

The Hinterland
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FADE IN:

EXT. ROAD - DAY

It's a lone stretch of road in a rural area. The sky is clear but the landscape is covered with snow.

A small mail truck trudges on the deserted road.

INT. MAIL TRUCK - DRIVING - DAY

A burly MAILMAN is behind the wheel, busy drinking coffee from a thermos.

His eyes narrow, seeing someone on the road. He closes the thermos, placing it on the dashboard.

He slows down, palming the horn.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

a lone FEMALE FIGURE is in the middle of the road. Slowly moving.

The Mailman HONKS the horn, again. The Female Figure continues to move at a snail's pace.

He slips the transmission into PARK, and slides out of the vehicle.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

MAILMAN

Ma'am?

No response.

MAILMAN

Ma'am, are you --

He loses the power of speech as he sees the trail of blood on the white ground. He reaches for her right shoulder, spinning her around.

He GASPS --

(CONTINUED)

-- because it's as if a giant chewed her up then spit her out: Her left arm is missing at the elbow, and her right hand grips the bloody stump; her left eye is missing, and what is left of her face is expressionless, slicked with blood.

She begins to SCREAM.

INT. TAXI - DRIVING - DAY

CALEB SLATER, 21, is asleep in the backseat, his head resting on the window. His left wrist is handcuffed to the door.

The taxis slews to a stop, Caleb's head jerking from the momentum. The taxi's horn BLARES.

TAXI DRIVER (O.S.)
Almost ran you down! Idiot!

Caleb's eyes flutter open, focusing --

THROUGH THE TAXI'S WINDSHIELD

-- to see: An older man trudging through the snow past the taxi's front bumper, a nickel-plated Remington 700 rifle slung over his back. His name is BING TRUITT, 60.

The TAXI DRIVER palms the horn, again.

TAXI DRIVER
C'mon!

Bing turns to the taxi, his left eye hidden behind an eye patch with a deep scar the color of licorice running from the patch down to his jaw.

CALEB
(yawning)
It's not wise to piss off the man
with the rifle.

TAXI DRIVER
He ain't gonna waste a bullet on
us. They're all here for the
bounty.

CALEB
Who is?

(CONTINUED)

TAXI DRIVER

Rifle jockeys. Hunters. They're after the reward the Gov'ner placed on them animals.

(off Caleb's look)

It's been on the news.

CALEB

Animals?

TAXI DRIVER

Some say mountain lions, others say bobcats. Thirteen people've been killed this winter alone. Found one the other day -- a jogger -- missing half her face.

CALEB

(to himself; sardonic)

Welcome to Oklahoma.

TAXI DRIVER

They ain't gonna be out for much longer. They got five days 'fore the big one hits.

CALEB

'Big one?'

TAXI DRIVER

Winter Storm. It's been on the news, too.

CALEB

I've been busy.

TAXI DRIVER

S'posed to be the biggest in seven years. Some parts expected to get thirteen inches.

The taxi turns into a cul-de-sac, pulling into a driveway.

Caleb removes a microcassette recorder from his coat pocket, pressing PLAY:

CALEB (V.O.)

Left shoe.

In the rearview mirror, the Taxi Driver sees Caleb remove a key from his left shoe and uncuff himself.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - HOUSE - DAY

Caleb slides out of the cab and surveys the snow-covered landscape. It is bleak and as inviting as the gray weather. The cul-de-sac is a circle of empty lots occupied by wooden frames that are the skeletons of new homes.

His eyes fall on the house before him: A two-story brick house which is one of only two completed houses in the cul-de-sac.

He turns to the second house and is surprised to see a NINE-YEAR-OLD GIRL staring at him through her window.

TAXI DRIVER
Sixty-two fifty.

He drops Caleb's luggage at his feet. Caleb hands him the money.

TAXI DRIVER
Enjoy.

Caleb stares at his house with as much enthusiasm as a yawn.

INT. FOYER - HOUSE - DAY

Caleb enters, luggage at his side. The house alarm immediately SOUNDS. He pulls out his cell phone, scrolling its saved numbers until he comes upon the one he needs, and types it into the alarm's keypad. The alarm CEASES.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is spartan and clean, complete with a couch, coffee table and a television.

He slumps on the couch. On the coffee table is a phone and answering machine. He pushes the button on the machine:

ANSWERING MACHINE
You have two messages:

BEEP.

PUBLISHER (V.O.)
This is Ty Purcell from Walker & Hyde leaving a message for Caleb Slater. We have granted an extension on your deadline. We hope your manuscript--

(CONTINUED)

He presses the button. BEEP.

EVAN (V.O.)

Hey, C, it's Evan. Hope your plane ride was okay. Didn't fall asleep, did you? Just kidding. I told mom and dad it was okay to give your publisher this number. Hope this is the peace and quiet you need to finish your novel.

BEEP.

Caleb slumps further in the couch. He doesn't want to think about his novel.

INT. GARAGE - HOUSE - DAY

He enters the garage, turning on the light. He sees a black Chevy Tahoe waiting patiently for him. A Cheshire-cat grin curls his lips.

Parked next to the Tahoe is a white Ducati 848 motorcycle. He runs his finger along its slick exterior, his smile getting bigger.

He turns to the workbench, various tools splayed across its surface. He runs his hand over the handle of a nailgun, picking it up.

He puts on a blowtorch helmet and examines his reflection in the Tahoe's window.

CALEB

Bruce Campbell. Army of Darkness.

With the nailgun in hand, he does the James Bond pose.

CALEB

Ash, 008.

He catches the Nine-Year-Old peering at him through the garage door window. Startled, he squeezes the trigger. The nailgun SPITS a nail with such velocity that it RICOCHETS around the garage.

The Nine-Year-Old darts away. Caleb's on the ground in a fetal position, the helmet cupping the goods.

CALEB

(scowls annoyance)

Your sister's ass.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Caleb dashes out of the house, slewing to a stop by the garage door. He sees a bag of Skittles near a cluster of footprints.

VOICE (O.S.)
You lookin' for her?

An angular BRUNETTE, about the same age as Caleb, and possessing a quiet beauty reserved for silent movie stars, drags the Nine-Year-Old by her jacket collar.

NINE-YEAR-OLD
He tried to shoot me!

CALEB
No, I didn't!

NINE-YEAR-OLD
He had a gun and a mask! I saw him. We could be living next door to Seven.

BRUNETTE
He's Evan's brother.

NINE-YEAR-OLD
Thought they were twins. He looks nothin' like him.

CALEB
We're fraternal.

BRUNETTE
I'm Kara, and this little spitfire is my sister Phoebe.

CALEB
(to Phoebe)
Missin' these?

He dangles the Skittles in front of her. She snatches them.

KARA
Don't mind her. She's nine going on sixteen. She gets curious, she gets into things.

PHOEBE
I wouldn't have gotten into things if you hadn't taken away my game.

(CONTINUED)

KARA

You know why I took it away.

PHOEBE

It's six months till the Wizard Expo. I need the practice.

CALEB

Wizard Expo?

Phoebe glances at him as if he were an impulse buy she planned to return.

PHOEBE

It's a three day battle royale. Every gamer's gonna be there.

KARA

Ignore her. She pretends she's dangerous.

CALEB

I saw a guy. Eye patch.

KARA

That's Bing. Don't worry. He's a pussycat. He and the others are patrollin'.

CALEB

I heard. Mountain lions.

PHOEBE

They ate up a jogger's face, killed her boyfriend.

KARA

Why don't you go inside and play your Wii that I wasted a paycheck on.

PHOEBE

You hid it, dummy.

KARA

It's in the kitchen, under the sink. Who's the dummy now?

Phoebe darts inside her house.

CALEB
(re: neighborhood)
Is it always like this?

KARA
Construction crews'll be back on
Monday. Couple of days before the
winter storm arrives.

