FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

Screenplay by
Nick Hornby

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

Screenplay by
Nick Hornby

© 2013 WILLOW AND OAK, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NO PORTION OF THIS SCRIPT MAY BE PERFORMED, PUBLISHED, REPRODUCED, SOLD OR DISTRIBUTED BY ANY MEANS, OR QUOTED OR PUBLISHED IN ANY MEDIUM, INCLUDING ANY WEB SITE, WITHOUT THE PRIOR WRITTEN CONSENT OF WILLOW AND OAK, INC. DISPOSAL OF THIS SCRIPT COPY DOES NOT ALTER ANY OF THE RESTRICTIONS SET FORTH ABOVE.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

1 EXT. PACIFIC CREST TRAIL - DAY 1

A breathtakingly beautiful and remote part of northern California - luridly green forests, forbidding mountains, an enormous sky. No signs of civilization anywhere. We can hear the sound of human breathing, though - her breath is ragged, maybe distressed.

And now we see a hiking boot that clearly has something to do with the breathing. It's not on a foot - it's perched on a rock.

The boot's owner is CHERYL, filthy, possibly blonde hair, her face and legs covered in cuts and bruises. On the ground beside her is an enormous back-pack, as big as she is, almost. She's trying to remove the other boot, a process that's causing her immense pain.

The boot comes off. She throws it down beside the other one. Now all she needs to do is peel off the blood-stained sock. She tears the sock off in one fast agonizing movement. She winces and curses.

Close on her exposed foot, which is a raw, pulpy mess. One of her toenails is loose. She sings...

CHERYL
I'd rather be a hammer than a nail...

...takes a deep breath, and suddenly rips the entire toenail off.

This causes a chain reaction. She twists away in pain, and knocks the giant back-pack over. The back-pack falls against the boot, and bounces it towards the edge of the path where it topples down and deep into the woods below. Cheryl stands up and peers down in disbelief.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
No.

She sits back down and takes off her other boot. This time she gets the boot and the sock off in seconds. She must feel the pain, but her anger and despair trump it.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
FUCK YOU, BITCH!

She stands up and HURLS the one remaining boot down into the woods towards its mate.

As it falls, a SUDDEN RUSH of disconnected images - a syringe going into an ankle...

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

1 CONTINUED: 1

different body parts in various stages of sex... a finger looking up words in a dictionary... a horse flailing... a man's fist inches from the face of a young girl... pages of a book burning in a campfire... a fox looking straight at us... a woman with no eyes...

Her voice bounces off the rocks.

The TITLE appears over black: WILD.

2 EXT. ROADSIDE - MOJAVE, CALIFORNIA - DUSK 2

An old pickup pulls up outside a motel near Mojave. The neon sign - WHITE'S MOTEL - TELEVISION - VACANCY - is bright in the twilight, like a Hopper painting. Cheryl gets out, starts to collect her stuff from the back of the pickup - her enormous back-pack, and two enormous plastic carrier bags full of stuff. She puts the bags down, waves to the driver of the pickup.

3 INT. MOTEL - DAY 3

Cheryl walks into the grubby lobby of the motel. The TV up on the wall behind the desk is showing the OJ trial. The woman behind the desk has her neck crooked uncomfortably so that she can see it. Cheryl comes in, struggling with her bags. She dumps them on the lobby floor. She's excited. The desk clerk swivels round and glares at her.

CHERYL
Hi. I'd like a room for the night, please?

DESK CLERK
Eighteen dollars.

She looks over Cheryl's shoulder out of the glass door, apparently checking something.

DESK CLERK (CONT'D)
Unless you have a companion joining you later. If you have a companion, it's more.

CHERYL
I don't have a companion.

DESK CLERK
So it's eighteen dollars. For now.

CHERYL
It's going to stay eighteen dollars.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

3 CONTINUED: 3

DESK CLERK
Unless someone comes later.

CHERYL
Someone won't.

DESK CLERK
He might.

Cheryl tries not to show impatience at the circularity of the argument. She pulls out a twenty and pushes it across the desk. The clerk takes the money and slides a form and a ballpoint on a chain towards Cheryl.

CHERYL
I've actually come here to hike the PCT, so I'll have to leave the license number part blank. No car.

If Cheryl was hoping for some friendly and curious engagement, she's getting nothing.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
And also... I don't have an address.

DESK CLERK
So put down your folks' address.

Cheryl hesitates and then writes an address while the woman goes back to watching the news report of the OJ trial.

DESK CLERK (CONT'D)
You think he did it? I do. That man is guilty as sin.

Cheryl picks up her bags and, key in mouth, heads towards her room.

4 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 4

Cheryl is lying on the bed in the motel room, sipping cheap wine from a plastic cup and watching TV with the sound down - George Clooney is talking to a patient on ER. Beside her bed there is a bucket, catching drips from some kind of plumbing problem in the ceiling. The plop of the drip seems ominous. She hasn't unpacked her stuff, which is still in carrier bags on the floor. She's wearing a tank top, and on her left deltoid we see a tattoo of a blue horse. It's fresh, and rimmed with tiny scabs. She begins to pick them off, and one starts to bleed slightly.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

5 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 5

Cheryl parts the curtain of her room and looks out into the dark. Across the way there's a man, Cheryl's age, passably attractive, smoking a cigarette. He sees her looking, and she allows her gaze to linger a little longer than she should. She drops the curtain. She picks up the phone in the room, dials a number.

CHERYL
(tenderly)
Hey.

6 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 6

PAUL, Cheryl's age, handsome and likable, is in his kitchen, cooking with a woman, 20s, both sipping wine. We see Paul's tattoo, same place on the arm. ER is also playing on the TV in the living room.

PAUL
(with equal feeling)
Oh. Hey. Hi.

He tucks the phone under his chin and gestures to the girl that he'll be two minutes. He wanders into his living room.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You in Mojave?

CHERYL
Yeah. I just gave your address as my address on the motel registration form. It was the only one I could think of.

PAUL
That's cool. Any time.

CHERYL
If you see my brother, will you tell him I made it this far? I don't suppose he'll give much of a shit.

PAUL
No, he does, he will.

Paul doesn't want to get into a long conversation.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Listen, I'm cooking dinner for a friend, and...

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

6 CONTINUED: 6

CHERYL
Oh? Which friend?

She tries to say it playfully, and fails.

PAUL
Does it make any difference?

A beat. Before she can answer...

PAUL (CONT'D)
You want to get into a discuseion about our sexual conduct?

CHERYL
I only called because I couldn't get through to Leif.

PAUL
I want you to call. We're friends, remember.

CHERYL
Yes. Sorry.

They re-gather.

PAUL
No, I'm sorry.

CHERYL
For what?

PAUL
I don't know. I'm sorry you have to walk a thousand miles just to...

He trails off.

CHERYL
Yeah, finish that sentence. Why do I have to walk a thousand miles?

Neither of them say anything. They watch George Clooney instead.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
You still have the list of places to write to?

PAUL
Yeah. You want me to send anything else?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

6 CONTINUED: (2) 6

CHERYL
No, thanks. Aimee's in charge of the boxes.

PAUL
What's in the first one?

CHERYL
A couple of books, some chocolate, T-shirts and pants, twenty bucks. Jesus, I can remember a time when I wanted more than that from life.

PAUL
I wish things were different for you.

She doesn't say anything.

PAUL (CONT'D)
It's going to be amazing. If not, remember that you can quit. Any time. And nobody will think any the less of you.

CHERYL
This isn't about what other people think of me, Paul. It's about what I think of me.

PAUL
OK. I have to go.

CHERYL
So go.

PAUL
You finally got what you wanted.

CHERYL
What's that?

PAUL
To be alone.

Cheryl thinks about this for a moment.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Happy trails!

She hangs up. The drip-catching bucket is filling up. There's a little puddle of water around it. She ignores it. She strips off to take a shower.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

6 CONTINUED: (3) 6

On the way to the bathroom she picks up the bucket, and realizes that it has a hole in it. She snorts with bitter amusement.

CHERYL
Figures.

7 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT 7

She dumps the water from the bucket into the bath, and catches sight of herself in a mirror. She stares at herself penetratingly. Her reflection saddens her.

Later. She's got wet hair and she's wearing a T-shirt. She parts the curtains to see if the man's still there. He's gone. She reaches for a small box: *'The Loudest Whistle In The World', it says on it.* She takes the whistle out and puts it in her mouth. It stays silent.

8 INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING 8

Cheryl is standing in the middle of the motel room beside her enormous backpack, and looking around her, helplessly.

There is equipment on every available surface in the bedroom.

She sighs, takes her sleeping bag, stuffs it into the backpack. Then her cooking pot, then her tent, then her raincoat, then her lantern and a towel, toilet paper, notebooks...

Later. The backpack is a marvel to behold. Everything has been put away; there are things dangling from every piece of the framework, and a complicated system of bungee cords. This efficiency has come at some personal cost, though, because Cheryl is red-faced and sweaty.

CHERYL
Oh, shit.

She has forgotten something. She starts to delve in the bag.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

9 INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - MORNING 9

Cheryl is filling an apparently insatiable dromedary bag in the bathroom sink. The dromedary bag is basically a giant water balloon, heavy and hard to wrestle with; when Cheryl has filled it and sealed it, she picks it up. It's clearly heavy and slippery, and it immediately squirms out of her grasp and onto the floor. She picks it up again and works out a way to carry it as far as the bedroom.

10 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING 10

And now, miraculously, the dromedary bag is attached to the backpack. Cheryl is in an even worse state; she's sitting on the floor next to the pack. There are large damp patches around her armpits. She stands up, looks to her handiwork, and then takes the backpack by the frame, just to test how heavy it feels. The backpack doesn't move. She uses both hands... still nothing. She can't even lift it.

CHERYL
Jesus Christ.

She sits down in front of the pack, puts her arms through the shoulder straps. She rocks backwards and forwards to gain some momentum, and then shoots herself forward. If she was hoping that the maneuver would end with her standing up, she's disappointed; now she's on her hands and knees, trying to stop the pack from pushing her onto her belly.

She crawls forward a couple of inches, puts a hand on the metal cooling unit in the room, using this to give herself some leverage.

Slowly, she manages to get to her feet - her head rises, her knees straighten. She's basically in an Olympic weight-lifting stance, and if the object of the exercise were to get herself into a standing position wearing an enormous backpack, then she's succeeded triumphantly.

11 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY 11

Cheryl is leaning against the wall beside a soda machine in a gas station, chugging a soda greedily. Her backpack towers above her head. She's already a hot and disheveled mess.

She's people-watching, apparently trying to work out which of the gas station's customers she might approach for a lift. The mother with three squabbling children is easy to discount; so too the sinister-looking man with hooded eyes, a pony-tail and a scar down one cheek.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

11 CONTINUED: 11

She likes the look of a pair of men who may well be father and son - the father is fiftyish, the son is 16 - in a van. As the father is about to open the van door, Cheryl approaches him unsteadily.

CHERYL
Hi. You driving west?

MAN
(reluctantly)
Yeah.

CHERYL
I'm going to Tehachapi Pass?

The man shrugs.

MAN
OK.

Cheryl walks over to the car, and then realizes that she has no easy way of climbing into the back seat. She opens the car door, sits on the edge of the seat with her legs on the ground, lies down and wriggles out of the backpack.

12 INT. VAN - DAY 12

Cheryl, happy in the back seat of the van without her pack on.

MAN
So what's going on at Tehachapi Pass?

CHERYL
I'm hiking the PCT from there.

MAN
I don't know what that is.

CHERYL
The Pacific Crest Trail. Runs from the Mexican border to Canada. I'll be walking for the next three months.

MAN
Jeez. You do a lot of hiking?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

12 CONTINUED: 12

CHERYL
Yeah. I mean, I'm not an obseesive. This is still, you know... quite a stretch for me.

MAN
So we're going to be your last human company for a while.

CHERYL
I guess that's right. I should make the most of the conversational opportunities.

They almost immediately lapse into a silence... broken by the man, who turns the car radio on and searches for music. The Shangri-Las' *"I Can Never Go Home Anymore"* suddenly plays. The son seems annoyed by his father's music selection. Cheryl looks out the window at the arid landscape, and smiles.

A12 INT. BOBBI'S HOUSE. DAY A12

BOBBI, Cheryl's mother - thirtyish, attractive, bright-eyed, arty, hippy, energetic - is dancing to the Shangri-Las tune with seven-year-old Cheryl. Their house is comfortable, cheaply but imaginatively furnished, full of colour. Cheryl and Bobbi have a whole choreographed routine to accompany the Shangri-Las' song which they perform with perfect seriousness while doing the dishes. The girls stop dancing when Cheryl's four-year-old brother LEIF turns the music off.

B12 INT. VAN - DAY B12

The son just switched the radio off and goes back to his reading. His father looks at him.

THE MAN
I love you too, son.

The father shakes his head, visibly hurt. No signs of compassion from the son who keeps on reading.

Cheryl goes back to her daydreaming.

C12 SOUNDLESS FLASHBACK: C12

We're back at Bobbi's house. Bobbi holds her hands a couple of inches apart. Young Cheryl and Leif start to smile and shake their heads no. Bobbi moves her hands further apart. The kids shake their heads again. Bobbi's arms are stretched as wide as they can go. This is the children's cue for a hug. They run into her arms.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

C12 CONTINUED: C12

Even though we don't really understand what's going on (we will later), this demonstration of love and happiness would put a smile on anyone's face...

... but not on Cheryl's as she keeps looking out the window.

13 EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY 13

The van pulls off the road and Cheryl gets out. The man opens the door and walks round to help her. With enormous effort, Cheryl drags the backpack down the seat. The man takes over, picks it up, drops it down with an alarming thump. He's clearly taken aback by the weight.

MAN
You're going to put that on your back? Because I couldn't put it on mine.

CHERYL
Oh, you get used to it.

The man stands there for a moment, waiting for her to put it on. He wants to see that she can.

Cheryl smiles at him, not willing to do it in front of him. There's a standoff for a moment.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Thanks for the ride.

The man stares at her for a moment longer, realizes that she's waiting until he's gone, and gives up.

MAN
Be safe out there.

CHERYL
I will.

He gets back in the van and drives off. Cheryl sits down in the dirt and adopts the position she needs to get the pack on her back.

She looks around her. She's on the edge of the desert. Dust is blowing around her feet; she's surrounded by the mountains of the Sierra Nevada. It's already hot. She sees a fence-post a few yards away, and walks towards it.

There's a small metal sign that says PACIFIC CREST TRAIL; underneath the sign is a small metal box. She opens it and takes out the notebook and pen inside. This is the trail register. She writes in the book. What she has written appears on the screen in her handwriting:

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

13 CONTINUED: 13

"IF YOUR NERVE DENY YOU - GO ABOVE YOUR NERVE - EMILY DICKINSON (AND CHERYL STRAYED)"

She begins to walk. She's happy, confident, excited.

CARD ON SCREEN: DAY 1

14 EXT. PACIFIC CREST TRAIL - DAY 14

Close on Cheryl's face. She's sweating and breathing hard. The confidence and excitement is fading out. The breathing forms only one part of a complicated rhythm track which involves her footsteps, the creaking of the pack and the sloshing of the water container. She grimaces with pain and attempts to adjust her pack. She's trying not to collapse under its weight...as we see the fence-post with the trail register maybe a hundred yards behind her.

15 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 15

Later. The same sort of terrain - a rocky, occasionally steep trail, scrubby, dry bushes. The fence-post is still visible, only a little further away. Sweat is stinging her eyes and blurring her vision. The pack is agony.

CHERYL (V.O.)
What the fuck have I done? What the fuck?

What we hear is Cheryl's MIX-TAPE RADIO. It's the sound of her head, a jumble of oaths and songs and poems and adverts and, occasionally, cogent thought, and we have access to it throughout the movie.

CHERYL (V.O.)
What... the... FUCK... what... the...
FUCK... what... the... FUCK

This *cri de coeur* becomes another instrument to add to the cacophony of her walking rhythm.

16 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 16

Cheryl stops walking, out of breath, and turns around. We can still see the fence-post - only just, but it's there. She shakes her head, turns again and keeps walking.

CHERYL (V.O.)
You can QUIT any TIME...you can QUIT any
TIME...you can QUIT any TIME...

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A16 EXT. TRAIL - DAY A16

Cheryl stops again, even more out of breath, her face red. She makes an effort to take her backpack off but stops. Too painful. She rests her pack against a large rock, unbuckles it and reaches over to a sage bush. She picks a handful of the leaves, rubs them between her palms, and puts her face in them, inhaling deeply. She looks at the blue sky, breathes in, brings her self up, and keeps on walking.

17 OMITTED 17

18 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 18

Cheryl puts her backpack down and rests on all fours, exhausted and shaken. She rummages around in her pack and pulls out a chair, her tent, the stove and a couple of books - her guide and her copy of Adrienne Rich's Dream Of A Common Language. We watch as Cheryl struggles to erect or even understand her tent, even though it's nowhere near sunset.

Later. Finally, the tent is up, her camping seat is positioned at the entrance. Cheryl is on her knees, examining the stove. She sighs at the effort involved in lighting it, and pulls from her pack some tuna jerky and a small packet of nuts. She sits wearily down on the seat and looks at her pack that stands against a Joshua tree. It's enormous. She looks around, shakes her head, and begins to write in a small book.

CHERYL (V.O.)
I thought of you today. I felt a burst of energy, remembering why I thought I could hike this trail. Hope you won't be mad at me...
(a beat)
... if I quit.

Cheryl puts her diary down, takes Adrienne Rich's book and begins to read the poetry aloud to herself.

