

EXT. OCEAN BEACH - DAWN

Waves CRASH on sandy shores. The camera pans across driftwood and seaweed.

A YOUNG MAN, late 20s with bouncy brown hair, curls in the fetal position, wearing blue swim trunks too small for him.

Offscreen, a female voice calls above the waves:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.) Hey!
Sweetheart! Hey!

The young man raises his head. Sniffling and sunken red eyes betray he's been crying.

Out among the distant breakers an OLDER WOMAN, late 40s, naked, waves her arms above her head, beckoning.

The young man stands and walks to shore. Dips one toe in the surf, then quickly recoils: too cold.

He clutches his bare arms as the wind picks up. Staring out at the older woman in distress.

She stops waving and turns away, opening her arms to the next wave. Just before it hits comes a DING as we...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - MEAT COUNTER - DAY

DING! A CALL BELL sounds atop a silver deli counter.

DAVID (O.S.)

Will!

The same YOUNG MAN from the dream bolts awake at a raw meat display case. The name tag on his apron reads WILL.

As he rubs his eyes, a coworker, name tagged DAVID, unties and puts down his apron beside the call bell. Will moves and speaks slowly, with wide sunken eyes, like he's stoned even when he's not.

DAVID
Dozing on your first day?

WILL
Sorry... I overslept.

DAVID
So you're still tired?

WILL
Yeah... my dreams have been...

DAVID

Ugh, spare me the dream talk.
Look, I'm taking my 15, so you better
look alive. And by 15, I mean 20.

WILL

Really?

DAVID

I'm leaving you because I trust you.
Consider it part of training. Have fun
manning the meat.

Will opens his mouth, but David exits before he gets a word out.
The automatic doors WHOOSH across the store.

Will looks around. The store nearly deserted. An old woman weighs
cuts of prepackaged steak. A fly buzzes inside the glass.

Will yawns. His eyelids grow heavy and shut before...

WHOOSH. The automatic doors open again.

CLOSE-UP: a FEMALE HAND with black nails, bangled wrist, and
spider web tattoo picks up a grocery basket. The camera bounces
with the basket as HEELS CLICK toward meat counter. Will in the
cross-hairs.

The woman, tattooed with dark wavy hair and shapely full-length
black dress, puts a finger to her lips as she surveys her
options. This is HOPE.

Will waits, uncertain where to look.

WILL

Can I help you?

HOPE

Maybe. I'll take the rack of lamb.

Will fumbles to don plastic gloves. Hope speaks fast, Will slow.

HOPE

Do you know the farmer?

WILL

Um.. it says Woolen Clouds Farms.

HOPE

How are they treated? I'm processing
it for the sacrifice, so the more
I know, the better.

Confused, Will tears one of the gloves. He fumbles with the meat
as Hope goes on.

HOPE

We'll call him Charlie. Do you think Charlie had a good life? Eating green grass, staring up at blue skies...

WILL

Frolicking with hobbits...

HOPE

Do you think Charlie died a virgin?

Will looks up midway through cutting into the lamb.

HOPE

Are you new here, Will?

WILL

How'd you know my...
(checks his nametag)
Oh, yeah... How'd you know?

HOPE

You just seem... green. Are you a student?
(Will shakes his head)
So you just up and moved to Eugene?

WILL

Mhmm. I was, like, just tell me where all the West Coast hippies are.

HOPE

I hate that term - hippie.

WILL

Well, I like the hippies better than all the Mormons where I come from. It's, like, a cult... but

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)

instead of kool aid, they drink fat-free milk.

HOPE

At least the cult here is more...

The knife slips and SLICES Will's finger where the glove had torn. A drop of his blood spills onto the meat before he sucks it off his finger. Hope raises her eyebrow, a hint of a smirk.

HOPE
...colorful. Are you okay?

WILL
Mm. Yeah. I will be.
(wrapping the meat)
Well, it was cool to meet you.

HOPE
You haven't.

WILL
Hmm?

HOPE
You didn't ask my name.

WILL
Right. Sorry. What's your name?

HOPE
Hope.

WILL
Hope. Hi Hope. I'd shake but...
blood on my hands.

HOPE
I could handle it.

Will GULPS. He finishes wrapping the meat and hands it across.
Their hands graze as she receives.

WILL
Maybe... see you around?

HOPE
Count on it. It's impossible to
escape anyone in this town.

She puts the meat in her basket and CLICKS away.