

CRASHDOWN

by

WH Clark

CRASHDOWN

FADE IN:

OPENING CREDITS - WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA - DAY

The Appalachians. Streams. Mountain vistas. Rural farms. A lake surrounded by mountains. Fishermen on the lake.

EXT. RURAL MOUNTAIN HOUSE - HILLSIDE BELOW - HIGH NOON

A two-story hillside home. Sunny autumn afternoon. Glimpses of a lake a block away.

TRUCK (65, fit, faded blue eyes, buzz cut) works in the yard. Dark sunglasses. Threadbare jacket. Nepal Sherpa (tassels, earmuffs). It's brutally cold outside.

Truck BUZZES the steep hillside with a GAS TRIMMER. He's wearing sound-proofing HEADPHONES.

There's a SONIC BOOM. Truck looks up. Doesn't see a SHOOTING STAR arc across the sky, CRASHING on a mountaintop a few miles away. He grabs a RAKE and starts RAKING LEAVES.

LATE AFTERNOON

Sweating from RAKING LEAVES, Truck takes off his jacket. Peels up the ears of his Sherpa. A radio blares from a window on the hill above. CLASSIC ROCK AND ROLL. The NEWS cuts in:

RADIO NEWS (V.O.)
Highway 129 across the Tennessee
Mountains including The Dragon will
be closed until this time tomorrow.
The U.S. Forest Service is doing a
controlled burn.

Truck stops raking. Looks north. Toward the mountains.

Smoke rises from a distant mountaintop in the BREEZY air. Bright blue sky. Scattered clouds. Truck scratches his chin growth (with patches of white).

TRUCK
We haven't had a lick of rain for
two months. And they're starting a
forest fire? With this wind?

WOP. WOP. An ARMY HELICOPTER flies directly overhead. Heads for the smoke. Lands. A second chopper lands from the North.

TRUCK (CONT'D)
The Army doesn't do forest fires.
(quietly)
And I don't do the Army.

Shivering from a gust of cold air, Truck gets back to work.

He puts HEADPHONES on. Fills a large plastic bag. Feeds the leaves into an ELECTRIC SHREDDER to make mulch. WHIRRRRR.

LATER

AMALIE (24, Norwegian, female, trim, attractive) scurries down the steep hill from the house above. She's wearing tennis shoes, athletic clothing, and a hiking backpack frame.

Amalie has to YELL above the noise of the electric shredder.

AMALIE
Hello. I am lost. Mister?

Truck doesn't see her. He keeps on working.

Amalie THROWS a BRANCH at his feet.

Truck looks up, paranoid - brief terror on his face. He stares at her. He uses a remote to turn off the radio in the house above them.

TRUCK
Ouch, forgot. Sorry to disturb.

With a distressed face, Amalie points fingers to her ears. Truck pulls the earphones off. She steps closer.

AMALIE
I am Amalie. Lost. Can you please
give me a direction?

TRUCK
Ask your smartphone. G.P.S.?

Truck turns his back to her. Finishes feeding the shredder. He glances up. She's still there. He turns the NOISY MOTOR off.

She's distraught. He's suddenly wildly paranoid.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Hey. I didn't hear your car in the driveway. How did you get here?

AMALIE

I have no vehicle and as you can see, I am on two painful feet so please just point me to the nearest civilization and I will go away.

Truck grabs a rake and starts RAKING again. The more persistent she is, the more FORCEFUL and RAPID his racking.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

They closed the Appalachian Trail. And then I have come on a rusty old bicycle, along many mountain miles to be here and now talking.

Mumbling to himself, Truck rakes circles around her. Quizzical, she turns around to face him as he circles.

TRUCK

I heard it on the news. Idiot Forest Service. Stupid Army. No wonder this world is going to hell in a handbasket.

AMALIE

I am a young woman and unschooled in your language and in distress and with no cell reception and you are being so rude and dizzy to me.

He stops. RAKES her tennis shoes. She scoots backward.

TRUCK

One more long sentence without punctuation and - and I'll stop being - nice.

AMALIE

If this is your nice, I would not like to see your unpleasant.

She acts hurt. A little desperate. Afraid he'll run her off.

TRUCK

Just leave me alone, lady. I've got a lot of ground to cover before six dark thirty.

AMALIE

My name is Amalie. I come from
Norway but well not directly more
like starting in Maine and then
down the whole Appalachian Trail.

Truck glares at her. Eyebrows furrowed. Lips pursed. Intense.

TRUCK

Amalie Longstory. You held me up
from my chores. Grab a utensil and
help me rake up for lost time.

Amalie takes her backpack off. Sets it down. Stretches.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Well? Snap to it, girl. This isn't
a yoga class. Chop-chop.

AMALIE

Then - I will be - staying for the
night? Food. Shower. I will work to
pay for my room and board. Please?

TRUCK

Not at this rate you won't. Come
nightfall, the coyotes will have a
feast on you.

Eyes wide, a little panicky, she pushes up her sleeves. Grabs
another rake to help him. He swipes it away from her.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Hands off the rake.

AMALIE

But you only just told me to -
(quietly)
Are you wrong in the head, mister?

TRUCK

Call me Truck. And - and, it's un-
neighborly, to make you work,
tuckered out as you seem.

AMALIE

Your kindness, it makes me want to
run away and scream to the wolves.

Truck stares at her, real hard. Then he smiles. Chuckles.

TRUCK

They'd take one bite and spit you
out. Too salty.

Truck scoots away to rake more leaves. She grabs a trash bag, holding it until he's ready to fill it with leaves. She studies him carefully.

AMALIE

I see now, how you are nervous, and
then how raking these leaves copes
away the stress.

TRUCK

My name is Truck. T.R.U.C.K.

He glances at her briefly, then rakes even HARDER. Amalie scans the environs, standing near him so she can talk quietly. Her fists are clenched at her side.

AMALIE

Remote house in a tiny Smokey
Mountains village, grumpy and rude
with threadbare clothes, a
bachelor. Have I observed well?

Truck stares at BLOODY BLISTERS on his palms. Briefly, his hands are DRENCHED IN BLOOD. He talks toward the ground.

TRUCK

I don't cater well to - stress. I
see things. Bloody things.

AMALIE

I am a psychology major. Does this
upset you even worse still, now
being observed by my trained eyes?

Very carefully, Amalie kneels. Starts filling the bag with leaves. He helps push them into the bag.

TRUCK

Don't need a therapist, Mrs. Emily.

AMALIE

It's Miss and Amalie and everybody
needs therapy because even I have
the necessity to confront the evils
of my past although sometimes I -

TRUCK

Leave my past where it is, dammit.

Truck grabs the bag and returns to the shredder. Turns it ON. She watches as he FEEDS leaves into the shredder, making them into a fine mulch.

LATER

Truck HOISTS a bag full of mulched leaves over his shoulder. Heads up the hill toward his home and an outside deck.

Truck points at the rake - she muscles her backpack on, grabs the rake, and hustles behind him up the steep hill.

AMALIE

I do not like people to invade my private headspace either, and I wish not to intrude on yours, but can you please slow down?

Truck stops briefly, catching his breath after lugging the heavy trash bag up the steep hillside. She stands nearby.

TRUCK

My stress tolerance is zero. Things happen. Hallucinations. Bad ones.

AMALIE

It is good for you to recognize your limited stress capacity, but you seem also to fear me, and I ask why because this baffles me.

TRUCK

Army. Forest fire. The interrogation. Little Miss. Persistent. Bears, bears, everywhere.

Truck HOISTS the bag over his shoulder. Struggles up the steep incline. She follows alongside him.

AMALIE

I offer you a chance to take this terrible burden off your unworthy shoulders.

TRUCK

Wasn't a burden at all. Not until you came along. To horror back my memories. I was doing just fine.

They reach a deck below the house, and he mulches low-lying bamboo shrubs near a downspout from the roof.

AMALIE

You are a careful gardener, with plantings at the roof down-funnel because bamboos love water that way and all the extra mulch. HMMMMMM.

TRUCK

I wish they had more sunlight, but
they're doing okay. Wish I could
say the same for me. So not okay.

They climb through railings onto a small deck. She scurries
ahead and stands in his way:

AMALIE

You need to confront your demons so
then your stress goes down and
maybe you can have a life after -
(quietly)
After the little death.

TRUCK

I've spent the last twenty years
confronting that - abomination.
(sotto voice)
Writing books. Building websites.
Meditation. Nothing works. Dammit.

AMALIE

The subconscious is a superman
fortress, and you lack a force of
will but I come with authority. Who
is not afraid of a cute little
Goldilocks in the forest?

Amalie smiles wide. His expression fades to grim.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

All of your bamboo plants are very
healthy. Makes me think of home.

TRUCK

My neighbors complain. They say
bamboo is a pest. Invasive.

AMALIE

I get that a lot, too.

Amalie scoots a deck chair into the deep shade, as he mulches
bamboo shrubs.

She's wary, hyper-alert - eyes darting. Danger lurking in
every shadow. He sees this - stops. Stares until she becomes
uncomfortable, eyes downcast.

TRUCK

Look who's paranoid now.

AMALIE

The Big Bad Wolf is very observant.

Suddenly upset, she hurries ahead, up stairs -

TRUCK

Wait. Don't step there -

Amalie steps on a step - and it BREAKS. Her FOOT FALLS THROUGH up to her calf. She can't get it out. Truck watches her struggle, a wry smile on his face.

AMALIE

You enjoy seeing the young therapist struggle, don't you? Payback.

TRUCK

I've been meaning to fix that step. Hang on. I'll go get my tools.

Exasperated, she watches him set up a sawhorse and lumber.

AMALIE

All this way and I become trapped by a goddamn redneck Hillbilly.
(to herself, hoarse)
I am not going to be paranoid. Deep breath. Calm breath.

TRUCK

Food and lodging? Got some moldy bread I'm saving for the raccoon. Sleep on the deck out here.

Her head SNAPS over to study (paranoid) a stay BEAM OF SUNLIGHT glaring off one of Truck's tools.

AMALIE

I have survived on worse, very much worse, as a child, and the famines.
(quietly, very hoarse)
Eating vermin to survive. Bugs. Digging worms out of the moist soil with my little-girl fingers.

TRUCK

I've got my fair share of fond adolescent memories. I dare you.

AMALIE

I would make your life a nightmare.

He measures the step, cuts a length of a board, then uses a prybar to WRENCH the rotten wood away. EMMIE (Amalie speaking with a GROWLING RESONANCE in her usual voice) mutters:

EMMIE

On the run. Barely evading road
blocks. Army rangers. Blood hounds
on my scent. Only to be trapped. By
Wile E. Coyote's sun deck.

Amalie WRENCHES her foot, but it's stuck. She HEAVES, the
foot comes out - she careens backward onto the deck.

TRUCK

Wait - stop. Don't even -

Amalie steps on a rotten section of the deck. Several boards
collapse. She FALLS THROUGH up to her knees.

Her feet are stuck in the mud. She's unable to get free.

EMMIE

Let me go, mister. I will not give
up. You will have to kill me.

TRUCK

Sure, whatever you say, lady. As
long as I got the tools out, might
as well fix that, too

Truck pulls a stack of boards out from under the house. She
grabs the crowbar and starts TEARING ROTTEN BOARDS out of the
deck. She helps as he SAWS new boards and NAILS them down.

AMALIE

(quiet, tentative)
You - you have pet raccoons?

TRUCK

I leave kitchen scraps every night
under the deck there. They've been
disappearing every night for years.
Tracks - raccoon feet.

Truck points at muddy paw prints on the deck. Amalie reaches
over to feel the paw prints. Scuffs the dried mud into a
light dusting. Relief burning into her features.

AMALIE

All is okay for me now. I see he
has a heart after all.

TRUCK

Sure I do. For animals.

AMALIE

What about innocent young girls?

Amalie holds boards so he can nail decking into place.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
I really do need your help and
desperately so because I am in the
worse way.

Truck stares at BLOOD BLISTERS on his palms. Brief glimpse of
DEEP WOUNDS on his wrists gushing BRIGHT RED BLOOD.

TRUCK
Last time I helped a lady in
trouble I ended up on a psych ward.

AMALIE
I am sorry that happened but I
understand now why you were so
reluctant to help me, and this
makes me feel less upset.

Amalie watches a wave of hazy sunlight move toward her - then
she relaxes as the sunlight warms her with its glare.

TRUCK
You're no hiker. The weight of that
backpack damn near knuckled you
under, coming up the hill.

Truck watches her squirm. Struggle for words.

AMALIE
With all the hiking and cycling and
excitement I am just very tired.

TRUCK
Hiking with a U.S. Forest Service
backpack? How did that happen?

He steps close, glaring at her suddenly terrified face:

AMALIE
I confess better on a full stomach.

Truck grabs her backpack, studying its markings.

TRUCK
No, wait. This is Army Rangers. Got
any idea why they would show up for
a piss ant forest fire?

She closes her eyes as clouds open up for a bit of direct
sunlight, but then - a deep gloom settles over the land.

AMALIE

Oh, my. The wolf has keen ears.

TRUCK

There are lots of second homes, for
rich folk down in Atlanta. You
coulda broke in and lived high on
the hog. Why me? Here? Now?

This takes her back. She has to think about it.

AMALIE

(quietly)

I was hoping a cranky old loner
would be so flattered by the
attention of a hot chick that he'd
zoom and miss all the tattletales.

Truck sweeps the deck clean. Puts the sawhorses into an
adjacent screen porch - starts to gather his tools together.

A CHURCH BUS stops on the road above his house. A CROWD OF
KIDS exits. Sounds of EXCITEMENT and THRILLS.

TRUCK

Oh, hell. I forgot it's Halloween.

The KIDS scurry to a neighbor's home. SCREAMS reverberate.

KIDS (O.S.)

Trick or treat.

Truck grabs an armful of tools. He bolts up the stairs.
Amalie grabs her backpack and hurries after him.

INT. TRUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The space is open. Large windows. Rustic furnishings. Many
bookcases. Barnwood floors. Horizontal-slat wood paneling.
Stylish light fixtures. A gourmet kitchen. Giant island.

