HALLELUJAH

"Pilot"

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DRAFT
1st - January 10th, 2011
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HALLELUJAH

"Pilot"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SWEET PETE'S ROAD HOUSE - NIGHT

OPEN ON a tawdry roadside bar. A man emerges, beer in hand.

This is CALEB TURNER, 38. As he walks into the parking lot, he downs the beer and tosses the can.

CALEB (V.O.)
Let's start with the obvious. I am a miserable sinner.

Caleb happily struts to his car, keys in hand.

CALEB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
My days are spent lying, drinking, and chasing women. And every so often...

As he is about to unlock his door, Caleb hears a sound. He turns to see TWO ROUGH-LOOKING MEN standing a few feet away.

CALEB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... I chase the wrong one.

Caleb suddenly bolts. The men go after him. Caleb heads back to the bar. Before he can get there, the men tackle him.

CALEB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That's how I get myself in trouble.

EXT. CAR - TRUNK - MOMENTS LATER

The men dump the struggling Caleb into the trunk of the car.

CALEB (V.O.)
If these boys work for her husband, they're probably going to kill me.

INT. CAR - TRUNK - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON a determined Caleb.

CALEB (V.O.)
But I won't beg for my life. 'Cause I know it won't be worth much.
EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MINUTES LATER

A car pulls over to the side of a desolate dirt road.

    CALEB (V.O.)
    But something's happening to our town.

INT. CAR - TRUNK - MOMENTS LATER

The trunk opens and four hands reach in drag Caleb out.

    CALEB (V.O.)
    It's like the Devil's grabbed hold and
    he won't let go.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

WIDE SHOT of the men as they drag Caleb from the car.

    CALEB (V.O.)
    Everyone I know, my family, friends...
    they're all suffering in some way.

One man grabs Caleb and holds him while the other begins
beating him. Caleb falls to his knees.

    CALEB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
    It's not right. Their lives shouldn't
    be this hard. They deserve better. So
    I'll beg for them.

One man takes out a gun out and points it at Caleb.

    CALEB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
    And if you also feel like saving my
    life tonight, I wouldn't object.

The man then pistol-whips Caleb. Caleb falls to the ground.

    CALEB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
    Anyway, that's all I got to say.

WIDE SHOT as the two men turn and walk away.

    CALEB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
    In Jesus Christ's name, I pray. Amen.

CLOSE ON Caleb as he passes out and his eyes close shut.

We're ON an OVERHEAD SHOT of Caleb as he lies in the middle
of the road. JOYOUS GOSPEL MUSIC begins to play.
EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

A pair of dusty old boots walk into frame.

CHOIR
GONNA LAY DOWN MY BURDEN, DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE...

We're ON a man's back as he walks. He carries a duffel bag.

CHOIR (CONT'D)
... DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE. DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE...

WIDE SHOT of this MAN as he walks down this deserted road.

CHOIR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... GONNA LAY DOWN MY BURDEN, DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE AND STUDY WAR NO MORE...

MEDIUM SHOT of the back of the man's head as he walks past a sign that reads, "WELCOME TO HALLELUJAH. POP. 20,367."

INT. TURNER HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

ANGLE on a smiling RYE TURNER, 40, as he tightens his tie, getting ready for church.

CHOIR (V.O.)
I AIN'T GONNA STUDY WAR NO MORE...

INT. TURNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

ANGLE on a determined RUTH TURNER, 39, as she licks her hand and smooths down the hair of a stoic MATTHEW TURNER, 8.

CHOIR
AIN'T GONNA STUDY WAR NO MORE...

INT. TURNER HOUSE - WILLOW'S BEDROOM - DAY

ANGLE on a thoughtful WILLOW TURNER, 18, brushing her hair.

CHOIR
AIN'T GONNA STUDY WAR NO MORE...

INT. TURNER HOME - FOYER - DAY

ANGLE on a BIBLE. A hand enters frame and grabs it.

(CONTINUED)
INT. ROMAN HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

ANGLE on a formidable DEL ROMAN, 42, as he flicks lint off of his expensive Italian suit.

CHOIR (V.O.)
AIN'T GONNA STUDY WAR NO MORE...

ANGLE on a sexy VEDA ROMAN, 26, as she puts on red lipstick.

CHOIR (CONT’D)
AIN'T GONNA STUDY WAR NO MORE...

EXT. ROMAN HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

ANGLE on a cocky GIDEON ROMAN, 21, as he preens in a mirror.

CHOIR
AIN'T GONNA STUDY WAR NO MORE...

Del and Veda pass in the b.g. Gideon grabs a bible and exits.

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Rye emerges from the house and hurries his family to the truck.

CHOIR
GONNA PUT ON A LONG WHITE ROBE, DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE...

EXT. ROMAN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Del and his family saunter to their car.

CHOIR
... DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE, DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

WIDE SHOT of both vehicles as they head down the highway.

CHOIR
GONNA PUT ON A LONG WHITE ROBE, DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE...

(CONTINUED)
They both pass by the MAN, still walking on the side of the road. He looks up to see that they are headed for a church that looms in the distance.

CHOIR (CONT’D)

... AND STUDY WAR NO MORE.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

WE'RE ON a pair of hands on a keyboard holding the last chord of the song.

REVEAL Ruth at the organ. Matthew sits beside her.

REVEREND MOTT, 60, arrives at the podium.

REVEREND MOTT

I want to thank the choir for singing that particular song. That's a helpful reminder to you all that we'll be holding services next week at Cooper's Creek. And we'll be baptizing folks in the river. Just like the old days...

ANGLE on Rye, seated beside Willow. He winks at someone O.S.

ANGLE on Ruth who smiles back at him. Matthew stares blankly at the keyboard.

REVEREND MOTT (CONT’D)

I also want to acknowledge the man responsible for our brand new pipe organ. We must thank him once again for his unbelievable generosity. Del Roman, stand up and take a bow.

Del Roman stands up in the pew and waves to the congregation as they applaud. Del basks proudly in their appreciation.

As Rye joins others in clapping, DEACON MAY, 45, comes up behind him and taps him on the shoulder. He motions for Rye to follow him. Rye hands his bible to Willow and exits.

ANGLE on Del continue to wave to the congregation.

EXT. CHURCH - SIDE DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Deacon May and Rye emerge.
DEACON MAY
Got a call from the hospital. Your brother's been hurt.

RYE
(stunned)
How?

DEACON MAY
He was found on the side of the road this morning. Someone had beat him up.

RYE
Did he say who did it?

DEACON MAY
Caleb's still unconscious.

RYE
Okay. I've got to go to him. Can you let Ruth and Willow know what's happened?

DEACON MAY
Of course.

Rye starts to head out. Deacon May stops him.

DEACON MAY (CONT'D)
And Rye? I'll make sure everyone here prays for you and your brother.

