

GOOD AFTERNOON, MISS

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Fingers fidget with the loose nail of a thumb. The skin around the nail is discolored, paler than the rest of the body.

JUNE, early to mid forties, walks along the side of the road in a worn prairie gown.

Behind her we see a black carriage turn a corner, headed up the same foggy road she walks along.

She glances over her shoulder once she hears the clacking of the horse's hooves against the gravel.

The COACHMAN is young, abnormally gangly, and pale. He wears a top hat and a black uniformed cloak that's long enough so we can't see his feet.

Both of the carriage's side windows are covered by black curtains.

It slows as it nears June.

She stops walking, takes a step back. When the carriage comes to a full stop, the Coachman removes his top hat and greets her with a warm smile.

COACHMAN
Good Afternoon, Miss.

His voice, soothing.

JUNE
And to you, Sir.

She begins walking again.

COACHMAN
(calling after)
A special day, isn't it?

She stops.

JUNE
I suppose.

COACHMAN
This road you walk is endless.

She looks up and down - foggy - we can't see the road's end in either direction.

JUNE
Yes, it's quite the trek.

COACHMAN
May I offer you a ride?

JUNE
You may.

COACHMAN
Well then Miss, would you--

JUNE
But I can't feign I have any interest in one.

COACHMAN
Can't you? Well then, how would one go about swaying your interests?

JUNE
With some old fashion imploring maybe. The kind that pulls you to your knees.

He laughs.

COACHMAN
Now, before I dirty my overcoat, do look around, Miss. Aren't you concerned about getting lost?

JUNE
No.

COACHMAN
You didn't look around.

JUNE
You didn't get on your knees.

He laughs.

COACHMAN
Miss, I'm not meaning to undermine your sense of direction, but with the breadths of these roads bedimmed by fog--

JUNE

I'm sure a little fog won't send my head spinning.

COACHMAN

Can you be so sure?

JUNE

I can. And your doubt only gives a staunch to my sureness.

COACHMAN

Miss, if my concerns come across belittling, I do apologize. My concerns only ever stem from my own goodwill.

JUNE

Yes, I do see the good in you. But that's not all. There's something else. Something that's... not...

She examines him squintingly.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I can't see your hands. Will you raise them for me?

He hesitates.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Now.

He raises them.

COACHMAN

Bone thin, aren't they? I'm never armed, Miss. Counterproductive really.

JUNE

That they are. Bone thin.

COACHMAN

May I lower them?

She nods. He lowers them.

JUNE

I'd prefer not to be beholden to anyone.

COACHMAN

I'll hold you in no debt, Miss.

JUNE

You can not think me daft enough to find certainty in the words of a stranger.

COACHMAN

I'll put it in writing if you'd like.

JUNE

You mean contractually?

COACHMAN

Contractual, yes.

JUNE

I'm not even headed to town.

COACHMAN

Haply timed. Neither am I.

JUNE

Is that so?

COACHMAN

It is.

JUNE

I find that unlikely.

COACHMAN

Unlikely, yes, but tis' true. Conveniently, I'm onto my last errand now.

JUNE

Your last?

COACHMAN

Yes.

JUNE

But it's so early in the afternoon.

COACHMAN

I don't get my schedule until the day of, Miss. It's ever changing.

JUNE

Well... an exciting occupation you've chosen.

COACHMAN
Yes... exciting.

She turns, begins walking again.

The carriage follows. As soon as she notices this, she stops.

JUNE
Sir.

COACHMAN
Miss.

She takes a few steps forward, stops. The carriage moves forward a few feet, stops.

JUNE
Your primary duties surely come first.

COACHMAN
I don't demur.

JUNE
Then you'll understand why I wouldn't want to impede.

She waits for him to respond, he doesn't.

JUNE (CONT'D)
You'll understand why I don't want to take you up on your offer. No matter your kind likeness.

COACHMAN
Sometimes Lilliputian power grasps our wants.

JUNE
Excuse me?

COACHMAN
A lady is never a bother, Miss. Not ever.

She walks back up the road until she's parallel with the carriage again. She keeps a good distance away.

JUNE
Such refinement and valiance in such a young man.

COACHMAN
Young?

JUNE

Precocity, I too had it when I was young.

COACHMAN

But young I am not, Miss. For youth is in the spirit, not the marrow. And I for one was born with many unfleshly wrinkles. Please Miss, do hop on.

JUNE

Endless determination I see.

COACHMAN

And proud of it.

JUNE

But a lady has to ask why one is so determined in the first place?

COACHMAN

Some paths don't cross by chance, Miss--

JUNE

June. My name is June.

COACHMAN

Miss June.

JUNE

Is this the end of your introduction then?

She goes to adjust the collar of her dress when she inhales in a sudden pain.

COACHMAN

I suppose it is.

She holds out her hand to see that the flimsy nail of her thumb has become looser. A slime oozes out from underneath.

JUNE

(under breath)
Dammit.

COACHMAN

Is something wrong?

She hides her hand behind her back.

JUNE

No.

COACHMAN

Is it your finger?

JUNE

... My thumb.

COACHMAN

May I take a look, Miss June?

(off her look)

Please.

After a moment of hesitation, she crosses the road and gives her hand over to the Coachman.

He gently examines her thumb.

JUNE

I can't seem to remember what I did to it.

He says nothing.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I assume you have a first aid kit on board.

COACHMAN

You assume wrong.

JUNE

Oh.

COACHMAN

Counterproductive really.

She tries pulling away. He doesn't let her.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

I'm as gentle as they come, Miss June. Though I will have to ask you to look away.

She turns her head.

He rips off the nail.

She flinches, backs away from the carriage.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

All better.

He holds out the nail.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Your souvenir.

She steps forward, extends her hand. He places it in her palm and smiles. She doesn't return the smile.

He folds her hand, turns it over, raises it to his pale lips, and plants a kiss.

He releases her hand.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Dearest Miss June.

They stare at each other for a moment.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
You're of no bother to me. None at all.

JUNE
I want you to know it's not your salutation that's coaxing, it's that voice of yours.

COACHMAN
I'll take what I can.

She begins moving towards the carriage doors.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Oh, wait. Wait. Wait, Miss June.

She steps back.

JUNE
What is it?

COACHMAN
I do apologize for not telling you sooner, but my carriage is full.

JUNE
Full? Full with what?

COACHMAN
My guests.

JUNE
Oh, yes. Yes, of course.

She looks to the carriage. It's small, looking to hold no more than three or four passengers.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It's just... they're terribly quiet.

COACHMAN

Not everyone has a lot to say, Miss June.

JUNE

How harrowing.

(beat)

Should I introduce myself?

COACHMAN

Why would you need to do such a thing?

JUNE

To inform them as to why they're stopped.

COACHMAN

That's sweet of you, Miss June. Awfully sweet, but for your own sake it would be better if you didn't.

JUNE

Oh, and why is that?

COACHMAN

My guests, they're all a touch distressed at the moment.

JUNE

Distressed?

COACHMAN

Yes.

JUNE

In what way?

COACHMAN

It's not my place to say, Miss June. I'm just the Coachman.

She moves closer to the covered window.

JUNE

I've never seen curtains on
carriage windows before.

COACHMAN

Now you have.

JUNE

Now I have.

She strokes the curtains. He tenses the more she touches
them.

COACHMAN

And you're now thinking about where
you shall sit, are you not?

JUNE

No. I was thinking about the
softness of some incongruities, but
that too is a sensible thought.

COACHMAN

The answer is nigh, Miss June.
Right beside me. The seat with the
finest of views.

JUNE

Your guests would too have a fine
view if it weren't for these
curtains.

He only stares.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Is there, uh-- is there enough room
up there?

COACHMAN

Plenty. That is, only if you're up
for a good conversation.

(off her look)

What is it?

JUNE

You want my conversation?

COACHMAN

More than anything. Will that be a
problem?

JUNE

No. A good conversation. Why not?

She makes her way around the front of the carriage, but stops at the two black horses. She gestures to them.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Do you mind?

COACHMAN
No, go ahead.

He tightens their reigns.

The second her fingers touch the first horse's fur, it flinches and whines.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Shh. Shh.

JUNE
There, there.

She continues to pet them.

JUNE (CONT'D)
What do you call them?

COACHMAN
I don't call them anything.

JUNE
Don't you think a Coachman's noble
steeds deserve identities?

COACHMAN
Dasher and Dancer it is.

She gives him a half smile as she bends down, examining their legs.

JUNE
I'll be damned.

COACHMAN
Selective language please, Miss
June. My horses can feel the
reverberations of your discontent.

JUNE
Their hindquarters, they're--

COACHMAN
Not the most muscular, are they?

JUNE
Not at all muscular.

COACHMAN

I know.

JUNE

Pulling such weight I'd have
thought the opposite.

She stands again, runs her fingers through their mane.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Dear God, I've never seen mane so
unkotted.

COACHMAN

Sleek, isn't it?

JUNE

Satiny.

COACHMAN

I even braid it from time to time.

JUNE

A lot of effort, wouldn't you say?

COACHMAN

I like to keep up with their
appearances.

JUNE

Huh, may I ask why? I mean, with
laboring their only purpose it
seems rather inane.

COACHMAN

Many faces meet them, Miss June,
but they don't meet many faces.

She notices their eyes, they aren't on her. They stare at the
road ahead.

JUNE

Well, this is astounding upkeep.
Beautiful creatures they are.

COACHMAN

Much appreciated, Miss June. Much
appreciated.

She cracks a half smile before finishing her travel around
the carriage. She begins to hop on by herself until the
Coachman grabs her hand and helps her.

JUNE

Thank you.

The box seat is leather. The spot beside the Coachman is worn and slightly torn.

She doesn't sit, but instead points to the seat.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It's worn.

COACHMAN

What is?

JUNE

Your box seat.

COACHMAN

Yes.

He looks away, but she stares at him until he turns back to her and says--

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Sometimes it's-- sometimes I like to sit on that side instead.