CALEB
I heard. The 'big one.' What I
meant was are we the only ones
here?

KARA
Welcome to the hinters.

CALEB
Hinters?

KARA
It's what we call it -- short for
Hinterland. We're ten miles in any
direction from anyone. We have
Guthrie to the north, Edmond to the
south, Cooper Ranch to the west,
and an endless supply of pecan
trees to the east. Our nearest
neighbor is three streets down.

CALEB
(sardonically)
It's a wonder he moved out here.

KARA
How's Evan doin'?

CALEB
For an adrenaline junkie, the
Middle East's Disneyland.

KARA
And you?

CALEB
I'm not a fighter, I'm a --

KARA
Lover?

He tries to smile but it comes out broken.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Writer.

KARA

Are you hungry? Phoebe and I are about to have lunch.

CALEB

No, thanks. Gotta unpack. It was nice meetin' you.

He's already making his way to his front door as the last word rolls off his tongue.

KARA

Nice meeting you.

She walks towards her house, surreptitiously glancing over her shoulder to see if Caleb has given her a second glance. He hasn't. He's already inside.

INT. BEDROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

Caleb stares at the laptop screen, the Backstreet Boys BLARE from the stereo on the desk.

INSERT - LAPTOP SCREEN

which have the words in bold type: Last Will and Testament.

BACK TO SCENE

Caleb types a few words, but immediately deletes them. Frustrated, he closes the laptop, turning off the stereo --

-- a HOWL bellows from outside, camouflaged a second ago by the Backstreet Boys. Caleb pauses, but only hears the wind LASHING at the window.

INT. BATHROOM - HOUSE - LATER

Caleb finishes brushing his teeth. He glances down at the scars on his wrist. A reminder of a past suicide attempt. He runs his finger over the scars.

The HOWLING returns. Longer and louder, as if it were outside the house.

INT. BEDROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

Caleb goes to the window, his eyes tickling back and forth.

SLAM.

His eyes rove the backyard. Snow flurries roil across the yard, driven by an unflinching wind.

SLAM.

His eyes fall on the fence. The gate swings open only to have the wind SLAM it shut.

CALEB

Your sister's ass.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

He steps out of the house bundled in a parka, a flashlight in hand. He moves to the fence, the flashlight beam playing on the darkness.

SLAM. The gate swings open, again. He grabs its latch, trying to close it... except the gate is disproportionate, preventing the latch from locking correctly.

He steps OUTSIDE the fence's perimeter, the darkness of the forest beyond. He tries to fix the latch from the outside.

He notices something, washing the flashlight's beam over it: Burned in the fence post is a symbol, similar in design to an Egyptian hieroglyphic.

He flashes the beam over another post. It, too, has a similar symbol burned in it.

From the darkness of the forest, a low GROWL swells like a distant thunderclap.

Caleb whirls around to the noise, the flashlight playing among the trees. He moves away from the fence, stepping closer to the forest --

SLAM. The noise startles him as if slapped. He drops the flashlight. It rolls into the mouth of the forest, swallowed by the darkness.

He moves to the forest. And stops as if he hit an invisible wall. Something is in the darkness, BREATHING.

(CONTINUED)

He cautiously turns, and slowly creeps toward the fence. His breathing becoming rapid. Afraid to turn around.

Another GROWL swells. Louder and closer.

Caleb makes a mad dash for the fence --

-- behind him, branches are HEARD snapping as the THING, its large silhouette hidden in the shadows, PLOWS through in pursuit.

He lunges in the backyard, trying desperately to close the gate behind him. But the latch won't lock --

-- the Thing SMACKS into the fence, SPLINTERING it... causing the latch to LOCK CORRECTLY. The force of the impact throws Caleb to the ground.

The Thing treads outside, its breath HISSING through the fence. In defeat, it unleashes a bloodcurdling SNARL.

Caleb races inside his house, SLAMMING the door shut behind him.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Caleb collapses to the floor, his legs like rubber.

INT. BEDROOM - HOUSE - MORNING

Caleb is asleep, his wrist handcuffed to the bedpost. Next to him is the microcassette recorder. And the nailgun.

Hammering is HEARD from outside.

His eyes flutter open, falling on the microcassette recorder. He yawns, and presses PLAY:

CALEB (V.O.)
Second drawer, The Catcher in the Rye, page 77.

His free hand grabs the book from the nightstand, flipping it open to page 77 where the key awaits. He uncuffs himself from the bedpost.

The doorbell RINGS.

He goes to the window, the cuffs still dangling from his wrist. He looks outside, and sees Bing hammering, repairing his gate.

The doorbell continues to RING. He grabs his coat.

INT. FOYER - HOUSE - MORNING

Caleb opens the door to a uniformed officer named GARRYMORE. Behind Garrymore are TWO HUNTERS, their rifles in a sling over their shoulders.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Caleb, flanked by the two hunters, follows Garrymore past his fence.

GARRYMORE

We found your footprints... and
its.

Caleb's about to reply but he stops dead in his tracks, losing the power of speech and locomotion.

A hundred yards away is a large patch of red snow. The aftermath of carnage.

FIVE POLICEMEN are crowd control: Keeping REPORTERS and GAWKERS (SIX ROWDY GUYS among them) behind the police tape.

GARRYMORE

What we found of him we were able
to fit into a Ziplock.

CALEB

Who was he?

TALL HUNTER

One of us.

SHORT HUNTER

(grimly)
Not anymore.

TALL HUNTER

I don't wanna hear that kinda talk.

SHORT HUNTER

We're the last of the
Mohicans. Everyone's turned
tail. Afraid --

TALL

There's nothin' to be afraid of --

(CONTINUED)

SHORT HUNTER

You seen the dogs -- they don't
wanna come up here. It's haunted.

TALL HUNTER

That's bullshit!

They start to argue. Garrymore separates the two, talking to them separately. Calming them because anger and rifles don't mix.

CRYPTOZOOLOGIST (O.S.)

Look how big its stride is...

Caleb turns to see TWO MORE HUNTERS and a CRYPTOZOOLOGIST crouched by his fence, examining the mesh tracks in the snow.

CRYPTOZOOLOGIST

... Five-toed bipedal, front claws
measure 'bout five-inches in
length, heel measures 'bout
two-inches.

BURLY HUNTER

That's a big bastard.

BALD HUNTER

What is it?

CRYPTOZOOLOGIST

I can tell you what it's not, it's
not a mountain lion or bobcat.

In the b.g., Bing continues to repair the fence, oblivious to everyone.

CRYPTOZOOLOGIST

(approaching)

Did you see it?

CALEB

Heard it.

The Cryptozoologist extends his hand and Caleb shakes it.

CRYPTOZOOLOGIST

Rene Ribicheaux,
cryptozoologist. What else did you
hear? Was it eerily quiet? Did
you get an weird vibe? There's a
phenomenon called the Oz Factor --

(CONTINUED)

GARRYMORE
(ignores Rene)
What were you doing out here?

CALEB
Wind blew my gate open. Came out
here to close it.

RENE
It didn't chase you?

CALEB
It did, but it stayed outside.

TALL HUNTER
Bullshit! That red patch down
yonder is the aftermath of what
this animal is capable of. It
would've made matchsticks of your
goddamn fence.

CALEB
(defensive)
I ain't makin' it up.

RENE
You look kinda familiar.

Caleb ignores him.

BING
What's with the cuffs?

Bing's voice demands respect, and everyone's eyes fall on
the handcuffs dangling from Caleb's wrist. He quickly
pushes the cuffs up his coat sleeve.

CALEB
Nothin'.

GARRYMORE
It looks like something.

Caleb can feel their stares burning a hole in him.

CALEB
I sleepwalk.

RENE
I know who you are! You wrote that
article on Montana Lewis for Guns &
Ammo.

