

HIGH DESERT

Written by

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Shadows. Prelude to Wagner's Tristan and Isolde BLASTS from an old stereo, its green glow providing the only light. And then we see a cigarette flare RED as the violins SWELL.

A FIGURE sits forward. MOVING CLOSER, OUR EYES ADJUST to PEGGY. Our hero. She's in her 40's, but has lived hard enough to look like she's in her 50's.

She is a vision: tears cascade from her chin as she rocks, beatific, the music pummeling her. Her lit cigarette conducts the strings. She HOISTS A PHONE UP. Lit up on the screen, the name of her interlocutor: ROGER.

PEGGY

Right here. This part. Promise me
you'll play this at my funeral--

Violins surge. Her mouth opens, ingesting their mournfulness.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

This is what love is. This is why
Wagner even lived--

(softly)

Right? Tristan. Did I tell you what
that name means? Born of sorrow.
That's what his mother named him.
Born of sorrow. Kind'a like me.

(crying and laughing)

Oh my fuck!

She gets up, wiping her face. Lifts the needle off the album.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I can't even listen to it. Not
without acid.

She raises her cigarette, waves it around as if it's incense.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

These are sounds from spiritual
realms, okay? Wagner could hear it,
but he was like a super-species,
you know? We're mortals. We can't
hear it.

(brightens)

Unless you take LSD.

She rests her cigarette on the shelf to clean the album with a cloth - lifts it gingerly off the turntable, phone in the crook of her neck.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(squinting from the smoke)

That's how I quit smoking, did I tell you that? I took a tab, and like three hours later, I'm staring down at my orange ashtray -- did you ever see that ashtray? Marble? Hand-carved, it was gorgeous. Anyway, I'm looking down, and it's full of cigarette butts. Like black with them. Disgusting. And I'm all, "Those are inside me! Oh my God."

(sniffs some smoke rising off the cigarette)

Sometimes one moment can change your whole life, you know?

Peggy slides the album back into its jacket. She wanders to the window and pushes the curtains aside. She squints from the bright California sunlight, surprised that it's day.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Shit, is this tomorrow? What time is it?!

2 EXT. PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA - PEGGY'S HOUSE - MORNING 2

And now we know where we are: A shabby little house in the high desert, surrounded by Joshua Trees and some scrub brush.

Peggy blows out the door in a fucking bonnet, calico dress, and bloomers -- frontier garb head-to-toe. She jumps into a thrashed Toyota in her driveway and slams the door on her hem.

PEGGY

Jesus fuck.

Lighting a half-smoked joint, she starts the car, throws it into reverse, and scrapes the chassis on her way out. She roars down the street, her hem dragging.

3 EXT. MEDICAL BUILDING - MORNING 3

Peggy's Toyota pulls into a parking space right in front of the clinic. A tumbleweed skips across the lot.

4

INT. METHADONE CLINIC - DOCTORS OFFICE - MORNING

4

Peggy stands at the counter in her frontier regalia while a nurse(MARY) fills out some medical paper-work.

MARY

Your mother's not with you again today.

PEGGY

No. Not today.

A YOUNG MAN lopes in. Early 20's. Unsure of protocol and jittery. Definitely a first-timer. Peggy eyes him knowingly as Mary slides a little square Methadone bottle across the counter, then watches Peggy open and drink it dry.

MARY

Tell her I tried the soup -- the Tabatchnick, frozen -- she recommended the split pea.

PEGGY

Yeah.

MARY

It was very good. I was surprised.

Peggy re-lights her joint. Mary shakes her head at her.

MARY (CONT'D)

You know you can't do that in here, Peggy.

PEGGY

Okay.

Mary disappears into the back. Peggy keeps smoking, gives the young man a good once-over.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(to the young man)
Who're you fooling?

YOUNG MAN

What?

PEGGY

You're not here for pain management.

YOUNG MAN

(nervous, unconvincing)
Yes, I am.

PEGGY

Methadone's ten times harder to
quit than heroin, you know that?

He stares at her, this old lady in her frontier gear.

YOUNG MAN

Who the fuck are you--

PEGGY

Hey!

Having interrupted, she now makes her salient point:

PEGGY (CONT'D)

You're too weak for this.

Mary comes back with a couple of Methadone bottles, withholds them from Peggy when she sees she's still smoking.

MARY

Put it out, Peggy.

Peggy grabs a Dixie cup off the water cooler, stamps her joint in it, and takes the two Methadone bottles Mary offers.

PEGGY

Okie-dokie, thanks.

Peggy heads to the door. Pauses by the young man.

YOUNG MAN

(defensive)

You don't know me.

Peggy nails him with a look, but her eyes are warm.

PEGGY

I do, actually. I'm not trying to
insult you. I'm trying to help you.
This is not for you.

YOUNG MAN

Oh, but it's fine for you?

PEGGY

Methadone's easy for me. I quit
smoking, I can quit Methadone.
And I'm different. I have
Fibromyalgia. What do you have?
(with compassion)
You're a junkie. You'll get a
double addiction, and you'll be
dead.

He makes a face. Mary interrupts the confrontation.

MARY

Give my regards to your mother.

Peggy turns back as she opens the door. Her voice cracks.

PEGGY

She died. Three weeks ago. Try the potato soup. It was her favorite.

5 EXT. PIONEERTOWN - MORNING

5

Tourists eat snacks, moseying around this Hollywood-Western-set-turned-tourist-attraction. Despite the candy and hot dog stands, the town aspires to depict life on the frontier.

6 INT. PIONEERTOWN - YE OLDE BAKE SHOP - SAME

6

A circa mid-1800's bake shop. JEANNIE, late 20's, kneads dough in a calico dress. She speaks sweetly to some tourists, but beneath the forced smile, she's fighting despair.

JEANNIE

To keep their families fed,
frontier ladies had to do all kinds
of smoking, canning, and, of
course, baking.

Another "frontier woman," TAMMY, mid 30's, mouths Jeannie's speech as she stirs a cauldron inside a cavernous fireplace. She's irritable, barely playing her part.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)

They had one sure-fire way to know
their stove was ready:

(opening the oven door)

If you can hold your hand in it for
no more than twenty seconds, it's
ready. Clever of them, right?

(smiling, she sticks her
hand inside the stove)

One, two -- Oww -- Goddamnit!

She jerks her hand out, screaming, which startles Tammy, who drops her spoon in the cauldron.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
Mother-fuck-me!

