

TYLER, TEXAS

Written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. WIND BREAK NEXT TO A PECAN ORCHARD - DAY

Robin's egg blue sky. Two African-American BOYS, both age 12, sweat as they walk along the edge of a pecan orchard swishing sticks back and forth, hitting trees and bushes.

(SUPER) MOBILE, ALABAMA 1954

EXT. EDGE OF PEACH ORCHARD - CONTINUOUS

From a distance, we see the boys talking to each other as they walk down a sun-baked dirt road.

EXT. FOREST OF LIVE OAKS - CONTINUOUS

Boys walk through a forest of live oaks, moss dangling from the branches. One boy eats a peach as they pass a shanty with an old African-American COUPLE sitting on the porch. The old woman smokes a pipe as she rocks back and forth.

EXT. LONG WORN FOOT PATH - CONTINUOUS

The boys laugh as they walk through a thicket of wild berries, then down a long, worn path towards a creek in the distance. They both look left, stop and stare. An African-American PREACHER, mid 50's, with salt and pepper Afro turns and sees the boys.

PREACHER (O.S.)

Boys, you go on home --- go on now!

Disturbed, troubled looks on the boys faces as they see an African-American male hanging from a tree. They nod their heads, slowly turn then run back up the path. Preacher GRUNTS as he lifts the man just below the hips, hanging from a rope. Another African-American MAN stands on a rickety ladder and cuts the rope.

SERIES OF SHOTS - (SUPER) CITY AND YEAR

Photographs of riots corresponding with each event.

Birmingham - 1963

Watts - 1965

Detroit - 1967

END OF SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. FRONT OF JACKSON'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

Morning. Three young African-American GIRLS play jacks in front of the store. An Africa-American WOMAN and CHILD walk out the front door and past the girls as the gears grind on a fully-loaded cotton truck slowly driving by. At the loading dock on the side of the building a skinny Caucasian MALE in overalls loads bags of seed onto an old flatbed truck.

INT. COUNTER OF JACKSON'S GENERAL STORE - CONTINUOUS

HENRY JACKSON, 25 year old African-American, confident, lean and strong with a serious expression, reads a draft notice.

INSERT - LETTER - which reads:

Selective Service System - Order to report for Induction.

He finishes reading the letter, shakes his head and tosses it on the counter in frustration. Small transistor radio plays Dionne Warwick's "Valley of the Dolls."

EXT. AERIAL SHOT - HIGH ABOVE THE GROUND - DAY

We're flying high above Mobile, Alabama and see houses, farmland and a small town. Then instantly, we're flying above the forests of Vietnam and an endless blanket of palm trees.

INT. FUSELAGE OF HELICOPTER / VIETNAM - DAY

CHOP CHOP CHOP of helicopter flying low over a canopy of palm trees, past a small village next to a river. Hold on Henry, as he stares out the open door of the helicopter, two other soldiers sit near him. We see fields of rice and palm trees, then out the left side in the distance, a large military camp. The helicopter slowly banks left as they make their approach, then roughly lands near a row of Quonset huts.

INT. TENT - LONG BINH / VIETNAM - DAY

JEROME, a large, militant African-American, mid 20's, talks passionately to a new African-American RECRUIT in their barracks, while packing a bag. The young recruit, barely 17, looks up meekly at the seasoned soldier.

JEROME

You think that white officer out there gives a shit about you? Make no mistake, my man -- those honkies out there don't give a rat's ass about us.

Henry slowly looks up as he unpacks his duffle bag. Jerome stares him down, then casually back at the recruit.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Tell me, how is honoring our treaty with the fucking French gonna help you and your family back home?

Recruit timidly shakes his head. Jerome slams a rolled up sweater into his duffle bag, sighs, then solemnly looks up at the recruit.

JEROME (CONT'D)

Just keep your head down, stick close to the brothers -- and forget about all that John Wayne shit they taught you in basic.

Henry looks at the recruit, then at Jerome. Jerome finishes packing his duffle bag, slings it over his shoulder, nods at the young soldier and walks out of the tent.

INT. MESS TENT - DAY

SOLDIERS, mostly white, a few African-American, sit at a table eating and laughing. Henry stands in the chow line nearby. Racist, arrogant soldier CHUCK BUKOWSKI and two BUDDIES walk up to a table. In the middle of the table sits CPL JOHN O'HARE, late 20's, solid, chiseled jaw and a tough look about him, laughs with his friends at the table. Bukowski stands there looking down at the group.

BUKOWSKI

(loud voice)

If we clean things up a bit, git these niggers outta the mess tent, we should be alright!

JOHN

(looks up - unsmiling)

Just so you know, you dim-witted fuck, this guy here -- this nigger, sittin' next to me, saved my life last month. Now, it's no crime to be stupid --- ain't nothin' I can do about that.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

But, I don't have to eat with you,
smell you and especially listen to
your backwoods fucking bullshit.
So, grab your plate and your
buddies and get the fuck on outta
here.

BUKOWSKI

And who the fuck are you --

John and three white SOLDIERS along with two black SOLDIERS sitting at the table stand up aggressively. One large white SOLDIER wearing glasses knocks his chair backwards.

BIG SOLDIER

(shaking head)

You don't want none of this --

A Lieutenant Colonel appears out of nowhere holding a tray as the men immediately snap to attention.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL

(beat - looking around)

At ease --- Bukowski, you piece of
shit, get your limp, sorry ass out
of my site!

Bukowski nods with regretful acknowledgement and backs away from the table only to bump into Henry who stands his ground, eyeballing him and the other two men. The three men back away as Henry sits down at the end of John's table making eye contact with John. John nods.

EXT. SOLDIERS THROWING FOOTBALL - DAY

John playing catch with two white soldiers and one African American soldier near barracks. They're all talking but we can't hear them. Henry listens to his radio as he watches them play from 100 feet away. Over the radio we hear:

ANNOUNCER

Scores were injured at a free
concert at the Altamond Speedway in
California yesterday, headlined by
the Rolling Stones that witnesses
later said turned into a bloodbath.
CBS video footage shows two Hells
Angles gang members clubbing or
stabbing a man to death. 300,000
people attended the concert after
being promoted as the "Woodstock
West" ---

Henry thinking as he continues to watch them play.

INT. TENT - DAY

Henry sits, listening to a young, skinny NCO, 23, talk strategy at a chalkboard on an upcoming sortie into NVA territory. The NCO is pimply faced and looks new to country.

YOUNG NCO

--- then come around their flank like this, positioning ourselves here to the south. This should seriously reduce maneuverability.

Henry, indifferent look on his face, stares forward. A hand appears on Henry's shoulder. He turns and sees John.

JOHN

(quietly)

This is a bunch of horseshit-- guys been here three days and no one's told him about the twenty thousand NVA up the road.

Henry looks at John with concern. Then a slow, cautious nod.

HENRY

I was thinkin' the same thing.

JOHN

Grab a beer after this?

HENRY

(slowly nods)

Yeah, sure ..

INT. TV / LIVING ROOM - ON THE SCREEN

Typical living room, United States 1970. Walter Cronkite on TV talking about the War in Vietnam. Then a shot of Secretary of State William P. Rodgers testifying before The House Appropriations Subcommittee.

WILLIAM P. RODGERS (T.V)

"The administration has no intention to escalate the war. We recognize that if we escalate the war in Cambodia with our ground troops, our whole program would be defeated."

Another scene of fighting in Vietnam. The interracial mix of soldiers, carnage and bodies being evacuated on cots and in helicopters.

EXT. KAMPONG CHAM PROVINCE - CAMBODIA - NIGHT

SUPER "CAMBODIA, August 1970"

Men on patrol. In the blue, translucent light, Henry and John walk along a narrow footpath towards the moon. They are among a small group of young soldiers, M16s at the ready. A MAN at point makes a clicking noise and the men drop to the ground. You can feel the tension in the air as the men look around. It's very quiet as Henry signals John with his hands that there is a small group of Viet Cong up ahead. John nods.

EXT. SMALL CAMP - KAMPONG CHAM PROVINCE - CAMBODIA - DAY

U.S. Army forward unit near river. Tents going up, patrol boats tied up with men working on them. Helicopters landing. Men move equipment out of the helicopters. John and Henry shake hands like long lost comrades. Henry belly laughs at something John has done. PLATOON SERGEANT MICHAEL RIGGS, late 20's, racist bully, standing nearby with a scowl on his face.

PLATOON SERGEANT

Army Specialist Jackson! Get your black ass over here and tell me where that RVF stat sheet is! Tell me something boy, do you honestly think you can just drift through this fucking war without a stitch of accountability! (louder) Do you?

CORPORAL JOHN O'HARE

(with disdain)

Sargeant, you asked for that 15 minutes ago! -- When did you think it was gonna come through?

PLATOON SARGEANT

If I wanted your retarded opinion I would ---

John grabs him by the neck and wedges him into a tent pole. Two soldiers stop, look, shake their heads and keep walking.

JOHN

I'll tell you what --- you take your countrified, Kentucky fried opinions and stick em up your ass.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)
 I'll kill you right here --- and
 you know who would care? (laughs)
 Only that ol' goat back home you
 been sweet with!

Pushes him backwards. Platoon Sergeant slips and falls in the mud. John shakes his head and looks down at him with disgust.

JOHN (CONT'D)
 Now, go on back to your tent,
 Riggs. I'll bring it to you, when
 it comes in. You got that -- boy!

EXT. BARRACKS (WALKING) LATER

Henry and John walk passed a group of men standing in front of their barracks, then past the commissary.

HENRY
 You don't understand, man. I know
 you want to, but you have no idea
 what it's like to be black in 1970.

JOHN
 You're right, I don't -- tell me
 what it's like.

HENRY
 (beat)
 We have no control, no voice and
 can only hope for some stale piece
 of bread that someone's thrown out.

John nods at Henry with a serious expression.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 Do you know what it's like to be
 thirsty and come close to a water
 fountain only to feel the weight
 from the stares of people standing
 near you? I know people like Riggs
 back home that'll beat you
 unconscious for looking at their
 wife.

JOHN
 I don't, but ---

HENRY

(interrupts)

Or the feeling deep down in your gut when you're pulled over by the po-lice at night on some isolated stretch of road.

JOHN

(beat)

You're right -- I don't know. But what I do know is that there are people out there, righteous people, that do care and want to bridge that gap and stop the evil you've seen.

John opens the door of the Mess tent and they walk in.

INT. MESS TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Henry and John sit at a table eating. Henry leans forward, pointing a fork down at the table to make a point.

HENRY

We're farther apart now than ever before -- most blacks where I am from have given up. What we want are decent jobs, a voice and to feel like what we say actually matters, that people are listening. I -- I don't feel like anyone is listening.

JOHN

It's taken a long time to get to this point and it's gonna take more time, but the Civil Rights Movement has made huge strides the last couple years and --

HENRY

(interrupting)

Black men and women are tired of waiting. We don't want to hurt anyone, rape your women or take anything from you. We just want the basic necessities that you enjoy and probably never think twice about.

JOHN

I understand -- Let me ask you a question.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

You and me -- we get along pretty well. Do you believe that there are other white people like me who understand and feel your pain?

HENRY

I think there probably are but I don't meet them very often and can't remember the last time someone shook my hand and asked me how I felt about something.

John looks at Henry seriously and nods.

JOHN

I can only tell you how I feel, that I respect you and hear what you're saying. People are listening and I think there are more people than you know that are watching the news, listening and feel that what you've lived through is wrong. I can tell you that I consider you a good friend and that you have more people on your side than you think.

Henry looks seriously at John and nods.

EXT. KAMPONG CHAM PROVINCE - CAMBODIA - DAY

Henry and John carrying ordinance up a slight incline. BAMM! A HUGE EXPLOSION knocks them to the ground. Smoke, a FIRE FIGHT. Soldiers scramble for cover. Confusion, tracers, more EXPLOSIONS. Henry and John lying in the mud near a fox hole. John has his arm over Henry's legs. Then, it's over! Henry scrambles to his feet, slipping as he drags John by the lapel to a fox hole. They're covered in mud and Henry's laughing.

HENRY

You alright? -- Damn, that was close! - John? -- John!

Henry looks back down at John as his expression turns serious. With shallow eyes, John looks up at Henry.

JOHN

Caught one --- left - side.

Henry carefully rolls him over - eyes wide with horror.

HENRY

Medic! (louder) Medic!

Henry distressed, quickly rips open the side of John's uniform. Takes a bandana out of his pocket and holds it firmly against John's side. Blood everywhere as Henry looks right, then left, grabs a bottle of whiskey next to a field ration and pours it on the wound.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(screams)

Medic! - You're gonna be all right!
Hold this against your side firmly.
You gotta breath slower - slow your
breathing, man!

JOHN

(low voice)

Medic's dead! I can see him. You --
you gotta walk me out, boy! (slight
grin) You hear me, boy -- you gonna
have to hump me outta here!

HENRY

(focused)

Not now -- (ripping first aid pack
open, unwrapping gauze) Ain't no
walking you out of here, man. --
We're 75 clicks in.

John coughing, blood comes out of his mouth as he struggles to keep his eyes open. Eyes roll back in his head.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Hold on -- just hold on. The Medic
from 304's on his way!

JOHN

(gurgling sound)

You gotta -- make it home -- to see
-- to see your girls.

John closes his eyes.

HENRY

No -- No!

Tears coming down Henry's cheeks. Henry shakes his head as he cradles John's upper body.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Hold on John! Keep your eyes open,
just a few minutes!

John struggles to reach Henry's hand, then finally grabs it.

JOHN

-- Do something for me!

CHOWDER, 18, a skinny soldier with bright red hair from south Boston, stands behind Henry.

HENRY

Sure anything! (loudly) CHOWDER,
find me a God damned Medic!

JOHN

Would you --

Henry leans down close to John's head. We can't hear them. Henry slowly nods, watching John intently.

HENRY

I promise, I will --- but you're --

John's grip on Henry's hand is strong, then goes limp. Slowly John's head falls to the left. Henry stares at his friend, horrified as tears stream down his cheeks.

HENRY (CONT'D)

No - No! -- John! --- Ahh fuck!

Henry embraces John's limp body, passionately crying. TWO WHITE SOLDIERS behind him, somber look on their faces.

INT. MILITARY BUILDING - SAIGON - DAY

Henry sits alone in a drab military office. A Catholic priest walks into the room as Henry looks up. Henry stands eagerly, looking for some kind of a sign. The priest looks at him then slowly shakes his head, quietly whispering something to him. Henry cries out in agony, falling forward to his knees as the Priest reaches out and catches him, holding him in his arms.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Henry sits in the front pew of an old Church, quietly looking forward. His eyes are swollen and sad. An elderly AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAN in his 80's shuffles forward with a thick hickory cane and slowly puts a weathered hand gently on Henry's head. Deep creases in the old man's face and hands.

OLD MAN

(shaky voice)

I'm sorry for your loss son, damn
shame -- I loved em dearly!

Henry looks up but doesn't say anything. People walk by. Mostly black but a few white. Some pat him on the shoulder, other's quietly say something to him, but he doesn't respond or move. Henry holds an envelope in his hand, then drops it.

INSERT - ENVELOPE - which reads:

Loretta Dowd 1834 6th Ave, San Diego CA, 92101. Henry Jackson
544 Layton St, Mobile AL, 36640.

INT. KITCHEN (TELEPHONE) - DAY

Henry on the phone with his sister Loretta.

HENRY

(into phone)

Uh huh -- Yeah, I took care of that yesterday and left the rest to mom and the church.

LORRETTA (V.O.)

(over phone - filtered)

That's good, I am sure the church could use it honey -- When do you think you'll get here? Calvin and the boys can't wait to see you.

HENRY

(into phone)

Well, I am not really sure -- I got a couple things I need to take care of -- Stop by my friends' place in Texas and check in on his family.

LORRETTA (V.O.)

(over phone - filtered)

Ok -- ok, well that's nice of you to do that. Just let me know. Call me whenever you want now, Ok?

HENRY

(into phone)

I will -- I'll see ya, Lu.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Henry forlorn, going through the paces. Dobro slung over his shoulder and military rucksack in his hand. Transistor radio in his jacket pocket. Storing his things in the compartment under the Greyhound bus. Sign on the side of the bus reads: "Richland Mississippi". Henry walks onto the bus, finds a place near the middle. Looks out the window, sad expression.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF STORE - DAY

Henry walks down the sidewalk. A small Dixie flag hangs in a store front window. RED TUCKER, 30's, sly, quick tempered, southern bully comes walking out of a store with TWO OTHER MEN, bumping into Henry. Red looks at Henry, shaking his head like he can't believe it. A SHERIFF, 40's, tubby with a foxy look to him and another large man, DUANE, late 30's, in dirty overalls and slicked back hair stand right behind him. Duane walks around Red, standing next to Henry, eyeballing him. Stoic look on Henry's face.

RED TUCKER

Where the fuck you goin', boy? You need to open your eyes and ---

Red notices a U.S. Army pin on Henry's collar. He stops, steps back and takes a much closer look at Henry. Henry notices Red's Bowie knife and distinctive red shoes.

SHERIFF

Red Tucker, don't you have enough to take care of tonight? Think your plate's full, boy! (Sheriff glares at Henry) Move along nigger before I take ya in!

Sheriff's badge reads: Mississippi. Henry nods, walks away.

EXT. PINEY FOREST - NIGHT

Henry wakes up near the edge of a forest. A huge bonfire ROARS 150 yards in the distance. Confused look as he watches. Then he sees it. A burning cross goes up in flames. It's a Klan meeting. Henry's in shock, heart pounding as he drops to his knees then scrambles to collect his things. Looking right and left then over his shoulder as he quickly changes into a dark shirt. He's packed and crouches next to a large pine tree. Fully alert as his eyes dart back and forth. He rests his arm against a tree for stability, then watches them through army issued binoculars, focused and very still. Slowly, he starts to shake as he watches the proceedings, then winces. An African American male dangles from a rope. On the stage to the left stand Red and the Sheriff, smiling as they watch. Tears roll down Henry's cheeks. Hidden behind the tree, he looks right, then left as he covers his gear and moves into the forest.

