

THE UNBOUND

Written by

Sam West

Samwisewestwilliams@gmail.com

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. CATSKILLS MOUNTAINS - MORNING

The sun shines through a gray winter sky, breaking between the towering pines of upstate New York. Civilization couldn't be further away.

We close in on: A STRANGE LILIUM FLOWER growing through the snow, ghostly white stamen surrounded by black petals.

The CRACKING of nearby branches. Then another CRACK, audibly closer.

The naked, bloody feet of a haggard looking WOMAN shamble slowly through the snow, crushing the flower underfoot. A shackle dragging a short length of chain is clasped to her ankle, toe nails cracked and bruised.

Her legs, nearly black with filth, give out in exhaustion. She catches her fall with one heavily scarred arm.

Her long hair obscures her face. She is woefully unprepared for the weather, wearing nothing but a dirty shift. She coughs up blood on the forest floor.

She struggles to prop herself up but the woman drudges onward, disappearing into the forest.

CUT TO:

INT. PHILADELPHIA DIVE BAR

A local watering hole for the down and out. Townes Van Zandt croons a sad song from a jukebox in the back.

At the bar drinking her whiskey is RACHEL SILVERMAN, mid 20's, beautiful in a worn way. At her feet is a duffle bag.

Tending bar is TOM. He gently raps his knuckles in front of Rachel to get her attention.

TOM

'Nother?

Rachel checks her watch, swirling the last few sips in her tumbler, assessing the need for a refill.

RACHEL

One for the road with the check.

On the muted TV above the bar, a graphic of a night sky with several comets streaking through the black. The chyron on the bottom reads "RARE METEOR SHOWER ON ITS WAY".

TOM
You gonna watch?

Rachel nods as she signs the check, sliding it back to Tom.

TOM (CONT'D)
Whereabouts?

RACHEL
Meeting some people in the
Catskills.

TOM
Been a few times. Colder than a
witch's tit this time of year.

RACHEL
You get your hands on many witch
teats?

TOM
Got a pair back at home, and only
if she lets me.

Rachel chuckles to herself and shakes her head at the bad joke, downing her parting drink. She grabs her bag from the floor and gets up to walk out the door.

RACHEL
See ya around, Tom.

Rachel opens the front door and walks through into...

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - MORNING

Morning light shining over the icy streets of Philadelphia's Fishtown district.

Digging through her backpack, she pulls out her headphones and sunglasses, donning them like a safety blanket. She straightens up and walks up the city street.

EXT. BUS STOP - LATER

Rachel leans against a fence, headphones on, applying shading to an impressive cyberpunk city in a notebook.

Nearby, a BOY (no more than 6) runs around the sidewalk pretending to shoot at imaginary fiends with finger-pistols. Rachel stops drawing, watching him play with a wistful look.

He points his finger at her, closing one eye to take aim.

BOY
(cutely)
Bang!

Rachel pretends to catch a bullet between her two fingers, bringing the imaginary bullet to her eye to inspect it. She FLICKS IT back at the boy, who jumps out the way. He stares bug-eyed at her amazing ability. Rachel smiles.

The door to the bus opens, and the driver steps out.

BUS DRIVER
7925 north-bound, now boarding!
Have your ticket out!

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel takes a seat near the back of the bus, leans her head up on the window, and closes her eyes.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

The bus heads north, passing through a dilapidated East Coast neighborhood.

INT. BUS - LATER

A BUMP jostles Rachel awake. She rubs the sleep from her eyes and turns to watch the world pass by outside.

The bus begins to accelerate. Rachel looks ahead to the driver... Something she sees gets her up in her seat.

Every other passenger is gone. The bus engine's pitch crescendos to a deafening roar. She looks up the aisle.

RACHEL'S POV: Sitting in the driver's seat is an OLDER MAN, skeletal and pale, staring at her with a horrifying intensity in the rear view mirror.

The Older Man turns his head to look back down the aisle at her. The top half of the man's face is gone, jaw gaping open to reveal a gory red maw. A RINGING pierces the air.

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Rachel wakes with a start. In her bag, her phone RINGS. She rummages through her pack

RACHEL
Come on, where the fuck are you...

The ringing stops just as she pulls out her phone. Caller ID indicating a missed call from "MARGOT". Rachel calls back. It barely even rings once.

MARGOT (O.S.)
(on phone)
What uuuuuuup!

Rachel cracks a much needed smile.

RACHEL
Hey Margot.

MARGOT
I am so dang excited to see you!
You're on the bus?

RACHEL
Yeah, just... waking up from a nap.
Kinda foggy.

MARGOT
You know how far you got left?

RACHEL
(slurring slightly)
I dunno, I was out like a light
right when I got on.

A beat.

MARGOT
You feeling okay?

RACHEL
Yeah, yeah. Just, you know. Tired.

Another beat. Rachel's eyes stare into the distance.

MARGOT
This is gonna be fun. I promise.

RACHEL
(slightly unsure)
Yeah, I know.

MARGOT

Let me know when you're close,
yeah?

RACHEL

Alright, I'll see you soon.

MARGOT

Okay, love you.

RACHEL

Love you too.

Rachel hangs up, lets it all out in one long sigh. She leans back against the window, watching the trees pass in a blur.

EXT. BUS STOP - AFTERNOON

A bus stop in a quiet, all-American town.

Parked across the bus stop with a huge "RACHEL" sign tucked under her arm is MARGOT PHILLIPS, mid 20's, headstrong with a relaxed demeanor, exuding an effortless cool.

Leaning on the car next to her is JAY SMITH, mid 20's, brooding over a cigarette burning at the filter. Dark eyes, hair shaved close to the head, black hoody under the leather jacket to match.

Two African-Americans in a white town. An older couple stares at them as they walk by. Jay and Margot don't react much to the attention.

JAY

When is the bus supposed to get
here?

MARGOT

When it gets here.

Jay uses the smoldering remains of his cigarette to light his next one before flicking it away.

Margot gives a wry smile.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

You nervous?

JAY

Nah. Just cold as fuck.

(a beat)

I can't remember the last time I
saw her.

Margot holds her hand out, and Jay passes her the cigarette.

JAY (CONT'D)
Wish I had kept in touch.

MARGOT
Mhmm.

She takes a drag, passes the cigarette back to Jay.

JAY
I wanted to reach out. So much time
had passed since that stuff with
her mom. And then last year, when
her dad... You know...
(a beat)
You think she's still mad at me?

MARGOT
(shaking her head)
You should ask her that yourself.
Probably could have used some
support.

JAY
Yeah but-

Margot holds up her hand.

MARGOT
Boy, I'm not the one you gotta
explain to.

From down the way, the BUS comes into view.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
(smiling)
There she is.

The bus screeches to a halt at the bus station. Margot holds up her sign as high as she can. Rachel steps off the bus, blushing when she sees the welcome party.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
(with the same effortless
cool)
Look at this fucking goddess!

Rachel spins for all the world to see like a model on a catwalk as she saunters over to her friend. The two embrace and laugh like sisters. They hug it out for a tender moment.

Jay approaches timidly.

JAY
Hey, Rachel.

Rachel's smile falters with the surprise.

RACHEL
Jay... It's been a minute.

JAY
(staring at the ground)
Yeah, sorry I haven't... yeah.

Jay goes in awkwardly for a hug which Rachel reciprocates for his sake, giving Margot a funny look.

RACHEL
Thanks for coming to get me.

He separates, uncomfortable with contact. His eyes dart around, unable to meet Rachel's.

JAY
My bus got here a few hours ago. Me and Margot have just been catchin' up.

RACHEL
You've been waiting that long for me? I could have gotten a ride, you didn't have to do that!

MARGOT
Oh, come on. It's nothing.

They stand there for a beat, their breath rising in plumes in the winter air.

JAY
I'm gonna get something to eat for the drive. Anyone want anything?

RACHEL
No, thanks.

MARGOT
I'm good.

JAY
Alright, cool. Be right back.

Just as he is about to walk off...

MARGOT
Jay, wait!

Jay stops and turns.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Get some chips. Surprise me.

Jay gives a mock salute and shuffles off.

Once he's walked far enough away, Margot gives Rachel a devilish look. Rachel responds by playfully slapping Margot's boob with the back of her hand.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Ow, bitch!

RACHEL
You didn't tell me he was gonna be here.

MARGOT
(smiling, suggestive)
You worried something might happen?

RACHEL
Fuck off. Not a chance.

MARGOT
Come on, I'm just messin' with you.
Nothing you gotta worry about. He
was nervous about seeing you.
Couldn't even look you in the eye!

They laugh like sisters, getting back in for a warm hug.

RACHEL
I fucking missed you.

MARGOT
I fucking missed you too.

Margot kisses her friend's forehead.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Get in shotty. You're in charge of
the tunes.

Rachel and Margot get in the car as sprinkles of snow begin to fall.

INT. MARGOT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Margot buckles up and pulls a vape pen from her pocket, taking a hit. She offers it to Rachel.

RACHEL
What's in that?

Margot blows plumes from her nostrils.

MARGOT
(with a killer smile)
Just a little jazz cabbage.

Rachel considers, then waves it off.

RACHEL
Nah, not yet. Don't wanna be an
alien when I meet these people.

Margot nods and pockets the pen.

MARGOT
Fair enough.

Margot looks at Rachel with a look of the upmost love.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Everyone's excited to meet you. And
you'll finally meet Greg! This'll
be one for the books, babe.

RACHEL
Who all is gonna be there?

MARGOT
Us three, and then my friends from
school. Brooke, her new friend
Nicki...

Rachel nods, starts scratching her thumb with her forefinger
with growing subconscious anxiety.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Christy, her boyfriend Hunter, he
was a couple classes above us,
works in bonds, or stocks, or
whatever. He brought his buddy
Jimmy he knows from work. And then
there's Greg!

RACHEL
Greg in finance, too?

MARGOT
Yup. Works with Hunter and Jimmy.

RACHEL
(cracking a smile)
And the ladies, these are some of
your sorority "sisters"?

MARGOT
(giving a little side eye)
Yeah.

RACHEL
Do you all have any little songs
you sing? Can I hear one now?

Rachel raises her eyebrows and smiles a little.

MARGOT
I smell what you're stepping in,
Rachel. Be nice.

RACHEL
Sorry, I know.
(puts on a silly posh
accent)
You're quite the socialite, my
dear!

MARGOT
(smiling)
Oh, shut it.

The two buckle up.

RACHEL
It's Greg's place, right?

Margot nods, smiling.

MARGOT
Wait 'til you see it. It's
unbelievable. My toilet has a
bidet, Rachel.
(raises her eyebrows)
A fucking BIDET.

RACHEL
I'm excited to meet him.

MARGOT
He's... one of a kind. I think you
two will get along pretty well.

RACHEL
Yeah?

MARGOT

I donno... it's like... you know, in "Harry Potter", how the only people who can see those zombie horses are those who've been in the presence of death?

RACHEL

No, you fucking nerd.

MARGOT

Bitch you know what I mean. You've both been through a lot. You speak a common language.

RACHEL

What happened to him?

MARGOT

Lost his parents and a brother when he was young. Car accident.

RACHEL

Fuck.

MARGOT

Yeah. He was in the back seat. Then his sister disappeared a couple years after that. Went out to a movie and was never seen again. He said they were pretty close.

Something Margot sees ahead of her breaks her attention. She points outside.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

(laughing endearingly)

Look at him.

They watch as Jay speed-walks across the street towards the car, bags of snacks in hand.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Your knight in shining armor.

RACHEL

(dead pan)

Ravish me.

MARGOT

Ravish? Jay? Nah, more like... (mimicking Jay performing pathetic sex)

(MORE)

MARGOT (CONT'D)

Oh, oh God, I love you, I fucking
loUGHHhh

(softly, spent)

Ohhhhh, oh Jesus...

They laugh as Jay reaches the car and gets in the back seat.

JAY

What's so funny?

MARGOT

Just some bullshit. What do we owe
you?

JAY

I got this one.

RACHEL

You sure?

Jay finally makes eye contact with Rachel for the first time since they got together.

JAY

No sweat. It all comes around.

Jay throws a bag of Combos from the provisions to Margot.

MARGOT

Pepperoni Combos? Are we on an
airplane?

(tosses it back)

You fucking psycho.

They all laugh together as old friends do.

EXT. BUS STOP - CONTINUOUS

Their car pulls out the bus station, heading towards the mist covered mountains in the distance as snow begins to fall.

EXT. CATSKILL MOUNTAINS - EVENING

Margot's car weaves through the mountain roads, surrounded by nature:

A frozen waterfall. Dense, silent winter forests covered in snow. An abandoned cottage succumbing to the elements.

Beautiful as it is, they are truly driving into the middle of nowhere.

INT. MARGOT'S CAR

Margot's eyes are on the road. Rachel stares out her window.

Jay is in the backseat, sound asleep.

MARGOT

(to Rachel)

Wait til you see the sky up here at night. Perfect for the meteor shower. It's something else.

RACHEL

I bet.

MARGOT

You've never seen so many stars in your life.

RACHEL

You don't get many in Philly these days.

MARGOT

That sweet, sweet light pollution.

RACHEL

Yeah, there's that, but... you ever feel like there were a lot more when we were younger?

MARGOT

Stars?

Rachel nods.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

They haven't gone anywhere. Just depends on where you are and where you look.

RACHEL

I guess. Or they just up and left.

Margot makes a worried side glance at Rachel, who stares a thousand yards out the window.

MARGOT

What's going on in that pretty little head?

RACHEL

Just a tough time of year.

A FLASH OF A MEMORY: A door opening, feet on a tile floor, the stock of a shotgun resting between them.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Hard to keep shit off my mind.

A beat.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Like, what does it all mean?

MARGOT
What does what mean?

RACHEL
Any of it. Like, the shit just seems to go on, and on, and I wanna say, "why me?", but then I think about, you know, kids getting cancer, or Ebola, or being born gay in the wrong part of the world. And my shit feels so small compared to that. But it doesn't make it less exhausting. And what is any of it for?

Rachel shakes her head. A moment of silence between them.

MARGOT
I'm not sure anyone really knows. You've been through a lot, and there's no good reason for that. But we endure, together. And I just hope you know that I'm always here for you.

Rachel rubs a stray tear and she nods.

RACHEL
I know.

MARGOT
Just don't give up on me, okay?

Margot takes Rachel's hand in hers, holding tight. Rachel just stares out the window.

Jay's snoring reaches a peak, making the girls smile.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
This fucking oaf.

He stirs, mumbling nonsense, still half asleep.

Something in the road catches Rachel's eye, making her shift in her seat uneasily...

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADS - SAME

The car moves ahead on the road, revealing the CARCASS OF A DEAD DEER on the side of the road, limbs twisted and bent, eyes empty and lifeless.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DUSK

The car pulls around a bend and up a long driveway until they reach a gorgeous home nestled in the mountains. Surrounding the house is a dark, endless expanse of forest.

INT. MARGOT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jay wakes, his eyes growing wide as he stares at the house.

JAY

Margot, you better marry this guy.

MARGOT

Bit too soon for that kinda talk.
We're just enjoying the moment for now.

JAY

Shouldn't be too hard with a place like this.

Outside, the snowstorm has picked up considerably.

JAY (CONT'D)

Glad we got here when we did,
shit's coming down hard.

MARGOT

Yeah, supposed to clear tonight in time for the shower, though.

Margot pushes a button that pops the trunk as they all get out of the car together.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jay walks in a brisk pace to the trunk, getting out several bags.

JAY
 (handing Margot her
 backpack)
 That's you.

MARGOT
 Cheers, love!

Rachel stands staring in awe at the house.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
 Fucking crazy huh?
 (pats Rachel's back)
 Come on, let's go see everyone!

Margot gets to the front door and peeks her head inside.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
 (to whoever is inside)
 Hellooooo!

VOICES (O.S.)
 (from inside)
 HEY!!!!!!!

Rachel stands still before the house. The growing storm whips around her, her hair flying about as snow blows every which way.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - FRONT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

A stark contrast to the winter storm outside, Rachel and Jay walk into a warm, cabin-cozy mansion in the Adirondacks.

JAY
 (dumbstruck)
 Damn.

MARGOT (O.S.)
 Yo! In here!

Turning to her left, Rachel sees Margot motioning her to come into the kitchen.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
 Just drop your shit, we'll get you
 situated in a little. Come say hi!

Rachel and Jay comply and walk into the kitchen.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN

Rachel and Jay walk into the minimalist modern kitchen and can't help but gawk. The wealth is palpable.

Lounging around the island are a group of four young adults laughing at a private joke.

MARGOT

Everybody, these are my day ones,
Rachel and Jay.
(to Rachel)
Rachel and Jay, this is everybody!

