

# RESTRICTED TERRITORY

## Act V Night Ride

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <u>Last Chance to Get Out.....</u>                  | <u>3</u>  |
| <u>Out Forever.....</u>                             | <u>5</u>  |
| <u>Evil Rides.....</u>                              | <u>6</u>  |
| <u>Terror at Home.....</u>                          | <u>6</u>  |
| <u>Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Freezer.....</u> | <u>13</u> |
| <u>Winter's Cruel Sting.....</u>                    | <u>14</u> |
| <u>Blocked Exit.....</u>                            | <u>15</u> |
| <u>Last Option.....</u>                             | <u>16</u> |
| <u>The Unexpected.....</u>                          | <u>17</u> |
| <u>Cold Crossing.....</u>                           | <u>18</u> |

Search is Called Off, for Now. . . . . 18

River Takes Its Toll. . . . . 19

End of Act V

To Act IV

To Act VI

## Act V

[ Night Ride ]

### Act V, Scene 1

[ Last Chance to Get Out ]

Setting: 1877 Bar R Bar ( -R- ) main house. Large, brightly lit dinning room, well appointed. There are buffets on each side of a double door that leads to the kitchen. Gilded framed portraits adorn the walls. Seated at the head of the dinning table is Hank Wilson who has just finished eating. Hank is well dressed. His motion and demeanor suggest upperclass upbringing. Although the table can seat many more, the only setting is for Hank.

Eleven men are standing near the table waiting to get instructions from Hank and Cody.  
A Chinese manservant clears the table of the single setting, then scurries off with a serving tray.

Hank: (After lighting a cigar and blowing a puff of smoke, he stands up.) This has to be done right. I want to take advantage of this storm coming in. Nobody should be venturing far from town for at least a couple days. That'll give us time for our little scenario to play out without question. Our guest doctor arrived back in town this morning, so we shouldn't have any loose ends.

Hank: Y'all know what's expected of ya'. Anybody that feels like they want out, can just ride off and never return. However, once this starts, there's no turnin' back.

The cowboys nervously glance at each other to see how the others are responding. It is quiet for a couple seconds.

Gary (One of the ranch hands.): (Breaks the silence. In a very nervous voice.) I ain't got no problem with the rest of it, but with kids it's different.

Hank: (Steps up to face Gary. The other crew step away from Gary. In a quiet, menacing tone.) What about 'em. (Pauses while slowly looking Gary up and down.) You got a problem shootin' kids?

Gary: (Even more nervous now.) Grown-ups is one thing. . . . (Looking around for support, but finding none.) I just ain't gonna be a part of shootin no kids. (Hoping the offer still stands.) I'll just be takin' yer offer and ride out. (Stuttering.) Dis . . disappear, like you said.

Hank: Sure. You can leave right now . . . but know this, you'll go through that gate for the last time. I don't even wanna hear your name. Understand?

Gary: (Relieved that Wilson didn't change his mind, stumbling over his words.) Yes sir, I understand completely, sir.

Hank: (Addressing the rest of the crew.) Last chance; same conditions. Anyone else?

The ranch hands, most of whom are looking at the floor, take quick glances around at each other but no one else takes the offer.

Cody: Good. Then lets get ridin'.

The ranch hands begin shuffling toward the door.

Hank: (Addressing Cody.) Cody, (Cody stops and turns toward Hank.) I've got a couple details to go over with you before you go.

Cody: Sure boss.

As Cody steps back to speak with Hank, the rest of the ranch hands go out the large room entrance into the entry vestibule and out the front door to saddle up. Camera, as the men file outside, does a 360 panorama from the entry vestibule: counterclockwise, a large entrance to the dinning room, a staircase with ornate banister to the second floor, a large entrance to the very large and well appointed parlor and the front door.

Hank: (To Cody, quietly, as the camera takes in the vestibule scene.) This might be a good time to thin out the herd a little. Dylan and Mark are gettin' to be more trouble than they're worth. Make sure t' leave 'em at Ben's place. And just to keep the rest of 'em in line, Gary might need a little help gettin' in his saddle. I'm guessin' he might like to stay at Greg's place until things *warm* up. (Implying that they will burn Gary's body with the rest.)

Cody: Got it boss. (Cody turns toward the door while donning his hat. He quickly walks to complete his first task.)

