

HEADSTONE

(Pattern 1970, Magical Realism)

A screenplay based on the story, Headstone from the collection:
SHARDS: Tales of Gas and Glass from the Great Black Swamp

By
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Nordal Hartman	Wanders on his bicycle	17	Male
MAGGIE	Unrooted free spirit	18	Female
Elvis	Putterer/fix-it guy	75	Male
3 teens	Cocky troublemakers	15-16	mixed
Voices	Sheriff's Department	any	mature sound

SCENE ONE.

Dusk Friday evening, 1970: a long forgotten corner of a mostly forgotten rural cemetery about 10 miles outside of a small Northwest Ohio town. There is a neglected apple orchard and a barely alive bar nearby. NORDAL HARTMAN, 17 years old, finishes replacing the tire on his bicycle. He has a backpack lightly packed with camping gear. He walks his bicycle along an unfamiliar trail. He leans his bike against a tree and stoops to examine a headstone that is partially consumed by the trunk of a maple tree. He has trouble reading the inscription on the bathtub-like planter basin in front of the headstone. He makes a rubbing with graphite and parchment paper. The date 1888 can be read.

NORDAL

8 years old. Poor little guy.

He reverently puts a shard of pattern glass on top of the headstone. He feels the stone curiously. It is almost too hot to touch.

He puts the rubbing in a folder with others. He wheels his bicycle through the confusing, curving paths and finally onto the asphalt road. He looks around, unsure of his direction in the growing darkness. He spots a flickering yellow light a couple hundred yards away and rides toward it.

As he gets closer to the light, he can see that it marks a driveway across a culvert. Frogs inside the culvert grow quiet as he leans his bicycle against a post with a broken chain attached. There is a star shaped arrangement of burned out neon tubes above a sign, also burned out and barely readable that says, "GASLIGHT GRILL."

He looks toward the building for signs of activity. There is a 1963 red Ford pick-up truck with a ladder rack over the bed. It is parked beside a set of 4 wooden steps that lead up to the rotted porch of the dark restaurant.

He walks his bike across the road and makes camp in the apple orchard. He walks back across the road to the bar.

He glances inside the bed of the red truck as he tests the wooden steps. There are a couple of 20-pound propane tanks, an assortment of electronic gadgets, and some car batteries piled as if collected from the roadside on dump day. He tries the handle on the door. It's locked. He peeks through the window on the door and is startled to be staring at a young lady about his own age. She has green hair streaked with blonde. Her eyebrow is pierced. She smiles as if she were expecting him. She opens the door. An old man sits hunched over a plate of mac and cheese.

MAGGIE

Hey.

NORDAL

Thought maybe I could use your facilities.

The man mumbles to his plate. A toothpick is balanced on his lip as a drop of yellowish liquid threatens to burst. He dabs his mouth with a cloth napkin and sits up like royalty.

She glances at the man for approval

MAGGIE

Sure. Didn't hear you drive up.

NORDAL

I'm on my bicycle. I was going to Bushy Quarry.

MAGGIE

Kinda dark.

NORDAL

I'm sacked out in the orchard across the road. I don't know this route, so I thought I'd better wait for daylight.

She hands him a lantern

MAGGIE

You'll need this. We just have the gaslight here.

NORDAL

No electricity?

MAGGIE

Nope. Just water and gas. We have our own wells.

NORDAL

A gas well?

MAGGIE

Yup.

NORDAL

Cool. My grandma doesn't have indoor plumbing, either. Outhouse with carpet and wallpaper. A pump at the kitchen sink. Didn't know you could have your own gas, though.

She shrugs as he goes into the darkness.

The toilet is like any other porcelain bowl, but it is supplied by a large tank high on the wall. He flushes and curiously considers the plumbing. He leaves the bathroom, switches off the lantern, and puts it on the bar.

NORDAL

Thanks.

MAGGIE

You want some mushrooms or something?

He digs around hopelessly in his pockets for some money.

MAGGIE

It's OK. On the house.

NORDAL

Sure. Thanks.