Through the windows: Streaks of fading sunlight, over the
mountains in dark silhouette.

Truck and Amalie BURST through the front door. Truck dumps
his tools on the dining room table. He searches everywhere.

TRUCK

Costumes. We need costumes. Hurry.

Truck yanks open a drawer. Pulls out an assortment of
eyeglasses (sunglasses, safety goggles, reading glasses).
Puts the glasses on a GIANT WOODEN ISLAND in the kitchen.

Amalie scans the kitchen. Spots a bowl of rubber bands on a high shelf. Grabs different color rubber bands. Puts her hair into two little-girl ponytails.

AMALIE

They are riding in a school bus?

TRUCK

In a rural community like this, houses are too far apart. Lots of retired folks don't want a bunch of rowdy kids showing up.

Amalie spots a pair of synthetic mirror sunglasses. Picks them up - POPS THE LENSES OUT - puts them on.

AMALIE

So you signed up for this event, a grumpy Appalachian hermit with a soft spot for happy children?

TRUCK

Best night of the year. Hurry, lady. They'll be here soon.

Amalie drifts into a utility room opening off the kitchen.

UTILITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amalie eyes an assortment of hats on hooks covering one wall - puts on a Humphry Bogart hat - glances out the window.

TRUCK (O.S.)

You scared of kids or something?

AMALIE

Only because kids see things.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Truck grabs a wicker basket. Heads into the kitchen.

TRUCK

Go. Stall them. Entertain them. Scare them. I'll be out with the goodies in a second.

Amalie grabs several SHARP TOOLS (backpack still on her back all this time) and - bolts out the front door. Truck rifles through the kitchen cabinets, putting treats into the basket.

EXT. TRUCK'S HOME - NIGHT

A DOZEN KIDS (colorful NATIVE AMERICAN outfits) and a female ADULT CHAPERONE (cowboy sheriff costume) in Halloween costumes are gathered around a yellow, 2-door Jeep Wrangler in the driveway. Staring at the license plate.

TALL BOY

I told you. He's a hundred percent disabled veteran. See the D.V. license tags?

CUTE GIRL

My Daddy did his landscaping. Said he helped dig holes and do bricks. Said he wasn't one bit crippled.

ADULT CHAPERONE

Some veterans are mentally disabled.

FAT BOY

Like, crazy mad? Talk about scary.

The kids back away from the car, suddenly afraid of it. Amalie approaches - sharp knives and tools in her arms. The kids gather around her.

CUTE GIRL

Who are you supposed to be?

EMMIE

I am a hungry ghost. I am looking to feast on young flesh.

They look at Amalie - see her rusty old road bicycle by the door, and BREAK OUT LAUGHING.

CUTE GIRL

Folks around here drive Harleys and Ducati racing motorcycles.

TALL BOY

That's not rust on the frame. It's - it's fire damage. You came up here from - from H - hell?

ADULT CHAPERONE

(frightened)

The wildfire earlier today. They said. A fugitive. A young woman.

The kids shut up when Amalie waves her knife in their faces.

ATHLETE BOY

I heard your accent. You're an
illegal alien. On the run.

Amalie steps closer, getting angry (they step back a little).

AMALIE

I speak better English than you,
young track star.

CUTE GIRL

Where's Truck? He makes us cookies.
He always writes funny stories in
the paper about alien invasions.

EMMIE

He does. Does he? We'll just have
to set the record straight. Yes?

Amalie steps up to the CUTE GIRL (Native American princess)
and grabs her by the collar - knife at her neck.

CUTE GIRL

Well, yeah. Mr. Truck's crazy all
right. But he's a funny kind of.

Other kids gather around close, egging Amalie on.

ATHLETE BOY

He knows things. About Roswell. The
government conspiracy. About
Majestic Twelve. Way back then.

EMMIE

I had people at Roswell. What does
he know?

Amalie grabs the ATHLETE BOY by his SUPERMAN collar. Lifts
him off his feet. The adult female YELLS:

ADULT CHAPERONE

Take it easy, lady. They're just
kids.

FAT BOY

Butt out, Mom. This is OUR day.

The FAT BOY pushes the ADULT CHAPERONE rudely back, away from
the action, then turns to watch as the ATHLETE BOY struggles
to get out of Amalie's grip.

AMALIE

And you believe him? A blood-
thirsty, raving schizophrenic?

ATHLETE BOY
That's why he's disabled?

AMALIE
Killing animals. Pregnant mothers.
Insolent childrens - just like you.

ATHLETE BOY
We've seen too many horror movies
to be frightened. Sorry. Ma'am.

Amalie points to the adult chaperone.

AMALIE
She is frightened and very.

Amalie takes her glasses off. Gives them the evil eye.

TALL GIRL
You're a gray alien? Gonna kill
Truck for revealing the truth?

AMALIE
If the government doesn't lock him
away first.

CUTE GIRL
They already tried that. He escaped
from the Army's pinko psych ward.

AMALIE
I will just have to send him back
there, now won't I - and drive him
all over crazy again.

FAT BOY
As an example? To all the other
U.F.O. whistleblowers?

Amalie grabs the chubby boy by the shoulders. SHAKES HIM.
He's terrified of her genuine fury.

AMALIE
You think it will work?

FAT BOY
Stop. Wait. I won't say nothing.
Honest I really won't.

The front door opens into a pitch-black interior.

Everybody stares as a figure emerges. Armed to the teeth (safety goggles, floppy Nepal Sherpa hat with the ear flaps up). Brandishing SHARP TOOLS. Carrying a basket stuffed with goodies.

FAT BOY (CONT'D)
Treats. Yes - I knew Mr. Truck
would come through for us.

The kids rush toward Truck. He hands out granola bars. Healthy snacks. Apples. Their enthusiasm evaporates.

FAT BOY (CONT'D)
Where's the candy? Chocolates. I
need my sugar high.

The cute little girl munches on a granola bar.

CUTE GIRL
This is yummy. Very excellent.

The other kids open their treats and chow down. They're just finishing up - to see Amalie stalking toward Truck, knife at the ready. Anxious to wreak vengeance.

AMALIE
You swore eternal loyalty and to
never tell the world about aliens.

Truck tosses the wicker basket aside. He gets a saw. A giant butcher knife. He kicks over her bike.

TRUCK
Who's afraid of a Wo Fat assassin
from Planet Zyklon B? On two flame-
roasted Wheels from Hell? Sounds
like a bad drive-in movie.

Amalie winds up and throws a KICK at him. He barely ducks her angry foot. The kids gather around to watch them square off.

EMMIE
This is what you do behind my
spine? Insult my heritage? Poison
the minds of these fine young kids?

Amalie points toward the kids. They nod their strong agreement.

TRUCK
I fought in Vietnam to stop you
alien bastards. Bitching to avenge
the dead and wounded ever since.

Truck lunges toward her with the butcher knife.

AMALIE

I do not go without a fight.

Amalie yanks her backpack off. Springs open a hidden panel on the bottom. Out pops a PISTOL.

TRUCK

Who me? Afraid of a water pistol?

Amalie sees a DARK SHADOW (dressed in all black) on the road behind Truck with something SHINY in his hands.

Amalie FIRES TWO SHOTS toward the DARK SHADOW.

Truck freezes. A PTSD look of horror on his face. Military crouch, hyper-aware.

Amalie turns: the kids are still there, munching their health bars, completely nonplussed.

EMMIE

This is where you run away. Child.
Scared. Out of your little wits.

CUTE GIRL

My Daddie hunts ducks. With a
double-barrel, pump-action shotgun.

The DARK SHADOW steps up to join the trick-or-treaters: some big kid in a Ninja costume. Twirling nunchucks.

TALL GIRL

Who's afraid of a nine-millimeter
Centurion Beretta?

FAT BOY

Been shooting a bear rifle since I
was knee-high to a bullfrog.

Amalie is flabbergasted. She stares at the female chaperone, who just shrugs.

ADULT CHAPERONE

I try. We all do.

AMALIE

Whatever happened to B.B. guns and
air pistols?

The KIDS DIE LAUGHING, as the lady chaperone corrals them back to the bus. They climb in.

Truck and Amalie wave as the bus leaves. Truck grabs a health bar and chows down.

Truck offers the basket to Amalie. She grabs one and snacks, too. They lean on the Jeep Wrangler. Stare into the night.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

Bunch of fine young cannibals you have for neighbors.

TRUCK

I hope you have a concealed gun permit. That tall girl's Daddy is the Graham County Sheriff.

AMALIE

But, officer, I didn't know the safety was off and they are only rubber bullets, officer sir.

Amalie hands the gun to Truck. He pulls out the magazine and pops out a - rubber bullet.

TRUCK

Now you can't threaten to blow my brains out with a headshot if I refuse to spill my guts out.

EMMIE

There are forty-eight more ways to coerce in our counter-espionage handbook. Some violent. Most not.

TRUCK

Should you be telling me this?

AMALIE

None of those subvert protocols work on schizophrenics and so I will have to wing it from here.

TRUCK

Damn kids.

Truck steps over to pick up a candy wrapper. She grabs another. They chat while picking up the litter.

AMALIE

They tell me you're an alien conspiracy fanatic.

(quietly, Emmie)

This is gonna be fun.

Truck stares down the road as the KIDS converge on another home.

TRUCK

They usually hang around longer.
Got cookies in the oven. Why did
Mrs. Hagan rush them away?

AMALIE

Can I put my bicycle inside because
the kids, they seemed to recognize
it.

Truck heads for the house, holding the door open - pointing
to her bicycle. She wheels it inside.

INT. TRUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Truck steps inside, pointing her to a small utility room off
the kitchen. She rolls the bike in there.

AMALIE (O.S.)

It's not at all what you're
thinking.

Amalie exits the utility room. Truck's in the kitchen.
Filling a tea kettle. He puts it on the gas stove. Lights the
burner. She sits on a stool at a LARGE ISLAND, facing him.

TRUCK

Yeah. About that backpack. That
bicycle. That revolver.

Truck fixes tea. Hands her a mug. His hands SHAKE and he
SPILLS HER TEA. She takes his hand to calm it.

EMMIE

Alone? On the Appalachian Trail?
For months on end? Afraid. Seeing
danger in every shadow. Even a
shadow dressed in Ninja costume.

TRUCK

(quietly)

Thinking it was an Army Ranger
chasing your ass down.

They sip quietly. They look up as OSCAR (chubby female cat,
one eye) HOBLES across the living room to eat at her bowl in
the foyer next to the dining room table. Truck whispers:

TRUCK (CONT'D)

That's Oscar. She's crippled. Hind legs don't work so well. Made steps so she can get up the counter.

Truck points at small carpeted steps leading up to the top of the kitchen island. Amalie nods her head, smiling - whispering:

AMALIE

After all that drama, it is almost a relief to see a physical infirmity. Awww, poor kitty.

They watch as Oscar hobbles away and disappears into an adjacent room. LITTER BOX SOUNDS.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

You are right and I should not be here drinking your white tea and invading your privacy.

Resolved, Truck moves around the island to her side.

TRUCK

Where's my manners? A long bike ride here, chores in the yard - you'll want to get cleaned up.

She opens up her backpack - it's full of firefighting tech.

AMALIE

I have no clothing because I was so frightened by the fire, I picked up the wrong backpack and ran.

TRUCK

I'll find you something clean to wear. Come. Please.

AMALIE

Your hands are shaking but I am not here to cause you so much distress so perhaps it is best for me to -

TRUCK

Get cleaned up? Hit the hay? Sleep tight? So you can be gone at dawn?

MAIN BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He heads toward where Oscar went. They tiptoe past a king-size bed where Oscar's grooming herself and into the bath.

MAIN BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amalie stares at an antique clawfoot bathtub draped with blankets and throws on the sides and bottom.

TRUCK

Oscar sleeps there.

Amalie picks up a colorful TEDDY BEAR off the side of the tub. Hugs it to her chest.

AMALIE

I think you must not approve of those young redneck children learning to hunt bears.

TRUCK

Can't imagine their folks would give them teddy bears to cuddle asleep at night.

(quietly)

Too bad. Bears are really smart. Resourceful.

AMALIE

I despise the rednecks driving around in pickups with cages for hunting dogs in the bed and a platform for dead bears, as if it was a blood sacrifice to Jesus.

TRUCK

Don't get me started, lady.

Truck shakes his head angrily. Gives her clean towels and a washcloth. Opens a de lux glass shower-stall door.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Soap. Shampoo. Take all the time you like. I'll just go clean up in one of the downstairs baths.

Amalie collapses on a chair by the counter; just collapses. Truck steps into a closet on the far side of the bath and emerges with pants and a shirt - points her that way.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Grab a shirt, sweatpants - whatever you like in the closet.

(sudden concern)

You okay, there? Would you rather the tub? I can take all that out.

Amalie shakes her head and favors him with a tired smile.

AMALIE

I am just weary and now that you
have put a name on it, my darkest
fears have come to past for me, to
see my extreme danger thusly
through young, innocent eyes.

TRUCK

Well, at least you're back to
talking in nonsensical run-on
sentences.

Truck exits and pulls the barn door gently closed (slatted wooden panel on a trolley rail above), and disappears.

MAIN BEDROOM - LATER

Truck (fresh clothes, barefoot) slips into the room. Peers through the barn door: into the bathroom. He KNOCKS quietly, then eases the door open.

MAIN BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amalie sits in the same chair, wearing the same soiled clothing. Her eyes are closed, hands clasped in prayer.

TRUCK

You okay there? Hello.

Amalie opens her eyes, squinting - a little startled.

AMALIE

A million apologies because I grow
weary and my back hurts for some
unknown reason and I just do not
know where I am anymore.

Amalie stands up, starting to disrobe - Truck scoots out.

LATER

Amalie steps out of the steamy shower. Wraps a towel around her torso. Glances aside:

She sees Truck through the slats in the barn door. Reclining on the bed, eyes closed. Amalie opens the door and confronts him, hands-on-hips angry.

AMALIE

What is this?

