

HIGH SOCIETY

Written by

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INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jacksboro, Texas. Population 1,311. A neglected old family home. Looks like a family lived here twenty years ago, but no longer does.

ESTEE, 30's, is what is locally referred to as a **LIFER**, aka a woman who never left her pathetic hometown and whose wasted potential has made a home atop her shoulders like a ton of bricks.

She is currently avoiding her existential woes by baking complicated SOURDOUGH RYE BREAD in her kitchen.

She looks small in the big empty house, like a child whose parents never came back home. She wears an old pajama dress full of holes from years of use.

She places all the baking ingredients on the table, and starts bringing them to life like a mad conductor. Flour, yeast, sugar, eggs -- a congregation of disparate materials, manipulated into one cohesive, smooth, harmonious ball of dough in her skilled hands. (AND YES THIS IS A METAPHOR FOR LATER, THANKS FOR ASKING.)

She puts her full arm strength into it, exorcising her demons into the dough. (They say the demons make it rise faster.)

She dumps the dough into a bowl, puts a wet towel over it to let it rise. Finished, she slumps into a chair and chugs from a bottle of bourbon. Just a casual low-key small sip. Then another. Then another. Then another.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Estee lies spread out in bed, drunk. Her sheets look childish, like she's been using them since she was a teen. She drunkenly sings loudly to no one, her song of choice is "Silly Love Song" by Wings/Paul McCartney, but instead of singing -

"IIIIIIII Llllllllove Yooooooooou,"

she sings "Fuuuuuuuck myyyyyyy liiiiiife."

Over and over and over again. Then, mid-sentence, she falls asleep.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAWN

A hungover Estee, barely standing, pops multiple pieces of dough into the oven, sets a timer, squints at the sun rising outside her window.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

Jacksboro, Texas. Population 1,311. Well, 1,304 after that mass shooting in the diner. Technically 1,305 if that old man who took two in the knee pulls through. Don't feel too bad for him though, he was the shooter.

Estee, carrying a bag of freshly baked bread, walks down Main Street - a crumbling, impoverished commercial street, trash everywhere, half the stores boarded up, graffiti full of hate and slurs. Surely this was a quaint town once upon a time. Maybe in the 70's.

She walks by a neglected park. A sad sign reads "Davy Crockett Park, Est. 1925" Grass gone yellow, asphalt cracked. Broken benches. Hate graffiti everywhere. Trash everywhere.

In the distance, an old rusty sign for "PIGGLY WIGGLY SUPERMARKET" falls off its hinges and crashes to the ground with a loud THUD. Estee doesn't even blink as she keeps on walking.

She passes by an old dilapidated house. On the porch, in a rocking chair, A RIFLE across his lap, sits DOOMSDAY STEVE, 50's, a pessimistic, possibly mentally unstable man. He calls out to Estee as she walks past.

DOOMSDAY STEVE

Why bother? Nothing matters.

ESTEE

(fake cheer)

Good morning Mr. Aitken!

DOOMSDAY STEVE

Twenty years tops before the world ends. Your capitalist greed, your vacant souls and your screens got us here. It's irreversible. The damage. It's all ending.

ESTEE

If it's all ending, maybe you should go have a donut?

DOOMSDAY STEVE

THE DONUT IS THE PROBLEM!

ESTEE

Like the metaphorical donut or the
literal donut...?

DOOMSDAY STEVE

All kindsa people coming to take
what's mine. And it's only gonna
get worse the less there is to go
around. So I'mma be right here.
Guarding what's mine. So no one can
take it. So no. I don't want a
freakin' donut.

ESTEE

OK Mr. Aitken, have a good one!

She picks up the pace, regretting her daily engagements with
this man. Up ahead she sees a CROWD GATHERED, mostly MEN,
outside a --

PLANNED PARENTHOOD CLINIC

A "JESUS LOVES YOU" billboard peeks ominously behind the
building.

Estee rolls her eyes as she walks past. The crowd screams and
purposely invades the space of TWO TEENAGE GIRLS, frightened,
holding hands.

The crowd's leader, KENNY, 30's, gets in the girls faces,
repeatedly screaming --

KENNY

MURDER!!!! MURDER!!!!!!

The others join in. "MURDER!!! MURDER!!! LIFE STARTS AT
CONCEPTION! LIFE STARTS AT CONCEPTION!"

They girls meekly navigate their way through the crowd,
getting pushed, prodded and name-called all along the way. An
exhausted NURSE, 40's, quickly opens the front door of the
clinic and ushers them inside, locking the door behind her
like she's warding off a zombie attack, which in some ways,
she is.

Estee watches all this and her blood boils. She gets in
Kenny's face. He cracks a shit eating grin.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Uh oh. Here comes the spinster
feminazi brigade.

ESTEE

For fuck's sake, Kenny, you colossal fucking hypocrite. You single handedly kept this place in business fifteen years ago.

(at his crowd of followers)

Did you know he knocked up every girl in my class? He'd be here twice a week. I swear, he had a membership. Like one of those sandwich shop punch-in cards. "Buy seven, get one free."

KENNY

(defensive, at crowd)

Yeah... well... that was a long time ago. It was my former self. My base self.

ESTEE

Oh yeah? Did you evolve?

KENNY

Sure did. Jesus came to me. In the shower. Showed me the way.

ESTEE

Wow. OK. Gross. But OK. Don't you people have... I dunno, just spitballing here... jobs to go to?

KENNY

Not since you libtards shut down the plant. Now we got jack shit.

ESTEE

Well. I'm glad you're spending your time wisely.

KENNY

I'm saving lives. What the fuck are you doing with your life?

ESTEE

Fuck you.

KENNY

You wish.

Estee walks off, giving him the finger. He gives her the finger back. Then he turns his attention back to the task at hand. Screaming "MURDERERS!!!" at crying girls.

INT. BAKERY - MINUTES LATER

Estee enters her workplace, a MOM AND POP BAKERY that looks like it's been handed down for generations, everything old fashioned, quaint and bright. An assortment of colorful cakes in the fridge up front, freshly baked breads propped up against the back wall.

The owner, MR. SHELBY, 60's, tired, friendly, old school, arranges desserts behind the counter.

MR. SHELBY

Mornin' Estee.

(at her bread)

Uh oh. What did the mad scientist make this time?

ESTEE

Rye Sourdough. Just a few.

MR. SHELBY

You know nobody wants that funky granola stuff round here.

(purses his lips
comically)

That sourdough makes the face pucker up.

ESTEE

Yeah well. Maybe today they'll want it, huh?

Mr. Shelby shrugs. A beat. He smiles.

MR. SHELBY

Go on then. Put'em up there.

(under his breath)

They won't.

He's right. They won't. But he knows if she doesn't feel like she's making even the slightest bit of difference in this world, some day she just won't show up for work, and they'll find her at home, dead.

She smiles, grateful for his support. She puts on her apron and props her breads up along with the standard plain baked goods, the kind that do sell.

DING. The door opens. In walk COLIN and RON, 30's, a handsome couple, they look like big city people on a nightmare vacation in the boonies. Reading the room, Colin quickly takes a few steps away from Ron.

COLIN

Morning. We'd like to place an order.

Mr. Shelby takes them in, then quickly looks down at the baked goods he's sorting. He never makes eye contact with them again.

MR. SHELBY

Sorry, gentlemen, if I could point you in the direction of that sign on the door.

Colin, wary, looks at the door.

COLIN

"Sweet Dreams Are Made of Cheese"?

MR. SHELBY

No, underneath it.

RON

"Once you lick the frosting off a cupcake it's a muffin, and muffins are healthy"?

MR. SHELBY

No, Christ, to the right. By the Jesus poster.

Colin looks at the Jesus poster. It says "YOU ARE ALL EQUAL IN THE EYES OF THE LORD." He squints until he sees a smaller sign underneath it.

COLIN

"We reserve the right to serve or not serve anyone we see or don't see fit to serve or not serve."

MR. SHELBY

Thank you for your time, gentlemen.

Estee dies of embarrassment. Colin rolls his eyes at Ron.

COLIN

I told you, bitch.

Ron just laughs.

RON

Well. I wanted to experience your third world shithole backwards childhood slumtown for myself.

(MORE)

RON (CONT'D)
And now I have. So I am very
satisfied. Five stars on Yelp.

Without another word, they leave the store.

Estee stares at Mr. Shelby, fuming.

ESTEE
Really?

He pretends he didn't hear her, continues his work. She
stares at him for a long beat. Finally, she throws her apron
down-

ESTEE (CONT'D)
I'm taking five.

She runs out.

EXT. BAKERY - CONT'D

She sees Ron and Colin a block ahead.

RON
I need to shove five sloppy
cheeseburgers into my face hole
right this second to palate cleanse
this entire day.

COLIN
Get me eight.

They kiss and part ways. A beat. Estee runs after Colin.

ESTEE
Hey. HEY!

Colin turns around.

COLIN
What now?
(puts his wrists forward)
You wanna arrest me?

ESTEE
Come here for a second.

Estee leads him to an ALLEY.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
What were you gonna order back
there?

COLIN

A cake. It's not even a fucking wedding cake. It's for my mom's retirement party.

ESTEE

I'll bake it for you. Free of charge. When do you need it?

Colin scrutinizes her... Why is she offering? Is she hitting on him? She knows he's gay, right?

COLIN

(suspicious)

Tomorrow. Why are you doing this? You know I'm...

She just stares.

COLIN (CONT'D)

You know there's no...

She just stares.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Like, I'm.. I'm with a man.

ESTEE

Oh no! I'm not hitting on you. Though I totally would. I mean damn. No, I just... I want to help because I'm ashamed I live here and I want to make it better, OK?

COLIN

OK. Thank you. Thanks. I appreciate it.

He takes out a pack of smokes. They're old school menthols, like we smoked when we were teens. He lights a cigarette. Offers her one. She takes it. They smoke together. She coughs and chokes but plays it off like it's totally cool.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ I forgot what a shithole this town is. I can't believe I'm smoking menthols. If my boyfriend finds out he'll legit murder me. I haven't smoked in decades. Only when I visit here. I regress to some powerless teenage wet blanket version of myself.

(takes a very long drag)

(MORE)

COLIN (CONT'D)

I'm just here for the weekend though, thank Christ. Shit, I feel so bad for the miserable fucks who never left. The lifers. THE LIFERS. I mean... Can you imagine? If THIS was your entire world? FOREVER?

Estee dies just a little bit.

ESTEE

You know, I remember you from high school.

COLIN

Oh shit no way, we went at the same time?!

ESTEE

Yeah. I was the one with the hair.
(gesturing... something)
Estee.

A beat. He doesn't remember her at all, his memory bank filled to capacity with the much more exciting rich life he's lived since he left this town. But knows he has to say something.

COLIN

Oh yeah totally. Estee. You were...
(scrambling)
"Most likely to", uh... um...

ESTEE

No, I wasn't actually. I never got one of those.

Estee dies some more.

Colin does the math. Realizes she's one of those lifers he just ruthlessly trash talked. Damage control time.

COLIN

I mean. This town isn't all bad. It's got... charm. It's got that lake, right? Quaint AF.

ESTEE

Oh yeah totally. It's like one of those hidden charm things. Really really really hidden charms. I would have totally left too, but, you know... I have this autoimmune skin condition thing.

(MORE)

ESTEE (CONT'D)

And my parents died, and I just gotta sell their house, but it's such a pain in the ass process, and I've been busy, and--

COLIN

Oh totally. Girl, I get it. Hey, home is where you make it. And the world's dying anyways. We got twenty years tops. So... Nothing matters. Right?

ESTEE

Right. So... Cake... tomorrow at 9am?

COLIN

Great. Thanks, Estee. Thanks for holding it down here.

She smiles a pained smile and watches him walk off.

INT. BAKERY - EVENING

Estee and Mr. Shelby work in tense silence. It's the end of the workday. Estee sadly eyes the bread wall. All her funky granola rye sourdoughs are still displayed on the shelf. No one here wants them. No one here sees their beauty. And no one here ever will.

She throws them into the trash, takes her apron off.

MR. SHELBY

Maybe tomorrow.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SUNSET

Estee walks down Main Street. At the corner, she spots a NEW STORE, "GRAND OPENING" sign out front. She looks closer. It's a MEDICAL MARIJUANA STORE. She snorts.

ESTEE

Pfft. Good luck.

A beautiful, buttoned up, ex-cheerleader perfectionist wholesome Christian woman in too much make-up, conservative clothes, gold cross necklace, walks out the front door of the weed shop. This is SHERYL, 40's, Estee's sister. Estee is shocked to see her.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Sheryl? In a weed shop? Has hell
frozen over?!

(looking around)

It doesn't look frozen.

(a beat)

That's a joke, cuz we live in hell.

Sheryl puts on a fake smile she reserves just for Estee.

SHERYL

Oh hey sis! I was just in there
explaining to the nice young man
inside that this town has no
interest in

(whispers)

The devil's lettuce,

(normal voice)

And if they don't take their cartel
drug dealing operation elsewhere,
I'll personally rain bureaucratic
hellfire down upon them straight
from the mayor's office, who, as
you know, I'm VERY good friends
with.

ESTEE

(raises her arms)

Hallelujah!

SHERYL

How are you?

(looking her over)

You look worn.

ESTEE

I am worn.

SHERYL

Oh hon, why?

ESTEE

Existence.

SHERYL

Come over for dinner. Shawn's
making baked ham. You could do one
of your cute bread things.

ESTEE

I'm tired, maybe some other night.

SHERYL

Come to church on Sunday? We'd love to have you. You know I've been praying for you. Oh and we have a new recruit! Illegally handsome and very single! Remember Jimmy from the car dealership?

ESTEE

(gross)

Jimmy? Strip club Jimmy whose dick fell off?

SHERYL

Oh that's just a myth. And anyways, Jesus came to him in the shower. Changed his life. Did a total 180.

ESTEE

Did Jesus glue his dick back on?

SHERYL

You're a lost cause, you know that?

ESTEE

Yes. I do. Speaking of nothing, I gotta go, I got a nothing I need to be at. Bye Sheryl.

Estee starts to walk off.

SHERYL

OK! Come to church!

ESTEE

I'll think about it.

She won't.

SHERYL

(calls after her)

Oh and we're having a picnic at the lake after. Come and wear something... nicer!

ESTEE

(yells)

I'll think about it.

She won't.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Estee swipes through TINDER on her phone. She swipes left on three profiles of random losers. We think she's gonna keep swiping through dozens more - but after three, the app displays a message -

"We're sorry. We've run out of profiles in your area. Try again tomorrow."

Desperate, she goes to the "Messages" section of the app. ONE NEW MESSAGE from ZACK. It reads - *"I remember you. You showed me your boobies in fifth grade. How about a repeat performance?"*

Estee shudders and throws away her phone, like it carries a disease. The kind of disease that made Jimmy's dick fall off, maybe.

She hears COMMOTION outside. She runs out.

EXT. ESTEE'S STREET - CONT'D

A TOWNIE POLICE CAR parked two houses down. She sees CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY GABLES JR. 30's, tall lanky man, second fiddle to his Sheriff dad. Chip of unrealized potential on his shoulder, just like Estee. He's escorting GLADYS, 70's, tiny Colombian grandma, to his police car.

Estee runs up to them and stops them in their tracks. There's a weird tension between Estee and Chief Deputy Billy we can't quite place.

ESTEE

What the fuck's going on,
(with derision)
Chief Deputy?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Police business. Orders from the top.

ESTEE

You mean from Daddy?

Chief Deputy Billy winces at this but quickly recovers.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

As a matter of fact yes. He's away on important police business and asked me to take care of this for him.

ESTEE

Take care of what exactly?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

(not proud of it)

Gotta look at her papers.

Estee reels.

ESTEE

Her papers? Are you fucking joking me?! Gladys has lived here for centuries. No offense, Gladys.

GLADYS

None taken.

ESTEE

She babysat me when I was a toddler, Billy. Fuck, she babysat YOU when you were a toddler.

(remembering)

She taught you English for fuck's sake! Remember you had a Spanish accent all through elementary school? "Chévere" was your favorite word, which we all thought was VERY weird.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

I remember.

Chief Deputy Billy looks guilty for a moment, then he hardens again. He opens the car door and gently gets Gladys inside.

ESTEE

She's fucking ancient, Billy! No offense, Gladys.

GLADYS

(from inside the car)

None taken.

ESTEE

She probably babysat your parents too when they were kids. Fuck, she's so old she may have founded this town for all we know. No offense, Gladys.