MAGGIE

Ticks in that orchard.

NORDAL

I'm good.

He laughs

MAGGIE

What's funny?

NORDAL

I was just thinking of my friend Jon and me screwing ticks out of our crotches last summer at Put-in-Bay.

MAGGIE

You can sleep in the camper out back, if you want.

NORDAL

It's ok. I just want to close my eyes for a couple of hours and get back on the road.

He scarfs down the mushrooms.

MAGGIE

Looks like you're pretty hungry. Got some meatloaf too, if you want a sandwich.

NORDAL

Yeah. Sorry. You're probably trying to close.

She laughs

MAGGIE

Sit here all night or take it with you. It's all the same to me.

She wraps up a sandwich and drops it in a brown bag.

NORDAL

Thanks.

He takes the bag.

MAGGIE

The trailer's unlocked, if you change your mind.

NORDAL

I'll be all right. I'm an old scout.

She laughs. He grimaces.

MAGGIE

Go get 'em, scout. Ah, g'on. Just pullin' your chain.

NORDAL

Sure.

He starts for the door as the old guy begins turning valves on the gas lamps.

MAGGIE

Hold it a minute. Come here.

She pulls out a napkin and pencil.

MAGGIE

If you're not familiar with this side of the cemetery, I can show you a faster way to get to Bushy.

NORDAL

Yeah?.

MAGGIE

Just go up this road about a mile... here, let me sketch it for you.

The man grinds his thumb on the table like squashing a bug as she sketches.

MAGGIE

This will save you about an hour, by bicycle.

NORDAL

Thanks!

MAGGIE

What are you going to do at Bushy? Fishing's no good there.

NORDAL

Shards.

MAGGIE

Huh?

NORDAL

I dig for shards of glass.

MAGGIE

Why?

NORDAL

Old man buys it from me.

MAGGIE

Busted glass?

NORDAL

This whole area was famous for gas, oil, and glass. Mr. Smith is writing a book about it.

MAGGIE

And you're like his assistant, or something?

NORDAL

Folks think the town was built on hard work, Christian values, and Yankee ingenuity. Really, just fuckin' luck.

MAGGIE

When I was little, I loved to go into Findlay with my daddy every Saturday.

NORDAL

Mr. Smith gets excited if I bring him a new pattern. I, uh ... sorry. Not very interesting to most folks, I suppose.

MAGGIE

No. Go on. Patterns, you were saying.

NORDAL

Of glass. He sketches it and identifies the factory that made it. Never mind.

MAGGIE

You want a beer or something?

She hands him the napkin map. He tucks it in his pocket, yawns and stretches, trying to establish some “cool.”

NORDAL

I better get some sleep. Thanks, anyway.

MAGGIE

Suit yourself.

Only one light was left to carve through the moonshadows. The old man walks toward the kitchen in the back.

FADE UP: PARKING LOT AND ORCHARD

The gaslight by the road is no longer burning. Nordal aims his light toward the orchard and makes his way to his campsite.

Sitting on his sleeping bag, he studies the map on the napkin. He looks closer at the name of a road. It says in capital letters, “SEND HELP.” The sound of a truck and tires crunching on gravel is heard.

The truck fades into the darkness. He studies the map. An arrow points to a little box marked "Dad's House." He urinates. The crickets stop sounding. He sees a glowing light in the cemetery. He blinks, belches, and zips his fly.

NORDAL

Goddamn mushrooms.

He eats his sandwich. Listens intently to every sound in the darkness. Squints at the glow in the cemetery. The glow grows 40 feet high. Men and women dressed in Victorian clothes marvel at the light that can be seen from 40 miles away. The old town of Findlay in 1886 is first engulfed in a peculiar and inspiring light before being consumed. He picks up his lantern and walks as if in a trace toward the light and the Victorian citizens of Findlay who are being transformed into a funeral party in black and white. Crickets grow silent in waves as he walks through the darkness. The fire is coming from near the headstone of the eight-year-old Victorian kid.