BALD HUNTER
The hell you say.

RENE
I shit you not! This boy spent
three months with the Tennessee
bushman.

BURLY HUNTER
Is it true he likes to blow up
shit?

CALEB
His favorite hobby was mixin'
potassium, sulfur, and sugar into
wine barrels.

Garrymore glances at the police tape. The five policemen
are not paying attention and the rowdy group of guys are
attempting to cross the tape.

GARRYMORE
(shouting)
Get those kids behind the
tape! Christ, don't make me use my
gun!

He trudges off toward the police tape.

TALL HUNTER
I doubt the Montana would let a
hundred pound bag of fly shit
interview him for a survey let
alone an article.

CALEB
He did it as a favor to my father.

SHORT HUNTER
What's your last name?

CALEB
Slater.

SHORT HUNTER
You related to Dirk Slater?

CALEB
He's my father.

Even this impresses Tall Hunter.

(CONTINUED)

BALD HUNTER

No shit?! Swingin' Dirk Slater! The guy that single-handily took down the Diomedé Kodiak.

BURLY HUNTER

The largest one on record. Ten feet, eighteen hundred pounds.

CALEB

Eighteen ninety-six.

BALD HUNTER

Hell, son. We should saddle you up.

CALEB

I'm not my father.

BURLY HUNTER

You sayin' your old man never took you huntin'?

Bing tosses his rifle Caleb.

BING

What d'you have in your hands?

CALEB

Remington.

BING

Go on.

Caleb's about to protest, but Bing glares at him with a look that can shatter glass.

CALEB

(reluctantly)

Mountain LSS Model with a stainless steel barrel and laminated stock. It is a bolt action with a barrel length of .26 inches, using a .280 Remington cartridge.

He tosses the rifle back to Bing. A small smile curls Bing's lips so fast it might have been a nervous twitch.

BING

Your fence is fixed.

He slings the Remington over his shoulder, gathers his tools, and walks away. The other hunters follow.

(CONTINUED)

Caleb glances at the fence. His eyes fall on another symbol. This one carved into the wood. He turns to look for Bing, but is met by Tall Hunter, pen and rifle in his arms.

TALL HUNTER
Can you sign my rifle?

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

It's a Barnes-and-Noble-type bookstore, complete with a coffee-shop at the entrance.

Caleb's in the New Age section, his eyes roving over the book titles. He pulls out one particular book, skimming its pages. He stops.

INSERT - PAGE

which shows talisman symbols, similar in designs to the ones he found on his fence. Underneath, the caption reads: Symbols carved in objects act as talisman, warding off evil.

The next page has a variety of symbols, the caption reading: Other symbols provide potency to kill enemies.

BACK TO SCENE

PHOEBE (O.S.)
Shit on a crust!

Caleb jerks his head up from the book, recognizing the voice.

PHOEBE (O.S.)
The price is wrong, bitch!

He follows the voice to the Children Section where Phoebe is slung over a chair playing her Gameboy DS. BYSTANDERS glare at her as if she were a drunk in church.

CALEB
We meet again.

Phoebe darts her eyes to him, then back to her game. Her fingers feverishly jabbing the DS.

PHOEBE
It's you.

(CONTINUED)

KARA (O.S.)
Phoebe Elizabeth Foster!

Kara, wearing a barista apron, approaches.

PHOEBE
(ignoring her)
The price is wro--

Kara snatches the DS from her grip.

PHOEBE
Hey!

KARA
You need to cool off, young lady.

CALEB
You're scarin' the sailors.

Phoebe stomps away, giving Caleb the finger.

KARA
Can I make you a latte?

CALEB
Just book huntin'.

She spies the book under his arm.

KARA
(reading)
Symbols & Witchcraft: A Study in
Alchemy.

Caleb tucks the book deeper under his arm, embarrassed.

CALEB
It's for research.

KARA
Is this about what they found this
morning?

CALEB
They talk to you, too?

KARA
Bing was at my door at the crack of
dawn. Had me pack. Feeb and I are
staying at a motel in Edmond.

CALEB

It's just a wild animal... that's
'fraid of fences.

KARA

What about you? Afraid of
anything?

CALEB

Only myself.

Kara smiles, oblivious to the sardonic tone of Caleb's remark, but her smile is so infectious that Caleb can't help but to smile back.

P.A. (V.O.)

Need help in the cafe.

KARA

They're playing my song.

She leaves, Phoebe following her. The little girl turns to Caleb, but instead of waving to her, he gives her the finger.

A smile curls her lips, and she returns the gesture. A small smile curls Caleb's lips.

INT. TAHOE - DRIVING - NIGHT

Caleb is at the wheel, snow flurries kissing the windshield.

A snowmobile DARTS IN FRONT of the Tahoe like a rogue deer. Caleb throws the wheel, SWERVING --

-- into a ditch.

He stares at the windshield, his knuckles tight around the steering wheel. A LANKY INDIVIDUAL, eyes covered with snow goggles, taps the window. Caleb lowers it.

LANKY INDIVIDUAL

Dude, I totally didn't see
you. Sorry.

A couple yards behind him, standing behind a dying bonfire are the rest of the rowdy guys (from the police tape).

LANKY INDIVIDUAL

Wanna come up for a beer?

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

Caleb sits in a ratty couch, cradling a beer. Next to him is MIKE (the Lanky Individual), playing PS3. To his left is TYLER, downing a beer of his own. On the floor, also engaged in PS3, are SAM, DOMINQUE, DANTE, and RILEY.

TYLER

You live next door to Kara.

CALEB

You know Kara?

TYLER

We all had a class with her at UCO. Till she dropped out.

MIKE

Parents died. Car accident. She dropped out to raise that spitfire of a sister she has.

SAM

Have you heard that tyke? Called me somethin' I had to look up on Imdb.

DANTE

What d'you think of our little Shangri-La?

CALEB

It's nice. The places I've seen. The forest... at night.

TYLER

It's haunted.

RILEY

(groans)

Here he goes...

TYLER

The Lenape Indians knew there was something evil in the wind. In the soil.

DOMINQUE

Don't let him shit in your ears.

TYLER

(to Caleb)

It comes every nine years. Like a cycle. Always in the winter. A

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TYLER (cont'd)
person'll disappear. A family
slaughtered. Sometimes they'll
find what's left of them, sometimes
they won't. Only a few have lived
to tell the tale.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Whirling snow obscures the Leeds Settlement as if it were built in a snow globe. The settlement consists of large log cabin and a barn.

TYLER (V.O.)
A preacher by the name of Joseph
Leeds, along with his brother
Benjamin, brought their families
and congregation to the Hinters.

INSIDE THE CABIN: JOSEPH LEEDS, a bear of a man, is laying on heavy clothing to his person. Next to him, in similar preparation, is BENJAMIN. The two brothers are preparing to brave the harsh winter storm. They are surrounded by the rest of the SETTLEMENT: Men, women, and children. TWELVE in total.

TYLER (V.O.)
But the harsh Oklahoma winter was
not kind to them. It had killed
their crops and livestock. They
were facing starvation. Joseph and
Benjamin decided to brave the
elements to go hunt. They had
little choice.

MARY LEEDS, a little girl of nine, grabs Joseph's hand. He leans over, wrapping his arms around her in comfort. She grabs his gloved hand, sliding a homemade bracelet around his wrist. JOSEPH'S WIFE pulls her away as Joseph and Benjamin grab their rifles. They open the door, snow blowing in as if shot from a cannon. They exit the cabin.

TYLER (V.O.)
After two days, they still had not
returned. But on the third night,
something did...

INSIDE THE CABIN: Everyone is in front of a fire, trying to keep warm. The wind strikes the log structure, trying to come in. A noise is HEARD. Everyone looks around, exchanging alarmed glances. It sounded like a GROWL, but cut with the ROARING wind, it is hard to be sure. Another GROWL is HEARD, deep and guttural.

