

C A R N I V A L E

"Black Blizzard"

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INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

'Le Mystere Des Voix Buigares: Polegnala e Pschenizta' starts to play. Dogs barking in distance. It's morning, and mist hangs in the air.

CLOSE ON

BEN HAWKINS fixing a truck with a crescent wrench.

Behind him, the Siamese twins ALEXANDRIA and CALADONIA are practicing their routine of handstands and cartwheels. Ben watches them, fascinated. In a deep backbend, they touch one another's faces, stretch, and smile. Ben looks wistful, or worried.

INT. LODZ'S TRAILER - DAY

The morning light streams in through a window, above the Victrola. LODZ sits in a chair beside the window, listening to the wind. There is a glass of absinthe on the table next to him. The glass begins to tremble. Sensing this without seeing, Lodz places a hand over the vibrating goblet, stilling it. Wind rises in the background.

Lodz smiles and beams.

EXT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - DAY

Fading paint proclaims, "Queen of the Gypsies," on the side of the well-worn schoolbus. The front of the cab, however, still admits in block letters to being a schoolbus.

SOFIE (O.C.)

You got your bath. I washed your clothes and cleaned your bedpan.

INT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - DAY

Radio is playing "On the Sunny Side of the Street."

As SOFIE speaks, she is taking out a white lace dress, unfolding it, checking it to make sure it's presentable, and packing it into a carpet bag. She is dressed in black pants and a sleeveless black silk shirt, but she's packing white stockings and a frilly, feminine dress.

CLOSE ON

APPOLONIA, staring up at the ceiling of the trailer.

SOFIE

It's not ugly. You say that every time. ... It's not pathetic. ... And it's not a lie, either. I'm just having a little fun, that's all.

Sofie finishes packing her carpet bag.

SOFIE
I never let it go too far. It doesn't
hurt anybody. ...

Pause. Another closeup of Apollonia.

SOFIE
Least of all me. I'll be back before we
open.

The doors slam shut on bus as Sofie tries to leave!

SOFIE
Mother, open the door. ... What are you
talking about? It's a beautiful day.

Sofie forces open the bus doors, and leaves.

CLOSE ON

APOLLONIA. She looks worried.

EXT. SAMSON'S TRAILER - DAY

Closeup of door of Samson's trailer, which says, "Management--Keep Out."

INT. SAMSON'S TRAILER - DAY

The Victrola plays "Tuscan Armonia."

SAMSON puts on aftershave, checks reflection in round mirror, adjusts tie,
straightens lapels.

SAMSON
(to himself)
Handsome devil.

Samson opens the door, and the breeze from outside rustles Management's
curtains.

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Ben is at the cook tent. Just about everyone else is too, but when Ben gets
his plate and goes to sit next to a roustabout, the roustabout gets up and
leaves as soon as Ben sits down.

ROUSTABOUT
Don't have to eat with him.

Newt and another roustie can be seen taking their meals somewhere else.

At a nearby table, LILA, GECKO, RITA SUE, FELIX, the twins, DORA MAE, and
LIBBY, are all sitting together gossiping. Felix is reading a magazine, Rita
Sue is doing her nails and seems distracted.

GECKO

There's trees over yonder. Why ain't
they set up by the trees, leastways we
get some shade!

Lila fans herself.

LILA

I thought reptiles liked the sun.

GECKO

Laugh and a half, this one, oughta be in
show biz!

Gecko puffs on his cigarette. Dora Mae and Lila laugh.

LILA

Y'all know where that road leads to?
(whispers)
Babylon.

Felix looks up from his magazine. Alexandria and Caladonia look worried.
Gecko looks scared. Lila nods.

LIBBY

I hear'd they strung up three rousties
in Babylon, back in '32, just to watch
'em dangle.

FELIX

Oh, horse-pucky! Babylon don't even exist.
It's just a tale carnies tell around a
bottle.

DORA MAE

It was four. And it wasn't rousties, it
was freaks.

Behind Dora Mae, Ruthie and a curly-headed roustabout can be seen finishing up
their breakfast.

LILA

Three pinheads and an albino named
Freddie Neff.

GECKO

(shudders)
Oh, I hate albinos.

Everyone around the table laughs.

GECKO (CONT'D)

Maybe Samson'll talk some sense into the
boss, maybe Jonesy.

LILA
Jonesy? Hell, that boy don't squat
unless Samson says shit.

CUT TO:

SAMSON
Shit!