THREE TEENS

(incoherent babble then the sound of a tree branch cracking)

TEEN #1

Shhh!

(silence)

TEEN #2

It was nothing.

THREE TEENS

(whispering, talking over one another)

The dog drool 5 minutes blood on her aproncackle Burning tomb ... the grave opened Filling with water ... couldn't wait any longer...

NORDAL

(spooky ghost sound)

TEEN #1

SHIT!!!

Nordal calls from the darkness like the spirit of Boy Scouts past.

NORDAL

Be prepared!!!

The teens scream and hug one another. Nordal laughs.

TEEN #1

Christ! You scared the crap out of us!

TEEN #2

It's just the guy with the bike.

NORDAL

Not as bad as you scared me. You get merit badges for making spooky tombstone lighting?

TEEN#3

Cool, huh?

NORDAL

You all were around when I was here before?

TEEN #1

Yeah. We saw you and hid.

NORDAL

So this is why the tombstone was hot? Pretty impressive. How long's that pipe been here?

TEEN #2

My dad says, forever.

TEEN #3

Someone said the little boy was killed in an explosion here when his dad discovered the gas.

TEEN #2

Yeah, that's why he was buried here. The rest of the cemetery just grew around him.

NORDAL

Pretty creepy.

TEEN #1

Yeah. What are you doing out here?

NORDAL

I was on my way to Bushy but I had a flat. After I fixed it, I got a little too interested in this cemetery. Got too dark so I was going to sleep a few hours and move on at daybreak. I'm camped out in the orchard over there.

TEEN #1

Bushy's not far. I can run you there. I wouldn't sleep in that orchard. Ticks.

Nordal looks at their 4-wheeler.

NORDAL

Thanks, anyway. Girl said I could sleep in the trailer over there.

TEEN #2

Man, you're brave.

NORDAL

Huh? Why?

TEEN #2

Whole family except the old man was killed when that trailer flipped on them. Been parked there ever since.

NORDAL

Yeah? Whose family?

TEEN #3

Guy that owned the bar.

NORDAL

I was just there. Good food.

TEEN #3

That place closed right after the accident.

Nordal fingers the map in his pocket.

NORDAL

You guys live around here?

TEEN #1

Why you going to Bushy, anyway? Too cold to swim.

NORDAL

I dig stuff out of the banks when the water is low. People used to dump there.

TEEN #1

Yeah. Couple of cars in there, even.

TEEN #2

Cox brothers drowned there.

TEEN #1

Not Ed.

TEEN #2

Oh yeah, he was killed hitchhiking out west. Still in high school. My brother knew him.

Suddenly the flame from the pipe leaps up about ten feet into the darkness and birds burst from the trees. Nordal jumps back as the teens laugh. One sticks an iron soldering pot over the pipe, holding it with a pair of tongs. The flame dies with a loud whoosh. One turns on a lantern and they begin to load their stuff into their 4-wheeler.

NORDAL

What kind of bar was it?

TEEN #1

I wouldn't go near the place.

The others laugh in agreement as they spin dirt onto the headstone.

They make a couple of donuts in the turf, and zig through tombstones on their way to the road. They yell as they pick up speed, bouncing onto the asphalt road.

Nordal turns on his lantern and works his way through the neglected tombstones. Oil workers, riggers, and farmers. The moon is a grey cotton ball behind clouds. He works his way back to his campsite and finds his bike is gone.

NORDAL

Shit! Damn kids!

Nordal packs up his gear and trudges toward the bar. The bar and trailer are silhouetted against the dirty sky, Without the gaslight, he has trouble locating the driveway. He walks toward the sound of frogs in the culvert. He works his light over the façade and window of the building. Sirens are heard in the distance. The window is boarded over. The door is locked. He pounds on the door and calls out. He pulls a corner of the plywood back and shines his light inside. There's no glass so he calls again through the small opening. Still no response. He gets his hammer-pick from his backpack, and pries enough plywood back to crawl through. He tosses his hammer beside his backpack on the porch and squeezes through the window with his lantern.

