

FRESHWATER

"Pilot"

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EXT. DESERT WASTELAND - DAY

The afternoon sun hangs in a cloudless sky... but this isn't some warm summer day. Blistering heat radiates from the cracked, parched earth. Not even a hint of a breeze.

Anything alive in this wasteland hides from the scorching sun under skeletal trees and emaciated cacti. Except for the BUZZARDS circling overhead.

A WOMAN appears on horseback. We see her in profile, cutting a silhouette against the pale sky. Faded red duster jacket. Stetson hat. Straight out of the Old West. Except her dress is slightly off. Ragged. Not quite 19th century. This is **ALDEN ZANE** (26, biracial, the toned build of a law-woman).

Her horse WHINNIES. She gives it a soothing pat. We dolly around... Revealing her HORSE HAS TWO HEADS! We are not in the Old West. We are in the future. Post-Nuclear-Apocalypse.

Alden removes a beaten-up GEIGER COUNTER from her jacket. The device CRACKLES. *CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.* The needle jumps. There is radiation here. Lots of it. She needs to keep moving.

Instead, she hops off her steed. Both horse heads SNORT.

ALDEN

Don't worry. I'll be quick.

She searches the area for something... Spots a faint indent in the soil. Only an experienced tracker would notice. She smells the dirt with her fingers. This is a HOOF PRINT.

She spots more hoof prints nearby. Alden is tracking someone, and they are headed further into the wastes.

EXT. DESERT WASTELAND - FORGOTTEN BATTLEFIELD - DAY

The sun is lower in the sky now, stretching shadows.

Alden continues through the desert. Her horse's hooves CRUNCH the topsoil. Until we realize it is *not* the earth making that sound, but bones... hundreds of skeletons litter the ground.

She checks her Geiger counter. *CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.* The needle's off the charts. This area is heavily irradiated.

She continues through the wrecked lands, past rusted Jeeps. A trashed U.S. Army tank. Unexploded mortar shells...

And still more skeletons. Whatever happened here, all those years ago, it was a massacre.

BARREN FIELD

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. Goes the Geiger counter. Alden ignores its dire warning. Stops in front of a barren field. A few skeletons lie about, but it's mostly devoid of wreckage.

A BALD MAN, MERIL (40s, looks 50s), stands stock still in the middle of the field. Visibly dehydrated. Partially sun-blind.

ALDEN
(calling out)
I appreciate you making it easy on me. They usually try an ambush of some sort.

She dangles a pair of shackles.

ALDEN
Let's go. We got a long ride ahead.

Meril refuses to move.

ALDEN
You really making me come over there? I swear, if I get a rock in my boot I'm gonna shove it up your--

He waves his arms in a panic.

MERIL
STOP!

A BUZZARD lands nearby. Looks around. *KA-BOOM!* The bird EXPLODES in a mess of guts and shrapnel.

After a few moments, the dust settles. Alden pokes her finger through a fresh hole in her jacket. Looks like her quarry ended up in the middle of a mine field.

MERIL
You okay?

ALDEN
Far as I know.

MERIL
I tried to warn you.

ALDEN
That's what that was? I hear "stop" and my first thought isn't, "the thief I've been tracking all day trapped himself in a fucking mine field." But thanks anyway.

She crosses to Meril's BURRO, two huge BARRELS strapped to its back, weighing down the poor creature.

She opens one of the casks. It's not gold or oil he's stolen... It's WATER. Alden takes a long draught.

MERIL

Hey! That's mine.

She ignores him. Leads the burro toward her horse.

MERIL

You can't leave me out here. I'll --

ALDEN

Die from radiation? The way my Geiger counter's popping off, I'd say you got a day, maybe less. Fair punishment for a water thief.

MERIL

You're supposed to be the Law.

She lashes the burro's reins to her saddle.

ALDEN

This is No Man's Land. You want laws, shoulda stayed in Freshwater.
(then)
Lucky for you there's a fifty liter bounty if I bring you back alive.

She crosses toward him.

Meril instinctively flees, forgetting for a moment that he is in a death trap. Alden gives chase.

BEEP. BEEP. *BOOM!*

Meril dodges an explosion.

BEEP. BEEP. *BOOM!*

A land mine DETONATES behind Alden. She's closing the gap.

Meril trips into a small gully. Continues his mad dash.

BEEP. BEEP. *BOOM!*

Shrapnel RIPS through Meril's leg. He crashes to the ground.

Alden slows her approach, letting him writhe in pain.

ALDEN

You think the bleeding's the bad part, but that pain'll pass. What's worse - for you, at least - is the pebble chafing my calf.

She digs a knee into the thief's back. Cuffs him.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

Now, how deep you want the boot, Father?

Flips him over, revealing a WHITE CLERICAL COLLAR around his neck. Meril is a priest.

She rips off a piece of her jacket. Presses the makeshift bandage onto *Father Meril's* wound. He HOWLS IN PAIN.

EXT. FRESHWATER - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

A large town at the edge of nowhere, built from the ruins of an older civilization (i.e. *us*). Shops and Saloons line a dusty main road. If you squint it resembles the Old West.

MAYOR CARHART (V.O.)

...Guilty of armed robbery,
assaulting an officer, perjury,
horse rustling...

EXT. FRESHWATER - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Blood oozes upward from the slashed throat of a DYING MAN. Flowing into his mouth and eyes. Defying gravity.

MAYOR CARHART (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...Improper entry to the country,
receiving stolen goods, selling
stolen goods, child endangerment...

Then our world tilts... The CAMERA ROTATES 180-DEGREES...

Until the dying man hangs upside down, strung up to a GALLOWS by his feet. Two other THIEFS bleed out beside him.

An ANGRY CROWD OF TOWNSFOLK look on. Rage in their eyes. Hatred. You can almost feel the tension in the air.

MAYOR COCO CARHART (50s, nappy red hair, mama bear energy) gives the sentencing. She's about as "white" as people get in this post-Apocalyptic melting pot. The ozone-less sky didn't spare the fair-skinned these past two-hundred fifty years.

MAYOR CARHART (CONT'D)

...And the high crime of water theft. The condemned, Miles Ray Tillman, George Frederik, A.K.A. Frederico Pacifico, and Bo Haft...

COLONEL GUILLERMO QUEVERRA (40s) observes from behind the crowd, flanked by SOLDIERS in identical red duster jackets (aka REDCOATS).

(NOTE: *In this dystopian future that resembles the Old West, the Redcoats are our version of the Union Army, the law and order that everyone needs but no one wants*).

Queverra scans the crowd, his face a cratered moonscape thanks to smallpox and an absence of sunscreen.

MAYOR CARHART

...We opened our doors to these men and they spat on our generosity...

Queverra pulls his horse alongside MAJOR DUFRESNE [DOO-FRAIN] (50s), sitting high in his saddle (the man never slouches), sporting a mustache that would make Sam Elliott blush.

QUEVERRA

Any word on the priest?

Dufresne shakes his head.

MAJ. DUFRESNE

While I appreciate a good blood-letting, Sir, I think our time's better served back at the Ranch. Sheriff's got his deputies on this.

MAYOR CARHART (O.S.)

...As your mayor, and as a Carhart, it is my job and privilege to keep this town thriving, to build upon the legacy of my family, and most important, to make us safe...

QUEVERRA

You trust *them* to keep the peace?

Four visibly intoxicated DEPUTIES guard the hanging men. It's obvious from looking at them that they are all related to the Mayor (red hair, crude tattoos, penchant for piercings).

MAYOR CARHART (O.S.)

...These *monsters* were found guilty, and by my hand they have met justice. They are giving back in blood what they stole from us. May their fluids bless the earth...

Nearby, **SHERIFF BURNSIDE** (40s, homespun suit, tin star on his lapel) scans the crowd with the two extra eyes on his face.

MAJ. DUFRESNE

The mutie's capable enough.

QUEVERRA

Mayor Carhart controls the only untainted aquifer for five hundred miles. 'Less you wanna us squeezing droplets outta cacti, we're gonna look after this town. Entiendes?

MAJ. DUFRESNE

Yes, Sir.

MAYOR CARHART

...I'd say Lord have mercy, but they don't deserve that kindness. Let 'em burn in hell.

The Crowd ROARS its approval.

She nods to the Deputies. *More punishment.* The massive LEAD DEPUTY unsheathes his Bowie knife. Grabs the dying man -- *SHUNK!* A ROCK SHATTERS the Deputy's eye socket.

THIEF'S WIFE

You kilt him! He's innocent!

The THIEF'S WIFE (30s) lets loose another rock. Her TWIN BOYS (4, blond, wafer thin) throw slightly smaller rocks.

The Deputies POUNCE on the woman. PUNCHING. STOMPING. PUMMELING her. It is brutal to watch.

Her Twin Boys helplessly swat at the Lead Deputy. *CRACK!* He BACKHANDS one of them.

Queverra is there in an instant, CHOKING OUT the Lead Deputy.

Redcoats swarm the Deputies. Pull them off the Thief's Wife. She flails and kicks. CLAWS Major Dufresne in the face.

A GUNSHOT echoes across the square. The Redcoats and the Deputies stop their scrum.

Sheriff Burnside stands on the gallows platform, smoking gun raised to the sky. His tin star gleams in the morning sun.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

That's enough now.