GLADYS

(from inside the car)

None taken.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
(loses his temper)
Look. I know. I KNOW. There's
nothing I can do about it, OK?
Orders from the top.

ESTEE
Alright you Nazi Robot. Fuck you,
fuck your daddy and fuck your
orders. Gladys, if he doesn't let
you go like in five fucking
minutes, you call me.

Chief Deputy Billy gets in Estee's face.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Keep mouthing off you can come
along for the ride.

Now she gets in his face. They're inches away now. Sexual
tension, pure hatred between them.

ESTEE
Oh yeah? Wanna deport me? Wanna
kick me out of this town?
(whispers)
I fucking wish.

A beat. Then Estee starts to walk off, consumed with shame
and anger. She yells out at the universe.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
Jesus, Fuck this town. Fuck it to
shit. I hope it burns to the
ground.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
With you in it?

ESTEE
Yes. Fucking yes. Just call me
Samson. LET ME DIE WITH THE FUCKING
PHILISTINES.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Should I be on arson watch?

ESTEE
No you dolt. I'm being fucking
metaphorical. Good fucking night.

Estee storms off, enters her house, slams the door.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

With unstoppable rage and fiery anger, Estee works on an adorable white frosted cake for Colin's retiring mom Linda.

She puts the final touches, writing, "HAPPY RETIREMENT, LINDA" in blue frosting on top. As she works, she sings the song "Shake Your Love" by Debbie Gibson, but instead of the lyrics "*Shake your love, I just can't shake your love*", she sings -

ESTEE

Fuck this town. Burn it to the ground.

(Mariah Carey level solo,
minus the talent)

Fuck this town to hell. Genocide it off the map.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The singing continues in bed, where Estee is spread out and drunk.

ESTEE

(singing)

Kiiiiill me. Kiiiiiiiill me. Kiii--

She falls asleep.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

Another day, another midlife crisis for Estee. She walks down the street, carefully balancing the wrapped delicate white cake in her arms. She passes by DOOMSDAY STEVE, still sitting on his porch, rifle on his lap, he gives her his usual morning greeting.

DOOMSDAY STEVE

YOUR LIFE IS A JOKE. NOTHING WILL
MATTER WHEN THE WORLD ENDS.

Close to her breaking point, she can't help but stop.

ESTEE

Oh give it a break, Mr. Aitken.
What the fuck happened to you? You
know me. Estee? You were my
teacher. 9th grade algebra.
Remember? My mom was the principal.
We'd have you over for pot roast on
Sundays.

DOOMSDAY STEVE

Your words are meaningless. We've passed the threshold of collective irresponsibility. We fractured. Fractured. Fractured. It's too late. They're coming for what's mine and I won't let them take it.

Estee makes one last ditch effort to reach him. The old him. She stares deeply into his eyes.

ESTEE

You had so many smart funny things to say about math and about the world. I used to think you were the only sane person in this town.

(remembering)

You'd say... how if religion is defined by a system of ideas that contains unprovable statements... then math is not only a religion, it is the only religion that can prove itself to be one. I just thought that was so neat. Remember?

This seems to trigger him. He slowly rises. For a second he seems human again. Normal. Fragile. He connects. But then his eyes go dark. His face twists in anger.

DOOMSDAY STEVE

IT DOESN'T MATTER. It's all over.

He moves towards her, rifle in his arms, menacing.

DOOMSDAY STEVE (CONT'D)

Only one true constant, and that's death.

ESTEE

Jesus. Fuck it. Lost fucking cause like the rest of them.

She walks off, creeped out. Up ahead - her favorite stop on her morning walk of torture --

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Kenny and his gang of unemployed trolls are gathered there again, chanting their anti-choice slogans.

KENNY

Oh shit, watch out guys, here comes the Feminazi freedom fighter.

(MORE)

KENNY (CONT'D)
 With that dusty vagina, she
 couldn't get preggers if she tried.

ESTEE
 Fuck off, Kenny. Not today.

She keeps walking, and he lets her, but she can't help but look back. A FRAIL WOMAN, red eyes, comes limping out of the clinic. The men close in on her, intimidating, Kenny at the lead. He starts chanting.

KENNY
 MURDERER! MURDERER!

Estee snaps. Turns back. Marches towards Kenny. Full of anger and violence and the need to do... something. But what? Is she gonna punch this large man with her tiny hands? Without thinking, she takes her beautiful white cake she spent all day baking AND VIOLENTLY SMASHES IT INTO HIM.

A chunk of cake that reads "LINDA" slides off his cheek and down his shirt. He recoils, stunned, wiping it off.

KENNY (CONT'D)
 YOU FUCKING BITCH.

ESTEE
 EAT SHIT KENNY. GET A FUCKING LIFE
 YOU HYPOCRITE MISOGYNIST ASSHOLE.

Look, we get it - Estee is angry at everyone. But this feels different. This feels bigger. Like Estee's about to snap. Irreversibly.

Frozen, she stares at the ruined cake on the ground. This is her life summed up in a single image.

She bends down and starts to SCOOP UP PIECES OF CAKE into her purse. It's heartbreaking and senseless. Her arms are covered in cake up to her elbows.

Kenny steps up to her, ready to get violent, when she rises, truly deranged--

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 FUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUCK!!

In eerie timing -- the "JESUS LOVES YOU" billboard behind the Planned Parenthood building comes loose off its hinges and falls to the ground with an ugly THUD.

Jesus. Kenny takes a step back, legitimately frightened. His posse of angry assholes also recoils, scared.

The Frail Limping Woman who just exited the clinic clings to one of the asshole men to protect her from the crazy screaming woman.

Then Kenny goes soft. Approaches Estee like you would a wounded wild animal.

KENNY

Geez, Estee. Take it easy. You alright?

ESTEE

NO. FUCK YOU. GO TO HELL. ALL OF YOU.

(at Frail Woman, gently)

Not you. I'm sorry for everything.

(at everyone else)

BUT DEFINITELY ALL OF FUCKING YOU.
DIE IN A PAINFUL SCORCHING FIRE,
YOU PATHETIC SMALL MINDED LIFERS.

Estee storms off.

KENNY

(apologetically at crowd)
She had a hard life.

MONTAGE OF ESTEE LOSING HER SHIT ALL OVER TOWN, FULL MENTAL BREAKDOWN MODE

Estee stomps down the street like a woman thinking hard on how to most efficiently assemble a bomb. Her arms covered in cake up to her elbows. She looks completely deranged. She is completely deranged. She passes by a parked truck where SID, 30's, redneck-vibes, peeks his head out, name calling A MAN on the other side of the street.

SID

Why don't you go back where you came from, slanted eye motherfucker!

Estee turns on her heels, as if someone just called her name. She marches straight up to Sid, gets in his face.

ESTEE

I'd say YOU go back where YOU came from, but even the decrepit vaginal doomsday hell hole that spit you out wouldn't take you back having seen what you turned out to be, you vile, ignorant waste of oxygen backwards motherfucking soulless HATEFUL MACHO BITCH.

(a beat)

Say hi to Holly for me.

SID

Will do.

(spits)

Cunt.

A FEW BLOCKS DOWN

She spots a CONFEDERATE FLAG hanging taut between two edges of a truck bed. She rummages in her purse through mounds of cake bits, pulls out a HIGH HEELED SHOE. She stares at the fancy shoe, and starts laughing hysterically like a mad woman.

ESTEE

Why do I have this? I'm not going anywhere! I'm NEVER going anywhere.

With the sharp end of the heel, she starts SLASHING the flag, tearing it up, laughing maniacally.

A FEW BLOCKS DOWN

She spots TWO MEN in wife beaters (no longer a PC term, but in this case - fitting) SCREAMING at each other in a parking lot, a small argument spiraled out of control. One of them pulls out a gun.

Estee walks up to them and starts BARKING LIKE A DOG.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

ARF ARF ARF! ARF!!! That's what you sound like right now. ARFARFARFARF! I'd say you sound like pitbulls but that would be an insult to pitbulls who are in fact misunderstood, sensitive loving creatures, while you are nothing but fragile scared children cloaked in pride and ego and so much bullshit it makes me want to empty an entire AK magazine into my fucking face.

With that, the MAN WITH THE GUN pivots his arm, AIMS HIS GUN AT ESTEE, a menacing smile on his face. That should shut her up. But she doesn't flinch. She just spread her arms like Jesus.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
BY ALL MEANS.

This gives him pause. What the fuck? He lowers his gun. She seems almost disappointed.

AT THE BAKERY

Estee peeks her beet red, angry head into the bakery. Mr. Shelby looks up from his work.

ESTEE
I FUCKING QUIT YOU HYPOCRITE BIGOT
GRAMPA FOSSIL FUCK.

She slams the door shut. Mr. Shelby shrugs, resumes his work.

END MONTAGE

Exhausted, Estee slows down. Deflates. The adrenaline rush, aka her only source of happiness in this town, leaves her body and all that's left is misery.

Then she sees the MEDICAL MARIJUANA SHOP, "OPEN FOR BUSINESS." She stops. Walks inside.

INT. WEED SHOP - CONT'D

Estee enters. Looks around. This is exciting new territory in an otherwise mind-numbingly familiar town.

It looks like a normal shop. That happens to sell weed. At the counter - GABE, 20's, not white. Smart, sad eyes, but always smiling like the Cheshire cat. (You know, cuz weed.)

Estee walks up to him, still red, broken down with cake arms.

ESTEE
Heard they're trying to shut you
down.

GABE
Oh yeah? Where'd you hear that?

ESTEE
It's a small town. Everybody knows
everything. They probably will too.
(MORE)

ESTEE (CONT'D)

They always get their way. So enjoy it while it lasts. But enough about you. I need drugs. The hard stuff.

GABE

Like heroin?

ESTEE

You sell that?

GABE

No.

ESTEE

Then why are you offering? Give me a weed.

GABE

Do you have a medical card?

ESTEE

No. Fuck. This was stupid. Good fucking bye.

She starts to walk out.

GABE

I can get you one.

She spins around.

ESTEE

Are you a doctor?

GABE

(no)
Yes.

ESTEE

(hmm)
OK.

He hands her an official looking notepad and a pen.

GABE

Fill out all your details here.

She does, then slides it back. He examines the info.

GABE (CONT'D)

Estee? Is that a bible name? Ester?

ESTEE

No.

(doesn't really want to talk about it. Finally-)
It's... I'm named after Estee Lauder, OK? My mom was a fan of the cosmetics line. The night time moisturizer was a particular favorite. Kept her young. She died with youthful skin.

GABE

So you're named after a moisturizer?

Estee tries to find a better way to put it. Fails.

ESTEE

Yes. I'm named after a moisturizer.

GABE

Cool. I'm Gabe. Named after one of the seven archangels, the herald of good news who appeared to Mary to announce her pregnancy and the impending birth of the Christ-child.

ESTEE

Wow cool, congratulations, you win the name competition, can we move this along?

GABE

Yes. So, in order to approve you, I gotta list your medical reasons for needing prescription marijuana.

ESTEE

A ferocious, all consuming hatred of this town and everyone in it?

GABE

Got anything a little more... medical?

ESTEE

Look, I'm a lifer, Gabe. It's a terminal illness. Stage four. No cure. All we can do now is ease the pain. Not only am I a lifer, Gabe, I'm a social pariah. A despicable outsider in a one-minded town.

(MORE)

ESTEE (CONT'D)

They'd collectively curb stomp me if it wasn't for my tragic sad sack sob story cautionary tale tragic past, so instead they just walk on eggshells around me, which is arguably worse than straight forward violence. I'm a powerless leper, Gabe. An obsolete oddity and a freak of nature. A plant that grew up wrong in a hostile environment, and it is so... so... thirsty.

Gabe blinks.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Also, I got a skin condition.

GABE

Cool that works. I mean not cool about the skin condition, or the social pariah. I'm sorry. Genuinely. Have you been down to the lake? I hear it works wonders for skin stuff.

ESTEE

What are you, a tour guide? Sell me some drugs.

GABE

OK. OK. Let me issue you the certificate.

Gabe scribbles on the notepad. He tears the paper, hands it to her.

GABE (CONT'D)

There you go. Just bring this paper back anytime you want to buy, OK? Now what kind do you want? We got a bunch of buds and vapes.

ESTEE

Got any edibles? My lungs are shit.

GABE

No, sorry. Not yet anyways. Companies are skeptical about selling to... this location. They figure we're gonna go out of business in two weeks tops.

ESTEE

Toldya. It's gonna happen. Devil's lettuce. Very ungodly.

GABE

Devil's lettuce. That's right. Anyways, if you can't smoke, you can just make your own edibles at home. Like, cook it or bake it.

Estee's eyes light up at the word "bake."

ESTEE

Oh fuck that's right. I'm a baker. And I just got a big fucking opening in my schedule, on account of I blew up my life, so I can totally do that. OK, let me buy some buds or flowers or whatever.

(leans forward)

I'm gonna need a fucking bouquet, Gabe.

He nods, smiles, takes out some options for her to choose from. She looks him over instead.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

I've never seen you before. Are you new? People never move here. They only move out of here. Why would you voluntarily come here? Did Jesus come to you in the shower? Oh shit, are you in witness protection program?

GABE

Ha. No. Well, if I was I couldn't tell you, right?

He winks at her. She winks back. He winks again. She winks back. A beat.

GABE (CONT'D)

No, I'm not. Why am I here... Well, my buddy asked me if I want to run this branch, cuz nobody else would touch it. And I thought, you know what... This country's falling apart, right?

ESTEE

(fake shock)

WHAT!

They smile at each other. Camaraderie. Such a rare commodity for Estee in this town.

GABE

And I thought it would be helpful to go somewhere that's the opposite of where I live... A ground zero of sorts. To live with the other side. To try... and understand... the enemy. Proverbially speaking.

ESTEE

Wow. We're the enemy, huh? I'm offended. Where are you from?

GABE

Yosemite.

ESTEE

Like the park? In California? People live there? Do you live inside a giant tree?

GABE

Well not inside the park, but in the town right next to it, yeah.

ESTEE

And do you guys like... Play hackysack and eat tofu and hug trees and cry about whales?

GABE

Pretty much. Yeah. Oddly accurate.

ESTEE

Well don't know why anyone would leave that slice of paradise to come here, but, hey, here you are, so welcome to hell.

GABE

If you hate it here so much, why don't you just leave?

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A remote, tiny bus stop. Estee sits alone on a bench, suitcase in hand. She watches as the bus drives away. As if physical glue keeps her on that bench, her heart breaks realizing she doesn't have the courage to leave this town.

BACK TO WEED SHOP

ESTEE

Well I would. I tried. It's just...
It's complicated. I spent my whole
life here. And... My parents died.
And I gotta sell their house. And
it's just been busy, and I haven't
had time to do it, you know? It's
hard. Selling a house. Here. Cuz no
one in their right mind would buy
here. And there's also... My skin
condition. You know, and the
lake... And...

GABE

Got it. Well. It's just that... You
know... when someone hates their
life and their town and their home
and everyone around them it usually
means they mostly just hate
themselves.

Camaraderie = over. Estee's walls shoot back up.

ESTEE

Alright Dr. Phil, what are you my
shrink? Sell me some drugs.

He smiles. Nods. Bags up her goods. She pays, grabs the bag
and leaves, shutting the door behind her.

A beat. She peeks her head back in.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Am I the enemy?

He considers.

GABE

TBD.

Fair. She smiles, nods and leaves.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

In her kitchen, following a recipe on an old busted laptop,
Estee finishes straining a homemade MARIJUANA BUTTER, meant
for cooking. She takes a deep breath, inhaling it. Nods,
approving.

She then opens a YOUTUBE VIDEO -- of a VIRAL STONER BAKING
SHOW. The host, STONER GREG, 19, Santa Cruz born and bred,
bro, hang loose, eyes red like the sun, slurs his way through
a POT BROWNIE TUTORIAL.

STONER GREG (ONSCREEN)
 So you take the... the... Eggs.
 (bursts laughing)
 Why are eggs? You know? Like
 seriously. Why are eggs?

Estee shakes her head, experiencing some buyers remorse.

STONER GREG (ONSCREEN) (CONT'D)
 Then, just. Haehe... Just.. pour
 the brownie mix, into...

ESTEE
 (disgusted)
 Pff. Store bought brownie mix?!
 What is this bullshit amateur hour?

She SLAMS the laptop shut. Rummages through her drawers and pulls out an assortment of baking ingredients.

