

CHAOS WALKING  
The Knife of Never Letting Go

Screenplay by  
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Based on the novel by  
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Note: *Noise*, which is the thoughts, memories, fantasies, dreams, and anxieties of men and animals, is constant in this world. There is no escape from it for anyone. It is seen and heard at every moment, even though it sometimes recedes into the background in the same way one's own thoughts and worries sometimes do. The only exception to the Noise is when the script explicitly indicates silence.

VIEW FROM THE STRATOSPHERE

Silent and beautiful. An Earth-like planet orbited by two moons. Slowly, we drift in toward its glinting blue water and lush green land. A slight camera shift reveals our view is through a porthole. On the wall next to the porthole is a child's sticker of a giraffe.

BLACK.

EXT. COUNTRY DIRT ROAD - DAY

The sky is dark with storm clouds. Todd, 13, in threadbare work clothes, walks along a dirt road bisected by acres of farmland. He's followed by Manchee, a scruffy little dog. Sad farmhouses squat in the distance. There is an almost imperceptible mumbling of voices in the background.

TODD (V.O.)

I am Todd Hewitt. I am twelve years and twelve months old. I talk to myself just about all the time, mostly to keep track of which one is *me* in all this Goddamn Noise. I am Todd Hewitt and I ain't never gonna have a girlfriend, which is the one thing my fool brain keeps telling me it needs. I am Todd Hewitt and I'm lonely in all sorts of new and stupid ways. I am Todd Hewitt. I never did ask to be born. 'Specially not on this God forsaken planet.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

(looking at Todd)

Need a poo, Todd.

Todd gives Manchee a glance, but keeps walking.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Poo, Todd. Poo! Poo!

TODD

Do it then! Poo, for crying out loud!

Manchee trots into a field. Todd waits impatiently.

TODD (V.O.)

Dogs, it turns out, don't never have nothing very interesting to say.

Todd looks off at a small village in the distance. Vague images float up from it, hover, and dissipate. Manchee comes running back from the field, wagging his tail.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Good poo, Todd!

Todd looks down at Manchee.

TODD

Shut up, Manchee.

They walk in silence.

TODD

Not like I even wanted you. Put that information in your tiny pea brain and --

Manchee wags his tail.

TODD

What I wanted, dog, for my last birthday was a knife. Like Ben. A man's gift.

Image of Ben's kind middle-aged face tilts down to a knife on his belt.

TODD

Not a boy's -- stupid, slobbering, mangy -- gift. Not a ruddy poo machine.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

(wagging his tail)  
Poo, Todd!

TODD (V.O.)

But Cillian just had to get on the Mayor's good side.

Image of Cillian, middle-aged and stern, presenting a puppy to the camera.

CILLIAN

From the Mayor's litter, boy. So you take proper care of him, you hear?

Todd and Manchee approach the small village of Prentisstown. Disembodied voices get loud. The sky here is dense with words and images. Boy and dog tense.

TODD (V.O.)  
I am Todd Hewitt.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Todd. Todd. Todd.

They pass a small boarded-up schoolhouse.

SUPERIMPOSED:

EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE - NIGHT

Bonfire of books. Huddle of men. Mayor Prentiss, on the steps, delivers a speech Todd only vaguely remembers.

MAYOR PRENTISS  
... in pursuit of ---- we must address  
the ---- and the very real dangers of --  
Men of Prentisstown -- Evil -- ideas --

Image of books taken off shelves in Todd's house. He, Cillian, and Ben watch.

MAYOR PRENTISS  
... essential that ...

Image of middle-aged teacher Mr. Royal weeping, followed by image of him teaching in a classroom. Todd is a student in the class.

MR. ROYAL  
Learning, boys, is the  
light in the darkness of...  
MR. ROYAL (V.O.)  
There is no light. All is  
lost. These poor boys...

Image of Mr. Royal alone in schoolhouse, gun in mouth.

TODD (V.O.)  
Mr. Royal -- No!  
MAYOR PRENTISS (O.S.)  
Books will not help us now.

Mr. Royal looks at camera. Gunshot. Todd grimaces, smacks his head to suppress the image. The words "Mr. Royal -- No!" ricochet around the bleak countryside. A man in the distance looks over. Boy and dog walk in silence.

TODD (V.O.)  
Everyone loses everything in  
Prentisstown. I guess everyone loses  
everything *everywhere* -- given enough  
time.

(beat)  
I am Todd Hewitt. I am twelve years and --

EXT. PRENTISS TOWN - DAY

Boy and dog hurry through the depressed town. A few men loiter. Loud mumbling. Images and words, some pouring from doors and windows, drip around Todd, pulsate, insinuate themselves into his body.

VOICE 1  
Todd Hewitt. He ain't ready.

VOICE 2  
Got to make sure Ezra don't cheat me on this grain.

VOICE 3  
Marie. Marie. Marie...

VOICE 4  
I'll kill that suovahoor.

VOICE 5  
When I was ten, my pa gave me that bike. I loved it.

VOICE 6  
Hungry. Need food now. What do I have to eat?

TODD (V.O.)  
I am Todd Hewitt. I am twelve --

VOICE 1  
(mocking)  
He is Todd Hewitt...

VOICE 3  
(mocking)  
He is Todd Hewitt...

Derisive laughter. Todd winces. He passes "Phelps Dry Goods."

TODD (V.O.)  
Oh, crap. Please don't make me talk to --

Mr. Phelps sticks his head out the door. A ghostly image of Phelps walks to Todd and gives him a pathetic hug. Todd feels it and shudders. The ghost hug evaporates.

MR. PHELPS  
Howdy, Todd!

MR. PHELPS (V.O.)  
My life is over. I'm --

TODD  
Hello, Mr. Phelps.

MR. PHELPS  
Good to see ya. How're Ben and Cillian?

MR. PHELPS (V.O.)  
I can't bear another day without my sweet Julie.

TODD  
They're good, Mr. Phelps. Workin' like always.

TODD (V.O.)  
Please don't make me see damn, naked Julie again.

A vague naked woman dances around Mr. Phelps. She kisses him and sings a sickly sweet song.

JULIE

Tell me the tales that to  
me were so dear, Long, long  
ago, long, long ago,  
Sing me the songs I  
delighted to hear,  
Long, long ago, long ago --

MR PHELPS

Come in for tea! Made some  
oatmeal cakes this morn,  
which I know you enjoy.  
We'll have a chat and maybe  
a game of checkers. What  
say you, lad?

TODD

I gotta hurry, on account  
of the rain.

TODD (V.O.)

Also on account of naked,  
singing and dancing Julie.

Todd smiles, waves and hurries along.

MR. PHELPS

Ok, Todd! You take care  
now!

MR. PHELPS (V.O.)

So ashamed. He saw my  
pathetic thoughts --

Mr. Phelps's gray cloud swirls after Todd, who now passes  
a gas station in a state of disrepair.

TODD (V.O.)

Mr. Hammar got no job since the fission  
generator busted. Now he just stares out  
the window and thinks *bad* all day.

MR. HAMMAR (V.O.)

I think bad, huh? Look at me, boy.

Todd is driven to look back at the gas station. Mr.  
Hammar watches him from a dark window. His voice pounds  
into Todd's brain.

SUPERIMPOSED:

Image of Todd alone in a desert, dripping sweat, holding  
a bloody knife, and staring blankly at a camera that  
glides away, leaving him tiny in a vast, dead space.  
Suddenly, the tiny boy dances like a toy.

MR. HAMMAR (V.O.)

One month, boy. The truth  
shall animate your soul.

TODD (V.O.)

Stop it... Shut up.... Get  
away from me.

Image of Todd standing above Mr. Hammar and bringing a  
hammer down repeatedly on his head, which cracks open.  
Blood and brains spill out.

TODD (V.O.)

A hammer for Mr. Hammar. Smash!

Hammar's broken face laughs. The actual Mr. Hammar also  
laughs. Suddenly he stops and glares at Todd.

MR. HAMMAR (V.O.)

Soon, boy.

Todd turns away quickly, hurries off.

TODD (V.O.)

I am Todd Hewitt. I am --

Todd passes an almost empty church. Quiet weeping Noise in muddy colors swirls around Todd's ankles.

TODD (V.O.)

Church ain't crowded no more. Funny, cuz They came to this planet to *live simple lives of prayer*. Men don't pray much now.

Next to the church, a bar, crowded with silent drinkers. Yet the Noise and music is near deafening. Images drift out: a decimated Earth, piles of female corpses. Words float by, snippets of yellowed correspondence. Hopeless voices drone on about lost youth, illness, despair.

TODD (V.O.)

Ben says --

Vague Flash of Ben talking to camera.

BEN

The bar is the new church...

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

And they play music loud to drown out drunk Noise. It don't work too good.

The jail is on the left. Mr. Prentiss, Jr., a 14 year old with a sparse moustache, directs a handcuffed man into the jail. He yells into the bar.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Shut up, you whiners! Babies!

Quick Image of Mayor Prentiss calling Mr. Prentiss, Jr. a "whiner" and a "baby."

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

(condescending)

Morning, young Todd.

TODD

Morning, Mr. Prentiss, Jr.

TODD (V.O.)

Pathetic idiot.

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MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Best respect your elders, boy.

Mr. Prentiss, Jr. sneers, pushes the man into the jail. Todd continues on.

Images of Prentiss, jr., younger (no moustache) hover:  
walking around with chest puffed; picking on another boy.

TODD (V.O.)

Used to be plain ol' Davy Prentiss. Now  
he's a man, I gotta call him Mister. All  
boys gotta call all men Mister. Means  
only I gotta call everyone that, being  
that I'm the last boy in the world. So  
Davy, the mayor's son, is now sheriff.  
Gets a gun and a badge. He likes that  
just fine.

Todd nears the edge of town. One more house, separated  
from the rest: bigger, cleaner, nicer, and, because of  
that, scarier.

TODD (V.O.)

I am Todd Hewitt. I am twelve years --

Noise emanates from the house, but it's different:  
several voices in unison, a perfect Gregorian chant.

VOICES

One... two... three... four... five...  
one... two... three... four... five... I  
am the circle and the circle is me... I --

Shapes drift out the door: triangles, rectangles. They  
pulsate, edges drift in and out of sharpness. A big,  
ominous black circle rolls out. As it passes Todd, it  
hums vaguely and block his vision.

VOICES

I am the circle and the --

TODD (V.O.)

I am Todd Hewitt --

The voices stop. Todd picks up his pace. Mayor Prentiss  
appears on his front porch. He smiles at Todd.

MAYOR PRENTISS

You *are indeed* Todd Hewitt. Thought I  
heard ya.

TODD

Good morning, Mayor Prentiss.

MAYOR PRENTISS

I see you've got that pup from my litter.

TODD

He's great, sir. Thank you.



MAYOR PRENTISS  
My special gift. To show my  
appreciation. I've had my eye on you.

TODD  
Thank you, sir.

MAYOR PRENTISS (V.O.)  
Do you like me?

MAYOR PRENTISS  
You're rare, Todd. Most  
men are stupid, which is  
why thoughtful men are  
needed to lead. In just a  
month you'll be one of  
those men.

MAYOR PRENTISS (V.O.)  
GOOD BOY... I am the  
circle... Do you love me?  
... Love me... I am the  
circle... I will make you  
happy. I will give you  
hope.

TODD  
That's exciting! I gotta go, sir. Got  
to get swamp apples, then back to chores.

MAYOR PRENTISS  
Run along. Plenty of time  
to chat soon.

MAYOR PRENTISS (V.O.)  
I need you to love me, to  
love me.

Todd hurries off. After a bit, he glances back toward  
town. The mayor is stepping into the church.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING

Nature sounds: singing birds, rustling leaves, gurgling  
water. A squirrel sniggers. Manchee chases it, barking.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Squirrel! Squirrel!

The squirrel taunts Manchee.

SQUIRREL (V.O.)  
Come and get me, Dog!

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Squirrel! Squirrel!

The squirrel scurries up a tree. Manchee barks.

TODD (V.O.)  
Everything got Noise since the Spacks  
released their Goddamn poison.

Image of fierce alien humanoids dispersing clouds of  
yellowish powder outside of Prentisstown. Image of mass  
burial. Many men and boys stare at adult and child-sized  
pine coffins, their Noise crying and calling out women's  
names.

TODD (V.O.)  
 Killed all our women. I'm glad we  
 slaughtered them Spacks. Damn monsters.

Images of aliens and men in brutal, bloody combat.

Back to the calm, woodsy environment. Todd watches the  
 squirrel taunt Manchee.

TODD (V.O.)  
 But animal Noise is better. Honest,  
 simple. Ain't trying to lie or hide or  
 trick you like men.

A bird lands in a nest in a tree near Todd. He watches  
 babies pop their heads up and chirp at her.

BABIES (V.O.)	MOTHER (V.O.)
Hungry! Hungry! Hungry!	Babies. Babies. Babies.

The mother bird regurgitates into their mouths. Todd  
 smiles and moves in to get a closer look. Flash of Todd  
 from the mother bird's point of view.

MOTHER (V.O.)  
 Boy. Too close! Boy! Boy! Boy!

Todd gives the birds space. Manchee returns.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
 Poo, Todd?

TODD  
 You really don't have to ask me.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
 Poo, Todd?

TODD  
 Yes! Poo! Poo! For God's sake!

Manchee trots off. Todd sighs, watches the birds.  
 Suddenly, a wild-eyed man leaps from the brush and slaps  
 Todd hard across the face, cutting his lip with a heavy  
 ring. Todd gasps in shock and pain.

TODD (V.O.)  
 Aaron?? What??

Manchee looks over from his business and slinks off into  
 the brush.

TODD  
 Look, Aaron. I don't know what --

Aaron punches Todd in the face. Todd falls to the ground, bleeding. Aaron stands over him, breathing hard.

AARON

You may not know *what*, boy, but God knows *what*. Can't hide from God. He hears all, including the evil in your lying Noise.

Todd stares up at Aaron's twisted grin. Distorted images swirl around him: beatings, naked women, Bosch-like abominations. Aaron sees Todd watching his Noise and pushes the thoughts back with a sermon.

AARON

(rapid fire)

I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward each person according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve. What is God saying here, my children? That we must serve Him. We must force others to do the same. For if one of us falls --

AARON

-- we all fall.

TODD (V.O.)

-- we all fall. Aaron's favorite thing to say.

Aaron studies Todd, then reaches out to help him up. Todd nervously takes the assistance.

AARON

Just looking out for you, Todd.

TODD (V.O.)

Thank you, Aaron.

AARON

Use your words, boy.

TODD (V.O.)

Give him what he wants.  
Maybe he'll leave.

TODD

Thank you, Aaron.

Aaron smiles, then raises a hand to hit Todd again. Todd flinches. Aaron laughs.

AARON

You're right to be fearful. Ours is a vengeful God. I'm simply His messenger.

They stare at each other, then, suddenly, eerily, Aaron turns and runs off, as if animated against his will.

Todd watches him leave, watches the disturbing images that hover around him as he disappears into the landscape. Manchee appears at Todd's side.

TODD  
Well, you're worthless.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Good poo, Todd.

TODD  
Yeah, right. Let's go find those apples. It's gonna rain.

Todd walks toward a stand of apple trees. Manchee follows. The forest is alive with animal words and images Todd pulls apples from trees. After a bit, he notices Manchee's gone. He spots the dog standing statue-like a few yards back.

TODD  
C'mon, dummy! We got stuff to do!

Manchee just stands there: alert, his ears flicking.

TODD  
What is it, boy?

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Quiet, Todd.

Todd stands very still. He listens.

TODD  
I am quiet. Still don't hear nothin'.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
*Is quiet, Todd. Is quiet.*

Manchee's hackles are up and he barks fiercely without words. It scares Todd. He approaches Manchee.

TODD  
What?

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Listen.

Silence. Todd turns his head right and hears forest creatures. He turns the other way and hears the same, but straight ahead, there is only the faint rustle of leaves. Todd, squinting into the trees, is scared --

TODD (V.O.)  
I am Todd Hewitt. Ain't no such thing as no Noise. Not in this world.

-- yet he feels compelled to walk toward the quiet. Manchee stays put. As Todd gets closer, the silence envelopes him. His breathing becomes shallow.

TODD (V.O.)

I am Todd Hewitt... I'm not scared...

His Noise evaporates. He feels small and alone. Then, oddly, Todd begins to weep. Manchee watches, worried. When Todd finally looks up, the silence is gone. He looks for it, almost desperately, but it's gone. Stunned, he walks off, forgetting the bag of apples.

EXT. PRENTISSTOWN - DAY

Todd and Manchee approach the village; human Noise hovers. Dark circles roll from the Mayor's house.

TODD (V.O.)

What was it? Something not there.  
Nothing. *Nothing* watching me. Looking  
into me, not letting me look back.

Terrifying image of a silent stand of trees. The image spreads in all directions, blanketing the town. Todd tries to avoid the rolling circles. He passes the church. Aaron is back in there now and preaching.

AARON (O.S.)

What can each of us do to ready ourselves  
for judgment -- Todd! I hear you out  
there! You were visited by the Devil in  
that swamp. Come in and pray with me...

Todd starts to jog, bringing thoughts from passers-by.

VOICE 1

Todd?

VOICE 2

Why is he running?

He runs faster. The voices merge into a blur of sound.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Todd and Manchee pass outbuildings. There's a rusted out fission bike leaning against a fence. A grumbling male voice, paired with images of wrenches and leaking oil is heard over distant muttering.

CILLIAN (V.O.)

Hot! Damnit! This foul piece of junk.

Todd passes a broken fission generator. Banging noises come from underneath.

CILLIAN (V.O.)

There you are. Been looking all over.

Cillian emerges from under the generator

CILLIAN

Where you been all damn morning?

CILLIAN (V.O.)

You have any idea how hard my life is?

TODD

Went to pick swamp apples. For Ben. Shoulda asked Ben if you was so curious.

Cillian looks up at Todd's empty hands.

CILLIAN

Nice batch you got there. There's work to be done. And boys are playing.

CILLIAN (V.O.)

You're lying. My life is miserable. Don't make it worse by lyin'.

TODD

I wasn't playing. If you'd ever listen. I dropped the apples. Ok?

CILLIAN (V.O.)

Liar.

An image of Todd dropping the bag of apples.

TODD (V.O.)

When I got scared.

CILLIAN

Scared of what?

TODD

Quit listening to everything. Can't I have some privacy around here?

CILLIAN

First you want me to listen, then you want me to *don't* listen. I dunno. Just do your work, boy.

Todd looks sullenly at the ground, kicks a rock.

TODD (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Ben is the nice one. He  
 cares about me. You're  
 mean and impatient. I know  
 you think it was a mistake  
 taking me in. You blame me  
 for your and Ben's  
 problems. But what am I  
 supposed to do? I exist.

CILLIAN (V.O.)  
 You've got to keep a tight  
 reign on boys. Otherwise  
 they test and test. I was  
 raised strict and I turned  
 out good. I work hard, I'm  
 honest and fear God. My  
 job is to instill that in  
 you. I'm not trying to be  
 your friend.

They stare at each other in silence for a moment longer.

CILLIAN  
 (softening)  
 Look, Todd... I --

TODD  
 (not having it)  
 Where's Ben?

Cillian's face hardens.

CILLIAN  
 Lambing starts in a week.

TODD  
 Where is Ben, I said.

CILLIAN  
 Get the damn sheep fed and  
 into their paddocks.

CILLIAN (V.O.)  
 I don't care if you love  
 Ben more 'n me.

Todd turns and stomps away. Manchee follows him.

