

The Republic of Sarah

"Pilot"

Written by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

CLOSE ON SARAH CHAMBERS (early 30s), a sharply intelligent agrestal beauty, as she stares right at us. Sarah is blue-collar to the core; the kind of rugged female badass you might see in a Ford commercial. She grits her teeth, doing her best to control her nervous breathing. She's anxious. Unsure. Scared, even.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Sarah wears a poofy colonial dress that's covered in a maple leaf pattern, a frilly white ruff, and a headband that features two plastic light-up maple leaves on springs. It's quite the contrast to her worried demeanor. Beyond her, a CROWD waits with baited breath. There must be 300 people.

SARAH

I. Am. Not. Moving.

A REVERSE ANGLE shows us what Sarah's staring at: a row of massive earthmovers sits on a dirt road in the middle of thick New England forest. Sarah blocks their path.

At the end of the row is a group of people led by GOVERNOR OTIS TAGGERT (50s), a smarmy, silver-haired politician. Beside him are JENNIFER TAM (30s, Chinese-American), a shark in a pantsuit, and DANNY (36), who's doing his best to hide his rural roots in a fancy blazer. We'll get more of Danny's details soon enough (like his last name, for example). He sports a fresh BLACK EYE.

OTIS

Get out of the way, Ms. Chambers.

SARAH

No.

DANNY

Sarah --

SARAH

Pack up your machines and go home.

Sarah glares at Danny. All is still... when, suddenly, we hear the distinct QUACKING of a goose. Everyone freezes as a family of noisy CANADIAN GEESE waddles right through the middle of proceedings. There's no escaping the quirky pastoral wilderness here, even in such a tense moment.

As the geese retreat, Otis turns to Sarah.

OTIS

This is your last warning. Step aside. Or else.

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Or else *what*? You gonna run me over
in front of all these people?

Otis glances at the crowd behind Sarah. He SEES several people recording him on their CELL PHONES.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You're up for reelection in the
fall, right, Governor? How does
flattening constituents usually
play at the polls?

Otis glares at Sarah. Her heart POUNDS. Beat. Otis glances over his shoulder at Jennifer, who shakes her head: *no*. Otis clenches. Sarah has him beat... *For now*. Finally:

OTIS

This isn't over.

He signals the earthmovers: *turn it around*. We FIND one of the DRIVERS - a burly bear of a man - as he shifts into reverse. But just as he's about to back up... we HEAR more QUACKING.

The GEESE are back, this time tottering around *behind* the bulldozers. An awkward beat passes as everyone waits for them to depart. Finally, the driver thrusts into reverse and backs away.

We follow the earthmover as it rolls past a sign on the side of the road: CASTLE PEAK. We STAY on the sign as the machine slips out of frame. And CLOSE ON the sign...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAWN

The same sign, now lit by the cool blue glow of dawn. Beat.

A Chyron appears: **TWO DAYS EARLIER.**

We HEAR rapid FOOTSTEPS. We PULL BACK to find Sarah as she passes the sign. She's out for a run. Gone are the bulldozers and the crowd, replaced by the steady rhythm of Sarah's stride against the backdrop of quiet New England forest.

Sarah checks her watch before pressing uphill at a quicker pace.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE PEAK - DAYBREAK

A radiant sunrise bathes the valley below in sparkling yellow light. Rolling hills carpeted in thick New England foliage stretch on as far as the eye can see. At the foot of the mountain, we SEE a tiny TOWN nestled in the lush forest.

CONTINUED:

We PULL BACK to find Sarah taking in the view. Here, alone with the wind in her hair and the sun on her face, Sarah is home. Here is where she's most herself. Beat. She clicks her watch as she resumes her run. ON the BEEP of her watch, MUSIC kicks in...

CUT TO:

EXT. MORRISVILLE - VARIOUS - SERIES OF SHOTS - MORNING

We follow Sarah as she takes her morning run around Morrisville. She jogs through colorful orchards, along a winding river, past overgrown meadows, and through an old covered bridge. All around her, Morrisville's rustic, wild beauty is on full display.

She passes several RESIDENTS along the way. Among them, we SEE: BETTY and RALPH TUCKER, a salt-of-the-earth elderly couple who feed APPLES into a cider press on their lawn. We SEE RUSSELL CYR, a scruffy fifty-something, as he paints his barn... completely naked. (A shrub blocks our view of his intimate bits.) Sarah exchanges a warm smile and a wave with everyone.

Sarah rounds a corner onto Main Street and moves along a row of adorable mom-and-pop storefronts. Behind her, two WORKERS unfurl a "MAPLE JUBILEE" banner between a pair of lampposts on the town square. Beyond them, we SEE people setting up for a large fair.

Sarah comes upon an antique pickup truck stopped in the middle of the road. BEV WHEELER (60s, salty) spots Sarah from inside.

BEV

Sarah! Mind giving me a push? Looks like my pickup needs a pick-me-up!

Bev offers a GOOFY LAUGH. Sarah heaves her weight into the truck. It rolls a few feet before Bev POPS the clutch and the truck starts. Bev waves as Sarah continues down the street.

Sarah stops at Sweetie Pie, a charming bakery. A stool sits outside the shop, a glass of juice and a donut on it. An index card with "SARAH" written on it is taped to the stool. Someone has left food for Sarah during her run. It's a folksy version of a marathon aid station. Sarah eats the donut and chugs the OJ.

She looks up to SEE GROVER SIMS (30s), cute and oppressively optimistic, in the window of the bakery. He gives instructions to a pair of young WAITERS - he's clearly in charge - before he notices Sarah looking at him. They exchange a happy wave.

And ON the THUNK of the glass as Sarah returns it to the stool--

CUT TO:

INT. SARAH'S HOME - MORNING

The THUNK of Sarah's door CLOSING as she moves inside, her run complete.

CONTINUED:

She pulls a NOTEBOOK from a desk in the corner of the room. She OPENS it to reveal a RUNNING JOURNAL. Each line includes a date, a location, a distance, and a pace.

We SEE that every line in the journal features the same run: "Castle Peak - 10.2 Miles." There are HUNDREDS of identical entries. Maybe thousands. Sarah is a true creature of habit.

She makes her new entry, then picks up her PHONE. After quickly checking her email, she opens TINDER... to find a starkly disappointing blank white screen that simply reads: "THERE'S NO ONE NEW AROUND YOU." Sarah sighs and puts her phone down.

And ON her smiling PROFILE PHOTO on the screen, we PRE-LAP the sound of a classroom BELL RINGING and we...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - SARAH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

SARAH, the same easy smile in real life.

SARAH

In honor of this weekend's Maple Jubilee, I thought we'd finish with some local trivia.

ANOTHER ANGLE finds her in front of a room of SOPHOMORES. She holds a bag of TAFFY.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You get a right answer, you get a piece of taffy.

The class CLAPS and CHEERS. Sarah turns to LEVI (16, nerdy).

SARAH (CONT'D)

Levi. When was the town of Morrisville founded?

LEVI

June 21st, 1788.

Sarah nods and tosses a taffy to Levi.

LEVI (CONT'D)

Oh, I can't. I'm allergic.

Levi tosses the taffy back. HUNTER (16, a bully) pipes up.

HUNTER

To what? *Fun?*

Some giggles from the class as Levi shrinks.

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Okay, Hunter. Your turn. Who founded Morrisville?

His smile fades. Beat. Sarah turns to the rest of the class.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Looks like Mr. Heitkamp is allergic to *facts*.

The class giggles. Now it's Hunter's turn to shrink.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Levi?

LEVI

Morrisville was founded by Enoch Tenney.

Sarah gives Levi a FIST BUMP. He smiles, buoyed by her support.

SARAH

That's right, Enoch Tenney. The poor son of a servant who struck out on his own and started a town that still stands 300 years later.

(a teaching moment)

Just another reminder that ordinary people can do extraordinary things.

Beat. The BELL rings. The students rise and pack up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Have a great weekend. I hope to see you all at the Jubilee on Sunday.

The students EXIT. Sarah packs up her things. Beat.

MARY (O.C.)

Good afternoon, Mrs. Chambers.

Sarah turns to FIND MARY HILL (50s, Iroquois), a resilient veterinarian, in the open doorway. Sarah rolls her eyes.

SARAH

"Mrs. Chambers" is my mother.

MARY

It's time to go.

SARAH

Oh, god. It's the first Friday of the month, isn't it?

Mary nods with a smirk.

CONTINUED: (2)

SARAH (CONT'D)
(playful, as a child)
Do I have to go? Please, Mary.
Please say I don't have to go.

MARY
Hey, it's not *my* fault the town
charter requires the vice principal
to serve on the Select Board.

And ON Sarah, not happy about the task before her...

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON a GAVEL as it BANGS a wooden table.

TIM (O.C.)
Oyez, oyez, oyez!

ANOTHER ANGLE finds TIM SHATTUCK (60s), an aloof retired banker, at the head of the table. Sarah and Mary sit with the other members of the Select Board: FRANCINE DICKENSON (40s), the sanctimonious sheriff, OSCAR JIMENEZ (40s, Latino), a charming painter, and EUGENE CHUBB (40s), a bizarre, brilliant librarian.

TIM (CONT'D)
I call to order this meeting of the
Morrisville Select Board. I will
now read the roll.
(re: himself)
Timothy Shattuck, Mayor.
(then)
Present.

MARY
Everyone's here, Tim. Everyone's
always here.

Tim begrudgingly puts away his notebook, annoyed at his associates' lack of interest in governmental formalities.

TIM
Two orders of business today.
First. David Lindholm's goat has
been acting up.

OSCAR
Vincent Van Goat? But he's so well-
behaved.

FRANCINE
Was so well-behaved. He died last
Tuesday.

CONTINUED:

MARY

Enterotoxemia. We tried everything we could at the clinic. But...

She shrugs: *no dice.*

TIM

Well, the new goat has been eating Peg Newburg's grass. She wants it arrested for trespassing.