She starts bringing them to life like a mad conductor. Flour, cocoa powder, sugar, eggs, and now the weed butter -- a congregation of disparate materials, manipulated into one cohesive, smooth, harmonious brownie batter in her skilled hands. (AND YES THIS IS A METAPHOR FOR LATER, THANKS FOR ASKING.)

DING! -- She pulls a beautiful brownie pan out of the oven. She cuts a small piece. Sniffs it. Tastes it. Considers it. Devours the whole piece. Waits.

AN HOUR PASSES. She still sits there. Scratching her head. It's not working. She hesitates. She eats another piece.

AN HOUR PASSES. She still sits there. Scratching her head. It's not working.

She's about to pull another piece when --

BOOM! PAUL MCCARTNEY'S "SILLY LOVE SONG" (or a budget friendly equivalent) STARTS BLASTING FULL VOLUME FROM AN INVISIBLE RADIO IN THE SKY, THE COLORS GO BRIGHT AND CRISP, FULL HD OR 4K OR WHATEVER THE FUCK AND SURROUND SOUND DOLBY 7.1 LIKE A CHOIR OF GODDAMN ANGELS BATHES ESTEE IN A 360 DEGREE AURAL HALO, AS HER FACE FULL OF DEEP SET FROWN LINES CONTORTS INTO A STRANGE UNFAMILIAR EXPRESSION.

A smile.

She looks down at her body. Wiggles her toes. And starts swaying. She starts singing along to the song that's playing in the radio in her head. But instead of her usual improvisational "KILL ME / BURN THIS TOWN" she sings THE ACUTAL GOD/PAUL MCCARTNEY GIVEN LYRICS.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 (sings)
 I.... Love.... Yooooou.

It's a goddamn religious experience. Arguably as powerful as Jesus visiting you in the shower.

She sings, her face full of shock and awe -- at how a single substance, a NATURAL PLANT AT THAT, can singlehandedly and overwhelmingly strip away decades of depression and sadness and grief and anger and self-loathing.

OUTSIDE OF ESTEE'S HOUSE

From outside the house, we see Estee dancing and running around through various warmly lit rooms in the house -- a genuine, heartwarmingly joyous party of one.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Estee awakes with a JOLT. She slept on the floor hugging the tray of brownies. She wipes the drool off her face. The high gone. The worries back. Still, thinking about last night... she smiles. She looks down at the brownies. Gets an idea.

INT. POLICE STATION - EVENING

Police station front desk. Estee, sunglasses on, walks up to the RECEPTIONIST, 20's, stern, no bullshit.

ESTEE
 Hi. I need to see Chief Deputy Billy.

RECEPTIONIST
 Is he expecting you?

ESTEE
 He's expecting my fist.

Receptionist stares.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 I mean yes.

Receptionist sizes her up, not impressed.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 I'm Estee.

The name registers with the Receptionist. As if Estee is some urban legend in this town. The Receptionist softens.

RECEPTIONIST

He's in his office.

Estee salutes and walks down the hallway and into -

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY'S OFFICE

Chief Deputy Billy and Gladys sit by his desk, a MOUNTAIN OF PAPERS between them. Estee walks in, metaphorical guns blazing.

ESTEE

Alright Sheriff Fuck Face, you let her go or what?

(her eyes go wide at the sight of Gladys)

Oh Jesus, Gladys, you're still here?! Christ Billy, did you make her sleep in a cell like a criminal, you KAPO FUCK?

Chief Deputy Billy rolls his eyes.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

You know Estee, that sympathy card you wield around town is starting to get mighty worn. Might lose its power soon you keep abusing it.

ESTEE

Great metaphor, "Chief." Those night school creative writing classes sure are starting to pay off. Why don't you call daddy, have him come discipline me and you can watch and jerk off and--

Gladys puts a warm hand on Estee to prevent escalation.

GLADYS

Don't worry Esterella, he did no such thing. He took me to his house for dinner and let me sleep in the guest room. The same room where I used to tuck you in when you were a baby, isn't that right, my little Billy?

Billy loses his mind at this emasculation. He turns to Gladys and yells at her in surprisingly eloquent Spanish.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Déjalo, abuela, deja de decirle a todo el mundo que hice eso o me meteré en un verdadero problema!!

Translation: *"Quit it, grandma, stop telling everyone that I did that or I'll get into trouble."* Gladys yells back --

GLADYS

Deja de gritar, sabes que tienes presión arterial alta, chico!!

Translation: *"Stop shouting you know you have high blood pressure, kid."*

They keep yelling in Spanish. Estee watches for a beat, like she's observing a game of sports she doesn't know the rules of. Then SHE starts yelling in surprisingly decent Spanish.

ESTEE

¿Cuándo vas a dejarla ir, cerdo?

Translation: *"when are you gonna let her go, pig?"*

The three of them start yelling at each other in a cacophony of Spanish. Things quiet down, then Gladys gets a mischievous smile on her face.

GLADYS

All this tension. I'm surprised you two never...

With that, they explode.

ESTEE

Are you joking?! I wouldn't touch this neutered cowboy redneck bigot with a six foot pole! Folks like him are the problem with this town! Never thinking for himself, never questioning anything! A cog in the fucking machine!

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Are you kidding?! That woman thinks she's some tree hugging liberal hippie but she got more rage, sadness and hatred in her heart than all of us combined! I'm still waiting to wake up one day to find that she shot down the entire town!

Ouch. An awkward silence. Finally, Chief Deputy Billy turns to Estee with as much calmness as he can muster.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)

Look, Estee, I don't have time for this right now. This town is falling apart. Now we got a marijuana epidemic to fight.

(MORE)

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)

And I'm doing it all by myself
until daddy comes back. Please.
Just let me do my job. Leave and
we'll be finished quicker. Don't
make me call someone to escort you
out of the building.

ESTEE

Don't worry, Führer, I'm leaving. I
just wanted to give Gladys
something to eat in case you've
been starving her.

Estee rummages in her bag, pulls out a WEED BROWNIE. She
hands it to Gladys. Leans down and whispers in her ear.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

(in Spanish)

*Something small to alleviate the
pain.*

Estee winks. Gladys gets the message and smiles, takes the
brownie. Estee starts to walk out.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Where's mine?!

ESTEE

(without stopping)

You don't get one, you diabetic
fuck.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

Estee exits the police station. Up ahead she spots her sister
Sheryl in too much makeup and a pink power suit, chatting up
some POLICE OFFICERS about the risk drugs bring to this town.

Estee curses silently, turns around, hoping to escape unseen.

SHERYL

THERE SHE IS!

Estee freezes in place.

ESTEE

Fuck shit fuck fuck shit.

Estee spins around.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

(big smile)

HEYYYYY!

Sheryl puts an arm around her.

SHERYL
You're coming to dinner.

ESTEE
Actually I already ate--

INT. SHERYL'S HOUSE - YARD - LATER

An impeccably groomed yard outside an ugly McMansion.

Estee sits by a picnic table, looking small and trapped in a prison of A MILLION SIDE DISHES, PLATES, BOWLS, endless cans of BUD LIGHT. (Riddle for the readers - if the devil created weed, who created Bud Light?)

Sheryl's hubbie SHAWN, 40's, good looking in a bland way, grills in the background, humming Smash Mouth tunes to himself. Sheryl keeps popping in and adding more plates to the table.

ESTEE
Is the football team coming over to eat, or...?

SHERYL
(obnoxiously cheery)
Oh shush. We're just happy to have you. It's a special occasion!

Sheryl and Shawn's daughter CHLOE, 8, dances around in a ballerina outfit, showing off to Estee, who couldn't possibly give less fucks.

ESTEE
Very nice. Great legwork.

Sheryl finally takes a seat. Cracks open a Bud Light.

SHERYL
So how are things?

ESTEE
Shit.

SHERYL
HEY. Not in front of the ildchay.
(pig latin for "child")

ESTEE
Sorry. Things are itshay.
(pig latin for "shit")

Work? SHERYL

Itshay. ESTEE

Boys? SHERYL

Itshay. ESTEE

Sex? SHERYL

Non-existshay. ESTEE

Come to church tomorrow, meet Johnny. SHERYL

You mean icklessday Johnny? Who slept with all the rostitutespay until his icksday fell offsdays? ESTEE

Oh stop it, that's an urban legend! SHERYL

All legends have an origin story. ESTEE

THUD, Shawn drops a giant chunk of meat on the table, ending the conversation. Time to eat.

LATER

Sheryl, Shawn, Chloe and Estee all recline around the table, stuffed.

Sheryl looks down at the open bag by Estee's feet. A TEMPTING PLASTIC CASE OF BROWNIES peeking through. Sheryl lights up.

Oh hon, you brought dessert?? How nice! SHERYL

Sheryl fishes the container out of the bag before Estee has a chance to stop her.

No! That's not for you!! ESTEE

SHERYL

Um. RUDE.

Sheryl giggles at Shawn as she removes the lid and puts the brownies at the center of the table.

ESTEE

Seriously, don't. They have...

Estee stares at the gold cross chain around Sheryl's neck.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

(scrambles)

They're not very good.

Sheryl takes a piece, playfully rolls her eyes.

SHERYL

You're so self deprecating, Estee!
We've talked about this. You gotta
believe in yourself, girl.

Sheryl and Shawn both eat a piece. Estee stares in horror.

Then little Chloe reaches a tiny hand into the case for a brownie piece. Estee has a heart attack. She shoots up.

ESTEE

NO! YOU CAN'T!

They all stare at her like she's crazy.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

It's got... tons of alcohol. So.

SHERYL

Oh... Alright. Chloe put it back
hon, it's not for you, baby.

Chloe gets angry. About to cry. Sheryl stands, still eating.

SHERLYL

How about I get you ice cream from
the kitchen?

(at Estee)

These are good, doll!

Estee smiles, nervous, grabs the brownies and quickly puts them back in her bag, zipping it tight.

LATER

It's near midnight, and Estee, Sheryl and Shawn are still out in the yard doing something they've never done before.

HAVING A GOOD TIME.

Laughing their ass off. The kind of laughter with tears and a belly ache. Red eyes. Sheryl has stripped away her fake cheery perfectionist bullshit act and is chugging beer, being clumsy and disheveled and goofy and human in a way that Estee hasn't seen in years if not decades.

SHERYL

And then dad goes... he goes...
 "You two... are in such a fucking degree of trouble... that I'm considering sending you... to a boarding school... with your great aunt.. in New Jersey." And he said "New Jersey" like it was a terrifying place where really bad stuff happens. We were scared of New Jersey for years. Heck, I'm still scared to go there.

Estee and Sheryl cry laugh together. The whole thing seems rare and surprising and precious to Estee. Sheryl grabs hold of a chair, feeling dizzy.

SHERYL (CONT'D)

Man, those Bud Lights are going to my head. Wooo! I feel silly. What were we talkin' about?

SHAWN

My wife, the teetotalist.

Sheryl smacks him. They all laugh and laugh.

We CLOSE IN on Estee watching Sheryl, an idea forming in her head. She fidgets with her bag under the table, caressing the container of brownies. Then she abruptly stands and grabs her belongings.

ESTEE

Alright I should get going. But hey. I was thinking. Maybe I will come to church tomorrow after all.

Sheryl's face lights up with genuine joy.

SHERYL

YAYYYY!!!

She stands and hugs her sister tight.

SHERYL (CONT'D)
 (whispers in Estee's ear)
 I miss you.

ESTEE
 (whispers back)
 That's just the weed talking.

Sheryl abruptly breaks the hug.

SHERYL
 What?!

ESTEE
 What?! NIGHT GUYS!! Thanks for
 dinner!

Estee walks off. Sheryl shakes her head at Shawn, laughing. She picks up a Bud Light can, shakes her head at it. What do they put in these things these days?!

PRE-LAP: CHURCH ORGAN MUSIC.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Estee rummages through her drawers and pulls out an assortment of baking ingredients. EIGHT STICKS OF PRE-PREPARED MARIJUANA BUTTER AMONG THEM.

She starts bringing the ingredients to life like a mad conductor, in sync with the holy, awe-inspiring church organ music. Flour, yeast, sugar, eggs, and now the weed butter -- a congregation of disparate materials, manipulated into one cohesive, smooth, harmonious cookie batter in her skilled hands. (AND YES THIS IS A METAPHOR FOR LATER, THANKS FOR ASKING.)

The organ music reaches a crescendo as she pulls SEVERAL PANS FULL OF TEMPTING COOKIES OUT OF THE OVEN. A bright sacred HALO surrounds them.

The church music continues over --

EXT. CHURCH - NOON

The fine people of Jacksboro, decked in their Sunday best, swarm inside a beautiful, old-timey CHURCH -- the beating heart of the community, and the one place seemingly unaffected by the dilapidation of this otherwise dying town.

At the entrance, by a picnic table, Sheryl, in a tailored bubblegum pink dress, hands out flyers advocating shutting down the marijuana dispensary before it brings cocaine, crime and prostitution to their town.

Next to her -- Estee, in an ill-fitting conservative dress, offers HER SPECIAL FRESHLY BAKED COOKIES to every person walking by. Her face is full of fake cheer as she addresses the passerby's.

ESTEE

Hey Charlene! Oh this? Just a little Jesus fuel. Want one? Hey Bruce. Cookie? Danny! How's that leg? LINDA. Happy retirement you old bag! Have a cookie! No, unfortunately not for kids, it's got alcohol, see. OK see you inside! Not if I see you first! No, you! No, you! Alright take it easy.

Nearly every person takes a cookie and nibbles on it as they enter the building. All except Chief Deputy Billy, the diabetic. He exchanges hateful glances with Estee as he walks past. She flips him off discreetly, then continues cheerfully handing out cookies to the church goers.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

EXTREME CLOSE UP on the face of community leader, PASTOR MICHAELS, 50's, dignified and distinguished, his eyes closed in prayer.

A long silent beat. Then he opens his eyes. **THEY ARE RED AND BLOOD SHOT.** A smile spreads on his face, maybe wider than is acceptable under these sacred circumstances.

You see, the dignified Pastor.... is stoned as fuck.

We PULL BACK and see him standing, maybe slightly swaying, onstage.

He starts singing with the voice of an angel, the famous hymn, "HIGHER GROUND."

PASTOR MICHAELS

*I'm pressing on the upward way,
New heights I'm gaining every day;
Still praying as I'm onward bound,
"Lord, plant my feet on higher
ground."*

We go to THE AUDIENCE -- the place is PACKED TO THE BRIM with townsfolk, who all share Pastor Michael's look - **BLOODSHOT RED EYES and BIG GOOFY SMILES ON THEIR FACES**. They sing along to the next verse, the music giving them goosebumps. They feel so good, Jesus MUST be in the house today.

CROWD

*Lord, lift me up and let me stand,
By faith, on Heaven's tableland,
A higher plane than I have found;
Lord, plant my feet on higher
ground.*

We CLOSE IN on ESTEE, watching the whole thing from the audience. She's smiling too, but maybe for different reasons. She closes her eyes and sings with irreverent passion.

ESTEE

*My heart has no desire to stay
Where doubts arise and fears
dismay; Though some may dwell where
those abound, My prayer, my aim, is
higher ground.*

LATER

The ceremony has ended and the crowd gets up to leave, chatting as they go. Estee watches as people HUG EACH OTHER in a way they never have before - genuinely, warmly, full body, intimate - with no shame, fear or anger. Rowdy teenagers hugging grandmas. Conservative church ladies hugging immigrants. Right hugging left. Left hugging right. Some hugs last an uncomfortably long time.

Chief Deputy Billy watches the whole thing, scratching his head. Odd behavior for their town. Very odd. Something suspicious going on. Something he can't quite put his finger on.

Estee's smile grows bigger.

ENTER -- MONTAGE OF ESTEE MICRO-DOSING THE SHIT OUT OF THE ENTIRE TOWN --

* Estee baking at home, bringing together a congregation of disparate materials, manipulated into one cohesive, smooth, harmonious cookie batter in her skilled hands. (YOU GET THE METAPHOR NOW!)

* Estee hands out weed cookies at a CAR SHOP.

* Estee bakes a weed cake.

* Estee hands out the cake at A HAIR SALON.

- * Estee bakes weed croissants.
- * Estee hands out croissants outside PLANNED PARENTHOOD.
- * Estee gives a bag of weed donuts to DOOMSDAY STEVE.
- * Estee delivers an Upside Down Pineapple weed cake at a CHURCH CHARITY EVENT.
- * Estee hands out cupcakes at a LOCAL DINER.