TODD  
 Yeah, yeah, I'll do your ruddy sheep!

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
 Sheep, Todd. Do sheep! Quiet in swamp!

CILLIAN  
 What does he mean "quiet in swamp"?

Todd turns around. Cillian is looking intently at him.

TODD  
 What do you care?! I got ruddy sheep to  
 feed, remember! Anyway, it ain't your  
 job to be my friend! Remember?

Todd walks off.

EXT. SHEEP FIELD - DAY

Todd and Manchee pass grazing sheep. The sheep "baaa."  
Images of them eating grass float above their heads.

SHEEP (MANY V.O.'S)

Eat. Eat. Eat. Eat. Eat. Eat.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Sheep, Todd.

TODD  
You're a genius, Manchee.

Todd listens past the sheep for other Noise.

TODD (V.O.)

C'mon, Ben. Where are you?

Todd hears a man's gentle humming in the distance.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Ben.

TODD (V.O.)

Ben.

The two follow the sweet humming. It grows louder.

TODD (V.O.)

Ben. Ben who I love. Ben and Cillian,  
my parents since my ma died when I was a  
baby. Ben, who is kind. The only man on  
the planet who is.

Manchee barks, runs around the corner of an outbuilding.

BEN (V.O.)

Early one morning, just as  
the sun was rising...

TODD (V.O.)

Ben's song for me. Says it  
was my ma's favorite.

Todd turns the corner, sees Ben. He'd been working on an  
irrigation system. Now scratching Manchee, he looks up  
and smiles at Todd. His Noise is soft and comfortable.

BEN

Hiya.

BEN (V.O.)

Hot today. Good boy,  
Manchee. Apples? Cillian?

TODD

Hi, Ben.

Ben studies Todd. Todd looks at the ground.

BEN

You taking the time to remind yourself  
who you are, Todd Hewitt?



TODD  
Why does Cillian have to come at me like  
that all the time?

BEN  
Just his way. He loves you.

Ben studies Todd, concerned: his bloody lip, his muffled  
Noise.

BEN  
Left the apples at the house, did ya?

Todd shrugs.

BEN  
What happened out there in the swamp?

Todd looks down. Ben watches both Todd and Manchee.  
Flash of Aaron staring down from Todd's POV.

BEN  
(furious)  
Aaaron? That sonuvahoor!

Todd doesn't say anything.

BEN  
Might just have a few words with him.

TODD  
Don't. It don't hurt that much.

Ben gently lifts Todd's chin and looks at his cut lip.

BEN (V.O.)  
One month... Birthday... Not much time  
... poor boy... Need to...

Ben sees Todd hearing his Noise. He covers it.

BEN  
Irrigation pipes rusted. So I'd best...

TODD  
Ben... what happens to me on my birthday?

Ben attempts a smile.

BEN  
It's a surprise. Don't go a-peekin' now.

TODD  
Ok.

TODD (V.O.)  
Something awful is comin' --

Ben puts his hand on Todd's shoulder.

BEN  
What happened in the swamp today, Todd?

TODD  
Just Aaron being Aaron --

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Swamp quiet.

BEN  
What's the dog mean by that?

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Quiet. Quiet.

TODD  
We saw somethin'. Well, we  
didn't see it; we felt it.  
Well, we didn't feel it.  
That was the weird part.

Todd shows Ben: Image of the silent trees. Ben studies  
Todd's Noise, his own Noise buzzing yellow with concern.

CILLIAN  
Ben! Todd!

Cillian's running toward them, out of breath, frantic.

TODD  
What is it, Ben? Are the  
Spackle back?

CILLIAN  
Ben?? What's that in his  
Noise??

TODD  
Is there gonna be another Spack war??

BEN  
On the way home, you walk through town?

TODD  
What?! Yes! How else could I --?

BEN  
We got to get you outta here. Right now.

Cillian has arrived, breathing.

CILLAN  
We got to get him out of here. Now!

BEN  
I know. I know.

TODD  
Will somebody please tell  
me what is going on?

BEN  
Don't think it, Cillian! No Noise!

CILLIAN I'm not an idiot!  
TODD Think *what*?

Ben grabs Todd by the shoulders and shakes him.

BEN  
Don't you think it neither!

Ben and Cillian look at each other, unreadable Noise between them. Ben turns to Todd.

BEN  
You're gonna have to leave Prentisstown.

Todd stares at them.

TODD  
There's nothin' outside Prentisstown!

Ben and Cillian glance at each other again.

TODD  
Quit looking at each other all the time!

CILLIAN  
C'mon to the house. Your bag is packed.

Cillian starts heading back.

TODD  
What?? How can you have my bag packed?!  
C'mon! That doesn't even make no sense!

BEN  
Let's go, Todd.

TODD  
No. Not till I get an explanation.

Ben turns and walks toward the house. Todd stands there for a moment, exasperated, then follows.

INT. BEN AND CILLIAN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Cillian tears up floorboards. Ben frantically stuffs a sack with dried food. Todd and Manchee stand dumbly in the middle of the room and watch.

TODD  
Is it that the Spacks are coming back?

There's no response.

TODD

Cuz I wanna stay and fight them. Get them back for what they done to my ma.

Ben and Cillian ignore Todd. Cillian pulls a packed rucksack from under the floor.

TODD

I ain't leaving. You hear?

Cillian pulls a leather journal from the rucksack.

TODD

Hey, you ain't allowed to have books!

A pounding at the door. Everyone jumps. Manchee barks.

MANCHE (V.O.)

Door! Door! Door!

Cillian shoves the journal back into the rucksack.

MR. PRENTISS, JR. (O.C.)

I know you're there! I hear all your ruddy noise!

CILLIAN

Stay here. Cover your Noise.

Cillian exits to the front room. Image of Todd shearing sheep appears around Todd and floats through the door to the front room. Ben counts; numbers hover over his head.

CILLIAN (O.C.)

What do you want, Davy?

MR. PRENTISS, JR. (O.C.)

That's Sheriff Prentiss to you, Cillian. I need to have a word with young Todd.

CILLIAN (O.C.)

Todd's out shearing sheep, Davy. I'll have him stop by your office later.

MR. PRENTISS, JR. (O.C.)

You take me for a fool, Cillian?

CILLIAN (O.C.)

You really want me to answer that, Davy?

MR. PRENTISS, JR. (O.C.)

I hear his noise not twenty feet away. I don't think he's shearing them sheep in the kitchen.

CILLIAN (O.C.)  
Why you got a rifle with you?

MR. PRENTISS, JR. (O.C.)  
Seems the boy had a funny little word in  
his Noise as he passed through town. We  
just wanna find out what it's all about.

CILLIAN (O.C.)  
We?

MR. PRENTISS, JR. (O.C.)  
His Honor, Mayor Prentiss.

An image of Mayor Prentiss screaming at Davy drifts into  
the kitchen.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
(calling)  
Y'all come out now!

They hear Davy heading toward them. Ben silently leads  
Todd to the back door. A scuffle ensues. Flashes of  
Cillian and Davy fighting, rolling on the ground, from  
both their POV's. Ben and Todd hurry into the front  
room.

INT. FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Davy's on the floor with a bloody nose. Cillian stands  
over him, aiming the rifle at his head.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
Hello, young Todd.

TODD  
Hello, Mr. Prentiss, Jr.

CILLIAN  
Get off my property, Davy.

Davy stands, wipes his nose, smiles.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
We got plans for ya, boy. One more  
month. Gonna be a big party.

Cillian cocks the rifle. Davy, snorts, nods to Todd.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
Be seeing ya.

Davy exits.

CILLIAN

He's gotta go now! Through the swamp.

TODD

Whoa! I ain't going back to the swamp.  
There's Spackle there! I told ya!

CILLIAN

Davy's comin' back for you, Todd. And he  
ain't coming alone next time.

BEN

Better take Manchee. His Noise is too  
loud for him to stay.

Todd glares at the clueless dog. Manchee wags his tale.

TODD

This just gets better and better.

Cillian slips the rucksack onto Todd's back.

CILLIAN

Todd --

Todd notices the change in Cillian; his Noise is sad. He  
sees himself as a baby being held by Cillian. Then  
Cillian pulls him into a desperate hug. Todd's cut lip  
smashes into Cillian's collar and he pulls away.

TODD

Ow! Watch it!

CILLIAN

Try to understand. We're doing this  
because we love you, all right?

TODD

No. It's not all right. All right?

Cillian tears up, nods, looks at Ben.

CILLIAN

I'll hold 'em off long as possible.

Cillian and Ben clasp hands, look into each other's eyes,  
and kiss. Images of them getting married, walking  
together in the woods, laughing. Todd watches the  
gravity of this goodbye and it scares him. Ben grabs Todd  
by the arm and pulls him to the door.

BEN

C'mon.

Todd looks back at Cillian as he is led away.

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

Ben, Todd, and Manchee run through a corn crop that's way over their heads. They're getting cut up.

TODD

Ben... This is crazy! How do we even know which way we're running?

BEN

I know! Now keep quiet!

MANCHEE

Corn.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The woods are dense with foliage. It's dark and scary. Strange giant lizards slither by. Their deep, slow whispering voices blanket the scene.

WHISPERING VOICES

Hungry. Hungry. Hungry.  
Hungry...

BEN

I'll get you through to the river. Then you can follow it to the swamp. Then --

TODD

You know this place is filled with crocs.

BEN

I hear 'em, Todd. There's no choice. Just watch your step -- Now, Food's in your rucksack, but forage and hunt if you can, to make it last long as possible.

TODD

Till when? When can I come back?

Ben stops, turns to Todd.

BEN

You can't never come back.

Todd looks at him, confused. He tears up.

TODD

I don't even know what I done wrong!

Ben hugs Todd.

BEN

Oh, Todd. You ain't done nothing wrong.

Todd pulls away.

TODD

Then I don't understand.

Ben sighs, pulls the journal from Todd's rucksack.

BEN

This'll explain. When the time is right.

Todd looks with anxiety at the book.

TODD

But, Ben --

TODD (V.O.)

Can't read.

Ben's Noise gets sad and hopeless.

BEN

I didn't know what to do. We couldn't let Prentiss see in your Noise that we was learning you how to read.

(beat, hopeful)

But you can read enough, right? Right?

Todd can't bear the worry in Ben's voice.

TODD

Yeah. I could read enough, Ben. Sure.

BEN

Good. Just take your time. Sound the words out. It's your ma's journal, Todd.

TODD

My ma?

BEN

She kept it from the day you was born till the day she died. We promised her we'd keep you safe. We couldn't let on our plan was to get you outta here as soon as you was old enough.

TODD

So I couldn't know either?

BEN

Couldn't let even a little bit leak out.



TODD

It's about the silence I found in the swamp today?

BEN

No. That was a surprise. But whatever it was, it surely got Prentiss's attention on you and that's the last thing we want.

TODD

That silence scared the hell outta me, Ben. Please don't make me go back there.

BEN

Do you trust me, Todd Hewitt?

TODD

Course I do.

BEN

Then trust me when I tell you the things you know about this world ain't true.

TODD

Then why can't you just tell me what is?

BEN

The Noise would be too loud. They'd track you like a beacon. We gotta go.

TODD

No. I'm going home with you. And I'm gonna become a man and live out my life in Prentisstown. Like everybody else in the world.

Ben stares hard at Todd, then:

BEN

Ok, Todd. Stay. This will be your thirteenth birthday party.

Ben's Noise opens up, fills the air around them. Todd watches a boy being led by the mayor to a clearing.

CHANTING

I am the circle and the circle is me.

The boy is in the center of a circle of men. He looks small and terrified. As the men chant, a black circle hovers oppressively above the boy's head.

BEN

They'll put things in your brain with their Noise, ideas about *patriotism and necessary evil*. They'll tell you have to be *grown-up* and you have to be *strong*.

A man is on his knees in front of the boy. The man and boy both have pleading eyes. A knife is handed to the boy. The chanting continues, driving the boy into a frenzy. He plunges the knife repeatedly into the man's neck, continually stabbing the man even after he is dead.

BEN

They whisper *different* for each boy.

Ben's Noise shows several boys going through the ritual.

BEN

Prentiss knows what's in everybody's hearts. He owns us. But not you. Not yet. But he will. Unless you go.

Todd is terrified. The world looks different now.

TODD

(quietly)

Where?

BEN

There's a map in the front of the book. One of the lies you been told is that there ain't other places. There are. They won't take Prentisstown men, cuz they know what we done. What we done binds us here. But you're still a boy.

TODD

What we've done? You and Cillian, too?

BEN

Todd, you're the reason we kept going as long we did. Keeping you safe is the most noble thing we ever did.

A *Bang* back toward the house. They jerk their heads.

BEN

Cillian!

TODD

I'll come back with you!  
I'll help you fight.

BEN

No! Go! Now! Through the swamp!  
Promise!

Todd just stares at him. Another *Bang*.

BEN  
Promise me!

TODD  
Ok! Ok. Whatever you say.

BEN  
I have to go. Here.

Ben unstraps his knife from his belt, hands it to Todd.

BEN  
This will be useful.

A quick image of a boy in the circle using a similar knife to stab a kneeling man's throat.

TODD  
I don't want it no more.

TODD (V.O.)  
I'm so Goddamn confused.

BEN  
Confused ain't bad. It's a helluva  
confusing world. Just take it.

Todd takes the knife.

BEN  
If I can find you, I will. I promise.

Todd and Ben look at each other.

TODD  
Ben --

BEN  
Go!

Ben nods goodbye, then turns and runs toward the house. Todd watches him. Ben looks back once, then disappears into the woods. Todd waits for a moment, then turns.

EXT. CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON

Todd runs with Manchee. Distant gun shots.

TODD (V.O.)  
I am Todd Hewitt. I don't know what to do or where to go. Ben says everything I been told my whole life is a lie. Maybe Cillian just wanted to get rid of me and Ben agreed cuz it'd be easier 'thout me. Maybe that's why he sent me off.

It starts to pour. Todd and Manchee, pelted by wind and rain, can barely see. They enter a small grotto and look out at the forest, blowing in gale-force winds. After a bit, Todd pulls out the journal and opens it to the first page. Flowing handwriting fills the screen:

My Dearest Son,  
I begin this journal on the day of yer  
birth. Yer the most beautiful thing  
that's ever happened in the whole entire  
universe...

Todd labors to sound out the words.

TODD (V.O.)  
My... dee...ar...est... sone.... I...  
beggin... beggin?...

Todd slams it shut in frustration, then stares at the rain and sees a vague photograph of a young woman.

TODD (V.O.)	WOMAN'S PHOTOGRAPH
Only way I'll ever know you	My dee-ar-est Sone. My dee-
is by a book I can't read.	ar-est Sone.

Todd weeps. Manchee looks up at him, worried.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Cry, Todd? Cry, Todd?

TODD  
(screaming)  
Shut up, Manchee! You're stupid and  
useless! And I hate you! Why the hell  
do I have to take you wherever the hell  
it is I'm supposed to go!

Todd glares at the shivering dog and suddenly feels even worse. He gets down and hugs the dog tightly, and continues to cry. Manchee licks at Todd's face.

EXT. SWAMP -- A BIT LATER (EARLY EVENING)

Rain has slowed to a drizzle. The two walk cautiously, listening. They stop and stare into the darkness. Silence. Once again, the quiet both draws Todd in and terrifies him. Cautiously, he inches toward it. There's a rustle in the leaves and the sound of running feet. Todd chases it, panting. The unseen thing pants. It falls with a grunt. Todd and Manchee see it: a girl, dirty and staring at Todd, trapped against a wall of rock. Manchee barks.

TODD  
 Shut up, Manchee.  
 (to girl)  
 You're not a Spack

The girl just stares. Manchee growls at her.

TODD  
 Shut up, Manchee.

TODD  
 Who are you?

TODD (V.O.)  
 You're a girl. I can tell.  
 Even though you don't look  
 like no girl I seen in  
 pictures.

Photos of girls in bows and dresses crowd the air around  
 Todd. Then, images of fantasy women crowd the girls.

TODD (V.O.)  
 ... or ladies I seen in men's Noise.

TODD  
 You're a girl. Not sure how I know  
 exactly. You got short hair and you're  
 not in no dress. But you're a girl, all  
 right.  
 (beat)  
 Right?

The girl doesn't say anything.

TODD (CONT'D)  
 I believe you are.  
 (beat)  
 So where'd you come from, then? There  
 ain't no females left on this planet.  
 (enunciating)  
 WHERE... DO... YOU... COME... FROM??

The girl recoils, pushing herself hard against the wall.

TODD  
 Why you got no Noise? I don't get that.

Todd stares at her. She stares back.

TODD (V.O.)  
 Maybe you ain't thinking nothing. Maybe  
 you're a dummy girl.

TODD  
 Well, you ain't no Spack. So I got no  
 quarrel with you.  
 (MORE)

TODD (CONT'D)

And I gotta keep movin'.

(to Manchee)

Keep an eye on this one. I'd best check the map, figure out which way is which.

Manchee watches her. Todd holds his knife in one hand, sits on a rock and pulls out the map, studies it.

TODD

Came up through here. So that means I'm --

*Wham!* Something smacks Todd in the head. He flails and the knife connects with the girl's arm. She cries out and falls back. Todd regains his bearings and sees the girl, now on her butt, is bleeding. She holds a stick. Todd stands quickly.

TODD

What the hell'd you do that for??

The girl just stares at him, breathing hard.

TODD

I wasn't doin' nothin' to you!

Todd feels his head. Manchee is nowhere to be seen.

TODD

Manchee!

Manchee comes trotting from the bush.

TODD

I told you to watch her!

MANCHEE

Poo, Todd.

TODD

What the hell you eatin' that's making you poo so damn much? It ain't normal!

Manchee looks sheepish. Todd keeps an eye on the girl.

TODD

Look, I ain't gonna hurt you.

She stares blankly.

TODD

I...AIN'T... GONNA... HURT... YOU!  
UNDERSTAND? JUST DON'T HIT ME NO MORE!

Her eyes go wide and she backs away into the shadows.

TODD

I ain't yellin'. I'm just tryin' to communicate. You don't have to --

A giant black hurricane of Noise bears down on Todd. It's cold and wet and it chills him to the bone. He turns to look at it and is SLAPPED in the face by the Noise and then by a hand. He falls. Aaron is on top of him, punching him in the head.

AARON

You little filth! What you smilin' at?

Aaron presses his thumbs into Todd's throat. His Noise is rich with ghastly imagery: plagues; fires; giant eyes staring down from the sky; Todd struggles to get out from under him.

AARON

I do enjoy our visits, boy.

Aaron dribbles spit into Todd's mouth. Todd gags and grunts. Suddenly Aaron's eyes widen in shock. He yells and looks down to find Manchee biting down hard on his leg. Blood seeps through this trousers.

TODD (V.O.)

Good Dog! Damn! Good dog!

Violently, Aaron shake his leg and Manchee flies off, smashing against a tree. Aaron looks around frantically.

AARON

Where is it?! Where'd it go??

TODD

Where is what?? What do you want??

AARON

The Sign! Where is the Sign??

The girl is gone. Branches break underfoot as she runs into the woods. Aaron pushes himself off Todd and runs after her. Todd sits up. A shaky Manchee joins him.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Todd?

TODD  
(coughing)  
I'm ok, buddy. I'm ok.

TODD (V.O.)  
Maybe she's all Aaron  
wanted. He called her The  
Sign. Maybe if he brings  
her back to Prentisstown, I  
can go back to my life.  
Maybe it's over?

MANCHE (V.O.)  
Over.