RYE
Deacon, I'm going to find out who did this to Caleb. And when I do, that's who you should be praying for.

Rye exits. Off Deacon May's concerned reaction, we:

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Rye crosses through the church, up the aisle, passing Veda and Del who are seated in a pew. Veda adjusts her incredibly low-cut red dress. Del thumbs through his program.

Seated on the other side of Del is IDA SIMPSON, a trouble-making old bitty. Ida gives Veda the once-over. Del notices.

DEL
Morning, Mrs. Simpson. Don't you look nice today.
IDA
Why thank you, Mr. Roman. I have to ask. Do you really think your wife's dress is appropriate for church?

Del looks at Veda, then back at Ida.

DEL
Not sure. But every time I see her in it, I do say, 'Thank you, Jesus'.

Del grins. Ida looks at him with disdain.

IDA
Fine, make jokes. I think you should know that outfit makes some people uncomfortable.

Ida turns away. Del stares at her for a beat, then leans in.

DEL
(smiling)
I don't like upsetting people. Maybe Veda and I should go worship somewhere else. We could go hang out with the Methodists. They won't mind her sexy red dress 'cause they'll know it comes with my sexy green money. And I can start buying them stained glass windows and hymnals and pipe organs. Of course, the reverend will want to know why I took my Christian charity over to the competition. I wonder how he'll feel when he finds out I left 'cause Mrs. Simpson needed to insult my wife.

(pointedly)
Think he'll be... uncomfortable?

Del stops smiling. His anger is clear. Ida is now unnerved.

IDA
Sorry. I didn't mean to offend you.

DEL
I'd say I forgive you, but I don't like to lie in church.

Del smiles, then turns away. As Ida stares at him, we...
INT. HOSPITAL - CALEB'S ROOM - DAY

CLOSE on a severely bruised Caleb, as he lies unconscious in bed. The only sound is the beeping of a heart monitor.

REVEAL Rye, seated beside the bed, staring at his brother. No longer able to control his rising anger, sadness, and frustration, he suddenly gets up and races out of the room.

INT. COUNTRY STORE - DAY

CLOSE ON a hand dropping a six-pack on the counter.

REVEAL Rye at the counter. A CASHIER scans the item.

CASHIER
Rye, I thought you quit drinking.

RYE
(reaching for wallet)
I've had a real bad day.

INT. ROMAN HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE on a hand placing an open bottle of wine on the table.

REVEAL DEL seated at a table. Also seated are Veda, Gideon, and DULCIE PREJEAN, 70. Dulcie is black and blind.

GIDEON
Sorry you missed church today, Miss Dulcie. The service was real nice.

MISS DULCIE
Wish I could've gone, but my hip was acting me again.

DEL
Were you able to sleep at all?

MISS DULCIE
Not a wink.

(then)
Of course, I wasn't the only one around here who couldn't sleep. Isn't that right, Veda?

Veda looks up from her food, caught.

VEDA
I don't know what you mean.

(CONTINUED)
MISS DULCIE
Wasn't that you I heard driving away
last night? Around midnight?

Veda shoots daggers at Dulcie, who grins slyly. Veda then
looks over at Del, who is livid.

DEL
That true, Veda? Did you sneak out
after I was asleep?

VEDA
I needed a little air, that's all.

DULCIE
She didn't come home 'til four.

Del slams his fist on the table. Veda turns to Dulcie.

VEDA
That's it. Next time you break a hip,
I'm gonna let you just lay there.

DEL
You went dancing again, didn't you?

VEDA
I didn't do anything wrong.

DEL
You're a married women. You know
better than to go to seedy bars and
dance with strange men.

VEDA
I'm just trying to have a good time.

DEL
You're supposed to have a good time
with me. I'm your husband.

VEDA
Well, you're never here. You're always
off at that store of yours. And I got
no one to talk to but an old blind
woman who'd stab me in the back if she
could see to find a knife.

DEL
You're not going dancing anymore,
Veda. Do you hear me?
VEDA
I don't work for you anymore. I'll do what I want.

DEL
I forbid it.

VEDA
And just how are you going to stop me?

There is silence. Veda and Del glare at each other. Finally:

MISS DULCIE
This meat is awful tough. Could somebody hand me a knife?

Off Veda's reaction, we...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Rye's truck drives down the desolate road.

INT. RYE'S TRUCK - DAY

Rye is still clearly emotional. After a beat, he turns and looks down at his side.

Rye's POV - The six pack of beer sits in the passenger seat.

CLOSE ON Rye as he stares at the beer he knows he can't have. Rye sighs then looks back out the windshield.

Rye's POV - The truck has drifted to the side of the road and is about to hit the MAN we saw walking earlier.

A panicked Rye suddenly twists the steering wheel.

In a WIDE SHOT we see the truck as it swerves and flips over.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Rye, lying on the side of the road, opens his eyes to see...

... the man he almost hit. This is JARED, 33. Jared leans against the truck, sipping a beer. He sees that Rye is awake.
JARED
Hey. I'm drinking one of your beers. I figured you wouldn't mind, seeing as how you almost killed me.

Jared grins, then takes another swallow. Rye struggles to raise himself up.

RYE
What happened?

JARED
You had an accident. Remember?

Jared points to Rye's truck that now sits in the middle of the road, completely battered.

RYE
Oh, right. I swerved to avoid you.

JARED
And then you rolled your truck a few times. It was exciting.

RYE
Was I thrown clear?

JARED
No, I pulled you out.

RYE
Thank you.

JARED
Don't get too emotional. I pulled the beer out first. I'm Jared, by the way. Jared O'Neal.

RYE
Glad to meet you. My name is...

JARED
Rye Turner. Yeah, I know.
(off Rye's look)
I looked through your wallet.

RYE
What?

(Continued)
JARED
You were unconscious for almost an hour. I got bored.

RYE
Why didn't you call an ambulance?

JARED
Didn't think you needed one.

As Rye walks to the truck he notices a beer can lying on the road. He looks at Jared.

RYE
Just so you know, I wasn't drinking.

JARED
I know.

Jared smiles gently. Rye gets in the truck and turns the key in the ignition. Nothing happens. Rye gets out.

RYE
Guess I should check under the hood.

JARED
What do you know about trucks?

RYE
Less than nothing.

Rye opens the hood and looks inside. As he does:

RYE (CONT’D)
So what were you doing out here?

JARED
Just walking.

RYE
This is the middle of nowhere. You must have been walking a long time.

JARED
You have no idea.

Rye gets back in the truck and tries to start it. Nothing. (NOTE: At this point, Rye can no longer see Jared.)

RYE
So what do you know about trucks?
JARED
Less than you do.
(then)
But I can give it a shot.

Jared crosses to the engine. He looks inside.

