

# **TASER RANCH**

Written by

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## **C O N T A C T S**

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FADE IN:

SUPER: "They tried to bury us; they didn't know we were seeds."-- Mexican Proverb

INT. TAEKWONDO GYM - NIGHT

NORA KARLSSON (25-30), an attractive, strong-willed immigrant (a decade in the U.S.) in a stunning tight gym suit, tennis shoes, a baseball cap, and sunglasses, nervously enters the small gym with two mats and two "heavy bags" for kicking and punching.

The Instructor (30s), a fierce, powerful woman in a Taekwondo uniform (gi), holds up her hand to stop two Black Belt women (also in gis) from sparring with roundhouse kicks.

The experts turn to face Nora, expecting her to bow.

Nora takes off her sunglasses with a perplexed look.

The Instructor signals the Black Belts to continue sparring with roundhouse kicks and punches before confidently walking over to meet Nora.

INSTRUCTOR

Nora Karlsson. You called.

Nora puts her hand out to shake, but the Instructor smiles and bows using the proper etiquette.

Nora pulls her hand back, watches the Instructor's bow, and returns a bow quickly and poorly.

NORA

Sorry. Thanks for including me.

Nora peeks around the Instructor, awed by the excellent moves of the Black Belts.

INSTRUCTOR

We bow to the instructor and anyone with a higher-level belt as we enter. Your cap and sunglasses tell me you have secrets.

The Instructor puts up a hand, and the Black Belts stop and face Nora, ready to bow.

Nora bows perfectly the second time, and the Instructor and the Black Belts bow back, then smile at Nora.

NORA

I liked those kicking things.

The Instructor laughs.

INSTRUCTOR

Roundhouse kicks. Follow me.

The Instructor demonstrates a roundhouse kick.

Nora's kick is weak.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

Again. Again. Again.

Each of Nora's kicks gets stronger.

Nora smiles.

EXT. RANCH - MORNING

At the far edge of a vast ranch where the forest greets a plowed field, Nora in brand outdoor gear, mud boots, and garden gloves, jabs a tree-planting shovel into the loose soil, creates a hole, tosses in a pine seedling, and pushes soil around the seedling with her mud boots, before moving a few feet away and repeating the process. She carries a satchel of a hundred pine seedlings and smiles at each seedling's opportunity for survival. We don't see Nora's face.

LIAM KARLSSON (50s), an overweight rancher in a leather jacket, jeans, cowboy hat, and boots, races up to her with a muddy open-top jeep, crushing a few seedlings before slamming on the brakes. Liam is violently angry and drunk.

LIAM

Talked about this, Nora!

Nora rolls her eyes but doesn't turn around. She continues planting, making Liam angrier.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Losing the ranch as it is. God-damn nonsense turning good range into forests! All your shit about climate change makes it worse!

NORA

You do the things you have to do. I do the things I want to do.

LIAM  
Johnny fuckin' Appleseed?  
Brainwashed by environmentalists!

Liam staggers toward Nora from ten steps away.

Nora grips the shovel tightly and listens to his footsteps.

Just before Liam reaches her with his arms outstretched, ready to grab her, she drops the shovel and spins with a moderately powerful roundhouse kick, landing in Liam's ribs.

Liam, caught off guard, exhales like a popped balloon and falls to the ground, gripping his ribs, struggling for air. Liam's hat is a foot away in the mud. We see his holstered pistol, but Liam doesn't reach for it.

Nora stands over him with her shovel.

NORA  
I said, Let me be!

Liam struggles to grab his hat and get up. He glares at Nora and points at her face.

LIAM  
Crazy, ya know that?

He starts the jeep and yells as Nora returns to planting.

LIAM (CONT'D)  
Be rid of you soon enough!

Liam spins the jeep around and races off, crushing a few more newly planted seedlings.

LATER

Nora is still planting, and she's almost out of seedlings. The sun is higher in the sky. As she kicks dirt around another seedling, she hears a wolf HOWL far to the north and a GUNSHOT to the south. She turns to the sound, drops her shovel and satchel, and runs toward the sound while pulling out her smartphone.

EXT. PAVED ROAD - DAY

We see Liam's bloody head slumped against the steering wheel. SHERIFF HARRY GLENN (30s), a ruggedly handsome man in uniform, takes photos and notes as an Ambulance and two EMTs stand by with a gurney.

Twenty feet back, Nora looks on with a blank expression. Her garden gloves stick out of her sweatshirt pockets.

The Sheriff walks slowly toward Nora, studying her face as he approaches.

SHERIFF GLENN

Sorry, Nora. Gotta ask you a few more questions. We can do it here or down at the station.

Nora shrugs.

NORA

Here's fine.

SHERIFF GLENN

Does Liam always carry a pistol?

NORA

Has a permit.

SHERIFF GLENN

Know that. I signed it. I mean, did he carry it more often recently?

NORA

More recently.

SHERIFF GLENN

Feel threatened by anyone?

Nora glares at the Sheriff, then looks into his eyes, perplexed, like they knew each other better than that.

The Sheriff glances away briefly.

Nora peeks around the Sheriff toward the jeep.

NORA

Didn't you find his pistol in the passenger's seat?

Sheriff turns, glances at the jeep, and yells to the EMTs.

SHERIFF GLENN

Go ahead. Take him to the morgue. Tell James I need the works.

(turns to Nora)

I know what it looks like, but we gotta treat it as a homicide. Procedure.

NORA  
 Enemies? Not an easy man to like.

SHERIFF GLENN  
 Sorry.

NORA  
 Drank with neighbors, argued with  
 me and the bank, but I don't know  
 who'd want to kill him.

The Sheriff softens.

SHERIFF GLENN  
 Know he filed for divorce?

Nora looks away.

NORA  
 Happy to grant it!

SHERIFF GLENN  
 Said you were planting trees. When  
 did you see him last, exactly?

NORA  
 An hour ago, a little more.

SHERIFF GLENN  
 Mile north?

NORA  
 Edge of the ranch, like I said.

SHERIFF GLENN  
 What kinda mood was he in?

NORA  
 Angry. Drunk. Like always.

SHERIFF GLENN  
 Funny, I didn't find him that sort.

NORA  
 Funny, you didn't live with him.

The sheriff turns to see the ambulance pull away.

SHERIFF GLENN  
 Like you to stick around in case I  
 need to ask you...

NORA  
(interrupts)  
More questions. I got a few  
questions myself!

The sheriff looks sadly at Nora as she turns and walks slowly down the road. He tips his hat.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

We see a huge man, CY WATSON (45), who looks like a refrigerator in overalls, standing one step inside Nora's modest house. Nora wears a bright sun dress rather than a black mourning dress. The man holds a giant casserole dish covered with aluminum foil like it's a tiny cereal bowl, as Nora paces slowly around the parlor, filled with antique chairs, small tables, and cabinets centered around a fireplace with photos. Two larger 8x10 photos of Liam's parents and Liam with his parents are in silver frames. On the other side of the mantle is Liam and Nora's wedding photo in a wooden frame in the same parlor. Nora has slightly labored breathing.

NORA  
Thank your wife for me, Mr. Watson.

CY  
Yes, ma'am. She was concerned about  
you after Liam's...

NORA  
Suicide.

CY  
And me and some of the neighbors  
are curious...

Nora is about to interrupt Cy again when there's a knock on the solid oak front door, and SARAH TREMAIN (40s), a curvy saleswoman wearing a gray pantsuit and blazer with a Home Security Services emblem, steps in.

SARAH  
Sarah Tremain, Mrs. Karlsson, Home  
Security Services. My cousin,  
Martin, was in the ambulance...

NORA  
News travels fast.

Sarah pulls a bottle of Brand whiskey from behind her back and hands it to Nora along with her business card as she takes the casserole from Cy and ushers him to the door.

SARAH

Hi, Mr. Watson. Sold your wife a door cam a while back. I'm sure Mrs. Karlsson needs time alone.

Nora yells.

NORA

Thank Mrs. Watson for me.

Sarah spins to Nora and whispers as she hands her the casserole.

SARAH

Vultures. All of 'em. They see you're alone. Smell blood.

NORA

You sold my husband that pistol.

SARAH

Lost a good customer and a friend. All they talk 'bout is the selling out to Chemco...

NORA

Not now, Ms. Tremain. I need time alone, but thanks for the whiskey.

Nora begins to usher Sarah out the door.

Sarah turns, holds Nora by the arms, and whispers.

SARAH

They gotta learn! A woman alone isn't a target, she's a threat!

NORA

Good to know.

Nora shuts the door, but Sarah is still talking.

SARAH (O.S.)

You can ask for the pistol back when the police are done fingerprinting it. Gotta protect yourself now!

Nora turns sadly from the door with the casserole and whiskey toward the kitchen. Just inside the kitchen door is a table with three identical casserole dishes next to two color brochures from the "Chemco Corporation" showing a beautiful blonde mom pushing her toddler on a swing at a playground with a small coal bed methane tower in the distance.



She sets down the casserole, keeping the whiskey in her hand.

She pulls an inhaler out of her sweatshirt pocket, takes a huge hit, and breathes deeply.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Sheriff Glenn rolls up to Nora's house in his squad car soon after sunrise.

He looks around one side of the house and sees the dirt road going to the barn.

He follows the road slowly, looking around for clues. Before he reaches the barn, he looks in the field behind the barn and sees a single, small oil well.

He sniffs the air and shakes his head in disgust.

He peeks in the barn door. He sees pine seedlings and potting soil. He looks around the door and spots the planting shovel with a pair of garden gloves resting atop the shovel.

He snaps a photo of the shovel, makes a few notes in his notebook, puts the notebook in his pocket, and reaches for his handcuffs.

He turns and walks back to the front door and knocks.

No answer.

He knocks louder.

Nora answers wearing a tattered, short, plaid bathrobe, exposing one leg. She holds the unopened bottle of whiskey.

NORA  
Sheriff Glenn?

SHERIFF GLENN  
You failed to mention that you,  
too, were filing for divorce.

NORA  
What difference does that make?

SHERIFF GLENN  
No note.

Nora looks perplexed.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Most suicide victims leave notes.

NORA  
Haven't known any suicide victims.

SHERIFF GLENN  
You two argued a lot, I hear, and  
Liam's divorce lawyer claimed he  
wasn't the suicide type.

NORA  
He should know. He stood to gain  
from our divorce settlement. He is  
my attorney, too. I wasn't  
contesting the divorce. Fifty-  
fifty, except for his fees from  
both sides.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Looks like you're getting a hundred  
percent now.

Nora slams the door.

NORA (O.S.)  
Asshole!

SHERIFF GLENN  
I heard that! The coroner said your  
husband had a bruised rib. You  
wouldn't know...

Nora opens the door.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
I'll come back later when the  
autopsy is complete.

Nora slams the door, and he returns to his squad car.

He speaks into his Brand smartphone.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Dispatch, can you patch me into the  
neighbor just to the north of the  
Karlsson ranch? One with the small  
oil well close to the Karlsson  
house. I'll wait.

From outside the squad car, we see Sheriff Glenn speaking on  
the phone with an alarmed expression.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - EVENING

Three of Nora's neighbors argue on the side of the dirt road, standing by one of the three Brand Pickup Trucks. Big Cy Watson and an elderly man almost as big as Cy, GRAMPS (70), are holding and yelling at DAX GILLIAM (50), a wimpy mixed-ethnicity college professor, who escapes for a moment, but Cy catches him and drags him back to Gramps, who yells at him more. Two empty beer bottles are on fence posts nearby.

Down the road, we see a jogger heading in their direction.

Tensions rise and tempers flare. Cy punches Dax in the shoulder to get his attention.

CY

I'm telling you, she won't sell,  
and she now owns the head of the  
freakin' valley!

DAX

No one in their right mind...

Gramps holds Dax's arms behind him. Gramps turns and spits. The jogger (Nora) gets closer, but she's still a blur.

CY

She got it all, now!

DAX

She can be convinced, I tell ya!  
She knows that line has to go  
through her ranch to get to us!

Gramps turns and spits as Cy delivers another punch.

GRAMPS

Make sure that she does!

DAX

I'll talk to her.

Gramps lets go of Dax, and Gramps and Cy get in their separate trucks and speed away.

The jogger gains on them, and Dax turns to see it's Nora in tight-fitting running shorts and a sports top. He stands as if nothing has happened.

Nora sees that Dax is trying to hide the fact that he's in pain.

Nora stops and takes a few breaths, and removes one earbud before speaking.

NORA

You okay?

Dax looks away.

DAX

Fine.

NORA

Guys bothering you?

DAX

Minor issue. No big deal.

Nora takes her smartphone from her jogging belt.

NORA

I'll call Sheriff Glenn.

Dax gets defensive and yells.

DAX

No! No sheriff! It's personal.

NORA

You're Professor Gilliam. The land behind ours.

DAX

Retired.

NORA

Look too young to be retired.

DAX

Forced out. Long story.

NORA

Suit yourself, Professor.

Nora jogs on as Dax steps to his Pickup Truck.

DAX

Call me Dax.

Nora turns to smile.

Seconds later, the Sheriff's car races by with lights and sirens toward Nora, who continues jogging.

Nora turns to glance at the Sheriff's car, then continues.

