

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

A STEAM LOCOMOTIVE CHUGS into the station. Brakes SQUEAL, steam HISSES, and the large cast iron beast GRINDS to a halt.

A WHISTLE BLOWS announcing its arrival to the late 19th century American frontier city that lies just beyond it.

In a moment, the station is filled with the commotion of PASSENGERS disembarking, and TRAIN WORKERS unloading the cargo.

INT. TRAIN CAR - DAY

The large train door slides open. CLUNK. Sunlight spills in, illuminating several wooden COFFINS.

The WORKERS slide them each out and load them quickly onto a wagon.

An UNDERTAKER oversees them, double-checking his logs and the names etched on each of them.

Next to him, is his SON, helping the workers load up the wagon.

The undertaker checks the name on a coffin, and then turns back to his log. He frowns. Then makes a mark with chalk on the lid.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Undertaker and son unload the CHALK MARKED COFFIN, and together, lower it gently into its freshly dug plot.

The son grabs his shovel and begins to rain dirt down on it.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

The undertaker's son slinks into the cemetery. He clutches a BOTTLE OF WHISKEY, and glances over his shoulder before unscrewing the top and taking a swig.

BOOM! A muffled, but thundering sound is heard.

The son looks around, confused.

Then suddenly, a mound of dirt begins to shift near a grave. The son's mouth droops open.

A HAND bursts forth from out of the thick, black dirt. Followed by an ARM, and eventually a HEAD and part of a TORSO.

All parts belong to BENJAMIN LOCKWOOD (40s), a very pale man with shaggy hair, and a well-groomed beard. He would be classically handsome, if he weren't covered in dirt.

He swivels his neck and spots the undertaker's son, staring stupidly at him with mouth agape.

Lockwood opens his mouth, and out falls a clump of dirt. Then he clears his throat.

LOCKWOOD
(casually)
Good evening.

The boy just stares.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
Well... you gonna just stand there,
or are you going to help me out?

The boy drops the WHISKEY and runs.

Lockwood sighs, and then manages to pull himself out of the ground. He brushes the dirt from his overcoat, and tries to shake it from his hair. The act, makes him realize that he's missing his hat.

He plunges his arm back down into the ground and retrieves a large brimmed hat out of the earth. He dumps the dirt from it and plops it back onto his head, proudly.

Then he turns and picks up the WHISKEY bottle the kid dropped. He shrugs his shoulders and stuffs the bottle into a SATCHEL that he wears under his overcoat.

Looking out, he sees the lights of a CITY nearby. He smiles.

EXT. CITY'S MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Lockwood walks through the main road. The city is bigger than a typical Western town, with hotels in place of boarding homes, and casinos in place of saloons. There's an air of pomp mingled with outhouses and dirt roads.

Lockwood looks to a DOCTOR'S OFFICE. It's dark and closed up. He turns back and sees a rather garish hotel -- the GRANGER GRAND HOTEL.

INT. GRANGER GRAND HOTEL - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

As garish as it is on the outside, it's even worse inside. It has a boldness that is desperate to appear sophisticated and cultured.

At the front desk, stands the man responsible for the decor, MR. GRANGER (50s). He bears glasses perched at the end of his nose, and puffy white mutton chops fixed to his jowls.

He MUMBLES to himself as he flips through his inventory.

Sweeping the entry is a young girl, (18) with thick dark hair. She looks fragile in form, but her hands are calloused and her eyes penetrating. This is, MARIETTA WILKINS.

She glances up as Lockwood approaches the hotel. HORSES hitched to a post outside, NEIGH, and REEL, pulling against the hitch as though spooked.

Marietta's eyes darken.

Lockwood enters the lobby. Marietta averts her eyes and lowers her head, focusing on her sweeping.

MR. GRANGER
(not looking up)
Good...
(seeing a filthy Lockwood)
... evening.

LOCKWOOD
Evening.

Lockwood continues to brush the dirt from his clothes.

MR. GRANGER
What may I do for you sir?

Marietta listens carefully, but never looks up.

LOCKWOOD
I'd like a room. Particularly, one
with a bath.

Lockwood pulls out an INTRICATE PIPE, and stuffs it with an assortment of herbs and tobacco that he keeps in a LEATHER POUCH around his neck.

MR. GRANGER
Oh yes. Of course. We do have one
of those. Cast iron tub. Bronze
feet. Lovely.
(MORE)

MR. GRANGER (cont'd)
Only the finest at the Granger
Grand. How long will you be bidding?

Lockwood searches his pockets for a match.

