

Deleted Scene – Pharmacy Raid

“You ready for tonight?” Lacy asked Travis as they walked from the shop building to her house.

Dylan had snuck off with Jace’s horse after overhearing Raul tell Ethan their plans to raid the pharmacy. At least he’d steered clear of her horse. Guess she’d scared him with the bat episode. She grinned a little maliciously at the thought.

Travis gave her a sidelong glance. “Yeah. The truck has enough gas to make it there and back. We won’t run out, but I had to use the last of what was stored in the gas cans. We’re completely out now.”

His enthusiasm was as contagious as a funeral dirge, and she wished Raul had insisted on taking Travis’ place. She could insist but didn’t want to hurt Travis any more than she already had. What a mess, she thought grimly.

The sun’s afterglow lingered and highlighted dark storm clouds in the northwest. She stopped and placed her foot on the front porch step. “It’s almost time.”

Travis stood silently, lost in thought. She knew he didn’t agree with their plan, but Dylan took the bait and left the farm. He struggled to process it.

Travis shook himself out of his morose preoccupation. “Sure. I’ll go get the truck.” He turned and walked down the concrete path to the carport.

She sat on the bottom step and pulled Cat’s supply list from her jean pocket. The wind whipped the corners making it difficult to read in the dimming light. Cat specifically asked for a battery-operated nebulizer for Matty and various sized batteries. She hoped the small drug store had one in stock. She also wanted a stethoscope. Her list was lengthy and included painkillers,

antibiotics, hypodermic needles, albuterol, cough and allergy medicine and other medicines she didn't recognize. Lacy wanted to stock up on any soaps they had. Everyone needed a good scrub, especially the guys.

She shivered, shoved the paper back into her pocket, and pulled the zipper of her brown down-filled jacket to her chin. The hood's cream-colored fuzz looked ridiculous, but she flipped it over her head anyway.

The rumble of the Chevy truck drew close. Troubling thoughts nagged her throughout the day and now as they were about to leave, they shouted their nasty what-if's. What if the pharmacy had already been cleared out? What if they came home with nothing, or worse walked straight into an ambush? She growled, frustrated. They had to succeed. Matty's life depended on it.

Travis leaned over and opened the passenger door. "Get in."

She hopped into the truck. Fresh gas fumes and cold air blasted through the vents. "Use the oil field roads. We'll come in on the south end of town."

He nodded, put the truck in gear and made a U-turn onto a gravel side road. After a quarter mile, he turned onto a worn half-gravel, half-dirt road that ran parallel to Highway 11. He punched the gas and they lurched forward. Gravel spit from the back tires and lost their grip on the shifting rocks. The truck's bed swerved unsteadily.

"Easy," Lacy cautioned.

He frowned, hands tight on the wheel. "Just ready to get this over with," he said sharply.

She could remind him he didn't have to go, but snapped her mouth shut. "Fine," she said through gritted teeth. "Just don't roll the truck before we get to town."

He rolled his eyes. "I know what I'm doing."

He shoved a cd into the truck's stereo system. Fall Out Boy boomed through the speakers shouting acclamations their songs knew what you did in the dark. A small smile flitted across her face. Fitting. She cast a glance at Travis. His head bobbed back and forth to the hard beat.

The familiar lyrics ran through her head in tandem with Patrick Stump's voice, "*In the end everything collides, my childhood spat back out the monster that you see...*"

The song droned on, but she tuned it out. It hit too close to what bothered her the most. Becoming a monster. Would she burn the ashes of everyone and everything she loved? Her actions toward Dylan today should shame her, but they didn't. And in her estimation, that was an issue.

At the edge of town, Travis turned off his headlights and crept slowly down Highway 18 toward the center of town and the pharmacy. She shoved the condemning thoughts away. Stowed them with everything else she refused to think about. She needed to focus.

Travis turned down an alley, pulled up behind the pharmacy building, and cut the engine. "Come on," he said and opened his door. He leaned his seat forward and pulled out a sledgehammer.

