

SHILOH

by

WH Clark

Inspired by actual events

SHILOH

FADE IN:

EXT. VICKSBURG MISSISSIPPI - CIVIL WAR CEMETERY - DAY

A beat-up, old yellow pickup turns onto a dirt road and parks behind an undertaker's van.

ROWDY (45, stout build) exits into a blustery THUNDERSTORM, puts on a dark raincoat, grabs a Bible, and heads toward a new grave site. A flash of light catches his eye.

A fleeting image of a woman in flowing robes, glowing white in the misty rain. Rowdy fights a wave of terror.

ROWDY

One foot on a banana peel and the
other in the grave. What was it the
doctor said?

A gust of wind blows the "mist" aside. It's smoke - from raging fires. CANNONS. And MUSKETS FIRING. Scattered across a Civil War battlefield.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

You have a brain tumor. It's
cancerous. Growing. Inoperable.

Rowdy steps toward the area where he saw the apparition. It's a large granite marker. He kneels down. Cleans off the gravestone: a gold-spangled Confederate flag.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

It's near your optic nerve. Expect
visual hallucinations.

A BOLT OF THUNDER ARCS down from the sky. It GROUNDS on a bronze statue nearby. A FERAL CAT spirits away with a wretched CATERWAUL.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

I give you a couple of weeks. Maybe
just days.

Rowdy talks to a bronze statue: a Confederate general on horseback. Glowing orange from the lightning strike.

DOCTOR (V.O.)

Off the record, people with this
kind of optic anomaly sometimes
experience an enhanced reality.

Steam HISSES from the statue as raindrops strike.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
Complex time is a two-dimensional
time construct, with real-time and
imaginary. Whatever that means.

Rowdy gives the figure a lazy salute. A MOURNFUL SCREAM
ECHOES through the landscape. Half rage. All agony.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
Present tense augmented by vivid
images ripped right out of your
memory banks.

Briefly, the entire landscape is devoid of trees. Rowdy's in
the middle of the Civil War battleground again. Surrounded by
cannons. Calvary. Knee-deep in mud.

DOCTOR (V.O.)
If it's not too much trouble, we'd
appreciate any details you could
provide us *ex post facto*.

The Confederate general on a HORSE transforms. Detaches.
GALLOPS into the gory mayhem. Chasing a horse-drawn carriage.

Rowdy shakes the vision off. Spots the undertaker's van,
speeding away in a cloud of dust. Chased by the general.

ROWDY
That feller needs to work on his
grave site manner.

Rowdy grabs a shovel. Takes his suit jacket off. Rolls up his
sleeves. Gets to work digging a grave.

EXT. VICKSBURG - BATTLEFIELD PARK - DAY

Rowdy's yellow truck pulls into the parking lot in front of a
rustic Civil War-era building. A giant "150TH ANNIVERSARY"
banner is draped over the entrance.

Rowdy steps out of the pickup. Turns up his collar. Runs
through heavy rain toward the battlefield museum.

JIMBO (75, black, thin) stands in a covered dog run between
two historic buildings, smoking. Rowdy skids to a halt in the
overhang near Jimbo.

ROWDY
Frightful storm's scared all your
museum visitors away.

JIMBO

As if wars wait for yellow daisies
and sunshine.

They stand watching the storm: the sun breaks through the
dark clouds. But the rainfall continues full bore.

ROWDY

Grampa used to say the Devil's
beating his wife, sun shining
through a pounding rain like that.

Jimbo stomps out his cigarette. Holds the door open.

JIMBO

The Dark Angel doesn't ever go of
her own free will.

They enter the building. A cloud passes in front of the sun.
Gloom descends on the landscape.

INT. BATTLEFIELD MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Rowdy unbuttons his trench coat. Loosens his tie.

JIMBO

Joseph had no peace in this world.
I hope he's better off in the next
one. Although I sincerely doubt it.

ROWDY

After what those felines - I mean,
felons did to him?

JIMBO

Death be not proud.

ROWDY

But she sure be beautiful.

JIMBO

Here are the artifacts found at the
crime scene. We all assumed they
were stolen.

Jimbo steps over to a small display case.

JIMBO (CONT'D)

Excepting. They're authentic, but
nothing we recognize nor any other
Civil War expert.

Rowdy takes a GOLD POCKETWATCH out of the display. Pops the cover. He smiles at the cameo of a lady inside the cover.

ROWDY

Grandma Ida. Hear tell you two were
kindred spirits, up until the day
she died. You should have this -

Rowdy gives the gold pocketwatch to Jimbo. The he studies the other artifacts. Pistols. Knives. A collection of rifles.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Don't recognize anything else. Why
would they shoot him and then leave
their weapons?

JIMBO

Those aren't just Civil War
weapons, Mr. Rowdy. They're actual -
not a day old, much less a hundred
and fifty years.

ROWDY

That's not possible.

They're both silent. Pensive.

JIMBO

Time goes by. Sometimes it doesn't
go willingly.

ROWDY

She'll seduce you.

Jimbo looks down at the floor. Drops of fresh blood at his feet. His eyes bug out - big, black, and scared.

JIMBO

Impale you on The Cross.

Jimbo turns the bloody watch over. Blood oozes from an engraved pentagram. Jimbo is horrified, eyes wide.

ROWDY

I'm gonna miss all this Civil War
history. Teaching it in class -
researching all the drama.

Rowdy holds out his hands, covered with bloody blisters.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

The pentagram isn't bleeding. Try
digging a six-foot grave in the
hard, clay soil hereabouts.

Jimbo's shaking hands wipe the pocketwatch off with a white handkerchief.

JIMBO

Things got so bloody toward the end, soldiers on both sides claimed to have seen the Angel of Death herself.

(quietly)

Sounds like you seen her square in the eye yourself.

Rowdy and Jimbo stare blankly at a panoramic graphic of the battlefield back then. It's just like Rowdy's vision.

ROWDY

My days are numbered, Jimbo. Maybe even in single digits. I figured to reconnoiter my old haunts.

Rowdy stops by a bronze statuette of a Confederate general on horseback. It's just like the bronze statue Rowdy saw.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Only three people were at the burial. Three. Me, Grandpa in a yellow pine box, and his Goddess.

JIMBO

The park visitors love your history tours. So vivid.

ROWDY

Anymore, folks can't see the history for the hate.

(quietly)

They hate you even more for telling the gospel truth. Go figure.

JIMBO

Excuse me, but aren't we missing the Confederate in the room here?

(quietly)

Where the hell did those weapons that shot Joseph come from?

Jimbo hurries across the museum to a giant model of the "BATTLE FOR VICKSBURG," showing a massive fleet of boats on the river.

Tiny blue soldiers disembarking.

A major assault up the chalk cliffs at the foot of the city.

JIMBO (CONT'D)

Not even any real evidence at the
crime scene. Clean as a plate a
tuna you give the cat.

Rowdy points to a feature on the map labeled "CEMETERY
RIDGE."

ROWDY

He left me the family haunt out on
Confederate Avenue. On Cemetery
Ridge, panoramic view. Great spot
for a cannon placement -
(shivering, afraid)
Always been shrouded in mystery how
it got that name.

Thunder BOOMS outside. Jimbo jumps a mile.

Rain POUNDS the roof. They have to talk louder.

JIMBO

You got that self-same uppity look
to your eyes as your Grampa Joseph.
Just like the Good Book says, The
abomination of desolation."

ROWDY

Make the rounds with me, Jimbo.
Like we always done. One last time?

Jimbo nods, fumbling with the pocketwatch, pointing at a
railway along the ridge.

They mosey through the museum proper, stopping briefly before
a few displays.

JIMBO

The Yanks attacked, under cover of
darkness - under cover of the
Christian faith - assaulting
straight up the chalk cliffs from
the river.

ROWDY

Braved the torrential downpour,
myself, the one that mired the
Bluecoat regulars in hip-deep mud.

They pause by an antique horse-drawn hearse with a sign that
reads, "GENERAL EARL VAN DORN'S LAST RIDE."

JIMBO

Then the rebels made so much racket
at the railhead on top of the
cliffs the Yanks thought
reinforcements had arrived.

ROWDY

Then they retreated. Terrified.
Something unspeakable -

JIMBO

At Cemetery Ridge. Happened at
Joseph's old place.

They pause at a modern display, showing Confederate statues
covered with graffiti, and other statues being torn down.

ROWDY

I wonder if we'll ever know the
truth about that terrible day.

JIMBO

Some say they saw the Angel of
Death herself. Then high-tailed it
for a big jug of Ozark moonshine.

Rowdy fights off flashback images of the cemetery.

ROWDY

This damn tumor. Can't hardly
separate the present from the
horrific past.

JIMBO

Why fight it? This is your chance
to live history in the living
flesh. What you always wanted.

They shake hands. Hug. Pull apart. Rowdy's fighting tears.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD MUSEUM - OVERCAST SUNSET

Jimbo stands in the dog run, smoking a cigarette - just the
way he was when Rowdy arrived.

Rowdy runs through the downpour to his pickup. Gets in.
STARTS THE ENGINE.

DIXIE (large, long-haired gray cat) huddles in the passenger
seat. Eyes big. Ears back. Hackles up, real scared.

ROWDY

Not to worry, girl. We'll find you
a nice new home before I pass on.

Rowdy stares at the statue of Confederate general EARL VAN DORN (bushy mustache) on a horse lit by the headlights.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Were those your weapons, General
Van Dorn? Dropped by your very own
hand - right after doing the dirty?

The motion of the windshield wipers makes the statue look like it's in motion. Galloping into the fray of battle.

EXT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - NIGHT

Rowdy elbows the pickup door open. Hurries across a cobblestone drive with Dixie in his arms.

The side door is blocked by bright yellow "CRIME SCENE" tape. Rowdy rips the tape off the door, talking to Dixie.

ROWDY

Finally, a grim reality I can
handle.

Rowdy struggles briefly with house keys. Dixie fights to get out of his arms.

Rowdy opens the door. Lets Dixie loose inside.

INT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rowdy walks through a vaulted room, turning on lights. The place is a throwback to the Victorian age.

ROWDY

Imagine that, a gunsmith put out of
his misery by a handgun. Poetic
injustice.

The furniture is all pushed aside, with evidence of a cleanup on the floor in the middle of the room.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

You open the door expecting Girl
Scouts selling mint chocolates -
then, boom. Boom. You're dead.

Rowdy unrolls a rug over the blood-stained wood floor and moves the furniture back in place.

UPSTAIRS

Rowdy darts up a half-flight of stairs. Turns on the heat at a wall thermostat. Dixie follows him everywhere.

ROWDY

Then the cops show up. Boom. Boom.
More lead in your already dead
torso. Claimed they saw the
assailants - dressed in Civil War
soldiers' uniforms. Who then
disappeared into thin air?

Rowdy heads into the bathroom a step away.

UPSTAIRS BATH

Rowdy washes his hands at the sink. The drain gets plugged up. Water overflows the sink out onto the floor.

He hears WATER FLOWING - GUSHING... coming from downstairs. Drying his hands on his trousers, Rebel steals out the room.

DOWNSTAIRS DEN

Slowly, Rowdy steps down a half flight of brick steps.

Water seeps out of the ceiling. Pools on the wood floor. The ceiling plaster is soaked and sagging.

Dixie sniffs at the puddle. She backs away, staring at Rowdy, eyes black and scared.

ROWDY

Finally, I get my money's worth out
of a goddamn insurance policy.

A CEILING FAN SHORTS OUT from the water. It EXPLODES with a shower of sparks.

A lady ghost materializes in the sparks. Naked. Angry. Dangerous: Her DIAMOND EARRINGS glitter ominously.

Rowdy stares: the sparks are superimposed on an exquisite full-wall etching of the Babylonian goddess Ishtar (buck naked, bird feet standing on lions and owls).

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Excuse me, Grampa, but exactly how
did Druids come to cater to a naked
Babylonian goddess?

A SMOKE ALARM SOUNDS OFF upstairs. Rowdy runs up the stairs. Dixie remains behind, staring up at the ceiling fan, hackles up.

MUD ROOM

Smoke billows out of the electrical panel. Rowdy pries open the panel door. Yanks out a smoking fuse.

ROWDY
Blown a fuse or three myself.

Rowdy sees his filthy self reflected in a dirty window. Dixie pads into the room. Rubs Rowdy's leg, "liking" him.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
Excepting my warranty's done expired.

Rowdy picks Dixie up. Gives her a good scratch. She purrs.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
Sure gonna miss you Dixie, girl.
More than anybody else in the whole world.

Rowdy sets Dixie down and heads out the side door.

ROWDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
We're going to a hotel for the night, girl. Not no veterinarian's feline daycare center, neither. A real, live, luxury accommodation.

Human-sized bird-shaped footsteps appear on the dusty floor and scoot across the room. Dixie follows them, hackles up.

The bird footprints stand at the glass door. Watch Rowdy's yellow pickup pull out of the driveway. Dixie GROWLS.

INT. RABID CAT HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Rowdy steps out of the elevator and paces across the lobby toward a raucous commotion in the casino. It's a festive atmosphere. Everybody wears outlandish antebellum costumes.

INT. RABID CAT CASINO - GAMING ROOM - NIGHT

Rowdy shows his ID to a bouncer at the door.

ROWDY

One last night on the town and
we'll hit the Battle of Vicksburg
history circuit for one last
hootenanny.

Rowdy steps up to a WAITER filling a punch bowl with Vodka.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

What's the occasion?

WAITER

The Seven Days of Christmas.

A drunken Confederate general comes at Rowdy, sharp sword at the ready, about to chop his head off. Rowdy cringes.

The Confederate general veers aside at the last second to grab a buxom bar girl around her tiny waist.

ROWDY

Another fake casino holiday?

WAITER

It was the Civil War re-enactors'
idea, celebrating the Christmas Eve
assault a hundred-fifty years ago.
The one General Van Dorn fended off
with trickery. Hah.

ROWDY

Belay the last. Let's just go and
commence the history hoot right
this very moment.

Rowdy grabs a glass of punch. Spikes it from a full bottle of Vodka on a side table.

ACROSS THE GAMING ROOM

SHILOH (28, pale, exotic, Middle Eastern Arab) cruises around. Elegant antebellum gown. Dazzling diamond earrings.

Shiloh slides up to a life-sized movie billboard. Chats with the voluptuous broad in the poster.

SHILOH

You've got them convinced gambling
is better than pure, romantic love.

Shiloh grabs a glass of champagne from a waiter's service.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 Cheap thrills, free booze, sex-on-demand. How can a genuine antebellum belle compete with that?

In one practiced motion, Shiloh downs the champagne and returns the glass to the waiter's tray.

The GAME BOSS (60, Black, gay) steps toward Shiloh. He studies her attire. Stares deep into her cleavage. A "666" tattoo on the top slope of one breast.