She squints, not buying his answer. She turns, eyes scour the surrounding woods.

JUNE

My home is a ways away.

COACHMAN

You're of no inconvenience, Miss June.

JUNE

I have to be back by sundown.

COACHMAN

As do I.

JUNE

What's your reasoning?

COACHMAN

What's yours?

She sits down. As soon as her bottom hits the box seat, the Coachman whips his reigns.

The carriage jerks forward. June catches herself from sliding off her seat.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Yes, do hold on, Miss June. My rims are worn and a few of my spokes cracked.

JUNE

This whole freight seems to have taken quite the beating.

COACHMAN

Yes, life will do that to you, you know? By chance do you happen to know any good wheelwrights?

She grips the seat.

JUNE

I can't say I do.

COACHMAN

You will be sure to inform me of any discomfort you're having along the way, won't you, Miss June?

JUNE

I'm not one to complain. Out loud.

COACHMAN

Are you cold?

JUNE

Uh, not real--

COACHMAN

I'd be happy to lend you my overcoat if you find the breeze too chilling.

JUNE

You're so concerned about my comfort.

COACHMAN

Well, of course I am, Miss June. You're my guest.

JUNE

It's truly touching.

COACHMAN

You're touched?

JUNE

Yes.

COACHMAN

Then may I ask why you seem so uneasy?

JUNE

I'm not uneasy. I'm just in some pain.

COACHMAN

Your thumb still?

JUNE

My entire body, my estrangement with aging I presume.

COACHMAN

Well, if there's anything I can do to--

JUNE

The air.

She turns towards the woods, sniffing.

COACHMAN

What about it?

JUNE

It burns my nose.

COACHMAN

I smell nothing out of the ordinary.

JUNE

A sweetness. Not from honeysuckle.

COACHMAN

Perhaps it comes ephemerally, Miss June.

JUNE

Perhaps.

COACHMAN

Like a breath or cough.

JUNE

You say my name a lot.

COACHMAN

Would you prefer I not?

JUNE

I don't know what I prefer, but what I do know is that I'm still unaware of your name. So, Sir, what is it that I should be calling you?

COACHMAN

Coachman.

JUNE

Coachman?

COACHMAN

Yes.

JUNE

That's it?

COACHMAN

That's all I am, Miss June. That's all I'd like to go by.

JUNE

One's name shouldn't be germane to their occupation.

COACHMAN

Names are but a throng of letters, Miss June.

JUNE

And?

COACHMAN

Who's to say what relegates as a normal one?

JUNE

I'm to say.

COACHMAN

You're to say?

JUNE

Your mother didn't allot you that name.

COACHMAN

Faces I prefer, always have, and faces don't always contest with the names given to them at birth.

JUNE

What's at the root of your
apprehension towards identity,
Coachman?

COACHMAN

An identity is much more than a
name, Miss June. And anyway, I'm
not of the main focus here, and
neither are my noble steeds--

JUNE

Dasher and Dancer.

COACHMAN

You are. You're the foreground,
Miss June. My guests are always the
foreground. I'm just your stage's
scrim.

JUNE

Most would call them passengers not
guests.

COACHMAN

I press for the primmer of the two.

JUNE

What about my name, Coachman?

COACHMAN

What about it?

JUNE

Does it contest with my face?

COACHMAN

Everyone knows there's nothing more
underhanded than a first
impression.

JUNE

Well, Coachman, feed me the sham
that is my first impression then.

COACHMAN

June. June. June.

He lets the name roll off his tongue a few more times.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

It's ill-fitting. Too... soft.

JUNE

Those incongruities, always soft,
aren't they?

She reaches up, putting her hand in the sunlight.

JUNE (CONT'D)

The sun is brighter than usual.

COACHMAN

It's the same as it was yesterday,
Miss June. Here. Let me accompany
you.

He accompanies her hand, stretching it higher into the
sunlight.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Feel its flaxen fervor. Let the
pores devour of it what they can.

He pulls his hand away. She bathes her hand in the sunlight
for another moment before the light disappears behind the
clouds.

A faint clacking.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

How do you feel?

She sits upright.

JUNE

Wait.

She touches his arm. They pause, listening.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It sounds like... hooves?

COACHMAN

Well, Miss June, we are being drawn
by--

JUNE

No.

The clacking grows louder.

Another black carriage emerges out of the fog ahead.
Everything about it is identical to the carriage they ride
in, from the black horses to the covered side windows.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Those hooves.

The Coachman leans forward.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Coachman?

His face, it drops into a frown. He leans back, shoulders straighten, jaw locks.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Who is that?

He doesn't react to her. His eyes stay locked on the carriage that's fast approaching.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Coachman? That carriage is nearly identical to this one, is it not?

COACHMAN
Why yes it is.

She leans forward to get a better look at the Coachman's face. He has yet to look at her since the other carriage has appeared.

JUNE
Coachman.

He doesn't turn.

JUNE (CONT'D)
(louder)
Coachman

He turns.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Who is that? I can tell by the look on your face you know.

He leans closer to her ear.

COACHMAN
A discomfort is to come.

The other carriage pulls up beside them, stops.

COACHMAN 2 is also ghostly pale and gangly, but his face is different from the Coachman's. It's more aged, wrinkled, eyebrows furrow as he holds a derisive smirk.

COACHMAN 2
Old Chap.

COACHMAN
Gent.

COACHMAN 2
Oh, how I have news for you.

COACHMAN
Well, let's hear it.

COACHMAN 2
Look left, you'll find my eyes.

The Coachman looks to him.

COACHMAN 2 (CONT'D)
There we are. Could I suggest a smile?

The Coachman doesn't smile.

COACHMAN 2 (CONT'D)
The influenza. Its moved further south.

COACHMAN
Where south?

COACHMAN 2
Cumberland. Seems the Queen City of the Alleghenies has a few railroads that have been transporting a little more than lumber.

COACHMAN
Word from the Board of Health?

COACHMAN 2
There's been a request put in for more nurses.

COACHMAN
... And?

Coachman 2's eyes move to June.

COACHMAN 2
They've yet to show.

COACHMAN
Any of them? What have the officials said?

COACHMAN 2

They've yet to appropriate any restrictions. Public gatherings, schools, none of its been banned.

His eyes stay locked on June who returns the stare without hesitation.

COACHMAN 2 (CONT'D)

So quick to give up those pesky officials are.

COACHMAN

Is that all then?

His eyes break away from the staring contest and back to the Coachman.

COACHMAN 2

So dismissive.

COACHMAN

Well-- it's-- I just--

COACHMAN 2

Ah, ah. Speak haltingly, Coachman. For all I want is to catch up. Can't you spare me a moment?

COACHMAN

... Sure.

COACHMAN 2

Good. Now let's start with this. Do inform me of who that lovely lady aside you is.

JUNE

I'm Miss June. Just June if we're being informal.

COACHMAN

We're not.

JUNE

Who are you?

COACHMAN 2

Me? Well, I'm your Coachman's most merited colleague.

JUNE

Is that right?

COACHMAN 2
We go back.

COACHMAN
Yes, back.

JUNE
Ah, but such tensions.

COACHMAN 2
Tensions you say? Between him and
I? Well, you see June--

COACHMAN
Miss June.

COACHMAN 2
It's all just a bevy of brotherly
horseplay. Like for like. Right
Coachman?

COACHMAN
Right.

COACHMAN 2
Don't you have siblings? Or are you
not familiar with the nuances of
banter, June--

COACHMAN
Miss June.

JUNE
Only child.

COACHMAN
Ah, there it is. Unfamiliarity,
such a prejudice.

JUNE
Such.

COACHMAN 2
Is your Coachman treating you well?

JUNE
He's a gentleman if there ever was
one.

COACHMAN 2
Oh, but we're all gentleman, June--

COACHMAN
Miss Ju--

COACHMAN 2

Yes. Yes, MISS June. All Coachman are certified gentlemen, but we're not all as easily weakened by sentiments as the beau beside you. He's just a big 'ol softie, aren't you 'Ol Chap?

JUNE

If I may.

COACHMAN 2

You may.

JUNE

There's a certain courtesy found within a gentleman, and from our brief interaction I have yet to see that same courtesy within you. So maybe your assumption's off. Maybe not ALL Coachmen are gentleman or at least maybe not to the same caliber.

Coachman 2 sniffs the air.

COACHMAN 2

There's that sweetness amidst us again. Sickly. Enlivens my every fiber. Tell me MISS June, why aren't you inside the carriage?

JUNE

It's full.

COACHMAN 2

And your Coachman's offered you a lift where?

COACHMAN

Home. I've offered her a lift home, Coachman. She wants to be back by sundown.

COACHMAN 2

Well, I suppose no one can compete with that kind of courtesy. Maybe he is more of a gentleman than I.

JUNE

Maybe.

COACHMAN

Good day, Coachman.

COACHMAN 2

But is it?

The Coachman readies his reigns.

COACHMAN 2 (CONT'D)

It's a real shame I hadn't picked
you up myself, Miss June. You'd
long be at your destination by now.

Coachman 2 takes off up the road. The Coachman relaxes his
reigns. June turns and watches the carriage disappear into
the fog.

JUNE

His spokes are cracked too.

COACHMAN

Are they?

JUNE

Worse than yours. Much worse.

COACHMAN

I hadn't looked.

JUNE

His arrogance. It brings a cold
draft.

COACHMAN

Yes, his wheels spin despairingly.

JUNE

I'm attracted to it.

A horse's neighing comes from the fog behind them. June turns
to look behind her again.

COACHMAN

Interruptions begone.

He whips his reigns, off they go.

JUNE

Whoa.

COACHMAN

Attracted, Miss June? You really
mean that?

JUNE

What can I say? I'm a destructive
sow.

COACHMAN

If you were so taken by him why did you proceed to defend me?

She says nothing.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

But there is that something about me, right Miss June? That something good you once pointed out and were maybe even a bit attracted to.

He smiles at her.

