

EXILE

Peg Tittle

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FADE IN:

INT. SUBWAY STATION -- DAY

Three young black men - K, EASY, and LJ - 'run wild' through a subway station. K (20s) is the leader of the group, and a bully. Easy (20s) is a follower; he doesn't say much, and he doesn't do much. LJ (23) is also a follower, but not for lack of potential; mostly, he just hasn't thought much about anything.

The three of them leap over the turnstiles (LJ does this very easily) and run through the crowds, bumping people, knocking people over, calling out, and laughing; K grabs someone's knapsack, Easy grabs someone's bag of groceries, and LJ grabs a woman's laptop. They enter one of the cars just as the train starts to move.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

K, Easy, and LJ claim about half a dozen seats. MAN (white, 30s) and SON (white, 10) are sitting nearby, facing forward, minding their own business, partly out of politeness and partly out of fear.

K rummages through the knapsack he grabbed; there's nothing but books in it, which he tosses aside in disgust.

K  
(to Easy and LJ)  
What you got?

Easy rummages through the bag of groceries, then, finding nothing of interest, tosses it to K. A few apples or oranges fall out and roll on the floor.

LJ opens up the laptop he grabbed, turns it on, presses a few keys.

K (CONT'D)  
(to Man)  
Goin' to the game?

MAN  
Yes, my son and I, we have tickets.

K  
Oh yeah? Can I see 'em?

Man pulls out two tickets and naively hands them to K, who promptly pockets them.

K (CONT'D)

Thanks, man!

Son begins to object, but Man indicates with a look that he is to be quiet. Son protests again; Man gives him a stronger look, and puts his arm around his shoulders, half warning, half protecting; Son picks up on this and is quiet.

LJ

(muttering to  
himself)

Bunch of files. I dunno. Nothin',  
man.

K

Delete 'em.

Man looks over quickly, a reflex, as if to say "No, don't!" K looks at him, challenging. Man says nothing, pointedly looking straight ahead again. Subway train stops. Man and Son get off, quickly. LJ presses the delete button, then tosses the laptop aside as he joins K and Easy, who are also getting off.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- LATER

LJ walks along the sidewalk in a somewhat lower-class neighborhood. MR. MORGAN (black, early 50s) and COWORKER (Hispanic, 30s) are working the street, walking along behind a slow-moving garbage truck, picking up the garbage cans and emptying their contents into the truck. Mr. Morgan looks somewhat intently, at LJ. LJ happens to look in Mr. Morgan's direction, but he looks right through him, not really seeing him.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

LJ passes a high school track; the track team is having a practice. He pauses and watches through the chain link fence, a bit wistful, a bit angry.

INT. COURT ROOM -- DAY

The courtroom is sparsely populated: JUDGE (a woman); JUDGE'S ASSISTANT (a man); a few GUARDS (at least one man and one woman); a few people (all men) sit apart, waiting to appear before the Judge - LJ is among these; one or two

people (men and women) sit in the main space, friends or family of those waiting to appear (none of whom is there with/for LJ).

JUDGE  
Leroy James Wagner?

LJ shuffles to a stand.

JUDGE (CONT'D)  
Are you Leroy James Wagner?

LJ  
Yeah. Yes.

JUDGE  
How do you plead to the counts of illegal entry, property damage, theft, and assault, occurring during the afternoon of Tuesday, April 21, 2027 at the South and Main Subway Station?

LJ  
Guilty, I guess.

JUDGE  
As this is your third conviction, you are hereby exiled.

Judge motions to one of the guards, who leads LJ from the courtroom without trouble.

INT. ESCORT OFFICE -- DAY

LJ is slumped in a chair across from ESCORT OFFICER (a woman) who is seated behind a desk. It is a rather plain, functional office. LJ looks at the nameplate on the desk, which says simply "Escort Officer."

LJ  
So you're an "Escort Officer"?

ESCORT OFFICER  
That's correct.

LJ  
What's that, the new word for parole officer?

Escort Officer looks rather dully, then disbelievingly, at LJ.

ESCORT OFFICER  
You don't know?

LJ  
Know what?

ESCORT OFFICER  
This is your third offence, is that correct?

LJ  
Yeah, so?

ESCORT OFFICER  
Do you have somewhere to go?

LJ  
What do you mean?

ESCORT OFFICER  
Have you found a society that will accept you?

LJ  
(laughs)  
What, I have to find my own prison?

ESCORT OFFICER  
You're not going to prison. This is your third time.

LJ looks confused.

ESCORT OFFICER (CONT'D)  
You really don't know, do you?

LJ  
(annoyed)  
Know what?

ESCORT OFFICER  
(partly to herself)  
You haven't a clue as to the consequences of your actions. Well, that's just one more reason.  
(definitely to LJ)  
Look, the first time you break our laws, the laws of this society, we try to rehabilitate you. Make you understand, and, hopefully, change.

LJ  
Yeah, that was a joke.

ESCORT OFFICER

Obviously. Second time, you got punishment. You were sent to prison.

(looks at LJ's file)

Served two years. And yet here you are again. Third time, well, given your inability or unwillingness to follow the rules of this society, you should live in some other society, yeah? If you have found a society willing to take you, we will provide escort. If not, we will escort you into exile.

LJ

What do you mean?

ESCORT OFFICER

We're kicking you out.

EXT. BORDER -- EARLY MORNING

The designated area of internal exile is separated from the country by a wall, suggestive of the wall in China or Germany. On this side, there isn't much - it's open, bare, country. The border guards have obviously arrived with LJ in an escort van of sorts.

BORDER GUARDS #1 (man) and #2 (woman) walk LJ to an entry spot in the wall. LJ gestures at the wall.

LJ

Escort officer said this wasn't a prison.

BORDER GUARD #1

Oh the wall isn't here to keep you in. It's here to keep you out. We don't want you.

LJ looks at the guard, a little angry, a little hurt.

BORDER GUARD #1 (CONT'D)

Hey, only because you so clearly don't want us.

(a little  
challenging)

Right?

LJ ignores the question.

LJ  
So what do I do in there?

BORDER GUARD #2  
Whatever you want.  
(pause, then)  
Isn't that what you want, what you  
wanted?

Border Guard #2 deactivates a sensor field with a hand-held device, and with Border Guard #1 close at his side, LJ walks through.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- SAME TIME

LJ walks through the 'gate' into open country. There seems to be a bit of a path leading away from the border wall, so he follows it.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- LATE MORNING

LJ sees three people (MAN #1, MAN #2, MAN #3) approaching him on the path. He is pleased about this, but when they meet, they basically mug him and steal his shoes.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- EARLY AFTERNOON

LJ continues on the path, much more slowly now; he's hurting, and his feet in particular have become increasingly bruised and cut.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- MID AFTERNOON

LJ sees a single person (MAN #4) in the distance; he slows, hesitates, then sees the other person run away from him.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- LATER

LJ sees two people (MAN #5, MAN #6) in the distance; he hides from them.

EXT. ALONG THE RIVER -- LATE AFTERNOON

LJ comes to a river. He takes a very long drink. Then he sits for a while and soaks his feet. Eventually, he gets up and follows the river.

EXT. RIVER'S END -- EARLY EVENING

LJ comes to the end of the river, to a sort of clearing where it feeds into a lake. JOHN (white, middle-aged, with a comfortable middle-class air about him, exiled for tax evasion) is sitting there making something, weaving something out of reeds. LJ sees John, and pulls back into the bush.

JOHN  
 (to LJ, but without  
 looking at him)  
 Just got here?

LJ  
 (after a puzzled  
 pause - how did he  
 know he was there?)  
 This morning.

JOHN  
 And you got this far before dark?  
 And with no shoes.

LJ is again puzzled - how did he know he has no shoes?

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 They hang out near the border.  
 Waiting for guys like you.

LJ  
 Guys like me.

JOHN  
 New guys. Guys not expecting it.

LJ  
 Why don't you do something about it?

JOHN  
 (finally turning to  
 face him)  
 Me? Now why should I do something  
 about it?



LJ  
Well you live here, don't you?

JOHN  
Your point?

LJ doesn't know what his point is or on some level realizes he's the last one to spout off about law and order or civic duty.

LJ  
Hey man, can I sleep here?

He looks toward a bunch of people at a beach area about a quarter mile away.

LJ (CONT'D)  
Is it safe?

JOHN  
Yeah. I'll watch your back.

LJ settles and falls asleep almost instantly. John continues doing whatever it was he was doing.

EXT. RIVER'S END -- LATE EVENING

Two men approach John, quietly so as not to wake LJ: ED is a middle-aged Native American exiled because he got too aggressive defending land claims; ANTHONY is a black man in his late 20s or early 30s.

ED  
Well?

JOHN  
(enigmatically)  
Maybe.

EXT. RIVER'S END -- MID MORNING

LJ awakes. John is nearby.

JOHN  
You're awake. Good. I'll take you over to the beach to meet the others. You can go f.or a swim too, if you like.

LJ nods, gets up, and begins to follow, wincing and walking a bit gingerly.

LJ  
Any women here?

John gives him a look. Unimpressed.

LJ (CONT'D)  
Thought maybe one of 'em could make me a pair of shoes.

John gives him another look. Even more unimpressed.

JOHN  
I've known of only two. One died giving birth. The other got raped to death.

EXT. ALONG THE SHORE -- MOMENTS LATER

John and LJ continue walking toward the beach area.

LJ  
So what are you in for?

JOHN  
You mean why was I exiled? Income tax evasion.

LJ  
That's it? No assault or nothin'?

JOHN  
Nope. And you?

LJ  
Petty theft. Sort of.  
(pause)  
Income tax evasion. You must be smart.

JOHN  
Nope. I'm about as stupid as you. Thinking I could or should get something for nothing. Be different if I'd withheld only the portion that paid for weapons, or that subsidized churches, but no, I withheld it all.

(CONT'D)

JOHN (CONT'D)

Even the money that paid for  
schools, roads, hospitals.  
I was pissed off at the government.  
Don't know what I was thinking.

LJ

Probably weren't thinking. Just like  
me.

John looks over, surprised, and impressed.

LJ (CONT'D)

But schools and roads, they're free,  
so -

JOHN

Nothin's free, 'cept maybe the air.  
Free just means someone else paid  
for it. That's what income tax is  
all about.

(he looks at LJ)

You've never paid income tax?

(it dawns on him)

You've never held a job?!

John and LJ continue walking toward the beach area.

LJ

So what do people do for shoes  
around here?

JOHN

Well, I've made my own.

He lifts a foot clad in a sandal/shoe woven from reeds.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's a lot of work and they don't  
last very long, but -

(recalling LJ's  
earlier comment)

But that's women's work. Right.

Well, there's the dump.

LJ looks surprised.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Yeah, people must've lived here  
before it was turned into exile, and  
there's what must have been a dump.  
It's pretty much picked over by now,  
but -

(CONT'D)

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 (sees LJ's look)  
 - that's beneath you. Right.

A rabbit scurries by.

LJ  
 Hey, I could catch a rabbit. Make me  
 a pair of rabbitskin shoes.

JOHN  
 Yeah... Could you catch a rabbit?  
 Really?

LJ  
 Maybe. If I had shoes.

JOHN  
 If you had shoes, you could get  
 shoes.  
 (smiles at the  
 paradox)  
 Apparently someone tried that once.  
 Didn't prepare the skin right, I  
 guess, ended up with maggots  
 crawling all over his legs.

LJ looks at John, smiling, as if he's just describing a  
 gruesome scene in a movie...

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Developed gangrene or flesh-eating  
 disease or something. They might've  
 been able to save him, by  
 amputating, but, well, what have we  
 got to amputate a leg with?

...but then it hits LJ, that this is serious reality here.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Even if one of us did have the guts  
 to try it.

EXT. BEACH -- MID MORNING

John and LJ (a young black man; TJ was LJ a few years ago)  
 have arrived at the beach. Ed and Anthony are standing  
 around a very small fire. With them are three other men: TIM  
 is a young black man in his late teens, and Anthony's  
 younger brother; TJ is a young black man - he was LJ a few  
 years ago; BISCUIT, another young black man, is the comedian  
 of the group. John introduces LJ to them.

JOHN  
 This is Ed, and Anthony, and Tim,  
 his younger brother. TJ. And  
 Biscuit.

LJ  
 (to Ed)  
 Hey do you know how to hunt a rabbit  
 and make - what's the word?

LJ looks at John for help.

JOHN  
 Cure.

LJ  
 Yeah, and how to cure the skin  
 right?

Ed simply looks at him.

BISCUIT  
 Sure he does. They teach that in law  
 school.

The others laugh.

LJ  
 You're a lawyer?

Ed glares at him, accusing racism, then walks down to the  
 water.