EXT. SECLUDED BUS STOP - DAY

Henry sits on a bench along the roadside early morning, dobro and rucksack next to him. Quiet, staring.

Then all at once he picks up his dobro and violently smashes it against the ground, continuing to pound it until there's nothing left but strings and the neck of the guitar. He screams!

A moment later, Henry sits quietly among bits and pieces of his shattered guitar as a bus pulls up. The door to the bus opens. Henry in a trance.

BUS DRIVER
Whad'ya gunna do, pal?
(startles Henry)
-- You gettin' on?

Henry barely shakes his head. Door closes and the bus pulls away in a cloud of smoke. After 10 seconds, Henry stands up, drops his ticket and starts walking down the street.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Determined look on Henry's face as he pages through a phone book then writes something down on a small piece of paper.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

A) EXT. ALLEY - DAY - Talking to a tough-looking African American MAN. Henry gives him \$5 down low. The man looks around, then gives Henry a piece of paper on the sly.

B) INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY - Henry at the hardware store buying rope, and supplies. He walks out of the hardware store, looks both ways, then crosses the street.

C) EXT. RED'S FARM - NIGHT - Someone coming slowly from 20 yards away. It's Henry. He runs up wearing dark clothing, crouches down, a small pack around his waist and holding a knife. He jumps the fence, looks both ways and disappears.

D) EXT. BUS STATION - DAY - Bus pulling into station. Sign on the building reads: Vicksburg, MS. Passengers stepping off the bus, then Henry stepping off.

INT. BARBERSHOP - DAY

Henry stands up after getting a haircut in a busy African-American barbershop. Over the radio we hear:

ANNOUNCER
And in Richland today two prominent
citizens were found dead.
(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
 Sheriff Chester Burrow drowned on
 his property and council member
 Redford Tucker was found hung near
 the Beauchamp Bridge.

SKINNY BARBER smiles and looks around, shaking his head.

SKINNY BARBER
 Well -- there'll be extra biscuits
 tonight!

They all laugh hysterically - all but Henry. BARBERS talking among themselves. Serious look on heavy set BARBER who is talking with Henry, then nods.

HEAVY SET BARBER
 Maybe five, six hours -- Monroe on
 through to Shreveport and another
 three to Dallas.

HENRY
 And Tyler?

HEAVY SET BARBER
 Hour or two past Shreveport --

HENRY
 Thanks man, appreciate it.

They shake hands. Henry picks up his rucksack and leaves.

EXT. TREELINE NEAR THE BEAUCHAMP BRIDGE - DAY

Red Tucker hangs from a tree. Three Sheriff Deputies and two people from the morgue are taking notes and standing around. MS SHERIFF, 40's, intense, sweating in his uniform, stands with his hands on his belt-strap and gun, next to Red's buddy Duane. They watch as Red's body is cut down. Distinctive red shoes on his feet. MS Sheriff shakes his head.

MS SHERIFF
 For the life of me --- I can't
 figure out how the hell he did it?

Duane looking at him sideways with a funny look.

DUANE
 He didn't do a damn thing -- that
 there's a snare line! --- Not one I
 ever saw, but it's a snare line --
 sure enough!

MS Sheriff has a confused look on his face.

MS SHERIFF

A snare line? Wha -- What the hell you talkin' about?

DUANE

I mean a snare line used to hunt. I've used 'em in the past.

MS SHERIFF

Why -- Who -- who would do that?

DUANE

I don't know but whoever set that -- meant it for Red! See these boot tracks leading to the river? Those ain't Reds. This was no accident!

MS SHERIFF

You sure bout that? ---

DUANE

Ain't no doubt in my mind.

MS SHERIFF

Listen here, I don't want you sayin' nothin' to nobody bout this, you hear me! If we gonna catch this som' bitch, we gonna do it my way.

Duane just looks at the Sheriff and nods. Sheriff looks at the tracks thinking.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW - EDGE OF SMALL TEXAS TOWN - DAY

Ranches, farms and barns dot the surrounding area. Steer and cattle in the fields. Early model trucks make their way down the long, flat, dusty roads, heat coming up off the road.

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - DAY

A truck comes to a stop in the shade of the piney woods. Henry jumps out of the back, grabs his duffle bag and says something to the CAUCASIAN DRIVER. The driver holds his hand up, then slowly drives off.

Sign on the side of the road reads, "Tyler Texas, Pop. 21,441."

EXT. MAIN STREET TYLER, TEXAS - DAY

Henry walks up the street past a Winn-Dixie supermarket, hardware and feed store, barber shop.

He tips his hat to a couple, white OLD TIMERS. One nods back.
In the distance, the spire of a church.

EXT. MCCLELLAN HOUSE - DAY

Paint peeling from an old white clapboard house. The porch in disrepair and dried by the sun tilts forward. Large red barn with a weather vane to the left and a wide expansive field with horses just beyond a large oak tree.

INT. PARLOR OF MCCLELLAN HOME - DAY

JUNE MCCLELLAN, mid 60's, tiny but resilient and strong in character, is the matriarch of the McClellan family. She stands near the entrance to the parlor staring towards the window, almost in a trance. The room is stark, with just a chair, sofa and coffee table. The windows are open and the drapes lightly blow in the breeze.

June's daughter, MOLLY O'HARE, 32, determined but fragile, is in the kitchen wearing a light blue apron and a melancholy smile, washes dishes and hums to Loretta Lynn on the radio.

HEATHER MCDONALD, a precocious 9 year old, plays with her best friend ANNIE O'HARE, 8, in the next room.

JUNE

I'm going to town.

MOLLY (OS)

Whaa - what! Where you going?

JUNE

(louder)

To town --- I am going to town.

MOLLY (OS)

(irritated)

What for --- just went yesterday.
What do you need?

Barefoot Heather runs to June with Annie right behind her.

HEATHER

(out of breath)

Can I come?

ANNIE

I wanna come too!

JUNE

Sure, hop in the truck.

(to Molly)

I've got a couple things I need to do.

Molly stands in the foyer, wipes her hands on a towel, nods and looks at June closely.

MOLLY

Ok, pick up some toothpaste, we're almost out - you alright? You look kind of funny!

JUNE

Aww, I'm fine. Just daydreaming I guess. Toothpaste?

MOLLY

Yeah!

JUNE

Be back in an hour.

EXT. FRONT OF MCCLELLAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

June jumps into an old Chevy truck, girls bouncing on the front seat giggling. Truck coughs, sputters and starts on the third try, then slowly pulls away in a cloud of dust.

June's grandson GRAYSON MCCLELLAN, 14, quietly intelligent with an easy disposition, lives at the ranch with his grandmother and aunt. He narrates the story.

GRAYSON (VO)

In January of 1971 we were in the second year of a drought. My aunt was classified as clinically depressed by a doctor in town after her husband was killed in Vietnam. Up to that point it was my grandmother who held us together.

June drives down a tree lined road. Girls hang out the passenger side window. They pass a lake that's almost dried out, the stark, flat Texas landscape out in front of them.

JUNE

Heather, I sure like that dress of yours. Your momma make that?

Annie smiles as she points at Heather's dress.

ANNIE

That's peanut butter and that's jelly.

HEATHER

(angry face)

Shushh!

(casually to June)

No - It's a hand-me-down -- my cousin Katie's.

JUNE

Well, it's mighty pretty. I like it!

June drives down the road. Downtown Tyler comes into view. Cars and trucks come and go. Two rugged men in cowboy hats walk across the street. Three teenagers talk near an old truck. Hold on June as she drives down the street.

EXT. OLD WHITEWASHED CHURCH - DAY

Henry walks towards the church. PASTOR HICKS, 50, a bear of a man, standing 6'4", walks out the front door of his Church and up to a directorate, waving at a passing truck. He slowly opens the case and tacks up an announcement as he looks right and sees Henry walking towards him. He closes the case and watches Henry as he approaches. Pastor Hicks greets Henry with a big smile and a hand shake. We see them talking. Pastor Hicks laughs then shakes his head as if to say no. They shake hands again and Henry starts to walk away.

MOMENTS LATER

June and the girls pull up in front of the church.

JUNE

Haven't fixed that ol' directorate yet? -- What do you do all day?

PASTOR HICKS

My my -- there you are. How you doin' Juney? Missed ya last Sunday.

HEATHER

Howdy!

ANNIE

Howdy Pastor Hicks.

PASTOR HICKS

Well, howdy girls -- You being good for Juney today?

GIRLS

(in chorus)

Yes -

PASTOR HICKS

Look at you! You're getting so big.
Makes me so happy to see y'all
today! What brings you to town?

JUNE

Ahh, I had a few things to pick up
at the store.

PASTOR HICKS

(nods, concerned look)

Say Heather, how's your momma?

HEATHER

She's been a bit under the weather.
Daddy says she's got a bit of a
cold.

PASTOR HICKS

(glances at June)

Well, you tell her that I said
"hey" and that I'll be coming by
Thursday mornin', OK?

HEATHER

Ok, I will ---

The girls look at each other, giggle, then continue to play with a Barbie. Pastor Hicks, with a concerned look, puts his hand on June's arm.

PASTOR HICKS

How you doing, Juney?

JUNE

(frustrated)

Been better I suppose, just too
damn busy. That old ranch won't
take care of itself, you know.

Pastor Hicks, thinking, stops, looks right, squints as he holds his hand above his eyes. Hand to mouth, yells out.

PASTOR HICKS

Henry -- (louder) Henry -- could
you come here for a minute son?

Henry stops, watching Pastor Hicks and June with a serious look, then slowly starts to walk towards them.

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)

Here me out now -- This young man Henry is looking for a place to stay for a couple days. He looks and sounds like a fine, fine young man. He's a carpenter, can fix an engine, says he's on his way to California? -- And you know how I feel bout carpenters! (winks at June, then seriously) Maybe you could help each other. In any event, I'd like you to meet him.

JUNE

(serious look)

Ok!

June looks at Henry, at Pastor Hicks, then at Henry again as Henry walks up. Pastor Hicks hand on Henry's shoulder.

PASTOR HICKS

Glad you didn't get too far! Henry, I'd like you to meet Mrs. June McClellan. She's got a place bout 5 miles from here off 31!

HENRY

(half smile, nods)

Afternoon, Ms. McClellan. My name is Henry --- Henry Jackson.

June looks deeply into Henry's eyes as if looking for something then smiles.

JUNE

Henry, our porch is about to fall over and I hear you're pretty handy? We could sure use some help -- you think you could help us fix a few things?

Henry's speech is slow and confident.

HENRY

Well, I can fix most anything made of wood --- if you've got the tools I can probably bring it back.

JUNE

I've got a whole barn full of tools. My late husband Hank collected every tool you could possibly want. --- We're having stew for supper, you hungry?

HENRY

Yes ma'am, can't tell ya how good
that sounds!

June winks at Pastor Hicks, then smiles at Henry.

JUNE

Well, we best get back before dark.
Hop in Henry.

HENRY

Ok -

Henry shakes Pastor Hicks' hand, throws his rucksack in the
back of the truck and opens the passenger side door.

JUNE

Girls, move over. Give Henry a
little room - Annie, scoot closer.

PASTOR HICKS

Ok, I expect to see y'all Sunday
morning. Don't make me come lookin'
for you now!

JUNE

Sunday dinner?

PASTOR HICKS

(slowly nods)
-- I'll be there!

JUNE

I know, I know, okra and cornbread!

INT. CAB OF TRUCK (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Driving down a shady section of road. Henry in the front
passenger seat next to Heather, June casually looks over at
Henry and smiles.

JUNE

Where you from, Henry?

HENRY

Mobile ma'am, born and raised.

JUNE

You don't have to call me ma'am --
You go ahead and call me Juney like
everyone else, honey. What you
gonna be doing out in California?

(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

Oh my, I'm -- I'm sorry, that's none of my business!

HENRY

That's alright, I'm headed to see my sister in San Diego. -- Never been west of Dallas.

ANNIE

How old is your sister? Is she pretty?

Henry looks down at Annie and nods.

HENRY

She's about my age and yes, she's very pretty --- her hair's not quite as pretty as yours, but she's very beautiful!

June / Annie smile. Annie nuzzles her head into June's side.

HEATHER

My name is Heather. Do I have pretty hair?

HENRY

Why, I've never seen such pretty hair, and that bow -- umm mmmm. I do love the color yellow. I have a friend back home named Heather, only we called her Heather-Belle!

HEATHER

I like that! Will you call me Heather-Belle, too?

ANNIE

(makes mad face)

Hey, I wanna pretty name, too!

June looks at Henry and smiles approvingly. We see them from outside the truck talking as they head down the road.

EXT. FRONT OF MCCLELLAN HOUSE - LATER

They get out of the truck, girls run off. June holding a small bag of groceries.

JUNE

Can we help you with those things?
My grandsons are running around
here somewhere (under her breath)
committing some crime.

HENRY

No ma'am, I've got it ---

June walks towards the porch expecting Henry to follow.

JUNE

I'll have my grandson, Grayson
bring you a pillow and blankets.

June stops and looks back at Henry, questioning look as to
why he isn't following her.

HENRY

I'll be fine out here, thank you.

JUNE

(concerned look)
I am sorry Henry, we just don't
have the space inside.

HENRY

Ms. June, I appreciate that very
much -- I'll be fine.

June looks at him for a few seconds, then nods.

JUNE

Supper'll be ready in an hour.

June walks up the stairs to the house as Henry grabs his
things and starts walking towards the barn.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Molly eyeballs her mother and whispers.

MOLLY

Who's that?

JUNE

That's Henry!

MOLLY

I don't understand --- you go to
the store for toothpaste and cheese
and come back with a black man?

JUNE

I didn't get any cheese.
 (whispering now) He's not a black man. That's Henry -- from Mobile! Denny said he could help us round the place for a few days. Fix a few things round here. What's wrong with that? (agitated) And why am I whisperin'?

June puts things away. Molly and June at the kitchen window watching Henry just inside the barn door. Henry takes a shirt out of his duffle bag, looks down at a puppy that has walked in, slowly bends down and pets the puppy, then casually looks up at the house. Molly and June duck to the side.

MOMENTS LATER

Molly watches Heather and Annie standing in front of two huge barn doors talking to Henry. Henry nods, looks around then grabs two mason jars and hands them to the girls. They run off laughing and giggling. Molly watches Henry closely.

MOLLY

Are you sure, Momma?

JUNE

I just told you -- he seems like a real nice young man. He's on his way to visit his sister somewhere. He's a mechanic and a carpenter - can fix practically anything and maybe - just maybe we'll get a couple things done around here! Besides, it'll be nice to have someone new 'round here for a change. -- Don't forget to tell GRADY -- you know how he gets!

GRADY HARPER, mid 50's, salty, overseer at the ranch. June puts on her apron and starts to cut up a potato.

INT. MCCLELLAN HOUSE FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Knocking. June walks across the foyer and answers the door.

JUNE

I was wondering where you'd gone!
 Henry, come on in! I want you to meet my daughter Molly. She thinks you might be nutty or something ---
 You're not nutty, are you?

MOLLY

(screams - embarrassed)

MOMMA! -- Hi Henry, I am Molly. My mother has lost her mind! It's sad, but we still love her -- It's very nice to meet you.

June walks back toward the kitchen mumbling something about biscuits. Half grin from Henry, looks Molly in the eyes.

HENRY

It's nice to meet you, Molly. I'll do my best to help you and your mother take care of a few of things while I am here. -- One thing though -- y'all know that porch is in bad shape and we're gonna need a whole lot of lumber to fix it.

MOLLY

Don't I know it --- a butterfly could land on it now and the whole thing would probably fall apart! I am pretty sure we've got enough lumber in the barn.

Out of the corner of his eye Henry sees a little blond boy staring at him from behind a chair. TY TUTTLE, 5, is a quiet boy that June watches during the day. Henry stops, stares at a picture on the wall of John. June yells from the kitchen.

JUNE

There's enough lumber in that ol' barn to build an ark -- Henry -- Henry, come on in here and try this stew. Tell me if it needs any salt!

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Henry trying the stew. CHANCE O'HARE, 15, is a good-looking, solid boy with an easy, confident, air to him stands next to his cousin Grayson. They shake hands with Henry, laughing as they talk about something. Molly intently watches them from the other room, thinking as Grayson hands Henry a glass of lemonade. Hold on Henry as he looks closely at Chance, then nods and smiles.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Chance brings his plate up to the sink. Grayson washes dishes and June is drying. Chance gives June a big kiss and June lovingly smiles back at him. Chance in a bold voice:

CHANCE

Momma, can I borrow the truck tonight? Like to swing by Bobby Jo's and see how she's doin'.

MOLLY

No!

CHANCE

(incredulous look)

What? Why not, Momma? I'll only be there a little while. Come on now!

MOLLY

Upon reconsideration --- no again! Now git your tail outta here!

CHANCE

(pained look)

Ahh, man!

Chance mumbles something and stalks off. Grayson looks at June, grins and snickers. Henry watching, smiles and looks the other way. June sees Henry watching them, smiles and continues drying the dishes.

INT. MCCLELLAN HOUSE / FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Knocking. Molly walks to front door. Ty's right behind her.

MOLLY

Hey DEX --

DEX TUTTLE, 40's, blue-collar racist, with a weathered look about him, says something to Molly. We can't hear them, then.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

He was fine. He's my good boy.

Molly gets down on one knee and gives him an Eskimo kiss.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

We'll see you in the morning, ok?

TY

O - o - o - ok!

DEX

Much obliged!

TY

B - B - Bye!

MOLLY
Bye, sweety!

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Annie and Heather, run by very excited.

HEATHER
I know, but I caught two ---

ANNIE
I only caught one --- but that's
because you bumped me!

MOLLY
Stop! Where have you two been? Did
you hear me ring the bell?

ANNIE
We've been catching fireflies for
Henry! Heather Belle caught two!

HEATHER
Henry said it was going to be dark
soon and he needed us to find some
fireflies so he could read!

ANNIE
Yeah, he said it was real important
and asked us to help him. And guess
what? -- We did, we caught three.