Sitting at the far end is BROOKE HEYMAN, mid 20's, hipster white girl, the first to crack a smile and wave.

Brooke gets up and walks over to Rachel without an ounce of shyness, giving her a big hug.

BROOKE

You made it!

RACHEL

(slightly uncomfortable)
Hah, yeah. Hey.

BROOKE

I'm Brooke! It is SO great to meet
you! Can we fix you guys a drink?
You've probably been on the road
for a while, huh?

Rachel gives a shy smile.

RACHEL

Yeah, sure.

MARGOT

(to Brooke)
You gonna introduce your friend?

BROOKE

Oh shit, duh!

Brooke points at NICKI MOON, mid 20's, a striking young Korean woman with the eccentric flair of an artist.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

This is Nicki!

Nicki gives Rachel a little wave with a tattooed hand.

NICKI

Howdy.

RACHEL

Hey.

JAY

Yo.

Slowly turning around with a "too cool to care" attitude is CHRISTY HAYNES, mid 20's, "it" girl from her ombre hair to pedicured toes.

CHRISTY

Hey. Christy.

She doesn't get up for a more personal greeting.

RACHEL

Nice to meet you.

Christy puts out her hand and gives a picture perfect smile.

CHRISTY

Nice to finally put a face to the name.

MARGOT

What're we drinking here?

BROOKE

Nicki's been brewing up some Sazeracs.

NICKI

Boujee drink for a boujee place.
(points to Rachel)
You in?

RACHEL

(nodding)
Let's dive in.

Nicki points to Jay. Jay waves it off, shaking his head.

JAY

I'm good.

Nicki gets to making the drinks at the nearby bar with the skill of a professional mixologist.

MARGOT

Where are the boys?

BROOKE

Think they're outside. Greg is out there showing off his new toy to Hunter and Jimmy.

Margot rolls her eyes.

CHRISTY

(sipping her drink)
Boys and their guns.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK

Rachel's hand pushing open a bathroom door. The Older Man (from her nightmare on the bus) sits on a dirty toilet, shotgun between his knees, teeth biting down on the barrel.

He looks upwards with eyes full of pain, his big toe poised to put pressure on the trigger.

CUT TO:

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel blinks the memory away. Margot clocks the discomfort and is quick to steer the conversation elsewhere.

MARGOT

So Rachel, Nicki is an artist too! Her work was just featured at a gallery in Brooklyn.

RACHEL

Oh yeah?

Nicki coats each glass with an absinthe rinse as she speaks.

NICKI

(with genuine humility)
Just thankful it keeps the lights on.
(to Rachel)
What do you do? Margot was telling me yesterday you like to draw, too.

RACHEL

Nothing too crazy like that, just-

MARGOT

She is really underselling herself. Rachel is super talented. Been working on a graphic novel that is MIND blowing.

BROOKE

Oh my god, I LOVE comic books. What's it about?

Nicki passes out the finished drinks to Margot and Rachel.

NICKI

(to Brooke, calmly)
A graphic novel isn't a comic, babe.

BROOKE

What's the difference?

RACHEL

Well... It is a comic, in form. But a graphic novel... it's not just about super toned people in costumes beating each other up. Hopefully, it's got a little more depth. It's like a novel, but... with pictures.

She notices everyone is looking at her. She retreats into herself.

Christy hides a smile as she sips her drink, speaking with thinly veiled sarcasm.

CHRISTY

Sounds really cool.

Nicki's eyes narrow at Christy behind her back.

NICKI

(sincerely, to Rachel)
That DOES sound really cool. You bring any of your illustrations with you?

RACHEL

(guarded)
No... I mean, yeah, but, nothing that's finished.

NICKI

I would love to take a look at them if you're okay with that.

Rachel gives a shy smile.

RACHEL
Yeah, sure.

The WHOOSH of the winter wind coming in through the front door, followed by the all too loud laughter of confident men.

MARGOT
There they are.

Rachel leans over to see who has arrived.

HUNTER ROSS, mid 20's, the taller of the two, is the country club type of handsome who exudes an air of a life of little worry. The other slice of white bread is JIMMY MURRAY, mid 20's, an overweight finance bro ironically wearing blue collar trappings. They carelessly stomp snow from their feet onto the floor.

JIMMY
Ho-lee shit it's fuckin' cold out there!

Margot has a confused look on her face.

MARGOT
Where's Greg?

HUNTER
Still out there in the woods.

MARGOT
What is he doing?

JIMMY
Calm your tits, sweetie. He said he'd be right in.

CHRISTY
Ew, you neanderthal, you did NOT just tell her to "calm her tits".

JIMMY
Alright, alright, just making a joke, no need to rile yourself up.

Margot looks at Rachel like she's withholding the urge to let Jimmy have it as the two men walk into the kitchen.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
What're we drinking?

Jimmy stops when he sees Rachel, instinctually eyes her up and down before extending his hand in greeting.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Jimmy. Nice to meet you.

Rachel shakes his hand.

RACHEL
Rachel.

Jimmy opens the fridge, taking out a beer and opening the bottle with his teeth.

MARGOT
You still fucking do that?

Jimmy takes a sip while giving Margot a thumbs up.

Hunter walks in after and b-ines it to Christy, hugging her from behind.

HUNTER
Hey there little mama. Sorry,
(motions to Jimmy)
Peter Pan here doesn't want to grow
up.

Christy lifts her head, and they do a little upside down kiss.

MARGOT
Hunter.

Hunter turns to Margot.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
You say hi to Rachel?

Hunter turns to look at Rachel.

HUNTER
Hey. I'm Hunter.

RACHEL
Hey.

HUNTER
You go to school with us?

RACHEL
Nope.

HUNTER
Oh? Where did you go to school
then?

RACHEL
No school for me.

Hunter gives her a look like, "oh well isn't that peculiar"
for a moment, before flashing a smile.

HUNTER
Well, you didn't miss much. Place
was pretty much a boarding school
for young alcoholics.

JIMMY
Brethren of the Boot n' rally!

HUNTER
(calling out)
Boot n' loot!

They all laugh at the inside joke, the boys the hardest.
Rachel looks around awkwardly.

Her eyes catch Jay's. Jay rolls his eyes while slightly
shaking his head in disapproval. Rachel smiles.

JIMMY
When are we gonna get to cooking?
I'm starving!

BROOKE
You making us dinner, Jimmy?

JIMMY
Shit no.

BROOKE
Alright, then be patient. It should
be done soon. Should we wait for
Greg?

MARGOT
No, let's get to it. He wants to
wander in the woods with guests
over, he can be late to his own
dinner.
(to Rachel)
Rach, take your stuff downstairs,
your room is the door on the left
down at the end of hall.

RACHEL
Alright, I'll be back. Nice to meet
you guys!

Rachel goes to the front door and grabs her bag, heading down the stairs.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The voices behind her soften as she goes down the stairs to the ground floor hallway.

She takes in the surroundings as she walks towards her room, pictures of scenic mountain views hanging on the walls.

She pauses in front of one frame to examine it: A family standing in front of the mountain house. In front are three children, a teenage boy standing behind a younger brother and sister. His hands hold onto the younger brother's shoulders.

The father stands behind the children, smiling. The mother stands next to him, not staring at the camera, but instead towards the teenage boy with a cold, hard face.

Rachel moves ahead and reaches her room. She is just about to open the door and head in, when she pauses.

She looks behind her. The door across the way is open just slightly.

Her curiosity gets the best of her as she turns around and slowly opens the door, revealing a dark room. She steps inside.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - TROPHY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rachel's hand fumbles for a light switch on the wall. She finds one, but just as the light turns on, something on the ground tips over with a loud metallic CRASH, making her jump.

On the ground is a tipped over metal bucket holding SMALL BRIGHT ORANGE STAKE FLAGS, many of which now litter the floor.

RACHEL
(catching her breath)
Shit...

She bends over and picks them up quickly, putting them back in the bucket, setting it right where she assumes it was before she knocked it over.

She finally gets a good look at the room.

Small, windowless, a cement floor with a drain in the middle. A wooden butcher's block is fixed to the back wall, thoroughly stained with large patches of dark blood. An assortment of knives for sawing and slicing hang on the wall above the table.

The mounted heads of double-digit point bucks stare down at Rachel with lifeless glass eyes. Below the most magnificent of them all, a REPEATING CROSSBOW hangs on a display rack.

A large, beautifully illustrated map of the surrounding area is fixed to the wall on her right. She steps up to it in awe.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Wow.

The mountain house is drawn in impressive detail despite its small size relative to the rest of the map.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

There we are...

Surrounding the house on the map is an immense swath of forest represented by many, many trees.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

This must have taken forever.

Something catches her eye. Far north of the mountain house on the map, a perfect circle is drawn in bright orange around a decently sized section of the forest. At the circle's center is a small RUNIC SYMBOL.

Just to the east of this zone, a drawing of a FIRE TOWER.

After observing the illustrated map, she turns around to look at the opposite wall.

The entire wall is bare, save for a MASK made from a strip of bark, two ocular holes chipped into the face. Painted onto the mask in a mysterious substance is the same strange rune-like symbol as on the map.

She approaches the wall and lifts her hand to touch the mask.

Suddenly, a loud BUMP from behind her makes Rachel spin around...

But nothing is there.

She laughs to herself to shake off the spooks and goes to leave the room. She takes one look back at the mask, turns the light off, and shuts the door behind her as she leaves.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel sits on the bed, dropping her bag to the ground. She lies back, sinking into the mattress like a cloud.

On the bedside table are two objects of note: A potted plant with the STRANGE BLACK LILIUM growing from the dirt. Next to it, an iron figurine of a salamander next to the pot. She picks it up and examines it before placing it back down.

From upstairs comes the sound of riotous laughter. She rummages through her bag, bringing out a dopp kit.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel unloads the contents of the dopp kit onto the marble bathroom counter. A worn toothbrush, a nearly empty tube of tooth paste, and a RAZOR.

She digs a bit deeper and pulls out a prescription bottle with no label.

More laughter from upstairs. She opens the bottle, two Percocets landing in her palm.

Rachel uses a glass to crush pills on the marble countertop. She takes a rolled up bill and rails them both in quick succession. She slides down the wall and sits on the ground as she lets the chemicals take over.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The snow is bearing down hard as the wind howls outside. Rachel zips up her bag and looks out the window.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL'S POV: A man in a bright colored jacket walking in from the trees, alone, just at the edge of the light in the midst of the storm, looking back at the tree-line.

She stares for a moment too long. His head turns, and he is looking DIRECTLY AT HER, face obscured by the dark. Rachel ducks down out of sight.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - LATER

Rachel walks up the stairs. Everyone (except Greg) sits at a dinner table topped by a lavish feast. Margot sees Rachel and waves her on over.

MARGOT

Rach, c'mere! You're sitting next to me.

Rachel moves to her seat, sitting between Margot and Jay.

BROOKE

Should we dig in?

MARGOT

Yeah let's do it. I don't know what's going on with Greg.

RACHEL

I think I saw him outside.

MARGOT

Yeah?

RACHEL

Yeah, he was coming out of the woods.

A look on Margot's face as if saying "huh"?

The front door opens. A tall, slender man enters, taking off his yellow jacket and hanging it on the coat rack.

JIMMY

Look who decided to show up!

Greg turns. Built like a greek god, darkly handsome with eyes that emit a stone cold calm, the kind of person that makes a movie slow down.

MARGOT

(indignant)

Where have you been?

He walks over, kissing Margot on the cheek. It's not enough to melt the icy glare in her eye.

GREG

Went for a walk. Easy to get lost in there.

He moves his eyes up, looking intently at Rachel. A charming smile breaks on his face.

GREG (CONT'D)
You must be Rachel.

He walks over to her chair and kneels, takes her hand in his.

GREG (CONT'D)
It's great to finally meet you.

RACHEL
(a tad uncomfortable)
Yeah, you too.

He gets up and sits at the head of the table.

GREG
Sorry everyone. Please, indulge
yourselves.

Everyone gets to the eating, the drinking, the revelry.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - LATER

Several bottles of wine later. Rachel absentmindedly pushes
mashed potatoes around on her plate.

BROOKE
Rachel, what about you?

Rachel breaks from her trance.

RACHEL
Say what?

BROOKE
Favorite author.

RACHEL
That's really tough. Boiling it
down to one... probably Stephen
King.

JAY
"The Stand" is a classic.

MARGOT
Or "The Long Walk"! All the Bachman
books, really.

BROOKE
Ugh, and "Carrie"!

CHRISTY

I guess airport literature has its value.

Everyone turns their head towards the snarky comment, Christy feigning indifference as she sips her wine.

JAY

What do you mean by that?

CHRISTY

Stephen King is hardly Shakespeare.

RACHEL

I don't think he ever called himself that either, but the guy has an imagination that's impossible to deny. He's the Lovecraft of our era.

NICKI

Without the racism.

HUNTER

Oh, come on! Lovecraft was a man of his time.

NICKI

Here we go...

HUNTER

What? You can't blame a person for views they inherited from a culture they were born into.

NICKI

This the hill you die on? Defending a dead guy for his racist bullshit?

MARGOT

I'm just gonna stop this conversation right here.

JIMMY

(nudging Hunter)

Stuck in the middle of nowhere with a bunch of SJW's.

NICKI

Since when did social justice become a bad thing?

GREG (O.S.)

It's starting.

Everyone turns to Greg, surprised to hear him speak. He is looking outside, in his own little world.

MARGOT

Looks like the storm cleared up.
I'll get to the dishes and meet you
all out there.

Everyone gets up and starts moving towards the door to head outside.

Rachel gets up and starts picking up plates.

RACHEL

I'll help.

Margot smiles.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - LATER

Rachel and Margot clean plates in the kitchen.

MARGOT

So, what do you think?

RACHEL

About?

MARGOT

Greg.

RACHEL

Oh. I mean, just met him really.
He's pretty quiet.

MARGOT

He usually is. Not one to waste
words.

RACHEL

How did you meet?

MARGOT

Jimmy and Hunter work with him.
Worship the guy. Always going on
about him. About a year ago, I went
out with the guys and Greg was
there, too. We got to talking, and
you know... here we are.

RACHEL

He's put a spell on you.

MARGOT
He's got that way about him.

RACHEL
I get that. Hey Margot... Thanks
for this. For inviting me up here
with your friends.

Margot puts the last dish in the dishwasher and closes it
shut. She goes in and hugs Rachel.

MARGOT
Of course, babe. I figured you
needed this. Now come on, let's go
outside before we miss it.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The crew stands outside bundled up and staring skyward. Up
above, meteors streak across the sky at an impressive rate.

BROOKE
(to Nicki)
Holy shit! You see that one!

NICKI
Yes babe. I'm looking at the same
sky you are.

Rachel stands a bit off to the side away from everyone else.

Jay walks up next to her, blunt in hand. He offers it to her.
She accepts it and takes a hit.

RACHEL
Thanks.

JAY
No problem. You looked like you
could use it.

RACHEL
(defensive)
What do you mean by that?

JAY
NO, no, nothing bad, just like...
this isn't my tribe either. Know
what I mean?

Rachel takes another hit as she nods.

RACHEL
(smiling)
Yeah. I do.

JAY
You are though. And Margot. I
didn't mean everybody.

RACHEL
I hear you.
(a beat)
I'm glad I got to see you, Jay.

JAY
Yeah. Never felt good about how we
left things.

RACHEL
Only one of us here did the
leaving.

Jay gives a bashful smile to cover the sting.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Sorry. That wasn't very fair.

JAY
No, it's alright. I deserved that.

They stand there together, looking up at the stars burning
across the sky in silence for a moment.

Jimmy saunters over, swaying a bit with too much drink.

JIMMY
Hey, can I hit that?

JAY
Uh, sure man, yeah.

He passes the blunt to Jimmy, who takes one hit and nearly
hacks up a lung.

Jay gives a Rachel a little smirk.

JIMMY
(catching his breath)
So, Jay. Heard through the
grapevine you served over seas?

JAY
Yeah.

JIMMY

Hardcore, man. I just wanted to tell you that I respect that. Really.

Jimmy takes another hit.

JAY

Thanks, I guess.

JIMMY

You see any action?

JAY

Something like that.

BROOKE (O.S.)

WHOA! Look at that one!

Jimmy turns to see Brooke pointing up at the sky. Jay looks relieved to be done with that conversation.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

What if one of those comets, just, like, took a left turn towards us and...

Brooke makes a cutely drunk motion with her fist of a comet falling from the sky crashing to the earth, ending with an exaggerated explosion sound and gesture combination.

CHRISTY

Didn't catch that, could you do it again?

Brooke raises her hand to repeat herself, but Nicki tenderly takes her hand and lowers it, giving Christy a cold but discreet side eye.

