

MOUNTAIN PRESS

Pilot Episode

Written by

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INT. AIRPLANE (PARKED) - DAY

TAYLOR MITCHELL, early-30s, stands from her first class seat. She's lean, thick brown hair in a messy bun. Dressed like a fashion-conscious lumber jack. She slings a small LEATHER SATCHEL over her shoulder.

As she exits, a FLIGHT ATTENDANT--

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Have a nice day Miss Mitchell.

Taylor smiles, gives a polite nod and exits the plane into--

INT. SALT LAKE CITY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Taylor walks through a concourse toward baggage claim.

LOUDSPEAKER
Welcome to Salt Lake City
International Airport.

She passes a CONCOURSE BOOKSHOP. We focus past her into the shop and land on a displayed book. Clearly fantasy, called: SWORDS & MAGIC by TAYLOR MITCHELL.

EXT. CONGRESS, IDAHO - AFTERNOON

The summer sun floats down on this TINY MOUNTAIN TOWN.

Taylor rolls her shiny hybrid rental car past a worn sign: WELCOME TO CONGRESS, IDAHO.

The storefronts are old, paint flaked off here, a bit of rust there.

Trucks and SUVs dominate the streets. The hybrid sticks out as it moves down Main Street. It pulls into the parking lot of the COTTONTAIL INN.

INT. COTTONTAIL INN - LATE AFTERNOON

There is a cozy, wooden lodge feel here but like the rest of town, its heyday has past.

Taylor hauls her suitcase and leather satchel up to the check-in desk staffed by--

MACO, a large Samoan, mid-50s, wearing a short-sleeved button down. A talker, not much of a listener.

MACO
Welcome to the Cottontail.

Behind Maco, the wall is slathered in post-cards from all over the country. A jumbled mess covering every square inch.

TAYLOR
Hi. I would like a room.

MACO
For one?

TAYLOR
Yes, please.

MACO
And, how long?

TAYLOR
Just a couple of days.

Maco taps away on keyboard hooked to an antiquated computer.

MACO
Of course. I'm Maco, the owner. Like the shark. My dad loved sharks. Let's see here, a couple of days. Okay. ID and credit card?

TAYLOR
Sure.

She fishes them out of her pocketbook.

MACO
You're going to love Congress. Have you been here before?

TAYLOR
Yeah, I--

MACO
Do you hunt? It's pheasant season right now.

TAYLOR
No, not really. I--

Taylor hands her cards to Maco, who doesn't look at them.

MACO
That's all right. You like coffee? I make it fresh all day, every day.

He points to a small table with a drip coffee maker, cups and condiments. Maco's pride contribution to the Inn.

MACO (cont'd)

It's from my cousin. He owns a little plantation on Kauai. Best beans on the islands. Hmmmm, maybe the Mel Gibson suite.

TAYLOR

Mel Gibson?

MACO

He stayed here... once. I asked him to send a post card though.

TAYLOR

Did he?

MACO

Nah. But I ask everyone. Did you drive up from Salt Lake?

TAYLOR

Yeah, flew into there.

MACO

Bit of a haul but it is the closest. Where'd you come in from?

TAYLOR

New York.

MACO

City?

Taylor nods yes. This process is wearing on her a bit.

MACO (cont'd)

Whew. That is big time lady. Haven't got a card from there yet.

Maco finally looks down at Taylor's license.

MACO (cont'd)

Taylor Mitchell. Oh, Caleb's sister.

Beat.

MACO (cont'd)
And Sam's girl.

TAYLOR
Yes.

MACO
I'm very sorry for your loss.

OPENING CREDITS.

INT. COTTONTAIL INN - CONTINUOUS

Still at the desk.

MACO

Your dad meant a whole lot to this town. Definitely the Mel Gibson suite then. Hey, I didn't see you at the service, did I?

TAYLOR

No, I couldn't make it.

INT. COTTONTAIL INN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Taylor opens the door to the Mel Gibson suite. It says so on the door.

She pulls her luggage into the two room suite. It's nice but--

All of the art in the room is framed Mel Gibson movie posters. A giant *Braveheart* hangs above the headboard.

She drops her suitcase and stares at it as Mel stares back, giant sword in hand.

TAYLOR

Huh.

Taylor plops down on the bed and pulls out a THIN, WORN NEWSPAPER from her leather satchel. The banner reads: MOUNTAIN PRESS.

She opens it to the first inside page.

Close On: An Editor's column called **Hindsight by Sam Mitchell** and a photo of a late-20s Sam from the backside, on his motorcycle, wearing nothing but boots and a helmet.

Taylor lets out a heavy sigh, refolds the paper then falls backward onto the bed.

EXT. TOWN TRIANGLE - EVENING

Taylor strolls through this tree-filled park. Passing a statue of some long dead mountain man.

Through the trees in the Triangle a dimly lit sign struggles to shine through the setting sun.

Taylor closes in on the building and the sign above comes into focus: MOUNTAIN PRESS.

She moves to the door. Stops. Backs away. Moves to the door. Turns and walks again. Spins back to the door, takes a couple steps. And stops.

TAYLOR
Ugh. Not tonight.

Taylor looks toward the point of the town triangle to: THE STOCK EXCHANGE SALOON.

INT. STOCK EXCHANGE SALOON - MOMENTS LATER

A former cattle depot, it's rustic with sawdust on the floors. And it's very busy.

At the bar. The bartender slides a beer between shoulders to Taylor as--

NATE (O.S.)
Taylor. Taylor!

He CRASHES into her. A monster hug sloshes her beer.

NATE NELSON. He's in his late-20s. Blonde, loves whiskey. He un-clenches her.

TAYLOR
Nate?

NATE
Yes. You're here. That's so great.

He orders over Taylor.

NATE (cont'd)
Whiskey please. Two of 'em. When did you get in?

TAYLOR
This afternoon.

NATE
You look fantastic! You were so chubby the last time I saw you.

TAYLOR
Ah, come on. I was like ten.

Their shots arrive. They pound them back.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
How's Nadine?

NATE
Still misses your dad a bunch. (beat)
And still really mad you didn't make
it to the memorial.

TAYLOR
I'm sorry. I--

NATE
Don't worry about it.

