

Devil's Playground
by Aaron Mitton

FADE IN:

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

An isolated jogging trail in a park. A silhouetted FIGURE stands in the moonlight.

The Figure holds a knife that drips blood. There is a jogger on the ground in a pool of blood.

INT. DINER - DAY

MADISON, a woman in her thirties, sits at the counter. Her calloused hands hold a mug of piping hot black coffee. She is wearing a flannel shirt and jeans, the smudges of dirt and grime further the evidence of her propensity to work hard. Her boots are scuffed and worn. Her hair pulled back into a tight ponytail reveals a face that doesn't smile much, but can light up a room on those rare occasions. Her eyes do a decent job of hiding her pain, though at one time, could enamor anyone.

MADISON

So I'm reading these stories
and articles about people
that lived through some of
these natural disasters like
Hurricane Katrina, and about
how some people never rebuild
afterward.

INT. WEALTHY MAN'S HOME - NIGHT

A WEALTHY MAN lies on the floor in a pool of blood. Next to him, a large, shattered vase. The Figure holds a shard of the vase, covered in blood.

MADISON (VO)

It's not like they just moved
away or anything, more like
they couldn't live the same
way again.

The Figure stands there for a moment, and drops the shard.

INT. DINER - DAY

MADISON

They're so scared to death of
the next storm, that they
just shut themselves up
inside. They get anxious and
scared anytime it's even
partly cloudy outside.

Madison pauses, takes a sip of her coffee.

MADISON

It's like they just, gave
up...

INT. CAR - DAY

Madison drives down a road in town. We see her daughter,
PARKS, 10-13, in the passenger seat. Her hair is unkempt,
not worried about impressing the boys. Unlike her peers
who wear loud shirts and sparkly tight pants, she dresses
in holey jeans, a plain white t-shirt, and a hoodie jacket.
She's spent most of her life doing the opposite of what
she's been told, except when it came to her mother. She
stares out the window while they drive down the road.

EXT. - OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Madison pulls up outside of an office complex, shuts off
her car, and stares at the building.

The sign outside the building reads "Turner Clinical Counseling and Support Solutions"

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - OFFICE - DAY

A dozen various men and women stream into a large, open office space. Some converse with each other, others sit in folding chairs arranged in a semicircle. There aren't many smiling faces.

GRAHAM, thirties, enters the room. A little socially awkward, he attempts to slip in unnoticed. He never misses a week, and is a good listener, although he doesn't participate much. His classic good looks are amplified by the fact that he doesn't care. He has on a t-shirt with some obscure mathematical joke that maybe 1% of the population will get.

He sits in a chair as he looks at his phone. He lifts his head up and glances out the window. He notices Madison as she sits in her car.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

PARKS

Are you gonna go in this
time mom?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A BUSINESSMAN gasps for breath on the hotel bed. He is covered in blood from multiple stab wounds. He reaches up.

BUSINESSMAN

Please...

A knife is put to his throat. The Figure slashes his throat as blood splatters on the wall.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

PARKS

Mom...

Madison stares at the building. She doesn't answer.

PARKS

MOM!

MADISON

(startled)

W-what?

PARKS

I said, are you going in this time?

MADISON

Yeah... Yeah, I um... I'm going.

She stares for a few more seconds, then she starts the car and drives away.

INT. CAR - EARLY EVENING.

Madison and Parks drive down a country road, on their way home.

EXT. MADISON'S HOME - EVENING

Madison's car pulls into the driveway of her small ranch.

INT. MADISON'S HOME - EVENING

Madison is in the kitchen. In what has become a routine for her, she does the dishes and cleans up. Parks sits on a counter and watches her mom.

Madison shows Parks funny things on her phone as they both laugh.

Alone, Madison showers, changes clothes. There are scars on her back, side, and thigh.

She gets into bed and pulls up the blankets. She stares at the ceiling for a moment as she struggles to fight back the random reflections that leave her restless at night.

She then rolls over and goes to sleep.

EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A beat up early-2000's hatchback sits in an abandoned parking lot. The pavement is cracked all over, with tall weeds that shoot up through them. The car rocks back and forth.

Suddenly, the driver's side door pops open and NAKED COLLEGE GUY, falls out, covered in blood. He tries to stand up, but right behind him is the Figure, holding a knife. The Figure hops on top of Naked College Guy and stabs him multiple times.

INT - MADISON'S HOME - MORNING

Madison is jolted awake.

EXT. MADISON'S FARM - DAY

Madison works in the summer heat on her ranch. Parks watches the goats do their thing. She likes the goats.

Madison looks at the automated water system for the animals. The water level is low. She inspects the machine and there is a busted valve that won't open. She shuts it down and takes the valve apart. She holds it up and looks closer at it.

MADISON

Dammit.

Madison takes the broken piece and heads toward her vehicle.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Madison wanders the aisles as she for the right part, as well as some other things she needed while she was there.

LATER

Madison pays for her things and leaves the store.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Madison gets into her car. Parks sits in the front passenger seat, a bit annoyed.

INT. CAR - DAY

PARKS

What took you so long?

Madison fidgets with her seat belt.

MADISON

Just had to make sure I got
the right...

Madison is interrupted by a knock on her passenger side window. It is an EMPLOYEE from the hardware store. He holds a bag with an item in it.

Madison rolls down the passenger side window.

EMPLOYEE

Ma'am, you forgot this.

The employee tosses the bag onto an empty passenger seat.

Madison

Oh, thank you.

Madison takes the bag from the passenger seat and throws it in the back seat. The employee turns around to go back inside and Parks has reappeared in the passenger seat.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Madison drives away

EXT. MADISON'S RANCH - DAY

Madison feeds the goats and chats with Parks.

Parks turns to look as a pickup pulls onto their property.

PARKS

Mom, there's someone here.

The pickup pulls up and stops. Graham exits and walks toward Madison. Madison has a slight smile.

GRAHAM

Hey Madison

MADISON

What's up Graham.

Madison continues to do work. She starts to walk toward the chicken coop. Graham walks next to her

GRAHAM

I just thought I'd come up
and see how you were doing.
It's been a few sessions
since we'd seen you.

MADISON

Yeah, I just... I don't know...
I've been meaning to make it.
I've, uh, just been busy
around here.

GRAHAM

Well, some of the group are
worried, so I told them I'd
drive up and check on ya.

Madison bends down and fills a bucket full of grain.

MADISON

Look, that's nice of you and
all... I just... No offense, but
I don't think groups are for
me. Here, hold this.

Madison hands Graham the bucket. She bends down to work on
a piece of machinery on the ground.

GRAHAM

Yeah, I know. I get it. I
mean, groups can be hard.
Telling a bunch of strangers
how you feel. It's...
Unpleasant...

Madison stands up and starts to walk again.

MADISON

Yeah, it kind of is.

They stop at the door to the coop.

GRAHAM

Did you know that in Greek,
the word catharsis means
purification?

PARKS

What's he talking about?

GRAHAM

You see, in Poetics, it's stated that tragedy, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude. And that through pity and fear, we can effect proper purgation of these emotions. (cont)

INT - UNIVERSITY CLASSROOM - DAY

Dozens of students are in the class as they listen to a lecture from PROFESSOR CADELL. Cadell, 60's, is older now, but teaches with the same passion he held as a young revolutionary. He paces as he speaks with a certain vigor. There is one student with short hair whom he has entranced. The student watches and listens with great adoration.

GRAHAM (VO)

You see, What Aristotle was saying, was that the tragedy forces you deal with certain emotions, like fear, and it is only through said tragedy that one can be purified.
(cont)

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

There is heavy rain. A WOMAN sits on the side of a desert highway, head in her hands as she sobs. Her left side is bloody.

GRAHAM (VO)

People think that catharsis is to just yell and scream until you feel better. (cont)
(cont) But it really means that you take the fear of the tragedy and purge it from your body.

The tragedy, however, never leaves you.

The Woman lifts her head. It's Madison.

INT - MADISON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rain falls outside. Madison sits at her dinner table and eats her dinner. Parks sits across from her and watches something on a tablet placed in front of her.

MADISON

You know, I think I'm going to give groups another shot.

PARKS

What? C'mon mom, you hate groups. Listening to all that whining...

MADISON

No, you hate groups. I just stopped going because I got sick of your complaining.

PARKS

Is this because of what that Graham guy said?

MADISON

He's got a point.

PARKS

Ugh, that guy weirds me out.
Can you hit next for me?

Madison reaches over and taps the screen of the tablet.

MADISON

Oh stop it, he's a nice guy.

PARKS

Whatever mom, he just takes
on himself to drive all the
way out here just to check on
you? What are you seven?
You're a grown woman, you
don't need checked on. Seems
kinda rapey if you ask me.

MADISON

Stop it, he was not being
rapey. The group was just
worried..

PARKS

Holy shit, they should just
get the hint that you aren't
going to back to those stupid
group sessions.

