

SECOND CHANCES

Written by

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SUPERIMPOSE: 22 YEARS EARLIER

INT. HORSE BARN - DAY

DANI(7) kicks her tiny cowgirl boot in the dirt, her delicate fingers tucked tightly into CHRISTIAN'S (Dani's father, 37) large, calloused hand.

Kneeling down straddling a wounded horse, two VETERINARIANS work diligently to stop the bleeding.

DANI

Daddy, why did the bad man hurt his horse?

Her father stands stoic. He squeezes her hand.

One Veterinarian turns to Christian.

VETERINARIAN 1

Sorry, Christian. There's nothing more we can do.

Christian turns, still holding Dani's hand.

CHRISTIAN

You're right. Now it's my turn.

EXT. CHRISTIAN'S YARD - DAY

Miles of wide open, sprawling hills set the scenery for the stately home.

Opposite the home, two large stables stand below the western sky.

Mingling around a long table piled high with food and drink, are FAMILY and FRIENDS in celebration. CHILDREN run and chase.

A young boy, VINCENT(10) stands outside the crowd.

CHILD

Come on, Vincent.

Christian has a light hearted discussion with two MEN, looks towards the barn and stops abruptly.

CHRISTIAN

Jeff! Get over here.

EXT. BARNYARD

Hanging out in the barn, is JEFF(21) and Hank(21), longtime friends and farmhands, laughing and throwing a ball to each other.

JEFF
Be right there!

He throws a fastball and Hank misses it.

HANK
You been practicing without me?

JEFF
You coming?

HANK
What, and miss you kiss up to the old man?

They both laugh and run towards the house.

EXT. FRONT YARD

CHRISTIAN
Think I'd better hire that man full time before he gets away.

Dani runs up to Christian.

DANI
Daddy! They're ready.

Christian picks Dani up and motions to the crowd.

CHRISTIAN
This is it, folks. Bring your glasses.

Everyone grabs their filled champagne glasses, and make their way to the end of the driveway.

Christian takes his wife ELEANOR'S(29) hand, who leans her head on his shoulder.

ELEANOR
Have I told you how proud I am of you, dear?

CHRISTIAN
Not in the last ten minutes.

He sets Dani down and the three walk hand in hand with the others.

Dani looks back at Vincent.

EXT. ENTRANCE OF DRIVEWAY

A large archway stands to greet guests. A white covering hangs over the middle.

Jeff stands under it, rope in hand, in anticipation to reveal what hides beneath it.

Christian lifts his glass.

CHRISTIAN

A toast, everyone, to new
beginnings and second chances.

All cheer!

In the background stands Hank, throws down a cigarette, stomps it out.

Jeff pulls the sheet off to reveal a sign which reads:
"SERENITY ACRES".

DISSOLVE TO:

Superimpose: PRESENT DAY - Serenity Acres

EXT. RUGGED OVERLOOK, SERENITY ACRES - MORNING

Dani(29) focused, poised, sits with attitude atop her Quarter horse, BJ, looking over the rolling hills.

Muffled sounds are heard at a distance.

Dani leads BJ to the edge of the tree line, stops.

Her beautifully intense eyes lock onto something. The sounds are that of a man's voice, yelling. She listens. It's HANEY (34, dirtbag, James Dean wanna be).

HANEY (O.S.)

I said GET UP you worthless, good
for nothing pile of sludge.

Dani takes a few more steps. One hand on the reins, the other, slowly raises her rifle.

We see him. In the ravine. Standing over his downed horse as he raises his rifle.

BANG!

Dani lowers her rifle.

Haney cries in pain, holds his bleeding hand as his gun lay shattered, ten feet away.

Dani sits stoic, still in the saddle.

EXT. HANEY'S RANCH - DAY

In a flurry of activity outside the home and barn of Haney, which resembles a dumping ground, ASSISTANT SHERIFF JENNINGS(30s) stands with Dani.

JENNINGS

I've been seeing a lot of this lately.

DANI

Give me five minutes with him. I'll put an end to it real quick.

JENNINGS

That's what I'm afraid of.

Three horse trailers displaying the name "SERENITY ACRES", line the driveway, manned by three HUSKY RANCH HANDS. They round up stray horses.

A second officer, WAYNE (40ish) walks out of the house with an obscenely filthy Haney, hand wrapped in a soiled, bloody towel.

Directly in front of Dani, Haney stops, spits a disgusting wad, just missing her foot.

Her steely eyes lock with his, she remains emotionless.

DANI

You evil little pig.

JENNINGS

Get him out of here before I let her at him.

Expressionless, Haney and Dani follow each other's stare until he is in the squad car and it drives off.

DANI

If you're done, I need to get these animals to a decent home.

JENNINGS

Sure. You alright?

DANI

I will be as soon as I get these horses away from here.

JENNINGS

I'll have someone check on you later.

Dani runs to the edge of the pasture where Haney's latest victim is being driven off in a horse trailer. She reaches in and rubs his neck.

The horse doesn't respond, Black eyes stare ahead.

DANI

You, I'll call Chance.

INT. BACK STABLES - DAY

Chance stands motionless on a bed of fresh hay, Dani slowly opens the gate and enters the large stall. Chance jolts in fear.

Dani steps back out, closes the door and leans on it.

A disruption, HANK (now 43) with attitude, angrily storms in.

HANK

Either you straighten out that lazy, good for nothin -

Chance becomes restless.

Dani grabs Hank by his arm and drags him outside the barn next to where JOSH(18, tough looking) is loading a pickup truck.

JOSH

Dad?

Dani and Hank ignore Josh.

DANI

Don't ever go off like that again around the horses, or you'll be the one out on your tail!

Hank whips out of her hold.

HANK

If you think I'm gonna clean up
after him, you've got another thing
coming.

He storms off. Josh sneers at Dani and runs after him.

DANI

Give me strength.

INT. ABANDONED HOME - LIVING ROOM- DAY

Sheriff VINCENT (now 32), chiseled and handsome, investigates a domestic situation call, shuffles through the trash on the floor, talks into his mic.

VINCENT

No sign of life here. Over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

10-4. I'll get the county guys over
there to tape it up.

The male NEIGHBOR (40s, straggly) waits at the doorway.

NEIGHBOR

Been about three days since the
last big fight. Yellin' and
screamin'. Thought someone was
gettin' killed.

Vincent walks in further, kicks trash out of his way. Hears muffled sounds from a closed door.

He opens it revealing a filthy bathroom. Listens. The sound again, louder.

INT. BATHROOM

He puts his ear up to another door. Slowly turns the handle and opens it.

On the floor of the closet, huddled in the corner is a frightened, scrawny, young boy JORDAN(15) looking up at him.

Vincent, shook up, slowly goes down on one knee.

The boy backs further into the corner, hangs onto a filthy quilt.

VINCENT
I'm Vincent. I won't hurt you.

The boy turns away for a moment.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
A friend.

The boy stares back, eyes wide.

Vincent stands and turns. He brings his radio up to his lips.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I need a social worker out here.
Now.

He clenches his jaw, walks back to the closet.

INT. SERENITY ACRES - STABLES - DAY

Dani walks from horse to horse with JEFF (now 43), Ranch Manager, good guy, workaholic.

They walk up to a stall housing another rescue (Quarter horse) from Haney's.

JEFF
We'll call this one Spirit. It's in her, somewhere.

Dani kneels to check out Spirit's blistered legs.

DANI
I had another run in with Hank.

JEFF
Since I hired his son, that chip on his shoulder's gotten bigger.

They continue their walk through the stable.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Anything planned for the 4th?

DANI
Make sure no idiot with fireworks gets any foolish ideas around here. You?

JEFF
Hang around here I guess.

Dani shakes her head in disappointment.

DANI

Your daughter ought to love that.
You need to bring her around more
often.

Jeff ignores her. They walk to the end of the barn.

DANI (CONT'D)

You need to get on the phone about
that grain order.

JEFF

It came a week ago.

DANI

The guys are complaining it's gone.

JEFF

Impossible. There were forty tons
delivered. I signed for it myself.

EXT. NORTH PASTURE - EVENING

The moon shines brightly on TWO MEN hauling branches through
the woods. It appears they are covering something up.

They get into a pick-up and slowly rattle out of the woods to
an opening in the fence.

INT. COURT HOUSE - DAY

MISS PEALE (60s), uptight Social Worker, stands before JUDGE
MANNING (60s) fair, kind hearted, and mildly jaded man.
Behind her, small and frightened, sits Jordan, holding his
filthy quilt, Vincent sits behind him.

MISS PEALE

Your Honor, this boy has been -

JUDGE MANNING

Does he have a name, Miss Peale?

MISS PEALE

Yes, it's Jordan your Honor. As I
was saying -

Judge Manning addresses Jordan.

JUDGE MANNING

How old are you, Jordan?

Jordan stands, Miss Peale pulls him back down.

MISS PEALE

He doesn't speak, your Honor.

Judge Manning walks out from behind his desk, sits next to Jordan.

JUDGE MANNING

I have a grandson about your age.
His favorite candy is sour gummy
worms.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a bag, opens it and holds it out to Jordan.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

Jordan takes it.

JORDAN

Thank you.

Jordan stuffs a handful into his mouth. His eyes get wide, and his mouth puckers, twists and turns. Giggles are heard.

JUDGE MANNING

He speaks, Miss Peale.

Judge Manning returns to his desk.

MISS PEALE

Like I was saying, this boy,
Jordan, has no home or family.

JUDGE MANNING

I've read the report.

Crashing in through the courtroom doors, an unkept, straggly PENNY REDLIN (35) yelling and staggering drunk.

PENNY

Where is he? You took my son!

Vincent leaps out of his seat, runs to Penny.

Judge Manning pounds his gavel.

TWO COURT OFFICERS one on each side, hold her still. Vincent goes back to his seat.

JUDGE MANNING

Order! Officers, bring her up.

She fights the officers all the way, turns, points to Jordan.

PENNY
Jordan! That's my son.

Jordan stands and heads towards his mother. Miss Peale holds him down while he struggles angrily to get up.

JORDAN
That's my mom.

Judge Manning pounds his gavel again.

JUDGE MANNING
I said order, or you'll all be in contempt of this court.

Penny reaches out to Jordan, struggling, in front of the Judge.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)
You're Jordan's mother?

PENNY
Yea. And I want him back.

JUDGE MANNING
Is that right?

PENNY
Look at him. You people are scaring him.

The Judge leans over his desk, addresses Penny in a quiet, but harsh tone.

JUDGE MANNING
Please state your name.

PENNY
Penny. And that's my son over there.

JUDGE MANNING
Do you have a last name Penny?

PENNY
Redlin.

JUDGE MANNING
Alright, Penny Redlin.

He waves her off.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)
Take Ms. Redlin and place her in a
cell until she's sober. I'll deal
with her then.

SLAM goes the gavel.

Penny goes crazy.

PENNY
You can't do this to me. Jordan,
don't worry. I'll come back for
you.

JUDGE MANNING
Get her out of my court room.

INT. TACK AND SADDLE SHOP - DAY

PETE (18) throws the remaining items into Dani's bag. She
stops in front of a poster on the wall. "COUNTY FAIR - RODEO"

She turns away.

PETE
Plan on entering a few of your
horses?

DANI
Not this year.

PETE
I'll be entering Daisy. She's come
a long way since you worked with
her.

Vincent enters the shop fuming, door SLAMS on the wall. Dani
and Pete watch as he storms past them, not a word said.

Dani shoves her bag towards Pete.

DANI
Hold this.

She goes after Vincent.

INT. SHOPS HARDWARE DEPT.

Dani walks up behind Vincent.

DANI
Someone having a bad day?

Vincent turns to her.

VINCENT
What gave you that idea?

DANI
You might want to put the door back
on it's hinges before you leave.

VINCENT
That obvious?

DANI
Care to talk about it?

VINCENT
I'll stop by.

INT. HORSE BARN - CHANCE'S STALL - EVENING

Dani leans on the gate of the stall. Chance doesn't move a muscle.

Jeff walks up, leans on the gate. Both in deep thought.

Jeff takes a deep breath;

JEFF
I'm calling it a night. A bunch of
us are heading down to Crazy
Harry's. You're welcome to join us.

DANI
Not tonight.
(pauses)
Jeff are you doing OK?

Jeff turns and waves as he walks off.

DANI (CONT'D)
Just thought I'd ask.

Dani grabs a horse blanket off the shelf, gingerly steps around the outside of Chances' stall. He jerks in fear. She walks to the far corner, lays her blanket down, then herself, facing the wall.

INT. HORSE STABLE - NIGHT

Dani lays asleep. Chance lays motionless ten feet away.

The sound of a car door clicks, footsteps.

Dani's eyes flash open. She listens. Hears giggles.

She listens for a few minutes, then bolts up, reaches for her rifle and eases out of the stall, creeping from stall to stall, until she reaches the end.

Inside the last stall she hears wrestling around. Dani flashes her light on Hank's face, drunk as a skunk with some FLOOZY.

HANK

Whoa, hold on there. Is that you, Dani?

FLOOZY

Hank. Who's Dani?

Dani has her rifle at her side.

DANI

You have one minute.

