

THE MISSING

Original Script
by
Christopher Styles

Christopher_styles@yahoo.com
702.410.3960
WGAWest Reg.#2300716

He tags his friend then darts in the opposite direction.

JOHNY
You don't know that!

Clouds over head release the sound of THUNDER.

JOHNY (CONT'D)
1, 2...

Johnny counts against a tree near where they dropped their bikes when he hears an insect-like CLICK, he glances about.

JOHNY (CONT'D)
3, 4?

Johnny no longer hears his friend, he *stops* counting and peers around.

JOHNY (CONT'D)
Where'd you go?

Johnny steps forward and slows when he spots his friends bike on the ground.

Johnny takes another glance before he begins to shout for his friend.

JOHNY (CONT'D)
Hey. Where are You?

4 **EXT. SMALL FOREST COMMUNITY HOUSE - DAY** 4

Johnny rides to his friends house, drops his bike and approaches the door.

Seth's Mother, Pauline answers. She peers back and steps out.

From a distance, the boy points to the forest.

TRANSITION:

(S.I. Opening Titles)

5 **EXT. WOODS - DAY** 5

A heavy fog rolls into a dense forest.

Ferns, clovers and moss cover the forest floor.

Rain falls over the forest, the droplets cause ripples to spread across the surface of a creek.

An endless canopy of redwoods is enshrouded in by storm front.

A vast expanse of coastal redwood forest stretches for miles as fog and rain take hold.

Deep in the forest under a tree is a weathered backpack and a pair of boots.

A small town resides at the base of a mountain.

DISSOLVE:

A reporter and a camera man record coverage for an update on the "Missing Boy".

MATCH CUT:

6

6

7

INT. CABIN - DAY

7

A Television broadcasts the report of a "Missing Boy" on the 4 O'Clock News.

T.V. NEWS (V.O.)

Local sheriff's office have called off Search and Rescue after more than a week since Seth Michales was reported Missing.

Official's say more than fifty people assisted and combed over 3 miles of local forest.

Tragically no new leads and all options have been exhausted.

A rustic, young man **Zack** in head to toe camouflage steps into frame.

T.V. WEATHER REPORTER (V.O.)

Next up, Meteorologists say a freak storm is pulling in the northern altitudes.

Jane, an endearing woman, late forties enters the room.

JANE

Grandpa's all packed and in the truck.

Zack turns off the T.V.

JANE (CONT'D)

You have everything you need?

Zack peers around, grabs his gloves off the counter and holds them up.

ZACK

I do now.

He stuffs them into his Camouflage jacket pocket.

The Woman smiles and moves closer.

JANE

Do me a favor?

ZACK

Sure.

JANE

Help grandpa however you can, ya' know. Hang with him a bit.

ZACK

Of course Mom.

MOM

This is probably his last time going out with y'all, so try to enjoy it.

Zack warms into a smile.

ZACK

We will. Love you.

Zack hugs her then makes for the door.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Call you on the road!

MOM

Alright, thank you.

8

EXT. FRONT DRIVEWAY - DAY

8

Zack approaches an SUV where **Dad**, mid forties and rustic waits beside **Uncle Frank**, youthful yet stoic.

Grandpa, warmly smiles yet reveals his age as he sits in the rear passenger seat, door open, one foot out stretched.

DAD

Good?

Zack lifts the gloves.

ZACK

Yup.

Dad nods at Zack.

DAD

Your Uncle Frank, thinks it's just passing over.

UNCLE FRANK

The forecast didn't say anything about a storm.

They all peer up at the overcast sky.

DAD

Looks like somethings coming.

Dad turns to Uncle Frank, he shrugs in reply.

DAD (CONT'D)

Well, let's get to it.

Dad crosses to the drivers side and each climbs in.

The vehicle's reverse lights brighten, the SUV backs out the driveway.

The vehicle shifts gears then drives away, a heavy weather front pushes in overhead.

9

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - DAY

9

Large cumulonimbus clouds conceal the sunset.

Rain falls in the distance as they turn onto a quiet highway that leads into the mountains.

10

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

10

Night looms, a light drizzle keeps the windshield wipers busy.

Everyone stares ahead at the road.

11 **EXT. DEAD END DIRT ROAD - NIGHT**

11

The vehicle comes a slow stop and parks.

One by one they exit, lift the trunk then each help set up.

A pop up canopy, table, lanterns, mini stove, tea pot, french press, folding chairs and lastly rifles.

Uncle Frank turns on the stove, the water boils, it's poured into a French Press then gently applied, he smiles back to each.

Dad, Grandpa and Zack each smile or nod.

After a gentle pour, Uncle Frank passes out steaming mugs of hot coffee to each.

UNCLE FRANK

How's about we go over that plan

Grandpa puts on a yellow rain slicker, nods and winks at Zack.

DAD

Good idea.

UNCLE FRANK

I did get to get up here last weekend and fix that tree stand.

Dad and Grandpa extend gratitude to Uncle Frank.

DAD

You did? Great.

GRANDPA

Thanks.

UNCLE FRANK

Of course.

GRANDPA

Zack, I hope you don't mind helping me into the tree?

ZACK

Of course Grandpa.

Dad thumbs at the nearby tree line.

DAD

Then Grandpa's in the tree on the lower, opposite side of the funnel.

Grandpa roll his eyes before he and Zack share a coy smile.

DAD (CONT'D)

The three of us will hike up and
take a position on the ridge.

He points in the opposite and up the hill.

Between sips of hot coffee each agree.

They sling rifles over their shoulders and head off.

12

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

12

A half moon rises on the horizon.

The three men ascend a small meadow upon the ridge line.

A faint light in the sky parallels them up the mountain side

The moon rises above the ridge, it brightens the darkness.

All is quiet, in a nearby blind Uncle Frank blinks at the
sudden increase in moon light.

Uncle Frank peers down the ridge at his brother.

Dad stares out attentive to a sound in the distance.

An owl HOOT'S, a second later a small stick CRACKS.

Zack's squints his eyes and slowly turns to face the sounds.

A white spotted Doe cautiously walks into the clearing.

She stops, sniffs at the air then caulks her head in a number
of directions.

Zack recognizes its a doe and sighs.

After a beat, the Doe steps forward.

ZACK

(Sighs)

Uh huh.

Dad spots the Doe, Uncle Frank lowers his rifle and relaxes.

POP!

A single rifle shot sounds over the mountain side.

The Doe darts in the opposite direction.

Zack stands and turns and casts a curious expression at his father.

Dad and Uncle Frank rise and step from their positions.

13

EXT. FOREST TREE STAND - NIGHT

13

The three descend into the clearing around the tree stand.

Each slows as they approach Zack first followed closely behind by Uncle Frank and Dad.

Zack turns to Dad when spot Grandpa missing.

Dad signals all to slow.

DAD
(whispering)
Stop.

He carefully scans the area and points at Grandpa's rifle set against the tree.

DAD (CONT'D)
Try not to move to much.

Zack stops and leers, Uncle Frank glances about then turns to at Dad.

DAD (CONT'D)
I'm trying to spot his tracks.

Zack stops, Uncle Frank peers around the base of the tree from where he's at.

UNCLE FRANK
Thats just it.

Zack looks to Uncle Frank perplexed.

Uncle frank removes a flash light from within a chest pocket of his jacket and clicks it on.

DAD
What?

Uncle Frank shines the light all around the base of the tree and out ward in every direction.

UNCLE FRANK
I don't see anything!

ZACK
There, behind the tree on the
ground.

Uncle Frank and Dad both step forward.

UNCLE FRANK
What the..

Dad CLICKS his flashlight on.

DAD
Grandpa's Boot.

Uncle Frank leans down and picks it up, the boot is untied
otherwise undamaged.

Dad shines the flash light around the base of the tree near
where the boot lays.

DAD (CONT'D)
(Raises voice)
Pops!

UNCLE FRANK APPROACHES THE TREE LINE, HE SCANS HIGH AND LOW
WITH HIS FLASH LIGHT.

UNCLE FRANK
Pops!.. Where are You?

Zack's take several feet in his own direction then cups his
hands to his mouth.

ZACK
GrandPa!..

He takes a second step to his left.

ZACK (CONT'D)
(Shouts)
Grandpa!

14 **EXT. AIRBNB CABIN - DAY (1)** 14

The sun breaks through openings in the clouds.

A large, quiet cabin is surrounded by various sizes of
redwoods. 2 vehicles crowd the driveway.

15 **INT. AIRBNB CABIN - DAY** 15

Inside the door shoes and boots line the entry way.

A jumbled line of suitcases stagger from the door to the kitchen.

Cheerful voices are heard from around the corner.

16

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, LIVING ROOM - DAY

16

Five friends, shuffle past a spacious living room with large windows and vaulted ceilings.

BEN
Not bad, eh!

THE GROUP
Awe. Ohhh. Awe!

One amongst them leads the group.

Ben (33) calm yet adventurous pushes through the living room and towards French doors at the rear of the house.

BEN
Even I've only seen photos of this place.

Ben peers at the kitchen as he goes.

BEN (CONT'D)
It looked epic!

May (32) shy, perceptive, intelligent young lady lifts the remote off the coffee table.

She points the remote and the television BLINKS to life.

BEN (CONT'D)
..I couldn't wait for us all to find out together.

May pushes a button, the volume drops.

She CLICKS the menu and chooses the local news.

Everyone steps to the back doors, the pleasant day outside and Ben beckon them further.

The T.V broadcast an "Update on a Missing Hunter".

NEWS ANCHOR

Mystery surrounds a missing hunter.
Its been 3 weeks since William
Campbell, 79 years of age was last
seen while hunting with his 2 sons
and grandson.

May watches for a beat then follows the group outside.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Local Search & Rescue were
initiated. Shortly after efforts
were called off due to dangerous
weather conditions.

The "Missing" News segment continues.

NEWS (V.O.)

Up next is the forecast, can You
tell us what's in store Kristy?

17

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN REAR PORCH - DAY

17

The group of friends all step onto a wrap around wood deck.

It's complete with Bbq grill, a large table and chairs, dart
board and steps down to the back yard.

They cross the porch to find their own vantage of the dense,
fern clustered meadows beneath the forest of towering trees.

BEN

I'm have to admit, this is better
than I imagined.

Kim, (34) attractive, bubbly is the first to proudly descend
the steps to the quaint back yard.

KIM

This place is
impressive.

KIM (CONT'D)

(Chuckles)

Hah. This is quite something.

Ryan, (33) introverted yet witty places his hand on Ben's
shoulder.

RYAN

Thanks for helping pull this off.
This is wicked dope!

A mountain side of trees surround the property.

From the canopy birds and crickets chirp as the shadows grow.

Joel (32) reserved and stoic stares up at the dense cover of trees.

He smiles at May with raised eye brows.

JOEL

I have to admit, I've never seen
anything quite like this.

A grass yard lined with flower beds of wild flowers and large trees surround the yard.

A cobble stoned path through the meadow leads to a fire pit with a bundle of firewood to the side.

RYAN

Wait 'till you see what we've got
lined up!

They each turn and listen to Ben.

BEN

Fern Canyon, the Big Tree. A giant
Sequoia over 360 feet tall!

RYAN

Oh yea!

May fawns over their surroundings as she lags behind the group.

She pauses enamored by the hill side of lofty trees then catches up.

MAY

I read it rains a lot?

BEN

You know I don't know. Your
probably right.

May lifts her phone.

MAY

The forecast says foggy every
morning with a chance of rain.

RYAN

Okay, cool!

Ben scratches his head.

JOEL
(Chuckles)
Hah.

BEN
Good to know.

Ryan raises an eye brow at Ben then lends a wry smile at Joel and May.

KIM
As long as it doesn't pour, I'm in.

Kim feigns a smile at Ben that softens as she turns to the others.

BEN
I'm sure everything will be fine.

KIM
(Forces laugh)
Huh.. Okay.

Kim makes eye contact with Ryan.

Ryan holds his curious smile and shrugs back at her.

KIM (CONT'D)
So what about tonight?

RYAN
Yea, brother. What do We have up
Our sleeves!

Joel watches both then glances away and smiles at his surroundings.

JOEL
Shoot, I'm happy with what we have
here. Good people, nature..

MAY
A fire pit!

May points over their heads as she descends the steps to join the group.

BEN
That's the idea.

A meadow, chairs and fire pit lay in wait.

KIM
Then Im glad I stopped by the
dispensary.

RYAN
Nice.

BEN
There's more.

They peer around at each other curious.

RYAN
Hah ha, this isn't quite Cancun but
still.

May and Joel catch eyes then quickly look away.

RYAN (CONT'D)
I mean.

Kim shies while Ryan beams.

RYAN (CONT'D)
(blushes)
E'hem.

Ryan notices Kim.

KIM
(Mumbles)
That was something!

Joel exhales

JOEL
Huh.

MAY
(Coughs)
A'hem.

Ben nods with an audible chuckle.

BEN
(Quips)
Heh, yea.

Kim shares the chuckle and shakes her head.

KIM
Well then, alright.

BEN
We're all friends here..

MAY
And adults.

KIM
So, what else is on the agenda?

BEN
Um, I need someone to run with me
to town. We'll pick up stuff for
dinner and breakfast.

RYAN
I'll roll.

They nod before anyone else can interject.

BEN
Cool, everyone else take this time
to choose your rooms.

KIM
Oh, Okay!

MAY
Sweet.

RYAN
It's first come first serve, the
master is two to a room.

Ben thumbs back towards the rear of the yard.

BEN
I was told there is a creek just
behind the property.

RYAN
Oh, If you do go for a walk take a
friend.

JOEL
Bet.

Joel glances to Kim and May,

JOEL (CONT'D)
Anyone interested?

KIM
I'd like to get settled first
myself.

JOEL
No worries.

Joel gives May an oddly shy expression.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Check it out before dark?