MADISON

Hey, language.

PARKS

Sorry..

MADISON

Well, let's give it another
chance. If they cry or whine
too much, then we don't have
to go anymore.

PARKS

That's all they do!

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, OFFICE - DAY

Madison sits in group counseling and listens to the other members. Parks stands behind her with a scowl on her face. DALE, a man in his sixties, has the floor as the DOCTOR observes. Tears swell up in his eyes as he speaks.

DALE

...I know Andrea wouldn't want me feeling this way, which I have to remind myself all the time. But also, that if I just take things one day at a time, I'll get through somehow.

DOCTOR

Thank you Dale for that. That was great. I'm sure Andrea would be proud of the progress you've made.

The Doctor stands.

Ok everyone, I think that'll do it for today. We'll see each other next week, same time.

Everyone gathers up their things and start to leave. On the way out, another member of the group, VE, a woman in her 30's, stops Madison. Before her tragedy, Ve was always the funnest person in the room, although her bright blue hair suggests that she is maybe starting to get back to that. Quirky and cute, there's hardly a person around that doesn't like Ve.

VE

Madison, wait up.

MADISON

What's up?

VE

Hey, a bunch of us are headed out to the mountains this weekend. We thought it might do all of us some good to get out of town for a day or two, ya know, get some bonding time without the doc, do a little fishing, whaddya say?

PARKS

No mom, say no. I don't wanna go camping. I hate camping!

MADISON

Um I don't know. Maybe.

PARKS

ARGH!

VE

Well, I hope you'll say yes. Between Dale, Graham, and Jackson, I'm the only girl going and I could use a sidekick.

MADISON

Graham's going?

Madison looks over at Graham, who converses with other members of the group.

MADISON

Yeah, you know what, why not,
I'll go. But you're my
sidekick.

VE

Deal.

PARKS

You're killing me mom!

INT. BAR - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

A scantily clad female BARFLY, twenties, is being strangled with a rope. The Figure uses both hands to tighten the rope around her neck. She squirms and fights for air. The Figure constricts the rope tighter until she's dead. The Figure drops her body on the floor with a loud thud.

EXT. OFFICE PARKING LOT - DAY

VE (OS)

Maddie? Maddie!

Madison is startled. She is leaned up against her car, with her phone in her hand. Her eyes are in the direction of the phone, although spacing off. Parks is perched on top her mom's car. As she sits cross-legged, she watches Dale, Graham, and Jackson load up the camp supplies.

MADISON

I'm sorry, what?

VE

I said, is that ok?

MADISON

Is what ok?

VE

I just asked if it was cool that you ride with Graham in his truck, since there's not enough room in mine. Are you ok Maddie? You seem kinda out of it,

MADISON

Me? Oh yeah, I was, uh, just reading this thing on my phone and tuned you out. Sorry.

VE

That's ok. Just get it outta your system, I guess, since there's no service up there.

MADISON

That's, uh, what I was doing. Gotta get my fix, ya know.

Madison puts her phone away and starts to load her things in Graham's pickup.

GRAHAM

Alright Madison, ready to go?

MADISON

Yeah, let's do this.

Parks hops down as she rolls her eyes.

PARKS

Oh, you are so in trouble. Do you like this sound "blee blee blee blee"? Because that's the sound I'm making all weekend!

Graham and Madison get in the pickup and they drive off.

INT. GRAHAMS PICKUP - DAY

Graham and Madison are driving down the road. Parks sulks in the backseat. Madison gets a text.

VE (TEXT)

Having some car trouble. Tow truck just got here. We'll meet you up there. Hopefully won't be too delayed.

MADISON (TEXT)

Ok. Thanks for letting us know. See you when you get there.

VE (TEXT)

You two behave yourselves.

MADISON (TEXT)

Ha Ha...

Madison puts her phone away.

MADISON

That was Ve. Her car had some trouble and they're on their way to the mechanics.

GRAHAM

Oh geez, hope everything is ok. Do they want us to come back?

MADISON

No, she doesn't seem to think it's a big deal. Said they'd just meet us there.

PARKS

Gee, how lucky for you?

INT. SEMI TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

A TRUCKER, 40's, is tied up in the sleeper cab of his semi. His face has been bloodied.

TRUCKER

C'mon, please! I'm sorry.
Please don't kill me!

A gloved fist punches him in the face.

TRUCKER

I'm sorry... Please...

The figure stabs the Trucker multiple times with fervid intensity.

INT. GRAHAM'S PICKUP - DAY

Madison suddenly wakes up. The car is on a bumpy gravel road. Graham looks over at her.

GRAHAM

Hey, there she is.

MADISON

Oh, sorry, I didn't realize I dozed off. How long was I out?

GRAHAM

About an hour.

Madison looks around outside.

MADISON

Where are we?

GRAHAM

We just went over Connor's
Pass. Not too far now.

MADISON

Where are we going again?

GRAHAM

It's called Devil's
Playground state park.

PARKS

Yeah, that's not terrifying.

MADISON

Hmm, I don't think I've ever
been there.

GRAHAM

It's kinda off the beaten
path. Apparently Dale knows
a great fishing spot up
there.

MADISON

Sounds like fun.

INT. MECHANICS SHOP WAITING ROOM - DAY

Ve, Jackson, and Dale are sitting in the waiting room. The
MECHANIC enters to talk to Ve.

MECHANIC

Hey, so it looks like someone
poured bleach into your gas
tank.

VE

What? Bleach?

MECHANIC

Yeah, we see this sometimes.
Usually teens or, I don't
know, maybe someone you
pissed off. Either way, with
it being the weekend, I can't
get the parts I need until
Monday.

VE

Ok, thank you.

The Mechanic returns to the shop.

VE

Who would put bleach in my
car?

INT. GRAHAM'S PICKUP

Madison looks out the window and watches the scenery,
courtesy of a sun unobstructed by clouds, as they drive
down the road.

GRAHAM

You know, I'm really glad you
decided to come out. I think
it's good for us to just get
out once in a while. Try to
forget about work and groups
and all that.

MADISON

Yeah, I just, I feel like
I've shut myself up since
Parks died, and I thought
maybe I should at least try
to move on.

They continue down the road as Madison and Parks take in
the view of the mountainside and large rock formations.

They pass a sign reading "Devil's Playground".

They drive a bit further, the road getting less and less maintained the deeper they go into the park.

Graham, as he holds a piece of paper, looks around and spots a clearing off the side of the road.

GRAHAM

Well, according Dale's map,
this is the place.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Graham pulls into the clearing. They exit the vehicle. It's hot, one of the hottest days of the year. Madison looks around the area. There are no services or signs of civilization.

The base of the mountain has a lot of sagebrush, with the trees getting taller and more populated the higher up one goes.

To this leviathan, humanity is inconsequential.

The isolated mountain side is rocky and imposing. There are large rock outcroppings in just about every direction. Massive boulders pepper the surface, further adding to the sense of insignificance. The entirety of the ridge emits an ominous sensation.

MADISON

Wow, Dale wasn't kidding, was he? This place is really out there.

PARKS

It's not too late to turn around and go home. Just take his keys and steal his truck!

Madison shoots Parks a dirty look.

GRAHAM

Man, I haven't been camping like this since I was a kid. This'll be interesting.

MADISON

I just hope Ve and them are ok.

GRAHAM

I'm sure they're ok. Look at it this way, it gives us the chance to set up in the best spots.

PARKS

Stop talking! Nobody likes you!

They start to unload their gear and set up the camp.

As they unload, Parks notices a vehicle driving toward them.

PARKS

Thank glob, Ve is here. At least she's interesting, unlike Wikipedia Brown over here.

A beat up pickup pulls into the camping spot. It pulls in quickly and slams on its brakes, kicking up dust. Both Graham and Madison turn to look.

Out of the vehicle steps JUNKIE, a tall, wiry, dangerous looking fellow in his 20's who apparently has a vendetta against sleeves, HOPHEAD, same age, shorter, who also apparently has a vendetta against toothbrushes, and their

girlfriends SUGAR and SWEETPEA, same age, who wear the same short skirts and heels whether going clubbing or camping.

Junkie rushes over to Graham and Madison, with Hophead close behind.

JUNKIE

Get outta here, this is our spot!

Graham steps in front of Madison. Madison rolls her eyes at this gesture.

GRAHAM

What're you talking about, this is public land?

JUNKIE

We already planned to use this spot.

GRAHAM

C'mon guys, we already got a bunch of our stuff unpacked and there's another clearing just up the road.

JUNKIE

I'm sorry, maybe the kind manner in which I spoke made you think I was asking.

I'm not.

Now you just get your shit and get out.

Junkie takes a step toward Graham

JUNKIE

Or do I gotta make you cry in
front of your bitch?

PARKS

Whoa! I beg your pardon?

SUGAR

You tell 'im baby!

GRAHAM

Alright, alright, we didn't
come up here to fight. We'll
be on our way...

