

MAGGIE

an original screenplay by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PACE HOUSE - ROOF - EARLY MORNING

A bleak sky pours gray down onto the roof of a lone farmhouse. The bare feet of a TEENAGE GIRL stand at the edge of the third floor. Scabs and puss spot her red and blackened legs.

The toes of the girl's feet dangle off the edge. Next to her feet, the binder of a book rests atop the roof. It appears to be without pages.

Slowly, one of the girl's feet raises up over the long drop. Then, her leg extends forward and hovers over the edge a long moment.

Pieces of paper drift on the wind as the girl shivers, standing on one leg before the long fall.

THREE WEEKS EARLIER:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFTERNOON

In the center of two dead corn fields, a pickup truck kicks up dust as it shimmies up a long driveway.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

WADE, weathered and aged with hints of rough attractiveness, wipes the sweat from his worn, tanned face with his large hands. He lights a cigarette with shaky fingers and glares across the cab at MAGGIE, who stares out the window, black shades covering her eyes.

Wade turns back to the road as the teenage girl rubs a patch on her arm.

WADE

Don't touch it. The doctors said
the less you aggravate it, the longer
you'll...

Wade studies the girl, then turns back to the road. Maggie rubs her buzzed head and closes her eyes tightly.

WADE (CONT'D)

Do you have any idea what you've
done to us?

Maggie glances at Wade, then back out the window. She puts her finger on the glass and begins to draw in the dust as the truck bounces up and down on the road.

WADE (CONT'D)

Molly keeps asking about you. You know what we tell her?

Maggie continues to draw. Wade puffs a cloud of smoke.

WADE (CONT'D)

Had to say you went to stay with Allie for a few weeks. So don't say any different. We'll tell her when we're ready. Caroline thinks we should tell them both now. But I talked her out of it. And Bobby still ain't said a word.

Maggie stares at Wade and covertly rubs the patch on her arm. Wade pays no attention. Maggie pulls a cigarette out of her father's pack on the dash.

WADE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

She lights it. Wade reaches across and snatches the cigarette from her mouth. She glowers at him.

WADE (CONT'D)

What the hell do you think you're trying to do?

He tosses it out the window. Teary eyed, Maggie mumbles something.

WADE (CONT'D)

What was that, young lady?

MAGGIE

I said what does it matter. I'm already dead.

Wade stares at the girl as she puts her head on the passenger door window, wiping her eyes.

INT. PACE HOUSE - AFTERNOON

CAROLINE, a short-haired, earnest looking woman, sits and stares out of the bay window of the living room, watching the pale truck draw nearer to the house. She sighs, putting her long fingers over her strained face.

A land-line phone RINGS. Caroline stands and answers it.

CAROLINE

Hello?... Hi Linda...He just got home with Maggie.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

He said as soon as he drops her off and she says hi to the kids, he'll run the two of them over to your house. So it'll be about another hour and a half. Thanks again for taking care of them through this....I know. Well, the doctors said Maggie will be fine for a while. She has an appointment with Vern in a few weeks, but the minute she starts to show signs, we're supposed to take her in for re-examination. I'm just glad we found her and she's home...Well, I think if you want, come by sometime in the next few weeks. It'd be good for her to see her you...All right. You too. Thanks again.

Caroline hangs the phone up and closes her eyes, gripping a rosary.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Dear Lord, please...please have mercy.

MOLLY, short, cute, and curly-headed, runs through the living room.

MOLLY

Mommy. Daddy's home!

CAROLINE

I know, baby.

Caroline scoops up Molly.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Did you pack your bag?

MOLLY

Yeah.

CAROLINE

Molly?

MOLLY

Yeah.

CAROLINE

Okay. Pretty-Pony going?

Molly looks up, her expression in thought.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You're not going to take Pretty-Pony?

Molly squirms to get down and as Caroline sets her down, the girl sprints up the nearby stairs, past BOBBY, who stands in the doorway.

The boy, twice Molly's height, stares up at Caroline, then turns his dark eyes up the stairs, then back down to Caroline. He picks up a bag at his feet.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Maggie's here, Bobby. You want to see your sister?

Bobby stares at her a moment longer, nods, then awkwardly walks into the next room.

EXT. PACE HOUSE FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

The truck slides up to the house and the engine clatters off. Molly sprints out of the front door and jumps into Wade's arms as he steps out of the cab.

WADE

Well, hello there darlin'.

MOLLY

Hi, daddy.

Wade looks back into the cab.

WADE

You getting out?

Maggie yanks the handle and exits. She grabs a backpack out of the back and she suddenly stops, tears falling past the rim of the glasses. She looks up and, noticing Caroline in the doorway of the house, quickly wipes the tears.

WADE (CONT'D)

You got those?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

She throws the backpack over her shoulder, grabs a bag from the bed and starts toward the house when Molly steps out from the side of the truck and looks up at her.

MOLLY

Hi.

MAGGIE

Hi.

Molly's face goes curious.

MOLLY
What happened to your arm?

Maggie looks up at Wade, who stares blankly.

MAGGIE
I...got hurt.

MOLLY
I scratched mine.

She shows her tiny, band-aid covered wound.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
But mommy fixed it. Who fixed yours?

MAGGIE
The doctors.

MOLLY
You had to go to the doctor?

MAGGIE
Mine's a little more than a scratch.

WADE
Maggie. Why don't you give your
sister a hug and say bye. The kids
are going to stay with your aunt for
a while.

Maggie stares coldly at Wade, then bends and shares a hug with Molly. They break and Molly smiles up at Maggie, eliciting a small smile from the teenager.

Molly sprints back to the doorway and Caroline bends and hugs her, then places a backpack on the little girl's back. Then, she kisses the girl on the forehead and scoots her along.

Molly sprints back to the truck and hops in, playing with a doll. Bobby exits the house, walking right by Caroline and stopping suddenly as he notices Maggie.

MAGGIE
Hi, Bobby.

The boy stares at her a moment, then looks up at the sky, squinting. Then, he stares back down at Maggie. Wade watches the two stare at each other, then walks over to Bobby.

WADE

Come on, kiddo. Let's get you to your aunt's. Maggie, I'll be back shortly. Head inside and put your stuff in your room. We cleared it out and Caroline made it up for you.

(shouting)

Caroline, honey. I love you.

Caroline walks over to Wade with a big smile on her face and hugs him. They kiss, then Wade smiles back at her, mumbling something which makes her smile grow. Wade walks back to the truck and hops in.

Maggie stares up at Caroline. Then, she drags her feet up to the house, rubbing her arm.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

WADE

Bobby, you okay?

The boy looks up at him, and finally nods.

MOLLY

Daddy?

WADE

What, baby?

MOLLY

What's this?

Molly points to the drawing in the dust on the passenger side window. Wade notices. Drawn into the dust of the window is the symbol for contamination.

Wade leans over the two children and quickly wipes it from the window.

WADE

Nothing, baby. It's nothing.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie steps through the threshold of the door and stops, studying the kitchen. Caroline mindlessly clears the table.

CAROLINE

Want to help me with these dishes?

Maggie stares at the woman, who turns back to her. Maggie sets her stuff down and slowly picks a glass up from the counter, staring at it.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You and your father missed dinner. We had corn dogs again. He's been slaving in the fields, trying to get them back to life. He's talked to several people from different counties and no one's got any of the crops going. But then again--

Caroline stops suddenly, a dish in her hand, and lowers her head.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Where did you go?

Maggie stills herself, surprised.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Where did you go?

Maggie rubs at the patch on her arm.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You just up and left. Your father searched for you. He scoured the damned city for two weeks. No phones. Out of walkie distance. No food. And no one was supposed to be out of the house. You left us, and he went for you. So tell me. Where did you go?

Tremors creep over Caroline's arms. Maggie stares hard at the ground.

MAGGIE

I didn't--

CAROLINE

Where, Maggie!

The glass in Maggie's hand crashes to the floor, SHATTERING. Caroline glares at Maggie. The young girl avoids eye contact.

MAGGIE

I was in a shelter.

CAROLINE

Where?

MAGGIE

K.C.

Silence befalls the kitchen. Caroline snaps out of it.

CAROLINE

(breathy)

Why? Why did you leave?

Maggie stares down at the shattered glass.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You left your family. You left your father. You left Molly and Bobby. You abandoned us.

Maggie's face tightens. Caroline shakes her head.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Just tell me why.

Maggie raises her head slowly and removes her sunglasses for the first time. Pink, blotchy skin surrounds her bloodshot eyes. They glimmer with a gray tint as she stares daggers at Caroline. Caroline looks suddenly shaken.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Dear Lord. Dear Lord.

MAGGIE

I watched people die there. And I'm not just sick. I lost my life.

(she chokes a cry)

And yeah. I left. I left to keep from hurting you. Molly and Bobby. Dad.

CAROLINE

But--but we never asked that of you. We would never--

MAGGIE

(pointing to her eyes)

And I never asked for *THIS*.

(beat)

But it doesn't matter. This is what I am now. I'm dead, Caroline. Don't you get that?

Maggie grabs her bag and stalks past Caroline, who backs away.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Bathed in the light of the bleakness outside, Caroline prepares a meager dinner from canned and other nonperishable foods. Leaning across the counter, she switches on a radio.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

--and up to five hundred and twenty eight thousand now, nearly all from inner cities and metropolitan areas. All infected or dead. People in rural areas were less affected, though it appears the nation's crops have died out. It would seem that while other countries were hit harder than ours, the nation has still fallen under the weight of this...outbreak. What will we do now? What can we do now? Tonight I have with me one of Washington's top--wait, I'm sorry. I can't even call it that anymore. Can I?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yes.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

It just seems odd, given the giant hole that now sits there. Apologies. But, tonight I have with me one of the government's top political advisors to Homeland Security. Mrs. Jane Sandowski. Jane, you were talking to me before the show about your husband. Would you care to elaborate on that now?

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

Well, as I was telling you, my husband was recently infected, and after the month that he was allowed home, I was ordered to bring him back in for quarantine.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

I'm terribly sorry.

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

It was one of the single most difficult days of my life. And many of the country have lost family in this misfortune. We just--

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

Misfortune? With all due respect, and my deepest sympathies, I believe that maybe, *maybe*, the events leading up to the outbreak were misfortunes. But not now. Let's don't mix our adjectives at this point. Now, we're in an apocalypse.

Caroline flinches at the words.

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

Please. I understand the fear that the country is feeling, but apocalypse is a bit dramatic. You said it yourself that many of us survived. And there are over--

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

Wait. Dramatic? Jane, I believe you said it. You lost your husband. Do you have no respect for your own dead husband? To call this any less than--

JANE SANDOWSKI (O.S.)

Please, please. It is our position that everyone should remain calm and continue living their lives, just as you were before. It's been over two months and the world hasn't stopped. Earth's axis are still in tact. We're still spinning. Life must go on. We need to begin rebuilding and reorganizing the nation. So, as I was saying, the government's stance is--

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

The government's stance?!? The president and vice president were--

Caroline powers off the radio and closes her eyes, praying. The rumble of a truck engine creeps through the room. Caroline looks out the window and watches as Wade's truck pulls into the drive.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Wade slides the truck to a halt, puts it in park and sits a moment. He stares over at the passenger window, at the smeared picture. Then, he wipes it again.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Wade comes through the door slowly, a .22 rifle hanging from his shoulder, and finds Caroline waiting for him, staring up at him somberly. They hug for a long moment.

WADE

Where is she?

CAROLINE

Her room.

WADE
You leave her be?

CAROLINE
Mostly.

WADE
Mostly?

CAROLINE
I asked her where she was.

WADE
I asked you to leave her be.

Caroline stares up at him. Wade sets down his rifle, kneels to pull off his boots and notices bits of glass on the floor. He looks up at Caroline.

WADE (CONT'D)
Mostly?

Caroline paces out of the kitchen. Wade sighs.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - LATER

Maggie's bags sit near a bare wall, next to piled boxes sitting against the opposite. Maggie sits on a thin bed, staring out a lone window at a darkening sky.

WADE (O.S.)
Knock, knock.

Maggie turns listlessly to the door.

WADE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You decent?

She turns back to the window.

MAGGIE
Yeah.

Wade slowly pushes the door open, standing in the frame.

WADE
Caroline's making you something to eat.

MAGGIE
I'm not hungry.

WADE
They said that'd happen. How you feeling?

Maggie puts her index finger on the glass.

WADE (CONT'D)
Sorry. I'll leave you be.

He turns.

MAGGIE
Two weeks?

He stops.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
You spent two weeks out there?

WADE
Yeah.

MAGGIE
Why?

WADE
My job.

MAGGIE
It's your job to protect them.

Wade hangs his head.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I'm contagious, daddy. More now.

WADE
The kids are at your aunt's. They'll be there a while. Caroline and I know the precautions. We'll be fine. We just want you...

Maggie plays with the bandage. Up close, the skin around it glows with a red and black rash.

MAGGIE
You'll be able to say goodbye to me soon.

Wade stares at his daughter a long moment.

WADE
Just eat something. Pretend. For me. Please.