Chief Deputy Billy is there. He tries to reach for a cupcake but Estee SLAPS his hand away.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Sorry, "Chief." Too sugary for someone of your poor health. Tell you what, I'll make you a healthy salad some day soon.

She winks at him with derision and walks off with the cupcakes. He watches her go, suspicion growing.

- * Estee delivers a sponge cake to an OLD FOLKS HOME.
- * Estee sits on a bench, watching the SLOWLY TRANSFORMING TOWN, gone from tense, ugly, divided, full of hatred, fear and paranoia -- to goofy, giggly, innocent and child-like.
- * For the first time in twenty years, Doomsday Steve rises from his porch, lays down his rifle on the ground and helps an OLD LADY cross the street, singing an old tune as he goes.
- * Kenny and his gang of pro-life trolls still hang outside the Planned Parenthood clinic - except they seem to have forgotten why they're there. Mostly they eat pizza and share it with the patients as they walk by.
- * Sid the name calling racist redneck runs wildly in the street after a PACK OF LOOSE PUPPIES, giggling hysterically.
- * Mr. Shelby hugs a tree for no reason.
- * We go CLOSE on ESTEE, watching the seemingly positive influence of everything she's done, a huge smile on her face, wiped off momentarily... by pangs of guilt.

END MONTAGE

INT. WEED SHOP - LATER

Estee walks in to find Gabe stocking shelves.

ESTEE

Hey partner!

He looks her over.

GABE

Well you're looking better.

ESTEE

What can I say... Jesus came to me
in the kitchen.

GABE

Hallelujah.

ESTEE

So I wanted to run something by you
real quick. I wouldn't call it an--
(exaggerated quotation
mark fingers)
"ethical dilemma", cuz that sounds
dramatic, but basically... I've
kinda been using the weed for
baking. And, you know, I've kinda
been handing out said baked goods,
and sort of, in a small roundabout
way, kinda micro-dosing the entire
town without their knowledge. Just
a little bit. Just like a low-key
fun amount. And I just wanted to
run that by you, super casually,
since it feels like a very light
grey-area moral issue...

Gabe stops what he's doing and stares at her.

GABE

Oh yeah, no, that's 100% morally
wrong.

ESTEE

Alright, sounds like we're kind of
unsure on where this stands
ethically.

GABE

No, it's definitely absolutely
ethically wrong.

Gabe walks back to the counter. She follows him like a
deranged puppy.

ESTEE

I mean yeah, 100%, totally hearing you, but also, at the same time, is it? Sounds like a real thinker. You know?

GABE

No it doesn't. It's wrong. Period.

ESTEE

Yeah, but you know. In this era... in this country... in this presidency... Right... Wrong.. It's all kinda upside down, ya know?

GABE

That's not an excuse.

ESTEE

You know what. This sounds like a complex 50-50 dilemma we both need to sleep on.

GABE

No we don't. Clear as day. Absolutely wrong.

ESTEE

(ignoring him)

So until we decide, I'm just gonna need a casual kilo real quick so I can keep micro-dosing the town, because frankly, it makes them more...

(thinks)

Cuddly, and less...

(thinks)

Evil... and I like that.

Gabe shakes his head.

GABE

It's illegal to sell that much.

ESTEE

Please.

But he just shakes his head. Estee thinks how to sway him.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Hey... you said you came here to learn about the other side. How about an official...

(MORE)

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 first-of-its-kind Jacksboro tour
 from a hardcore life-long local?

Gabe smiles.

TOUR MONTAGE (TOO MANY MONTAGES? NEVER!!)

Estee leads Gabe through various streets and corners, using secret passages, doors and alleyways only the hardcore locals know about. As they weave through hidden corners and secret nooks, she gives him little monologues, he just listens and smiles. Down one street --

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 This is the crack den formerly
 known as a Piggly Wiggly's.

Down another street --

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 This is where I had my first kiss!
 Also where a man shot an entire
 family because the baby looked at
 him funny.

Down another street -

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 Oh man, there used to be a great
 Chinese restaurant here all the
 families would go to for special
 occasions like graduations and
 such. It had the cool lanterns, the
 little personal dish heaters, the
 lazy susans, everything!! Then it
 got burned down ""by accident"" and
 now it's an Autozone with a black
 market gun shop in the back. Anyhoo-

Down another street -

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 This is where I used to take ballet
 classes. Ages 4 to 13! Had to quit
 when they switched to point. My
 toes weren't built to stand
 upright, you know? Also this is
 where the KKK rally convenes when
 they roll into town.

Down another street, unremarkable in every way -- but Estee's face darkens.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

This is where my parents died. It was a...

(a beat)

Let's just keep going.

Gabe's face fills with empathy.

GABE

I'm sorry.

ESTEE

Let me take you to the best slash only ice cream place in town!

END MONTAGE

EXT. STREET - LATER

Estee and Gabe walk down a shaded suburban street, ice cream in hands.

ESTEE

So tell me again about ending up here? Cuz I still don't buy it, no offense.

GABE

(smiles)

Well. The short long short version is... I finished college. Public policy. Real sexy stuff.

ESTEE

Too sexy, some might say.

GABE

And I saw things falling apart and I wanted to help fix them. So I started working in politics. In campaigns. Fast forward a few months... I'm in a purple bathrobe that's not even mine, lying on the carpet of a house that isn't mine, trying to find a reason to get up and start my day and failing, day after day after day. Beard down to here.

ESTEE

Sounds familiar. Minus the beard.

[QUICK FLASHBACK to Estee lying bed drunk with a bottle of whiskey singing "Kiiiiill me.... Kiiiiiiiill me..."]

GABE

What happened here... What's been happening here... In this country. I just didn't see it coming. Nobody did. And I entered something like... a crisis of faith. But not Christian faith. Human faith. Faith in humanity.

ESTEE

Sounds painfully familiar.

GABE

And when I finally got up off the floor... I told myself I have to find a way to reaffirm my faith. I have to believe again. So I came here. For one last ditch effort.

ESTEE

And if the verdict is we're all garbage?

GABE

I dunno... What would an old... grizzled.. Cowboy do round these here parts if he got tired of living?

ESTEE

Shotgun to the head.

Gabe smiles, nods - Bingo. Estee marvels at that. Looks at Gabe in a new way. His depression and suicidal tendencies a clear turn-on for her.

She stops and grabs his hand in hers without thinking.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Well Gabriel. I think you and me are a lot alike. And I think you're the kind of person who wants to change things for the better. And here in front of us is a golden opportunity to do that. So I think we should go into business together and give this a shot. And if it doesn't work, we can give each other a shot. To the head. What do you think?

Gabe looks down at their held hands. Estee looks down too. They quickly yank their hands apart, but CUT TO --

DING! CLOSE on Gabe handing Estee a giant bag full of weed. We're back at the --

INT. WEED SHOP - CONT'D

ESTEE

Thank you. This is good. You'll see. This will be good.

GABE

Mm hmmm. These cuddly townsfolk aren't gonna be so cuddly when they find out what you've been doing to them without their consent, you know.

ESTEE

We'll cross that proverbial shit bridge when we get there. Consider it a grand experiment in humanity! Your main purpose for being here, after all.

GABE

OK, well... I hope you have a fire extinguisher at home. Because they'll be coming with torches. And pitchforks.

ESTEE

Ha, Gabe, please. What do you think this is, Deliverance? You jaded west coast hippie. It's gonna be great. You'll see!

She slaps some money on the table and runs out.

A beat. She peeks her head back through the door.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

I'm not the enemy, right?

He considers. Smiles.

GABE

TBD.

Fair. She smiles, nods, heads out. Gabe watches her go. Is that love in his eyes? Hard to tell, they're so red.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

At a protest outside town hall, sporting signs that demand closing the weed shop, "**RID US OF THIS DEVIL'S LETTUCE!**"-- Sheryl and her gang of RIGHTEOUS CHURCH SISTERS are giggling uncontrollably as they nibble on some of Estee's specialty PINK CUPCAKES.

SHERYL

I've been feeling so good lately.

RIGHTEOUS SISTER #1

Me too! I'm like... Laughing all the time.

RIGHTEOUS SISTER #2

(whispers)

And my appetite is out of control!
Need an ice cream IV for my vein
with the amount I've been eating!
I'm like - Is this early menopause?

SHERYL

God forbid! But GIRL, SAME. Except funny thing is...

(whispers)

I don't even care about my weight that much anymore??

RIGHTEOUS SISTER #3

Um, speaking of sweets, your sister's baking... #addicted.

RIGHTEOUS SISTER #2

SERIOUSLY. And every time she feeds them to us it's like "ACK! SUGAR HIGH! SOS! SOMEONE HELP ME!"

As the Righteous sisters continue to giggle, **we CLOSE IN on Sheryl**, looking at their weed shop protest signs... she starts to put it together. The weed shop. Estee. The Bud Light. The cookies. The giddiness. The high... A range of expressions on her face. She slowly walks up to the box of cupcakes on the table, and with anger and panic, slides them into the trash.

She stares at the trash for a long beat. Then, torn, she takes the cupcakes out of the trash and puts them back on the table.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Estee, incredibly stoned, blood shot eyes, sits in the center of a BAKED GOODS EMPIRE. Cookies, cakes, pastries, the works.

She closes her eyes. And starts singing... AMAZING GRACE.

She sings it comically, Mariah Carey minus talent, drawing out certain notes and adding cringe worthy embellishments to every other word.

ESTEE

Amaa.....

(longest pause)

... zing graaeaeaeaaaaace. How...

(longest pause)

Sweet, the...

(longest pause)

... Souoeuououn---

BANG BANG BANG. LOUD BANGING on her front door makes her JUMP and grab her chest.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Oh Jesus!

She waits a beat. Maybe it'll go away.

BANG BANG BANG. Fuck.

She runs to the window, peeks out the curtains.

Gabe was right. Deliverance is here -- as outside her door stands **THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY, VERY ANGRY EXPRESSIONS ON THEIR FACES**. (Are they holding torches or are those just cellphones? Kind of hard to tell.)

ESTEE (CONT'D)

(hushed)

Oh shit. Oh fuck. Shit. FUCK. SHIT.

BANG BANG BANG.

Estee looks all around. Nowhere to run nowhere to hide. She runs to the kitchen. Grabs a knife. Then puts it down. Grabs a broom. Then puts it down. UGH, THINK, STONED BRAIN, THINK.

BANG BANG BANG.

Finally, she grabs a can of COOL WHIP. Yeah. That's a good weapon, stoned brain, great job. Wielding the can, she walks up to the door and opens it. She puts a big smile on her face.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 OH HEYYYY. Hey there, ev..
 Everybody! What a nice surprise!
 And it's not even my birthday for
 another month!

They stare her down, angrily.

SHERYL
 We know what you've been doing,
 Estee.

KENNY
 And it ain't fucking right.

ESTEE
 What? What are you talking about?!
 Is it my singing in public? I know
 my voice is an acquired taste, so I
 get it. You know what, fine. You
 got me. I'll stop. No more singing
 in public. I give you my word!

SHERYL
 No, Estee. It's that... that...
 (whispers)
 Devils lettuce.

ESTEE
 I'm sorry, what?

SHERYL
 (whispers)
 Devil's lettuce.

ESTEE
 I'm sorry, what?

SHERYL
 (whispers)
 Devil's lettuce.

MR. SHELBY
 Oh quit it! WE KNOW. We know what
 you've been up to. And it is a
 serious crime.

SHERYL
 If the Sheriff found out about
 this...

KENNY
 Or hell, even Chief Deputy Billy...

Estee drops the smiley act. Fuck these guys.

ESTEE

Alright cool. Am I going to prison for the rest of my life or what? Fuck this shit, happy to leave. I'd be happier in a jail cell than in the fucking Dante's Inferno eternal purgatory shitstorm hell hole that is this town. So let's go. Lock me the fuck up.

Murmurs, nudges and the clearing of throats. No one wants to speak up. Finally --

KENNY

(quietly)

Well... Not so fast.

ESTEE

Huh?

SHERYL

(almost inaudible)

Estee... While this is a serious crime... We're willing to let this slide...

ESTEE

Huh?

MR. SHELBY

(a faint whisper)

If... You keep making it... for us.

ESTEE

Huh?

KENNY

We want more.

ESTEE

More... Weed? I mean. The weed store's right there. Why don't you just buy some for yourself?

PASTOR MICHAELS

BECAUSE IT'S THE DEVIL'S LETTUCE!

ESTEE

But... It's still the devil's lettuce in my baking.

SHERYL

Yeah... but that's... You know...
Different. It's baked goods! Baked
goods are innocent... and
wholesome... And it's... out of our
control.... If... You keep serving
it to us... And... We keep eating
it... innocently and unknowingly. I
mean, you're basically forcing our
hands here. It's your sin, not
ours. We're the victims here.

KENNY

It's a fun little loophole!

Estee just stares, digesting all of this.

ESTEE

I mean...
(a beat)
OK. Sure.

PASTOR MICHAELS

Great. That'll be all. Goodnight.

The entire crowd turns on their heels and walks off, leaving
Estee standing there, incredulous.

A beat. She bursts out laughing for a long long time.
MEANWHILE--

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

Chief Deputy Billy sits slumped at his desk, a bored
depressed look on his face. He picks up a SHERIFF ACTION
FIGURE that looks just like him.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

And now we'd like to bring to the
stage, a man... nay... a hero...
who saved the town... and the
country... from itself... And the
crowd goes wild...

(whispers)

Ahhhhh... Ahhhhhhhhhhh.

Suddenly, his computer screen comes alive with a FACETIME
CALL from Daddy, aka SHERIFF WILLIAM GABLES.

Chief Deputy Billy immediately straightens in his chair, an
urgent look on his face. He smooths down his uniform, hair,
then answers the call.

SHERIFF WILLIAM GABLES, 50's, large and intimidating, appears on the screen.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Son.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Dad. Father. Sir.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Holding it down?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Absolutely. 100%.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Anything to report?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

(thinking long and hard)

No.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Go on.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

That's it.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Then why the concerned look?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

(debating, finally)

Well that's just it. Father. Sir.

It's been quiet.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Ain't that a good thing?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Real quiet.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Too quiet?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Too quiet.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Quiet how?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

People getting along quiet.

SHERIFF WILLIAM
(mulling this over)
I don't like it.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Me neither.

SHERIFF WILLIAM
America doesn't work like that.
Social harmony... It's not for us.
People getting along... It could
undermine everything we've worked
so hard to build over the past few
centuries.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
You mean capitalism and the war
machine?

SHERIFF WILLIAM
(ignoring him)
Find out more. Find out what's
behind this... Quiet. Could be a
cult situation. You know folks love
their cults down here. Or could be
Russian interference, trying to
undermine the very essence of our
democracy. Find out what Kool-Aid
they're drinking, son, and how we
take it away before it gets
poisoned.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
I get that reference.

SHERIFF WILLIAM
Good.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
And you got it, sir father. I'll
look into it. You can count on m--

CLICK. The line goes dead. No love from the old man.

Chief Deputy Billy picks up the Sheriff action figure again.
Brings it up to his face. Stares at it.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

Time to make daddy proud. Chief Deputy Billy walks up to a
mechanic, SHANE, 50's.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Shane. Awfully quiet lately, ain't it?

SHANE
Sure is.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Any clue why?

SHANE
Nope.

Awkward silence. Billy doesn't know where to take it from here. A little green on the investigating front. Finally--

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Well I'll see ya.

SHANE
Sounds good.

A block away, he approaches THREE KIDS ON BIKES.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Kids. Awfully quiet ar--

KID
We didn't do it!

The Kids quickly pedal away. Crud. He walks a few blocks down, spots TWO GRANDMAS on a park bench. Bingo. Approaches.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Agnes. Ethel.

The two grandmas just stare.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
Awfully quiet around here, ain't it?

The two grandmas grunt. Grandma #1 rummages in her purse, takes out a MYSTERIOUS OBJECT wrapped in a few used KLEENEXES. With agonizing slowness, Chief Deputy Billy watches as she unwraps the object, revealing... A COOKIE. Looks like Estee's cookie. Slowly, she snaps it in half and offers Grandma #1 the other half. The Two Grandmas nibble slowly in silence, watching Chief Deputy Billy.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
Well alright then. Thank you for your time.

With that he walks away. They watch him go.

GRANDMA #1
Is he real or am I hallucinatin'?

Grandma #2 shrugs, grunts.