Graham turns his back to go.

GRAHAM

Just apologize to my friend.

JUNKIE

D'you say to me?

PARKS

Whoa, look who decided to
cowboy up!

MADISON

Graham, c'mon, let's just
leave these assholes and find
another spot.

SWEETPEA

You talkin' shit bitch?

JUNKIE

Well, answer Sweetpea... You
guys talkin shit?

Madison steps from behind Graham.

MADISON

Sweetpea? What is she, a hillbilly? A stripper? A hillbilly stripper?

Madison turns to Sweetpea

MADISON

(bad southern accent)
Hey sugar, d'you remember to blow your daddy goodbye before you left the house this mornin?

PARKS

Whoa, ho! And just like that, mom's in it!

SUGAR

I'm Sugar...

MADISON

Really? Geez, I was just kidding. Sweetpea and Sugar? Are all four of you cousins too? Or brother and sister?

PARKS

Boom!

Junkie, fists clenched, takes a step toward Madison. Graham steps in front of him and they bump chests.

HOPHEAD

Aww shit, you messed up.

Junkie punches Graham in the face and knocks him down to the ground.

Sugar and Sweetpea howl and whoop.

SUGAR

Woohoo! Yeah baby!

Madison rushes in tries to push Junkie off of Graham. Junkie doesn't budge, instead, turns to her, shoves her away with one arm and puts her on her butt. Graham gets an angry look in his eyes. Hophead runs in as he laughs and kicks Graham in the stomach.

JUNKIE

Get your shit and get out.
I'm not asking again.

Graham props himself up. He spits out blood.

Madison gets to her feet and goes to Graham.

GRAHAM

Ok... Ok, we're going.

PARKS

Oh c'mon, you guys can take them! They're just lucky they don't have face my power punch of pain!

Parks dances around like boxer in the ring, air punching.

Madison helps Graham stand, then they both load up their truck and drive away.

EXT. 2ND CAMPGROUND - EVENING

Graham and Madison unload their supplies while Parks wanders around and explores.

EXT. 2ND CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Madison sits next to the campfire, Parks on a log next to her mom. Graham, camp chair in one hand and two beers in

the other, walks up and sits down a few feet from her. As he walks up, he hands Madison a bottle.

MADISON

Thanks...

Graham's face has a bruise on his cheek, though not major.

MADISON

I can't believe those
assholes.

GRAHAM

Forget about 'em. Let's just
try to remember why we came
up here and have a good time.

Slight pause as they both stare into the fire.

MADISON

You didn't have to do that.

GRAHAM

What?

Madison stands up.

MADISON

I don't mean that as in you
didn't have to go out of your
way to do a nice thing for me
or I have low self-esteem and
I don't deserve it, or
anything like that.

Madison starts to pace.

MADISON

I mean that, I can take care of myself. I don't need or want you to step in between me and whatever I'm facing down.

PARKS

Whoa, take it easy on him mom.

GRAHAM

Ok.

MADISON

Ok?

GRAHAM

I don't know what else you want me to say? You're right, I shouldn't stepped in, you don't need me to come in and save the day.

Graham gets up and starts to walk around.

GRAHAM

But to be fair, they did pick a fight with both of us.

PARKS

He's got a point mom.

MADISON

You got a point. Sorry, I didn't mean to go off on you like that. I'm just... I guess I'm just frustrated about that whole thing.

GRAHAM

No, it's ok, I get it. I'm frustrated too. In fact, you know what?

Graham gets up and grabs a fist sized rock. He leans back and throws it into the woods as hard as he can, yelling.

GRAHAM

AAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!

Madison and Parks have a confused look on their face.

PARKS

Uhh...

MADISON

What was that?

Graham picks up another rock and hands it to Madison

GRAHAM

Here, you do it.

PARKS

I-I-I-I think it's time to go now...

MADISON

What're you talking about?

GRAHAM

Just reach back and throw it as far as you can and yell as loud as you can. Trust me.

Madison gives a half-hearted effort on the throw, and on the yell.

MADISON

Aaahhh...

GRAHAM

What was that?

They both laugh. He picks up another rock and hands it to her.

GRAHAM

Now, put your big girl
panties on, and throw this
damn rock.

Madison looks at the rock and looks at Graham. She then leans back, and throws the rock with all her strength.

MADISON

YYYYYAAAAAAGGGGGHHHHHH!!!!

GRAHAM

Yeah! Now doesn't that feel
better!

Graham picks up and throws another rock.

GRAHAM

AAAAAARRRRRRGGGGGHHHHHH!!!

Do it again!

They both pick up whatever they can find; rocks, beer bottles, firewood, and start to throw them into the darkness of the forest, all whilst they scream.

Madison, having had one too many drinks, stumbles and starts to fall. She grabs Graham to try and catch herself, but she pulls Graham down with her as they both laugh, out of breath.

MADISON

Would Aristotle call that
cathartic?

Madison looks at Graham and pauses. She reaches up and puts her hand on his bruised face and laughs.

MADISON

Look at your poor dumb face.

They catch each other's eyes. They move in to kiss, when Madison opens her eyes and sees Parks stare her down with a face showing disapproval.

Madison pulls back.

MADISON

I'm... I'm sorry... I
can't...

GRAHAM

No, I'm sorry, I didn't mean
to...

MADISON

No, it's not you... I just...

Madison starts to walk away.

MADISON

I can't do this right now. My
life, me, I'm not where I
need to be. I thought I was,
but...

GRAHAM

Stop, you don't have to
explain. I like you, a lot,
but I also don't want to be
some emotional crutch you're
using to get past Parks.

(cont)

(cont) People like us, the survivors, we need to be ready for life before we're ready for romance.

PARKS

Ugh, what are these feelings?

MADISON

That's really nice. D'you get that off a greeting card?

PARKS

Is it pity? That's impossible, there aren't any baby pigs around!

GRAHAM

A Facebook meme, but that's not the point.

Look, I think we both just got caught up in the moment. And I don't even know if I'm ready, to be honest. I still think about Lorie every day.

MADISON

How about we both give each other a bit more time? Until we're ready. We can still hang out and just be friends.

GRAHAM

That's a plan I can live with.

PARKS

Dumb, squishy baby pigs anyway...

MADISON

Anyway, I'm gonna turn in.
It's getting kinda late.
Goodnight. I'll see you in
the morning.

GRAHAM

Yeah, goodnight.

Madison and Parks go into their tent while Graham puts out
the campfire

EXT/INT - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Madison and Parks drive down a desert highway in the middle
of a storm. Parks is asleep in the passenger seat and
Madison looks drowsy behind the wheel.

PARKS (VO)

Mom. Mom!

INT. MADISON'S TENT

Madison is asleep in her sleeping bag. Parks kneels next
to her.

PARKS

Mom...

Madison, half asleep, opens her eyes.

MADISON

What is it?

PARKS

Graham left his tent

MADISON

So?

PARKS

Don't you think it's weird?
It's the middle of the night,
and I don't think he's even
slept.

Madison thinks about it for a moment.

MADISON

Ok...

Madison unzips her tent and peeks out. She sees Graham
walk down the dirt road.

MADISON

What is he doing?

Madison makes her way out of the tent, and starts to follow
Graham. She is far enough back that he doesn't notice her.
He walks over to the neighboring campsite where Junkie and
his friends are camping.

INT. JUNKIE'S TENT - NIGHT

Junkie, Hophead, Sugar, and Sweetpea all sit inside the
tent. The inside of the tent is filled with smoke as they
take turns smoking drugs out of a pipe. The music blares
out of a small boombox in the tent. They all laugh and
have a good time. Junkie pulls out his phone and starts to
play on it.

SUGAR

What the hell are you doing?
We don't have a signal up
here. Put that away and come
pay attention to me.

JUNKIE

Calm your tits Sugar. I just
gotta collect my coins for
the day.

HOPHEAD

Ha! Tits...

SUGAR

Alright, fine. But I'm gonna
get Sweetpea to calm 'em
down.

Sugar scoots closer to Sweetpea. They pull each other close and start making out. Hopheads mouth is agape. He hits Junkie on the shoulder in an attempt to get his attention.

HOPHEAD

Hey! Hey! Hey!

EXT. JUNKIES CAMP - NIGHT

Graham stands next to the tent. He walks over to the woodpile, grabs a club-like log and places one end in the fire.

EXT. BETWEEN CAMPS - NIGHT

Madison and Parks watch Graham from a distance, keeping themselves hidden.

MADISON

What the hell is he doing?

PARKS

Does he, like, know those
guys?

EXT/INT. JUNKIES CAMP - NIGHT

Graham walks to the tent door, pulls a zip tie from his pocket, and ties the zippers together so it can't be unzipped. He then walks to one end of the tent.

Junkie and Hophead enjoy the show by the girls as Hophead giggles like an idiot. Suddenly, the tent collapses.