## Act V, Scene 2

[ Out Forever ]

Camera: Outside the large ranch house, gloomy late evening. It is a cold, breezy night with broken clouds covering and uncovering the full moon. The ground is covered with dirty snow from all the horse traffic. Fifty feet or more, catacorner to the house is the bunkhouse. Both the house and the bunkhouse have hitching rails at their respective porches. Saddled horses are tied to both sets of rails. Oil lamps provide the light on the porches of the house and bunkhouse. The men are getting their horses ready.

Cody: (Stepping out of the door, calling out to the crew.) Pay attention here!

The crew all stop what they are doing and look at Cody.

Cody: You all have your assignments. Rick an' me are goin' to be at the main fork by Ben's place to make sure there ain't no interruptions while you work. Everybody knows their job, Right?

Crew: (Not in unison.) Yes, boss.

Cody: Okay. We're on the trail in five.

Cody looks off to a quieter area of the front yard, where one man is about to saddle up. Cody walks over to where Gary is getting ready to leave.

Cody: Gary!

Gary looks at Cody with a little nervousness and hurriedly tries to finish getting his saddle ready to leave. Cody walks closer to Gary and holds up a money bag. Relief crosses Gary's face as he sees the bag.

Cody: You might need this for your trip. (He holds out the money bag.)

Gary stops what he was doing and approaches Cody.

Gary: Thanks. Wasn't expectin' nothin' but a kick in the ass as I left.

Just as Gary reaches for the bag, a knife, hidden in Cody's sleeve drops into his hand. Cody stabs Gary in the chest.

Cody: (Gets in Gary's face.) Just a little heart-felt goodbye. (Grabs Gary to hold him up just long enough to whisper into his ear.) Boss says the offer's been revoked.

Gary falls to the ground dead. The knife is still in Cody's hand.

Cody: Won't be needin' this. (As he picks up the money bag.)

Cody: (To Thug 2.) Take him along. We'll leave him at Greg's ranch.

Thug 2: You heard him, (Motioning over to other ranch hands.). Leave his guns and saddle here and tie him on the back of 'is horse.

The other ranch hands take the saddle off his horse, remove the dead man's holster and secure him to the horse. Then they all mount up and ride out of the ranch.

### Act V, Scene 3

[ Evil Rides ]

Camera: View towards the front gate of the ranch, from within the front yard area. The riders, all wearing dark clothing, head out the gate. The wind whistles as it passes the entrance. The horses' steps can be heard as they splash in the mud and crunch the snow. Camera B angle is looking back at the ranch, a few feet above the riders' heads, riders heading toward the camera. First pair of riders is Cody and Rick, then a group of three, then Mark and Dylan, followed by another group of three with Gary (dead man) and his horse tethered behind. Sound fades as camera B moves back and up, away from the riders.

### Act V, Scene 4

[ Terror at Home ]

Camera view is the exterior of a wooden door. Two shots ring out in quick succession. A scream and then sobbing is heard from the other side of the door. The camera 'ghosts' through the door. Mark and Dylan are

standing in the kitchen/front room of the ranch house, Ben and Marsha have been shot and are lying on the floor. Mark and Dylan have guns held on the kids that are crying at side of their dead parents.

Mark: (Slyly to Dylan, in a malicious tone.) We don't have to kill these two . . . just yet. I think we might have a little fun with 'em first. (Speaking so the kids can hear.) I suppose that if they are real (extending the word to reeal.) nice, (Glares right at Victoria.) we could let them just ride off and disappear like good ol' Gary.

Flashback to Gary getting stabbed.

Dylan smiles in acknowledgment.

Mark: (To kids.) Okay, stand up 'an quit yer bawling.

The Kids stand up slowly, timidly, holding each other for comfort and still sobbing.

Mark: (Addressing the kids.) Whatcha say kids? You gonna do this the easy way or the . .

Austin: (Crying and yelling at the same time.) We aren't stupid, you son of a bitch !

Camera: Victoria is very surprised at Austin. She has never heard Austin use such foul language. She is not angry, just surprised.

Austin: Y'all are just gonna kill us anyway. We ain't making *anything* easy for you.

Victoria looks at Austin in fear and agreement, but does not say anything.

Dylan quickly steps forward and punches Austin in the stomach.

Dylan: Little brat!

Austin buckles to the floor.

Victoria: (Screams. Grabbing at Austin to protect him.) Leave him alone!

Victoria tries to assist Austin, but Mark steps forward with his gun and separates Victoria from Austin and Dylan. Mark motions her to step back.

