

SOUTH OF HEAVEN

Pilot for one-hour comedy/drama series

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EXT. AIRPORT—DAY

We hear a high pitched roar. Bright pink toenails, tan and slender feet, and a pair of Prada jeweled dragonfly platform sandals descend a flight of portable stairs and stop on the cracked pavement. We see SUMMER BENTLEY, 32, standing on the tarmac of a small airport. In the background, majestic snowcapped mountains and blue sky. The roar of the small plane's engine dies down and we hear Summer's voiceover.

SUMMER (V.O.)

Twelve years ago I gave my heart and my life to the most beautiful man I've ever met. This morning, he handed my heart back to me in a dozen pieces, my life in a million. The man of my dreams had found the woman of his dreams and she was no longer me. I gathered some things from the apartment on West 119<sup>th</sup> Street, the apartment with the big closets and the view of Central Park. I caught a cab to Mara's office. I didn't know where else to go.

Bags are unloaded from the belly of the plane and set down on the pavement with a thump—baggage claim western-style—but Summer has nothing to claim. She walks to the small cinderblock terminal, passing under a hand-painted sign that reads: WELCOME TO MONTANA, WE LIKE IT HERE.

SUMMER (V.O.)

Of course, Mara couldn't see me right away. I sat there in the waiting room, surrounded by potted ferns. On the wall, original oil paintings of a mountain stream by Savage, one of Mara's more grateful, more artistic clients. Polly the receptionist offering me chai tea every so few minutes. I sat there wondering why we need to be needed. Why couldn't Randy be content with me? Why did he need to lie about the real reason behind his twice yearly trips to the cabin in Montana. It wasn't fly-fishing that drew him to Rock Creek. I sat there wondering, Why aren't we comfortable in our own skins?

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL—LATER

Inside the terminal there aren't any rental car counters, no airport shuttle buses. Summer, with her designer sunglasses and outfit, looks so lost.

LONNIE, a deranged old man dressed up as Jesus Christ stands holding a cardboard sign that reads WELCOME TO GOD'S COUNTRY. He is an older man with an obvious wig and theatrical beard, wearing a velour bath robe and leather cowboy boots.

LONNIE

(to Summer)

Welcome, Sister. We're glad to have you.

Summer smiles uncomfortably behind her sunglasses and walks past.

She approaches a JANITOR cleaning up the terminal with a broom and dustpan.

SUMMER

Excuse me. Can you tell me how to get to Heaven?

The janitor stops sweeping. He leans on his broom, squints, and smiles toothlessly.

JANITOR

Wall, I reckon you need to get to pray first.

SUMMER

No, I mean how can I get to the town of Heaven?

JANITOR

(smiling)

That's what I meant, Miss. Heaven is about twenty miles due west of Pray, Montana. Get to Pray and you're almost there.

Summer thanks the janitor and he resumes his sweeping.

A VOICE with a slight German accent comes from behind Summer.

VOICE

I can take you dere, to Heaven.

Summer turns to see a young man, JAKOB YODER, leaning against a vending machine, finishing off the last of a candy bar. Jakob sports chin whiskers and he wears a multi-colored Mexican poncho, baggy jeans, and a blue knit cap on his head.

Summer looks up and down the nearly-deserted terminal.

JAKOB

(continued)

Or if ya want, I tink dat Ford dealership over ta Livingston rents cars on the side dere, but they'd have to shuttle one out to ya. My car's right outside, dere.

SUMMER

(shrugging her shoulders)

What the hell.

Jakob and Summer approach the crazy old guy dressed as Jesus as they walk toward the exit.

SUMMER

(softly)

What's his deal?

JAKOB

Lonnie? He used to be da postmaster over to Big Timber.

SUMMER

What is he, like a Hare Krishna or something?

JAKOB

(laughing)

Oh, no, nothing like dat. He hangs around waiting for dat dere Mel Gibson to land his

plane here so they can talk about that Jesus Christ movie show.

SUMMER

Mel Gibson?

JAKOB

Yah, he has a big ranch over on the other side. But I think he has a private airstrip now and don't land his plane here anymore. Lonnie don't know it.

They are passing Lonnie now.

JAKOB

(to Summer)

Tell him your zip code.

SUMMER

What?

JAKOB

It's a trick of his. Tell him your zip code.

SUMMER

(to Lonnie)

One-oh-oh-two-six.

LONNIE

(stroking his fake beard)

Central Park North. Welcome to Montana.

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT—LATER

We see Summer and Jakob walking among the dusty pickup trucks and shiny SUVs in the small parking lot. Jakob walks up to a battered green Nova, opens the passenger door, and holds it open for Summer, who climbs in reluctantly. The car doesn't start as Jakob grinds away at the ignition.

JAKOB

(sniffing the air)  
You smell gas, dere?

SUMMER  
(shocked)  
Excuse me?

JAKOB  
I think she's flooded, dere. Got to remember to  
clean the carb in dis one.

He opens his door and climbs from behind the wheel of the car.

C'mon.

Jakob leads, Summer follows. They walk to a rusty black Ford pickup, bends down to the exhaust pipe that's wired up to the frame, and sticks his finger in the tail pipe. Summer looks around, as if she is ready to bolt. Jakob fishes a piece of orange baling twine from the exhaust and there, dangling on the end of the string, is a set of keys. Jakob's eyes go crazy wide and he smiles at Summer.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE—LATER

We see Jakob's truck flying through the landscape at a top speed of 35 m.p.h. The truck's exhaust roars, the front end shimmies, one of the turn signals blinks constantly.

They drive through the landscape, past cattle grazing, mountains hanging in the background, fishermen casting for trout in the river that parallels the highway.

A highway sign reads ENTERING PRAY, POPULATION 88, ELEVATION 4,491 and below that, another handmade sign with an arrow pointing to a dirt road that takes off to the west announces HEAVEN, 22.

