

EXT - NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

It's a Saturday morning in April of 1955. A station wagon with the rear hatch open is parked in the driveway of a two-story home in Griffin, Georgia. The front yard boasts a blooming peach tree with a rope swing.

JUNE STAR, 6, capricious, swings on the rope swing.

June Star's grandmother, LUCILLE RICHARDS, 65, plump and outspoken, appears through the front door.

LUCILLE

June Star, your daddy says you should finish packing.

June Star stops the swing.

JUNE STAR

I'm done packing.

LUCILLE

Really? Did you pack your toothbrush?

JUNE STAR

Nonna!

June Star pouts, throws the swing aside and sulks into the house past Lucille.

INT. - KITCHEN - DAY

A kitchen table basks in sun near a picture window in a spacious kitchen. BAILEY RICHARDS, 41, quiet but temperamental, bends over the newspaper at the table. His wife SUSAN, 39, fatigued, nurses eight-month-old BABY at a rocking chair in the far corner.

June Star performs a high-wire act by pacing on a seam in the linoleum tile.

Lucille hurries into the room carrying a large duffle bag draped with a towel. She places it near the sink.

LUCILLE

Bailey dear, did you see the article about the Misfit?

BAILEY

No.

LUCILLE

Just you read it. I wouldn't take my children anywhere with a criminal like that a loose. Bailey, are you listening?

Bailey flips through the newspaper silently. Lucille walks over to stand behind Bailey, hands on his shoulders.

LUCILLE

Besides, June Star's been to Florida before. How about somewhere else... like east Tennessee?

JUNE STAR

If you don't want to go to Florida, Nonna, why dontcha stay at home?

Susan glares at June Star

LUCILLE

And what would you do if this Misfit caught you?

June Star pauses on the wire for a moment.

JUNE STAR

Kick him in the shins.

The duffle bag trembles and a cat's tail pops out from under the towel.

Lucille crosses the kitchen and pulls the towel over the tail. She glances around to see if anyone has noticed.

LUCILLE

The morning is wasting away! We'd better leave soon.

She carries the duffle out the door.

JUNE STAR

She has to go everywhere we go.

BAILEY

Least she didn't ask to bring Pitty Sing this time.

June Star pretends to jump off the high wire.

JUNE STAR

I like Pitty Sing! Except she sheds all over my dresses.

INT - CAR - DAY

Bailey drives with Susan and the baby beside him. Lucille fidgets next to June Star reads a comic book in the back seat, while Lucille fidgets next to her. She removes her gloves and places them on the rear dash.

LUCILLE

Not too fast, Bailey dear. The patrols hide behind billboards, you know.

JUNE STAR

Poppa, let's speed through Georgia. It's so plain.

LUCILLE

I wouldn't talk about my native state that way.

JUNE STAR

Georgia is a lousy state.

LUCILLE

In my time, children were more respectful of their native states, and their parents, and everything.

She points out the window past June Star.

LUCILLE

Oh look at that cute little pickaninny! Wouldn't that make a picture now?

June Star pushes herself up to look out the window.

JUNE STAR

He didn't have any britches on.

LUCILLE

Probably didn't have any. Little niggers in the country don't have things like we do. If I could paint, I'd paint that picture.

June Star returns to her comic books.

LUCILLE

Enough of the comic books. Let me tell you a story.

June Star looks to Lucille eagerly.

JUNE STAR

Tell the one about the sawtooth tiger!

LUCILLE

You know that already. I have another.

(MORE)

LUCILLE (cont'd)

There once was a lady who was
courted by a Mr. Edgar Atkins
Teagarden.

JUNE STAR

Edgar Atkins Teagarden? What kind
of name is that?

LUCILLE

He was a fine-looking young man
from Georgia. Every Saturday
afternoon he brought his lady a
watermelon with his initials carved
in it: E-A-T.

Bailey chuckles and his wife glares at him.

LUCILLE

Well, one Saturday, the lady wasn't
home, so Edgar left the melon on
the porch. But she never got the
watermelon, because a nigger boy
ate it when he saw the initials: E-
A-T!

Lucille laughs all alone.

JUNE STAR

I wouldn't marry a man just 'cause
he brought me melons!

LUCILLE

Mr. Teagarden died a very wealthy
man. You'd do well to marry a man
like that.