Hank shuffles to his feet. Brings the Floozy with him.

HANK

We're just having a little fun. You know with the wife at home and all...

The floozy smacks him in the arm.

FLOOZY

You didn't say anything about a wife.

Dani checks her watch.

DANI

Thirty seconds.

They open the gate, grumble past her.

INT. JUDGE MANNING'S CHAMBERS - DAY

Vincent paces, stating his case to the Judge. Miss Peale perched across the desk.

VINCENT

We can't just throw him at the system, it'll never work.

MISS PEALE

I assure you he'll go to a good home, with parents well trained in dealing with, this type of boy.

Vincent loses his temper.

VINCENT

Tell me. What type of a boy is he?

JUDGE MANNING

Alright. We won't accomplish anything this way.

Vincent gives Miss Peale a cold stare.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

I don't see any other choice than to place him into the Schmidt home.

Miss Peale smiles with simper superiority.

Vincent won't have it. He paces.

VINCENT

Hold on. What if I can find him the perfect home? I've got a feeling about this. Give me twenty four hours.

Miss Peale shakes her head in a condescending way.

JUDGE MANNING

I understand your concern, Vincent. But Miss Peale has...

Vincent leans over his desk.

VINCENT

Twenty four hours. I swear, if I can't do it, he's all hers.

The Judge looks from Miss Peale to Vincent.

JUDGE MANNING

Twenty four hours.

Vincent slams his hand on the desk

VINCENT

Thank you Judge Manning.

He reaches over and shakes the Judges hand ignoring Miss Peale.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - CHANCE'S STABLE - DAY

Dani stands outside a stall, reaches over to pet Chance and he flinches, then bucks. Dani jumps back.

Dani hears movement, turns. Vincent is at the door watching.

She quietly goes to Vincent.

VINCENT
Pretty mean horse?

DANI
Pretty scared horse.
(beat)
I'm glad you stopped by. Maybe
you'll fill me in on what's going
on with you.

Vincent wanders around as though inspecting the barn.

VINCENT
Have I told you what a fabulous job
you do here?

Dani chuckles. Motions for them to head out of the barn.

DANI
What do you want, Vincent?

VINCENT
Why would you say a thing like
that?

DANI
Go on.

VINCENT
You've got a big, roomy home, barns
full of beautiful horses, land as
far as the eye can see.

DANI
And a transparent friend. Get to
the point.

VINCENT
You seem so lonely, never get out,
no close friend to laugh with at
night.

DANI
Is this a proposal?

They reach the porch, have a seat on the swing.

VINCENT
It's not what you think.

DANI
I'm listening.

Vincent is at a loss for words.

VINCENT
Maybe I can explain better if I
showed you.

Dani grins, resigns herself to him, grabs her purse.

DANI
This better be good.

She hollers out.

DANI (CONT'D)
I'm heading out Jeff.

At the treeline stands Haney, watching.

INT. BOY'S HOME - DAY

Large, older home with a warm feel. ELLIE (60s) stout grandmother type, greets them while wiping her hands on her apron.

She and Vincent hug tight.

ELLIE
My sweet, sweet Vince.

She holds him away from herself.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Let me look at you. So handsome.

He turns to Dani.

VINCENT
Dani, I want you to meet someone
who's been like a mother to me.

Two BOYS run through the room fighting.

ELLIE
Boys, I'm making fresh cookies, and
if you want any...

She goes back to Dani.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

So nice to finally meet you Dani.
Vincent has spoken about you for
years.

Dani looks over at a blushing Vincent.

DANI

Really?

VINCENT

I brought Dani over to meet Jordan.

Ellie's mood drops. A big sigh.

ELLIE

It's so sad.

They follow her up the stairs, to a closed door. Vincent stands back for the women to pass.

Dani looks at Vincent as if to say, "What's going on here"?

Ellie quietly opens the door, we see;

INT. BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS

Jordan, laying on his bed, staring ahead motionless, holding his quilt tightly against his chest.

Ellie walks to him, very slowly sits next to him. She reaches out and caresses his head.

ELLIE

I have someone here to meet you,
Jordan.

In the doorway stand Dani and Vincent.

Dani's eyes widen.

EXT. PORCH OF BOYS HOME - DAY

Dani is the first one out the door breathing fire. Ellie and Vincent follow.

Dani paces in anger. Walks up to Vincent, pointing her finger in his face.

DANI
You did this on purpose!

VINCENT
I just couldn't...

DANI
What am I supposed to do with a kid
at my house?

She paces, rants.

Ellie comforts her.

ELLIE
This is a big decision. Too big to
be made quickly.

VINCENT
You're right. Dani, I'm sorry.

Dani cringes at the hurt in Vincent's eyes.

DANI
I need some time, to think.

They walk to the car, Vincent turns around, winks at Ellie.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - DAY

Jeff and Dani ride the property inspecting the roaming horses, and check on four RANCH HANDS repairing fences. One section of the fence is down.

JEFF
What happened here?

RANCH HAND
Probably just kids. Those tire
tracks go on for another thirty
feet.

JEFF
Make sure you check for broken
bottles or any metal pieces.

Ranch Hand waves OK.

Jeff and Dani follow the tracks in a slow trot. They reach a cool, shaded area.

Dani is in deep thought, then suddenly.

DANI
Jeff, STOP!

Jeff yanks on the reins, the horse rears back.

Dani is off her horse inspecting the ground. She spots a set bear trap.

DANI (CONT'D)
It wasn't kids who did this.

She pokes a large stick in it and it closes with a SNAP breaking the stick in half.

She turns to Jeff.

DANI (CONT'D)
Any ideas?

JEFF
Only that someone's got a bone to pick with you.

INT. DANI'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Around the room, there are various pictures of Dani and her father, ranging in age. They had obviously won awards for many rodeo competitions.

Dani walks to a wall covered with awards her mother had received for being Foster Mother of the years, nineteen ninety-five, nineteen ninety-six, nineteen ninety seven, and nineteen ninety-eight. There were coordinating pictures of her mom surrounded by children of all ages.

A framed picture of Dani(8)in the act of roping a calf.

Dani sits down at the desk. In front of her is the rolled up rodeo flier. She picks it up and unrolls it.

Stares at it for a moment, RIPS it up in anger.

Her housekeeper GRACE peeks her head into the room.

GRACE
I'm heading up. Anything I can get for you?

Dani hesitates for just a moment, takes a deep breath.

DANI
Grace, my father never talked about the accident. My mother's.

Grace sits at the edge of the chair.

GRACE

It was so sad. He kept it all
inside, sweetie.

DANI

What about the children?

GRACE

There were six of them. All killed
along with your mom, by a drunk
driver.

(PAUSE)

She wanted a house full of children
she could love. She always said,
"There's nothing better for an
abused child than the love of an
animal."

Grace stands, pats Nicole's hand.

GRACE

It's never been the same around
here.

DANI

I know.

Grace leaves.

Dani drops her head in her hands, and is interrupted by a
phone call.

DANI (CONT'D)

Hello...I never stay mad at you...
I'll have the porch light on.

EXT. DANI'S HOME-FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Dani and Vincent sit on chairs, Vincent with a beer, Dani
with a glass of wine and wrapped in a cape.

DANI

I'm not convinced last night was
the first time we had intruders.

VINCENT

You should have told me.

DANI
Jeff told me about a few other incidents.

VINCENT
I think I'll hang around tonight, if that's OK?

DANI
You sure?

He gets up, taps on the cushion of the swing.

VINCENT
This should work.

A quiet moment.

DANI
Vincent, I'm really sorry I came down so hard on you.

VINCENT
Which time?

Dani gives him a look of "What-ever".

DANI
Today, at the boy's home.

VINCENT
Don't worry about it.

He takes a long drink of his beer.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I won't lie to you, when I saw that boy, cowering in that closet...

Dani reaches her hand over on his.

DANI
It's OK. I've been thinking about a lot of things lately.

She looks around the grounds.

DANI (CONT'D)
Every where I look, I'm reminded of my father and his legacy.

She looks up to Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)

It's only been half fulfilled. It needs my mothers dream to made it whole.

They stare out over the ranch in silence.

INT. JEFF'S HOME - LEXI'S BEDROOM - EVENING

LEXI (15) cute girl with attitude, sits at her computer typing away. She's wrapped in a tattered, gray sweater.

Next to her computer is a picture of a young woman wrapped in the same gray sweater, holding a young Lexi's hand.

Jeff lightly taps at her door, enters.

JEFF

I thought I'd run out to the ranch.

Lexi turns, not too happy.

LEXI

Don't forget, I'm leaving early tomorrow.

JEFF

Where to?

LEXI

Dad. Leadership camp.

JEFF

Does grandma know?

Lexi gets up condescendingly, hands him a brochure.

LEXI

Just go to the ranch dad.

Jeff walks out. Reaches an open bedroom door, stops, looks around.

The bed is made. Woman's toiletries on the dresser, a wedding picture of Jeff and wife. A woman's robe laying on a chair.

He slowly closes the door, leaves.

EXT. BOYS HOME - DAY

Dani stands on the large porch, hesitant to ring the door bell. She hears children playing inside and peeks in the door window. Finally, she pushes the button.

Ellie opens the door all smiles.

INT. LIVING ROOM, BOYS HOME - DAY

DANI
How is he doing?

ELLIE
Last night he finally slept in his bed. Just have to take things real slow.

DANI
I understand.

ELLIE
All my life I've taken in boys...
Are you ready to see him?

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM

The bed is made shabbily, an empty plate sits atop the covers next to a still Jordan, who looks down.

Ellie goes to the bed and grabs the plate.

ELLIE
Jordan, this is Dani. She was here the other day.

DANI
Mind if I come in?

Ellie walks out the door, closing it softly behind her.

DANI (CONT'D)
Miss Ellie tells me you won't come out of your room.

Jordan glances at her briefly.

JORDAN
Is my mom going to be OK?

DANI
I'll check if you'd like.

JORDAN
Can you help her?

She kneels next to him.

DANI
Of course. Whatever she needs.

Jordan's head is down.

JORDAN
My step-dad beats her up.

Dani tilts his chin up to her.

DANI
Remember Vincent?

JORDAN
The Sheriff who found me.

DANI
Yes. He'll make sure your mom stays
safe.

She stands and walks to the window.

DANI (CONT'D)
I was thinking, I could use someone
like you to help me on my ranch.

JORDAN
Me?

DANI
I have a horse that could use a
friend too... like you.

She walks to him.

DANI (CONT'D)
Would you like that?

JORDAN
I guess.

DANI
How about we go down and talk to
Miss Ellie, see what she thinks.

Jordan stands, turns, straightens out his quilt. The back of his shirt raises enough to see hideous welts on his back.

Dani winces in pain.

EXT. BOY'S HOME

Dani walks out, makes a phone call.

DANI

This is Dani - A woman by the name of Penny Redlin is currently locked up. - Right, county. Can you send someone there right away, give her the option of your facility? - Alcohol, maybe more. - Put it on my tab. - Thanks.

EXT. HORSE STABLES - DAY

Jeff walks a young quarter horse off the trailer.

DANI

Thanks Jeff. I'll take her from here.

Vincent drives in, parks next to the truck.

Dani stands with attitude, smiling and holding the lead rope.

Vincent steps out of his truck in full Sheriff garb.

VINCENT

Hey Jeff.

Jeff waves and walks off.

Vincent walks up with an exaggerated limp, hand on his back.

DANI

What's with your back?

VINCENT

Couldn't you find a more comfortable swing.

DANI

You came all the way here to complain about my swing?

VINCENT

Actually, I wanted to let you know Haney is out.

Dani is visibly angry.

DANI

You're kidding, right?

VINCENT
Seems his own little band of
thieves posted bail.

DANI
Wonderful.

Vincent walks to the new horse.

VINCENT
Doesn't look like a rescue.

DANI
She was at one time. I just got her
back.

VINCENT
I thought your point was to rehab
first, then find them a home?

DANI
It is, I figured I'd need a gentle
horse for Jordan to practice on.

This brings a smile to his face.

VINCENT
Does that mean...

DANI
He'll be here in three days.

A very excited Vincent grabs her, twirls around in a big hug.

VINCENT
This is fantastic. I swear, you
won't be sorry.

DANI
I hope not. Honestly, I don't have
a clue how to take care of boys.

INT. DANI'S HOME - JORDAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

In an elegant, yet comfortable home, Dani helps GRACE (60s)
no-nonsense, matronly housekeeper, prepare Jordan's room.

Dani hangs a new picture.

DANI
There. I hope it's not too girly
for him in here.

GRACE

It wasn't girly when it was your room. Besides, I can just imagine what he was sleeping in before.

Dani pulls a box down from the closet. Pictures spill out onto the floor. Most of them are of her and Vincent, much younger.

She picks one up. Vincent is being pinned from Police Academy.

She holds it close to her heart, not overlooked by Grace.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'll never understand you two. One minute you're ready to marry him, the next, POOF. He's gone.

DANI

Yea well, we're still friends.

GRACE

It's just a shame.

Dani gathers up the pictures.

DANI

I'll put these in my room.

GRACE

Someone ought to talk some sense into you two, especially now with the young man coming to live here.

