THE JOURNEY BACK HOME

By

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Revised Fourth Draft
We hear a shrill BLOW OF WIND over the screen. It starts to ENGULF the blackness and sound.

We find ourselves at --

EXT. FIELD OF WEEDS - GRAY HORIZON - AMERICAN SOIL - DAY (1942)

Overcast. We spectate a field of TALL WEEDS, swaying from a breeze of gusting wind. The FIELD seemingly stretches on for over a mile’s range of uncharted vastness. Notice a FAMILY OF TREES settled further back in background. The MISTY MOUNTAINS from a great distance beyond. The WIND accompanying the scene throughout. The whole atmosphere feels hypnotic through the breeze.

Let it be duly noted that this marvelous, gracious land we’re experiencing is an alternate parallel universe set in the United States during the 1940s. Looks as though it highly resembles a foreign landscape. The nature of this land is simply breathtaking. Beautiful. Very idyllic. The scope and large scale of it is nothing more than prestigious in its entirety.

Strangely, though, we see no human beings upon this desolated part of the world. Still so beautiful in all of its mythical wonder.

MUSIC -- sweet and melancholic -- begins to carry over the next few exterior shots, taking us about 6 seconds on each shot as we take in these images.

CUT TO:

Close on a rusted pair of PLIERS laying burrowed in the grass.

An ancient OAK TREE as some of its autumn leaves lightly fall from its perches.

A gray RABBIT chewing on a twig branch near the forests, nose twitches.

A battered RED WAGON lying on its side amidst the tall weeds.

Panoramic view of the TREE FOREST, old and eerie.

A gust of wind brushing away some AUTUMN LEAVES on ground.

A nearby BEACH as the waves are creating a tide.

More TBD.

We finally settle on:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - FROM A GREAT DISTANCE - GRAY DAY

Music concludes.
In a MEDIUM/LONG SHOT: WE SEE an OPEN DIRT ROAD while we’re placed further away from it on a grassy low prairie. The scene is stark and quiet. Till suddenly...

AN ARMY VEHICLE

appears on the road from our LEFT FRAME. On board are 2 ARMY MEN in uniforms.

The vehicle barrels along the road, its tires picking up clouds of dust, till it finally arrives at:

**EXT. RAMSHACKLE HOUSE – MIDDLE OF NOWHERE – GRAY DAY**

The army vehicle stops and parks about 15 feet away from this tasteless, secluded, one-story home (where our main protagonist lives). Both uniformed men step off the vehicle. By their postures they seem like highly standard professionals.

They walk their way up the front steps, till they stand right in front of the front door. We can’t see any further close identification by what their faces look like. One of the men takes a step forward and knocks on the door. Then takes a step back, waiting.

In momentary, a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN (a blur from our distance), in her gown answers the door. She looks at both men, coming to realize by their silence that she lost someone of hers in the army. Upon realizing she’s speechless. She puts a hand to her mouth, bawls, drops to her knees, grieving. A long beat. Then we...

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. SAME – FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE – A DIFFERENT (GRAY DAY)**

It’s another day at this worn, rickety place they call a house.

We take a moment to see what lies around this household: PILES OF CHOPPED WOOD rests at the corner of the house; TALL GRASSES which could use a trim; WATER DRIPS from the house GUTTERS; an AXE wedged in a tree stump used for chopping up wood; a BICYCLE with a basket strapped by the handlebars which leans against the porch railing.

**INT. RAMSHACKLE HOME – THOMAS’S HOUSE – KITCHEN – SAME**

There’s nothing affluent about the interior either.

In the kitchen, we see the same WOMAN (Thomas’s mother, whom we’ll call SUSAN) as she methodically cleans off some dirty dishes at the sink trying to keep herself preoccupied.

Susan is in her late 40s/early 50s. Has frizzy brown hair. Her skin a bit pale. Wears her period’s dress. Her hands are moving less diligently for we see they’re TREMBLING. It appears she still hasn’t gone past the fact that someone in the family has passed on.
There’s still grief concealed inside this what used to be a once-enchanted beauty who has suffered through and has faced many rough obstacles during the days leading up to this moment.

She momentarily stops from washing the dishes, unable to keep going. She puts her hands on the sink counter. Head bowed down. Lots of painful memories starting to override in her. She slightly turns her head away from us, as though she’s become relinquished to getting a grip on herself. After a few beats, she turns her attention back to the dishes, only halfway finished. She decides to grab a dish rag, wipes off her soaked hands, then tosses it aside, turns around and makes her way into...

**INT. FAMILY DINING ROOM - THOMAS’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

Where we come to find our star attraction, THOMAS, 21-years old (though he looks rather 25 at best in general). He sits at the family table, using a spoon to eat from his bowl of homemade tomato soup, a family ingredient made manually brewed from his mother’s own hands.

Thomas is a good-looking, young gentleman with a gold of heart who’s hard to resist. He cares a great deal for his family. His black hair, though, could use a good washing. He sits right across the table from... His sister SAMMY, age 12, at the precocious age of hitting puberty. She, too, has black hair. Will grow up to become a self-independent, beautiful woman one day. She also eats from a bowl of tomato soup.

These are Susan’s ever-wonderful, precious children.

Susan tries to maintain her cool in front of Thomas and Sammy as she goes to the table and takes her seat, right in the middle. She instantaneously shifts to good manners so as to not let her children be worried about her. Her tone radiant, with a touch of class.

**SUSAN**

So! How’s the soup? Is it scrumdiddlyumptious enough?!

**THOMAS**

Yes, Mom. It’s delicious.

**SUSAN**

Sammy, what about you? Is it good for you?

**SAMMY**

Yes, it’s good. I like it.

**SUSAN**

All righty then...

Susan reaches over and grabs the big bowl full of her warm homemade soup that’s placed in middle of the table.
She starts pouring some into her own small bowl, filling it up. She then places the big bowl back in the middle. Digging in.

Everyone remains quiet as they eat their soups in the hushed, lightweight moment.

**INT. THOMAS’S HOUSE – LATER THAT NIGHT**

It’s bedtime. Susan comes sauntering down the hallway. She pauses at her KID’S BEDROOM DOOR, which has been left partially opened. She sneaks up to the door, peeks her eyes inside to see:

SUSAN’S POV -- Thomas, who sits on the edge of the bed, is lightly stroking Sammy’s hair as she falls asleep in the covers. The nightstand lantern is lit, illuminating their side of the bed. Thomas begins to tell a story to Sammy, using his SOFT, SOOTHING VOICE:

THOMAS  
(telling story)  
When you were littler I remember how much you loved seeing our father after he’d come back from his long trips away. It was like it was from only yesterday.

ON SUSAN. She becomes touched by the way Thomas’s sweet soothing voice is telling the story, fond on how much she adores them, couldn’t have asked for a better family than the one she has now.

THOMAS (O.S.) (CONT’D)  
(continues story)  
Whenever he’d saw us he was a happy and proud man, knowing he had the perfect family to look after and provide enough substantial use for us as much as he could.

SUSAN’S POV -- Thomas stares down at Sammy’s sleeping face. Thomas continues.

THOMAS (CONT’D)  
Even though he’s gone over to the other side, I know it in my heart that he’ll be looking down over on us, for the rest of our lives, as long as we both shall live.

Thomas stops for a moment to reminisce. A beat. Then:

THOMAS (CONT’D)  
Now we only have each other to look after. Our mother could use all the support and invaluable love as much as possible. Let’s hope that things in the future will turn around for us.
Thomas takes more of it in. Then:

THOMAS
Have a goodnight, Sammy, and sweet dreams.

He plants a soft kiss on her forehead. Then gets off the bed and goes to turn off the lantern, darkening the whole room. He goes round the bed and gets under the covers beside Sammy. He tries falling asleep, right from his little sis.

Susan takes another moment to watch them both sleep from aside each other on the bed. Then she closes the door shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. THOMAS’S HOUSE – MIDDLE OF NOWHERE – GRAY MORNING

A cloudy morning. The house looking more like a postcard.

Thomas makes his emergence through front door. Goes down the steps and approaches his bicycle which leans against the porch railing. He mounts the bicycle, starts pedaling, away from the house and on the road.

EXT. ROAD – VALLEY OF FIELDS – MOMENTS LATER

Thomas pedals on his bicycle along the same deserted road that the army vehicle previously drove on. See an acre of TALL GRASSES housed on one side of the road, a FAMILY OF TREES on the other. Thomas starts to come across a narrow passage which leads to the direction of a nearby TOWN. He goes in that direction.

EXT. SMALL TOWN – THOMAS’S HOMETOWN – LATER

A bustle of TOWNSPEOPLE, dressed in their period ensembles, stroll around town on this fine gray morning. The location of this lively small town remains undisclosed, though it seems like a town that’s much simpler to the town of DEADWOOD from the 19th century only more expandable. Almost like an entire western movie set.

Thomas rides his bicycle into town, breezing past a bunch of the townspeople out walking and shopping. The whereabouts to where these other people live remain unknown to our interests.

Thomas soon arrives and stops at the town’s FOODS SUPPLY STORE. He dismounts his bicycle, parks it by the front steps, then climbs his way up the steps going into the store. And as he does so, we capture a GLIMPSE of a SIGNING SHEET POSTER nailed to the wall outside which indicates:

“JOIN THE ARMY.”
“FIGHT FOR YOUR COUNTRY.”

The poster shows the picture of an animated, strong-minded MALE SOLDIER giving the iconic SALUTE in serving his country.
Thomas comes across the poster as he stops for a sec and gives it a quick onceover. Then turns his attention from it and enters...

**INT. FOODS SUPPLY STORE – CONTINUOUS**

Empty, left unsupervised. Thomas steps in the store. Takes a moment to survey it. Then goes over and takes his hand on a fresh red apple. Holds it close to his nose. Takes a sniff. Then places it back where it was. Thomas then comes across the STORAGE CLOSET where from inside it with the door opened wide we see: A LARGE PILE of disfigured and torn CARDBOARD BOXES as though they’ve been left forgotten for years.

*SFX: A BACKDOOR OPENING.*

Thomas turns his head away from storage room closet and looks to see coming in from backdoor: the PROPRIETOR, 50, grizzled, curly mustache, in work clothes.

The Proprietor sees Thomas as he knows what he’s come here for.

**PROPRIETOR**

Well, then. Nice of you to come back to the store.

Proprietor is familiar with Thomas. He approaches the REGISTER. Thomas meets the Proprietor there, as he pulls out a full grocery list from his pocket. Hands it to the Proprietor. Proprietor takes it, pulls out his reading glasses, looks through the list carefully. As he examines the list:

**PROPRIETOR**

How’s the whole family been doin’ lately? Things seem to be getting back on right track?

**THOMAS**

We’re okay. How’re you? How’s the workplace been goin’?

**PROPRIETOR**

Lotta laborin’ I’m afraid. And what of your mother -- how’s she?

**THOMAS**

She’s doing alright. Compatible. She’s still holding it in there.

**PROPRIETOR**

Let Susan know that I send her my condolences.

**THOMAS**

I’ll see that she knows.

Proprietor starts going around the store for Thomas’s order.
EXT. FOODS SUPPLY STORE - AWHILE LATER - DAY

Thomas emerges from the store, carrying 2 handful bags of groceries. He goes for his bicycle, climbing down the steps. He approaches his bicycle, placing the bags in the bicycle’s basket. He starts to mount on it when...

CRASH!!

A young woman, 18, comes running and bumps into Thomas after having been caught off guard for a moment. They both go TUMBLING DOWN on the ground after their abrupt collision. Bicycle gets KNOCKED OVER. The FOOD pouring out from the bags landing on the ground. Thomas is caught in a daze, tries to regather himself. The woman, a luminous BEAUTY, wearing a lovely dress realized what she did as she quickly comes around and tends to pick up every single food item and place them back in the bags.

Her name is JENNY.

JENNY
Oh, gosh -- I’m really sorry! I didn’t look where I was running. Here, I’ll pick those up for you.

THOMAS
It’s fine, Miss. These things happen.

He joins her in picking up his food. As they do so in the duration, Thomas sneaks a look at her face. It’s a beautiful face. He has never laid eyes on such a beautiful face before.

They’ve picked up and put away the last remains of the food. They look at one another. The first meeting between the two, attractive young people. Thomas can barely look away. She’s enchanting to look at. Jenny feels the same way about him. There’s an AFFECTION between them. Both seem shy to comment and give their greetings to one another.

After a moment:

JENNY
Hi.

THOMAS
Hey.

Silence. They can’t help it. It’s love at first sight.

Thomas suddenly comes snapping out of his trance. A beat.

JENNY
Sorry about that.

THOMAS
It’s okay.
Thomas smiles to himself. He heads for his bicycle. Jenny, more than content into getting to know him, steps up to him at his bike.

JENNY
I’m Jenny by the way.

THOMAS
Thomas.

They shake hands. First human contact.

JENNY
You live around here?

Thomas gives a sec to look at her again. Then he surveys his head around. Points the direction.

THOMAS
My house is just a few miles down at that direction.
(beat; then)
Why’d you ask?

Jenny steps closer to him. Even though she could spontaneously thrust right into him at the moment she restrains herself.

JENNY
Just want to see where you live.

Thomas scoffs. He’s flattered that she’s taken an interest in him.

JENNY (CONT’D)
So how ‘bout it?

She sweetly pleads with him. Falling for him. Beat.

JENNY
(whisper)
I don’t mind.

Thomas seems more than content to recommend an approval of her needs.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD – LEADING BACK TO THOMAS’S – SOME TIME LATER – DAY

Jenny and Thomas walk separately though closely next to each other, heading for the direction back to Thomas’s house. Thomas holds the handlebars of his bicycle, the groceries in basket. Neither of them speak for a moment. Then:

JENNY
It’s very nice out here. Very intoxicating.
THOMAS
Have been living around here my whole life apparently.

JENNY
I can see why.

She moves her head around, taking it all in. The wind RUSTLING the trees. The grasses SWAYING in same direction. Jenny looks back at Thomas and then slyly asks him:

JENNY
Can I ask you a personal question?

THOMAS
What about?

JENNY
You ever been in love?

Thomas stops in his tracks. He processes the question. Comes with a question of his own.

THOMAS
Have you?

She seems a little bewildered from the throwback. After taking some moments to ponder it she comes with her answer.

JENNY
No. Not really.

THOMAS
Oh...

He senses that’s something they both have in common. She steps up to him, repeats, fluently:

JENNY
You ever been in love with someone?

Thomas takes her question seriously. Finally:

THOMAS
No, I haven’t.

Jenny appreciates his honesty. Smitten.

JENNY
Guess that’s something we both have in common.

She backs away from him, hands behind her back, looks the other way and continues on foot ahead. Thomas stands there weighing his next options. Jenny yells back at him from a distance:
JENNY
Hey slowpoke! You coming or what?!

Thomas quickly snaps out of it as he then follows her.

EXT. THOMAS’S HOUSE - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - FEW MOMENTS LATER

They’ve arrived at his house. Jenny studies it. Jovial.

JENNY
It’s a nice place you got! Is your whole family inside?

THOMAS
Yeah. Just my mom and little sis.

JENNY
What about your father?

THOMAS
He died, recently.

Jenny feels sorry. She shows her sympathy.

JENNY
Sorry to hear. How did he die?

THOMAS
Fought his way in the army. He was a lieutenant colonel. Died in the field.

JENNY
I’m sorry for your loss.

THOMAS
Appreciate it.

We see that Susan has stepped outside from the house. She sees Thomas having a chat with a pretty young girl he brought over. Feeling Susan’s presence, they both turn to look at her.

SUSAN
Pardon my intrusion. Didn’t know my son would be bringing company over today.

Thomas clears his throat.

THOMAS
Uh, Mom, this is Jenny.

Jenny gives her warmest greeting to Susan.

JENNY
How do you do? Pleased to meet you.
She indicates the squalid-looking place.

JENNY (CONT’D)
You have a lovely home.

Susan gives herself a moment to take in on this young beauty whose been hanging around with Thomas. She’s a little amazed yet deeply concerned by the acquaintance.

SUSAN
Nice to meet you as well. I’m Susan, Thomas’s mother.

She exchanges a look at Thomas. Then turns her attention back on Jenny.

SUSAN (CONT’D)
Would you like to come inside?
I’ve made brunch.

JENNY
I’d love to.

INT. FAMILY DINING ROOM – THOMAS’S HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

Everyone, Sammy included, is at the table enjoying their afternoon brunch. Nobody is talking at first.

Susan gives herself a moment before she decides to venture in and asks Jenny:

SUSAN
So how long have you and Thomas known each other?

Knows that she’s been put on the spot.

JENNY
Um... Not for long. We met in town earlier.