(CONTINUED)

OUTSIDE: Two brave men, hunkered in heavy clothing, investigate. The whirling snow has died. It's just the wind. They trudge through the snow, abruptly stopping. Their eyes go wide. Before them, huge claw prints are imbedded in the snow.

SCREAMS escape the log cabin. Screams of fear and pain.

The two whirl around to see a large shadow pass a window from within the cabin.

TYLER (V.O.)

The Lenape Indians knew of the nine year cycle.

THREE NATIVE AMERICAN HUNTERS from the Lenape tribe enter the settlement armed with spears and bow and arrows. CLOSE-UP: Tips of the arrows and spears have talisman symbols carved into them.

TYLER (V.O.)

But the harsh winter prevented them from taking action until after...

They enter the log cabin, their weapons leading. Blood is everywhere. Tables and chairs are scattered like debris from a tornado.

Scuffling is HEARD from behind a closet door. They go to the door, FIRST HUNTER cautiously opening it --

-- to reveal nothing but darkness.

Outside, SNARLING cuts the silence like a scythe. They spin around to the noise.

From the darkness of the closet, Mary leaps out. They spin around to her. She clutches First Hunter's leg, whimpering and afraid. The others flank her, slowly lowering their weapons.

The front door BURSTS OPEN, splintering wood. The hunters turn, their weapons ready. Mary SCREAMS, burying her face in her arms in a fetal position. Behind her, the shadows of the hunters and the MONSTER play on the wall, fighting.

TYLER (V.O.)

They killed it. Or thought they did.

Later, Mary is in the background as the Lenape hunters stand over a large grave. They solemnly set fire to it.

(CONTINUED)

TYLER (V.O.)

Because two left that one night,
but one came back.

INSIDE THE GRAVE: A large claw burns in the fire. Wrapped
around its wrist is the homemade bracelet.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

TYLER

So the legend goes.

There's a pregnant pause, then:

RILEY

I'm gonna call 'bullshit' on that.

Everyone snickers.

SAM

Why does it come out only in the
winter? And why every nine
years? Why not six months? Right
after football season ends.

TYLER

Kiss my ass, Scully. I ain't
makin' it up.

RILEY

And is there only one monster or is
there a Dread Pirate Roberts
situation happenin'?

Caleb's cell BUZZES. The boys continue to argue.

CALEB

(into cell)

Hello?

ADT OPERATOR (V.O.)

This is ADT Security. You have an
alarm breach.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Headlights slice through the flurries, the Tahoe pulling to
the driveway. The garage yawns, darkness inside.

INT KITCHEN - HOUSE - NIGHT

Caleb enters with a flashlight in one hand, the nailgun in the other. He moves through the darkness, the flashlight beam leading.

He stops, the beam playing on wet FOOTPRINTS. He follows the footprints

UP THE STAIRS

as they lead to his bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He enters, the nailgun looking for a target. The footprints stop at the dresser, the handcuffs resting on top.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

He goes to the backdoor. The flashlight beam illuminating the door's LOCK hanging on its side like a pendulum. On the ground are its screws.

VOICE (O.S.)

Turn around! Slowly! Let me see
your hands!

Caleb raises his hands and slowly turns to face Garrymore's flashlight. Garrymore lowers his weapon.

GARRYMORE

(scowls annoyance)
Jesus. Should've known.

Caleb recognizes Garrymore.

GARRYMORE

Sleepwalkin'? The PD starts
chargin' after the second false
alarm.

CALEB

Someone broke into my house!

Garrymore's flashlight shines on the lock and its screws.

GARRYMORE

Wanna file a report?

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

I want you to find the bastard!

GARRYMORE

Was anything taken?

CALEB

I don't know.

GARRYMORE

It was probably those rowdy bastards three street down.

CALEB

I was just with them. It was probably those gunslingers from this mornin'. Lookin' for a souvenir.

GARRYMORE

They're forty miles east of here tracking something.

He makes his way to the front door.

GARRYMORE

Let the department know if you wanna file.

He's out the door before Caleb can protest.

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

The Weather Channel BLARES from the television:

METEOROLOGIST (V.O.)

... the extreme weather will end around midnight as the last of the cold front leaves the metro.

Caleb isn't paying attention to the television. He's busy reading Symbols & Witchcraft: A Study in Alchemy.

INSERT - PAGE

which shows arrows, hunting knives, and hatchets marked with symbols. Underneath, the caption reads: Several Native American tribes believe talisman symbols aid them in battle.

BACK TO SCENE

(CONTINUED)

METEOROLOGIST (V.O.)

We have reported power
outages. OG&E estimate that over
half the metro is without--

The lights flicker, the power going out like a sputtering engine. Caleb is now sitting in the dark.

CALEB

Your sister's ass.

EXT. FOREST - UNKNOWN

Emergency vehicles occupy the snow covered ground, at its mouth is a frozen lake.

EMERGENCY CREWS trudge from the lake carrying a small black body bag in their arms.

A FATHER, anguish in his face, is held back by an EMT --

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Caleb startles awake as if slapped. His eyes immediately go wide, tickling back and forth in their sockets. He's not in his bedroom.

He glances at himself: He's wearing a parka and snow boots that he clearly didn't go to bed wearing. His handcuffs dangle from his wrist.

A guttural GROWL bellows from the darkness. Caleb's now on his feet, hauling ass away.

The growling is HEARD, again. Closer.

Caleb continues his full sprint, dodging trees and their branches. He looks over his shoulder, seeing an animal's SILHOUETTE melt out of the shadows in pursuit.

He whips his head forward, seeing the tree a split second before he COLLIDES into it. He crumbles in a heap. The silhouette LUNGES at him --

-- and with a harsh RING, a bullet SEARS the air, SLAMMING into the animal.

Like a coiled spring, Caleb is on his feet, stumbling backwards. His eyes fall on the large mountain lion splayed a few feet from him. Dead.

(CONTINUED)

Bing emerges from darkness like an apparition, his Remington already slung over his shoulder.

CALEB

You!

Bing circles the carcass.

BING

This ain't what was out here last night.

CALEB

(realizing)

It was you! Broke into my house! Screwed with my cuffs! You used me as bait!

BING

You were in no real danger.

Caleb pulls out two red cloths from the parka. He sniffs them.

CALEB

Deer piss! Why not just douse me in steak sauce, you asshole?!

BING

It's dead, you're not.

CALEB

Somnambulism's nothin' to play with.

Bing kneels next to the carcass and ties its hooves together.

BING

Didn't know it was dangerous.

CALEB

'Dangerous?!'

Bing tosses Caleb a shiny new pair of stainless steel handcuffs.

BING

These won't open.

CALEB

Your pals from this mornin' in on this, too?

(CONTINUED)

Bing grabs the carcass by its legs.

BING

They're on the other side of town.

CALEB

Slick as snot. Send 'em on a wild
goose chase while you bag and tag
the trophy.

BING

Like I said, this ain't what was
out last night.

CALEB

There's something you ain't sayin'.

BING

(ignoring him)

Follow your footprints a hundred
yards, you'll see your house.

He drags the carcass away, disappearing as quick as he
appeared.

Caleb looks around, realizing he is alone. He springs away
and drives into a cluster of branches.

CALEB

Your sister's ass.

INT. BATHROOM - HOUSE - MORNING

Caleb lethargically stares at his reflection in the
mirror. A thermometer hangs from his lips.

He stands at the toilet, taking a leak. The SQUEAL of an
electric saw startles him, and the thermometer falls into
the toilet.

CALEB

Your sister's...
(sneezes)

Ass.

He carefully picks the thermometer from the toilet, shaking
it off in the sink. The SQUEAL of the saw continues.

