

OVER THE HILL

(EXCERPT)

Written by

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FADE IN

EXT. MONTANA RANCH - DAY

The cloudless blue sky goes on forever.

Sounds of a SCUFFLE (O.S.) -- GRUNTS, HEAVY BREATHING, a horse SNORTS.

A worn Stetson arcs high against the sky, tumbles in the air, and lands dangerously close to fresh horse manure.

Flecked with blood, the hat's owner, veterinarian MAUREEN "MOJO" JOHANSEN (61) struggles to hold a wild-eyed horse with a needle in its neck. Her long silver braid whips around.

An angry abrasion swells on her forehead where a lightning-quick hoof launched her hat.

But her face shows only years of harsh Montana weather and a jaw set to win.

MOJO
(breathing hard)
Thought you said he was broke.

The horse's owner, RED MOLINE (50-ish, dirty overalls) gets up from the dirt where the horse knocked him over, tries to join Mojo on the lead rope.

MOJO (CONT'D)
No, my hat. Get my hat.

The horse settles some, allows Mojo to approach, calm him.

Red offers up the hat, then pauses. He peers at something in the lining -- a faded, laminated photo of a smiling young man wearing a backpack.

His eyes dart curiously between the photo and Mojo.

Mojo abruptly reclaims the hat, settles it on her head.

RED
I, uh... never seen him strike like that. Guess he don't like needles.

MOJO
I think he'll be fine now. Help me push him up against the barn so I can finish up.

EXT. MONTANA BIG SKY COUNTRY - LATER

A ribbon of highway -- a lone 4-wheel drive pickup speeds along, dwarfed by looming mountains and rolling grasslands.

The truck sports a custom canopy. The doors read:
"RANCHLAND EQUINE VETERINARY, M. JOHANSEN, DVM, EAGLE, MT."

INT./EXT. MOJO'S VET TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Mojo's gaze veers from the road, locks onto the mountains.

An airhorn BLASTS from an approaching semi. Mojo startles, jerks the wheel, careens back to her side of the highway. She pulls off the road, knuckles white on the wheel.

Mojo looks back at the peaks. Dark clouds blow in.

Hail PLINKS onto her truck, MORPHS into CLICKS on a keyboard.

ROSIE (PRE-LAP)
(mutters as she types)
The jagged ridges of the Mission
Range push into -- no...
(TYPING pauses, resumes)
... cut into the famous big sky...

INT. MCCALLUM HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A typical ranch home -- aged pine and leather, Native-American rugs on scarred wood floors. Large windows look out onto a wrap-around porch.

A rustic sign: "LUCKY M BLACK ANGUS" decorates a wall.

The keyboard CLICKS come from

ROSIE'S OFFICE

ROSIE MAE MCCALLUM (62) types at a desk overflowing with travel books and magazines. Despite the languid classical music drifting from her headphones, her feet jiggle in pink feathered slippers like high-strung birds.

Rosie looks with wistful appreciation at the scenic video on a large monitor -- aerial views of mountains, alpine meadows, pristine lakes. She types on.

ROSIE
Hmm... let's see... this scenic
Montana byway, with access to miles
of trails... wilderness trails...

Her typing slows, stops. Rosie ponders her desk calendar, removes her headphones. She picks up her phone, ponders more.

Her foot resumes its restless jitters.

INT. MOJO'S VET TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Mojo rummages through her glove box. She pulls out a pill bottle, fumbles it open. Pills scatter like popcorn. She scoops some up and swallows them dry --

-- and spots a revolver stashed in the open glove box. She eases it out, grips it as she stares at the mountains. Finally, she pushes the gun under her seat.

Her cell phone RINGS. Mojo looks at the screen, takes a deep breath. Answers on speaker phone.

MOJO

You finally forgive my 'Screw the therapy, just get out of the house' comment?

INTERCUT - MOJO'S TRUCK/ROSIE'S OFFICE

Rosie frowns, doodles nervously on the calendar.