JUNE

The other Coachman was able to smell the sweetness. Why couldn't you?

Nervous, he coughs to clear his throat.

COACHMAN

Well, onward we go.

JUNE

Yes, onward.

They exchange awkward eye contact.

JUNE (CONT'D)

So Coachman, what is this last errand you must run? Maybe I can help.

COACHMAN

Just your company is enough, Miss June.

JUNE

Oh, come on.

COACHMAN

I couldn't ask for anything more.

JUNE

Don't be so sheepish. What is this errand?

COACHMAN

Sheepish I am not nor am I as courteous as you make me out to be.

JUNE

There must be something I can help you with. Do you know the area well?

COACHMAN

Well enough.

JUNE

There's a good many short cuts I could show you.

COACHMAN

We won't be taking those, Miss June.

JUNE

They're easy to find. One's just up ahead.

COACHMAN

I don't want the knowledge.

JUNE

It's easy Coachman. Here. See the--

She begins to stretch out her arm to point when he pulls it down, startling her.

COACHMAN

No.

A beat.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

I mean, not in-- not with this kind of fog, Miss. June. The main roads are hard enough to navigate.

JUNE

Alright.

COACHMAN

No more talk of it.

JUNE

Well, the town itself is shaped like a parasol. One way in one way out. Surrounded by...

She gestures around her.

JUNE (CONT'D)
The deciduous. If that's of any
help.

He says nothing.

JUNE (CONT'D)
If I were a boy I would have been
named after the county.

She stares at him until he turns to her, nodding.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Garrett.

COACHMAN
One way in, one way out.

She looks at him funny.

JUNE
I was actually raised just up the
road.

COACHMAN
Were you?

JUNE
Yes, on what was once the town's
only farm.

COACHMAN
Do tell me about that, Miss June.

JUNE
The farm?

COACHMAN
Your upbringing.

JUNE
Okay, well--

COACHMAN
Tell me everything. All of it.
Everything you can.

JUNE
Order me and my tongue runs to ill
will.

COACHMAN
Of course. Take your time.

JUNE

I was raised on what one would call a small homestead. Veritably puny at around sixty acres. My siblings and I were practically bred to man the butter churn.

COACHMAN

Wait, I thought you said you were an only child.

JUNE

I fibbed.

COACHMAN

Why?

JUNE

Who knows? I fib a lot.

COACHMAN

Well, how many siblings do you have?

JUNE

Eleven.

COACHMAN

Eleven?

JUNE

Push em' out, send em' to the field. You know the ol' piggish way.

COACHMAN

Piggish. A perfectly placed word, Miss June.

JUNE

We were a tall bunch. The boys all nearly six foot. There were seven of them. And the shortest of the girls, being me, is still around five-four.

COACHMAN

You know, I'm rather tall myself, Miss June.

JUNE

(laughs)

Tall enough to rival a six foot stableman?

COACHMAN

In another world, maybe.

JUNE

Stature aside, we were well known
for selling our butter year round.

COACHMAN

Chickens in the summer, pork in the
winter.

JUNE

Yes, that's right.

COACHMAN

Along the Allegheny were you?

JUNE

Had you visited us before,
Coachman?

COACHMAN

Yes, once I do believe.

JUNE

The likelihood.

COACHMAN

But only once.

JUNE

Quaint farm, wasn't it?

COACHMAN

From what I can remember, for my
memory is muddled, Miss June. I
ride through many lands.

JUNE

Well, quaint it was. We eventually
sold of course.

COACHMAN

Butter go sour?

JUNE

No, the reasoning was of the
theological.

COACHMAN

And what was this theological
reasoning?

JUNE

It began with a family tragedy. A
Somewhat disturbing one.

COACHMAN

Miss June, please feel free to stop
sharing whenever you feel the need.

JUNE

Rehashing doesn't sadden me,
Coachman. It just puts use to the
darkest chambers of my sagacity.

She pauses, makes an odd shape with her mouth.

COACHMAN

... What is it, Miss June?

JUNE

(under breath)
Honesty is praised then...

She mumbles the rest to herself.

COACHMAN

I'm sorry I didn't catch that.

She grabs at her cheek.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Miss June?

She begins rubbing it.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Miss June, what did you just say?

She doubles over, gripping her cheek with both hands. The
carriage slows.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Miss June--

JUNE

Honesty is praised then left in the
cold!

She sits up again, touches the inside of her mouth, and pulls
out her finger - clean.

COACHMAN

You'll find no stain of claret.

JUNE

I'm sorry for yelling. I thought I
had bitten...

She pats her cheek in confusion.

JUNE (CONT'D)

A strange tooth ache maybe?

COACHMAN

Here, Miss June, look, the
bloodroot.

The Coachman leans closer to her and points to a bundle of
bloodroot flowers gathered along the side of the road.
They're beginning to wilt.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Look, you get to catch the last of
their alabastrine hue.

He shifts his point.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

And just beyond that you can see
the liverleaf.

His voice softens, trying to comfort her. He points up at the
sky.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

And above us you'll see--

JUNE

Only God's stand-ins suffer.

COACHMAN

... The morning rime dripping from
the branches.

JUNE

Unless I suffer because I'm more
than just a stand in.

She smiles to herself, quits playing with her cheek. The
Coachman leans away from her again.

JUNE (CONT'D)

There are always a few stories a
person tells multiple times
throughout their life, Coachman,
and this is one of mine.

(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

It was a stroke of misfortune or rather a series of misfortunes for my younger sister Eliza. She had locked herself out of the farmhouse to which she did more often than not, but this time around when she tried climbing through a bedroom window, to her misfortune, the sash was drifting and well... it fell onto her neck. Then the bike she had used as a stepping stool fell from under her feet. Farmhouse windows by the way are very heavy. At least ours were. Her neck broke instantly. She hung there for hours before anyone found her. She was only seven.

COACHMAN

How devastating. I'm so sorry, Miss June.

JUNE

There were scuff marks on the wall from where she had kicked, trying to salvage some balance. They stayed there for some time, until I eventually took soap to them.

COACHMAN

How courageous of you.

JUNE

From her point of view I used to imagine that I was the one hanging there, squirming, wheezing, feet searching for the seat of my fallen bicycle, but never quite finding it.

COACHMAN

Miss June, I don't know if my ears can bear--

JUNE

All she was probably trying to do was get inside to grab one of her corn husk dolls. I believe she was the sister that collected them. Or maybe she just wanted a glass of water.

COACHMAN

One shall never know.

JUNE

Yes, one shall never know.

A beat.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It was my bedroom. It was my bedroom window. I left that part out. I never tell people that part. I don't know why.

COACHMAN

You had your own bedroom? Even with ten other siblings?

JUNE

First floor, second to last door on the right. The window looked out over the river. A room with a view. My bed sat just three feet from my sister's guillotine. Yes, one, two, three feet.

COACHMAN

Good heavens, Miss June, how did you manage to ever fall asleep?

JUNE

With my head to the pillow. How else?

COACHMAN

Well--

JUNE

Of course a divide soon became of the room.

COACHMAN

Of what room? Of your bedroom?

JUNE

Yes, what other? And the word "soon" isn't terse enough. No, the divide came that very night.

COACHMAN

The night of her death?

JUNE

One, two, three hours afterwards. Roughly.

COACHMAN

Soon indeed.

JUNE

On the left of the room is where I placed my cheval glass and when there, I was able to acknowledge only it--

COACHMAN

I've always wanted to look into one of those.

JUNE

But on the right of the room, where the window was, I performed as the reverend would.

COACHMAN

And how would that be?

JUNE

As any other bored attendant of the almighty. I tidied, I engaged, I sewed the skirts of others for nothing in return.

He looks at her funny.

COACHMAN

That-- that's wonderful, Miss June. I prefer the right of the room already.

JUNE

I don't. I didn't.

COACHMAN

No?

JUNE

I didn't mistakenly use the word "bored".

COACHMAN

I didn't think you had.

JUNE

You see, it's that sill, Coachman. It was heavy in more than just its weight.

COACHMAN

How so?

JUNE

What it displayed for me, I had to display for it. A river, my good view. A good example, hers. Yes, I had to be choosy with what I allowed her to see.

COACHMAN

Miss June.

JUNE

It's a good thing she couldn't see the left of the room, Coachman. Where my cheval glass sat with its smug carelessness and freethinking. The obscenity.

COACHMAN

Yes, well, maybe the divide was necessary then.

JUNE

I must admit, I wasn't the most sociable child so I hadn't talked to her as much as I would have liked when she was alive.

COACHMAN

You seem very sociable now, Miss. June.

JUNE

But I did talk to her more than the others did. When they were assigned the same chores as her, they mostly worked in silence. But her and I... we weren't silent all the time. No, not all the time.

COACHMAN

It must be hard to bond with all your siblings when you have so many.

JUNE

I remember my mother sat bedside and watched over her for two whole days before the funeral. At first I thought it was out of love, but later I discovered it was because of the rats. She didn't want them getting to her body.

COACHMAN

I'm sure she also did it out of love, Miss June.

JUNE

You sure about that?

COACHMAN

She was her mother after all.

JUNE

My mother had too many children. You only have so much love to give and if that love is divvied up equally amongst eleven children it spreads too thin to be felt.

COACHMAN

Yes, I see. The exclusivity. That's what's missing.

JUNE

When my sister was alive my mother spoke to her even less often than I. She knew very little about her eighth born child and her eighth born child knew very little about her.

COACHMAN

This story you tell grows sadder and sadder.

JUNE

Does it? I hadn't noticed. It can grow even sadder if you'd like.

COACHMAN

Oh, I'd-- no thank you, Miss June. Why would anyone like that?

JUNE

Her post mortem picture for example.

COACHMAN

No, Miss June. Please stop.

JUNE

I don't mind talking about it.

COACHMAN

I can see that, but I'm... wait a minute, she had one taken?

JUNE

No. That's where the story grows sadder you see. The photo was never taken because her eyes fell out of their sockets. The contortion of her face was far too...