FRANCINE

She wants me to arrest a goat?

EUGENE

Wouldn't be the first time an animal faced the justice system.
(then, listing)
1457, a sow and her piglets are put on trial in France for murdering a child. 1771, a dog is arrested for biting a Lord in England. Just recently, Brazilian authorities arrested a cat for helping with a prison break. *Allegedly.*

Beat. The Select Board stares blankly at Eugene. Then:

TIM

Moving on. The company that does the landscaping in Town Square is raising its prices. I've looked at the budget and, well, we can't afford the new rates.

OSCAR

Can we bump municipal taxes another point to cover the cost?

TIM

We already did that after the roof of the gym caved in. We can't keep picking people's pockets.

FRANCINE

Especially when most pockets around here aren't that deep.

MARY

What about Duncan O'Hara? I've seen a mower in his yard.

EUGENE

That's the *only* place you'll see it. Stopped working two years ago.

CONTINUED: (2)

OSCAR

Why does he keep it in his yard if
it's broken?

FRANCINE

Ride-on mowers never "break." They
just *become* "lawn chairs."

A few chuckles around the table. Beat. Tim notices Sarah
whispering something to Mary.

TIM

Sarah? You wanna say something?

Sarah turns red, shrinking in the spotlight.

SARAH

Oh, no. Sorry. It's nothing.

MARY

(to Sarah)

Tell him. It's a good idea.

SARAH

Why don't we let David's goat graze
on town square? It'll cut the grass
for us. Peg's happy, and we can
send the landscaping company home.

A beat as the Select Board members digest that. Then:

OSCAR

For someone who hates politics, you
sure are good at politics.

SARAH

It's a Chambers family curse.

Francine's police radio CRACKLES to life:

POLICE RADIO VOICE (O.C.)

Sheriff Dickenson?

FRANCINE

Go ahead.

POLICE RADIO VOICE (O.C.)

I'm sorry to interrupt, but there's
been an accident.

And ON the Select Board's curious shock at that news...

CUT TO:

EXT. STATE FOREST - DAY

The Select Board stands with geologists BURT (50s), more beard than face, and WILMA (30s), a grown-up girl scout, at Francine's cruiser. We SEE a logo for the NEW HAMPSHIRE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY on their matching shirts. Burt speaks with a THICK Maine accent.

BURT

We was up the road apiece when ol'
Gus trips on a cat spruce and goes
tumblin' down into the puckerbrush.

Beat. The Select Board stares at Burt: what? Wilma translates.

WILMA

We were working up by Castle Peak
when our colleague Gus tripped over
a branch and fell off the trail.

BURT

Prit'near tore off his prayer
handle. Whole thing's mollyhocked.

WILMA

He hurt his knee pretty bad.

BURT

Gawmy chowdah-head wobblin' around
like he's got a wicked bazz on.

The Select Board turns to Wilma. She just shrugs: *no idea*.

FRANCINE

I spoke to the EMTs. They're gonna
take your friend in for an MRI.

SARAH

What were you guys doing on Castle
Peak anyway? Didn't the state
survey that area last year?

WILMA

That was before we knew about the
mineral deposit.

MARY

What mineral deposit?

Wilma unfurls a MAP on the hood of Francine's cruiser. We SEE Morrisville in the center, surrounded by thick forest. The WOONSOCK RIVER runs along the town's southern border, while CANADA is directly to the north. Wilma points as she explains:

CONTINUED:

WILMA

Few weeks back, we were working by the Woonsock when we found a vein of coltan. It's a metallic ore used in cell phones. Valuable stuff.

TIM

How valuable?

WILMA

This quantity? Billions with a "B."

Tim shoots an intrigued look at Francine as Wilma resumes.

WILMA (CONT'D)

We mapped the deposit, which we now know runs the entire length of Morrisville.

(pointing)

You can see it there, in red.

On the map, we SEE a long red BLOTCH that stretches under much of Morrisville. The Select Board scrutinizes it.

OSCAR

My house sits on top of it.

MARY

So does mine, along with the high school and half of Main Street.

WILMA

I'm sure the governor has a plan to extract the rock without causing too much damage.

SARAH

The *governor* knows about this?

And ON Sarah's question...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - AUDITORIUM - THE NEXT MORNING

CLOSE ON Otis as he stands onstage, soaking in APPLAUSE from a packed house. It looks like the whole town is here, including Sarah, Tim, and the other members of the Select Board. Jennifer stands off to the side of the stage, watching intently.

OTIS

Thank you. It's always nice to be in Morrisville. This is an amazing place.

CONTINUED:

OTIS (CONT'D)

The phrase "Live Free or Die" - the boldest and most recognizable state motto in the country - was first spoken in Morrisville. Our beautiful state bird - the purple finch - was first documented in Morrisville's forest. And the now ubiquitous cider donut was first baked in a Morrisville kitchen.

We FIND Sarah at the back of the auditorium. She stands with CORINNE DEARBORN (30s), her bubbly best friend.

CORINNE

(whispering to Sarah)

This guy sure did a great job memorizing our Wikipedia page.

Sarah smirks and nudges Corinne. The two are obviously close.

SARAH

(*Shhh...*)

Corinne.

Up front, Otis continues.

OTIS

And if all that weren't enough, this is also the home of former State Senator Ellen Chambers, the visionary who modernized our state education system in the mid-90s.

We FIND ELLEN CHAMBERS (60s), a regal lioness, among the pews as the room erupts in APPLAUSE. At the back of the room, Corinne smiles at Sarah and makes a show of clapping for Ellen. Sarah rolls her eyes before joining in the applause... albeit with less enthusiasm.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Morrisville has already given so much to New Hampshire. And now, it has a chance to give even more.

(then)

As I'm sure you've all heard by now, a sizeable deposit of coltan has been discovered in your town. The wealth this resource will generate could change the lives of everyone in this state. We could improve roads and bridges from here to Nashua. We could build a new hospital in every county. Every teenager could go to state college for free, and every senior citizen could retire with dignity. It's vital that we extract this mineral.

CONTINUED: (2)

OTIS (CONT'D)

(the next step)

I've hired Belmont Industries to evaluate the deposit. Their team will arrive tomorrow afternoon to discuss drilling with Mayor Shattuck and the Select Board.

(a big smile)

There will be more news to share in the coming weeks, but for now, let me say this: congratulations. You just won the lottery.

The crowd CLAPS. Jennifer flashes a THUMBS-UP to Otis from the side of the stage. In the back, Sarah turns to Corinne.

SARAH

If they drill that deposit, Morrisville as we know it will come to an end. This wouldn't be a town anymore... it'd be a quarry.

Corinne nods in silent agreement. And ON Sarah, concern spreading across her face as she watches Otis shake hands with Morrisville residents at the front of the room...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Sarah, Tim, Oscar, Eugene, Mary, and Francine wait outside Town Hall as a caravan of slick LUXURY SUVs pulls up and a dozen LAWYERS emerge. After a beat, the doors of the lead car swing open and Danny emerges. Sarah's jaw drops at the sight of him.

SARAH

Oh my god. Danny. What are you doing here?

DANNY

I could ask you the same thing. You're on the Select Board? I figured you'd know better than to get into politics.

SARAH

My job at the school requires me to be here. Now. Answer my question.

DANNY

Me? I'm here to negotiate a mining contract.

SARAH

You work for Belmont Industries?

DANNY

Six years in the legal department.

SARAH

...Of all the people they could've sent, they picked you?

DANNY

I have a certain talent that makes me perfect for this job.

SARAH

What's that?

DANNY

I speak hillbilly.

Danny offers a sardonic smile as he pushes past Sarah. She's left on the sidewalk, still reeling at his presence. Beat.

MARY

That guy's a real dick.

SARAH

Older brothers usually are.

CONTINUED:

And ON the revelation of Sarah's relationship to Danny...

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON a stack of glossy information PACKETS as they hit the table. The cover features the title: THE MORRISVILLE MINING PROJECT: UNEARTHING A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

DANNY (O.C.)

We hope to begin drilling as soon as possible. It's important that we break ground before winter arrives and the ground freezes up.

ANOTHER ANGLE finds Danny and his team on one side of the table, and Sarah, Tim, Francine, Oscar, Eugene, and Mary on the other. The Select Board members peruse the packets as Danny speaks.

DANNY (CONT'D)

The plan involves construction of several mining facilities, as well as upgrades to water, power, and transportation infrastructures.

TIM

Will those upgrades be citywide?

DANNY

Absolutely. You can't build a solid house without a strong foundation.

Sarah scrutinizes a map in the packet. Sharp-eyed viewers will notice the British spelling of "colour" in the MAP KEY.

SARAH

Looks to me like you're more interested in *bulldozing* houses than building them. Most of these structures sit on private land.

OSCAR

What about tourism? Your plan calls for the destruction of a lot of Morrisville's forest. Kinda hard to attract leaf peepers if you don't have any *leaves*.

MARY

And I don't see anything in here about environmental impact. God knows what kind of toxic sludge drilling coltan creates.

DANNY

Our mines are perfectly safe.

CONTINUED:

EUGENE

I'm sure that's what they said in Picher, Oklahoma. And Centralia, Pennsylvania. And Treece, Kansas.

DANNY

Those weren't *Belmont* sites.

EUGENE

But they were mining towns. Right up until the quarries went bad and poisoned all the people.

Danny has had enough. He starts packing up his things.

DANNY

Ok. Why don't you read the packets and we can finish this tomorrow.

Danny nods at his team. They rise and head for the exit, when --

SARAH

Danny. You're just gonna walk out in the middle of this conversation?

Danny turns, his annoyance with the Select Board evident:

DANNY

It's not a conversation, Sarah. It's me offering you the courtesy of telling you about our plans before we execute them.

SARAH

And what if the people who own this land decide not to sell it to you?

