

49

CONTINUED:

49

She straps the crates down with BUNGEE CORDS...

50

EXT. A HILLSIDE ROAD - DAY - ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE 50

EXTREME WIDE on a long, straight road that runs along the base of a steep hill. We might notice -- in fact we probably SHOULD notice -- up there atop the hill --

A CROOKED WOOD-AND-WIRE FENCE running the length of the frame, parallel to the road. And as we're taking the pastoral stillness of all this in --

SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak.

-- A BICYCLE enters frame. Sarah riding, the small cart filled with BIRDS hitched to the back.

Bike and Cart and Birds and Woman move across the vast expanse, as we CUT TO:

51

EXT. A CONVENT - ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE 51

-- A CONVENT. Simple, two stories, a garden and a fence, CROSS on the roof.

A NUN, sixty, lean and rugged, is at work in the garden. She's not in a full HABIT, but her headdress and the BIG SILVER CROSS around her neck give us a sense of her vocation. She looks UP at the sound of the SQUEAKING as --

Sarah pulls up in front of the Convent on her bike.

The Nun sets down her hoe and walks over to the front to greet her.

Sarah dismounts, begins removing the bungees tethering the cages to the cart as the NUN approaches, warm smile on her kind face. She speaks in an AUSTRALIAN ACCENT --

NUN

I was worried you'd forgotten.

(then)

Don't usually get so many so close together. Love is in the air.

Forgotten WHAT? So many WHAT? We do not know. And we won't know for quite some time. But for now --

Sarah says nothing, just picks up the cage of birds from her cart, sets it on the ground. Goes back for the next.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

Remember -- We DO NOT SEE HER FACE. We're lingering on the Nun, watching her. Taking her in, as --

-- Sarah sets a SACK OF SEED down near the second cage. The Nun pulls a HANDFUL OF FOLDED BILLS (Australian currency) from her pocket, offers it to Sarah. *

Sarah nods, takes the money. She's got what she came for. Heads back to her bike. BUT... We stay with the Nun for a moment... almost as if she's wondering whether she should say something.

And then? She does --

NUN (CONT'D) *

... Sarah?

(a beat)

Does the name "Kevin" mean anything to you?

Sarah stops. Her back to us. Hesitates for a moment. And then... she turns around.

And for the very first time, we see her FACE.

She is beautiful. Maybe fifty. Gray hair... elegant, just a few streaks of its former brown. Crows feet branch for her striking blue eyes. Oh. And one more thing.

She is NORA DURST.

Why is she going by the name "Sarah"? We do not know. Why is she out here in this post-apocalyptic looking terrain? We do not know. But that's not what The Nun asked her. She asked if she has ever heard of Kevin Garvey. And to that? Nora simply says --

NORA

No.

There's more to that no. So much fucking more. And we're about to spend the next seven episodes experiencing it. But for now? Let's simply --

SMASH TO BLACK.

8 CONTINUED: 8

She stands there, looking up at the sky, waiting and watching patiently, just like the Millerites did so long ago. But Nora is not waiting to be taken away. Her feet are firmly on the ground. No... she's waiting for --

-- A PIGEON. Descending from the sky. Landing on the perch beside the coop.

Nora reaches for it... gently picks it up -- and removes a SMALL WHITE SLIP OF PAPER attached to one of its talons.

No interest in the paper, she drops it into a LARGE ORANGE PLASTIC BUCKET at her feet -- We might notice there are many, MANY other slips of paper in there. We also might notice they all have WRITING on them.

Now, Nora sets the pigeon inside a cage as ANOTHER BIRD lands. And another. And another. DOZENS MORE descending in a feathery rainstorm around her.

Nora goes to them in turn, one-by-one, pulling strips from talons, dropping strips into the bucket, setting birds back in their homes, as we CUT TO:

9 INT. NORA'S (REMOTE) HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 9

AN EGG SIZZLES IN A FRYING PAN. TOAST POPS OUT OF A TOASTER.