Maggie pulls the bandage off, revealing a rotten patch of flesh the shape and size of a quarter. Wade CLOMPS down the wooden stairs.

INT. PACE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Caroline and Wade sit across a long table from each other, Maggie to Wade's right. Maggie stares down at her food. They sit in silence for a long moment.

Wade scoops food into his mouth slowly, watching the two women. Maggie plays with her food, never taking a bite.

CAROLINE

Maggie. Where are your bandages?
If we're going to--

Maggie drops her fork and stands quickly, sliding the chair back. She paces quickly out of the room, up the stairs and SLAMS a door.

Wade slowly drops his fork in his plate and stares up at Caroline.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

I know. I know. But I can't look
at it. I can't see it,
knowing...knowing what's going to
happen. I can't. Wade...

WADE

I know.

Wade stands and drags the side chair over to Caroline and sits next to her, holding her hand.

CAROLINE

I've asked Him and asked Him.

WADE

I know.

CAROLINE

And I don't feel anything. I feel
so alone.

WADE

I'm here.

She looks at him, then down at their interclasped hands. A desperate smile flashes on her face.

CAROLINE

I know.

Wade lowers his head.

WADE

He's there. He's not left us yet.

CAROLINE

I just don't understand. It's not like it was supposed to be.

Wade and Caroline sit in a hollow silence.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie, slumped across her bed, pulls a phone from a box at her side. She stands and plugs it into a jack and puts the receiver to her ear. DIAL-TONE.

She dials three numbers. The bandage on her arm is replaced.

OFFICIAL MALE VOICE (O.S.)

You have reached the Kansas City St. Paul Hospital. If you need immediate assistance, press one. If someone you know has been infected with the W.D. virus, and requires immediate quarantine, dial two. If you are infected and are displaying any of the noted symptoms, please dial three. If--

Maggie presses two on the keypad.

OFFICIAL MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Please note. All tracking and positioning systems are offline. When prompted, provide the operator with your address, phone number, and medical I.D. number, along with your condition.

Music plays a long time before clicking off.

CONCERNED FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

St. Paul Hospital, please tell me your address.

Maggie hesitates.

CONCERNED FEMALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

What is your address?

Maggie slowly lowers the receiver.

CONCERNED FEMALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hello? I need your address before I--

Maggie puts the phone down.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MORNING

Maggie, seated on a swing-set, moves languidly back and forth. She notices a small toy on the ground and leans to pick it up. She plays with the small porcelain soldier between her fingers. A dark gray ring around the bandage marks the spreading dead skin on her arm.

She pulls back on the swing and begins to sway higher and higher. Higher and higher.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline opens a deep freeze near the door and pulls out a large bin. She opens it and retrieves two large, frozen tomatoes, then exits.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Caroline walks around a few chairs and exits the porch to the dead grass and straight up to a large generator. She evaluates the display and then flips one of three switches. It vibrates to life.

Wade looks up from the distance, an axe in one hand and a long piece of wood in the other. He smiles briefly at Caroline and she waves to him. Then, she returns to the porch.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN

Caroline puts the tomatoes on a plate in the microwave and starts it. While it defrosts, she notices an inhaler on the ground, under the table where Maggie first sat, upon arriving. She bends and picks it up, reading the canister:

ALBUTEROL. PRESCRIPTION FOR: PACE, MARGUERITE JANE

The microwave BEEPS and she retrieves the plate, then turns and stares out of the window at Maggie. She begins to dice the tomatoes.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie smiles, faintly, and pulls back higher on the swing. She closes her eyes, basking in the gray sky, and for a short moment, she smiles.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline stares out at Maggie, intently.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie's bandaged arm shakes, then suddenly gives out and her hand slips from the chain. The swing twists and contorts. Maggie screams out, flopping back and forth before finally spilling out to the ground and crying out.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline darts out of the kitchen and into the:

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Lying on her face, Maggie pushes herself up slowly. Caroline drops to her side.

CAROLINE

Are you okay?

Maggie grunts.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Maggie? Are you--

As she helps the girl turn over, she notices the girl's broken finger.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Oh, Lord. Your finger.

Maggie notices it and starts to shake.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Come on. Come inside.

She helps Maggie up.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN

Seated at the table, Maggie winces down at her broken finger. Caroline fumbles through the cabinets.

CAROLINE

I know it's up here somewhere. Your father is always hurting himself out in the fields. Where is it!

MAGGIE

Caroline?

CAROLINE

I think he might have put it in the--

MAGGIE

Caroline!

Caroline stops short and notices Maggie's hand. A small amount of gooey black liquid crawls out of the broken finger. Maggie stares up at Caroline with reddened eyes, ringed with dark skin.

CAROLINE

I--I...

Caroline moves past the girl into the living room.

CAROLINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I'll call. I'll call the doctor.

(shouting)

Wade!

Maggie stands and slowly inches to the counter, staring down at the diced tomatoes.

CAROLINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

WADE! WADE!

Maggie picks up the large knife and stares down, in a trance, at her broken finger and the black puss seeping from it.

Caroline's low murmurs echo in through the kitchen. Maggie shakily lowers her finger to the cutting board. She raises the knife, near-spasms running through her.

CAROLINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I got through to Dr. Kaplin's office.

Maggie slowly lowers the knife, her face pained. Then, in a flash she flings it up again, and in one fell swoop, the knife comes down and her finger lobs off, into the tomatoes.

Maggie sinks to her knees, weeping tearlessly and silently to herself. After a short moment, she rises and stares down at the blackened finger. She picks it up and drops it into the sink, down the drain.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CAROLINE

(on phone)

Yes, she's infected. Almost five months. Can you please patch me through to Vern...Yes...Yes, I understand, but--

A GRINDING SOUND suddenly arises from the kitchen.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(on phone)

No. I'm here. Yes, he is. No.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

No, she's my stepdaughter. I'm her emergency...

The GRINDING SOUND continues. Caroline drops the phone and slowly paces to the frame of the kitchen door. The empty kitchen echoes the sound of the garbage disposal.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caroline inches to the sink, a shocked look on her face. Up close, the GRINDING SOUND spurts and clatters. She flips a switch on the wall and the disposal stops. Leaning over, she notices a small, lined spatter of black liquid from the edge of the sink to the drain.

EXT. EMPTY FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie sprints through the dead field. Nearing the wood edge, she slows and stares up at the sky, it, too, dead. She stops and kneels down, cradling her injured hand in her other. It drips black liquid from the wound of the amputation.

She scoops up a bit of dirt with her good hand and studies it.

The sound of tree branches SNAPPING echoes out of the wood edge.

MAGGIE

Daddy?

Maggie stands quickly, dropping the dirt. She stares into the gray woods, backing away slowly.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Daddy?

In the distance, a stone's throw away, two shadows emerge, one taller and one shorter. The shadows stop. Maggie, too, stops but her eyes stay fixed on the shadows.

They emerge from the wood edge in jerky motions. Maggie watches, paralyzed, as the lifeless body of a DEAD MAN pulls on the hand of a DEAD GIRL at his side. They slowly look at each other, blackened dead skin spotting their bodies.

Maggie's mouth gapes as the dead man and girl begin to jerkily move closer to her with sad, piteous looks on their faces. A gray mist shrouds their pupils and their heads wobble slightly.

The tiny dead girl trips and falls to her knees. The dead man stops and stares down at the girl.

Then, he picks her up and gives her a nudge on the back. The girl continues forward.

WADE (O.S.)

Maggie.

Maggie jumps, startled. She turns around to find Wade, sweating and breathing heavily just behind her. His gaze, though, locks steady on the two dead bodies moving slowly closer to them.

WADE (CONT'D)

Get behind me.

He garnishes an axe in one hand, his other clenched tightly into a fist.

MAGGIE

Daddy?

WADE

Maggie. Get behind me. Now.

Maggie turns back to the man and girl stumbling to her, then she moves behind Wade.

MAGGIE

Daddy. Don't. Please.

Wade finally breaks his gaze and shares a look with Maggie.

WADE

Go back to the house.

He simply turns his back on her, staring at the man and girl.

MAGGIE

Daddy?

She puts her hand on his sweaty shoulder and he pulls away from her grip. A tear falls from his eye.

WADE

Go.

She slowly backs away, leaving him standing before the two sad, dead creatures moving towards him.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie stumbles into the yard and Caroline quickly runs to her and puts a blanket around the girl's shoulders.

CROAKING CRIES from the distance send crows scattering into the lifeless sky from the fields behind the two women.

Caroline jerks her head in the direction only a moment before ushering Maggie toward the house.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wade, leaned over on the edge of the couch, his head in his hand, talks quietly into the phone.

WADE

Nathan and Julia. Yeah, his daughter...Hell, I don't know...I don't know! Ray, you tell me. How the HELL--

He stands, suddenly angry. His voice raises.

WADE (CONT'D)

Ray, we've known each other since high school, but I swear to God, if you come near Mag, I will cut your goddamn head off. She--she...I'll deal with it.

He paces to the bay window and stares out at the blackness.

WADE (CONT'D)

Just get something out here and get the remains. They're in the south edge of the field. And Ray.
(beat)
Tell Bonnie I'm sorry.

He sinks back into the couch and closes his eyes.

WADE (CONT'D)

Yeah. Yeah, I know. Maggie used to babysit Julia. She's just six fucking years old. And as my daughter was walking away, I put an axe to the girl. They weren't right, Ray. This whole goddamn thing ain't right. What have we done to ourselves. What the hell did we do?

He lowers his head.

WADE (CONT'D)

I know. I know. Just get out here. Get them out of my field.

Wade drops the phone onto the base and stares up at the lit fireplace, then up at a series of photos. One in particular shows Wade and a stringy, but beautiful woman, SARAH, holding a young Maggie on her lap.

Caroline descends the stairs. Wade breaks concentration.

WADE (CONT'D)

How is she--

Caroline shushes him.

WADE (CONT'D)

(lower)

Is she asleep?

Caroline nods, then sits down on the ottoman across from Wade.

WADE (CONT'D)

How's her finger?

CAROLINE

Well. It's gone. She made sure of that. But I got it bandaged up. She won't go to the hospital or the doctor.

WADE

I figured that. You think she--

CAROLINE

Wade. She's fine for now. How are you?

Wade lowers his head and Caroline takes his hands in hers.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Did you talk to Bonnie?

Wade shakes his head.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

What'd Ray say?

WADE

Said he don't know why they were like that. But no one had seen Nathan in a few weeks. And since school's are shut down, they ain't seen Julia either.

They sit in silence.

CAROLINE

They're in a better place. They're with Him.

Wade looks up with red eyes.

WADE

How do you know? You didn't see their eyes. You didn't see the look in Julia's face. I killed his little girl. The same little girl I used to bob on my knee when Nathan and Bonnie came over. Same girl that... I killed her, Caroline. In cold blood.

CAROLINE

You did not. You are no killer. They'd already moved on.

WADE

There was life in her eyes. They weren't dead But they weren't alive. I swear. They looked at me. They looked dead at me. And she watched, with those piercing eyes, as I put Nathan down. Two swings to his neck and he fell, dead for good. She grabbed my leg and started dragging herself up my pants. I pushed her off. And I...I...Tell me how He could let something like this happen?

CAROLINE

All things happen for a rea-

WADE

For a reason? A reason? What reason is this? What reason is it that I had to kill my neighbor and his daughter? What reason is there, out there in this god forsaken world, for my daughter, my Maggie, my Daisy, to end up like this? Why her?

He hangs his head. Caroline pulls Wade's head to her bosom.

CAROLINE

Dear Lord. Please show forgiveness.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAWN

In the far distance, the gray sky, barely lit, casts ghostly shadows of the emergency unit bagging the pieces of Nathan and Julia.

Just beyond the porch, Wade and Caroline observe the event. Caroline pulls the blanket around her in closer and grabs Wade's hand, her rosary wrapped around hers.

The emergency unit slams the doors on the wagon and shuts off the flashing lights. Then, it pulls away and back onto the dirt road. Behind it, an old car sits idling. The driver's door opens and a distraught, aged woman exits.

CAROLINE

Is that Bonnie?

Wade ignores her, staring back at the woman as she stands just behind the car door, glaring out at the two of them with glossy eyes. Then, her gaze turns upward toward the house.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

My God. She watched them. She watched them put Nathan and Julia in those bags.

Wade follows Bonnie's gaze and looks up at the window atop the house, where Maggie stands, staring back out at the field. Bonnie climbs back in her car and slowly pulls out of the field and onto the dirt road, exiting the Pace land.

FOUR DAYS LATER:

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Caroline leans on Maggie's door.

CAROLINE

Will you please just let me help?

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I appreciate it. But no. I just want to be alone right now.

CAROLINE

Why won't you just let me help you?

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Help me? I'm not going to be home schooled just to up and die in a few months. I don't think Washington or Chief Sitting Bull can help with that.

CAROLINE

Come on. You don't *know* you're going to die. The Lord works in mysterious ways. I've been praying. Matthew eight, two to three says that a man with leprosy came and knelt down before Jesus and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

And Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. Then he shouted, "Be Clean!" And immediately, the man was cured of his leprosy. There are so many--

Maggie swings the door open and rips the sleeve of her shirt up, revealing a gaping wound on her arm, caked with blackened skin.