LJ (CONT'D)  
 I just meant, what's a lawyer doing  
 in here?

ANTHONY  
 We think he got a bit too aggressive  
 defending land claims.

Biscuit pauses before he adds -

BISCUIT  
 And we think it was this land.

Biscuit stifles the giggle, but not the grin. Ed rejoins the  
 men.

ED  
 (to LJ)  
 So, we're headin' out to do some  
 fishing. You coming?

LJ  
Nah, I think I'll just hang out  
here.

ANTHONY  
You're sure?

LJ  
Yeah. My feet are still sore.

Ed shrugs. They walk over to some bushes, under which their fishing equipment is hidden: John pulls out a woven fishing net of sorts, Biscuit pulls out a woven basket and a spear, and Ed, Tim, and Anthony also pull out spears. They all head out further along the beach then, except for TJ and LJ.

EXT. BEACH -- MID MORNING

TJ and LJ settle themselves on the sand near the fire.

LJ  
This is the life, eh? Lying on the  
beach in the sun.

TJ gives him a look.

LJ (CONT'D)  
So what are you in for?

TJ  
You mean what am I out for.

LJ  
Yeah.

TJ  
I don't remember.

LJ  
Can't be all that long ago, how old  
are you, man?

TJ  
(laughs)  
Theft under, theft over, break and  
enter, assault, property damage. A  
whole bunch of stuff, but I don't  
remember any of it. I was out of my  
mind on somethin' or other.

LJ  
All three times?

TJ  
Probably more than three.

LJ  
Guess there's no drugs here, huh.

TJ  
Oh I didn't have a drug problem.  
John says I had RDD. Responsibility  
Deficit Disorder.

LJ  
(probably missing  
that last part)  
Did you deal too?

TJ  
Yeah. I did. And before you ask,  
yeah, probably to kids. I dunno.  
Like I said. I don't remember.

LJ doesn't pursue the matter. Instead, he gets up and pisses on the fire. As soon as TJ realizes what he's doing, he jumps up in alarm, but it's too late - the fire is pretty much out. TJ tries desperately to salvage it, picking off the wet bits and blowing on a few embers, but to no avail.

TJ (CONT'D)  
Fuck, man!! What did you do that  
for?

LJ  
What?

TJ  
You put out the fuckin' fire! What's  
the matter with you??!!

LJ  
What's the big deal? Light another  
one.

TJ  
With what? You got some matches? A  
cigarette lighter maybe?

LJ is silent as it sinks in.

TJ (CONT'D)  
Jesus H. Christ! Gotta go get my own  
damn fish now.

TJ stomps off toward the bush and pulls out his spear, as well as two sticks. He returns to LJ and throws the sticks at him.

TJ (CONT'D)  
Start rubbin'.

TJ heads off after the others.

TJ (CONT'D)  
(muttering under his  
breath)  
Asshole.

EXT. BEACH -- MORNING

LJ looks perplexedly at the sticks, sits down, starts rubbing them together. Nothing happens. He persists for about a minute then gives up.

EXT. BEACH -- LATE AFTERNOON

The others return, carrying fish.

LJ  
(happy to see them)  
Oh man am I hungry!

Ed stops in his tracks.

ED  
Did you help catch these fish?

LJ  
Well, no, but -

ED  
Then what makes you think you should get to eat them? If, however, you'd kept the fire going, which was TJ's job -

Ed looks pointedly at TJ, who obviously isn't in anyone's good books at the moment.

ED (CONT'D)  
You would've been entitled. But as it is...



Ed heads down to the water with his fish.

LJ  
 (petulantly, to Ed's  
 back)  
 Well what am I supposed to eat?

ED  
 (turning to look at  
 him)  
 How old are you?

LJ  
 Twenty-three.

ED  
 And you haven't figured out how to  
 feed yourself yet?

Ed turns away again in disgust. Anthony picks up where Ed left off.

ANTHONY  
 You put the fire out. Did you start  
 another one?

LJ  
 No, man, I tried, but -

JOHN  
 (placating, but  
 barely)  
 Well, it's too late now to make a  
 trip to the other side - it'll be  
 dark soon.

ANTHONY  
 Looks like it's sushi tonight.

TIM  
 No way, man, I ain't eatin' no raw  
 fish.

ANTHONY  
 (angrily, almost as  
 if he resents Tim's  
 very existence, or  
 at least presence)  
 Like hell you aren't! You put it in  
 the lake for tomorrow and it might  
 not be there. You're eating your  
 fish tonight!

TIM

What I eat or don't eat ain't none  
of your business!

ANTHONY

Like hell it isn't! After what I -

TIM

(overlaps with  
Anthony's last  
comment)

Yeah, well I never asked -

Both Anthony and Tim stop short, each of them caught in a  
love/hate conflict.

JOHN

(to LJ)

Why don't you and TJ go around to  
the other side tomorrow?

TJ

(explaining)

There's usually some guys on the  
other side. They keep a fire going  
too. They'll probably let us have  
some.

(an afterthought)

And we never travel alone.

LJ

But I ain't got no shoes.

LJ looks at Biscuit, who is about the same size.

LJ (CONT'D)

Hey man, can I borrow yours?

BISCUIT

Hell no. I might never see 'em  
again. Can't have my Daffy Duck  
watch either, so don't even think  
'bout askin'.

JOHN

You had all day, and you didn't make  
another fire and you didn't make any  
shoes?

Ed has come back to the firepit and stands beside John;  
Anthony and Tim have stopped bickering to look at LJ. LJ  
looks at all the disapproving faces.

LJ

Hey, I don't need this shit.

LJ tries to stomp away, but in sand, and with sore feet, well, he doesn't pull it off. Suddenly he stops. They all wait. Finally LJ turns.

LJ (CONT'D)

Okay, where do I get some of those weeds or reeds or whatever?

John heads off up the shore; LJ follows.

EXT. BEACH -- LATE AFTERNOON

John and LJ return with a bunch of reeds. LJ sits down and starts trying to make a pair of shoes. The others sit around the firepit, talking.

FADE TO NIGHT AS THEY GET COMFORTABLE IN THE SAND TO SLEEP.

EXT. BEACH -- MORNING

TJ nudges LJ awake, not very gently.

TJ

It's a long way around. We better get started.

LJ very carefully puts on the shoes he made the night before and stands up; the shoes don't look very promising. They leave. LJ nods to the knapsack TJ has on.

LJ

Where'd you get that?

TJ

The dump.

LJ

What dump?

TJ

There's a dump, left over from before, when people lived here.

LJ

Oh yeah, John mentioned that. Will we pass it? I'd like to check it out.

TJ  
Well, we don't exactly pass it, and  
we don't have time to stop anyway,  
but I'll show you where it is.

EXT. ALONG THE SHORE -- LATER

TJ and LJ continue walking along the shore.

LJ  
So what's up with Anthony and Tim?

TJ  
No one knows exactly. Feeling is -  
well you know they're brothers,  
right? Feeling is that whatever  
Anthony did, or confessed to doing,  
he did to keep his kid brother from  
getting sent here.

LJ  
And he ended up here anyway.

TJ  
Yeah. And have you heard him sing?  
Anthony? Man, he coulda been  
somethin'.

They continue walking along the shore. Clearly LJ's shoes  
are not going to make the trip.

TJ takes an empty plastic bottle from his knapsack and fills  
it with water from the lake.

TJ (CONT'D)  
We're away from the lake for a while  
now.

They each drink their fill, TJ fills the bottle once more  
and puts it in his knapsack, then they turn away from the  
lake and head into the bush.

TJ (CONT'D)  
Sometimes we hear wolves or coyotes  
or something in this area, but not  
until it gets dark.

EXT. ALONG TRAIL IN BUSH -- LATE MORNING

TJ and LJ come to an apple tree.

LJ

Hey wait a minute -

He starts to reach for the nearest apple.

TJ

No! Only the ripest one. Leave the others. They'll be good later.

TJ looks around on the ground, while LJ looks up at the tree, then starts climbing.

TJ (CONT'D)

Here's one.

LJ

It looks half-rotten. There's a better one up here.

TJ

You can eat around the rotten part. But take that one too. Maybe you can trade it for some fish tonight.

LJ picks the apple, then starts climbing back down. As he jumps to the ground, one of his shoes falls apart. He reacts with disgust and anger.

After a questioning nod, and TJ's assent, LJ puts the apple into TJ's knapsack. He then picks up the half-rotten apple and starts chewing around the rotten part.

They continue walking, LJ wearing just one shoe. LJ tosses the remaining rotten apple away.

TJ (CONT'D)

Hey, don't just toss it away!

TJ goes after it, picks it up, looks around a bit, selects a spot, then plants the seeds.

TJ (CONT'D)

If we're lucky, it'll grow and we'll have another apple tree here some day.

EXT. ALONG TRAIL IN BUSH -- LATER

TJ picks up some dry twigs as he goes along, and puts them in his knapsack.

TJ  
We'll need these on the way back.

TJ takes a drink from the bottle, offers the rest to LJ. LJ finishes it off then tosses the empty bottle away.

TJ (CONT'D)  
Hey!!

TJ goes after the bottle, retrieving it like it's a treasure - which it is.

TJ (CONT'D)  
What the fuck are you doing? You gotta stop tossing shit away!

LJ  
Sorry, man. I wasn't thinking.

TJ  
Gotta stop doin' that too.

EXT. AT END OF TRAIL IN BUSH -- LATER

TJ and LJ hear some shouts, and as they come out of the bush, they see a small PACK OF MEN attack two men, apparently NEWCOMERS. LJ starts to run out, but TJ pulls him back. One of the two newcomers falls. The other bends down to him, as the pack takes off.

NEWCOMER #2  
911!  
(absently reaching  
to his pocket as if  
for his cellphone)

NEWCOMER #2 (CONT'D)  
Someone call 911! We need an  
ambulance here!

After a moment, TJ and LJ go forward out of the bush toward the newcomers. Newcomer #2 sees them, and suddenly the reality of the situation registers; he looks anxiously at his fallen friend, then takes off. TJ and LJ approach the fallen man; he's dead. TJ nods toward his feet.

LJ  
Why didn't they take his shoes?

TJ looks around nervously.

TJ  
I don't know. But you better put 'em  
on quick in case we have to run for  
it.

LJ looks at him a little in horror, but then takes the man's  
shoes off and puts them on.

LJ  
Shouldn't we at least bury him?

TJ looks up at the sun, implying they haven't got enough  
time.

LJ (CONT'D)  
The animals will get him.

TJ  
Yeah. And they've said it tastes  
like chicken.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE LAKE -- EARLY AFTERNOON

TJ and LJ come to the group on the other side of the lake.  
There are three men, BOB, MAN #7, and MAN #8, sitting near a  
small fire.

TJ nods to all three; they nod back.

TJ  
Hey Bob.

BOB  
Hey, TJ! How's it goin'?

TJ  
Good, man. How's it goin' here?

BOB  
Oh, well, you know.

TJ  
Yeah. This is LJ. He's new.

LJ  
Hey.

TJ  
We, ah -

BOB  
Your fire went out.

TJ  
Yeah.

LJ  
But it was my fault, man. TJ's not  
to blame.

TJ looks surprised, and Bob looks puzzled, at LJ's rush to  
claim responsibility.

BOB  
Uh-huh. Yeah, sure, help yourself.

TJ unpacks two odd little box structures from his knapsack,  
and goes about carefully transferring embers from the fire  
into the little boxes.

BOB (CONT'D)  
Some dry stuff over there.

TJ goes to where Bob indicates and scrounges up some dry  
leaves and bits of twig which he carefully adds to the box.  
Then he hands one to LJ.

TJ  
Careful! Keep it sheltered from the  
wind and watch it. We gotta feed it  
to keep it going all the way back.

LJ  
Why do we need two?

TJ  
Because one's going to go out.

BOB  
Or two.  
(grinning)  
I'll be here.

TJ  
Yeah. Hate to chat and rush, but -

BOB  
It'll be dark soon enough even if  
you don't have to come back. Go.



TJ and LJ leave the way they came, carefully holding their fireboxes.

EXT. ALONG TRAIL IN BUSH -- LATER

TJ and LJ are walking slowly, carefully, through the bush with their fireboxes. LJ is in front.

LJ

So what are those guys here for?

TJ

Don't know the other two guys, never seen 'em before, but Bob - he says he didn't pay child support.

LJ

That's a crime??

TJ stops short at that. He opens his mouth, but then shakes his head - where to begin?

LJ (CONT'D)

Damn!

TJ

Went out?

LJ

Yeah, sorry, man.

TJ

Well we still got one. Let's keep going. Pick up dry leaves and stuff as you go. And you go first, keep the wind off me.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE LAKE -- LATER

TJ and LJ approach the men at the other side, fireboxes dark and empty.