There has been some effort to clean the tables; dirty dishes are stacked around. He finds some matches but is unable to light a gas sconce. He tries to get a dial tone on a pay phone with no luck, either. He works his way to the kitchen. There is a small apartment sized refrigerator. After a moment he realizes that it is running. He listens more closely and hears a motor outside. He goes to the front window to see if anyone has come back.

Seeing nothing, he turns the bolt on the front door and steps out onto the porch. He picks up his backpack, forgetting his hammer, and walks to the back where he'd heard the motor.

The sound comes from a locked windowless shed. Wires run into the bar and into the trailer.

After looking around the parking lot, he opens the door to the wrecked silver trailer.

The inside is surprisingly clean and organized for a rig that had rolled over a couple of times. It is furnished with a neatly made sofa-bed. There is a loft bed above a little kitchenette, a closet, and, a chemical latrine. He turns on a light and it immediately goes out as the motor in the shed goes quiet. He carries his backpack outside to the shed and fishes around for his hammer-pick. He remembers he left it on the porch. His flashlight dies as he searches for the hammer. He can't find it. He feels his way back to the power shed. The door is now unlocked and he can hear the motor running again. He opens the door and a machine is making a loud racket. The ingenious contraption appears to be a diesel tractor engine with some sort of converter to generate ac electricity. He closes the door and the odd sound fades quickly.

Back inside the trailer, it is dark again and he is without a flashlight. He tries to remember the layout and gropes his way to the sofa-bed and flops out to wait for dawn. A voice in the darkness.

MAGGIE

Is this your idea of sending help?

NORDAL

Holy mother of god! What's going on?

A night light flicks on and MAGGIE is sitting in the little kitchen nook that could be converted into a bed below the loft.

MAGGIE

Are you planning to put me on the handlebars of your bicycle and sing 'raindrops keep falling on my head' ?

NORDAL

Sorry?

MAGGIE

The movie.

NORDAL

I get that. I mean what help do you need?

MAGGIE

What do you got?

NORDAL

Sorry. When you said I could sack out in the trailer I assumed it wasn't being used. I'll just mosey along.

MAGGIE

Funny word. Mosey. Maybe we should both just mosey on down the road. You're cute when you get nervous, by the way.

He picks up his backpack and heads for the door.

NORDAL

Thanks. I'll stop by 'Dad's House' and tell him you sent for him. Shit!

MAGGIE

Trouble in paradise?

NORDAL

I forgot. Goddamn hoodlums stole my bicycle.

MAGGIE

Well, there goes my Katherine Ross moment.

NORDAL

Whatever.

He pulls hard on the door handle but it's locked. He fumbles around trying to unlock it but it's secured from the outside. Or otherwise.

NORDAL

What the ...

MAGGIE

Houston, we have a problem here.

He pulls the curtain back and sees that the truck has returned..

NORDAL

What's this all about?

MAGGIE

Only fools are kind, Alfie. I'd say that the old man likes us.

He tries the door again.

MAGGIE

Soundproof and escape proof.

NORDAL

Why? I got nothing.

She opens a drawer and pulls out a book.

MAGGIE

Then let me give you something.

Nordal looks at the book.

NORDAL

What? Looking Back ?

MAGGIE

Yeah. It's yours. I'm not big on "looking back."

She points to a camera above the loft bed.

MAGGIE

Come over here. Where the camera can't see us.

NORDAL

What?

MAGGIE

Just get over here.

He joins her under the camera.

NORDAL

What? He watches you?

MAGGIE

He knows if we've been bad or good. Now you can always have a look back.

She puts the book inside his shirt.

NORDAL

He spies on you with a camera? Man, that's Orwellian.

MAGGIE

I guess.

NORDAL

Can he hear us?

MAGGIE

No. I don't know. Maybe. But I don't think so. He just watches. I suppose he could if he wanted to. But I think he likes to make his own sound track. Like right now. I bet he's like watching us like we are his kids. Go pick out a board game.

NORDAL

What?