MAGGIE

You know why I wear long sleeve shirts? Because of this. This ain't leprosy. It isn't cancer. This is death. See these?!?

She yanks the sunglasses from her face, revealing bloodshot eyes, purely dilated and glossed over with gray. Dark rings envelop them from forehead to lower cheek.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

This isn't some freak case of... whatever! I'm dying Caroline. No. No. I'm dead. I died a few weeks ago. My body just hasn't decided to let go.

CAROLINE

How can you say that? You're standing there. You're talking to me. I don't care how many times you say it, you're not--

MAGGIE

Yes I am. I feel it. No, wait. I don't feel. That's the point. I don't feel anything anymore. I lost that a week ago. I don't feel pain. I don't feel heat or cold. I don't taste. I don't *feel*.

CAROLINE

But your finger...

MAGGIE

I was in shock, Caroline. I didn't feel it. I was in shock that my finger was pulled half off my hand.

A brief silence pangs.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

What do you want?

CAROLINE
I just want to help.

MAGGIE
You can't.

CAROLINE
But He can. He can heal--

MAGGIE
Him?!? He did this to me. Your God did this to me. He damned me. I spent my whole life in church, when daddy and I went and then when you made me. And I know exactly where I'm going.

Caroline's eyes flood with tears.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
And I can't do *that* anymore either. I've been trying.

She slams the door in Caroline's face. The woman exhales loudly and it quickly becomes a choked cry. She puts her arm on the door frame to brace herself.

CAROLINE
Oh God. No. No. What have you done?

EXT. FOREST - LATER

Wade trudges through a thicket of trees, carrying his axe. His hands are filthy with soil.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - LATER

Wade paces up the dirt road, back to the house. He stares up at the sky, then out at his field, wiping the sweat from his brow and shaking his head. He scans the horizon.

His house, on a slight hill, stands alone, dark against the barren sky. Behind it rests the shed and generator. And something else. Someone in a seat in the middle of the back yard. Caroline.

Wade stares, a puzzled look on his face. He walks quickly, then picks up speed, running to the back yard.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

WADE
Caroline? Caroline, are you okay?

Wade slows to a jog, noticing Caroline's posture. Sitting upright in a rocking chair, in the middle of the yard, she stares out at the murky horizon, wrapped in a blanket. She clutches at her rosary.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline, what's wrong? What's going on?

CAROLINE

Nothing.

WADE

Something's going on. Why are you out here? It's cold out.

CAROLINE

I can't feel anything from Him anymore. I can't feel Him.

Wade bends over, breathing heavily.

WADE

What?

CAROLINE

I--I don't know. I'm scared. She's dying. And I can't feel His presence to help her.

WADE

I know.

CAROLINE

And she's going to Hell.

WADE

What?

CAROLINE

It's the only explanation.

Wade straightens, still huffing.

WADE

What?

CAROLINE

She's gone to us. They're all gone. All of them. The world. It's gone. We're all sinners. And they...those poor things...are going to Hell.

She turns to him for the first time.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

We were spared. His mercy spared us.

WADE

Caroline. What's happened to you?

CAROLINE

I don't know. I think I'm finally understanding.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Daddy!

Wade turns to see Maggie standing in distant doorway of the house.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Daddy, there's a man on the phone for you.

Wade looks back at Caroline, who stares out at the horizon again, a blank look on her face. Then, back to Maggie.

WADE

I'll be in in a minute, Daisy.

Maggie retreats back inside. Wade turns back to Caroline.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline. I'm going to say this to you only once. My daughter is not going to Hell. I don't know what the hell happened to you today. Or what got into your head. But I need you to snap out of it. I'm hanging on by a thread, and that means she's already falling. So, please. Don't do this. I need you. *She* needs you.

Caroline ignores him.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline!

She turns to him, seemingly awake now.

WADE (CONT'D)

I need you. Please.

He backs slowly away and trots off to the house.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

As Wade enters, Maggie stands from the table and hands him a phone with a long cord. She palms the receiver.

MAGGIE
Daddy, what's going on?

WADE
I don't know. She--

MAGGIE
Daddy, the bank says they're going to foreclose.

Wade opens his mouth, then stops.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
They said you're months late on the farm.

He slowly takes the phone out of her wounded hand.

WADE
Let me be, Dais.

MAGGIE
Daddy, what--

WADE
Maggie! Let me be.

Maggie slowly backs away and disappears into the living room. Wade looks out the window a moment at the dead farm then sits, the phone to his ear.

WADE (CONT'D)
Hello?

BANK MAN (O.S.)
Hello, Mr. Pace. I'm George Garmen. I'm calling on behalf of Evans Bank. There appears to be an outstanding balance on your mortgage and your three home equity loans are past due. Now, given the situation and the outbreak, the government has issued what's called a Leniency Policy which grants every citizen a two month grace period. Now, this covers--

WADE
A two month...

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)
Grace period. Yes, Mr. Pace. This covers all debt, whether outstanding or not. Did you receive the letters and pamphlets about this policy from the post office? I know there's been a large mixup with the mail and it wasn't running for nearly two weeks, but I see there were five issued and two were postmarked several weeks ago.

WADE
Yes. I got them.

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)
So you are aware of the policy. You're aware that the policy's effective end date is in a month?

Wade starts to shake his head.

WADE
I'm sorry, Mister...

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)
Garmen.

WADE
Mister Garmen. I'm sorry, but I believe you said you were calling on behalf of the bank? Evans Bank in Kansas City?

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)
That is correct, sir.

WADE
Do you live there? In K.C.?

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)
Yes, sir. I--

WADE
Mister Garmen, when was the last time you left the city?

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)
It's been--

WADE
Before the outbreak?

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)
Yes, sir.

WADE

I'm going to assume that you've seen the infected.

A pause.

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

Yes. Yes, sir.

WADE

My daughter was infected about a month and a half ago. Is that in your papers?

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

Yes, sir.

WADE

Concerning the...equity loans.

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

I show three equity loans, taken out for...cash. Her name is listed in the notes--

WADE

Mister Garmen, I used one of those loans to track down my daughter. You see, she'd gone missing for a while, after the outbreak. It took me weeks to find her. When I finally did, I was forced to stay at a hotel for a few days by the hospital while my daughter was being looked at. I tried to find the best doctors I could. For medical attention and evaluation, as mandated by the government. Now, that's where the other two loans come into play. I used every penny to pay for a group of doctors to tell me that my baby girl is officially dead, like the rest of the poor, dead bodies walking around out there.

GEORGE GARMEN (O.S.)

I--I'm sorry, Mister Pace. The insurance companies can provide more information on--

WADE

I'm not finished. That's just what happened first.

(MORE)

WADE (CONT'D)

Now, the reason I ask if you've ever been out of K.C. in the last few months is that the country ain't much like it used to be. See, that outbreak not only killed my daughter, who, by the way, is upstairs walking around. But it also killed most of the crops in the United States. And Europe. And parts of Russia. What was it they said about Asia and Australia? They were "too far out of the fallout zone" for crops? Got the people, not the crops. But as for us, the folks that plow the land for our food. Well, it's just as dead as the sky we're forced to look at. As dead as my daughter. So thank you, Mister Garmen. Thank you for the *two month grace period*. Now, just give me a few more with my daughter before you take the land, and I'll be out of the house and you can give it back to the bank.

The lines goes silent.

WADE (CONT'D)

Now, please stop calling.

Wade slams the phone down on the receiver and huffs out a breath, quietly shaking.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

You all right?

Wade simply looks up at her, his eyes showing his rage.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Bank?

WADE

Yeah.

She sits next to him and grabs his hand.

CAROLINE

Again?

WADE

Yeah.

(beat)

Cockroaches and banks.

She looks over at him quizzically.

WADE (CONT'D)
 Cockroaches and banks. Seem to be
 the only things that survive these
 things.

A small smile creeps over her face.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie sits on the center of the couch, listening to Wade and Caroline, picking at the black hole in her arm. A small section of her forearm muscle hangs, drooping off the bone.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
 I'm sorry. I'm just...

WADE (O.S.)
 I know.

Maggie carefully pulls her long sleeve down over the disgusting wound and closes her eyes. She sits for a long moment.

TWO DAYS LATER:

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Wade smokes a cigarette, staring out at the one-lane road passing under the truck. Maggie stares out the window at the half-dead foliage of the woods.

She pulls her sunglasses off her face briefly, revealing dilated pupils and deep-set rings under her eyes. She blinks rapidly then replaces the glasses.

EXT. PICKUP TRUCK - LATER

Wade's pickup truck shimmies through the small town. Signs denoting closed businesses litter the windows of the buildings.

The truck pulls past a police cruiser and ambulance, rolling up to the opposite curb next to a man in a uniform staring up at a building.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Wade rolls the dirty, squeaky window down.

WADE
 Ray.

RAY, the plump officer, pulls a small smile as he turns and steps to the truck.

RAY

Hey Wade.

Ray squints and leans in, looking at Maggie.

RAY (CONT'D)

Maggie.

She ignores him, staring out the window.

WADE

What's going on?

Ray's face goes cold.

RAY

It's Grace. Another heart attack.

WADE

Jesus. Is she all right?

RAY

They're in there with her right now.
Should be bringing her down soon.
She's pretty bad off, but Chris said
she'll survive to have another.

Wade leans out and looks up at the building. Ray does the same.

RAY (CONT'D)

Her third since Gerald died. I heard
infection has to spread for at least
five weeks before the brain will
keep living after the organs fail.
He was infected for three days before
his heart gave out. Probably better
that way.

Ray cringes ever so slightly, staring in at Maggie, though she still ignores him. A silence passes.

WADE

Ray. Thanks. For the other day.

Ray looks up at the bleached sky.

RAY

Shouldn't have ended like that.
Bonnie should have taken them in.

WADE

She infected?

RAY

I don't know how she's not. Turns out she was keeping them in their den for over a month. Found over twenty pounds of raw burger in the fridge.

WADE

Jesus.

RAY

Yeah. Just couldn't let go.

WADE

It's her family. Was her family.

Another silence.

WADE (CONT'D)

Don't the hospitals keep records of their progress? Did she not take them in?

RAY

She did. Once. To K.C. But since it was out of state and right after the outbreak, they didn't bother following up. K.C.'s had over eighty thousand cases of infected. Guess Nathan and Julia fell to the wayside. I got in contact with chief of medicine out there at Saint Paul and gave them a rash of shit. Hell, Wade. If you hadn't done what you done, a lot worse could have happened. A whole hell of a lot worse.

WADE

I...

RAY

Save it. Wasn't your fault.

A brief silence as the wind rolls through.

WADE

Bonnie?

RAY

In custody. Not sure how it's going to pan out. They're considering it a felony and she's slated for transfer in a few weeks. Fucking jails are still open. Ask me, they ought to--

WADE

Ray.

Another silence. Then, Ray nods toward Maggie.

RAY

(quieter)
How is she?

WADE

Heading to the doctor's now.

Ray nods.

RAY

Well, all right.
(leaning in)
Maggie. You take care, okay?

Maggie turns her gaze to him, her expression blank through the sunglasses, and then back out the window.

MAGGIE

Yeah.

Wade nods toward TWO PARAMEDICS exiting the building, wheeling out a stretcher with an ELDERLY LADY strapped to it. Ray notices, slaps the truck and walks toward the medics.

RAY

Call me sometime tomorrow. I'm going to need your statement about the other day.

Wade stares out at the paramedics as they slowly push the stretcher to the ambulance. Then, he rolls up the window.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - WAITING AREA - LATER

Maggie's sunglasses sit atop her head as she stares out the small waiting-room window at a group of teenagers in a distant parking lot chatting and laughing.

She frowns and sits next to Wade, who reads a newspaper. The headline of the paper reads: TWO BILLION INFECTED. FOUR BILLION SCARED.

Maggie leans over in the plastic chair and notices two children a few feet in front of her with toys in their hands, staring up with wide eyes. She smiles, but in doing so, the red, cracked skin around her eyes begins to open. One of the kids begins to cry.

A DISTRESSED WOMAN notices.

DISTRESSED WOMAN

James. Carrie. Get over here.
Right now.

Maggie realizes, and pulls her sunglasses onto her face. The kids move slowly to the seats next to the woman. Maggie sits back hard, slamming the chair against the wall. Wade lowers the paper, looking at the woman.

WADE

Lauretta.

The woman, LAURETTA, flashes a fake smile.

LAURETTA

Wade. How are you?

WADE

Been better. You?

Lauretta glances at Maggie then back.

LAURETTA

Fine. How are Molly and Bobby?

WADE

Good. Staying with my sister for a little while.

LAURETTA

Oh?

Maggie folds her arms.

LAURETTA (CONT'D)

Maggie. How are you doing?

WADE

Tip top, aren't you, Daisy.

MAGGIE

Peachy.

Lauretta frowns. A NURSE opens a door and steps out, holding a clipboard.

NURSE

Maggie?

Maggie stands quickly. The nurse smiles.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Follow me, dear. Wade, you can come too. You two doing okay?

