Scene opens in the morning, at the Thomas House, set at the foot of the hills that extend westward, bordering The D Ranch. Cal steps out onto the back porch, feeling the breeze flow over him. He closes his eyes, breathes it in, enjoying the wind as it comes down off the hills, through the trees…His eyes open…they focus on the forest lined hill in front of him, then his head turns left, west, towards the D Ranch. Then he scans the hills between his house and Dez's, looking…focusing…breathing in deeper….his face changes, his eyes narrow….)

Cal: "Abomination"

(scene shifts to the hills…through the trees, winding, low to the ground, a single coyote wanders, smelling the ground, then the air, flecks of white foam at the corners of its mouth…The animal's brain is only sending signals for one thing…)

Coyote: (thought) "Water"

(Its eyes yellow, its fur ragged, it sniffs the air, searching for the scent of water. Other coyotes nearby, part of the pack this one once belonged to, senses its presence…They turn as one and lope in the opposite direction)

Coyote: "Water….then hunt…hurt…kill"

(The coyote's rabies-addled brain, swelling in its bone cavity, presses against its protective shell, the unnatural pressure sending signals of aggression and violence. The disease has hijacked the central nervous system, sending toxic signals to the mind and body)

(scene shifts to Cal, still standing on the back porch….He stares into the forest, speaks in a whisper towards the forest….)

Cal: "Go…you are not welcome here"

(scene shifts back to the coyote…It's head raises up from the ground, its ears standing up as if hearing something…Then the smell of water, the sound of a nearby splash as another animal drinks, possesses its senses…The coyote darts off towards the sound..)

(scene shifts to Dil, Nell, and Dez, sitting on the back patio, enjoying the morning breeze as it travels through the olive orchard…Nell breathes it in….closes her eyes…)

Nell: "I love that smell!"

Dil: "Some people say it smells like the Mediterranean Ocean, like the waves coming in"

Nell: "Since I've never been to the Mediterranean Ocean, I'll take your word for it….The Mediterranean Ocean smells like olives"

Dez: "Barf warning"

(Both Dil and Nell look at her, curiously…Dez crosses her arms over her chest, stares back at them)

Dez: "One of you is about to say something mushy…."

Dil: 'Nope….not in the mushy mood"

Dez: "You're always in the mushy mood around her"

Dil: 'I am NOT mushy…"

(Nell is watching them both, her head moving back and forth like a spectator at a tennis match…she smiles as she watches the brother and sister go head to head)

Dez: “Liar! I’ll prove it….Nell…look at Dil….”

(Nell turns her gaze from the reparte’ to Dil…she stares, a small smile on her face…)

Dez: “Nell, you remember when you told Dilbert you were pregnant?”

(Nell remembers…she thinks about his reaction…the memory brightens her face, her eyes smiling along with her mouth…Dil watches, and under his breath…)

Dil: “My world just got brighter….”

(Dez quickly leans forward, jabbing a finger towards Dil)

Dez: “AH HA!”

(Nell winks at Dil, he winks back, Nell is seen propping her chin in her hand, staring at him)

Nell: “I love you”

Dil: “Then marry me….”

(Dez looks at them both, snaps her fingers in the air….)

Dez: “Hey! You two! Remember me?”

(Nell swivels her face towards Dez, still smiling)

Nell: “It was like the moment Cal told you he loved you….when he told you he’s been waiting forever for you..”

(Dez stares, straight faced…but the memory betrays her…she begins to blush, and the smile pushes through the blank expression…)

Nell: “Ah Ha back at you, sis”

(Dez crosses her arms again, leans back, looks at them)

Dez: “You can both bite me”

(Dil scoots his chair back, stands)

Dil: “It’s Saturday, I’m not on call anymore, and there’s work to do….”

Nell: “The beams?”

Dil: ‘Yea…one’s loose….that last storm rocked the stable pretty good…Some of the nails are pulling out. One of those beams comes loose, it’s going to hurt one of the horses”

(He pauses, smiles a Dez)

Dil: “Or one ugly ass cow”

(Dez frowns back at her brother)

Dez: “Bessie is beautiful!”

Dil: “Bessie’s a cool cow, I’ll give you that sis,,,but she’s not winning any County Fair contests…Not like her momma”

(Dez immediately turns red…Nell sees it…)

Nell; “There’s a story there!”

Dez: “No story…bubba’s babbling”

Dil: “Nope….tell her, sis…one of your many claims to glory….”

Dez: “Shut up!”

Nell: “I want to hear it!”

Dez: “Of course you do……dammit”

Dil: “Go on, sis…tell her about it!”

Nell: “Yes! Tell me!”

Dez: “It was stupid”

(Dil turns towards Nell, points at Dez)

Dil: “Sis here, at the tender age of 16, had every guy in the county, and beyond, sniffing at the doors of the foster home we lived in…The county fair had a beauty contest, with a $100 prize…We needed the money…so…”

Dez: “The county’s one industry was making fences…it was stupid..And they fished for crawdads…Man, they were nuts over those disgusting things”

Dil: ‘Yea Nell, say hello to your famous sis…..”

Dez: “Don’t….”

(Nell looks expectantly at Dil…)

Dez: “Bubba…I’m warning you….”

Dil: “The one and only….”

(Dez buries her face in her arms)

Dil: “…the beautiful and glamourous…”

(Dez, her face still buried, extends a single finger salute to her brother)

Dil: “…Miss Crawford County Crawdad Chain Link Queen!”

(Nell bounces in her chair, clapping her hands)

Nell: “I think it’s wonderful!”

Dez: “Yea…I had to ride behind a tractor, do that stupid wave…”

Dil: “Got her hundred dollars, though”

Dez: “And 4 marriage proposals”

Nell: “I bet you were beautiful…you still are…”

(Dez sits back up straight, looks at her brother)

Dez: “Now that I’ve been outed, bubba….Want some help with that beam?”

(He places a hand on Dez’s shoulder, squeezes it…)

Dil: “No sis, but thanks…I want to get to it, secure it, and be done before Bishop and Torres get here”

Nell: “I am so excited! Baby Nickie!”

Dez: “I heard she had an accident at your office”

Nell: “Yea…McYuck. We tossed the keyboard”

Dil: “I’ll leave this talk to you ladies….”

Nell: “It’s coming your way in 8 months, Big Daddy….”

Dil: “Then I’ve got 8 months of no keyboard barf….I plan on enjoying it while I can”

(Dil walks into the kitchen, Nell watching him walk…)

Dez: “Don’t believe him…the boy’s been on cloud nine….He can’t wait for that baby to get here”

Nell: “I know…he talks to her every night…He’s even made up stories he tells her…They’re a little different, but it’s sweet”

Dez: “Bubba makes up stories? As in kid stories?”

(Nell chuckles)

Nell: “But like I said…kinda different….There’s Roly Poly Bunny, the rabbit that can’t hop…every time he tries, he falls over, rolling on the ground…all the other bunnies laugh at him...Then Omicron Oak, the king of the forest, tells Roly Poly Bunny how one day his rolling is going to save all the animals in the forest…….!”

(Dez stares at Nell….Nell stops smiling, looks to make sure Dil has left…then she looks back at Dez)

Nell: “I looked it up…I can’t find Roly Poly Bunny any where…I think he’s making it up as he goes along.”

(Dez stares at Nell….then…)

Dez: “And there’s a forest fire…Roly Poly Bunny saves the day….”

(Nell looks at her in surprise…)

Nell: “How do you know?”

Dez: “When bubba and I were little, dad used to tell us bedtime stories…nothing he read us would work….we fought sleep, fought it more, frustrating dad to death…Then one night he came in our room, mom was with him for backup…He had a made up story, mom standing by to hear it…It was the story of Roly Poly Bunny….Girl…we listened like we were hypnotized…and we went to sleep…From that night on, no other bedtime story would do…Girl, Roly Poly stories are classic!”

(Nell looks at Dez in awe…)

Nell: “Oh my god, Dez….he’s….”

(Dez nods….)

Dez; “Honey…your man there is telling his baby a love story….He’s passing on a memory…from when we were happy..(shakes her head, thinking of that time)…”It’s kind of a big deal to him..”

(Nell looks towards the kitchen….looking for Dil…He’s already left the house, walking towards the stable)

Nell: “How did I get so lucky, Dez? I can’t get my head around it…”

Dez: “Like he said, honey….you light up his world….Just keep being you, sis….that seems to be working just fine”

Nell: “Dez…tell me nothing bad’s going to happen to us….”

Dez “I can tell you what you want to hear, sis..(pause) “…but the world never seems to listen”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the forest, the coyote finishes its feeding, then trots off, weaving side to side, momentarily confused, the rabies virus sending too many signals at once, overloading the normally accurate messages…..the moment passes, and the coyote trots in a straight line, searching the forest for more food….The half eaten carcass of a rabbit lays behind him…He stops, cocks his head…he sniffs the air….the scent of humans…the sound of a large beast…both senses trigger saliva, hunger, and violent messages in its head….He trots forward, following the trail….The scent of the humans used to be a warning, a sign to change course. Now, a brain no longer afraid of anything, draws the coyote down the hill…)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the stable…Dil is seen climbing up a tall step ladder, towards the end of a 20 foot wooden beam that crosses from one side of the stable walkway to the other. The one foot square beam is nailed to the support post, extending from 5 feet in the ground, concrete around the base, upwards, ending in the rafters above his head. He reaches the top of the ladder, and can see all four of the long nails pulled outward, several inches of space between the heads and the beam)

Dil: “Nail them back in, or drill and put screws in….”

(His thoughts choose the screws)

Dil: ‘They’ll stay firm…Should have done that to begin with”

(He climbs back down the ladder, walks across the walkway to his tool bag, kneels down and extracts a battery powered drill, a drill bit, and four long lag screws, placing them in the pouches on his work belt…He looks at the support post in front of him, hits it hard with his palm, testing it…)

Dil: “Solid…good…”

(scene shifts to the other side…two nails can be seen hitting the soft ground, falling from the beam, shaken loose from the vibrations of the struck beam from across the walkway)

Dil: “Right tools, right job…..”

(Dil stands, takes another look at the support beam in front of him, his eyes follow the beam upwards, where the other end of the cross beam is attached…he doesn’t like what he sees)

Dil: “Loose too….I’ve got a bigger problem than I thought…”

(He strikes the post one more time, looking up for evidence of what the vibration causes…nothing…)

Dil: “It’s holding…(looks up at the beam)

Dil: “I’ll be back to you after I finish the other one”

(Across the walkway, one more nail is seen hitting the ground….The fourth, and last nail, can be seen tilting downwardss, the pressure from the beam, no longer supported enough, strains against the nail…)

Dil: “Get the other one, come back…”

(He stands, his back to the original loose beam…..The view shifts to the last nail, giving up the losing battle against gravity and leverage, the last one holding the beam flips upwards as it is shot out from the force of the falling, 200 pound beam)

Dil: “Okay, pal…Sorry for having to drill into you….”

(He sees the beam swinging down towards him, still held above him by the loose nails…He instinctively turns his back to the beam….It strikes him, directly along his spine….He is propelled forwards, falling face down on the dirt of the walkway….The scene shows the remaining nails have been wrenched free, the other end of the beam falls loose, heading directly for him, hits the top of Bessie’s gate, bounces sideways, landing on the floor, inches from Dil’s head….)

(scene shifts to the front of the D Ranch, Torres driving, Bishop in the front seat, turned around, looking at baby Nickie in her car seat….They pull up to the front, stop the car, Nell and Dez, both running to the car….)

Bishop: “Wow…they’re glad to see us!”

(Nell and Dez jostle for position at the back door of the sedan…)

Torres: “Not us….(nods towards the back seat) “…her…”

Bishop: “Well, I don’t blame them…she’s beautiful…”

(Torres and Bishop exit the car, Torres running around the front of the car to make sure Bishop can make it out okay…He turns his head towards the stable…Through the open doors he sees Dil, laying on the floor….face down…)

Torres; “DIL!”

(The women startle, watching Torres run full speed towards the stable….Nell sees what Torres saw….she screams Dil’s name, starts running in the same direction)

(scene shifts to the stable…Dil, his head turned to one side, eyes blinking….he hears voices…)

Torres: “Don’t move him! The beam hit his back!”

(Torres points to the black stains, running almost perfectly up the spine, on Dil’s white Tshirt…smudges of tar from the creosote soaked beam…..Torres claps his hands hard in front of Dil’s face….Dil blinks….)

Dil: (weakly) “Can’t…can’t….(his voice fearful) “I can’t feel my legs!”

(Scene shifts to Dez on her phone, barking orders at someone on the other end)

Dez: “AIR MED! NOW YOU LAZY SON OF A BITCH! DOJ EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION ALPHA TANGO 214456!”

(a pause as she listens. Then…)

Dez: “VERIFY IT ON YOUR WAY!”

(She lowers her voice, starts giving instructions…)

Dez: “Marine Male, 6 foot 4 inches, 240 pounds, conscious, coherent, possible spinal damage, no feeling or movement in the lower extremities…no allergies, no other complications….bring the board, neck brace and two people that know how to transport spinals….I’m calling McNalley now….she’ll take over from there”

(She ends the call…hits speed dial for Caprice…Nell is seen kneeling, her face on the ground next to Dil’s…She has one of his hands in hers, he squeezes…)

Dil: “Nell..I can’t feel them..god…no…I can’t feel my legs……Nell….help me…..god no. Please no no…..”

20 minutes later

(scene shifts to the forest…The coyote's ears perk…the rabid animal looks up in the sky, sees a large thing, noisy….flying over the hills….)

(scene shifts back to the stable… fades out as Dez is seen talking to Caprice, Nell laying on the ground next to Dil…Bishop holding Nickie, looking upwards for any more beams…Torres is seen running outside, waving his arms to the descending LifeFlite chopper…..)

(scene fades to black and white)

scene opens in the Waiting Room at Walter Reed Hospital, Torres, Bishop, holding Nickie, sit in chairs, surrounded by a full waiting room. Dez is seen standing by the doors leading into the procedural rooms, when Nell walks through the doors)

Dez: "Did I give you everything you needed?"

(Nell, holding a closed manila envelope, nods, hugs Dez…)

Nell: "Yes…thank you for remembering….I wasn't…I wasn't thinking…."

Dez: "Who was?"

Nell: "You"

Dez: "Only because I've been through this a few times, sis….You'll learn…Bubba keeps that file folder handy, in the file drawer…it has copies of everything you need, from ID to insurance cards, to medical records"

Nell: "I didn't know he…".(She wipes tears) "I didn't know he did that….the first page in the file…."

