

THE MISSING

Written by

Christopher Styles

Christopher_Styles@yahoo.com
702.410.3960
WGAWest Reg.#

EXT. NOR CAL REDWOODS- DAY

FADE IN:

A GENTLE FOG AND MORNING MIST HOLD OVER, DAY BEGINS.

A SLOW, LAPPING LAKE.

A LARGE, STOIC REDWOOD ROBUST AND MYSTERIOUS, IT'S TRUNK
HOLLOW AND BURNT OUT, GUARDED BY FERNS.

A TWISTED SNARL OF VINES AND SAPLINGS AKIN TO A BLIND, HOME
TO SOME UNKNOWN THING.

A DARK GLEN SURROUNDED BY TALL TREES ENVELOPED IN SHAGGY MOSS
COVERED IN SOFT DARK GREEN FURLS OF THE SAME.

DISSOLVE

ESTABLISHING SHOT, AN IMMENSE REDWOOD FOREST OVER WHICH
LARGE, DARK CLOUDS APPROACH.

DISSOLVE

WITHIN THE FOREST A SMALL COMMUNITY RESIDES AT THE BASE OF A
MOUNTAIN.

EXT. SMALL FOREST COMMUNITY & HOUSE-DAY

AT THE EDGE OF TOWN A LONE ROAD LEADS TO A SMALL, SINGLE
FAMILY HOME.

A boy rides up on his bike.

A second boy in a baseball hat with yellow letters pushes his
bike out to meet the first.

TOGETHER THEY RIDE OFF TOWARDS THE FOREST.

EXT. LOCAL FOREST-DAY

THE BOYS FOLLOW A THIN TRAIL INTO THE FOREST WHEN THEY STOP
ABOVE A SMALL CREEK.

They drop their bikes and descend the short distance to the
creek.

They collect a handful of rocks of various sizes.

THEY TOSS ROCKS AT THE CREAK.

The first boy jumps up, tags the second and darts in the opposite direction.

FIRST BOY
You're It!

Clouds over head release the sound of **thunder**.

BOY 2
1..2.

THE BOY WITH THE BASEBALL CAP COUNTS WHEN HEARS AN INSECT-LIKE SOUND AND GLANCES BEHIND HIM.

BOY 2 (CONT'D)
3.

The First Boy no longer hears his friend, *stops* and peers around then walks back.

BOY 1
Where'd you go?

He slows when he spots his friends bike on its side.

The boy takes another look around then begins to cry out for his friend.

FIRST BOY
Hey, Where are You?

TRANSITION:

EXT. SMALL FOREST COMMUNITY, HOUSE- DAY

THE BOY RIDES TO HIS FRIENDS HOUSE, DROPS HIS BIKE AND APPROACHES THE DOOR.

His friends mother answers, peers back then steps out.

Tears are shared.

FROM A DISTANCE, THE BOY POINTS TO THE FOREST.

TRANSITION:

EXT. WOODS-DAY

[Opening Credits]

A HEAVY FOG ROLLS IN OVER A DENSE FOREST.

PUSH OVER: FERNS, CLOVERS AND MOSS COVERED FOREST FLOOR.

TIME LAPSE- LOW, TILT UP.

AN ENDLESS CANOPY OF REDWOODS IS APPROACHED BY A STORM OF DARK CLOUDS.

RAIN BEGINS TO FALL ON THE FOREST, the DROPLETS CAUSE SMALL RIPPLES TO SPREAD ACROSS THE SURFACE OF A CREEK.

A vast expanse of COASTAL REDWOOD FOREST STRETCHES FOR MILES as FOG AND RAIN TAKE HOLD.

PULL: WIDE SHOT DEEP IN THE FOREST, UNDER A TREE IS A WEATHERED BACKPACK AND A PAIR OF BOOTS, ONE ON ITS SIDE

A SMALL TOWN AT THE BASE OF A MOUNTAIN.