TAYLOR
Sooooo, what do you do? What are you
up to?

NATE
I am a nurse down at Bear Lake
Memorial. I live here, still. It's
not bad. Nothing like New York I bet.

INT. TAYLOR'S BROOKLYN CONDO - EVENING [FLASHBACK]

Taylor sits on the edge of her sofa with DAISY, mid-20s,
really into yoga apparel.

Taylor sips whiskey out of a rocks glass. Daisy leans in and
wraps her arms around her.

DAISY
When is the service?

TAYLOR
Thursday.

Daisy runs a hand softly over Taylor's cheek.

DAISY
Are you going?

Taylor takes another sip.

TAYLOR
I don't know.

DAISY
I'm so sorry.

Daisy pulls Taylor in for a loving kiss.

DAISY (cont'd)
 But, it's not like you guys were
 close.

Taylor pulls out of Daisy's embrace, stands, and as she
 walks out--

TAYLOR
 Thanks, Daisy.

BACK TO:

INT. STOCK EXCHANGE SALOON - PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

Taylor calls for another round--

TAYLOR
 Two more, please. Brooklyn is... It's
 nice to get away for a while.

NATE
 Well, I'm glad you're here. Did he
 leave you the paper?

TAYLOR
 Yes, he did.

NATE
 Thought he might. Are you going to
 start printing again? The town misses
 it. Even if it was just once a week.

Their drinks arrive.

NATE (cont'd)
 (yelling)
 Everyone listen up.

The bar settles and Nate stands up on the rung of a stool.

NATE (cont'd)
 This here is Taylor Mitchell. Sam's
 daughter. She's here to get the
 Mountain Press up and running again.

The crowd CHEERS. Nate gives her another big hug.

TAYLOR
 No, Nate, I can't run a paper. I came
 to sell it.

NATE

Nah, you're not gonna sell.

And then the shots start coming for "Sam's little girl."

MALE TOWNSPERSON

Might have noticed the town's a little depressed. Your daddy's paper sure help lift folks up.

TAYLOR

I'm glad it could help.

He hands Taylor a shot and they toss 'em back.

FEMALE TOWNSPERSON

Always read Sam's Hindsight Column first thing. You going to pose for the same picture?

TAYLOR

I'm not much of a motorcycle gal.

Another shot.

INT. STOCK EXCHANGE SALOON - LATER

Taylor is getting sloppy. Nate keeps pace and cheers her on.

TAYLOR

(to the whole bar)

To my dad.

She takes a big swig of beer. Some of it hits her mouth but the rest sloshes down her shirt.

EXT. STOCK EXCHANGE SALOON - NIGHT

Taylor and Nate stand out front. Both are pretty wrecked. Taylor, by far the worse.

NATE

Where are you staying?

TAYLOR

Maco's Gibsontail.

NATE

Lovely. You can't drive.

TAYLOR
I walked. Let's get a Lyft.

NATE
Lyft?

TAYLOR
Or an Uber. Though I prefer Lyft.

NATE
We don't have those. I'll walk you
back.

INT. MEL GIBSON SUITE - DAWN

Taylor cracks an eye open. She's naked in bed. A hand
caresses her back.

NATE (O.C.)
Morning sunshine.

He's snuggled up next to her, just as naked.

TAYLOR
Oh no.

Taylor is up and out of bed in a flash--

TAYLOR (cont'd)
No no no. Fuck. Fuck.

NATE
Yeah.

TAYLOR
You're my--

NATE
Step brother. Totally different
parents. No relation.

TAYLOR
This is, oh, this is super wrong.

She paces around the room. Their clothes are strewn
everywhere.

NATE
Maybe a little--

Nate gets up and flings open the curtains. The morning sun
showers his naked body. He stretches in its warmth.

TAYLOR
A little-- No! No!

She jumps in front of him and slams the curtains shut.

NATE
C'mon, who doesn't like a little
sunshine in the morning?

TAYLOR
What if someone saw you?

NATE
Who's going to see me this time of--

RING RING. RING RING. Taylor answers the room phone.

TAYLOR
Hello?

MACO (O.S.)
Good morning Taylor.

INTERCUT between Taylor and Maco at the front desk.

MACO
I saw your curtains were open.

TAYLOR
What?

MACO
You're awake right? So I thought I'd
let you know there's fresh coffee in
the lobby.

TAYLOR
You called to tell me there's fresh
coffee?

MACO
Sure. Like a wake up call but better
because, you know, there's coffee.

TAYLOR
Did I leave a wake up call?

MACO
No. But I saw that you were up.

TAYLOR
You saw?

She's pointing wildly at Nate. He's back on the bed, calm.

MACO

Your curtains were open for a sec.
Then you closed them really fast.
You've got to be gentle with those.

TAYLOR

So you saw *me*?

MACO

Yeah. I don't want to judge but most
folks here put on some clothes before
they stand in the window.

TAYLOR

Yes. Uh, so sorry. Won't happen
again. Thanks for the call. Be down
in a bit. Gotta go.

CLICK.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Oh god.

She sits next to him on the bed.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

What if, say, anyone in town finds
out?

NATE

Maco didn't see me so no one knows.
Who are you going to tell?

TAYLOR

No one. No way.

NATE

And I'm not telling. Just a one time
accident.

TAYLOR

One time. Oh shit, Daisy.

NATE

You're way past monogamy at this
point. So maybe...

He leans in and kisses her neck.

TAYLOR
(agreeable)
Oh, damn me.

She pulls him down onto the bed.

INT. MEL GIBSON SUITE - LATER

Taylor and Nate are getting dressed, both freshly showered.

NATE
You know, we should be proud of
ourselves.

He looks around the room at the Mel Gibson posters.

NATE (cont'd)
It's amazing anything sexual could
happen in this room.

Beat.

NATE (cont'd)
When was the last time you saw Caleb?

TAYLOR
His wedding, I guess.

NATE
You haven't met the boys then?

TAYLOR
No.

NATE
You suck at family.

TAYLOR
Yeah.

They're dressed now. He picks up her worn copy of Mountain Press.

NATE
I don't remember this issue.

TAYLOR
His column is about the day I was
born.