SUMMER (V.O.)

When I finally got in to see Mara and told her what had happened, she buzzed Polly on the intercom and told her to call me a cab. Then Mara put her arm around me and told me that I needed to get to the airport immediately. I needed to embrace the sins of the past. That was the only way I could get on with my life's work.

On the plane, I could see all of my carefully planned life strategies falling by the wayside. By now, Randy and I were supposed to have an eighteen-month-old baby girl. Elizabeth Ann. And I should be pregnant again, this time with a boy, to be named Randall. From the air, I could almost see the milestones that I placed like marbles on a game board, never being attained. And now I'm here, in Montana, accepting rides from alternative country boys.

(she looks over at Jakob)

Or maybe he's a German tourist. What the hell, roll the dice and move.

INT. JAKOB'S TRUCK—LATER

Jakob steers the truck with his knees, reaches up and takes his blue knit cap off and throws it behind the bench of the pickup. His blond hair is cut in a bowl-do. He pulls the poncho over his head to reveal a pastel green dress shirt and black suspenders. In one moment, Jakob goes from alternative to Amish.

Summer holds up an expensive camera phone.

SUMMER

I was going to take your picture, for my assignment. Can I still do that?

JAKOB

Ya sure, but...

SUMMER

It's not against your religion or anything?

JAKOB

(laughing)

No, no. Are you a reporter or sum-tin?

SUMMER

Why do you think that?

JAKOB

You said you had dat assignment, like for a newspaper.

SUMMER

Oh, no. This assignment is for me. It's an exercise so that I can move on with my life.

Summer sees that Jakob is trying not to laugh. The truck weaves.

SUMMER

(smiling herself)

What's so funny?

JAKOB

Dat dere is one of dem cell phones. You keep calling dat a camera.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE—LATER

The truck continues through the scenic countryside.

SUMMER (V.O.)

You must confront the past, Mara said. Embrace Randy's infidelity. Go to the cabin, see it, smell it, absorb it, own it. As proof I had completed the assignment, I was to take a photograph of me standing in front of the cabin.

Only then could I get to sleep without the twin comforts of expensive Pinot Noir and cheap pharmaceuticals. Only then could I move on. It was the only way I could get myself back, Mara said, but now, I'm not sure I know what any of that means.

INT. TRUCK—LATER

Jakob cranks down the driver's side window and hangs his arm outside the truck.

Summer breathes in the mountain air.

JAKOB

Where are we going for dat assignment of yours?

SUMMER

It's my husband's cabin. On the river. I'm not sure where it's at.

JAKOB

You never been dere before?

SUMMER

No.

JAKOB

Den he just bought it?

SUMMER

(sadly)

No, he's owned it forever. He comes out once or twice a year, to...to go fly-fishing.

They drive along, listening to the country music on the radio.

JAKOB

How we gonna know where dat cabin is?

SUMMER

I've seen photos of it. The place is small, not much to look at.

The road makes a bend and there, right on river's edge, sits a tiny cabin surrounded by a few pine trees.

SUMMER

There it is.

JAKOB

(skeptically)

You sure dat's da place?

SUMMER

Yes, it looks just like the photos.

The truck turns off the road, pulls down a two-track through the grass, and stops in front of the cabin.

Jakob turns off the ignition.

Summer sits, unable to make the next move.

JAKOB

If you had a honest-to-goodness camera, I could take dat picture for ya.

Summer looks down at the camera phone in her hand.

SUMMER

Thanks. This is something I need to do by myself.

She opens the passenger door of the truck, about to get out, but turns back toward Jakob.

SUMMER

Is there any way I could get you to drive me back to the airport after I'm done here? I'd be

more than willing to reimburse you. You can have your carbs cleaned or do whatever you need to do.

JAKOB

Dat plane only comes and goes once a day. You'd have ta wait at dat airport a whole day.

SUMMER

That's okay. Will you take me back?

JAKOB

Ya sure.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CABIN—LATER

Summer stands outside the cabin, hesitating. Then she turns toward the truck, holds the camera phone up in front of her, and snaps a few pictures with the cabin and the river in the background.

Jakob, in the truck, gives her a thumbs-up, but we can see that he is humoring Summer. He still doesn't believe the phone is a camera, as well.

SUMMER (V.O.)

Once I accomplish my task, I can move forward with whatever life has in store for me. A separation, a divorce, a new job in a new city. All of my suspicions about Randy will be behind me. I'll finally be able to sleep again, without the need for cheap pharmaceuticals and expensive Cabernet.

Summer walks up the three steps to the porch of the cabin. She tries the front door, but it is locked. Peering in the window, all she sees is shadow.

Summer walks back down the steps and motions to Jakob that she'll just be a second. She walks around to the rear of the cabin, where the river is flowing lazily along. There is another porch back here, with a charcoal grill, a bird feeder, two Adirondack chairs. Summer tries the back door, but it is locked as well. She sits in one of the chairs and extends the antenna on her cell phone.

There is no signal. She puts the camera phone back in her purse and watches the river flow past.

Something catches Summer's eye. It is the movement of the curtain shading one of the back windows of the cabin. A breeze billows the fabric in and out. Summer sees that one of the windows is cracked open. She stands, puts her manicured fingers under the windowsill, and lifts. The window glides up easily.

INT. JAKOB'S TRUCK—LATER

Jakob listens to the radio, drumming his fingers on the steering wheel of the truck.

INT. CABIN—LATER

The interior of the cabin is washed in shadows and dusty shafts of light. On the walls, vintage fishing rods, a wicker creel, cheaply framed art prints of mountains and bears and deer. In the kitchen, a few sprung mousetraps on the narrow countertop.

Off the kitchen, there is a tiny bathroom. Beyond, a closed door.

Summer approaches the door slowly. She puts her hand to the rough wood, as if feeling for heat or a heartbeat, then pushes it open.