TAMMY
Shit!

7 EXT. PIONEERTOWN - YE OLDE BAKE SHOP - MORNING 7

A few tourists hurry out of the bake shop. Jeannie follows.

JEANNIE

I can't take this fucking shit!

8 EXT. PIONEERTOWN - SAME 8

With a big leather purse, drinking cream soda through a straw, Peggy walks through Pioneertown, talking on her cell.

PEGGY

(into cell)

Wait till you see me in the show
today, you're not gonna believe
it's me.

OWEN, Peggy's boss and a tour guide, leads a group through the village. He chides Peggy under his breath as she passes.

OWEN

Cell phone, Peggy.

PEGGY

(to Owen, excited)

It's my brother -- he needs
directions. He's coming with my
sister today.

OWEN

No cell phones on the frontier.

She nods, dismissive, then ducks into the village office.

9 INT. PIONEERTOWN - ACCOUNTING OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 9

The office is empty. Peggy sets her soda down and pulls a Keurig cup out. She fires up the coffee maker.

PEGGY

(into cell)

Okay, I have a little privacy for a
second. I'm so excited you guys are
coming, it's like a dream coming
true... Yeah, easy... North on
Pioneertown Road.

Peggy pulls out three lipsticks. Applies them in layers.

10

EXT. PIONEERTOWN - MINUTES LATER

10

Peggy, still on her cell, walks through the Town Square.

PEGGY

But your hotel's nice? You got a phone in the bathroom, right?

She comes upon Jeannie in the Town Square Gazebo, crying.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Good, that's great. I can't wait... Yeah... See you then.

Peggy hangs up. Huffs it up the gazebo steps knowingly.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

What did he do now? Duck his child support?

JEANNIE

He hit Brian. Kid came home yesterday with a black eye. Wouldn't even go to school today.

PEGGY

Okay, we're taking him to court. You'll get full custody.

JEANNIE

No, I've tried, Peggy. His reptile brother gives him money for the lawyer every time. I can't win in court. He's got it sewed up. I can't afford a lawyer. I can't pay my bills.

PEGGY

I'll find you a lawyer.

JEANNIE

I'm taking Brian, I've decided. I've got an Aunt in Vegas. We can hide out there for a while.

Peggy drops her bag. Wipes Jeannie's mascara-streaked face.

PEGGY

He'll find you, and you'll end up in jail. Uh-uh.

JEANNIE

He leaves the kid in the car while he goes in a motel with a hooker.

PEGGY
Ugh, so sick.

JEANNIE
I know. So, an hour later, Brian
knocks on the door to ask for money
for a Coke, and Billy punches him
in the face for bothering him.

Peggy tilts her head as if she hears a whistle.

PEGGY
Where is he right now?

JEANNIE
Probably at his brother's garage,
pretending to work.

IN THE BACKGROUND: Tammy flounces out of the bake shop. She searches, then spots Peggy and Jeannie. Yells over to them:

TAMMY
What the fuck, Jeannie?! I'm here
alone! Peggy's supposed to relieve
me in ten minutes!

Peggy and Jeannie startle at first. Then simultaneously respond:

PEGGY	JEANNIE
Shut the fuck up, Tammy--	Just go back inside! I burned my hand!

Tammy stares at them, exasperated, then trudges back into the bake shop.

Jeannie gets up as people head into the unmanned shop.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
We've got to man the bake shop.

PEGGY
Cover for me till I get back.
(slowly, deadly serious)
Where's the garage?

11 EXT. PARKING LOT - PIONEERTOWN - MOMENTS LATER

11

Rifling through her purse, Peggy rushes to her car.

ROGER (O.S.)
Peggy!

Peggy turns. ROGER saunters over. Sensitive eyes, strong jaw. Kind of the perfect cowboy, except he works at Pioneertown.

ROGER (CONT'D)

We got a one o'clock show--

PEGGY

I know. I'll be back.

ROGER

I was thinking about what you said about Wagner today --

She smiles. And he pulls her close and kisses her.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Peggy... You run so deep.

PEGGY

(patting his cheek fondly)
I told you. I can't. Maggie's a friend of mine. You haven't been separated that long.

ROGER

How long do I have to be single for you to be with me?

PEGGY

10 years.

Now he looks startled. She finds her keys.

ROGER

Where'd you get 10 years?

PEGGY

It just feels right.

ROGER

But we'll be old then.

PEGGY

Oh, no. I'll never be old.

ROGER

What's that mean? You're not gonna die?

PEGGY

No, I'm not, but if I do, you're in charge of music at my funeral.

She slides in, slams the door, then rolls down the window.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Roger, my family's coming. They came for the funeral, but they're coming just to see me now!

ROGER

No shit.

PEGGY

It's sweet, right? I promised Mommy we'd be close after she died. I'm excited.

ROGER

I'll take good care of them.

PEGGY

I know you will. I'll be back.

He watches Peggy gun out of the parking lot onto the two-lane highway. Scrape! A tail of sparks flies from the chassis.

12 INT. PEGGY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NOON 12

Peggy comes out of her room in street clothes. She moves to a closed door across the hall, but pauses before she opens it.

13 INT. PEGGY'S MOTHER'S BEDROOM - SAME 13

Matching bed, dresser, and vanity, all from the 50's. Peggy solemnly sits at the vanity.

PEGGY

Hi, Mommy.
(forcing back tears)
I need your help, okay? I miss you,
but I can't go into it right now.

She nods to her reflection. Takes a pair of white kid-leather gloves from the drawer and pulls them on.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Right now I need to kick some ass.

She admires the way the gloves look, then opens the velvet jewelry box. Stares at the gleaming pearls and bracelets.

14 INT. PEGGY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME 14

Wearing the gloves, Peggy rips a couple zip-lock bags out of the drawer and fills them with her mother's jewelry.

15 EXT. RANDY'S GARAGE - DAY

15

A dingy electric sign spins above the garage. It features: A snarling green lizard and the words "Randy The Reptile."

Peggy, two Baggies in her gloved hand, gets out of the car as BILLY steps from the office. Dyed hair, t-shirt two sizes too small, he squints at Peggy -- she's no wallflower.

PEGGY

You Randy?

BILLY

No, that's Randy.

He points to RANDY, a paunched-out version of himself, on a weight bench, flirting with a 20-year-old CUSTOMER.