NATE
Oh Taylor--

He gives her a big hug.

TAYLOR

Thanks.

Their embrace ends and--

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Wait. Maco saw me naked. We can't go down together.

NATE

It's okay, I've known him for years.

Taylor gives him a pleading look.

NATE (cont'd)

Fine. I'll take the fire exit. Meet you in the parking lot.

INT. COTTONTAIL INN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Sunglasses on, Taylor moves down the stairs to the lobby, hurrying toward the front door.

MACO

Taylor. Taylor. Hey, don't forget your coffee.

TAYLOR

Oh, right.

She stops at Maco's coffee table. Pours a cup to go. Takes a sip. At best, it's not good.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Wow. Okay. Well, thank you.

EXT. COTTONTAIL INN - CONTINUOUS

Taylor reaches her Hybrid in the parking lot. As she's unlocking it, Nate sneaks out from the side of the inn and scurries across to her.

TAYLOR

Subtle.

They get in.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Want some?

She holds up the coffee.

NATE
Maco's?

TAYLOR
Yeah.

NATE
Nope.

INT./EXT. THE HYBRID - A SHORT BIT LATER

Taylor pulls into the Stock Exchange parking lot.

NATE
Good luck with Caleb--

He leans over to kiss her--

TAYLOR
Hey! Ground rules.

NATE
I'll remind you we set those in the
shower.

He settles for a kiss on her cheek.

TAYLOR
Thanks.

She gets out and walks toward her car.

EXT. TOWN TRIANGLE - CONTINUOUS

Taylor wheels around the Town Triangle, zips past Mountain
Press and stops--

INT./EXT. THE HYBRID - SAME

She stares up at the roof of car--

TAYLOR
Why not.

Then puts it in reverse and backs up to the front doors of
the paper.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - A MINUTE LATER

Taylor digs a key out of an outlet box on the front then unlocks the door... to *her* newspaper.

INT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - CONTINUOUS

As Taylor walks through the door it fades to:

INT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Taylor is a girl, about 7. She runs through the small lobby filled with 70s and 80s era furniture. A comfy chair sits in one corner.

Little Taylor pushes open the door at the back of the lobby and races onto the work floor.

Work tables with newspaper layouts. A couple electric typewriters and a rotary phone to one side.

TAYLOR

Papa? Papa?

She hurries on to the back of the floor, passing a few filing cabinets, the bathroom, then slams open the back door of the building.

Taylor peeks her head around. Nope, not out here.

She races back inside to a closed door with a red light beaming above the door. The DARKROOM.

Taylor stares up at the light. SIGH. She knows what that means.

She heaves herself up onto a stool by a layout table. Her hands move bits of paper around and she giggles until--

SAM (O.S.)

Taylor?

SAM MITCHELL, early-30s, scruffy haired, clean-shaven, glasses, stands in the darkroom doorway. His button-down shirt and slacks are wrinkled, ill-fitting.

SAM

No no no. What are doing?

He hurries over to see Taylor's damage.

TAYLOR
Look Papa, it's me.

The bits of news articles are arranged into a cubist-like stick figure.

SAM
Never, ever mess around with the layouts. Go read a book.

TAYLOR
Sorry.

BACK IN THE LOBBY. Taylor climbs into the corner chair and picks up a children's book. With a sullen pout, she begins to read.

- ANOTHER DAY. Taylor pulls the ribbon out of a typewriter cassette and stretches it across the room.

SAM
Taylor! Stop that. Go wash your hands and read a book.

- AND ON ANOTHER. Taylor jams letters into a BLOCK STAMP. And now stands near the bathroom with the stamp and an ink pad hammering TAYLOR all over the wall.

SAM (cont'd)
Taylor!

TAYLOR
I know. Go read a book.

BACK TO THE PRESENT.

Taylor stands in the middle of the work floor. Same layout but with modern paper tech here and there.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
Yeah, I can't run a paper.

She moves toward the lobby, past the DARKROOM, the DOOR FLIES OPEN--

SLAM. THUD. She's driven into the ground by SHELLEY, mid-20s, on the chubby side, longish hair.

He has Taylor wrestled over and sits on her, fist ready to strike.

Taylor is stunned. And it's hard for her to breath, or talk.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Who the?

Shelley speaks softly, almost a mumble.

SHELLEY

How'd you get in?

Instead of a punch, Shelley KNOCKS on Taylor's forehead.

TAYLOR

Ow. Stop that. I used the key.

SHELLEY

How do you know about the key?

Another KNOCK, KNOCK to the forehead.

TAYLOR

Stop already. Most people in town probably know about the key. Who are you?

SHELLEY

Shelley.

TAYLOR

Shelley, I'm Taylor. Mitchell.

Shelley eases off Taylor's chest and sits next to her on the floor.

SHELLEY

Oh, I read your books. Have you read Game of Thrones?

TAYLOR

Yes. Not all fantasy books have to be Game of Thrones.

SHELLEY

I guess that's true. Why are you here? You never come here.

TAYLOR

Sam left the paper to me. Didn't they tell you?

Shelley helps Taylor to her feet.

SHELLEY

No, but I haven't really seen anyone since the, hey, you weren't at the--

TAYLOR
I know. I couldn't make it.

Taylor walks through the work floor inspecting the tables and the couple computer work stations. Then moves on.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
You worked for Sam?

Taylor scans the filing cabinets. Many more of them now, all dated: starting in the late 1970s up to today.

SHELLEY
For a couple of years now. I started right after college. He needed help making the paper digital.

TAYLOR
And why are you here now?

Taylor moves on to the back. Around the corner near the bathroom, her name still stamped all over the wall.

SHELLEY
It's my job.

Taylor stops and turns to Shelley.

TAYLOR
So Caleb didn't tell you anything?

SHELLEY
He stopped in but I hid.

TAYLOR
Because?

SHELLEY
I'm not good with people.

TAYLOR
I see. So you've been coming to work even though he's gone?

Taylor stops in front of Sam's OFFICE door. She stares at it for a moment.

SHELLEY (O.C.)

Yeah. I thought I could do it on my own. But the first couple weeks I was just really sad and then I didn't know how to get started.

Taylor reaches for the handle but stops.