She stops herself once she notices the Coachman growing sick.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It sounds worse than it was.

COACHMAN

No, I'm all too familiar it. I should apologize, Miss June. It's just, I don't mingle well with death.

JUNE

Does anyone?

COACHMAN

You'd be surprised.

JUNE

I'm a good example, Coachman.

She keeps nodding her head until he does.

COACHMAN

Of course you are, Miss June.

JUNE

That window sill would agree with me.

COACHMAN

I'm sure it would.

She lets out a sigh of relief.

JUNE

Anyway.

She looks around.

JUNE (CONT'D)

The leaves have yet to change down here. Where are the red maples?

COACHMAN

Standing still amid the hour.

She gives him a funny look.

JUNE

Yes, trees do typically stand still... though if anything I'd rather the mountains be missing.

COACHMAN

What's so wrong with the mountains, Miss June?

JUNE

Well... I have many questions, Coachman, and very few have I found answers for with them serving as my blinders.

COACHMAN

Though beautiful blinders you must admit.

JUNE

Not beautiful enough.

COACHMAN

What then is beautiful enough, Miss June?

JUNE

Would you like me to tell you liverleaf or would you rather me not yawn as I give my answer?

COACHMAN

The no yawning option would be nice.

JUNE

Okay then.
(laughing to herself)
Dynamite.

COACHMAN

Excuse me?

She smiles at him.

JUNE

There was a young drifter that my father had hired to put up some fencing between the months of August and September of '68. You see, my mother didn't allow us children to go near this drifter, for he was an outsider.

(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

Her discission was final and we were never to question it, but one day, my mother ordered me to go bring the drifter his lunch. And so I did, and as I handed over the tray I said something to him that you said to me today.

COACHMAN

And what was that?

JUNE

Tell me everything.

COACHMAN

And what did the drifter tell you, Miss June?

JUNE

He told me about dynamite.

COACHMAN

Is-- was that all?

JUNE

Beautiful, isn't it? My mother's intention. The window of opportunity she gave me. I think she knew I would ask about what went on beyond the mountains. In that moment, I looked to that drifter as if he were Jesus. But unbeknownst to my mother, all my Jesus knew about was dynamite.

COACHMAN

That is beautiful. Stories, Miss June, you're good at their delivery.

JUNE

I wonder why she chose me. I wasn't the only one in the kitchen.

(softly sings)

Oh, the old mill wheel it turns, it turns. Turning, turning, turning. I love to see it turning so.

COACHMAN

Do you still talk?

JUNE

Who?

COACHMAN

To your mother.

JUNE

Of course not. I can't stand my mother.

COACHMAN

Wait, what? Why? You just said--

JUNE

Giving your children shelter is one thing, but sheltering them is another.

COACHMAN

But think about it, Miss June.

JUNE

I am.

COACHMAN

Just beyond those same mountains was Antietam.

JUNE

So?

COACHMAN

Well, would good parents lead their children towards the fire or away from it?

JUNE

They'd lead them close enough to see its creator, but far enough not to be blistered.

COACHMAN

You ever seen mass murder, Miss June?

JUNE

I wasn't asking to have a picnic hillside and watch. I just wanted to know it had happened.

COACHMAN

If you don't mind me saying, you seem quite critical of parenting, Miss June.

JUNE
Isn't everyone critical of
something?

COACHMAN
I spot a wedding band on your
finger.

She moves her left hand too quickly. The nail of her ring
finger clips the pocket of her dress and rips clean off.

She hides her hand from the Coachman.

JUNE
Yes.

COACHMAN
How long have you been married?

She hides her pain poorly.

JUNE
Oh God.

COACHMAN
Miss June?

JUNE
Yeah. Yes, I'm married.

COACHMAN
I know. I can see that from the
band on your finger. I was asking
how--

JUNE
What-- what did you ask?

COACHMAN
I was asking how long you've been
married.

JUNE
Oh, uh, I don't know. Ten or twelve
years. Maybe more.

COACHMAN
You don't know?

She sighs.

JUNE
A decade at least. No, I'm sorry,
two decades.
(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

Over twenty years by now. Probably.
Our anniversary is in May, but I
couldn't tell you the day off hand.

COACHMAN

A gloomy acknowledgment, wouldn't
you say?

JUNE

What was?

COACHMAN

That sigh.

JUNE

No. No gloom here. It was just a
sigh, Coachman.

COACHMAN

A sigh is never just a sigh, Miss
June.

JUNE

Well, what? What would you like me
to say? Yes, I'm both a wife and a
mother.

COACHMAN

You say this with even more gloom.
A ravenous kind that's weighing on
your brows.

She tries to look less tense.

JUNE

Well, they're not exactly the most
exciting of identifiers, are they?

COACHMAN

And why aren't they?

JUNE

With commonality comes monotony.

COACHMAN

I can understand that.

JUNE

I feel dizzy.

She sways in her seat.

COACHMAN

Hold my hand, Miss June.

He holds out his hand. She doesn't take it.

JUNE

I just need a moment. I'll be fine.

She leans over the side of the carriage, coughs.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It's like I'm trying to disgorge of something. Nothing's-- there's nothing coming up.

She sits properly again.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Can your guests hear me, Coachman?

COACHMAN

No, Miss June. Their ears are elsewhere.

JUNE

Are you positive?

COACHMAN

Of course I am.

JUNE

Good. Good. I want to tell you something.

COACHMAN

Do you feel seen, Miss June?

She does a double take.

JUNE

Excuse me?

COACHMAN

I want you to feel seen, heard, special, like I'm only focused on you and you alone because I am. Do you feel that, Miss June? Do you feel seen right now?

JUNE

You're doing a fine job, Coachman.

COACHMAN

Fine as in passable or fine as--

JUNE

It's a good afternoon, Coachman.
I've never met a man more open to
hearing the rambles of a woman.

COACHMAN

I love women.

JUNE

I'm sure you do in your young age.

COACHMAN

I hardly meant it in that way.
They're just so much more
responsive and--

JUNE

Amenable, yes, I get it.

COACHMAN

I just want criticism, you know?
Constructive would be nice, but any
kind really. Anything. Big, small.
You could even critique my
approach. I can tell you were put
off by it. Should I pull over
slower next time?

JUNE

You could reupholster this seat.

He turns, looks at the road ahead, nodding.

COACHMAN

The seat, okay.

JUNE

Is that not the critique you were
looking for?

COACHMAN

It's a fine critique, Miss June.
Now, what were you beginning to say
before I cut you off. I do
apologize.

JUNE

Oh, uh, I'll have some trouble
explaining this, but simply put I
believe evil has three homes.

(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

Roofed it can be within those who inflict, within those who personify hate through their words, and within those who think evilly, but refrain from ever acting upon said evil thoughts.

COACHMAN

I presume there's nothing wrong with thinking unpleasantly, just as long as you never--

JUNE

I didn't say unpleasant. I said evil.

COACHMAN

Oh, well--

JUNE

Let me finish, Coachman. Please.

COACHMAN

Yes, of course, Miss June.

JUNE

If you hadn't already guessed, I'm among the last, the lowest, the most unassuming layer of evil. And that layer, the ones who think evilly, are perhaps just as morally skewed as the first layer.

COACHMAN

As morally skewed as, say, murderers and thieves?

JUNE

Yes.

COACHMAN

I don't follow.

JUNE

My own two hands could never blatantly harm another person, Coachman. Not ever.

COACHMAN

But?

JUNE

But whether or not I would step in and stop an evil from happening if I were to witness its unfolding in nature, well...

COACHMAN

That's another story.

JUNE

Yes.

COACHMAN

And you're referring to the bystander effect, are you not?

JUNE

No, I'm not referring to any degree of cowardice. Bystanders are fearful and feeble. That's why they don't intervene. But me, I'm only referring to evil.

COACHMAN

You already had my attention, Miss June, but now you also have my intrigue. Do elaborate, please.

JUNE

Once my first born became a toddler, I began having these withdrawals. They were very much without substantiation.

EXT. LAWN - EVENING - FLASHBACK

DAUGHTER, around two years old, walks towards a distant field.

JUNE (V.O.)

I wasn't depressed for I don't believe in such a silly pretext, but keeping tabs on her did become more and more difficult for me. Part of that was due to my habitual napping.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - SAME

The backside of a Woman, sleeping, uncovered by the sheets.

The window in front of her showcases the sunset.

JUNE (V.O.)
 "Terrain for the removed" my father
 called it. But that evening I had
 failed to keep an eye on her
 entirely.

SIRENS WAIL.

The body sits up.

EXT. FIELD - SAME

The tall grasses rustle in the wind as the sirens sweep the
 grounds.

JUNE (V.O.)
 It's a well-to-do mining region
 where we live. We constantly hear
 the sirens, the machinery. The
 sirens in particular run on a
 schedule much like the church
 bells, which I strongly dislike for
 other reasons.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

The Woman's backside. We watch her move towards the window.

JUNE (V.O.)
 They didn't usually wake me, but
 that evening they did.

INT. BACK PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

The screen door, halfway open.

JUNE (V.O.)
 And that's when I discovered the
 back door.

An arm reaches for the handle.

EXT. FIELD - SAME

The daughter walks wobbly as the wind knocks her around.

JUNE (V.O.)

She had never been able to reach the doorknob before, but I wasn't the kind of mother to mark my child's growth on a closet wall so I forgot the universal law that children often times grow... and didn't lock any of the doors.

INT. LAWN - SAME

June walks off the back porch, looking beyond.

JUNE (V.O.)

When I went outside, my search for her didn't last but a few seconds. I spotted her in the field behind our house.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

June enters into the field. Her daughter doesn't notice her. She follows at a distance.

JUNE (V.O.)

My daughter looked calm, empty headed. She hadn't known what she had done was wrong. I never taught her any better.

The daughter bends down and plucks a dandelion.

JUNE (V.O.)