DANNY

Then we *take* it.

SARAH

You can't come here and just start putting up factories.

DANNY

Sure we can. Eminent domain laws are like Legos: you can build anything you want if you use them the right way.

(then)

The governor has already drafted a bill to acquire that land. When the state senate sees how much money it will mean for their communities, everyone will sign it.

(the headline)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY (CONT'D)

That rock is coming out of the ground whether you like it or not. You might as well get your piece of the pie. Because if you refuse to sell the land and we have to come take it... you'll get nothing.

Danny EXITS, his team in tow. The Select Board remains at the table, stunned. Beat. Sarah jumps up and goes after Danny.

TIM

Sarah. Wait. We should talk about --

She's already gone. And ON the Select Board as they follow...

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Danny and his team climb into their SUVs when Sarah approaches.

SARAH

Danny. What the hell are you doing?

DANNY

You mean, besides my job?

SARAH

You can't just wipe Morrisville off the map.

DANNY

We're putting Morrisville ON the map, Sarah. A lot of what we're planning is gonna make this a much better place to live.

SARAH

It's *already* a great place to live.

DANNY

For you, maybe.

SARAH

This is your home *too*, Danny.

DANNY

Was my home, sis. Was.

(then)

Now it's just another podunk town on the long list of places I'd rather not be.

SARAH

You're more than welcome to leave.

CONTINUED:

DANNY

I'll be gone soon enough. And you can go back to living your insignificant little life with all your insignificant little friends. (speaking of which...)
How *is* mom, by the way?

WHAM! Sarah PUNCHES Danny square in the eye.

He doubles over, clutching his face. The members of the Select Board freeze. They've never seen Sarah be so impulsive. Danny's colleagues move to restrain her, but he waves them off. Beat.

SARAH

What's the matter? The old you would've thrown a baseball at my head by now. You go off to the city and forget how to fight?

Beat. Danny stands up. A caustic GRIN appears on his face.

DANNY

Don't worry. If it's a fight you want, I'll give you one.

He climbs into his car, motioning for his colleagues to do the same. The caravan pulls away from Town Hall, and ON Sarah, watching them go...

CUT TO:

INT. VET CLINIC - EVENING

PAN OVER a row of animal cages in a small veterinary clinic.

MARY (O.C.)

So *that's* Danny.

ANOTHER ANGLE finds Mary examining Sarah's FIST in an empty exam room. Sarah WINCES as Mary prods her fist.

MARY (CONT'D)

If I remember correctly from what you've told me, he said goodbye to Morrisville after high school.

Mary gets to work putting a few sutures into Sarah's knuckle.

SARAH

He didn't *say* anything at all. He just left.

MARY

And you stayed.

CONTINUED:

SARAH

You weren't living here yet when everything that happened with my family... *happened*.

(then)

For me, a lot of people stepped up to help me through it. People like Francine. Oscar. Corinne.

MARY

It's loyalty that keeps you here.

SARAH

When things got bad, the people of this town had my back. You can be damn sure I'll always have theirs... which, at the moment, means helping you and Tim and the rest of the Select Board figure out how to stop to this mining crap.

MARY

Danny obviously doesn't share your enthusiasm for Morrisville.

SARAH

(it's a tough memory)

The stuff that happened changed him. It made him angry. By the end of high school, he had more enemies than friends. The few times he did reach out for help, people weren't very interested in reaching back.

(then)

I tried to contact him a couple times after he left, but he never responded. Today was the first time I've seen him in a decade.

(then, a small smile)

I gotta admit. I've imagined our reunion a thousand times since he left. None of them included me punching him in the face.

MARY

Speaking of which --

SARAH

I know. I shouldn't have hit him.

MARY

You should have hit him *harder*. Next time, raise your elbow and swing from the hip.

CONTINUED: (2)

Sarah can't help but laugh. Mary's metered compassion is exactly what she needs right now. And ON Sarah, WINCING as Mary stitches her up, we PRE-LAP the SOUND of KNOCKING...

CUT TO:

EXT. ELLEN'S HOME - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Sarah's bandaged fist as it KNOCKS on the door.

SARAH (O.C.)

Mom?

ANOTHER ANGLE finds Sarah outside a small saltbox. A quaint sign hangs beside the door: CHAMBERS. Sarah KNOCKS again.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Mom? Come on.

No answer. Sarah tries the handle and discovers it's UNLOCKED.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLEN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A neatly appointed living room. The wall features photos of Ellen with various dignitaries, as well as plaques awarded to "Professor Ellen Chambers." Stacks of books written by Ellen - we SEE one titled "The Politics of Truth" - line the bookshelf.

SARAH (O.C.)

Mom?

Sarah ENTERS to find the room empty. Beat. Sarah hears a CRASH from a nearby room. And ON the sound...

CUT TO:

INT. ELLEN'S HOME - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sarah pushes the door OPEN to FIND Ellen drunk on the floor. Gone is the regal woman we saw at Town Hall yesterday morning, replaced by a half-conscious hot mess with vomit on her sweater.

SARAH

Jesus, mom.

Ellen's eyes flutter open as Sarah steps inside.

ELLEN

(slurring heavily)

Hi, honey. What are you doing here?

SARAH

I was coming to tell you about
Danny being back in town... but it
looks like you've already heard.

CONTINUED:

ELLEN

The prodigal son returns. I thought I'd have a little something to... "celebrate."

SARAH

Looks like more than "a little."

Ellen shrugs. Sarah sighs, discouraged.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Mom. You were ten months sober.

ELLEN

If you're here to make me feel bad... you can leave.

SARAH

No, Mom.
(a frustrated truth)
I can't.

Sarah pulls Ellen into the SHOWER and turns it on, unleashing a torrent of water onto her mom. Sarah slumps down next to the shower as the water runs. Beat. Over Sarah's shoulder, we HEAR Ellen VOMIT. Overwhelmed, Sarah tips her head back, releasing a deep SIGH. And on the gentle THUD as her head hits the wall...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Another THUD, this one the sound of a stack of mining company INFO PACKETS as they land in the back of Danny's SUV.

DANNY (O.C.)

All the packets are out.

ANOTHER ANGLE finds Danny at his SUV as he slams the trunk CLOSED. He approaches Otis and Jennifer, who stand at Otis' car.

DANNY (CONT'D)

We'll give people some time to look them over, then we'll start scheduling meetings to begin the land acquisition process.

OTIS

What about push-back? Granite staters are notoriously stubborn.

DANNY

Everyone's a revolutionary until they count the zeroes on the check.
(then)
There are always a few feisty dissenters, but I'm not worried.

CONTINUED:

OTIS

Okay. Let's get an exploratory team rolling as soon as possible.

Danny nods and disappears into his car. Otis turns to Jennifer.

OTIS (CONT'D)

You sure about this whole thing?

JENNIFER

Your approval ratings will take a hit when news of people being pushed out of their homes first breaks. But polling shows it'll blow over quickly.

Suddenly, we HEAR the sound of a goat BLEATING. Jennifer and Otis turn to SEE a goat grazing on Town Square behind them. It's David Lindholm's mischievous goat, now grazing on Town Square. The goat BLEATS once more before returning to its meal. Beat.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You're going to do great things for New Hampshire with this money, Otis. Things that will really make a difference. And when you do, we can use that success to catapult you into the national spotlight.

(then)

Make no mistake: the road to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue starts in Morrisville.

And ON Otis, reassured by Jennifer's guidance...

CUT TO:

INT. ELLEN'S HOME - BEDROOM

Sarah tucks Ellen - who has passed out - into bed when she notices a FRAMED PHOTO on the bedside table. She picks it up and stares at it. We SEE: teenage versions of Sarah and Danny, arm-in-arm as they offer goofy smiles to the camera. It's a candid, authentic moment of sibling affection.

TEARS well in Sarah's eyes as bittersweet memories come flooding back. Before she gets too emotional, she wipes her eyes and puts the photo back on the table.

We STAY on the photo as Sarah moves toward the door. And as we HEAR Sarah CLICK the bedroom lights OFF as we...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. TOWN HALL - SELECT BOARD MEETING ROOM - MORNING

Sarah, Tim, Francine, Mary, and Oscar sit around the table, an array of empty coffee cups and half-eaten pastries between them. They've obviously been at this a while. Beat.

MARY

Red pandas.

(then)

If we adopt a family of endangered red pandas and resettle them in Morrisville's forest, that land would become protected habitat. Drilling would be prohibited by federal law.

TIM

Come on. We agree it's important to find some leverage over the mining company, but let's not go crazy.

MARY

They want to start work before the ground freezes, Tim. That's less than a month away. "Crazy" is all we have time for.

TIM

We aren't wholly opposed to drilling. We just wanna be sure it happens on *our* terms, not theirs.

SARAH

You aren't opposed to drilling.

FRANCINE

There were sixteen traffic accidents in Morrisville last winter because of frost heaves. You're saying we couldn't use some new infrastructure?

SARAH

Of course we could. I just don't want to sell our souls to get it.

Beat. It's a real pickle. Suddenly, Eugene bursts in with an armful of MAPS and HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS.

EUGENE

I think I found a solution.

He drops the paperwork onto the table.

CONTINUED:

EUGENE (CONT'D)

As long as we belong to this country, this country is in charge. The governor can do whatever he wants. And if it weren't him, it'd be some *other* government twit trying to bleed us dry. But what if we weren't part of this country?
(then, eager)
I found something in these old maps that'd help us stop the drilling: we could *declare independence*.

Silence. Sarah's gears turn. It's a crazy idea... but an intriguing one. The rest of the Select Board is less impressed. They stare blankly at Eugene: *Is this dude insane?* Finally, Tim turns to the rest of the Select Board:

TIM

Why don't we resume this discussion after the Maple Jubilee?