SHELLEY (O.C.) (cont'd)

He always helped me out, gave me directions. I sure miss him.

Taylor can't do it. She pulls her hand back and turns to Shelley.

TAYLOR

He was beloved by many, I guess. Listen, I need some decent coffee--

SHELLEY

I bet. You look terrible. Try the Mud Hut.

TAYLOR

Thanks. And Thanks. Maybe this afternoon we can talk more about what's going to happen with the paper?

SHELLEY

Okay Miss Mitchell.

TAYLOR

Call me Taylor.

SHELLEY

Okay. Can I get paid then? For the last month. I have all my time cards.

TAYLOR

Uh, sure. Do you know how to do that?

SHELLEY

Yes.

TAYLOR

So, you could've paid yourself?

SHELLEY

No. That would be stealing.

EXT. MUD HUT - MOMENTS LATER

Establishing: It's a shoddy looking, shack like structure. Taylor's car rolls into a parking spot.

INT. TAYLOR'S HYBRID - A MINUTE LATER

Taylor taps her phone anxiously against her leg then--

Close On: Phone. A new, blank text message to Daisy. The cursor flashes.

Back on Taylor as she begins typing and talking to herself.

TAYLOR

Hi Daisy. Miss you. I think. Have you watered the plants? Things are good here. Got drunk and had sex with my step-brother. No, that thing is totally cool here. Hope you don't mind.

She looks down at the message and hits CANCEL.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Maybe just think on that for a while.

INT. MUD HUT - A MOMENT LATER

It is cozy compared to the outside of the structure and seats about a dozen.

At a corner table sits JANEY ALVAREZ. Early-30s, Mexican American, a Fish & Game Ranger in uniform. She sips on a coffee, doodling on her phone. A call comes in for her--

JANEY

Alvarez.

But Taylor walks in and we jump to her. She scans the detailed menu boards. This could be Nirvana.

The owner, ANDY NISHIMURA, late-20s, of Japanese descent, staffs the counter.

ANDY

What can I get for you?

TAYLOR

A large coffee to go with... (big sigh of relief) almond milk.

As Andy gets Taylor her drink--

TAYLOR (cont'd)
Mmmm, and a blueberry muffin, please.

ANDY
You got it.

Taylor pays for her coffee now. Andy notices her name on the card.

ANDY (cont'd)
Sam's daughter?

TAYLOR
Yes. Please don't bring up the service.

ANDY
What happened? I was out of town.

TAYLOR
You and me both.

She takes a first sip.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
God damn, this good.

Janey has finished her call and walks toward the door.

Taylor hits the door at the same time. They both reach for the handle.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
No, sorry, after you.

JANEY
No, no, go ahead.

TAYLOR
Just--

Taylor opens the door and moves aside for her to leave.

JANEY
Thanks.

TAYLOR
You bet.

EXT. MUD HUT - CONTINUOUS

Taylor follows her out and they cross to their vehicles.
Janey's, a Fish & Game SUV.

INT./EXT. THE HYBRID - A MINUTE LATER

Taylor waits to turn out of the lot. Janey pulls up behind.
And then turns the same direction as her.

Janey follows her down Main...

And tails behind as she makes a right...

Then a left.

Taylor notices in her mirror.

TAYLOR
Seriously?

Taylor pulls up in front of a house. Janey parks right
behind her.

EXT. CALEB'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Taylor gets out of her car. Janey is already out and closing
her door.

TAYLOR
Did I do something wrong?

JANEY
Nope.

TAYLOR
Why are you following me?

JANEY
I am not.

TAYLOR
You're here to see Caleb?

JANEY
I am.

Taylor reaches out to shake her hand.

TAYLOR
I'm Taylor, Caleb's sister.

Janey gives a short, firm hand shake.

JANEY
Janey Alvarez. Fish and Game. I know
who you are.

TAYLOR
You know?

JANEY
Yup.

Janey leaves it at that and sets off down Caleb's long
drive.

TAYLOR
You're, may I, I'm going that way
too.

Taylor catches up to her.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
So, not much of a talker?

JANEY
Not when I'm working.

They round the back corner and there is Caleb's heavy duty
pick-up truck and the garage, doors wide open.

TAYLOR
(freaked)
Gaaaaaagh.

In the garage is CALEB MITCHELL and a DEAD ANTELOPE hanging
from the rafters. He's about half-done skinning it.

Taylor turns away. She might barf. Janey isn't phased.

Caleb is in his early-30s, Taylor's younger brother. He's
raw, hardened. Sleeveless shirt. Lots of tattoos.

CALEB
Morning Janey.

He takes off his gloves and sets down his knife.

JANEY
Caleb.

CALEB
Sis.

He reaches to shake Taylor's hand. Taylor meets it while trying to avoid looking at the carcass.

TAYLOR

Hi buddy.

Theirs is not a warm reunion.

CALEB

(to Janey)

What can I do for you?

TAYLOR

Hide whatever that is, first of all.

JANEY

Pronghorns aren't in season Caleb.

CALEB

Hit it with my truck this morning.
Shame to waste a good animal.

JANEY

You know you've got to report those
to me.

TAYLOR

You hit it then took it home? To eat?

Janey walks over to inspect the hanging carcass. Taylor peeks at it again.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Ew.

JANEY

Is she always this queasy?

CALEB

Yup.

TAYLOR

Oh come on. You've got a, a dead
thing hanging there. All skinless.
Mostly.

Janey looks at the front of his truck. It's pristine.

JANEY

No marks on your truck.

Janey's moves back to the carcass and points to a hole behind a front shoulder--

JANEY (cont'd)
This a rifle shot here, Caleb?

She pulls out her ticket pad and begins writing one up.

CALEB
Ah hell Janey.

TAYLOR
You're a poacher?

CALEB
It's not poaching.

JANEY
It is poaching and the next time
it'll be more than just a ticket.

She tears it off and hands it to Caleb.

JANEY (cont'd)
You understand?

CALEB
Yeah.

JANEY
You two have a good day.

And with that, Janey heads back down the drive. Taylor and Caleb stand in silence until she's out of ear shot.

TAYLOR
Is it a money thing?

CALEB
Money's fine.