TODD (V.O.)  
Ain't right they want to  
hurt her but maybe she done  
something bad. She seemed  
awful terrified. But maybe  
they got good reason for --

The girl screams. Todd is on his feet, instantly,  
running. He scrambles through bushes. Manchee follows.  
Aaron has her in shallow water, up against a tree,  
holding both her hands as she screams and kicks and  
struggles to get away.

TODD  
(weakly)  
Leave her alone.

Aaron's back is to Todd with Noise so loud he doesn't  
hear. Images of demons swarm around him. There's an  
image of the girl as an angel, being sacrificed. Image  
of Mayor Prentiss walking among the demons.

MAYOR PRENTISS  
She is the key. Aaron, you do me proud.

Aaron ties her hands together with his cord belt.

TODD  
Leave her alone!

Images: Mayor Prentiss whispering in Aaron's ear;  
chanting monks; a little boy watching a man beat a woman.

AARON (V.O.)  
She is the seductress. Our key to  
eternal salvation. The whore.

The girl kicks him. He slaps her across the face.

TODD  
Leave her alone!

Manchee barks.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Alone!



The girl looks past Aaron at Todd, with pleading eyes.

TODD (V.O.)  
I have to do it.

TODD (V.O.)  
I have to kill him.

Todd raises his knife. Aaron turns to him, releasing the girl, who is too beat up and defeated to run off.

AARON  
Your Noise reveals you, boy.

Todd takes a step back.

TODD (V.O.)  
Coward. Shut up!

Aaron steps toward Todd and Todd steps back again.

AARON  
You are a coward. The Lord has no use for a coward.

TODD (V.O.)  
Coward. I'm a coward. I'm a goddamn coward.

Aaron lurches, knocks Todd's hand, sending the knife flying. He lands hard on Todd's chest, with Todd in the water and Aaron's fingers pressing deep into his neck. Todd flails; one of his hands lands on a big rock. He smashes it hard against Aaron's head. Again and again. Unconscious, Aaron slips off, lands with a splash face first. His head bleeds profusely. Todd scrabbles back, coughing, not taking his eyes off Aaron. Manchee approaches Todd and licks him on the face, puppylike.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Todd? Todd? Todd? Todd?

Todd scratches the dog between the ears.

TODD  
It's ok, boy.

Todd looks up to find the girl there, her eyes wild, her cheeks tear-stained. Her still-tied hands hold the knife. Todd backs away, then realizes she's not threatening him. He gently takes the knife and cuts her hands free. The girl looks down at Aaron, still gurgling in the water. She looks back at Todd, who is ashamed.

TODD (V.O.)  
You saw I couldn't kill him. You understand I ain't no man.

She looks up at Todd. He averts his eyes.

TODD (V.O.)

You want me to kill him. You want me to stab him. You would respect me then.

Todd looks down at Aaron, then at the girl. She holds her breath. Todd drops to his knees in the water next to Aaron and lifts the knife over his head.

TODD (V.O.)

Nobody could say nothing bad about me doing this, given the situation. But what a knife does can't never be taken back. And I ain't got no idea what it changes you into. Am I still Todd Hewitt after I kill a man who deserves killing? Anyway, his head is bashed in real good and he's most likely gonna die anyway. So it's not a choice I need to make now.

(beat)

I am Todd Hewitt and I'm a coward.

Todd looks up at the girl. She stares, still seemingly holding her breath. He lowers the knife and stands.

TODD

He's gonna die anyway.

He picks up his rucksack and walks into the forest. Manchee follows. After a moment, he looks back and sees the girl is following, too.

EXT. SWAMP - LATER STILL (NIGHT)

They arrive at a clearing. The girl walks a bit ahead.

TODD

Hold up.

She stops.

TODD

You understand me! That's a start!

Todd pulls a flashlight from his sack. He turns it on and shines it into her face. She squints.

TODD

You know how to use one of these?

She doesn't say anything.

TODD (V.O.)  
You understand, but not much. Maybe you  
understand like Manchee understands.

He shines the flashlight on the map.

TODD  
(pointing)  
So, this is where we are. Here's another  
settlement. You from there? Cause  
that's where we're going. So...

He looks over at her. She's staring at the night sky.  
He looks up to see what she's looking at. Nothing.

TODD  
Good. We're in agreement then.

He puts the book in the rucksack and starts walking. The  
girl walks in the opposite direction.

TODD  
(looking back)  
No. This way.

The girl keeps walking.

TODD  
Hey. We ain't got time. You hear me?

The girl keeps going.

TODD  
Don't you understand nothin'?

Finally, Todd follows the girl.

TODD  
Look, we can maybe get protection at this  
settlement, so it's best if--

She ignores him, keeps walking away.

TODD  
Aaron ain't the only one after us!

The girl stops. Todd notices a burnt tree. He shines  
his flashlight into the darkness and sees more burnt  
trees and a giant, messy area of plowed brush and mud.

TODD  
Holy...

The girl continues in the direction of the plowing.

TODD  
What is this?

Some of the brush still smoulders. The girl stops by two oblong shapes on the ground. Todd shines his flashlight onto them. It's a man and a woman. After a moment:

TODD  
Your folks?

The girl says nothing. Her face remains blank.

TODD  
So, what happened to them?

No response. She walks off. He and Manchee follow, his flashlight catching a glimpse of metal.

TODD  
What the hell...

He sees more of it. It's huge and shiny and crumpled.

TODD	TODD (V.O.)
That's a spaceship!	Where'd you come from?

The girl continues to the ship, enters a hatch. With some trepidation, Todd and Manchee follow.

#### INT. UPSIDE-DOWN SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Dark, smashed up. Todd and Manchee step carefully; the girl moves quickly; she knows the wreckage intimately.

TODD  
How the hell you live through this?

The girl fastidiously places supplies in a bag.

TODD  
Holy cow. Holy moly.

Todd looks out a porthole at the crushed trees and animals outside. There's an upsidestown giraffe sticker next to the porthole.

#### EXT. CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Todd and Manchee exit the ship. The girl has placed a green box on the ground and piles wood on top of it.

TODD

Look, we gotta keep moving. We got --

She presses a button. Instantly, a full-sized campfire rages in front of them. Todd is amazed.

TODD

Wow! I want me a campfire box. But --

The girl sits. The fire is inviting; Todd is soaking wet.

TODD

Ok. Just for a minute.

Todd and Manchee sit. The girl fishes in her bag, pulls out two small packets, hands one to Todd. He watches as she opens hers, pops some small dried fruits into her mouth. Todd follows suit, placing one in his mouth.

TODD

Hey, that's good! Man, space people!

He dumps the whole package into his mouth and swallows it greedily. Manchee barks a small, pleading bark.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Hungry, Todd?

Todd looks down at the dog's sad face.

TODD

Oh, Manchee. I'm sorry. I forgot.

The girl pours some fruit into her hand and holds it out nervously to the dog. Manchee crosses to her. As his mouth reaches her hand, she screams, and drops the food. Manchee eats it off the ground. Todd smiles and nods a "thanks" to the girl. She just stares.

TODD

So you from a planet where no one speaks or nothin'?

She ignores him, desperately searches the sky. He sighs.

TODD

Anyway, we gotta keep moving. Nice chattin' with ya'.

The girl turns a switch and the fire is out. Then she neatly places the box into her bag. It's not even hot.

TODD

Man, I really do want one of them.

The girl looks back toward the bodies of her parents.

TODD (V.O.)

I'm sorry. We can't bury 'em in this ground. Too swampy. Maybe we can --

The girl fishes a flashlight from her bag and walks off. Todd follows. Manchee brings up the rear.

TODD (V.O.)

Not a thought for her folks. Hard to figure that kinda person. Maybe people got no Noise when they ain't got nothin' inside.

They trudge through the night: over hills, across creeks. Nocturnal creatures make Noise: *I want. I want. I want. Hungry. Hungry. Hungry. Scared. Scared. Scared.*

EXT. SUMMIT - MORNING

They arrive, exhausted, at the top of a hill. Todd consults the map.

TODD

This looks right. But I don't see no sign of a settlement.

The girl pulls a small pair of binoculars from her bag, hands them to Todd. Todd looks through them. The distant landscape is gorgeously vivid magnified.

TODD

Man, you got some magic stuff in that bag. No settlement, but it sure is pretty here sometimes.

Todd takes in the view. The girl remains silent. He hands her the binoculars. She looks out at the world.

TODD (V.O.)

Looking at the view with you. It's pretty. You're pretty. I ain't never thought I'd see a girl. And here one is. But you don't talk. And you ain't got no Noise. Do you even think it's pretty here? No way I can know. Is this what it was like for everyone before the Spack infection?

Image of Spackle spreading yellow powder.

TODD (V.O.)

Them days, you never knew what no one  
else was thinking. Then the Noise comes  
and -- The Noise! The Noise! Crap!

Image of piles of female bodies.

TODD (V.O.)

-- Kills women! *Kills* --

Todd's eyes widen.

TODD (V.O.)

Am I infecting you now? Does it mean  
you're gonna die? Holy --

He looks over at her. She's staring at him and backing  
away. Todd backs away, too.

TODD

You hear my Noise?? I figured, since you  
got no Noise, you couldn't hear it. I'm  
such an idiot! I don't know if it's true  
I can infect you! I'm just thinkin'  
stuff! I got no clue how viruses work!

The girl backs slowly down the hill

TODD

Maybe I'm wrong about everything!

Manchee watches all this, confused.

TODD

I'm wrong! I'm sure I'm wrong!

She covers her mouth in an attempt to keep the germs out  
and runs back toward her ship. Todd runs after her.  
Manchee follows. She's fast.

TODD

Manchee!

Manchee speeds ahead to catch up with her. Todd snags his  
foot on a root and lands hard on his elbows.

MANCHEE (V.O.)(O.C.)

Todd! Todd!

Todd stumbles to his feet and follows Manchee's voice.

MANCHEE (V.O.)(O.C.)

Todd!

Todd, heaving, comes upon the girl. She sits on a rock, her knees to her chin. Manchee licks her face.

TODD

Leave her be, boy.

Manchee keeps licking.

TODD (V.O.)

Keep my Noise calm so I don't scare her.

The girl hears this, looks angrily over at him.

TODD

I know you can hear me thinking! What am I supposed to do?! I think things!!

TODD (V.O.)

Calm...calm... calm... Stay calm, calm...

He keeps thinking "calm."

TODD

All right, look --

She watches his mouth, anxiously. He understands, and covers it with his hand as he talks.

TODD

Our only chance is to get to the next settlement. I don't blame you being scared of me. But I don't *wanna* hurt you. So, how about we go separate? But you come -- on your own. I'll keep an eye out for you. Ok? But you come.

She stares blankly at him. Todd waits. Then he turns and walks back to the hill. He looks back. She sits there.

TODD

Just c'mon. It's gonna be ok.

No response. Todd waits, sighs, then turns and heads up the hill. The girl's bag sits there at the top.

TODD (V.O.)

Oh crap.

He looks down the hill. Then, a slight whisper. He looks around. No one to be seen. The whisper again. He pulls the girl's binoculars from her bag.





MAYOR PRENTISS (V.O.)

You're with a girl now, Todd. And --

The mention of the girl startles Todd. He grabs her bag and runs down the hill.

MAYOR PRENTISS (V.O.)

I ask you, is it wise to trust someone you can't hear? Noise is a curse but also a blessing. It makes us one. *This* Noise now is me being truthful. I'm coming for you because I love you, because we are one. The girl is not us. A valuable commodity, yes, but only if controlled.

Todd mutters "shut up" over and over as he runs. He arrives at the girl, grabs her wrist. She pulls away.

TODD

We gotta go! They're coming! Aaron's coming! And Mayor Prentiss, who don't have your best interest in his heart. Stay away from me if you're scared! But no matter what, I'm better than them.

The girl studies Todd. He stares at her with worry.

TODD

He says you're dangerous because I can't hear you.

(beat)

I don't think that's true.

He stares at her blank face, at her silence.

TODD

Please.

After a moment, she holds out her hand. He looks confused, then reaches to take it. She violently shakes her head "no", and indicates she wants her bag.

TODD

Oh.

He hands it to her. She heads up the hill without looking back. Manchee wags his tail and follows her.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Happy, Todd. Girl. Girl. Girl.

Todd hurries after them. At the top of the hill, hoofbeats are heard mixed with Noise from the approaching posse. Aaron's Noise is louder than the rest.

AARON (V.O.)

And I will execute great vengeance --

The girl looks back with terror.

TODD (V.O.)

I will kill him if he ever comes near you again...

AARON (V.O.)

And they shall know I am the LORD, when I lay my vengeance --

The girl looks at Todd. He blushes, turns away, spots a path in the brush.

TODD

Over here maybe!

The girl follows Todd and Manchee. Hoofbeats and Noise get louder. There's a bridge up ahead.

TODD

Look! We were right! This is it!

Todd tests the bridge with his foot. Sturdy. They hurry across. On the far side, Todd uses his knife to saw at the rope securing the bridge to its post. His sawing doesn't make a dent

TODD

C'mon, c'mon --

He tests the blade against his finger. It bleeds instantly.

TODD (V.O.)

Damnit, knife, be good for something!

The Noise and hoofbeats are louder. Todd saws harder, to no avail. His hand slips and smashes against the post, scraping off skin. He throws the knife down.

TODD

Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!!!

The world goes red. Todd advances on the girl, his hands clenched into fists. She backs up.

TODD

This is all you! I was doing goddamn fine before you showed up and turned everything upside down.

(MORE)

TODD (CONT'D)

Now I'm gonna die and I ain't got no idea why! And it's your fault! Your stupid, dumb, silent, blank fault! I could be home! I could be safe and clean and not beat up and not scared to death! It's all because of you! And you're nothing!

Frightened images of Aaron, Mayor Prentiss, horse hooves raising dust, burning books, fierce Spackle warriors, piles of dead women, a boy stabbing a man in the neck.

The girl is cornered against the bridge post. There's silence between them. His hands are raised in threatening fists. Noise and hoofbeats is all we hear. Finally, Todd punches -- *himself* in his black eye. Then he punches his split lip. It bleeds. He pummels himself in the face again and again. The girl watches, her mouth hanging open. Todd, exhausted, falls to the ground, crying. Manchee worriedly sits next to him. Finally:

TODD

(defeated, looking down)

Listen, we should at least run.

He stands, glances at her. There's a slight shift in her expression. He notices it. He squints at her.

TODD

You just thought something?

The girl ignores him, pulls the campfire machine from her bag, places it on the ground, picks up a big rock and smashes it down hard onto the box.

TODD

Hey! No, we need --

The box cracks and a viscous green liquid oozes from the crack. She picks up the box and shakes the liquid onto the bridge. Todd watches. The mayor and his cohorts have arrived. One of the men on horseback tests the bridge. The girl signals for Todd to step back. He pulls Manchee away. The girl presses the button on the box. An igniter clicks. She tosses the box onto the liquid, then jumps back, almost landing on Todd. The box clicks one more time: Massive explosion and fireball. Their side of the bridge falls and the man and his horse plummet into the river far below. The remainder of the bridge hangs from the other side, engulfed in flames. Prentiss and his posse watch. All of them, with the exception of Prentiss, are covered with soot. As the smoke clears, Todd hears Prentiss's Noise rise above the anxious Noise of his group. Even though he is not looking at Todd, Prentiss's Noise reaches him.

MAYOR PRENTISS

Your resourcefulness confirms you are worthy of my attention, Todd. But you are misguided: I want to help you. Everyone needs help. So we can help each other. And we will. Soon enough.

Prentiss nods to Todd, then leads his posse away. Todd checks both ways along the river, turns to the girl.

TODD

Looks like the bridge was the only way across, but we keep moving, just in case.

Todd holds her bag out for her. She looks at him, blankly. Her stare unsettles him, and he becomes ashamed. After a long moment:

TODD

I'm sorry. I didn't mean those things.

He looks down.

GIRL

Viola.

Todd looks back up at her.

TODD

What?

He watches her mouth open and sound come out.

GIRL

My name. It's Viola.

Todd just stares at her. She watches him, watching her.

TODD

Viola.

TODD (V.O.)

She talks. Her voice is... *pretty*. Kinda high and... light. Viola. I like that name. She talks. She's in there. Viola.

She nods.

TODD (V.O.)

Viola.

TODD

Viola.

She doesn't respond this time.

TODD (V.O.)  
Get her to say another  
thing.

TODD  
My name is Todd.

VIOLA  
I know.

TODD (V.O.)  
Course she does. Stupid.  
(beat)  
Get her to say somethin' else.

TODD  
So you can talk then?

She doesn't say anything.

TODD (V.O.)  
Idiot! Course she can! Stupid moron!

She reaches for her bag. He hands it to her.

TODD (V.O.)  
Get her to speak more. Her voice. It's good.

TODD (V.O.)  
Shut up! She can hear everything! Shut up!

VIOLA  
We should go. Away from here. I think.

He nods. She starts walking along the path.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Away!

Manchee follows her; he's in love. Todd brings up the rear and watches the back of her head as they walk.

TODD (V.O.)  
Her accent's different. It seems smart.  
She can hear this. Shut up. Just think  
about walking. She's pretty. Shut up.

EXT. DOWN THE PATH - A BIT LATER.

Todd follows Viola and Manchee.

TODD (V.O.)  
She walks different than me. Shut up. I  
am Todd Hewitt. Not so much swinging  
shoulders like how men do. Shut up. Not  
like women I seen in Noise though.  
Nothin' like that. Shut up. But  
*somethin'* like that. Shut up.

TODD  
Should we maybe have something to eat?

Viola says nothing, but plops down on a rock. Manchee lies down next to her. Todd, embarrassed, sits and opens his bag. He pulls out a slab of jerky and cuts off a few pieces. He hands one to Viola and throws another to Manchee. They chew in silence. She watches him.

TODD (V.O.)  
Be quiet. Be quiet. Don't think nothin'. Be quiet. Be quiet. Stupid.

VIOLA  
Your face.

TODD  
What about my face?

Viola mimes punching herself in the face.

TODD (V.O.)  
I'm an idiot. Idiot.

TODD  
Yeah, well...

VIOLA  
And before that, from --

TODD  
Aaron.

VIOLA  
Aaron

VIOLA  
He never said his name. But I knew.

TODD  
Welcome to New World.

Viola looks at him, then pulls a small box from her bag. She opens it, removes a square, and cuts it.

TODD  
I got bandages.

VIOLA  
These are better. Synthetic tissue. Help you heal, then they fall off.

She approaches him. He pulls away. She waits until he relaxes, then gently applies the bandage over his eye.

TODD (V.O.)  
 Feels so nice.  
 (humiliated)  
 Shut up. Oh God. Oh --

VIOLA  
 (talking over Noise)  
 What is this place? Why do  
 I hear your voice when your  
 mouth isn't moving? Why do  
 I see pictures and colors  
 and feel your sadness?

She applies another bandage.

TODD  
 I ain't sad.

TODD (V.O.)  
 I'm sad because --

TODD  
 (covering Noise)  
 We came here as settlers a  
 bunch of years before I was  
 born. We was peaceful,  
 church-goin' people but  
 there was aliens here...

VIOLA  
 Well, no, you're actually the aliens.

TODD  
 I ain't no alien! You be careful taking  
 their side! They killed my ma!

VIOLA  
 I'm not taking their side. It's just,  
 it's their planet, so technically --

TODD  
 We offered to help them! Teach them  
 farming, share our food. But they hated  
 us for God knows what reason. Jealous.

Todd's Noise shows images of fierce Spackle and  
 frightened, noble settlers trying to appease them.