CHERYL
Today a backhoe divulged out of a crumbling flank of earth/one bottle amber perfect a hundred-year-old/cure for fever or melancholy....

She stops to cram some tuna jerky into her mouth.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
... a tonic/for living on this earth in the winters of this climate/Today I was reading about Marie Curie..."

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

18 CONTINUED: 18

CLOSE on the poem in the book. We can see that it's called 'Power'. Her voice fades out. The voice of an older woman fades in to complete the poem.

LECTURER (V.O.)
"....She died a famous woman denying her wounds/denying/her wounds came from the same source as her power."

19 INT. CLASSROOM - COLLEGE - DAY 19

The book is now on a desk in a classroom. A younger Cheryl, surrounded by fellow students, is looking at it. It's being read out loud by a lecturer - wild grey hair, alternative, an old-school feminist.

LECTURER
What I'd like you to think about for next week - and to make myself plain, "thinking about" actually means writing, in essay form...

Chuckles and groans from the students.

LECTURER (CONT'D)
...Is, where did this poem come from? Simple as that. So all you need to do is go away and find out about Adrienne Rich's life, and the history of American poetry, and you're all set.

More chuckles and groans.

LECTURER (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Cheryl stands up, puts her book in her book bag.

20 EXT. CORRIDOR - COLLEGE - DAY 20

A bustle of students and teachers between classes. Cheryl almost bumps into a woman going the other direction. They carry on walking. Cheryl thinks about it, then spins around.

CHERYL
(hissing)
Bobbi!

The woman stops and turns. It's Cheryl's mother. She looks pathetically grateful for a moment, then tries to act cool.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
How's it going?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

20 CONTINUED: 20

BOBBI
Yeah. Good. I think. Hard, but..

She shrugs and smiles excitedly.

21 INT. BOBBI'S HOUSE - NIGHT 21

Bobbi and Cheryl are sitting at the kitchen table, studying. Cheryl is writing her essay about Adrienne Rich; Bobbi is trying to write about Erica Jong's 'Fear Of Flying'.

CHERYL
I'm sorry I ignored you today.

BOBBI
It's OK, hon. We agreed. It's a difficult thing, going to school with your mother.

CHERYL
It doesn't mean I'm not proud of you, because I am. Really proud.

Cheryl's mother's face lights up.

BOBBI
You know what? I'm pretty proud of me, too. I knew there was a lot out there. I just never knew it was this much.

She picks up the Erica Jong book.

BOBBI (CONT'D)
Tell me about zipless fucks. As I understand it, the ziplees fuck is like the no strings-attached, guilt-free one-night stand...

CHERYL
Mom! I will not talk to you about zipless fucks!

BOBBI
Are they more real now than they were? Mine have all come covered in zips. Zips everywhere.

Cheryl's younger brother LEIF and his friend WAYNE enter. Leif is blonde, Wayne a black-haired Native American. They are both eighteen, long-haired, stoned, maybe trouble.

LEIF
What's for dinner, Mom? I'm starving.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

21 CONTINUED: 21

Bobbi and Cheryl look at each other and laugh. They've forgotten.

CHERYL
Books and essays.

BOBBI
I'll fix you something. Is Wayne staying?

CHERYL
Let him do it. He's eighteen. You can't afford the time.

BOBBI
If I can't be a mother then I can't be a student either.

She stands up and begins to bustle around the kitchen.

CHERYL
That's ridiculous.

LEIF
If she wants to make me dinner, then let her.

CHERYL
(gesturing at the books)
So this is all wasted on you. You're learning nothing.

BOBBI
You think that's what it's all about? Ditching one thing for another? Not to me it isn't, sweetheart. I have to do everything, and I want to do everything. And I hope you do, too.
(to the boys)
Pasta?

Cheryl looks at her, abashed. Leif walks to Bobbi and kisses her. Wayne sits at the dining table and looks at Cheryl's books. Cheryl is amused but seems to enjoy the flirt. She notices Wayne's necklace.

CHERYL
Nice.

LEIF
Isn't it cool? It's an eagle. The Ojibwe believe that it represents... something.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

21 CONTINUED: (2) 21

He and Wayne collapse into stoned giggles. Cheryl rolls her eyes.

22 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 22

Cheryl back in her tent, eyes closed, still chewing on tuna jerky, trying to teach herself the poem.

CHERYL
"Denying her wounds came from her power."

A quick glance at the book.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
"Denying her wounds came from the same source as her power."

Close on Cheryl's face. We don't know what's going on with this poem and these memories, but they cause her pain.

23 INT. TENT - DUSK 23

Cheryl reading in her tent with her head-lamp. She puts the book down, turns the light off, lies in the dark. There are noises everywhere - animals in the distance, breeze in the scrub, thunder a long way away. She puts the light on again. She's scared. Her head turns towards the noises on either side of her. She turns the lamp off again.

24 BLACK 24

We hear the sounds that Cheryl was hearing, but louder. We start to see some grain in the darkness as we become used to it. There's a movement - the silhouette of a wild animal in the foreground. Suddenly a light appears in the distance: Cheryl's tent, a tiny bright dot in an inhospitable landscape. The animal freezes. It's a Jack rabbit, a long way away.

25 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 25

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 2

The next morning. Cheryl is on her hands and knees in front of her camping stove, and she's re-reading the instructions. Beside her are the dehydrated meal she intends to cook.

CHERYL (V.O.)
"Please ensure that you use only the white gas compatible with this stove. Other fuels...

Her voice gets louder in her rage and panic

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

25 CONTINUED: 25

CHERYL (V.O.)
...MAY HARM THE EQUIPMENT AND RENDER IT INOPERABLE. SHIT SHIT SHIT.

She kicks the useless canister of fuel.

CLOSE on an inedible-looking mess of lumpy oats and undissolved powder. Cheryl adds a little more water, stirs it around, wearily spoons it into her mouth.

CHERYL (V.O.)
Two all beef-patties special sauce lettuce cheese pickles onions on a sesame seed bun. Two all beef-patties special seuce...

26 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 26

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 3

The usual walking rhythm - slosh, creak, thump. There is something else that's making her uncomfortable, however, on top of the pain in her shoulders and hips and feet. She's in e cold sweet. She stops, takes off her pack, rummages inside and pulls out e small trowel and some toilet peper. She welks off the trail a few yards, squats down end tries to dig in the dirt with the trowel. Nothing doing - she can't penetrate the dry, rocky surface. She's getting desperate - she starts trying to use the trowel as a pickaxe. Still nothing. She hurls the trowel down on the ground in disgust, fumbles with her trousers, takes them off, kicks them well sway and squats. Her face registers relief. Afterwards she collects stones and places them on and around her own excrement.

Later. Cheryl clears her throat and starts talking to herself.

CHERYL
"So, Cheryl...What do you do for fun? When you're not hiking?" "Oh, I like to sit on a real toilet, with a seat and a flush. And I like to cook. Like, food. I like to cook food and eat it. I love music. Songs. I love the sound of the human voice. I like listening to people. That's a hobby of mine I hadn't even noticed until I started walking on my own through the fucking desert."

27 EXT. TENT - EVENING 27

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 5

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

27 CONTINUED: 27

Cheryl in her tent, reading Faulkner by head lamp and spooning cold mush into her mouth again as she starts humming a refrain that rings a bell.

28 EXT. TENT — DAY 28

CARD ON SCREEN — DAY 7

A different location. Cheryl changing it up a little, and eating the tuna jerky with e handful of nuts. It doesn't look any more appetizing.

CHERYL (V.O.)
(singing)
You like potaTO, I like poTAto...

29 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 29

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 8

CHERYL (V.O.)
You like tomaTO, I like toMAto...

It's even hotter, if anything, and Cheryl is scarcely recognizable as the woman we saw talking to Paul in the hotel room. She's a different colour from the sun and the dirt and the blood, and she's already thinner. She's sitting on the side of the trail, boots off, pulling all the available cold food she has, the nuts and the power bars and the jerky, and laying it out in a line. There isn't much of it. She unwraps a power bar, swallows it in two bites, chases it down with some warm water. She's still starving. She unwraps another one. It makes no difference.

CHERYL
OK. We need to feed you, kid.

Further along the same stretch, Cheryl is standing by a dirt track leading off the trail. She has a compass in one hand and a map in the other. She starts to walk up the dirt track.

30 EXT. TRACK — DAY 30

Cheryl walking through a completely uninhabited landscape.

CHERYL
"PotaTO, poTAto, tomaTO, toMAto...Shut the fucking whole thing off"!

She hums the melody line from *"Let's Call The Whole Thing Off"* out loud, trying to turn it into something else that doesn't remind her of her hunger.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

30 CONTINUED: 30

She takes the staccato rhythm of the song and turns it into the melody line from "El Condor Pasa".

CHERYL (CONT'D)
"Yes I would, if I could, I surely would... I'd rather eat a sparrow than a snail"...

31 EXT. TRACK - DUSK 31

Dusk, and the landscape hasn't changed much - there's still no sign of life, the energy has gone from Cheryl's singing. and *"Let's Call The Whole Thing Off"* has won the battle of the songs.

CHERYL (V.O.)
"PotaTO, poTAto, tomaTO, toMAto"...
Please, make it stop.
(singing out loud)
I hate this song.

Cheryl rounds a bend and sees, off in the distance, a pick-up truck parked on a road, and behind it in a field, the lights of a tractor suddenly appearing. She runs towards them.

32 OMITTED 32

33 EXT. ROAD - DUSK 33

Cheryl, standing in the tractor's path, waving at the driver. He stops the tractor. This is FRANK, a very large white man. wearing a cowboy hat. He is clearly nonplussed by the appearance of this beaten-up, filthy woman.

CHERYL
Hello. Hi. I'm Cheryl, and I'm walking the PCT, and I've run out of food, and I just need to get somewhere so that I can buy a hot meal. And you're the first person I've talked to in eight days who isn't me.

FRANK
I'm working.

CHERYL
I understand. But maybe when you've finished you can give me a ride somewhere?

Frank looks at his watch.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

33 CONTINUED: 33

FRANK
Don't know what you're going to find round here that's open at this time in the evening.

CHERYL
Even if you just left me outside a place that will be open for breakfast in the morning...I could just sleep nearby.

Frank looks at her.

FRANK
You must be pretty hungry.

CHERYL
I had all these dehydrated meals, but I can't heat them up because I brought the wrong fuel, and... yeah, I'm kind of desperate.

FRANK
I got another thirty minutes or so to do here. You can sit in my truck.

He gestures to the pick-up parked on the road. Cheryl watches him leaves.

34 INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DUSK 34

Cheryl watches Frank driving up and down in a field in the distance. She sniffs the air in the truck, and then sniffs her clothes and her armpits - what she can smell is herself. She winds the window down. When she knows Frank can't see, she opens the glover compartment and finds a silver whiskey flask; she screws it open, takes a sip. She reaches under the driver's seat and finds a black case. Inside: a gun.

A34 LATER - NIGHT A34

Frank gets into the truck.

FRANK
I've been thinking. You can come home with me. Dinner and a shower.

Cheryl is alarmed, but is trying to stay calm.

FRANK (CONT'D)
What kind of woman are you, anyway?

CHERYL
What kind?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A34 CONTINUED: A34

FRANK
I mean...Are you like Jane?

CHERYL
Jane?

FRANK
Tarzan's Jane?

She laughs, trying to give the impression of being at ease.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I've got a little something for us.

He leans across Cheryl, opens the glove compartment, takes out the flask and hands it to her.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Ladies first.

Cheryl takes a sip from the flask.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I'm going to call you Jane.

He starts to drive.

CHERYL
I'm not out here on my own, actually. My husband Paul is a little further ahead on the trail. But we're meeting up soon. At Kennedy Meadows, probably.

Frank takes the flask from her, takes a long sip.

FRANK
There's something else I like to do when I finish work.

He looks at Cheryl. He's impossible to read. As he's driving with one hand on the wheel, Frank reaches beneath his seat, where the gun is. Cheryl grips the door handle, preparing to open it and jump out. Frank comes up with a clear bag, pulls out a thick lasso of red licorice, holds it out to Cheryl.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You want some, Miss Jane?

Cheryl takes it, gratefully, and crams it into her mouth.

FRANK (CONT'D)
My wife hates it that I eat candy before dinner.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A34 CONTINUED: (2) A34

He peels off a chunk of licorice, puts it in his mouth, and Cheryl settles back into her seat.

A35 LATER A35

Through the windshield, we're approaching a house in the middle of nowhere. Literally. Nothing to reassure Cheryl.

35 INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT 35

Frank and his wife live in a small, spotlessly clean, three-room house. The TV is blaring away - more news of the OJ trial, in front of two empty chairs that clearly belong to heavy people. Frank's wife Annette, a large woman, appears from the kitchen and places large quantities of food, ribs, greens and corn on the table. Cheryl can't take her eyes off it. She moves towards a chair so that she can dig in.

ANNETTE
Hold on, sweetheart. No offence, but...

She picks up the newspaper from the table, removes a couple of pages, puts them over Cheryl's chair. Cheryl looks mortified.

Later. Frank and his wife have finished eating, but Cheryl is still going. Her plate is full of rib bones.

FRANK
You meet your husband at college?

She remembers what she told him in the truck.

CHERYL
Oh. Paul. Yeah.

FRANK
He must be even crazier than you. One thing going on a hike like that when you're a man. Another thing letting your wife do it.

ANNETTE
Not everyone in the world thinks like you, Frank.

FRANK
No, and it's why the world is all messed up.

CHERYL
Paul and I kind of do our own thing.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

35 CONTINUED: 35

It's said lightly, but the lightness has been hard won.

36 INT. SHOWER - NIGHT 36

Cheryl in the shower. At her raw, blistered, bruised feet, the water is running almost black. The hot water on her body is as intense an experience as the food was... until she touches her tattoo.

37 INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY 37

Close on the blue horse being created by a tattooist - except as the camera pulls back, it's clear that the shoulder providing the canvas belongs to a man - Paul. Cheryl is watching. She's revolving her shoulder gently. The tattooist is a woman, tattoos everywhere: neck, arms, hands. Paul winces.

TATTOOIST
So what does this horse mean to you guys?

PAUL
Well, we both really dig horses.

CHERYL
We're actually getting divorced. This afternoon. So we wanted something that, I don't know. Bound us together forever.

She's emotional, although the tattooist doesn't notice.

TATTOOIST
It hasn't occurred to you that it might be less painful to stay married? Cheaper, too.

Paul smiles, and sees an opportunity to get the conversation off their relationship.

PAUL
Well, at least we probably won't regret it. Couples don't necessarily stay married, but they tend to stay divorced.

The tattooist smiles.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You get a lot of people asking about removing tattoos...

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

37 CONTINUED: 37

CHERYL
I cheated on him.

TATTOOIST
It happens.
(to Paul)
She seems sorry.

CHERYL
I am sorry.

PAUL
Hey, Cheryl. Would you...

TATTOOIST
Come on, man. Wipe the slate clean.

PAUL
It's quite a big slate.

CHERYL
I cheated on him many times, and I don't know if I can stop. And I hate hurting him. He deserves so much better.

The tattooist carries on with the job in silence.

A37 INT. PAUL AND CHERYL'S APARTMENT - DAY A37

Close on a hand made book on which it's written *The Day The Daisies Bloomed*. Next to it, a dictionary.

That is Cheryl's POV as she sits on the sofa reading something that makes her smile and look at Paul who is gathering all the legal papers spread on the table.

PAUL
Anyone who gives their marriage vows a title like that is by definition too young to get married.

Cheryl goes back to her reading... and stops, choked by an emotion.

Paul notices and looks at her with compassion.

CHERYL
(avoiding Paul's look)
I hope you can do that someday with someone else.

PAUL
I hope you can too.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

38 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY 38

Paul and Cheryl are hurrying along the street, arm-in-arm. They reach their destination, a downtown office building, and Paul opens the door. Cheryl stops him from going inside.

CHERYL
We're sure?

Paul rolls his eyes affectionately.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I mean, I know we're not sure sure, because we've been going back and forth for months. But right now? Today?

Paul sighs helplessly.

PAUL
Yep. Today. Now.

39 INT. OFFICE - DAY 39

The notary public, VAL, is very small, mid-thirties, with cropped hair, dyed bright blonde apart from a streak of pink. She has tattoos too. She's a punk notary. She's examining the divorce papers while Paul and Cheryl watch. We can see that they're holding hands.

VAL
Is that right? 'Stry-ed'?

CHERYL
It's just 'Strayed'. Like a stray dog.

She looks at Paul. He smiles. No comment.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I needed a new name and I saw that word in a book and... you know all the meanings? I looked it up. "To wander from the proper path, to be lost, to be without a mother and a father, to become wild".

Val isn't interested.

VAL
OK. This all looks fine.

CHERYL
I just want to say that this isn't a regular divorce.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

39 CONTINUED: 39

CHERYL (CONT'D)
This is not for lack of love, just so you know. I love him and he loves me.

Val nods, but she doesn't want to know about this. She may have dyed blonde hair and tattoos, but she's a notary, not a therapist. She presses her notary public stamp against some pages.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
This was all me. He didn't do anything, I'm the one. I broke my own heart.

Paul lets go of Cheryl's hand.

Cheryl's eyes fill with tears.

PAUL
Cheryl, please.

She stops talking. Val decides to study the papers one last time as a way of avoiding eye-contact. She puts them in an envelope and thrusts them across the table towards Cheryl.

VAL
You're all set. You have to mail them yourselves. Good luck.

Cheryl won't take them. Paul does.

40 EXT. STREET - DAY 40

Paul and Cheryl standing by a mailbox. Paul is holding the envelope that Val gave him. Without saying anything, he posts the envelope through the slot. It seems brutal, given the atmosphere of indecision and love.