MAGGIE

Up on the shelf. A board game. He seems to like it when I play cards or pick-up sticks, or word puzzles. I'm sure he'd like to watch us play together.

NORDAL

Sorry.

MAGGIE

You don't want to play board games?

NORDAL

No. I mean, yes. I just meant that I see you have the game, "Sorry."

He picks up the board game and puts it on the table. She smiles to the camera on the ceiling.

MAGGIE

We're going to be good friends, I can tell already. Maybe we should introduce ourselves. I'm MAGGIE.

NORDAL

Nordal.

MAGGIE

Nordal! Well, Nordal, I suppose we should make the best of our peculiar situation.

Sorry is a simple game that doesn't require any strategy. He glances up at the camera as they play.

NORDAL

How long have you been here?

MAGGIE

Hard to say. Maybe a year.

NORDAL

Hasn't anyone been looking for you?

MAGGIE

Maybe for a while. Elvis gave me a police scanner. He said I could go if someone was looking for me. Maybe someone will look for you.

She turns on the scanner.

NORDAL

Elvis?

MAGGIE

Elwood. I call him Elvis because he's always humming, "Love me Tender." Your turn.

NORDAL

This is crazy. He's watching us play a game?

MAGGIE

I guess. What's the harm? He's really a nice man.

NORDAL

Oh, yeah. Kidnappers are sweethearts. Kids in the cemetery said that his family was killed when they were pulling this trailer.

MAGGIE

What kids?

NORDAL

Locals. Goddamn hoodlums who stole my bike.

MAGGIE

Don't know anything about that. Look, he's not really a kidnapper. I can leave any time I want to.

NORDAL

So, *you're* the kidnapper?

MAGGIE

Feel free to leave.

NORDAL

We're locked in.

MAGGIE

Really?

She reaches over and pops the door open easily. Nordal picks up his backpack and walks out. The red pick-up is staring at the dead neon sign. The orchard. The cemetery. No bicycle. A foam bed in a trailer. No-brainer. He sits back down at the board game after closing the door.

NORDAL

You can open the door and *I* can't. How does that work?

MAGGIE

You can open it. Go ahead.

He opens and closes the door just as easily as she had..

MAGGIE

Your move.

He picks a card.

NORDAL

Thanks. "Move forward 11 or change places with an opponent."

NORDAL

I'll change places.

MAGGIE

Sweet.

NORDAL

So, how did I get to be so lucky? What made him choose me?

MAGGIE

I chose you.

NORDAL

Really?

MAGGIE

I told him I was lonely. He said I should find a friend.

NORDAL

And he doesn't try to hurt you or anything?

MAGGIE

Please. He treats me like a daughter.

NORDAL

That's really sad that no one is looking for you.

MAGGIE

When I was 14 they had my picture in a paper hawking newspapers in Haight Ashbury.

NORDAL

What's that?

MAGGIE

San Francisco, you idiot. You are so from here.

NORDAL

Sorry.

MAGGIE

Hare Krishna, LSD, I still have my tambourine.

NORDAL

So look at you now. All grown up with a job and everything.

MAGGIE

Yeah. Right.

NORDAL

So, are we supposed to be the kids who were killed or something?

MAGGIE

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

NORDAL

What about his wife?

MAGGIE

Wife?

NORDAL

His whole family was killed, right?

MAGGIE

If you say so.

NORDAL

Maybe no one will come looking for *you*, but my parents will be trying to find *me*.

MAGGIE

Elvis already called your house. They didn't know where you were or when you'd be back.

NORDAL

How did he know who I was?

MAGGIE

Elvis knows everything. Not much happens around here that Elvis doesn't see. Believe me, I've known several Elvises. Or is it Elvi?

(The police scanner squawks.)

POLICE SCANNER1

Parents are all there now.

POLICE SCANNER2

10-4. Any i.d. on the bicycle, yet?

POLICE SCANNER1

Negative. The parents don't recognize it.

NORDAL

Serves them right, Sounds like those shits got pulled over. Maybe I can get my bike back.