Truck startles. Sits upright on the bed, bashful.

TRUCK

I - I didn't see nothing, if that's
what you're thinking.

AMALIE

Waiting for her services?

TRUCK

Of course not. I - I - just wanted
to hear you in the bathroom.

(quietly)

Showering. Busy noises. To remember
back when. When. I had a girl.

AMALIE

Just to be close to somebody who
cares and who does not judge.

(gently)

Yes, this I can well understand, so
okay, you can stay put.

She steps back into the bathroom. The door remains open. Seen
in silhouette through the slats, she showers.

Amalie steps out of the shower. Vague. A light fog of steam.
Toweling dry. She hears Truck GASP, sucking in his breath.

TRUCK

You're bleeding.

Grasping the towel to her chest. Amalie leans over. Looks at
her groin. No blood. But DROPS on the floor. At her feet.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Not there. Your back.

Amalie gets in full light. Turns to see her back in a mirror.
Truck sees clearly for the first time: BLOOD along her spine.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Oh, God. Excuse me, but I'm running
away here.

Truck hurries from the bedroom. Amalie closes the slat door.
Desperate. Frantic. Afraid. Wets the towel. Pulls it across
her back.

LIVING AREA

Truck's at windows. Staring. He fights a nervous tremor.
Wrings his hands. BLOOD SEEPS from blisters on his palms.

Amalie eases into the room. Curls up on a big leather sofa (facing the hearth). Twisting her hair into nervous braids.

AMALIE

It is a rash because I suffer ivy allergies and left untreated, blood festers, so with all the excitement I forgot to apply the treatments.

(quietly, soothing)

I understand how paranoia has put strange ideas into your head and I see how you are struggling.

TRUCK

At least you can control - what comes into your head.

Anxious for something to do with his hands, Truck steps over to the heart. Opens the opposing glass doors. Builds a fire with crumpled paper. Cardboard. Kindling. Logs on top.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Deep breath. I see blood. I saw blood. But it's not real. It's an hallucination. Sure it was. That's what schizophrenia is. A horror.

Truck lights the fire with a match. Feeds it with paper.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Whenever my stress maxes out I see blood. Didn't mean to frighten you.

Amalie stares into the fire. Fighting inner terrors.

AMALIE

I retrieved the incorrect backpack and do not have my rash meds.

(quietly)

The bleeding will continue, both the real and the imaginary.

Eyes wide. Biting her lip. Amalie backs from the FIRE. Horror in her face. She SCREAMS but nothing comes out.

TRUCK

Oh, hell. The fire. You were trapped. In a wildfire. Trapped.

Amalie breaks out in tears. Rises from the sofa. RUNS to the front of the house. (Open living/dining/kitchen/foyer area.)

FOYER

Truck stands quietly behind Amalie, who's kneeling at a WOODEN PRAYER BENCH, rocking gently, humming.

Amalie glances back and sees him, then stands up with a brave smile on her face: resolve shining through a shower of tears.

AMALIE

In Norway, fires are very warm and comforting and you were kind to -

Amalie gets her gumption back and, arms-crossed angry says:

AMALIE (CONT'D)

What is this offensive display?
This is not the man I just met.

Amalie points to a grand painting of SALOME AND THE HEAD OF JOHN THE BAPTIST by Lovis Corinth (severed head on a platter, his dead eyes staring at her generous breasts) above the prayer bench. There's a very old Bible on the prayer surface.

Amalie indicates the Bible, then the artwork.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

I see a religious man. But not so much, with big teats overlooking.

TRUCK

Oops. Feel my own head on a platter right about now.

Her hands go impulsively across her sternum.

EMMIE

Please do not panic. I am here for you. Do - does the sight of a woman's bosom relax you?

Amalie points toward Salome - Truck stares at the artwork, visibly calming down.

TRUCK

I can't think of a better way to die, eyes focused on plump breasts.

Eyebrows up, Amalie fingers the Bible. Opens it up. Admires the full-color artwork.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

That Bible is a hundred fifty years of family to me.

(MORE)

TRUCK (CONT'D)

The rest of it is - history. Drama.
Struggles, to find purpose and
meaning.

Amalie pages through the illustrations. Fascinated. With
reverence. Awe.

AMALIE

So you believe in the unknown and
the unknowable and the supernatural
big unknown stalking.

TRUCK

It belonged to Grandpa Howard. He
was an Irish Catholic. Emigrated
from Cork County Ireland. They damn
near crucified him. Evil heathen!

Truck stares at his bloody palms, willing the hallucinated
blood to go away, leaving just a few raw blisters in their
wake.

AMALIE

(quietly)

The most Orthodox of Catholics?

TRUCK

Not hardly. He was Clan O'Cleary
one of three Druid ruling classes.
(proud)

We're the antiquarians, the keepers
of history. The storytellers.

AMALIE

This gives me hope.

Amalie studies the room. Steps out. Surveys the living area.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

I did not expect so many layers of
culture, style, the complex depth.
(angry surprise)

Full stop and forget that because
he has a bed in the living room.

Amalie stands over a rustic frame of logs and limbs. Layers
of pillows. Set up like a sofa.

Suddenly anxious, Amalie points toward a large porch outside
double glass doors opening off the living area:

AMALIE (CONT'D)

Can we go outside because it is warm inside here for me and I must have steamed too long with so much filth to remove inside and out.

Truck flips a wall switch. Lights inside CEILING FANS on the porch come on to illuminate the porch in a SUBTLE SHIFTING AMBIANCE. They step through the glass doors.

UPSTAIRS SCREEN PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Amalie stands at the threshold: Another double bed to the right. Rustic table and chairs to the left. A stone hearth.

Screens on all sides look out on a heavily forested hillside - like you're in a treehouse.

AMALIE

More this lusty subtext.
(sotto voice)
Not too subtle with your subconscious desires are you?

TRUCK

Didn't have room in the rest of the house when I moved in. The cats love that bed. So, I left it there.

Amalie sits on the bed. Surveys the serene nature-scape. It's dark, but lights from the porch project onto shadowy trees.

AMALIE

My family lived close to nature. Very elemental and this brings me back to difficult memories. Sometimes nature is kind but others cruel. You balance them nicely.

TRUCK

How did you get here, anyway? I - I saw the Bicycle from Hell. Wouldn't ride that contraption if I was running from Lucifer himself.

AMALIE

I found it at a ranger's station cast off and thrown away.
(quietly)
I felt an immediate empathy for it.

Amalie sighs with deep contentment. Then suddenly she's alert, looking around - relaxes as Truck sits nearby in a wicker chair.

TRUCK

You remind me of the Hell I left behind to escape here. I thought for sure the demons would never find me here. And here you are.

Amalie climbs up on the bed. Props herself into the deep pillows. Deep sigh of relaxation.

EMMIE

I begin to understand this bed now. So quiet here. Tranquil. All this - ambiance. It keeps the outside world far. So far away.

A giant cat BEVO scurries out of the living room, and looks at Truck - Amalie - JUMPS onto the bed and into her arms, PURRING very loud.

Amalie scratches the cat. Bevo HOWLS VERY LOUD and cuddles closer. Amalie is perturbed.

AMALIE

How is this cat so loud, or -
(quiet, afraid)
Is my hearing going bad?

TRUCK

No. She's deaf. Meet Bevo the cat. She showed up in the middle of a freezing snowstorm a few years ago. HOWLING at the front door.

EMMIE

(quietly)
Ahh. She cannot hear herself.
Like master, like cat.

Bevo curls up on Amalie's lap, pawing for attention - which she gets. Truck sits at a small round table, facing them.

AMALIE

I have exhausted all my resources in money, time, and even patience.

Amalie squirms in the bed, as if her back was bothering her.

TRUCK

There's an Urgent Care place in town. An all-night pharmacy, too.

AMALIE

I have nothing with which to pay.
(quietly)
Not that anything they could do
would help me.

Truck stares at a GLOBE and finds NORWAY on the map, the U.S.

TRUCK

Your folks could wire you funds.

AMALIE

They are light years away, so
please allow a lady to dream of
being Salome with a following and a
friend, for a few precious minutes.

There's a gust of cold wind. Amalie shivers. Truck gets a
heavy wool blanket out of a cabinet. Drapes it over her.

TRUCK

Hot shower. Cold wind. You'll catch
triple pneumonia. Dehydrated? I
made some fresh lemonade earlier.

AMALIE

Can you heat it up real hot and add
some spices maybe cinnamon, please.

Truck heads back inside.

Amalie stands up. Drapes the blanket around her shoulders.
Sits at the table - just as Truck returns with two large mugs
of steaming beverage. He hands her one.

Amalie warms her hands on the mug, taking small sips. Truck
lights the gas burner in a FIREPLACE INSERT next to the
table. He sits down. They watch the fake logs turn red.

TRUCK

Grampa Howard came here from the
Old Country, the Highlands. Very
similar climate. Lots of rain. Cool
summers. Remote. Forgotten.

EMMIE

My native lands are similar. In
mountains. Bamboo houses. Bamboo
furniture. Pandas. Like your little
black and white Oscar cat.

Truck studies her face in the firelight.

TRUCK

Bamboo in Norway? Pandas? It's like there's a whole 'nother you inside.

AMALIE

My - my childhood bedroom in Oslo, full of things to make me think of warm tropical weather while it is winter eight months each year.

Truck indicates a shelf nearby with many REVOLUTIONARY WAR titles. An authentic BETSY ROSS American flag.

TRUCK

Grampa Howard married Ida Erb. She had Swiss roots. Came before the Revolutionary War. Erb Family Bible downstairs. Founded the Mennonites.

AMALIE

So your other family side are righteous evangelicals, which is how disappointing.

TRUCK

Sure they were. Then the Civil War started. Half joined the Yankees. The other half the Confederacy.

AMALIE

This warms my heart.

Amalie studies an odd menagerie of distorted figurines on a massive log-shelf above the hearth: wooden, glass, metal.

She starts to pick one up. Pulls her hand away. Afraid.

TRUCK

The other side of my family goes back to the Salem Witch Trials. Cotton Mather, friend to Satan. Dark roots we have, on both sides. Dark.

EMMIE

My antecedents had great stature and influence. We were sacred but feared. While the emperors were fat and lazy. We were industrious and clever. This got us banished.

TRUCK

There it is again. The - VOICE.
(sotto voice)
(MORE)

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Never mind. I'm just tired. Not
accustomed to - company. Much less
of the young feminine persuasion.

Truck turns down the gas burner. Adds a few real wood logs to
the fire. They watch as the wood SPITS and SPARKS. The
overhead lights are out now. The only light is from the fire.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

If the fire bothers you -

A COYOTE CALLS in the distance. Another. A whole pack.

AMALIE

Ah, so there are really wolves in
the neighborhood, and they sound
quite nearby.

TRUCK

Closer than comfort. One of my
neighbors feeds them.

AMALIE

Those Halloween kids, they
mentioned aliens and spacecrafts
and intrigue and how you wrote
about this in the local newspaper.
Can you spin a story for me, Mr.
Druid Antiquarian?

Truck turns on a task light over the table. Gets the globe.
Turns it to the U.S. Pointing at New Mexico.

TRUCK

How's about two hungry ghosts,
roaming the Earth in limbo, unable
to rest in eternal peace?
(sudden realization)
Be right back. Refill?

Smiling pleasantly, Amalie holds out her mug. Truck grabs it.
Disappears into the house.

Amalie's smile turns gruesome. She bends over, holding her
back. In excruciating pain.

Amalie puts her hand at her back under her sweatshirt, pulls
it out: FRESH BLOOD.

Truck returns. Unfolds a NEW MEXICO MAP on the table.

Blocked out in the middle is the giant US ARMY WHITE SANDS
MISSILE RANGE in the southeast.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

My other grandfather, Dad-ee, was a forester. He worked on Indian reservations out in New Mexico. The Great White Father they called him.

She points to THE TRINITY SITE on the map, with the White Sands boundaries, to the north.

AMALIE

You Americans worship at a shrine to the first atom bomb test that is named after your God Trinity?

TRUCK

Not me, lady. I got trapped above the nuclear reactor on a submarine, one summer at the Naval Academy. Radiation terrifies me.

Truck stares at his hands: X-RAY glimpse of the bones. One bony hand is holding a ballpoint pen. Writing.

FLASHBACK - U.S. NAVY PSYCH WARD - DAY

Truck (baby blue pajamas) writes text on an elaborate diagram, a "TIMELINE OF LIFE EVENTS." Psych nurses hover trying to glimpse what he's working on.

TRUCK (V.O.)

I submitted a scientific paper, of the effects to the Navy shrinks. Said that's when my schizophrenia started - proof positive.

BACK TO SCENE

Amalie stares: Truck is scribbling nonsense on the globe.

Truck startles - glances bashfully at her - hurries into the house. She yells through the open glass door:

AMALIE

Amalie is a psych major so there is no need to be afraid.

Amalie FIGHTS a SPASM of PAIN. Adjusts her back for relief.

TRUCK (O.S.)

Truck is not afraid. Of anything.

Truck returns with a rustic WOODEN BOX.

Truck gets a book from the box, IMAGES OF WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE, showing her photos: Rockets taking off. Workers at clunky old computers. Military officers everywhere.

Hesitating, Amalie takes to book - wincing. GRABS it with both hands. Closing her eyes. Biting her lower lip.

AMALIE'S THOUGHTS - Flash to White Sands circa 1945. An object STREAKS through the sky. ANTIAIRCRAFT GUNS fire from the ground. SHRAPNEL hits it. The object CRASHES.

Amalie opens her eyes. Shoves the book into Truck's hands. Looks away. Hiding her extreme consternation.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Operation Paperclip brought all the Nazi rocket scientists to White Sands. All their equipment, too - whole trainloads. Literally.

Amalie takes a deep breath. Brave smile. Calm enthusiasm:

AMALIE

Your railroad engineer grandfather, he was there and all of a sudden you have a very interesting story.

TRUCK

They tested the Nazi's V-2 rockets at White Sands. German engineers transformed the V-2 platform into the Apollo rockets. Mercury, too.