BOB

Hey TJ, LJ. Long time no see. There's a couple big embers there on the left.

TJ goes through the same routine. They leave again.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE LAKE -- LATE AFTERNOON

TJ and LJ approach the men at the other side, fireboxes again dark and empty.

BOB

We really have to stop meeting this way.

TJ

Tell me about it.

TJ goes through the same routine. They leave again.

EXT. APPROACHING PLACE WHERE ATTACK OCCURRED -- LATER

TJ and LJ both still have their fires in their boxes. LJ recognizes the spot and begins looking around nervously.

LJ

So what's the story with these -

TJ

The beaters? That's what we call 'em. We figure a lot of 'em are here for beatin' on their women. And it seems they can't live without beatin' on someone - Hey, watch where you're going!

EXT. EDGE OF BUSH AT THE BEACH SIDE OF THE LAKE -- EVENING

LJ, in the lead, and TJ, following, come out of the bush, slowly; LJ's fire has long gone out; TJ's has not, and he walks like he's carrying nitroglycerine.

LJ

Just a little further man, we're almost there, we did it.

TJ

Can't see my fuckin' feet in this fuckin' dark. You tell me when there's something I'm gonna trip over.

LJ

Yeah, you're doin good. We're almost there.

When they get within view of the beach, LJ sees a fire.

LJ (CONT'D)  
Hey, they've got a fire!

He runs on ahead to the strong fire they've got blazing.

TJ  
(muttering to  
himself)  
Doesn't hurt to have two. Just in  
case. Came all this fuckin' way.

TJ carries on, still as careful as before.

EXT. BEACH -- MOMENTS LATER

LJ runs up to John, Ed, and another man, HENRY, standing at the fire.

LJ  
(bursting with  
anger)  
You've got fire! Why the fuck did  
we go through all that then? Thought  
you didn't have any matches or  
nothin'.

JOHN  
Henry did it.

LJ  
(still thrashing  
about)  
Well if it was that easy, why the  
fuck -

JOHN  
Who said it was easy? Henry?

Henry comes over.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Show him your hands.

Henry shows him his hands in the light of the fire. They're raw and blistered.

LJ  
But why? We went over to the other  
side. You knew that.

JOHN

We weren't sure you'd make it back.  
With fire.

They are suddenly silent, respectful, as TJ arrives with his pathetic little flame in a box.

TJ

(to Henry)

My fire's bigger than your fire.

TJ and Henry start to giggle, no doubt from exhaustion. TJ sets his little fire beside the big one. Then both of them sit down, to admire their efforts, TJ collapsing with exhaustion, Henry sitting with his hands, limply, palms up in his lap. They continue to giggle intermittently.

Anthony walks up from the lake with Tim and Biscuit, carrying some cleaned fish.

ANTHONY

Time for a fish fry!

They settle themselves around the fire, frying fish, and talking. LJ gets his apple out of TJ's knapsack.

LJ

I didn't help catch the fish, so -  
but I've got an apple - does anyone  
want to trade me this apple for a  
fish?

There is a moment's silence.

BISCUIT

Sure thing. Here you go.

Biscuit hands over a fried fish.

BISCUIT (CONT'D)

One fish for one apple.

(pause)

Anyone got a bag of Doritos to  
trade? I got another fish here -

TJ and Tim groan, apparently this teasing mention of the many foods they crave is not new.

EXT. BEACH -- LATER

The men are sitting around the fire, eating their fried fish and talking. Tim goes to the lake with a mug.

LJ  
So what do you guys do when it gets cold?

BISCUIT  
Shiver.

TJ  
Build bigger fires.

Tim comes back with a mug full of water.

LJ  
You get that mug from the dump?

TIM  
Yeah.

LJ  
And no one's ever got sick from drinking the lake water?

JOHN  
Not that we know of. You should talk to Ike. He knows a lot of what's happened, you know, history.

LJ  
I ain't interested in no history.

The others are silent - LJ has, yet again, clearly said something wrong.

ED  
(not too kindly)  
What are you interested in?

LJ misses Ed's tone, but is confused - has he been asking too many questions?

LJ  
Nothin' I guess.

They are all silent. Then LJ tries again, obviously not too comfortable with the quiet.

LJ (CONT'D)

Hey, John, when you said it'd be different it was just some taxes that you didn't pay, what did you mean?

JOHN

Well I guess I meant that that would be breaking the law for a legitimate reason. You know, there are good laws and bad laws. Breaking the bad ones, well that's just civil disobedience. And maybe, I don't know, maybe it wouldn't've counted for the three-law.

BISCUIT

You mean some crimes count and some don't? How is that fair?

ED

What, you think all crimes are the same?

BISCUIT

Well...no.

ED

So what crimes do you think should count for the three-law?

JOHN

And what should be done about the other crimes?

TIM

Murder. Killing someone is definitely wrong.

ED

Even in self-defence?

TIM

Okay, no, but otherwise.

TJ

What if it was an accident? What if you didn't intend to kill someone? What if you didn't even know that you killed someone?

Tim seems to be the only one who doesn't recognize that TJ is talking about himself at this point.

TIM  
They still die.

TJ  
(agreeing,  
admitting)  
Yeah.

ED  
So we have to decide whether it's  
the consequence or the intent that  
matters.

LJ  
What do you mean 'we'?

ED  
(looks at John  
before answering)  
Hypothetically. If you were running  
the place, if you were trying to  
create a society -

TIM  
But there's accidents and then  
there's accidents.

Anthony looks at him, encouraging to continue.

TIM (CONT'D)  
Like there's accidents that you  
should've known better and then  
there's just, like, accidents.

ED  
Negligence.

TJ  
What?

ED  
Young Tim just described the legal  
concept of negligence. When you  
should've known better, when you can  
reasonably foresee the consequences,  
and you do it anyway, you're  
negligent.

ANTHONY  
And guilty.

LJ  
Okay, what about the small stuff -  
and not accidents.

BISCUIT

Like just stealing shit?

LJ

Yeah.

ANTHONY

Well, you're taking something that doesn't belong to you. That's wrong, isn't it?

ED

Ah, but define "belong". Stealing someone's car, okay, a clear case of theft. But what about taking something that you think belonged to you in the first place?

BISCUIT

That'd be like taking back stolen goods. No crime in that.

TJ

(glancing at John,  
but just as he  
starts to speak)

Or not paying income tax? It's your money, you earned it, how is it stealing if you just keep it?

JOHN

Because I used the roads without paying for them. So it's like I stole the use of them.

LJ

But you didn't steal them.

ED

It's sort of like downloading music off the internet without permission. You don't steal the song, but you steal use of it.

BISCUIT

But are they both wrong?

ED

Think of it this way. You spend a day working for a man, I don't know, fixing his roof or something, then he doesn't pay you. He hasn't stolen you -



TIM  
But he's stolen the use of you.

ANTHONY  
He's taken your labor without  
paying.

BISCUIT  
Ah. Cool.

EXT. BEACH -- LATER

The discussion is over. The men are quiet.

TIM  
(starts singing)  
I'm ridin' in your car, you turn on  
the radio.

BISCUIT  
(sings the next  
lines)  
You're pullin' me close, I just say  
no.

LJ looks a little puzzled.

TJ  
(sings the next  
lines)  
I say I don't like it, but you know  
I'm a liar.

ANTHONY  
(finishes the verse;  
his voice is  
particularly good)  
'Cause when we kiss, oh -

TIM, BISCUIT, TJ, ANTHONY  
(in perfect four-  
part harmony)  
Fire.

LJ is delighted.

HENRY  
(to LJ, gesturing at  
the foursome)  
Introducing, "Rap-a-capella"!

Tim, Biscuit, TJ, and Anthony break into a rhythmic, swinging, sexy half-rap, a capella version of the Pointer Sisters' "Fire".

EXT. BEACH -- MID MORNING

The men are getting ready to go fishing. MAN #9 arrives; the others apparently know him (they are not alarmed in any way by his appearance), but he is not one of their group.

MAN #9

There someone named LJ here?

LJ

Yeah. Who wants to know?

MAN #9

There's someone at the window asking for you.

LJ

What window?

TJ

There's a place in the wall where the forcefield is weak or somethin'. You can hear someone on the other side if they're real close.

LJ

And someone's there? Now?

BISCUIT

Apparently. And asking for you! Are you famous or what?

LJ

All right! I'm getting out of here!

(to Man #9)

Can you show me this window? Can you take me there? How far is it?

MAN #9

'Bout two hours.

(agreeing to take  
him)

Come on.

LJ

Yes!

EXT. THE WINDOW -- LATER

LJ approaches the spot identified as the window. Man #9 has taken off. MR. MORGAN is on the other side.

LJ  
Hello? K? Easy?

MR. MORGAN  
Hello?

LJ  
Who's there?

MR. MORGAN  
Is that LJ?

LJ  
Yeah. Who are you?

MR. MORGAN  
I'm Mr. Morgan.

LJ  
I don't know no Mr. Morgan.

MR. MORGAN  
I pick up - I picked up your garbage twice a week. On your street, where you lived.

LJ  
Yeah? I never saw you.

Mr. Morgan sighs: that's part of the problem - LJ has never seen anyone but himself.

MR. MORGAN  
I know.

LJ  
So what are you doing here? It's not exactly in the neighborhood. You here to get me out?

MR. MORGAN  
No, I'm afraid I can't do that.  
(pause)  
You don't think you belong there?

LJ

There's nothin' here! What'd I do to deserve this? I didn't kill anyone or anything.

MR. MORGAN

What did you do - the first time.

LJ

I knocked over some garbage cans. Big deal.

MR. MORGAN

And wrecked Mrs. Emerson's garden.

LJ

Yeah. So? Didn't mean anything.

MR. MORGAN

Well it meant a lot to Mrs. Emerson. That was her husband's garden, and when he died, she spent all of her time there, tending it, taking care of it. She loved that garden. Cried for days when she saw what you'd done.

(pause)

And it took me two extra hours to pick up the garbage that day. Missed my granddaughter's first piano recital.

LJ

So for that I get sent here? I was just a kid.

MR. MORGAN

You were fifteen. And the second time -

LJ

That was an accident.

MR. MORGAN

How can you get drunk by accident? Tell me.

LJ is silent.

MR. MORGAN (CONT'D)

How can you steal a car, and then when you're done your little joyride, just leave it in the middle of the road - how do you do that by accident?

LJ

I thought it was the side of the road. I was drunk, man.

MR. MORGAN

Oh and that excuses you? You chose to drink that much. Are you saying you didn't know what happens when you drink that much?

(pauses)

The family coming around the corner didn't have a chance. That poor child will spend the rest of her life in a wheelchair.

LJ

Yeah, well that's not my fault.

MR. MORGAN

Then whose fault is it?

LJ

I didn't mean for that to happen, okay?! That wasn't supposed to happen.

MR. MORGAN

Well, what did you mean to happen when you left the car in the middle of the road? What wasn't supposed to happen - other people aren't supposed to be using the road when you're using it? Who the hell are you?

LJ

How did I know they'd be coming around the corner?

MR. MORGAN

What, you didn't know people drive cars on roads - around corners?

LJ

Yeah, well can't a man change?

MR. MORGAN

You're what, twenty-three? Twenty-three years old and running through the subway with complete disregard for others. For what matters to them. When were you planning to change? What exactly were you waiting for?

LJ

Look, man, why did you come? What do you want?

MR. MORGAN

What do I want? What do you want?

LJ

I don't want nothin'.

MR. MORGAN

Well, I guess you got what you want then.

They are both silent.

MR. MORGAN (CONT'D)

(trying again)

I just thought - all those years ago, I thought maybe if I'd said something -

LJ

Yeah and what might that have been. You're what, fifty? And a fucking garbageman.

MR. MORGAN

What's that supposed to mean? You think you're too good to pick up other people's garbage? You too good to cut the grass at the city's parks? Repair the roads? Tell me, what job do you think is appropriate for a person of your skills and abilities? At least I pay my way.

(voice fading as he  
turns and walks  
away)

And I'm tired of payin' yours too.

LJ

What's that supposed to mean?

Mr. Morgan walks back to the window.

MR. MORGAN

Well, for starters, your rehab, and prison - who do you think pays for that?

LJ

Hey, I worked when I was in prison!

MR. MORGAN

It costs \$200 a day to keep a man in prison. You say you worked, you figure you earned your keep? You earned \$200 a day? What did you do that was so very difficult, or so very dangerous, or so very valuable, it was worth \$200 a day?

Mr. Morgan begins to leave again.

LJ

Are you leavin'?  
(threatening)  
We ain't done yet!