Victoria steps back slowly and starts to cry.

Dylan rolls Austin over, and taking a long leather strap from his belt loop, ties his hands behind him.

Dylan: Now that otta makes things a bit easier. (Looking at Victoria) Yer next sweetie.

Dylan then gets another strap and grabs Victoria to tie her up. Victoria struggles with Dylan as Mark watches. Victoria seems to be getting the upper hand in the struggle.

After watching for a bit Mark gets impatient and grabs Victoria by the arm and puts her in an arm hold pressing her into the floor. Dylan ties her up.

Mark: Looks like ‘sweetie’ here is a bit too much for you. I’m takin’ her, you c’n have that stubborn scamp!

Dylan: I almost had her before you ...

Mark: (Interrupts.) Almost ain’t good enough. (Laughs.) You get the boy or nothin’. Talkin’s done. I got some business to discuss with the little lady.

Mark, grabs Victoria’s arm and jerks her onto her feet and then shoves her toward the bedroom. Victoria looks at Austin and puts on a false front of propriety. Beneath the facade, is her concern, not only for herself, but also for her brother. Austin, though young, understands what is about to happen . . . to each of them. He musters enough strength to hide his fear of what is to come.

Mark: I don’t care what you do out here, but I better not get any disturbance from ya’ ‘till I come back out. Got it!?

Dylan: (In a defeated tone.) Yeah, I hears ya..

Camera: Shows a short glimpse of Austin with a smirk at the two men fighting.



Mark pushes the struggling Victoria and forces her into the bedroom. Austin immediately loses the smirk. Once in the bedroom, Mark slams the door behind them.

Dylan grabs Austin by the arm and jerks him to his feet. Austin has been crying. His face is ruddled by the floor. Despite the tear streaks and abrasion, he has a look of bold confidence and defiance.

Dylan: (In a very angry and demanding tone, getting right in Austin's face.) You listen up boy . . . and you listen good. I ain't in the mood for any trouble from the likes of some brat. You just do exactly what I tells ya to do. If ya don't, I'm a goin' t' get real mean. Ya don't want me t' get mean.

Austin does not respond; he maintains his defiant glare.

Dylan, manhandling Austin, pushes him into a standing position, facing the table. Dylan stands close behind Austin, then slowly, takes a couple steps back and begins to undo his belt.

Dylan: Okay boy, drop them breaches!

Camera: In the bedroom. Mark pushes Victoria onto the bed: she lands on the bed, face down. Mark starts undoing the top of Victoria's dress.

Victoria: (Screaming) Stop! Get off me you pig!

Victoria starts squirming and thrashing. She hits Mark in the forehead with the back of her head leaving a small cut that starts to bleed.

Mark: (Stands up. Wipes some of the blood from his forehead.) Looks like I got a feisty one. (Taking a couple of straps from his belt.) I'll just have to take care of that.

Camera: Back to the front room. In the background from behind the closed door emanate sounds of Victoria struggling in the bedroom.

Austin does not move. He just stares straight ahead. Camera's focus is now sharp on Austin.

Out of focus, in the background we see Dylan removing his belt.

Dylan: (Very angry.) Boy, I said to drop ‘em.

Dylan steps forward, raises his hand and then hits Austin across the back with the belt. Austin flinches and tears stream from his eyes.

Austin: (Wincing at the pain, trying his best to not cry out loud, tears stream down his face. His voice breaks as he screams back at Dylan.) I can’t!

Dylan: (Growling.) Why the hell not boy?

Austin: My hands are tied!

Even though the situation is worse than horrible, Austin gets a little a little satisfaction of making Dylan look like an idiot.

Camera: In the bedroom. Victoria is face up on the bed and has both hands tied to the corners of the bed. Her dress top is pulled to her waist, exposing her petticoat. Mark is struggling tying one foot to the corner of the bed.

Victoria: (Fighting to get away.) Let go of me! Get away! You stinky bastard! Don’t touch me!

Victoria is able to hit Mark in the face with her knee. Mark slaps her across the face.

Camera: In front room.

Mark: (background) Give me that other leg you wild badger . . . (Struggling in bedroom.)

Dylan: If you try gittin’ away, or fightin’ back, I’ll break every bone in your body. You’ll be in so much pain you’ll be beggin’ me t’ kill you. You got that? (He gets angry for being made a fool by Austin. He steps up and is untying Austin.)

Dylan: (Almost in a fury.) When I’m done here, you drop them pants and put yer hands on the table. Hear me!?