LOCKWOOD
Just the night, I suspect. I'm
looking for Dr. Heaberlin
(Mr. Granger lights a
match for him)
-- thank you -- is he in town
tonight?

MR. GRANGER
No, sir, doc had a medical call at
a homestead. Probably won't be back
for a day or two.

Lockwood puffs thoughtfully on his pipe.

LOCKWOOD
Best make it two nights then.

MR. GRANGER
Yes sir.

Mr. Granger happily grabs the room key.

MR. GRANGER (cont'd)
That'll be eight dollars.

Lockwood cocks an eyebrow.

LOCKWOOD
Eight? Dollars?

MR. GRANGER
Yes, sir.

LOCKWOOD
Four dollars for a room --

MR. GRANGER
With a bath.

LOCKWOOD
-- a night?

MR. GRANGER
Yessir.

Lockwood begrudgingly reaches into his pocket.

LOCKWOOD
The West really has become
civilized.

He pulls out his billfold, a clump of moist dirt comes with it, spraying onto the counter.

Mr. Granger brushes it off with disgust.

Lockwood pries open his billfold. He wrinkles his brow, anger boils up within and he SLAMS the billfold HARD onto the counter.

Marietta jumps in her skin.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
(harsh whisper)
Pilfering off a damn corpse!

MR. GRANGER
Is something wrong sir?

LOCKWOOD
Only the moral decay of society!

Lockwood calms himself.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
I'm embarrassed. I don't seem to have the adequate funds necessary to procure a room at this time. May I reserve the room?

MR. GRANGER
Certainly. For what night?

LOCKWOOD
Tonight.

MR. GRANGER
Bank is closed. How you gonna get four dollars tonight?

Mr. Granger leans in close.

MR. GRANGER (cont'd)
You're not gonna rob nobody, are you?

LOCKWOOD
Well, in a way. You do have a casino in this town, don't you?

EXT. CASINO - NIGHT

TWO GUARDS toss a DRUNK MAN out of the casino. He tumbles onto the ground.

Lockwood stands over him, the Drunk Man looks up.

Lockwood extends the bottle of WHISKEY that he got from the undertaker's kid.

LOCKWOOD
Fifty cents for the bottle.

The drunk smiles.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

Lockwood enters the casino, and gives it a cursory glance.

It's two-storied, large, and every inch filled. A bar counter is the main attraction, with stations of various card games, like Faro, poker, and three-card monte, positioned throughout.

A PIANO PLAYER pounds out a cheerful TUNE, while DRUNK MEN dance with clinging PROSTITUTES.

GUARD
No weapons beyond here.

Lockwood looks to the guard, and nods. He takes off his belt and holster, and tosses it to him. We spot the glint of his COLT 1873 single-action revolver, with 7 1/2 inch barrel.

Then he weaves his way through the crowd to a poker table. There's a professional DEALER, and FOUR other MEN occupying the table.

LOCKWOOD
Evening, gentlemen.

DEALER
Evening sir, the game is five-card draw. Are you familiar with the rules?

LOCKWOOD
Intimately.

DEALER
Very good.

The Dealer deals, and the antes are placed. Lockwood picks up his cards, and carefully watches the others.

We hear THUMPING, like BEATING HEARTS. Lockwood glances from one player to the next as they study their hands and make their bets.

He can HEAR each of their HEARTBEATS.

They lay down their bets. One folds immediately. A LANKY GAMBLER raises.

Lockwood HEARS Lanky's HEART FLUTTER.

It's Lockwood's bet. He calls.

The GAMBLERS discard their unwanted cards and the DEALER passes them new ones.

We DON'T HEAR what they request, all we HEAR are their HEARTBEATS, excited or crushed.

Lanky raises -- and his HEARTBEAT races.

LANKY GAMBLER

Raise ya.

Lockwood's nose twitches, like he can smell the small bits of perspiration that are forming on Lanky's forehead.

He can see Lanky's veins, protruding out from under his skin, unnoticeable to anyone else.

Lockwood half smiles.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

Lanky Gambler SLAMS his cards down in anger.

DEALER

Winner. Again.

Lockwood pulls in a large pot, with glaring faces watching him, particularly Lanky.

LOCKWOOD

(at their expressions)

Oh come on boys, don't look so downcast. Lucky streaks are part of the game.

Lockwood puffs on his pipe.

LANKY GAMBLER
Luck? I say yer a cheat.

LOCKWOOD
You can say that... once.
(menacingly)
Not twice.

Lanky seems to shrink.

