

Vourdalacks Of Love

CONTEMPORARY THRILLER, LOW BUDGET, FEW LOCATIONS

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FADE IN:

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

A pure bachelor pad - claustrophobic with a cheap bunk bed and pizza boxes strewn about.

The only objects of note are the flat screen TV and pro filming equipment, a camera and a film editing setup.

A tag on the equipment reads:

NICK HEBERT

ROBOTIC PRODUCTIONS

NICK HEBERT (30s), blue eyes and square jaw, he is athletic and handsome, sleeps on the bottom bunk in a dirty pair of jeans and an undershirt.

He tosses and turns as his eyes snap open to --

GORCHA, an old man in traditional Amish clothes, hat and beard, looming over him. A smile plays on Gorcha's lips.

Nick jumps backwards, pressed against the wall.

Gorcha instantly disappears.

Nick takes a deep breath. He runs his fingers through his bedhead hair and looks around.

The apartment is empty.

NICK
(Shallow breaths)
Oh, my god.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nick splashes sink water on his face.

He stares into the mirror.

An engagement ring glistens on his finger. Nick takes it off.

Gorcha appears in the mirror, staring down at Nick.

Nick washes his hands with soap then puts the ring back on.

When he looks back up, Gorcha is gone.

Nick shuffles back to the --

BEDROOM

Nick sits wearily on his bed. He reaches for an open soda can on a table next to his bed and downs it.

He repulses at the awful taste.

A KNOCK.

The apartment door squeaks open.

HELEN (O.S.)
Nick?... You here?

HELEN (30s), bespectacled and pretty, walks in. She's one of those women who knows exactly what to say on every occasion.

She catches him resting on the edge of the bed.

HELEN
Hey. I didn't know you were back.
When'd you get in?

Helen saunters to Nick and gives him a kiss on the cheek. He kisses her back.

She looks around at all the trash.

NICK
I was gonna clean up.

Nick drops the empty can on the ground.

HELEN
Mmm. Sure you were. Remember to
feed the fish?

She walks to the tank and drops a pinch of food in.

NICK
Read my mind.

Helen pulls the drapes open.

The sunshine makes Nick shield his eyes.

HELEN
Get a little Vitamin D in your
life, Nick. You look like a
vampire.

Nick fake hisses at the sunlight.

NICK

It burns.

Helen sits by Nick. She strokes his hand and leans over for a kiss.

HELEN

Yep. Shower time.

NICK

Well, you smell nice.

HELEN

...Said every creep ever.

NICK

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Helen strokes his hair.

HELEN

Guess who's gonna sing at our wedding? The Nuts!

NICK

(Scoffs)

Who'd you blow to pull that one off?

HELEN

Well, there was that one guy, but that was just for fun...

Nick glares at Helen, incredulous.

HELEN

Kidding, duh.

(Giggles)

Took me a week to chase 'em down. Today, we'll do the invitations. Wanna help me out with that?

NICK

Can we postpone it?

She raises her eyebrows and squares her shoulders.

NICK

The invitations, not the wedding.

Her gaze glides across the room.

His suitcase is wide open but empty.

She scrutinizes the messy room.

HELEN

The place was cleaned last week.

Nick nods, checking out the room.

HELEN

How long have you been back, Nick?

NICK

Not long. I just needed a rest.

Helen gets up and stands with her back to the window.

HELEN

From me? Is that it?

NICK

'Course not. Look, I'll do the invites, okay? Now. No problem.

Nick searches the apartment for them.

NICK

Let's see, if I were an invitation I would be...

Nick can't find them in a drawer. He reaches in his pocket for a smoke and picks up a lighter from a pile of clothes.

He lights the cigarette, drags deeply, exhales.

She bustles around the room, picking up the mess.

HELEN

Nick, what happened?

Helen tries to keep it casual but her worried face betrays her. She notices that the camera is hooked on to the screen.

HELEN

You found something good, didn't you?

NICK

More like dull and stupid.

She flips the camera and the computer screen on.

The recording plays from the middle.

NICK
We gotta watch it right now?

He wraps his arms around her.

She brushes his hands away, sits comfortably and watches.

ON SCREEN:

Nick and MITCH (late 30s), an Amish man, and his two little sons, all dressed in traditional garb, behind a dinner table.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AMISH FARM HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT (FOOTAGE)

CAMERA POV - OVER NICK'S SHOULDER, FACING THE TABLE

A woman, ZDENKA (20s), nice features, head covered, bustles around with food.

Zdenka lays a plate with three runny eggs in front of Mitch and Nick.

The kerchief that holds her hair falls on her shoulders and she doesn't pay attention to it. Without it, she's beautiful.

Mitch points at the kerchief and clears his throat.

Zdenka puts the kerchief back on her head.

Nick points to the rolling camera:

NICK
So, you ever seen anything like
this bad boy? Not to brag but not
many city folks can afford this
kind of gear.

Nick enjoys himself.

NICK
Are you guys cool with being
filmed? How's that work?

Mitch laughs, almost mocking Nick. He sticks his fork into the eggs with a smile.

Zdenka takes a seat. Nick watches her.

They smile at each other.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Helen watches Nick and Zdenka's smile, intensely.

She hugs Nick from behind and leans into him. He strokes her hands with affection.

She struggles to keep her voice even.

HELEN

Did you have fun?

Helen's eyes follow Zdenka and Nick in the footage. Nick remains deeply focused on Zdenka. He smirks.

Nick shrugs as he glances over at Helen.

NICK

Two tons of fun. On party night, we churned butter 'til dawn.

Helen's expression changes as she watches the footage --

She's jealous, but her voice remains even.

HELEN

Is she his wife?

Helen catches the wink. She goes to the computer and zooms in on Zdenka, then Nick.

Nick wearily sighs as he walks up behind Helen.

NICK

Half-sister or something. Who knows, with these people?

HELEN

Where's the kids' mother?

NICK

(shrugs)
Couldn't tell ya.

Helen sits in the computer chair and fiddles with the camera. She flips it back on, her lips thin. She chuckles.

HELEN

I used to ask a bunch a' questions about this stuff. You used to love it.

NICK

I still do.

They watch more footage together.

INT. AMISH FARM HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT (FOOTAGE)

CAMERA POV - OVER NICK'S SHOULDER, FACING THE TABLE

Zdenka offers Nick a slice of bread. Nick takes some. She offers him the salt.

NICK

Ha! My girl'd never go for that.
She says I'm salty enough.

Zdenka doesn't seem to get the joke.

As Nick takes the salt, their fingers touch.

Nick douses the food in salt.

NICK

That's a joke. My girlfriend loves
to micromanage my life... and my
salt intake.

Zdenka turns to her brother.

ZDENKA

I like city people. Too much salt,
too much fat...

OFF SCREEN

HELEN (O.S.)

Girlfriend? Are you fucking kidding
me, Nick? I'm your fiancée.

NICK (O.S.)

It's shorthand. Relax. Sheesh...

ON SCREEN

Nick pulls a notepad from his pocket. He jots in it.

NICK

"Too much salt. Too much fat." I
feel like a new man, already.

He finishes the last of his eggs. He takes a piece of bread and wipes his plate clean with it.

NICK

Mind if I ask, what makes your
people tick?

ZDENKA

Talking in cliches like that ticks me off. Or should I say turns me off?

Nick jots down another note.

NICK

Aa, good one! The eggs were wonderful, by the way.

Zdenka rises to clean up. She grabs all the plates off the table as --

Mitch gives silent permission to the boys to leave the table.

They circle the table with paper airplanes while screaming.

It bothers Nick, but doesn't phase Mitch or Zdenka.

ZDENKA

I apologize about them. We are pretty lenient with the children. You may have noticed.

Nick shrugs.

NICK

It's cool. Whatever's normal, that's what I like.

MITCH

Is this your first documentary?

NICK

Fourth.

MITCH

You ask me, you're not making good use of your time. Your people know most everything that's worth knowing about us.

NICK

I don't know, sir. We have a pretty cliché...

(Looks to Zdenka)

...view of the Amish. This could be a turning point.

MITCH

Don't wager on it.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nick jerks toward the dvd player and switches it off. Helen turns it back on with the remote.

NICK
Are you being serious?

Helen throws him a stern look.

INT. AMISH FARM HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER (FOOTAGE)

CAMERA POV - ON A TRIPOD, BETWEEN THEM ALL

Mitch, Zdenka and Nick are sitting in separate seats.

Zdenka watches the front door. It creaks.

Zdenka springs to her feet. There's no one at the door.

MITCH
The wind.

NICK
You expecting somebody?

Zdenka nods. She takes a moment to collect her thoughts.

ZDENKA
Don't you know? We believed that
was why you selected our family.

NICK
No, I met Mitch down at the bar. He
was sellin' eggs. I thought that
was pretty awesome. Amish dude
sellin' eggs in a bar, y'know? Next
thing I know, I'm eating dinner
with you fine folks.

MITCH
We sell anywhere we can.

Zdenka takes a moment before she starts her story.

ZDENKA
Our father left ten days ago. We
hunt in the woods from time to
time. It's the only way to get meat
around here --

Mitch's face turns rigid, his jawline hardens.

MITCH

Zdenka...

Zdenka touches his hand but he pulls away.

NICK

Sir, I'm really intrigued. May I
hear it, please?

Mitch keeps a stern face. Again, he signals to Zdenka to keep quiet. Zdenka straightens her shoulders. She knows better.

ZDENKA

Father told us if he's not back by
the tenth day, he's dead.

Mitch jolts up, furious at Zdenka.

MITCH

I asked you to stop!

Zdenka looks at the grandfather clock.

It chimes 7:30. She doesn't care about Mitch anymore:

ZDENKA

If he's not back by 8pm, the
vourdalacks got to him.

NICK

The what?

BORIS (8), overhears the conversation.

BORIS

Is grandpa Gorcha coming back?

Some motion outside draws Nick's attention to the window.

A faint reflection of an old man appears in it.

Nick gets distracted from the window as Mitch rises and slaps his son hard.

Boris cries and runs to Zdenka, who hugs him.

The other boy, DENIS (6), tears up, as well. Both go away to their room, upset.

ZDENKA

Why did you hit him?

MITCH

He was wrong to mention Father's name. You should know better.

Mitch turns to Nick:

MITCH

We would prefer you leave tonight. Please don't overstay your welcome.

Mitch strides out, slamming the door behind him.

Nick and Zdenka remain in the room. Nick breaks the silence.

NICK

Should I even ask?

ZDENKA

Please don't.

NICK

And the vourdalacks?

ZDENKA

Creatures of the night. Blood suckers.

NICK

They sound like vampires.

ZDENKA

We call them vourdalacks.

Nick can't suppress a laughter.

NICK

Just so we're on the same page, vampires. Vampire vampires?

Zdenka shrugs.