MAY
I'm game.

Joel smiles.

May offers a soft smile in return.

MAY (CONT'D)
Give me two minutes.

JOEL
Of course.

BEN
Before we go, ya'll want Tri-tip or
pizza?

KIM
Um, the first please!

RYAN
Hah Heh ha.

JOEL
I thought you said, you had
something special planned.

MAY
(chuckles)
Yea?

Ryan half laughs, Ben puts both hands up.

BEN
Alright, okay. You're right!

RYAN
Hah, don't worry. As long as we get
lucky with the butcher we'll get
something good.

KIM
Hah ha!

Joel nods with a smile.

Ben raises his wrist watch.

BEN
It's 4:30 now. It'll take us an
hour to get a few things and back.

MAY
We'll plan on
dinner around 6:30.

RYAN
Perfect.

KIM
Indeed!

They each make their way back inside.

BEN
Later ya'll.

KIM
Later!

May glances at Joel .

MAY
(Mouthes)
I'll be right back.

Joel nods.

18 **INT. AIRBNB CABIN, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

18

Joel grabs the door behind Ben and Ryan.

Kim winks at May.

She pushes up the stairs and playfully pushes past May.

May takes a step back, they lock eyes then bolt up the stairs
and into the hall.

Joel grins at Kim and May as he pulls the door closed.

19 **EXT. AIRBNB CABIN FRONT DRIVE - DAY**

19

Ben, Joel and Ryan step out front, they walk towards an SUV
parked in the driveway.

RYAN

I cant believe we were able to
score this house.

Ben shakes his head.

BEN

I had booked a whole different
place. When this opened up, I
jumped at it!

Ryan points to an enormous Redwood at the edge of the
property.

RYAN

I mean look at that ..!

RYAN (CONT'D)

I can't believe theres one that big
in our yard.

Awe inspired they take a step in it's direction.

Joel stops.

JOEL

Huh.

Ben drops his head.

BEN

Shit, that reminds me.

Joel caulks his head, Ryan squints from Ben to Joel.

BEN (CONT'D)

You know how it can be out here.

Ben peers around at as if the proverbial type were present.

BEN (CONT'D)

Most are friendly..

Ryan lowers his head, Ben raises both his hands.

JOEL

Awe..

Joel smirks.

BEN

You know theres always those few.

JOEL
Oh yeah, I do.

Ryan shakes his head as he closes the distance.

BEN
Thats..

Ben exhales and looks up at Joel.

RYAN
Fucking bullshit, man.

Ryan slowly lifts his hand to Joels shoulder.

BEN
Yea, I'm.. So sorry.

Joel glances from the hand to Ryan with a warm acceptance.

JOEL
I'm glad I know people that show me
different.

Joel holds them in a calm stare then nods.

BEN
I just want you to know, you're not
my "token" friend. I've always
thought of you as just..

RYAN
My brother.

BEN
Yea, me too.

A serenity washes over Joel.

JOEL
(Deep breath)
Hey, um..

Joel turns and peers at the house.

Ryan and Ben turn and follow Joel's Gaze.

20

INT. AIRBNB CABIN UPSTAIRS HALLWAY & MASTER BEDROOM - DAY 20

May follows the hallway to the end, in opens into the Master.

Kim glances in each room as she approaches from behind.

KIM
 Girl, This place ..Is nice.

A king bed, fluffy comforter and extra soft pillows beg one step closer to investigate.

Kim enters in step with May, looks around then flips the light switch.

KIM (CONT'D)
 Oh, Is that the bathroom!

Fire place, dresser, ottoman and large television help fill the space.

May approaches the foot of the master bed and runs her hand over the fluffy, inviting comforter.

May allows her self to fall back into the embrace of the bed.

MAY
 Awe!

It cradles her in slow motion.

21 **EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, FRONT DRIVE - DAY**

21

JOEL
 I.. Can't say enough.

Joel searches for the words.

JOEL (CONT'D)
 Thank you two for *always* trying to keep us together.

Ben tilts his head at Ryan.

RYAN
 We try.

Joel nods at Ryan.

BEN
 I'm far too scatter brained to pull this off on my own!

RYAN
 He means busy. If it was just me I'd have given up.

Ryan and Ben share modest smirks.

JOEL

I was sad when it didn't happen 2 years ago. So, I was glad when ya'll called back this spring.

RYAN

I know everyone is doing there thing.

Ben nods.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Plus I don't want to seem desperate so give it some time, we'll reboot and try again.

Ben exhales and nods in mutual solidarity.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Kind man that he is. I can always count on Ben helping me to float the idea to ya'll.

Joel toes at a pebble on the driveway before he kicks it.

JOEL

Well, I'm glad ya'll do.

He blushes as he looks at the house.

JOEL (CONT'D)

I don't know if I...

Joel swallows as he pauses.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Get to see her otherwise.

Ben appreciates the honesty.

Ryan shares with a nod and they both glare at the house.

RYAN

Not sure ya'll can tell but I'm a bit of a loner.

Joel and Ben glance to each other and smile.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Ya'll, are my closest friends.

Joel and Ben lean into Ryan and pat him on the back.

BEN

You too.

Joel steps into them.

JOEL

Through thick and thin.. Ya'll my brothers.

Ryan and Ben nod.

Joel pushes off Ben and Ryan.

JOEL (CONT'D)

But if ya'll don't make that Tri-tip happen, I'm not so sure.

Ben and Ryan chuckle, climb into the SUV and Joel waves with a smirk as he returns to the house.

22

INT. AIRBNB CABIN MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

22

Kim steps towards the Master bathroom.

KIM

I like your style.

Kim takes a look around.

KIM (CONT'D)

Fancy a roommate?

May lifts her eyes and forms a smile.

MAY

Um.

KIM

Look, that way we get it. Instead of Ryan and Ben.

MAY

I mean they did find the place.

May raises her brows at Kim.

KIM

Im just saying.. Those two will take 5 minute showers and leave piles of clothes.

May assesses that point.

KIM (CONT'D)

That's not even enough time to enjoy
that hot tub.

May leans in to see and they both turn and glare at the
jacuzzi style master bathtub.

KIM (CONT'D)

That at least 30 minutes with some
scented candles.

MAY

That does sound nice.

May weighs her options.

KIM

I'll ask Ben to pick some up!

Kim steps into the bathroom.

KIM (CONT'D)

Look at that shower!

With both hands up Kim incises May further.

A custom tile shower with 2 over sized, height adjustable
shower heads.

MAY

(in awe)

Awe.

Kim turns to spot a door around the corner!

KIM

Is that a walk in closet?

May gets up to see.

KIM (CONT'D)

Girl, don't get me started. This is
Ours!

May stops in front of the jacuzzi tub and nods.

KIM (CONT'D)

Let's get our suitcases so nobody
can take this room.

MAY

Uh, should we?

KIM
They said choose our room.

Kim sports a wily leer.

KIM (CONT'D)
Besides, if they want the room they
can have it.

May glances back at Kim as she exits the master.

23

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, ENTRY WAY - DAY

23

May descends the stairs as Joel opens the front door.

MAY
Oh, hey.

JOEL
Hey

MAY
Hah ha, um so.

JOEL
Just saw Ben and Ryan off.

May nods and smiles.

MAY
cool.

May crosses to her gray, no frills suitcase.

JOEL
Oh, um here. Let me help you.

Joel walks over and starts to lean into help.

MAY
I got it, thanks.

Joel glances up the stairs then at May.

JOEL
Sure?

May observes Joel size her up.

MAY
Yea, I got it.

JOEL
Of course.

Joel nods and hangs back..

MAY
I'll just be a minute.

May grins as she pulls her suitcase to the edge of the stairs.

MAY (CONT'D)
Apparently, we need lay claim to the master bedroom.

May pushes down on the telescopic handle, grabs tight the pull handle and lifts it to her side.

Intrepid She makes her way up the stairs.

May nears the top when Kim approaches.

KIM
Uh huh.

Kim glances down at Joel.

KIM (CONT'D)
Oh, a gentleman!

Kim smiles at May and tilts her head.

KIM (CONT'D)
Nope. I already lugged mine all through the airport.

Kim places her hand on her heart as she turns to speak to Joel.

KIM (CONT'D)
If I may bother you?

She points to the matching large, light pink, leather luggage with fancy trim.

JOEL
(Chuckles)
Uh huh, these I take it.

May peers back, Joel lifts both suitcases up the stairs.

KIM
Thank you very much!

24 **INT. AIRBNB CABIN UPSTAIRS -DAY**

24

Atop the stairs Joel stops with a huff.

 JOEL
 (Clears throat)
 Uh huh.

He sets the suitcases down and lifts the handles for her.

 KIM
 Great, I can take it from here.

 JOEL
 (Laughs to self)
 Huh.

Joel starts down the stairs, stops and turns to Kim.

 JOEL (CONT'D)
 Let May know I'll be out front,
 Please?

Kim pulls her luggage behind her and without turning around replies.

 KIM
 You got it.

25 **EXT. AIRBNB CABIN FRONT YARD - DAY**

25

Joel reaches into his rental car and pulls out a classic cigarette case.

He flips it open, inside the case is a row of joints.

 JOEL
 (quotes)
 You're all I'll ever need.

A label states Sativa on one Left, Indica on the right.

Joel snickers as he pulls a joint from the case, closes it and returns it to his inside jacket pocket.

Joel flips the joint to his lips, removes a lighter and sparks it.

 JOEL (CONT'D)
 (Exhales)
 Awe.

A large cloud of smoke emotes from Joel, alongside a sigh of relaxation.

ER CLUNK!

The front door closes, Joel peers up from his joint.

MAY
Hey, what you smoking on there
stranger?

Joel raises one eye brow and caulks his head.

JOEL
Yea?

May displays a grin, moves to Joels side and extends two fingers.

JOEL (CONT'D)
You sure, "This ain't no bammer
weed".

MAY
Please, "We don't smoke that shit
in the SLC!"

Impressed Joel hands off the joint to May with ease.

JOEL
Okay, Okay.

MAY
I'm saying, this better be fire or
Im judging you.

Joel chokes on a bit of his exhale.

JOEL
I didn't know you *smoke*.

MAY
There's a lot you don't know about
me.

Joel nods and takes the return.

He puts it to his mouth and pulls deep.

JOEL
(Through exhale)
Fair enough.

May glares at Joel as smoke trails from her nostrils.

MAY
How about that walk?

Joel nods and passes it to May then glances around before he finds his bearings.

JOEL
Yeah. I'd like to check that trail behind the house.

MAY
Cool, how about our street first? See how many neighbors we truly have?

Joel nods and they both make down the driveway.

MAY (CONT'D)
Cool.

May peers both ways, they head off in the QUITE direction.

26

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN STREET - DAY

26

Joel and May pass the joint as they walk down the street.

The paved road continues 100 feet then becomes a dirt road as it bends a corner.

JOEL
Huh, what you think.. Keep going or turn back already?

MAY
Hah, good question?

JOEL
It might be a county road..

They stop and asses both directions.

MAY
Hmm..

JOEL
Last thing I want to do is to walk down someone's driveway.

Joel takes another hit.

MAY
How about we just a lil' ways further.

Joel agrees with a nod, they walk on as he offers her the last of the joint.

MAY (CONT'D)

We can always turn back.

May glances down at the joint with a gentle touch and little effort she hits it.

A noisy, old truck barrels around the bend and onto the dirt road.

May glances away as she tosses the roach to the ground.

The old truck screeches to a dusty halt several feet past them.

May glances at Joel before she stares into the trucks side view mirror.

The truck idles.

MAY (CONT'D)

(Mumbles)

What the actual fuck?

May squints at the truck, then glances down shifts feet and steps on the smoking joint roach.

Cautiously May scans the vehicle as she peeks through the windows.

The Driver abruptly rolls his window down.

May shoots a curious expression at Joel, wary they approach the truck.

MAY (CONT'D)

Oh, Shit!

An Old Man with a scruffy beard and intense eyes, shotgun mounted behind his head glares at them.

May forces a smile at the scruffy, Old Man.

Joel offers a gentle lean and nods at the Old Man.

The scruffy Old Man takes stock of them and shakes his head.

May and Joel glance at each other then back at the Old Man.

MAY (CONT'D)

(curious)

Hello?.

Joel takes a step, appraises the man then the interior of his cab and stops dead when he spots the shotgun.

Joel raises his hands and humbly engages the Old Man's eyes.

JOEL

We're just taking a walk. We didn't mean to trespass or anything.

The man reaches down and spits in a cup.

OLD MAN

Well ya' are! Ain't nothing this way but my house.

They both peer down the long, windy dirt road.

JOEL

No problem. We didn't know.

OLD MAN

What the hell ya'll doing out here anyway?

May leans in.

MAY

Like we said sir, just taking a walk.

OLD MAN

I heard you, I meant where in tarnations did y'all come from?

May squints at the scruffy, Old Man.

She points in the direction of their cabin.

MAY

We're your neighbors for the week at the that last Cabin..

OLD MAN

Oh christ, not another queer bunch of Three's Company!

MAY

(Surprised)

Uh.

JOEL

(Snickers)

Hah ha.

May throws a rigid glare at Joel.

OLD MAN
You two should be getting back..

MAY
Yes sir. Thank you.

May turns towards Joel a bit surprised.

The Old Man takes a rigid tone with them and peers at Joel insistent.

OLD MAN
It's not safe out here.. M'hem.

May raises a hand to block the sun shining, inhales and nods to Joel.

Joel nods back at the Old Man.

May and Joel glance from the Old Truck to the dirt road ahead then turn back towards their Cabin.

The truck's rear wheels kick dirt as it lunges at the dirt road.

MAY
Well, that was something.

JOEL
Hah, yeah.

MAY
Killed my buzz too, shit!

The two wave at the dust as they break into heavy laughter and head back.