INT. WEED SHOP - LATER

Chief Deputy Billy enters the weed shop, takes it all in. Finds Gabe reading a book behind the counter. Panic crosses Gabe's face for a moment, then he settles back into his stoner expression.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Greetings. Chief Deputy Billy.

GABE
Hi there. Gabe.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Pretty quiet round here.

GABE
Yep.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
How's business?

GABE
Quiet.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Not a lot of clientele.

GABE
Nope.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
How you stay in business then?

DING! As if on cue, in walks Estee. Chief Deputy Billy rolls his eyes.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
Wow. Color me surprised.

Estee walks past Billy. They stare each other down with mutual suspicion and disdain.

She stands by the counter, saying nothing, waiting for Billy to leave. He stares at her, not moving. Gabe stares at them both. A stand-off.

A long beat. Finally, Chief Deputy Billy heads towards the exit.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)

Y'all have a good day now, ya hear?

Estee cynically salutes at him. Waits for him to exit. He does. Then she turns to Gabe, all smiles.

ESTEE

Ugh. Ignore him. Toothless. His daddy's the real cop and he's MIA. Anyhoo - Howdy Partner! Turns out you were right. Re: Deliverance. Torches. Pitchforks. The works! Except guess what. They...

(wink)

Gave me their banjo, if you know what I mean.

GABE

(blinks)

Have you seen Deliverance?

ESTEE

No. But! This is huge. The town wants our business, Gabe. Everything you were worried about - immorality, lack of ethics, illegality blah blah etc. Out the window! They give us full consent to drug them!

This doesn't seem to soothe Gabe.

GABE

Huh.

ESTEE

This is great. Makes our experiment less shady and more righteous. So... Full steam ahead! Just need another super casual kilo and it's BAKE O'CLOCK!

GABE

I dunno, Estee...

ESTEE

Please Gabe. A chance to change things. Together. A rare chance... To see the good in humans. Like we said. Give it a shot. Or a shot to the head. Please?

Gabe hesitates. Is that love in his eyes? Hard to tell, they're so red. Eventually, like always, he folds.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Estee enters her kitchen with MULTIPLE LARGE SHOPPING BAGS.

She takes out SEVERAL POUNDS OF FLOUR. Roughly 80 eggs. 40 sticks of butter. And other insane amounts of baking ingredients. She gets to work. Bringing all the disparate ingredients to life in her skilled hands, when THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Her clothes full of flour, she opens.

Standing there is GLADYS, the town's ancient, very legal Colombian grandma.

ESTEE

Gladys! Oh thank god, Sheriff asshole let you go?

GLADYS

Yes, it was.. A misunderstanding. Don't worry.

But then Gladys crosses her arms, a disapproving parental look on her face.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

I ate your cookie.

ESTEE

(swallows)

Look, Gladys, I know what you're thinking. It's immoral, maybe borderline unethical, maybe just a smidge illegal, but--

GLADYS

If you're going to do it, Ms. Esterella, do it right.

With that, Gladys pushes past Estee into the kitchen, puts an apron on and starts arranging the baking ingredients *her way* - like someone who has been to this kitchen before countless times over the years and knows where everything is. Estee follows her, in surprise and awe.

Gladys takes the marijuana buds and the butter, and starts manipulating them with an expertise way beyond Estee's skill level.

GLADYS (CONT'D)

You can increase the potency in the
bake by decarboxylating the kief.

ESTEE

De-whatting the what?

GLADYS

Just watch.

Gladys continues to work. Estee continues to watch, her eyes
growing wider.

ESTEE

Gladys, you minx! I didn't know you
knew how to do this kinda stuff!

GLADYS

(in Spanish)

What, you think I was always an
ancient grandma? I used to be young
like you, you know.

Estee starts taking notes on everything Gladys is doing.

ENTER -- BAKING MONTAGE

* Gladys teaches Estee how to elevate her weed baking skills.
Together they make - Cakes. Pies. Cookies. Pastries.

* Estee and Gladys pull more and more trays out of the oven.

* CLOSE ON - THE WINDOW SILL. Where several BAKED WEED GOODS
such as pies and cakes now sit, piping hot, like a Saturday
morning cartoon. Next to the goods - a JAR with some bills in
it, marked "PAY WHAT YOU CAN."

* HANDS grab the BAKED goods from the window sill.

* Estee and Gladys pull more and more trays out of the oven.

* The Money jar slowly fills and empties.

* Estee places more and more baked goods at the window sill.

END MONTAGE

The sun has set. After a good day's work, Gladys and Estee
sit at the kitchen table, now stoned off their own baked
goods, still nibbling, laughing their asses off together.

Estee counts the money from the jar. Not too shabby. She
hands a cut to Gladys, who pockets it.

As Estee continues counting, Gladys suddenly GRABS HER ARM, turns it over. Inspects it. **There's a new RASH there.** Like an eczema flare-up. Pink and raw. Gladys gives Estee a concerned knowing look. Estee yanks her arm back, shrugs it off.

ESTEE

It's nothing. It's not gonna be bad like it used to. I just had a stressful week. Don't worry.

Gladys scrutinizes Estee. Finally, she smiles.

GLADYS

The day I stop worrying about you is the day I die.

ESTEE

Well guess we're looking at 70 more years of worrying then, Gladys. Might wanna take some cookies for the road.

They smile at each other. Gladys stands. Gathers her things. Estee walks her to the door. They hug. Break apart. Gladys grabs Estee's face with her hands.

GLADYS

I want you to think about what you're doing here. You have an opportunity. To do good. To fix things. To fix this place. Don't waste it.

Estee stares, feeling a little disturbed, emotional. Gladys pats her on the head and leaves. Estee stares at the closed door, thinking hard.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

TV is open to the local news. Estee walks in with an OLD COLORFUL BOX marked "HIGH SCHOOL."

She stares at it, heavy hearted. Then opens the lid. On top sits her yearbook. She reluctantly opens it, flips over to her class. Finds her picture. It's her but it's like a different person. Smiling. Hopeful. Emotionally intact. Before shit went bad.

She flips a few more pages, a FAMILY PHOTO falls out. Her parents, her and Sheryl. Everybody's smiling. Happy. Wholesome. A perfect family. Estee stares at it, a million emotions on her face, then she quickly slips it back into the yearbook and puts it away, as if it's contagious.

[QUICK FLASHBACK of Estee at the bus stop, the bus leaves without her, she didn't have the courage to get on it.]

Back in her living room, she reaches for the thing she's been looking for - a LARGE PAD OF COLORFUL PAPERS. And some COLORFUL MARKERS.

She places them on the carpet, and starts making large SIGNS, the content of which we don't yet see.

EXT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Across the street, in the dark, Chief Deputy Billy sits on a bench. He raises BINOCULARS. He scribbles something into an empty notebook.

Suddenly, Estee's head peeks through a window.

ESTEE

Can I fucking help you, you giant creepy perv?

Chief Deputy Billy bolts out of his seat, pretends to be investigating a nearby lamp post.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Nope. Just making the rounds. Official police business. Go back inside! That's er, an order!

She watches him for a beat.

ESTEE

Alright, you fucking weirdo.

She goes back inside.

EXT. PARK - MORNING

Estee, with a backpack, starts hanging up her colorful signs. We see the content for the first time - "CLEAN THE PARK, GET A COOKIE."

She finishes hanging up her signs, and sets up shop by a bench, laying out cleaning supplies and an appetizing jar of cookies, no longer available on her window sill. Finished, she waits.

Slowly, RANDOM PEOPLE show up. Unemployed folks. Bored folks. Do-gooders. New weed addicts. They see the signs. Some of them keep walking. But some of them pause. Smile. Grab a cookie and get to work.

Estee watches as a bunch of GOOD SAMARITANS, stoned out of their gourds, lovingly pick up trash, paint benches, plant new flowers and seeds, and scrub away hate graffiti. Occasionally they stop, forgetting where they are. Some take naps. Or talk to trees. An OLD COUPLE makes out. But mostly, they're all productive, and the neglected park starts looking brand new. Estee smiles.

ESTEE

(quietly)

This one's for you, Gladys.

INT. DINER - SAME TIME

Chief Deputy Billy sits at the counter, observing the passerby's. Everybody is getting along. Laughing. Chatting. Weird combinations of people you wouldn't normally see. And they're all eating... A lot. Strange. Very strange. He scribbles down notes on a tiny notebook. The TV catches his attention.

ON TV -- The local Jacksboro news. News anchor SANDRA DINGRANDO faces the camera in a sharp suit.

SANDRA DINGRANDO (ON TV)

Local law enforcement reports an astonishing 80% drop in crime rates -- and at the same time -- a steep incline in fast food establishment related burglaries. We now go live to Papa John's on Cecil Street, where teen employee Kevin Rodriguez was held at gunpoint only yesterday.

ON TV - Footage of the local PAPA JOHN'S.

KEVIN (ON TV)

The guy... He had a gun in one hand and a hamster in the other. I thought that was kind of weird, but I wasn't gonna argue with the gun part. Anyways, he stole eight extra large pizzas, and... that's it. Oh and all the mozzarella sticks. But that's it. Didn't even take any cash from the register, which I thought was odd.

Chief Deputy Billy takes it all in, thinking hard.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Estee baking and baking and baking. An empire of baked goods. Baked goods placed on the window sill. Grabbed by random hands. Cash dropped into the JAR.

A KNOCK on the door. Estee, covered in flour, **the rash on her arm growing**, opens the door.

It's KENNY. Her Planned Parenthood mortal enemy.

ESTEE

God, what?! You don't need to come inside, just grab what you want and drop some cash in the jar.

Kenny breaks into a smile. Fuck, he's already stoned.

KENNY

I know. I just thought. You know, maybe we could...

Estee rolls her eyes. CUT TO --

EXT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - PORCH - SUNSET

Estee and Kenny sit on rocking chairs on her porch. They're now both stoned.

KENNY

It's a good thing you're doing. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

ESTEE

(cynical)

Thanks, Kenny. Coming from you, that means a lot.

KENNY

You know... I knit.

ESTEE

You're a nit? Tell me something I don't know.

KENNY

No. I knit. I'm a knitter. I knit.

ESTEE

Oh... OK. Weird. But OK.

KENNY

Ever since I turned... I dunno...
20-something. I've had this...

He raises his hand to where his chest is. He starts shaking his hand manically. It's disturbing.

KENNY (CONT'D)

I've had this... Unrest. This
rage... This fear... Whatever the
fuck you wanna call it. And... It
just showed up. And it wouldn't
leave. I felt like it was eating me
alive. And I didn't know what to do
with it.

[QUICK FLASHBACK to Estee at the bus stop. The bus leaves without her. She didn't have the courage to leave.]

ESTEE

I get that.

KENNY

(stoned)

I'm sorry, what are we talking
about?

ESTEE

Rage. Fear. Paralysis.

KENNY

Oh yeah yeah yeah. And I saw
something on TV. One of them TV
doctors. They said people like me
need to find... a hobby... to focus
them... to focus *their hands*.
Something that'll.... exhaust you
till you don't feel that... that..
(his hand shakes more)
Shakiness anymore... So I chose
knitting.

ESTEE

And?

KENNY

Shit. It worked. For a while. Must
have knitted... some fifty, sixty
scarves? Twenty sweaters. Even some
dang mittens! Got my whole family
fully outfitted for many, many
winters to come.

Estee laughs. Kenny laughs too. But then he frowns.

KENNY (CONT'D)

But then... one day... it wore off. Then I got angry again. And it got bad. Real bad. And I did some shit I ain't proud of. But then Jesus... He came to me.

ESTEE

In the shower, we know.

KENNY

That's right. But here's the kicker. Gonna tell you a secret right here....

(whispers)

Even he didn't stick around. One day the ease was gone and I was on my own with the shakes again. I thought I was fucked for real this time. Till I ate your cookies.

Estee smiles. Didn't see that coming.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Now to be clear - I'm not cured. I'll never be cured. And I know that now. But this... This makes it more... manageable. So I figure, somewhere between your baking, Jesus and the knitting... I can get by... I can.

His hand still on his heart, shaking. Suddenly he stops. The hand goes still.

KENNY (CONT'D)

I can be OK. I think.

Estee smiles. Without thinking, she grabs his hand, squeezes it. They hold hands for a second, then she quickly recoils. He recoils too. He stands.

KENNY (CONT'D)

So I guess all this to say... Thank you. I know you and me have had a rough go at it. And I know how you hate this place and everybody in it. And how life dealt you a shit hand and all that. But I want you to know that you did good. With your hand. You did good.

Estee stands. Tears up.

ESTEE

Thanks Kenny.

Moment of truth... Do they dare... hug? Neither of them budges.

KENNY

OK I'm gonna go now.

ESTEE

OK. Bye Kenny.

They just stand there for a moment. Finally, he nods and leaves. She watches him go. She breaks into a smile. She feels something creeping in... a feeling she hasn't felt in many years... Pride.

She watches the purple sky, the sun disappearing behind the horizon. Then she feels a presence there. And smoke.

She turns her head to it. It's Gabe, on her lawn, smoking a joint. Is that jealousy in his eyes? Hard to tell, they're so red.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Jesus, you scared me. How'd you know where I live?

He climbs up the porch steps.

GABE

It's a small town. Everybody knows everything.

ESTEE

Oh. OK. Well. You want something to drink? Wanna come inside?

GABE

No. Listen. I've been thinking... I don't want to do this with you anymore. The experiment. I'm done.

ESTEE

What?! But we're making such a difference in this town!

GABE

I have to doctor my receipts. Divide your purchases into multiple fake accounts cuz you're buying so much and you're the only client. I could go to jail. For a long, long time. I did not come here for this.

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)

I did not come here for any... complications.

ESTEE

Please, Gabe. This is... This is the only thing I have. This is the only thing I'm good at... This.

Gabe loses his temper for the first time.

GABE

I don't care! I'm not from here! I don't know any of you people! That's not my problem! You're not my problem! You're not-- Jesus, what's that on your arm?

He grabs her arm, sees the rash. It's growing. She yanks her arm back, protectively.

ESTEE

It's nothing. I told you. I have a skin condition.

GABE

Yeah, that... doesn't look good. Have you been to the lake?

ESTEE

Fuck the lake, Gabe! There is no lake! The lake doesn't exist! The lake is a lie! It's like that cat in the box, you don't know if it's alive or dead.

GABE

Schrodinger's cat?

ESTEE

Yes! It's Schrodinger's lake.

GABE

No it's not! It's a real lake that definitely factually exists.

(Stoner arguments, man.)

ESTEE

Not to me! I've never been.

GABE

You know there's a world that exists outside your point of view, right?

ESTEE

I'll believe it when I see it.

GABE

Wow. Small town mentality. So painfully typical.

ESTEE

Does condescension pass down in your genes where you come from or is it taught at local schools? Cuz I swear sometimes you woke big city fancy hipster liberals are more narrow minded than we, your so called enemy, has ever been.

GABE

Grab a fucking jacket, cuz we're going to the lake right now.

ESTEE

It's 80 degrees out, so I don't need a damn jacket, and also I'm not fucking going.

EXT. STREET - LATER

They're going. Estee even put on a light jacket. They walk down a street, a dark field up ahead. To their left they see a beautifully lit yard, a large crowd gathered, someone RECITING POETRY inside.

ESTEE

It's a new poetry night some local folks organized. Weed got them all creative and whatnot.

POETRY RECITER (O.S.)

(reading, muffled)

America. Amer.... Ica. She is my greatest love. And yet she betrays me thusly.

ESTEE

(cringes)

Look, it's not good poetry. But they're expressing themselves! That's healthy, you know?

LATER

Gabe and Estee walk down a field, up a mountain, surrounded by trees. The sun has fully set.

We've never been anywhere like this before in this story. We've never been anywhere... pretty like this before. And as odd as it seems - neither has Estee.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Jesus. Who knew this town had all this stupid beautiful nature in it.

GABE

Literally everybody.

ESTEE

Not me.

GABE

If you read up on the town folklore, they say even Jesus visited this lake.

ESTEE

Oh yeah? Did he grab a red eye from the middle east?

GABE

Hey, I'm just telling you the story. Jesus descended into these down here waters...
(whispers)
...and vanished.

Estee's eyes light up.

ESTEE

Oh man, do you think Jesus has been popping up in everyone's showers because of the lake? Like maybe he just came to the lake, and like, peed in it a little? And it filtered into everyone's showers? Since the town's water source is this lake? So his juices end up in showers?

Gabe just blinks. Estee stares at him, waiting for a response.

GABE

Oh I'm sorry, I thought that was a rhetorical question.