She stays confident, trying to win her way over with Susan. Thomas doesn’t once try to chime in while he observes this attempted discussion take its place as he sits there silently eating while both women have their talk.

SUSAN
You two have never met before?

JENNY
That’s right.

SUSAN
You don’t say...

Susan’s a bit surprised to hear this.
SUSAN (CONT’D)
And how did you meet?

JENNY
I...

She first looks to Thomas. Then:

JENNY (CONT’D)
It’s actually pretty funny how it happened. What happened was that I incidentally ran right into him. Didn’t look where I was going. It was imprudent of me, I know. It all happened by accident.

SUSAN (amused)
I see...

She looks at Thomas. Thomas sees the gratification look on his mother’s face. A beat, then:

SUSAN (to Jenny)
Are you two fallen in love yet?

Thomas immediately chimes in.

THOMAS
Mom...!

SUSAN
What -- a mother can’t ask?

Jenny takes it seriously. She looks to Thomas.

JENNY
I think we’re getting there.

Thomas looks back at Jenny. A change of subject:

SUSAN (O.S.)
Thomas told me that he wishes to follow in the footsteps of his father one day.

SUSAN (CONT’D)
Says that he wants to join the army. Just like his old man.

Susan strictly feels SADDENED. She’s silent. Stares into her plate.

THOMAS
You okay, Mother...?
She doesn’t answer. She’s contemplating something. Then she looks up from her plate and looks at something PAST CAMERA. CUT TO:

SUSAN’S POV -- we see from out a WINDOW a couple of TALL WEEDS as they shiver from a breeze of wind outside.

BACK TO SCENE

Susan keeps her intent on the window a beat. Then she excuses herself from the table.

SUSAN
Would you excuse me? I need to use the lavatory.

She seems desperate to go. Susan gets up trying to conceal in her emotions, disappearing for the lavatory.

Everyone remains seated in their seats. Secured firmly. Don’t know what to make of Susan’s sudden departure from the table. A moment of silence. Then:

SAMMY
(to Jenny, curious)
Are you and Thomas girlfriend and boyfriend?

They’re quiet.

INT. THOMAS & SAMMY’S BEDROOM – LATER THAT NIGHT

It’s nightfall. We see that Sammy’s already fallen asleep on the bed under the covers. Thomas goes toward the nightstand. Finds the box full of matches. Takes one out. Strikes it. A small flame ignites from the match. He next grabs the lantern and starts lighting it up. Casting an illumination to the side of the bed. Thomas sits on the edge of the bed. Gently brushes Sammy’s hair with elegance.

SFX: SOFT KNOCK ON BEDROOM DOOR.

Thomas looks away from Sammy sleeping to see standing quietly by the door in the hall:

JENNY
(whisper)
Hey.
(re: Sammy)
Is she asleep?

THOMAS
Yeah. She’s resting.

Jenny slips in the room, tiptoeing her way over to the bed. She easily sits next to Thomas on the bed. Both talk in their WHISPERED VOICES so as to not make Sammy wake from her slumber.
JENNY
Looks like a little angel.

THOMAS
She has her mother’s good looks all right.

Both remain silent as they take a moment to watch Sammy sleeping. Then, Thomas looks back at Jenny, making a suggestion.

THOMAS
It’s late as it is. Perhaps you should head home for the night.

JENNY
Wish that I could, but...

She indicates the darkness coming from out the window.

JENNY (CONT’D)
...It’s too dark out.

THOMAS
Then I guess you’ll be staying here for the night?

JENNY
Afraid so.

There’s a calmness in the air around them. Both love-bersgs take a moment to watch Sammy fallen asleep. Then they look back at one another and stare eternally into each other’s eyes. Jenny gives Thomas an implied gesture, serenely asking him: “So, what now?”

They stare likably into each other’s eyes. Only the silence surrounding them. A beat. Then we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SMALL TOWN – FEW DAYS LATER – DAY

A larger assortment of TOWNSPEOPLE than from before. It’s a new day in this town. Partly sunny, partly cloudy out today. In the large amasses we come to find siblings Thomas and Sammy as they exit together from one of the stores, dressed in their circa 40s fashion. They walk as a duo amongst the crowd.

SAMMY
I don’t get it. Is that new girl you’ve been hanging around with your girlfriend or not?

THOMAS
(incredulous)
Hey. It’s nothing like that. Honest to God...
SAMMY
I could tell she’s been taking a liking to you.

THOMAS
Oh? Is that what you think?

SAMMY
I don’t think -- I know it!

THOMAS
(off her look)
Yeah, okay... I see what you’re doing...

SAMMY
I could tell that you like her, too.
I mean she is beautiful.

Thomas has a look of deep concernedness.

THOMAS
You think Jenny’s beautiful, Sam?

SAMMY
Don’t you?

A beat. Thomas cares not to comment her. Instead, he tells her:

THOMAS
Shut up.

They turn around a corner.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCAL DINER - TOWN - DAY

A nondescript, though ravenous joint. The place is HEAVILY PACKED. Hardly any tables available. Thomas and Sammy come into the diner, see that the place is highly busy. They go find a table anyway.

Soon they find an empty table, take their seats from across each other. Both peruse the menus, looking at what’s good for grubbing today.

THOMAS
What’re you thinking of having?

SAMMY
I’m probably thinking of trying out their tomato soup.

THOMAS
Hopefully not as good as mother’s homemade.
SAMMY
Which is why I’m gonna take a
tasting test and see the results
for myself.

Thomas can’t help but chuckle. And right then, 2 YOUNG GENTLEMEN
in their mid-20s come ambling up at their table and stop right
there. Both men are very charismatic, enthusiastic, though dressed
very unkemptly in their ensembles.

These are Thomas’s close friends since childhood: ERIC & GERARD.
They both seem psyched to see their best friend.

ERIC
Hey, Thomas!

GERARD
Been lookin’ all over for ya, buddy
boy!

Thomas looks up from his menu.

THOMAS
Hey, fellas. What’s going on --
did something happen?

GERARD
(shyly, blushes)
Aw, well, you know how it is...

Eric slaps Gerard on the shoulder.

ERIC
What you doing? He doesn't know.

GERARD
Hey, chill, Eric, I got this.

THOMAS
Fellas...?

We see that Sammy is looking straight at Gerard with the ogling
eyes; a handsome young fella she’s staring adoringly at.

ERIC (O.S.)
Okay, so check this out. There’s
a possible change that --

Gerard disrupts Eric.

GERARD
We’re actually on our way to the
social club nearby to hear from
the broadcaster about joining the
army.
ERIC
And it’s about to start in any minute. C’mon -- we’ll take you over there!

THOMAS
You mean, right now?

ERIC
No, after you’re finished from eating -- Of course, right now!

Thomas ponders it. He seems unsure. Gerard grows impatient.

GERARD
Hey, c’mon, Thomas, this is what you’ve always been waiting for, is it? A chance to join the army?

THOMAS
Yeah, sure... But --

ERIC
“But” nothing! Let’s get going already.

SAMMY
(infatuatedly at Gerard)
Hi, Gerard.

GERARD
Oh. Hey, Sammy.

ERIC
Are we goin’ to this thing or what?!

THOMAS
Yeah, of course, just -- give us a sec. We’ll meet you over there.

ERIC
Better hurry. Wouldn’t want to miss this announcement for the world!

Feeling greatly anticipated, Eric and Gerard turn around and scram for the exit.

Thomas takes a few moments to make his decision. Finally:

THOMAS
Alright, Sam. Let’s skedaddle.

SAMMY
Cool.
They get up from their table and make their way out.

**INT. SOCIAL CLUB - TOWN - MOMENTS LATER**

Almost everyone (MALES & FEMALES, ages 13-25) has already congregated as they wait anxiously by the RADIO, only just a few moments away from the big announcement. Everyone seems eager to hear the broadcast. They CHATTER indistinctly in the meantime. Either sitting in chairs, on the floor or on sofas while others stand on their feet in hopeful transfixion, exchanging AD-LIB suggestions and conversation.

One of the BOYS (age 14) tinkers with the radio antenna as he tries to get a full signal out of it. We only hear STATIC coming from radio. Once he’s fixed it, we begin to hear a NEWS BROADCAST giving the big announcement.

**BOY (AGE 14)**

Hey, everyone! Hey! Shush...!!
Pipe down -- it’s starting!

Everyone turns their attention on the radio as they lean forward, listening attentively to the BROADCASTER over radio:

**BROADCASTER (OVER RADIO)**

...A new war has surged onward, for we are yet at the brink of facing another endless sea of destruction.

SEE that Eric and Gerard have arrived at the club as they weave through the mass to try getting closer to radio. They take their seats on the floor as they listen to the announcement in hopeful anticipation.

**BROADCASTER (OVER RADIO) (CONT’D)**

The army is looking for the bravest, toughest, heroic and self-righteous men who’ll to join the revolution into finishing the new war with the German Nazis.

During this, Thomas and Sammy have finally made it to the club as they push their way in forward closest to the radio. Have their seats during.

**BROADCASTER (OVER RADIO) (CONT’D)**

This is a turbulent moment, as the ongoing war continues to unravel. The American Army could surely use all the best and boldest men in order to finally secede the new war to end all wars. President Franklin Roosevelt has plans to... (etc.)

**ANGLE ON:** Eric who sits right next to Gerard. He speaks sotto voce to a YOUNG MAN in his early 20s opposite him.
ERIC
(to young man, sotto)
Y’know it’s one thing that we’ve already settled our differences with the Japs. But now with the Germans, and what they’ve been doin’ to all of those Jews... Somebody’s gotta do something in order to stop those Nazi bastards.

ANGLE ON: Thomas who scans his eyes around the crowd, speculating, during the continuing announcement.

BROADCASTER (OVER RADIO)
...If there’s anyone out there who wants to make a difference in fighting for this great nation look no further.

Thomas’s eyes eventually come to rest on somebody in the crowd he knows: Jenny. She sits while listening to radio along with what’s presumably a FRIEND of hers from a back corner. Jenny’s oblivious of Thomas watching her the entire time.

BROADCASTER (OVER RADIO)
Be sure to enlist yourself at your nearest post that’s right around the corner. Be there, for we, the great people upon this great land called the United States, will be accounting on you in prevailing the mission.

Sammy turns her head to see Thomas looking straight at Jenny from the corner. She leans sideways toward her brother and WHISPERS to him:

SAMMY
That’s Jenny over there, ain’t it?

THOMAS
It’s her alright.

SAMMY
Go and talk to her afterwards.

THOMAS
And say what, exactly?

Sammy gives Thomas a “You’re kidding” look.

BROADCASTER (OVER RADIO)
Seeming as though we could be facing our greatest threat yet we will not go down without a fight.

(MORE)
BROADCASTER (OVER RADIO) (CONT’D)
This is your chance to make your
country proud of you. Enlist soon
for maybe -- just maybe -- only
after might you become the next
great American hero.
(then)
This’s Chester Riffler signing off.
Good luck to all of you out there.

And that marks the conclusion of the Broadcast.

Everyone that sits immediately stand to their feet. Full of
enthusiasm. Chattering loudly to one another.

Eric and Gerard turn to see Thomas somewhere in the crowd as they
advance toward him. Thomas sees them coming his way. Shares a
look with Sammy.

THOMAS
Here come Eric and Gerard.

SAMMY
Now’s your chance. You go talk to
Jenny while I hold those boys off.

THOMAS
No need -- I got this.

Sammy rolls her head.

SAMMY
Your loss, big bro...

She turns and abandons Thomas, overwhelmed that she left him there.
Sammy goes toward Jenny and her friend at the corner. Loud
whisper:

THOMAS
Sam -- wait...!!

Too late. Eric and Gerard have approached Thomas.

ERIC
Thomas! You made it! So, what did
you think?!

GERARD
Can’t wait, I’m so psyched!

They have to shout in order to be heard.

EXT. SOCIAL CLUB – TOWN – CONTINUOUS

The same Boy (14) who worked on the radio antenna has staggered out
of the club and out in the open. To the bypassing townspeople:
BOY (AGE 14)
Hey!! Everyone! Listen up! People!
We’re gonna go and enlist to join the
army, so if you want to enlist and
beat the Nazis now’s your chance!
C’mon, now!!

Some of the townspeople (mostly young men) suddenly realize as they
take full sprint and race for a nearby post to enlist.

That’s when Eric and Gerard from in the club come out and they,
too, start running for the post as if their lives depended on it.

ERIC
Ah, shit...!! Don’t wanna miss the
opportunity. C’mon, Gerard, let’s
hustle before they’re all booked!

As they breeze past the sprinting crowd of young men, with Gerard
trailing not too far behind:

ERIC
Move aside, losers! C’mon -- move!

Eric looks back to see that Gerard is unable to get surpassed the
crowd.

ERIC (CONT’D)
Hurry the hell up, Gerard!

GERARD
(struggling to catch up)
I’m coming -- hold your horses!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SOCIAL CLUB – CONTINUOUS

The place is now half-empty. See Thomas as he’s standing by the
bar, observing Sammy having a private chat with Jenny and her
friend (around same age as Jenny). Pretty soon the 3 girls
approach Thomas at the bar. Thomas calms his nerves as Jenny
approaches along with her small female flock.

THOMAS
Hey there.

JENNY
Hey. What did you think, about the
broadcast?

THOMAS
I say it was very... Inspiring.
Exceptionally inspiring.

Jenny agrees with him.
After a beat, Jenny introduces her friend.

**JENNY**

This is my friend Samantha.

**SAMMY**

Look at that, Thomas, she’s got the same first name as mine.

**SAMANTHA**

Happy to make your acquaintance, Thomas.

Samantha’s cute in a perky girl kinda way. In her early 20s.

**JENNY**

So Thomas... You thinking of going to enlist yet?

Thomas seems visibly unsure at the moment. Feels like it’s not his time yet to enlist. He tries keeping it cool:

**THOMAS**

Um, yeah, I don’t know though... I mean there’ll always be another chance later.

**JENNY**

Well, you never know. Never know when an opportunity like that will ever come your way again.

**THOMAS**

I can wait a little longer. And besides, it wouldn’t be right for me to leave behind the two most important ladies in my life.

Sammy represents her own fake heartiness as she says comedically, with a little hint of truculence:

**SAMMY**

Aww, how wonderful of you to say that like you mean it, big brother.

**THOMAS**

Yeah, yeah...

Thomas knows this act of hers as he pretends playfully like it doesn’t bother him. After a beat:

**JENNY**

Ahem -- so anyway would you like to come over at my place for a while? It’s just me and Samantha. But if you want to though...
SAMMY
I’ll go. If it’s okay with Thomas.

SAMANTHA
We would be much more obligated if you did.

Jenny looks from Samantha to Thomas. She stares at him pleadingly, wants him to join. She’ll just die if he doesn’t.

JENNY
What do you say, Tom? You in?

Thomas takes a moment to think about it. Beat. Final thought:

THOMAS
Okay.

Start the MUSIC.

EXT. JENNY’S HOUSE – VALLEY OF FIELDS – LATER THAT DAY

A field of GRASSES as well as some TREES in background of Jenny’s secluded, small home in middle of nowhere (much relatable to Thomas’s).

See Thomas, Jenny, Sammy and Samantha as they’re playing an exuberant game of CRICKET by the house front porch. Everyone’s having the time of their lives outdoors. Their clothes ruffling from the wind.

LATER --

Sammy frolicking around in the grasses, as the other 3 keep an eye out for her while they walk their way up towards the field. Nature surrounded in all corners.

LATER --

At the front porch of Jenny’s house, Thomas sits closely next to Jenny on the stoop as they watch both Sam’s playing their round of cricket together. Hear them giggle with such open glee.

INT. JENNY’S DINING ROOM – LATER – DAY

Our team of 4 are at the dinner table enjoying a late-afternoon meal in their attendance. They dig into some warm bread, bowls of fresh stew, cups of liquid. At one point, they all share a laugh.

LATER --

Samantha has fallen asleep on couch in the living area, Sammy ostensibly dozes off next to her. Jenny and Thomas come forward, as they watch them sleep next to each other on couch for a moment.

LATER --
Jenny and Thomas both go down the hallway and enter Jenny’s bedroom so they can have quality time alone together. He shuts the door closed behind him.

INT. JENNY’S BEDROOM – MOMENTS LATER – DAY

They both lie down on the bed on their sides, facing each other. They stare lovingly at one another for a brief infinity. Despite them being alone they whisper talk:

JENNY
You had fun today?

THOMAS
Sure did.

Jenny takes her hand and places it firmly on Thomas’s black hair. She brushes it real gently. Thomas takes his hand and puts his fingers to her cheek, caressing it. A moment between them. Then:

JENNY
(beat)
You like hanging out with me?

THOMAS
I do.