NICKI

She's fuckin' with you, babe.

BROOKE

Oh...

Christy smiles to herself.

GREG

Indifference.

Rachel looks to Greg. He continues to stare upwards.

GREG (CONT'D)

The universe would move on.

MARGOT

Well that's fucking bleak.

GREG

For you, maybe. Grand scheme of things, though... Stars die, and the subsequent supernova could have wiped out whole systems of life and we wouldn't even know it. A rock colliding with our doomed planet would ultimately be as inconsequential as you absentmindedly stepping on an ant.

Rachel takes this in, looking at Greg curiously.

From a little ways away, Jimmy BURPS.

JIMMY

(loudly)

Well, this is fucking boring.

MARGOT

You can go inside, nobody's stopping you.

Rachel watches Jimmy give Margot the finger, then chugs some of his beer as he walks back to the house.

CHRISTY

Yeah, this is great and all but it's freezing.

(whispering in Hunter's ear)

Let's call it a night. Bed's waiting for us.

Hunter gives Christy a knowing grin and the two follow Jimmy into the house. Nicki walks over with a very tipsy Brooke.

NICKI

I gotta put this one down, but anyone in for a nightcap?

MARGOT

I think we're gonna call it, too.

Nicki looks to Rachel and Jay.

NICKI

Any takers?

Rachel and Jay look at one another. Jay shrugs.

RACHEL
Yeah, we're in.

Nicki smiles.

NICKI
My kinda people. I'll see you
inside.

Nicki holds Brooke up as they walk away.

Rachel and Jay stand out there together, gazing upwards.

EXT. WOODS

The dark and windy woods, the light of the MOUNTAIN HOUSE a bright dot far, far away. The sound of sticks CRACKING under pressure, as something with labored breathing approaches the house.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - LATER

Nicki, Jay, and Rachel sit on an oriental rug by a cozy fire playing Pyramids. Nicki flips the next card in the sequence. The 2 of Clubs. Nicki rubs her chin in consideration.

NICKI
HMMMM. Rachel. Drink.

Rachel looks Nicki in the eye, squinting as if looking for some sort of sign. She takes a sizable sip.

RACHEL
Did you have it?

Nicki smiles and shrugs.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Flip the next one.

NICKI
Alright, this one's for all the
marbles, folks.

Nicki flips the last card at the top of the pyramid. 5 of Spades. Rachel and Jay look each other in the eye.

RACHEL
Jay.

JAY
Nope. Show me.

Rachel flips one of her cards, revealing the 5 of Diamonds.

RACHEL
(smiling)
Drink up.

Jay takes a pull and shakes the now empty can.

JAY
Need a new one. Anyone else?

RACHEL
No thanks.

Nicki lifts her drink.

NICKI
Good with this.

Jay gets up and walks off.

NICKI (CONT'D)
So, you friends with everyone here?

RACHEL
Just Margot. And Jay, I guess. We went to high school together. You?

NICKI
I met everyone through Brooke. Gotten kinda close with Margot.

RACHEL
How did you two meet? You and Brooke?

NICKI
She's a fly at the bar where I work part-time. Stayed past closing one night, and... I donno. I took her home. Rest is history. Pretty sure I'm the first girl she's been with.

Nicki points in the direction Jay went.

NICKI (CONT'D)
You two...?

Rachel shakes her head.

RACHEL
Nah. Almost, once. We haven't seen each other in a while.

NICKI

Hmm.

A beat of silence between them.

NICKI (CONT'D)

I like that guy. Means well.

RACHEL

Most the time, yeah.

NICKI

(pointing upstairs)

Certainly more personable than Chad
and Chaz up there.

Rachel laughs.

RACHEL

Margot sure knows how to pick her
friends.

NICKI

Yeah. Bit of a people pleaser. Not
the worst thing, I just see that
Jimmy guy WAY more than I like.

The sound of RETCHING from upstairs.

NICKI (CONT'D)

Uh oh.

RACHEL

That Brooke?

NICKI

I know that helpless retching from
anywhere. Think I gotta go save
her.

Nicki gets to her feet, stretches her back.

NICKI (CONT'D)

It's good to meet you, Rachel. Nice
to have a friendly face here.

RACHEL

Yeah, thanks. You too.

Nicki smiles and leaves.

EXT. WOODS

The lights of the mountain house are closer now, a beacon of warmth shining in the distance through a web of dead branches. The light CRUNCH of snow being stepped on is heard.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Rachel sits alone, staring into the fire.

JAY (O.C.)
Where'd she go?

Rachel turns to find Jay standing there, beer in hand.

RACHEL
Think Brooke needed some help holding her hair back. Probably checked out for the night.

JAY
Oh.

Rachel gets up. The two of them awkwardly stand there.

JAY (CONT'D)
You want to-

RACHEL
I think I'm gonna get to sleep.

Jay tries his best to hide his disappointment.

JAY
Yeah, yeah sure.

RACHEL
What're you gonna do?

JAY
Drink this, I guess. Maybe a couple more. Who knows? Not the best sleeper.
(beat)
Alright, well...

Jay goes in for a hug. They get in close, staying there holding each other for a tender moment.

They look into each other's eyes. Looks like the spark between them could grow into something more.

RACHEL
See you tomorrow.

JAY
Yeah. See you.

Rachel walks off, leaving Jay alone in the living room. He cracks the beer as he plops into a nearby chair.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM

Rachel sleeps. The CREAKING of wood wakes her up, her eyes opening with a start, darting around. She is alone.

She gets up and walks to the bathroom, standing in front of the mirror. She turns the faucet on and bends down, taking long sips straight from the source.

She gets back up and looks into the mirror, displeased.

She goes and gets back in bed, closes her eyes.

Another CREAK, her eyes open. The room is dark, but empty.

She turns over.

RACHEL'S POV: Laying next to her is a DARK SHAPE, reminiscent of a beautiful woman, skin a deep black like the night sky, bespeckled with tiny points of light like dying stars. Its black hair floats in the air, moving as if pushed by an invisible current.

Before she can scream, it puts its hand over Rachel's mouth, its face obscured by its flowing hair. Rachel writhes in terror.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM

Rachel wakes with a start, dripping sweat.

Somehow, she has moved onto the floor. The pot with the BLACK LILIUM is shattered next to her. She clutches the crushed flower in her hand.

She throws the flower across the way, hitting a wall and falling to the floor. She roots through her bag. She takes out a pill from the prescription bottle, popping it in her mouth.

She then takes out a pack of cigarettes and a bright orange lighter from her bag.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

The moon hangs heavy in the black sky, its light falling through a lacework of dead branches.

Rachel steps outside the house bundled in her winter jacket. She lights a cigarette, takes a heavy drag. She lets it out in one big exhale, face turned upwards.

In front of her, obscured by the darkness and snowfall, something from within the forest LIMPS TOWARDS HER.

Rachel keeps smoking, oblivious to the approaching shape.

RACHEL'S POV: A meteor streaks across the night sky. She smiles. Then she looks down.

THE WOMAN (from the intro) is mere feet in front of her. She takes slow steps towards her, the light illuminating her distressing state. Her shift is now covered in BLOOD, length of chain still dragging behind her ankle.

Rachel is too frightened to scream. The woman reaches out her frail hand, pleading.

WOMAN
(barely a whisper)
Please.

Rachel gets herself up and rushes up, catching the poor emaciated thing as she falls (Eagle-eyed viewers will catch a scar in the shape of the familiar STRANGE SYMBOL on the woman's arm).

The woman is mumbling something. Rachel leans in closer to listen, the woman's blue cracked lips almost touching her ear...

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(with quiet, manic terror)
... Came from beyond the stars.
From the infinite nothing. All
alone. For so long.
(giving out from
exhaustion)
So, so long...

She passes out, Rachel barely able to hold her up.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Jay sits on the chair right where we left him, dozing off with another beer in his hand.

RACHEL (O.S.)
(screaming)
Help!

Rachel's SCREAM from downstairs jerks him awake.

Jay looks around, unaware of where the sound is coming from.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Somebody! Help!

Jay bolts up and runs downstairs towards the commotion.

JAY
Rachel?

Jay gets to the landing and turns to find Rachel holding the woman up, taking her into her room.

RACHEL
Jay! Help me!

He stands shocked for a moment, then moves to help her take the broken woman into Rachel's room.

JAY
Who is she?

RACHEL
I don't know, lie her down on the bed.

They put her down gently, her skin white, her breathing extremely shallow.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Draw a bath, not too hot. I think she's dying.

Jay goes into the bathroom and starts running the water. He begins to pace around the room.

JAY
Where did she come from?

RACHEL
I don't know she just... walked out of the woods.

The Woman keeps mumbling to herself. Jay leans over to hear better.

JAY
What's she saying?

RACHEL

I don't know, something about
"coming from the stars", "the
infinite nothing?" I have no idea,
I think she's hallucinating.

Rachel looks around frantically.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Fuck, uh.... We need to call the
police! You have your phone?

Jay takes his phone from his pocket.

JAY

I have no service. Shit. Shit shit
shit. Um... go get Greg! Go quick,
I'll get her in the bath!

Rachel bolts out the door. Jay picks the woman up from the
bed and takes her into the bathroom.

He lowers the woman into the tub, warm water beginning to
fill it.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Rachel leaps up the stairs to the second floor, nearly
stumbling.

She gets to the door at the end of the hall and tries opening
it. Locked.

She starts banging on the door with her fist.

RACHEL

Greg! Greg get up! Get up!

Another door opens. Jimmy stands in the hallway, half asleep.

JIMMY

Would you shut the fuck up?

Rachel ignores him, keeps banging on the door.

Finally, it opens. Greg stands there looking at Rachel.

Behind Greg, Margot is stirring in the bed, putting a pillow
over her head to try and block the noise.

RACHEL
 (breathless)
 We got somebody downstairs, I think
 they're dying.
 (catching her breath)
 Came from the woods, and-

GREG
 Where is she?

RACHEL
 Down in my room. We need to call an
 ambulance, now!

Greg nearly knocks Rachel over as he pushes her aside,
 walking fast and with purpose down the hall past a confused
 Jimmy.

JIMMY
 Greg, what the fuck is happening?

Greg ignores Jimmy, walking down the stairs with purpose.

Rachel watches Greg go, a curious look on her face. Something
 gives her pause.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM

Jay holds the woman's head above water.

Jay looks over the woman's body. Scars from what looks like
 years of mutilation, sallow skin and wispy hair. She barely
 looks human.

JAY
 Come on, come on. Don't die on me.

A commotion from upstairs.

JAY (CONT'D)
 Help is coming. Hang in there.

The woman's eyes crack open slightly.

JAY (CONT'D)
 Yes! Hey, hey
 (pointing to the shackle)
 Who did this to you? Who put that
 on you?

Jay leans in close.

Suddenly, the woman's eyes go wide in terror.

Jay turns to find Greg standing at the doorway.

JAY (CONT'D)
Greg, thank god, did you make the call?

GREG
Has she said anything?

Jay makes a look of confusion.

JAY
What?

GREG
Did she say anything. Names, how she got here, where she came from, anything?

JAY
No, she hasn't really been able to talk.

Greg steps up to Jay, almost in a threatening way, certainly enough to assert some sort of dominance.

GREG
I got this. You make the call. The phone is in the laundry room in the back corner of the kitchen.

JAY
I think I should stay-

Greg stands over him, an urgency in his eye we haven't seen before.

GREG
Go, Jay. Now.

Jay nods and is about to get up to go, when the woman grabs his arm.

Jay turns to look at her. The woman looks terrified.

JAY
He's gonna take care of you. I'm gonna go call to get help, I'll be right back. You're okay, we got you now.

Jay jerks his arm out of the woman's grasp and hustles out of the bathroom, leaving Greg alone with her.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Jay gets up to the ground floor, running into Rachel as she descends from the upper level with Margot.

JAY
Help me find the phone! Greg said
it's this way!

Rachel and Margot follow Jay into the kitchen, then into the laundry room in the back.

No phone is visible. Just a washer/dryer unit on the far wall and a folding table.

Cabinets line the other wall.

RACHEL
Jay...

JAY
He said it was somewhere in this
room, look around.

Jay starts frantically rooting through cabinets. Margot joins the effort.

Behind them, Jimmy and Hunter hustle into the kitchen.

JIMMY
Will someone tell me what the fuck
is going on?

Rachel slumps to the ground in exhaustion, trying to get her bearings.

Jay checks the last cabinet.

JAY
Damn it, where is this thing?

Something dawns on Rachel.

RACHEL
He said "she".

MARGOT
Rachel, would you help us look for
the damn phone?

RACHEL
He said she! He asked where "she"
is...

JAY

What are you talking about? You think he knows what happened to her?

RACHEL

At the very least, yeah.

Rachel gets to her feet, starts sprinting to the stairs to her room.

She stops in her tracks.

Greg is walking up to the top of the stairs, holding the woman in his arms, wrapped in a wet sheet.

Greg walks up the stairs slowly, holding the frail body with care.

Margot puts a hand to her mouth in shock.

Greg lays her down on the floor tenderly.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

What happened?

Greg takes a throw blanket from the couch nearby and puts it gently over the woman's body.

GREG

She went into shock. She died in my arms.

Margot goes to comfort him, rubbing his shoulder. Her eyes don't leave the body.

Christy and Jimmy stand in shock on the stairs.

A fury burns behind Rachel's eyes.

RACHEL

What did you do?

GREG

What?

RACHEL

You asked me, "where is she". How did you know it was a "her"?

GREG

What are you talking about?

Rachel looks Greg dead in the eye.

RACHEL

I didn't mention who it was before you said that. And you said, "she".

Greg looks at Rachel like she's crazy.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

(turns to Jimmy)

You were in the hall with us, you heard him say that, right?

JIMMY

I didn't hear a fuckin' thing. I was half asleep.

GREG

You're saying I had something to do with this?

Margot steps in between them.

MARGOT

Greg, relax.

(to Rachel)

Rachel, calm down, maybe you misheard him, he couldn't have-

RACHEL

I DIDN'T mishear him. I KNOW what he said.

Christy makes a "psh" sound. Rachel turns to her.

CHRISTY

Don't go making this any worse with some psycho bullshit. This is fucked up enough as it is.

Rachel starts shaking, turns back to Greg.

RACHEL

I know what I heard. You sent Jay on a wild goose-chase for a phone up here so you could be alone with her!

GREG

I don't know what's going on with you. Margot said this is a tough time of year for you, not to mention I found these in your room.

Greg pulls Rachel's prescription bottle full of pills from her bag. He tosses it at Rachel's feet.

GREG (CONT'D)
I don't think your head's on
straight.

MARGOT
Okay, everyone calm down!
(to Rachel)
Rach, go downstairs.

RACHEL
Margot, he-

Margot raises her voice for the first time, losing her cool.

MARGOT
Rachel!

Rachel looks incredibly hurt.

RACHEL
Margot, I'm not making this up.
(turns to Jay)
Jay, come on, you were there too!

Jay shakes his head.

JAY
Rachel, I don't know if pointing
fingers is the answer.

Rachel is incredulous, slowly backing away from the rest of
the group.

RACHEL
I know what I heard.

MARGOT
I understand you believe that, but
you're in shock, we ALL are, and
maybe you heard something that
wasn't really there.

The tears start coming, Rachel looks about to break down.

RACHEL
But... I heard him-

CHRISTY
Why don't you go to bed, okay? Let
us handle it.

Rachel stands alone in the middle of the group. She walks
slowly, alone, to the stairs.

Voices behind her, she hears her name, the words "crazy", "addict", "drinking problem", the noise in her head getting louder.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM - LATER

Rachel sits on the bed, back on the headboard, shaking.

A knock on the door. Rachel doesn't respond.

The door opens.

Footsteps approach the bed.

Margot sits next to her. They're silent for a moment.

MARGOT

Rachel. What happened tonight was fucked up. I'm still trying to wrap my head around it. And considering all you've been through... I can understand why you think you may have heard or seen something. And I mean it. I believe you heard that. But it doesn't mean it actually happened. Greg couldn't possibly have done something like that.

Rachel doesn't respond.

MARGOT (CONT'D)

They found the phone in the kitchen, but the lines are down. Probably because of the storm. Greg and Jay are gonna take the body to the police station tomorrow.

Rachel shakes her head.

RACHEL

Why don't you believe me? Why don't you have my back? When have I ever lied to you?

MARGOT

You haven't babe. And I don't think you're lying, which is why I'm so concerned for you right now. I just don't think you're thinking straight. What were those pills you brought?

Rachel lifts her head.

RACHEL

Get out.

MARGOT

Rachel, I-

RACHEL

No. Get out. I know what I heard.
If you don't want to believe me,
then GO!

