



**SAMPLE CINEMATIC SCENE | POST-APOCALYPTIC DRAMA |
JUSTIN CUMMINGS**

Updated July 25, 2023

Email | mail@justincummings.net

Website | justincummings.net

INTRO

This scene represents a crucial turning point in the relationship arc between sibling characters Nia and Malik. In their story, the natural environment is being ravaged by some kind of genetic plague that rewrites and recombines the DNA of living things in strange, often horrifying ways.

A rift formed between the siblings when Nia became pregnant and Malik loudly voiced his disapproval, because he was afraid of what the plague might do to an unborn child. Reuniting with him after months of estrangement, Nia has lied to her brother and claimed the medicine she desperately needs is for herself - when in reality it's for her baby, who is beginning to show signs of gene plague.

Malik doesn't trust Nia, and may not be entirely trustworthy himself. By the end of this scene, however, the siblings have reached a shaky truce. The future is uncertain, but by helping one another through a traumatic encounter, they begin to build bridges again.

Note: The scene works as a cinematic but could easily play out as a player-controlled setpiece with scripted VO instead. The encounter with the plague wolf could be executed as a combat gameplay sequence as well.

EXT. AMERICAN MIDWEST - THICK FOREST - LATE DAY

MALIK (mid 30s, tense, leery) leads his sister NIA (late 30s, withdrawn, guarded) along a well-concealed path. He shoots a glance at the FRESH BANDAGE on her wrist.

MALIK

Wound looks clean.

NIA

It's healing.

MALIK

What'd you say it was?

NIA

A rat.

MALIK

Right, right.

(beat)

What'd it look like?

NIA

What?

MALIK

What did it look like?

NIA

Like a rat, Malik. You sure this is the right way?

MALIK

(ignoring the question)

The bad ones look different. That discoloration in the fur, the skin. The milky eyes. You only need penthanol for the bad ones. So it must have looked all messed up.

NIA

(dismissively)

Yeah. Yes. White eyes, the whole thing.

Malik STOPS. Turns to face Nia. In a flash, he LUNGES for her wrist, trying to tear off the bandage. They STRUGGLE.

NIA

What are you doing--

MALIK

I just made that shit up. Their eyes aren't white. You know that.

A sudden SNAP in the underbrush, very close by. The siblings FREEZE.

A WOLF, clearly in the agonizing late stages of genetic refraction plague, stares out at them through IRIDESCENT, COLOR-SHIFTING EYES. Drool runs from its maw. Its wheezing breath becomes a low, desperate GROWL.

Malik puts a finger to his lips while his other hand reaches for the PISTOL at his waist.

NIA

(hushed)

No, wait!

Malik rips the gun from its holster but the wolf is already on him. He SCREAMS.

Then: a PIERCING CRY from the wolf as it rolls off of Malik. Nia stands over them, a BLOODIED KNIFE in her hand. She's CRYING.

NIA

(to Malik)

You son of a bitch.

Stunned and confused, Malik follows her gaze to the SHIVERING WOLF CUB huddled in the brush. Its wide eyes show traces of SHIFTING COLOR. It turns and flees. Nia SQUEEZES BACK TEARS.

MALIK

Oh my god. You did it, didn't you? You had the baby.

NIA

I don't need your fucking permission. It's my life.

MALIK

But now you need my help. To try and cure it.

NIA

Him. Cure him.

Malik stands up. Awkwardly, he approaches his sister.

Beat.

MALIK

(quietly)

What's done is done, Nia. We gotta look forward.

He indicates a path leading in a NEW DIRECTION.

MALIK

It's this way. Sorry. I had to be sure. We'll be there before sunset.

He starts off. Nia wipes her cheeks and follows.