They enter a deeper forested area. It's a beautiful night.

GABE (CONT'D)

You seem different, you know, from
when I met you. Not that I wanna
take all the credit.

(self conscious)

I mean... not me, the weed.

ESTEE

I feel different. Less...

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Sad.

GABE

Angry and hateful and crazy.

Estee smacks him. They laugh. They it gets quiet. Awkward.

ESTEE

So what are you latest findings
here? Since we're all just lab rats
in your grand political experiment.

GABE

Well, not much yet, but... There's
one thing. I think I figured out
the secret to life.

ESTEE

Oh. Just that? Pff. Call me when
you get something big.

GABE

Wanna hear it?

ESTEE

Yes please.

GABE

Are you sure?

ESTEE

Yes!

He keeps her waiting on purpose.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Fucking tell me!

GABE

I'm not sure you're ready.

She SCREAMS. He laughs.

GABE (CONT'D)

OK. OK. Jesus. Here it is...

(dramatic pause)

Everybody is very different... But we're all unhappy in the same way.

ESTEE

(disappointed)

That's it?!

GABE

That's it. Everybody has different moral codes... beliefs... Personalities... behaviors... Dreams... nightmares... enemies.... But once you strip down the circumstances.

As he says this, he gently takes off her jacket. She recoils.

ESTEE

What are you doing!

He gently turns her around. And then she sees it for the first time.

THE LAKE.

It's real. And it's beautiful. Surrounded by trees, the crystal clear waters shine brightly as the moon reflects in the ripples.

Estee's eyes well up as she takes it in. Because something this beautiful has no place in an ugly town like this. And the fact that it exists -- and has existed this whole time -- makes her angry.

And the fact that she's being a pussy right now makes her even angrier. Coward. She quickly wipes her tears away before he sees.

GABE

It's OK. You don't have to be strong all the time.

But she doesn't feel comfortable. She puts on a smile.

ESTEE

Race you there!

She starts running towards the water. He blinks. Then runs after her.

They jump in with a big SPLASH. Estee squeals with joy and laughter and surprise and, you know, weed.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Fuck! It's real.

Gabe laughs at her reaction.

GABE

I tried to tell you.

She starts swimming around, taking in the place.

ESTEE

Oh yeah, Jesus has definitely been here.

GABE

You can feel it?

ESTEE

I can feel it.

Suddenly, her eyes LIGHT UP.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

You should baptize me.

GABE

Aren't you already baptized?

ESTEE

Yeah but... it's been a while, and... everybody involved is dead, so... Let's do it again!

GABE

I don't know that I know how.

ESTEE

Just... hold my head underwater. And mutter some... garbage.. Or something.

GABE

(unsure)

OK.

ESTEE

OK here we go!

She grabs his hand, puts it on top of her head, and DIVES IN.

GABE

Uh... Garbage... garbage garbage...
Garbage... May you find the peace
and happiness you seek. Amen.

A beat. He loosens his hand's grip on her head, ready for her to come up for air. But then HER hands shoot out of the water, grab his hand, and force it to force her head down so it stays underwater. Yikes.

Look, guys, marijuana can help depression but it sure don't cure it.

Gabe starts to panic. Her head's down there a long ass time. He fights to free his hand from her hands.

Then everything goes still. Then she SHOOTS UP, GASPING FOR AIR. Then she starts to laugh. And scream. And laugh.

GABE (CONT'D)

Jesus, you scared me.

ESTEE

WOOOO! Now you have to say
something official like... like...
I now pronounce you...

GABE

I now pronounce you...

ESTEE

Born again.

GABE

Christian?

ESTEE

Just... born again is fine.

They both giggle, taking in the water, the sky, the stars, the moon.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

You want me to do you?!

GABE

I'm good.

Gabe looks down from the sky and finds Estee staring at him.

GABE (CONT'D)

What?

ESTEE
Why are you really here?

GABE
I told you.

ESTEE
What do you want?

GABE
To know my enemy.

She swims towards him. Gets close.

ESTEE
Am I your enemy?

GABE
Maybe.

She swims closer.

ESTEE
But I'm not like them, I'm like
you.

GABE
(bittersweet)
It's fascinating that you think
that.

This gives her pause. She wasn't expecting that. Then she comes even closer.

Inches apart. A beat. They kiss. It's sweet and tender. They break apart and stare at each other.

ESTEE
I'm not your enemy. I'll show you.
I'll show you it's a good thing
we're doing here. Let me show you.
(thinks)
Come to church on Sunday.

GABE
That's not really my thing.

ESTEE
Please. Just come.

He nods.

EXT. SHERYL'S HOUSE - MIDNIGHT

Estee, still dripping wet and high on life and romance and OK maybe weed, BANGS on Sheryl's door. A long beat.

Then Sheryl opens the door. She looks... different. The polish is gone. So are the structured suits. She wears sweatpants. Dirty shirt. Dried chocolate ice cream around her mouth. Eyes bloodshot red. She looks... plumper. More disheveled... And a little lost.

SHERYL

Christ Estee, do you know what time it is?

ESTEE

YES I DO DEAR SISTER BUT I COULD NOT WAIT. For I am born again! I am free! I am ALIVE!

SHERYL

Jesus, are you high?

ESTEE

I mean... Yes. Aren't you?

SHERYL

Yeah, that's a fair point.

Sheryl leads Estee to porch chairs, they sit down and talk in hushed tones.

ESTEE

Damn Sheryl, you don't look so good.

SHERYL

I know. I... uh... I'm high all the time now. I can't stop. It was fun, at first. But now... I don't know. The entire town is... changing. It feels.. Different. Wrong. Immoral.

ESTEE

Have you seen who's running the country? Right and wrong are archaic terms, Sheryl. It's all just chaos. Who cares!

SHERYL

That's not an excuse! You don't emulate bad behavior. You lead by example. Leadership. That's what we were taught.

(MORE)

SHERYL (CONT'D)

That's what mom and dad always used to say--

(quoting the bible)

"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for... ugh... I forget... Oh yeah, the church of God, which he obtained with his own... blood or whatever." Acts 20... something something.

ESTEE

Yeah OK sure but like, also,

(quoting the bible)

"Not many of you, like, should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will totally be judged with greater strictness. For we all stumble in MANY WAYS, Sheryl. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is, like, a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole fucking body or whatever. If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we totally guide their whole bodies as well. Look at the fucking ships also: though they are so large and shit, they are driven by strong freakin' winds, they are guided by a very small rudder or like wherever the will of the fucking pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small fucking member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire... you know?!" James 3:4 or whatever.

Sheryl just stares, shocked.

SHERYL

How the heck do you remember all that?!

ESTEE

I don't know, Sheryl. I have a lot of free time.

SHERYL

I just... Things were set. They were clear. Our way of life... it was clear. And now it's... messy.

(MORE)

SHERYL (CONT'D)

I spend nights looking out at the sky. Instead of watching my HGTV. I'm thinking thoughts I never thought before. I'm... questioning things. I friggin' hate it, Estee.

ESTEE

Why! Sheryl, questioning is GOOD. It's what makes us better. The greatest minds in the history of mankind were great because they questioned. And they dared be in limbo. Dare to be in limbo, Sheryl!

SHERYL

But limbo is terrifying!! Why is it so scary?

ESTEE

Because it is. For everyone. But especially for people like you and me. Who suffered loss. And trauma.. And sudden... change. Change is scary. But Sheryl it's necessary. And its wonderful. If you just give it a chance. Please. Give it a chance with me.

Estee grabs Sheryl's hands.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

I'll show you. Just come to church on Sunday. OK?

Reluctantly, Sheryl nods.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - THE NEXT DAY

More BAKED WEED GOODS get placed on the window sill. More random HANDS of locals grab the goods, insert cash into the slowly filling MONEY JAR.

A particular CHUBBY HAND reaches for an apple crumble when ESTEE GRABS IT TIGHT.

ESTEE

Pastor Michaels. I was wondering if I could ask you for a small favor.

PRE-LAP: CHURCH ORGAN MUSIC.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

CLOSE ON: Estee's face, eyes closed. She starts singing.

ESTEE

*All praise to Him who reigns on
high, In majesty supreme.
Who gave His life for man to die,
That He might man redeem.*

She opens her eyes, they're bloodshot red.

We go WIDE. The Church is packed to the brim with TOWNSFOLK. Nibbling on cookies. Smiles on all their stoned faces.

And Estee.... Is on stage. In Pastor Michaels' place. Wearing some kind of robe. Dignified, yet odd looking... Estee looking. For not being a cult leader, she sure is starting to look like one.

The entire crowd, aka THE NEW CHURCH OF HOLY EDIBLES, joins her in song.

CROWD

*Redeemer, Savior, Friend of man
Once ruined by the fall,
Thou hast devised salvation's plan,
For Thou hast died for all.*

They finish singing.

ESTEE

Please be seated.

They all obey. She scans the crowd. Everybody is there. Sheryl. Kenny. Gabe. Even Chief Deputy Billy. She opens her mouth to speak, then realizes she doesn't know what to say.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

And God said to the people of
Israel...

Fuck. What DID he say? She's struck by a bad case of stage fright, combined with shitty weed memory. Everybody stares at her, expectantly.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Abandon ye prejudices and, just
like... Come together, man.

A few people exchange glances. But mostly it goes down smooth with this community of newfound stoners. God was a cool guy! He would totally say something like that.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

And uh... Overcome thy differences.
And do good. You know? Oh uh.
Deuteronomy 28. 5. Anyways. This
town. This town...

(she starts pacing)

Has been around for a long time.
Through wars. Conflict. And a
recession or three. But never...
has it shown such division. Such
ugliness. Such un-Christlike
behavior... as it has in these dark
times. But today... TODAY... We say
ENOUGH! Today we come together. And
we look at one another. And we call
each other by the only name that
matters - "Friend." Say it with me.
"Friend!"

Oddly enough, they do.

CROWD

Friend!

ESTEE

"Neighbor!"

CROWD

Neighbor!

ESTEE

(winces, gets over it)

"F... Family!"

CROWD

F... Family!

Gabe watches with awe. The town truly coming together under
Estee's guidance.

ESTEE

And that's what we're gonna call
each other from now on. And to that
end - me and my friends and my
neighbors and my family are gonna
start making some changes around
here. And we're gonna make this a
better place, together. In fact,
there's gonna be a great kickoff
event this afternoon at the newly
renovated Crockett park, and I hope
y'all can make it... And all I ask
from you... my friends... my
neighbors...

(MORE)

ESTEE (CONT'D)

is that you keep an open mind as we execute these changes. And in the spirit of generosity, don't forget all the goods, baked and otherwise... that I kindly provide onto you.

She pointedly stops. A veiled threat under the guise of kindness. A long silence. Some blinking.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Uh... so uh... If you hear me, let me hear an Amen!

A long beat. Finally -

CROWD

(enthusiastically)

AMEN!

Chief Deputy Billy watches from the last bench, as he realizes without a shadow of a doubt that this real suspicious quiet, whatever it may be... It's somehow all related to Estee.

EXT. PARK - THAT AFTERNOON

A few TABLES arranged together at the center of the newly renovated park. Estee and Sheryl sit behind a large colorful banner Estee made at home that reads "**GIVE A GUN, GET A KITTEN.**" They're surrounded by large cages full of small SHELTER KITTENS up for adoption.

A few people mill about. Various reactions, from enthusiasm to disgust.

Stoner Sheryl put in an effort for this public appearance, but is still a little more disheveled than usual. She plays with an orange kitten on her lap. Gabe sits with them, watching the proceedings, fascinated.

GABE

Are you telling me people are really gonna give up their guns?!

ESTEE

Of course not. This is Texas. They'd chop off their own dicks before they give away their guns. But we're hoping they're willing to part with... some of their guns.

A stoned-out-of-his-mind COWBOY, 50's, drops a SEMI-AUTOMATIC on the table with a THUD, as if to prove her point.

COWBOY
I'd like one of them,
whatchamacall'em.

SHERYL
A cat?

COWBOY
Yep that's it. Gimme the chubby guy
with the stripes. That's a lil
tiger in the making.

He signs a form and gets handed a KITTEN. He melts with the kitten in his hands. Estee tosses the gun into a LARGE CARDBOARD BOX filled with similar guns. Gabe watches in awe.

Chief Deputy Billy walks by, taking in the scene. He exchanges suspicious hostile glances with Estee.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
You sisters trying to steal my job?

SHERYL
Never, Billy. Just trying to help
keep the peace and quiet in this
town.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
I'd say you've done a mighty good
job at that. Been quiet lately.
Real quiet.
(pointedly)
Too quiet.

ESTEE
Jail cells feeling too empty, Chief
Deputy? Hands tingling for some
action?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Nice sermon, Estee. Didn't peg you
for the religious type.

ESTEE
What can I say, I've seen the
light.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Praise the lord. I was actually
wondering if I could discuss some
police matters with you. Alone.

ESTEE

Bit busy at the moment.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

My schedule's wide open. Just say when.

Estee thinks for a moment. Gets an idea.

ESTEE

Come by my place later. I'll fix us some dinner.

Chief Deputy Billy is taken aback. Didn't expect such an offer from such a hostile woman. Suspicious. Still. What better way to investigate someone than a firsthand invitation to poke around their home.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

You got it.

Estee nods, tosses another gun into the box, as more GIGGLING PEOPLE line up to get their kittens.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Estee the baker tries something new -- cooking a normal dinner. She slides a ham into the oven. Sets the timer. KNOCK ON THE DOOR. She runs over and opens it.

ESTEE

You're early!

But it's not Chief Deputy Billy. It's Pastor Michaels.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Oh. Hey Pastor Michaels!

PASTOR MICHAELS

I hope I'm not interrupting.

ESTEE

Of course not! Would you like to come in?

PASTOR MICHAELS

No, I... I really can't stay. I just wanted to say great work today. Really... Unique sermon.

ESTEE

Thank you.

PASTOR MICHAELS

You know, you really have done a big service to our town. Bringing people together like that.

ESTEE

Aw, thanks.

PASTOR MICHAELS

In fact, other... neighboring towns... Well, they heard of this... service... you provide... And were... likewise interested... in... adopting our model...

Estee nods blankly.

PASTOR MICHAELS (CONT'D)

And they were indeed... wondering... if... Perhaps... we could extend our services... to them.

Estee finally gets it.

ESTEE

Oh. OK. Uh... Sure! If they're willing to pay. We can do it.

PASTOR MICHAELS

Yes! They're very much willing to pay. Top dollar even.

ESTEE

Excellent. We'll arrange it then.

PASTOR MICHAELS

Great.

He still lingers at the door.

ESTEE

Is there anything else... or?

PASTOR MICHAELS

Maybe... Just... something small... for the weekend?

ESTEE

Oh of course!

She runs into the kitchen, comes back with a PIE.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

This is a good one! You'll like it.
Just.. Take it slow, eh?

Pastor Michaels gratefully accepts the pie. He bows. But does not offer money. Instead he offers a -

PASTOR MICHAELS

Bless you.

Estee nods. A divine act of kindness. Just then, Chief Deputy Billy walks up the steps, dressed half fancy and holding a bottle of wine. Feeling somewhat awkward.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Am I interrupting?

PASTOR MICHAELS

No I was just leaving. Take care,
you two!

Pastor Michaels scurries along.

ESTEE

Hey! Come in!

INSIDE

Chief Deputy Billy inspects her house. Looking for clues... of something. Estee scrutinizes Chief Deputy Billy, suspicious.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

You look sharp... ish.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Thanks. Ish.

Chief Deputy Billy scrutinizes Estee, suspicious.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)

Didn't know the famed Jacksboro
baker could cook.

ESTEE

Ha, don't be so sure I can - we'll
see! I got this ham. It's what my
mom used to make for--

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

For Sunday night dinners. I
remember.

Estee gives him a surprised look.

ESTEE
You remember that?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Yeah. Been over once or twice.
Maybe YOU don't remember. But she
was a great cook.

Something vulnerable and real between them. They quickly
break it, uncomfortable. She goes back to cooking. He gets
busy opening the bottle of wine, pours them both glasses.

ESTEE
Don't poison mine, eh?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Too late!

They hold up their glasses.

ESTEE
To death and deception!

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
What?

ESTEE
What? Cheers!

They don't take their eyes off each other as they drink.

A BUZZER GOES OFF ending the moment. Dinner is ready.