ZDENKA

Are there any other kind?

NICK

So, if I go out there right now, I'm gonna run into Dracula?

Zdenka's eyes turn red and gleam with a strange glow as her chin hardens.

She leans close to Nick and opens up her mouth.

Her teeth are an inhumanly vibrant shade of white.

Nick recoils at the sight of it.

A noise outside startles Nick. He turns towards it. When he sees nothing, he turns back to Zdenka.

Zdenka has changed back. She's as beautiful as ever.

Her eyes are clear. She speaks in a soft voice as she strides over to a large, oak box in the corner.

ZDENKA

And, Father told us one more thing.
If he comes back after dawn on the
tenth day...

Zdenka turns back to Nick, holding a large, wooden stake.

ZDENKA

...we kill him.

Nick stares at the stake, mouth wide open.

ZDENKA

...I begged him not to go, but he
wouldn't listen. Wanted us to have
meat on the table.

NICK

What about your community, don't
they provide for you? I thought
Amish share everything.

ZDENKA

We are a proud folk.

Zdenka watches Nick - he doesn't buy into it.

ZDENKA

You think it's all stupid, don't
you? I see it in your eyes.

She reaches for a drawer, grabs an old photo album. She flips through the pages and stops on a picture of a family.

The people in the picture are excessively pale.

ZDENKA

Here. These are them, a family that
churned. We didn't know, and even
if we did - vourdalacks are sort of
different to vampires, they infect
only their own folk. They do it
kind of out of love.

Nick stays respectfully silent. Zdenka points at an eighteen year old girl in the picture.

The girl's piercing black eyes offset her milky white skin.

ZDENKA

This is Veronica. She used to be my best friend.

In another picture there's her and Zdenka together.

ZDENKA

One day we sneaked out to a mall and she suggested to take pictures.

PICTURE BOOTH - FLASHBACK

Girly giggles in the dark.

VERONICA doesn't take her eyes off Zdenka and moves closer. Zdenka frowns, doesn't know what it's about.

ZDENKA (V.O.)

I didn't know she got infected...

Veronica attacks Zdenka.

They grapple and Zdenka manages to break away.

ZDENKA (V.O.)

I remembered to grab the pictures.

BACK TO SCENE

Zdenka shows Nick the booth pictures. Veronica's fangs exposed, her eyes fiery. The photos look genuine.

ZDENKA

Only later I realized that I have a shadow in these and she doesn't.

Nick peers in the pictures - Veronica doesn't have a shadow.

A thought shines in Nick's eyes.

NICK

Hey, know what? I might have another angle for my film.

Zdenka looks at him, her eyes infinitely sad. Nick points to his camera.

NICK
That could be an Amish vampires
documentary.

ZDENKA
Vourdalack documentary.

NICK
Right.

He sees Zdenka's sorrowful eyes.

NICK
It must be insensitive of me to
think of my film at a time like
this.

Zdenka grabs the photos, places them back into the album.

NICK
Listen, if your dad is alive and
well, this kind of movie won't hurt
him. It may help you fight the
vourdalacks. I mean, I know what's-
her-name is your friend, but she's
not alive. She's a dummy and may
get you some day. Or the kids.

She looks at Nick.

ZDENKA
I know.

She suppresses the urge to cry.

ZDENKA
Go ahead, film about vourdalacks.
I'll help you with your movie best
I can.

Zdenka wearily rises, tidies up the table. She disappears
into the kitchen.

Nick grabs the tripod and camera and packs them.

Nick reaches for his phone as he continues to pack.

He flips it open, dials a number. There are couple of beeps
and a male voice responds.

NICK
(into phone)
Hey, Jerry! Listen, Jerr, I have a
great idea for another film...

He listens to what Jerry has to say and his face changes.

NICK

Yeah I know, but is it of any value? We can tackle the story from a different angle, the one that will stick. Just hear me out...

Jerry talks on the other end of the line and Nick grows impatient.

NICK

Okay, I'll do it on my own then. Won't have to share the return, right?

He snaps his phone shut and turns around to see--

Zdenka waits for him to finish the phone conversation.

NICK

To hell with his permission. Next you know I'm selling this documentary to HBO and Jerry is sucking on his thumb.

Zdenka shrugs.

ZDENKA

What's an HBO?

She is about to leave but Nick holds her hand. She tenses at his touch and he immediately lets go of her.

NICK

Sorry. Tell me more about these vourdalacks.

ZDENKA

You don't believe me, do you?

NICK

Make me believe, huh.

He stares her down and she finally nods.

NICK

I'll come over tomorrow, may I?

There's a rustle outside and both of them look up.

Gorcha appears in the guest room window, this time he knocks. Zdenka turns pale. A triumph in eyes, Gorcha shows her his kill - a dead boar.

The clock chimes eight. Gorcha hurries toward the front door. Zdenka trembles with fear.

She turns to Nick, pulls his sleeve and whispers, her eyes wide open.

ZDENKA

It's eight sharp. Now we won't know if he's... Don't leave now. Please stay the night.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Helen turns off the recording and exhales a sigh of frustration.

HELEN

Okay. I think I saw just about enough.

NICK

It's all business, you know that, right?

She studies him, worried.

Nick scoots over next to her, grabs her hand and squeezes it with conviction.

NICK

That's why I haven't called. I want to get my hands on the story--

HELEN

Did I guess it right? You've been home for a few days now, haven't you?

NICK

Yeah, but it has nothing to do with us. Seriously.

She jerks up - what Nick just said is too much to bear.

HELEN

What am I supposed to think? You called Jerry to change the theme as soon as you talked to that Amish bimbo.

Helen strides out. He goes after her.

NICK

It's all about the money. That project might help us with that. Hey, who wants a big wedding, huh? Who signed the NUTS? Me?

HELEN

You are full of it!

He grunts, frustrated.

NICK

I'd call. Come on, you know that.

HELEN (O.S.)

Call your Amish beauty if she has a phone.

The door slams shut.

Nick sits down upset.

He bends for a remote control and presses a few buttons. The footage rewinds to the moment where Helen stopped.

ON SCREEN:

Nick and Zdenka. He extends his hand for a shake.

She blushes to touch another man's hand, but returns the shake. Nick reaches for his camera to shut it off.

Black screen.

BACK TO SCENE:

Nick fast forwards to the next recording--

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT (FOOTAGE)

CAMERA POV - ON A TRIPOD, FURTHEST CORNER

The room is small, in dark colors.

A small window is heavily shuttered.

There's no furniture except for a bunk bed and chair.

Nick adjusts the camera on a tripod. He whispers into it:

NICK

Today is April 15. As you know, Gorcha came home at 8 sharp yesterday. He doesn't mind me, in fact he ordered me to stay, and his crazy son Mitch didn't have balls to object. So far Gorcha didn't touch anyone in the house, he seems really tired from all the hunting. He spent the rest of day in bed - and we all know what that means.

He sneers while talking, obviously doesn't believe it all.

NICK

I'm spooked.

He chuckles.

NICK

Okay, no I didn't lose my marbles. I don't believe in vour-dah-lacks. Duh. But these Amish guys do. They look and talk sincere and that's what makes for a good show - sincerity. It's all in good fun, right? I'm playing along. That girl, Zdenka, is beautiful, but I'm engaged--

He flashes his ring at the screen.

Nick reaches under his mattress and pulls out a wooden stake.

He takes a small knife out of his backpack under the bed, starts sharpening it.

NICK

It's just no sleep at night for me when he's supposed to be the most active. That is if this vampire business turns out to be true. I asked Zdenka if she is sure that Gorcha's a vourdalack but she refused to talk about it. She asked me to forget about what happened yesterday. And she wants me to forget the handshake.

The chips from the stake fall to the floor.

NICK

Think she's bluffing.

He winks into the camera.

NICK

She wants me to stick with an Amish lifestyle documentary now that she believes her dad is back.

Nick grabs his backpack and props the door with it.

NICK

In case I fall asleep that should wake me up. I didn't waste the day - learned the floor plan and now I know where the boys' room is. They are an easy prey, I guess.

He points to his ears.

NICK

Will keep these awake.

He shoves the sharpened stake back under the mattress and slides under the covers.

Awake, he lies...

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Nick remains focused on the footage.

ON SCREEN:

Nick is in bed for quite sometime. The wait bores him. He sticks his watch under the lenses to see the time.

It shows 2:00 am.

BACK TO SCENE

Nick fast forwards.

No one appears on screen. He fast forwards some more.

ON SCREEN

FAST FORWARD MOTION - Nick walks to a camera, talks to it some.

The fast forward motion stops at:

ON SCREEN: Nick talks to the camera when the door to his room opens. No one appears.

In a moment, Gorcha walks in. A sly smile plays on his face.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT - APRIL 15TH

Nick jerks up in bed as he sees Gorcha.

His hand searches under the mattress.

Gorcha grabs a chair, moves it close to the bed and sits down. He looks calm and together while Nick seems a nervous wreck.

GORCHA
(heavy German accent)
Looking for the stake?

Nick doesn't answer, he tries to buy time. His hand rests safely on the stake under the bed.

GORCHA
Don't be shy, let me see it. I come from the long generation of handymen, want to check out the workmanship.

Nick pulls it out, holding it firmly - he'll use it if he must.

Gorcha crosses his legs in a comfortable position.

GORCHA
Tell me, did Mitch hit one of my grandsons yesterday?

Nick doesn't understand.

NICK
What does it have to do with me?
...Why are you here, in my room?

GORCHA
Why are you here? ...Who the hell are you? I couldn't help but notice the ring on your finger - are you married?

NICK
Engaged.

GORCHA

What are you doing in my house? You like Zdenka, don't you? I noticed the way you look at her...

Nick gulps.

NICK

I love my girlfriend and have nothing but respect for Zdenka. She's a wonderful girl.

GORCHA

She is, isn't she?

He rises and walks to and fro in the room.

Nick's hand grips the stake even harder. Gorcha notices.

GORCHA

Put that down, will you. Even if I were a vourdalack, I wouldn't waste the effort like that. I don't even know you.

NICK

Your daughter told me vourdalacks infect only family--

GORCHA

Not only.

He winks at Nick. Nick shudders.

GORCHA

We bite the ones we love as well as the ones we accept. Vourdalacks are privileged creatures - they live forever. I don't see the reason for humans not to want that. But the privileged must be chosen wisely, don't you think?

He sits down and looks deep into Nick.

GORCHA

Vourdalack or not, I'm worried about Zdenka.

NICK

I think I got that much.

Gorcha bends toward Nick.

GORCHA
Did Mitch hit Boris yesterday?

NICK
Yes, he did. So what?

Gorcha emits a long sigh of frustration.

GORCHA
There's no hitting in my family.
It's the number one rule around
here.

NICK
Add "no biting" to that and I'll
stay forever.

