Open the door. Now.

Haberman adjusts his glasses, walks over and opens the door. Sheriff Gordon stands there.

HABERMAN
Sheriff.

Virgil and Jenkins stride in. They tackle Haberman to the floor.

SHERIFF GORDON
Mr. Haberman, you are 'ficially under suspicion for the murders of Frank Dwyer and his son, Benjamin Thomas Dwyer.

HABERMAN
What?!

Haberman's ears prick when he hears Virgil preparing a pair of handcuffs. He struggles in Jenkins' grip.

HABERMAN
Wait, this is crazy.

Sheriff Gordon picks up Haberman's rifle, looks it over.

SHERIFF GORDON
No kiddin'.

HABERMAN
I'm a pacifist, for God's sake. Do you think a man could have done that to the Dwyers?!

Virgil places his knee in the small of Haberman's back.

VIRGIL
Wrists, sir.

HABERMAN
Please don't cuff me. I'll come, just don't cuff me, okay?

Virgil wrenches Haberman's hands back and with a sharp clack, cuffs him.

HABERMAN
Wait a second. The girl. She's in the bathroom. You need to protect her.

Sheriff Gordon nods at his men, and while Jenkins hoists Haberman to his feet, Virgil walks to the bathroom door and opens it. April stands against the wall.

EXT. LOVE NEST MOTEL, CARPARK - NIGHT

Sheriff Gordon comes down the stairs, carrying Haberman's rifle.

He's followed by Virgil who leads a skittish Haberman. Haberman looks over his shoulder at April, who's being escorted by Jenkins.

They reach the car park and April stops, bare-footed, at the edge of the pavement. Jenkins bends and carries her awkwardly across the sharp gravel.

They all head towards two police cruisers.

SHERIFF GORDON
Put her in mine.

VIRGIL
Where's Ellis?

SHERIFF GORDON
(calls out)
Ellis!

Jenkins opens the passenger door of the Sheriff's car and April reluctantly climbs into the backseat. He closes the door on her and she peers out.

HABERMAN
This is a mistake.

SHERIFF GORDON
Shut your mouth.
(shouts)
Ellis!

Realization dawns on Haberman as he's pushed towards the second cruiser. And then he catches a glimpse, a black shape moving through the shadows a distance behind the Sheriff. He jerks out of Virgil's grasp.

HABERMAN
It's here! You idiots! It's here!

Virgil slams Haberman against the side of the car.

VIRGIL
If you don't simmer down, I'll
need to get heavy with you. Hear
me?

A distant HOWL. They all freeze. Virgil smiles nervously.

VIRGIL

What the hell was that?

Jenkins stands near the Sheriff's car. He unlatches a flashlight off his belt, flicks it on and directs it into the night. He sweeps it out over the highway. There comes a gurgling, choking sound and Jenkins spins.

Ellis, throat a bloody gushing mess, staggers into the light. He drops to his knees, falls face down in the gravel.

Sheriff Gordon, Virgil and Jenkins hastily pull their guns from their holsters.

HABERMAN

(to Virgil)

Uncuff me, man. Take them off!

Virgil's hand moves to the keys on his belt.

SHERIFF GORDON

Leave it, Virgil.

HABERMAN

You can't do this!

SHERIFF GORDON

Keep your mouth shut. That's your last warning.

JENKINS (O.S.)

Uh, fellas.

They all look over to where Jenkins shines his flashlight into the night.

JENKINS

I just saw something...

Everyone freezes. April presses her face to the window.

Swift sudden movement and the Werewolf vaults the police cruiser's roof and collects Virgil.

Haberman staggers back in shock.

Virgil wails as he sprawls in the gravel. The Werewolf hunches over him, sinks its claws into his chest and rakes it open. The man bucks, gurgles.

HABERMAN

SHOOT IT!

Sheriff Gordon, slack lipped and dumbstruck, raises his gun and fires. The bullet hits the Werewolf in the chest and it ROARS, pushes itself towards him on powerful legs.

The Sheriff aims the gun again but the Werewolf swats him off his feet. He lands messily in the gravel, tumbles then slumps, unconscious.

Jenkins steps forward, mouth twisted, gun aimed. He fires twice, one bullet catching the Werewolf in the torso.

The Werewolf yelps and pivots. With terrifying speed, it dashes at him on all fours.

It rams the startled cop against the Sheriff's car, bites into his throat.

SHERIFF'S CAR

April shrieks and scurries back when blood sprays the window.

EXT. LOVE NEST MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Haberman's knees buckle.

The Werewolf savages Jenkins. The cop's head drops off and hits the gravel with a sickening thud.

Haberman's eyes flick to Virgil. The handcuff KEYS still hang from the dead man's belt loop. Keeping one eye on the monster, Haberman turns and crouches awkwardly, cuffed hands straining.

His fingers brush the keys and they jingle.

The Werewolf turns and looks at Haberman. Recognition flashes in its intelligent eyes. It drops Jenkins' headless body to the ground.

The color drains from Haberman's face.

A noise to Haberman's left. Sheriff Gordon, bloodied and groggy, scratches through the gravel for his gun.

SHERIFF GORDON

Son of a bitch.

Sheriff Gordon determinedly gets to his knees and aims, steadies his firing arm across his forearm.