PAUL
What are we doing?

CHERYL
Saying goodbye.

Paul nods. He knows.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Will you come back for a drink?

He kisses her on the cheek and walks away.

PAUL
Goodbye.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

40 CONTINUED: 40

CHERYL
Bye.

PAUL
Cheryl Strayed.

Crumpled against the mail-box, she watches him go, as it starts to snow.

41 INT. SHOWER - NIGHT 41

Cheryl, finishing her shower - just letting the water wash over her, still. She finishes the shower and gets out. She starts to dry herself, winces. She looks at herself in the bathroom mirror, puts her arms out straight on either side of her. There are wounds everywhere: her tailbone and her hips and her shoulders have all been rubbed raw by her pack. She shakes her head. She looks like she's paying for somebody's sins.

42 EXT. STREET - DAY 42

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 9

Cheryl emerges from a store carrying the gas she needs for lighting her stove. Frank is sitting in his pick-up truck waiting for her. She climbs into the cab.

43 INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - DAY 43

Frank pulls away.

FRANK
You get what you need?

CHERYL
Yep. I don't have to eat cold mush any more. I can eat hot mush.

FRANK
There's no husband, is there?

Cheryl, embarrassed, makes a "busted" face.

CHERYL
No. I mean, there was. We got divorced two months ago. And he's not on the PCT. I lied because I was scared of you.

FRANK
I knew that. You ever think about quitting?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

43 CONTINUED: 43

CHERYL
Only about once every two minutes or so. Every part of me hurts, all the time. You think I should quit?

FRANK
Oh, sure.

Cheryl laughs -- at his frankness and his lack of encouragement.

FRANK (CONT'D)
But don't listen to me. I've quit a bunch of things, Jobs. A marriage. I'd have quit your hike pretty much on the first day.

CHERYL
And do you regret any of them?

Frank thinks.

FRANK
I never had the choice. I just couldn't do them. Wasn't never a time when it felt like there was a fork in the road.

Cheryl thinks about this.

CHERYL
Yeah, that's about the size of it.

44 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 44

Cheryl rejoins the trail. It's a rocky, hot, steep section, with mountains everywhere, near and far. Cheryl signs the trail register. Handwriting on the screen:

'FEAR IS THE WILDERLAND, STEPPING STONES OR SINKING SAND'
(JONI MITCHELL - AND CHERYL STRAYED)'

45 EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT 45

Cheryl by her tent, already dirty and bloody again. There are coyotes howling away somewhere in the distance, and she's a little spooked. She's trying to get her stove working with the new fuel, and suddenly it flares into life.

CHERYL
YES!

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

45 CONTINUED: 45

Later. She's contentedly spooning beans and rice into her mouth - a small triumph. She's sufficiently cheered to attempt an impersonation of the coyotes.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Yip! Yip! Yip! Yip!

46 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 46

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 11

The old, familiar, nightmarish rhythm: the sloshing of the bag, the creak of the pack, the pounding of the feet. The trail is steep at this point.

She's so focused on her rhythm that she fails to hear a new instrument in the mix. As well as the creak and the plod and the slosh there's a rattle. She ignores it for a few seconds, then realizes what it is and stops dead. At her feet there is a huge rattlesnake.

She scrambles backwards and stands stock-still, staring at it. She's petrified. Her breathing is heavy and fast - she tries to slow it, and regain self-control.

CHERYL
Listen... I just want to scoot right by you there.

She makes a slithering gesture with her hand.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
OK? I'll get on with my day, you get on with yours...

The snake stays put. She gets ready to move, then changes her mind.

Cut to later: Cheryl and the rattlesnake are in identical positions.

And later: Cheryl is a little further back, sipping water from a bottle.

And later: Cheryl preparing to move again. This time she moves. She takes as wide a berth as she can, and then runs as fast as she can, given the weight of the pack, with the occasional glance back.

A46 INT. TENT - DUSK A46

Cheryl slides into her sleeping bag, exhausted. She freezes when she hears something. Sounds like footsteps.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A46 CONTINUED: A46

CHERYL (V.O.)
Fear creates fear. Do not allow yourself to be afraid. You can't be afraid. Power creates power. I'm strong. I am not afraid. Nature is my friend, not my enemy...

She doesn't finish her sentence that she jumps out of her sleeping bag, and out of the tent...

B46 EXT. TENT - DUSK B46

... where she turns her flashlight on. She takes her sleeping bag out of the tent and drops it on the ground. Nothing moves. She holds it upside down, shakes it, and when something falls out of it, she blows as hard as she can in The Loudest Whistle In The World...

C46 EXT. WILDERNESS - DUSK C46

... alarming creatures of the surrounding wilderness.

D46 EXT. TENT - DUSK D46

One of the creatures doesn't seem too worried: a caterpillar moves slowly next to Cheryl's sleeping bag on the ground.

She watches it, dumbfounded, and puts her hands on her ears, annoyed by the loud ringing that buzzes in her head...

E46 INT. PAUL'S CAR - DAY E46

... and keeps buzzing as we see Cheryl on the passenger seat, fingers in her ears, refusing to listen to Paul as he's driving across a bridge, screaming at her. But we can't hear him, all we hear is the ringing...

47 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 47

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 15

... that soon transforms into the sound of loud cicadas. It's hotter than it's ever been; everything, the trees and the sky, seems bleached by the sun.

CHERYL (V.O.)
Are you burning and yearning?/ Do you ever get blue? Do you think of returning?/ How's the world treating you?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

47 CONTINUED: 47

Cheryl stops in her tracks behind a tree. In the distance there is a river, and a man sitting in it, bathing. Cheryl wonders if she should show herself. The man is totally naked. She seems to enjoy the view... until he spots her.

THE MAN
Oh. Hi. Cheryl Strayed?

This is GREG. He's simultaneously pleased to see her and a little embarrassed. So is Cheryl.

CHERYL
Do I know you?

GREG
I saw your name in the trail register. You're the only woman in there. I'm Greg. I thought I was behind you.

CHERYL
I came off the trail for a night. My stove wasn't working.

GREG
Well, I'm very pleased to meet you. Sorry, I wasn't expecting visitors. Give me a moment.

He waits for her to turn her back to get out of the water. She finally gets it.

48 LATER 48

Greg - in his hiking T-shirt and shorts - and Cheryl sitting in the shade, drinking water.

CHERYL
So...How many miles a day are you doing?

GREG
I'm averaging twenty-two at the moment.

CHERYL
(with disbelief)
You'll be at Kennedy Meadows tomorrow?

GREG
Hope so.

CHERYL
(lying)
I'm only managing, you know... eleven or twelve.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

48 CONTINUED: 48

GREG
The first couple of weeks are hard. You do all that preparation and training and nothing prepares you for the pain and the heat.

CHERYL
Yeah. So what kind of preparation did you do?

GREG
Oh, you know. Weekend hikes, a few lectures... I heard Ray Jardine speak a couple times.

Close on Cheryl's face. She's trying to look as though she's done all this, while at the same time keeping the panic out of her face.

CHERYL
Wow.

She doesn't know who the hell Ray Jardine is.

GREG
I started planning a few years ago. I can hardly believe I'm here now.

CHERYL
Me neither.

GREG
We picked the wrong year, though. Are you bypassing the Sierra?

CHERYL
(laughs)
Sure. I'll bypass anything. Should I?

GREG
It's completely socked in. The biggest snowfall for a decade or so. Nobody's getting through that. How about we make a plan up in Kennedy Meadows? I'm staying there for a few days to rest up.

CHERYL
Thanks. Yes. Let's make a plan. That would be good for me.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

49 INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY 49

Cheryl is eating lunch with her friend Aimee in a window seat. Outside: a typical Minneapolis winter with lots of snow. Cheryl is distracted, not really engaging with Aimee's questions or her concern.

CHERYL
It's not like I'm some junkie. I'm in control.

AIMEE
Yeah, everybody is with drugs.

CHERYL
I'm an experimentalist. The girl who likes to say yes. It's all fine. Relax.

Aimee shakes her head. She doesn't think so. Cheryl takes a chip, dips it in the salsa and takes a bite. Something feels weird. She touches her throat. Her hand slowly slides to her belly, as if she was following the chips down.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I think I'm pregnant.

AIMEE
What?

Cheryl makes a face.

AIMEE (CONT'D)
You're serious?

Yes.

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Who's the father?

CHERYL
I don't know. I have an idea, but..

AIMEE
An idea? Are you fucking kidding me? What are you doing to yourself?

50 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY 50

Cheryl's truck in an outdoor parking lot, completely snowed in. Aimee and Cheryl stare at it.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

50 CONTINUED: 50

AIMEE
Ok, we need a pregnancy test kit and a shovel.

51 INT. OUTDOOR STORE - DAY 51

Cheryl and Aimee are waiting to pay for a shovel at the till. The store sells all kinds of equipment for outdoor activities. Cheryl gets distracted by a display of books. She picks one up, flicks through it and reads a page, not paying attention to Aimee.

AIMEE
You're doing it in front of me. And if you're pregnant, we're going to pay a visit to your "idea" and we're going to make a plan.

It's their turn to pay. Cheryl puts the book back in its place. THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL, VOLUME ONE, with the photograph of a spectacular landscape on its cover: a lake surrounded by rocky mountains and blue sky.

A51 INT. LADIES' TOILET - DRUG STORE A51

There are two stalls. Only one is occupied. By Cheryl. But we only see her boots and winter jacket on the floor, as we hear her pee. It stops. This is Aimee's POV as she stands in the toilet, waiting for her friend to come out.

B51 INT. ALLEY - DRUG STORE B51

We're on an alley full of drugs and medications. It looks endless. Suddenly there is a little girl, seen from behind, that walks in, and away from us, with a small bottle in her hand. That is Little Cheryl-7. She's holding back tears.

52 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY 52

Cheryl is shovelling the snow away from her car under the surveillance of Aimee who looks at her with red and teary eyes. Aimee would like to take over but Cheryl refuses and keeps on shovelling, her mind spinning, and we can hear it. It sounds like an engine blended with the repetitive noise of wipers going up and down a windshield.

Later: Cheryl keeps on shovelling with the same determination. Aimee is now crying.

Cheryl suddenly stops shovelling, breathless. There is something different in her eye. And we see what she sees:

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

52 CONTINUED: 52

That photograph of the lake again, surrounded by giant mountains, and as we get closer and closer to it, we see little Cheryl-7, among the nature.

Back on Cheryl who turns to look at Aimee. It starts to snow again. In slow motion. The scene looks and sounds surreal, until her voice brings us back to reality.

CHERYL (V.O.)
There is no plan to make. I have to have an abortion.

A52 INT. CHERYL'S CAR - PARKING LOT - DAY A52

Cheryl is seated behind the steering wheel looking at the wipers, wiping the snow flakes off the windshield. In the distance, Minneapolis, blurred, cold, out of touch. Suddenly in focus, a ring on Cheryl's hand holding the wheel.

CHERYL
I'm throwing my life away! I became a piece of shit. My mother gave me so much more than this stupid ring. I was strong, and responsible, and clear-eyed. I wanted things. I was good. What the fuck am I doing, Aimee? I have to change. I need to go back to that store.

Aimee doesn't get it.

53 INT. OUTDOOR STORE - DAY 53

Cheryl's hand snatches THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL BOOK from the shelf she left it in. She takes it to the clerk in the store, walking with determination.

CHERYL (V.O.)
I'm going to walk myself back to the person my mother thought I was.

The clerk takes the book and meets Cheryl's look.

CLERK
Yeah!

Cheryl leaves the store. She nearly walks straight into a woman wearing a papoose containing a baby. Cheryl's look meets the baby's.

54 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 54

Cheryl walks on the trail. Sweating. She doesn't have the determination she had in the store. She stops to rest.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

54 CONTINUED: 54

CHERYL
I'll see you in Kennedy Meadows.

Her POV: further ahead, Greg stops and turns. His pack is about half the size of Cheryl's. And he has a trekking pole, which he uses with a kind of nerdy enthusiasm.

GREG
Pretty big pack you've got there. Ray Jardine would have a thing or two to say about that.

CHERYL
I'll bet. And I really wish I knew who Ray Jardine was.

GREG
He wrote the book on backpacking!

CHERYL
(embarrassed)
Oh. Well, I didn't read it.

Greg laughs.

GREG
You're doing fine, Cheryl. You're green, but you're tough. And tough is what counts out here. Most people couldn't do what you're doing.

Cheryl beams.

CHERYL
Thanks.

Greg starts to walk ahead.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Hey, Greg.

He stops and turns around.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
What do you think about?

GREG
Ha! A lot of stuff I'd forgotten. And a lot of stuff I didn't want to remember.

CHERYL
It's not the hiking that will kill me. It's the thinking.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

54 CONTINUED: (2) 54

GREG
I hear ya!

He waves and walks on. Close on Cheryl. She meant what she has just said in ways Greg would never be able to guess.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

55 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 55

Later. A rockfall has slowed Cheryl's progress. She can't go round it: there's a sheer rock face on one side, a steep drop into scrub on the other. She has to clamber over it. She chooses the easiest point and attempts to climb, but the pack makes it impossible for her. She removes the pack, and with great effort manages to place it on the rocks in such a way that she has a shot at retrieving it from the other side.

She climbs over the rock and turns around to begin the task of lifting the pack over to her side. She climbs back over the other side, puts the pack back on, and starts to wobble back over the rock. When she'd done it she allows herself the 'luxury' of squatting on all fours. There's a little grin of triumph.

56 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 56

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 19

The terrain is changing now, as Cheryl climbs higher. Towards the Sierras. It's greener, the trees are taller, there are flowers.

CHERYL (V.O.)
"Maybe your other girlfriends /Couldn't pass the test/Well if you're rough and ready for love..."

She sings out loud.

CHERYL
"Honey I'm tougher than the rest."

57 EXT. KENNEDY MEADOWS - DAY 57

Off in the distance, Cheryl can see the lodges of Kennedy Meadows. Bruce Springsteen takes over in her head and the world-weary ballad of survival has never sounded so triumphant.

58 EXT. KENNEDY MEADOWS - DAY 58

Kennedy Meadows is a pleasant, welcoming campsite, with a cafe/restaurant, and a general store. There's a big banner saying WELCOME TO KENNEDY MEADOWS, hanging from one of the lodges, and Cheryl trudges wearily towards it. A group of half-a-dozen men are drinking beers at a trestle table nearby, and when they see Cheryl, they cheer. Cheryl smiles, heads over to them. Greg is among them.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

58 CONTINUED: 58

GREG
You made it! OK, guys. This is Cheryl. And Monster.

CHERYL
(embarrassed)
My pack? Oh, man.

GUY 1
OK, I can see Monster. But I can't see Cheryl.

Laughter. Greg stands up.

GREG
What can I get you?

CHERYL
Snapple. I've been dreaming of Snapple. And corn chips. Thank you.

She produces a ten dollar bill from her shorts and hands it to him.

GREG
And when you're done, Ed here will cook you dinner at the camp site.

Ed, an older man, stout and bearded, beams at her amiably. Cheryl looks bewildered by the kindness of strangers.

CLOSE-UP of four bottles of Snapple lined up on the table. We see Cheryl's face, distorted and coloured by the drink but still clearly full of longing, through the glass.

CHERYL
Oh my God.

She picks one of the bottles up and drains it, while the men cheer as if this were some kind of keg party. In any other context, you'd worry for her - a young blonde woman, a group of men drinking beer. But it's Snapple, and it's Kennedy Meadows, and these people are hikers, and it's all benign. Cheryl drains the second bottle, too.

59 INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY 59

Cheryl is standing at the counter of the general stores. A pleasant, middle-aged lady comes to serve her.

CHERYL
I have a package to pick up?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

59 CONTINUED: 59

STORE ASSISTANT
You must be Cheryl.
(off Cheryl's look of surprise)
There's only one package for a woman back there. And you have a couple letters, too.

She scuttles off.

60 EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY 60

Cheryl is sitting on the stoop, her face buried in a fresh T-shirt that has obviously come from the open box beside her. She puts it down, fishes around inside the box and pulls out a twenty-dollar bill. She puts that in her pocket, and opens the letter that she's received at the same time.

PAUL (V.O.)
Sweetheart...

Cheryl reacts to the salutation - it's a little stab.

PAUL (V.O.)
If you're reading this, then you've walked a hundred miles through the Mojave Desert. A hundred miles! Whatever else has happened between us, however angry we are or were with each other, I'm so proud of you, and in awe of you. Or I will be, once you've done it, which you haven't yet. As I write, you've only just left. So actually, you've done almost nothing at all. Like me! We can still be friends!

Cheryl smiles.

61 EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY 61

Cheryl is paddling at the edge of the raging, icy-cold South Fork Kern River.

She crouches down, splashes water on her face and hair and under her clothes. Ed, the older man, is shouting and waving behind from the campsite behind her.

ED
Hey Cheryl! Come and get it!

62 EXT. ED'S TRAILER - DAY 62

Ed has a little pop-up trailer with a tarp roof, and a makeshift camp kitchen beneath it.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

62 CONTINUED: 62

Cheryl is sitting on a fold-up chair, working her way through a pile of hot dogs lurid with mustard and ketchup. She tries to eat politely but she can't - she destroys her food.

CHERYL
So...You're not a hiker?

ED
Not like you guys. I come here for the summer and hang out with the real hikers. You fascinate me.

CHERYL
(laughs)
I'm not a real hiker.

ED
You just walked a hundred miles through the desert heat.

CHERYL
And it nearly killed me.

ED
You want some help?

Cheryl pokes her bare, bloody, bruised feet in the air.

CHERYL
Do I look like someone who needs help?