Gorcha inches toward Nick, so close, that Nick can feel
his breath.

GORCHA
Then stay.

Nick looks into Gorcha's unflinching eyes.

NICK
I'd have some of what you're
smoking. Seriously.

A moment passes, Gorcha's stare becomes more intense.

NICK
I can't stay, I'm engaged, I have
my life going. Why, what's going on
here?

GORCHA
Mitch is in love with her.

Nick takes a moment before he can speak again.

NICK
She's his sister.

GORCHA
Technically they are not siblings,
Mitch is not mine, my wife was with
child when we got married.

Gorcha wearily rises and walks to the door.

GORCHA
But they grew up together. He used
to look after her...

Nick processes what he heard.

The door opens and for a moment Nick sees Zdenka's piercing eyes in the doorway.

Gorcha walks out, slides the door shut.

NICK

Zdenka?

He rises to check the door. He opens it to see Gorcha's back. There's no Zdenka in sight.

Nick shuts the door.

He heavily breathes, takes a moment to collect his thoughts.

Finally he shakes it off, chuckles to himself, approaches the camera, talks into it:

NICK

Okay, I admit I got a little scared. He's intense, must be on drugs or something.

Nick sits on the bed, when the door opens again.

It's Zdenka.

She's in a white peasant blouse, which seems almost transparent. Her hair is not covered and her black curls cascade down her back.

She walks in and sits next to Nick.

ZDENKA

You asked me if my father was a vourdalack--

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The footage keeps rolling.

Nick reaches for another cigarette.

INT. HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nick looks at Zdenka - he's lost in her eyes.

ZDENKA

Dad just told me he's a walking dead. He worries about me, that's why he returned.

She makes an effort to continue.

ZDENKA

If not my father, Mitch and I would be married long ago.

NICK

You don't love him, do you?

Zdenka shakes her head.

ZDENKA

I'm in no position to say no....
We'll become an outcast in the village if we do. This is not acceptable here.

She looks away.

NICK

I came for a little dull documentary and look what I'm getting.

ZDENKA

You can't film it, Nick. I'm sorry.

NICK

Yeah, right. On the other hand a little publicity may help you. What do you think?

ZDENKA

City folk can be really insensitive.

She gets up and strides out.

NICK

It's the only way to find out the truth.

She shushes him and shuts the door to his room.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The SCREEN TURNS BLACK

Nick sits with his head in his hands.

Nick gazes mindlessly at the black screen.

For a moment he sees Zdenka, calm and vulnerable the way she was on that day.

He shakes the vision off, reaches for the camera and deletes all the black screen up to the moment when Zdenka came to his room.

He pauses, then deletes Zdenka completely, cutting the footage to the part when Gorcha enters Nick's room.

Nick's phone rings.

He checks the caller ID - it says JERRY.

Nick grunts, stops the video, hits "answer" and puts Jerry on speaker phone.

JERRY
Hey, you're back?

Nick nods.

JERRY
Speak up, would you.

NICK
Did you want something, I'm kind of
in a hurry--

JERRY
Oh, come on. Do you have an Amish
footage?

NICK
I'm editing as we speak.

JERRY
When can I see it? Let me come
over--

NICK
Hold on, Helen is on her way over
here.

JERRY

That I understand. About the
footage - no funny stuff, ok?
Amish, their ways, lifestyle and
shit - that's all we need, agreed?

NICK

Sure. See you around.

Nick hangs up. He presses the play button on the video.

ON SCREEN:

NICK'S FACE - EXTREME CLOSE UP

Nick talks into the camera:

NICK (ON SCREEN)

Today is April 16th. The Gorcha
family have been extremely
welcoming and helpful. All except
for Mitch. That one looks at me
like he would kill me. But Gorcha
took me under his wing. So, I'm
hanging in here.

Nick steps away from the camera.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - APRIL 16TH.

The family gathered about the dinner table, set for a big
meal.

A plate of meat cut in thick pieces sits in the middle of the
dinner table.

Gorcha looks extremely proud of himself. He's given an
armchair and is seated at the head.

His grandchildren sit next to him. Their eyes shine hungry
and happy.

Zdenka cuts the meat and puts some on everyone's plate,
including Nick's.

She hides her eyes when handing Nick his plate.

Gorcha covers his plate with his hand.

GORCHA

Thank you, dear, I'm not that
hungry.

(MORE)

GORCHA (CONT'D)

Tired rather, but I'll sit with you. It's a lot of fun to watch my little devils feast.

He pats Boris.

GORCHA

Why should you wait like that? Go on, dig in.

The boys are anxious to start but hesitate and look at Mitch.

BORIS

It's okay, grandpa.

Mitch nods and only then the boys start eating.

GORCHA

Eh, Mitch, that's not how I raised you. I wanted you to be a free spirit - you didn't have to ask for my permission to eat.

Mitch doesn't say anything.

GORCHA

How's the food?

The kids giggle and do a thumbs up sign.

BORIS

Was it a big boar, grandpa?

GORCHA

Oh, yeah. It's a pity your dad didn't let you see it.

MITCH

No big deal... I shouldn't have let you into the woods. It's going to be me next time.

GORCHA

Oh, no. You can order your own children, but as long as you're my son I'll be the one ordering you. I'll be the one to hunt as long as I'm alive.

Mitch presses his lips tight.

MITCH

We were worried.

GORCHA

I know. But the boys need meat. I
couldn't come back without it.

He leans toward Boris and gives him a kiss on the forehead.

GORCHA

Look at them...

The boys have their cheeks well stuffed. They chew and share
happy glances.

Gorcha pats one, then the other with love.

GORCHA

It wasn't easy to catch that beast.
He was fast as a bullet. And smart.
He rolled in the mud before letting
me touch him - almost slipped
through my fingers when I got my
hands on him.

BORIS

I thought you shot him from the
distance.

GORCHA

No. I put a snare and waited for
him to get in. You could never go
wrong with a pear. These wild
boars, they love pears.

BORIS

So did you shoot him in the end?

GORCHA

I slit his neck. With a yatagan.
You know what it is, right? Mine is
from my grandfather. It'll be yours
one day, Boris.

Boris' eyes sparkle with excitement.

BORIS

Really?

Gorcha nods. He pats the boy's head.

GORCHA

I'll show it to you. But it's not
inside the house.

BORIS

Could you show it to me today?

GORCHA
Maybe later.

Mitch fidgets.

MITCH
Why would you have it away from
home?

GORCHA
We don't keep weapons in the
house. It's always been a rule
in our home. Have you forgotten
about it?

Mitch hides his eyes, nods.

Gorcha looks at Nick, points to the camera.

GORCHA
How's your thing going? Are Amish
any different from the rest of the
world?

NICK
Actually yes. I didn't know that,
but something is different about
you all.

Mitch frowns - he's not in the best of moods.

MITCH
How so?

GORCHA
Let's listen. I'm sure he means
well. Don't you, Nicky?

NICK
It's Nick. ...I don't mean any
disrespect, it's just there's love
in your house. I wish my family was
more like yours.

Gorcha laughs, content. Clanking of silverware fills the
room.

Gorcha glances at Zdenka. There's no meat on her plate, just
two runny eggs.

GORCHA
There's enough for everyone,
Zdenka.

ZDENKA

You know that I don't like meat.

Gorcha sighs.

GORCHA

She's an angel sent to me by my
lucky star.

Zdenka blushes.

ZDENKA

Dad.

The boys clean their plates with a piece of bread, put that final piece into their mouths and glance at Mitch for his permission to leave the table.

They get up, hug Gorcha and give him a kiss. They kiss their father next.

At last they run to Zdenka and give her a hug.

GORCHA

She reared them, you know. Their
mother died when the little one was
just a baby.

NICK

It's interesting to watch the way
they hugged you all before leaving
the table.

The boys run around, making noise.

GORCHA

See them running around, making
noises? Some parents dislike that.

Nick nods.

GORCHA

Not us here. What can be better
than child's laughter?

NICK

Almost like in the pictures. You
know those post World War II
pictures - a loving family at
dinner...

Nick sees a surprise on their faces.

NICK
Never mind.

Nick finishes his dinner.

NICK
Well, big thanks, that's very generous of you. There's one other thing, I wanted to ask - do all Amish live like that? I mean together - you, Mitch, his family, Zdenka, all together?

Gorcha signals to Mitch to have a take on the question.

MITCH
Not all. But, believe me - it's much better this way.

NICK
I don't mind, it's just, you know, different.

GORCHA
Zdenka may leave home only when she gets married - that's the rule here in the village. Same goes for Mitch. I'd allow it if I didn't know they like me around.

Gorcha coughs. He doesn't seem to be able to stop.

ZDENKA
Let's get you to bed.

Gorcha obeys. He wearily rises. Kisses Mitch's forehead and walks with Zdenka to his room.

The kids sit quietly now, looking through a picture book in a corner.

Mitch and Nick share an uncomfortable stare.

MITCH
If you touch her, I'll kill you.

NICK
Excuse me? Why would I touch her?

MITCH
You heard me. Where's your ring, by the way?

NICK
Somewhere in my room. Why? It's not
a secret I'm engaged.

Mitch scowls at Nick.

MITCH
Enjoy the rest of the week. Once
you leave I don't want to see you
here anymore. You got it?

Nick shrugs.

NICK
What if your dad is a vourdalack?
You'll need some help guarding your
family.

Mitch's face changes. Concern clouds his eyes.

NICK
He'll infect you in no time,
won't he?

MITCH
You're putting your life on the
line too.

Nick nods.

MITCH
Why are you doing this?

NICK
I'm thinking of doing a documentary
on vourdalacks.

MITCH
Of course.

Mitch rises from the table and disappears in the depths of
the house corridor.

NICK
Was nice talking to you.

Nick strides to the camera but doesn't have time to turn it
off as he gets distracted by the rustle outside.

He turns to see Gorcha in a window, holding Boris tight.

He positions the camera to film the window.

Denis is outside too, learning to ride a skateboard, right by the window. He doesn't follow Boris and Gorcha.

Nick dashes to the window and pushes it open.

NICK

Hey! Where's he taking your brother?

DENIS

Grandpa wants to show us the yatagan. I'll be next to see it.

Gorcha overhears, turns around and meets Nick's gaze.

He flashes a sly smile at Nick and hurries away, clutching Boris' hand.

Nick reaches under his shirt and pulls out a stake.

He dashes out.

CAMERA POV - THROUGH THE WINDOW

Nick races after Gorcha and Boris. They run away from him but Nick reaches them fast.

Nick grabs Boris away from Gorcha. He threatens Gorcha with the stake. Gorcha moves away at an inhuman speed, but not before--

--Nick aims for Gorcha with the stake and scratches his arm. No blood appears.

Boris fights Nick - he tries to pull away, but Nick doesn't let go of him.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nick peers into the footage.