Sarah snaps out of it. She had totally forgotten:

SARAH

The Jubilee. I have to put my costume on.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - SIDE ROOM - DAY

Sarah stands at a mirror, now wearing the poofy dress, frilly ruff, and maple leaf headband she had on when we first met her. This is the first time she's seen herself in the outfit.

SARAH

I have to take this costume off.

Corinne - Sarah's BFF from the teaser - appears. She's putting the finishing touches on Sarah's costume.

CORINNE

You're this year's Maple Master. You *have* to wear it. Besides, you look adorable.

SARAH

You *have* to say that: you're on the Jubilee organizing committee.

CORINNE

I don't have to say it because I'm on the organizing committee.
(then, a smirk)
I have to say it because you're my best friend.

CONTINUED:

Sarah playfully whacks Corinne as the two laugh. A quiet moment passes as Corinne threads a sash around Sarah's waist.

SARAH

Listen. I gotta tell you something.

CORINNE

If it's about how I'm gonna be living next to a smokestack, I already know. A mining company packet showed up in my mailbox last night. Gave me all the details.

SARAH

...Danny's back. He's here. In Morrisville. I thought you should know.

Corinne goes rigid, the color draining from her face. Beat.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You'll be fine.

(off her silence)

Corinne. *You'll be fine.* I promise.

Sarah flashes a reassuring smile before EXITING. And ON Corinne, dread setting in, we PRE-LAP the SOUND of jolly BRASS MUSIC...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAPLE JUBILEE - DAY - SERIES OF SHOTS

CLOSE ON the "Maple Jubilee" banner we saw being hung in the teaser... PULL BACK TO reveal an OOMPAH BAND playing music beneath it. The Maple Jubilee is in full swing. There are people everywhere: Town Square is PACKED.

The brass music continues as a series of shots takes us around the Jubilee, allowing us to soak in the jovial atmosphere. Everyone is in high spirits as they enjoy the festivities... and yet, everywhere we look, we'll notice the mining company INFO PACKET that's been passed out to the town. The coltan deposit is clearly on everyone's mind as we move through the jubilee:

Teenagers play vintage carnival games with names like "Show Town Knockdown," "Frog Flinger," and "Hit and Miss." CHILDREN get their photos taken with "Thomas Heffer-son," a COW dressed in a colonial American soldier's uniform.

We SEE rows of VENDER BOOTHS. In one row, we SEE a craft booth with a giant **SALE!** sign overhead... right next to a sailing school booth with a giant **SAIL!** sign overhead.

We FIND a table for BELMONT INDUSTRIES, where we SEE Danny - sporting a BLACK EYE - and a few others talking to residents about the mineral deposit. Danny glances out into the crowd several times - clearly looking for someone - but... no luck.

CONTINUED:

Further down, we SEE Mary giving checkups to family pets at a tent for the Morrisville Vet Clinic. She examines the stomach of a small PIG as a FAMILY looks on. After a beat, she leans down to speak to VIOLET, an impossibly cute five-year-old girl.

MARY

Okay, Violet. No more pennies for George. That's not what we mean when we say "piggy bank."

Violet nods her understanding as we move away to...

FIND Eugene at a booth for the library, where he performs a show for a group of children with two sock puppets. A nearby sign reads: "The Morrisville Library: Where Literature Comes Alive!"

EUGENE

(as the female puppet)

Oh, Mr. Mellors. How can something so wrong feel so right?

(as the male puppet)

Quiet, Lady Chatterly, or your husband will hear us!

Eugene smushes the faces of the puppets together and makes kissy NOISES as the children giggle and we...

FIND Sarah as she talks with Betty and Ralph - the elderly couple we saw pressing apples in the teaser - at a food booth.

BETTY

148 years, Sarah. That house has stood for 148 years. My great-great grandfather built it in 1871, and every generation of my family has lived in it since. To think they could just knock it down...

Tears swell in Betty's eyes. She can't bear the thought.

RALPH

Those damn mining company fat-heads in their fancy suits. Our house may not seem like much to them, but that doesn't mean it's not special.

Sarah does her best to present as brave face.

SARAH

I promise, Mayor Shattuck and the Select Board are doing our best to figure this whole thing out.

(trying to cheer her up)

Come on, I had my first kiss in that house when you let Annabelle invite boys to her sleep-over party in sixth grade.

CONTINUED: (2)

Betty can't help but smile; it's a happy memory.

SARAH (CONT'D)

No way I'm gonna let those mining
company fat-heads tear it down.

Now it's Ralph's turn to smile. Betty squeezes Sarah's hand.

BETTY

Thank you, Sarah.

Sarah smiles as Betty and Ralph disappear into the crowd, but her grin quickly vanishes once they're gone. She slumps against a nearby telephone pole, completely overwhelmed by all this. She closes her eyes. And ON Sarah, anxiety washing over her...

FIND NANCY SHATTUCK (40s), an amiable Manhattan transplant, at a stall for the Morrisville Pottery Studio. A silent auction featuring the work of the studio's teachers is laid out on the booth. Francine approaches in her full-dress Sheriff's uniform.

FRANCINE

Hi, Nancy.

NANCY

...Hey.

The tension is intense and immediate. There's history here. Francine scans the silent auction. She SEES that nobody has bid on a pot labelled "Nancy." All the other work has several bids.

FRANCINE

Auction going well? I know you guys
are trying to buy a new kiln.

NANCY

Fine.

A long beat.

FRANCINE

Listen, I'm no good with words, you
know? So I just... I wanted to say
that I-- I miss you.

NANCY

Don't. Please.

FRANCINE

I'm sorry. But I was hoping we
could maybe talk.

NANCY

No, Francine, it's over. I told
you. I can't do it... us. This
thing. I'm sorry.

CONTINUED: (3)

Tears well up in Francine's eyes as she nods her understanding.

FRANCINE

Good luck with the auction.

Francine fights back emotion as she disappears into the crowd. And ON Nancy, watching her go... PRE-LAP Tim's amplified voice:

TIM (V.O.)

Feeling dirty?

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - BANDSTAND - DAY

We FIND Sarah and our mayor, Tim, on the bandstand: Sarah holds a basket of decorative SOAP while Tim reads prize descriptions from a clipboard. A bucket of RAFFLE TICKETS sits at his feet. A crowd is gathered, many of whom clutch raffle tickets.

TIM

Then our next prize is for you! A basket of "conflict zone decorative soap," kindly donated by General Anderson's military surplus store.

We FIND Corinne as she appears at the back of the crowd. There's concern on her face - something's wrong. She moves through the crowd toward the stage as Tim continues.

TIM (CONT'D)

Conquer your B.O. and vanquish your clogged pores with these military-themed soaps and cleansers.

Corinne appears at the front of the crowd. She waves at Tim.

CORINNE

Mayor Shattuck. Mayor Shattuck?

It's no use. He's distracted by the raffle. Corinne spots a set of STAIRS on the side of the stage. She heads toward it.

TIM

This basket features a variety of products, including "Scud Suds," "Troubles Bubbles," and bestselling hand soap "Insurgent Detergent."

Corinne makes her way up onto the stage. She waves at Tim.

CORINNE

Mayor Shattuck. Mayor Shattuck.

(then, loud)

MAYOR SHATTUCK.

CONTINUED:

Silence sets in as everyone turns to look at Corinne. Tim and Sarah step over to her.

CORINNE (CONT'D)
There are bulldozers on the road to
Castle Peak.

The MICROPHONE in Tim's hand amplifies Corinne's words for the crowd. They MURMUR amongst themselves.

CORINNE (CONT'D)
Five of them. I thought digging
wasn't gonna start for a few weeks.

TIM
It's probably just some tests.

SARAH
You do "tests" with a shovel and a
microscope. Not five bulldozers.

TIM
Sarah.

SARAH
They have no right to be up there.

TIM
Castle Peak is state land, Sarah.
If the governor wants to send
bulldozers up there, he's allowed.

Sarah fumes. She's furious at the thought of the governor digging up her town... but Tim is right. She looks out into the crowd as she tries to relax... and spots Danny glaring at her.

Something snaps inside her. She's not going to let her brother get his way. She's through being pushed around. She stares at Danny for a moment before heading for the stairs.

TIM (CONT'D)
Sarah. Where are you going?

And ON the question...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

CLOSE ON SARAH as she stares right at us.

SARAH
I. Am. Not. Moving.

We realize: we're back at the opening scene, with Sarah standing in front of a row of bulldozers.

CONTINUED:

But this time, our cameras move through the crowd of people behind Sarah - *people we now know and recognize* - as the scene plays out in the background.

We FIND Corinne biting her nails, nervous as she watches her friend. We FIND Mayor Tim, unsure of his place in all this. We FIND Select Board members Mary and Oscar, who trade a concerned look. We FIND Betty and Ralph - our sweet elderly couple - as they silently reach out to hold hands.

We also SEE glimpses of other townspeople - people we *don't* know - as they watch Sarah in disbelief. They can't quite believe their eyes: *she's actually standing up for us*. Some smile. Many nod in agreement. A few even discreetly pump their fists, silently urging Sarah on from afar.

OTIS (O.C.)

This is your last warning. Step aside. Or else.

SARAH (O.C.)

Or else what? You gonna run me over in front of all these people? You're up for reelection in the fall, right Governor? Does flattening constituents usually help with the polls?

We return to a moment we recognize: the end of Sarah's standoff with Otis. He glances at his assistant, Jennifer, who shakes her head: *no*. Otis clenches. Sarah has him beat... For now. Finally:

OTIS

This isn't over.

Here again, we break with what we saw the first time. As Otis signals the bulldozers and they retreat, we STAY on Sarah. Beat.

SARAH

Eugene!

Eugene emerges from the crowd and approaches Sarah.

EUGENE

That was amazing. You alright?

SARAH

I need you to meet me in Town Hall in an hour. And bring those maps.

And ON Sarah's request...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - MEETING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON a HISTORICAL MAP of northern New Hampshire.

CONTINUED:

EUGENE (O.C.)