Dez: "A full Power of Attorney with your name on it? Yea…He asked me to draft one…"

(Nell looks at Dez, her eyes afraid)

Nell: "I wouldn't have thought of that. At all….I don't have anything like that for him…."

Dez: "If you want, I'll do one for you…."

Nell: "Please…and one for you too….in case…"

Dez: "I will, sweetie….thank you"

Nell: "Is it okay to ask, you know, when…."

Dez: "When did he ask me to do it?"

(Nell crosses her arms over her chest, holding herself tight…)

Nell: "Yes…I guess it's not important, though…."

(Dez looks at Nell….thinks…then…)

Dez: "You remember when he was in that boat? The one with bomb? And he saw you waiting, when he got off the helicopter?"

(She nods…remembering that night….)

Dez: 'He asked me to draft it the next day"

(Nell looks at Dez, surprised…)

Nell: "But…we had just met…why would he…"

(Dez leans forward, kisses Nell on the cheek….)

Dez: “He told he’d met ‘the one’…that someday you’d be in this position…(Pauses) “…Baby girl…he knew then…when he told you he’d been waiting forever for you, he wasn’t lying…And when he knew, he knew…The only person that didn’t know it was you, sweetie…”

(Nell nods…two tears fall…She wipes them away, looks back towards the doors….)

Nell: “Dez…please tell me how to help him…I want to be everything he needs….I don’t know how to do that for him..”

Dez: “Just be you, honey…and no matter what happens…Don’t let him forget how much you love him…”

Nell: “The doctor said it could be bad…”

Dez: “I know…we just have to keep hope….and pray…”

(Nell nods, then turns as she sees the door to the hallway open…Caprice walks out, nurse scrubs on…)

Caprice: “Nothing yet, he’s coming back from the MRI…The doctor has to look at them before they decide anything…But..(She motions to Bishop and Torres to come with them. They get up, walk to Caprice)..”I want to get you guys out of this room…I don’t want that baby in the middle of anything that might get her sick…”

Bishop: “Thank you, Caprice”

Caprice: (whispers) “I do want that, but that’s also the story we’re giving this crowd in here…Once you go back here before them, a small uprising can happen…Come on”

(Caprice walks through the large double doors, takes them down the hallway, then opens the door to a small waiting room close to the ER patient area…several couches, chairs, a small table are in the room)

Caprice: “Ellie, do you need some diapers? I know you came in a rush….”

Bishop: “Thanks, but my tote bag was in the car…I think I’m good..”

Caprice: “You’re a natural, little momma”

Bishop: “Dez…is Cal coming?”

(Dez looks over at Caprice…then she answers…)

Dez: “I called him from the house…He was in his car…already heading up here….”

Bishop: “Up here? Why..?”

Dez: “I don’t know…it’s…it’s hard to explain…I’m trying to understand it myself…”

Bishop: “It’s okay….we kinda know he’s…He’s who he is….”

Torres: “You mean what he is…”

Bishop: “Yea…what Torres said….”

(Dez looks at Torres, looking for his reactions…Torres notices)

Torres: “Hey, I like the guy! He’s muy Bueno in my book!”

(Dez smiles, mouths ‘thank you’ to Torres)

Caprice: “Anyway, I’m sure you’ll see him soon enough…..(pauses)..”…somehow….here…there…wherever…And I’ll come in and give you an update as soon as I get one”

(Just as Caprice is closing the door, it's pushed open….McGee comes in, surprising them, Delilah behind him…Then Gibbs reaches through the group, extends his hand, tapping Nell on the shoulder…She turns….)

Nell: "GIBBSY!"

(She hugs him fiercely…more tears fall)

Nell: "I didn't know you were here yet….Thank you for coming!"

Caprice; 'Nell, honey, your surrogate daddy here has been working….He called in a favor…."

Gibbs: "Just a friend…Nell…Dez…come on out…I want you to meet someone…."

(Nell and Dez walk out, not knowing what to expect…Standing in the hallway, is Dr. Cyril Taft, the old time friend of Gibbs, and chief surgeon for the Navy. Gibbs walks to Taft, gives him a quick bro-hug)

Gibbs: "Thanks doc…I appreciate you coming…"

Taft: 'Hey, when Jethro Gibbs calls, you come…"

(Gibbs turns to Nell and Dez)

Gibbs: "Doc here worked on me….saved my life…"

Taft: "Aboard an aircraft carrier……"

Gibbs: "Doc… Sitrep?"

Taft: "Good news bad news"

Dez: "Bottom line?"

Taft: "No vertebrae are shattered…I'm amazed at that…but Captain Bosworth has incredibly developed lower back muscles…probably saved him from more damage"

Nell: "More damage..What damage?"

Taft: "I'll know when I see the MRI, but it's obvious we're looking for how much nerve damage there is…That's why he has no feeling or control over his lower extremities…But…(He looks at Nell, then at Dez).."Which one of you do I tell?"

Nell/Dez: "Me"

(Taft reaches out takes Nell and Dez both by the arms, pulls them close together, shoulders touching)

Taft: "If you believe in miracles, say thanks…If you don't believe in miracles, start believing…"

Nell: "Miracles? What miracle?"

(Dez gives Gibbs a small smile…Taft notices)

Taft: "There are maybe 5 neurosurgeons in the world recognized as competent enough to treat nerve damage without surgery…One of them just happened to be in the hospital….."

(He looks at Dez, still smiling at Gibbs….)

Taft: "Is there something I need to know? You two are making me nervous…"

Gibbs; "No doc….keep going…."

(Taft looks at Gibbs, dubious, then turns back to Nell and Dez)

Taft: “Strange thing…this doc is recognized as the best of the best…only problem is he lives in Italy…”

Nell; “Can we get him? Please? I’ll pay for him to come…I promise…”

Taft: “That’s the miracle part, Miss Jones…This doc came here, said he was visiting….Then he asked the front desk to page me…”

(He looks again at Dez…her face is looking at the floor…)

Taft: “When she told me his name, I didn’t believe it…”

Nell: “Who? Who was it?”

(Doors open down the hallway….a doctor exits, full scrubs, cap, face mask….)

Taft: “You can meet him yourself….Ladies, I present to you your miracle…one of the very best neurosurgeons in the world”

(The surgeon enters the hallway, takes off his cap and mask….Nell’s eyes open wide…)

Nell: “Cal?”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens at the D Ranch, the open pasture next to the house is shown, the stable off in the distance…Scene moves to where the hillside slopes down, meeting the pasture just inside the line of trees at the bottom of the hill…In the undergrowth, the coyote sits, looking at the 5 foot wire fence in front of him…Beyond the fence, a fawn walks uneasily on new legs, just born….The coyote spies the small deer, and begins salivating….He looks to the left of the fawn, and the mother, weak from giving birth, walks to the fawn, continues licking the new baby, cleaning it….The coyote gauges the height of the fence, its sense of judgment clouded by the rabies running through its system….the ravaging hunger makes the decision….The coyote backs up, then sprints towards the fence, leaping….and clearing it easily….it lands, crouches, laying perfectly still, focused intently on the easy feast only 20 yards away….It begins to move forward, slowly, not wanting to alert the mother…..10 yards away now……It quickens its pace, it’s mouth already watering, its addled mind already tasting the young and tender flesh of the newborn…..The coyote begins to increase its speed….The sound of hooves…Then a burning, searing pain, its side on fire. The coyote finds itself hurtling through the air, landing harshly….It spins in the direction of the threat. It’s yellow eyes see a stag….and the enormous, sharp, powerful antlers….The stag had been waiting, stalking it while it was stalking the newborn….Fear, pain and frustration surge through its mind, immediately, in a quick flash, the coyote darts towards the fenceline, the stag chasing, as the coyote makes the leap again, almost over the fence, its back leg catching on the top strand, landing harshly again, tumbling through the thicket covering the forest floor…..The coyote, knowing the fence provided safety from the protective stag, turns, stares with hatred filled yellow eyes at the stag…The tall beast was pawing the ground directly on the other side of the fence, blowing hard out its widened nostrils, staring back, unafraid, daring it to cross over again…The coyote was confused, knowing the fathers leave the young, not being part of raising or protecting the fawns….The stag stood tall, proudly, ready to protect the female and her young….The coyote registered a rare, clear thought….)

“There is something different about this land”

(scene shifts to Walter Reed, in Dil’s hospital room…Dr. Taft standing by Dil’s bed, Nell and Dez off to the side, listening. Both women are fearful, both trying not to show it)

Dil: ‘When can I walk again?”

Taft: “It’s not that simple, Captain”

(Dil looks over at Cal..his face a mixture of fear and anger. He raises his torso off the bed..)

Dil: ‘CAL! TELL ME!...WHEN CAN I WALK?”

(Cal moves closer to Dil)

Cal: “My friend….we do not know….”

Dil: “DON’T SAY THAT!”

Nell: “Baby…please….”

Dil: “STOP IT! SOMEONE TELL ME THE TRUTH! TELL ME I’M NEVER GOING TO WALK AGAIN! SAY IT! JUST SAY IT!”

(He falls back on his pillow, eyes staring at the ceiling. Silent…Nell looks over at Cal, motions to him, her face asking, ‘may I?’, Cal nods to her…She moves to the side of his bed. Dil does not turn his face to her, instead, his eyes remain fixed on the ceiling)

Nell: “We have choices. Most of all, we have hope”

(He does turn now….his face stern)

Dil: “We?”

(She returns the sternness with her own)

Nell: “Yes, Dil, ‘we’…If you don’t see it that way, then our baby and I will leave the room and let you make up your mind…alone”

(He continues to stare at her…after a few moments of no response, she leans down, kisses his cheek, raises up…)

Nell: “They’ll tell me when you’ve decided”

(She turns to walk out…)

Dil: “NO! DON’T LEAVE!”

(She turns back to him…he reaches out for her hand…she takes it)

Nell: “Why?”

(Dil looks at her, then at Cal, and Taft….)

Taft: “Doctor, would you step outside with me so we could consult?”

(Cal, seeing what Taft sees, nods to him)

Taft: “Indeed…it would be wise)

(Cal and Taft both leave the room, closing the door behind them….Dil watches them leave, then turns to Nell…he says nothing, but his face has turned from stern resolution to fearful..He still says nothing, only stares at Nell)

Nell: “I know you’re scared”

(He nods….)

Nell: “I’m scared too”

(She shifts her eyes over to Dez, Dil follows them….He sees Dez, standing at the foot of his bed, looking out the window, arms crossed over her chest….Dil looks back to Nell, she nods her head towards Dez.)

Dil: 'Sis?"

(She turns to face him)

Dil: 'Come here please?"

(Dez hesitates, then moves to Nell's side)

Dil: "You're part of this. You have been all my life"

(She gives a small smile)

Dez: "Thank you"

(Dil hesitates, looks at Nell….then at Dez…)

Dil: "I don't know what to do"

Nell: "None of us know. They haven't told us anything yet"

Dez: "Yea bubba…maybe you want to listen first?"

(Dil looks at both of them….)

Dil: "I'm scared…But you two seem to have it all together…"

Dez: "And you're supposed to be the guy that's cool, calm, collective?"

Dil: "Well….yea…"

Dez: "Remember what dad told you that time I got real sick?"

(He thinks back….nods his head)

Dil: "He was always the calm one…Mom freaked out about everything…Except…"

Dez: "Except when the big things happened"

Dil: 'He told me…."Son, women…they worry about the smallest things…men laugh at them for that. But son, when the big things hit us..You watch…the man will be lost, worried how he's going to take care of whatever it is, paralyzed with fear….and in the background, the woman is already planning, preparing, getting things in order, working past the moment…."

(He pauses_

Dil: "Dad said that's when the roles reverse…and he told me to remember that…And he also told me to trust it…"

(He looks over at Nell…..)

Dil: "What do you want me to do?"

Nell: "Listen"

(He looks at Dez…she nods her head in agreement)

Dil: "Okay…listen it is…Anyone think they're finished with their consult?"

(Dez smiles…moves to the door)

Dez: “I’ll go see…you two have 2 minutes to Barf it up”

(Nell smiles at Dez, then turns to Dil. He speaks softly…)

Dil: ‘I’m scared”

Nell: ‘Of course you are”

Dil: ‘Not about the legs…yea, that’s scary….but I’m scared….I’m scared about….”

Nell: “Me?”

(He nods)

Nell: “You love me?”

Dil: “More than you’ll ever know”

Nell: “You know I love you?”

(He hesitates to give the predicted answer)

Dil: “I sure hope so”

(She nods….)

Nell: “Therein lies the rub, prince Dil….”

(He looks at her…saying nothing…)

Nell: “You wonder, if the worst happens, that you never get your legs back…You’re worried that I’ll leave you”

Dil: ‘Worse”

Nell: “What could be worse than that?”

Dil: ‘That you’ll stay”

Nell: “You mean out of pity….not love…”

(His face changes…)

Dil: “Yes…but it’s not about…”

(She puts a finger to his lips, quieting him)

Nell: “I know….but it’s what a man would think…At least I think it’s what a man will think…”

Dil: “When I think about that happening…and you, the kind of woman you are…You’d stay…and you’d be wonderful to me…That’s you…But it woudn’t be….”

(Nell holds up a hand in the stop sign signal)

Nell: “You’re getting into territory that’s not yours to decide, baby…”

(He looks at her questioningly…)

Dil: “I…I don’t understand what that means…”

Nell: “You don’t get to put limits on my love for you”

(She keeps going)

Nell: “You don’t get to define how much love you or why I love you”

(She looks off, then back at him)

Nell: “I gave you everything…all of me…Except that. Why and how, and what I love about you, that’s mine…I keep it…You don’t get a say so in it…And baby…”

(His face begins to soften….She gives him a small smile)

Nell: “I’ve never been much of a leg girl….”

(He gives her a small smile in return)

Dil: “I don’t deserve you”

Nell: “Don’t place me on a pedestal just yet, young prince….What I haven’t told you is this….”

(She takes a breath)

Nell: “When I thought about it, part of me welcomed you losing use of your legs”

(He looks at her in surprise)

Nell: “It was stupid, selfish, and it passed….but…If it came true, it would have let me show you how much I love you…You would need me, and god, Dil, I need to be needed by you…You always have things figured out…you always know what to do….Me? I skits here, skits there, get insecure, cry, worry….but not you…Sometimes I don’t think you need me…not how I need you….So…part of me….and I feel horrible about it, part of me wanted you to need me….”

(She raises her eyebrows, a “there it is” expression…Neither of them say anything…then)

Dil: “I need you…I’ve always needed you….no matter what…Nell…you’re my life…”

(She leans down….kisses him…)

Nell: “Then let’s face this….head on…you and me….”

