

The A.T.

by  
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Inspired by True Events

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EXT. FOREST - DAY

The forest is green and still. Morning birds chirp to the new day, and sunlight squeezes through the cracks of the leaves.

SHANNON BROOKE (33), tall and skinny, jogs down a trail. Her hair, tied back, tosses itself side to side, and she mouths to the music she listens to.

She jogs downhill towards a stream and watches the water run downstream as she jogs by.

Shannon stops at a tree and rests. She pops open her water bottle and squirts some in her mouth. Her cell phone rings.

SHANNON  
(Into phone)  
Hello?

TERRI (V.O.)  
Hey! You're awake.

Shannon begins to walk on the trail.

SHANNON  
I'm jogging.

TERRI (V.O.)  
When did you start?

SHANNON  
Just last weekend.

TERRI (V.O.)  
Cool, maybe I can start joining you when I'm able to get off my ass.

SHANNON  
Yeah! That'll be great. I found this perfect trail and the view is amazing.

TERRI (V.O.)  
Well I want to see this so you're going to have to help me get up early. Any way, I tried calling the house phone but nobody answered so that's why I'm calling your cell.

SHANNON  
Tom is probably still asleep and Ashley is starting to sleep in later.

(MORE)

SHANNON (CONT'D)

She's only seven and is already starting to act like a teenager. What's up?

Shannon walks out of the forest and to her car.

TERRI (V.O.)

I was just calling to see if you wanted to hang out later today. Maybe go to that Fastball concert tonight?

SHANNON

Oh yeah, that sounds like fun!

TERRI (V.O.)

And we can get a few drinks afterwards.

SHANNON

Sounds like a plan.

TERRI (V.O.)

Awesome! Just give me a call whenever you're ready and I can come pick you up. I'm bringing Erica along if that's alright.

SHANNON

Yeah, sure. Girl's night.

Shannon steps inside her car.

TERRI (V.O.)

Great. I'll see you later. Bye.

SHANNON

Bye.

Shannon hangs up and starts up her car. The car pulls out onto the road.

INT. CAR - DAY

Shannon turns on the radio. Nothing but commercials and morning talk shows emit from the radio. She puts on a CD and country folk music emits from the speakers.

EXT. CAR - DAY

The music continues.

The car continues traveling through the country. Pine trees tower overhead.

The car passes by a vast lake. Ducks fly over the surface of the water.

Deer slowly walk to the edge of the lake and begin to drink from it.

Reflections of pine trees and mountain glide over the windshield of Shannon's car, and disappear as she pulls out onto the highway.

The car travels towards a large neighborhood.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The car heads for a house. Two police cars and an ambulance sit in front of it; the siren lights flash off the front of the house.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Shannon pulls her car into the driveway and quickly gets out. A POLICE OFFICER stops her.

POLICE OFFICER  
I'm sorry, you can't come through here—

SHANNON  
No, I live here! Ashley!

ASHLEY (O.S.)  
Mom!

ASHLEY BROOKE (7), small and thin, still in her pajamas, runs over to Shannon. She squeezes tightly to her mom.

SHANNON  
Are you okay? What happened?

Shannon picks up Ashley and holds her.

ASHLEY  
Dad wouldn't wake up.

The police officer walks up to Shannon. He rubs his eyes.

POLICE OFFICER  
Mrs. Brooke...It's your husband...

Shannon tries to speak, but barely anything comes out. She turns away from the officer and begins to cry.

Shannon falls to her knees and squeezes Ashley tightly, who begins to cry, also.

Behind them, paramedics push a stretcher out of the front door with a body beneath a white sheet.

The police cars begin to disappear. The ambulance dissolves into nothing, and the police officers, paramedics, and neighbors disappear with the vehicles.

Shannon remains on her knees, but instead of crying, she hugs Ashley.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: Five Months Later

A backpack sits on Ashley's back. A school bus pulls up in front of the house.

SHANNON

I love you.

ASHLEY

I love you, too.

SHANNON

Have fun at your last day of school.

ASHLEY

Okay.

Ashley pulls away from Shannon's hug and waves to her as she runs to the bus.

Shannon stands up and watches Ashley get on the bus. She waves as the bus leaves.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

It's a small corner coffee shop. A few empty tables sit outside.

Shannon and TERRI COHEN (30), with an athletically built body and short hair that reaches halfway past her neck, walk over to a table and sit.

TERRI

...And the bastard sat next to me  
with two drinks in his hands and  
was like,

(Deep man voice)

"Hey, how you doin'?"

(Normal voice)

And I just stared at him.

SHANNON

You stared at him?

TERRI

Didn't say a word.

SHANNON

Then what did you do?

TERRI

I told the bartender to cancel my  
order, took both the drinks from  
his hands, and went and sat back  
down with Erica.

Shannon laughs.

SHANNON

No way!

TERRI

Seriously, men are so...

Shannon's laugh fades away. Terri trails off and takes a sip  
from her coffee.

TERRI

Except for Tom. He was a great guy.  
You were lucky.

SHANNON

Yeah...He was...

TERRI

Once again, Shannon, I am so sorry  
I didn't call much after what  
happened. I'm just not well with  
dealing with stuff like that.

SHANNON

It's fine, I completely understand.

TERRI

I kept on staring at the phone every day and I just really wanted to call, but I never knew what to say and I just end up making things awkward any way.

SHANNON

Terri, it's fine. Everything is okay. I mean, I still have cards from people that I haven't read yet.

TERRI

How's Ashley doing?

SHANNON

She's doing fine. She doesn't seem to be as bothered about it now. I'm a bit worried that she doesn't seem phased by it that much anymore.

TERRI

You don't need to worry. She's a great girl, you know that?

SHANNON

Of course I do, she's my daughter.

They chuckle.

TERRI

He was so young, though. It's hard to think that stuff like that happens in your thirties.

SHANNON

His family has had a line of heart attacks. He's had two before in less than two years, I guess it's reasonable that there could have been worse ones to follow.

TERRI

That's still unbelievable.

SHANNON

It kinds of makes you wonder how precious life is, huh?

TERRI

You got that fucking right.

She holds up her coffee cup.

TERRI

To life.

Shannon can't help but smile. She lifts up her cup.

SHANNON

(Unenthusiastically)

To life.

They cling coffee cups and take a drink.

TERRI

Oh, hey, okay so the reason I wanted to hang out today was, well to spend time with you and all, but also...

She pulls out a pamphlet from her bag and slides it across the table.

TERRI

...This.

Shannon picks it up.

SHANNON

What is it?

TERRI

It's a brochure about hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Shannon is dumbfounded.

SHANNON

You're serious?

Terri nods excitedly.

SHANNON

You want to hike on the Appalachian Trail?

TERRI

And I want you to come with me.

SHANNON

All of it?

TERRI

As much as our hearts desire.

SHANNON

I don't know what to say...

TERRI

Come on, it'll be fun! We both love the outdoors and the wilderness. You always strive to find the best views, you're not afraid of heights or travelling on dangerous grounds, it'll be awesome.

Shannon looks through the pamphlet.

TERRI

The stuff in there is nothing like what you'll see if you actually went there. Tens of thousands of people walk it every season, so it must be good.

SHANNON

And risk our lives by facing dehydration, freezing nights, possible bear attacks, poisonous snakes, poison ivy, breaking a bone, falling from cliffs, catching diseases, and possibly getting lost, not to mention over a hundred other hazards?

TERRI

Well sure!

Shannon sets the pamphlet down and thinks for a moment.

SHANNON

Have you walked it?

TERRI

No, which will make it even more adventurous for the both of us! Come on! It'll be so much fun.

Shannon looks down at the pamphlet.

SHANNON

What about Ashley?

TERRI

Send her to your mom's place! Just think about it...Leave all your problems behind for a while and come hike on this trail with me.

SHANNON

I don't know. It's kind of early after what happened.

TERRI

It's early, but I want you to keep away from the fact that he's gone. This will help. Think of it as therapy.

SHANNON

I guess...But still...

TERRI

I've been planning it for a few months now. I have lists and everything we need. It'll be fun. You and me, in the wilderness. Ashley will be with your mom, you can take off work—I'm sure they'll understand if you say you need a vacation because of what happened...

Shannon bites her lower lip.

SHANNON

When do you plan on leaving?

TERRI

You're coming?! Oh my God, awesome! I swear you won't regret it. I've already researched as much as possible and I'll print out stuff for you to look over.

SHANNON

That sounds great, but when do we leave?

TERRI

We'll go shopping this weekend for everything we need and I was planning on leaving in about a month or so.

Shannon nods. She smiles and holds up her coffee cup.

SHANNON

To the A.T.

Terri holds her cup up.

TERRI

Now that's the spirit. To the A.T.

They cling coffee cups.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Terri and Shannon stand in front of security check. Shannon kneels down next to Ashley.

Behind Ashley is Shannon's mother, DIANE (60), white hair, aged a lot, short.

SHANNON

I'm going to be gone for just a few weeks, so I want you to be real good for Grandma, okay?

ASHLEY

Okay.

SHANNON

Maybe when I get back, we can take our own trip to wherever you want to go, alright?

ASHLEY

Disney World!

SHANNON

Disney World? Don't you think you're a little old for that?

ASHLEY

Mom!

Shannon smiles and pinches Ashley's cheek.

SHANNON

Come here.

Shannon pulls Ashley in for a hug. She squeezes tightly and kisses Ashley's cheek.

SHANNON

I love you.

ASHLEY

I love you, too.

Shannon stands up and faces Diane.

DIANE

Be careful, now.

SHANNON

I will. Make sure Ashley's good, okay?

DIANE

Okay. And Shannon, don't worry about any bills or finances okay? I'll take care of that.

SHANNON

No, Mom! I told you, you don't need to do that!

DIANE

Nonsense, honey, I'm going to because I am your mother and I need to take care of you whenever you're in times of trouble with anything.

SHANNON

Mom...

DIANE

Tom is gone. What are you going to do?

Shannon frowns. She looks at her feet, then back at Diane.

SHANNON

(Sighs)

Fine. Thanks.

DIANE

Don't worry about a thing.

They hug.

SHANNON

I'll call you when we get to Georgia.

TERRI

Oh, no you won't. No cell phones.

SHANNON

What?

Terri searches for Shannon's cell phone in her carry-on bag.

TERRI

Sorry Diane, but this is supposed to be a *relaxing* trip, and we need to leave our problems behind.

SHANNON

Are you calling my mom and daughter a problem?

TERRI

They might as well be.

Terri pulls out Shannon's cell phone and hands it to Diane.

DIANE

You can call me when you get to the hotel, then.

SHANNON

I guess I have no choice.

TERRI

Come on, let's go.

SHANNON

Bye, Ashley! Bye, Mom! I'll call you as much as possible, whenever I have a chance!

Ashley and Diane say good-bye as they watch the two get in line for security check.

EXT. TAXI - DAY

A plane flies over head towards the airport, the engines scream.

A taxi drives away from the airport.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Terri and Shannon sit in the back. Shannon flips through dozens of papers printed off the Internet.

TERRI

This is going to be a real blast. We arrive in Springer Mountain, spend the night in a hotel, and wake up early and begin our trip along the Appalachian Trail.

The TAXI DRIVER looks in the rearview mirror.

TAXI DRIVER

You're hiking the trail?

TERRI

Yeah. Have you been on it?

TAXI DRIVER

Nah, but I've driven a lot of people to Springer Mountain so they could hike it. Are you going to do the whole thing?

TERRI

As much as we want.

TAXI DRIVER

Earl Shaffer. He was the first person to hike the entire trail in one trip. I've known many people who try also, but they end up dropping out. I drove this one guy there, he lasted about a week. His wife was so angry because he spent all that money on equipment, so she forced him to go on it again and I was his driver again.

Shannon looks at one of the pages she's holding.

SHANNON

(From the paper)

What are we going to do about our bags and stuff? Like, our food?

TERRI

What about it?

SHANNON

Bears. It says that bears usually sniff around at night and it's one of the causes for bear attacks.

TERRI

We tie our food back to a rope, and swing it over a branch high up in the trees.

SHANNON

(Reading)

Apparently, American Black Bears are able to climb up trees and get to food tied in trees.

TERRI

So, we'll tie it to the end of the branch. A small branch. Their weight will probably cause it to break and it'll run off scared.