INT. BEDROOM - HOUSE - MORNING

Caleb stares out the window at: CONSTRUCTION WORKERS assembling the skeletons of new houses. NOISES from various tools are HEARD, the most prominent is the electric saw.

INT. KITCHEN - HOUSE - MORNING

He grabs scissors, a roll of duct tape, and a box of tinfoil from the cabinet.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - HOUSE - MORNING

He goes through Evan's spare military bag, removing desert fatigues, socks, two Kevlar vests. He digs deeper until he removes a large wool blanket.

INT. BEDROOM - HOUSE - MORNING

He covers the window with tinfoil. He cuts long sections of the wool blanket, duct taping the sections over the window's seams. He is slowly turning his room into a cocoon -- the NOISE of the construction crews becoming distant.

INT. KITCHEN - HOUSE - MORNING

He pours a splash of NyQuil, Pepsi, and Jack Daniels into a coffee cup, stirring the concoction before downing it with grit teeth.

INT. BEDROOM - HOUSE - MORNING

He flips open the dictionary on his desk, dropping the handcuff key between its pages. He slides into bed and cuffs himself to the bedpost.

CALEB

(into microcassette recorder)
Dictionary. Filter, fingerprint.

He yawns, closing his eyes.

The doorbell RINGS.

INT. FOYER - HOUSE - MORNING

Caleb opens the door. Kara stands at the threshold with Phoebe behind her, playing her Gameboy DS.

KARA
Came to check on you. Heard about
your little adventure last night.

Caleb's eyes are like weights, the door practically holding him up. The concoction working its magic.

CALEB
I was used as bait as a lil' joke.

PHOEBE
The price is wrong, bitch!

Kara snatches the DS from her.

PHOEBE
Hey!

KARA
What'd I say about--

There's a THUD. They turn to find Caleb slumped against the door, asleep.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The snowmobile slews to a stop, kicking snow. Mike hops off, hurriedly unzipping his pants as he makes his way to a nine-foot wall of trash wood that stares at him like an over-sized porcupine.

He lets out a sigh of relief as he pees, shuddering as the wind whips at him. He lifts his head, smelling something beyond the trash wood. He zips himself up, and attempts to peer through the dead branches and tree trunks.

The wind brushes something against his leg. He looks down to see a metal sign that reads: Cooper Ranch. Private Property. Trespassers will be KILLED.

He looks over his shoulder, past the tracks caused by the snowmobile, to an overturned tree lying over a barbed-wire fence. He rode through private property.

He steps away from the trash wood, and stops. His eyes focused on deep claw marks on the trunks and branches of the trash wood.

He hops on his snowmobile, and TEARS away.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Clancy is busy installing a two hundred pound generator. Kara exits the house.

CLANCY

Thought you were gonna check on him and leave.

KARA

He passed out on the floor. I couldn't just leave him.

CLANCY

Where is he now?

KARA

The floor.

CLANCY

Sniff the air, but don't kiss the dirt. I'm tellin' you this as your daddy's friend, I want you and Feeb outta here 'fore the storm hits.

KARA

Then why are you installing a genny?

Phoebe bursts through the door.

PHOEBE

He's in your truck!

KARA

Why'd he get in my truck?

PHOEBE

Not yours.

Eyes got to Bing.

BING

He wasn't wearin' a pair of handcuffs?

KARA

Handcuffs?

(CONTINUED)

BING

I doubt he'd find my spare keys.

The sound of the truck's engine ROARING to life is HEARD. Everyone's face freezes.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Caleb's eyes flutter open. He's sitting at the kitchen table. Kara stands next to him, taking a drag from her inhaler.

KARA

Jesus, you're insane!
(takes another drag)
Driving while asleep?!

CALEB

How'd I--

KARA

Bing talked you outta his truck.

Caleb's eyes groan as they fall on Bing.

BING

It's how I was able to put a coat
and galoshes on you last night.

KARA

The damage is done.

CALEB

What damage?

KARA

You owe me a new tire.

CALEB

I drove your car?

BING

No, mine. We used hers to stop
you.

Phoebe enters the room, handing Kara a thermometer.

CALEB

How bad is it?

(CONTINUED)

KARA

Forget about the tire. Let's worry about you. I think you have a fever.

Caleb glares at Bing as Kara jams the thermometer in his mouth.

CALEB

(mumbles; re: thermometer)
Where'd you get this?

PHOEBE

Your sink.

Caleb immediately spits out the thermometer.

BING

I'll bring you a new tire tomorrow. As for t'night, Caleb you'll drive 'em back to their motel.

CALEB

What 'bout you?

BING

I have somethin' to do t'night. Walk me out.

INT/EXT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

Caleb stands at the door, shivering. Bing's outside, sniffing the air.

BING

In two days, the storm'll stick on us like dried snot.

He turns to Caleb, about to say something more, but gets in his truck instead. He STARTS his truck, and drives away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Caleb enters, trailed by Kara who is wiping the thermometer with a sanitation wipe. On the kitchen table in the b.g. are dishes and empty pizza delivery boxes.

KARA

Didn't know you were checking the oil with it.

(CONTINUED)

Phoebe snickers, a pizza crust hanging from her mouth like a cigar. She's busy playing her Nintendo Wii.

CALEB
It fell in.

KARA
Don't be a baby. Open up.

CALEB
Mm-mmm.

She couldn't pry open his mouth with a crowbar.

KARA
Fine. I have one at home that I haven't peed on. Feeb, clear the dishes and pizza boxes.

Phoebe moans.

KARA
I paid a pretty penny for that Wii. It's a barter system.

PHOEBE
(scowls)
Fine.

Kara leaves.

Caleb slumps on the couch watching Phoebe swinging the game paddles like a bat. She misses the ball.

PHOEBE
Shit on a crust.

She unsuccessfully tries to hit the ball, again.

CALEB
Your form is wrong.

He stands next to Phoebe, demonstrating:

CALEB
Keep your feet apart. When you swing, use your hips. Upper body. Like Barry Bonds.

PHOEBE
Who?

CALEB

Just try it.

She looks at him, doubt in her expression.

CALEB

If it doesn't work, I'll clear the dishes.

She turns back to the game, swinging with her hips and upper body. Doing her best Barry Bonds impression. And successfully hits the ball.

PHOEBE

The price is wrong, bitch!

CALEB

Don't forget the dishes, Happy Gilmore.

INT. FOYER - LATER

Caleb's wearing his coat, car keys in his palm, and a thermometer sticking out of his mouth.

Kara pulls it out, examining.

KARA

You have a fever. Can't let you drive.

CALEB

It's a good thing you live next door.

PHOEBE

How's that a good thing? Someone didn't pay the gas bill.

KARA

Someone wasn't satisfied with their DS. They needed a Wii, too.

PHOEBE

When I win the Wizard Expo and we're filthy rich, we can photocopy our butts and send 'em to the gas company.

CALEB

You don't have any heat?

(CONTINUED)

KARA

That's the other reason we're staying at a motel.

CALEB

Just stay here.

Kara is about to protest --

CALEB

It's my fault you're stuck here. And it's below freezin' out there.

PHOEBE

He sold me.

She brushes past Caleb, entering the living room and unpacking the Wii from her backpack.

KARA

Phoebe Elizabeth Foster. Time for bed.

Phoebe moans.

CALEB

You can stay in the master. It's past the livin' room.

PHOEBE

Your master bedroom is on the bottom floor?

CALEB

I didn't design the house.

KARA

(to Phoebe)

Git.

Phoebe trudges off to the master bedroom.

KARA

I hope you wear your cuffs tonight. Don't wanna chase you, again.

CALEB

I have 'em right--

He starts checking his pockets, patting himself down. Where are they?

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Kara pulls herself up from behind the bed, the handcuffs in her grip.

KARA
Found them.

CALEB
Cuff me.

