

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

NO. 2. "FINDING SHELTER"

Jess sits up. She looks around, checking that her family is safe around her.

Then, her eyes go to the storm above her. Her face creases with worry.

JESS
 WHATEVER SHALL WE DO NOW?
 SLEEPING UNDER A GRAY SKY?
 SHOULD I WAKE HENRY? NO...
 WHAT CAN HE DO WHEN WE'RE ALL STUCK
 OUTSIDE?

She stands.

JESS (CONT'D)
 I'VE GOT TO FIND A PLACE,
 SOMEWHERE,
 SOMEHOW,

Thunder booms.

JESS (CONT'D)
 I'M GONNA MAKE THINGS RIGHT,
 AND I DON'T CARE HOW!

She runs further into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - BLUEBERRY BUSHES - MORNING

She weaves her way through thick blueberry bushes and bramble. They get caught in her hair and rip her clothes, but she doesn't seem to care.

JESS
 I'LL VISUALIZE THE IMPOSSIBLE, AND
 MAKE IT PROBABLE,
 BEND REALITY TO MY WILL.
 (MORE)

JESS (CONT'D)
 I'LL FIGHT AND FIGHT 'TIL I SEE
 WHAT IS RIGHT,
 'TIL I CHANGE WHAT IT IS I CONTROL,
 'CAUSE THE WORLD WON'T GET FAIR ON
 ITS OWN.

EXT. THE WOODS - RIVERSIDE - MORNING

On the other side of the thicket is a river. She looks downstream.

JESS
 MOTHER RHYMED "WHEN YOU'RE LOST
 YOU SHOULD FIND A RIVER BLUE,
 PEOPLE ARE DOWNSTREAM, JESS...
 FIND AN ADULT, AND THEY'LL COME
 RESCUE YOU."

She stares into the distance, debating, unsure.

JESS (CONT'D)
 WE'VE GOT TO FIND A PLACE,
 SOMEWHERE,
 SOMEHOW,
 OR WE'LL SHIVER TO OUR GRAVES
 WHEN THE STORM BREAKS OUT...

Her jaw clenches. Her fist clenches. There's nowhere to go, but Jess knows but one thing:

There's no going back.

She goes upstream.

JESS (CONT'D)
 I'LL VISUALIZE THE IMPOSSIBLE, AND
 MAKE IT PROBABLE,
 BEND REALITY TO MY WILL.
 I'LL FIGHT AND FIGHT 'TIL I SEE
 WHAT IS RIGHT,
 'TIL I CHANGE WHAT IT IS I CONTROL,
 'CAUSE THE WORLD WON'T GET FAIR ON
 ITS OWN.

She stops. Her eyes light up.

EXT. THE BOXCAR - MORNING

In front of her is... the dark outline of a boxcar on rusty broken rails, nearly covered with dead leaves.

She breaks into a smile.

JESS
I found a place...

She turns behind her and runs back to her family as she
shouts,

JESS (CONT'D)
I found a place! Hurry!

(END OF SONG)

THE FATE I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO CHANGE

Henry and Watch are on a walk in the woods, dodging the thick trees in the night.

HENRY

WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES I SEE THEM.
STAINED ON MY EYELIDS ARE THEIR
IMAGES.
AND THE PAIN,
AND REGRET,
IT ALL SWIRLS INSIDE MY HEAD
UNTIL THERE'S NOTHING LEFT.
NOTHING'S EVER LEFT.

He's at those blueberry bushes now. He picks one and feeds it to Watch.

Then, he takes another handful, as though he's going to eat it himself.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I REMEMBER ALL THE TIMES THAT I
RETREATED INSIDE MY HEAD,
EVERY LASH OF THE BELT,
AND EVERY WORD THAT HE SAID
WAS BLOCKED OUT BY FANTASY
THAT I HELD SO CLOSE TO ME.
AND I WANTED THAT.

He crushes the blueberries between his fingers.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I WANTED THAT.

It's as though his hands are stained with blood.

INT. BOXCAR - LATER

Henry reenters the boxcar. Watch immediately lies beside Jess, closes his eyes, and is asleep in an instant.

From the moonlight shining from the open door, Henry watches his sleeping siblings.

HENRY

LONELINESS
 SEEPING IN
 WHEN I REST MY HEAD;
 ALL THE PAIN AND REGRET COMES
 FLOODING BACK.
 I AM TORTURED BY THE CHILDHOOD
 THAT I'LL NEVER HAVE.
 AND I'M HAUNTED BY THE MEMORIES
 OF THE LIFE I'VE NEVER LED.
 IT CONSUMES MY WAKING HOURS,
 KEEPS ME FROM UNCONSCIOUS HOURS,
 AND I'M LEFT WITH NOTHING BUT
 REGRET
 FOR THE FATE
 I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO CHANGE.

He kisses Violet on the cheek.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(spoken)
 Goodnight.

CUT TO BLACK.

The boxcar door slams shut.

EXT. MCALLISTER HOME - VEGETABLE GARDEN - DAY

MRS. MCALLISTER, Dr. McAllister's mother, a sweet woman around sixty years of age, shows Henry her vegetable garden, full of carrots, parsnips, and onions that need to be thinned out.

MRS. MCALLISTER

I have been so busy that I have
 actually stayed awake night
 worrying about these carrots.
 There--see that?

She pulls out a good-sized carrot as she speaks.

MRS. MCALLISTER (CONT'D)

Much too crowded. Thin them out.