PEGGY

This look familiar?

She hands Billy the Baggies. He paws them with greasy hands.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I found them in a bag on the street, right over there.

BILLY

What're you, a good samaritan?

PEGGY

I just believe in karma.

He stares at her, suspicious, but she just smiles innocently.

BILLY

Why are you wearing gloves?

PEGGY

I got that thing Michael Jackson had. Spots.

BILLY

Yeah, I think this is my girlfriend's. She loses shit all the time.

Peggy snatches back the bag.

PEGGY

Let me talk to her, just to confirm. Guy down the block says it's familiar to him, too, but I don't think he's on the level.

(MORE)

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Gimme your number. I'll call you.
 (as he writes on a card)
 How much is a wheel rotation here?

He surveys her car, handing her his number.

BILLY

I could fix that dent for you, too.
 Whole thing, two hundred.

PEGGY

Huh. What time do you close?

She eyes vile Randy, curling a dumbbell to impress the girl.

16

EXT. TOP HAT RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

16

Peggy pulls her car up to the kitchen door. A few WORKERS are on break. Peggy nods to one, GILL, who leans in window.

GILL

Didn't think we'd see you here
 again.

PEGGY

Whether you believe me or not, this
 is for somebody else.

GILL

Lie to yourself, Peggy. Don't lie
 to me.

PEGGY

Whatever -- just give me a dime,
 and we'll part ways forever.
 (by way of explanation)
 I'm on Methadone.

17

INT. COW TOWN SALOON RESTAURANT - PIONEERTOWN - AFTERNOON 17

A cowboy-attired MAITRE'D seats Peggy's siblings STEWART and DIANNE at a nice table by the stage. Stewart, mid-40's, has a relaxed command. Dianne, 40, would be lovely if she could relax her anus a little. The Maitre'd hands them menus.

MAITRE'D

This is the best table for the show
 -- you'll be able to see the pores
 of Peggy's skin. And just so you
 know, we're family here, and Peggy
 is like a mother to us.

STEWART

That's very nice. Thanks.

MAITRE'D

The brisket is the special today,
and we want to extend the ten
percent family discount on the
brisket for you two.

DIANNE

That's so nice of you.

MAITRE'D

We usually don't extend the
discount to daily specials, but we
just love Peggy a lot.

Stewart smiles tightly. The Maitre'd leaves.

DIANNE

"The show." What's she gonna do,
swing from the chandelier?

STEWART

It wouldn't be the first time.

18 EXT. BILLY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON 18

Peggy opens her trunk, grabs a roll of paper towels, a bottle
of Windex, and slams it shut.

19 INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - SAME 19

Paper towels and Windex in hand, Peggy knocks on an apartment
door. FAWN answers: 20, tank top, and obscenely short shorts.

PEGGY

Speedy maid. Sorry I'm late.

Peggy barrels past her, uninvited.

20 INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 20

Peggy surveys the messy apartment. A giant TV is blasting.

FAWN

What's Speedy Maid?

PEGGY

We're like Molly Maid, but quicker.
And we're a little cheaper.

FAWN
Billy has a maid?

Peggy heads toward the bedroom. Gestures to the TV.

PEGGY
Go back to your show. Don't let me
disturb. I'll start in the bedroom.

21 INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 21

Peggy rifles through a dresser drawer, checking to make sure Fawn hasn't come in. She pulls a Baggie from her purse with a tiny amount of cocaine and buries it in Billy's underwear.

22 INT. BILLY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 22

Fawn stares from the sofa as Peggy heads to the front door.

FAWN
You're done? That was like one
minute.

PEGGY
It's too dirty for us. Tell Billy
he's a pig.
(looking around the room)
How come he's got no pictures of
his kids out?

FAWN
He's got kids?
(then)
How do you know?

Peggy makes a face at Fawn, then she's out the door.

23 INT. RANDY'S GARAGE - OFFICE - AFTERNOON 23

The phone rings. Wakes Randy from a nap on his bench press.

RANDY
(groggy)
Billy!

Billy comes in from the garage. Answers the phone.

BILLY
Y'ello.

INTERCUT CALL:

24 INT. PEGGY'S CAR - SAME

24

Peggy barrels into the Pioneertown parking lot on her cell.

PEGGY
Is this the Reptile?

BILLY
No, this is his brother, Billy.

PEGGY
I know about you. You're a horrible
father and generally a worthless
human being.

BILLY
Susie?...Who is this?
(thinking)
Deidre?

PEGGY
The one from before, with the
jewelry Baggie.

BILLY
Oh yeah. With the dent.

Peggy screeches into a spot and jumps out of her car.

PEGGY
I got your fingerprints off the
Baggie you touched. I know all
about your prior arrests.

BILLY
Who the fuck are you?

Peggy charges (back in her garb) through Pioneertown, still
on her cell.

PEGGY
I planted two bags with heroin.
The first has just a little bit, so
you know I'm not bullshitting. It's
in your underwear drawer. Check
with your girlfriend, I was just
there.

Randy sits up. Scratches his belly. Sees Billy panicking.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
The other Baggie's got a quarter
ounce in it. Trust me, you'll never
find it. Only I know where it is.

BILLY
Hey, listen to me, you bitch.

RANDY
(to Billy, re. call)
Is that Mommy?

PEGGY
No, you listen to me. You're never
lifting a hand to your kids again.

Peggy pauses outside the saloon. Steadies her anger.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
You got till tomorrow night to get
out of town. At six o'clock, I'm
dropping a dime and telling the
cops where the other Baggie is.
Your fingerprints are all over it.
There's enough smack in there for
your ugly face to get forty-five
years to life.
(Suddenly sees siblings)
OHHH, MY GODDD! HIIIEE!

She hangs up on him.

25

INT. COW TOWN SALOON - PIONEERTOWN - LATER

25

Peggy, still breathless and radiant from the stunt show, has
joined her brother and sister at their table.

PEGGY
What'd you think of the show?

STEWART
Very realistic.

Peggy reaches out and touches Dianne's earrings.

PEGGY
Ugh, I love these. I have almost
the same ones, but yours are real.

DIANNE
You were good. I thought you were
really on fire for a minute.