JARED (CONT’D)
Try it again.

Rye does. It doesn't start.

RYE
If we have to walk to town, we better get started. It'll be dark soon.

JARED
Try it one more time.

Jared puts his hand on the side of the truck. He closes his eyes and then... the truck starts.

JARED (CONT’D)
How about that? You are good to go.

RYE
Thank you. So... you need a lift? I'll take you anywhere you want to go.

JARED
Know of a place to eat? I'm starving.

RYE
As it happens, my family owns the best diner in Hallelujah. And you can have whatever you want. On the house.

JARED
Free food and I didn't get hit by a truck. It's my lucky day.

Jared crosses and gets into the truck.

RYE
This has been a real bad day for me. I was so upset I wasn't paying attention to the road. You came out of nowhere. It's a miracle I didn't hit you.

JARED
Truer words have never been spoken.
Rye puts the truck into gear. As they drive down the road, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
FADE IN:

INT. CRACKED KETTLE DINER - NIGHT

We're CLOSE ON a child's hand gently tapping his fingers.

REVEAL Matthew seated at a table, staring into space as his hand quietly taps out a rhythm only he can hear.

In a WIDE SHOT we see a busy diner. Gideon sits by himself at a table. Willow crosses to him, bill in hand.

    WILLOW
    Anything else?

    GIDEON
    Thanks. I'm good. Keep the change.

Gideon hands her cash. Willow starts to go, then stops.

    WILLOW
    This is a hundred dollar bill.

    GIDEON
    Well, you deserve a big tip. You're a good waitress.

    WILLOW
    I forgot your toast and spilled coffee on your boots. What is this?

    GIDEON
    Honestly? I wanted to do something nice for you.

    WILLOW
    Why?

    GIDEON
    I've been away at school for a few years. You probably don't remember me.

    WILLOW
    I remember you, Gideon.

    GIDEON
    See, I wasn't sure. When I first came in, you were pretty cold to me.
WILLOW
That's 'cause I remember you.

Willow goes to the cash register. Gideon rises and follows.

GIDEON
Guess I deserve that. I was never very nice to you and your friends.

WILLOW
You were quarterback of the football team. We were giggly freshman girls. You had every right to make fun of us.

GIDEON
Still, I could've been nicer.

WILLOW
I'm sure we've both grown up a lot since then.

GIDEON
So... you don't hate me?

WILLOW
No. I do not hate you.

GIDEON
Do you not hate me enough to go out with me?

Willow stops counting out bills and looks up at him. She is both surprised and intrigued, but before she can answer...

RUTH
Everything okay here, Willow?

WILLOW
Oh, yeah. I was just telling this gentleman he gave me a hundred dollar bill by mistake.
   (handing money)
   Hope you come again.

GIDEON
Oh, you can count on it.

Gideon grins and crosses off. As Willow watches him go...
RUTH
Del Roman's son... I wish he wouldn't come around here.

ANGLE on the entrance. As Gideon crosses out, he passes Rye and Jared who enter.

Ruth sees them and quickly crosses over.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Rye, where have you been? The hospital said you left hours ago.

RYE
It's quite the story. But before I tell you, I want you to meet someone. (indicating Jared)
This is Jared O'Neal. Jared, this is my wife, Ruth.

JARED
Pleasure to meet you, Ruth. Rye's told me a lot about you.

Jared holds out his hand. Ruth steps forward, but doesn't take it. She pushes past him and Rye and goes to the door.

RUTH (looking out door)
What the heck happened to our truck?

Rye and Jared exchange a smile.

INT. CRACKED KETTLE - LATER THAT EVENING

Willow carries a plate of bread to a table where Jared, Rye, Ruth, and Matthew are seated and eating.

RYE
... and when I woke up, there was Jared. He was watching over me. And then he helped me get the truck started.

Rye looks at Jared who smiles as he continues to eat.

RUTH
Well, I guess we owe you a debt of gratitude, Mr. O'Neal.
JARED
This is best meal I've had in I don't know how long. I think we're even.

WILLOW
So what were you doing all the way out on the interstate?

JARED
I was coming to Hallelujah.

WILLOW
But... you were walking?

JARED
Yeah. I don't have a car.

WILLOW
If you were coming from Huntly, that's thirty miles away. You must have been walking for an awfully long time.

JARED
That I was.

Jared notices Ruth using her fork to feed Matthew, who sits passively, eating what she gives him. Jared reacts.

RYE
You're liking that meatloaf, huh?

JARED
It's my favorite meal.

RYE
Really?

JARED
Oh, yeah. It was the one thing they served in prison that I could tolerate.

Jared continues eating. The family stares at him, stunned.

RYE
You were in prison?

JARED
Yeah. Could someone pass the gravy?

(CONTINUED)
RUTH
Why?

JARED
'Cause I can't reach it from here.

RUTH
(annoyed)
Why were you in prison?

JARED
Oh. I sort of hurled a man through a plate glass window.

WILLOW
How come?

JARED
It's hard to explain.

RUTH
Try.

Jared sets down his fork and looks at Ruth quite seriously.

JARED
We all come face to face with evil at some point in our lives. It may take the form of cruelty, brutality, corruption. Whatever it is, some people can see this evil up close and walk right on by. I can't.

Jared picks up his fork and begins to eat again. The family watches him in stunned silence. Finally:

JARED (CONT'D)
Yes, sir. Mighty fine meatloaf.

As Ruth and Rye exchange a look, we...

INT. ROMAN HOUSE - MISS DULCIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Miss Dulcie sits in a chair, playing an auto harp.

MISS DULCIE
(singing)
LEANING, LEANING, SAFE AND SECURE FROM ALL ALARMS; LEANING, LEANING, LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS...

(CONTINUED)
As she continues to sing, she hears a voice join in, singing the contrapuntal melody. REVEAL Del standing in her doorway.

**DEL**
\[(singing)\]
LEANING ON JESUS, LEANING ON JESUS, SAFE AND SECURE FROM ALL ALARMS; LEANING ON JESUS, LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS.

**MISS DULCIE**
\[(singing)\]
LEANING, LEANING, SAFE AND SECURE FROM ALL ALARMS; LEANING, LEANING, LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS.

They finish. Del enters and sits on the stool next to Dulcie. He takes her hand.

**MISS DULCIE (CONT'D)**
Well, I know you didn't come here to sing hymns with me. What's wrong?

Del sits quietly for a moment, then:

**DEL**
What am I going to do about Veda?

**MISS DULCIE**
I told you not to marry her. I was on my knees begging you not to bring that gaudy piece of trash into this house. And what did you say to me?

**DEL**
Miss Dulcie, please.

**MISS DULCIE**
"Shut up." That's what you said. The woman who put diapers on you. And taught you every hymn you know. You said it was none of my business who you married. And now you have the gall to complain about her? If I could see you, I'd kick you cross the room.