Mr. Morgan stops and turns.

MR. MORGAN

No, we aren't.  
(pause)  
But do you really want me to come back?

LJ

(after a pause)  
It's not like I've got anything better to do.

MR. MORGAN

Well then maybe I'll be here again next week.

After Mr. Morgan has left, LJ sits at the window for quite a while, deep in thought.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- LATER

LJ is walking in open country, having finally left the window. At one point he realizes that the dump is near where he is, so he turns to go to it.

EXT. DUMP -- LATER

LJ rummages in the dump, disgusted with what he's doing. Eventually he finds something worth keeping, puts it in his pocket, then continues to rummage.

EXT. BEACH -- AFTERNOON

Ed, John, Anthony, Tim, TJ, and Biscuit are sitting around the fire.

ED

Well, what say we all? Is he in or not?

TJ

I say he's in. He stuck it out that whole way to get fire.

JOHN

Yeah, but he pissed it out in the first place. And didn't you say he tossed the apple, then the water bottle?

ANTHONY

Sat here all day and didn't even try to make shoes for himself, let alone a fire.

TJ

I know, I know. But he reminds me of me, not so long ago. He'll come around.

TIM

He coulda taken off on you, but he didn't. I say he's in too.

JOHN

Yeah, but what can he do? I mean, what does he bring to the group?

ED

He got awfully angry when he discovered his trip was for nothing. That makes me nervous.

BISCUIT

I like him. I say he's in.



ED

Anthony?

ANTHONY

I don't know. I want to say yes, but  
-

ED

He's got no motivation. He doesn't  
want anything.

TJ

Give him time. Come winter...

ED

And in the meantime?

ANTHONY

In the meantime, maybe he's just  
like the rest of us - we all want to  
feel good about ourselves, proud of  
what we do - self-respect. He just  
doesn't know how yet -

JOHN

Well, he'd better figure it out  
soon.

EXT. BEACH -- LATER

LJ arrives at the beach, walks up to the fire. John, Ed,  
Anthony, Tim, TJ, and Biscuit are standing around it.

LJ

Hey, I found these at the dump. I  
figure they could belong to the  
group.

John takes what he offers; it's a pair of kids' scissors.

JOHN

You're giving these to us?

John examines the scissors.

JOHN (CONT'D)

This is great. These will really  
come in handy. Thanks LJ.

LJ

It's just scissors. Kids' scissors.

BISCUIT

Which means they're perfect for us.  
We best make sure we don't run with  
'em.

The others laugh, but John looks pointedly at Ed and Anthony.

EXT. BEACH -- MORNING

Ed, John, Anthony, Tim, TJ, Biscuit, and LJ are gathered by the fire.

LJ

So, anyone goin' fishin' today? I'd like to come.

ANTHONY

Yeah? That's good.

ED

But we have something to tell you first.

LJ looks a little concerned.

ED (CONT'D)

You're in.

LJ

(a little nervously)  
In what?

JOHN

Well, we've got a group, sort of, we're trying to make a go of this -

ANTHONY

And we vote on new people, to see if we want them, to see if we trust them -

LJ

You mean this was a test? I've been doing some sort of a test?

TJ

Yeah. First you failed.

BISCUIT

Then you passed. Then you failed.  
Then you passed.

LJ  
But I'm in. I passed?

JOHN  
(looking a little  
uncomfortable)  
Well, most of us think you passed.  
So we're going to take you to the  
cabin today.

LJ takes a moment to process the news.

LJ  
There's a cabin?

JOHN  
Well, yeah, there's a couple.  
Hunters' cabins, by the look of  
them, from before. And we've sort of  
appropriated one of them. You'll  
see.

LJ  
Okay. Okay. Thanks, man. Everyone, I  
mean. Thanks.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- LATER

LJ, John, Ed, Anthony, Tim, Biscuit, and TJ are walking  
along, on their way to the cabin.

TJ  
(to LJ)  
So who was at the window?

LJ  
Some guy from before. Says he's the  
garbageman from our street.

TIM  
What'd he want?

LJ  
Don't really know. Rag on me a bit.  
(hits his head)  
Damn! I shoulda asked him if he had  
any matches!

ANTHONY

Wouldn't've mattered. He couldn't've given them to you anyway. Nothing physical can get through the field. He tosses 'em over the wall, they'll just bounce back.

They walk on without talking for a bit.

LJ

So do any of you meet anyone at the window? I mean, you could, right -

There is an awkward silence. Ed pointedly walks on ahead. Anthony looks at Tim, just at the moment Tim looks at Anthony -they are the only family they've got; Anthony is pleased that Tim has looked his way, though he doesn't actually smile at him; Tim is a bit uncomfortable about the moment. TJ and Biscuit both look off into the distance - no one's come to ask for them.

JOHN

My wife wanted to. But I told her not to. She's got to get on with her life. Best if it's a clean cut. I may as well be dead.

(pause)

And it hurts too much.

(looks at Ed)

Especially if there's kids.

EXT. CABIN -- LATER

The group arrives at the cabin. It is indeed an old hunter's cabin. It looks like it was, at one time, efficiently functional (that is, not luxurious by any means, but well-kept). Now it has the appearance of having been stripped, and to some extent, trashed. For example, there is no glass or screening in the windows, there are no tools hanging where one might expect to see them, and so on.

It's about fifteen feet by thirty feet - large enough for a living room, a kitchen area, and a separate bedroom. A woodstove chimney is visible, but instead of wood stacked all neat and tidy against an exterior wall, there is a pile of odd shaped chunks near the door, many of which look too large to fit in a stove. The remains of a garden are visible at the side. There is a well (pump handle visible) nearby, and an outhouse some distance away.

There are VOICES and SOUNDS of people moving about, coming from inside the cabin.

LJ  
 (half asking, half  
 telling)  
 There's someone already here - ?

JOHN  
 Yeah, we take turns. The cabin's not  
 big enough for everyone - though  
 that's one of our projects -  
 building an addition or something -  
 so we take turns. One group lives  
 here for a week, the other lives  
 out, and then we switch.

Henry comes out of the cabin.

HENRY  
 Hey, Ed, John.  
 (nods at the others,  
 then acknowledges  
 LJ)  
 New guy. I see you're in.

LJ  
 Yeah.

HENRY  
 Okay. Welcome. A tour?

Henry looks inquiringly at Ed and John and gets an affirmative response. He leads LJ to the side of the cabin, and John and Ed tag along, where TAPPER is on his knees, working in a garden. Of all the men, Tapper looks the most comfortable with the survival-in-the-wild thing. He is robust looking, and has a beard. Tapper gets up, nods at LJ.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
 This is our garden. There's not much  
 in it - we can't exactly go buy  
 seeds. Apparently it was a garden at  
 some point in time, though, and  
 there seems to be a bit growing.  
 We're not quite sure what yet. Nor  
 are we sure what to do about it.

LJ starts to walk into it.

TAPPER  
 (in alarm, and  
 anger)  
 Hey!

LJ stops, puzzled.

TAPPER (CONT'D)

You don't make a move here without someone telling you, showing you. Not one move, d'ya hear? Do you know anything about gardening?

LJ

No, man, but -

TAPPER

Didn't think so. So you're liable to walk right over what's growing. We need what's growing.

LJ

Alright, chill -

JOHN

No, he's right. You don't do anything without permission, without guidance. We don't have a lot of room for error.

ED

Or carelessness.

Suddenly there's noise of a fight from inside the cabin. Anthony rushes in and is quickly followed by Henry.

EXT. CABIN -- MOMENTS LATER

Henry and Anthony come out of the cabin, forcibly restraining a third man, CARLOS, who's shouting and struggling. They lead him past the others - Ed, John, TJ, Tim, Biscuit, and LJ are still standing at the front of the cabin - some distance away from the cabin, then let go.

CARLOS

(shouting as he's  
being led out of the  
cabin)

I'm sick of it! We got nothin' here!  
Can't even have a smoke. And I'm  
just sick and tired of it!

(the shouting turns  
to weeping by the  
time he's let go)

All I want is a lousy cigarette. A  
hamburger. Some clean clothes.

JUAN comes out of the cabin to stand in the doorway, a broken radio in his hand.

JUAN

Well, the dishes are plastic, thank god, but our only pot doesn't have a handle anymore. And -  
(holds up the radio)

ANTHONY

(deeply  
disappointed)  
Ah, no.

ED

(looking at LJ)  
We can't afford anger either. You feel a tantrum coming on, you get the hell away from everything and everyone, you got that?

LJ nods, then speaks quietly.

LJ

You had a radio?

ANTHONY

Yeah, and the good thing, one of the very few good things here, is that it was solar-powered. So we didn't have to worry about the batteries -

LJ

Maybe we can fix it. I could -

ED

Yeah? You know about radios?

LJ

(sheepishly)  
No.

ED

Then you don't touch it. We'll wait for someone who knows what they're doing. Bound to be someone, sooner or later.

LJ

So what exactly can I do?

JOHN

Well, you tell us.

LJ looks at John, unsure if that was a challenge or a sincere question. John looks at Carlos then, who has collapsed in a heap, then he looks at Henry.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Continue the tour.

Henry leads LJ around to the back, John, Tim, Biscuit, and Anthony tag along.

HENRY

(leading LJ around  
to the back)

Here we have our livestock.

He points to two rabbits in a very makeshift cage, and a pheasant in another very makeshift cage.

HENRY (CONT'D)

The idea is that, well, you know what rabbits do best - we're hoping eventually we'll have great quantities of rabbit stew - and whatever else we can manage.

LJ

Rabbit-skin clothes.

HENRY

Well, we gotta figure that one out. You should talk to Ike. In the meantime, unfortunately, what we got here is two boy bunnies.

TIM

Hey, I didn't know.

HENRY

'Course you didn't. Not criticizing, Tim.

ANTHONY

(proudly)

Tim's the one who caught those for us.

LJ

Really?

(admiring)

All right.

TIM

Used to play basketball. Guard. I'm fast and good at zigzagging.



LJ

And the bird. Does it lay eggs?

HENRY

Well -

BISCUIT

Tim seems to have a little sexual confusion going on.

TIM

Do not!

Biscuit and Tim scuffle for a bit, looking like two brothers who really enjoy each other's company.

HENRY

Well, that's it for here. Ike's out cutting trees. Well, tree. All we have is one axe. One very dull axe. It's really hard going. Don't quite know what we're going to do with it when it's down. Be nice to have a saw, we could cut it up for firewood. There's a woodstove inside. Probably take all of us to drag it here so we can start on that addition, loghouse style, I guess.

They're back at the front of the cabin, where TJ has been lingering with Ed, Juan, and Tapper.

TJ

The well's over here.

He walks to the well, and starts pumping. He then offers LJ a drink from the cup that's there.

TJ (CONT'D)

And the outhouse is way down there.

BISCUIT

Never shit upstream. Ask Martha.

Tapper comes from his gardening to join the others.

TAPPER

So, gonna all sit for a bit before you head back?

ED

Nice try. Still can't count to seven, huh?

EXT. BUSH -- DAY

LJ and Biscuit are carrying huge chunks of wood from the bush to the cabin.

LJ  
So, what's the story with Ike - he used to be some kind of history teacher?

BISCUIT  
No, used to be some big honcho in business.

LJ  
So how'd he get here?

BISCUIT  
"Profits in excess" and "Fraudulent advertising".

LJ  
What's that?

BISCUIT  
(after a pause)  
Theft over and lyin'.

They continue heaving and grunting for a bit.

LJ  
Any idea when it starts getting cold?

BISCUIT  
Don't know exactly. But it'll be too soon whenever it is. We ain't got near enough wood to last a winter.

LJ  
And all I've got is this t-shirt.

BISCUIT  
Yeah. There's a heavy coat in the cabin. We wear that when we go outside. One at a time.

LJ stops to rest for a second.

LJ  
So what happens to Carlos?

Biscuit pauses before he answers.

BISCUIT  
He gets kicked out.

LJ  
He gets exiled?

They both try not to laugh. They don't succeed. Then they resume their task.

EXT. BUSH -- DUSK

Tim and LJ are trying to catch a rabbit. They do not succeed. Not even close.

EXT. CABIN -- MORNING

This scene is the first in a series spread out over the week at the cabin - LJ makes a rabbit cage trap.

LJ is trying to weave twigs, but they keep breaking. He becomes frustrated and snaps the remaining ones in two.

EXT. BUSH -- AFTERNOON

LJ looks for green twigs, of a different kind. He finds several, collects them, takes them back to cabin.

EXT. CABIN -- LATE AFTERNOON

LJ is again weaving twigs, and succeeding. He ends up with two pieces about one square foot each, but since the twigs are of different lengths, and he has nothing to cut them with, the ends stick out rather messily.

