

REPAIR THE CARROWS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. LOG CABIN - MORNING

On a wooden desk, cracked glazing splits the framed portrait of a young family consisting of a FATHER, a MOTHER, the ELDEST DAUGHTER, a SECOND OLDEST DAUGHTER, TWO TWINS(boy and girl), and a PUPPY, all smiling.

In the background, a MAN sits up in his cabin bed.

The Man wipes his face, revealing WALKER CARROW(60's, grizzled hair and a beard like wool, the Father in the portrait) opening his rusty eyes.

On the gravel floor, JACKSON(full-grown Labrador Retriever, a very good boy, the Puppy in the portrait) stands from his doggy bed and flap his ears.

Walker shushes Jackson, rises and performs a back cracking stretch. He tucks the blanket over his wife, COLLEEN CARROW (60's, the Mother in the portrait).

Walker heads to the door in his long johns...(The 12x14ft Cabin features a fireplace, a desk, a window, a wood stove, a small dining table, and a kitchen counter)... He steps into his boots and lumbers outside...

EXT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

...to see the ALASKAN WILDERNESS. He takes in the orange sun rising above a mountain chain that slopes into the Blue Lake below, of which the beach is just a short walk from the cabin.

After a moment, he heads into an OUTHOUSE.

EXT. BLUE LAKE BEACH - LATER

With his homemade fishing pole, Walker(dressed in a plaid shirt, pants, and suspenders) sits on one of two wooden chairs by the lake, between them, Jackson rests on a doggy bed.

Walker casts his line, waits...

LATER

Walker dozes off -- a tug on his fishing line wakes him. He pulls the rod back, reels the line in. Pops up from his chair.

Jackson innocently watches Walker dig his heels in the dirt.

Yanking hard, Walker curls his back as the fishing rod snaps!  
Falls back in his chair!

Walker, panting, recovers from the effort, stands when...

...A LARGE HALIBUT swims into and out of view, Walker  
chuckles in amazement at the fish's size, Jackson growls.

EXT. BLUE LAKE BEACH - DAY

Off aways lies a BEACHED CANOE tied to a wooden post. Walker  
(wearing a worn-out plaid jacket, binoculars, and bucket hat)  
approaches with a pack-board over his shoulder, which he  
places in the canoe along with his SPRINGFIELD RIFLE.

EXT. BLUE LAKE - DAY

The Man and Dog duo canoe across the lake.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CREEK - DAY

The duo drink from a creek. Walker then crosses over, Jackson  
doesn't. Walker looks back, waves him over.

WALKER

C'mon, boy.

Jackson whines. Walker sighs, steps back across, and carries  
his dog over the creek lest Jackson touches the water.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Scaredy cat.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

Jackson patiently watches Walker pee on a tree. Walker buckles  
his pants, Jackson trots over and pees on Walker's urine.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Behind a boulder, Walker aims his rifle at something rustling  
in the bushes ten yards off. Beside him, Jackson watches a  
BUTTERFLY flutter around his snout.

A CARIBOU wanders from the bushes, sniffing the lush grass.

He tightens his grip on the rifle, rests his finger on the trigger, puts the animal's heart in his sights. Then...

The butterfly lands on Jackson's nose, and he sneezes.

Distracted, Walker loses aim, the Caribou gawks straight at him and freezes.

He resets his aim on the animal when he sees a CARIBOU CALF stumble out from the bushes.

Walker holds aim for a moment, and lowers his rifle.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The duo cross train tracks when they feel the ground tremble, hearing rumblings of an oncoming FREIGHT TRAIN down the tracks, it blows its whistle.

They watch as the train comes around the bend, the TRAIN CONDUCTOR gives a friendly wave to Walker, who waves back.

Watching the train pass, Walker catches a glimpse of TWO FREIGHT-HOPPERS in a boxcar gawking back at him.

Jackson's eye is caught by a SQUIRREL perched on a log, the two animals stare down until the squirrel scampers off, and Jackson chases after it. Walker doesn't notice.

The train fully passes, Walker ponders a bit, turns to see Jackson is gone. He makes a face and continues his hike.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

Walker hikes alone. Returning, Jackson hops out of the bushes, empty-mouthed. They press on...

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

Walker and Jackson come in view of the lake far off down below. To the west, he sees a small dot in the grass.

He equips his binoculars; It's another CARIBOU, alone.