(then)

Thank you for your assistance, Colonel Queverra. My men can take it from here.

Queverra stares him down.

MAYOR CARHART

I share your sentiments, Sheriff.
It is always a pleasure having our
distinguished guests from the North
visit. I wish you all safe travels
back to your base.

Queverra nods to his soldiers. They reluctantly let go of the
Deputies and slink back to their horses.

QUEVERRA

What happens to the woman?

MAYOR CARHART

She's a Stater, probably crossed
illegally.

QUEVERRA

Or she came through the camps and
has every right to be here.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

Either way, she assaulted my
deputies. She hangs.

QUEVERRA

The kids?

MAYOR CARHART

I know you're new to the job,
Colonel, but one thing your
predecessor knew well was the...
delineation of things. You patrol
the lands 'round the border, do
some civilizing. And we live our
lives, *in peace*. I trust we can
reach a similar agreement.

With that, Carhart and Burnside leave Queverra.

Major Dufresne approaches.

MAJ. DUFRESNE

Orders, sir?

QUEVERRA

Fetch my horse and meet me at the
cistern. I need a fucking drink.

EXT. FRESHWATER - MAIN STREET - DAY

A mutt feverishly licks a bone-dry water trough.

Queverra walks down the street. The pavement long ago crumbled to dust. Most windows are shattered or boarded up. The entire town feels like it's covered in an inch of dirt.

He tips his cap to various PEDESTRIANS, but all he gets back are sneers. The Redcoats are not a welcome presence here.

He crosses toward a massive metal structure rising up from the center of town, a giant WATER CISTERN. ARMED DEPUTIES stand guard. Gaunt TOWNSFOLK line up for their water rations.

A MAN WITH AN EXTRA ARM cuts the water queue. An OLD MAN grabs his shirt. They wrestle each other to the ground.

Other townsfolk kick dust and shout curses.

The Deputies chuckle.

Queverra sighs. Heads toward the ruckus, gun drawn.
Somebody's gotta keep the peace.

ANGLE ON: Spray painted in red across the cistern is the name, "FRESHWATER." SPLAT! BIRD SHIT dribbles down the "W."

WE FOLLOW a passing BUZZARD as it flies through the air, over the endless desert.

Then we ZOOM OUT. WIDER AND WIDER. Giving us a literal bird's eye view of dry river beds. Empty lakes. Dirt-capped mountains. And in the distance, a few HUMAN SETTLEMENTS.

And as we pull up into the atmosphere, we realize... We're in CANADA. Just north of what used to be Montana, to be exact. Because the U.S.A. is an irradiated disaster zone.

This is a dying world. The land is parched. The oceans are toxic. And it's all our fault.

END TEASER

ACT ONEEXT. FRESHWATER - STATERVILLE - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

A refugee shantytown at the edge of Freshwater, "Staterville" is a mass of repurposed tin lean-tos and blue tarp tents. To the locals it's a pox on Freshwater, filled with REFUGEES from the former United States, aka "Staters."

Queverra steps over a cesspool as he crosses toward a makeshift MEDICAL CLINIC. Gaunt Staters stare at him as he passes, their starved skin pulled taught against frail bones.

EXT./INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

THROUGH A WINDOW, WE WATCH Queverra approach. He tips his hat to a filthy WOMAN breastfeeding an INFANT.

VICK THE STATER (O.S.)
(in pain)
Donnie, can you hear me?

ANGLE ON: **DR. KITT FOLLEY** (30s, afro, surgical apron) swabs the neck of a Stater, **VICK** (40s, beard, cherry nose). A TINY LIFELESS HEAD covered in gangrene grows out of his shoulder.

KITT
You keep moving I'm gonna remove both your heads.

The clinic is the cleanest place you'll find in Freshwater, but it's still decrepit like everything else. Even the stainless steel table has stains on it.

VICK THE STATER
(weeping)
Donnie never hurt nobody.

KITT
Because he's not alive.

VICK THE STATER
Oh Christlord! Is he dead?!

KITT
This head's never done nothing but wobble around on your shoulder. It doesn't even have a brain.

VICK THE STATER
 He's my brother!
 (then, defensive)
 He winked at me once.

Kitt douses a rag in motor oil. Before Vick can speak again --

She claps the rag over his mouth. Vick THRASHES. MUFFLED SCREAMS. Kitt holds him down. He FLAILS. KICKS. SCRATCHES. Until finally... he passes out.

She grabs a bone saw off the table.

QUEVERRA (O.S.)
 This a bad time?

The door shuts behind Queverra. He removes his Stetson.

KITT
 He'll be out for awhile.

Queverra eyes the motor oil, then the saw.

QUEVERRA
 No morphine?

KITT
 Ran out last week. Still waiting on that shipment from New Vancouver.
 (then)
 They catch those water thieves?

QUEVERRA
 Most of 'em.

He sniffs the rag. Not a bad buzz.

QUEVERRA
 Why'd you leave, Kitt? All it takes is one asshole crying "witch"...

KITT
 I'm a doctor. Witchcraft is whatever bullshit Meril's peddling.

QUEVERRA
 It was Father Meril stole the water. Ran off with ninety gallons and let some Staters take the fall. Mayor Carhart bled them out right in the street... It's not safe.

KITT

The Ranch is too far out. I can't help people if they're dead by the time they get to me. I only noticed Vick's rotting head because I saw him through the window.

QUEVERRA

Did you hear me? There's *blood* in the streets. We can protect you at the Ranch.

KITT

(sarcastic)

Your protection did my husband a lotta good.

QUEVERRA

He might still be out there.

He knows that's a lie. Can't even look her in the eyes.

KITT

Then why'd you stop looking?

(then)

No. Sam's dead, and any affiliation I may have had with his regiment died with him.

QUEVERRA

Kitt...

KITT

You're the Colonel now.

(then)

I'll see you when I do my rounds.

End of argument. Queverra nods. As he puts on his Stetson --

They hear GUNSHOTS in the distance. He gives Kitt a look. But she's not going anywhere.

EXT. DESERT WASTELAND - DAY

Alden moseys along on her two-headed horse.

Behind her, Father Meril slowly comes to. He's seated atop the burro, hands tied behind his back.

ALDEN

How's the leg?

FATHER MERIL

Eat shit.

ALDEN

"You're welcome" would've sufficed.

They ride in silence for a moment.

FATHER MERIL

What happened to the others?

ALDEN

Never made it outta town. But that was your plan all along wasn't it? Lead your flock to water, let 'em catch a bullet for you?

Father Meril refuses to talk. It's gonna be like that. But Alden can't help herself, she *needs* to know why he did it.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

You had them *all* under your roof. Staters. Canucks. Praying, 'stead of shooting each other. Even singing a song or two. You were holding Freshwater together.

The Priest stares into the distance, pretending not to hear.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

So was it the power? You build it, you can break it? That it? Or did God tell you to be a shithead?

(then)

You owed 'em more than that. Don't gotta be a saint, but why a devil?

Father Meril lets the silence linger.

FATHER MERIL

You're a Stater too, aren't ya? Yeah, I see it now. It's in the eyes. Those refugee camps, they stay with you... like a sickness.

Alden ignores him.

FATHER MERIL (CONT'D)

Redcoats must've promised you big. Fight on the frontier for fifteen, twenty years, hunting your own kind, then your contract's up and you... get your own lake, huh? All the water you can drink?

Alden knows it's bullshit, but hope is all she has.

FATHER MERIL (CONT'D)
 You might wear a red coat, but
 you'll never be one of them.

His words cut deep. Before Alden can respond --

Meril's burro rears up, flinging him to the ground.

ALDEN
 Your steed seems to disagree.

She calms the frightened animal.

A large metal cylinder juts out of the ground, like some sort of broken exhaust pipe. This is what scared the burro. Alden ignores it. The wastes are filled with "relics" like this.

Meril SCREAMS bloody murder!

ANGLE ON: BLOOD OOZES from his busted mouth. Meril bit part of his tongue off in the fall.

FATHER MERIL
 (lispig)
 Oh Jethuth. Thupid fucking ath. I
 loht my tongue!

Alden finds his tongue in the dirt. Wipes it on her jacket.

ALDEN
 Here. Hold your tongue.

Meril stares at his bloody tongue in a daze.

Alden hoists him onto her saddle.

The two ride off. Freshwater is a speck in the distance.

EXT. FRESHWATER - DUSK

Hours later, Alden saunters into town. Meril is slumped onto her shoulder, weak from the heat and blood loss.

Freshwater's streets are eerily empty. Ancient plastic grocery bags blow through like tumbleweeds. No one in sight. Something is very wrong.

Alden spots a HEADLESS CORPSE. Blood pooling in the dirt. She recognizes the victim by the boots (This was CLAY BOONE).

Someone WHISTLES.

A rugged Redcoat, **SGT. GRISHAM KING** (30s, Steve McQueen with a mullet) waves her over from a darkened doorway.

INT. LEECH'S MINING SUPPLIES - DUSK

Deputies drag Meril across the threshold. Sheriff Burnside barricades the door behind them.

Grisham peers out the window.

ALDEN

What happened? Unpaid bar tab?

MAYOR CARHART (O.S.)

Stater scum.

Mayor Carhart swaggers into the room.