She grabbed two flashlights from the floorboard along with a box of black trash bags, then jumped out. They crept up the steel stairway. She cringed at every creak the old, rusted steps made. The second-floor doorway had been boarded up with press board and painted the same dark red color as the bricks. She leaned over the railing. Green dumpsters lurked along the building's edge like huge, hulking beasts waiting to devour anyone that dared walk by.

Travis sidled up beside her on the small landing. "Step down a couple steps so I can swing."

She stepped down and watched him swing the heavy hammer against the aged press board. The dull thud echoed down the alley as it slammed into the wood. The wood cracked and splintered under the assault. Travis threw chunks of red wood to the alley below as they broke free. She held her breath on each swing, worried the MP would hear.

Finally, Travis threw down the last piece of pressboard. He'd hammered a crawlspace through the door from the bottom up. She stepped up, clicked on a flashlight, and followed him through the small passage.

She handed him the other flashlight. He flicked it on and scanned their surroundings. Steel grey file cabinets lined three walls and a desk made from the same grey steel sat in the center. He swept the light along the walls until he found the staircase opening.

“Come on,” he urged.

When they reached the bottom step, Lacy pulled the list from her pocket and handed it to him. “Think you can handle the medicine? All this will be on their shelves behind the counter.”

“I guess,” he mumbled. “What are you gonna do?”

She dropped the trash bags on the step, pulled out a handful and stuffed them into her waistband. “I’m going to look for shampoo, soap, deodorant.” She scrunched her nose. “All the things that cure body odor.”

He chuckled despite himself and sniffed his armpit. “Yeah,” he agreed. “We’re all a little smelly.”

“A little?” she scoffed and yanked another bag from the box.

He took a step toward her and playfully grabbed the black bag from her hand. He leaned in and sniffed. “Well, you don’t smell like roses and rainbows either.”

She pushed his shoulder and stepped around him. “Shut it,” she said, disgusted because

he was right. Her hair felt like a grease bomb exploded on her scalp and her arms and legs felt gritty. Homemade soap left a lot to be desired. “Let’s hurry and get this done.”

Travis found everything on Cat’s list, deposited the bag on the step, and went to help Lacy. She’d already filled three bags with laundry soap, bar soap, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, razors, tampons, toothbrushes, and toothpaste, and had moved to the Band-Aid aisle. She bent to the lower shelf and tossed all the rubbing alcohol, witch hazel, and hydrogen peroxide into a fresh bag.

Travis gaped. “You filled them all the way up?”

Distracted, she didn’t hear his exasperation. “Yeah. Here.” She threw another bag into his empty hands. “Start filling.”

He tossed the limp bag to the ground. “I’d better see if I can even lift these,” he griped, motioning to the bags filled like Santa’s big, red sack at Christmastime.

“Okay.” She brushed aside his brusque attitude. “Go ahead and get them to the opening then come back. I’ll have more.” She looked up and gave him a tongue-in-cheek grin.

He heaved one bag over his shoulder, grumbling under his breath. By the time he moved the bags upstairs, she called it quits. She’d gotten as much as time would allow. It felt like they’d been in the small store for hours, but realistically, it had only been a few minutes.

When she heard his boots scuff down the wooden stairs, she stood and made a final turn, looked wistfully at all the useful things they didn’t have time to take.

They loaded everything in the truck bed. The streets were quiet except the wind whistling through the alley. It rattled the dumpster’s metal lids in an eerie, unsettling bang, bang, bang.

Threatening storm clouds covered the moon’s waxing crescent and left them in inky darkness.

Travis slowly backed the truck down the alley, then whipped it around and left Shidler's downtown with the pedal mashed to the floor.

Only when they pulled through the front gates of the Monroe farm did Lacy's chest relax. She took a deep, cleansing breath and looked at Travis, a huge smile on her face. "We did it," she exulted.

He pulled up to her back door, then cut the engine. He ran a hand through his shoulder length hair.

"Yeah." He barked a short laugh. "I guess we did."

Cat and Ethan walked up the drive and helped unload the medicine and supplies. Lacy handed Cat a stethoscope, AA batteries, and a portable nebulizer.

"Thank God," Cat muttered. With the albuterol in hand, she left them to finish unloading, tears in her eyes.

Lacy watched her run down the drive. If this doesn't work... She left the thought hanging.