BOOM! Walker jumps, the crack of a distant gunshot fills the air. He finds the Caribou in his binoculars once again to see the animal lying dead in the grass.

He pans his binoculars far off, down by the lake, sees a HUNTER holding a smoking rifle.

MOMENTS LATER

Through his binoculars, Walker watches the Hunter wrap the Caribou meat, strap it onto his own pack-board, and stand...

Slowly, the Hunter's eye finds Walker and Jackson looking down at him from the top of the hill. Walker lowers his binoculars and waves.

The Hunter waves back, makes his way down toward the lake.

MOMENTS LATER

The Hunter, way in the distance now, hikes into the trees, out of sight. Walker heads for the Caribou carcass.

MOMENTS LATER

The duo approaches the cadaver. The Hunter harvested the ribs and tenderloins, but the front quarters and legs still remain.

Walker smirks at Jackson, pulls out a knife.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Coming from the lake, Walker returns with the Caribou meat on his pack-board as Jackson follows. Colleen, tending their vegetable garden, sees them.

COLLEEN  
Heading out again today?

WALKER  
No, I'm staying.

Jackson runs up and sniffs Colleen, she pets him.

COLLEEN  
I was thinking we can take the canoe out later?

WALKER  
Sure.

Colleen kisses Walker on the cheek and brings a bowl of veggies in the cabin.

Walker places the pack-board on a wooden table, unties and lays out the meat he's harvested.

Inside, Colleen starts up their wood stove.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
What'd you do with the morning?

COLLEEN  
Just got done picking some veggies.  
Also started on another song.

Colleen walks out with a plate, hands Walker a knife.

WALKER  
How many is that now?

Walker cuts slices of meat from the bones and slaps them onto the plate in Colleen's hands.

COLLEEN  
Not sure exactly. When we get back home I should play them for someone important.

WALKER  
We are home--

--Colleen coughs into her elbow. A short pause.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
Still got that cough?

COLLEEN  
It's heading out.

EXT. MEAT TREE - DAY

Off from the cabin, a wooden ladder leans against a branch, and Walker carries up the Caribou meat wrapped in plastic. He ties and hangs the meat on the branch, heads down the ladder.

INT. LOG CABIN - DAY

At the desk, an emptied bowl rests next to Colleen as she writes lyrics in a notebook. Walker eats stew on the bed, watches her write.

She takes a break, stretches out her hand as she stares at the cracked family portrait, lost in thought. Until...

WALKER  
How do you just jot that all down?

She snaps out of it, turns, and finds the words.

COLLEEN

I don't know, I just... I remember things I've been through and write down how I feel, helps me come at ease with 'em. You should try putting together a song or two; just avoid being pretentious about it.

She continues writing.

WALKER

I'll just stick to the guitar. I've never been one for writing.

EXT. TREES - DAY

Walker treads in the woods with a saw in hand, searching the lower tree branches, tests one's flexibility by tugging down hard on the branch, it snaps.

He tries another branch, pulls down, and it doesn't snap, but bends. He raises his saw to branch's collar, and saws away...

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Wood chips surround Walker's boots. Sitting on a stool, he carves the branch he sawed down. He's made it thinner, smoother.

MOMENTS LATER

Walker twists three SCREW EYES(a screw with a loop for passing a cord through) into and along the branch, nails his fishing reel to the thick end of it, and runs a line through the screw eyes.

Holds it for inspection; he's fixed himself a new fishing pole.

--Something rustles behind him, turns to see a BEAVER, staring in awe of the wood chips at Walker's boots.

Walker smirks, tosses some wood chips to the Beaver, who quickly scoops them up and scampers away.

EXT. BLUE LAKE - SUNDOWN

The sun sets behind the mountains as Walker, Colleen, and Jackson sit in the canoe on the water.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Walker sets three plates of Caribou meat with veggies on the dining table. Colleen sits, Jackson hops onto his chair, and Walker grunts in pain as he sits.

WALKER

My legs are a little sore.

COLLEEN

You're getting too old for walking.  
I'll have to stop calling you "Walker."

He chuckles.

WALKER

I'll always be Walker, especially  
when I'm older.

COLLEEN

Why's that?

WALKER

'Cause I'm gonna need one of those  
walkers to help me around!

They laugh out loud, Colleen coughs once or twice as the laughter subsides.