Beat.

CALEB (cont'd)
Heard you put on quite a show over at
the Stock Exchange.

TAYLOR
I may have exceeded my limits.

CALEB
Nate helped you back?

TAYLOR
He did. How do you know all of that?

CALEB

Small town.

TAYLOR

(stammering)

So you heard about me and him? Not me
and him you know but--

CALEB

Sounds like you could both use a
little drying out. Still, glad
someone in the family was there to
get you home.

TAYLOR

Yes, that was really nice of him.

INT. CALEB'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A pleasant, blue collar abode. A cross hanging here, a
framed bible quote there.

In the KITCHEN, Caleb hands Taylor a set of keys and an
8.5 x 11 envelope.

CALEB

You are now the official owner of
Mountain Press Incorporated.

Taylor stares at the envelope for a moment.

TAYLOR

There's no reason he couldn't have
left this to you.

CALEB

You're the writer. I spend all week
at the mill.

TAYLOR

It's not about that. You've spent
more time there than I ever did.

CALEB

You going to start printing again?

TAYLOR

I don't know, I was thinking--

JEBEDIAH, 7, and ABRAHAM, 5, tear into the room. They're
little copies of Caleb, towheaded, bright-eyed and LAUGHING.

CALEB
BOYS. House rules.

JEBEDIAH
Sorry Papa.

ABRAHAM
Sorry Papa.

They stand silent, almost at attention.

CALEB
This is your Aunt Taylor.

Taylor kneels down to greet them. They hold their stance.

TAYLOR
Hi guys.

Hesitantly, Jebediah steps forward and offers a hand.

JEBEDIAH
Nice to meet you Aunty.

Taylor is thrown by the formality but returns the handshake.

TAYLOR
Nice to meet you...

CALEB
Jebediah.

TAYLOR
Right. Hi there.

Abraham's hand is outstretched and waiting already.

ABRAHAM
Nice to meet you Aunty.

TAYLOR
You too Abe.

ABRAHAM
Abraham please.

TAYLOR
Abraham it is.

CALEB
Nice day out. You boys go soak up
some of that sunshine. Your mom will
call you for lunch.

JEBEDIAH
Yes Papa.

ABRAHAM
Yes Papa.

The boys race out of the kitchen as HANNAH, comes in, arms full of groceries. She's in her mid-30s, flannel shirt and a long skirt. An honest blend of biker girl and Mennonite.

Her warmth is a stark contrast to her husband--

HANNAH

Taylor, you made it.

She hurries the groceries to the counter. Taylor sets her new keys and envelope down nearby, ready to accept the big ol' hug Hannah brings in.

TAYLOR

Hi Hannah. It's so good to see you.

HANNAH

You too. It's been such a long time. The city treating you all right?

TAYLOR

It's nice to be back in the mountains.

HANNAH

Course it is. It's home. I read your last book. Such a beautiful world. A little violent for me but...

TAYLOR

Yes, they are. Sorry. Caleb?

CALEB

Hannah says they're good, I'll take her word.

TAYLOR

Just glad someone I know read them.

HANNAH

Whenever a new one came out, your dad would carry it all over town. Show anyone he ran into. I'm sure people tell you all time how much they're like Game of--

TAYLOR

Ah, ah. Please.

HANNAH

Well, I enjoyed them.

CALEB

She's a tough critic. Take that and run.

TAYLOR

Thank you Hannah. The boys are adorable. It's so nice to finally meet them.

HANNAH

Aren't they?

TAYLOR

When is little, what'd you decide on? Jehoshaphat, coming along?

Hannah's smile vanishes. Caleb puts an arm around her.

CALEB

It was Ethan.

(beat)

We lost him in the second trimester.

Fuck.

TAYLOR

Oh no. I'm sorry. I--

CALEB

You didn't know.

TAYLOR

Oh that terrible joke. I am so sorry. I, uh, I'm gonna go. I should check on Shelley.

Taylor bolts for the front door.

INT. THE HYBRID - A MINUTE LATER

Still parked in front of Caleb's house. Taylor sits inside, her head slumped on the steering wheel.

TAYLOR

Suck at family.

She pulls up her head, clicks on the car and slinks away.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - DAY

Taylor pulls on the front door. It's locked. She pats her pocket for the--

TAYLOR

Ugh, keys.

They're still at Caleb's. She grabs the spare from the outlet box, opens the door, and HALTS in the doorway.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Shelley?

It's quiet. Taylor cautiously walks through the lobby to the work floor.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

You here?

Another few steps.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

No need to hide any more buddy. Or tackle me.

The darkroom door creaks open. Shelley's head peeks out.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Were you going to jump me again?

SHELLEY

Not once I heard your voice.

TAYLOR

Thanks for that. So, how do we get you paid?

SHELLEY

The checks are in Mr. Mitchell's office, Miss Mitchell.

TAYLOR

Taylor is just fine Shelley. In the office?

Taylor walks to Sam's closed office door. She reaches for the handle-- and stops.

SHELLEY

Are you going to open it?

TAYLOR

Yeah, gimme a sec... You know, I've never, ever been in here?

SHELLEY

The knob sticks a little but we could probably oil that right up.

TAYLOR

That's not, yeah, okay.

Her hand grips the knob and, like ripping off a band-aid, she twists then pushes the door open.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Wood paneled. Florescent lights hum as Taylor looks around. A few of the Paper's front pages hang, framed, on the walls.

A smallish cross hangs alone on one wall.

A reasonably new computer and an old electric typewriter sit on a metal desk.

Taylor runs her hands over the typewriter. Shelley has crept into the doorway.

TAYLOR

He typed me letters on this. Easier than handwriting he said. Even with email he'd still send letters. Only thing he wrote was his name at the end, with that big swooping S.

Picture frames edge one side of the desk. Caleb and his family. One of Nate.

And an old one set in the mountains: Sam, his new wife Nadine, Taylor and Caleb as kids and their new stepbrother, Nate.

Taylor picks it up.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

This was the first time Caleb and I met them. Sam thought a nice camping trip would start things off on the right foot.

She sets the picture down.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
Let's find those checks.

INT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - LATER

The Lobby. Taylor sits in the same old chair she used to read in. Shelley leans against the desk.