ON SCREEN:

A figure appears and blocks everything that goes on outside the window. It's Zdenka.

Zdenka moves a bit away, her legs wobbly. She sits down and watches Nick and her father, unable to move.

She sees Gorcha run away and Nick who struggles with Boris and tries to take him back to the house.

Her eyes tear up. She notices the camera.

She moves close to it.

ZDENKA

Thank you, Nick. I'll never
forget you.

Zdenka looks into the camera, beautiful and in very much
pain.

She reaches for the shut off button.

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT

Nick rewinds to the moment when Zdenka appears on screen.

He watches her again, teeth clenched.

Nick reaches for his phone and flips it open. He scrolls to
JERRY, dials.

There are couple of beeps and a male voice responds.

NICK

Hey Jerry. Listen, I still want a
different story, the one I talked
to you about. Let me surprise
you, huh?

Nick's face changes - Jerry isn't happy with Nick.

NICK

It's Amish vampires. Would you
please hear me out, It's a hell of
a story, I promise you that.

Jerry says something again, Nick patiently listens.

NICK

Alright Jer, I got you. Know what,
fuck you. Yeah, that's what I
said, fuck you. Always wanted
to tell you that.

Nick snaps the phone shut. It rings in a moment, but Nick
kills the sound and tosses it away.

It comes apart as it hits the floor with a thud.

Nick unzips his backpack.

He walks out, returns with his toothbrush and toothpaste. He throws in few t-shirts, underwear, a pair of jeans.

He remembers something, moves to his double screen. Ejects a dvd and jots "Helen" on it.

Nick writes a note to Helen and sticks it to the dvd.

He turns off all the screens and camera. Next, he detaches the camera and packs it.

He leaves the dvd on the table.

He zips his backpack, slings it over his shoulder.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Unpaved.

Nick's sedan raises a cloud of dust.

One side of the road is dense forest. The other - empty fields.

INT. CAR IN MOTION - DAY

Nick drives, sips his coffee.

He peers into the distance - Gorcha's house stands aloof about a mile away.

Nick slows down - a man in torn clothes makes his way through the trees.

NICK
Hey? You need help?

The man has no interest in Nick. He walks away into the depths of the forest. Nick slows down.

The man turns to Nick and suddenly smiles, flashing a pair of white fangs. Nick flinches.

A bump on the road. Coffee sloshes out.

NICK
Shit!

He wipes it off. Lifts his head toward the forest - the man is gone.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A brick wall surrounds the property, leaving a huge opening in front. No gates.

Nick pulls in the driveway.

Nick reaches for his backpack, slings it over shoulder and shuffles out.

He's greeted by a loose dog. It wags its tail and Nick affectionately pets her.

NICK
Yeah, it's me again.

Worry washes over his face as he nears the house.

He meddles on the porch. He lifts his hand to knock, but changes his mind.

He walks around and looks into the--

KITCHEN WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Zdenka bustles around, dressed lightly, with her hair loose. Nick admires her for a moment.

She looks up and shudders seeing him. Then, her mouth stretches into a happy smile.

She holds her breath not to scream. Nick grins back.

He hears the entrance door squeak open and walks around to the--

PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Mitch stands at the door with a heavy frown, waiting for Nick to show up.

Nick squares his shoulders.

NICK
I came to talk to your father and sister.

MITCH

Well, dad is not home.

Mitch is about to turn back into the house when--

NICK

Where's your Gorcha?

MITCH

Don't pretend like you don't know.
You two became good friends lately.

Zdenka steps out.

ZDENKA

Hi, Nick. Dad left without saying a
word to us. He's back in the woods.

She turns to Mitch.

ZDENKA

Aren't you going to ask him in,
Mitch? Nick saved your son, we
can't forget that.

Zdenka strokes Mitch's shoulder.

It's hard for Mitch, but he opens up the door and shows
Nick in.

ZDENKA

You're always welcome in this
house. Right, Mitch?

Mitch clenches his teeth, but nods. He mumbles:

MITCH

Yeah. Thank you.

Nick walks up the stairs and steps in. Mitch and Zdenka stay
behind.

Mitch grabs Zdenka's arm, they lock eyes.

MITCH

(whispers)

He's taken. Hope you remember that.

He shuffles in and leaves the door open.

INT. HOUSE - HALL - NIGHT

BORIS (O.S.)
Grandpa Gorcha is back! Grandpa
Gorcha is back!

Boris storms into the room, followed by his brother and sees only Nick.

BORIS
Oh, it's you.

Mitch grabs Boris, lifts him up.

MITCH
Shut up, stop bringing up his name,
it's a bad omen.

BORIS
Grandpa promised me his yatagan. He
always keeps his promises.

Mitch's face etches with anger.

He puts Boris back on the floor.

MITCH
Your grandpa is not coming back.

BORIS
Why?

MITCH
Stop saying that!

BORIS
(shouts)
Why?!

Mitch smacks Boris on the face.

GORCHA (O.S.)
I don't appreciate you hitting my
grandson.

Everyone turns around and sees Gorcha.

Boris and Denis run to their grandpa and cling to him. Gorcha pats them on the heads.

He gives Mitch a long condemning look.

GORCHA

Did you forget about me? I left
to hunt before you all had a
chance to talk me out of it.

Everyone quiets down and stares at Gorcha. The tension is palpable.

Zdenka pulls herself together and hurries to her dad.

There's a rifle hanging over Gorcha's shoulder and another dead boar in his hands.

Gorcha throws the boar onto the porch. Blood pours out of the animal's sliced neck.

Zdenka takes the rifle off Gorcha's shoulder.

ZDENKA

You must be tired. You should have
told us you were going to the woods
again. We got very worried.

Gorcha holds on to his rifle and gently pushes her away.

GORCHA

It's okay. I may need it. And I
want to see you eat some meat this
time, okay?

He kisses her forehead.

Mitch and Zdenka share sullen glances behind Gorcha's back.

Nick moves close, makes sure that Gorcha doesn't see them and points at the back of his backpack.

There's a stake thrust into a back pocket.

Mitch nods.

Zdenka sets the dining table.

GORCHA

It's been a long day for me.

He gives Nick a look.

GORCHA

I'm getting used to seeing you
at our place. You should stay
for longer.

A dog barks outside. They all turn towards the front door - it still appears open.

The dog barks and whines.

GORCHA
What's with her?

MITCH
First time I see her worked up
this bad.

NICK
Maybe she wants to try a boar?

Gorcha's hand darts for the rifle. He aims at the dog and shoots.

The dog whimpers and falls. Blood oozes from the fresh hole in its chest.

Gorcha strides to the door too fast for his age and swings it shut.

GORCHA
Here. Not a problem. A boar is for
us and us only.

Scared, Boris and Denis run to Zdenka and grab her skirt.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

KITCHEN

Zdenka bustles around.

Nick walks in. He checks the living room - no one is around.

Zdenka moves to the sink and starts the dirty dishes.

ZDENKA
Mitch's watching us like a hawk so
you know.

NICK
He's better watch his father.

She throws Nick a look of reprimand.

ZDENKA
It's my father, too.

NICK

Listen, at the moment he's no one's
father, he's a vampire, a
vourdalack, a dead man
reincarnated. You made me believe
these stories.

Zdenka lets go of the dishes.

She sinks into a chair wearily, hides her eyes.

ZDENKA

The thing is, even if Dad is a
vourdalack, he loves us very much.
Like I said he's here because he
worries about me.

Nick reaches for her hand, but she pulls away and glances at
the door in fear someone might see them.

NICK

Or, maybe he just wants to feed on
your blood? That would be out of
love too, wouldn't it?

ZDENKA

Mitch says it's because Boris
wouldn't stop calling for him. Dad
heard him.

NICK

This love thing is getting on my
nerves, sorry.

Zdenka shrugs, rises and gets back to doing the dishes.

Nick tries to say something but the clanking of dishes drowns
the last of his words.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

GUEST BEDROOM

Deep night.

Not a peep heard in the house.

Nick shuffles out and tiptoes into the--

LIVING ROOM

Nick holds the camera.

He finds an unobtrusive spot inside the wall, being there for a flower pot, quietly removes the pot and shoves his camera inside.

He puts his camera on record and looks around - there's no one in the room.

He walks back into--

GUEST BEDROOM

Nick slides under the covers.

In a whisper:

NICK
Staying up. Up. Up. Up.

LATER - SUNRISE

Nick snores, deep in his sleep.

The door to his room swings open and the lights go up.

Nick pops his eyes open.

Through an open door, he catches a glimpse of Mitch and the rest in the living room.

Nick springs to his feet, fully dressed.

LIVING ROOM

Mitch holds Nick's camera, shoves it in Nick's face.

MITCH
Is that what you're here for? You want your stupid documentary back, right?

NICK
That too. What's the matter? The kids are up?

Boris grabs Zdenka's hand.

BORIS
I want to see the yatagan, too.
It's not fair.

Zdenka shushes him, walks to Mitch.

She tries to snatch the camera from him. Mitch pushes her away and she hits a wall.

MITCH
You're blind. Blind.

ZDENKA
Calm down. Please.

NICK
Where's Gorcha? What's going on?

BORIS
Grandpa ran away with Denis. Dad wanted to get grandpa with the stake but couldn't.

Nick points at the camera in Mitch's hands.

NICK
May I see?

MITCH
Sure.

He throws it to the floor and stamps on it with his heavy boot.

A part of the camera crushes under his foot.

Mitch's glares at Nick. It's a standoff.

Zdenka covers her face with her hands, ready to cry.

MITCH
Dad's counting on you? That's what he said, right? He told me he wouldn't come back if not for you!

NICK
That's a lie. When did you two talk about me?

Mitch's face etches with anger.

MITCH
Get the fuck away from us.

NICK
(teeth clenched)
He wouldn't come back, if you
didn't have to marry your sister.

Rage washes over Mitch's face. He pounds on the table.

MITCH
She's not my blood!

He inches towards Nick.

MITCH
And what do you have to show for
her? Your ring?

Nick remains silent and looks at Zdenka. She quietly sobs
in a corner.

Mitch leaves for one of the bedrooms.

Nick crouches, picks up his camera.

NICK
Darn it.

He walks away, too.

GUEST BEDROOM

Nick packs the broken camera, collects his stuff and shoves
them into his backpack.

He strides out into the--

LIVING ROOM

Mitch shows up with several freshly made stakes.

He waves them under Zdenka's nose.

MITCH
We don't have any other choice. Dad
will come back for Boris next, and
then for the rest of us. Do you
want that to happen?

He hands one to Zdenka.

MITCH
If I don't return soon enough, you
know what to do.

--he walks out.

INT. HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Nick with his backpack over his shoulder walks out the door.

Zdenka sees Nick off.