SHANNON

Yeah, and we'll have to clean up the mess.

TERRI

Just don't worry about a thing. I've researched everything we needed to know—

SHANNON

(Questionable)  
Everything?

TERRI

Trust me. I've hiked before in other places, it won't be much different here.

Shannon smiles and looks out the window at the open country.

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - DAY

The door opens and Terri and Shannon struggle to walk in with their large hiking bags on their back.

Terri faces away from one of the beds and falls backwards onto the bed and lays on her bags.

TERRI

Oh yeah, that's much better.

Shannon does the same.

SHANNON

Oh my God, you're right.

Both of them are out of breath. Shannon struggles to sit up. She moves herself across the bed towards the phone on the desk.

TERRI

How about we hit the bar before tomorrow? One last drink.

SHANNON

Let me call my mom first.

She types in a number as Terri stands up and walks into the bathroom with a change of clothes.

SHANNON

(Into phone)  
Hey Mom, we're here.

DIANE (V.O.)  
Oh great! Glad you got there  
safely.

SHANNON  
What did you two do today?

DIANE (V.O.)  
We went and saw a movie and then  
got ice cream afterwards.

SHANNON  
Well don't let her have all the  
choices. I don't want her to wear  
you out.

DIANE (V.O.)  
Oh please, this girl is giving me  
more of a workout than that  
treadmill you guys gave Paul and  
me.

SHANNON  
Yeah, if you ever used it. Can I  
talk to Ashley?

DIANE (V.O.)  
Yeah, one second.  
(Away from phone)  
Ashley! It's your mom!

A brief moment of silence through the phone, then Ashley  
crackles through.

ASHLEY (V.O.)  
Hey, Mom.

SHANNON  
Hey honey, are you enjoying your  
stay at Grandma's so far?

ASHLEY (V.O.)  
Yeah, she's really fun.

SHANNON  
Do you miss me already?

ASHLEY (V.O.)  
Mom, you haven't even been gone for  
a day yet!

SHANNON

I know, I'm just playing with you.  
Don't have too much fun without me,  
okay?

ASHLEY (V.O.)

Alright. Here's Grandma.

Diane crackles in.

DIANE (V.O.)

So do you leave for the hike  
tomorrow?

SHANNON

Yeah.

DIANE (V.O.)

We'll have fun and don't let  
anything bother you alright? Ashley  
will be fine here.

SHANNON

I know. Thanks for taking care of  
her. I'll talk to you soon.

DIANE (V.O.)

Alright. Bye-bye.

Shannon hangs up. Terri walks out of the bathroom in a  
different outfit.

TERRI

Alright, let's head out.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Background rock music, the sound of a pool stick hitting a  
pool ball, people walk around with beers in their hands.

Terri and Shannon sit at a two-person table, each with a beer  
in front of them.

SHANNON

So why didn't Erica come on this  
trip too? Doesn't she like this  
kind of stuff also?

TERRI

She does, but nothing was happening  
between us. I mean, there was a  
moment here and there, but things  
just faded away.

SHANNON

You two finally broke up.

TERRI

Yeah, we both figured out that nothing was happening so we decided to move on.

SHANNON

That sucks. I'm sorry.

TERRI

Oh it's fine. Just another reason why I'm taking this hike. To take some weight off my shoulders.

SHANNON

Except that's not possible with those thousand-pound backpacks on our shoulders.

TERRI

Oh Jesus, those are going to be a pain in the ass.

SHANNON

And you know what else is?

TERRI

What?

SHANNON

The fact that I think those two guys over there might be checking us out.

Terri looks over and sees two men staring at them. She looks back at Shannon, tries to hold in her laughing, but she can't help it.

She bursts out laughing and Shannon snorts over her laugh.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

The sound of a heart monitor beeping echoes through the silent room.

Shannon sleeps in a chair next to a hospital bed, her head resting on the bed. In the bed is TOM BROOKE (35), buzzed head, beard, his face already beginning to wrinkle.

Tom's eyes slowly open. He looks around the room and grasps his surroundings. Tom takes in a deep breath and looks at Shannon.

He lifts his hand up and softly caresses her hair. She slowly wakes up and sees Tom awake. She smiles.

Tom smiles back. For a moment, they stare at each other, with the heart monitor beeping in the background.

TOM  
Where's Ashley?

SHANNON  
She's at my sister's house.

TOM  
Helen?

SHANNON  
No, Rachel. Helen moved, remember?

TOM  
Oh right...I guess I forgot because  
of...  
(He checks himself)  
...whatever happened to me.

SHANNON  
You had a heart attack.

Tom looks at her for a second, and then sighs and rests his head on his pillow. Shannon sits up.

SHANNON  
Tom, this is your second one in two  
years—

TOM  
One and a half.

SHANNON  
Yeah and I'm getting really  
worried.

Tom holds Shannon's hand.

TOM  
There's nothing to be afraid of  
Shannon.

SHANNON  
I don't know what to do.

TOM

Hey, if it's my time to go, then  
let it be, but I'm still here,  
okay?

SHANNON

But what's going to happen if the  
next one is worse?

TOM

Like I said: let it be. These  
things happen, and for my case,  
it's going to happen a lot. It runs  
in my family.

SHANNON

I know, but—

TOM

You don't know when they're going  
to happen. No medicine or treatment  
will keep them from coming.

A tear rolls down Shannon's cheek.

SHANNON

But what am I going to do with  
Ashley?

TOM

Just take care of her, protect her.  
That's what mothers do. The father  
is there to protect the family as a  
whole.

SHANNON

But what if something happens to  
me?

INT. HOTEL - ROOM - DAY

Terri shakes Shannon awake.

TERRI

Wake up! Wake up, wake up, wake up!

Shannon groans.

TERRI

Come on! Let's hit the trail.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

BEGIN MONTAGE

Terri and Shannon walk the trail, both with walking sticks. Shannon looks up at the large trees that seem to bend over them and cover up most of the sky.

Other hikers trail behind them or pass them.

They walk up to a fallen log and Terri tries her best to get over. She throws one leg over, and she tries her best to get the other one over.

Terri falls to the ground, landing on her backpack. The two laugh and Terri takes her backpack off. She stands up and helps Shannon over.

Shannon ends up falling also.

The two walk over to a cliff, exhausted. They stare at the view of the mountains.

They continue to walk the trail. Their conversation is inaudible. Shannon whacks the foliage with her walking stick as they walk along the side of the trail.

A bird flies onto a tree branch and watches Terri and Shannon walk further down the trail.

END MONTAGE

EXT. TRAIL - LATER

The sun sets and the sky turns a golden yellow with multiple layers of reds, pinks, and purples.

Terri and Shannon set up their tent a few yards away from the trail.

SHANNON

How far do you think we walked today?

TERRI

Who knows? I don't really like to think about that stuff. I like to make it a surprise.

Shannon wraps one corner of the tent around a stake.

TERRI

Did you know that there's not a single map of the Appalachian Trail that has every single small town or camp post and whatnot labeled on it?

SHANNON

Oh yeah?

TERRI

Yeah. It's kind of hard when you have a 2,174-mile long trail, not to mention the distance changes every time, that stretches through fourteen states.

SHANNON

Yeah, well, it's hard to travel even a mile of the trail with all this crap on our backs.

TERRI

You got that right. The sleep tonight is going to be nice.

EXT. TENT - NIGHT

It's very dark. Barely any light can squeeze through the trees. Crickets chirp, and other various animal noises echo through the vast area of woods.

Another noise emits from inside the tent. It's a low noise, like growling. Or more like snoring.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Shannon opens her eyes and turns over, only to come face to face with Terri, who the snoring is coming from.

She takes her arm out of her sleeping bag and plugs Terri's nose. A few seconds go by, and Terri begins to cough. She swats at Shannon's hand and turns over.

TERRI

(Mumbled)

...Sorry...

Shannon smiles. A branch outside snaps. The crickets go quiet. Shannon's smile fades quickly.

She sits up and stares at the side of the tent. Another crack, this time on the other side of the tent near Terri.

Leaves rustle, and something brushes up against the side of the tent.

Shannon covers her mouth. Whatever's outside gets off the tent and everything goes quiet again.

Shannon shakes Terri.

SHANNON  
(Whispered)  
Terri! Terri, wake up!

Terri groans.

SHANNON  
(Whispered)  
No, I'm serious. I think something's outside our tent.

TERRI  
It's just the wind...

SHANNON  
Oh shut up, we both know it's not.

EXT. TENT - NIGHT

The zipper slowly moves upward. It's very loud in the silence and it stops midway.

SHANNON (O.S.)  
Sh! Be quieter!

The zipper runs up, this time more slowly. Terri crawls out of the tent with a flashlight. She turns it on.

Shannon follows with a flashlight also. She turns hers on and waves it across the trees and ground.

The two spend time looking around the tent and in the woods. Terri sighs.

TERRI  
There's nothing here.

SHANNON  
Something rubbed up against the tent.

TERRI

Well whatever it was, it's gone.

SHANNON

What if it was a bear?

TERRI

Well it knows we're here now. Good going!

They huddle together and walk towards the trail, their flashlights pointed straight in front of them.

A branch cracks above them, and before they can look up, a Black Bear falls to the ground with the branch.

Shannon and Terri scream and jump back. Shannon falls over, still screaming, and Terri tries to help her up. The Black Bear scrambles to its feet and runs off.

At the end of the broken branch is a large bag of food. Terri begins to crack up.

SHANNON

Oh my God!

TERRI

Holy shit! That scared the shit out of me!

Terri cracks up some more.

TERRI

You should have seen your face!

SHANNON

I'm sure it looked a lot like yours!

Shannon shines her light on the bag of food.

SHANNON

Well, you were right about the branches breaking...

TERRI

See, I told you, I have everything planned out.

SHANNON

Jesus, I almost had a heart attack.

Terri laughs as she helps Shannon up.

TERRI

Come on, let's get back to bed.

SHANNON

What about the food?

TERRI

Just stick it under the tent or something. If a bear tries to get under there, we'll bash its fucking head in.

EXT. TENT - DAY

The tent collapses as Terri and Shannon undo the stakes and pull out the poles. Terri folds the tent up and ties the poles together.

Shannon gathers her things together and opens up the food bag.

SHANNON

What's for breakfast?

TERRI

I put some trail mix in there and some apples for the first day.

SHANNON

Whatever sounds good to me.

She pulls out the trail mix and two apples.

TERRI

I still can't help but laugh about last night.

SHANNON

Yeah, well, we're lucky that bear didn't get our food.

TERRI

Oh lighten up. It's nature. You never know what to expect.

SHANNON

You're damn right. Poison ivy, ticks, spiders, snakes, bears, dehydration, broken bones...

Shannon tries to get her backpack on. She struggles and falls over. Terri laughs.

BECKY TURNER (31), very fit with a lot of muscle, spiked hair, in nothing but a sports bra and pants, walks through the foliage to the two.

Behind Becky is JONAS HERRING (32), whose very fit body is seen under his long sleeve shirt, shorts, and short spiked hair.

BECKY  
Hi!

TERRI  
Hello.

BECKY  
You guys need help?

TERRI  
Apparently my friend does.

JONAS  
Here, let me help you.

Jonas takes off his backpack and helps Shannon to her feet. He walks over and gets his back pack on without a problem.

BECKY  
I'm Becky, and this is my friend Jonas.

TERRI  
I'm Terri, she's Shannon. This is our first time hiking the trail.

BECKY  
Oh awesome! We try and hike it as much as possible, but we don't plan doing all of it.

JONAS  
We try to stay in the state.

TERRI  
Oh cool. So you guys know this part of the trail well, then?

BECKY  
Pretty well. This place is awesome. You guys will like it.

SHANNON  
Well we were just about to leave. Do you two mind if we join you?

BECKY  
Not at all. Come on.

They walk towards the trail. Jonas walks more quickly than the girls and gets ahead of them.

TERRI  
Is he in a hurry?

BECKY  
No, he always walks fast. I've finally become fit enough to keep up with him.

SHANNON  
Are you two going out or married or...?

BECKY  
Us? No! We're gay.

Terri cocks her head and raises an eyebrow.

TERRI  
Oh really?

SHANNON  
Seriously?

BECKY  
That doesn't offend you or anything, does it?