Camera shows Austin at the table with his hands tied behind him. There is nothing on the table. Austin does not respond to Dylan. Tears are streaming down Austin’s face.

Camera: Close-up of faces -> Dylan comes right up behind Austin and whispers in his ear. . .

Dylan: (With obvious evil intent.) You best not be any more trouble.

Austin just stares straight ahead. Dylan pushes Austin in the back after untying him, purposely on line of blood from the injury inflicted by the belt. Austin winces. Dylan takes a couple steps back.

Dylan: Now get to it.

Austin does not move. He is doing his best not to cry out loud, but his lower lip is beginning to quiver.

Dylan: Ya need another taste of the belt?

Camera: In bedroom. Focus: Mark is finishing up tying Victoria to the bed. Mark has blood on his face from Victoria's hit and three parallel scratches on his neck from her fingernails.

Mark: That should do, for now.

Mark wipes some of the blood from his face with his hand, then wipes it on the bed. Camera moves behind Mark. Mark undoes his gun belt and puts in on the floor by the bed.

Mark: All that fightin' sure gets a fella worked up.

He puts a knee on the bed as he approaches Victoria.

Camera from Dylan's vantage we see the back of Austin, the blood streak is expanding from the belt wound. Austin looks as though he is loosening his belt very slowly.

With a loud slap, a belt appears from out of sight, as Dylan strikes Austin with the belt a second time.

Dylan: Get with it boy! (Sounds of struggling coming from the bedroom.)

Camera from other side of table shows Austin with his belt undone, and reaching into his pocket, Austin pulls out his knife opens it and places it right in front of him.

Camera zooms out: focus is on Austin's hands. They are fisted on top of the table with the open knife between them. Out of focus, same frame, Dylan dropping his pants to his boots and approaching Austin. Austin, belt undone, is still in focus. Austin grabs his waistband with his left hand and the knife with the right.

Camera from behind Dylan: Dylan with his long shirt tails and long johns, walking toward Austin.

Camera: Close up of Austin's trembling fingers of his left hand. His fingers open only slightly and the waistband falls from the frame.

Camera in Bedroom: Mark is trying to undress Victoria. Victoria is fighting back with all her might.

Camera from behind Dylan: Austin's pants fall. As is typical of the day, Austin also has long shirt tails and drop-back long johns. Austin is sniffing.

Dylan: Cry and scream all you want, It don't make no difference t' me.

Just as Dylan takes another step. . .

Austin: (In an uncharacteristic, menacing manner.) *You* can scream all the way to hell!

Austin spins around with knife-in-hand slicing Dylan in the groin.

Dylan is totally surprised by the attack, tries to grab Austin and his injury at the same time. Dylan's injury takes precedence, so Austin evades the grab. Dylan falls to the ground, clutching his injury in a curled up position on the floor, kicking and screaming. An ever increasing pool of blood emanates from his hip area as it spreads slowly across the floor.

Dylan: (In a panic, yelling to Mark.) Mark! He tried to cut my pecker off! Mark, get in here! He's got a knife! He cut me! Shoot that little son of a bitch!

While Dylan is yelling, Austin quickly pulls up his pants, looks around, throws open the front door, then grabs a frying pan from the stove and a chair from the table. He hides in the second bedroom. All this while, Dylan is yelling obscenities and writhing on the floor.

Dylan: That little peckerhead . . . I'll hang him from his balls. . .

Mark comes out from the bedroom. His shirt is unbuttoned and his belt is undone. He has his gun in his hand.

Mark: What the hell is all this caterwauling about!? Can't ya even handle a little kid?

Mark, in the doorway, sees Dylan on the floor squirming about. His attention is turned to the front door that is slammed close by the wind. He does not see Austin, in the doorway of the second bedroom. Austin is standing on a kitchen chair with a frying pan held high.

Dylan: Find that kid and shoot him!

Just as Mark steps through the door, Austin, with two hands, hits Mark on the head with the cast iron frying pan. This causes Mark to fire his gun.

Mark is knocked to the floor, stunned.

Austin falls from the chair, dropping the frying pan. He lands behind Mark, falling into the open bedroom door.

Victoria screams, thinking the shot hit Austin.

Mark tries to reach for Austin, but is not able to make any coordinated moves. Mark is dazed, confused and non-ambulatory. He can not even form words.

Austin, dazed by the fall, stumbles as he gets up.