ZDENKA

Don't take Mitch close to heart,
he's upset. We were hoping dad was
alright. ...Now he took Denis...

NICK

It's hard to stay close to you,
anyway.

He touches her hair, admiring her for a moment.

NICK

I'll stay in the village to make
sure you're safe. Ask for me in the
motel if you need help.

He flashes his ring at Zdenka.

NICK

Don't worry, you're safe around me.

Zdenka watches him walk to the car.

Her heavy breathing and longing eyes tell volumes.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Nick picks up his keys and heads to his room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Nick throws his backpack on a table and wearily plops down on
the bed.

He gets his camera and carefully examines it.

NICK

Shit.

Nick tries to retrieve footage. Then another. Unsuccessful.

He messes up and clicks on unrelated stuff of Helen and
himself together.

The camera flickers, shows another footage.

In it - Helen smiling at him.

The camera dies.

NICK
Stupid asshole.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

HALL

Sound of a key working the lock.

The door squeaks open and Helen walks in. She looks upset but not as angry as she used to be before.

She looks around.

HELEN
Nick?

She heads into the--

LIVING ROOM

Helen walks straight to the dvd player. Notices the dvd waiting for her.

She picks it up.

Reads:

NICK (V.O.)
It's not about the girl - I just
want to help her.

She groans, throws the disc to the floor. It lands with a clank but doesn't break.

She sits on the bed, lost, thinking it over, reads the rest of what he wrote.

NICK (V.O.)
I need the story. Will be back
soon. Nick". "P.S. Sorry if I
didn't treat you right the last
day."

She thinks, tears up the note, tosses the pieces in the air.

She dabs her eyes with the palm of her hand.
Finally, she gathers herself and bends for the dvd.
She inserts it into the dvd player.
She hits play and takes a seat.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Nick enters with a bag, full of camera parts and a toolbox.
He examines the parts, frees them off the wrappings.
He grabs his camera, opens his toolbox.
Starts working on it.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The camera is workable.
Nick plays the footage of him and Helen.

ON SCREEN

STUDIO APARTMENT

It's a picnic at home - they sit on the floor with a picnic basket, balloons. The radio is on.
Helen laughs playfully.

HELEN
We should picnic indoors more often.

NICK
Better every day.

He grabs a balloon, wraps the string of the balloon around her finger. And shoots her a quizzical look.

She squints, doesn't understand.

NICK
So? Will you?

HELEN
Is that a proposal?

NICK

Yeah. This balloon symbolizes the diamond that will go on this finger.

Helen laughs. They kiss.

BACK TO SCENE

Nick chuckles.

He zooms in, zooms out - the camera works well.

Nick sighs content, tosses the camera on the bed and heads out.

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

Helen wanders around, picks a shirt from the floor.

She holds it to her nose and sniffs his scent.

A framed picture on a windowsill catches her eye - Nick and her together, arms wrapped around each other, happy smiles.

She lunges for it and swipes it off. It breaks. Her hand bleeds, but she doesn't care.

She stares at the broken pieces, sees a piece of a torn sticky note with "I just want the story" written on it.

She picks it up, crumples it, then straightens, reads it again as if allowing the words to sink in.

She sits down.

Then, she bends for the picture. Props it up on something on the table and looks at it for a moment.

She picks up pieces of the broken frame. Leaves them in a pile on the table.

Walks out.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - IN MOTION - NIGHT

Helen studies the map and a printout of the directions.

She blows the steam off her coffee that she holds in hands wincing at every sip.

She adjusts her GPS, inputs the location.

GPS
Arrive at 13:00.

She checks the drive time - it's 17 hour drive.

HELEN
Shit.

She accelerates.

INT. MOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Nick scans the place.

Not many people - two others and the BARTENDER.

Nick walks straight to the counter.

NICK
Something light.

The Bartender is a silent type. He nods.

NICK
Rough day today.

The Bartender rolls his eyes, he's not in the mood for conversation.

NICK
I'm Nick. Nick Hebert. I'm filming
about Amish.

BARTENDER
Amish village is two miles north.

NICK
I know. I stayed at Mitch and
Zdenka's.

BARTENDER
You sure they are Amish?

NICK
Their house is in the village.

BARTENDER
A bit aloof, I'd say, but whatever.

Nick frowns.

A COWBOY sits down next to him.

He signals to The Bartender and The Bartender knows what the drink is.

COWBOY

I remember you. You're filming about Amish, don't you? I've seen Mitch pick you up.

The Cowboy downs his drink at once.

He signals for another.

COWBOY

How is it going?

Nick glares. Not up for the idle curiosity.

NICK

All good.

The Cowboy sneers. The bartender serves them another round of drinks.

The Cowboy downs his drink, his eyes fixed on Nick.

COWBOY

I bought a dozen eggs from him that night. Strange place he picked to sell, don't you think? I mean a bar out of all places.

NICK

I suppose.

COWBOY

I asked him about you. He's got a short fuse, doesn't he? Is he really Amish?

NICK

Listen, do you need to ask me something or what?

COWBOY

No, Nothing. ...So, the girl, Zdenka... Is she as beautiful as they say?

The bartender chuckles.

Nick glares at the Cowboy, but the Cowboy doesn't flinch.

COWBOY
Does she turn you on?

Nick swipes his drink off the counter, splashing Cowboy a little. The Cowboy laughs if off.

The Bartender inches to them.

BARTENDER
(in whisper)
Let's leave it at that, eh?

There's a GIRL in a dark corner, a drink in her hands. She watches Nick from her spot and he feels her gaze.

NICK
It's weird in here today.

COWBOY
That's because of you. We're waiting for a story about these "Amish" from you.

He makes quotation marks at "Amish".

NICK
What do you mean by "these Amish"?
What does it all mean?

COWBOY
Aren't you getting it?

A girl in the corner gets up and comes out of shadows. Nick recoils--

--Zdenka's photo booth pictures flash in front of his eyes--

It's Veronica, Zdenka's close friend, looking like human, no fangs or fiery eyes.

The Cowboy observes Nick, a sarcastic smile spreads on his face.

Nick doesn't get to ask anything as--

The door to the bar flies open and Zdenka dashes in. Her hair is loose and she wears a thin white shirt and a skirt, which is too skimpy for an Amish lady.

She darts to Nick and holds him by the arm.

Veronica quickly retrieves into her corner.

Zdenka pulls Nick's sleeve, there's sense of urgency in her troubled eyes.

COWBOY

Wow. Do Amish dress like that these days? I have to dig up an Amish girl for myself then.

Nick springs from his chair, towards the Cowboy, and throws a punch at him.

The Cowboy dives down but the punch still gets him. He falls off his chair, but springs to his feet with the intensity of a cat.

Nick has his fists at the ready. The Cowboy pulls himself together, grins, tips his hat.

COWBOY

Mind my asking, have you slept with her?

He points to Nick's high collared shirt, that conceals his neck.

COWBOY

You should check your neck for bites.

Zdenka steps in front of Nick and urges him to follow her.

ZDENKA

Something happened. Please come with me, I need your help.

Cowboy chuckles but says nothing.

Nick bows to Cowboy.

NICK

We are not over yet.

Everyone in the room watches them walk away.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY

Zdenka rushes in with Nick in tow.

Nick finds a moment when she is not looking, brings his hand to his neck and checks for scrapes.

He doesn't find anything and breathes easy.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Zdenka sits on Nick's bed, as there's no other place to sit in his room.

Nick adjusts his camera.

ZDENKA
Is it important?

NICK
It's like having a third person in here to watch us. I don't trust myself with you.

He puts it on the tripod. Puts it on record. Glances at Zdenka.

NICK
Sorry. Besides, I have to think of my movie.

He sizes her up.

NICK
You're beautiful by the way. Which is not good. Not good at all.

ZDENKA
Mitch returned.

Silence hangs. Nick leaves the camera alone.

NICK
What about Denis?

Zdenka shakes her head.

Nick sits next to Zdenka. Wraps his arms around her.

ZDENKA
He finally asked me to marry him.

She puts her head on his shoulder.

ZDENKA
I thought he would wait, with Dad and Denis gone... He says he waited enough...

Nick strokes her hair.

ZDENKA
I don't know what to do.

She looks deep into his eyes.

Nick keeps silence. He studies Zdenka's face- he sees her burning eyes in the glow of a night lamppost that spills through the holes in the shutters.

NICK

I'm sorry.

She nods and rises as if to leave. He holds her hand.

He takes both of her hands into his. He pulls her chin up, looks into her eyes.

NICK

Do you want me to have a talk with Mitch?

She shakes her head.

ZDENKA

If you were not engaged he would have listened, but I can't take that sacrifice from you.

Nick gives her hand a squeeze.

She looks at his ring, tries to pull it off, but Nick jerks his hand away.

NICK

(whispers)

Don't.

Zdenka leans to Nick, closes her eyes.

ZDENKA

I feel better around you. You calm me down.

NICK

I don't want to lie to you - I'm committed to my life. And to this--

He points to his ring.

ZDENKA

It doesn't matter.

NICK

Does he know you came to see me?

Zdenka inches closer and kisses him on the cheek.

NICK
Does he know?

ZDENKA
Not yet. I wanted to tell him.
It'll set me free. We don't keep
secrets from family.

NICK
Why does he hate me if he doesn't
know?

ZDENKA
He sees your eyes. The way you look
at me. The way I look at you.

Her black curls fall on her face and Nick gently pulls them away.

He strokes her hand and looks her over - she wears very little.

He can't help it anymore - he bends to her and kisses her and she reacts to the kiss.

She undoes her shirt. It falls to the floor at her feet.

She wraps her arms around Nick.

He holds back from the embrace. Zdenka holds his face close.

ZDENKA
You'll help me, right? Just once.

Nick embraces her right back. His engagement ring reflects what little light is in the room. Zdenka takes it off and puts it into his hand. He pockets it.

Nick extends his hand to turn the camera off, but it is out of his reach.

He can't get away from Zdenka - she's too beautiful, too vulnerable.

He puts a lid on the lenses.

She reaches for his lips. He responds.

For a moment Gorcha appears in a corner of the room, smiling content. Nick shakes it off. Gorcha is gone.

ZDENKA
What?

He wraps his arms around her.

She unties the strings of her skirt.

The camera keeps rolling.

INT. MOTEL ROOM DAY

The room is dark - the windows are shuttered and the morning sun slices in through the cracks.

Nick lays alone. He opens his eyes and looks around. There's no trace of Zdenka as if she was not there.

He gets up, slips his shirt on.

NICK

Zdenka?

He opens up the shutters and opens the window.

He walks to the--

BATHROOM

NICK

Zdenka?

She's not there.

He goes back to the--

ROOM

Nick grabs the tripod and--

--panics - there's no camera on it.

He walks to the door, frantic, then changes his mind.