POLICE SCANNER2

There may be a 4th kid somewhere, we'll start searching tomorrow.

POLICE SCANNER1

10-4

POLICE SCANNER2

We might be able to question the survivor later tonight if he comes around.

NORDAL

Oh shit!

MAGGIE

Gee, Nordal. You're a wanted man.

He opens the door. The truck is gone. The gaslight at the sign is burning. He walks to the sign and the frogs grow silent. He looks back at the trailer. MAGGIE's silhouette is in the open doorway. She holds a Sorry card to her forehead like reading his future. He turns off the gaslight and returns to the trailer.

NORDAL

So, where do I sleep?

She smiles and points to the loft above the kitchenette that was already prepared for him.

MAGGIE

Grandma's attic.

NORDAL

Okay if I use the bathroom?

MAGGIE

My home is yours.

He does his business in the cubicle, Split screen of MAGGIE preparing for bed. He comes out as she's finishing. Her back is to him as he undresses and pulls himself up in the loft. He bumps his head on the camera.

NORDAL

I'd say sweet dreams, but my cards predict nightmares.

MAGGIE

In the morning we'll see the path. You hungry?

NORDAL

No! Thanks.

She smiles.

MAGGIE

We have a couple of old bicycles that Elvis found and fixed up.

NORDAL

Yeah?

MAGGIE

He's a pretty clever guy.

NORDAL

Yeah, I can see that. The generator, gas lighting, plumbing.

MAGGIE

He could use some help. You should stick around.

Nordal addresses the audience breaking the 4th wall.

NORDAL (TO AUDIENCE)

The trouble with clever do-it-yourself types is that they can put others in danger. After the damage is done, they might feel a little guilt, a lot of grief, and maybe even all-consuming regret, but they go on puttering. I don't mean that in a negative way. You gotta cross that line occasionally so you know where it is because that line moves around, you know? What I really said was:

He turns back to MAGGIE.

NORDAL

I'll give it some consideration.

MAGGIE

Sleep. We'll talk over breakfast.

NORDAL (TO AUDIENCE)

I didn't know what it would all look like in the morning light, but at that moment, a place to sleep, the orchard, the cemetery, a hot meal, and maybe some sort of business venture, seemed pretty enticing.

NORDAL

Sure. Good night.

He addresses the audience with the wonder of a young man who has just discovered that his parents have a love life.

NORDAL (TO AUDIENCE)

And it was. Listen, I'm just gonna tell you this part. During the night I woke to sighing sounds that I assumed at first were MAGGIE's dreams. At the time, I had no idea that girls might pleasure themselves. I mean, I sure knew how guys did, but, well, you know. It was a sweet cooing that was not even vaguely like my own awkward efforts. I pretended to sleep but stirred a couple of times to see if she would pause. She did. She wasn't dreaming. Sweet dreams indeed. I mean, in my mind at least, she was thinking of me. Do you know what I'm talking about? It was poetry. Ballet. Compared to my clumsy handling of my dad's Coronet magazines or the lingerie section JC Penney catalogue (which, by the way was just a bit better than Sears. Just sayin'.) Anyway, this really complicated my situation. I'm not sure what time I finally fell asleep, but it was way past sunrise when I woke up.

I lay with my eyes closed for maybe 5 minutes trying to remember where I was. I would do that when I was on an overnight trip. I'd keep my eyes closed until I could figure out where I was. I smiled when I remembered my interrupted sleep and opened my eyes to see what horror the place might be in the daylight. But it was mostly as I imagined it in the dark. MAGGIE was gone. Her bed was neatly made. I slid off my bunk and dressed leisurely. It was like I was staying in a bed and breakfast without a care in the world. I even made a half-hearted effort tidy my own bed. After using the chemical toilet, I saw a note on MAGGIE's pillow. "Breakfast is in the bar. S" I looked up and there was the camera. I'd completely forgotten about that. Was Elvis watching me? Was he watching MAGGIE last night?