The Sheriff skids in front of Nora. Dust flies. He shuts off the siren and lights and steps out in an angry mood.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Mrs. Karlsson, I need you to come  
with me.

Nora removes her earbuds.

NORA  
It's Mrs. Karlsson now? Can't you  
ask me your questions here?

Nora's eyes open wide as the Sheriff pulls out handcuffs.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Didn't look right, that's all.  
Strictly procedure.

NORA  
I don't know what...

SHERIFF GLENN  
Liam's prints were on the pistol.  
Except, no powder burns on the side  
of his head.

The Sheriff has a worried look.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
He was shot from six feet away. And  
that bruised rib of his looks like  
he was hit by a thin-blade shovel.

NORA  
Harry?

SHERIFF GLENN  
(whispers)  
Got no choice, Nora. You have the  
right to remain silent...

Dax drives by in his pickup and drowns out the Sheriff as he  
cuffs her and guides her to the back of his car.

Dax slows the truck as he drives by and looks sadly at Nora,  
and she weakly smiles back at him.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Sheriff sits behind his desk. Nora sits in one of two  
chairs facing him. They both avoid eye contact.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Best not to speak 'til your  
attorney is present.

NORA

I told ya I didn't kill him.

SHERIFF GLENN

I believe you, but as Arthur Conan Doyle wrote for Sherlock Holmes, "There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

NORA

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

SHERIFF GLENN

Sorry, Sir. Couldn't get enough of Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie as a kid, and can't forget 'em now.

NORA

You don't talk to me anymore at the grocery store on Wednesday nights. You don't even look at me.

SHERIFF GLENN

Your husband... I'm so sorry.

NORA

A one-off, I know. And you buy more frozen pizzas these days.

SHERIFF GLENN

(laughs)

Are you the detective now?

NORA

Sexy blonde of yours out of town?

Sheriff Glenn looks away, and Nora sees this.

SHERIFF GLENN

(smiles weakly)

Five weeks ago, Wednesday, wasn't it? The store was closing in ten minutes...

Now it's Nora who looks away.

CUT TO:

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

In the back aisle of a dimly lit grocery store, Sheriff Glenn, in uniform, strolls with a cart half-full of chips and beer.

From the other direction, Nora approaches wearing a bright, flowery dress. She pushes a cart filled with wine, bread, and vegetables.

Nora smiles.

NORA  
Hi, Harry. Long time no see.  
Shopping for poker night tomorrow?

The Sheriff smiles.

SHERIFF GLENN  
That obvious, Nora? Are you  
shopping for one? Where's Liam?

Nora grabs a container of milk.

NORA  
Passed out by now. Where's your arm  
candy?

The Sheriff grabs a bottle of orange juice.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Girls' night out.

The Sheriff points to the double doors leading to the back of the store.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
(smirks)  
If those doors could talk...

BACK TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff stands as RONNY HARRISON (60), a heavy-set man dressed in a vintage gray suit, barges in and sits down. Ronny whines rather than talks.

RONNY  
This is why I don't do this  
anymore. I'm just a banker.

Nora pulls herself together well enough to speak, but she and the Sheriff avoid eye contact.

NORA  
You're still a licensed attorney.  
You were handling Liam's divorce.

RONNY

And yours, no contest, no kids,  
amiable fifty-fifty cash  
distribution of proceeds from the  
sale. Easy.

NORA

I didn't do it! I was planting tree  
seedlings a mile away.

The Sheriff interjects sternly.

SHERIFF GLENN

What was your relationship with  
your husband recently?

NORA

Tolerable for the past four years.  
It was like struggling to go to  
sleep. You can't lie to yourself  
like you can all day long. I would  
agonize, waiting for sleep so I  
could escape him.

SHERIFF GLENN

How the hell did ya ever meet?

NORA

Computer matched me to the man he  
dreamed of being, not the monster  
he'd become with booze and pills.

SHERIFF GLENN

You couldn't live with him no more?

Nora turns even sadder. The look of pity grips Ronny's face.

NORA

Live? The time I spent dreaming was  
so much better than real life. The  
moment I'd wake up, I'd try my  
damndest to fall back asleep to get  
back into my dream. Whatever I  
dreamed, and some were nightmares,  
it was better than my awake life.  
He meant less to me than the empty  
substance of my dreams.

(beat)

It wasn't living!

The Sheriff stares at her suspiciously.



SHERIFF GLENN  
Liam isn't living either, and I got  
a murder to solve!

Ronny looks angry and points at himself as he paces in the  
opposite direction from the Sheriff.

RONNY  
Now, the oil rights sale is in  
jeopardy. There's no death clause  
in the proposed sales offer.

Nora gets in Ronny's face.

NORA  
I wasn't anywhere near him when I  
heard the shot. I ran the whole way  
and called 9-1-1.

RONNY  
Your prints on the gun?

Nora is angrier.

NORA  
No. Never touched or fired a gun.  
Don't believe in them. Having  
access to a firearm triples one's  
risk of death by suicide. Sheriff  
knows that. All our neighbors do.

The Sheriff stops and yells.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Could've used gardening gloves!  
Then put the gun in his hand!

The Sheriff gets in Ronny's face.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Go back to doing notary work,  
foreclosures, and wills!

Ronny ignores the sheriff and turns to Nora again.

RONNY  
Charge you with a crime, yet?

NORA  
No.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Waiting on the toxicology report.

NORA  
Drunk as usual.  
(looks away)  
I suspect.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Bruised rib, too! Like he was hit  
with a shovel.

NORA  
(to Ronny)  
Ask him if the shovel was at the  
scene.

The Sheriff races to Nora, ready to strangle her.

SHERIFF GLENN  
No.

RONNY  
So, Sheriff, you don't have Nora's  
prints on the gun, and there's no  
shovel at the scene, and she called  
9-1-1 from a mile away? Then ya  
gotta let her go.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Flight risk.

RONNY  
Her neighbors are furious. They're  
counting on the divorce and the  
sale. She's in danger.

Nora looks away.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Common knowledge. I've done my  
research! The gas and oil rights  
under the ranches hold all the  
value. Chemco's been after the  
rights for years. Ranches are worth  
nothing without the gas buried a  
mile and a half deep.

The Sheriff races to Ronny.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
How much is it worth, banker?

RONNY  
Millions per ranch.

SHERIFF GLENN

But can't get to any of it without  
a pipe and drilling on Liam and  
Nora's -- I mean, Nora's ranch.

(snickers)

I don't have to hold you. Let's put  
an ankle monitor on you and send  
you home.

Ronny protests vigorously, as Nora glares at the Sheriff.

RONNY

Can't do that!

SHERIFF GLENN

Watch me!

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nora paces in the living room, occasionally peeking out of  
the front windows. We see she wears a cute skirt and top, and  
an electronic ankle monitor with a green light. She paces  
toward the kitchen when we hear a loud KNOCK on the door.

Nora strides to the front door and pauses. She takes out her  
brand smartphone and dials 9-1 (ready to punch in the "1").

There's a second, louder KNOCK on the door.

Nora yells.

NORA

Who is it?

CY (O.S.)

It's Cy. Cy Watson.

Nora puts her hand on the deadbolt lock. We see a small table  
by the door that has a bowl for keys, a bottle of whiskey,  
and the business card that Sarah Tremain brought.

NORA

What do you want?

CY (O.S.)

Just wanna talk.

Nora grabs the bottle of whiskey like a club.

NORA

Can it wait 'til morning?

CY (O.S.)  
Just want to be straight with you.

NORA  
I'm listening.

CY (O.S.)  
Can I come in?

NORA  
Don't think that'd be a good idea.

She HEARS Cy smash a pint whiskey bottle on the porch.

CY (O.S.)  
Fine! Back in the morning!

Nora puts her ear to the door to hear Cy's big footsteps walking away.

Nora sets down the whiskey bottle, grabs Sarah's business card, and makes a call.

LATER

Nora hears the doorbell ring, followed by a polite knock, and a sweet voice.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Nora, it's me, Sarah Tremain.

Nora races to unlock the deadbolt and let Sarah in.

Sarah's voice turns angry. She's carrying three boxes as she barges into the house.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Never open the door right away.

NORA  
I knew it was you.

SARAH  
Did you?

Sarah puts down two of the boxes and rips the top one open.

NORA  
What's that?

SARAH  
Doorbell cam. No single woman, my condolences again, should be without one.

Nora stares at the unit inside the box.

Sarah whips out a screwdriver drill from her back tool belt.

NORA  
What's it cost?

SARAH  
How much is your life worth? Give  
me a few minutes.

Sarah works on the doorbell, not looking at Nora.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
The camera and deadbolt are your  
friends.

Nora peeks at the other two boxes.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Now, you'll check your phone and  
see who's out the door before you  
unlock it.

Nora smiles.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
I see you have a new ankle  
decoration. I bet your neighbors  
already know.

Nora is alarmed.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
You're a sittin' duck!

Nora sees one of the boxes that reads, "Stun Gun."

SARAH (CONT'D)  
You won't get Liam's pistol back  
for a few days. If ever!

NORA  
I'll never use a gun! Never.

SARAH  
That's why I brought the next best  
thing in home security.

Nora takes the Brand Stun Gun out of the box.

NORA  
Stun gun?

SARAH

Not any stun gun. It's the latest model. A jolt from that baby delivers a high-voltage shock, causing loss of balance and muscle control, confusion, and disorientation -- bringing that bastard to his knees.

Nora puts the stun gun back in the box.

NORA

I don't like guns.

SARAH

Call it your lightsaber!

Sarah tightens the last screw and turns with her hand out.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Hand it over. Your phone. I'll download the app and install it.

Nora reluctantly hands Sarah her phone.

NORA

How will it work?

SARAH

The motion detector starts the camera. Great for catching porch pirates, too.

NORA

Porch pirates?

SARAH

Thieves who steal delivered packages. The Sheriff has bagged plenty in the county!

Sarah hands back the phone and turns her head.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Needs your passcode to download and install.

Nora turns and punches in her passcode numbers and hands the phone back to Sarah.

Sarah pushes a few buttons and hands the phone back to Nora.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'll go out on the road to test it.

Sarah exits and shuts the door, and Nora stares at the phone.

The phone is off.

The phone buzzes and lights up with a view of Sarah approaching the door.

Sarah rings the doorbell. The phone snaps a photo of her.

Nora smiles and opens the door.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Wrong.

NORA

It worked great.

SARAH

Always ask who it is and what they want. Your phone will record their photo and voice. As your voice recognition files build up, you'll have a second ID test.

Nora stares at the phone.

Sarah yanks the stun gun out of the box.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Add the lightsaber to your list of friends. You can't be too careful.

(points to the whiskey)

And using the whiskey bottle as a club isn't going to do it!

Nora laughs.

NORA

It works in the movies.

SARAH

Only in the movies!

Sarah hands the stun gun to Nora.

NORA

How much do I owe ya?

SARAH

Hundred for the doorbell cam and one-twenty-five for the lightsaber.

(smiles)

I'll bill you.

Nora hugs Sarah, who pauses to enjoy the hug.

NORA  
Thanks so much.

SARAH  
Glad to help. I take pride in my  
home security business.

NORA  
Thanks, Sarah. I feel safer.

Sarah picks up the third box from the floor and waves as she  
begins to exit.

NORA (CONT'D)  
What was in the third box?

SARAH  
You're not ready for the big time.

The door is about to shut.

NORA  
What was it?

SARAH  
A Taser!

Sarah shuts the door.

Nora stares at the stun gun, picks up the instruction  
booklet, and plops into a comfortable chair.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Sheriff Glenn studies his computer screen. The whiteboard he  
faces has only two photos: Liam's and Nora's.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Means?

The Sheriff goes to the whiteboard and writes: "Pistol,  
gloves?"

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Motive?

He writes: "Abuse, ranch, oil."

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Opportunity?



He writes, "At the scene, later?"

His phone RINGS. He answers it on speakerphone.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Ronny, thanks for getting back to  
me. What'd ya find out?

RONNY (O.S.)  
My client... my living client, had  
the most to gain financially from  
Liam's death, but only if she  
accepts the offer from Chemco.

SHERIFF GLENN  
For the oil and gas rights.

RONNY  
We were about to foreclose on the  
ranch, but she didn't want to sell  
when her husband was forcing her.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Forcing her.

RONNY  
I shouldn't be telling you this. He  
wouldn't sign the divorce papers.

The Sheriff stands, paces, and looks at the whiteboard.

SHERIFF GLENN  
You'll testify that Nora was  
extorting her husband's future  
financial well-being if he didn't  
sign their divorce papers.

Ronny is angry.

RONNY  
You're twisting it around. Nora  
didn't want the money or the ranch.  
She wanted the divorce!

SHERIFF GLENN  
I have everything I need, Ronny.

The Sheriff ends the call.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAWN

Nora is in bed when her phone BUZZES.

It lights up, and she sees Cy Watson stomping to the door.

Nora throws a bathrobe over her small nightshirt and races to the front door.

She sees that her stun gun is fully charged, sitting on the table with the whiskey by the front door.

NORA

Who is it?

Nora stalls as she attaches the brass safety chain on the front door.

CY (O.S.)