Margot sits there silent for a moment, then gets up and leaves Rachel there alone, closing the door behind her.

Rachel sobs as she pulls the covers over her head, her eyes closed.

INT. WOODS - DREAM

Rachel is sitting on the forest floor. Confused, she stands, leaving the blanket on the ground.

She walks through the woods, ambling about aimlessly, hopeless and lost. She screams for help, but no sound comes out.

Far ahead of her, she sees a door surrounded on the ground by a large bed of the strange black flowers. She slowly walks towards it.

Rachel's hand reaches for the door handle. She pushes it open.

Inside, the Older Man sits on the toilet in the bathroom (from her memories), naked feet on the tile, shotgun propped between his knees, biting on the barrel. He looks up directly at Rachel with PITCH BLACK EYES.

He pulls the trigger. Instead of what you would expect, thick, voluminous dark plumes start billowing out of the man's mouth, his nostrils, his eyes, until all we see is a thick cloud of noxious black smoke.

Two bright pinpoints of light appear, terrible eyes from the darkness opening wide to watch her.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - RACHEL'S ROOM

Rachel wakes up in her room, coughing. She sits up and looks ahead. Smoke is billowing in from under the door. She gets up, covering her eyes, moving towards the door.

She tries to open it, but it won't budge. The door is blocked from the other side.

RACHEL
(coughing)
HELP!

She bangs on the door.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Somebody! Help me!

She goes to the window, looks for a latch. There is none.

She continues to cough, room filling with smoke.

She picks up the iron salamander from the bedside table and throws it as hard as she can at the window.

It cracks, but nothing substantial.

She takes the salamander back in her hand, and starts wailing on the glass as hard as she can.

The smoke continues to billow in from the crack under the door.

Her energy running low from a lack of oxygen, she gives the window one final SMASH. The glass shatters. Rachel grabs her coat and vaults herself through the newly opened window.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAWN

Rachel takes a few steps away from the house and looks back.

The house is on fire, flames licking up the side from the windows.

RACHEL
Oh fuck.

She makes her way up a set of stairs on the outside of the house that lead to the first floor.

The door opens, and she walks into the inferno.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE

Rachel enters the house from the side entrance, leading her into the living room. Smoke fills the place, the fire creeping its way through the house.

She makes her way to the stairs leading to the second floor, shielding her face as much as she can.

She gets to the hallway. The doors are barricaded shut with tilted chairs. Behind each door, someone bangs and screams.

Rachel moves to the first door, kicking the chair out. She opens the door.

Nicki and Brooke hustle out, coughing.

RACHEL
Help me with the others!

Nicki and Brooke help Rachel move the other chairs out of the way. One by one, they release Jay, Jimmy, Christy, Hunter from their rooms.

Rachel is outside of the door where Greg and Margot are. There is no barricade.

She opens the door.

The room bears the mark of a struggle. Chair knocked over, broken glass from the window on the floor. On the sheets, bright red splashes of blood.

The room appears to be empty.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Margot?

On the far wall, the bathroom door is slightly ajar.

Rachel walks slowly towards the door.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(quieter)
Margot?

She reaches her hand out, touching the handle.

Pushes it open.

Margot is on the tile floor, throat slit, kneeling as if in prayer in a pool of her own blood. Her skin is pale, empty eyes staring upward in death.

Rachel is stunned. She falls to her knees, barely a trace of reaction from the emotional shock.

Nicki comes behind Rachel. Her mouth goes wide.

NICKI

There's nothing we can do. We need
to get out of here, come on.

Nicki tries to pull Rachel, but she is despondent.

NICKI (CONT'D)

Come on!

Rachel doesn't move, flames raging all around her.

Nicki wraps her arms around Rachel, pulling her out of room.

In the kitchen, the sheet covered corpse of the woman is
afire, black charred skeleton's mouth wide open in a silent
scream.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAWN

Rachel, Jay, Nicki, Brooke, Jimmy, Christy, and Hunter all
stand outside the house as the inferno builds higher,
engulfing the home.

They gasp for air, fight to retain their sanity and grasp the
gravity of the situation.

While most of them were able to get their shoes on (with the
exception of Jimmy), they're all in thin sweaters and sweat
pants or leggings. Not nearly enough for the seasonal chill.

JIMMY

What the fuck.

Brooke is sobbing as Nicki rubs her back.

JAY

Where is Greg?

Hunter steps forward, turning to address the rest of them.

HUNTER

Alright, everybody just stay
together, we'll walk down the road
and follow it as far as we can.
Someone has to notice this house is
burning down.

NICKI

I didn't hear a fire alarm, did
you? We're in the middle of fucking
nowhere!

HUNTER

That isn't helping. If we stick together, we-

Hunter's macho leadership moment is cut short when an arrow BORES THROUGH HIS THROAT, protruding from the other side.

He drops to his knees, hand rising to feel the arrow as if to see if it's really there, eyes wide in disbelief. He begins choking on his own blood. Rachel spins around to find:

Greg, holding the REPEATING CROSSBOW and working the lever action mechanism to draw back his next missile. He lets it fly.

It finds its target, hitting Brooke in her Chest. She falls from Nicki's arm, dead before she hits the ground.

RACHEL

RUN!

The remaining members of the star-watching party sprint ahead towards the tree-line.

An arrow ZIPS by Rachel's head, making her duck and fall.

She gets back up, sprinting as fast as she can.

Greg, calm and collected, readies the next shot. In front of him, his targets move fast towards the forest. He takes aim, then lets it go.

It finds its mark, flying into Nicki's shoulder, making her tumble to the ground just at the edge of the forest.

Jimmy runs right by her, huffing and puffing, not in the physical condition for this situation, not concerned enough to help her up.

Jay stops and turns, sees Nicki on the ground.

He runs back and helps pick her up.

An arrow lands in a tree beside his head with a THUNK

JAY

Come on!

She struggles but is able to stand, the two of them running deeper and deeper into the woods.

His prey too far into the forest for a clean shot, Greg lowers his weapon. On his back is an old leather RUCKSACK, more bolts protruding from the opening.

He stands there silently, looking into the woods.

A gurgling sound draws his attention.

A few feet away, Hunter is curled on his side in the middle of painful death throes, his blood staining the snow around him in a wide, red pool.

Nearby, Brooke lays still in the snow, her dead eyes wide with the shock of her immediate death.

Greg calmly walks over to Hunter and stands over him, looking down with emotionless eyes. He kneels down slowly and watches Hunter struggle.

GREG

(remorseless, cold)

I didn't anticipate this, but it's
how it has to be.

Hunter looks back with confusion and sadness, unable to speak, coughing up blood. Greg watches as Hunter takes his last painful attempts at breathing. He stands, the house a roaring inferno behind him.

He walks towards the woods as if he hadn't a care in the world.

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

The sun is just beginning to rise, the morning light breaking through the grey, foggy winter air.

Rachel moves through the forest, running as fast as she can between the trees.

She looks behind her. Can't see anybody, the burning house out of sight.

Not paying enough attention, her foot SNAGS on a root and she falls, tumbling down a short hill.

She comes to a stop at the bottom, struggles to get up.

She lifts her left hand, the pinky bent at a grotesque angle.

RACHEL

(loudly)

Gah, fuck!

JAY (O.S.)

(loud whisper)

Rachel!

Rachel perks up, looking around.

RACHEL
Jay?

JAY (O.S.)
Shh! Hey!

She turns left. A little ways away, Jay is waving her over, ducking behind a fallen tree.

Rachel sneaks over while trying not to make too much noise, holding her injured hand. She goes around the tree, finding Jay and Nicki, sitting with their backs against the log.

Nicki has her hand pressed against the wound in her shoulder, the arrow still sticking out. Her shirt is soaked in blood.

Rachel sits next to Jay. She looks over the log to see if anyone is coming. Finding nothing, she sits back down.

The three speak to one another in guarded whispers.

JAY (CONT'D)
Are you hurt?

RACHEL
I wasn't hit, but, I think I...

She lifts her hand, showing Jay her finger.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
It's broken.

JAY
Try and keep still.

Jay tenderly inspects her hand.

JAY (CONT'D)
Okay, it's not so bad, I think I can take care of this.

He looks around the forest floor, picks up a stick. He peels a strip of bark from the log they're leaning on. He wipes the stick clean with the end of his sleeve and offers it to Rachel.

JAY (CONT'D)
Bite down on this.

RACHEL
You sure you can do this?

JAY
You're gonna have to trust me.

RACHEL
Fuck, okay, okay. Fuck.

Rachel takes the stick and clenches it between her teeth.

JAY
Close your eyes.

Rachel shuts them tight. Jay takes her busted finger in one hand, holding the rest of Rachel's hand steady with the other.

JAY (CONT'D)
Ready?

Rachel clenches her eyes tighter, nodding.

Jay resets the bone with a sickening CRUNCH. Rachel gives a muted cry, her teeth bearing down on the stick.

JAY (CONT'D)
Hard part's done. Hold on a second.

He pulls the draw string out from his hoody.

JAY (CONT'D)
This'll sting, but don't move.

Rachel nods.

Jay places the strip of bark under her pinky and ring finger, using the drawstring to finish the impromptu splint.

JAY (CONT'D)
Okay. Now, I need you to help me
get that arrow out.
(pointing at Nicki)

RACHEL
(nodding)
Okay.

Rachel moves low to the ground to the other side of Nicki.

Nicki is sweating profusely, but all things considered, keeping it together.

NICKI
Glad to see you.

RACHEL

You okay?

NICKI

(wincing with pain)

No, I am definitely not okay.

JAY

Nicki, can you move yourself forward a bit? I need to see how far it went.

Nicki complies, face contorting with the painful effort.

The arrow has gone all the way through her shoulder, the serrated tip poking out the other end.

JAY (CONT'D)

It's gone through.

NICKI

Damnit.

JAY

No no, that's actually better. I'm gonna break the arrow from the front, then pull it out your back.
(to Rachel)

I'm gonna need you to help me hold her down for that first part. You still got that stick I gave you?

Rachel passes him the stick, and he holds it in front of Nicki's mouth.

JAY (CONT'D)

Bite down.

Nicki bites down on it, closing her eyes.

RACHEL

(to Jay)

How are you not freaking out right now?

JAY

No time for that, wouldn't help.

A beat of silence. He has a point.

JAY (CONT'D)

We gotta keep moving. He's probably following us. Now hold her down.

Rachel presses against Nicki's arm. Jay holds the arrow tight with his hands.

JAY (CONT'D)
Nicki, hang in there. Try not to
scream. One... Two...

His grip tightens as he tries to bend the wooden arrow. Nicki bites down hard, groaning in pain, tears going down her face.

After a bit of resistance, the arrow SNAPS.

Nicki can't help but yell, the sound echoing through the forest.

JAY (CONT'D)
Okay, lean forward.

Nicki does so.

JAY (CONT'D)
Brace yourself.

Jay gets his grip on the arrow tip, and pulls the rest of the arrow out of Nicki's body. A small yelp comes out of Nicki as she falls to the forest floor.

They all catch their breath for a moment.

RACHEL
Where should we-

The CRUNCH of snow and leaves pressed underfoot behind them.

Jay and Rachel look at each other in terrified recognition.

They slink down low, Rachel putting her hand over her mouth, trying to be as quiet as possible.

The steps get closer with a crunch, crunch, crunch. Close enough to be right behind the log.

JIMMY (O.S.)
Hello?

Jay looks over the log behind them.

JAY
(with relief)
Jesus, Jimmy.

Jimmy stands behind them, shivering in nothing but boxers and a T-shirt drenched with sweat. He has no shoes, no socks.

He falls to his hands and knees.

A few feet behind him is Christy, emotionless, staring at the ground. Truly shaken.

JAY (CONT'D)
Are you guys hurt?

JIMMY
No, just... so fucking cold...

JAY
We gotta keep moving.

JIMMY
We just got here! I gotta rest a minute!

Jay goes to help up Nicki, who waves it off.

NICKI
I'm good, let me do it.

She gets to her feet, bearing through the pain.

JAY
We can rest in a bit. We gotta put distance between us and Greg.

CHRISTY (O.S.)
Why did he do that?

Everyone turns to her. Nobody has an answer.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)
(to Rachel)
What happened?

The rage burns in Rachel's eyes. She gets up and glares at Christy, getting in her face.

RACHEL
I tried telling you. All of you.
None of you listened to me.

Jay moves to get in between them, holds Rachel by the shoulders.

JAY
Hey hey hey, not right now. Okay?
We need to move.

A tense moment between them, the fire burning in Rachel's eyes.

RACHEL
Fuck you, Jay. You could have said something.

She wipes a tear and pushes her way past Jay and walks ahead.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Figures.

Jay, ashamed, turns to follow. Jimmy gets up and staggers behind, choosing his steps carefully with naked feet, holding his arms to try and stay warm.

Nicki follows suit, holding her wounded shoulder.

Christy lags behind the rest of them, taking small steps, looking at the ground as she walks.

We pull back, further and further, the view growing smaller of the crew trudging through the forest in a staggered line.

Pulling further back we find, far behind them, standing silently, Greg watching.

EXT. WOODS - MORNING

The five of them walk on, deeper into the forest.

The trees are old here, tall and strong.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel is crawling her way to the top of a steep incline, huffing and puffing from the effort. Behind her, the rest of the survivors follow suit.

From this top, they arrive at a vantage point giving them a clear view of the mountain range that surrounds them.

It's nothing but forest and hills as far as the eye can see.

Rachel looks behind them. A plume of dark, black smoke rises from the trees far behind them.

JIMMY
There's nothing. No houses, no roads.

He sits on the ground, devastated.

CHRISTY
We're fucked.

NICKI

Hold on...

She squints, using her hand to shield the sun from her eyes.

She points outward into the mountains.

NICKI (CONT'D)

What is that?

Far away, standing tall amidst the trees is a CASTSKILLS FIRE TOWER, a small cabin raised high above the ground standing on four skinny metal support beams. A zig-zagging series of stairs leads up into the tower's shelter.

JAY

A fire tower... There could be a radio in there. We could call for help, bunker up until it arrives.

RACHEL

How far is it?

JAY

A days walk, maybe more. If we hustle, we can make it before nightfall.

CHRISTY

How do you know? Who made you in charge?

JIMMY

Christy, stop.

(points at Jay)

He's our best chance of ever getting out of this alive. Listen to what he has to say.

Christy shakes her head.

JAY

We head northwest, try and stay quiet, and keep an eye out.

Jay heads in the direction towards the tower. The rest follow.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

They cross a small stream. Jay offers to help Rachel cross, but Rachel ignores it, pressing on.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Mid-day.

Rachel takes careful steps over an icy patch.

Something in front of her catches her eye.

She walks up and bends down. Stuck in the ground is a BRIGHT ORANGE FLAG (the ones we saw at Greg's house). She looks to her left, then her right. The flags, about 10 meters apart, go in each direction as far as the eye can see.

Not far in front of her, A WOMAN'S SHAPE, faceless, painted black (familiar to the one from Rachel's dream) is carved into a tree with expert craftsmanship. The woman seems to be holding out her arms, as if welcoming whoever has found her there.

At the base of the tree, a few of the strange Black Liliams grow.

The rest of them catch up, stopping behind her to stare at the figure in the tree.

NICKI
(re: flags)
What the hell is all this?

JIMMY
They could have been left by
people.

Nicki looks at him like "no shit".

NICKI
You think?

JIMMY
I donno, maybe a survey crew, or
something.

Jay points at the figure in the tree.

JAY
Well then what's that about?

Nobody speaks, all of them looking and wondering.

JIMMY
The flags could mean there are
people nearby.

JAY
 Could be. One way to find out.

Jay steps across the line and walks ahead. Everyone follows after him.

Rachel stops in front of the tree, staring at the carving of the faceless woman.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

The crew continues on, moving slowly, exhausted and cold.

Jimmy lags far behind, his feet turning blue. He falls to the ground, catching his breath in heavy heaves.

The rest of them stop and turn.

JIMMY
 Guys, just one moment, please. I need... I need to stop.

Christy goes back and sits next to him, holding her knees to her chest, head tucked down.

Jay goes back to Jimmy and looks at his feet.

Ahead of the pack, Rachel stops and stares solemnly ahead.

The tears start to come, try as she might to hold it together.

NICKI (O.S.)
 Hey, Rachel.

Rachel collects herself, turns to find Nicki a few feet behind her.

NICKI (CONT'D)
 Mind if I join you?

Rachel nods. Nicki steps up next to her.

The forest is silent. Birds chirp, the wind blows through the trees. Dead branches click against each other.

NICKI (CONT'D)
 Beautiful out here. Despite everything.