Shiloh cups her breasts in her hands, lifting them up. The game boss rolls his eyes. Not at all impressed.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 What kind of judge are you of these bodacious feminine wiles?

The Game Boss grabs her arm. Leads her to the exit.

GAME BOSS
 It's time we put you out to pasture with the rest of the milk cows.
 (ugly face)
 Golden Globes or not, if you aren't gaming or hanging on some gambler's arm showing some serious skin, we don't want you grazing around here.

Shiloh spots Rowdy across the room and stops cold. She studies Rowdy's profile in a mirror to his side.

Shiloh bends over. Rips the billowing petticoat out from under her dress. Tosses it aside, and...

Suddenly Shiloh is in Rowdy's face, stumbling. Grabbing onto his arm for dear life.

SHILOH
 Say, mister. How about we -

Rowdy spots the "666" tattoo on her breast. Looks away - and back again. Focusing on the tattoo.

ROWDY
 I - I'm just here for some - heavy lifting. Ma'am.

Shiloh grabs Rowdy's arm. Walks him toward the exit.

SHILOH
 Why, you look like you need to treat a lady to dinner.

EXT. RABID CAT CASINO - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Shiloh and Rowdy step down a cobblestone street with a panoramic view of the steamboat-style riverboat casino, floating on the banks of the Mississippi River.

ROWDY

Haven't had a proper meal in years.

SHILOH

You do look mighty pale.

ROWDY

I just spent six months in an Army hospital and rehab unit.

(quietly)

That will suck the sunshine out of any living soul.

SHILOH

Pale and morbid. I like that in my men.

Shiloh tucks her arm into his and leads him down the sidewalk toward live music. Flashing lights. Night action.

EXT. MAIN STREET - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Rowdy staggers out of a restaurant, drunk. He runs into an iron park bench. Gently, Shiloh steers him back on course.

ROWDY

You here for the Confederate ball?

SHILOH

Don't you recognize the costume?
I'm a Banshee, you know -

ROWDY

The Irish spirit that comes to warn
the clansmen of imminent death?
Call me R. Dannigan of the Clan
O'Clearey. Alias Rowdy.

SHILOH

Why fancy that, I found myself a
vintage Irishman.

With her arm clamped around his waist, Shiloh leads Rowdy down the middle of the sidewalk. Toward a parking garage.

ROWDY

My antecedents came straight from
County Cork, Ireland. Druid down to
the wax between my toes.

(quietly)

Always had a weakness for cheap
whiskey... And fine women.

Half a block away, KNOX (55, dressed as a Confederate
general) steps out of an expensive restaurant. Heads toward
the same parking garage.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

The Clan O'Clearey were the
traditional antiquarians for the
Druids. The keepers-of-history.

SHILOH

My, aren't we just the precious
jewel box full of confessions.

(quietly)

Don't drink very much, do you?

ROWDY

As in never. Why?

(sotto voice)

Running off my mouth, aren't I?

SHILOH

I just adore a man willing to use
the tongue between his cheeks.

INT. RABID CAT CASINO - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Standing by his yellow pickup, Rowdy fishes in his pants for
his keys. He leans heavily on Shiloh for support.

SHILOH

How does a Druid historian end up
in a psych ward?

ROWDY

Not. I never been on no psych ward.

(sotto voice)

And you drank more than I did.

Shiloh props Rowdy against the pickup. Plunges her hand into
his front pants pocket. Feels around.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

How come you're still sober?

SHILOH

But. Isn't it obvious? Oh, my.
Drunk as a heathen but still paying
attention to her activities.

Rowdy yanks her hand out. Keys in her hand.

ROWDY

Hey. We only just met.

Knox steps into the parking garage. Shiloh hears his
FOOTSTEPS and looks. Their eyes meet: She reaches into her
purse. Pulls out a derringer.

SHILOH

You.

Knox freezes. He stares at a red Porsche a couple of parking
spots away and - he makes a run for it.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Hey, judge. I'm talking to you.

Shiloh picks up her skirt. Runs after Knox, waving the
derringer in the air.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Stop. You owe me money, mister. A
whole passel of greenbacks. Pay up,
already.

KNOX

Go away, witch.

SHILOH

I chaperoned your dinner party. I
pretended to be your beautiful,
sexy wife. Just so you could go and
lasso some rich new clients. Pig.

Knox reaches the red Porsche. Pulls his keys out. Hands
shaking.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Where was your ugly wife, huh? Do
you even have an ugly wife?

They get in a tussle. Shiloh has the derringer, muzzle over
Knox's heart. Her finger on the trigger.

Rowdy tries to restrain Shiloh.

ROWDY

Whoa, lady. You're assaulting him -
battery, too. Put that toy gun
away.

A man in a CIVIL WAR DOCTOR's suit (black doctor's bag,
stethoscope around his neck) darts out from behind a van
parked nearby.

A SHOT SOUNDS.

Knox falls to the ground.

The CIVIL WAR DOCTOR darts away and disappears. Rowdy feels
Knox's neck for a pulse.

SHILOH

Do something. C.P.R.

Rowdy turns Knox on his side. Blood spurts from a gory wound
at the back of his head.

ROWDY

A hole like that in your torso?
Poor guy doesn't have no more C.P.
to R.

Rowdy picks up the doctor's weapon: a shiny vintage pistol.
He handles it like it was a hot potato.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Oh, shit. Another Civil War weapon,
and not a split second older than
the day it was forged - in 1850.

SHILOH

Just forged? Another - another
what?

Shiloh struggles with big-time shock. Her knees buckle.

ROWDY

Felons left behind their murder
weapons after they shot Grampa.

Shiloh turns away, fighting a vomiting reaction.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Oh, wow. Banshee appears -
harbinger of imminent death. Boom.
Death comes a-knocking. On somebody
else's door. I'm off the hook. Yay.

SHILOH

(quiet, very afraid)

Metals can only go one way in time -
to the future. Can't never go to
the past. Immutable law of nature.

Shiloh stares at Rowdy with an accusing, menacing look.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Can't help but notice the blood on
your sleeve, there.

(stern, deadly serious)

Terrible struggle, just terrible,
sheriff. Please, lock him up -
before he shoots me, next.

ROWDY

You best pray nobody saw us. Your
outfit is a whole lot more
conspicuous than mine.

They hustle toward Rowdy's beat up old yellow pickup. Mount
up. Burn rubber getting out a there.

INT. OLD YELLOW PICKUP - NIGHT

They barrel down a boulevard and empty side streets. Rowdy
SQUEALS THE TIRES turning a sharp curve.

The pickup hits the GRAVEL BORDER before Rowdy muscles it
back onto the concrete roadway.

SHILOH

Pull over. You're gonna kill us,
too.

Shiloh slides an arm around his waist. Behind his back.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

I'll make it worth your while.

Rowdy points to the rear. Shiloh turns and looks: flashing
cop car lights are following them.

EXT. VICKSBURG - CITY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Rowdy VEERS off the road. They JOLT down a narrow dirt road.
Into a thicket of oak trees.

Rowdy stops. Turns the headlights out.

They both turn in their seats: the flashing cop car lights drive on by, following another vehicle.

ROWDY

What are you afraid of? We haven't done anything wrong.

SHILOH

Leaving the scene of a crime?
Failure to render C.P.R.?
(sobbing giant tears)
Abducting a perfectly innocent
witness against her feeble will?

They gaze out the windshield at a rolling vista:

Narrow paths. Colorful fresh flowers. Ornate tombstones.
Mossy oak trees.

One very old 1950s jalopy that looks like the grandfather of Rowdy's vehicle.

ROWDY

Somebody's visiting Grampa's grave.
Come on. Paying him respects.

They step out into the light of a full moon. Walk toward the old jalopy.

Shiloh drapes a thin shawl over her shoulders against the chill in the air.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

It's Jimbo from the battlefield
museum.

SHILOH

Exactly how do you intend to render
assistance to that poor, grieving
Black man?

Jimbo looks up as FOOTSTEPS approach.

Grampa's GOLD POCKETWATCH glitters in his hand in the bright moonlight.

Jimbo sees Rowdy well enough. But Shiloh is vague and unclear. Jimbo rubs his eyes. He steps aside to try and get Shiloh into focus.

JIMBO

Sweet Jesus, it's the Devil's spawn
come to take me down under.

Rowdy approaches, waving at Jimbo.

Jimbo's very confused. Because Shiloh's still half flesh and bones. Three-quarters ghostly phantasm.

JIMBO (CONT'D)
The Angel of Death.

Rowdy bears down on Jimbo, who's now retreating rapidly toward his pickup.

JIMBO (CONT'D)
Leave me be. Go away. Scram.
(screaming)
Take your Goddamn time peace back,
Grampa Joseph - it's cursed. Bloody
cursed.

Jimbo throws the pocketwatch at them.

Rowdy snags the pocketwatch by the chain. Stuffs it in his PANTS POCKET.

ROWDY
Hey, Jimbo. It's me, Rowdy.

Shiloh grabs Rowdy's shirt. Tries to hold him back.

SHILOH
Come on, guy. Leave the poor Black
man to his grief.

Jimbo reaches his jalopy. Grabs a hunting rifle off a rack in the rear window.

Jimbo's shaking hands CHAMBERS A ROUND. He aims at Shiloh.

Rowdy backs away, grabbing Shiloh's sleeve to pull her back, too.

ROWDY
Okay, Mister Rowdy is going now.

Jimbo stumbles on a rock. He jerks to the side.

The rifle FIRES. A bullet strikes Rowdy.

Rowdy wobbles, dazed and confused.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
Taliban sniper at six o'clock.
Scramble, on my mark.

One hand on his heart, Rowdy stumbles backward, grabbing at Shiloh for support.

Jimbo throws the rifle into the back of his jalopy, jumps in, and SPEEDS AWAY.

A cloud of sooty, black exhaust hits Rowdy in the face. He coughs and gasps.

The gold pocketwatch falls out of Rowdy's SHIRT POCKET into his hand.

Rowdy looks at the watch. There's a bullet embedded in the gold casing.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
Where'd that come from? That means -
I'm dead now?

Slowly, Rowdy stretches out his hand. Looks at his palm.

He opens up his other hand. Looks at that palm.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
Where are my bandages? My hands are
all healed from digging Grampa's
f-ing grave. What the hell?

Rowdy looks at Shiloh.

Shiloh's standing in the full light of the moon. Fading in and out. Shimmering with a soft glow.

SHILOH
It's your lucky day, Amish. An hour
ago you were marked for certain
death. Then bling. Change of heart.

Rowdy blinks. Squints. Grabs her by the shoulders.

ROWDY
Why are you still here? Your
Banshee job is done already.

SHILOH
You mean - you believe me? That I'm
a Banshee?
(quietly)
Nobody ever believes me.

ROWDY
Go away. Disappear. I am not going
to die this day.

Rowdy unhands her... backs away. She follows him.

SHILOH
 My name's Shiloh. As in bloody
 Civil War battle. Hint?
 (gently)
 Banshees warn faithful Clan members
 of their impending demise. Out of
 gratitude for their - attentions?

ROWDY
 I know my Druid history, dammit.
 Backward and forward.
 (quietly)
 You can leave your standard Banshee
 spiel for the next job.

Arms crossed, Rowdy studies her. She crosses her arms, too.

SHILOH
 Something wrong with my lame
 costume?
 (bitter venom)
 That poor, old Black man just shot
 a lame holiday bullet at you?

ROWDY
 Hey. I put that pocketwatch in my
 pants pocket. I never put anything
 in my shirt pocket.

Rowdy pulls out the gold pocketwatch from his shirt.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
 How did that end up here? Again.

SHILOH
 You can't recollect any better than
 a goldfish in a fishbowl. Blink.
 It's a whole new world.

ROWDY
 Jimbo had blanks in his rifle.
 That's it. Sure. Sure he did.

The moon goes behind a cloud. Shiloh seems to fade away.

SHILOH
 Ain't nobody here but us chickens.
 (quietly)
 You saw a ghost? In this very
 cemetery? Really, now.

Rowdy stares at her hands and arms as they slowly disappear.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Did you like what you saw? Was she pretty? Did she tug at your heartstrings?

ROWDY

Stop that. Just plain stop it. I have a hard enough time separating out reality - without you muddying the waters.

Rowdy rubs his eyes.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Damn. I forgot. My condition. Huh. What exactly is real here?

SHILOH

It's called beer. Then wine. With a whiskey chaser. Tequila and limes for dessert.

ROWDY

I never drink. Not even a drop.

SHILOH

Ain't nobody actually talked to me before. Like I was a real person. What's your problem in the head, mister? ...Oh, never mind me.

Shiloh pushes Rowdy into the pickup and scoots in beside him.

INT. OLD YELLOW PICKUP - NIGHT

Rowdy turns the IGNITION ON. They listen to the ENGINE PURR.

ROWDY

Tumor. Visions. Mixing up the past and the morbid present. Leastwise, not in a logical fashion.

Rowdy gets out. Walks around the back. Shiloh scoots behind the wheel as he climbs in the passenger side.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

(rubbing his eyes)

Got to find out what happened to Grampa. Hoping to use this - second-sight condition, to root out the facts into evidence. Clairvoyance.

SHILOH

Now I know why the boss wanted me
to take some vacation days. Go hang
with the transcendental for a
spell, he told me.

Rowdy starts to ask a question. But she holds up her hands.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

He coulda told me,
(deep, angry voice)
You. Go find out where the fuck the
vintage iron came from.

She looks aside for his reaction. But Rowdy has dozed off.

EXT. CITY CEMETERY - NIGHT

Jimbo's ratty old pickup eases to a stop near Grampa's grave.

Jimbo gets out, a candle in one shaking hand and a shotgun in
the other.

Jimbo stands quietly near Grampa's grave, mumbling to the
fresh mound of dirt.

JIMBO

It's started again, Joseph. The
Angel of Death is back.

Jimbo looks toward the sound of a GALLOPING HORSE.

It's a Confederate general on horseback. OMG. Looping a lasso
toward Jimbo's head.

JIMBO (CONT'D)

Good God Almighty, it's the Pale
Horseman of the Apocalypse.

The general chases Jimbo across the cemetery, his HORSE
KNOCKING over gravestones.

Jimbo BLASTS both barrels of the SHOTGUN into Van Dorn - to
no avail.

VAN DORN

How dare you people obliterate my
Christmas Eve miracle from history
and black wash the past.

Jimbo jumps into his old jalopy. Turns on the lights

No sooner than the high beams hit Van Dorn - he disappears.

INT. OLD YELLOW PICKUP - SUNRISE

Rowdy's pickup turns into a winding driveway that disappears into unkempt foliage and deep shade.

Rowdy jolts awake. He looks at Shiloh, who's driving.

ROWDY

Hey. This is my house. How did we even get here?

Long BRANCHES BRUSH the top of the pickup, SCREECHING like a fingernail on a chalkboard.

SHILOH

One look at my giant antebellum nipples, and you blabbered out your whole life story.