Samson strides across the midway, followed by JONESY. The midway is a flurry of activity. Tents are going up, and people are doing morning chores, as Samson stalks past, Jonesy limping along behind him.

JONESY
I'm serious!

SAMSON
Carnies belly-achin'. Sounds real
serious to me.

JONESY
I'm tellin' ya. I got to talkin' with
the men and they were telling things
they're not happy with.

They pass a roustabout, OSGOOD, with a wheelbarrow under a tent.

SAMSON
Osgood! Run get the sedan.

Osgood immediately drops what he's doing and runs.

JONESY
It ain't just belly-achin. I got men
ready to bolt.

SAMSON
Look, I don't have time for this.

JONESY
They've been hinky since we left the
circuit. Now you got us settin' up in
the middle of nowhere. It just don't
make sense to me is all.

Roustabouts, as they pass, pretend not to be listening, but there are suddenly men walking by and standing close to Jonesy, "not listening."

SAMSON
Look, it ain't my call!

JONESY
Well, then talk to him. Tell him!

SAMSON
You know that ain't gonna do a damn bit
of good.

Osgood pulls up with the sedan behind Samson.

JONESY

Well, maybe I could take a crack at it.
You know?

Jonesy looks around, camera pulls back, and somehow he's surrounded by five or six rousties listening to the conversation.

JONESY

I could maybe talk to him.

SAMSON

That's not gonna happen.

AERIAL SHOT OF

at least eight rousties standing around waiting to see how it goes with Jonesy.

Samson and Jonesy reach the sedan. Jonesy holds door as Samson gets in. Samson hands Jonesy keys to trailer.

SAMSON

I expect you to have everything up and
running by the time I get back.
(to Osgood)
Go.

Osgood and Samson drive off.

ROUSTABOUT

That's telling him Jonesy.

JONESY

Why don't you just shut your hole and
get back to work. That goes for the lot
of you, go on, back to work!

INT. LODZ'S TRAILER - DAY

Lodz smells deeply and appreciatively from an absinthe bottle. Lodz corks the absinthe bottle, wraps it in a towel, and goes to the cupboard. He puts up a palm to find the cupboard doors, and is patting the door as Ben knocks. Throughout the conversation, Lodz is calmly getting ready to go, in what looks like the kind of carefully choreographed routine that allows the blind man to find his way around by himself. A number of other bottles stand on the table.

LODZ

Enter!

Ben enters the trailer, and looks at the bottles on the table with a puzzled expression.

BEN
What are you doin'?

LODZ
(serenely)
Rolling up bottles and putting them in
drawers. Hand me the last one.

Ben hands him a bottle with liquid in it.

BEN
You wanted to talk to me?

LODZ
No.

BEN
(disgusted)
Fine.

Ben gets ready to leave.

LODZ
I have something to show you. About
Scudder.

BEN
Okay. Show it to me then.

LODZ
It isn't in my possession.

Lodz puts on his coat.

LODZ (CONT'D)
You'll have to drive us there.

BEN
Where?

LODZ
Not far.

Lodz reaches for his cane.

BEN
You best not be pullin' some kind of
monkeyshine.

Lodz, ready to leave now, thumps his cane a few times on floor to orient
himself to the door.

LODZ
Shall we?

They step through the trailer door. The paint on the door is peeling a little, but is still fresher than what we've seen on any of the other places. Lodz fishes in his left pocket for the key as he moves through the door, carefully preserving the routines that allow him to find his way around without his sight.

EXT. LODZ'S TRAILER - DAY

Lodz carefully locks his door. As he turns, and faces away from the door, he seems deep in thought, perhaps worried. The wind sighs behind him, as he seems to stare in Ben's direction.

INT. DIGNITY MINISTRY (CHIN'S) - DAY

The new church in Mintern. Iris directs choir as Justin picks up hymnals from the pews. The children are singing "Let the Little Children Come To Me."

CHILDREN

"...come to me, so says thy blessed
Lord... and I a little child must be
obedient to His word..."

REV. NORMAN BALTHUS has come in unnoticed. He stands in the doorway.

NORMAN BALTHUS

Lovely.

Justin smiles warmly.

JUSTIN

Norman! What are you doing here?

Justin sets the hymnals in his hands on the table, and hugs Norman.

JUSTIN

I wish you had called ahead, I would
have had Iris make us something. Come
on, I must show you around. The
children's dormitories are upstairs.

NORMAN

This is not a social visit, Justin.