A REPORTER AND CAMERA MAN RECORD COVERAGE FOR AN UPDATE On THE "STILL" MISSING, LITTLE BOY.

TRANSITION:

INT. CABIN-DAY

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

T.V. WEATHER REPORTER
What was forecast to be a
moderate day appears to be turning
for the worst.

A young man in head to toe camouflage approaches.

T.V. WEATHER REPORTER (CONT'D)
Meteorologists say the freak storm
came out of nowhere and appears to
be forming in the northern
altitudes.

A Woman enters the room.

WOMAN
Okay, I got Grandpa all packed in
the back of the truck.

The Young man turns off the T.V.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You have everything you need?

The young man peers around then grabs his gloves off the counter and holds them up.

YOUNG MAN

Hah, I do now!

He holds the gloves up then pockets them in his Camouflage jacket.

The Woman smiles and takes a step closer.

WOMAN

Do me a favor Zack?

ZACK

Sure.

MOM

Help your grandfather out 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.

EXT. FRONT DRIVEWAY-DAY

ZACK APPROACHES TWO MEN IN THEIR FORTIES.

Grandpa sits in the rear passenger seat door open, one foot out.

DAD
Got em'?

Zack lifts the gloves.

ZACK
Yup.

DAD
Good, your Uncle Frank thinks it's
just a 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 it off.

DAD (CONT'D)
Well then, let's roll.

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.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY-DAY

A cluster of rain clouds steal the sunset.

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

DISSOLVE

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY-NIGHT

NIGHT LOOMS, A LIGHT RAIN BUSIES THE WINDSHIELD WIPERS.

Everyone stares ahead and out at the road.

EXT. DEAD END DIRT ROAD-NIGHT

THE VEHICLE COMES A SLOW STOP AND PARKS.

One by one they exit then lift the vehicles trunk remove and set up.

A POP UP CANOPY COMPLETE WITH 3 SIDES, A TABLE, LANTERNS, MINI STOVE, FRENCH PRESS & TEA POT, FOLDING CHAIRS THEN RIFLES.

Uncle Frank turns off the stove, removes the boiling water, pours it into a French Press and gently begins to push when he peers up to each.

Dad, grandpa and Zack each smile and nod.

AFTER A GENTLE PRESS, UNCLE FRANK PASSES OUT MUGS OF FRESH, HOT COFFEE TO EACH.

UNCLE FRANK

How's about we go over the plan

GRANDPA PUTS ON A YELLOW RAIN SLICKER, NODS AND PASSES A GENTLE SMILE AND A WINK AT ZACK.

DAD

Good idea. Let's.

UNCLE FRANK

I did make it up to check on that tree stand.

DAD

Oh, you did great. Thanks!

UNCLE FRANK

Of course.

Dad Nods as does Grandpa.

GRANDPA

Zack, I hope you don't mind helping me into the tree? I assume thats where I'm going.

ZACK

Of course Grandpa.

DAD

Perfect. Grandpa in the tree on the bottom, opposite side of the funnel.

Dad points into the far tree line.

GRANDPA AND ZACK SHARE A COY SMILE AND ROLL THEIR EYES.

DAD (CONT'D)

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

He thumbs over one shoulder.

Between sips of steaming coffee each agrees.

THEY SLING RIFLES OVER THEIR BACKS AND APPROACH A TRAIL.

DISSOLVE

EXT. FOREST-NIGHT

A HALF MOON RISES ON THE HORIZON.

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

A FAINT, GLOWING WHITE LIGHT IN THE CLOUDS PARALLEL'S THEM UP
THE MOUNTAIN SIDE.

The moon rises above the ridge and brightens the darkness.

ALL IS QUIET, IN A NEARBY BLIND UNCLE FRANK BLINKS AT THE
INCREASE IN MOONLIGHT.

Uncle Frank peers across and 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 PRESSES INTO THE CLEARING.