The border between New Hampshire and Canada was established in 1844 by the Webster-Ashburton treaty.

ANOTHER ANGLE finds Sarah and Eugene at the table, an array of MAPS and DOCUMENTS splayed out before them.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Part of that border is defined by the Woonsock River, which flows along the southern edge of town.

(then)

But here's the thing.

Eugene pulls out a historical MAP of Canada. It's in FRENCH.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

When the Canadians mapped the area in January of 1844, they drew the river in one place.

He pulls another historical MAP - this one of America.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

And when the Americans mapped it four months later, they drew the river much further south.

SARAH

Why the anomaly?

EUGENE

The river jumped between the dates the maps were drawn. It's pretty common, geologically speaking.

(then)

Here's the *uncommon* part.

Eugene lays the America map on top of the Canada map. He spots a TAPE DISPENSER on the table. He uses it to tape the maps to a WINDOW. The daylight shining through the thin paper of the maps has the effect of showing us both sets of borders at the same time. It's like stacking two transparencies on a light table. Eugene grabs a MARKER.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

The treaty says everything north of the Woonsock is Canada.

He draws upward ARROWS from the border on the Canada map.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Everything south is America.

CONTINUED: (2)

He draws a bunch of downward-pointing ARROWS from the border on the America map. And that's when we see it, as clear as day: a chunk of land with no arrows on it smack dab in the middle.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

The river jumping left a huge chunk of unclaimed land in the middle. Morrisville sits on that land. And since both countries agreed to use the maps drawn at the time of the treaty as the accepted standard...

SARAH

...This town was never legally claimed by anyone.

EUGENE

We are, in point of fact, a completely autonomous entity. If we declare independence, we'd gain total control over what happens inside our borders...

SARAH

...including who does and *doesn't* get to drill on our land.

EUGENE

(he nods)

The way to save our town is to turn it into a *country*.

A long moment of silence as that idea hangs there.

SARAH

Can you make copies of this stuff?

EUGENE

Sure. Why?

SARAH

Because as far as I'm concerned, the only people who should have a say in what happens to *our* town and *our* land is us.

(then)

The governor just made it pretty clear that he disagrees.

(resolute)

I think it's about time we stop listening to him.

And ON Sarah, fierce and determined...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. SWEETIE PIE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON an empty mug as a stream of COFFEE sloshes in.

CORINNE (O.C.)
You're kidding, right?

ANOTHER ANGLE finds Sarah, Mary, Eugene, Oscar, and Corinne in a booth. Eugene's maps and documents cover the table. Grover - the bakery's owner - flits in and out, refilling coffee. He steals a few glances at Sarah... his affection for her is obvious.

CORINNE (CONT'D)
I mean... People can't just...
declare independence.
(then, genuinely)
...Can they?

EUGENE
Filettino, South Sudan, the
Murrawarri Republic, the Sovereign
Yidindji Government, and Liberland.
(then)
Five declarations of independence
in the past seven years alone. All
based on legitimate claims.

OSCAR
...And a weird mapping error counts
as a "legitimate claim?"

EUGENE
(he nods)
A weird mapping error is why
there's a stretch of desert between
Egypt and Sudan that you could go
conquer *right now* if you wanted.

CORINNE (O.C.)
Are you sure about this, Sarah? I
wanna stop the drilling as much as
the next person, but declaring
independence is... a big step.

SARAH
A big step away from all the people
who want to trample our town and
destroy our way of life.
(inspired)
Imagine it. We would control our
own destiny. No more giant
conglomerates pushing us around.

CONTINUED:

SARAH (CONT'D)

No more smug politicians trying to
take our land.

(the headline)

No more strangers telling us what
to do or how to live.

It's a rousing speech. But before anyone can start chanting
"viva la revolución," Oscar reminds us:

OSCAR

No more roads, no more sanitation,
no more power grid. No more FEMA if
there's a flood, no more national
guard if there's a forest fire, no
more CDC if everyone gets sick.

(the point)

... no more help.

That's a sobering thought. Beat.

SARAH

When Greg Wooten's son needed
surgery last year, nobody swooped
in to whisk him off to some free
hospital. We all pitched in to make
sure he got the care he needed.
When that blizzard hit and nobody
had heat for the coldest week of
the year, I don't remember FEMA
showing up. What I do remember is
everyone taking turns chopping
firewood and passing it out to the
town.

(then)

We already have help, Oscar. We
have each other.

Oscar relents. He can't disagree. Beat.

CORINNE

Let's say this works. Let's say we
hold a vote and everyone says yes
and we declare independence. We
don't know how to run an economy.
We don't know how to establish
borders or set up a legal system.

(then)

Do we have to write a national
anthem? How do we design a flag? If
it's a World Cup year, do we send
the varsity soccer team?

(then)

I mean. Sarah. This would be us
building a country *from scratch*.

SARAH

Exactly. Us.

CONTINUED: (2)

Beat. Fair enough.

CORINNE

What about the rest of the Select Board?

SARAH

I invited Tim and Francine to come tonight. They refused. They don't think this is a good idea.

CORINNE

(to the others)
But you three do?

EUGENE

(he nods)
I think people should rule the palace... not the other way around.

MARY

(she agrees)
If you want to see what happens when a marginal community is exploited by an unfriendly government, try growing up on an indian reservation.

OSCAR

Or being Latino. Or gay.

Sarah turns to Corinne, the last person to say yes.

CORINNE

You're my best friend, Sarah. You jump, I jump.

SARAH

Good. If we work together, we have everything we need to stage a vote on independence and save Morrisville.

EUGENE

Not quite.

SARAH

What do you mean "not quite?" What are we missing?

And ON the question, we PRE-LAP the SOUND of a CHAINSAW...

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. COLONIAL HOME - BACKYARD - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a LUMBERJACK - his face hidden behind a protective mask - as he sculpts an ELVIS log carving with a chainsaw. We PULL BACK to reveal Sarah, Mary, Eugene, Oscar, and Corinne watching.

In the yard around him - illuminated by floodlights - we SEE two dozen more log carvings of Elvis. They're all decidedly odd: Elvis as a centaur, Elvis planting a flag on the moon, Elvis battling a dragon, Elvis in a jumpsuit dunking a basketball.

SARAH

Judge! Judge! ...JUDGE!

The lumberjack stops his saw and flips up his protective mask to REVEAL... he's not a "he" at all. It's PAULA JUDGE (50s), a gruff mountain of a woman. A cigar dangles from her lips.

PAULA

What do you want?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COLONIAL HOME - NIGHT

Sarah and the group watch silently as PAULA JUDGE (50s), a gruff mountain of a woman, reads a DOCUMENT at her desk. A cigar stub dangles from her lips. A hand-carved wooden nameplate identifies her as "JUDGE PAULA JUDGE." Beat. She puts the document down.

PAULA

No.

SARAH

But, Judge Judge, your honor --

PAULA

You have no legal grounds to initiate an emergency public vote.

OSCAR

Judge Judge, please. A vote on independence is vital to ensuring that the people of Morrisville have a say in shaping their own future. We're voting for our *lives*, here.

PAULA

I don't care if you're voting on your favorite Teletubby. It's not my job to evaluate the *subject* of your vote; only its permissibility.

(re: the document)

And based on the evidence you've laid out here, your call for an emergency vote is illegal.

CONTINUED:

Paula hands the document back to Sarah.

PAULA (CONT'D)

You'll have to wait until November
to put it on the ballot.

SARAH

There won't be any town left by
November.

PAULA

Sorry, kiddo. You're out of luck
unless you can show me a lawful
reason to hold a vote.

And ON Sarah, deflated but not defeated...

CUT TO:

EXT. SARAH'S HOME - FRONT PORCH - MORNING

Sarah reads through DOCUMENTS at a table outside, a LAPTOP and a
mug of coffee by her side. Beat. Frustrated, she puts down the
paperwork and wipes her eyes. It's been a long night.

GROVER (O.C.)

Sarah?

Sarah opens her eyes to FIND Grover - the cute owner of Sweetie
Pie - in front of her.

SARAH

Morning, Grover.

GROVER

You didn't pick up your post-
workout donut and juice. I thought
I'd swing by to check on you.

SARAH

You're sweet. No time for a jog
this morning. Too much to do.

GROVER

You look a little wiped. You okay?

SARAH

...No. Not really. Two days ago, my
biggest problem was somebody's goat
eating the wrong grass. Now I'm
trying to save a whole town.

GROVER

If anybody can do it, you can.

SARAH

I wish I had your confidence.

CONTINUED:

Grover smiles. He pulls a PASTRY from a box he's carrying.

GROVER

Here. I just got these in at Sweetie Pie. They're video game pastries. We've got...

(a Pac-Man shaped muffin)

...Snack-Man...

(a Tetris-piece tart)

...Tart-tris...

(a Space Invaders donut)

...Glaze Invaders.

Grover's pun-filled offerings are goofy as hell... and adorable. Sarah accepts the Space Invaders treat, her mood improving.

SARAH

Thanks, Grover.

He offers a warm smile and walks off. Sarah watches him go, his supportive charm not lost on her. Beat. She takes a bite of the donut. As she chews, she stares at the little alien-shaped pastry in her hand... an IDEA forming. She puts the donut down and digs through her pile of paperwork until she finds the Belmont INFO PACKET - the packet Danny handed out to everyone.

She flips it open to the same map she was examining during her initial meeting with Danny. And as we ZOOM IN to the oddly spelled "colour" on the MAP KEY... PRE-LAP:

SARAH (V.O.)

Invasion by a foreign aggressor.

CUT TO:

INT. PAULA JUDGE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sarah hands Paula a copy of the town charter.

SARAH

The Morrisville town charter lists "invasion by a foreign aggressor" as a reason that an emergency vote can be called.

PAULA

A "foreign aggressor?" Are there German paratroopers hiding in a tree somewhere I don't know about?