Nora lifts the egg with a SPATULA, deposits it on a slice of bread. Places another piece of bread on top.

She brings the FRIED EGG SANDWICH to her kitchen table and sits down. No sound but the pigeons cooing outside, as we --

CUT WIDE. Nora eats her lunch. All alone.

10 EXT. NORA'S HOUSE - DAY - LATER 10

Later, Nora loads LIVE CRATES OF PIGEONS onto a CART, which is in turn attached to an old but durable BICYCLE. She straps the crates down with a BUNGEE CORD with the efficiency of someone who has done this many, many times as we CUT TO:

11 EXT. A HILLSIDE ROAD - DAY - ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE 11

SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak.

Nora rides her bike down the long, straight road running along the base of a steep embankment.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

About fifty feet up that embankment, a crooked WOOD-AND-WIRE FENCE runs the length of the frame, parallel to the road.

It's okay if you don't give a shit about that fence now because you will later. You'll give a shit because that fence is going to save Nora Durat's life. But for now --?

-- Bike and Cart and Birds and Woman move across the vast expanse and we CUT TO:

12 EXT. A CONVENT - DAY - ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE

12

-- A CONVENT. Simple, two stories, a garden and a fence, CROSS on the roof. And what's a convent without --

A NUN at work in the garden. Sixty, tough -- Not in a full HABIT, but her headdress and the BIG SILVER CROSS around her neck tell us her vocation. *SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak.* The Nun looks UP at the sound of the bike as --

Nora rides up, dismounts. Begins removing the bungees from the cart as the NUN approaches, warm smile on her kind face. She speaks in an AUSTRALIAN ACCENT --

NUN

I was worried you'd forgotten.

(then)

Don't usually get so many so close together. Love is in the air.

Forgotten WHAT? So many WHAT? Love is in the WHAT? We do not know. But for now, Nora says nothing, just picks up the cage of birds from her cart, sets it on the ground. Goes back for the next. The Nun watches all of this, then produces a folded wad of AUSTRALIAN CASH, steps toward Nora.

Nora looks up, nods, takes the money. She's got what she came for, heads back to her bike. And we HOLD ON THE NUN for a moment... as if she's wondering whether she should say something. And then? She does --

NUN (CONT'D)

... Sarah?

(a beat)

Does the name "Kevin" mean anything to you?

And now that we have some CONTEXT for this moment... now that we saw Nora get into that machine... now that we SENSE she has not seen nor heard (nor thought?) that name in a long time, it's all the more devastating when she simply answers --

(CONTINUED)

The Leftovers Ep. 308 "...of Nora" REVISED BLUE 9/7/16 17.

12 CONTINUED: 12

NORA
No.

Last time we were here, that word is where we ended.

This time, it is where we will BEGIN.

Because the Nun's still standing there. And so is Nora.

NUN
... Are you sure? Because a man
calling himself that came by
yesterday... he had a photo.
(beat)
A photo of you.

Nora blinks. If we could see inside her head right now, it
would be a very high tower, constructed of carefully placed
toothpicks, swaying in the wind. Threatening to fall...

NORA
Did you tell him anything?

NUN
Of course not.

Nora NODS, relieved...

NUN (CONT'D)
But I think he knew I was lying.

Nora stops breathing. The tower falls. This is what it
looks like when someone in hiding is FOUND. And we SMASH TO:

13 EXT. A HILLSIDE ROAD - DAY 13

SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak.

Unburdened by the birds, Nora rides back the way she came.
Up out of the saddle. Working the pedals. HARD.

~~14 OMITTED 14~~

~~15 INT. NORA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 15 *~~

~~-- QUICK, CHAOTIC CUTS -- Frenetic and ROUGH as Nora digs
through a FREEZER and finds~~

~~-- A TIN COFFEE CAN. She pulls off the TOP. It's stuffed
with ROLLED UP WADS OF CASH.~~

~~(CONTINUED)~~

17

INT. NORA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

17

-- Nora YANKS open a kitchen drawer, grabs a PACK OF CIGARETTES. Puts one to her lips as she fumbles out a box of wooden matches.