Amalie is fascinated. Focused. Eyes big. Intense. Muttering:

AMALIE

Roswell is nearby and Corona where the two U.F.O.s crashed down and both of them right there downrange on White Sands properties.

TRUCK

Oh, wow, another U.F.O. fan. We're a dying breed.

EMMIE

You got that right, mister.

Truck looks at her. Shakes his head. Then gets back to -

Truck pulls out an old LIONEL TRAIN SET out of the old wooden box. Spreads out the pieces on the table.

TRUCK

Grampa Howard gave it to me for
Christmas one year. Still works.
Perfectly.

Amalie picks up the pieces. Admires them. Rugged. Heavy.

She takes the heavy LOCOMOTIVE. Holds it with both hands.
Closes both eyes. Concentrates. Eyebrows furrowed.

AMALIE'S THOUGHTS - Flash to White Sands 1945. Soldiers rush
to the crash site. It's near RAILROAD TRACKS. They surround
the crash site. Men in chemical protection suits hoist a
METEORITE onto a flatbed railroad car.

Amalie opens her eyes: Truck's staring at her. She holds the
locomotive out. Gently, Truck takes it from her hands.
Studies it. Hefts it. Turns the wheels.

AMALIE

They are rugged and hefty and an
excellent inspiration for a young
boy to become an engineer.

TRUCK

Both my grandfathers were in New
Mexico back then.
(quietly)
Is that where you were just now?

AMALIE

What did they see or know, your
grandfathers, and this fills me
with anticipation to imagine what
are your great unknowns.

Amalie scoots closer. Her face bright. Eyes alluring.

TRUCK

(to himself)
She's turned on my alien
encounters. Just my luck.

Truck sets up a length of track on the floor. Puts the
locomotive on the track.

Truck grabs more sections of track. Assembles them in a
closed loop. Amalie watches him at work, muttering:

AMALIE

She marvels at how you hobble
together random facts into dark
stories with reckless abandon

They talk as he pulls more train cars out of the box - a CATTLE CAR. CABOOSE. Several FLAT CARS.

TRUCK

Worshipping ancestors, in the Druid culture, is a way to allow our life to be influenced by their wisdom.

AMALIE

You have a peculiar way of ignoring the obvious and focusing on the hidden which your average one-dimension female covered in makeup would consider most annoying.

Truck hooks up the TRANSFORMER. LIGHTS come on inside a CATTLE CAR (chickens inside). The TRAIN MOVES. SMOKE comes out of the locomotive stack. A WHISTLE sounds.

TRUCK

They brought all the Nazi scientists to White Sands after the war. Their entire V-2 research facility at Peenemunde, piece by piece. Lab equipment. V-2 rockets. Scientists and all their documents.

AMALIE

Every military and civilian in all of New Mexico was sworn to eternal secrecy for generations to come.

TRUCK

Could that secret knowledge that neither grandfather could speak. Could a small boy, sensing it, assimilating it - thereafter motivate his actions?

Truck studies deliberations in her face. Amalie gets restive, then uncomfortable - finally talks:

AMALIE

The subconscious is a locomotive of motivations, drives, and forces.

TRUCK

Influencing important decisions throughout my life.

AMALIE

If you trust yourself, trust in your instincts and your *Satori*, but of course, if it is in your blood.

Amalie helps him pack the train set back in the box. Inside the box is a small LAVA ROCK. She picks it up. Holds it in her fist tightly.

AMALIE'S THOUGHTS - White Sands 1945. Soldiers offloading whole trains. Crates with SWASTIKA markings. Box cars with NAZI markings. Equipment. Scientists. A tent city.

TRUCK

I worked at White Sands. I even gave a talk to the Commanding General and scientists at the High Energy Laser Facility. HELSTAF.

AMALIE

The trillion-dollar Star Wars laser project, the most secret project on the most secret base in the world but that's just not possible.

TRUCK

Neither is it possible, you knowing all this privileged information.
(quietly)
It's not even on the web, no matter how hard you look. Or the Dark Web.

Truck gets stressed out. She watches his eyes go wild and wide as he drifts to the past.

FLASHBACK - WHITE SANDS - DOWNRANGE - NIGHT

Under a full moon, Truck is motionless. Wrapped up in a MOTORCYCLE WRECK in the desert. Surrounded by tumbleweeds.

TRUCK (V.O.)

I got in a storm of trouble after that presentation at HELSTAF. Righteous firestorm. Couldn't ever explain why I did that.

AMALIE (V.O.)

Inner drives bringing you to confront your family's cursed past at the hands of the evil military-space-industrial complex?

Military vehicles drive by. Slow down. See him. Speed away.

BACK TO SCENE

Amelia shivers convulsively at Truck's grim expression and - pensive - gets up to sit next to the now-roaring fire.

TRUCK

It was the perfect plan, when I
think back on it. Well executed.
Some collateral damage, but -

Amalie sits with her back straight as a board, which seems to
relieve the escalating pain.

AMALIE

What the damnation did you do?

TRUCK

I broke through to the heart of the
beast. Leviathan. Not once. Twice.

AMALIE

The scary story is working because
the goose has pimples all over me.

Amalie shivers, arms crossed as if to keep her chest from
exploding.

Truck doesn't notice. He's headed back into the house.

TRUCK

Time for a pit stop. Be right back.

Truck disappears. A DOOR CLOSES inside the house.

PAIN shoots through Amelia's spine. She SCREAMS. Stifles it.
Tears of pain roll down her cheeks. Her expression is grim.

BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Truck zips himself up. Rinses off his hands in the sink.

Turns - his hands out - to see a WHITE TOWEL covered with
BLOOD. He picks at the towel. Dries his hands on his pants.

Truck backs away from the towel rack. Turns. Scoots out.

UPSTAIRS SCREEN PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Truck eases onto the porch. Amalie doesn't see him at first.
She's wiping tears from her cheeks.

TRUCK

You okay there? Come on, let me see
what's going on with that back.

Truck approaches. She sobers up. Arms crossed. Defiant.

EMMIE

They are tears. But not of pain. I am lonely. I lost my things. My money. Even my smartphone.

TRUCK

But, in the bathroom, I just saw - the towel and the -

AMALIE

How the moon fall out of my sky?

Truck stops cold. Amalie look down bashfully, smiling.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

I am only being a scared audience so please, carry on.

Truck stares at her. The deep creases around her eyes now. The pain at the corner of her mouth. Truck eases into his chair. Amalie speaks quietly:

AMALIE (CONT'D)

Where were we, oh yes, the military just retaliated against you at White Sands.

Amalie looks for his response. Studies him as he drifts into the twilight zone. She NODS KNOWINGLY as his eyes go blank.

FLASHBACK - RITZY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

A sleepy Truck climbs out of an AUDI FOX. The WINDOWS are SMASHED OUT. He brushes shards of glass off his clothing.

TRUCK (V.O.)

I ended up flat broke - living out of my car. On the street, homeless.

AMALIE (V.O.)

And even more determined than ever to understand their actions.

Several residents THROW ROCKS at Truck, smashing the rest of the windows. He hustles inside and SPEEDS AWAY.

BACK TO SCENE

Amalie sees his odd, blank expression.

TRUCK

Twenty years later I was a semester short of a P.H.D.

(MORE)

TRUCK (CONT'D)
in celestial mechanics. I told my
advisor about White Sands. I was
expelled with extreme malice weeks
later.

AMALIE
(sudden fury)
Didn't you watch the X Files where
the government kills to protect
their secrets?

TRUCK
That's all make believe.

AMALIE
Maybe twenty years ago but now it
is all the new status quo but you
know that is and this makes me
wonder what keeps you going.

TRUCK
This. Found it among Grandpa
Howard's things.

Truck picks up a scrap of METAL FOIL from inside the WOODEN
BOX. Crumples it into a tiny ball.

Truck spreads it out again: It's smooth as silk.

Truck hands t he metal to her. She repeats what he just did.

AMALIE'S THOUGHTS - Brief flash of small children playing
with the exotic metal foil.

Amalie looks at him, smiling, relaxed for the first time.

AMALIE
It is only a child's entertainment.

TRUCK
They said the Roswell U.F.O. was a
Project Mogul weather balloon. Fell
to the earth.

AMALIE
Why do you believe there are so
many conspiracy people out there,
because there is truth to their
believes, and a great deal of it.

Truck chokes up. Swallows hard. Fights back emotions.

FLASHBACK - WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE - DAY

Truck ties metal foil to the tail of a WEATHER BALLOON and releases it.

The balloon inches upward. The wind catches it. The balloon ZOOMS downrange. Quickly disappears from sight.

TRUCK (V.O.)

I was a weather tech. At White Sands. C-Station. We tied metal foil to the bottom of balloons and tracked them with a W.W. two-era mobile radar rig to measure winds.

Truck watches as the rusty old radar rig lurches in fits to track the foil on the balloon as it gains altitude.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck (ugly face) crumbles up the foil. Tosses it back into the wooden box.

EMMIE

There was no metal foil at the Roswell site. Well, there was, alien foil - but the. The. The authorities denied it completely.

TRUCK

Can't track a giant plastic balloon via radar without any metal.

Truck PIERCES a PAPERCLIP into White Sands on the globe.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Where would you bring the debris? The so-called U.F.O. experts say they took it to Wright Patterson - two thousand miles fucking away.

Truck PIERCES another PAPERCLIP at Cincinnati, Ohio.

AMALIE

In all the Roswell literature I've read, nobody ever mentions White Sands, but how scary is that, not even the U.F.O. crazies talk about White Sands not even one word.

TRUCK

Only true schizophrenics are paranoid of the conspiracy nuts. Maybe I've had you wrong all along.

Eyes narrowed, Amalie watches Truck fight for mental (and physical) balance.

He steps away and returns with the Family Bible.

He pulls a LETTER out, hidden inside the Bible. Holds it out to her.

Amalie stares at the letter. He waves it in front of her face. Daring her. Studying her face to catch her reaction.

Pursing her lips, she takes the letter. Carefully. Reads it.

AMALIE

Signed by President John F.
Kennedy. He thanks your Grampa
Howard for exceptional service to
the United States government.

Her hand holding the letter SHAKES. She has to grab it with the other. Truck gets closer. Looking directly into her eyes.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

I revere President Kennedy and he
is a great man in Norway.

AMALIE'S THOUGHTS - The Oval Office in chaos. J.F.K. signs a letter. Gives it to a five-star general. The general runs out. J.F.K. sits quietly at his desk. Saying a silent prayer.

Her face a mask of grief, Amalie hands the letter back.

TRUCK

It was sent to my Pop. Grampa
Howard had just died. Mailed a week
before. Pop received it the very
day J.F.K. was assassinated.

Amalie winces. True emotional angst. Truck puts the letter back in the Bible. He hurries inside. She follows him.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Amalie steps into the gourmet kitchen just as Truck's pulling a couple of hot lemonades out of the microwave.

Truck hands her a beverage. He points to a WHISKEY CABINET.

She spikes her drink and then sits on a bench, at a large wood-block island, watching him pull vegetables and pizza fixings out of the fridge. They talk as he washes and cuts the veggies up for toppings.

AMALIE

Getting that letter, on that day -
it must have shaken your father.
You are full of dark family
secrets, are you not?

Truck JAMS a KNIFE into the wooden island surface.

TRUCK

The Space Mafia shot Kennedy. His
dream of a peaceful last frontier
in Space was a threat. Only one way
to stop him. Boom. Dead.

Amalie flips through a glossy photo book Pictures of the
Pain: Photography of the Assassination of John F. Kennedy.
She's careful not to hold any page at length.

AMALIE

I can see your incentives
everywhere to keep on trucking.

Truck pulls out another book Dark NASA - shows her more
photos: Stops at a GRAINY IMAGE OF A SHOOTER above the
motorcade. On a GRASSY KNOLL. At the top of stone steps.

TRUCK

Here's the shooter. Plain as can
be. In Technicolor.

Amalie stands up (hands over her heart, pushing). Truck DRUMS
the table impatiently with UNKEMPT, DIRTY FINGERNAILS.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

How about the trillion-dollar laser
lab at White Sands? What President
Reagan called the Star Wars laser.
Nothing but a giant slush fund.

AMALIE

I see your end game and your
determination to get there, but
less clear is how you got into this
high-stakes game at all.

Truck rolls out a flour mat on the counter and begins
KNEADING the pizza dough - white flour going everywhere.

TRUCK

It started with the most impossible
of impossibilities. A direct
appointment to the Academy by my
U.S. Congressman from Louisiana.

AMALIE

Unwise maybe but not impossible.

TRUCK

During the Viet Nam War? When everybody was desperate for deferment from combat? With my lousy grades, growing up all over Europe as an Exxon brat?

AMALIE

Then I suppose you washed out.

His face brightens. His shoulders go up, to reminisce.

FLASHBACK - US NAVAL ACADEMY - DAY

Montage of BANCROFT HALL. The BRIGADE OF MIDSHIPMEN in formation. In class. Athletics. The mess hall.

TRUCK (V.O.)

No. I was near the top of my class. Well-liked. Super grades. Then, after two years, Pop had a heart attack, and I quit.

The entire brigade MARCHING IN REVIEW in front of a review stand full of high-ranking military and civilians.

AMALIE (V.O.)

Admirable family values but very stupid as a career move, however.

Truck is one of the midshipmen crewing a GIANT SAIL BOAT. Cutting through the waves in CHESAPEAKE BAY. The academy is silhouetted in the background.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck pulls a small pile of NAVAL ACADEMY MEMENTOS from a drawer in the China Cabinet: PHOTOS. RIBBONS. An athletic LETTER award (like athletes wear on jackets and sweaters). Leather gloves. Brass collar insignia. A dress uniform hat.

Amalie fingers the items, wincing. Relieved to experience no empathic connection.

TRUCK

I moved to Port Gibson, Mississippi. It's not far from where I grew up, in north Louisiana.

Truck pulls out pages from the KENNEDY ASSASSINATION REPORT.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

The Oswald Brothers went to a school there, Chamberlain Hunt Academy. At Port Gibson.

