

# AN UNSAYING

Written by

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Red rusted railing encircles a tiny podunk rodeo.

A scattering of early risers sit in the bleachers watching a couple lopers inside making use of the slow morning hours.

Sophia and Nora sit in the oxidized bleachers as they watch Eli playing on his phone. He's locked in, full tech neck.

SOPHIA

You know if Ricky said he was gonna  
call you?

Nacona sits a row above, her demeanor flummoxed. She rests a foot on the row below her, massaging a knee.

NORA

No, he never tells me what he does.

SOPHIA

(to Nora)

Why you datin' that fool?

NACONA

(to Sophia)

Same -- why -- I saw the men I did.

SOPHIA

(to Nora)

Any of these fools can make money.  
You can't do no better?

NORA

He's sweet on me ... Is that ole  
Burk from Estelline down there?  
Can't miss that nose of his ...  
Weird seein' him here. He was in  
Childress few weeks ago.

The women gaze at the man. He nods.

NORA (CONT'D)

(to Sophia)

Classic old timin' larper. He quit  
stoppin' by once he got what he  
wanted from her, after the force  
let him go.

NACONA

Yeah.

The man looks at the young teen, THOMAS, appraising. He nods again and tightens the boy's clasp around the reins.

NORA

Well, this reunion could be your last chance to get a lil more than social security come your way ...  
Ain't worth shit.

Nacona stands and walks down to the man stood by the horse.

101 EXT. FENCE LINE - MORNING

101

BURK, late sixties, broad shouldered, in a regal buttoned down, leads the horse towards Nacona. She leans on the fence.

NACONA

If your arena were any good you wouldn't be down here.

BURK

What's that?

NACONA

How well do you know the county officers?

BURK

You heard somethin' 'bout all that?

Burk shrugs.

NACONA

I just wanted to catch up with you Burk. Good to see you. How're your folks doin'?

BURK

Which folks you mean? Don't talk with the men on the force no more. Keepin' Thomas out of trouble keeps me busy. There's plenty of mess 'round here.

NACONA

I read today ... they flushed the prison system last week. Every inch of it swimmin' in nothin' but corruption, even out here.

BURK

Buddy a mine told me ...

NACONA

You are keepin' up then. He tell  
you 'bout a local girl runnin' off  
with a bag of drugs?

Burk straightens.

BURK

Which one is this now? I see it is  
not that daughter of yours. Your  
grand baby?

The incorrigible mare, jerks its head.

Burk yanks the reins.

BURK (CONT'D)

I'm supposin' ...

NACONA

Yeah?

BURK

She's got that much it's the cartel-

Nacona gazes.

NACONA

No. That can't be the case, not  
here.

BURK

Could be ...

Burk pulls away from the fence, turning the horse around.

A beat.

NACONA

Well, if it were my granddaughter  
I'd be more concerned ...

BURK

Okay.

NACONA

If you hear anythin-

BURK

I'll keep an eye out.

107

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

107

Sage steps over to the door, applies her weight against the wall. She looks to the door handle. It's locked ...

Outside: the exhausted depression of wooden planks. A beat.

We gradually become aware of two shadows emerging obstructing the single overhead porch light. The knob violently rattles.

She vaults to support the flimsy door, grasping for the knob.

The door explodes open. Cash recovering from a breach kick.

Sage is thrown to the floor, the corkscrew skittering into the middle of the room. Cash, pistol raised, clears the room. Ricky follows behind, eyes locked on Sage ...

Ricky straddles over her as she clammers for the cork screw. Blows rain down from above, incapacitating her resistance.

He gets into full mount -- cinches her neck into a vice grip, starts choking her and slams her head into the wooden floor.

RICKY

Shh-Shh-Sh-It's okay ... It's okay.

Sage panicking -- rageful screams -- Her feet flailing.

RICKY (CONT'D)

You're okay--

Cash gawks at the open kitchen cabinets, he utters sharply:

CASH

Ricky!

Ricky ceases his assault, keeping his strange hold around her neck, he pulls Sage to her feet.

The house stills ...

Ricky stares at Cash who pops on the overhead kitchen lamp as they stare into the abyss of the cabinets. A beat.

-- Buckshot sprays through the kitchen and living room. --

The thud of a body.

Ricky breaks his grasp, fracturing the chain around Sage's neck, as he turns and dives out the front door.

Sage recoils free. She winces, clasping her throat.

She hits the floor gasping for air.

It is all strange ...

Sage looks at the wooden floor: at the foot of the kitchen table -- Cash writhing in agony, reaches into his belt line.

The shotgun blast roars across the room again and for an instant turns the room orange.

The chewed-up kitchen cabinets disintegrate into pieces.

The door wobbles back against the jamb and creakily bounces.

Sage has already risen from her prone, now on elbows and knees and is sprawling towards the front door.

108 FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR

108

Sage crawls to the edge of the couch throwing herself through the door as orange muzzle flash strobes the room.

Her body lands on the wooden deck of the front porch.

109 EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

109

Sage climbs to her feet and straightens.

She is at the steps of the porch, standing in the pool of lamp glow from a lone telephone pole.