SHANNON  
Oh, no, of course not. I just saw him and I would've never guessed. Terri's actually lesbian herself.

BECKY  
Really?

Terri nods.

BECKY  
Are you two in a relationship?

TERRI  
Nope. Shannon...

Terri looks at Shannon, who looks at Terri kind of nervously.

...She's married. She has a daughter at home right now.

BECKY  
(Mainly to Terri)  
Well then, I think we're all going  
to get along real well.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

BEGIN MONTAGE

The four hikers sit at a table with plates of food in front of them. Becky and Terri sit on one side together while Jonas and Shannon sit on the other side.

The four laugh at a joke. The waitress walks by and hands them all beers.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Shannon stands at a pay phone and speaks inaudibly into the receiver.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Shannon stops everyone on the side of the trail and points off towards the forest.

An adult Moose and her baby walk through the foliage, picking off leaves of nearby bushes as they walk.

Shannon takes a picture from a disposable camera and winds the film. She looks at Terri, who looks at her with a "What are you doing?" face.

Terri shakes her head and walks off. Shannon shrugs and sticks the camera in her bag.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

The four swim in the river, talk, splash each other, etc.

EXT. TENTS - NIGHT

Two tents lay out on the ground. The four hikers sit around a small fire. Shannon throws peanuts into Terri's mouth. Terri catches each one of them.

END MONTAGE

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Shannon lays in her sleeping bag with a small journal and pen. Her light is a small lantern in the middle of the tent. Terri crawls through and zips up the door.

SHANNON  
What day is it?

TERRI  
Day 6.

SHANNON  
Already? The days have gotten shorter.

TERRI  
That's what Jonas said.

SHANNON  
I have to admit, he's cute.

Terri lays down on her sleeping bag.

TERRI  
Yep, all the gay ones are. Just look at me.

Shannon smiles as she writes in her journal.

SHANNON  
You like Becky, huh?

TERRI  
Yeah, she's a cool girl, seems to like the outdoors a lot.

SHANNON  
You like her more than that.

TERRI  
What are you talking about?

SHANNON  
You know exactly what I'm talking about!

Terri flips over onto her stomach and faces Shannon.

SHANNON  
Every time I look at you, you're always looking at her, smiling. And I see that sparkle in your eye...

TERRI

Oh shut up!

Shannon laughs.

SHANNON

No, but seriously, I see it.

TERRI

So what if I do?

SHANNON

Nothing! I just thought that was cool, that's all...

Terri rests her head on her pillow.

TERRI

She's pretty.

SHANNON

That, she is.

Shannon finishes up her journal entry. She closes the small book and rests it next to her sleeping bag. She lays down and faces Terri.

SHANNON

I'm having a lot of fun, just so you know.

TERRI

That's good. I'm glad it's making you happy.

SHANNON

You were right. I feel so free from everything right now. I'm really glad you mentioned this trip. Thanks.

Terri pats Shannon's arm.

TERRI

No problem. Good night.

Terri rolls over and faces away from Shannon.

Shannon smiles and turns out the lantern.

INT. STORE - DAY

Terri, Becky, Jonas, and Shannon walk around the store and look at clothes, snacks, magazines, etc.

Jonas grabs a soda and walks up to the cashier, RECO NEWMAN (30), tall, skinny, shaggy.

BECKY

So, what made you guys want to come hike the A.T. again?

SHANNON

Like Terri put it, just to get away from any problems at home.

BECKY

(To Terri)

Like girlfriends and stuff? Or considering you're case, Shannon, a husband or something like that?

Shannon looks at her for a moment, then resumes looking at clothes.

SHANNON

Something like that...

Becky frowns, looks at Terri, and forces a smile.

Shannon walks over to a very large map of the Appalachian trail that hangs on the wall. She tilts her head and looks at it.

Jonas walks over to her. He looks at her, then at the map, and tilts his head also.

JONAS

It's a big map.

SHANNON

Where are we?

Jonas points at the bottom of the map.

JONAS

Right there.

SHANNON

Are you serious?

JONAS

Yeah.

SHANNON

We've been walking for six days and that's how far we've gotten?

JONAS

It's a 2,170-mile long trail, what we traveled is, like, half a centimeter...or something.

Jonas pulls out his soda and opens it up.

JONAS

God, it's been ages since I've had one of these.

He walks off to look at clothes. Shannon continues to stare at the map.

EXT. STORE - DAY

Terri and Becky walk out of the store and sit down on a bench.

BECKY

Did I say something wrong in there? Shannon seemed kind of weird.

TERRI

Try not to mention anything about husbands or fathers or anything.

Becky opens her mouth to say something, but stops and nods.

BECKY

Alright.

They sit there for a moment. Terri looks around the town and watches people walk by.

TERRI

I'm really glad you guys let us come along with you.

BECKY

It's no problem. Some times it's better to walk the trail with more people.

TERRI

Yeah. I love being on outdoor trips with Shannon. We've been friends for probably nine years. I love her to death.

BECKY

Same with Jonas and me. He's such a crazy guy and he's really fit. I always offer him the opportunity to hike the A.T. and he always comes. I'm glad I'm with him because we always meet crazy people on the trail.

TERRI

I've read that in a book about this trail. I think it was called a Walk in the Woods or something.

BECKY

I heard from people who walk the trail that the author exaggerates a lot of stuff in that book; that people aren't like how the people in the book are on the trail.

TERRI

Which is why I'm glad we ran into each other. We just clicked—

Becky quickly moves in and kisses Terri. Becky stops and pulls back. She touches her lips.

BECKY

I'm sorry...

Terri moves in and they kiss again, this time more passionately.

INT. STORE - DAY

Shannon stands at the counter and purchases a snack and a bottled water. Jonas stands next to her.

JONAS

Oh, oh look...

Shannon looks over and sees Terri and Becky kissing. She lets out a little gasp.

Reco looks over and sees the two kissing, also. He narrows his eyes a bit.

JONAS

Aw, that's really cute.

Reco looks at Jonas. He clears his throat.

RECO  
(Quickly)  
That'll be \$4.50.

Shannon searches through a fanny-pack around her waist.

RECO  
Can you hold on a minute?

SHANNON  
Yeah, okay.

Reco walks off while Shannon speaks. He walks to the door.

EXT. STORE - DAY

Reco steps out onto the porch of the store.

RECO  
Excuse me?

Terri and Becky stop kissing.

RECO  
(Strictly)  
This is a family store. Not to  
mention a family town. There are  
kids here.

Terri and Becky look at each other.

BECKY  
I'm sorry, we didn't know it was  
offensive.

RECO  
(Strictly)  
Well just don't do it again, okay?

Reco shakes his head and walks back inside. Becky looks at Terri, confused.

INT. STORE - DAY

Reco gets back behind the counter and takes Shannon's money.

RECO  
Sorry about that.

SHANNON  
It's alright. Thank you.

RECO

Thanks. Have fun on the A.T.

Shannon takes her snacks and she and Jonas walk out. Reco watches the two leave.

EXT. STORE - DAY

The four walk away from the store.

TERRI

Did you guys see that?

SHANNON

What was all that about?

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Jonas and Shannon walk side by side, while behind them Terri and Becky walk side by side. They each have two different conversations.

SHANNON

You're quiet.

JONAS

Yeah, sorry about that. I don't talk much when it comes to this type of stuff.

SHANNON

It's alright.

JONAS

I'm more of a listener any way. Plus, being out here, I think more than I speak.

SHANNON

Yeah, being out here has made me think a lot, too. About my daughter, my mom, the house. I hope they're all okay.

A HIKER passes by them, walking in the opposite directions.

HIKER

Hello.

SHANNON

Hello.

JONAS

Hi.

The hiker looks behind him as he passes the four. Shannon and Jonas continue to have a conversation. It becomes inaudible, along with Terri and Becky's conversation.

The sky grows golden, then pink and purple.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

The four walk up to a shelter, an open, three-walled structure with a wooden floor.

JONAS

Here we are.

SHANNON

What's this?

JONAS

It's a place that they built for campers to sleep in.

Terri looks inside.

TERRI

I think I'd rather sleep in my tent again.

BECKY

Oh, it's not that bad.

TERRI

I think I'll stick with the tent.

SHANNON

I think I'll join you.

Becky sighs.

BECKY

Just wait. You'll be wanting one soon!

Terri and Shannon smile. They pull out the tent and begin to set it up.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Shannon puts up her journal.

SHANNON

So what was that you and Becky did at the store?

TERRI

It was just a kiss. Nothing about it.

SHANNON

Uh-huh.

TERRI

You know what, you can just shut it, okay?

Shannon laughs.

SHANNON

Whatever.

She turns the lantern off.

INT. TENT - DAY

Terri snores as she faces away from Shannon. Shannon's eyes slowly flicker open. She sits up and sees Terri snoring and rolls her eyes.

She crawls towards the door of the tent and unzips it.

EXT. TENT - DAY

She stops as she unzips the tent door and stares at the ground. A dark, thick liquid puddles up in front of her. She dips her finger in it.

Red stains the tip of her finger. It's blood.

She follows the trail of blood towards another puddle, this one larger than the one in front of her tent. Drops of blood splash into the puddle.

Shannon looks up. She gasps and covers her mouth.

SHANNON

Oh my God.

EXT. TENT/SHELTER - MOMENTS LATER

TERRI (O.S.)

Becky! Jonas! Get out here!

Becky walks out of the shelter and over to Terri and Shannon.

BECKY

What's up?

SHANNON

Look.

She points up and Becky looks up.

A beaver hangs from a tree branch by its tail. The stomach as been ripped open and intestines hang out. The throat as been slit; blood drips from it. Flies swarm around the carcass.

BECKY

Jesus Christ...

SHANNON

Where's Jonas?

TERRI

Did he do this?

BECKY

I don't know. He wasn't in the shelter when I woke up. His stuff wasn't here either.

TERRI

He probably did it...

(Shouting)

...Jonas, God damn it, what the fuck!?

BECKY

Hey! Look, Jonas would *not* do something like this! He's against the killing of animals.

TERRI

Then who's the sick fuck that did this?

BECKY

I don't know! I'm scared because he's missing and that beaver is the least of my problems! If something happened to him, I want to find him right away. We'll go to the next town and try to find him and see if anyone's seen him.

She looks at their tent.

BECKY

And you might want to move your tent. It's getting blood on it.

Becky walks back into the shelter and Shannon and Terri look at their tent. Blood soaks into the front of it.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

It's a small town. A few cars drive along the road, with small stores and other buildings.

INT. ANOTHER STORE - DAY

The three women walk into the store and up to the counter where a CASHIER sits and reads the paper. He looks up at them.

BECKY

Hi, we were wondering if you saw a man walk in here. His hair is sort of short, brown, he's about six feet tall, fit and strong.

CASHIER

I don't believe I have.

BECKY

I think he was wearing a red shirt and cargo pants. He has a five-o'clock shadow?

CASHIER

I'm sorry, I haven't seen anyone like that.

BECKY

Okay. Thanks.

EXT. ANOTHER STORE - DAY

They walk up next to the road.

BECKY

Okay, let's just go around and ask anyone if they've seen him. We'll split up and meet here back in, I guess, fifteen minutes.

INT. BANK - DAY

Shannon walks up to the BANKER and leans on the counter.

SHANNON

Hello.

BANKER

Hi, how can I help you?

SHANNON

I'm not here to make a transfer or anything. I was wondering if you've seen a man here who's about six feet tall, really fit—

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Becky stands at the counter and faces the PHARMACIST.

BECKY

—he has short brown hair, five-o'-clock shadow, kind of a square jaw, I guess. Really pretty blue eyes—

EXT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Terri rests her arms on the patrol car's driver window. She talks to a POLICE OFFICER.

TERRI

—and he wears I think a red shirt and cargo pants if I heard Becky correctly. And he's really strong. You can practically see his six-pack underneath the shirt.

INT. BANK - DAY

BANKER

I'm sorry, I haven't seen him.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

PHARMACIST

I haven't seen him. Sorry.

EXT. POLICE CAR - DAY

POLICE OFFICER

I don't think I've seen anybody like that. I'll radio a missing persons case to the station and we can get a search-and-rescue started.

TERRI

How would it work?