Truck pulls the pizza out of the oven. Slices it up. Points toward the dining table. She sits down as he brings the pizza pan over and two plates.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

I bought a house from the school secretary - found her old papers. Lee Harvey couldn't hit the broad side of a barn with a shotgun.

Amalie eats (brief pause, hands over her heart, pressing) as Truck digs in with relish.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Later I ran into a personal family friend of the Oswalds in Galveston. He told me the exact same thing.

Bevo jumps up on the table. Amalie feeds her bits of meat.

AMALIE

So the Space Mafia did the kill shot and the government's covered it up ever since but everybody knows that now.

Staring at his BLOODY HANDS, Truck hurries into the kitchen. Starts cleaning the counter. The stove. Washing dishes. Scrubbing desperately to get the BLOOD off his shaking hands.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

What's wrong with your hands? I have been so wrapped up in my own thoughts, I did not see.

Truck nods. Gives her a weak smile. Gets back to cleaning.

TRUCK

I blew up, is what happened. At White Sands. I was there. In the middle of it all. Investigating. Making progress. Then. Boom. I blew up. Ruined everything. Crashdown.

Truck POUNDS the counter with a fist. Silverware RATTLES.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

After they blew up my motorcycle?
My car. I turned in drug users,
people for cheating on their
spouses, all sorts of offenses.
They retaliated. I fought back. It
was a war out there.

They look up as OSCAR (cat, chubby, black and white, only one
eye, hind legs don't work very well) hobbles into the room.

Truck hurries to get treats for her out of the fridge.

Oscar sits by Amalie, staring up at her - eyes big and black.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

She's usually terrified of
strangers.

Amalie picks Oscar up and cuddles her, both very happy.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

She'd just got hit by a car.
Pregnant. The vet saved the
kittens. Oscar lost one eye, and
her back legs don't work well.

AMALIE

I adore cats, my only friends when
I was small girl.

Truck smiles. He reaches over to scratch Oscar in her arms.

TRUCK

She camps out in the bedroom most
of the time. I have a pet heating
pad set up for her on the bed when
it's cold outside.

Amalie studies the painful tenderness in his expression.

AMALIE

I am corrected. You've had company
for dinner every day of the long
year and breakfast and supper, too.

Oscar climbs onto the dinner table and gnaws on pizza crust.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

Great company to cozy up in bed to
read a scary thriller book.

TRUCK

Haven't read for pleasure in thirty years. Vision issues? Nonfiction only. If at all.

Amalie scratches Oscar while Truck brushes her, then Bevo. They move into the living room a few steps away.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amalie stand in front of a leather sofa watching: Truck opens the hearth doors. The fire is a pile of red coals.

Amalie sits on a the coffee table, near Truck and the fire.

AMALIE

I always wondered why Hollywood puts no animals on space voyages. All that long distance without a warm, fuzzy friend to share with.

TRUCK

It's been a long, dark voyage alright. What little sanity I have left I owe to Oscar and Bevo.

Truck feeds the fire to get it going strong again.

AMALIE

I am not pleased to ask this, but do you have any physical evidence?

TRUCK

You're sitting on it, lady.

He points to the coffee table (rugged boards on railroad-type wheels). Amalie JUMPS up. Oscar scurries out of her arms.

AMALIE

This looks like one of those railroad push-pull go-carts.

Amalie studies the rugged table, careful not to TOUCH it.

TRUCK

Lots of old railroad tracks at White Sands. Found an old line that dead-ended into a mountain cavern overlooking the compound. Who knows, maybe Grampa Howard built it.

Truck HEAVES the table over on its side. There's a Nazi SWASTIKA on the bottom, and stenciled: HEERESHWAFFENAMT.

The heavy table topples - toward Oscar! Amalie rushes to steady the table. Grabbing on HARD.

Her expression shows sheer terror.

AMALIE'S THOUGHTS - FIRE in the desert. EXPLOSIONS. Men roll the cart toward a sheer mountain. Into a dark CAVE.

Amalie starts back to the present. Truck's staring at her face. Concern in his features. She grabs her back, wincing.

AMALIE
(painful smile)
A catch in the back but go on.

TRUCK
Heereshwaffenamt. That's the German Army Weapons Office at Peenemunde Proving Grounds. Then there's this - old Nazi bayonet. Still no rust.

Truck opens a drawer. Pulls out a NAZI DAGGER. He pulls the dagger out of its sheath - not a speck of rust on the blade.

AMALIE
You found this little trolley at White Sands? How did you -

Amalie picks up the dagger. Truck is focused on her face. Her hand shakes. Her body tenses. Her face shows - PAIN.

AMALIE'S THOUGHTS - American soldiers stand at the cave entrance. A group of scientists exits. The soldiers KILL them all with MACHINE GUNS.

TRUCK
There's that expression again. Same expression Grandpa Howard would get whenever he told this story.
(quietly)
Something you want to tell me?

AMALIE
I, I am only reacting, with empathy, to your frightful tale of horror and you would have me behave otherwise?

Truck grabs her shaking hand. Peels her fingers back. Takes the Nazi dagger from her. Puts it away.

TRUCK

The table was Grampa Howard's. The dagger was Dadee's - my other grandfather. He was involved in Operation Paperclip as well.

Gritting her teeth, Amalie grabs the dagger. Inspects it carefully. Convulsions shimmer down her spine. But she maintains calm in her voice.

AMALIE

We in Norway have a genetic horror of the Nazi occupation but here in America people think only of the glorious victory by the G.I. Joes.

TRUCK

Yeah. We won the Great War. Except we didn't. It was the Russians who won. They lost twenty-seven million soldiers and civilians. The U.S.?
(quietly)
Not even six hundred thousand.

They sit side-by-side on the coffee table. Feed the fire bits of paper. Cardboard. Kindling.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

You seem to have a direct, personal link to this Roswell situation, even more than mine.

AMALIE

I am an emotional person, some even say an empath, and so I sense and feel things very out of proportion.

TRUCK

Not exactly what I'm seeing here.

Truck stands at a window wall: A full moon hovers over the mountains.

AMALIE

With your engineering pedigree and the U.S. Naval Academy, I can now see how the hero's journey begins.

TRUCK

The Army recruiter gave me a little rank and my choice of job and installation. Anywhere worldwide.

EMMIE

Weather tech. White Sands. I begin
to think the Force was with you.
Young Jedi.

(Amalie's voice, quietly)
Or at least a weak psycho-magnetism
facsimile thereof.

Truck looks inward. His expression is pensive. But content.

FLASHBACK - WSMR - C STATION - NIGHT

Truck works at a desk in the empty weather bureau, pouring
over computer printouts.

TRUCK (V.O.)

I worked the night shift. It was
very peaceful. Watching the moon.
The sunrise. Lightning in the
thunderclouds.

Truck looks up from the desk as the sun rises, back-lighting
towering columns of THUNDERCLOUDS downrange.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck looks at her. She's fighting her own demons - but with
an expression of strong resolve.

AMALIE

Why did the military retaliate
against you? What did you do to
cause this?

TRUCK

The railroad cart. The dagger. They
weren't heirlooms. When I was a
White Sands I investigated. Found a
cave in the mountains. The cart was
in there. The dagger was buried
nearby in the rubble.

AMALIE

How did you connect them to your
grandfathers -

TRUCK

They had photos of them.

Truck pulls out a small black metal box. Extracts a stack of
photos. Shows her the vintage pix. His Grandpa Howard with
the railroad cart. Grandpa Dadee with the dagger.

Truck holds out the photos. She won't take them. He's insistent. She glares at him, crossing her arms, defiant.

AMALIE

My hands are dirty enough already, with all you told me, and now the military will be after me, they are so extremely paranoid about their U.F.O. secrets.

TRUCK

I was just hunting down my past. I didn't know anything about Roswell or U.F.O.s or any of that crap at the time. Not until after -

(quietly)

Oh, right. I forgot about the Army Rangers.

AMALIE

Sooner or later they will find me and interrogate me and I will spill all the baked beans about you to them.

TRUCK

I can think of worse ways to die.

Truck goes quiet. Dark. Introspective.

FLASHBACK - WSMR - HEADQUARTERS BARRACKS - PARKING LOT - DAY

Truck (torn fatigues, bloody arms, and hands) rolls the wrecked, burned-out motorcycle into the barracks parking lot just as the whole company is mustering for MORNING FORMATION.

TRUCK (V.O.)

They totaled my motorcycle, with me on it. The Honda Shadow was a total loss.

Truck pushes the motorcycle wreck through the ranks.

Truck parks the motorcycle in a rack and loses his balance - has to grab a female soldier - sees his BLOODY HANDS on her shoulders.

TRUCK (V.O.)

It's a miracle I survived. Much less without a scratch.

The lady soldier pushes away from Truck. She hurries into the formation. Truck stumbles and falls, hands outstretched.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck stares at his BLOODY OUTSTRETCHED HANDS. His expression is grim but determined.

AMALIE
You are projecting all these bad
things into visions of blood.

Truck fights back welling tears, struggling to control them.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
(loud, insistent)
Am I correct - the hands, arms?

Truck heads downstairs as she runs to the master bath.

LATER

Truck returns.

Amalie's on the sofa with Oscar in her lap.

AMALIE
She just climbed your little step
onto the coffee table, then hopped
onto my lap. What a cutie.

TRUCK
I owe her my life, many times over.
Thinking to suicide. Just couldn't
bear to think of her locked for
life in a tiny cage at the pound.

Oscar scoots out of Amalie's lap. Darts onto the porch
through a SWINGING PET DOOR.

AMALIE
No way to get out - trapped.

Truck sits bolt upright - terrified.

FLASHBACK - WHITE SANDS CREDIT UNION - PARKING LOT - DAY

Truck opens the hood of a smoking FIAT BRAVA: there's a
RAGING FIRE in the engine compartment.

EMMIE (V.O.)
I know trapped. I am there.

Cars drive by - rubbernecking. Nobody stops to help. The car
EXPLODES, throwing Truck backward.

RETURN TO SCENE

Truck wipes the cold sweat off his brow.

TRUCK

That's what I get for turning them
in for using hard drugs on the job.
But hey, that's why they have the
Military Police. To investigate.

Truck pulls a letter out of a file folder (tucked into the
bookcase behind the sofa). Hands it to her. She scans it:

AMALIE

All the names, places, and dates
were obliterated from the document
submitted for review. OBLITERATED?
What kind of word is that in such
an official police documentation?

Amalie stares at Truck, astonished. His expression is a mask
of absolute terror.

FLASHBACK - MILITARY HOSPITAL - PSYCH WARD - DAY

Nurses throw Truck (baby blue pajamas, straitjacket) into a
PINK PADDED ROOM.

TRUCK (V.O.)

They gave the redacted statement a
psychologist to evaluate. Boom.
Wrapped me into a straightjacket.
Threw me into a padded cell.

AMALIE (V.O.)

Give me any detailed statement like
that. Eliminate all the details.
Free ticket onto any psych ward.

Truck POUNDS HIS HEAD against the door. KICKS the door. RAMS
THE WALLS with his shoulders.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck struggles, attempting to remain calm against an extreme
subconscious fury.

TRUCK

They do that in regular, civilian
psychology?

EMMIE

Of course, we do. It was our greatest invention. We mastered it to perfection. Even published formal studies on the process.

Truck blinks. Frowns. EXPLODES WITH FURY.

TRUCK

You did that to me. And - and, you dare to come - come and implore me to show you how to improve on your diabolical technique.

AMALIE

Wait, do not -

TRUCK

I knew you were up to no good. Knew it. From the first time I saw you. We're over. Good night. Good bye.

Truck grabs a jacket. Hurries out onto the patio.

DOWNSTAIRS SCREEN PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Truck EXERCISES on a universal gym, in a space similar to the upstairs screen porch (boxing speed bag, free weights, exercise cycle).

Truck's breath shows in the frigid air.

Amalie pads down the stairs. Steps through a screen door, wearing one of his jackets. Her eyes are downcast, ashamed:

AMALIE

I do not at all support this practice of using a psychology diagnosis to attach labels upon those who threaten high authority.

His words are angry but his pace slows a little.

TRUCK

I don't know you. Get on your goddamn bicycle and go away.

Amalie grabs a set of boxing gloves. Hits the speed bag. SPINS THE BAG. Venting.

LATER

They both tire. Stop. Square off over an exercise bench:

AMALIE

My research is in defense of people
like you to try and stop this kind
of abuse of medical science.

Truck spots a spot of blood on her back. Oozing through the
thick fabric of the jacket.

TRUCK

Is that blood? On your back?

AMALIE

Oh, my, it's your nice jacket.

Amalie turns. Hurries up the stairs, confused and distraught.
Fighting back tears (not succeeding).

Muttering angry Norwegian words to herself.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Truck steps up stairs inside the house into the living room.

Across the open space, Amalie, bicycle in tow, is opening the
front door.

TRUCK

Wait. Stop.

Truck hurries to block Amalie from leaving.

Amalie's cheeks are wet with tears. She wipes them away with
an impudent shirt sleeve.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

I - I should thank you, for your
work to detox the criminal justice
system.

EMMIE

I must go. You are in danger. I
wish you no harm. Kind sir.

TRUCK

Relax, lady. Danger is my last
name. Mom always said I'm not happy
unless I'm in some kind of trouble.

Truck takes the bicycle from her. Rolls it back into the utility room.

Amalie follows him, one hand on the bicycle.

AMALIE

It is my cross to bear, not yours.

TRUCK

Speaking of hauling crosses to Cavalry - should we look at your back? The blood.

AMALIE

Your sincerity, it is disarming me.

Amalie smiles. Laughs. Her face transforms, briefly.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

The blood is a small thing and it is from the exertions on your speed bag so please not to worry.

TRUCK

If it hurts, maybe I can offer -

Truck turns - shyly, opens the whiskey cabinet. Stands back.

AMALIE

An invitation to get blasted?

Truck smiles. Chuckles - LAUGHS.

Amalie steps over and closes the cabinet. He sobers up quickly - melancholy, eyes downcast.