ROWDY

I would not.

Shiloh reaches deep into her cleavage. Yanks off two star-shaped pasties off her erect nipples. Plasters them on the dashboard.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Then again, maybe I would.

(quietly)

It's been ages since I even had a proper date.

A sturdy antebellum house is hidden in foliage to the right.

Briefly, the early morning sun reflects off the windows, looking as though A FIRE IS BLAZING inside the house.

EXT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - SMOKEY DAWN

Rowdy gets out and grabs a bundle of mail out of the mailbox. He walks up the driveway beside the pickup as it inches up the hill, flipping through the mail while talking to Shiloh.

ROWDY

You're still here?

SHILOH

Had to be sure you got home safe, didn't I? No more than any other proper lady would do. Or, I declare - are you suggesting I'm not the perfectly southern belle?

Sunlight silhouettes Shiloh, her hair framed in a halo.

ROWDY

Didn't realize how beautiful you
are.

Shiloh leans out, showing him some generous cleavage.

SHILOH

What kind of line is that? How
about sexy? Voluptuous. Hot.

(quietly)

Go ahead and break my fondest
illusions with the first sober
vulgarity out of your mouth.

The small yard is surrounded by giant shade trees.

ROWDY

Who are you? Miss Manners?

Shiloh parks. Gets out. They head toward the entrance. Rowdy
yanks "CRIME SCENE" tape off the front door.

SHILOH

A clod-hopper, war-addict who reads
etiquette columns? It's not the
target, little misses. It's the -
goddamn weapon.

(sudden urgency)

Where's the little girl's room?

ROWDY

That's odd. I coulda sworn I
removed that damn yellow tape.

Shiloh waits impatiently. Waving her arms, squirming, as
Rowdy unlocks the front door.

INT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Shiloh bounds up a flight of wood stairs. Disappears into the
upstairs bathroom.

Shiloh SCREAMS.

Rowdy vaults up the stairs. He runs into Shiloh as she's
backing out of the bathroom, terrified.

ROWDY

Shiloh? What -

Dixie huddles nearby, watching all. Ears back and afraid.

UPSTAIRS BATHROOM

Rowdy inches into the small bathroom. Dim light filters through ripped-up window blinds.

GLASS SHARDS from broken shower doors CRUNCH underfoot.

A half-nude CIVIL WAR NURSE (wearing DIAMOND EARRINGS) lies bleeding out on the floor, barely visible. Her mouth is open wide in a silent scream of horror.

A HALF-EMPTY WINEGLASS sits on the pedestal sink. A puddle of glistening red fluid glistens on the floor.

ROWDY

Where'd this mess come from? It
wasn't here yesterday.

Rowdy pokes the red muck with a finger. It's thick. Sticky.

Dixie hovers at the door threshold.

Rowdy touches the fluid to the tip of his tongue. He yells downstairs toward Shiloh (afraid, his voice breaking):

ROWDY (CONT'D)

It's just rust. Whole damn plumbing
is rusted out.

He gets up on wobbly knees. Backs out of the room.

LIVING ROOM

Rowdy steps down the stairs. The front door is wide open. He runs for the door. Shoots outside.

EXT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - DAY

Rowdy finds Shiloh huddling near the pickup, sobbing.

SHILOH

What's a Civil War nurse doing in
your bathroom - all bled out.

ROWDY

Never figured a Banshee would be
mortified by a little ol' ghost.

She becomes genuinely furious:

SHILOH

Hey, you. The paranormal is MY dimension. I LIVE there. Nobody DARE invade it. Much less leave their bloody handiwork behind, here - in real time.

ROWDY

Honest? You saw that female ghost lady upstairs?

Shiloh slaps him, hard. He reels back, hurt - confused.

SHILOH

How dare you insult me - in my very moment of dire distress.

Rowdy walks Shiloh to a picnic table. Sits her down. She wipes tears off her face.

ROWDY

Must have been a coon got in the window. Squirrel maybe.

SHILOH

Oh, God. I just connected all the dots. The Druid I buried in that cemetery was your Grampa Joseph. The Black man at his gravesite.

ROWDY

Why is it, pray tell - right after you show up. I'm fucking surrounded by death? Gory death.

Shiloh gathers her petticoats, deathly afraid.

SHILOH

This is where that old man was shot by the robber guy. Papers said nary a trace - excepting their fucking pistols.

Rowdy pulls out his cellphone.

ROWDY

I'll call, have somebody come over and clean the upstairs bath.

SHILOH

I'm in the middle of a goddamn redneck paranormal shooting gallery.

Rowdy stares in the distance, musing.

ROWDY

Isn't that the weirdest thing? All that hooch I had last night and I don't have squat for a hangover.

SHILOH

Hey, pissant, I can only hold on for so long.

Shiloh steps over to the pickup. Comes back with a small pile of clean lingerie. Rowdy stares at her.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

What? I can't have a change of linens in my big purse?

Suddenly desperate, she squirms, speaking in a small voice.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

The little girl's room? Hurry.

Rowdy lets her in the glass side door.

ROWDY

It wasn't the alcohol. The visions were - well. True?

Rowdy follows her inside, closing the glass door behind him.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS MUD/BATHROOM - DAY

They enter a room that's half bathroom and half laundry. Shiloh scans the filthy dirty space, disgusted.

SHILOH

Ugh, get your cleaning shoes on, baby Louie.

Shiloh drops her pants and sits right down on the toilet across the room, relieving herself.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

After all this Confederate drama, You owe me an expensive dinner in a swank restaurant, mister. And I mean how.

Rowdy turns the hot water on in the bathtub, then tidies up the room a bit.

ROWDY (O.S.)
 Plenty of piping-hot water. Go
 ahead, wash away all your sins.

Shiloh strips off the rest of her clothes. Disappears into a thick cloud of steam.

SHILOH
 Hey. It's my vacation. Let me enjoy
 my pleasures, here. Hint. A lady
 needs her privacy?

Rowdy stops. Stares: Silhouetted in the steam, she looks like the ghostly apparition he saw earlier.

He scoots into the house proper.

Shiloh yells at Rowdy, as he leaves.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 Never seen a skyclad woman before?
 Huh? Hey - Rowdy, you still there?
 Cat got your tongue?

Petite bird-shaped footsteps appear in the condensation on the tile floor, stepping toward the towel rack.

ROWDY (O.S.)
 Cat. Dixie.

Rowdy's head pops in the door.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
 Gotta go get Dixie from my hotel
 room. I'll meet you at the café
 down the street.

SHILOH
 Dixie? You didn't say anything
 about no lady friend. You married?

Shiloh looks toward the door, but he's already gone.

INT. SESQUICENTENNIAL CAFE - DAY

Shiloh and Rowdy sit at a corner table eyeballing the other patrons who are mainly Civil War re-enactors and tourists.

They're in town for a re-enactment battle. "150TH ANNIVERSARY" posters are everywhere.

SHILOH

I must confess, even shiny clean,
and perfumed all over. All this
crime scene drama's got my pimples
goosed.

Shiloh gulps down the rest of a very large whiskey.

ROWDY

If not for the bona vide Civil War
weapons found at the crime scene,
I'd chalk all this confusion up to
my visual-nerve brain tumor.

SHILOH

Pardon my ignorance. But, now that
you're sober. Do you. I mean. I
don't confuse you in the least bit?

ROWDY

NO. You're a Goddamn Banshee. A
denizen from Hell. The -

She acts hurt.

SHILOH

No need to go and blurt out the
ugly truth on me.

ROWDY

Feel like I'm going insane, here.

SHILOH

That makes the two of us. I punch
out a ticket for a Druid
intervention. And. And then.

Rowdy gets a faraway look in his eyes.

ROWDY

I saw this lady ghost. In the
cemetery. Funny, she looked just
like you. She saw me. Then, I heard
this god-awful scream.

SHILOH

(taking a deep breath)
Shall I do another one for you?

ROWDY

You scared the dickens out of my
friend Jimbo. Huh. If he saw you,
then I'm not going crazy. Yes.

Rowdy stares at her: focusing. She poses seductively.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
So I was right. You really did come
for Grampa. However.

A waitress swoops their empty plates aside and, in the same
deft motion, leaves their bill on the table.

SHILOH
He was listening. How unusual in a
man.

ROWDY
The horrific murder scene in
Grampa's house didn't scare you one
little bit, neither. It was all an
act, southern gal in distress.

Rowdy fumbles with some bills, then just leaves a pile of
cash on the table, not bothering to count the money.

SHILOH
Observant, too.

Rowdy pulls Shiloh's chair out for her.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Southern gentleman to boot.

Rowdy sits opposite her at the small table.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
How can a battle-hardened war
veteran such as yourself judge how
I wasn't the least bit perturbed by
said gruesome murder. Why, maybe I
was just in earth-shaking shock.

Rowdy pulls out a roll of money. Hands her a wad of bills.

ROWDY
Bye, darling. Shine your butt on
back to the Rabid Cat Casino, won't
'ya?

SHILOH
Crude. Bossy. Bling goes the magic.

Shiloh eyes the fat roll of money.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Oh, my goodness. A man of many talents, I see. Zoom-zoom, back in high esteem.

ROWDY

It's my severance pay from imbedding with the Army in Afghanistan. blood money. Take it. Just take it and go.

Shiloh stuffs the money into her lacy black bra.

SHILOH

Bloody money doesn't buy you love. But it might just buy you some time to get there.

Shiloh wraps her arms around Rowdy as if for a hug - grabs his wallet from his back pocket.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

What? I can't be going around in my work clothes all the time.
(seductive wiles)
Why, what will the neighbors say?

Shiloh pulls a credit card out of his wallet. Waves it in his face.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Tic. Toc. Meter's running.

Shiloh tosses the wallet toward Rowdy. As she runs for the nearest boutique. Rowdy yells after her:

ROWDY

I'll be back soon. Meet me right here. Sundown. Gonna go clean up the house.

SHILOH

Spanky clean. And nix the command voice.

ROWDY

See you - never.

SHILOH

I heard that.

Confederate General Earl Van Dorn sits at a table nearby, sipping a draft beer.

Rowdy walks out, passing right in front of Van Dorn.

ROWDY

Last email from Grampa. Said he'd
been visited by a Banshee. I
thought he'd been kicked up side
the head by a horse.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Carrying several shopping bags, Shiloh exits a boutique and heads toward the next one.

Shiloh stops to read the headlines on a "VICKSBURG POST" newspaper at a sidewalk newsstand.

SHILOH

Banker shot after costume ball.
after the close of business. Police
are interviewing witnesses.

Shiloh stares at a police sketch. The drawing shows Rowdy's clean-shaven face.

INT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rowdy steps inside the front door. Stumbles over a box under the mail slot. He lifts out a double handful of letters.

Rowdy studies the envelopes - opens one up.

ROWDY

Christmas cards. I plumb forgot it
was the holidays. Brad Knox. Oh,
God - I thought I recognized him.

Rowdy tosses the mail back. Walks up the stairs, and gingerly opens the bathroom door.

UPSTAIRS BATH

GLASS CRUNCHES underfoot as Rowdy steps inside and turns the lights on. The light bulbs SPARK and SPUTTER.

Dixie stops at the doorway.

Rowdy reaches up to screw a bulb into the fixture above the sink. The bulb POPS in his hand.

ROWDY

Good will to all men -

Blood streams down his forearm from a glass cut.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
Unless you've got Confederate
ancestors. And regret what they
done.

Rowdy turns on the hot water in the bathtub.

He grabs a towel and bandages from a cabinet. Tets down on
his knees at the tub to clean and bandage his bloody arm.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
Christmas. God, how I hate
Christmas. Now more than ever.

The Lady Ghost's face materializes in the steam, with a fine
body decked out in lacy lingerie.

Rowdy sees the dame and turns around, but she's gone.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
Say, Dixie? Did you see anything?

Dixie sees the ghost - runs out of the room, terrified.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
I reckon so.
(quietly)
Probably just saw all that blood.

Rowdy turns the water off and heads downstairs.

LIVING ROOM

Passing a big black desk in the living room, Rowdy stumbles
on something. He looks down.

It's Dixie, curled up in a ball on the floor. He touches her.
She HOWLS.

ROWDY
Dixie!

Rowdy grabs a basket, frantic - stuffs it with towels and
rags. He gently puts Dixie in. Dixie HISSES and SPITS at him,
in great pain.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
It's okay, girl. We'll get you to a
doctor.

Rowdy hurries out the front door with the basket in his arms.

INT./EXT. OLD YELLOW PICKUP - NIGHT

Rowdy cruises the strip in the downtown shopping area. He's looking... looking.

Rowdy pulls to the curb, and Shiloh climbs in. She takes one look at Rowdy, and her jaw drops.

SHILOH
Bloody hell. You look like you've
seen a ghost.

ROWDY
Dixie's hurt. Real bad. Just
dropped her off at the vet.

Shiloh grabs his arm so strongly that the pickup swerves.

SHILOH
That gorgeous gray feline?

Shiloh scoots closer to him, slipping an arm behind his back.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Cats instinctively protect their
people, you know. They'll quite
willingly sacrifice themselves for
their beloved ones.

Rowdy pulls into the Rabid Cat Casino parking lot.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
What's she protecting you from?

ROWDY
The army. The V.A. Confederate
patriots. Evangelicals. Denizens
from Hell. The History Channel.
(suppressed rage)
Why are you still here, lady?

Shiloh stares at his rage. She talks very softly,
mesmerizing. In the shadows, a cavalry soldier shadows them.

SHILOH
Paranormal events aren't real-time
like C.S.I. forensics. They're
spiritual. Independent of time.

ROWDY
Just stop it. Please. Stop.

SHILOH

What's your problem, mister? You want me to help you solve this goddamn murder or not?

He calms down - and opens up to her:

ROWDY

Sorry. Just - well, sad to lose Grampa. That way. It's horrible.

SHILOH

Head spinning? Heart heavy? Here, allow me to plant your feet firmly back on *terra firma*.

Shiloh pulls a newspaper from her purse. Waves it at him.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Dead banker. Psycho on the run just back from a murder spree in Afghanistan. Kidnapped a casino chartreuse.

ROWDY

Nobody but a history teacher would do the bloody with an antique pistol. Or even know how to make it work.

Rowdy stares at his likeness in a sketch on the front page. The cavalry soldier shadowing them is closer.

SHILOH

Are you afraid of - supernatural?

ROWDY

Coming in the person of a Banshee? You're damn right I am.

SHILOH

So we're on the same wavelength, here? Finally.

ROWDY

If'n you define insanity as a frequency wave - well, yeah - I'm with you.

Rowdy points toward her shopping bags in the pickup bed. He puts the truck in gear and eases into light traffic.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Did I buy you any nice clothes?

STREETLIGHTS around Van Dorn BUZZ ON AND OFF as he GALLOPS away, hot on the trail of Rowdy's pickup.