PEGGY
Why does Mommy have to die for us
to see each other? L.A.'s an hour
away, Stewart. I mean, really--

STEWART
 You could come see me too,
 you know--

PEGGY (CONT'D)
 (to Dianne)
 And you're twenty minutes
 from me! I shouldn't have to
 wait for him to come to see
 you--

*

PEGGY (CONT'D)
 (lightly, but hurt)
 I just love you both. You'll always
 be my babies. That's all.

A WAITRESS interrupts. Smiles at Dianne.

WAITRESS
 More iced tea? It's bottomless!

PEGGY
 We're sisters.

WAITRESS
 No, you're not. Are ya? You must
 have had so much fun growing up
 with Peggy. Did you ever call her
 Margaret growing up, or just Peggy?

DIANNE
 Just Peggy.

STEWART
 (under his breath)
 Or Face-in-the-plate.

The waitress moves off, but Peggy is staring at Stewart. She heard that.

PEGGY
 My face never fell in the plate.

DIANNE
 It did. 'Cause when you nodded out--

PEGGY
 I never made contact. And I'm down
 to 2 milligrams of Methadone a day.
 For my Fibromyalgia.

Her siblings look at her. Dianne stirs her tea.

DIANNE
 So... what are your plans?

PEGGY (CONT'D)
 It was a beautiful funeral,
 wasn't it?

STEWART

Who was the guy in the shorts?

PEGGY

Charles? He's a neighbor. Wasn't that gorgeous, him singing "Long and Winding Road"?

STEWART

Is that what it was? Hard to tell. He nodded off through most of it.

DIANNE

He did. It was embarrassing.

PEGGY

Well, he's a person, he struggles, but people come out the other side.

STEWART

That guy's not coming out of anything.

Peggy squints at him as if she has x-ray vision.

PEGGY

You don't feel things. Ever since Blackie died, you haven't let yourself feel.

STEWART

You know what I feel? I feel worry. I worry the next time I come, it'll be to attend my sister's funeral.

A tense silence. Peggy's reeling, but she has no defense.

DIANNE

(softly intervening)

Okay. So, what are your plans?

PEGGY

What do you mean?

STEWART

Have you thought about what you're doing next?

PEGGY

Regarding what?

STEWART

I mean, it's fine, we supported you while Mommy was here because you were taking care of her, but it ain't happening anymore, Peg.

Peggy stares at him, thinking about how little he was once.

STEWART (CONT'D)

Frankly, I'm terrified for you.

DIANNE

You need a job.

Peggy tears her eyes away from Stewart to look at Dianne.

DIANNE (CONT'D)

It's part of sobriety, isn't it? You need that structure.

PEGGY

Well, I can't get a job. I don't know how to.

DIANNE

You have a job here. You work as a barmaid.

PEGGY

That's acting.

STEWART

Well, maybe you could act like a court stenographer or something.

PEGGY

(speak English)
What?

DIANNE

We can't afford it anymore. We met with a realtor this morning.
(off Peggy's dangling jaw)
In case you can't pay the mortgage, you know... we'll have to sell it.

PEGGY

Sell Mommy's house? That's why you came to town? Not to see me?!

STEWART

That's absolutely not true. We're here to see you. But c'mon.

(MORE)

STEWART (CONT'D)

We can't just pay for the house indefinitely.

PEGGY

You came here to throw me out on the street?

DIANNE

No, stop, nobody's going to be on the street. We just have to start being practical.

Peggy is incredulous. And it was going so well.

26

EXT. DESERT BACKYARD - YUCCA VALLEY - NIGHT

26

Peggy sits by her best friend CAROL'S pool. Carol is beautiful, arty, around 40. She is the love and light to Peggy's snakes and snails. They pass a joint.

PEGGY

Well, fuck you, too. What did I ever do to them?

Carol gives her the gentlest of "are-you-serious" looks.

CAROL

I mean. You let them down. A lot. And your kid, too, so...

PEGGY

They're giving me like three weeks to start paying a giant mortgage.
 (taking a hit, passing)
 You know what they never tell you about? How regret eats away at you, like you drink a bunch of black poison on an empty stomach, then drop a potato in.
 (beat)
 Fuck stenographer, I could write greeting cards, right?

Something CLATTERS by the house. They watch calmly as:

REVERSE: A chunky teenaged GIRL knocks over trashcans, climbs a fence, then claws her way toward her open bedroom window.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Where's she supposed to be?

CAROL

In her room sleeping.

PEGGY
She still hate you?

CAROL
(shrugs)
I married her father. We're making progress.

PEGGY
Every time I see you together,
she's a bitch to you.

CAROL
Well. She's not happy.

The girl struggles to pull herself up into the window. She throws herself inside, graceless, and we hear a muted CRASH.

PEGGY
At the very end, after she died, I wanted to yell, "What just happened?" Seriously. Who said that thing? It was like Truman Capote or Barbara Walters, that when someone dies, it's like she's in China, but I just can't call her.
(off Carol's compassion)
And they just want me to move on and work in the dry cleaners.

CAROL
You need answers. You know who had answers? Running Wolf.

PEGGY
That perv who felt you up in the teepee?

CAROL
It was a sweat lodge.

PEGGY
It was supposed to be sacred.

CAROL
He couldn't help himself. You should light some sage. You know, smudge whatever you don't want there... energetically.

PEGGY
I can't smudge Mommy. What if she's not ready to leave?
(after some thought)
(MORE)

PEGGY (CONT'D)

What am I supposed to do? How am I supposed to get a job? I don't have any experience or skills or talent or anything. Or ambition.

CAROL

Think about what you're good at.

PEGGY

I'm good at blending lipstick colors. It's all in the layering.

CAROL

I love that orange on you.

PEGGY

It's not orange. It's a blend. Three layers. It's pretty, right?

A Coyote howls somewhere. Carol hands Peggy a big wine glass.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Little Coyote. Sounds like your stomach growling, right? Listen.

A plaintive aooooo. Carol listens as Peggy searches her mind:

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Something I'm good at.

27

INT. PEGGY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

27

A TV blares in the background as Peggy, crying, smudges with a huge sage stick. She opens her closet, smudges, then pauses when she sees... A TACKLE BOX: POISON HAZARDOUS FLAMMABLE KEEP OUT scrawled all over it in Sharpie.

Peggy pulls it out and opens it to find: A dozen varieties of LSD. She removes a vial of Yellow Barrel acid. Greets it like an old friend. Literally:

PEGGY

Hello, sensei.