**DEL**
I had fallen in love, Miss Dulcie. I wasn't ready to hear the truth then.

**MISS DULCIE**
(grinning)
Does that mean you're ready now?

**DEL**
You know something?

(CONTINUED)
MISS DULCIE
Where I'm sitting is right above the
guest room. If someone makes a call, I
can hear it through the vent. Veda
uses the phone in there sometimes.
I've heard her tell him she loves him.
(off Del's silence)
You okay?

DEL
No. But I needed to hear it. Thanks.

Del rises, kisses her on the head, then crosses to the door.

MISS DULCIE
And Del? She's not only humiliating
you, she's humiliating our entire
family. Anything you do to her is
justified.

Del nods, then exits. Miss Dulcie resumes playing her harp.

INT. CRACKED KETTLE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jared washes dishes. He hands them to Rye, who dries.

JARED
I must say, you got a lovely family,
Rye Turner.

RYE
I like to think so.

JARED
Couldn't help but notice your son is
kind of quiet.

RYE
Yeah. He had an accident a few years
back.

JARED
What happened?

RYE
Matthew was upstairs playing in his
room. Ruth left the window open. Just
a crack. Somehow he fell out and...
well, we got him to the E.R. as soon
as we could. But we were too late.
There was brain damage.

(CONTINUED)
JARED
I'm so sorry.

RYE
The doctors told us Matthew would never be the same. Truth is, Ruth changed as much as he did. I wish you could have known her before. She was so filled with joy. Her smile could light up a room.

(then)
She doesn't smile so much anymore.

JARED
That'll change. In time.

RYE
I don't know. Bad things keep happening to us. Right after we got married, I lost my father, very unexpectedly. Then Matthew got hurt. Now my brother is in the hospital. It's like God is testing me and I don't know why.

JARED
You'll understand when he wants you to.

RYE
I guess so.

(then)
What's your story? Got a family? A home you're trying to get back to?

JARED
I don't have a home. And whatever family I had, well, they're long gone.

RYE
Then where were you walking to?

JARED
No place. Any place.

RYE
Well, until you find a place, why don't you stay here?
INT. TURNER HOUSE - HALLWAY - AN HOUR LATER

Ruth enters frame.

RUTH
What do you mean he's staying here?!

REVEAL Ruth is talking to Rye as he pulls linens and a pillow from a hallway closet.

RYE
If we don't put him up, he'll spend the night sleeping in a field.

RUTH
That's what he signed up for when he decided to become a drifter in the first place.

RYE
I promise you, he's not dangerous.

RUTH
You sure about that? Only thing we know about him is that he likes to throw men threw plate glass windows.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - FOYER/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jared stands at the bottom of the stairs. He grins as he listens to the muffled sounds of Ruth and Rye fighting.

After a beat, Jared's gaze drifts over to the living room. He sees something which draws him in.

Jared's POV - Matthew sits alone in a chair.

Jared crosses in slowly, as if not to scare the boy. Jared takes the boy in for a beat, then notices something unusual.

Jared's POV - Matthew hands rest on his legs, miming a typing motion on his thighs.

Jared is intrigued by this.

Suddenly the phone next to Jared rings. He looks at it.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Rye and Ruth are still there. The phone rings again.
RYE
Ruth, I'm going to help this man and that's all there is to it.

RUTH
Fine! I just wish I understood why this is so important to you.

RYE
This is an chance for us to practice what we preach. We can show kindness and compassion to a fellow human being, who is down on his luck. And I think that's something God would approve of.

RUTH
Is that what this is? You're trying to score points with the Almighty?

RYE
After the misery we've endured, do you blame me?

Rye heads down the stairs. Ruth follows.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS
Rye and Ruth come down the stairs.

RUTH
Well, I am sorry to disappoint you, Rye. The Lord isn't some cosmic slot machine you put good deeds into, hoping to get something wonderful in return. It just doesn't work that way.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
They enter to find Jared holding the phone. He turns to them.

JARED
It's the hospital. Your brother just woke up.

Ruth and Rye exchange a slow look at each other. As a knowing smile spreads across Jared's face...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An injured Caleb waits anxiously at the curb. He looks around nervously. Suddenly, he sees Rye who rushes up.

CALEB
Hey, big brother. What are you doing here this time of night?

RYE
The hospital called. They said you woke up and were trying to leave.

CALEB
Yeah. My taxi should be here soon.

RYE
You can't go anywhere. You're hurt.

CALEB
Well, there are folks in this town who would prefer I heal elsewhere.

RYE
You mean the guys that beat you up?

CALEB
They came real close to killing me. I'm not giving 'em a second chance.

RYE
Caleb, at this point I gotta ask. Why did they do this to you?

CALEB
(sighs)
It's my own damn fault. I knew she was married. I knew people would talk. But she was so fine. And I was so drunk.

RYE
Just tell me her name.

CALEB
Veda Roman.

RYE
Del Roman's wife?!
CALEB
Just so we're clear, she asked me to dance. I should've said 'no', but the pretty ones never ask me to dance.

RYE
Is that all you did? Just dance?

CALEB
See, that's the thing. She was real sad that night. I could see it in her eyes. I asked what was wrong. She said she had this 'friend'. And he didn't want to see her no more 'cause he was feeling guilty. Then I said I'd never feel guilty about being with someone as fine as her. That made her laugh. And then... she kissed me.

(off Rye's reaction)
I know. This is why I should only dance with ugly women.

RYE
Look, I understand you're scared. But you got to report this to the police.

CALEB
No way.

RYE
If you don't, Del will get away with it.

CALEB
That's what rich men do. They get away with things. I don't begrudge 'em that. Hell, some day, when I'm rich, I want to get away with things, too.

The taxi pulls up. Caleb starts to go to it. Rye stops him.

RYE
Come on, K. We got to get you justice.

CALEB
You get it for me. Okay, big brother?

Rye nods. Caleb gets into the cab. As it drives off, we...
INT. CRACKED KETTLE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Ruth wipes down a table. She looks up to see Jared standing in the doorway.

RUTH
I thought you were still at the house.

JARED
I came into town to see if you needed any help. I'd like to earn my keep while I'm staying with you.

RUTH
(dryly)
Got any idea how long that's going to be?

JARED
Not too long judging by the sound of your voice.

Jared laughs. Ruth stares at him.

JARED (CONT’D)
You know, some people tell me I'm funny.

RUTH
Yeah, I got people who lie to me too.
(grabbing broom)
You know how to use one of these.

JARED
Yes, ma'am.

Ruth hands the broom to Jared, then goes back to her cleaning. As Jared begins sweeping, he looks at O.S.

Jared's POV: Matthew sits at a booth, doing nothing.