ROSIE

Don't assume that. I'm checking in on you. It's what friends do when... well, it's ten years ago today, isn't it?

Mojo removes her hat and peers at her forehead in the rearview mirror. She opens an alcohol wipe.

MOJO

(under her breath)
I'm getting too old for this shit.

She dabs at the wound, winces.

ROSIE

Wh... what?

MOJO

I'm losing my touch. Almost got my head taken off today.

Mojo dabs some more, hisses in pain.

ROSIE

Well, I just -- you okay?

MOJO

I'll survive. I'm fine, Rosie.

Mojo rubs her arm in sudden pain, pulls up her sleeve to reveal an ugly pair of needle marks inside her elbow. She swabs them with the alcohol wipe.

ROSIE

You sure? I mean, I know myself, anniversaries can be rough. I look at the mountains and I think 'what would I...' I mean no trace, no --

MOJO

Closure. But you don't get to say it, Rosie. I say it. Jess was my son.

HAIL rains down. Mojo looks anywhere but at the mountains. She pulls her hat over, gently cleans the photo inside it.

ROSIE

You won't be alone tonight, will you? CeCe's there?

MOJO

No... yeah, I'm not alone.

ROSIE

What's that sound?

MOJO

It's hailing.

Rosie steps to her office window, looks out.

ROSIE

Blue sky here, three hours away. Only three hours. That's a beer run in this state.

MOJO

Rosie, it's just... I have clients, schedules. I put over twenty thousand miles on my rig last year.

ROSIE

And not one of them in the name of friendship I bet.

Rosie wanders to a shelf, looks at a photo of teen Mojo and Rosie standing on galloping horses, all smiles, braid and curls flying. The caption:

"THE SHOOTING STARS - MONTANA STATE FAIR 1980"

She wipes dust from a stylish award next to the photo:
 "ROSIE MCCALLUM - AWTO TRAVEL WRITER OF THE YEAR 2016."

MOJO

Well, got to get going. I have --

ROSIE

Mojo, wait. Please. I'm sending you something, something important. But, I... I'll just call back after it arrives.

MOJO

What 'something'? What could I possibly need --

ROSIE

Maybe it's something I need. Look. I'm calling back in a few days. After it gets there.

Rosie ends the call.

Mojo stares at the blank phone screen. HAIL pounds the truck.

INT. ROSIE'S OFFICE - DAY

ROSIE

(mutters at phone)
 Stubborn as always.

A KNOCK. Ranch hand TOBY GRANGER (34) hovers in the doorway. His shirt's tucked in, but sweat rings and a three-day beard give him a feral look.

TOBY

Miz McCallum? They're all corralled n' fed.

ROSIE

I'm working. Didn't Elliot tell you about just leaving a note?

Toby looks blank, turns his grimy ball cap in his hands.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

On the hall table. Wait, uh...

She snaps her fingers, tries to recall his name.

TOBY

It's Toby, Miz.

ROSIE

Yes, Toby. When's Elliot back?

TOBY

Coupla days, I guess. Said he'd miss the sale. Vern's comin' at six to load 'em up and --

ROSIE

(returns to her desk)

A note please. I'm on a deadline...

Toby turns away, slaps his cap back on his head.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A cardboard box sits on the hall table, some folded maps beside it. Toby pokes around for a pad and pen.

In the box, an engraved cremation urn peeks from Styrofoam peanuts. Toby peers at the name -- "Benjamin O. McCallum."

He scans the maps, stops at one titled "WOLFTOOTH WILDERNESS" with "For Rosie's SPECIAL quest" scrawled on it.

The hand-drawn one next to it resembles a map to buried treasure -- red arrows, X's, scribbled directions. He peers closely, sneaks out his phone for a photo.

A chair SCRAPES in Rosie's office. Startled, Toby retreats out the front door without snapping a pic.

Rosie emerges, goes to the hall table. Frowns -- no note. She puts the maps in with the urn, carries the box to her office.