TAYLOR
I want you to know that I understand
how important the paper is to you and
that--

JACKIE, pulls open the front door, interrupting. She's mid-30s, business casual.

JACKIE
Taylor?

Taylor pops up to greet her.

TAYLOR
Yes.

JACKIE
Jackie Evans. I'm here for the--

TAYLOR
Hi, yes, the appraisal.

Shelley is surprised by this.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
What do you need from me to get
started?

JACKIE
Nothing. Just need to verify all the
physical assets and we're good. Mind
if I start in the back?

TAYLOR
No, go ahead.

Jackie heads off to the work floor leaving Taylor and Shelley.

SHELLEY
But, but--

TAYLOR
I'm sorry Shelley.

Caleb strolls in. He's got Taylor's paperwork and keys.

CALEB
Left these on the counter.

He hands them over to Taylor.

CALEB (cont'd)
Hey, Shelley.

SHELLEY
Um, Mr. Caleb--

Shelley unloads in his quick-paced mumble--

SHELLEY (cont'd)
Did you know she is going to sell the paper? There's an appraiser here. And I won't have a job and I'll have to move. And my only friends are here in town. And I'll have to meet new friends and I'm not good at meeting people and Mr. Mitchell is the only person I've worked for and now--

CALEB
Whoa, whoa, hang on there.

Caleb puts an hand on his shoulder.

SHELLEY
And now. And now. And now--

CALEB
It's okay. You're okay. You're alright, Shelley.

Shelley's near fit subsides with Caleb's calming words.

CALEB (cont'd)
I thought you were going to start printing.

TAYLOR
No, I was going to tell you this morning but the boys came in and then I made that giant ass of myself. Super sorry about that by the way.

CALEB
It's fine.

TAYLOR
Hannah?

CALEB
She's okay. More worried about you
rushing off then anything.

TAYLOR
Tell her sorry for me. Again. Please

CALEB
Sure thing.

The front door opens AGAIN. Nate pops his head in.

NATE
Hey Mitchell kids.

CALEB
Nate.

TAYLOR
(almost startled)
Hey.

SHELLEY
(mumbles shyly)
Hi Mr. Nelson.

NATE
Mind if we come in?

TAYLOR
We?

Nate pulls the door open and in walks NADINE NELSON-
MITCHELL. Mid-60s. Sort of a reformed hippie vibe. Long gray
hair. Denim-clad.

CALEB
Hey Ma.

It's the warmest we've seen him as he moves to greet her.

NADINE
Caleb.

She lovingly hugs him.

SHELLEY
(again shyly)
Hello Mrs. Mitchell.

NADINE
Hello Shelley. Good to see you.

She gives him a hug as well.

NADINE (cont'd)

Taylor.

No hug for her.

NADINE (cont'd)

Sure did miss you at the service.

TAYLOR

I'm sorry, Nadine, I--

NADINE

Hard to explain why Sam's oldest wasn't there. But I guess folks understand you're busy and what not.

NATE

(jumping in)

So how's the paper stuff coming along?

NADINE

Still not sure Sam left this in the best hands.

CALEB

Ma, come on.

Shelley looks like he might cry.

SHELLEY

It doesn't matter. She's going to sell it.

NADINE

Sell it?

NATE

Last night we celebrated you starting it back up.

TAYLOR

Because that's what you told everyone and then we did like a hundred shots.

NATE

I forgot all lot of that.

NADINE

Nate, were you drinking?

CALEB

Oh, we heard about you two.

NATE
You told him we slept together?

Bedlam.

TAYLOR
No, I didn't.

NATE
We agreed not to tell
anybody.

CALEB
You what?

NADINE
You two are family.

Shelley slides out the room.

TAYLOR
I didn't tell anybody. You just
blurted it out.

NATE
Shit.

NADINE
Nate. Language.

CALEB
You guys grew up together.

NATE
Mom. Not now.

TAYLOR
Not really.

NADINE
Well now what do I tell people?

NATE
You can't fucking tell people.

NADINE
Nate!

CALEB
Brother and sister.

TAYLOR
Totally different parents.

CALEB
That's not okay.

NATE
Stop. Everyone stop!

Beat.

NATE

Listen. What Taylor and I did is no
one's business so--

That sets it off again.

NADINE

It's an abomination.

CALEB

You came back to hookup with
Nate?

NATE

It's still nobody's
business.

TAYLOR

No. For the paper.

CALEB

But you're selling the paper.

Jackie strolls in from the back.

NADINE

I cannot believe you slept with your
sister.

NATE

Stop saying that.

JACKIE

You slept with your sister?

NATE

Oh, dammit.

TAYLOR

What?

CALEB

They used to date.

JACKIE

Is that why you broke up with me?

NATE

No, no, no, no, no.

Taylor steps over and hurriedly escorts Jackie out the
building.

TAYLOR

Jackie, look, would you mind, can we
finish this up later? Great, thanks.

Taylor has her out the door before Jackie can respond.

NATE

It was a lot of other reasons.

Nadine fumes.

TAYLOR

Nate and I clearly made a mistake.
It's not going to happen again.

Taylor looks to Nate who gives a seductive wink back.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Uh, and I have a whole life I need to
get back to--

NADINE

A cheater too, huh?

NATE

Ma.

NADINE

Makes you a homewrecker Nate.

CALEB

Ma.

NADINE

Nate, take me home.

Nadine shakes her head in disappointment as she pushes open
the front door.

TAYLOR

Nadine, I'm sorry.

Nate mouths SORRY to Taylor as he follows Nadine out. Taylor
lets out a giant--

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Fuuuuuuuuuuuuck.

Caleb folds his arms and shakes his head.

CALEB

You sure know how to get to people.

TAYLOR

Without even trying.

INT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Caleb walks toward the bathroom door.

FLUSH.

CALEB

I can't believe you slept with Nate.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

(in the bathroom)

Stop saying it.

CALEB

Wont' be less true.

The door opens and Taylor washes her hands.

TAYLOR

Hey, why didn't you tell me about the baby?

CALEB

Didn't want to make a fuss. We told folks who were close.

TAYLOR

Family-wise or geographically?