ALDEN

Mayor.

MAYOR CARHART

I want 'em all dead!

Sheriff Burnside explains.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

Some unknown individuals went on a shooting spree. Might be refugees.

MAYOR CARHART

It's goddamn Staters, just say it.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

We believe it's retaliation for the hangings. They're still at large.

GRISHAM

Took Clay Boone's head clean off.

He gives her a look. A stolen moment, just for her. But we see it. Relief. Because she's alive. He cares about her.

ALDEN

I saw... Any of ours?

Their moment is broken by Carhart. She sees Father Meril and POUNCES on him, LANDING BLOW AFTER BLOW ON HIS FACE.

MAYOR CARHART

Fuckin' traitor!

Burnside and the deputies let Carhart have her fun.

She gets in a few more licks before Alden pushes them apart.

ALDEN

He's my prisoner. You want him. You pay. Fifty liters.

MAYOR CARHART

Outta my way.

Sheriff reasons with Alden, trying to diffuse the situation.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

You won't get any water 'til we eliminate the shooters. Whole town's on lockdown.

GRISHAM

I take it you want our help with that too?

MAYOR CARHART

I know better than to ask anything of the Royal Canadian Army. None of you lift a finger 'less you're pissing clear.

GRISHAM

Then good luck to ya. I prefer not being shot at anyway.

He heads for the door.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

Eighty liters.

Carhart shoots Burnside a look. This is not the first time the Sheriff has undercut her. It better be the last.

ALDEN

You already owe me fifty for bringing the priest back alive.

MAYOR CARHART

Sixty. Plus what's owed.

GRISHAM

It's not our job to negotiate. Let's find the Colonel and get back to the Ranch.

ALDEN

One-sixty all in. Straight from the aquifer.

(MORE)

ALDEN (CONT'D)

We're not taking that shit's been sitting in the cistern for weeks.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

That's double what was *stolen*. You got thirty times that in reserve.

GRISHAM

Right. We don't need this. Alden...

Her eyes do not waver from Carhart.

ALDEN

One-sixty. All-in.

Carhart cackles, showing off her gold-capped canines.

MAYOR CARHART

You got bigger balls than your Colonel. Might wanna get that checked out. One-sixty it is. *From the cistern.*

They shake.

ALDEN

Any idea where they're holed up?

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

My boys took some fire by the church 'fore we regrouped. Could still be there. Seem dumb enough.

With the negotiation complete, Carhart drags Father Meril toward the back, a sadistic smile on her face.

MAYOR CARHART

I'm 'a take a liter outta you for every drop you costed me.

Alden feels a pang of guilt as she watches them go. His blood is on her hands. But empathy can get you killed out here.

EXT. FRESHWATER - STATERVILLE - DUSK

The waning sun casts swaths of darkness over the street.

Alden and Grisham's shadows precede them as they slowly creep toward a RAMSHACKLE CHURCH at the edge of Staterville, standing out amongst the tents and hovels.

The Sheriff and his posse of deputies follow closely behind. A JITTERY DEPUTY clutches a TORCH with trembling hands.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE
Careful with that.

GRISHAM
Can't we just smoke 'em out? Be a
lot quicker.

ALDEN
The whole place'll go up like
tinder and we'll never get paid.

GRISHAM
I was against this, remember?
You're the one keeps running after
every horse thief and chicken
fucker with a bounty on his head.

Grisham winks. There's more than just sarcasm to their
banter, there's flirtation. These two have history.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE
Would you two shut up. They could
hear you at the border.

ALDEN
Don't we *want* to draw 'em --

Suddenly she VOMITS all over the ground.

GRISHAM
You getting nervy on me?

ALDEN
I'm dehydrated.

Grisham sees through her lie. He's worried, but he decides
not to press it. Now's not the time.

GRISHAM
There's no medal for bravery out
here. There's just living or dying.

Sheriff Burnside spots a TRAIL OF BLOOD leading from the
Church. He grabs a torch from a deputy to see it better.

A SHINY OBJECT glitters in the low light. Grisham picks it
up. It's a JUMBLE OF GOLD EARRINGS... and they're all
attached to a DECOMPOSING HUMAN EAR!

ALDEN
What is it?

GRISHAM
Deadmen.

The deputies blanch. This is the worst possible news.
But Alden's at a loss. She's still an outsider in this world.

GRISHAM
(explaining)
The border tribes, when one of 'em
gets the rads, they send 'em off
'fore they die. Take out as many
settlers as they can. "Deadmen."

ALDEN
What do they call the ladies?

Grisham shakes his head.

GRISHAM
Never seen one.

EXT. STATERVILLE - LATER

Sheriff Burnside follows the blood trail through septic
streets, his torch doing little to combat the darkness.

Alden eyes the jittery deputy. He looks ready to bolt.

But Grisham's eyes are on her. Watching. Concerned. It's not
just dehydration... she looks sweaty. Pale. Sick.

Sheriff raises a fist.

They all stop in their tracks.

The torches illuminate a BLOODY CORPSE in a gutter.

GRISHAM
(sotto)
One of yours?

Burnside shrugs. He can't tell from this distance.

Alden steps toward it, but Grisham grabs her. *Not your job.*

Sheriff Burnside waves over the torch-less deputy.

The deputy takes step. After. Tentative. Step.

Clenches his rifle. White knuckles. Takes a deep breath,
trying to will his heart from beating out of his chest.

He rolls over the corpse and --

BOOM! His head BURSTS in an ERUPTION OF BUCKSHOT AND BRAIN MATTER, showering Sheriff Burnside and the other deputies.

The "corpse" is a DEADMAN (30s), and he's very much alive, even though his irradiated flesh hangs off him like melted cheese. He FIRES a sawed-off shotgun at the jittery deputy --

BOOM! A GAPING HOLE opens up in the man's stomach.

Sheriff Burnside gets a shot off --

BANG! RIPS OFF the top of the Deadman's skull. Brain fluid OOZES from the cavity. But he keeps firing, even as he dies --

Barely misses the Sheriff.

BANG! BANG! Bullets KICK UP DUST in front of the Redcoats.

A second DEADMAN (20s) FIRES twin Rugers from behind a tin shed. A malformed THIRD ARM hangs uselessly from his side (so we'll call him THREE-ARM).

Alden DIVES behind the rusted skeleton of a truck.

Grisham almost lands on top of her.

A look between them... This has gone to shit.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - NIGHT

Kitt peeks out the window, trying to see what's going on...

But it's too dark. She can only make out MUZZLE FLASHES.

She crawls over to the unconscious Vick.

Sees his second head discarded in a bucket.

She holds up a mirror to Vick's mouth. It fogs. Barely. He's still breathing, for now.

GUNSHOTS. Kitt instinctively ducks.

CRASH! Alden flies through the window. Landing with an "oof."

More GUNSHOTS from the street. SHOUTS. SCREAMS.

Alden takes in her surroundings... The clinic. *Fuck.* She would rather be out there, getting shot at, than in here. Because Alden does not want to face Kitt. Not now. Not ever.

KITT
You're bleeding.

A glass shard juts from Alden's bloody arm. But her eyes stay on the window, waiting for an enemy, her gun at the ready.

KITT
You need a suture.

ALDEN
(sotto)
I'll manage.

WE HEAR GUNFIRE in the distance. The battle's moving away.

The silence hangs there for a moment, neither knows what to say. It's too much for Alden.

ALDEN
I'm sorry we couldn't find him.

KITT
You don't have to --

ALDEN
I'd still be in the camps if it wasn't for Folley. Or dead. Though I might be headed that way in a few... Anyway, stay low.
(then)
And sorry 'bout the window.

She steps through the broken window.

EXT. FRESHWATER - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Three-Arm brazenly stalks the street. Firing into windows. Shouting AD LIBBED OBSCENITIES. A palsied smile plastered on his putrid face. He's getting off on the mayhem.

A BRAVE DEPUTY steps out from an alley.

Three-Arm immediately guns him down.

INT. FRESHWATER BARBERSHOP - CONTINUOUS

Queverra watches Three-Arm through a cracked door. Gripping his Smith & Wesson. Waiting for the right moment to strike.

He glances across the room... An ASHEN WOMAN presses dirty rags against the bleeding stomach of an INJURED BARBER. They're innocent victims in this ruthless attack.

QUEVERRA
Keep pressing. I'll be back.

Queverra nods to her. He will end this. Time to be the hero.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Queverra KICKS OPEN the door. SPLINTERS fly. He WHIPS his Smith & Wesson around like a seasoned gunslinger. FIRES at the bewildered Deadman. *Clint Eastwood eat your heart out.*

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. Goes the empty chamber. Queverra forgot to reload his fucking gun. *Oops.*

He stands there. Out of ammo. Completely helpless.

But the Deadman does not shoot... He LAUGHS. An haunting CACKLE. It's all a big joke to him. The attack. The murder. The chaos. And Queverra is the biggest joke of all.

The laughter cuts the Colonel to the bone. Because this villainous stranger has hit on his greatest fear... That he is a fraud. A punchline. An emperor without any clothes.

Three-Arm lifts his Rugers to shoot Queverra --

BANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANGBANG! A HAIL OF BULLETS RIP APART THE DEADMAN. Until he is a red, pulpy mess.