Colleen coughs once more, grimaces. Walker is too busy with his food to notice. She glances at the family portrait resting on the desk, takes a sip of water.

COLLEEN

You ever wonder what year it is?

WALKER

I lost surety after a few years out  
here. Maybe nineteen... sixty-four,  
sixty-five? How about you?

COLLEEN

Sixty-nine.

WALKER

Think so?

COLLEEN

Yep.

(beat)

I've been wondering how the kids  
must look.

WALKER

I bet they aren't kids anymore.

Colleen reflects as Walker watches Jackson lick his plate clean and hop off his chair.

COLLEEN

I saw Jessica in a dream last night, but she was older than she was when she died; what she woulda looked like now.

Walker doesn't look up from his food.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

That's gotta transcend something, right?

WALKER

Write a song about it.

Colleen makes a face, continues...

COLLEEN

She looked about late twenties, but not too late. Like twenty-six, she was twenty-six. That'd make it... ten years?

WALKER

I don't think it's been that long.

COLLEEN

What if it is?

Walker shrugs.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

You don't think that changes anything?

WALKER

What would it change?

COLLEEN

You don't think we'd go back after ten years?

WALKER

Do we have to talk about this now?

COLLEEN

It's been years and you never wanna tell me what you're thinking or how you feel. Don't you wanna see them again?

WALKER

Of course I do, but you gotta keep in mind that just because we wanna see them doesn't mean they wanna see us.

Pause, Colleen considers sullenly,

COLLEEN

It's just hard.

Walker stands, kneels next to Colleen, takes her hand.

WALKER

I know. But it's what's best. And remember, the kids aren't the only thing we came out here to stay away from.

(beat)

We did this to ourselves.

She nods, he comforts her.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Jackson sleeps on his bed, Walker and Colleen sleep on theirs, which is small but they make it work.

Colleen wakes with a cough, looks around and nudges Walker.

COLLEEN

I gotta go.

Walker, half-asleep, rolls over to make room as she climbs out of bed.

Jackson awakes, watches Colleen put on Walker's coat and boots, then trudge outside, closes the door.

Walker is already back to sleep... Until he hears coughing outside the cabin. Jackson's ears twitch.

Walker adjusts himself, tries to sleep, but then, he hears more coughing. He sits up, listens... The coughing starts to sound painful.

Jackson runs over and scratches at the door, Walker jumps out of bed and hurries outside...

EXT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

...to see Colleen curled up against the outhouse, coughing her lungs out. Jackson, panicking, runs over and barks, Walker leaps over, sits her up.

WALKER

You're okay. You're okay now.

Colleen lets out one last big cough, and her lungs clear up.

She catches her breath, Walker raises his hand to find tiny drops of blood sprayed on it.

INT. LOG CABIN - LATER

In bed, Colleen sips water, gives the glass back to Walker, and lies down. Walker tucks the blanket over her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MEAT TREE - DAY

On the ladder, Walker unties the wrapped Caribou meat from the branch and carries it down to the ground.

His breath turns to vapor as it rises into the cold air.

EXT. BLUE LAKE BEACH/LOG CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Colleen sits in her chair, Jackson lays beside her as she writes lyrics in her notebook.

Her writing is interrupted by a small coughing fit. After it passes, she sees Walker at the cabin cutting up some meat.

She shivers as a chilly gust of wind passes through her, she closes her notebook and stands, a bit woozy.

Colleen lumbers to the cabin with Jackson, who growls at a flock of BIRDS overhead, Colleen looks up, watches them fly south. Her head wavers, her eyes flutter, and she faints.

Walker drops everything and runs over to her.

WALKER

Colleen!

Once again, he sits her up, and she comes to.

INT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Colleen lays in bed, Walker sits next to her, mid-conversation;

WALKER

There's another way to the train.  
Won't have to canoe but it'll cut  
two miles off the hike.

COLLEEN

It's no use, Walker. I can't walk  
like you can.

WALKER

Then I'll carry you. There's no  
sense in not trying.

COLLEEN

There's no sense in trying either.

Walker dips his head.

EXT. MEAT TREE - DAY

The plastic-wrapped Caribou meat dangles from the branch. The sun shines directly on the plastic, the sound of the lake water spilling onto the beach can be heard.

CUT TO:

THE SAME SHOT

But now, three more bundles of meat hang from the branch, everything in sight is dusted with snow, the wilderness is dead quiet.