27

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, MOUNTAIN SIDE CREEK - DAY

27

River stones run the length of a small, tranquil creek.

A woman's hand dips into frame and scoops one up.

May lifts then turns the rock over in her hand.

MAY
Okay, this is much better path.

Joel and May walk along side the creek.

JOEL

Agreed.

MAY

Yea, well who choose the street
that led straight to someone's
house?

May tosses the river stone back into the creek bed.

JOEL

What? That was You!

May crosses her arms and nods at Joel with a smirk.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Plus, I said maybe we should turn
back.

To that May scoffs.

MAY

Pshaw!

They continue along.

JOEL

(Imitates her)
You were like, "Boy. Quit being a
punk and come on".

MAY

(Laughs)
Shut up, no I didn't.

JOEL

"Besides I just don't give a fuck."

They both laugh.

MAY

I never said anything like that.

May lands a solid punch at Joel's shoulder.

JOEL

See, billy badass over here.

MAY

Please, I don't have shit too prove
to no one.

Joel raises a brow at her.

May softens.

JOEL
No more than anyone else, no doubt.

Joel shies.

JOEL (CONT'D)
I know, I'm a work in progress.

He turns to the creek and pauses.

May watches Joel.

Joel fidgets, takes a breath.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Look, I've held onto this for too long.

MAY
Onto what?

JOEL
I'm not certain I'll ever even get a chance too again, uh.

May pauses not sure what to make of that.

MAY
Wait.

Joel stops and thinks hard about his words.

JOEL
I'm not usually one to talk about feelings or whatever. I just don't want to have to hold onto this and not tell you..

They both look at each other in a touching yet sadly awkward confrontation. (Of timing meets emotional space.)

MAY
Are you sure, you want too? I mean.

They both share another painfully awkward beat.

JOEL
(Takes deep breath)
If I never said anything..

He glances away then dips one hand into his pocket for his joint case.

May places her hand over his.

MAY
Hey.. It's okay.

Joel lifts his gaze to hers.

May closes the space between them.

MAY (CONT'D)
Thank you..

She stands on her toes and places a gentle kiss on his cheek.

MAY (CONT'D)
For giving me time.

May meets his eyes.

They find each other.

May leans in and gives Joel a long hug.

They separate yet May holds onto Joel and Joel to her.

MAY (CONT'D)
And for waiting for me.

They share in the missed longing.

28

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, REAR PORCH - DAY

28

MONTAGE:

A switch is flipped, a string of large lights brighten the yard.

A lid is open, a strand of gas in a BBQ sparks into flames.

A row of fat steaks and boiled corn are placed on the grill.

A bar is rolled out.

A small bucket of ice, bottled waters and a row of glasses neatly sit on top along side a plate of diced limes.

The icing Ben and Ryan reveal 3 boxes of Don Julio 1942 and place them on the table. Two are left in their fancy box.

The 3rd is pulled from its box and set on display on the bar.

BEN

That looks good, don't you think?

Kim smokes a bowl nearby, stands and proudly claps.

RYAN

I've been waiting for years to go
all out like this.

Kim steps forward excited!

KIM

Holy shit! You two have really out
done yourselves.

Ryan and Ben blush, Ryan retorts.

RYAN

We do what we can.

Ben nods then points to Ryan.

BEN

Please, it's all his doing.

Ryan shoots a curious look at Ben.

RYAN

Yea right, Ben clearly sponsored
today's events!

Ben shakes his head.

Kim Raises a brow at them.

KIM

Well, all of this sure is sweet.

She gestures at the amazing spread.

BEN

Yup. That's Ryan.

Ben thumbs at Ryan.

RYAN

Stop.

Ryan holds one hand out, palm up.

BEN

Just an all around sweet guy.

Ryan smirks at Ben then shakes his head.

RYAN

Bro, whatever this is.. It's not helping.

Ryan turns to Kim and blushes.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Look honestly. I'm more of the rough-neck type, really.

Ben laughs then clears his throat to mask his amusement.

Ryan breaks into a grin.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Okay, probably more of the quiet loner but still.

Kim shakes her head at Ryan then glances at Ben,

He nods back at Ryan with a proud nod.

RYAN (CONT'D)

You know, the silent, tough guy.

Ryan rubs at the muscle in his bicep.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Loyal.. Dependable.

Ryan satirizes his self as he rubs his chin.

Ben tries not to laugh.

Kim rolls her eyes.

KIM

Okay Mr. Loyal and dependable..
We'll see?

Ben chuckles then spots May and Joel return through the side gate.

Ryan and Kim turn to see them.

RYAN

Wait..?

Ryan eyes them, their hands clasped.

RYAN (CONT'D)

What!

KIM
(Approving)
Okay, okay!

Ryan appears little surprised.

RYAN
Where'd y'all come from..?

May throws a curious scowl at Ryan.

Ben observes Ryan and Kims response to Joel and Kim.

Ben smiles and nods.

Ben jumps up to check on the the steaks.

Ryan throws both hands up.

RYAN (CONT'D)
(Mouths)
Sorry, sorry.

Joel closes in on the grill.

JOEL
Yo', you guys were serious.

May closes in on the bar and inspects the tall, sleek bottles of Don Julio, 1942.

MAY
Oh, they're serious.

Joel peers back at her.

Kim gets up and approaches May at the bar.

JOEL
I'm saying, y'all really out did
your selves.

May glances sideways at Kim.

Kim returns a large nod.

KIM
I see ya'll already pulled a bottle
from the box. How about we crack
this baby open?

Ben waits for an answer from Ryan with a smile.

RYAN

Please do.

MONTAGE:

The steaks are flipped, beautiful grill lines reveal near perfection.

Each glass receives a square of ice, followed by a healthy pour of tequila.

KIM rubs a lime wedge over the rim of the glass, drops it in and passes one to each.

Ben sniffs at his glass then peers at the others.

May and Joel in turn take their own and swirl or sniff at it.

Ben spots Kim still at the last two drinks when he shrugs and puts the glass to his lips.

May snickers at Ben as he swallows a quick sip.

BEN

Oh fuck, that's good!

MAY

Yea?

Ben nods as he stares in amazement.

BEN

Thank god this stuff is so expensive, otherwise I'd might be an alcoholic!

Everyone nods or laughs as they lift theirs own into view.

MAY

I don't drink tequila that often? Are you supposed to chase it with lime and salt?

KIM

No, this is top shelf. Sip it straight up or on a block of ice!

Kim slows and watches the group.

RYAN

Wow, this smells amazing.

Ryan hangs over his glass enamored.

Ben holds his glass up.

BEN
Wait 'til you taste it.

They share a chuckle.

They each pause and look to one another.

Ryan lifts his glass, each takes notice.

RYAN
Too, those we lost along the way.

They clink their glasses to each others.

JOEL, KIM, MAY, BEN
To Those We Lost.

Each individual pauses then approach their glass with a sip.

MAY
Ehh, oh.

KIM
EH hem. Yeah.

RYAN
Oh, thats smooth.

JOEL
(Swallows with a burn)
Yea, compared to cheap alcohol
maybe.

BEN
Hah ha.

RYAN
Well yea.

MAY
Hah heh.

KIM
Exactly though!

Ben leans into his and already takes the final sip.

Ryan stares down into his own.

Joel holds fast, peers around at his friends then takes
another slow sip.

Ryan swirls his then takes a quick second sip.

He lifts the back half of the glass up and slowly *pours* out it out.

No one speaks, they all watch him in silence.

RYAN

This is for ya'll.

Their smiles are defiant in the face of shared pain, their mood modest and mellow.

KIM

We... Wish you could be here.

Kim shares in the stoic moment and *tips* her glass.

Ben *pours* out the back half of his too.

BEN

Here here.

Joel *spills* a spot of his in front of him.

JOEL

Yea.

Joel nods, tears up then glances away.

May tilts the light amber liquid and watches as it flows over the rim.

A long beat, Ryan slowly raises his head.

RYAN

I'd give *anything, everything*. I miss you sis.

They each raise their glass, say a name then take a final sip.

BEN

My brother, Steven.

Some name siblings, some best friends, cousins, teachers and coaches.

KIM

Cassie.

MAY

And Kelly.

JOEL
Rachel.

 RYAN
Mathew.

 BEN
Corey.

 KIM
Daniel and Daniel.

 MAY
William.

 JOEL
Isiah.

 RYAN
John.

 BEN
Lauren.

 KIM
And Kyle.

They share heavy tears.

 RYAN
We do Our best to remember Our
friends.

 KIM
Still the hard part remains.

Ben steps to and swiftly removes the next bottle, its seal
and all.

 BEN
We ..live on.

He returns with a strong pour to everyone's glass.

Ryan agrees in solidarity and rubs his eyes.

 RYAN
Yes. Yes we will.

Joel lifts his chin, removes a joint and shares in the
sentiment.

 JOEL
We *will*.

May nods.

MAY
Here, here.

Kim looks at the others, wipes her eyes and joins the precession.

KIM
(Whimpering)
Okay.

They lift their glasses together.

MAY
Then, too ..Carrying on.

They toast, immediately after each sips their drink.

Kim turns to Ryan.

Ryan appears to barely hold his self together.

Kim watches him and lifts a shaky hand to her mouth.

KIM
(Soft and torn)
When Cassie died.

Kim swallows then re-approaches.

KIM (CONT'D)
(Assertive)
After Cassie and Kelley were
killed.

Kim inhales to hold back tears.

KIM (CONT'D)
I was always depressed or sad about
something..

Ryan peers at Kim.

KIM (CONT'D)
You know the fucked up thing? I
realized, I was *really* just mad at
myself the whole time.

Ryan takes a breath, in that moment he catches Kims eyes.

KIM (CONT'D)
I just don't know why I survived
that day and they didn't.

Her friends rush to speak up.

BEN
Whoa.

RYAN
Hey.

MAY
That's not fair to yourself.

Joel agrees.

JOEL
Yea.

KIM
No?

She looks each in the eyes.

KIM (CONT'D)
You *all* know, how I was.

Ben, Joel, Ryan and May glance at each other.

KIM (CONT'D)
They were my friends. Do you know
how I treated them?

Kim breaks, she fights to articulate over self loathing
tears.

KIM (CONT'D)
I told them ..I was going to get
new friends and make them popular
instead.

May and Joel *share* a glance.

KIM (CONT'D)
I don't know why I said it.

May moves to support her.

MAY
Thats just high school. We were all
ugly back then.

Joel and Ben share an innocent glare.

KIM
Don't you get it. This was my
fault, I was the popular girl.

Ben and Ryan join May in an attempt to console her.

KIM (CONT'D)

I picked on them, Dylan and Eric.

Joel places a hand on Kim's shoulder.

JOEL

It wasn't just you.

He makes sure she looks him in the eyes.

JOEL (CONT'D)

There were jocks and other **cool** people that picked on them.

RYAN

(Sighs)

Myself included.

Ryan looks down then back at his friends.

RYAN (CONT'D)

It's not one of my proudest moments. Loner against loner, I guess.

Ryan teary eyed turns to Kim.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Usually at their expense.

Kim is hardly able to keep eyes with Ryan.

KIM

Did I pick on you?

Ryan doesn't immediately answer.

RYAN

You didn't really even see me back then.

Kim lowers her head, tears well. She returns to that time, and place..

Ben speaks up.

BEN

The point, if there is one? Is that back then, we were *all* part of that system.

Ben looks at each person.

JOEL
We're older now. It's easier to
recognize indecency.

Joel holds his head up.

May nods then lifts her chin.

MAY
We were just kids.

May offers Kim a warm hand.

MAY (CONT'D)
We can give ourselves a break.

RYAN
Maybe we can help change all that,
somehow.

Kim clings to the last of her glass.

KIM
(sobs)
That'd be nice. Cause I hurt, a
lot.

Ben leans into Kim.

BEN
Me too.

RYAN
That makes three.

Joel nods.

JOEL
Yeah.

May pulls them all into a her.

MAY
Yup, Im pretty fucked up too.

They snortle and chuckle and Kims accepts the group hug.

Kim cries as everyone wraps their arms around her.

For a brief second she sobs wrapped in their warmth.

KIM
Thank you guys.

They hold her and lean their heads on hers.

The group loosen their circle and nod from one another to Kim
Joel warmly pats her shoulder.

Ben turns and quickly makes for the BBQ.

Kim grabs ahold of then leans into Ryan.

RYAN
(Whispers)
Thank You.

Kim wipes tears from her eyes as she gives and gets a long
from hug Ryan.

She lets go, reaches up to Ryan's beard and holds him in a
gaze.

In seconds, Ryan and Kim share a spectrum of emotions.

BEN
Alright ya'll, Ive got good news
and better news.

Ben points from one side to the next.

BEN (CONT'D)
First is the steaks are done, even
though I kinda' forgot about 'em.

Everyones looks shocked.

BEN (CONT'D)
Fortunately, we got the thickest
steaks we could find. So, actually
they're perfect!

Ryan almost faints when he's saved by the punch line.

RYAN
Oh thank God.

Kim and Joel appear relieved.

RYAN (CONT'D)
What he means to say is, dinner is
ready!

JOEL
Haha ha, whew.

Ryan smiles at Kim and moves to help.

BEN
Haha, exactly!

May shakes her head hardly convinced by the prank.

29

EXT. AIRBNB, REAR PORCH TABLE - NIGHT

29

Each help set the outdoor table.

Ben brings over the bottle of Tequila and plate of limes.

They settle in around the table.

Everyone appears elated by the spread.

RYAN
You don't have to wait on our
account.

Ben cuts long strips of perfectly cooked steak.

BEN
Please, have at it.

Within seconds the steak is sliced or halved for each to take.

Everyone leans in and loads their plates with steak and more.

MAY
Wow, guys!

The ladies share in a delicious first bite.

KIM
Oh my god, this is so good!