She didn't see me. I thought of running over and scolding her, mimicking whatever disciplinary actions I saw her father enact in the past, but I didn't. Instead, I followed her. She crossed the field, stopping every so often to pick a dandelion. But eventually...

The hill. It sticks out of the flat landscape like a sore thumb. Atop it are a surplus of dandelions. Her daughter, with her hand full of dandelions, stops a few yards away.

JUNE (V.O.)

She made it, my little girl made it to the hill.

Her face lights up at the sight of the golden dandelions.

JUNE (V.O.)
And that's when I turned around...
and walked away.

June looks to the ground and turns around. She walks away from her daughter.

JUNE (V.O.)
Fully knowing she was going to
ascend the hill. Hoping she would.

We follow the daughter as she climbs the hill. Hovering far above her, we see that just past the surplus of dandelions is a large, deep sink hole.

SIRENS.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT

June avoids the Coachman's stare.

COACHMAN
Oh, Miss June.

She looks down at her hand and rubs the discolored skin where the two missing fingernails once were.

JUNE
(under breath)
Oh, Miss June.

COACHMAN
I shudder to ask, but what happened?

JUNE
Nothing unusual.

COACHMAN
What could that possibly mean?

JUNE
I went back inside the house and sat down at the kitchen table. I said nothing and I did nothing for a long while. That is, until I heard the little pitter-patter of her footsteps on the back porch. Only then did I begin to cry.

The Coachman sighs in relief, he's on the verge of tears.

COACHMAN
She was okay.

JUNE
Unharmmed.

COACHMAN
What a miracle.

JUNE
Yes.

COACHMAN
She must have turned around or
perhaps the hill was too steep for
her to scale.
(beat)
May I ask you a question, Miss
June?

She nods.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Why did you begin to cry?

JUNE
Relief.

COACHMAN
Why did you really begin to cry,
Miss June?

She looks away.

JUNE
She's a good child.

COACHMAN
I must confess, Miss June, I will
have a hard time looking at you the
same after hearing all of this.

JUNE
I'd think less of you if you
didn't.

COACHMAN
But nevertheless I will be taking
your secret to the grave. I swear
it.

She says nothing.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Your own blood and flesh. You-- how
could-- it's--

JUNE
Unforgivable, yes. Well, it's a
good thing I wasn't looking for
your forgiveness, now isn't it,
Coachman?

A long beat passes.

COACHMAN
You know, Miss June, I'd really
like to get to know more about you.
As of now all I know of is your
tragedy.

JUNE
I enjoy many things.

COACHMAN
Like what?

JUNE
The emptiness of a hymn, the
frisson of an empty stomach, the
lightness of an empty palm.

COACHMAN
Empty, empty, empty. It all
revolves around the word.

JUNE
I know. I'm deliberate with my
words.

COACHMAN
Is there anything you like that
doesn't revolve around the word
"empty"?

JUNE
Napping, sleep.

COACHMAN
Requires an empty head, Miss June.

She looks away from him.

The Coachman reaches over and takes her hand. He doesn't look
at her as he does this.

JUNE

They feel as thin as they look.

COACHMAN

I could say the same.

She laughs, holds onto him for a quick, but genuine moment before growing visibly uncomfortable and letting go.

JUNE

I have another story.

COACHMAN

Okay.

JUNE

When I was eleven I stole my father's shotgun and set out on a quest to shoot the town's church bells.

COACHMAN

Was this a rebellion against the Lord, Miss June?

JUNE

You should decide that for yourself, Coachman.

COACHMAN

Okay?

JUNE

At the time, I believed that if I generated enough noise just above his residency then in his headache his plans for me would disband or at the very least delay. But my sight and my aim were too poor a quality for execution.

COACHMAN

Sorry to hear.

JUNE

Thirty years too late for sorrys, Coachman. But it was a silly thought to begin with.

COACHMAN

What made you bring up that particular story, Miss June?

She points upward.

JUNE

The sirens. From the coal mine. I told you before how they reminded me of the church bells.

(off his look)

They're ringing. They ring right now.

COACHMAN

I'm listening but...

JUNE

Don't you hear them?

COACHMAN

No, Miss June. I don't hear any sirens.

She shivers, rubs her goosebump ridden arms.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Are you all right, Miss June? Your shivering's beginning to frighten me.

Up ahead, a wooden structure comes into view.

June leans forward in her seat, smiles.

JUNE

Tell me, Coachman, if one's mind is already depthful enough to please itself, then wouldn't you agree that the mind of another is not needed to accompany what is already comforted in its solitude?

COACHMAN

Maybe if I understood it better.

JUNE

Sounds like something my husband would say.

COACHMAN

You swim in too deep of waters for me, Miss June.

JUNE

But what everyone does need is a bipartisan conversation. Not even I can deny that.

The wooden structure is an old bridge.

JUNE (CONT'D)
I once met a soldier on the Jericho
Covered Bridge.

She points to the bridge.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Are you familiar with Little
Gunpowder Falls?

COACHMAN
Yes, actually. I've frequented this
river many times.

JUNE
As have I. As have I.

COACHMAN
Much history's imbrued in that
wood, wouldn't you say?

JUNE
I'm not sure what wood it's
constructed of.

INT. COVERED BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

COACHMAN
That's-- I think you've missed my
po--

JUNE
Stop. Stop!

June shakes the Coachman's arm, startling him.

The carriage comes to a halt.

There's an awkward moment as June takes in her surroundings
and the Coachman watches her do so.

JUNE (CONT'D)
How many do you think have swung
from these upper rafters?

She giggles.

COACHMAN
(deadpan)
More than a few.

JUNE
I'm well aware.

She turns her body to face the Coachman and gestures for him to lean closer. He does.

JUNE (CONT'D)

The panelling isn't airtight, but that's okay, Coachman. Know why?

COACHMAN

No?

JUNE

Because neither are the memories. It all fits, don't you see?

She grins. He nervously laughs.

COACHMAN

Miss June, you mentioned a soldier before.

JUNE

I did.

COACHMAN

You met him here?

JUNE

Yes.

COACHMAN

... Well, what was his name, his rank?

JUNE

He didn't have either. Not a name nor a rank.

COACHMAN

How wouldn't he have--

JUNE

I saw him throughout my puberty. Sporadically. Whenever my desires kicked in, I would come and visit him and only once they abated would I leave.

She hops off the carriage, paces around the bridge.

COACHMAN

Desires?

JUNE

Yes.

COACHMAN
You explored your desires with him?

JUNE
Yes, Coachman.

COACHMAN
Miss June, this was a soldier, a
grown man, yes?

JUNE
Sure.

COACHMAN
You mean to tell me a grown man was
parading about the woods with a
child?

JUNE
We never paraded. No, we stayed
only on the Covered Bridge. Only
here.

She knocks on the wall. There are missing panels and holes
everywhere.

COACHMAN
What desires were you exploring
exactly, Miss June?

JUNE
Oh, Coachman.

She makes a tsk-tsk sound with her mouth.

JUNE (CONT'D)
How disappointing you can be.
Unlike you and I, his hands weren't
the kind you could hold let alone
be pleased by. He loomed a few
feet above the ground if you know
what I mean.

COACHMAN
I don't believe I do.

JUNE
... A ghost, Coachman.

The Coachman lets out a chuckle.

COACHMAN
Oh.

JUNE

My soldier was an informant of the many things unaware to me.

COACHMAN

What kinds of things, Miss June?

JUNE

Life changing things. I of course can't disclose of all of them with you, but since you've been so genial and since I'm in such a rarely reflective mood on this good afternoon, I will tell you that he did inform me of my *raison d'être*.

COACHMAN

And what did he tell you your *raison d'être* was, Miss. June?

JUNE

To forever talk to those loose panels and be perfectly happy doing so.

COACHMAN

... Wait. Miss June.

JUNE

Please don't assault me with your eyes, Coachman.

COACHMAN

But Miss June, a person can not possibly lead a perfectly happy life--

JUNE

Alone? Makes me rather rare then, doesn't it?

COACHMAN

But Miss June, you're married.

She pauses before walking out of the bridge. The Coachman follows her.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

June stares back at the bridge. The Coachman stops beside her.

JUNE

In my nineteenth year my parents made an arrangement for a well-known bible salesman to take me on a little outing. He was kind enough to let me choose the day's activities so I told him to take me on, as I put it, an "unguided exploration of the dense forest". When in sooth, all I was really trying to do was lure him onto my--

COACHMAN

Covered bridge.

She smiles, nods.

JUNE

Yes, and here, on my Covered Bridge, with my soldier present, I tested him.

COACHMAN

How so?

JUNE

First I began by asking questions such as: "would you fear a woman who watered the garden during a downpour?".

COACHMAN

To which he replied--

JUNE

Or "a woman who often puts the place settings underneath the table, instead of atop it?".

COACHMAN

To which he replied?

JUNE

No.

COACHMAN

He said no?

JUNE

To both scenarios?

COACHMAN

Yes, he said he didn't fear anything.

(MORE)

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

So I then went on to ask him if he would shake hands with my self awareness.

JUNE

You asked him to do what?

COACHMAN

I asked him. To shake hands. With my self awareness... as I presented the empty space beside me. Like this.

Reenacting the scenario, she presents the empty space beside her as if it were an invisible dancing partner.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

And?

JUNE

And this man...

(scoffs)

This bible salesman whom I had just met, actually reached out and shook "hands" with the thin air. So, what was my response you wonder? Well, like any normal woman, I gasped and swatted his hand away.

COACHMAN

You hit him?

JUNE

Mildly.

COACHMAN

Miss June.

JUNE

I then scolded him for being far too forward with his handshake, saying "look what you've done. Look. I had tied a rope to both her and my wrist to ensure her capture--

COACHMAN

"Her" as in your self awareness?

JUNE

And you've damn well torn the rope in two with your abrasiveness. How dare you, Sir? It took me a lifetime to tie her down and now she's run astray again".

COACHMAN
You're laughing.

She begins making her way off the road into the forest.