You know damn well. That no-good Sarah Tremain sold my wife one of these goddamn doorbell cams too.

NORA

What do you want?

Nora checks the deadbolt. It's locked.

CY (O.S.)

Can I come in?

NORA

No. What do you want?

CY (O.S.)

We're losing our ranches. Can't sell beef or soybeans these days.

Nora turns sad.

NORA

We know that! I mean, I know that.

Nora unlocks the chain lock and deadbolt and steps out. Realizing how big Cy is, she glances at the open door.

Cy paces angrily across the front porch and back.

CY

Your husband and us. We had a deal!

NORA

I know nothing about it.

CY

That's why we're here, damn it!

NORA  
You said 'we' again. Who are you  
talking about?

Nora takes her inhaler from the bathrobe pocket and takes a hit.

CY  
Me and Gramps.

Nora turns to go back inside.

NORA  
Send me a letter and I'll look it  
over with my lawyer.

Cy grips her arm like a vice. She sees how big his hand is.

CY  
No, we gotta talk.

Nora pauses and half-turns her face with an innocent smile.

Cy releases his grip, and she elbows Cy in the gut, then spins and kicks the side of one of his knees, so that it collides with his other knee and sends Cy flat on the porch.

He moans and has trouble standing, and Nora races in and fastens the brass safety chain. She opens the door to the length of the chain.

Nora glares at Cy, who limps to the door in pain.

NORA  
A letter, Cy. In writing, dated and  
signed. That's the only way I'll  
consider any offer after my lawyer  
approves.

Cy paces angrily. His temper grows.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Remember. You're being recorded.

Cy's hand lunges into the opening of the door and tries to grab Nora's throat.

Nora jumps back, grabs the whiskey bottle, and sets it back down. She grabs the stun gun and jabs it against Cy's arm.

ZAP!

We see Cy's arm shake uncontrollably before it retracts to the outside part of the door.

NORA (CONT'D)  
In writing, Mr. Watson!

Nora puts on the deadbolt and calls 9-1-1.

LATER

Nora hears the siren and looks out the front window.

Cy is gone, and she sees the lights on the sheriff's car turn off with the siren.

She sees Sheriff Glenn exit the squad car.

Her phone shows Sheriff Glenn smiling. As he presses the doorbell, she sees his face turn serious. The doorbell RINGS.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Who is it?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
It's Harry.

Nora opens the door with the safety chain lock. She's angry.

NORA  
Big Cy Watson came to my door and started yelling at me about some deal my husband had made with him. Put his angry arm through the door and tried to strangle me, so I zapped him with my stun gun. Got it all recorded.

SHERIFF GLENN  
I thought you never used guns.

Nora turns sarcastic.

NORA  
Did I say stun gun? I meant a lightsaber. Just protecting myself.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Let me see the video.

Nora checks her phone. She finds nothing. She checks again. She finds only a still photo of Cy with a sad look. She shakes her phone in disgust.

NORA  
Mr. Watson will have two burn marks on his right forearm. Think you'll believe the scars?

The Sheriff looks down to see the ankle monitor.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Maybe I'll go talk to Cy.

NORA  
You do that, Sheriff.

The Sheriff pulls out a piece of paper from his pocket and shoves it through the door.

SHERIFF GLENN  
After I collect that shovel in your barn with this warrant.

NORA  
Strictly procedure, Harry! I know.

SHERIFF GLENN  
How long have you owned that stun gun? Never mind. I'll ask our local arms dealer.

The Sheriff ambles off toward the barn.

Nora slams the door and locks the deadbolt.

Nora watches the front entrance with her phone until Sheriff Glenn carries the shovel in a large evidence bag to his car.

Nora collapses into a chair to think.

LATER

She sees Ronny Harrison drive up in a Brand sedan.

Ronny approaches the door with two large envelopes.

RONNY (O.S.)  
I know you can see me. My wife bought one last month. Open up.

Nora opens the door, still wearing her short bathrobe.

NORA  
How's my defense case coming?

RONNY  
The sheriff called. Told me you owned a stun gun and a shovel, either of which could have been used to incapacitate your husband before you staged his suicide.

Ronny looks away, even sadder.

NORA  
That's not why you're here?

RONNY  
Ms. Karlsson, it's my duty to drop  
off these two envelopes.

Ronny hands the two envelopes to Nora.

RONNY (CONT'D)  
The top one is the offer by Chemco  
to purchase the mineral rights and  
all the gas and oil under your  
ranch. It's a lot of money, and I  
thought...

Nora tosses the envelope violently into the fireplace.

RONNY (CONT'D)  
Thought you'd do that.

NORA  
What's in the second one?

RONNY  
Foreclosure papers, unless you can  
come up with three months' back-  
mortgage payments.

Nora is stunned.

NORA  
But Liam...

RONNY  
Counted on the sale of the mineral  
rights.

NORA  
What did he do with the mortgage  
money?

RONNY  
You'd have to ask him.

NORA  
Right!

RONNY  
So you might want to rethink that  
mineral rights offer.

Points to the fireplace.

NORA

I suppose you want to be paid for  
all your hard efforts handling my  
divorce that didn't happen, and my  
murder case that's a sham?

Ronny gets defensive.

RONNY

I shouldn't have...

Nora picks up the stun gun and shoots it in the air with a  
loud CRACK!

Ronny backs up toward the door in fear.

RONNY (CONT'D)

I can see you're upset.

NORA

You haven't seen upset!

Nora puts down the stun gun on the table and calms down.

NORA (CONT'D)

Nobody likes being backed into a  
corner! I'll think about my  
options. We'll talk later!

Ronny exits, and Nora shuts and deadbolts the door.

She stares at the envelope. Her chin drops to her chest.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Papers are scattered around the dining room floor. Nora sits  
at an old wooden desk examining bank papers and receipts. She  
wears a sexy outfit, hoping the Sheriff will drop by, but  
she's angry looking at the receipts.

One small desk drawer is locked. She tugs at it and it  
doesn't budge.

She stands and exits to the kitchen, returning with a big  
flathead screwdriver and a hammer.

She pounds open the desk drawer to find bank notices warning  
of foreclosure, and gas and hotel receipts, liquor store  
receipts, and jewelry receipts, all on their credit card.

She organizes the receipts, takes out a large calendar, and begins mapping out her late husband's last three months.

Her smartphone rings. It's Sarah Tremain.

NORA

Sarah, I'm getting still shots of people at the door, but not video like you said.

SARAH (O.S.)

My apologies. You know us gals and technology. Must be a setting.

NORA

Worked when you showed me the first time. Got the video of you testing it at my door, but not this morning when Cy Watson came 'round.

SARAH (O.S.)

It's why I prefer a pistol. Works every time.

NORA

The lightsaber worked like a charm.

SARAH (O.S.)

I'll come over and check it out.

NORA

Not tonight. The place is a mess. Tomorrow okay?

SARAH (O.S.)

Don't be silly. My life's a mess, too. Be there soon.

Sarah ends the call. Nora looks around at the messy room and shrugs.

Nora goes back to filling in the calendar.

Nora's phone lights up as Dax approaches the door sheepishly with a bottle of wine.

Nora strides to the front door as the bell rings. Nora yells.

NORA

Who is it?

DAX (O.S.)

I bought one too. Doorbell cam. Same model.



NORA  
Does your video recorder work?

DAX (O.S.)  
No.

Nora unlocks the two locks and opens the door.

NORA  
Mine neither.

They share a moment before Nora opens the door.

Nora double-locks the door behind Dax as he speaks.

DAX  
No mac and cheese.

NORA  
Thank God.

Their eyes meet again as Dax hands her the wine.

DAX  
Just dropping it off. I know you  
must be horribly upset.

NORA  
I'll be upset if you don't have a  
glass with me, stat.

Nora exits to the kitchen.

DAX  
Stat? Were you a doctor?

NORA (O.S.)  
I was an electronics designer.

Nora returns with two wine glasses and a wine opener.

DAX  
Not much use on a ranch.

NORA  
You'd be surprised. The internet  
goes out a lot. So did my husband!

Dax chuckles, then shyly looks away, as Nora opens the wine  
and pours two glasses. Nora turns deadly serious.

NORA (CONT'D)

Truth is, I hated my job, hated the city, and I was looking for a new start. Met Liam during his sober days, and I liked him. Insisted I be a stay-at-home ranch wife.

DAX

Does that make you happy?

NORA

Happy enough, 'til he started drinking again.

DAX

Sorry.

NORA

Are the rumors true?

Dax barely sips the wine, looks away, and speaks softly.

DAX

I fell in love with one of the thousands of students with whom I came in contact. That was wrong. Didn't mean for it to happen. A friend of hers reported me for sexual misconduct. Suspended without pay. I learned that depression is like a bullet to the... sorry. I'm so sorry.

Nora takes a sip and ponders Dax's last comment.

NORA

And your love interest?

DAX

Graduated. Moved home to India. Never heard from her again. I was so ashamed that I couldn't return to the university.

Dax points to the receipts and mail on the desk to change the subject.

DAX (CONT'D)

What's all that?

NORA

Liam insisted on doing all the bills. Men's work. I should have stepped in. Management, I guess.

DAX  
Miss-management?

NORA  
Ha-ha! I hated bookwork, so I let  
him. Second-biggest mistake I made.

DAX  
Second? Oh, marrying him. The  
divorce. Got it.

NORA  
Are there any secrets in this town?

DAX  
A secret is something you tell one  
person at a time.

NORA  
You couldn't find teaching work?

DAX  
Who would have me? What worse? I  
never even kissed her.

Dax stares at the gas receipts.

NORA  
When did you buy your ranch?

DAX  
My parents left it to me.

NORA  
The one oil well?

DAX  
Dad's idea. Last recession. Chemco  
got the rights to one section.  
Dumbest...

Dax picks up two gas receipts.

DAX (CONT'D)  
Four gallons one day later.

Nora takes a closer look.

NORA  
Four gallons?

DAX  
The average MPG for his Jeep,  
thirteen. The destination was  
twenty-six miles, then back.

Nora checks the calendar while Dax filters through more receipts.

NORA  
Statistics professor. Right?

DAX  
Simple math.

NORA  
Thursday night? Poker night with  
Gramps. Two miles away. The town's  
only six miles. What the hell?

Dax shows Nora three sets of receipts.

DAX  
Three more alternate Thursdays.

Nora grabs the receipts out of Dax's hands, tosses them on the desk, and gulps down her wine.

NORA  
Tried to cover his tracks by  
refilling the tank the next day.

DAX  
There might be a perfectly innocent  
explanation.

Nora paces in anger.

NORA  
Like flirting with a much younger  
Indian girl? And a student?!

Nora's phone buzzes and lights up.

DAX  
I should be going.

Dax heads to the door with Nora.

NORA  
It's Sarah Tremain.

Nora swings open the door before Sarah can ring the doorbell. Sarah, wearing a low-cut T-shirt, swaggers in and then glares at Dax, who stands behind Nora.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Won't you come in? You've met  
Professor Gilliam.

Sarah pushes her way past Nora and pushes Dax hard as she enters the living room.

SARAH  
What's the pervert doing here?

NORA  
Just stopped by...

Dax points to the stun gun on the small table by the door.

DAX  
To express my condolences without  
bringing Mac and Cheese or  
weaponry.

Sarah turns and glares at Dax.

SARAH  
Do you know what the good professor  
did?

Dax exits quietly and shuts the door, but stops on the porch to hear Sarah's tirade.

NORA  
Sarah...

SARAH  
Nothing short of rape from what I  
hear!

Nora pulls out her phone, trying to change the subject.

NORA  
Tell me about the set-up video  
options on the doorbell cam.

Behind Nora, outside, we see Dax walking slowly up the dark dirt road.

SARAH  
You wouldn't understand them.

NORA  
Try me.

Sarah grabs the phone from Nora and changes a setting.

SARAH

Your video record feature musta  
shut off. Have a power outage?

NORA

Yes.

(points to her ankle  
monitor)

Only lasted about twenty minutes  
again. Not long enough to escape!

Sarah chuckles warmly.

SARAH

Just long enough to have to reset  
all the clocks on the microwave or  
clock radios...

Nora smiles back.

NORA

I should hope for an all-night  
power outage and head to Mexico!

Sarah turns a bit to hide the phone from Nora's watchful  
eyes, and she punches a few more keystrokes, then abruptly  
hands the phone back to Nora.

SARAH

Sometimes this App reboots without  
warning. I'll check for software  
updates and get back to you.

NORA

Thanks.

Sarah looks around to see the mess of papers everywhere.

SARAH

Tornado?

Nora shields Sarah from the desk, and the bottle of wine and  
wine glasses on top of many bills.

NORA

Bills. Nothing I can't handle.

SARAH

Like Cy Watson?

NORA

You heard?

SARAH

So did the sheriff. Cy's told him  
you kicked him in the side of the  
knee. Knocked him over.

NORA

He grabbed my arm.

SARAH

Blindsided, he said. Thinkin' 'bout  
pressin' charges.

NORA

He assaulted me on my property!

Sarah hands back the phone.

SARAH

The sheriff will say it's his word  
against yours. The recording  
function should be working again.  
Look up that professor of yours on  
the Internet, if it's working, that  
is. My phone service is. Yours?