RACHEL
 You serious?

Nicki shrugs.

NICKI
Would make some good photos.

A beat as they take in their surroundings in silence. Rachel puts her hand on Nicki's shoulder.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Just trying not to think about...
You know.

RACHEL
(sincerely)
I'm sorry about Brooke.

Nicki bows her head.

NICKI
Yeah. Me too. She was so good. Felt like she was just figuring herself out.

Nicki nods. Another beat of silence.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Try not to stay mad at Jay. It won't do you good to hold onto that right now.

RACHEL
You don't get it. That's what he does. Leaves you hanging when you need him most.

She takes a deep breath to collect herself.

NICKI
What happened?

RACHEL
(closing up)
It doesn't matter right now.

She shakes her head.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Let's go check on the others.

Nicki nods, knows when to let something go.

NICKI
Yeah, okay.

Rachel turns and walks back towards the rest of the group.

Jay is inspecting Jimmy's feet. They're white as paper, the tips of his toes beginning to turn a concerning shade of dark blue.

Christy hasn't moved an inch, staring at nothing in particular with empty eyes.

Jay pinches the end of Jimmy's toe.

JAY
Feel that?

Jimmy shakes his head.

JAY (CONT'D)
Alright.

Jay takes his shoes off, then his socks. He gives the socks to Jimmy.

JIMMY
Thank you, bro.

He goes about putting the socks on.

JAY
This'll help for a little, but we gotta keep going. Think you can manage that?

Jimmy nods.

JIMMY
Yeah. I think so.

JAY
Alright.

JIMMY
There's more of us. What if we hide, bum-rush him when he walks by?

Jay shakes his head.

JAY
We're unarmed and most of us are injured. We wouldn't stand a chance. Our best option is to reach that tower and hope it has a radio.

He stands just as Rachel and Nicki arrive.

JAY (CONT'D)

Hey.

RACHEL

Hey. Which way is the fire tower?

JAY

We just keep going the way we're going, I think.

Jay looks up at the sky, a curious look on his face. He checks his watch, then looks back up and squints at the sun

RACHEL

What is it?

JAY

The sun, it's... I donno. Let's move.

Jimmy is slow to get up but manages to do it.

JIMMY

Alright, let's do this thing.

Christy doesn't move.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Christy, come on, let's go.

Silence.

RACHEL

Christy...

The rest of them look at one another, then to Christy with concern.

JAY

Christy, nobody is coming to save us. We need to move.

Jay reaches to help her up.

Christy brings her head up fast, and screams.

CHRISTY

LEAVE ME ALONE!

Christy stands right up, taking a step back away from the rest of the group.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)
You don't even know where the fuck
you're going!

She turns and starts off in the direction they came from.

JAY
Where are you going?

She doesn't respond, just keeps moving.

Jay hustles up after her and tries reaching for her shoulder.

JAY (CONT'D)
Hey...

Christy turns, slapping his hand away.

CHRISTY
Don't you fucking touch me.

Jay backs off, hands up.

NICKI
Hey, we're all scared here,
alright? You don't gotta-

CHRISTY
Don't gotta what?

She points in the direction she was heading.

CHRISTY (CONT'D)
We made a mistake going this way.
We gotta head back to the house,
get a car, go for help.

JAY
He's back that way!

CHRISTY
Then we go around him!

JAY
Christy. Splitting up is just about
the dumbest thing we could do right
now.

CHRISTY
No, following all of YOU into the
middle of bumblefuck nowhere is the
dumbest thing I could do right now.

A beat as they stand in silence like a group of frightened children.

Christy walks away from the rest of them, not looking back.

Jay moves to make another attempt, but Nicki grabs his hand.

NICKI

She's made up her mind. Come on.

The rest of them slowly turns and walk in the opposite direction.

EXT. WOODS

Greg is standing just before the line of bright orange flags. He stares at the woman carved into the tree.

He takes his bag off from his back, opening it. He pulls out an old stone mortar and pestle and a mason jar. Inside the jar is one of the strange Black Lilliums.

He takes the flower from the jar, pulling the white stamen from the center and putting them in the mortar.

He takes one of his arrows and cuts his hand with its razor sharp tip, barely flinching.

He squeezes his hand, blood flowing into the mortar.

He mashes everything together with the pestle, creating a bloody paste.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Greg pulls out the WOODEN MASK (from his house) and applies the paste to its face, glazing over the symbol with a fresh layer. He puts the mask on.

He stares down at the ground, foot raised, almost as if he is scared to step over the line.

He steps forward, boot crossing the line. He exhales in relief, then walks ahead.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Jay leads the way through the forest, the group making slow progress. Jimmy is a ways behind the rest.

JAY

Hold up, let's let him catch up.

They stop to take a breather. Rachel bends down, examining a group of the strange Black Lilium growing from the snow.

RACHEL

This Lily. There were some at the house. But it isn't right.

The group stops and looks to Rachel.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

They don't grow this time of year.
Let alone through the snow.

Jay looks up at the sky. The sun shines through the branches, still at its zenith.

JAY

The sun isn't moving. We've been at this for hours. Should be well on its way across the sky by now.

Jimmy catches up with the group, his skin so white it's almost turning blue in the cold.

JAY (CONT'D)

(to Jimmy)

You good, man? You want us to take a break?

Jimmy doesn't speak, just keeps walking ahead, a dead look in his eye, beyond the point where the body presses on without the mind.

JIMMY

She's... just up this way.

Jimmy raises a hand to point ahead of him.

JIMMY'S POV: The Dark Shape (from Rachel's nightmare) floats in the forest far in front of him, dark hair flowing eerily across its face. It is a terrifying beauty to behold.

We see what the rest of the group sees. Nothing. Just Jimmy pointing into the air.

Jimmy puts his hand down and keeps walking.

Rachel, Jay, and Nicki all look at each other with concern. They follow Jimmy further into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - RIVER - LATER

The group gets to the edge of a river, ice cold water moving at a considerable pace. They all stare with utter dread in their eyes.

RACHEL

Can we try and find a way around it?

Jay shakes his head slowly.

JAY

He could catch up to us while we're stalling. We gotta keep going.

Jay starts undressing.

JAY (CONT'D)

Try and keep your clothes dry. Hold them over your head as we're going over.

Jimmy, mind broken, just walks into the river.

JAY (CONT'D)

Jimmy!

Waist deep, he forges ahead. Then chest deep. The others stare as he makes it across the river without going under, getting to the other side.

When he gets to the other shoreline, he sits and turns, awaiting for them with his head bowed, shaking with cold.

Rachel looks at Jay as he undresses. On his back is a MASSIVE scar.

Jay looks back to Nicki and Rachel.

JAY (CONT'D)

(teeth chattering)

Alright, let's go.

Jay, holding his clothes and shoes above his head, starts making his way across the river, followed shortly by Nicki.

NICKI

Freezing!

JAY

Just try to keep moving!

Rachel pauses at the edge. Jay turns to encourage her.

JAY (CONT'D)
Rachel! Come on!

Rachel steps in, the chill of the water taking her breath away. She holds her clothes above her.

She gets waist deep. Ahead of her, Jay is just getting out of the river.

Suddenly, Rachel SINKS, head going under with a scream.

EXT. UNDERWATER

Rachel is feet below the surface, floating weightlessly.

EXT. RIVER

Jay looks back across the river. Rachel is nowhere to be seen.

JAY
Rachel?

EXT. UNDERWATER

JAY (O.S.)
(muffled)
Rachel?

Rachel swims upwards towards his voice, up and up, until...

EXT. OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

Rachel breaches the surface.

The forest is gone. Her friends are gone. She is treading water in the middle of what appears to be an endless ocean of black churning water, the sun a pale yellow disk burning behind ominous clouds overhead. Lightning streaks across the sky.

She looks around frantically. No shore line on either side in sight.

RACHEL
Jay! Nicki!

The panic begins to settle in.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(screaming)
Hey!

She swims. And swims. And swims.

A wave CRASHES over her. She rises back up, gasping for air.

She presses on, swimming ahead with all she's got.

EXT. OCEAN - LATER

The last sliver of the sun is about to dip below the horizon.

Rachel's movements are now slow with exhaustion. She stops to see where she is. No progress has been made, still swimming in the middle of an endless sea.

RACHEL
(distraught)
SOMEBODY!

She turns around looking for any sign of hope, her head dipping into the water, her tired body nearly incapable of keeping her afloat.

Suddenly, Rachel gets PULLED UNDER, disappearing under the surface.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Rachel tries to swim upwards, but some unknown force is dragging her down, deeper and deeper into the black of the depths below.

The air escapes her lungs, plume of precious oxygen rising upwards.

Below her in the black of the water's depths are two tiny points of brightness (like the nightmare before the fire), horrible eyes like burning stars watching her from the void below.

Rachel's mouth opens in a scream as she is pulled into the black towards the terrible lights, no sound coming out.

EXT. RIVER

Rachel gasps for breath as she is pulled to the surface of the river by Jay.

They tumble backwards onto the opposite shoreline. She struggles in his arms.

Rachel catches her breath.

Nicki comes over holding Rachel's soaking clothes.

NICKI
What happened?

Rachel's eyes hold a thousand yard stare.

RACHEL
I was all alone. I was alone for so long.

Nicki and Jay look at each other.

NICKI
You were only under for a few seconds.

RACHEL
(shivering)
It was real. I was in the middle of... nothing. Nowhere... endless.

She curls into a ball on the ground.

Rachel shakes from the cold in Jay's arms, quietly sobbing into his shoulder. At first uncomfortable holding her like that, he brings her in to try and keep her warm.

NICKI
What the fuck is going on?

Jay gets up and starts putting on his clothes.

JAY
We need to make a fire. They won't last long soaked like this. Stay with her, keep close, or she's gonna freeze.

NICKI
(motioning to Jimmy)
What about him?

Jimmy sits by the side in silence, mumbling quietly to himself, staring intently across the river.

JAY
Just keep an eye on him. I'll be back, I won't go far.

Jay walks off into the woods.

Nicki curls up and wraps a protective arm around Rachel, who shivers in her embrace.

EXT. WOODS

Jay holds a bundle of dead sticks in his arm, working to snap another branch from a tree.

An eerie whoosh of the wind behind him catches his attention, and he turns to look behind him.

Nothing. Just the wind swaying the dead trees through the forest, the branches clicking and clacking together like old bones.

He gets back to collecting sticks from the tree.

A distant whispering emanates from far away. Jay stops and looks around. Again, nothing.

He reaches up to a branch, not looking where he is reaching.

CU on Jay's hand, reaching for a stick. His hand wraps around it, then instantly retracts in pain.

JAY

Ah!

His hand has a laceration across the palm. The stick he was reaching for has a thorn protruding from the bark, coated in his blood.

We see the top third of Jay's body. As he looks at his injury, a little pale arm reaches up from below, grabbing the neckline of his shirt. He looks down.

For only a second we see in his arms, instead of the bundle of sticks, a small middle eastern child, a gaping bullet wound where its left eye should be, shirtless and wearing soccer shorts. The boy's torso is riddled with more bullet holes, leaking black.

The little boy's mouth opens and closes like a fish choking in the open air, his hand taking a tight grip around Jay's shirt, staring INTO Jay with his one good eye.

Jay drops the boy and falls on his ass, screaming as he clenches his eyes shut. When he looks back, it's just a pile of fallen sticks in front of him.

He catches himself, practicing controlled breathing.

All around him, ethereal, distant whispering in a dead language travels on the winds that blows through the trees.

Jay looks around him to see where it could be coming from, but he is all alone.

He gets up and quickly gets to gathering the fallen sticks, looking around anxiously.

EXT. RIVER

Nicki holding Rachel on the bank of the river.

The CRUNCH of fallen branches behind them. Nicki turns her head around.

Jay comes walking in from the forest, sticks and strips of bark in his arms. A look of grave concern on his face.

NICKI

Find everything you need?

Jay puts the fire material down and sits, putting his head in his hands.

NICKI (CONT'D)

Jay?

Jay rubs his eyes and takes a deep breath.

JAY

Sorry. Just... shit's getting to me.

Jay gets to making the fire, arranging the sticks in a tried and true pattern on the ground. He puts the small strips of bark and some smaller sticks below the structure for kindling.

JAY (CONT'D)

Check her pockets. She should have a lighter. Hoping, at least. Otherwise this'll take a lot longer.

Nicki roots through Rachel's pants pocket and brings out a bright orange lighter and a damp pack of cigarettes.

Nicki opens the pack and frowns. She pulls out a cigarette, which crumbles in her hand from the moisture.

NICKI
Could have really used one of
these.

She passes Jay the lighter.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Will that work?

JAY
Should. I've put these through the
wash and they come out the other
end alright.

He flicks the lighter with his thumb.

No flame.

JAY (CONT'D)
Come on.

He flicks, flicks flicks flicks.

Finally, a little flame erupts. A slight smile breaks on
Jay's face.

JAY (CONT'D)
Whew, alright.

Jay holds the flame to the kindling, which catches.

NICKI
Where did you learn all this?

Jay focuses back on the fire, speaking as he tends to it.

JAY
After ROTC got me through school,
went to Afghanistan. Combat medic
for the 75th.

NICKI
You were in the army?

Jay nods, gives an affirming grunt. The fire begins to grow.

JAY
Let's get these clothes close by
the fire. We can't stay here long
and we need them to be as dry as
possible if we're gonna make it
far.

He turns to Jimmy.

JAY (CONT'D)
Jimmy, get over here.

Jimmy doesn't move. Just stares straight ahead, a disturbing smile on his face.

Jay shakes his head. He snaps his fingers at Jimmy.

JAY (CONT'D)
Jimmy!

Jimmy stays where he is, sickly grin widening.

He turns to face them. Tears are falling down his face with the rapturous joy of the born-again. He looks directly at Rachel as he speaks.

JIMMY
She is going to take us home. Back
to nothing. Where we belong.

Rachel gets her clothes on and gets near the fire, watching Jimmy with a look of concern.

NICKI
What the fuck is he talking about?

RACHEL
He's lost it.

JIMMY
Lost?

He stares back ahead of him, the smile getting even wider.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Things have never been so clear.

JAY
Don't pay attention to him. He's
not worth our time. Huddle up, get
warm. We gotta get going soon.

Rachel and Jay and Nicki sit around the fire, absorbing the warmth.

Nicki looks to Jimmy. He still sits there, whispering nonsense to himself.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - LATER

High above the mountains, looking down on the endless sea of green. It's eerily silent. No animal calls, no birds. Just the sound of the wind rising to a shrill HOWL.

EXT. RIVER - LATER

Rachel, Nicki, and Jay sit around the fire in silence.

Down the way, Jimmy still mumbles to himself, looking straight ahead.

Jay pokes the embers of the fire around with a stick.

JAY
Need more fuel for this fire.

He starts to get up.

NICKI
No no no.

She gets up and puts out her hand to stop Jay.

NICKI (CONT'D)
I got this. You stay.

JAY
You sure?

NICKI
Come on, you've done more than
enough. I got this.

Nicki starts walking into the trees behind them.

JAY
Nicki...

She turns

JAY (CONT'D)
Just... if you see anything, run
right back, yeah?

Nicki nods and goes into the woods.

We see Rachel is awake, staring at nothing, curled up near the dying fire. Jay looks at her, looking like he's searching for the right thing to say.

JAY (CONT'D)

Rach...

She doesn't move.

RACHEL

Mmhmm.

JAY

I should have spoken up. Back at the house. Maybe if I did, none of this would have happened.

She turns to face him, eyes boring into him. He can't meet her gaze.

JAY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. You were right. I should have spoke up.

A beat.

RACHEL

It's just not the first time you left me high and dry when I needed you. And I want to trust you. Seeing you again after all these years I almost forgot why I couldn't. But you just...

A beat.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

When my mom got sick, I never felt more alone. My dad was losing it, even then. And all I had were you and Margot. We were just kids, but... I thought we...I don't know, Jay. I learn again and again that you're not someone I can count on. And it hurts every time.

JAY

Rachel, I-

CRACKS from behind them. Nicki comes up with a bundle of sticks in her arms.

NICKI

Not interrupting am I?

RACHEL

No.

Rachel turns back away. Nicki looks to Jay and shrugs.

She drops the sticks next to the fire. Jay, looking defeated, gets to placing the sticks in a stack around the embers.

JAY

You two rest up. I'll keep watch.

Nicki gets on the ground next to the fire.

Nicki's eyes start to close slowly and she fights to keep them open, but exhaustion takes over.

EXT. RIVER - LATER

Nicki comes to with a start, as if she has only blinked.

She sits by the last smoldering embers of the fire. She gets up, looks around frantically.

Jay and Rachel are gone. As is Jimmy.