TODD  
 They wanted us dead. By their nature,  
 they need to kill. So we fought them.  
 Then they spread some germ on everything.

Images of angry Spackle releasing bags of yellow dust.

TODD  
 Supposed to kill us all. Just killed all  
 the women --

Viola reacts. Todd doesn't notice.



TODD

But what it did to men and animals is it made it so you could hear all their thoughts.

VIOLA

Sometimes I can hear it clearly, but mostly it's just --

TODD

Noise. That's what we call it.

VIOLA

And the Spackle?

TODD

None left. We won them good.  
(sarcastic)  
Hooray. Now everything's great.

VIOLA

So I guess I'm going to die then.

TODD

You ain't sick seeming. Maybe the germs are only in Prentisstown. Maybe if we get to the next settlement -- I'm sorry.

Viola sits down, hugs her knees. After a bit:

VIOLA

You must warn them.

TODD

What?

VIOLA

When you were trying to read that book --

TODD

I *was* reading it. I can read.

VIOLA

All right.

(beat)

So that was in there. "You must warn them." I just wondered what it meant.

TODD

How the hell should I know?  
(beat)  
I can read.

TODD (V.O.)

"You must warn them."  
That's what it said.  
Stupid idiot.

VIOLA

Okay.

Todd stands.

TODD

Okay. We should keep moving.

Viola stands. The sound of a rifle being cocked.

VOICE (O.C.)

You should most surely not keep moving.

A burly figure aims a rifle at them. Manchee barks.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Gun! Gun! Gun! Gun!

BURLY FIGURE

Shut that thing up.

TODD AND VIOLA

Manchee!

Manchee keeps barking "Gun!"

TODD

We're just passing through,  
Mister. We mean no harm.

TODD (V.O.)

Who is this? Why he ain't  
got no Noise?

BURLY FIGURE

Why did you all blow up my bridge?

This is a surprise. Todd and Viola look at each other,  
then back at the burly figure.

TODD

We didn't know it was yours.

BURLY FIGURE

I didn't ask you if you knew who it  
belonged to. I asked why you blew it up.

TODD

We were being chased, sir.

VIOLA

(whispering to Todd)  
Ma'am.

TODD

Huh?

BURLY FIGURE

Chased by who?

TODD (V.O.)

How do I answer? Is he on the Mayor's  
side? Would he give us up for bounty?  
Has he even heard of Prentisstown?

BURLY FIGURE  
Oh, I heard of  
Prentisstown, all right.

TODD (V.O.)  
He can hear my Noise.  
Don't matter what I say.

BURLY FIGURE  
(ominously)  
And yer from Prentisstown  
then.

TODD (V.O.)  
Just don't think nothin'.  
Just --

VIOLA  
(blurting)  
He saved my life!

BURLY FIGURE  
And how do you know he ain't saving it  
for himself?

Viola looks at Todd, suspiciously. Todd looks confused.

BURLY FIGURE  
No. I guess he ain't, at that. Still  
too much of a pup for thinking like that.

TODD  
I'll be a man in twenty-nine days.

BURLY FIGURE  
Nothing to brag about where you're from.

The burly figure lowers the rifle from his face. Todd  
studies the face.

TODD (V.O.)  
Hold on. Is he a woman?

BURLY FIGURE  
Yes.

VIOLA  
Obviously.

TODD (V.O.)  
Jeez! He's an old woman!

BURLY FIGURE  
I'll thank you to refer to me as "she."  
(re: rifle)  
And I ain't so old I can't use this.

TODD  
I just ain't never seen one  
in real life.

TODD (V.O.)  
And you look nothin' like  
ones I seen in men's Noise.

She stares at him. Viola, mortified, rubs the bridge of  
her nose.

TODD

I ain't being mean! Thoughts just happen! I ain't sayin' the women in men's Noise are so great or nothin'!

TODD (V.O.)

Just sometimes I like 'em is all.

The old woman laughs.

BURLY FIGURE

The name's Hildy.

VIOLA

Viola.

HILDY

The boy's Todd, I see. And the dog's Manchee. And you're runnin' from Prentisstown. Which I can't blame you for. Even though I built that bridge with my own hands and I don't much like it being blown up, I think you did right. So I'll ask you this once.

(re: rifle)

Am I gonna need this?

VIOLA

No, Ma'am.

TODD (V.O.)

Ma'am?

HILDY

Ma'am is like sir. Only for a lady.

TODD (V.O.)

Ma'am.

HILDY

Now, c'mon with me. I'll get you some hot food and a place to sleep.

TODD (V.O.)

How the hell do I tell if a person with no Noise is crazy? Cuz she seems crazy.

HILDY

You're a funny one, boy.  
(stares at him crazy-eyed)  
Guessin' you don't tell.

TODD

Anyway, we're heading to the next settlement. We gotta keep movin'.

HILDY  
I'll take ya there. I'm the mayor.

TODD (V.O.)  
You ain't no mayor. Mayors don't look like you. This is a trap.

Viola looks at Todd.

TODD  
Don't think we oughta.

VIOLA  
I desperately need a bath.

Todd just looks at her.

VIOLA  
I'm really filthy. I don't like dirt.  
There's not dirt where I come from.  
(beat)  
There's dirt everywhere here!  
(beat)  
I hate dirt. She seems okay.

TODD (V.O.)  
No. People without Noise don't seem like nothin' at all.

Viola glares at him.

TODD  
Well, not you, obviously. If that's what that look means. I don't know what that look means, cuz you ain't got no Noise!

She picks up her bag and starts climbing up to Hildy.

TODD  
How'm I s'pposed to know why you're mad??

VIOLA  
(to Hildy)  
I'd love some food and a bath, please.

HILDY  
Good enough. This way.

They begin walking off through the woods.

TODD  
I don't think we should go with her!  
Besides I might be contagious, remember!

Viola stops and turns.

VIOLA

Maybe you shouldn't come then. Go off  
and do your own thing.

Todd stands there, stung. Viola looks down, avoiding eye  
contact, but hears his recriminating thoughts.

TODD (V.O.)

You'd do that? You'd just leave me?  
How can people just leave people? I  
saved your life. Don't that count for --

HILDY

(laughing)

Now, boy, it's ok. We won't catch ya.

Todd hesitates, then grudgingly picks up his bag and  
starts up the hill toward Hildy and Viola.

HILDY

Good.

She walks with Viola. Manchee runs on ahead to be with  
them. Todd stays far behind, following sullenly.

TODD (V.O.)

They sure became fast friends. Maybe  
people with no Noise have Noise with each  
other? Why am I the one who is always  
alone? I hate this world. Wish I lived  
on a spaceship. All clean and quiet.

Hildy and Viola laugh at something.

TODD (V.O.)

They laughing at me? If they was normal  
Noisy people, they couldn't have no  
secrets from me. Mayor Prentiss is right  
about that. Maybe Viola should stay with  
Hildy. They seem to love each other so  
damn much.

Viola looks back and glares at Todd. A muttering starts  
to emerge from up ahead, very quietly at first.

TODD (V.O.)

Noise?

HILDY

Ah. The music of Farbranch.

The path opens onto a road lined by apple orchards. Men and women pick the crop. The Noise is loud now, but restrained. It's gentler than Prentisstown Noise, chattering about the quality of the crop, religious hymns, images of children playing.

TODD (V.O.)

All those women! This sure as hell ain't Prentisstown...

Suddenly the Noise from the orchards changes. It goes dark with images of mayhem and slaughter.

VOICE 1  
Prentisstown?

VOICE 2  
Did someone say  
"Prentisstown"?

VOICE 3  
I heard "Prentisstown."

VOICE 4  
Prentisstown?

The workers have stopped their picking and watch Todd, Viola, Hildy, and Manchee on the road. The word "Prentisstown" continues to crackle and multiply through the Noise. Todd looks anxiously at Hildy.

TODD  
What's --

HILDY  
Don't worry, pup. Just a lot of curiosity. Don't mean --

Hildy stops short. Matthew, a bear of a man, stands in the road, blocking the way. He looks angry.

MATTHEW  
Prentisstown?

HILDY  
Morning, Matthew. I was just bringing --

MATTHEW  
(to Todd)  
You're not welcome here. Understand? Or do I need to be a little more emphatic?

Matthew pulls a massive machete from his belt. Todd instinctively reaches for his knife.

HILDY  
Put that away, Todd.

Todd doesn't.

MATTHEW  
What you bringing into our town, Hildy?

Todd and Matthew stare at each other. Red Noise swirls violently around Matthew. But from behind the red Noise, images and sounds of weeping leak through.

TODD (V.O.)  
What is he showin'?

HILDY  
Just bringing in a boy and  
girl pup who need help.

MATTHEW  
You know the law, Hildy.

HILDY  
The law only applies to men. This here  
boy ain't a man yet. Check his Noise.

TODD  
I got twenty-nine days.

MATTHEW  
Your numbers don't mean nothin' here.

Todd studies the weeping in Matthew's Noise. It seeps into him and he starts to cry, too. So does Viola.

HILDY  
He's fleeing Prentisstown. Just like you  
yourself, once.

The Noise from the orchards murmurs "Prentisstown" again.

TODD  
You're from Prentisstown?  
(then, sees it in his Noise)  
You're from Prentisstown!

Matthew raises his Machete. Todd grips his knife.

MATTHEW  
I am from New Elizabeth. I am *never* from  
Prentisstown!

TODD (V.O.)  
New Elizabeth?

The Noise from Matthew suddenly becomes violent. Close-ups of screaming people. Stabbing. Women slaughtered. The Noise is magnified by the workers in the orchard, until the whole sky is blood red, filled with screaming and killing and weeping.

HILDY  
Stop it! Stop it right now, Matthew!  
Stop it, everyone!



The Noise subsides to a horrific murmur. Todd and Viola are wide-eyed with terror.

MATTHEW

You'll not say a word in our town,  
Prentiss boy. If you know what's --

HILDY

There'll be no threats, Matthew.

MATTHEW

Who's this little traitor to womankind?

Matthew points his Machete at Viola. Todd reacts impulsively, jumping between Viola and Matthew, his Noise filled with confused flashes of Viola's face, her crying in the swamp, her staring down at her dead parents, the sound of her pretty voice.

TODD

You'd best take two steps back from her!

HILDY

Todd!

VIOLA

MANCHEE

Todd!

Todd!

MATTHEW

Give me a reason, Prentiss boy.

TODD

Give *me* a reason, Elizabeth jerk!

HILDY

Enough!

Matthew responds to Hildy's authoritative tone. He doesn't put down the machete, but the tension drains. Then his face contorts, his lip quivers and he begins to weep. They all watch the sad Noise of grief pour from him. Nobody knows what to do.

HILDY

Put the knife away, Todd.

Todd does. Matthew drops his machete to the ground.

MATTHEW

It's meant to be over.

HILDY

I know, sweetheart.  
(gently touches his arm)  
(MORE)

HILDY (CONT'D)

Gonna take these two very decent children to my house, so they have a place to stay while they figure what to do next.

MATTHEW

All right.

HILDY

I'll say howdy later, Matthew.

Matthew nods and Hildy leads the kids down the road. Some of the images from Matthew's Noise echo in Todd's head as they walk silently along. Finally:

TODD

What law was he talking about?

HILDY

Long story, pup. I'll tell you later.

INT. HILDY AND TAM'S CABIN - NIGHT

Hildy, Viola, and Todd sit at the table and eat. Todd appears stiff and awkward. Finally:

TODD

So, like, is there a cure for Noise here?

HILDY

No. Not here. Maybe in Haven

TODD

Why ain't women dead here then?

HILDY

The Noise don't kill women, pup.

TODD

The Noise killed every female in Prentisstown! It killed my Ma!

HILDY

Todd, Prentisstown has a sad history. Whole number of things went sour there.

TODD

(beat, quietly)  
Yer wrong. The Noise did it.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Todd sits on the bed and stares out the window. He can hear Viola crying in the bathroom.

TODD (V.O.)  
I could just go. The girl would be fine stayin' here with this liar. Best for everyone.

VIOLA (O.S.)  
(loud whisper)  
*The girl??* Just shut up, Todd!

TODD  
(whisper)  
I didn't say nothin'.

VIOLA (O.S.)  
(whisper)  
You know how tired I am of hearing your stupid thoughts about how I'm nothing and how it'd be fine to just leave me?

TODD  
(beat, whisper)  
You know how tired I am of havin' no idea what yer thinkin? You stop keepin' secrets and I'll stop thinkin' stuff!

She enters from bathroom, in a much too large robe.

VIOLA  
I don't keep secrets! I have a normal brain that doesn't transmit every stupid, knuckleheaded thought it thinks!

TODD  
My brain is the normal brain for this world!

VIOLA  
Not from what I'm seeing in there!

TODD  
Stay out of my head then!

VIOLA  
I wish I could!

TODD  
Shut up!

Hildy appears in the doorway.

HILDY

Enough! Go to bed, you two! Early morning. Long as you stay in Farbranch, we gonna put you to work in Farbranch. Ain't no free rides in Farbranch.

EXT. STORAGE FACILITY - MORNING

Hildy leads Todd and Manchee to an open barn door.

HILDY

Wait here.

She enters, greets Ivan, a dour man. Todd can't hear the conversation, just Ivan's Noise. Ivan looks at Todd.

IVAN (V.O.)

Prentisstown?

He looks back to Hildy, says something. A wave of purple comes off him but is quickly hidden. Hildy signals for Todd to enter.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY - CONTINUOUS

Todd and Manchee approach Hildy and Ivan. Ivan doesn't look at Todd.

IVAN

You can sweep up in back. And you can keep your dog out of my way.

TODD

Listen, I was raised on a farm. I think I can do more 'n sweep. I mean --

HILDY

Till we get to know you, pup. Everyone's a little on edge. But we're having a town meeting tonight. About you and Viola. I think that'll calm everyone.

IVAN

Broom's in the back.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY - LATER

Todd is sweeping. He feels some Noise, looks up and sees Ivan watching him from the doorway.

IVAN

You be wantin' some lunch, I guess.

Todd shrugs. Ivan enters with a container and two bowls. He pours stew into the bowls and hands one to Todd. They sit on some boxes and eat in silence for a bit.

IVAN

(looking down at his bowl)

Not all of us here feel the same.

Todd looks up, confused.

TODD

About what?

IVAN

About history.

TODD

Don't know what you're talkin' about.

IVAN

Prentisstown's still got allies.

(looks up at Todd)

Hidden away in surprisin' places.

Ivan's Noise washes over Todd. Confused, angry: images of dead bodies and war, but also images of women ordering him about. It settles into a sizzle. Ivan stands.

IVAN

Well, that's lunch.

INT. STORAGE FACILITY - LATE AFTERNOON

The floor is almost entirely clean. Todd sweeps up the final bit of mess. Manchee sleeps on a bag of feed.

TODD (V.O.)

Not bad. Maybe I get a real job now.

IVAN

No, not bad at all. I'm headin' to the meetin'. I'll put in a good word.

TODD

Thanks.

Ivan stares at him for a moment, then turns and leaves.

TODD

That's an odd man, Manchee.

A creak in the floorboards. Todd looks up and sees Matthew standing there, machete in hand.

MATTHEW

What man you calling odd, Prentiss boy?

Manchee starts barking.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Back! Back! Back! Stay Back!

Todd pulls his knife from his belt. Matthew walks toward him, swinging his machete.

MATTHEW

No skirts to hide ye from what ye did now, boy.

TODD

I didn't do nothing.

MATTHEW

You from Prentisstown. That's plenty.

TODD

I can't help where I come from.

MATTHEW

You should know before I mete out your punishment, boy, my ma's name was Jessica.

TODD

I swear, I don't know what that means!

Matthew's Noise pours from him. There's a young woman front and center, staring at Todd.

MATTHEW (V.O.)

Jessica.

Suddenly, more scared young women and girls surround Matthew. Fires and explosions. The women scatter. Men Todd recognizes on horseback, including Mayor Prentiss, appear with guns and swords. They trample women under hooves. Screaming and gunshots. Jessica is shot.

TODD

Why is everyone lying all the time?!

Matthew screams and runs across the barn toward Todd.

TODD

Manchee! Get outta here! Run!

Todd runs to the door. He glances back for Manchee, sees he's running for Matthew. Manchee leaps onto Matthew's leg, sinks his teeth deep into it. Matthew yells.

TODD (V.O.)  
Good dog!

MATTHEW  
Damn mongrel!

Matthew swings wildly with his machete trying to get Manchee off. The blade slices off two-thirds of his tail, then sticks into the wood floor. Manchee yelps and slinks off to a dark corner. A furious Todd jumps onto Matthew's back and the two topple and roll on the floor. Todd kicks at Matthew's bitten leg. Matthew yells in pain and Todd disentangles. Matthew looks at his wound.

TODD  
I ain't afraid to kill you!

MATTHEW  
That makes two of us then.

Matthew lunges for his machete, still stuck in the floor. He pulls at it. Suddenly, there's Noise from the town that distracts Todd. Matthew dislodges the machete and comes for Todd. Todd is cornered. He backs up until he's against a wall.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Todd?

TODD  
Just let me get my dog and I'll leave this town.

MATTHEW  
Too late for that now.

With that he raises his machete above his head. But he hesitates. Todd watches Matthew's Noise.

MATTHEW (V.O.)  
(soft)  
He's just a little kid. I can't...  
(angry)  
Prentisstown! Jessica!

Todd looks up, sees a rope holding silage rolls, and slashes his knife at it. He presses himself against the wall as the rolls come down fast, burying Matthew. Only Matthew's arm sticks out, the machete next to it. Todd hurries to Manchee, who worriedly wags his bleeding stump.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Todd?

TODD

Good boy. You're gonna be fine.

More Noise and commotion outside. It's closer now. Todd picks up the whimpering dog and is carrying him to the door when a frazzled Hildy hurries in.

HILDY

There you are! Get to the house now!

She sees Matthew under the silage rolls.

HILDY

What the hell happened here?

TODD

(indicating machete)

That the hell happened.

HILDY

Jesus. Just get back to the house. Now.

Hildy struggles to pull the rolls off Matthew. Todd watches her.

HILDY

Now, pup! Hurry!

EXT. FARBRANCH - CONTINUOUS

Todd carries Manchee through the streets, crowded with running, panicked people. Noise is loud and terrified, the words "Prentisstown" and "army" and "slaughter" echo. Images of death and despair fill the sky. Todd weaves his way through the crowd. He passes Ivan and several other men with weapons, oddly waiting silently amidst all this chaos. Ivan winks at Todd. Todd shudders. He arrives at Hildy's. As he climbs the steps, Viola unlocks the front door.

INT. HILDY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Todd enters. Viola locks the door.

VIOLA

Where have you been?? What happened to Manchee??



TODD  
He needs bandages. He's bleeding bad.

Viola runs upstairs.

TODD  
(calling after Viola)  
What's going on? What the hell?

VIOLA (O.S.)  
Prentisstown is attacking! Where have  
you been?? I was so worried!

She hurries down the stairs, bandages in hand.

TODD  
Like how many men now?

VIOLA  
I don't know. I don't know.  
(bandaging Manchee's tail)  
Hildy said Farbranch will protect us.

TODD  
Machete guy just tried to kill me, so I'm  
not so sure.

She looks up at him.

VIOLA  
Yeah.  
(beat)  
Anyway, Prentisstown is here because of  
us, right?  
(beat)  
We should go. It's only right.

They look at each other.

VIOLA  
We'll get to Haven. Maybe they'll have a  
communication tower. I can contact my  
ship. Maybe you get a cure. It'll be  
better. People here are weird, anyway.

TODD  
I'm beginning to think people are weird  
wherever you go.