EXT. RABID CAT CASINO HOTEL - NIGHT

Shiloh grabs her shopping bags, piles them into Rowdy's arms - hiding his face - and scampers along beside him.

ROWDY

I got Dixie when she was just a
little ball of gray fur.

Rowdy maneuvers through the parking lot toward the foyer.

Shiloh grabs the random package that he drops on the way.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Didn't expect to see you again,
neither.

SHILOH

Newspaper says witnesses saw two
costumes at the scene of the crime:
a drunken Confederate doctor and a
knock-out gorgeous Southern belle.

ROWDY

So I'm in the clear? Scott free?
(sudden depression)
Oh, crap. They'll interview
witnesses from the ball.
(squeaky voice)
Yeah, this guy was all over her,
drunk as a skunk.

Shiloh is visibly upset.

SHILOH

You were gonna throw me to the
wolves? How's that for gratitude?

ROWDY

Gratitude? What the hell for?

SHILOH

Why, your ugly mug is all over the
daily papers. Just who do you think
is going to be your faithful alibi?

INT. RABID CAT CASINO HOTEL - NIGHT

The elegant lobby is full of Civil War re-enactors and their gear. A Confederate general is among the patrons, drinking up a storm with his foot-solder buddies.

The Rebel general grabs a buxom WAITRESS passing by. He buries his face in her cleavage. She LAUGHS raucously, throwing her arms around him.

WAITRESS

Why, General. You're absolutely
every ugly husband's worst enemy.

Rowdy shoves a credit card into Shiloh's hand.

ROWDY

Here, go book us a room.

Shiloh hurries toward the front desk. Rowdy lurks in the shadows, hiding his face behind the packages.

Rowdy spots Van Dorn - stares as the general sweeps the waitress into the shadows and rips her blouse off for a quick trick.

Shiloh returns with a room key.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Might I please ask how this Banshee
thing works? I mean, are you a
ghost? A visual hallucination? Or
what?

SHILOH

The paper says the banker was
costumed as General Earl Van Dorn,
commanding the Confederate Army of
The West.

As they head for the elevators, Shiloh unfolds the newspaper in his face.

A rough sketch of DOCTOR LEWIS ERB stares back at him.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Do you recognize this police sketch
of the cops' new suspect? It's your
lucky day. You're off the hook.

(quietly)

Their number one suspect now is a
Doctor Louis Erb, a jealous husband
who shot the general after he
seduced his wife.

Shiloh looks from Rowdy's face to the drawing in the newspaper.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Why, glory be. I perceive a certain likeness. You. And Dr. Louis Erb.

(quietly)

Does that rhyme with Lucifer or am I just - imagining more things?

Rowdy yanks her into an empty elevator.

ELEVATOR

All the walls in the elevator are full-length mirrors.

Shiloh pulls out a powder kit from her new purse. Pretties up in the mirror (patting powder to her breasts, too).

ROWDY

You seem downright - domestic, for a ghost-slash-demon spirit.

Rowdy talks to her reflection in the mirror.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Hot shower? Perfume. Olfactory hallucination, too? Not likely.

(quietly)

Pissing in the latrine. Holding up a newspaper. Mystery deepens. Or dementia.

Shiloh gives him a sexy pose. The elevator stops. The doors open. They scurry out.

INT. RABID CAT CASINO HOTEL - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Shiloh sits in front of a large mirror at one end of the room, brushing her long white hair.

Shiloh wears an extra-large green striped "CLAIBORNE COUNTY PRISON" nightshirt. The pantaloons from her ballroom costume.

SHILOH

Never looked good in stripes. As if he would even notice.

Rowdy channel surfs the local news on TV.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Violent weather. War movies. war news. Violent crimes. anger and rage - this is insane. People actually watch all of that stupid mayhem for relaxation?

ROWDY
It helps to keep my mind in - er, the sexy present. No, wait. Rewind -

SHILOH
I can help with that, kind sir.

Shiloh tightens up her shirt real close so her breasts are painfully prominent. She does a little striptease act behind and around the TV.

Rowdy waves her out of the way to his view of the TV. She's offended:

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Tell me - p-lease - it's not the violence and misery, that gets your rocks off.

RAIN mixed with HAIL POUNDS the sliding glass doors which lead to a small balcony outside.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Hello? Sexy broad in the heat of the night? United by danger. Chased by the authorities. Cornered.

Rowdy clicks the TV remote off.

Rowdy gets up to stare out the glass doors - talking to her reflection in the glass.

ROWDY
Okay. She's a Banshee. If nothing else, 'cause Grampa saw her, too.
(quietly)
At least she's not a ghost. Nor an avenging spirit. Ghoul. Wraith. Phantom. Shadow. Avenging ex.

She poses very sexy.

SHILOH
Who says I'm not just a hallucinogenic projection of your lifetime of suppressed lust?

Rowdy holds two fingers to his neck, checking his pulse.

ROWDY
Heart's thumping worse than a
marathon run.
(to himself)
If the body says she's real, then
shut the F up, brain - she's real.

Briefly, he sees a major Civil War-era Yankee ironclads on the river below, shelling Vicksburg.

Rowdy focuses - and it's just two ironclad-shaped casinos floating offshore.

SHILOH
Tell me you aren't glued to the
boob tube for Monday Night
Football. Thursday Night. Sunday
Night.

FLASHING RUMBLES of CANNON and MORTAR FIRE. On the far side of the river - but it's just a spate of fireworks.

ROWDY
Don't watch football. Or any other
sports, for that matter.

SHILOH
Oh, my. He has quality time
available. Pencil me in.

Rowdy turns away from the window. Focuses on Shiloh.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
You were imagining the river
assault on Vicksburg. Any time now
you'll swoon in despair from a
broken-heart attack because the
damn Yankees won.

ROWDY
O.M.G. She can read my mind.

SHILOH
Drunk as a skunk's stripe the other
night? Single. Virgin.

ROWDY
Nonsense. I would never tell you a
personal thing like that. To a
complete stranger? A casino girl?

Shiloh grabs the room phone. Dials. Waits for an answer.

SHILOH

Are you sure, soldier boy? *Marque numero dos* for what dark, turbid thoughts are keeping your Johnston flaccid, *por favor*.

ROWDY

I am not turned on by violence. Or war. I. Just study it. Investigate.

Shiloh waits as the phone rings.

SHILOH

Ring-ringing. Room service? Can a body order out for a floozy harlot? .No? How about a casino slut?

ROWDY

I never called you that, nor even insinuated.

SHILOH

It's kind of you to say that. Especially coming from a Druid and all. Thank you, dearest.

(whispering)

She's forwarding my call. Oops.

Shiloh slams the phone down.

ROWDY

Reception will have our room number.

SHILOH

Look who's keeping an innocent casino girl against her delicate Southern will.

Shiloh cracks open the sliding glass door. Enter THUNDER BOOMING from a MAJOR THUNDERSTORM outside.

There's a violent KNOCKING on the DOOR. A KEY TURNS in the latch.

The door opens - only to get CAUGHT by a SECURITY CHAIN.

GAME BOSS (O.S.)

Room fucking service. Open up.

Rowdy grabs Shiloh and whispers to her urgently. (She continues to talk normally, even a little louder.)

ROWDY

You said only the Druid faithful
could see you. You lied to me.

SHILOH

He's fixing to call the sheriff.

GAME BOSS (O.S.)

You paid for a single room. I swear
to Jesus if you got company, I'll
throw the both of you out on your
backsides. Now open up.

She lowers her collar to show some serious cleavage. Stands
boldly facing the door - motions for Rowdy to open it.

Full of trepidation, Rowdy unlocks the chain.

The game boss storms into the room. Looks under the bed. In
the closets. Pokes his head in the bathroom.

He steps up into Rowdy's comfort zone, stern and commanding:

GAME BOSS (CONT'D)

Don't you never call room service
again. Good night.

After the Game Boss slams the door behind him - Rowdy pokes
Shiloh with his finger.

He SNAPS her BRA STRAP. Sniffs her perfume. Smooths her hair.
Studies her in the mirror.

ROWDY

Why didn't he see you? Smell your
perfume?

SHILOH

Time has two dimensions. He only
experiences one of them. Druid
faithful see the other one, too.

ROWDY

Jimbo saw you - well, sort of.

SHILOH

Black folks got soul.

ROWDY

Dixie?

SHILOH

Cats? Druid's best friend?

Shiloh turns the lights out.

BEDSHEETS RUSTLE as she gets in.

ROWDY

Jesus H. Christ, I surely hope the
cops don't catch me before I keel
over and die.

SHILOH

Innocent little Sambo coos as the
bailiff holds out a giant Bible.
Do you swear to tell the whole
truth and nothing but.

Rowdy climbs into the other side of the bed.

ROWDY

Why couldn't I hitch up with some
dumb, cross-eyed broad?

SHILOH

Who's excited by mystery?
Challenge. To solve the crime of
the century?

In a sudden flash of lightning: brief glimpse of Rowdy,
leaning on his side, studying a restful Shiloh.

EXT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - NIGHT

Rowdy and Shiloh work by the light of a streetlight. They're
cleaning paintbrushes in a bucket of water.

SHILOH

A Banshee could get used to this.
Domestic bliss is banned where I
come from.

ROWDY

Time really has two dimensions?

Shiloh SHARPENS a MACHETE to a razor's edge.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

You're on vacation - doing this?

SHILOH

It's not as if there's a long
waiting list for my services. And
hey, a lady gets to have fun, too.

ROWDY
Waiting for me to kick over?

SHILOH
Not often I'm caught with my tongue
tied in knots. I reckon you really
are a Druid master-class.

Shiloh is lost in a turmoil of possibilities.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
So long as you're in imminent
danger of death, I'll be here.
There's death and then there's
long, agonizing death. That's me.

ROWDY
The doctors did say my tumor might
mess with my sense of time. I
thought Banshees were less sexual
and more physical.

Shiloh rushes Rowdy. Holds the sharp machete at his throat.

SHILOH
Is this physical enough? Is it
danger that turns you on?

She reaches down to his crotch with her free hand.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Bingo. Up pops the little soldier.

She eases back and, arms crossed, just stares at Rowdy.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
If I banish a really vile,
villainous debauchery. Well, I get
a reprieve. I ain't going nowhere
'cause you're my ticket uptown.

Shiloh steps aside and TESTS THE MACHETE on a pair of
sneakers. They're cut cleanly in half.

ROWDY
Stop that.

SHILOH
Serious murder mystery? Committed
by Civil War weapons that, like,
are brand new?

ROWDY

Fired by Confederate soldiers who
just happen to fade back into the
past - where they fucking came
from. Stop this nonsense.

Rowdy rushes her, but she waves him back with the machete.

SHILOH

I wonder how long the neighbors
will believe we're just contractors
fixing up the old place.

ROWDY

Until I kill you for ruining my
favorite jeans? Mutilating my lucky
tennis shoes.

The streetlight FLICKERS then ZAPS off all the way.

SHILOH

You have such an endearing
attachment to material goods.
That's a woman's domain. Your job
is to dress her to kill.

A neighbor's BEAGLE starts a MOURNFUL HOWLING.

ROWDY

I'm not buying the charm-school
act, either.

Shiloh drops the act and gets down right serious:

SHILOH

I was sent here to investigate your
Grampa's murder. Something
nefarious - very, for the Devil
Himself to get personally involved.

ROWDY

Apparently, you're as off-balance
in all this as I am. Finally, some
good news.

SHILOH

One Antiquarian dead of unnatural
causes is bad. Then another, soon
thereafter - and now a third?

ROWDY

But of course, he and Grampa always
went hunting on Christmas Day.

SHILOH

You knew the deceased? Why didn't you say so in the first place?

ROWDY

Didn't remember his face until I saw his Christmas card in Grampa's mail.

SHILOH

We - you know, give Gold Ribbon service to senior Druids, alias yourself and Grampa Joseph.

ROWDY

We're just a couple of lousy Antiquarians. No. Big. Deal.

SHILOH

Maybe not much appreciated in the Christian or Western culture. But in our world, Antiquarians sit at the top of the pyramid.

ROWDY

Yeah. About your world. How -

SHILOH

Even Satan respects you guys - who can give us better P.R. than a Druid higher-arch, much less a one-in-ten-billion Antiquarian?

They pack up their things and head inside.

INT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Shiloh and Rowdy sit at a table in the living room, eating fast food. Paint and painting supplies are everywhere.

SHILOH

There's only so many coats of paint we can put over your tortured past.

(quietly)

Hint: Life flashing before your eyes yet, pilgrim?

ROWDY

Why are you so hung up on this guilt thing?

SHILOH

If you want to get the full benefit
of our services you have to come
clean.

ROWDY

As in confess - every thing?

Shiloh reaches into her bag. Pulls out a big purse. Flips
through some plastic cards. Shows him one.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Guido's Deep Dish Pizza?

Shiloh blushes deep red. Shows Rowdy another card.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Well, why didn't you say you were
Mr. Lucifer's Chief Enforcement
Officer in the first place.

He studies the card. She snaps her fingers. The card
vaporizes from his hand.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Okay. Exactly what services are we
talking about here? In your premium
elite Druid Special package?

She pulls a spiral notebook out, ready to take notes.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

You need background information to
fill out my application. Got to
submit it to The Big Horney for
approval. In quintuplicate.

SHILOH

Hell? Red tape?

ROWDY

Grampa never talked much. Grandma
Ida was still around, through grade
school, anyway.

Rowdy shows Shiloh an old album of newspaper stories about a
gruesome car crash with photos.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

I was the only one to survive the
car crash that killed my folks. If
you could call this surviving.

SHILOH

Car crash? More death. Talk about a
galloping, avenging - curse.

A single photo, an 1800s tintype, falls out of the album.
Shiloh picks up the photo. She picks it up.

Shilo studies the photo under the light. It shows a small
tombstone in a family plot surrounded by other markers.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

(reading the back)

Little Bill. Stillborn.

Rowdy stares at her, the photo.

He's mortified - horrified. She slips the photo back into the
album.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

(gently)

Okay. Not a good place to go right
now. We'll save Little Bill for
later.

Rowdy opens a drawer in a big black oak desk. Pulls out a
metal box full of mementos. Sits it on top of the desk.

ROWDY

Grampa Joseph was a gunsmith.
Things started to go bad after Lee
Harvey Oswald shot J.F.K.

SHILOH

Infamous weapons? Seems a likely
place to start the interrogation.

Rowdy flips through newspaper clippings of Grampa Joseph. Lee
Harvey Oswald. The JFK assassination.

ROWDY

Grampa said it was the dark hand of
fate. The Antichrist. The Devil's
Assassin wreaking vengeance through
the impenetrable veil of time.

Rowdy's hands shake as he shows her another album with
vintage photos of the school where Grampa taught.

SHILOH

Antiquarians always get carried
away. Translation please?

ROWDY

The Oswald brothers went to a military boy's school down the road, Chamberlain Hunt Academy. Grandpa taught firearms there.