(He nods, pulls her close….whispers)

Dil: “I do need you”

Nell: “Thank you…now…let me help you….”

(He nods….)

Dil: “Want to see if they’re finished consulting?”

(A small smile)

Nell: “Yea…but baby…Dez….”

Dil: “I know…she’s feeling left out”

Nell: “And she shouldn’t be…”

Dil: “I know…”

Nell: “Okay Prince Charming….I’ll go get them”

Dil: “Wait!”

(She turns)

Dil: “I need you”

(she smiles)

Nell: “I believe you….now…showtime, big boy”

(scene shifts to the D Ranch, sheriff’s car pulls up to the house…A deputy exits the car, walks to the front door, knocks…No one answers…He takes a flyer, sticks it in the crevice where the door meets the frame….The flyer reads…)

WARNING – KEEP CHILDREN AND SMALL ANIMALS SAFE

COYOTE IN AREA

CONFIRMED HUMAN ATTACKS

CONFIRMED RABIES

IF SIGHTED, DO NOT APPROACH – CALL SHERRIF’S OFFICE IMMEDIATELY

(The Deputy walks away, gets in his car, turns around in the driveway, heads back towards the entrance road, view inside his car shows a stack of the same flyers, as he heads to the next residence, the Thomas Ranch)

Deputy: “The thing’s crazy…”

(Scene shifts back to the D Ranch front door…a strong wind comes up, the flyer in the door jamb is seen fluttering….then the wind pulls it out, flyer goes tumbling in the wind, far away from the house…)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in hospital room, Cal and Taft standing by Dil’s bed, both talking…Nell and Dez stand at the end of his bed, listening)

Taft: “Soldier, you’ve got some choices….but before you hear them, do you want the short version or the big word version?”

Dil: “I’m an educated man, doc…I’ll follow”

Taft: “Then I’ll turn it over to my associate….”

(Taft nods to Cal….Cal moves to be able to see Dil’s face…)

(Cal looks at Dil….Dil nods he’s ready)

Cal: “DLK….In 2018 a study was done, and a breakthrough in neurological treatment…Until then, it was believed nerves, once damaged or cut, do not regenerate. The study showed that while that was true for the Central Nervous System, it was not for arms and legs…A molecule, short name DLK, was discovered to be sending signals through neurons…Axons, to be more specific…(pauses, makes sure Dil is following….) “DLK was found to be the key molecule linking an injury to the nerve’s response to that injury, allowing the nerve to regenerate, but more importantly, sending signals for those nerves to repair themselves”

Taft: “We partied when we read that report…It was life changing for nerve injury patients”

Cal: ‘What was more exciting, is that the study showed if the patient had been previously injured, this process was remembered by the DLK…”

Dil: ‘Molecular memory…It’s based in the DNA…”

(Cal’s eyebrows raise….Taft chuckles)

Cal: “Yes…quite correct, Captain Bosworth”

Dil: “You can call me Dil, Cal…we’re going to be in laws….remember?”

(Taft looks at Cal in surprise….)

Cal: “Yes.…we are…”

(Cal looks over at Dez….gives her a smile…She smiles back, proud of him)

Cal: “In your case, your DLK memory is heightened, due to quite a few past injuries…”

Taft: “7 years ago…USS Enterprise….”

(Dil looks at Taft in shock….)

Dil: “How…..”

Taft; “I was the surgeon…Those 3 very nicely done pucker marks on your shoulder blade, and one by your spine…”

Dil: “That was you?”

Taft: “Yes, the genius that is me was your surgeon…and before you came out of anesthesia, two men in black suits grabbed me and took me to a room…”

Dil: “If you talk about anything you heard from me… you….”

Taft: “Yea…something like that”

Cal: “For accuracies sake, I have examined the work Dr. Taft did….”

Taft: “Oh boy, I was afraid of this….”

Cal: “Excellent work…superb work…he removed a bullet directly against your nerve cluster, with no damage to the nerves…possibly, only 10% of the surgeons in the world could have accomplished that”

(Dil looks at Cal…then at Taft…)

Dil: “Thank you?”

Taft: “Just doing my job, soldier…but I will accept online accolades, gifts of gratitude,….”

Dil: “Yea….”

Cal: “Moving onward, please…..It is possible, through electrical current applications..”

Dil: “Tens unit?”

Cal: “That is an oversimplification, but yes…and those currents allow us to…how you say…”boost the messages from the Axons to the nerves in your legs….We have two paths, Captain…”

(Cal takes a breath….)

Cal: “One, you wait for the nerves to regenerate on their own…You will be confined to your bed, 80% of your waking hours…no lifting, running, no exertion whatsoever….at the end of that year…”

Dil: “Year?”

Cal: “Year…”

Dez: “Door number two sweetie….”

Taft: (silently) “Sweetie?”

Cal: “The option is this….You will be applied treatments…here…for two days…Three times a day, the staff will apply electric shocks, delivered by needles piercing your lower back…”

Dil: “Two days?”

Cal: “Then you will be sent home…wheelchair bound, I am sorry to say, for a period of 5 days…At the end of those 5 days, you will begin testing your legs, slowly…”

Dil: ‘I’m in”

Cal: “No, you are not…not until you hear the remainder”

Dil: ‘I’m not going to like this part, am I?”

Cal: “Your response will by yours….(pause) “The natural healing…after 1 year, it is possible you will regain 100% of your previous capacity….If you choose otherwise…for the treatments I am describing, you will know in approximately one week…”

Dil: “It’s a no brainer…”

Cal: “It is anything but a….no brainer, Dilbert…First, the treatments are incredibly painful…No pain medication can be provided….”

Dil: “Opiates slow the nerve signals…”

Cal; “Exactly….so you will suffer…It will seem, for a short period, approximately 30 seconds, that….”

(He searches for the right parallel)

Cal: “….it will seem as if boiling water was surging through the veins of your legs”

(Dil listens…nods his head)

Dil: “I can deal with that…go on”

Cal: “At the end of the week…you may attempt to stand, walk…you will know it is time by the pain you will begin feeling in your legs. Your nerves will tell you they are waking up, so to speak…The pain….it will be considerable”

Dil :’No pain no gain…right?”

Cal: “When you feel that surge of pain, you will attempt to stand, then walk, slowly…But if you do not follow this protocol, if you push the process too fast, too hard…If you, in your sudden feeling of joy, run? If you send that type of signal to the regeneration process, it will attempt to protect the body…It will shut off the signals…forever…”

Dil: “Forever?”

Cal; “Forever…and if that occurs, and the studies show, the nerves will either have healed, and you will enjoy a lifetime of your legs at their previous capacity….or you will lose that capacity…forever…”

(Dil blinks…then..)

Dil: “Odds?”

Cal; “50%...it either works forever, or it fails forever…”

(Dil looks back up at the ceiling, processing the information he just received….then he looks over at Nell….then at Dez….)

Dil: “Your choice…both of you”

Nell: “NO! It’s your life, Dil….”

Dil: “No, it’s not…it’s your life too…and Sis?”

(Dez, surprised, looks at him)

Dil: “You’ve taken care of me since I can remember…”

Dez: “You’ve taken care of me too, bubba…remember?”

Dil: ‘You have a say in this…I owe you that…you sure as hell earned it…”

Dez: “You don’t need to…”

Dil: “I love you, sis…I love both of you….”

Nell: “We know, baby…”

(Nell stares straight at him…then she turns to Cal and Taft, Dez speaking before she can)

Dez: “He’d never make it for a year…He wouldn’t make it a month…”

Dil: “You don’t think so?”

Dez: “I know so. I’ve nursed you through too much, I’ve seen you push past the limits…”

Dil: “Okay…one vote for shock treatment”

(He looks at Nell….she walks to his side, her arms crossed over her chest)

Nell: “I’m with Sis…If….”

(Dil looks at her, waiting….)

Nell: “If you will let me help you through it..If you will put aside that overdeveloped sense of pride you have….”

(He nods, small shrug)

Nell: “I’m not finished…..There’s a chance it won’t work…there’s a 50/50 chance, if you push it, which you will, you’ll be in that chair the rest of your life….If that happens…Will you accept that you WILL need help?…That when I do help you…when Dez helps you…That it’s an act of love…It’s not an obligation….”

(She leans down, her face closer to Dil’s…her voice becomes stern….)

Nell: “Because if you pull that noble “your life would be better without me” shit…I swear to god, Dil, I’ll slap you so hard across the face, you’ll see stars…You do not have the right to tell me I don’t love you enough….”

(Cal and Taft look at each other….both impressed…Dil looks at Dez, then back up at Nell…then to Cal…)

Dil: “There you have it…The ladies have spoken…and I’ve been read the riot act…”

Nell: “Your daughter says yes too…”

(Dil smiles, then looks at Cal and Taft)

Dil: “We’re good doc….I’ll do it…but there is one caveat…”

(Dez glares at Dil)

Dez: “I knew it…”

Dil: “You mentioned the staff applying the treatments…”

Cal: “Yes…they are most competent….”

Dil: ‘I’m sure they are…but..these are my legs, my life…my sister, my wife (Nell smiles, nods to him) “….my baby…”

(He turns from Nell and Dez to face Cal)

Dil: “I know it’s asking a lot, Cal…but…”

(Cal nods to Dil)

Cal: “I thank you for your trust…It would be an honor”

Dil: “Thank you…It is a trust thing…complicated by me being terrified…but I trust you”

(Dez looks at Dil in surprise….she leans against Nell, Nell reaches around Dez’s waist, gives her a hug)

Dez: “Love you bubba

Dil: “Love you too, sis…Well, docs.. when do we start?”

Taft: “I can answer that one…tomorrow morning…the treatments will be done in a different room…”

Dil: ‘Okay…what’s so special about that room?”

Taft: “It’s soundproofed”

(Dil looks at him for a moment…)

Dil: “That bad, huh?”

Cal: “And more”

Taft: “By the way, folks…that study? That mapping of the molecule that changed nerve treatment forever? If you ever want to thank the doctor that discovered it?”

Dil: “Yea…?”

(Taft points to Cal)

Taft: “You’re looking at him….”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens at the D Ranch…in the pasture, Bessie is seen grazing…Nearby, Prissy and two other horses are feeding as well, their heads towards the ground, enjoying the tall grass in the

pasture….Nearby, on the pasture side of the wire fence, the coyote lays, watching…It sees the cow, grazing…it also sees the horse, feeding as the cow does….Memory tells him the cow cannot run well, and horses do not intervene. The coyote begins to lope towards the pasture behind the cow….Then the coyote, nearing the cow from the blind side, stops…ears perked, nostrils flaring as it smells the air…The diseased mind allows it to register a though)

Coyote: (thought) "Diseased"

(The coyote looks closer, sees the hide of the animal is covered in masses of growth….it knows it should turn, leave, but hunger and anger and violence runs through its mind, possessing the normally careful spirit of its kind, and gives a signal to kill….The coyote obeys the virus…It begins to dash towards the cow, when the larger animal, a horse, sees him…also seeing the horse kicking up dirt and grass as it gallops towards him…The coyote, for a moment, is fascinated at this new development, then the fascination breaks as the horse rears up, its front hooves aiming at its head….)

(scene shifts to the coyote, sitting on the other side of the fence, once again trembling in frustration and hunger….Once again, it feels a though..)

"This land…it is different"

(scene shifts to hospital hallway, Taft and Cal walking together)

Taft; "At some point you're going to have to tell me how you know these people"

Cal: "Professional acquaintances, then more evolved"

Taft: "More evolved…is that dodge ball talk for mind your own business?"

(Cal chuckles)

Cal; "No, Doctor Taft…it is merely the truth…."

Taft; "So..now you're a veterinarian.."

Cal: "Yes…it is quite satisfying…"

Taft; "Nerve regeneration to horse castration…oh yea…I can see why"

(once again, Cal chuckles)

Taft: "Just be sure you keep the two practices separate…If you were to confuse one with the other….I don't think Miss Jones would appreciate you castrating her fiancé"

(Cal smiles at the mental image)

Cal: "No…I can assure you she would not"

Taft: "You know, doc…you're joining a group of people…this NCIS family…"

Cal; "Which I understand you are one?"

Taft: "Distant cousin….but doc, this group will push you to bring your A game. Every day…Strongest group you'll ever run into…they don't take crap from anyone"

Cal: "I have seen that…The men are quite courageous and formidable"

(Taft smiles)

Taft: "I wasn't talking about the men, partner…."

(Cal nods…then smiles…)

Cal: “Indeed…The women are simply… world changing”

(scene fades to black and white)

Next Morning

(scene opens in Walter Reed, a surgical room…Dil is laying flat on his stomach, his head resting in a circular pillow…His torso is covered with a sheet, his lower back and lower body uncovered…He startles as Caprice begins to pull straps over his upper back, upper thighs, and ankles

Dil: ‘Is this really necessary?”

(view shifts to underneath the table, Dil’s face showing through the hole in the pillow)

Caprice: “Yes…it’s for safety”

Dil: “Safety?”

Caprice: ‘Our safety, big boy….mine and Cal’s…”

(The view from under the front of the table shows Dil closing his eyes…)

Dil: ‘Nell’s not in here, is she?”

Nell: “Nope…she’s not”

Dil: ‘Honey….didn’t they tell you it wouldn’t be good for you to be in here?”

Nell: “Yes”

Dil: “Maybe you shouldn’t”

Nell: “Yet, here I am”

Caprice: “Nell sweetie…If it’s about standing by your man, I can tell you right now, if this were Jethro, I’d be outside…”

Nell: “Outside the room?”

Caprice: “Outside the hospital…way outside…”

Nell: “Me and Dez are switching out….She wanted to video it”

Dil: “Hey! Is this supposed to make me feel better or something?”

Caprice: “Of course it is, sweetie…”

(Caprice looks over at Nell, smiles….Then she pats his bare butt cheek..Dil yelps)

Caprice: “You were right, Nell…he does have a nice butt”

Nell: “Oh yea…I’m just in here enjoying the view”

Dil: “This is so wrong!”

(Dil’s face can be seen turning red)

Cal: “Dilbert….I am about to begin…I have applied some topical anesthetic to the skin, to relieve the sting…But…”

Dil: “I know…boiling water…veins…soundproof room…”

Cal: “I am aware you have tolerated intense torture…have you not?”

(Nell’s eyes get wide…)

Dil: ‘Skip it doc…let’s do this…”

Cal: “As you wish…Nell? Are you sure?”

(She nods…)

Cal: “Forgive me, my friend…”

(Cal takes a 6 inch needle, connected by coiled wires to a control box by the table… presses the tip of the needle against the flesh in the lower back, directly above the cheeks…Dil winces, grunts…”

Dil: “Not too bad…”

(Cal nods to Caprice….Caprice places her hand on a black knob, then closes her eyes…)

Cal: “Caprice? Begin please?”