Grisham, Alden, and the Redcoats we met in the Teaser surround the mutilated Deadman, their weapons smoking.

GRISHAM

You all right?

QUEVERRA

My gun... it jammed.

He pulls himself together. But he is deeply shaken.

GRISHAM

That's the last of 'em, I think.

ALDEN (O.S.)

Uh... Colonel.

Queverra feels something at his feet. A FLOOD OF WATER running through the street. And the source --

The town's water cistern. Punctured by bullet holes. Leaking.

Off his horror, we --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOEXT. FRESHWATER - MAIN STREET - MORNING

Burnside sticks a gnarled finger through a bullet hole in the water cistern. Peers inside with his extra eyes.

Shafts of light illuminate a tiny pool of water at the bottom. It's barely enough for a dog let alone a town.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE
Crossfire. No question.

He joins Carhart and Queverra, huddled beside the cistern.

The surviving Redcoats (including Alden and Grisham) monitor a gathering crowd of LOOKIE-LOOS.

QUEVERRA
We did the job you hired us for.
We're not responsible for
collateral damage.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE
Lotta people gonna be thirsty.

MAYOR CARHART
You want your payment, lick what's
left off the ground.

QUEVERRA
You made a deal with my soldiers.

His clenched fist trembles at his side. No one notices, but the Colonel is still disturbed by his Deadman encounter.

MAYOR CARHART
And that deal was for water
expressly from the cistern. Which
is now under your feet.

QUEVERRA
You've got an aquifer full'a
clean. Pump more.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE
That's not a fair compromise --

MAYOR CARHART
Fine then.

Sheriff Burnside gives her a look. There's a secret between them, something big, but it's not his to tell.

MAYOR CARHART (CONT'D)

But... I want you escorting me to
the pump. None of them other
Redcoats. Just you.

(then)

In case any more gunfights break
out, I know you'll have my back.

She eyes the Deadman's corpse, its bloody entrails already
turning black in the midday sun.

Queverra tries to read her, but Carhart gives away nothing.

QUEVERRA

Sergeant Grisham. Round up the dead
and return to base.

(then, to Carhart)

Lead the way.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER

Redcoats pile VICTIMS' CORPSES beside the damaged cistern. A
MANGY DOG grabs a severed foot and flees down the street.

Grisham pokes at Three-Arm's viscera using an obscenely large
Bowie knife.

Alden watches, picks at the wound on her arm.

ALDEN

He's still contaminated, ya know.

GRISHAM

I'm being careful.

He gives Alden a concerned look. He's still worried about
her. But he's too much of a soldier to say anything.

ALDEN

You keep at it, you'll be growing a
pair 'a tits in no time.

GRISHAM

And won't you be jealous.

Alden kicks some bloody slop at him. Grisham blows a kiss.
Then he's back to sifting through the viscous mess.

After a few moments, he pulls out the Deadman's jawbone with
his knife. Blood drips off a ROW OF GOLD TEETH.

Some nearby LOOKIE-LOOS take notice.

ALDEN

Probably had his sack pierced if
you wanna fish that out too.

GRISHAM

Gotta leave something for the
locals.

Kitt drags Vick the Stater's dead body towards them.

GRISHAM

Making a donation, Doc?

She leaves the body beside the pile of corpses. Stalks off
without a word, angry with herself. She failed. Again.

ALDEN

Doctor Folley...

Kitt pauses.

KITT

You wanna keep that arm, you need
it cleaned and sewn. ASAP.

Alden doesn't budge. Too much pride and guilt.

GRISHAM

Thank you for the offer, Doc.
(then)
Alden. You heard her. Get going.

She stares him down. He knows how hard this is for her. But
he's not budging.

GRISHAM (CONT'D)

That's an order.

She nods. That's how it's gonna be. Shuffles after Kitt.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

Kitt turns on a gas lamp, ILLUMINATING the empty clinic.

Blood cakes the operating table, Vick's blood.

Alden steps inside.

A breeze blows through the broken window, ruffling the pages
of a yellowing medical textbook. Kitt shuts it.

Drags over a stool.

KITT

Take a seat.

Lights an oil lamp to get a better look.

She studies Alden... Her skin looks even paler in the dull light. The beads of sweat stand out. Bags under her eyes. Whatever Grisham saw, she sees it too.

KITT

You ever see a doctor before?

Alden eyes the broken window. Not wanting to listen. She's spent so long avoiding her past...

ALDEN

They tested us... every couple months. In the camps.

Kitt wipes the blood from Alden's arm with a cloth.

KITT

When was the last time you slept?

ALDEN

I try not to. Live longer that way.

Kitt dips her fingers in a jar of white paste. Rubs the salve on Alden's wound. It stings.

KITT

You need to sleep.
(then)
How long were you in No Man's Land?

The question catches Alden off guard.

ALDEN

How'd you--

KITT

Are you feeling queasy? Headache?
It usually starts that way. Nausea.
Tiredness. But that could be the
lack of sleep...

ALDEN

Hold up. Just... Are you... You
saying I got the rads?

For the first time, Alden is truly terrified.

EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

Alden stumbles out the clinic. Thoughts swirling. Barely conscious of the world around her. She looks like a woman who just received a death sentence.

GRISHAM (O.S.)

There we go. Good as new.

Grisham waits with both of their horses. He offers the reins to her two-headed steed.

GRISHAM

It's never as bad as you think.

Alden hides behind a fake smile. Nods agreement. She is not going to tell him the truth. Not yet.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Alden, Grisham, and a few Redcoats ride a dusty road out of town, pulling carts full of corpses behind them.

Grisham glances back at corpses. Most of them Staters.

GRISHAM

You know any of 'em... from before?

Alden refuses to answer.

GRISHAM

I hope you're not dragging an auntie behind you, s'all.

They ride in silence. But his question grates on her. Months he's known her. Years. And he never asked about her past.

ALDEN

Why you asking me now? How many bodies we dragged back to the ranch ... but this time you're curious?

He shrugs. He was just trying to make conversation. Trying to keep the banter light. But he clearly hit a nerve.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

They got camps far as the coast. Twenty? Fifty? They don't plan much building 'em, didn't account for fallout, air quality, water...

GRISHAM

I've heard --

ALDEN

But you never *seen*. Starvation.
Thirst. Disease. Worse... And
that's all *before* we had to cross
the wastes to New Vancouver. Me
being here, 'stead of back in that
cart, that's a fucking miracle. So
I don't want to see if my aunt's
decomposing back there.

(then)

Wouldn't know what she looked like.

The Redcoats give Grisham a look. He really stepped in it.

But his attention is elsewhere...

A PLUME OF SMOKE rises in the desert.

GRISHAM

The Ranch...

They share a look. This is bad.

ALDEN

Go. I'll handle the dead.

Grisham and two Redcoats race off toward the smoke cloud.

EXT. THE RANCH - MAIN GATE - DAY

The galloping Redcoats near a former minimum security prison turned military outpost (aka "The Ranch"). A few walls have collapsed, what's left standing was reinforced with wood, cement, scrap metal, and abandoned automobiles.

Six REDCOAT PRIVATES idle outside the main gate, watching a SMOKE BOMB fizzle. We can immediately tell that they are Staters, enlisted into the Royal Canadian Army in exchange for the promise of citizenship, just like Alden.

GRISHAM

What the hell happened here?

The Privates look to each other. No one wants to talk.

GRISHAM

Privates. Report.

PVT. LOACH (19, sunken eyes, peach fuzz) speaks up.

PVT. LOACH

It was an accident, sir.

Grisham studies Loach. The lack of eye contact. The hand wringing. The flop sweat. He's lying.

GRISHAM

Accident. You're going with the singular here... So, you abandoning your posts in the middle of the day, that's the accident, right? 'Cuz that'd mean the pin pulled *itself*. Or was the smoke grenade the accident and you all deserted for no good reason?

PVT. LOACH

We, uh... I was cleaning the armory, sir. And, uh... It went off, so I brought it out here.

A BURLY PRIVATE interjects, helping out his friend.

BURLY PRIVATE

He was keeping us safe.

The commotion attracts REDCOATS from inside the base. Grisham waves over a leathery SENIOR OFFICER (50s).

GRISHAM

Officer Billick, please escort Private Loach to the stockades.

The Privates ERUPT IN PROTEST.

REDCOAT PRIVATES

That ain't fair! / Fuck that! / Said it was an accident!

GRISHAM

Screw it. Take 'em all.

The Privates' protests grow louder. They HURL INSULTS.

Loach's hand dances over his holster. The situation is tense.

PVT. LOACH

This is bullcrap. I'm a hero.

GRISHAM

You're an idiot. One damn spark and we're dead. One. It's why we keep the bombs locked up.

(then)

Will someone take this damn Stater to the stockades?

Loach draws his pistol.

PVT. LOACH

This is, uh...

(searching for the word)

Bigotism. Yeah. I got a right to
serve. I signed my papers.

Major Dufresne (Queverra's #2) rides through the gate, his
face still scratched up from the fracas in the Teaser.

MAJ. DUFRESNE

Sergeant Grisham, why's our base
suddenly bereft of soldiers?

(sniffs the air)

Is that...?

GRISHAM

Unauthorized use of fire by Private
Loach here. Abandoning his post.
Dereliction of duty. Mutiny...