JUNE
Yes, I am. Would you like to know
what he did next, Coachman?

COACHMAN
Yes, Miss June. I would.

JUNE
He asked me which way she went.

June frolics through the trees, weaving in repetitive circles
as she plays the part of the bible salesman.

JUNE (CONT'D)
I played along thinking if I ran
him around long enough... like
this... chasing "her"... he'd
eventually not come back. And so
passed five minutes, then ten, then
twenty, then a half hour.

COACHMAN
Wait, he was chasing your--

She stops abruptly.

JUNE
My self awareness, yes. Why is that
so hard for you to understand?

She heads for the river.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Anyway, I myself became tired just
watching him, but he... he never
broke character. Not once.

COACHMAN
I feel silly for asking this, Miss
June, but did he ever find her?

JUNE
He did.

COACHMAN
Where?

June walks into the water, goes about waist deep.

JUNE

He found her right about here.
Waist deep.

COACHMAN

Oh my goodness.

He laughs and gives her a round of applause. She bows, makes her way out of the water.

JUNE

And later, as he was tying my self awareness back to my wrist, I decided I was still going to see my plan through till the end.

She picks something up off the ground, heads for the carriage.

JUNE (CONT'D)

So I began mumbling about a certain thimble.

COACHMAN

A thimble?

JUNE

Yes, I made a story up about how I had lost my favorite thimble and I desperately needed it back because that thimble was the top hat to the single grain of tenderness I possessed.

COACHMAN

Single grain...

JUNE

The man, to my disbelief, began searching the woods frantically until he found an acorn.

She presents the acorn in her hand.

JUNE (CONT'D)

And placed it in my hand, telling me to use the cupule as its top hat until he was able to find my lost thimble.

She removes the cupule from the acorn.

JUNE (CONT'D)

A sparkling substitute.

COACHMAN

You told him you possessed such a small amount of tenderness that it could wear a thimble and he didn't run away then and there?

JUNE

No.

COACHMAN

Wow. Miss June. That man is... is...

JUNE

My husband.

They pause.

COACHMAN

So much dedication and persistence it's almost touching.

JUNE

So at that point of the day, I decided to toss my guise of insanity into the river and watch it sail downstream.

COACHMAN

You finally spared the poor man.

JUNE

Deservingly.

She tosses the acorn and its cupule off the bridge. She watches it float away with the weak current.

She walks back to the Covered Bridge, but doesn't enter. She only stares inside.

COACHMAN

How did the rest of the day go, Miss June?

JUNE

Fine.

COACHMAN

That's it? Just fine?

JUNE

Yeah, it went fine. We wedded just three weeks later.

COACHMAN
Was it a lovely affair?

She doesn't respond.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Miss June?

She waits another moment before saying--

JUNE
I married feeling fortunate that I
had found a man as decent as him,
but had I had control over my own
life, he would have only ever been
a decent friend.

(beat)
If only those bullets had hit the
church bells, you know? Maybe I
wouldn't be here. Maybe I wouldn't
be... this.

She turns and looks back at the Coachman.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

The fog has grown thicker.

June slouches in her seat.

JUNE
Would you like to make a toast with
me, Coachman?

COACHMAN
I would love to, Miss. June.

JUNE
Wonderful.

COACHMAN
But I don't have anything to make a
toast with.

JUNE
I just want to pay tribute. We
don't need drinks to do that, do
we?

COACHMAN
No, we don't. What would you like
to toast to, Miss June?

JUNE

To the cut and the dried.

She holds up her hand like she's holding a glass. She turns over her hand, pretending to pour out the drink.

COACHMAN

And a toast to your profile, Miss June. May I never forget its discernment.

JUNE

How can you see one's discernment?

COACHMAN

The same way you can see their soul. From where I sit.

She looks to him, smiles.

JUNE

So what about you, Coachman? How has life treated you?

COACHMAN

Today, admirably, but that's not always the case.

JUNE

And why do you think that is?

COACHMAN

Now, Miss June, that's all you're going to get out of me. You know how I don't like to comment on myself.

JUNE

Yes, you don't ever speak of yourself.

COACHMAN

That's right.

JUNE

But can't you tell me anything about yourself, Coachman? Anything at all? It's only fair with all I've shared with you.

COACHMAN

... I fib sometimes too.

JUNE

Okay.

COACHMAN

I'm not proud of it.

JUNE

And what is it that you fib about?

COACHMAN

I did smell the sweetness, Miss June. It's potency and all. More than once.

JUNE

Oh.

COACHMAN

As a matter of fact, I smell it right now. I'm so sorry.

JUNE

It's okay. Thank you for telling me. Though, it is strange. I don't smell anything.

A beat.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I slipped out of my house while my husband's back was turned again.

COACHMAN

Well then he's probably very worried about you, Miss June?

JUNE

Probably not.

COACHMAN

What do you mean?

JUNE

I mean, he's fine without me.

She giggles as she shakes her head.

COACHMAN

Yes, but I'm sure he doesn't want to be without you.

She shrugs.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
You don't acknowledge the needs of
others very well, Miss June.

JUNE
He doesn't have them like I do.

COACHMAN
Wait, what did you just say?

JUNE
What?

COACHMAN
I'm sorry. You don't think your
husband has needs? Is that what you
just said?

She looks off, scratching her head.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Answer me.

JUNE
(agitated)
I don't know.

COACHMAN
Are you feeling dizzy again?

JUNE
No.

COACHMAN
How long have you been missing from
your home, Miss. June?

JUNE
A few hours.

COACHMAN
Is that all?

JUNE
A couple at the most. I've never
stayed out past nightfall. Like I
said, I have to be back before
sundown.

COACHMAN
Where were you heading?

JUNE

I didn't have a fixed course. I never do.

COACHMAN

Well, all I can say is it's a good thing we're headed to your house now, Miss June.

JUNE

Yeah. Though I would like to stop somewhere first.

COACHMAN

Where?

JUNE

The bees aren't humming.

She stares entranced at the road ahead. The Coachman's eyes grow watery as he stares at her profile.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I always hear them. And the Whip-poor-wills too.

COACHMAN

Miss. June.

JUNE

Yes?

COACHMAN

Please look at me.

She does.

JUNE

Are you all right? Your eyes are wet.

COACHMAN

I'm so very sorry you had such little say over the course of your own life.

JUNE

I'm not terribly unhappy, Coachman.

COACHMAN

We both know you could have become much, much more than just another wife and mother.

And with that, her eyes begin to grow wet too, but she puts a stop to her emotions before any tears fall.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Hopefully circumstances will be
different for your daughters.

JUNE
My daughters?

COACHMAN
Yes.

JUNE
My daughters. Yes, that's right. I
have two. I do-- I have-- no, I am--
I love my daughters, Coachman. I
mean-- they're...

He shakes his head. She stops.

JUNE (CONT'D)
What?

COACHMAN
No, you don't, Miss June.

JUNE
Excuse me?

COACHMAN
You've only ever loved yourself.

She takes that in for a moment before beginning to act frantically, breathing heavy and turning in her seat to see the road behind them.

JUNE
The day feels so long. Why is that?
Why is--

COACHMAN
You're not in the wrong, Miss June.

JUNE
What?

COACHMAN
Please believe me.

JUNE
Nothing's clearing. Not the
overcast, not the fog.
(MORE)

JUNE (CONT'D)

The fog's growing thicker. Why--
what-- why is that?

COACHMAN

The more I ignore it the more it
swells.

JUNE

Your teeth.

COACHMAN

My teeth?

JUNE

They're so white. Porcelain white.
Unnaturally white. Like they've
never before met the rinds of red
meat.

COACHMAN

I don't know what to say.

JUNE

Are you a vegetarian or...? What's
the last thing you ate?

He says nothing.

JUNE (CONT'D)

You're not average looking.

COACHMAN

Well, what is average looking?

JUNE

You're so pale and gangly and--

COACHMAN

You're beginning to hurt my
feelings, Miss June.

JUNE

Oh, Coachman.

COACHMAN

Listen, Miss June, you're not in
the wrong.

JUNE

There's that dreadfully sweet smell
again. No, no. God, no. That has to
be what's making me dazed.

COACHMAN

Yes, I can smell it too, Miss June.
I promise I can smell it this time.

JUNE

Dear God. Like rotten coffee.

She pinches her nose.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Dear God, I'm cold.

The carriage begins moving faster.

COACHMAN

I know you are.

JUNE

I'm so cold, Coachman.

COACHMAN

I know, Miss June.

JUNE

I'm in such pain.

COACHMAN

You may rest your head on my lap if
you need to.

JUNE

Why are we suddenly moving so much
faster?

COACHMAN

We're not.

JUNE

Yes, we are.

COACHMAN

Well, yes, maybe we are.

She rubs her temples, begins swaying left to right.

JUNE

Oh, the old mill wheel it turns, it
churns-- turns-- it turns.

Her breathing grows heavier.

JUNE (CONT'D)

My shoulder's so tight. I can't--
it won't crack.

She tries cracking her shoulder.

JUNE (CONT'D)
(softly singing)
Turning. Turning. Turning.

COACHMAN
Oh, the old mill wheel it turns, it
turn--

JUNE
(under breath)
Stop. Stop. Stop.

He stops, blushes in embarrassment.

COACHMAN
Sorry, I've been told my singing
voice isn't as soothing as my
regular one.

JUNE
The mill wheel's lost.

COACHMAN
I'm sorry, Miss June, but you're
not making much sense. The wheel's
lost? How is it--

JUNE
No, I'm lost. Me. I've been lost
for hours now. Dammit.

COACHMAN
I know you have, Miss June, but I'm
here now and you're not in the
wrong.

She begins coughing.

JUNE
There's something in the air.
There's something...

COACHMAN
I'll have to ask you to sit still,
Miss June.

She composes herself, quits turning in her seat.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
Thank you.

A beat.

JUNE
(under breath)
Stop the carriage please.

COACHMAN
What was that?

JUNE
Stop the carriage please.