He slides into bed, extending out his arm. She cuffs his left wrist to the bedpost. She notices his scars. He pushes his sleeve over the scars.

KARA
Get some rest. You have to drive me to work tomorrow.

CALEB
The keys to the Tahoe are on the dresser.

KARA
You're trusting me with your truck?

CALEB
I'm keepin' your sister as collateral.

KARA
That doesn't exactly work in your favor.

CALEB
That thought's gonna fester.

The handcuff key dangles from her finger.

KARA
What do you want me to do with this?

CALEB
Hide it.

He nods with his nose to the microcassette recorder on the desk.

CALEB
Then say where you hid it.

(CONTINUED)

KARA

Really?

CALEB

Just a precaution.

KARA

No peaking.

Caleb playfully covers his eyes.

KARA

Did your mother ever hide little notes for you to find?

CALEB

If she did, she was really good at hidin' them.

KARA

About six months ago, I started leaving myself notes. Every morning I write myself one. Something positive. Something to help me get through the day. You should try it.

She places the microcassette recorder on his chest.

KARA

Pleasant dreams.

She leaves the room. Caleb uncovers his eyes, and looks around. Where did she hide the key?

He presses PLAY on the microcassette recorder:

KARA (V.O.)

It's in your wallet.

He grabs his wallet, finding the key and a note. The note reads: Smile.

He smiles, but his smile cracks as another thought seeps through his subconscious. His eyes fall back to the microcassette recorder.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The wind is still, and the night sky clear. The moon bathes light, creating shadows.

Bing melts out of the shadows in a crouching stance, his Remington leading. He creeps toward the nine-foot wall of trash wood.

BEYOND THE TRASH WOOD

Bing crawls through the under bush. He slithers forward, the Remington's barrel searching for targets. His finger ready on its trigger.

The Remington stops, Bing's eyes focusing through the rifle's scope. Fifty yards away, hidden by limbs of disfigured trees, is a cave that stares at the sky like a mangled mouth.

Bing lowers the rifle, deciding whether to proceed or not. He sees the lights of the Cooper Ranch in the distance.

Not tonight. He retreats back into the darkness.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Caleb wakes up. He yawns, grabbing his microcassette recorder.

KARA (V.O.)
It's in your wallet.

CALEB
(remembering)
Right, right, right.

He grabs his wallet, the key sliding into his palm. He uncuffs himself, reading the note: Smile.

He grabs a piece of paper from his desk and writes: Be positive.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Caleb enters. Phoebe's on the couch, channel surfing.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB
Guess Kara went to work.

PHOEBE
Next stop, NASA.

CALEB
Took away your Wii?

PHOEBE
Rocket Science Department.

CALEB
Bored?

PHOEBE
Head Engineer.

CALEB
Wanna go sledding?

She turns to him.

PHOEBE
You have a sled?

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Caleb finishes welding two aluminum trashcan lids together.

PHOEBE
That don't look safe.

Caleb turns to her. She is right.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Caleb and Phoebe stand at the edge of a slope, both wearing Kevlar vests. Phoebe grunts under the weight of hers.

PHOEBE
This shit's heavy.

CALEB
Quit whinin'. I took most of the plates out.

PHOEBE
Hey McFly, these vest ain't gonna do jack if we hit a tree.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB
If you're scared...

She jumps on the sled, taking the dare. He slides behind her.

PHOEBE
Better not jump off, asshat.

He pushes off, the sled speeding down the slope.

They enter the forest. Trees coming at them like oncoming traffic, their branches whipping at them like grotesque arms.

Caleb maneuvers the sled, trying to dodge the trees --

-- but they CLIP a tree, and the sled fishtails into another direction. They fly off the mound, CRASHING below.

Caleb and Phoebe are sprawled on the ice. Caleb's eyes go wide. They've landed on a frozen lake.

CALEB
Phoebe! Don't move!

He reaches for her, but she playfully pulls away. She jumps up and down on the ice.

PHOEBE
It'll hold.

He angrily snatches her arm, YANKING off the ice.

PHOEBE
You almost pulled my goddamn arm out!

CALEB
Sorry.

PHOEBE
I should be pissed at you for steering like the Iraqi bobsled team!

The ice BREAKS, and the sled disappears like a capsized boat. They stare at it.

PHOEBE
Whoops.

CALEB
Yeah, whoops.

EXT. FOREST - LATER

Caleb and Phoebe make the trek up the hill. Caleb now carrying Phoebe's vest.

PHOEBE
I gotta pop a squat.

CALEB
Can't you hold it?

PHOEBE
The way you were steerin', be glad you ain't wearin' it.

CALEB
Make it quick.

She ducks behind a cluster of bushes.

CALEB
(beat)
You done?

PHOEBE (O.S.)
Can't go.

CALEB
It ain't brain surgery.

PHOEBE (O.S.)
I can't go when it's quiet. Sing something. Sing the Backstreet Boys.

CALEB
The what?

PHOEBE
Don't deny it. I found their CD in your collection.

Caleb sweeps his head around, making sure no one else is around.

CALEB
"You are my fire, the one I desire, believe me when I say I want it that way."

(CONTINUED)

(stops)
If this winds up on Youtube--

A snowball KISSES his face. He drops Phoebe's vest.

PHOEBE
Gotcha!

A smile curls his lips. Phoebe hurls another snowball. He slides behind a tree, dodging it. He scoops up snow, packing it.

He spins around, ready to hurl --

Except, Phoebe is gone.

Caleb rubbernecks, his eyes tickling back and forth. He drops the snowball.

CALEB
Phoebe?!

Glass is HEARD shattering. Caleb runs to the noise. More shattering is HEARD.

He slews to a stop in front of a seven-foot fence topped with barbed-wire. Beyond the fence are the grounds of the new country club. It's under construction with a series of skeletal frames outlining new buildings.

Scaffolds, pulleys, and other construction equipment litter the outside of a three story gymnasium where garbage chutes hang from its roof like rubber tongues. Two of the gymnasium windows are broken.

Phoebe throws another rock, BREAKING window number three.

A SECURITY GUARD exits the gymnasium, slogging through the snow.

SECURITY GUARD
Hey! Stop right there!

Phoebe sprints past Caleb who turns to see the Security Guard running toward them.

CALEB
Your sister's ass.

He races away, catching up to Phoebe. They stop running, realizing the Security Guard has stopped chasing them.

CALEB
(scowls annoyance)
Vandalism! Really?!

PHOEBE
It ain't vandalism. It's
retribution!

CALEB
It's a country club, not the
Taliban.

PHOEBE
My father had the land picked
out. He cashed out he and my mom's
401K, and was gonna build a dance
school for Kara to teach. That
country club bought the land from
right under them. Our parents
weren't even buried
yet. Dicks. But, I'll buy her a
school. Somewhere better.

Caleb understands.

CALEB
When you win the Wizard Expo.

Phoebe offers him a half-smile.

CALEB
Hop on.

He kneels and she hops on his back. He carries her.

PHOEBE
You like my sister don't
you? You're always talkin' about
her ass.

CALEB
(defensively)
I do not!

PHOEBE
'Your sister's ass.'

CALEB
That's just something I say. Like
'Hasta la vista, baby,' or 'This is
my boomstick.'

PHOEBE
What's that one from?

CALEB
Army of Darkness.

PHOEBE
Whatever. Mine's cooler.

CALEB
(incredulous)
'The price is wrong, bitch?'

PHOEBE
Don't knock Happy Gilmore.
(beat)
She could do a lot worse.

CALEB
Who?

PHOEBE
My sister, jackass. You're a boy,
she's a girl...

CALEB
What's with the deus ex machina?

PHOEBE
The game?

CALEB
Game? What? No. It's...
(thinking)
Like in a romantic comedy when the
two leads are a perfect match for
each other, but for some reason or
another they don't hook up -- until
some unforeseen force puts 'em
together. That's deus ex machina.