PVT. LOACH

It's only smoke. I didn't mean--

MAJ. DUFRESNE

Twenty days in the cooker.

PVT. LOACH

But... No one's lasted longer than
ten. Sir...

MAJ. DUFRESNE

You can plead your case when
Colonel Queverra returns.

Redcoats round up the Privates. They go peacefully this time.

Grisham watches them disappear inside the base. He
commiserates with Dufresne, expecting an understanding.
They've both been here since the beginning.

GRISHAM

Never seen that when Folley was
around. Next they'll be throwing a
hoedown.

MAJ. DUFRESNE

He was one man. Maybe it's you that
needs to be better.

His words catch Grisham off guard. But the Major is dead
serious. He and Grisham are not the same. And never will be.

Dufresne rides back into the base.

Moments later, Alden arrives with the corpse carts.

ALDEN

I see the Ranch is still standing.

GRISHAM

For now.

(then)

You're on disposal. Get to it.

He stalks off.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

Kitt carefully removes a broken pane from the window frame.

A CHILD'S LAUGH draws her attention outside...

TOWNSFOLK go about their business. Repairing homes. Feeding horses. Hawking goods. Putting the gunfight behind them.

Kitt spots a YOUNG GIRL (3) splashing about in a pool of blood. Having the time of her life. Blissfully unaware.

OUCH! Kitt absent-mindedly sliced her finger. She sucks on her bleeding digit. Searches for a bandage.

Nothing in the drawer.

She checks around the operating table...

The WHITE SIGHTLESS EYES of Vick's extra head stare up at her from the medical waste bucket.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - LATER

Kitt rummages through a closet, her finger bandaged.

Familiar red coats hang from rusty hangers, an empty holster beside them. And perched on a shelf... a dusty STETSON HAT. These belonged to her husband.

She fishes out a SIX-SHOOTER. Still loaded.

Hurries out of the clinic.

EXT. DESERT WASTELAND - HILLSIDE - DAY

Carhart whistles an eerie tune as she leads Queverra up a dirt path, past sickly trees and bare bushes.

Queverra scans his surroundings, hand always on his sidearm. He's on high alert, eyeing the barbed wire fence surrounding the base of the hill, ARMED GUARDS perched in watchtowers made from repurposed steel. It feels like a fortress.

Freshwater glimmers in the distance.

QUEVERRA

Near a dozen dead and you're riding off with a Redcoat. There's gonna be questions...

MAYOR CARHART

People talk. Keeps 'em busy.

QUEVERRA

And if they ask why their mayor couldn't protect them from a few tribesmen? Not many refugees left to hang.

MAYOR CARHART

There'll be more. I could shoot 'em at the door, they'd keep coming in.

She spits out the words. Her hatred is palpable.

QUEVERRA

You know what's past that border? Death. The pox. Radiation. Heat worse than you can imagine...

Carhart's heard the rumors. She's seen the deformities, the cancer, the starving children. But that's not her problem.

MAYOR CARHART

My family's been in Freshwater a long time. Since before the Great War, when angels roamed the skies, dropping hellfire --

QUEVERRA

They were called airplanes. Not angels. And they dropped bombs.

MAYOR CARHART

They also say the ground here used to be green. You ever seen it?

(then)

(MORE)

MAYOR CARHART (CONT'D)

I'm not the monster you think.
Three dead Staters means three more
of *my* people get water for the day.
Wouldn't you do the same?

QUEVERRA

My orders are to protect the
southern territory and the people
in it. I don't care where they call
home. We're all thirsting out here.

MAYOR CARHART

And *what* are you protecting them
from, huh? All those evils past the
border, the death, the disease, *I*
am the only one holding it back. If
Freshwater falls, Vancouver's next.

QUEVERRA

That's why we're here.

Carhart almost laughs at Queverra's naiveté, but she knows
the truth, and it's time he knew it too.

MAYOR CARHART

What do you know about your
predecessor taking his four best
men into the wastes?

QUEVERRA

Colonel Folley informed me that a
group of settlers out in No Man's
Land found an unexploded ordinance.
What old-timers called a nuke. So
he led a team out for disposal.

MAYOR CARHART

That what he told you? Not a lotta
trust for the man he picked to take
his place.

They arrive at a WATER PUMP STATION. It's intricate. Ancient.

QUEVERRA

You implying he lied to me about
his mission?

MAYOR CARHART

I'm not implying. I'm saying. He
lied to all of you.

QUEVERRA

Careful with your words now.
Slander's a crime, even out here.

She ignores his idle threat.

MAYOR CARHART
See that chain dangling over there?
Would you be a doll and pull the
lever beside it?

QUEVERRA
That's not the pump.

MAYOR CARHART
It's the dipstick. I want you to
check the water level.

Queverra does as he's told. Reaches for a lever.

MAYOR CARHART
It's the other one.

He pulls the other lever.

A chain *CLANKS* as it slowly emerges from a hole in the ground, winding itself around a winch. *CLANK*. Winding. *CLANK*. And winding. *CLANK*. And winding. *CLANK*.

MAYOR CARHART
How much water you got stored?

QUEVERRA
A few weeks, no more than a month's
worth I'd say. Why?

CLANK. CLANK. CLANK.

MAYOR CARHART
Your Colonel wasn't looking for no
nuke. He was searching for water...

CLUNK! The chain abruptly stops. A large METAL DIPSTICK dangles from the winch. Barely wet. The water level must be mere inches. This is really really bad news.

MAYOR CARHART (CONT'D)
... 'Cuz we're almost out.

Off Queverra realizing that they are all going to die...

INT. DEAD END SALOON - DUSK

FWOOOM! A stone bowl filled with white powder *IGNITES*. Kitt quickly inhales the wisps of smoke emanating from the bowl. Slumps back on her stool, enjoying the immediate high.

After a moment, she taps her bowl for a refill. Two fingers.

The BARTENDER (30s, tumored forehead) tears open a moldy box of LAUNDY DETERGENT. Fishes out two crystalized lumps. Grinds them with a mortar and pestle. This is "huff," a decent substitute for booze in a world low on water.

A SUNKEN-EYED ADDICT (40s) leers at Kitt from across the bar.

SALESMAN (O.S.)

...Cures gout. Alleviates tooth rot. And has been known to grow back missing limbs--

A sleazy SALESMAN (30s, horse hair wig, top hat) hawks his miracle cures to the HUFFERS at the bar.

SALESMAN (CONT'D)

--My horn-toad paste also hydrates.

The Salesman brushes his fingers across Kitt's as he passes by. She jerks her hand away, spills some precious huff.

BARTENDER

That's enough, Zeke. You wanna speak further, you gotta buy a round for the bar.

GRUMBLING ASSENTS from the huffers sober enough to hear.

The Salesman packs up his wares. He knows the drill.

The Bartender lights the bowl for Kitt. She inhales deeply.

But Kitt can't enjoy the high. She feels the Sunken-Eyed Addict watching her. He whispers to the huffer next to him, loud enough for her to hear. (NOTE: From now on we'll just call him SUNKEN-EYES)

SUNKEN-EYES

...Redback whore...

That is Kitt's cue to leave. She grabs her cowboy hat. Slaps a VIAL OF WATER onto the bar top (This counts for currency out here in the wastes).

EXT. DEAD END SALOON - CONTINUOUS

The sun disappears over the horizon but the heat remains.

Kitt steps onto the street. Checks her six-shooter.

A pair of LAMPLIGHTERS ignite street lamps on the main drag, wheeling a large fire extinguisher behind them.

SUNKEN-EYES (O.S.)
Hey. C'mere.

Sunken-Eyes beckons her from the doorway.

Kitt slips down a side street.

EXT. FRESHWATER - ALLEY - DUSK

She hurries down an alley. A HAND REACHES FROM THE SHADOWS... A huffer CHOKES her in a headlock. Kitt can't even scream.

OOF! She SLAMS her elbow into the huffer's gut. CRACK! BASHES her head into his nose. Blood gushes. Down he goes.

More huffers appear behind her, filling the alley. Bloodshot eyes glint in the darkness.

SUNKEN-EYES (O.S.)
We juss wanna talk...

Sunken-Eyes blocks the end of the street. Nowhere to run.

SUNKEN-EYES (CONT'D)
Have a lil' chat...Wanna ask...

Kitt kicks at a huffer. Misses. He drunkenly stumbles, FACEPLANTS into a wall.

SUNKEN-EYES (CONT'D)
Why, huh? Why's you whorin' out to them fuckin' Redbacks...

Kitt draws her gun. A huffer CRACKS her head with a bottle. Her weapon clatters to the ground.

SUNKEN-EYES (CONT'D)
They's in league with them fuckin' tribals... They kilt us...

BANG! BANG! Bullets RIP THROUGH Sunken-Eyes's knees. He collapses in a SCREAMING, bloody heap.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE (O.S.)
Leave the doc be.

BANG! Sheriff Burnside fires a warning shot at the huffers. They scatter.

Sunken-Eyes writhes on the ground.

SUNKEN-EYES

Fuckin' mutie... Think that badge
means shit, ya ugly piece'a--

Burnside **BOOTS** Sunken-Eyes in the face. Teeth and blood
SPLATTER the alley walls.