EXT - FILLING STATION - DAY

The car pulls up to the station. Next door is a café with a
large sign above the door that reads "RED SAMMY'S FAMOUS
BARBECUE." RED SAMMY, 44, sunburnt and vigorous, sits on a
bench outside the café.

INT - CAFÉ - DAY

The dimly-lit café/bar is filled with rustic picnic tables. The place is vacant except for Bailey and his family, who seat themselves opposite the bar.

RED SAMMY

Would you like a couple of minutes to decide?

BAILEY

Why don't we just get burgers and lemonade all around?

Sammy collects the menus and exits through the rear of the room.

LUCILLE

If I'm not mistaken, we're quite close to a plantation I once visited.

JUNE STAR

Plantations are boring. Just rows and rows of cotton.

Lucille leans over toward June Star.

LUCILLE

Not this one! There was a secret panel in this house, and the story goes that the family silver was hidden in it..

June Star jumps up, runs to Bailey and clings to his elbow.

JUNE STAR

Let's go see it! Let's go to the house with the secret panel! Please, Poppa, can we?

BAILEY

Sit down, sweetie. If you're real good, we'll drive by.

INT - CAR - DAY

LUCILLE

The dirt road you need to take is about a mile back.

BAILEY

Dirt road!? Why didn't you say something?

He brakes and then pulls a U-turn.

EXT - DIRT ROAD - DAY

The station wagon travels along a remote, dusty road elevated above an evergreen forest on both sides.

INT - CAR - DAY

BAILEY

If we're not there in five minutes, we're turning back.

LUCILLE

It's not much farther.

She bumps the duffle next to her and PITY SING, Lucille's cat, snarls and springs from under a towel onto Bailey's shoulder.

Bailey throws on the brakes with Pitty Sing clinging to his neck. The car veers to the left and down the embankment, ROLLING once. June Star falls to the floor and Susan, clutching the baby, is thrown out the passenger door. Lucille lands in the front seat.

EXT - GULLEY - DAY

The station wagon stops at the bottom of a ten-foot embankment, right-side-up, with the passenger door wide open. The dust clears.

Part way up the embankment, Susan, covered with dust, has a long bleeding cut on her right cheek. She holds the SCREAMING baby on her shoulder.

Bailey throws Pitty Sing from the car.

June Star opens the back door and climbs out.

JUNE STAR

We've had an accident!

She quickly surveys the scene.

JUNE STAR

(disappointed)

But nobody's killed.

Lucille pushes her legs out of the open passenger door and holds her side.

LUCILLE

I think I've damaged an organ.

Bailey gets out of the car and slams the door shut. Lucille rises to her feet gingerly.

Susan begins to nurse the baby, who quiets down.

BAILEY

That damn cat...

LUCILLE

SShh! Listen!

The sound of TIRES ON THE DIRT ROAD can be heard in the distance.

She tries to climb the embankment, but the sand slides beneath her. The more she scrambles, the more the sand crumbles. She runs away from the embankment and begins flailing her arms high in the air.

An old, hearse-like car travels slowly along the dirt road and stops above the accident site.

Two men climb out of the vehicle and perch at the top of the embankment. The first is a TALL MAN with gray hair and spectacles, wearing trousers but no shirt. His companion, BOBBY LEE, a short man with red hair and overalls, pulls two pistols out of the car. He hands one to the TALL MAN.

The TALL MAN descends the bank cautiously. He stops near Susan to survey the scene. Susan pushes herself back slightly and shields the baby.

TALL MAN

Afternoon. I see you had you a little spill.

He continues down the bank and leans casually against the car.

LUCILLE

We rolled twice!

TALL MAN

Once. We seen it happen. Bobby Lee, get down here and see if their car'll run.

Bobby Lee descends the bank and makes several unsuccessful attempts to start the car.

JUNE STAR

Whatcha gonna do with that gun?

TALL MAN

Y'all sit down where you're at.

They all sit. Suddenly Lucille bolts to her feet.

LUCILLE

You're the Misfit! I knew I
recognized you!

MISFIT

Yes'm. But it would've been better
for all of you, lady, if you
hadn't.

LUCILLE

You wouldn't shoot a lady, would
you?

MISFIT

I'd hate to have to. Sit down.

Lucille sits.

LUCILLE

You don't look a bit like you come
from common blood. You come from
nice people.