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

After a beat she steps forward.

Zack recognizes its a doe and sighs.

ZACK

(Sighs)

Uh Hummm.

DAD SPOTS THE DOE, UNCLE FRANK LOWERS HIS RIFLE AND RELAXES.

Pop!

A single rifle rapport cracks through the quiet mountain side.

The Doe springs off 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.

EXT. FOREST, TREE STAND-NIGHT

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
(Quietly)
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 the obvious directions.

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 up the boot, its 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)
Grandpa!

TRANSITION

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN-**DAY 1**

The sun breaks through openings in the clouds.

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

INT. AIRBNB CABIN-DAY

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.

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, LIVING ROOM-DAY

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 pushes through the living room and towards French doors at the rear of the house.

BEN
I've only seen photos of this place.

Ben peers at the kitchen as he goes.

BEN (CONT'D)
It looked epic!

MAY A QUIET, PERCEPTIVE, INTELLIGENT YOUNG LADY REACHES FOR THE REMOTE FROM THE COFFEE TABLE.

She points the remote, the television awakes.

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 BECKONS THEM FURTHER.

The T.V broadcast an "Update on a Missing Hunter", that
vanished several weeks ago.

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 (CONT'D)

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?

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, REAR PORCH- DAY

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 and Ryan approach Ben.

KIM

This place is
amazing!

Kim an attractive, bubbly young woman is the first to proudly
descend the steps to the quaint back yard.

KIM (CONT'D)

(Chuckles)

Hah. This is quite something!

Ryan introverted yet witty places his hand on Ben's shoulder.

RYAN
Thanks for helping pull this off.
This is perfect!

A MOUNTAIN SIDE OF TREES SURROUND THE PROPERTY.

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

Joel stares up at the dense cover of trees.

He smiles at May with raised eye brows.

JOEL
I've never.. Seen anything like
this!

A GRASS MEADOW LINED WITH FLOWER BEDS OF HERBS, WILD FLOWERS
AND FRUIT TREES DOT 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 here a lot?

BEN
I'm not sure, 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
That sounds dope!

Joel glances to Kim and May,

JOEL (CONT'D)
Anyone?

KIM
I'd like to get settled first..

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.

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, LIVING ROOM-DAY

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.

TRANSITION

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, FRONT DRIVE-DAY

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.

CUT TO:

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

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.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, FRONT DRIVE-DAY

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'd, 'ehem.

Joel swallows and 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.

TRANSITION

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, MASTER BEDROOM- DAY

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)
Thats 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.

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, ENTRY WAY-DAY

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 AT JOEL, HE LIFTS THE SUITCASES AND CARRIES BOTH UP THE STAIRS.

KIM
Thank you very much!

INT. AIRBNB CABIN UPSTAIRS-DAY

Atop the stairs Joel stops.

JOEL
(Clears throat)
Uh huh.

HE PUTS HER TWO 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.

TRANSITION

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN FRONT YARD-DAY

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.

Err 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 even 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.

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN STREET-DAY

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.

TRANSITION

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, MOUNTAIN SIDE CREEK-DAY

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)
And, 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 slows and 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? **Wait.**

JOEL

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

May pauses not sure what to make of that. Joel stops and
thinks hard about his words.

JOEL (CONT'D)

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.

TRANSITION:

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, REAR PORCH-DAY

MONTAGE

A SWITCH IS FLIPPED, A STRING OF LARGE BULBED LIGHTS BRIGHTEN THE YARD.

A LID IS OPEN THEN A STRAND OF GAS IN A BBQ SPARKS INTO FLAMES.

A ROW OF FAT STEAKS AND BOILED CORN IN THEIR HUSKS ARE PLACED ON THE GRILL.

A BAR IS ROLLED OUT.

PLACED ATOP IS A BUCKET OF ICE, BOTTLED WATERS AND A ROW OF GLASSES.