POLICE OFFICER

We'll search the last town, the surrounding woods between the last town and this one, take a look around this town, and we'll search the surrounding woods from this town to the next. I recommend you stay here until something comes up.

TERRI

Alright, thanks.

She walks away from the police car and sighs.

EXT. STORE - DAY

Shannon puts money in a pay phone.

DIANE (V.O.)

Hello?

SHANNON

(Into phone)

Hey, Mom.

DIANE (V.O.)

Shannon! How's everything going with the hike? It must be beautiful up there.

SHANNON

Oh, it's beautiful alright. We're having some...minor complications, but it's nothing to worry about.

DIANE (V.O.)

Like what?

SHANNON

Nothing. Can I talk to Ashley?

DIANE (V.O.)  
 She's asleep right now. We've had a long day.

SHANNON  
 Oh, okay. Well, tell her I love her, alright?

DIANE (V.O.)  
 Okay.

SHANNON  
 I'll talk to you later.

DIANE (V.O.)  
 Oh, Shannon? Are you sure you're going to be okay?

SHANNON  
 It's nothing to worry about, Mom.

Becky sits at the porch of the store. She stands up when Terri walks up to her.

TERRI  
 I talked to a police officer. They're going to do a search-and-rescue.

BECKY  
 Damn it, Jonas.

Shannon walks up to the two.

TERRI  
 He said we should stay here until further notice.

SHANNON  
 What's going on?

TERRI  
 They're going to do a search-and-rescue.

BECKY  
 Well, you two can stay here. I'm going to go to the next town and just check. I'm really worried. He's never done anything like *this* before.

Becky begins to walk off. Terri stops her.

TERRI

Wait! We're going to come with you.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

The sky is a bright blue. Only a few clouds fill up the sky. Birds fly overhead.

SHANNON

I haven't seen a person since we've left that town.

TERRI

Maybe they're at some gathering that Jonas went to.

SHANNON

Oh yeah, like really...

TERRI

This trail is big. It's almost the end of summer. Maybe people are waiting until a crisp fall day.

EXT. TRAIL - LATER

More clouds have gathered. There's no more blue left in the sky. The clouds are dark and gray, and threaten to rain.

BECKY

The next town isn't for the next five miles so let's keep walking.

EXT. TRAIL - LATER

The sky is even darker, but only because it's almost evening time.

BECKY (O.S.)

Jonas!

TERRI (O.S.)

Will you stop? People are going to think we're crazy.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

A lot of lightning. Roaring thunder. The trees bend far in the strong wind. The trail gets muddy as rain pours out of the sky.

The three run across the trail towards a shelter.

BECKY  
In there! Hurry!

INT. SHELTER - NIGHT

The three run inside soaking wet. They quickly drop their stuff on the floor.

A man sits in the corner, his face unseen. He stands up, gets his backpack on. He startles Shannon and she screams. The man walks out of the shelter and into the rain.

TERRI  
Fucking weirdo.

BECKY  
I guess the rain doesn't bother  
him, huh?

Becky pulls out a lantern and sets it on the floor. She turns it on. Shannon pulls hers out, also, and turns it on.

TERRI  
God, it's fucking freezing!

SHANNON  
Here.

Shannon hands Terri one of her long sleeved shirts. Terri quickly puts it on. Becky and Shannon put on sweat shirts also.

Terri walks over to an upside down tuna can suspended by a short nylon cord. She taps it.

TERRI  
What's this?

BECKY  
It's a mouse trapeze.

TERRI  
Come again?

BECKY

You hang your food bags to keep the rodents from getting them.

Terri stares at it and taps it again.

TERRI

It's nice to know I might have rats crawling all over me while I sleep.

BECKY

Yep. Especially when it's raining like this.

TERRI

Oh, that's real encouraging.

Shannon walks over to the opening of the shelter.

SHANNON

God, it's raining buckets. I hope Jonas is alright.

BECKY

He better be. I'm going to kick his ass when we find him. He knows not to run off like this.

SHANNON

Do you think he's hurt?

BECKY

I don't try and think about that.

INT. SHELTER - LATER

Terri sleeps, and again, snores. Becky and Shannon lay on their sleeping bags. It continues to pour down rain outside.

SHANNON

So how did you and Jonas meet?

BECKY

In college at The University of North Texas. Great school with a great music program, theater program, they had weekend camping trips, it was awesome.

SHANNON

My sister went there. She said it was awesome. And the town...Not so much.

BECKY

Oh, Denton? Fucking boring. The only time it might be interesting if there were murders circling the city or if some, I don't know, sci-fi creature came from space and started terrorizing the people.

Shannon laughs.

BECKY

Anyway, we met on a kayaking trip during one of the weekend camping deals. He was standing next to me when this douche was hitting on me and I kept on telling him to go away. After I told the guy to fuck off five hundred times, Jonas was like, "Dude, if she doesn't want you, then leave her alone. I'm gay and even I wouldn't want to fuck you."

SHANNON

No way!

BECKY

Yeah. But that was before Jonas found out I was lesbian.

SHANNON

It seems like you two get along really well.

BECKY

Yeah we became friends instantly. I've never made a friend that fast in my life. To tell you the truth, I'm really a shy person.

SHANNON

You didn't seem shy when we first met.

BECKY

Because Jonas was with me. He's a crazy guy and is always nice enough to walk up to people and say, "Hi." Which influences me to do the same thing.

Shannon nods.

SHANNON

So do you guys ever receive any...crap, I guess, about your...sexuality? Sorry if that's kind of awkward or whatever.

BECKY

Oh, no it's completely fine. Um, kind of, sort of, people don't throw things at us or anything if that's what you mean.

Shannon laughs.

SHANNON

No, of course not.

BECKY

Jonas has had it a lot harder than me. Kids would make fun of him, beat him up. When he was sixteen, his parents found out he was gay and they kicked him out of the house. He'd stay with friends in their sheds or in their basements or backyards until their parents found out he was there. Then they'd tell him he couldn't stay. Fortunately, he was friends with this kid who had hippies for parents. They thought it was fantastic and so they became his parents.

Shannon snorts and Becky laughs.

BECKY

Seriously, I'm so glad he didn't become one of them. Hippies are so annoying, but it was great for him. They paid for almost everything. They accepted him immediately, fed him, practically made him their child.

Becky sighs and looks out into the rainy woods.

BECKY

Jesus, I really hope he's okay.

SHANNON

He told me he's hiked at a lot of places so he knows a lot about survival.

(MORE)

SHANNON (CONT'D)

I'm sure he's fine, don't let it  
keep you up. We need to sleep.

Shannon takes a gulp of water from her water bottle. Thunder rumbles through the sky.

BECKY

Terri told me not to mention this,  
and you don't have to talk about it  
if you don't want to, but what  
happened to your husband?

Shannon stops drinking her water. She sets the bottle down.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A tear rolls down Shannon's cheek.

SHANNON

But what am I going to do with  
Ashley?

TOM

Just take care of her, protect her.  
That's what mothers do. The father  
is there to protect the family as a  
whole.

SHANNON

But what if something happens to  
me?

Tom holds on to Shannon's hand.

INT. SHELTER - NIGHT

Shannon fumbles with her water bottle. She opens her mouth to speak when there's a loud bang on one of the walls.

Shannon and Becky turn their heads to the back wall.

BECKY

What was that?

Another bang. The two jump at it. Terri groans as she wakes up.

There's another loud bang. One of the bungee cords from the mouse trapeze falls off its hook. The tuna can falls to the floor with a loud clatter.

TERRI  
What's going on?

Becky and Shannon stand up. It becomes silent.

A loud scratching comes from the back wall. It begins to move towards the side that Becky and Shannon are on. There's another loud bang on the roof of the shelter.

BECKY  
God damn it, Jonas, if that's you,  
I'm kicking your ass!

The scratching moves onto the side that Becky and Shannon are on. Shannon walks over to the opening of the shelter when the scratching stops.

Shannon looks around the opening towards the side that was being scratched on. Nobody's there. She steps back into the shelter.

SHANNON  
There's nobody there.

Shannon walks over to Terri's side and checks the outside of the shelter. Nobody's there either.

She looks back at Becky and shakes her head.

Becky shoves her boots on and walks out of the shelter on her side. Shannon watches her disappear behind the shelter. She looks back on her side.

She watches Becky appear from behind the shelter. Becky runs back inside the shelter.

BECKY  
Nothing there. I guess it was a  
tree branch or something.

Shannon turns and watches Becky take her shoes off.

Suddenly, a man jumps down from the roof of the shelter. He throws a black bag over Shannon's head and pulls her out of the shelter.

BECKY  
Shannon!

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

The man drags Shannon along the muddy trail. She kicks and screams, but they are only muffled by the bag.

Becky runs out of the shelter, only to have another man hiding behind her side of the shelter smash her across the face with a large, bulky tree branch.

Blood sprays from Becky's mouth as she falls to the ground unconscious. The man drops the branch and quickly grabs her body and pulls her into the woods away from the shelter.

Shannon continues to kick and scream as the man pulls her by her wrists.

Terri runs up from behind the man with the large branch that the other man had.

She swings the branch at the man and knocks him to the ground. Terri continues to hit the man with the branch as Shannon tears the bag off of her head.

The other man runs over and tackles Terri to the ground. The branch flies from her hands. Shannon jumps to her feet and runs down the trail the opposite way.

TERRI

Shannon! Run!

The other man gets off the ground and puts the black bag over her head.

Shannon looks behind her and sees the black bag cover Terri's head.

SHANNON

Oh my God!

She looks behind her again and sees the first man drag Terri away while the man who tackled Terri runs after Shannon.

Shannon screams and tries to run faster. The first man shouts something and the man that chases Shannon slows to a stop. He watches her run and runs back over to the other man.

She continues to run down the trail when she slips on a mud puddle and falls face first into the muddy trail. She attempts to get up, but her feet slide on the trail.

She finally grasps ground and gets on her feet again.

Shannon runs over to a tree and quickly climbs it. She climbs onto a large branch and sits against the tree while she sits on the branch.

She begins to cry. Lightning flashes off of her and thunder rolls through the woods.

EXT. SHELTER - NIGHT

Becky's tied up, unconscious body sits in a wheelbarrow. She sways her head side to side.

The two men carry Terri's body towards the wheelbarrow. The black bag is still over her head and her hands are tied behind her back, her legs tied together.

They drop her body on top of Becky. Terri cries underneath the black bag.

EXT. SMALL CABIN - NIGHT

One of the men pushes the wheelbarrow towards the cabin. The other follows behind them.

They push the wheelbarrow up to the porch. They grab Terri's body and carry her into the cabin. A few moments later, they walk out and carry Becky's body into the cabin.

INT. CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Terri's body lays on the floor against the wall. She squirms on her stomach and continues to cry beneath the bag.

Becky's body is tossed next to Terri's.

The two men's faces are finally revealed. One of them is Reco, the store cashier.

The other man pulls his hood off.

EXT. TRAIL - FLASHBACK DAY - DAY

A Hiker passes by Shannon and Jonas, walking in the opposite directions.

HIKER

Hello.

SHANNON

Hello.

JONAS

Hi.

The hiker looks behind him as he passes the four.

INT. CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The man turns out to be the hiker from before, FRANKIE CHRISTY (29), kind of chubby, buzz cut, a scar on his left cheek.

Reco points at Terri.

RECO

Fuck! Jesus Christ, that bitch beat the shit out of me. Where the hell were you?

FRANKIE

I was taking care of the other one. Don't get mad at me!

RECO

She bashed my head with a tree branch! Do you know how much that hurts?

FRANKIE

Why don't you try asking her?

Frankie points at Becky.

RECO

That was harder than I thought it was going to be. The rain slowed us down, the trail was muddy.

He sighs and looks at the two women.

RECO

But, everything happens for a reason.

FRANKIE

What was the purpose of getting my cheek cut open last time? I look like a freak.

RECO

Please, don't be so dramatic. It's just a scratch.

FRANKIE

Oh, yeah, a scratch...And the hole I carved out of that chicks head just needed a band aid to heal, huh?

RECO

I thought women liked scars, too?  
But don't worry, these women were a  
bit easy. This is going to work out  
alright.

FRANKIE

It better.

Frankie walks out of the bathroom.

RECO

Hey.

Frankie faces Reco. Reco throws him a flashlight.