TRUCK

I still can't believe what happened to you. It's gruesome. A nice vacation in the wilderness gone bad.

Her hands go to her sternum in a prayerful gesture.

AMALIE

Not half of what can happen in a big, ugly American city, or when the Army Rangers are at your door banging in the name of the law.

His eyebrows raise. Truck panics:

TRUCK

And you effing came here? To my house. My sanctuary. They'll find me here. Destroy me. You did this.

Truck's eyes are big, black, wide - paranoid. Rage building.

EMMIE

Please do not panic. I mean you no harm. Nobody knows. Only my close friends. No one else.

Truck's anxiety escalates. He grabs her. Shakes her.

TRUCK

There's that damn voice again. What's wrong with you? Do you have a double personality? High on some kind of trans meds to transition to a male? Doh! I have no more meds. Well, yeah - it's all falling apart.

AMALIE

Please calm yourself down because I am training to be a professional and I would never abuse of your confidence because this could damage your recovery process.

TRUCK

Recover? From schizophrenia? Like, who says I want to recover? It's everybody else who needs to - to -
(quietly, calming down)
Stop making a fool of himself.

Suddenly all business, Amalie gets her backpack and pulls out a smartphone.

Amalie opens up a RECORD app. Shows it to him.

AMALIE

I should be recording this for my research project but can I please I have your permission?

Truck studies her. The smartphone. The RECORDING app.

TRUCK

What's your smartphone doing in the Army Ranger's backpack?

AMALIE

Huh - oh, oops, I forgot that when all that came down, it was in my back pocket, and isn't that where you keep your most importants?

TRUCK

You have a very selective memory, lady. Although, that's pretty common among your species.

Very carefully, she hits the RECORD button. The app shows a frequency-range graphic. Truck is furious - livid:

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Wait one cotton-picking minute. You knew I was schizophrenic right off the bat.

(in her face)

Oh, boy. I need to hang out with this crazy. Data for my project.

AMALIE

I have been interviewing many people on the Appalachian Trail, asking why do people devote six months of their life to this adventure?

He fights the fury cascading through his linebacker physique.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

Many want to lose weight. others enjoy the great outdoors, inveterate loners fed up with society, Baby Boomers on their last legs, Gen Z'ers want to brag about it for the rest of their pathetic lives, psychos wanting isolation.

Truck SLAMS the phone to turn off the app. Amalie JUMPS.

TRUCK

Schizos suspicious of everyone? Spiced with spasms of impulsive violence? Ruling everything else out but E.T. in the body of a cute young lady?

AMALIE

Are you coming onto me?

She shakes her head, suddenly afraid (hands over her heart).

TRUCK

How important is this interview to you?

Amalie nods, eyes wide and afraid - imploring his indulgence.

EMMIE

V - very much. Sir. Kind sir.

Truck stands up. Leans across the table. Grabs her by the collar - lifting her out of her chair. She mutters:

AMALIE

(in Norwegian)

This is bad. So bad. How am I to gain back his trust? All is lost.

TRUCK

No. Norwegian. I hate the Norwegian sotto voice you have when your are confused or upset or being evasive.

AMALIE

Okay, but I do understand your fears.

TRUCK

Why wait until now to start the goddamn recording? All those details I've given you already? You didn't even take notes.

AMALIE

You are indeed very observant.

Amalie doesn't fight his grip or his fury. Just waits.

TRUCK

Where's your backup recording device? Where, or you're out the door right this second.

AMALIE

I have no backup because only paranoids have a backup.

TRUCK

Six months in the wilderness? gathering crucial data? irreplaceable data?

AMALIE

I suddenly remember how you were also in graduate school.

Amalie looks at him. At her smartphone. At the cold rain falling outside now, in brisk gusts of arctic cold.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
Not until Dr. Jekyll lets go of her
delicate collar bones.

Truck sets her down gently, standing as she gets her poise back.

Slowly, Amalie unbuttons her blouse. Pulls her bra off. Brief view of her generous physique. She hands him the bra.

TRUCK
Seduction. That's your answer?

EMMIE
No, stupid. The mike is built into
the bra fabrics.
(Norwegian)
Please, dear God, may a little peak
of Salome's breast calm him down.

Truck studies the bra, Stretches it. Rips it - no mike.

AMALIE
It is apparently a Chinese tech
device and it didn't work anyway so
why am I even telling you?

Amalie carefully takes the bra from him. She PUNCHES a pad in the middle of the two cups.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
Press once to begin recording then
press again to stop recording.
(quietly)
Doh, exactly how men wish their
women to be in the bed.

TRUCK
Hence the hands over your heart.

Amalie nods, demure and a bit ashamed.

AMALIE
Worked fine at first and then,
well, you are not most men.

Truck grabs the bra from her. He studies it under a bright light.

TRUCK

Looks like the heart monitor in my fitness chest strap. Needs moisture - for good skin contact. You were scared. Fear sweat. I'd know that stench anywhere.

Amalie gets offended. Pulls a light jacket around her.

EMMIE

Cold. It, I was just very freezing cold. Yes. Normal physiological react, I will tell their engineers to correct the great dishonor.

Amalie bows deeply. Holds the bow for a few heartbeats (deep cleavage - tiny CATHOLIC CROSS TATTOO on one breast).

She stands up, her eyes down and subservient as she mutters:

AMALIE

You are very insightful which is most unusual for a person of your technical erudition, and, well, it is frankly a little bit kind of erotic for me having now lost all control of the delicate situation.

Amalie reaches a hand out to start RECORDING - he grabs her hand before she can do that.

Truck talks sincerely, his voice SHAKING as he tries to regain self-control.

TRUCK

Now Dr. Amalie knows I am rude, impulsive violent. Yes?

Amalie nods, as confused as ever (arms gripped strongly across her torso, trembling from a chilling fear).

TRUCK (CONT'D)

I'm a loner. We're dredging up strong memories. Stronger feelings. They explode at the most unexpected moments. Right? Human nature.

AMALIE

You are very clever for a psycho but I think this only means you have been in therapy which is a good thing but a little dark.

Her expression softens slightly as she starts to understand.

TRUCK

Whenever you need to say something
off the record. Scream. Slap me.
Now you can hit the STOP and blame
it on me in your report. Yes?

Amalie's eyebrows shoot up. She relaxes with a mischievous
smile.

AMALIE

I have never talked to a real
paranoid schizophrenic before only
just artificial intelligence
simulations in our computer lab.

TRUCK

I reserve the right to stop it as
well. Either to blurt out some
stupidity or to whatever.

Truck grits his teeth. RIGID JAW. Fighting his inner demons.

AMALIE

Conversing with the flesh and bones
psycho is a whole new dimension.
(gently)
Hang in there, Charlie Brown.

Truck hurries to prepare hot lemonade brews + whiskey in each
- and they step over to the table. She hits RECORD.

TRUCK

Damn right there were aliens at
Roswell.
(shouting, psycho)
I'm talking with one.

Truck covers his mouth with both hands, mortified.

AMALIE

You just said what?
(very quietly)
Where did that come from?

Amalie fights a smile at his officious bully tone. Then
sobers up. Plays the serious diplomat.

EMMIE

Now. We must continue the
interrogation. Yes? You were at
White Sands. They retaliated. You
fought back. Then the put you onto
a psych ward.

(MORE)

EMMIE (CONT'D)

Standard operational procedure back then. What happened on the psych ward?

TRUCK

(to himself)

Nix. The. Norwegian. Please.

Truck gets a box of papers from the utility room. Puts it on the dining room table. Yanks out a folder - hands it over.

Truck names each document as she takes it.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

The complete documentation. Psych tests. My written rebuttals. The military tribunal.

Amalie slides gold-rim glasses on to study the documents.

AMALIE

Very insightful if sloppy and irreverent but otherwise half-way expert.

Truck stares at the glasses.

TRUCK

Where'd the glasses come from?

Amalie takes the glasses off. Stares at them. At Truck. The papers. Sweat beads on her forehead.

AMALIE

I don't know, but, wait, these are your glasses and I only picked them up, well, out of force of habit.

Amalie holds the glasses out. Truck SNAGS them.

TRUCK

Almost had you there Your veneer is getting mighty thin, lady. Sooner or later the reptile skin and snake eyes will punch through the smooth little girl skin.

AMALIE

Is that any way to talk to a young psych nurse on the military ward?

Amalie waves the pages in his face.

Truck's eyes follow her motion, in a kind of hypnotic trance - and he zones out.

FLASHBACK - BAMC - OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CLINIC - DAY

Truck is typing away at an IBM SELECTRIC on the nurses' desk, wearing WALKMAN headphones and listening to a cassette.

AMALIE (V.O.)

Are you sure you wrote this?

TRUCK (V.O.)

Right there in the psych ward
office. Old I.B.M. Selectric
typewriter. Electric.

Truck gets up from typing to assist a patient in her therapy routine.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck blinks repeatedly. Returns to the present - and points at the medical documents in her angry hands.

Amalie puts the glasses back on, thumbing quickly through the papers, reading very fast.

AMALIE

Many documents are referenced by
your attorney as being in evidence.

TRUCK

You sure do read English fast.
Amalie from Norway. Which
constellation is that in?

Amalie looks at him over the bifocals.

AMALIE

Speaking of evidence, by what logic
do you think I am an
extraterrestrial? Please, this
interests me for my researches.

Truck stares at a DEEP GASH in his LOWER ARM, blood-soaked hands.

Amalie watches him will the hallucination away, his face contorted with an extreme concentration.

She puts Truck's documentation into her backpack and stands up - ready to leave.

Amalie gives him a small bow of gratitude.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry the sad story has to end this way. Thank you for the papers.

TRUCK

You're leaving? But we aren't even to the good part yet.

Amalie stops. Takes a step back - surprised and skeptical.

AMALIE

The alien entity part, but I am so sorry, kind sir, I am so not up for a second feature this evening.

Truck pulls two hardback books out of the shelves and hands them to her:

Retrofitting for Energy Conservation and Electrical Design
Guide for Commercial Buildings.

TRUCK

Fast forward ten-plus years. I got my Professional Engineer License. Published two McGraw-Hill books. A semester away from a damn Ph.D. in mathematical physics.

Amalie is leaving. Then. Studies the book covers. Stops.

AMALIE

I see no connection to White Sands here, but energy conservation is the one thing that riles American conspicuous society no end.

Intrigued, Amalie picks up the books. Thumbs through them. Pausing to admire several elaborate illustrations.

TRUCK

My advisor in grad school asked for a short biography. I said I'd been at White Sands. I said I had a meeting at HELSTAF with senior scientists. The Star Wars laser?

EMMIE

Oh, God. So now the Space Mafia. They know who you are. However. Why would they be worried?

TRUCK

Because I'd been complaining. Up
the food chain. At the University.
About no advising help. No feedback
on research. Total neglect. By the
entire faculty.

AMALIE

(smiling, quietly)

I see you speak - Norwegian.

Truck shows her more thick folders in a cardboard moving box.

Amalie handles the folders with growing desperation.

TRUCK

I went to war with Leviathan.

Amalie looks at him strangely - he ducks his head and looks
away.

AMALIE

You're scaring me now. Leviathan is
the mythical monster beast. Even
God Almighty fears Leviathan.

TRUCK

I thought you weren't -

Amalie reaches out. SLAMS the recording device with fury.

EMMIE

Religious. What would you know?
Hiding all my life. Secret prayers.
Watching the police round up your
friends and my family.

TRUCK

You sure you're from Norway?

AMALIE

Oops.

They stare at the recording device. She talks quietly:

EMMIE

I hate being watched all the time.
Cameras everywhere. Artificial
intelligence algorithms that
examine your body language.

TRUCK

So that's what the world is coming
to?

Truck's lost. Unable to - to - gain any traction whatsoever.

She waits - watching - waiting - for him to recollect:

FLASHBACK - WSMR - DOWNRANGE - NIGHT

Truck is at the motorcycle wreck, just getting up from the twisted debris. Sees his bloody hands. DEEP GOUGES in his arms White desert sand clotting the blood.

TRUCK (V.O.)

I suppose it's dangerous for you.

Truck stares at his hands. GUSHING BLOOD.

TRUCK (V.O.)

They're looking for you. But not for you. Something missing here.

AMALIE (V.O.)

You would make a good shrink because you never look at the surface but what is underneath.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck stares at his hands and arms - filthy with blood. Ducks his head down and concentrates on his food.

AMALIE

(quietly)

And I will be a terrible shrink because I talk too much about myself and reveal too much and feel empathy for the patient and just cannot seem to break that connection with this poor human.

They're both depressed, shoulders drooping, bone tired.

Truck is suddenly animated. Assertive. Standing. Belligerent.

TRUCK

I got it. Amalie isn't your natural body, is she? You have her memories, her voice, her character but - then you don't.

AMALIE

You have this aggravating habit of rushing to irrational conclusions without the least minimal amount of supporting evidence.

TRUCK

But I'm right. I know I'm right. It just plain FEELS right. Huh?

Standing, furious, Amalie VENTS, blurting out:

AMALIE

She studies psychology because she is full of conflicting confusions and afraid of therapy. Her inner chaos is incompatible with my central nervous system and if I do not encounter a new host soon I will cease to exist.

Awkward moment as Truck studies her face. Her awkward body language. He LAUGHS.

TRUCK

I met psychos like you on the psych ward. Had me fooled then, too.

Amalie blinks, fast. Twists her head. Confused. Her mouth opens to talk, but nothing comes out. This makes her even more confused.

Truck stands up. He sits her down, gently. Then hhe sits opposite her. Waiting patiently. Observing her face. She says - face blank and expressionless - in a monotone:

AMALIE

Sorry, I am processing because this brain has a very limited capacity.

Truck studies her shaking hands. Nervous twitches. He leans back, waiting for her processing to complete.

TRUCK

Yeah. I figured as much.
(quietly)
Hands off my Norwegian.

AMALIE

(monotone)
Stop that because it confuses me even more, but then you knew that.