She drops in a letter marked "Mojo", preps the box to ship.

PRE-LAP - A MUSICAL THRUM FADES IN, VIBRATES, LINGERS...

EXT. MCCALLUM RANCH - LATER

The THRUM continues -- haunting, like a sustained note from a ghostly harp. It's the WIND vibrating a waist-high rope stretched from Rosie's back porch to a distant chicken coop.

Rosie's boots jut over the bottom step, hesitate. With a deep breath, she grasps the rope, steps off the porch.

She walks, tentative at first. Never losing contact with the rope, she makes her way past idle equipment, tired fences -- all the way to her chicken coop.

INT. CHICKEN COOP - CONTINUOUS

Rosie slips into the coop. A dozen hens CLUCK in greeting.

ROSIE
Hey girls. Whatcha got for us?

One hen flaps up onto Rosie's shoulder.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
Awww, Izzy. They been ganging up on
you again? No respect for
seniority.

Rosie peers with concern at a bloody spot on the bird.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
I'll put you over in the south pen
with some new BFFs. Never too late
to live your best life, right?

She shrugs the hen off gently, goes about her chores.

LATER

Rosie emerges from the coop. One hand on the rope, the other
cradles eggs in her shirt.

After a few steps, she frowns in concentration. She releases
the rope, her breathing quickens. She mumbles as she walks.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
One thousand one, one thousand two,
one thousand three...

She moves along the rope, not touching it. At one thousand
five, a SCREECH from above. An egg slips out, hits the ground
with a wet crunch.

She grabs the rope and peers up to see a hawk circling.

A hawk's-eye view of the ranch reveals an odd pattern of
ropes radiating outward from the back porch to every
outbuilding -- hay barn, shop, even her garden.

A whole network to get Rosie from one place to another.

INT. MCCALLUM HOUSE - DAY

Sunrise. Rosie watches Toby from a window. On horseback, he
herds BAWLING Angus from a corral into a cattle hauler. Rosie
shuffles to her office, slumps at her desk. She sees her
wedding photo, slumps lower.

Eyes on Ben's fresh, hopeful face, she types "SORRY" onto her laptop's waiting page.

INT./EXT. MCCALLUM RANCH TRUCK - DAY

COUNTRY MUSIC drifts from a dusty inbound pickup. Stock dog Zip rides the hay bales in back like a world class surfer.

Head ranch hand ELLIOT BINGHAM (45), the epitome of quiet, work-hardened authenticity in faded denim, stops at the gate.

A "FOR SALE" sign swings drunkenly from one nail. Real estate flyers fill a plastic box below.

Elliot eyes it disapprovingly, climbs out with hammer and nails to fix it. Job done, he slips tobacco into his cheek.

Dull POPS echo in the distance -- sounds of target shooting. Elliot cocks his head to listen, gets back in the truck.

EXT. 'BACK FORTY' - MOMENTS LATER

Elliot ambles from the truck toward Toby. He moves with a limp, as if an injury never healed right. But he manages.

His back to Elliot, Toby PLINKS away at beer cans on hay bales. He looks at home with a gun.

ELLIOT

Yo, Toby!

Toby lowers the pistol, grins at Elliot's approach.

TOBY

Hey, man. The crazy widow know you're back yet?

ELLIOT

Aww, she's okay, just --

TOBY

Batshit crazy, right?

Elliot spits a graceful arc of tobacco juice.

ELLIOT

Quirky.

TOBY

Quirky? Quirky is likin' warm beer or not wearin' socks. I'm telling you, she's batshit.

ELLIOT
She's a writer. Fancy travel
magazines, books.

TOBY
Travel writer? She can't leave the
house -- like a normal person,
anyway. Man...

Toby shakes his head and wipes the gun with his shirt.

TOBY (CONT'D)
Hey, her ol' man wasn't exactly
normal either, right? Didn't he
bury his money n' shit?

ELLIOT
Well, he wasn't big on banks.
Always kinda wondered if he buried
his wad somewhere on the ranch.