She is alone on the shore of the river.

She stands.

NICKI

(screaming)

Jay! Rachel!

She starts moving ahead, into the forest.

NICKI (CONT'D)

Guys! Where are you!

She is sprinting through the trees. Everything looks the same.

She looks behind her, and the river is gone.

VOICE (O.S.)

Somebody!

Nicki turns towards where the noise came from.

NICKI

(screaming)

Where are you!

She jogs further into the forest.

She stops.

In the distance, a young boy in a bright colored jacket walks through the forest, sobbing. He desperately moves his little legs after another boy, taller and older.

YOUNG BOY

Wait! Where are we going!

Nicki waves to try and grab their attention.

NICKI

Hey! Stop!

Nicki runs after them.

OLDER BOY

Not too much further. Come on!

YOUNG BOY

I want to go home! I'm scared!

The older boy disappears behind a large tree.

OLDER BOY

This way, Jacob!

The younger boy reluctantly follows, still well ahead of Nicki. He disappears behind the tree as well, out of Nicki's sight.

Nicki sprints ahead, reaching the tree. When she gets behind it, expecting to find the boys there, she stops.

In front of her is a naked woman. Old, corpse like skin. The woman turns. She has no face, just a smooth stretch of pale skin where her eyes, nose, and mouth should be.

Nicki turns to run the other way.

In front of her are DOZENS of these apparitions. Naked, skeletal, faceless people with ghostly, rotting skin. All facing her.

She spins around and around.

She is surrounded by what seems to be HUNDREDS of them, standing in the forest as far as the eye can see, standing completely still.

Then, all at once, they start coming towards her in jerky, discombobulated movements at an alarming speed.

When they reach her, they pull at her arms, her face. Nicki tries to fight them off, but there are just too many of them.

The old woman starts shoving her hand into Nicki's mouth, reaching inside.

EXT. RIVER - DUSK

Nicki wakes, screaming.

Jay and Rachel try and calm her, holding her down as best they can, but Nicki swats their hands away.

NICKI
Get off of me! Get off!

JAY
Nicki! Nicki calm down!

Nicki starts to come to her senses, breathing heavily.

JAY (CONT'D)
You fell asleep. We all did.
Somehow.

NICKI
It wasn't a dream. It was real. It
was...

Rachel and Nicki look into each other's eyes with an understanding.

NICKI (CONT'D)
What the fuck is wrong with this
place?

They all sit, staring at the ground.

The sky is darker, the sun covered by a thick layer of gray, menacing clouds.

JAY
I saw something, too. In the
forest.

NICKI
What did you see?

Jay looks back, into the woods. In a FLASH we see the little boy in his arms, disfigured face staring up at him with his one eye.

Visibly still shaken from the experience, Jay turns his head back around and stares at the forest floor.

RACHEL

Hey...

They look to Rachel. Rachel points down the river's edge.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Where is Jimmy?

Jay and Nicki turn.

Jimmy is nowhere to be found. His clothes are sitting in a pile where he last was.

They look around. He is nowhere to be seen.

JAY

He must have run off.

RACHEL

Why would he leave his clothes?

JAY

On Everest, they find some people frozen on the mountain nearly naked. In the last stages of hypothermia, some people strip their clothes cause they feel like they're burning alive in them, when they're actually freezing to death.

NICKI

Should we look for him?

A beat. Jay shakes his head.

JAY

We gotta keep moving. Hopefully, we find him on the way.

The trio gets up.

Jay leads them into the woods, leaving the river behind them.

The last remnants of the fire go out, dark smoke rising from the ash.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Jay, Nicki, and Rachel all trudge along. Exhaustion is getting the best of them.

As they head further in, more and more of the Strange Black Lillium flowers appear.

Rachel notices a couple of the dark strange flowers as they walk by. Ahead of them are even more.

RACHEL
There's more of the flowers here.

NICKI
Give me the fucking creeps.

Jay stops and holds up his hand.

He turns and puts his finger over his lips, motioning to get low with the other hand.

They three of them crouch. He points forward.

Up ahead in the forest, they can see someone leaning against the base of a tree on the opposite side, blonde hair blowing in the wind.

Jay's eyes squint to get a better look.

JAY
It can't be...

He stands, starts jogging up to the tree.

RACHEL
Jay, wait!

Rachel gets up and goes after him.

NICKI
Shit!

Nicki follows suit.

They reach the tree and turn around.

Jay puts a hand over his mouth in horror.

Rachel screams.

Rachel's POV: Sitting at the base of the tree is Christy.

She sits crosslegged, her arms resting on her legs, hands palm up on each knee. The arms have been severed and switched, right hand over left knee, left over right.

In each palm is a candle, burning bright, melted and solidified between her fingers in waxy white stalactites that drip down her knuckles.

Her stomach has been gutted, innards removed, more candles burning within the chasm. Her eyes are gone leaving hollow, empty sockets, and her bottom jaw has been ripped from her head, tongue hanging down her throat

She sits upon a bed of the strange, dark flowers. Etched into the bark above her is the strange symbol.

Nicki retches to the side.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Who... did Greg do this?

Jay stands nonplussed. He looks around.

JAY
This... this is where we left her.

RACHEL
What do you mean?

JAY
We've gone in a circle. Somehow.

RACHEL
No. No, no, we would have had to cross the river again! There's no way that-

JAY
Rachel, I know. Okay? I know. It doesn't make sense. But this is where she stopped.

RACHEL
You led us in a fucking circle, Jay!

JAY
But I... we...

Jay sits on the ground, trying to wrap his head around the conundrum.

The forest around them seems never ending. Wind blows the branches. They CLICKCLICKCLICKCLICK together.

Nicki stares at the ground, hopeless.

NICKI
We gotta get out of here.

Rachel starts walking away from Christy's corpse.

RACHEL
Come on. Let's go.

JAY
We don't even know where-

RACHEL
Anything is better than here. Come
on.

They move on, walking onward under the indifferent, static sun.

EXT. WOODS

An aerial view of the Catskills, the ghostly fog an ethereal river between low mountain peaks like lonely islands in a sea of mist.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Nicki leads the way, far up ahead of Rachel and Jay. Jay steps up so he's walking next to Rachel.

JAY
Rachel...

RACHEL
What?

JAY
I know why you got a lot of reasons
to not like me, but-

RACHEL
Jay, stop. Now is not the time.

JAY
When is ever a good time?

RACHEL
Definitely not right now.

Jay stops, almost gives up on the conversation, but catches up after her.

JAY
Please, Rachel, if you give me a
chance to explain myself...

Rachel stops, turns to him.

RACHEL

You had time to do that. My mom died a decade ago. In so much pain. Screaming. Not like they tell you it happens, "going quietly in the good night". And during that, you left, and I didn't hear from you. Not ONCE. You could have explained yourself anytime since then. Then last year, when my dad blew his fucking brains out, did you think to say anything then, either?

JAY

Rachel, I-

RACHEL

No, just stop. I learned not to rely on you a long time ago, Jay. And I don't need any sort of apology now. Let's just get out of this, and go on with our own lives like before, okay?

Rachel leaves him standing alone.

She catches up to Nicki, who is standing there awkwardly, pretending she didn't hear anything.

NICKI

Everything okay with you two?

RACHEL

Peachy.

Rachel walks ahead. She stops and squints.

In the distance in the forest, HUMAN FIGURES IN THE MIST.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Holy shit.

(turns to Nicki)

There's fucking people up there!

Rachel jumps, waves her arms.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

HEY! OVER HERE!

She starts jogging towards the figures. Nicki and Jay follow suit.

In the distance, the figures also start moving towards them.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Hey! Over here! We need help,
please!

Now that they're closer, Rachel can discern three separate figures.

Rachel waves at them. One of the figures waves back, in sync with Rachel's own movements.

Rachel starts to slow down, and the figures across from her do as well. Jay and Nicki flank her sides.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(confused)
Hey...

She waves. The figure in the middle in front of her waves, mirroring her movements.

Rachel walks forward. So do they.

The fog begins to clear.

In front of Rachel, Nicki, and Jay are mirror images of themselves, but *ROTTING*, their eyes gone, black blood streaming down their faces.

Jay waves, and the mirror Jay waves back in sync with his own movements.

JAY
What the fuck...

A fourth figure appears behind their mirror apparitions, stalking.

The *CRACKING* of sticks breaking from behind them. Rachel turns to look behind her.

Ambling towards them with a sickening limp is the Older Man from her nightmares, half his face blown off, blood stained like a gory bib on his neck and chest.

It limps towards them.

RACHEL
(quietly, to herself)
Dad...

She points at it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Do you guys see that?

Jay and Nicki look to where she is pointing. Their eyes go wide, affirming Rachel's question.

It keeps limping towards them, getting closer, and closer.

Rachel turns and starts sprinting through the forest in the opposite direction, followed soon after by Nicki and Jay.

Jay looks behind them periodically.

The thing somehow is able to keep up, moving with a jerky, disturbing quickness.

Rachel runs, and runs, and runs.

EXT. CLIFF

Rachel runs and stops herself just as she gets to the edge of a cliff!

A rock she kicks tumbles down, falling, falling, falling. It's a long way down.

Below are a group of boulders. The rock crashes into them with a WHACK, bounding off to the side.

Rachel turns and holds her hands out to Jay and Nicki, who are closing in fast.

RACHEL
STOP STOP STOP!

Jay is able to stop himself just in time. Nicki, however, is looking behind her, too slow to react.

She skids to a halt, but her momentum begins to carry her over the edge. She screams.

Just as she is about to go over, Rachel grabs her arm. Nicki slips, going over, but held by Rachel. Rachel yells as her arms are pulled down.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Jay! Help!

A CRACKING behind them, the Old Man emerges from the woods, mere feet away. Blood drips from the open wound.

JAY
Hold on!

Jay eyes a large stick nearby. He picks it up, wielding it like a baseball bat.

JAY (CONT'D)

Come on!

The thing reaches its arms out, but Jay dodges and takes a heavy swing at its leg. The leg SNAPS! A black bone breaking through the skin.

It falls, but then slowly and inhumanly rises back up, a corpse puppet on invisible strings. It keeps moving towards Rachel, who hangs onto Nicki for her life. Their grip begins to slip.

Jay drops the stick and rushes the thing, slamming into its back.

It stumbles, disappearing over the edge of the cliff.

Jay moves and helps Rachel pick Nicki up, bringing her to safety.

They all breathe on the ground, exhausted.

NICKI

Is it gone?

Rachel gets on her hands and knees, crawls to the edge and looks down.

Rachel's POV: Far below, dashed upon the rocks in bloody distortion, is the naked body of Jimmy.

The sickly grin is still on his face, even in death.

Rachel puts her hand to her mouth.

RACHEL

Oh my... oh my god.

Jay goes over to take a look. His face sags with the realization of his actions.

JAY

Jimmy...

Rachel puts her hand on Jay's shoulder.

RACHEL

Jay, Jay listen...

Jay looks at her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Whatever that was, it wasn't Jimmy.
We all saw it.

JAY
(pointing downwards,
screaming)
Then who is that? WHO IS THAT?

Jay sits on the ground.

JAY (CONT'D)
(quietly, to himself)
I killed him.

He sits there, lost in dark thoughts.

EXT. MOUNTAINS

A blanket of fog has begun to creep over the low mountain range. Notably, there are no animal sounds, just an eerie stillness.

EXT. CLIFF

Jay hasn't moved a muscle.

Rachel and Nicki sit a little ways away, looking out over the mountain range in front of them.

JAY
Maybe we...

He stops himself.

NICKI
Maybe we what?

JAY
What if this is all just one long
nightmare. And if we jump, it'll
all be over.

Jay stares out beyond the cliff's edge.

JAY (CONT'D)
Sometimes that's what it takes for
a bad dream to end. You die. But
then you wake up. Somewhere,
anywhere but here.

Rachel looks beyond the edge as well, tears welling in her eyes, a look of sad understanding of these words.

Nicki gets up and gets closer to Jay.

NICKI

Maybe you're right. But what if you're not? What if this is it? This is the weirdest shit I've ever been through, but we don't know what's on the other side if we take that leap.

Rachel quietly sobs. Nicki puts a comforting hand on Jay's shoulder.

NICKI (CONT'D)

You did what you had to, Jay. You saved us. And I don't know about you, but I'm not ready to find out what's on the other side just yet. We can get out of this.

Rachel looks back to find Nicki staring at her.

NICKI (CONT'D)

Together.

A beat of silence, save for the wind blowing through the air, branches clicking together.

NICKI (CONT'D)

We have to find our way out. And we won't do that just sitting here.

She puts her hand out to Rachel. Rachel gets up and joins them.

The three survivors get in close, holding each other near the cliff's edge.

They break apart, the human contact a brief reprieve from the weight of the dread that surrounds them.

Jay, looking out over the edge, squints at something in the distance. His eyes go wide with excitement.

JAY

Look!

He points out to a far away hill. Closer than it was before, within a days walk, is the FIRE TOWER.

A glimmer of hope flashes over Jay's face. He stands.

JAY (CONT'D)

The Fire Tower! We're close!

He starts walking away towards the woods.

RACHEL

I didn't want to say this before,
but how are you sure the radio is
gonna be there?

JAY

I'm not, but it's the only shot we
got right now.

Nicki shrugs at Rachel.

NICKI

(to Jay)
Lead the way.

Rachel nods in agreement.

JAY

Alright, then. Let's go.

They set off into the woods, heading in the direction towards
possible salvation.

EXT. WOODS

The sun, still at its zenith, breaks through the clouds,
light beams piercing into the endless expanse of winter
forest.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Jay leads the way, Rachel and Nicki trailing shortly behind.

NICKI

How far do you think we've gone?

JAY

Pretty far. Let's find a good
vantage point and reassess.

He checks his watch.

He taps at it's face hard with his finger, concerned.

JAY (CONT'D)

Of course.

NICKI

What?

JAY

Watch isn't working.

He looks up at the sky.

NICKI

How long we been wandering out here?

They stop, looking at each other, unsure.

RACHEL

Feels like days.

Jay points up a hill.

JAY

Come on, let's see how close we are.

They trudge up the hill.

When they get to the top, they search for the Fire Tower.

It isn't there.

JAY (CONT'D)

It should be... right over...

RACHEL (O.S.)

Oh my god...

Rachel is pointing into the forest to their right. Jay and Nicki look to where she is pointing.

Leaning on a familiar tree is the near completely decomposed corpse of Christy. Her skeleton is in the same position as they last saw it, though all that's left is dirty bones. The strange Black Liliun have grown over her, weaving through her ribcage, sprouting from where her mouth should be..

RACHEL (CONT'D)

No. No no no. No no no no no.

NICKI

This is impossible. We...

JAY

We're back where we started.

GREG

Tired yet?

They all turns to find Greg, aiming down the sight of his crossbow. He pulls the trigger.

The arrow zips through the air, hitting Jay in the stomach. He falls, clutching his wound.

JAY

RUN!

Another arrow hits him in the back.

Rachel and Nicki run as fast as they can into the woods.

Greg follows, walking after them.

EXT. WOODS

Panting, Rachel keeps running as fast she can. She looks around.

She is all alone. No sign of Nicki.

She hides behind a tree, scared for her life.

EXT. WOODS - SAME TIME

Nicki sprints ahead in the woods.

NICKI

Rachel, come on, this-

She turns around. Rachel isn't there.

NICKI (CONT'D)

Rachel?

Looks all around her. Nothing but the trees.

NICKI (CONT'D)

RACHEL?!

She keeps running ahead. Then she stops.

A sound coming from behind her, a repetitive, wet CLUNK, CLUNK, CLUNK.

She turns towards the source of the sound.

The teenage boy from before is now kneeling, one knee on top of the little boy's chest, his back to Nicki. In his hand raised above his head is a LARGE ROCK, wet with blood.

He raises his arm higher to strike again but stops. He turns his head, looking directly at Nicki, blood sprayed on his familiar face.

Nicki turns to sprint away, but stops in her tracks. Greg stands before her.

EXT. WOODS

Rachel stops running when she hears Nicki's scream echo through the forest.

RACHEL
NICKI!

She looks around. Only the trees, nothing else.

She runs in the direction of the scream.

EXT. WOODS - RIVER

Rachel comes to the edge of the river. She stops in her tracks.

Floating down the river are dozens of pale, naked bodies. Face down. Drowned and dead. They pass by in terrible numbers with the river's current.

She watches the bodies flow down the river, turning to see where they're heading.

Instead of more forest, the river is leading into an endless black ocean, pale bodies floating on the surface as far as the eye can see.

GREG (O.S.)
You see now.

She turns.

Greg is standing there.

RACHEL
Why are you doing this?