They both scream, giggle and run off. June looks at Molly and raises her eyebrows like "I told you so." Molly stands there with a concerned look, contemplating the introduction of their new visitor, Henry Jackson.

MOLLY
(agitated, loud voice)
Put some shoes on -- and who the
hell is Heather-Belle?

June putting dishes away in the kitchen, grins.

INT. INSIDE THE BARN - NIGHT

Henry stands at the work bench organizing some clothes. Molly walks in with a serious look, holding an old kerosene lantern. She stops, looking Henry right in the eyes.

MOLLY

I don't know you, my mother doesn't know you, but she likes you for some reason. To be honest -- I don't know how to feel 'bout having you 'round here. But I want you to know something! If anything -- anything happens to one of these kids while you're here, I will flip you like a cheese omelette. You hear me?

HENRY

(stunned)

Yes, yes - I --- I hear you.

Molly puts the lantern on the bench, still looking at him, nods like they have an understanding and walks out.

MOMENTS LATER

From the darkness of the back of the barn Grady emerges wearing dirty overalls and cowboy boots. Unflinching, Henry sees him and looks directly at him.

GRADY

She's mostly bark anymore -- but tough as nails when it comes to her younguns.

HENRY

I am sure she is -- I'm Henry ---

GRADY

(interrupts)

I know -- I know who you are. Juney told me. (they shake hands) Welcome - I could use some help round here. (pause) She's gut shot, you know!

HENRY

What?

GRADY

After John - her husband was killed over there in Viet-nam. She's lost - -- in the dark somewhere and don't know how to get back I suppose.

HENRY

--- I understand!

GRADY

No, you don't! -- I live in the house in the shady corner. I'll be 'round --- let me know what you need. (starts to walk out) Oh, if you need me for anything just ring the bell three times.

HENRY

Ok, I will.

Henry watches Grady as he slowly fades into the night.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - LATER

The inside of barn is illuminated as Chance and Grayson push the truck away from the house. Henry stands just inside the barn door. Chance glances at Henry, then back at Grayson.

CHANCE

(angry voice)
Come on!

Grayson looks back at Henry. Forty yards down the road Chance hops in and jump starts the truck. Grayson comes walking back, self-conscious as he looks at Henry.

EXT. FRONT OF DRUG STORE - DAY

Chance hanging out with a couple friends. He looks left and notices a big kid from school pushing a couple smaller boys just 75 feet from them. Chance looks at his best friend FERNANDO SANCHEZ, 16, a happy, rugged, good-looking cowboy type and nods in the direction of the bigger kid.

CHANCE

What's that kid's name ---

FERNANDO

(looks around)
In the cap?

CHANCE

Yeah.

FERNANDO

That's Jed Stanton's brother,
Jayce.

(to friend)
It's Jayce, ain't it?

OTHER FRIEND

Yeah, Jayce Stanton --- fuckin' bully, just like his brother.

Chance intently watches him, then JAYCE STANTON, 15, 6'0" and solid as a rock, pushes one of the smaller kids down. Chance decisively hands his 7-Up to a buddy and walks with purpose towards Jayce.

CHANCE

Hold up, boys!

FERNANDO

Oh man, here we go!

ANOTHER BUDDY

What's going on?

A few of the guys turn around as the others start walking that way. With a swagger, Chance slowly walks up behind Jayce and deliberately and loudly mispronounces his name.

CHANCE

Hey Jay - C!

Jayce turns around quickly with a scowl.

JAYCE

What?

CHANCE

Got something for ya!

JAYCE

Yeah, what's that --

Jayce stands up straight; he's taller than Chance by two inches. Standing next to each other as Chance looks him right in the eyes, then Chance leans in a little closer.

CHANCE

Last night -- I banged your sister like a screen door in a tornado!

Chance makes a clicking noise with his cheek then deftly takes a step back. Jayce takes a huge swing, but Chance ducks, moves right and comes in low with a kidney punch. He quickly takes one step back and follows up with a strong left to the jaw. Chance watches as Jayce goes down in SLOW MOTION. Buddies stand around shouting and shaking their heads.

YOUNGER KID

Yeah Chance, kick his ass!

FERNANDO

Damn! -- that there's a corn-fed boy too!

BUDDY NEXT TO FERNANDO

He's big --- but he's no cowboy!

ANOTHER YOUNGER KID

What's wrong, Jayce -- cat got your tongue?

FERNANDO

Had it coming -- yes sir, sure did!

Younger kid looks up at Chance with awe.

ANOTHER YOUNGER KID

Thanks, Chance!

Chance scratches his nose as he looks at Jayce and nods.

YOUNGER KID

Yeah, thanks, Chance!

ANOTHER BUDDY OF CHANCE

(pours his Coke on Jayce)

All he needs is a nice cold Coke to cool off!

A couple of the kids laugh as Jayce squirms on the ground.

INT. FRONT OF MCCLELLAN HOUSE - DAY

Early morning and much of the porch is finished. Lumber leaning against the house. Two saw horses in front of the stairs. Henry in a chair near the barn doors reading. June walks toward Henry with a cup of coffee. Hands it to him.

HENRY

Thank you.

JUNE

You sleep alright?

HENRY

Yes ma'am, slept just fine.

JUNE

I can probably set you up in the front room, if you don't mind the couch.

HENRY

Well, thank you, I appreciate that,
but this is better for me. Say Ms.
Juney, what kind of horses are
those over yonder? The spotted
ones?

June looks towards the corral.

JUNE

Those are Appaloosas -- beautiful,
aren't they? -- See more of them up
north in Colorado and Idaho. Hank
loved them. Their look, temperament.

HENRY

Never seen anything like 'em ---
Ms. Juney, I didn't want to wake
anyone - what time should I start?

JUNE

(amused)

Molly and the boys have been up for
hours taking care of the animals.
We're Texans, Henry. We're up
before the birds.

She starts to walk away, stops, then turns around.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Don't let Chance convince you to
ride that one with the black tail.
You'll live to regret it!

Out of the corner of his eye Henry spots Ty again peeking out
from behind an old oak barrel near the barn.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - DAY

Henry helping Grady load some hay onto a flatbed truck.

UNDER THE BIG OAK - CONTINUOUS

Henry and Grady relax against the railing near the corral in
the shade. Grady chomps on a cigar talking, using his hands
to describe something. Henry shakes his head like "no"! Grady
nodding his head like "yes". Henry grins. Chance rides up on
his horse, wearing gloves.

CHANCE

Mornin', Henry -
(To Grady)
(MORE)

CHANCE (CONT'D)

I am goin' to Fernando's - will you
tell Momma for me?

GRADY

I'll tell her.

Chance slaps his horse with his hat and rides away in a cloud
of dust. Henry looks at Grady, concerned.

HENRY

How's he doing?

GRADY

Alright, I guess - tough as nails
on the outside that one -- but on
the inside, I think he's a hurtin'!

Serious look from Henry as he looks at Grady and nods.

INT. INSIDE THE BARN - DAY

Chance walks into the barn holding an old rifle. Henry very
serious at the work bench. Transistor radio playing Aretha
Franklin's "Until You Come Back to Me."

CHANCE

Henry, you -- you know anything
about guns?

Henry thinking, looks at the rifle sideways then stares at it
as if reminiscing. (long pause)

HENRY

They call that a rifle -- looks
like a 22.

CHANCE

I know - it was my father's. Think
it's worth saving?

Henry stops and looks at Chance. Slowly nods.

HENRY

It's probably worth the time to
figure out what's wrong with it!
Let's have a look --

CHANCE

This piece seems to be stuck. What
do you suppose we could do to get
er' working again?

Chance hands the rifle to Henry. Henry examines it and slowly starts to take it apart. Jack the dog lies down near Henry.

HENRY

Looks like the stock's locked up here for some reason. Let's put some oil on it and see what that does.

CHANCE

(nods, watching Henry)
Ok!

HENRY

I think I saw something over here that might work.

Henry grabs a small can of oil and a rag from a shelf. They stand at the work bench talking. We can't hear them. Chance grins and Henry looks up, smiling.

EXT. HENRY OUT IN THE FIELD - DAY,

Henry sits out in a field, a stick in his hand, swishing it back and forth.

INT. FRONT ROOM PARLOR - DAY

Molly standing, watches Henry from the window.

MOLLY

What's he doin' out there?

June casually looks up, then out the window at Henry.

JUNE

Relaxing, I suppose - he looks very relaxed.

MOLLY

Spends a lot of time out there and under the big oak!

JUNE

Works pretty hard, almost finished with the porch! Grady really likes him.

MOLLY

I know, I know. I am just saying - He likes it out there!

June stops doing her needlepoint, looks very closely at Henry in the field - thinking.

JUNE

He's been through something. I don't know what, but he's been hurt! I suppose his soul needs a quiet, peaceful place. I know how he feels!

Close up - Hold on Henry as tears roll down his cheeks.

EXT. MCCLELLAN HOUSE FRONT PORCH - DAY

Posts have been replaced, part of the rafters in the roof and most of the railing is finished. June walks out, puts a glass of lemonade down on the rail.

JUNE

Henry, I can't believe it's the same porch! And these chairs --- I love em! Come, sit with me a spell.

HENRY

Well, thank you! It's coming along real fine.

Henry wipes the perspiration from his forehead. June sits down and Henry sits down next to her. She looks up at him, pats his hand and starts to reminisce.

JUNE

You smell that?

HENRY

What -- the jasmine? -- Yes. Always loved the smell of jasmine. Grows wild here.

JUNE

You know --- when Hank and I were first married he planted creeping rose right here in front of the porch. (sighs) -- And at one point it had grown completely over this part of the roof. (faraway look) It was so beautiful. There was jasmine in back and honeysuckle near our bedroom window. --- My goodness - On warm summer nights you woulda thought you were in heaven!

HENRY

I am sure it did. Nothing like jasmine or honeysuckle to help you sleep -- You know you have creeping rose on the far side of that fence yonder and I've seen honeysuckle near the swimmin' hole and in that thicket near Grady's place. Course, you got wild jasmine just about everywhere.

JUNE

Honeysuckle at the swimmin' hole? Where -- where is that?

HENRY

Oh, the kids took me to the crik yesterday on the other side of Pearson's field after we finished up.

JUNE

(confused)

There's water in that ol' crik?

HENRY

That Crikes fed by a spring. There's a lot of water in that old crik. Least 10 feet!

JUNE

Huh, I haven't been over there in years. I'll have to go with you and the kids next time. (Pats Henry's hand as she gets up to leave) Let me know when you go!

HENRY

Ms. Juney, I'll be finished with the porch soon. Couple things I could take care of in the barn for you. Possibly get that ol' tractor goin. But we'll need some supplies -
- few things from the store.

June looks at Henry, thinking.

JUNE

I am sure we do -- Sounds like a trip to the hardware store's in order! I need a few things myself. Gimme 10 minutes.

HENRY
Ok, let me know --

EXT. TRUCK UNDER SHADY TREE - LATER

June and Henry hop in the truck, she turns the key and it starts strong and hearty on the first try.

JUNE
That's strange -- usually takes 2
or 3 tries to get her going!

HENRY
Chance and I took a look at it
night before last, cleaned the fuel
line -- adjusted a couple things.
Should run fine for awhile.

JUNE
I thought this ol' truck was headed
for the trash heap. That was mighty
nice of you! Henry --- you truly
are a breath of fresh air!

EXT. FRONT OF SAM'S HARDWARE - DAY

JUNE
I've got to run up to the Winn-
Dixie, you get what you need at
Sam's and I'll meet you in a few
minutes.

HENRY
That's fine, I'll see you in a
minute.

SALES COUNTER

STORE KEEPER, 30's, skinny, nervous type, looks around.

STORE KEEPER
Can I help you?

HENRY
Good Morning, do you have --

DEX TUTTLE
I'll tell ya what he wants -- he's
here to pick up some watermelon.
Boy, this here's a hardware store.
Ain't no watermelon here.

A few of the guys in the store laugh. Henry ignores them and without missing a beat.

HENRY

I'll take two pounds of 5" penny nails and a pound of 3". Some of these metal straps and -- the biggest block and tackle you got.

STORE KEEPER

Just -- just got some block and tackle in. Which one you want?

Storekeeper points to a row of block and tackle. He's nervous as he looks back at Dex.

HENRY

Second from the right, thank you.

Henry slowly walks in the direction of the block and tackle, picking out things he needs, neither rushing nor feeling nervous.

DEX

Boy, I need some help with this here bundle; you take this out to my truck for me.

Henry walks right past him as he takes his things to the counter like he never heard him. Dex raises his voice!

DEX (CONT'D)

Did you hear me, boy?!!!

PASTOR HICKS

(booming voice)

Dex Tuttle, you leave that man alone! Henry is my guest in this town --- Now take your sorry ass and git the hell out of here! -- and try using your Bible for something other than a door stop!

June walks in, senses what has happened. Looks at Pastor Hicks then walks up to Henry at the counter.

JUNE

Don't pay him no mind. Every town has an idiot -- I suppose Dex Tuttle's ours!

Pastor Hicks nods at June and she knows everything is all right. Dex leaves through the back door.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Did you get what you needed?

HENRY

Yeah, I got everything.

As they're walking out, KRISTY WATSON, mid 40's, whispers to another woman. They're both looking at June and Henry and saying something under their breath. June looks directly at them, sticks her tongue out, keeps walking.

INT. CAB OF TRUCK (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS

Henry driving. After quietly driving a minute, June looks over at Henry.

JUNE

You run into that kind of foolishness very often?

HENRY

Not where I am from --- we were separated mostly. But when I did, my father told us to pretend they weren't there and to focus on what we had to do. (pause - concerned look) You know -- Dr. King said --- "I have a dream that one day -- little black boys and girls will walk together holding hands with little white boys and girls." --- Do you believe that'll ever happen?

June watches Henry with a pained look. (pause)

JUNE

I do Henry -- Yes -- I do! It may take some time, but I believe that!

HENRY

(barely nods)
Truck pulled over up ahead! -- You know him?

Concerned look on June's face as she watches Henry.

JUNE

(long pause)
Sure, that's --- that's Bud Norman.
Let's see what's going on.

June still watching Henry as they pull up to truck. BUD, late 50's, stocky build in worn overalls and cowboy boots.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Hi Bud -- workin' on your tan?

Bud taps his hat then slowly shakes his head.

BUD

Juney, she done quit on me! Think it's the carburetor?

JUNE

Bud, this here's Henry Jackson from Mobile. He's stayin' with us a spell.

BUD

(nods)

Henry.

HENRY

Hello Mr. Norman, would you mind if I took a look?

BUD

Well, thank you son. I'd be much obliged!

Henry gets out and walks around to the other side of the truck. They shake hands.

HENRY

My daddy had a '55 a lot like yours, and you're right about the carburetor -- always was a problem.

And they begin a conversation in front of Bud's truck. June takes a sip of her Coke, wipes her forehead with the can, lifts her hair and lays her head back against the window.

EXT. SIDE VIEW OF TRUCK - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Henry in front of the truck holding a screwdriver and a nut. Bud at the wheel of the truck with his foot above the pedal.

HENRY

Ok, try it now!

Bud touches the pedal and turns the key. Starts right up!

BUD

Ah'll be damned -- You got some kind of talent son -- Thank you!

HENRY
You're welcome Mr. Norman.

BUD
It's Bud, you call me Bud!

Bud pulls his wallet out.

HENRY
No, no -- that's -- that's not
necessary Bud!

BUD
Well, I sure appreciate that. Say
Henry, I've got a tractor givin' my
son Mick and I a headache. We could
sure use your help if you got some
time.

HENRY
Well, I've got a couple things
we're finishing up at the McClellan
place -- can I call you next week?

BUD
Sure - sure, Juney's got my number
and that ol' tractor -- Well, she
ain't goin' nowhere.

June and Bud laugh as Henry and June climb in the truck. Half
smile from Henry. June waving.

JUNE
See ya, Bud!

Bud waves as Henry and June take off down the road.

EXT. MCCLELLAN HOUSE - PORCH - DAY

Dusk. June stands on the porch with a serious look as she
stares down at Dex near the bottom of the stairs, then in a
fierce voice.

JUNE
I have a question for you -- Were
you ever kicked by a horse, fallen
out of a tree or dropped on your
goddamned head?

DEX
(taken aback)
No!

JUNE

Because you don't appear to have a brain in that puny little cue ball of yours. --- Now, I've watched your sweet little boy for two years, never asked for a penny and basically raised him as mine. I would never use him as a bargaining chip but - If I ever hear you say or do what I understand you did this afternoon -- I will kick your ass so far into space -- Houston'll think we got another damned rocket up there! Do you hear me?

DEX

But I ..

JUNE

Ut, utt! Did I say you could talk? -
- That little boy in there is a precious jewel - and you will not corrupt him with your simpleminded, moronic, racist thoughts.

June walks down a few steps, looking him in the eyes.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Now think about what I've said Dex Tuttle, think real hard because you're slower than most folks. Do not upset me again!

Molly stands on the porch, arms crossed, giving Dex the evil eye. June walks down the rest of the steps, shoves a bag of Ty's things into his hands, turns and walks up the stairs. Dex just standing there holding the bag, looking stupid.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Pastor Hicks stands at his pulpit, very focused, looking out over his congregation.

PASTOR HICKS

Tolerance is a prized virtue these days. The ability to be understanding of those with whom we differ -- is a fine trait. No one is born with hatred or intolerance.

As he glances in the direction of Dex Tuttle.

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)
That's something that people bring
to the table themselves. And why,
WHY for heavens sake would you do
that? At times I think this world
has gone plumb crazy - plumb crazy!

He looks around slowly, taking each and every face in.

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)
Tolerance and love, character
traits that will take you far --
swell your heart to unimaginable
size -- giving you happiness you've
only dreamed of.

Looking around and nodding.

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)
Yes! --- A quote from the late Dr.
Martin Luther King.

He glances at Henry.

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)
Nothing in this world is more
dangerous than sincere ignorance
and conscientious stupidity! And
that hate cannot drive out hate;
only love can do that. (long pause
as he looks around) I'd like you to
take a minute today and really
think about what he said.