Several pix show a young Grampa among his students. Lee Harvey Oswald is among them.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

He swore on the Family Bible that Lee Harvey couldn't hit the broad side of a barn with a shotgun. even with telescope sights.

Rowdy studies the desk, smiling fondly.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

This big black oak desk was his workbench.

SHILOH

Jacob's altar. Isaac's fear. Chock full of conspiratorial outrage.

(quietly)

Two more aces on the slots. We. Have. A. Winner. Folks.

Rowdy points to a spot on the floor, dark with dried blood.

ROWDY

This is where I found Dixie. Right by this ugly old desk.

SHILOH

Wood can absorb vibrations from people - anger, fear, malevolence. Everything your Grampa felt.

Shiloh studies the desk. Pulls out the drawers. Inspects the craftsmanship of the joints.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

This is antebellum. Early 1800's.

Shiloh squats down. Points to deep claw marks on the legs.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Your feline clawed the hell out of the legs there. See them claw marks? Feel her pain.

ROWDY

That looks, after Dixie got hurt.
it's the same caterwaul as at
Grampa's internment. Sheer terror.

Shiloh grabs Rowdy. Slams him against the desk.

SHILOH

Stop doubting there's a curse on
your tail. If you don't believe me -
fucking believe Dixie.

He stares up at a ceiling fan above the desk.

ROWDY

Waiting - waiting - waiting for my
brain to react. to throw a gruesome
hallucination my way.

FLASHBACK - LIVING ROOM - DAY

An old lady, Grandma Ida, hangs from the ceiling fan.

She slowly rotates with a gruesome smile on her blackened
face.

Giant DIAMOND EARRINGS glitter in the dim light, dazzling
Young Rowdy.

ROWDY (V.O.)

(dreamy voice)

Diamonds passed down through the
generations. Diamonds.

His eyes follow the DIAMONDS around and around, mesmerized.

BACK TO SCENE

Rowdy breaks away from Shiloh. He stumbles down brick steps
into the downstairs den.

ROWDY

The damned earrings - I've seen
them before - that ghost, in the
cemetery - in my own house.

Shiloh follows him down the brig steps.

DOWNSTAIRS DEN

Rowdy stumbles through a row of square columns. Sits down at a baby grand piano in the adjacent room.

PIANO ROOM

Shiloh sits beside Rowdy on the piano bench.

She quietly taps out A MELANCHOLY BANSHEE TUNE on the keyboard.

ROWDY

It's working. The hallucinations
are starting to sync with real-
time.

SHILOH

What's working? Explain.

Rowdy stands up. Wanders around and around the piano.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

You can't solve anything unless you
roll up your sleeves and get all
greasy working under the chassis.
Now. Talk. To. Your. Mechanic.

ROWDY

I just spent five years in a combat
zone, imbedded with a combat unit.
You survive by reacting to what you
see not what you think you see.

SHILOH

Didn't six months on a psych ward
learn you anything?

Shiloh takes Rowdy's hand and gently leads him back upstairs.

LIVING ROOM

Rowdy and Shiloh collapse on the sofa. They both stare at the big black oak desk across the room.

SHILOH

How did your Grandma die?

Rowdy turns away, fighting back his sadness and shame.

ROWDY

She shot herself with a handgun.

Shiloh grabs him forcefully by the collar, shaking him:

SHILOH

They're gonna tell a small boy
about his granny dangling with a
noose around her neck, gagging,
turning blue, kicking up a storm,
pissing in her panties, slobbering,
eyes bulging, screaming in agony,
but only a mangled groan comes out?

Shiloh pushes him away. He sits back, arms crossed, afraid.

ROWDY

I prefer the old illusion, what
Grampa told me.

They sit quietly and stare at the black oak desk.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Grampa. Oh. My. God. The cops said
his wound was from a revolver,
Civil War vintage - lead bullet in
his head - the weapons went back.
But the lead bullet stayed here.

Fighting a mixture of horror. Remorse. Grief - Rowdy turns on
heel and runs out the door.

EXT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - NIGHT

Rowdy hops into the pickup. Tries to start it up. But the
battery is dead.

Shiloh stands by the driver's door, hysterical.

ROWDY

I just want to go see how Dixie is
doing.

SHILOH

No. I mean, make that - hell no.
(calming down)
Just get us out of here. Now.

Rowdy jumps into a muddy All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and FIRES
IT UP. Shiloh gets in the ATV. They speed down a dirt trail.

The night is chilly. There's frost on the ground. Their
breath shows hoary.

Shiloh bundles a light jacket around her, shivering.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD THICKET - NIGHT

BUMPING down a winding dirt path, the ATV passes a small neighborhood park.

SHILOH (O.S.)
If you were in a combat zone all that time, why didn't you instinctively render first aid to the bleeding Rebel general?

Rowdy is silent. She waits patiently for him to talk:

ROWDY
It's just a holiday ritual, Shiloh. It's been going on for years - generations. Razz the Clan O'Cleary for their role in bringing down the Confederacy. Every year they - it's a new pantomime. Never expect it -

Shiloh watches his distraught face as they pass under streetlights: dark, light, dark, light.

SHILOH (O.S.)
Ritual? Maybe in years past - but - the General? Murder one. Witnesses gave that man's description to the cops - it's all over the newspapers.

ROWDY
I - I thought folks were just having the usual fun. I - I just wanted you to relax, make some friends for you.

SHILOH
Fun? Friends? Those thieving, murderous, conniving criminal elements? We should have tied up that General and brought him to the cops. We'd be Scott-free right now.

INT. ATV - NIGHT

Rowdy drives the ATV past the park. Down a dark gully.

ROWDY
Or behind bars.

They stare at the moss-draped oaks lining the boulevard.

SHILOH

I - I understand. You're having
issues with all this spiritual time-
warp hoopla. Excuse me, but -

(quietly)

Don't make all that a sick joke on
your new lady friend.

(loud, angry)

Talk to the Banshee.

Rowdy takes a deep breath to relax.

ROWDY

Van Dorn was handsome, single, and
a well-known womanizer. Right after
his miraculous defense of
Vicksburg, he seduced a doctor's
wife.

Shiloh's makeup is dappled with streaks of sweat.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

The doctor found out.

The trail winds behind a gala mansion. They see a raucous
holiday party in progress on the front lawn.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

And the doctor shot Van Dorn to
avenge his wife's honor.

Shiloh glares at Rowdy. She looks demonic in the dim light.

SHILOH

What you saw back there in the
parking garage - what you
experienced - was the old happy
days tradition.

ROWDY

And what you saw - was.

(quietly)

Pray tell, what exactly did you
see?

Rowdy studies her face. It grows bright, then dark as they
speed past light coming from a row of elegant Civil War-era
mansions.

SHILOH

I saw a cold-blooded murderer and
his co-conspirators framing you for
the first-degree murder of an
attorney at law.

Behind them, a group of Trick or Treaters points toward something right behind them.

The kids are absolutely frantic.

ROWDY

They finally get their vengeance, a hundred fifty years later. For Van Dorn's assassination.

SHILOH

Vengeance is best served on an old platter.

ROWDY

The trail of death? J.F.K. Lee Harvey Oswald. Grampa. Knox. They lead directly to - to.

SHILOH

General Van Dorn. He's the curse. After your family. For eternity.

Shiloh turns. Sees a shadowy figure on a giant black horse, brandishing a long rifle - following them. Aiming!

The rider FIRES his RIFLE. Again. Again. One streetlight after another EXPLODES. It's Earl van Dorn.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Floor it, man. Go.

Shiloh reaches her foot over and PUNCHES the gas. ZOOM-ZOOM.

EXT. ALL SAINTS ACADEMY - NIGHT

The ATV eases around the grounds of elegant antebellum buildings.

ROWDY

Boy, that's a relief. Just reenactors, playing the old we-hate-the-O'Clearys game. Recognized my dentist, alias Earl Van Dorn.

Area floodlights illuminate the grounds dramatically.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

The battle of Vicksburg was exactly a hundred fifty years ago. almost to this very night. Hence all the reenactors in town.

SHILOH

You're still stuck in real-time.
We'll never get to the bottom of
this unless you can let go.

The ATV cruises around an antebellum chapel.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

I know you can do it. Isn't that
what history teachers do? Grovel in
the past glories of empires?

ROWDY

Hard to unfasten my brain from the
here and now. Gonna take more than
perfumed words and combat charades
by a bunch of amateurs.

Autumn-colored leaves float on the surface of a lighted
swimming pool.

SHILOH

That Van Dorn ghoul? Hint: he's got
even the Devil Himself terrified.
Leviathan, the mythical beast of
Antiquity? Terror Incarnate? Here
in your dimension.

ROWDY

I just spent years in a combat
zone, lady. Then six months on an
army psych ward? With all due
respect, this is not one bit scary.

Wind blows heaps of leaves across athletic fields.

SHILOH

Go ahead, be that way.
(seductive, melodic)
Relax. Talk. Let your soul do the
walking. Release your subconscious
past - your deepest, darkest fears.

ROWDY (V.O.)

This used to be the grounds of a
Christian day school, All Saints
Academy. No end to the torment, of
being a pagan kid in day school.

General Van Dorn materializes out of the landscape...

... at the head of a Confederate cavalry company who
terrorize Yankee foot soldiers - ripping them limb from limb.

ROWDY

What they're reenacting is how Van Dorn defeated a massive Yankee sneak attack on Christmas Eve.

SHILOH

War plus religion is a potent antidote to the time dyslexia gripping your innards.

ROWDY

Fooled the Yanks into thinking reinforcements had arrived.

SHILOH

Can you at least take yourself back to that era? You've done in in the body. What about the spirit, in the soul? Come on, it's not hard.

LIGHTNING STRIKES front and center - KA-BOOK! - leaving a pillar of STEAM in its wake.

ROWDY

You won't find their Christmas Eve assault written in any textbooks.

(quietly)

It's just an illusion. The Yanks never attacked on Christmas Eve.

SHILOH

O.M.G. If it's not in the history books, then what the hell are all those reenactors doing in town?

THUNDER REVERBERATES like cannon fire.

ROWDY

Feels so real. Real blood. Real explosions. Even the bitter sulfur taste of gunpowder on the wind.

Heavy snow begins to fall.

Van Dorn and his men fight through the storm, leaving mayhem in their wake. They're fearless, undaunted.

SHILOH

So. You're the great-grandson of the man who murdered a Confederate hero. His death killed the South's best chance for victory.

The soldiers head directly for Rowdy and Shiloh.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Whose ghost then murdered your attorney - in cold blood - no doubt believing you were the victim.

ROWDY

Except. General Van Dorn was just right there. He knows I'm alive and kicking.

SHILOH

He'll be coming for us. Again and again. Until he's avenged.

ROWDY

Is it Van Dorn who's after me or Death itself?

(quietly)

This sure doesn't feel like the warm and fuzzy near-death-light experience they talk about.

SHILOH

Don't you believe a word of it. Near-death is a gruesome agony, as time rips the soul asunder.

ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT

Rowdy and Shiloh sit quietly in the ATV, perched at the crest of Cemetery Ridge. The battle unfolds in the valley and on the hillside below:

A CANNON ROUND EXPLODES just as LIGHTNING STRIKES a transformer on a pole just ahead of them.

Lights in the whole neighborhood go out. Lightning bugs BLINK on like muskets firing.

HAIL CRASHES with a racket on the hood, sounding like MORTAR BLASTS.

ROWDY

The good doctor's name was Louis Erb.

Van Dorn gets hit.

The Confederate general falls out of his saddle. Gets hooked by the stirrups. He's dragged by his horse until his men cut him loose.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
 Drilled into me since grade school.
 (shrill granny voice)
 Do your homework, or Louis Erb will
 come to eviscerate you with a rusty
 hacksaw.

Drifting snow strobes with lightning to reveal glimpses of
 soldiers scurrying across the open ground under heavy fire.

SHILOH
 A threat that every Southern boy
 would take to heart, I'm sure.
 (quietly)
 Rhymes with Lucifer? Like, maybe
 you be kin to the King Himself?

Red blood SPLATTERS when a Confederate soldier takes a direct
 hit. A military surgeon rushes to staunch the blood from his
 mortal wounds.

ROWDY
 Pitched battles all over this area
 in that Christmas Eve attack. Blood
 and guts galore.

SHILOH
 Hacking away at the Confederate
 resolve. The Confederate faith.

Van Dorn is back at the head of his cavalry column, but now
 he's on a litter, being drawn by a horse.

Van Dorn FIRES his PISTOL at the enemy and SLICES them up
 with his sword in the other hand.

ROWDY
 What's this Van Dorn guy's problem?
 Why's he tormenting me - my family?

Spots of BLOOD SPECKLES the windshield and ooze downward.

SHILOH
 Isn't being shot dead by your great-
 grandfather reason enough?

The ATV's headlights SPUTTER out, and they coast down a steep
 incline.

The ATV goes faster and faster.

The ATV keeps gaining speed, as the Civil War battle rages
 on.

ROWDY

Made the acquaintance of another
phantasm, back in Afghanistan.

SHILOH

(mesmerizing)

Good. Very good. Now. Purge all
your guilts so there's nothing left
to block the time continuum from
washing over your consciousness.

CANNONS rake the undergrowth.

ROWDY

Blood thick as red dope on a
slaughterhouse floor, now - as it
was, then, and forevermore.

Mortar rounds EXPLODE, throwing wounded Rebel soldiers into
the air.

Cannonballs rip trees in half, EXPLODE on the ground, and
WHISTLE overhead.

SHILOH

So you were in real, live combat.
Feared for your very life, many
times over. Day after day.

ROWDY

Each time you're less frightened
than the last - until, finally,
you're. One. With. Death.

Van Dorn's horse is killed.

His soldiers hook a fresh horse on his litter, and Van Dorn
keeps on fighting.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

They gave me an honorary Silver
Star. The unit I was embedded with
was ambushed, terrible casualties.
I grabbed an M-60 and killed,
killed every last one of them.
Killed. I. Am. Death.

Screams echo through the hills.

SHILOH

Just try and silence them lambs.

ROWDY

You never quite get the screams of
agony out of your head.

The ATV keeps gaining more and more speed.

Bright detonations reflect in ice-covered tree limbs and
trunks.

MASSIVE EXPLOSIONS rock the tree line.

ROWDY (V.O.)

The Taliban said I was cursed by
Ishtar, ancient Babylonian goddess
of love and war. Powerful juju over
there. Ishtar.

The ATV is heading into a wall of trees.

Shiloh screams.

Shiloh pushes over into the driver's seat. JAMS her foot on
the brake pedal.

The ATV SHUDDERS to a stop.

REBEL

Grampa has Ishtar's engraving
downstairs. Buck naked. Wings. Big,
ugly bird's feet. Standing on
lions. Bad curse, the worst.