Jeff shows up at the bedroom door, out of breath.

JEFF

You better get out here. We've got a problem.

Dani drops the box, races out after Jeff.

EXT. STABLES - DAY

A loud commotion, Hank and another FARM HAND are rolling around in a heap, punching, yelling.

The horses in the stable are very nervous.

Dani runs up to them and yanks the farm hand off Hank, Jeff holds on to Hank. They drag the sweaty, puffing men outside the stables.

Jeff throws Hank onto the ground, stares down at him.

JEFF

Pack your things, Hank. I should
have done this a long time ago.

Hank stares up at Jeff.

RANCH HAND

He was kicking the horses. I tried
to stop him.

Hank looks at the kid beady-eyed.

HANK

Watch what ya say, kid.

JEFF

Hank. Let's go.

A frustrated Dani walks towards the house.

DANI

This, I don't need.

Josh sits in his pickup truck, watching.

INT. DANI'S HOME - MORNING

Vincent glances through the living room windows as he paces.

Through the window, Dani's truck drives up.

VINCENT

Grace. They're here.

Grace runs out from the kitchen.

They stand near the door, it opens.

In walks Jordan, then Dani. Jordan stops, looks around in
awe.

DANI

Jordan, you remember Vincent.

Jordan makes eye contact with him.

VINCENT

Welcome home.

JORDAN

Thanks.

DANI

And this is Grace. She's a friend
and works at the ranch.

GRACE

If there's anything you need
Jordan, just ask.

JORDAN

Can I see my room?

Dani and Vincent can hardly contain their excitement.

VINCENT

Lets go my man.

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM

Jordan sets his small back-pack on the bed and looks around.
He stares at the open closet where clothes are neatly hung,
and PJ's layed out on the bed next to a basket of toiletries.

He feels the pajamas, looks up at Vincent and Dani.

JORDAN

Are these mine?

DANI

Yes.

The three stand there before Vincent pipes in.

VINCENT

Lets give him some time to check
out his room.

They agree.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

When you're ready, just come down.

Jordan looks around the room in awe.

EXT. RANCH - DAY

The young horse is tied on a hitching post next to the
stables.

Dani and Vincent watch Jordan's face as they near it.

DANI

Think you can handle her, Jordan?

Jordan looks up at her.

JORDAN
Is she really mine?

DANI
Just have to give her a name.

Jordan gives Dani a big hug. Then thinks for a moment.

JORDAN
My mom always said she was gonna
have a baby girl. Name her Chloe.

DANI
Sounds good to me. How about you
Vincent?

VINCENT
Chloe is good.

They watch him as he caresses Chloe. They are like proud
parents.

DANI
Wait, Jordan.

She brings out her camera.

DANI (CONT'D)
OK, Jordan. Smile big.

INT. JEEP

Dani drives Vincent and Jordan around, pointing out various
pastures and horses. Jordan remains quiet.

DANI
This herd has come a long way since
I picked them up.

VINCENT
Slow down, there's Jeff.

Jeff and Lexi walk over to meet the jeep.

JEFF
So, you must be the new man of the
house.

DANI
Jeff, Lexi, this is Jordan.

JEFF
Howdy Jordan.

LEXI
Hey.

Jordan is in awe of the horses. Then someone else catches his eye. Lexi.

JORDAN
Hi.

Dani notices the twinkling of the eyes.

DANI
Lexi, Jordan will be staying with me.

LEXI
Cool. Maybe we can ride together.

Jordan is so shy.

JORDAN
Sure.

Dani and Jeff glance at each other, smile.

They drive off.

VINCENT
She's pretty cute, huh?

Jordan just grins and looks away.

He addresses Dani.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I'm not sure if you know, but
Jeff's been staying overnight in
the stables.

Dani slows down to a crawl.

DANI
How do you know?

VINCENT
The night I slept on your swing, I
saw a light so I checked it out.
Looked like a regular sleeping
quarters in there.

DANI
I'll talk to him... How about we
show you the stables, Jordan?

INT. STABLES - DAY

Handlers are working in various stalls.

The first stall they reach, the horse has a leg wrap on.

Jordan stops, stares.

Silence. Dani looks over to Vincent for help.

VINCENT
His owner is in jail.

They walk to the next stall.

A handler was rubbing down the scraped, bony ankles.

Jordan looks up at Vincent.

JORDAN
What happened to him?

VINCENT
I'm guessing shackles.

JORDAN
How can people hurt animals?

VINCENT
Same way they hurt humans. They
have no heart.

After passing the row of wounded horses, they head into the
next stable.

INT. STABLE II

Jordan looks over the massive room until his eyes lock onto
Chance. He makes his way to the gate.

DANI
Don't get too close.

Jordan glances at Chance. Chance glances at Jordan. This
exchange goes on for a few minutes.

Chance shows some semblance of peace.

Jordan sits outside the fence.

Dani takes a step. Vincent holds her back.

VINCENT
Lets leave them alone.

Dani hesitates.

JORDAN
What's his name?

DANI
Chance.

Vincent leads Dani away.

VINCENT
It's OK.

Jordan and Chance are alone. Neither of them move. They appear to be relaxed.

EXT. STABLES

VINCENT
I'll assume you want me to hang
around a while.

DANI
That wasn't an assumption, you read
my mind.

Jordan races by the two of them straight to the house.

Vincent and Dani take off after him.

INT. DANI'S HOME - DAY

VINCENT
Should I go up?

DANI
I got this.

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM

Jordan stares out his window.

Dani steps in.

DANI

You OK?

Jordan remains silent.

She sits on the edge of his bed.

Jordan mumbles.

JORDAN

What happened to Chance?

DANI

He had an abusive owner.

JORDAN

Where is he now?

DANI

Vincent took care of him.

Jordan quietly sits on the bed.

JORDAN

Chance likes me.

DANI

Of course he does.

JORDAN

Was he bad too?

Dani's heart drops. She gets on her knees in front of him.

DANI

Chance was never bad. You were never bad. He's good, like you.

She takes him by the shoulders.

DANI (CONT'D)

Listen to me. You are a beautiful, loving boy. Your step-dad was...he wasn't well.

She embraces him in a tight hug.

INT. LARGE STABLES - EVENING

Dani and Chance are alone in the stable. The evening sun is just going down with dusty remains of the day glowing in it's golden light.

Dani holds a long pole. At the end of it is a salve. She rubs it over various scrapes and cuts on Chances' back. No eye contact. Speaks in a soft voice.

DANI
That's my sweet boy. We'll get you
all healed up.

She walks around to the other side. Chance is a bit jumpy when she goes over a deep cut.

DANI (CONT'D)
Some day you're going to have the
life you deserve.

She hums a tune.

She STOPS at the sound of running outside the back of the stable. Chance is restless.

DANI (CONT'D)
Relax.

She slowly lays the pole down. Walks to the corner of the stall, looks around, nothing. Goes back to Chance.

DANI (CONT'D)
That's it. Listen to the sound of
my voice.

Hums again.

Peeking out from behind a bale of hay in the front of the stable, is Jordan.

Through a window is fading tail lights.

EXT. DANI'S RANCH, FENCED IN CORRAL - DAY

Dani holds the end of the lead attached to Spirit's halter in one hand, and a long, flexible pole in the other.

Jordan stands at the fence, observing intently.

DANI
Come on girl. Now this way. See how
I get her to move. Just tug gently
on the rope. Never startle her by
yanking.

Jordan sits on the fence.

DANI (CONT'D)
OK Spirit, now this way.

Spirit gets out of control a few times. Dani is able to calm her down.

DANI (CONT'D)
See what I did Jordan, very gently.
Rub her all over. Let her know
you're her friend. Keep body
contact.

She stops in front of Jordan.

DANI (CONT'D)
Give it a try?

Jordan's eyes light up, and without a word, he jumps down from the fence and takes the rope and pole.

DANI (CONT'D)
That's right. Nice and slow.

Jordan rubs her gently. Then slowly walks her. Looks up to Dani.

DANI (CONT'D)
It's OK. You're doing great.

While slowly leading her, she responds as gently as he leads.

DANI (CONT'D)
That's right. Now this way.

Spirit responds, again and again...

JORDAN
Is this right?

Dani cheers him on at the fence.

BANG. A loud shot is heard.

Spirit rears her head wildly, frightening Jordan to a cowering position. Dani runs in and grabs the rope and ties Spirit to the fence, then rushes back to Jordan.

DANI
I'm here Jordan. Come with me.

She and Jordan run to the house. She yells for Grace who meets them at the door.

DANI (CONT'D)
GRACE! Take him inside.

INT. DANI'S HOME

Dani grabs her rifle and takes off.

EXT. RANCH

On her horse, Dani races in the direction of the shot.

She meets up with Jeff and three FARM HANDS.

JEFF
You might want to see this.

They all ride to the wooded area. Tied to a tree is a young HICK (30s) with a nasty attitude, bear traps lay at his feet.

Dani dismounts her horse and strolls over to him. Paces back and forth in an intimidating manor, rifle over her shoulder.

DANI
So, apparently you get your jollies
out of terrorizing my ranch.

HICK
I didn't do nothin'.

He spits through a few missing teeth, watching Dani circle him.

DANI
So you're here doing what, cleaning
up my land?

Another spit.

Jeff wanders over.

JEFF
Who sent you here?

HICK
You can't keep me tied up here. I
have my rights.

DANI
You left any rights you had at my
property line.

She turns, walks back to her horse.

DANI (CONT'D)
Get him to the Sheriff's office.

One of the farm hands loads the traps into the truck.

HICK
Hey. Where you goin' with them?

FARM HAND
They're mine now.

EXT. RANCH - EVENING

Dani greets Vincent in the driveway. He's carrying a cap.

DANI
He's up in his room. Had a little scare.

VINCENT
I heard.

DANI
I'd swear there's a full moon, all week.

VINCENT
You need me to hang around again?

DANI
We'll be fine. It was interesting today, how Jordan came alive with the horses.

VINCENT
They understand each other.

DANI
Broke my heart just watching him.

Vincent pauses.

VINCENT
That was some piece of work your guys brought in.

DANI
Do you think he was working on his own?

VINCENT
I doubt it. He's not bright enough. But I do have a theory.

DANI
Care to share it with me?

He ignores her, pulls out a flier from his pocket.

VINCENT
Before I forget, take a look at
this.

The Brochure: County Rodeo.

DANI
Not this year.

VINCENT
It's been twelve years. Besides, it
might be good for Jordan.

She turns and places the brochure back into his pocket.

DANI
You take him.

Vincent is frustrated.

VINCENT
Don't think you're off the hook
that easy.

He waves the cap.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
A little gift.

They walk into the house.

EXT. JEFF'S FRONT PORCH - EVENING

A cool breeze rustles the leaves, the bark of a dog, a honk
of a horn. Jeff swings back and forth, not hearing anything.

Lexi runs up the porch steps, straight to Jeff. A kiss on his
cheek. She butters him up for something.

LEXI
What are you doing home already?

JEFF
Just thinking.

LEXI
You came home to think?

JEFF
How was camp?

LEXI
It was lame dad. Really, I skipped
out early.

JEFF
That's nice. Grandma saved you some
supper.

Lexi sits on the railing.

LEXI
Dad?

JEFF
Yea Lex.

LEXI
Remember how we used to skip out on
Friday afternoons and see a movie?

JEFF
It's pretty busy at the ranch.

LEXI
You never do anything. We never do
anything.

JEFF
I'm not such good company.

LEXI
Mom wouldn't want you to be so
unhappy.

She jumps down.

LEXI (CONT'D)
And she'd want you to sleep in your
own bed.

JEFF
You better get in. Grandma's
waiting.

Lexi mopes into the house, door slams.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - STABLES - DAY

Dani waits beside Chloe. The ranch hands are busy in and outside the stables. Jordan moseys out of the house carrying a new pair of boots, wearing his new cap.

DANI
Ready for your first lesson?

JORDAN
I guess.

DANI
Problem with the boots?

JORDAN
Are they only for good?

Dani laughs.

DANI
Good, not so good. - Silly, they're
just boots.

He sits on the driveway and slides them on, admires them.

Dani grins with camera in hand, as he takes a few awkward steps.

DANI (CONT'D)
There. A real cowboy. Look at me
now.

She hands the lead to Jordan.

DANI (CONT'D)
We'll start with the basics.
Getting to know your horse.

MONTAGE - DANI TEACHES JORDAN TO TEND TO THE HORSES

-- They take turns brushing/caressing the horse.

-- They laugh/fumble around getting the blanket and saddle on Chloe.

-- Jordan rides Chloe for the first time.

-- Jordan is on clean-up duty with a wheelbarrow and shovel. He's afraid to get dirty.

-- Jordan and Dani have a water fight while cleaning out the wheelbarrow.

-- Dani and Jordan ride at a slow pace. Jordan stiffens up as they pick up the pace.

-- Dani taking pictures of Jordan doing chores.

END MONTAGE

DANI (CONT'D)

Whoa. Pull back very gently on the reins.

As they continue the slow pace, Jordan relaxes while Dani points out a few areas of interest.