EXT. FRONT OF CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Pastor Hicks talking with Dex after church. He has his hand
on Dex' shoulder, looking at him in the eyes. Dex with a
sorrowful expression nodding his head. Ty leans against his
father's leg, holding a stick, watching the other kids play.

INT. BUS STOP - DAY

Sheriff and MAN in overalls talk to an attendant at the bus
terminal. Attendant nods his head as if to say yes. Hold on
the Sheriff as he asks another question. We can't hear them.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - HENRY'S CHAIR - DAY

Henry with his coffee, whittles something in his chair. Ty just inside the barn door intently watches him and Jack. Henry casually glances over at him. Ty slowly wanders over.

TY

Wha - wha - wha - what chu makin'?

HENRY

Nothing!

TY

Y - y - y- Yes you are -- I - I
wanna see!

HENRY

No -- no, it's a secret!

TY

Ahhh!

Ty makes a pouty face.

HENRY

Ohh, alright -- you wanna see how
it works? --- It's magic, you know.

TY

(excited)
I - it is?

HENRY

Yep, ok, now look at how I hold my
hands and what I do.

Ty nods, watching very closely - Henry rubs his hands together and the propeller takes off 15 feet into the air!

TY

(screams)
I - I wanna try, I wanna try! Sh -
sh - show me again, show me again!

Ty runs back with propeller. Henry puts his arms around Ty, showing him how to hold his hands together just as Annie and Heather come running around the corner. They stop and watch.

HENRY

Ok, yep, just like that -- now
swish your hands together!

Ty swishes his hands and the propeller takes off. Annie and Heather stand with their mouths open. They run to pick it up.

TY

L - L - look! L - look what Henry
made - It - it's magic!

ANNIE

What is it?

HEATHER

What chu got there?

TY

It - it's magic, look! Y - y - y
You rub it like this and it - it
flies up in the air. H - H - Henry
made it!

Henry watches them, grins and begins to read the paper again.
June watches them from the kitchen window and smiles.

EXT. BBQ - UNDER THE BIG OAK - DAY

Twenty people mill around a group of tables. Fernando stands
next to a girl and snaps a towel at Chance. June and NEIGHBOR
LADY serving up steak, chicken and corn. Grady at the grill,
telling a joke to Henry, Chance, Fernando and ANOTHER MAN.

GRADY

You're gonna like this: "Louisiana
State trooper pulls over a heavy
set black woman."

Grady looks at Henry, holding his hand up.

Walks up to her window, flips open
his ticket book. She says, "I bet
you gonna try to sell me a ticket
to the Louisiana State Troopers
ball!" The Trooper looks at her and
says, "Louisiana Trooper's don't
have balls"! Sly grin on her face
as she looks at him in the eyes.

Grady, Chance and Fernando are already laughing.

There's an awkward moment of
silence as he closes his book, tips
his hat, walks back to his patrol
car and leaves!

Grady slaps his thigh, laughing LOUDLY, as the rest of them
bust up laughing. Henry slowly grins, then starts laughing.

MOMENTS LATER

Pastor Hicks talks with Henry near the corral. A young man walks away from them.

PASTOR HICKS

Fine young man, yes indeed. I like him -- I like his family!

HENRY

Seems like a nice kid!

PASTOR HICKS

What are you doing tomorrow mornin'? -- I could use your help.

HENRY

Uh tomorrow, sure! What do you have to do?

PASTOR HICKS

Ah, just taking a few supplies to a couple from the Pasture Church not too far from here.

HENRY

The Pasture Church?

PASTOR HICKS

Yes, I pastor a small church for the needy -- fine group of people just up the road. I'd like you to meet this couple if you got time.

Pastor Hicks takes Henry's arm and introduces him to ANOTHER MAN standing nearby. They smile and shake hands.

EXT. INSIDE TRUCK - DAY

Henry and Pastor Hicks drive down an old dusty road. Past a couple of huge shady oak trees with cattle underneath.

PASTOR HICKS

It's this one up ahead on the right!

HENRY

(pity in his eyes)
What's going on here?

PASTOR HICKS

This -- this my son - is abject poverty. The kind of poverty that'll kill ya. I am partial to Ester and Otis.

(MORE)

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)

Their kids Samuel and Bess are favorites. Kidnapped my heart, I suppose.

ESTER / OTIS BROWN, 30's, poor African-American sharecroppers who live near the McClelland Ranch. They have two kids: BESS 8, SAMUEL 5. Henry and Pastor Hicks pull up to the house. Assorted lumber, bricks, an old Chevy on blocks in the front yard. Samuel comes running out the door, across the front yard and jumps into Pastor Hicks' arms. Henry watches Pastor Hicks kneel and give Samuel a big hug. Pastor Hicks holds Samuel as Otis and Ester walk out the front door.

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)

There they are, come meet my friend Henry.

OTIS

Hi Henry --

ESTER

Hello --

Pastor Hicks sets Samuel down, then hands Samuel a small wrapped present. Henry smiles as he hands Ester two small canvas sacks. Samuel hugs Pastor Hicks. Ester and Pastor Hicks go inside as Henry and Otis slowly walk around the house. Henry gets down on one knee and shakes hands with Bess. Hold on Henry as he looks deeply into her eyes.

EXT. UNDER THE BIG OAK - DAY

Dusk, Henry sits in a chair under the big oak. Molly walks over to where Henry is sitting. Henry begins to stand up.

MOLLY

No, no - That's all right. You mind?

HENRY

No -- please.

They sit in quiet just looking out over the meadow.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Has Grady always been here?

MOLLY

Grady Harper (she laughs) -- yup!
Grady's family owned this place before we did. Came back after WWII and his family had sold it to us -- He loves the land -- loves Texas!

(MORE)

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Still directs us around like he owns it! (laughs again) -- Loves it more than life itself. - I think my Daddy saw that in him and let him build the house in the shady corner -- he's always been here -- helped raise me.

HENRY

He sure is a character!

MOLLY

Yup, he's funny -- he and John -- were -- were good friends. They did everything -- together.

Pause, then she dabs her eyes as Henry puts his paper down.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry!

HENRY

Don't be --- It's all right!

MOLLY

(embarrassed)

It's hard for me to -- to move forward --- I miss him so much.

Long pause, then Henry looks at Molly.

HENRY

Believe it or not -- I know something about how you feel.

MOLLY

You -- you do? (dabbing her eyes)

HENRY

Yes -- I do!

(stares into the distance)

There's a void inside of you --- a hopeless feeling. Someone has left you and -- to imagine your life without them is too much!

MOLLY

(nods - crying)

I -- I don't know what to do. I'm just lost without him!

HENRY

It's human nature to feel that way -
- I am sure John would probably
want you to recognize these
beautiful things in front of you --
and want you to take little steps
to move forward.

MOLLY

There are so many things we need to
do 'round here -- I -- I don't even
know where to start!

HENRY

And you're right -- you can start
right here -- with the ranch. It'll
rain again, and when it does you'll
build the livestock back up and
plant crops.

MOLLY

(she sighs)

We do have a lot that we can take
care of right now.

HENRY

Yup, we'll put the place back
together until things turn. And
when it does, you'll be ready!

MOLLY

One step at a time --

HENRY

One step at a time -- At the moment
I am thinking of my daughter -- and
a story that she loved --- would
you like to hear it?

Molly nods, wiping her eyes.

Moments later.

HENRY (CONT'D)

--- and when the caterpillar
thought the world was over -- it's
beautiful, multi-colored wings
unfolded and became a butterfly!

MOLLY

I've always loved that story!

She smiles, nods, her face worried and unconfident.

INT. BARN - WORK BENCH - DAY

Grayson stands at the work bench and slowly picks up Henry's journal and a newspaper clipping falls out. He bends down and picks it up, then reads it, a concerned look on his face.

MOMENTS LATER

KITCHEN - BREAKFAST TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Grayson with a somber look tells June and Molly about the newspaper clipping. We can't hear him and then.

MOLLY

(hurt in her eyes)

His whole family -- in -- in a house fire --- an accident?

JUNE

(frustrated and mad)

Why -- why were you looking through his things? That's none of your concern -- Those are his things!

GRAYSON

I -- I just picked up his journal and -- and it fell out.

MOLLY

Granny's right -- you had no right!

TY

I've seen Henry cr - cr - crying in - in - in the field!

Molly looks at Ty and walks to him, then picks him up.

MOLLY

Oh honey, Henry's not sad -- he loves it here with us. He's crying because -- because he loves us so much. (looks at June) Why don't you go out and play for a while.

June makes a confused face. Molly walks him to the front door then comes walking back into the kitchen.

JUNE

(whispering)

Well, that made a lot of sense!

MOLLY
 (whispering - agitated)
 He caught me off guard! I didn't
 know what I was sayin'!

June shakes her head with a concerned look as Henry walks in the side door. Everyone looks at him like they got caught. Molly tries to busy herself near the sink!

MOLLY (CONT'D)
 Hey -- How you doing?

JUNE
 (to Henry)
 You hungry?

Ty wanders back into the kitchen.

TY
 H - H - Henry -- are you happy?

JUNE
 (looks at Ty)
 Of course he's happy, honey.
 (to Henry)
 How 'bout a sandwich?

Henry looks at them, nods with a confused look on his face.

HENRY
 What?

MOLLY
 (to Ty)
 Come here, sweetie --

Molly opens the side door and scoots Ty outside.

HENRY
 What was all that about?

MOLLY
 Who knows -- kids?

GRAYSON
 Henry -- Henry, I'll go clean up
 the front for you now. (sheepishly)
 I'll -- I'll be out in front, ok!

HENRY
 That'll be good since -- the front
 yard's out in front! --- What's
 going on here?

Henry makes a funny face, then goes to grab a carrot.

JUNE

Nothing, honey - (slaps his hand)
Wash your hands, help me over here.
Grab that tomato an' slice it up!

June watches Henry with a troubled look as he washes his hands then smiles as he looks over at her.

EXT. FRONT OF THE BROWN'S HOUSE - DAY

Henry and Otis put shingles on the roof of the small house. Ty and Samuel run back and forth down below laughing.

OTIS

Mighty nice of you to help me with this, Henry.

HENRY

No problem -- I am happy to do it!

Henry hands Otis a few more nails.

OTIS

So, you say Ms. June may need some help soon, huh?

HENRY

Well, we really need help now - When do you think you could start?

OTIS

Yesterday --

They look at each other and laugh.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

June sits on the porch, Jack at her feet. Henry works on a post on two saw horses. Molly and Heather are husking corn on the steps. Henry's small radio on the porch plays Carole Kings "Sweet Seasons." Molly, with desperation in her voice.

MOLLY

Well, we've got to do something - We're running out and I don't know where it's gonna come from.

JUNE

(pained, unsure look)
We could get more cattle -- raise
more cattle - maybe some steer?

MOLLY

Momma, the Wilsons have shot some
of their cattle. We're in the
middle of a drought!

JUNE

(agitated)
I am just thinking out loud -- What
do you suppose we should do?

Henry takes off his hat, wipes his face with a handkerchief.
Arm extended as he leans against a post on the porch.

HENRY

That stand of trees on the far side
of that field yonder, do you know
what kind of trees those are?

MOLLY

I've swum in that crik my whole
life, but I can't tell you what
kind of trees those are -- scrub,
oak?

HENRY

Scrub for sure -- but more than
half are red oak -- rare for these
parts -- and expensive, too.

June looks quizzically at Henry.

JUNE

Henry that's fine and good, they're
beautiful for sure, but why are you
telling us?

HENRY

Pearson's field -- it's for sale,
isn't it?

MOLLY

(confused look)
Yeah, has been for more than a
year. Why do you ask?

Molly keeps husking corn and casually looks up. Henry
scratches his head with his hat.

HENRY

Well -- If I were a bettin' man,
I'd say a quarter of that stand of
Red Oak would pay for Pearson's
field -- and leave you a tidy sum.
You contract with Pearson for his
field, payable in 3 weeks, sell the
lumber to a mill, pay Mr. Pearson
and walk away with a couple bucks
and the field.

Molly drops the piece of corn. Henry looks at June, nods,
then picks up the saw and starts to walk toward the barn.
Both June and Molly's mouths are slightly open as they watch
him walk away. (beat)

JUNE

Moll, call cousin Jimmy -- find out
what 100 board feet of Red Oak goes
for --- and what a typical 40-year-
old Red Oak would fetch.

MOLLY

Momma, you -- you think it's even
possible?

June doesn't answer, just watches Henry as he walks across
the yard into the barn, Jack five feet behind him.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Annie in her mother's bedroom gently shaking her.

ANNIE

Momma -- (louder) Mommma!

Molly looks up sleepy eyed and drowsy.

MOLLY

Honey, what's wrong?

ANNIE

I hear somethin' -- a noise from
outside! From the barn, I think?

Sits up on her elbow, grabs the clock and looks at it. Then
lies back down.

MOLLY

It's probably just the wind honey.

Molly tilts her head, she hears it too. Gets up, puts on her
robe and starts to walk down the hall. June standing there.

JUNE
What's going on?

MOLLY
Nothin'.
(to Annie)
Stay with granny.

Molly, walks down the stairs, through the living room, out the front door. SCREAMS coming from the barn. She starts to run. It's Henry screaming!

INT. INSIDE THE BARN (HENRY'S COT) CONTINUOUS

HENRY
GET OUTT, GET OUTTT! RUN, RUNNN,
RUNNNN! GET OUTT! GET OUTTTT!

Molly standing over Henry. She gently shakes him.

MOLLY
Henry - Henry!

Henry continues to scream. Molly forcefully shakes him again. He bolts up in bed, perspiring, eyes wild with a terrified look on his face. He cups his face with his hands and cries passionately. With a sad look, Molly sits down next to him.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Henry, it's all right! It's all
right!

Henry's head falls onto her shoulder and she hugs him.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
You were having a bad dream -- it's
all right -- it's all right now.

He's uncomfortable hugging her and then he gives in, putting his arms around her as he again, cries intensely.

EXT. TRUCK DRIVING DOWN ROAD - DAY

Duane and ANOTHER MAN driving down the road. Another angle as they pass a sign that reads, "Welcome to Jackson, Mississippi."

INT. BARN - DAY

Heather Belle and Ty come running into the barn with an old rolled up piece of paper.

HEATHER

Henry, Henry - look what we found!

HENRY

Let me see that -- That looks like an old map of some kind. What's this right here?

Henry points at the map as Annie runs in.

ANNIE

Did you show him - did you show him?

HEATHER

(agitated)

Shushh! He's lookin' at it, ain't he?

HENRY

It gives you clues -- clues to find something.

TY

Annie says it looks like a real treasure map!

HEATHER

Yeah, a REAL treasure map!

HENRY

That's it -- it looks like a treasure map.

They're all wide-eyed, mouths open, looking at Henry.

HENRY (CONT'D)

We should go look for it!

A chorus of screams and laughter.

MONTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

A) EXT. - CORRAL - DAY - Henry and kids walk past the corral with canvas bag, picks and shovels.

B) EXT. - SWIMMING HOLE - LATER - Henry and the kids walk past the swimming hole with canvas bag, picks and shovels.

C) EXT. - NEAR A LARGE TREE - LATER - Henry and Heather Belle digging with a large pick and shovel. Annie / Ty on their knees moving dirt with their hands.

D) INT. - KITCHEN - SUNSET - Just before dark Heather Belle and Annie come running into the kitchen with an old wooden chest. Ty right behind them.

ANNIE

Momm, mommm look - look at the treasure we found!

They set an old wooden box with rusty hinges down on the table. Open it up and we see that its filled with glass curios, bottle tops, an old watch, 200 - 250 coins, a small stack of \$1 dollar bills. Heather and Annie dump it all on the table as they start to sort it out. June looks at Molly.

JUNE

What a wonderful gift.

Molly smiles and nods as she watches Henry out the window in the field. He sits there swishing his stick back and forth.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

June walks out the front door onto the finished front porch. Surprised look, her mouth open.

JUNE

Oh, Henry -- I've never seen a more beautiful porch. It's -- it's just amazing. Moll (louder) Moll, come out here and look at this!

MOLLY (OS)

Ok - Ok, stop screechin' at me!

HENRY

Well, thank you -- Chance, Gray and Mick helped quite a bit. Grady milled the railings.

Molly hands Henry a glass of lemonade. Her mouth wide open with a look of astonishment as she looks around.

MOLLY

My goodness -- Henry, how did you do this -- and a porch swing? Momma, look -- a porch swing!

HENRY

Gray and I finished that just last night!

JUNE

Henry Jackson - Pastor Denny was sure right about you. You are a craftsman - a carpenter and a craftsman! I am gonna sit down right here and -- and I am not leaving. (laughs) Come sit with me.

June pats the porch swing. Henry slowly walks over and sits.

JUNE (CONT'D)

This'll be our new living room. The breeze feels so nice right here on hot summer evenings.

Chance and Fernando come riding up on their horses.

CHANCE

So, what do ya think? You like it? Nobody can build a better porch than Henry.

MOLLY

I love it -- It's perfect, just perfect!

FERNANDO

Nice job, Henry!

CHANCE

We're goin' to Grady's for some axle grease. Be back soon.

Chance and Fernando take off on their horses.

JUNE

We love it -- and -- and we love you, Henry!

June reaches for, then holds Henry's hand as they sit there.

MOLLY

And look at that sky -- It's like a painting this mornin'. Mmm mmm! I don't believe I've ever seen the color red so beautiful!

HENRY

Well, good thing we finished today.

JUNE

Why?

HENRY

Those clouds you see there. Those are storm clouds. -- I expect by nightfall we'll see a big storm. (to Molly) You're finally gonna get your rain -- I expect a whole lot of it!

MOLLY

(doubtful)

Henry, are you sure? It hasn't rained in Smith County in two years!

Skeptical look on Molly's face, she starts to walk inside, stops, looks up at the sky again then walks inside.

GRAYSON (VO)

That night, it rained two inches and on and off for the next three months. Our drought was finally over.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - DAY

Chance standing with his horse Mick near the barn. Henry watches the boys from inside the barn.

CHANCE

(to Grayson)

You're the stupidest person I ever met, just hop on him regular. Like you do Chipper. Just throw your right leg over him real quick-like. -- Damn, you really are stupid!