He opens the door and squints in the sunlight and surveys the orchard. The cemetery. The tired neon sputnik sign. The boarded-up Gaslight Grill. The empty spot where the red truck had been. He pushes open the door. MAGGIE sits at a table eating a bowl of Cheerio's.

MAGGIE

Hey.

NORDAL
Mornin’

MAGGIE
You want a hot breakfast?

NORDAL
I better use your phone and move on.

MAGGIE
We got no phone.

NORDAL
Right.

She seduces her cereal with a plastic spoon. Balances a Cheerio on the tip of her tongue. Nordal attempts conversation.

NORDAL
Sleep well?

He clenches his teeth and says “idiot” inside his mouth.

MAGGIE
It was my best night in over a year. Thanks. How about you? I hope you were able to sleep. I'm kind of a restless sleeper.

Nordal babbles.

NORDAL
Oh, yeah. Right. I was fine. I've slept in all kinds of crazy places.

MAGGIE
I didn't disturb you? Even a little bit?

NORDAL
Nope, I slept like a baby all night.

She pushes her cereal around. Angry. Rejected. Nordal rattles on, unaware that he has rejected her advances.

NORDAL

So, where's the old man? Elvis?

She shrugs.

NORDAL

I figured he would be watching us 24/7.

MAGGIE

He's odd, not crazy.

NORDAL

What are we going to do?

MAGGIE

We?

NORDAL

Sorry. This is my first kidnapping.

MAGGIE

You're free to leave.

NORDAL

What will you do?

MAGGIE

What do you mean?

NORDAL

Where will you go?

MAGGIE

Why would I go anywhere?

NORDAL

Does he know you tried to get me to send help for you?

MAGGIE

It was his idea. He's very clever. He knew you come riding to my rescue on your Schwinn.

Nordal turns to leave.

NORDAL

It's been real.

MAGGIE

Look, he's not a bad guy. Just old and sad.

NORDAL

Really? Just keeps you in a beat-up travel trailer and spies on you.

MAGGIE

We all spy on each other. Just mosey along, ok?

NORDAL

I'm sorry if I'm not who you thought I was.

MAGGIE

No hard feelings. We played Sorry, we move on.

NORDAL

So, what am I supposed to tell your dad, assuming I go that direction?

MAGGIE

My dad?

NORDAL

Yeah. Your map pointed to his house.

MAGGIE

Oh yeah. Well, I didn't say that he was *there*.

NORDAL

You are such an enigma. You know what that is?

MAGGIE

You are such a dick. You know what that is?

NORDAL

I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

You say that too much.

He walks to the front door and looks out the window.
The red truck is back. He returns to the table and sits.

NORDAL

He might not be as old as you think.

MAGGIE

Maybe not. Fucking up real bad can do that to a person.

NORDAL

You said to send help.

She smiles a genuinely sweet smile. Sunshine again. He
has truly made a difference in her bleak existence.

MAGGIE

Yes. Thank you for coming.

NORDAL

I'm here by accident. I took a wrong turn in the dark.

MAGGIE

No one comes here by making a wrong turn. I hope you find what you're looking for.

NORDAL

Shards. Patterns.

MAGGIE

The bike's out back.

Elvis walks in. In daylight he looks like an ordinary old
tinkerer. He is hunched over like he'd tossed too many
heavy things into the back of his truck. He beams
lovingly at them like they are his family. He speaks for
the first time.

ELVIS

Better get that trash carried out. The breakfast crowd will be here soon.

NORDAL

Sure.

Nordal picks up the trash can and carries it out the front door. His pick-hammer is laying on the porch right where he'd tossed it the night before. He picks it up and carries it and the trash to the back. He empties the trash. He sees the bicycles chained beside the generator shed. He turns the handle to the trailer door intending to grab his backpack. It is locked. He pulls out the book: Looking Back. He strikes the chain hard with his hammer. On the third try the lock pops open.

He rides a bike, carrying his hammer and the book, past the cemetery, past the orchard, past "Dad's House" past Bushy Quarry, past the State line. On to wherever the tires might wear out and he might find another bicycle.

FADE TO BLACK.