There is a double bed and a wooden dresser and a closet in the bedroom. There are no forgotten items of lingerie, no scented candles or massage oils. In the closet, flannel shirts and worn denim jeans. Summer takes one of the shirts from its hanger, breathes in the scent of her husband, then puts the shirt on over her designer outfit. In the bottom drawer of the dresser, there is a framed photograph. Summer sits on the bed, wearing Randy's shirt, and turns the photo over.

SUMMER

(softly)

Omigod. What have I done?

INT. JAKOB'S TRUCK—LATER

Jakob turns off the radio and leans out the window of the truck, listening. There is only the sound of the river whispering in the distance.

EXT. CABIN—LATER

Jakob gets out of the truck and walks up the front steps of the cabin. He tries the door knob, then knocks softly. He peers in through the window, just as Summer did, but it is too dark to see anything inside.

Jakob walks around the back of the cabin. He tries the back door, but finds that it is also locked. Then, he sees the open window. He climbs in through the window.

INT. CABIN—LATER

Jakob walks through the cabin, looking for Summer.

In the bedroom, Jakob finds Summer fast asleep on the bed. She looks like Goldilocks in one of the three bears' beds.

On the dresser, the framed photograph. The photo shows a man and a woman dressed in formal wear, holding fluted glasses of champagne, and wearing cardboard hats with glitter spelling out HAPPY NEW YEAR. It is Randy and Summer.

ACT TWO

EXT. CABIN—MORNING

Summer sits in one of the Adirondack chairs on the back porch. She is snuggled against the morning chill in a big, ugly blanket. The river, forever flowing. She hums a few sad bars of “Old Man River.”

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE—LATER

SUMMER (V.O.)

He proposed on New Year’s Eve, but I didn’t accept until the following November. I wanted to make sure that Randy was the right one, that everything would be as close to perfect as anyone can hope for. And it was, for a while. We waited to try and get pregnant while he was working his way up through the ranks at Milburn, Asher, & Reed. We waited until we moved into our new apartment. We were always waiting. And then, as a joke, I accused him of having a woman on the side, of not wanting me to come out to Montana on his fishing trips because the cabin was actually his love nest. For what ever reason, his eyes betrayed him. That was my impression, at least. Maybe his contacts were dried out, maybe it was just a vitamin deficiency or exhaustion from the long hours he worked that made Randy’s eye twitch. But it led me straight to here. And even if I’ve come to the conclusion that I made possibly the biggest mistake in my life, it was the first good night’s sleep I’ve had in years.

Summer walks down the gravel road, dressed in a flannel shirt and baggy jeans, towards the old water tower with the name THEAVEN painted on it. She tries to get reception on her camera phone, but there is no signal.

A pickup truck approaches her, going the other way, and the driver waves at Summer. She fumbles with the cell phone, almost dropping it, and the truck is past before she can manage to wave. She turns and watches the truck disappear down the road before resuming her hike into town.

EXT. DOWNTOWN METROPOLITAN HEAVEN—LATER

Summer stands at a pay phone mounted to the outside wall of the Four Corners Café. She punches in a series of numbers, but the phone won't accept a credit card call.

SUMMER

(reading the instructions printed on the phone)

Ten cents a minute, local calls only.

(looking around incredulously)

You've got to be kidding me.

INT. CAFÉ—LATER

Summer enters the café and sits at the counter, near the cash register. Mounted deer heads stare down at her from the walls. Cheaply framed art prints of cowboy and Indians, Lewis and Clark, Custer. Country music on the stereo system. In the far corner, a long table with five elderly gents playing cards and drinking coffee and trading lies.

One of the OLD COFFEE DRINKER'S voices rises above rest.

OLD COFFEE DRINKER

I come around Turner's Bend in my drift boat  
and there they are, laying out on a gravel bar,  
naked as the day is long, waving their rods  
around. I don't know what it was, but it warn't  
fishin'.

He throws his cards down on the table.

You ain't bluffin' me, are you, Petey?

Summer watches LIBBIE, the young waitress, move from table to table refilling coffee cups.

SUMMER

Excuse me.

LIBBIE

(over her shoulder)

We don't take credit cards.

Summer looks down and sees that she is still holding onto her plastic. She puts the credit card back into her purse and comes out with her wallet. When Libbie nears, she tries again.

SUMMER

Can I get a cup of green tea, and about three rolls of dimes for the pay phone?

LIBBIE

How about Earl Grey and a roll of quarters?

SUMMER

You don't have cell phone reception here. How do you people make long-distance phone calls?

Libbie brings Summer a little stainless steel pot of hot water, and a cup with a tea bag in it. In her other hand, she's picked up the cordless phone from its place near the cash register. She sets them down on the counter.

LIBBIE

It's five cents a minute. Keep track of how long your call is.

Summer pours the hot water and we see the tea bleeding in the white cup. She punches a series of numbers into the cordless phone and glances at the clock on the wall of the diner.

SUMMER

It's me. I don't know what happened yesterday, but I think I made a huge mistake. I'm staying with a friend. I'll be home tonight. We can talk.

(Beat, while Libbie passes by)

I love you.

Summer looks at the clock on the wall.

SUMMER

(continued)

Well, that was a whole nickel's worth.

The door to the café swings open and a diminutive Hispanic man, DANNY DELGADO, enters. Danny, a handsome 30 year-old, is dressed in faded Levis, exotic cowboy boots, and a silk shirt. He walks up to the front counter.

DANNY

(to Libbie)

Can I get two bottles of Evian?

LIBBIE

Alls we got is Big Springs.

DANNY

What's that?

LIBBIE

It's water. It's clear and it's wet. They bottle it up around Great Falls.

DANNY

Okay, give me two bottles.

In the background, we hear one of the old farts let out a wolf whistle. Danny turns toward the table of old men and looks at them over the tops of the smoked gray lenses of his Porsche Trigon sunglasses.