EXT. HILLS OUTSIDE FARBRANCH - NIGHT

Todd, Viola, and Manchee run to the top of a hill  
overlooking town.

The streets below are lit with burning buildings. Distant gunshots and screams are heard. They stop to catch their breath.

TODD

Can I see those binocs?

Viola hands them to him; he surveys the scene. Through the powerful lenses, he seems to be in the middle of it, only with attenuated sound and a green hue. It is an army, many on horseback with rifles, many following on foot with torches. Residents run through the streets.

TODD

It's all of Prentisstown.

His binoculars find familiar faces: some deranged, some dead in the eyes, but all committed to this atrocity.

VIOLA

How can it be everyone?

TODD

You got me.

TODD (V.O.)

Davy Prentiss, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Collins, Mr. O'Hare, evil Mr. Hammar... Mr. Phelps, for God's sake -- he's not mean. But his face! Mr. Kearney, who made wooden toys for all the boys on their birthday. Every bleeding man in Prentisstown. What the hell is going on?

VIOLA

Todd. We've got to keep moving.

TODD (V.O.)

Mr. Gillooly.

Mr. Gillooly shoots a woman. She falls to the ground.

TODD

What the -- ? Mr. Gillooly can't even butcher his own meat. He feels bad for sheep!

Todd finds Mayor Prentiss, still clean, not even holding a gun, smiling beatifically in the midst of the carnage.

TODD (V.O.)

Mayor Prentiss lookin' like he's out for a Sunday canter.

Prentiss cocks his head, listening.

MAYOR PRENTISS (V.O.)  
So nice to hear your voice, Todd.

Todd leaps back in shock at hearing this. He lowers the binocs. Viola watches him.

VIOLA  
What?

TODD  
Better keep moving.

EXT. PATH - LATER

Todd, Viola, and Manchee arrive at a fork in the path. Todd checks the map: it ends at Farbranch.

TODD  
Guess we're on our own from now on.

VIOLA  
River's always been on the right.

TODD  
But the left path is bigger and less overgrown, so more used. Must mean something.

VIOLA  
A problem for Robert Frost.

TODD  
I dunno know what that means.

VIOLA  
Just a joke. Never mind.

TODD  
What's the joke? Don't say never mind.

VIOLA  
Doesn't matter. It's stupid. I say we go right because we're more likely to find the river there and that's definitely going to lead us to Haven.

TODD  
I guess, yeah. Might as well.

They head to the right. As they walk:

TODD

What's Robert Frost?

VIOLA

He was a poet. Long time ago. He wrote a poem called *The Road Not Taken*. So --

TODD

Right. Wasn't he also, like, a snowman in a story? I kinda remember that part.

VIOLA

I think maybe that's Jack Frost.

TODD

Oh. Right. Yeah. Right.

(beat)

Well, I know a poem, too.

VIOLA

Yeah? How does it go?

TODD

All the voices that surround me/Seep in my brain and do confound me/They whisper things, they yell, they lie/I feel their rage, their shame, their cries/And after, I am left to find/Which one is *me* inside my mind.

VIOLA

I like that. That's lovely.

TODD

Ben learned me it. I sometimes say it in my head. To remind me who I am.

(beat)

Confound means confuse, in case you didn't know.

VIOLA

Oh, ok. It's a good poem.

An explosion and a flash of fire, gunfire, screams. Plumes of smoke rise above Farbranch. Todd and Viola don't say anything. They just keep walking. Viola seems about to cry.

VIOLA

We led that army to Farbranch, y'know. What's going there is our fault.

Todd doesn't say anything, but sighs and nods to himself.

VIOLA

"You must warn them." We didn't.

(stopping)

I'm sorry but I think you need to let me see the note. Now. I think I have to.

Todd nods, undoes his rucksack, hands her the book. She stops, studies the map with a flashlight from her bag.

VIOLA

"Go to the settlement across the bridge. It's called Farbranch. The people there should welcome you. There are things you don't know about our history, Todd. I'm sorry but if you knew them you'd be in great danger."

TODD

Opposed to now. Sunshine and lollipops.

VIOLA

"The only chance you have is because of your innocence. Prentisstown is on the move. The plan been in the works for years, waiting..."

TODD

For the last boy to become a man. Me.

VIOLA

"The mayor plans to take Farbranch and who knows what beyond it. You have to warn them."

(looking up)

That's underlined.

TODD

So it's my fault. Not yours.

VIOLA

No! They should've told you, not expected you to read it if you can't --

TODD

I can read!

(beat)

They couldn't a told me. It would be in my Noise and Prentiss woulda known and we wouldn't a got that headstart.

VIOLA

Fine, but their solution wasn't thought through. Nothing make any sense here.

TODD

So do we warn other settlements?

VIOLA

I don't know. I think so. It's just --

TODD

Ben didn't say nothin' about them, right?  
What if they're crazy and angry like  
Prentisstown? They might hold us for  
ransom or kill us or...

VIOLA

So we must warn people but we can't warn  
people. Another brilliant instruction.

TODD

(beat)

I don't think we can't stop at any  
settlement before Haven.

They walk in the darkness.

VIOLA

I hate this place. And there's no damn  
river. I'm thirsty.

TODD

Maybe we shoulda taken the other path.

VIOLA

Should we go back? What if this is  
right?

TODD

I don't know what to do. I don't know  
what to do. I don't know what to do!!

VIOLA

Ok, we keep walking for a while and then  
go back if we don't come to it.

TODD

If we're gonna go back, we have to go  
back soon, else the army will be upon us.

They both look scared and very small in the dark woods.  
Image of Mayor Prentiss on horseback following Todd.

TODD (V.O.)

I am Todd Hewitt. I am twelve years  
twelve months old. I am Todd Hewitt...

Viola stops and turns to face him.

VIOLA  
I'm Viola Eade.

Todd stops.

VIOLA  
That's my name. Viola Eade. E-A-D-E.  
She holds out her hand.

VIOLA  
A pleasure to meet you, Todd Hewitt.  
Todd shakes her hand. They stand there for a moment.

VIOLA  
I'd be happy to read your mother's  
journal to you, as well. At some point.  
I'm just offering.

TODD  
We'll see.

Later: pre-dawn. Todd and Viola drag their feet now.

VIOLA  
I'm so thirsty. It can't be this far.  
I'm sure we've gone the wrong way.

TODD  
Definitely ain't no turnin' back now.

VIOLA  
(snapping)  
*Isn't any turning back now.*

Todd stops, looks furiously at her.

TODD  
You truly wanna correct my words? Is  
that what needs to be done right now?

VIOLA  
There was just so much to correct there,  
Todd. First of all, a double negative --

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Water! Water!

Manchee leads the excited pair down the hill to the river. They fall to their knees, lapping up water. Manchee is in, up to his belly, and drinking. Viola fastidiously washes her face, scrubs her nails.

VIOLA

Oh, thank God.

(turning to Todd)

I'm really sorry. I was losing my mind.

TODD

Don't matter none.

VIOLA

No, it don't.

They smile weakly at each other. Viola pulls two collapsible bottle from her bag, fills them with water. They walk on. After a little bit, an odd singing can be heard. Many, many deep, haunting voices singing the same word over and over. Viola and Todd look at each other. Manchee runs ahead, barking. They arrive at an enormous plain and, in the gray pre-dawn light, they see it blanketed by a herd of thousands of giant, slow-moving, furry creatures. It's a breathtaking sight.

VIOLA

What are they?

Manchee barks.

MANCHEE

Cows! Cows!

TODD

I ain't got no idea. Sure as hell ain't cows.

MANCHEE

Big cows!

VIOLA

So beautiful. Can you tell what they're saying?

They listen to the song.

TODD

I think they're saying "here."

VIOLA

Here. So beautiful. My God.

Viola closes her eyes to take in the song. Todd watches her.



EXT. PATH - EARLY MORNING

The sun rises. They still walk, but barely. Viola spots an abandoned water mill up ahead.

VIOLA

I don't care if they find us and kill us.  
I'm going to go sleep now in that weird  
building.

Todd nods and they drag themselves to the mill.

INT. WATER MILL - EARLY MORNING

They drop their bags. Todd takes off his shoes, looks at his bloody feet, covered with blisters. Viola lies down, closes her eyes

VIOLA

You'll hear them coming? I mean, I know  
I said I don't care if they kill us, but  
I kind of do.

TODD

I'll hear 'em. You sleep first; I'll  
listen.

She nods and is instantly asleep. Todd watches her, his thoughts coming fast and scattered.

TODD (V.O.)

Gotta be hard, thrown into this  
craziness. Viola Eade. Funny name. I  
like it, though. What's weird is I only  
know you three days an' I feel nothin'  
that happened before is real. Like  
everything before was a lie. An' I guess  
this *is* reality: always runnin' with you,  
'thout safety, 'thout answers. That's  
just the truth of being alive. What was  
your life like before the last three  
days, Viola? What's it like to grow up  
on a spaceship? A place you can never  
leave. Like Prentisstown. But she got  
out. She got out on that little ship  
that crashed. Why didn't they bring the  
whole ship and all the folks?

VIOLA  
(eyes still closed)  
You send scout ships ahead to make local field surveys and find the best landing sites. Also, how does anyone ever sleep here with all this Noise?

TODD  
Sorry. I can't not think. Just happens.

Groggily, Viola sits up.

VIOLA  
My parents were so excited to come here. A new world of peace and happiness.

TODD  
I'm sorry it ain't that way.

VIOLA  
It's not your fault. But would you maybe sit outside until I fall asleep? So it's a little more quiet. I mean, is that ok?

TODD  
Yeah. Sure.

VIOLA  
I'm sorry. I'm just so tired.

EXT. WATER MILL - MOMENTS LATER

Todd and Manchee sit together. An image of the bodies of Viola's parents hovers near Todd.

TODD (V.O.)  
Her folks, excited to start a new life here.

A vague image of Todd's mother floats over him.

TODD (V.O.)  
Was my ma excited when she first got here? Wonder if her head was full of hope and peace. Wonder if she ever found any of that, for even a minute.

EXT. WATER MILL - NIGHT

Viola shakes a sleeping Todd. He snaps awake.

TODD  
What? What? What?

VIOLA  
Shh. Shh. Listen.

Todd sits up. There's Noise: a whispering of voices.

TODD  
Oh, man. How long was I asleep?

VIOLA  
Too long. We slept too long. The army?

Todd listens, stands, jams stuff in his rucksack.

EXT. BEFORE SUNRISE - LATER

It's raining. They run, the "whisper" nipping at their heels. They see a small town on a hill, still asleep. Dream images float above the houses: men running in slow motion, chased by monsters; a naked man is laughed at by a large group of people. Todd and Viola run quietly along the river, past docks. A woman attends to a fishing net. They hurry past, hiding behind boathouses. Then they're beyond the settlement and back into the wilderness.

TODD  
Well, we managed that one.

TODD  
Now just however many more till Haven.

VIOLA  
If Haven even exists anymore. We're putting a lot of faith in a word.

TODD  
A word's all we got.

Hoofbeats. A single horse. Down the road but approaching fast. Todd and Viola look for somewhere to hide. There's a fallen tree beside the road. They crouch behind it. Todd pulls out his knife.

VIOLA  
Only one horse, right?

TODD  
But fast. He's after something.

The rider appears small in the distance, his Noise comes in snippets with corresponding images.

## NOISE

Rain. Good boy. Eyes peeled.  
 Bootprints? Prove myself. Dad.  
 Ashamed. Ashamed. Ashamed.

Flashes of the army, a woman being chased, Mayor  
 Prentiss. Todd realizes.

## TODD

It's the mayor's son. Davy.

Manchee barks.

## MANCHEE (V.O.)

Davy!

## TODD AND VIOLA

Shh!

Davy Prentiss slows his horse to a walk. They watch him  
 through the branches. He's only a few feet away.

## MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Todd Hewitt!!!

His voice terrifies Viola. She crouches lower.

## MR. PRENTISS, JR.

You think you can hide from me, Todd  
 Hewitt? I've been hearing your Noise  
 since you were born and I hear it now.

Davy laughs, edges his horse into the woods, toward them.

## MR. PRENTISS, JR.

And what's that emptiness I hear beside  
 you, boy? What is that sour lump of  
 nothin' in a dress?

Todd watches Viola flinch at Davy's meanness.

## TODD (V.O.)

Damn him.

(planning)

Well, he got a gun and I only got a --

## MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Damn right, I got a gun. And, hey, I got  
 another gun, too. One special, just for  
 your little lady there, Todd.

The Noise around Davy Prentiss fills with sordid sexual  
 imagery and includes half-remembered lewd stripper music.

Todd looks at Viola; she sees the Noise, too. He indicates the direction they should try to run.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Please run. Give me reason to hurt you.

Davy and his horse are so close, Todd and Viola can hear the horse's jittery Noise amidst its snorting.

HORSE (V.O.)

What's that? Snake? What's that?

TODD

Now!

He and Viola run. Davy Prentiss fires his gun wildly, directs his horse onto the road and follows them. They run through a narrow strip of woods and are completely visible to Davy from the road. The horse overtakes them within seconds.

TODD

Across the road! The woods are deep there!

Viola nods and they go for it. Viola succeeds, but Davy gets his lasso around Todd's legs and drags him to the ground. Viola turns back to look.

TODD

No! Run! Run!

Their eyes lock, then she disappears into the woods. Todd looks up to see Davy high on his horse, smiling.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

My pa sure is gonna be proud.

TODD (V.O.)

Still got my knife, so maybe --

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

And it's making me quake.  
That's a terrifying tiny  
little knife you got there.  
(points rifle at Todd)  
Now drop it.

Todd drops the knife. Davy hops down off the horse.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Yer little lady sure didn't show no loyalty.

Manchee bares his teeth and leaps for Davy's leg. Davy kicks him viciously in the face and Manchee squeals, goes flying, and slinks into the bushes. Davy is unfazed.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
 Friends abandoning you right and left,  
 Todd boy. I guess it turn out women and  
 dogs are pretty much the same animal.

TODD  
 Shut up!

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
 Poor Todd. All this time  
 with a woman and you never  
 learned what they're for.

TODD  
 Stop talking about her!

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
 What you do, Todd, is you  
 keep the ones that's whores  
 and you shoot the ones that  
 ain't whores. It's simple.

Davy bends down close to Todd's face.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
 After I tie you up, I'll go find her and  
 let you know which one she is.

With a grunt, Todd pushes himself hard off the ground.  
 His forehead smashes into Davy's nose, breaking it. Davy  
 flies backward. The horse is spooked and runs off down  
 the road. Todd punches Davy in the face, then rams his  
 knees into Davy's groin. While Davy groans and curls up  
 on his side, Todd kicks Davy's gun away, grabs the knife,  
 cuts his own legs free, and stands, looking into the  
 woods for some sign of Viola. Todd turns back and *Wham!*  
 Davy punches him in the eye. Todd staggers.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
 You piece of shit!

Todd swings his knife wildly toward Davy, who steps back  
 while searching the mud for his gun. Todd jumps on  
 Davy's back and they both fall to the ground, punching  
 and kicking, both pouring out Noise. Todd succeeds in  
 getting Davy onto his back. He sticks the point of his  
 knife under Davy's chin.

TODD  
 Why you after us?

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
 Us? My pa only wants you.

TODD  
 What? Why?

Davy stares at Todd, but doesn't answer.

TODD

Why does he want me? I'm asking you!

Davy smiles. Todd slaps him across the face.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

My pa says a knife is only as good as the man wielding it. You a fighter -- I'll give you that -- But you ain't no killer.

TODD

Shut up!

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Yeah? How you gonna make me?

TODD

I WILL KILL YOU!!

Davy laughs.

TODD

Stop it!!!

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Wanna hear how Ben and Cillian screamed for mercy 'fore I shot them twixt the eyes?

The Noise around Todd turns red. His face clenches. As he lifts the knife above his head:

TODD (V.O.)

I will kill you. I will kill you.

Davy smiles up at Todd. Todd hesitates.

TODD (V.O.)

Coward! I'm still a damn coward. I --

Davy punches Todd in the throat. Todd falls off him, gasping for air. Davy easily wrenches the knife away from him.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Let me show you a thing or two about wielding.

Todd looks down, ashamed, wheezing.

TODD

Just kill me already.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

My pa wouldn't be none too pleased with me killin' you. Thing is, plenty of fun to be had with a knife, 'thout killing a man.

Todd stares up at Davy. He makes no attempt to escape.

TODD (V.O.)

I'm sorry, Ben. I'm sorry  
I'm such a coward.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Course you ain't a man yet.  
Nor will you ever be one.

Davy brings the blade close to Todd's face.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Maybe the word of what you are would look pretty carved on your forehead. Good news for you is... you won't be able to read it! Because you can't read! Haw Haw Haw!

Todd closes his eyes and waits. Pause.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Well, well, well, what do we have here? Looks like yer girlfriend decided she wants to visit with me after all.

Viola stands at the edge of the woods, watching.

TODD

Run! Get away from here!

VIOLA

(to Davy)

Step back. I'm warning you.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

Haw! What ya gonna do, run and hide from me to death?

Something shoots from Viola to Davy, sticking to his chest: a plastic bulb with wires. He chuckles.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.

That's what you got? That's a devastatin' weapon, honey. Why I --

A Blast of Light. Viola grabs Todd and yanks him away. Davy's on his back, in spasms. The knife is dropped. Smoke and sparks come from the device and from various places on Davy's body.



VIOLA

I was afraid... that I might take you and me with him... all this water. But he was about to cut you... and I couldn't...

Todd stares at his knife on the ground, goes for it.

VIOLA

Todd.

TODD

Is he dead?

VIOLA

Shouldn't be. Just the voltage from a --

Todd squats over Davy, raises the knife.

VIOLA

You're not a killer, Todd.

Todd's Noise goes red. He spins around to glare at Viola.

TODD

Don't you never say that to me!

VIOLA

(calming)  
Todd.

TODD

I'm why we're in this mess! They're after me! If I kill one of them, maybe they get scared and they're not so quick to come after us no more.

VIOLA

Todd, listen to me. Listen to me!

Todd's Noise quiets a little. He looks at her.

VIOLA

When you found me, back there in the swamp, I'd been chased by that insane man for days. And there you were, with a knife and your frantic Noise. And for all I knew you were just like him.

(beat)

But I did know. I could tell you weren't a killer. I knew I could trust you.

TODD

You hit me in the face with a stick.

VIOLA

Okay, so I was a little confused. I mean, this is one screwed up planet. But I didn't hit you very hard. Right? And I was right about you.

(MORE)

VIOLA (CONT'D)

You saved my life. You stood up for me.  
You're not a killer, Todd. That's why I  
like you.

TODD

(beat)

That's why you what?

VIOLA

(beat)

I'm just saying you're a good person.

TODD

You don't understand what is --

VIOLA

I do. I think I finally do. Don't you  
wonder why they want you so badly?

TODD

Cause I don't fit.

VIOLA

Yes! They want to make you kill.

TODD

Huh?

VIOLA

If they can snuff out the part of you  
that won't kill, then they've won.

TODD

He killed Ben and Cillian!

VIOLA

No. He said he killed them. We have  
boys like him on the ship. He's a liar.

TODD

He's a man.

VIOLA

Because of some stupid birthday? Do you  
want to be the kind of man he is? Is  
that what you aspire to?

TODD

He's a man cuz that's how it works here.

VIOLA

Well, how it works here is idiotic.

She grabs Davy's lasso and starts to tie him up.

VIOLA

We tie him up -- really well -- and we get the hell out of here. That's it.

