

SCENE 1

(The interior of a Montana cabin a few miles south of the Canadian Border. It is bare bones. One room furnished to be lived in, but not necessarily lived in well. A few small appliances. A couch, two cots. The door opens and LEIF (50's) enters. He is robust, heavily bearded, nervously talking. He is followed by DECLAN (Mid-40's). Declan is grizzled, with a nearly shaved head and five-o'clock shadow. He wears a rumpled olive jacket. He is a menacing figure. He scans the interior, but he doesn't seem to listen to Leif.)

LEIF

Um. I don't know about the furniture. From the old owner. And I personally changed the locks, so I know no one else has got the keys. I don't think you need to lock anything all the way out here. Derrickhands and loggers used to move in and out of this place. A lot of them scratched their names into things. I guess it was seasonal. Some of the cabin looks a little wobbler-jawed together, but it's solid.

I remember 20 years ago people used to move in and out of this place with the jobs, but now... Last tenant was an old guy. I'd see him in town like twice a year. When he froze to death on the hillside, no one noticed for a while. They think he got lost. Thing is, he was less than a hundred yards from the door, but in a snowstorm... They said they were looking for his kin, but no one's come forward yet, so the county thought an auction... There's electricity just been connected.

(He turns on the light. It flickers.)

It gets a little spotty at times. Keep a butane lantern. Best investment you can get. You're going to want to stock up on wood in the spring- Have you ever tried to cut frozen wood in the winter? You don't want to. I don't want to. Um. Oil on the hinges. Needs to be done. I can bring some up. With groceries. If you like. Just work for tips and all. I don't know what that painting is. Something.

Think it's always been there. I know it's hard to get up here. You followed me pretty easy. I come on up here on a quad usually, not a truck. That's why I work for tips. Did I say that already? Well. Look. It's not great. But you can't beat the price, right? And we're motivated. And-

DECLAN

It's perfect.

LEIF

'Cause I got some boys across the lake who can fix up just about anything. The flashing on the roof could use work.

DECLAN

I said it's good.

LEIF

Serious? Great! Um. Few final things. Um. There's deer trails out here. You think they go straight but they're really tying you in knots around the mountainside. Get a good GPS or at least a map. Never let it out of your pocket. Trust me on that, I've got stories. Um. Is it true that you offered to pay in cash?

DECLAN

(Pause.)

That's what you hear?

LEIF

No. I didn't hear about it until I started hearing about it. In town they said a guy walked in with a duffle bag and-

(Laughs.)

-they said he looked like a scary motherf-... Um..

(Pause.)

Said he looked like... Um. What you're wearing. Um. Let's change the subject. You can get me at my woodshop most days. Or the clubhouse next to the old fire station. Or the bar next to the Lumber mill. Especially karaoke night. Um. Ask for Leif. Or just describe me. Or use my nickname. My nicknames "Cherrybone". Do you wanna know why?

DECLAN

How far is Canada?

LEIF

Um. If you drive, you have to loop back through Sweetgrass, but that's gonna be back out of the hills and then west till you can turn north. If you walk, it's uh... About 5 miles north. But it's a hell of a five miles. It's also the best hunting in America, if you know what you're doing. I mean, you are equal with the animals once you step out there. You get lost, you can use the border to orient yourself. You'd know it if you saw it. It's like God reached his right arm down and tore a gash in the forest as far as you can see, west to east.

(Pause.)

How long you gonna stay here? 'Cause if you're not ready for winter here-

DECLAN

Bet a lot of people have wanted to see this place.

LEIF

Um... You're the first.

DECLAN

Talk to the owner.

LEIF

The County's the owner right now. Clerk is the one who phoned. None of them could find this place so they called me. I can talk to him tonight if you want to close things up.

DECLAN

In person.

LEIF

I can do that.

DECLAN

Tell him I don't want it.

LEIF

Oh?

DECLAN

Tell him soon.

LEIF

Well. Sorry to hear that? Doesn't suit your needs?

DECLAN

No. It's perfect.

LEIF

You said you didn't want it.

DECLAN

I said tell him I don't want it.

(Declan holds out an envelope. Leif
doesn't take it.)

DECLAN

You do odd jobs?

LEIF

How odd?

DECLAN

I can make the price right.

LEIF

What kind of work?

DECLAN

The kind I pay you for.

LEIF

I can do most any honest work.

DECLAN

(Staccato laugh.)

What was that rickety wooden bridge called? 5 clicks back?

LEIF

Yeah, um. Easton's Bridge.

(Declan tosses Leif a set of keys.)

DECLAN

Throw them in the water.

LEIF

The- The water? Sorry?

DECLAN

The deep part.

LEIF

What do I do with the truck?

DECLAN

Not much good without keys.

LEIF

I'm not following.

DECLAN

I hear they're still finding equipment left here from the 40's. From when the army built these roads.

LEIF

Last year they found an honest-to-god munitions truck. A-1 Carbines just sitting in the back. So, yeah. I can get it into the woods. But it would break my heart if that were what you're asking.

DECLAN

Then you're in luck 'cause I'm not asking.

LEIF

I do this, it's gone, you're out a nice truck, you understand that? I might not even be able to find it.

DECLAN

Good.

LEIF

One of God's worst sins, wasting a truck.

DECLAN

I can think of worse.

(Leif reluctantly takes the keys.)

DECLAN

Just make sure snow finds it before anyone else does.

LEIF

What about my quad?