He darts to the Motel phone, dials 0. He listens to the phone beep, no one answers.

Annoyed, he tosses away the phone and dashes toward the door.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY - DAY

He rushes to the counter.

The CLERK yawns, rolls his eyes at a sight of Nick's mad face.

NICK

Did anyone enter my room
yesterday?

CLERK

Yeah. You and that girl Amish girl
of yours.

NICK

Do you know when she left? My FX-3
is missing.

CLERK

Haven't seen her leave. ...My FX-3
might be missing too if I knew
what it was.

The Cowboy appears in the lobby and hands the keys to the
clerk.

Nick watches him, his face etching with suspicion.

NICK

Did you take my camera?

The cowboy's face stretched in a sneer. He doesn't answer and
turns away from Nick.

NICK

Is he staying in this motel?

The cowboy heads for the door.

Nick strides after him.

INT. MOTEL BAR - DAY

Nick with the Cowboy at the counter.

The same BARTENDER gives them a look of warning.

NICK

No, not today, I promise. I just
need a drink.

He points to the Cowboy.

NICK

Whatever he has. My treat.

He scans the bar--

From her corner, Veronica watches Nick eagerly, staying in the dark.

Nick leans to the Cowboy.

NICK
What's she doing here?

Veronica comes out of her corner to the light.

She sits next to Nick.

Nick instinctively pulls back.

NICK
You're... I know you. How can you
be here, among normal people?

The cowboy laughs and snorts.

COWBOY
Excuse me?

VERONICA
(to Cowboy)
You're so wasted.

NICK
What's going on in here? You're the
vourdalack girl, Zdenka's friend. I
know you, I saw the pictures of you
and Zdenka together in that picture
booth.

Veronica moves close to Nick. She scowls at him. She is pretty.

Nick sees a small scar on her neck as if from a bite.

VERONICA
...We used to be friends with
Zdenka, you're right about that.

She rubs her neck at that and squints at Nick.

Silence hangs. Nick finishes his drink and rises from his chair. It suddenly feels eerie in there.

He sees their sullen faces. All eyes trained on him.

NICK
What are you, people? It feels like
I'm in a lair of vourdalacks.

Nick sizes up the distance to the door.

The Cowboy snorts again and starts hiccuping.

COWBOY

We are not the vourdalacks. Bet you know someone who is.

NICK

Okay. Fine. What about my camera?

The Cowboy sighs frustrated.

COWBOY

Have you ever noticed that their house is the only one close to the woods? It stands aloof, compared to the rest of the other houses in the village? Think about it.

Step by step Nick moves closer toward the door. He avoids Veronica's unwavering gaze.

The Cowboy downs his glass and signals to the Bartender for another.

The Bartender fills another one and slides it over.

COWBOY

I don't know anything about the camera. Your new girlfriend must have taken it. She won't let you go just like that, so you know. She'll play with you til she gets you. All. To herself.

The cowboy sneers at Nick and lifts his glass for a cheer.

COWBOY

Because now--

Nick waits for the rest of it but the Cowboy takes really long time to finish.

NICK

Now what, damn it?

The Cowboy hisses sarcastically:

COWBOY

Now you're family...

Nick backpedals - he stands next to the door.

He feels the door knob with his hand, jerks it open and darts out.

EXT. BAR

Nick paces away as he makes it out the door.

He stops, looks back, acknowledges that there are no pursuers.

He slows down. And hears:

COWBOY (O.S.)
They are not the only vourdalacks
in the village.

Nick turns his head.

NICK
Is that a confession?

COWBOY
There are quite a few of them in
the woods.

Nick keeps moving toward his car.

COWBOY
He thought Gorcha should have a
chance to live forever. So he
did Gorcha a favor. ...Veronica
got lucky.

Nick glances at the windows and sees the sullen faces--

Veronica and The Bartender remain fixed at him. Both are very pale, almost green.

Nick has almost reached his car.

COWBOY
It's hard to escape the
vourdalacks. You realize that,
don't you?

NICK
Who are you talking about?

COWBOY

They are the only ones who kept the house. The most productive ones, if you know what I mean.

He sees Veronica exit the bar, moving towards him, slowly but steadily. Too pale for a human.

She smiles at him. Nick sees her blood shot eyes.

Nick jerks the car door open and slides in.

NICK

Why should I believe you? You might as well be a vourdalack yourself.

COWBOY

It's your call.

Nick revs the engine.

COWBOY

Stay alive.

EXT. GORCHA'S HOUSE

Nick tries the door. It squeaks open.

He sighs a relief.

He looks inside and sees no one.

He walks in.

NICK

Zdenka? Where are you?

No one answers him.

INT. GORCHA'S HOUSE

Nick sits on the bench and takes a couple of deep breaths.

He lifts his head and sees Denis, sitting across from him.

NICK

You? Zdenka said your dad couldn't find you.

Denis stares Nick in the eye.

Something is different about the boy.

His eyes gleam hungry like hopeful eyes of a hunter who just saw his meal.

Nick gives a quick glance around.

DENIS

Are you looking for something?
Yatagan maybe? I know where grandpa
keeps it now.

Nick studies him, says nothing.

DENIS

I can take you there if you want.
Grandpa never shown it to anyone,
except for me. Not even Boris. He
says he didn't have time.

Nick takes a moment to collect his thoughts.

The bench he's sitting on is wooden.

In one swift movement Nick flips it over and twists a leg out.

Denis springs up and veers toward the door.

Nick doesn't pursue, he watches Denis - realization registers.

Zdenka storms in at that.

She eyes Nick, hurries to him, jerks the wood out of his hands.

ZDENKA

What's that for?

NICK

Denis. I just saw him, he was here.

Zdenka slumps, slides onto a chair.

ZDENKA

It couldn't have been him. We lost
him to vourdalacks.

Tears appear in her eyes. She dabs them with her sleeve.

Nick reaches for her hand. She doesn't protest.

NICK

Did you take my camera?

Zdenka nods.

NICK

Why?

ZDENKA

I thought I could spot something
that would tell me my father is not
that...

NICK

Did you see anything?

Zdenka shakes her head.

ZDENKA

No, nothing about my father.

She squints at Nick, pulls her hand away.

ZDENKA

But I saw how unfair you were to me
all this time.

Nick deflates.

NICK

What are you talking about?

ZDENKA

Oh, yes. Getting under my skin at
the time I was the most vulnerable.

He violently shakes his head. She sounds certain and calm.

NICK

That's not true. You know that. I
never lied to you.

She takes her head cover off, letting her raven locks of hair
down her shoulders.

ZDENKA

You have to tell Mitch about us.

NICK

What for?

She moves closer to him.

ZDENKA

You want your camera back, right?

Nick looks around. Only now he notices the house doesn't look the same - spider webs cover the furniture. Dust motes spin in the thin shafts of light.

He walks into the kitchen - no dishes, no trace of life whatsoever.

He frowns, looks back. Zdenka stands a step away and smiles.

ZDENKA

It's dangerous here for you, Nick.
Have I told you that?

He shakes his head.

NICK

We must leave. Take Boris if you
like. And I need my camera.

His eyes dart around in search of the camera. He steps back and examines the back of a large wooden chest.

NICK

I apologize if I mistreated you.
We'll talk about that on the road.

Zdenka watches him with a badly hidden sneer.

Nick walks into the--

GUEST BEDROOM

Barren.

No sheets on the mattress, spider webs cover the corners of the room and the furniture.

Nick sniffs the air.

NICK

It's like I never stayed in here.
So empty... and cold.

He turns back and meets Zdenka's burning eyes.

ZDENKA

What difference does it make?

NICK

It's chilly in here. Smells like
death.

ZDENKA

And you like comfort and warmth?
You talk like a spoiled city boy.

Nick shakes his head.

He walks into the--

LIVING ROOM

To see--

Denis stands there with an abandoned leg from the bench, that Nick ripped off just a while ago.

Nick screams for Zdenka and turns to see--

She stands at the door, quizzical look in her eyes.

Denis advances on Nick.

Nick makes a few steps to the side, towards the safety of the front door.

He glances toward the kitchen on the way. Mitch peers in through the kitchen window.

Zdenka extends her hands to Nick.

ZDENKA

Wait, don't you want your camera?

One more step to the side and Nick--

Dashes out--

EXT. HOUSE

He races down the porch--

To the driveway.

No footsteps behind but Denis appears on the porch with the leg from the stool.

Next thing - the leg flies into Nick, hitting him on the head from behind.

He hears Zdenka scream:

ZDENKA (O.S.)

Denis, don't!

Nick's head bleeds, but he doesn't pay attention to it.

Nick runs, leaping over the carcass of the dead boar.

He slips in the mud next to its remains.

He notices the worms wriggling inside its rib cage. The mud is red from the boar's blood.

Nick grabs a handful of dirt and throws it at Zdenka.

The mud hits her face.

She whispers:

ZDENKA

I'm sorry. It wasn't supposed to be this way.

He forces himself to his feet.

NICK

How was it supposed to be, you stupid blood-thirsty leech? To think that I almost fell for you...

He turns away and races away when he sees--

Mitch, almost sprouts in front of Nick, rage in his eyes.

MITCH

That's how you thank her for all she's done for you, city boy?

Nick races to the side. Toward the brick wall.

Mitch does not pursue but scowls and watches.

Something, a small human body, veers high and jumps at Nick, almost driving its fangs into the white flesh, but--

Nick is quick. He dodges the body off and as it falls on the floor he sees that it's--

Boris.

The little boy's eyes are fiery and hungry for flesh, his fangs exposed.

Nick is almost at the fence, he leaps up in an attempt to grab the top.

He manages and swings his leg over. He looks down the other side and sees--

Unwavering old eyes and wrinkled face of Gorcha, waiting for Nick.

Gorcha gives Nick a friendly smile, but Nick doesn't buy it.

Nick takes a moment to breath.

Boris comes to his senses, licks his blood-thirsty lips and scrambles up.

Mitch blocks the exit to the road and to Nick's car.

Nick looks behind, toward the entrance door. He sees--

Zdenka pushes Denis down the steps and cries to Nick:

ZDENKA

Here. Come on in.

He thinks - this is his only chance.

Mitch doesn't wait.

But before Mitch moves forward--

Nick jumps down from the fence. He forces himself to rise and runs for his life.

On the way, Denis gets to him, grabbing Nick by the foot, but Nick dodges him away.

Zdenka keeps the door open for him.

Few more steps, Nick leaps forward--

INT. HOUSE

--and crashes to the floor.

Almost instantly, he hears the door lock behind him.

He checks it out - the door is sturdy wood.

ZDENKA

You have some time to think but so is them, you know.

He turns to Zdenka, forces himself to rise. Unlike the others, she looks human like, no fangs or fiery eyes.