She plunges down the steps towards the P.T. Cruiser as a pistol thumps and a shot chews the wooden porch column.

110 EXT. FRONT YARD/DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

110

Sage hurries across the yard.

The commotion inside the house has stilled ...

A glance to one side: Ricky, sprawling to cover by the hood of the P.T. Cruiser, his shoulder shredded with buckshot.

Sage slows approaching cover around the hatchback of the car.

She risks a look back towards the house.

Clusters of struggling grunts echo from inside the house.

Multiple gunshots illuminate the interior.

Sage sags.

115 Sage sprawls on her knees to the opened driver's door. 115

No key in the ignition.

She fumbles around the floorboard and the cupholder. Nothing.

She rises from the nook in the door jam and looks through the front windshield. Along the fence line next to the shed -- Noe's parked dirt bike.

Gunshot screams into the kitchen side window from the truck parked on the side of the house.

Noé, weakly returns pistol rounds from within.

Sage kneels up into the front seat of the car.

Another burst of rounds from outside --

Noé walks out onto the porch -- pistol drawn, circling the bed of the truck, Cash fires from the hood.

Sage pauses, looks at the open front door ... Runs for it --

Noé struggles reloading his pistol from the truck bed.

Cash fires twice from the hood at Noé.

116 INT. NOE'S HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT 116

Sage's grip now on top of the shredded duffle bag in the overhead cabinet, its interior contents remaining intact.

She pulls it out, throws the strap over her shoulder.

She cranes her neck out of the front door --

Noé fires towards her, hitting the top of the door frame.

Sage ducks for cover back inside.

Cash shoots at Noé, forcing him back into cover.

117

EXT. FRONT YARD - NIGHT

117

Noé fires at Cash, he skirts around the truck bed and sprints into cover against the hatchback of the P.T. Cruiser.

Sage looks out at the bike, looks at the two vehicles.

She steadies herself against the doorframe.

Heavy breathing fills the silence ...

Footsteps outside.

Hollow boot clicks traverse across the yard without hurry.

They draw towards the pickup.

Noé is rounding towards the right corner of the bed.

Approaching the pickup, shotgun unsteady at the tires.

His steps slow ...

Slowing to a halt, he sees:

Blood pooling underneath the far side of the truck bed.

Cash rises and fires --

Sage bursts out from inside and sprints to the dirt bike.

Noé fires, back-peddling --

Buckshot peppers the truck, shattering glass and body alike.

Noé retreats behind the driver's door of the P.T. Cruiser.

She mounts the bike, tightens her grip on its clutch and kick starts it -- Nothing.

Noé, inside the front door frame.

Cash advances down around the bed of the truck.

Cash fires twice -- pistol shot claws up the P.T. Cruiser's driver side door and its hood.

Sage, looking back behind, frantically kick starts the bike again -- this time rolling over. Its engine shrills alive.

Noé crouches up from his squat to get a better look at Sage.

Pistol fire shatters windshield, twice at her, one hits the work shed, the other, kicks up ground in front of the bike.

Cash unloads his clip into the front of the P.T. Cruiser.  
Noé covers behind the door and fires a single shot at Cash.  
Cash crosses back behind the truck into cover.  
Noé falls behind the P.T. Cruiser's hatchback. Dry heaving.  
Noé's eyes follow the sounds of rubber tearing through dirt.  
He looks out into the night ... Nothing to see ...

118 EXT. ESTELLINE - PASTURE - NIGHT

118

Minutes later. Sage tracks up the repose of a small hillside, the dirt bike kicking back dirt.

She wobbles down the berm.

At the top of the mound, the bike hits a barbed wire fence, the impact jerking it violently as the throttle catches.

The front tire punctures, a siphon of air hissing out.

Sage battles to regain control of the bike.

The tire loses traction, wire whirling around its axle.

The bike crashes, catapulting Sage over the handlebars.

She lays face down in the dirt yards away from the bike. The bag -- more yards out in front of her.

A twisted contortion of wire claws into her lower body.

She digs herself out of the dirt, supporting herself on her elbows, enough to rip out the wire from the skin of her legs.

Sage limps, grabs the bag, wading into the pasture's depths.

She turns and looks. A dull dinging bell sound grows ...

A herd of cows are approaching from the void. Charolais ready for slaughter, they are grazing and walking unsteadily.

As they approach, they gape at Sage, covered with blood.

Five late night roamers stare at her ...

The two parties exchange stares at length. Sage inches forward, rubs the snout of the fat one in the center.

The herd remains indifferent and continues on their grazing.

Sage watches them disappear ...

MINUTES LATER

Sage walking further into the endless pasture. The babbles of a brook nearby. Wind stirs the brush surrounding her.

She is not yet near the source ...

She looks down:

Mounds of Yucca block her walking path, the groupings of three to five each smatter the untilled pasture.

She nears one of the Yucca groupings. Examines a burrow.

She drops the bag down next to the hole.

A few paces away, she grabs a dead Yucca.

On her good knee, she kneels, claws out dry soil, widening the hole. She slides the bag over and packs it into the burrow and covers it with the dead Yucca.