JOEL
Uh huh.

Before long all are buzzed, eat, joke and toast glasses that are poured, drank and refilled.

RYAN
I can't believe I ate two platefuls
already.

BEN
Oh, I can..but then so did I.

KIM
Please, don't count my plates.

May lends a satiated nod as she sneaks one last bite.

MAY
(Mouthful)
Don't look mom!

They share a laugh with May.

Joel glances up then pushes away from the table with a hand waving it off.

JOEL
Oh I'm done.

Ryan stands, makes for the bar and grabs the final bottle of tequila then returns table side.

RYAN
(Slightly slurred)
I've got just the remedy for that!

He holds the bottle up in front of them.

Each reacts in their own way, mostly positive.

BEN
(slurs)
Last bottle ya'll!

JOEL
Oh shit. Good thing we've been
eating like god damned fools.

May expression laments the last bottle.

KIM
Yea, cause we about to be drunk
like some damned fools!

MAY
Hah! I'll drink to that.

RYAN
Shit, Im already drunk to that.

They share of fit of laughter.

Ryan walks around the table and pours a hefty round to each.

BEN

This is also the perfect time to transition ..to the fire pit.

Ben stands and joins Ryan as they lead the group to the fire pit, the bottle of 1942 in hand.

RYAN

I almost forgot!

May, Kim and Joel have a delayed response and with their eyes follow Ben and Ryan.

Ryan stands and leads the others to the fire pit.

30

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN REAR PORCH, FIRE PIT - NIGHT

30

The fire pit is set and ready with logs and kindling.

Ben takes a knee and places the kindling beneath the logs.

RYAN

I got ya brother?

Ryan removes a lighter from one pocket and from another a mini tube.

BEN

You do, huh?

Ryan squeezes it open and in one move pops the joint from the tube into his mouth and lights it.

BEN (CONT'D)

Glad to see you have your priorities straight.

Ryan chuckles then hands the lighter to Ben.

RYAN

(Exhales)
yessir.

BEN

Thanks.

Ben lights the kindling then blows gently..

May, Joel and Kim approach the fire pit and each take a seat.

The fires CRACKLES AS grows over the logs.

May is the first to finish her latest pour of tequila.

MAY

You holding that bottle hostage or what?

BEN

Hah ha, Naw. Here you go.

May nods when Ben attempts to offer the bottle and lifts her glass instead to which Ben pours a solid double shot.

Ryan and Kim exchange pleasant smiles.

Joel takes a quick sip then tilts his glass at Ryan.

JOEL

Please and thank you.

Ryan starts to pass the joint to Joel when Ben pushes the bottle of 1942 at him.

MAY

Trade ya!

Ryan Curiously extends the joint to May.

RYAN

(curious)

Yea?

Nonchalant May extends a receiving hand.

Two more logs are tossed on the fire.

May takes a calm, deep draw then exhales a cloud before she passes it to Joel.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Alright, alright, alright!

May chokes on her laugh.

Ryan nods at her then Joel.

Joel nods back with some pride.

Kim points at the Bluetooth Speaker.

KIM

Does that work?

Ben turns around and peers at the speaker on the stack of wood.

BEN
Oh yea, I almost forgot!

He reaches down and turns it on.

Ben then pulls his cell phone from his pocket and thumbs the password lock.

Kim takes it from him.

She types furiously.

The speaker blares to life with LOFI MUSIC.

RYAN
(enthusiastic)
Okay.

Ben gets up and starts to move in a cool two step to the beat.

BEN
Awe, yea!

KIM
Okay, now it's a fucking party!

Each gets up and groove to the beat.

MAY
Hey!

May passes the joint to Joel..

JOEL
Hey!

She next does a smooth move all her own then taps kim into action.

KIM
Hey!

In a cute dance pivot Kim turns the moment into her own as well.

MAY
Oh, hey!

In fun fashion Ryan then Ben and Joel all fall in step around the fire and join in.

The fire grows..

Ben pumps at the air with his hands, everyone laughs along then joins in.

BEN

Hey.

GROUP

Hey!

Everyone freely dances around the fire.

The fire burns bright.

The group 2-steps there way around the fire.

Ryan and Kim do the bump.

So does May and Joel

Ben grooves along.

The ladies separate, approach Ben then dance around him.

Everyone smiles and enjoys the vibe.

The MUSIC FADES

They settle, share laughs and enjoy the last of the fire.

LOW, CRANE UP:

A log COLLAPSES, embers leap, others shimmer underneath.

31

EXT. AIRBNB, REAR PORCH FIRE PITT - NIGHT

31

A final shot is poured to all.

BEN

A huge thanks for making it all the way out here.

Ben and Ryan look at each person whole heartedly.

RYAN

Yea, big thanks for being here.

May, Joel and Kim each reply with earnest gestures.

KIM

Thank you both.

Joel nods and May agrees.

MAY
I really appreciate all of this.

BEN
Please know for us, this time
together is a really big deal.

KIM, JOEL, RYAN AND MAY
Here, here.

With a CLINK, they share a final toast.

BEN
I Love all of you guys.

KIM
Awe.

MAY
We love you too.

JOEL
Yea, Love ya'll.

RYAN
(chuckles)
Ya'll are the best!

Ben uses the poker to turn the last log over chunks of wood
and glowing embers.

BEN
Well, with that. I guess we can
wind it down.

Kim and Joel stretch, yawn and smile when they eye the
windows of the warm, inviting cabin.

RYAN
I can hang out here and watch the
fire till it dies down.

Everyone begins to stand up.

BEN
Don't, We head out at 10AM.

JOEL, KIM, MAY
Ugh!

Ben rolls his eyes and chuckles to himself.

RYAN
 (snickers)
 Sweet!

Joel, Ben and May all walk away together.

Kim returns to Ryan's side.

KIM
 Hey..

Ryan returns a shy smile.

Ben nods at Ryan as he heads into the house.

32

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, FRONT DRIVE - DAY (2)

32

Ben, Ryan, Kim, Joel then May step out side.

Ryan chugs back a bottle of water, Kim rubs at her temples,
 May shades the sun from her eyes.

Joel and May spark a morning joint.

RYAN
 I know its not community but you
 always have the fire shit.

Joel admits with a nod.

JOEL
 Awe, flattery will get you two
 hits.. Two Hits!

Joel emphasis with 2 fingers in the air.

Ryan accepts a pass of the joint and hits it.

Ben leans into Ryan.

RYAN
 Yea?

Ben exhales turns to Joel and extends the joint back to him.

JOEL
 Hey.

May observes Ben's eyes wince.

MAY
 You okay?

BEN
Just hoping that will help with my
headache.

Ryan nudges Ben.

RYAN
Im happy to drive.

Ben rubs at his temple.

BEN
Yea, sure.

Ben hands keys to Ryan.

BEN (CONT'D)
Shotgun!

Ben crosses around to the passenger side, the others follow.

Ryan opens the drivers side and gets in.

33

INT. SUV - DAY

33

RYAN
All right ramblers. Let's get
rambling!

BEN
Couldn't help it, could you?

RYAN
(aloof)
What?

Ryan grins.

Joel climbs in last and everyone closes there doors.

JOEL
Hah, I liked it.

RYAN
See!

Kim glances curious at May.

KIM
Huh?

MAY
Yea, I remember that movie.

KIM
Get the fuck out of here.

May shrugs.

MAY
Okay.

May turns to Joel.

MAY (CONT'D)
You?

Joel nods.

JOEL
Yea, From Dusk 'till Dawn!

Ryan smiles at Joel.

RYAN
(Matter of fact)
Uh, huh.

MAY
Not bad.

KIM
How do ya'll remember all this
useless shit?

MAY
Also, Reservoir Dogs..

Ben nods at Ryan.

RYAN
Nick Cage does his own version in
Gone in 60 seconds.

May nods then lifts both her hands up in an Elvis like
gesture.

MAY
Okay, Let's Ride!

Kim shakes her head at the bunch.

KIM
(Nonchalant)
Never seen that one either.

Ryan lowers his glasses from his head over his eyes.

MAY
They're so beautiful out here in
the wild like this.

RYAN
Yea and every year a bunch of
people think they can approach
these beast burgers!

Everyone pauses and glances to Ryan.

RYAN (CONT'D)
What?

KIM
You' so stupid!

Ben grows a smile.

MAY
(Mouths)
Beast burgers?

Joel laughs to himself, shakes his head then returns to his
window side view.

Ben nods to Ryan.

The SUV pulls off.

37 **EXT. DAVIDSON ROAD - DAY**

37

The brake lights brighten, they turn at a sign beside the
highway.

Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park - Gold Bluffs Beach.

Entry Station 4, Campground 6, Fern Canyon 8.

The SUV descends through the forest to a foothill that crests
above a long strip of Gold Beach.

The SUV splashes through water that runs across the road to
arrive at the trailhead parking lot.

38 **EXT. FERN CANYON, TRAILHEAD - DAY**

38

A sign post marks the trail head, they all approach.

KIM
This is it?

May glances at the modest approach.

A modest trail continues adjacent to the beach, at its mouth bright, green bushes and short trees line the path.

BEN

Give it a minute.

They walk 15 yards, the trail bends then opens up in front of them.

Everyone slows in awe.

KIM

Whoa!

They naturally fan out.

The walls of the canyon rise to 50 feet or more.

Ferns of all kinds grow one over the next, a dense green covers the steep, vertical sides.

Everyone grins as they cross wood planks or step across and over shallow GURGLING streams.

Along the way they all stop and gather when they find a long, yellow, Banana Slug.

They come too rest, drink water and smoke once more at a huge fallen redwood.

On the way back, Kim slips off a log and into water that soaks her shoes.

Every one fights to contain them selves, May gives in.

MAY

Oh, hah heh, ahhh.

She covers her mouth with one hand and the other she holds up apologetically.

MAY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

Immediately they all share in the hysterics over Kims aquatic fate.

The group rounds the corner back to the vehicle.

Kim glances down at her shoes.

KIM
Okay I have to admit, wet boots and
all.

A snort and a chuckle are heard.

KIM (CONT'D)
That was dope!

Ben nods with a smile.

BEN
Good form Kim.

RYAN
In all seriousness though.

Ryan glances to each with both hands up and a concerned
expression.

RYAN (CONT'D)
If Kim falls in water every time we
do a trail..

The group wait for Ryan to finish.

RYAN (CONT'D)
This will be the most fucking
hilarious day ever!

Ryan, Ben and Joel burst into a fit of laughter.

JOEL
Ha heh hah.

He turns to hides his laughter and near tears.

JOEL (CONT'D)
That was a dope hike though.

They all continue toward the SUV

MAY
Yea, What's next?

Ben smiles.

BEN
Glad You asked!

RYAN
We're off to Big tree.

BEN

Wait till you see this bad boy!

They near the SUV.

MAY

Wait, did you two already come here?

They form a loose circle.

BEN

These are places, we've either been too as kids or always wanted to see.

RYAN

There's some we just found and added to the list.

BEN

Like our final stop after Big tree, is Tall Trees Grove.

RYAN

We're slotted for 1pm. Just a short 4 mile trail.

They all stop and glare at Ryan.

Ryan with blinks at them a coy grin.

KIM

Sounds good, lets do it.

May watches Kim and smiles, each nods.

Ben and Ryan approach the SUV, open the doors for everyone, and they all pile in.

39

EXT. HIGHWAY 101 - DAY

39

The SUV pulls from the dirt road onto the highway.

All eyes take in the view, fog pulls through the forest and back out to sea.

Ben rides the air with his hand, beside him Ryan still drives.

Kim chin in hand she peers out, May leans back in her seat and turns to see Joel adrift.

Ryan smiles and gives Kim a glance of recognition.

RYAN
Well said.

May nods.

MAY
Yea girl.

Joel nods. Ben does too.

Kim returns an appreciative smile.

KIM
Thank you guys.

Ben is proud of the group, peers up at the beautiful tree then quietly walks away.

May and Joel remain in awe-struck positions.

Ryan glances at May and Joel with a smile before he walks away.

May and Joel are left.

At last he lowers his gaze to May, chuckles then nods before he walks after the others.

May peers up at the loan giant.

MAY
You are something else.

May turns and walks away.

42

EXT. ACCESS ROAD - DAY

42

They pull onto an access road blocked by a swinging single gate with a pad lock.

Ben gets out and pushes the gate open, with his hand he gestures them forward.

Ryan puts the SUV in gear and rolls through the now open gate.

The Vehicle drives up a dirt access road.

43

INT. SUV, TALL TREE GROVE PARKING LOT - DAY

43

Ryan adjust the rear view mirror.

RYAN

Ben and I have back packs. Feel free to put your waters and anything you might need in them.

Ben half turns to see his friends.

BEN

This hike will be around 2 hours. Be sure you have what you need-hat, beanie, hoodie, whatever.

RYAN

And don't worry, we brought snacks!

Ryan thumbs toward the trunk.

KIM

Oh, good. I didn't bring anything!

BEN

Don't worry. Its cooler weather, a semi short hike and Ryan and I brought plenty water.

Kim holds up her latte'.

BEN (CONT'D)

In case anyone needed 'em.

Ben smiles at Kim.

The SUV pulls into a smaller dirt lot and finds an open spot.

RYAN

Tomorrows hike will be a longer one.

BEN

So, we'll all be sure to pack a small lunch and take water.

Joel and Kim exchange mutual embarrassment at their unpreparedness.

RYAN

Questions?

MAY

Naw. Let's do this and talk about tomorrow, tonight.

BEN

Alright then.

Ryan nods at Ben and they both lean into their door handles.

44

EXT. TALL TREES GROVE, PARKING LOT & TRAILHEAD - DAY

44

The trailhead is fronted by a weather worn, moss covered hut with information board and bench seats inside.

Bear proof trashcans and a second trailhead and info marker stand a few feet away.