Norman takes a letter out of his pocket.

NORMAN

(seriously)

McNoughton received this letter today.

Norman hands the letter to Justin. Justin puts on his reading glasses, and reads the letter.

JUSTIN

(stunned)

They sent this to the Bishop?

NORMAN

Why didn't you tell your church board
what you were doing? Why didn't you
tell *someone* what you were doing?

JUSTIN

I didn't want to deal with their red
tape!

NORMAN

Justin, how many times do I have to tell
you--

JUSTIN

I didn't spend one penny of the board's
money, not one cent of their funds--

NORMAN

You are a church asset. They pay you
for your time. That time should be
spent with them. Not over here!

JUSTIN

But I haven't neglected that
congregation.

NORMAN

Your board, and seventy-two of your members,
think otherwise!

Norman takes out a signed petition with a long list of names. The papers
rustle in their hands as they argue.

JUSTIN

What if the Bishop were to come here
himself? What if he were to see the
good work...

NORMAN

The decision has been made. Now either
you turn this chapel over to someone
else, and return to your duties at First
Methodist, or you'll be disciplined and
reassigned.

JUSTIN

I can't just stop.

NORMAN

There'll be some time for transition.

JUSTIN

No. No, you don't understand. God told me to do this. He spoke to me.

NORMAN

As he speaks to all of us.

JUSTIN

No. As he spoke to Abraham, and Isaiah, and Moses.

Norman looks puzzled. There is a long, awkward pause, while Justin tries to decide how to handle this. At last he folds the letter, and walks past Norman.

JUSTIN

Thank you for coming, Norman. Thank you.

Justin stalks past, leaving Norman standing at the hymnal table, looking very worried and sad, as their talk sinks in.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

A sunny, beautiful morning. Bird song, and sounds of motors. Sofie's parked her pretty black model T out in front of a gas station. "La Wally" fades up on a radio somewhere.

INT. STATION RESTROOM - DAY

Sofie has changed into the white dress we saw her pack earlier, and is taking something out of the carpet bag. We descend from the ceiling, to look over her shoulder. Sofie puts on flowered hat in front of mirror, sizes up her reflection, and adjusts her sleeves.

SOFIE

(trying to sound guileless)

Has it been that long?

Sofie adjusts her hat and tries to act more surprised.

SOFIE

Has it been that long?

Sofie sighs and shakes her head, dissatisfied with her performance.

EXT. MISS JOLENE'S HOUSE - DAY

Samson knocks on her door with flowers. MISS JOLENE answers.

JOLENE

Why Samson, what a lovely surprise!

SAMSON
Good morning, Miss Jolene. I thought
these might brighten your day.

Samson offers his flowers to Miss Jolene.

JOLENE
Why you sweet, darlin' man! They
most surely will!

Miss Jolene bends down and kisses Samson on the cheek, and takes the bouquet. Samson smiles. Jolene allows Samson in ahead of her, and looks around before following him inside and closing the door.

EXT. SALLY'S CAFE - DAY

Sofie is sitting in a car outside Sally's Diner. She adjusts her hat with brim slanted at a jaunty, sexy angle.

HARLAN STAUB walks past, sees Sofie, and looks thunderstruck. He can't take his eyes off her. She nods to him. He stares at her, looking apprehensive, excited, and fascinated. Then he goes to open Sally's Diner. Sofie looks disappointed.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Driving down a dusty road. Ben and Lodz in cab of truck. Ben looks annoyed, silent.

INT. SALLY'S CAFE - DAY

Harlan brings plates to customers. A bald man and a dark-haired man are seated at the counter.

HARLAN
All right, boys, all right, hold your
horses, here you go.

Harlan serves a bald man with enormous nose.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
You better finish that this time.
Need anything else?

DARK-SKINNED MAN
Plenty good.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
All right.

Harlan gazes out the window again, at Sofie.

EXT. SALLY'S CAFE - DAY

Harlan watches Sofie fanning herself, and checks his watch. Goes outside and taps on the car. "La Wally" is still playing.

HARLAN
Everything okay, Miss?

SOFIE
You nearly scared me to death!

HARLAN
I'm sorry. My name's Harlan, Harlan
Staub. That there, that's my cafe.

SOFIE
Pleasure to meet you, Harlan. My name's
Betty. Betty Jones.

They shake hands through the window.

HARLAN
Miss Jones. I couldn't help but
noticin' you been out here an awful long
time.

SOFIE
Have I?