She tucks the vial into her open bag, then goes back to smudging. The smoke ribbons, then disappears. Peggy relights it with a Zippo -- the thing goes up like a torch. She blows, but it FLARES UP further.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(running into the hall)
Shit shit shit.

28 INT. PEGGY'S MOTHER'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 28

Peggy launches the sage, hissing, into the toilet. She stares into the bowl, glum... when she hears A LOUD KNOCK.

29 INT. PEGGY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 29

Peggy gets to the front door just as a flier slides under it: a glossy brochure from DESERT PROVIDENCE REALTY. Peggy picks it up and reads a handwritten note: "Stewart, nice talking to you the other day. Let's make a sale!"

Shaky, Peggy pulls out her phone. Dials Dianne. No answer.

PEGGY

(into phone)

Yeah, this is your big sister. When did you hire a realtor, Dianne? You are throwing me out in the street! Okay, fyi, I'll remember this.

She hangs up. Wanders into the bathroom, seething.

30 INT. PEGGY'S MOTHER'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER 30

She pulls the sage out of the toilet. FROM THE TV, she hears:

MAN'S VOICE

Why are there so many TV Shows about the criminal justice system? Because it's exciting.

Peggy cranes her neck to see the TV. ON SCREEN: BRUCE HARVEY, a P.I. in his late 40's.

BRUCE (ON TV)

All the dramatic events that make for great TV also make for a great career. Are you interested in getting justice? Are you good at reading people?

PEGGY

Very good.

BRUCE (ON TV)

With Mustang College, you can have a career like...

(these words flash on TV:)

Criminology, Juvenile Justice.

Peggy makes a face, ew, no one wants that.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Anti-Terrorism.

Peggy's eyebrow arches with interest.

PEGGY
I could do that. I hate those fuckers.

BRUCE
Train to be like me -- Bruce Harvey, Private Investigator.

Peggy lights up. An Epiphany.

31 EXT. OFFICE COMPLEX - NEXT DAY 31

A stucco office building with a wood sign at the entrance: *Yucca Insurance, Barb's Uniforms, Bruce Harvey Investigations, and Star Liquor.*

Peggy barrels into the lot, scraping the undercarriage.

32 INT. BRUCE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 32

Hanging on the wall, a headshot of James Garner (circa Jim Rockford-age) is signed, "To Bruce." BRUCE himself (in no way the crisp professional from the ad) scrolls down his own eBay account at his desk, talking on the landline.

BRUCE
(into phone)
No one stole your identity. No.

THE VIEW of his outer office betrays his side-job: collectables span the length of one wall. Men's designer sneakers, vintage toys, and toner cartridges.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Most of the purchases were made after midnight. You're buying jewelry online. Maybe after a pill?

THROUGH BRUCE'S WINDOW: A spotless Vintage '76 Camaro with the vanity plate **200ADAY** is parked outside. Peggy's car stops abruptly behind it. She rolls down her window, squints at the plate, then swings into the adjacent spot.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
You owe me for ten hours... No...
(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Because my fee's not subject to
your abuse of prescription pills...
or your mental health.

Bruce watches Peggy walk to his car, tilt the side mirror up,
and apply a fresh coat of lipstick. WTF? He knocks. Waves her
away. She looks up. Waves back.

33 EXT. BRUCE'S OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER 33

Exuberant, Peggy races up the steps - grabs the handrail - it
wobbles, and rips halfway off the wall. Peggy's shoe catches
on the step as she rights herself, slicing off the heel.

34 INT. BRUCE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 34

Bruce is still on his call.

BRUCE

(into phone)

Pay your fucking bill, or I'll send
it to a collector!

Bruce hangs up and throws the phone. Why not? It lands in the
vintage toy pile behind an unopened American Doll just as--

Peggy lopes in, missing a heel. They look at each other.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

PEGGY

Peggy Newman, private investigator.
I want to work for you. I saw your
commercial.

BRUCE

The commercial was for P.I. school.

PEGGY

School's for morons. I don't mean
to offend, but my mother let me
stay home the entire fourth grade.

He looks slightly horrified. She sees it.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

She died three weeks ago.

BRUCE

Oh, I'm very sorry. My condolences.

PEGGY

My mother always believed I'd do something important. You always think, "Oh, she's my mother, of course she thinks I'm not a complete loser like everybody else does." I never knew what she saw in me till now. This is my renaissance. I could be a ridiculous P.I.

(off his awkward smile)

In a good way.

(re. the weird office)

You're still a P.I., right? You've got a Neil Sedaka frisbee on your shelf. I wouldn't advertise that.

BRUCE

I am advertising it. It's on eBay.

(defensive)

My wife prefers I don't do the shipping from home.

(off her look)

It's a side business.

She eyes the sale items. Reassesses the situation.

PEGGY

It's a side hustle.

(off his stunned look)

I'm a P.I., I'm not judging. You're keeping the lights on, there's no shame in that.

She picks up a Samantha American Girl Doll.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Pre-Mattel. That's the real shit.

BRUCE

I'm not hiring.

PEGGY

I think you might be making a big mistake. It really looks like you could use some help around here.

BRUCE

I've got my own problems right now.

PEGGY

Yes, you do. And I'm making the rounds of P.I. offices today. I'd hate for you to miss out.

BRUCE
Do you have any experience?

PEGGY
In what?

BRUCE
Carpentry. What the fuck do you think?

PEGGY
That's another thing -- and I could help you with this -- you might get more business if you had a friendlier face to greet people. My face is friendlier. Also, I could work cases. Two jobs, one salary. Don't be so quick to say no.

BRUCE
No.

PEGGY
Here's my information. Just think about it. You need help.

She hands him a mostly-blank resume. Starts to leave, but turns back. One more thing:

PEGGY (CONT'D)
(indicating sale items)
Listen, always have a ringer bid against your biggest sucker. Maybe not for the Neil Sedaka frisbee.
(then)
I look forward to hearing from you.

BRUCE
(as she leaves)
Stay away from my car!

But the door slams before he finishes.

35

INT. PIONEERTOWN BAKE SHOP - DAY

35

A family of TOURISTS mills into the room like zombies. Peggy offers them maple cookies with a smile. A kid takes one.

PEGGY
Can you believe it?!

Peggy turns. Her earpiece is in. She's talking on her cell:

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I mean, it's not definite yet, but it looks really good... Who would have thought, me at my age, starting a prestigious career? I'm like Mary Tyler Moore on Methadone.