(She opens her eyes….looks at the knob…and turns it…a hum is heard)

(silence…Then Cal’s body jumps up, straining against the straps, and he begins screaming…he keeps screaming….Nell turns her face away, terrified…For 30 seconds, Dil screams until his throat rebels, and the screams turn into a pain driven rasp….Cal looks at the second hand of the clock on the wall, then nods to Caprice, she quickly turns the knob to the left…the hum of the machine lowers, then is silent…Cal notices Dil is not moving)

Cal: “Dilbert…are you with me?”

(silence)

Nell: “Dil! Answer him!”

(Dil stirs…Caprice unbuckles the straps…Dil brings his hands to the table top, pushes his torso upwards, his head looking down towards his groin..He turns his head to a terrified Nell, tears streaming down her cheeks…Dil looks at her, shakes his head)

Dil: “Honey…I think I wet the bed”

(Caprice breaks out in laughter, Nell laughs, wiping her cheeks…)

Caprice: “It’s okay sweetie…it happens to everyone”

Dil: ‘Hey Cal…”

(Cal looks at Nell, then at Dil, a look of apprehension on his face)

Cal; “Yes, Dilbert…”

Dil: “That hurt”

(Cal looks at him, astonished)

Cal: “It hurt? That is all you have to say?”

Dil: “Yea…what else am I supposed to say?...1 down, 5 to go…When do we do the next one? Let’s get this over with”

(Cal looks at Dil, disbelief on his face…)

Cal: “Incredible”

(He pauses)

Cal: “Utterly incredible”

(Nell smiles, still wiping her face)

Nell: “That’s my man!”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in hills near the D Ranch…men, some in uniform, some in hunting apparel, seen walking through the trees….one officer, speaks into his handheld 2-way)

Officer: “Base, Gerald here.. still nothing…We’ve found tracks, and can see where some coyote jumped the fence, then tracks in the pasture…But it’s gone….The tracks come back to the fence, then they lead up the hills then we hit rock…no prints…”

(The officer hits the switch again)

Officer: “Base, looks like there was a scuffle…I’ve got evidence of a fawn, a mother, then…(hesitates)..”Then a larger buck? If I didn’t known any better, I’d think the buck tangles with that coyote, protecting the young-un”

Base: “Negative, Gerald…Stags don’t protect the fawn or the mother…”

(Gerald remembers the scene…the prints, the plowed up dirt where the coyote’s prints show it reversed course)

Officer: ‘Copy that”

Officer: (thoughts) “No way it’s another buck…this stag fought that coyote…it was protecting its family…”

(He looks around, over the pasture, towards the house….)

Officer: (thoughts) “There’s something different about this place…Thomas place too…(pauses) “And I think it’s a good kind of different”

(static)

Base: “Thank you Gerald…move half your crew towards the Thomas Ranch, the other half west, to the Holloway Ranch”

Officer: “Copy…Anyone at Holloway? No one’s at Thomas or D Ranch”

Base: “I wouldn’t worry too much about D…A flyer was put on the door….Those folks can take care of themselves”

Officer: “Copy that, base…Maybe that coyote has wised up, left this area”

Base: “Negative, Gerald…he’s still around…”

Officer: “Any more attacks?”

Base: “Affirmative…Morales found a calf….it was our guy”

(The officer sighs….)

Officer: “Copy…same as the last one?”

Base: “Yea…killed it, then left…took part of a rear leg with it, left the rest to rot…That’s not normal. Coyotes normally aren’t strong enough to rip a leg off”

Officer: “Evidently our boy is. And he’s on a killing spree”

Base: “Affirmative…it’s gone rogue, Gerald…and we can’t find him…He’s already attacked two children, they’re in ICU. Both positive for rabies…he’s a bad one, Gerald…Real bad…”

Officer: “Choppers get anything?”

Base: “Negative…That’s one smart coyote…Maybe those are old tracks you found?”

Officer: “Negative on that, Base…the tracks we found here at D Ranch are fresh…only hours old”

Base; “Then keep at it Gerald…this beast is evil..That’s the only way I can see it….It’s pure evil. People are going to die, Gerald…mark my words…people are gonna die”

(scene shifts to thicket only 30 feet away from the officer….The coyote is perfectly still, perfectly camoflaged…it is watching the man through breaks in the branches…at his feet lays a bone, stripped clean of the calf’s flesh…It lowers its head, yellow eyes, now tinged with red, staring at the officer…)

(scene fades out to view of the officer talking on his handheld….Hunger satisfied at the moment, the coyote waits for the human to move away from the others. The coyote watches as the human walks away, more distance from the pack of other men…A small smile forms on the coyote’s muzzle)

(scene fades to black and white)

Two Days Later

(Scene opens in Dil’s hospital room, Dil laying on stomach, Nell sitting by the end of the bed, next to his head, Dez leaning against the far wall..Nell is running her fingers through his hair…)

Nell: “Your hair is growing out, baby…”

Dil: “Feels weird…it’s been a while”

Nell: “Didn’t you wear it long once?”

Dil: “Long time ago…”

Dez: “Don’t encourage that, sis…Back when he did, he had that whole Jason Momoa look thing going on…”

Nell: “And that’s a bad thing?”

Dez: “No…not if you want more women than normal sniffing around and going into heat”

(Nell looks at the hair growing out, then at his upper torso…She nods to Dez in agreement)

Nell: “I think I’m going to shave his head”

Dez: “Good thinking”

Dil: “Hey…you two can plan out my hair later….Nell…some help please? I need to go to the head”

(Nell nods, gets up from her chair, pulls the sheet that’s been covering his back, down….She looks at his lower back…Scene shows heavy bruising directly above his cheeks, dark purple splotches can be

seen…She closes her eyes, pain on her face, then opens them, carefully placing one hand on his waist, careful to avoid the bruised area..)

Nell: “Careful…those bruises have to hurt”

(Dil says nothing, but begins to turn his body towards her, rolling over…Once he’s on his back, she reaches both arms under his ankles…lifts…)

Nell: “I’m going to swing them towards me, then let them hang over the side….”

(Dil looks away while Nell’s doing this….Dez is watching….Dil looks back at Nell, frustration on his face….He starts to speak, but Dez has made it to the bed, standing by Dil…She reaches out, places her hand on his shoulder…She speaks softly to her brother)

Dez: “It’s temporary, Bubba…remember that….Let her help…”

(Dil looks at his sister, then away from her…Nell says nothing, gets the wheelchair, rolls it to side of the bed…)

Nell: “Okay…just like the nurse showed you…slide off..put your hands on the arms…”

(Dil grabs the top part of the wheelchair, violently throws it to one side…the chair rolls then clangs against the wall, rocks to a standstill…Nell has her eyes closed, breathing deeply…She opens them, walks to the wheelchair, calmly rolls it back…)

Nell: “Okay…like the nurses showed you…come on….”

(Dez can see Nell’s face…it’s resolute, calm…but that telltale, very small quiver of her chin shows…)

Nell: “Dil, let me help you….”

(Dil stares down at the chair…does not look up…)

Dil: “No..just give me the container”

Nell: “You can’t use a container forever, baby….Now come on…I’ll help you….”

(Dil looks away….voice steady, but firm)

Dil: “No. Thank you…..but no”

(Nell nods, says nothing…Dil allows himself to fall backwards at an angle on the bed, brings his arm up to cover his eyes…Nell rolls the wheelchair to the side, reaches up and takes the urine container off the rack by his bed, hands it to him…Dez watches her carefully…she can see the pain on her face….Dez places a hand on Nell’s arm….Nell looks at Dez…)

Dez: “Honey…I’ve got it from here…why don’t you…”

Dil: ‘Yea…why don’t you both…”

(Nell sobs…covers her mouth as she runs out of the room…..Dez watches her as she runs out, she follows, sees that Nell is running down the hallway…She turns back to the room…She slams the door hard behind her…Then she walks quickly to Dil’s bed, where he has pushed himself back up, sitting, legs hanging useless off the bed…)

Dez: “You selfish, self pitying son of a bitch! You can treat me like shit if you want, but that woman?” (Points out the door)”That woman that has been trying to help you? She just ran out hurt….hurt so bad she’s crying, but no…oh..hell no, she won’t let you see that! Every damn treatment you’ve had….(Holds up one hand, fingers spread) “Five of them, Dil! All 5, she’s stayed in the room with you, watched and listened to you scream, her face right by your screaming head, watching you agonize! And not once would she let me sit in for her…(Dil staring at her wide-eyed) “You know why, asshole?

Because once upon a time, you told her you got strength from her! So she stays! That woman! That woman, Dilbert, loves you more than anything in this world, and you don't deserve her! You hear me? (screams) "You don't deserve her!...(She wraps her arms around herself, looks away, squeezes her eyes shut..tears falling…speaks softly) "You don't deserve her…."

(Dil reaches out, touches her hand)

Dil: "I'm sorry….I'm scared…"

(She looks back at him, then yells in his face)

Dez: (yells) "Scared? …..YOU"RE scared? Let me tell you about scared, mother$%^&# ! Your woman? That woman that loves you so much in spite of you pushing her away? In 8 months she's going to go through hours and hours of screaming…Want to know why? You see how tiny she is? She'll push an 8 or 9 pound watermelon out of her body, and her body will never be the same again! And then that woman you yelled at and treated like shit will want to do it again! Because YOU want more children, and SHE loves you enough to want them for you!...You're scared?"

(She looks away again, crying…then softly)

Dez: "We're all scared! This thing happening to you, it's not just happening to you! It's happening to all of us"

Dil: "Dez…I'm sorry…"

(She looks away)

Dez: "You're telling the wrong person"

Dil: "I know…can you go get her…I'll tell her…"

(Dez turns, walks away)

Dez: "You want to tell her bad enough, you go find her…If she's even still here….(pauses) "If you've driven her away…I swear to God, Dil….I'll never forgive you"

(She grabs the wheelchair, slams it against the bed, shaking everything connected…Then she turns and leaves….Dil watches as she walks out…A lost look comes over his face)

(scene shifts to the Sheriff's station….The Sheriff looks up at a young deputy standing in front of him…disbelief is on his face…)

Sheriff: "No..There's been some kind of mistake…."

Deputy: "No sir, no mistake…They found…..They found what was left of Gerald just up the hills off the D Ranch"

Sherriff: "Jesus Christ, son….that thing…"

Deputy: "Yes sir…and sir…I know I'm new to the department, but I grew up my whole life around those animals…Saw this once before…"

Sheriff: "How bad, son….?"

(The young deputy looks at his Chief for a moment, shakes his head)

Deputy: "Once they taste human flesh, Sheriff…it's all they want…If we don't kill that thing, sir, quick…It's gonna be bad…It's gonna be real bad…"

(scene shifts to hills overlooking the D Ranch…the coyote lays on the ground, covered by growth, a small stream next to him…His hunger and thirst quenched, his reddish yellow eyes stare at the D Ranch house…He can smell the human scent on the fences. The breeze is pulling the air around the house up to him, his nostrils flaring, his hunger returning…He lowers his head to the ground, begins chewing on the bone he brought with him…Tattered cloth still attached to the bone shows a Deputy star stitched on the sleeve)

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens at Walter Reed Hospital, outside on the lawn, benches and tables set up for patients and visitors…Nell is seen sitting on a bench, smooth sidewalk curving around in front of the bench. The branches from a large oak create shade for her…She sees someone coming down the sidewalk, in a wheelchair…She gives Dil a small smile, does not get up..Dil wheels the chair up to her)

Dil: 'There was a time when I'd see a bright smile from you…"

(She shrugs)

Nell; 'Not feeling so smiley bright right now…It'll pass…"

Dil: "I hurt you. I'm sorry"

Nell: "It's okay…you're scared. I understand that"

Dil: "I was wrong. I treated you horribly…I'm so sorry"

Nell: "I know…I am too..I shouldn't have walked out like that….You needed me, and I ran…"

Dil: "I don't blame you…You deserved better…Please, Nell…"

(He reaches up, takes her hand…She places her other hand over his…Then she notices blood on his arm….)

Nell: "Dil…you're bleeding!...How…."

(He lifts his arm up, looks at the blood just above the elbow…a small cut can be seen)

Dil: "It's nothing…I cut it on the legs of the monitor stand…"

Nell: "Legs?"

Dil: "Yea…I had a little problem getting into the chair…Me and the floor had a talk"

Nell: "You fell? Dil! You're not supposed to be…"

(She pauses)

Nell: "Didn't Dez help you?"

(He looks down….then back up…)

Dil; 'Sis and I are not on the best of terms right now…"

(Her face falls…)

Dez: "Because of me…oh god, Dil, I'm sorry…"

(He shakes his head…)

Dil: “Because of me…This one’s all on me honey…Dez kinda…well….I guess I finally know what “I told him how the cow ate the cabbage” looks like”

(Nell chuckles)

Nell: “I just love her”

Dil: “She sure loves you….damn….!”

Nell: “You two will be alright…right?”

Dil: “Yea…this isn’t the first time she’s poked my chest, yelled at me, pushed my chest, yelled at me, kicked the bed, yelled at me…threw a wheelchair, yelled at me…”

(He stops…then)

Dil: “Actually, it is the first time she’s slung a wheelchair at me…”

(She finally smiles…)

Dil: “God, I Iove that smile…”

Nell: “That smile loves you”

Dil: “Forgive me? Please…please give me another chance to show you I deserve you?”

(Nell gives him a small smile)

Nell: “Baby…you’ll always get another chance…hundreds of them….I’m in love with you…it’s what love does”

(Dil stares at her….then speaks timidly)

Dil: “I need to tell you something…something I just realized…”

Nell: “That you love me? I know, baby…”

(He shakes his head…)

Dil: “I didn’t know how to love…I’d never had any practice…I knew I loved you, and it’s real, but….”

Nell: “But….”

Dil: “I was laying on that floor…trying to pull myself to the chair…to get in it, to come to you…and it came to me, that….(looks up at her) “…that I’m learning how to love, from you…”

(Nell’s eyes water…she shakes her head, embarrassed chuckle)

Nell:”We might be in trouble!”

Dil: “No…we’re going to be the ones that get it right…Not because of me…but because of you…I’m learning how to love from you…”

(Her eyes watering, she leans her head down, placing her forehead on his head…)

Nell: “Do you love me?”

Dil: “Yes..I do”

Nell: “Do you know I love you?”