HARLAN
About an hour-and-a-half by my watch.

Harlan points at his watch.

SOFIE
Has it been that long? I'm waitin' for
my brother Ben. He went to send a wire
and run some errands.

Sofie looks around for "Ben," worried.

SOFIE
He should be back by now.

HARLAN
Why don't you come inside and wait?
It's cooler.

SOFIE
I couldn't. I'm fine. Really.

She smiles and laughs. He gives her a sweet, longing look.

INT. SALLY'S CAFE - DAY

Harlan serves a glass of iced tea to Sofie.

HARLAN
That's on the house, Miss.

SOFIE
(offering to pay)
Please.

HARLAN
(insisting)
My pleasure, Miss.

SOFIE
Mrs. I'm a widow. Lost my husband,
almost a year and a half-oh, God, it's
been two years now.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

The truck rounds a mountain.

BEN
How much further?

LODZ
Patience, boy. Today we're presented
with a unique opportunity.

BEN
Unique? What the hell does that mean?

LODZ
By telling you everything now, it would
spoil the adventure.

Ben slams on brakes so truck grinds to a halt.

BEN
Okay, that's it. I'm callin' you. You
put up right now, or I'm turnin' back.

LODZ
(smiles knowingly)
Dear me. I'm afraid it's much too late
for that.

Ben looks behind truck, develops a panicked expression in seeing the storm
approaching.

BEN
Aww, hell.

Ben frantically rolls up the truck window, which sticks and rattles and goes up quite slowly.

INT. MISS JOLENE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Samson whistles (Beethoven's "Für Elise") and preens in front of a full-length mirror. Jolene reclines naked in the bed, bare-breasted and bare-legged with a sheet across her midsection. He counts out several large bills onto her night table.

JOLENE
I should be payin' you.

SAMSON
Well, you're probably right. But I
wouldn't have it any other way.

They laugh.

Osgood calls to Samson from outside by the sedan.

OSGOOD (O.C.)
Boss! Hey, boss!

Dust is already blowing, Osgood points in the direction of the storm.

SAMSON
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Jonesy and Newt hammer stakes into the ground, when they see the huge storm on the horizon coming straight for them.

JONESY
Tell the others to pack it up.

They both look at the approaching storm, horrified.

JONESY
(urgently)
I said batten it down.

NEWT
We gotta move to shelter, Jonesy.

JONESY
Ride it out here. Go, goddamn it, go!

NEWT
Break it down! We're breaking it down!

INT. SALLY'S CAFE - DAY

Sofie and Harlan are holding hands across the counter.

SOFIE

Clayton Jones. He was the star box man
for the Sox. Real fireball.

HARLAN

Really? Horsehide Houdini?

SOFIE

Yeah! That's what they called him.

HARLAN

Wow, yeah.

(waves his hand in the air)

I remember something. He got hurt.

SOFIE

Yeah it was his knee. Real bad too.
Nearly a cripple. That were the end of
that. He changed. Everything changed.
He got real sad, real quiet. One day I
came home..I smelled gunpowder... found
him upstairs.

HARLAN

Hey, hey, I'm real sorry.

Sofie looks outside. The storm has reached the town. There are people
running in the dust, trying to take cover.

SOFIE

Mama...

She exits the cafe.

HARLAN

Hey! You can't go out there.

EXT. SALLY'S CAFÉ - DAY

Sofie runs out into the street. Harlan grabs her. The wind is roaring so
loudly they're nearly drowned out. They're barely visible in the brown dust.

SOFIE

I have to get home!

HARLAN

I can't let you go, Betty!

Harlan escorts Sofie back into the cafe.

HARLAN

Come on!

The wind roars.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

The carnival truck is stopped in dust. The storm is raging all around.

BEN

We have to wait this bastard out.

Nothing is visible but dust through the windows of the cab.

LODZ

In my experience, darkness often yields
the brightest light.

BEN

That's swell, Lodz. Me, I'm gonna get
me some shuteye right about now.

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - DAY

Dora Mae and Felix run to a bus, covering their faces with rags. They are coughing and hacking. Dora Mae finds Apollonia deeply covered with dust. The doors and windows were left open. Dora Mae grabs Apollonia, tries to make her breathe.

FELIX

Now just pound it out of her, girl!

Dora Mae repeatedly slams her fist on Apollonia's back and great clumps of dirt fall out of the catatonic woman's mouth.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Ben wakes, realizes he's alone.