Dylan: (Not being able to see what's happening.) Did you get 'em? You got him, right?

## **Act V, Scene 5**

[ Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Freezer ]

Austin stumbles into the bedroom and slams the door behind him. Victoria has her hands and feet tied to the bed. Her dress is half ripped off revealing her petticoat. She is surprised and relieved that Austin is still alive. With

the situation at hand, Austin foregoes any thought of modesty for his sister and immediately starts cutting the ropes off her wrist.

Victoria: Are you okay? (As he kneels to cut the rope at her wrist, she sees the blood from the belt injuries seeping through his shirt.)

Austin: (As he is cutting the ropes with his knife.) I'll be fine. How about you?

Victoria: Yeah. Hurry, before they come back.

Victoria glances toward the door. She see shadows and hears scuffling from the other side. She takes the knife as soon as her hand is free and works on the other side. Austin, having given the knife to Victoria, unties her feet. Victoria gets to her feet and gets her dress back on in a hurried fashion. She glances back at the door again. There are still shadows moving on the other side and the sounds of movement. Looking around the only other exit is the window.

Victoria: (She opens the window.) Let's not give them a second chance. Quick, through here.

Victoria helps Austin get started out the window. She sees the blood soaking through Austin's shirt and winces in pain for her little brother. She grabs her boots, quickly puts them on and follows him out, glancing one last time at the closed door and the sounds with the moving shadows.

## Act V, Scene 6

[ Winter's Cruel Sting ]

Outside is a cold winter night with a strong breeze. The whooshing of the wind in the trees fills the valley. The clouds drift through the dark sky. Occasionally, light from the full moon pokes through the broken heavy clouds providing a patches of brightness that dance across the snow. Victoria and Austin are not dressed for the frigid environment in which they now find themselves. They have no jackets, gloves, scarves or hats: The necessary protective clothing for outdoor survival in these winter conditions. They have only been out of the house for a few seconds, but the cold is already beginning to bite.

Their breaths can be seen as they breathe and speak.

Victoria and Austin are crouched down by the corner of the ranch house looking toward the barn.

Victoria: (In a hushed, but urgent tone.) Let's get the horses. We can ride to Uncle Greg's.

Austin: (Nodding.) Okay.

Trying to find the safest and least visible route they survey their options. Victoria points to a wood pile just a short distance from the house, closer to the barn. Victoria leads with Austin right behind her. They scurry over to the wood pile and take a moment of refuge.

Victoria: I thought we were never going to see each other again. (She gives him a carefully placed [to avoid his injuries] hug; he gives her a big hug in return.) What happened? How'd you get away?

Austin: (Excitedly at first.) I cut the one and (What has just happened is starting to be realized. His excitement becomes more of a confession.) then I hit the other with the skillet. (Austin becomes very serious as he thinks about what just happened and he starts to cry again). I think, maybe, I killed 'em. I didn't want to kill nobody. I'm scared. (Austin's face loses all color.) I don't feel too good.

Austin quickly moves to the end of the wood pile and vomits. Victoria goes to comfort him. After vomiting, he sits with his back against the wood pile, puts his head between his knees and sobs.

Austin: (Wiping his mouth, still sobbing.) Sorry fer pukin'.

Victoria: (In a caring and sensitive manner.) Silly boy! (She runs her fingers through his hair.) You were just defending yourself and did what you had to. I'm thankful and glad you did. (In order to get him re-focused, her tone changes to a more instructive tone.) 'Cept now you have get yourself together. We're not out of this yet. Besides, at least one of those bastards is still alive. (Austin looks at her with some surprise.) I could tell by the shadows under the door. You ready to get outta here?

Austin quickly nods his head in the affirmative, wipes his face with his sleeve and moves back to the center of the wood pile.

## Act V, Scene 7

[ Blocked Exit ]

Camera finds two riders' silhouette in the winter night. The camera floats in behind them as they ride toward the ranch house. Overheard as the camera closes-

Cody: They must be done by now.

Rick: (In a calm, business-like tone.) Maybe, but I only heard three shots. . . . Supposed t' be four of 'em.

Cody: Yeah, but I know what they're up to and I ain't gonna sit out here and freeze my ass off waitin' for them to have some fun. Ev'rbody else is already headed back. Boss wants them two outta our way anyhow. Let's just take care of the two idiots, finish whatever they didn't get done, and get back to the ranch.

Rick: Yeah. Weather won't hold much longer.