OLD MAN

(to Danny)

What kind of car you driving?

The patrons of the café turn to look out the window and see a shiny black Porsche purring in the parking lot.

DANNY

It's a Boxster.

OLD MAN

That don't look like no box car to me.

A cowboy, CHANCE PARKER, who had been sitting quietly at the end of the counter speaks up, enunciating his words loud and clear.

CHANCE

It's a Porsche Box-ster, Frank. Just because they don't make 'em in John Deere green don't mean it isn't a real machine.

We see Summer as she studies the cowboy. Chance, 37, is tall and tan. He wears a Kings Rope cap, slim-fit Wranglers, and a black long-sleeved shirt.

Danny pays for his bottles of water.

OLD MAN

Uh oh, somebody let the wolf out of his cage.

We see MAC McCASLIN, 60, dressed in brand new cowboy boots, a cheesy leather vest over a colorful shirt, and a twenty-gallon Stetson, get up from his corner booth and approach Danny, who is pocketing his change. Mac has a full head of white hair and a ruddy face.

Mac holds his right hand out to Danny, offering a handshake. Mac tries to sound like a bit actor in a John Wayne western, but there is a distinctly Boston accent when he speaks.

MAC

Name's McCaslin. Mac McCaslin.

Danny shakes Mac's hand and finds Mac has foisted a business card on him. He glances at the card, then pockets it.

MAC

If you're looking for any kind of prah-perty in the area, I can help. You really can own a piece of Heaven. Just give me a call.

Danny mumbles his thanks, takes a parting glance at Summer, then leaves the café.

MAC

(turning to Chance)

And we need to talk sometime, Chance. I'm willing to up my offer on that riverfront prah-perty. Heck, son, I'll even paht-ner up with you on the development. You just need to hear me out.

Chance gets up from his stool and throws a few bills on the counter.

CHANCE

You know I can't do it. Not now.

Mac retreats to his corner booth and starts reading his *Wall Street Journal*.

Chance give Summer a shy smile and heads out of the café.

OLD MAN

(calling out to Chance)

Tell your mom and dad we asked after them.

CHANCE

Will do, Frank. Thanks.

Libbie busses the spot where Chance was sitting, passing the dishes through to the kitchen, then wiping down the place with a damp rag and taking care of the money. She goes to the kitchen and comes back with a huge cinnamon roll on a plate and sets it down in front of Summer.

SUMMER

I didn't order this.

LIBBIE

It's on the house. You look like you could use something that'll stick to your ribs.

SUMMER

I couldn't possibly eat this.

LIBBIE

You have any allergies or anything? Any special dietary restrictions?

SUMMER

No. Although I'm trying to stay away from shellfish.

LIBBIE

(putting big pat of butter on the roll)  
There ya go.

SUMMER

Really, I couldn't possibly.

LIBBIE

You could try.

Summer can smell the fresh-baked roll. It's unlike anything she's allowed herself to indulge in for the last ten years. She picks up a fork and takes a bite.

SUMMER

(with her mouth full)  
Omigod, that is so good.

Libbie motions to the others in the café.

LIBBIE

There you have it. That's Heaven, Montana, in a nutshell. The mayor and his poker-playing buddies. All of them sitting there every morning, waiting for something to happen. And then when it does, when something different walks in through the door, they distrust it. Then there's the shyster real estate agent. They call him Mr. T. behind his back. He thinks that no one knows he is the one that steals the T off the Welcome to Theaven sign on the outside of town. You see, this place was homesteaded by Augustus Theaven back in the late 1800's. But nowadays people are calling it Heaven.

SUMMER

I saw the water tower still said "Theaven."

LIBBIE

That's because old Mac is too fat to climb up there and paint it out, and he's too dumb or stingy to pay a high school kid to do it.

SUMMER

What's the story with the cowboy?

LIBBIE

Oh, you noticed him, did ya?

Summer raises her eyebrows playfully.

LIBBIE

That was Chance Parker. His great granddaddy was old Augustus Theaven, the one who homesteaded this place. Chance still runs the family ranch, has a few thousand acres down

along the river and a lease up in the mountains.  
Chance's folks are in the nursing home over to  
Pray. I guess his daddy isn't doing so good.

SUMMER

And the real estate agent, Mr. T, he is hounding  
the cowboy to sell off his land for a housing  
development?

LIBBIE

You got that right. (beat) So, that's the story of  
this place.

SUMMER

So what about you? You didn't tell me your story.

LIBBIE

I was born and raised her, but I'm just passing through.

SUMMER

Me too. I'm just passing through.

LIBBIE

Can I get you another roll?

SUMMER

My god, no. It was horrible.

Both women look down at the plate, which looks as if it's been licked  
clean, and they laugh together.

SUMMER

Thanks for that.

LIBBIE

You betcha. You done with the phone?

SUMMER

No, I need to make another call.

Summer picks up the cordless phone and punches in a string of numbers.

SUMMER

Mara, this is Summer. I'm here, in Montana, but I think I've made a huge mistake. What I thought happened, with Randy, it never did. I'm flying home this afternoon and I'll call you when I get in, tonight, maybe tomorrow morning. (beat, as she turns and looks out the window of the café) It's so beautiful here.

Summer disconnects, then dials another number. We hear a message with a man's voice and Summer hangs up. She looks at the clock on the wall.

SUMMER

(to Libbie)

Do you know an Amish kid, drives an old green pickup truck?

LIBBIE

Jakob?

SUMMER

That's right. Jake. How would I go about getting his phone number?

LIBBIE

He lives in the colony, out north of town. They don't have phones there. Why do you want to get a hold of him?

SUMMER

He said he'd drive me back to the airport.

LIBBIE

Well, if Jakob said he'd take you back, he will. He'll find you.

Summer stands and puts a few bills on the counter.