DANI (CONT'D)

Way over beyond that rock fence... that's where we let the healthy horses run free.

JORDAN

How do you know when they're healthy?

DANI

I don't. But they do.

They reach a large fenced arena where a number of ranch hands are training horses.

DANI (CONT'D)

Hi guys!

They ride to the fence and greet one of the trainers.

DANI (CONT'D)

Eric, this is Jordan.

Jordan's small hand get's lost in Eric's hand shake.

ERIC

Hi Jordan. Will you be working on the ranch?

JORDAN

Yes.

He looks up at Dani.

DANI

He's moved in with me. I got tired of being alone in that big house.

ERIC
Looks like you'll be in good hands,
Dani.

DANI
So what are you working these
horses for?

ERIC
This bunch is going to the
Children's Rehab Center.

Dani eyes them up.

DANI
You're doing a great job guys.

ERIC
Nice meeting you Jordan.

They slowly walk the trail when Dani's eyes lock onto something ahead, stretches her arm out stopping Jordan.

DANI
Very slowly Jordan, I want you to
turn around and ride back to Eric,
without stopping.

Jordan looks ahead.

JORDAN
I should stay with you.

DANI
No. Just go.

Hesitantly, Jordan turns his horse and slowly walks the opposite direction.

Dani waits until Jordan is gone. She turns off the trail.

Up ahead, a truck is being loaded with large bundles. Dani is on her cell.

DANI (CONT'D)
Right, the North pasture.

She tucks her phone into her saddle and settles into the woods.

EXT. NORTH PASTURE

A rickety, rusted out pickup truck stands half loaded with barrels labeled "FEED". Ten feet away, two THIEVES haul branches off a site, revealing tons of hay bales.

THIEF 1

Hurry. We ain't got all day.

Thief 2 flings a couple bales towards the truck with all the force his scrawny arms can muster up.

THIEF 2

You ain't the boss of me.

From the woods, Dani watches what looks to be a comedy act.

The thieves fall over each other, push and shove.

Vincent rides up along side Dani. They look straight ahead.

VINCENT

Kind of a shame to break up their
little two man act.

Dani pauses.

DANI

We don't have to.

VINCENT

Took the words right out of my
mouth.

He takes out his phone.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Wayne, I need you to stand-by at
Serenity Ranch's north drive.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES DRIVEWAY

A Sheriff's car pulls in being followed by the rusted pickup. Trailing them is Dani, Vincent and Jordan on horseback.

The vehicles park. Jennings get out of the squad car. Jeff wanders out of the barn.

JEFF

My grain. I guess I wasn't losing
my mind. Unload it back there.

The two thieves slink by, Wayne between the two.

Vincent dismounts and advances on the men.

VINCENT
Hold it, you two!

They turn to him slowly.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Thanks for assisting these two,
Wayne.

WAYNE
Yea. I figured they'd know just
where to unload the goods.

VINCENT
When they finish here, you can show
them our accommodations back at the
station.

Wayne tips his hat at Vincent and Dani, and gets back to the
guys.

WAYNE
Let's go you two.

A car slowly creeps up the driveway. Dani and Vincent stand
and watch until it pulls up and stops. Miss Peale steps out.

Vincent cringes.

DANI
Who is she?

VINCENT
Our waking nightmare.

Miss Peale struts up to them, hand out to Dani.

MISS PEALE
You must be Danielle?

Dani ignores the hand.

DANI
It's Dani. And you are?

MISS PEALE
I'm Miss Peale from Social
Services, and I'm in charge of
Jordan.

Vincent stands back, crosses his arms and grins.

DANI

That's where you're wrong, Miss Peale from Social Services. I happen to be in charge of Jordan.

Miss Peale slides her hand down and backs up, addresses Vincent.

MISS PEALE

Vincent. Would you explain the situation to...Dani?

Vincent puts his hands in the air and laughs.

VINCENT

You're on your own.

MISS PEALE

Any time we have a situation like this, an expert is assigned to overlook things.

DANI

And this, situation, would be Jordan?

MISS PEALE

Well, yes.

Again, Vincent stands back and shakes his head.

Miss Peale pulls out a card and hands it to Dani.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)

Be sure and call me if you have any questions, or trouble.

DANI

You'll be the first one I call. Now, you know your way out, right?

Miss Peale turns and leaves the same way she arrived.

Dani turns to a smiling Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)

What was that?

VINCENT

You don't want to know, but I'll explain later.

They turn their attention to Jordan and Lexi who attempt to get onto horses.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
After work I plan on heading out to
the fairgrounds.

Jordan attempts to get off his horse. Lexi get's right up.

Dani and Vincent both jump to help him.

Jordan stops, looks at both of them.

JORDAN
I can do this.

They step back. Lexi giggles.

DANI
I know, I know.

VINCENT
It's cool.

Jordan hops down, grinning.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
About the fairgrounds, Jordan.
Lexi, you're welcome to join us.

LEXI
I think my dad wants me home.

Jordan looks over for Dani's approval.

DANI
If you two are going, make it after
supper.

VINCENT
That's my next question.

Dani yells to Jeff.

DANI
Before Wayne hauls them in, there
are a couple more loads waiting for
them in north pasture.

She focuses back onto Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)
The Chinese Restaurant is on your
way.

VINCENT
I see. Grace's night off?

Jordan stammers around.

DANI

Go ahead you two. I'll finish up
with Chloe. Introduce Lexi to
Chance.

INT. STABLES

Standing alone in his stall, Chance flinches when he hears a
noise.

We hear;

JORDAN (O.S.)

You have to be very gentle with
him.

LEXI

Can I ask you a question?

JORDAN

Sure.

LEXI

Is it true, you know, about your
parents.

Jordan sits on a bale of hay. Lexi sits next to him.

She takes his hand, he looks at her and smiles. She smiles
back, flirty.

They lay back on the hay, holding hands and looking up
silently.

JORDAN

They aren't so well.

Jeff yells in from outside the barn. Lexi pulls her hand away
from Jordan.

JEFF

Ready, Lexi?

Lexi takes his hand back.

LEXI

I'll see you tomorrow?

A smile from Jordan.

JORDAN

Yea.

Lexi runs out, Jordan gets up, hums the same tune Dani was humming.

Jordan sits for a moment staring up at the ceiling before he slowly gets up, walks around to the front of Chance, holds his hand out and opens it up revealing a carrot.

Slowly, Chance lowers his head and takes the treat. As he does this, Jordan rubs between Chances' ears. Chance remains still.

They seem to understand each other.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

She's pretty cool, isn't she?

Chance let's out a little nicker.

Jordan makes himself comfortable inside the stall.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to the fair with Vincent.

Chance responds by shaking his head.

Jordan hears voices and footsteps.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I'll be back later.

He crawls out from the stall.

Jeff and Josh walk up to Jordan.

JEFF

Jordan. This is Josh, one of our ranch hands.

JOSH

Howdy.

Jordan is uneasy, but nods.

JEFF

Josh doesn't spend too much time in here. These fellas are still pretty skittish.

JOSH

Nice place to take a little siesta.

Jeff is serious.

JEFF
I'll take that as a joke.

EXT. FAIRGROUNDS - EVENING

A group of FIVE BOYS, budding cowboys, show off to a GROUP of local GIRLS.

CHUBBY BOY
I roped my first calf when I was
just ten.

SKINNY KID
I was eight.

The chubby boy pushes the skinny kid.

CHUBBY BOY
You were not.

One boy plays awkwardly with a rope watching the girls as he twirls.

The girls just laugh and walk on.

Jordan and Vincent walk up eating corn dogs, stop. Vincent knows them.

VINCENT
Having fun boys?

ALL IN UNISON
Hi Sheriff/Yea/Who's that?

VINCENT
This is Jordan.

CHUBBY BOY
You new here, Jordan?

JORDAN
Kind of.

SKINNY KID
Maybe you can hang out with us
sometime.

Jordan looks up at Vincent like asking for his approval.

VINCENT
Sure. You boys taking the next
training class?

BOYS
Yea.

Vincent explains to Jordan.

VINCENT
Dani teaches the kids in town how
to handle horses. Her next class is
in two weeks.

They dance around like a bunch of idiots.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Behave yourselves now.

Vincent and Jordan walk into the crowd, the boys continue
showing off to all the girls who pass.

A group of five not so nice KIDS hang out by the Ferris
wheel, poking fun at those in line. Haney lingers nearby.

ADAM (18, Gritty smart mouth with attitude) has his arm slung
around Lexi, who's donning the latest fashion, hair in a
ponytail, desperately tries to hide a cigarette. Josh is in
the group.

Jordan stares at an uncomfortable Lexi.

ADAM
Hey there Sheriff. That little turd
your new side kick?

Lexi coughs and blows out a puff of smoke.

VINCENT
Does your dad know what you're up
to Lexi?

LEXI
Maybe, if I was a horse.

The rough kids all laugh.

JOSH
See ya round Sheriff.

Lexi looks down to hide her eyes. Jordan notices.

Adam leads Lexi, Josh and the rest of the lost kids away from
a disappointed Vincent. Haney slinks behind.

Vincent's eyes don't leave Haney's.

Jordan takes his eyes from Lexi to the Tilt-A-Wheel.

VINCENT
Think you can handle it?

Jordan finally manages a grin.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Let's go.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - STABLES - DAY

Dani and Jordan ride in from the North pasture.

Inside the large stable, Vincent is talking to Jeff, who is seated on a large hay bale, not too happy.

Vincent hears the horses, pats Jeff on the shoulder, turns and walks out to meet Dani and Jordan.

DANI
Everything OK?

VINCENT
We ran into Lexi last night, and she wasn't hanging out with the girl scouts.

DANI
Just what he doesn't need.

VINCENT
Mind if Jordan and I take a hike around the ranch?

DANI
Not at all.

Vincent walks to Jordan.

VINCENT
Care to join me?

DANI
Go ahead Jordan. I've got the horses.

Jordan dismounts his horse, they walk off.

From a distance, Jeff leans on the stable door watches Vincent and Jordan walk off.

INT. JEFF'S HOME - LEX'S ROOM - EVENING

Through the half open door, Jeff peers in to see Lexi, who is on her phone.

A light tap, he steps in.

LEXI
Gotta go... Yes, I promise.

With a roll of her eyes;

LEXI (CONT'D)
What dad?

JEFF
Can we talk?

LEXI
Now? I'm kind of busy.

Jeff sits on the bed.

JEFF
What's going on with you?

LEXI
Nothing.

JEFF
Hanging out with Adam isn't
"nothing".

Now Lexi is angry.

LEXI
You had Vincent checking on me?

JEFF
That crowd is nothing but trouble.

LEXI
We're just friends.

JEFF
You're fifteen. You have other
friends.

LEXI
They can never do anything.

JEFF

Consider yourself in the same boat.
In fact, we'll be spending a lot
more time together.

Lexi stands, almost in tears.

LEXI

I wish mom were here.

She storms out of her room knocking the picture of her mother
off the desk. Footsteps bang down the stairs.

Jeff picks up the broken picture.

Lexi's Grandmother rushes by, peeks into the room.

Jeff is a broken man, staring at the picture of his deceased
wife.

JEFF

I do too, Lex.

INT. STABLES - MORNING

The sun is just peeking out. Jordan, still in his pajamas,
gingerly slips into Chance's stall.

Chance peers over at Jordan, immediately comes to life.

With a smile on his face, Jordan rubs over Chance's shoulders
and nose. Chance responds with a nudge.

JORDAN

I missed you too.

He makes himself comfortable on top of a bale of hay, facing
Chance.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Last night Vincent took me to a
real carnival. I went on rides and
everything.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out chunks of apple.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I brought you something.

Holding it out, Chance eats the morsels out of his hand.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
It had caramel on it, but I ate it
off.

Jordan flops down on the hay, saddened.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
You're gonna like Vincent. I think
he's like us.

He grabs another piece of apple, feeds it to Chance.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I gotta go now. Don't worry cause
everyone here is nice.

He leaves through the back door.

The door closes, Josh steps in from around the corner, mocks
Jordan.

JOSH
Everyone here is pretty nice...yea,
yea.

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM - MORNING

On his dresser, propped up on a carnival-won stuffed bear,
leans a snapshot of Vincent and Jordan on the Tilt-A-Wheel.

Jordan finishes dressing. There is a loud commotion outside,
and runs to his window to see;

EXT. RANCH

CHAOS. Horses running in the driveway, fields, pastures.

Ranch hands chase them on horses and some not on horses, each
trying to lasso them.

INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM

Jordan sees Chance. Angry, limping. Josh is chasing him with
a rope.

EXT. RANCH

Jordan storms out the front door, straight to Chance.

DANI (O.S.)
Jordan. Stay in the house.

Dani, and five other RANCH HANDS circle the horses and lead them to a corral. A few strays run wild.

Jordan catches up to Josh, pushes him down, rips the rope out of his hand.

JORDAN
Leave Chance alone.

Jeff rides up on his horse.

JEFF
That's enough boys.

JOSH
He's crazy. Keep him away from me.

JEFF
Jordan, go help with Chance, Josh stay here.

Jordan turns in a huff, storms off.

Jeff climbs off his horse, heads for Josh.