Ryan and Ben approach the info boards, the others stop just shy of the trailhead.

KIM

What you two looking at over there.

BEN

Just making sure we're not missing anything important.

RYAN

Readers are leaders!

Kim makes a smug expression at the back of Ryan and turns to May.

KIM

Hmm.

JOEL

I'm glad someone is reading the information.

Joel waits for the guys to finish at the board then turns and starts down the trail.

May nods to Kim then turns and follows suit.

Kim looks up to see loose clouds over head and turns to Ryan and Ben.

KIM

What do we do, if it rains?

Ryan glances at Ben.

BEN
Umm, walk faster?

RYAN
Hah.

Kim gives Ryan and ben the evil eye.

Ryan puts up his hands

RYAN (CONT'D)
Sorry.

Kim exhales as the group kick off down the trail.

45

EXT. TALL TREES TRAIL - DAY

45

Joel and May stop and peer back at the others.

Joel lifts a joint, lights it, pulls once then passes it too May.

May takes a calm draw then passes the joint back.

The group embark on a well maintained, dirt path that meanders into the heavy wooded forest.

The group approach a fallen giant that has a trail width cut out of it.

JOEL
(wonderment)
Huh.

Each passes through it with entertained expressions.

KIM
Cool.

Kim pulls at Ben and Ryan then shouts at May and Joel.

KIM (CONT'D)
Hey guys, hold up.

May and Joel slow then return, Kim pulls them into a selfie before letting them press on.

MUSIC CUE

The SOUND of MOVING WATER brightens.

JOEL
You hear that?

MAY
(delighted)
Yea!

The path leads through a grove of trees that cluster against the bank of a river.

MAY (CONT'D)
Look at that one.

Like a proud parent, May dotes on one massive giant of a tree.

May, Kim and Ryan stare up as they near, Joel and Ben both pat the colossal Sequoia Semperviren.

Joel reaches his hand out to the tree as he passes.

Ben gazes up as passes by.

They continue on, the giant remains as it was.

Ben stops and drops his back pack from his shoulders.

BEN
It's just sprinkling, since I only have a t-shirt on. I'm gonna' rock my poncho now.

Ben proudly pulls a yellow poncho from his pack.

RYAN
It's not as cool as Ben's.

Joel lends a single chuckle, Ben dawns an aloof expression.

RYAN (CONT'D)
But I do have extra ponchos, if anybody needs one.

Ryan pulls a single, small, clear poncho from his pack for them to see.

JOEL
Good looking out.

KIM
Yea, I didn't bring anything like that!

May glances at the clouds and puts out a hand.

KIM (CONT'D)

I might take you up on it, if it keeps up.

Ryan nods

May marches towards the edge of the river bank, Joel loosely follows her on the path.

Kim and Ryan keep pace, Ben holds the back of the line.

Ben pauses when he hears a sound like an large Insect *clicking*.

It stops, so Ben turns and joins the others.

46

EXT. TALL TREE GROVE, RIVER BANK - DAY

46

A placid river with hints of yellow, burgundy and red dot the gravel banks that meander through the Redwood Forest.

The group emerges from the forest line to stand on the rivers edge.

They trek across and over a creek where they discover the trunk of a giant, fallen redwood.

KIM

Can we climb up this thing?

BEN

Thats a great idea.

Kim champions one foot on the tree trunk, fallen into the river bank.

RYAN

Thatta' girl.

Kim leads her friends up the fallen tree.

Ben follows Kim and Ryan follows them both.

May and Joel approach the edge of the tree trunk.

May smiles then swiftly scales the giant.

Joel nods then does the same.

JOEL

Ha hah!

47

EXT. GIANT FALLEN REDWOOD - DAY

47

Atop the tree trunk, Kim sweeps one hand over the trunk..

KIM

Let's take a seat!

Ryan and Ben smile and sit.

May and Joel approach, arms out both dawn large grins.

MAY

This is crazy cool.

KIM

I know right! I've never done anything like this!

Ryan and Ben share proud smiles.

RYAN

Shoot, me neither.

Awe struck they sit and take in the forest.

The quiet thrum of CRICKETS, FROGS, INSECTS and BIRDS blend AROUND the TRICKLE of WATER that flows under them.

Something... *Watches.*

Kim shuffles her weight.

KIM

Come on ya'll. One more!

She lifts her phone above her.

KIM (CONT'D)

You're all going to have to scrunch in.

They chuckle as they attempt to squeeze in.

KIM (CONT'D)

Okay. 1, 2, 3!

They each giggle or snortle, Kim holds the button down for good measure.

RYAN

Awesome!

Ben peers down and over past the tree trunk, to the river bank that rises beneath him.

BEN
Don't mind me. Think I found
another way down.

Ben scoots to the edge of the trunk, lowers himself over the edge and lands GENTLY in the RIVER ROCK below.

Ryan and Kim stand up, May and Joel wait and listen.

BEN (CONT'D)
If you guys go down the tree, the
trail picks up over there.

They each start down the massive tree trunk.

Ben searches his way across the small creek.

He pauses to watch his friends descend and lifts his phone for a quick shot.

Behind him he hears a *SOUND of STEPS* on RIVER ROCK.

BEN (CONT'D)
Huh?

Ben sweeps his gaze in that direction.

He misses his friends in motion as they follow Kim down and off the trunk.

Ben double takes back over his shoulder then ducks under the fallen tree and across the river bank.

Close by a small trail leads back into the forest.

Ben arrives first at the river banks edge.

The group veers toward the trail in a loose arch.

A FLOCK of BIRDS FLY upwards from in the canopy on the opposite side.

The four friends near the trail.

BEN (CONT'D)
Anyone see that..?

Ben's question goes unnoticed.

Ben watches the group pass him then ascend the trail up a tree's roots, encircle it then out of sight.

BEN (CONT'D)
 (Clears throat)

Hmm.

Ben steps up and follows suit.

The forest *still.. watches.*

48

EXT. TALL TREE GROVE, TRAIL - DAY

48

Ben catches up with the others.

The grove of trees rise high above dense tufts of ferns and lichens.

A humbling sentiment tunes them into the forests splendor.

KIM
 Holy shit, look at this place.

They gaze, gander and absorb into their surroundings.

RYAN
 This place ..is like a movie set!

JOEL
 I was just going to say that.

One by one they walk through the glen.

Ben registers a long hiss behind and parallel to him.

He stops, turns his head and stares.

BEN
 What the..?

The *sound* stops.

Ben watches the group disappear around the next bend.

He glances back then hurries after his friends.

Ben glances back, *Nothing.*

He starts around the corner, *something* shuffles through the bushes parallel to him.

Ben slows and turns his head as he spies for the source.

A low *GROWL* and slow *CLICKING* emanates from a few feet away.

RYAN
Hey, you coming?

Ben startled looks up, glances at his side then to Ryan.

RYAN (CONT'D)
You alright?

Ben feigns a smile and raises one arm and ushers Ryan forward.

BEN
Hey uh, yea.

May, Joel and Kim glance back.

JOEL
'Sup?

Kim notices Ben's anxiousness.

KIM
Everything okay?

Ben face flush he puts his hands out, palms up.

BEN
I don't want to alarm anyone.

KIM
(Worried)
Um, too late.

BEN
I think... Somethings trailing us.

MAY
Huh?

RYAN
You sure man?

Ben's head nod is adamant.

BEN
Whatever it is, it followed us
across the river bed.

Everyone hard stops to scan their field of view.

BEN (CONT'D)
We've done about 2 miles, it should
loop back.

May, Joel and Kim listen with optimism.

MAY
Let's keep our eyes open and stick
together.

Ben and Ryan concur.

RYAN
Yup.

BEN
Agreed.

Ben glances around causing the other to do the same.

BEN (CONT'D)
If you see anything, unless it's
absolutely necessary.

Ryan turns to Kim.

RYAN
Don't run.

May agrees.

MAY
A predatory instinct will kick in.

JOEL
(sarcastic)
Hah, got it.

Kim admits.

KIM
Yea, I'll try.

BEN
With a little luck, we'll be out of
here in no time.

The group pushes forward

49

EXT. TALL TREE GROVE - DAY

49

They enter a foreboding grove where a burnt out, Old Growth Redwood stands disfigured amongst its fellows.

May and Kim lead, Shoes shuffle when a tumble is heard at the rear of the group.

The group turns around to spot Ben on one knee, mid-slip.

RYAN

Hey!

Ryan reaches back with a quick hand.

BEN

Whoa!

Joel turns back latent.

JOEL

You alright?

Ryan yanks him forward, pats Ben once then gives him space.

BEN

(Embarrassed)

Hah, yea. Thanks!

Ben gains his footing, glares at the burnt out hollow in the tree then to his friends.

RYAN

Huh? No worries.

A small cloud of dust settles behind Ben as he waves one hand at the group..

BEN

I don't know, I must've slipped?

Ben reaches down toward his ankle.

BEN (CONT'D)

That was weird.

Ben rubs at a tender spot then lifts his sock.

BEN (CONT'D)

(Mumbles)

Feels like, *something* grabbed me.

Ryan and Joel glance at Ben.

JOEL

What?

Ryan peers down the trail.

Ben stands back up.

Kim nods.

KIM
Uh Huh, Okay. Okay!

Kim fatigued attempts to sprint.

Ben takes exhausted SLOW BREATHS.

Ryan wheezes beside him, places a brief hand on Ben and concurs with the bobbing of an outstretched finger.

Joel takes a deep breath and nods at Ben.

JOEL
I hear ya brother.

Joel gently puts a hand on Ben's lower back while he straightens Ben's shoulders.

JOEL (CONT'D)
Slow, deep breaths.

Ben labors to pull in his first deep breath.

BEN
Hmm, Huhhh!

May teary eyed glances from Ben to Joel.

JOEL
There you go brother, good job.

The black SUV pulls to a stop beside them.

The window ROLLS down, Kim UN-LOCKS the doors.

KIM
Lets go.

Ryan moves to open the truck's rear door.

Joel and May help Ben into the back seat.

Something from behind the tree line peers between branches of an elder Redwood.

BEN
(anguished)
I was doing ..just fine with out
you, thank you.

Joel smiles, lifts and slides Ben over in the seat then climbs in behind him.

May runs around to the opposite rear.

Ryan and Kim take the front and drivers side.

The brake lights dim and dust raises into the air as the truck DRIVES AWAY.

FADE OUT

52

INT. AIRBNB CABIN - NIGHT

52

SLOW FADE IN

The front door of the cabin is closed, all is quiet.

The muffled sound of a vehicle pulls up, car doors open and close.

Feet shuffle closer, voices are heard when the front door is shoved open then held by Kim.

RYAN
Careful, careful.

JOEL
I got him.

May leads them through the door, her hands extend to stabilize Ben.

MAY
Right here, the couch.

Ben barely holds his head up yet still retains awareness.

BEN
I see it.

Ryan helps brace Ben.

JOEL
Almost there.

RYAN
Yup.

Together they achieve the landing of a drunkard.

Ryan steps back, May finds the arm of the couch and Joel plops down next to Ben.

BEN
...Ugh.

Completely spent Joel leans back.

JOEL
Oh shit!

Ryan throws a grin to Ben then Joel.

RYAN
You're telling me.

JOEL
Whew, I'm just glad you're alright
Ben.

BEN
Huh, yea.

KIM
What can we get for you Ben.

Ben's head floats, still he replies.

BEN
Water. A cold compress.

JOEL
A what.

May walks to the nearest bathroom.

KIM
A cool rag!

Kim watches May then steps to the kitchen.

RYAN
You alright? You had me scared for
a minute.

BEN
(Loopy)
Hmm. I'll be.. Okay.

May returns with a wet wash cloth.

MAY
How's he doing?

She slows as she draws near.

JOEL
He just fell asleep.

Kim returns with a glass of water and nods to May.

KIM
I think he'll be okay.

May leans over and places the cloth over Ben's forehead.

BEN
Mmm.

Ben goes limp with delirium.

Kim PLACES the GLASS of WATER on the end table next to the couch.

They each use the moment to exhale.

MAY
We're not in the clear yet.

Ryan, Joel, Kim and May glance at each other in agreement.

RYAN
Tonight were going to have to watch over him.

MAY
Anyone have any Tylenol or Ibuprofen?

KIM
I do.

MAY
I'll go grab him a blanket.

RYAN
I saw one in the closet over there.

Ryan points across the room.

May and Joel get up and head in separate directions.

Ryan leans back and keeps an eye on his friend.

Kim returns, sets two pills on the table and takes a seat beside them.

Joel brings a dish of food and a pitcher of tea to the table.

JOEL
(Clears throat)
I hope sweet tea is okay.

Ryan splits his attention between Ben and his friends at the table.

Kim half smiles at Joel.

KIM
That sounds great.

MAY
This looks amazing.

RYAN
Yea, I'm starving, thanks bud.

JOEL
I'm happy too.

A rustle then feet shuffle, everyone turns to catch Ben stumbles in.

Ryan rushes to help.

RYAN
Hey, how you feeling bubba?

BEN
(Mumbles)
Um, thirsty and my heads pounding.

KIM
I can't believe you are up already?

BEN
(Slurs words)
Are you guys eating, without me?

JOEL
Hah ha.

Kim grins.

MAY
We just sat down.

May gets up and crosses behind them to the living room.

KIM
Yea, join us.

JOEL
Take your time.

May returns AND SETS a GLASS of WATER and two ibuprofen.

Ben and Ryan sit, the others pass food to him.

MAY
After you get a bite, take these
okay.

Ben squints at the tablets beside the glass.

He REACHES for them, POPS both followed by a quick SIP of
WATER.

In moments everyone empties their plates and are in good
spirits.

Ben slows and wipes his forehead.

He puts his silverware down and wanes a beat.

MAY (CONT'D)
Ben, you okay?