Kitt turns away. She might be a doctor, but she can't stomach
the violence. Still, **SHE HEARS...**

Each.

Sickening.

THUD! As Burnside kicks him again, and again, and again.

Finally, after what seems like an eternity, the Sheriff stops
the punishment. Adjusts his tie. Wipes off a spot of blood.
And bends down to whisper in Sunken-Eyes's ear.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

Who's ugly now?

He crosses to Kitt. Slow. Deliberate. She recoils.

But Burnside simply hands her back her gun. Without a word.
And then he's gone, back down the alley.

EXT. THE RANCH - STABLES - DUSK

Alden unloads corpses behind the **STABLES** with the help of a
REDCOAT STABLEHAND (20s, gangly, bad teeth). Wipes sweat from
her brow. It's taxing work. The worst part is the smell.

The Stablehand drags bodies inside, leaving streaks of blood
in the dirt. We don't see where he's taking the corpses, but
it's not hard to guess... Why waste perfectly good nutrients?

SQUEALS draw our attention to a nearby pen. **PIGS** bum rush a
feeding trough.

EXT. STABLES - LATER

The Stablehand drags the last body through the doors.

Alden finds a **SEVERED ARM** on the ground. The calloused palm.
Dirty, cracked nails. This could be anyone... a Friend.
Enemy. Stranger. Relative. It weighs on her, all this death.

EXT. THE RANCH - NIGHT

Alden waves to the GATE GUARDS as she leaves the Ranch.
She's still holding the severed hand.

EXT. THE RANCH - LATER

Alden finds a small gully off the dirt road. Tosses in the hand. Kicks some dirt on top of the makeshift grave.

She is not sure what to say, if anything. Alden has never been to a funeral before, but she's heard about them.

THE SOUND OF HOOVES draws her attention. A FIGURE ON HORSEBACK appears in the darkness...

ALDEN

Ay! Who goes there?

The Figure comes into view... It's Queverra. But there is something off about him... Eerie... He's slumped in his saddle. Thousand-yard stare. Lost in his own world.

ALDEN

Colonel?

The horse continues leading Queverra to the Ranch.

ALDEN

Are you all right, sir?

She grabs the reins of his horse.

Queverra looks down, but doesn't seem to see her. He is in a fugue state. He steps off the horse. Hands Alden his hat.

ALDEN

Should I fetch the medic?

Queverra speaks, but he sounds a million miles away.

QUEVERRA

Nunca... Nunca... Es un error...

ALDEN

Sir.

She places a hand on his shoulder --

Queverra snaps out of his haze. Looks her dead in the eye.

QUEVERRA

This is a mistake. I can't... I
can't do this. I'm not capable.
Folley... Please... Help me.
(screaming)
HELP ME!

His terror is deeply unsettling, but Alden's too strong to be rattled by some jitters. The desert gets to everyone eventually. Still, you never expect it from your leader.

ALDEN

Sir. You got a case of the
wasteland fever's all. You need to
relax. Colonel Folley is... gone.
And he... chose *you* to replace him.
It's not a mistake. Because... he
wouldn't have done that to us. He..
He could see people. What they
really were. What they were capable
of. Even when others couldn't...

Alden does not even realize she's speaking about herself.

Queverra eyeballs her a moment. He seems to be cogent. But then he aims a pistol at his temple. Squeezes the trigger --

ALDEN

No!

CLICK. The chamber was empty. Queverra stares at the gun. A look of betrayal.

Alden is *shook*. Her commanding officer just tried to kill himself in front of her. She has *no idea* what to do...

He aims the gun again. *CLICK*. Again. *CLICK*.

And that's when the absurdity of it all lands on Queverra. In his deranged state, he understands why the Deadman was laughing. The joke of it all... So he LAUGHS. A guttural, insane CACKLE that echoes across the empty desert.

Off Alden realizing her commanding officer has lost his grip on reality we --

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEEXT./INT. THE RANCH - STATER BARRACKS - MORNING

Alden stares out across the barren desert, her eyes red from lack of sleep. The landscape looks different to her now... There's menace in the swirling dust. Danger in the cloudless sky. She is going to die here. They all are.

She stands among rows of rusted cots and moldering mattresses, the only one awake in these derelict barracks. A tattered AMERICAN FLAG hangs on the wall.

Alden packs a RUCKSACK. She's getting the hell out of there.

INT. STATER BARRACKS - LATER

She hurries out before her fellow Stater Redcoats awaken.

INT. STABLES - CONTINUOUS

Alden passes stalls occupied by mutant HORSES and disfigured DONKEYS. The stench is overpowering.

She finds Grisham tying a saddle onto a horse. He is surprised to see her.

ALDEN

Going somewhere?

GRISHAM

Morning ride. It's better before the heat sets in.

(eyeing her rucksack)

And you?

Grisham's hiding something... But Alden is too busy with her own lie to notice.

ALDEN

Couldn't sleep.

GRISHAM

You never told me... what Doc said.

ALDEN

That's right.

She has a lot to say to him, but that's not it.

GRISHAM

Alden...

ALDEN

We need to get out of here.

GRISHAM

Don't tell me them Deadmen got you feared. Most of 'em die before they get anywhere near Freshwater.

ALDEN

Last night, Queverra... He's not right in the head.

GRISHAM

None of us are. That's what makes us able to do this job.

ALDEN

I'm serious, Grish. We're not safe here. He's... You didn't see him. It's more than just being out here.

GRISHAM

Is this about us?

Alden tries to suppress her rage. He struck a nerve.

ALDEN

Us? What "us" are you talking about?

She makes a show of remembering, but she knows *exactly* what he's talking about. She still feels guilty about it.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

Ohhh, you mean the "mistake" we made, fucking in the guard tower when we were 'sposed to be out patrolling for our missing Colonel? Or did it "never happen"? I forget where we landed on that.

A BELL *CLANGS* from outside the barracks. *Emergency*. Their conversation will have to wait.

GRISHAM

We'll discuss this later, private.

ALDEN

Won't we.

EXT. THE RANCH - COURTYARD - DAY

A few stragglers join the gathered REDCOATS. The army detachment numbers about eighty in total (men and women), each division lined up in loose formation.

QUEVERRA (O.S.)
 ...This incident occurred while performing duties related to the town's protection.

Queverra eyeballs the late arrivals as he address his troops. He looks sober, put-together, you would never guess he attempted suicide only a few hours prior.

Grisham, Major Dufresne, and a few OFFICERS flank him.

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)
 ...Therefore I have decided to donate a portion of our water stores as a gesture of good faith.

Alden stands among her fellow Staters, easily the largest of the Redcoat divisions. Some GRUMBLE at Queverra's speech.

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)
 It is our duty as representatives of the Royal Canadian Army to protect the southern frontier and all its citizens. Those are our orders and we will follow them.

Alden watches Queverra fiddle with the gun at his hip. *Should she say something?* He seems fine now. Maybe it was nothing. A moment of weakness. He's under a lot of pressure after all...

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)
 But... we cannot fulfill our duties if we continue to be reliant on Freshwater for our survival. We need to become water-independent. We need to secure our--

ALDEN
 Sir.

Queverra glares at Alden.

ALDEN (CONT'D)
 What of... uh, New Vancouver, sir? Have they been--

QUEVERRA

A request for aid will be sent, but the journey takes many weeks, and with the recent water theft in town, we can no longer rely on Freshwater to control its--

A BELLIGERENT STATER blurts out.

BELLIGERENT STATER

Let's fuckin' take theirs!

A few Staters WHOOP in agreement.

Queverra ignores the outburst.

QUEVERRA

We will send scout teams to explore No Man's Land and locate a new, clean water source.

BELLIGERENT STATER

But we'll get the rads out there.

MAJ. DUFRESNE

That's enough, private.

QUEVERRA

There will inevitably be casualties. But radiation levels in the wastes have been dropping in recent months and--

GRISHAM

I'll do it.

All eyes on Grisham.

GRISHAM

I will ride out, sir.

Queverra was not expecting that. This job was not meant for the likes of Grisham (i.e. Canucks).

QUEVERRA

Good... Very good, Sergeant.

Alden stares down Grisham. WTF is he thinking?!

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)

I want teams of two. Geigers will be provided, as well as dowsing kits. You leave by sundown --

ALDEN (O.S.)

Me too.

All eyes now on Alden, including Grisham. He looks upset.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

I volunteer.

QUEVERRA

Private Zane... um, that's the spirit. You will accompany Sergeant Grisham...

Grisham shakes his head. No way is he letting Alden join him.

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)

Do I have any more volunteers?

No one budges. They know how dangerous this mission is.

QUEVERRA

Bueno, a little incentive... Ten years off your service contract for any soldiers with refugee status. Twenty if you find water.

Hands shoot up among the Staters. That is quite an incentive.

EXT. THE RANCH - LATER

ND REDCOATS fill up canisters from the Ranch's water tower. Others load up pack mules for their scouting missions.

Grisham and Alden bicker as they beeline toward Queverra.

GRISHAM

What the hell were you thinking?

ALDEN

We need to go, Grish. I told you. And I've every right to accompany--

GRISHAM

No, *Stater*, you don't. You're not coming with me. You stay.

Alden is baffled and hurt by Grisham's hostility.