(thought)

Hey, where's Manchee?

TODD

(realizing)

Oh, crap!

They run frantically around, looking for him.

TODD AND VIOLA

Manchee? Manchee? Manchee?

A whimper in a bush. They find him with his eye swollen shut and a bloody mouth. Todd reaches out and he growls.

TODD

It's okay, boy.

VIOLA

Oh, you poor thing.

Viola grabs her first aid kit. She coaxes him to swallow a pill and begins to apply a bandage over his eye.

TODD

What'd you just give him?

VIOLA

A quarter of a pain pill. Not that much. He should be able to keep walking.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Todd and Viola trudge through the rain along the muddy road. Todd carries an unconscious Manchee.

TODD

What'd you hit Davy with, anyway?

VIOLA

A device which allows our ship to locate me wherever I am on the planet. It took forever to reconfigure.

TODD

But what are you going to use now?

VIOLA

Hope Haven has a communication tower. You want me to carry Manchee for a while?

Todd nods, passes the dog to Viola. They walk.

TODD (V.O.)  
 Maybe she's right 'bout why they're  
 chasing me. Then, maybe she ain't right.

Viola glances over at Todd, clearly hearing his thoughts.

TODD (V.O.)  
 But maybe I *should* be able to kill  
 someone who's done me wrong. That *is*  
 what a man would do. And maybe Davy  
 really did kill Ben and Cillian like he  
 said. It's only her that said he was  
 lying. Maybe she's lying. Anyway, if I  
 had killed Davy back at the farm then he  
 never coulda led the mayor's men to Ben  
 and Cillian. An' if I killed Aaron in  
 the swamp, he never coulda led the mayor  
 to me. Seems no matter who wants me to  
 be a killer, it's better for me to be  
 one. Better for everyone.

VIOLA  
 Todd, look --

They've happened upon a campsite and find themselves face  
 to face with a Spackle tending the fire. He wears no  
 clothing; moss grows on his skin. Fish are hung to dry  
 on a line. Todd freezes. The Spackle freezes.

VIOLA  
 Todd.

TODD  
 Shh!

The Spackle slowly stands. Todd see his Noise. Images  
 of Todd and Viola in odd colors. An an odd humming.  
 Todd sees an image of a spear in his Noise. He looks  
 around and spots the spear leaning against the rock wall.

TODD  
 Don't even --

The Spackle goes for the spear. Todd runs to intercept.

VIOLA  
 Todd!

Todd knocks the Spackle down, falls on top of him.

TODD (V.O.)  
 They're *not* weak. Why is this one weak?  
 Spacks are strong and vicious. I don't --

The Spackle escapes. Todd punches out at him, catching him in the side of the head. He goes down easily, but is up again immediately, running for the spear. Todd corners him against the rock wall. The Spackle hisses.

VIOLA

Can't you see how scared he is?

TODD

Should be... with what I'm gonna do...

Todd throws the Spackle to the ground, jumps on top of him. Viola gasps at the brutality. She grabs at Todd.

VIOLA

Please, Todd, don't --

TODD

Leave me be!

As Todd shakes her off, the Spackle escapes again, and again heads for his spear. Todd screams in rage, throws him to the ground and plunges the knife into his chest. The Spackle wails in an unearthly manner. Todd grabs at his temples, in psychic pain.

TODD

Shut up shut up shut up shut up!!

He pulls the knife out. Blood sprays from the wound.

TODD (V.O.)

Red. His blood is red, too.

The Spackle continues to wail. Todd growls and plunges the knife in again. The Noise and wailing stops. The Spackle's eyes go blank. Todd heaves, covered in blood. He looks over at the crying Viola. She shrinks away from him, terrified.

TODD

They started the war! They killed my ma!

Without warning, Todd throws up. Viola is silent. He throws up again.

TODD

He woulda killed us.

VIOLA

He was terrified!!

TODD

He went for his spear!!

VIOLA

After you went for your knife!

TODD

These *monsters* killed the women in my town! All of them. They killed our future.

VIOLA

You stupid fucking idiot! How many times have adults lied to you? I mean, wasn't every single Spackle killed?? Huh? Weren't you told that? How true was it?

Todd is quiet. He looks at the Spackle. He sits hard.

TODD (V.O.)

I got what I wanted. I killed someone. Did somebody love him? Children? Oh God. He's gone forever. And so am I. There's no road back. The way she looks at me now. The horror in her eyes. She hates me. She hates me. Viola. I'm sorry. Please look at me normal again.

Viola hears Todd's Noise, but she doesn't look at him.

VIOLA

I hear Noise, other than yours. There's more of them. And if they didn't hate us before, they do now. We have to go.

Todd nods, drops the bloody knife, slips on his rucksack, picks up Manchee. He steals a look at Viola. So much grief on her face. He averts his eyes and sees movement in the trees. His eyes widen. Viola feels his Noise.

VIOLA

What? What??

She turns. There's Aaron.

VIOLA

Oh, enough already! Damn it! Just --

Aaron charges her. She screams. He covers her face with a dirty rag. She's out. Todd, without his knife and still holding Manchee, rushes Aaron. Aaron smacks him across the head with a staff he had strapped to his back. Todd drops Manchee, falls: a ringing in his head. Aaron, in slow motion, drops the unconscious Viola, grabs the knife and walks toward Todd. Slow motion crying angels flap their wings above Aaron. A woozy Todd crawls away through the mud.

AARON

(distant sounding)

I've no earthly use for you anymore, boy.

Aaron brings the knife down into Todd's back.

UNDEFINED WORLD

Todd, small in the frame, tumbles through gray, wobbly space. Voices call to him through cotton wool. Images of piles of bodies, both women and spackle, drift through the space. Blood rains from the sky. A spaceship circles. Viola stares blankly at him from a porthole.

TODD

I am... I was Todd Hewitt. Here lies Todd Hewitt who is dead. Todd Hewitt who never did nothing, who never saved nobody... Todd Hewitt who...

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Todd... Todd... Todd...

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Todd opens his eyes. Manchee licks his face. The campfire is out, the world lit only by its two moons.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Todd...

Todd can't move. The knife sticks through the rucksack into his back. He tries to talk, but can't. He attempts to scratch Manchee's head but is met with a sharp pain. He groans and reaches back, despite the pain, to feel what's there. He touches the knife.

TODD (V.O.)

Holy... Oh, shit.

He grabs the handle, scrunches his face, yanks it. He yells through the pain and manages to slide the knife out. He looks at the blade, covered with his blood and dried blood of the Spackle. He cranes his neck to look at the Spackle's body. Animals and insects gnaw at it.

TODD

(weakly)

Scat! Get away! Leave him be!

ANIMALS (V.O.)

Food. Food. Food. Food. Food.

The animals ignore him. He gingerly pushes himself onto his hands and knees, then squirms out of the rucksack. He looks at the slice going through it, pulls out his mother's journal, and sees the knife was stabbed cleanly through.

TODD

This makes no sense. Why did he stab me through the bag, Manchee? Why not slit my throat? Or stab me in the neck?

Weak and unsteady, Todd crawls to Viola's bag, fishes through it, finds a bandage, takes off his shirt. The stab wound oozes blood. He applies the bandage.

Later: Todd has dug a shallow grave for the Spackle and covers the body with dirt. Manchee barks.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Viola??

TODD

We'll find her, boy.

Todd transfers all his belongings to Viola's bag, puts on a shirt, stands unsteadily and heads slowly back in the direction from which they came. Manchee barks.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Viola! This way, Todd.

He's facing the opposite direction, sniffing the air.

TODD

That way? You sure? Toward Haven?

The dog barks in the affirmative.

TODD

Can you smell her? You gotta be sure.

Manchee barks again, then runs off on the road to Haven.

TODD

Good boy. Damn good boy.

Todd limps after Manchee. He falls, gets up, walks. The terrain is rough and there's an increasingly surreal quality to it in the moonlight. Perspiration forms on Todd's brow.

TODD (V.O.)

One foot front of the other. That's all.



EXT. PATH - LATER (NIGHT)

Todd stumbles along, shivering and sweating. He wears shirts over shirts now. The wind blows hard.

TODD (V.O.)  
I am Todd Hewitt. I am twelve... dozen  
eggs. I am Twelve Hewitt.

The water droplets on the trees pulsate in the moonlight, make zig-zags of light as the branches sway in the wind

TODD (V.O.)  
The world is sparkly. It sparkles and  
I'm looking through the sparkles for...  
Varkle. *Viola not Varkle.* Viola who  
hates me. Because I am a killer.

Image of the knife coated with the blood of the Spackle.

TODD (V.O.)  
Spackle blood? In me. Infectin' me?  
Turnin' me into a Spackle?

Todd looks down at his arm. Moss grows on it. He shakes his head. The moss is gone.

TODD (V.O.)  
Does that happen? Wish I knew more  
things. So if I become the Spackle I  
killed -- Because his blood -- Then Viola  
will love me. Because I'm not me  
anymore. And Varkle loves Sparkles.

EXT PATH - MORNING

Todd and Manchee walk in the early morning light. The rays of the sun pulsate and change color.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Todd peers through the trees at a settlement. Many people wearing colorful masks. They stop what they're doing and stare at Todd. Violent, screaming Noise.

TODD  
What the -- ?

Todd runs through the settlement, heaving and sweating. Manchee trots by his side, confused. The masked people call to him through frozen lips.

## MASKED PEOPLE

Stay with us, Todd. It's safer in masks.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Todd sits against a tree, hugging Manchee for warmth. He shivers crazily. The wind howls.

TODD

I did bad, boy. I let Aaron take Viola. I let Ben and Cillian die. I killed that Spackle. I let my ma die. I let my pa die. I kicked you. I kicked you and you're nice!

(starts to weep)

But we gotta keep movin' right? We gotta find her.

Todd stands. Suddenly, Aaron is right in front of him.

AARON

I see you got some Spack in you now, boy.

Todd falls back in surprise. When he looks up, Aaron is gone. Manchee turns back to him, concerned.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Todd?

TODD

Where'd he go to??

Manchee sniffs the trail, confused.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

This way, Todd.

TODD

Good boy. We'll get that bastard.

They struggle up the hill, Todd searching for Aaron. Aaron pops into existence at top of the hill

AARON

Hello, Killer.

Todd scrambles toward him, falls on his face. Aaron's gone. Todd looks all around. Now Aaron's voice comes from everywhere.

AARONS (O.C.)

Killer. Killer. Killer. Killer...

Todd jerks around, looking for its source. Finally:

TODD

Manchee, you don't hear nothin', do ya?

Manchee watches Todd blankly.

TODD

It's the fever, ain't it?

AARONS (O.C.)

Killer. Killer. Killer.

Todd walks, does his best to ignore the incessant voices.

TODD

You ain't here, Aaron! Screw you!

Aaron appears up ahead. Todd chases the phantom. But now there's a second Aaron. Then a third. Soon the woods are filled with Aarons.

ALL THE AARONS

If one of us falls, we all fall.

TODD

I'll kill you.

All the Aarons unbutton their shirts, bare their chests. The wind howls fiercely through the trees, but the Aarons appear untouched by it.

ALL THE AARONS

Will you? I dunno.

Todd, sweating and shivering, pulls the knife from his belt and raises it to one of the Aarons.

TODD

I've already killed. I can kill.

AARON 4

Killing a Spack ain't actual killing.

Todd hesitates, then plunges the knife into -- *Viola's* heart -- She's replaced Aaron. She screams in agony.

TODD

No! God no!

Viola looks at him, disappointed, a hole in her heart.

VIOLA

(quietly)

Why did you kill me, Todd?

Todd reaches for her; she vanishes. He checks the knife in his hand: just dried blood. He falls to the ground and weeps. Manchee hovers over Todd, barking softly.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Aaron. Aaron. Aaron.

TODD

It's just my fever, boy --  
(realizing)

Wait! You can't see them fever Aarons!

Todd bolts up. The world swirls. Colors flash in his eyes. He sways, falls, stands again.

TODD

Where is he??

Manchee leads Todd to the top of a bluff. Hundreds of Aarons linger in the woods. Now there are also hundreds of disappointed Violas, and hundred of dying Spackles with knives in their chests. All of them chant "coward" as he makes his way through them. When he arrives at the hilltop, Todd can see down river: Thousands of Violas, Aarons, and dying Spackles, all staring at him. There's an abandoned settlement on the river. He scans the scene until he spots the one Aaron, not looking back at him. This one kneels in prayer over an unconscious Viola.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Aaron.

TODD

I see him.

VOICE BEHIND TODD

What do we do?

Todd looks back and he sees a version of himself standing among the Aarons, Violas, and Spackles. Todd groans.

TODD

Oh, Jesus.

He stumbles to the river, sticks his head into the icy cold water, holds it there. When he pulls it out the hundreds of phantoms are gone. The Other Todd remains.

OTHER TODD

Can't save her by ourself. We're sick.

TODD

(not looking at him)  
Ain't got no choice. C'mon, Manchee.

Todd climbs the bluff. Manchee and Other Todd follow. They all watch as Aaron continues to pray over Viola.

OTHER TODD  
Maybe she's already dead.

Todd ignores Other Todd. He looks at Manchee.

TODD  
Can't approach him direct. He'll hear.

OTHER TODD  
Maybe dead of a broken heart. Cuz of us.

TODD  
I really ain't talkin' to you.  
(to Manchee)  
We figure out how to distract him.

Manchee barks in the affirmative. Todd scratches his ear.

TODD  
You are the best, Manchee. You really are... just damn good. Couldn't a got nowhere 'thout you.

Todd continues to absently scratch Manchee's ear. Other Todd taps his foot impatiently. An image of Ben teaching a younger Todd how to start a fire forms in front of Todd. He watches, gets an idea, and copies Ben's technique with some sticks he finds on the ground.

BEN  
Back and forth fast as you can.

OTHER TODD  
Definitely won't work. Too damp.

BEN  
(singing)  
Early one morning, just as the sun was rising. I heard a maiden call from the valley below.

TODD  
(singing)  
Early one morning, just as the sun was rising. I heard a maiden call from the valley below.

OTHER TODD  
Aint workin'. See?

The wood starts to smoke.

TODD  
Ha. Ha!

Todd tosses some moss under it and continues. Soon there's a flame. He throws kindling on it, turns to Manchee.

TODD

Okay. Here's what we're gonna do. I make you a torch out of this branch here.

Todd uses a small stick to draw a map in the mud.

TODD

This is us. Here's Aaron and Viola. You take the torch past them upwind, drop it so some brush catches fire. It'll look like we have a campfire there. Then go to him, bark, and run toward the smoke, like you're warning me you found him. He'll follow, and I'll sneak in and get Viola.

OTHER TODD

What?? He can't possibly understand that.

TODD

Do you understand, boy?

Manchee barks.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Understand, Todd!

TODD

Tell it back to me, then.

Manchee looks at Todd blankly for a long moment, then barks.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Understand, Todd!

OTHER TODD

He clearly do not understand, Todd.

Todd looks at Other Todd, then at Manchee.

TODD

All right, then. Good boy.

He lights Manchee's torch. Manchee takes it.

TODD

Now, go!

Manchee runs off.

OTHER TODD

He don't know where he's goin'.

Todd ignore Other Todd, grabs a long flat branch and heads to the river. Other Todd follows. Todd climbs into an old row boat moored to a small pier. He unties it.

OTHER TODD

This won't work. She's gonna die. Or is already dead, like I told ya.

Todd uses the branch to shove away from the pier.

TODD

Bye.

OTHER TODD

Don't leave me! What's gonna happen to me?

TODD

You'll be fine. You don't exist.

Todd floats down river. He uses the branch to steer.

OTHER TODD

(yelling from shore)

There's no smoke! The dog's not doing what he's supposed to!

TODD

(yelling back)

Shut up!

But Todd's worried, looking for smoke. Finally, smoke!

TODD

Oh, thank you. Good boy.

Manchee barks in the distance.

MANCHEE (V.O.)

Todd! Todd! Aaron! Aaron!

AARON (V.O.)

Todd Hewitt! I see your fire, boy! I'm comin' for you!

Todd steers the boat to the shore, beaches it, staggers into the woods. He finds Viola on her back, unconscious.

TODD

(loud whisper)

Viola. Viola. You have to wake up.

She opens her eyes and stares up at him, trying to focus.

VIOLA  
You look really terrible.

She goes back to sleep. He shakes her again.

TODD  
Viola! Wake up! We have to go!

Again she opens her eyes, stares at him.

VIOLA  
You came for me.

TODD  
I did. I came for you.

VIOLA  
(goofily)  
Awww. You're a sweetpea!

TODD  
We gotta go. Before Aaron comes back.

This registers.

VIOLA  
Aaron. Oh shit. Oh, God!

She struggles to her feet.

TODD  
Can you walk? Because I'm not sure I --

VIOLA  
I can walk. I'm fine.

She falls on her face. Todd helps her up and they support each other as they hurry to the river.

VIOLA  
Where's Manchee?

TODD  
He got Aaron chasin' him. He'll be along.

Manchee comes tearing out of the woods, barking.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Todd! Aaron coming! Todd! Aaron coming!

They hurry as best they can. Manchee jumps into the boat. Todd and Viola push the boat into the water.



TODD  
Viola, you get in!

She does. Todd pushes the boat from the shallows. Aaron appears, running full speed to the boat.

AARON  
Todd Hewitt! I ain't done with you!

TODD  
First you are done with me, then you ain't. Make up your damn mind.

Todd climbs in, but Aaron's in the water and grabs his feet. Viola grabs Todd's shoulders. They both hold on tight. Manchee barks crazily.

AARON  
You belong to me, boy!

VIOLA  
Leave him alone!

Manchee leaps from the boat and onto Aaron's chest, knocking him to the ground. The boat starts to float away. Manchee tears at Aaron's face.

TODD  
Manchee! Come on, boy!

Todd and Viola unsuccessfully try to bring the boat back.

VIOLA  
Hurry, Manchee! Meet us down river!

Manchee rips Aaron's nose clean off his face. Aaron screams, grabs the dog by his scruff and pulls him off.

VIOLA  
Oh my God! Oh, Jesus!

Manchee is struggling and yelping, but Aaron's got him. Blood pours from the gaping hole in Aaron's face.

AARON  
Get back here, Todd Hewitt!

Manchee barks and squeals.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
Todd? Todd? Todd?

Viola paddles desperately against the current.

VIOLA  
Let him go!

AARON  
The girl or the dog, Todd.

TODD  
 (quietly)  
 I'll kill you.

Manchee is hanging by his scruff. He yelps, panicked.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
 Todd! Todd! Todd?

Todd looks at Viola. Tears run down her face as she continues to paddle against the current. Their eyes meet.

VIOLA  
 No. Todd. Oh God.

Todd puts his hand on her arm, to stop her paddling. She slumps down. The boat floats away. Manchee barks.

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
 Todd? Todd? Todd?

TODD  
 I'm sorry, Manchee! I'm so sorry!

MANCHEE (V.O.)  
 TODD? TODD? TODD? T--?

A furious Aaron snaps Manchee's neck. The barking stops. Todd looks at him hanging there limply in Aaron's hand.

TODD  
 Manchee! Oh!

Aaron laughs, causing more blood to spurt from the hole in his face. The boat glides around the river bend and Manchee is gone from view. Todd's eyes roll back in his head.

TODD  
 Oh, Jesus.

The world around him dims.

VIOLA  
 Todd?

Everything goes black, then: POV From Todd's at the bottom of the boat, looking up at Viola's worried face hovering over him. To black, then: POV looking up at the afternoon clouds; Viola in the corner of the frame steering the boat. To black, then: POV looking up at the night sky full of unfamiliar constellations. To black, then: POV looking up at early morning fog.