Ben turns away, under slowed breaths his mouth salivates, he
turns gray.

A COUGH comes over him.

Ryan leans in.

RYAN
You need anything?

Ben holds out one shaky hand index finger raised.

Everyone leans in or offers to help.

Ben takes a large deep breath then doubles over at the table.

In the next instant Ben stands then folds over before he sits
back down and works to prop him self upright.

Everyone is confused.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Ben.

JOEL
You okay brother?

Ben opens his mouth then HEAVES a STREAM of PROJECTILE VOMIT.

They all attempt to avoid it.

Kim unable to dodge it, takes the BRUNT of the PUKE.

Ben rocks in his seat. On the balls of their feet the group is poised to move.

Ryan glares at Ben then at Kim.

RYAN

Oh Shit!

Kim distressed, moans.

KIM

Oh- my- god!

Kim extends both arms out.

Ben makes a GUT WRENCHING SOUND then HEAVES more VOMIT.

He stands and exhales a stream.

Kim escapes this time.

Ben appears to have a never ending TORRENT.

At last, Ben collapses in his seat then forward onto the table with a THUD.

Incredulous Joel blinks then turns to Ryan.

JOEL

Can you grab me the rag?

Ryan steps away confused, returns and hands one to Joel.

Joel gently places it under Ben's face, then shrugs.

Ryan and May nod, Kim SOBS behind them.

Joel glances from Ryan to May.

JOEL (CONT'D)

What, the actual fuck was that?

Ryan shakes his head in return.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Yo, is that normal?

RYAN

I've never seen anything like that.

MAY
Neither have I.

May and Joel share bewilderment, Kim stands by distraught and drips with vomit.

Joel glances from May to Ryan then to Kim.

JOEL
Kim?

Kim is grossed out and in shock.

KIM
Huh?

JOEL
Go upstairs, take a shower.

She MOANS her way to the bathroom.

Joel turns to Ryan and May then turns and peers at the kitchen.

JOEL (CONT'D)
We'll ..clean this up.

May and Ryan return vexed expressions.

54

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, KITCHEN - DAY (3)

54

Kim POURS 2 cups of STEAMING coffee then carries them toward Ryan at the table.

RYAN
Thanks.

She moves to a seat by Ryan's side then joins him at the table.

Kim leans into Ryan, they settle against one another.

May and Joel walk in.

KIM
Hey.

May smiles.

MAY
Hey.

Joel nods at Ryan.

RYAN

Morning.

May bee lines for a cup, Joel makes for a seat at the table.

KIM

How's he doing?

Joel YAWNS.

JOEL

Better, I think.

Kim lends an optimistic tone. Joel nods.

May makes herself a glass of water then turns to Joel.

MAY

Coffee or?

JOEL

Water too, please.

May pours as everyone sits in silence.

May hands a glass to Joel then sits and joins them.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Thanks.

They sit quietly, the birds outside sing and the sun shines through the windows.

Ryan sits and stares as he holds his mug, he begins to take a sip when he hears of a stir in the living room.

The 4 friends turn or start to get up.

BEN

Is that coffee I smell?

Everyone hustles into the living room.

55

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, LIVING ROOM - DAY

55

Ben sits up in slow motion.

BEN

Cough, cough.

Ryan circles the corner with everyone just behind.

RYAN

Oh man, am I glad to see you awake.

Kim reels when she spots Ben.

KIM

Oh, thank god.

Emotions surge as they find Ben their fearless and charismatic friend awake.

With effort Ben moves his legs to the floor.

May catches his eye with a gentle smile.

MAY

How are you feeling?

May takes a step to the side to let Joel in.

BEN

A little beat, honestly.

Joel steps forward with a glass of water in hand, he extends to Ben.

Ben peers from the water to Joel.

BEN (CONT'D)

And thirsty. Thanks

Ben takes a deep breath, exhales then sips the water.

He peers back at them as he finishes his glass.

BEN (CONT'D)

Honestly guys. I'm okay.

Everyone relaxes and each take a seat nearby.

KIM

We just cant believe you're awake
and okay already.

RYAN

Yea buddy, we were worried.

Ryan emphasis with a pat on Ben's back and a serious look.

RYAN (CONT'D)

We didn't know if you were going to
make it through the night or if we
should take you to the hospital?

Ben grateful listens to each.

BEN
Thanks, all of you for taking care
of me.

MAY
You would have done the same.

Ben's eyes gloss over.

BEN
Thanks ya'll.

KIM
Should we get him some coffee or
something?

Kim throws each cautious expressions.

BEN
I am hungry.

The four glance at one another, Kim shakes her head worried.

BEN (CONT'D)
What?

Ben observes his friends.

RYAN
I bet you are buddy?

BEN
What's that mean?

Joel flashes a emphatic then exhausted expression at Ryan.

BEN (CONT'D)
What?

KIM
You.. Don't remember?

Ben scratches the back of his head.

BEN
Not, really.

They glance at Ryan then back to Ben.

RYAN
Come on, let's get something in
you. You can tell us what you
remember

KIM
And we'll tell you what really
happened.

Ben nods and the group transitions into the kitchen.

56

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, KITCHEN - DAY

56

The group walks with Ben to the table.

May POURS his COFFEE then joins everyone.

MAY
Cream or sugar?

BEN
Not today, thx.

Everyone patiently sits idle, after a beat he SIPS his coffee
then gazes back at his silent audience.

BEN (CONT'D)
Alright. Color me curious?

Ben takes a second sip then continues.

BEN (CONT'D)
What happened? All I remember is
feeling weak then faint toward the
end.

Ryan and Joel lean in.

May squints her eyes, curious.

JOEL
Wow?

RYAN
(Clears throat)
We had to um... Help you finish the
trail and into the truck.

Kim looks at each of her friends for support.

KIM
I've **never** seen anything like that
before!

Ryan shakes his head and May nods.

RYAN
She's right. It got so wild, so
fast.

Ben STROKES the STUBBLE on his face.

BEN
Come to think of it.

He peers to his side in deep thought.

BEN (CONT'D)
I've never been black out sick from
anything before this.

May considers his words.

MAY
(to self)
Huh.

JOEL
Yo', you were sick last night. Let
me tell you.

Ben surveys person to person, each shakes or nod in their own
grossed out way.

Kim makes a stank face, raises a finger over her nose and
shakes her head.

BEN
That bad?

RYAN
Brother, bad is an understatement!

Joel points an index finger at Ryan.

May shakes her head with wild eyed affirmation.

RYAN (CONT'D)
It was like you reached some, new
level of projectile vomit!

Ryan extends his arm and hand from his mouth in an over
zealous attempt at a visualization.

He next directs the same gesture at Kim.

KIM
Ugh.

Kim has a similar expression to the night in question as she smacks at Ryan.

KIM (CONT'D)

Stop it!

Ben glances at Kim confused?

Kim attempts to deflect Ryan's animated hands.

RYAN

Fucking exorcist style bro!

KIM

Gross! Enough already.

Kim punches Ryan in the arm.

RYAN

What?

Ben peers to May.

MAY

It was bad.

Joel appears to give a long once over of Ben.

JOEL

You don't remember, any of that?

Ben passes a hazy gaze over the kitchen and table.

BEN

Honestly, I don't.

Joel glares at May then turns to Kim and Ryan.

JOEL

That's crazy.

RYAN

Yea, cause you woke up and said you wanted to eat dinner with us.

Ben considers it for a second and draws a blank.

BEN

What, That is crazy? I want to say I vaguely do but the second half of yesterday is like a fog.

MAY

That's.. Really something?

RYAN

Oh buddy, and you didn't just puke
one and done either.

Joel turns to Ryan, offers a fatigued response and both hands
up.

KIM

It did just keep coming and coming.

MAY

We just finished cleaning the
kitchen at three this morning.

Ben raises his eye brows.

JOEL

(Ironic laugh)

Hah. Ain't no towels, wash clothes,
paper towels or otherwise left in
this house.

Ben blushes.

BEN

Wow, I'm so sorry.

Ben peers down then winces.

He turns sideways, lifts his calf to one side and points at a
yellow and green imprint around his ankle.

BEN (CONT'D)

Well, as if that's not enough.

KIM

What do you mean?

Kim follows everyones gaze.

BEN

Take a look at this.

Ben stands up and lets his foot rest on his seat.

A deep, green and yellow bruise extends over the back of
Ben's calf to his ankle.

Everyone glares in silence.

Joel leans in then peers from the bruise back at Ben.

Kim winces at it then glares from friend to friend.

KIM
Looks like a really gross bruise.

Ryan leans in for a closer look.

RYAN
Um, I cant be the only one that
see's a hand print of *some* kind.

Joel and May nod to Ryan in agreement.

May gazes at the sickly, yellow and green bruised imprint
with three fingers.

Ben stares down then slowly up at May.

He drops his foot, returns to a normal position and quietly
sits.

Everyone retreats to their seats clearly stunned.

KIM
I don't get it? All I see is a
gross, yellow bruise!

Joel chuckles at that.

Ben let's a single, nervous laugh, then shies before he pans
across his friends anxious faces.

May turns to Kim then everyone.

MAY
It also looks like..

RYAN
(Matter of fact)
A weird 3 fingered hand print?

Joel stoically nods.

MAY
Do you recall, where that happened?

Ben tries.

BEN
The last thing I remember is..
Something was following me.

Everyone regards Ben's words this time.

MAY
What do you think it was?

BEN

I don't know. I just felt like we were being *watched*.

Joel glances at May and Ryan then back to Ben.

BEN (CONT'D)

First, it was parallel to me in the bushes.

Ben tries to follow the order of events in his memory.

BEN (CONT'D)

Then I heard *sounds*.

Ben turns his head, like he's listening to something.

KIM

Sounds?

BEN

A *CLICKING*, like some kind of ..insect but different.

Kim turns to the group for a clue.

May heavily considers Ben's descriptions.

MAY

I think I did too. I just didn't know what to make of it.

Ben turns to May they hold a gaze, Ben shakes his head.

BEN

I have no idea what it was? I have to admit, I'm more curious now than ever.

KIM

What? You're kidding right?

Joel turns to May.

She raises her eyebrows at Ben.

RYAN

You know we don't have to go back out today?

Ryan thumbs over his shoulder then to the others for support.

RYAN (CONT'D)

We weren't sure if we should take you to the hospital just a few hours ago.

KIM

Yea, I'm sure we'd all be just fine hanging around here today.

Joel watches each reply.

BEN

I mean we aren't even going to the same area. It's a whole other spot then yesterday.

MAY

We don't have too but I guess I'm still down.

Ryan glances down at Ben's leg at squirms.

RYAN

It's up to you brother.

KIM

Let's just stay here and chill. Maybe go get a bite in town!

Kim offers a tempting smile.

BEN

How about we take our time this morning. I need a shower and we'll grab a bite on the way.

Joel's eyebrows raise.

Kim steps forward.

KIM

What?

Ben faces Ryan, not surprised he accepts.

KIM (CONT'D)

I cant believe y'all.

Kim throws both her hands up.

KIM (CONT'D)

Fuck it! Let's go back again they say.

The Man with the flyers lets the hikers walk away.

Without skipping a beat The Man with the Flyers spots the group and approaches.

May and Joel appraise the Man as he nears.

Ben doesn't bother, he's gets out and heads for his back pack in the trunk.

Ryan and Kim step forward.

ZACK

Hey, sorry for approaching you like this.

Each grabs about their packs and half offer him their attention.

RYAN

It's all good man. What's up?

The Man with the Flyer takes a beat to look each in the eye.

ZACK

It's just..

Zack exhales, takes a breath and tries to keep their attention.

ZACK (CONT'D)

My family and I weren't far from here.

Zack puts a hand to his brow.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Just over a month back.

Everyone listens or pays closer attention to him.

Zack pauses, glances to his side and SHAKES the PAPER FLYERS in his hand.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Um, this is a picture of my grandfather.

Zack lifts the flyer into view and turns it to each.

Ben raises a hand to shadow his eyes.

ZACK (CONT'D)

He went missing. "Unexplainably".

Everyone glances from the photo to the youngish man with longer hair and facial stubble.

Kim shakes her head.

May glances at Ryan and Joel.

ZACK (CONT'D)

We were all together hunting one minute then the next, he was gone.

Zack appears to fraught with denial and guilt.

KIM

I'm so sorry.

RYAN

Did he get lost or something?

ZACK

That's just it. We found his gun and his shoes but he was no where to be found!

The group is at a loss for words.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Please. Our number is on here.

Zack PUSHES the FLYER at anyone.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Maybe you can just take a photo of this flyer and keep an eye out.

BEN

Of course.

Ryan grabs a flyer as does Kim.

May removes her camera and SNAPS a PHOTO of Zack's flyer.

MAY

I hope you find him.

ZACK

Thank You!

JOEL

Yea brother, best of luck.

ZACK

I appreciate that.

Ryan offers then takes the back pack from Ben, slides past Zack and bids the others forward.

RYAN
We'll definitely keep an eye out.
Take care now.

They follow Ryan's lead and continue past Zack.

Zack steps aside, peers around him at the thick fog then pleads, both hands up.

ZACK
Please. Be careful out there!

KIM
Thanks, we will.

MAY
Thank you.

Kim nods and mouths a thank you to Zack.

The group marches forward.

Zack watches them till they disappear into the fog.

60

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL - DAY

60

The group set off on the trail.

Ben starts in front.

May & Joel catch up, with a gentle grin May passes Ben.

A second later Joel passes Ben and pats on his shoulder.

JOEL
Take your time.

Kim catches up and smiles at him.

KIM
How are you feeling?

Ryan listens to Kim and Ben.

BEN
I'm better.

Ben blinks from Kim to Ryan.

BEN (CONT'D)

Maybe not as strong as usual, I
guess.

Ben EXHALES then shrugs it off.

KIM

Fair enough.