Owen, the tour guide, comes in just as the kid who took one of Peggy's cookies spits it out and complains to his mother. Peggy's too involved in her conversation to notice.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

You there?

INTERCUT CALL:

36

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME

36

Dianne is on the couch. Stewart is packing to leave town.

DIANNE

I can't, I just...
(handing him the phone)
She wants to be a P.I..

STEWART

(taking the phone)
Peggy?

Peggy thinks she's still talking to Dianne.

PEGGY

I mean, I'll be more like an intern for a P.I. when he hires me, which he hasn't yet, but that's a big "yet" because the guy loves me.

BEHIND HER, the kid's mother complains to Owen about the cookies. He steps over to Peggy. Taps her shoulder.

OWEN

Peggy. No phones.

Peggy nods to him, but continues with her conversation.

STEWART

(tries to be encouraging)
Okay, great. That's a start.

DIANNE

(shaking her head)
It's one more crazy thing she's going to try in-between rehabs.
(MORE)

DIANNE (CONT'D)

How many times is her insurance going to pay for it? I can't do it again.

ON PEGGY, realizing that Dianne has passed the phone. She hears every word, though it's unintended. Pain, not just irritation, is in her voice. Peggy has put them through it.

STEWART

(into phone)

We were thinking more like a job-job, you know, with more structure. To show you're helping yourself -- then maybe we could help you.

PEGGY

I am helping myself.

STEWART

And the drugs.

Owen inspects the cookies. Samples one... and spits it out.

PEGGY

(into phone)

I'm down to two milligrams of Methadone a day, okay? I was up to sixty. You know how hard that was? It was very hard.

(off his silence)

You don't even believe me.

He hands the phone to Dianne. She takes it, reluctantly.

DIANNE

I can't do this again, Peggy.

Owen stands in front of Peggy, appalled.

OWEN

What did you put in these cookies?

PEGGY

My cream soda. The water was shut off this morning. Recipe called for water, what was I supposed to do?

(into phone, to Dianne)

When I had money, we all had money.

DIANNE

And you were dealing drugs!

PEGGY

Okay, judgey, it was just pot!

DIANNE

It's not just the money. All my
life I've done everything you ever
wanted. I can't do it anymore.
You've got to pull your weight.

Peggy's eyes well up, but she'll never let them know.

37

EXT. PIONEERTOWN BAKE SHOP - DAY

37

While Roger brushes his old horse, Peggy slowly twirls her
cigarette at her side like an altar boy swings incense.

ROGER

Nothing makes you get your shit
together like someone saying they
don't believe in you.

PEGGY

And my best friend is gone. My
mother was my best friend. I would
drive and nod out and she'd wake me
up -- who's gonna do that for me
now? She was my co-pilot.

ROGER

You've got a son.

PEGGY

He's done with me. I wish I could
smoke this cigarette.

ROGER

Everyone here loves you.

Jeannie runs up to Peggy and hugs her. Peggy has to lift her
arm so her cigarette doesn't burn a clinging Jeannie.

PEGGY

He's gone?

JEANNIE

He's gone, Peg. You did it.

LOUD MUSIC stops their conversation.

ANGLE: A camo-wrapped Hummer (weirdly blasting New Age music)
skids into the dusty parking lot behind them. Tammy jumps out
of the passenger side before it comes to a full stop,
staggering wildly, then falls to the ground.

BRAKE LIGHTS. The driver's door opens and, engrossed in a call, GURU BOB, charismatic, around 50, steps out of the Hummer and extends a hand to Tammy. Once she's up, Tammy flashes a coy, hurt baby face until Guru Bob, still on his call, places a hand on her forehead as if dispensing a healing. She closes her eyes. Distracted, he then turns and heads back to his vehicle. Tammy turns to Peggy, et al:

TAMMY

Hey! This is my fiancé, you guys!

Guru Bob waves perfunctorily at the group, then slides in and peels out, kicking pebbles back at Tammy, who waves goodbye, even as she covers her eyes with the other hand.

Roger's horse neighs, agitated.

ROGER

(softly, to horse)

It's okay, Raven.

Peggy watches the Hummer with disgust.

PEGGY

What the fuck was that?

Jeannie goes back to her story as Tammy jogs toward them.

JEANNIE

I think last night was the first time I've slept through the night in probably six months--

Tammy, manic, thrusts her ring finger at all of them.

TAMMY

Check it out, y'all!

JEANNIE

Pretty, Tammy.

TAMMY

It's a gift from GB. And I got two more gifts coming--

(winking)

... if you know what I mean.

PEGGY

What's GB, a jewelry store?

TAMMY

Guru Bob. My fiancé. They say diamonds are forever, right?

PEGGY

Are moonstones forever? 'Cause that's what's on your finger.

Tammy's smile fades as she inspects her ring.

TAMMY

I don't think so. GB knows jewels.

PEGGY

(shrugging)
Okay.

TAMMY

He knows everything.

PEGGY

Does he know not to go around calling himself "Guru"?

TAMMY

Other people call him that. He's famous, Peg. He was on the news.

JEANNIE

(to Peggy, explaining)
Bob Scarborough. Bob and Barb at Five. Well, just Barb now, but yeah, Channel 18.

PEGGY

The "Everything's stupid" guy? No way. My mother liked that guy.

TAMMY

Uh-huh. That's my boyfriend.

PEGGY

What exactly happened there?

TAMMY

He left the news world to have more meaning in his life.

Tammy inspects her ring until Jeannie uproots her reverie:

JEANNIE

Honey, isn't it your shift at the bake shop right now?

PEGGY

Yeah, go fire up the hot rocks, you're late. Speaking of which, congrats again on the ring.

Tammy starts to go, but turns back.

TAMMY
What were you guys talking about?

PEGGY JEANNIE
Go fire it up, Tammy. Move! People are waiting for bread!

Tammy slogs toward the bake shop. Jeannie turns to Peggy.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
Anyway, Peg, because of you I can breathe. I know he'll be back one day, but--

PEGGY
What do you mean he'll be back?

JEANNIE
Randy the Reptile always bails him out. Always takes him back. Because he helps with the insurance fraud--

PEGGY
Wait, wait, wait, stop.
(when she does)
Now, back up.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. PIONEERTOWN PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER 38

Peggy is barreling toward her car. She is on her cell phone.

