

TOWN

Written by

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EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. ROAD - DAY

Music plays as a small SUV drives down a dirt road with no other traffic.

INT. SMALL SUV

A YOUNG WOMAN in her 20s or 30s is driving and singing along to the music when it cuts out, and her phone rings through the stereo. She takes the call on speakerphone through the stereo.

YOUNG WOMAN

Hey, hey! What's goin' on!?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Just callin' to check in on my girl. How's the trip so far?

YOUNG WOMAN

It's good! Got into Phoenix late last night and hit the road early this morning. Should be at the trailhead soon.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Right on. How's the weather?

YOUNG WOMAN

Hot! But that's okay. There's water at the trailhead and along the trail. Should be a fun couple of days!

WOMAN'S VOICE

Yeah, I bet! It's getting warm--  
(as the call cuts out)  
Next week--but I--

The call drops completely, and the music starts playing again. YOUNG WOMAN grabs her phone, stops the music, and tries to call again. Nothing happens.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. ROAD

The SUV pulls over, and YOUNG WOMAN gets out of the car and walks around with her phone in the air trying to get a signal. Frustrated, she gets back in the car, and the SUV drives off.

INT. SMALL SUV

YOUNG WOMAN is still driving when she comes to a T intersection with a sign that just reads "Town -->." She glances at her stereo which reads "6:34pm" and then glances at her phone which reads "No Service." She sighs and takes a right toward the town.

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN

The road dead-ends in a tiny town with only a few very old-fashioned wooden buildings, and YOUNG WOMAN parks the SUV outside the general store. She gets out, looks around, and walks into the store.

INT. GENERAL STORE

The store is all but empty, and the SHOPKEEPER behind the counter is an old man in old-fashioned clothes.

YOUNG WOMAN

Hi, I'm a bit lost--do you know  
how to get to the Rojo Canyon  
trailhead?

SHOPKEEPER

Oh, I doubt you're lost if you've  
found your way here.

YOUNG WOMAN

Excuse me?

SHOPKEEPER

I don't know the place you  
seek--why don't you ask around?

YOUNG WOMAN  
(a bit confused)  
Okay, thanks, I will.

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN

YOUNG WOMAN walks out of the general store and sees a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN and a TEENAGE BOY (both also in old-fashioned clothes) across the way staring at her. She approaches them.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Excuse me, do you know how to get  
to Rojo Canyon from here?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN  
(after a pause)  
Have you tried looking within?  
Maybe what you're looking for is  
already here.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Uh, thanks, but I meant driving  
directions.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN  
(smiling)  
Oh, I think you're headed in the  
right direction.

YOUNG WOMAN looks at TEENAGE BOY, who stares blankly back at her. She walks away in confused silence back to her car and looks toward the setting sun. SHOPKEEPER comes out of the general store and locks the front door.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Is there any sort of lodging in  
town?

SHOPKEEPER  
(pointing across the way)  
There's an inn where you may lay  
your head.

YOUNG WOMAN

Thanks. Can I leave my car here  
overnight?

SHOPKEEPER

That you may. See you tomorrow.

YOUNG WOMAN stares at SHOPKEEPER as he walks off toward  
another building. She shakes off her confusion, opens up  
her car, retrieves her backpack and a few other belongings,  
and walks toward the inn.

INT. INN DOWNSTAIRS

YOUNG WOMAN walks in, and the INNKEEPER (an old woman in  
old-fashioned clothes) is sitting at a table with chairs in  
an otherwise empty room. There is a stairwell on one side  
and an oil lamp and a door to another room on the other.

INNKEEPER

(motioning toward a  
chair)

Hello. Please, sit down.

YOUNG WOMAN sets down her things and takes a seat at the  
table.

YOUNG WOMAN

Do you have any rooms available?

INNKEEPER

But of course. We have only one  
room, and it is for you.

YOUNG WOMAN

(after a pause)

Okay . . . thanks. I'll take it.

INNKEEPER

(smiling)

Of course you will. Would you like  
something to eat?

YOUNG WOMAN

Uh, sure. What do you have?

INNKEEPER  
I'll be right back.

INNKEEPER politely excuses herself from the table, goes into the other room, and returns with a bowl of soup and a spoon. She places the meal on the table before YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUNG WOMAN  
Thanks.  
(trying the soup)  
It's good!

INNKEEPER smiles as YOUNG WOMAN eats the soup.

INNKEEPER  
The room is open, and there's a  
key on the nightstand. There is an  
outhouse and a well out back.

YOUNG WOMAN pauses mid-bite and stares blankly at INNKEEPER for a moment.

YOUNG WOMAN  
What do I owe you for the room?