Nora checks her phone.

NORA

Out!

Nora has an epiphany.

NORA (CONT'D)

I get it. Bluetooth still works, so  
the doorbell cam works even if I  
can't call out.

Sarah smiles and steps closer to Nora.

SARAH

Smart girl. Remember...

NORA

The deadbolt and camera are my  
friends.

SARAH

And the stun gun.

Sarah's smile disappears, and she inches closer to Nora.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I don't think that a roundhouse  
kick or a temporary jolt is gonna  
stop Cy Watson, Gramps, or that  
professor from gettin' what they  
want!

NORA

No, no, I wasn't... Wait, the  
roundhouse kick worked both times!  
Do you know any self-defense moves?

SARAH

A few. Only need one move now.

Sarah reaches behind the back of her sweatshirt and draws a  
0.38 Snub-nosed pistol faster than Billy the Kid. She points  
it around the room, taking imaginary shots at the wine bottle  
and wine glasses, then re-holsters her weapon.

Nora is angry.

NORA

I don't allow guns in my house!

Sarah compassionately approaches Nora.

SARAH

All the self-defense moves in the  
world aren't gonna...

NORA

I firmly believe...

SARAH

(interrupting, angry)  
They don't care what you believe!  
Guns are real power!

Nora's phone RINGS, shocking Nora and Sarah.

NORA

It's the sheriff. Gotta take this.

Sarah steps away, but not toward the door.

Nora ushers Sarah toward the door.

NORA (CONT'D)

Just a minute, Sheriff.

(to Sarah)

I think you'd better go. Thanks for  
fixing my phone.



Sarah, dejected, trudges to the door.

Sarah turns and points to the wine bottle and two glasses.

SARAH  
Alcoholic beverages are strictly  
forbidden under house arrest.  
(smiles, winks)  
But I won't tell if you don't.

Nora waves goodbye and locks the door. She races to her desk, sits, and pulls out a fancy new Apple laptop computer from a lower drawer. She plugs her phone into the laptop.

NORA  
Go ahead, Harry. Sorry.

Nora turns on the computer and plugs her phone into it.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
See, when that cellphone tower on  
Lookout Mountain goes out in a  
storm, so does your bargain-  
basement radio-wave ankle monitor.

NORA  
Real shame. My emergency cell phone  
and Wi-Fi go out, too. I feel your  
pain.

Suddenly, a screen flashes: "Recent keystrokes, downloads, commands, and cookies." The screen fills with computer code, which Nora seems to track and understand.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
But you're not free to roam. Fact,  
if the juice comes on up the  
mountain, and you're not within  
fifty feet of your house, you'll go  
straight to jail. Got it?

NORA  
Got it.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Strictly...

Nora pauses the strolling key codes and stares at her phone.

NORA  
Procedure. Is that why you called,  
Harry?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Them pit viper neighbors are mad.

NORA  
Tell 'em not to come around.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Free country, Mrs. Karlsson. Or do  
you prefer Ms.?

NORA  
What was that, Harry? Or do you  
prefer Sheriff?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Toxicology lab results came back.

Nora stares at the computer code again.

NORA  
Told ya, he'd been drinking.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Three times the legal limit.  
Something else too.

Nora stares at her laptop screen.

NORA  
What?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Tested positive for opioids and  
antidepressants.

Nora looks puzzled.

NORA  
Antidepressants? No one here  
takes...

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
(interrupts)  
Lots of 'em. Ya know who has a  
prescription for Oxycodone or  
antidepressants?

Nora jumps out of her seat and yells into the phone.

NORA  
Shit! Shit! Shit!

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Can't believe he didn't fall right  
out of his jeep! It may explain the  
lack of a note.

Nora trudges back to the desk chair and collapses in it.

NORA  
No shape to write one.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Don't explain the lack of powder  
burns. Were you feeding him your  
Oxy? I know you had a prescription!

NORA  
Can't help ya, Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Says the only suspect with motive,  
means, and opportunity!

NORA  
Cast a broader net, Sheriff! Are  
you on the list?

The Sheriff turns compassionate.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)  
Jesus Christ! We made a mistake.  
One night, okay!

Nora ends the call.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Sheriff approaches the whiteboard and writes, "Drugs."

Cy barges into the office, drunk and in a rage, grabbing the  
Sheriff by the collar. He slurs his words.

CY  
I want that murderin' bish tossed  
in jail!

The Sheriff gives Cy a deadly glare, smashes Cy's face on the  
desk, and drags him to the door.

SHERIFF GLENN  
I hope you didn't drive here drunk  
to tell me that! Could have killed  
somebody. I'll drive ya home.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nora, still in the sexy outfit, unlocks a door in the hallway, opens the door then sits on the top step for a moment in the dark.

NORA

Can't do this. Maybe I should just  
run! Mexico? Anywhere but here.  
Home? Anywhere but there!

She pauses, then slaps her knees with resolve.

She stands bravely, flicks on the stairway light switch, and walks down a flight of steps slowly as if someone is there.

It's an empty room, except for the back corner of the basement, where we see a cobweb-covered baby's bassinet. Her chin rests on her chest. She fights back tears.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We see Gramps lying down in full camouflage, staring at Nora's house through night-vision binoculars. He has an open notebook that reads: "Dax 8:21-8:43 PM. Sarah: 8:43-9:02. Phone 9:01. Basement? 2 minutes. Bedroom: 9:03."

Gramps shuts the notebook but doesn't leave.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Gray skies and swirling winds greet the morning. Dax drives up in his pickup truck, gets out, and looks around, including the spot where Gramps was spying on Nora the night before.

He pulls a box of food from his truck. We see coffee, eggs, bread, bacon, and corn. Dax sheepishly approaches the house and knocks on the door.

NORA (O.S.)

Who is it?

DAX

Grocery boy.

Nora opens the door with the chain lock on and peeks out.

NORA

Alone?

DAX  
Brought you some groceries. Storm's  
coming from the north. Eighty  
percent chance of heavy...

NORA  
Saw it on the web.

Nora opens the door wearing a bathrobe.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Come in. Thanks for the goodies,  
put 'em in the kitchen, will ya?

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora turns toward the bathroom. Dax's eyes follow her.

NORA  
Need to shower before the water  
heater goes out.

DAX  
What about your ankle monitor?

Nora spins and smiles.

NORA  
Waterproof. Lots of Hollywood movie  
stars wear 'em as accessories now.  
Start some coffee. Be right out.

Dax is smitten. He enters the kitchen and hears the shower.

He hears a KNOCK on the door.

Dax goes to the door and opens it to see Sheriff Glenn  
holding a search warrant and several plastic evidence bags.

They are surprised to see each other.

DAX  
Sheriff?

SHERIFF GLENN  
Professor?

Dax is embarrassed and wimpy.

DAX  
Just brought Nora... Ms. Karlsson,  
some groceries before the storm.

The Sheriff barges in the door, and pushes Dax aside, heading to the bathroom.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Same warrant. Gonna collect pill bottles, and cell phone... know if she has a computer?

DAX  
No, I don't.

The Sheriff opens the bathroom door and peeks in. Nora screams.

NORA  
Get out of here!

She peeks out from behind the translucent shower curtain and glares at the Sheriff!

The Sheriff's eyes open widely, and he tries to force himself to look away, but he can't.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Sorry. So sorry. Same warrant.  
Where are the pill bottles?

The Sheriff rummages through the medicine cabinet and drawers and finds nothing, while Nora shuts off the water and grabs a towel.

NORA  
Get the hell out of here, pervert!

Dax appears at the bathroom door to see Nora step out of the shower. His eyes open wide.

The Sheriff storms out of the bathroom, pushing Dax aside.

SHERIFF GLENN  
This is the perv you should be worried about. Where's your bedroom?

NORA  
Liam's on the right. Mine's left.

The Sheriff is shocked.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Separate bedrooms?

Dax, embarrassed, turns around.

NORA  
Dax, coffee on yet?

DAX  
Er... right away, Nora.

Dax sneaks one last peek at Nora, then races to the kitchen.

The Sheriff races out of the bedroom and down the hall to the bathroom door, just as Nora slams it shut and locks it. The Sheriff has only one pill bottle in a clear evidence bag.

SHERIFF GLENN  
One pill bottle? That all ya got?

NORA (O.S.)  
Probably from his room!

SHERIFF GLENN  
How'd ya know? Just hope I don't  
find your fingerprints all over  
this bottle.

NORA (O.S.)  
I never ordered the pills or  
touched them, or anything else in  
his room. Good luck, Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN  
I need to take your smartphone.

NORA (O.S.)  
I need it for emergencies. Ya know,  
9-1-1?

The Sheriff stares at the pill bottle and is on edge.

SHERIFF GLENN  
I'll have your phone examined and  
back by this afternoon. Think you  
can stay out of trouble 'til then?  
No karate kicks or stun gun?

The Sheriff turns, takes two steps toward the door, then  
turns back.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Oh, the coroner says your shovel  
didn't cause Liam's bruised  
ribcage. After talking with Cy  
Watson, I think we'll take a look  
at your boots.

Nora exits the bathroom angrily, partly dressed in a white blouse and holding her short jean skirt in her hands. Her hair is wet, and her face is angelic, but she glares at him.

NORA

Knock yourself out. I mean that!

The Sheriff is stunned by her beauty, but he holds open an evidence bag, and Nora drops her phone inside the bag.

SHERIFF GLENN

I will... I mean, I won't. But I will take your ninja warrior boots to that coroner to see if there's a match. Got a computer?

Nora begins to put on her capris.

NORA

Liam had a laptop. Haven't seen it for a while.

The Sheriff can't take his eyes off her.

SHERIFF GLENN

I'll be back later if I can't get what I need from your phone.

Dax exits the kitchen with two cups of coffee and a smile.

The Sheriff sees Dax swoon as Nora buttons her skirt.

DAX

Can we offer you a cup of coffee, Sheriff?

The sheriff glares at Dax and stomps to the front door.

NORA

It worries me that you seem unconcerned about having a real killer on the loose.

The Sheriff turns angrily as he steps out of the door.

SHERIFF GLENN

Damn it! No other suspects on the list, yet. An ankle monitor costs you twenty-five dollars a day.

The Sheriff hops in his car and drives off.

Nora shuts the door calmly as Dax hands her a cup of coffee.



DAX  
If you didn't do it, the killer is  
still out there. I don't like that.

NORA  
But the killer does. Who was Liam  
seeing on poker nights?

Dax stares back at the desk with piled-up receipts and bills.

LATER

It's almost dusk. Nora examines receipts, and Dax lies back  
on the couch, resting comfortably, almost asleep.

They hear a shotgun BLAST in the field across the road.

They race to the front door.

NORA  
Call 9-1-1!

DAX  
No phone.

NORA  
What?

DAX  
Invasion of privacy. My doorbell  
cam has a monitor. I have a  
landline at home for 9-1-1.

NORA  
Go out the back door, cut across to  
your place, and call!

Dax sets down his coffee next to the stun gun and races  
toward the back door.

Nora peeks out the window to see Gramps holding a shotgun in  
contrast to the twilight. He's alone in full hunting gear.

GRAMPS (O.S.)  
Get on out here, Mrs. Karlsson!

Nora opens the door with the chain lock on it.

NORA  
Can't do it. Ankle monitor. House  
arrest.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gramps sees Dax running across the field toward his house, against a gorgeous sunset, and Gramps shoots.

Dax dives to the ground, gets up, and runs faster.

Gramps shoots again but misses again, and Dax runs faster.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora races to the side window in the parlor and sees Dax running out of range.

GRAMPS (O.S.)  
I'll pick up the perv later.

Nora returns to the front door and is shocked to see Gramps peeking through the chain lock and waving a large yellow envelope.

Nora slams the door, locks the deadbolt, grabs the stun gun, and ducks as Gramps yells.

GRAMPS (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I ain't gonna shoot ya. Shotgun's just to get your attention.

Nora yells.

NORA  
You got it. What do you want?

GRAMPS (O.S.)  
Our banker and your lawyer swung 'round this morning and dropped off a foreclosure schedule! I was fixin' to kill him, 'cept he said it wouldn't do no good for my kin.

NORA  
Take it up with him!

GRAMPS (O.S.)  
I would 'cept it's up to you to sell your oil rights, so we can sell ours, or...

NORA  
We all get foreclosed? Is that it? It's all my fault?

GRAMPS (O.S.)

Liam was gonna sell. He told me so.  
Told us all! But that shyster  
lawyer Ronny Harrison says that an  
oral contract ain't worth the paper  
it ain't written on.

NORA

I got the same foreclosure  
schedule, and the next owner might  
well be Chemco!

Gramps' mood turns sad.

GRAMPS (O.S.)

You got kin?

NORA

Not in this country, and they'd  
never come here!

GRAMPS (O.S.)

Why the hell not?

NORA

'Cause healthcare and education  
costs are too high, and the place  
is run by shyster lawyers, crooked  
billionaires, and Chemco!

Nora hears the flash-spark sound of a stun gun.

NORA (CONT'D)

Gramps? What was that?

Nora crawls toward the door and places her ear on it.

NORA (CONT'D)

(yells)

Gramps?