Josh gets in another dig.

JOSH
Are you jealous Lexi was with us last night? She'd never go for you.

Jordan keeps walking.

JEFF
Care to tell me what happened, Josh?

JOSH
What are you gonna do, fire me like you did the old man?

EXT. CORRAL

Six skittish horses, wearing ace bandages of all sizes on their legs, corralled. Dani, Jordan and the four ranch hands stand along the fence.

Jeff walks over to Dani.

JEFF
Can we talk?

DANI
What have you got?

They walk over to the barn.

JEFF
Josh claims he saw Jordan unlatch
all the doors, then run out.

Dani immediately jumps at him.

DANI
That's crazy. Jordan was in his
room all morning.

JEFF
Hold on a minute.

DANI
And what was Josh doing at the
time? I told you when you hired him
I didn't think it was a good idea.

JEFF
And we both agreed we'd give him a
chance, because of his dad.

DANI
Yea, well, we gave it a try.

(PAUSE)

Now, we're going to go back out
there and not say a word about this
to Jordan.

Dani storms out, back to the corral.

EXT. CORRAL

Dani walks over to Josh, Jordan and the others.

DANI
Jordan, go on in and get dressed.
Josh, I'd like to have a word with
you.

Jordan mopes into the house.

Josh steps up to Dani.

JOSH
Hello Miss Dani. Anything I can help with?

DANI
Can you tell me what you saw?

JOSH
Well, I was just walking in with some fresh shavings, and there was Jordan.

DANI
What was he doing?

JOSH
That's the thing. He was sneaking around, so I just stopped and watched for a minute.

DANI
Just tell me what you saw.

JOSH
He was opening the latches.

Josh hems and haws. Dani stares at him for a moment.

DANI
What about the other stable?

Josh fidgets.

JOSH
I don't know. I guess he was in there first.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She whips her hat down, missing the table, and heads for the kitchen.

Jordan sheepishly walks up the stairs. Dani runs back out wearing a worried frown.

DANI
Jordan, wait.

Half way up, Jordan stops.

Dani runs up the stairs and comforts him.

JORDAN
I didn't do it.

DANI
I need to ask you a few questions.

Dani sits on the step.

DANI (CONT'D)
What were you doing in the barn?

JORDAN
I go out there to visit Chance.

DANI
Did you see anyone else out there?

JORDAN
No. Just me. Is Chance OK?

DANI
Chance is fine.

Big hug. Dani gets up close.

DANI (CONT'D)
Jordan, listen to me. I am not
angry with you. I believe you.

Jordan looks down.

Dani lifts his chin.

DANI (CONT'D)
Do you understand? I could never be
mad at you.

Grace walks around the corner.

GRACE
They need you out there again Dani.

DANI
I'll be right there. Jordan, are
you alright?

JORDAN
I'm OK.

DANI
Grace will be right here.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dani is discouraged while talking to Vincent.

DANI

What do you know about Josh?

VINCENT

He wasn't a bad kid. But now, he's got that same chip on his shoulder as his dad. Hangs with a rough crowd.

DANI

He seems...too polite.

VINCENT

I worry about Jordan. He doesn't need more troubles.

Jordan sneaks down the staircase, overhears the conversation.

DANI

This is more aggravation than I need.

VINCENT

Maybe I should take him on the delivery tomorrow.

Jordan hangs his head, creeps out the front door without being detected.

DANI

Vincent?

He turns to her.

DANI (CONT'D)

Jordan's mom is in rehab.

Vincent is pleased.

DANI (CONT'D)

I'm going to visit her today.

EXT. STABLES - EVENING

Chance stands in the back of his stall, head down, untouched bag of feed.

Jordan slinks into the gate, walks up to Chance, pets his face. Chance doesn't move.

JORDAN

I'm sorry about what happened.

He reaches into his pocket, brings out a carrot, puts it up to Chance's mouth.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I think I'm causing trouble around here.

He holds Chance's face with both hands.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

It's OK. They're not mad at you.

Chance's ears shoot up, he gives Jordan a soft nicker.

Jordan chuckles, offers him another carrot.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I just heard I'm going away with Vincent tomorrow.

He walks around and strokes Chance all over.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Maybe I shouldn't have come here.

He goes back to the front of Chance. Hugs him tight around the neck.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Just don't break out again. Dani's pretty mad.

He grabs the blanket off the shelf, smooths it down behind Chance and lays down.

INT. DANI'S KITCHEN - MORNING

The sun is just coming up, the coffee is perking, and Grace is busy preparing breakfast.

Dani walks in, still in her robe and slippers. Pours herself coffee.

DANI

I won't be going with the guys today.

GRACE

You won't?

DANI
It'll be Vincent and Jordan. Could
you throw on another plate for
Vincent?

The doorbell rings. She looks at her watch. He's early.

INT. ENTRANCE

Dani opens the door to the stone face of Miss Peale.

MISS. PEALE
Danielle?

DANI
It's Dani. What can I help you
with?

She opens the door and Miss Peale marches in.

MISS PEALE
Is he here?

DANI
Of course he's here. He's in bed.

MISS PEALE
May I see him?

Dani is flabbergasted.

DANI
Excuse me, I just told you he is
still sleeping.

MISS PEALE
I don't mind.

She walks towards the staircase. Something on the hallway
table catches her eye. Pictures.

She reaches down and snatches them up, looks at them.

Dani grabs them back out of hands with a snort.

DANI
Well, I do!

MISS PEALE
Looks like child labor to me.

Miss Peale looks at her watch.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)
It's almost 8:00. He should be...

DANI
He should be sleeping.

Vincent walks in the door, stops abruptly, angered.

VINCENT
What's she doing here?

MISS PEALE
I've come to check on Jordan. So if
you don't mind...

Again, she walks to the stairs.

DANI
I'll get him.

She runs up the stairs. Vincent pulls Miss Peale aside.

VINCENT
I swear, you do anything to
jeopardize this, I'll personally
dig something up to throw your
sorry self in jail.

MISS PEALE
This is the thanks I get? If it
weren't for me...

VINCENT
If it weren't for you, I might of
had a half way normal childhood!

INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM

Dani opens the door to an empty bed. Panicked, she whispers;

DANI
Jordan?

She searches the closet, under the bed, looks out the window.
No Jordan.

INT. ENTRANCE

Dani sashays down.

DANI
I'm sorry, but Jordan just got into
the tub.

She goes to Miss Peale and leads her to the front door.

DANI (CONT'D)
How about you come back tomorrow
and I'll see he's up and dressed
when you get here?

Miss Peale hesitates.

MISS PEALE
But, I don't mind...

Dani opens the door and nearly pushes her out.

DANI
Tomorrow, Miss Peale.

Door closes. Dani runs to Vincent, grabs his arm and leads
him up the stairs.

DANI (CONT'D)
He's GONE!

VINCENT
What do you mean?

INT. JORDANS BEDROOM

DANI
I mean, Jordan's not here!

Vincent does a search.

INT. FRONT ENTRYWAY

Miss Peale gingerly opens the door, peeks around the foyer,
then sneaks up the stairs.

INT. JORDAN'S BEDROOM

VINCENT
Alright, let's figure this out.

Through an opening of the door, Miss Peale listens.

DANI

He was fine when I checked on him
last night.

VINCENT

The barn.

Vincent swings the door open revealing Miss Peale.

MISS PEALE

Where is he? I demand to know.

Ignoring her, they shoot right past, down the stairs.

Miss Peale gets out her notebook, follows close behind.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)

If his life is destroyed, it won't
be because of me.

Dani turns, gets in her face.

Vincent stops her.

VINCENT

She isn't worth it.

They take off out the front door.

EXT. RANCH - MORNING

Dani runs to the first stable.

DANI

Vincent, check the pastures.

Jeff runs out of the stable.

JEFF

What's going on?

DANI

Jordan's missing.

JEFF

I'll check the corral.

A scramble to look for Jordan.

Miss Peale stands defiantly, writing in her book, lips
pursed.

MISS PEALE

They should have known better than
to hand him over to a single woman.

She peeks into the stables. Notices the bandaged horses.

MISS PEALE (CONT'D)

What ever does she do to her
horses?

Again, she writes in her little book.

We hear Dani and the others yelling for Jordan.

DANI (O.S.)

Jordan... Jordan.

MISS PEALE

I've seen quite enough.

Off she stomps.

Dani runs to the second stable, huffing, frightened.

She notices Chance still lying down. She slows to a fast
pace, then slower as she reaches the gate, where she stops.

She brings her hands to her mouth.

Vincent runs in.

Dani motions for him to be very quiet as he approaches her.

Lying, curled up next behind Chance, wrapped in his quilt, is
Jordan. Sound asleep.

Vincent drapes an arm around Dani.

She looks up to Vincent.

DANI

Do you think he's been...

VINCENT

Sleeping here most nights? Yes.

Jeff runs in and Dani quiets him.

He has a look of surprise on his face.

JEFF

Look at that Chance. Looks like
he's found himself a friend.

Dani snaps her head up.

DANI

Miss Peale. We need to let her know.

VINCENT

Never mind. I'll deal with her later.

Jordan stirs. Then opens his eyes, wider, wider.

Sits up straight.

JORDAN

What's wrong?

They all start laughing.

Chance stirs.

Jordan gets to his feet and moves out of Chance's way.

Dani and Vincent help him out from the stall. Dani hugs him hard.

JEFF

Looks like you have yourself a good friend little buddy.

Jordan appears shy.

JORDAN

Yea, I guess, but, aren't you mad at me?

DANI

Why would you ask that?

JORDAN

Last night I heard you say things.

Dani gives a puzzled glance to Vincent. Kneels down in front of Jordan.

DANI

I'm not mad at you now, or last night.

Vincent joins her.

VINCENT

She's right. I don't know what you heard, but it wasn't about you.

Dani stands.

DANI

Let's get you inside. And before I forget, you had me worried sick.

They all laugh.

Jeff watches the three of them walk out.

INT. SOCIAL SERVICES - DAY

A group of professional looking people work at their desks.

Miss Peale walks out of the MANAGERS office.

MISS PEALE

Last I heard she'll be getting out in a week. That should give me time to relocate Jordan.

MANAGER

Good work Miss Peale.

Miss Peale displays a smug grin.

Everyone in the office ignores her, a couple gossip behind her back. She's obviously not well liked.

EXT. CEMETERY - EVENING

At a distance, a woman sits in front of a headstone.

It's Dani, sitting comfortably having a serious conversation.

THE HEADSTONE READS: CHRISTIAN R. WALTER - Loving father, husband and friend. You will always be missed. DATES: 1950 - 1998. Next to his is her mothers. ELEANOR H. WALTER - Beautiful wife, loving mother. DATES: 1952 - 1995.

DANI

So, now that he's living with me, I've found myself getting attached to him. I know you'd be proud of him dad.

She takes a deep breath.

DANI (CONT'D)

But I'm worried. Things are happening around the ranch and sometimes I'm afraid the horses may be in danger. Or worse, Jordan and myself.

She stands and paces back and forth.

DANI (CONT'D)

Then there's Vincent. Where do I start?

(pauses)

I'm wondering what it would be like if we were like we used to be. I know it sounds crazy, but I think he feels the same way I do.

She flops down in front of the headstone again.

DANI (CONT'D)

I'd like to talk to him about this, but what if I'm just imagining that he has feelings for me again?

She lays down, looks up to the sky.

DANI (CONT'D)

What do I do?

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - CHANCE'S STABLE- DAY

Chance lowers his head and Jordan kisses him.

Dani stands, arms crossed and shakes her head in awe.

DANI

What can I say? You two are amazing.

Jeff moseys over.

JEFF

Never seen anything like that before.

DANI

Maybe their parallel lives have something to do with it.

They pause at the sound of a car driving up.

Dani cusses under her breath.

DANI (CONT'D)
I've got to handle this. Could you
hang out with Jordan.

JEFF
Sure thing.

EXT. BARN

She walks over to meet Miss Peale, who steps out of her car
as if looking for trouble.

DANI
Nice of you to check on Jordan.
He's doing fine.

MISS PEALE
I trust you found him.

DANI
Of course I found him.

Dani stops to regroup.

DANI (CONT'D)
What can I do for you?

Miss Peale looks around the ranch.

MISS PEALE
Is there somewhere we can talk?

DANI
Just tell me your business. I've
got work to do.

MISS PEALE
Alright then. I'm thinking about
permanent placement for Jordan. A
stable home.

DANI
You mean like the one he came from?

MISS PEALE
A place where he'll have a mother,
and a father.

Dani faces Miss Peale.

DANI
When I agreed to take Jordan in, it
was no secret I was a single woman.

MISS PEALE

I wasn't informed of this arrangement, until he was already here.

DANI

Well he's here now. And adjusting very well.

MISS PEALE

I saw how he was adjusting. Running away and all.

DANI

What's this really about Miss Peale?

MISS PEALE

Jordan's mother will be getting out of jail in four days.

DANI

Apparently you have no idea she's been in rehab all this time.

She's almost speechless.

MISS PEALE

Well, maybe I knew and just forgot.

Dani stares at her, no sense of humor.