MOMENTS LATER

Chance walks in the barn next to Henry at the workbench.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

That Grayson is really stupid -- he needs professional help! -- Henry, do you think we can save this ol' block and tackle? Grady said he really needs it.

Chance holds out the block and tackle. Henry glances at Chance, takes the block and tackle but doesn't say anything.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

He can't throw a football, he's terrible at school. I don't think he's ever kissed a girl before.

Henry examines the block and tackle. Looks at Chance. Then back at the block and tackle.

HENRY

I don't believe the strongest people are those who show strength in front of us --- The strongest are probably those like Grayson who win battles we know nothin' about. Did it ever occur to you that you just might be the lucky one --

CHANCE

(confused look)

No?

Henry taking apart the block and tackle.

HENRY

There's a story I heard as a boy --- Two brothers standing before God. After talking with them a minute God tells one of them that he can leave but asks to speak with the other. -- He tells the boy standing before him that his brother will have a handicap -- a serious handicap requiring a great deal of help from him! -- You can tell the boy is really thinking about what he has just been told -- then standing straight as an arrow, he looks God right in the eyes and says, "I'll take this handicap - I am the strongest --- I will bear this burden."

Long pause - Henry turns and looks at Chance.

CHANCE

Is that it? What -- What happened?

Henry grabs a screwdriver and pries the bolt loose from the block and tackle.

HENRY

And so it was -- The boy who at first was asked to watch out for and take care of his weaker brother took the burden for himself because he loved his brother so --

Henry grabs another wrench, continues fixing the block and tackle, but doesn't look up.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Maybe Gray is the strongest one. Maybe he took a bullet for you --- But here's the thing -- Is it not your job to look after your cousin?

Henry glances at Chance.

Build him up, give him confidence! That confidence that you already have. Not beat him down -- Sounds like he's already got at least one guy doing that!

CHANCE

(pained look)

I know -- I - I heard!

HENRY

I think that Gray would love that you, especially you, cared that much for him! I think your father would be proud that you helped him - - looked after him like a brother!

Chance looks directly at Henry with sorrow in his eyes. Nodding! Henry putting grease on the spindles of the block and tackle.

CHANCE

I -- I am sorry. You're right! -- I never thought of it that way --- I promise you I will -- I'll look after him.

HENRY

Don't promise me -- promise Gray, promise your mother, Annie and anyone else you love that you'll always be there for them -- to inspire and encourage them.

Henry hands Chance the block and tackle. Chance nods, looking Henry right in the eyes, then slowly turns and walks out.

EXT. OUTSIDE BARN DOOR - DAY

Henry stands in the pouring rain, arms outstretched, head back with his eyes closed, enjoying the rain on his face.

INT. CHURCH SERMON - DAY

Pastor Hicks at his pulpit looking out over his congregation.

PASTOR HICKS

Yes, compassion and empathy for others. I happened upon a kitten the other day -- A newborn kitten, lost or abandoned by its mother. Huh - Beauty covered in fur! We've become close friends and I'll take care of him --- and yet we forget - there are those among us who feel abandoned -- our own neighbors -- neighbors going hungry or in need of our help! What are some examples of compassion that Christ showed? What can we do to be more like him, to help a neighbor in need? To bring her a bag of apples -- or corn when our coffers are full! Who do you know who needs help with their roof -- or planting the spring crop?

June looks up at Henry and puts her hand on his. Pastor Hicks slowly looks around - long pause.

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)

Who -- who do you know? --- Before you close your eyes tonight -- I want you to think about this and what you can do to help!

EXT. BACK OF BARN - DAY

Henry hears some commotion out back of the barn. Walks out and sees Annie, Bess and Gray completely covered in mud. He looks right and sees Chance, Sam, Ty and Heather Belle laughing hysterically. Henry in a loud voice.

HENRY

What the hell's going on out here?

They all stop and look at him. Ty on his knees slowly scoops a handful of mud and stands, looking at Henry. Serious face on Henry as he looks at them.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You better not!

Ty smiles for a second, then nails him right in the shoulder. Henry grins, shaking his head, then scoops a big handful himself and tags Grayson. They all come after Henry. The next 60 seconds is complete, absolute, chaos! Molly and June laughing as they watch the whole thing from just inside the barn. June has an old Kodak camera and takes a picture.

EXT. SANCHEZ HOME - DAY

Henry, Chance and Grayson stand near the truck in front of the Sanchez home. Chance begins to plane the edge of a door next to a saw horse as Henry hands Grayson a small sack.

HENRY

Gray, bring this to Ms. Maria. This is the medicine that Pastor Hicks wanted us to give her. One table spoon every 4 hours. You hear me?

GRAYSON

(in Spanish)
One tablespoon every four hours.

HENRY

(smiles)
Yes!
(to Chance)
I think another 1/8th inch off that door should do it. What do you think?

CHANCE

Yup, that'll do it.

ON THE GATE OF THE TRUCK - LATER

Henry, Chance sit on the gate of the truck.

CHANCE

Henry, where do they get money to buy food? How do they get by?

HENRY

Well, they have a small garden out back -- I've seen it! They raise chickens and I think they have a goat! -- Probably work around town doing various things. It's probably not enough!

Grayson walks up.

CHANCE

We can help 'em. We've got the fruit trees and Granny's vegetable garden out back. Bring em some meat next time we slaughter a steer!

GRAYSON

Yeah, that's a good idea! Granny's always had her victory garden out back. We could bring some to Ms. Ester and Ms. Maria!

HENRY

I think that would be a very nice and kind thing for you to do. Huhh, you know -- I take back what I said about you two!

Sly grin on Henry's face. Chance pushes Henry in a playful manner. Big genuine smiles from Chance and Grayson.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You know, my daddy used to say, if you have a chance to do something nice or make someone happy, do it. The world needs more of that.

Hold on Chance and Grayson as they nod and watch Henry like they admire him a great deal.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Full moon shining on the porch. Fireflies and the sound of crickets. Henry sits there as Molly walks out, looks left.

MOLLY

Oh, I'm sorry --

HENRY

That's all right -- would you like to sit for a minute?

MOLLY

Yes, yes thank you - my my, would you look at that moon.

Henry doesn't say anything - just nods.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Henry, thank you for spending time with Chance.

(MORE)

MOLLY (CONT'D)

He needs someone like you --
another male to talk to and help
keep him grounded.

HENRY

I remember that age and what it was
like.

MOLLY

I don't know -- He seems to have
spun out of control after his daddy
died -- I am not really sure what
to do anymore. (long pause)

HENRY

If you don't mind me sayin' -- he
needs something of his own.
Something to sink his teeth into.

MOLLY

Like what? What can I give him --
What can I do for him?

HENRY

Well, I believe that it's not what
we do for them but what we teach
them to do for themselves that'll
make them feel successful in their
own minds. Give him something to
take care of -- something that he
alone will be responsible for. You
want to keep him grounded -- put
some weight on his shoulders.

MOLLY

But -- but we have the ranch -- He
can help me with that!

HENRY

That's true -- but I wonder if he
thinks of it that way? -- Have you
ever noticed, Chance is great with
animals. A natural! -- Comfortable
and happy around 'em. I was in town
the other day -- You can get 50
head of steer in Fort Worth for a
song right now because of the
drought -- The timing's perfect --
Fatten 'em up and sell 'em next
year for four times what you got
'em for. Put that seed in his mind --
-- he'll know what to do!

Molly thinking - her silhouette in the moonlight.

MOLLY

How would we get 'em here -- How much would that cost?

HENRY

(measured)

Let him figure that out --

Her silhouette in the moonlight nodding.

INT. BARN - WORKBENCH - DAY

Grayson and Henry at the workbench. Henry showing Grayson a part he found.

HENRY

Take a look at this. (throws him the part) I think it's from an old motorcycle.

Henry looks over at Grayson, noticing a black eye but doesn't say anything.

GRAYSON

Yep, probably an Indian or Harley. Grandpa Hank had a passion for old motorcycles. Used to race 'em down near the little store! -- Had a whole mess of 'em' at one time.

HENRY

Really?

GRAYSON

Yep, that's him right there.

Grayson points to a picture from the 1940s of a young, stocky man standing next to a flat track Harley.

HENRY

That's your grandfather?

GRAYSON

Yup! Good lookin' ol' cowpuncher, wasn't he!

HENRY

Yeah, he sure was!

GRAYSON

Hey, you know, we still have a bunch of old motorcycles in that far stall under a tarp.

(MORE)

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

Chance and I been trying to get Grady to help us build one seems like forever! You wanna see em?

HENRY

Yeah sure -- What happened to your eye?

GRAYSON

Ah, this kid at school's giving me a bad time. I'm alright!

Henry nods and lets it go. Grayson picks up a couple dusty cylinder heads weighing the tarp down, then throws the tarp back, unveiling 15 old motorcycles and assorted engines. Dust everywhere as the sun filters through the slats. They both cough, back up waving their hands. Amazement on Henry's face.

HENRY

Oh man! -- this -- this here's the motherload -- you've got probably six - seven Harleys here and another three or four Indians.

GRAYSON

(big smile)

Yep! --- Wanna build a bike?

HENRY

Hell, we'll build a couple. You'll have to get your Grandma's ok!

Grayson smiles like he hit the jackpot! Henry still looking at them. We see them talking but can't hear them. Henry shaking his head as he tosses Grayson another part!

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

MS Sheriff and Duane talking to the clerk wearing a name badge that reads "Wallace". Sheriff writing something down.

SHERIFF

Was he carrying anything?

CLERK

(nervous, shakes his head)

No! Just - just bought and paid for his things and left.

SHERIFF

How tall was he?

CLERK

I don't know -- maybe 6 foot!

Duane grabs Clerk by the collar, glaring at him.

DUANE

You think this is funny Wallace?
You better answer these questions,
boy, or I'll be back for you.

Group of four men walk out the back door. Two other men eyeballing Wallace. Terrified look on his face.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Henry sits in the field, staring into the distance as a dream comes to him.

FLASHBACK INT. MESS TENT - DAY

Henry sits in the mess tent near three African-American SOLDIERS.

1ST A.A. SOLDIER

Damn right, the SEATO treaty stuck
the black man in the ass for sure.
We over here fighting their war.

Other two soldiers nod their heads.

2ND A.A. SOLDIER

You can't trust no white man -- You
hear me, you just can't trust 'em!

Henry shakes his head as he snaps out of his dream, very still, stick in his hand as he stares forward at nothing.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Chance driving the Chevy down an old road. Fernando in the passenger seat when they see a girl walking up ahead. PATTY JOHANSON. 15, blond, well endowed and very pretty.

CHANCE

Hey, I think that's PATTY JOHANSON!
--- Damn -- ain't she top heavy!

FERNANDO

Oh, man!

CHANCE

Close your mouth -- you look like a dog in July!

They pull up along side Patty.

FERNANDO

Hey Patty, thought that was you --
How you doing?

PATTY

Hey Fernando.

Patty leans forward to see who's driving, then grins!

PATTY (CONT'D)

Chance O'Hare, when did you start drivin'?

Chance puffs his chest out and in a funny voice.

CHANCE

Ohh, I've been driving for years now!

They laugh. Chance leans forward on the steering wheel.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Where you --

PATTY

(interrupts)

Saw your man the other day in town.

CHANCE

My man? -- You mean Henry? He's not -- not my man. Just staying with us a spell!

PATTY

(embarrassed)

I didn't mean it that way dummy. He helped momma and I load some things in the truck, seems real sweet.

CHANCE

Well, thank you, he's on his way to San Diego, just passing through I guess. Say Patty, where you headed? We give you a lift?

PATTY

Sure, I'm just going to Charlotte's.

FERNANDO

Hop in!

Fernando gets out and lets Patty scoot to the middle of the cab. They're both stunned at how beautiful she is.

CHANCE

How's Charlotte doing? I haven't seen her in school.

PATTY

She's been sick -- guess she's feelin' better. Going to Dallas tomorrow to see her cousins. She let me borrow these pie tins.

CHANCE

Really -- what kinds of pie you like to make?

PATTY

Well, Daddy's partial to blackberry, but my brothers like peach and cherry pie.

CHANCE

(straight faced)

I -- I'd sure like to try your pie sometime!

Sly grin on Fernando's face. The road splits up ahead, Fernando leans forward, looks at Chance.

FERNANDO

(big smile, in Spanish)

Take Bellwood, it's bumpy as hell!

Chance and Fernando grin as they head down the road.

CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pulling into the driveway under a huge oak. Patty's hair is disheveled and in her eyes as she tries to pull it back. Fernando hops out. Patty looks longingly at Chance then scoots out. Patty pulls her long blond hair back with both arms, giving the boys an eye full! Then in a sassy twang.

PATTY

Thanks for the ride, boys!

Chance and Fernando in a trance as they watch her walk away. Fernando's mouth slightly open.

CHANCE

Yeah, sure -- anytime, nice to see you -- (under his breath) Like to see the rest of you.

FERNANDO

Yeah Patty, you take care!

Patty walks up the driveway, stops, turns around. She walks back to the truck, puts both hands on the door, smiles and in perfect Spanish.

PATTY

Hope y'all enjoyed my tits!

Patty winks at them as Chance spits his 7-Up out on the dash. Fernando laughs out loud as she slowly turns and walks away.

FERNANDO

Muy caliente!

CHANCE

That's right -- she's too hot for you! She likes me!

FERNANDO

(in Spanish)

You're too stupid!

They're both laughing as the truck pulls away driving down a beautiful tree lined east Texas road!

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - DAY

Annie standing against the side of the barn crying. Henry walks out of the barn holding a rag and a motor part that he's cleaning.

HENRY

Hey, hey, -- what's going on here?

ANNIE

Momm -- Momma got mad at me!

Henry pulls up a crate, sits down looking at her and listens. She comes in close and puts her hand on his knee.

HENRY

Uhh huh!

ANNIE

She's mad cuz I didn't finish my chores. Why does she have to get so mad? --- I didn't do anything!

Henry quietly laughs to himself.

HENRY

Well, I think that's probably it. Sometimes I think people get upset with us because they expect us -- to -- to finish those things we've been asked to do.

ANNIE

(sniffles)

Well, I -- I did most of it ...

HENRY

You want your momma to treat you like a big girl, don't you? -- You are a big girl now, aren't you?

ANNIE

Yeah! I am almost 9!

HENRY

Well, what if the next time she asks you to do something -- you put a little extra effort into it? Take care of those things -- everything she wants you to do? You think you could do that?

ANNIE

Yeah, I could -- I could do that!

HENRY

This is the biggest ranch I've ever seen. Granny and your Momma work pretty hard round here and I think she needs people strong like you and me to help her. What do you think?

ANNIE

I guess so!

HENRY

(surprised look)

You -- you guess so? -- you guess so! (tickles her)

ANNIE
(smiles / giggles)
Yes, I know she does.

HENRY
I happen to know your momma loves
you very much. -- Why, I bet she'd
even climb a volcano for you!

ANNIE
(deadpan)
There aren't any volcanoes 'round
here!

HENRY
(shocked looked)
What - well - well, if there were
any I bet she would!

Annie looks at Henry with puffy eyes, nods and gives him a big hug. Henry at first feels strange hugging her. Then, as if remembering his daughter, gives her a big hug. Molly, with a melancholy look watches from the kitchen window.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

June walks into the barn and stands next to Henry. Jack is asleep next to Henry. Transistor radio plays a gospel song.

JUNE
Got a letter from the lumber yard
today. Can you believe they sent us
\$514 dollars for the wood they cut?

HENRY
Yes I can, that's great --

JUNE
I want you to have half of it --
was your idea!

HENRY
(shaking his head)
No - you put that somewhere safe
for the kids. Grayson or Annie'll
be needing it before you know it!

JUNE
I really would like you to have it.

HENRY

Ms. Juney, money -- money has never been my problem. I appreciate it, really, but I don't need it.

JUNE

(frustrated)

You and my late husband are the same damn person, I swear! -- Most stubborn mule of a man I ever met!

HENRY

(laughs - nodding)

Well, I appreciate you comparing me to a mule, but I think you probably feed me \$10 dollars worth of food every week.

JUNE

What am I gonna do with you?

June smiles, shaking her head as she looks at him.

INT. KITCHEN BREAKFAST TABLE - DAY

Kitchen is alight with the morning sun. Meadow in the background. Molly making breakfast for Chance.

MOLLY

You get enough?

CHANCE

If you got em, I'll take another couple of them sausages.

Molly serves him three more sausages.

MOLLY

I heard Will Templeton talking out in front of the Piggly Wiggly the other day.

CHANCE

Oh yeah, what'd he have to say?

MOLLY

(casually)

Said you could get 50 head of steer in Fort Worth now for practically nothin' cause of the drought an' all. But the drought's over - Said you'd be stealin' 'em now, really!

Molly watches him out of the corner of her eye. Chance thinking deeply, very focused on what she has said.

CHANCE
I could do that!

MOLLY
(casually)
Uh huh -- I betcha could!

CHANCE
I got that money Fernando and I made last August! Hell, Grady and I could go to Fort Worth and -- and -- which - which way did Grady go?

Chance takes a huge bite, mouth full as he runs out. Screen door slams. Molly grins as she washes the dishes.

INT. BARN - DAY

Two engines on the work bench. Assorted parts scattered around. Issac, Mick, Chance and Grayson are talking and cleaning various parts.

HENRY
This Harley here -- I think they were made from about the mid 30's to the mid or late 40's. Strong engine! The Indian was its only rival, really!

ISAAC
Look at this -- the oil system here re-circulates - back into the pan and up through here again --- and even though it had a smaller displacement than the flathead, it had more power!

HENRY
I remember hearing something about that before. Amazing, ain't it! --- Where's the intake?

ISAAC
It's right here -- look!

HENRY
Ok, ok, that makes sense now!

MOMENTS LATER

Issac stands, leaning against the work bench. Henry sits on a stool, focused and working on the frame of the motorcycle.

ISAAC

I tell ya what --- I'll help you get the '47 going -- if you help me with the Indian. Maybe dicker for a few parts I need to get' er going!