Wade stands, drops the paper in front of Laretta's feet, the headline bold and exposed, then smiles and exits the waiting area.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EXAMINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie sits on the bedding with patient garb tied around her. A light KNOCK rattles the door.

WADE (O.S.)
Dais?

MAGGIE
Yeah.

He enters.

WADE
How you--

He notices her arm.

WADE (CONT'D)
Jesus, Maggie.

He grabs her wrist lightly and examines it.

WADE (CONT'D)
Maggie. Baby.

MAGGIE
I don't feel it.

He looks up at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
It's okay, daddy.

Another rap on the door startles Wade. DR. KAPLAN, a tall, distinguished, but warm man, enters slowly.

DR. KAPLAN
Afternoon, Wade.

WADE
Vern.

He shakes Wade's hand and smiles at Maggie.

DR. KAPLAN
Maggie, how are we doing today?

Maggie shrugs.

MAGGIE

Good. I guess.

DR. KAPLAN

Good. Good.

Dr. Kaplan pulls some gloves on, then steps in front of Maggie, feeling her neck.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

You eating?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

WADE

No.

Dr. Kaplan smiles down at Maggie.

DR. KAPLAN

It's okay. I know it can be scary, Maggie. But the best thing you can do is try to get some food in you. Some nutrition. Not sure yet if any food has any affect on it.

MAGGIE

I'm never hungry.

DR. KAPLAN

That'll pass. You'll get your hunger back. Just make sure that you get a lot of vegetables with the meat.

He breathes heavy on his stethoscope and places it on her back.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Take a deep breath in.

She does.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Now let it out.

She does.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Again.

Wade watches as the doctor checks several times.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Lungs are good. Scans show that it looks like the asthma receded already. And your heartbeat is abnormally strong. That's a good sign. From what we've seen, the heartbeat is an indicator.

He whips off the gloves and places new ones on.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Now let's see about that scratch.

She looks up at him as he lifts her arm lightly.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Hmm. Looks like the origin site is spreading. Maggie? You been picking at it?

MAGGIE
No.

WADE
Yes.

Maggie stares at her father.

DR. KAPLAN
I know it itches. But you have to leave it alone. Unfortunately there's no antibiotics for this. So you have to just ignore it as best as possible, okay?

She nods. Dr. Kaplan notices Maggie's missing finger and stops, staring it.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Maggie.

He examines closer.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
What happened here?

WADE
She had a bit of an--

MAGGIE
I cut it off.

DR. KAPLAN
Why did you cut your finger off?

He evaluates the amputation wound.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Maggie?

MAGGIE
I--I don't know.

DR. KAPLAN
Those decisions should not be yours to make, Maggie. Let me make those.

MAGGIE
What did it matter? What good is a finger if my arm is falling off?

DR. KAPLAN
Maggie, your arm isn't going to fall off. We don't know a lot about this virus yet, but we know that while the original bite sites may decay, they eventually stop. There could be...

He looks up to see the girl's scared face.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Listen. If something happens, please just call me.

He pulls a small scraper from a drawer.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
I'm going to take a sample, okay. I want to send it off to K.C. for evaluation. Tell me the second this begins to hurt.

She begins to shake as he slowly scrapes away a piece of the flap of skin hanging from her arm.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Doing okay?

She nods and he continues to scrape and put the samples in Petri dishes.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
You know, Allie's been asking about you. She said she's tried calling a few times.

Maggie remains silent.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 You should give her a call. It's
 been hard around here. On everyone.
 And I think it'd be good for you.

Dr. Kaplan scrapes once more, puts it in the dish, then pulls
 off his gloves, carefully.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 All done. Last thing to do is put
 some dressing on it. I'll have Judy
 come in and take care of that. I
 have to see a few other patients.
 But before I do that. Wade, can you
 give us a minute?

Wade stares between them, then nods.

WADE
 I'll be right outside, Dais.

He exits and the doctor pulls up the stool and sits across
 from Maggie.

DR. KAPLAN
 Maggie, I want to go over a few things
 with you again. Is that okay?

She nods.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 I know you're aware there's no cure.
 But the more you stick to my
 directions, the longer you'll have.
 You understand?

She nods.

MAGGIE
 Yeah.

DR. KAPLAN
 Have you been able to get out and do
 things?

She stares down at her feet.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 Maggie. You have a little while
 left. I want you to get out and go
 try to enjoy it. Spend some time
 with friends. Give Allie a call and
 go do whatever it is that you girls
 do. She knows what's going on here.
 (MORE)

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 She knows the transfer methods of
 the infection just as you do.
 (beat)
 Maybe get your father to take you
 into the city for a week. Okay?

She nods. He grabs her hand with his.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 I know it's dark right now. I know.

He shakes his head.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 Go have fun, kiddo. I'm going to
 give you a few notes with what I've
 said. I want you to follow them,
 okay? And keep that arm bandaged.
 Remember, it's saliva and blood that
 transfers, so this infection can
 still spread. And Maggie. When you
 come back, I want to see all nine of
 your fingers.

She nods.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Wade notices Dr. Kaplan walking up to him and blows the smoke
 from his mouth.

WADE
 (mumbling)
 Shit.

DR. KAPLAN
 How many times do I have to tell
 you?

WADE
 Everyone's got their vices, Vern.

DR. KAPLAN
 Well, try to pick one that doesn't
 involve cancer.

As Dr. Kaplan nears him, Wade shakes his hand.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
 She's getting dressed. I just wanted
 to talk to you a minute. You know
 the deal, right? Transfer methods?

WADE
News has been going on and on--

DR. KAPLAN
But you know?

WADE
Spit to spit. Blood to blood. Blood
to spit. So on.

DR. KAPLAN
Yes. Just keep gloves on her. She'll
be safe around everyone. Just make
sure they know that. Last thing you
want are close family members backing
away from her. She needs all the
love she can get right now.
(beat)
Come here.

Dr. Kaplan leads Wade to the side of the building.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Give me one.

Wade smiles and pulls a cigarette out and lights it for him.

WADE
They're stronger--

Dr. Kaplan looks up at him while puffing.

WADE (CONT'D)
Remember when we used to sneak out
of biology and do this? Me and Sarah
and you and Karen?

DR. KAPLAN
It's a wonder I got into med school.

WADE
Hell it seems like so long ago. When's
the last time you had one?

Kaplan take as deep drag and exhales the smoke.

DR. KAPLAN
The funeral.

He lowers his head and sighs.

WADE
I know. I know.

A silent moment passes.

DR. KAPLAN
You doing okay?

Kaplan takes another long drag.

WADE
I don't know. I feel like it's my
fault.

Wade heaves out a big sigh.

WADE (CONT'D)
I just...I just swore to Sarah I'd
never let anything happen to her. I
raised her alone for ten years,
protecting her as best I could. But
I never quite knew how to be her
father. I was always daddy, but I
felt it was just a title. With
everything that happened--I mean,
every time I looked at her, I saw
Sarah's stubborn twinkle in her eyes.
I pulled back, Vern. It was...it
was too much. Then, when I met
Caroline, the damn girl began to
drift away. When Bobby and Molly
came, she grew almost invisible.
And I know I did this to her. I
know I pushed her away and...and
when that boy came along, she just
left. And now...

Kaplan drops the cigarette and smothers it with his shoe.

DR. KAPLAN
Wade.

Dr. Kaplan places a hand on Wade's shoulder.

DR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
She loves you more than you can know.
Her body's dying but her heart ain't.
Spend time with her. As much time
as you can. Because there's not
much left.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie lies on her bed, reading a book. She looks up at a
KNOCK at the door.

MAGGIE
Come in.

Wade enters.

WADE

I ain't intruding am I?

MAGGIE

No. Just reading.

WADE

Oh yeah? What?

MAGGIE

Slaughterhouse Five. Found it in one of the boxes. It's kind of weird.

Wade sits down on the bed next to Maggie.

WADE

Yeah. That was your mother's. She was always a big bookworm. To this day, I don't know what she saw in me at the get-go. She had it all: brains, looks, legs, and a heart of gold. Me? Well, maybe it was my big old truck.

He laughs. Maggie stares at him questioningly.

WADE (CONT'D)

That beat up thing out there, yeah. Point is, we dated for a long time. She'd always push books on me and I'd always laugh and turn them down. Politely, though. Your mother had one hell of a backhand. But in my mind, what was there in a bunch of words that I couldn't get out of a movie or the television. I didn't have time anyway with the farm and all. Well, shortly after we got married, you came along. When she was pregnant, we used to lay in bed at night watching TV and just talking. One night, your mother turns to me, glowing with you in her, that giant belly sticking half a mile out of her shirt, and says, "are you ever going to read to her?" Out of the blue. Well, I stared at her and said "of course." She proceeded to giggle a wicked little laugh and asked me how I was going to read to you if I was illiterate. I thought she'd said illiterate. I think now about it now and she probably said alliterate, but it doesn't matter.

(MORE)

WADE (CONT'D)

Well, my pride wounded, I got up and walked downstairs to the living room and picked up one of the baby books we'd bought and brought it back upstairs. I turned off the damned TV and laid down and for the rest of the night, I read to you, while you were in your momma's stomach, just a tiny thing. "A Daisy's Journey," was what it was called. I read it to you every night. When it came time to pick a name, I thought it was a clear sign. Daisy. I couldn't think of any other name better fitting. But your mother, being the most difficult pain in the ass that she was, hated it. We went round and round, and in the end, I got my way. Well, we both did. Marguerite. It's the common name for Daisy. Your mother always was too damn smart for her own good.

Maggie smiles.

WADE (CONT'D)

I don't guess I ever told you that.

MAGGIE

No. You never did.

WADE

She kept that garden out back in those woods for about a year after you were born. But with everything that needed done around here, and a new baby girl, she couldn't keep up with it. But Daisy.

Wade sniffs, then stands and walks toward the door.

MAGGIE

Daddy? What did you want to tell me?

WADE

Doesn't matter.

MAGGIE

Daddy.

WADE

I wanted to thank you. For tonight.
(MORE)

WADE (CONT'D)

I know Caroline's cooking can taste like pig shit at times, but it meant a lot to me that you ate it.

MAGGIE

I have a secret weapon. I can't taste anything anymore.

Wade smiles.

WADE

She's trying, Mag. Cut her a little slack.

He exits.

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - LATER

Maggie stands in front of the mirror, rubbing her buzzed head, staring at it for a long time with pain in her face.

ONE WEEK LATER:

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Maggie stumbles down the stairs lazily, half awake. She stops, noticing Caroline sitting on the edge of the couch, next to the radio.

MAGGIE

Caroline?

Caroline throws out a hand to shush her.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

...While hospitals are reporting record admittance concerning what the media has sensationally coined as the "Necroambulist," or more literally, "Walking Dead" virus. Though a cure has yet to be officially developed, the Chinese have created a vaccination intended to prevent the virus from spreading.

Maggie sits across from Caroline in a chair.

MAGGIE

A cure?

CAROLINE

A vaccination.

MAGGIE

I don't remember. What's that?

CAROLINE

A cure treats you and makes you better. Vaccinations prevent someone from getting it.

MAGGIE

So you and daddy can be safe?

Caroline shrugs.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

The vaccination, developed from traces of the virus itself, and of other unstable viruses, such as the rabies virus, and a compound of synthetic chemicals, has produced nearly an eighty eight percent survival rate in all test cases. However, while the results of the test cases seem optimistic, the virus itself has been characterized to cause different results in different species. Rats, for instance, become catatonic almost overnight, and when given the opportunity, will eat until they burst. Rabbits take nearly three weeks and die of starvation before changing. Humans, as we've seen, vary, taking up to four months to change. They also experience a craving for meat, based on the virus's protein deficiency. So the vaccination may or may not be able to inhibit one from acquiring the virus. There are--

Maggie stands, running her wounded hand over her buzzed head.

MAGGIE

Where's daddy?

CAROLINE

He's setting the traps.

MAGGIE

The traps? Why?

CAROLINE

Says there's been things getting on the land and if he's going to get the fields going, he don't want them in.

Caroline leans back over, listening to the radio as Maggie enters the:

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie walks in and leans over the sink, looking down at the garbage disposal. The phone suddenly RINGS. She answers.

MAGGIE
Hello?

MOLLY (O.S.)
Maggie?

MAGGIE
Hey, kiddo. How are you?

MOLLY (O.S.)
Good. Aunt Linda took us to get ice cream today.

MAGGIE
That's great.

MOLLY (O.S.)
My scratch is better.

MAGGIE
That's good, Mol.

MOLLY (O.S.)
Is your scratch all better?

Maggie stares down at her covered arm.

MAGGIE
No. Not yet.

MOLLY (O.S.)
When can we see you?

MAGGIE
I don't know. You guys want to come visit?

MOLLY (O.S.)
Yeah.

MAGGIE
Want to come this weekend?

MOLLY (O.S.)
Yeah.

MAGGIE
Molly, there's something--

MOLLY (O.S.)
Is Mommy around?

MAGGIE
Yeah. Yeah, she is. Hold on.