Toby squints down his gunsights at the distant mountains.

TOBY
Or up there?

ELLIOT
I dunno. He used to pack into
Wolfteeth before the cancer made
him too weak to ride. Said it was
some kinda special. But...

Elliot's chew juice hits the dirt like a bullet.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
You been readin' too much about
that millionaire fella, hid that
gold in the Rockies n' wrote all
those clues. Caused a damn frenzy.

TOBY
I'm just sayin' it'd be easy. Just
leave the GPS coordinates for the
crazy widow.

ELLIOT
I told you, she's just quirky...
And Ben? Old school. Map man, all
the way. GPS was cheating. Besides,
she's not gonna go off and find it.

Toby ponders this, then squeezes off three more rounds, each
one a dead-center hit. He grins over his shoulder at Elliot.

TOBY
I can find a target.

Elliot narrows his eyes, slips his chew to the other cheek.

ELLIOT
Fixin' fence in the morning. Early.

He heads back to the ranch truck. Toby resumes his SHOOTING.

EXT. MOJO'S PLACE - NIGHT

Mojo sits on the steps of her old double-wide. She holds an icy beer to her bandaged forehead and stares into her hat at the young man with the smiling eyes that never look away.

Across the parking lot, her sleek Ranchland Equine Clinic is surrounded by fields and corrals dotted with a few horses.

She rises, drinks deep. Then heads for the clinic, leaving the hat behind.

INT. EQUINE CLINIC - MOMENTS LATER

In a cozy foaling stall, Mojo checks over a mare and her new colt. All liquid eyes and wobbly legs, the colt nuzzles Mojo. She doesn't smile, just strokes his fuzzy mane.

BARN AISLE

Mojo holds up a small glass vial, draws some of its liquid into a syringe. She looks at the horses in the stall, then eases down onto a straw bale outside their door.

She finds a spot just below a bandaid in the crook of her elbow. And guides the needle in.

Her eyes close, her voice becomes a sigh.

MOJO
(to the mare behind her)
You're a good momma.

Mojo slumps lower. The vial escapes her pocket. It rolls slowly to a stop, "Ketamine" visible on the label.

INT. EQUINE CLINIC - DAY

BARN AISLE

Mojo lies motionless on the floor.

WHUMP! Outside, something thumps against the closed barn doors, followed by the RUMBLE of a truck leaving.

Mojo's eyes flutter open. Close. Then fly open.

MOJO

Ssshit.

She looks at her watch, claws her way upright, tries to come alive. She stumbles to the barn doors, wrestles one open.

And blinks in the sun at a UPS box at her feet.

INT. MOJO'S PLACE - LATER

Mojo sits in her home office amid years of careless filing.

She stares at the open UPS box on the floor, the letter marked "Mojo" open in her hand. The Wolftooth Wilderness map and the hand-drawn one are strewn around.

She kicks numbly at the box. Packing peanuts scatter. Ben's cremation urn tumbles out.

Mojo's phone RINGS. She sets the letter aside.

MOJO

Doctor Johansen... (listens)...
And when did her water break?

Mojo stands, looks at her watch.

MOJO (CONT'D)

I'm on my way. Try to keep her on
her feet, see if you can reach in
and feel the other foot...

Mojo hurries from her office.

INT. MOJO'S PLACE - NIGHT

Mojo drags herself inside. She hangs up her hat, pauses at the hall mirror. Hollow, raccoon eyes stare back.

She sniffs her hand, her sleeve, grimaces at the horse grime she wears from her night working on a barn floor.

She walks to the fridge, trips over a crusty pizza box on the floor. She stops, takes stock of the room -- empty beer bottles, decaying take-out, scattered laundry.

A grim sigh and she gets to work.

Plucking empties off the coffee table, she uncovers a beer-stained page that reads: "WebMD KIDNEY CANCER SYMPTOMS."

She pauses over it, then resumes tidying.