With trembling fingers, she scrapes the match against the box. It does not light. Again. Nothing. Finally --

A FLAME. She presses it to the cigarette, lights it.

And takes an intensely long DAG.

WIDE. Nora standing there in her kitchen. Smoking. Thinking. Not wanting to be thinking. Wanting to be still. Trying to be CALM. But then --

-- She's MOVING again. Heading for another kitchen drawer... Yanking it open with a clatter of scissors and pens -- hands scrabbling as she finally finds what she's LOOKING FOR --

A PLASTIC CALLING CARD. And we SMASH TO:

18

EXT. DESOLATE ROAD - DAY

18

SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak.

Nora is back on her bike. Another beautiful vista. Another road out in the middle of nowhere. But this one leads to --

19

EXT. DESOLATE ROAD - PAY PHONE - DAY

19

-- A PAY PHONE. Solar-powered, off the side of the road. Nora rides up, dismounts the bike, strides up to the phone.

Hand still shaking, she picks up the receiver. Swipes the CALLING CARD, and DIALS a number, easy, from memory --

And the phone RINGS. And RINGS. And just as we're dying to know who she could POSSIBLY be calling, we INTERCUT WITH:

20

EXT. PARK - DAY - INTERCUT (ALREADY SHOT)

20

-- A PARK BENCH. A (slightly, but distractingly futuristic) CELLPHONE vibrates on the bench as a hand reaches for it... ANSWERS --

Laurie (INTO PHONE)

... Hello?

Holy shit. It's Laurie.

(CONTINUED)

20

CONTINUED: (4)

20

NORA

I called you because I thought you told him where I was!

LAURIE

C'mon. You knew I didn't tell him.
(beat)

You called because you wanted me to say it was okay to go to the dance.

NORA

... What? -- I don't want to go to the fucking... dance!

LAURIE

Gotcha.

(beat)

But if you did, it's okay.

NORA

Jesus Christ, Laurie!

Laurie stays CALM. There's no need to panic. She's already said what she believes Nora needs to hear --

LAURIE

... Same line next week?

SLAM! Nora HANGS UP.

Because NO. That's not why she called Laurie. It's NOT. She's just going to ignore Kevin and whatever little game he's playing. And then he'll leave. And she'll get on with her life. Yes. That's EXACTLY what'll happen, as we CUT TO:

21

INT. NORA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

21

AN EGG SIZZLES IN A FRYING PAN. TOAST POPS OUT OF A TOASTER.

Nora lifts the egg with a SPATULA, deposits it on a slice of bread. Places another piece of bread on top.

She brings the FRIED EGG SANDWICH to her kitchen table and sits down. This is her ritual. This is what CALMS her.

She takes a bite. Chews slowly. Puts the sandwich down. She's not that hungry.

Something's bothering her.

She glances nervously at the BACK DOOR.

(CONTINUED)

The Leftovers Ep. 308 "...of Nora" REVISED BLUE 9/7/16 27.

21 CONTINUED: 21

After a moment, she gets up and LOCKS THE DOOR.

Just to be sure, she TESTS the knob.

That's better.

She sits down. Picks up the sandwich.

A beat. Goddamnit! She RISES OUT OF FRAME, as we SMASH TO:

22 A SERIES OF QUICK CUTS - THROUGHOUT NORA'S HOUSE 22

... Nora moves through the house -- Locks the FRONT DOOR.

Closes and locks WINDOWS in the LIVING ROOM. The PANTRY. The BEDROOM. She just wants to seal herself inside an IMPREGNABLE FORTRESS. And now that she's successfully done that, she can finally --

23 INT. NORA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT 23

-- RELAX. WATER flows into a tub. Nora beside it in a bathrobe, ready to STEP IN. But she hesitates as she turns to the open doorway leading into the hall.