PEGGY
Carol, what are you doing? What if I bought you lunch? If it's at Panda Express. Or a coffee? If it's at Burger King.

39 INT. CAROL'S CAR - DAY 39

Peggy, in street clothes, is in the passenger seat. Carol watches from the driver's seat as Reptile Randy smokes a cigar and suns himself.

PEGGY
Randy the Reptile likes his cancer two ways. And his brother Billy's a deadbeat kid beater. Nice family.
(MORE)

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I can't pick which one I wanna
procreate with.

CAROL

What do I do?

40 INT. RANDY'S GARAGE - DAY

40

Carol pulls up alone. Checks her lipstick in the side mirror. She slides out, dolled up, straightening her skirt. Randy the Reptile gets a load of her. She's a knockout, and he's a goner. His cigar almost falls out of his mouth.

PEGGY is outside the garage, taking pictures...

THROUGH THE LENS: Carol flirts with Randy. She saunters over to his weight bench.

CAROL

How much is that, 200 pounds? You
can't press that much.

He can't get under the barbell fast enough.

ON PEGGY, clicking away. He curls dumbbells (CLICK), he jumps rope like a prize fighter with a cigar in his mouth (CLICK).

41 INT. BRUCE HARVEY'S OFFICE - DAY

41

Bruce is on the phone at his desk, mid-conflict.

BRUCE

(on the phone, tense)
We're called *Bruce Harvey*
Investigations... Yeah, Doochie-
Harvey was dissolved months ago,
different company. But Bruce Harvey
LLP isn't liable for that, fella.
(about to blow)
Doochie embezzled from that firm...
Doochie, Doochie... Like douchey.
Shepard Doochie... Good luck! If he
has any money left, it's mine--

He startles to find Peggy standing there. He didn't even hear her come in.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Jesus -- I'm in no mood, lady.

She throws the PHOTOS OF RANDY THE REPTILE on his desk.

PEGGY

Get in the mood. Workman's comp fraud. If this guy is doing workman's comp, you think he's not doing auto insurance fraud? Accidents? Look no further -- this place is a gold mine for you.

Bruce can't help but glance at the pictures: Randy lifting weights and, notably, leaping off the roof of a car, beer cozy in hand, malt liquor sloshing as Carol ducks.

BRUCE

Great. Now make my bills go away.

She grabs a stack of bills and shoves them in his drawer.

PEGGY

Denial is very misunderstood. And I think also underrated.

The landline RINGS. Bruce slightly flinches. He stares at the phone as if it's radioactive. Peggy picks up.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Bruce Harvey Private
Investigators...

He can't believe her audacity, but he doesn't stop her.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Uh-huh... Okay, couple'a questions: How much do you claim Mr. Harvey owes you? And two, what's your success rate talking to people with that mouth?

Bruce just stares at her, at once horrified and relieved.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

This call's being recorded for training purposes. I'm going to need you to state your name, address, direct extension, and the names of two supervisors... Uh huh... Honey, we trace calls all day long, it's our business. In about thirty more seconds, I'll have your home address. Oh, it's legal.

Bruce shakes his head, nervous, but Peggy raises a relaxed index finger. Shoots him an "I've-got-this" look.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Because we're a licensed private investigation firm, and you're harassing us... Oh, look, your home address just came up. How about I send somebody to teach you some manners? No? Then stay there and find out.

She hangs up. Coolly looks up at Bruce.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

You need me, and I need this job.

BRUCE

You don't have a record, do you?

PEGGY

No. No. Of course not. How far back would they look for that kind of thing?

(off his look)

Don't worry. I'm clean. When do you want me to start?

OUT THE WINDOW: A fat man gets out of a giant old Cadillac.

BRUCE

Fuck me.

PEGGY

Who's the beauty in the suit?

BRUCE

Hal Goldstein... Landlord.

PEGGY

(calculates)

Have you got money to pay me?

BRUCE

Twelve dollars an hour.

PEGGY

(indicating the pics)

And fifty percent of business I bring in.

BRUCE

Are you out of your mind?

PEGGY
Forty-five. No! BRUCE (CONT'D)

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Okay, thirty. I can't go lower.

BRUCE
Ten!

PEGGY
Fine.

The tension drains from his face a little.

BRUCE
I'm behind on a few things. But
I've got a lot of people owing me.

PEGGY
(heading to the door)
We'll take care of that. Let me
handle this.

42

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

42

Peggy meets Mr. Goldstein before he gets to the entrance.

PEGGY
Hi, Mr. Goldstein. Peggy Newman, I
work for Bruce Harvey.

MR. GOLDSTEIN
He's bringing hookers in the
daytime now?

PEGGY
Well, that just got you a sexual
harassment charge in civil court. I
was recording that on my phone. In
my pants. I looked at the books,
we're a month or two late on rent,
which, big deal. New bookkeeper.
There's money coming in, money
going out, it's business. We'll get
it to you as soon as possible.

MR. GOLDSTEIN
No.

A GRUBHUB DELIVERY GUY walks past them into the building.

PEGGY

I wasn't going to tip my hand, but the reason Bruce is so busy is all the hours he's putting in on the workman's comp suit he's filing against you--

She rattles the bannister at the entrance. She's in 5th gear.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

This banister nearly crippled him. He walks with a cane now -- why do you think I'm out here? He's ashamed for anyone to see him in this condition. It's his manhood. We're just deciding now how *much* to sue for. All depends on what the doctor sees in the x-rays today. We'll talk. Get my drift, fuckey?

MR. GOLDSTEIN

Good day.

He turns and walks away.

43 INT. OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER 43

Peggy heads back to Bruce's office and sees the GrubHub guy checking his phone, looking for an office number.

44 INT. BRUCE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER 44

Peggy comes in with the bag of food, FRANK written in Sharpie on the side. Bruce watches Goldstein get in his boat of a car.

BRUCE

What the fuck? You're like the asshole whisperer.

PEGGY

We're going to get this place fixed up -- it's going to be like a showplace.

Peggy unpacks the Mexican food she's just pilfered.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

You must be hungry. Here. Eat.

BRUCE

Where'd you get that?

PEGGY

Doesn't matter. So, what's my job?

BRUCE

Organizing and bringing me coffee.

PEGGY

Not just. Serving subpoenas, planting bugs, being a decoy. I've Googled this whole operation.

BRUCE

Monday morning at nine.

PEGGY

I don't get up before eleven.

BRUCE

Nine!