Dil: “Absolutely….yes..I do”

Nell: “Then everything’s going to be alright…”

(She waits…)

Dil: “Yes…Everything’s going to be okay”

(She raises her head up…sees that his head is still tilted down…then she sees the tears falling off his face onto his hospital gown, making dark spots on the blue material)

Nell: “Baby?”

(He places a hand on the back of her neck, pulls her down…she kneels on the sidewalk, allowing him to pull her close to him…She can feel his body trembling…)

Nell: “Honey…Are you hurting? Do I need to get you inside…”

Dil: ‘I’m dying inside….I’m so sorry….I was so scared of losing my legs….”

Nell: “I know…It’s okay…”

Dil: “But I never knew what real fear was until I was laying on that floor….knowing I’d hurt you…Maybe losing you…I got more afraid right then than I’ve ever been in my life…..…”

Nell: “Not a chance, baby…we’ll get through this…”

Dil: ‘I wouldn’t…Not alone, I know that….but if you’re here…with me…”

Nell: “I’ll always be here…(kisses him) “Always….”

(scene shifts to the door to the hospital…Dez standing outside, watching…she wipes a tear, small smile….Then she says to herself)

Dez: “Hell, they’ll always find a way…Even in spite of my asshole brother…”

(She pulls out her phone…dials Cal)

Dez: “Hey angel boy…are you on your way up here? It’s almost butthead time”

(She listens…)

Dez: “A coyote? What the hell?”

(She listens more…Cal explains everything)

Dez: “I need to get home! Bessie! Prissy! The others!...Wait..I hear a Bessie…you don’t have a Bessie!….Where are you?”

(scene shifts to the D Ranch Stable…Cal is seen standing in the doorway to the stable, talking to Dez on phone)

Cal: “I am here with your animals…I have brought them into the stable…I will wait here until you return”

Dez: “You’re guarding my animals?”

Cal: “Well yes…are they not dear to you?”

Dez: “Yes! But you didn’t have to…..”

Cal: “My Destiny…if they are loved by you, then I too shall love them…Is that not how love works?”

(She thinks back on the scene in the hospital room, then the scene she witnessed at the park area bench…She smiles…)

Dez: “Yes baby…that’s exactly how love works…(Pause) “Have I told you lately that I love you?”

Cal: “My Destiny…it may have been so long ago I cannot recall!”

(She grins…)

Dez: “Butthead…it was earlier today…”

Cal: “Too long ago…eons ago…”

Dez: “Thank you, Cal..I love you”

(He is seen smiling…)

Cal: “I live again….”

Dez: “You’re getting it right, angel boy….Now…what do I tell my asshole brother?”

Cal: “Tell him I have called, consulted with Dr Taft, and he agreed…He has called in orders for him to be checked out…I have seen the readings from the MRG…when we began, his nerve conductivity was 5…complete paralysis….This morning, they are at 40…Phenomenal progress!”

Dez: “Well call me stupid, but what do the numbers have to be?”

Cal: “A nerve conductivity reading of 45 shows some control…50 is considered fully functioning…We are now at the point the therapy can do no more…the rest is up to him, and to God…I can do no more for him…”

Dez: “Lover boy, you’ve worked wonders…and I know you did it for me…I love you…I love you, Cal….Thank you…”

Cal: “Ah..finally…It had been eons…ages..since I heard those life giving words….”

(Dez’s face shows surprise)

Dez: “Wait..did you just try and tell a joke?”

(surprise on Cal’s face)

Cal: “Yes…why yes!…I suppose I did!”

Dez: “I love you even more, angel baby….I’ll tell Dil and Nell, then get home as quick as I can!...Wait…”

Cal: “Yes?”

(She smiles…)

Dez: “I know it’s been too long since I told you….so…I love you”

Cal “Then I shall live to take another breath…And I do not jest, My Destiny….I love you, as well…”

(She ends the call, smiling….then a sound surprises her)

Nell: “Ahem”

(Dez turns to see Nell and Dil…Nell smiling at her)

Dez: “Yes?”

Nell/Dil: “Barf”

(Dez blushes, then looks at her brother….she sees the dried blood on his arm)

Dez: “How’d that happen?”

Dil: “Groveling on the floor in a puddle of my self pity”

(She looks at both of them..)

Dez: “You two….you okay?”

Nell: “Yea…better than okay….better than ever…”

Dez: “Good…because you’re checking out…And there’s a problem…I’ll tell you on the way up”

(She stops…turns to Dil…)

Dez: “I’m sorry bubba…I’m sorry I talked to you like that..”

Dil: “You did exactly what I deserved…Thank you”

(She rears back with her arm, then punches him in the shoulder…Dil winces)

Dil: “What was that for?”

Dez: “For making me talk to my brother like that!”

(She squats by his chair, wraps her arms around his neck)

Dez: “Love you Bubba…It’s going to be okay….I promise…”

Dil: “Yes it is…my bride to be said so, and you say so. That’s good enough for me…Now…what’s going on back home?”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens at the D Ranch, dusk…Cal is seen standing at the stable doors, looking across the pasture….He smiles at something…)

Cal: ‘Ah…you have braved the fence…Excellent…”

(View shifts to pasture…The rabid coyote is seen standing, 50 yards away…the body of the animals is trembling..The coyote’s brain is sending signals to kill…it’s mouth salivates, mixing with foam gathered at the junction of upper and lower jaws…)

Cal: “You have betrayed the Balance, you have turned your back on the Design…”

(The coyote barks…steps closer….but stops…two thoughts go to war in its brain)

Coyote: (thoughts) “Kill…Run…”

(Cal begins to walk towards the trembling animal…)

Cal; “So….your angels still dance with your demons?...How strong are the angels? How powerful are your demons?...Let us see…”

(Cal pulls a knife from his pocket…he opens it…He stops, rolls up his sleeve, then runs the razor sharp blade over his forearm…Blood begins to seep out…then drip…Cal lifts his arm to his mouth and softly blows on the wound…The coyote stares….ears up..Nostrils flaring, testing the air….As Cal blows, a breeze comes up and takes the scent of Cal’s blood to the coyote…The ultra-sensitive nasal passages

pick up the blood molecules travelling on the breeze, then translate the signals to the brain….Then…The coyote jumps towards Cal, falls, begins snarling, barking, twirling on its legs, it's mouth flinging rabid foam in a circle, the brain sending signals of the taste of human flesh, the tenderness, the sweetness so unlike the forest animals…Then the eyes losing what yellow they had, now fully red, full of wrath and violence and the desire to kill, the focus on the human…the origin of the frantic signals roaring in its brain. The coyote hears the strange sounds come from the human's mouth)

Cal: "Come to me…come here to me…come and try and kill me, come and try to feast on my flesh….come to me…."

(He repeats the taunt, walking slowly to the coyote, watching it spasm from the overload in its senses…)

Cal: "Food..flesh….come…come and let us go to war…just as I and your ancestors once did….Come and let us find out which is the killer and which is the prey"

(The coyote stops its thrashing….one more look at the human advancing…the violent signals now overwhelmed by another sensation….Fear…The human whispers…Somehow the animal understands…and dashes towards the tree line)

Cal: (whisper) "…Abomination"

(He watches as the coyote runs to the wire fence, leaps, clears it easily….It does not stop to taunt the human…it runs)

Cal: "You..me….This is not over"

(scene fades to black and white)

Scene opens at the D Ranch, kitchen table, Dil sitting in wheelchair, Nell next to him, Dez and Cal across the table, sitting. Dez has a glass of Bessie's milk in front of her, half full pitcher in middle of table. Dez picks up the glass, takes healthy gulp of the raw milk. Dil looks at the glass of milk, then looks over at Cal….Dil's face changes to show a curious look…Cal sees it, shakes his head….Dil's face falls…disappointed)

Dil: "Hey…just askin'…"

Cal: "Understandable…You feel the milk had something to do with your sister's remission….."

Dil: "Well…didn't it?"

(Cal shrugs…Dil frowns…)

Dil: "We're gonna have to work on your….(pause).."..communication"

Dez: "He doesn't have to work on anything…."

(Nell smiles at Dez..)

Nell: "Because he's perfect, right?"

(Dez stares at Nell for a moment….then smiles, leans over and kisses Cal on the cheek)

Dez: "Pretty much!"

Dil: "Barf"

(Dez grins…)

Dez: "Barf on all you want, bubba…"

(They are interrupted by the sounds of horses whinnying….Dil instinctively starts to push himself up from his wheelchair…Nell quickly places a hand on his arm…)

Nell: 'Stay, big boy….I'll go check…"

(Cal looks towards the front of the house, stares in the direction of the stable)

Cal: "It is only an owl"

(Dil stares at Cal….)

Cal: "It is a regular visitor….It lands on the branch of the olive tree closest to the back patio, then flies from there to the stable…(small grin for Dil) "Nothing mysterious, I assure you"

Dil: "No way"

Cal: "Way indeed…"

(Dil rolls his chair away from the table…)

Cal: "My Destiny….(then looks at Nell) "Mother…perhaps the both of you would like to check the horses?"

(Dil looks at Cal….Cal is looking back….Dez closes her eyes…purses her lips…then gets up…)

Dez: "Come on sis…It's time…"

(Nell looks at her curiously, then gets up….Dil, looking at Cal, speaks to Dez)

Dil: "Take a gun"

(He pauses)

Dil: 'And take your time"

(Dez stares at Dil, frowning….She places a hand on Cal's shoulder, squeezes it…Cal reaches up, gives her a reassuring look…He speaks softly to her)

Cal: "This is too long in coming…we will be fine..Go…..but please, do not shoot the owls…They are only doing what nature intended…"

(Dil gives one more look at Cal, disapproving…Nell watches, leans down, kisses Dil on the cheek…)

Nell: “Play nice”

(Nell and Dez walk out of the kitchen, Dez stopping by her room, comes back with 9mm in a shoulder holster, slung over her shoulder, hanging down by her side…Nell and Dez walk out, through the front door…)

(Scene shifts to Nell and Dez outside, walking to the stable…)

Dez; “Kinda scared, sis”

Nell: “They’re having that talk…”

Dez: “Yea…Cal knows Bubba has questions…”

Nell: “If you were Dil, wouldn’t you?”

Dez: “Of course…but the truth…if Cal tells him what the truth…is…christ, Sis….I’d think he was crazy”

Nell: “Maybe not…I think it’s wonderful!”

(Dez stops, looks at Nell…)

Dez: “What’s wonderful…?”

Nell: “Cal…who he is…or was…I’m not sure which now…but he told me…And it’s the most wonderful thing that could ever happen to you…”

Dez: “He told you? Nell! He said he was going to…But…”

Nell: “But what? I never came running to you asking? Or screaming he’s a nutcase?”

Dez: “Okay…yea….”

Nell: “Did he tell you why he told me?”

Dez: “No, he didn’t…And I’ve learned not to ask too much…”

(Nell gives Dez a big smile….)

Nell: “He wanted to ask my opinion on something….and to ask me what he needed help with, he had to tell me…”

Dez: “That made absolutely no sense whatsoever….”

Nell: “It will!”

(They are both startled when they hear the loud call of an owl, coming from inside the stable…)

Dez: “No way!”

(Nell Imitates Cal’s soft voice)

Nell: “Indeed way”

(Both quicken their pace to the stable, open one of the double doors, walk in…Dez flips the light switch by the inside entrance…Three large lights, running from front to back, come on, illuminating the stable…They hear another call from the owl…They look upwards, and Dez sees the large bird…She points, excited, whispering to Nell)

Dez: “Look! Up in the corner by the opening…!”

(Nell looks up, sees the large owl, sitting upright, its head swiveling towards them….Nell’s face brightens up)

Nell: “I see! Cal was right! Oh my god, I can see the head of the mother too!”

Dez; “Yea…it’s so cool….but it’s early….”

Nell: “Early?”

Dez: “Owls usually nest in March…They’re a month ahead of schedule…”

(Nell, still looking at the owls, in wonder…)

Nell: “Think it’s a sign, angel girl?”

Dez: “I don’t know…I’m learning that everything’s a sign…and what’s with the angel girl thing? I’m not the one that’s…whatever…”

Nell: “No…I just think you’re an angel…that’s all!”

(Dez shakes her head, looking at Nell…)

Dez: “You’re a trip, sis….But maybe it IS a sign..Maybe nature is telling you you’re going to have that baby early?”

(Nell looks at her in awe….)

Nell: “You think? Oh my god, that would be wonderful! Dil’s so anxious….”

(Nell looks again at Nell…she notices Nell’s excitement was for Dil…not herself…)

Nell: “Or maybe the owls just couldn’t resist the temptation…”

Dez: “Yea…maybe they stared intensely at each other and started ripping each other’s feathers off…knocked leaves off the branches, feathers flying everywhere….”

(Nell considers what Dez just said…she thinks….then a blush comes over her face, she hides her face in her hands…and from behind the hands….)

Nell: “I have no idea what you’re talking about….”

Dez: “Uh huh…”

(They both continue to look at the owls…scene shows Prissy and Bessie are looking upwards as well…)

(scene shifts to the kitchen….Cal is shown leaning on the table, his arms on the table in front of him…Dil is seen leaning back in his chair…His face wide-eyed, jaw partially open…)

Cal: "And there, my friend…is the truth…."

(Dil doesn't respond…he stares more at Cal)

Cal: "This is the moment you tell me I am…"

(Dil finally starts to speak)

Dil: "I…I think I already knew..no footsteps in the snow…you make from the stable to the fence almost instantly…Just didn't want…or…could not…"

Cal: "Get your brain around it?..As you say..?"

Dil: "Head…head around it…but yea…that works..So..you're…but won't be.."

Cal: "It is my hope…yes…"

Dil: "You'd give that up….for Sis.."

Cal; "It is either that, or we cannot be….What would you not relinquish to keep The Nell?"

(Dil looks at him….shakes his head…)

Dil: "Nothing"

Cal: "It is important to her….that you approve…"

Dil: "Could I stop it?"

Cal: "No…or perhaps yes…She would be in the tragic position of having to choose…between you, who she loves so dearly, and me…."

Dil: "Who she loves just as much…."

(Dil stares at Cal for a moment….Then leans forward)

Dil: "Tell me you love her"

(Cal smiles…His eyes brighten, then gold flecks begin dancing in his eyes….)

Dil: "Never mind…I can see…."