COACHMAN
Again? Why?

JUNE
I've asked nicely, Coachman--

COACHMAN
And I thank you for that, Miss
June.

JUNE
So please just do as I ask.

COACHMAN
But why? Why is it that you want me
to stop?

JUNE
I want to be on foot from now on. I
won't be needing your services any
longer. Please let me off.

COACHMAN
... No, Miss June.

JUNE
Excuse me?

COACHMAN
No, I'm sorry.

JUNE
What do you mean no?

COACHMAN
My wheels too spin despairingly.

JUNE
Okay?

COACHMAN
You don't really want to be on
foot, Miss June.

JUNE

Yes. Yes, I do.

COACHMAN

No, you don't. Not right now, Miss June. Do trust me when I say this.

JUNE

Pull over, Coachman.

COACHMAN

I'm not letting you off, Miss June.

JUNE

Why?

COACHMAN

I just said.

JUNE

No you didn't. Tell me why.

COACHMAN

I just can't. I-- I-- I can't now that I know you have no intention of returning.

JUNE

Well Coachman, I must say your gentlemanly manner is quickly losing its repute.

COACHMAN

You smite me with such a hurtful utterance, Miss June.

JUNE

Each time you refuse a lady's wish it depletes.

COACHMAN

I'm sorry, Miss June. That's never been my intention.

JUNE

I don't give a damn about your intentions.

COACHMAN

My steeds, Miss June. Selective words. Please.

The carriage picks up speed.

JUNE

Stop the carriage!

COACHMAN

Please don't raise your voice, Miss June. I'm a fragile giant.

JUNE

What can I say. I'm an impolite, destructive sow. Pull over.

COACHMAN

No, you're not, Miss June. You see, you've just been misplaced. You're not in the wrong.

JUNE

Not in the wrong. Not in the wrong. Not in the wrong. You keep repeating yourself over and over and over. I know I'm not in the wrong. My self awareness told me so. Now give me the reigns.

COACHMAN

My steeds. They heed to only me.

JUNE

Stop the carriage, Coachman.

COACHMAN

I'm-- I can't-- no-- I'm on a schedule, Miss June. It'd be rude to further inconvenience my guests. I stopped once. I won't be doing so twice.

JUNE

I'm not asking you to take me up and over the Appalachians. I'm just asking you to pull over. I'll hop off and be on my way.

The horse's neigh, speed up.

COACHMAN

It's what I said about your daughters, isn't it?

JUNE

What?

COACHMAN

I was just-- I don't know. I thought you would appreciate my honesty, but like you said, honesty is just praised and then left in the cold. I'm so sorry, Miss June.

JUNE

I know very well I've only ever loved myself, Coachman. You're not the first to tell me and I'm certain you won't be the last.

COACHMAN

Up the ladder we go. My steeds follow relentless glow.

JUNE

Let me off!

COACHMAN

Why? Why do you need to abandon me like this, Miss June? What have I done so wrong?

The carriage moves faster, the horses whine.

JUNE

Slow down, Coachman.

COACHMAN

It means everything that my guests like me. Tell me you like me, please. Please, Miss June! Tell me!

JUNE

Slow down.

COACHMAN

I can't.

JUNE

Now!

COACHMAN

I can't!

The carriage is now moving at an unsafe speed.

CLOSE ON, spokes cracking.

JUNE

STOP THE GOD DAMN CARRIAGE!

COACHMAN

I can't-- I don't-- I-- please
don't leave me, Miss June! Just
please! I need to know more about
you. Tell me more. Tell me
everything. I want to know
everything. YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME
EVERYTHING!

JUNE

So be it.

She stands.

COACHMAN

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!

The horses whine.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

MISS JUNE! NO!

She jumps off the carriage, tumbles to the gravel.

Ahead, the carriage stops. We continue to hear the horses
whining.

COACHMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Miss. June!

June gets to her feet and runs into the woods.

COACHMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Miss June! Come back! Come back!

Hey! I'M ALL YOU HAVE!

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

June runs through the woods, we don't hear her pant as she
does. Once she stops, she turns and looks behind her to see
if anyone is following--

June's POV: skimming the forest - no one, the road is out of
sight.

She hikes up her dress to her mid thigh and examines a scrape
on her left leg. There's no trace of blood, not even a drop
seeps from the wound.

She picks some peeling skin off the wound and flicks it onto
the ground.

She looks at her hands. All of her fingernails are now pale white.

She continues on.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

June walks along the side of a new road.

The fog has grown even thicker.

The sound of clacking. It comes from behind her. She turns around. The fog prevents her from seeing what's heading her way.

As a shadowy figure emerges from the fog, she quickly dives into the nearest ditch.

The figure is another black carriage that's identical to the two we've previously seen, only this one is miniature and drawn by two black ponies.

The CHILD COACHMAN looks about seven or eight years old and like both previous Coachman, he's gangly, pale white, appears to be tall for his age, and wears a black uniformed cloak.

The miniature carriage passes June. Though she gets on her knees to get a better look, the Child Coachman never sees her.

Once he passes, she rises and watches as the carriage disappears into the fog.

Continuing her walk, she soon spots a dark silhouette up ahead. The closer we get, the more it appears to be the backside of a person.

JUNE

Hello?

There's no answer. She approaches the MAN.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Sir?

The Man turns, his eyes are wide and his shaking arms wrap around his chest which is damp with sweat.

He begins to mumble nonsense at the sight of June.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Sir?

The nonsense grows louder, but harder to understand. She places a hand on his shoulder.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Sir, are you okay?

He begins to sob.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Sir, if you want my help you'll have to tell me what's wrong.

He moves away from her.

MAN
I don't wanna. Please. I don't wanna.

JUNE
Oh, Sir please don't cry. It's hardly a masculine trait.

He coughs until he drops to his knees. She drops down beside him.

JUNE (CONT'D)
We'll have to get you to a doctor as soon as possible. I don't know... you know, how treatable you are, but judging by that cough and how under staffed most places around here apparently are, I'm not really sure about your odds.

He falls onto his back.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Oh, God.

He pukes up pinkish-grey sludge. She jumps to her feet and backs away.

JUNE (CONT'D)
I'll go get some help. I'll be right back, Sir. Well, maybe not right back, but-- try to lie on your side.

She tries rolling him onto his side.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Just-- help me here. Sir, please.

He panics and flails his arms around, hitting her hard. She falls over. He crawls into the ditch.

She chases him down, grabs his arm.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Sir, sir!

He lets out an ear shattering cry.

She stops to cover her ears. She watches him fall over a few more times before he disappears into the woods.

She backpedals onto the road. Soon enough - the clacking of hooves. They grow louder and louder.

She moves into the center of the road as she tries to get a better look at what's coming.

A pain-stricken neigh. A black horse emerges from the fog and bolts in her direction.

She jumps out of its path as it bolts up the road and disappears.

Seconds later another pain-stricken neigh, followed by the clacking of hooves. Another black horse emerges from the fog and bolts up the road in the same direction as the previous black horse.

She walks up the road in the direction the horse came from.

Through the fog she soon discovers yet another black carriage. This one is of a normal size, but wrecked and tipped over. Its wheels still spin.

June approaches, looking at the surrounding woods for some kind of clue as to what could have happened. She sees nothing.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Hello?

She grabs the carriage's spinning wheel and proceeds to move to the door. She tugs at the handles, but they don't budge.

She bangs on the door.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Is anyone in there? Hello? If you're hurt, please bang on something. Hello?

She notices the window. She moves to it and pulls back the black curtains.

June's POV: not a single person is inside the horribly reupholstered, dingy, and dirty carriage.

She backs away.

The carriage wheel has begun to spin again, this time creaking as it does.

She looks up and down the foggy road one last time before taking off back into the woods.

EXT. RIVER - LATER

June walks along the river until she spots a white fence in the distance.

EXT. FARM - CONTINUOUS

We see June climb over this white fence.

The backyard has no garden, no farming equipment lying around, no farmers tilling, and not a single animal.

June walks to the brick farmhouse. No lights come from any of the windows.

She ascends the back porch, entering into--

INT. SUNROOM - CONTINUOUS

June crosses to the brick wall and removes a loose brick. Behind this brick she locates and removes a rusted silver key to which she uses to unlock the back door.

She enters--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The furnishing is sparse, dusty

She crosses to a cabinet and opens it to find only two items inside; a drinking glass and a bottle of opened Whiskey, neither of which are dusty.

She pours herself a full glass.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

In one hand, June holds her glass of Whiskey. She runs her other hand along the hallway wall.

EXT. FARM - LATER

June retrieves wood from inside a shed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

June starts a fire in the hearth.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

June walks down another hallway, one hand still feeling the wall. She turns, enters into--

INT. JUNE'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She stands frozen in the threshold, staring hard at whatever's in front of her.

June's POV: the window.

June's bedroom is about the size of a walk in closet. All that's inside is a cheval glass, a bed, and a desk.

She walks to the desk where she pulls the chair out and carries it over to the window. She places it just a few feet away.

Before sitting, she moves to the window and runs her fingers across the sill.

JUNE
Gossamer for drapery.

She strokes the drapery.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Useless.

She sits down, coughs to clear her throat.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Uh, well, um...

She fidgets awkwardly in the chair before she leans forward, points.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Do you remember that wooden
trailer?
(scoffs)
They never got rid of it.

June's POV: Through the window we see a small, wooden trailer. It's covered in leaves, weeds, and fallen branches, hardly visible to the passing eye.

JUNE (CONT'D)
When it rained, you, Brenna, and I
used to hop inside and run from one
end to the other, tipping it as we
tried not to slip on the leaves. Of
course someone always ended up
walking away with a bruise on...

She leans back in her chair.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Or was that... maybe that's Ruby
I'm thinking of.
(blushing)
Sorry. It was Brenna, Ruby, and I,
not... I got confused.

She takes a swig, tears up.

JUNE (CONT'D)
I hope you're warm wherever you are
because... because I'm not. I'm not
warm. I don't remember much about
you. And I'm so, so sorry for that.