NEXT A PLATE OF 3 LIMES; 1 WHOLE, 1 HALVED & 1 DICED.

THE ICING, BEN AND RYAN REVEAL 3 BOXES OF DON JULIO 1942 AND PLACE ON THE TABLE. TWO ARE LEFT IN THEIR FANCY BOX.

THE third IS PULLED FROM IT'S BOX AND on display.

BEN
That looks good, don't you think?

Kim smokes a bowl nearby, stands and happily claps .

RYAN
You kidding me? I've been waiting
for years to go all out like this.

Kim steps forward excited!

KIM
Holy shit. You two went all out!

RYAN AND BEN BLUSH.

Quickly 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.

ALOOF BEN JUMPS TO CHECKS ON THE GRILL'S TEMPERATURE AND THE STEAKS.

Ryan throws both hands up.

RYAN (CONT'D)
(Mouth's)

SORRY, SORRY.

Joel closes in on the grill.

JOEL
Bro. Are you guys serious right
now?

MAY CLOSSES 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:

EACH GLASS RECEIVES A SQUARE OF ICE, FOLLOWED BY A HEALTHY
POUR OF TEQUILA.

THE STEAKS ARE FLIPPED, BEAUTIFUL GRILL LINES REVEAL NEAR
PERFECTION.

KIM LIMES EACH GLASSES' RIM, DROPS IT IN AND PASSES ONE TO
THE EACH PERSON.

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 the/ 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 BETWEEN THEM.

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.

RYAN
Yes. Yes we shall.

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
(whimpers)
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, I've 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.

TRANSITION

EXT. AIRBNB, REAR PORCH TABLE-NIGHT

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.

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN REAR PORCH, FIRE PIT-NIGHT

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 takes to 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 comes to life.

CUE: LO-FI HOUSE
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 & DANCE AROUND HIM.

EVERYONE SMILES AND ENJOYS THE VIBE.

MUSIC CUE FADES

THEY SETTLE, SHARE LAUGHS AND ENJOY THE LAST OF THE FIRE.

A burning LOG collapses, shimmering embers begin to pile up.

[LOW, CRANE UP]

EXT. AIRBNB, REAR PORCH FIRE PITT-NIGHT

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.

THEY ALL 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.

TRANSITION

EXT. AIRBNB CABIN, FRONT DRIVE- **DAY 2**

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 Bens 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.

INT.SUV-DAY

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.

RYAN

(Scoffs)

Come on.

KIM

Excuse you!

Ryan shakes his head.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD LANE-DAY

THE SUV PULLS OUT THE DRIVEWAY.

DISSOLVE

EXT. AVENUE OF THE GIANTS-DAY

THE SUV ARRIVES AT A JUNCTION AND DESCENDS ONTO THE OLD REDWOOD HIGHWAY.

THE SUV DRIVES A NARROW, CURVY ROAD THAT MEANDERS THROUGH DENSE REDWOODS.

BEN CRANES HIS HEAD OUT OF THE WINDOW TO SEE THE GIGANTIC TREES THAT SURROUND THEM.

They each push against or lean out their windows.

ALONGSIDE RIVERS, STACK OF LOGS BESIDE A SAW MILL, SMALL TOWNS AND DENSE FORESTED HILLS.

EXT. HIGHWAY 101-DAY

THE SUV REJOINS HIGHWAY 101.

A FOREST FILLED CORRIDOR OF GREEN PASTURES, PONDS WITH QUANT HOMES ON HILLSIDES AND DISTANT RANCHES.

THEY SLOW THEN PULL INTO A DIRT ROAD WHERE THEY SPOT A SMALL HEARD OF ELK.

Ben leans out his door, lifts his camera and snaps several shots.

KIM

(Joking)

You know If you get closer, you can get a better shot.

RYAN

Yea, right or die trying.

Joel laughs, Kims eyes widen.

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.

TRANSITION

EXT. DAVIDSON ROAD-DAY

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.