ED
OK, so first of all: your boots are too small. That's why you're losing toenails.

Cheryl laughs.

CHERYL
You're right. And I only just realized it the second you told me. I just thought I was supposed to hurt that bad. But I have nothing else. And no money.

ED
Did you buy them from REI?

CHERYL
Yes.

ED
You're lucky, because they're really good.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

62 CONTINUED: (2) 62

ED (CONT'D)
You call them on the pay-phone, you tell them, they'll have new boots sent to your next stop.

CHERYL
Seriously?

ED
And your pack...It's insane. We need to do some pruning.

63 LATER 63

Cheryl's belongings are spread out on a picnic table. Ed is standing on one side of the table, Cheryl on the other.

ED
So... I'm going to pick out the stuff that's useless to you, and you can leave it in the free box unless you can give me a good reason why you need it with you.

CHERYL
OK.

Ed picks up a stick of deodorant.

ED
How's this working out for you?

Cheryl laughs.

CHERYL
I stink. I stink all the time. And my armpits are the least of it.

Ed laughs and puts the deodorant down, the first item in a pile of discards. Ed picks up a pair of miniature binoculars.

ED
You having much fun with these?

Cheryl sighs at her own stupidity. Ed turns to her miniature saw.

CHERYL
Yeah, I'm not sure that was ever very real, the sawing.

Ed turns to the books - the Adrienne Rich poems, a copy of Flannery O'Connor's Collected Stories, the Pacific Crest Trail Volume 1.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

63 CONTINUED: 63

ED
You're burning what you read?

CHERYL
You want me to burn books?

ED
You won't become a Nazi, I promise you. But you will have a lighter pack. Look...

He picks up her copy of The Pacific Crest Trail Volume 1 and finds Kennedy Meadows. He takes a chunk of pages between his fingers.

ED (CONT'D)
You're done.

Ed tears the pages out, puts them down on his grill, sets light to them. We watch them burn.

On the screen, we see a graphic image of the part of the trail Cheryl has already walked going up in flames.

Ed picks up the O'Connor and the Adrienne Rich books.

CHERYL
They're never done with. And they will never get burned.

Ed shrugs.

ED
OK. It's your weight.

CHERYL
Yup. It's my weight.

64 LATER 64

The discard pile has grown much bigger. We can see a disposable razor, a flash for her camera...Ed picks up a fat roll of condoms, and before Cheryl can stop him, he has unraveled them - he didn't know what they were. Cheryl, excruciated, closes her eyes.

ED
You need... the whole roll?

CHERYL
I can't even remember what I was thinking of when I packed those.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

64 CONTINUED: 64

Ed is just as embarrassed as Cheryl. But he wants to put them aside and move on; Cheryl feels an obscure need to explain herself.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Who was that woman who thought she'd need twelve condoms on a hike? Sex! I don't want sex! And nobody wants sex with me!

She gestures at herself. Ed clearly doesn't disagree.

ED
Let's go find the others?

Ed starts to walk away. When his back is turned, Cheryl tears one condom from the strip and slips it into her pocket.

65 INT. LODGE - DAY 65

Cheryl is talking on a pay phone in a corridor. She clearly can't quite believe the ease of her call.

CHERYL
Listen, I'm sorry if I'm being slow here but... you'll just send the boots there? And I don't have to do anything?

She listens, smiling.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Thank you so much. You will be my favorite company, forever and ever.

She hangs up, starts to walk away from the phone, comes back. She digs out some change and dials a number.

LEIF (V.O.)
Hi. This is Leif. Please leave a message after the tone.

CHERYL
Hi little brother. It's me. You didn't write... Anyway, I'm alive. I have walked a hundred miles now... I miss you.

She's got nothing else to say. She hangs up.

66 EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY 66

Cheryl is sitting outside her tent. She's wearing the T-shirt she received in the box, eating a bar of chocolate and she's looking at a book that arrived in the same package: James Michener's 'The Novel'.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

67 INT. CAR - DAY 67

CLOSE on a copy of the Michener book, face down on a car passenger seat. A hand picks the book up and throws it carelessly onto the back seat. The hand belongs to the younger CHERYL, who sits down in the passenger seat.

BOBBI
Hey!

CHERYL
Oh, come on, Mom. James Michener? Gimme a break. You know that's not a real book.

Bobbi sighs. Every mother who has had her taste and intelligence insulted by a smart-mouthed daughter will recognize her expression.

BOBBI
OK, so what's wrong with James Michener? I enjoy his work.

CHERYL
He's crap, that's what's wrong with him.

BOBBI
And which of his books have you read?

She starts to drive away - it becomes apparent that they live in the middle of nowhere.

CHERYL
You think I'm gonna waste my time on fucking James Michener? I'm reading Flannery O'Connor and Adrienne Rich, and more to the point, so are you now. They don't make any difference to you?

BOBBI
I watch TV, too. You want me to stop that?

CHERYL
Books aren't TV, Mom. Books are...Books are going to change your life.

BOBBI
Yeah, I'm hoping.

CHERYL
So let them.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

67 CONTINUED: 67

BOBBI
What can I say? I love James Michener.

Cheryl thinks for a moment.

CHERYL
This must be pretty weird for you.

BOBBI
What?

CHERYL
Seeing how much more sophisticated I am than you were at my age.

Her mother doesn't say anything. She's clearly stung. Cheryl immediately regrets her cruelty, but she doesn't apologize.

BOBBI
Well. That was the plan.

CHERYL
What plan?

BOBBI
I wanted you to be more sophisticated then me. I just hadn't figured out that it would hurt sometimes.

Cheryl closes her eyes, annoyed with herself, and then takes her mother's hand.

CHERYL
How do you put up with my crap?

Bobbi strokes Cheryl's green dress.

MOTHER
I always like it when you wear this.

68 INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING 68

Cheryl is eating in the Kennedy Meadows restaurant with the guys she met earlier in the day. She's wearing a clean T-shirt and some earrings, and her hair isn't quite so tangled. The detritus of the meal is visible, and the waitress is leaving the check on the table. GREG is in the group; also two nice-looking men, in their late forties, TIM and DAN; and ED, the "trail angel" who cooked her lunch. Cheryl is happy, and a little giddy with food and drink and company.

DAN
What about you, Cheryl?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

68 CONTINUED: 68

CHERYL
Oh, you know. I wanted to test myself. And I'd just been through some things...

TIM
The usual?

CHERYL
What's the usual?

DAN
He's here 'cause my wife just dumped me.

An awkward silence.

DAN (CONT'D)
He decided he had to suffer too. What are old friends for, after all?

Cheryl smiles uncertainly but is truly touched.

CHERYL
Then I guess the usual, more or less.

She doesn't know what else to say.

DAN
Anyway, I'm over her. It doesn't hurt anywhere near as much as blisters and shin splints.

Tom picks up the check.

TIM
We OK to split this? Fifteen each.

Fifteen? With as much insouciance as she can muster, Cheryl throws her twenty across the table.

TIM (CONT'D)
(to Dan)
Twenty for you, lard ass! You ate twice as much as the lady here.

Tom gives a ten dollar bill back to Cheryl.

69 OMITTED 69

70 EXT. KENNEDY MEADOWS - CAMPGROUND PICNIC TABLE 70

Cheryl is reading a map by the light of Ed's lantern. Greg joins her.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

70 CONTINUED: 70

GREG
You decided what to do about the snow?

CHERYL
I'd like to push on, if there's a way.

GREG
Ed told me a lot of the hikers went up the PCT another forty miles, to Trail Pass. And that's where they get forced off by the snow. Then they catch a bus up to Reno and onto Truckee. Rejoin the trail at a lower elevation.

CHERYL
I didn't come out here to ride buses.

GREG
You probably didn't come here to slide off mountains, either. If you're worried about cheating yourself, make your hike longer. Walk to Ashland. Or The Bridge of the Gods.

CHERYL
'The Bridge Of The Gods'. I like the sound of that.

GREG
Either way, don't beat yourself up. You strike me as someone who's done plenty of that already. Must've been some break-up.

CHERYL
Yeah. 'Break-up' is kind of a shorthand.

GREG
Oh. OK.

Greg's not the kind of man who'd went to delve any deeper.

CHERYL
I thought being alone would be good for me.

GREG
And is it?

Cheryl just smiles. Together they look up at the night sky, stars and stars and stars.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

71 INT. TENT - NIGHT 71

Cheryl in her tent, wearing her head lamp and reading James Michener's 'The Novel'.

72 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY 72

Cheryl and her mother wait in a hospital corridor. Bobbi is wearing a green hospital gown. Cheryl takes her hand and squeezes it.

CHERYL *
There's nothing to worry about. I know *
it. *

A sombre-looking doctor comes up to them. *

DOCTOR *
Bobbi Grey? *

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

72 CONTINUED: 72

Bobbi stands up. Cheryl stands with her and tries to make eye contact with the doctor but he won't look at either of them. Suddenly Leif bursts into the room. Cheryl shoots him a look.

73 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY 73

Cheryl is in tears. Her mother is staring straight ahead, unable to comprehend what she has just been told.

LEIF
She doesn't even smoke.

DOCTOR
I'm sorry. Our job from this point on is to make sure that you're as comfortable as possible.

LEIF
What do you mean, comfortable?

CHERYL
What about trying to cure her? You don't see that as your fucking job?

Bobbi turns to her.

BOBBI
Cheryl! Watch your mouth.

DOCTOR
You probably have some questions.

CHERYL
How long?

MOTHER
Can I still ride my horse?

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
(to Bobbi)
We'll be giving you radiation to reduce the size of some of the tumors along your spine. One jolt and it could crumble.

LEIF
How long?

DOCTOR
We hope for a year.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

73 CONTINUED: 73

CHERYL
Hope! That's what "hope" means to you people?

Leif stands up quickly and leaves the room.

74 INT. LADIES' TOILETS - HOSPITAL 74

Cheryl is sitting on the toilet, leaning against the wall, weeping in silence. We hear someone flushing in a stall further along.

BOBBI (O.S.)
Are you all right, honey?

Cheryl doesn't answer. She just closes her eyes.

75 INT. BUS - NIGHT 75

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 23

Cheryl is in a similar position - sitting in the bus, her head resting against the window, James Michener on her lap. She wipes her eyes. The lights of Reno are a blur through the window.

76 EXT. STREET OF RENO - NIGHT 76

Cheryl gets off the bus. It's the middle of the night. She looks pale and lost. She walks into a restaurant.

77 INT. RESTAURANT - DINER SECTION - NIGHT 77

Cheryl inserts a coin in a pay phone, dials a number. We hear Paul's answering machine.

CHERYL
Hey. It's me. I'm sorry to call so late, but I don't know when I'm going to be near a phone again, and I have a bus to catch. I had to bypass a chunk of trail because of the snow, so I'm missing one of your letters. I'm in Reno. If you were here, we could get divorced again. Anyway. I'm alive. Still. And that's all my news, and the sum total of what I've learned on my bike.

78 INT. RESTAURANT - BAR SECTION - NIGHT 78

Cheryl, with Monster on her back, walks into the bar section. The place is almost empty. There are some slot machines in there.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

78 CONTINUED: 78

There's a guy playing the slots, middle-aged, too many clothes, smoking, pumping coins into one of the slot machines. Cheryl watches him for a moment.

CRAZY GUY
These four machines are mine.

Without taking his eyes off the machine, he gestures on either side of him.

CRAZY GUY (CONT'D)
They all owe me. You can play them if you want but it's my money if you win.

CHERYL
That seems...fair.

Cheryl digs in her pocket and finds some change. She chooses a machine from the row behind the crazy guy - so, not one of his. She puts a quarter in... and wins. She smiles.

CRAZY GUY
Mother. FUCKER.

Cheryl has two fistfuls full of quarters. She looks around - there's nowhere to change them.

CHERYL
Is there anything I can do with these? I can't take them with me.

CRAZY GUY
Nobody to change 'em this time of night.

CHERYL
I'm catching a bus.

The crazy guy turns, finally, and eyes the fistfuls of quarters.

CRAZY GUY
I'll give you ten bucks for them.

CHERYL
You'll give me ten bucks for, like, twenty-five?

The crazy guy gives her a take-it-or-leave-it shrug.

CRAZY GUY
And I can throw in a T-shirt. You look like you could use one.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

78 CONTINUED: (2) 78

He delves into his carrier bag and brings out a lurid Bob Marley T-shirt.

CRAZY GUY (CONT'D)
You know who he is?

Cheryl nods.

CRAZY GUY (CONT'D)
This shirt is sacred. It will offer you protection.

CHERYL
I could do with some, I guess.

79 EXT. ROADSIDE - MORNING 79

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 25

Cheryl is attempting to hitch a ride on a hot, dusty roadside somewhere in the middle of California. She's not having any luck.

CHERYL (V.O.)
"Hi. I'm Cheryl. I'm an unaccompanied female hitchhiker. Would it be OK if I got into your car so that you can rape and dismember me? Nobody is expecting to see me for months, so I won't be missed." Jesus Christ, Strayed. What do you think you're doing? Why don't you just, you know, hike the twelve miles?

A silver Chrysler LeBaron pulls off the road and onto the gravel shoulder. On the back off the car we see a bumper sticker: "IMAGINE WHIRLED PEAS". A pleasant-looking guy, mid-thirties, gets out of the car. We will soon know him as JIMMY CARTER. Cheryl looks at him suspiciously.

JIMMY CARTER
Hi there.

CHERYL
(warily)
Hi.

JIMMY CARTER
Some backpack you've got there.

CHERYL
Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

79 CONTINUED: 79

JIMMY CARTER
I can't give you a ride because I have no room.

Cheryl glances over at the car to see if this is true. It is. His car is stuffed full of junk, clothes and newspapers and books and all kinds of stuff.

Jimmy Carter offers his hand. In his other hand he's holding a notebook and pen.

JIMMY CARTER (CONT'D)
I'm Jimmy Carter. No relation.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

79 CONTINUED: (2) 79

Cheryl shakes his hand, but offers no name in return.

JIMMY CARTER (CONT'D)
I interview hobos for the Hobo Times. Drive all over the USA. And I have to tell you, lady hobos are hard to find.

CHERYL
OK, so first of all, I'm not a hobo. And second...That's, like, a real thing? The Hobo Times?

JIMMY CARTER
It's real enough to pay my rent and my petrol. So...How long have you been out on the road?

He's poised to take notes.

CHERYL
I'm not "on the road". I'm hiking. On the Pacific Crest Trail. Except I'm bypassing a chunk of it, because of the snow.

JIMMY CARTER
So if you're not a hobo, where do you live?

Cheryl thinks, sighs.

CHERYL
I'm between places at the moment. I'm thinking of living in Portland when I'm done on the PCT.

Jimmy Carter makes a couple of notes.

JIMMY CARTER
This is so fucking cool. I've spoken to maybe one female hobo in two years.

CHERYL
To reiterate: I'm not a hobo. And most women can't walk out. They're tied to the home. They have kids, and parents to look after, and..

JIMMY CARTER
You sound like a feminist.

CHERYL
I am.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

79 CONTINUED: (3) 79

JIMMY CARTER
That's excellent. Fantastic. I love feminists.

Cheryl rolls her eyes. Jimmy Carter seems to write for a long time, and Cheryl tries to see what he's writing. He moves his notepad away.

JIMMY CARTER (CONT'D)
So if you're not a hobo, you have a job, right?

Cheryl is lost for words for a moment.

CHERYL
I've had a whole ton of different jobs. And I was studying until a couple of years ago.

JIMMY CARTER
I hope you don't think this is too personal. But I've noticed it's often personal trauma that forces people out of their lives and into the hobo life.

CHERYL
I'm still in my real life, OK? I've just taken some time out. There is no hobo life.

Jimmy Carter looks at her disbelievingly, and then shrugs - he's not going to argue. He reaches through the open window of his car door and pulls out a camera.

JIMMY CARTER
Can I get a shot?

He doesn't wait for permission. We freeze momentarily on Cheryl's face and gesture - she looks like a hobo.

JIMMY CARTER (CONT'D)
It should be in the fall issue. And a couple of my pieces have been in other magazines. Harper's have expressed an interest in my work. That's a New York magazine, kind of swanky and...

CHERYL
I know what Harper's is. I want to write for it one day. And I really don't need to be centerfold Bum Of the Month first...

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

79 CONTINUED: (4) 79

He reaches into the car again and hands her a plastic bag.

JIMMY CARTER
Hobo care package. Thanks a lot.

And he disappears as quickly as he arrived. Cheryl delves into the bag, finds a can of beer and a packet of corn chips and shrugs.

80 INT. CAR - DAY 80

CLOSE on a tattoo on a muscular male forearm: the tattoo depicts the top half of a bare-breasted woman, her head thrown back in either agony or ecstasy.

Cheryl is squashed into the back of a car with three adult humans and a dog, Stevie Ray, who has found some space on the floor by Cheryl's feet. The humans are LOU, the biker woman driving the car; DAVE, her boyfriend, sitting in the front of the car with her; and SPIDER, Dave's brother. The men are bikers - black leather vests, no shirts, bandannas, lots of scary and lurid tattoos - and Lou is a bleached-blonde, weathered biker's moll.

CHERYL
What's the dog's name?

SPIDER
Stevie Ray. I got him on the day he died. The other Stevie Ray, I mean.

CHERYL
I love Stevie Ray.

Dave pops a CD into the boom box that's propped between him and Lou, and Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Texas Flood" loud blues guitar fills the car. Cheryl grins. She's been starved of music, and it sounds fantastic to her.

SPIDER
(to Dave)
Put "Love-Struck" on.
(to Cheryl)
Just came on me, the second you got in the car.