RECO

Go find the other one.

FRANKIE

Why do I have to?

RECO

Just do what I fucking tell you to,  
okay?

Frankie leaves the bathroom.

FRANKIE

(Under his breath)

Bastard.

Reco watches him leave and walks over to Terri. She continues  
to sob beneath the black bag.

Reco caresses Terri's face. She gasps and moves her head  
away, but he continues to caress her face.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

Shannon sits on the branch, drenched with rain. She brushes  
her matted hair out of her face, and her tears are mixed up  
with the rain.

She looks back down the trail and sees the shelter with the  
lanterns still lit. Nothing at the shelter moves.

Suddenly, lightning strikes a nearby tree. Shannon screams  
and loses her balance, but quickly grabs onto the branch. She  
dangles from the tree.

The tree the lightning struck begins to crack. The wind pushes it over towards Shannon. She sees the tree fall towards her and screams.

The tree hits her and she slips from the branch. She screams as she falls to the ground, but her screams come to an abrupt stop when she hits the hard ground floor.

The tree topples over her body and Shannon becomes hidden.

EXT. TRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

A beam of light shines on the trail. Frankie walks out from behind the shelter and walks down the trail. He swings his flashlight from side to side, in the woods, up in trees.

The rain begins to die down. Thunder rumbles through the area. Trees crackle as the wind blows them sideways.

Frankie walks further down the trail. He looks behind him at the shelter, then in front of him. He shines his lights on footsteps and begins to follow them.

He stops at the fallen tree and shines his light on it. The tree lays on the trail, almost halfway covering it. The footsteps end at the tree Shannon was at.

He kicks at the fallen tree, and then shines up at the tree, right at the spot where Shannon sat.

FRANKIE

Where the hell are you?

Frankie shines his light back on the fallen tree, stares at it for a second, then continues on down the trail.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A tear rolls down Shannon's cheek.

SHANNON

But what am I going to do with Ashley?

TOM

Just take care of her, protect her. That's what mothers do. The father is there to protect the family as a whole.

SHANNON

But what if something happens to me?

Tom holds on to Shannon's hand.

TOM

I promise, nothing will happen to you.

SHANNON

You don't know that.

TOM

If anything does, I just want you to fight your way to the finish. And I'll be there right next to you. Don't let anything get in the way, and I know you won't let anything get between you and Ashley.

Shannon squeezes Tom's hand tighter.

TOM

You just gotta fight.

Shannon sniffs and she hugs Tom.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Dawn arrives as the sky slowly gets brighter. The sky is overcast and causes the woods to look gray. A small fog clogs up the vision. There's no more rain.

The fallen tree sits on the trail. It jumps and becomes still. It jumps again, and a hand pokes through the branches and leaves.

The tree jumps once more and Shannon crawls out from beneath it. She struggles to get out and takes in a deep breath.

Shannon coughs, covered in mud and soaking wet with no shoes on. She crawls out of the tree and onto the trail. She lays on her back and coughs some more.

She stares up at the sky. The trees tower over her. An eagle lets out a loud cry and floats above her. She rolls over onto her stomach and struggles to her feet.

Shannon begins to walk, but stumbles side to side like a drunken woman. She collapses next to a tree and breaks down crying.

She sniffs and stands back up and stumbles down the trail.

EXT. SHELTER - DAY

Shannon stumbles over to the trail and walks inside, but stops. All the bags are missing. The lanterns are gone, the floor is bare.

Shannon stumbles backwards and loses her balance as she walks off the edge.

She falls on her back and yelps in pain. She arches her back and grits her teeth, flips over onto her stomach. Her arms shake as she gets onto her hands and knees.

Shannon looks next to her and sees wheelbarrow tracks. She follows them and the tracks lead her to the foliage next to the shelter.

She stops at the plants and looks onwards. The tracks lead her deep into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Shannon stumbles through the foliage and between trees. Bird calls echo through the vast forestry. Shannon shivers, her chin trembling.

She stops and takes off her wet sweatshirt. She wraps her sweatshirt around her waist and continues to walk.

Shannon comes upon a large hill and begins to carefully walk down it. She steps on sharp, jagged rocks and gasps.

She grabs her foot and gasps in pain. Shannon looks down at it. Blood stains her hands and sock. She takes deep breaths and makes her way down the hill.

She comes to the middle of the hill when she steps on loose sticks and rocks. They slip beneath her feet and she falls on her side.

Shannon begins to roll down the hill. She screams and rolls into a tree with a sickening crunch. She falls past the tree and tries to grab it.

She keeps a grip on the tree, but soon begins to slip. Her hands start to bleed from the bark that scratches up her palms.

Her hands slip from her grip and she slides down the hill. She reaches the bottom and rolls to a stop on her back.

Shannon's face is scratched and her body is bruised. She coughs, her throat dry. She rolls onto her stomach and throws up.

She gets onto her knees and wipes strings of slobber and throw up from her mouth. Shannon yelps and looks at her finger.

Her eyes grow wide when she sees her finger bent in a different direction. She calms down and takes deep breaths.

Slowly, she grabs her finger, but retreats her other hand and yelps. She takes another deep breath and grabs her finger again.

Softly she counts to three with each deep breath and pops her finger back into place.

Shannon screams bloody murder. Her screams echo through the woods. A flock of birds escape from a tree near her.

Shannon cries as she holds onto her finger and doubles over. Tears flow from her eyes and drool drips from her mouth, but she could care less.

She looks up at the sky.

SHANNON  
(Deep breaths)  
Jesus Christ...God, please let me  
get out of here...

She takes more deep breaths and slowly gets to her feet. Shannon looks at her finger and tries to bend it.

She flinches in pain as she moves it, but is able to bend it all the way.

Shannon looks over to the sound of flowing water. She begins to walk towards it.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

A large river flows quickly. Sharp, jagged rocks sit in the middle of the river, which cause deadly rapids.

Shannon pushes her way through the trees and bushes until she sees the water. She rushes over to the river bank and falls to her knees.

She cups her hands and begins to gulp down water like there's no tomorrow. Her hands shake as she drinks the water. It drips down her cheeks and chin.

She stops and allows time for it to flow down her throat. She coughs, then gags, and tries to keep everything in. She shivers and turns away from the river.

She throws up again, this time mostly water, so it's clear.

She takes deep breaths and turns back to the river and drinks some more water.

She finishes one last gulp and takes a breather. Across from her, a baby moose and its mother walk up to the river bank and start drinking.

Shannon watches the two drink the water. She coughs. The mother moose looks up and stares at Shannon while the baby moose continues to drink.

The mother moose scoots closer to her baby and continues drinking water.

SHANNON  
(Quietly)  
Ashley...

Shannon stands up.

SHANNON  
Terri!

Shannon spins around and becomes disoriented. Everything becomes double-vision.

SHANNON  
Becky! Terri!

Shannon walks down the river. She stops when she sees smoke rise up from behind the trees. She looks through the trees and sees a small cabin.

She steps into the river and carefully begins to cross. Shannon reaches the middle of the river and almost loses her balance.

She stops to ground herself, and then continues on.

UNDERWATER

Shannon's feet walk across smooth river rocks. Her feet kick the rocks and the river takes the rocks downstream.

She steps on a pile of rocks and they move beneath her feet.

THE RIVER

Shannon loses her footing and falls underwater. She quickly pops her head out of the water before rapids push her back underwater.

Shannon pushes herself up and she grabs onto a large rock. She is able to hold on and pulls herself up onto the rock. She takes a deep breath and steps back into the water.

She makes it across to the other side of the river. Shannon walks a bit upstream and walks into the woods. The cabin is just in sight.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Shannon runs out of the woods and into an open area. She sees the old, small cabin. Smoke rises out of the chimney.

SHANNON

Hello?

She walks towards the cabin, but stops when she sees her backpack, along with Terri and Becky's.

SHANNON

Oh my God.

The door opens. Shannon quickly runs over to a pile of chopped logs and hides behind it. She looks around the pile and sees Reco and Frankie walk over to an old pick up truck.

Reco opens the driver side door and searches for something. Frankie rests on the hood of the truck and they have an incomprehensible conversation.

Reco pulls out a shotgun and slams the door shut. Shannon gasps and puts her back against the pile of logs.

She slowly leans back over and watches them again.

RECO

Hey, get some more firewood, would ya?

FRANKIE

You know, I'm sick and tired of you always telling me what to do.

RECO

Just quick complaining, you pansy. Get some damn firewood.

Frankie walks over to the pile of wood. Shannon presses her back up against the pile again.

He picks up an axe on the side of the pile. Shannon closes her eyes and tries to stay calm.

An axe comes down on one of the pieces of the wood. Shannon squeaks and covers her mouth.

Frankie steps on the piece of wood and pulls the axe out of it. He raises the axe up again and slams it down on another piece of wood right next to Shannon's head.

She falls to her side and covers her head and mouth.

RECO (O.S.)

What the fuck do you think you're doing?

FRANKIE

I'm getting firewood. What's it look like I'm doing?

Reco walks up next to Frankie.

RECO

Do you have shit for brains?

FRANKIE

What the fuck are you talking about?

Reco slaps Frankie upside the head. He snatches the axe from Frankie.

FRANKIE

Ow! What the hell?

RECO

You don't fucking use an axe to pick up fucking firewood! You're going to knock the God damn firewood pile over!

FRANKIE

Don't yell at me, damn it! I was just messing around! I ain't hurting anyone!

RECO

Do you know how long it took me to chop up this wood and stack it up like that? Unless you don't want to clean up the mess, don't use the God damn axe to pick up the God damn firewood!

The firewood pile tips over and chopped logs spill out all over the place.

Reco throws the axe at the pile. It almost strikes Shannon.

RECO

God damn it! This is what I was  
fucking talking about!

FRANKIE

Don't fucking yell at me!

RECO

I can fucking yell at you if I  
want! It took me all day to chop  
and stack that firewood and there  
you go and knock it all over!

FRANKIE

It was a damn accident, you son of  
a bitch!

Reco shoves Frankie.

RECO

You son of a bitch, don't talk to  
me like that.

FRANKIE

Don't touch me!

Frankie shoves Reco back. Reco tackles Frankie to the ground and they start fighting and cursing. Shannon scrambles to her feet and runs over to the side of the cabin.

She hides behind two trash cans and the wheelbarrow and watches Reco and Frankie continue to fight.

Frankie pushes Reco off of him.

FRANKIE

Get the fuck off of me!

Reco stands up and stares at Frankie.

RECO

You better not fuck anything up.

Frankie coughs and sits up. Reco helps Frankie up and brushes the dirt off of him.

RECO

Now clean up that mess you made.  
Keep a look out for that girl.

Reco walks away and Frankie brushes off the dirt on his pants. He walks over to the woodpile and begins to pick up the wood.

Shannon crawls away from the trash cans and wheelbarrow towards the other side of the cabin. She crawls under a window. Shannon stands up and presses herself against the cabin wall.

Reco pulls Terri's body out of the bathroom. He comes back moments later and pulls Becky's body out.

Shannon looks back at Frankie and makes sure she's hidden. She looks back inside and sees Reco walk into the bathroom.

She moves away from the window as he looks outside. He lifts the toilet lid and unzips his pants. Shannon quickly makes her way to the other side of the cabin.

She quickly moves around the corner just as Frankie grabs the wheelbarrow. He looks at where Shannon was standing, takes the wheelbarrow, and pushes it to the woodpile.

Shannon looks around the corner and watches him push the wheelbarrow to the woodpile. She moves down the side of the cabin and stops at another window.

Inside, she sees Terri, with the black bag still on her head, and Becky on the floor in the kitchen. Becky's face is covered with dry blood.

A white sheet sits on the table with a giant lump underneath it.

Reco appears as he walks into the kitchen. Shannon hides behind the wall of the cabin, but slowly peeks through the window.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY

Frankie walks in.

RECO

You already cleaned up the pile?

FRANKIE

I got most of it back together. The others I stuck in the wheelbarrow.

Reco sighs and shakes his head.

FRANKIE

What?

RECO

Nothing. You just can't do what you're told, huh?

FRANKIE

I did do it!

RECO

Will you stop whining? You sound like a fucking four-year-old.

FRANKIE

Whatever.

He bends down next to Terri and Becky's body.