SARAH

No. There are British miners hiding on a mountain.

Sarah offers a PRINTOUT of Belmont's corporate webpage.

CONTINUED:

SARAH (CONT'D)

The Belmont Mining Company is headquartered in England. That's why "color" is spelled with a "U" in the packet they handed out.

(then)

Yesterday, they rolled heavy machinery into our town - onto our land - in a hostile attempt to take control of our natural resources.

(then)

Sure sounds like an invasion to me.

ON Paula, the argument for a vote suddenly very compelling...

CUT TO:

INT. TIM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON a PRINTED NOTICE as it lands on a coffee table. The top of the notice reads: "EMERGENCY VOTE ON INDEPENDENCE: SATURDAY."

TIM (O.C.)

We have to stop this.

ANOTHER ANGLE finds Tim, Francine, and a handful of other SUPPORTERS in Tim's living room.

TIM (CONT'D)

Earlier today, Sarah somehow convinced the judge to sign off on an emergency referendum on independence. Which means the only way to get rid of this ridiculous idea now is to *win* the vote.

Tim reaches for his GLASS and realizes it's empty.

TIM (CONT'D)

(over his shoulder)

Honey? Can you grab some water?

(resuming)

Breaking away from the United States is... absurd. And risky. If this motion passes, there's a real chance this whole town goes under.

(then)

Besides, I'm sure I'm not the only person who sees *some* benefit from Belmont's plans. We could do a lot of good around here with the profits from the coltan.

Nancy appears with a pitcher of water. We suddenly realize: Nancy - the woman with whom Francine was in a relationship - is Tim's wife. She and Nancy make awkward eye contact as Nancy fills everyone's glass. It's a fraught moment. Suddenly:

CONTINUED:

TIM (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Francine?

Francine snaps out of it. She turns to find Tim looking at her.

TIM (CONT'D)
Can we count on your support?

FRANCINE
I don't like these mining company
cidiots in their fancy suits.
(then, glaring off-camera)
No offense.

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals Danny sitting in the corner of the room.
He offers an acerbic smile.

DANNY
None taken.

FRANCINE
But there's a right way to handle
things, and this isn't it. America
was built by *facing* adversity, not
running from it. Far as I see it,
Sarah's plan is something much
worse than reckless: it's cowardly.

TIM
(nods, then to the group)
The vote's two days away. Sarah and
her pals are already knocking on
doors. It's time we do the same.

DANNY
I can give you whatever money and
manpower you need to win the vote.
We're all on the same side here.

FRANCINE
From what I remember of your
teenage years, Danny, you aren't
much of a team player.

DANNY
The enemy of my enemy is my friend,
Francine. I'm sure they taught you
that during your time in the Army.

FRANCINE
They did. They also taught me to
shoot traitors.

ON Francine and Danny, glaring, uneasy allies for the moment...

CUT TO:

INT. / EXT. - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - ELECTIONEERING MONTAGE

A series of shots takes us around Morrisville as the pro (Mary, Oscar, Sarah, Eugene, Corinne) and anti (Tim, Francine, Nancy, a few SUITED Belmont lawyers) independence groups work to convince residents that their argument is the right one.

We begin with our cast knocking on various FRONT DOORS in rapid succession. We SEE: saltboxes, colonials, cottages, and farms... as well as a houseboat, a yurt, a tree house, an RV, and even a windmill. Morrisville's architecture is certainly... *diverse*.

We SEE doors swing OPEN to reveal people of all shapes, sizes, ages, and races. Some we recognize - Ralph, Betty, Bev, and Russell all make appearances - and many we don't.

We SEE QUICK CUTS of our cast talking to residents. Some people nod and smile, some frown angrily, some scratch their head in disbelief, some slam the door. It's clear there's a wide range of reactions to the idea of independence in Morrisville. As the montage comes to an end, PRE-LAP the sound of KNOCKING...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Danny OPENS his door to REVEAL Otis. Before either can speak, we HEAR a long MOOSE CALL from a small speaker atop the door.

OTIS

What the hell was that?

DANNY

That's the sound of revenge.

(then)

The owner of this hotel is a friend of someone who wasn't very happy when I skipped town ten years ago. She recognized me when I checked in... Told me the only room they had available was "Moose Manor."

Danny OPENS his door wide to show Otis his room. We SEE moose stuff everywhere: PHOTOS of moose on the wall, moose-shaped lamps, rugs, pillows, and tables, moose-print wallpaper and drapes. A folksy sign hangs on the far wall: MOOSE MANOR.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I get moose pillows, moose sheets, and an authentic moose call every time I open the door.

Danny closes and reopens the door. We HEAR another MOOSE CALL.

CONTINUED:

OTIS

(beat, then:)

Listen. We need to talk. This independence thing isn't good.

DANNY

Relax. We spent all day knocking on doors. A lot of Morrisville's residents want nothing to do with independence. There'll be plenty of votes *against* Sarah's referendum.

OTIS

And according to a poll that Jennifer just finished, there'll be plenty of votes for it.

DANNY

Otis. There's no way the American government lets Morrisville break away. A group of people decides to start their own country, and... what, the White House is just gonna blow them a kiss and wave goodbye?

OTIS

The White House has nothing to do with it. They don't want to get their hands dirty with this. They're calling it an issue of States' Rights. So for now, it's my problem and my problem alone.

(then)

If your sister wins... If Morrisville decides to kick us out... it would mean hundreds of millions in lost profit for your company, and more importantly, for my state.

(then)

You're only a junior associate at Belmont. We didn't bring you here because of your experience - we brought you here because you know these people. Kill the independence vote and get them to agree to the mining project... or we'll find someone who can.

Otis turns and EXITS. And ON Danny, the stakes made clear...

CUT TO:

INT. TIM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Nancy sits at the table, sifting through bid sheets from the pottery studio's auction. Tim ENTERS and heads for the fridge.

CONTINUED:

TIM

Hey. How'd it go with the auction?

NANCY

We sold all the pieces. Made almost four hundred dollars.

TIM

That's great.

NANCY

Thanks for buying my pot, by the way. Nice move with the fake name. The only thing more embarrassing than nobody bidding on it would've been everyone knowing my husband was making a pity purchase.

TIM

(he's only half-listening)
What pot?

NANCY

My planter. The bid sheet was blank all day, but when I came back from my break, someone had written "Iris Fluffenstein" at the top. The name of my childhood dog.

Tim finishes at the fridge and heads for the door.

TIM

I didn't know you had a dog.

Tim kisses Nancy on the head, then EXITS. And ON Nancy, realizing it wasn't Tim who so gallantly rescued her pride...

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CORINNE'S CLASSROOM - EVENING

Corinne grades papers in an empty room when there's a KNOCK on the door. She looks up to SEE Danny in the OPEN doorway. She goes rigid as they lock eyes... as does he. Beat.

CORINNE

Danny. I was wondering if I was going to see you.

DANNY

I'm sorry it's under such...
difficult circumstances.

CORINNE

"Difficult circumstances" is how you left. Makes sense it's how you'd come back.

CONTINUED:

Danny bites his tongue. She's not wrong.

DANNY

I was hoping we could talk about my sister. I'm worried about her.

CORINNE

That's a first.

DANNY

This independence thing is crazy. It's way more than she can handle.

CORINNE

And how do *you* know what she can handle? You've been gone for ten years, Danny.

DANNY

The sister I grew up with could barely muster the courage to raise her hand in class. There's no way she's ready to lead a revolution.

CORINNE

The sister you grew up with couldn't throw a punch, either. Sure looks like she figured it out.

Corinne glares at Danny, his BLACK EYE still fresh.

DANNY

I'm just trying to help, Corinne.

CORINNE

Help *who*?

DANNY

Sarah's in over her head. Someone needs to talk some sense into her. I'm hoping that someone is *you*.

Beat. Corinne's spidey-sense tingles.

CORINNE

Is that why you're here? You trying to turn me against Sarah? You can't beat her on your own so you're gonna recruit a double agent?

DANNY

No, that's not it. I just--

CORINNE

What happened to you? When you walked away from me a decade ago... When you broke my heart...

CONTINUED: (2)

CORINNE (CONT'D)
(it's a tough memory)
You said it was because you had to
go "find yourself." Looks to me
like you lost yourself instead.

Danny remains quiet, stung by that sentiment. Then:

DANNY
Look, Corinne. I know I made a mess
of everything when I left, but I --

JOSH (O.C.)
Mom?

Danny is interrupted JOSH DEARBORN (9), precocious and whip-smart, in the doorway. He stands with his BIKE.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Are you ready to go?

CORINNE
Josh. How many times have I asked
you not to bring your bike into
school? Leave it outside.

Danny's eyes go wide. He turns to Corinne:

DANNY
...You're a *mother*?

CORINNE
Of two. The little one's at home
with my husband.

Somewhere deep down, Danny knew Corinne would be married by now... but it's a gut-punch to hear it confirmed.

DANNY
Your husband.

CORINNE
Yeah, Danny.

Corinne packs up her papers and joins Josh in the doorway.

CORINNE (CONT'D)
My husband.

Corinne and Josh EXIT. And ON Danny, watching the life he could've had walk way from him...

CUT TO:

INT. SWEETIE PIE - NIGHT

Otis eats dinner alone in a booth in the back. A MANILA ENVELOPE rests on the table. Sarah appears.

CONTINUED:

SARAH

I got your message.

Otis beckons Sarah to sit. She obliges. Beat.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What am I doing here?

OTIS

You're here so I can tell you that
I know the truth about your mother.

All the hair on Sarah's neck stands up.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Ellen Chambers. Renowned public
servant. Esteemed professor. Best-
selling author. And, as it turns
out: world-class alcoholic.

SARAH

...I don't know what you're talking
about.

A beat as Otis studies Sarah's face.

OTIS

Pretty good, but if you're going to
lie to someone, you need to
maintain better eye contact. First
thing they teach you when you get
into politics.