The sound of Viola snoring. To black. Silence. Slowly, sound is introduced: birds, a burbling stream, odd and shifting music. The blackness gives way to gauzy sunlight, slanting against a pale blue wall.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Todd's in bed. His eyes follow the sunlight to a chair next to him. A sleeping Viola is curled up in it.

TODD (V.O.)

Viola.

Viola's eyes open. She looks over and sees he's awake.

VIOLA

Todd! Oh my God!

She jumps up and hugs him.

VIOLA

I thought you were never coming back! I thought you were dead!

TODD

I was, I think. I think I really was.

VIOLA

No. Just very sick. Doctor Snow took care of you.

TODD

Who? Where are we?

VIOLA

A settlement called Carbonel Downs. Dr. Snow is the doctor who saved you. We were floating down river when I saw him fishing on the bank. His Noise told me he was a doctor and that he was decent.

Image of Aaron holding a yelping, panicked Manchee.

TODD

Manchee.

Viola's eyes meet Todd's and neither says anything.

TODD (V.O.)

I see her sadness. I can see it. Without any Noise. I see it.

Dr. Snow, a tall, jovial clean-cut man enters.

DR. SNOW  
Is that Noise I hear?

VIOLA  
Well, Hiya, Doctuh Snow.

Todd looks at Viola, confused.

DR. SNOW  
Hello, Hildy. Pleased to finally meet  
you, Ben.

TODD  
Ben?

VIOLA  
Ben, this heuh's Doctuh Snow.

Snow presses his stethoscope to Todd's chest.

DR. SNOW  
Please inhale deeply, Ben.

Todd looks at Viola again, then inhales. Snow listens.

DR. SNOW  
You were very sick. I wasn't sure we  
were going to be able to bring you back.  
I haven't seen a Spackle infection in a  
long time.

TODD  
Was I turning into a Spackle?

DR. SNOW  
No. It doesn't quite work that way. But  
you were suffering from blood poisoning.

TODD  
(to Viola)  
How long have we been here?

DR. SNOW  
This is your fifth day.

TODD  
(jumping up)  
What?? We gotta get go!

VIOLA  
Ah been tryin' to tell 'm that.

DR. SNOW

You're safe here, Ben. We were one of the main fronts in the war. Trust me, we know how to defend ourselves.

TODD

That was Spackle. This is men. *Bad* men. A thousand of 'em.

DR. SNOW

So the rumors say. Not numerically possible though.

TODD

Don't know nothin 'bout nu-miracle. But they got guns and horses.

DR. SNOW

As do we.

TODD

Do you have men who'll join 'em? Because there are them that have.

DR. SNOW

(Noise rumbling)

Anyway, you have to rest.

TODD

We ain't waiting for the army to show up.

DR. SNOW

We just ask that you meet with the elder men before you leave, to tell us what you know about the impending invasion.

TODD

They'll kill everyone who doesn't join 'em. That's what I know.

DR. SNOW

We'll see if we can't get a little more detail. Meanwhile, Hildy, please, get some food in him.

VIOLA

Ah surely will do that.

INT. KITCHEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Todd sits at the counter. Viola prepares some food.

TODD

What the hell was that voice?

VIOLA

Not good to be from Prentisstown. So I told him we were from Farbranch.

TODD

But... how do you sound different like that?

VIOLA

That? My mom and I used to imitate people on the ship. It's a game.

TODD

I never heard anything like that.

VIOLA

It's fun. Listen, We've got to get out of here soon. He's nice but this place is weird.

TODD

We will. There's no way I can keep Prentisstown out of my Noise, anyway.

(beat)

Hey, what is that music?

VIOLA

One of the weird things. They play it all day and night. It's awful out here, but in the center of town it's unbearable.

TODD

To keep men's thought's private?

VIOLA

How'd you know?

TODD

They had that at the bar in Prentis... where I'm from.

VIOLA

The other thing is, women are segregated here. They use them only for cooking and cleaning and making babies. Dr. Snow would not take me seriously. He practically patted my head when I tried to tell him the army was coming.

TODD

Well, I gotta say, that accent don't make you sound too smart.

A man appears in the doorway.

TOWNSPERSON

The elder men will see you now.

TODD

Okay, we'll be right there.

TOWNSPERSON

No. Just you.

VIOLA

See? This is so humiliating --

TODD

No. They speak to both of us or they speak to neither of us.

Viola smiles.

TOWNSPERSON

That's not what Dr. Snow --

TODD

I don't care what Dr. Snow. That's the deal. Go tell him.

The townsperson stares at Todd for a moment, then leaves.

TODD

Now let's get out of here.

EXT. CARBONEL DOWNS - DAY

Todd and Viola hurry through the center of town. The music is blasting and horrible. They yell to each other over it.

TODD

It's awful!

VIOLA

I know! But I can't hear your Noise! So it works!

TODD

We're even, finally! Hey, how far are we from Haven?!

VIOLA  
Only two days!

TODD  
Holy -- We really come far down the  
river, huh!

VIOLA  
Day and a half before I saw anyplace that  
looked safe to stop! A lot of sad,  
scary, depressed settlements along this  
river!

TODD  
I -- Hey, do you hear something weird in  
the music?! Like, different?

Viola listens.

VIOLA  
Someone is singing?

VOICE  
(buried)  
Early one morning, just as the sun --

TODD  
Yeah, it's like --  
(realizing)  
Ben! It's Ben!

Todd runs to the river's edge.

VOICE  
Oh, don't deceive me --

Todd scans the woods across the river until he spots Ben  
crouching in the brush.

TODD  
Ben!

He tears across the bridge and jumps into his arms.

TODD  
Ben! Ben! Ben!

Viola follows, waits a respectful distance away.

BEN  
Oh, Todd. I been following your Noise  
for days now.



TODD

You found me. Now everything is gonna be all right.

BEN

It's so good to see you, Todd.

Todd looks in Ben's eyes. They are tired and sad.

TODD

Cillian?

Ben's Noise shows Todd their house engulfed in flames.

TODD

Aw, no.

He hugs Ben again. They hold each other tightly.

TODD

I left Manchee to die, Ben. I killed a innocent Spackle. I done bad things.

BEN

I seen it your Noise. It's all right. Your heart is good. I see that, too.

They hug. Ben sees Viola quietly standing there.

BEN

Hello.

VIOLA

Hi.

BEN

You must be her.

VIOLA

I must be. You must be him.

BEN

You taking care of Todd?

VIOLA

We're taking care of each other.

BEN

Good.

Todd grabs Ben's arm and starts to pull him.

TODD

C'mon, we'll get you food. There's a doctor who can look at your cuts.

Ben stands firm. He looks at Viola.

BEN

Can you keep an eye out for us?

Viola nods and heads toward the road to stand guard.

BEN

Things have escalated, Todd. There's a town called Haven. You need to get there.

TODD

Yes, I know that, Ben. That's what we're doin'. We can all go together.

BEN

Prentisstown men ain't welcome anywhere on New World.

TODD

They ain't too fond of Prentisstown boys, neither. But we'll find a way.

BEN

We won't. You have to go by yourself.

TODD

I ain't by myself no more.

BEN

(beat)

No, you ain't. And that's good.

Viola comes rushing back through the brush.

VIOLA

Horse on the road!

TODD

We'd best get out of here.

BEN

I told you, I can't come with you.

TODD

We ain't leaving you to be caught by no army. Let's go. We'll talk about it later.

EXT. WOODS - A BIT LATER

The three of them run through the woods, Todd and Viola in front, Ben huffing and puffing in the rear.

TODD  
You okay, Ben?

BEN  
I'm built for farm work not running!

Suddenly, the sound of gunshots in the distance.

VIOLA  
Carbonel Downs. It's started.

TODD  
No, Carbonel Downs is finished.

EXT, WOODS - NIGHT

Still running. Ben is far behind, clearly exhausted.

TODD  
(pointing up a hill)  
Up there, Ben. We'll get a view, maybe.  
See where we are.

They climb the hill. On top they find a cemetery.

VIOLA  
This is weird. What is this?

TODD  
A cemetery. Where you bury dead people.

Viola looks confused.

VIOLA  
I never heard of that. There are actual  
people under us?

TODD  
Nobody dies in space?

VIOLA  
We burn them. We don't put them in  
holes. That's completely unsanitary.

Ben has arrived at the top of the hill. He flops down against a gravestone and breathes heavily.

VIOLA

Someone is buried under there, you know.  
Just so you know.

BEN

Sounds like a pretty cozy deal about now.

Viola shudders. Todd sits against a gravestone across from Ben. Viola remains awkwardly standing.

TODD

Ben, I think it's time you tell me stuff.

Ben is silent for a moment. Then:

BEN

I guess there's no puttin' it off any longer.

(deep breath)

Ok. So. The Noise germ was never Spackle warfare. Just the way this planet works. Happened to everyone soon as our ship landed.

VIOLA

Not everyone.

BEN

Right. Just men. No one knows why. So it was chaos and Noise for a long time. A lot of people started new settlements, thinking they could escape it, but it was everywhere.

Ben stops, sighs, looks up at the moons.

BEN

Spackle lived with the Noise fine. But men need to hide. They got secrets and shame and this place don't allow that. So work wasn't getting done; farms were failin'; people was drinkin'. People was angry.

VIOLA

*Men* were angry.

BEN

Yes, yes, yes. Men. Men was angry. Men needed a scapegoat. As men often do.

VIOLA

The Spackle.

BEN  
You seem to have this down already.

VIOLA  
Maybe it's easier to see all this  
nonsense if you haven't been raised here  
with so many lies.

Ben just looks at her.

BEN  
Anyway. Preachers started preachin'  
against the Spackle. That led to a war.  
All the Spackle was killed.

TODD  
Not all.

BEN  
(sighs)  
I know. But the ones left knew better  
than to come around men any more.

They sit there in silence. Finally:

VIOLA  
That's not all the story.

BEN  
No. Not nearly. But I don't --

VIOLA  
(to Todd)  
Men couldn't stand women knowing  
everything about them and them not  
knowing anything about women.

BEN  
Not all men. There were good ones.

TODD  
You and Cillian.

BEN  
And others.

TODD  
So, the men of Prentisstown killed the  
women?

Yes.

VIOLA

BEN  
Not all the men.

Todd looks down.

TODD

My ma?

Ben nods. Todd stares at his hands.

TODD

Who was Jessica?

BEN

Jessica Elizabeth was the mayor of Prentisstown.

TODD (V.O.)

New Elizabeth.

BEN

A good woman. She sent women and children to safety when it become clear what was about to happen. She sent her own boys. But she never made it herself.

TODD

Why didn't my ma send me?

Image of Todd's mother forms. She holds Ben's hand and talks to him.

BEN

Your ma believed in the good in everyone. She never thought this was gonna happen. By the time it was clear to her, it was too late. So she brought you to me and Cillian to take care of. And we promised we would. And we did. Best we could.

TODD'S MOTHER

Ben, it's not going to happen like that. These men will see the error of their ways before somethin' tragic occurs...

TODD

Keeping me in Prentisstown was taking care of me?

BEN

We didn't think the attack would happen either. We were stupid. There's a whole lot of stupidity going around this planet, case you ain't noticed.

VIOLA

I noticed.

TODD

Yeah, me too. I noticed.

BEN

Yeah. Then it was too late. All men from Prentisstown were considered criminals. We couldn't leave.

TODD

But you and Cillian were innocent --

BEN

We weren't innocent.

TODD

What do you mean?

VIOLA

They let it happen. They didn't die with the men who were protecting the women.

BEN

Cillian wanted to fight! You need to know that. But I wouldn't let him.

TODD

Why?

BEN

I promised your ma we'd take care of you. We couldn't do that if we got killed.

Hoof beats in the distance.

VIOLA

Oh, you've got to be kidding!

She pulls her binocs from her bag, sets them on Night Vision and looks through them down the road. Davy appears on horseback.

VIOLA

It's him again! Man!

TODD

Aaron again??

VIOLA

No, the kid. Davy.

TODD

Davy? What is with these people? Don't they never die?

VIOLA

We've got to go. Now.

BEN

You know I can't got to Haven with you.  
So this is where we part. I'll stay and  
take care of Davy.

TODD

Ben. He's got a gun.

BEN

Little Davy Prentiss? I could handle him  
if he had a cannon and a suit of armor.

TODD

He's crazy and mean, Ben. And he's got a  
lot to prove to his pa.

BEN

The only thing that makes me a man  
anymore is seeing you safely into  
becoming a man. It's how I atone.

TODD

It ain't fair.

BEN

It ain't. But there's hope. And you  
gotta always remember that.

TODD

(broken)

There ain't no hope.

BEN

There is, Todd. You keep goin'. Always.  
You understand?

(for Todd's ears only)

Look, till a few days ago, you ain't  
never seen the horrors you seen now. I  
know that.

TODD

It's been awful, Ben!

BEN

But you also never seen *her*.

(nods toward Viola)

She came from *another planet*, Todd. And  
still you found each other. You found  
her. You found her, Todd.

(beat)

There's always hope. It's called love.

Hoof beats are closing in. Viola looks at both of them.



VIOLA

We've got to go if we're going.

BEN

I'll buy you some time. Take care of each other. Please.

Ben runs down the hill toward the hoof beats.

TODD

Ben!

But he's gone. They stand there.

VIOLA

I'm so sorry, Todd. We really have to go though. Ben needs to do this. For you.

Todd nods. They head down the other side of the hill.

EXT. PATH - NIGHT

Todd and Viola run. Todd cries.

TODD (V.O.)

Ben. Ben. Ben. Ben...

Viola starts to cry, too.

EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - SUNRISE

Todd sits on an overturned basket and stares at the river. Viola brings a basket and sits right next to him. He hands her some jerky. They eat silently. His mother's book pokes out from the open bag on his lap.

TODD (V.O.)

Your silence so close used to make me lonely. It's different now.

He looks over at her. She stares at the river.

TODD (V.O.)

She's gotta be hearin' this. But she just stares straight ahead. Like she's giving me privacy or somethin'. If we ever get to Haven, we won't be Todd and Viola anymore. We'll be part of a whole city, not the only two people in the world eatin' breakfast together. I'm gonna miss you. Shut up, Todd.

Viola continues to chew, staring at the river.

TODD

So, know how you do voices of folks?

VIOLA

(looking over)

Hmmm? Yeah. I know.

Todd pulls out his mother's book.

TODD

Think you could do my ma?

VIOLA

(thinks)

I heard her voice in Ben's Noise. I'd very much like to try.

She takes the book, opens it to the first page, tries to channel Todd's mother.

VIOLA

My Dearest Son...

Todd closes his eyes, sees the old photograph of his mother. Gradually it transforms into a living image of her, talking to the camera.

VIOLA (O.C.)

I begin this journal on the day of yer birth. Yer the most beautiful thing that ever happened in the entire universe. I wish yer pa could see you, Todd, but the good Lord saw fit to take him with the sickness five months ago.

A faded photograph Todd's father appears and fades away.

Image of Todd's mother writing by candlelight.

VIOLA

You look like him. Well, babies don't look like much of anything 'cept babies, but you do. Yer gonna be tall, Todd, cuz yer pa was tall, yer gonna be strong, cuz he was, and yer gonna be handsome. Oh, are you ever gonna be handsome. The ladies of New World won't know what hit 'em.

Viola pauses. Todd opens his eyes, glances quickly over at Viola, then looks away, embarrassed. She stares down at the book.

TODD  
 (awkward)  
 You sound really good as her.

VIOLA  
 Oh, thanks. Thank you. So, anyway --  
 (beat, reading)  
 Let me tell you about New World. We  
 arrived here ten years ago, looking for a  
 simple and new way of life. Different  
 from Earth.

Image of Todd's mother writing.

VIOLA (O.C.)  
 A life of peace and guidance from God. A  
 place to love our fellow man. There've  
 been struggles, Todd. It ain't been  
 easy. Oh, listen to me, sayin' "ain't."  
 But I guess there's not much harm in  
 "ain't", is there? Okay, so that's my  
 first choice as your ma. Say "ain't" as  
 much as you like.

Viola looks over at Todd. Their eyes meet. Neither says  
 anything, but she smiles, then looks back at the book.

VIOLA  
 (reading)  
 There's something called The Noise here,  
 which I'm guessing you're very familiar  
 with now that you're old enough to read  
 this. You've grown up knowing nothing  
 else, so maybe it's easy and comfortable  
 for you like it is for the Spackle, but  
 for men who grew up without Noise, it's  
 very difficult. David Prentiss convinced  
 Jessica, our mayor, to start our town on  
 this side of the swamp, to get away from  
 it.

Image of Mayor Prentiss talking to Jessica Elizabeth.

VIOLA (O.C.)  
 David has a son named Davy, just a few  
 months older than you. A beautiful boy.  
 You'll be good friends, I'm certain.

Todd pictures a baby Davy Prentiss, with a little fuzzy  
 moustache. Viola giggles. Todd smiles.

VIOLA  
 There's a break in the page here, then it  
 says "later."  
 (MORE)

VIOLA (CONT'D)

(reading)

Sorry, son. Had to stop for a minute for a visit from our holy man, Aaron.

TODD

Holy, my ass.

VIOLA

He's the scariest person I've ever seen.

(reading)

He's a good man. Although lately, he's been saying things I don't agree with about the native people of New World. They're so shy that we had no idea anyone was living here when we landed. Very sweet people. Aaron has been preaching that they're animals. But he's wrong. They're people and it is their planet where we are guests. We have to remember that. We have to be kind to them, Todd.

Image of the terrified Spackle at the campsite. Viola stops. She sees the image, but does not look at Todd.

VIOLA

Should I stop?

TODD

No.

She nods.

VIOLA

(reading)

What I want to tell you is that power hungriness is something that separates men from boys, but not in the way most men think.

(beat)

Todd, there is so much beauty in the world. There's gonna be hardship. But the glory of God is in all around you: In the trees, the birds, the clouds. And in the people, even the ones who are lost and angry. They was all once babies like you. And they have that purity in them still, buried deep maybe, but there. Look for it. Living is hard and people fall, but you look for that, Todd. Have compassion for them. And for yerself.

Todd stands and looks out at the river. He watches the birds fly. He looks at the clouds. He looks at Viola.

TODD  
It is pretty here.

VIOLA  
It is. Very. I love it.  
(beat)  
I like your mom. A lot.

TODD  
(nods)  
Yeah. Can you keep going?

VIOLA  
(reading)  
This is the song I sang you this morning.  
(singing)  
Early one morning, just as the sun was  
rising/I heard a maiden call from the  
valley below/Oh, don't deceive me, oh,  
never leave me/How could you use a poor  
maiden so?

Todd faces away from Viola. The emotion is too much.

VIOLA  
(reading)  
It's a promise. I will never leave you  
or deceive you. And someday, you will  
make that promise to someone. And that's  
how we keep good in the world.

Tears are rolling down Todd's face now.

VIOLA  
(reading)  
Oh, no! There you are crying from your  
crib, my darling. Crying for the world  
to come to you. And I will. So, my  
grown-up boy, I say goodbye just for now  
to go take care of my baby boy.  
(looking out at river)  
Do you want me to read more?

Todd shakes his head "no", too emotional to speak. He cautiously glances at Viola. She's crying. Her lips tremble. She turns away from him. Todd continues to watch her.

TODD (V.O.)  
I know what she's thinking. Without  
Noise. Even with her back to me.

He studies the slump of her shoulders, her hands grasping his mother's book.

TODD (V.O.)  
Her shoulders slumping. Her hands tight  
on the book.