Sage huffs, recovering from the strain of the work. She eases herself up to her feet and traces the barbed wire.

She digs at her knee. She inspects the wounds on her thigh, an inch deep. Blood laps weakly out. Something stops her.

She falls to her hip.

119

EXT. SMALL BROOK - NIGHT

119

There is the porch glow of a bunk house at the end of land.

In front of her ... a small waist high brook.

Sage staggers in, bringing water to her wounds.

She passes through to the other shore.

120

EXT. PASTURE - DAWN

120

Cicadas sing.

A saddled horse trots in rhythm with booted spur clicks of a man. Sage cradled on roots leading to the trunk of an acacia.

A cowboy beams down at her, twirling the metal chained lead of the horse in spirals.

Sage struggling to support herself against the trunk. Back to the cowboy, WYATT BLACK, mid-fifties, skeletal frame, bone dry skin, approaches, the spur rings fall silent as he slows.

His squint fades into a gaze. He is looking quizzically down.

The silence of the morning fills with robin and raven chirps.

Sage's hand raises up to her face, catching a length of barbed wire. Her pants are gnarled open, exposing her bloody thighs and shins. Her look up is glazed.

Wyatt stares. Sage pulls at the wire.

WYATT

Well, howdy sunshine.

126 INT./EXT. ROLLS ROYCE/BACK ROAD - DAY

126

Nacona sits next to the Father, they drive in silence. His Masonic pinky ring clanking against the steering wheel.

127 INT./EXT. LOCKHART TRAILER - FRONT PORCH - DAY

127

The car parked in the drive. Nacona steps onto the porch, the Father a few steps behind, toupee bobbling with each step.

FATHER

Ma'am?

They're both at the front door. Nacona fits the key into the hole, turns the key and then the door knob.

NACONA

It's kind to stop by but get the hell-

Nacona whips open the door to expose Nora laying wallered in the carpet, foaming at the mouth.

NACONA (CONT'D)

What in the goddamn hell.

NORA

I think them pills been spiked.

NACONA

How many of them did you swallow?

NORA

I just took one of 'em, Mama.

NACONA

Couldn't you just smoked some dope  
instead?

NORA

We didn't have no good dope here.

Nacona pulls a water pot off the porch and dumps it on Nora.

FATHER

Looks bad. You want me to take her  
up to the hospital in Childress?

Nacona slams the watering pot onto the table.

NACONA

(to Father)

Get the hell off my damn porch.

129

INT. PADUCAH - SOPHIA'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

129

Nacona and Nora sit diagonally across from one another at Sophia's dinner table. Sophie comes into the room with somebody's toddler on her hip and a cup of coffee in her other hand. She sits and slides the cup across to Nacona.

Nacona smirks.

NACONA

Thank you little missy. I needed  
this fix.

Sophie frees the kiddo in her lap. He runs off.

SOPHIA

Boutta get these kids burgers.  
What'd you wanna see me for?

NACONA

Has Cash called you yet?

SOPHIA

No he hasn't ...

NACONA

(to Nora)  
Ricky?

NORA

Him neither ...

NACONA  
(to Sophia)  
Can you look after Nora?

SOPHIA  
Well, I don't know. Need me to  
babysit a forty-year-old?

NACONA  
She's more like a teenager.

SOPHIA  
(chuckling)  
Did she shit the bed again?

NACONA  
It's that Shake n' bake horse shit.

NORA  
Momma, I can look after myself--

NACONA  
Wrong. Nora, We're gettin' you  
medication.

NORA  
Prescriptions don't work in no way.

NACONA  
I wish I could put up with this but  
I got financial matters to address  
with Ricky gone.

A beat.

SOPHIA  
They ain't gone nowhere ...

Nacona looks at her.

After a beat:

NACONA  
My daddy was a farmer. Land was out  
there north of Chalk.

Nora shakes her head, shrugs.

NACONA (CONT'D)  
We harvested different crops  
dependin' on the year, well what we  
could afford ...

Nora rolls her eyes.

NACONA (CONT'D)

And he wound up settlin' on cotton.  
So here it's nineteen-eighty-two and  
daddy got me and a single harvester  
workin eighty five acres ... A  
ranchin' conglomerate came and  
lobbied with the state,  
gerrymandered most of the  
surroundin' land away from the  
farmers. We couldn't operate above  
cost with how much we gave up. They  
paid us some ... There was seventy  
farmers in Paducah then, think  
there's four now. The extra free  
time with his new job at the  
gasoline plant led to him pickin'  
up other hobbies ... So then we got  
the trailer ...

She takes a sip of coffee, leaving room for Sophia to  
interject if inclined.

She does not.

NACONA (CONT'D)

Holler when Cash calls, just ask  
him 'bout Ricky and Sage.

Nacona sets down her finished cup of coffee.

Another beat.

NACONA (CONT'D)

Well, dry-land cotton farmin'  
durin' drought season wasn't the  
brightest idea to begin with ...

NACONA (CONT'D)

Couldn't get an abatement for the  
boll weevil ...

Another beat. Nora stares at Nacona.

NORA

Why you cryin' about your pappy?

NACONA

Ain't we talkin' parasites?