LIBBIE

The roll was my treat. You don't owe for that.

SUMMER

It's for the phone and the tea...and the story.

LIBBIE

Take care now.

SUMMER

I will. Thanks.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE—LATER

Summer walks down the road, back toward the cabin. She waves at passing vehicles, most of them fisherman pulling drift boats on trailers behind. A battered car idles up alongside Summer. It is Jakob.

JAKOB

Ya hey dere, Miss, I was coming to see if ya still needed a ride to the airport this afternoon.

SUMMER

Yes, I certainly do. I guess I fell asleep last night.

JAKOB

It's de air out here.

Summer takes in a deep breath, then nods her head.

JAKOB

I got dis errand to run, but I pick you up at dere cabin a little after noon. We get to the airport in plenty a time.

Summer nods her head. Jakob drives off down the road. Summer waves, bidding him farewell.

INT. CABIN—LATER

Summer putters around the cabin, cleaning up. It is an act of contrition, of trying to restore order in her life. She scrubs the kitchen counter, resets the mousetraps daintily, opens the windows and airs out the place.

Later, she sits on the back porch, sipping a glass of water, watching the water of the river run past.

SUMMER (V.O.)

I wonder at something the waitress in the café said. “I was born and raised here, but I’m just passing through.” I wonder what it would be like to be tied to a place, to know the people who have lived there forever, to know their grandparents, their children, the whole history of a place spelled out like the words on a water tower, looming overhead. I wonder if I could survive in a place like this, waiting tables, listening to the mayor tell the same corny jokes every morning. Waiting for...

We hear a high-performance engine gearing down in the distance.

SUMMER  
(continued)

Waiting for...

We hear the sound of a car stopping, doors slamming, feet on the front steps of the cabin.

Summer stands and looks at her wristwatch. It is too early for Jakob to be picking her up. She walks through the cabin.

MAN’S VOICE  
(muffled through the cabin door)  
The key is here, somewhere, babe. Keep your pants on.

Summer opens the door.

Two men stand on the front porch.  
The black Porsche is parked beyond.

DANNY  
(to Summer)  
That's my shirt.

SUMMER  
(hand to her mouth)  
And that's my husband.

Randy's eyes go wide, his mouth drops open.

Danny studies Summer over the tops of his sunglasses,  
skeptically.

Summer burst out laughing.

### ACT III

Summer stands, holding the door to the cabin open, wearing Danny's flannel shirt. Tears stream down her face from her fit of laughter, but she stops laughing, suddenly, and she looks just plain sad.

SUMMER  
What are you doing?

Randy's eyes go all shifty and he takes a step away from Danny, distancing himself.

RANDY  
The may fly hatch is on.

He waves his hand in the air, as if shooing away a cloud of insects.

After our fight, I thought I'd come out for a few days and give you some time to figure things out. I wanted to give you some space.

Randy reaches out with both hands and takes Summer by the shoulders. He leans in for a kiss, but she dodges him.

SUMMER

I didn't mean "What are you doing here?" I meant, What are you doing— (she looks at Danny, then back to Randy) here? What is this?

Randy brushes past Summer, and enters the cabin.

RANDY

Summer, Danny Delgado. Danny, meet Summer.

Summer and Danny face off on the threshold of the cabin. Finally, Danny offers his hand to Summer.

DANNY

Pleased to meet you.

Summer takes his hand, smiling, unsure of herself.

RANDY

Danny is a client. He owns the Cuadro Gallery on West Broadway, in Soho. And you're opening another...where is it again?

DANNY

Chelsea. West 25<sup>th</sup>.

RANDY

Chelsea, that's right.

Summer steps aside and waves Danny inside.

SUMMER

Please, make yourself at home. So you two are here for business or...?

RANDY

I told you, the hatch is on. I thought Danny could use some time out under the big sky. Without going into specifics, I'm representing his interests in some legal matters. The question is, what are you doing here?

Summer opens her arms and makes a sweep of the cabin.

SUMMER

I thought I'd open up the place for you. Air it out a little, let the sun shine in.

Randy opens up a small closet and brings out a three foot long aluminum tube. He unscrews the cap on one end, shakes out something wrapped in brown cloth. He unties the string on the bundle and unwraps the sections of a fly rod.

SUMMER

I polished up the plastic silverware, reset the mousetraps, and dusted off the photograph of us that was taken on New Year's Eve.

RANDY

I think I'll set you up with the five-weight rod, Danny. It's good for a beginner. We can take an hour or so and practice casting out in the yard it, so you can get the feel of it.

Randy takes great care in assembling the rod and fly reel. He hands it to Danny, who looks as if he's been handed a loaded gun. Randy turns to Summer with a goofy smile on his face.

RANDY

Hon, you up for some fishing?

EXT. CABIN—LATER

Randy and Danny continue the fishing trip charade.

Randy teaches Danny how to cast with the fly rod toward the Porsche, as if they are trying to catch a big, black fish.

Randy casts nervous glances toward the cabin.

EXT. BACK PORCH—LATER

Summer sits in one of the Adirondack chairs on the back porch. In her lap, there is a pad of legal paper. She begins to write.

SUMMER (V.O.)

My first instinct is to run as far away as I possibly can. But I can hear Mara's voice in the back of my head. She's saying something crazy like, "Every insurmountable obstacle is a glorious opportunity," or "Death is only life stripped of its costume jewelry." I need something that I can believe in, something I can understand. The only thing I have left is me.

EXT. CABIN—AFTERNOON

The battered black pickup pulls off the county road and makes its way toward the cabin, stopping alongside the gleaming Porsche. We see that the vanity license plate on the Boxster reads: JESUS 1.

Danny and Randy put down their fly rods.

Jakob gets out of the truck. He's dressed alternative again.

He puts his hands on his hips and whistles at the sight of the Boxster.

RANDY

Can I help you?