Well... that will not fucking do. She moves for the door... PULLS it closed --

But it won't. There's a loose HINGE, impeding it. Nora STRUGGLES -- literally needs to HEFT THE DOOR UP from the floor in order to move it -- And Thank God, once she does --

SLAM! She YANKS IT INTO THE FRAME. It's CLOSED.

Satisfied with her handiwork, Nora sighs, relieved. SUCCESS.

Safe and secure, she kicks off her shoes. Sheds her robe. And at last, steps into hot tub. Puts a washcloth over her eyes. And finds PEACE. And we CUT:

24-25 OMITTED 24-25

26 INT. NORA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT - A LITTLE LATER 26

Nora looks calm and refreshed, hair wet, bathrobe back on as she brushes her teeth. Spits. Looks at herself in the mirror, back in control. Life is back to normal. But when she goes to open the newly-mounted bathroom door...

It's fucking STUCK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And a COMPLETE FUCKING ABSENCE OF BIRDS.

35 EXT. HILLSIDE ROAD - NIGHT

35

SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak.

Once again, Nora pedals through the night. MORNIGHT falls over the same stretch of road we first saw her traverse. The one with the incredibly steep embankment and the wire fence at the top. Yes. We're mentioning it again, as we CUT TO:

36 EXT. CONVENT - LATER

36

Nora glides to a stop in front of THE CONVENT. Its windows are DARK, which is only to be expected at this time of night. It's a PEACEFUL, REASSURING scene, marred only by a single incongruous detail --

... an ALUMINUM EXTENSION LADDER propped against the side of the house, leading right to a SECOND-STORY WINDOW. And not only that...

Climbing down the ladder, very carefully, is a MAN IN A LEATHER JACKET. He's stocky, middle-aged, with a full head of salt-and-pepper hair. Nora watches as the man LOWERS the ladder and HIDES it behind the BUSHES running along the side of the convent. He seems calm and unhurried, as if performing a FAMILIAR RITUAL.

When he's completed this task, the man CROSSES HIMSELF, and heads down the driveway, looking very CHEERFUL. His expression doesn't change until he spots --

-- Nora standing there, looking right at him.

He is BUSTED.

The Man In The Leather Jacket says nothing. He just gives Nora a quick, EMBARRASSED NOD -- then crosses the street and climbs onto a MOTORCYCLE parked there. He puts on his helmet, starts the engine, and putters off into the night.

Nora was already wound up, but somehow, this WINDS HER UP MORE as she strides to the door of the CONVENT and KNOCKS.

No answer. She KNOCKS EVEN HARDER.

Nothing. And now she's POUNDING ON IT. And finally --

THE DOOR OPENS.

(CONTINUED)

36

CONTINUED:

36

... And here stands the NUN.

She's wearing a MODEST COTTON NIGHTGOWN, her hair is loose and lovely, her face flushed, her expression more forgiving than one might expect, given the lateness of the hour.

NUN

... Sarah?

NORA

What did you do to my birds?

NUN

I... let them go just like I always do. What's wrong?

NORA

... What's wrong is they didn't come back. Did you give them the seed I gave you?

NUN

Yes. Of course --

NORA

-- And you didn't feed them right before you let them go, did you?

NUN

Of course not. I did everything the same.

NORA

Then where are they?

NUN

I don't know.

Nora's really coming apart now. She needs fucking ANSWERS --

NORA

Those birds are trained to do one thing -- Just one thing -- and that's to come home. So you must have done something different.

NUN

(shrugs; a sweet smile)
Maybe they're delivering the messages of love.

Nora shakes her head. SERIOUSLY??!

(CONTINUED)

NORA

It's great your newlyweds believe a bird with a range of fifty miles is gonna bring their stupid poetry to Timbuktu, but don't try to sell that bullshit to me.