CUT TO:

Lodz walking alone across a field of dust, into the storm. Lodz isn't even covering his face, but walking briskly into the wind.

CUT TO:

BEN

Loony sumbitch.

Ben gets out of the truck, covers face with a rag, and, following Lodz, staggers a few dozen yards. Ben stumbles over a lamb that's died, lying in the dust. Lodz is nowhere to be seen. Thunder and lightning flash. Ben finds a cabin, and feels his way along the edge of it. Gasping from the dust, he tumbles into the cabin, coughing.

INT. CABIN - DAY

The small cabin is all wooden, with a small stone fireplace at the wall opposite the door. A painting of a field hangs crooked over the fireplace. Some old wooden furniture remains in the cabin: a shelf, a china cupboard, and a chair. The floor is bare wood.

Lodz is sitting by a fire he's made in the fireplace. He smiles serenely, composed with no sign of choking, and pokes the head of his cane into the fire.

LODZ

Hawkins.

BEN

What the hell are you doing?

LODZ

Welcome.

INT. SALLY'S CAFE - DAY

The storm is raging outside, the wind howling. Harlan and Sofie are talking intimately, leaning across the counter from one another. Sofie is holding her coffee cup overhand. She searches Harlan's face as she talks.

SOFIE

You married?

HARLAN

No. Never found the right girl.

SOFIE

So who's Sally?

HARLAN

Who?

SOFIE

Sally's cafe.

HARLAN

My mama. She taught me how to cook.

The lights go out, leaving them in darkness.

HARLAN

(philosophically)

Yeah, well, that was bound to happen sooner or later.

INT. MISS JOLENE'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Pretty furniture and tasteful wallpaper. Samson and Osgood sit in darkness. Jolene lights an oil lamp. All three sit, awkward and bored.

OSGOOD
I've got two bucks.

SAMSON
(disbelieving)
Two bucks?

JOLENE
(shrugs)
All right.

Jolene stands, and leads Osgood upstairs. Samson looks stunned.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

The dust storm's blasting away, around the cabin.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Lodz stands in front of the fire, back to the fireplace, regarding Ben with white eyes. Ben is angry and pacing from side to side.

BEN
Brought me out here for what? Huh?

He kicks over a chair.

BEN (CONT'D)
Nothing! I almost got dead out there!

LODZ
(coolly)
You were not in any real danger. I think we both know that.

BEN
I damn near died!

LODZ
How melodramatic. Born for the stage, young Hawkins.
(a beat)
This storm, it's what they call a black blizzard, no?

BEN
That's the name they gave to it.

LODZ
The topsoil of ten thousand farms, much like your own. Kills dreams. Lend me your hand, boy.

Lodz takes Ben's hand, and reads Ben's thoughts. He leans in close to Ben.

LODZ
(leaning in close to Ben)
It killed your mother.

BEN
What's it to you?

LODZ
She drowned in it. The dust.

As the scene progresses, Lodz delivery grows rougher, more growl-like. His accent becomes more Russian.

BEN
You shut the hell up.

Ben tries to shake loose from Lodz's grip.

LODZ
Alone.

BEN
You shut it, or I swear to Christ I'll
shut it for you.

Ben jerks away from Lodz and paces back and forth. Lodz grunts, a bearlike, Russian-sounding grunt.

LODZ
(growling)
Of course you survived it.

BEN
Stop it now!

LODZ
That ceaseless howling. The
high-pitched shriek of wind. Listen.
The sound of her death.

The storm has been getting more and more shrill behind Lodz's voice all this time.

BEN
Make it stop. Stop it *now*!

Silence.

LODZ
Ahhh!

Lodz laughs.

LODZ (CONT'D)
(hushed with anticipation)
Open the door.

Ben does. Outside is clear of the storm, you can see the horizon and blue sky through the door.

LODZ
(excited, smiling)
You did that.

BEN
No.

As if in response, storm erupts again.

BEN
NOOOO!

Ben is knocked down by the wind and has to brace against the floor, crouching, to push the door shut again.

Lodz, blown by the wind and dust, coughs.

LODZ
(ruefully)
You did that, too.

BEN
You're crazy!

LODZ
Quite. But it was you who stopped the storm.

BEN
That had nothing to do with me.

LODZ
It had everything to do with you.

BEN
Only God can make the weather stop!

LODZ
Think you can hide what you are? You can't. Not even from yourself. A blind man could see that.
(smiles)
Don't be a fool. Let me help you.

Lodz bends down, gets red-hot cane from fire.

