

EXT TENT REVIVAL NIGHT

A tent sits in the middle of a field surrounded by 1950's era sedans. Oak trees and Pines surround the area on all sides. A dirt road leads into the woods. A convertible winds its ways toward the tent. A man in his early fifties is driving, his wife in the passenger seat.

The car rolls past the parked cars and stops at the end of the row. The man and his wife exit their cars and walk toward the tent. They pass a delivery van with "THE CHURCH OF THE DEVINE WATERS" painted on the side. The image of a smiling man with his arms outstretched, a bible in one hand and a cross in the other. Below the image is written: "The Good words of life... Dr. William Jessup". By the side of the van a gas powered generator chugs away. Power cables run from it to the tent.

Inside the tent a young woman, SARAH JANE LIVINGSTON, is listening attentively to a man in the front. She is barely twenty, dressed in a simple cotton sun dress. Even without make-up she is beautiful with an all pervasive innocence. She stares at the front without blinking.

WILLIAM JESSUP is in his late forties, once well built but softening. He is in a suit and ties, sweat glistening on his forehead. He looks much the same as the image on the delivery van. He even holds the bible and the cross.

JESSUP

We were not brought forth to be the defilers of the earth... We were not brought forth to be the corrupters of the world... Drinking and fornicating without any consideration of the word.

As Jessup speaks the camera moves around the tent showing thirty or so people seated on rickety wooden benches. Some are close to bored, others look ready to stand up and speak in tongues. The camera moves outside the tent to the delivery van.

JESSUP (cont'd)

No. NO! We were not put here to do such vile and depraved things. Brothers and sisters here tonight, I tell you... There is only one reason we were brought onto this earth. We were brought forth to serve him...

INT DELIVERY VAN NIGHT

The van is cluttered with boxes and obvious religious trappings: Offering plates, candles, a box labeled bibles.

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Light from the tent seeps in through the front window and falls on a little girl, ESTER. She is on her side, laying on a pile of burlap sacks in the back of the van. She is five years old, black hair and blue-eyed. She wears a short flower print dress

Her hands are tied behind her back with coarse rope. She is struggling against the knots. Her wrists are bleeding. She manages to pull one hand free. She creeps to the front of the van and climbs carefully out the driver's side door.

She runs across the field for the woods.

EXT TENT REVIVAL NIGHT

Jessup is waiving his Bible over the crowd. He has loosened his tie and opened his collar.

JESSUP

To proclaim his glory... To speak of him
not in hushed whispers in darkened
hallways. No. NO!!! We need to SCREAM
his Glory with all our might. For He
loves us. He shows us the way...

In the front row listening with attention equal to that of SARAH sit four elderly men dressed in their finest attire. Each crowned with a bowler hat. Each clean shaven and smiling contentedly. They are moving their lips along with the words Jessup speaks.

INT MOVIE THEATER NIGHT

DAVE CALDWELL, early twenties, sits in the middle of a darkened theater, his lips moving along with the words being spoken by the actors on screen. In front of him, LESTER FRAHLEY, nineteen and muscular sits with BETTY an attractive sixteen year old. His arm is around her, pulling her closer than she wants to be. She tries to push him away.

LESTER

Betty...

She ignores him. Dave glances their way. He look annoyed.

LESTER (cont'd)

Betty... let's get out of here... my
backseats just calling.

She still ignores him. Dave shifts uneasily in his seat.

LESTER (cont'd)

You're just dying to spread those little
legs for old Lester.

(MORE)

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LESTER (cont'd)

Don't tell me you ain't. You're wet just thinking about it.

She pushes him aside and tries to stand. Lester grabs her arm and forces her back into the seat. Dave leans forward. He has an average build, but is nowhere close to Lester in obvious strength.

DAVE

Excuse me, would you please not talk. I'm trying to watch the movie.

Lester ignores him and whispers into Betty's ear.

LESTER

Now, Betty, honey, don't run off. I'm only saying what's on both our minds.

BETTY

Lester, let go of my arm. I'm gonna go call my dad to get me.

LESTER

You're daddy can't do the things I can.

Dave taps Lester on the shoulder.

DAVE

I'll bet her daddy can shut up during a movie.

Lester turns and punches Dave in the jaw. Betty takes the opportunity to run out of the theater. Lester follows her, leaving Dave holding his jaw.

EXT MOVIE THEATER NIGHT

Betty throws open the doors to the theater and makes it a few steps onto the sidewalk before Lester catches her. He grabs her shoulder and she spins around, slapping him in the face. He raises his hand.

BETTY

My girlfriends told me you were a bastard. Go ahead. Prove 'em right. Go ahead. Hit me. See what girls you can get after I tell 'em what you did. Nobody'll get in that back seat with you.