Graham has pulled the rods out the tent, causing it to collapse.

Everyone inside starts to scramble. Junkie finds the zipper, but can't get it unzipped.

Junkie
What the hell! It's stuck!

Graham grabs the log, which has one end burning, and raises it above his head.

Everyone struggles to find a way out.

HOPHEAD
Damn cheap ass ten...

Suddenly, Hophead is interrupted by a flaming log bashing in his head. The girls scream.

EXT. JUNKIES CAMP - NIGHT

The tent is now on fire. Junkie is the first to emerge out of the tent, although on fire. Graham takes his club and hits him in the head and knocks him out, leaving him to burn to death. The girls also run out on fire, but collapse a few feet from the tent, burned to death.

Graham watches them burn, blank expression on his face, as he tosses the club onto the campfire.

EXT. BETWEEN CAMPS - NIGHT

Madison and Parks watch in horror.

PARKS
Holy shit! This can't be happening.

Terrified and panicked, Madison turns around to run, but trips over some brush and makes some noise.

Graham hears something and looks up, just in time to catch a glimpse of Madison.

PARKS

Mom, run!

Graham sets off on a dead sprint after her.

Madison runs through the trees. Panicked and out of breath, she stops. Frantic and lost, she whips her head around in every direction to try and find her way when Graham appears.

PARKS

Mom, look out!

Graham tackles Madison before she has a chance to react. She hits her head, which knocks her unconscious.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Madison sees brief flashes as she drifts in and out of consciousness. Graham is carrying her somewhere.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAWN

Madison wakes up to find her hands and feet tied up with zip ties. She sits on the ground, Parks is next to her. She looks around and sees nothing but trees and mountains. There isn't see one recognizable landmark.

She is lost.

Graham sits across from her and plays games on his phone, waiting for her to wake up.

MADISON

W-what's going on? What's happening?

GRAHAM

(looking down)

Just trying to get this last ball in the... Dammit... Sorry, I was just passing the time until you woke up.

PARKS

You're not too bright, are you?

MADISON

No, I mean what is going on here? This situation? I saw you murder those people. I'm zip tied. I have no idea where I am. What the hell is going on!?

GRAHAM

Look Mads, I don't know what you think you saw...

MADISON

I know what I saw! You killed those people!

Graham stands and turns his back to her. He stays quiet for a moment as he shakes his head, then turns around.

GRAHAM

Ok, look, you caught me. Yes, I put down those those "people", those addicts. Did the world a favor by getting rid of some worthless trash.

PARKS

Oh you're a real hero

MADISON

They were human beings!

GRAHAM

That's not the way I see it.

Graham starts to pace.

GRAHAM

You weren't supposed to know this about me, at least, not yet. I was going to tell you eventually, I swear.

PARK

What, is there like 3 dates rule before you tell someone you're a psycho?

MADISON

Please Graham, just let me go. It's not too late. We, I, can help you.

GRAHAM

I DON'T NEED HELP!

Madison and Parks are both taken aback by Graham's abrupt yelling.

GRAHAM

Just... Shit, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I shouldn't've yelled at you. This isn't how I pictured this going down. It's... You are just so frustrating sometimes. I don't need help.

PARKS

You seem perfectly well
adjusted to me.

MADISON

Well then what do you want
from me?

GRAHAM

Have you heard the term
Übermensch? It's German.

Madison just gives Graham a frightened stare.

GRAHAM

It means Superman, or
Overman, to be more accurate.
It's the concept that we can
be better than human. That
through education, we can
avoid the pitfalls of
morality. You see, we are
superior to other people, so
their morality doesn't apply
to us.

PARKS

Holy shit.

MADISON

(under breath)

Language

GRAHAM

What?

Madison ignores the question.

GRAHAM

Anyway, I want you on this journey with me Madison.

MADISON

You know, Ve and the rest of them are gonna be up here any minute. They're gonna wonder where we are. They're gonna see what you did to those people, call the police and start looking for us.

PARKS

Guess you didn't think that through did you?

GRAHAM

I highly doubt they'll be up here anytime soon.

MADISON

W-what did you do to them?

GRAHAM

Did you know that gasoline is organic? It always makes me laugh when people say that organic is healthier, but I don't see any of them chugging gasoline.

PARKS

Seriously, again with this stuff?

GRAHAM

And if you'll remember from your organic chemistry class, when you mix an organic compound with sodium

hypochlorite, you get
oxidation.

MADISON

Will you get to the point?

GRAHAM

And when an oxidizing agent
comes into contact with
metals, it strips away (cont)
(cont) electrons from the
metal, and you get rust.

Graham pauses and sees that Madison is not amused.

GRAHAM

Bleach... I put bleach in her
gas tank. As we were loading
up. As soon as she started
her truck, her engine was
toast. So, to reiterate, I
don't think they'll be up
here any time soon.

PARKS

Just tell him what he wants
so he lets you go.

MADISON

Ok, Graham, I'm intrigued.
How about you untie me and we
can talk about it.

GRAHAM

Tsss... You know, that wasn't
as convincing as you had
hoped.

PARKS

That was even painful for me
to watch.

MADISON

JUST LET ME GO YOU PSYCHO!

GRAHAM

Whoa there Mads, calm down now. Besides, even IF I let you go, you have no idea where we are. I know this area like the back of my hand. So it's best you stick with me. Now get up.

MADISON

What are you gonna do to me?

GRAHAM

I'm not gonna do anything to you, but I also don't want to sit here all day. It's hot and it's not very comfortable, you know? So c'mon, let's get moving. I got snacks in the truck.

Graham helps Madison to her feet. They start to walk, with Madison in front of Graham.

PARKS

You can't go with him mom,
you gotta get away!

MADISON

(mouthing words)

I know.

As they walk through the mountainous terrain, Parks notices they are coming up on a particularly rocky section with a downhill slope on one side.

PARKS

There mom, that's where you
gotta do it.

As they walk, Madison works to get the zip tie locking mechanism in between her wrist. Discreetly, she puts her wrists up to her mouth and cinches the zip ties as tight as she can.

They soon get to the rocky terrain. Both have a hard time keeping their balance. Suddenly, Madison puts her hands above her head and quickly brings them down into her body, which snaps the zip tie.

Graham is confused and Madison moves quickly to shove him in the chest, which knocks him off balance. He starts to fall, but he is able to grab one of Madison's hands and pulls her down with him.

Parks reaches out for her.

PARKS

MOM!

They both tumble down the hill and hit rocks and trees and brush on the way down, taking a violent beating. Graham comes to a stop when he hits a thin tree, back first. The tree has low branches, one of which impales him through his shoulder. He screams in pain.

Madison comes to a stop a moment later when she hits a large rock. Dazed and confused, she slowly gets up, moaning, coughing, and gently sobbing as she does so. She wipes the dirt and blood from her face and looks up. She sees Graham leaned up against the tree, screaming.

GRAHAM

MADISON! HELP!

She slowly gets to her feet, and hobbles her way down the hill and away from him.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Madison runs through the mountains at an awkward pace. She walks with a limp and her hand on her ribs. Parks stands a short distance in front of her.

PARKS

Mom...

Madison goes past her, ignoring her.

Parks reappears in front of her.

PARKS

Mom stop...

Madison ignores her again and Parks reappears again.

PARKS

You gotta stop!

Madison slows down to a walk and Parks walks alongside her

PARKS

Mom, you look like hell, you gotta stop.

MADISON

I'll be fine. I think I just broke some ribs.

PARKS

You're lucky if that's all you broke. You need to take a break.

MADISON

I can't. Graham could free himself any minute. Gotta *mmp* keep going.

Parks steps in front of her mom and stops her.

PARKS

No mom, you're lost, you're tired, you're hurt! You gotta stop NOW!

Madison looks around and finds a cluster of rocks a short way away.

MADISON

Ok... We can stop up there, at least give ourselves some cover.

EXT - MOUNTAIN HILLSIDE - DAY

Graham is struggling to free himself. He exerts all the energy he has and is able to extricate himself off the tree. He grimaces and screams as the branch is pulled from his shoulder. He falls and lays down on the ground, face up, out of breath.

GRAHAM

Haha... Screw you tree...

EXT - ROCK ARRANGEMENT - CAVITY - DAY

Madison and Parks work their way up to the arrangement of rocks and find a shallow cave to rest in. Madison nearly collapses from exhaustion. She sobs as she puts her head in her hands.

PARKS

Holy shit, I can't believe what just happened. (cont)

(cont) I mean, he was gonna straight up murder you. He was probably gonna rape you too. Probably in that order, who knows?

MADISON

Parks...

PARKS

What a freaking psycho! I knew I felt something off about him. There was something saying "Don't trust this guy". I tried to tell you. I tried to warn you.

MADISON

Seriously Parks...

PARKS

Seriously mom, if you would've just listened to me. But you had to go. You didn't want it to just be us anymore. You couldn't stand the thought of just the two of us at the ranch. You couldn't...