EXT. BUSH -- MORNING

LJ searches for more green twigs of the kind he found yesterday.

EXT. CABIN -- LATE AFTERNOON

LJ now has six squares, but realizes he doesn't know how to fasten them together into a box. He gets up and heads for bush again.

EXT. CABIN -- MORNING

LJ is fastening the sides of his box together with various grasses, weeds, reeds, finally finding something that works.

EXT. CABIN -- AFTERNOON

LJ has hinged the front piece, the door, so it swings in and out. He props the door open with a stick, and ties it to a rock he has put at the back of the cage trap. He moves the rock from through the other end, the propping stick falls over, and the door closes. He's delighted. But then realizes the door swings out easily, so the rabbit can just walk out of the cage trap.

EXT. CABIN -- MORNING

LJ adds a lip to the bottom front. This time he fastens the door open on the inside, tied to the top of the cage trap and connected to the rock. Again, he moves the rock through the other end, the door comes free of its knot at the top of the cage and swings shut. Because of the lip, it can't swing out. The rabbit will be trapped inside. LJ goes excitedly in search of Tim.

LJ

Hey, Tim!

EXT. CABIN -- AFTERNOON

Tim is with LJ in front of the cabin.

LJ

Check this out.

LJ demonstrates his rabbit cage trap to Tim. Tim is at first excited, but then he stares at it a bit, and is not so excited.

TIM

No, that won't work. Look.

Tim rigs the door again, then takes off his jacket, bundles it up to the size of a rabbit, and puts it inside the cage. When he triggers the door, it falls down on top of the jacket.

TIM (CONT'D)

The door will just come down on top of the rabbit and it'll just sort of turn and walk out. You need to make the thing longer. So the rabbit is way at the back when the door closes, yeah?

LJ sees immediately and is angry at himself for not having figured that out. His anger is immediately overtaken by fatigue.

LJ

(immensely dejected)

Yeah.

EXT. BUSH -- DAY

LJ spends all day looking for enough long twigs of the right kind.

EXT. CABIN -- DAY

LJ spends all day weaving four new, longer sides. At one point, he becomes very frustrated - too many twigs start breaking. Just before he smashes the whole thing, he gets up and walks away (as if remembering Ed's advice - or warning).

When he returns, he realizes he can use the front and back of the earlier version. He then ties them together, adds the lip, rigs the door, tries the trap. It works. He calls Tim.

LJ

Tim!

Tim comes out of the cabin.

LJ (CONT'D)

Okay, try this one.

Tim tests the trap with his jacket, though he can see at a glance it will work.

TIM

Yeah, man, you've got it.

(pause)

What are we gonna use for bait  
though?

LJ

I dunno. We got no carrots. What do  
you feed your rabbits? What do they  
like?

TIM

Well what I feed them, and what they  
like, is pretty much all around. So  
why would they go into the cage for  
some?

LJ

Right. Okay, we gotta - how about an  
apple? They wouldn't find those all  
over the place. And they might like  
it. Crunchy. Like carrots. Rabbits  
like carrots, right?

TIM

Worth a try! Only we leave tomorrow.

LJ

Well, can't we ask one of the others  
to try it out?

TIM

Yeah. Juan. He'll do it.

EXT. CABIN -- MORNING

It's switch day. The other group (Henry, Tapper, Juan, and  
Ike - who, we see now, is the oldest of the men as well as  
the one who has been in exile the longest) arrives at the  
cabin. LJ shows Juan his new rabbit trap. This is the first  
time some of the others - Ed, John, and Anthony in  
particular - have seen it. They watch with interest, and  
approval, as LJ demonstrates. Juan agrees to find a good  
spot for it, bait it, and then check it every day.

EXT. BEACH -- EVENING

The group is sitting around the fire.

LJ  
So, I was thinking -

Biscuit blurts out a laugh. LJ grins, then continues.

LJ (CONT'D)  
I'm going to the window tomorrow.

ANTHONY  
Your Mr. Morgan is meeting you there again?

LJ  
Well, maybe. We didn't exactly - but if he is, I was thinking we could ask him for stuff.

TIM  
But he can't give us nothin'.

LJ  
Not physical stuff. But he can give us information, yeah? And we need that, right?

The men are suddenly very interested.

TJ  
Ask him how to make matches.

TIM  
And something to eat besides fish.

TJ  
(nodding at John's feet)  
And shoes.

TIM  
And tv.

BISCUIT  
Yeah, write that down.

They all turn to look at Biscuit, who continues without missing a beat.

BISCUIT (CONT'D)  
Ask him how to make paper.

TJ  
And indoor plumbing.

JOHN

(sarcastically, and  
with increasing  
anger)

Why don't you just ask him how to  
make circuit boards. That way we  
could build our own computer and  
find out all this stuff on our own.  
Hey, I know. We could build a  
satellite dish. Ask him how to  
launch a satellite dish. Write that  
down.

The men are silent for a bit.

TIM

Okay, what about electricity. What's  
his name invented that back in the  
dark ages. Can't be too difficult.

John sighs.

ED

We don't have the stuff we'd need to  
make any of that even if we did know  
how. We'd need copper wire for  
electricity. Copper pipes for  
plumbing. Where are we going to get  
copper?

JOHN

(still sarcastic)

Maybe the mineralogy department of  
Princeton could come to the window  
and give us a lecture. And then the  
R & D department of Dunstable  
Mining. Hell, shouldn't take them  
too long to explain everything we  
need to know about copper mining.

ED

All I'm sayin' is we may as well ask  
about stuff we can follow up on.

The men are silent again.

BISCUIT

Ask him how to make soap.

JOHN

(dismissive)

We don't need soap - aren't we doing  
okay with sand, and swimming in the  
lake?



There is silence. They all look pointedly at John.

BISCUIT

(turns back to LJ)

Ask him how to make soap. Write that down. In the sand.

TIM

We need something special for matches?

ANTHONY

Sulfur.

TIM

Okay, what about a candle? Could we make candles?

ED

Maybe. Especially if we can make soap.

JOHN

Don't they both need lye or something?

ANTHONY

Or animal fat - we might eventually have that -

ED

What we need is information on how to live off the land. There must be plants out there that we could use in a hundred ways. Just knowing what to eat and what not to eat - we're lucky we haven't poisoned ourselves yet.

ANTHONY

And there must be ways to make some sort of shelter without bricks and plywood and fiberglass insulation, maybe even without logs, since trees are so damned hard to chop down.

LJ

So that's what you want me to ask him?

ED

Yeah. Maybe he could get a survival book from the library or something and read it to us.

BISCUIT

How are we going to remember a whole book?

JOHN

(he's come around to  
the value of the  
idea)

We'll have to get everyone there.  
Each of us can remember something.

ANTHONY

I can make little songs out of the words for everyone. Be easier to remember that way.

There is a pause in the conversation, but it's a good pause -instead of the usual mix of dejection, boredom, anger, and fatigue, there is an energy, a hope, among the group.

LJ

But how are we going to pay him? I mean, we can't, we shouldn't just take it for free, right?

JOHN

(despairing again)

Yeah, and even if we could pay, it's not like we can just hand him some money or whatever.

ANTHONY

Wait a minute. Does your Mr. Morgan like music?

LJ

I don't know, why?

ANTHONY

We can give him a concert. That should be worth, what, twenty bucks?

BISCUIT

Say what? Twenty? Baby, we are so fine. Charge the man fifty!

LJ looks at the members of Rap-a-capella.

LJ  
You'd do that?

TJ  
'Course we would. What do you take us for, a bunch of good-for-nothin' free-loaders?

EXT. THE WINDOW -- DAY

LJ walks up to the window.

LJ  
Hello? Mr. Morgan? Are you there?

MR. MORGAN  
Yes, I'm here. Is that you, LJ?

LJ  
Yeah. How're you doin'?

MR. MORGAN  
I'm doing fine, thank you. And yourself?

LJ  
Oh, well... I'm glad you came back.

MR. MORGAN  
Well, that's good. It's a long drive. I wasn't actually sure you'd be here. Wasn't actually sure I'd be here.

LJ  
Well you are, and I'm glad. Because I have a proposition to make to you.

MR. MORGAN  
Oh? What kind of a proposition?  
(a bit worried)  
I can't help you get out, you know.

LJ  
I know. I'm not asking for that.

MR. MORGAN  
Okay -

LJ  
 I'm asking, I'd like to ask, for information. We need to know stuff. There's a bunch of guys in here, and they're - we're - I'm part of them now - they're good guys, I haven't fallen in with the wrong - and we're trying to -

LJ is exasperated with his incoherence, but so much has happened to him, so much has changed, he has changed...

LJ (CONT'D)  
 We don't know stuff. And we thought that could be something you could give us. Information.  
 (rushes on)  
 But not for free. I mean, we'd pay you. We're not asking for a handout.

MR. MORGAN  
 I see.  
 (supportive, not challenging)  
 And how are you going to pay me?

LJ  
 You like music?

MR. MORGAN  
 Yes, as a matter of fact, I do.

LJ  
 Well, we'd like to give you a concert. There's a group here, they're called "Rap-a-capella" - they're really somethin' too, you should hear them. I mean even if you don't agree to this.

MR. MORGAN  
 Well, all right, I'd like to hear them. But I'll have to think about the other. I'm not sure it's - let me think about it.

LJ  
 Okay. Sure. I understand. If you come back next week, with, well, what we were thinking we need most is information about how to live off the land here -

(CONT'D)

LJ (CONT'D)

- what to eat, what not to eat, how to build a shelter without, you know, saws and nails and all the stuff we don't have. Oh, and soap. We'd like to know how to make soap. And candles.

MR. MORGAN

You need a survival guide.

LJ

Yeah. I guess that's what you'd call it.

MR. MORGAN

Well, okay, let me think on it, and maybe look around. I'll see you next week, one way or another, yes?

LJ

Yeah. Yes. Thank you.

LJ leaves. Mr. Morgan stays for a bit, staring at the wall as if trying to look through to exile, thinking.

INT. MR. MORGAN'S LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Mr. Morgan enters his living room holding a cup of coffee. He turns on a reading light by his chair, then turns on the tv, then sits in his favorite chair, setting his coffee on the sidetable near it. It is a lower-middle-class living room: there are a few newspapers on the coffee table; there is a stereo system and a shelf of CDS against one wall, and some books on a bookshelf; there are ordinary furnishings and accessories (knick knacks or whatever) in the room.

JANET, his wife, enters the room as well, carrying also a cup of coffee and some healthy snacks. She is also black, in her 50s. She sets her coffee and the snacks on the coffee table and sits on the couch.

MR. MORGAN

We should've sent out for a pizza.

JANET

We should be in our twenties again.

They settle in for a comfortable evening.

MR. MORGAN

So LJ made a proposition to me today.

JANET

That man is in no position to be making propositions to anyone.

MR. MORGAN

Well, that may be. Still. He asked if I could bring him some information.

JANET

Information?

MR. MORGAN

Well, it seems there's a group of them in there, out there, trying to make a go of it, and, well, they don't know much.

JANET

And whose fault is that?

MR. MORGAN

Oh come on. Do you know how to make soap?

JANET

Make soap?

MR. MORGAN

That's one of the things they want to know.

He gestures to the room.

MR. MORGAN (CONT'D)

Could you make a CD player? Coffee? A cup? We wouldn't be any better off. They've got nothing, Janet. No electricity, no plumbing. No tools. Not to mention books, television, computers. The fruits of centuries of civilization.

He picks up a bottle of aspirin from the sidetable by his chair, and takes one.

MR. MORGAN (CONT'D)

Aspirin, for god's sake. How are those boys ever going to invent aspirin?

JANET

They're not boys. And they should have thought of that before they turned their back on society, on the fruits of centuries of civilization.

She turns down the tv with the remote control.

JANET (CONT'D)

Someone spent seven or eight years going to classes, studying chemistry, biology, what have you, and then probably another five years experimenting, trying this and that, before they finally came up with aspirin. And then someone had to put together a company to make it. And distribute it. All so we can buy a hundred of them for a mere three dollars. You for your heart, and me for my head.

She smiles and reaches her hand over to him.

JANET (CONT'D)

Give me one of those.

She takes an aspirin with a swallow of coffee, then massages her temples a bit.

JANET (CONT'D)

Same with electricity, plumbing, television, books. Someone's put a lot of work into all those things. And your LJ should have thought of all that before he said "Fuck you!" Not once, not twice, but three times.

Mr. Morgan agrees, and yet -

MR. MORGAN

Surely they still have rights. They're human beings, for god's sake.

JANET

Are you talking about human rights? Are you saying that just because you're human, you're entitled to certain things? No siree, I don't agree with you there. Takes more than that.