BEN
I don't want your Goddamned help, you two-bit, used-up, burned-out old junkie!

Lodz hits Ben in the face with the red-hot cane. Smoke rises and a huge, deep burn appears on Ben's left cheek. Ben slaps his left hand over the burn.

BEN
You burned me!

LODZ
But you're not burned, are you?

Ben lifts his hand from his face. Ben's burn is gone without a trace.

LODZ (CONT'D)
Yet the smell of burning flesh lingers
on in the air.

Ben feels his newly healed skin, wonderingly, looking suspiciously at Lodz.

INT. DIGNITY MINISTRY (CHIN'S) - DAY

Justin sits, list of names in hand, covering his face in his hand in despair.

IRIS
What? What is it?

Justin hands her the letter, mutely. She reads it.

IRIS
We need to speak to Norman.

JUSTIN
Norman was the messenger.

IRIS
What did he say?

Iris sits next to Justin on pew.

JUSTIN
He said that I should obey the
Bishop.

IRIS
Norman's always done what's best
for us.

JUSTIN
Yes, I know. He saved us.

IRIS
More than once.

JUSTIN
I won't ignore the will of God!

IRIS
But maybe it's God speaking to you too.
First Methodist is your rock. Wait, be
patient. Your time will come.

JUSTIN

Did you know that there's a boy here
who's mother abandoned him in a restroom of
a five-and-dime?

IRIS

No, but--

JUSTIN

Or that Polly Anne's father sold her to
some men for one dollar? No. No, of
course not. Who wants to dwell on things
like that? We never consider the little
ones. We only put on our clothes. Who
can see the children feeding the endless,
ravenous hunger of the textile mill?
Mechanical mouths that aren't choosy. A
silken thread. A lock of hair. A scrap of
scalp. Tiny, torn fingers....

Iris trembles, terrified, as the room around them goes dark.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

We only turn up the heat. Why think of
the boys in the mines, crouched over the
chutes? For hours they sit, sifting the
refuse from the coal, their backs bent.
Old men by nine. Black lung by twelve.
Coal is heavy and hard. Hands are soft
and fragile, crushed. Feet crushed.
Skulls crushed. Go for a walk, you see
them. Boys and girls, selling themselves
to men and women. A nickel buys a virgin.
Some are kept in cages. Babies bought by
men who raise them as livestock. Animals
to abuse. Soft flesh to violate, to tear
and bite. "If anyone causes even one of
the little ones who believe in me to
sin, it would be better for him to have
a large millstone hung around his neck
and be drowned in the depths of the
sea!" They must open their eyes! They
must open their mouths and drown!

INT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - DAY

Everyone is inside Apollonia's trailer. Wind roars outside. Dora Mae is
watching Apollonia closely. Lila fans herself. Alexandria and Caladonia
cower behind Ruthie. Gabriel lays his head in Ruthie's lap, Libby lays her
head on Rita Sue's. Ruthie, Rita Sue, and Gecko look especially worried.
Everyone is coughing. Felix is pacing. Jonesy bursts in, letting in a big
gust of wind and dust.

JONESY

Anyone seen Sofie?

EVERYONE ELSE

NO!

GECKO

So when are we gonna get to shelter?

JONESY

When Management says so, just like always.

Jonesy leaves Apollonia's trailer, shutting door.

INT. MISS JOLENE'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Samson is alone. A smashed figurine lies on the floor near him. Jolene comes in.

JOLENE

What happened?

SAMSON

Wind.

Samson gestures with his cane.

Jolene picks up the pieces of the figurine. Osgood comes into the room and sits down, looking dazed and happy. Jolene sets the pieces on a table and stands by the window.

SAMSON

(looking up at Jolene)

How many tricks you turn in a day?

JOLENE

Tricks?

SAMSON

Yeah, that's what we call them at the carnival.

JOLENE

Why?

SAMSON

Just curious. Businessman to businesswoman.

JOLENE

(coldly)

Five. Three maybe.

SAMSON

How long does it take you to do each one? Assuming it's straight up fucking?

JOLENE

Half hour. Maybe less.

SAMSON

Seemed like forty-five minutes by my watch.

OSGOOD

(shocked and embarrassed)

You was timing us?

SAMSON

Well, I only heard the bedsprings
creaking for the first 12 minutes, but I
bet you could turn 'em out faster. Way
faster.

JOLENE

Might cut into repeat business.

Jolene looks hurt.