Lockwood takes a big drag on his pipe.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
Tell you what, let me buy you boys
a round of drinks. How's that
sound?

They just glare at him.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
Good. Alright, we're friends again.

Lockwood gets up from the table and makes his way to the bar. He signals to the bartender, but suddenly, his demeanor shifts.

He scans the room and notices TWO MEN, pale faced, dressed like miners, and standing near the counter. They look like BROTHERS.

The ELDER tips his hat subtly to Lockwood. Lockwood nods back. He looks troubled, but then turns to the bartender.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
Five shots of your best --
(thinks better of it)
third best -- whiskey.

EXT. CASINO - LATE NIGHT

Lockwood exits the casino with a spring in his step, heading for the hotel.

It's late and the streets are mostly empty now.

From the shadows, a FIGURE emerges behind Lockwood. A GUN COCKS. BANG!

Lockwood is shot in the back and falls to the ground like a sack of potatoes.

The gunman rushes over to him -- and now we see, it's Lanky Gambler.

He turns him over to get to his billfold -- but to his surprise, Lockwood's eyes pop open! He rips Lanky's pistol from his hand and starts BASHING him in the face with it.

Lanky's nose CRUNCHES, and BLOOD sprays on Lockwood's face. He tastes it. It tastes good. Lockwood's face begins to morph become grotesque and animal like. FANGS spring out.

Lights come on as people are drawn out from the sound of the gun shot.

Lockwood quickly dashes down an alley near the hotel, leaving a bloodied and broken Lanky on the ground.

Townsfolk gather around Lanky, MURMURING.

Up above, peering down through drawn curtains is Marietta. Her face, stone cold. She saw the whole thing.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The curtains are drawn over the windows. Lockwood sleeps soundly in his bed.

There's a CLICK at the door as his room is unlocked.

The door slides quietly open and Marietta enters. Clutched in her hand, is a TENT PEG, and HAMMER.

She slinks over to the bed, a sprawled Lockwood lays before her.

Marietta gently places the tent peg over his chest, angling it at his heart. She arches back the hammer. Inhales. SWINGS.

Lockwood's eyes dart open. He flinches and jerks -- the tent peg plunges into his shoulder.

He BELLOWS and knocks her aside. She CRASHES to the floor and scrambles.

He goes after her. She's grabs the CURTAIN and yanks it off the rod. Sunlight pours through the room, IGNITING his exposed flesh in FLAME.

He SCREAMS in pain and charges blindly, wrapping himself in the fallen curtain, trying to snuff out the flames and shield himself from the sunlight.

Marietta makes a run for the door, but Lockwood wraps her up with him in the curtain and pushes her to the adjoining...

WASH ROOM

He flings her into the cast iron tub, and tosses off the curtain.

His flesh is burned and scorched.

Marietta tries to rise, but he's quickly upon her. He grabs her by the hair and JERKS her head to the side, exposing her neck.

She SCREAMS.

His face morphs into vampire form and brings his teeth down -- but stops.

He notices something on her neck. It's a SCAR. He forces her head the other way -- there's another scar on the other side of her neck.

She trembles, and whimpers softly, waiting for the inevitable.

But he doesn't bite. He grabs her arms and rolls up her sleeves, exposing her wrists -- more scars. They look like animal bites.

Lockwood releases her and backs away.

She looks up at him, curious.

He pulls the tent peg out from his shoulder and tosses it away. He seems agitated, and clumsily pulls out his leather pouch from around his neck, and checks for his pipe. It's not on him.

He grabs a NEWSPAPER on the counter and tears off a piece of it. His HANDS are SHAKING.

Marietta doesn't know what to do. She looks to the exit, thinking about how to get past him.

Lockwood manages to roll his tobacco and herbs into the newspaper. He licks it closed, pops it in his mouth, and checks for a light.

Seizing the distraction, Marietta jumps up from the tub, only to have Lockwood kick her back down, with ease.

LOCKWOOD
Be right with you.

With no match, Lockwood, extends his finger out into the sunlight in the adjoining room. His finger ignites immediately and he uses it to light his cigarette.

He snuffs out the flame and inhales deeply. His face begins to change back to human form. His hands, steady.

MARIETTA

I ain't goin' back. So you best
just kill me now.

LOCKWOOD

Tempting.
(beat)
Though you have me at a loss.
You've clearly encountered my kind
before.

MARIETTA

Monsters.

LOCKWOOD

Now that's hurtful. I view it as a
medical condition, which I am
treating.