JAKOB

Dot dere is a be-yoo-tie car. Is dat from around here?

RANDY  
No, it's a Porsche. It's German.

JAKOB  
I'm Dutch, too, but I'm still from here.

RANDY  
(impatiently)  
What can I help you with, partner?

JAKOB  
I'm here to pick up dat woman.

RANDY  
Summer?

JAKOB  
Ya, ya.

RANDY  
And where are you taking her?

JAKOB  
Back to dat airport. She going back home, she said.

Randy, perking up at this news.

RANDY  
Well, hang on just a sec. I'll go get her.

JAKOB  
Sure, sure.

INT. CABIN—LATER

Randy walks through the cabin, looking for his wife.

At the kitchen, he stops in his tracks. There, on the counter, is the framed photograph of him and Summer. He picks it up, looks at the photo, then sets it down gently.

At the back window, he watches Summer writing on the legal pad.

EXT. FRONT YARD—LATER

The hood is up on the Porsche.

Danny and Jakob stand over the car, studying the engine compartment.

JAKOB

Dis here is your car?

DANNY

It belongs to an acquaintance who has some property near here. We flew into the airport and picked it up.

JAKOB

Dis friend of yours, he named Mel?

DANNY

No, his name is Jesus (pronounced “hey-zeus”).

The stand there, awkwardly, looking down at the pristine heart of the car.

JAKOB

I used ta be able to work on dese tings before dey put dem computers in dem. Now, I wouldn't know where ta start.

Danny looks at him, incredulously, then they both start laughing.

EXT. BACK PORCH—LATER

Summer and Randy sit beside each other in silence.

Summer finally turns to Randy, tears in her eyes.

SUMMER

What are we doing?

RANDY

What do you mean?

SUMMER

I mean, it's like we are acting in some bad summer stock production. This isn't any way to be.

RANDY

(reaching over touching her hand)

You're just emotional right now. You probably haven't been sleeping well. Go back home and get some sleep and we'll talk when I get back.

Summer moves her hand away.

SUMMER

I'm calling Larry when I get back. I might even call him from the airport if I can find a phone that works. I'll get the ball rolling.

RANDY

Larry?

SUMMER

Just stop it, Randy. We have to stop pretending.

RANDY

Maybe you should have your medication checked. Get some screening done on your hormones or something.

SUMMER

My hormones are just fine.

RANDY

I came out here to tell you that your ride to the airport is here.

SUMMER

An Amish kid?

RANDY

Something like that. Where'd you pick him up at?

SUMMER

Don't even pretend to be jealous, Randy. I should be asking you, where did you pick him up at?

RANDY

Get some help, Summer.

He stands and slams the back door.

EXT. FRONT YARD—LATER

Jakob and Summer climb into the black pickup.

Jakob grinds away at the starter and the truck finally catches, belching out a big cloud of black exhaust.

Summer rolls her window down.

SUMMER

(to Danny)

I left you shirt hanging in the closet.

DANNY

(brightly)

Oh, thanks.

Then he catches himself, looks at Randy, who merely shrugs his shoulders.

SUMMER

(with an edge to her voice)

I hope you catch something.

Jakob puts the truck into gear and pulls out onto the county gravel, Randy and Danny watching from the yard.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE—LATER

The truck roars down the gravel.

Summer and Jakob hang their forearms out the window, listening to country music on the radio.

The engine sputters and the truck coasts to a stop in the middle of the road.

SUMMER

What happened?

JAKOB

Oh, dat happens all da time with dis truck.

SUMMER

So it's nothing serious?

JAKOB

No, nuttin' serious. We just run out of gas.

Summer smiles nervously, unsure if he is kidding or not.

JAKOB

I carry gas can in da back of da truck for dis.

SUMMER

(relieved)

That's good. I was worried I was going to miss my flight.

Jakob gets out of the truck, walks around back, and rummages around in the junk pile in the bed of the pickup. He retrieves an old plastic jug that once held laundry detergent, then walks up to the passenger side of the truck.

JAKOB

You want to be coming along or wait here?

SUMMER

Coming along where? I thought you said you had a gas can.

JAKOB

(holding up the jug proudly)

I got dat can right here.

SUMMER

But it's empty, right.

Jakob shakes the empty jug and nods his head.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD—LATER

Jakob and Summer walk down the gravel road. Jakob points at a barn in the distance.

JAKOB

We head up dere to da Bailey place and I get some gas from dem. Dis happens all da time.

SUMMER

You mean you've run out of gas here before?

JAKOB

(looking back at the truck)

Ya, I made it a little bit fur-der last time I broke down here.

He points at a pair of horses in the pasture along the road.

You see dem horses? Dey was standing along da road da last time dat truck broke down. It was da middle of da night. I got out and looked under da hood with a flashlight and I hear dis deep voice say, "It's your fuel pump." I look over my shoulder and dere were dem horses standing dere, da black and dat white. I know you won't believe it, but dat black horse says, "Take your flashlight and tap on dat fuel pump." I done it and got in and da truck fired right up. I seen da lights on at da Bailey Place up dere and pulled in and knocked on da door. Old Man Bailey comes and says, "What's da matter dere, Jakob, you look like you seen a ghost." And I tell him dat horse out in his pasture told me how to fix my truck.

Jakob walks along, letting Summer hang.

SUMMER

This didn't really happen. (beat) Did it?

JAKOB

Oh yeah, sure, sure.

SUMMER

What did the man say?

JAKOB

Bailey asked me if it was da black horse that was doing da talking, and I told him it was. I asked him, "Am I crazy?" And he said, "No, you ain't crazy, I'd say you're lucky. Dat white horse don't know shit about mechanicing."

Summer punches Jakob in the shoulder and laughs, then suddenly goes quiet.

JAKOB

What's da matter dere?

SUMMER

I guess I haven't heard myself laugh in a very long time.