INNKEEPER  
(smiling)  
We can deal with that tomorrow.  
I'm sure you can afford it.

YOUNG WOMAN again stares blankly at INNKEEPER.

INNKEEPER  
I'll be retiring now. Please,  
enjoy your stay, and sleep well.

INNKEEPER gets up and exits to the other room. YOUNG WOMAN has a few more bites of soup, pushes the bowl forward, and gets up. She grabs her things and heads upstairs.

INT. INN UPSTAIRS

YOUNG WOMAN enters the room, which has only a small bed, a nightstand, one window, and an oil lamp on the wall.

She sets down her things and tries her phone again, which still has no service. She procures a headlamp from her backpack, puts it on, and heads back downstairs.

EXT. BEHIND INN - DUSK

YOUNG WOMAN exits the outhouse, pulls a small bottle from her pocket, and squirts hand sanitizer into her hands. After rubbing her hands together, she walks toward the well and tries the pump a few times, but nothing happens. She looks back at the inn as the light on the first floor goes out. She sighs and heads back inside the inn.

INT. INN UPSTAIRS

Having changed into pajamas, YOUNG WOMAN locks the door of her room, blows out the lamp, and gets into bed.

INT. INN UPSTAIRS - DAY

The room is full of natural light, and YOUNG WOMAN wakes up slowly, smiling and well rested. It is only when she stretches her arms that she realizes she is wearing different clothes from what she fell asleep in. Panicked, she throws off the blankets and sees that she is in an old-fashioned nightgown. She looks around the room and sees an old-fashioned dress and shoes laid out for her, but her backpack and other things are nowhere to be seen. Still in a panic, she looks out the window and sees that her SUV is still outside the general store.

INT. INN DOWNSTAIRS

Barefoot and in the nightgown, YOUNG WOMAN creeps down the stairs. INNKEEPER is nowhere to be seen, and she quickly heads out the door.

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN

Walking fast with her head on a swivel, YOUNG WOMAN goes straight for her car. She runs her hand under a wheel well for a bit and fishes out a hide-a-key.

She unlocks and gets into the car, pulls a fast turnaround, and speeds out of town.

INT. SMALL SUV

Still flustered but greatly relieved, YOUNG WOMAN keeps driving. All of a sudden, she looks confused and slows to a stop. Not far ahead of her is the same T intersection with the sign that just reads "Town -->." She glances at the dashboard, and the low-fuel light is on. She takes a left and continues on away from the town.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. ROAD

The SUV again comes to a stop at the same T intersection. YOUNG WOMAN gets out of the car and looks around. She gets back in the car, turns around, and goes back the way she came.

INT. SMALL SUV

As the car runs out of gas and comes to a stop, YOUNG WOMAN bangs on the steering wheel in frustration and breaks down emotionally.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. ROAD

YOUNG WOMAN exits the car, kicking and beating it. After a few moments, she gathers herself and looks down the road. Still barefoot and in the nightgown, she starts walking. She gets to the "Town -->" sign and goes right, picking up a large stick on the way.

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN

YOUNG WOMAN walks into town and heads straight for the inn.

INT. INN DOWNSTAIRS

INNKEEPER is standing in the middle of the room when YOUNG WOMAN comes in and confronts her, brandishing the stick.



YOUNG WOMAN

I want my stuff. Where is it?

INNKEEPER

You have no need for your things anymore. Everything you need is here.

YOUNG WOMAN

(stepping forward and  
still brandishing the  
stick)

I'm not fucking around! Give me  
back my fucking stuff!

INNKEEPER steps backward, trips over a chair, and hits her head hard on the edge of the table as she falls. On the floor, she lays motionless, and blood starts pooling out from her head. YOUNG WOMAN throws the stick to the side and gets on her knees next to INNKEEPER. YOUNG WOMAN checks INNKEEPER's pulse and turns INNKEEPER's lifeless head side to side before standing up and running outside.

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN

YOUNG WOMAN runs toward a MIDDLE-AGED MAN in old-fashioned clothes.

YOUNG WOMAN

Is there a doctor here!? The  
innkeeper--she hit her head! She's  
not breathing! Please, she needs  
help--I don't know what to do!

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

All is as it should be. You need  
not fret, my dear.

YOUNG WOMAN

She's dying! We need to call 911!

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

All is as it should be.

Flabbergasted, YOUNG WOMAN steps backward and looks around. SHOPKEEPER is standing outside the general store and staring at her, as are MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN and TEENAGE BOY from across the way. She looks back at the townspeople for a moment before heading back to the inn.