LOU
Oh, shut up, Spider. Jesus.
(to Cheryl)
Ignore him. He's nothing but a horny old bastard.

The women exchange a smile.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

80 CONTINUED: 80

DAVE
You must be pretty tough, if you're hiking this fuckin' trail.

CHERYL
I'm sitting in a car with you right now. That's not so tough.

DAVE
You know that story about the motherfucking apes?

Cheryl, startled, shakes her head.

DAVE (CONT'D)
So this scientist in Paris or wherever the motherfuck it was, he was trying to teach apes to draw. And he keeps showing them art pictures, like motherfucking Old Masters and shit, and he gives them charcoal pencils, and he's saying, come on, ape motherfuckers, draw. And one day, one of them draws a picture. You know what he draws?

CHERYL
No.

DAVE
The bars on his own motherfuckin' cage. Can you relate to that, sister?

He turns and executes a complex biker handshake with Spider. Cheryl catches Lou's eye in the rearview mirror. They smile.

Cheryl notices a laminated card dangling from the bottom of the mirror.

CHERYL
Cute boy. How old is he?

Lou doesn't say anything. She just turns the music down. They drive on for a few moments. The mood is suddenly sombre.

LOU
He was eight.

Cheryl understands the use of the past tense instinctively.

CHERYL
Oh. I'm so sorry.

Cheryl leans forward and pats her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

80 CONTINUED: (2) 80

LOU
He got hit by a truck when he was riding his bike. Five years ago.

DAVE
He was a tough little motherfucker. Like his mom. Held on for a week.

Cheryl doesn't know what to say, so, helplessly, she repeats herself.

CHERYL
I'm really sorry.

LOU
I know you are, sweetheart.

81 EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY 81

Cheryl is pulling her pack out of the trunk of the car while Dave, Spider and Lou light up cigarettes. The men walk Stevie Ray into the tress by the side of the road while Lou watches Cheryl put on Monster.

LOU
You're pretty.

CHERYL
Thank you. You too.

LOU
Aw, you're nice, but I know I'm not. I'm good hearted, is what I am. Some men like that. You, though, you'll always be OK. So long as you slap assholes like Spider down when they ask for it.

She looks at Cheryl's legs.

LOU (CONT'D)
And so long as you shave your legs sometimes.

Cheryl looks down at her legs, embarrassed.

LOU (CONT'D)
Nah, I'm just giving you shit. I think it's great that you're doing this. I wish more women told everyone to go and fuck themselves. We'd be better off. After my son died? I was gone too. In here.

She pats her chest.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

81 CONTINUED: 81

LOU (CONT'D)
I look the same. But I'm not the same. His death took the Lou out of Lou, and she ain't coming back. You know what I mean?

Cheryl looks at her steadily.

CHERYL
Yes. I know exactly what you mean.

LOU
I thought you would. I had that feeling about you.

She suddenly lurches forward and hugs Cheryl.

82 INT. CAR - DAY 82

Cheryl and Bobbi are driving back from the hospital. This time, Cheryl is driving. There is a stunned, grief-stricken silence.

BOBBI
I was never me.

CHERYL
Don't talk about yourself as if it's over. It's not over, OK? We'll find someone who...

BOBBI
I've always been somebody's daughter or mother or wife. I never got to be in the driver's seat of my own life. I thought that would come. I thought time was infinite.

Cheryl doesn't know what to say. She's too young, and she's too blind-sided by the news they have received, and by the glaring sun that shines through the window.

83 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 83

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 28

Back to the familiar rhythm - the creak, the slosh, the pounding. Cheryl is fitter now, can walk faster. And she's angry - this is what thinking about her mother does to her. But the trail is heading quite steeply uphill - it's hard going, and it hurts. And then, to the rhythm of her boots and her squeaking pack...

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

83 CONTINUED: 83

CHERYL
Fuck you. Fuck you. Fuck you.

84 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 84

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 30

She reaches a plateau and stops to look at the trail that disappears into a landscape of snow in the distance.

CHERYL
You've got to be KIDDING me.

She's still wearing shorts and a T-shirt.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Well...all right. And fuck you.

She produces a ski-pole from her pack, pulls out her wet weather clothes, puts them on and starts to walk again.

85 EXT. SNOW LANDSCAPE - DAY 85

Cheryl battling with the snow. There is no trail any more - just white, everywhere around her.

A little further on, and she's standing with a compass on a high ridge, singing to herself to the tune of Homeward Bound.

CHERYL
I'm west of the agonic line/My declination's posit-i-ive, wo-oo-woh/The sun is right behind my back/So true north should be over there/I will not lose this fucking track/Or I'll end up in... Delaware...Portland bound/I hope I am...

She walks on, hopefully in the direction of Oregon, when suddenly we're as startled as she is when something passes behind her at lightning speed. She turns around.

Her POV: two SKIERS dangerously going down hill. Obviously, pros. They're already very far when Cheryl shouts at them.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
HEY! HELLO!

Nothing. They don't hear her. She shouts again, this time with everything she has, and the now tiny toy-sized skiers stop, look around, and spot her.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
WHERE AM I?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

85 CONTINUED: 85

SKIER 1
CALIFORNIA!

The skiers "high-five" and laugh.

CHERYL
Fucking hilarious.

SKIER 1
ARE YOU LOST?

CHERYL
NO. JUST SCREWED.

She waves wearily at the skiers and moves on.

86 OMITTED 86

87 INT. TENT - DAY 87

Cheryl waking up in her tent. She's wearing her wet weather clothes, and she's sleeping with her food and her water, in an attempt to keep it all from freezing. She opens her eyes and stares woozily at the whorls of frost on the roof of the tent. She unzips the tent, and we see her POV of the world outside: snow everywhere. It's hard to imagine that anyone can sleep in this terrain, let alone hike.

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 32

88 EXT. TENT - DAY 88

Cheryl tending her stove in the snow. She takes the pan off the gas, pours some of the boiling water into a container, stirs it around, begins to eat, without enthusiasm or appetite. She looks bleakly around her at the snow when a beautiful fox glides over and sits a few paces away from her, watching her without fear. Cheryl doesn't know whether to be frightened of him or not.

A88 SOUNDLESS FLASH: A horse with a coat exactly the same color A88
as the fox's fur.

BOBBI (V.O.)
Can I see Lady before we go?

89 OMITTED 89

90 OMITTED 90

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

91 EXT. HOUSE - DAY 91

Bobbi is holding on to Cheryl's arm as they walk towards their car.

Cheryl knows why she's asking and hates it.

CHERYL
You can see her when you're back.

Bobbi stops walking.

BOBBI
Please.

92 INT. HORSE STALL - DAY 92

Lady, Bobbi's horse, sees Cheryl and Bobbi approaching and trots over to see them. Bobbi strokes her nose.

BOBBI
She saved my life. I mean, when I left your father.

CHERYL
I know what you mean.

BOBBI
I'm not going to make you promise anything. This is hard enough for you as it is. Just do whatever is the kindest thing.

Mother and daughter stare at each other for a moment.

CHERYL (V.O.)
Why are you looking at me?

93 EXT. TENT - DAY 93

The fox is still staring at Cheryl. The question was addressed to him. There is, of course, no answer. Cheryl slowly and carefully goes down on her knees, and freezes when she gets to the fox's eye level. They stare at each other.

CHERYL (V.O.)
I am not afraid.

Then, after a long beat...

CHERYL
Lady?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

93 CONTINUED: 93

The fox turns tail and runs into the trees. Cheryl runs after it. We hear her voice fade as we lose sight of her.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
MOM! MOM! MOM!

A94 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT A94

Bobbi is desperately sick and in pain. She looks at a MALE NURSE next to her bed, with desperate eyes.

BOBBI
Mor... phine! Please!

Cheryl stands in a corner of the room, helplessly watching her mother. While the nurse looks at his wristwatch, Cheryl notices the outline of his penis through his tight nurse's trousers. The nurse catches Cheryl's look.

Without a word, she walks into the small bathroom at the foot of Bobbi's bed. The nurse joins Cheryl. She gets close to him. Too close.

CHERYL
Help her, please.

She reaches for his sex as the door slowly closes...

The nurse is still looking at his watch when Cheryl gets out of her daydream fantasy.

THE MALE NURSE
(to Bobbi, softly)
No.

Bobbi cries and her tears fall in the wrong direction. Not down over the light of her cheeks to the corners of her mouth, but away from the edges of her eyes to her ears.

B94 INT. LADIES' TOILETS - HOSPITAL - NIGHT B94

Cheryl is in a stall, seated on a toilet, her hands joined together, praying in silence, holding back tears. She hears someone walking in. She re-gathers and leaves.

C94 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT C94

Cheryl is on the phone, impatient.

CHERYL
I'm his sister. He has my number. Thanks.

She hangs up.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

94 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 94

Cheryl is back in the room and sees Bobbi's bear feet sticking out from the sheets. They're blue. Cheryl finds her mother's socks and struggles to put them on her.

CHERYL
Shit, Mom, you have to help me here.

Cheryl instantly regrets her burst of impatience when she sees Bobbi just staring at her, defeated.

Cheryl puts her coat and hat on, and bends over to kiss her mother.

BOBBI
Don't.

CHERYL
I'll be back in the morning. With Leif.

Bobbi is so weak, she can't talk, but manages to smile.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I love you, Mom. You must know.

Bobbi nods imperceptibly.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
You're the centre of me. Everything I am.

There's an agonizing pause as Bobbi gropes for a word.

BOBBI
Love.

It's all she can manage. Cheryl leaves the room.

95 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT 95

Cheryl closes the door quietly. A sympathetic nurse approaches her.

NURSE
How's she doing?

CHERYL
We were told a year! We've had a month. One fucking month.

The nurse doesn't know what to say. A beat.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

95 CONTINUED: 95

NURSE
I'm sorry. I'll pray for her.

Cheryl can see the empathy in her face, and the rage starts to drain out of her.

96 EXT. STREET - NIGHT 96

Cheryl walks down the street, oblivious to passers-by and the everyday, uncaring thrum of an ordinary urban winter evening. We realize it's St. Patrick's Day - there are drunk green people everywhere. Cheryl passes a bar with a big plate glass window. We can't hear the noise, we can only see it - men and women wearing green shirts and green hats and drinking green beer. A drunk man catches Cheryl's eye, makes a sad face, points at her and laughs. His friends turn to look, and they start laughing too.

97 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 97

Cheryl blundering on through the snow, determined, inelegant, maybe lost, surely in her thoughts.

CHERYL (V.O.)
What are you laughing at, assholes? Fucking Saint Patrick! Go to hell, all you fucking Saints!

She sees a tree with a small tin badge attached to it. The badge says "PCT".

CHERYL
(ironic)
Thank you, God, for showing me the way!

She looks around.

CHERYL (V.O.)
As if he gives a shit. I'm sorry, but God is one ruthless bitch.

And carries on.

98 OMITTED 98

99 OMITTED 99

100 OMITTED 100

101 INT. BOBBI'S HOUSE - NIGHT 101

Cheryl is lying on the couch, on the phone, still wearing her coat and hat.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

101 CONTINUED: 101

CHERYL
It's urgent. He needs to GET THE FUCK HOME!

She smashes the receiver down.

102 LATER - NIGHT 102

Leif blunders through the back door, drunk and stoned, but sobering up fast. Cheryl leaps to her feet.

CHERYL
Where the fuck have you been?

Leif looks at her vulnerable.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
She's dying! Do you understand?

LEIF
Don't say that. She can't die.

CHERYL
She can. She is.

LEIF
Stop saying that! She can't die. I can't live without her. I can't do this.

Cheryl holds her brother and comforts him. Like a mother.

A102 INT. BOBBI'S HOUSE - LEIF'S ROOM - NIGHT A102

Cheryl and Leif lay together in his single bed, talking, crying and laughing.

LEIF
Killer, Doobie, Motorcycle Dan, and who was that other guy? The guy who gave us five dollar bills for candy so that we'd leave the two of them alone?

CHERYL
Nipper!

Cheryl's mind is somewhere else.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
If you press your face hard against the glass, you can see a slice of Lake Superior. It seems to go streight into the horizon...

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A102 CONTINUED: A102

A FLASH of Bobbi in her hospital bed, looking at Cheryl pressing her face against the window.

BOBBI
A room with a view...

CHERYL (V.O.)
... she said.

More laughs from Leif and Cheryl still in bed together.

BOBBI (V.O.)
All of my life, I've waited for a room with a view!

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A102 CONTINUED: (2) A102

CHERYL
Jesus, she never stops!

LEIF *
These past few years I acted like she's *
nothing to me, but really she's *
everything. *

Cheryl nods. Agrees. A beat. Then she shuts her eyes and joins her hands together. Leif giggles.

LEIF (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

CHERYL
I'm praying to the whole fucking universe. Hoping that there is a God somewhere. I want a miracle. I want to believe in miracles. No way Mom's going to die at 45!

Leif is crying again... and soon joins his sister in her desperate call to God. Clearly, these two have never prayed before.

103 INT. CAR - DAY 103

Leif is driving her mother's car, too fast. Cheryl sits in the passenger seat. Neither of them speaks.

A103 EXT. TRAIL - DAY A103

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 36

There's no snow to be seen. The trail is visible again, and we're back in the familiar rhythm, the thump of boots and the creak of the pack. Cheryl is still lost in her thoughts that soon make her smile.

104 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY 104

Cheryl and Leif walk down the corridor towards her mother's room. Excited to see her mother again, and to surprise her with Leif's presence, she has a smile on her face, like the one she had at 7...

BOBBI (V.O.)
How much do I love you?

A104 INT. FATHER'S HOUSE - DAY A104

Bobbi is holding her hand a couple of inches apart.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A104 CONTINUED: A104

BOBBI
This much?

Young Cheryl and Leif start to smile and shake their heads.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A104 CONTINUED: (2) A104

CHERYL
No.

LEIF
No.

BOBBI (CONT'D)
This much?

She moves her hands further apart. And as we hear young Cheryl and Leif answering "NO" again, we see...

Cheryl on the trail... and Cheryl in the hospital hallway, both smiling as they keep on walking.

Back in Father's house...

BOBBI (CONT'D)
This much?

Bobbi's arms are stretched as wide as they can go.

BOBBI (CONT'D)
I can't get there! I can't stretch them wide enough! Help!

Back on the trail, Cheryl stops at the spot where she lost her boots at the beginning of the movie.

Back in the hospital, Cheryl stops in front of her mother's room. There's a sign on the door: PLEASE CHECK IN AT THE NURSE'S STATION BEFORE ENTERING. Cheryl turns around, bewildered. She sees the nurse from the day before.

NURSE
We put ice on her eyes.

CHERYL
What?

NURSE
She wanted to donate her corneas, so we...

Cheryl bursts into the room. Leif stands outside, too stunned to move.

105 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY 105

Paul is in a chair and stands. He says something like "*Just got here an hour ago*" but we can hardly hear him because we're in Cheryl's head, hearing her loud breathing. Paul stands with his arms outstretched but Cheryl swerves for the curtain around Bobbi's bed, and pulls it back to reveal her corpse. Over Bobbi's eyes is a pair of surgical gloves packed with ice, the fingers lolling clownishly across her face.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

106 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 106

Cheryl is standing on the edge of the trail, hurling her one useless boot down into the forest, yelling her pain but we don't hear her. We hear instead the introduction of El Condor Pasa as it continues to play over the following scenes.

107 MONTAGE 107

A SUDDEN RUSH of disconnected soundless images: a beaten-up, swollen eye completely closed; Cheryl howling while kissing the belly of her mother; Cheryl screaming her guts out in the wilderness; Cheryl smoking a crack pipe with a man; Cheryl engulfing Leif in her arms in the hospital; Cheryl undressing in a hotel room while a stranger watches; young Cheryl and young Leif cowering in the back of their mother's car; the surgical gloves packed with ice falling on the floor; Bobbi's face, lifeless and sightless; Cheryl howling... under the soft voices of Simon & Garfunkel: *Yes, I would, if I could, I surely would...*

108 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 108

Cheryl is angrily making boots out of the beach shoes she carries around with her for times when she's not hiking. She's winding duct-tape around them, and around her ankle.

109 INT. HOTEL BAR - DAY 109

Cheryl is sitting on her own at the bar, staring into space. The man we saw Cheryl undressing for is sitting nearby reading a newspaper. Cheryl says something to him and the man hands over the Books section.

110 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY 110

Cheryl and the man making violent, frantic love in a hotel room.

111 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 111

Cheryl still constructing her shoes. Just ahead of her she sees the fox.

CHERYL
What the fuck do you want?

When we go back to her POV, the fox has disappeared.

112 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY 112

Cheryl waitressing in a restaurant. She gives the check to a table of two youngish guys in suits. She stares at them.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

113 EXT. BACK OF THE RESTAURANT - DAY 113

Cheryl is having sex with both of them against the wall of the back of the restaurant. The guys' efforts are labored, and she's unengaged, distracted by something further down the alley.

From her POV, we see Bobbi watching her.

114 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 114

The door opens and Cheryl slips into bed and puts her arms around Paul who doesn't sleep, doesn't move nor say anything. Cheryl falls straight to sleep.

115 INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - DAY 115

Cheryl lying in bed with the guy we saw smoking crack, JOE - punk-rock skinny, quiff. The couple are clearly post-coital. Joe's apartment has no furniture except for a mattress, a beaten-up coffee table and two chairs. He leans out of bed and takes what is unmistakably the paraphernalia of heroin.

Cheryl puts her foot on his chest.

CLOSE on a needle going into Cheryl's ankle. Cheryl closes her eyes and sighs with pleasure.