EXT. FERN CANYON, TRAILHEAD-DAY

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 MINI 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.

DISSOLVE

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.

EXT. HIGHWAY 101-DAY

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.

DISSOLVE

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.

DISSOLVE

THE SUV TURNS INTO A SMALL PAVED DOUBLE LOT, IMMEDIATELY OFF THE HIGHWAY.

EXT. BIG TREE, PARKING LOT & TRAIL-DAY

THE GROUP DISMOUNTS THE SUV AND PASSES BY THE TRAIL MARKER.

.2 - Big Tree.

THEY FOLLOW BEN AND RYAN AROUND A GENTLE BEND, EACH PERSONS MOUTH DROPS OPEN AS THEY SLOW UNDER THE BEHEMOTH.

EXT. BIG TREE-DAY

EACH SLOWLY STEPS BACK TO TAKE IN ITS TOTALITY.

BEN

Wow.

Side by side in awe.

RYAN

You can say that again.

MAY FOLLOWS ITS HEIGHT WITH HER EYES AS HIGH AS SHE CAN SEE.

MAY

Oh my god!

Joel is clearly moved as he stares up.

JOEL

(Agreement)

Uh Huh.

A little to her self, Kim blinks up at the sleeping giant.

KIM

I never knew there was anything
this awesome on this planet!

SHE APPROACHES THEN REACHES FOR IT.

KIM (CONT'D)
Mind officially blown!

May, Joel, Ryan and Ben watch her with long nods.

KIM (CONT'D)
What?

KIM STEPS BACK.

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.

DISSOLVE

EXT. ACCESS ROAD-DAY

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.

TRANSITION

INT. SUV, TALL TREE GROVE PARKING LOT-DAY

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.

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

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.

EXT. TALL TREES TRAIL-DAY

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.

DISSOLVE TO:

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.

DISSOLVE

EXT. TALL TREE GROVE, RIVER BANK-DAY

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!

EXT. GIANT FALLEN REDWOOD-DAY

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
INTO 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 FROM THE CANOPY OF 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.

EXT. TALL TREE GROVE, TRAIL-DAY

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 Bens 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.

DISSOLVE

EXT. TALL TREE GROVE-DAY

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.

BEN

Nothing, I guess.

May observes Ben, she falls in behind him.

TRANSITION

EXT. TALL TREE GROVE, TRAIL-DAY

BEN DEHYDRATED DRINKS LONGINGLY FROM HIS CANTEEN, LOOSELY IT DANGLES IN HIS HAND AS HE FALLS BACK TO THE MIDDLE.

May and Kim glance past Ben at Joel and Ryan.

Ben wavers then stumbles, Ryan and Joel rush to his side and place arms around his shoulder.

TRANSITION

EXT. TALL TREES GROVE, LOT & TRAILHEAD-DAY

THREE SETS OF SHOES TRUDGE ALONG.

Pale and sweaty Ben fights to keep his head up as the group nears the parking lot.

THE SUN DIPS BEHIND TREES AND CREATE TALL SHADOWS AS THE GROUP GETS BEN TO THE TRAIL HEAD HUT.

KIM

Let's let him sit here.

They help Ben to the benches inside.

RYAN

Here we go!

RYAN AND JOEL EXHAUSTED HELP LOWER BEN.

JOEL

I got ya.

May steps in too help Joel brace Ben.

ONCE SEATED RYAN BREAKS AWAY TO STRETCH A MUSCLE SPASM IN HIS LEG AND CATCH A BREATH.

May turns to Ryan.

MAY

Keys!

Ryan removes the Fab and hands it to May.

MAY (CONT'D)

Kim get the truck, please.

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 Bens 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

INT. AIRBNB CABIN-NIGHT

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.

TRANSITION

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, KITCHEN-NIGHT

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 WITH THE 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, 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 unconscious.

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 BENS 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.

DISSOLVE.