She turns and walks off, leaving Lester with his hand raised. He runs it through his hair in an attempt to cover his embarrassment.

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LESTER

I know a place where they'll spread...
and I don't have to put up with any shit.

He turns and walks in the opposite direction of Betty. He passes by an alley on the side of the theater. A two by four swings out of the darkness and hits him in the stomach. Lester buckles over. Dave steps out of the darkness.

DAVE

I asked you nicely to be quite. It's not polite to talk during the -

He swings the board and hits Lester across the back. Lester drops to the ground.

DAVE (cont'd)

MOVIE.

He drops the board and walks down the street.

EXT TENT REVIVAL NIGHT

Jessup is on his knees in front of a middle aged woman. He clasps her hands and rests his forehead against them.

JESSUP

You have found us here in the darkness.
You have found our light from which the
divine waters flow. Do you wish to join
us here in the light? Do you wish to let
the waters flow over you and surround
you, wrap around you and carry you
through this world until you reach the
next?

WOMAN

Yes... Please Lord... Welcome me in.

Jessup winces slightly when she says Lord, but covers it by pulling her hands closer. He stands and motions to one of the elderly men to rise. WILSON GREELEY one of the bowler wearing men from the front row gets up from his seat and retrieves a wooden bowl from a table by the side. He hands it to Jessup.

JESSUP

We welcome you in. Let the divine waters
pour over you and cleanse your spirit.

Jessup pours water from the bowl onto the woman's forehead. she closes her eyes and smiles.

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CONTINUED:

CROWD

Amen.

JESSUP

Amen. Amen, brothers. Now the elders will pass among you the communion wine. Remember this is the blood and the body...

EXT WOODS NIGHT

Ester runs blindly through the woods, pushing aside underbrush that gets in her way. Her knees are skinned and her face had been scratched.

EXT DIRT ROAD NIGHT

Dave is driving a beat-up 1945 Chevy down a dirt road cut through a heavily wooded area. One headlight is burned out.

Dave's lip is starting to discolor and a little blood has dried on his chin. He is singing along with the radio, traveling at a pretty good clip. Rain starts to pelt his windshield.

DAVE

Great....

He turns on the wipers. His right hand rests on the back of the passenger seat and his left wrist is across the steering wheel. He starts to sing again and smiles.

EXT TENT REVIVAL NIGHT

The rain has started to fall steadily. The field is pooling with water. Rain is pouring from the eaves of the tent.

Sarah is taking the communion wine from Bowler Hat #2. She drinks the wine down and looks back to Jessup at the front of the tent. She shudders slightly when the wine makes it's way to her stomach, but then smiles broadly. Her cheeks flush.

The entire congregation has a similar red cheeked glow. All are smiling broadly.

JESSUP

We remind you all to come and visit us again. We'll be traveling around this week. Brother Dumar thinks we might even make it into Texas.

There is a muttering from the crowd.

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JESSUP (cont'd)

Now, now... brothers and sisters.
Texans might not deserve my words as much
as the good people of Louisiana, but we
all know they need them a whole lot more.

The crowd laughs, a little more heartily than could be
expected. They still have a rosy cheeked glow.

JESSUP (cont'd)

Well be here next Friday provided brother
Hebert will let us use his field again.

Jessup looks to Brother Hebert, a middle aged man in the
second row. He nods his consent.

JESSUP (cont'd)

And of course, you can always find us on
Sundays at our little church on Bayou .
Now please, bow you're heads and join
with me in prayer. We are grateful for
having the opportunity to join here on
this beautiful night. Protect and keep
us all as we make our ways home tonight.
Let the divine water wash over us and
keep us safe. Amen.

CROWD

Amen.

Everyone gets up to leave. Some men run for their cars while
their wives wait. Other couples make a dash under the
protective covering of the husbands coat. Sarah stands by
the a tent pole and looks out at the woods. The last of the
congregation drives off.

EXT FIELD NIGHT

Jessup has walked into the rain. He is in the middle of the
field, his head thrown back and the rain pouring over him.
He drops to his knees and holds his hands in prayer.

EXT TENT REVIVAL NIGHT

Greeley walks up to Sarah.

GREELEY

It was nice of you to join us tonight,
Miss....

SARAH

Sarah Jane Livingston.

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GREELEY

It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance, Miss Livingston. My name is Wilson Greeley. I hope you didn't walk here, miss. The weather kind of turned on us out of the blue. We'd be glad to offer you a ride to where ever you need to go.

SARAH

I'm headed all the way back into Texas. I live in -

She stops herself, suddenly afraid to say what she was about to tell Greeley.