NUN

I'm not trying to sell you anything, dear...

(beat)

It's just a nicer story.

Let that sit there for a moment. It's a lesson. A moral. One that, at least for now, Nora won't fucking HEAR.

NORA

Who was that man?

A beat.

NUN

What man?

NORA

The man I just saw leaving.

NUN

You mean Father Brian? He's the only man permitted in the convent.

NORA

Does "Father Brian" ride a motorcycle?

NUN

No.

NORA

Well this man did.

(points)

And he was climbing down a ladder from that room right up there.

NUN

Oh. That's strange.

The Nun just looks at her, deadpan. Nora narrows her eyes --

NORA

Is that your room?

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (3)

36

NUN

It might be. But I certainly haven't seen any men on ladders.

Nora can't fucking BELIEVE the audacity of the lie, especially when it's crystal clear by now that --

NORA

You just had sex with him.

NUN

No I didn't.

NORA

You did.

NUN

Did not.

Okay. Fuck this. Time to pull out the BIG GUNS --

NORA

Then swear to God.

The Nun doesn't even hesitate. Serene --

NUN

All right. I swear to God.

Okay. That's unfair. Unjust. That's against THE RULES. Nora looks like her head is about to explode.

NORA

You're a fucking liar.

And you'd think The Nun would flinch at the profanity. Or at the venom behind it. But she doesn't. Instead, she looks at Nora with benevolent SYMPATHY, as she softly says --

NUN

I saw you dancing with that man. That man you said you didn't know.

(beat)

I'll pray for the safe return of your birds.

Nora is thrown by the kindness... flinches as if she's just had cold water thrown in her face. But then, she recovers. And in the words of a certain chain-smoking cult many, many years ago, Nora Durst FIRES BACK --

NORA

Don't waste your breath.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (4)

36

And with that, no closer to recovering her lost birds... no closer to recovering fucking ANYTHING, Nora turns and angrily stalks away as we CUT... ONE LAST TIME... TO:

37

EXT. HILLSIDE ROAD - NIGHT

37

SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak. SqueakSqueak.

Once again, Nora pedals home.

We're WIDE on that same desolate stretch of moonlit road as Nora ZIPS into frame from the left -- speeding homeward.

It's the same exact shot we've seen so many times we know it's surely transitional. We don't expect anything to actually happen. But just as Nora's about to exit frame...

Something DOES.

Suddenly and without explanation, the THE BIKE SKIDS. Nora goes DOWN. Fucking HARD. It's a SPECTACULAR WIPE-OUT.

CLOSE ON NORA -- lying there on the road. STUNNED. She blinks... getting her bearings... BRITS HER TEETH as --

-- She picks herself up, wiping dirt from her clothes, examining her scrapes, making sure nothing's broken. She turns to her fallen gear, trying to figure out what the FUCK just happened. And then she sees it...

A strand of MARDI GRAS BEADS.

Tangled in the CHAINS of her bike -- and the SPOKES of her twisted front wheel. She scans the ground: a THIRD strand of beads... a FOURTH. A trail of SIN. A trail that could seemingly come from only ONE SOURCE --

And right on cue, Nora hears, faintly: MEHHHEHEHEEH... MEHHHEHEHEEH. She turns towards the sound --

HIGH ABOVE HER, WAY ATOP THE STEEP EMBANKMENT THAT RUNS ALONGSIDE THE ROAD --

The SCUMPGONE. And it is stuck. Its head is CAUGHT in the FENCE as it struggles: MEHHHEHEHEEH... MEHHHEHEHEEH...

Wounded as she may be, Nora knows what she must do. So she starts up the embankment, moving for the trapped animal.

... But when we say this hill is steep, we mean fucking vertiginous. No problem for a goat. But for Nora, already banged up from the crash, it's ROUGH.

(CONTINUED)