Cal: "It is indescribable…the short response is, Yes, I love her…But it goes…it goes so much deeper…"

Dil: "She's happy, Cal…she's happy for the first time in…hell, the first time ever…"

(He thinks…then his face turns to concern…)

Dil: "She's also easy to hurt, Cal…right now, she's in love…and her walls are dropping…you could so easily hurt her…without even knowing it…And if you changed your mind? If you got tired of…"

Cal: "I know..and I watch for her pain to begin….I can feel it, sense it, and everything inside me rises up to protect her…For me to hurt her…even unknowingly..It would grieve me in ways you cannot fathom…"

(Cal pauses)

Cal: "Her happiness, is my happiness..Not in the way you understand that, but in a way far beyond…When my kind love…When I love..it is unconditional, it is forever, unstoppable….I cannot hurt your sister without hurting myself 10 times over…"

(Dil is listening, closely…watching the flecks swim in Cal's eyes…)

Dil: "Children….what about children….You know…her mastectomy did not include a hysterectomy. Have you thought about children?"

(Dil pauses…then his eyes widen)

Dil: 'Could you even HAVE children?"

(Cal smiles….)

Cal; "Children…a child, born of our love? What a magnificent thought….Yes…we could…but no, we have not discussed it…I am…(pauses) "…afraid to ask?"

Dil: 'Would they be normal? Jesus, Cal…sorry…but I have to ask…."

Cal; "Of course…and yes, the children are as all children are….I do, however, wait…for the Decision"

Dil: "To see if you're not you anymore..or it…whatever"

Cal; "Will I be never again as I am, or will I be forever as I am…Or, in an infinite wisdom, would it be decided I would be both? I do not know…But…I wait"

Dil: "Does it make a difference?"

Cal; "No…It is simply something I would want to know"

Dil "Yea..I get it…uh..not really, but I think I do…kinda…"

(Cal looks at Dil)

Cal: "You, surprisingly….seem to be accepting this…."

(Dil stares at Cal for a moment…)

Dil: "I knew it the moment you looked at Dez…and when she looked back…"

Cal: "Knew what?"

Dil: "I couldn't stop it…I knew I couldn't stop her…hell, no one can…but you…Cal, I didn't know whether to just go up to you, give you a family hug, cut through all the bullshit, and call you brother…Or…"

Cal: "Kill me?"

(Cal chuckles…Dil does not….he simply shrugs…)

Cal: "I see…"

(Cal looks over at the bench by the French doors to the kitchen…he smiles…)

Dil: 'Hey….Want to learn about something that Sis likes?"

(scene shifts to Dez and Nell walking back into the house…Dez turns to Nell)

Dez: "I'm freaking out"

Nell: "About them?"

Dez; "Yes! What if Bubba says 'no'? What if he flips his wig? Or one of mine…"

Nell: "Have some faith in him, sis…he just wants you to be happy"

Dez: "But Nell…what if…What if he does say no? I'd have to choose between the two of them…The thought of it makes me sick!"

Nell: "No way….(pauses) "Who would you choose?"

(They startle…yelling voices can be heard coming from the kitchen…The voices of Dil and Cal can be heard, loud)

(Dez looks over at Nell in panic…..Nell looks back her…the same look of disbelief on her face)

Dil: (yelling) "I WILL NOT ALLOW IT!"

Cal: (yelling) "YOU CANNOT STOP ME! I AM TOO POWERFUL!"

(scene shifts to the edge of the hillside….A tree limb, broken off the tree during a storm, lays over the wire fence, its tip touching the ground on the pasture side….Under the cover of the leaves, the coyote lays, watching the two human females walk from the animal den to the human dwelling place…the red eyes of the coyote lock on Dez)

Coyote: (thoughts) "She reeks of the Other…"

(Then the eyes shift to Nell, suddenly the coyote begins trembling, salivating)

Coyote: (thoughts) "The human carries a cub…(the coyote's heart begins racing) "so soft…so tender…"

(The animal continues to stare, its mind fixating on Nell…)

Coyote: (thoughts) "Wait… kill…open her…then feast…"

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in NCIS bullpen, Gibbs sitting at his old desk, McGee at his desk, arm in a shoulder sling..Torres sits at his desk, looking over at Bishop's desk...confusion on his face….)

Mcgee: "Torres…you having flashbacks?"

Torres; "No man…having trouble with the flashpresent"

Gibbs; "Separation anxiety, Torres?"

Torres; "No…(high pitch voice) "Me? Freaked out without my daughter? No way…."

McGee: "You have the right to take spousal leave Torres…"

Gibbs: "Yea, Torres…go home….(looks at Mcgee) "If your team leader tells you to…"

(McGee looks over at Gibbs…)

McGee: "It's okay boss…you sitting there just seems right…."

(McGee turns to Torres)

McGee: "So, Nick…if it's not wanting to be with your daughter…"

(Torres's face looks up, frustration on his face)

Torres; "I do! Sue me! It's no Bueno being here when Nickie needs her Padre!..."

McGee; "So…go home!"

(Torres looks down…mumbles…)

Gibbs: "Torres…speak up…"

Torres; "Can't"

McGee: "Can't speak up or can't go home?"

Torres: "Si…no Bueno…"

McGee: "Wait a minute…you've been staring all morning long at Bishop's desk…"

(scene shifts to Bishop's desk…Dawson stares back, waves and smiles at Torres)

Dawson: “I may bring a potted plant tomorrow”

Gibbs; “Nesting, huh, Dawson?”

(Dawson waves her hands around, taking it all in..)

Dawson: “I think I like this desk”

(Torres speaks under his breath)

Torres: “Oh madre de dios me protégé “

Gibbs: “Mother of God protect me?”

(Torres ignores Gibbs..keeps speaking in a whisper)

Torres: “Protogeme de me mujer que me asesinara”

(Gibbs chuckles…shakes his head..)

Gibbs: “Yea…I wouldn’t want to be you right now, Torres”

Dawson: “What did he say?”

McGee: “Something about asking for protection from a woman that would murder him”

Dawson: “Okay…so I’ll move to another desk”

Torres: “Beuno…muy Bueno…”

McGee: “Nope…I’m training you…I need you right across from me”

Torres; “Hey…Put her across from me! I’ll train her! I already know her!”

(Gibbs looks over at Torres, shakes his head, looks back down at some papers)

McGee: “Not your job, Nick…”

Torres; “Dinozzo trained Ziva!”

(Gibbs looks down, small grin, shakes his head)

Gibbs: ‘Oh yea…that turned out good”

(McGee’s phone rings…he answers…)

McGee: “NCIS, Special Agent, Team Leader Timothy McGee speaking, how may I help you?”

(Everyone turns to stare at McGee, especially Dawson..)

Torres: “Anyone got that written down?”

Dawson: “When he hangs up, call him…When he answers, I’ll start taking dictation”

(McGee ignores them, listens…then..)

McGee: "Yes, I remember…we received it, but could make no positive ID on it"

(Listens more….)

McGee: "Alright, maybe she can help us identify it..Send her up"

(McGee ends the call…He looks down at the phone, then up at Gibbs)

McGee: "Remember the package we got several months ago…"

Gibbs: "Yea….a finger"

Torres: "I remember that! I opened the box!"

(Gibbs smiles)

Gibbs; "Squealed like a girl"

Torres: "It scared me! Here I am, doing the mail open thing, being helpful, open a box, and I'm looking at a dead finger!"

Dawson: "You ever get live fingers here?"

Gibbs: "Not yet…but we're waiting…."

Torres: "Man, the finger was wrinkled up…muy nasty…."

McGee: "It was burned…Kasie couldn't get prints, they were burned off…The DNA wasn't in any of our databases…No ID could be made"

(McGee pauses…looks towards the elevators)

McGee: "There's a visitor coming up…wife of…actually, ex-wife of a Navy Ensign. Says she knows something about it…"

(The elevator door opens, a middle aged woman, nicely dressed, long wool coat, matching gloves… sees McGee, walks up to him…)

Woman: "Are you NCIS Special Agent Team Leader Timothy McGee May I help you?"

(Torres laughs…Dawson bites her lip, facing the woman)

McGee: "Yes ma'am..(pauses, lets out a sigh) "That would be me…"

Woman: 'My name is Kathy Wooding…I used to be married to Ensign Gregory Wooding…I lost something in the divorce that belongs to me…I believe you have it?"

(McGee looks at her, questioningly….)

McGee; "Mrs Wooding? We don't keep anything regarding a civil matter here at NCIS, unless it's evidence in a criminal matter....What is it you think we have of yours?"

Kathy: "I believe you have my finger"

(The woman holds up one gloved hand, pulls it completely off, holds up a burned hand, skin badly wrinkled.... one finger is missing, a short stub where it used to be)

Kathy: "Divorces can get nasty"

(Gibbs looks at her, then at the hand..His eyebrows go up…)

Gibbs: "Ya think?"

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens at the D Ranch, Dez and Nell in the living room, hearing the yelling coming from the kitchen, between Dil and Cal…Dez is panicked, Nell fearful for her..The men's voices echo out from the kitchen…)

Dil: (yelling) "I WILL NOT ALLOW IT!"

Cal: (yelling) "YOU CANNOT STOP ME! I AM TOO POWERFUL!"

Dil: (yelling) "I WILL WIPE YOU OFF THE FACE OF THIS PLANET!"

Cal: (yelling) "YOU ARE INCAPABLE OF SUCH A FEAT!"

(Nell has her hands to her mouth, horrified…Dez looks at Nell, pleading….then they both run into the kitchen, Dez crying out to the two men…)

Dez: "No! Please! Both of you STOP!…JUST STOP!"

(Dez stops in her tracks…Nell, following, immediately stops also…Dil looks up at Dez)

Dil: "Huh?"

(Dez and Nell are looking at both men, sitting at the kitchen table, both have laptops in front of them…..Dil looks at Dez, confused…)

Dil: "Stop what?"

(Dez stares at the both of them….her face blank…Nell begins to giggle..Dez looks at Cal, her voice almost child like)

Dez: "Cal, honey…what are you doing?"

(Cal points at Dil, then crosses both arms over his chest…His face shows disbelief)

Cal: "He was going to pound my Troll army with his winged hammer! Which he had turned radioactive by picking up the right number of golden treasure chests…Of course, I had anticipated it, and fortified myself with the power left in my fallen gremlitrogs…"

Dez: "A game..Gremlitrogs…so the yelling…."

(Cal looks at Dez with surprise on his face)

Cal: "It is very realistic! My Trolls were about to defeat his angel battalions…"

Dez: "Wait (points at Cal) …you're the troll army? (points to Dil) "And he's the angel army?"

Cal: "Yes! I thought it wise to see what the enemy would do….I must confess..it is rather…(pause) "Invigorating!"

(Nell's giggles have turned into laughter….Dil looks at her, still confused…)

Dil: "Nell? What the hell is so funny?..And sis,,,why did you barge in all wound up?"

(Dez looks at both of them….back and forth…)

Dez: "So…you two…you're okay?"

Dil "Yea…why wouldn't we be?"

Dez: "Cal…you told him….he…he's okay…?"

Cal: "Why yes, why would he not be?"

(Dil looks over at Cal, winks…Dez catches it…)

Dez; "YOU SORRY SON OF A BITCH!"

(She looks around for something to grab…Nell quickly hands her a pot holder…)

Dez: "You had me worried that you two were fighting!"

(Slaps his shoulder with the pot holder)

Dez: "I thought you were telling him he couldn't be with me!"

(She slaps his arm with the potholder)

Dil: 'Damn sis! I'm glad Nell didn't give you a frying pan!"

(Dez thinks…)

Dez: "WHERE'S A FRYING PAN?"

Dil: 'Sis! We're fine! I kinda knew! We were talking about you two having children!"

Dez: "Someone give me….."

(She stops…stands still…She faces Cal with a blank look…then a whisper..)

Dez: "Children?"

(scene fades to black and white)

The Next Day

(Scene opens at the D Ranch, Nell and Dil in the pasture, near the stable…Nell pushing Dil in his chair, enjoying the breeze)

Nell: "You've been so good…I'm proud of you"

Dil: 'Trying"

Nell: "I know…it's been hard on you"

Dil: "Not really…just some parts"

(she laughs, puts one hand on his shoulder)

Nell: "The bathroom parts?"

(He smiles)

Dil: "Yea, but it's not the worst part"

Nell: "What is?"

(He hesitates…reaches behind him with one hand, places it on hers..says nothing..She squeezes his hand)

Nell: "I know…But I've loved it…it's been soft, gentle…and finally, I feel like…I don't know…"

(She hesitates, then finishes)

Nell: "I feel like more than just a part of it…Finally I'm giving…Making you feel…(pauses, looking for words)"

Dil: 'Wonderful? Great? ..(pause, searching also)"

Dil: 'Making me feel loved?"

(She nods, blushes…)

Nell: "I hope so"

Dil: "Can you come around here please?"

(She does, he can see she's blushing…)

Dil: "Too much talk?"

(She shakes her head, kneels down on the grass, rests her head on his legs)

Nell: 'Just talk I've never had before"

(She pauses, then)

Nell: "Do you really feel loved?"

Dil: 'Yes…There's a couple of things this whole ordeal has taught me…One…When we're together…When we're intimate, I was dreading it. Embarrassed, afraid, not feeling like…..I don't know…not feeling like a man…Then you…."

(She turns red, hides her face in his legs…He places one hand on her head…)

Dil: "Then last night…you said.."

(scene switches to Dil remembering the moment… Nell and Dil in bed, Dil laying on his back, Nell raising up, touching his face, gently)

Nell: "Please…let me…Let this be all for you…Let me show you how much I love you and adore you….and how much I want you…."

(Scene switches back to pasture)

Dil: "I remember feeling……"

(He can feel her head nod against his legs…)

Dil: "I felt loved…more than that, I felt..If this doesn't work out…if I never walk again….We'll be okay…"

(She blushes a deeper red, then slaps his leg…)

Nell: "Don't say that! It's going to be fine!"

(Silence…Dil is looking at his legs….fear and amazement…)

Dil: "Nell…hit me again…."

Nell: "No!"

Dil: "Slap my legs again…I felt you nod…"

(She raises her head up, looking at him in surprise….She raises her hand up, and slaps his upper thigh…hard)

Dil: 'Ow!"

(She smiles…slaps it again)

Dil: "Ow again!"

(Then his face contorts….pain shoot through his legs…he screams….)

Nell: "That pain! It's time!"

(scene shifts to the edge of the fence line…the coyote, laying again under the shelter of the fallen limb, hears the scream of the human….He also sees them close together….He wants her alone…His hunger increases…his brain starts sending a wave of signals to his body….His mind reels with intense input…All towards killing the female and feasting on her cub…He rises from the ground, his body trembling in anticipation, his mouth foaming, and his eyes, blood red, focus on the female….)

(scene shifts back to Dil, still sitting, slapping at his legs, then pounding with his fist....Nell looks at him, a scared look on her face)

Nell: "Dil stop! You're going to break your leg!"

