

**OPEN ON:**

Alaska.

Green trees and blue ocean as far as the eye can see. White tongues of glaciers plunge from snow-capped peaks to lap at ice-blue inlets.

An ISLAND; full of houses on stilts, that seem to cling to the liminal space between land and water. Eagles play, otters gambol and nature is everywhere.

Across a large bay, a bigger town. Rugged fishing vessels compete with small fishing boats where a large, singular piece of sand juts into the bay: HOMER.

Beyond Homer, where paved roads give way to dusty ones and the houses become sparse, then disappear altogether. Is another place, a place where signage is clear: "Keep Out. Private Property".

*Ninilchik.*

A community not big enough to be called a town. A collection of homes around a central CHURCH whose onion-shaped spires and strange looking cross make it immediately clear it belongs to the Orthodox.

And among that collection of houses...

FADE TO:

**INT. SHOWER - DAY**

GREEN EYES: Bright and intense.

**RUSALKA (17)** is enjoying the heat of a hot shower. The eyes close in simple pleasure.

Through steam we glimpse bright red hair, a pure white complexion and lean, strong muscles. But when she reaches down to scrub her leg she FLINCHES IN PAIN.

Bracing her foot on the soap dish, she cranes to examine her ankle more closely, the water continuing to run. Whatever's caught the washcloth is small, a baby's toenail. She plucks at the glint.

CLOSE UP: **A SCALE?**

It won't come off when she swipes at it. In fact, it seems ATTACHED to her skin.

With a look of disgust and surprise she nips the offending scale between her thumb and forefinger, yanking it off like a particularly troublesome hair.