A forgiving smile plays on her lips as she rushes toward the kitchen--

KITCHEN

She makes sure that the back door is locked.

Someone pulls from the outside, but that door is an old wooden construction as well and there's no way it would go down easily.

Zdenka moves to the window and talks to those outside.

ZDENKA

He's mine! Wait til I'm done
with him.

Nick's mouth drops open.

She moves away, into the--

LIVING ROOM

--where Nick stares at her, breathing hard, trembling with anxiety.

She bends to him, extends him a hand to help him up.

He slaps it away and scrambles to his feet.

His eyes search for a sharp object - he sees the three-legged stool, the one he broke.

She traces his look and saddens.

ZDENKA

I didn't think it would come down
to this. Sorry.

He darts for the stool, but Zdenka stops him.

ZDENKA

You won't need it. Don't worry,
we'll just talk.

Her eyes plead with him.

He peers into them.

NICK

Now?

Zdenka moves to the small opening in the wall--

--where Nick put the camera once - the pot place. Only now the opening is very small, the size of an apple.

Realization registers as Nick moves towards her - it's his camera inside there.

Zdenka extends her hand into the opening and flicks the camera on.

ZDENKA

Don't try to pull it out. You can't.

NICK

Did you nail it in?

He examines the wall--

--the studs been cut off and then nailed back in, leaving a small square opening in the wall, just enough to project a footage--

--on a wall across.

Zdenka lowers the sound.

ON SCREEN:

Their last night together.

Nick smiles into the camera. Some muted small talk precedes their kissing.

Zdenka extends her hand again in the opening and forwards the screen to the moment when--

She bites Nick on the neck.

BACK TO SCENE

Zdenka watches Nick's reaction.

NICK

You bit me that day? Why don't I remember this?

She rewinds the footage and puts it back on.

ON SCREEN

She bites in and Nick closes his eyes seemingly enjoying it.

NICK (ON SCREEN)
This feels good.

Zdenka feeds on him and he seems just to lie down with his eyes closed.

She drops next to him and he's entranced, not moving, his lips bluish, his eyes glassy.

She puts her finger on the bite to stop it from bleeding.

In a moment Nick comes back to life.

He doesn't seem to remember what just happened.

BACK TO SCENE

Zdenka kills the footage and looks at Nick.

ZDENKA
You're almost one of us now. One more bite is all that's left.

He scowls, angry glow appear in his eyes.

NICK
I'll plunge a stake into your heart without blinking, then I get out of this hole. Just watch me.

He darts for the stool and rips off another leg.

She slumps, saddened.

Moves closer to him.

He drops to the side the hand that holds the leg of the stool but she lifts it and points the sharp end into her chest.

ZDENKA
Do it. I don't want you unhappy. If I have nothing to lose if I can't have you.

He looks into her eyes and sees she's being sincere.

He just stands there.

She moves back toward the camera again, extends her hand in, works the camera.

The footage flickers on--

It's the day Gorcha talked to Nick about his concern for Zdenka.

ON SCREEN

Gorcha sits by Nick's bed.

Nick looks tense, his hand clutches the stake - its tip is visible.

GORCHA (ON SCREEN)
Mitch is in love with her.

NICK (ON SCREEN)
With Zdenka? She's his sister.

GORCHA (ON SCREEN)
She's not his sister. Mitch is not mine. My wife was with child when we got married...

BACK TO SCENE

Zdenka touches Nick's hand and he shudders, pulls away as if from plague.

ZDENKA
You knew what was waiting for you before coming back here.

Her eyes gleam hopeful.

NICK
No I did not. I thought your dad was a vourdalack. Not even that much - I wasn't sure about it being true.

Zdenka rewinds - the last episode plays again. She points at his hand.

ZDENKA
Look at you clutching that stake. Fearing an old man. You didn't come just for your film, you came to save me.

Zdenka grabs his hand and doesn't let go.

ZDENKA

You knew what was waiting for you here but you returned.

She moves closer to Nick and adds quietly:

ZDENKA

You came back to me.

Nick looks at her, his eyes saddened.

NICK

Mitch wanting to marry you and Gorcha being worried about you - was it all an act?

Someone bangs the door and growls outside. Nick and Zdenka react - they have little time.

NICK

Why didn't you just bite me from the very beginning and call it a night?

Zdenka hides her eyes.

Nick suddenly turns pale, his lips bluish.

He acts dizzy, takes deep breaths, looks for a place to sit, staggers to it.

ZDENKA

It's from the bite.

She helps him sit down, then hurries into the--

KITCHEN

She gets a glass of fresh blood from a cupboard.

LIVING ROOM

She brings it back to Nick. He gags at the sight of it.

ZDENKA

Do not fear. It's not human, it's from the dead boar.

Nick smirks.

NICK

Sure. I have nothing but trust in you, my dear.

He watches her with disgust, face and lips drained of color.

She drinks half of the glass, looks at Nick and gently pushes the glass toward Nick.

ZDENKA

It's for you.

He winces at the smell of it, shakes his head, but she's adamant.

ZDENKA

You have to drink. It'll give you strength.

NICK

Why are helping me?

She strokes his cheek.

ZDENKA

Don't you know? ...drink. I need to see you finish it.

Nick grabs the glass with a trembling hand. She kneels next to him.

ZDENKA

You're weakening. It's because you're only half human now. You'll be alright, blood and flesh in no time.

NICK

If I survive your folks.

Nick downs the blood.

ZDENKA

Are you better?

He closes his eyes.

He hears voices.

Someone bangs the door.

Someone touches his forehead.

ZDENKA (V.O.)
 Are you alright? Nick! Stay with
 me. Do you hear me?

Slowly he comes back to his senses.

His eyes flutter open and he sees Zdenka. He sees her eyes,
 her lips.

His gaze slide down her neck.

NICK
 You're such a beautiful liar.

She nods, her hand still on his forehead.

ZDENKA
 There's no time for talking.

NICK
 You didn't answer me - wouldn't it
 be easier to bite me from the
 start?

ZDENKA
 (whispers)
 It's never easier.

NICK
 Instead you played me just like a
 cat plays its pray.

ZDENKA
 Not all of it was a lie.

NICK
 What wasn't?

ZDENKA
 ...That's how it started ten years
 ago. Those were the last days of me
 being a human and the last days of
 my father being a human.

NICK
 Did your dad infect you? He went to
 hunt and came back a vourdalack?

Zdenka nods.

ZDENKA
 He infected Denis first, lured him
 out with a yatagan.
 (MORE)

ZDENKA (CONT'D)

Then Mitch, who left for Denis. Me.
...There was someone. Someone I
liked...

NICK

Just like me now?

ZDENKA

Almost like that, but he didn't
survive. My family got angry at him
for not accepting me, and they did
the worst to him. They drained him
out. But you'll make it out of
here, I promise.

They are being interrupted by a violent blow to the entrance
door.

All sorts of animal noises come from the outside.

Both Nick and Zdenka turn toward it.

ZDENKA

They are tired of waiting. You need
to run. Fast.

The door doesn't budge much but definitely seems shakier than
before.

She grabs Nick's hands and speaks with urgency:

ZDENKA

I begged them to go along with it,
to give me a chance to feel human
again and let me be with one for
the last time.

There are tears in her eyes.

ZDENKA

I wanted to become a human again
ever since I laid my eyes on you.

There's another blow to the door.

Nick jerks up.

ZDENKA

Wait. This documentary must be
worth a fortune.

She darts to the camera and in one violent movement tears the
wall apart. She doesn't look human when she does that.

She gets the camera out and then she goes back to normal.

She hands him the camera.

Nick studies her face.

NICK

Would it get you in trouble to be
exposed like that?

ZDENKA

I don't care.

Nick shakes his head.

NICK

I do.

He takes the camera and throws it at the door.

It bounces off of it and falls to the floor with a thud.

He's ready to move.

Zdenka picks up the leg of the stool and hands it to him.

ZDENKA

Here, you'll need it. Just
please... spare them if they don't
attack you. They are the only
family I've got.

He nods, takes the piece of wood from her hands.

He is about to leave, but meddles.

NICK

Were there others you liked besides
that boy?

She shakes her head.

ZDENKA

No, only you. You made us believe
you could be a part of the family.

NICK

It's just the people at the bar
said--

Zdenka's hands roll into fists, face riven with anguish.

ZDENKA

The people at the bar lied! Who'd
you rather believe, me or them?
They hate us, don't you understand?

He looks at her and it's obvious that he believes her.

He glances at a window and catches the sight of a lonely car
moving towards the house. Something stirs in his face.

NICK

Helen.

Zdenka points toward the kitchen door.

ZDENKA

Go quietly. I'll cover you.

She darts toward the--

GUEST BEDROOM

She rips through the shutters with inhuman force, gnawing on
it as a hungry animal.

She exerts a triumphant scream:

ZDENKA

I got him. Here. He's here.

The sounds of hurried feet in heavy boots waft in as Zdenka
hurries to push the window open. It won't budge.

Mitch throws a stone at a window.

The window breaks, covering Zdenka in shards of glass. She
doesn't seem to care.

ZDENKA

Hurry, before he's back to his
senses.

MITCH (O.S.)

Why don't I see him?

ZDENKA

He's passed out on the floor.
Quick, or he gets drained all out.

KITCHEN

Nick works the lock and yanks the door open.

He turns back to see Zdenka one last time--

She rips through sharp ends of a broken window with bare hands.

Amidst the animal act, she turns to Nick - her eyes for just a moment gentle and loving.

She mouths to him:

ZDENKA
Go in peace.

He nods and--

Disappears through an open door.

EXT. HOUSE

Nick rushes to his car and pulls the keys out.

The animal screaming comes from the other side of the house.

MITCH (O.S.)
You lied to us!

INT. NICK'S CAR

Nick thrusts the key in and starts the car.

It roars to life and Nick takes a brief moment to breathe.

He pushes the accelerator, the car jumps and he hears--

The tires make a wheezing sound.

Nick growls - it's apparent that the tires are flat.

Denis stands afar, the yatagan (fancy old incrustated knife) in his hands. Triumphant smile plays on his lips.

Nick accelerates and drives right on Denis. He hears:

ZDENKA (V.O.)
No!

He turns to see her, eyes wild with horror.

Nick stops the car, darts out.

EXT. HOUSE

Nick races away.

Mitch grabs Boris and throws him at Nick.

Boris latches onto Nick's back with an inhuman force but Nick takes off his jacket and dodges Boris away.

Boris falls into dirt with Nick's jacket in hands.

Nick doesn't stop. He doesn't look back when--

He hears Mitch growl. There's a loud slap and he turns his head.

Nick stops for a moment. He sees Zdenka's flustered face covered with black curls.

Mitch backhands Zdenka.

Anguish washes over Nick's face.

NICK
(teeth clenched)
You stupid bastard.