MADISON

PARKS, THAT'S ENOUGH!

Parks is taken aback. Madison stands up.

MADISON

Seriously Parks! Look, I don't know if you've noticed, but I've had a pretty shitty day so far.

EXT - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Heavy rain. Madison cries in her hands as sits on the side of the road, drenched. Her shirt and pants on the left side are torn and bloody. There is an overturned car in a field.

MADISON (VO)

You think that I don't want
to be back home with you? To
have everything back the way
it was? To have you alive!?
But you know what? You're
not. You're dead! (cont)

From behind Madison comes police and ambulance lights.
Madison is too shocked to move or respond.

INT. ROCK ARRANGEMENT - CAVITY - DAY

Madison stands and faces a sitting Parks.

MADISON

(cont)You're dead because of
me. Because I couldn't keep
my eyes open. Because I
couldn't protect my child,
the one damn thing that I was
supposed to do! (cont)

Madison wanders around the little cavity as she unloads on
Parks. Parks can't do anything but listen.

(cont)But now, you're here,
and I don't know if you're a
ghost, or if I'm just bat-
shit crazy.

PARKS

But mom, I...

MADISON

No Parks, I don't want to hear it! And as far as Graham goes, yes, you were right, I should've listened to you. But he... (cont)

Madison pauses to wipe away tears.

(cont)Graham was always really nice to me. I thought he might be the one to help me move on. So excuse me for being stupid enough to fall for his shit!

And now, I got a murderer after me, I'm lost and hungry, I'm hurt, and I'm really starting to doubt that I'll ever get to go home again. (cont)

She takes a step toward Parks.

(cont)So maybe, for ONCE, you could be just a little supportive and CUT ME SOME FUCKING SLACK!

Madison turns and sits down, her back to her daughter.

Exhausted and crying, she doesn't hear Parks, so she looks over her shoulder.

Parks is gone.

She turns back around, puts her head in her arms, and cries.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - EVENING

Graham is injured. He traverses the mountainside as he looks for Madison.

He notices an outcropping of rocks below him, so he makes his way down to it.

He walks to the edge and surveys the landscape.

INT. ROCK ARRANGEMENT - CAVITY - EVENING

Madison hears a noise. She sits as still as she can as she struggles to not make noise. Bits of gravel and dirt fall in front of the small cave entrance.

INTERCUT BETWEEN MADISON AND GRAHAM

Graham looks around the landscape for signs of Madison.

Madison attempts to scoot further back in the cavity, although her back is already up against the back wall.

Graham shimmies down the rocks

Madison puts her hand over her mouth to help her not make any noise. Tears roll down her face.

Graham gets to the base of the rocks

Madison sees Graham step in front of the cave entrance, his back to her.

Graham looks around for signs of Madison.

Madison slowly picks up a nearby rock that is about the size of a grapefruit. She makes a slight rustling sound.

Graham quickly turns around to be greeted by a rock to the face, which knocks him down.

Madison takes her opportunity and starts to run downhill away from him.

Graham, bloodied face and all, works to re-orientate himself. He gets on his feet, sees Madison in the distance, and gives chase. As he chases her, she drops below his line of sight.

Madison runs along rock tops, working her way down the mountain side. As she runs, she missteps over a narrow crevice and falls in.

The crevice is about ten feet deep and gets narrower as it gets deeper. On her way down, she dislocates her shoulder. As the crevice narrows, she is brought to a stop when one of her feet lodges and stops her descent.

Madison focuses all of her willpower to not scream in pain.

Graham still chases after her. He drops down to where he last saw her and can see no sign of her. He continues to run and leaps over the crevice that she is trapped in. He runs a bit further and stops.

GRAHAM

MADISON!

MADISON!

Madison stays quiet, paralyzed by fear.

Graham runs into the woods and continues to look for her

EXT. MOUNTAINS - CREVICE - EVENING

Madison struggles to dislodge her foot, but to no avail. She paws at the sides of the crevice with her one good arm in a panic in hopes of finding a lip that she can grab hold of, also to no avail.

Claustrophobic terror starts to set in as she flails her one good arm. Her teeth gnashed, she keeps her wits enough to keep from screaming as the sun starts to set

EXT. MOUNTAINS - CREVICE - MORNING

HIKER (VO)

Hey... HEY! Wake up!

Madison barely has enough energy to open her eyes. She looks up. A HIKER stands over the crevice, looking down.

HIKER

Hey, you ok down there? I got some rope, hold on.

The Hiker puts his backpack down, reaches into it, and grabs some rope.

HIKER

Ok, just grab this here rope and I'll help pull ya out.

He throws one end of the rope down to her. She grabs it with one hand. The Hiker struggles to pull, but he can't get her out.

MADISON

My foot's wedged in the crack down here.

Madison struggles to get her foot free. Suddenly, the tension on the rope tightens. There is more force pulling her up. As the rope pulls on her, she manages to pull her foot free of the crack and she is pulled to the top of the rock.

Madison stays on the ground, unable to move, her ankle swollen and bleeding. The Hiker kneels next to her.

HIKER

Are you ok lady? How'd you
get down there?

Madison struggles to speak. The Hiker points over his
shoulder.

HIKER

You were wedged in there
perty good, but luckily,
this feller came by and
helped me pull you out.

Madison looks up.

Graham is behind the Hiker.

Madison gets a terrified look on her face. She points at
Graham

MADISON

Look out!

The Hiker turns around to see Graham's foot kick him in the
face. The Hiker is knocked onto his back. Graham jumps on
top of him and delivers a savage beating. After several
vicious punches, Graham stands up and kicks him into the
crevice and the body of the Hiker tumbles in.

Madison can only watch in horror.

Graham squats down next to Madison

GRAHAM

So, how was your night?

Madison tries to crawl away. Graham reaches out and picks
her up. She tries to resist, but is too exhausted and in
too much pain. Graham carries her over to a nearby tree
and sits her up against it. He walks back to where he
killed the Hiker to get the rope.

Madison attempts to crawl away again, although just ends up collapsed on the ground.

Graham sees this and rushes back to her, rope in hand.

GRAHAM

Whoa, hey there, where do you think you're going?

He grabs her to prop her up again when he notices her shoulder.

GRAHAM

Ouch, geez, what happened to your shoulder.

He probes it as Madison squeals in pain.

GRAHAM

Oh yeah, definitely out of socket. We're gonna have to fix that.

Graham leaves her face down and sits on the ground next to her. He places one foot on her side, under her arm, and grabs her wrist with both hands.

GRAHAM

Ok, now, you won't feel a thing.. Probably..

In one quick move, he pulls her arm while pushing on her body with his foot. Madison howls out in distress.

GRAHAM

There, that wasn't so bad was it.

Graham grabs her under her arms and props her back up against the tree as she sobs uncontrollably. He grabs her arm and rotates the shoulder joint.

GRAHAM

There see, all better.

He takes the rope and ties her hands behind her back and around the tree.

Graham walks back over to where the Hiker was and grabs his backpack. He returns with a bottle of water. He squats next to her, opens the water bottle, and holds it up to her.

GRAHAM

Here, take a drink.

He tilts the bottle into her mouth and she takes a drink. He pulls it away from her and takes a few drinks himself.

MADISON

Why are you doing this to me?

GRAHAM

Me? You did this to yourself when you ran. I had zero intention of hurting you.

MADISON

You tackled me, you tied me up, so forgive me if I seem a bit skeptical.

GRAHAM

You were panicked, I had to calm you down. In hindsight, maybe I could've tried a different way, I don't know. Live and learn, right?

Graham stands up.

GRAHAM

Did I ever tell you how I met
Lorie? It was in college.
And she was going to kill me.

INT. - COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Professor Caddell paces back and forth as he lectures the class. His passion for the subject has caught the eye of a young student, LORIE. She is in her early 20's, beautiful, and has a smile that just exudes confidence.

GRAHAM (VO)

We were in philosophy class
together. I hated philosophy
and barely paid any
attention. But I loved that
class because I always sat
behind Lorie.

YOUNG GRAHAM is sitting behind Lorie. He looks at her with longing eyes.

EXT. UNIVERSITY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Young Graham is looking under the hood of his car, his hands in the engine.

GRAHAM (VO)

One night, my stupid car
broke down in the parking lot
again.

YOUNG GRAHAM

Stupid piece of shit.

Young Graham kicks his car, but hurts himself.

YOUNG GRAHAM

Owww!

Young Graham grabs his backpack and starts to walk.

He ducks into an alleyway.

EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Young Graham emerges from the alleyway into the abandoned parking lot. Just as he turns the corner, he sees Naked College Guy being stabbed to death just a few feet in front of him. The murderer looks up. It is Lorie, naked, covered in her victims blood. Although her face is spattered with blood, the intensity in her eyes can't be hidden. Crouched down and exposed, she couldn't care less who sees her tattooed body. An alternative beauty and a free spirited firebrand.