Jared looks back at Ruth. He begins sweeping. Then:

JARED (CONT’D)
You know, Rye talked to me about Matt last night. I can't begin to imagine what it's like having a child with such 'special' needs.

Ruth doesn't respond. She keeps cleaning.

(CONTINUED)
JARED (CONT’D)
What's been the hardest part?

Ruth stops cleaning. She looks intently at Jared.

RUTH
No one's ever asked me that before.

JARED
You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to.

Ruth thinks for a beat, then lays down her sponge.

RUTH
The doctors told me he will never talk and he will never be able to accomplish anything you'd expect of a normal child. That was difficult. But when they told me he will always need to be taken care of, that was the hardest part. Because it meant I can't die first.

JARED
You have strength I can only dream of.

RUTH
I'd fall apart if it wasn't for Rye. He's the only thing that holds this family together.

(then)
He never blamed me. He never held it against me that I allowed his child to be... damaged. And as the years go by and I get angrier and more resentful, he just... keeps forgiving me.

(then)
Now that I think about it... that's the hardest part.

Ruth exits. A sympathetic Jared watches her go. His interest is then stirred by something he sees out the window.

Jared's POV – Rye in an argument with SHERIFF BOB, 45.

Jared is intrigued by this development.

EXT. HALLELUJAH TOWN SQUARE – CONTINUOUS

Rye and Sheriff Bob are in the middle of a heated discussion.
RYE
You have to investigate!

SHERIFF BOB
Investigate what? Your brother hasn't reported a crime.

RYE
Talk to the hospital. They have records of his injuries.

SHERIFF BOB
Which he could have gotten falling in a ditch.

RYE
You want proof he was attacked? Talk to the folks who were at Sweet Pete's that night. Maybe they saw something.

SHERIFF BOB
No. I don't have time for this.

The sheriff starts to walk away.

RYE
I guess you don't. You're probably busy driving around in that new police cruiser.

The sheriff stops.

RYE (CONT'D)
That is what I heard. Right? Del Roman donated two new cars to the department last month.

SHERIFF BOB
You got no proof Del was involved in this.

RYE
I told you about Caleb and Veda. That's motive.

SHERIFF BOB
That's gossip.

(CONTINUED)
RYE
And this is a conflict of interest.
I'll be mentioning that when I talk to
the state police.

Rye starts to leave. The sheriff follows after him.

SHERIFF BOB
Go ahead. And I'll tell 'em about your
grudge against Del.

RYE
This isn't about that.

SHERIFF BOB
I think it is. I think you hate him so
much you'd drag his name through the
mud just for sport.

RYE
He hurt my brother.

SHERIFF BOB
Can't wait to see some proof.

Sheriff Bob turns and crosses away. Rye watches him go, then
quickly exits frame the other way.

INT. CRACKED KETTLE DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Rye storms in off the street. He passes Jared, who stands
there sweeping, and crosses into the kitchen. Jared follows.

INT. CRACKED KETTLE DINER - CONTINUOUS

Rye enters, goes to the refrigerator and grabs a beer. He
sets it down on the counter and looks at it. Jared appears.
They both stand silently for a moment. Finally:

JARED
Tell me.

RYE
Del Roman had my brother beaten just
because he kissed his wife. Sheriff
Bob won't investigate because he likes
Del's money.
   (picking up the beer)
And I want a drink real bad.

(CONTINUED)
JARED
What are you going to do?

RYE
There's nothing I can do.

JARED
Sure there is. You just don't see it yet. But you will.

RYE
You think more of me than I do.

JARED
You can't see yourself. But I see you. I see you're not the kinda person who sees corruption and walks on by.
(then)
So, again, what are you going to do?

Rye takes this in. Then:

RYE
I might have an idea.

JARED
Thought you might.

Jared takes the beer away. Rye watches as he puts it back in the refrigerator. Jared smiles at him, then exits.

INT. MOVING TRUCK - DAY

Del stands in a darkened space. We don't know where we are.

DEL
I don't know why I wanted to marry a beautiful woman.
(then)
I guess I thought it'd be fun to walk down the street with Veda on my arm. But when I look into the eyes of the men that pass us, I don't see envy. I don't see them being jealous of me. No, I see them all thinking of ways to take her away from me. And that drives me absolutely crazy.
(then)
Now I want to say two things to you. First, are your wives attractive?

(CONTINUED)
REVEAL the TWO MEN in who beat up Caleb.

MAN #1
Not really.

DEL
Well, you're lucky.

MAN #2
What's the second thing?

DEL
If you find out who Veda's been screwing, you can both have an extra week of vacation.

The two men smile. Del crosses out.

EXT. LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Del emerges from a truck onto a platform. As he walks away we see ROMAN EMPORIUM insignia on the side of the truck.

INT. ROMAN EMPORIUM - DAY

Willow is there, staring longingly at dresses.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Are you stalking me?

She turns to see Gideon, working as a floor manager, behind her.

WILLOW
No, I'm just waiting for my friend, Amy. She works here.

GIDEON
Would you like to stalk me? 'Cause I can give you my schedule.

WILLOW
I'd love to be obsessed with you, but between work and school...

They exchange a smile. Willow then turns and begins looking at more dresses. Gideon follows her.
GIDEON
So I'm not sure if you heard about this big fund-raiser they're having at the college. There's gonna be a band and lots of fancy food to eat. Maybe you want to go with me. Check it out.

WILLOW
I heard about that. It's black tie. I have nothing to wear to that. But thank you.

GIDEON
We got some real nice dresses right there. Just pick one out.

WILLOW
I can't afford those.

GIDEON
You can use my employee discount.

WILLOW
Gideon...

GIDEON
That's twenty per cent off. Come on. You can't afford not to date me.

Willow laughs. Gideon grins. Then:

WILLOW
It's just... I'm not allowed to shop here.

GIDEON
Oh.

WILLOW
My father doesn't have a lot of rules, but that's one of them.

There is an awkward silence. Then:

GIDEON
Hey, here's an idea. Why don't I just buy you a dress?

WILLOW
(stunned)
What?

(continuing)
GIDEON
Your dad can't get mad about a gift.

WILLOW
Hold on.

GIDEON
And this way you'll have something to wear to the party.

WILLOW
I can't go out with you, Gideon!

This stops Gideon cold. He looks at her, hurt.

WILLOW (CONT’D)
Our fathers hate each other. It's just never going to happen.

They begin walking again. Beat. Gideon stops.

GIDEON
Why is your dad still angry about all that stuff? That was twenty years ago.

WILLOW
I don't know. But he is.

GIDEON
Well, I think it's time he got over it. Why should he ruin your life just cause he doesn't understand business?!

Willow wheels around and faces Gideon.