SARAH (cont'd)

You probably wouldn't even know the town. Hardly a dot on the map. Anyway, Dave should be here any time to pick me up. Thank you though.

GREELEY

I'm sorry your husband didn't care to join us tonight.

SARAH

Dave's not my husband. He's just a friend of mine.

GREELEY

All are welcome here. The Church of Divine Waters welcomes all into its fold.

SARAH

Y'all haven't met Dave.

She smiles at Greeley. He stares earnestly at her without blinking.

SARAH (cont'd)

That was a joke. Religion might take to Dave, but he doesn't rightly take to it.

GREELEY

I see. Well, he is welcome here. I hope we see you again.

SARAH

You will.

GREELEY

And if he doesn't show-

(CONTINUED)

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Sarah cuts him off.

SARAH
That's him right now. Good night. God
bless.

Sarah runs into the rain.

GREELEY
(nodding and frowning)
Yes, of course he does.

INT DAVE'S CHEVROLET NIGHT

Dave has thrown open the door for Sarah. She jumps into the car and shakes the water from her hair. Dave hold up his hand to block the drops.

DAVE
Jesus, Sarah. Watch what you're doing.

Sarah immediately notices the bruised lip.

SARAH
Somebody talk during the movie?

Dave puts the car into gear ignoring her questions.

DAVE
How was church?

SARAH
Great.

She smiles at him. He looks her over.

DAVE
Jesus, they way you're smiling, you look
like you just got laid.

SARAH
Gettin' laid hardly makes me smile
anymore.

Dave looks at her. The smiles fade from both their faces. Dave looks at the road ahead.

EXT TENT REVIVAL NIGHT

Greeley and the other bowler hatted men are counting the collection take.

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BOWLER HAT #1

One hundred and twenty-eight dollars and
sixty eight cents.

GREELEY

Most of it came from our good farmer
Hebert. Bless a hard working man.

Jessup walks in from the rain. He brushes back his hair and
shakes some of the water from his clothes.

JESSUP

Let's pack it up boys. We've got to be
in Natchitoches by tomorrow night.

Greeley and Jessup walk out of the tent toward the van. The
rain is slackening. The three other Bowler Hats start to
stack up the pews and tear down the tent. Greeley opens the
back of the delivery van. He stares inside.

JESSUP (cont'd)

Well get the girl to the church later.
She's traveling okay.
(looking to Greeley)
What's wrong?

Greeley climbs into the back of the van. He tosses the sacks
aside and begins to tear the contents apart looking for
Ester.

GREELEY

She's not here. She's not in the van.
The little demon's escaped.

Jessup steps into the van with Greeley. He puts his hands on
Greeley's shoulders.

JESSUP

Wilson, calm down. She can't go far.
Not in this weather. We'll keep packing
up the things here. I don't want to
worry brother Hebert. If we tear out of
here, he's bound to wonder why. We'll
pack up and then go looking for our
little lost one.

GREELEY

If we don't find her. The devil out
there... It's not good. Not good at
all.

JESSUP

We were careless. We looked at it as a
little girl. We were wrong.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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JESSUP (cont'd)

Next time well be more careful.

(grabbing Greeley's face)

And there will be a next time. She won't
get away from us.

Greeley nods and climbs out of the van. Jessup picks up the ropes that had held Ester. He starts to cry.

INT DAVE'S CHEVROLET NIGHT

Dave's looks over at Sarah. She's smiling again. Dave looks back at the road.

SARAH

I don't know Dave. It was good and all,
of course I didn't know what to expect.
I haven't been to church since my gramama
died. I took communion. I don't think I
was supposed to , but nobody asked if I
was a member of a church or anything.
course, God'll know.

DAVE

If God knows, you've got a lot more to
worry about than taking communion when
you ain't supposed to.

Sarah slaps his arm.

SARAH

Be nice. You promised you'd be nice
about this.

DAVE

I drove you there. Out of state. . . .
I'm being nice.

SARAH

I know, I'm sorry. I just don't know
what I'm gonna do. Mr. Greeley asked if
I was coming back and I said I would.

DAVE

Hate for you to lie to a church going
man.

SARAH

So, you'll take me back next week.

DAVE

I guess I have to if I wanna be nice.

SARAH

Maybe you can stay and listen.

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DAVE

Don't think that'll be happening.

SARAH

You could have some of that communion wine.

DAVE

You'll need more than that to get me into church. Even if it is only a tent.

SARAH

I don't know. I was awful good wine.

Dave looks intently ahead.

DAVE

Jesus Christ!

He slams on the brakes and the car skids on the now muddy road. Dave corrects for the skid and pulls the car onto the breakdown lane.

SARAH

What the hell are you doing?