DANI

And maybe nobody thought it was any of your business.

Miss Peale is momentarily speechless.

MISS PEALE

Well, you'll be seeing more of me, soon.

Dani stands firm. Eyes could slice right through Miss Peale.

Miss Peale turns, marches to her car.

Leaving, her car nearly careens off the driveway.

EXT. DANI'S HOME-FRONT PORCH - EVENING

The moon is shining brightly. Dani and Jordan sit on the porch, Dani on the swing, Jordan on the step.

Vincent walks up from his squad car.

VINCENT

Well, well. Nice to see you two hanging out.

Jordan stands shyly.

DANI

Go ahead Jordan. (mouths to Vincent) He's got something to show you.

VINCENT

Let's see what you've got.

Dani gives Vincent a look of "We need to talk".

INT. CHANCE'S STABLE

Shyly, Jordan leads Vincent and Dani to Chance's stable, grabs a blanket, and drapes it over Chance's back.

VINCENT

Sure that's safe?

Dani elbows him.

Jordan walks to the front of Chance and gives him a big hug.

JORDAN

Good boy.

He pulls out a carrot and dangles it in front of Chance, who takes it and munches away.

VINCENT

Is this the same horse?

DANI

Watch now.

Chance leans down, his ears go up and he nuzzles Jordan.

VINCENT

I'll be darned.

Jordan proudly looks up at Vincent. A big grin forms on his lips.

Vincent and Dani clap for him.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I'm proud of you, Jordan.

Jordan displays a BIG grin.

JORDAN
Did you see the way he nuzzled me?

VINCENT
Sure did, big guy.

They walk back out.

EXT. PORCH

It's dark now. We see the silhouette of Jordan, Vincent and Dani.

VINCENT
Quite the young man you've got here.

DANI
He's been working hard this week.

JORDAN
Thanks, but it was Chance.

They all laugh.

DANI
You're a natural. You'd better get ready for bed. There's a lot more work tomorrow.

Jordan runs off with a smile.

Dani turns to Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)
Ready for that talk?

VINCENT
What's up?

They walk to the porch, Dani heads into the house.

DANI
Can I get you anything?

VINCENT
Surprise me.

EXT. DANI'S HOME-FRONT PORCH

Vincent is not happy. He stands at the railing, takes a swig of beer.

VINCENT
That woman is trouble.

DANI
Shhhh. - We can do this Vincent.
I've got an idea.

Vincent continues to fume.

VINCENT
I hope it's a good one.

Dani goes to Vincent.

DANI
Hey. I said we'd work this out.

Vincent turns to her, very worked up.

DANI (CONT'D)
You need to calm down.

VINCENT
Alright, what's this idea of yours?

Dani leads him by the arm, back to the swing.

DANI
Jordan loves his mother, right?

VINCENT
Yea.

DANI
Since I've had her in Rehab, she's
been improving tremendously. I'll
start looking into a day trip for
her.

Vincent is taken aback.

VINCENT
Sounds like you've been handling
things just fine by yourself.

DANI
It's what I'm good at.

INT. BOY'S HOME - DAY

Dani visits with Ellie.

DANI

I'm worried about him Ellie. He's
so angry about this whole thing.

Ellie stands.

ELLIE

Maybe I can shed some light for
you.

She leads Dani up the stairs, and into Jordan's old room.

DANI

This is where Jordan stayed.

Ellie opens the closet door. On the shelves are old puzzles,
model cars, a baseball and glove.

Dani looks around.

DANI (CONT'D)

Toys?

ELLIE

Look closer.

The woodwork is marked with gouges. Each one represents a
year's growth, the age written. Along side the gouges is a
name.

Dani looks closer.

DANI

V.I.N.

She turns to Ellie.

DANI (CONT'D)

Vincent?

Ellie nods her head.

DANI (CONT'D)

You mean OUR Vincent?

Ellie nods her head again.

Dani faintly sits on the bed.

DANI (CONT'D)

I had no idea. Ellie, does that mean you...

ELLIE

Raised him as my own.

DANI

He never said a word. I've known him for years.

They sit quietly, Dani trying to take it all in.

DANI (CONT'D)

That's why he's taken so much to Jordan.

Ellie lays her hand on Dani.

ELLIE

He was Jordan.

INT. SHERIFF STATION - DAY

Vincent is on the phone when Wayne hands him a fax.

VINCENT

I'll have to call you back.

He hangs up the phone and reads the note. Crunches it in his fist, waves it in the air.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

This is a joke, right?

WAYNE

According to Miss Peale, there's proof they have him working as a farm hand.

VINCENT

Will she ever go away.

WAYNE

Want me to ride out and let Dani know?

VINCENT

I'll handle it. She's got enough to deal with now.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - CORRAL - DAY

Jordan walks Chance around the corral. Jeff stands alongside the fence.

JEFF

That's right, now turn him this way.

Dani walks up.

DANI

He's looking good.

JEFF

I plan on bringing Chance out into the corral one day this week.

DANI

I was meaning to ask you about Chance. He might do better with his own personal trainer.

Jeff isn't real keen on the idea.

JEFF

The guys are pretty stretched with work as it is.

DANI

I was thinking more in the lines of Jordan. Then have Lexi over to tend to Chloe.

Jeff is uncomfortable.

DANI (CONT'D)

What could it hurt? Besides, it'll give you a chance to spend time with her.

JEFF

I don't know.

A commotion is coming from the stables. Dani and Jeff head in.

EXT. STABLES

Josh has a rope around Chloe's neck and is tugging on her with one hand and whipping her with a long stick in the other.

Dani runs up and yanks the rope out of his hands.

DANI
Stop. You never handle a horse this way.

JOSH
I swear, I didn't know.

Dani motions for Jeff.

DANI
Handle this.

Jeff just shakes his head.

INT. JEFF'S HOME - NIGHT

The outside light is on. An infomercial plays on the TV for a sleeping Jeff.

The front door creaks open, startles Jeff.

JEFF
Lexi? Is that you?

Lexi sneaks up the stairs.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Lexi?

LEXI
Dad, I'm tired.

She keeps going.

Jeff follows her.

JEFF
It's a little late, isn't it?

LEXI
Dad, just go to bed.

JEFF
I've been... Have you been drinking?

LEXI
No dad.

Jeff sniffs her.

JEFF
Were you smoking?

LEXI
Dad. It was my friends, not me.

JEFF
Get some sleep because tomorrow
you're coming to work with me.

LEXI
Are you serious?

JEFF
We're leaving at seven sharp.

Lexi stomps off mumbling.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - MORNING

Lexi is dressed in white shorts, pink top and sandals. Dani
walks out to greet her and Jeff.

DANI
So nice of you to help out Lexi.

Lexi looks at her dad, whatever.

JEFF
Where would you like her?

Dani looks her up and down.

DANI
I'd start with a change of clothes.
Follow me.

Lexi follows Dani inside with attitude.

EXT. STABLES - HITCHING POST - DAY

Jordan brushes K.C. (young quarter horse with scrapes on
rear).

Josh manhandles MAGIC (quarter horse with wounds on legs). He
brushes over the wounds, prompting Magic to rear.

JOSH
Stand still.

He swats her.

Jordan sees red. He throws his brush down and body slams Josh to the ground.

JORDAN
Leave her alone.

Jordan gets up only for Josh to tackle him, spitting and sputtering.

Dani and Lexi stroll around the corner only to see them fighting.

DANI
Hey. That's enough you two.

JOSH
He started it.

He quickly gets up, brushes himself off.

Jordan does the same.

JORDAN
Sorry, for this.

Dani stares at Josh.

DANI
If you two are finished, Lexi will be helping out for a while.

JOSH
Hey Lexi.

DANI
Jordan, would you show her around?
I'd like her to start working with Chloe.

JORDAN
Sure.

DANI
If you need anything, I'll be out in the north pasture with Jeff.

Dani leaves, Josh steps in.

JOSH
Was your dad waiting up last night?

LEXI
Why do you think he dragged me
here? So where's that great place
you were bragging about?

JOSH
Let's go.

He throws Jordan a rope and takes off with Lexi. She turns
back to Jordan. Smiles coyly.

INT. BACK STABLES

Josh shows off to Lexi.

JOSH
I don't come in this stable much.

He passes Chance. He turns to see Jordan peeking in,
watching.

JOSH (CONT'D)
But, when nobody's around, look
out.

LEXI
When did you get this job?

JOSH
Before they fired the old man.
Shouldn't have messed with him.

They pass another horse. Josh stomps in front of the horse,
waving his arms to scare him.

The horse screeches in fright, rattling around in his stall.

LEXI
Why do you do that?

JOSH
For fun. Try it.

LEXI
You're sick.

Josh takes her to his "hiding place" in a side room.

Puts his arm out to stop her, looks around.

JOSH
Make sure that little reject isn't
around.

He brushes hay off from a trap door in the floor. Lifts it.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You first.

LEXI
What's down there?

JOSH
Somewhere no one will bother us.

Lexi sheepishly climbs down into a dark room.

Josh follows, closing the door behind him, flips on a flash light.

Lexi looks around in awe at cases of wine and beer lining one wall, a small table loaded with open bags of chips/snacks, empty beer bottles strewn around.

There are 6 gas containers lining another wall behind an old mattress.

LEXI
So this is what you and Adam meant about a great hideout. How did you find this place?

JOSH
The old man. Figured I'd finish what he started.

He grabs a beer, opens it and hands it to Lexi.

LEXI
I better not.

JOSH
Go ahead. Who'll know?

LEXI
My dad.

Josh sits on the mattress, takes a swig, pats the mattress next to him.

JOSH
Have a seat. Adam won't care.

LEXI
I don't like Adam.

She heads for the stair.

JOSH
What's your hurry?

LEXI
I'm going up. It smells really bad
in here.

Josh chugs his beer.

JOSH
Hold on. Watch and learn.

He grabs a bottle of wine, tucks it under his sweatshirt, and
heads up.

He gingerly lifts the trap door, peeks around out.

JOSH (CONT'D)
OK. GO.

Lexi climbs out, comes eye to eye with Jordan. Stops
abruptly.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Hurry up.

LEXI
Jordan. Hey.

She climbs out, Josh pops his head up and sees Jordan.

JOSH
It's the little freak.

They're both out, he covers the door, scatters the hay.

Josh walks over to Jordan, attempts to drape his arm around
him when Jordan FLINCHES almost to a cower, drops his hat.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Whoa there. Little jumpy, aren't
you?

This takes Lexi by surprise.

LEXI
Is he alright?

Jordan stares up at Josh.

JOSH
Come on. We should get back out. At
least look like we're busy.

They walk by Jordan.

Josh turns.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Look, if you know what's good for
 ya, nobody will find out about our
 little secret.

He gets in Jordan's face with a quick start.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 HAH.

Jordan flinches.

LEXI
 Lay off Josh.

JOSH
 Cool.

Josh (laughing) and Lexi walk out.

Lexi turns back, a look of concern.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Go ahead, I'll catch up.

He grabs her backpack and stuffs the bottle of wine in.

EXT. LARGE PASTURE - DAY

FOUR RANCH HANDS each work a horse with eight additional
 horses standing by.

JEFF
 Time we move this group out.

DANI
 Set it up. I've made arrangements
 for them to go to Hope Ranch.

They mount their horses.

DANI (CONT'D)
 Vince is bringing pizzas over
 tonight. You and Lexi are welcome
 to join us.

JEFF
 I'll check with Lexi.

DANI
Is she doing alright?

JEFF
You know girls.

DANI
I know what she's going through.

Jeff ignores her.

DANI (CONT'D)
Or have you forgotten, I was her
age when my mom passed.

JEFF
Lets head west. I've been meaning
to check the irrigation system.

Dani let's it go, for now.

EXT. CORRAL

Josh and Jordan each brush a horse.

Lexi finishes braiding pink ribbons into Chloe's main, peeks
over to Jordan, he does the same.

Dani and Jeff ride up, see nothing but what Lexi did to
Chloe.

JEFF
What the...

DANI
Looks like we've got ourselves a
pampered princess.

They erupt into laughter.

Lexi is very proud of her work.

LEXI
Look at her hooves.

Chloe has pink, glittery polish painted on her hooves.

Dani and Jeff get down off their horses.

DANI
Now I've seen everything.

Lexi stands proudly, wearing a huge grin.

Jeff points to four horses standing at the hitching post.

JEFF

Looks like someone's been busy.

JORDAN

I finished those four. Figured you'd want them all done today.

Josh looks at him as though to say "right".

Lexi stands with attitude.

LEXI

Leave him alone, Josh.

Josh runs up to Jeff.

JOSH

Before I leave, I'll put those deliveries away.

JEFF

You know where they go?

JOSH

You bet.

He takes off.

Dani and Jeff tie their horses.

DANI

Lexi, I was asking your dad if you two could stay for pizza.

She looks at her dad.

LEXI

Can we?

JEFF

Sounds good to me.

DANI

Great. I'll give Vincent a call.

They head into the house.

Lexi drops her pack inside the front door.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Lexi and Jordan sit on the steps eating pizza. Jeff and Dani are in the background.

JORDAN
So, where's your mom?

Lexi looks down.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Did she leave you?