GRAHAM (VO)

She had lured this kid there on the promise of sex. She told me later she almost chickened out, but found her moxy last minute.

She sees Young Graham, jumps up, grabs him, throws him against the car, and raises her knife.

YOUNG GRAHAM

WAIT!

Lorie hesitates and looks at Young Graham

GRAHAM (VO)

I still, to this day, don't know why she hesitated. But seeing her there, covered head to toe in blood, she looked beautiful.

Lorie still has the knife above her head.

YOUNG GRAHAM

I... I... I can h-help you.

LORIE

What're you talking about?!

YOUNG GRAHAM

G-get rid of the b-b-body.
It'll g-go a lot faster with
two people.

Lorie lowers her knife and lets Young Graham go. He stares at her for a moment.

GRAHAM (VO)

And not beautiful in some
shallow, superficial way, but
really... Perfect... The spirit
of Ares in the form of
Aphrodite.

Lorie points the knife at Young Graham's face.

LORIE

Don't play me.

YOUNG GRAHAM

I would never.

INT. LORIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Young Graham and Lorie sit on the couch. Both are changed into comfortable clothing and their hair is wet.

GRAHAM (VO)

She took me back to her
apartment (cont)

Lorie uses wild hand gestures as she explains to Young Graham

(cont) She talked at length about Nietzsche, De Quincey, the futility of morality, and all the other stuff Professor Caddell talked about. (cont)

Graham can't help but gaze upon Lorie's face.

(cont) But it was the way she explained it. She spoke with such passion...

I just fell in love with her.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

A JOGGER is jogging along an isolated jogging trail. As he runs past some trees.

GRAHAM (VO)

After that, we were inseparable. We decided to do this thing together. We started with some jogger who was by himself.

Graham grabs him and throws him down as Lorie jumps on top of him and stabs him to death. She stands up, looks at Graham and they smile at each other.

Lorie, hand covered in blood, grabs and holds Graham's hand in the moonlight.

EXT. BACKROAD - NIGHT

A FARMER, 50's, stands up against his truck, hands in the air.

GRAHAM (VO)

Then a farmer whose truck had
broken down.

Lorie is standing in front of the Farmer, gun pointed at him. She shoots him several times as he falls to the ground.

She turns and hugs Graham as she jumps up and down with joy. She gives him a quick kiss and tightens her squeeze.

INT. WEALTHY MAN'S HOME - NIGHT

A WEALTHY MAN in a bathrobe has his hands tied behind his back. He kneels on the floor of his kitchen. Lorie and Graham stand in front of him. Lorie holds a very large, expensive looking vase.

GRAHAM (VO)

We had the occasional home
invasion.

Lorie raises the vase above her head and smashes it on the Wealthy Man's head, which knocks him down. She then takes a large shard of the broken vase and stabs him in the neck.

Lorie stands up, grabs Graham's face with her bloody hands, and makes out with him as they both smile.

GRAHAM (VO)

But what really got Lorie
going (cont)

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Lorie sits at the bar, dressed in a revealing, low cut, slim fitting dress.

GRAHAM (VO)

(cont) was when she got to
seduce them first.

A Businessman sits at the same bar. She looks at him and throws a seductive smile his direction.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Lorie stands over the bloody Businessman and puts the knife to his throat, and in one quick motion, slashes it, as she and Graham watch him bleed out. Lorie looks at Graham and gives him the come-hither look.

GRAHAM (VO)

I don't know what about
seducing them first put her
in the mood (cont)

Graham and Lorie are in the shower of the hotel room having passionate sex.

(cont) but she was always an
animal afterward.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Lorie is making out with a female BARFLY. The two stumble into the ladies room and into a stall. Once in the stall, she pulls out small rope from her pocket and strangles her.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

A car is rocking back and forth as Graham and Lorie have sex.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - AFTERNOON

Madison listens to Graham, disgusted.

MADISON

Ok, ok, I get it...

GRAHAM

Sorry... So anyway (cont)

EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Lorie is dressed in a tube top and short skirt, your classic sleeper leaper. She walks in between parked semi trucks.

GRAHAM (VO)

(cont) One night, about a year and a half ago, Lori was looking to seduce a trucker.
(cont)

A Trucker opens his door and Lorie gets in.

(cont) She was going to convince him to drive out somewhere before she killed him. (cont)

The Trucker keeps looking at Lorie's body as they drive down the road.

(cont) and I was gonna follow behind in my car.

INT. GRAHAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Graham watches the semi as he drives behind it, keeping his distance. The semi pulls over

INT. SEMI - NIGHT

The Trucker feels up Lorie as she straddles him. Lorie laughs and giggles as she reaches into her clutch and pulls out a knife and raises it above his head. The trucker, however, at the last second, sees this and grabs her arm before she is able to stab him. He manages to throw her against the other side of the cab.

GRAHAM (VO)

But we didn't count on him
having that gun.

The Trucker reaches into his door, pulls out a pistol, and points it at Lorie. Lorie's face goes pale.

INT. GRAHAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Graham slouches in the driver's seat as watches the semi. Simultaneously, he sees two flashes from the semi in the darkness and hears two gunshots. He sits up straight. His eyes get as big as dinner plates.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Graham gets out of his car and runs up to the semi.

He opens the driver's side door to see Lorie dead, shot twice in the chest, and the trucker holding a pistol. The Trucker turns around and points his pistol at Graham and pulls the trigger, but the gun jams. Enraged, Graham climbs into the cab and starts punching the trucker.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

Graham sits, tears roll down his cheek.

GRAHAM

She'd gotten kinda cocky.
She thought she could handle
anything or anyone. So she
let her guard down.

MADISON

Don't you see Graham, she
twisted your mind. Please,
let me help you. It's not too
late for you. She was
unhinged, dera...

GRAHAM
DON'T YOU TALK THAT WAY ABOUT
HER!

Madison is taken aback. Graham turns his back to her.

GRAHAM
Don't you see? She was
right. About everything.
Humanity, as it is, is
insignificant. Their morals,
their ethics, are just
crutches to carry them
further into their
meaningless existence.

MADISON
So that's what you use to
justify yourself? Sounds
like you're just trying to
rationalize your bloodlust.

GRAHAM
Look Mads, I know it's
confusing now, but soon,
it'll all make sense.

MADISON
What do you mean?

Graham turns to face her.

GRAHAM
Do you know why they call
this place Devil's
Playground? The place is
crawling with rattlesnakes.
There are years I come up
here and kill them by the
dozen.

Graham starts to wander, as he looks for something.

GRAHAM

Rattlesnake venom, you see, causes tissue necrosis and disrupts coagulation. Now most of the time, they won't attack people unless we bug them first.

MADISON

Why are you telling me this?

GRAHAM

Well, you see, I had a thought, that we could hang out here for a few days, while you "try to help me". We have enough supplies to last that long. Problem is, it's in the truck back at camp, and it's going to take a few hours for me to go down and grab that stuff.

Graham bends down and grabs a large bowling ball sized rock. Madison starts to get nervous.

MADISON

Graham...?

GRAHAM

And you've shown yourself to be pretty clever, I particularly liked the way you broke that zip tie, and so even though I got you tied up, I just don't trust you to not get away again.

MADISON

Graham, what are doing?

Graham kneels down next to Madison, looks her in the eye, and places his hand on her cheek.

GRAHAM

Just relax, you'll barely feel a thing... Probably...

MADISON

Graham? No! Please!

Graham lifts the rock above his head and smashes one of her legs, breaking her tibia. Madison can't scream loud enough.

GRAHAM

Shh, shh... It's ok, it's over now.

Graham stands up.

GRAHAM

Now hopefully, between that and the rattlers out there, you'll stay put.

Graham picks up the Hikers backpack, and takes off down the mountain.

Madison can't do anything, but cry.

EXT MOUNTAINS - EVENING

Madison sits up against the tree, still tied up. The tears that mixed with dirt have left streaks on her face. Having no more tears, she hangs her head in despair.

She notices movement out of the corner of her eye. She looks, and sees a rattlesnake as it slithers in her

direction. She gets a terrified look on her face and freezes. The snake continues toward her until it is right up next to her leg. Madison holds back all sound and movement as she trembles in terror.

The snake crawls up and onto her leg and slithers around. Madison continues to fight back the urge to kick it off.

The snake then crawls off her leg and slithers away.

Madison lets out some whimpers of relief as she hangs her head, despondent.

PARKS (OS)

Holy shit that was close.

Madison is startled. Parks has appeared in front of her, sitting cross-legged.

PARKS

I can't believe that slimy thing crawled on you.

MADISON

Snakes aren't slimy Parks.

Parks stands up and walks toward her.

PARKS

Yeah, I know...

She sits down next to her mom.

PARKS

So, how's it going?

MADISON

Oh, you know, living the dream.

Parks has a hard time facing her mother.