They begin to lean forward and KISS on the lips. It’s the first kiss between the two. MUSIC starts fading out, and we...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. THOMAS’S HOUSE – DINING ROOM – SOME DAYS LATER

Around the afternoon. Thomas sits at the table reading the DAILY NEWSPAPER. His eyes examine through today’s columns and headlines.

That’s when his mother Susan comes into dining room, sporting her AFTERNOON DRESS she’s wearing. Thomas feels her presence as he puts the paper down to have a look at his nicely-dressed mother.

THOMAS
Well, don’t you look stupendous!

SUSAN
(re: her dress)
What d’ya think? Haven’t wore this in years. Can’t believe it still fits.

THOMAS
I can tell.

A beat. Then;

THOMAS (CONT’D)
You going somewhere today?
SUSAN
Just to walk around town for a bit.
(beat)
Would you like to accompany me?

THOMAS
Sure. Just give me a few to get ready before we go.

EXT. SMALL TOWN – LATER – DAY
Both mother and son saunter around the streets, arm-in-arm. A variety of townspeople walk amongst them during their stroll.

THOMAS
You haven’t been outta the house in so long. Y’ sure you’re feeling all right for this?

SUSAN
Oh I’m more than sure of it. It’s no trouble at all. I needed to get out of that rigid house anyway.

A beat.

THOMAS
So how far are we going?

SUSAN
Only a few blocks. See what’s new around. What I’ve missed since the last I’ve been out here.

Susan glances at the store windows they’re passing. She instantly stops from walking, looks right into a store that’s displaying something OS she fancies. She might want to go in and have a look.

SUSAN
Well call me dandy... I think I might want to have a look at that.

THOMAS
You want me to join you?

SUSAN
I was thinking of checking it out for just a quick few moments.

THOMAS
Guess I’ll be waiting for you out here when you’re done?

SUSAN
I won’t be for long.
She makes her stride into the store. Thomas waits for her in meanwhile. He goes and stands by a pole, watching the large citifying crowd going about their destinations.

Suddenly:

GERARD (O.S.)
Hey Thomas!!

Thomas sees his friends Eric and Gerard come running for him and stop once they’ve approached him. Both are panting heavily, sweat trickling from their faces. They wait a moment to get their oxygens back. Breathless:

ERIC
Tho... Thomas... We got news for you...

GERARD
We... We’ve been lo... Looking all over...

They’re really out of breath.

THOMAS
You fellas alright?

We wait a moment. Then:

GERARD
(speaks normally)
Thomas. We got in!

THOMAS
Got in where...?

GERARD
The army, what else!

ERIC
That’s right. Me and Gerard have enlisted ourselves and we made the cut. Can you believe that, Thomas?! Now we get to go fight in the war.

Eric and Gerard are both ecstatic. Thomas shows his support.

THOMAS
Yeah, that’s good. I’m proud for you both.

GERARD
(to Thomas)
You got in as well.
Pause. Thomas looks like a deer facing the headlights. He’s got a nonplussed look on his face. Can’t seem to shake it off. Hardly budging.

THOMAS

What...?

GERARD

That’s right, bud! Me and Eric were able to put you on the list.

ERIC

So, wha’dya think, Thomas? Isn’t this great?! Now all three of us will be heading off to war. What d’ya say to that?

Thomas is strictly speechless, motionless. He’s in too much shock that he can barely suppress it. He didn’t expect this to happen to him today. He won’t respond.

Eric looks at Thomas like he’s gone crazy.

ERIC (CONT’D)

Okay -- perhaps you don’t get what we just told you.

GERARD

What’re you talking? Look at him for crying out loud. He’s got the picture.

ERIC

“The Three Musketeers” are going to fight the enemies! C’mon, Tom, try to say something at least?

Thomas is still unresponsive. He has to turn and look the other way... and that’s where he sees his mother Susan standing right there by the store she was just in. She’s already overheard the news. Can’t believe it herself. She looks like she’s going to dramatically pass out on the floor. But instead, she shows her futile support for Thomas:

SUSAN

Congratulations, son.

Thomas didn’t expect her to find out this way. It crushes him to see his mother finding out about it so suddenly. That he’s been enlisted in the army without his approval or recommendation.

Off Thomas’s look we... CUT TO:

INT. JENNY’S HOUSE – DINING ROOM – LATER TODAY

Thomas and Jenny sit at table. A calm, uneasy silence in the air.
Jenny's already been informed of Thomas joining the army unexpected. She's distraught, utterly speechless, vulnerable that the love of her life is about to be shipped off to war. She can barely hold it together. Emotionally conflicted that this is really happening to her. Thomas tries to ease the tension with his best reassured kind of words:

THOMAS
Look, I know it must be difficult, to see the prospective side on all of this. But Jenny, I want you know that it’s not going to change the fact that I don’t want to be with you anymore. I still wanna be with you. I really do. Just, promise that you won’t...

Abruptly she grabs a VASE on the table and HURLS IT AT THE WALL. The vase DISINTEGRATES. Fragments of the broken vase lie scattered on the floor. Jenny slowly starts tearing up. Thomas swallows, unnerved.

THOMAS
Jenny, I --

JENNY
Why did this happen all a sudden? Why?!

She bawls.

THOMAS
Jenny...

He consoles her. She feels like a real downer. This is not how she thought this day would go.

JENNY
I thought we were gonna be together.

THOMAS
We are together, Jen. We'll always be together.

JENNY
But what if you die out there? And then what?!

THOMAS
Jen... Come here.

He hugs her, tight. She gives back the hug. It lasts only for a moment. Then they separate.

JENNY
I don’t want you to go.
I’m sorry, Jen, but there’s nothing I can do.

Do you even love me?

A beat. Thomas thinks about that. Then shows his compassion:

I do love you, Jen. You know I do. Always will.

Then marry me.

Beat. Thomas is taken aback. She meant it. Though he seems discouraged by her proposal. After a moment to regain his strength:

Jenny, you know that we’ve only known each other for just a few weeks.

Why should it matter? So just a few weeks we’ve known each other. So what? I already feel like I already found the one, the one I wanna spend the rest of my life with. You.

She manages to stop her crying. Thomas takes it all in.

You sure about us getting married?

Why let it stop us now?

After a beat.

You’re sure about this?

Jenny smiles. She’s sure about it.

Yes. Let’s get married. At least before you leave.

Silence. They lock eyes. Seems like they’re definitely gonna go through with the arrangement. It’s official.

MUSIC carries over the new few scenes...
INT. THOMAS’S HOUSE - LIVING AREA - SOME DAYS LATER

Thomas (the Groom) and Jenny (the Bride) stand in front of the makeshift ALTAR as they’re about to get married. Thomas wears a cheap black suit, Jenny in a lovely white dress.

We see Eric, Gerard, Sammy and Samantha sitting in chairs right in front of the Groom and Bride, the well-wishers who’re about to bear witness of the two lovers getting married in a small ceremony.

See that Susan stands in the altar as the temporary minister, the one who’s about to marry the two.

Groom and Bride give their vows to one another. Then they both put on the rings. They kiss. A standing ovation from the well-wishers as Jenny and Thomas have officially been declared married.

INT. JENNY’S HOUSE - LATER - PRE-DUSK

Front door swings open. Thomas, still in suit, carries Jenny, still in her dress, in his hands as he tends to carry her all the way to the bedroom. Thomas manages to use his foot to close the door. They make their way to bedroom.

INT. JENNY’S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

We watch Thomas and Jenny, both half-undressed, on the bed together as they passionately start to MAKE OUT.

The MUSIC slowly FADES OUT, and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. JENNY’S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

CLOSE ON Jenny. She’s heavily asleep underneath the sheets, totally naked. She turns around in bed and her eyes open. She lifts her head up, groggy. Looks to the other side and sees that Thomas... isn’t right beside her in bed.

Jenny scans the whole room: he’s nowhere to be found. She starts thinking to herself, that maybe he’s already left. Alarmed all the sudden, Jenny springs out of bed...

CUT TO:

EXT. JENNY’S HOUSE - FIELDS - MOMENTS LATER

Jenny, fully dressed, rushes out the front door, goes for her bicycle which leans against the side of house, mounts it and starts pedaling...

EXT. AIRSTRIP TAR MAC - DAY

We watch the NEW ARMY RECRUITS (30 in the pack) about to make their way into a PLANE that’s nearly ready for takeoff.
In the group going into the plane we come to find: Thomas, Eric and Gerard. Our 3 boys are in their ARMY UNIFORMS, carry their belongings in duffel bags, filed in a single formation line.

Jenny arrives just in time and sees Thomas being the last person to go into plane. She takes full sprint after him.

    JENNY
    (shouting)
    Thomas...!!

Thomas turns around and sees his new wife charging after him.

    THOMAS
    Jenny...

Jenny finally reaches him as she WRAPS HER ARMS AROUND HIM. They embrace for what could be the last they’ll ever see each other.

    THOMAS
    ...Sorry I didn’t wake you up.
    (then)
    You’re a real heavy sleeper you know that?

    JENNY
    I only wanted to say, farewell.

They’re both lost in the moment. They eventually separate. Jenny leans into his ear and whispers:

    JENNY
    You promise me one thing, that you’ll make it back to me, as soon as you can.

    THOMAS
    I will.

She next hands him a faded PHOTO of herself. He takes it. The finalized moment between the newlyweds.

    JENNY
    Be sure to look after yourself.

Thomas nods. And then the moment of their final goodbyes is over. He turns and heads for the plane. Not even telling each other “I love you” once. Jenny watches him go, earnestly hoping that he’ll make it back soon in one piece.

    TIME CUT:

We watch as the PLANE takes off, ascending skyward. Those from below ground level watch the plane take off and disappear across the skies. Off the receding plane we...
Silence over black. Then after some moments, we hear:

MUSIC -- dramatic and uplifting.

FADE IN ON:

ECU – TWO BROWN EYES. They look out past the camera into space.

We PULL AWAY to reveal that the eyes belong to:

THOMAS. Geared and suited up in his ARMY TROOP UNIFORM. He sits crammed in the back of a CONVOY TRUCK, along with 14 OTHER MEN, also in their uniforms, their duffels sitting by their feet. See that ERIC and GERARD are seated in the truck as well across from Thomas. They both produce seemly confident demeanors, knowing that their country is depending on them in winning the war.

O.S. we hear a DRILL SERGEANT give a direct order:

DRILL SERGEANT (O.S.)
   Alright, let’s maneuver! Got a lot more troops coming in! Let’s keep it steady! Clear!

The Convoy STARTS TO MOVE... and we PULL OUT from it as we reveal:

EXT. AMERICAN ARMY PLATOON BASE CAMP – FOREIGN SOIL – DAY (1943)

The base is inhabited with hundreds, maybe THOUSANDS of MALE SOLDIERS as they’re all scattered about, a very testosterone environment.

WE TRACK WITH THE CONVOY mostly as it comes lumbering across a few of the scenes we’ll be encountering throughout the ride. We PASS BY -- Troops sitting on small craters, eating out of food cans; Troops settling in their tents; Troops playing kickball; Troops standing around; Troops walking around with their firearms strapped to their shoulders; Troops eating at tables talking animatedly; Troops lock and loading on some ammunition; etc.

The Convoy finally comes to take a break at:

EXT. THOMAS’S TENT RETREAT – OTHER SIDE OF BASE – DAY

The convoy parks outside from the tent retreat where Thomas and the other men in back are to be staying in. Exiting from the front passenger’s side of convoy is a SGT. ESCORT, 30s, stocky, strenuous in character, as he goes round back of the convoy, herding out all the men as they exit the truck along with their duffels.

SGT. ESCORT
   Alright, men, let’s move it! Hustle your feet! Let’s go!
Sgt. Escort leads them along the way into...

**INT. THOMAS’S TENT RETREAT – CONTINUOUS**

MUSIC finishes.

Every recruit finds their folding beds. Sgt. Escort addresses the men while they settle:

SGT. ESCORT

In here is where you’ll be keeping yourselves rested while you’re here in the army! Make sure to be up and ready tomorrow at o-five-hundred, sharp! Get plenty of rest Soldiers! Your country depends on it.

He then turns back around and retreats back for the convoy outside.

Thomas, Eric and Gerard unpack their things at their folding beds. Gerard decides to kick back on his bed as he plops his ass on it while everyone else continues unpacking their belongings and personal possessions.

**INT. SAME – NIGHT**

Resting hours. Everyone in the tent retreat is fast asleep in their folding beds. Some snore loudly in their sleep, one shifting in their bed. As we PAN AROUND the sleeping soldiers we come to find... THOMAS who is lying face-up in his bed, staring into the faded photo of Jenny she gave him before leaving. His eyes keep looking into photo with a longing and admiration.

CLOSE ON the PHOTO of Jenny. We hear her talking in the b/g in a VOICEOVER.

JENNY (V.O.)

You promise me one thing. That you’ll make it back to me. As soon as you can.

BACK TO SCENE

Thomas looks into photo for another few moments, then kisses Jenny’s forehead in photo and puts it away underneath his pillow. He tries going to sleep for the night.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

**EXT. A FIELD OF TALL GRASSES – ON ENEMY LINES – NEXT DAY**

We look at the GRASS lightly swaying from the wind. The FORESTS on opposite sides, as well as MOUNTAINS up ahead further down beyond.
It’s DEAD QUIET in the field. Only the desolation surrounds us. Then, out of nowhere:

AN ARMY OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS ENTER OUR FRAME FROM BEHIND CAMERA.

Thomas’s American platoon unit. They each have on their uniforms, clinging their hands tight on their rifles, helmets on their heads, some with emergency kits strapped to their backs, everyone’s huddled close together, keeping an alert eye around, on the lookout for anything nearby, as they furtively walk with purpose in the grass.

WE FIND Thomas somewhere in the pack. He too is dressed in uniform, with his rifle, helmet on head for protection, eyes scanning around cautiously, keeping himself huddled in his group.

We also find Eric and Gerard walking forward together from an opposite side. Gerard speaks sotto with Eric as they continually walk and survey their eyes around.

GERARD
(sotto, to Eric)
Where do you think they are, the Nazis?

ERIC
How should I know? That’s what we’re all trying to figure out.

Eric seems a bit frantic.

GERARD
They could be hiding anywhere out there.

ERIC
So make sure to keep a clear lookout for them.

GERARD
I know what I’m supposed to do. What makes you think that I don’t know what my own instincts are telling me to do?

ERIC
Stop talking. Keep a vigilance.

BACK WITH THOMAS: He’s still keeping an alerted watch for any signs of the enemy around the whole area. Momentarily one of the SOLDIERS, the CAPTAIN of the pack, raises a fist in the air and whisper shouts to his men: “Halt!” Everyone FREEZES. Not moving. Very still. The Captain thinks he may’ve heard something from afar in the distance ahead. He next gives the order: “Get down”. And GET DOWN they do. They’re now hidden within the tall grasses, on their stomachs, keeping camouflaged, remaining quiet.
ANGLE ON: Eric and Gerard as they keep themselves hidden in the grasses, trying to sneak a peek from above to see what’s out there.

GERARD
(sotto, to Eric)
What do you think the Captain heard?

ERIC
Have no idea. Maybe he’s being delusional. Or worst.

Gerard crouches beside Eric.

GERARD
Eric? In case we’re about to meet our demise today I just want you to know that you’ve been a truly great friend, and I’ll be willing to take a bullet for you with honor and --

ERIC
(no time for last-minute requests)
-- Yeah, yeah, recite it all back to me once we win this battle.

Eric tries to peer over the grasses for any signs of trouble.

GERARD
(buzzkill)
You’ve just managed to ruin the moment. I was opening myself out to you. Whatever happened to bros sticking out for other bros?

ERIC
Stop feeling bad for yourself, Gerard.
I have a feeling they’re watching us close out there, waiting for us to make the first move.

BACK TO THOMAS. He listens with a perked ear at the sounds of the gentle WIND and TREES howling nearby. It’s a very surreal moment.

The Captain then decides to LIFT HIS HEAD UP ABOVE THE GRASSES, so only his head is visible in the open. His head moves around, spying for anything. Nothing happens. Then: A WHIZZING NOISE... then suddenly -- Captain’s head gets BLOWN OFF. He falls like a rag doll on his stomach, a BULLET ripped its way through his head, lying there on the ground, DECEASED.

Then... a MULTITUDE of ricocheting GUNSHOTS from the trees FIRE AWAY on Thomas’s whole platoon. A ferocious BATTLE escalates. Everyone in platoon is panicked as they impulsively RETURN FIRE. Aiming their weapons and unleashing hellfire on the enemies nearby. The BATTLE grows intense and chaotic.
But we see that Thomas is cowering from the battle as he stays hidden in the grass while everyone else takes action. Troops disperse dodging the bullets, some get hit going down, waving their rifles around wildly pulling the trigger, running amok and take full cover, etc. The enemy is hidden somewhere in the trees from the left side, totally obscured from us with no traces as to where they’re located in there.