She serves them both. Chief Deputy Billy takes a bite of the
ham. Chews quietly for an unnerving amount of time, making
Estee feel self-conscious.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
And the verdict is...?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
... Almost as good as mom's.

Estee smiles, sadly.

LATER

Their plates empty. Between the booze and the banter - the
suspicion between them seems to have dissipated. They laugh
like close friends, or maybe something more.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
Well Estee. That sure was
something.

Estee bows. Chief Deputy Billy sways a little.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
Wow. Feeling the wine. Damn. Didn't
know I was such a lightweight.

Estee just leans back in her chair. Watches him. Smiles. Because it's not the alcohol he's feeling. She really baked that baked ham. That's right. This some Phantom Thread shit right here. Chief Deputy Billy tries to stand, quickly sits back down.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
Damn. I am feeling... woozy.

Estee just continues to smile and stare, making him feel even more self-conscious. He giggles.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
What? What are you looking at?

Estee laughs.

ESTEE
Nothing. You just look cute when
you're stoned.

Chief Deputy Billy laughs. Good one. Then he gets it. Then he GASPS.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
What?!

Estee jumps up, full of fire, a finger in his face.

ESTEE
Are you investigating me?! Is that
why you're constantly around?! Is
that why you're here tonight?! What
do you want from me?!

Chief Deputy Billy jumps up, full of fire, a finger in her face.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Did you drug me?! Did you put stuff
in my food?! Do you...

It fucking finally dawns on him.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
OH MY GOD. You're a baker. You're a
BAKER. You've been feeding the
town. OH GOD. OH GOD.
(MORE)

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
 Is THAT how you've managed to mind
 control this entire town?! THROUGH
 DRUGS?! YOU'VE BEEN FEEDING THE
 TOWN DRUGS?!

ESTEE
 YES. FUCKING YES. And you know
 what, Chief Deputy Billy? THEY
 FUCKING LOVE IT.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
 Oh my god. That's why it's been so
 quiet. Real quiet. Too quiet.
 Everybody's stoned. Everybody's
 stoned!!!

She half climbs the table to get more in his face.

ESTEE
 AND THEY FUCKING LOVE IT. CAN'T GET
 ENOUGH. BEST THING TO EVER HAPPEN
 TO THEM. BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO
 THIS TOWN.

He half climbs the table to get more in her face.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
 YOU'RE MAKING THE ENTIRE TOWN BREAK
 THE LAW. YOU'VE TURNED US ALL INTO
 CRIMINALS. WE'RE FUCKED. WE'RE SO
 FUCKED!!

They stare at each other for a long beat - full of suspicion
 and fear and paranoia and hatred. Enemies.

And then, obviously, they kiss, passionately.

They start to maneuver towards the living room, still
 kissing. She breaks free, gasping.

ESTEE
 Spying on me like this... Snooping
 outside my window. YOU'RE A GIANT
 CREEP. AND IT'S NOT OK!

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
 Oh because running a one-woman
 small town drug cartel is REALLY
 LEGAL AND SUPER OK!

They stare at each other for a beat. Then kiss some more,
 maneuvering towards the --

BEDROOM

He shoves her down on the bed, then he giggles, then he gets very serious.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
I just wanna state for the record
that THIS IS NOT OK.

ESTEE
Shut your fucking mouth and take
your shirt off.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
OK.

He takes his shirt off and gets on top of her. Sexual tension so thick you could cut it with a sexy sex knife - His face inches from hers, both breathing hard - he tells her what every woman wants to hear.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
I'm gonna have to tell Daddy.

Estee starts to laugh hysterically, realizing she's in deep trouble. He starts to laugh too, from the drugs.

ESTEE
Oh no. Don't tell daddy, Billy.
That would be bad. That would be
very very bad.

She's about to shove him off, when he grabs her face, with great tenderness.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
OK. OK I won't. I won't.

ESTEE
Promise?

He caresses her face, like someone who is truly smitten. He nods. Then she nods. OK. It's OK.

And then, you know, they have sex.

LATER

Naked under the sheets, they lay there, together. Somewhere between giddiness and complete shame. The two of them together... Enemies their entire lives. Nobody wanted this. And yet... Maybe they're not so different after all.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
I envy you.

ESTEE

Me?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Yeah.

(in Spanish)

You're brave.

ESTEE

I'm not brave. I'm chickenshit.

[QUICK FLASH -- Estee at the bus stop, the bus leaves without her. Too scared to get on it.]

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

You are brave. Look at what you've done. With the town. Took some balls.

ESTEE

(in Spanish)

You can be brave too.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

I can't be shit. I'm just daddy's little helper. Carrying out orders. And one day I'll become daddy. And I'll have my own son to boss around. And he'll be carrying out orders. And then he'll have a son. And I'll just drop dead one day in the supermarket and be forgotten a couple of years later.

ESTEE

It doesn't have to be that way. Say you got dealt a shit hand. Like me. We got dealt a shit hand. So either you say - "Welp, got dealt a shit hand, might as well fold", or you say - "I got dealt a shit hand, so who fucking cares, might as well play the shit out of that hand, terrify everybody at the table till they're pissing their pants, and maybe with enough luck, intimidation and chaos I might accidentally win", ya know?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

I guess so. Guess I never thought about it that way.

ESTEE

Me neither... But now... I figure why not. I always thought being a lifer is a curse. And it is. It fucking is. It's a terminal disease.... But turns out it's also strangely... powerful. Like a superpower. Everybody knows you. Everybody trusts you. Under the right circumstances... Why, you could get them to do... virtually anything. I can get them to do anything. Even you...

She looks at him, he's passed out.

MORNING

Estee wakes up first. Hungover. Depleted. She stares at the sleeping Chief Deputy Billy. He's sweet, but she feels nothing. She looks down at her arm. **The rash is spreading.**

INT. WEED SHOP - SAME TIME

Gabe reads a book behind the counter. Estee walks in with a pep in her step.

ESTEE

Good morning, business partner!

He lights up at seeing her.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

(loudly)

We're expanding operations! Uh, I mean...

(whispers)

We're expanding operations.

GABE

What does that mean?

To answer, she smacks A THOUSAND DOLLARS ON THE TABLE.

ESTEE

It means I'm gonna need to buy you out here.

GABE

Estee...

ESTEE

Do you know Sheryl is currently in talks with the mayor to turn the abandoned Piggly Wiggly crack den into a shelter for the needy? And.. AND... we're raising money for underpaid teachers in like three freakin' districts, not to mention, raising funding for the arts in elementary schools, and and...

Gabe hesitates.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Come on, man! I'll just bake for the next 70 hours straight like a one woman sweatshop, then we can celebrate in our special place! Ya know, by the lake!

She grabs his hands. Squeezes them. Pleading. Somewhere in all this - Gabe is swayed. Yet again. Reluctantly, he nods. They start piling goods into brown paper bags.

GABE

Just... Please be discreet.

ESTEE

(loudly)

ALWAYS AM!

(whispers)

I mean.. Always am.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Estee and Gladys start baking enormous amounts of baked goods. Pies, cakes, pastries, breads, cookies, THE WORKS! They package all the goods in fancy new containers, and brand them with freshly made specialty stickers that read "**BAKED**" or another cringey pun brand name of your choice.

As they work, Gladys eyes Estee, something on her mind.

GLADYS

I don't know that it's the best idea to be romantic with two different people at the same time.

ESTEE

What? Where'd you hear that?

GLADYS

It's a small town. Everybody knows everything.

ESTEE

Right. Well. Why the fuck not, Gladys. Pardon my French. I can be with two people. I can do what I want. **This my town now.**

GLADYS

I'm just afraid you'll get hurt.

ESTEE

Well Gladys, that makes one of us.

EXT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - LATER

Estee and Gladys load up their wrapped baked goods into an UNMARKED WHITE VAN. Estee hands the DRIVER a THICK STACK OF CASH, like a straight up mobster / cartel boss.

A FIRE TRUCK DRIVES PAST a few blocks away, sirens BLASTING. Estee and Gladys look at each other, puzzled.

DRIVER

Oh yeah, a house burned down on Banks Street. It's OK, they got everybody out.

Hmm.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Feeling all kinds of out of it, Chief Deputy Billy sits in his office. A FACETIME call from Sheriff Daddy. He hesitates. Then answers.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Well?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Hi dad, sir. Uh. I've looked into things. And uh. There's some strong leads, and uh... You know. Slowly but steadily making progress... And uh...

SHERIFF WILLIAM

You got nothing, do you?

Silence.

SHERIFF WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Hmmm. Maybe I should come back early. Take care of it myself.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

No, dad, don't worry about it, I got it covered, I--

CLICK. Line goes dead.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

Estee and Gabe splash around the lake in another blissful nighttime swim. Gabe does a handstand underwater. Then comes up for air. Estee applauds.

ESTEE

What are you.. Some.. Fuckin.. Olympian? Olympiad? Olympian?

Oh yeah, they're very stoned.

GABE

I'm an Olympiadic performer, yes.

She swims towards him. They stare at each other. He goes serious.

GABE (CONT'D)

What if it all goes wrong? What you're doing?

ESTEE

How? Everybody signed up for this. This is a fully consensual operation. And it makes everybody happy. The only potential risk that goes through my mind is obesity. And you know, there are worse ways to live and die.

GABE

Yeah, well. There are other dangers you may be overlooking. I have to order larger quantities for the store now, you know. Which stretches believability in a town like this. Which means my lies grow bigger in accounting for said weed. I've made up so many fake accounts I'm running out of name combinations.

She puts her arms around him. Brings him close.

ESTEE

I can help you with that.

She kisses his cheek.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

I know a lot of names.

She wraps her legs around him.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Like Bob... Bob... Bob Smith..
George Smith... Albert... Smith.

He kisses her back.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Fred... Fred... G...
Grant..chester.

GABE

That's a good one.

And then, you know, fuck it, they have sex.

DON'T JUDGE ESTEE, YOU PREHISTORIC FUCKS. It's 2019. A woman can do whatever the fuck she wants with her body and soul.

Or, you know, do judge her. She IS a highly immoral, selfish, chaotic, clinically depressed, wholly destructive and self-sabotaging person. Does a past full of tragedy really redeem that? That's your call. I'M JUST THE WRITER, WHAT DO I KNOW.

PRE-LAP: BANGING ON THE DOOR.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Estee opens the door in a bathrobe, looking a hot mess.

Her rash is looking much worse now. Spread to both arms. She hides it under the bathrobe.

Sheryl is at the door, in a strange velour track suit, eating a donut anxiously.

SHERYL

We're late to the thing!

ESTEE

(squints)
What thing?

SHERYL

The ribbon cutting on the thing...
You know... The Piggly Wiggly
shelter... Thing?

ESTEE

Are you already high? Jesus Sheryl,
it's not even noon.

SHERYL

Are you seriously judging me right
now? Look at you, you look like...
fucking.. That movie.. With the
guy.

ESTEE

Big Lebowski?

SHERYL

BINGO!

Estee grabs her keys, locks the door.

ESTEE

Alright let's go.

SHERYL

You're going like that? In a robe?

ESTEE

Why the fuck not. This my town now!

Sheryl rolls her eyes. They start walking.

SHERYL

Just don't forget the thing...
about that guy... You know with the
wings. And the sun.

ESTEE

Icarus?

SHERYL

BINGO!

STREET

They walk down the street at a hurried pace. Estee in a
bathrobe. Sheryl puts on sunglasses and fishes a slice of
pizza from her purse.

SHERYL (CONT'D)

There's trouble in paradise, you
know. That house that burned down?
(MORE)

SHERYL (CONT'D)

It's cuz everybody took a long hard
fucking nap! Left food in the oven.

ESTEE

Sheryl can you take smaller bites?
It's hard to understand you.

SHERYL

This isn't a joke! Worst part? Took
the fire department a long ass time
to get there - cuz they were all in
the woods doing a stoner
reenactment of Grease.

ESTEE

The musical?!

SHERYL

People are losing their minds,
Estee. I don't know if this Perma-
High life is good for them. I
mean... You and I... We're
professionals, we can handle it.

Sheryl takes out an empty hamburger bun from her purse,
starts nibbling on it.

SHERYL (CONT'D)

But the laypeople... I don't know.
I think we might need to better..
Regulate... moderate...

ESTEE

(not listening)

Yeah sure etc. Of course. We will!
You got it.

CLOSE ON: A RED RIBBON BEING CUT WITH GIANT SCISSORS.

EXT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - LATER

Sheryl and Estee, surrounded by OFFICIAL LOOKING FOLKS and
THE MEDIA cut the ribbon on the REVAMPED PIGGLY WIGGLY - now
a shelter for people in need. Cameras flash as they wave at a
CHEERING AUDIENCE.

ESTEE

(pandering like a
politician)

Are these scissors huge or did I
just eat too much cake?

Everybody laughs and cheers, an adoring audience.

Pastor Michaels urgently makes his way to Estee.

PASTOR MICHAELS

(whispers)

We got a problem. One of the
delivery vans got pulled over.

ESTEE

(smiling at crowd)

Fuck. OK. We'll talk about it
later.

(at crowd)

GOD BLESS THIS TOWN!

Across the street, an official Sheriff's police car pulls over.

Daddy's back in town. SHERIFF WILLIAM, even more large and intimidating in the flesh, exits the car. He walks over to the main event, taking it in, chatting up the locals.

Chief Deputy Billy sees him and dives into some bushes. But then he thinks against it and stands up. Brushes himself off. Walks up to daddy.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Father! Dad. Sir. You're back! But
I had it covered.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Yeah well I didn't buy anything you
were selling. You had the little
lamb voice of someone who had gone
and lost their way. Gone and fell
in love with the town. Or a tree.
Or a woman. Meanwhile murmurs of
the strange going-ons in this town
have been growing. So I decided to
cut the amateur hour and
personally come and check it out.
To expedite results, no offense to
your blatant incompetence.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

None taken. And what strange going-
ons?! This town is completely
normal!

A STONED, FULLY NAKED MAN runs past the crowd, belting a
Tammy Faye song of your choice from the top of his lungs.

William stares pointedly at Chief Deputy Billy.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY (CONT'D)
That's just Fred, you know he's
crazy.

SHERIFF WILLIAM
And what's this ceremony all about?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
They're converting the Piggly
Wiggly crack den into a shelter.
Normal!

SHERIFF WILLIAM
Mm hmm. We'll see about that.

With that, Sheriff William walks off, begins his own
investigation. Chief Deputy Billy watches him go.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
Crud.

MEANWHILE ON THE FRONT STAGE OF THE EVENT

Bathrobe Estee and Stoner Sheryl, the new queens of town,
wave at the crowd and start to walk off, stopping
occasionally to shake hands and field answers from the press.

An average looking MAN comes over to greet them and Sheryl
gives him a big hug.

SHERYL
Estee! This is who I've been
meaning to introduce you to for
AGES! Johnny! Remember Johnny from
the car dealership?

ESTEE
You mean Dickles-- Johnny! Yes. Hi!

SHERYL
(to Johnny)
Johnny this is Estee my very single
sister.

ESTEE
(under her breath)
Eh, getting a lot of action these
days but OK.

SHERYL
And she's not always in a bathrobe!
Just to be clear.

From afar, Estee spots Sheriff William making the rounds, doing actual investigative work, unlike his incompetent son. She swallows hard, realizing her show is about to end for good.

JOHNNY

Lovely to meet you, Estee. Love what you've been doing around here. Big fan. Was thinking maybe we can--

ESTEE

(distracted)
Totally. Talk to my agent.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

Estee, in her bathrobe, walks down the street, feeling suddenly small and lost.

[QUICK FLASHBACK -- Estee at the bus stop, the bus drives away. She didn't have the courage to get on it.]

She observes her small town, the bane of her existence, and how it's changed for the better... and for the worse.

MORE FIRE TRUCKS RUSH PAST.

She overhears TWO GRANDMAS ON A BENCH.

GRANDMA #1

His house exploded. He got very high and tried to microwave a hat.

Up ahead, a TRAFFIC JAM. The cause - a MAN dancing on top of his car to Earth Wind & Fire.

POLICE CARS ZOOM PAST. Chaos... GROWING. Everywhere. People... losing their minds.

Pastor Michaels runs up to Estee.

PASTOR MICHAELS

Another delivery van just got pulled over.

ESTEE

Another one?! Jesus, what are they like, checking for drugs on the highways?!

PASTOR MICHAELS

Yes. That's literally what they do.

ESTEE

Right. OK. That's fair. Maybe...
Maybe it's a holy sign from above
that we need to stop... Everything.