116 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 116

CLOSE on that same ankle, being wrapped in duct-tape. Cheryl stands in her newly-constructed duct-tape shoes, ramshackle, hopeful and hopeless.

CHERYL
Fuck you. Let's go.

She starts to walk down the trail, wincing in pain. There's a new percussion instrument in the rhythm section now: the thud of boots has been replaced by the rustle of the tape.

117 EXT. TRAIL - DUSK 117

Cheryl is on the trail. It's getting dark. She stumbles. She doesn't care. She keeps walking.

118 LATER - NIGHT 118

She's still hiking, through the night, with energy and anger, her head lamp on. She walks by a tree and gets spiked by a branch. It leaves a gash on her cheek. She hardly breaks stride.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

119 EXT. TRAIL - DAWN 119

First light. Cheryl stops on the edge of a raging stream - she has to go through it. She gingerly puts one foot into the water and is immediately knocked off balance. She lands on her back, pack first, and is swept downstream a few feet before she can get a grip and stop herself.

When she clambers out the other side, soaking wet, the duct-tape shoes are trailing behind her. She rips them off, starts again.

120 INT. CAFE/STORE - DAY 120

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 51

Cheryl, filthy, sweating, her duct-tape boots flapping and unraveling, walks into a small cafe/store - a couple of tables. A guy in his sixties is leaning on the counter. Cheryl takes a Snapple out of a cold drinks cabinet, looks at it, puts it against her forehead before putting it down on the counter.

CHERYL
Hi. I'm hoping that you have a couple of parcels for me. Cheryl Strayed?

MAN
I seen one. Don't think there's two.

He disappears off into a back room.

CHERYL
There'll definitely be two.

She tries to say it with certainty, but we can tell she's panicking. He comes back with one box, and a letter. He puts them on the counter.

MAN
New boots from REI?

CHERYL
Yeah.

She dangles out a foot to show him.

MAN
Wow. How far have you walked in those?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

120 CONTINUED: 120

CHERYL
Maybe fifty miles? You're sure there isn't another box? And there should be a couple more letters. I bypassed the last stop and...

MAN
I'm sure. And lady, if you walked fifty miles in duct-tape, you got the box you needed. It's two dollars for the Snapple.

CHERYL
You know what? I'm good.

With a heavy heart, she picks up the Snapple and puts it back in the drinks cabinet.

121 LATER 121

Close on a pair of new boots on the cafe table. Cheryl is running her fingers over them lovingly while she reads a letter.

PAUL (V.O.)
Dearest Cheryl, Welcome to Old Station. I think you're halfway, maybe a little more. Six hundred miles! Damn! I hope you didn't mind all the stuff I got into in the last letter. Once I'd put it in the mail-box, I wondered whether I'd done the right thing. Maybe the truth is better to speak than to hear. Maybe you didn't want to know any of that. But I was angry with you.

Cheryl puts the letter in her bag and starts to leave.

MAN BEHIND COUNTER
Remember to take enough water with you when you go back out on the trail. It's pretty hot out there.

CHERYL
There's a water tank about twenty miles away, right?

MAN BEHIND COUNTER
Yep. But it's way over a hundred degrees on the Modoc Plateau. That's a lot of sweat.

Another hiker comes in - a woman, older than Cheryl, cropped grey hair, less disheveled, smaller pack. This is Stacey.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

121 CONTINUED: 121

STACEY
You must be Cheryl. I'm Stacey.

Cheryl smiles in delight.

CHERYL
You're a woman!

She stands up and hugs her.

122 EXT. CAMPSITE - DUSK 122

Cheryl is doctoring her feet while talking to Stacey. Their tents are side-by side, and they're both sitting on their camping seats.

STACEY
Did you come across a guy called Greg?

CHERYL
Yes. A long time ago, at Kennedy Meadows, when I knew even less than I do now.

STACEY
He quit.

CHERYL
Greg? No way. He was a real hiker.

STACEY
He couldn't deal with the snow. He's coming back next year.

CHERYL
Wow. I'm still here and Greg's gone home!

Stacey raises her glass to make a toast.

STACEY
Female power!

Cheryl chinks her cup and smiles. A beat.

STACEY (CONT'D)
Do you get lonely?

CHERYL
Sometimes. Honestly, I'm lonelier in my regular life than I am out here. I miss my friends, of course, but it's not like there's anyone waiting for me at home.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

122 CONTINUED: 122

A pause, while Cheryl works out how much she wants to say to this woman.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
My mom died of cancer four years ago and my dad's a bastard. He hasn't been in my life since I was six, which is probably for the best, because he was a violent man. Oh, and I got divorced a few months ago. So my life's kind of... emptied out.

Stacey nods.

STACEY
Join the club.

Cheryl smiles at her.

CHERYL
I have a brother, Leif. I love him like mad but we... lost each other.
(a beat)
How about you?

Stacey hesitates to talk.

STACEY
I can't stay married. I've been married and divorced three times.

Stacey shakes her head, not proud of her accomplishment, but keeps her smile on her face.

STACEY (CONT'D)
I need to find something in me. I don't know what yet but... I needed to re-gather. I guess the trail's a good place for that. For people whose lives have emptied out. I mean, look!
(gesturing to the sunset)
This has the power to fill you up again if you let it. I'm slowly learning to.

Cheryl laughs. Stacey wonders why.

CHERYL
My mom used to say this thing that drove me nuts: *"Every day there's a sunrise and a sunset and you can choose to be there for it. You can put yourself in the way of beauty."*

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

122 CONTINUED: (2) 122

STACEY
I like your mom. My kind of woman.

Cheryl smiles at her gratefully, doesn't say a word, even though we hear her say...

CHERYL (V.O.)
She was the love of my life.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

123 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 123

Cheryl is in an empty, cheerless college classroom, sitting on one side of a work-table on a plastic chair. On the other side is a therapist, VINCE - fiftyish, grizzled, kind-looking. Cheryl is drawn, pale, unkempt, red-rimmed eyes; she's at rock-bottom. She clearly doesn't want to be there.

CHERYL
I've been destroyed by her death. There's nothing else to say about it.

Vince stays silent. A beat.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I thought there'd be couches and armchairs and books. And Kleenex.

VINCE
That's fifty-bucks-an-hour therapy. This is ten-bucks-an-hour therapy. Why do you think you'd been destroyed by your mother's death?

CHERYL
Is that what your job is? To ask the bereaved if they're grieving too much?

VINCE
People grieve in all sorts of different ways. I'm asking you about yours.

CHERYL
Is mine so bad?

VINCE
You're using heroin and you're having sex with anyone who asks. I'm not sure that these things are making you happy.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

123 CONTINUED: 123

CHERYL
Well, you're wrong. I'm happy while I'm doing them. And the rest of the time I want to die. Can you see the appeal?

VINCE
Do you sleep with your husband too?

CHERYL
No. I'm like a guy when it comes to sex. I prefer to be detached.

VINCE
You think that's what guys are like?

Cheryl shrugs and stares at the poster behind him - a picture of the universe, with an arrow pointing at a tiny dot and the words "YOU ARE HERE' beside it.

CHERYL
I see that poster all over the place. I hate it. Who wants to teach kids that they don't matter?

Vince turns around to look at it.

VINCE
Did you feel as though you mattered?

This gets to her, momentarily.

CHERYL
Yes. I know I did.

VINCE
So who detached from you?

CHERYL
Oh, right. My mom dies, and we have to talk about my dad. Jesus.

VINCE
So there's the answer to that particular question.

CHERYL
Anyway. We detached from him.

VINCE
Did you get a say in that?

A sudden soundless FLASH - young Cheryl dabs a tissue on her mother's face in the car. Looks like she's applying make-up.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

123 CONTINUED: (2) 123

Back to Cheryl, now fiddling distractedly with her wedding ring.

CHERYL
I didn't need one.

VINCE
Maybe you did.

Cheryl stands up.

CHERYL
This isn't going to work for me. This isn't about talking.

She leaves.

Another soundless FLASH: a small bottle of peroxide being poured on a tissue. Young Cheryl holds it against an ugly gash above her mother's beaten up eye.

And as we hear Charlie Rich starting to sing - Who Will The Next Fool Be...

124 INT. FATHER'S HOUSE - DAY 124

Young Cheryl walks back into the house with Leif and Bobbi. The young girl looks at her father who is frying eggs. The man obviously feels cheap and guilty but he's delighted to see them. He picks Leif up as he sings over Charlie Rich's song. Bobbi smiles with one eye. The other one is swollen.

125 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 125

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 56

Cheryl is back on the trail in her new boots. There is a spring in her step. She stops at a trail register and writes.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

125 CONTINUED: 125

ON SCREEN "EVEN A CHILD WITH NORMAL FEET WAS IN LOVE WITH THE WORLD AFTER HE HAD GOT A NEW PAIR OF SHOES - FLANNERY O'CONNOR (AND CHERYL STRAYED).

But the landscape is like it was right at the beginning of her hike - it's arid and scrubby, and the temperature is clearly unbearable.

CHERYL (V.O.)
The ashes of a body aren't really like the ashes from a fire, soft and silky.

A125 SOUNDLESS FLASH: A125

Bobbie's grave and tombstone, with the inscription 'I'M WITH YOU ALWAYS'.

CHERYL (V.O.)
They're more like pale pebbles mixed with a gritty grey gravel. We spread most of them around her grave.

B125 INT. TENT - NIGHT B125

Cheryl is writing her diary.

CHERYL (V.O.)
But some of the larger chunks I put in my mouth..

SOUNDLESS FLASH: Cheryl's mouth opens.

CHERYL (V.O.)
And I swallowed whole.

Cheryl continues on the trail.

CHERYL (V.O.)
The first time I smoked heroin it was a hot sunny day in June. I laughed like a child, and twirled around in my mother's jewelry box.

126 SOUNDLESS FLASH: 126

a dancing geisha girl is twirling as young Cheryl, full of make-up and jewels, looks at it.

127 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 127

Cheryl resting in shade, her pack off, chugging water from one of the large bottles she has brought with her.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

127 CONTINUED: 127

She stops herself, puts the bottle back in the pack. She hasn't had enough.

CHERYL
Fuck it.

She pulls the bottle out of the pack and drinks the rest. She then pulls out a second bottle of water and a ball-point pen, and marks off what she's going to allow herself at the next stops.

128 EXT. TRAIL - LATER 128

She's walking, composing sentences in her head again.

CHERYL (V.O.)
The first time I shot up, I sank to my knees and begged... "*More, more, more...*"

129 SOUNDLESS FLASH: 129

Close on a needle going into a tied-off vein.

CHERYL (V.O.)
(singing)
"... *how do you like it, how do you like it*".

130 EXT. JOE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY 130

Cheryl, sat on a beaten-up garden chair on a bit of dismal scrubland in front of an apartment block. She's stoned out of her mind.

There is a weird dude in front of her, making fancy dance moves. And even if we can't hear him, we can tell that he's singing... "*More, more, more*".

CHERYL (V.O.)
A day after my birthday, a man asked me for money.

The dude lip-syncs... "*That's what I want*".

131 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 131

So does Cheryl as she keeps on walking.

CHERYL
(singing)
"That's what I waaaaaaaaant".

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

131 CONTINUED: 131

Cheryl stops singing but keeps on walking. She touches her throat and gives the finger to an imaginary person in front of her.

132 EXT. JOE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY 132

The dude has a knife at Cheryl's throat. And he's not singing, nor dancing anymore. He reaches into her pocket and takes her money.

133 INT. JOE'S APARTMENT - DAY 133

Cheryl looks at her reflection on the glass of the coffee table, a red mark on her throat left by the knife. Next to her, Joe has passed out on the mattress, naked.

A door opens. Reveals Paul. The couple stares at each other.

CHERYL (V.O.)
A week after the event, somebody finally wished me "happy birthday". He drove eighteen hundred miles to see me and I cheated on him anyway.

Cheryl holds back tears.

A133 INT. PAUL'S CAR - DAY A133

We're back in Paul's car when he and Cheryl were fighting. This time, we can hear them. These two know how to fight.

PAUL
Just tell me why you're doing this to yourself?

Cheryl has her fingers in her ears and pretends not to hear anything. Paul can't stand it anymore and takes her left hand out of her ear, in a violent movement, as he keeps driving across a bridge.

CHERYL
Don't you fucking touch me!

PAUL
Don't you fucking play this game!

CHERYL
I didn't ask you to come and get me! You came for your own reasons. Just so you could be the big hero!

A beat during which Paul doesn't know what to say.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A133 CONTINUED: A133

PAUL
Maybe.

CHERYL
Why did you come all this way to get me?

PAUL
Because!

Paul grips the steering wheel, frustrated, emotional, confused.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Just... because!

Cheryl looks out the window. Through the structure of the bridge, we can see Mount Hood in the distance

134 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 134

For a second, it sounds like we're hearing the echo of Paul's voice. Cheryl drinks down to the last marker on the last bottle of water, and then, still parched, drains the bottle.

135 LATER 135

Cheryl rounds a bend, and there, in the distance, is the water tank she's been longing to see. She gasps her relief.

But as she gets closer to it, she can see that there's a piece of paper attached to it, flapping a little in the breeze.

CHERYL
No.

She walks towards it as quickly as she can.

CLOSE on the piece of paper: "NO WATER".

She sits down in the shade of the water tower and pulls out her guide book.

136 INT. TENT - DAY 136

Close on Cheryl waking up. She's parched. She licks her cracked lips.

137 EXT. TENT - DAY 137

Cheryl licking the tent, trying to suck up any dew that may have collected overnight. She looks at a sage bush next to her.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

137 CONTINUED: 137

She puts her face in her palms, inhaling deeply some leaves of sage that she rubbed against her palms. When she brings her face back up, we see...

... Bobbi's face instead, who looks up at a blue sky.

Cheryl gets rid of the leaves and gathers her stuff as we start to hear her teacher's voice...

TEACHER (V.O.)
I lost my mother's watch. And look! My last, or next-to-last...

138 INT. CLASSROOM COLLEGE - DAY 138

Her teacher is holding a book and is reciting a poem...

TEACHER
... of three loved houses went. The art of losing isn't hard to master...

139 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 139

Back on the trail. Cheryl's breathing is quite labored now, and the coherence that was allowing her to compose sentences in her head has gone. She starts to accompany her teacher.

CHERYL (V.O.)
... I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster, some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent. I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

Back on the teacher.

TEACHER
(with Cheryl's voice)
And every rappin' cat I know drinks MILLER LITE...

Back on Cheryl on the trail.

CHERYL
... ain't that so.

Cheryl is struggling, sick and scared. She tries to chant.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Fear creates fear. Power creates power. Don't fucking die here.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

139 CONTINUED: 139

Cheryl sees what she's been looking for - a stagnant pond, the size of a tennis court. The water is shallow and brown, and you'd have to be desperate to think about drinking it.

She pulls out her water purifier, crouches down and begins to pump the brown liquid into the bottle.

CHERYL (V.O.)
Do not let the tube touch the bottom. Do not let the tube touch the bottom.

The pumping is hard, and even when she has filled a bottle, it doesn't look anything less than poisonous. She finds her iodine tablets, reads the instructions on the packet.

CHERYL (V.O.)
Thirty minutes!
(out loud)
Fuck you, iodine tablets.

CHERYL (V.O.)
I didn't mean that. You're cool. It's the science that's fucked.

She settles down to stare at the bottle and starts to count out loud.

CHERYL
One Mississippi Two Mississippi Three Mississippi

140 LATER 140

She's counting much faster. There is another bottle beside it now.

CHERYL
Fifteen hundred and one, fifteen hundred and two, fifteen hundred and I'm done.

She picks up the bottle, drinks it down in one. Suddenly she hears a noise, and two men are standing by the pond with her, CLINT and TJ. They're both wearing jeans with knives hitched onto their belts, and there are bows and arrows in their backpacks.

CLINT
You got any water?

This is said without apology or supplication. Both the men seem aggreseive and desperate.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

140 CONTINUED: 140

CHERYL
You can drink the pond water, but you have to filter it first.

TJ
We don't have a filter.

CHERYL
You can use mine. You have a bottle?

TJ
We got an empty beer can.

He produces one from his bag. She passes the filter to the small man, and he starts to try to pump with it, into the beer can, as Cheryl watches him.

TJ (CONT'D)
And we can just drink it straight from the can?

Cheryl hesitates.

CHERYL
Sure. You came out with nothing to drink?

CLINT
We brought a six-pack of these. Each. But we drunk 'em all.

TJ
I can't do this.

CHERYL
Yeah, it's hard work.

TJ
It won't move.

Cheryl takes over. She can't pump it either. She takes it out and examines it. It's clogged with mud from the bottom of the pond.

CHERYL
You weren't supposed to let the tube go into the mud like that, you were supposed to keep it up in the water.

TJ
Shit.

CLINT
So now what are we supposed to do?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

140 CONTINUED: (2) 140

Cheryl is reluctant to show her bottle of pills, then...

CHERYL
You can use these.

Cut to the two men filling their beer cans with water and dropping iodine tablets into them.

TJ
How long does it take?

CLINT
She just told you, asshole. Thirty minutes.

They lapse into silence.

CLINT (CONT'D)
So. How can we kill the time?

TJ
I can think of some ways.

He sniggers and looks at Cheryl. Cheryl is uncomfortable.

TJ (CONT'D)
She's got a really nice figure, don't she? What I can't believe is that she's out here all alone. If she was my girlfriend, I wouldn't have let her.

Cheryl stands up, moves towards Monster. She's scared now.

CLINT
Oh, sit down, we're just messing with your head.

CHERYL
I'm hiking on a bit farther, so I'd better get going. Nice to meet you guys.

The men exchange a smile. There is a silence for a moment.