A few passes later she sets a box on a table. It's taped for shipping with a Post-it note on it that says "Send to CeCe."

Mojo pulls out her folding knife, hesitates, then slices through the shipping tape. She retrieves a framed photo -- a younger Mojo, her arm around a willowy brunette and the teenage version of the young man in her hat.

She touches the smiling faces, her own unreadable. Then closes it into a drawer and goes back to work.

LATER

Mojo lies on her bed in the dark, stares at the ceiling. She gives up, sits on the edge of the bed, her face lit by the cold glow of a nightlight.

INT. EQUINE CLINIC - NIGHT

PROCEDURE ROOM

A cold glow continues on Mojo's face -- now from an open fridge in a darkened room lined with stainless steel counters, sinks, cabinets.

She removes a familiar vial, leaves the fridge open. In its light she pulls a needle and syringe from a drawer.

Mojo loads the syringe with swift efficiency. Her phone RINGS and vibrates in her back pocket. Startled, she drops the glass vial -- SMASH -- onto the floor.

She fumbles for the phone one-handed, inadvertently hits 'speaker'. Rosie's voice fills the room.

ROSIE (V.O.)
You gonna do it?

Mojo freezes in alarm, looks from the syringe to the phone, then around the shadowy room as if the walls have eyes.

ROSIE (V.O.)
Well?... Mojo?

Mojo sits, sets aside the syringe, pulls herself together.

MOJO
You know what time it is?

ROSIE (V.O.)
What, you sleep at night now?

MOJO
Rosie, what do you want from me?

INT. MCCALLUM HOUSE - SAME TIME

Rosie looks at the stars out her living room window.

INTERCUT - PROCEDURE ROOM/ROSIE'S HOUSE

ROSIE
Didn't you read the letter? I owe
Ben his final resting place. I need-

MOJO
You owe him, I don't. Just use his
pack string and -- you still have
Elliot?

ROSIE
Yeah, but --

MOJO
Then you and Elliot head into
Wolftooth and get it done. Or hell,
just fertilize the winter pasture
with him. Ben'll never know.

ROSIE
I'll know. He deserves better... he
was a good man.

Mojo's face says Rosie's right.

ROSIE (CONT'D)
Is it CeCe? She's not okay with you
going?

MOJO
No. It's not CeCe.

Rosie sinks into her couch, pulls a blanket around her.

ROSIE
Mojo, I couldn't pull out of it. I
can still barely leave the house. I
have this... this system just so I
can step off the porch.

She chokes up.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Ben thought I'd get better,
believed I could do it. How was I
supposed to tell him --

MOJO

Isn't Ben the one person who'd
understand?

ROSIE

I thought you would understand --

MOJO

Look, Rosie, you've had like a year
to figure this out --

ROSIE

It's only eight months, tomorrow.

MOJO

It's just... I've got my own...
things. I'm trying to --

ROSIE

Well, give CeCe my respect for
being a damn good writer... and
sympathy for living with you.

Rosie hangs up, sniffing. Snugs her blanket closer.

PROCEDURE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mojo pockets her phone with a sigh. She fetches a broom to
clean up. But sets it aside and goes for the syringe.

She sinks down by the fridge, examines her arm in its light.
The needle finds its target. She nudges the fridge door
closed. All goes dark.

PRE-LAP - BLACKNESS - A FLY BUZZES LAZILY SOMEWHERE.

INT./EXT. TOBY'S BUNKHOUSE - MCCALLUM RANCH - DAY

Blackness gives way to dawn silhouetting a fly on the grimy
window. Toby's form emerges in the gloom.

He sprawls on a bunk, boots still on, jeans at half-mast. The
fly lands near his mouth. He snorts, slaps at it, knocks a
beer can off his bunk to join other empties on the floor.

A KNOCK rattles the door.

ELLIOT (O.S.)

Toby. Let's go. Coffee's on the steps.

Toby pries his eyes open, grunts to a sitting position.