WILLOW
You are not allowed to criticize my father. He's the best man I've ever known. I will honor him anyway I can. And if that's means having nothing to do with your family, then so be it.

She starts to storms off when her friend, Amy, appears.

AMY
Hey, Willow. Hope I didn't keep you waiting.

Willow grabs her friend and drags her off. As a troubled Gideon watches them exit the store, we...
INT. TURNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Rye and Deacon May stand, talking, by the Deacon's car.

RYE
So. You think I'm off-base?

DEACON MAY
No. You're right on. When it comes to Del Roman, Sheriff Bob's been looking the other way for a long time now.

(then)
Remember when Ed Polk's bar caught on fire? Most folks don't know this but the week before Del tried to buy some of Ed's land. Ed went to the sheriff, but he refused to investigate. And now...

RYE
... Ed's land is Del's parking lot.

DEACON MAY
He's threatened his competition, he's bribed city officials. Del's hands have gotten dirty the past few years.

RYE
And you're sure about all this?

DEACON MAY
I have a very reliable source.

RYE
Well, that's it then. We got to start by removing Sheriff Bob from office. And that's not going to be easy.

DEACON MAY
Just tell me what you need me to do.

As the two men exchange a grim smile, we...

EXT. TURNER HOUSE - DAY

Rye enters to find Ruth preparing dinner. She looks up.

RUTH
What were you talking to Deacon May about?

(CONTINUED)
RYE
He's going to help me organize a
meeting tomorrow.

RUTH
What kind of meeting?

RYE
I asked some important folks in the
town to come to the church tomorrow.
I'm going to convince them to help me
remove Sheriff Bob from office.

RUTH
Why? Because he won't help Caleb?

RYE
That's just part of it. I've learned
Del Roman's got a lot of skeletons in
his closet and the sheriff is the one
who keeps 'em polished.

RUTH
You're going to take on Del Roman?

RYE
I'm not afraid of him.

RUTH
Well, I am. He's got money and power
and important friends. Why would you
think you could go up against him?

RYE
Someone's got to try.

RUTH
Why does it have to be you?

JARED (O.S.)
Why not him?

Ruth and Rye turn to see Jared standing in the doorway.

RUTH
This is a private conversation.

JARED
Not when you're talking that loud.
(then)
(MORE)
JARED (CONT'D)
Don't you understand your husband is trying to do the right thing here?

RYE
It's okay, Jared.

JARED
Why can't you support him?

RUTH
'Cause I'm afraid of what could happen to us!

JARED
Yes, there are risks. But this is where faith comes in!

RUTH
That's a problem then! 'Cause most of my faith got used up waiting for my son to start talking again. The rest of it was spent looking into his eyes for some sort of sign he was still in there. Yeah. If you want to talk about faith, you came to the wrong house!

JARED
(quietly)
You know, sometimes you got to look up from your own problems to see there's something so much bigger than us in this world. And then we have to remind ourselves to trust in it.

Ruth glares at Jared, trying to control herself.

RUTH
I don't trust anything anymore. Least of all you. Come morning, I want you out of my house.

Ruth exits. As Rye and exchange a look, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

We're ON a RED LIPSTICK. A woman's hand enters frame and picks it up. REVEAL Veda looking into a mirror.

VEDA
My daddy always liked his liquor. More than he liked Mama even. He'd sneak out of the house after supper so he could be alone with that flask of his. Mama would holler, but he wouldn't come in till his whiskey had run out. (applying lipstick)
One night I went out looking for him. I couldn't have been more than five. I found him behind the silo and I asked Daddy why he drank so much. And he said, 'There are times when I need the pain to go away.' He then put his coat around me and sang some old Baptist hymn till I fell asleep in his arms. My daddy liked his liquor. But he loved me. The doctors diagnosed him with Alzheimer's seven years ago. They said he'd need constant care. And I didn't have a cent to my name. That's when I decided to marry Del Roman. I knew he was cruel. And I knew I'd be unhappy. But my daddy now stays in the fanciest nursing home in the state. And he's gonna stay there till... the pain has gone away. (then)
What I'm trying to say is... you don't have to feel guilty about what we've been doing here. God knows how much I need you. Remember that. We will be forgiven.

Veda rises and exits. REVEAL she was talking to Deacon May.

EXT. DEACON MAY'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Veda cautiously steps out onto the front porch and furtively looks around. Once she's confident that her departure will go unnoticed, she quickly exits.
PULL BACK to REVEAL Del's men watching from a nearby parked car. They exchange a look. One of the men pulls out his mobile phone.

CLOSE ON the phone as the man begins to text Del.

INT. CHURCH — DAY

Rye has gathered a handful of local business people to discuss removing the sheriff from office. As the meeting comes to an end and the crowd disperses, Del enters and angrily confronts Rye about his actions. Del accuses Rye of being motivated by jealousy and a misguided need for retribution. As they argue, we learn more about the long and twisted history between the Roman and Turner families. Del threatens to use his power and influence to ruin Rye. But Rye stands his ground. Del is shocked. But, before he can regroup, he is interrupted by the text from his men revealing that Veda has been having an affair with Deacon May. To Rye's surprise, Del angrily retreats.

INT/EXT. DEACON MAY'S HOUSE — LIVING ROOM/PORCH — DAY

Deacon May is sipping a cup of tea. The doorbell rings. He crosses and opens the door to reveal a subdued Del.

DEL
(gently)
Deacon. I'm sorry for not calling first. Can we talk?

Deacon May, trying to hide his unease, forces a smile and nods.

INT. DEACON MAY'S HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — MINUTES LATER

CLOSE ON tea being poured into a cup. PULL BACK to REVEAL a nervous Deacon May pouring it into a cup being held by Del.

DEACON MAY
You seem upset, Del. Something wrong?

DEL
Guess you could say I'm having a 'spiritual crisis'.

DEACON MAY
In what way?

(CONTINUED)
DELC
It's come to my attention that some people I trusted, have betrayed me.

DEACON MAY
(sweating)
Oh?

DELC
And my heart has just filled up with hatred for them.

DEACON MAY
So... how can I help you?

DELC
I can't live with this darkness in my heart. I need to... expel it. But I don't know how.

DEACON MAY
Perhaps you should start by forgiving these people.

DELC
Even if what they did to me is... practically unforgivable.

DEACON MAY
If God teaches us anything, it's that nothing is unforgiveable.

DELC
Really?

DEACON MAY
Yes. No matter how bad we've strayed, no matter how great the sin, God can forgive us.

DELC
Just like that?

DEACON MAY
Well, you have to repent. You have to pray and ask for his forgiveness.

Del looks at Deacon May and smiles.
DEL
You know, this is exactly what I needed to hear. Thank you, Deacon.

DEACON MAY
It was my pleasure.

Deacon May starts to rise. Del grabs him by the arm.