SAMSON

Naw Hell. What's a fella care how long
it takes as long as he gets his nut.
Besides you increase your profit.
Double, maybe, if you can get it down to
six minutes. Why you can churn 'em out
in 20 minutes for the pillow talk. Tell
you what. Let's see how fast you can do
ol' Osgood, here.

JOLENE

No.

Samson pulls out a bill from his wallet.

SAMSON

Sawbuck says you will.

OSGOOD

I ain't ready.

SAMSON

You ready when I tell you you're ready.

JOLENE

I said no.

SAMSON

Ten.

JOLENE

Why are you doing this?

Samson counts out more bills onto a pile on his chair. Jolene goes over to
Osgood, grabs his hand and pulls him to his feet, then leads him to the foot
of the stairs.

JOLENE
(to Osgood, sultry)
Come on, don't sell yourself short.

She hangs all over Osgood.

JOLENE
(to Samson)
Tell you what. Keep your money. I
like this boy.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Ben sits against the wall, covering his eyes with his arm, anguished. Lodz is seated by the fire again, profile turned to us. The wind continues to howl in the background.

BEN
(miserably)
I don't want it.

LODZ
You have no choice.

Lodz bows his head over his cane like a man praying, both hands folded together over the top of the cane.

BEN
I don't have to use it.

He stands up and steps towards Ben.

LODZ
Don't be absurd. It's a gift! I gave
up my eyes for a fraction of what you
possess!

He turns his back on Ben angrily.

LODZ
(more gently)
You must let me help you, boy. Babylon
will be upon us soon.

Lodz sits again, facing Ben.

BEN
I don't care.

LODZ
The very land the town stands on is
poison. It swallows men. It will
swallow you, too, if you are not
prepared. But I can teach you.

Ben looks away from Lodz. Lodz looks at Ben for all the world as if he can see him, and Ben squirms, refusing to look back.

LODZ
Hawkins? Hawkins, answer me!

BEN
I'll take my chances.

INT. SALLY'S CAFE - DAY

Harlan and Sofie are on a blanket on the floor having sex. Harlan is moaning and carried away, nearing his climax. Sofie isn't all that into it. Harlan whispers "oh, God," over and over, completely swept away by his climax. He relaxes and rolls off her.

After he rolls away from her, Sofie lies staring, tears in her eyes. They dress without looking at one another.

HARLAN
Looks like things are clearing up out there some. Smoke?

SOFIE
Yeah, sure.

Sofie puts her panties back on, and pulls her stockings up. Harlan lights a cigarette and hands it to her. Suddenly his expression turns pained, anguished.

SOFIE
It's okay. It was the storm.

We see her leave the diner, get into the car. After she starts the engine, she takes a long look at her eyes in the rear view mirror, before driving away.

INT. MISS JOLENE'S HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Jolene opens her front door, to let Samson out. Samson hands her money.

SAMSON
For your statue.

JOLENE
You gonna be out this way again?

SAMSON
I suspect so, sooner or later.

JOLENE
When you do, don't come back here.

He salutes her with his cane and leaves.

INT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - DAY

Dora Mae peers anxiously at Apollonia through whole scene.

JONESY
She's gonna be okay.

FELIX
She's lucky. We all are. Bad as this
thing is, it could have been worse.

JONESY
I had no say in it.

FELIX
Ain't blamin you Jonesy, it was
Management's call. Samson's the only
one who can talk to him. Hell,
everybody knows that.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Osgood is driving Samson back to the carnival.

OSGOOD
That gal is a real wingdinger.

SAMSON
Shut up, Osgood.

EXT. SAMSONS'S TRAILER - DUSK

Jonesy, covered with dust, makes his way to Samson's/Management's trailer.
He unlocks the trailer and opens the door, knocking.

JONESY
Everything Okay?

He knocks again.

JONESY (CONT'D)
You all right in there?

Jonesy looks around to make sure no one is watching, then removes a set of
keys from his pocket. He unlocks the padlock hanging on the trailer.
He steps inside.

JONESY (CONT'D)
Samson's gone. Thought I'd check in on
you. Hello?

Management's trailer seems empty.

JONESY (CONT'D)
It's me, Jonesy. Clayton Jones. You
awake?

Jonesy stares at the curtained compartment in the back. He walks towards the
curtained area. He reaches out to part the curtains.

JONESY (CONT'D)
Sir?

He opens the curtains. The view pans across the back compartment from left
to right. There is nothing in the back compartment of Management's trailer.