SARAH

I'm *not* getting into politics.

Otis studies Sarah's face once more. Finally, with a smile:

OTIS

Better. I almost believed that.

Otis pushes the FOLDER across the table.

OTIS (CONT'D)

Those are police reports from the
late 90s. They detail a handful of
incidents involving your mother.

Sarah slowly opens the folder and sifts through it.

OTIS (CONT'D)

She was arrested three times for
D.U.I. *Three times*. There was also
an episode in which several people
reported hearing her screaming at
your brother. He was only eleven.
(he knows all too well)

CONTINUED: (2)

OTIS (CONT'D)

Drunks always have a favorite target. I was my father's. Sounds like Danny was your mother's. No wonder he left Morrisville so quickly after high school.

(then)

The sheriff at the time buried the cases. And no abuse was ever reported.

Sarah is reeling. She can hardly breathe.

SARAH

(re: the reports)

Who gave you these?

OTIS

Wrong question. What you *should* be asking is: what's it gonna take to make them disappear?

A long beat. Sarah's frozen. Otis leans in. The real threat:

OTIS (CONT'D)

Kill the independence movement or these go public. Your mother's legacy will be ruined, along with her job in academia and her writing career. I can't imagine anyone hiring the author of 'The Politics of Truth' once it's revealed she's spent her whole life lying.

Otis counts out some CASH to pay for dinner.

OTIS (CONT'D)

I know how much your mother means to you. You're a classic "fixer." Hopelessly devoted to broken people. You'll do the right thing, even if you don't know it yet.

Otis drops the CASH on the table before EXITING. And ON Sarah, anger and frustration boiling up inside her...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Danny reads over some paperwork in his moose-themed room when there's a KNOCK at the door. He OPENS it (the speaker device on the door offers its pre-programmed MOOSE CALL) to REVEAL Sarah. She's a storm of emotion, equal parts furious and devastated.

DANNY

Sarah.

CONTINUED:

SARAH

I know it was you. You gave the governor those police reports. You gave him mom... so he could get me.

DANNY

Sarah, please. I don't --

SARAH

Just shut up, Danny. Shut. Up.

Beat. Sarah glares at Danny. Tears well in her eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What did I do? What did I do that was so bad that you decided your life was better without me in it?

(then)

I cried for weeks when you left. You're my big brother. All I've ever wanted was to be close to you... and all you've ever done is try to get away from me.

Now it's Danny's turn to fight back tears.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I know what happened with you and mom. I know what she did to you. You think I was too young, but I know. I saw it. I get why you stopped talking to her.

(crying)

But why did you stop talking to me?

Tears roll down Sarah's cheeks... and Danny's. Beat. Sarah collects herself a little.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You win, Danny. I'll stop the vote on independence.

(a disheartened shrug)

You've already taken everything else from me. Why not my home, too?

Sarah turns and EXITS. Beat. Danny suddenly SLAMS the door CLOSED. The speaker device comes loose, leaving it hanging from the door by a wire, broken. It plays a MOOSE CALL... and then ANOTHER... and then ANOTHER... And ON Danny, shell-shocked, as the MOOSE CALLS play on loop...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. SARAH'S HOME - BEDROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON Sarah as she lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. Her eyes are red. Her face is pale. She hasn't slept. Beat. KNOCKING downstairs breaks the silence. Sarah doesn't move. More KNOCKING. Then more. And as she finally climbs out of bed...

CUT TO:

INT. SARAH'S HOME - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

Sarah pulls the front door OPEN to REVEAL Corinne. She holds up a cup of coffee and a bag from Sweetie Pie.

CORINNE

Three sugars, two creams, one jelly donut.

And ON Sarah, softening at the sight of her best friend...

CUT TO:

INT. SARAH'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Sarah and Corinne sit together as Sarah sips her coffee. Beat.

CORINNE

You can't just give up, Sarah.

Sarah just shrugs: *what am I supposed to do?*

SARAH

I don't know what I was thinking. I should've followed my gut and stayed out of it.

CORINNE

(treading lightly)

Listen, I love your mom. She taught me how to ride a bike. I still have fat kid dreams about those lemon cupcakes she used to make us in third grade. But she hasn't exactly been a saint her whole life.

SARAH

Saint or not, she's still my mom. I'm not gonna sell her out.

Corinne nods as Sarah's phone RINGS. She answers on SPEAKER:

SARAH (CONT'D)

Mary. What's up?

CONTINUED:

MARY (V.O.)
Are you watching?

SARAH
Watching *what*?

And ON Sarah and Corinne's shared curiosity...

HARD CUT TO:

INT. SARAH'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

We're CLOSE ON the TV. Onscreen, we SEE local news coverage of an emotional press conference that Ellen is giving at Town Hall.

ELLEN
...long career that saw the public
put their faith in me... A faith I
repaid with deceit.
(then)
The deceit stops now.

PULL BACK to REVEAL Sarah watching with baited breath. Beat.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
I am an alcoholic. Both during my
years in politics and today.

We HEAR MURMURING from the press in the room with Ellen.

ELLEN (CONT'D)
The hard truth is: I was arrested
three times for drunk driving
during my tenure in the senate.

More shocked MURMURING in the room as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Danny watches the press conference on the TV in his hotel room.

ELLEN
These incidents were concealed from
the public by a member of local law
enforcement in an effort to save me
from embarrassment. I won't share
personal details about this man out
of respect for his family.

Danny watches in silence, expressionless, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. SARAH'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

We return to Sarah as she watches.

ELLEN

I wish to apologize to anyone who
has been hurt by my actions,
including and especially my
children.

Ellen looks straight into camera as tears glisten in her eyes.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Of all the titles I've ever held,
"mother" was the one I was proudest
of... but the one I deserved the
least. I'm sorry.
(breaking down)
I'm so sorry.

Ellen EXITS as the room erupts in CHATTER and QUESTIONS from the
press. And ON Sarah, stunned, her eyes glued to the screen...

CUT TO:

INT. ELLEN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ellen and Sarah sit in the living room. Ellen looks exhausted -
it's been a rough day. Sarah watches her mother in silence as
she stares out the window. Beat.

ELLEN

Early this morning, your brother
came to see me. He told me about
the governor's plan. About how Otis
was trying to blackmail you with my
personal history.

(then)

He made it clear he still wants
nothing to do with me. But I guess
he feels differently about you.

SARAH

...Mom, you didn't have to --

Ellen finally turns to face Sarah.

ELLEN

My behavior already lost me one
child. I wasn't going to let it
lose me the other.

Tears well in Ellen's eyes as she stares at Sarah. Beat. Sarah
nods, a silent acceptance from daughter to mother. Then:

CONTINUED:

SARAH

Doing what you did, disarming the governor's plot... does it mean you support the independence movement?

ELLEN

It means I support you.

It's a lovely sentiment. Sarah softens.

SARAH

I'll take all the support I can get. I mean... I know I'm the one that started this whole thing, but I didn't do it because I wanted to. I did it because...

She trails off, at a loss for the answer.

ELLEN

You did it because Morrisville needed a hero and nobody else was willing to put on a cape.

SARAH

I don't feel very heroic. The opposite, actually. But I can't run from this. The last thing anyone needs is me hiding in the closet, crying into a tub of Rocky Road.

(she shrugs)

I guess I'm just scared.

ELLEN

Of what?

SARAH

Of stepping into the spotlight. Of leading this movement. Of getting swallowed up in the world of politics and becoming...

She trails off. She was about to say something she shouldn't...

ELLEN

...And becoming *me*.

A long beat. Sarah nods silently.

SARAH

I saw what that life did to you. What it did to our family. I don't want that to happen to me.

CONTINUED: (2)

ELLEN

Listen. When things got hard during my career, hiding in a closet and crying into a tub of Rocky Road is exactly what I did.

(the ugly truth)

Except it wasn't a tub of Rocky Road.

(then)

The fact that you're standing up for everyone... that you're facing this thing head-on... is all the proof you need that you'll never turn out like me. Because you're braver and smarter and stronger than I am.

(then)

No matter what happens, that will never change.

Ellen offers a weary smile. And CLOSE ON Sarah, digesting her mother's words, resolve growing inside her...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

CLOSE ON Sarah, uneasy. A long beat passes as she tries to control her nervous breathing. Finally:

SARAH

I'm supposed to imagine you naked.

ANOTHER ANGLE finds Sarah at a podium in front of a room full of Morrisville's residents. It's PACKED. Tim and the rest of the Select Board sit onstage behind her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

When you're nervous to speak in front of a crowd, that's what they tell you to do, right? Imagine everyone naked.

(a smile)

It's harder than it sounds. I figured I'd at least get some help from Russell Cyr, but, of course, the one time I really need him to be nude, he's wearing clothes.

The crowd LAUGHS as our cameras FIND Russell in the crowd. He wears a t-shirt that says: NAKEDNESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I spent a lot of time thinking about what I was going to say today. At first, I thought I'd talk about how special Morrisville is.

CONTINUED:

SARAH (CONT'D)

(then)

But, to be honest, it's not. Other places have forests that are prettier than ours. They have mountains that are taller. Sunsets that are brighter.

Oscar shoots a glance at Mary: *where's she going with this?*

SARAH (CONT'D)

But you know what *no* other place has? The goofy pop of Bev Wheeler's laughter. The warmth of a hug from Ralph Tucker. The sound of Nancy Shattuck singing in church on Sunday mornings.

We FIND these CITIZENS in the crowd as Sarah names them.

SARAH (CONT'D)

No other place has Mary Hill's comforting smile as she examines a sick pet... Eugene Chubb's bubbly enthusiasm when he's reading to kids... Francine Dickenson's firm hand when she arrives at the scene of an accident.

(the headline)

What makes Morrisville special isn't the *place*: it's the *people*. People who believe in each other and take care of one another.