HENRY

(looks up)

That'll work -- course, I'll have to ask Moll - But I am sure she'd be ok with that.

ISAAC

You know a lot about motorcycles, Henry -- How is that? -- I mean, where'd you learn so much about em?

HENRY

Oh, I was always interested in engines and moving parts --- Mr. Weinstein who owned the grocery store down the street from us - we kind of bumped into each other I guess and he took me under his wing. He was really the one who taught me about engines and motorcycles. Very gentle, kind man. He even took me for rides from time to time.

ISAAC

Wow, that's cool. He sounds like one hell of a guy!

HENRY

Yep - yep, he was.

MOMENTS LATER

Chance holds a Harley Davidson service manual.

CHANCE

Says here that the Panhead come out in '48 -- ran a little cooler than the Knucklehead.

ISAAC

That's true - probably why they were so popular. But personally, I always liked the Knuckleheads -- Good lookin', easy to work on.

MICK

I agree, damn beautiful bike. Is this the 61 or the 74 inch?

HENRY

That's a 74 inch. See this right here? (Henry pointing to the casing) That's how you can tell!

Isaac and Mick are nodding. We see them talking but we can't hear them. Mick says something funny and they all laugh.

EXT. HENRY IN THE FIELD - DAY

Henry sits in the field and slowly falls into a dream.

FLASHBACK - BARNYARD - NIGHT

Sheriff Burrow walks with a large club in the darkness. Confused look on his face as he sees a small light next to a horse trough. He looks around, walks up to the light, bends down to pick it up and BAMM, his stick is knocked out of his hand as he's thrown against the trough. Henry grabs him by the overalls and purposefully looks him in the eyes.

HENRY

Now, you look at death you bastard -
-- and know what it's like to be
helpless!

Horrified look on the Sheriff as Henry stares at him, then slams his head into the trough. The Sheriff's arms and legs flail as Henry holds him underwater. The Sheriff's POV as he thrashes about, watching Henry above him --- then silence.

LATER - EXT. PATHWAY ALONG THE EDGE OF A FIELD

We hear the sound of a bell RINGING. Red walks along a path illuminated by the moon, determined to find the source of the ringing. Hold on Henry as he watches Red walk by, then stop. The bell RINGS on the branch of a sapling that is bent over. Red looks around, then takes one step forward. Henry pulls a cord and the sapling shoots skyward; a rope spun around Red's neck.

Red's legs pump furiously as Henry slowly steps forward. Red desperately grasps the rope around his neck as he looks down at Henry, feet furiously kicking, then stops.

END OF FLASHBACK

Henry sits in the field staring forward with serious look.

EXT. FRONT OF MCCLELLAN HOUSE (FLOWER BED) - DAY

Morning - Henry, Molly, Annie and Heather-Belle are planting climbing rose and honeysuckle in front of the porch.

ANNIE

Why do we have to do this?

MOLLY

Because it'll make Granny smile when she gets back! You want to her to be happy, don't you?

ANNIE

Yes!

TY

Why are we planting them here?

HENRY

Because Juney loves climbing rose and she used to have some right here, many years ago before you were born. Don't you think it'd look nice here?

TY

(nods)

ANNIE

(nods)

They smell really nice --

HEATHER

What's this?

HENRY

That's honeysuckle. I'll give you some to plant under your window at home and at night you'll drift off to dreamland in no time at all.

Molly looks up as Henry gently takes her hand and pours a handful of dirt in it.

HENRY (CONT'D)

To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow!

Molly looks into Henry's eyes and smiles.

TY

L - look -- b - butterflies!!!

MOLLY

Yes - ya see -- this is really a butterfly garden. (she makes a funny face) They'll come from all over Texas just to sit in this here garden. What do you think about that?

TY

From all over Texas?

MOLLY

Yup!

INT. BARN - HENRY'S WORKBENCH - DAY

GRAYSON

Henry - Henry - come quick, Molly's sick!

They run up the front porch stairs and into the living room.

INT. LIVINGROOM - CONTINUOUS

Molly is lying on the couch with hand on her head. Henry walks over to Molly and kneels down. Molly in a low voice.

MOLLY

I don't know what's come over me -- (agitated) Give me a minute!

Henry feels her forehead.

HENRY

You're hot -- Gray, would you grab a wet towel and bring it to me? What'd you have to eat today?

We see them talking but can't hear them - she closes her eyes. Moving her hands as if to say go away.

INT. MOLLY'S BEDROOM - LATER

The room is dark. Small candle flickering on the night-stand. Henry comes in. He feels her head again, then goes to leave.

MOLLY
(low voice)
Henry!

HENRY
Yes!

MOLLY
Where are the girls?

HENRY
Downstairs - they're fine. Playing
Mr. Potato-head with Gray.

Henry licks his fingers and puts out the candle. Moonlight in the room is very bright. We see Henry's knees and lower legs.

HENRY (CONT'D)
I don't like candles --

MOLLY
(sad look)
I know, I know --- sit with me.

Henry looks left, then pulls a chair near the bed. We see them talking for a minute. Then her expression is sad and melancholy as she looks up at Henry. In a low voice.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Tell me --- tell me about Bess --
What was she like?

Concerned look on Henry, thinking. Then his expression changes to a gentle smile. He looks out the window and sighs.

HENRY
She was sweet -- like honey --
Sweetest disposition you ever saw.

Henry nods as if in a dream.

HENRY (CONT'D)
She could calm you down by putting
her hand on yours -- or build you
up --- a real charmer. She had a
way with people I'd never seen
before. (long pause) Wore her hair
long -- kind of pulled back.

MOLLY

Did -- did she live near you?

HENRY

No, no - she lived the next town over, but her cousins lived just down the street from us. I first saw her at a church picnic -- She was so beautiful --- I almost swallowed my tongue!

MOLLY

Did it take long to say hello?

Henry reminiscing, shaking his head.

HENRY

In my neighborhood! I knew I didn't have much time (laughs quietly) -- My friends would have run me over if they had seen her first. Guess I was lucky --- I was pretty shy back then, but somehow I got the courage to walk over and say hello!

MOLLY

I am sure she liked you!

HENRY

I don't believe I made much of an impression. But a few weeks later she touched my sleeve as I was leaving the park near our house -- Yep (nodding) she was special -- You would have liked her -- and been good friends.

Molly talking and Henry smiling but can't hear them. Moments later - Henry reaches for a photo on the bed stand, looks at it for a minute.

MOLLY

Recognize anyone? -- Can you see?

Henry holding it in the moonlight and nods as he looks at the picture of two men (John and Henry) standing together.

HENRY

John --- was -- my best friend.

Molly has a concerned, sad look as she nods her head.

MOLLY

I know -- I know - But why, why
didn't you tell me?

HENRY

I just -- I just couldn't -- Still
too raw for me I guess. I am sorry.
I should have said something!

MOLLY

How did you meet? - Where were you?

HENRY

We were in the same platoon. -- He
used to do things that'd make me
laugh - usually got me in trouble!

MOLLY

His letters were filled with you!

(beat) Henry dabs his eye as a tear rolls down his cheek.

HENRY

Yeah, we took care of each other -
we --

Henry's voice trails off as he looks out the window.

MOLLY

He said you saved his life near
Da-Nang -- Is that true?

Slight nod, as he continues to look out the window but
doesn't elaborate.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Were you with him --- when --

HENRY

--- John died in my arms. Last
thing he said was your name.

Molly's hand over her mouth, as she starts to cry. Henry puts
his hand on hers.

MOMENTS LATER

HENRY (CONT'D)

He used to tell me about you and
the kids -- the ranch and what it
was like here. He made me promise
to stop by and check in on you.

Molly reaches for Henry's hand; he takes it. They sit quietly for a minute. The room is dark except for the moonbeam coming through the window directly on their hands.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I am thinking of something my wife told me years ago --- It's made all the difference in my life since the accident! -- She said --- whenever you feel the sun, the rain or moonlight on your face -- that's me giving you a kiss on the cheek. I believe that one thing -- that single thought got me through this past year.

Sorrowful look on Molly's face.

MOLLY

I know now that you understood what I said that day under the big oak. I am sure she loved you very much!

Molly looking at Henry as he stares out the window. They sit in silence for a minute. She's sleepy and closes her eyes.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

Will you stay with me -- 'til I fall asleep?

HENRY

(nods)
--- Sure!

INT. BARN (PUNCHING BAG)- DAY

Henry hits a homemade punching bag dangling from a large beam when Grayson walks in. Funny look on Grayson's face.

GRAYSON

Hey, what are you doing?

HENRY

Used to box a bit -- just -- gettin' a little work out.

GRAYSON

You used to box?

MOMENTS LATER

Henry shows Grayson how to bob and weave. Then how to punch the bag. Grady and Chance watch from the work bench. Grady nods with a stubby cigar in his mouth.

MOMENTS LATER - Henry and Grayson sit on crates, Grayson sweats as he listens to Henry, then nods.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

I am gonna wallop that Colt McCoy
if he comes near me again.

HENRY

Work out with your cousin and I a
little more, do what I told you and
you'll be fine. Keep your head
down, protect your chin! - hear me?

GRAYSON

(nodding)
Yep!

INT - BARN - (WORKBENCH) CONTINUOUS

Henry stands back and watches Chance and Gray spar.

CHANCE

That's it -- that's it! Dig in a
little bit more like this, then
come up quick!

GRAYSON

Like this?

CHANCE

Yeah, that's it - Take 'em with
your left. He won't be expecting
it. You show 'em your right - come
back with your left! Got it? --
Show em what bullies get!

Grady cleaning a part, takes his cigar out of his mouth.

GRADY

Damn right - some kids just need an
ass whoopin' to bring 'em 'round.
Nothin' wrong with that!

Grady whistles for Chance to come over to him, they talk. Grayson sweating, talks with Henry, then grins and nods.

EXT. FRONT OF MCCLELLAN HOUSE - DAY

Old truck pulls up in front of the porch. Ester, Bess and Samuel get out. Ester holds a sack lunch. June stands on the front porch, her hand above her eyes with a big smile.

JUNE

Ester -- Ester, my goodness, how are you? What a wonderful surprise to see y'all today. This isn't your daughter Bess now is it?

June walks down the stairs.

ESTER

(embarrassed, nods)
It sure is -- this is our Bessie!

JUNE

(to Bess)
My, my - you've grown four inches since I saw you last! (to Samuel)
And Samuel -- You're like a little man now!

Ester is proud and has a big smile. Bess is shy as she stands next to her mother. Samuel smiling, hides behind his mother.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Come on in outta this heat and have something cold to drink inside.

Annie and Heather have walked up. Bess, looks at them as Ester and June start to walk into the house. They stare at each other.

ANNIE

Wanna see a baby horse?

BESS

(shy nod)
Ok.

HEATHER

Come with us

Heather Belle extends a hand and they run off towards the corral. Samuel and Ty are already playing near the barn as Jack barks at something near the fence.

EXT. UNDER THE BIG OAK - DAY

Grayson walks up behind Henry, quiet, thinking, hitting the tree and the other chair with a big stick. Henry looks up.

HENRY

You alright?

GRAYSON

Yeah --- yeah I'm fine --- Henry, if there was someone you wanted to meet -- maybe a girl -- what -- what do you say to em?

HENRY

You want to meet this girl? You want to get to know her?

GRAYSON

(embarrassed)

Yeah -- I'd like to meet her!

HENRY

Well -- they're a tricky bunch ya know! What's her name?

Confused look on Grayson's face, shakes his head.

GRAYSON

I am not really sure. She just kind of showed up today -- on a yella bike. Prettiest face your ever saw! (embarrassed again - quickly) Morg Temple said he heard she's from Biloxi? But -- but, I am not sure.

HENRY

You just told me she's new 'round here, right?

GRAYSON

(questioning look)

Yeah!

HENRY

Well, show her around -- Introduce her to your friends. -- Take her somewhere exciting on bikes - maybe Lost Pine Lake?

GRAYSON

Oh, I don't know -- I -- I -

Henry stops to make a point, looking Gray right in the eyes.

HENRY

Gray - they only want to believe that you care about 'em. If you're a good listener and genuinely care about what she's sayin' -- her thoughts -- ideas and dreams -- you've got a friend for life.

GRAYSON

But I want to kiss her - when does that start?

HENRY

(funny face)

Whoa - whoaa! The kissin's a long way off! You gotta focus, man. Talk to her and listen! -- Don't crowd her now.

GRAYSON

Just talk to her, huh?

HENRY

That's it! -- Show her around -- Give her plenty of room, and if it was meant to be -- then (nodding) it'll blossom like a spring flower!

GRAYSON

I can do that --

HENRY

I know you can -- touch her heart, and if it's in the stars -- her lips will follow.

Grayson flashes a confident grin. Henry smiles.

INT. BARN - DAY

Henry and Bud are working on Bud's truck. Isaac and Chance are in the corner, working on the motorcycle. Grady and Bud are arguing.

GRADY

Well, that's a pile of horse-shit right there. Ain't no truck better than a Chevy, any five year old'll tell ya that!

BUD

I don't know -- got over 120,000 miles on my Ford right now!

GRADY

And look what we're doing --
workin' on it, ain't we?

Grayson working on another truck near the work bench grins. He has grease on his cheek, holding a wrench under the front wheel well. He scoots out from underneath the truck.

GRAYSON

Henry, what side is it on again?
Right or left?

HENRY

(to Gray)
Right side -- hold up, I'll be
right there.
(to Grady and Bud)
I believe we got some boxing gloves
right there on the work bench.

GRADY

Ahh, we just hummin' and hawin'!

Henry smiles as he watches them arguing.

INT. BARN - DAY

Ty and Annie sit on a crate watching Henry at the workbench. Molly walks in just as Annie asks Henry a question.

ANNIE

Henry - what's --- what's a Nigger?

Henry stands at his work bench with his back to the kids. He stops and looks up at the wall but doesn't turn around, then looks back down at the motorcycle piece he was cleaning.

HENRY

That's a word you shouldn't use
Annie -- A threatening, hurtful
word to Black men and women --
people with black skin like me!

ANNIE

(looking sad)
I'm -- I'm sorry!

HENRY

That's all right - You didn't know

Henry turns around and sees Molly standing there with a concerned look on her face. Without missing a beat.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Let me ask you a question! Granny sure loves to play her piano, doesn't she?

TY / ANNIE

Y - Yeah! Yes!

HENRY

What color are the keys on her piano?

ANNIE

Black and white!

TY

Yeah, b - black and white.

HENRY

That's right. And when she plays the piano, what keys does she use?

ANNIE

All of em -- black and white.

TY

Uh huhh -

HENRY

That's right. Hmmmm, what if she just played the white or just the black keys? The music -- would it sound as beautiful?

ANNIE

No, it sounds better when you play 'em together.

HENRY

Exactly, it's better when she plays 'em together. It's the same with people -- It's better when we all play together nicely, isn't it? Same with those apples in that basket over there! Grab a handful and bring 'em over here.

Annie and Ty bring a bunch of apples to the bench. Molly walks over and stands next to Henry. Henry wiping them off with the tail of his shirt.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Now who can tell me what kind of apples Granny likes?

TY

I - I can -- I can -- that's easy,
she likes th - these.

Ty holds out one of the red apples.

HENRY

That's right -- she likes the red
ones doesn't she? (looking at
Annie now) I know for a fact that
your momma likes these.

ANNIE

(looks at her mother)
Yup, loves em!

HENRY

She's got one in her hand most'
every time I see her!

Molly has a half smile, concerned look.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(looking at Ty)
And you and Annie like these, don't
you? (holding a light green apple)

TY

Yep!

HENRY

They all look different on the
outside -- don't they?

TY / ANNIE

Yeah - Yeah!

HENRY

Ok, I want you to take a big bite
out of each one of them and set em'
up here on the barrel (45 seconds
later) Good, aren't they?

TY / ANNIE

Uh huh / Yep!

HENRY

(to Ty)
The red ones are good too, aren't
they?

TY

Uh huh, yep!

HENRY

They're all sweet and yummy -- but they look a little different on the outside?

They both look up at Henry and nod.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Well -- people are a lot like these apples! -- Lots of different kinds of people - different colors.

Henry kneels down eye level with the kids and puts his arm up next to Annie's. Ty quickly puts his arm next to Henry's.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Look at my skin compared to yours. I am a different color than you are - But I am just as sweet as you. (he smiles) -- Do you think I am just as sweet?

Annie nods and smiles, looking up at Henry as she gives him a big hug. Ty sees this and hugs Henry too. Molly relieved now, stands next to the work bench with a peaceful smile.

HENRY (CONT'D)

That word that you used a minute ago is a hurtful, mean-spirited word to black people -- like me. -- In the future -- you can call people with black skin -- a Black man or a Black woman, Ok?

ANNIE

Ok!

TY

Ok!

Henry smiles at the kids from arm's length, nods, then hugs them again. Half smile from Molly as she nods her head.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Dark, steamy, city alleyway. A cat stares down from the ledge of a second story window. Two Caucasian MISSISSIPPI SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES stand over an African American male whose throat has been slit, lying face up near wooden pallets and a dumpster.

1ST DEPUTY

Almost cut it clean off --

2ND DEPUTY
 (uncaring)
 Uhh huhh! Probably used a razor.

1ST DEPUTY
 Wonder if they got what they were
 looking for.

Second Deputy shakes his head as he pulls out a small bag of Redman chewing tobacco and stuffs a wad in his mouth.

EXT. PEARSON'S FIELD - DAY

Henry, Ty, Heather Belle and Annie standing next to the tractor. Henry gets down on one knee and whispers in Annie's ear. Annie looks up and nods.

ANNIE
 K! -

Annie smiles and runs off.

Five minutes later - Annie stands in the Kitchen panting as Chance, Fernando and Grayson finish breakfast. Molly stands there as Annie looks up at her mother.

ANNIE (CONT'D)
 Momma, Henry, Grady and Bud are at Pearson's field. Henry says they're ready and really need your help.

MOLLY
 (taking off her apron)
 Ok, I'm coming!

CHANCE
 Momma, I can help!

GRAYSON/FERNANDO
 Me too! I can help!

MOLLY
 (relieved)
 We could sure use some muscle!