PHOEBE
Like I watch romantic
comedies. I'm a gamer.

CALEB
Monster Squad. Seen it?

PHOEBE
Of course.

CALEB

Remember the scene where the kids are trapped in Dracula's house -- the Wolfman's comin' down one hallway, the ghoul sisters comin' down another, and Dracula's in the last one?

PHOEBE

Yep.

CALEB

Remember how they escaped?

PHOEBE

They moved the statue's arm and escaped through a trapdoor.

CALEB

That's deus ex machina.

PHOEBE

(beat)

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, he is single.

CALEB

You're impossible.

They come to Caleb's backyard.

CALEB

(to himself)

What the hell's he doin'?

Bing is at Caleb's fence, installing the last of four Klieg light-posts that are strategically positioned around the backyard's perimeter.

CALEB

What is this?

Bing enters the backyard, Caleb following. Phoebe slides off his back.

BING

(re: Klieg light-posts)

They're hooked to a genny. Gas powered.

He points with his nose to the seven drums of gasoline that surround the generator. He turns to Phoebe:

(CONTINUED)

BING
What's up, Feeb?

PHOEBE
(shrugs)
Another day, another adventure.

Her eyes fall on the three duffel bags resting on the drums.
Bing leans closer to Caleb, out of earshot of Phoebe.

BING
Thought they were s'posed to leave
last night.

PHOEBE
Get a load of this bitch!

They crane their necks to Phoebe. Her hand is in one of the
duffel bags, pulling out the butt of a Remington.

CALEB
Step away from the bag!

BING
It ain't loaded.

CALEB
(to Phoebe)
Go inside and play your game.

PHOEBE
She hid it, idiot.

CALEB
It's in the cabinet next to the
sink.

Phoebe darts inside.

BING
I want them gone before t'morrow
night.

He's digging in one of the duffel bags -- pulling out
flares, rope, and tripwires.

CALEB
(angry)
Why?

Bing lifts his head, a glare in his eyes.

BING

What are you gonna do? Leave her a note?

CALEB

What?

BING

I know why you're really here. I've seen that look before. I had that same look.

Caleb staggers back, surprised.

BING

How were you gonna do it? Me? I was gonna down a bottle of Jack, then swallow my revolver.

Anger shrink wraps Caleb's eyes.

CALEB

You know nothin' about me.

BING

You're wrong. I know you wasted all the money from your book deal to send your brother's ashes into space. He always wanted to be an astronaut, your younger brother. The one that followed you on the frozen lake when you were thirteen--

With anger boiling, Caleb throws a punch --

-- Bing catches it, bringing Caleb closer. He brushes back the sleeve of Caleb's jacket to reveal the scars on his wrist.

BING

I know the pain. The guilt. The anger. How you feel so suffocated by it.

Caleb yanks his fist away.

BING

What's out there killed my family. Took my son. I found what was left of my wife and daughters. It's not the stuff that you don't recognize that haunts

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BING (cont'd)
you, it's the stuff that you do. I
spent the last eight years inside a
bottle feelin' sorry myself. But
not this winter. Not anymore.

Caleb turns away, his eyes darting to the generator, the
duffel bags, the Remington, then his house. His eyes
narrow, examining his house closer -- carved into the bricks
of the chimney are talisman symbols.

CALEB
(re: talisman)
What's this?!

BING
Just a precaution.

Caleb scoffs, turning away.

BING
Need to do the upstairs windows,
too--

CALEB
No windows! This is crazy!

BING
Everybody's chasin' their tails
because whatever's out there ain't
a wild animal. It's somethin'
outta a nightmare.

CALEB
And you're gonna show up like the
ghost of John Wayne, guns
blazin'. How d'you kill somethin'
outta a nightmare?

BING
The Native Americans used
talismans--

CALEB
Enough of the supernatural crap!

BING
That crap saved your ass the other
night. Believe me, don't believe
me. I'm just tryin' to what's
right.

(beat)
And, it's caught your scent.

CALEB

What has?! The animal?! No wonder
you're settin' up all this
shit! Why you want Phoebe and Anna
outta here! I'm the fuckin' bait!

Phoebe steps out of the house. Caleb and Bing turn to her:

CALEB/BING

(in unison)

Go play your game!

She disappears back inside.

BING

You're not gonna be in any real
danger.

CALEB

Then why all the firepower?

BING

A minute ago you didn't believe any
of this.

CALEB

A minute ago I didn't know I had my
own monster cologne!

BING

My son survived an attack like you
did. A couple nights later, they
came back for my family. Took my
son. Made a noise I wouldn't wanna
hear twice in my life. Now these
things won't strike till
t'morrow. One last supper before
the big storm. But they'll take
someone, always do.

CALEB

What does it do with 'em? Eat 'em?

BING

The evil out there wears many
faces. It just wants another one
to wear.

CALEB

Bullshit. How d'you know it
doesn't eat 'em?

(CONTINUED)

BING

These things leave a mess when they eat. Blood everywhere. But they don't shit where they sleep.

CALEB

You keep usin' the plural instead of the singular. How many are out there?

BING

The truth is I don't know. But I found out where they live.

CALEB

That's why you need bait.

He can see the fear in Caleb's face.

BING

You piss yourself you can only stay warm so long.

CALEB

How d'you kill 'em?

BING

Bullets, fire--

CALEB

Talisman?

BING

It protects, it keeps 'em out. But they have ways around it. They have handlers.

Bing can see the quizzical expression wash over Caleb's face.

BING

They might not speak the King's English, but these monsters got ways of communicatin' and understandin'.

CALEB

Shit! This just gets better and better.

BING

I tracked 'em in the beginnin' of the season. The animals move

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BING (cont'd)
through the trees -- tryin' not to
leave tracks to follow. But their
handlers ain't so
graceful. Sometimes they come out
with 'em, sometimes they
don't. But when they strike
t'morrow night, they'll be out
there with 'em. And I'll be
waitin' for 'em.

Caleb stares at Bing. Sincerity in the hunter's eyes.

CALEB
What's the plan?

He can feel Bing's stare.

CALEB
Whether I believe you or not is not
important. This mornin' I wrote a
note to myself to be positive. I
might not be positive tomorrow, or
the day after. But right now I
will be. So, what's the plan?

SERIES OF SHOTS

Bing is setting tripwires at the base of several trees,
attaching flares to their ends.

Caleb soaks multiple lines of rope in the one of the drums
of gasoline.

Bing douses the base of the trees with gasoline, melting the
snow.

They both tie the doused ropes around the trees. Creating a
web.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Kara enters, moving toward Phoebe who is jamming away on the
Wii.

KARA
I thought I took that away from
you.

(CONTINUED)

PHOEBE

Sue me.

Kara looks out the window.

KARA

What're they doing?

PHOEBE

Setting booby traps.

KARA

For what?

PHOEBE

Boobies.

EXT. BACKYARD - LATER

Bing removes the Remington from the duffel, and tosses it to Caleb. He pulls out an identical Remington from the third duffel bag.

BING

(re: Remington)

It was my son's.

He points to the tripwires, and to the ropes that crisscross the trees, surrounding the house's perimeter like a web.

BING

If something happens t'night, the flares'll go off. The fire'll surround this place. Stay inside, and you'll be safe.

CALEB

Is somethin' gonna happen t'night?

BING

I want Kara and Feeb outta here.

He slings the Remington over his shoulder, and walks away.

CALEB

You didn't answer my question.

Bing stops, turning to Caleb.

BING

Nothin'll happen unless somethin' brings 'em out.

He exits the backyard, swallowed by the night.

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

Tyler is surrounded by a mesh of Christmas lights, busy attaching the ends of the battery operated lights together.