Dil: (yelling) "I can't feel it anymore! It's gone! It's gone!"

(He continues to pound, Nell leans back forward, grabbing his hands….)

Nell: "NO! No more…"

(Dil looks back down at her…his face the most fearful she's ever seen…He pleads…)

Dil: "It went away…It didn't work…Nell…god…no…no….."

Nell: 'Baby…it's just a start…your legs are telling you they're getting ready….Honey, Cal said your legs would warn you….Baby…."

(He looks to her….listens…his fear lessens)

Dil: "Yea…maybe…."

(She moves closer)

Nell: "I know it's scary.."

Dil: "I've been wanting this…for days…Now…(looks at her) "Now, I don't know….I'm going to find out if I….if I ever…"

Nell: "You'll find out…either way…we're going to be okay…."

(He looks at her, his face afraid…..he says nothing…She speaks for him…)

Nell: "You're afraid…you're terrified about finding out…"

(He nods)

Nell: "And you're still afraid about me…."

(He nods again…)

Dil: 'I'm sorry…."

Nell: "It's okay….I know you feel that…honey, anyone would…but you'll find out, either way….I love you"

(She looks him in the eyes…)

Nell: "Remember how you felt when I wanted to love you? I remember how I felt…It was wonderful…your arms held me tight…your hands, strong enough to break me, but they were the softest hands…I loved it so much…"

(She pauses…watching for his reaction…then he speaks…)

Dil: 'Do you need me?"

(She smiles, nods)

Nell: "Oh yes, baby…I need you"

Dil: 'Do you know I need you? Do you know, that I know…that I need you so much…?"

(eyes moist, smiling)

Nell: "I know…and I know you know it…so, yes, I know you need me"

(He gives a small smile, mixed with the fearful eyes)

Dil: 'Then everything's going to be okay…."

Nell: "Yes, baby…everything's going to be alright"

(She gets up, kisses him…then walks to the back of his chair)

Nell: "Let's go back…I'm kinda scared if we do anything else, we'll be pushing it…He said if you pushed it too much, to soon, even after they hurt, you could…"

Dil: "I remember…50/50.."

Nell: "Even odds, but let's not test those right now. We'll wait until they start hurting again…"

(He nods…they start to head back towards the house)

Dil: 'OH god…stop…."

Nell: "Honey?"

(He grabs his legs….then screams….Then he screams again….)

Dil: 'NELL!"

(She turns quickly to the front of the chair…leans down….)

Nell: “Is it time? Do you think….”

(He shakes his head…yells..)

Dil: “ I DON’T WANT TO KNOW!”

Nell: “Easy then…try to stand…I’ll help you….remember…no sudden movements…then a slow walk….easy baby…”

(He nods…then grabs his legs, starts screaming again…..Nell’s face is covered in tears now, but she talks to him, calmly…)

Nell: “I’m going to walk away….then you get up….stand…walk a couple of steps to me…”

(scene shifts to the coyote…his ears perk up at the sound of screams…he looks towards the humans…He sees the one bearing the cub move away from the other one….)

(scene shifts to the house, Cal and Dez outside, Cal in the stable, Dez at the front porch watching Dil and Nell in the pasture, far off..Nell is trotting away from Dil……Dez hears Dil’s screams…Then she sees a flash of brown and grey dart out from near the fence line…

Dez: “CAL!”

(She begins sprinting across the pasture towards them)

(scene opens in the stable…Cal talking to Bessie, listening to her moo, a smile on his face…Then his head turns…He looks in the direction of the pasture)

Cal: “He is here”

(Cal bolts out of the stable…)

(scene shifts to the pasture…Nell nervously trotting, mouthing prayers…She gets far enough away, then turns to Dil)

Nell: “Come on baby….easy…”

Dil: “No!”

Nell: “Please…I’m here…I need you try…come to me….Try honey….please…just stand…”

(Dil looks down at his legs….)

Dil: (to self) “Come on soldier…”

(Images of boot camp flash through his head….A Drill Instructor screaming in his face)

Instructor: (screaming) “I DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU STAND FOR, PRIVATE BOSWORTH! YOU HEAR ME MAGGOT! WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?”

(He places his hands on the arms of the wheelchair…)

Nell: (watching him..whispering) "Come on baby…you can do it…"

(Dil pushes up…he is able to bring one leg off the footstand…then the other…He flexes his stomach muscles, and strains…with the help of his arms, his body rises up…..)

Nell: (yelling) "You're standing! Baby, you're standing!"

(scene shifts to Dez, sprinting…she's a runner…few can match her…until something streaks by her…leaving her behind…)

Dez: "Cal?"

(scene shifts to the coyote…sprinting towards the female…his eyes fixed on her soft stomach…his legs churn faster, drivin by the insanity that has completely take over…)

(scene shifts to Nell…she is jumping up and down, clapping, crying, shouting)

Nell: "You're standing! You're standing!..Now slowly..come to me! Come to me! Not too fast! But come to me !"

(Dil looks down, amazement and joy on his face…He takes a step…pain shoots up his leg…but the joy takes over, he feels a sudden urge to run….)

Dil: "Hurt all you want you son of a bitch….I'm not running! He told me I'd feel that way…Now…one step…"

(He sends a command to his leg…it obeys…his leg moves up and forward, then down…Then the other leg…)

(scene shifts to Nell…Her faces goes into shock….A coyote is running straight towards her….foam spraying out of its mouth as it speeds towards her…..She instinctively drops her hands to her stomach, protecting the baby..and just as instinctively, she screams…)

Nell: (screaming) "DILLLLLLLLL"

(scene shifts back to Dil….He looks up at Nell, his face smiling….then he sees the coyote…its running straight for her, impossibly fast….)

(scene shifts to Nell, she is still screaming Dil's name….then she stops…The coyote is near…then nearer…She can see it preparing to leap at her stomach….she closes her eyes, grabs her stomach tight…)

Nell: "Not my baby…not my baby…..not my baby…."

(She opens her eyes, turns to run….Then 240 pounds of streaking, fearful, terrified man slams into the coyote, knocking them both to the ground….The coyote leaps back up and pounces on the human that has deprived him of his prize…)

Nell: "DILLLLL!"

(The ground erupts in chaos….The growls and snarls of the coyote are matched by the roars of the man, both interchangeable, both filling the air with the clamor of a fight to the death…The coyote snaps at the human's neck, the man twists, it tears into a shoulder, the human pounds the coyote's face with its fist, hammering the coyotes skull with multiple blows…The coyote rages, twisting and turning on the ground as the human grabs its face, thumbs searching for its eyes. The coyote's body is spiraling, doubling over, forward and backwards, snapping back and forth in motion so fast it's a blur to the eye, the animal attempting to loosen itself from the hands of the human, it's jaws ripping into human flesh as it tries to pull away…Then one hand releases its head, and it sees a chance, it sees the throat…its jaws, lightning quick, snap towards the soft flesh of the neck…just as an unbelievably powerful blow, driven by fear for his mate more than fear of the coyote, smashes into its head, then instantly, another blow, then another….then there is darkness….The coyote drops to the ground, lays still….and closes its eyes…the man rolls over on his back, ragged breathing coming from his mouth and nose)

Nell: (Shrieking) "DIL! DIL!"

(She looks at the father of her child…their baby…Dil is on the ground, covered in blood…some his, some of the animal's…He rolls again, comes to his hands and knees…still breathing hard, shaking from fear and adrenaline….He looks up at a horrified Nell…she is reaching for him…then falls on her knees next to him…)

Nell: "Oh god oh god…Dil…you're…you're bleeding everywhere…You came…you shouldn't have come…but you did…baby…oh god"

(The coyote's eyes open…rage flows…and a feeling never before felt…Revenge….The human's back is to it..It sees the throat so close…It tenses…slowly draws its hind legs up, feels firm dirt under its paws…and leaps at the throat…Just as a voice screams out)

Cal; 'ABOMINATION!"

(The coyote leaps into the air towards Dil…He sees it, pushes Nell to the ground, unable to fight any longer…he covers her with his body, protecting her, looking up….and sees the coyote stop in mid leap…A hand around its throat…)

Cal: "I TOLD YOU WE WERE NOT FINISHED!"

(Cal is seen standing straight up…He has the coyote in one hand, holding the animal, his hand clamped around the coyote's throat, the animal thrashing, snarling, jaws biting at air….Dil looks….it's impossible….he sees a man is holding 100 pounds of thrashing animal as if it's nothing, his arm extended straight out, unwavering, gripping it with one hand…Dez has reached them… she is staring at Cal and the coyote, disbelief on her face…They all hear Cal speak calmly to the diseased animal, still thrashing in the grasp…)

Cal: "It is finished now"

(Cal's hand squeezes, a crack is heard as the neck bones snap…The head lolls to one side, then flops over, it's eyes glaze, then as the life signals stop, as the muscles of the eyes no longer work to keep the eyes closed, they open…Life has left its body….In disgust, Cal tosses the animal aside, watching it hit the ground, laying still)

Nell: "Help us Cal! Help us!"

(Cal turns from the dead animal, rushes to Dil…Cal's face shows horror as he sees Dil on the ground, bloodied, torn…then rolling off of Nell, turns to face her..his face anxious…)

Dil: 'You...our baby….are you both okay…"

(The crying, terrified woman answers)

Nell: "Yes! We're okay….Dil..you ran! You shouldn't have run!"

Dil: (weakly) "Had to…Had to stand……..A man has to stand …for something…"

(Cal reaches for him…Dil pushes his hand away…He rolls over, gets to his hands and knees…His memory returns to the drill instructor screaming in his face…)

"WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?"

(Dil pushes himself up…screams out loud at the instructor in his mind, screams for the pain in his legs)

Dil: "I STAND FOR MY WIFE!"

"WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR MAGGOT?"

(he struggles past the pain to try and raise his body)

Dil: "I STAND FOR MY DAUGHTER!"

(He gets one leg in front of him, he rises more, his legs screaming, his face contorting in pain…)

Cal; "My god in heaven….no man can withstand…."

"I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU STAND FOR MAGGOT! WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?"

(Nell looks at her man, clothes torn, flesh bleeding, blood running down the side of his head, a bare spot shows on his scalp from the coyote's teeth….And he's never been more beautiful)

"HAVE YOU FINALLY FIGURED OUT WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?"

(Dil looks at Nell…his face in pain, but his voice strong…He mouths silently to Nell)

Dil: "I need you"

(Then he tells the Instructor he's finally figured it out…he speaks firmly)

"I stand for my family"

(scene fades to black and white)

(Scene opens in the D Ranch kitchen, everything cleared off the kitchen table, Cal helping Dil up on the table, then laying him down. Dil's clothes torn, bleeding from multiple bites and cuts…Dez is at the sink, running water, pulling several dish towels out of the drawer)

Dez: "Nell, in my room, the armoire closet…there are boxes of gauze, alcohol wipes, and bandages….and get me…(she moves to Dil, looks at cuts…) "…well, there's a blue plastic case on the top shelf..The staple gun…I'll need that.."

(Nell, standing by Dil, looks at him, her face fearful…he nods his head…)

Dil: 'It's okay…she's done this a few times"

Nell: "Dil…what about…what about rabies…the reports said…"

Dez: "Imovax"

(Cal looks over at Dez, cocks his head)

Dez: "Intramuscular, 2 days before we went to Russia"

Cal: "He has been vaccinated?"

Dez: "Standard with overseas land ops people….Middle East neighborhoods are full of dogs, nobody vaccinates their dogs…rabies is common…Every ops person receives them. I'm vaccinated too"

Cal: "Dosage?"

Dez: "He tested at 1.5 on the scale..It was good, but not perfect…He received the full dose booster shot before we left"

(Cal looks curiously at Dez for a moment, then turns to Dil)

Cal: 'Fortunate…and impressive….Your sister seems to be quite knowledgeable regarding your health"

Dil: 'She's a helicopter mom"

Dez: "Someone has to do it, hardhead…."

Cal: "There are some followup injections you must have, and as soon as we are finished, I shall retrieve them from the office…"

(Nell walks quickly back in the kitchen, hands full of pads, gauze, wipes…)

Nell: "I heard that! Being his momma is my job now!"

(Dil looks at her curiously…then he turns to Dez…Dez nods)

(Dil's face grimaces….he reaches down and grabs both thighs…Cal watches…shakes his head…)

Cal: "I confess, Captain…I have seen much, and can attest your tolerance for pain is extraordinary"

Dil: "Practice"

Dez: "Come on big boy…let's get that shirt off….what's left of it…"

(She begins cutting the shirt, pulling it aside….Dez looks at the evidence of past injuries….several pucker marks indicating gunshot wounds, scars from knives, multiple areas with older stitch marks and staple marks…She stares at his torso…She turns, starts to walk out through the French doors to the patio..)

Dez: “Cal..can you take over?”

(Cal watches her…He turns to Dil)

Cal: “Should I go with her?”

Dil: “Normally, yea….but maybe…”

Nell: “I’ll go…”

(Nell follows Dez outside, finding her standing, looking out on the olive trees…her arms crossed over her chest, hugging herself tightly..Nell comes up to her, wraps her arms around her from behind…Dez takes one hand and places it over Nell’s, in front)

Nell: “It’s been hard on you…”

(Dez nods…says nothing)

Nell: “You really love your brother”

(Dez nods again…)

Nell: “He loves you too, sis”

Dez: “I know”

Nell: ‘I need your help, Dez”

Dez: “How?”

Nell: “I need to learn to be the one that does this now….I need you to teach me”

Dez: “Maybe he won’t need it anymore…he did quit…you know?”

Nell: “This had nothing to do with what he does, honey”

(Dez nods)

Nell: “And, sis…do you think he’ll really stop?”

Dez: “If you ask him to, he will…He’ll do anything for you”

(Silence…then..)

Nell: “I’m not going to ask him to do that”

(Dez, surprised, turns quickly to face Nell)

Dez: “Why? It’s for his own good! It’s for your own good! Your baby’s!”

Nell: “I need him to want to. I need him to make that choice on his own…I’m not going to be the woman that keeps him from being who he is”

(Dez looks to the side, hugging herself again)

Dez: “He really is good at what he does”

Nell: “The best”

Dez: “He’s fearless”

(Nell nods)

Dez: “He really believes that good can win over evil…”

Nell: “Yes..he does”

(Then Dez’s face changes to anger)

Dez: “Then why him? Why does it have to be my brother?”

Nell: “Same reason it has to be my husband…to be…Same reason it has to be the father of our child”

(Dez stares at Nell….)

Dez: “Why then?”

(Nell gives her a shrug….)