Dazed and confused, Shiloh and Rowdy stare at the battle.

EXT. ALL SAINTS ACADEMY - NIGHT

Soldiers' lifeless bodies, floating in a now blood-red
swimming pool, fade from view.

SHILOH

Onward Pagan Soldier. Into the cold
embrace of mistress death.

Wind blows leaves on the surface of the pool, dappling the
calm waters.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Never got past the eco-friendly New
Age façade? Never realized that
behind that P.R. Druid fluff is a
nightmare heathen Earth goddess?

ROWDY

Raised Druid. Volunteered to embed
with a combat unit. Wanted to
experience war first hand, up front
and personal. The blood. The -

SHILOH

Apocalypse? You embraced her.

Thunder and lightning fade into the distance.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Any soul worth its salt is always
in eternal conflict.

ZERO DARK FIFTEEN

Rowdy and Shiloh sit in the ATV with the chaotic battlefield
horror fading in the valley below.

Rowdy buries his head in his hands.

ROWDY

All battles look the same under the
cover of darkness. The Civil War.
Iraq. Afghanistan.

Shiloh stares at the ghostly landscape.

SHILOH

Could you imagine being a foot
soldier back then?

ROWDY

No food, living off the barren land
- no winter coats.

A BRANCH FALLS on the windshield, scattering hundreds of tiny
spiders off its leaves onto the glass.

SHILOH

Feel the battle going on in your
soul, between the intransigent need
for clarity and the all-consuming
desperation to survive the quest.

Rowdy turns on the windshield wipers and the rubber blades
SQUASH the spiders on the glass.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Did you tell anybody, about what -
really - happened over yonder?
Seeing Ishtar.

Rowdy turns onto a narrow, winding utility-access path.

ROWDY

Grampa. I always knew we had Druid blood. Never knew until I was hip deep in blood and gore that we came from one of the ruling classes. Antiquarians.

The intersection ahead is blocked by cop cars, LIGHTS FLASHING. An avalanche of mud and rocks has blocked the road.

Rowdy turns onto a dirt path. She speaks quietly.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Didn't honestly give it much thought, until I was embedded with the Army. Saw all the men searching - for meaning, purpose - faith.

SHILOH

Ain't nobody more important to the Druid clans than the storytellers. The myth-makers. Without your magical words, faith dies.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD PATHS - NIGHT

Rowdy drives down winding, rugged trails, following a ridge line at the edge of town.

ROWDY

I can feel my grasp of the present getting weaker. Fading.
(quiet, somber)
Leviathan cometh.

SHILOH

Ancient evils love long, drawn-out battles. Death, gore - hope. - agony, betrayal. The abomination of desolation is upon you.

They approach a long column of Confederate cavalry towing wagons. A cannon. Munitions - moving by torchlight.

Rowdy barrels toward the column, unperturbed.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

You smell that? Smells like horses. Horse droppings.

Shiloh jams the steering wheel to the side just in time.

The ATV VEERS past the horse soldiers.

Speckles of HORSE DROPPINGS HIT the windshield.

SPLAT.

Shiloh turns, only to stare right into the eyes of General Van Dorn.

VAN DORN

You people shot my lieutenants off
their horses. First time in the
history of warfare, the enemy
purposefully targets the leaders.

A full cohort of cavalry rips through the night behind Van Dorn.

VAN DORN (CONT'D)

I'm mad as a hornet's nest and
fixing to avenge my brave men.

Their rifles are at their shoulders.

VAN DORN (CONT'D)

Fill that mechanical beast full of
lead, men. Fire at will.

Van Dorn draws his sword and bears down on them at a full gallop.

Van Dorn's cavalry FIRES. Rifle rounds WHISTLE by.

VAN DORN (CONT'D)

I'll cut your heads off, scoop your
brains out like a ripe pumpkin, and
carve a smile on your ugly face.

SHILOH

What the hell are you waiting for?
Step on it, you moron.

A rifle SHOT shatters the rearview mirror.

Another RIPS A HOLE in the rear of the ATV.

Shiloh pulls out a lady's derringer out of her purse. Holds it at Rowdy's head. She COCKS the TRIGGER back.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Don't you make me say please.

Rowdy FLOORS the accelerator. The engine sputters and dies. Van Dorn and his men are almost on top of them.

The soldiers FIRE point-blank, SHATTERING windows with bayonets drawn for the final assault.

Rowdy pulls off his jacket and holds it over her head against the shattered glass.

EXT. HOUSE OF USHER RUINS - DAY

The ATV has stopped in front of neat rows of ornate brick columns, each 45 feet tall. They're all that remains of a once-great antebellum mansion of epic proportions.

A FLUTTERING OF GIANT WINGS startles Rowdy from a restless slumber.

ROWDY
What just happened?

SHILOH
Your subconscious mind suffered a psychotic break with time and pulled the plug. You passed out.

Deep forest surrounds them on all sides. There's no sign of Van Dorn or his men.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
That's a good sign, Rowdy. You're getting there.

Row after row of pitched Confederate tents line the clearing in a thick dawn mist.

A few Rebel soldiers stoke campfires here and there. Rowdy and Shiloh exit the ATV.

ROWDY
We're leaking gas, is where we're getting. Tarnation. They shot a hole in the gas tank.
(quietly)
Wait one. Something's not right.

SHILOH
How does a musket fired in a Civil War battle - hit your gas tank?

ROWDY
You're right. That was the real Van Dorn. Horses tough as nails from engaging the enemy. Not sleek and pampered grazing grassy knolls.

Shiloh steps away from him, one baby step, then another. Rowdy is still groggy and a little disconnected.

SHILOH

Van Dorn's not just avenging the clan who assassinated him. Nor the attack he led to defend Vicksburg on Christmas Day. But the Yank's violation of the sacred Code of War.

ROWDY

As a historian - violating the sacred Code of War is a living horror. A terrible crime against all of humanity.

(quietly)

Fuck. That's all we did over in Iraq - target their senior leadership. Night and day.

SHILOH

Did they do the same thing? The enemy? Taliban. Afghanistan.

ROWDY

No. Absolutely not. Never.

SHILOH

Well. There you go. Stupid.

Arms crossed, Shiloh waits impatiently.

ROWDY

I saw an apparition once. Back in-country. A lady, draped in robes, glowing - inviting.

She KICKS the ATV. Pounds the hood with her fists.

SHILOH

Holy cow - you saw Ishtar? Herself?

(quietly)

Rule number two: Never leave any witnesses.

ROWDY

It was right before the Taliban's sneak attack on our position. That's why I was awake and super alert the night they attacked.

Shiloh pummels Rowdy with her clenched fists.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
That ghost lady saved my life.
(angry)
Hey, stop beating me up.

Shiloh screams, a demonic Banshee howl, crazed, frantic, desperate.

She beats Rowdy with angry fists, hard and harder. His torso - shoulders - face.

SHILOH
You feel my fists? Bleeding from my
anger and frustration? And you
still refuse to believe?

ROWDY
In Banshees? Who warn you of
imminent death?

SHILOH
And? Didn't - she.

Rowdy grabs Shiloh's fists and slowly calms her down.

ROWDY
Nonsense. Once you see a Banshee,
you're already dead.

SHILOH
That's so not true. We warn you of
danger - so you can save yourself.
(quietly)
You have to believe, Rowdy. It's
the next, last step to - solving
this damnation on your family.

Rowdy looks at her with blank eyes (not focusing) - then looks into the distance, pointing:

ROWDY
Look, they're gearing up for the
assault on Port Gibson.

Shiloh sulks, crossing her arms in defiance. Rowdy massages his aching jaw.

She looks out on a clearing of wildflowers.

SHILOH
I'm not seeing squat.

Rowdy gently points her body toward the dawn's early light.

ROWDY

This is where it all started. The horror. The ancient evil. It's here, now. Can't you feel it?

SHILOH

You see - something? Tell me.

A BUGLE SOUNDS.

Confederate soldiers hustle out of their tents. Strap on their suspenders. Pants. Uniforms.

They're all barefoot - feet bloody and festering.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

The Confederates were too poor to buy shoes.

ROWDY

I saw bare footsteps back in Grampa Joseph's house. Did you -

SHILOH

That was me. You saw me. You see the actual battle now - the present is slipping away, into the morbid past.

Shiloh's knees buckle. She grabs Rowdy for support.

ROWDY

There's the House of Usher. Made famous by the Edgar Allen Poe horror story of the same name.

Shiloh pushes away from him and drifts toward the ruins.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Mark Twain was here. He called it the greatest mansion in the old South. You could see the Mississippi River from the balcony way up on top. Yonder.

The house fills out around the columns into its antebellum glory. It's surrounded by slaves working sprawling cotton fields.

SHILOH

Tell me, please, this morbid fascination with history - war. - doesn't rattle your immortal soul?

The grand house morphs into a wartime field hospital.

ROWDY

The House of Usher was a charity
hospital back then, during the
hostilities. Took in the wounded
from both sides, protected by a
mutual truce. Out of respect for -
Christ the Redeemer.

SHILOH

The soul is always the first to let
go. Unlax. let it take a baby step.
Back. Into immortal time.

The soldiers break camp and muster into formation.

ROWDY

They're burning it down. Oh, God.
So much evil and darkness
associated with this place.

Bright orange sunbeams break through the tall foliage. The
trees seem to glow in the thick ground fog, as if on fire.

Flames rise from the House of Usher, hundreds of feet.

SHILOH

This is where Leviathan began.
Raging through the ages. Embodied
by Van Dorn and his damned hellions
on horseback. The five horsemen.

A dark cloud of thick smoke, in the vague shape of a
grotesque monster, morphs from the burning mansion.

ROWDY

Somebody - who? - burned the
hospital down. full of wounded
soldiers. From North and South
alike? That's gruesome.

The rising sun bathes them in warmth. The illusion fades.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

I can hear the screams. It's a
death knell. Oh, horror of horrors.

A call to battle SOUNDS on a bugle.

A Confederate officer being hauled in a litter leads a
cavalry charge on the Yankee lines. It's Van Dorn. The Yanks
are repelled and retreat into the thick forest.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
 Dr. Louis Erb had a fancy gold
 pocketwatch. Handed down to the
 eldest son all these years.

The battlefield is full of wounded soldiers from both sides.

Van Dorn gets first aid from NURSE JANET.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 Belonged to Little Bill, they said.

Rowdy gives her the pocketwatch. She puts it to her ear.

SHILOH
 Tick. Tock. Tick. Gentle rhythm of
 time to put the poor, cholic child
 to blissful sleep.

Rowdy pauses to rest on a giant tree stump.

ROWDY
 He was there. Dr. Erb. I can feel
 it in my bones. My genes.
 (conviction)
 I. Am. Time.

Shiloh collapses at Rowdy's feet into a misshapen pile of
 misery.

SHILOH
 Thousands of mortally wounded,
 screaming in dawn's early light -
 the agony, the pain. Then they're
 effing burned alive.
 (to herself)
 It's the gold pocketwarch, tick-
 tocking you back into time.

Rowdy helps her to her feet.

They walk slowly through a now very thick ground fog, hand in
 hand.

EXT. WINTERGREEN CEMETERY - CONTINUOUS - DAY

The fog clears. They're in the middle of an old graveyard.

Rowdy and Shiloh mosey through the tombstones.

ROWDY

There's Earl van Dorn's grave. He's
the only one buried facing South.
His beloved Confederate South.

A few yards away, Shiloh stands at a wrought iron fence
around a small family plot. She points at a very small
tombstone.

SHILOH

O.M.G. It's your photo of Little
Bill.

Rowdy steps into the fence. Squats down. Reads the
inscription on the marker.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Born and died on the same day.
Stillborn.

Rowdy is in shock, terrified.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Can you feel it? I mean REALLY feel
it?

Rowdy hasn't moved a muscle.

ROWDY

That was no stillborn child,
Shiloh. Look at the grave. It's for
a full-size adult male.

Rowdy remains in shock. He can't shake it off. She takes his
hand and holds it in her heart.

SHILOH

A grave dug in the past - then
transformed by the present?
(quietly)
Suddenly serious complications.

EXT. HOUSE OF USHER RUINS - DAY

The Yankee troops regroup and begin to march in order across
the field.

Rowdy and Shiloh are in the middle of the Bluecoat troops.

SHILOH

People always struggle with the
horrific truth about me. Now I know
exactly how they feel.

Rowdy and Shiloh are Yankee soldiers, now, MARCHING IN STEP along the battlefront.

ROWDY

Felt like that, the first time I
had Dr. Erb's fob watch in my grimy
little hands. I was just a child.

SHILOH

Terrible memories were awakened.

A Confederate CAVALRY CHARGE BOLTS out of the forest nearby - ripping across the field.

The first Yankee rank goes down on one knee and FIRES A VOLLEY.

ROWDY

Louis Erb really does rhyme with
Lucifer. And it's not by chance.
(quietly)
Hence the Pentagon on the back.

Rowdy is catatonic, visibly shaken. Gently, she puts the pocketwatch back into his hands.

SHILOH

There's no shame in being Druid.
It's a wonderful calling, a
beautiful way of life. Compassion
for nature, the environment.

He swallows hard and mans up.

ROWDY

Pagan? Druid. I can live with that,
embrace it even. But, what we're
talking about now - it's Satanic.

While the Yanks reload, the second rank aims. But before they can fire, they're overrun by the Rebel cavalry.

Mayhem ensues.

The Bluecoats break ranks and beat a hasty retreat.

Rowdy and Shiloh double-time to the rear with them.

Shiloh hauls Rowdy to the ATV. He tries to crank the ignition.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

No more gas.

SHILOH

It went back in time. Now it's here again. It has gasoline but the timing is off. Bad off.

Rowdy and Shiloh hurry down a dirt path away from the battle. Their clothes are back to the present day.

ROWDY

Felt like that in Afghanistan once, timing off. Like we were fighting in World War One. Time warp.

SHILOH

You have a versatile imagination. But only enough to Technicolor the re-enactors in the here and now. We need more. The real deal.

Shiloh turns on heel and stalks away.

ROWDY

It's almost midnight on Christmas Eve. The assault on Vicksburg is a-coming.

Rowdy points to the O'Clearey House on top of a hill a few blocks away.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

My place has the best view in town. Right smack in the middle of the action. Cemetery Ridge.

Van Dorn BOLTS out of the trees a hundred yards away at full GALLOP.

Right behind him are a dozen horse soldiers, FIRING rifles in a steady rain of hail.

VAN DORN

It's them.

Bullets ZIP by Rowdy and Shiloh, SHATTERING tree limbs on all sides.

VAN DORN (CONT'D)

Get them, men. We've got the Angel of Death and her consort in our rifle sights. Go, go, go.

They run for dear life. Rowdy stops cold, pointing.

ROWDY
Back to reality.

Through the trees, the neighborhood park they passed earlier is thick with EMS and police cars, lights flashing.