FRANKIE

Can't we get this over with. I couldn't find that other girl, she's probably already gone or probably dead.

RECO

No she's still out there. I can feel it.

FRANKIE

Please, you're not psychic.

RECO

I didn't say I was.

Frankie looks at Terri. A dark stain is soaked in her pants between her legs. He laughs.

FRANKIE

Hey, this one pissed herself.

Reco walks over and squats down next to Frankie. He taps Terri. She doesn't move. He taps her again. Again, she doesn't move.

Reco hits Terri's shoulder. Terri groans and squirms a bit. Reco smiles.

RECO

Take the bag off.

Frankie pulls the bag off. Terri closes her eyes from the light. She has a black eye and her lip bleeds.

RECO

Good morning.

He looks at her face.

RECO  
What happened to her eye and lip?

FRANKIE  
It took two hits just to slow her  
down.

RECO  
You punched her?

Frankie nods.

RECO  
Jesus Christ...

FRANKIE  
What?

RECO  
If you want to slow them down, keep  
them from walking by bashing their  
damn knee caps in.

FRANKIE  
I didn't think of that.

RECO  
I'm beginning to think that you  
don't think at all.

Terri opens her eyes and stares at the two men. She looks at  
Reco. Her eyes widen.

TERRI  
You!

RECO  
So you remember me?

TERRI  
What the fuck...Where the fuck am  
I? I...

Terri looks over at Becky's unconscious body.

TERRI  
You bastards! I'm going to fucking  
kill you!

RECO  
No, no you're wrong. It's me who's  
going to fucking kill you.

Terri tries to move her arms, but she yelps. The rope digs into her wrists; they bleed slowly.

RECO

Your other friend here should wake up soon.

TERRI

Where's Shannon?

FRANKIE

Who?

RECO

I think that's the one who's still missing.

TERRI

Don't you fucking touch her.

RECO

Why not? You can't stop us.

Terri coughs.

TERRI

She has a daughter, for God's sake!

RECO

For God's sake, indeed.

Reco stands up and walks over to the front door. He opens it and looks out into the woods.

RECO

She's out there somewhere. No worries.

Frankie looks into Terri's eyes.

FRANKIE

You have terrific eyes.

TERRI

Fuck you.

FRANKIE

Let me get a closer look.

Frankie holds Terri's head still and tries to open her eyes more. She moves away.

TERRI

Don't you fucking touch me!

Frankie grabs her face again, but Terri spits in his face.

He wipes the spit off of his face and looks at it. He slaps her. Shannon covers her mouth as she watches.

Terri looks at him in disbelief. Frankie slaps her again, this time harder. Again, he slaps her. He continues to hit her, harder and harder, his hand turning into a fist.

Shannon's eyes are wide, her mouth still covered.

Reco runs up behind him and pulls him back.

RECO

Hey! Get back! *Get back!*

Frankie's legs thrash about and he jumps to his feet. Reco shoves him into the wall.

RECO

What the fuck are you doing?

FRANKIE

She spit at my face.

RECO

Don't you touch them until I tell you to!

Frankie holds his hands up.

FRANKIE

Okay! Okay...

Reco shoves him into the wall one last time and walks over to Terri. He puts the bag back over her head.

RECO

Why don't you clean up the rest of the firewood?

Reco walks out of the kitchen. Frankie sighs and shakes his head. He walks out of the cabin.

Reco walks over to a telephone in the living room and picks it up. He dials a number.

RECO

(Into phone)

Hey, Val, it's Reco...I'm good, thanks. You...? That's good. Hey, listen, I was wondering if you could take my shifts for the next three days...?

(MORE)

RECO (CONT'D)

Yeah, I'm going on vacation. I already told Walter and he said it's okay as long as I get someone to cover my shifts... Alright, thanks...Yeah, and if you want, feel free to see if anyone else wants to take my shifts.

Shannon checks to see that they're both gone and opens the window. She crawls in.

RECO

(Into phone)

Alright, thanks...I will. I'll talk to you later...Bye.

He hangs up and walks over to a couch.

She crawls across the floor over to Terri. She grabs the bag and Terri begins to kick her tied legs. Shannon shushes her and pulls the bag off of Terri's head.

Terri almost freaks, but sees Shannon.

TERRI

Shannon!

Shannon shushes her.

TERRI

Oh my God, you're okay!

SHANNON

Yeah.

TERRI

What's going on?

SHANNON

Sh! I don't know what's happening but I'm going to get you guys out of here. There's a truck out there and if I find the keys, I can drive us out of here.

TERRI

No, I don't want you to get caught. I don't want you to get hurt.

SHANNON

I'll be fine. Just stay quiet.

Shannon puts the bag back over Terri's head.

TERRI

No! No please, Shannon!

RECO (O.S.)

Hey! Shut up in there!

Shannon stands up and walks to the entrance of the kitchen. She looks into the living room and sees Reco on the couch with a pillow over his head.

She walks over to the entrance of the cabin and looks around a small table. There are no keys on it. She silently searches through the drawers.

Keys are nowhere to be found on the desk. She walks over to the kitchen counter and looks there, but there's nothing.

Shannon walks over to a coat hanger next to the door. Two coats hang on the wall. She checks the pockets of one coat. Nothing.

She checks the pockets of the other coat. She pulls out a pocket knife and sticks it in her back pocket. She looks out the door at the truck.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Shannon steps out onto the porch. The wood creaks beneath her feet. She looks over at the woodpile where Frankie stacks the wood up from the wheelbarrow.

His back faces her, and she runs to the truck. She hides behind it just in time as Frankie notices a piece of wood on the ground.

He walks over to it and faces at the truck. He picks up the wood and walks back over to the pile.

Shannon quietly opens the truck door and checks the ignition. The keys aren't there. She pulls down the sun visor and the keys drop onto the dashboard.

Shannon excitedly grabs the keys and sticks them in ignition, but doesn't turn them.

She leaves the door open and checks for Frankie. He continues to stack the wood.

She runs back to the porch.

INT. CABIN - DAY

She steps inside and checks for Reco. He still has a pillow on his head. Shannon kneels next to Terri and takes the bag off.

SHANNON

I found the keys, they're in ignition. I'm going to get you in the back of the truck, and then I'm going to get Becky, okay?

TERRI

No, take Becky first. Please.

Shannon looks at Becky. Becky groans. Shannon nods and crawls over to Becky.

Shannon begins to lightly slap Becky's face. Becky's eyes open and Shannon puts her index finger to her mouth.

BECKY

Wha...What...?

Shannon presses her finger harder to her mouth. Shannon picks Becky up and begins to drag her towards the cabin entrance.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Shannon drags her out onto the porch. She drags her across the ground and towards the bed of the pick up truck. Becky groans as Shannon tries to set her in the bed.

Shannon looks over at the woodpile. Frankie is gone. She looks around the area but can't find him anywhere.

She quickly walks to the porch and is about to walk into the cabin when Frankie appears at the porch.

FRANKIE

What do you think you're doing, little lady?

Shannon jumps at his voice when she sees him. He begins to run at her. She jumps off the porch to the truck.

Terri watches on from inside.

Before Shannon can reach the truck door, Frankie tackles her and pins her down.

TERRI

Shannon!

FRANKIE

Reco! I need the rope!

TERRI

Leave her alone!

FRANKIE

Reco!

Reco runs out onto the porch and sees Frankie on top of Shannon. He curses to himself and runs inside.

A moment later, he runs out and grabs Shannon's hands. He ties the rope around her wrists.

Reco grabs Shannon's bound hands and drags her back towards the cabin. Frankie walks over to the bed of the truck and grabs Becky.

She tries to scream, but is disoriented from the blow she took to the head earlier.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY

Reco drops Shannon to the floor of the kitchen. Frankie walks in and slides Becky's body onto the floor.

Reco sets Shannon up against the wall and grins. He moves her hair out of her face.

RECO

Well, well, well, look who we have here.

TERRI

Don't touch her!

RECO

Shut up!

(To Shannon)

I was beginning to worry about you. Frankie and I thought you might have hurt yourself, or gotten yourself killed. Lucky for us, we'll get to do that for you.

SHANNON

(Quietly)

Please...Don't...

RECO

I'm sorry, what was that?

He moves in closer and faces his ear towards her.

RECO

Was that a beg to be kept alive?  
After you came in here to try and  
save your stupid friends? Why are  
you begging for us not to kill you  
when you got yourself into this  
shit in the first place? Did you  
always believe that you were  
smarter than us? Smarter than a  
couple of guys who live in the  
woods?

FRANKIE

Also known as "rednecks."

RECO

Will you shut up?

SHANNON

Why are you doing this?

RECO

I'm actually curious to know what  
your answer is. Why do you think  
we're doing this?

SHANNON

We didn't do anything! We are just  
hiking the trail like everyone  
else! We're on vacation like  
everyone else!

RECO

That doesn't answer my question.  
Why do you think we're doing this?

SHANNON

Please, just let us go! I have a  
daughter!

RECO

(Mocking)

"Please, I have a daughter"—Answer  
the damn question!

Shannon begins to cry.

SHANNON

I don't know! I don't know...!

Reco sighs.

RECO

And I bet you're wondering why we chose you out of all the other hikers out there, too, huh?

Shannon continues to cry. She turns away from him.

RECO

Look at me when I talk to you.

She doesn't look at him. He slams his fist on the wall right next to her face. She flinches.

RECO

Look at me!

She forces herself to look at him.

RECO

Why am I doing this? *Why* am I *doing this*?! I saw those two fucking dikes out in front of my store exposing their homosexuality in public! They are full of sin by making love with the same sex! They are killing unborn children by being homosexuals!

Shannon pulls out the pocket knife from her back pocket and begins to slowly cut the rope.

RECO

Their bodies are impure and are a sin as a whole in the eyes of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father of Heaven! I am following the Lord's word and cleansing the world by exterminating those who carry out sin through homosexuality! For that, they are going to the depths of Hell where they will experience pain and suffering for all eternity!

Terri begins to cry.

TERRI

Oh God, please don't!

RECO

The Lord has called for me to do so, and I will follow his word.

SHANNON

That's not true!

RECO

Oh really? Why not?

Shannon sniffs and calms down.

SHANNON

Who are the real sinners?

RECO

What are you talking about?

SHANNON

It's not her fault that she falls in love with the same sex! It's nobody's fault! It's how she was born! That's how God made her!

RECO

She is a mistake!

SHANNON

Like hell, she is, you mother fucker! You were not called to kill her or Becky! If you kill her, you will go to Hell and experience pain and suffering for all eternity because it is an even bigger sin to kill someone! You are not fulfilling God's word, you are destroying it by killing an innocent person!

RECO

She is not innocent! She is an impure being who must be rid of this world before she causes any more sin! I am going to save everyone who is against homosexuality some time, and I am going to save her the embarrassment of the feeling of prejudice.

SHANNON

There's no prejudice, this stuff is in every single continent! You can't stop it.

RECO

I can with the Lord's help.

(To Terri and Becky)

(MORE)

RECO (CONT'D)

You rid of the body, you rid of the sin!

SHANNON

Don't you dare touch them—

Reco punches her. He stands up and backs away. Shannon gasps, blood drips out of her mouth.

FRANKIE

Whoa, whoa! What the hell? You told me not to punch any of them, why do you get to?

Reco pushes him against the window.

RECO

Shut the fuck up!

He walks over to a knife holder and pulls out a large steak knife. He walks over to Becky.

SHANNON

(Disoriented)

Wait...What are you...What are you doing?

Reco sits Becky up by pulling on her hair. She yelps. He pulls her head back by her hair and puts the knife to her neck.

SHANNON

Wait, no!

TERRI

No! Oh God, please don't do this!  
Please!

Becky begins to cry. Shannon begins to cut the rope around her wrists furiously.

TERRI

Please don't do it!

Terri looks away.

RECO

Frankie, hold her still and make her watch. I want her to see this bitch die.

Frankie kneels next to Terri and holds onto her head. He faces her head towards Becky and pulls her eyelids back so she can see.

TERRI

Stop let me go!

SHANNON

Don't do it! Stop! Just let her go!

BECKY

No! Please! I don't want to die!

Reco digs the knife deep into her neck and slides it across. Her neck splits open and blood sprays out like a waterfall.