(then)

People who saw my mom on TV this morning and called me up to make sure I was okay and to ask if I need anything. I've gotten more than a hundred messages like that today. A hundred.

(then)

That's not a town... It's a *family*.

(then)

What Mayor Shattuck said in his speech is right. Declaring independence *is* crazy. But what my mom did this morning helped me realize that, when somebody comes after your family, "crazy" might just be your best option.

We FIND Ellen in the crowd. She listens intently.

SARAH (CONT'D)

If we do this, we take our future out of someone else's hands and into our own. Our fate will depend on nobody but us. *Just us*.

CONTINUED: (2)

SARAH (CONT'D)

One big family, with all our talents and quirks... our blemishes and imperfections... working together to make a life.

(then, a smile)

I can't imagine anything better.

And ON the crowd, digesting Sarah's inspirational words...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. - TOWN HALL - DAY - VOTING MONTAGE

A series of shots takes us around Town Hall as Morrisville's residents vote on independence. People come and go from voting booths. Residents on both sides of the debate hold signs and wave flags to support their cause.

PRESS TRUCKS from major news outlets line Main Street. We realize: *this story has gone national*. We SEE brief snippets of REPORTERS doing stand-up reports from Town Square.

REPORTER #1

...The Conch Republic. The Texas Nationalist Movement. The Yes California Independence Campaign. And now we can add the tiny town of Morrisville, New Hampshire to the long and shameful list of American separatist movements...

REPORTER #2

...Reports that the whole venture stems from an unwanted intrusion by Belmont Industries, a mining company intent on plundering Morrisville's wealth. By the look of things, they picked the wrong town to mess with. "Live Free or Die" indeed...

REPORTER #3

...They're called "micro-nations." Small groups that break away from their governments in pursuit of sovereignty. And in fact, many of these places have succeeded in some way or another. Whether Morrisville joins that unique fraternity... only time will tell.

We get glimpses of our cast throughout. We SEE Mary and Eugene talking with constituents on one side of Main Street... and we SEE Tim doing the same on the other.

CONTINUED:

We SEE Francine cast her ballot... and Oscar cast his. We SEE Grover putting handmade "VOTE INDEPENDENCE" signs in the window of Sweetie Pie. We SEE Danny alone, watching people enter Town Hall from a park bench in town square.

We SEE Sarah sitting on the floor of the Select Board meeting room, staring at the two historical MAPS that Eugene taped to the window... and that still hang there. We follow Sarah's gaze and slowly ZOOM IN to the blank space in the middle of the maps... the space where Morrisville sits... as we...

CUT TO:

INT. FRANCINE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Francine answers a KNOCK at the back door to reveal Nancy. Before Francine can say a word:

NANCY
Iris Fluffenstein.

Beat. Francine's busted and she's knows it.

FRANCINE
That's the name of your dog, right?
The black lab you had growing up?
(then)
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to step
out of bounds. It's just, nobody
was bidding on your planter and I --

Nancy lunges forward and KISSES Francine. Deeply. Passionately.
Beat. Nancy pulls away. Francine remains frozen. Beat.

NANCY
The three months we were seeing
each other were the happiest three
months of my life. I woke up every
morning with a smile on my face,
whether I was in your bed or my
own.
(then)
I want that back. Whatever *this*
is... I don't want it to end. I
guess I'm just... scared.

FRANCINE
I'm scared too. But that's okay. We
can be scared together.

NANCY
What about Tim?

FRANCINE
We'll figure it out. I promise.

CONTINUED:

The pair kisses once more before Nancy turns and disappears into the woods behind Francine's house. And ON Francine, SMILING...

CUT TO:

EXT. FRANCINE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Nancy, the same SMILE on her face, moves through the forest back toward town. We PULL BACK TO REVEAL Josh - Corinne's nine-year-old son - straddling his bike, watching Nancy from afar. He's mostly hidden behind a large oak tree. We realize: he just saw Francine and Nancy kissing. And ON this revelation...

CUT TO:

INT. CORINNE'S HOME - BEDROOM - EVENING

Corinne digs out a shoebox from behind a rack in her closet. She OPENS it to REVEAL a collection of relics from a relationship gone by: love notes, little keepsakes, and a stack of PHOTOS.

She shuffles through the photos, each featuring a moment from Danny and Corinne's ruddy-cheeked teenage romance. To our surprise, the last few photos document an engagement. Corinne stops on one: a younger version of herself holding up a diamond ring while Danny kisses her cheek.

She puts the photos back into the shoebox... and pulls out the ENGAGEMENT RING itself. She stares at it, clearly still wrestling with the ghosts of her past with Danny.

MALE VOICE (O.C.)

Honey! Dinner time!

Corinne quickly hides the box: its existence is a secret from her husband. And as she heads downstairs for dinner...

FADE TO:

EXT. RURAL MOUNTAIN ROAD - EVENING

We catch up to Sarah as she does her run up to Castle Peak. And she surges ahead...

CUT TO:

EXT. CASTLE PEAK - EVENING

Sarah emerges from a trail and steps out onto Castle Peak. We jump into her POV as she scans the vista: the forest in the distance, a row of mountains beyond, the rooftops of Morrisville nestled in between verdant hills. Bathed in a warm orange sunset, the town's bucolic beauty is on full display.

DANNY (O.C.)

Boy, you're even more sentimental than I remember.

CONTINUED:

Sarah turns to FIND Danny standing by his car behind her.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Have you been doing Dad's run?
What, you think if you jog the same
route he did every day, maybe
you'll bump into him?

(then)

He's not coming back, Sarah. He's
never coming back.

SARAH

...Just like you were never coming
back, right?

Beat. She's got him there. Silence.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What are you doing up here anyway?
I thought this was just another
podunk town on the long list of
places you'd rather not be.

DANNY

A podunk town with a nice view.

They sit in silence. Beat. Finally:

SARAH

Why'd you do it? Why'd you stop the
governor's blackmail plot?

DANNY

Because you're my sister.

(then)

A fair fight is one thing. If you
go head-to-head with the governor
and he kicks your ass, so be it.
But him cheating... I dunno, it
didn't sit right.

SARAH

Why not?

DANNY

(he shrugs)

I think it's something only a big
brother would understand.

A long beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Listen. I'm sorry. For all of it.

SARAH

Me too.

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY

For whatever it's worth... I'm proud of you. All of this... everything that's happened. I didn't think you had it in you. But... I guess people change.

SARAH

When they try hard enough.

Sarah stares at Danny, her subtext not lost on him. Beat.

DANNY

I spoke to my boss today. However this vote turns out, Belmont is gonna continue to pursue a coltan mine in Morrisville. I've been told to secure the land we need by any means necessary. Looks like I'm gonna be here a while longer.

(then)

When push comes to shove, I'm still gonna try to bulldoze this town.

SARAH

I know. And I'm still gonna try to save it.

DANNY

...I know.

And ON the Chambers siblings, side-by-side in the sunset, the love/hate, push/pull of their relationship made clear...

FADE TO:

INT. TOWN HALL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

THUNK! Close on a BALLOT as a hand hammers a rubber "CERTIFIED" stamp onto it and moves it aside. THUNK! The stamp lands again.

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals Eugene counting a stack of ballots at a table onstage. Sarah and the Select Board stand behind him. It's standing room only as Morrisville's residents watch with baited breath. THUNK! Another ballot. THUNK! Another. THUNK!

THUNK! We SEE the faces of our cast as they watch Eugene in silence. THUNK! THUNK!

You could cut the tension in the room with a *spoon*. THUNK! Eugene reaches the bottom of the pile. Silence. He makes a few final tabulations. Then, finally:

EUGENE

371 to 326.

(then)

Independence wins.

CONTINUED:

The room ERUPTS. Some residents CHEER and YELL. Some BOO. A few WALK OUT, while others HIGH-FIVE and HUG. It's a complete spectrum of emotions. Onstage, Tim fumes.

TIM

I don't believe this.

He shakes his head as he walks toward the exit. The room goes quiet as they turn their attention to the action onstage.

MARY

Mayor Shattuck?

TIM

Not anymore. It's just "Tim" now. I don't want any part of this.

Tim EXITS. Silence.

OSCAR

Who's in charge if the mayor quits?

Beat.

BETTY (O.C.)

Sarah.

Everyone turns to SEE Betty - the nonagenarian Sarah spoke with at the Maple Jubilee - as she stands up.

BETTY (CONT'D)

When that mining company tried to run us over, Sarah's the one who stared them down. She saved our houses. She saved our town.

(then)

She saved us. She should be our leader.

Betty's husband stands up next to her.

RALPH

I agree.

Beat. Ellen stands up. She smiles at Sarah.

ELLEN

So do I.

Corinne rises.

CORINNE

Me too.

More and more residents rise from their seats, showing their support for Sarah.

CONTINUED: (2)

Mary, Oscar, and Eugene, too, nod and smile at Sarah. Here, in this moment, everyone is standing up for what they believe in. And what they believe in is Sarah.

And ON Sarah, resolute, ready embrace her destiny...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN HALL - THE NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON Sarah, the light of camera flashes flickering on her face. Beat.

SARAH

I'm here to announce that,
effective immediately, the town of
Morrisville has voted to declare
independence.

ANOTHER ANGLE reveals Sarah standing on the stairs of town hall with Francine, Mary, Eugene, and Oscar behind her. REPORTERS from a dozen different national outlets wave cameras and microphones in her face. Danny and Otis are visible among the crowd of townspeople beyond.

Otis flashes an angry look at Danny, then EXITS. Danny remains.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Our select board has prepared a
document that explains the decision
in detail, but for now, I want to
assure you that we are well within
our legal rights to take this step.

The reporters shout a dozen different questions at once, but one rises above the rest:

REPORTER

Does this make you, Sarah Chambers,
the leader of a brand new country?

A silent moment passes as that question hangs in the air. And ON Sarah... determination on her face as she takes a deep breath...

HARD CUT TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT

*