Dave pulls the car around and the headlights fall on a small figure in the road.

DAVE

There's something in the road....

SARAH

That's no reason to almost kill us.

Sarah tries to see the figure through the rain. Dave opens the car door.

EXT DIRT ROAD NIGHT

Dave runs through the rain to the small figure lying in a puddle of mud in the center of the road. He turns it over to find it's Ester. She isn't moving. Dave checks her pulse.

INT DAVE'S CHEVROLET NIGHT

Sarah gasps when she sees the figure is that of a little girl. She gets out of the car and runs to Dave.

EXT DIRT ROAD NIGHT

Sarah runs up and puts her hand on Dave's shoulder.

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SARAH

Is she?

DAVE

She's breathing. She's got some scratches, but I can't see anything else wrong.

SARAH

We need to find her home. Find her parents.

DAVE

We need to get her out of the mud and dried off.

SARAH

But her parents'll be worried.

DAVE

Let 'em be.

Dave picks up Ester and carries her to the car. Sarah climbs in first and takes Ester from his arms. Dave retrieves a blanket from the trunk of his car and tosses it to Sarah.

INT DAVE'S CHEVROLET NIGHT

Dave starts off. The rain has almost stopped. Sarah is drying off Ester's hair with the corner of the blanket.

SARAH

It's too dark in here to really see, but I think she's just got some scrapes that's all.

DAVE

We'll get her to Doc Pritchett. He can check her out... provided he ain't too drunk yet.

SARAH

We're not taking this girl to Silky's.

DAVE

There isn't anywhere closer than Wheatonsburgh. We'll swing by doc's but it's Friday night and if he ain't home he's gonna be at Silky's. Besides, I promised I'd have you back to work sometime tonight.

SARAH

Don't mention work.

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Sarah rubs the blanket over Esters head again.

EXT TEXAS BORDER NIGHT

Dave's Chevrolet flies past a sign reading: WELCOME TO TEXAS

EXT SILKY'S NIGHT

Silky's is a large plantation home. A small sign by the road reads: SILKY'S GENTLEMAN'S RETREAT Every light in the first floor is on. Cars are parked in every possible location on the front lawn. The front porch wraps around two sides of the house. There are four porch swings, each holding a couple. The men are of all ages. The women are young and scantily clad.

EXT JACKSON'S BAR

Behind the house occupying what once was the servant quarters is JACKSON'S BAR. It is a two story building, both floors are brightly lit. The windows are open and loud music is coming from inside.

INT JACKSON'S BAR NIGHT

The bar is packed. A black juke joint band is playing loudly in the back part of the bar. A black man is tending bar with a white man. The rest of the crowd is white.

Lester and two of his friends are standing by the bar. They each hold half drunk beers. Lester's friends don't look happy. MITCH, eighteen and as large as Lester puts his drink down on the bar.

MITCH

Lester, you didn't drag us into Texas to listen to a bunch of niggers play shitty music.

The black bartender, STUART, looks up at the boys.

LESTER

Shut up, Mitch, and finish your beer.

MITCH

It's finished. Now me and Wally are gonna take our asses back to Natchitoches.

Mitch grabs Wally's shoulder. Lester stops them both.

LESTER

Fine. Fine. We'll go in Silky's now.

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MITCH

It better be worth the drive.

LESTER

Is getting fucked worth the drive?

He pushes them outside.

EXT JACKSON'S BAR

Lester Mitch and WALLY walk out of the bar and up to Silky's. As they round the house, Dave pulls up and stops his car. He and Sarah get out. Sarah is holding Ester. The little girl is shaking violently. Dave looks to a man leaning against Jackson's.

DAVE

Pete, you seen Doc?

Pete points to Silky's. Dave runs up the back steps of the house and holds the door open for Sarah.

INT SILKY'S KITCHEN NIGHT

Silky's kitchen looks like a typical kitchen. A small table with five chairs is in the breakfast nook. There is a large refrigerator and stove. It looks like a normal home with the exception of PEARL a twenty-five year old prostitute sitting at the table. She's eating a carrot and drinking a beer. She glances up to see Dave enter.

DAVE

(to Sarah)

Take her to Silky's room.

PEARL

Hey, sweetie. Took you two long enough.

DAVE

You seen Doc?

PEARL

He's with Bess in number four. What's wrong? Oh my God, whose kid is that?

Dave runs out of the kitchen. Pearl gets up and goes to Sarah. Ester is shaking violently in her arms.

SARAH

We found her in the road. Help me here.

INT SILKY'S STAIRWELL NIGHT

Dave runs up the stairs, passing SILKY on the way. Silky is a forty-five year old woman. She is tall and despite fading looks is still attractive. She is dressed in a silk kimono. She looks unhappy to see Dave. She turns after him and grabs him at the stop of the stairs.