Camera floats past the riders toward the ranch house. There is a barn on the right as the camera continues on the trail toward the ranch house. As the camera approaches the front door, it veers to the right, then around to the back where Victoria and Austin are hiding.

## Act V, Scene 8

[ Last Option ]

Victoria, with Austin in tow, starts to run for the barn. Just as they clear the woodpile, Victoria see the riders approaching. She immediately reverses direction knocking Austin down in the process. They both scramble back behind the woodpile.

Victoria: (Flustered.) Damn! We can't get the horses with those riders commin' in. We just need to get outta here. . . now!

Austin: (In desperation.) Where we gonna go? They'll see us tryin' t' run to Uncle Greg's place. They'll catch us for sure.

Victoria: (Quickly glancing about, obviously trying to find a solution.) There. (Pointing across the snow to the river.)



From the ranch house, looking east, there is a large meadow that has trees and a steep uphill to the south and a lake to the north. The meadow narrows as it passes between the slope and the lake, eventually reaching the creek and the trees beyond. The creek feeds the lake on its eastern side. The fastest way to the cover of the trees is straight across the meadow and through the creek.)

Victoria: (Letting Austin in on her reasoning.) They wouldn't take the chance of following us 'cross the crick tonight.

Austin, not wanting to waste anymore time, grabs Victoria by the hand and starts running across the snow. It is quiet in the snow covered field, except for the crunch of the snow being compacted with each rapid step as Austin and Victoria scramble towards the safety of the trees and the cabin, just a few hundred yards farther.

Austin: (In a matter-of-fact tone. His sentence being staccatoed by his labored breathing.) You know . . . we're gonna' likely . . . freeze to death.

Victoria: (Panting from the run across the snow.) I know we don't have much chance, (pausing the dialog for a couple of breaths, as they continue to run.) but I don't think we have any other way out. (Another breath.) I'd rather freeze than get caught by them again.

Austin: (Also, breathing hard, takes a quick glance back.) Me too.

Victoria and Austin make their way across the snow toward the river. The river is about 30 feet wide. Most of it is less than knee deep this time of year. However, there are holes and debris that compound the dangers of the current, the cold, and the darkness.

## Act V, Scene 9

[ The Unexpected ]

The two riders arrive at the ranch house. They tie their horses to the porch rail where two other horses are tied. They dismount and head up the stairs. Moaning sounds are heard from the door as they approach.

Rick: (Grinning. Directed at Cody.) Sounds like we might be interrupting something.

Music starts: Men's/boy's choir - soft, high, distant voices (boys only) ethereal and bucolic . . .

. . . music intensity and volume increase when they are running . Voices deeper tones, fuller choir (men and boys). . .

Music only when in the cabin,. No voices.

Cody flings the door open, making a grand entrance, as if to catch something ‘in-the-act’. He is immediately taken aback by what he finds - Dylan is murmuring in a pool of blood and Mark is laying on the floor with agonal respirations.

Cody and Rick draw their guns. Their attitude changes from casual to alert anticipation.

Cody: Shit! (Looking at Rick.) Find those damn kids. I’ll finish off these two.

## Act V, Scene 10

[ Cold Crossing ]

Camera back to Victoria and Austin.

Just before Victoria steps into the water, Austin stops, grabs Victoria’s hand and holds her back. He looks into her eyes to strengthen his resolve. In the distance a shot rings out. Hearing the shot, the kids look back toward the ranch house. A few seconds later, a second shot breaks the stillness, yet again.

Music back to full choir. Medium volume and intensity.

Austin: (Still breathing deeply. Shakes Victoria to regain her focus. She again looks at him.) If we get separated, meet me at the old miner’s shack.

Victoria: (Trying to keep a positive attitude.) Okay. First one there starts the fire.

Victoria is very nervous. She knows that once they enter the stream, they will likely not see the dawn of a new day. She is driven to this action by the certain death that awaits them if they do not cross, but, at the same time, feels the responsibility that she might be leading her younger brother, and herself, to their doom.

Austin takes a deep breath in anticipation of the near freezing water and to bolster his determination to get across. He quickly starts into the river first. Victoria is right beside him. The kids use each other for balance while they slowly make their way toward the other side. The river is only about knee deep but very cold. Their legs become numb and they start to lose coordination. Because the river rocks are rounded and slippery, each step is a challenge.

Music reaches first apex at Austin entering the water. Music and voices intense.