VAN DORN BREAKS THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE -

horse galloping directly at Rowdy - sharp sword SWINGING DOWN at Rowdy's neck.

INT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Shiloh stares out the window at Van Dorn's horses, grazing on the lawn, their soldiers loitering on foot nearby.

Still half-conscious, Rowdy gazes blankly at the sound of LARGE WINGS FLUTTERING.

Rowdy feels his neck.

ROWDY
Right in the neck of time. I mean
nick.

Dazed and confused, Rowdy tries to sort things out.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
That was no re-enactor. But how -

SHILOH
Your subconscious saw the danger
and yanked the two-prong time plug -
brought you back to the present.
Saved your life.

Shiloh steps over to a pile of mail by the front door and sorts through it quickly.

ROWDY
More Christmas cards? More God damn
guilt for my pagan antecedents?

SHILOH
Evangelicals get gold bonus points
for turning a pagan to the Lord.

She rips open one envelope; it's empty.

Then another: empty. She stares at him, dumbfounded:

ROWDY
Tradition?

A SHORT SPELL LATER

They sit in front of A ROARING FIRE, opening the mail.

Shiloh opens up one envelope after another, first reading the address, handing it to him - then he tosses it into the fire.

ROWDY

Childhood friend. Godfather. Family doctor. Dentist. Pastor.

SHILOH

Christians wasting a postage stamp? Just for kicks? I. Think. Not. They hate you.

ROWDY

Technically, they hate Grampa. However. Now that he's gone, all that hatred transfers to me.

SHILOH

Tradition. Stupid tradition.

ROWDY

Because we - we, think Black lives matter. Always have.

Shiloh gets up and walks into an adjacent room, the guest bedroom (opens off the living room).

She's still visible as they talk.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

People just plain can't live without their precious hates.

Rowdy watches as Shiloh packs her travel bag.

SHILOH

I'm going home. Fight your own demons. I've got work to do.

Rowdy stares into the fireplace. At the dancing flames.

Shiloh steps into the living room. She's packed and ready to leave, but -

Rowdy's nowhere to be seen.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

I tried to yank his heartstrings. I really did. But then - how the F can I make him face the music?

Shiloh stomps her feet in frustration. Rowdy yells from upstairs:

ROWDY (O.S.)
What's Ishtar to you?

She drops her bags and heads up the half-flight of stairs.

UPSTAIRS BEDROOMS

Rowdy clears everything off the blood-stained carpet. Shiloh calls up to him from the stairway landing.

SHILOH (O.S.)
Come drive me back to the Rabid Cat
Casino. Vacation's over, dear.

Rowdy scoots out of the bedroom, turning off the lights.

FOOTSTEPS running down the stairs to the main floor.

EXT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - NIGHT

It's snowing now.

The driveway is covered with several inches of fresh snow.

Shiloh tosses her bags into the pickup bed - slips on a spot of ice.

Shiloh catches herself on the side of the pickup, fighting back tears - and failing, as they pour down her cheeks - freezing into icicles of frustration.

SHILOH
Nobody cares. Nobody wants me. I am
so the lost cause.

Furious, Shiloh yanks off her sneakers and throws them into the bushes.

Snow turns into a vicious blizzard of thick, wet snow.

Rowdy steps out of the house - studies the sky.

ROWDY
Looks like a bad-ass winter storm's
a-comin'. Exactly the same prelude
as in the fall of 1862. How
coincidental is that?

Shiloh climbs into the pickup and SLAMS the DOOR.

SHILOH

Not nearly as vicious as the storm
ravaging the immortal soul of your
pathetic humanity.

Rebel muses at the dark, angry sky.

ROWDY

This is more than the Almighty's
fury that the Yankees dared to
violate His most sacred day.

SHILOH

You. Have. No. Idea.

Rowdy hurries to the pickup. He stops at Shiloh's window. She
rolls the window down.

ROWDY

Driveway is frozen solid, Boo. We
aren't driving anywhere tonight.

Shiloh gets out in her stocking feet.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Watch out; you're gonna get
frostbite on your feet. I'd have to
carry your sassy frass over the
threshold.

SHILOH

A second chance at Heaven? Stop
that nasty rumor before it gets
legs.

Shiloh walks around to the rear of the pickup, THROWS the
TAILGATE down. Reaches for her bag.

ROWDY

Grandma Ida used to tell a story on
X-mas eve, about how it wasn't the
weather that defeated the Yanks, or
even Van Dorn's clever ruse at the
railheads.

SHILOH

She believed? The sweet old lady
who hung herself - Oh, God - it was
on Christmas Eve. How terrible.
What a tragedy for your Grampa.

Rowdy watches the weather. Shiloh stands beside, cooling off -
slowly. Inevitably.

ROWDY

He didn't mourn. Worse. He told
that same feeble story every year
to all us kids.

(quietly)

On Christmas Eve. Even pagans
respect the Christmas Glory.

Shiloh wipes the tears off her face, managing a brave smile.

SHILOH

It's not a fable. They believed.
God bless them.

(quietly)

Pity none of the kids listened.

Suddenly bashful, Shiloh turns quickly away - slips and
almost falls flat on her face.

Rowdy grabs her and holds her upright. She asks in a quiet
voice.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Well? How did the story end? Why
did the damn Yankees high-tail it?

ROWDY

They saw the Angel of Death that
night, hovering above the chalk
cliffs. Glowing in the dark. Golden
wings shimmering in the moonlight.
Scared the bejesus outta them.

Rowdy stops - thinking hard, a quizzical look on his face.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Wings a-fluttering, like a giant
hummingbird of vengeance. Dark.
Angry. The Angel of Death, they
said. Threatening them with the
wrath of God Almighty.

Shiloh fights down her rage.

SHILOH

For attacking on Christmas Eve.
There it is again - nothing matters
but God damn Christmas.

(to herself)

Rule number six. Don't keep your
frustrations all bottled up.

ROWDY

Respecting Christmas keeps me from
going full Druid, doesn't it?

Rowdy grabs Shiloh. Sits her up gently on the tailgate.

SHILOH

A little comfort sex isn't the end
of the world.

Rowdy pulls his coat off. Slips it around her shoulders.

ROWDY

It's the self-discipline that
matters.

SHILOH

You can't overcome your morals -
your rules - Christmas. - to give
me comfort in my time of mortal
need?

Not far away, a TRAIN WHISTLE blows, loud and clear.

ROWDY

You're afraid of Van Dorn? Or at
least the monster demon going by
the image of Van Dorn.

SHILOH

You're damn right I am. Terrified.
As scared as you pathetic humans
are of Satan. Yeah, I work for the
Archangel Lucifer - in the flesh.
Still alive and kicking - avenging.

Rowdy climbs up and sits beside her.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Sorry. Where were we?

ROWDY

Willpower is life. If you can't
resist casual sex -

Shiloh scoots closer to him for warmth, arm hooked around his
back and under his jacket.

SHILOH

Casual? We've been inseparable for
weeks now.

ROWDY

Oh sure, in Banshee time.

SHILOH
You believe me? Honest you do?
(weak, needful)
I'm a lady, too, you know.

Shiloh starts shivering. Beat. She screams from the cold.

ROWDY
Why not let's scoot for the house?
You're freezing cold out here. I'll
go light a fire on the hearth.

SHILOH
For some wild west justice? One man
being judge, jury, and executioner?

Rowdy takes her in his arms and carries her toward the house.

ROWDY
If we ever get out of this hell,
I'll tell you all about another
famous ancestor of mine. A U.S.
Marshal by the name of Wyatt.

SHILOH
Wyatt Erb? O.K. Corral? It's about
damn time.

Rowdy carries her across the threshold.

ROWDY
What's your last name, anyway?

SHILOH
Jasmine. As in the gorgeous white
flower. That you'll never have.

INT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rowdy puts Shiloh on the sofa and covers her with a blanket.

ROWDY
Used to see whole fields of
jasmynes in Afghanistan. Prettiest
flower in the whole wide world.

Rowdy tucks her in, then heads downstairs.

He returns with a mug of hot tea and hands it to her.

SHILOH
Jasmine is life. Perfumes, bath
soaps, even worship services.

ROWDY

My head's a-spinning all of a sudden. Flashbacks. Going out to chop us some firewood. Back after a spell.

Rowdy heads for the door, pulling on a winter coat. She yells after him:

SHILOH

Stop fighting the flashbacks.

Shiloh waits for Rowdy to leave, then STOKES THE FIRE with several old Bibles lying around.

A SHAKE AND A SHIVER LATER

Rowdy bursts into the door.

He's covered in snow, shivering badly. A VIOLENT WIND blows the snow horizontally - into the foyer behind him.

NOTE: From this scene until the end, the electric lights inside are out, and all illumination is by candlelight or lanterns (already in place and burning bright).

ROWDY

Judas H. Priest, it's cold out there. Power's out. Damnation.

Shiloh poses seductively on the sofa in the flickering light from the roaring fire. She's stripped off everything but a tiny string bra. Sexy harem pantaloons. Stockings.

SHILOH

Hot as the hubs of Hades over here, sheriff.

Rowdy DROPS an armful of LOGS down by the fireplace.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Sooner or later, you'll run out of excuses not to get intimate.

ROWDY

They shut down the power plant on Christmas Eve, to throw everybody back to the antebellum past.

A sharp hatchet hangs loose in his hand.

SHILOH

Tradition. Beloved tradition.

He notices Bibles in the fireplace, burning.

ROWDY

You're burning Grandma Ida's
Bibles.

Rowdy's grip on the hatchet tightens. His wrist flexes,
swinging the hatchet back and forth, back and forth.

SHILOH

That old hag? The one who hung
herself - on Christmas Eve?
(quietly)
I'm just doing what she always
wanted to do.

She rips pages out of a Bible. Tosses them into the fire.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Have you ever read the Old
Testament? It's chock full of sex,
lust - envy, romance. All the
things that tether you with a ball,
chain, and anchor - to the present.

Shiloh grabs a giant hunting knife.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Can't you just say it? I'll take a
subtle hint, if that's all you can
muster.

ROWDY

Say what?

SHILOH

That you want me. As a woman.

They stare at each other's weapon, neither of them blinking.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

All your spiritual book learning,
and you still don't know.

ROWDY

Know what?

SHILOH

That religion without mystery is
dead.

Rowdy runs up the stairs into the bedroom.

ROWDY
Why didn't I think of that before?

UPSTAIRS BATHROOM

Washing his hands at the sink, Rowdy stares at his flickering reflection in the mirror.

THUNDER ROLLS outside.

SHILOH (O.S.)
Can't even get it up to face my
furious.

FOOTSTEPS bound up the stairs.

Suddenly Shiloh is standing in the bathroom doorway, knife in hand.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Are you angry with me? I didn't -

Rowdy grabs his hatchet. She takes a step back.

ROWDY
Every time I go into this
bathroom, thunder roars so's the
rafters shake. I believe.
(small voice)
I halfway believe you, despite all
my fears, anxieties, education.

SHILOH
Dominoes falling. Click. Clack.

Rowdy maneuvers past her and heads downstairs.

LIVING ROOM

Shiloh talks to Rowdy as he approaches the sofa, drying his face on a white towel.

SHILOH
Will you ever speak what's on your
mind? I mean, honest - will you?

Beat. He stares at her. Hesitates. Takes a deep breath:

ROWDY
 (deep breath)
 You're the Whore of Babylon. Death
 incarnate. The Angel of Death
 herself.
 (quietly)
 But you're cute, charming,
 enchanting - a real hoot.

She tosses a few more books on the fire.

SHILOH
 I am so not cute. I'm a monster.
 With ugly bird feet and -
 (quietly)
 No friends.

Rowdy stops.

He stares at the burning books. He loses it.

Rowdy SLAMS the HATCHET BLADE into the wood hearth.

ROWDY
 So it's true? I'm gonna die?

SHILOH
 It depends on how you define death.

Shiloh JAMS her KNIFE into the sofa.

ROWDY
 You're evil.

Rowdy grabs her by the shoulders. Shiloh gets a vice grip
 around his throat.

SHILOH
 I'm a cult goddess.

Her thumbs tighten over his windpipe. He struggles in her
 grip.

ROWDY
 You're a dream. A hope. An
 ambition. A belief.
 (eyes bulging)
 An asphyxia orgasm.

She loosens her grip. He breaks away from her and heads up
 the stairs.

Shiloh hurries after him.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

The blood in the living room where that robber shot Grampa. Now that I remember about it. It was way more than one man coulda bled out. Two even. Way, way more.

UPSTAIRS - WEST BEDROOM

Rowdy grabs a kerosene lamp and inspects the wood floor.

SHILOH

What a head rush.

(quietly)

It's been a long, lonely millennia since anybody believed in me.

ROWDY

Where are all the other bodies that were killed and eviscerated that night?

Shiloh latches onto a rusty hunting knife. She runs a thumb along the blade and draws a bead of blood.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

I think something more happened to Grampa. All that blood sure wasn't his. The robbers knew that. The cops knew that. Now we know that.

They get down on their knees.

They crawl around on the wood floor - each brandishing a sharp knife.

SHILOH

Maybe he serial murdered a dozen neighborhood bigots.

Rowdy holds the lamp over a large, deep stain.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

More. blood?

(quietly)

I don't get it. What -

Shiloh can't take her eyes off the floor:

A growing pool of blood gets fresher by the second.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 I think - these are two crime
 scenes here, across two time
 frames. One past. One present. The
 other - back to the House of Usher.
 Go there.

The HOUSE TREMORS, deep and strong. Shiloh screams:

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 Go. To the house on Cemetery Ridge.

Pictures on the wall become crooked.

CRACKS FORM in windows as the foundation shifts.

Rowdy points his knife toward the bathroom.

ROWDY
 That bathroom is where the surgeons
 washed up. That crash-cart nurse
 bleeding out in the bathtub. When
 we first got here. Remember?

They circle each other warily.

SHILOH
 Crash cart? Then, this is.

ROWDY
 Dr. Louis Erb's surgery.

Shiloh backs away in horror - accidentally knocks over
 Rowdy's kerosene lantern.

The room goes dark.

SHILOH
 Hence, all the blood on the floor
 that comes back on the jubilee
 anniversary of glory.

Out the window, a full moon comes out from behind clouds, and
 a dull glow illuminates the room.

INT. BEDROOM/SURGERY - NIGHT (1862)

The room slowly becomes a Civil War-era surgery.

A ROARING FIRE in the HEARTH lights the room in a steady
 flicker.

In the middle of the room is a sturdy wooden surgery table, holding a mortally wounded soldier.

SHILOH (O.S.)
 You did it. You synced your
 hallucinations to reality - and let
 your soul go free to roam time
 immemorial. I'm so proud of you.

Pools of warm blood glisten on the floor around the surgery table.

STEAM RISES from the blood because the air is very cold.

The soldier on the operating table screams. It's General Van Dorn!