CLOSE ON: Thomas. He still cowers, helplessly. Suddenly gets GRABBED ON THE SLEEVE by one of his men, barking him an order—

SOLDIER #1
On your feet, soldier! We need to evacuate from this area! Get going!

Thomas forced to his feet, trying to keep a hunch as he runs like hell away from the battle scene, leaping over and deflecting past other soldiers, as he tries to make a full charge into the FORESTS ON THE RIGHT SIDE, AWAY FROM THE ENEMY WHO’RE ON OTHER SIDE.

EXT. FOREST/RIGHT SIDE – CONTINUOUS

Thomas and some of his other fellow soldiers take full refuge into the trees and hide behind them, returning fire andducking.

But Thomas doesn’t hide behind a tree or return fire as he continues taking charge, deeper in the forests...

MOMENTS LATER

Thomas becomes lost in the forests. He eventually takes a break from running as he hides behind a LARGE BOULDER. He’s panting like crazy, sweating profusely. Hear the DISTANT GUNSHOTS and GRENADE EXPLOSIONS back from where he came. Thomas grips his rifle tightly, breathing raggedly, trying to keep a composure. He pulls back the HAMMER of his rifle. Instinct starting to kick in. Knows he can’t just cower away from the battle forever for he needs to find the courage in him in going back there somehow. He takes his time to decide an answer.

SFX: SCUFFLED FEET APPROACHING.

Thomas hears a pair of feet approaching from behind the boulder. He hardly moves any muscle. Not sure if that’s one of his men or the enemy. Could it be the latter?

Thomas readies himself before springing into action. When suddenly, from out of thin air -- a GRENADE DROPS FROM THE AIR, landing and hitting the ground and stops INCHES AWAY from Thomas. Thomas sees the grenade, EYES WIDENING in horror as he attempts to leaf from the grenade as it EXPLODES: Thomas gets THROWN BACKWARDS, lands on his side hard, caught in a haze as everything GOES SILENT.

SFX: RINGING. HEART THROBBING.

Thomas feebly jerks his body around on the ground. Defenseless.
He must be losing his hearing aid. Only the RINGING accompanying the sound from within his head. Rolls over on his back. Eyes start to SHUT. Swooning. His consciousness FADING AWAY as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

The ringing intensifies more over black. It momentarily becomes SILENT.

SMASH CUT INTO:

ECU - THOMAS’S FACE - UNKNOWN SPACE

Both his eyes are shut. And then they SPRING OPEN. He GASPS. Bolts his head upright...

WIDEN OUT:

INT. CAVE SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Thomas finds himself inside a protective shelter. Has regained his consciousness. Sits up. His uniform filthy, hair disheveled and face smeared with dirt, but nonetheless he’s still in one piece.

GERARD (O.S.)
You’re alive.

Thomas freaked as he looks to his left and sees: Gerard looking back at him, sitting with his legs crossed, cleaner than Thomas, a grin of his face, his rifle laid down beside him, still alive and in one piece. He’s been watching Thomas sitting there for a while.

GERARD (CONT’D)
Thought we lost you forever, bud.

Thomas holds his stomach as he makes a GROAN; in pain. He looks to see a STEEL DOOR locked from the inside, the only way in and out of this shelter. Gerard lifts his dented CANTEEN and takes a slug of something liquid. He then hands his canteen over to Thomas, who takes it from his hand.

THOMAS
Gerard.
(takes a drink)

GERARD
Got the wind knocked right out of you, huh?

Thomas hands the canteen back to Gerard. He wonders.

THOMAS
Where’s Eric?

ERIC (O.S.)
Right here, amigo!
Emerging from a dark corner is Eric, also in one piece, still in uniform, carries his rifle. He approaches his two war buddies and takes a seat next to Gerard, snatches the canteen from Gerard and takes a large gulp. Eric clears his throat.

**ERIC**

Mmm. Man you would not believe how we made it outta there in one piece.

Gerard retrieves his canteen from Eric and puts it down aside.

**GERARD**

See that everyone’s still okay. All of ours limbs still intact.

**THOMAS**

That’s super to hear.

Thomas presses his back against the wall. Processing everything.

**ERIC**

(re: the shelter)

Can’t believe that we found this place.

**GERARD**

Yeah. Hope the enemy hasn’t rigged the place up, or else we’d be fucked by now.

Gerard gets to his feet.

**GERARD (CONT’D)**

If you’ll excuse me I have to defecate. Make sure to not go anywhere without me.

Gerard makes his way and disappears from Eric and Thomas. Silence for a moment. Then:

**THOMAS**

You know what time it is?

**ERIC**

Forgot to bring my pocket watch.

Thomas scans around the shelter. He’s determined.

**THOMAS**

There a chance they could be looking for us? Our guys?

**ERIC**

They better be.

Eric pulls out a PACK OF CIGARETTES from his uniform.
ERIC (CONT’D)
Otherwise why hide in here for some reason.

He next pulls out a MATCHSTICK, takes a single cigarette out from its packet, strikes his match, lights up his cigarette.

THOMAS
I didn’t know you smoked, Eric.

Eric blows out the flame from his match.

ERIC
It’s a nonpermanent habit of mine. I know it’s not good for your lungs and whatnot but why the hell do I care.

He takes a drag. Then blows out a cloud of smoke. It hits the direction of Thomas as he swipes it off him.

THOMAS
But didn’t you had asthma since you were six?

ERIC
Sure did. Luckily it all evaporated out of my system since I was 19.

He takes another hit from his cigarette. Thomas looks around the shelter.

THOMAS
Sure is nice and cozy in here.

ERIC
Yeah but all the dirt seems to be the real problem of this place.

Eric leans back a little, feeling at one with the smoke.

THOMAS
Think we should be heading back out there? What if the enemy finds us in here?

ERIC
Let’s weigh it out a little more. I wanna make it seem as though this is to be my last cigarette I’ll ever get to smoke.

He takes another hit. Blows the smoke out from his mouth. Thomas looks to Eric with a questionable thought up his sleeve. A beat.

THOMAS
Why’d you put me on the list?
Eric looks at him. Forthcoming to the question.

ERIC
Why not?

THOMAS
I never asked you to do that for me.

ERIC
You say it like it’s a bad thing.

Thomas shoots Eric a look.

ERIC (CONT’D)
Hey. Don’t give me that look. This is what you wanted, right? Weren’t you the one who said you wanted to be like your father?

Thomas looks sheepish.

THOMAS
...Just wasn’t ready for it.

Eric has a feeling in his thought. Simply gets it.

ERIC
Oh, I see. It’s because of Jenny, isn’t it?

THOMAS
You got me.

ERIC
(after a beat)
She never wanted you to go.

THOMAS
(pause)
At first...

ERIC
Alright, let’s just get past the fact that you abandoned her to join in the army against my wishes. You should be lucky and grateful you even have her in the first place. And yet look at me -- I’m all alone.

Gerard calls out from in a different part of the shelter.

GERARD (O.S.)
Hey don’t forget, you still have me, remember?!
Eric calls back at Gerard.

**ERIC**
Yeah I hear you, Gerard! Just...
Resume with your duty...!

Eric suddenly finds himself LAUGHING. “Duty”.

Thomas can’t help but laugh, too.

**THOMAS**
Not alone, huh? Always thought that you and Gerard might end up being together.

**ERIC**
Don’t get me started.

They stop laughing. A beat, then:

**THOMAS**
You know that Sammy loves Gerard?

Eric gives a look of concern.

**ERIC**
Really??

**THOMAS**
Yeah. But don’t tell him that I told you, it’s kind of a secret.

**ERIC**
I hear ya. My lips are concealed.

Moment of silence. Then:

**THOMAS**
Were your parents worried, when you got enlisted in the army?

**ERIC**
‘Course they were. See that’s a thing about parents; always left feeling worried every time their own children are sent off to go fight in the wars. But Gerard has got it even harder though. He’s been living with his grandparents ever since his parents got killed in a car accident when he was thirteen. He was left feeling traumatized for a while. I’ve always been there for Gerard, and he’s been there for me as well.

(MORE)
ERIC (CONT’D)
Y’know everybody’s gotta have someone important in their lives during this despicable time in life. You never know what type of severe things are gonna come right at you, even if you see it coming straight for you.

Eric takes another hit. Blows out the smoke. A beat.

ERIC (CONT’D)
Man. Who woulda thought that these days couldn’t get any better. I only hope that someday in the not-too-distant future once the world gets back on its feet I’m gonna see the emerald bright light reaching down over on me. It’ll be a miraculous sight to behold upon, if it ever does come.

He stubs out his cigarette. Wipes his hands off.

ERIC (CONT’D)
You know I’ve be thinking, that maybe once I make it outta here I should start my own charity fundraiser. I’ve always wanted to help out on others, those who need saving the most. My parents think it’s a good start on my work ethics. They’ve always told me I should toughen up and find a way to develop my own pathway into life.

(beat; then)
Parents, you know. They always want to support you, every step of the way.

Eric starts to pull out from his uniform a flask, which possibly contains alcohol in it.

ERIC
I could tell that that’s what your father would’ve wanted for you, to create a path you wanna spend on for the rest of your life.

THOMAS
Father was a true saint. He loved every one of us in the family.

ERIC
Everyone’s got a dead relative somewhere.
Eric takes a swig of his flask.

ERIC
Aww... That’s some good stuff.

Moment. Then:

ERIC (CONT’D)
Jesus -- what’s taking Gerard so long?

He calls out to Gerard.

ERIC
Hey, Gerard, what’re you doing back there?!

GERARD (O.S.)
(from the distance)
Taking a shit, what else does it sound like?!

Eric looks back at Thomas. He starts cracking up a bit.

ERIC (re: Gerard)
That dude’s been goin’ at it for like five minutes already. I mean how long does it take for someone to take a number two for?

Thomas refers to the flask in Eric’s hand.

THOMAS
Can I have a swig at that?

ERIC
Be my guest.

Eric hands his flask over graciously to Thomas, who takes it. Thomas squints one eye and has a look inside the flask.

THOMAS
What is this stuff, anyway?

ERIC
It’s whiskey. Try it.

Thomas takes a swig of whiskey -- then immediately squirts it out of his mouth, didn’t like the taste of it. He makes a grimace face.

THOMAS
Shit -- that tasted bitter.

ERIC
It’s cuz it’s alcohol.
He retrieves his flask, puts it away.

ERIC (CONT’D)
Someone ought to start drinking more.

THOMAS
Or less.

Suddenly they hear a DISTANT EXPLOSION from outside, as well as continuing GUNFIRES. The battle is still going on.

ERIC
Guess it must’ve been going on for like an eternity out there.

THOMAS
I think we’ve loafed around for long enough don’t you think?

Eric grabs and keeps a firm grip of his rifle.

ERIC
I’ll betcha I could kill every single one of ’em German Nazis as soon as they come bursting in from that door over there. Yet suddenly I’m also getting the scent that I may not have the gutsy feeling in me anymore into doing it.

Gerard suddenly appears from a dim corner as he goes to rejoin his friends, sitting right next to Eric.

GERARD
How you guys doin’? Sorry I took so long.

ERIC
We were starting to worry that you might’ve ran out on us.

GERARD
What? What you talkin’ about?! C’mon, don’t be ridiculous. I’m here aren’t I?

THOMAS
You guys sure do make a perfect odd couple.

A beat of silence.

ERIC
(then:)
Think it’s safe yet for us to be heading back out there?
GERARD
Why don’t I have a looksee.

Gerard gets back up and goes toward the steel door. He looks through a secret peephole and sees what’s outside.

ERIC
What do you see, Gerard?

GERARD
(looking through peephole)

He turns his head and looks at his friend.

GERARD (CONT’D)
I think it’s safe to go out.

ERIC
You heard the man. On your feet, soldiers!

They gather their gear, fix their uniforms as they prepare to go back out into the field.

EXT. FOREST – MOMENTS LATER – DAY

Thomas, Eric and Gerard scour around the forests as they trek their way back to their unit. Their weapons poised. Suddenly Thomas hears a DISTANT CRY FOR HELP that’s close. They stop.

THOMAS
Hold it! You guys hear that?

Thomas snaps to and starts to go for the call, with Eric and Gerard following behind.

EXT. DIFFERENT PART OF FOREST – BIT LATER

They eventually come to find an INJURED TROOP (20s) from their side as he’s on the ground bloodied and wounded. The Injured Troop bleeds from his right shoulder where the bullet ripped its way through it. Our 3 boys go and help the poor hapless Troop out.

ERIC
Hey. You okay there, trooper?

GERARD
What happened? Where’s our unit at?

INJURED TROOP
...Damn Nazi bastards ripped a bullet through my damn shoulder!
They help the injured man on his feet.

ERIC
Where’d everyone go? Did they retreat back to base?

INJURED TROOP
(grows hoarse)
We were outnumbered. Everyone one of us got scattered. There was nothing we could’ve done to stop... Ahh!!

He YELPS in pain. He’s losing blood. They need to get going if they want to save the injured troop’s life.

INJURED TROOP (CONT’D)
Ow! Shit--! I’m losing blood...!

GERARD
It’s alright, we got you. Just gotta keep moving if we wanna make it back to the base.

Eric and Gerard support the Injured Troop on his feet holding him by the shoulders as they proceed their search, Thomas holds his rifle close by as they head off.

EXT. TALL GRASSES/FORESTS – LATER

Subsequently they arrive back to where the main battle took place. They come across: a collection of DEAD BODIES (Thomas’s platoon unit) spread all around on the ground, the sight of a violent massacre gone wrong. Thomas, Eric, Gerard and Injured Troop avert their locks from the gruesome sight as they move onward.

INJURED TROOP
(glimpsing the bodies)
There’s something I’m never gonna get out of my mind.

ERIC
Just look away, we must be getting close.

They come near a trail which leads towards the mountains up ahead...

EXT. HILLTOP – SOME TIME LATER – DAY

They crest their way up the hill; a view of the extensive horizon far as the naked eye can see, a beautiful imagery. Injured Troop as he’s being carried over looks like he’s gonna pass out from all the blood loss; he might not make it back in time.

SFX: DISTANT GUNSHOT FROM BEHIND.
They stop and whip their heads back to see where the gunshot came from.

THOMAS
Where do you think that gunshot came from?

GERARD
My guess would be just a few miles from the west lane.

ERIC
We should keep movin’. It’s not save in these parts.

They start moving. Suddenly... WHIZZZZZZ -- BAM!

Injured Troop GOT SHOT IN THE BACK OF THE HEAD and his body slumps. Eric and Gerard drop the body and impulsively dive for cover as well as Thomas. They pull out their weapons... returning fire! They hid behind a bunch of rocks; Eric and Gerard on one side, while Thomas is alone on another. The RICOCHET of bullets.

Thomas about to shoot his last bullet... weapon malfunctions. He tries reloading it, when... A GRENADE EXPLOSION nearly knocks the wind off Thomas as he gets TOSSED BACKWARDS, lands on his back, caught in yet another haze. RINGING coming from in his head. Thomas tries to move his body around, looks to see where Eric and Gerard are. Can’t see or find them. Thomas rolls on his stomach, tries crawling. But he’s starting to feel swoony, grows weak. He starts passing out on the ground, face down, drifting into an utter BLACKOUT...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. EMERGENCY TENT - BACK AT BASE CAMP - LATER THAT (DAY)

CLOSE ON Thomas’s face as he sleeps on an emergency bed. His eyes FLUTTER OPEN.

WIDEN OUT: Still in his uniform, boots off, a bandage wrapped around his head, still in one piece. He tries lifting his head up, MOANS, sitting up. He looks at his surroundings, doesn’t know how he got here.

A sergeant, SGT. MACKEY, 28, enters the tent and stands at a respectable distance from Thomas’s bed. He lacks a physical use of intensity and toughness, looking very much like a pro athlete than a soldier of war, someone whose seen it all, with an expressionless face, well-built and strong-minded.

Thomas slowly coming to as he looks to the sergeant.

THOMAS
...What happened out there?
SGT. MACKEY
The unimaginably unthinkable happened.

Thomas GRUNTS, still going through a physical pain in his system.

SGT. MACKEY
You got lucky that our men were able to find you and pull you out of there on time.

THOMAS
How many men are left?

SGT. MACKEY
Only a few. There were a lot of those who didn’t make it.

Thomas remains silent a few seconds, and then:

THOMAS
What about those two soldiers I was with? Where are they?

Sgt. Mackey produces his sympathetic face.

SGT. MACKEY
(beat)
They didn’t make it.

Thomas looks sad. The dejection hitting him hard.