SILKY

You said you be back in three hours.
Where's Sarah?

DAVE

We ran into a problem. Sarah's in your
room. She could use your help.

Silky grabs Dave's chin and turns his mouth to the light.

SILKY

Somebody talk during the movie?

DAVE

I'll tell you later. I gotta get Doc.

There is a loud commotion from downstairs. Two men are shouting at each other. One voice is clearly Lester's. Silky looks after Dave and then downstairs.

SILKY

I'm gonna need your help down here.

She turns and heads quickly down the stairs.

INT ROOM #4 NIGHT

Room #4 is a small room with a night stand and a bed. The bed is currently occupied by DR. PRITCHETT a middle aged balding man and BESS an eighteen year old prostitute. Doc is on top of Bess, deeply involved in the evening activities.

Dave throws open the door and enters without knocking.

DOC

What the hell's going on here?

BESS

Hey, Dave.

DAVE

Bess. Doc. We've got a problem
downstairs in Silky's room.

DOC

I'm a little busy here.

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DAVE

It's a big emergency.

BESS

You can stop, hon, I won't be offended none.

DOC

No offense, but I'm not really worried about offending you.

Dave hands Doc his pants and turns around to let the man dress. Bess gets up and goes to the night stand to grab a cigarette.

BESS

Hurry back, hon.

Dave grabs Doc's arm and leads him out of the room. The shouting from downstairs has gotten louder.

INT SILKY'S PARLOR NIGHT

Silky is standing between Lester and a young woman named SHEILA. There are other people in the room actively trying not to be involved. Mitch and Wally are behind Lester. Silky is not intimidated in the least.

SILKY

Everybody shut up and tell me what's wrong.

SHIELA

He grabbed me when I was talking to Seth. Just yanked me out of the chair. Said "you." Like he could just grab me like that.

LESTER

That little whore's acting like she's too good to fuck. Like our money ain't good enough.

SILKY

Quiet.
(to Lester)
What's the problem?

LESTER

We drove in from Natchitoches to enjoy ourselves. That little whore's acting like she's too good for me.

SHIELA

I was sitting with Seth and this guy just grabs me out of the chair like I'm supposed to go with him just 'cuz he grabbed me.

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SILKY

Sir, we have a way of doing things here. You come in, take a little time to meet a girl. Talk with her.

LESTER

If I wanted to talk I wouldn't be coming to a whorehouse.

Dave walks in behind Lester and his friends.

SILKY

I don't think you'll be coming at all tonight.

Dave walks into the parlor behind Lester and his friends.

LESTER

I just want some bitch I can fuck.

SILKY

Ask one of your friends if they're available. My girls are off limits to you. Dave, show these boys out.

Lester turns and sees Dave. He doesn't move.

LESTER

You.

DAVE

Hey, it's my movie buddy. Just ain't your night for love is it? Let's go.

MITCH

Come on Les, let's go.

LESTER

I ain't going anywhere with this son of a bitch. This is the guy that jumped me outside the movie.

WALLY

I thought you said it was three guys.

MITCH

Let's just let the cops handle it. We'll get the sheriff and get his ass locked up.

They start to walk past Dave. Silky speaks up.

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SILKY

Dave, why don't you help these boys find the Sheriff? He's in number eight.

Lester and his friends look to Silky.

SILKY (cont'd)

Course I doubt he wants to be interrupted by three Louisiana peckerwoods that don't understand the way this town works.

Lester and his friends walk out. Lester tries to knock over a table by the door, but succeeds only in causing a vase to fall on it's side. Before the vase can roll to the ground, Wally grabs it and sets it upright. He turns and holds his hands up apologetically. Silky smiles at him. She looks around the room at her now nervous customers.

SILKY (cont'd)

They'll be no charge for the dinner theater. Someone'll be by to freshen your drinks. This rounds on me.

She smiles and walks with Dave out of the room.

INT SILKY'S ENTRYWAY NIGHT

Dave and Silky step into the front hall. A man is just walking in. He smiles at Silky and steps into the parlor.

SILKY

Jesus, it's been hell. Marcus called in sick and I haven't had anybody on door keeping pricks like that out. Danny's too busy upstairs handling money to be any good down here. You and Sarah taking all god damn night to get back. I need her ass working.

Sarah comes through a door down the hall. She is dressed in a thin black nightgown.

SARAH

My ass is going, Silky.

(to Dave)

Doc needs to talk with you Dave.

INT SILKY'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Silky's bedroom is extremely large and very tastefully decorated. Pearl and Doc are seated on either sides of the bed. Ester is tucked under the covers. She is sweating profusely.