(CONT'D)

JANET (CONT'D)

You have to earn rights. You want the right to borrow books from the library? You have to agree to take care of them. And even if we do have rights just because, surely they can be forfeited. You return those books all torn up, or you don't return them at all, you lose the right to borrow more.

MR. MORGAN

Yeah, but food, shelter -

JANET

You pay for it. We pay for the fruits of other people's labor. How long have you been collecting garbage to do just that? And why do you think I've been working at that damn cafeteria all these years? I swear those kids get worse every year.

She massages her temples again, before continuing.

JANET (CONT'D)

We have a right to it because we pay for it. Why should they get a free ride? Are they disabled in some way? Are they children? Are they elderly?

MR. MORGAN

You're right. But it's supposed to be exile, not punishment. And if all we're saying is 'Hey, make your own society,' well that's exactly what they're trying to do. And isn't trade between societies acceptable?

JANET

What have they got to trade?

MR. MORGAN

(sheepishly)

Well, they say they're going to give me a concert. Be worth twenty bucks.

She snorts - the things her husband gets up to!

JANET

And in return, you'd what, read to them from some survival book.



MR. MORGAN  
That's the plan, yes.

She looks over at him warmly - he has a good heart, god bless him.

JANET  
Okay, but why you? You don't owe this LJ anything.

MR. MORGAN  
Don't I? I keep feeling that if I'd said something to him - I saw that boy twice a week for all of his twenty-three years.

JANET  
He had a father. And a mother. And teachers. And rehab. I'm sure someone did say something to him. More than once. More than twice. He just wasn't prepared to listen.

MR. MORGAN  
Well, he's prepared now.

JANET  
Well it's a little too late now.  
(changing direction)  
Do you even know if it'd be legal?  
How'd you find out about this window anyway?

MR. MORGAN  
Fellow at work. His younger brother was exiled. He visited him at this window a couple times but then the kid just stopped showing up. Feared the worst, of course.

EXT. CABIN -- MORNING

It's switch day. Ed, John, Anthony, Tim, TJ, Biscuit, and LJ approach the cabin. LJ quickly notices his rabbit cage trap by the door, all in splinters. He stomps toward the door.

LJ  
Hey! Juan!

Juan comes out of the cabin and LJ gives him a shove.

LJ (CONT'D)  
 What gives you the right?

LJ gives Juan another shove.

LJ (CONT'D)  
 Took me a whole week to make that!!

By now the others are closer.

ED  
 Hey!

Ed stares at LJ as if daring him to lose it and take a swing at him.

TJ and Biscuit hustle LJ away from the others.

BISCUIT  
 (in a bored British  
 accent)  
 And here just past the palatial  
 ballroom, next to the multi-media  
 entertainment center, we have the  
 time-out room.

JUAN  
 (calling out to LJ)  
 I didn't do it, man!! Why would I?  
 Think! I set it like you said, and  
 when I went out to check it the next  
 day, it was all bust up.

TIM  
 So someone else found it. Took the  
 rabbit and broke the trap to bits.

LJ  
 (still angry)  
 But why? That doesn't make any  
 sense! Why not just take the rabbit?  
 A week! I spent a whole fucking week  
 making that thing!

ED  
 (under his breath to  
 John)  
 Oh my. A whole week. Friend of mine  
 had his dissertation wiped out by  
 some stupid kid's email virus. Three  
 years he'd spent on the thing.

JOHN

Give him a break. Probably never spent a whole week working on anything before.

ED

Yeah. You're right. Still.

LJ's still stomping around in anger.

JOHN

He didn't keep a back-up?

ED

He did. Never checked it. Turns out the disk was defective.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- AFTERNOON

Biscuit and Tim are out collecting firewood. They hear a HELICOPTER.

BISCUIT

What the fuck?!

They start to run toward where it seems to be planning to land, over the next rise. As they get to the top of the hill, they see several people already at the spot. Tim wants to run right up close, but Biscuit holds him back.

BISCUIT (CONT'D)

Hey, think. They're sure as hell not comin' to get us. And there might be trouble. So we may as well stay here.

TIM

But -

BISCUIT

Sssh -

The helicopter lands, and the motor turns off, but no one gets out. Some of the men walk closer to it.

HELICOPTER GUARD#1

(speaking from  
inside with a male  
Scandinavian accent)

Please stay back from the helicopter. I repeat, please move away from the helicopter.

The helicopter guard seems to wait until the men stop approaching and the closer ones step back

HELICOPTER GUARD#1 (CONT'D)

Thank you. Is there a Dr. Arnold Morrison here?

The gathered men look at each other. Then one, Man #10, steps forward.

HELICOPTER GUARD#1 (CONT'D)

Please stay back from the helicopter!

Man #10 steps back.

MAN #10

Yeah. He's not here now, but I've seen him around. Newcomer, right?

HELICOPTER GUARD#1

Tell him we will be back in one half hour. He must be here in one half hour, yes?

MAN #10

Take me at least that long to find him.

There is a pause as the people inside the helicopter confer.

HELICOPTER GUARD#1

One hour. We will be back in one hour.

The helicopter takes off. Man #10 looks around him for a moment in confusion, surprise, or indecision, then heads off at a run.

TIM

The others are going to want to hear about this!

Tim and Biscuit start running back toward the cabin.

EXT. CABIN -- LATER

Tim and Biscuit run up to the cabin, calling out.

TIM

Anthony! John!

BISCUIT

Hey, anyone here?

Anthony comes running out of the cabin in alarm, Ed and John come from around the back.

TIM

There was a helicopter! It landed and two guys came out asking for a Dr. Morrison.

ANTHONY

A helicopter? Landed here in exile? Are you sure?

Tim looks at him.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

(rushing on)

Of course you are. Sorry.

ED

Well isn't that a precedent.

JOHN

Who's Dr. Morrison, anyone know?

ED

Actually, yeah, I heard from one of the others about two new guys. One's a governor. Ex-governor. Got caught rigging his election. He'd already been caught accepting illegal political contributions and awarding contracts to his friends. The other one was this doctor. In, or out, for doing abortions. Or euthanasia. One of those sanctity of life crimes. So-called crimes.

JOHN

So who were the guys in the helicopter? Were they Americans?

BISCUIT

I don't think so. Had an accent. Something European, I think.

ED

Maybe Denmark or Sweden is willing to accept Dr. Morrison into their society. Well, well, it does happen.

TIM

If they find him. They said they'd be back in an hour. We gotta find this Dr. Morrison and let him know!

ANTHONY

Hang on, why do you have to find him? You don't even know him.

TIM

(to Ed)

Do you know where he is?

ED

Sorry, last time I saw him was days ago.

BISCUIT

Well, I'm going back anyway. See what happens. Anyone coming?

JOHN

Hell, yeah. I'm curious too.

ANTHONY

(mostly to Tim)

Keep your distance! John - ?

JOHN

Yeah.

Biscuit, John, and Tim head off. Ed goes back to the back of the cabin, and Anthony goes back inside.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- LATER

Biscuit, John, and Tim are lying on the hill at the helicopter site, safe at a distance. There are several men, many more than before, gathered near. John is intent on watching what unfolds, but he listens in to the conversation between Tim and Biscuit.

TIM

(to Biscuit,  
responding to what  
he said earlier)

Why wouldn't they come for us? I mean, I ain't so bad, am I?

BISCUIT

If you were a society, would you  
welcome someone who just took stuff  
all the time without paying?

John grins to himself at Biscuit's comment - the lads are  
a 'learnin'!

TIM

Maybe.

Biscuit looks at him as if to say "yeah, right."

TIM (CONT'D)

Maybe if I'd had the money, I  
would've paid for it.

BISCUIT

And why didn't you have the money?

TIM

I didn't have a job.

BISCUIT

(by this point, it's  
clear Biscuit is  
talking to and about  
himself as much as  
to and about Tim)  
And why didn't you have a job?

TIM

Couldn't find one.

BISCUIT

(after a pause)  
Chucky Chicken's always hiring.

TIM

(admitting)  
Yeah. But at what they pay, take me  
forever to get what I want.

BISCUIT

(wailing like a  
baby)  
And I want it NOW!!

Tim laughs.

TIM

What was it you wanted so bad?

These next two bits are the only sober moments for Biscuit in the whole movie.

BISCUIT

Y'know -  
 (disgusted with  
 himself)  
 I don't even remember.

TIM

Couldn't've been that important to you.

BISCUIT

Nothin' was important to me.

TIM

(after a pause)

There's a lot of guys collecting unemployment and what do you call it, benefits - 'oh my back hurts' - why don't they get a job at Chucky Chicken too?

John grins again - good question.

They hear the HELICOPTER approach and see it land. Again, no one gets out.

HELICOPTER GUARD#1

Please stay back from the helicopter. Do not approach the helicopter without permission. If you do, you will be shot. We do not want to do this, but we will. Is Mr. Arnold Morrison here?

One of the men raises his hand; he is clearly out of breath.

DR. MORRISON

I am Dr. Arnold Morrison.

HELICOPTER GUARD#1

Please step forward and show your ID at the window.

Dr. Morrison pulls a wallet out of his back pocket and shows the guard his ID, through the window. The people inside the helicopter confer and make a decision.



HELICOPTER GUARD#1 (CONT'D)

Dr. Morrison only, please. Everyone else, please do not approach the helicopter. I repeat that we will shoot.

The helicopter door opens and two armed guards (#1 a man, #2 a woman) get out. They motion Dr. Morrison into the helicopter. While he is getting in, a man runs toward the helicopter.

MAN #11

If you take him, you take me too! We all want out of here!

HELICOPTER GUARD #2 shoots him. Just like that. Dr. Morrison hesitates, horrified, then continues to get into the helicopter as gestured by Guard #1. The helicopter takes off.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- DAY

LJ, TJ, Biscuit, Tim, Anthony, Ed, and John are at the window. Mr. Morgan is on the other side; he has brought a lawn chair and he has a book in his hand. His car is parked nearby.

LJ

Hello? Mr. Morgan?

MR. MORGAN

LJ?

LJ

Yeah. You came.

MR. MORGAN

I did.

LJ

And -

MR. MORGAN

And I have a book with me -

The men cheer.

MR. MORGAN (CONT'D)

I don't know how much of it will be useful to you, but -

ANTHONY

Thank you, Mr. Morgan. I'm Anthony.  
And there's Tim here, and TJ, and  
Biscuit - we're Rapacapella - and Ed  
and John, they're here too.

MR. MORGAN

All right.

ANTHONY

Now we thought we'd give you your  
concert first, because once you  
start reading, we're going to have  
to concentrate on remembering what  
you read. Is that okay with you?

MR. MORGAN

Yes, that's fine.

ANTHONY

All right. This first song, you  
might know it, it's called "In the  
Still of the Night".

They start singing a rap/acapella version of the song.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- LATER

Mr. Morgan applauds.

MR. MORGAN

That was truly exceptional. I thank  
you, gentlemen. Really. It's a shame

-

(he stops in  
midsentence)

I guess I'd better be starting my  
end of the deal. I've marked a bunch  
of spots - I think you'll like this  
first one. Dandelion coffee.

BISCUIT

Coffee!!

(to Anthony)

Gimme that one!

MR. MORGAN

Apparently you take dandelion roots,  
you all know what a dandelion looks  
like, I imagine, well you wash and  
scrape the roots.

(CONT'D)

MR. MORGAN (CONT'D)

Then you dry them by a fire until they're black. Don't let them touch the flames though. Then you cut them up and grind them. I guess it'll end up like coffee grounds. Then, well, it says you use one teaspoon per cup of water.

ANTHONY

Okay. Mr. Morgan, if you could just wait a minute - I'm going to turn each bit of information into a bit of song, so it's easier to remember. Hang on -

(thinks for a moment, then sings to Biscuit, to the tune of "I'm a Little Teapot")

"Dandelion roots get washed and scraped; then you let them dry by the fire 'till black; then you cut them up and grind them good; here you go, your coffee, Mac!"

Biscuit wanders off to the side and sings his "I'm a Little Teapot" - he does the 'handle' and 'spout' gestures, then adds washing, scraping, cutting, grinding (moving his hips in a circular motion?) - he's having a silly time, and the group, previously daunted by the task ahead, lightens.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Okay, we're ready for the next bit.

MR. MORGAN

All right, now, I didn't find a soap recipe I thought you could use, but there's a plant called soapwort. Apparently you can boil a handful of leaves or roots in a pint of water and get a lathery liquid.

ANTHONY

And does the book describe it? Is there a picture?

(to others)

Anyone know what soapwort looks like?

The men all shake their heads.

MR. MORGAN

Well it says it's got a single  
flower with five five pink petals,  
and the leaves are green, shiny and  
spear-shaped.