THOMAS
What...??

SGT. MACKEY
You only have a minor concussion around the head. Couple stitches will heal it right up.

(then)
I’m Sergeant Mackey by the way.

And right then a LT. COLONEL (late 40s) steps into the tent, Mackey feeling his presence as he turns around to face the Colonel. Mackey steps forward and stops in front of the Colonel. The Colonel whispers something into Mackey’s ear. Thomas just sits there watching the Lt. Colonel whispering inaudibly to Mackey for a moment. Colonel then turns back and retreats outside. Mackey looks back at Thomas. Duty calls for him.

SGT. MACKEY
You have to excuse me I must be heading out. Make sure to get enough rest. You’re gonna need it for when you’re back in the field.
Mackey then turns and struts right out from the tent.

Thomas is left to his own devices. He sits there as he silently lingers. Can he really go through with it more?

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**EXT. BATTLEFIELD - SLOW MOTION - FEW DAYS LATER**

A **BAND** of **AMERICAN SOLDIERS** enter our frame. Thomas is somewhere assembled in the group, as they all brace for **IMPACT**, they **MARCH** towards the enemy. **OPEN FIRE**. Thomas takes part of the action this time, suddenly a newfound warrior who’s already found his courage as he’s yet to become one of America’s greatest war heroes. The continuing **BATTLE** extends furthermore, even in **SLO-MO**.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. EMERGENCY TENT - ARMY BASE CAMP - LATER - DAY**

It’s later today after that last battle. On an emergency bed lies a **WOUNDED SOLDIER** (20s), lean and muscular, though at the moment he looks extremely **PALE** as blood gushes out from one of his **KNEECAPS**, roughly being treated by a **TEAM** of **PARAMEDICS** as they try fixing his wound. The Wounded Soldier **SCREECHES** in a raging, agonizing pain during the whole operation. He so badly wants to be put out of his misery.

**WOUNDED SOLDIER**

*Goddamn! AHH!! Son of a BITCH! Get me some more morphine, doc!*

**PARAMEDIC #1**

Just hang tight we’re doing the best we can.

Wounded Soldier takes his hand and grabs the Paramedic from his sleeve.

**WOUNDED SOLDIER**

You give me more morphine or so help me god I’m gonna -- AAAAAHHH!!

The pain is too much for him. He lies back down, defeated.

**WOUNDED SOLDIER (CONT’D)**

God help me...!

**REVERSE ANGLE** -- Thomas in uniform watches from feet away as the Paramedics continue doctoring on the Wounded Soldier’s kneecap. He sits there contemplating the scene, somberly wondering for a moment what it would feel like to be in that situation.

Off Thomas’s reaction...
EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP - EATING AREA - DAY

Later. Sitting at a table are a BAND OF TROOPS (all around their 20s) as they eat from their trays and have conversations (DIALOG in this scene to be IMPROVISED). They talk about their loved ones back home, future dream jobs, their days in the battlefield, etc.

Thomas sits by himself at an empty table eating his food off a tray. Doesn’t bother to look to his peers as he feels like an intruder at some exclusive party, very uninterested in joining them. We then CUT TO:

BLACK.

Silence. Then...

FADE UP ON;

INT. JENNY’S BEDROOM - NIGHT (DREAM SEQUENCE)

ON JENNY. Sitting on edge of her bed in her bedroom. Her head stares at the floor. Then it momentarily looks up. Staring RIGHT AT US. She delivers a warm SMILE. Suddenly, a LOUD WHISPER from behind camera...

A MALE’S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey...! Wake up!

INT. THOMAS’S TENT RETREAT - LATE AT NIGHT - REALITY

Thomas in bed awakes from his dream. He looks up, dreary, at the darkness ahead. He sees a DARK, SILHOUETTED FIGURE hovering by the bed looking down at Thomas. The figure steps into the briefness of light, casting an illumination of his face. The figure appears to be: A YOUNG AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAN. He’s the male’s voice. In his mid-20s. Wears a troop uniform. He looks down at Thomas on the bed, as Thomas grows uneasy by his presence. The African-American troop (ANTOINE as we’ll come to know him) sits on the edge of Thomas’s bed. He looks back at Thomas with self-purposefulness as he talks in a low voice:

ANTOINE

Your name’s Thomas?

Thomas has no idea what this guy wants with him.

THOMAS

(lowly)

Do I know you?

ANTOINE

You can call me Antoine.

Antoine turns, eyes scanning the whole interior of the tent. Every soldier in here is DEAD ASLEEP. Thomas grows more curious on what Antoine wants from him. They whisper the whole time.
THOMAS
There something you want from me?

Antoine turns his attention back on Thomas.

ANTOINE
I could tell you don’t like being here.

THOMAS
How do you mean?

Thomas sits up. Eyes fixed on Antoine.

ANTOINE
You feel as though there’s no true purpose or complexion as to why we’re fightin’ and killin’ only for the hell of it. You feel like you never asked to come here in first place.

THOMAS
Not sure where you’re going with this.

A beat.

ANTOINE
I’ve seen men who’ve been through worst, feeling as though they’re missing something most important to them in their life.

(beat)
You seem as though you’re missing something, too. I would know just by a simple look at them.

THOMAS
Missing what exactly?

ANTOINE
What’s the most important thing in your life right now, Thomas?

Thomas ponders. His simplest answer:

THOMAS
My family.

ANTOINE
Your father?

Beat.
THOMAS
My father’s dead.

ANTOINE
I’m sorry to hear.
(then, after a beat)
He was a lieutenant colonel, am I right?

Pause.

THOMAS
Yeah... He was. How did you...?

ANTOINE
I’ve met him once before. He mentioned you at some point through our first and only conversation. He was a good gentleman.

THOMAS
Were you there when he got killed in the field?

ANTOINE
No. I wasn’t.

THOMAS
(after a beat)
My father talked to you, about...?

ANTOINE
It was right before he was assigned to leave on what would be his last mission. I could see from the look of his eye that you and your family meant so much to him. Kind of the same way I felt for my family.

A beat. Then:

ANTOINE (CONT’D)
Do you miss your family, Thomas?

THOMAS
Every day while I’m breathing.

ANTOINE
There a special lady back home?

THOMAS
Yeah, there’s a special lady.

ANTOINE
Did you two tie the knot?
THOMAS
Uh-huh. It was right before I
got shipped off.

ANTOINE
She wouldn’t happen to have told
you to make it back to her after
some time, would she?

Thomas decides carefully.

THOMAS
Yeah, she did.

ANTOINE
How long ago since you two last
seen each other?

THOMAS
Nine months.

ANTOINE
Go back to her.

Thomas STUNNED.

THOMAS
What?

ANTOINE
You don’t want to risk another day
here in your young life to try and
get yourself killed, do you? I’ll
bet she’s missing you so much that
it’s killing her. And what if one
day she decided to move on without
you, thinking you might’ve died or
won’t ever come back?

Antoine eases back.

ANTOINE (CONT’D)
I know I shouldn’t be telling you
this. Truth is, it ain’t right, to
see those you love fade away from
your memory not knowing if you’ll
ever get to see them again after all
this.

His voice grows SOBER.

ANTOINE (CONT’D)
I’m really all that I got for my
family back where I’m from. Would
hate to see their faces in knowing
that I may never return to them.
ANTOINE (CONT’D)
Family is the one thing that keeps a person on their feet.

THOMAS
You’re telling me I should make it back to my wife, now??

ANTOINE
What is your gut telling you?

Thomas ponders. Then:

THOMAS
And how am I to pull it off?

ANTOINE
(matter-of-fact)
There’s a large tugboat down at the shoreline from just a mile away from here that’s about to ship itself back into the states carrying a few box containers and crates for deportation. It leaves precisely at six this morning. It’ll be the last shipment to sail off across the coast until the next three months.

THOMAS
How do you know for sure there’s a boat out there?

ANTOINE
I know almost everything that goes around the base. I’ve lived here for the last seven years straight. I know all the schedules.

THOMAS
Have you ever tried going to the boat yourself.

ANTOINE
Nah, I haven’t.
(beat, then)
Just isn’t my time yet.

Thomas thinks. It seems as though he’s urging to make it to the boat before it ships off, convinced that he should return immediately to his family and loved one. Thomas gets off from his folding bed, trying to keep the noise down quietly as he looks back at Antoine.

THOMAS
What time is it right now?
Antoine takes out and looks at his pocket watch.

ANTOINE
Already two after five.

Thomas begins to pack up his things in a bag, stuffing everything valuable to him in it for his upcoming imminent quest.

THOMAS
How far away is the shoreline?

ANTOINE
About two or three kilometers from where we are.

THOMAS
Will I make it to the tugboat on time?

ANTOINE
If you act quickly. You’re also gonna need some supplies; food, water, and other stuff for your journey before you head your way over there.

THOMAS
I think there’s more of that on the other side of camp.

ANTOINE
I’ll help you with that. Have to make sure though that we don’t get seen. Wouldn’t want anyone here thinking that two of their men are abandoning the mission without receiving a notification or permission slip at firsthand.

THOMAS
Got it.

Thomas continues packing. He slips on his boots.

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP – EARLY PEAK OF DAWN

Antoine and Thomas walk around the encampment while undetected. Thomas has on a thick coat and carries his LARGE PACK over him, which contains his personal stuff and sufficient supplies to go for his journey. There doesn’t seem to be another living soul out at this early morning, everyone else still fast asleep in their tents.

ANTOINE
I should probably warn out that once the boat makes it to shore...

(MORE)
...you might have to either get a map or compass to know which way your home’s at.

THOMAS
I’ll keep that in mind.

ANTOINE
Depending on where you’re going you either might have to drive a car or just start walking thereon.

THOMAS
I’ll stick with the walking.

ANTOINE
Sure you can handle that?

Thomas shows a little hesitancy.

THOMAS
Yeah. I think so.

They walk out of base.

EXT. DOCKS – SHORELINE – EARLY SUNRISE

Still dark out but we can make out the first sunbeams of morning up on the horizon. Antoine leads Thomas towards a WISHING WELL. They hid behind it. See up ahead at the docks: a TUGBOAT with men deporting a few box containers and wooded crates onboard.

ANTOINE
You’re just in time.

(beat)
This is where I stop. You’re practically on your own at this point. Sorry I can’t help you with the rest.

Thomas inferred.

THOMAS
That’s all right. I can manage.

Both look as though they won’t be seeing each other after this. They courteously shake hands.

ANTOINE
Good luck on your trip.

THOMAS
Thanks. Thanks for letting me do this.
ANTOINE
Remember and make sure to not let anyone down there sees you entering the boat.

THOMAS
Be as quiet as a mouse.

A beat. The final moment between them.

ANTOINE
This is goodbye, Thomas. See you in the next life.

Antoine receives a thank you glance from Thomas. Antoine then turns and heads back for base. Thomas watches Antoine recede away a brief moment, then looks back to the docks. And as we watch Antoine head back... he VANISHES FROM THIN AIR. A figment of Thomas’s imagination.

Thomas, unbeknownst to Antoine’s disappearance finds the will in him as he now makes his stride down towards the shoreline.

EXT. DOCKS/SHORELINE – ONBOARD OF TUGBOAT – MOMENTS LATER

Thomas sneaks a way into tugboat from a back-entrance gangplank.

TIME CUT:

The Tugboat’s engine turns on as it starts chugging its way off from the shoreline and into the open sea waters.

Thomas hides from behind one of the large containers, his pack off him sitting by his side, watching and taking a good, long look back at the place where he fought many battles. The SUN RISES from the horizon. A sight to behold.

FADE OUT.

Silence over black. It starts to feel like we’re about to face intermission.

Instead we find that we’re in --

EXT. WILDERNESS – BACK ON U.S. SOIL – DAY (1944)

We’re looking up and speculate at a row of TOWERING TREES, the leaves on branches rustle from the wind.

CUT TO:

ON A STREAMING RIVER -- from a low angle we watch a tribe of trout fishes swimming aimlessly in the waters. Then suddenly... A HUMAN BOOT comes INTO FRAME, STOMPING in the waters scaring the fish away. WIDEN OUT TO REVEAL: Thomas as he crosses through the stream with his pack over him.
He’s already on the brink of growing a scruffy beard. Carries a thick long stick he uses as a staff. A beanie which he wears over his full head of hair. Looks a lot like a homeless person, someone whose grown weary and with his clothes rumpled-up. Has been journeying for some months. And as he makes his way across the stream we...

EXT. OPEN ROAD/OUTSKIRTS OF A TOWN – DAY

Thomas walks among a stranded, gravel paved road, away from the outskirts of an unknown town he’s passing through. Even while on the road Thomas looks very much like a hitchhiker, though he never does seem to stick a thumb out or hail for an oncoming vehicle to hitch him a ride.

EXT. VAST LANDSCAPES – VARIOUS – DAY

Thomas comes through more landscapes; remote countryside’s, rolling hills, lush continents, etc. as we take time to marvel at these images.

EXT. SUMMIT – SUNSET

Watch as the fireball sets from the summit.

EXT. FORESTS #1 – CLEARING – DUSK

Thomas comes to a sparse clearing which makes for the perfect place to rest for the night. He takes off his large pack, set it down from aside, puts down his stick.

Thomas sits on a tree log, takes off both his boots giving his sore feet a nice rub.

Thomas preps up his sleeping bag.

Thomas constantly flicks two stones together to get the fire going and make campfire.

NIGHTTIME – LATER
Thomas settles in his sleeping bag near the blaze he built. He lies on his side, facing the roaring fire. He shuts his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAME - NEXT MORNING

Fire has died out from overnight. Thomas still asleep in his bag, cocooned in it. There’s a silence in the air. Then suddenly...

SFX: A TWIG SNAP FROM A NEARBY DISTANCE

The sound makes Thomas wake up. Groggily he opens his eyes, seeing blurs all around, no sudden movements.

THOMAS
Hello?!

Nothing. Thinking that the sound has vanished and moved on he closes his eyes, back to sleeping. Quiet. Then:

SFX: SECOND TWIG SNAP, CLOSER NOW

Thomas suddenly wakes back up. Senses there’s DANGER nearby. Alert and vigil, he gets up and goes for his large pack. He zips it open, rummages around in it...

SFX: A PAIR OF PAWS APPROACHING

Thomas finally yanks out a .32 COLT SINGLE ACTION ARMY REVOLVER, cocks its hammer, whips around, aiming his weapon at:

A GRAY WOLF PUP

Only a couple months old. Looks very harmless. Standing 12 feet away from Thomas.

Thomas stares at the wolf pup, not sure if he’s about to face an impending doom, keeps his gun aimed at the pup, finger close to the trigger, keeping stiff. The wolf pup gives no signs of danger or peril. It begins to sniff the ground, investigates, possibly for food.

Thomas sees that the pup is harmless as he lowers his weapon with profound relief. He looks at the pup sniffing around for something. Thomas goes back for his pack, digging his hand around in it, and momentarily comes up with a single PEAR in his hand. Thomas turns back to the pup, who is closer now, as he tries to offer the pear to the pup.

THOMAS
Hey...! You hungry?

Pup senses the pear. It starts to approach it. Thomas keeps his nerves calm. He tosses the pear over to the pup which lands in front of it. Pup stares down at the pear. Bows its head to it.
Pup sniffs the pear. Starts to take a nibble. Then it brusquely chews it whole. Pup eats the pear up.

Thomas gets out from his sleeping bag, folds it up. He packs up everything. Gets his boots back on. He tries to attach the straps on him.

He’s finally ready. Now makes his way out of the clearing and back to the journey. But he stops short for a moment. Turns his head around and looks back to see: the wolf pup has followed him, looking up at Thomas with the puppy eyes, wondering if he has more food in him. Thomas turns his head away from the pup, processing. He then resumes walking. Calls back to the pup:

THOMAS
Should go and look for your family!
It’s not safe being alone out here!

The pup sits there watching Thomas depart from the forests...

CUE MUSIC.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD/VAST PLAINS – DAY

Thomas hitchhikes. Nature surrounds him in both corners. He peruses a map he carries, trying to figure which route to go. There are no other persons or vehicles in sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD OF GRASS – DAY

Thomas walks his way through the isolated field of green grass, trying to reach further up ahead: the mountains. We see that there are storm clouds approaching up on the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILLOWS/ MOUNTAIN – FEW MOMENTS LATER

It’s drizzling rain. Claps of thunder. Thomas passing through the willow part of the mountains, his pack and clothes drenched with rain water as he scavenges for a way out of the area.

CUT TO:

EXT. TBD – DAY

Thomas embarks past more various areas: rural countryside’s, couple undisclosed mid-sized towns, few cultural villages, as he checks his map during the sequence.