PEARSON'S FIELD - LATER

Isaac has plowed 75% of the field. Chance is on a horse pulling something towards a clearing. Grayson and Fernando pull seed bags off a flatbed truck. Otis and Henry pour bags of seed into a big red machine. Ester and June are talking near the tractor.

The girls are picking flowers, and Samuel and Ty are playing with sticks. Molly is moving people around the field like chess pieces.

MOLLY

Pull that over here -- can you get it any closer?

Mick backs the truck up a little more but backs over Grady's foot. Grady hopping around, then yells.

GRADY

Not that damn close!

Chance running after Grayson - Grayson running after Chance. The sky is a heavenly robin's egg blue, with a beautiful dark green scrub treeline in the background. June looking at Henry and smiling. After ten seconds Henry glances down at June.

HENRY

What?

JUNE

Look what you've done?

HENRY

Me?

JUNE

Yes, you! -- Our family engine is hummin' again. You did this, Henry Jackson!

June looks up at Henry and smiles. Hold on the field as we see everyone working and laughing.

EXT. EXPANSIVE FIELD - DAY

Chance on his horse, a black dog running next to him barking and moving steer towards the creek. He whistles loudly directing them to move to the right. Fernando, 50 yards way, at a fast gallop, moving the strays back towards the middle.

INT. INSIDE THE BARN - DAY

Chance, Grady and Henry working on the motorcycle. Grady chomping on his cigar.

GRADY

This kid Colt -- he's the bully that's a botherin' him?

CHANCE

Yep, saw the whole damn thing! Colt went to push him and BAMM! First shot was that left (winks at Henry) He come outta that corner swingin and a bobbin' -- Hit him twice before he knew it!

Henry listening intently, motorcycle part in his hand as he looks up, then nods with a concerned look on his face.

GRADY

Good! - Good! - Ass whoopin's good for everyone! Bring this kid back to his senses!

HENRY

Well, he'll think twice about messin' with Gray again!

CHANCE

Teacher came and broke it up. But everybody knows that son of a bitch is a bully -- Hell, I was ready to bust his lip myself. Gray looked good - I was proud!

HENRY

Good! Don't forget to tell him that -- It'd be a lot coming from you.

GRADY

Henry's right -- you tell him!

Grady looking at Chance and nodding. Grayson walks in with a fat lip and a black eye. Henry mildly shocked, then grins.

HENRY

Hey!

GRAYSON

(big smile)
Guess what!

Chance walks over and puts his arm around him. Then Grady and finally Henry. Gray using his hands telling them the story. They're all laughing and smiling but we can't hear them.

INT. BARN - DAY

Three cars in the barn. 8 - 9 people in the barn working on them. Henry looks around, amazed at the number of people there. Another truck pulls up just outside the barn door.

Mr. Sanchez gets out, grabs a tool box from the back of his truck and walks into the barn smiling.

MR. SANCHEZ

Hola!

CHANCE

Hola, Mr. Sanchez, como estas?

Mr. Sanchez smiles and nods as Isaac turns around and shakes Mr. Sanchez hand.

HENRY

Who's got my 7/8" wrench with the red handle? (sarcastically) I think we need some more help 'round here!

MICK

I can call my cousin Tommy!

CHANCE

Yeah, hey Isaac, maybe you can get one of your nine kids to come help!

Grady lifts his head from under a hood, slowly takes his cigar out of his mouth as he looks around.

GRADY

Who's got nine kids?

CHANCE

Issac --

GRADY

Nine kids? How the hell did you wind up with nine kids?

ISAAC

(apologetically)
Well, I -- I love my wife ---

GRADY

(looks at him funny)
Hell son, I love my cigar -- but I take it out of my mouth every once in a while!

They all bust up laughing. Isaac turns ruby red! Grayson walks up to Henry with his friend MITCHELL. Mitchell, 15, is tall, blond with freckles and a shy smile.

GRAYSON

Henry, this is my buddy Mitchell
from school -- he wanted to ask you
a couple questions about his
daddy's car.

Henry wipes his hands on a rag then shakes Mitchell's hand.

HENRY

Alright - Hey Mitchell, how you
doin'?

MITCHELL

Good, real good thank you. Henry,
whenever I step on the gas -

Conversation fades as they walk towards his father's '63
Chrysler Station wagon. Molly walks in wearing a flower print
summer dress holding a tray with two pitchers of lemonade.
She stops and takes in the scene. There are at least 9 butts
sticking out from under the hoods of assorted cars.

MOLLY

Why, I haven't seen so many butts
since I stood underneath the Ferris
wheel last summer -- who's thirsty.

MICK

I'd love one - thank you Ms. Molly!

Molly makes her way around the barn. Pouring a glass for
Otis. A chorus of thank you's!

ISAAC

Can I get one over here, Ms. Molly?

Molly turns around after pouring a glass and bumps into Tim,
spilling his drink. They lock eyes. Both are starstruck! Tim,
early 30's, is rugged and good looking with an easy smile.

MOLLY

I -- I -- I'm sorry!

TIM

Oh, that's all right --- looks like
you got the worst of it. I don't
think we've met -- My name's Tim!

Molly face is bright red as she turns and knocks another
glass over she had just set down on the barrel. She's
flustered and goes to pick up the glass. So does Tim and they
bump heads. Molly falls backwards. Tim helps her up then
picks up the glass, wipes it off on his shirt and hands it to
her. Grady is watching Molly and Tim and shakes his head.

GRADY

It's like watching a train wreck.

TIM

Well damn, we're a pair, aren't we?

GRADY

Tim, get yo' tail over here -- You still got that line? Where the hell's it lead to, son?

Molly makes a face like he's in trouble.

TIM

Oh -- right here behind the carburetor -- right here!

Tim glances back at Molly, then back to Grady. Molly glances back at Tim, then starts to pour another glass.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

June and Henry lean against the railing of the corral watching the kids ride. The view of the meadow is spectacular. June is thinking and becomes serious.

JUNE

How did you know it would rain?

HENRY

Rain -- rain when?

JUNE

That morning on the porch when the sky was red! -- How did you know?

HENRY

You're talking to a farmer's son. I guess I paid attention --- You ever just -- just know something?

JUNE

You think we'll get anymore?

HENRY

I don't know --

JUNE

(questioning look)

How was it that you were at the church that day when I came by?

Henry shakes his head as he looks off in the distance.

HENRY

I knew you were in Tyler -- But I lost your address somewhere. -- I thought it might take a couple days to find you.

JUNE

But you were right there -- almost like you were waiting for me!

HENRY

(pause)

It was as if someone, something had willed me to be there --- Do you believe in -- divine intervention?

Solemn look on June's face.

JUNE

I don't know --- that was a strange day for sure. -- Maybe John or -- or Hank wanted you to be there?

Henry looks down at June and nods.

INT. DOWNTOWN TYLER - DINER - DAY

Slender, white MALE, with determined angry look, walks into small downtown diner and looks around. DAVID LINDLE, mid 40s, is Henry's attorney from Mobile. He spots Henry near the middle of the counter and slowly walks towards him. Serious expression as he walks behind Henry, reaches into a leather satchel and slowly pulls out a 15 page document.

DAVE

Are you Henry C. Jackson?

Henry and the man sitting with him turn around.

HENRY

Dave!

DAVE

(smiles)

Where the hell you been? I've been lookin' all over tarnation for you!

HENRY

I've been -- I've been right here!

Henry stands; they shake hands and then hug each other. Henry's friend at the counter, FRANK, mid 40s, in overalls and a John Deer hat, stands up, put's \$1.10 on the counter and nods at Dave as he starts to leave.

FRANK

See ya later Henry. We still on for Friday mornin'?

HENRY

Sorry Frank, yeah - yeah, we're still on. I'll seeya --
(to Dave)
What are you doing here?

DAVE

What am I doin' here -- What am I doing here! I'll tell you what I am doing here! (he sits down at the counter) I am your god damned attorney ain't I? Your business sold you big dummy!

HENRY

(pained look)
Oh yeah!

DAVE

Ohh - yeah? (shakes his head) -- Henry, do you know how much money we're talking about?

HENRY

No, I don't -- and I don't really care!

Dave stops and looks at Henry closely. A sad, empathetic look on his face. He knows Henry well and what he's gone through. He looks down, long pause, then slowly looks up again.

DAVE

You can do a lot of good with this, you know!

Henry thinking, then looks up at Dave like he has an idea. Henry and Dave talking, we can't hear them. Dave smiles and nods. Henry tells Dave something and Dave writes it down. Dave asks Henry a serious question and Henry seems to answer yes and nods. Henry signing something. Hold on Dave as he looks at Henry with admiration.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - DAY

Late in the day. Henry walks toward the house from the field with Otis and Bud. Issac slowly pushes the 47 Harley out of the barn with Grayson steering and laughing. Mick, Tim, Mitchell and four other guys slowly file out of the barn.

GRAYSON

Well - whaddya think?

CHANCE

Looks pretty good, don't it?

HENRY

What the heck! You kidding, looks brand new -- Who did the paint?

MICK

Isaac knows this guy in town - you like the color?

Molly and June on the porch husking corn. Heather Belle and Annie breaking peas. Henry looks up smiling, proud.

HENRY

I love it -- pretty close to the original! (looks at Grady) Grady and I figured it for red and grey, didn't we?

GRADY

Damn right - that's because it was!

ISSAC

We wanted you to be the first to take it for a spin!

MICK

Yeah, go on, give it a try!

Henry takes his time walking around it, looking at it as the others slowly walk up, surrounding him and the motorcycle. Grady chomps on his cigar.

GRADY

We don't have all day you know - some of us gotta work round here!

Molly and June smiling from the porch. Heather Belle and Annie go running out and shimmy through the boys and stand next to Henry as he hops on, then Henry looks up at Isaac.

HENRY

You prime it?

ISAAC

No!

Henry primes it, adjusts something, then cranks it. Starts with a LOUD ROAR! Girls SCREAM. He looks around, puts it in gear and slowly takes off. The girls run alongside of him laughing, then scream again as he pulls on the throttle and takes off. Ty has run way ahead and is standing on the side of the road as Henry roars by him. Ty runs after him. Hold on Henry as he rides down a lonely stretch of road.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Henry comes running into the kitchen from the side door.

HENRY

Twister! Twister! Moll, count every head -- Tell me who's missing.

Henry looks left, runs in the front room, picks up Annie and Heather Belle in his arms and runs back in the kitchen with them. Chance comes running in the side door and screams.

CHANCE

Twister! -- Half mile! Come on - We gotta get to the cellar!

HENRY

Get to the cellar! I'll meet you there in two minutes, GO - GOO - GOOO! (grabs Chance) Come with me.

As they're leaving Henry grabs Grayson firmly by the bicep, looking him right in the eyes. In loud voice.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Gray, make sure everyone gets to the storm cellar fast.

GRAYSON

Ok!

Grayson is frightened. Chance looks Grayson in the eyes and nods. Henry and Chance run out.

MOMENTS LATER

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

Everyone hold hands and follow me --
1, 2, 3 Now!

Grayson kicks the side door open and they all run out, ducked down low, girls screaming. Molly holds Heather Belles hand and Annie's head to her side as they run toward the cellar.

EXT. STORM CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

Storm Cellar - Two minutes later. Very loud, debris and dirt are flying everywhere. Henry holds a hand up to his face to block the dirt from getting in his eyes. He quickly helps Samuel and Bess down the stairs. Molly grabs Samuel, then Ester and Otis jump down the stairs. Hold on Henry's face!

HENRY

(loudly)

Who? -- Who's missing?

MOLLY

(startled. concerned look)

Ty, it's Ty! We can't find him.

Shock! The blood has run out of Henry's face. The sound of the wind is deafening. Henry says something to Chance. Chance shakes his head like "no!". Henry holds the door open then physically pushes Chance forward and down the steps.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

(shouting, pained look)

Heather Belle said he was near the big oak!

Henry's shirt almost blowing off his back. Eyes dart back and forth and then a look like he knows. He takes off running.

INT. INSIDE CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

For sixty seconds we hear the roar of the storm from inside the cellar. It's very loud; dirt is blowing in through the slats in the door. The door is blown open. Chance grabs the rope attached to the door and with every muscle Chance, Grayson and Molly pull it shut. Molly slips and falls on her butt. Ten more seconds of whistling, then nothing! From the back of the cellar Dex, in a loud and arrogant voice.

DEX

Where is he? -- Where's Ty?

Dex looking towards the door, expecting to see him up front. Anxiously looks back and forth.

DEX (CONT'D)

Where the hell is he!

MOLLY
 (sad, frightened face)
 Henry went to look for him!

Chance slowly pushes the door slightly open, and we can see debris swirling in the immediate area. In the distance we see the funnel a quarter mile away.

DEX
 What! (angrily) What! - I thought
 he was up here with y'all!

Dex pushes past the girls just as a large hand firmly grabs the door. Long pause as the hand holds the door open. All eyes are on the door. Chance's face as the door opens slowly.

CHANCE
 HENNRY! -- HENRY!

Henry is holding Ty, who is dirty and scratched up a bit, but awake and crying in Henry's arms. Dex leaps forward in a rude manner, pushing everyone out of the way.

DEX
 Gimme him!

Dex pulls Ty away, then stops, looking at Henry for a second - confused look on Dex' face - something's wrong! Chance pushes the door open the rest of the way. Strange look on Henry's face. He's calm, almost relieved, but his eyes are shallow and the blood has drained from his face. He turns slightly to the left and then we see it. A stick has impaled him in his side. Henry drops to his knees, then slowly falls forward.

CHANCE
 HENRY!

Molly screams. They look at him in horror. Dex still holding Ty, catches Henry's head with his right hand just before it hits the stairs. June moves forward, taking her shawl off and puts it under his head.

JUNE
 Dex, get the --

DEX
 (interrupts June)
 I got it -- I got it! Moll, take Ty
 -- Chance, Gray - help me get him
 to the truck!

MOLLY
 Where you goin'?

DEX

Doc Eastman, he'll know what to do.

Dex, Chance and Grayson put him in the bed of the truck, then jump in the bed of the truck on either side of Henry. Truck slowly pulls away. Hold on boys as they watch over Henry.

EXT. FRONT OF ESTER / OTIS' HOUSE - DAY

Destruction. Ester and Otis' house is leveled, gone. Chance, Grayson, Otis and Ester standing out in front. Chance bends down and picks up a rag doll and hands it to Otis.

CHANCE

We'll help you build another house -
- a better one. Bring the tractor
over in the mornin', level this and
start fresh!

GRAYSON

Yeah, for now - you'll come stay
with us. -- You'll be alright!

ESTER

(tears, worried smile)
Thank you -- thank you!

Ester's hands to her face crying. Concerned look on Chance as he puts his arm around her shoulder and looks at Grayson.

EXT. FRONT OF STORE - DAY

Duane walks up to the MS Sheriff now dressed in street clothes.

DUANE

Got him! -- He's in Tyler ---

SHERIFF

How you know that?

DUANE

We beat it outta that nigger in the
barber shop. Didn't believe him at
first, but I know it now, It's him.

SHERIFF

You sure? --

DUANE

Oh, I'm sure --

SHERIFF

Ok --- you call Billy and the others. Have 'em meet us in Monroe in the mornin'.

INT. INSIDE THE BARN - DAY

Henry sits on a crate listening to Heather Belle, cane leaning against the bench. They're eye level. Ty standing next to Henry with his hand on Henry's knee watching Heather Belle. She's very animated, holding her hands up, and moving them back and forth. Then she takes Henry's hand and walks him outside and around the corner of the barn showing him something. Cane in hand, Henry walks slowly, nodding his head as he looks at her and grins.

HEATHER

So, when can we start? When? Do you think Gray will help?

Walking back into the barn Henry stops suddenly, and Ty, not paying attention, walks right into Henry's butt. Henry grins and guides Ty in front of him.

HENRY

Why don't we start right now?

HEATHER

(Screams)

Yes, now! -- We can start now?

TY

Yay! I wanna help - I wanna help!

HENRY

I think I know where there's a good piece of rope.

Henry stops as if thinking about what he has just said.

HEATHER

You do? Whaa -- Where? Henry - what will we use for a seat?

HENRY

Why don't you take Ty and look real careful over in that corner. I saw three or four thick oak boards that should work real fine.

Heather holds her hand out. Ty takes it and they run over to where Henry pointed as Jack slowly sniffs around. Henry looks at them as if remembering something or someone.

Moments later

HEATHER

I found one -- I found one. Henry -
Henry - look! How 'bout this one?

TY

That's a good one --

HENRY

Let's take a look ---

They come running over and hand it to Henry.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I think this is perfect for a seat!

HEATHER

Is it?

TY

What - What'll we do now?

HENRY

Well, we'll have to measure to get
the hole just right - I'm gonna
need some help now.

Kids looking up at Henry then nod. We see the three of them talking, measuring and working together. We can't hear them.

EXT. FAR SIDE OF THE HOUSE - LATER

Molly taking down laundry. She hears SCREAMING from the back of the barn, drops the basket and starts to run. She reaches the back of the barn only to see Heather on a swing that's been attached to the big oak. She clutches her chest and shakes her head. June runs up right behind her.

ANNIE

Momma -- momma, look what we made!

MOLLY

My goodness! You scared the life
outta me!

Ty runs back and forth as Jack barks near the tree. Heather Belle, Bess and Samuel stand to one side watching Annie and laughing. June stands near the barn watching them.

JUNE

Would you look at that --

CHANCE

Mom, come here, you have to try it.

Molly shaking her head and waving him away. Chance and Gray look at each other, then chase after her. She SCREAMS.

MOLLY

No, no - I am not getting on that thing.

She SCREAMS again as they all fall to the ground laughing in a big pile. Ty jumps on them. Henry standing with his cane watches with a big grin as he wipes his hands on a rag. Hold on June as she watches Henry and smiles.

EXT. TWO TRUCKS DRIVING - DAY

Six Mississippi country boys driving down a narrow dirt road. Pull up in front of an old ranch. Mail box says "Johnston."

INT. KITCHEN (TELEPHONE) - DAY

Sun's going down. Phone rings. June wipes her hands on her apron and walks to the phone.