Elliot pops his head in, eyes Toby with no mercy.

TOBY

(rubs his eyes)

Yeah, yeah... I'll catch up.

ELLIOT

Bring extra wire. I'm headin' out.

MOMENTS LATER - Elliot's ATV WHINES off.

Toby shuffles to a horse trough out front. He slops some water on his hangover, shudders at the cold. Goes for the mug of joe on the steps.

A rhythmic WHACKING comes from behind Rosie's house.

He looks toward the sound, gets an occasional glimpse of Rosie working the back garden with a hoe.

He watches her. Swigs his coffee, considering. Then scans around -- he's alone.

He beelines it to the house.

INT. MCCALLUM HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rosie's THUMP, THUMP continues from the back of the house. Toby eases the front door open, listens warily. He creeps down the hall, peeks in a few doors, finds

BEN MCCALLUM'S OFFICE

and slips in. He looks around the leather and wood decor, heads for an open letter on the desk.

INSERT - THE LETTER

"Rosie Mae, you always were the best part of my life..."

Toby rubs his bloodshot eyes, tries to focus.

"... My last wish is for you to release me in that special place. You'll find it. You always were good with maps. And, Rosie, I left something there for you. In finding it, may you find yourself, and may that treasure carry you through the rest of your years.

It's been a great ride. See you down the trail.

Love you always,

Ben"

Toby tugs at his chin, starts to search the room. He pauses, listens... then freezes -- Rosie's HOEING has stopped. He hurries into the hall and out the front door.

EXT. MCCALLUM RANCH - DAY

Loaded with tools and rolls of barbed wire, two ATVs sit on a grassy slope. Zip lies in their shade. Nearby, Elliot and Toby wrestle with the broken fence.

Toby's phone BUZZES. Elliot looks annoyed.

ELLIOT

How the hell you get service here?

Toby walks off, hisses into his phone.

TOBY

Look, I'm working.
(frustrated sigh)
I told you, I'll send something
later this week.

He bristles. Ravens cry overhead, scolding.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Yeah, I know. Always late. But I
might have a line on somethin'. I'd
be able to get caught up, back
payments n' everything... no, I
don't know when... You just gotta --

Toby stabs the sod with the toe of his boot.

TOBY (CONT'D)

No, no, don't put her on. I gotta --

He melts, his face flushes with helpless joy.

TOBY (CONT'D)

Hey, sweetheart. How's my Emmie?
... Yeah? You like Daddy's present?
Four candles! What a big -- Emmie?
Emma?

Toby scowls at the dropped call, trudges back to Elliot. They work in sweaty silence for a while.

ELLIOT

You got something else lined up?
'Cause if you're leaving, I need
notice.

TOBY

What? Oh. Nah, might be -- it's
just somethin' for extra cash. A
one time kinda thing. Maybe.

Elliot pauses.

ELLIOT

Extra cash is always good.

Then resumes pulling on the fence with Toby.

EXT. MOJO'S PLACE - NIGHT

Mojo sits on her steps, a beer at her side. She fidgets with
something on her truck key ring -- a silver medal embossed
with a shooting star, "1st Place" engraved on the back.

She gazes out at the night sky. A shooting star arcs briefly.

With a sardonic smile, Mojo toasts it with her beer. She
ponders the medal for a moment, then makes a call.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Yes.

MOJO

I'll do it.

ROSIE (V.O.)

Wh... what? Oh! You will? Oh, Mojo,
I knew you'd --

MOJO

My way.

ROSIE (V.O.)

What does... Okay, okay, your way --
whatever way -- is fine. I promise.

MOJO

You promise, and I'll deliver Ben
his last wish.

LATER

Mojo leans on her fence, watches three horses and a mule
munch their hay.

MOJO (CONT'D)

You guys up for an adventure?
Chevy? How 'bout you?

The mule flicks her an ear, goes back to eating.

MOJO (CONT'D)

Yeah, not what I had in mind
either. But guess we'll make it
work.