PARKS

I'm sorry I took off like that.

MADISON

Forget about it. It's ok. I'm just glad you're back. I could really use a friend. Real or not. It doesn't really matter right now.

PARKS

I... I never knew that you fell asleep when we got in that wreck. You've never talked about it before...

MADISON

I'm sorry... I... I didn't want to tell you because I thought you'd leave, or disappear, or something, I don't know.

PARKS

As long as you need me, I'll be here.

MADISON

Thanks kiddo, that means a lot.

PARKS

So what do we got going on here anyway? Why are you just hanging out by this tree?

MADISON

Are you kidding me? I'm tied up, my leg's broke.

PARKS

Seriously? Are you even my mom, because my mom would never think about giving up at a time like this.

MADISON

Well, what would you have me do?

PARKS

If I were tied up here, what would you tell me?

Madison picks her head and gets a slight, newfound look of resolve.

MADISON

Find something sharp to cut the rope with.

Unable to see her hands, Madison starts to feel around to see what is available. She feels out a rock with a jagged edge. She scoots herself around the tree, closer to the rock, as she grimaces in pain.

PARKS

You got it mom.

Madison gets to work to shear the rope. After a few minutes, she is able to get through the rope and get her hands free.

PARKS

Alright mom!

As she rubs her wrists, Madison starts to look around, getting more charged by the second.

PARKS

Ok, what do you need to do next?

MADISON

Splint my leg.

PARKS

But what do you need first?

MADISON

Some sort of tool.

Madison looks around for inspiration. She sees the crevice.

She gets down on her elbows and starts to army crawl. She clenches her teeth in pain, but continues.

She makes her way to the crevice. She leans over and looks down. The Hiker has a knife on his belt. Madison takes her rope and fashions a loop on one end. She lowers it down but does not have success getting the knife.

PARKS

C'mon mom, you can do this.

She keeps trying and eventually, she manages to grab the handle of the knife

PARKS

Yes!

Madison pulls up the knife and sticks it in her belt.

She then works her way over to some branches lying on the ground. She goes through them and finds the ones that she needs.

She uses the knife and cuts the leg off of her jeans, exposing her broken leg. Parks is appalled.

PARKS

Geez, what did he do to you.

Madison's leg is crooked, swollen, and every shade of blue and purple. There is also a fair amount of fresh and dried blood.

PARKS

You're gonna have to set it.

MADISON

I know.

Madison works her way back to the tree. She ties the foot of her broken leg to the base of the tree. She scoots herself backward so that the rope is taut.

She takes off her belt and puts it in her mouth. A few deep breaths and she braces herself. She pulls traction on her leg in a jerking motion. She doubles over in pain as she screams. It didn't work.

PARKS

You're gonna have to do it again.

MADISON

I know

She sets herself again, grabs nearby tree, and she pulls traction again, through gritted teeth. This time, instead of a jerk, she pulls until the bone is reset.

She lets go of the tree and just lies on her back, staring up at the sky as she pants.

PARKS

You are officially Carol
Danvers.

Madison just gives Parks a confused look.

PARKS

Alter ego of Captain Marvel?
The toughest chick in Marvel
comics?

MADISON

Oh, right...

She pulls herself together.

Using the branches, rope, and jean fabric, she constructs
herself a field splint.

She grabs another thick stick to use for a crutch.

PARKS

Ok mom, let's see what you
got.

Madison starts to pull herself up to her feet, all while in
severe pain.

PARKS

C'mon, c'mon, c'mon, almost
there.

Madison works until she stands upright and defiant. Parks
cheers.

PARKS

Yes! Woohoo!

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DUSK

Madison and Parks hike their way down the mountain.

PARKS

So what's the plan mom?

MADISON

Find a way outta here, get
some help.

PARKS

That's not much of a plan.

MADISON

Well, it's all I got right
now.

Madison and Parks continue to walk

Parks hears a noise in the trees. She looks up and sees
something moving around

PARKS

Mom, I think something's
following us.

MADISON

It's a mountain lion. It's
been following us a while.

PARKS

Well, um, aren't you worried?

MADISON

It hasn't attacked us yet.

PARKS

That doesn't sound as
reassuring as you think it
does.

Madison and Parks continue to walk. It is almost dark.
Parks looks at her mom, concerned.

PARKS

Mom, we should stop for the night. We still have no idea where we are, or even if we're going the right direction.

MADISON

Graham went this way, that's the way we're going.

PARKS

And what if he's on his way back? You don't have the energy to fight him off. You haven't had anything to eat or drink for two whole days. You've barely slept. We can at least fix one of those problems.

They stop.

MADISON

You're right. Let's see what we can find.

They walk a bit further and find a small cave. There is some old garbage inside a fire pit, as if someone had been there within the last few weeks. In the garbage is a plastic water bottle with a few sips of water left inside. Madison gets all she can out of it.

Madison then digs into the fire pit. Under the ash, she unearths something small wrapped in tin foil. She opens it up.

It is a potato, although old and dried up.

PARKS

How'd you know that was
buried there?

MADISON

I didn't. I was just hoping.
Sometimes, when people camp,
they forget how many potatoes
they buried under the coals,
or just get full, and leave
them there.

Madison can't eat her prize fast enough.

PARKS

How do you know all this
stuff?

MADISON

Grandpa. He used to tell me
all the time, that when you
live in Idaho, it's important
to know this kind of stuff.

PARKS

He sounds cool.

MADISON

Yeah, he really was.

LATER

Madison settles into the cave, closes her eyes, and goes to
sleep. Parks sits by her side.

PARKS

Goodnight mom.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

PARKS (OS)

Mom, mom wake up!

Madison is startled awake. Parks is pointing.

PARKS

Um, we have a problem.

A MOUNTAIN LION stands at the entrance of the cave.

PARKS

Ok mom, no sudden movements.

Madison takes her time and sits up. She reaches over and grabs her crutch in one hand and her knife in the other. She raises them both above her head.

MADISON

GO ON, GET OUTTA HERE!

The mountain lion starts to move in, growling.

MADISON

Shit...

It leaps toward Madison. She swings her crutch, knocking it off its path. It lands right next to her and takes a swipe, which leaves large lacerations on her arm and side. She drops the knife. Parks can only watch, mortified.

The mountain lion steps back and leaps again. It lands on Madison and knocks her onto her back. The lion tries to swipe at her, but she is able to grab both of its paws. However, the mountain lion is able to sink her teeth into Madison's shoulder. She screams out.

Using what strength she has left, she throws it from on top of her.

Madison scrambles for her knife as the lion moves in a third time. She uses her crutch to keep the animal away as she swings her knife and lands a piercing cut, although not fatal. The mountain lion steps back and stares her down. Madison stares right back, puts her hands up above her head again, and waves them wildly.

MADISON

RAWWRR! GET OUTTA HERE!

The mountain lion steps backwards until it disappears into the darkness.

Madison pants, a look of fury in her eyes.

INT. CAVE - MORNING

Madison is asleep, still sitting up. As the sun hits her face, she opens her eyes.

EXT - MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Madison and Parks trudge along through the forest.

EXT - MOUNTAINS - CREVICE - DAY

Graham walks to where he tied up Madison. He has a full backpack.

GRAHAM

How was your night? Sorry I didn't make it back last night. But it was dark and there are mountain lions out here. Fun fact, mountain lions...

Graham walks up to the tree where she was tied up and notices she's not there.

He drops the backpack.

GRAHAM

Shit!

Graham takes off into the woods

GRAHAM

Madison!

EXT - MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

Madison and Parks continue to wander the woods.

Parks stops and looks behind her.

PARKS

Did you hear that?

Madison stops and looks around, not making any noise.

MADISON

I don't hear anything.

They both take a few steps.

GRAHAM (OS, DISTANT)

Madison!

They both stop. Madison has a terrified look in her eyes.

PARKS

Shit, we gotta go!

Madison and Parks both start to scamper downhill as fast as they can, although in Madison's current state, that's not very fast.

GRAHAM (OS, LESS DISTANT)

Madison!

PARKS

Shit mom, he's getting closer!

Madison looks up behind her. She catches a glimpse of Graham, although he doesn't see her.

In desperation, Madison starts look around. She notices a large tree and darts behind it. Parks is in front of her.

PARKS

What're you doing!?

MADISON

I can't outrun him and he's headed right for us. I'm just hoping that he'll run past.

Madison situates herself against the tree, careful to make sure she is not exposed in any way.

She can hear Graham's rushed footsteps get closer.

She pulls the knife out of her belt. Her knuckles whiten as she holds the handle of the blade.

Graham runs up to the tree she is behind and stops.

He looks around.

PARKS

Mom, don't move.

Madison is just out of his sight. She holds her breath. Fear overtakes her as she struggles to not make a sound.

Graham surveys the forest. Frustrated, he runs his hands through his hair, pursing his lips

Suddenly, Graham hears a noise in the distance and runs off in a different direction.