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Dave and Silky enter the room. Pearl sees her boss and gets up. She straightens what little she has on and heads out of the room.

DOC

Sarah tells me you found her on the road between here and Natchitoches.

DAVE

Yeah.

Silky sits down on the bed and looks at Ester.

DOC

Why didn't you take her to the hospital in Natchitoches?

DAVE

I didn't think she needed a hospital. I thought here would be fine.

SILKY

A brothel? You thought a brothel would be just as good as a hospital?

DAVE

Sorry. You want me to drive her to Natchitoches?

DOC

No, it wouldn't be good to move her, again. She's in pretty bad shape, but it's nothing rest won't cure. We'll need to get the sheriff down here. See if anyone's been reported missing or kidnapped.

SILKY

Kidnapped?

DOC

Look at her wrists. The girl's been tied up. She's also been pretty badly banged around. Somebody's been taking out some anger on this little thing.... I gave her a little something to get her to sleep. The way she was shaking... I swear, if I didn't know better I'd say she was having the DT's.

DAVE

You drinking again? She's five years old.

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SILKY

Dave!

DAVE

Sorry, Doc, I didn't mean anything by that. Just, she's a little young to be hooked wouldn't you say?

DOC

Before I moved to Wheatonsburgh, I'd have said yes. This town's opened my eyes to a lot of the worst the world has to offer. But, far be it from me to moralize, I've got a prostitute to get back to. I'll come round in the morning to check on her. Anything happens in the next little while, Dave, I think you know where to find me.

DAVE

Tell Danny I said this one's on the house.

Doc walks out of the room. Dave stands up. Silky gently touches Ester's forehead.

DAVE (cont'd)

You want me to get one of the girl's to watch her.

Silky doesn't look up from Ester.

DAVE (cont'd)

Silky? You want me to get one of the girl's?

SILKY

You shouldn't have brought her here. Doc's right about this town being bad. This place... Dave, a whorehouse isn't any place for a kid.

DAVE

You didn't feel that way with me. I'll send one of the girl's back to watch her.

Dave walks out of the room. Silky looks after him. She is near tears.

INT SILKY'S ENTRYWAY NIGHT

Dave walks up to DANNY, a muscular man at the front door. Danny's in his late fifties, but obviously a very physically powerful man. Dave lights a cigarette and offers one to Danny. Danny declines.

DAVE

Danny, you understand Silky?

DANNY

I known her as long as I known you, Dave. She's a woman. No understanding them in my book. Woman can be crazy. Woman can be fun. You just gotta be ready for both. Excuse me, but some people's time is up.

Danny heads up the stairs to roust the patrons or collect more cash for a few extra minutes of fun upstairs. Dave leans up against the front door.

INT SILKY'S STAIRWELL NIGHT

SHERIFF OLSTEAD comes walking down the stairs. He's in his mid-sixties with a slim build. He's a tall man, sun browned face and weathered skin. He has smile wrinkles around his bright attentive eyes.

He is wearing his Sheriff's uniform, buckling his gun holster, as he takes the final steps to the ground. His fly is undone. He waives at Dave.

OLSTEAD

Dave, my boy, you're looking good tonight. I heard a little ruckus down here. Thought you must have it under control, else you would have called up for me.

Dave just nods.

OLSTEAD (cont'd)

You would called up, right, Dave?

DAVE

Sure, Sheriff, sure. Olstead's the man to call when you got trouble.

Dave pats him on the shoulder. Olstead shrugs off the pat.

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OLSTEAD

Dave, I know you don't care for me, but I would ask you have a little respect for the uniform.

DAVE

It's hard to Sheriff, when the uniform's fly's open.

Olstead zips his fly and looks at Dave. He stares awkwardly at Dave for a second, when Silky walks in to break the tension.

SILKY

(to Dave)

You tell him about the girl?

OLSTEAD

What girl?

DAVE

I was just about to put his detective skills to work.

SILKY

Dave! I don't know what your problem is tonight, but I really don't need it. Go help Danny upstairs. I'll tell the Sheriff about your little discovery.

Dave tossed his cigarette out the front door and heads upstairs.

INT SILKY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

Danny is walking down the hall. A man walks out of one of the rooms adjusting his clothes, a girl follows him to the doorway and blows him a kiss goodbye. She is smiling and giggling. As soon as the man is gone she turns back to the room, her expression changes to one of boredom.

Pearl steps into the hall and looks at Danny.

PEARL

You know, I never thought I'd get bored with fucking....

DANNY

Why don't ya' become a nun if the works gettin too hard.

She flips him off.

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PEARL

If it ain't hard I ain't working.

Dave greets Danny at the top of the stairs.