TJ
How come you're out here all alone, sweetheart?

Cheryl doesn't answer and gathers her stuff.

TJ (CONT'D)
Is there some man somewhere who isn't getting any at the moment?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

140 CONTINUED: (3) 140

Clint sniggers.

CLINT
Maybe he is.

They both laugh. Clint pulls on his pack.

CLINT (CONT'D)
We're heading out too. Don't want to run out of light.
(to TJ)
Come on.

Clint takes a beer can and starts to leave. TJ follows and waves Cheryl goodbye with the other beer can in his hand. She waves back and watches them in a fake posture of readying herself to leave as they disappear into the woods. She stays still and listens, but her breathing prevents her from hearing properly. She holds her breath. The sound of footsteps slowly fades out. She starts to breathe again.

A140 LATER A140

Cheryl has now her pair of leggings on and her tarp is laid out. She peels her sweaty shirt off and puts on a long sleeve shirt when suddenly she is startled by TJ who watches her from a distance. He starts walking towards her.

TJ
I thought you were heading on.

Charyl knows now that there is something to be afraid of. We can hear the blood pounding in her ears.

CHERYL
I changed my mind.

TJ
You tried to trick us?

CHERYL
No, I just changed my mind.

TJ
You changed your clothes too.

TJ takes off his backpack and sets it down. On top of it, his arrows. Cheryl spots them.

TJ (CONT'D)
I like your pants. They look good on you. They show off your hips and legs.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

A140 CONTINUED: A140

CHERYL
Please don't say that.

TJ
What? Can a guy give a girl a compliment anymore? You should be flattered.

CHERYL
Thank you.

A long beat. He stares at her. She crosses her arms against her chest, aware of the fact that she isn't wearing a bra.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I think you better get going. It'll be getting dark soon.

TJ
It's a free country. I'll go when I'm ready.

Another long silence during which TJ gently swirls around the water inside his beer can. Then suddenly...

CLINT
What the hell are you doing? I thought you got lost! Get your dumb ass here, let's go!

TJ looks at his watch, and lifts his beer can.

TJ
It's safe to drink the water now. Here's to a young girl all alone in the woods.

TJ takes a sip, looks at her and leaves, slowly. As soon as he's out of sight, Cheryl packs her things at lightning speed and leaves in the opposite direction.

B140 LATER B140

It's dusk. Almost dark. Cheryl walks away as quickly as she can. She risks stopping and looking behind her. There's nobody there. She holds her breathe again and listens. Nothing unusual.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

B140 CONTINUED: B140

She starts to breathe more easily, and walks on. We notice that over her long sleeve shirt, she has put on the Bob Marley T-shirt that she was given.

141 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 141

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 62

Cheryl is lost in the middle of a thick fog. We can't even see her at first, until she walks closer to the camera. She's still wearing her Bob Marley shirt.

Cheryl notices a sign on a tree: WELCOME TO OREGON, USA - PORTLAND 498 MILES. Cheryl gasps, and then giggles with delight. In the distance she sees a trail register. On Cheryl as she waves to the field beside her.

CHERYL
Goodbye, Californian cows! Hello, Oregonian cows!

The cows stare at her impassively.

Cut to a trail-register quote on screen:

'BUT I HAVE PROMISES TO KEEP/AND MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP - ROBERT FROST (AND CHERYL STRAYED)'

We hear music coming from...

142 EXT. MAIN STREET, ASHLAND - DAY 142

Ashland is completely bewildering for someone who's spent so much time alone in the wild. It's bathed, today at least, in dazzling sunlight, and there are punks and hippies and tattoos everywhere. Cheryl doesn't look out of place, with her tattoo and her caked-on dirt and her back-pack, but she feels out of place. She sees Jerry Garcia's face and name everywhere - on home-made signs in shop windows, on T-shirts, stuck onto the sides of vans. She smiles and nods her head to the rhythm of an acoustic guitarist playing the Grateful Dead's *"Box of Rain"* on the sidewalk accompanied by a male singer.

Cheryl stops next to a young girl, pink hair and studs, to listen.

CHERYL
People really love the Dead in this town.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

142 CONTINUED: 142

The girl looks at her witheringly. Cheryl, taken abeck, walks on. She stops at a newspaper vending machine and reeds the headline: JERRY GARCIA DEAD.

Cheryl walks on through the town. She passes a blonde girl, face smeared with grime, crashed out in a doorway: Cheryl notes the track marks and the apparently obligatory tattoo. She touches her own, unconsciously.

143 INT. POST OFFICE - DAY 143

Cheryl weiting in line in the post office. A lot of the same alternetive crowd are in there. An angry, young man runs away from the counter at the front of Cheryl's line and storms out.

ANGRY YOUNG MAN
You're westing your time. She won't give you shit.

It's Cheryl's turn. The middle-eged woman behind the counter hates her on sight - Cheryl is just another member of the tribe of the unwashed. Cheryl smiles sweetly at her.

CHERYL
Hi. I have a box and some letters to pick up? Cheryl Strayed?

WOMAN
How ers you spelling that?

CHERYL
Strayed? Like a, you know, like a cat that strayed. Like Stray Cat Blues.

The woman doesn't appear to be a Stones fan. She disappears to check. Cheryl people-watches for a moment. In the parallel queue, e boyfriend and a girlfriend are arguing quietly. The girl is in tears. The woman comes back and interrupts Cheryl's reverie.

WOMAN
Just this.

She hands her a postcard. Cheryl looks at it in alarm.

CHERYL
No, there should be a box weiting for me.

WOMAN
No box.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

143 CONTINUED: 143

She starts to look behind Cheryl towards the next person in the queue.

CHERYL
It has money in it. I need it. I have forty dollars in the entire world, and twenty of them are in that box.

WOMAN
There's no box. And before you ask: no, I can't advance you the money. This is a post office, not a bank. And I'm not your mother.

Cheryl starts to say something, stops herself, turns away from the woman and starts to walk away, reading her postcard.

PAUL (V.O.)
Yay! Oregon! You made it! Thinking of you, Paul.

She stops walking.

CHERYL
Jesus.

144 EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY 144

Cheryl is looking wide-eyed at the abundance in the shop windows. Outside a food store there's a bucket of peaches. Cheryl picks up a peach and puts it to her nose, inhaling deeply. She puts it back. She spots a drugstore, with a cosmetics ad in the window - a glamorous woman, lipstick and eye make-up. Cheryl stares at her and goes in.

145 INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY 145

Cheryl is trying on lipstick. She looks at herself in the mirror. The plum-coloured lipstick looks incongruous on her, garish. A middle-aged, immaculately turned out saleswoman standing nearby spots her.

SALESWOMAN
That shade looks nice on you.

CHERYL
Really? I don't look weird? Like a clown?

SALESWOMAN
No.

The saleswoman approaches her for a closer look and then stops.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

145 CONTINUED: 145

SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)
Oh, my.

Cheryl looks at her, puzzled.

SALESWOMAN (CONT'D)
Do you mind if I say something? The nicest lipstick in the world can't help a girl if she doesn't take care of her personal hygiene.

Cheryl laughs, embarrassed.

CHERYL
Oh. I'm sorry. I intend to take care of that.

SALESWOMAN
(whispers)
It really needs to be a priority, sweetie.

146 EXT. STREET - DAY 146

Cheryl comes out of the store holding a Snapple. She looks at it with longing, and then starts to glug it down. She stops halfway through, savoring it. Her attention is taken by a very cute guy, slightly older than Cheryl, across the street. He's handing out flyers. He spots Cheryl, smiles at her, crosses the road. This is JONATHAN.

JONATHAN
Hey.

He's very handsome indeed, and Cheryl is obviously attracted to him.

CHERYL
Hello.

JONATHAN
I work at a music club down the street, and we're honoring Jerry Garcia tonight. Why don't you come along?

He hands her the flyer. Cheryl makes sure she stands at arm's length.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
What's your name?

CHERYL
I'm Cheryl.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

146 CONTINUED: 146

Every time Jonathan tries to get a bit nearer, Cheryl retreats a yard.

JONATHAN
(laughing)
I don't bite.

CHERYL
I don't mind some biting.

The moment she's said it she regrets it.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Oh, my God. I'm so sorry. I've been on my own for a long time.

She regrets this, too.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I don't mean...I've had a ton of relationships, so I'm not, like, some old maid, but..AAARGH!

Cheryl shoots herself in the head with her fingers.

JONATHAN
Look, I'll put you on the guest list. And maybe we can do something afterwards? What do you think?

CHERYL
I'd like to. But it depends on some things beyond my control. Really stupid crap about money and soap and...fresh underwear.

Jonathan puts his hands in the air, a gesture intended to convey that he doesn't want to know any more.

JONATHAN
I hope to see you later.

Cheryl watches him go, drains her Snapple, and marches off with a new determination.

147 INT. POST OFFICE - DAY 147

Cheryl is back at the counter in the post office, and the same crabby woman is serving her. The clerk doesn't appear to have any recollection of their previous meeting.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

147 CONTINUED: 147

CHERYL
I'm Cheryl Strayed. I have a box to pick up?

WOMAN
How are you spelling that?

CHERYL
(the merest trace of impatience)
S-T-R-A-Y-E-D

This rings some kind of bell with the crabby woman.

WOMAN
I think I may have seen something with that name on.

She disappears to look. Meanwhile Cheryl watches the kids in the post office again. One young couple in the next line are kissing passionately. Cheryl smiles involuntarily. Suddenly the crabby old woman is back - this time with a large box.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
There you go. Sign here, please.

She pushes a form across the counter. Cheryl looks at her in disbelief.

CHERYL
Do you have any idea how important your job is? Seriously? The lives of all the people in this room are in your hands. We need you to be kind, and we need you to care.

WOMAN
Happy to help. Next, please.

148 INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY 148

Close on what could be a map: a ridged, pale, puckered, otherworldly landscape. It's the skin on Cheryl's hips, where the skin has been rubbed raw and healed itself `and rubbed raw and healed itself until it resembles something that you might find in an organic butcher's shop. Cheryl is wearing a black bra and pants, and she's examining herself thoughtfully in the motel-room mirror. She's a different woman from the beginning of the movie: tanned, slender, muscular, sun-bleached, beaten up, hairy. She shaves her legs.

Later. She's fully dressed and wearing a fresh T-shirt. She checks herself one more time.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

148 CONTINUED: 148

She shrugs - it's the best she can do - and leaves the room for her date. CLOSE on the detritus on the bedside table: some change, a half-eaten bag of potato chips, a Snapple bottle - and the condom that she's been carrying in her pocket for hundreds of miles.

149 INT. DRUGSTORE - EVENING 149

Cheryl is back at the beauty aisle in the Co-op she visited earlier on in the day. The same woman is still there, still waiting for customers.

CHERYL
I had a shower.

SALESWOMAN
Great!

CHERYL
And I think I have a date. But I don't have any money, so I'm just going to help myself to any free samples you have.

SALESWOMAN
OK. Let's see what we've got.

150 INT. CLUB - DUSK 150

Cheryl is wearing make-up. She looks good, but unfamiliar to us. The club is full. Some of the people from the post office and the plaza are among the crowd listening to an original cover of "*Ripple*" by the Grateful Dead, performed by a solo guitar player-singer. Cheryl loves the music - it's nearly as important to her as food, and she's wolfing it down...

Perhaps they're better left unsung
I don't know, don't really care
Let there be songs to fill the air

Jonathan, Cheryl's new friend, suddenly appears with two glasses of red wine. They listen to the music in silence, watching the crowd of "Dead Heads" accompanying the singer, some of them with their eyes filled with tears.

Cheryl notices that Jonathan is connecting with the crowd. She waits for him to look at her and when he does, she loves what she sees.

Ripple in still water
When there is no pebble tossed
Nor wind to blow

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

150 CONTINUED: 150

Jonathan takes Cheryl's hand, kisses it and looks away when he starts to sing along with the crowd.

Reach out your hand if your cup be empty
If your cup is full may it be again
Let it be known there is a fountain
That was not made by the hands of men

Cheryl is the only one that is not singing. She doesn't know the lyrics, obviously, but it doesn't stop her from really enjoying the moment, and her company. *

CHERYL
What time do you finish work?

JONATHAN
In an hour.

A look between them. *

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

151 INT. DINER - DUSK 151

Cheryl is sitting on her own at a diner in town. She's eating a big burger and a large fries. *(to be moved before 150)* *

152 INT. CAR - NIGHT 152

Cheryl is in Jonathan's car. He's driving down dark country roads outside Ashland. He's talking, a little nervously. Lucinda Williams is playing on his tape-deck.

JONATHAN
I love where I live. But I'm worried that girls think I'm taking them somewhere to chop their heads off with an axe.

He turns down a bumpy track.

CHERYL
It hadn't occurred to me, until you said that just now.

JONATHAN
So why do you trust me?

He stops the car. They have arrived at a farm in the middle of nowhere.

CHERYL
I guess...I don't know what the statistics are, but it has to be a minority of axe-murderers who are Lucinda Williams fans. And you have kind eyes, and you live in a tent on an organic farm. If you're a psycho, then I've learned nothing about anything.

Jonathan leans towards her and kisses her.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Mmmm. I should use that line on guys more often.

JONATHAN
You're rad.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

152 CONTINUED: 152

Cheryl tries not to wince at the word.

CHERYL
You're... rad too.

153 INT. TENT - NIGHT 153

Darkness, and then Jonathan turns on the light, and we can see his tent. It's enormous, and lovely. You can stand up in it, there's electric lighting - lamps that look like candles on cardboard dressers on either side of the double bed - and a heater. There are even books on a little shelf.

Cheryl looks around admiringly.

CHERYL
Wow. This is fantastic.

JONATHAN
I know. I'm lucky.

He looks at Cheryl.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Really lucky.

He puts his arms around her and kisses her again. They fall onto the bed. Jonathan pulls away so that he can speak.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)
Listen. I'm not presuming or anything. But if this goes any further...do you have a condom?

Cheryl laughs.

CHERYL
I've been carrying a condom in my pocket for weeks, in case. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I decided I wasn't taking my pants off for anyone. So I left it in the motel.

JONATHAN
That's cool.

CHERYL
No it's not! Because now I want to take them off. But I have to warn you: there's some... bad stuff under there.

JONATHAN
Oh. OK. What kind of bad stuff?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

153 CONTINUED: 153

Cheryl laughs.

CHERYL
It's not, like, contagious bad stuff. It's just...

She stands up, unbuttons and steps out of her jeans, and pulls down her pants to show him the puckered, discolored skin over her hips.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
This hike hasn't done much for my sexual confidence.

Jonathen pulls her towards him and, very slowly, kisses her stomach and then moves towards the relevant area.

154 EXT. BY THE RIVER - DAWN 154

Cheryl is writing something in big letters in the wet send.

155 INT. TENT - DAWN 155

Jonathan wakes up, looks around for Cheryl. He walks to the door.

His POV: further by the river, Cheryl stands in front of her art-work in the sand that she is erasing with her feet: P-A-U...

156 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 156

Pages from the PCT guide are being torn out by Cheryl's hands. She throws them on the fire.

MONTAGE of Cheryl hiking through Oregon, eating up the miles. We hear the old, familiar walking rhythm track, the creak, and the plod, and the click of her ski-pole. The landscape is sometimes lush, sometimes steep and rocky. In her head, she is composing a letter.

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 71

CHERYL (V.O.)
Dear Paul, Back in Ashland I had sex with a man, and afterwards I wrote your name in the sand. I've done that on every beach I've been on, ever since I met you, but I'm not going to do it again. It's too sad.

Cheryl gets her first sight of the spectacularly beautiful Crater Lake. She stands gazing at it, awed.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

156 CONTINUED: 156

CHERYL (V.O.)
Here are some questions I've been asking myself. What if I forgive myself? What if I was sorry, but if I could go back in time I wouldn't do a single thing differently? What if I'd wanted to fuck every single one of these men? What if heroin taught me something?

157 EXT. TRAIL - DUSK 157

Camp is set near the lake, the stove is burning, heating water, and Cheryl is writing the letter that she has been composing.

CHERYL (V.O.)
What if yes was the right answer instead of no? What if all those things I did were the things that got me here? What if I was never redeemed? What if I already was? I have only another two hundred miles left to walk. I'm desperate for it to be over, but I'm terrified, too. I have twenty bucks left in the world. When I'm done, then I'll have to start living, and I'm nowhere near ready.

She looks at what she's written, holds the sheet of paper above the stove and watches it burn.

158 EXT. RANGER'S STATION - DAY 158

It's raining hard, the light is fading, and Cheryl's cold and wet and hurting. But she's approaching a rest stop - there's a ramshackle collection of dark wooden buildings and a few picnic tables. As Cheryl walks towards it, a ranger emerges from one of the buildings and locks the door.

CHERYL
Excuse me! Please! You have a box for me.

RANGER
I'm just closing up. Could it wait until tomorrow?

CHERYL
I have a fresh T-shirt in there. And some chocolate, and fresh batteries.

RANGER
OK, OK.

He inspects Cheryl more closely.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

158 CONTINUED: 158

RANGER (CONT'D)
If you'll have a drink with me later.

CHERYL
(uncertainly)
Sure.

159 INT. RANGER'S STATION - DAY 159

A cheerless, dimly-lit and untidy office which doubles as a general store, with a token stock of hiker staples - energy bars, potato chips, batteries. The ranger is bent down, breathing hard, lifting Cheryl's box. He plonks it on the counter.

RANGER
There you are, good-lookin'.

CHERYL
Thank you.

RANGER
You like punch? I make a good one. Through whatever liquor I've got into a bucket, then pour a few tins of juice on top.

CHERYL
Sounds great.

