ALEX / CLARENCE

ALEX
Missy?

... but there's no answer... just the throbbing pulse of a thousand insects shouting about the heat. And then some scuffling sounds, something scraping against the wall. Alex frozen in the darkness, all the hairs on her neck standing.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Who's there?

Nothing... Alex points the torch down the passageway, clears her throat, wanting to sound braver than she feels.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Who's there?!

And then a whimper from the ground. Alex swings the torch around the side of the house. Clarence cowers in the corner, blood all over him.

23 INT. LINDARA ALEX'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1 23
ALEX, CLARENCE, MISSY,

Crashing through the darkness... as Alex helps haul Clarence into the house.

ALEX
Missy! Finish filling the gennie. I need some light in here.

Missy races out. Alex drags a chair, helps Clarence sit. In the moonlight, she can see the matted blood in his hair.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Where are you hurt? Clarence?

Her hands on his face, hunting with her fingers for the source of the blood.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Is it here?... Here?

The generator lurches back to life. They squint against the sudden flood of light. Alex reels at the state he's in.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Christ. What happened to you?

Clarence stares at his bloody hands - shaking from fear, or pain, or shock... Alex pats him down with more urgency, hunting for the injury. Missy arrives back.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Clarence, you gotta tell me where you're hurt?

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SP START

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CLARENCE
I'm not. It's not... not my blood.

Skin-prickles all over. She struggles to keep her voice even.

ALEX
Missy, go put the shower on.

Missy is frozen to the spot. Alex stares at her, hard.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Go!

Missy backs out of there.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Where's Sheyna?

A long beat. Clarence's eyes are full...

CLARENCE
I don't know.

On Alex: *holy shit.*

ALEX
But it's her blood, right?

Nothing from Clarence.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Clarence? Where is she...?
(she waits)
Clarence?!

CLARENCE
I don't know.

ALEX
What are you talking about? You don't know?

He finally looks up at her, eyes wide, freaked out.

CLARENCE
I don't know, alright?! I can't remember!

24 INT. LINDARA ALEX'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1 24
ALEX, TIM, CLARENCE, MISSY,

Intercut with:

24A EXT LINDARA (FLASHBACK) DAY 1 24A
CLARENCE, SHEYNA,

Continue

A roadmap unfurls across Alex's kitchen table... Tim flattens it out. Alex and Clarence stare down at it - at the tiny spots marking the towns in the vast far west.

TIM
You left on the Barrier?

Clarence nods, lets his finger trace along the highway...

CLARENCE
Then we stopped at Pearson's corner...

TIM
Why?

CLARENCE
She wanted to go home... I wasn't ready. I said we should go to the Gorge. Watch the sunset.

TIM
Very romantic.

Alex flicks him a look.

TIM (CONT'D)
Who won the argument?

CLARENCE
I don't... I don't know...

It's sits there heavily.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
I can't... I can't get it straight, in my head.

He can't find the words to describe it. He presses on his closed eyes... and BANG!

We're back in the car as the 4WD takes some air as it barrels over a rise...Hoots of delight from inside the car - 16 year old Sheyna in the passenger seat, her head out the window, shouting out the words to a song...

CLARENCE (O.S) (CONT'D)
I didn't want the day to be over.

... Clarence driving - grinning from ear to ear - cause next to him is a girl he likes so much his teeth hurt and even the arse-kicking he's going to cop for stealing this car can't dent how good he's feeling right now.

And then Clarence suddenly turns to Alex, cause parts of the memory jigsaw are starting to come back to him.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
She said if I wouldn't take her back, she'd get out of the car and walk...

Alex nods him on... he mentally hunts for more... but slumps, there's no more.

CLARENCE (CONT'D)
Next thing I remember, I'm on the ground. No car... No Sheyna...

— END

25 EXT/INT. LINDARA SURROUNDS/POLICE TRUCK - NIGHT 1 25
ALEX, CLARENCE, TIM,

The mounted spotlight on the truck cuts a swathe through the blackness. Searching, looking for some sign of Sheyna. Tim, Clarence and Alex are jammed in the front. They pull up at an intersection. No car. No sign of Sheyna. They sit a long time... and then...

TIM
How bad was the argument?

Clarence stares out the window.

TIM (CONT'D)
Cause if it got out of hand...

ALEX
(low, warning him off)
Tim.

TIM
Maybe she pissed you off, and you know, stuff sometimes happens, stuff you didn't plan.

Clarence closes his eyes against the idea, shutting it out.

TIM (CONT'D)
Cause, her blood's -

ALEX
(louder, cutting him off)
Tim!

TIM
(ignoring her)
I need to understand what happened, mate. I need to understand how her blood got all over you.

Clarence puts his head in his hands, unable to cope with the questions. Alex and Tim stare at each other in the darkness - the tension between them electric.