JUNE

(into phone)

Hello -- Minnie? Minnie is that you? Slow down! (pause) What? -- Wha -- When? -- Whaa? -- Minnie, call the Sheriff, call everyone! Minnie call everyone! I have to go!

Hangs up the phone. Runs to the porch and rings the bell three times. Waits, then three more times. Back to the phone.

JUNE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Isaac -- Isaac, they're coming to get him. I need you over here now.

We see her talking but can't hear the rest of the conversation. Molly walks in.

MOLLY

What the Hell's goin' on?

JUNE
 (surprised, pointing)
 Run, run tell Henry - men are
 coming to get him. Go - Go!

Molly runs for the front door with panic in her eyes. June glances out the window. Headlights - Headlights! She screams - drops the phone. We hear someone on the other end. Two older trucks pull up in front of the porch.

EXT. FRONT OF MCCLELLAN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Six men standing in front of the McClellan house. Two of them with Klan hoods on carrying ax handles. Three of the men hold rifles. Molly is blocked as she stands out front holding Ty.

DUANE
 Where is he?

June runs down the steps and out in front of Molly, looking the biggest one in the eyes and with total confidence and in a low voice.

JUNE
 (to Molly)
 Take the kids in the house --
 (to the men)
 You boys get back in your trucks
 and get on outta here - this is not
 gonna happen, you hear me?

DUANE
 I'll ask you one more time, then
 (nodding) I am gonna bust someone
 up for sure!

JUNE
 I told you to --

Duane slaps June to the ground. Henry comes walking out of the barn with his cane looking them dead in the eyes.

HENRY
 I am right here --

They all turn, June, bleeding from her mouth screams.

JUNE
 No, No Henry -- Stay there! Stay in
 there! (exhausted, trails off) No!

SECOND HICK

Watch him, Billy -- he's an Army
Ranger!

MOLLY

(desperation, pleading)
The Sheriff's on his way --

DUANE

Then we better get to business --
(to Henry)
Remember me?

Duane knocks Henry to the ground with an ax handle. Another one hits Henry in the legs with a big stick.

THIRD HICK

Where's the rope? Bobby, git that
rope outta the truck!

Henry is lifted up onto the bed of the truck. A noose put around his neck. One of the men throws the rope over the barn hoist. The men start to pull the rope. Molly runs to stop them, but one of them grabs her, pulling her to the ground.

CHIK CHIK - BLAMMM! A shot from the dark corner of the yard takes out the front right tire of the truck. Silhouette of a man as he slowly walks forward. As he walks forward we see it's Grady. In a low confident voice.

GRADY

I ain't playin'!

CHIK CHIK - gun aimed at the big one. Another shot rings out from the far side of the house - the men turn that way.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Open yo' mouth one mo' time, fat
boy and I'll turn you into a
doughnut! (nods) -- find yo' balls
on the other side of Smith County!

Duane doesn't say anything but another the man holding the rifle moves forward. Shot from the other side of the house wings the man in the shoulder, spinning him around.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Uh-huh! You're thinking six of you
and two of us -- but I am taking
fat-ass with me, you hear?

Head lights - truck coming down the road. Grady shaking his head. Then two more trucks headed towards them. Grady walks forward, looking the big man in the eyes.

GRADY (CONT'D)
 You ain't goin' nowhere!

Twenty seconds later - Isaac, Mick, Tim, Pastor Hicks and 8 other men hop out of the trucks with shot guns, rifles and ax handles. Two more sets of headlights coming from the shady corner. Chance steps out from the shadows with his father's rifle. Big Boy knows he's lost and steps back.

DUANE
 Ok -- Ok!

Grady puts his arm around Chance like a son. Grayson comes running up, then talking with Chance.

CHANCE
 Which one?

Chance slowly walks past Duane, then hammers him in the face with the rifle butt. Chance looks down at him.

CHANCE (CONT'D)
 That ain't the worst you'll get tonight!

PASTOR HICKS
 No - No! We'll let the law handle this!

Pastor Hicks calmly takes the rifle from Chance. Molly takes the rope off from around Henry's neck. June tending to Henry now sitting up against the tire of the truck. Mick walks up along the side of another one of the country boys and nails him right in the gut then upper cuts him in the face.

MICK
 That's for Henry!

ANOTHER TYLER MAN
 You boys sure a long way from home!

A couple more of the Tyler men move forward. Pastor Hicks in a booming voice.

PASTOR HICKS
 No! Our friend is hurt - I know you fellas are hopping mad. But, we are civilized men and will handle this properly. The Law will take care of this, do you hear me?

In the distance flashing lights from a police car.

MOMENTS LATER

Sheriff pulls up in a cloud of dust. Pastor Hicks standing near the country boys. Sheriff's gun is drawn, looks to Pastor Hicks. SAM, 30's, Sheriff Deputy. MACK JOHNSTON, 50's, large, sturdy rancher in overalls.

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)

These are the men you'll need to take in. This one's gonna need a doctor for sure!

SHERIFF

SAM, pull those boys off to the side and get em' in the car. MACK, will you help me transport the rest of these men if I need you?

MACK JOHNSTON

Sure -

JUNE

You! -- you! (pointing a finger at Duane) I'll see you soon enough -- We'll have our day in court! Henry, Henry will have his day in court, you sorry excuse for a human being! Do you hear me? (Pastor Hicks holds June by the wrist). We'll have our day. Do you hear me?

SHERIFF

(cuffing one of them)

You fella's in a world of shit! That's one woman I would not want to upset -- Knows the Judge too!

Duane walking by, split lip and a huge black eye. Grady eyeballing him, then a mischievous grin.

GRADY

Welcome to Texas!

Duane sneers at him. Another two trucks pull up. A third coming from the shady corner. MINNIE JOHNSTON, late 50's, heavysset, nervous type, pulls up with a concerned look, slowly gets out, almost shaking as she looks around.

JUNE

Minnie -- Minnie, thank you, thank you so much!

PASTOR HICKS

(quietly to June)

Doc Eastman's on his way --

PASTOR HICKS (CONT'D)

All right now -- you boys welcome
to stay if Moll and Juney want you
to -

JUNE

(interrupts)

Yes, yes of course. Minnie, will
you help make some lemonade for the
boys while we get Henry upstairs?

Molly kneeling next to Henry with a cloth on his forehead.
Minnie, nervously nods as she turns left, then right and
starts walking towards the porch with another WOMAN. Two men
gently lift Henry and start to walk him into the house.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Light streams through the stained glass windows.

PASTOR HICKS

Do you understand the meaning of
Judgment --- of Justice and
righteousness? (loud voice) Do you?
We reap what we sow, don't we?
(nodding) The Word clearly -- very
clearly teaches us that we are
solely responsible for our actions.

MOMENTS LATER

We alone must take responsibility
for our lives and strive to become
better, more responsible brothers
and sisters. Because if we don't --
if we blame others for our short
comings -- if we hold our brothers
down (he looks around, raising his
voice) he will know -- and will
carry out great vengeance on them
and punish them in his wrath!

EXT. FRONT OF COURTHOUSE - DAY

Dusk as streams of light filter between the trees on the
square. A young, stocky, muscular man walks Duane into the
building. A plaque on the side of the building says "Smith
County Courthouse." They walk up the steps. Man at the top of
the stairs opens the door. They walk in the door and down a
long corridor, through another set of doors, then down stairs
and along another hallway to a wall of bars. The Sheriff
unlocks a door and they walk into a basement jail cell.

Jailer comes forward and unlocks an inner cell door. The door is made of thick black iron bars. The back of the cell is so dark you can't see the back wall. There's shuffling and movement at the back of the cell.

YOUNG SHERIFF
You'll stay here tonight!

DUANE
(cocky)
Huhhh! This all you got here in Smith County? I'll be fine till my people come get me in the mornin'. I'll beat this bullshit!

Sheriff nods his head as he takes the handcuffs off Duane. Sheriff thinking to himself, looks left, then reaches for the Klan hood another Sheriff is holding.

YOUNG SHERIFF
This yours, ain't it?

DUANE
Yeah - that's mine!

Sheriff takes the hood and throws it to Duane as he walks into the cell. In the background there's SHUFFLING and then something moves forward. We see a pair of legs. They move closer, then one man up to the waist, then his chest!

Duane leans in, squinting as he focuses and watches this man move forward in the cell. The man takes another step forward. He's an African-American man about 6'2", 270 pounds with arms the size of cannons. He's wearing overalls, and behind him are four more serious looking African-American males.

Duane anxiously stares forward, knowing his fate. It's very quiet. The cell door closes with a loud CLANG. Sheriff opens the outer door to walk out, stops, looks back towards the cell for a moment, then slowly turns and walks out.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Morning - Henry sleeps soundly in a queen sized bed with white sheets and a large quilt. Big picture window with the meadow in the background. Molly pouring water for him, then sets it down on the night-stand. She looks back and takes the candle off the night-stand. She walks out of the room, making sure to close the door quietly. Ty curled up asleep on a big pillow in the hallway. Pastor Hicks, Isaac, Dex and 10 other people from town drinking coffee and lemonade downstairs.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

DOC EASTMAN

He'll be fine, but he needs a lot of rest. Be mindful of that eye of his and change the dressing every day.

MOLLY

(concerned look, nods)
I will.

DOC EASTMAN

Let me know if anything changes. Be back on Tuesday to check on him.

EXT. FRONT OF CHURCH - DAY

Pastor Hicks slowly walks out to the mailbox, opens it, sifts through a few letters and stops at one in particular. He runs his index finger along the top, opening it.

INSERT - THE LETTER, which reads:

Dear Reverend Dennis L. Hicks,

It has been brought to my attention that certain funds are needed to finish the school house for the Pasture Church. My benefactor is a big fan of yours and wanted you to have this asap. There may be additional monies left over for families in need and two in particular who I know you will help. Last thing our friend said to me was, "Now go do some good!"

Sincerely,

David Lindle

Esq. Mobile, Alabama

BACK TO FRONT OF CHURCH

Pastor Hicks stands there looking at the check. He smiles, looks right, nods then slowly walks back towards the Church.

EXT. AERIAL SHOT: HIGH ABOVE MCCLELLAN PROPERTY - DAY

Morning, robin's egg blue sky with a few puffy clouds. Looking down on the big oak and the meadow. To the left we see the vegetable and corn fields. We see someone walking down the dirt road near the field. We watch him from high above then pan down and see that it's Henry walking with a cane. He's smiling now as if pleased with what they have accomplished. It's very still and quiet as he looks out over the fields they've planted. Henry as he stops and smiles.

INT. WORKBENCH - DAY

Morning - June walks into the barn. Henry's duffle bag sits on an oak barrel as he grabs his toothbrush and wraps it in small towel. Henry looks up casually at June.

JUNE

You're leaving us, aren't you?

HENRY

(pause)

I didn't expect I'd be here this long. (half smile) Think of all the money you'll save on lemonade!

JUNE

I never paid no mind to that.

Standing next to Henry she brushes something off his sleeve, then holds his hand as they look at each other.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I'd buy a mountain of lemons if you stayed.

Henry turns away, looking back down at his things, nods.

HENRY

Guess -- I -- I never thought I'd grow to love y'all as much as I do.

Henry trying not to show any emotion, turns to June again and nods. June smiling at Henry, like she loves him a great deal!

JUNE

You have a home here, Henry Jackson! I want you to know something --- I couldn't be more proud of you if you were my own son. (long pause) I do have one thing I want from you --- One promise I want you to make. I want you to promise me that you'll come back and see us again -- will you do that for me?

HENRY

(nods)

Yes -- I'll do that.

She steps towards him looking him in the eyes like she's very proud of him. He bends down to hug her and she kisses him softly on the cheek. Holding his hand again she stops, looks at him with a concerned look on her face, nods and walks out.

EXT. BIG OAK - LATER

Henry sits under his oak looking across the meadow.

MOLLY (O.S.)
Just gonna run off without sayin'
anything, huh?

HENRY
No, no! Was just about to come in.

Molly has a concerned look and melancholy smile.

MOLLY
When will we see you again?

HENRY
I am not sure - But you're pretty
tough -- you can handle this place
by yourself!

MOLLY
Oh, I -- I am not so tough!

HENRY
As I recollect -- you were going to
flip me like uh -- uhh?

MOLLY
(pained look)
A Cheese Omelette! (they both
laugh) I wanted you to think I
could take care of my kids --

HENRY
Oh -- you convinced me all right!

MOLLY
If you're worried about those
country morons, they're all goin'
to jail for a long time -- If Isaac
and Grady don't kill 'em. (she
laughs - not Henry - long pause)
You'd better write and tell us what
California's like -- the movie
stars and all.

Pained, half smile on Molly's face.

HENRY
I will --

Henry nods - long pause - then slowly.

HENRY (CONT'D)

If you think that my heart doesn't
ache knowing I won't see y'all in
the morning --- you'd be wrong!

MOLLY

Do you know how much you mean to
me? --- How much you mean to my
mother and the kids?

HENRY

Yes, and I hope they know how much
they mean to me.

Hold on Molly, tears in her eyes. Then quietly.

MOLLY

Is it getting better --- or --

Long pause as Henry looks at Molly. He slowly nods.

HENRY

Yes --- every day -- is a little
better. Spending time with you and
your family has helped heal me and
mended my soul. (smiles) -- We took
care of each other, didn't we?

Molly nods, starts to cry and hugs him again. Tears coming
down her cheeks. (Long Pause)

MOLLY

Nobody's gonna take care of you
like we do!

MOMENTS LATER

Henry nods, holding her at arm's length now. He looks at her
and smiles like she's come a long way and is better now.

EXT. FRONT OF BARN - HENRY'S CHAIR - DAY

Morning - Henry's chair. A bluejay flies up and sits atop the
empty chair. After 10 seconds the bluejay flies off.

EXT. - FRONT PORCH - LATER

Ty stands on the porch, talking in a forceful way. Chance
looks at Ty from the bottom of the stairs.

TY

You - you - said if I ever wanted
somethin' -- Well, I want this!

Chance thinking - shaking his head.

CHANCE

Ty --

Ty - Defiant, staring him down!

INT. CAB OF TRUCK (MOVING) - LATER

Chance and Ty driving down the road. Ty sitting up on his
knees with a pensive look, staring out the front window.

EXT. BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

They roll into the bus station. Ty opens the door before the
truck stops, hops out and starts running.

CHANCE

Ty, wait!

Chance hops out, runs after him as Ty rockets down the ramp
but slows down when he sees Henry stepping on the bus.

TY

Henry -- Hennry!

Ty runs and runs, running as fast as he can and lovingly
jumps into Henry's arms, hugging his best friend for five
seconds. An older, Caucasian WOMAN sits on a bench nearby,
watching them closely.

TY (CONT'D)

W - where you goin'?

HENRY

I am going to see my sister -- I
told you!

TY

No, no you didn't say when! You --
you can't go now. (tears welling up
in his eyes) We - we want you to
stay with us. I need you (pleading)
I'll -- I'll make sure you don't c -
cry anymore. I promise!

Henry affectionately looks at Ty, then hugs him tightly.
Whispering in his ear.

HENRY

I know -- I know you would!

Woman on bench watches them intently. She sees that they're best friends. Takes her handkerchief out and dabs her eyes.

TY

(pleading)

Please Henry -- p - please!

Henry slowly peels Ty from his arms.

HENRY

I'll be back -- I promise! Do you remember what I told you? --- A promise is a --

TY

(interrupts)

A promise, I know -- But, but I - I love you the most!

Long pause, as Henry looks down at Ty and smiles.

HENRY

-- and I love you the most!

Ty hugs him again as the woman dabs her eyes. Chance is standing behind Ty now, tears rolling down his cheeks.

ANNOUNCER

Bus number 4 to Dallas and El Paso leaving in two minutes.

HENRY

You take care of Jack, your parents and the McClellans. You're in charge now, ok!

Ty nods, tears coming down his face as Chance comes up behind him, putting his hand on his shoulder. Henry starts to climb the stairs of the bus, then stops, looks left towards the boys who are now holding hands. Henry smiles that confident, half smile of his, nods and gets on the bus.

MOMENTS LATER

Chance and Ty watch as the bus drives off in a cloud of dust.

GRAYSON (V.O.)

I think in a way during those ten months in 1971 that we helped each other. Henry helped heal my aunt's heart for sure.

(MORE)

GRAYSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But in a way I think we may have helped ease his pain a bit too - or at least that's the way I like to think of it. We saw Henry many times over the years and when he came to visit, people from miles around would come sit on our porch and talk about old times.

EXT. UNDER THE BIG OAK - DAY

Beams of sunlight come through the big oak. Heather, Bess and Annie hold hands as they walk towards the meadow. Ty and Samuel are right behind them, laughing and holding hands.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

The sound of crickets, a huge harvest moon shining on the porch where Molly, in bare feet and a summer dress sits quietly. June walks out, looks to the left at her daughter.

JUNE

What a beautiful night - and that harvest moon, my goodness. What's that grin of yours all about?

MOLLY

(pause - dreamy look)

I think Henry just kissed me on the forehead! -- Did he ever tell you the story about his Bess and the moonlight shining on his face?

JUNE

(concerned look)

No, I -- I don't believe he did!

MOLLY

(pause)

Well --

Slowly, she begins to tell her mother the story. We can't hear them. In the translucent, blue moonlight, beautiful climbing rose and honeysuckle ascend the posts of the porch as fire flies make their appearance in the front yard. Slowly we pan up to the panoramic dark blue sky of East Texas as it explodes with galaxies and stars.

INSERT - OLD PHOTOS

Snapshots (old sixties style photos with white borders) of Henry sitting in his chair out in front of the barn.

The mudfight, kids on fence with Cowboy boots watching Chance on his horse, Kids at swimming hole, Grady and Henry leaning against the Chevy smiling. Annie on the swing, Epic scene in field farming. Lastly, a picture of Henry and John in Vietnam, their arms around each other with great big smiles.

BLACK SCREEN (SUPER)

"Some people come into our lives and quickly go, others stay a spell and leave footprints in our hearts and we're never, ever the same."

FADE OUT.