EXT. AIRPORT—LATER

Jakob pulls up to the tiny cinderblock terminal. Summer throws open the passenger door and, just before she jumps out, she leans over and gives Jakob a kiss on his cheek. She gets out of the truck, closes the door, and runs to the entrance to the terminal.

EXT. TARMAC—LATER

The tiny plane sits on the runway. A airport worker rolls the portable steps away from the plane. Finally, the engines throttle up and the plane taxis down the runway and takes off into the beautiful blue sky.

Outside the terminal, under the sign that reads: WELCOME TO MONTANA, WE LIKE IT HERE!, Summer stands, watching the plane disappear in the sky. Her hair is messed up from the constant wind. She wears one of Randy's ratty shirts. She looks like a different woman.

INT. TERMINAL—LATER

Summer sits in one of folding chairs, watching the ticket agent shut down the departure/arrival gate.

Behind Summer, we see Lonnie the Crazy Jesus Guy. He pulls back the arm on his bathrobe, looks at his wristwatch, shrugs his shoulders and walks out of the terminal.

Summer is utterly alone, utterly lost.

ACT IV

INT. TERMINAL—AFTERNOON

Summer sits in the chair, still. The terminal is deserted.

We hear a loud BANG from outside the terminal.

An office door marked Airport Security opens and a fat SECURITY GUARD, who has obviously been woken from a nap, stumbles out of the room, reaching for the gun on his belt.

SECURITY GUARD

Christ, what the hell is going on now?

Lonnie the Crazy Guy stick his head in the entrance door, holding his hand up in a picture of serenity.

LONNIE

Not to worry. It's just that Amish kid working on one of his cars. Looks like he finally got that one up and running. It must have backfired.

SECURITY GUARD

The Toyota?

Lonnie looks out the window.

LONNIE

Dark blue Pontiac. No, it's a Buick

Summer gets up and walks out the door to the parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT—LATER

Jakob is under the hood of a big blue boat of a car, which is smoking and idling roughly.

Summer walks up behind Jakob.

SUMMER

Wie gehts? (vee gates)

JAKOB

Alles gut.

SUMMER

You're not surprised that I'm not on the plane back to New York?

JAKOB

No, dat's why I work on dis boo-ick. You're going to need a way to get around.

Summer approaches the car and watches Jakob working on the carburetor. He makes an adjustment with a screwdriver and the car's engine starts to run smoothly. Jakob puts the air cleaner back on and slams the hood closed.

JAKOB

Dere you go.

SUMMER

How did you know?

JAKOB

Dat smoke means dat engine is running too rich. It needs more air.

SUMMER

I mean, how did you know I wasn't going to leave?

Jakob looks away, toward the airport terminal. He itches a spot on his back with the screwdriver. Then he turns back to Summer.

JAKOB

Dat laugh you had inside. Dat's what told me.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE—LATER

The black Ford pickup rattles down the washboard gravel, sending up a rooster tail of dust. Following behind, where the wash of dust ends, is the blue Buick, piloted by Summer. The window is down on the old car. Summer hangs her arm out the window, playing with the wind, country music on the radio.

SUMMER (V.O.)

Like this old car, my life has been running too rich. I need more air. And this is the perfect place to get it.

EXT. BLUE SKY ARMS MOTEL—LATER

The reader board outside the motel reads BLUE SKY ARMS and below that, FLEA MARKET EVERY SAT. The motel is actually eight small log cabins built in a semi-circle around a grassy area that has a picnic table, a bonfire pit, and the skeleton of a teepee.

Summer's Buick follows Jakob's pickup into the gravel parking area in front of the office.

SUMMER (V.O.)

I know that I will need to have it out with Randy at some point. Whether it is here and now, or later, sitting across the conference table from him in my attorney's office back in Manhattan, I don't know. What I do know is that, after I get settled in, I am going into town and buy a pack of legal pads and a bunch of pens, and I am going to write my way through this. I am going to spill ink as if it is blood. Open a vein, and let it all pour out.

INT. CAFÉ—NIGHT

We see Summer sitting in a booth, writing for all she is worth. Libbie refills her hot water for tea and smiles.

EXT. LIBRARY—DAY

The blue Buick is parked on Heaven's main street. Summer walks through town. There is Mac McCaslin's real estate office with the sign reading, "C'mon in and buy yourself a little piece of Heaven." There is small gas station/feed store, a grocery store, and the Stockman's Bar. Summer notices a tiny building set just off the main street and she walks over to it. In the window, a sign that reads, LIBRARY, HOURS 10-2 M W F SAT.

Summer walks up to the door and tries the knob.

INT. LIBRARY—LATER

Summer opens the door and pokes her head inside. The place is tiny. Just inside the door there is a small check-out desk with a computer sitting on it. Shelves of books along the wall to the right. To the left, a small open area where four young children sit, listening to ALICE FEENEY, the town librarian, read them a story. Alice wears a cardigan sweater, black-rimmed eyeglasses, and a skirt.

Summer feels as if she is intruding on something and starts to back out of the room, but Alice smiles and waves her inside.

It only takes Summer a few minutes to browse the few titles in the library. For the most part, she spies on the librarian reading to the children. The door to the library opens and two women walk in, the mothers of the gathered children. Summer is envious of the mothers, as the kids tell them about the story they just heard. Storytime is over now.

ALICE

(to Summer)

Can I help you find something?

SUMMER

The manager of the Blue Sky Arms told me that he thought you had a computer here with Internet access.

ALICE

We do. Let me go turn on the computer. It will take a few minutes for it to warm up.

They move to the circulation desk by the front door.

SUMMER

That's great.

ALICE

I'm supposed to use the computer for checking out books, but I find that it's easier to do it by hand.

Alice turns on the computer. She opens a drawer on the desk and takes out a clipboard and hands it to Summer.