Greg starts to step towards her, slowly.

GREG
This is not my doing, Rachel. What you see around you... Something far greater is at work here.

Rachel backpedals and trips over a branch, falling on her back.

GREG (CONT'D)

Let me show you.

He quickly overpowers her, putting her into a choke hold.

She struggles, squirming in his arms as he brings her to the ground. Her eyes full of fright.

She slowly succumbs to the lack of oxygen, the sky above her fading to black.

EXT. VOID

Rachel is floating in the middle of space, surrounded by the innumerable stars.

She catches her footing, as if stepping up onto an invisible platform.

In front of her, a SHARD OF ROCK in the distance. She walks towards it.

As she gets closer, she can see a LARGE BED OF THE STRANGE DARK FLOWER surrounding the shard.

She steps closer, and closer. Her naked feet step into the flowers.

She stands before the shard, which is much larger now that she is up close to it. A towering, 50 foot piece of unearthly stone. One side is completely smooth, as if it were a piece of a much larger puzzle.

On this smooth face is the STRANGE SYMBOL.

A ghostly voice starts to rise from the rock, beckoning her.

She drops to her knees.

In front of her, the floating dark figure, its black hair floating in front of its face in slow, fluid motions.

The hair moves to reveal a dark, pitch black visage. No mouth, no nose, but two eyes, pinpricks of terrible light.

All around, comets start flying by. The shard of unearthly rock also starts to move, accelerating, flying through space at an incredible speed.

Rachel cannot look away from the light in the dark figure's eyes.

The rock goes faster, and faster, until it approaches a collision course with a familiar bright blue sphere (Earth).

They burn through the atmosphere, screaming towards a vast forest, the sea of green rising to meet them as they crash into the forest.

INT. PRISON

Rachel's eyes open.

She is inside an old wooden enclosure, tall reams of wood rising 20 feet in the air. A circular opening on the roof reveals a starry night sky.

A comet streaks across the black.

She groans as she painfully rises.

A clinking sound.

She lifts herself up and moves but is shackled to the ground. Instead of the clothes she was wearing, she now is in a white shift.

On her face, the strange symbol is painted on in bright red.

She turns to see a WOMAN (#1) sitting behind her. She has the strange symbol drawn on her face as well, but brown like old blood.

Nearby, another WOMAN (#2) in a similar situation lays in the fetal position, facing away.

RACHEL

Where am I?

Woman #1 looks upwards at Rachel.

WOMAN #1

I don't know.

A look of recognition crosses Rachel's face.

A BRIEF FLASH OF A MEMORY: The picture of the family on the wall of the mountain house. The mother standing behind the teenage boy, staring down at him.

Back in the prison, we see the woman #1's face, the same as the one in the photo.

RACHEL

You're his mother...

The woman is silent for a moment.

WOMAN

There was always something wrong with him. You could see it in his eyes. There was nothing behind them. No feeling. No light. Nothing like his little brother.

She smiles, slightly.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Jacob was such a sweet boy. Couldn't trust Greg to be alone with little Jacob. Jacob would come back with cuts and bruises. Burns. Never said where they came from. But I knew. Yes. I knew.

Her smile begins to sour.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

When Greg took his little Jacob into the woods... I knew he was going to do something horrible. I went in after them, and...

The cracks begin to show in this poor woman. She grabs handfuls of what little is left of her hair and begins to rock back and forth.

WOMAN #1

Has it come to you yet?

Woman #1 looks to Rachel with a broken look.

WOMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Have you seen its face?

RACHEL

Whose face?

BOOM. A door on the side opens. Greg stands in the doorway, wearing the mask. He holds a pail in his hand.

WOMAN #1

(to Greg)

Son, please...

She inches forward on her knees.

WOMAN #1 (CONT'D)

Gregory, please, let me out of here, please-

Greg calmly puts the pail by the entrance.

He then walks over and smacks his mother across the face.

She shrinks in fear and he stands over her, looking down.

GREG

That reality you knew was a lie. Do not let its memory shackle you to the misery of existence any longer. You will join father and the others, soon.

Greg then kneels, rubbing the hair of his mother tenderly.

GREG (CONT'D)

You will be brought back home soon. I promise. Existence has been your sentence, your painful exile from nothingness. Where we all return.

You can hear but not see him smiling.

GREG (CONT'D)

And it will take you there.

Woman #1 cowers, shrinking into herself.

Greg looks at Rachel.

RACHEL

Fuck you.
(screaming)
FUCK YOU!

Greg walks up and kneels in front of her.

GREG

If you only understood how lucky you are, you wouldn't speak to me that way.

RACHEL

What is wrong with you? You're fucking crazy!

Greg laughs at this.

GREG

You will see the irony of that in time.

Greg stands and exits the shack.

Woman #2, laying on her side, emits a low moan.

We see her turn. Her arm has a tattooed sleeve up the side. Woman #2 is NICKI, though haggard and aged many years somehow.

RACHEL

Nicki?

Rachel tries to move as close as she can to Nicki, but the shackle stops her.

Nicki's eyes are empty, bereft of any sanity.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I'm here, we can get out of this.

Nicki moves very slowly.

NICKI

R... Rachel?

RACHEL

What did he do to you?

NICKI

I've... it's been. I've been here forever. Where...

Nicki curls into herself, running her hands through her thinning hair.

NICKI (CONT'D)

(crying)

So long... it's been SO LONG.

Her fingers clench tight, ripping the hair from her head. She looks back at Rachel, face contorted with insanity.

NICKI (CONT'D)

YOU'RE NOT THERE. WE'RE NOT HERE.
WE'RE NOWHERE. THIS IS ALL THERE
EVER WAS!

She continues to scream at Rachel. Rachel backs away.

RACHEL

Stop, please!

Nicki doesn't respond, just gives one, long, blood curdling scream as she stares at Rachel with wild eyes.

INT. PRISON - LATER

Rachel sits. Nicki has curled herself into a ball, silent.

Greg enters, dragging something heavy in with him. Rachel tries to move as far from Greg as possible, until she sees what he brought in: Jay, bloody and unconscious, his limp form being dragged across the floor. The strange symbol has been painted on his face.

RACHEL
Jay! Jay wake up!

Greg doesn't react to her cries, but goes about shackling Jay's ankle to the floor.

GREG
He's lost a lot of blood. Probably
can't hear you.

Rachel looks up at Greg with an intense hatred.

RACHEL
What happened to Nicki?

Greg takes the pail, walks over to Rachel. Rachel tries to back away, but the length of chain doesn't let her go too far.

GREG
Let me show you.

He reaches his hand into the pail, splashing the brown, nauseating water onto Rachel's face.

She spits, not wanting to get any in her mouth.

The symbol on her face begins to erode.

GREG (CONT'D)
I'm taking your protection. You
must let go. Let your mind wander.
Otherwise, this will be more
unpleasant than it has to.

He washes the symbol from her face. The room begins to shift, the walls breathing. The mask Greg wears becomes his face, the symbol on it glowing.

GREG (CONT'D)
(distorted)
You must learn that time and space
are constructs.
(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

Those things you hold onto, memory,
emotion, meaning. All of it amounts
to nothing. Shadows on the wall.

Greg disappears, everything disappears, we enter Rachel's
fraying consciousness through her iris.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I am lifting the veil so you can
see the truth. Only then will you
be able to let go. Only then will
you be truly free.

Light morphs into darkness, darkness morphs into light.

Rachel lays on the ground, staring up into the opening in the
ceiling. The light rises and falls incredibly fast, dozens of
the sun's rotations passing in mere seconds.

Close up on Rachel's eye, where the iris is a reflection of
the passing time.

Her nails drag across skin, making deep cuts that bleed down
her arms.

Nearby, Jay stirs.

He groans with pain as he moves, his eyes opening slowly.

JAY

(weakly)

Where the...

His eyes dart around the room. He sees Greg's mother staring
at the wall, mumbling to herself, and Nicki (whom he doesn't
recognize) curled up in a ball nearby.

His eyes then land on Rachel laying nearby, catatonic.

JAY (CONT'D)

Rachel?

He starts dragging himself with one arm across the ground,
wincing with the effort.

JAY (CONT'D)

(yelling)

Rachel!

A CLINKING of the shackle going taught. Jay has gone as far
as it will let him go.

He reaches out his arm to try and touch Rachel, though she is
just out of reach.

JAY (CONT'D)
Rachel! Rachel come on, listen to
me!

Rachel makes no response, her eyes open but empty.

EXT. VOID

Rachel kneels before the SHARD, towering over her, much larger than it was before. The symbol vibrating in front of her.

INT. PRISON

Jay watches helplessly as Rachel's skin seems to shift and move over her body, wounds opening and closing like little mouths, blood seeping out before forming into scars.

GREG (O.S.)
She's bearing witness.

Jay turns to find Greg standing over him.

JAY
(seething anger)
What the fuck did you do to-

Greg lifts his foot and presses it onto Jay's torso. Jay yells from the excruciating pain.

GREG
Quiet. I'm doing her a favor.

JAY
A favor?

He applies a bit more pressure, watches emotionlessly as Jay squirms in pain under his boot.

GREG
You could never hope to understand.

Greg lifts his foot and Jay gasps for breath.

Greg bends on his knee, glaring at Jay through his mask.

GREG (CONT'D)
This will all be over soon.

Greg turns and leaves.

Jay looks helplessly as Rachel. He watches her in silence for a little while, tears going down his face.

JAY

Rachel, I'm... I'm so sorry.
Please. If you can hear me... I
shouldn't have left when you needed
me. I was just scared. I wasn't
running away from you. I'm just
always running away when things get
tough. I'm sorry.

Rachel makes no response.

JAY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

Jay turns away, unable to watch what is happening to Rachel any longer.

EXT. VOID

Rachel is kneeling before the shard, floating in the void. She looks up. The two points of light stare back at her from within the shard.

The Dark Figure strikes the inside of the shard like an animal in a cage, sending psychic ripples through void.

It strikes again, and again, and again, as if trying to break free.

Rachel stands, walks slowly towards the shard until she is eye level with the being inside it.

It strikes from within the shard, and finally, it dawns on Rachel...

RACHEL

You're trapped here, too.

The points of light stare back at her.

INT. PRISON - LATER

Rachel still has an empty look in her eyes, laying on the ground.

Her appearance has changed significantly. Her body is covered in scars, her hair thinner and turning grey, more emaciated and filthy, as if much time has passed since we last saw her.

Greg's hand comes into view, applying the symbol to her face.

GREG

I stumbled upon this place as a child. Nearly got myself lost here forever. But it came to me. Taught me how to anchor my sanity. Showed me EVERYTHING. So that I may free it. But it is mine, now. To do what I wish.

As soon as the symbol is done, the world around her begins to return to normal.

She lays on the ground, mind shattered.

GREG (CONT'D)

I am doing you a favor. Your life, all life, is a series of continuous miseries and pains. Consciousness is our curse. A mutation that imprisons us. But I am here to help set you free. From all of it. Release you from everything. Return you to the featherbed of nothingness. And that thing out there, that is your key to salvation.

He extends his hand to her.

GREG (CONT'D)

This can all be over. Will you let me help you, Rachel?

She looks up at him, nodding slowly.

GREG (CONT'D)

Good. It is time.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Greg leads woman #1, Nicki, Jay, and Rachel through the forest.

They walk within a thick column of trees that have been snapped in half, following this line of decimation towards the base of a mountain.

Finally, the group slows down as they come to the edge of a huge clearing.

RACHEL POV: A wide impact crater, the trajectory of the celestial object that caused the broken trees leading to a CAVE at the base of the mountain.

The area is covered in the strange Dark Liliium, growing thicker at the mouth of the cave, as if whatever lies within is their source. Dozens of MYSERIOUS MOUNDS are interspersed throughout the field of flowers, facing the hollow opening at the mountainside.

Above them, comets streak across the sky.

GREG

She came from the black. Screaming across the cosmos. She is a prisoner here, just as we are. But she can set us free.

They walk through the field of flowers in a daze. Rachel passes one of the mounds on her left.

In the mound is a HUMAN BEING, naked, skin a deathly pale, kneeling with its arms hanging limp at its sides. The black flowers have grown over the body, INTO the body, some flowers even sprouting from WITHIN.

The body's chest moves slightly with each shallow breath. Rachel can see a white, milky eye beneath the foliage, staring ahead.

THE EYE MOVES, looking at Rachel with the dead, empty gaze of a doll.

In her hypnotic state, this barely fazes Rachel. She looks around the crater, noticing that the dozens of mounds that surround them are each something that was previously human.

EXT. CRATER - MOMENTS LATER

Woman #1, Nicki, Jay, and Rachel are all within 20 yards of the mouth of the cave, Greg standing behind them.

GREG

Kneel.

They comply.

Above, the comets shoot across the sky faster, and faster.

From deep inside the cave, a low, terrible drone begins to rise. We close in on the cave's opening, a cavern of endless black.

Suddenly, from within this void, TWO TINY POINTS OF LIGHT APPEAR, seemingly miles away. They move slowly, the terrible lights getting closer and closer.

Rachel closes her eyes in terror and turns her head away. Greg kneels down behind her, gently pushing her face back towards the cave's mouth.

GREG (CONT'D)
Do not be afraid.

RACHEL'S POV: Floating in front of them is the Dark Figure.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
She will release you.

The figure first floats up to Woman #1. She looks worried at first. The figure takes her face in its hands. Its hair moves, and Woman #1 stares into its eyes, which shine with an overwhelming brightness. A slight smile goes across her face.

Then, it's as if the light was snuffed out of her. She is breathing, but goes completely slack. The flowers below her start to grow, vines edging their way up her body and INTO her, raising her skin as they go, new bulbs growing and sprouting out from within.

Then, it goes to Nicki, tears of joy streaming down her face. The being takes Nicki's face in its hands, and does the same. Nicki goes slack, collapsing into the flowers.

The flowers slowly begin to grow over her, too. Her mouth slack, a vine enters the opening, inch by inch, Nicki giving no reaction.

Rachel closes her eyes tight.

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Let yourself go. Let yourself be free.

Rachel's eyes begin to loosen, not clenched so tight. It seems as if she is about to open them.

JAY (O.S.)
Rachel!

Rachel moves her head and looks to the right, away from the Shard. Jay, struggling to move, limps forward and gets in between Rachel and the dark figure.

JAY (CONT'D)
Rachel! Get up! Run!

Greg starts walking towards Jay. When he gets to him, Jay goes for a punch.

Greg knocks it aside, and lays a haymaker to Jay's face, sending him tumbling.

Rachel, her focus coming back, starts to get up.

A BLACK HAND grabs her. She rips the hand away as she sprints off as fast as her weak, tortured body can allow her. A ghostly SHRIEK bellows from behind her.

Greg is pummeling Jay, turning his face to a bloody pulp.

Jay is motionless. Greg gets up, hands covered in blood. He looks at Rachel and follows her.

Jay lays on the ground, turns his head. He watches as Rachel runs away, a slight smile breaking on his face. He turns on his back, eyes towards the sky.

Floating just inches above his face, the dark figure leers back into his gaze with its terrible white eyes like burning stars. Jay's face contorts in utter terror.

The vines grow over him, his body struggling against them. We watch as they go into his eyes, his mouth open in a soundless scream as a bulb comes up from his throat and blooms outward.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Rachel moves as fast as she can through the woods, but Greg is hot on her trail. He catches up to her and TACKLES her to the ground.

They wrestle on the ground, but Greg gets the upper hand, pinning her on her back.

GREG

I was doing you a favor.

RACHEL

It wants to be free. Why are you keeping it here?

GREG

So, it came to you, too?

(a beat)

Why would I free it, when watching it devour the light from the eyes of its prey unfolds the truth of the universe before me?

RACHEL
You're fucking crazy.

Greg hits her, blood spewing from her mouth.

GREG
She won't let you go. Never.

He hits her again. Rachel is beginning to lose consciousness.

Greg relents, breathing heavy.

Rachel, using all her strength, lifts herself and rips off Greg's mask, throwing it aside.

He gets up and reaches for it, tumbling to the ground. His eyes go into the back of his head. He is stumbling through madness, his mind breaking.

As Greg writhes on the ground we see in flashes what he is experiencing in his mind: A group of the FACELESS WHITE FIGURES ATTACKING HIM, raking their nails over his skin. One of them gripping his bottom and top sets of teeth with its hands and PULLS THEM APART, dislocating his jaw and tearing his cheeks.

Nearby, Rachel sees a rock. She limps over to it, picking it up in her hand.

Greg is crawling on the forest floor, inching towards the mask. Just as his fingers are about to touch it, it is kicked away by a shackled foot.

Greg looks up.

GREG (CONT'D)
No. You can't be here.