LEXI
Yea. She went to Heaven.

JORDAN
Sorry.

LEXI
Want more pizza?

JORDAN
Sure.

Lexi gets up and runs into the house.

Dani wanders over and sits next to Jordan.

DANI
Having fun?

JORDAN
Can I ask you something?

DANI
Of course.

JORDAN
Could we maybe give Chloe to Lexi?

Dani laughs out loud.

DANI
Is it her glittery polish?

JORDAN
Not really...

DANI
A horse is a pretty big gift, isn't it?

JORDAN
It's just, she's a girl's horse.
And I have Chance.

Dani looks into Jordan's innocent eyes.

DANI
You sure make it hard for me to say
no.

JORDAN
So we can?

DANI
I'll let you break it to her.

Lexi comes bouncing out with more pizza.

Vincent yells from inside the house.

VINCENT (O.S.)
More root beer anyone?

He gets near the front door.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Diet or...

A loud yelp.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
OUCH. What have you got in this?

A bottle of wine rolls out.

A look of surprise on all of them. Lexi's eyes are wide, jaw
drops.

Vincent holds up the bottle.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Looks like one of yours Dani.

Jeff stands, now seeing red.

LEXI
I swear, I didn't put it there.

Jeff grabs the bottle from Vincent, waves it at Lexi.

JEFF
This was in your backpack?

Lexi is very upset.

LEXI

Of course you don't believe me,
dad.

She breaks down crying.

Dani goes to her, and is not very happy with Jeff.

Vincent tries to calm the whole bunch.

VINCENT

Look, let's everyone just -

Jordan stands and interrupts.

JORDAN

She didn't do it.

They all stop and look at him.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

She's telling the truth. I saw...

He looks down, unsure if he should finish.

DANI

Jordan, what did you see?

JORDAN

It was Josh. He put it in there.

Lexi is crying. Lashes out at her dad.

LEXI

Now do you believe me?

She runs off crying.

Jordan runs after her.

Jeff turns, Dani stops him.

DANI

Let Jordan talk to her.

Jeff and Dani are angry.

DANI (CONT'D)

I DON'T want him back on my ranch.

JEFF

I'd like to go over there right
now.

VINCENT

Just hold on. There isn't a thing we can do tonight. I'll pay him a visit tomorrow.

INT. STABLES - EVENING

Jordan and Lexi sit outside Chance's stall. Lexi is crying.

Jordan stands in front of her and puts his arms on her shoulders.

LEXI

I'm so mad. He's like, not even my dad anymore.

Jordan quietly listens.

LEXI (CONT'D)

So where are your parents?

JORDAN

Jail.

Lexi's interested.

LEXI

Seriously? Did they kill someone?

JORDAN

Might as well have.

LEXI

I thought my dad was bad.

JORDAN

Why do you say that about him?

Lexi turns and falls back onto the hay.

LEXI

He's annoying, or something. I don't know.

She squirms up.

LEXI (CONT'D)

So what's with this horse?

JORDAN

It's Chance.

Lexi quickly turns to him.

LEXI

My dad told my grandma that you
were the only one that could go
near that horse.

Jordan grins.

JORDAN

I guess.

The light goes on in her head.

LEXI

Aren't you that kid they found?

He doesn't respond.

She is embarrassed.

LEXI (CONT'D)

Sorry. I shouldn't have said
anything.

Jordan reaches over and takes her hand in his.

JORDAN

It's OK. So what's up with your
dad?

She leans over to him shyly.

LEXI

It's OK if you kiss me.

JORDAN

I've never...

LEXI

It's OK. Should I start?

Jordan chuckles, takes her hand, leans over and gives her a
kiss on the lips. They both just sit there for one long kiss.

Then;

JORDAN

Was that OK?

She leans her head on his shoulder, both smiling.

LEXI

Yea.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - NIGHT

Not a sound except an owl's hoot. And darkness. The only lights are the stars. Then, shadows.

A person runs out of the stable carrying a long ladder, sets it up at one of the bedroom windows. Drops an item next to it.

This person runs back to the barn.

INT. DANI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Flashes of light flicker through the windows, the whinny of horses gets louder and smoke seeps in with the breeze.

Dani stirs, then BOLTS upright, springs out of bed to the window. She screams.

DANI
Grace! Jordan!

She races to their rooms in a panic.

DANI (CONT'D)
Fire. Get up.

Grace runs out.

GRACE
What's wrong?

DANI
The barn's on fire. Where's Jordan?

She runs into his room. Empty.

She panics now.

DANI (CONT'D)
Jordan. Oh my God. Grace. Call 911.
Jordan must be in the barn.

She's out the front door, running, phone to her ear.

DANI (CONT'D)
The barn's on fire. I think
Jordan's in it.

INT. CHANCE'S STABLE

Dani runs through dark clouds of smoke, straight into Jordan.

DANI

Jordan.

Jordan runs out coughing, very upset.

JORDAN

I got Chance and Chloe out.

DANI

Stay with them.

JORDAN

I'm coming with you.

DANI

Alright, lets get the rest of the horses out.

They run to the stalls and shoo the horses out.

Finally, horns and sirens are roaring.

Vincent is the first to arrive with fire engines right behind him.

The firemen jump off dragging their hose lines to the burning barns.

Vincent races over to Jordan.

VINCENT

Are you alright?

He looks around frantically.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Where's Dani?

JORDAN

Taking horses to the corral. I can't find Grace.

Vincent turns to the firemen.

VINCENT

Grace is in there. We need to get her out. - Jordan, go help Dani. Keep her at the corral.

Jordan takes off.

Vincent runs into the gnarly darkness.

Flaming beams explode from the ceiling.

Firemen run by yelling through their air masks.

FIREMAN 1
Bring those hoses around back.
Place is like a tinder box.

Vincent runs back out, takes a breath, runs back in. He is stopped by a masked fireman.

FIREMAN 2
You can't go in there.

Vincent wrestles himself away.

VINCENT
Give me your mask.

FIREMAN 2
What?

VINCENT
Your mask.

The fireman reaches up, takes off his mask, hands it to Vincent.

The fireman runs back for a new mask, hurries in after Vincent.

They run back out, Vincent carrying Grace.

FIREMAN 2
Get that ambulance over here. Now.

More loud cracks as they load Grace into the ambulance.

Dani runs around the corner in a panic, right to Grace. Vincent catches her.

VINCENT
She's OK! Some smoke inhalation,
they've got her on oxygen. They're
taking her in.

DANI
I'm going with her.

She looks up at a coughing, soot stained Vincent.

DANI (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

VINCENT
Where's Jordan?

DANI

He's with Jeff. You need to be seen
at the hospital too.

She turns to the ambulance, and Vincent takes off, the
opposite direction.

At a distance, a dark figure just barely leaves Dani's
eyesight.

PARAMEDIC

We've gotta go, Ma'am!

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - MORNING

Dawn. Stable I is gone, smoldering. Stable II is partially
intact.

An exhausted fire crew roll up hoses, some poke at
smouldering debris.

Vincent and Jordan, exhausted, filthy, look over the charred
mess.

A squad car pulls in and drops Dani off, who plods to Vincent
and Jordan.

VINCENT

How's Grace?

DANI

She'll be alright. They want to
observe her today.

The Fire Chief approaches them.

VINCENT

Hey Chief. What's up?

FIRE CHIEF

Looks like all the horses made it
out.

DANI

Thank God for that.

FIRE CHIEF

But, you might want to see this.

They follow him to the side of the house where a ladder leans
up against Jordan's window.

Anger ramps up in Dani.

DANI
What's this?

Vincent stops her.

VINCENT
Hold on a minute. Chief?

The Chief picks up a pair of gloves and ball cap, hands them to Vincent, who smells them.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Ooooh!

Dani grabs them from Vincent, smells them and looks at Vincent.

DANI
Who's are these?

Then to the fire Chief.

DANI (CONT'D)
Now just a minute. Jordan did not do this.

The Fire Chief addresses Jordan.

FIRE CHIEF
This your cap and gloves, son?

Jordan is frightened.

JORDAN
Yea.

Dani steps in front of Jordan.

DANI
We're done here. Jordan, get in the house.

Jordan looks at Vincent.

VINCENT
Go ahead, Jordan. We'll be right in.

Jordan takes off towards the house.

FIRE CHIEF
I'll have to put it in my report.

DANI
You can't think it was Jordan.

VINCENT
Dani, he has to document what he found.

Vincent pounds his fist on the side of the house.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
And once I get my hands on that...

DANI
You work on finding who did this.
Jordan needs me now.

INT. JEFF'S HOME - MORNING

A filthy, exhausted Jeff trudges in the front door, and is greeted by Lexi.

LEXI
DAD. What happened?

He flops down on his chair.

Lexi prods for information.

LEXI (CONT'D)
You smell Dad. Was there a fire?

JEFF
Dani's ranch. The stables are gone, the horses are traumatized, and poor Dani...

LEXI
Did her house burn?

JEFF
No. I've got to get cleaned up and get back.

LEXI
What about Jordan? Is he OK?

Jeff stretches and yawns.

JEFF
Doesn't look good for the poor kid.

Lexi freaks out.

LEXI
Is he hurt dad? I'm going with you.

JEFF
If you call spending time in juvie
being hurt, then yea.

LEXI
What? Juvie?

She stands frozen. Whispers to herself.

LEXI (CONT'D)
Josh. Dad, I'm going with you.

Jeff trudges to the stairs.

He gets to his room and stops. Lexi is behind him.

JEFF
What the...

There is a new bedspread (masculine) on the bed, the dresser
is cleaned off except a few pictures, and the robe is off the
chair.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Lexi?

Lexi walks over to the closet and opens the door. On the top
shelf is a plastic bin labeled; MOM'S TREASURES.

Jeff stands there in awe.

LEXI
I had to do something, Dad. Jordan
and I thought that maybe if I made
these changes, you'd want to be
home.

Jeff turns and gives her a big hug.

JEFF
Thank you.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - FRONT PORCH - DAY

A solemn atmosphere as Miss Peale walks Jordan to her car.

An exhausted, angry Vincent leans on the porch railing.

VINCENT
This is so wrong.

DANI

Do you think he did it?

Vincent gets irritated with Dani. He turns to her and snaps.

VINCENT

You don't believe he actually started the fire, do you?

Dani is speechless, stares at Vincent.

He walks off.

Dani follows, gently takes his arm.

DANI

Vincent?

VINCENT

Boys like him...

He struggles. Turns away from Dani.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

...don't do this type of thing.

DANI

Aren't you overreacting a bit?

Vincent doesn't turn back.

DANI (CONT'D)

Let's just go down there and explain to them that he didn't do anything.

Vincent turns to her, and she sees he's seriously angry.

VINCENT

And that will make everything alright? Can you just try and imagine what Jordan's going through? You have no idea. How could you?

He turns from her.

Dani is stunned, she gets it now.

She takes him by the arms, looks into his eyes.

DANI

Listen to me Vincent. I know.

Vincent looks away from her.

She pulls his face back.

DANI (CONT'D)
I KNOW.

VINCENT
You know what?

He looks into her tearful eyes.

DANI
I saw your room. The marks on the
closet. Your old toys.

He begins to speak, she hushes him.

DANI (CONT'D)
It's OK. We all have things in our
past. I, have things.

Vincent stares at her in disbelief.

DANI (CONT'D)
Vincent?

He turns, seething.

VINCENT
Were you spying on me?

DANI
Of course not. I went and saw
Ellie.

VINCENT
Is that why you took Jordan in,
because you felt sorry for me?

DANI
Are you kidding?

VINCENT
Not really something I'd kid about.

Dani marches right up to him. Now she's mad.

DANI
I brought Jordan in because you
asked me to.

VINCENT

You still had no right questioning
Ellie.

DANI

And if you trusted me as a friend,
you would have told me.

Vincent throws up his hands, he's completely had it.

He stomps off. Then turns back.

VINCENT

You know what I think?

Dani stands, arms crossed, glaring at him, cuts him off.

DANI

I think you better turn around and
keep going.

Vincent stomps to his truck, and storms out of the driveway,
stones flying.

Jeff and Lexi pass him on the drive way.

Lexi gets out and runs to Dani.

LEXI

Dani. I need to talk to you.
Where's Jordan?

Jeff walks towards the barn.

JEFF

What's with Vincent?

Lexi and Dani walk to the porch.

EXT. BURNED STABLES

Jeff stands sullen, looks over the mess. Picks up a stick and
pokes around.

LEXI (O.S.)

Dad!

Jeff turns as Lexi and Dani run up to him.

LEXI (CONT'D)

I'm going with Dani. We'll be back
later.

DANI

Lexi may have just solved the case
for us.

They run off leaving a confused Jeff.

INT. JUDGE MANNING'S COURT ROOM - DAY

Miss Peale stands next to a sulking Jordan at the front
table.

Behind them is Vincent, alone, looking back at the doors.

JUDGE MANNING

According to your report Miss
Peale, Jordan's had a little
trouble with fire starting.

MISS PEALE

Yes, your Honor.

JUDGE MANNING

Care to tell me what happened?

Miss Peale starts in, excited.

MISS PEALE

This boy...