He indicates his cigarette.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)

You can thank the Blackfoot Indians
for your life. Their particular
blend of kinnik-kinnik, has...
remarkable properties.

He inhales, and gives a devilish grin. Then exhales.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)

Less monster. More magnanimous.

Marietta furrows her brow.

MARIETTA

You ain't from Silver City?

LOCKWOOD

The aforementioned land of "back"?
No. Is it nice?

MARIETTA

(bitter)

No.

Lockwood nods.

LOCKWOOD

I think I've cracked it. You're a vampire hunter, with a bounty on your head. Many a times bitten in pursuit of your prey...

He brushes her hair back, exposing her scarred neck. She slaps his hand away.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)

...but never consumed.

(beat)

Vampires are not restrained or kind enough to spare the life of their meals.

MARIETTA

It ain't no kindness what they do.

(beat)

Regard you as nothing but cattle, and drink you next to death, till you wish you was.

That hangs in the air for a moment. Lockwood ponders it.

LOCKWOOD

Interesting. Conservation. Never seen that in a vampire before.

(beat)

Well, I suppose the world's becoming more civilized, and vampires with it. No more hunting, no more free-roaming cattle.

He takes another drag on his cigarette.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)

So, you got out of your cage?

MARIETTA

Don't need no cages. Vampires run the whole town, the mayor on down. Lots have run. Not many got far.

LOCKWOOD

How many?

Long beat.

MARIETTA

Nary a one.

Lockwood nods.

LOCKWOOD
At risk of sounding gauche, is
there, perchance, a pecuniary
attachment to your predicament?

MARIETTA
Huh?

LOCKWOOD
Is there a reward for you?

MARIETTA
(cautiously)
No.

LOCKWOOD
Not at all? Even a lost head of
cattle fetches a reward, are you
not worth more than they?

Marietta stares coldly at him.

MARIETTA
There ain't no reward.

There's a tense beat, and Lockwood proffers a sly smile.

LOCKWOOD
I see.
(beat)
It might interest you to know, that
I spotted two of my kind in the
casino the other night. They look
alike, like brothers.

Marietta can't hide her horror.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
(off her face)
I take it you know them.
(beat)
Now, you mean to tell me, that if I
were to apprise these gentlemen as
to the whereabouts of their
runaway, I should expect no
monetary compensation at all?

There's a chilling pause, and Marietta stares straight
ahead.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
Shall we talk terms?

Her eyes flick to him.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
I will hobble my mouth, on
condition. Condition number one:
you apologize for trying to kill
me.

He looks to her. She stares back at him. Then finally.

MARIETTA
(mumbling)
Sorry.

LOCKWOOD
Condition number two: you
apologize, only this time, like you
mean it.

Beat.

MARIETTA
(flatly)
I'm very sorry.

LOCKWOOD
Condition number three.

He tosses her the curtain.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
You hang that back up. Turn down my
bed, and bring me breakfast --
something suitable for my diet.
(beat)
After that, you may do as you
please, which I imagine, would be
to make yourself scarce.

Marietta sits up, surprised.

Lockwood waits for her.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
Tick, tock. Daylight is your
friend.

MARIETTA
That's it? You ain't gonna eat me
or nothin?

LOCKWOOD
Well don't take it personally, I'm
sure you're delicious. I'm just not
in the habit of eating humans.

Marietta stares at him, baffled, and then slowly gets out of the tub and exits the wash room, stepping out into the protection of the sun-filled room.

She looks back at Lockwood.

MARIETTA
You really aren't like them.
There's compassion in you Mister...
Mister?

LOCKWOOD
Lockwood.

MARIETTA
Mr. Lockwood. You're different.
There's compassion in you.
Compassion for sure.

She picks up the curtain rod and notices his BILLFOLD resting on the night stand.

MARIETTA (cont'd)
I am mighty sorry 'bout trying to
kill you.

Lockwood stands in the wash room, watching her.

MARIETTA (cont'd)
And I'm mighty grateful fer you
sparing me. Which is why I'm extra
sorry -- but I've only been workin'
a week -- and I ain't got no money
for a stagecoach or train ticket.

Lockwood arches an eyebrow.

In a flash she drops the curtain, grabs his BILLFOLD and bolts for the door.

LOCKWOOD
HEY!

Lockwood goes to stop her, but halts before the sunlit room. And then she's gone.

LOCKWOOD (cont'd)
Damn, moral decay of society!

EXT. CITY'S MAIN STREET - DAY

Marietta puts on her coat, as she hurriedly shuffles down main street on her way to the train station.