Maggie cradles the phone in her hand a moment.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Caroline. Phone.
(into the phone)
Molly, she's coming. I have to go,
okay? I love you.

MOLLY (O.S.)
Bye.

Maggie lays the phone down on the counter and walks to the door. Caroline enters.

CAROLINE
Who is--

MAGGIE
Molly.

EXT. FIELD'S EDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie stalks up to Wade as he kneels down in the dirt, sweating. Farm instruments and traps lay next to him in disarray.

MAGGIE
You still haven't told them?

WADE
What?

MAGGIE
You haven't told Molly? Or Bobby?

WADE
Maggie, I--

MAGGIE
I'm not going to play like this isn't
happening. I'm not going to lie to
them. Tell them or I will.

Maggie turns and stalks off.

WADE
Maggie? Come on. Maggie!

THREE DAYS LATER:

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie's eyes flicker open in the dark. She sits up in bed and stares around her room. She fumbles her hand around her mouth and sticks a finger inside. She lets out a whimper.

She rushes out through a hallway and into:

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie flips on the light and looks in the mirror, spreading her mouth open. In the mirror, she sees a tooth missing.

MAGGIE
No. No.

She screams out. Again and again. She slides down the sink. A light turns on in the hallway and Wade sprints into the bathroom, kneels to her and cradles her in her arms.

WADE
What happened, baby. What happened?

MAGGIE
I don't want to die, daddy. I don't want to die. I don't want to die. I don't...

WADE
Shh. It's okay. It'll be okay. I swear. It'll be okay.

Caroline stands in the doorway, a horrified look on her face.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - MORNING

Maggie sits on her bed, her back to her door. A KNOCK raps.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
Maggie? You awake?

Caroline slowly enters.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
How are you feeling?

Maggie doesn't move.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Molly and Bobby are here. And your Aunt. You want to come downstairs? You don't have to come down for long. I know you aren't feeling well. But I think it'd be good for them to see you. And for you to see them.

Caroline grabs the rosary around her neck. Maggie doesn't move.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Maggie?

Maggie eerily stands and turns, a few blisters on her scalp.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Maggie?

MAGGIE

I don't want to right now. Is that okay?

Caroline stares for a moment, then nods.

CAROLINE

Okay. Okay. Maybe later.

Caroline exits. Maggie walks to the window and stares out at the dead field for a long moment. Then, she gazes down at the hard stony walkway below.

She places her palm on the window and looks down at her missing finger. Then she looks down at her hand, and the tooth in it.

BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)

Are you dying?

Maggie closes her hand and turns to find Bobby in the doorway.

MAGGIE

Bobby?

BOBBY

Dad said you were sick. But you're dying, huh?

Maggie nods.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

A few kids at my school got infected and died. I knew one of them. This kid named Stephen.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry.

BOBBY

I didn't like him. But I didn't want him to die.

MAGGIE

Yeah.

BOBBY

Does it hurt?

MAGGIE

No. Not anymore.

BOBBY

What happened to your finger?

MAGGIE

I cut it off.

BOBBY

Why?

MAGGIE

I don't know. I think because it reminded me that I'm dying.

A pause.

BOBBY

How come we're staying with Aunt Linda?

MAGGIE

Because I'm contagious.

BOBBY

Contagious. Oh.

Bobby stares around the room.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I miss you.

MAGGIE

I miss you too.

BOBBY

All right. Don't tell them I came up.

MAGGIE

I won't.

Bobby smiles at her briefly then leaves. Maggie sits down on her bed, looking back down at her tooth in her hand.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Maggie walks downstairs and looks out the window at the family outside on the front porch. She stares at them longingly.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MOMENT LATER

Caroline, Wade, and LINDA, a small woman with hints of Wade's features, all sit in fold-up chairs. Bobby walks around the yard with his arms out. Molly, on the edge of the porch, plays with a doll.

Maggie walks out and catches the eye of Linda, who stops mid-sentence, gets up and goes to the girl, hesitating a moment, then hugging her awkwardly, without touching skin, for a long time. She lets go and looks the girl over. Her rubber-gloved hands rub each side of Maggie's face with gentle love.

LINDA
You look beautiful.

Maggie smiles.

LINDA (CONT'D)
Come sit.

Maggie sits down in an open seat next to Linda. Molly walks up and before Maggie can grab for her, Caroline quickly walks over and puts gloves on Molly's little hands. Then, she sets her gently on Maggie's lap.

LINDA (CONT'D)
How have you been?

MAGGIE
I'm okay.

WADE
Vern said she was progressing well.

LINDA
Well, she's strong. It's her mother in her.

WADE
Truth.

LINDA
What have you been doing? Tell me everything.

MAGGIE

I...I--

WADE

She's been helping out around here.

LINDA

Let the girl talk, Wade. I swear.
And what have you got this poor thing
doing around here? She should be
out with her friends. Having fun.

(to Maggie)

Go head, baby.

MAGGIE

I haven't been able to do much.

(beat)

Started reading momma's books.

LINDA

Oh yeah? Which ones?

MAGGIE

Well, just one right so far.
Slaughterhouse Five.

LINDA

Yeah?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

Linda smiles and goes silent. Molly points at the blisters on Maggie's head.

MOLLY

You hurt yourself again?

CAROLINE

Molly, don't touch.

MAGGIE

Yeah, Moll. I'm sick.

She looks at her father questioningly, then begins to bob Molly on her lap.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm dying.

MOLLY

You're dying?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

MOLLY
 Mommy says when you die, if you're
 good, you go to Heaven.

CAROLINE
 That's right baby.

Molly looks between the two, then up at Maggie for a long
 moment. Then, she smiles.

MOLLY
 You can be with your mommy.

Maggie nods. Linda notices Maggie's discomfort.

LINDA
 Molly? You want to help your father
 grill up the hot dogs?

Molly nods ferociously. Maggie picks her up.

MAGGIE
 All right, Moll. Helicopter time.

Molly starts to make sputtering sound. Maggie twirls her
 around.

CAROLINE
 Maggie, watch--

Maggie twirls Molly, following Wade to a nearby grill.
 Halfway there, she stumbles and her arm gives out, nearly
 dropping Molly. She tries to conceal it, failing.

Caroline stands, staring at the two, but Linda grabs her
 arm. Maggie lowers Molly, who stares up at her.

MAGGIE
 Ran out of gas.

WADE
 You all right?

MAGGIE
 Yeah.

WADE
 (to Molly)
 Come help me with the hot dogs.
 (to Maggie)
 You sure?

She nods and watches Molly slowly run up to Wade. He stares
 back at Maggie with repressed fear in his eyes, pulling the
 gloves from Molly's hands with caution.

Then, the two begin to lay the hot dogs on the grill.

Bobby grabs Maggie's hand out of the blue and smiles up at her. Maggie notices the glove on his hand and forces a smile.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - EVENING

Leaned into a van, Caroline buckles Molly into her child-seat and kisses her on her forehead. Wade hugs Linda and the short woman hops in the driver's side. Bobby sits in silence in the back-seat.

Caroline steps back to Wade and grabs his hand. Maggie stands just beyond them, and watches as the van pulls away. Caroline and Wade turn back to go inside.

Maggie stares on. Bobby turns in the back window and waves slowly. Maggie raises her hand and waves back.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Maggie sits in a large chair, listening to the radio and reading through a yearbook.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Wade and Caroline sit next to each other holding hands on the front porch. Wade puffs on a cigarette.

WADE

I'm just saying you don't need to get so touchy with her, that's all.

CAROLINE

She nearly dropped Molly.

WADE

Molly's fell down those stairs and laughed about it. I think a two foot fall wouldn't kill her.

CAROLINE

I don't care. I'm--

WADE

Let it go, Caroline. That girl in there is experiencing all kinds of hell we don't even know about, and probably never will. She don't need you harassing her on top of it.

CAROLINE

Wade, I--

Wade stands abruptly and walks to the railing.

WADE

You ever wonder what's going to happen when it comes time? You ever wonder how you're going to feel about it?

CAROLINE

The Lord will--

WADE

No! Not the Lord. You. How will you feel? What are you going to feel when that girl in there, that girl who has tried repeatedly with you, that girl who loved and cared. How are you going to feel when she finally changes? When she finally dies.

Caroline stares up at him for a long moment, then in at Maggie on the couch. Maggie smiles genuinely for the first time, unaware of Caroline watching.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline. I love you. And there ain't nothing gonna stop that. But Maggie has been the first woman of my life since the day she was born.

Wade rests his hand on Caroline's shoulder, then walks off and flicks the cigarette into the yard.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - LATER

Lying on her bed reading, Maggie looks up at Caroline in the doorway.

CAROLINE

Hey.

MAGGIE

Hey.

CAROLINE

The phone's for you.

MAGGIE

Who is it?

CAROLINE

Allie.

MAGGIE

Caroline, I really don't want to talk to anyone right now.

Caroline sits on the bed.

CAROLINE

Listen. There are things that we
just can't deal with on our own.
The bible tells us that--

MAGGIE

Oh God. Are you really doing this?
Fine, I'll go talk to her.

Caroline grabs Maggie's hand.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

Okay.

Maggie looks down at Caroline's hand still clinging to hers.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Caroline?

Caroline smiles up at Maggie then lets go. Maggie looks
down at her, a tinge of curiosity in her eyes, then she exits.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie grabs the phone, sighs, then puts it to her ear.

MAGGIE

Hey!

ALLIE (O.S.)

Oh my God. She lives.

MAGGIE

Shut up.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Where have you been? I mean, when--

MAGGIE

Haven't been feeling well.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Well, how are you feeling right now?

MAGGIE

What?

ALLIE (O.S.)

Trent, Candace, and a few other people are heading out to the reservoir for the night. I know it's not a trip into K.C. or anything. But it's the last few weeks before school starts up again. And I don't think any of our parents are going to let us out much further than that, especially the good Doctor Kaplan.

MAGGIE

Trent?

ALLIE (O.S.)

Yeah. You heard?

MAGGIE

Yeah. Your dad told me he went to K.C. to get checked out after I left.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Yeah. He's at four weeks right now.

MAGGIE

Is he okay?

ALLIE (O.S.)

Seems okay. But don't take my word for it. Come see for yourself.

Maggie stares down at her missing finger.

MAGGIE

I don't know. I've been--

ALLIE (O.S.)

Come on, Pace!

MAGGIE

I don't--

ALLIE (O.S.)

Maggie. No one is going to say anything. No one cares. We all just miss you. All right, fine, I miss you.

Maggie hesitates.

MAGGIE

All right. When are you--

ALLIE (O.S.)

Twenty minutes. Don't you bail on me, Pace.

MAGGIE

I'm not making any promises.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie slams open the closet doors and looks at her wardrobe. Then, she picks a few items out and looks them over, throwing them on the bed. She finds a dress and lays it out.

She throws on some makeup and touches it up several times, attempting to cover the blisters on her scalp.

Removing her pants, she notices a few pieces of dead skin on her leg. She stares up at the dress, then down at her leg.

She plops down on the bed and stares at herself in the mirror: her face narrow from weight loss, her eyes seem larger; the small amount of hair on her head unable to cover the blisters; the blackened wound under the bandage worsening. She puts her head in her hands.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie, in jeans and a sweatshirt, grabs her sunglasses, despite the night, and slides them on. Then, she puts on a pair of gloves and a hat.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

She steps out onto the porch in time to see a pair of headlights in the distance. Wade sits in the chair on the porch still, drinking a beer.

MAGGIE

Daddy, I'm--

He smiles and waves approval.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thanks.

She ambles out to meet the oncoming car. Wade watches her go, a small smile on his face.

INT. ALLIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

ALLIE, thin and not overtly attractive, adjusts her thick-rimmed glasses and smiles over at Maggie.

ALLIE

What's with the glasses, Corey Hart?

MAGGIE

You don't want to know. And before
you ask, the same for the gloves.

Allie smiles.

ALLIE

How are you?

MAGGIE

How do I answer that?

ALLIE

With words. Remember, I know about
it. My dad *is* a doctor. Ten weeks.
Cravings for meat. Occasional loss
of motor functions. Loss of feeling.
Tear ducts...you get the point. I
know. So, what I'm really asking
is, how. are. you?

MAGGIE

Other than all that? Absolutely
fantastic.

Allie and Maggie laugh.

ALLIE

Pace. You're the strongest girl I
know.

MAGGIE

Oh yeah?

ALLIE

I was wondering one thing. Since
dad won't tell me. And it's not in
any of the reports.

MAGGIE

No, I don't have it anymore.

Allie stares at her, a small smirk on her face.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Yes, I know what you're talking about.
And my period is officially gone.
Gone.

ALLIE

Lucky.

EXT. RESERVOIR CAMP-SITE - LATER

A group of TEENAGERS sit around a campfire. Maggie and Allie sit next to BARBARA, a tall, awkward girl. Across from them, CANDACE, a short, tanned girl buries herself into the chest of a stocky boy, MASON.

A little further away, but somewhat alone, sits TRENT. The average looking teenager exhibits similar features as Maggie, albeit a little less: Dark ringed eyes, blotchy skin, dead in areas, and a large bandage over his neck.