Nell: “It’s who he is, sis…Same as Gibbsy, Tim, Nick…Bishop, Leon…You too…”

Dez: “And you…”

Nell: “Only if I have to..it’s not a career choice”

(Dez stares at Nell for a moment, then a small smile)

Dez: “He really is larger than life”

Nell: “Yea..he is”

Dez: “He’s a heroic son of a bitch, isn’t he?”

Nell: “Yes. We both just watched him take on a crazy coyote, fight it with his bare hands”

Dez: “Yes…and god, Nell…I was half scared to death, worried sick….”

Nell: “And half amazed?”

Dez: “YES! My god…it was…….It was magnificent!”

(Dez looks up at Nell…)

Dez: “He’d wither away and die if he couldn’t do it…wouldn’t he?”

Nell: “Probably”

(Dez looks at Nell for a moment, then hugs Nell tightly, starting to cry…)

Dez: “I love you so much!”

(Nell hugs her back)

Nell: “I love you so much too, sis”

(They stand for a moment, hugging, saying nothing..then..)

Dez: “He’s a butthead”

(Nell nods)

Nell: “Yes he is…but he’s a beautiful example of a man butthead”

(Dez nods..then pulls back to face Nell…)

Dez: “Do you think you can do this?”

(Nell shrugs)

Nell: “Do I have a choice?”

(Dez laughs…shakes her head)

Dez: “No”

Nell: “You’re right..Now come on….show me how it’s done”

(Dez nods…but does not move….she’s staring at Nell)

Dez: “I’m really glad you’re here, sis”

Nell: “Hope so”

Dez: “You’re the only real friend I’ve ever had”

(Nell smiles)

Nell: “Sister…I’m the only real sister you’ve ever had”

(Dez smiles…then nods to Nell)

Dez: “Come on…I’ll teach you how to inflict the most pain and he won’t blame it on you…It’s a really good stress reliever”

Nell: “Thank you sis….maybe then you and Cal can….go talk?”

(Dez looks straight ahead….)

Dez: “Yea…we do need to….”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens to Cal and Dez in the ranch jeep, Dez driving, pulling up in front of the Thomas house)

Dez: “I really do like this place”

Cal: “I certainly do hope you do”

(She looks at him curiously…then the light bulb goes off over her head…She smiles)

Dez: “It’s where we’ll live?”

Cal: “If that is your choice”

Dez: “Well, angel boy…it’s either this or you move into the ranch….”

(Cal furrows his brow, stares at her….She laughs)

Dez: “Or not….”

Cal: ‘Will you walk with me? I would like to show you something…”

Dez: “What?”

(He hesitates….)

Cal: “I would like to show you….a gift….”

Dez: “You’re giving me a gift? I love gifts!”

Cal: “It is part from me….and part from someone else….”

(she looks at him curiously…)

Dez: “Someone else? Who?”

Cal: “That, My Destiny, will be for you to determine the truth”

Dez: “Then show me!”

Cal: “Indeed, beloved….”

(She kisses him quickly…then smiles)

Dez: “Do me a favor angel boy?”

Cal: “Of course….what is it?”

Dez: “That funny way you talk? You know…real real old school?”

(she pauses, gives him another peck on the cheek)

Dez: “Don’t ever stop…I love to hear you talk to me that way”

Cal: “Gladly….since it is the only manner in which I know to speak…”

(She jumps out of the jeep….)

Dez: “Come on! Show me!”

(Cal exits the jeep…walks around to her, looks at her shoes…)

Cal: “Boots…good….”

(She looks at her feet)

Cal: “We are going for a short walk….”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens in the hills directly behind Cal’s house….they are climbing up rocks, trails, climbing higher on the side of the hill)

Dez: “Cal! This is a short walk?”

(He stops…listens…then turns to Dez)

Cal; ‘We are here….”

(Dez leans against a large rock…looks down the hill..her face brightens up)

Dez: “Oh my god, Cal! The house…it’s right down there!”

Cal: “Yes…it is…a direct line of sight”

Dez “This is my present?”

(He smiles, turns towards the thicket in front of them….)

Cal: “In a sense yes…and in a sense no….Please…come with me”

(He pushes the thicket aside, small trees and growth…they both push through it)

Cal: “Several nights ago, I was…urged….called…to come here”

Dez: “Nights? You came up here at night?”

Cal: ‘Night..day…There is no difference to me…I received an answer to my request….and this was one of the answers…I turned my eyes towards this area, hearing a cracking sound…and the sounds of rocks falling…”

Nell: “Yea? So?”

(Cal reaches the end of the thicket…He pushes the last limbs aside, allows Dez to go through….when she does…She’s speechless…until she manages a whisper)

Dez: “Oh Cal…..”

(She finds herself speechless again….She looks up at the jagged rock, sees where rocks have broken away…and 20 feet above them, water rushes out of the new opening in the rocks….it falls straight down into other rocks, flowing towards another natural stream close by….The sound of the 20 foot waterfall, the spray, the sun streaming through the spray creates a huge rainbow affect, mesmerizing Dez..)

Dez: “My god….it’s the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen….”

Cal: “And, if you wish, I can clear the area in between the back porch and this waterfall…”

(She turns to him, excitedly)

Dez: “I’ll be able to see it from the back porch? Seriously?”

(He nods)

Cal: “Your brother needed peace…So he created it with the olive trees….And you…..you, My Destiny….Someone else was aware that you needed peace as well….”

(She looks at him in disbelief…then up at the waterfall….then back at him…..)

Cal: ‘It means, my love….that he approves….It is a gift…given in love…from him….to you….”

(She stares…then tears fall….she covers her face with her hands…..Cal steps to her, hugs her, holds her face to his chest….)

Cal: “I love you…And it would seem I am not the only one”

(His words seem to make her cry even more……but she speaks..)

Dez: “I thought he hated me…..”

Cal: “No dear one….never….”

(She nods her hear, still crying in his chest)

Dez: “You really want to marry me?”

Cal: “Second greatest thing I wish to do”

Dez: “Second?”

Cal: “Love you…be loved by you. That is first….That is all I need….”

Dez: “You want children…”

Cal: “I want them if you do…I am here to love you…and to love you is to give you what you want”

Dez: “You…but what do you want? It’s not just about me….”

Cal: “My Destiny, Destiny, My Destiny…you have much to learn….”

(She stops crying, still has her head against his chest)

Dez: “Then teach me…what do I need to learn?”

Cal: “Your love, My Destiny….(He looks up at the waterfall) “…The love behind this gift to you….”

(He kisses the top of her head)

Cal: “This is all I need….It is quite simple, really…I am complete. I am fulfilled…If I have you”

(She holds him tighter)

Dez: “I’m afraid to have children”

Cal: “I know…it would be fearful for me, as well”

Dez: “The cancer…what if I passed it on…I’d die…..”

Cal: “Then we enjoy each other.. Is that enough for you?”

Dez: “YES!”

Cal: “So be it”

Dez: “And I need my waterfall”

(Cal smiles)

Cal: ‘And your waterfall”

Dez: “I love you, Cal..I’m going to love you forever…Doesn’t that scare you?”

Cal: “No”

(They stay silent for a few moment….then…)

Dez: “I hate crying”

(He says nothing)

Dez: “Ever since I met you….Why do I cry so much?”

Cal: ‘You have held tears in for too long”

Dez: “But this is happy crying..like…really happy”

Cal: “We also shed tears in our joy….it is not a terrible thing, My Destiny. It is an honest thing.”

(She nods, her face still against his chest…then..)

Dez: “But you don’t ever cry! What about your joy? Don’t you ever feel it?”

Cal: ‘I do now”

(He places a hand under her chin, tilts it up to see his face, his smile…And to show her his own tears, falling down his cheeks….She bursts out again, burying her face against his chest)

Dez: “THIS IS WHY I CRY SO MUCH! IT’S ALL YOUR FAULT!”

(scene fades to black and white)

(scene opens at the D Ranch, night time…Nell is on phone, laughing…then she ends the call…She gives Dil a big smile)

Nell: “That was Sis”

Dil: “Yea? She okay?”

Nell: ‘Oh yea….”

(Dil looks at her curiously)

Nell: “She said not to wait up”

(Dil rolls his eyes….shakes his head)

Nell: ‘And that she’d probably be late for breakfast”

Dil: “I don’t want to hear anymore!”

Nell: “Then she said maybe she’d be here for lunch”

Dil: “Stop it! That’s my sister!”

(Nell smiles bigger)

Nell: “Cal got her a wedding gift!”

Dil: “This oughta be good…What…a Self Poof kit? Her own wings? A How To Talk Funny Video?”

(She smiles, says nothing…..Dil waits….)

Dil: “Well what? What did he give her?”

Nell: “Are you ready?”

(She can’t wait any longer to tell him, bouncing up and down on the couch)

Nell: “A waterfall”

(Dil’s face changes to WTH…)

Dil: “A waterfall? You mean a garden fountain thing?”

Nell; “Nope…a 20 foot waterfall coming out of the hillside that she can see from their back porch!”

(He stares at her for a moment…..then shrugs)

Dil: ‘Okay…that’s nice”

(Nell stares at him for a moment….then thinks back to her conversation with Dez)

Nell: “She really does love you”

(He gives her a small smile)

Dil: “I know”

Nell: “Do you tell her?”

(Nell keeps staring at him…He rolls his eyes…holds his hand out for her phone…She bounces again on the couch, hits speed dial for Dez’s number….he grabs it, puts it to his ear….)

Dil: “Hey sis…I hear Cal bought you a waterfall”

(He smiles, listens…)

Dil: “No…nothing’s wrong….I just called….actually Nell called….but I wanted to call….and I would have…”

(She cuts him off….he listens…)

Dil: “Yes…your butthead brother will get to the point…christ, sis….”

(He looks at Nell, she’s listening, watching…she pats her heart…Dil nods, mouths ‘okay okay’…)

Dil; “Hey sis…I just wanted to say…I don’t say it enough….but..” (scrunches his eyes) “…I love you very much”

(He listens….smiles….ends the call…He hands the phone back to Nell…She looks at him…)

Nell: “Well? What did she say?”

Dil; ‘She said thank you….”

(Disappointed look on Nell’s face)

Nell: “That’s all?”

(Dil gives a small smile…looks at Nell’s phone….)

Dil: “She said she had to go, she was happy crying, and it was all my fault”

(Nell gets up from the couch, walks to him on his couch…she grabs a pillow, puts it in his lap)

Nell: “How do your legs feel?”

Dil “Good enough for you to put your head on this pillow”

(She smiles, lays down, gently rests her head on the cushion)

Dil: “You comfy?”

Nell: “Yea…very…”

Dil: “Good…because I want to tell you something…or ask you….”

Nell: “What, baby?”

(he takes a deep breath)

Dil: “I keep calling you my wife”

(She smiles…)

Nell; “I know…I love it”

Dil: “But you’re not”

Nell: “I feel like I am”

(He blurts it out)

Dil: ‘Why don’t we get married?”

Nell: “Silly boy…you asked me that…I said yes…”

(She thinks…then pops up quickly…He winces…)

Nell; “What are you saying?”

Dil: “Nothing….just thought….”

Nell; “Dil! What?”

Dil: “I don’t know, Nell…I just thought, since we are, and we’re sure, you know….why are we waiting….I mean, I understand if you…”

Nell: “Yes!”

(She’s looking at him, big smile)

Dil: “Yes?”

Nell: “Yes!”

Dil: “What about that big wedding you….”

Nell: “NO!...Wait…YES! When?”

Dil: ‘Uh…soon?”

(Nell bolts up from the couch, picks up her phone, calls Dez…She starts squealing into the phone, Dil can hear his sister squealing back…He smiles to himself, leans back, watches Nell as she tells his sister about planning an upcoming wedding on short notice….Then he sees Nell start jumping up and down….)

Dil: “Uh oh…”

Nell: (into the phone) “Okay! I’ll call you right back!”

(She ends the call…huge smile on her face….but says nothing…Dil hangs his head….then shakes his head…)

Dil: “Fine…I can make enough BBQ for a double wedding….”

(She squeals, runs to him, kisses him on the cheek, then dials Dez…)

Nell: “HE SAID YES! OH MY GOD IT’S GOING TO BE WONDERFUL!...”

Dil: (to self) “Oh sis….please be doing the right thing….”

(Nell turns to him….she starts to reach out her arm…then she stops, gets back on the phone…)

Nell: “Shake my finger..right?.Okay..hold on…”

(Nell shakes her finger at Dil)

Nell: “She said to tell you that she’s absolutely sure she’s doing the right thing!”

(He laughs….gets up, takes the phone from Nell…)

Dil: “Sis, if you’re happy I’m happy…Okay?”

(He hesitates…then.)

Dil: “Sis? Have you told Cal this is happening?”

(He listens….nods his head…)

Dil: “I thought so…you might want to let him know, sis…..”

(He hands the phone back to Nell….He hears more squealing….then the call ends…Nell runs to the couch, throws the cushion back in his lap….)

Nell: “Now where were we?”

Dil: “Uh…..movie….?”

Nell: “Yes! I want to watch Pretty Woman”

Dil: “Okay….”

(He picks up the remote, clicks the power on)

Nell: “I feel like Julia Roberts…..”

(He looks down at her curiously….)

Nell “Except I’m not a hooker…or have big hair…or her lips…or her body….and you’re better looking than Richard Gere…Other than that, I feel just like her”

(He watches her, seeing the excitement on her face….he smiles…)

Dil: ‘I’m glad you’re okay with it”

Nell: “I’m better than okay….”

(nothing is said for a few moments, then, softly..)

Dil: “Thank you”

Nell: “For what?”

Dil: “For making me happy….For being there for me at the helicopter that first night…For saying your favorite color was chicken fried steak…For loving me….especially that…for wanting our child..For sticking by me when I was afraid..For the smile you give me…the one that completely lights up my world….”

(She takes the remote out of his hand…she hits the ‘off’ button..The TV goes dark..She takes his hand and places it on her stomach)

Nell: “Keep going”

(He looks at his hand, pulls Nell’s shirt up to show her still flat stomach….He puts his hand on her flesh)

Dil: “Andreas…honey…..Let me tell you a love story….it’s about your mommy and daddy…you need to know how much we love each other and how you happened….”

(Nell relaxes…Dil reaches up, flips the light switch on the wall, the room goes dark…Nell closes her eyes, a small smile on her face)

Dil: “Once upon a time, there was a woman…and she was the very best drone driver in the world….And there was a soldier…And this very very smart woman noticed there were no potties near the camp, and

she saved the soldier from the big boom…This soldier wanted to thank this very very smart lady….so he goes to meet her….and when he saw her…”

(scene fades to black and white)

THE END OF

“WHAT DO YOU STAND FOR?”