The Misfit digs a hole in the sand with his heel, then covers
it again.

MISFIT

Yes mam. Finest people in the
world.

LUCILLE

You shouldn't call yourself the
Misfit. You're a good man at heart.

BAILEY

Everybody shut up and let me handle
this!

Bailey begins to stand. The Misfit points the pistol at him,
so he remains squatting.

MISFIT

I pre'chate that, lady. Bobby Lee,
would you take the man and the girl
into the woods?

Bobby Lee pulls Bailey to his feet.

BAILEY

Listen, you don't understand.

Bobby Lee approaches June Star, who darts away and stands on
the other side of Bailey.

JUNE STAR

He's a pig.

Bobby Lee chuckles. Bailey takes June Star by the hand, and
Bobby Lee leads them into the woods.

BAILEY

I'll be back in a minute, Mamma.

LUCILLE

Come back this instant! Bailey Boy!

The Misfit squats and makes patterns in the sand with the tip
of his pistol.

MISFIT

No ma'am, I ain't a good man. But I
ain't the worst neither.

LUCILLE kneels forward, hands on her knees.

LUCILLE

You could be honest if you'd only
try. Wouldn't it be nice not to
have someone chasing you all the
time?

MISFIT

Somebody is always after you.

LUCILLE

Do you ever pray?

MISFIT

No ma'am.

Two PISTOL REPORTS echo through the woods, followed by silence. Lucille crumples into a ball.

LUCILLE

Bailey Boy!

The Misfit sits back and crosses his legs.

MISFIT

I was a gospel singer for a while.
I been most everything... in the arm
service, with the railroads. Been
an undertaker... I even seen a woman
flogged.

Lucille raises herself to her knees again and wipes away tears.

LUCILLE

Pray, pray... Pray!

MISFIT

I never was a bad boy that I
remember, but somewheres I done
something wrong and got sent to the
penitentiary.

LUCILLE

That's when you should have started
praying. What did you do to get
sent there?

MISFIT

I forget what I done, lady.

He stands and dusts sand from his trousers.

LUCILLE

Maybe they put you in by mistake.

MISFIT

No ma'am.

LUCILLE

If you'd pray, Jesus would help you.

MISFIT

That's right.

LUCILLE

Then why don't you pray?

MISFIT

I don't want no hep.

Bobby Lee returns with Bailey's shirt.

MISFIT

Throw me that shirt, Bobby Lee.

Bobby tosses the shirt to the Misfit, who puts it on. Lucille begins to cry again.

MISFIT

Take the lady with the child now.

Bobby Lee escorts Susan to the woods.

LUCILLE

Jesus. Jesus.

MISFIT

Yes ma'am. Jesus thrown everything off balance.

LUCILLE

I know you wouldn't shoot a lady!
You come from nice people! I'll
give you all the money I got!

A PIERCING SCREAM is heard in the woods, followed by a PISTOL REPORT.

The Misfit takes off his spectacles and cleans them with his sleeve.

MISFIT

Lady, no one ever gave the
undertaker a tip.

Two more PISTOL REPORTS pierce the air.

LUCILLE

Bailey Boy..

She pulls herself to her feet. Standing unsteadily, she stares into the woods.

MISFIT

Jesus shouldn'ta raised the dead.
He thrown everything off. If He did
what He said, there's nothing to do
but follow Him. But if He didn',
there's nothing to do but enjoy the
few minutes you got left - by
killing somebody or doing some
other meanness.

LUCILLE

(faintly, as if to
herself)
Maybe He didn't raise the dead.

Dizzy, Lucille collapses.

MISFIT

I can't say He didn't because I
wasn't there. It ain't right I
wasn't there.

Lucille looks up at the Misfit.

LUCILLE

Why, you're one of my own babies!

The Misfit frowns and steps backward. He draws his pistol and
SHOOTS Lucille three times.

Bobby Lee returns from the woods.

MISFIT

Take her off where you thrown the
others.

BOBBY LEE

She was a talker, wasn't she?

MISFIT

She would of been a good woman, if
someone'd been there to shoot her
every minute of her life.

Bobby Lee chuckles.

MISFIT

Shut up, Bobby Lee. There's no real
pleasure in life.

Pitty Sing darts past the two men and up a pine tree on the
edge of the woods.

FADE OUT