INT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Walker sits next to the crackling fireplace, Colleen, in bed, picks at a plate of food. Walker studies her for a long while, thinking...

Colleen holds out her half-eaten plate, Walker takes the dish...

COLLEEN

(raspy)  
Thank you.

...and places it on the kitchen counter. He turns to see Colleen has laid down, her eyes closed.

Walker's eyes change, he quietly steps over and gently checks her pulse, he exhales, relieved.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY

The wilderness is caked with snow. Walker stands off ways from the train tracks.

He ponders, peering down the southbound track, his thought broken by the train's whistle in the distance...

The train comes rumbling around the bend. The Train Conductor waves at Walker, throws a small sack into the snow.

Walker waves back. As the train passes, he hikes over, opens the sack, revealing a bundle of envelopes, stamps, and bottles of cough medicine.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

Walker returns with the small sack. Opens the cabin door...

INT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

...to see the cabin is void of both Colleen and Jackson. He turns, and sees Colleen sitting with Jackson by the lake.

EXT. BLUE LAKE BEACH - MOMENTS LATER

Colleen, in her chair, tunes a guitar, Jackson lays beside her. Walker approaches.

WALKER

I got you some more cough medicine.

COLLEEN

Thank you.

Beat.

WALKER

Little cold out, isn't it?

Colleen's voice sounds healthy, as if she isn't sick...

COLLEEN

I got my lungs back, this might be the last time I do so, I wanted to do two things.

WALKER

Which are?

COLLEEN

One: I wanna tell you to go find the kids, and bring 'em here.

Pause. Walker, taken aback...

WALKER

That's... not... There's too many reasons I can't do that.

Walker waits for a response, she doesn't give him one.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Who's gonna take care of you?

Again, she doesn't answer. Walker raises the small sack.

WALKER (CONT'D)

I was gonna send a letter; telling how you're sick.

COLLEEN

A letter won't do.

Walker shakes his head.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

This might be my last chance. I wanna see them, Walker. I wanna see how old they are.

WALKER

What if they don't wanna see us? Which they won't.

COLLEEN

There's no sense in not trying.  
(off Walker's look)  
It'll be hard at first, but they'll come around.

WALKER

What makes you sure?

COLLEEN

(smiles)

Remember what we used to call you?  
"The Man who can fix anything."

Walker purses his lips.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

We were good parents, Walker. Good  
parents that did one bad thing.  
They'll see that.

WALKER

I don't.

COLLEEN

Walker...

WALKER

I'm not leaving you here all alone.

COLLEEN

...I only got moments left before I  
start coughing again, I don't wanna  
spend it arguing with you.

(beat)

You're gonna go find them and bring  
them back here before I go, and  
you're leaving tomorrow.

They gaze at each other with glazed eyes.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)

Understood?

Walker sighs.

WALKER

Yes, ma'am.

(beat)

What's the second thing you wanted  
to do?

Colleen holds out the guitar for Walker.

COLLEEN

Sing a song.

Walker takes the instrument, and starts strumming. Colleen  
sings the song, which continues to play...

INT. LOG CABIN - DAY

...Walker retrieves a burlap sack from under the bed, opens up a bureau, takes out an extra set of clothes...

EXT. LOG CABIN - DAY

...Song still playing. Walker chops some firewood on a tree stump, suddenly, it begins to snow, he looks up, returns to chopping wood, a little faster than before...

INT. LOG CABIN - DAY

...Colleen still sings. Next to the fireplace, Walker stacks firewood as Colleen watches him from the bed...

EXT. BLUE LAKE BEACH - SUNDOWN

...Song playing. Walker and Colleen sit on their chairs on the beach, with Jackson laying between them, silhouetted by the sun setting behind the mountains...

BACK TO:

EXT. BLUE LAKE BEACH - DAY

Colleen still sings, Walker still strums. Jackson watches.  
The song ends.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAWN

The sun rises above the tree-dotted hillsides.

INT. LOG CABIN - MORNING

Colleen sits on the bed as Walker mallets two hooks into the wall above her, then rests his Springfield Rifle on the hooks.

WALKER

Perfect, there if you need it.

Colleen's voice sounds sickly again.

COLLEEN

(raspy)

Thank you.

Walker opens a desk drawer, retrieves some coins, counts them.