Nora lays down her stun gun, stands, and unlocks the  
deadbolt. She slowly opens the door with the chain lock on,  
and she sees Gramps lying unconscious on her porch.

She slams the door, releases the chain lock, and throws open  
the door.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora feels for a pulse on Gramps.

No pulse. She begins CPR and hears a siren approaching.

The Sheriff skids to a stop and races to Gramps, pushing Nora aside. He feels for a pulse. Nothing.

SHERIFF GLENN

He's dead!

NORA

I told Professor Gilliam to call you!

SHERIFF GLENN

He called 9-1-1. Said Gramps shot at him with a shotgun.

The Sheriff looks at Gramps' neck and sees two burn marks from a stun gun.

He looks around Gramps and into the street.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Don't see no shotgun, do you?

Nora looks around in a panic.

NORA

I saw and heard it, too! And saw him fire at Dax!

SHERIFF GLENN

Dax, is it? I see.

The Sheriff peeks in the door and sees Nora's stun gun on the floor. Nora is defensive.

NORA

I didn't stun him! Hasn't been fired today at all.

SHERIFF GLENN

No way to tell, is there?

The Sheriff gets on his radio.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Dispatch, we have a DB at the Karlsson home. Gramps Watson. Notify Cy. Send the coroner, and get someone out here for photos and evidence. Looking for Gramps Watson's shotgun, or I'll be bringing in Nora Karlsson for questioning, and sending another car to pick up Dax Gilliam.

Nora is angry and confused.

NORA  
I didn't...

Sheriff Glenn pulls out his cuffs and slaps them on Nora.

SHERIFF GLENN  
You have the right to remain  
silent...

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MORNING

Nora, still in her white blouse and short jeans skirt, sits in the interrogation room alone with handcuffs on. Before her is a blank legal-sized yellow tablet and a pen.

Sheriff Glenn bursts in the door with four evidence bags containing a bottle of pills, her boots, her phone, and her stun gun.

He's disappointed seeing the blank tablet before Nora.

SHERIFF GLENN  
What the hell is going on here,  
Nora? Thought the night in the  
holding cell would protect you.

NORA  
I told you everything last night.  
Sure as hell have nothing to  
confess.

The Sheriff grabs the seat across from Nora and glares at her, holding up the pill bag, as Ronny Harrison staggers into the room and takes a seat next to Nora, who glares at Ronny.

NORA (CONT'D)  
'Bout time.

RONNY  
Got my pressures at the bank.

NORA  
I bet you do.

SHERIFF GLENN  
First, the first DB.

NORA  
DB?

SHERIFF GLENN  
Dead body. Your husband. The bottle  
of Oxy? Dangerous drug.

Nora leans towards Ronny.

NORA  
Ask him if he found my fingerprints  
on the bottle.

The Sheriff sets the evidence bag with the bottle aside.

Nora turns away.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. FARMHOUSE

Liam comes home drunk and knocks Nora (in her short bathrobe)  
around as she describes it.

NORA (V.O.)  
Liam came home one night, drunk,  
knocked me around, pushed me over a  
table, and wrenched my back.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

NORA  
Ask Doc Woods. I called you, too,  
but so did Liam, and he told you I  
fell. Liam picked up my  
prescription and confiscated them.  
(uses finger quotes)  
"For my own good." Never saw 'em  
again.

Ronny whispers to the Sheriff.

RONNY  
Did you find...?

The Sheriff holds up the boot and interrupts Ronny.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Boot's consistent with Liam's  
bruised rib.

NORA

But the shovel wasn't, and he could  
have bruised his rib a dozen other  
ways, right, Harry?

(elbows Ronny)

Speak up if you have any questions,  
Ronny.

The Sheriff shoves the boot aside, picks up Nora's phone, and  
slides it across the desk with a smirk.

SHERIFF GLENN

Nothing here, I'll admit.

NORA

Ruined my opportunity to use the  
doorbell cam video to see what  
happened to Gramps, and my ability  
to call 9-1-1 afterward.

The Sheriff looks away in disgust, then turns to Nora in a  
rage.

SHERIFF GLENN

You knew there'd be no evidence of  
you using your stun gun on Gramps?

Nora is stunned and angry.

NORA

You confiscated my phone...

SHERIFF GLENN

You may not have known about his  
pacemaker, but...

The Sheriff picks up the evidence bag containing the stun  
gun.

Ronny angrily stands and whips out a stun gun identical to  
Nora's.

RONNY

Half the town has one of these.  
That Sarah Tremain's been selling  
'em like hotcakes!

The Sheriff is flustered. He paces and mumbles.

SHERIFF GLENN

Means, motive, and opportunity.  
Everybody loved Gramps Watson. His  
kin won't be happy!

(MORE)

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Cy knows about this already. Don't  
have enough to hold you here. House  
arrest again.

The Sheriff holds Nora's stun gun up with one hand.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Sending you home. Sorry! You made  
yourself a target this time!

INT. RONNY'S CAR - DAY

Ronny drives an expensive Brand sedan, with Nora in the  
passenger seat, looking out the passenger window.

NORA  
Thanks for sticking up for me.

Ronny laughs.

RONNY  
Heard about Gramps from the  
grapevine.

NORA  
Sarah. Did she sell you a stun gun?

RONNY  
She said I'd lose a fistfight to a  
twelve-year-old.

NORA  
Ever use it?

RONNY  
Never charged it. Sarah's idea for  
me to buy it to show the Sheriff  
how common they are. She knew he'd  
blame you.

Nora looks back out the side window.

NORA  
How did she know?

RONNY  
Cy threatened her on the phone for  
selling one to you. Big, angry man  
there.

Nora turns to Ronny.



NORA

Thanks again for driving me home.

RONNY

Self-interest. From a business standpoint. Look, your husband was an unstable drunk and pill freak, no offense.

NORA

None taken.

RONNY

A gust of wind could have come up when he shot himself, leaving no powder burns.

Nora pauses to think.

RONNY (CONT'D)

It's what I would have argued if you went to trial.

NORA

If?

RONNY

Don't know or care 'bout Gramps. Been battling cancer for years. Cy was gonna get his ranch anyway.

NORA

I didn't know.

RONNY

Nobody did, 'cept Doc Woods. Three of us were fishing buddies. Not much to talk about when the fish aren't biting. Sworn to secrecy.

NORA

I'm sorry for Gramps.

RONNY

But Cy's not a thinking man. Just dumb enough to go back to jail and miss out on millions of dollars of oil and gas revenue.

NORA

Back to jail?

RONNY

Prison. Fishing buddies, remember.  
And Cy already knows you hold the  
key to his now bigger share of the  
oil money.

Nora looks out the window.

NORA

And now his father's death.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Ronny skids to a stop in front of Nora's house.

RONNY

The best thing for you to do is  
sign those rights over to Chemco,  
sell the ranch, and get as far away  
from here as you can! I'll expect  
your decision by tomorrow morning.  
Say eleven AM?

Nora opens the door in silence, with her phone in her hand.

NORA

Thanks for the lift.

RONNY

Dialing 9-1-1 may not help you.  
Just sayin'.

NORA

I can take care of myself.

Nora shuts the door, waves, and turns toward her front door.

A little green light on her ankle monitor lights up. She sees  
it and trudges to the door, where 1 medium and 3 large boxes  
are waiting on the porch.

Nora unlocks the door and pulls the boxes inside.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Nora pulls the boxes down to the basement. The 3 large boxes  
contain a section of a Mirafit portable martial arts mat.

She constructs a 12-ft by 8-ft mat with three sections.

She opens up the medium box and pulls out an unfilled boxer's  
"heavy bag."

She races upstairs to fetch her husband's clothes to fill the heavy bag in the basement.

Lastly, she fetches her computer from upstairs and gets to work following self-defense instructional videos on YouTube.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

The Sheriff stares at the whiteboard that only has Liam's and Nora's photos and previous notes. He draws a box around the two photos, then a line from Liam's photo to the outside of the box, and adds a question mark at the end of the line.

SHERIFF GLENN

Outside the box. Think outside the box. Phone records? Security cameras? Stores? Gas stations?

He throws down the magic marker, frustrated. He turns to his computer to zoom in on photos of the receipts on Nora's desk.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Where you been traveling to, Liam?

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Liam is swerving in his open-top Jeep and just misses the Sheriff's patrol car coming the opposite direction.

The Sheriff skids and turns, with lights and siren, and chases Liam in an exciting car chase on a dusty, dark road.

The Sheriff finally pulls over Liam within sight of his ranch house.

As the Sheriff approaches the Jeep, Liam swings open the door, knocking the Sheriff down.

Liam hops out and jumps on the Sheriff.

LIAM

Seen the way she looks at you!

They wrestle, but the Sheriff wins.

SHERIFF GLENN

You're drunk!

LIAM

Stay away from her! Hear me?

The Sheriff pulls Liam to his feet.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Walk home and sleep it off!

END FLASHBACK

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Sheriff zooms in on another receipt.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Who else ya been seeing lately?

Zooms in on another receipt.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Gotta be something here, somewhere!

He pushes the keyboard back in disgust.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Does anybody else want you dead? As  
Sherlock says, "When you have  
eliminated the impossible, whatever  
remains, however improbable, must  
be the truth."

INT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

She's sweating in tight workout clothes, kicking and punching the heavy bag while watching a video on her laptop.

Her phone buzzes, and she sees Dax at the front door.

Nora races upstairs, shuts the door, and leaps to the front door.

Dax is smitten with Nora's sweaty look, but he looks away.

NORA  
Sorry, it took me so long to get to  
the door. Daily workout.

Dax enters with a folded map of the county.

DAX  
Heard about Gramps. Did you...

NORA  
I didn't stun him if that's what...

DAX

No, no. You wouldn't. I mean, did you have a tough time convincing the sheriff?

NORA

Gramps shot at you, but when the sheriff got here, his shotgun was gone.

DAX

Your interior lights were on while you were in jail. Saw 'em from my place.

NORA

The sheriff probably searched the place.

Dax walks to the desk.

DAX

Probably saw all of Liam's receipts.

NORA

He looked for Gramps's shotgun and any evidence on me, but he didn't mention anything this morning.

DAX

I brought you a county map. Might want to map your husband's receipts.

Dax drops the map down on Nora's desk.

Nora turns to Dax sweetly.

NORA

You know I didn't kill Liam or Gramps. You're trying to help me find out who did.

Dax looks away.

DAX

I know why the Sheriff isn't helping you!

Nora grabs Dax's arms and gets in his face. They speak in rapid fire.

NORA  
Tell me! Tell me now!

DAX  
Saw three gas receipts from out on  
this Country Road, and the Sheriff  
lives way out there.

NORA  
So?

DAX  
Poker night for the Sheriff,  
Gramps, Cy, and me, and sometimes  
Liam.

NORA  
Do you think Liam was seeing  
Harry's gorgeous girlfriend?  
Ridiculous! He'd kill him!

DAX  
The statistics strongly indicate...

Nora interrupts and pushes Dax away.

NORA  
Think it's time for you to go!

Nora ushers Dax to the front door.

DAX  
But it's Cy you gotta worry about.  
He's gone mad! Ran over my mailbox,  
and was shooting his new AK-47 over  
my house. Thinks we're in cahoots.  
He's crazy, I tell ya!

Nora shoves Dax out the door. She's angry.

NORA  
We're not in cahoots! I can take  
care of myself.

Nora slams the door and locks it.

Her phone rings. It's Sarah Tremain. Nora answers and yells.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Did you sell Cy Watson a fucking AK-  
47?

SARAH (O.S.)  
Did I get you at a bad time?  
Thought I'd drop by tonight to show  
you a new Taser gun with...

NORA  
(interrupts)  
Fucking idiot! You signed my death  
warrant!

Nora ends the call, stumbles over to the desk, collapses in the chair, and stares at the county map and pile of receipts.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nora eats a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, drinks hot tea, and continues to map Liam's receipts. Three clusters of points occur on the map.

Nora's eyes open widely when she sees the pattern.

Suddenly, she hears automatic rifle shots in front of her house. BAM BAM BAM BAM BAM!

Nora crouches and races to the front door by the table to grab her wimpy stun gun. She remains crouched as she returns to the desk to grab her phone and races to the basement while dialing 9-1-1.

As she runs down the steps, a Dispatch Officer (female; 30s) answers.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
Emergency.

NORA  
This is Nora Karlsson. Tell Sheriff  
Glenn someone is shooting an  
automatic rifle at my home!

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
What's the address?

NORA  
Tell him to track my ankle monitor!

Nora ends the call.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nora slams the basement door and races to stack the martial arts mat against it.

She unties the heavy bag from the ceiling beam and drags it to the side of the door. She crouches behind the heavy bag, holding her phone and her stun gun.

Her phone RINGS. It's Sheriff Glenn.

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Nora? You okay?

NORA

You know damn well I'm not okay!

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Just Cy Watson letting off a little steam. Perfectly legal target practice on his ranch...

NORA

Right outside my goddamn door!

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Get a video?

NORA

Are you nuts?

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Any windows broken?

NORA

No!

SHERIFF GLENN (O.S.)

Ya see? And don't even think about goin' anywhere with that monitor.

Nora glares at the green light on the monitor.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

It will look bad if you try to escape. I'll talk to Cy. We play poker, but he's not my buddy! Call me if he hits anything by accident!