Terri screams and Shannon watches, eyes wide open. Becky gurgles on her blood. Reco digs the knife deep into her neck again and slices it open once more.

Terri tries to look away, but Frankie holds her head in place.

RECO

Don't look away!

Reco throws Becky's dying body on Terri. Blood sprays from Becky's neck onto Terri.

Shannon finishes cutting the rope off of her hands. She breaks free and grabs a nearby coat hanger next to the cabin entrance.

She screams as she picks up the coat hanger and smashes it on Reco's head. He falls to the ground and she smashes it on his head again. He becomes unconscious.

Frankie runs over, but Shannon smashes the coat hanger on him, too. He stumbles back and falls to the ground.

Shannon drops the coat hanger and pulls Becky's body off of Terri, who cries as she watches Becky roll off of her. Blood begins to pool around the table.

Shannon uses the pocket knife to cut the rope off of Terri's wrists. She gets it cut off and Frankie gets to his feet. He grabs Shannon and pulls her back.

She swipes the knife at him and cuts his arm open. He screams and retreats as he holds onto his arm. Blood squirts from between his fingers.

Shannon stands up and Frankie looks up at her. She slices at his neck and cuts it open. Blood begins to drip out.

Terri unties her feet and crawls away. She turns Becky over. She doesn't move.

TERRI

Oh God...

Frankie stumbles back. He holds onto his neck and then looks at his hand. It's covered in blood.

FRANKIE

You bitch!

Frankie steps on Becky's blood and slips. He falls backwards and lands on the table. The legs break and the table tips over. The object beneath the white sheet falls to the floor.

The sheet pulls off and Jonas' body rolls out on the floor onto his back.

Shannon screams.

His body is pale and bruised. His neck has been sliced open, his penis and testicles have been cut off, his eyes have been pulled out of their sockets.

SHANNON

Oh God!

Frankie stumbles to get up, but he slips on Becky's blood. Shannon stares at Jonas' body and covers her mouth.

She runs over to Terri.

SHANNON

Terri! Come on!

TERRI

Becky!

SHANNON

Come on! She's dead!

Shannon pulls her back. Terri tries to reach for her.

TERRI

No!

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Shannon and Terri stumble out of the cabin.

SHANNON

In the truck! Hurry!

Terri limps to the passenger side as Shannon climbs into the driver seat. She turns the keys in the ignition, but the truck refuses to turn on.

Shannon continues to start the truck, but fails. They see Frankie step out of the cabin, his clothes soaked in blood.

SHANNON

Start, you piece of shit!

Frankie runs up to the driver side. Shannon locks the door as he pounds on the window.

FRANKIE

The truck is fucking under repairs,  
little lady! You're not going  
anywhere!

Frankie smears his blood on the window.

FRANKIE

Get out of the fucking truck!

He winces in pain and touches his neck.

FRANKIE

You bitch! I can't believe you cut  
my fucking neck open!

He goes to the bed of the pick up truck and pulls out a tool box. He pulls out a tire iron and walks back to the driver side and begins to hit the window.

Shannon and Terri scream.

The window shatters and Frankie reaches inside the truck. Shannon pushes his face back. He grabs her hair and pulls her towards the window. Shannon screams.

She shoves her thumb into his eye. He screams and retreats from the truck. Frankie closes his hurt eye and crawls back through the window. He unlocks and opens the door.

Shannon kicks the door open and knocks him to the ground.

She grabs the tire iron. Frankie sits up and she smashes his face with the tire iron. Blood and teeth spray from his mouth. He falls to the ground and screams in pain.

Shannon and Terri begin to run away from the cabin towards the river.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Shannon runs through the trees, while Terri limps behind her and slowly lags behind.

SHANNON

Come on! Run!

TERRI

I can't run fast enough! Wait!

Terri falls to the ground. Dirt and leaves poof up into the air. Shannon looks behind her and sees Terri on the ground.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Frankie sits up and picks up one of his teeth. He squeezes his hand around the tooth into a fist.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Shannon runs over to Terri and tries to help her up, but Terri falls back on the ground.

SHANNON

We have to keep moving! We have  
to—

Shannon looks back at the cabin and sees Frankie running towards them with the axe in his hand.

SHANNON

Oh my God! Terri! Get up!

Shannon pulls Terri up to her feet and they start stumbling towards the river.

They're only halfway through the woods when Frankie gets ready to strike as he runs towards them. Shannon looks back and sees the axe above his head.

Shannon pushes Terri down to the ground and dives out of the way as he swings the axe down towards the ground.

He faces Shannon and holds the axe above his head. Shannon moves out of the way as he brings the axe down to the ground. She stands up and tackles him.

Terri stands up and stumbles out of the way as the two fight on the ground. Frankie gets on top and punches her in the face. Her lip splits open.

Frankie stands Shannon up and pushes her into a tree.

He walks over and pulls the axe out of the ground. Terri runs up and pushes him, but she's too weak to even move him a few feet. She falls to the ground.

Terri pulls herself across the ground and cries. Frankie walks around her and dangles the axe above her.

Shannon rests against the tree, too tired to do anything. She watches on.

SHANNON

Don't do it! Please!

Terri continues her attempt to crawl away and pleads to herself. Frankie holds the axe over her.

SHANNON

No!

He brings the axe down on the back of her neck. Blood sprays on the axe and on her clothes. She stops crawling. He brings the axe down again. Her neck snaps, she stops moving.

Blood sprays on nearby trees and on the grass. He brings it down again, and the axe completely decapitates her. Blood sprays on his face and he stumbles back.

Terri's body twitches. Shannon watches on in horror. Frankie turns to her.

Shannon gasps and stands up. Her legs become shaky and she falls forward. She begins to crawl away on her hands and knees.

Frankie, also tired and out of breath, slowly walks after her.

Shannon nears the riverbank. She begins to crawl over rocks. She looks at them as she crawls towards the water.

Frankie walks closer to her and gets his axe ready. He raises it up, but then Shannon turns around and throws rocks at him. They hit his stomach and chest and he backs away.

FRANKIE

Stop!

She continues to grab rocks and throw them at him, and he tries to block them with his hands.

She throws a large rock and it hits him in the face. He drops the axe and stumbles back, screaming in agony. He holds onto his face and falls on his back.

Shannon grabs a large, flat rock and stands up. She quickly walks over to him and falls to her knees.

Frankie takes his hands away from his face and sees her holding the large, flat rock above his face.

FRANKIE

No!

She brings the rock down on his face with a sickening crunch. His body jolts.

She takes the rock up and he gurgles on his blood. Blood flows from his nose and eyes. She smashes it on his face again.

His legs twitch violently, and she hits him more times, each time with a harder blow. Blood flings off the rock every time she brings it over her head.

His face becomes a mushy pulp of meat and blood.

The grass turns red, her pants turn red, and blood sprays on her face and clothes. She slams the rock down on his face one last time and keeps it there.

Shannon quickly gets to her feet and tries to run towards the river.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

She runs into the water and almost loses her balance as she runs across.

Shannon falls on her hands and knees, but is able to keep ground. She stands up and takes another step. She loses her balance and falls.

This time she can't grab onto a rock. The rapids pull her downstream. She hits numerous rocks and yelps at each blow she takes from them.

She falls down a small dip and submerges beneath the white rapids. Shannon comes up for a breath of air but immediately goes back under.

UNDERWATER

Shannon slams her back into a large rock, which forces her to scream underwater. She takes a breath and begins to cough.

THE RIVER

Shannon comes up out of the water and coughs as water spews from her mouth.

She takes in a deep breath before going under more rapids.

Shannon pops out of the surface of the water one more time. She tries her best to swim towards the bank.

She falls down another dip and hits a rock face first. Her head starts bleeding and her head falls backwards, and her eyes roll upwards.

She floats down the river, disoriented, double-vision. The water becomes calm as she reaches smooth waters.

EXT. RIVER - LATER

Shannon's body lays on the bank of the calm river. An eagle flies above her and lets out a loud cry.

TOM (V.O.)  
(Whispered)  
Shannon.

Shannon moves her head to the side.

TOM (V.O.)  
(Whispered)  
Shannon, wake up.

She rolls over onto her back and her eyes slowly flicker open.

She touches the gash on her head and looks up at the overcast sky.

She sits up and stares at the river. She takes a look at her surroundings. Her stomach gurgles and she gags. Shannon rolls onto her hands and knees and throws up.

Shannon breathes deeply and clutches her stomach, her face contorted from pain. She stands to her feet.

She looks upstream and sees a person walking on the opposite side of the river. She waves her arms in the air.

SHANNON  
Hey! Hey I need help over here!

The person looks at her. She stops waving her arms when she realizes who it is.

The person is Reco, with the blood-covered axe in hand.

SHANNON

Oh my God...

She runs into the woods as Reco runs down the bank.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Shannon stumbles through foliage and trips over logs and branches.

She struggles to climb up a steep hill, grabs onto plants, slips on rocks and almost falls when plants become unrooted.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Reco splashes across the river. He loses his footing but quickly gets up, and grips the axe tightly.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Shannon runs through the woods. She trips over a rabbit hole and falls face first into the dirt.

RECO

He climbs up the hill, but slips. He grabs to a root of a tree, throws his axe up to the top of the hill, and continues to pull himself up.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

Shannon runs onto a dirt road. She looks to her right; nothing but dirt road.

She looks to her left; a two-story house sits at the end of the dirt road. Pine trees surround the house.

Shannon runs down the dirt road towards the house.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Shannon runs up to the front door. She pounds her fist on it.

SHANNON

Hello!? Is there anyone in there!?  
Somebody help me! Please!

She runs over to a window and bangs on it.

SHANNON

Hello!?

Shannon runs back to the front door and shoves her shoulder into it. The door won't budge. She continues to try and break the door open, but fails to do so.

She looks back at the woods and sees Reco run out. He looks to his right at the stretch of dirt road, and then at the house.

Shannon gasps and runs down the porch steps. She runs around the back of the house and up the porch steps of the back door.

She shoves her shoulder into the back door, too, but, like the front door, it doesn't open.

She jumps down the porch steps and races to a basement cellar door. She grabs the handle and pulls. The door moves half an inch.

She pulls harder and the door swings open. She falls on her back and sees Reco walk around the corner of the house.

Shannon gets to her feet and runs inside the cellar. She quickly grabs the door and slams it shut just as Reco reaches the cellar.

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

Shannon grabs a wooden board and slides it in front of the door. Reco tries to open it, but the board lock keeps it from opening.

She backs away, hyperventilating, and watches the door.

Suddenly, the axe breaks through the wooden cellar door. Shannon screams and backs away. The axe continues to break through.

She runs toward the staircase that leads up to the first floor.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Shannon runs out of the basement. She stops and stares at the house interior. It's a country home, with animal plaques, antique furniture, old-styled paintings.

She turns back to the smashing of the cellar door in the basement (O.S.).

Shannon slams the door shut and pulls a couch from against the wall. She pushes it in front of the basement door.

She looks over at the kitchen.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Shannon searches the room. She finds a wall phone and knocks the phone off the hook. She picks up the phone and dials 911.

911 OPERATOR  
9-1-1, what's your emergency—?

SHANNON  
Please, you have to help me!  
Someone is after me! He's killed my  
friends, he's trying to kill me!

911 OPERATOR  
Alright, we are sending officers to  
your address immediately. What's  
your name?

SHANNON  
Shannon. He's in the basement,  
please hurry!

911 OPERATOR  
Officers are on their way, Shannon.  
Do you have anything to arm  
yourself with?

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Reco swings his axe at the fuse box. Sparks fly from the box. He smashes the axe at it again.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Shannon stares at the phone.

SHANNON

Hello?

She listens in.

SHANNON

Hello? Is there anybody there—?

The axe breaks through the basement door. Shannon screams and drops the phone.

INT. HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY

Shannon runs up the stairs as Reco squeezes through the hole he made through the basement door beneath the staircase. He climbs over the couch.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Shannon runs into a clean bedroom with the bed made, a desk neat and organized, a closet door open with the clothes neatly folded and hung.

She slams the door shut and locks it. She runs to the window and unlocks it. She tries to open it, but it's jammed.

RECO (O.S.)

Please, don't make me chase you.

She looks back at the door.

INT. HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY

Reco walks up the stairs. He drags the axe behind him.