WALKER  
Sixty-five cents left.

He shoves the money in his pockets, looks around...

WALKER (CONT'D)  
(mumbling)  
What else...? Window...fireplace...  
you got food...uh--

COLLEEN  
--Walker.

He turns to her.

COLLEEN (CONT'D)  
You're gonna miss the train.

He can't help but smirk.

WALKER  
That's kinda the point. I just  
don't feel right leaving you.

COLLEEN  
You don't wanna leave me or you  
don't wanna go back?

WALKER  
Both.

They smile, Walker kisses her on the forehead. He hefts his burlap sack over his shoulder, Colleen quickly stands and hugs him long and tight. They whisper to each other...

COLLEEN  
Thank you.

WALKER  
Anything for my best girl.

They release. Walker heads for the door, opens it, Jackson tries exit, but Walker blocks him with his foot.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
Stay, Jackson.

COLLEEN  
Take Jaxy with you.

WALKER

What--? No, he's gotta stay and keep you company, help you out.

COLLEEN

I'll be fine on my own a few days.  
(off Walker's look)  
Besides, he'll be a better help in getting the kids back.

WALKER

Colleen--

COLLEEN

--Bring him. And if you don't, I'll move out and build my own cabin.

Walker smirks, lets Jackson out, looks back at Colleen.

WALKER

I'll be as fast as I can.

COLLEEN

Don't be fast. Just be patient, Walker. And they'll come around.

WALKER

I'll try.

A moment...

COLLEEN

Good luck.

Walker nods, and closes the door.

EXT. WILDERNESS - DAY

The Man and Dog navigate through snowy bushes, Walker lifts his knees high with every step, Jackson keeps his head low.

Under the bushes, Jackson sees a SQUIRREL, they both freeze, and the squirrel takes off, Jackson chases after it.

WALKER

No! Jackson! We got no time for--!  
Jackson, come back here!

Jackson disappears into the snowy woods.

WALKER (CONT'D)

You're gonna get me in trouble!

Walker waits, but Jackson doesn't come back. Walker growls, continues to press on, a bit faster than before.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Trees getting sparse, Walker looks for Jackson as he marches.

WALKER

Jackson! Come on, boy, where are you!

No answer, just the sounds of the wilderness, until he hears the faint echo of a freight train.

His eyes widen, he runs.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Jackson! Train's here we gotta go!

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - MOMENTS LATER

Walker sprints out from the tree line to see the train slowing down, coming around the bend. Walker tries to get the Train Conductor's attention as he runs forward.

WALKER

Hey! Hey!

The Conductor can't see or hear Walker.

Walker growls and keeps running through the snow-dusted field between him and the train.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Jackson!

Walker turns his head, no sight of Jackson.

Walker runs up next to the train, searches for an open boxcar, sees one, and throws his sack inside...

I/E. BOXCAR/TRAIN TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

...Walker's sack lands in the boxcar, he grabs the door, and jumps onto the platform with a grunt, kicks his legs until he rolls safely inside.

He immediately stands, searching the tree line for--

WALKER

Jackson!

The train picks up speed, passing the bend. Walker sees Jackson shoot out from the trees and hightail it across the snowy field!

WALKER (CONT'D)  
Come on, Jackson! Come on, boy!

Jackson closes in, the train speeds up, Walker sees a dead squirrel in Jackson's mouth!

WALKER (CONT'D)  
Ha! You got him, boy! Come on now!

Jackson is only feet away from Walker, but before he can jump on, the train reaches top speed, and Jackson can't keep up.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
Come on, Jackson!

Jackson falls behind of the boxcar, slows to a jog.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
(almost laughing)  
Aw, Jackson! She's gonna be mad!

Walker gazes as Jackson sits in the snow...

WALKER (CONT'D)  
Take care of her, Jaxy.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - CONTINUOUS

...with the squirrel in his mouth, Jackson watches the train disappear into the wilderness.

INT. BOXCAR - NIGHT

Tired, Walker sits in the corner of the boxcar, studying the night sky, watching the moon hover above the trees.

His eyelids get heavy, and he falls asleep...

CUT TO:

THE SAME SHOT

Of Walker sleeping, only now it's not the moon, but the sun that shines on his eyes. The train's whistle wakes him.

Walker climbs into a stand, peers out of the boxcar to see the train is pulling into a SMALL RAILYARD!