NORA

Accident, my ass! Is this all because my husband was sleeping with your girlfriend every Thursday night for the past two months?

SHERIFF GLENN

Ex-girlfriend. And neither you nor I can prove that!



The Sheriff ends the call.

Nora slumps to the floor behind the heavy bag.

The overhead basement light blinks before going out.

NORA  
Damn it. Not now!

Nora jumps up and pushes the mats away from the door as she makes her list.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Emergency kit. Flashlights,  
candles, matches, food, water, a  
first-aid kit, a radio, and  
blankets.

She switches on her phone flashlight.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Quickly. Save the battery. Save the  
battery.

She takes one step on the stairs and listens for intruders.

She tiptoes up the stairs, stun gun in one hand, flashlight in the other.

A wooden stair CREAKS. She shuts off her flashlight, turns her head, and listens.

She tiptoes on.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

The upper house is pitch dark. Nora peeks out and sees no one. She crawls quietly to her bedroom closet and pulls out a cardboard box that reads "Emergency."

She crawls to her bathroom and tosses in a first-aid kit, toothbrush, toothpaste, and toilet paper. She crawls to the kitchen and grabs crackers and cheese, apples, and bottled water. She grabs an empty coffee can and tosses the toilet paper in it.

She turns to leave the kitchen but returns to the freezer to pull out ice cream. She grabs a spoon from a drawer.

In a moment of fury, Nora races to the fireplace mantle, grabs her framed wedding photo with Liam, and smashes it.

She removes the photo and tears it in half, taking Liam's photo with her.

She looks and listens before crawling to the basement door.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

The mats are against the door again. Nora sits behind the heavy bag, cuddled in an emergency blanket. Her phone is in one hand. Her stun gun is in the other. One candle burns before her, as she eats the ice cream and sips her water.

Nora lifts her eyes to a dark corner where the baby cradle is, covered with cobwebs. She talks softly to the cradle.

NORA

It wasn't my fault. Low sperm  
count! Fat bastard drank, smoked,  
and took pills. His sperm couldn't  
crawl, let alone swim.

Nora stares sadly at the cradle in the flickering candlelight. Again, she fights back tears.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Sheriff patrols a road and spots Cy's pickup truck driving slowly in front of him. He flashes his lights and pulls him over.

Sheriff Glenn approaches the truck with caution.

Big Cy steps out of his truck in full camouflage hunting gear and forms fists in both hands.

SHERIFF GLENN

Don't want trouble, Cy.

CY

Ain't doin' nothin' wrong!

SHERIFF GLENN

Scaring the widow Karlsson half to  
death ain't nothin'.

CY

Widow, or murderer?

SHERIFF GLENN

Let the law handle it, Cy.

CY  
Driven us all to the poor house.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Firing that A-K is harassment.

CY  
Got the right. Second Amendment.

Cy reaches into his truck and pulls out the AK-47.

Sheriff Glenn remains calm and steps closer to Cy.

SHERIFF GLENN  
She's got her rights, too. Life,  
liberty, and the pursuit of  
happiness.

CY  
No one's takin' my rights.

Cy steps toward the Sheriff, who looks away, then back,  
before using lightning-fast mixed martial arts to take the  
rifle out of Cy's hands.

The Sheriff tosses the rifle aside as Cy tackles the Sheriff,  
and a fight and wrestling match goes on for minutes before Cy  
ends up out of breath with his neck under the Sheriff's boot.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Cy, don't want to arrest you for  
assaulting an officer of the law.  
Again! You'd know where they'll  
send you.

CY  
She's got to learn.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Let me handle it! Got it?

Cy breathes heavily and backs down.

Sheriff Glenn helps him up.

Cy grunts, picks up his rifle, and drives off.

Sheriff Glenn breathes a sigh of relief.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nora practices self-defense by candlelight and watching videos. She wears a tight tank top and yoga pants. The heavy bag now has Liam's part of their wedding photo taped on.

After several kicks and punches to the heavy bag, she stops and looks fondly at the cradle.

NORA

None of this was my fault, and they  
will all pay! Believe me!

She kicks and punches. The "low battery" light flashes on her laptop. Nora stares at the cradle.

NORA (CONT'D)

Know what marriage is like with a  
drunk who won't change? It's like  
being the only two people in a  
burning airplane. He gives you two  
choices: stay with him and the  
plane, or jump!

Nora kicks and punches the heavy bag with greater fury, glaring at Liam's photo on the heavy bag.

NORA (CONT'D)

I finally jumped!

Her computer battery dies, and the screen goes dark.

NORA (CONT'D)

Falling isn't hard if you pick  
yourself up!

She gives one final, strongest-ever kick to the bag.

Her phone buzzes. She sees Dax at her front door wearing an upscale brand outdoor jacket and nice pants.

INT. TRAILER - SAME TIME

Sarah Tremain's phone buzzes on the nightstand next to her deluxe bed in a nice mobile home. The room is dark, except for the light of the phone.

She turns on the lamp on the nightstand to reveal her pistol, a Taser, and a bottle of Jack Daniels.

She's dressed in a sexy nightgown, and there's a cute blonde female sleeping naked next to her. We see her back.

Sarah stares at her phone to see Dax at Nora's door. She leaps out of bed.

SARAH  
Gotta step out for a minute. A  
client needs me.

The sleeping naked blonde doesn't move.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - SAME TIME

Dax waits patiently outside as Nora slowly opens the door.

Nora puts her index finger to her lips, requesting silence, and pulls Dax into the dark house.

Dax begins to speak, but Nora angrily gives him the "silence sign" and pulls Dax through the house to the basement door.

Dax follows the stairs to the candlelight.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dax sees a makeshift martial arts gym, the emergency box, and supplies. He turns to face Nora, who is right behind him, and sees that she has removed her tank top and sports bra.

Nora puts her finger to her lips again and begins to remove Dax's jacket.

Dax's eyes open widely as she pulls him to the floor mat.

Nora kisses and fondles Dax in a way that is more athletic than passionate, as if to relieve stress.

Dax is surprised and overcome with immediate and unwanted anxiety. He fumbles removing his clothes.

Dax doesn't know what to do with his hands as Nora glides over him, kissing his neck, ears, and cheeks.

Dax sweats profusely, eyes wide open in fright, as Nora kisses his chest and stomach.

Nothing. Dax cringes in embarrassment.

The sex is over. Nora turns away.

Dax mumbles.

DAX  
Anxiety. Depression. I take...

NORA  
Doesn't matter. Sorry for springing  
it on you like that.

The lights come on with a buzz. Nora gets dressed.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Power's on! Gotta hurry.

Nora runs upstairs.

Dax dresses quickly. He stops momentarily as he sees the  
cradle in the corner. He finishes dressing and runs upstairs.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Nora peeks out the front window in the dark. Dax joins her.  
She gives him the silence sign and whispers.

NORA  
I need you to do me a favor.

DAX  
That's what this was about?

NORA  
They're out there. Waiting for me.  
I know it.

DAX  
Who's out there?

NORA  
Don't know. Maybe Cy. Maybe the  
Sheriff. Maybe both!

Nora grabs Dax by the jacket and pulls him close.

NORA (CONT'D)  
I need you to sneak out the back  
door to the barn, grab the jumper  
cables hanging by the door, and  
short out the cell phone tower  
behind us on Lookout Mountain.

DAX  
I can't.

NORA  
You have to, or they'll kill me for  
sure. March in here with their AK-  
47s and gun me down. I need this  
ankle monitor turned off.

DAX  
You won't have cell service for an  
emergency!

NORA  
Who am I gonna call? The Sheriff?  
(angry)  
Do it!

Dax shakes in fear.

DAX  
You won't just escape when the  
monitor goes out?

NORA  
Unsettled business. I can't leave!

Nora pulls Dax to the back door, hands him a small  
flashlight, and pushes him out the back door.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Cy is watching with Gramps's night-vision binoculars fixed on  
the front door. He has a shotgun and an AK-47 next to him.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Dax, using the flashlight, sees the jumper cables, Nora's  
gardening gloves, and unplanted seedlings.

He grabs Nora's gardening gloves and the jumper cables, shuts  
off the flashlight, and exits the barn quietly.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora's phone buzzes, and she sees Sarah at the door.

Nora unlocks both locks and peeks out with her index finger  
pressed to her lips.

Sarah looks out into the field toward Cy, then enters the  
house and whispers.

SARAH  
Brought you something more  
powerful.

NORA  
You picked an odd time to visit!

As Nora double-locks the front door, Sarah pulls out her new upscale Taser, and she looks around for Dax.

SARAH  
You alone?

NORA  
Yes, why do you ask?

Sarah tiptoes through the house, with the Taser's flashlight and dual lasers on.

SARAH  
Easy enough for someone to sneak in  
a window or the back door.

NORA  
No one's here.

Sarah talks in a low voice as she searches.

SARAH  
If they're here, they'll get the  
shock of their life. This is the  
new Taser X2, my electrical weapon  
of choice, which packs 1,400 volts.

NORA  
That's a ton compared to a 12-volt  
car battery!

SARAH  
Baby causes certain cardiac  
arrhythmias for up to thirty  
seconds. They look like fish  
flopping on the shore.

Sarah can't find Dax and walks right past the door to the basement of the dark house.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
Can't we turn on the lights?  
Power's back on, ya know.

NORA  
Prefer the dark in case someone is  
out there with a gun.

Sarah nods her approval and peeks out the front window.

SARAH  
Works up to fifteen feet away! If  
they come at ya, give 'em a jolt,  
then run like hell!  
(MORE)



SARAH (CONT'D)  
(turns, smiles)  
Twelve hundred bucks with my  
professional discount.

NORA  
Can't afford it.

Sarah turns sad.

SARAH  
Can't afford to be shot neither!  
The talk in town is that if you  
die, you default on the mortgage,  
and the bank sells your ranch to  
Chemco.

NORA  
They all win. I lose. Is that it?

Sarah sets the Taser next to the stun gun by the door.

SARAH  
Tell ya what. Test it out for a few  
nights. Free of charge, get it?

NORA  
Not funny. They got real guns. Come  
back in the morning with Ronny.  
Tell him to bring his notary stamp.

Nora escorts Sarah out and looks suspiciously out to the  
field.

SARAH  
Notary stamp? What the hell for?

Nora closes the door and double locks it. Nora stares at the  
Taser and stun gun.

NORA  
You'll see.

EXT. LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN CELL TOWER - NIGHT

Using a flashlight, Dax stares up at a cell phone tower in  
genuine fear. A chain-link fence surrounds the tower.

He feels the fence without being shocked, so he jumps the  
fence and follows wires from the tower to the control box.

He is unable to pull wires from the control box.

He finds a large piece of lumber against a fence and yanks a  
wire from the control box.

He connects the red jumper cable lead to the exposed wire and grounds the black cable to the fence.

He sends a text message that reads: "shorting cell tower."

He checks his cell phone nervously before connecting the other red jumper cable to the fence. His phone is unchanged.

He attaches the other black jumper cable directly to the red cable. It sparks wildly for a few seconds.

Dax sees his phone report, "No Service."

INT. RANCH HOUSE - SAME TIME

Nora, dressed in all black, sees her ankle monitor light go out.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The Sheriff is asleep on a couch in the office when his radio BLASTS a warning BEEP-BEEP.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
Sheriff Glenn?

He answers his radio.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Glenn here.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
Said to beep when Ms. Karlsson's  
ankle monitor goes offline. The  
cell tower shorted out.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Her last location?

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
She was home. Hasn't moved.  
Probably asleep.

SHERIFF GLENN  
I'm headin' on out there to be  
sure.

The Sheriff grabs his hat and gun and begins to run out the door before he realizes he's without boots.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora sneaks around the ranch house, staying low from the back of the house and to the adjacent field to circle Cy. It's pitch dark, but we see that Nora is wearing latex gloves and carries the stun gun and the Taser on her belt.

Nora crouches and sneaks up on Cy, who is lying on his stomach and watching Nora's front door with the night-vision binoculars.

Nora sees the shotgun to Cy's right, the AK-47 to Cy's left, and a bottle of Jack Daniels whiskey between them.

Nora races up from behind, but Cy hears her, and he spins onto his back with the AK-47, but it jams when he tries to fire it.

Nora kicks Cy in the crotch. He groans and bends forward.

Nora immediately follows with a roundhouse kick on Cy's elbow, and the AK goes flying out of his arms.

Nora fetches the AK and flings it away in the dark, as Cy struggles to his feet with the shotgun in his hands.

CY

This won't jam!

Nora puts her hands up, about six feet from Cy.

NORA

I didn't kill Gramps!

CY

Hell, you didn't! Your porch, the same way you stunned me!

NORA

Ask the Sheriff.

CY

Ask him what?

NORA

Ask him if the burn marks were made by my stun gun! They weren't!

Nora takes a step closer.

NORA (CONT'D)

Ask him who removed your dad's shotgun from the scene.

Cy looks away, then back.

CY

We had a deal with Liam about the gas line.

NORA

(angry)

You can't spend your oil money in jail! You kill me, and you get time, not money!

Cy points down to Nora's ankle monitor.