Ben, Kim and Ryan continue along.

May and Joel slow next to a large round boulder that prop up
a tall, broad Redwood.

Ryan, Kim and Ben near May and Joel.

KIM (CONT'D)

What do you think about Zack story?

Ben reflects, Ryan speaks first.

RYAN

Not a lot to debate.

Kim's surprised by her friends.

MAY

He seemed sincere.

RYAN

The flyer had name, dates, photo,
the county and area he went
missing.

KIM

You don't think he could've faked
that?

Joel speaks up.

JOEL

Sure. But why?

Kim agrees.

MAY

He genuinely appeared upset.

KIM

Exactly, that's what worries me!

Ben listens and glances at the trail that rises ahead of
them.

KIM (CONT'D)

Am I the only one that thinks what happened to Ben yesterday?

Kim looks at Ben but thumbs back at the parking lot.

RYAN

Yea?

She glances from Ryan to Joel then May.

KIM

(Sighs)

Never mind.

Ryan pauses in thought.

May ponders her friends start and stop.

MAY

Hmm.

Ben observes each, SCRATCHES his THIGH then leads the group onward.

They watch then follow.

They follow ben up the rise and are able to just see the Pacific Ocean enshrouded in morning fog awakened by an early sun.

The clouds and fog swirl and socks into the canyons and beaches below.

Ben slows.

BEN

There's supposed to be a view point. Then the trail circles the mountain back to where we started.

RYAN

Cool.

Ryan nods then points ahead and they all keep pace.

61

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, CREST - DAY

61

The trail emerges from a thick line of TREES that BOW and creak in the WIND.

Grass covers the ridge as they find a single bench that faces the ocean.

Ben takes a seat, the gang leans against or sits on the bench with him.

Speechless, they gaze at the Ocean and Pacific Coast line.

KIM
I'll be the first to admit. This is
beautiful!

May nods her head.

Joel props himself against the bench and leans into a comfortable view.

Ryan smiles at Joel, Ben proudly basks in the view.

JOEL
Ben, Ryan.

Joel clearly moved peers at Ben.

JOEL (CONT'D)
I see, why getting us all out here
is so important to y'all.

Ben glances back at Joel.

JOEL (CONT'D)
I've never seen anywhere, like this
place.

Ben nods a smile, everyone joins him with a nod or a rub of the shoulder.

A minute passes when a strong GUST stirs them out of their comfort zone.

KIM
Who hoo!

RYAN
That's a tad bit chilly.

May turns and peers up at the sky to the west large, gray clouds gather against the coastline.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Looks like a little something might
be coming in?

BEN
Then we'll get moving. The trail
loops around this mountain.

Everyone nods to Ben.

They walk from the view with a bench and start around a bend.

62

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, OPPOSITE SIDE - DAY

62

The group descends a valley between two mountains, its trail zig zags down then hugs one side.

Mini wood bridges cross tributaries until the trail finds A babbling brook.

Birds chirp and a wood pecker sounds over the gentle flow of water

MAY

It is pretty back here!

KIM

It is and the wind is more calm too.

The stream meanders near to the trail.

JOEL

We haven't bumped into anyone this whole trail.

Ben takes a step near the creek bed.

KIM

It's like we have the whole place to ourselves.

Ben stares at the creek, soothed by its gentle flow.

A BREEZE BLOWS through the valley, heavy clouds gather overhead that shroud the forest in an overcast shadow.

Kim rubs at her shoulders.

KIM (CONT'D)

That got dark fast.

May lifts her hoodie.

MAY

Sure did.

Ben glances up, returns to the path and takes lead.

The group follows behind.

63

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL TRAILS CROSSING - DAY

63

The trail meet in an X, where the two intersecting paths fork in the road.

One trail loops and ascends the opposite mountain, theirs continues up the valley and back around their mountain.

Ben allows them to interpret.

JOEL

Huh, that's a lot of trails.

Ben glances at each.

KIM

Which way?

May glances at the other two paths then nods up the trail they were on, Ben and Ryan approve with a smile.

BEN

We just continue on around this same mountain.

Ben points up the valley, further up the same trail and to the right.

A FAMILIAR *CLICK, CLICK, CLICKING*, NARROWLY AUDIBLE OVER THE WATERS TRICKLE, CAUSE EACH TO PAUSE.

May heeds the sound as she peers over the others.

Ryan stops and listens.

Ben and Kim leer in opposite directions.

THE lurid *CLICK, CLICK, CLING* becomes audibly louder!

RYAN

(hushed)

What the fuck is that?

BEN

(Whispers)

Shhh.. Listen.

Ben steps forward and cups one hand to his ear.

May peers out and rotates to hear the sound.

JOEL
(deadpan)
I've *never* heard anything like
that.

KIM
Maybe we should get moving.

Joel and Ryan share nods, May steps toward Ben and leads the group.

They follow May past the intersecting trails.

Ben joins May, together they split their field of view as they walk the trail.

MAY
What do you think?

Ben shakes his head.

BEN
I'm not sure it's anything we're
familiar with.

May side eyes Ben.

A guttural *Growl* emits from the trees ahead.

Ben and May instinctively take a half step back.

A large, *Translucent* Creature lands in the bushes beneath a giant redwood.

Unable to process the group falls over one another before they can turn to run away.

The still *unseen* Thing bursts through a swath of bushes and saplings.

The panicked group spring up and run up separate trails.

Ben remains... The others flee.

An AGGRESSIVE round of *CLICKING* faces them.

Ben caulks his head.

An angry GROWL.

Ben takes a step backwards with barely time to flinch.

FWOOP!

The bushes shake, Ben's shoe flies past.

A fleeting *CLICK, CLICK, CLICK* is heard.

Only the forest breeze and the *SOFT FLOW OF WATER* are heard.

64

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, OPPOSITE SIDE - DAY

64

Kim stops first.

Shaken and on the verge of tears, she listens then looks for Ben.

KIM
(Cries)
Ben..

Joel and May Peer out from behind separate trees just off the trail.

Ryan gasps for breath against a tree several feet away, he motions to her.

KIM (CONT'D)
(Screams)
Ben!

They each emerge from hiding.

Ryan approaches, his hands raised.

RYAN
Shh. Calm down.

KIM
Where the fuck did he go?

RYAN
Calm down.

KIM
What the fuck was that!

RYAN
I don't know.

May and Joel approach.

MAY
Let's, try to keep it down.

Kim quiets, the panic shifts and eyes begin to dart about.

MAY (CONT'D)

Okay.

Kim's eyes appear to grow large once more.

KIM

Is that Ben's shoe?

Kim points a shaking finger past them.

Joel puts a hand on her shoulder.

May listens intent as she sweeps the trails and glances up into the trees.

Ryan picks up the Shoe then glances around.

May then Ryans eyes land upon a single, large footprint.

Ryan reaches out to Kim.

KIM (CONT'D)

Oh my god!

She resigns herself to Ryan's arms.

Joel steps to May.

JOEL

What do you think?

Joel follows her gaze.

May vigilant, turns her eyes to Joel.

MAY

The question is.. Continue on or go back?

Ryan peers at the mountain.

RYAN

We've got to be half way by now.

May nods.

Kim's grows frightened by that statement.

JOEL

Okay then what.

Kim pants.

KIM
We're not leaving Ben out here!

Silence gives way to quiet glares.

Joel sulks.

MAY
No one, wants to leave Ben out
here.

May steps to Kim and exhales, Kim starts to sob again.

A long tear trails down her cheek, she looks up at May.

Ryan hesitant pushes forward.

Traumatized they move up trail toward an group of trees.

JOEL
What do you think?

May listens then turns to face them.

MAY
Shh?

Ryan lifts his head and listens.

KIM
What!

Joel stares into the distance.

MAY
Why'd it get so quiet?

Ryan responds.

RYAN
Maybe.. It's baiting us?

They stare at Ryan.

RYAN (CONT'D)
I mean, it could be anywhere?

The group goes stiff.

MAY
Ryan's right. Let's keep our eyes
open.

Joel nods.

JOEL
This time let's try to stay
together.

Each nods back.

MAY
It's already sunset. We should
probably keep moving.

Overhead the sun passes thru its furthest position and starts
to arch behind the mountain.

Each peer out with dread, no one person takes the lead.

A low *CLICKING* is heard.

They reflexively duck low and together.

KIM
Did you hear that!

JOEL
(Gently)
Shhhhh.

Another long, odd *CLICKING*, this time from behind they shift
their weight and stare in that direction.

KIM
Is it behind us now?

RYAN
What the actual fuck!

Kim holds tight to Ryan.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Whatever *It* is, seems to be pushing
us forward.

May nods her head then looks up at them both.

MAY
I think you're right, we might not
have a choice.

They cautiously take a step, their heads on swivel.

CRUNCH!

The four whip their attention at the sound behind then edge
forward away from it.

JOEL
Forward then?

Joel is the first to take a bold step in the forward direction.

RYAN
Forward it is.

May nods, she and Ryan cautiously move forward.

Frozen, Kim listens to the sounds around her wide eyed and frantic.

A kind, strong hand grabs Kim's arm, Joel assists Kim to catch up.

65

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR OPPOSITE SIDE - DAY

65

The group pass beyond the crisscross of trails.

Slowly they rise out of the valley.

KIM
Is it still behind us?

May stop and listens.

RYAN
I haven't heard anything.

The three friends Scooby doo together behind May and listen.

JOEL
I hate to say it. I think I heard something parallel us.

Kim scans from side to side.

Joel glares into the tree line.

KIM
That's what Ben said.

Joel glances from Ryan to May.

A tranquil glow brightens on their peripheral.

The trail rides the hill, around the trees ahead of them where a wide, gold hued beam shines.

From within the light a songbird WHISTLES.

Kim caulks her head at the sound and entranced by the radiant glow.

KIM (CONT'D)
Wow, it's so peaceful.

May, Joel and Ryan stare at Kim start up the path.

Kim points and stumbles along.

Joel wavers as he stares at the light that seems to go beyond the canopy into the sky.

JOEL
(foggy)
What ..the hell ..is that?

The Songbird *WHISTLES*.

MAY
(dazed)
I ..don't know.

Ryan can't shake the draw, in his peripheral May and Joel, still he feels the need to **go** to the sound.

Joel snaps out his trance when Ryan walks past.

May and Joel turn to one another, Blink then glare up at Ryan and Kim.

Both are able to shake the glows snare.

MAY (CONT'D)
Where are they going?

May looks to Joel for solidarity, he nods and cautiously she follows after them.

Joel resigns and follows her.

May and Joel take a few steps when they hear a sound- like a HEAVY METAL DOOR.

May, Joel, Ryan and even Kim slow.

The dry, MECHANICAL SOUND reveals a LOW, BULLISH HORN that REVERBERATE from the clouds above.

The final hue of daylight fades and the forest falls completely silent.

KIM
Hey, where'd ..it?

Ryan Stops and looks around.

RYAN
What the fuck?

Joel exhales.

JOEL
Oh. Thank god, ya'll back.

RYAN
What the hell was that sound?

May pats Ryan and Kim on the back, she attempts to move the heard forward.

MAY
I don't know but it didn't sound good.

JOEL
No, it didn't.

Joel and May share concern as they continue to direct Ryan and Kim up the trail.

66

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR MOUNTAIN RISE - DAY

66

A cool, evening fog socks into the mountains as they ascend.

RYAN
Hey guys, slow down.

KIM
This fog is crazy thick!

Thick fog causes May and Joel to slow on the trail ahead of Ryan and Kim.

RYAN
Something about it, doesn't feel right?

Kim glances around the forest barely visible, she sniffs at the air.

JOEL
It sure moved in fast.

May turns her nose away.

KIM
What is that smell?

A repulsive smell forces Kims to turn her nose up.

MAY
Ugh, it's metallic, kind of burnt
smelling.

RYAN
Yea, It smells like...

Ryan takes another sniff mid sentence.

JOEL
Sulphur, like matches?

Kim's enchantment wears off.

KIM
It definitely doesn't smell like
forest anymore?

MAY
Uh uh.

Terrified they forge the mountain together.

Joel throws a pleading glance at each.

JOEL
Remember, stick together.

Kim nods and Ryan feigns a smile.

The trail skinnies into A stand of pine trees upon the ridge
top.

67

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST - NIGHT

67

The group rises with no other sound then a breeze that blows
over the trees.

May peers through the darkness as they near a hill top, the
fog in patches.

May, Joel, Kim and Ryan group closer as night falls.

MAY
I've got a weird feeling?

JOEL
Like something is watching us.

They exchange vexed expressions.

MMMMMMM NNNNNAAAAA.

Something emerges from the forest.

ZZZNNNNHHHH!

Kim and Ryan glance at each other then peer out into the darkness.

SCHNICKKK!!

May turns her head as she listens, the sound grows as it nears.

CRACKLE!

Joel instinctively reaches his arm out in front of May.

May frowns then follows his eye line to the scrub brush across from them.

The group back up as they catch sight of an electric, green glow.

The green, glowing Object bounces along then seemingly notices them.

The green Glow veers from the tree line and bobs about as it observes the group.

Every one stares, no one moves.

Each experiences their own reactions, mystified, awe-struck, fearful and cautious.

The green, glowing Orb and is emboldened when joined by a second smaller orb.

RYAN

(Murmurs)

What the Fu.. ?

JOEL

It sure the hell ain't Tinker Bell.

May, Joel and Ryan share dreadful expressions.

The two glowing Orbs venture from the tree line towards the group when the larger one nears then flies around Kim.

KIM

It's like a fairy.

Joel faces Kim in dis-belief.

Kim reaches out for the Green Orb.

May grabs at Kim so hard she startles her.

MAY

Don't!

The two Green Objects intertwine then dizzyingly fan out in a similar direction.

Kim giggles then follows them into the tree line.

RYAN

(wines)

Come on, Kim.