BLOOD SPURTS from a massive chest wound as the surgeon works.

NURSE JANET pours red wine from a bottle into the general's mouth as anesthesia.

Shiloh stands at the doorway, silhouetted in crimson from candles burning all around the surgery table.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 Don't touch anything. It'll suck
 you back to their time. For real.

Rowdy slinks around the perimeter of the room. He watches in horror as the surgeon continues working.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
 That's what happened to that
 wineglass in the bathroom.
 (true horror)
 Blood, wine, broken glass - poor
 nurse's dead corpse.
 (screaming)
 She drank the blood. She got sucked
 down to Hell.

Rowdy screams as blood sprays all over him - and that part of him fades.

ROWDY
 Holy Mary Mother of God.

SHILOH
 Drink Satan's blood and you'll get
 everlasting life - in Hell.
 (gently)
 I'm that nurse. Fell headlong into
 temptation. Evil temptation.

Rowdy doesn't hear her. He's staring, mesmerized - outside the window at bright FLASHES from cannons and rifles and A MAJOR BATTLE underway.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Oh, Goddess. Don't give in to the
temptation, Rowdy. It's lethal.
You'll go straight to Hell.

Rowdy gravitates toward the window. He jolts back as a BULLET RIPS through the window, sending shards of glass everywhere.

Rowdy reels back as another RIFLE ROUND CUTS through his shirttail and wrenches a deep wound in his side. He bends over in pain.

NURSE JANET (vague, fading in and out) hurries to attend to Rowdy's wound.

ROWDY
I know that nurse, Shiloh. I can
sense a connection - she can, too.

Orderlies bring a stretcher into the room and remove Van Dorn from the operating table.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
You're right, Shiloh. It's
intoxicating. Irresistible.

Van Dorn expires and -

A warm, yellow glow emanates from his body, drifting up and away like a wraith.

SHILOH
Dr. Erb didn't kill Van Dorn. He
tried to save the general.

The nurse takes the bottle of wine anesthetic, pours a generous glass full. Drinks it right down herself.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Look. She's pregnant.

Rowdy's facial hair has grown in full now. Rowdy looks very much like General Van Dorn.

ROWDY
It's Dr. Erb's wife, my great-
grandmother.

Nurse Janet turns. Briefly, she stares directly into Rowdy's eyes.

ROWDY (CONT'D)
I gotta find out what happened.
Just got to.

Nurse Janet hurries out of the room and down the stairs,
leaving the half glass of wine.

Shiloh stares at the wineglass.

SHILOH
Don't, Rowdy. Just don't.

Rowdy grabs the glass and drinks half a glass of wine.

He disappears into thin air.

Shiloh rushes toward him, grabs his arm - disappears with
him.

INT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - 1862 - NIGHT

A NURSE looks up the stairs toward Rowdy, glaring at him.

Rowdy takes one scared step backward, almost running into -
Shiloh, who's still grabbing his arm.

ROWDY
They set up a field hospital, right
here in my house.

The nurse hurries down the stairs, after the orderlies
carrying Van Dorn's dead body on a stretcher.

The nurse (young Shiloh) pauses to speak to Rowdy.

NURSE
General Van Dorn defends the city
in a miraculous victory. And what
do we do? Shoot him dead to rights.

ARTILLERY SHELLS EXPLODE all around and SHATTER large
sections of the house.

Wounded soldiers in stretchers on the ground floor scream in
agony as BULLETS and SHRAPNEL SHRED the air.

ROWDY
This is where all the blood came
from in the house. The weapons.
Civil War weapons - straight to my
house from the past.

FIRE ERUPTS on the main floor and spreads quickly up the wooden stairs.

Rowdy has to back into the second-story surgery room to escape the RAVENOUS FLAMES.

A BULLET HITS Rowdy square in the shoulder and SLAMS him back into the surgery room, against the operating table.

Soldiers hoist Rowdy up onto the table and hold him down with strong hands.

Dr. Erb's face lurches into Rowdy's view:

LOUIS ERB
You think I would kill my best and
oldest friend in the whole world?
Earl Van Dorn?

Dr. Erb's giant butcher knife is poised to swoop down and wrench open Rowdy's shoulder.

ROWDY
Stop. Who the hell are you?

LOUIS ERB
Dr. Louis Erb.

Rowdy looks up into the face of Dr. Louis Erb.

Rowdy sees an older, darker image of himself staring back with bright red eyes.

ROWDY
Are the stories true? Van Dorn
seduced your wife, so you shot him?

LOUIS ERB
Seduced? What kind of a left-handed
word is that?

Rowdy struggles, kicking and thrashing.

Dr. Louis Erb laughs, deep and loud, rumbling like the sound of thunder.

LOUIS ERB (CONT'D)
I couldn't have kids. My plumbing
down there just doesn't work. My
beloved misses adored children. So
I looked the other way when Earl
van Dorn took her into his bed.

SHILOH

Bless you, doctor. You musta died
of a broken heart.

(quietly)

Leaving behind a wife consumed by
guilt - which she passed on to her
firstborn male son. And from there -
well, call it tradition.

Dr. Louis Erb grabs Shiloh and pins her to the operating
table beside Rowdy, screaming at her:

LOUIS ERB

You. You're the abomination. You
were there when my wife gave birth.
My nurse practical.

SHILOH

Here I am, now. N-never left.

Dr. Erb hauls a giant knife back and draws it in a long arc,
shoving it clean into Shiloh's heart.

Shiloh screams.

Dr. Louis Erb's malicious face appears in front of Rowdy,
lying prone on the floor.

LOUIS ERB

We were all best friends since
childhood. Van Dorn courted her
first, but I stole her hand in
marriage after he went off to the
Indian wars out west. She never
stopped adoring him.

Rowdy scrambles to his feet - hand covering his gut wound -
and grabs a big candle, searching. Shiloh is there, lying
prone on the floor.

Rowdy and Dr. Erb circle the operating table.

LOUIS ERB (CONT'D)

When the general died on my
operating table; well, I raised his
child as if he was my own.

ROWDY

You raised the child - it lived?

LOUIS ERB

Strong. Straight as an arrow.

ROWDY

Then who was Little Bill? Buried
next to you and the missus?

LOUIS ERB

Little Bill? Ain't never heard of
no Bill - not in my family nor the
wife's.

Flames and sparks SPIT all around Louis Erb. He disappears.

Shiloh sits up on the floor. He helps her up.

ROWDY

How are you still alive?

SHILOH

I - we, can travel time, to ease
the departed into their next -
journey. Two-dimensional complex
time. One down here, and one back
in your time.

She stares at the bloody floor - creeping blood gravitating
toward Rowdy, snaking up his trousers.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

If you don't give up this blasted
obsession with finding out the
damned truth.

Rowdy doesn't hear her.

They poke around the operating room, checking out all the
primitive surgical tools.

ROWDY

Who was Little Bill? I know he's
real - we seen his grave.

SHILOH

A dignified Daughter of the
Confederacy, charity icon, belle
down to her lacy-silk corset
strings. Getting Dr. Erb's gold
watch for a Christmas gift?

ROWDY

With a pentagram on the back? Sign
of Lucifer? No wonder they became
pagans.

SHILOH

Thus begins the ugly tradition of
your redneck neighbors to beggar
you for what you done to the good
General - you killed the South.

ROWDY

Grandma Ida hung herself - on
Christmas Eve. Out of respect - for
Lucifer, the Archangel of Light.

Shiloh walks over to the wall opposite the window and touches
a fresh musket ball hole in the plaster wall.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Oh, God. Now I'm kin to the
Confederacy's greatest hero.

(depressed)

The Black Lives woke police will
skin me alive.

SHILOH

There are a lot worse things than
existential disappointment. Much
worse.

ROWDY

I'd rather go back to being kin to
Lucifer. People love him now.

SHILOH

Nothing to say they didn't tell you
that out of a kindness, so you
wouldn't think you were descended
from the South's greatest traitor.

ROWDY

Yesterday's kindness is today's
cruelty. How do I know the truth?

SHILOH

It's locked up in your genetic
memory, Rowdy. Can't nobody open
that D.N.A. vault but you.

Rowdy grabs a pistol and holds it to his temple. He's ready
to pull the trigger. Blood now completely covers his clothes.

ROWDY

I'm evil, Shiloh. The military says
so. The Chaplain's Corps says so.

(losing it)

My friends, neighbors, family. My
own goddamn ancestors.

SHILOH

You don't have the least minimal
idea of evil, Rowdy. Stop deluding
your pathetic mind.

SHILOH SCREAMS

- as more bright red blood oozes up from the cracks in the
floor and gravitates ominously toward Rowdy.

ROWDY

I'm cursed, damned. A civilian
killing a dozen insurgents. A
historian - just to find out what
war is really like.

SHILOH

Nonsense. You saved your whole
platoon from certain death. I saw
your scorecard. You got a boatload
of bonus points that day.

Shiloh tries to take the pistol from him, but he pushes her
aside.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Dammit. Rule number one. Never let
them know the score.

(really depressed)

I'll get hard time in Hell's
Kitchen for that one.

Rowdy stands tall, letting the fresh, BRIGHT-RED BLOOD SIPHON
its way up his pants legs.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

It will suck you right on down to
Hades, Rowdy. Don't let the blood -
reach your heart. Please? Trust me.

ROWDY

What I did. Oh God, I want to die.

(agonizing)

How can I ever forget? What I did
to them. Still. I'd kill them all.
Kill them a thousand times.

Rowdy starts to turn black and white like he's shifting back
into time.

Shiloh picks up the wineglass, now half-full again.

SHILOH

This wine - it's Lucifer's blood.
The real Lucifer. It will take you
right on down to Hell. The real
Hell. Not the Disney park in your
pathetic western tradition.

Shiloh is breathing hard, chest heaving. Her blouse is
completely unbuttoned, exposing deep curves.

ROWDY

My kinfolk was the South's greatest
cavalry leader. I coulda been proud
of that - Doh. - fifty years ago.
(quietly)
I belong in Hell. Give me that
wine.

SHILOH

Clearly, I'll never reach you.

Shiloh downs the half glass of wine.

She smashes the empty glass against the wall. It EXPLODES
with a crash and fades back into the past.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

Hell isn't for people like you.

The CURTAINS BURST into FLAMES.

The fire runs across the wood floor toward them.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

I've been there. I work there. You
have no idea how horrible it is.

The flames coalesce into the physical image of General Van
Dorn.

General Van Dorn draws his sword.

SHILOH (CONT'D)

It's Lucifer. The real Lucifer.
Don't let the façade fool you. He's
a master of disguise.

The ROOM BURSTS INTO FLAMES all around them.

Van Dorn swings his sword and drives them back into a corner.

Desperate, Rowdy and Shiloh look out the window at the raging
Civil War battle going on outside.

SHILOH (CONT'D)
Jump. It's our only way out.

Van Dorn corners them.

There's a MUZZLE FIRING at close range. A bullet SLAMS into General Van Dorn and knocks him back.

Rowdy stares at the smoking gun in his hand.

ROWDY
Oh, God. I really did shoot Van
Dorn - my own father. Grandfather.
(confused)
Oh, crap. What the dickens is going
on. Why can't I just fucking die?.

Shiloh grabs Rowdy and hauls him toward the door - but the fire is too intense.

They can't get out. They reach the window. Rowdy yanks the window open.

SHILOH
You go first. That way I can jump
and land on something soft.
(quietly)
So I don't break my delicate
ankles.

Rowdy stands there, gathering resolve.

He SLIPS and FALLS out the window.

General Van Dorn fades into the raging inferno, THRASHING the air blindly with his BATTLE SWORD.

EXT. HOUSE O'CLEAREY - NIGHT

Rowdy falls down, hits on his legs - slams down on his back.

His HEAD SLAMS the ground... and BOUNCES.

Rowdy's unable to move his legs. Dark blood oozes from the back of his head.

There's a FLUTTERING OF LARGE WINGS - then - Shiloh lands gently on Rowdy, her feet on his chest.

Rowdy stares at her ankles, feet - big bird feet.

ROWDY

Bird feet. Why, you're that infidel
demon goddess Ishtar.

Shiloh climbs off of him and helps him sit up - with his back
against a wall.

SHILOH

I really do wish you had heard all
my subtle hints. Really I do.

ROWDY

The wings - I heard the wings.

SHILOH

Every time there was a shift in
time. Lots of turbulence otherwise.

Rowdy winces, reaches behind his head - pulls his hand away,
and it's full of blood.

ROWDY

Guess there ain't no calling nine
one one for an ambulance. And Dr.
Erb is - well, he's probably on the
run because they think he shot Van
Dorn.

SHILOH

You really didn't need to die, you
know. I coulda pulled some strings.

ROWDY

Die? I'm gonna die? In this
Godforsaken - delusion?

SHILOH

It's a wicked business, mine.

Beat.

ROWDY

But, you're Ishtar. You're better
than this Banshee gig. You're a
Goddess.

SHILOH

I'm glad you believe. However. A
lady has to earn a living somehow.

He's fading fast. Shiloh tries to make him comfortable.

ROWDY

It's not your fault, Shiloh. I was too blind to see. Too - too.

(sudden apprehension)

Will I go back home?

His eyes flutter, struggling to stay conscious. Tears gush down her cheeks.

ROWDY (CONT'D)

Oh, wow. You really did care for me.

SHILOH

Of course I did, you moron. How could I not respect an Onward Druid Soldier?

ROWDY

Well? Will I be going home or not? Another big splotch of blood on the living room floor?

SHILOH

I'm afraid you stay right here. They'll give you a proper pagan burial. I'll see to that.

ROWDY

Little Bill. That's me.

SHILOH

Buried alongside your great-grandpa and grandma.

ROWDY

Thanks, Shiloh. I can rest in peace now. Better than - than. death by brain tumor.

Rowdy manages one last smile, then fades away with the smile still on his countenance.

SHILOH

He believed. Truly believed. What an unexpected blessing.

Slowly, her wings turn a golden yellow, shimmering bright in the sunshine.

Shiloh closes his eyes, takes one last look.

There's a FLUTTERING OF LARGE WINGS. And - she's gone.

A CAREFUL WHILE LATER

Several NURSES, bloody white clothes - scurry up to Rowdy's body. Check his vital signs.

NURSE #1

He's alive. Come on, let's get him
inside. Looks like a broken leg.
Some internal bleeding.

The nurses wave at several SOLDIERS, who hurry toward them - grab Rowdy's body, and haul him toward the front door.

They whisper amongst themselves, half scared and half terrified.

SOLDIER #1

God Almighty. Did you see that -
phantasm.

NURSE #2

It was the Angel of Death herself.
And why not - look at all this
senseless bloodshed.

SOLDIER #2

Who else could it a been?

NURSE #1

They don't call this Cemetery Ridge
for nothing.

The nurses disappear inside with Rowdy, while the soldiers take up arms and hurry toward the sounds of battle.

FADE OUT

THE END