ALDEN

Fuck that. Where's this coming from, huh?

GRISHAM
You're not well.

That may be true, but Grisham's hiding his true reason.

ALDEN
You're the one hasn't been right
since we got back. What happened?
You hiding something from me?

GRISHAM
What are you hiding? You look like
a pile of horse shit on a hot day.

They reach Queverra, who is overseeing the troops.

GRISHAM (CONT'D)
Colonel, a moment please.

QUEVERRA
Having second thoughts?

GRISHAM	ALDEN
I do not need a... Do you question my competency, sir?	Sir, what Sergeant King means to say is --

QUEVERRA
You two displayed excellent
teamwork yesterday in the face of--

GRISHAM
I can't have her slowing me down.

ALDEN
I can out-ride any soldier on the
base, *including* you.

QUEVERRA
Don't interrupt me again, Sergeant.
Private Zane's one of the best
tracker's we've got. I don't care
if she's stricken with polio and
you gotta drag her ass 'cross the
desert. You follow my orders.

(then)
I already got a man in the cooker
Don't join 'em.

GRISHAM
We're not chasing down thieves,
sir. I need a dowser.

QUEVERRA

You need to get moving.

(then)

Unless you'd prefer to sit this one out? We have more than enough volunteers.

Grisham grits his teeth and salutes.

GRISHAM

No, sir.

He leaves in a huff. But Alden stays behind.

QUEVERRA

Were my orders unclear, private?

ALDEN

No. I... I didn't say anything... about yesterday. I won't.

QUEVERRA

There's nothing to say.

ALDEN

I just want to make sure you're--

QUEVERRA

I don't know what you *think* you saw, private, but you didn't.

(then)

The desert plays tricks on us all. Makes you see things that aren't there. Best be careful.

ALDEN

Sir...?

QUEVERRA

How many years you got on your contract? Fifteen? Twenty? Consider it zero. Commuted.

ALDEN

What do you mean?

QUEVERRA

Get on your horse and keep riding. Don't mind looking for water. You've served well, and I'll make sure they have your papers by the time you get to New Vancouver.

ALDEN

Sir, I... are you all right?

QUEVERRA

That doesn't concern you any more.
Congratulations, Alden Zane. You're
free to go.

(then)

But... if I ever see you here
again, I will have you executed.
And if you breathe a word of this
to anyone, I will do worse.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

The clinic door hangs off its hinges. The huffers from the bar got their revenge after all. It looks like a tornado blew through. Tables. Chairs. Medical devices. Smashed and tossed aside. Kitt sifts through the rubble.

A STARVING STATER raps on the broken door.

STARVING STATER

Doc Folley. Uh... It's my wife. She
got sores all over... Father Meril
performed a blessin', but...
(notices the damage)

You good?

Kitt stares at the starving man. He's been through hell to get here. But standing amongst the rubble of her clinic, her own husband presumed dead... She's all out of compassion.

KITT

I can't help you. Sorry.

He wants to say something more, to plead his case, but the look in Kitt's eyes says everything. He leaves.

Kitt goes back to searching her clinic. She lifts a broken cabinet... Finds her husband's Stetson. Brushes off the dust. Somehow it survived the onslaught. Maybe it's a sign.

EXT. THE RANCH - MAIN GATE - DAY

Carhart and Sheriff Burnside ride up to the Ranch gates. Two Deputies trail them, their horses drag a PORTABLE WATER TANK.

EXT. THE RANCH - COURTYARD - DAY

Redcoats escort the Deputies to the water tower.

Carhart and Burnside dismount. Queverra greets them.

MAYOR CARHART

You're doing the right thing here.

QUEVERRA

I can throw in an extra barrel or two with the tank. Should be enough for a few days.

MAYOR CARHART

We can stretch it.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

I sent riders to the settlements, calling in our water debts.

MAYOR CARHART

It's fuckin' charity's what it is. But that's where we're at.

QUEVERRA

I'll have scouts scouring No Man's Land by daybreak. We will find something. There could be wells, ponds, maybe a clean lake.

MAYOR CARHART

How 'bout an ocean if you're gonna be dreaming shit up?

QUEVERRA

What were you gonna do when the aquifer ran out? You think that cistern would last forever?

MAYOR CARHART

We've been making arrangements.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

Our drilling out by the Macklin Ridge's not quite--

Carhart silences him with a glare. He has overstepped. *Again.*

MAYOR CARHART

We didn't expect our fellow citizens to shoot the damn cistern.

Two REDCOAT SCOUTS pass by.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

(re: Scouts)

How much have you told them?

QUEVERRA

Enough.

WIDE ON: Dozens of REDCOATS prepare for the journey. Strapping down water barrels. Checking geiger counters. Trying on jerry-rigged HAZMAT suits. Packing saddle bags. Arming themselves. Saying their goodbyes.

INT. THE RANCH - ARMORY - DAY

Grisham tests the grip of a pistol. Hands it back to the SERGEANT-AT-ARMS.

GRISHAM

Got anything bigger?

Guns, ammo, mortars, grenades line the walls of the ARMORY.

The Sergeant-At-Arms hands Grisham a THOMPSON CONTENDER. His eyes light up. It looks more like a rifle than a pistol.

INT. ARMORY - LATER

Grisham loads his saddlebags with enough weapons for a small army. Land mines in the side pocket. Grenades in the front. M16 strapped to the top. All that's left is the Contender...

He opens the main pocket to see if there's space... It is filled with GOLD. Gold watches. Gold bars. Even fillings.

Grisham eyes the Sergeant-At-Arms. He is too busy cleaning a glock to notice. Grisham quickly shoves in the Contender and closes up the bag. His secret still safe.

INT. STABLES - DAY

Alden checks the saddlebags on her two-headed horse. Suddenly she VOMITS all over the saddle. *Gross.* She breathes deep. She has this under control. *Nope.* She VOMITS on the horse.

Alden rubs her stomach. Pulls up her shirt -- Revealing her slightly distended belly. Alden isn't sick from radiation poisoning, SHE'S PREGNANT!

ALDEN

(to her unborn baby)

You're a bigger asshole than your daddy, know that?

EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Kitt hangs a "CLOSED" sign on the clinic's broken door.

Mounts her horse.

Puts on her husband's Stetson.

EXT./INT. THE RANCH - QUEVERRA'S OFFICE - DAY

REDCOAT SCOUTS ride off into the wasteland.

ANGLE ON: Queverra watches from his desk. Turns his attention to the water tower...

Burnside oversees his Deputies as they fill the portable water tank. Carhart takes a sip, testing the product.

REDCOAT SCOUT (O.S.)
Sir... my orders?

Queverra acknowledges a REDCOAT SCOUT (20s, blond, buck teeth) sitting across from him. He removes a HANDWRITTEN LETTER from a drawer. Angles it under a burning candle.

QUEVERRA
Can you read, Private?

REDCOAT SCOUT
No, sir.

The Scout eyes the candle warily.

QUEVERRA
(re: candle)
Don't worry.

He raps his knuckle on the desk.

QUEVERRA
Plastic, courtesy of Colonel Folley. It won't burn.
(then, re: letter)
This is a request for supplies...

As he speaks, we ANGLE ON the letter. In his clear, looping longhand we read:

I sent them to die

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)
 You deliver it to General Tachick
 in New Vancouver and no one else...

To search for water that is not there. I had no choice.

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)
 ...if a corporal or some other
 officer asks to see it, even a
 major, you tell them...

They die so we may live another month, maybe more.

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)
 ...your orders are to give it to
 directly the General, no
 exceptions. Understood?

Please forgive me. And send some goddamn supplies.

Col Guillermo Queverra RCA

You read that right. The scouts were sent on a suicide mission. Queverra sacrificed the few for the many.

REDCOAT SCOUT
 Yes, sir.

Queverra rolls the parchment.

QUEVERRA
 Which god do you believe in?

REDCOAT SCOUT
 Uh... none, sir.

He drips wax onto the letter. Presses his dog tag to seal it.

QUEVERRA
 Then I wish you luck.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUREXT. THE RANCH - MAIN GATE - DAY

Alden paces atop her horse, waiting on Grisham. She absent-mindedly rubs her belly. Her secret child's not giving her the day off, but she has to soldier on.

A pair of STATER REDCOATS pass through the gate, on their way to No Man's Land. They completely ignore Alden.

She calls up to the GATE GUARD.

ALDEN

Ay. You seen Sergeant Grisham ride out yet?

The Guard shrugs. A lot of Redcoats rode out today.

Alden stares out at the desert wasteland. Grisham's out there somewhere... that asshole left her. And she's gonna find him.

EXT. FRESHWATER - DAY

Grisham rides past Freshwater. Checks behind to make sure he is not being followed. No sign of Alden.

EXT. DESERT WASTELAND - DAY

Grisham winds up a canyon. He relaxes. Home free. Removes a canteen from his pack.

ALDEN (O.S.)

You're easy to track.

Alden waits for him at the top of the trail.

GRISHAM

Damnit, Alden. What the hell are you doing here?

ALDEN

Following orders. You should try it sometime.

GRISHAM

Why'd you... There's nothing to find out here, you know that right? This is a damn... Queverra's just making a show for Carhart.

ALDEN

So what're you doing out here?