DEL
Before I go, could we pray about this?

DEACON MAY
Well, sure.

Deacon May closes his eyes and clasps his hands.

DEACON MAY (CONT’D)
Dear Lord, please help Del as he tries to rid his heart of the hatred that has invaded it...

As the deacon continues to pray, Del opens his eyes.

CLOSE on Del's hand as he takes a gun from his jacket.

CLOSE ON Deacon May as he continues to pray.

DEACON MAY (CONT’D)
... and show him that forgiveness is its own reward.

CLOSE on the white tea pot. There is a gun shot. Blood spatters all over it. There is the sound of a thud.

REVEAL Del as he looks down at Deacon May's body.

After a beat, Del takes out his phone and dials.

DEL
(into phone)
Sheriff, I need you over here at Deacon May's house. Come alone. And bring a shovel.

Del ends the call and looks down at Deacon May's corpse.

FEMALE SINGER
(singing)
I'M ON MY WAY, TO CANAAN LAND...
INT. DEACON MAY’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON Deacon May's body as it is rolled up in an oriental rug.

FEMALE SINGER
(singing)
... I'M ON MY WAY, OH TO CANAAN LAND...

PULL BACK to REVEAL Del and the sheriff struggling to lift it.

EXT. FOREST - LATER

CLOSE ON a shovel piecing the earth.

FEMALE SINGER
(singing)
... ON MY WAY, CANAAN LAND, ON MY WAY,
GLORY Hallelujah, I'M ON MY WAY...

PULL BACK to REVEAL Del and the sheriff digging a grave.

EXT. FOREST - HOURS LATER

CLOSE ON Deacon May's body, still wrapped in the rug.

FEMALE SINGER
(singing)
... WELL, ON MY WAY, TO CANAAN LAND;
I'M ON MY WAY, OH TO CANAAN LAND...

PULL BACK to REVEAL Del and the sheriff callously tossing it into the grave.

EXT. FOREST - HOURS LATER

CLOSE ON a shovel patting down the dirt. PULL BACK to REVEAL Del and the sheriff as they give one last look at what they've done.

FEMALE SINGER
(singing)
ON MY WAY, CANAAN LAND, ON MY WAY,
GLORY Hallelujah, I'M ON MY WAY...

As they get in the cruiser and pull away, an unknown POV REVEALS that someone else has been watching them.
INT. TURNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Ruth, Rye, Willow, and Matthew stand at the foot of the stairs, clearly waiting for something. After a beat:

    RUTH
    I know you're both angry with me.

    RYE
    We're not angry. Just sad.

    RUTH
    I don't see why. You hardly know the man.

    RYE
    I can't explain it. There's just something about him. He's special.

    RUTH
    Well, I don't see it.

    RYE
    Well, you never looked.

    WILLOW
    Please don't fight.

There is silence. Finally:

    RYE
    I'm going to go pull the truck around front.

    WILLOW
    I'll go with you.

They exit. Ruth stands there, trying to contain her emotions. She crosses to Matthew who stands off to the side. She runs her hand through his hair. He doesn't respond.

    JARED (O.S.)
    Good morning, Ruth.

Ruth looks up to see Jared standing on the staircase.

    RUTH
    Morning.

    JARED
    Where's Rye?

(CONTINUED)
RUTH
He's bringing the truck around for you.

JARED
He doesn't have to do that. I was just gonna start walking. Like I always do.

Ruth stares at Jared for a beat. Then:

RUTH
What kind of life is that for a grown man? Wandering around aimlessly. You need to settle. Put down some roots. Be around people who love you.

JARED
To be honest, lately, I've been thinking the same thing.

Jared and Ruth stand for a beat. Then:

RUTH
I made you a sack lunch for your trip. I'll go in and get it.

Ruth exits into the kitchen. Jared watches her go. He then turns to Matthew. He looks at the boy who stares off into nothingness. He crosses to him and kneels down on one knee. Matthew doesn't acknowledge him.

JARED
Hey. I prayed last night. I asked Him what your folks needed. And He told me... it's you. You've got come out of there. It's time for you to show them what you are capable of. Would you do that for me? Would you show 'em?

Matthew suddenly looks at Jared. And for the first time, we see Matthew focus his eyes on another human being. As he does, Jared grins.

INT. TURNER HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Ruth wraps a sandwich in plastic. As she puts it inside a brown paper sack, she hears a slow version of 'Down By the Riverside' being played on a piano. She looks up.
RUTH
Willow, what are you doing here? I thought you were going with your daddy to get the truck.

Hearing no response, Ruth looks up from what she is doing. She sees something outside the window that confuses her.

Ruth's POV - Rye and Willow are standing by the truck.

Ruth frowns. This doesn't make sense to her. She takes a step to the living room.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Jared...?

She slowly moves toward the doorway. She stops when she sees Jared standing in the middle of the room. He is looking at something O.S. and smiling.

Ruth enters the room and we PULL BACK to REVEAL a child's hands in the foreground slowly, but firmly playing the keyboard.

CLOSE ON Ruth's face as she stares, thunderstruck.

OVER her shoulder we REVEAL Matthew playing the piano.

ANGLE ON Rye and Willow as they enter the front door.

RYE
Ruth, you can tell Jared we're ready to go.

Rye, hearing the music, stops. He looks at Willow, who shrugs. They enter the living room to see...

... an emotional Ruth kneeling beside Matthew who continues to play.

Rye and Willow stare, stunned and confused at what they're seeing.

CLOSE ON Matthew's hands as he finishes the hymn.

Ruth stares at him for a beat, unsure of what to do. She then grabs him and begins hugging him, rocking him back and forth. Matthew doesn't react to this.

Ruth looks up at Rye, tears in her eyes, but smiling a glorious smile.
RUTH
Did you see him? Did you hear what he did? Our baby made music.

Ruth buries her head in Matthew's shoulder. Willow crosses and joins her mother and brother.

A stunned Rye looks over at Jared who looks at the tableau in front of him with a satisfied smile.

RYE
Did you do this?

JARED
Matthew did it. I just... encouraged him.

RYE
(emotional)
We never thought he'd ever... We just gave up hope, you know?

JARED
That's never a good idea.

Rye looks back at Ruth, who is rocking Matthew back and forth in a passionate embrace. Rye, starting to understand what has happened, slowly looks back at Jared.

RYE
Who are you?

Jared reaches out and puts his hand on Rye's shoulder.

JARED
I'm a friend.

As Jared grins, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR
FADE IN:

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

OPEN ON a WIDE SHOT of various churchgoers walking down the side of a hill to the river. Music is heard in the distance.

CLOSE ON a MALE SOLOIST playing a guitar. Choir members stand behind him, clapping in time to the music.