CY

I'll be shooting a runaway! A fugitive from justice!

NORA

Good, I thought you were an old-fashioned peeping Tom instead of a bully and a vigilante!

CY

Sheriff says you won't admit your guilt!

NORA

'Cause I'm innocent! I wasn't anywhere near Liam when he died. I was near Gramps, and it was another type of stun gun, and I sure didn't take his shotgun! Sorry for your loss, but that means there's a killer still out there!

CY

I don't believe it!

NORA

What if you're next for being a Peeping Tom, land-grabber, or card thief? You'd better save those shells for the real killer!

Nora turns her back, careful to remove her Taser from her back belt, and hides with her belly as she turns.

CY

Can't let you get away with it.  
(charges toward Nora)  
Our future...

Nora spins and ducks as Cy swings the shotgun like a club, the butt of the rifle just missing Nora's head.

Nora fires the Taser, and Cy falls back convulsing.

Nora tosses the shotgun away in the dark and stands over Cy.

NORA

The electric current disrupts  
voluntary control of muscles,  
causing neuromuscular  
incapacitation. Won't kill ya!  
Unless you drank too much, then all  
bets are off.

Nora stares at Cy's eyes, rolling in their sockets like  
aimless souls. Nora yells!

NORA (CONT'D)

At some point, an eye for an eye  
leaves everybody blind! You stay  
away from me, you hear?

Nora turns toward her house.

NORA (CONT'D)

Gotta get back. Expecting company!

EXT. LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN CELL TOWER - NIGHT

The Sheriff's car skids to a stop. He hops out with a  
flashlight and pistol in hand and sees jumper cables  
connecting the control box wires to the fence.

He disconnects them carefully and tosses them in the back of  
his seat.

The sheriff calls dispatch on his radio.

SHERIFF GLENN

Dispatch, can I get the current  
location of the Karlsson woman?

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Nora runs like a track star to the back door of the house and  
dives inside. She grabs and uses her inhaler.

Nora's ankle monitor lights up.

EXT. LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN CELL TOWER - CONTINUOUS

The Sheriff waits impatiently.

DISPATCH OFFICER (O.S.)  
Says here she's still in her house,  
Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN  
I'll check for myself. Over.

The Sheriff rolls his eyes in disgust as he heads to his car.

EXT./INT. RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

The Sheriff's car skids to a stop.

He hops out and leaps to the front door.

Nora answers the door in her nightgown and short, sexy bathrobe, with the ankle monitor visible, but she doesn't let him in.

The Sheriff sees the monitor, while Nora yawns.

The Sheriff peeks behind Nora to see the broken wedding photo frame.

NORA  
What is it, Sheriff?

The Sheriff pulls the jumper cables from behind his back.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Missing a set of jumper cables?

NORA  
Lots of things go missing from  
here: shovels, pills, a husband...

SHERIFF GLENN  
Have you been here all night?

NORA  
Where else would I go?

SHERIFF GLENN  
Any visitors?

NORA  
(angry)  
I sleep alone, if that's what you  
mean!

(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

You got any more concrete evidence on me? Fingerprints? Video? Ever find Gramps's shotgun?

SHERIFF GLENN

No, no, and no! That don't mean...

NORA

Sheriff, unless you have solid evidence, can I request a two-mile range on my ankle monitor, so I can plant the seedlings in my barn? They'll die if I don't get them in the ground, and there's been too much dying 'round here.

The Sheriff paces back and forth angrily on the porch, holding up the jumper cables.

NORA (CONT'D)

It could have been kids, Sheriff.

SHERIFF GLENN

But it wasn't kids, was it?

NORA

I don't know, Sheriff. There's a lot I don't know.

The Sheriff is furious as he stomps back to his car.

SHERIFF GLENN

Two-mile range. No farther!

NORA

Let me know if you find out anything more, Sheriff. I think you still have a killer out there!

The Sheriff throws down the jumper cables and races away!

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Ronny races up in his upscale sedan, with Sarah following in her car.

Ronnie carries his notary stamp kit with a worried look on his face.

Sarah reluctantly follows Ronny up the steps, like something big is up.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - MORNING

Nora, in a cute sun dress, waits for the bell to ring.

NORA  
Who is it?

RONNY (O.S.)  
Ronny? What's this...

SARAH (O.S.)  
Know damn well who it is. Open up!

Nora checks her phone and unlocks the door.

NORA  
Checking to see if my doorbell cam  
and video recorder are working.  
Can't be too careful these days.

Ronny enters gracefully. Sarah nudges Nora on the way in. We see the Taser gun and the stun gun on the table by the door.

RONNY  
What's this about? What did you  
decide? Sell your oil rights or  
foreclose?

NORA  
Neither.  
(hands Ronny a check)  
Here's a cashier's check for the  
back mortgage payments and the next  
three months in advance from a  
donor who would like to remain  
anonymous. And, they'll be back!

RONNY  
Who'd do such a thing?

SARAH  
Is it real?

Nora snaps a photo of Ronny and Sarah staring at the check.

RONNY  
Looks legit, but you won't last  
three months!

Ronny angrily tosses the check to the floor and starts to choke Nora.

RONNY (CONT'D)  
You'll ruin me! I'm finished!



Sarah reaches to the table, grabs the Taser gun, and zaps Ronny.

Ronny falls to the floor, shaking and stunned.

Sarah bends over to help him.

SARAH

Ronny, so sorry. You'll be okay.

Nora takes the Taser from Sarah, careful to grab it with two fingers by the battery (away from the trigger).

Nora yells at Ronny.

NORA

Snap out of it, Ronny. I want a notarized receipt for that check. Sarah will witness.

(glares at Sarah)

Won't you, Sarah?

Sarah sees that Nora is deadly serious.

SARAH

Yeah. I guess so.

NORA

And, Ronny, I'll need you to record and notarize my last will.

SARAH

What?

Ronny is sitting up but still shaken.

NORA

The terms aren't important. Just wanted to cover myself in case of an untimely death. Like I said. Can't be too careful.

Ronny is groggy.

RONNY

Too careful? No, you can never be too careful.

Nora and Sarah help Ronny up and over to the desk, where four sets of papers await Ronny's notary seal and signatures.

Nora signs first and takes photos of Ronny and Sarah signing.

NORA  
I'll have copies handed out or  
mailed to people I trust.

Nora keeps copies and packs original copies in a business envelope and guides a wobbly Ronny to the front door.

Ronny is angry upon leaving and doesn't turn around.

RONNY  
I'll file the papers right away.

NORA  
Oh, and Ronny?

RONNY  
What?

NORA  
After that, you're fired!

Ronny storms out, leaving Sarah and Nora alone. Sarah has her pistol holstered behind her.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Before Ronny gets in his car, he hears Sarah yell, furniture breaking, and glass shattering in the house.

SARAH (O.S.)  
Ruined him! Now you're gonna ruin  
me? I don't think so, bitch!

Ronny doesn't give it a second thought. He drives away slowly.

INT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

There is a real catfight going on, and the front room is a mess of broken furniture and glass.

Sarah holds the Taser, and Nora holds the stun gun.

Sarah aims the Taser at Nora, who somersaults the room to grab a couch cushion to protect herself, as Sarah fires her first electrodes.

Nora charges Sarah with the cushion and her stun gun and knocks Sarah back.

Sarah kicks the stun gun from Nora's hand and hops to her feet with ninja-like skill, but Nora uses the energy from Sarah's kick in a twirling roundhouse kick that sends Sarah flying back against the wall, but Sarah's second electrodes don't fire and remain in the Taser.

Sarah reaches back for her pistol, but Nora lands her fists of steel into Sarah's gut, and Sarah, out of wind, collapses to the floor.

Nora turns to pick up the stun gun and holds it above Sarah with a threatening glare.

NORA

Hand over your smartphone! Now!

Sarah reluctantly hands Nora the phone.

SARAH

Won't do you any good. It's locked.

NORA

I've known your passcode for days.

(Nora enters the code)

Never enter your passcode in front  
of a doorbell cam with video!

Sarah looks away in anger.

SARAH

Shit!

NORA

Look at all these videos you  
collected from my front door!

(beat)

You'll stay right here while I  
airdrop these to my laptop, won't  
you?

Sarah nods yes.

Nora stuns her with the stun gun. Sarah is incapacitated.

NORA (CONT'D)

Sorry. Don't trust ya.

Nora takes Sarah's pistol and the smartphone and runs to her bedroom.

LATER

Nora returns to find Sarah holding the Taser with two charged electrodes ready to fire.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Wouldn't do that if I were you?

SARAH  
Yeah? Why?

NORA  
Because I'll send your videos to  
the Sheriff and the D.A.

Sarah's hand holding the Taser begins to shake.

SARAH  
I... I...

NORA  
You're not a murderer, Sarah.

Nora steps closer to Sarah, grabs her arm with another MMA move, and strips Sarah of her Taser.

SARAH  
No... I'm not a... murderer

NORA  
I learned about your doorbell cam  
hack by examining the code you  
installed on my smartphone. The  
camera notified you and me whenever  
someone came to my door.

SARAH  
Inadmissible evidence.

Nora paces confidently with the Taser.

NORA  
What's the Sheriff gonna say about  
those poker night videos?

Sarah reaches for her pistol, but it isn't there!

NORA (CONT'D)  
Oh, if I don't punch in a certain  
passcode on my computer three times  
in the next 48 hours, they'll  
automatically be sent to the  
Sheriff, D.A., and posted on the  
web. Your career in home security  
will be over, and you'll face  
charges of invasion of privacy,  
espionage, and blackmail.

SARAH

I didn't...

Nora raises her Taser at Sarah.

NORA

You also installed backdoor malware on the phone that turns on the camera and sends you the video. I thought you were just a perv until I saw the Sheriff's poker videos. You were getting a cut of the action from someone.

Sarah shakes as she stomps to the front door.

NORA (CONT'D)

You were playing him. The Sheriff.

Sarah doesn't turn around.

SARAH

Don't be ridiculous.

NORA

You'd snuggle up to him or do whatever you needed to do to get crime reports to sell your home security products. Must have been a great acting job!

Sarah turns angrily.

SARAH

Can't be serious.

NORA

Said yourself. The sheriff is as dumb as a rock, like every good ol' boy. Liam had him pegged, too.

SARAH

You're crazy!

NORA

Had to be sure. I secretly checked Cy's smartphone last night and saw the same code on his doorbell cam that turned his phone camera on at your command.

Sara tries to escape, but Nora gives her a roundhouse kick to the knees and sends her into the front door. Nora laughs.

NORA (CONT'D)

You only need a few good moves if they keep working for ya.

SARAH

I'm calling the Sheriff!

NORA

And tell him his poker buddies cheated him every week, tipping each other off who had the better hand. I saw it all on Gramps's phone the night he died.

Sarah gets into a fetal position by the door, covering her face.

SARAH

You're crazy!

NORA

That's why you had to shut Gramps up before he confessed to me.

Sarah breaks down in tears, staring up at Nora in anguish.

SARAH

I didn't know he had a pacemaker.

NORA

Who removed the shotgun from the porch?

SARAH

I didn't.

Nora stands over Sarah with the Taser pointed at her heart.

NORA

Who removed the shotgun from the porch?

SARAH

I didn't, and I don't know! I swear!

Nora pauses.

Nora tosses Sarah's smartphone back to her.

NORA

You're gonna turn yourself in for  
stun-gunning Gramps trying to  
protect me, and I'll vouch for you  
that it was self-defense.

SARAH

If I don't?

NORA

If you don't, I'll share your  
videos on the web, to the D.A., and  
the Sheriff will go after you for  
manslaughter, and I'll testify  
against you.

SARAH

That's blackmail!

NORA

And, I'll keep the Taser. If you  
ever come around here again, I'll  
use it!

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sarah struggles out the door in a huff and turns to see Nora  
ripping out the doorbell cam with a claw hammer.

LATER

A mysterious Brand electric car drives up. A Woman (40s) with  
a briefcase and a 13-year-old girl, both dressed in green T-  
shirts and blue jeans, walk to the door.

They see the torn-out doorbell.

The Woman knocks politely.

Nora answers in a stunning green dress and signs a few  
papers, using the Woman's briefcase as a table.

NORA

Thanks for the cashier's check and  
for buying the ranch.

Nora also hands the Woman a USB Memory stick.

Nora keeps one copy, and the Woman and girl retain a copy and  
smile as they leave as quietly as they came.

Dax walks up as the electric car drives away.

He sees that the doorbell cam has been ripped out.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Remodeling a bit.

Dax smiles uneasily.

DAX  
Can I come in?

Nora acts perfectly normal, but hesitates, and Dax notices.

NORA  
The house is a bit of a mess. Dust everywhere.

DAX  
I wanted to talk about last night.

NORA  
Later tonight. A real date perhaps?

DAX  
I called Ronny Harrison's office. I needed to talk to him today about my foreclosure schedule. The office said he went fishing. I didn't know when he was coming back.

NORA  
All these matters will be resolved soon.

DAX  
What do you mean?

NORA  
Cy confronted me last night, out of grief for losing his dad. He wasn't thinking clearly, so I was polite.

DAX  
What?

NORA  
Thanks for shorting the cell tower, or I'd be dead. Cy was in such grief, he would have charged right in and shot up the place.