PEGGY

Okay, fine. Nine-thirty.

45

EXT. LOEWS HOTEL - DAY

45

Peggy is on her phone as she pulls into the hotel's entrance. Her's mother's ashes are in an urn in the passenger seat.

PEGGY

(into cell)

It's me. Your big sister. Finally with some good news. I got the job. It actually happened. So... I just wanna try to make up for being difficult, you know? I get it that I'm not a picnic, I admit that, but maybe you can forgive me just a little, maybe start over, you know, grant Mommy her dying wish: that we all be close. I love you guys.

Peggy chokes up as she parks in the hotel's semicircle.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(into cell)

I don't know if you checked out yet. I'm at your hotel. I can keep Dianne company on the way back from the airport. I brought Mommy's ashes with me, so maybe we could all go to Hawk's Peak to let some go. She used to love it there. I mean, it's touristy, but...

The phone goes dead. Beeps. She dials the number again. Just as it rings, she sees her siblings exiting the hotel with Stewart's luggage. Stewart looks at his ringing cell and makes a face. He offers it to Dianne, who, seeing the caller ID, rolls her eyes. Stewart turns off his phone. Pockets it.

ON PEGGY, heart-sick as she watches her siblings ignore her call and hop in Dianne's Audi. Her eyes fill with tears. And then she remembers something. She digs through her purse. Finds that vial of LSD and places a tiny tab on her tongue.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
(quietly to herself)
It's okay. You're gonna be okay.
Just hold on...

46 EXT. SAN JACINTO MOUNTAINS - MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY 46

We HEAR: Wagner's "Prelude to Tristan and Isolde". The same music we heard in the beginning.

Barreling up the foothills, past desert wild flowers and cacti, Peggy's Toyota whines as it speeds to the top.

47 INT. PEGGY'S CAR - DAY 47

Peggy sobs softly as her car hurtles up the steep mountain highway. Her mother's ashes and her phone, plugged into the stereo, bounce around in the passenger seat next to her.

Wagner crescendos through the speakers, and the LSD is starting to come on. Peggy widens and wipes at her eyes, not sure if she's seeing the road or hallucinations.

PEGGY'S P.O.V: Road signs caution traffic to slow. Straight ahead, the road ends suddenly with a scenic overlook.

But Peggy doesn't slow down. It looks like she's going to drive off the cliff and just be done with it.

Twenty feet from the edge, Peggy stomps on the brakes. The car skids on the dirt for another ten feet before coming to a stop at the edge of the cliff, perilously close.

48 EXT. MOUNTAIN CLIFF - SAME 48

Her mother's urn in her lap, Peggy listens to Wagner. A minivan pulls up next to her, and a family piles out to take pictures. Peggy is oblivious to them. She turns off her car and carries the urn a few feet away from the cliff's edge.

PEGGY

You never liked Wagner, but maybe now you can hear it. You know everything now, huh? Probably finally found out who stole grandpa's Krugerrands. Not me, lady. I mean, you never accused me, but now you know for sure... It was fuckin' daddy, wasn't it?

Peggy walks right up to the edge of the cliff and stares out at the horizon. Looks through the hallucinations for a sign.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

"You're safe here," that's what Isolde said to Tristan when he died. I sang that to you, you remember? You covered your ears and screamed, "Peggy, you can't sing, stop it," but now you get it, right?

Talking through her tears, she opens the urn. Takes some of the ashes out in her hand. Tripping her brains out as she stares at the ashes. Wow. This was a person. In many ways the love of her life. She holds the ashes out in front of her.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

(re. The ashes)

"Don't be scared, Tristan, just sleep, sleep..."

(crying to the horizon)

I don't know the German, but, swear to God, I'm learning it this year.

She tries to toss the ashes all the way to the clouds.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Fly free, Mommy. But not too far.

She slips on the hill from the toss, but catches herself.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Ow.

(yelling as she climbs up)

Fibromyalgia's a fucking little bitch!

She makes her way back up the hill. Passes the family with the minivan and brightens when she sees their LITTLE GIRL - wearing a pretty pink dress with a nice matching bag. The little girl smiles back at her proudly.

ANGLE ON THE FAMILY posing for pictures.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

What a beautiful dress. I think
you're the prettiest little girl
I've ever seen!

The little girl beams. Peggy melts.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Is that your mommy?

The little girl nods shyly. Peggy fights back tears.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Yeah.

(recovers semi-composure)

And that bag is gorgeous. I have
almost the same one. Replica Prada.
So versatile; the shoulder straps
are removable.

(commerce is so stupid)

Just as nice as the real thing,
right?

LITTLE GIRL

(honestly has no idea what
she's saying)

Uh huh.

PEGGY

What's real, anyway?

LITTLE GIRL

I don't know.

Peggy points at her.

PEGGY

Nobody does.

The little girl stares at her with curiosity.

LITTLE GIRL

Where's your mom?

Peggy looks around, tripping hard, a big smile on her face.
All she sees is love all around.

PEGGY

Everywhere.

(turning to leave)

Stay away from the edge, kid.

Peggy makes her way back to the car. She slides into the
driver's seat.

49

INT. PEGGY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

49

Peggy stares out at the mountain range from the driver's seat as HER PHONE RINGS. She glances down at the phone warmly, but can't remember how to answer it. It keeps RINGING.

PEGGY
(to ringing phone)
Hello, friend.

She SEES IT'S JEANNIE. She smiles and pushes different buttons until she finally gets it right.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Hiiii.

JEANNIE (O.S.)
Peggy! Money's missing from the Pioneer office! Owen saw you in the office the other day. They think you stole it!

Peggy laughs as though that's the funniest thing she's ever heard. She drops the phone on the passenger seat.

ONLY WE CAN HEAR Jeannie's distant voice continuing.

JEANNIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He's calling the cops, so--

WE SEE on the phone's screen a series of texts in giant font: '911! S.O.S.! MONEY STOLEN FROM THE STORE. CALL ASAP.'

But Peggy's SUPER high, and WAGNER'S BLASTING, so she doesn't notice or care.

With her pupils wide as saucers, she just gazes out at the mountain range, and SEES the heavenly realms.

Holding what's left of her mother's ashes close, she glimpses something in the landscape: the possible.

WE PULL BACK - drone shot - from above. A lone car with a lone soul as Wagner takes us into the sunset. It disperses into every color. And then to black.

THE END