INT. INN DOWNSTAIRS

YOUNG WOMAN sees INNKEEPER still on the floor with even more blood pooling out from her. She dismisses INNKEEPER and goes into the other room. To her surprise, the room is completely empty. She leaves the room and heads upstairs.

INT. INN UPSTAIRS

YOUNG WOMAN opens the door and looks around, under the bed, and then at the old-fashioned shoes on the floor.

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN

Now wearing the shoes and again brandishing the stick, YOUNG WOMAN walks out from the inn and toward the only other buildings in town. She enters the first building and is heard loudly rummaging around before coming out and doing the same in the second building. She exits the second building, and the townspeople are still staring at her.

YOUNG WOMAN

Fucking empty! What the fuck is  
wrong with you people!? Where do  
you eat!? Where do you sleep!?

The townspeople keep staring in silence.

YOUNG WOMAN

(toward SHOPKEEPER)

I'm fucking talking to you! Where  
the fuck is my stuff!?

SHOPKEEPER

Everything you need is here.

After a moment of silence and completely at her wit's end, YOUNG WOMAN walks backward while pointing the stick at the townspeople before dropping it and walking out of town.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. ROAD - NIGHT

YOUNG WOMAN comes up to her car. Exhausted, she opens the car, gets in, and falls asleep in the backseat.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. ROAD - DAWN

The rear side door of the SUV opens up. YOUNG WOMAN gets out, opens up the other doors, and rummages around inside. She comes up with mostly useless items, but there is a road flare, a first aid kit, and a gallon of water. She tears the bottom of her nightgown and fashions head protection from the sun and a sling to carry the road flare and first aid kit. Using the car key, she scratches a message onto the hood of her car: "LOST. EVERYTHING STOLEN. EVIL TOWN, DONT GO. NEED FOOD & WATER. FOLLOW ARROW." She adds a large arrow pointing away from the road, chugs from the gallon of water, and starts off in that direction into the desert.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. DESERT - DAY

YOUNG WOMAN treks through the wilderness, hiking up a couple of ridges, only to see nothing but more wilderness in all directions. As the midday heat sets in, she rests in the shade of a spindly tree.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. DESERT - DUSK

YOUNG WOMAN reaches some rocky cover and sits down in relief. After a moment, she gets up and starts gathering dry brush and sticks. She clears a small area and starts a fire with the road flare. Very sore, she takes off her shoes and applies ointment from the first aid kit to blisters on her feet.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. DESERT - DAWN

YOUNG WOMAN wakes up to the smoldering remains of the fire. She is very sore and dehydrated, but she manages to put on her shoes, stand up, and start walking again.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. DESERT - DAY

Stumbling through an open stretch of desert, YOUNG WOMAN comes upon some small shade from a rock and sits down. She rests, finishes the last of the water, and soon passes out.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. DESERT - NIGHT

YOUNG WOMAN wakes up shivering and looks around in the dark night. She pulls herself into a fetal position, falling in and out of sleep.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. DESERT - DAY

YOUNG WOMAN is awake but can barely sit up. Eventually she does and tries to walk but immediately stumbles. She musters all her strength to crawl, barely making it to a rock outcropping and collapsing in the shade. She lays there motionless.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. DESERT - NIGHT

YOUNG WOMAN still lays motionless.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. DESERT - DAWN

YOUNG WOMAN still has not moved at all. As the early morning light begins to illuminate the landscape, five figures dressed in ceremonial robes and masks come out from around the outcropping. One wears a different mask from the rest and carries an oil lamp as well as an incense burner hanging from a chain, and the other four carry a stretcher-like bier. They move YOUNG WOMAN onto the bier and carry her away with the other figure leading the way with the lamp and incense.

INT. COMPACT CAR - DAY

A middle-aged BUSINESSMAN in a suit drives down a dirt road through the Southwest U.S. He messes with a dashboard GPS, which responds, "Routing . . . Sorry, route not found," in an artificial woman's voice. Frustrated, BUSINESSMAN grabs the GPS and throws it to the floor.

EXT. SOUTHWEST U.S. ROAD

The compact car rolls to a stop at the T intersection with a sign that just reads "Town -->."

INT. COMPACT CAR

BUSINESSMAN looks curiously at the sign and takes a right toward town.

EXT. MIDDLE OF TOWN

The compact car pulls into town and drives by INNKEEPER, who smiles and waves, alive and well. BUSINESSMAN parks outside the general store, gets out, looks around, and walks inside.

INT. GENERAL STORE

BUSINESSMAN

Excuse me, is there a hotel around  
here?

SHOPKEEPER is not behind the counter; instead, YOUNG WOMAN is behind the counter, smiling and dressed in old-fashioned clothes.

YOUNG WOMAN

Of course. Everything you need is  
here.

THE END