JONESY (CONT'D)
Goddamn. Goddamn!

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

The truck pulls in. Ben shuts off engine.

LODZ
(smiling, smugly)
Well?

Ben opens the door of the truck as if to leave, ignoring Lodz. Lodz catches
Ben's arm.

LODZ
Don't you wish to learn more?

Ben yanks his arm away from Lodz, gets out, slams the door, and walks away.

Lodz, thrown back by the violence of Ben's departure, looks angry and
disappointed. He throws his head back against the wall and sits brooding a
moment.

Lila opens other door to the cab. Lodz smiles in recognition, and accepts
her help getting out of the truck. He leaves his hand in hers, and steps
out, coat around his shoulders.

LILA
Did you get what you want from the kid?

LODZ
More.

Lila laughs, and clasps Lodz's hand in both of hers.

LILA
I thought he'd be a ripe suck.

LODZ
There is much work to be done.

Lila looks a bit puzzled and worried at this statement. Lila sinks her hands into Lodz's pockets, takes the key as if this is a frequent ritual, looks at Lodz and sighs as if she thinks he's lost his mind, and then guides him to his own trailer, holding his hand and cane both firmly in her left hand.

INT. SOFIE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Sofie has changed back into her black silk shirt and slacks, and sits sadly next to Apollonia. Apollonia lies still, encrusted with dust, mud around her mouth from what she coughed up during the storm.

SOFIE
(sincere)
I'm sorry.
(a beat)
Yes, I did. We'll talk about it later,
okay?

Sofie plays with Apollonia's hair.

SOFIE
I didn't know he was married.

A single tear rolls down Apollonia's cheek.

SOFIE
That's an ugly lie.

Outside, a car is pulling up.

INT. CARNIVAL GROUNDS - NIGHT

Samson, still in his good suit, strides over to the canopy where Jonesy is working.

SAMSON
Howdy-do, there, Jonesy.

Jonesy says nothing, but keeps working.

SAMSON
Blowdown to end all blowdowns, huh?

Jonesy is still angrily ignoring Samson.

SAMSON
Everything hunky dory?

Jonesy has been looking down at a table, bent over. Now glares up at Samson, straightens. Obviously very angry.

JONESY
Just fine.

He tosses keys to Samson, who catches them.

JONESY
Right as rain.

Jonesy stamps off angrily past Samson without another word. Samson, stunned, watches him open-mouthed, looks like he wants to call out to him. Samson looks at the keys in his hand, seems to be considering something, then looks anxiously after Jonesy.

EXT. JUSTIN AND IRIS'S HOME - NIGHT

An attractive, although modest two-story home.

INT. JUSTIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Iris walks in. She looks as if she is trying to figure out what to say. She goes into Justin's room, where Justin is asleep, stands a moment as if trying to find her resolve. Iris puts her hand on his forehead.

Justin wakes and looks up at Iris.

IRIS
There's been a fire at the ministry.

Justin flings his covers aside, and leaps up.

EXT. DIGNITY MINISTRY (CHIN'S) - NIGHT

The black model T pulls up in front of the ministry. Justin gets out of the car, runs. He has not bothered to put on a shirt, just a t-shirt, jacket, trousers, light black robe covering it all. The camera shows us the blackened remains of Chin's. Justin yanks someone out of the way, and moves past him.

A policeman is just coming out, as Justin moves into what was the front doorway of his ministry, and is now open space of black cinders. Iris catches up behind him.

Justin looks around, sees wreck. Iris keeps moving to stand close by his side. Justin turns away from the ministry in shock, then looks back again.

JUSTIN
My God. Where are the children?

Iris turns her head in the direction of a tarp, on the ground in front of the ministry. Justin follows her gaze, sees tarp, with the dead children under it. He puts his hands in front of his mouth, and walks past the smoking debris, towards the tarp, very slowly, as if hoping what he sees isn't true.

He looks down and sees, sticking out from under the tarp, the burnt and bloody legs of one of the children. He sways as if about to faint, staggers to his knees, throws his head back, and howls in anguish. Iris crouches down, throws her arms around him trying to comfort him. Justin, still on his knees, leans forward, howling with grief. The song "Le Mystere Des Voix Buigares: Mir Stank Le" plays.

AREIAL SHOT of

people standing around, surveying the damage. A photographer enters and starts documenting the wreckage. Justin continues to rock with grief in front of the tarp, in Iris's embrace. The building continues to smolder....