ANTHONY

(after a pause,  
maybe humming  
fragments that ago  
nowhere)

I'm having trouble with that one...

ED

I'll take it. Gotta ton of case law  
in my head, one's Soap vs Regina, if  
you can believe it. May as well get  
some use out of it. I'll just add a  
couple notwithstanding clauses...

(to Mr. Morgan)

"Notwitstanding five pink petals and  
shiny, green, spear-shaped leaves -  
the defendant did on the night in  
question boil a handful of leaves in  
a pint of water" - yeah?

MR. MORGAN

You've got it.

JOHN

(muttering)

Gotta find another pot.

MR. MORGAN

Okay, this next one...

EXT. THE WINDOW -- LATER

The others - Henry, Tapper, Ike, Juan, and DICK, a newcomer  
apparently accepted by the cabin group - have arrived and  
are standing around, waiting their turn.

The process continues with Mr. Morgan reading a bit, Anthony  
turning it into something memorable, then presenting it to  
the next waiting man.

MR. MORGAN

Well, this is just miscellaneous, I  
guess. Stuff that's good - dandelion  
juice is apparently rich in minerals  
and vitamins.

(CONT'D)

MR. MORGAN (CONT'D)

And fresh green spruce needles also have vitamin C - you chew on the needles or boil them in hot water, making a tea. And then there's a list of stuff that's poisonous -

ANTHONY

Hang on, give me a minute.

Dick is waiting next in line.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I'm all outa songs, man, try this one as a nursery rhyme -

(in a singsong voice)

"Go and gather fresh green spruce,  
Chew on the needles or make a tea;  
Or you can drink some dandelion  
juice; Both are rich in vitamin C."

Dick just nods and wanders away from the group.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Hey, wait a minute. Stay here and say it to yourself - five times to be sure you've got it.

DICK

I ain't no school kid. This is shit.

Dick spits on the ground.

TIM

Hey! Do it! He knows what he's doing. Taught me a lot of stuff.  
(looking at Anthony)

TIM (CONT'D)

Only reason I didn't learn half of it was my own damn fault.

Anthony nods, accepting the praise and the apology.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- LATE AFTERNOON

MR. MORGAN

Well, that's about it. The rest of this doesn't seem to apply to this part of the country. And well, it's getting late -

ED

Yeah, we're about full anyway. And we've got to get back before dark. Thank you, Mr. Morgan.

The others chime in their heartfelt thanks.

MR. MORGAN

Oh you're quite welcome. And thank you once again for the concert. I'll leave you then, I confess I'm a bit eager to get back, the 400 is on tonight -

(he stops in  
midsentence)

TIM

(suddenly realizing)

The Olympics! We're missing the Olympics.

LJ

Shit! I'm gonna miss my man Jaheel do the 100 in under 9.

TIM

Under 9? Man, no one's done it in under 9 -

LJ

Yeah, but Jaheel, he's gonna do it this year, I can feel it. Say Mr. Morgan, when the 100 is on, could you tape -

There is an awkward silence all round.

JOHN

Good-bye, Mr. Morgan. And thanks again.

EXT. CABIN -- MORNING

It's switch day. LJ, TJ, Biscuit, Anthony, Tim, Ed, and John arrive at the cabin for their turn. There's no one about. This is odd.

JOHN

(calling out in some  
concern)

Henry? Tapper? Anyone home?

John enters the cabin, then yells.

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

In here!

The others rush in.

INT. CABIN -- MOMENTS LATER

Tapper is lying on the couch, obviously in some distress, sweaty and shivering.

TAPPER

Water! So cold!

JOHN

Get him some water!

TJ runs out to the well. John feels Tapper's forehead.

JOHN (CONT'D)

He's burning up.

Ed in the meantime has gone into the bedroom.

ED

Juan and Henry are in here. Henry's  
-Henry's unconscious. Juan's  
delirious.

ANTHONY

Ike. Where's Ike?

TAPPER

Dead.

JOHN

What happened?

Tapper doesn't respond.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Tapper - ? Tapper!

TAPPER

Don't know -

He drinks all of the water TJ has brought to him. TJ goes back out for more.

TAPPER (CONT'D)  
Just suddenly. Sick.

JOHN  
Was it something you ate maybe?

TAPPER  
No. Nothing new.

JOHN  
Anyone get bitten by something?

TAPPER  
No.

ANTHONY  
Could be contagious still. Tim, out  
of here. All of you - don't come any  
closer.

Tim, Biscuit, LJ, and TJ leave the cabin.

JOHN  
We gotta bring the fever down.

ED  
Too bad we're not at the beach, we  
could just throw them into the lake.  
(shouting out the  
door to TJ)  
TJ, fill the pail and leave it at  
the door.

EXT. CABIN -- MOMENTS LATER

TJ runs back to the well, fills a pail that's sitting  
nearby, then returns to the cabin door and sets it down. He  
hangs around nervously near the cabin door with Tim,  
Biscuit, and LJ.

INT. CABIN -- MOMENTS LATER

John gets their only towel, soaks it in the pail, and then  
covers Tapper with it.

Ed takes off his shirt and soaks it in the pail.



ED

Anthony, why don't you get out too.  
No point in all of us getting  
exposed.

He wrings out his shirt, then takes it into the bedroom to  
Juan and Henry.

ANTHONY

Ike. We gotta find Ike.

EXT. CABIN -- MOMENTS LATER

LJ, TJ, Tim, Biscuit, and Anthony are standing out front.  
John and Ed come out of the cabin. Anthony moves away,  
taking Tim with him. Tim doesn't resist.

ANTHONY

No offence, man.

ED

None taken. Good idea.  
(to the others)  
Keep your distance.

They look expectantly at John, and Ed.

JOHN

It's not working. They're getting  
worse.

ED

Fever. Chills. Thirst. What else?  
Notice any rash?

John shakes his head.

ED (CONT'D)

Me neither. Not food, they said. And  
not rabies or distemper or whatever.  
What then?

JOHN

(he walks in a  
circle of  
frustration and  
desperation)  
We don't know. We don't know  
anything! We're just a bunch stupid  
- !

ANTHONY

Okay, so we find out. LJ. When are you meeting your Mr. Morgan again.

LJ

Actually, it's supposed to be today.

ED

Today? I thought it was day before switch.

LJ

It used to be. Remember I always left early from here so's I could be at the window. But last week he asked if he could change it from Saturdays to Sundays.

ED

Well, how were you going to -

LJ

I hadn't figured it out yet. An' I forgot, okay?

Ed throws up his hands in disgust and walks off a ways.

ANTHONY

Take two hours to get back to the beach, then two hours from there. What time do you meet?

LJ

Noon.

John looks at his watch.

JOHN

It's nine now, he'll never make it.

BISCUIT

He can go the diagonal. Might do it in three hours.

JOHN

The diagonal?

BISCUIT

Yeah, instead of going back to the beach and then over, you take, like, the hypotenuse of the triangle.

LJ

But I don't know -

BISCUIT  
 (to Ed, John, and  
 Anthony)  
 I'll go with him. I know the way.

JOHN  
 Yeah? You can make it in three  
 hours?

BISCUIT  
 Well, we can try. Anyone got a  
 better idea?

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- MORNING

Biscuit and LJ are sprinting through open country.

EXT. BUSH -- LATER

Biscuit and LJ are jogging through bush.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- LATER

Biscuit and LJ are jogging through open country.

EXT. ROAD TO WINDOW -- LATER

Biscuit and LJ arrive, almost walking, at a road. Biscuit is  
 completely exhausted.

BISCUIT  
 (looks at his watch)  
 It's 11:30. And it's at least  
 another five miles. We're never  
 going to make it.

LJ  
 Five miles just straight on this  
 road? And then I'm at the window?

BISCUIT  
 Yeah, but -

LJ  
 I can do it.

BISCUIT  
 (disbelief)  
 That's six minutes a mile, man!

LJ  
 (a little uncertain)  
 I know.

BISCUIT  
 After what we just did?

LJ  
 (with resolve)  
 I can do it.

BISCUIT  
 (encouraging,  
 cheering him on)  
 All right. Go, man! I'll catch up.  
 Do it!

LJ takes off at a near sprint.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- NOON

LJ arrives approaches the window, completely winded, but  
 calling out -

LJ  
 Mr. Morgan! Mr. Morgan?

There is no answer.

LJ (CONT'D)  
 (louder)  
 You there? Don't go! Mr. Morgan?

MR. MORGAN  
 LJ?

LJ  
 They're sick. Ike's dead. You gotta  
 help. We need to know what to do.

MR. MORGAN  
 Slow down. Catch your breath. You  
 ran all the way here?

LJ

Didn't want to miss you. It's important. We need to know, could you please find out for us, we need to know how to bring down a fever. They're all sick. We don't know what it is.

MR. MORGAN

Could just be the flu or something.

LJ

Ike's dead.

MR. MORGAN

Ah. Sorry. Food poisoning?

LJ

No. And not rabies or anything - no one's been bit. They're hot, but cold, and thirsty, Henry's in a coma or something, and Juan's delirious. Happened quick. Or they would've come to the beach.

MR. MORGAN

Okay, okay. So yes if you can bring down the fever, maybe they'll recover. I see.

LJ

Do you know how to bring down a fever?

MR. MORGAN

Well, our daughter had a fever once. We gave her Tylenol, I believe.

LJ

(desperately,  
angrily)

We ain't got no Tylenol!

MR. MORGAN

No, of course not. Sorry. I see where you're going, there must be some plant or something that does the same thing. Someone should know. Some natural medicine, naturopath, or something.

LJ

I can't pay now. But I will. I promise. I'm not askin' for a handout, I'm not trying to get something for nothing. I'll pay.

MR. MORGAN

Yes, I'm sure you will. I believe you. You'll stay here? I'll be back as soon as I can.

LJ

Please hurry. I'll be here.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Morgan gets into his car and drives off quickly on an unpaved road in open, empty country.

INT. INSIDE MR. MORGAN'S CAR -- MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Morgan is driving along an old highway now, as fast as is safe, deep in thought. The VOICE of the car's automated system suddenly interrupts his thoughts.

CAR'S AUTOMATIC SYSTEM

The gas tank is almost empty. Please fill up. The gas tank is almost empty. Please fill -

Mr. Morgan flicks a switch that turns off the automated warning. Then he slams his hand on the steering wheel and looks at the gas gauge. He starts looking for a gas station.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- LATER

LJ looks anxiously down the road, but doesn't see Biscuit.

EXT. GAS STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Morgan pulls into a gas station on an empty stretch of the highway. GAS ATTENDANT #1 (female, Hispanic) and GAS ATTENDANT #2 (male, white) are lounging nearby, but the moment he pulls in, they approach his car.

MR. MORGAN

Just fifty bucks please, I'm in a  
bit of a rush.

GAS ATTENDANT #1

Yes sir!

Gas Attendant #1 starts putting gas into the tank; Gas Attendant #2 cleans his windshield. The tank is quickly filled with fifty dollars' worth of gas; Gas Attendant #1 takes the fifty dollar bill Mr. Morgan has ready, and Gas Attendant #2 steps away from the windshield. Mr. Morgan quickly drives away from the station.

EXT. FURTHER ALONG THE HIGHWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Mr. Morgan drives along the highway for a bit, then comes to a sign announcing "Treville, Pop. 3,000." He slows as he enters the town and carefully looks at the houses and buildings lining the highway that has become the main street. He sees what he wants, and stops in front of one - it's a post office. Around the side is a door, marked by a sign "Treville Public Library." Mr. Morgan gets out of his car and enters the library.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- LATER

LJ looks down the road again, but again, doesn't see Biscuit.

INT. TREVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY -- MOMENTS LATER

The library is one room in the basement of the post office: there are books lining the walls and on shelving making three short aisles in the room; there is also a magazine display, a children's storytime corner, and a computer station. Mr. Morgan walks up to the circulation counter. The LIBRARIAN is a middle-aged white woman.

LIBRARIAN

Hello, may I help you?

MR. MORGAN

Yes, I hope so. I'm looking for some information. I'm trying to find out what plants, what wild plants, will bring down a fever.

LIBRARIAN

Oh, I'm sure we have some field guides or survival-in-the-wild books that will have that information for you.

She begins to direct him to one of the aisles.

MR. MORGAN

(implying that he'd like some help finding the books)  
I'm afraid I'm in a bit of a hurry -

LIBRARIAN

Oh, in that case, perhaps a computer search would be best. Bill -

BILL, a young black man, comes to the counter from one of the aisles where he has been shelving books.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

Bill, could you please help this gentleman do a quick computer search?

BILL

Sure.

He leads Mr. Morgan to the computer station.