Ryan is first to follow after her.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Not again.

Thunder *RUMBLES* above.

May and Joel steal another side glance.

A patch of fog swirls around a sparse break in the bushes at the tree line.

Ryan trips his way through the fog and brush where he saw Kim go.

May and Joel follow several feet down hill.

68

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL FAR CREST TRAP - NIGHT

68

RYAN

Fuck me. Kim? Kim!

Ryan takes a couple steps further, slows.

RYAN (CONT'D)

What.. Where is this girl?

A step further, Ryan surveys a foggy scene when he spots Kim trail the green Orb.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Kim!

Each step Ryan pursues Kim, the surroundings take on a more foreign appearance.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Stop!

Kim takes another step when she returns to awareness.

SMASH CUT:

69

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST - NIGHT

69

May stomps around the break in the bushes Ryan and Kim walked through.

MAY

Ryan? .. Kim!

Joel investigates a few feet away and turns to May hands up.

MAY (CONT'D)

Where the fuck did they go?

Joel shakes his head

JOEL

I don't know.

CUT TO:

70

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST TRAP - NIGHT

70

Ryan puts his hand on Kim shoulder.

RYAN

Are you back with me?

Kim starts to discern their predicament.

KIM

Where are we?

Ryan shakes his head at their surroundings.

KIM (CONT'D)

And what is that smell?

a heavy fog and shadow gathers or shrouds every tree, fern and bush.

RYAN

It looks like the forest but I'm not sure it is.

MMMMNNNN.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Oh no.

PSSSHHHH!

The ground shakes accompanied by a sound of clunky, heavy, metal followed by a pressurized hiss.

RYAN (CONT'D)

We should head back the way we came.

Kim rambunctiously agrees.

Ryan grabs her by the hand, they sprint back in the direction they entered.

A dark fog swirls as it shrinks ahead of them.

Ryan and Kim loose grip as they trip there way over the same ferns and bushes they entered through.

71

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL FAR CREST - NIGHT

71

Ryan returns to view, he trips his way back through.

Joel leaps back!

Ryan falls over his pack as he attempts to turn around.

Up the path May turns around.

From the ground Ryan stares in wait for Kim.

Ryan fixes on the void where Kim should emerge, tears form in his eyes.

RYAN

Kim?

Joel assists Ryan up.

May stares at the break in the bushes.

Joel holds onto Ryan, they near the tree line, May and the brush.

Ryan watches May step through the same spot He and Kim *crossed* through.

Ryan quickly raises a hand toward her.

RYAN (CONT'D)
(muttered)
Careful.

May turns to Ryan.

MAY
Where is she, Ryan?

Ryan pushes off Joel and stomps through the bushes in a frantic search.

RYAN
Kim.

May thrashes about the same undergrowth.

MAY
Kim.

Joel observes with a sort of grimace, he lowers his head.

Ryan realizes then begins to do circles.

RYAN
I was holding her hand.

May pauses and listens.

RYAN (CONT'D)
We were both running, together.

Ryan peers around.

RYAN (CONT'D)
We tripped our way through this...
Fucking bush.

Ryan stops, stares at the space between ferns and brush.

RYAN (CONT'D)
I don't understand. She was right
here with me!

Ryan starts to sob.

Small drops of rain begin to fall.

Ryan collapses to his knees.

May draws near him, she places her hand on his shoulder.

Joel lifts his head and joins them.

a dreary downpour begins.

72

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST RISE - NIGHT

72

The trio huddle together as they trudge forward.

The mountain side appears never ending.

The trail is exposed to wind, weaves in and out of forests
lowers in elevation only to rise again.

The three near a thick, shadow covered growth of trees.

RYAN

Whoa.

JOEL

Uh huh.

In front of them is the obvious trail and a worse option.

RYAN

We're not going in there.. Are we?

Their trail continues around the mountain, a separate trail
drops into a whole other valley.

MAY

Um.

May barely entertains the second option.

MAY (CONT'D)

You know this is the our trail,
right?

Ryan advances toward the lower trail.

RYAN

I mean this path could be just as
good as any?

May and Joel pan their view over the foreign valley below.

JOEL

(insistent)

Ehem, no brother it's not.

RYAN

(Sighs)

I know.

Ryan shoulders go slack.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Just look at it and tell me you
want to go in there?

They cringe at the sight of the shadowy grove ahead.

MAY

Not really.

JOEL

Me neither.

RYAN

If you don't want to go. How about
we just wait here 'til sun up?

Ryan desperately pleads his case to both.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Come on. We can meet in the middle
on this.

Joel sighs, May returns her eyes to Ryan's.

MAY

If we weren't missing friends, in
danger freezing and at least a
little dis-oriented. I'd agree.

Joel reminds both.

JOEL

(mumbles)

Do I have to add being *stalked*.

May agrees with a nod.

RYANS

That's what it feels like to me.

She steps to Ryan and reaches out a hand.

MAY

I don't want to leave her either.

RYAN

I'm afraid, she's still out here.

May hugs Ryan

MAY

I know.

Joel pats his friends shoulder.

JOEL

Then let's go get them some help.

Ryan returns his sights to the trail then nods at Joel and May.

RYAN

Okay, alright.

They trek through the cold, wet mist and deep shadows that hold sway over the trail.

73

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL FAR CREST SCRAGGLY GROVE - NIGHT 73

May, Joel and Ryan rise the far side crest.

Something watches them.

The trio move together in single file.

May and Joel lead, Ryan glances back and notices a *SHIMMER* cross the trail.

RYAN

Wha?

Ryan glances forward to May and Joel then back.

The trail now empty.

May sluggish, looks back at him.

MAY

Did you say something?

Ryan continues to stare.

RYAN

(mumbles)

Did you, see ..

May peers over Ryan and down the trail.

She assumes Ryans is paranoid and rejoins Joel.

Ryan shakes his head then falls back in line.

Only a few steps later and leafs flutter and fall in front of Ryan.

He glances up.

Something translucent on a tree limb kneels.

Ryan goes wide eyed.

The eyes ILLUMINATE a crimson red as *It* glares back at him.

Ryan scrambles and knocks into May and Joel.

May and Joel stumble.

JOEL

Whoa?

May intuits the threat, she pushes to observe.

MAY

What did you see?

May and Joel hold onto Ryan to keep him calm.

RYAN

(huffs)

Up there, in the tree.

May and Joel share an oh shit moment before they lift their gaze up to the tree.

JOEL

Where? I don't see..

Ryan wedges himself between his friends and extends one arm, index finger pointed.

RYAN

Half way up, the big branch.

May fixes her stare, she squints up at the large branch.

JOEL

May?

Fixated, May only searches.

Joel lifts his brows at Ryan when he's spots May's reaction shift.

May spots a *SHIMMER* in the tree, leans in and tilts her head.

RYAN

You see It?

May admits with a slow nod.

Joel and Ryan fall behind May when the trio spot the shimmer vault from one tree to the next.

Ryan rotates on his heels, then pushes and pulls at May and Joel.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Run, run, run!

The trio abruptly turn and bolt up the trail.

Something CRASHES into the bushes by Joel, he peers over.

JOEL
What the fuck is *that*!

Ryan and May both shake their heads.

MAY
Go, keep going!

Ryan nods.

They both follow May.

JOEL
Fuck!

Adrenaline pushes them across the plateau of a ridge.

RYAN
(huffs)
I can't, keep this up ..much longer.

The trio run out of steam and stumble into some brush for cover.

74

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST DARK FOREST - NIGHT

74

Ryan sprawls over a large boulder.

RYAN
(between breaths)
Fuck ..Me!

Joel takes a knee near a green textured tree.

JOEL
(frustrated)
Uh.. Uh okay.

May peers up at the tree they take cover under as she catches her breath.

MAY
 (pants)
 Anybody, see anything?

Through exhaustion they each attempt some level of awareness.

Joel stands up and peers around.

Ryan rolls over and to his feet.

RYAN
 Not after we started running.

JOEL
 I heard *something* behind us.

Ryan's head darts about.

May tries to clock her surroundings.

MAY
 I think, it's pushing us down the
 mountain.

Ryan and Joel share concern.

JOEL
 It's got to be almost dawn, if we
 can stay together til then.

RYAN
 We have to be almost down and
 around the mountain by now?

MAY
 A little light and for all we know
 we're already are.

A HEAVY METALLIC SCRAPE steals their attention.

-Unlock, DRAG then SLAM closed.

JOEL
 What, the fuck?

RYAN
 There it is again!

MAY
 What is that?

Ryan pleads with Joel and May.

RYAN
That's the sound I was talking
about.

GRAWWWLLLL!

The trio react simultaneously and reel in horror.

RYAN (CONT'D)
I don't want to know **what** *that* is.

May reels.

They edge back together.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Run!

In the sky above, a *translucent craft* hovers..

MAY
Oh shit, oh shit , oh shit!

A HUMMING PULSE accompanies a radiant light.

They duck and run for cover, their arms crossed over their
heads to shade them.

A natural fork happens between the ridge and the trail.

An Orb appears in front of Ryan that separates the trio.

Joel and May stick to the descending trail.

CUT TO:

75 **EXT. OLD REDWOOD FOREST RETURN RIDGELINE - NIGHT** 75

Ryan dodges the Orb onto the higher ride line.

Exposed and alone, Ryan's head is on swivel.

76 **EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN DESCENDING PATH - NIGHT** 76

May and Joel duck from a Bright Light that hovers then dims
as it finds distance.

May and Joel slow when it at last drifts away.

JOEL
Where's Ryan?

MAY

What?

May peers around.

MAY (CONT'D)

Where'd he go?

JOEL

Ryan.

They both peer in opposite directions.

MAY

Ryan!

77

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN RIDGE LINE - NIGHT

77

An overhead wind blows the trees and bushes around Ryan, fraught he glimpses from side to side.

He looks up as a bright light envelops him from over head.

A THUNDEROUS HORN sounds.

Ryan flinches and he shields himself with both hands.

FADE TO WHITE

78

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN DESCENDING PATH - NIGHT

78

May and Joel back track.

MAY

(cautious)

Ryan?

May takes a step or two further and peers up the ridge.

JOEL

(apprehensive)

Ryan!

They take long looks in opposite directions then at each other.

JOEL (CONT'D)

What... Was that?

May leans into Joel with large tears.

MAY
 (whispers)
 Where ..Is he?

Joel reaches out to support her.

JOEL
 I ..don't know.

Their eyes heavy with doubt.

MAY
 What do we do?

Joel shakes his head.

JOEL
 He should be here.

May SOBS.

Joel nods and holds her.

JOEL (CONT'D)
 We'll double check this ridge then
 keep going.

Joel holds out his hand.

May grasps his palm and they forge the ridge together.

79

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN RIDGE LINE - NIGHT

79

A large tree edge lit by the moon takes the end of the ridge when May and Joel steps from behind its bow.

MAY
 Look!

An odd Glow *boomerangs* across the horizon.

JOEL
 Huh?

They stand and watch.

May turns to Joel.

Joel to May.

They stare into each others eyes.

HUMMMMPHHH.

May pulls Joel near her.

HUMMPH.

May and Joel duck for cover of the tree.

Joel gazes up.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Holy Shit!

May follows Joel's eyes Over a rush of noise and light, past flailing branches.

A Translucent Craft the size of a football field SILENTLY rotates above them.

MAY

(mouthes)

Oh. My. God.

JOEL CAREFULLY BACKS MAY TO THE TREE.

AUUUUUUUUUU!

Tears build in May's eyes.

Joel hugs her tight.

He glances down at the descending trail.

May follows his gaze.

Hand in hand, they bolt for it.

80

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL RETURN DESCENDING PATH - NIGHT

80

May and Joel appear from around a bend and back onto the trail.

A light from above pulses as it pursues them.

SLOW MOTION:

THEY ATTEMPT TO GAIN SPEED.

AUMMPH.

The Crafts light intensifies as it closes in.

HUMMPH.

They run as hard as they can.

HUMMMPPHHHH.

May and Joel peer up in horror.

Tears stream May's cheeks as Joel's hand is pulled from hers.

MAY
No, No, No!

She tries to hold on.

Joel smiles down at her.. As he goes, he raises one hand.

JOEL
(whispers)
Run.

May shakes her head furiously.

Through tears she stumbles to keep one foot in front of the other.

AAUUUMMMM.

The craft rotates onto its axis

HummMPPHhhh.

A bright FLASH and the craft streaks into the pink and purple Skyline.

May SOBS as she watches *IT*.

A second turns into forever, she falters down the trail.

81 **EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL - DAY**

81

ESTABLISHING SHOT:

Old Redwood valley is partially veiled in a morning fog.

Heavy panting reveals shaky and trembling steps through dirt and gravel.

May's breath plumes through the cold morning air.

Worn, tattered and shivering, May wills her self forward.

CUT TO:

82 **EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, PARKING LOT - DAY**

82

A vehicle turns in.

The doors open and a couple steps out.

They dawn backpacks, close the doors, and walk away..

Their security alarm and headlights BEEP twice.

The couple walk past the entry point to the trail and sign post.

83 **EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL - DAY**

83

With each step May wavers when she hears gravel and bushes ahead she goes wide eyed.

The Young Couple hike along when they slow as they spot May.

The Young Woman quickly recognizes May's condition.

May blinks at the Couple.

A wave of emotions rush over her, Her body weakens and May collapses.

The Couple rush to her side.

The Young Woman holds May.

Dehydrated May lets out dusty sob, unable to hold back a fit of tears.

She attempts to cover her face with one hand.

The Young Woman holds May.

The Young Man stands and cautiously pan around.

A gentle breeze BLOWS through the forest, the sun comes out and the fog begins to clear.

The view rises to show an ever expanding forest and mountains, the fog and rain at its edges.

Roll Credits.

..FADE TO BLACK.