Amalie recovers. Smiles. Sheepish. Looks down, ashamed.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

You have a good brain and it would be a pleasant place for me.

TRUCK

No, it wouldn't. My mind is a chaos. And you damn well know it.
(quietly)
Sorry, no more Jedi mind-game tricks. I promise. Why are you even still here?

AMALIE

I am sorry the Roswell incident caused you so much trouble, you and your family. I wanted to help. With her psychology, perhaps -

TRUCK

There's nothing psychology can do for me. And, besides, I'm okay with it. It's the Roswell crap that -

AMALIE

How can you not want to get better?
(quietly)
Or, better said, how do you remain sane much less cognizant because I need this while my mind goes bonk.

TRUCK

I haven't finished my story yet. Do you want me to continue? Then maybe we can figure a way out for you?

AMALIE

I may not comprehend for much longer, the way this brain is shorting out, but it confuses why you would even want to help.

TRUCK

I'm thinking my grandfathers tried to save your people back then. They'd want me to finish the job.
(quietly)
So, shall I continue? We're almost there.

Truck waits for her to nod.

Amalie starts the RECORDING again. He starts to say something, but the words just don't come out.

AMALIE

And they still expelled you even after you got so far in grad school, but I require evidence.

TRUCK

A whole stack of documents.

AMALIE

You must have done something more than rant about White Sands, but something extreme to provoke them, because the government does not make stupid kidergarden mistakes.

Truck smiles, but somehow can't take the pain. He closes his eyes. She watches his features, hoping - waiting. Eager -

His thin smile contorts as he tries to think back in time.

FLASHBACK - UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - CLASSROOM - DAY

Truck is giving a SEMINAR to a small audience of professors and grad students, explaining an elaborate EARTH-TO-MARS TRAJECTORY diagram on the chalkboard.

TRUCK (V.O.)

I discovered a way to modify any Mars trajectory to reduce energy use by ten percent.

Suddenly the audience EXPLODES in FURY, everybody talking at once - righteous rage.

TRUCK (V.O.)

They said it was impossible. So I made a full-blown windows program to show everything in living color. Put it online. Showed the world.

Truck shows an elaborate, multi-color real-time graphic of the trajectory - with 16-digit columns of numbers ticking off at the bottom to show the three-dimensional coordinates. The audience calms down, studying the graphic.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck's face is bright and enthusiastic - but - fades.

TRUCK

This was back in 2001. Mars was very important back then. We had just lost six landers. All the world was desperate to reach Mars. And I got there.

Truck stares at her face: BLOODY TEARS. The bloody cross on her shirt is surrounded by BLOOD.

TRUCK (CONT'D)
 So much pain. Can't. Just can't.
 No. I - I just - can't get beyond
 all their hatred. Their -

Truck closes his eyes, struggling, his face shading darker.

FLASHBACK - UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS CAMPUS - DAY

A montage of campus scenes: the STUDENT UNION. A FOOTBALL GAME in the stadium. The iconic TOWER.

TRUCK (V.O.)
 I was doing fine. Then - they found
 out about White Sands. I was
 expelled six weeks later. With
 extreme malice. Aforethought.

AMALIE (V.O.)
 No probation - counseling? A
 disabled is a protected class.

Truck stares up at a GIANT AMERICAN FLAG fluttering in front of the TOWER building.

BACK TO SCENE

Truck looks down. Counts on his bloody fingers:

TRUCK
 So are older-than-average students.
 Vietnam veterans. Vision problems.
 I was in four protected classes.

EMMIE
 But your Mars research. Talk tech
 to me. I want you to do this. I am -
 fascinating on it.
 (quietly, Amalie)
 Somehow I feel an inkling of hope
 and this brain is clearer and I
 wonder what your are doing to me.

TRUCK
 I saved any Mars trajectory twenty
 percent on fuel? That's huge. Any
 trajectory. Twenty percent.

Slowly, Truck wills her crimson features to disappear.

They fade, but leaving dark, dried patches blood.

EMMIE

U.T. Austin is Grand Central NASA.
All the angst to reach Mars back
then? And they ignore your
wonderful project? How dare they.

Truck buries his head in his hands, unable to take it
anymore. His eyes are closed with a desperation to forget:

FLASHBACK - UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - ENGINEERING - DAY

A montage of angry meetings with one professor in various
settings. After a class. In their office. On the stairs.
Outside a rusty old elevator. In the computer lab.

TRUCK (V.O.)

They prohibited me from publishing
a tech paper on it. Then trashed
letters I submitted from twenty
experts who loved my Mars solution.

BACK TO SCENE

Amalie's distraught, and getting more so. But still waits
patiently for Truck to regain his composure.

When he looks up from his hands, his eyes are blood-red, his
expression grim.

EMMIE

Stop analyzing yourself. I am the
therapist in this stuffy little
room.

(suddenly nervous)

Something, we must do something. My
time is short.

TRUCK

Yeah, I noticed how you're
Norwegian avatar talks more now.

Amalie leans forward to pick up a CAT BRUSH on the sofa.

Truck reaches out to stop her but to no avail.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Wait. Stop.

Bevo opens one eye. Sees the brush. HOWLS as she jumps onto
the coffee table.

Amalie brushes Bevo, who starts PURRING very loudly.

AMALIE

Hang in there, Bevo. Nobody's going to turn you into tennis racket strings. Not yet they aren't.

Truck grabs the brush from Amalie and gives Bevo a very rough brushing. Brutally rough.

EMMIE

Stop that. You'll hurt her - but, would you look at that? She likes it.

Truck gives Amalie the brush. Tentative, she gives Bevo a brush. Rough. Rougher. She talks very quietly:

AMALIE

This triggers a feeling in me and more hope and it is something about being hard on the feline.

(quietly, eyes big)

Please continue so that this feeble brain can process further.

TRUCK

I have dozens of documents on university letterhead, in their own words - the dozens of rules, regulations - laws. - they broke.

Amalie turns away to hide her frantic face.

He sees her back: totally bloody now, oozing from every pore.

EMMIE

I have been invading your privacy. Watching you flashing back. Pushing you to do this. You will go insane. And I will still perish.

DARTS OF FIRE SPARKLE from the bloody mass of mangled flesh. He watches - unable to take his eyes off her back.

TRUCK

I always thought the rules were there to protect people like me, disabled, older - vulnerable.

Amalie - she gets self-conscious. Turns to face him square on. But still avoids his fierce glare. Talks quietly when he is calm.

AMALIE

I have been here very long. Longer
that I believed I would live.

TRUCK

Half a day? Sorry. Banshee time
doesn't count.

Amalie shakes her head, trying to figure that one out. Can't.

AMALIE

There you go again with the
shorthand and, btut, it, clears my
mind and there it is - hope again.

Amalie checks her watch, cringing. She speeds up the pace of
her questions, growing more and more desperate.

TRUCK

I think logic is the antidote you
need, at leaast -

Amalie turns to face him, LIVID with FURY.

AMALIE

What do you know because I am on
desperation's edge and you are
being the dispassionate scientist
and - and - I, well, lost track of
what I was going to say. Oh, dear.

Truck sits her down, talking quietly.

TRUCK

Can I please ask what your end game
is? What you actually NEED to LIVE?

AMALIE

We come as a spore and the heat of
re-entry activates and then we must
find a host but if the host is
incompatible it gets bad and we
degenerate quickly away.

TRUCK

Ah, I get it. I seemed the perfect
host. A house full of books. A good
brain. Rapid central processor. But
now you have run down the clock.

AMALIE

You would find me a suitable host,
a complete stranger and maybe even
a threat not to mention the Army
Rangers will put you away back on
the psych ward you fear so much.

The spot of blood on her chest grows. The cross covers her whole chest now.

Truck rubs his eyes, hard. Grabs his head with his fists, trying to get the hell rid of his visions.

Amalie looks at her chest, where he's looking.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

Your blood visions again but this
is different and I believe you are
empathic and seeing my merge with
his body deteriorate in real time.

Truck nods, then bucks up, resolved:

TRUCK

We're running out of time, aren't
we? How long do we have?

AMALIE

Hours maybe even less and so I
believe it is hopeless.

TRUCK

Not if we suspend the process for a
while. Come on, I have an idea.

Truck stands up. Grabs a jacket. Puts it on. Hands her another.

AMALIE

Where are we going?

TRUCK

Downstairs. Got the heat turned off
down there. Come on.

Truck disappears downstairs (the stairs are right behind the bookcase at the back of the sofa).

Hurriedly, Amalie grabs the RECORDING DEVICE. Puts the coat on - follows him down the narrow stairs.

DOWNSTAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Amalie pads down carpeted stairs. Pauses to admire a beautiful library. Then walks toward a bright light, down a short hallway.

DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - THE BLACK SUN - CONTINUOUS

There's a wall sculpture at the end of the hall:

A metal frame in the shape of daisy-flower petals circles a BLACK core, all on a wavy BRIGHT YELLOW fabric.

On a small red table below is a collection of very old photos.

Amalie flips through the photos, admiring the black-and-white technique. Truck is visible through a doorway to the left:

AMALIE

I like your black sun art. Is this about your - radiation disease?

TRUCK (O.S.)

Red table below is all about the Erb family back in Switzerland. Wilhelm Heirich Erb.

AMALIE

It is somehow comforting, your complicated past and you you embrace it with such vigor.

Amalie joins Truck in the next room.

MECHANICAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Truck searches documents stuffed into a large GUN SAFE.

Amalie steps up quietly behind him, watching him dig frantically into boxes, books, folders, and a briefcase.

TRUCK

Dr. Erb researched that knee reflex when you hit that spot. He was half psychologist and half physiologist. Called him a psycho-physiologist.

AMELIA

I sensed you had psychology in your genes from beginning and I believe that is why I was so persistent it remaining with you here.

Amalie stands at the doorway (in good light) and reads one book, admiring elaborate illustrations and complicated diagrams.

Bevo sneaks into the room. They whisper:

TRUCK

Forbidden room, this. I lost her for several days in here once.

AMALIE

Sorry. I did not know this.
(quietly)

Even worrying about your feline, this makes my mind clearer but I do not see any connection or logic to it how this might help me.

Bevo disappears behind a large shelf.

Amalie stands in the light, surveying the exposed floor structure of the floor above, framed-in walls - not to mention yet another room filled to the rafters with junk.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

I have observed thousands of books, hundreds of little nooks all over this big house in which to hide one idea to solution my situation.

TRUCK

It's the old put-something-where-nobody-would-think-to-find-it trick.

Amalie pulls out her trick-or-treat glasses (with no lenses). Stares at Truck over the top of the glasses.

AMALIE

Only to then forget it yourself. Not a good approach for a person with a schizophrenic brain.

TRUCK

But my schizophrenia - damn, that's it. The same thing that cancels out my schizophrenia will help you.

AMALIE

You do handle the disease well, but how?

TRUCK

I don't remember, dammit. Have to start over from scratch, how I flashed on the idea.

Truck takes a cardboard moving box and heads across the hall into another nicely-furnished room. She's right behind.

BEVO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Truck puts the cardboard moving box on a DRAFTING TABLE (set up as a podcast station with two commercial microphones, a monitor, and a VIDEO CAMERA with PHOTOGRAPHY SHADE LIGHTS.

Amalie takes a stealthy look at her watch, frowns deeply - wipes the extreme desperation from her face, and somehow finds a Buddha calm within to showcase.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

The hourglass is almost empty.

Truck opens the box. Pulls out a stack of old vintage photos. Amalie studies the photos under the light: tintypes hundreds of years old.

AMALIE

The Army Rangers will come for me at dawn. All points bulletin. No problem finding me, either.

TRUCK

Not after firing your weapon like -

AMALIE

Quiet. Pressure like this is bad for your psychotic brain. I would never forgive myself if this caused you psychiatry problems.

Amalie unfastens her ponytails. Shakes her long hair loose around her shoulders.

Amalie notices a stack of elaborate CELESTIAL MECHANICS drafting illustrations on the table and picks them up, studying them.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

You have a very nice drawing hand.

Truck turns - notices her hair. Stares at her until she gives him a nervous smile.

TRUCK
Something about the drawings.

AMALIE
They are very elegant, symmetrical,
and oddly hypnotic.

Truck rushes to search a bookshelf above the single built-in bed, then another across the room - drawers, closets.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
We should not be desperation
searching. That will lead only to
more and more frustrations.

Amalie watches as he pulls books and clothes out of a closet.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
I am not afraid, Truck. If it is my
time, so be it. I only worry for
you.

TRUCK
It's the math. That's the antidote
to my schizophrenia. Studying math.
Extreme math. Celestial Mechanics,
the most extreme math of them all.

AMALIE
This brain does not do math, I -

TRUCK
You're looking at math, lady. The
most advanced math on the planet.

Amalie stares at the drawings, picks up similar illustrations.

AMALIE
It is oddly - reassuring, but what
am I looking at?

TRUCK
Planetary motion. Each line on that
diagram is a stable orbit,
represented by umpteen
calculations.

AMALIE

Like planets going around a sun,
this makes my brain spin and go
even worse than before.

TRUCK

I have a whole book of those
diagrams somewhere. Hundreds of
them, all built into a new model of
human psychology.

AMALIE

This sound fascinating, but what
does it look like?

TRUCK

It's yellow. Bright yellow.
Paperback. The Zen of Gravity is
the title. Inch and a half
thick. Trade paperback size.

Truck starts pulling clothes and knickknacks from drawers
under the built-in single bed.

AMALIE

This is no way to solve a problem
but you must be calm and let your
mind find what it is you seek.

Amalie takes his arm and leads him back to the library.

DOWNSTAIRS LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Amalie sits Truck in a leather recliner, then goes to stand
at a metal podium facing a chalkboard. She studies the room:

AMALIE

You have created this wonderful
space to try and recover the charm
of graduate school.

TRUCK

Best place to study for exams, up
all night in an empty classroom,
pouring out all the equations on a
clean chalkboard.

Amalie smiles, fighting to calm her voice.

AMALIE

Instead of the book, perhaps you
can just drawn diagrams for me?