BILL (CONT'D)

What are you looking for?

MR. MORGAN

Wild plants that will bring down a fever.

BILL

Okay...  
(he enters the information)  
Looks like there's almost fifty -

MR. MORGAN

Can we narrow it down a bit somehow?

BILL

Well, are you interested in any particular state?

MR. MORGAN

Yes, this one - this very area, in fact.



BILL

Okay...

(he keys in)

Well, that leaves us with ten. Some don't come into bloom until late summer -

MR. MORGAN

Okay, good, you can eliminate those.

BILL

So we have seven left. Oh, that one's pretty -

He points to the screen, which displays a purple flower.

MR. MORGAN

(surprised)

I know that one. Bergamot. Mrs. Emerson - a friend of mine has that in her garden, I think.

BILL

You're right. It says it's wild bergamot. Rather common. Now this one

(he points to the screen)

...says this one's rare.

MR. MORGAN

Could we eliminate those? If we just stick with the ones that are easy to find, how many are there?

BILL

Well...that brings us down to four. The wild bergamot, willow, wild licorice, and lemon verbena.

MR. MORGAN

Four's good. That's good.

BILL

You want me to print this out?

MR. MORGAN

Yes, please.

BILL

Pictures, descriptions - do you want the 'what to do with it' part?

MR. MORGAN

Yes, please.

BILL

And what about the 'explanations of how it works' -

MR. MORGAN

No, that you don't need to print.

BILL

Okay...done. Here you go.

Bill takes four sheets of paper from the printer and hands them to Mr. Morgan.

BILL (CONT'D)

You can pay at the counter - twenty-five cents per page.

MR. MORGAN

Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Morgan walks back to the counter, pays the dollar, and leaves.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- LATER

LJ trots about a mile down the road to look beyond a curve, but there's still no sign of Biscuit. He's torn between going further to find Biscuit and turning back to be at the window when Mr. Morgan returns. He trots back to the window.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- AFTERNOON

Mr. Morgan pulls up to the window and gets out of his car with the four sheets of paper. LJ is there waiting.

MR. MORGAN

LJ? Are you still there?

LJ

Mr. Morgan? Did you find something?

MR. MORGAN

Well, I don't know. There are a few possibilities, I've got pictures, but of course you can't see them. Let's see, there's wild bergamot - do you know what that looks like?

LJ

No.

MR. MORGAN

Okay, well it says it's about three feet tall, it's got purple flowers, looks like a sea anemone - you know what that is?

LJ

Yeah, all octopussy sort of.

MR. MORGAN

That's it. You grind the plant to a powder and rub it over the body.

LJ

Okay, what else?

MR. MORGAN

Well, then there's willow bark. You know what a willow tree looks like?

LJ

Yeah, that one I know.

MR. MORGAN

Good, okay, it's the bark you want. You make a tea.

LJ

Okay, anything else?

MR. MORGAN

Yes, two more. Wild licorice. I guess that'll smell like licorice. It looks, well it's about four feet high, it says, it's got dark green leaves, and yellow and white pea-like flowers. Grows in ditches and near slow streams.

LJ

(in desperation)

I'm not going to be able to remember all this!

MR. MORGAN

Yes, you can. Let's go back. What was the first one.

LJ

I don't remember!

MR. MORGAN

Looks like a sea -

LJ

Like a sea monster. A purple sea monster.

MR. MORGAN

How tall?

LJ

Four feet?

MR. MORGAN

Close enough probably. Three feet. And what do you do with it?

LJ

Make a tea - no, you rub the flowers -

MR. MORGAN

You grind the plant and rub the powder over the body. Say it all.

LJ

Purple sea monster, three feet tall, grind the plant and rub it, rub the powder over the body. Okay. I think I've got it.

MR. MORGAN

And the second one?

LJ

That was the tea - willow bark tea.

MR. MORGAN

Good. Okay, and the third one was wild licorice. Maybe this'll help. Picture a piece of black licorice like you might've had as a kid, yeah? Okay, now put dark green leaves on the black licorice, got it? Okay, now add teeny pea-sized yellow and white flowers. There, and make the thing four feet tall, growing in a ditch. A four foot tall piece of licorice with dark green leaves and little white and yellow flowers. Got it?

LJ  
Yeah, it looks stupid -

MR. MORGAN  
Well that's not actually what you'll be looking for, you understand -it's just to help you remember what kind of leaves and flowers wild licorice has. I imagine it'll smell like licorice. That might help.

LJ  
Okay, what do we do with it if I find it?

MR. MORGAN  
Okay, this one you can make a tea with the roots, or chew the roots. I guess that'd be quicker, maybe stronger. Have your sick people chew the roots while you're waiting for the water to boil. Okay, one more. Lemon verbena. Smells like lemon, again dark green leaves, again tiny flowers but this time mauve and white. And again, make a tea.

LJ  
Make a tea. Okay.

LJ starts to head off.

MR. MORGAN  
Wait! Are you sure you've got it all? Say it back to me.

LJ hesitates, then returns.

LJ  
Three feet tall purple sea monster - tea. Willow bark - grind it and put the powder -

MR. MORGAN  
No, the purple sea monster gets ground to a powder. Say it again.

LJ  
Purple sea monster - I haven't got time!

MR. MORGAN

But it'll all be for nothing if you get it wrong! Concentrate! Three feet tall -

LJ

Three feet tall purple sea monster - grind it to a powder and put it on the body.

MR. MORGAN

Right.

LJ

Willow bark tea.

MR. MORGAN

Right.

LJ

Licorice - four feet tall, dark green leaves and yellow white flowers -

MR. MORGAN

The licorice roots get chewed - like real licorice, yeah? - or made into a tea.

LJ

And the last one was - I can't remember!

MR. MORGAN

Another one you can smell -

LJ

Lemon! Lemon something. Dark green leaves again, tiny flowers again, but mauve and white. Tea.

MR. MORGAN

Okay, once more.

LJ

Three feet tall purple sea monster, grind the plant to a powder, put it on the body. Willow bark tea. Licorice - four feet tall, dark green leaves and yellow and white tiny flowers - chew the roots or make a tea. Lemon something - dark green leaves and mauve and white tiny flowers - tea.

MR. MORGAN

Okay, I think you've got it. Keep saying it, and look for the stuff as you go. Good luck, LJ.

LJ takes off down the road, muttering and running.

EXT. THE ROAD TO THE WINDOW -- AFTERNOON

LJ runs back along the road, muttering to himself, and looking down at the ground, in the ditches, for the plants described by Mr. Morgan.

Suddenly he stops, scrambles down the ditch, to Biscuit's body. Biscuit is beaten pretty badly, his shoes and most of his clothing are gone, and his Daffy Duck watch is smashed.

LJ

Biscuit? Say something, man!

LJ understands that he's dead.

LJ (CONT'D)

(he wails)

NO!!

LJ starts crying, as he looks around desperately. He doesn't have time to bury him - he doesn't have a shovel in any case - and there aren't many rocks around to cover him up. He picks him up, sets him carefully over his shoulder, then climbs back out of the ditch. It's hopeless to try and carry him all the way back, plus it would just slow him down, but he can't just leave him there.

Suddenly he hears others in the distance, WHOOPING WITH WAR CRIES. They're coming closer. He tenderly but quickly sets Biscuit down, back into the ditch, a little hidden at least. He gives him one last look, takes off his smashed watch and puts it in his pocket - then runs like hell.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- AFTERNOON

LJ has outrun the beaters. He's obviously exhausted, but he's still running, still repeating the information, still looking. He has a bunch of weeds and plants sticking out of his pockets.

EXT. BUSH -- LATER

LJ is still moving, still mumbling, still collecting plants. His pockets are full; he has taken off his shirt and tied it into a bag, which is bulging, which he carries in one hand. He has a bunch of uprooted plants in his other hand, more or less fitting the descriptions given by Mr. Morgan.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- AFTERNOON

LJ suddenly realizes he doesn't know where he is. He begins to panic, but then sees some landmark in the distance - a striking tree. He has gone a couple miles off course. He begins to run again, toward the landmark.

EXT. CABIN -- LATE AFTERNOON

LJ staggers toward the cabin. TJ, Tim, Anthony, and John are out front, anxiously waiting for him, looking for him. When they spot him, they run out to meet him, all talking at once.

ANTHONY

Hey, LJ -

TJ

Did you make it in time?

JOHN

You've got something?

LJ puts his hand up to quiet them, collects himself, then speaks very clearly and pointedly to each one in turn, but they all listen to each bit intently.

LJ

(to Anthony)

Four feet tall purple sea monster,  
grind the plant to a powder, put it  
on the body.

ANTHONY

Got it.

LJ

(to TJ)

Willow bark tea.

TJ nods.



LJ (CONT'D)

(to John)

Licorice - three feet tall, dark green leaves and mauve and white tiny flowers - chew the roots or make a tea.

John nods.

LJ (CONT'D)

(to Tim)

Lemon something - dark green leaves and yellow and white tiny flowers - tea.

Tim nods.

LJ hands to John what's in his hands. Then he starts to empty his pockets and t-shirt bag, but fumbles. TJ rushes to help him. Soon everything is laid out on the ground, and John begins to sort it somehow.

TIM

(quietly)

Where's Biscuit?

LJ just looks at them helplessly.

ANTHONY

No. No.

LJ

I went on ahead at the road, he told me to, he couldn't keep up. We had only half an hour left, it was five miles -

TJ

They beat him bad?

LJ nods.

TJ (CONT'D)

FUCK this place!!

INT. CABIN -- LATER

Tapper is chewing on what is hopefully wild licorice.

John is boiling water in their only pot (without a handle) on the woodstove. He sets out two cups, and puts some willow bark in one and some lemon verbena in the other.

Ed makes a powder out of what is, he hopes, wild bergamot; he looks at it dubiously, then takes it into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Ed rubs the powder on Henry's chest - he is still unconscious.

INT. CABIN -- MOMENTS LATER

John gives one of the cups to Tapper, then takes the other into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

John helps Juan, who is barely conscious, drink from the cup.

EXT. CABIN -- LATER

John and Ed carry Henry's dead body out of the cabin and lay it beside Ike's.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- LATER

TJ and Tim search for more plants that fit the descriptions. They find some and take them back to the cabin.

INT. BEDROOM -- LATER

Ed has become sick and is now lying in the bedroom where Henry was.

EXT. CABIN -- LATER

John and Anthony carry out Juan's body, and lay it beside the bodies of Henry and Ike.

INT. CABIN -- LATER

Tapper is sitting up on the couch, apparently recovering.

INT. CABIN -- LATER

John is making more tea at the woodstove.

EXT. BUSH -- LATER

TJ and LJ find a willow tree and strip it of as much bark as they can.

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY -- LATER

Anthony and Tim find more wild licorice.

INT. BEDROOM -- LATER

John has become sick; he's taken Juan's place in the bedroom.

EXT. CABIN -- LATER

Anthony and Tim carry out Ed's body.

INT. CABIN -- LATER

LJ makes the tea, gives it to John.

EXT. CABIN -- DUSK -- LATER

Anthony comes out of the cabin, carrying Tim's body. He walks to where the other bodies (Ike, Henry, Juan, and Ed) are lain. LJ, TJ, Tapper, and John walk behind him; all are weak, exhausted.

Still holding Tim (he can't let him go yet), Anthony sings. So pure. So expressive. An anguished lament, but so beautiful it takes your breath away (the solo vocal equivalent to Barber's "Adagio"). He tenderly sets Tim beside the others. LJ steps forward and puts Biscuit's watch in one of Tim's hands. They all stand. Silent.

EXT. THE WINDOW -- DAY

LJ is at the window.

LJ  
Mr. Morgan?

SHANE, a young, white punk in his late teens, is on the other side.

SHANE  
He ain't here. You LJ?

LJ  
Yeah. Who are you?

SHANE  
The trashman -

LJ  
(cuts him off)  
- Mr. Morgan.

SHANE  
(pauses)  
The trashman sent me. Said we should talk.

LJ  
(puzzled)  
What for?

SHANE  
Yeah, that's what I'd like to know.

LJ begins to figure it out.

LJ  
You've done rehab?

SHANE  
Yeah that was a joke.

LJ  
And you've been in prison?

SHANE

Yeah, just got out yesterday. So I don't know what I'm doin' here.

(pauses)

Look man, why don't you just tell me whatever it is he thinks you know - oh, and he said something about payment - a "hard payment" - that mean anything to you?

LJ realizes now that making Shane understand everything he has now come to understand, essentially saving his life, is how he will pay Mr. Morgan for having saved his life (and the lives of the others who survived).

LJ

(after a heavy  
pause)

Yeah.

FADE OUT

THE END