Viola's back straightens, stiffens

TODD (V.O.)  
Her back getting stiff cuz she's hearin'  
my Noise thinkin' about her. I can see  
you, Viola -- thinkin' your parents came  
here with the same hopes as my ma.  
Wonderin' if our road is just as false as  
the one my ma was on. You're thinking  
about my ma lovin' me and it's putting  
you in mind of how your parents loved  
you. And how you'll never see them  
again. And you hurt. I know this. I  
know you, even without no Noise. I know  
you, Viola Eade. I know you now.

TODD  
(whispering)  
Viola.

Viola still faces away.

VIOLA  
I know.

Todd sits close to her. They both stare at the river.

EXT. RIVER BANK - LATER

Todd and Viola walk. Viola stops to listen: sound of  
rushing water. She scours the area with her binoculars.

TODD  
What is it?

VIOLA  
A fall. A big one. Enormous.

TODD  
The road'll find a way past it.

VIOLA  
Not what I'm saying. A falls that big is  
certain to have a city at its base.  
Perfect place for a first settlement.

TODD  
Haven?

VIOLA

We've made it. I'm sure of it.

Todd looks at the falls through the binoculars

TODD

If we run, we can be there under an hour.

VIOLA

If?

She smiles. He smiles. And they run. Full speed, now, for the first time, with joy, whooping and hollering.

TODD (V.O.)

Please be there, Haven. Please be there.

VIOLA

It's there! It is, Todd! I know it!

TODD (V.O.)

Why do I love it when you say my name?

VIOLA

Todd! Todd! Todd! Todd! Todd!

EXT. ROAD - A BIT LATER

They come around a corner and, there, half mile across, is the falls. They stare at it for a moment: the spray, the rainbow. Viola reaches for Todd's hand.

TODD

Look.

Past the spray, down in the valley, is a city.

VIOLA

Oh my God.

TODD

It's the biggest thing I've ever seen.

VIOLA

I gotta say, it's smaller than I imagined.

Todd looks through the binoculars.

TODD

There's a fortified fence. They're getting ready for the army.

VIOLA

Good. That's really good.

They continue on the steep road leading past the falls. When they get to the top, Todd looks through the binoculars to see if the army is on their tail.

TODD

There they are.

VIOLA

How many now?

TODD

Maybe four hundred. Hard to tell. Miles and miles back there.

VIOLA

We beat them. We beat them, Todd.

She takes his hand once again.

TODD

We're not there yet. And we don't even know if Haven is strong enough to --

She looks him hard in the eye.

VIOLA

No. We beat them. You be happy, Todd Hewitt. Ok?

TODD (V.O.)

She's right. I should just put my arms around her and hold her to me. To celebrate. Because I want to. More 'n anything. Maybe it's not right to do, but maybe it is. But maybe later there'll be a better time. But I want to let her know I agree with her an'... love her. Shut up! Shut up!

Viola pulls Todd toward her and hugs him tight.

VIOLA

Thank you.

TODD (V.O.)

Ain't no other place in the universe to be right now. All the bad that led up to this, how can I separate it from now?

VIOLA

We'd best keep moving. To keep our lead.



TODD  
(formally)  
Yeah. That makes good sense, Viola.

They pull apart and smile shyly at each other.

TODD  
Don't wanna lose our lead. And --  
His eye catches something on the river.

TODD  
Holy mother of crap.

Viola squints at what Todd's seen: a boat coming down river. Paddling it furiously, with a rifle slung over his back, is Aaron.

VIOLA  
How is he not dead?

TODD  
Beats the hell outta ma.

Aaron spots them. And they're off, running through the woods again.

AARON  
Todd Hewitt! Our bidness ain't done!

Aaron drags the boat ashore and fires his rifle. A clod of mud explodes at their feet.

TODD  
(to Viola)  
Go! Go!

Another shot. Viola falls and tumbles down the hillside.

TODD  
Viola!

Todd scrambles down toward Viola.

TODD (V.O.)  
Please no! Oh, God. I'll kill him!

He arrives at Viola. She's scratched up and muddy.

TODD  
Viola!

She opens her eyes.

VIOLA  
I'm not hit! The bullet --

TODD  
You sure??

VIOLA  
The bullet whizzed by me and I fell.

He helps her up.

TODD  
Thank God. You sure?

She nods. They hurry up the hill. The trees have thinned out.

VIOLA  
He'll pick us off up here.

They look around, trying to find someplace safe.

AARON (O.S.)  
Todd Hewitt!

Todd spins around, searching. There's a tiny little trail, almost invisible, between rock walls.

TODD  
There! Maybe he won't notice that trail!

VIOLA  
He'll hear your Noise. He'll find us.

TODD  
Not over the sound of the waterfall.

VIOLA  
Oh, Todd. We were so close.

She's paralyzed with fear. He holds her by the shoulders.

TODD  
I promise to get you to  
Haven by tonight. I  
promise.

TODD (V.O.)  
(singing)  
Oh, never leave me, oh,  
don't deceive me--

Viola takes this in, nods. Todd smiles, leads the way.

EXT. ROCK TRAIL - DAY

The trail leads under the falls. As they get closer, the roar is deafening. Soon there's a wall of water on their right. In front of them is an abandoned stone chapel: pews carved from rock, a stone pulpit, and in the wall a large circle is carved, orbited by two smaller circles.

VIOLA

New World and its moons. A church?

TODD

I'll bet from when they first landed,  
when everything was hopeful.

AARON (O.S.)

Todd Hewitt!

VIOLA

Has he found us? Oh God.

TODD

I don't think so. He sounds far off.

VIOLA

What the hell does he even want?

Todd touches the knife on his belt.

TODD

He's crazy. That's what he wants.

VIOLA

Todd, I don't think I'm the sacrifice.

TODD

What do you mean?

VIOLA

He had all that opportunity to kill me.  
But he didn't. He just kept me asleep.

AARON (O.S.)

(closer)

Todd Hewitt!

VIOLA

He's coming. He's here.

(broken)

We almost made it. We did.

TODD

We're still gonna make it. I promised.

Todd grabs his knife. Aaron, rifle in hand, descends the stairs. His face is mangled, his nose gone. He smiles.

AARON  
Fittin' place for the grandest of  
religious sacrifices.

Suddenly, images flash: a boy stabbing a man, Aaron opening his shirt baring his chest, Ben talking to Todd in the swamp. Todd understands.

TODD  
Put your rifle down, Aaron. I know what  
you want.

Aaron's smile gets wider. Blood dribbles from his face.

TODD  
She's not the sacrifice. But I'm not  
neither.

AARON  
(laughing)  
Surely someone's got to be the sacrifice.  
Else I gave up my best nose for nothin'.

TODD  
You're the sacrifice. It's how boys in  
Prentisstown become men. They kill a  
man.

AARON  
Yes. And you are the final soldier in  
God's perfect army.

TODD  
God's got nothin' to do with your damn  
army. Now put down the rifle. I know  
what I gotta do.

Aaron nods, tosses his rifle off the cliff.

AARON  
Proceed.

Aaron spreads his arms and smiles benignly at Todd, who tightens his grip on the knife.

TODD  
If I kill you, will they leave us alone?

AARON

No. I don't want you to *kill* me. *Hate* is the fire that purifies the soldier. You need to *murder* me.

Aaron takes a step toward Todd. Todd takes a step back.

AARON

(to Viola)

Perhaps yer little boyfriend promises bigger than he delivers.

(to Todd)

Do as God tells you, boy.

TODD

I been alive almost thirteen years and the only voices I ever heard was men's.

AARON

God works through men, don't he?

VIOLA

So does evil.

AARON

Ah, it speaks.

TODD

Don't you talk to her.

Aaron steps toward Todd. He talks to Viola, but smiles at Todd.

AARON

Tell me, harlot, what are the little things about our boy here that get you all hot and bothered? Do you admire his cute little behind? Do you have fantasies about caressing his fine --

Todd yells in anger and charges Aaron with the knife.

VIOLA

Todd!

Aaron runs straight at the knife, but at the last moment, Todd steps aside and Aaron slams hard into the wall.

AARON

Kill me! What is wrong with you? Jesus --

Aaron swings a fist at Todd's face. Todd ducks and slashes Aaron's arm. Aaron swings with his other fist and catches Todd under the jaw. Todd flies back.

VIOLA

Todd!

Aaron turns to Viola, smiles, and approaches her with exaggerated, mocking monster steps.

TODD  
(to Viola)  
Go! Get outta here! Please!

Viola hurls a big stone at Aaron. It catches him on the forehead and he stumbles senselessly for a moment.

VIOLA  
(to Todd)  
C'mon!

Todd scrambles to his feet, but Aaron, blood pouring down his forehead, grabs Viola's arm. She screams, struggles to get free. Todd leaps, knife out, at Aaron, but at the last second, he turns the knife away and just smashes into him. Viola falls and Todd lands on top of Aaron on the ground. Aaron punches at Todd's face. Todd tries to grab hold of Aaron's fists. Aaron lifts his head and bites a huge chunk out of Todd's neck. Todd yells, falls off Aaron, and scrambles away, holding his bleeding neck. Aaron comes after Todd, swinging, catching him in the eye. Todd raises his knife but, again, doesn't use it. Aaron punches him in the face. Todd still doesn't use the knife. Aaron punches Todd in the jaw, dislodging several teeth. Todd falls, hits his head on the pulpit, and drops the knife. Aaron stands over him.

AARON  
You will never be a man.

TODD  
I'm already a man.

AARON  
(mimicking)  
*I'm already a man.* Christ, you're disappointing. Rob me of my sacrifice! So now I'll kill you, and you'll die knowing I will then kill the girl... *very slowly.* And with immense pleasure.

As Aaron reaches for the dropped knife, Viola smashes him on the head with another huge rock. He stumbles, but doesn't fall. He looks at Viola, smiles, blood now pouring from two gashes on his head.

TODD  
You ain't human.

Aaron looks at Todd, laughs.

AARON

Much more than human. I'm soon to be a martyr, boy. Then a saint.

Without looking from Todd, he throws a punch at Viola, catching her square in the eye. She falls backward and hits her head hard on the stone floor.

TODD

Viola!

Todd pulls himself off the ground and runs past Aaron to her. She is unconscious; her head is bleeding. He cradles her head in his hands.

AARON

It was foreseen you would betray her.

TODD

Shut up! You... whatever the hell you are!

Todd screams in frustration, charges Aaron, knocks him down, lands on top of him.

AARON

Well, that's a start.

TODD

Shut up shut up shut up shut up!

Todd pounds Aaron's face, over and over. Aaron laughs as his face becomes a bloody pulp. Bones crunch. One of his eyes gets crushed by Todd's knuckle.

AARON

That's it, boy. Take me. Lovely.

TODD

Shut up!!

Todd continues to pummel Aaron. His teeth are gone; his mouth oozes blood as he smiles up at the boy. Todd sees his knife on the ground. Somehow, it seems to glow.

KNIFE

Use me. Take the power in your hand.

AARON

Listen to your knife. It talks sense.

Todd nods, climbs off Aaron to get the knife, but Viola grabs it first.

TODD  
Viola? No. Please.

AARON  
No! Not you! Not you!!

Viola plunges the knife into Aaron's neck, then steps back and looks in horror at what she's done. Gurgling sounds come from Aaron. He pushes himself to a kneel, clawing for the knife, trying to pull it from his neck. He stands. Viola gasps. They watch as he attempts to talk. His Noise swirls: wild colors, flashes of hellfire. Then he looks at Todd and suddenly his Noise stops. He falls forward, over the edge of the cliff and disappears. They watch cliff edge in silence.

TODD  
Is he even gone?

Viola doesn't say anything. They stand there.

TODD  
I woulda done it.

VIOLA  
Todd?

TODD  
I woulda killed him myself.

Her chin shakes, then her shoulders, then her whole body. Todd holds her to him. They stand there, gently rocking.

TODD  
Killing someone ain't like it is in stories. I know that. I'm sorry.

VIOLA  
I feel sick. I feel so sick.

TODD  
I know.

She pushes herself away from Todd and throws up. Todd kneels next to her and gently touches her back.

VIOLA  
I couldn't let you do it.

TODD  
I woulda done it.

VIOLA  
I know. But then he would have won.



TODD  
You shoulda let me.

VIOLA  
No.  
(beat)  
I *wanted* to kill him, Todd.

She looks at him, horror in her eyes.

VIOLA  
Oh, God. I wanted to kill him. Oh God  
oh God oh God oh God -- I wanted to so  
much!

TODD  
Stop it! He made you want to. He did  
that. That's why he was evil.

VIOLA  
He made me fall.

Todd turns her face to him.

TODD  
Everybody falls. Everybody. I fell,  
too. We're gonna climb back up together,  
Viola. That's what we do when we fall.

This registers with her. They look at each other, then:

TODD  
C'mon. Haven is waitin'.

EXT. PATH - DAY

They walk past a vista and see Haven in the distance.

TODD  
See? It's still there.

Viola looks at Todd.

VIOLA  
You get hit in the face a lot, y'know?

TODD  
You do pretty good yerself.

VIOLA  
True.

TODD  
How's the eye?

VIOLA  
Sore. But I'll live.

TODD  
You, yer indestructible.

Viola smiles. Suddenly, there's a zip in the air. Viola grunts. Todd looks at her, then at the front of her shirt: a hole and blood. She follows his eyes down, to look, then falls forward. Todd catches her. He scans the area. There's Davy Prentiss holding a gun, on horseback on a hilltop.

VIOLA  
Todd, I think someone shot me.

Davy Prentiss directs his horse down the hill.

TODD (V.O.)  
God damn, Why won't they let us be? I can't do this anymore! This is too hard! Please don't die on me. Please.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
Hoo-boy! Look at that embrace! I think she wants you bad, Todd.

Todd's Noise goes red with rage and hopelessness.

TODD  
You call me Mr. Hewitt.

Davy is surprised and flinches a little.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
Come on now. Just playin'.

TODD  
Call me, Mr. Hewitt. You pathetic little child.

Image above Davy of Mayor Prentiss yelling at him.

MAYOR PRENTISS  
You're pathetic!

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
Hands up. I'm taking you to my dad.

Todd ignores him. He lays Viola gently down on the road.

TODD  
It's gonna be ok. We're gonna be ok.

VIOLA  
It burns, Todd.

TODD  
You hang on. This won't take but a second.

Todd stands and faces Davy.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
I said, put your hands up.

Todd starts walking toward Davy and his horse, then he starts running, full speed at them

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
I'll shoot you!

The horse is looking, wild-eyed at Todd. Todd puts the word "SNAKE" loud in his Noise and shows all sorts of images of snakes slithering around a horse's feet. The horse whinnies and rears up on its hind legs.

MR. PRENTISS, JR.  
God damn it, Todd! Cut it out!

Davy tries to control the panicked horse, which now spins in terrified circles. Todd reaches in and punches Davy hard in the face. Blood spurts from his nose, he drops his gun, and falls from the horse, his foot caught in the stirrup. Todd smacks the rear of the crazed horse and it flees, back up the trail, dragging Davy behind it.

VIOLA  
Todd?

Todd looks back at Viola. She is pale and terrified.

VIOLA  
I think I'm dying.

Todd hurries to her and picks her up.

TODD  
Yer not dying. We'll get you to --

VIOLA  
I'm so cold.

TODD  
Yer not Godamn dying!

He looks at the road to Haven. It zigs and zags. He needs a more direct route, so he picks Viola up and runs, with her in his arms, through the scrub, down the hill.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE HAVEN - DAY

Todd, exhausted and scratched up, enters the city through an open gate, with a listless Viola in his arms.

TODD

Help! Somebody! Help!

VIOLA

Todd, I'm scared. I don't think I can --

TODD

Don't you dare give up!

The streets are oddly deserted.

TODD

Help us! Somebody! Please!

Viola's head lolls.

TODD

You keep yer ruddy eyes open, Viola Eade!

Viola tries to open her eyes. They form little slits.

TODD

Where is everyone?! Someone?! Help!

He wanders the empty streets of Haven, calling for help. A huge black circle floats down an empty street toward Todd, obscuring his view. It passes through him like thick black air. When it's beyond him and he can see again, there sits a single horse and rider. It's Mayor Prentiss, looking as serene and polished as ever.

TODD

Oh, holy hell.

Todd turns and runs as best he can with Viola heavy in his arms. Prentiss rides alongside him at a leisurely pace.

MAYOR PRENTISS

Where are you going to go, Todd. This is it. There is nowhere else anymore.

TODD

How the hell can you be here already?

MAYOR PRENTISS

Even a simpleton knows there are two roads to Haven.

TODD

But the army's a day away at least.

MAYOR PRENTISS

Sometimes the rumor of an army is as powerful as army. I made sure there were plenty of rumors. And here you are, on schedule. Although I expected my son to bring you. But no surprise. He's worthless, as I'm sure you already know. You'd be so much more interesting as a son. And I hear you've got a vacancy in the father department!

TODD

Shut up.

Four other horsemen come around a corner and block Todd.

MAYOR PRENTISS

First of all, no, I won't shut up and you'll soon learn that it's inadvisable to take that tone with me. Secondly, when you address me, it's President Prentiss now.

Todd stares at Mayor Prentiss and the men surrounding him. It's deathly quiet.

TODD (V.O.)

You ain't got no Noise.

MAYOR PRENTISS

No, that's right. We don't. Isn't that a lovely development. I can hear you but... Well, we're like your little friend there. Except we're not female. Oh, yes, and we're not dying.

TODD

Please help her. They must have doctors in Haven.

MAYOR PRENTISS

It's New Prentisstown.

TODD

Ok. New Prentisstown. Please. I'll join your army. I'll kill people! I'll do whatever you want... President Prentiss.

MAYOR PRENTISS

Indeed you will.

(beat)

(MORE)

MAYOR PRENTISS (CONT'D)

Mr. Breslau, see to it that the girl is properly attended to.

Mr. Breslau reaches down from his horse for Viola. Todd hesitates, then hands her over.

MAYOR PRENTISS

Good boy.

Mr. Breslau rides off down the street with Viola slumped over his horse. Todd follows them with worried eyes. Images of women being slaughtered flash.

MAYOR PRENTISS

Not to worry. We'll make sure Viola --

TODD

Don't say her name.

MAYOR PRENTISS

We'll make sure Viola is well enough to join us for your birthday festivities in sixteen days. We'll give her a front row seat. I can guarantee she'll be so proud of you.

Image of Todd stabbing a kneeling man in the neck. Image of a horrified Viola.

TODD

(beat)

Just make her well. Please.

MAYOR PRENTISS

Come. Let's get better acquainted. Son.

Mayor Prentiss escorts Todd, head hung low, into the city, down empty streets.

TODD (V.O.)

(weakly)

I am Todd Hewitt. I am a man. I have hope. Listen, Viola: I have hope for us.

The words "Listen, Viola: I have hope for us" echo and rise. The camera stays with these words as they lift over buildings and drip down onto Viola, the next street over, being hauled away on horseback. She is unconscious, but stirs when the words touch her. As Todd's Noise dissipates, the camera continues to rise over the city. Soon, we can see for miles. We see the waterfall and the river and the long trail and a bedraggled Davy approaching on horseback.

We see the encroaching army followed by chained female prisoners on foot. We see Carbonel Downs burning. Beyond that we see a series of settlements burnt to the ground. We see bodies everywhere. We see the burnt bridge and the swamp and the crashed spaceship. Finally, we see a deserted Prentisstown. And we're still rising. Soon we can only see green land and blue water. It's silent and beautiful.

END

CASSTING