Caleb's non-answer tells her.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

I get it. We...

Taylor hurries out of the restroom back to the work floor.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

Shelley? Shelley, are you still here?

SHELLEY

(O.S. muffled)

Yeah.

TAYLOR

Come on out Shelley.

Like a kicked puppy, Shelley emerges from the darkroom.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

You alright?

SHELLEY

No.

Shelley shuffles over to the siblings.

SHELLEY (cont'd)
That yelling never happened when Mr.
Mitchell was here.

TAYLOR
No, of course it didn't. That was
just family working some things out.

CALEB
Little louder than usual, that's all.

SHELLEY
Like when I was a kid at home.

Taylor flashes a 😏 look to Caleb.

TAYLOR
Shelley, we didn't mean to upset you.
We're sorry. Why don't you head home
for the day.

Shelley's head hangs. Taylor moves in and gives him an awkward hug with a few too many pats on the back. Caleb smiles at the exchange.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
There you go. I'll walk you out.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - A MINUTE LATER

The REAR PARKING LOT. The lone car is a mint condition 1973 VW Super Beetle.

TAYLOR
(excited)
Oh man. I can't believe he still has
this car.

She and Shelley walk toward it.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
It looks great.

Shelley unlocks and opens the driver door.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
Sam gave you his Super Beetle?

SHELLEY
Mr. Caleb said it was in the will.

INT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - MOMENTS LATER

SAM'S OFFICE. Caleb sits behind the desk.

TAYLOR (O.S.)
Shelley got Pop's car? Really?
Really?? Where are you?

CALEB
Office.

Taylor comes in and plops down in a chair opposite the desk.

TAYLOR
I loved that car.

CALEB
You got the paper.

TAYLOR
But the... fine.

Taylor looks around the office again.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
Only the second time I've been in
here. First time was earlier today.

CALEB
You know why he never let us in here?

INT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - DAY [FLASHBACK]

Taylor is 7 yrs old again. The same flashback: She's messing with the front page layout, up on the stool.

CALEB (O.S.)
He was embarrassed. Tried to hide it.

Sam comes out of his office. Still scruffy haired with glasses but unshaven. And his button-down shirt and slacks are much more disheveled.

SAM
(slurred)
No no no. What are doing?

He drunkenly staggers over to see Taylor's mess.

TAYLOR
Look Papa, T for Taylor.

SAM
Never, ever mess around with the
layouts. Go read a book.

Taylor runs off to read her book.

Sam staggers back to his office and the bottle of Scotch on
his desk.

BACK TO SCENE.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Same. Caleb behind the desk. Taylor across from him.

CALEB
Didn't want us to know where he kept
it. You think he was sober for that
picture he used in his column?

TAYLOR
I figured he was just trying to be
funny.

CALEB
He was. But he was also loaded to the
hilt. Most of the time back then. You
guys never talked about it?

TAYLOR
We never talked about anything.

CALEB
Well, he was always here.

TAYLOR
Come on, that's not fair. We grew
apart and I'm not like you.

CALEB
Big city girl now.

TAYLOR
Maybe but what's wrong with that? I
shouldn't be punished for moving away
to go to a good school and building a
life for myself somewhere new. You
came back here. You got to know Pop.
And Nadine. What's with that Ma stuff
anyway?

CALEB

You ever give her a minute of time
you'd know she's family.

TAYLOR

There's no way she thinks of me as
family.

CALEB

Pop doesn't sober up if he doesn't
meet her. It cost him mom, you, his
house. That's why he moved into that
shitty trailer after mom took us
away.

TAYLOR

Oh.

CALEB

Almost lost the paper too. He
would've explained if you'd let him.

TAYLOR

He didn't want to know about my life.

CALEB

Because you wouldn't let him.

TAYLOR

Well it seemed easier that way.
Which, as turns out was a bad idea.
But he should never have been gone in
the first place. And, you know, then
I wouldn't have to let him in.

CALEB

Boy and you didn't. He was laying in
that hospital, wondering if you were
going to come say goodbye. And when
we knew there wasn't much time, he
thought maybe you'd call but you shut
him out, all the way to the end.

TAYLOR

We hadn't spoken in years--

CALEB

You didn't come to his funeral, sis.

TAYLOR

I could have, I just... I didn't.

Caleb gets out the chair and moves to the door.

CALEB
Come say goodbye to the boys before
you leave?

TAYLOR
Yeah.

INT. MEL GIBSON SUITE - EVENING

Taylor packs her suitcase. She grabs her leather satchel and slides the worn copy of Mountain Press into it.

EXT. CONGRESS - NIGHT

Taylor walks down Main Street. BOOTLEGGERS TAVERN is in the distance. She's making a call as she walks--

DAISY (O.S.)
Hi you've reached Daisy. We'll talk
soon. Bye.

TAYLOR
Hey. It's me. I'm looking at flights
for tomorrow so...

INT. BOOTLEGGERS - NIGHT

Prohibition era photos of people boozing it up. Antiques hanging on the walls. A rural Applebee's with better food.

Janey is at the bar finishing a meal. DAX sets a fresh beer in front of her. He's the owner/bartender. A barrel-chested, flannel-clad, mustachioed, mid-40s, white guy.

Taylor comes in the front door and heads straight to the bar.

TAYLOR
May I?

JANEY
Sure.

Taylor saddles up onto the seat next to her.

DAX
What do you think?

TAYLOR
A beer. And, sorry, do you have any
vegetarian options?

DAX
The soup, I suppose. Or some bread.

TAYLOR
I'll take both. Thanks.

DAX
Taylor Mitchell, right?

TAYLOR
Yes, sir.

DAX
I'm Dax.

He extends a hand for Taylor to shake.

DAX (cont'd)
You sure you're related to Sam? That
man ate a steak every time he walked
in here.

TAYLOR
We are different in a whole bunch of
ways.

JANEY
Not all of 'em. You sound like him.

DAX
Damn near look like him.

JANEY
And from what I heard, you drink like
he used to.

TAYLOR
Man, things get around this town
fast.

Dax laughs and heads off. Janey resumes her meal. Taylor's
beer arrives.

JANEY
Cheers.