ALLIE

I think so. But my dad said that Mister Moore and Miss Hawks aren't coming back.

MASON

I don't see why they're opening the schools back up this soon.

CANDACE

We need to get back to normal sometime.

Maggie watches Trent as he pokes the fire with a stick.

MASON

Baby, come on. This ain't normal. Trent, you tell them. Are you coming back?

TRENT

No. My dad pulled me. He said what's the point.

MASON

See, baby. How's that normal?

BARBARA

She said we *need* to get back to normal. And we do. Sorry Trent, but

(to Mason)

how long do you think we should wait to go back to school?

MASON

I'm just saying now ain't the time. It's too soon. There are still some running around out there.

CANDACE

And so you bring me out here?

MASON

Baby. There are a ton still out there. But there ain't none left up here. I'm saying we should wait until all the school districts can start back up again. At the same time.

BARBARA

Well, what about the Andersons?

Allie looks at Maggie.

MASON

They were the last ones.

MAGGIE

What about me? What about Trent?

The group goes silent.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Well?

MASON

Come on, Mag. You're not one of them things.

MAGGIE

I'm not? I was bit. Just like all the rest.

MASON

But, you're not one of them. Not now. And probably--

MAGGIE

But I will be. What then?

MASON

I'm sorry. I was just saying--

Trent gets up and walks away, back to one of the cars.

CANDACE

(to Mason)

What did I say? What did I say? I said no talking about it. Didn't I?

Maggie gets up and follows Trent. Allie watches.

INT. TRENT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Maggie gets in the car and Trent looks at her.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry.

TRENT

It's not your fault. It's my own fault.

MAGGIE

How is it your fault? He was--

TRENT

Not him. This.

He points at his neck.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I did it to myself.

MAGGIE

What? What do you mean?

TRENT

I was working out in my dad's field when I came across one of them.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. TRENT'S FATHER'S FIELD - DAY

The bleak sky pours down on Trent as he looks up from behind a tractor engine and spots a NAKED WOMAN walking slowly through the fields. He runs to her aid.

TRENT (V.O.)

She wasn't anyone from town. So I got a little worried. I asked if she was okay and she just stared at me. She was naked. That was the only way I could tell it was a woman.

Sores, scratches and lacerations cover the woman's body. Trent shakes as he apprehensively looks her over from a distance. She simply stares at him awkwardly.

TRENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And she just stared at me, for a long time. I'd heard that you shouldn't go near them, but she wasn't trying to do anything to me. And she looked pretty hurt. So I walked over to her and put my shirt around her. She looked up at me again with those eyes.

As he wraps his shirt around her, the woman's gray and misty eyes study him with curiosity.

TRENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I started to walk her back to the house and she let me. We got about halfway there before she stopped. I tried to pull her on, but she wouldn't budge. I turned and called out to dad and that's when she grabbed me. Not hard. But enough that it scared me. When I turned back, her eyes were on me again, curious now.

The woman's mouth opens a bit as she looks him over. Her head cocks to one side.

TRENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Like she was studying me. I grabbed her hand and held it and turned back to call for dad again. I was on the ground in pain before I knew what had happened. She bit me.

Trent scurries away from beneath the woman. Her bloody mouth gapes open and her eyes turn to fear.

TRENT (CONT'D)
 Not a bunch. Just once. Almost like she was curious what I'd taste like. She stood there, staring down at me. And she had what looked like regret or fear or something in her eyes. Like she hadn't meant to do it. It wasn't ten seconds later that my dad shot her in the chest with his twenty two.

A single shot explodes into her chest.

TRENT (CONT'D)
 She stumbled back and looked up at him. He put another into her head and she fell. But her eyes stayed open. They were wide open, and on me still.

Trent locks eyes with the woman. The hint of apology in her eyes is gone, replaced by fright.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TRENT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Maggie grabs Trent's hand, but he doesn't notice.

TRENT

Dad took me to the hospital and they told him that we had to go to K.C. for evaluation. Didn't have the right equipment here. That was last month. And now, now they're about to open up the schools again. And everyone's getting back to normal. But not me. And not her. I didn't even find out what her name was. Or if she had a family. When we got back, she was gone. Dad said the cleanup crews came and got her and burned her body.

Maggie removes her sunglasses, studying the boy's face with her red eyes as he stares out into the darkness.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I just didn't think it would happen like this. I didn't think things would start to get back to normal and we'd still be here, dying.

(beat)

Can you still feel it?

Maggie shakes her head.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Dad said it'll go away soon. Said Doctor Kaplan told him that I'd stop feeling before long. Also said I was doing good. But I know I ain't. I know it's worse for me. Because of where she bit me.

(beat)

I see her eyes, Mag. When I look in the mirror. I see her eyes in mine.

Trent stares out at the campfire and the teenagers talking.

TRENT (CONT'D)

I forgive her though. I forgive her. She didn't mean it. I know she didn't.

EXT. CAMP-SITE - MORNING

Maggie wakes up and crawls out of a sleeping bag. The rest of the group still asleep, she quietly steps out of the woods, to the edge of the road beyond and sits down.

Barely visible through the haze, the sun gleams a dawn orange. Maggie stares out at it, just creeping above the horizon. Squinting, she slides on her sunglasses.

She sits there a long moment, staring at the sun as the sky fades back to gray.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

Maggie steps around Allie's car and leans into the driver's side window.

MAGGIE

Thanks.

ALLIE

Shut up. You promise you'll hang out this weekend?

MAGGIE

I promise.

ALLIE

All right. I'm holding you to it.

MAGGIE

When don't you.

Maggie smiles then backs away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

See ya this weekend.

Allie watches Maggie begin to walk away, then gets out of her car and jogs over to her. She stands before her, gets ready to hug her, then doesn't. They stare at each other a tense moment.

ALLIE

I love you, Pace.

MAGGIE

I love you, too.

Allie backs away and wipes her eyes.

ALLIE

Shut up.

Maggie smiles. Allie jogs back to her car and hops in, waving and backing the car out.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Maggie slowly walks up to the porch. Wade, bent over, hammering in a loose wooden slat pauses to look up at her.

WADE

Well? Have fun?

Her stale, gloomy expression melts into a small smile.

WADE (CONT'D)

Well?

She walks in, smiling.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - NEXT DAY

Maggie lies in bed, reading a book. Wade knocks on her door and slowly walks in.

WADE

Dais. You know what Vern said. We should get you outside. Get you doing something.

MAGGIE

I am doing something.

WADE

Something more active. Why don't you go outside.

MAGGIE

Daddy, I'm enjoying this. Get.

He smiles and exits.

THREE DAYS LATER:

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

In just a tank top and sweat-pants, Maggie leans into the mirror, examining the patches of hair growing around her scabbed scalp.

MAGGIE

(yelling)

Daddy! Where are the clippers?

Caroline drifts into the bathroom.

CAROLINE

There's no need to shout.

Maggie glares at her.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

They're downstairs.

Caroline slides on some gloves, then puts her hands on Maggie's face, near the girl's eyes.

MAGGIE

Not too close.

CAROLINE

I'll be fine.

Caroline gives her a stern look, then leans in and analyzes the girl's eyes. She makes a small face, leaning further in, her neck close to Maggie. Maggie sniffs once, then again.

MAGGIE

You smell that?

Caroline sniffs.

CAROLINE

No.

MAGGIE

You sure?

They both sniff.

CAROLINE

I don't smell anything. Maybe your father is cooking up something he shouldn't be. I tell him and I tell him.

MAGGIE

Smells like...I don't know. Meat or something.

Caroline finishes looking at the girl's eyes.

CAROLINE

Looks okay. Still really dilated though. Doctor Kaplan's directions said to try and use eye drops every night. You been using them?

MAGGIE

Yes.

CAROLINE

Maggie?

MAGGIE

I swear.

CAROLINE

All right. I'll go get the clippers.

Caroline exits. Maggie leans into the mirror, widening her eyes with her fingers, staring at the enlarged pupils.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Caroline floats down the steps casually.

CAROLINE

(to herself)

Wade Pace. I swear. How many times
have I told you that it's too late
to be grilling those--

She stops halfway down the stairs, staring at Wade asleep on the couch. She glances up the stairs a long moment, rubbing her neck, realization on her face.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Caroline? You find the clippers?

Caroline shivers, still holding her neck.

MAGGIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Caroline?

CAROLINE

No. No. Hold on a sec.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Why? You gonna go yell at Dad for
cooking this late?

Caroline's faces quivers.

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie splashes her face with water and, coming up, sees Caroline in the mirror.

MAGGIE

Did you find them?

Caroline nods. She hands Maggie the clippers. In her other hand, Caroline grips tightly to a pair of scissors.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thanks. I know it's kind of gross,
but I'm getting used to my hair this
short. Better this than bald patches.

(noticing the scissors)

I can't use those. I shake too much.
You know that.

Caroline stares at the girl.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

What's daddy cooking?

Caroline's white-knuckled grip on the scissors tightens.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Caroline? Hello?

Caroline's grip tightens, then suddenly eases.

CAROLINE
Nothing. I--I told him he doesn't
need to be eating this late.

MAGGIE
You know he's just going to sneak
something in the middle of the night.

CAROLINE
Yeah.

MAGGIE
Thanks by the way.

Maggie plugs the clippers in and begins to cut her hair, careful around the blisters and dead skin. Caroline stares a moment, then she sets the scissors on the counter as she exits. Maggie studies the scissors a moment before continuing to buzz her head.

INT. PACE HOUSE - BACK PORCH - MORNING

Wade hammers a nail into the top of two adjoining wooden boards. Maggie holds the bottom one while Wade hammers another nail into the top.

MAGGIE
What's it called again?

WADE
A tap joint.

MAGGIE
Tap joint?

WADE
Yeah. Hold it still. See, these
two keep it from moving while those
keep it locked in place.

Maggie holds the boards still as Wade raises a few more and they all come up together, revealing a section of a fence.

MAGGIE
A fence?

WADE
A fence.

MAGGIE

What for?

WADE

A little project I have going.

MAGGIE

Oh? Secret project?

A shrill howl bellows through the yard. Wade stands.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Traps?

WADE

I'd bet.

MAGGIE

Fox?

WADE

Sounds like it. I'll-

MAGGIE

I can get it.

Wade stares at her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I've been doing it since I was ten.
Besides, you have your little secret
boy's club to build.

WADE

Funny. Funny girl.

She saunters off backwards, kicking dirt up at him.

WADE (CONT'D)

Dais. Take the twenty two.

Maggie turns, limping slightly, but sauntering her best.

MAGGIE

I know.

EXT. FRONT FIELD - LATER

The thin rifle in her hands, Maggie makes her way slowly
through the dead earth. She grunts in frustration.

MAGGIE

Where are you?

She stops, looking around her, squinting through her sunglasses. She hears a scratching noise and drops to her haunches, breathing heavily.

She readies the gun quickly, then realizing her index finger is missing, she rests her middle finger over the trigger. Only the wind is heard through the field.

She slowly stands and the scratching sound echoes again. She slowly moves forward, rifle readied and shaking.

In front of her she notices the trap and its captive, a fox, scratching the bark of a nearby tree through the metal gratings.

Maggie lowers the .22 and slowly walks up to the trap. The fox begins to whimper.

Maggie stares down at it intently, her body completely still. She sniffs once and then sets the .22 on the ground. Kneeling to her hands and knees, she crawls to the front of the trap and sits, studying the fox's fear and its frightened eyes.

She sniffs again.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Wade hammers two more nails into a thick section of wood. He looks up and finds Maggie walking quickly up to the house.

WADE

Dais?

She ignores him, walking faster, her shirt covered in red.

WADE (CONT'D)

Mag? Maggie!

He rises and walks, then runs after her.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Maggie bursts through the door and quickly makes her way through the kitchen and just before reaching the living room, Wade slams the kitchen door open.

WADE

MAGGIE!

She stops, her father now breathing heavy behind her.

WADE (CONT'D)

Maggie. What's going on? Are you hurt?

She remains still and silent.

WADE (CONT'D)
Maggie.

CAROLINE (O.S.)
What's going--

Caroline comes around the corner in front of Maggie, with the girl between her and Wade, and stops, frightened.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Oh God, Maggie, what happened to you?

She moves forward, but Wade raises his hand.

WADE
Caroline! Stop! Don't.

CAROLINE
What are you talking about?

Caroline moves to Maggie and grabs the girl before she suddenly goes limp. Caroline kneels to her and cradles her in her chest.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Maggie? What happened?

Wade slowly steps forward, shock on his face. As he inches closer, he sees Maggie's glasses broken and a deep cut beneath her eye. Her shirt, however, is covered with fresh blood.

WADE
Oh my God. Mag...

He kneels to them and Maggie suddenly convulses and shouts, sliding away from them. They stare with horrified looks. Maggie shivers in the corner.

WADE (CONT'D)
Baby. Dais. What happened?

Maggie begins to cry tearlessly. Realizing it, she SCREAMS.

CAROLINE
I'll call the doctor.

Caroline begins to stand, but Maggie juts an arm forward.

MAGGIE
(shouting)
NO!

Caroline hesitates, then continues toward the phone.