She stands up, moves the chair back to the desk. She pauses for a moment before grabbing a candle off the desk and throwing it at the window.

She stands there, staring at the broken shards for a moment. The wind finds its way inside. The gossamer drapes blow.

She moves back to the window and caresses the drapes, rubbing them against her neck.

LATER, the gossamer drapes being ripped apart over the bed.

LATER, June stands in front of her cheval glass with the gossamer drapes wrapped around herself like a stylish shawl.

She admires her reflection.

She turns and looks behind her - the right side of the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

June stands in front of the fire. Her face, deep in a reverie.

LATER, a small table is thrown against a wall, two of the legs break off. June grab one of the broken legs.

She stands in the middle of the room with her lit homemade torch; one of the table legs with a table runner wrapped around the top.

She moves towards a picture window. It too is covered by gossamer drapery.

As she nears, she extends the torch, but stops just as the flame is about to make contact with the drapery.

Her arm begins to shake, her eyes water.

She drops her arm.

LATER, a pail of water is thrown on the fiery hearth.

EXT. FARM - LATER

From the front porch we watch June walk up the driveway with her shawl still wrapped around her shoulders.

EXT. ROAD - EVENING

June walks, hunched over and looking more disheveled than ever.

After a moment, we hear the clacking of hooves.

She stops walking.

The black horses stop beside her.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

The carriage lanterns are lit.

June's head lies on the Coachman's lap as he guides the horses through the dark fog. Her eyes flutter open and closed.

Every once in a while the Coachman caresses her chestnut hair.

JUNE

Coachman.

COACHMAN

Yes?

JUNE

I never finished giving you
directions.

COACHMAN

I won't be needing them. Rest up,
Miss June.

Her eyes close.

EXT. JUNE'S HOUSE - LATER

The carriage pulls up in front of the driveway and comes to a
stop.

The Coachman sets aside his reigns.

COACHMAN

Miss June.

He gently shakes her shoulder. She wakes, sits up.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

We've arrived.

She wipes her eyes as she takes in her surroundings.

JUNE

Hello.

She smiles, he forces one.

JUNE (CONT'D)

It's so strange. Somehow I'm still
exhausted.

She coughs.

The Coachman won't look at her.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Is everything all right, Coachman?

COACHMAN

You have a lovely home, Miss June.

JUNE
(shrugs)
It's all right?

COACHMAN
And a lovely garden.

She pops her head up to get a better look.

JUNE
It's wilted. But I had just watered... you know, you never answered my question, Coachman.

COACHMAN
What did you ask?

JUNE
I asked if everything was all right.

COACHMAN
No. Everything's not all right, Miss June. It's... I'm sad.

She puts her hand on top of his.

JUNE
Coachman, I just wanted to let you know how--

COACHMAN
Please don't apologize for anything, Miss June. Please.

JUNE
Can I at least invite you in for a cup of tea?

He nods.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Good.

She smiles and hops off the carriage. She stands there, waiting for him to follow her lead.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Coming?

COACHMAN
I'll be there in a moment.

JUNE
Okay. I'll be waiting.

The Coachman watches her travel up the long driveway.
He sheds tears.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

June freezes upon entrance.

June's POV: the entire house, empty.

She runs into various rooms on the first floor only to discover the same empty fate in each one.

JUNE
Coachman!

She makes her way back to the front door.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Coachman! I've been robbed. I've been rob--

EXT. JUNE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

June freezes on the front porch steps.

The Coachman is halfway up the driveway when he stops walking. He's monstrously tall, inhumanly tall, all legs at four times her height. His cloak flows in the wind, hugging his mile long legs.

After the moment of initial fear passes, June walks down the driveway, meeting him halfway.

He removes his top hat, bows his head.

COACHMAN
Miss June.

JUNE
(shaking)
Thank goodness for my high ceilings.

COACHMAN
Probably not quite high enough.

He chuckles.

JUNE

How could you possible know. You've yet to come inside.

He smiles. The house is as tall as he is.

JUNE (CONT'D)

If you could just wait here for a moment. I'll have to run next door and barrow a kettle and some sugar. And some tea bags too.

COACHMAN

There's really no need, Miss June. I won't be crossing that threshold.

JUNE

Okay.

She coughs.

JUNE (CONT'D)

You'll need to notify the authorities, Coachman. You see, my house has been robbed. Everything's gone. Every stick of furniture.

COACHMAN

And your family?

JUNE

Oh, yes. They're missing as well.

COACHMAN

Is that what you think they are? Missing?

JUNE

What do you mean?

COACHMAN

You more than anyone should know that some places have too dark a past to see a bright future in.

JUNE

What? Wait... wait...

She turns, runs back up the driveway towards the house.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Again, June runs through the house, checking every room once more, and this time going to the second floor. Even there, she finds nothing but emptiness.

The SIRENS sound.

She looks out of a bedroom window at the field behind the house.

EXT. JUNE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

June hops off the back porch, wind blowing her hair as she stares at the empty field in front of her.

She walks a little further into the backyard until something unseen spooks her. She rushes back up the porch steps, tripping and coughing.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

She stumbles inside, collapses onto the floor. As she tries to prop herself up, another one of her nails pops off.

She screams.

EXT. JUNE'S HOUSE - SAME

The Coachman hears her scream, puts his top hat back on, and finishes his walk up the driveway.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - SAME

June writhes on the floor. She begins spitting up a small amount of pinkish-grey sludge.

FAINT FOOTSTEPS.

COACHMAN (O.S.)

Miss June.

She continues to spit up.

COACHMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You'll have to come outside, Miss June.

JUNE
(faintly)
Stop saying my name.

COACHMAN
Miss June, if you're in pain, I can
help--

JUNE
Stop saying my name!

EXT. JUNE'S HOUSE - SAME

The Coachman stands in front of the porch steps, ducking his head as low as he can to see inside the front door.

COACHMAN
You'll have to come outside now.

INT. JUNE'S HOUSE - SAME

June crawls towards the foyer. As she reaches for the staircase's railing, another one of her nails pops off.

She screams.

She gets to the front door, sees the Coachman peering in through the front porch. She lies flat on her back and begins to laugh.

JUNE
Laugh with me please.

He looks away. Her laughter turns to tears.

JUNE (CONT'D)
I always wanted to be taller.

COACHMAN
Please.

JUNE
Well, not as tall as you.

COACHMAN
Do come outside.

JUNE
I always wanted to be smarter too.

COACHMAN
Miss June.

JUNE
Dammit, Coachman!

He jumps.

JUNE (CONT'D)
I asked you not to say...

She begins laughing again.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Did I scare YOU?

He looks away.

JUNE (CONT'D)
Why? Why should I come outside?

COACHMAN
Because alike your soldier, the fog
is my informant and its told me
I've prolonged our time together
enough.

JUNE
But I've only been gone a few
hours. A couple at most.

COACHMAN
That's a lovely scarf you wear.

JUNE
You think everything's lovely.

COACHMAN
That's because nearly everything
is.

JUNE
It's a shawl.

COACHMAN
Quite the summery fabric you've
chosen.

JUNE
It seems I'm always under dressed.
No matter the occasion.

She coughs up some more sludge.

JUNE (CONT'D)
It's so painful.

COACHMAN

I know you... you're beautiful.

JUNE

No, I'm not.

COACHMAN

I wasn't referring to beauty of the shallow.

JUNE

I'm a monster.

COACHMAN

Look who you're talking to.

They both laugh.

The Coachman steps onto the first step, ducking even lower under the porch, and extending his hand.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

Come. Discover the truest form of solitude.

She grips the wall as she struggles to her feet. She crosses to the threshold, grabs the Coachman's hand.

EXT. JUNE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Coachman helps June down the front steps as her weak body gives out.

They walk hand in hand down the driveway, until she stops.

JUNE

Can I...

(gestures in front of her)

Alone?

COACHMAN

Of course.

JUNE

And one more thing.

She takes a deep breath, looks deep into his eyes.

JUNE (CONT'D)

How did I--

Just as she's about to finish her question, he says--

COACHMAN

I don't know how, Miss. June. I'm
just the Coachman.

She nods.

They continue on, but this time, she walks alone a few yards
behind him.

June walks slowly, taking in her surroundings: the last
slivers of sunlight as they seep behind the mountains, the
rustling of the leaves at her feet and in the trees above,
the birds flying overhead, the foggy roads, and the view of
her house growing smaller and smaller behind her.

When they reach the carriage the Coachman grabs the door
handle and stands waiting.

He watches as June takes in her last few glimpses of life.

When she reaches the carriage, he lets go of the handle and
moves to her. With tears in his eyes, he leans over and
kisses her forehead.

Staying at her forehead, he says--

COACHMAN (CONT'D)

It's a great honor to have called
you my guest... Miss June.

JUNE

I always knew there was something a
little off about you.

He smiles, she caresses his cheek.

JUNE (CONT'D)

You're very much a gentleman,
Coachman.

COACHMAN

And you're very much a ground-
breaking woman, Miss June.

JUNE

Last errand of the day. Right?

COACHMAN

I'm so sorry.

She steps aside.

He wipes his tears, opens the carriage door. We can't see inside. We only see the back of the Coachman and the carriage door.

She climbs inside.

COACHMAN (CONT'D)
So long, Miss June.

He shuts the door behind her.

He walks to the front of the carriage. We follow him. His side of the box seat has a large cubby in the floor for his long legs to fit. He hops on.

We're at the back of the carriage again - his weight moves the freight.

We hear the whip of the reigns and the whines of the horses as the carriage sets in motions and moves towards the sun which has now disappeared behind the mountains.

There's a window on the back of the carriage that we have not seen before. It's not covered by black curtains like the side ones. Through it we can see the inside of the carriage. It's beautifully furbished, clean, and EMPTY.

The carriage disappears into the thick fog.

The fog evaporates within a matter of seconds.

The clear road. The carriage is gone.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END