DAVE

I'll watch the clock. Who's time's up next?

DANNY

Sarah's got five minutes in room 7.

Dave sighs and sits down in a chair at the top of the stairs. He looks to a grandfather clock at the end of the hall. It is 2:55.

INT CHURCH OF THE DIVINE WATERS CHAPEL NIGHT

Jessup, Greeley and the three other bowler hatted gentlemen are in the small chapel that serves as home to the Church of the divine waters. Jessup is pacing back and forth, his bible clutched in his right hand.

GREELEY

I had a talk with brother Hebert. He said the woods are pretty thick all around his farm. He'll get his dogs out in the morning. I gave him some cloth from Ester's things. He'll let us know if she lit out on foot.

BOWLER HAT #1

Or what, how else would she have gotten away?

GREELEY

She could have snuck into someone's car. Lit out that way. She's just a little girl. She won't have gotten far.

Jessup throws his bible against the wall in a fit or rage. The men all turn to look his direction.

JESSUP

Quit talking about Ester like a little girl. We aren't dealing with a little girl. We are dealing with the Devil himself. Remember that. That little girl is his seed. She is his likeness here on earth. If we don't find her. If we don't stop her.... Don't you understand. If Ester is free then the Devil is free.

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BOWLER HAT #1

Then how can we find her? We caught her once, but will she let herself be caught a second time?

Jessup looks a Bowler Hat #1. He points his finger at the man's nose.

JESSUP

Brother, you've hit on the answer. We caught her before, because she wanted us to catch her. She wants to test us. To try our faith. She'll let us catch her again. She's baiting us.

GREELEY

If she didn't want us to find her then she-

JESSUP

She would have stopped us from ever looking. She would have killed us in that field.... No, she's playing with us. Playing with everyone of us.

GREELEY

But, where would the devil run to hide?

INT SILKY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

Dave is watching the clock.

CUTAWAY - CLOCK FACE

The time is 2:59. The second hand is ticking with 10 seconds to 3:00.

INT SILKY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

Dave is up from his chair.

CUTAWAY - CLOCK FACE

The second hand is ticking with 8 seconds to 3:00.

INT SILKY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

Dave is halfway to room number 7.

CUTAWAY - CLOCK FACE

The second hand is ticking with 4 seconds to 3:00.

INT SILKY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

Dave is at the door to number 7.

CUTAWAY - CLOCK FACE

The clock strikes 3.

INT SILKY'S UPSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

Dave pounds on number 7's door.

DAVE

Time's up. Come on.

Dave opens the door. He glimpses Sarah and a balding man in his forties lying on the floor. He is on top of her, her legs wrapped around his waist. She is hitting the floor with both hands.

SARAH

Five more minutes, baby. Five more minutes.

DAVE

I need the money.

SARAH

You'll get it... oh god... you'll get it.

Dave slams the door. He walks down the hall toward his chair. Danny comes up the stairs and sits before Dave has a chance.

DAVE

Five more on 7.

DANNY

You get the money?

DAVE

No.

DANNY

You need to get the money...

DAVE

Danny, I know that. Talk to the whore.

Dave heads quickly down the stairs.

INT JACKSON'S BAR NIGHT

Dave is sitting by himself at the end of the bar, a half empty glass of water in front of him and a cigarette dangling from his lips. The bar is obviously closed. The band is gone and only the bartenders remain. They're cleaning off the counters and putting stools and chairs up off the floor.

DAVE

I'll lock up, you guys get on out of here.

The bartenders nod and retrieve their stuff from behind the bar. As they walk out, Pearl walks in. Dave has started closing the bar. The counter top to the bar is hinged on the bartender's side. Dave simply grabs the far edge of the bar and flips it toward the wall. It forms a cover over the bar and all it's contents. Dave's sealing the whole thing with a large padlock when Pearl speaks.

PEARL

Jesus, Dave, what a night... The bar closed, I see.

DAVE

I imagine I could open it for you.

PEARL

That's okay, I've had enough of everything for a quite a while. I'm gonna go to bed ... for like the tenth time tonight ...

DAVE

Get some sleep this go round.

There is a door in the back of the bar marked: PRIVATE. It leads to a stairwell. The top portion of Jackson's is occupied by private rooms for some of the girl's. Other's live elsewhere in town.

PEARL

Dave, before I forget, Silky wants you inside ...

Dave tosses his cigarette to the ground. He heads outside.

EXT JACKSON'S BAR DAWN

The first hints of morning are beginning to show. Dave is halfway to the back door of Silky's when Sarah walks out. She stumbles slightly and Dave steadies her.

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CONTINUED:

SARAH

Sorry, Dave, not really feeling too good.

DAVE

You were feeling great earlier.