CUT TO:

EXT. CROP OF CORNFIELD – TRAIL ROAD – DAY
Music finishes.

Thomas waltzes down an infinite valley stalk of corn, eating from a peach in his hand. He conspicuously comes to find an unpaved trail: which leads towards the direction of a FARMHOUSE. We can hear some sort of tumultuous RUCKUS going on at the farmhouse, a FAINT CLANKING of some sort.

Wanting to figure out what the hubbub is, Thomas begins his stride on the trail heading for the farmhouse...

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMHOUSE – SOME MOMENTS LATER

At the side of the farmhouse a GEEZER FARMER (80), scruffy white beard, withered, someone whose been through many years of hard laboring, is fumbling with his MOTOR from the front hood of an OLD FORD CONVERTIBLE. Farmer CURSES under his breath, having difficulty in trying to fix his motor.

Thomas comes trotting his way up to the farmhouse. He releases the pack off him, puts his stick down and approaches the Farmer at his convertible. Farmer suddenly looks up and sees Thomas approaching him.

THOMAS
Hi there!

FARMER
(folksy)
And who are you, young man?

Thomas approaches the hood. Looks to the motor.

THOMAS
Having trouble getting your vehicle started?

FARMER
Indeed. For some reason this old precious baby of mine can’t start due to some critical condition.

THOMAS
Lemme see if I can help fix the problem.

It appears that Thomas knows a thing or two about motors. He inspects the motor, trying to figure out the problem. Farmer watches him at work.

FARMER
You a hitchhiker?

Thomas pauses for just a brief moment.
THOMAS

Not really. Just passing through here is all.

Thomas stays concentrated as he tries to expertly figure what’s wrong with the motor. Farmer doesn’t speak another word as he stands to the side, remaining silent. Thomas eventually looks and sees that a tube has been unattached. He grabs the tube and attaches it back to its originated spot. A sigh of relief from Thomas.

THOMAS

Okay. Get behind the wheel and start ‘er up.

Farmer goes and gets behind the wheel of his convertible. He leaves his door open as he slips the key in the ignition, turns it over: THE ENGINE SPUTTERS TO LIFE. It’s fixed.

Thomas smiles. He’s fixed the old man’s vehicle. Listen to the engine purring. Thomas closes the hood shut. Farmer turns off the engine, climbs out. He goes over and gives his thanks to the stranger who helped fix his convertible’s motor.

FARMER

Phew-ee! Well I’ll be... Never thought that she’d work again this convertible. Thanks for your assistance, young man.

THOMAS

Glad to be of service.

They extend hands and shake.

FARMER

You from around here?

THOMAS

Uh, no.

FARMER

(after a beat)

My name’s Richard.

THOMAS

Thomas.

RICHARD

Wanna thank you again, Thomas, for getting my vehicle workin’ once more.

THOMAS

A good thing I was walking by to help out.
He turns and makes it for his pack and stick.

RICHARD
Y’know if you want you’re more than welcome inside for a bit to have somethin’ to eat.

THOMAS
That’s very generous of you, but I should be on my way.

RICHARD
It’ll just be for a few minutes. I insist.

Thomas ponders it.

INT. DINING ROOM – FARMHOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

Thomas sits at the table of the dingy dining room, a cup full of something liquid in his hand. Richard comes over and sits across the table, cup of something liquid in his hand.

RICHARD
I don’t normally under any circumstance ask for anyone passing by here to come into my home before for hospitality.

He sips his drink. Then, looks to Thomas:

RICHARD (CONT’D)
But I can tell from the look of ya that you’re different.

THOMAS
(quizzical)
How so...?

Richard doesn’t have a straight answer in him.

RICHARD
Ahh... I don’t know. Guess I must be too absentminded to explain it more accurately.

Richard takes a sip of his drink. A moment of silence.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
If you don’t mind me asking, where is it that you came from?

Thomas sips his drink. Takes a few seconds to decide an answer.

THOMAS
... I was in the army.
Richard seems surprised.

RICHARD
The army? Really?

Thomas nods his head. Really.

RICHARD
So, what’ve you been up to since the army? Did they make up take a leave of absence?

Thomas stiffens. It seems as though he doesn’t want to expose the fact that he snuck out from the army, afraid if he explained himself it would seem like something only a traitorous coward would do. After a few seconds later he’s come up with an alibi:

THOMAS
Uh, yeah. It turns out that I suffer from these... anxiety attacks. Didn’t realized I had them in me this whole time.

Richard thinks to himself with a considerable thought: you don’t say.

RICHARD
Sorry to hear.

Thomas droops. He takes a breath and looks back up.

THOMAS
Guess everyone who wants to join isn’t suitable enough to fit in the army, eh?

He chuckles sheepishly.

RICHARD
I guess so.

Moment of silence. A beat, then:

RICHARD (CONT’D)
You got any family?

THOMAS
(simply)
Yeah.

RICHARD
(beat)
Spouse?

Pause.
THOMAS
Yeah.

RICHARD
It’s a girl ain’t it?

THOMAS
(after a beat)
Yep. Wife, actually.

RICHARD
A married man I see!

Thomas half-smiles.

RICHARD
How long you been married?

THOMAS
Nearly two years.

RICHARD
(mind wanders)
She must be a keeper...

Takes sip of his drink. Sets it down after. Then, a beat:

RICHARD (CONT’D)
I had me a grandson who was actually in the army.
(points at something past CAMERA)
That’s him in the middle.

Thomas cocks his head and looks to the wall to see: A FRAMED PICTURE PORTRAIT of: Richard (75) standing on the left, his wife (60s) on right side, and the GRANDSON (15) in the middle.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Name was Arthur. Died at only 20-years-old in combat.

CLOSE ON Thomas. He stares at the portrait of Arthur with a thought in his mind, coming to realize who that person in the photo is... CUT BACK IN TIME:

EXT. FORESTS/GERMAN SOIL – DAY (FLASHBACK)

Inaudible throughout. The scene where Thomas, Eric and Gerard help the Injured Troop (ARTHUR) on his feet with the bullet wound in his shoulder, making their way out of the forests...

CUT BACK IN REAL TIME:

INT. DINING ROOM – FARMHOUSE – SAME AS BEFORE
Thomas lingers on Arthur in the portrait another moment. Then turns back to face Richard at the far end of table.

RICHARD
He was half-Irish. The Irish part from his mother’s side. Father was Caucasian American. Her mother got deported back to Ireland after her green card expired. The father... Well, let’s just say he’s in a better place now. Arthur was only five when me and my wife took him in and saved him from facing transference like her mother... Raised him all his life.

A beat as Richard goes SILENT. The whole feeling sinking in.

RICHARD (CONT’D)
(then)
My wife Michelle has been dead for two years now.

A somberness in Richard’s tone:

RICHARD (CONT’D)
Truth of a matter is, I’m all that is left of this entire farm.

Thomas look at him, feels Richard’s pain.

THOMAS
Must be tough having gone through all that on your own.

RICHARD
Indeed...

Richard’s eyes droop. Feeling saddened. Takes a tepid sip of his drink. Then:

RICHARD
Did you ever lose someone close to you, Thomas?

THOMAS
(after a moment)
Yeah, my father. About two years ago.

RICHARD
My condolences.

RICHARD
How long have you walked?

Thomas figures out the calculations in his head.

THOMAS
Two... perhaps three months...

RICHARD
You know if you want I could offer you a ride since my convertible’s all fixed up, thanks to you.

Thomas resigned. Nonetheless he shows his appreciation with a simple smile.

THOMAS
No thanks, won’t be necessary.

Thomas gets up from the chair.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
I could use the exercise anyway.

RICHARD
(his cup close to his lips)
Same here. But I’m afraid my timing’s over here as a matter of fact.

He takes another sip. Thomas sets his cup down on top of table, then turns and goes to collect his things.

THOMAS
I thank you for the beverage and hospitality.

RICHARD
You’re very welcome.

Richard set his cup down, gets up. Goes to show Thomas the way out.

RICHARD
You be sure to look after yourself on your way out.

Thomas looks back at Richard, nods. He then opens the door and steps outside, continuing his journey onward...

START MUSIC.

EXT. BACK ON THE ROAD – DAY – MONTAGE

Thomas comes across more beautiful landscapes, continents, etc.
EXT. FOREST #2 – DAY

Thomas stops at the tip of a RIVER STREAM where the current moves rapidly. He tries figuring out the math on how to cross it safely.

TIME CUT:

Using all of his weight from the pack Thomas crosses through the rapid stream, getting through with less difficulty.

EXT. AN UNDISCLOSED TOWN – DAY

See passersby saunter. Thomas making his way across town amongst the masses.

OMITTED

EXT. FOREST #3 – NIGHT

Thomas gets snuggled up in his sleeping bag, cozies up next to the warm fire he built. He lies on his back, staring up at the stars above. He takes out the photo of Jenny from his pocket, staring into it a moment. Then we:

CUT TO:

EXT. SAME – THE NEXT MORNING

End of music.

Thomas lies still in his bag, asleep. A small wind blows a few strands of his hair. Suddenly: THE BARREL OF A HUNTING RIFLE ENTERS FRAME, THE MUZZLE POINTING DIRECTLY on Thomas’s sleeping face.

Thomas starts to stir awake, eyes flickering open at the sight of the rifle aimed on him. He goes frozen. Warily looks up to see the person behind the rifle...

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN IN HUNTING GARB

points his rifle down DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF CAMERA. The man is in his late 30s/early 40s, with a GRAY GOATEE, the look of a wilderness explorer by what’s registered on his features.

The goatee man starts to speak to Thomas with an even-tempered authority, forcing Thomas to comply to each question he answers unless Thomas wants to be shot down.

GOATEE MAN

You mind explaining why you were trespassing on my territory?

Thomas slowly, cautiously sits up in his sleeping bag. Hopes that this man doesn’t shoot him in the spot.
THOMAS
I’m sorry...?

GOATEE MAN
You were sleeping on my turf.

THOMAS
Sorry... Didn’t know I was intruding.

GOATEE MAN
(semi-shouts)
Who are you? What’s your purpose for being here?

THOMAS
(hesitantly)
... My name is Thomas... I’ve been traveling for long miles back of south... I’m just trying to get back home to my family... I was in the army for a while, so I -

GOATEE MAN
- Hold up.

Goatee Man suddenly realized something.

GOATEE MAN
You’re an army man...?

Thomas becomes impassive. He figures that’s his best alibi. Looks back at the Goatee Man and replies:

THOMAS
Uh, that’s right! I was an army man, apparently.

Goatee Man somehow for some reason has come to understanding that Thomas may be telling him the truth. He lowers his firearm off Thomas, becomes optimistic.

GOATEE MAN
What’s a former soldier like you doin’ all the way outta the army for?

Thomas gingerly gets on his feet. He wipes the dirt and leaves off his coat. Looks to the Goatee Man. Primitive, passive.

THOMAS
I... I’ve been traveling for like seventy miles back of... Well, I’m not quite sure of it anymore actually...
GOATEE MAN
For how long?

Thomas fidgets. He seems quite unsure.

THOMAS
...Been like a few months, per se.

GOATEE MAN
(you don’t say)
That’s a lot of walking.

THOMAS
Yeah...

After a beat:

GOATEE MAN
And did the army, like, kicked you out or somethin’? With the war still going on I don’t...

THOMAS
(interrupts)
Yeah, apparently, they did kick me out! Had myself these panic attacks that came outta nowhere. And you know what they say about someone who gets these attacks: you’re not fit to be in the army.

It’s the same alibi he used on Richard.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
So they made me walk all the way back on foot, which leads me to this moment right here in front of you, good man.

Goatee Man seems consented by Thomas’s liability.

GOATEE MAN
Well, that must’ve been a tough experience to go through.

A beat. Thomas is silent.

GOATEE MAN (CONT’D)
Hey you think there’s a chance I could lend you a hand?
(indicates his rifle)
Considering that I almost would’ve shot you on the spot?

THOMAS
Perhaps some food and water...?
Sure thing. You got it. You’d be more than welcome to come over at my place not too far from here. It’s just me and the wife.

THOMAS
Thank you, that’ll be great.

Thomas starts to go and pack his things. While the Goatee Man stands to the side:

GOATEE MAN
I’m Allen.

THOMAS
Thomas.

ALLEN
Nice to make your acquaintance, Thomas.

EXT. CABIN HOME – FORESTS – SOME TIME LATER – DAY

Allen and Thomas, pack strapped on him, make their way towards Allen’s cabin home in middle of the forests. We see Allen’s lovely wife THERESE, mid-30s, pleasant-looking, benign, standing by her stoop watching her husband and Thomas advancing her way.

ALLEN
Hey Therese, check it out! We got ourselves a visitor whose passing by! Found him asleep in the forest not too far from us.

THERESE
Well isn’t that nice!

THOMAS
Hello, ma’am.

They’re front and center.

ALLEN
Therese, dear, you wouldn’t mind if Thomas could come in for a while to get a bite to eat, do ya?

THERESE
It wouldn’t be so much of a bother. He’s more than welcome.

(looks at Thomas)
Your name is Thomas?

THOMAS
That’s right, miss.
ALLEN
Said he was in the army.

THERESE
No kidding.

ALLEN
Better believe it.

INT. CABIN HOME - DINING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Allen, Therese and houseguest Thomas are sitting at the table eating and in mid-conversation.

ALLEN
Therese and I have been livin' in these parts of the forest for about nine years.

THOMAS
That surely is quite a long time.

THERESE
Oh, indeed it is.

ALLEN
But we never really do get any company over a lot. Kinda get the feeling that they never know we're out here.

THERESE
Or perhaps it's because you keep threatening them to get off of our property using your rifle.

ALLEN
(incredulous)
That's not true...!

Therese gives him a look. Beat.

ALLEN (CONT'D)
Okay -- maybe it's true.

(beat)
Hardly.

(then)
Anyhoo, all's we do around here is hunt for bucks and deer.

THERESE
Those are made quite convenient as our main dishes on supper nights.

THOMAS
Gotta adapt to survive.
Yeah and other times we just pick out our own apples from them trees outside right around the corner of the house. We even use the water pump outside for our watering supply. Also take time to just mosey around the forest enjoying nature. Yep, that’s how we do everything around here. Nothing varies on how we keep ourselves occupied on our daily rituals.

Must be nice having the time to yourselves.

Oh, you’d be amazed on how we keep ourselves functioned.

Silence. Then:

So, nine years...

Time just flies right by, doesn’t it?

We’ve always come to be enraptured by the great outdoors. This abode of ours is all’s we have to call it our private sanctuary.

Moment. Then:

(looks to Thomas)

So, Thomas, what is the status of your... traverse? Allen mentioned you were in the army...?

Thomas looks down at his plate, harboring a deep thought in his head. Takes a few seconds before he replies.

Yeah, I was... But not anymore.

There a reason for why you left, especially with the war still going on?

Thomas just stares into space. It lasts only briefly.
Then, softly:

THOMAS
(beat)
I had to get outta there. I’m all
the family I got left for my ma
and sis back home.

ALLEN
You’re married I reckon.

Thomas snaps from his reverie.

THOMAS
How’d you...?

ALLEN
I can see the glare coming from
that ring on your finger there.

Allen casually points to the WEDDING BAND around Thomas’s left ring
finger. He’s almost forgot that he still has it on him. He takes
his right index finger and feels the rounded surface of his band.

THOMAS
Been about two years since I’ve
last seen the wife.

THERESE
What does she look like? You
have a picture of her on you?

He does actually. Thomas pulls it out from his pocket, hands it
over to Therese. She studies the photo of Jenny; admires the
profile.

THERESE
My -- she’s a beauty.

ALLEN
What is it?

Therese shows the photo to Allen. Without looking at them:

THOMAS
I knew the moment when we first met
that she was the one. Like two
peas wrapped in a bundle.

ALLEN
I can see why.

Allen likes what he sees in the photo, although his slight
affection for Jenny doesn’t match for what he has with current wife
Therese.
THERESE
What’s her name?

THOMAS
Jenny. Her name’s Jenny.

Thomas suddenly lets a small TEAR trickle from one of his eye sockets. Allen and Therese turn to look and see that Thomas is slightly getting tearful.

THERESE
You all right, Thomas?

Thomas wipes the tear from his cheek. Takes a moment. Sniffles.

THOMAS
I’m fine, thank you.

He gets up.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
I should be heading back. Wouldn’t wanna keep ‘em waiting for me longer. Thanks for the nutritious meal, it was delicious.

THERESE
Our pleasure, Thomas.

She hands the photo back to Thomas. He takes it, puts it away. Then goes for his gear which rests by the corner of a wall.

ALLEN
Y’sure you know which route you’re goin’?

THOMAS
Yeah, I got a map I’ve been carrying around with me. I know the way alright.