Zdenka sees Nick and yells:

ZDENKA
Run, Nick! Don't stop!

Nick doesn't move.

Boris makes a slurping noise. Nick looks at him - Boris' eyes fiery, fangs exposed.

Boris staggers to his feet ready to launch for Nick again.

Nick doesn't move. He watches Zdenka.

Gorcha appears before Zdenka and Mitch, and in time, as Mitch is about to hit Zdenka again.

Nick sees Gorcha catch Mitch's hand and twists it behind his back--

Relieved, Nick runs for dear life.

Boris in tow.

Soon Nick is out on the road, past the brick wall.

EXT. ROAD

Nick sees Helen's car again. It's close, almost here.

Nick advances toward it.

He looks back, but--

--there's no Boris, no trace of vourdalacks anywhere.

Nick stops for a moment and checks the surroundings. No one follows.

He waves to Helen, trying to give her a message and doubles his pace toward her.

A pothole, but Nick avoids it.

He sees Denis ahead. He shakes his head in disbelief, looks back - the other vourdalacks are behind, not able to keep up.

All, but Denis.

He notices a skate board next to Denis and understands.

Denis waves to Helen.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - NIGHT

The music blares.

Helen sees Denis and smiles politely.

She peers into the darkness, sees a mad man waving, squints, reaches for her glasses and--

--doesn't understand a thing.

As soon as the car levels with Denis, she slows down and rolls a side window open.

Denis smiles back.

EXT. ROAD

Nick hurries forward and screams as loud as he can.

NICK
Noooo. Do not stop.

EXT. ROAD

Helen stops by Denis.

She turns down the radio.

HELEN

Hi sweetie. Do you know where I
can find an Amish village? I need
to find...

She pulls out a piece of paper with "Gorcha Vourdalacks"
written on it.

HELEN

Think they are called Vourdalacks.
Must be the last name.

DENIS

Vourdalack is not the last name,
Mam. It means a vampire.

She puts away her paper and looks at him - he's not a normal
boy now, his eyes turn fiery and fangs exposed.

HELEN

Wow, nice Halloween mask.

Denis laughs and launches for her through the open window.

She screams.

They grapple.

Her hand searches for the keys.

She keeps on screaming, when some other force pulls Denis
away from her.

Panicked, she doesn't even look what it is, she jerks the
gear to Drive and pushes the accelerator.

EXT. CAR

Nick throws Denis to the ground.

He runs after the car screaming as loud as his lungs permit.

NICK

Hey. Stop. Let me in. Stop.

INT. CAR

She glances in the mirror and slows down.

She pants, checks for Denis and completely stops the car.

Nick opens the door and slides inside.

NICK

Hurry up. The little turd will
puncture a tire or something.

Panicked, she ignites the car.

There's Denis standing in front of it. She squints and
accelerates right at him.

In one swift movement, Nick pulls the wheel to the side, not
to hit him.

HELEN

Are you crazy, it's an animal. He
almost suffocated me.

NICK

He's just a child.

The ride slows down and appears bumpy.

EXT. ROAD

Denis sits on the ground and laughs at two punctured tires on
Helen's car.

He scrambles to his feet and trudges away.

He picks up his board on his way back.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - IN MOTION - NIGHT

Eyes wide open, Helen keeps fixated on the road. The shadows
cast by the trees startle her but she keeps pushing on gas.

Nick rolls down his window - the wheezing sound wafts in.
Nick frowns.

He looks down at the tires - the ones on his side are okay.

NICK

Must be on your side.

He looks back and sees Denis on his board with the yatagan in hands and he understands.

NICK

Didn't know vampires were this smart.

His breathing steadies.

NICK

If they pursue we would have to leave the car and use our feet.

Helen fumes:

HELEN

What kept you so long here?

Nick doesn't answer. He watches the woods, the shadows. Finally he makes an effort and turns to Helen.

NICK

Thanks for coming back for me.

HELEN

After all you've done it's pretty heroic on my part.

She glances him over and a look of annoyance washes over her face.

HELEN

Do you have a good footage? Don't tell me you came here for nothing. Where is your camera by the way?

Nick deflates.

NICK

This is hardly the time to talk about it.

HELEN

Do you have it stored somewhere? All we have is the tape you left for me, which is a lousy shot of an old vourdalack with some nonsense about his daughter marrying her brother.

NICK

I'm not going to use it.

HELEN

Yeah, it's pointless if you don't have more. Do you?

He sits with his back to Helen.

She pounds the wheel.

HELEN

Why aren't you answering me? I asked you where you keep the camera!

NICK

I told you. I said I'm not going to use any of it.

HELEN

You can but you won't, did I get you right?

Helen sounds bitter.

There's a long silence. Nick's head is turned towards the woods still.

She reaches into the front compartment of her car, shows Nick a piece of paper with his writing on it.

HELEN

Did you really mean this?

Silence.

HELEN

Why did you come back then? From your stupid little footage it's obvious you returned for her. I didn't listen to what my heart was telling me--

NICK

Maybe you should have. I'm sorry. Why did you come back? For the footage? You know there's money in it, don't you?

Helen's face hardens.

HELEN

In other circumstances I'd throw you out.

NICK
And you'd do the right thing.

They ride in silence for a while.

HELEN
Can you see them?

Nick blinks, his eyes unfocused. He turns back and watches what he left behind.

NICK
Yes.

HELEN
They are chasing us?

NICK
No. They are not following us anymore.

He swallows hard.

NICK
She made them stop.

HELEN
What? Why would she make them stop?

He notices a stool leg in his hand.

He rolls down the window and tosses it away.

NICK
She cares for me.

Helen groans, pounds the wheel.

They ride in silence. Finally, Helen steadies her breath.

HELEN
I gather you decided not to make a movie. Let me ask, is it because you are in love with her?

She enunciates her every word to communicate hate and pain.

NICK
Her name is Zdenka. ...You know they can hear you calling them if they care for you.

HELEN

She lured you in here to use for a meal but you still fell for her.
Aw, this is so romantic.

She glowers at Nick. Nick appears elsewhere--

-- vision of Zdenka floats in front of Nick's eyes:

she looks calm and somewhat sad. Her raven hair is loose, the curls cascade down her back.

NICK

Apparently not enough if I'm running away like that.

A silent reprimand in Zdenka's eyes and--

She's gone.

NICK

She helped me escape.

HELEN

(sarcastically)
How wonderful - your love is mutual! Don't let me stand in your way then.

NICK

Yes, Helen, I don't think I'd leave her if not for you.

Helen is ready to kill him now but she pulls herself together.

HELEN

Bullshit.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Denis walks to Zdenka and grabs her hand.

She stands there with Mitch and the kids, all holding hands like one loving family.

They watch Helen's car turn smaller and smaller.

It hasn't disappeared from their view just yet, when Zdenka pulls away from her family.

A maddening scream follows--

ZDENKA

Nick!

She runs after the car extending her both hands toward Nick - as if begging to come back.

INT. HELEN'S CAR

They ride in silence.

Helen glances at the mirror in front and winces.

HELEN

Don't look back.

She watches Nick, there's struggle on his face.

HELEN

She wants your blood, that's all.
Remember that, don't surrender to
the moment of weakness.

Nick gulps.

EXT. ROAD

Zdenka doesn't stop, she trips and falls but comes back to her feet and keeps on running.

Helen's car moves through the bumps of the road.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Nick looks back.

Helen grabs his hand and gives it a squeeze, but he pulls away.

HELEN

Don't forget, she is hungry. She
wants to feed and possibly feed her
family.

But Nick doesn't respond, not taking his eyes off of Zdenka.

NICK

I'm sorry, I can't. I'm out.

Helen shakes her head.

HELEN
What do you mean?

Nick just sighs.

NICK
Pull over. Please.

HELEN
Listen, I came back for you - not
for the footage but for you. I
looked past the fact that you're in
love with the silly girl...

NICK
I'm sorry, I can't do it anymore.
Please stop the car.

HELEN
Asshole! You're an absolute prime
asshole, you know that right?

She doesn't stop, accelerating and he jerks the door open.

He lets himself fall out.

EXT. ROAD NIGHT

He rolls over, staggers up onto his feet and slowly limps
toward Zdenka.

His mouth stretches into a smile at the sight of her getting
closer.

Finally he runs.

Helen's desperate cry reaches him:

HELEN
Nick? What are you doing, you fool,
she'll suck on you and that would
be the end of you.

Nick doesn't listen.

He looks ahead. At Zdenka.

Zdenka stops and waits for him.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Helen finally pulls on the brakes and watches Nick and Zdenka, her face red with fury and jealousy.

GORCHA (V.O.)
He was always unfair to you.

Panicked she jerks toward the sound. It came from her left side, from a window.

She makes sure the window is closed and taps the lock down.

She ignites the car and then notices a wrinkled hand on her right shoulder.

She turns to see a pair of shrewd eyes fixated at her. Her lips quiver.

GORCHA
But you forgave him. You came back
for him.

She pants, closes her eyes and opens them again to check if the man is real.

GORCHA
(quietly)
That speaks volumes. You have a
loving heart. I like that in
people.

He is real.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Nick has Zdenka in his arms. He holds her and twirls her around.

They hold hands, lean on each other and caress each other as a couple would.

Nick turns to Helen for a moment and sees Gorcha talking to her in the car.

There's a glint of worry, but in a moment he's alright as--

Zdenka holds his face with both hands and looks deep into his eyes. He smiles.

INT. HELEN'S CAR - NIGHT

Helen's hand darts for the door, but it's locked.

GORCHA

I wouldn't fight it if I were you.
Do you know why?

He pats her hair, strokes her cheeks.

GORCHA

Because now you're family.

He touches her shoulder, presses a nail into her white flesh, it turns red. He licks his lips.

GORCHA

Do you have any family other than
him?

He inches towards her neck.

For a moment her gaze drifts away and she sees Nick with Zdenka, cheering.

Gorcha continues in a soft whisper.

GORCHA

Don't let him go. You don't have to.
I can help you.

She peers into his eyes. He caresses her neck. She gazes at him in silence.

She becomes obedient, lulled by the persuasive touches of the vourdalack.

She frees her neck of the protective shirt collar, inviting him closer.

HELEN

Is it gonna hurt?

He shakes his head.

He kisses her gently on the neck. She pants, scared, but closes her eyes.

HELEN

It won't kill me, will it?

Gorcha doesn't answer. He digs his fangs in.

Her scream pierces the night.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Nick hears Helen scream and his hand around Zdenka's waist tightens.

ZDENKA

Don't fear, she'll be alright.

He looks ahead and sees Mitch, squinting at him.

Nick doesn't drop his eyes.

They pass by scowling Mitch.

They walk toward the house, their arms wrapped around each other's waist.

Denis and Boris skip happily behind.

FADE OUT.