GREG'S POV: His little brother, Jacob, stands above him. His little head is caved in, the strange flowers blooming from within the wound, dark vines spiderwebbed over his young face.

GREG (CONT'D)
It chose me. This isn't supposed to happen.

Instead of Jacob, we see Rachel above Greg, a rock poised high in the air above her head.

She brings the rock down on his head. Over, and over, and over. Blood spraying on her shift, on her face.

Greg's body twitches on the ground, then goes still. Rachel slowly gets up, getting to her feet despite being racked with pain.

She ambles ahead into the woods, leaving the mask behind her.

EXT. CRATER - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel stands at the edge of the crater.

She walks up, past all these hopeless things kneeling in the bed of strange flowers, until she reaches the mouth of the cave.

She takes a nervous breath looking into the cave.

A rustle behind her. She looks back.

The dozens of bodies behind her START TO RISE, their faceless heads all turning to look straight at her.

Rachel turns and sprints into cave, disappearing into the darkness as the terrors begin their slow pursuit .

INT. CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel takes careful steps across the rocks. She looks back, the horrors behind her haunting silhouettes at the entrance of the cave that is quickly disappearing behind her/

The Dark Liliiums are everywhere, lining the sides of the cave and covering the ceiling. In this darkness the strange flowers give off an eerie glow, a bioluminescence that gives the cave a cosmic appearance as if she were floating in the depths of space.

Not paying attention, her foot catches on a rock and she TUMBLES, crashing over rocks, until she FALLS INTO OPEN SPACE, CRASHING INTO A BLACK POOL BELOW.

Rachel swims upwards and breaches the surface, gasping for air, the liquid she swims in black and slimy as oil. She wipes the viscous fluid from her eyes and looks around the cavern.

RACHEL'S POV: a few meters ahead, A ROCK LANDING WITH THE SHARD EMBEDDED INTO IT, surrounded by a bed of the strange Dark Liliium flowers.

She swims ahead, crawling from the water on her hands and knees onto solid ground. She gets up and walks towards the shard from her dreams.

THE SOUND OF A ROCK FALLING BEHIND HER makes her turn.

Another rock falling with a CLICK CLACK. Her head turns towards the sound, but in the dark of the cavern she cannot see a thing.

She goes up to the shard, it's unearthly material reflecting the glowing plant life surrounding it.

She leans in closer, when suddenly, TWO BRIGHT LIGHTS appear from within. She falls back in shock.

From within the shard, The Dark Figure floats in front of her, terrible eyes staring at her. Rachel stares back.

Rachel moves her hand slowly towards the shard.

Her hand touches the surface, and a terrible SCREECHING echoes through the cavern. She turns.

Emerging from the water behind her in serene, unhurried steps are DOZENS of faceless white terrors, moving right towards her.

Rachel looks around desperately until her eyes fall on a LARGE ROCK nearby.

The things move ever closer, more of them appearing behind the ones who have already risen from the depths of this black pool.

Rachel raises the stone with her hand, smashing it on the surface of the shard. A crack forms, but little else. The Dark Being watches from within.

Rachel looks behind her: The shambling things are dangerously close.

She raises the stone, crashing it down onto the shard again, and again, and again, the cracks growing each time.

One of the terrors puts out a hand, grabbing her shoulder.

It pulls her back, a group of them wrapping their pale arms around her, pulling her into the black ooze with them.

Rachel, with her last bit of strength, uses her one free hand to throw the rock at the shard. A sizable chunk is chips off, a beam of light emitting from within.

The cracks begin to spiderweb across the surface from this focal point, an eerie light seeping out.

The cracks grow, until finally, the shard explodes in a burst of incredible light, engulfing the immense cavern in a glow brighter than the sun.

INT. CAVE

CLOSE UP ON: Rachel's eyes, closed. They slowly flutter open.

Rachel is lying down on the stone floor. She picks herself up slowly, weak from everything she has been through. She looks to where the shard was to find nothing there.

EXT. CRATER - MOMENTS LATER

The dark, endless black of the mouth of the cave. Rachel slowly emerges into the light, limping her way out.

A few feet outside, she stops leans her head back to look around her.

Birds fly in the air, the wind blows through the trees. Whatever warped presence occupied this place, it's gone.

Rachel look ahead at the tree-line, and starts walking.

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Rachel walks through the trees, the setting sun shining through the forest. It's beautiful.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Rachel trudges on further into the woods. Something she sees makes her stop in her tracks.

RACHEL'S POV: A point of light in the distance.

Rachel walks towards it, her steps short, her breath heavy.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel is nearing the edge of the woods, the outline of a house in front of her. Safety is within reach.

A figure in front of her, the short spark of a lighter. She edges towards it.

RACHEL
 (weakly)
 Help... Help me...

The woman in front of her gasps at the sight of Rachel. Rachel is about to fall when the woman catches her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Don't let.. don't let it take me...

Rachel looks up, staring her savior in the eyes.

She looks upon her own face, a version of herself before all this began. SHE IS LOOKING AT ANOTHER RACHEL, the house ahead of her is Greg's mountain house.

Rachel #2's eyes go wide. She carries the Rachel we know (now Rachel#1) towards the house.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel #2 carries Rachel #1 into the warmth of the house, but Rachel #1 is close to death.

RACHEL #2
 (yelling)
 Help!

Footsteps from upstairs. Jay #2 comes crashing into the room.

JAY #2
 Who... Who is this?

RACHEL #2
 I don't know, lie her down on the bed.

They put Rachel #1 down gently, her skin white, her breaths extremely shallow.

RACHEL #2 (CONT'D)
 Draw a bath, and make it warm, but not too hot. She's dying.

Jay goes into the bathroom and starts running the water. He begins to pace around the room.

JAY #2
 Holy shit, holy shit. Where did she come from?

RACHEL #2

She... she walked out of the woods.

(a beat)

We need to call the police. You
have your phone?

Jay takes his phone from his pocket.

JAY #2

I have no service. Shit. Shit shit
shit. Um... go get Greg! Go quick,
I'll get her in the bath!

Rachel bolts out the door. Jay picks the woman up from the
bed and takes her into the bathroom.

He lowers the woman into the tub, warm water beginning to
fill it.

Rachel #1's eyes flutter open, and she looks at Jay #2.

She gets up from out of the bath.

JAY #2 (CONT'D)

Whoa whoa whoa whoa, get down,
relax, we're gonna get you help.

Rachel #1 looks at Jay #2, a fierceness in her eye.

She pushes him aside, leans out of the tub and reaches for a
dopp kit on the counter. It falls to the floor.

JAY #2 (CONT'D)

What're you-

She roots through the kit, her hand inside it, searching...

Jay #2 grabs her by the shoulder and lifts her, bringing her
back fully to the tub.

JAY #2 (CONT'D)

Get back in there!

Rachel #1 is in the tub again when the door opens.

Greg #2 stands at the entrance.

He looks at Rachel #1, piecing a puzzle together in his mind.

JAY #2 (CONT'D)

Greg, thank god, did you make the
call?

GREG #2
Has she said anything?

Jay makes a look of confusion.

JAY #2
What?

GREG #2
Did she say anything. How she got here, where she came from, who did this, anything?

JAY #2
No, she hasn't really been able to talk.

GREG #2
I got this. You make the call. The phone is in the laundry room in the back corner of the kitchen.

JAY #2
I think I should stay here, I-

Greg #2 stands over him, an urgency in his eye.

GREG #2
(yelling)
Go, Jay. Now.

Jay #2 nods and is about to get up to go, when Rachel #1 grabs his arm.

Jay #2 turns to look at her.

JAY
He's gonna take care of you. I'm gonna go call to get help, I'll be right back. You're okay, we got you now.

Jay #2 jerks his arm out of the Rachel #1's grasp and hustles out of the bathroom, leaving Greg #2 alone with her.

Greg #2 shuts the door behind him, and looks at Rachel #1. He stares at her for a little, a silence between them.

GREG #2
This certainly complicates things.

He looks up and away.

GREG #2 (CONT'D)
Suppose this means I have to get
her there.

RACHEL #1
I freed it.

He looks back to Rachel #1, a menacing look in his eye.

GREG #2
Say that again?

A devilish smile breaks on her face.

RACHEL #1
That thing in the woods. I did what
you wouldn't do. I freed it.

Greg #2 shows something on his face that we haven't seen
before... complete terror.

GREG #2
You freed it?

Greg #2's fear slowly turns to anger, and he goes in for the
kill. He lurches forward, trying to wrap his hands around her
neck. She struggles, water splashing.

GREG #2 (CONT'D)
You cannot begin to understand what
that thing wants. You have no idea
what you've done.

Rachel #1 reaches behind her, RAZOR in hand. She SCRAPES it
across his arm, blood gushing.

He jumps back, holding the wound.

GREG #2 (CONT'D)
Fucking...

Rachel #1 is up from the tub. He lurches forward again,
wrapping arms around her and tackling her into the wall.

Rachel #1's head slams against the bathroom wall, enough to
almost knock her out. He does this again, and again. A
ringing in her head goes off.

She takes the razor blindly slashes it in front of her.

Greg falls backwards, clutching at a mortal wound in his
neck, hate in his eyes.

She gets up from the tub, stepping over his body and opening the door.

She gets out of the bathroom and is standing face to face with Rachel #1.

Rachel #2 looks at Greg #2 dying on the floor, then to Rachel #1.

A beat of silence between them.

RACHEL #2
Did he do this to you?

Rachel #1 nods.

Rachel #2 steps aside. Rachel #1 walks ahead to the door, leading outside.

Greg #2, hand clutched to his throat.

She stops, slides to the ground. Everything she has went through is taking it's toll. Rachel #2 sits by her, holding her head.

RACHEL #1
Dad was wrong.

She looks at her other self in the eye. Taking a nearby towel, Rachel #2 tenderly washes the strange symbol from Rachel #1's face. When the mark is gone, Rachel #2's face tells us that she is beginning to realize who she is talking to, unbelievable as it may be.

The mark removed, something strange begins to happen to Rachel #1, body slowly beginning to fade, taking the sheen of the starry sky.

RACHEL #1 (CONT'D)
The things I have seen... This life we live... It's a tiny, insignificant part of something much bigger. Something you cannot even imagine. There may be no reason to any of it, but there is liberation in that. Everything that's happened, everything that will happen... it may have no meaning, but it doesn't make it not worth living.

A beat. Rachel #2 listens intently.

RACHEL #1 (CONT'D)
Don't give up, okay?

Rachel #2 nods, a tear going down her eye.

RACHEL #2
I won't. I promise.

Rachel #1 lets out a few short breathes before the light in her eyes begins to fade.

Rachel #1's body begins to rise into the air, shifting into a beautiful ethereal light, glittering like space dust that's losing its humanoid form.

Rachel #2, both terrified and mesmerized by what she sees, backs herself up into the wall behind her as the shape starts to swirl like cosmic smoke, edging ever closer towards her.

Unable to back up any more, she raises her arms in front of her and shuts her eyes tight as the substance of what was once Rachel #1 is absorbed INTO Rachel #2, seeping into her body.

Rachel #2's body goes rigid, her eyes opening wide, rolling into the back of her head.

WE SEE FLASHES OF PREVIOUS SCENES OF THE MOVIE IN QUICK SUCCESSION as these experiences are melded into Rachel #2's being, as if another person's life was flashing before her eyes: Standing outside the mountain house, Margot smiling in the kitchen, watching the meteor shower outside, Margot's dead body, flames from the mountain house burning in the night sky, running through the woods, the wooden carving in the forest, Jay's face, Christy's skeletal corpse on the tree.

The speed at which we see these memories is snowballing, going faster and faster: The various hallucinations, Greg in his mask, the shard in the middle of the crater, the strange flowers growing over the husks of human forms, Jay saving her, Rachel breaking the Entity free, and finally...

The Dark Being's eyes, the two tiny points of light staring back at her in an endless darkness, growing brighter and brighter.

We return to the bathroom again, Rachel #2 is shaking from this otherworldly trance, the trauma of absorbing the experiences of her counterpart rippling through her.

She SCREAMS, holding her head in her hands.

JAY #2 (O.S.)
Rachel, how is-

Jay stands at the door, finding Rachel #2 all alone on the ground, shaking and distraught. Greg's lifeless body is slumped on the far wall.

He quickly gets down and holds her.

JAY #2 (CONT'D)
Where did she go?

Rachel looks up into Jay's eyes through fearful tears.

RACHEL #2
I saw you... I saw you die...

Jay #2 looks at Rachel with confusion and concern. He hugs her tighter to him.

JAY #2
Shh, it's okay. I'm right here. I'm right here.

They hold onto each other on the bathroom floor.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NEXT MORNING

The morning sun breaks over the Catskills Mountains.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - SAME TIME

A POLICE OFFICER stands in the back of the house, bending over a set of bloody footprints that lead from the woods to the house.

She follows the footprints to the door leading inside. She pokes her head in.

POLICE OFFICER POV: A body (Greg #2's) covered up with a tarp. The bathroom is still covered in blood.

The police officer shakes their head. She moves around to the front of the house.

A length of police tape is being stretched between two police cars. A forensics team enters the front door.

Rachel #2 sits wrapped in a blanket on the back of an ambulance. The police officer walks over to her.

POLICE OFFICER
Can I get you anything?

Rachel #2 shakes her head slowly. The police officer sits next to Rachel #2 on the back of the wagon.

In the back, Jimmy, Hunter, and Christy are being questioned by a different officer. Nearby, Nicki rubs Brooke's back.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
So this woman came in from the woods, nearly naked in the middle of winter, with a shackle on her ankle. And you were the one who found her?

Rachel #2 nods.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
She mentioned to you that the, uh... unfortunate state she was in... it had something to do with the deceased?

RACHEL #2
Yes.

POLICE OFFICER
And she was the one who killed him?

RACHEL #2
Yes.

The officer grunts, shaking her head.

POLICE OFFICER
Got more people up to some weird shit in those woods than I care to imagine. Where did she go? This woman?

RACHEL
She...

Rachel #2 looks up at the officer.

RACHEL #2
She was gone when I came back.

The police officer puts a comforting hand on Rachel #2.

POLICE OFFICER
You've been through a lot. Just try and hang in there. I'll be back.

Rachel #2 nods, and the police officer walks away.

The police officer speaks into her com strapped to her shoulder.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Alright we need a search through
 the woods for a female, age
 unknown...

Her voice trails off as she walks away.

Rachel #2 sits alone on the back of the ambulance, staring into the woods.

Margot #2, wrapped in a blanket, eyes puffy from crying, sits down next to Rachel #2.

RACHEL #2
 Hey.

They hug, Margot #2 closing her eyes tight.

MARGOT #2
 I'm sorry. I don't know what to
 say. I... I had no idea who he was.

RACHEL #2
 That's not your fault. None of this
 is. I promise you.

They hug again.

RACHEL'S POV: Jay #2 is walking towards them, stops when he sees the moment they're sharing.

JAY #2
 I'll come back later.

RACHEL #2
 No, Jay. Come here.

Jay #2 walks up and the three of them share a long, comforting embrace.

JAY #2
 Cops told me I could take us to the
 station, we'll have an escort down
 the mountain. Shouldn't be far.

RACHEL #2
 Thanks, Jay.

She looks at him with eyes full of love and admiration.

JAY #2
(bashful)
Yeah, uh. Yeah. Let's get the fuck
out of here.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADS - LATER

Margot's car trails a paddy wagon as they make their way down the mountain, another police vehicle following close behind.

INT. MARGOT'S CAR - SAME TIME

Jay drives down the mountain, focused on the road. Margot is asleep in the backseat, wrapped in a blanket. Sitting in the passenger seat is Rachel #2, staring out the window as everything passes.

JAY #2
Hey, Rachel...

Rachel #2 looks over at Jay #2.

JAY #2 (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I... I'm sorry I wasn't
there for you before. When you
needed me. I was scared, and I let
that fear tear me away from one of
the best things in my life. And
I... I dunno. I'm sorry.

Rachel #2 smiles, takes Jay's free hand and holds it. She looks back out the window as they drive off.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROADS - SAME TIME

The car zips down the road behind the police vehicle, disappearing around a bend.

We are left with the bucolic scenery of the Catskills, until...

The camera pans to the side of the road. THE CORPSE OF THE DEAD BUCK (which Rachel #1 saw on her way up the mountain) is splayed on the edge of the concrete, limbs still bent at grotesque angles, the head picked apart by scavengers, half its face revealing a red skull within.

We close in on the horrid visage of this deer, getting closer and closer to its empty eye.

A STRANGE BLACK FLOWER slowly begins to bloom from within the socket, black petals opening up into the cold winter air.

FADE TO BLACK.