THERESE
Well we’ll pray for you that your continuing journey goes well. Be sure to rest your body off every so often. Need time to rebuild all that energy inside you.

THOMAS
Thanks for the heads-up, I’ll remember that.

(then)
Guess this is goodbye.

Strapped on, Thomas makes it for the exit door... then stops right there. Turns back to face Allen and Therese. He asks:
THOMAS
Um, you wouldn’t mind if I’d pick
out a few apples from outside to
go with the trip, do you?

ALLEN
Not at all. Take as many as you
need.

THERESE
And good luck to you.

Thomas nods, appreciates it.

EXT. APPLE TREE – SIDE OF CABIN HOME – MOMENTS LATER – DAY

Thomas picks out some fresh red apples from an apple tree and
stores them inside his pack to go for his ongoing adventure.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD – BACK ON THE JOURNEY – LATER – DAY

Thomas trekking on the open free road in a rural area.

JUMP TO:

He comes across a REMOTE BEACH; a flock of SEAGULLS & PIGEONS
inhabit the whole area, flapping their wings around.

EXT. TBD – DAY

He walks past more landscapes, etc.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCKY MOUNTAIN – DAY

Thomas glides his way down a rocky slope, trying to reach further
down a riverbank...

EXT. ROAD/UNCHARTED AREAS – DAY – VARIOUS

ATMOSPHERIC SHOTS: Thomas walks his way past more beautiful
scenery, walking past a summit continent, etc.

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. FOREST #4 – CLEARING – PRE-DUSK

The sun is setting. Thomas getting restful as he finds a safe
clearing to rest for the night.

JUMP TO:

Thomas walks back to clearing with a pile of chopped wood in hands.
Thomas gets the fire going by using two stones just as he did before.

The sun has set. Darkness in the forests. Thomas lies down by the fire, in his sleeping bag, eating an apple. He stares up at the stars above, hands behind his head. Shuts his eyes. Tries to go to sleep...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. FORESTS #4 – NEXT MORNING

A dead rabbit DROPS INTO FRAME and hits the ground with a thud.

CUT TO:

Thomas cunningly uses a bowie knife to cut off the skin of the dead rabbit in his hands.

CUT TO:

He cooks the rabbit meat in a pan on top of a burning fire letting it sizzle.

CUT TO:

He eats the fully-cooked rabbit meat in a plate, spits out the fat.

CUT TO:

He takes a piss by the bushes.

CUT TO:

He begins packing everything up.

CUT TO:

All set and ready he makes his exit from the clearing...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD – WOODS/FIELD OF WEEDS – LATER – DAY

Thomas walking on the shoulder of the road. Silence in every corner. No signs of human life forms anywhere. Just the WOODS on Thomas’s right-hand side, a FIELD OF WEEDS on the left. Suddenly...

A WOMAN’S FAINT, WAILING CRY FOR HELP from within the woods:

WOMAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
Somebody...! Help! Anybody...!!
Hearing the cry for help Thomas’s instincts kick in, as he turns and takes charge into the woods...

**EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS**

Thomas weaving through the woods, though the weight of his large pack is making him decrease in speed, but he nonetheless picks up the pace as much as he could, desperate to reach for the woman’s call. Her wailing voice resonates through the woods:

**WOMAN’S VOICE (O.S.)**
Help me please...!! Someone...!

Thomas eventually comes to --

**EXT. CABIN – IN MIDDLE OF THE WOODS/OPEN SPACE – DAY**

-- as he emerges from the woods and sees a WOMAN, 30s, on the ground with her LEG CAUGHT UNDER A DEAD COW from her cabin home. She sees Thomas over there looking at her.

**WOMAN**
(bawling; in Southern accent)
Please, sir, help me! My leg!

Thomas quickly drops his stick and dismantles the pack off him and rushes over to her. He skids to a stop and crouches before her.

**THOMAS**
What happened, miss?!

**WOMAN**
My leg... It’s caught!

She winces, can’t set her leg free. Thomas rolls up his sleeves, stoops downward, tucks his hands from underneath and tries to heave the cow up. Woman struggles to wiggle her leg outta there. Thomas can’t hold it up much longer; it’s quite heavy. Soon the Woman slips her leg out from underneath the cow and is FREED. Thomas immediately sets the cow down, PANTING. He looks to the Woman, touching her leg, rubbing it, inspecting it, doesn’t hurt that bad. She hyperventilates. Thomas takes a breath and then goes to help her on her feet.

The Woman, a FADED BEAUTY, short, looks to her savior (we’ll get to know her name in just a moment). She gathers her bearings. Stands on her feet, hardly putting pressure on her one bad leg, feeling grateful for having been saved by Thomas. She would’ve gotten her whole leg amputated if Thomas hadn’t rushed over in time.

After composing Thomas asks her, reassuring:

**THOMAS**
Are you all right, Miss?
She takes a sec before she remembers her manners.

    WOMAN
    (relieving)
    I believe so.

    THOMAS
    How did it happen?

    WOMAN
    I’m... I’m not sure. Cow seemed, okay for a bit till it... Till it just collapsed dead... Where my leg got caught under...

She’s heaving for air, still can’t believe it. She tries calmly pulling herself together. Thomas takes a look at the dead cow on the ground, wondering what made it collapse dead. He then looks back at the Woman, shows his courtesy:

    THOMAS
    Well you seem all right. Looks like you’re okay.

A beat.

    WOMAN
    Thank you, for saving my life.

    THOMAS
    It was a good thing you yelled out loudly enough otherwise no one would’ve showed up in time.

    WOMAN
    I’m Karen.

    THOMAS
    Thomas.

The Woman wipes off dirt from her dress. Composed. A beat.

    THOMAS
    Is there, like, no one else out here, besides you?

Karen looks at Thomas. Somber.

    KAREN
    It’s just me.
    (beat)
    Only me, unfortunately.

Thomas surveys the place out. A whole area of short grass, picket fencing, a small barn at the corner, etc.
THOMAS
Is that the only cow you got?

KAREN
Sadly, yes.

Thomas reassures.

THOMAS
You sure that your leg’s fine?
Don’t need to go to a doctor to examine it?

KAREN
It’s only a little sore. It’ll heal eventually.

Karen, content, brings a smile. Keeps her intent straight on Thomas, somewhat finding herself attracted to him.

KAREN
So, Thomas... That’s the name of my savior.

She’s starting to come onto him. Thomas can see that. Beat.

KAREN (CONT’D)
Where is it that you came from, Thomas?

Hands behind her back she becomes coy with him. Thomas confused as to what’s happening.

THOMAS
What...?

KAREN
How did you ever come to hear me crying for help?

Thomas remains stiff. Then turn his head at the woods from where he emerged.

THOMAS
I was... I came from that part of the woods.
(points to the woods)
Just passing through there. Been journey a lot.

Indicates his pack from aside:

THOMAS (CONT’D)
As you can tell...

Karen steps up to Thomas. Intimately close.
KAREN
You’re a traveler ain’t you?

Thomas hesitant.

THOMAS
...I guess...


KAREN
There a chance I could return the favor, traveler?

Thomas is uninterested.

THOMAS
I don’t...

KAREN
Please? It’s the least I could do, especially for saving me.

She grabs his shoulder, keeping a soft grip on him. Looks at him with pleading, adorable eyes. Thomas even though he wouldn’t want to leave her hanging is undecided. He’s choked up.

KAREN (CONT’D)
Perhaps you wanna come inside for something to snack on, after your long journey over here. I would be more grateful if you said yes.

Speechless Thomas takes a few seconds to decide. Finally:

THOMAS
Um, thanks, but no thanks. I gotta head my way back.

Her happiness suddenly dissolves. Bewildered that he’s rejecting her offer. Thomas evenly release her hand off his shoulder. He starts going for his pack...

THOMAS (hesitant)
Um, it was, nice meeting you, Karen. You, you take care now, okay?

Karen stands there stiff, feeling crushed that Thomas is leaving. Thomas sees that she looks sad and disappointed. Knows that he can’t just leave her like this. Would kill her if he didn’t offer.

THOMAS (beat)
But if you insist.
Karen’s expression comes back around as she looks delighted, pleased.

CUT TO:

INT. KAREN’S DINING ROOM – CABIN – FEW MOMENTS LATER

The interior has a homey feel to it. Thomas sits at the small table, his pack and stick off to the side. Karen limps her way into dining room carrying a tray full of refreshing food and cups of liquid.

Thomas, curious:

THOMAS

You don’t get a lot of company over, do you?

Dissatisfied by the idea of it:

KAREN

No, not really. But I always find ways to stay preoccupied.

Karen diligently sets the tray down on table. She takes her seat across the way, looking straight ahead at Thomas, folds her hands and places them atop. Thomas tentatively grabs one of the cups and takes a slurp. Karen doesn’t speak for a moment as she takes time to ogle at Thomas’s sight, appreciates his company. Then:

KAREN

(hardened)

I was married once. He left long ago. Told me before he left that he was having second thoughts on the relationship.

THOMAS

How long ago was that?

KAREN

3 years to be exact...

A beat of silence, then:

THOMAS

So you’ve been left all alone out here for that long in middle of nowhere?

KAREN

Monogamy can be a challenging concept for a lotta people.

She grabs the other cup. Presses it close to her chest.
KAREN (CONT’D)
I think the reason my ex left me was that he found out that he was unsuited to socially able look after me and let me be impregnated with child.

THOMAS
You were pregnant?

KAREN
(guiltily)
No.

She takes a drink. Feels embarrassed.

THOMAS
You know, if it’s of any consolation I think --

Karen interrupts:

KAREN
(abrupt)
Am I attractive?

Pause.

THOMAS
...What?

KAREN
I’m not plain or anything like that...?

Thomas considers the idea. Then:

THOMAS
Yeah. ‘Course you’re attractive.

She appreciates his answer.

KAREN
Will I ever find the right one?

Thomas reconsiders carefully.

THOMAS
Yeah, someday perhaps.

Beat.

KAREN
Would you wanna be with me?

A beat as Thomas STAYS STILL, non-responsive. It’s almost like he felt tempt from her last question.
Karen looks at him sensually. She’s got some dirty thoughts in her mind. After a moment Thomas finally responds:

THOMAS
Why’d you asked me that...?

Karen all the sudden looks embarrassed.

KAREN
I don’t know.

She slightly averts, looking away from him. Thomas feels as though he doesn’t want to tell her the truth — that he’s with someone else and the fact that he’s married. Thinks that it’ll hurt Karen’s feeling if he exposed the truth to her. He takes a moment to think of something, then, abruptly, HE STANDS UP.

THOMAS
Thank you for the hospitality. I should be getting back on the road.

He turns going for his stuff. He seems desperate to leave. Karen suddenly becomes baffled and crestfallen that Thomas is already leaving her. She sets her cup down, gets up from her table and goes to try and convince him to stay more, doesn’t want to lose him.

KAREN
But you just got here! Was it something I mentioned?

THOMAS
It wasn’t you, really.

KAREN
I didn’t mean to start raising question like that. (agitating) Please just stay a little more, it’s the least I could do f--

THOMAS
Thank you but I have a much longer journey I must get back to. But do me a favor and take care of your leg for me.

He straps the pack on him. Karen sees that she’s not reeling him back in. Strapped on Thomas begins the stride for exit door. She follows him along the way, growing more agitated.

KAREN
So that’s it, then? You’re just gonna leave like that, after you saved me from having my leg get crushed?
THOMAS
I’m sorry if my accompaniment was cut short but like I said...

He’s at the front door. His hand stretches out and reaches for the knob to open it when... Karen SNAPS AT HIM --

KAREN
DON’T YOU DARE WALK OUT ON ME!

Thomas stops short, merely terrified yet astonished. Karen stands there with the sad eyes. She’s on the verge of trembling.

Thomas doesn’t look back at her. A beat. Hesitantly:

THOMAS
You don’t know me that well.

KAREN
If you go now that’ll be the end of it for me.

It’s as though Thomas has become her whole world. She nearly BREAKS DOWN. Thomas taking time to process slowly turns around to face her directly.

THOMAS
What do you want from me?

KAREN
Only your company, if it’s not asking much.

Beat.

THOMAS
How old are you?

KAREN
Thirty.

Thomas gives her a look.

KAREN (CONT’D)
Thirty-two actually.

THOMAS
Okay...

Karen slowly walks up to him, apologetic.

KAREN
I’m sorry that I snapped at you. It’s just that I haven’t been around another man in so long.
Thomas takes it in. Despite the resentment he’s representing there’s also a sense of regret in his eyes. She insists:

KAREN (CONT’D)
Do you think you could find a change of heart and perhaps keep me company for the day? (an idea)
You could rest here for the night! You said you’ve been journeying around a lot. You could use a good night’s rest on a comfy bed for a change. You could use the spare bedroom. (beat; then)
Would you please accept my offer? It would be rude to not accept. (beat; then)
What do you say, Thomas?

Thomas thinks about it. Finally:

THOMAS
How long you want me to stay?

KAREN
Till tomorrow morning. You could be on your way then. How ‘bout it?

Off Thomas, deliberately deciding...

CUT TO:

INT. GUEST BEDROOM – KAREN’S CABIN – MOMENTS LATER – DAY

She shows Thomas the guest bedroom. Thomas passively comes in behind her, lugging his pack inside. He stops and drops his pack, looks at the room. It’s a bare room, only a single bed and nightstand, tainted ceiling, grubby walls.

KAREN
It may not be much, but you could sleep in here if that’s okay.

Thomas glances around. Then, for first time throughout his journey, takes off his beanie. His hair is messy and sloppy looking, hasn’t cleaned it for a while. He looks back at Karen, and, affirms her:

THOMAS
It’s only ‘til tomorrow, then I’ll be on my way.

Feeling gratified he’s staying over Karen starts developing tears in her eyes. She goes and HUGS HIM. She doesn’t let go of him for some time.
KAREN
(sotto; pleased)
Thank you, Thomas.

INT. SAME – LATER TONIGHT

Nightfall. Thomas, in a pair of borrowed pajama bottoms and shirt, prepares going to bed. He gets under the sheets, getting snuggly. Door to the room opens as Karen sticks her head in while standing by the threshold, checking up on Thomas.

KAREN
All settled in?

THOMAS
Yes.

KAREN
I’ll be just right down the hall if you need anything from me.

THOMAS
Okay. Goodnight.

Thomas turns away from Karen, on his side as he tries going to sleep. Karen doesn’t leave just yet. She watches him faced away from her a moment. Something on her mind.

KAREN
(then)
Thomas?

He doesn’t respond. Still facing away from her, very still. Karen nevertheless slithers her way in. Reveal she’s in her evening nightgown. She tiptoes over to the bed, gently sits down on the edge, her back to Thomas. Karen just sits there not talking, like she’s savoring for the right moment to say something meaningful. After just a few seconds of silence:

KAREN
(whisper)
...You awake, Thomas?

TIGHT ON Thomas. His eyes are open while on his side looking away from her, head pressed on pillow. Again, he doesn’t give her a response.

ON KAREN -- She turns her head and looks down on him a moment.

ON THOMAS -- remaining quiet with his eyes open. He slightly quivers. From b/g we see Karen rising on her feet, she goes around the bed, till she stands right in front of Thomas on other side. Thomas gazes up and stares at her.

Karen gazes down and stares at him. She’s about ready to thrust in and bust a move. She says to him, sweetly:
KAREN
Hi there.

Thomas is feeling uncomfortably close to Karen. He scoots back a little. Then decides to finally engage with a thought in his mind:

THOMAS
What are you doing?

Karen gets to her knees, not taking her eyes off him, leering at him the whole time. She leans even more closer on him. After a beat, she says back to him, thoughtfully, intimately:

KAREN
You don’t know how long I’ve waited for a guy like you to show up here.

Moment of silence.

Thomas starting to feel strictly terrified for his life.

Momentarily, she leans in on him more, close enough that she goes for a kiss -- but Thomas quickly draws back from her.

THOMAS
Whoa, whoa, whoa... Hey.

Karen stops herself, realizing the mistake she almost made.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
That’s probably not a good idea.

KAREN (mortified)
I’m sorry.

THOMAS
That’s okay. Maybe you should...

She abruptly springs to her feet, then turns and goes round the bed heading out the door. Gone.

LATER

Thomas is already fast asleep, alone in the quiet room.

DISSOLVE TO:

BLACK. Silence.

FADE IN ON:

ECU – JENNY’S FACE – UNKNOWN SPACE

Her eyes stare at the ground below us. Then they momentarily LOOK UP and STARE INTO CAMERA. The moment is ruined by A WHISPER:
INT. GUEST BEDROOM – KAREN’S CABIN – LATE AT NIGHT (REALITY)

Thomas is suddenly awakened from his dream with a start. He looks up to see looming over him from the bed: Karen, wearing a cute handmade DRESS, with red-and-white POLKA DOTS, looks all the more beautiful wearing it, posing in front of Thomas.