RECO

I can't believe you smashed my  
fucking head with a coat hanger.

He reaches the top of the stairs.

He walks to the first door of the upstairs hallway and opens it. He looks inside.

RECO

Nothing behind door number one.

He walks up to a second door. He opens it up. It's a bathroom.

RECO  
Nothing behind door number two.

He walks up the door Shannon ran into.

RECO  
Could it be door number three?

He tries to turn the door handle, but it's locked. He smiles.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The axe smashes through the door. Reco creates a hole in the wall and sticks his arm through. He unlocks the door and sticks his head in when he opens the door.

RECO  
You know, I'm starting to get real  
tired of breaking through—

Shannon hits his head with a trophy. Reco falls to the floor and groans. He spits out blood and a few teeth.

Shannon runs over to the window and tries to open it up, but it's really stuck.

Reco picks up one of his teeth and grits his teeth at Shannon.

RECO  
You knocked my fucking teeth out,  
you bitch!

He quickly jumps to his feet. Shannon hits the window with the trophy.

The glass shatters. She hits the remaining shards of glass with the trophy and knocks them off. She climbs through the window, but Reco grabs her.

SHANNON  
Get off!

She kicks him back and falls onto the roof. Reco stumbles backwards on the bed, but quickly climbs through the window.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Shannon runs over to a vine wall uses it as a ladder to climb down. Reco runs over and swings the axe at her. It misses her head by inches and cuts into the vine wall.

She screams and lets go of the wall. She falls to the ground and quickly gets on her feet.

Reco climbs down the vine wall and chases after her into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Shannon zigzags between the trees and jumps over bushes, logs, and rocks. She trips over a log and falls flat on her chest.

She looks up and around, but Reco is nowhere to be seen. She gets up on her knees and searches through the trees.

A shadow passes behind her; she doesn't notice. A branch snaps (O.S.) and her head snaps in the direction of the sound.

She stands up slowly walks through the foliage, but stops. She listens as the sounds of cars speeding down a highway echo through the woods in front of her (O.S.).

Shannon runs forward into an open area without any trees. She sees a car pass in the distance.

SHANNON

Hey! Hey over here! Help!

More cars pass through the trees.

SHANNON

Somebody help me!

She trips and falls again into some bushes. Shannon lifts her head up and sees Reco walking through the woods.

She quickly rolls on her back and stays flat on the ground. She breathes heavily and tries to calm herself down.

A snake begins to slither up her leg. She doesn't seem to notice until the snake slides onto her chest. She gasps and tries to remain still.

The snake slides up to her face. She squirms and grabs the snake and tosses away.

Shannon scrambles to her feet and backs away from the snake. She turns around and begins to run.

The head of an axe slides out from behind a tree, catching Shannon at the neck. She flips over onto her back.

Shannon attempts to breath but only coughs violently and sputters. Reco walks out from behind the tree and stares at her. Shannon stares back.

RECO

I'm sorry, are you unable to breathe?

He kicks her in her side. She grabs her side and curls up in the fetal position. He kicks her again, this time in her gut.

She wheezes as she tries to breathe.

RECO

You killed him...

Shannon rolls back over on her back.

RECO

You fucking killed him! He was like a brother to me, and you *killed him!*

SHANNON

(Wheezing)

You fucking killed three of my friends!

RECO

But you didn't know them for *fifteen* years did you!? This never would have happened if you cooperated.

SHANNON

They didn't deserve it...

RECO

Neither did Frankie. He didn't deserve to get his neck cut open, he didn't deserve to get his fucking face get smashed by a fucking rock!

SHANNON

He helped you kill innocent people!

RECO

How many times do I have to tell you that the people we kill are not innocent in any way?

SHANNON

Neither was your friend.

RECO

And neither were yours. I hope they  
enjoy rotting in Hell.

SHANNON

Fuck you.

RECO

I don't even know where to start! I  
don't know if I should let you  
suffer or if I should make it quick  
to save us both the time!

Shannon coughs and gags.

RECO

I am sick and tired of you running  
away, but now I have you.

Shannon begins to cry.

RECO

You thought you could get away? No,  
just like every other woman out  
there, you are so *God damn weak!*

He screams in her face.

RECO

Survival of the fittest.

He holds the axe up and slams it down on Shannon's leg. She  
screams in pain as the blade digs deeps into her skin and  
muscle.

Reco jiggles the axe in her leg and causes the skin and  
muscle to rip. Blood gushes from her leg.

Shannon grabs her leg and continues to scream.

SHANNON

Please!

RECO

Don't waste your breath.

SHANNON

Killing me won't bring your friend  
back.

RECO

No, but when I do, he'll be living  
in peace with the Lord. I'm here to  
avenge him.

Shannon wheezes as she rolls on her back. Reco gets the axe ready for another blow.

RECO

You're lucky I forgot my shotgun.

A branch snaps and Reco looks up. A baby Black Bear hangs onto a branch above them. It cries before the branch breaks off the tree.

The bear lands next to Shannon and Reco. Shannon covers her face and rolls away. She yelps at her leg. The bear rolls into Reco and knocks him to the ground.

The bear cries again and Reco jumps to his feet.

RECO

God damn it!

He kicks the bear. It growls and cries louder. He kicks it again, this time in the head. Its cries echo through the woods.

RECO

Get the fuck out of here!

The bear runs off. It limps as it runs away.

Reco picks up his axe and walks over to Shannon.

RECO

(To himself)

Lord, give me the strength to spread and fulfill your word and to exterminate those who sin by having same sex marriages. Please bless this poor woman's soul, and please watch over Frank.

(To Shannon)

And I just want you to remember, everything happens for a reason.

He holds the axe up above his head but stops when there's a loud growl and snarl behind him. He brings the axe down and looks behind him.

A seven-foot tall female American Black Bear stands behind Reco. It stands up on its hind feet and roars at him.

Reco's eyes grow wide. He holds up his axe, but the bear swipes its paw at him. His body flies across the ground, his axe falls from his hands.

He stands up as the bear charges at him. The bear tackles him and he screams as it begins to claw at his body and face.

The claws rip at his face and four gashes split open. Blood sprays on the grass and plants. The bear bites at his throat and rips it open.

Reco chokes on his blood.

The bear picks him up with her paws and throws him across the ground. He spits out blood and rolls onto his back. The bear walks over and bites down at his stomach.

His entrails spill out onto the ground. The bear pulls the intestines out with her paw, then bites down on Reco's head. Her teeth sink deep into his skull.

She shakes her head and Reco's neck snaps. The bear drops his head and begins to sniff his body.

She rolls his body over onto his stomach. She rolls him over again back onto his back.

Shannon struggles to stand up. She uses a tree for support, but she falls as she puts weight on her injured leg.

The bear turns to her. She looks at it and lays down on her stomach very still. The bear begins to walk to her and begins to sniff her.

Shannon's breathing becomes shaky as the bear continues to sniff her. It uses its nose to nudge her, and she lets out a small scream.

The bear continues to nudge her, sniffs her face, and, finally, backs away.

The baby bear walks up to its mother and snuggles against her, and they turn and begin to walk away. Shannon continues to stay still until the bear's footsteps are no longer heard.

Shannon breathes hard and deeply, her breathing very shaky. She sits up against the tree and wipes her forehead.

Shannon watches the bear and cub leave and looks back at Reco's mutilated body. She gags and turns away.

Shannon tries to stand up again, using the tree for support. She is able to keep her balance and she begins to limp towards the highway.

Police cars speed down the highway with their lights and sirens on. Shannon waves her arms towards them.

SHANNON  
Over here! Hey!

More patrol cars speed after the first one.

SHANNON  
Over here! Please...!

She falls and yelps. She tries to stand up but can't. Shannon begins to cry as she stares at the highway. The passing cars seem so close. She reaches out to them.

SHANNON  
Please...Over here...

She continues to cry.

A moment later, she gets on her hands and knees and begins to crawl her way towards the highway.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A car passes by the woods. Shannon appears out from the woods. She crawls out next to the highway and collapses.

A HITCHHIKER with hiking gear and a hiking backpack walks backwards along the shoulder of a highway.

He turns back around and sees Shannon on the side of the road. He walks up to her and notices her injuries.

HITCHHIKER  
Oh my God, what happened?!

SHANNON  
Please, help me...

HITCHHIKER  
Okay, hold on! Jesus Christ...

The hitchhiker takes his backpack off and takes off his sweatshirt. He covers Shannon with his sweatshirt.

He looks down the highway, but there are no cars coming.

HITCHHIKER  
(Nervous)  
Okay, um, okay, I'm going to try and get help...I saw police cars drive by, but there aren't any cars coming either way, but I'm going to try and find help okay?

SHANNON  
Don't leave me...

The hitchhiker kneels next to her.

HITCHHIKER  
Okay, I'll stay here. Jesus, what  
in God's name happened to you?

A car appears on the highway and nears the hitchhiker and Shannon.

HITCHHIKER  
Wait, there's a car coming this  
way. I'm going to try and stop it,  
okay

The hitchhiker walks out onto the middle of the road and waves his arms in the air.

The car begins to slow down.

HITCHHIKER  
I think they're slowing down!

The car pulls to the side of the road. The hitchhiker runs over to the driver side and talks to the driver of the car.

Shannon stares up at the overcast sky. The clouds begin to dissipate and the sun shines down on Shannon. She closes her eyes.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

SUPER: Three Days Later

A heart monitor beeps in the silent hospital room. Shannon lays in the hospital bed asleep.

Ashley and Diane sit in a chair, asleep. Ashley sleeps in Diane's lap.

Shannon's clean and showered, but her face is decorated with bruises. Her lip is stitched up, her leg wrapped with bandages, her cuts cleaned.

A shadow looms over Shannon and a hand touches her arm. She begins to wake up. Tom's face comes close to hers. He kisses her on the cheek.

TOM  
You did good. She's okay.

Shannon smiles.

TOM  
I love you.

Tom backs away. Shannon turns over to see him, but he's gone. There's nothing there but a large window.

She looks back at the sleeping Ashley and smiles a little.

She sits up and looks around the room and out the window. It rains, and she has a great view of the Appalachian Mountains.

She holds the bed comfort control and presses the up button. Her bed bends into a sitting position and she lays back.

Shannon grabs a TV remote and turns the television on. It's the news.

INSERT: Television screen

A NEWS ANCHOR sits at her desk and looks at the camera.

NEWS ANCHOR  
Good morning, I'm Christen  
Halloway. Our top story this  
morning, police officials were  
finally able to talk to the victim  
of a quadruple homicide while she  
was taking a vacation with three  
other friends on the Appalachian  
Trail. 33-year-old, Shannon Brooke,  
was kidnapped with three other  
friends while hiking by two men who  
were later identified as 30-year-  
old Reco Newman and 29-year-old  
Frankie Christy.

Two pictures show up on the screen of Reco and Frankie.

NEWS ANCHOR  
Both the convicts were killed the  
same day Shannon was found; Christy  
was killed near a small cabin the  
two men lived in and Newman was  
attacked and killed by an adult  
American Black Bear. Terri Cohen,  
Becky Turner, and Jonas Herring  
were also victims to the homicide  
and unfortunately were killed.

Three pictures show up of the three other victims.

HOSPITAL ROOM

Shannon's eyes water up.

TV SCREEN

NEWS ANCHOR

Shannon had told officials that the killings were hate crime-related, that the two men's reason that they killed the three hikers was because they were homosexuals, and that they, quote, "were told to follow the word of the Lord and exterminate those who sinned through homosexuality."

HOSPITAL ROOM

Shannon looks away from the TV and out the window. Lightning rips through the sky and thunder rumbles through the mountains.

TV SCREEN

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)

This event has sparked much controversy around the country as those who support gay rights protest against those who deny the rights of same sex marriages, or homosexuality altogether. But this isn't the first time a hate crime related to homosexuality has occurred on the Appalachian Trail. Let us not forget the murders of Julianne Williams and Lollie Winans who were victims of a double homicide in 1996 where authorities considered anti-lesbian prejudice as a possible motive for the brutal attack.

BACK TO SCENE

The news anchor's voice echoes as she continues her story while Shannon stares out the window.

Lightning flashes again. Shannon closes her eyes.

FADE OUT.

Thunder rumbles through the blackness.

THE END