He opens his mouth to speak but she just keeps on walking.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Estee sees DOOMSDAY STEVE aka MR. AITKEN her former math teacher gone mad, now looking quite sane, if a little stoned and giggly, holding an outdoors class to a group of KIDS. Math and teaching tools scattered on the grass.

Estee smiles a sad smile and walks up to him.

ESTEE

You're teaching again!

DOOMSDAY STEVE

I am! Well not officially. I just grabbed these kids. I mean not in a criminal kidnapping kind of manner. Their parents are around... Somewhere. Anyways. Feels good.

ESTEE

Even though the world's gonna end?

DOOMSDAY STEVE

Gotta make the little we have left count, right?

A SMALL CHILD walks up to Estee and pulls on her bathrobe.

SMALL CHILD

We're learning about fucktals!

DOOMSDAY STEVE

(quickly)
Fractals. He means fractals.

Seeing the child, Estee grows even sadder and more desperate, feeling like a lost child herself.

ESTEE

Hey Mr. Aitken... You got any like, I dunno... advice for me... Like fun.. Math.. Metaphors.. For life.. Like you used to when we were kids?

DOOMSDAY STEVE

Hmm.. Let's see... Well I think fractals are a pretty neat metaphor, aren't they? A fractal is a uh... a never-ending pattern. We're talking infinitely complex patterns that are self-similar across different scales. They are created by repeating a simple process over and over in an ongoing feedback loop. Driven by recursion, fractals are images of dynamic systems - pictures of Chaos. Neat, huh?

ESTEE

OK... And uh... What's the uh... What's the.. The metaphor here exactly?

DOOMSDAY STEVE

Well. Chaos... is everywhere. And human behavior repeats itself... Our demons drive us to repeat the same behaviors again... and again.. And again.. But... The important thing to understand is that underneath all the variables... we are all self-similar. We are all the same.

ESTEE

But it doesn't feel that way anymore. Things have gotten so fractured. People got so angry and spiteful and small. I tried to save it, I tried to save this town, but... I can't. It's not sustainable.

DOOMSDAY STEVE

But you are.

ESTEE

I'm what?

DOOMSDAY STEVE

Sustainable.

ESTEE

What if I'm not? The loop has to end at some point.

An EXPLOSION in the distance.

INT. ESTEE'S HOUSE - LATER

Estee dramatically dumps all the weed into trash bags. She then dumps all her baking ingredients into trash bags.

The kitchen is now empty. Sterile.

OUTSIDE

She throws out large bags of trash.

EXT. SHERYL'S HOUSE - SUNSET

Estee knocks on Sheryl's door, still in the bathrobe, the rash everywhere now.

Sheryl opens the door, She wears an old pajama dress full of holes from years of use. Similar if not identical to the one Estee wore in the beginning of this film. There's a WEED COOKIE peeking out of her pocket.

They both have lost looks on their faces. Two orphans.

ESTEE

Jesus. You look like me.

SHERYL

That bad, huh? And look who's talking, with that robe. You look like that guy from that movie.

ESTEE

Big Lebowski? We've had this conversation before, Sheryl.

SHERYL

Sorry, my memory's shit lately.

ESTEE

What's going on?

SHERYL

I just don't know... anything... anymore.

ESTEE

Sheryl, I told you, not knowing is good.

SHERYL

But I used to know. I knew everything. When mom and dad di-- I rose to the challenge.

(MORE)

SHERYL (CONT'D)

I maintained their public image. I was there to take over. For the town. A leader. An example. And there was a comfort in that. And now... I don't know anymore.

ESTEE

Do you want to go back to that?

SHERYL

Heck no.

ESTEE

GOOD. Then don't. Then live with the not knowing until you figure out who you wanna be. Not for mom and dad. Not for the town. Not for me. But for you.

Sheryl takes out the cookie.

SHERYL

So I just do this to feel nothing forever?

Estee grabs the cookie from Sheryl, throws it into the bushes.

SHERYL (CONT'D)

HEY!

ESTEE

You don't have to do that if it doesn't work anymore.

SHERYL

Then what?

Estee gets emotional. Grabs Sheryl with both hands.

ESTEE

Sheryl. You're my big sister. You've always taken care of me. You are strong. And you will figure it out. I have full faith. And I love you.

SHERYL

(suspicious)

Why are you being soft? Did you do something? Are you going to do something?

ESTEE

No! Can't we share a moment?

SHERYL

What are you planning? Estee you're not gonna do anything crazy are you?

ESTEE

No! What am I gonna do, drown myself in the lake?! Get outta here Sheryl, you're just stoned. Now give us a hug.

Sheryl eyes her suspiciously. Then she gives in. They give each other a big long hug.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

(tearing up)

Have a good night, OK?

EXT. LAKE - SUNSET

Estee walks up to the lake. It's magic hour. The area is empty and quiet. The lake serene. Beautiful. Sad. Perfect.

She takes off the bathrobe, her entire arms are covered in a rash now, she slowly enters the lake. She lowers herself into the water until only the top half of her head is visible.

Then she hears a SPLASH from the other side of the lake. It's an ALLIGATOR. It stares at her.

ESTEE

Do you mind? I'm trying to die here.

The Alligator doesn't budge.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Look, I get it. Suicide is irresponsible and selfish. But I have no options left, Mr. Alligator. I'm a toxic leper. An obsolete oddity and a freak of nature. A plant that grew up wrong in a hostile environment. But I now know with certainty that I can't leave. And I can't stay either, cuz I poison everything. So what do I do, huh? This is the only logical choice. You get it. You've been around.

The Alligator starts swimming towards her, threateningly. Most humans at this point would get very scared, but as we already know Estee, she responds a little differently. Her face twists in anger.

ESTEE (CONT'D)
 GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE YOU DUMB
 BITCH ASS ALLIGATOR THIS IS MY
 FUCKING LAKE I OWN ALL OF THIS SHIT
 GO TO SOME DUMB SWAMP AND STAY
 THERE YOU PIECE OF SHIT NO ONE
 INVITED YOU HERE.

The Alligator blinks, considers this. Then he gently makes a U-Turn, swims away, exits the lake and waddles out of sight.

Content, Estee nods to herself, resumes trying to die. She lowers herself down to the water. Closes her eyes. Prepares to descend fully, forever. Sweet release.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
 Estee!

Estee rolls her eyes and floats up.

ESTEE
 Oh for fuck's sake. Can't a woman
 die in peace?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
 What?

ESTEE
 What? How'd you find me?

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
 It's a small town. Everybody knows
 everything. Listen, I need to talk
 to you! Daddy's here. And he's
 better than me at... figuring stuff
 out, and...

ESTEE
 It's OK. I know. It's all over for
 Estee.

Chief Deputy Billy's face fills with unexpected tenderness. In full uniform, he walks into the water to speak to her face to face. She laughs a bit at his commitment.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY
 Estee, what we had... maybe it's
 the drugs, but... it felt good.
 I... I want to be with you.

ESTEE

That's cute, Billy, but I'm not built for that. Or for anything. I'm just an obsolete relic freak who doesn't belong here anymore.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

But that's not true! You've got superpowers, remember? You're a lifer. Everybody knows you. Everybody trusts you. Under the right circumstances... Why, you could get them to do virtually anything. You can get me to do... virtually anything.

ESTEE

You know what, I think that was just the drugs talking. I don't think anyone can make anyone do anything. Let alone themselves. I think we're doomed to remain stuck in our own loops, Billy.

That gives Billy pause. Uh.. What?

GABE (O.S.)

Oh. Hello. Didn't know we were having a party.

Gabe stands on the shore, watching them, irate.

ESTEE

Oh for fuck's sake.

Gabe takes his shirt off and also enters the water.

GABE

I hope I'm not interrupting. It's just that the lake is kind of our place. It's where we go to discuss the drug operation we're running.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Oh cool. Well I'm the local cop investigating that drug operation.

GABE

Yeah well, we had sex.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

Yeah well, we also had sex, so...

ESTEE

Can you both maybe, just like, fuck
off forever?

Just then, Sheryl runs over, looking panicked and disheveled.

SHERYL

Estee! Estee!

ESTEE

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST. Is there a
birthday party here or what the
fuck is going on?

SHERYL

It's the Sheriff. He got the fancy
out of town police involved.
They're coming. They're... there's
a raid. Planned. To stop... you.

ESTEE

I know. It's cool. Don't worry
about it. Wanna come in for a swim?
All the cool kids are doing it.

And with that, MORE AND MORE FAMILIAR FACES and TOWNSPEOPLE
come pouring in. Gladys, Mr. Shelby, Kenny and his cronies,
Pastor Michaels, etc. Etc. THE ENTIRE TOWN.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

WHAT THE ACTUAL FUCK.

KENNY

We're here to protect you, Estee.
We won't let them take you.

ESTEE

Please let them take me.

KENNY

NEVER.

They all gather on one side of the lake. On Kenny's cue, they
all take out VARIOUS GUNS.

ESTEE

Oh Christ. Put those away, will
you?!

As if on cue, A SWAT TEAM, ALL IN BLACK, HELMETS, WEAPONS
DRAWN, run down the hill and gather on the opposite side of
the lake from the townsfolk. Sheriff William at the head.

More and more TOWNSFOLK show up. Old ladies. Angry youngins. Church ladies. Cowboys. More SWAT TEAM on the other side.

TWO CAMPS. On opposite of the lake.

A MEXICAN STAND-OFF. A DUEL. Guns drawn.

Sheriff William gets on a MEGAPHONE.

SHERIFF WILLIAM (ON MEGAPHONE)

Estee Lynne Dorci. You've had your fun but now it's time to call it quits. You have ten seconds to exit the water and come with us.

Kenny nods at the TOWNSFOLK and they all raise their guns, at the ready.

KENNY

Just say the word, Estee, we'll shoot them down.

ESTEE

They're fucking cops, Kenny.

KENNY

But they ain't our cops. They're out of town cops.

ESTEE

NONETHELESS!

Gabe swims to shore, alone on the sidelines, a removed party of one. Observing, as he always does. Fearful but fascinated at how their experiment will finally end.

Chief Deputy Billy, still in the water, knows this is it. His moment to be brave. His moment to take a stand, make a difference, play the hand he was dealt, like a gosh darn hero.

He swims to shore over on the town's side, joins Kenny, takes out his gun, ready to betray his father and defend Estee. Sheriff William sees this and gets on his megaphone.

SHERIFF WILLIAM (ON MEGAPHONE)

Son. What are you doing. Get over here RIGHT NOW.

A beat. Chief Deputy Billy hesitates. Then he hurriedly walks over to Dad's side, head hung low. He stands behind Sheriff William, makes eye contact with the always brave Estee, then fills with doubt again.

He marches to the sidelines, where Gabe sits.

CHIEF DEPUTY BILLY

I'm just gonna... I'm gonna.. I'm still kind of working out my position here, please go on, don't let me keep you.

Everybody rolls their eyes. Resumes business.

SHERIFF WILLIAM (ON MEGAPHONE)

Estee come out with your hands up, I ain't playing around here.

KENNY

Leave her alone!

Everybody grabs tighter hold of their guns. One wrong move and this could all go very wrong.

Estee, in the eye of the storm, still submerged in the lake. She is absolutely done with all of this. With all of them. She swims up to a ROCK in the middle of the lake and CLIMBS IT.

From the shore, it looks like she's STANDING ON WATER.

A GRANDMA on shore GASPS, crosses herself.

GRANDMA

(whispers)

Just like Jesus.

ESTEE

It's a rock, Ethel. I'm on a rock.
(loudly)

NOW LISTEN THE FUCK UP. I appreciate what y'all are trying to do here, but no thank you. Put those guns away. I'm ready to pay for what I've done. But before I go I just have one last thing to say.

Then she just stands there silently for a very long time. The Townfolk look her over. At her drenched figure. Exposed arms. **The rash has spread and covers almost all of her visible skin now.** It looks irritated too, like she's been scratching.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Everybody always asks me, "Gee Estee, if you hate it so much, why don't you just leave?" And I always give bullshit answers.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

(on megaphone)

Come out with your hands up--

ESTEE

CHRIST, GIVE ME FIVE FUCKING SECONDS TO SPEAK MY GODDAMN MIND BEFORE YOU TAKE ME AWAY FOREVER, YOU SMALL SAD SACK COG IN THE INDUSTRIAL FASCIST AMERICAN MACHINE RUINING LIVES SINCE IN THE DAWN OF FUCKING MAN, but also I hope Ruth is doing well, give her my best, ANYWAYS, I always give bullshit answers. But I'll tell you the real truth now. The real real truth.

(a beat)

I hate this town. I hate all of you. I really hate all of you. And I hate myself too. But I don't leave this town, because you don't leave family. You just don't. No matter how dysfunctional, how selfish, how misguided, immoral, ugly, stupid self-righteous, hypocritical, violent, crude... you just... Don't leave family. My parents left us.

Estee makes eye contact with Sheryl and despite herself, starts tearing up.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

And I know how much that hurts. So I can't leave. I can't...

She chokes.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

You know what? No. I don't like this metaphor. Let's try a different one. A more poignant one. And yes I pronounce the g in poignant, so fuck you.

Estee toughens back up. Takes a deep breath. A beat.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

This town is like a cancer. This country... is a cancer. Don't get me wrong now, I ain't idealizing the past - it's always been a cancer. But now... this cancer... It's gone and metastasized...

(MORE)

ESTEE (CONT'D)

And morphed... And mutated... And spread... And now you can't cut it out anymore. It's there. Forever.

Silence.

OLD MAN

(quietly)

Did she say this town is like pasta?

ANOTHER OLD MAN

(quietly)

No, cancer.

OLD MAN

Oh my, how morbid.

A GUNSHOT GOES OFF IN THE CROWD.

STONED COWBOY

OOPS, MY BAD!

Then things quiet down again.

ESTEE

But here's the thing about cancer. It's your own cells that turned against you... poisoning everything. They're still yours. It's your cells. Do you get it? Why haven't I left? Because I knew long before everybody else figured it out, that it's your cells. There's no *you*... apart... from *them*. Do you understand?

Silence. She faces the town. A final goodbye.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

As much as I hate it, and fuck knows I do - there's no me apart from you. And that's why I can't leave. Ever.

(a beat)

Unless I die.

With that, she dives into the lake and disappears.

The Townsfolk GASP. Murmurs. Cries. She's gone.

ETHEL

(gasps)

She disappeared in the lake, just
like Jesus!

A long sad quiet beat.

Then Estee BURSTS through the water. She gasps, catching her
breath.

ESTEE

OK. I'm ready to go now.

She waddles awkwardly towards William and the SWAT Team. She
reaches the shore and they tackle her to the ground. Cuff
her. She cooperates fully.

Then they come for Gabe.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

DON'T FUCKING TOUCH HIM! He had
nothing to do with this.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

He ran the shop. He was your
supplier.

ESTEE

He was no such thing. I broke into
his store, after hours. Multiple
times. Stole his shit. Messed with
his accounts. Threatened his life.
Look at him then look at me, you
know he's not capable - You know I
am.

William looks her over. Shrugs. Good point.

SHERIFF WILLIAM

Son, we'll be in touch. And you can
kiss your license goodbye.

Gabe nods. Raises his hands, a surrender. They start leading
Estee away. She passes by Gabe. She bolts forward and plants
an aggressive kiss on him. Then she's dragged away. She calls
after him --

ESTEE

Am I the enemy?

He smiles a sad smile.

GABE

TBD.

As they lead her away, the Townsfolk just watch quietly.

Then they break into cheer and applause, a loving thank you for Estee.

It's a sweet gesture, but it brings her no joy. Her face still serious, as they take her up the mountain, and escort her into a BLACK SUV.

The SUV pulls out and drives away.

INSIDE THE CAR

ESTEE

Hey can you crack open the window
an inch?

An AGENT, buff and severe, stares her down, refusing.

ESTEE (CONT'D)

Oh for fuck's sake, what am I gonna
do, slice myself into thin layers
and slide out through the crack?!
Open the fucking window, you
useless void where a human being
should be.

A beat. The Agent cracks open the window. Estee nods thanks.

The wind blows on her face.

She watches out the window as they pick up speed, following a trail out of town.

A small faded sign reads **"NOW LEAVING JACKSBORO."**

Estee reads it, and for the first time -- she breaks into a real smile. Not a stoned smile. Not a cynical smile. Not a revenge smile. Not a suicidal smile. A real one.

A smile of pure relief. Going to prison, but free at last.

The Lifer is dead.

THE END.