Truck steps forward and doodles equations and diagrams on the chalkboard.

Amalie talks as much to calm herself as him:

AMALIE (CONT'D)
I am not afraid to die not when
they began this mission or when we
crash-landed or when the Army
Rangers showed up with their angry
machine guns.

Studying him carefully, she waits patiently for him to calm down. When he turns, she pulls out the RECORDING DEVICE and turns it off.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
We are now off the record. No more
stress from there. No more Big Tech
listening to us.

Truck stares at the SMARTPHONE, still stressed out.

She tosses the device on the floor. Grabs a heavy BARBELL. SMASHES the smartphone TO SMITHEREENS.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
I always wanted to do this.

TRUCK
Amalie or the - Norwegian.

AMALIE
They are so invasive with all the
hidden ways to track you and
manipulate you and transform your
thoughts into a lust to buy junk,
eat junk, speak junk, junk, junk.

Truck collapses into the recliner, staring at the wall of books. She steps toward the books, and studies them, too.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
You seem to be hiding something.
Please let me know this.

She scans the books, talking quietly:

AMALIE (CONT'D)
I see philosophy. Kabbalah.
Mysticism. Catholic mass. Is this a
subconscious reference to your
Druid grandfather?

Truck shakes his head, his desperation growing.

Amalie moves to another wall above the stair landing: a bull skin with small framed drawings of colorful matadors and bulls in the act. He sees BLOOD OOZING FROM THE BULL SKIN.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

And this? Where do all these come from? They look very old.

TRUCK

Spain. Bullfights. Madrid Plaza de Toros. When I was a kid. Casa Paco's afterward. Juicy steaks on hot plates. Hot enough to cook on -

Truck begins to choke up. His words come in spurts.

AMALIE

Who was at this dinner? Eating steaks at Casa Paco's.

Tears well in his eyes. He starts to talk - can't. She goes to squat by him, her hand gentle on his knee.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

Are they alive? Your parents?

Truck shakes his head, unable to speak. She looks at the wall, with a sudden understanding.

AMALIE (CONT'D)

Your father was an engineer, but I see no tech here - what about -

TRUCK

Damn. That's it. It's upstairs. In one of the bookshelves. Come on.

Truck runs up the stairs. She steps quietly after him.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Truck runs out of the stairwell - glances at books strewn all over the floor.

Truck glances into the bedroom to see Amalie standing on the bed, yanking books and tossing them onto the bed and floor.

There's a KNOCKING at the door. POUNDING HARD. They huddle in the narrow hallway going to the main bedroom. Whispering.

AMALIE
It's them. Time's up.

Truck shoves her into the bedroom.

TRUCK
Like hell it is. Go, and don't make
a noise.

She scurries into the bedroom and disappears into the bath.

Truck heads to the front door and opens it.

A burly SHERIFF stands at the door, hand on his PISTOL -
flashing COP CAR LIGHTS behind him: White, RED. White. BLOOD
RED. White. BLOODIER RED.

SHERIFF
My teenager said you had a
Norwegian gal here yesterday
evening.

TRUCK
Yes, sir. She was -

SHERIFF
Doing what. Exactly?

TRUCK
Interviewing me about hiking the
Appalachian Trail.

SHERIFF
You two are on - terms?

The sheriff pulls an F.B.I. WANTED POSTER for AMALIE
JOHANSEN.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)
Just got this over the teletype.
Armed and dangerous.

Truck stares at the poster, eyes wide, pupils black and
scared.

Amalie's face on the poster is demonic. OOZING BLOOD.

The Sheriff sees Truck's terror, and his hand slides down to
his hip holster and gently UNBUCKLES the tab over his pistol.

MAIN BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amalie huddles in a small side room off the main bath, sitting on the toilet - shivering from fear - staring blankly at the clawfoot bathtub right in front of her.

Amalie hears CAT BREATHING NOISES from inside the tub.

She stands up. Sees Oscar curled up. Asleep inside the tub - on a golden YELLOW shawl.

The colorful Teddy Bear is right above the YELLOW shawl.

Amalie reaches down - stops - very gently picks up Oscar and moves her off the YELLOW shawl.

There's a book underneath: The Zen of Gravity: A New Psychology based on Celestial Mechanics by WH Clark.

She SCREAMS WITH JOY - then quickly covers her mouth, agonizing - scooting back into the toilet closet, closing the door.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff and Truck both look back into the house when they hear Amalie's muffled SCREAM.

SHERIFF

Huh? Who's that?

Truck wrenches his hands, sweating buckshot, eyes wide:

TRUCK

That - caterwaul? That was BEVO. My cat. BEVO.

Bevo comes running - takes one look at the Sheriff and HOWLS.

The Sheriff is startled.

BEVO takes one look at the open door and HOWLS again.

The Sheriff yanks his pistol out, aiming at Truck.

SHERIFF

I should arrest you right this minute, the both of you.

TRUCK

She's deaf. I'm schizophrenic.

SHERIFF

I know, God dammit. I ran your plates when I got here. Makes no difference to me, you're being a hundred percent crazy.

TRUCK

The judge might feel differently.

Truck very gently pushes by the Sheriff and cracks open the screen door.

Bevo steps carefully out of the door - and then BOLTS into the driveway.

The Sheriff, brow furrowed, is nonplussed.

SHERIFF

That there sure didn't sound like no cat hollering to me.

Truck shrugs, but he's unable to make eye contact.

The Sheriff shines a light in Truck's face, then steps past him into the house - sees books strewn everywhere.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

What the Sam Hell is going on here?

Truck steps into his way and eases him toward the door.

Truck looks away when the SHERIFF TURNS INTO LUCIFER INCARNATE:

Bloody red skin. Hair tinged with FIRE.

TRUCK

I'm gonna have to ask you for a search warrant, Sheriff. Please, sir.

The Sheriff stiffens up and gets real angry in the face.

SHERIFF

You stay put. I'll radio in to the Court House. You'll have your warrant in ten minutes.

TRUCK

Yes, sir. Fine.

SHERIFF

I will remain in the driveway.
Don't you or your lady friend do
nothing stupid. Ya' hear?

Truck nods and pushes the door closed. He stares into the living room.

Amalie rushes into the room. She holds a book out to him.

AMALIE

I found this book, buried inside
the blankets inside the clawfoot
tub. The Zen of Gravity?

Truck grabs the book and sits at the dining table, putting reading glasses on to study the pages under the desk light.

TRUCK

Haven't seen this book in ages.
Where did you find it?

Amalie grinds her teeth, trying hard not to show panic.

AMALIE

What must I do now, please because
I feel like I'm falling apart.

Truck sits her down. Puts the glasses on her. Opens up the book.

TRUCK

Just read the captions on the
figures from the beginning. They
explain the whole psychology mode.

EMMIE

Birth of the ego. Conception. The
Id. Ego. Superego.

(gently, Amalie)

This is fascination and it makes
such wonderful sense, how you build
an id and ego into an orbit and the
men are from Mars and women are
from Venus and -

TRUCK

The Norwegian is gone. It's
working.

AMALIE

Yes, I feel a temporary relief.

Amalie puts the book down.

Amalie inches up to the kitchen window. Sees the cop car on the street above, LIGHTS FLASHING - several neighbors have already gathered around, rubbernecking.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
Harboring a fugitive. Obstructions to justice. Lying to the police. I have now sent you to an institution for the criminally insane.

TRUCK
Stop that. Do your homework.

AMALIE
I'm okay for a few minutes. We must think of what to do next.

Truck slips up to stand beside her, staring outside:

AMALIE (CONT'D)
That Sherriff would work but I have no desire to live in the brain of a Neanderthal redneck cop.

Truck stares at her bloody back.

TRUCK
It's not enough, is it? That book.

AMALIE
I still need a new host and it must be compatible because I cannot make the transition again my energy will all be used up.

TRUCK
Somebody smart. Good brain. Youngish. Must it be female?

AMALIE
It does not have to be, but I do kind of like being female so yes that would be pleasant.

TRUCK
You like the psychology?

AMALIE
Sure, that would let me learn more about your big theory, but we are in the boondocks, surrounded by Hillbillies and clodhoppers.

TRUCK

We can call an ambulance for your back. They would bring you to hospital with lots of doctors and professional people. Good brains.

AMALIE

They will recognize me because didn't I hear the Sheriff showing you a photo of me?

Truck is suddenly downcast.

TRUCK

I'm gonna miss Amalie. She's kind of cute. Can't you -

Amalie rustles in the kitchen drawers. Finds a giant CARVING KNIFE. Lunges for Truck. They square off.

TRUCK (CONT'D)

Did I say something?

EMMIE

You are weak. Your brain is scrambled eggs. But now I have the math book. I can manage.

TRUCK

Where's Amalie? She'd never double-cross me like this.

EMMIE

She is dead.

Truck lunges forward.

They struggle.

Emmie breaks away, smiling. Triumphant.

Truck struggles onto his feet. GRABS a deep gash on his arm.

Truck wraps the arm with a kitchen towel and -

Truck RUNS outside.

TRUCK (O.S.)

Somebody. Please help.

Emmie steels to the window to watch.

EXT. RURAL MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Just as Truck rushes out of the house, an EMS BUS pulls up. A female MEDIC (25, cute, dyed blonde) rushes out. Another medic (45, male, hefty) talks with the Sheriff.

The lady medic hurries Truck to the back of the van. She sits him on the bumper and tends expertly to his wound.

MEDIC

It's not too bad. Nothing vital severed. What happened?

SHERIFF (O.S.)

Clear the decks. We have a serious injury here. Damn near mortal.

The medic tourniquets Truck's arm. Field stitches his gash with sutures that bite on side and attach to the other.

The Sheriff and medic shoulder-carry Emmie to the back of the EMS van. They push Truck away and get Emmie into the van.

They RIP her blouse off: Her back oozes fresh blood. Truck turns away to RETCH.

The Sheriff grabs Truck by the collar.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

You said you was alone.

Truck shows his arm.

TRUCK

She - she threatened me. Was gonna kill Oscar. Couldn't do nothing?

SHERIFF

Oscar? That damn cat?

TRUCK

Schizophrenic? Living alone? She's the next best thing to family. Better, in fact. Loads better.

The Sheriff shoves Truck down so he's sitting on the driveway.

SHERIFF

Don't you go nowhere. I got to call this in. You're damn lucky the Rangers didn't find you. They're shooting to kill. I mean, flat-out kill.

The Sheriff scoots over to his vehicle. Opens the driver's door. Leans in and gets a microphone. Talks - one eye on Truck all the while.

There's a small EXPLOSION inside the ambulance.

BLOOD splatters all the windows.

Truck gets up and runs that way.

The female medic, covered from head to toe with blood, opens the ambulance doors. Staggeres out. Collapses in a heap.

The male medic looks inside the van: wall-to-wall bloody gore as if a body exploded into a million pieces.

The Sheriff steps over. Glances inside. Holds back a retching reaction. Heads back to his sedan.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

So much for our escapee. I got a dozen other incidents to run down.

(to Truck)

You. Stay out of trouble.

The Sheriff gets into his sedan and speeds away.

The male medic gets a garden hose. Turns it on. Hoses out the blood and guts as best he can.

The female medic staggers over to a rock wall and RETCHES HER GUTS OUT over the edge. Sick as a horse. RETCHES again.

MEDIC

She's no use to me like this. Tell her I'll be back later. We got injured Rangers. Injured kids. It's like a damn war zone out there.

The male medic gets in the van. STARTS the engine. Speeds away.

The female medic staggers back toward Truck. Stares at the EMS van speeding away. Raises a feeble hand.

MEDIC (CONT'D)

Wait. Where are you going?

Her hand drops. Her body drops. She's spent. Truck sits her up then gets the hose.

Truck hoses the medic off with a fine spray, first the back. Then the front.

The lady medic is crawled into a ball. Rocking back and forth. No top. Covers her bare torso with her arms.

Truck finally sees her face.

It's Amalie!

She looks at him, struggling to give him a brave smile.

Truck rushes to take his jacket off and give it to her.

Amalie wraps the jacket around her nakedness. Truck helps her onto her feet.

TRUCK

Amalie? Is that you? But how?

(ominous, backing up)

Oh, God. It's the evil Norwegian.

Truck looks every which way, looking for an escape.

Amalie LAUGHS. Grabs his arm. Holds it. Looks at the bandages. Frowns deeply.

AMALIE

Sorry about your arm, Truckster.

TRUCK

Don't worry about me. What about you? I thought for sure you were a goner. What happened?

AMALIE

I, I just touched her and boom, there was an explosion and I was covered in flesh and blood and brain matter and then I was ankle-deep in human goo, but here I am healthy and alive and ready to adventure away.

TRUCK

You didn't have to, you know - body snatch that medic lady?

AMALIE

Come on, let's go inside because I feel dirty and grimy and need a good hot bath and then we can talk and figure out what to do next.

Amalie takes Truck by the arm and leads him back to the house.

They stop: Bevo and Oscar in a window looking at them.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
Aww, I feel right at home.

Amalie loops her arm in his - bad arm. He WINCES. She scoots around to the other side and loops hers into his good arm.

AMALIE (CONT'D)
Okay, you are right and I should be in that other woman's ugly body with the big, sagging tits, but something in your drawings re-wired my brain and let me take her energy and repair myself good as new. Viola.

She steps forward. Twirls. Does a ballerina bow.

TRUCK
What would have happened if -

She hurries him back to the house. Bevo and Oscar disappear from the window and show up at the screen porch door.

AMALIE
They'd just send me back.

They disappear into the house.

TRUCK (O.S.)
Sent you back? You're from the future?

AMALIE (O.S.)
Sure I am, from when the Earth turned on edge after the ice caps melted and Norway is a tropics full of bamboo and panda bears - but what, did you really believe I was an alien from outer space?

TRUCK (O.S.)
Well. Maybe. Just for a second. If you're not an alien, then who the hell is the Norwegian?

Amalie LAUGHS. Truck chuckles. Bevo MEOWS. VERY LOUD. The laughter dies down. Oscar meows gently.

FADE OUT.

THE END