ALICE

I'll have to ask you to read the rules at the bottom of the sign-in sheet, then sign your name on a time slot.

Summer laughs, thinking that Alice is joking, but she dutifully reads the rules.

SUMMER

Thirty minute time limit. No porn sites. I think I can live with that.

She signs her name and hands the clipboard back to Alice.

SUMMER (V.O.)

Mara. I've decided to stay here in Montana and sort things out. I'm going to see if Morgan will give me an indefinite leave of absence from work. If not, I'll quit. There are so many details to work out, but staying here feels right.

The people I've met here are so simple and straight-forward. But, then again, they aren't. It's hard to explain. The girl who works at the little diner here said that she'd lived here her whole life, yet she was just passing through. There is an Amish kid who gave me a car to drive around. There is a man at the airport who dresses up like Jesus and haunts the terminal, waiting for Mel Gibson to show up. Just now, I had to sign up to use the computer at the library, though no one has used this computer in about a year, it seems. No one locks their doors. I couldn't even get a key to the cottage I'm staying in at the motel. The owner told me, "Oh, I'll keep an eye out for ya." And so, I am staying here. I know it sounds crazy, but it feels like home. Maybe crazy is home. I will stay in touch. Summer.

EXT. BLUE SKY ARMS—AFTERNOON

We see Summer sitting at the picnic table in the courtyard of the motel. In the distance, the blue Buick is parked in front of one of the tiny cottages.

A police car pulls into the parking lot and stops. Summer watches as a uniformed deputy gets out of the car and goes into the motel office, then he gets back in the car and drives to the farthest cottage. He gets out and opens the back door of the cruiser. Two men get out of the car and the deputy shows them into the cottage, then he gets back in the car and drives off.

BUTCH, the owner of the motel, walks from the office to where Summer is sitting. Butch is in his sixties, with a silver crew cut and a paunch.

BUTCH

You probably saw the sheriff's car.

SUMMER

Is everything okay?

BUTCH

Aw, yeah. They brought a couple of boys to spend the night.

SUMMER

You mean they're prisoners or something?

BUTCH

I guess you could call them that. Jerry got in a shouting match with his wife last night and the neighbors called the cops. And Wiley had too much to drink over to the Stockman's and got arrested for drunk pedestrian. They'll be taken over to the county seat in the morning and be taken before the judge.

SUMMER

You're kidding me.

Butch kicks at the dirt with his boot.

SUMMER

You mean I'm spending the night sleeping next to two criminals, and I don't even have a lock on my door?

BUTCH

First off, you're in number three, and they're clear over in cabin eight. For two, you got a deadbolt on your door if you want to use it. And for third, they're not really criminals. I mean, you've gotten in a fight with your husband before, haven't you?

SUMMER

How do you know I'm even married?

BUTCH

One thing you can't ever forget, darlin'. This is a small town. A real small town. That's how I know that Jerry and his wife, Raylene, were probably fighting over him working too many hours to try and support Raylene and her girls. And that's how I know that Wiley had too much to drink because it was three years to the day that his fiance got in a wreck over to Livingston.

Butch sees that there are tears welling up in Summer's eyes. His voice softens.

BUTCH

I'm not trying to be too hard on you. Just don't be too hard on them boys. They are good men. Now, what is it that you're supposed to remember?

SUMMER

It's a small town.

BUTCH

Absolutely. Now I'd understand if—after all is said and done—you wanna find another place to stay. I'd hate to lose your business, though. I run into some problems paying my taxes a few years back and I worked out a deal with the county. They own cabins six, seven, and eight. Sometimes we get old folks, or indigents, or other people needing a place to stay for a night or two. I put on a cookout at six o'clock for 'em. It's nothing special, usually some dogs or burgers and a bag of chips. You're welcome to come if you think you can make it.

SUMMER

Thanks for telling me, about everything.

BUTCH

No problem, darlin'.

EXT. BLUE SKY ARMS COURTYARD—EVENING

Butch is grilling hamburgers. JERRY and WILEY, the two county wards, sit at the picnic table, drinking cans of soda and eating chips from a bag.

Summer pulls the Buick to a stop in front of her cabin. She gets out and walks over to the picnic table carrying a large grocery bag. From the bag, Summer pulls out a carton of potato salad, a container of fresh strawberries, a can of whipped cream, and an angel food cake.

We see Butch introduce Summer to the two men. They shake hands with Summer and offer her a can of soda. She sits, and starts cutting up the strawberries, and there are smiles all around.

EXT. BLUE SKY ARMS COURTYARD—LATER

We see there is a big bonfire in the pit. Summer sits at the picnic table by herself, wrapped in a blanket. Beyond, we can see the light blink out in cabin eight, where Jerry and Wiley are staying.

SUMMER (V.O.)

When I went into town for the food, I stopped in the library to check my email. There was a message from Mara. It said, "Summer, I received your message. As my grandmother once told me, you have to do what you have to do. I also have an option for you to consider, and it might fit into your new, modified, life path and career direction: I am coaching a woman, Emily, who is the managing editor of She magazine. I mentioned your situation to her, telling her how brave I think you are, and sent her a couple of your recent messages, which I thought were very well thought out, but also extraordinarily well written. Emily agreed

with me. In fact, she used the term “floored,” and while I find superlatives dangerous, I think your writing is an untapped well that needs to be explored. She wants you to write a monthly column for the magazine. She said that the urban-girl-on-the-go thing has been done to death. They are looking for a new perspective on what it means to be a woman. Would you be willing to write for the magazine? Whatever you decide, I send you light and love. Mara.” That was an easy decision. I’ll have a harder time deciding what to do with Randy and his boyfriend, Danny. When I was at the grocery store, there were only two ways to go on the deserts. It was either the chocolate sheet cake or the angel food and strawberries. I think I made the right choice.

Summer watches the sparks of the fire as they rise into the night air and blend in with the millions of stars above.