HENRY

And what should I do with the ones
I pull up, ma'am?

MRS. MCALLISTER

(indifferent)

Oh, throw them away, toss them over
into the orchard, and sometime
we'll burn them when they get dry.

HENRY

Do you... mind if I... uh, take
them myself?

MRS. MCALLISTER

Oh, no. That will be fine. Have you
chickens?

Henry gives a troubled smile.

HENRY

Of a sort.

Mrs. McAllister watches him pat dirt around the carrots that
have been disturbed, then leaves him to work in the hot sun.

HENRY (CONT'D)

HOW'S IT FAIR THAT I AM HAUNTED
WHEN NO ONE FACTORED MY OPINION IN?
MOTHER DIED,
FATHER STOPPED
TRYING TO LET GO OF HIS GRIEF.
BITTER 'TIL THE END.
UNTIL HE WAS DEAD.

INT. MCALLISTER HOME - GARAGE - DAY

Now, Henry is straightening out a very disorganized garage.
At present, he's filling drawers labeled "TOOLS" and "NAILS"
with the appropriate items.

HENRY

I REMEMBER ALL THE TIMES THAT I
MADE EXCUSES FOR WHAT HE DID,
FOR THE PICTURE I HAD
OF THE MAN I CALLED "DAD."

EXT. INTERVALE - NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Henry is walking back to the boxcar after a day's work.

HENRY
 I SPENT HOURS ON THAT FANTASY
 THAT I KNEW WOULD NEVER BE,
 STILL, HOPE NEVER LEFT.

Henry reaches into his pocket and pulls out a hammer.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 IT NEVER LEFT.

DR. MCALLISTER (V.O.)
 If you can use it, you may have it,
 my boy.

EXT. BOXCAR - BY THE WATERFALL

It's an almost idyllic day in the boxcar. Violet and Benny are swimming in the brook, Jess is cooking stew in a kettle suspended over a fire, and Henry is laying in the sun, shirt off and hair wet.

But, as always, he's hardly peaceful.

HENRY
 ALL THE PAIN
 COMING BACK
 WHEN I REST MY HEAD;
 ALL MY HOPES AND MY DREAMS IN STARK
 CONTRAST.
 I AM TORTURED BY THE CHILDHOOD
 THAT I WISH I HAD.
 AND I'M HAUNTED BY FAKE MEMORIES
 OF THE LIFE I WANT SO BAD.
 IT CONSUMES MY WAKING HOURS,
 KEEPS ME FROM UNCONSCIOUS HOURS,
 AND I'M LEFT WITH NOTHING BUT
 REGRET
 FOR THE FATE
 I NEVER HAD THE CHANCE TO CHANGE.

He thinks back to an old, painful memory.

PAN ACROSS:

INT. THE CORDYCE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

As we sweep the scene, there's indiscriminate shouting. Something is thrown, and something shatters.

This is not the house in Middlesex, but a different one, somewhere else, in an unknown city, perhaps near, perhaps far. The furniture is overturned; it's messy and mostly in shambles.

But, most of all, it's empty.

INT. THE CORDYCE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

In a dingy bedroom, a younger Jess tends to a younger Henry, bruised and beaten.

The two of them hug.

CUT TO BLACK.

HENRY (V.O.)
 I'LL NEVER FORGET HIS DEAD BODY.
 AND THE OVERWHELMING GRIEF THAT HIT
 ME.
 HOW IT CAME TO PASS
 I WOULD NEVER GET WHAT I WANTED.
 AND THE SURPRISE
 I STILL WANTED THAT.

BACK TO:

EXT. BOXCAR - BY THE WATERFALL - DAY

HENRY
 (spoken)
 How could I want that?

He sits up.

INT./EXT. BOXCAR - MONTAGE

A series of scenes happen as Henry sings:

Jess and Violet grab a nest of eggs, left there from a runaway hen in the woods.

Henry shows Benny how to spread butter onto his bread with the back of his spoon. Benny is delighted.

Violet hems a tablecloth by the waterfall.

Jess, Violet, and Benny dig ginseng root from the ground.

Violet hands Benny a new teddy bear.

Jess and Violet cut their hair short.

HENRY (V.O.)
 I WILL NEVER THE WORLD HURT MY
 FAMILY
 THE WAY THAT IT HURT ME;
 NEVER LET GRANDFATHER OR ANYONE
 PULL US BACK TO THAT SOCIETY.
 I'LL LIVE AND DIE A TRAMP!
 IN MY HOME FOR THE TRAMPS!
 I'LL SACRIFICE ANYTHING FOR MY
 SIBLINGS
 THAT MAKE LIFE STILL WORTH LIVING.

INT. BOXCAR - DAY

Henry uses a piece of tailor's chalk to write something on the boxcar's wall.

HENRY (V.O.)
 WE'LL LIVE AND DIE AS TRAMPS
 IN OUR HOME FOR THE TRAMPS

SLOW PAN TO REVEAL LIST.

The list is as follows:

Milk	.24
Bread	.10
Bread	.20
Cheese	.10
Milk	.24
Beef	.20
Bone	.05
Cloth	.10

HENRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 AND, TOGETHER, AT LAST,
 WE'LL MAKE UP FOR THE FATE

At last, we see the top of the list, in big letters:

"HOME FOR THE TRAMPS"

HENRY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 WE FINALLY HAVE THE CHANCE TO
 CHANGE.

(END OF SONG)