Madison waits for a few moments to make sure he's gone.

PARKS

Ok mom, I think he's gone.

Madison starts to move from behind the tree. With her knife still in hand, she makes it a few yards when

Suddenly

Graham shows up in front of her.

Both Madison and Parks shriek in terror.

GRAHAM

Oh thank God, there you are.
You know how dangerous it is
out here? Something could've...

Madison takes a swing with her knife. Graham is caught off guard, but manages to grab her hand. He looks into her eyes and can see the hatred.

GRAHAM

What the hell was that? Are
you kidding right now? Are
you trying to kill me? After
everything I've done for you!?

He pulls the knife out of her hand viciously throws her down, which causes her to tumble down the slope of the mountain.

He watches her, then tosses the knife down the mountain.

As Madison rolls down, her broken leg hits a rock sticking out of the ground

Her fall is stopped when her body hits a tree.

Madison can barely push herself up. She is in an extreme amount of pain. The gash above on her forehead drips blood into her eyes. She whimpers as the struggle to endure wears thin. Parks cries as she watches.

PARKS

You gotta get up mom. C'mon,
you can still get away.

Graham hops his way down to her.

He stands her up and slams her against a large boulder. He has one hand over her mouth. Madison is panicked as she tries to escape.

GRAHAM

Shhhh... Shhh... Quiet Mads... It's
ok, It's ok... I'm not gonna
hurt you. Calm down.

Madison manages to bite Graham's hand really hard. Graham screams in pain, but doesn't let go. In anger, he slams the back of her head against the rock wall.

GRAHAM

Madison! You gotta stop! I'm
trying to explain myself to
you! I'm not the bad guy
here! You gotta listen to me!
You gotta...

Madison manages to knee him in the crotch, and he releases her. He doubles over as they both fall down.

She tries to crawl away but Graham reaches out and grabs her foot. She rolls over onto her back and Graham tries to crawl up her body. But Madison is able to kick him in the face with her good leg, which knocks him back.

She rolls back onto her stomach and starts to crawl away. Graham gets back to her and punches her broken leg. Madison screams in pain.

She grabs a bat sized stick, rolls over, and lands a blow across his head. Graham is stunned and falls back.

Madison takes the opportunity and manages to get to one leg, as she tries hopping down the mountain.

Disoriented, Graham tries to stand up. He sees Madison making her way down the mountain. He runs downhill after her and tackles her, which throws both of them down the mountain.

PARKS

MOM!

They come to a stop after a short distance. Both of them writhe in pain on the ground. Graham gets up and crawls over to Madison, who coughs and squirms.

He gets on top, straddles her, and puts his hands on her throat. His grip tightens.

Her eyes bulge.

Her face turns blue.

She grabs his wrists to try to pry them off of her. She kicks her legs in agony

GRAHAM

Seriously Madison, if you would just listen to me! We can do this together! We can finish what Lorie started! You and me Madison.

(fade)

We're better than all of them!
We treat them no different
than they treat their animals!
But you have to stop fighting
me! You have to learn how we
do things!

At the (*fade*): Madison is desperate. She flails her arms as she swings at what can to try and escape. Parks kneels next to her mom, crying and scared. She gets down on all fours and gets right in her face.

PARKS

(during the "*fade*", talking
over Graham)

Mom, you gotta fight back! You
can't get away from him! You
can't keep running! Fight back
or you're gonna die!

Mom!

Mom, fight back, please!

Madison sees the knife that Graham threw earlier. She reaches for it with one hand. The knife is at the edge of her fingertips.

As she is about to lose consciousness, she makes one final push to grab the knife.

She stretches as far as she can. Using her fingertips, she is able to bring the knife just close enough to grab it.

GRAHAM

You're so damn frus...!

Graham stops mid-sentence. His eyes get wide. Madison has stuck the knife into his side. Her fist still on wrapped around the handle. His grip loosens and Madison lets go of the knife as she coughs and starts breathing again.

Graham fumbles backwards off of Madison. Madison props herself up as she catches her breath. He grimaces as he pulls the knife out. He hemorrhages blood. He looks down at the wound.

GRAHAM

Shit...

He turns and looks at Madison.

Madison pants, a look of fury in her eyes.

He lunges at Madison with the knife.

Madison gets out of the way, but he is able to grab her as they roll on the ground.

She ends up on top of him. Graham points the knife at Madison as he tries to stab her but Madison, her hands on his wrists, is able to push his arm back.

Locked in a struggle, Madison leans forward and bites his wrist. He growls in pain and drops the knife.

Madison seizes her opportunity.

She grabs the knife.

She raises it above her head.

Teeth grit

Eyebrows furrowed

She stabs Graham in the chest again, and again, and again.

Tears flood from her squinted eyes and stream down her bloody and dirty face.

She stops.

Graham is dead.

She is silent for a moment.

Madison unleashes a primal scream.

Exhausted and covered in blood, she slumps off the dead body. As she attempts to catch her breath, Parks takes a seat next to her on the ground.

PARKS

Holy shit mom, remind to never
get on your bad side.

Madison gives a half-hearted laugh.

MADISON

I think I've got another one
in me if you don't watch your
language.

PARKS

Sorry mom..

I don't care what Aristotle
says, that looked cathartic to
me.

EXT MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY - LATER

Madison and Parks wander around the mountainside. Madison struggles to walk with her injuries.

Madison stops. Parks turns around. Madison spots a nearby tree, walks over, and sits down underneath it.

PARKS

Mom?

MADISON

I just need to take a break.

Parks rushes over to her mom and kneels down next to her. Madison's eyes start to close.

PARKS

No, no, no, no... Mom, you gotta keep your eyes open. We're almost there. You're gonna make it.

Madison is barely staying coherent.

MADISON

It's... It's ok sweetie. I love you so much. And after everything we've been through together, I'm just glad you're here with me, right now, in this moment.

PARKS

No mom, please don't talk like that. Everything's gonna be fine, just like you always used to tell me.

MADISON

Parks... Everything IS fine.

Madison closes her eyes and her body goes limp.

PARKS

Mom, no! Please mom wake up!
Please! Mom! Please!

Parks drapes her arms over her mother, buries her head, and quietly sobs.

PARKS

Please mom... I love you...

Suddenly, a noise. Parks looks up. It is Ve and some FOREST RANGERS!

Parks quickly gets to her feet. She jumps up and down.

PARKS

HEY! UP HERE! HELP! PLEASE!

Parks see Ve and the Rangers continue on. They are about to leave.

PARKS

Shit...

Ve and the Rangers look for Graham and Madison

VE

Graham! Madison!

Parks walks backward in front of Ve.

PARKS

C'mon Ve! Please look up!

They continue to walk. Parks stops as Ve goes past. Parks looks forlorn and is about to give up. But not without one final try.

PARKS

STOOOOOOP!!!

Ve stops. The Rangers stop and look at Ve.

PARK RANGER 1

What is it?

Ve looks around, but sees nothing.

VE

I've, um... I don't know. I
just got a feeling we should
look up there.

Ve points up the mountainside.

They go up the mountainside. Ve sees Madison and rushes
over to her. The Rangers follow her. Ranger 2 checks
Madison's vitals.

RANGER 2

She's got a pulse!

Ranger one speaks into his radio.

RANGER 1

We're gonna need air medics...

Ve has her hands on her mouth as she cries.

VE

What the hell happened to you
Madison?

A helicopter lands nearby. Two PARAMEDICS rush up the
mountain with a backboard. Madison is boarded with a C-
collar. IV's are started. Her eyes open. She looks up and
can see the Paramedics and a distressed Ve.

She can also see Parks. Parks smiles and waves with tears
on her cheek as they carry her mother to the helicopter.
Madison manages a modest smile.

MADISON (VO)

You see, what those storm
survivors are afraid of is
that there's gonna be another
storm. But there's always
gonna be another storm.

INT. DINER - DAY

Madison drinks coffee.

MADISON

But what they don't want to
comprehend, is that in between
those storms, there's
sunshine. You need to get out
there and feel the sun on your
face, the breeze in your hair..

Madison looks at the person sitting next to her and notices
he's bald. She chuckles.

MADISON

Well, my hair anyway.

Madison puts her coffee down and looks at the barstool next
to her. It's empty. She stares at it for a moment,
crestfallen but contented, and with a slight upturn of the
corners of her lips. She looks back up.

MADISON

Even if what you love is gone,
find the strength you need to
pull up your sails, because
the good that happens between
the storms, far outweigh the
storms themselves.

EXT. CAFÉ - DAY

Madison walks toward her car. The passenger seat is empty.

She gets in and closes her door.

PARKS (OS)

What took you so long?

Parks is now in the passenger seat

MADISON

I told you you could come in.

PARKS

I didn't want to go in. Those
old guys are gross.

MADISON

Well then, quit your
complaining.

And just enjoy life.

Madison smiles as she drives away.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END