DAX  
You knew he was out there?



NORA  
Suspected it.

DAX  
He's not very bright.

NORA  
On the contrary. He knew that if I died, the ranch would be foreclosed before I could sell it. If he made it look like he shot me as an escaped prisoner, the Sheriff would go easy on him. Maybe reward him. Then Chemco buys my ranch for a song, and all of you become rich!

Dax pauses and looks away sheepishly.

DAX  
You had them all figured out, didn't you?

NORA  
Not all of them.

Nora holds her new Taser with pride.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Know what happens when you're hit with one of these babies? Involuntary paralysis. Muscles don't respond to commands.

DAX  
What's the range?

NORA  
Fifteen feet.

DAX  
Geez.

NORA  
Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a house to dust, a few emails to send, and tree seedlings to plant for future generations.

Nora smiles.

DAX  
Future generations?

NORA

Only ones who matter! Don't you agree?

Dax looks puzzled.

DAX

Tonight then. It's a date. Stop by at eight?

NORA

Can't wait, Professor.

Dax looks at Nora sheepishly as he waves and leaves.

After he's gone, Nora pats her tummy with both hands. She smiles.

EXT. RANCH - AFTERNOON

Nora is planting tree seedlings on a bright sunny day. She wears a thick sweatshirt (completely zipped up, and hiding her Taser gun), tight blue jeans, and her work boots. Her back is to the dirt access road.

Cy drives up with Dax in Cy's pickup. Cy steps out of the truck first, wearing the same western clothes, jacket, and cowboy hat as the night before. He has a half-smile and stands in front of the truck.

Nora briefly turns to see them and then returns to planting.

CY

Came to apologize 'bout last night.

Nora doesn't turn around.

NORA

Rather you just let me be.

Dax steps out of the truck in western wear and a manly leather/suede jacket with his hands in the pockets. He looks sad and sheepish as he joins Cy in front of the truck.

DAX

Hi, Nora.

Nora doesn't turn around.

NORA

Hi, Dax. Thought I wouldn't see you 'til tonight.

Cy glares at Dax.

DAX  
I asked Cy if I could come along.

CY  
We know some strangers visited you.

Nora keeps planting but turns briefly to glare at Dax.

NORA  
Boys do talk.

CY  
Somethin' you want to tell us that concerns us?

NORA  
Nope.

CY  
That concerns the future value of our ranches?

NORA  
Nothin' to say.

DAX  
I'm okay with whatever you decide, Nora. You know that.

Nora turns to stare at Dax with a perplexed look.

NORA  
Huh.

CY  
The sheriff called me this morning. Told me to stay away from you.

NORA  
You don't listen very well.

Dax looks away.

CY  
He was curious 'bout your latest payment to the bank. Said he's lookin' into it. Somethin' 'bout an accomplice?

NORA  
It's none of his business either.

DAX

Cy thinks he wanted to know if you were keeping the place. Of course, I'd like you to...

CY

Sheriff said he'd be talkin' out of school, but said he didn't have enough evidence to book you for Liam's murder.

Nora keeps planting.

NORA

That's right.

CY

Said there was new developments on daddy's death, but couldn't talk about 'em.

NORA

Sounds like you should be talkin' to him, not me.

CY

The thing is, I don't know how, but I know you were somehow involved.

Nora finally turns. She's angry.

Cy walks to the back of the pickup and takes out his shotgun.

Dax has a sinister grin on his face.

NORA

Is this a lynch mob? Is that it? Can't you get it through your thick skulls that if you kill me, you get life in prison! No more oil and gas money! No more ranch?

CY

I don't own it no more. Sold my worthless ranch and Gramps's worthless ranch to Dax this mornin'!

Nora is stunned and angrier, as Dax looks away.

NORA

Dax's ranch is in foreclosure!

Dax paces like a neurotic and depressed madman.

DAX  
None of your business.

CY  
Dax says you can't go more than  
fifty feet from your ranch house.  
Makes you an escaped prisoner.  
Leave the valley with my head up.

Nora glares at Dax.

NORA  
Sheriff extended my range to two  
miles, due to a lack of evidence!  
He said I wasn't a flight risk!

DAX  
She lying. She's outsmarted you  
again, Cy! This is your big chance  
to be a hero.

Cy aims the shotgun in her direction.

Nora drops the shovel, takes out her phone, and raises her  
hands.

NORA  
I surrender! Call the Sheriff.

DAX  
She knows there's no cell service  
way out here!

NORA  
How do you know that, Dax? Test it  
before?

Dax nudges Cy.

Nora lowers her hand without the phone and takes the Taser  
out from the back of her sweatshirt.

DAX  
Trying to trick you again, Cy! Like  
she tricked your dad.

Cy gets nervous. His hands and the shotgun are shaking.

DAX (CONT'D)  
Shoot her, you idiot! Now it's self-  
defense!

Nora tosses the Taser a few feet in front of her.

NORA

Don't do it, Cy! I warned the Sheriff that something like this could happen.

Dax yells into Cy's ears.

DAX

Nobody's that smart, Cy. Shoot her! I'll be your witness. Self-defense!

Cy pauses, then drops the barrel of the shotgun.

Dax takes his hands out of his jacket. He's wearing Latex gloves.

Dax grabs at Cy's shotgun, but Cy clings to it.

Dax suddenly goes into Ninja-mode. He plants a perfect roundhouse kick into Cy's ribs and punches Cy like a Heavy Bag.

Nora's eyes open widely, and she dives for the Taser.

She turns to see Cy unconscious on the ground, and the shotgun in Dax's hands pointed at her. Dax's voice is manly and calm.

DAX (CONT'D)

About eighteen feet away, wouldn't you guess?

Nora stands with the Taser and glares at Dax.

NORA

Called the Sheriff this morning. I told him it was all you.

DAX

Don't think so. We had a date tonight.

NORA

When I heard Liam had alcohol, Oxy, and antidepressants in his bloodstream, I wondered where he got the antidepressants.

DAX

Not from me.

NORA

Common side effects are a lower libido and erectile dysfunction, often prescribed to sex offenders, but I had to find out for myself.

DAX

No pharmaceutical records.

NORA

Mail order, Canada, easy to get. After seeing your roundhouse kick was much stronger than mine, I knew how Liam was incapacitated long enough for you to frame me for murder.

Nora steps closer to Dax.

DAX

You're as loony as everyone said you were.

Dax cocks the shotgun.

DAX (CONT'D)

Hold it right there, fifteen feet!

Nora tosses the Taser to one side (but closer to Dax) and tosses her phone to the other side (also closer to Dax). She takes a step closer.

DAX (CONT'D)

I was right. No service out here.

NORA

Why'd ya do it?

Dax smiles.

DAX

First, wanted you more than any other foreigner I've ever stalked.

Nora smiles wryly.

NORA

The Indian woman?

DAX

Among others. Forbidden fruit.

NORA

Latex gloves?

DAX  
Idiot Cy's fingerprints. Only ones  
on the shotgun.

NORA  
Like Liam's pistol. What about  
Gramps?

DAX  
Sent him to your place. Knew about  
his pacemaker. If you didn't stun  
him, I would have.

NORA  
But Sarah did it.

DAX  
Happy accident.

NORA  
You took his shotgun.

DAX  
Moment of weakness. I never owned a  
gun. See. We had a lot in common.

NORA  
My oil and mineral rights. But  
things weren't working your way,  
were they?

DAX  
They always work out my way.

Nora shrugs.

NORA  
You cut the power to the cell tower  
for me, hoping Cy would finish me  
off. You'd be rich.

Nora takes a step closer.

DAX  
Richer.

He aims the shotgun at her chest. He's angry and eager to  
shoot.

DAX (CONT'D)  
I saw your little make-shift  
martial arts studio. Probably  
watched videos.  
(MORE)



DAX (CONT'D)

No match for my brown belt after  
two years of intense professional  
training.

Nora takes a half-step closer.

They hear a siren in the distance. Dax shakes in fear.

NORA

So what? Are you gonna shoot me?

The siren gets louder.

We see Dax's cold eyes glance at his Latex gloves.

DAX

No. Cy's gonna shoot you, and then  
turn the gun on himself.

Nora takes a step closer, and Dax pulls a trigger. BAM! The shot hits Nora squarely in the chest and knocks her back six feet in the mud. A few pellets hit her exposed neck and face. Blood splatters from her face and neck, and she remains lifeless.

Cy begins to gain consciousness, hearing the blast. He gets to his feet but is groggy.

Dax races over to him and holds the shotgun barrel under his chin. Cy grabs the shotgun, and it goes off. BAM! Cy's head is blown apart.

The Shotgun drops, and Cy falls on top of it.

DAX (CONT'D)

Perfect.

The siren is louder.

Dax races to the Taser, stands where Nora was standing, and shoots the Taser once, to the left of Cy, so it hits the truck. One shot remains in the Taser.

Dax drops the Taser and races to get Nora's smartphone. He grabs Nora's shovel and quickly digs a hole.

He tosses the shovel by the last seedling planted and drops Nora's phone in the hole. He removes his Latex gloves, drops them in the hole, and kicks dirt into the hole.

The Sheriff's car is in sight. Dax runs toward it.

The Sheriff races to the site and slams on his brakes.

Dax is alarmed to see a K-9 (German Shepherd) in the back of the Sheriff's car.

The Sheriff gets out, scans the scene, and uses his radio immediately.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Dispatch. Send the coroner to the northwest section of the Karlsson ranch. Suspect in custody.

Dax's eyes open widely.

The Sheriff slaps cuffs on Dax and races to Nora.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
You'd better hope she's dead!

He feels for a pulse, and he glares at Dax.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
She was right!

Dax is defensive.

The canine is sniffing around the scene.

DAX  
Saw it all happen. She tried to Taser Cy, but missed. He shot her in self-defense. Remorse set in, and Cy turned the weapon on himself.

The Sheriff carefully examines the scene and takes photos with his phone.

SHERIFF GLENN  
Smart lady, she was. But you tipped her off about the patterns in Liam's receipts. He was sleeping with 'bout every female in the county, except my ex-girlfriend and Sarah Tremain.

The Sheriff glares at Dax, then laughs.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Probably 'cause my ex-girlfriend was Sarah's spy, sharing my crime reports with her to sell more security items.  
(MORE)

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
I ended it six months ago after I  
told her I had feelings for someone  
else, but she was married.

DAX  
Nora?

SHERIFF GLENN  
Nora figured that out too.

The dog sniffs around.

Dax races to the back of Cy's truck and grabs the AK-47. He  
fumbles with it, because the handcuffs and aims at the  
Sheriff, but it doesn't fire.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Told Cy this morning that I saw  
that thing loaded one more time,  
I'd shoot him myself!

The Sheriff grabs Nora's Taser and races toward Dax.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Nora said this morning she liked to  
keep her enemies close, and her  
frenemies closer -- people  
pretending to be your friends.

Dax tosses the AK-47 down in the mud.

DAX  
I wanna talk to my lawyer.

SHERIFF GLENN  
(laughs)  
I hope it's Ronny Harrison.

Dax looks away in anger.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Agatha Christie taught me, "Evil is  
not something superhuman, it's  
something less than human."

Sheriff Glenn sneers at Dax.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)  
Nora was betting I'd find Gramps's  
shotgun at your house. I've  
requested a warrant.

The canine stops over the spot where Dax buried his Latex  
gloves.

The ambulance approaches with a siren and lights, as the Sheriff pulls out Latex gloves and evidence bags. He puts on gloves, grabs Nora's shovel, and digs at the spot.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

You know she sold the ranch and gas and mineral rights to the Conservancy under the stipulation that it was all to be planted with trees. Road and all. You would have been cut off anyway. No oil for Cy and his kin either.

The Sheriff finds Dax's Latex gloves and bags them up.

DAX

Why'd she do a stupid thing like that?

SHERIFF GLENN

Her last words to me were, "They tried to bury us; they didn't know we were seeds."

The Sheriff finds Nora's phone, stares at it, and shows it to Dax.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

Look! It's still on video record.

Dax is too furious to speak.

The ambulance arrives, and the same EMTs race to Nora.

DAX

Thought you called the Coroner.

SHERIFF GLENN

(angry with Dax)

I loaned her my vest, but it's not designed for a point-blank shotgun blast!

(to the EMTs)

I expected a Taser! I didn't know, damn it! I didn't know!

Dax hangs his head as the Sheriff stomps closer to Dax and Tasers him.

Dax collapses in the mud and shakes.

SHERIFF GLENN (CONT'D)

You have the right to remain silent, asshole!

The EMTs have worried looks as they prepare Nora for transport.

ROLL CREDITS

EXT. RANCH - DAY

SUPER: "Two weeks later."

We see a dozen women and girls (various ages and types) happily planting tree seedlings on the ranch. One of them is Nora with a few scars and Band-Aids on her neck.

The Sheriff drives up with coffee and donuts for the planting team. Nora looks sensationally happy and gives him a hug and a kiss... nothing big, just nice and sweet.

Nora takes her inhaler from her pocket and stares at it. She shrugs like she doesn't need it and puts it back in her pocket.

A wolf HOWLS in the distance, and they all smile.

FADE OUT.

**THE END**