JUDGE MANNING

Surely you haven't forgotten his
name again, Miss Peale.

MISS PEALE

No, your honor. Jordan, has not
only run away from his current
living arrangements, he has
maliciously -

The court room doors FLY open.

Vincent stands.

Low murmurs are heard.

Dani and Lexi storm down the isle, Dani dragging an angry,
hog tied Haney, and Lexi dragging Josh.

An eruption in the room.

Vincent bolts up and runs to Dani.

VINCENT
How in the world...

Dani gives him a look of "Nice work, huh?"

Judge Manning pounds his gavel.

JUDGE MANNING
Order. Order everyone.

There is no order. But, a three ring circus.

DANI
Your Honor?

JUDGE MANNING
Miss? Do you realize I could order
you in contempt of court? And what
have you done to those men?

Vincent grabs the rope from Dani. For just a second they
stare into each other's eyes.

Haney yells and struggles to get out of the ropes.

HANEY
She kidnapped me. I'll sue you for everything.

Two court officers run in, one grabs Haney, the other Josh.

Miss Peale stands like a priss and huffs at the whole thing.

Dani grabs Lexi and drags her to the Judge.

DANI
Jordan's innocent. Haney and his
band of delinquents are the guilty
ones.

HANEY
Look what she did to me.

The Judge sits, conceding defeat. Waves Dani and Lexi
forward.

The court quiets.

JUDGE MANNING
Will someone tell me what's going
on?

Dani is still out of breath.

DANI
Your Honor, I have proof that
Jordan is innocent.

JUDGE MANNING
I take it these two have something
to do with that proof?

Dani nudges Lexi.

DANI
Go ahead Lexi, tell the Judge what
you told me.

Miss Peale stands.

MISS PEALE
Your Honor, this girl...

JUDGE MANNING
Miss Peale. Sit down.

Miss Peale sits, with attitude.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)
Can we get on with this?

DANI
Lexi, tell the Judge.

LEXI
It was Josh and Haney. They had
cans of gas and wine and he said it
was for when he needed it. And it
was in the secret hole in the
floor.

JUDGE MANNING
OK. Let's slow down and start from
the beginning.

Lexi takes a deep breath, looks up at Dani, who nods to her.

LEXI
OK. I had to go to Dani's with my
dad, I guess cause he was mad at
me.

The Judge leans back on his chair, preparing for a long one.

LEXI (CONT'D)
When I got there, Josh was there.
He's friends of Adam's.

Dani leans down and whispers to her.

DANI
Get to the cellar door.

LEXI
OK. Anyway, Josh showed me this secret room. It wasn't really that much of a secret cause his dad and Haney hung out there too.

JUDGE MANNING
And what was in this "secret room"?

LEXI
First, it really smelled bad. Like gas, and maybe dirt. On one side, there were cases of wine stacked up, and other stuff.

JUDGE MANNING
Would this other stuff be gasoline?

LEXI
Yea.

She walks over and climbs on the edge of his desk.

LEXI (CONT'D)
He said bad stuff about Jordan. And he also said I should run away with him because my dad is so mean.

Now Vincent gets up.

JUDGE MANNING
Have a seat. Let her finish.

Vincent sits.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)
Is that so?

LEXI
I used to think so, but then Jordan told me he was just sad, and that I should just love him.

The Judge nods his head as if saying, "Hmmm, interesting".

JUDGE MANNING
Jordan, come up here, please.

Jordan stands and walks up next to Lexi.

JORDAN

Yes sir.

JUDGE MANNING

Did you have any knowledge of this
"secret room"?

JORDAN

Just when I found Lexi and Josh
crawling out. Then one night when I
was sleeping in the barn, I watched
Haney and a couple guys go down
there.

The Judge addresses the court officers.

JUDGE MANNING

Would you kindly take "Haney" back
and book him. The other one too.

Haney struggles.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Don't bother to untie them until
you get him in his cell.

He turns to Dani, Lexi and Jordan. Vincent joins them.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

I'd say you did some pretty amazing
police work, Dani. Wouldn't you
agree Vincent?

VINCENT

Yes sir, I would.

He and Dani glance at each other. She smiles at him, he's
relieved.

JUDGE MANNING

Jordan. How are things going for
you, other than the fire, that is?

He looks up at the Judge.

JORDAN

OK. I miss my mom though.

He glances at Dani.

JUDGE MANNING

Are you happy living with Dani?

JORDAN

Yea. She's like my mom used to be, before. And Vincent comes over to visit. Just not enough.

JUDGE MANNING

Would you like to have visitation with your mother?

JORDAN

It might help her, you know, get better.

Vincent puts his arm around Dani.

JUDGE MANNING

Thank you Jordan, Lexi. We could all learn from you two. Have a seat.

They do.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Dani, I'd say you and Vincent are just what Jordan needs. And give Lexi's dad a message from me. Tell him he's very fortunate to have such an insightful daughter.

Miss Peale stands, raises her hand.

JUDGE MANNING (CONT'D)

Miss Peale, sit down. I'll make arrangements to have you officially off the case. And Dani, I'll see to it that someone helps you with visitation.

DANI

Yes, your Honor.

He slams his gavel one last time.

JUDGE MANNING

Court adjourned.

EXT. DANI'S FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Dani sits on the swing, grinning as she watches Vincent stroll up the sidewalk to the house.

VINCENT

Well, I rounded up the rest of the gang. They'll be spending a lot of time together for a while.

DANI

That's great. Now, care to finish our earlier conversation?

Vincent leans on the porch railing.

VINCENT

Nope.

DANI

Discuss what happened at the courthouse?

VINCENT

Uh uh.

Dani gets up off the swing and sashays over to him.

DANI

What could you possibly want to talk about?

Vincent leans down and kisses her.

DANI (CONT'D)

Finally, we agree on something.

VINCENT

Yup.

This time, they kiss with more passion.

Dani pulls away.

DANI

Now what?

Vincent's eyes grow wide, grins.

Dani smacks him.

DANI (CONT'D)

I mean about Jordan.

VINCENT

We could finally have that talk about things you've been keeping from me.

DANI

Now?

VINCENT

Why not? And I've got just the place.

They walk to his car.

INT. VINCENT'S CAR - COUNTY FAIR GROUNDS - EVENING

Vincent turns off the motor, turns to Dani.

VINCENT

You can open your eyes.

Dani opens them, looks around wide eyed.

DANI

What's going on?

VINCENT

It's been twelve years. It's time we both get some things off our chests.

Dani stares ahead.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Are you with me on this?

Dani takes a deep breath, looks up to the heavens.

DANI

You had to go right to Vincent, didn't you dad?

Vincent stares at her.

DANI (CONT'D)

Never mind.

EXT. HORSE STABLES - COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

A clear, calm night. Dani hesitates when she reaches stall fourteen.

VINCENT

You OK?

She sits on a wood bench outside the stall, looks around.

Vincent snoops around.

DANI

This is where my dad brought me for
my first Rodeo competition.

VINCENT

No doubt he was the best.

DANI

Yea.

(pauses)

He won more calve roping
competitions than anyone. Still
holds the record.

Vincent walks back to her.

DANI (CONT'D)

All these years, I've blamed
myself.

A confused Vincent sits next to her.

VINCENT

What do you mean, you blamed
yourself?

DANI

I was the one who cinched up his
horse. I never rechecked it.

VINCENT

He took care of it himself. It
wasn't your fault.

DANI

Instead I was hiding behind an
outbuilding waiting for you.

Vincent stands and takes her hand.

VINCENT

Lets walk.

Dani looks around at everything, reminiscing.

DANI

I thought for sure those old stands
would be replaced by now.

VINCENT

They've put the money into kids
programs instead.

Dani spots something ahead, stops. Smiles playfully.

DANI

Let's go.

They run to the large, metal swing set and both settle into their own swing.

DANI (CONT'D)

Remember that night we all came here after the school dance?

VINCENT

How could I forget, all the trouble we got into.

Vincent jumps off his swing and she follows.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

This way.

They head for the out buildings. Once there, Dani slows down, Vincent disappears behind one.

VINCENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Back here.

He turns, goes back and takes her hand and leads her behind the building.

Dani stops. Reflects.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You remember?

DANI

I never forgot.

VINCENT

The day before your dad's competition, I privately met him at his stall.

DANI

I don't understand.

VINCENT

I asked him for his blessing, to marry you.

Dani is in disbelief.

DANI

Are you...

Vincent stops her.

VINCENT

He asked me to meet him out here at the stables the following night. He said there was something he wanted me to have.

He pulls something out of his pocket.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You were with him when he saw me coming, so in order to get you to leave, he shooed you along and said he'd check the horse himself.

Dani's remembering back.

DANI

I was so wrapped up in meeting you, I took off, without a second thought.

Vincent speaks quietly.

VINCENT

I knew he needed help, so I offered to recheck the horse.

A wide eyed Dani turns to Vincent.

DANI

No Vincent. It wasn't your fault.

Vincent stops her again.

VINCENT

It's taken me all these years...

He holds out his hand where a beautiful, antique ring sits.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Your dad gave me this.

Dani is speechless. She takes it, her teary eyes slowly meet Vincent's.

DANI

My mother's ring?

Silence as she looks from the ring to Vincent.

Vincent pulls Dani up, kneels down.

VINCENT

I've been waiting for twelve years
to do this.

Dani caresses his cheek.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Now, I'd like to keep my promise to
your dad.

(pauses)

Will you marry me, Dani?

She cries in joy.

DANI

Of course I will.

They kiss.

EXT. SERENITY ACRES - MORNING

It's a new day. Jeff and Lexi show up early, Lexi dressed in jeans, boots and gloves. Her hair is pulled back and ready to tend to Chloe.

Jordan runs out to greet them.

JORDAN

Ready Lexi?

LEXI

You bet.

JEFF

Hey you two. We have work to do.

LEXI

That's where we're going, dad.

JEFF

Don't forget, I'm your boss now.

Lexi and Jordan laugh loudly.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Pretty sure that means you too,
Jordan.

DANI (O.S.)

What's all this talk about being
the boss?

Jeff turns to her.

Standing with her, is Jordan's mother, Penny. She's nicely dressed in jeans, boots. Sober and very attractive.

Jeff's eyes light up, takes off his hat and bows to her.

JEFF
Mornin', Ma'am.

Jordan and Lexi turn, Jordan is stunned, drops his hat and races, open arms to his mother.

JORDAN
Mom.

Penny kneels and they embrace each other.

Jordan tries to hide his sobs.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
You came back.

Penny holds him out from her.

PENNY
Let me look at you. I've missed you so much.

She embraces him again.

JORDAN
Are you staying for good, Mom?

PENNY
No, sweetheart. Dani arranged for me to go into a great rehab facility.

DANI
That's right, and I'll bet there are family visitation days.

Jordan runs over and hugs Dani.

JORDAN
Thanks so much, Dani.

PENNY
And while I'm there, Dani and Vincent are going to take very good care of you.

JORDAN
Mom, today's the rodeo, can you come along?

Lexi pushes her dad.

LEXI
Ask her, dad.

JEFF
I happen to have an extra ticket.

He looks down shyly.

Penny looks down at her clothes.

PENNY
I'm dressed for it.

Jordan jumps up and down.

JORDAN
Yea, Mom! Will you?

She and Dani look at each other and wink.

PENNY
I wouldn't dream of missing your
first rodeo.

All cheer.

Vincent walks out of the house wearing brand new cowboy duds.
Stops.

Everyone is looking at him, chuckling.

VINCENT
What?

Dani goes to Vincent and pulls off a tag off his shirt.

JORDAN (O.S.)
We're ready.

Grinning from ear to ear, Vincent brings out a framed
certificate from behind his back. He holds it up to Dani.

INSERT: "It is my honor to present this Letter of
Certification as a Foster Parent, to Dani Walter at
SERENITY ACRES.

Dani brings her hands to her face, tears stream down her
face.

DANI
This is just like my moms.

VINCENT

And there's a place right next to
hers I can hang it.

They hug and kiss.

The kids moan, then all clap.

They all turn. Jordan and Lexi hold reins of six horses.

Chloe, decked out in her fancy ribbons and nail polish, bows
and stomps a foot.

Penny walks over to her, admiring the ribbons.

PENNY

Who is this?

Jordan smiles brightly.

JORDAN

Chloe.

Penny turns to Jordan with a big grin.

PENNY

You remembered.

Jordan grins shyly.

DANI

I almost forgot. Penny, this is for
you.

She hands her a photo album.

Penny pages through it, speechless.

DANI (CONT'D)

A little something to remind you of
what you have to come home to.

Penny hugs Dani.

JORDAN (O.S.)

Mom. Let's go.

EXT. END OF DRIVEWAY

All ride under the "Serenity Acres" sign, Dani bringing up
the rear.

Dani stops, turns, and looks back at the ranch and sees...

FLASHBACK

Scene from beginning when her father, mother and herself were celebrating. Her dad looks over towards the sign, stares with a look of peace on his face.

Present

Dani sits on her horse. A tear in her eye.

DANI

You started something pretty
amazing, Mom and Dad.

She turns and catches up to Vincent.

FADE OUT