CLOSE ON a MALE SOLOIST playing a guitar. Choir members stand behind him, clapping in time to the music.

MALE SOLOIST
(singing)
... JOSHUA FIT THE BATTLE OF JERICHO, JERICHO, JERICHO; JOSHUA FIT THE BATTLE OF JERICHO AND THE WALLS COME TUMBLING DOWN...

REVEAL members of the congregation listening to the music. They sit on assorted benches and lawn chairs.

REVEAL Del, Veda, and Gideon as they emerge from their car. While they walk, Veda checks herself in her compact.

They cross to Reverend Mott who is in the middle of a serious conversation with the sheriff.

DEL
Reverend, what are you doing out here?
I thought you be in the river by now, praying up a storm.

REVEREND MOTT
Deacon May never showed up.

Veda looks up from her compact.

DEL
That so?

REVEREND MOTT
He was supposed to be here an hour ago to help me set up. He's not picking up his phone. I'm starting to worry.

SHERIFF BOB
Reverend wants to have one of my boys drive to his house. See if he's okay.
Del and the Sheriff exchange a look.

**Del**
Sounds like a plan. Now if you'll excuse us.

Del keeps walking. Veda and Gideon follow.

**Veda**
This isn't like Deacon May. He's usually so responsible.

**Del**
Well, I hope he's okay. I know how much you like him.

Del exits frame. Veda gives him a look of concern as she exits frame. Gideon stops when he notices something O.S.

**Gideon's POV** - Willow and Rye walking down the hill.

Gideon looks back at his family, then exits frame the opposite direction.

**Angle On** Willow and Rye. Willow freezes when she sees a smiling Gideon walk right up to them.

**Gideon**
Hey there, Mr. Turner.

A beat as Rye stares at him.

**Gideon (Cont'd)**
Hi. I'm Gideon Roman.

**Rye**
I know who you are. What can I do for you?

**Gideon**
I heard what happened between you and my father the other day. I'm sorry about that. He shouldn't have said those things. I've always heard you and your family are good people. And, truth be told, now that I'm back in town, I'd really like to get to know you all better.

(Continued)
RYE
Well... that's very kind of you. Thank you for talking to me.

Gideon crosses away. Rye and Willow resume walking.

RYE (CONT’D)
Willow, I'm curious. Does he ever come into the diner?

WILLOW
Sometimes.

RYE
And you talk to him.

WILLOW
Not really. A little.

RYE
Okay.
(them)
You like him.

Willow looks at her father, who wears a gently smile.

WILLOW
I don't know. Maybe.

Rye stops walking. Willow stops as well.

RYE
Well... that's too bad. Because he's the one boy in town I will not allow you to see. I'm sorry, but that's how it's got to be. Understand?

WILLOW
Yes, Daddy.

Rye crosses away. Willow watches him, her eyes brimming with her hurt.

ANGLE ON Gideon walking away. Suddenly Willow runs up to him.

WILLOW (CONT’D)
Thursday nights I run the diner by myself. That'd be a good night for you to stop by. Okay?
GIDEON
Okay.

Willow quickly crosses away. A grin spreads across Gideon's face as he watches her go.

ANGLE ON Reverend Mott, talking to the sheriff.

SHERIFF BOB
My boys should be arriving at the deacon's house any second now. If you can wait a few more minutes...

REVEREND MOTT
No, I gotta start baptizing before my arthritis medication wears off. I'd hate to dunk these folks and not be able to bring 'em back up again.

The reverend crosses away. He passes by Ruth, who stands with Matthew, talking to a group of woman. We STAY on Ruth.

RUTH
... and I called Doc Stone to tell him what happened and he didn't believe me. Said it was scientifically impossible. And I told him maybe so, but my boy was playing the piano, regardless. I tell you, Ida, I don't know the last time I was this happy.

Ruth gives Matthew a squeeze. Matthew looks at someone O.S. He gives a slight smile.

Matthew's POV - Jared stands a few feet away, looking at him.

CLOSE ON Jared as he grins back at the child.

EXT. RIVER - MINUTES LATER

REVEREND MOTT stands waist-high in the water. Beside him is a teenage girl, dressed in a white robe.

REVEREND MOTT
... and Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

REVEAL the congregation and choir who are crowded around on the river bank, watching.

(continued)

(continued)
ANGLE ON Del and Sheriff Clement who stand halfway up the hill, watching the proceedings and talking.

SHERIFF BOB
The deacon's only been missing a couple of hours and folks are already starting to ask questions.

DEL
That's what people in a small town do. Let 'em.

Del watches as the sheriff fidgets nervously.

DEL (CONT’D)
Will you calm down?

SHERIFF BOB
I helped you bury a body last night. That means I'm an accessory after the fact. I could go to jail.

DEL
Relax. No one saw us.

SHERIFF BOB
I couldn't sleep when I got home. I just laid in bed for hours wondering what hell would feel like.

Del looks at the sheriff with disdain.

DEL
I slept fine.

The sheriff reacts.

ANGLE ON the REVEREND as he prepares to immerse the teenage girl.

REVEREND MOTT
... and I baptize you in the name of the father, the son and the holy ghost.

The REVEREND guides the girl backwards into the water. She is immersed. He quickly brings her back up.

The crowd on the bank begins applauding. The choir breaks into song.

(CONTINUED)
As everyone is singing and cheering, we are CLOSE on Matthew as he looks off to the side. Something catches his eye. He stares impassively.

Ruth looks down and sees that Matthew is staring at something. She looks to see what has caught his attention. She walks forward a few steps, unsure of what she is seeing.

Ruth's POV - The body of a man floats face down in the water just a few feet away, slightly hidden by some reeds.

Ruth opens her mouth. She is unable to scream. She points to the body. She runs to the crowd and points. People begin to look. Suddenly a woman in the crowd screams.

Everyone in the choir turns to look. The music stops. The reverend, emerging from the water, looks. CLOSE on Rye and Willow as they look. People begin running toward the body.

Two men lift the body out of the water and flip it over onto the muddy bank of the river. One of them looks at the man's face.

MAN
   It's Deacon May.
   (calling out)
   It's Deacon May.

CLOSE on Del and the Sheriff who exchange incredulous looks.

People begin to react. Women begin to cry. Most everyone begins running to the body. A few mothers grab their children and try to drag them away.

CLOSE on Del as he notices something strange.

Del's POV - Everyone in the crowd is running around panicked or is looking towards the body. Except for one man.

Jared stands apart from the crowd looking directly at Del.

After a moment, Del turns to the sheriff.

DEL
   Who is that man? And why is he looking at us?

The sheriff looks at Del and reacts, concerned.

SHERIFF BOB
   I don't know.

(CONTINUED)
CLOSE ON Jared as he continues to angrily stare. There is no trace of forgiveness in his eyes.

FADE OUT.