WADE
Caroline. No.

CAROLINE
What?!

WADE
Just give her a minute.

CAROLINE
Wade. We have to--

WADE
Caroline! PLEASE! Give her a minute.
Please. Just one minute!

Caroline nods quickly, nervously. Wade nods back, then turns his attention to Maggie.

WADE (CONT'D)
Daisy. Daisy, just look at me.
Baby.

Maggie lifts her head and looks up at her father.

WADE (CONT'D)
Good, baby. Good.

Wade slowly moves forward.

WADE (CONT'D)
Now. What happened out--

She moves away. Wade stops abruptly.

WADE (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay. I'm not...I'm not
moving. Baby. I just need to know
what happened. It's okay. Just
tell me what happened. Daisy.
Please.

MAGGIE
(jittering)
It was afraid of me. I didn't know
it. I didn't know it. I didn't. I
swear.

WADE
What was, the fox?

Maggie nods jarringly.

WADE (CONT'D)

Okay. It's okay. What happened?

MAGGIE

(jittering)

I...I could smell it. It smelled.
It smelled like--I...I...I couldn't
stop. I couldn't stop. I just wanted
to help it. I just wanted to...but...

She looks up at him suddenly, her deep-set, dry, dark red eyes piercing. A drop of blood dribbles down her pale chin.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Daddy. Please. Please help me.

Wade slowly moves forward, then he grabs her and pulls her into him with a giant embrace, a tear streaming down his cheek.

WADE

It's okay. It's okay.

She sobs in his chest.

WADE (CONT'D)

It's okay. It's okay. It's okay.

He turns his head, still holding her and looks at Caroline, whose eyes gleam with tears. Caroline's hand still holds the phone, unconsciously. Wade shakes his head and Caroline's hand comes off the phone as if she never knew it was there.

EXT. FRONT FIELD - LATER

Wade trudges through the dirt, a pained expression on his face. He stares around the field, then finds the trap. He walks past the discarded .22 and stares down at the trap a long moment.

Claw marks rake the back of the trap and the tree behind it. The fox, lying on its side, is relatively clean, save for a single bite, a small hole in its side. Its stomach rises and falls slowly. Foam bubbles heavily around its mouth.

WADE

Jesus.

Wade kneels, never taking his eyes off the animal and retrieves the .22. The fox's now-red eyes look at him and its lips curl back, revealing a sharp set of small teeth.

Wade brings up the .22, aims and fires. The shot echoes loudly in the field. The fox dies instantly, a bullet hole in its head. Wade stares at it a moment longer.

INT. DARKNESS - LATER

WADE (O.S.)

But I'm only a flower, said the daisy.
I don't have any legs. The
caterpillar laughed and said, you
don't need legs to go with me. Just
hop on my back. The daisy said,
thank you caterpillar, and together
they walked to the spring.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - EVENING

In the yard, TODDLER-MAGGIE jumps in the air reaching out for a firefly. She barely misses. She smiles around her though as fireflies hover like speckled lanterns in the fading sunlight.

WADE (V.O.)

At the spring, the daisy met a beetle.
Have you seen my mother, asked the
daisy. No, said the beetle, but you
could fly with me. But I'm only a
flower, I don't have any wings, said
the daisy. The beetle laughed and
said, you don't need any wings to
follow me. Just hop on my back.
The daisy said, thank you beetle,
and together they flew to the garden.

On the porch, a YOUNGER WADE leans across the threshold of the house's front door. He smiles in and beckons SARAH, a young and beautiful woman with passionate fire in her eyes.

WADE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

At the garden, the daisy met a honey
badger. Have you seen my mother,
asked the daisy. Why yes, said the
honey badger. She has been looking
for you. I'll take you to her.
Burrow with me. But I'm only a
flower, I don't know how to burrow,
said the daisy. The honey badger
laughed and said, just hop on my
back. Deep in the soil, the honey
badger said, she's right up there.
The daisy said, thank you, honey
badger.

From the doorway, Sarah observes as her young daughter giggles in the midst of swarm of fireflies. She clasps hands with Wade and smiles.

Then, Maggie trips and falls to her stomach over a patch of dark soil. Sarah steps forward with concerned eyes, but Wade holds her back and nods for patience.

WADE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And the daisy wiggled and wiggled
 and wiggled and finally he popped
 up, out of the soil, and there was
 his mother looking down at him.
 There you are, little daisy, said
 his mother. Where have you been?

Picking herself up off the ground, Maggie notices a daisy in the soil. She pulls the flower up and out of its root. Then, she smiles. Sarah exhales and Wade smiles.

WADE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Then, he said, I was with cricket,
 and caterpillar, and beetle, and
 honey badger. And what did you learn,
 asked the daisy's mother. I learned
 to walk and to jump and fly and to
 burrow. And the daisy--the dais--

Wade's voice breaks off into a small sob.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Maggie's red, swollen eyes slowly open, staring up at the ceiling. She finds herself under her covers in her bed. She begins to sit up and then notices Wade in the chair next to her.

Pale and asleep, Wade's hand extends out, wrapped around the .22. In his lap rests a children's book. Maggie stares at him a long moment before pulling back the covers to reveal a clean shirt and pants. She checks her skin and it, too, is clean, save for the dead skin in areas.

MAGGIE
 Daddy?

Wade stirs, dropping the book and sitting upright.

WADE
 Mag, you all right?

MAGGIE
 Are you--are you...

He notices his arm around the .22 and then moves it out of the way, setting it in a corner.

WADE
No, baby. Never. I came straight
from the field.

MAGGIE
What happened?

WADE
You passed out.

MAGGIE
Did I...did I hurt anyone?

WADE
No, baby. Everyone's okay.

MAGGIE
Where's Caroline?

WADE
She went to stay with your Aunt for
a while.

Maggie stares down at her feet, a listless lull in her eyes.

MAGGIE
I'm so hungry.

WADE
I know.

MAGGIE
It's time, isn't it?

WADE
No.

MAGGIE
I don't want to hurt anyone.

WADE
You won't.

MAGGIE
How--

WADE
Because I'm here. I'm here, baby.
I won't let that happen.

Maggie sniffs once then exhales loudly.

WADE (CONT'D)
It's okay. Are you dizzy? Can you
walk?

Wade stands and helps her out of bed.

WADE (CONT'D)
Let's get you something to eat.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Wade and Maggie sit at the table. Maggie devours a plateful of sausage and bacon. Wade drinks a cup of coffee.

MAGGIE
Where did you get this?

WADE
I froze some a while back. Hid it from Caroline.

He smiles sadly.

MAGGIE
It tastes so good.

Wade sips.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
She's afraid of me, isn't she.

Wade nods.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
It's happening faster than it should.

Wade nods again.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
When did she leave?

WADE
Yesterday.

Maggie stops eating and looks up at him.

WADE (CONT'D)
You...you were out for about a day.

She drops a piece of bacon into the plate.

WADE (CONT'D)
You passed out, here in the kitchen. Yesterday morning.

Maggie stares down at her plate.

MAGGIE
I don't feel well.

WADE

Okay. Let's get you back up to bed.

Wade stands, leans over and helps Maggie up.

INT. PACE HOUSE - MAGGIE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wade helps Maggie into bed and kisses his hand and touches it to her forehead.

WADE

Your mother would be proud of you.
You know that?

Maggie curls into a ball toward Wade.

MAGGIE

Will you stay with me a while.

Wade nods, then seats himself against the wall, on her bed. She places her head in his lap..

INT. PACE HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sprints into the bathroom, shuts the door, flips the toilet seat up and vomits heavily. Again and again.

Completely drained, she stands, shaking and goes to the mirror. Her darkened features exaggerated now, she finds herself a ghost of what she used to be. The few sores on her head are larger.

She hangs her head over the sink.

INT. PACE HOUSE - WADE'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Wade, shirtless and asleep in his bed, breathes heavily. The room is splashed with a dim, gray morning light.

In the doorway, Maggie's silhouette stands, staring in at Wade. She stands there for a long moment, unmoving. Groaning.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MORNING

Wade nails a few pieces of wood together, sweating under the gray sky. Maggie steps out of the doorway of the kitchen and Wade notices.

WADE

What are you doing down here?

MAGGIE

Tired of being in bed.

WADE

You hungry?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

WADE

You want me to cook you something?

MAGGIE

No. I just want to sit out here with you.

WADE

Pull up a chair. I could use the company.

She drags a chair near him and sits down.

WADE (CONT'D)

Caroline called this morning. She wanted to know how you were doing. Her and Molly.

He slams the hammer down into another nail.

WADE (CONT'D)

And Bobby.

He finishes nailing the piece in.

MAGGIE

He talked to me.

Wade stops, looks up, then goes back to hammering.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

When they were over. He came up and talked to me.

WADE

I know. He'd talk to me, too, off and on. Made me promise not to tell Caroline. I think he thought he was trying to prove something to her about you. Maybe get her to stop treating you so distantly.

MAGGIE

But you told her anyway.

WADE

She's his mother, Mag. Of course I did. She was worried sick about the boy.

Maggie stares off at the horizon.

WADE (CONT'D)

Now, I know you and her never got along so well. And I know deep down, you resented me getting with her. But I love her. Not like I loved your mother. This...this is different. She's a good woman. And despite what you might think, she loves you.

MAGGIE

Yeah.

Wade stops, dropping the hammer and leaning on the wood, sweating.

WADE

What would you have her do, huh? We sent Molly and Bobby off to your aunt's and she hasn't seen them nearly at all since I brought you back. She ain't seen her own kids for over two weeks.

MAGGIE

And neither have you.

WADE

But I'll get to see them again. I don't get to see...

Maggie and Wade share a long silent moment. Then, Maggie stands and walks away, back to the house.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sits on the couch, picking at a small piece of dead skin on her hand, staring off into the distance. The radio plays lightly through the room.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

...sixty eight infected dead, and over forty two uninfected left injured or dead. During the riot, sixteen soldiers were killed, bringing the final death toll up to over one hundred, becoming the largest single tragedy in Kansas City history, not counting the outbreak. A representative of the Kansas City Saint Paul Hospital said that this kind of reaction was not expected

(MORE)

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

given the small number of employees that actually knew about the vaccination's arrival. Early shipments of vaccination were expected late yesterday afternoon and each vial was allocated to hospital employees, intended to prevent medical staff from being infected with the W.D virus during treatment. Government officials have not yet made an official statement, but have since posted nearly four times as many security personnel at the hospital. We were, however, able to speak with one of the protesters early this morning.

EXCITED WOMAN (O.S.)

I lost my husband last night.

She breaks off crying.

EXCITED WOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He...he was just trying to get something for us, so we could spend time with our son. In safety. He's, our son, he's infected.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

Over forty eight families have removed early-stage infected family members from the hospital since this morning, despite the recent government law prohibiting stage-three infected individuals outside quarantine. One concerned father said,

UPSET MAN (O.S.)

They have vaccinations for medical staff, for but not for the rest of our community? Not for the families? We're what matters. We're the ones who will spend their last days with them. Not the hospital. They just put them away in a locked room like a bunch of sick animals. I'd rather my wife spend her last day's with me than in some packed hospital with other infected.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

It is unclear at this time what the government will do about these--

Wade walks by and switches the station.

WADE
Why are you listening to this crap?

He tunes the radio to an old song and it plays melancholy through the living room.

WADE (CONT'D)
I got dinner made. Let's...

He looks down at Maggie and her eyes stare off into the distance.

WADE (CONT'D)
Hey.

He waves his hand in front of her face.

WADE (CONT'D)
Maggie.

She snaps out of it and looks up at him.

MAGGIE
What?

WADE
You hear any of that?

MAGGIE
No. What did you say?

WADE
Dinner's ready. Let's go eat.

He grabs her hand and gently helps her up.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie breathes heavy, eating a plateful of meat. Wade stares down at his plate. They continue like that for several moments.

Maggie drops her fork and stares down at her food, her red eyes pained.

WADE
Dais?

She ignores him.

WADE (CONT'D)
Daisy, what's wrong?

She vomits a small amount of her food into her plate and Wade quickly backs his seat away. She gets up immediately and runs outside, vomiting.

Wade puts his head in his hands.

Moments later, Maggie's vomiting stopped, Wade gets up and heads to the door.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

Wade opens the door to a trail of vomit, looks up and finds Maggie's body out in the backyard.

WADE

MAGGIE!

He sprints to her and kneels down to her side. She looks up at him.

MAGGIE

Let me go. Let me go. I can't do this. I can't do it.

WADE

No. No.

He picks her up in his arms and carries her back to the house.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Wade carries her through the living room, puts her on the couch and puts his hand on her face.

MAGGIE

Please. Please make it stop. Please.

Choked up, Wade puts a blanket over her.

WADE

You want the blanket, honey? I know you can't feel it, but...

MAGGIE

Please. Daddy, please just--

WADE

Did you know that when you were only a year old, your mother dropped you?

MAGGIE

Daddy, I can't...

Wade smiles through tears.

WADE

It wasn't bad. You fell from the couch to the carpet. But your mother was hysterical. She called Vern and told him what had happened. And you know your mother. When it came to you, it was a huge deal. He came out immediately and he looked you over--

MAGGIE

Daddy.