## Act V, Scene 11

[ Search is Called Off, for Now ]

Camera: back at the ranch house, Cody is looking out the window at the tracks left by the kids. The clouds are still blocking most of the moonlight.

Cody: (Standing at the window, his voice directed back into the ranch house to Rick.) Found em! . . . Least, where they went.

Rick, hearing Cody's discovery, quickly steps past the two dead men, through the door and arrives at the window.

Cody: (Pointing to the footprints in the snow.) They won't be too hard to track.

Clouds break a little so we can see the kids in the distance struggling to cross the river.

Music (dramatic volume decrease to quiet background) only while at the cabin.

## Act V, Scene 12

[ River Takes Its Toll ]

Camera back to kids

Austin slips and falls into the river. Victoria struggles to pull him back to his feet. Austin's hair and clothes are completely soaked by his brief dunking. Victoria sees the chances of making it through the night quickly vanishing. She isn't even sure Austin will make it to the shore, which is only ten feet away. Austin begins shivering. His teeth are chattering. She is about to lose all hope. Victoria shakes her head and splashes a little water on her face in an effort to clear her mind and get a stronger sense of purpose.

Second apex in volume and intensity when Austin slips.

Victoria: (Under her breath, to herself.) We are not done yet! One step at a time. We've to get to the other side. Come on Victoria, we're not going to quit here.

Camera back at window - kids in distance.

Rick: (Turning away from the window and walking back into the front room.) No point goin' after 'em tonight. They'll be dead by mornin'. We'll come back with a couple dogs after the storm passes to put 'em back in the house before it gets burned.

Music (dramatic volume decrease to quiet background) only while at the cabin.

Camera back to kids.

Austin and Victoria finally reach the other side. Austin is totally soaked and Victoria is mostly wet.

Victoria: (Still holding onto Austin's hand and leading him up the slope. Encouragingly.) Not too far now, baby brother. It's just up this hill a little ways.

Austin: (Starting to lose the ability to speak and form sentences.) You go a . . ahead. I'm tir . .slee.

Victoria: (Desperately trying to keep him moving.) I'm not going anywhere with out you. (Victoria is pulling Austin by the arm as they slowly go up the mountain.) Come on, you have to keep moving.

Victoria is now having spurts of shivers. They both have difficulty moving as they try to find the trail up the mountain to the cabin. They have managed to get about 200 feet up the mountain. Austin is now shivering uncontrollably. His steps are uncoordinated. He begins to take deep breaths. The darkness and snow hide all traces of the trail they seek.

Austin: (Nearly incomprehensible.) S - s - s o -o . . .c - c - c - cold . . . t - t - tir - d -d.

They reach a wooden bridge. Austin falls, too weak to continue. Victoria pulls him by the arm a short distance before losing her footing and falling. She gets back up and tries again. She manages to pull him a few feet, then falls again. She tries once more, but the cold has taken her strength.

Victoria: (Crying, she screams at him.) Get up! You can't stop here. You've got to keep going! (She looks down at Austin. His eyes are barely open, he does not respond. Sobbing, she falls to her knees.) I'm sorry. I'm so sorry!

Austin closes his eyes. Although he doesn't respond, his breath is seen in the cold air. Victoria knows that Austin has only a few minutes of life left and that she will have only a few after that. Even though she was relieved to have escaped the evil that awaited them at home, she is sorry that they couldn't make it to the old miner's cabin for a chance of survival. With the end so near, she realizes that she is not afraid of death, just sad that life for them was so short.

Music intensity and volume decrease as they exit the water.

Music is soft. Low intensity. Begins with men and boys with orchestra, trailing to just boys and orchestra.

Austin is lying on the ground in a fetal position. Victoria accepts her fate and lays down behind Austin, wrapping her arms around him. She has tears running down her face as she embraces him.

Victoria: (In a weak and broken voice. Speaking softly into his ear.) I am so sorry little brother. . . I just didn't know any other way. (Victoria's voice changes from broken to crying.) Austin, . . . I'm so sorry. (Praying. She feels around and finds his hand. Holding Austin's hand and looking into the sky, she prays.) Lord, forgive our sins.

Snowflakes begin to fall. Austin goes still. Victoria gives Austin a kiss on the back of the head. She starts to shiver again.

## End of Act V

[To Act IV](#)

[To Act VI](#)

Ethereal, a capella, boys only.

Music end on solo boy's voice, long note, sustained with reverb. and then tapers off to silence.