The Werewolf lowers its head, sprints at him. The Sheriff FIRES. Blood bursts from the monster's torso but it keeps on coming.

Sheriff Gordon fires again, bawls incoherently as the Werewolf bears down on him. He throws up his arm in defence and the creature catches it in its teeth.

Haberman gets to his feet as the Sheriff shrieks. He spots April climbing out of the police cruiser. One hesitant bare foot touches the gravel.

HABERMAN

April, no.

April grimaces at the Werewolf's back - mere feet away - as it continues to maul Sheriff Gordon. She limps over to Virgil's body. Haberman realizes what she's doing and nods.

She crouches, gingerly pulls the keys off Virgil's belt.

Haberman turns so April can free him. He watches nervously as the Werewolf tilts its head back, passes meat down its gullet. And then it stops, sniffs at the air.

April carefully unlocks the Haberman's cuffs.

HABERMAN

(whispers)

April...

April peers around Haberman.

The Werewolf stares at them. Its eyes find her and it shifts, what's left of the Sheriff now forgotten.

Haberman does his best to block April from view.

HABERMAN

Run.

APRIL

I don't--

HABERMAN

Go.

April stares up at Haberman helplessly. Haberman looks over his shoulder at her.

HABERMAN

April...

April nods, turns and runs past the Sheriff's car, toward the highway and into the night.

The Werewolf sees the yellow flash of April's nightgown and takes a step forward. Haberman waves his arms over his head.

HABERMAN

Hey!

The Werewolf growls at him. It lowers itself to the ground, stares fixedly into the night. Haberman moves around, steps into its eyeline.

HABERMAN

Let her go.

The Werewolf hunches low to the ground, glares at Haberman.

HABERMAN

Don't do this to her.

The Werewolf runs suddenly, intent on finding April.

Haberman steels himself, steps in its way. The monster roars, swipes at him. Haberman cries out and stumbles back, landing roughly on his backside.

The Werewolf disappears into the night.

Haberman whimpers, looks down at a large bleeding slash in his stomach. Reeling, he gets to his feet and doubled over, hunches over to his rifle.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

April runs in the darkness, her breath high, strained. The moon shines off the flat highway. She runs towards nowhere. No end. She runs.

A low HOWL behind her and she whimpers.

Rapid movement to her left. The high, eager pant of a dog. She keeps on, bare feet slapping the road top. All sound melts away.

She slows to a stop, sobbing. She watches the Werewolf, a dark blur in the moonlight, circle her.

APRIL

Please...

The Werewolf moves languorously towards her and she sinks to her knees. It comes in close, fetid hot breath teasing her hair.

APRIL

Don't.

The Werewolf runs its muzzle along her cheek. April cries softly.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Haberman runs, as fast as the pain in his gut will let him. A flashlight swings in one hand, jerks the beam of light up and down. Nightmarish snapshots of the highway.

In his other hand, the rifle.

HABERMAN

April!

Silence as he runs.

HABERMAN

APRIL!

The light catches color up ahead. A smudge of yellow on the road - April's nightgown. Haberman approaches. The light gleams off April's bare legs. Then her face - blank, staring.

HABERMAN

Oh God.

April's nightgown is bunched around her hips. Blood coats her thighs.

He shines the light in her face. She blinks slowly. A dry hiss escapes her lips. Haberman falls to his knees.

HABERMAN

April.

APRIL

Here.

Haberman tenses. He raises the light directly at the Werewolf. It crouches a distance away, head lowered. It shies away from the glare of the flashlight. Haberman lifts the rifle, aims it.

HABERMAN

It could have been a lot cleaner than this.

The Werewolf growls. Haberman grips the rifle tighter, resolve tenses his jaw.

HABERMAN

Come on. Let's end it.

The Werewolf races at him.

Haberman holds steady. The rifle CRACKS as the Werewolf leaps, collecting Haberman's throat in its jaws. The flashlight clatters to the road and both man and monster tumble into darkness.

The rifle FIRES again, like a sharp punctuation, briefly illuminating Haberman and the Werewolf in mortal struggle.

Then silence.

April lies in the dark. Stares up at the moon for a long while.

Red light sweeps her face. Then blue light. Then red.

Police cars approach, lights flashing dreamily. As their headlights grow brighter and they come to a stop on the highway, April turns her head.

Haberman. Dead. Eyes open. His hand still grips the rifle.

She looks towards Haberman's feet. Jesse lies there, naked, body riddled with bullet holes. His hand outstretched, he stares at her sightlessly.

April turns and looks at the moon again as the dark shapes of men draw near.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Scuffed sneakers tread the edge of the highway.

JESSE (V.O.)
My Dad told me every living thing
has a desire to survive.

A hand curls around the rabbit's foot hanging from leather cord.

It's April walking here under the sun, rucksack over her shoulder, her blonde hair in a loose braid. She turns and when she hears the rumble of an engine.

JESSE (V.O.)
Everything wants to continue on,
no matter how wretched its
existence.

The afternoon sun glints off a big rig in the distance. She puts her thumb out in anticipation.

With her other hand, she holds the small mound of her belly.

JESSE (V.O.)
I don't have a choice.

FADE OUT.