(then)

I'm not sick, 'case you were buying that bit 'a bullshit. Don't even pretend this is about that.

Grisham wants Alden to leave. He *needs* her to. But he can't tell her why. And that secret is torturing him.

GRISHAM

You need to go. Please.

ALDEN

"Please"? That's a new color on ya. You really must got *some* secret. Well I got one too.

GRISHAM

What did you say to Queverra, after I left?

ALDEN

Nothing concerns you.

Grisham shakes his head. He doesn't want to have to do this, to hurt her with another lie. But he has no choice.

GRISHAM

You wanna know why I'm here?

(then)

'Cuz the worst mistake I ever made was fucking you. And now I'm atoning for it. I shoulda been looking for my commander, it'd only been a few days, Folley's trail was still hot. But I got... distracted by some stater whore.

Alden knows he's trying to get to her, but it still stings.

GRISHAM (CONT'D)

And I won't have that same whore stopping me this time around.

ALDEN

He's not out here.

GRISHAM

That's what makes you different from us. You staters don't know about sacrifice.

(MORE)

GRISHAM (CONT'D)

You can volunteer for every damn assignment, capture all the bad guys, but it'll only ever make you dead. Won't make you a Redcoat.

Silence. Neither knows what to say. Grisham just hurt Alden deeper than any bullet wound. He leads his horse away.

ALDEN

He went north.

Grisham pauses, hoping that his words stung enough to stop her... hoping he won't have to resort to other means.

GRISHAM

Don't follow me.

He disappears over the ridge.

Alden thinks for a moment... Then she swings her horse around after him. She has to know what he's hiding.

INT. QUEVERRA'S OFFICE - DAY

FWOOM! Queverra inhales a bowl of huff. Sags into his chair. It's not a clean high, but it's better than nothing.

But the guilt remains. Eating away at him. Those soldiers... *his* soldiers, their blood is on his hands. And there will be more dead as the days progress, many more.

He tries to make another bowl, but the box is empty.

INT. QUEVERRA'S OFFICE - LATER

He rummages through a closet, searching for more huff. Finds Colonel Folley's DRESS UNIFORM, adorned with all sorts of medals and ribbons. He searches the pockets. Removes a FLASK. Shakes it... There's liquid inside! That's a first.

QUEVERRA

Full'a secrets weren't you,
Colonel?

Tosses the uniform onto a chair.

QUEVERRA

This how you got through it?

Takes a swig. It burns.

QUEVERRA

Puta madre!

He takes another swig. Not bad. Whatever it is.

QUEVERRA

You left me with... This doesn't count, cabron. Their lives are in my hands. Mi manos.

(then)

Were you too weak to tell me or did you just hate me that much?

(then)

No. No. You didn't look for shit. You ran away and left me, 'cause you didn't have the cojones! You couldn't make the choice so you left it to me, you goddamn... cobarde. You *coward!*

KNOCKS at the door.

QUEVERRA (CONT'D)

But I did it. I saved us.

Queverra pulls himself together. Barely.

Major Dufresne enters. He is not wearing his usual Redcoat officer's jacket, instead he is dressed as a civilian.

MAJ. DUFRESNE

Sir.

QUEVERRA

Is it done?

He nods. It's done. The look on his face tell us that whatever Dufresne did, it is unforgivable.

EXT. DESERT WASTELAND - DAY

The sun beats down on Kitt. She pulls her (husband's) Stetson low. Studies a PICTURE OF A BLOOMING CACTUS in a yellowed textbook, "Edible and Medicinal Plants of Canada."

In front of her stands a WITHERED CACTUS. Hard to tell if it is the same one from the book. Only one way to find out. She flips open a pocket knife. But before she can slice it open--

A GLIMMER OF LIGHT dances across her face. Momentarily blinding her. She shields her eyes.

Something GLINTS out there in the desert. Shining bright. Metallic. Too far to tell what it is...

EXT. DESERT WASTELAND - LATER

Kitt hops off her horse.

A HI-TECH PERISCOPE juts out of the earth. This is the source of the glint. But Kitt needs to be careful, most "relics" people find out here can kill you.

She waves her knife in front of her as she cautiously steps toward it, feet weighed down with fright.

CAW. CAW. A murder of CROWS ride the winds overhead.

Kitt reaches the periscope. TAPS it with her knife -- A hollow CLANG. Nothing more. Seems safe.

She inspects the object. It appears to be new, unlike the rusting detritus one usually finds in the wastes. She stares into a CAMERA LENS. This is like nothing she has ever seen. She tries to pry the lens off with her knife --

WHOOOOOOOOP! A KLAXON BLARES.

Kitt's horse is spooked. FLEES into the desert. Leaving Kitt stranded, without her supplies.

WHOOOOOOOOP!

As the gravity of the situation lands on Kitt, the WHOOP of the Klaxon fades away and we --

ANGLE ON the lens. A green light BLINKS. It is recording...

INT. UNKNOWN AREA - DAY

We PULL BACK revealing we are watching Kitt on some sort of VIDEO SCREEN. It's high-tech, sleek, with multiple digital overlays. Cables branch out to other screens and machines.

We can't tell exactly *who* is watching - the room is pitch black - but we can glimpse the outline of a MILKY WHITE FIGURE. Its RASPY BREATHS echo in the darkness.

EXT. THE RANCH - COURTYARD - DAY

A storm rolls across the horizon, arriving with the coming night. Heat lightning streaks across the clouds.

Carhart and Burnside ride out of the Ranch with their Deputies hauling the portable water tank behind them.

As they reach the gate, a MOB OF REDCOATS block their path.

MAYOR CARHART

We don't need an escort, thank you.

The Redcoats do not move.

SHERIFF BURNSIDE

Stand aside.

(then)

I'll only tell you the once.

He gives Mayor Carhart a look.

MAYOR CARHART

Friends. This appears to be a misunderstanding. As I'm sure you're aware, I am the Mayor of Freshwater, that town there over the ridge. Perhaps your commanding officer neglected to mention he provided us this water as payment for an outstanding debt.

Queverra appears.

MAYOR CARHART

There he is. Colonel, you mind telling your troops to let us pass?

Queverra sways a bit in his saddle. Eyes bloodshot. He is beyond fucked up. No one is sure what he's going to do.

After an excruciating silence, he speaks --

QUEVERRA

Let 'em through.

The Redcoats step aside.

As Carhart passes by Queverra. He gives her a look.

QUEVERRA

You might wanna hurry.

ANGLE ON: The horizon... SMOKE RISES above Freshwater. The town is burning! And Queverra seems to know all about it.

EXT. DESERT WASTELAND - NORTHERN PLAIN - DAY

The storm approaches. The darkening sky obscures the smoke on the horizon (from the fire in Freshwater).

Alden and Grisham ride across the empty desert landscape, hugging a cliff wall to avoid the heat lightning.

Grisham spies a nearby TREE, knotted and twisty like a bonsai. Sun-bleached skulls hang from its branches. He was looking for this...

He digs his heels into his horse's belly. It whinnies. Slows.

ALDEN

What happened?

GRISHAM

Dunno. He pulled up lame.

ALDEN

He looks gassed. Let me see.

GRISHAM

What can I do to make you go?

ALDEN

You could shoot me, I guess.

GRISHAM

I'm not watching you die.

ALDEN

Then come with me. We don't even have to stay together, but --

GRISHAM

No. Alden...

ALDEN

I'm free, Grish. Queverra, he... My contract, it's commuted.

This catches Grisham by surprise. For the briefest of moments, he wonders if he should leave... start over.

GRISHAM

How?

ALDEN

Doesn't matter... Just... don't throw your life away for Folley. You know he wouldn't want that.

(then)

(MORE)

ALDEN (CONT'D)

And promise you won't go back to the Ranch. Not ever. Please.

Grisham's at war with himself. He hides it, but he cares for Alden. And now he's going to have to hurt her even more.

GRISHAM

You need to go. Now.

ALDEN

Promise me.

GRISHAM

I can't do that.

ALDEN

You'll die. For what?

He eyes the skull tree. Whatever he's waiting for... it's happening soon.

GRISHAM

You stupid fucking bitch. Why won't you ever listen to anyone? I'm trying to save you.

Alden realizes there's no winning this battle. Grisham is going to stay. But she has one last card to play.

ALDEN

You wanna know what Doc said? The vomiting, headaches... It's not the rads I've got... I'm pregn--

BANG! A bullet RIPS into her side. She slumps to the ground.

Grisham stands there, gun smoking. He shakes, unable to believe what he's just done. Stands there for what seems like minutes. Frozen.

DREADLOCKS (O.S.)

You're late.

Four TRIBESMEN step into the lantern-light, led by a gold-tooted man with blond DREADLOCKS (20s, gold chains). Their dress tells us they're from the same tribe as the Deadmen.

GRISHAM

Busy day.

DREADLOCKS

(re: Alden's body)
She woulda made a good prisoner.

GRISHAM

I know.

Grisham opens his saddlebag. Tosses over a gold ring.
Dreadlocks catches it. Gives it a bite. Real gold.

He motions for Grisham to follow.

ANGLE ON Alden... Bleeding out on the desert floor.

Lightning streaks the sky.

Her eyes are slits. She fights to keep them open, watching as
Grisham disappears into the night. She's alive. For now.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF PILOT