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, KITCHEN-DAY 3

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.

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, LIVING ROOM-DAY

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 some 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.

Bens' 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.

INT. AIRBNB CABIN, KITCHEN-DAY

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 somewhere
toward the end of the trail.

Ryan and Joel lean in.

MAY SQUINTS HER EYES, CURIOUS.

JOEL
Wow?

RYAN
(Clears throat)
Yea, um. We had to help you finish
the trail and get you back to 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 presses at
a pale 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 DOWN TO HIS ANKLE.

Everyone looks on 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 following me.

EVERYONE REGARDS BEN.

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
..weird insect?

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 BENS 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.

THEY ALL STOP TO WATCH KIM, SHE FLAILS HER ARMS AS SHE HEADS
UP STAIRS.

Ryan stands up with Ben and squeezes his shoulder.

RYAN
Take your time, okay.

BEN NODS.

Ryan walks after Kim.

May and Joel remain exchange sighs before May takes a long
sip of coffee.

DISSOLVE

EXT. HIGHWAY 101-DAY

CUE: SLOW
DRONING
MUSIC_CRESCENDO.

THE SUV DRIVES DOWN A LONG CORRIDOR OF HIGHWAY, ENSHROUDED BY FOG WITH BRIGHT STRIPES OF SUN BEAMS THAT SHINE THROUGH THE TREES.

Everyone quietly peers forward or out their windows.

EXT. PARKING LOT, OLD REDWOOD TRAIL-DAY

THE VEHICLE PULLS INTO THE PARKING LOT, PAST A MAN THAT HOLLERS AT TWO PASSING HIKERS.

The Man raises his voice, holds up flyers and pushes one on them.

KIM
Sheesh!

RYAN, MAY, JOEL AND KIM WATCH OUT THE CAR WINDOWS AS THEY DRIVE PAST

KIM (CONT'D)
What's that guys problem?

Joel and May eyeball him as they pull in.

MAY
I have a feeling we're about to
find out.

EXT. PARKING LOT, OLD REDWOOD TRAIL HEAD-DAY

THE GROUP CLIMBS OUT OF THE CAR.

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 TAKES 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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL-DAY

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 PONDERES 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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, CREST-DAY

THE TRAIL EMERGES FROM A THICK LINE OF TREES THAT BLOW IN THE WIND.

Grass covers the ridge as they approach 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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, OPPOSITE SIDE-DAY

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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, TRAILS XING-DAY

The trail turns into a X, where 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.

AN FAMILIAR *CLICK, CLICK, CLICK*, NARROWLY AUDIBLE OVER THE WATERS TRICKLE, CAUSES EACH TO PAUSE.

May heeds the sound as she peers over the others.

Ryan stops and listens.

BEN AND KIM LEER IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS.

A lurid *click, Click, Clicking* is 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 *click-ing* 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, clicking* is heard.

ONLY THE FOREST BREEZE AND THE SOFT FLOW OF WATER are heard.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, OPPOSITE SIDE-DAY

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 Ben 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, okay.

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

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 RYAN'S 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 *click-ing* is heard.

THEY REFLEXIVELY DUCK LOW AND TOGETHER.

KIM
Did you hear that!

JOEL
(Gently)
Shhhhh.

ANOTHER LONG, ODD **CLICKING** IS HEARD, 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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR OPPOSITE SIDE-DAY

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 but 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 CANT SHAKE THE DRAW. IN HIS PERIPHERAL ARE MAY AND JOEL,
STILL HE FEELS THE NEED TO GO TO THE SOUND.

Joel snaps out of *it* as Ryan walks past him.

MAY AND JOEL FLINCH, TURN TO ONE ANOTHER, BLINK THEN GLARE UP
AT RYAN AND KIM.

Both are able to shake the glows enchantment.

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 MECHANICAL
SOUND.. AKIN TO A HEAVY METAL DOOR.