She raises her glass. Taylor grabs hers.

JANEY (cont'd)
To your dad.

TAYLOR
To my dad.

CLINK. And they take a sip.

TAYLOR (cont'd)
You knew him?

JANEY
We met a few times. I took him on a ride along once so he could photograph a family of brown bears.

TAYLOR
I remember that issue. They were playing in the hot tub up at the McNeil cabin.

JANEY
Yes! Crazy afternoon. Did you get the paper?

TAYLOR
Oh yeah. Never missed an issue. I'll dig that one out when I get back.

JANEY
I thought you were sticking around to start printing again?

TAYLOR
How on earth did you hear that?

JANEY
My brother. He's the bartender at the Stock Exchange.

TAYLOR
Ahhhh, it all comes together now.

Taylor takes another sip then--

TAYLOR (cont'd)
I don't know how to run a paper and really, I don't know this town or all of you the way he did.

JANEY

On that ride along, he told me you'd had another book published. And then he pulls a copy out of his camera bag to show me. Talked about how smart it was and how he could see your sense of humor in it. And how he always knew your imagination could stretch that far.

TAYLOR

I appreciate that.

Dax delivers Taylor's food.

DAX

Vegetable soup and a side of my nearly, maybe someday, world famous sourdough.

TAYLOR

Thanks.

(to Janey)

I never really got to know him as an adult. That's, I wish, ah, you know.

Janey stands and pulls some cash out to pay her bill.

JANEY

It's tough when you can't change things.

TAYLOR

It is indeed.

JANEY

Still--

She takes her last swallow of beer.

JANEY (cont'd)

Seems like through your books he got to know you some.

TAYLOR

I hope so.

JANEY

Have a good night.

We stay with Taylor as Janey walks away. Taylor takes in a spoonful of soup, thinking.

And... Janey's back. She leans against the bar.

JANEY (cont'd)
Forgot to tell you. He gave me that
copy of your book.

TAYLOR
You read it?

JANEY
Yes. And the others.

TAYLOR
No Game of Thrones jab?

JANEY
Nah, I liked them more.

And with Taylor, we watch Janey walk out the front door.

The door closes behind her and Taylor returns to her soup, a
little smirk on her face.

Dax slides over to check on Taylor--

DAX
How's the soup?

TAYLOR
So good.

DAX
And the bread?

TAYLOR
Magical. Hey Dax?

DAX
Yeah?

TAYLOR
Pretty much everyone here knew Sam,
right?

DAX
I'd say everybody.

TAYLOR
What his days were like. Things he
did.

DAX

You've seen how things get around this town. It's not nosy really. I think we're all just looking out for each other. Ah, maybe a little nosy. What are you thinking?

TAYLOR

I need to sort through it a little but it's a good thing. Mind if I get the check?

EXT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - NIGHT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Taylor paces under the struggling Mountain Press sign. Lighting up the best it can for it's age.

Taylor's in a deep conversation with herself--

TAYLOR

I can do this. No, I can't. Can I? I think I can. I think I should. Should. Soooooo, that's a yes then. Yes, I'm doing this. I am doing this.

She steers her pacing to the front door and begins to unlock it.

INT. MOUNTAIN PRESS - LATER

In Sam's Office. Taylor gently closes the door and sits behind the desk. She stares at the old framed front pages on the wall--

Then rubs her hands on the desk. She pulls out a drawer, nothing interesting, then closes it.

She pulls on another drawer. It's locked. Hmmm. Ah, keys. She digs them out of her pocket and finds the right one.

It opens and Taylor sifts through the various files in there. Financial docs, invoices, a file folder with stationery and cards sticking out. *What are these?*

She pulls it out and lays it open on the desk. HAND WRITTEN LETTERS. She scans the top one, reading aloud in a mumbling sort of way to herself.

TAYLOR

Dear Sam,

Still snow here in Utah. How's the weather up your way? I wanted to let you know our son--

She stops and looks up from the letter.

TAYLOR (cont'd)

We never lived in Utah.

EXT. COTTONTAIL INN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Taylor walks through the parking lot, making another call. BEEP.

TAYLOR

Hey Daisy, me again. I think...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TAYLOR'S BROOKLYN CONDO - MORNING [FLASHBACK]

It's bright and warm on her rooftop patio. Taylor sips coffee in her PJs at a patio table.

Taylor POV: She looks out over her Brooklyn neighborhood. Brownstones, trees, the Manhattan skyline in the distance.

DAISY (O.S.)

You're going, aren't you?

She's in a bathrobe, wet hair, holding a cup of coffee.

TAYLOR

We talked about this--

DAISY

You know if you were one hundred percent sure you were going to sell it, you wouldn't be going at all.

TAYLOR

Daisy, I am not staying.

DAISY

Because when you start something you don't stop until--

TAYLOR

It is important to me that I--

DAISY

It's important to me because I'm not moving to fucking Idaho.

BOOSH! Daisy's mug EXPLODES into the corner of the patio.

DAISY (cont'd)

I love you. I love Brooklyn. I love this apartment.

TAYLOR

It's my apartment.

DAISY

Well, I'm not leaving.

TAYLOR

I loved that coffee mug.

DAISY

Like you love me or love your writing?

We see Taylor physically mull over the choices.

DAISY (cont'd)

Dick.

She grabs Taylor's mug and heaves it over the edge of the roof.

We sail with the mug, racing toward the sidewalk. BOOSH! As it hits the cement.

Daisy storms back into the apartment.

BACK TO PRESENT.

EXT. COTTONTAIL INN - NIGHT - PRESENT

Taylor is nearing the front door, still on the phone--

TAYLOR

You were right. I'm going to stay. It's, I'm not sure, I think it's something I need. Please, please consider watering the plants. I'll talk to you soon.

She slides her phone into her back pocket as she pulls open the front door.

INT. COTTONTAIL INN - CONTINUOUS

Maco reads a book behind the desk, his feet kicked up. Taylor strolls in the front door, pocketing her phone.

As he stands--

MACO

Oh, you look much better than this morning. My cousin's coffee, right?

TAYLOR

Um, sure. Hey Maco, I'm going to need the Mel Gibson suite for a while longer.

FADE OUT