KAREN
(soft; easy)
What do you think of this dress? I handmade it myself.

No response from Thomas. He’s concerned on what Karen’s doing.

KAREN
(after a beat)
Don’t I look beautiful wearing it?

She smiles, coyly. Still no comment from Thomas. Curious, Karen’s smile dissolves. She wants to know what’s wrong.

KAREN
What’s the matter, Thomas? Don’t you like how I look?

Silence. Then:

KAREN (CONT’D)
I’m bothering you, aren’t I?

Thomas suddenly BLURTS out:

THOMAS
Yeah -- you kinda are.

Karen’s hurt by his words. She slowly WELLS WITH TEARS. Stands there looking foolish, BAWLING. Thomas feeling guilty over what he did sits up and tries consoling her, didn’t mean to hurt her feelings like that.

THOMAS
No, no, no... Karen, don’t cry.
Of course, you’re beautiful...

Through shredded tears:

KAREN
I’m not cut out for anyone...!

THOMAS
What’re you talking about?
KAREN
You don’t find me attractive...

THOMAS
Please stop crying.

He tries soothing her to calm down. After a brief moment Karen looks to him and says, while trying to put on a brave front:

KAREN
Are you with someone else?

Thomas becomes speechless. Taking a sec to decide an answer, he figures now’s the time to spill the beans to her.

THOMAS
Yes, I’m with someone else.

He displays his wedding band to her.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
It’s not that I don’t think you’re attractive. You are, in so many ways. But as you see I’m married, and she’s waiting for me to make it back to her. See, for a while I was in the army, and before I got shipped off she let me keep a promise to her...

KAREN
You were in the army?

This is big news to her. Thomas fidgets for a moment, then:

THOMAS
Well... yeah. I was. But that’s not the point...

Suddenly her IMPULSES KICK IN as she lunges into him and KISSES HIM ON THE LIPS. In momentary Thomas manages to pull himself away.

THOMAS
Hey -- no! I’m sorry, Karen, but no! Did you not hear me? I have a wife.

KAREN
I’m sorry... Couldn’t help myself.

THOMAS
Karen --

Karen pulls back. Taking it all in. Beat. Then:

KAREN
I’m just sick of being rejected.
THOMAS
Karen...

KAREN
(demanding)
Let me finish!

A beat, and then:

KAREN (CONT’D)
You don’t know what it’s like to be
left on your own. Don’t know the
first thing of losing a loved one.
Never been able to find anyone else
who’d look after you, love you, be
with you, after so long.

THOMAS
Sure, I get that. I understand what
you must be going through.

KAREN
Do you?

A beat. Thomas keeps quiet. Karen continues:

KAREN (CONT’D)
Look, I know it’s probably silly of
me to open up to a stranger you’ve
only met today. Very doltish of me,
I know. I’ve tried so many times to
get past the fact that my ex left me
out here on my own. When I was a
witty little girl my one life’s
dream was to find the right man.
Though I never did have a normal
childhood. Turns out that I was
given away to an orphanage. I never
knew my birth parents. I wasn’t
exactly raised the right way like
every other person is supposed to be
raised. Sadly, I never got adopted
by any family. There’ve been many
shitty foster homes I got transferred
to. Never went to a decent school.
Got bullied. Remained an outcast for
half of my life. Wasn’t equipped or
eligible enough for the right jobs.

Beat. Then:

KAREN (CONT’D)
I had to teach myself on how to make
it into this world. One time I’d
reached the ending point of my life...
(MORE)
...and I tried to commit suicide, but that failed, obviously.

Pause.

Ever since my husband left me I thought I would be by myself forever. And then all the sudden after today you showed up and saved me, and right then I realized: someone really does care about me. 'Cause otherwise why else would he be here to come and save me for?

Thomas’s eyes droop. Karen stays fixed on his face.

All I’m trying to say is that if some other gentleman ever came into my life they would see and realize that I need comfort after having lived in solitude. Since you’re here, Thomas, you think that for tonight you could keep me company?

Thomas takes time to come up with an answer.

Uh -- I don’t...

I’m not asking that you move in with me or get married. I just want to feel close next to someone, someone good and pure who sees that I matter in this world. Only for tonight. And I promise you can go first thing in the morning.

So. What say of you, Thomas?

Thomas ponders, deliberate. Then finally:

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. GUEST BEDROOM – FEW MOMENTS LATER – LATE NIGHT

They’re both lying down in bed under the covers close to each other, staring up at the tainted ceiling. Silence.
After a few seconds Karen engages in a new discussion:

KAREN
So how’d you end up joining the army?

Thomas collects his thoughts before replying.

THOMAS
Well, my father was a lieutenant colonel. Been serving the country for about twenty years. I grew up realizing that I wanted to one day follow in his footsteps. He died a couple years ago.

KAREN
(sympathetic)
I’m sorry.

THOMAS
Thanks.

A moment, then:

THOMAS (CONT’D)
Anyway a couple good friends of mine, Eric and Gerard, said they both enlisted and that they were able to put my name on the list. Then few weeks later we were transported off into German territory. Both my friends got killed later in the first battle. I was there when it all happened. And then one night this black troop in uniform convinced me that I shouldn’t waste another day at base, that I should be with the love of my life before it’s too late.

KAREN
(captivated)
My god...

THOMAS
So I’ve been makin’ the journey back ever since. Then later in the journey I ran into you, which led to this moment.

Thomas looks up, reminiscing. A beat:

THOMAS (CONT’D)
I love my wife Jenny. Not a day goes by when I can’t stop thinkin’ about her.

(MORE)
THOMAS (CONT’D)
It was hope that brought us both together. We were lucky that we found each other. We got married right before I departed for the war. Me and Jen actually have a lotta things in common. She had been raised by her father after her mother died from giving birth to her. She never spoke to anyone else about that but me. She knew I was the one she could trust the most.

TEARS start to flow from Thomas’s eyes. He starts losing it.

THOMAS (CONT’D)
I’ve always thought I would die in the field. And Jenny -- if she ever found out that I never would’ve made it back she’d...

He can’t continue more. He starts WEEPING, uncontrollably. Karen feels sorry for him as she reaches out to him and tenderly using her hand starts soothing him by rubbing his shoulder.

KAREN
Thomas.

Thomas manages to look her in the face.

THOMAS
Yeah...?! (he sniffs)

KAREN
Don’t worry. I’m sure you’ll make it back to her. You’re worried that you’ll lose her if you don’t return to her on time.

It may not be the most comforting words to Thomas, but at least he’s pulled it together.

THOMAS
I’m sorry... that you’ve been left here all alone. Everyone needs to have someone important in their lives to take care of them.

KAREN
Maybe the day will come one day when I might finally have the change to find a guy as good as you.
Thomas can’t suppress his sadness anymore as he goes back to CRYING. Karen moves closer on him and wraps her arms around him, Thomas really letting himself go. This is the most we’ve ever seen Thomas cry before. The scene is heartbreaking. CUT TO:

LATER AT NIGHT

Thomas, eyes dried up and closed, is asleep on the bed. PAN UP to see Karen lying right beside staring down at Thomas watching him sleep away for a moment. Then she leans in on his forehead and plants a kiss there. She then rolls back over lying on her back trying to get some sleep. Off Thomas’s resting face we...

FADE OUT.

Silence over black.

Then... MUSIC SLIPS INTO THE SOUNDTRACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD – PLAINS – DAY

WIDE SHOT: In further B/G we see a TINY FIGURE (Thomas) walk along the road continuing his quest back home.

(The next few scenes will consist of LONG SHOTS of Thomas as he comes across more idyllic picturesque places.)

MONTAGE (LONG SHOTS):

Thomas walks along a boardwalk overlooking the ocean, a pier off to the side.

Panoramas of an unnamed small town as we see Thomas’s speck strolling along.

On the shoulder of a road where surrounded in all corners are the vast fields of tall grass.

Thomas walks past an old boardinghouse in a countryside on the road.

He strides amongst a field of numerous large boulders.

An open glade view of Thomas in a forest trying to cross the river stream.

More TBD.

EXT. WOODS – PRE-DUSK

Thomas sits by the campfire, devours into a food can after a long day’s journey.

JUMP TO:
He finds a private brush and squats down to take a shit.

JUMP TO:

He spreads open his sleeping bag, lays it down on ground.

JUMP TO:

SAME – NEXT MORNING

Music ends.

Thomas lies down on his back in sleeping bag fully awake, looking up and stares at the puffy clouds floating above him.

JUMP TO:

He slips out from his sleeping bag, stretching his limbs around.

JUMP TO:

Already packed and strapped on he starts walking.

EXT. WOODS – AERIAL VIEW – DAY

We’re soaring above the woods, full of mystic and wonder.

MATCH CUT:

EXT. WOODS – FROM GROUND LEVEL – CONTINUOUS

Thomas walks and walks around the woods, wandering aimlessly. Notice that he’s become slow by fatigue. He looks really tired out. To set the mood he SINGS a little tune to himself, with a toneless voice:

THOMAS
I’M JUST WANDERING ROUND THE WOODS.
GOT MY PACK ON MY BACK.
GONNA SEE MY WIFE PRETTY SOON.
(etc.)

He walks off...

EXT. CLIFF/WOODS – LATER

Thomas comes to and stops by the RIDGE of a steep CLIFF. He takes a look downward; it’s a pretty STEEP SLOPE, 150 feet all the way down. Ahead is an ACRE OF FORESTS.

Thomas withdraws his head. Decides to take a break as he dismantles his pack, sets down his stick/staff. He cracks his back. Looks away from the cliff, when suddenly... He accidentally SLIPS and FALLS OVER, HITS HIS BACK ON THE GROUND HARD. Came pretty close from falling off the cliff.
Thomas MOANS in pain. Hurt like hell. He takes a few before he GETS BACK ON HIS FEET. Takes a breath. Looks back to where he almost would’ve plummeted to his death.

THOMAS
(under breath)
Holy shit.

He walks pretty stiff; back really sore. He goes for his pack and stick/staff... suddenly:

A STRONG GUST OF WIND HITS HIS DIRECTION

As Thomas BACKPEDALS... the wind making him loose his footing...

He starts TUMBLING BACKWARDS. And...

HE FALLS OVER THE CLIFF AND GOES DOWN!

Thomas is ROLLING HARD downhill, BONES crunching, hitting a number of SHRUBS and ROCKS along the way...

He finally REACHES THE BOTTOM and LANDS HARD ON HIS ASS! He insanely WHIMPERS. Took a big nasty fall down the slope.

Thomas rolls over on his back, facing upward. Lost his pack and stick from up the cliff. SCREAMS AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS --

THOMAS
AAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!

He lies there in excruciating amount of PAIN. BREATHEES laboriously. There’s not a soul in sight to help him out. His entire inner system is SORE. He just lies there waiting for an opportunity to muster enough strength in him to get back up.

After a moment, he tries getting to his feet... STRAINS to do so... unsuccessful.

He looks up at the sky, strains as he gives up. Watching up above as the earth slowly rotates around him.

Just when his journey was going well now turns for the worst.

Thomas thinks, trying to figure a way as to how he’s gonna get back up. He may be lying there for some time. Once its dawned on him:

THOMAS
...son of a bitch...

LATER

Thomas still lying on the ground, looking up at the revolving sky.

ON THOMAS’S FACE. He’s losing his breath. Facing a slow and painful death. He starts SHUTTING BOTH EYES. Deep in a thought.
He’s thinking. Remembering.

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN SPACE – JENNY’S FACE – ECU

Both her EYES stare down below CAMERA. Then they LOOK UP AND STARE DIRECTLY AT US. Her VOICE chimes in b/g.

JENNY (V.O.)

Thomas? Come back.

BACK TO:

REALITY – SAME AS BEFORE

Thomas OPENS HIS EYES. He exclaims. It’s like he heard her voice calling for him out of nowhere. He talks under his breath, straining to hold the words in together:

THOMAS
(laboriously)

No... Won’t end like this... Not like this... Not...

He’s choked on his own words. After some moments he tries to regain more energy in his system to get back up.

He STRUGGLES to lift himself on his feet. Only halfway there... When... HE SLIPS and FALLS ON HIS SIDE. Ouch.

Groaning he lies there on the ground. Giving up again.

He looks at his surroundings. No sudden movement. Very calm and silent all around. Not a thing or person in sight.

He has difficulty in trying to figure where he’s at. Unfamiliar with this territory.

Then suddenly... it's "DING!"

Thomas has an EPIPHANY. He vigorously moves his head around, seems to REMEMBER this place. Thinks deeply to himself: Is this it? Am I getting closer to home?

There’s a streak of RELIEF on Thomas’s face.

He stops his head at the forests, looks directly through it. He’s thinking what lies beyond there. Once it hits him his EYES WIDEN. He knows what’s beyond that forest.

Suddenly finding the strength in him again he LIFTS HIMSELF ON HIS FEET. Struggling at first. Then, STANDS ON BOTH FEET. Success!

After taking a breath, he hastily LIMPS at full charge INTO THE FOREST...
EXT. FOREST #5 – DAY

Thomas crossing his way through the forest at minimum, if not fully maximum, speed. He doesn’t slow down. His memory box growing more on him as he proceeds forward... Getting so close...

HEAR something further ahead in the distance... a RUSTLE of some sort. Thomas starts gaining more speed, getting hyper as he later comes across:

EXT. FIELD OF WEEDS – DAY

He emerges from the forest to find a vast field of TALL WEEDS swaying and rustling from the wind (looks an awful lot like the same field that opened the film in first scene).

Thomas is familiar with this field. He’s getting closer. Overcome with MORE RELIEF.

He lumbers through the weeds, BARRELING with all his effort. Soon he trips and falls face down. But that doesn’t stop him there as he begins to CRAWL... Nearly out of the field of weeds...

EXT. HILL/ PRAIRIE – MOMENTS LATER

He crawls his way out of the field and crests over a hill of a prairie... reaches the top and sees what lies beyond ahead:

HIS RAMSHACKLE FAMILY HOME

Only a mile ahead in the long distance. Intact. Looking like a postcard.

ON THOMAS as he basks in the glory of having reached his home at last. Finally!

He gets on his hind knees. And, YELLS OUT, UPROARIOUSLY --

THOMAS
HEEEEEYYYYYYYY...!!

He’s caught out of breath. Squints his eyes and looks straight ahead and sees from a great distance: A TINY BLURRED SPECK emerges from the house front door, stops and looks straight ahead, seeing Thomas on top of the hill.

On Thomas. He sees the speck looking back at him.

THOMAS
Jenny...?!!

EXT. THOMAS’S HOUSE – JENNY’S POV

as we LOOK AHEAD and see Thomas’s SPECK from over the prairie.

BACK WITH THOMAS:
He shuts both eyes. Knowing he’s finally made it to his destination. More relief streaks across his face. With both his eyes closed he says to himself:

    THOMAS
    (soft)
    I’m tired.

Then...

BACK AT THE HOUSE – JENNY’S POV

He DROPS ON HIS BELLY; VANISHING from our vantage point, having fallen on his front in the GRASSES. A very long MOMENT.

LONG SHOT OUT:

Jenny standing at the foot of the house takes the first few steps forward off the porch. Then takes off running... straight for Thomas.

    JENNY
    (faintly)
    Thomas...!!

TWO FIGURES step out from the house (Susan and Sammy) as they see Jenny bolting up the prairie trying to reach where she saw Thomas. They both come to realization and take off running after Jenny...

EXT. PRAIRIE/HILL – LONG SHOT

Jenny running through the prairie and finally reaches Thomas, who is lying peacefully in the grass. She bends down and brings him close to her, cradling him in her arms. Susan and Sammy have made it to the scene as they stand there and watch Jenny cradle Thomas in her arms. Hear Jenny SOBBING mournfully through the wind. Her husband finally returned to her as he promised.

Thomas’s journey back home now over.

As we take time to adjust from this mesmerizing moment of reunion...

CUT TO:

INSERT – TALL WEEDS – HOLD

They sway from the blowing wind. A same feeling that opened the film.

Shortly afterwards the wind CHANGES COURSES. The weeds STOP FROM SWAYING. They remain STILL. Dead silence. A calm, treasurable, processing moment.

CUT TO:
EXT. BEACH – ON HOLD – DAY

Watch as the WAVES wash onshore and then flow back into the sea waters...

Soon a SEAGULL comes FLAPPING ITS WINGS INTO OUR FRAME, SOARING. It FLUTTERS AWAY PAST CAMERA. Disappears.

Moment.

Then...

MUSIC -- hypnotic and melancholy -- as we...

ROLL END CREDITS.