May, Joel, Ryan and even Kim slow as each hear.. *Something*.

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
comepletly 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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR MOUNTAIN RISE-DAY

A COOL, EVENING FOG SOCKS INTO THE MOUNTAINS AS THEY ASCEND.

RYAN
Hey guys, slow down.

KIM
This fog is crazy thick!

THROUGH A THICK FOG MAY AND JOEL SLOW UP 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, I almost smell..

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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST-NIGHT

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.

MmmNaa NNnnAaa.

Something emerges from the forest.

Zzzzznnnhhh!

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

Schhnick!!

MAY TURNS HER HEAD AS SHE LISTENS, THE SOUND GROWS AS IT
NEARS.

Craaackle!

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 GLOW APPEARS LIKE AN 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 heavy 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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST "TRAP"-NIGHT

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:

EXT.OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST-NIGHT

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.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST "TRAP"-NIGHT

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.

Mmmmmnnnnnnn.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Oh no.

Pshhhhhhhh!

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 AGREE'S.

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.

EXT.OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST -NIGHT

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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST RISE- NIGHT

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 ahead 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 in there..
How about we just wait here 'til
sun up!

Ryan desperately pleads his case to both.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Come on! We can at least meet in the middle.

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

MAY

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

Joel reminds both.

JOEL

(mumbles)

Do I have to add, being *stocked*.

RYANS

That's what it feels like to me.

May glances from Ryan to Joel.

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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST (SCRAGGLY GROVE) - NIGHT

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.

A TRANSLUCENT *SOMETHING* KNEELS IN THE TREE.

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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, FAR CREST "DARK FOREST"—NIGHT

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 heir attention.

((An Unlock, drag then slam close.))

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.

Grraaaaawwwlll!

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:

EXT.OLD REDWOOD FOREST, RETURN RIDGELINE-NIGHT

RYAN DODGES THE ORB ONTO THE HIGHER RIDE LINE.

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

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN DESCENDING PATH-NIGHT

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!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN RIDGE LINE-NIGHT

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

ALIEN HORN
DECRESCENDOS

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN DESCENDING PATH-NIGHT

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.

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN RIDGE LINE-NIGHT

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 OTHER.

HummMMmpphh.

May pulls Joel near her.

HummMMPhhhh.

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.

AuuuMMMMmmmm!

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.

TRANSITION

EXT. OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, RETURN DESCENDING PATH-NIGHT

IN SLOW MOTION MAY AND JOEL APPEAR FROM AROUND A BEND AND BACK ONTO THE TRAIL.

A light from above pulses as it pursues them.

A MOSTLY STRAIGHT LINE LEADS THE WAY AS THEY ATTEMPT TO GAIN SPEED.

AummmmmMMmpphh..

The Crafts light intensifies as it closes in.

HummmMPphhhh

THEY RUN AS HARD AS THEY CAN.

HuuuuMMMMmmhh..

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.

AuuuUMMmmmm!

THE CRAFT ROTATES ONTO ITS AXIS

HummMMPHhhh.

A BRIGHT FLASH AND THE CRAFT STREAKS INTO THE PINK AND PURPLE HORIZON.

May sobs as she watches *IT*.

AFTER A BEAT, SHE FALTERS DOWN THE TRAIL.

EXT.OLD REDWOOD TRAIL-DAY

ESTABLISHING SHOT-OLD REDWOOD VALLEY IS 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:

EXT.OLD REDWOOD TRAIL, PARKING LOT-DAY

A VEHICLE TURNS IN.

The doors open and a couple steps out.

THEY DAWN BACKPACKS, CLOSE THE DOORS, AND WALK AWAY..

Their vehicle beeps twice.

THE COUPLE WALK PAST THE ENTRY POINT TO THE TRAIL AND SIGN POST.

CUT TO:

EXT.OLD REDWOOD TRAIL-DAY

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 IN A HUG.

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.