Maggie closes her eyes.

WADE

And he told her there was nothing wrong with you. Just a little shock on her part, that's all.

Wade stares down at Maggie, silent a moment.

WADE (CONT'D)

I was in K.C. When she told me, I started to cry. And I only cried around your mother twice. But when she told me Vern had to come out to see you, I...

Tears stream down his face.

WADE (CONT'D)

I...

He leans down and kisses her forehead for a long moment.

WADE (CONT'D)

I love you.

He leans back and sits in the chair across next to her, staring at her. Then, he wipes his eyes and stands, exhaling loudly. And abruptly, he heads to the stairs and up.

Maggie's chest rises and falls barely noticeable. She wheezes through her breathing and it becomes a slight groan. Her mouth opens and her jaw closes, tightening, then opening again.

Wade returns from upstairs with the .22. He slowly walks back to the chair and sits, staring down at the rifle. Then, he stands and readies it, barrel pointing at Maggie's head.

Wade's face turns angry, tears streaming. He MOANS loudly in disgusted pain. His aim begins to waver and he shakes his head, moaning again.

MAGGIE
 (eyes closed)
 Why...why were you in K.C.?

Other than her words, she looks unconscious. Wade begins to shake violently and lowers the gun, sobbing. He falls back into the chair, dropping the gun to the ground.

WADE
 (sniffing)
 I was buying seed. It was your mother's anniversary present.

A long moment passes.

MAGGIE
 (eyes closed)
 What...?

WADE
 (sniffing)
 Daisies. For her garden.

Wade and Maggie sit in silence.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK PORCH - LATER

Hose in hand, Wade sprays water over the vomit on the back porch, pushing it out into the dead grass. Then, he grabs a bucket and a scrub brush and scrubs the wood.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Wade wakes up on the couch with Maggie's head lying in his lap. Cleaning gloves still on his hands, he strokes her buzzed hair, avoiding the sores.

MAGGIE
 Are you awake?

WADE
 Yeah.

MAGGIE
 I feel so...weird. I feel like a stranger to myself. Everything seems foggy.

Silence.

WADE
 I want to show you something.

She looks up at him, her features morbid.

WADE (CONT'D)

Come on.

She leans up, then he stands and helps her to her feet.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Wade helps Maggie out of the back door, her motor functions failing. They walk down the back section of the driveway and into the dirt.

MAGGIE

I can do it.

WADE

All right. Just hold my hand.

They hold hands and slowly walk through the back yard, under the gray sky.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

MAGGIE

Where are we going?

WADE

Through here. Just a bit more.

MAGGIE

It can't be...

They exit the forest into a small clearing.

EXT. SMALL CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Maggie lets out a groan of surprise. In front of them, in lines of splendid flourishing, sits a small garden of daisies, enclosed by a small wooden gate, Wade's handmade gate.

Maggie steps forward and Wade stays behind, watching her.

MAGGIE

Daddy.

She slowly leans down to a daisy. She runs her hand over the petals, then the stem.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Momma's garden? How...

WADE

I don't know. I came out here last month and there was a small section growing back there.

(MORE)

WADE (CONT'D)
I planted some more last week and
they grew. Damndest thing.

Maggie smiles ever so briefly.

MAGGIE
It's the most beautiful thing ever.

She sits down to the earth below, running her rotted fingers
over more petals. Wade walks over and sits down next to
her, putting his arm around her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
What about the fields?

Wade shakes his head slowly, staring out at the daisies.

Maggie leans in on Wade and they sit there, staring at the
garden, stark against the gray sky and earth.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER

Wade helps Maggie through the yard, a daisy in her ear.

WADE
I'm going to call Caro--

Maggie stops and her face goes cold, stressed.

WADE (CONT'D)
Mag?

She grunts in pain, doubling over and breathing rapidly.

WADE (CONT'D)
Maggie...

She continues breathing heavily.

MAGGIE
So hungry.

WADE
Let's get you inside and I'll cook
some--

MAGGIE
Not that.

She slowly stands, shaking her head, her eyes tortured. She
pulls her hand from his.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
It's getting worse.

Wade simply stares.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I don't want to go to quarantine. I
don't want to go.

He stares at her intently.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Daddy! I don't want to go. Please
don't make me go. Just stop it.
Make it stop.

Wade grabs her hand, but she pulls away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
No! Tell me you'll do it. Tell me
you'll make it stop. I can't do
this anymore.

WADE
I'll...

MAGGIE
Please!

WADE
I'll make it stop. I'll...make it
stop.

Maggie nods solemnly and grabs Wade's hand.

MAGGIE
Tonight.

Her grip tightens on his hand.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sits at the table, the phone pressed to her ear.

MAGGIE
...Um, and ice cream and cookies.

MOLLY (O.S.)
What about Pretty Pony?

MAGGIE
Of course Pretty Pony. What would I
do without Pretty Pony.

MOLLY (O.S.)
And Hugs-a-Lot?

MAGGIE

All of them.

MOLLY (O.S.)

Okay. Well, you can take them with you.

MAGGIE

Well, we can both have them. I'll have them there, and you can have them here. How's that?

MOLLY (O.S.)

(sniffing)

Okay.

MAGGIE

Oh, don't cry, Mol. It's okay. I'm going to watch you from there everyday. Tell you what. I can be your guardian angel.

Molly cries.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Is that okay? I'll always be around with you.

MOLLY (O.S.)

But you won't be there. For breakfast. And after school.

MAGGIE

Yes, I will. I promise you. Any time you get nervous or scared or just want to talk to me, just close your eyes real tight and I'll be right there. Okay? Molly?

MOLLY (O.S.)

Okay.

MAGGIE

I love you so much.

MOLLY (O.S.)

I love you.

Molly begins to cry again as the phone is handed away.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Mag. Bobby told me he talked to you.

MAGGIE

Yeah.

CAROLINE (O.S.)

Here he is, okay?

Maggie's jaw begins to shake in the silence.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Hi.

MAGGIE

Hey.

BOBBY (O.S.)

I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

It's okay.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Is it...is it true about Heaven?

MAGGIE

Of course.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Really?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

BOBBY (O.S.)

So you'll be there? You promise?

MAGGIE

Yeah. I promise. I'll be there.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wade sits back in his chair, rolling a bullet in his fingers and listening to Maggie on the phone.

He sets the gun down, gets up and walks to and out of the front door.

EXT. PACE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Wade pulls a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket and shakily lights one. He puffs on it multiple times.

A CLANKING sound suddenly echoes through the house. Wade turns quickly.

WADE

Maggie?

He sprints inside.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wade runs past the gun, and into the kitchen.

INT. PACE HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Wade finds Maggie in the chair, staring out at nothing. The phone lies on the floor, still tinnily echoing voices.

WADE

Maggie?

She turns toward him slowly, her eyes distant.

WADE (CONT'D)

Baby?

She grabs for his arm, and he backs away, tears in his eyes.

WADE (CONT'D)

Maggie! MAGGIE!

He grabs her quickly and spins her around, pinning both her arms beneath his. Then, he begins to shush her gently.

WADE (CONT'D)

Maggie. It's me. It's me. Come on, baby. Come on. Snap out of it.

She moves slightly in his grasp and he shushes more.

WADE (CONT'D)

Come on baby. Come on! Snap out of it. You can do this.

He begins to cry harder.

WADE (CONT'D)

Maggie. Please. Don't do this! Not now! God dammit! Maggie!

MAGGIE

Daddy?

WADE

Oh God. Oh God. That's a girl. Come on.

MAGGIE

Daddy? What'd I do?

Wade bursts into a long, exhaled sob.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
What's happening?

WADE
Nothing, baby.

He spins her back gently and looks into her coherent eyes.

WADE (CONT'D)
It's okay. It's over.

He hugs her. Her arms slowly hug him back.

INT. PACE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Maggie's eyes open and she stares at nothing as she rests on her father's lap. He breathes lightly in his sleep, slouched into the couch.

She slowly gets up and looks him over, quizzically. Then, she leans in, near his neck, then stops and moves up to his forehead and puckers her lips, avoiding saliva contact. She kisses him softly on the forehead.

Then, she puts a blanket on him and slowly and very shaky, she walks up the stairs.

ONE MONTH EARLIER:

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Wade sprints through the hallway, stops and evaluates a directory. Then he notices the a HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE.

WADE
(to employee)
Hey! Where are they keeping all
the...sick people?

The employee stares at him.

WADE (CONT'D)
The sick people! The infected.

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE
They're using the E.R.

WADE
Where the hell is that?

HOSPITAL EMPLOYEE
Second floor.

Wade looks over the directory quickly and then sprints down the hall.

INT. HOSPITAL - E.R. - MOMENTS LATER

Wade bursts through the doors and a WOMAN IN SCRUBS and a mask stops him.

WOMAN IN SCRUBS
Sir, you shouldn't be down here.
All the people down here are very
badly sick. I need you to--

WADE
My daughter is down here. She's in
here somewhere.

She hands him a mask and he holds it over his face.

WOMAN IN SCRUBS
What's her name?

WADE
Magg--Marguerite. Marguerite Pace.

The woman leans over to a MAN IN SCRUBS and pulls her mask down.

WOMAN IN SCRUBS
(to man)
You have a Marguerite...

WADE
Pace. Pace.

WOMAN IN SCRUBS
(to man)
Marguerite Pace?

The man looks over his clipboard.

MAN IN SCRUBS
Hmm. Pace. Over there, I think.
There's a lot of--

Wade sprints toward the direction in which the man points, evading people and looking around him at the infected people.

He searches each bed.

WADE
Maggie? Baby?

MAGGIE
Daddy?

Maggie, sitting on the edge of a makeshift bed, stares up dumbfounded at her father as he sprints up to her. He drops the mask and picks her up in a hug. She hugs him back. They both cry.

WADE

(crying)

Oh God. Where have you been? I searched everywhere for you.

MAGGIE

(crying)

I'm sorry, daddy. I'm so sorry.

WADE

(crying)

It's okay. It's okay. It's gonna be okay.

INT. HOSPITAL - STERILE ROOM - LATER

Maggie sits on a bed in the distance. Wade stares up at a DOCTOR with tears in his eyes.

WADE

Nothing?

DOCTOR

I'm sorry. The blood samples show it's progressing rapidly. But this isn't conclusive. We don't know anything but what we've seen so far. The best I can do is release her and contact your family doctor. Transfer the records.

Wade stares at Maggie as she wipes her eyes.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Mr. Pace. Your daughter's bite was severe. Punctured an artery, which managed to transfer the virus faster. Most patients admitted now show signs of human bite wounds. Her wounds don't look like that at all.

Wade ignores the question, his heavy gaze on Maggie.

WADE

Human? You say it so casually. Like it happens everyday.

DOCTOR

With all respect, it has been. For the past few weeks.

Wade looks up at him and they share a silent moment.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Well. Make sure that she doesn't aggravate the wound. She has weeks, at best. I'll send the documents to...

He looks at a clipboard.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Dr. Kaplan, is that right?

WADE

Vern. Yes.

DOCTOR

He can go over everything with you. The hospital sincerely appreciates your donation. It's not often that...

The doctor notices Wade study Maggie.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I'm extremely sorry, sir, but I have several other patients.

(beat)

I truly am sorry.

Wade turns to watch the doctor leave, then wipes his eyes and goes to Maggie.

MAGGIE

What'd he say?

WADE

You know doctors. Sky's either always falling or everything's peachy. But from what I gathered, you have a while.

MAGGIE

A while.

WADE

Yeah.

(beat)

Let's get to the hotel. We can check...

He grabs her head gently in his hands, runs them back through her long hair and stares at her beautiful blue eyes.

WADE (CONT'D)

Don't you ever leave me again. You hear me?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

WADE

I'm serious. Never again.

MAGGIE

I promise, daddy.

She tears up and hugs him.

WADE

Never.

They embrace for a long moment.

NOW:

EXT. PACE HOUSE - ROOF - EARLY MORNING

Maggie, seated on the roof in a long t-shirt and boxers, opens her red eyes and stares out at the gray sky and the farm around her. She sits for a long moment, ripping the pages out of the Daisy book and letting them float off in the wind.

When finished, she sets the binder of the book down next to a pen. She stares off at a small patch of cloudless sky. In it, the moon shines.

She slowly stands, steadying herself. Her long shirt waves in the wind. She extends her arms out to her sides. The wind catches her and she shakes, staring down at the long drop. Then, she closes her eyes.

Her toes wiggle over the edge of the roof. Scabs and puss spot her red and blackened legs.

She opens her eyes once more and they stare distantly out at nothing. A gray mist shrouds her pupils and her head wobbles slightly. Her foot comes up and dangles over the edge.

Then, she steps out, her body falling forward slowly and disappearing over the edge of the roof.

A few of the daisy pages drift around on the morning breeze atop the roof. In the binder of the book, Maggie's handwriting stands out:

I'M SORRY I BROKE MY PROMISE, DADDY. I'M GOING TO LIVE WITH MOM NOW. I LOVE YOU. -DAISY

FADE OUT.