It really doesn't. Suddenly, three young men burst in, full of energy - RICK, JOSH and RICHIE. They're hikers, lean, tall, bearded, good-looking. They stare at Cheryl.

RICK
Cheryl?

RICHIE
Cheryl Strayed?

CHERYL
Yeah.

JOSH
Oh my God!

RICEIE
"If your nerve deny you..."

JOSH
"...Go above your nerve."

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

159 CONTINUED: 159

RICK
Emily Dickinson! "But I have promises to keep/And miles to go before I sleep."

RICHIE
Walt Whitman!

JOSH
No, Robert Frost. The Whitman was "Be curious, not judgmental."

RICHIE
"Never ever ever give up." Churchill.

RICK
"God is a ruthless bitch?" You left off the name.

CHERYL
That one was me.

JOSH
You're our hero!

They start to make we-are-not-worthy gestures.

RICHIE
Every morning for about three weeks we've been saying, TODAY is the day we'll catch Cheryl. But you just keep powering on.

RICK
"I'm a slow walker, but I never walk back", my ass!

CHERYL
Lincoln.

Rick presents his hand to shake.

RICK
I'm Rick. And this is Josh. And Richie.

RANGER
OK, fellahs. I'm shutting up, now.

JOSH
We just wanted to pick up our post.

RANGER
I'm sorry. I re-opened for the young lady. I'm not gonna re-open again.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

159 CONTINUED: (2) 159

CHERYL
You wouldn't have to re-open again, because you haven't re-closed yet. Their post is right behind the counter there.

RANGER
I'll be here in the morning.

He ushers them towards the door. Cheryl makes one last plea.

CHERYL
It's such a miserable night, and I'm sure that whatever the boys have had sent here will make it a lot easier...

She makes direct, sincere eye-contact with the ranger, who sighs and relents.

160 EXT. RANGER'S STATION - DAY 160

The boys and Cheryl are all clutching packets and parcels as the ranger locks up. It's still raining hard. Cheryl is distracted. Next to the ranger's station is a paddock containing a horse. The horse wanders down placidly to look at them.

CHERYL
Is that horse yours?

RANGER
Yeah. You want to take her out in the morning? She could do with it.

She can't take her eyes off the horse.

RANGER (CONT'D)
I have to go into town now for an appointment. But knock on my door after nine. I'm in the other half of this building.

Cheryl snaps out of her daydream.

CHERYL
The ranger here has asked us over for a drink.

JOSH
Oh, fantastic. We could use one.

RANGER
Oh, now, listen, I have a small place, and...

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

160 CONTINUED: 160

CHERYL
OK, I understand. There's a lot that I need to talk to these guys about anyway, so I'll see you in the morning.

She turns quickly and ushers the guys away. As he's walking, Richie opens his box and shows her two bottles of JD.

Close on the ranger, gaping.

161 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT 161

The four tents are all pitched as if around a circle, and everyone is sitting under the canopies of their individual tents, keeping out of the rain, drinking from a JD bottle.

RICK
Hey, how do you deal with being on your own? We have each other all day, and we're still sick of ourselves. Aren't you, like ...done? Through with whatever you've got in your head?

Cheryl is drunk by now, but the conversation has made her as thoughtful as she's capable of being.

CHERYL
Nah. I thought I would be. But I'm not. Not yet. There are some things I keep putting off. I try to remember old McDonald's ads instead.

JOSH
"Putting off"? Sounds ominous.

CHERYL
Oh, I've been to most places I didn't want to go. There are just one or two that...

She tails off and shrugs.

RICHIE
I hear ya. There are a couple of girlfriends I don't want to think about again in a hurry. I'm hoping I can keep them at bay.

RICK
I think I know who you're talking about.

Laughter from the men.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

161 CONTINUED: 161

CLOSE on Cheryl. We know that this isn't the sort of stuff she meant. Suddenly, these boys seem very young, and she feels old and tired.

162 INT. TENT - NIGHT 162

Cheryl in her tent, still drunk, rain beating on the canvas. She tries to read with her head-lamp on, but she can't focus on the words. She closes her eyes, and suddenly she sees a FLASH of a horse. She opens her eyes again, panicky. She tries to read again, can't, closes her eyes and starts to whispers words we can't make out - and BAM! There's the horse again.

163 INT. HOUSE - DAY 163

Cheryl alone in her mother's house, holding a refuse sack. It's a wreck - beer cans, overflowing ash-trays and indications of drug use everywhere. She half-heartedly starts to fill the sack, then, distracted, she puts it down, walks to the back door.

164 EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY 164

Leif, older, the drugs and grief visible in his face, is cleaning a rifle while Cheryl watches from the doorway. He examines his work for a moment then looks at Cheryl.

LEIF
Ready?

165 INT. HORSE STALL - DAY 165

Cheryl stroking Lady, Bobbi's horse, who's in a pitiful condition, old, but desperately thin, too. Cheryl is * whispering words to Lady or God or her mother that we can't quite make out. She goes silent and looks up to see Leif standing there with his rifle. They are wearing coats and hats and scarves.

LEIF *
We don't have to do this! *

CHERYL *
We promised mom we'd take care of her. *

LEIF *
By killing her? *

CHERYL *
She's been sick for a long time. She's * old. She's in pain. *

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

165 CONTINUED: 165

LEIF *
There has to be another way. *

CHERYL *
You got the money to do it properly? Have *
a vet come out? If we don't do it, she *
dies slowly, in a lot of pain. Is that *
what you want? *

Cheryl and her brother pet the horse.

LEIF *
Right between the eyes? *

CHERYL *
One clean shot. *

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

165 CONTINUED: (2) 165

They stand about five feet away from Lady. Leif crouches down on one knee in the snow, positioning the rifle, Cheryl behind him. She takes a sharp breath and then the gun goes off.

166 INT. CHERYL'S TENT - NIGHT 166

Breathless, she starts to scramble out of her sleeping bag.

167 EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT 167

Cheryl stumbles out of her tent, still panicky. She half-trips over a rope, keeps going.

CHERYL (V.O.)
Shoot her again!

Bang! Cheryl stops on her tracks and starts to puke.

We hear one more shot. And another one. More puke.

CHERYL (V.O.)
AGAIN !

Bang!

168 INT. HORSE STALL - DAY 168

Lady is on the ground, dead.

Cheryl puts her hands on Lady's blood-spattered body and runs her hands along it. Leif looks at his sister, in tears.

169 EXT. PADDOCK - NIGHT 169

We see Cheryl walking towards the paddock in the rain.

But she blunders on, until she reaches the fence. The horse comes down to see her, placidly. She strokes the horse's head.

LEIF (V.O.)
The Indians believe that when a warrior dies, you have to kill his horse. So he can cross to the other side of the river. Maybe Mom can go now. *

Rain on her face.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

170 EXT. TENT - DAY 170

Cheryl crawls out of her tent. The boys are already up, boiling water on their gas stove, sitting cross-legged and eating mush. The rain has stopped, the sun's out.

RICHIE
How are you feeling?

They obviously heard her retching during the night. Cheryl is a little embarrassed.

CHERYL
Oh. You know.

Suddenly her friend the ranger appears. He has a mug of coffee and a donut.

RANGER
Hey, good-looking. Brought you some coffee and a donut. Fresh this morning. Looks like you could use them.

Cheryl takes them from him.

CHERYL
Thank you. Really.

The guys are watching in some disbelief - where's theirs?

RANGER
Come and get a refill before you head off.
(to the guys)
Morning, fellas.

He walks back towards his station. When he's out of earshot, the boys explode, in laughter and outrage.

RICK
Do you have a trail name?

Cheryl wonders...

RICK (CONT'D)
A nickname. We're the Three Young Bucks.

RICHIE
We didn't call ourselves that, by the way. Some people we met started it.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

170 CONTINUED: 170

CHERYL
I can see that. You're young, and, I don't know, frisky...

JOSH
Anyway. We have one for you. Queen of the PCT.

Cheryl laughs, despite the way she's feeling.

CHERYL
C'mon.

RICHIE
He doesn't mean it in a good way.

Laughter.

RICK
You have so many stories about people doing things for you and wanting to help you. And nobody ever gives us anything. They don't do a damn thing for us, in fact.

JOSH
"Come and get a refill, your majesty...."

CHERYL
Your majesty doesn't go anywhere. The refill comes to her.

RICHIE
"Song TBD"

RICK
Noooooo! Fuck, man! Now I'm going to have that song stuck in my brain for a hundred fucking miles. Jesus!

Josh hits Richie on the shoulder. He's as annoyed as Rick.

RICHIE
Would you have preferred...

JOSH
Don't!

Rick and Josh are silently warning Richie. A beat. Then after three seconds, Richie starts singing and runs away...

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

170 CONTINUED: (2) 170

RICHIE
"Song TBD"!

Rick and Josh run after him as if trying to kill him. Ritchie runs away, singing *"song TBD"*.

Cheryl laughs and nods.

A170 LATER A170

Cheryl and the three Young Bucks are performing in perfect sync Bobbi and Cheryl's choreography on The Shangri-Las' *"I Can Never Go Home Anymore"* that we heard earlier. One of the young bucks plays guitar with a rattle snake in his hands.

A171 EXT. RANGER'S STATION - PHONE BOOTH - DAY A171

Cheryl, her pack on her back and about to leave, dials a number. We hear Leif's ansaphone message again.

LEIF (O.S.)
Hi, this is Leif. Please leave a message after the tone.

CHERYL
Hey brother. Me again. I know we don't have a home to go to but we're still tied together. I'm pulling you along with me. It's hard. So... help me out, huh? Walk a little.

171 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 171

Cheryl walking alone on the trail, smiling, humming El Condor Pasa. After a complete verse, she stops humming, smiles, keeps on walking. And now we hear that someone else is humming. She loses her smile.

172 INT. KITCHEN - EVENING 172

Cheryl's mother is humming El Condor Pasa. She's cooking, and lost, happily, in both the task at hand and the song. Cheryl enters in a foul temper. She throws a bag down in a corner of the kitchen and sits down heavily at the table.

CHERYL
Would you stop humming that fucking song?

Bobbi stops to wonder what's eating her daughter.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
What is wrong with you?

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

172 CONTINUED: 172

BOBBI
What is wrong with you?! I'm happy. Happy people sings.

Bobbi starts humming again. Same song.

CHERYL
Why... are you happy? Tell me!

BOBBI
I have no reason to be unhappy.

CHERYL
You don't want more than this?

(CONTINUES)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

172 CONTINUED: (2) 172

BOBBI
Oh, sweetheart.

CHERYL
Seriously? We have nothing.

BOBBI
We're rich in love.

CHERYL
Oh, puh-lease. Not that again. We're both waiting tables, Jesus!

BOBBI
We're students.

CHERYL
We have loans we'll be paying off for the rest of our lives. Our house is falling apart. You're on your own because you married an abusive alcoholic asshole. And you stand there singing. What is it you're not getting?

BOBBI
Oh, there's nothing I don't get, believe me. But then what? If there's one thing I could teach you, it would be how to find your best self. And, once you've found it, how to hold on to it for dear life. Actually, I'm not sure there's anything else worth knowing. Do I regret marrying an abusive alcoholic asshole? No. Not for one second. Because he gave me you. You see how it works? It's not easy. But it's worth doing.

Cheryl doesn't know what to say.

BOBBI (CONT'D)
You'll have worse days than this, honey. And you can let them kill you if you want, but...you know, I want to live.

173 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 173

Cheryl is walking as we hear her voice in her head.

CHERYL (V.O.)
"I want to live." Fucking Pollyanna. You weren't so great. You weren't such a great mom. Shit. You used to smoke pot in front of us.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

173 CONTINUED: 173

CHERYL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
You came out with all that stupid corny shit... *"We're not poor, we're rich in love!"* You wanted me to call you by your first name when I was like eleven. You didn't help me apply for colleges, and when I was accepted at one, you ended up enrolling with me, as if you were *my* sister. And then, just before we graduated, you fucking die at 45, you moron.
(a beat, then she lets it out)
You couldn't even stay alive and enjoy your fucking miserable happy life. FUCKK!

Cheryl breathes, swallows her frustration and starts to walk again. She walks around a bend and stops in her track when she sees straight ahead in the trail... a llama.

CHERYL
What's this now? A fucking petting zoo?

174 LATER 174

Cheryl is in front of the animal, 10 feet away. The llama has a lead rope around its neck and is wearing a saddle. He sniffs in Cheryl's direction, makes a step forward and pauses to assess whether he should continue. Cheryl sits still and watches the animal.

CHERYL
It's okay. You're safe in this world.

The llama walks closer and stops again. Cheryl takes the lead rope and then pats the animal, tentatively at first, and then with more boldness and pleasure. An older lady, VERA and a young boy, KYLE, five years old or so, are walking towards her, and a dog is walking behind them.

VERA
You got him! Thank you.

CHERYL
Does he have a name?

KYLE
Shooting Star.

VERA
And I'm Vera, and this is Kyle.

KYLE
You forgot Miriam.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

174 CONTINUED: 174

VERA
So sorry, Miriam.

CHERYL
(to Kyle)
Are you having a good time hiking?

KYLE
We are having a wonderful time, thank you very much for asking.

Cheryl laughs.

CHERYL
My, you're polite.

KYLE
Vera is my grandma. She's looking after me because I have some problems that I'm not supposed to talk about with strangers.

CHERYL
You don't have to talk about them. Everyone has problems. I've had some problems, too.

KYLE
What kinds of problems?

CHERYL
Oh, you know...

She mentally scans her inventory, trying to pick something that a child might want to know about.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
I had problems with my dad, for example. I don't see him any more.

KYLE
Me neither. What about your mommy?

CHERYL
Well... she died.

Kyle looks at her solemnly. Then at Vera. Back at Cheryl. The thought of losing one's mother seems to affect him.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
You know... problems don't stay problems. They turn into something else.

(CONTINUED)

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

174 CONTINUED: (2) 174

KYLE
What do they turn into?

CHERYL
I don't know yet.

KYLE
How did she die?

CHERYL
She got very sick.

KYLE
My mother is a singer. She has taught me many songs. Would you like to hear one?

CHERYL
I certainly would.

Kyle sings Red River Valley - beautifully and with feeling. The llama, the story-book grandmother, the strange boy, the old song...It's an overwhelming moment for Cheryl, strange and funny and beautiful. She's holding back tears.

175 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 175

Cheryl walking backwards up the trail, waving at Kyle and Vera while they wave back. We still hear the voice of the kid singing the song. Cheryl smiles to herself.

CHERYL (V.O.)
"I have some problems too. My mom died."
Jesus. A five-year-old kid, stupid! I really made his day.

She laughs, and then the laughter turns into something else, and she begins to cry and cry and cry, for the first time on the trail.

CHERYL (V.O.)
Mom, I'm not crying because of you. I'm not crying because of dad, or because of Paul. I'm not crying because I'm happy or sad. I'm crying because I'm full. That kid. This place. Hundreds of miles. Ninety days on the trail, and all the years before that. I'm full up.

She carries on crying.

CHERYL
I miss you!

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

176 OMITTED 176

177 MOVED TO B178 177

A178 EXT. TRAIL - DUSK A178

Cheryl is lying in her sleeping bag, on her tarp, out on the open, by a reservoir. She didn't put up her tent. A camp fire is burning close to her. She's writing in her diary.

CHERYL (V.O.)
There's no way to know what makes one thing happen and not another. What leads to what. What destroys what. What causes what to flourish or die or take another course.

Cheryl stops and looks at the fire. In it: what's left of THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL, VOLUME 1.

178 EXT. TRAIL - DAWN 178

Cheryl asleep out in the open. She wakes up with a start and looks down her body: hundreds of tiny little black frogs are hopping all over her sleeping bag. She shrieks soundlessly, laughs, stands up.

B178 EXT. TRAIL - DAY B178

CARD ON SCREEN - DAY 94

Cheryl back on the trail. She stops to fill her hat full of the large, ripe berries that overhang the trail, eating some as she does so.

CHERYL (V.O.)
It took me years to be the woman my mother raised.

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

179 EXT. TRAIL - DAY 179

Cheryl rounds a bend and sees something. She stops. Simon and Garfunkel's El Condor Pasa starts to play.

CHERYL (V.O.)
It took me four years, seven months, and three days to do it, without her. I didn't know where I was going until I got there.

She starts to walk again towards something we can hardly see through the trees: a bridge.

180 EXT. TOLLBOOTH - DAY 180

The tollbooth agent waves Cheryl through. A sign above the tollbooth says 'Bridge Of The Gods'. She starts her walk across the bridge.

CHERYL (V.O.)
I felt more alone than anyone in the whole wide world that morning. Maybe that was okay.

We follow her. She stops next to the structure. Her POV - Beneath her on the road, people walking. They spot her, smile and wave. They turn to look at her. The sun is reflecting off the beautiful blue water. She can see fish swimming in the river. She looks up at the blue sky, closes her eyes.

CHERYL (V.O.)
I didn't need to reach with my bare hands anymore. To know that seeing the fish beneath the surface of the water was enough. That it was everything... my life, like all lives, mysterious, irrevocable and sacred. So very close, so very present, so very belonging to me.

She opens her eyes, and sees a fox sat in the middle of the road, on the other side of the bridge. He looks at her for a moment... and leaves.

CHERYL (V.O.)
How wild it was, to let it be.

Cheryl touches the bridge and smiles. Her eyes fill with tears.

Simon and Garfunkel start to sing El Condor Pasa.

THE END

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library

FOXSEARCHLIGHT.COM/AWARDS

Released by Twentieth Century Fox © 2014 Twentieth Century Fox

Script provided for educational purposes. More scripts can be found here: http://www.sellingyourscreenplay.com/library