SARAH

You got that right. Jesus, it was good tonight.

DAVE

What would them church people have to say about you now?

Sarah pushes Dave away from her and heads for Jackson's. Dave looks after her.

DAVE (cont'd)

(whispering)

Good, Dave.

He starts to move toward Sarah.

DAVE (cont'd)

Sarah, I'm sorry. I didn't mean anything by it.

Sarah throws open the screen door to Jackson's. It hits the wall and closes fast. Sarah looks at Dave through the wire mesh of the screen, before turning and heading upstairs. Dave dejectedly heads for Silky's.

INT SILKY'S KITCHEN NIGHT

Silky is sitting with a cup of coffee at the kitchen table. She is lost in thought and oblivious to Dave's entrance.

DAVE

Silk.

Silky notices him for the first time, she looks up, bleary eyed from lack of sleep.

SILKY

Hey, honey.

Dave sits down with her.

DAVE

Who's watching the kid?

SILKY

Sheila's back there I tell you, hon, something's scared that kid good.

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CONTINUED:

DAVE

I think you ought to fire Sarah.

Silky sits up with Dave's sudden non sequitur. She lights a cigarette and stares him in the eye.

SILKY

Any particular reason.

DAVE

I called time on her upstairs, and she kept on screwing. No break to get more cash. That break's what keeps 'em in there for more than fifteen minutes.

SILKY

Dave, half the girls pull that same thing. You think I should get rid of them too?

DAVE

No, I just think you should fire Sarah.

SILKY

Cause she ain't about to quit, and unless I fire her, she's gonna keep screwing for cash and breaking your heart in the process.

Dave looks at Silky, as if this if this is the first time he's become aware how transparent his affection for Sarah is.

SILKY (cont'd)

Never fall in love with a whore It never works out. Look what good it did your father.

She looks at Dave and laughs slightly. Dave smiles and gets up from the table.

DAVE

I'm gonna get some shut eye.

SILKY

Not without checking on the little blonde you saw fit to bring home. If she's up, you are too. This old girl's needs her sleep.

There is a knock on the kitchen door and two older MAIDS walk in. One is carrying laundry bags, and the other has cleans sheets.

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CONTINUED: (2)

MAID #1

We're gonna get to work cleanin', if that's all right with you Miss Silky.

SILKY

Be my guest.

Silky and Dave head out of the kitchen.

INT SILKY'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Sheila is sitting on Silky's bed, she has a wet washcloth on Ester's head. Ester is shifting her head from side to side and mumbling to herself.

Sheila sees Dave and Silky enter the room. She gets up and yawns.

SHIELA

I'se beginnin' to think y'all forgot about us.

DAVE

How could we ever do that, darlin'? She doing okay?

SHIELA

A little better now.

Sheila walks close to Dave. She brushes up against his shoulder.

SHIELA (cont'd)

I'm about to fall asleep right here.

She puts her arms around Dave.

SHIELA (cont'd)

You wanna carry me up to my room, sugar.

Silky sits down next to Ester on the bed.

SILKY

Dave's gonna be carrying this little one to bed. This ain't the place for a child. Dave, you carry her up to your room.

DAVE

A room over a bar'll be better than here?

SILKY

A bar's a better place for a kid than a whorehouse. Not much, but-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

But, you wanna get some sleep and don't need this kinda hassle.

SILKY

Bingo. Shiela, give him a hand.

Dave reluctantly picks up Ester and head out. Shiela hold the door and then follows him. Silky collapses on the bed.

INT DAVE'S ROOM

Dave's bedroom is the loft/attic of Jackson's bar. It has a high arched ceiling and small windows on all four sides. Silky's can be seen out of the window next to the bed. Shiela and Dave climb the stairs to the bedroom. It is fairly neat and Spartan in it's decorations. No pictures hang on the walls. One corner of the attic has been turned into a bathroom/shower.

Dave has a double bed, a small bookcase filled with paperbacks, a guitar, a turntable, a few records and wardrobe. Apart from a sleeping bag and some other camping equipment, the room is bare.

The shades are drawn, allowing only slivers of light to stream into the room. Dave sets Ester on the bed and Shiela covers her up. Ester begins to mumble again.

ESTER

(mumbling)

No, no, I don't wanna... it tastes funny... snakes'll come again... the snakes'll... no...

DAVE

What's she saying?

SHIELA

She's been going on like that all night. Mumbling about snakes and the devil and drink something... I looked at her back and her arms and legs.... all bruised and....

Shiela begins to cry.

SHIELA (cont'd)

I'm sorry... I just hate to think of somebody doing that to such a precious little girl.

Dave gives Shiela a hug and runs his hands through her hair.

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