Mike emerges from his bedroom with a camcorder, examining the viewfinder.

MIKE

This is gonna make us rich and
Youtube famous.

TYLER

As long as you're not bullshitting
'bout what you saw.

MIKE

Got no reason to lie. You of all
people should believe me.

TYLER

Provided we catch it on film.

Dominique, Riley, Dante, and Sam bursts through the front door, carrying a wrapped pig carcass. They grunt under its weight.

DANTE

Got the bait.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Caleb enters with the Remington tucked under his arm. Kara and Phoebe look at the rifle.

KARA

Febb, go to the other room.

Phoebe leaves. Kara continues to stare at the Remington while taking a drag from her inhaler.

CALEB

Just a precaution.

KARA

Can I take it?

He carefully places the rifle in her arms. She opens the cabinet under the sink, and puts the rifle inside.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB
I'm gonna drive you to Edmond--

KARA
Why?

CALEB
Just a precaution.

KARA
If you're staying, we're staying.

Caleb is about to protest --

KARA
I'm the world's oldest
twenty-year-old with a kid to
boot. I've never ran away from
anything, responsibility or other.

CALEB
You're stubborn.

She grabs his hands.

KARA
And you're tense.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She pulls him near the television. She turns it on, scrolling the channels until she comes upon the classic rock channel. Bryan Ferry's "Is Your Love Strong Enough" fills the room.

KARA
When I'm tense I dance.

CALEB
I don't know how.

She holds his hands, bringing him closer.

KARA
It's as easy as lying. It's like a
language. You can say everything
and nothing.

She begins to move gracefully. Caleb following her lead like a shadow. His footwork a little clumsy.

(CONTINUED)

KARA
If people meant what they said,
they'd say less but mean more.

They continue to dance.

Phoebe reenters the room. She quietly watches Caleb and Kara dance, a smile curls her lips. Kara catches her watching.

PHOEBE
(feigns annoyance)
Shit! I'm hungry!

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The snowmobile skids to a halt, Riley and Sam hopping off. They carefully approach the wall of trash wood, carrying a large black trash bag.

They pull out pieces of carcass from the bag, tossing pieces of pig flesh across the ground.

Sam cranes his neck, trying to get a peak through the trash wood. He stumbles back, his eyes wide.

SAM
I think I saw something.

He turns to Riley who is busy writing his name in the snow.

A low GROWL swells like an approaching thunderstorm. Riley stops peeing.

TWO HUNDRED YARDS AWAY,

Dominique and Dante are busy adjusting the bear trap: A metal jaw the size of a yacht anchor, the Christmas lights decorating it. Hanging above the trap is the pig carcass.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Caleb, Kara, and Phoebe are on the couch. Empty take-out Chinese food boxes litter the coffee table. The television plays Army of Darkness.

Kara glances at Phoebe who has fallen asleep on her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

KARA
Movie fatality.

CALEB
Tough critic.

Caleb scoops Phoebe his arms, the bag of Skittles dropping. Kara grabs the bag.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He lays Phoebe on the bed. Her eyes flutter open.

PHOEBE
My Skittles?!

Kara places the bag in her hands.

KARA
Shhhh. Here they are.

Phoebe sticks the Skittles in her pocket. She drifts back to sleep.

CALEB
What's with the Skittles?

KARA
They were our parents'
favorite. She carries a bag
everywhere she goes -- a piece of
them still with her.

Caleb offers her a smile but it comes out broken.

CALEB
Get some rest. We are all gonna
leave early t'morrow.

He leaves, closing the door behind him. Kara continues to stare at the door as if Caleb was still standing there. Wishing he would have said more to her.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The snowmobile SCREAMS around the bend, sliding to a halt. Dominque removes his goggles, surveying the forest. Dante is riding behind him, his patience worn.

(CONTINUED)

DANTE

We're going in circle, Magellan!

DOMINQUE

We ain't goin' in goddamn circles!

Dante angrily points to a cluster of trees in the distance, the Christmas lights visible.

DANTE

That's where we set the goddamn trap!

DOMINQUE

Sam and Riley are around here. Somewhere.

Before Dante can object, Dominique ROARS the snowmobile down the hill. They swerve over the bend, Dominique's jaw dropping --

Directly ahead of them is Sam's snowmobile, tipped on its side like debris from a tornado --

-- and they CRASH into it. The force of the collision throws them like rag dolls.

Dominique pulls himself from the ground.

DOMINQUE

Dante, you alright?

Dante stirs, reaching for his broken leg with a teeth-clinched grimace.

DANTE

My goddamn leg!

Dominique ignore him, his eyes washing over Sam's wrecked snowmobile. Blood on its broken nose.

DOMINQUE

They must've hit a deer.

(shouting)

Riley?! Sam?!

In the distance, the bear trap is HEARD snapping SHUT. Followed by a painful ROAR.

They whip their heads to the noise.

(CONTINUED)

DOMINQUE
Your cell working?

Dante grimaces as he pulls the cell from his pocket. Dominique sees something, fear occupies his face.

DOMINQUE
We gotta go!

Dante whips his head around.

DANTE
Are those the Christmas--

Dominique grabs Dante, and drags him to the snowmobile.

ON THE HILL,

Tyler and Mike are fiddling with the camcorder. Mike's cell RINGS.

MIKE
(into cell)
Whoa, whoa! Slow down! What's
chasin' you?

Tyler's eyes are trained on the forest. A blur of Christmas lights dart between the trees, illuminating in spurts like a chain of yuletide strobe lights.

TYLER
(to himself)
The monster.

MIKE
(into cell)
Hello? Dante?

Tyler leaps on the snowmobile, spraying snow as he TEARS down the hill.

MIKE
(shouting)
Hey! What 'bout me?!

TYLER

barrels down the slope, slewing to a stop near an under bush of dead trees. Directly ahead is Dominique's snowmobile, wrecked on its side.

He hears something. A voice. Low. Distant.

(CONTINUED)

He slides off the snowmobile, searching for the voice.

He stops. Dante's cell is in front of him, Mike's voice emanating from its speaker --

-- but gripping the cell is Dante's hand which is chewed off at the wrist.

Dante covers his mouth, stifling a scream -- he sees the beast's silhouette fifty yards away. Its eight-foot frame camouflaged among the pecan's branches. It's busy eating, bones CRUNCHING.

Tyler carefully retreats to the snowmobile, his eyes still trained on the beast's silhouette. He slides on the seat --

-- his cell RINGS. His eyes SCREAM. He kicks the snowmobile in gear, SPEEDING away.

The tree tops sway like a clothesline in high wind, as the beast -- its profile hidden in shadow -- leaps from tree to tree in pursuit.

ON THE HILL,

Mike waves his arms at Tyler's retreating form, trying to get his attention.

MIKE
(shouting)
I'm callin' you!

TYLER

speeds past trees, their branches whipping at him. He nervously glances over his shoulder, his eyes playing over the forest. The beast is nowhere to be seen.

He turns around to see a tree coming at him. He swerves a second too late. The side of the snowmobile RIPS off bark from the tree. The fuel line RUPTURED.

It slides to a stop, Tyler gripping the steering handles tight. He's shaking. Adrenaline surging.

A GLOVED HAND

wraps around Tyler's mouth, another gloved hand yanking him off the snowmobile.

Tyler is pressed against a tree, Bing's gloved hand still covering his mouth. The hunter's eyes are locked on something in the distance.

BING

Two hundred yards east, there's a house. When I say go, go.

He removes his hand from Tyler's mouth. Tyler's eyes go to the snowmobile, seeing the gas leak from the ruptured line.

Bing crouches with the Remington in his grip, its scope to his good eye.

BING

Go!

Tyler leaps on the snowmobile, BARRELING away.

POV - SCOPE

Its infrared coats the forest green. We drift to the summit of a tree: It's top sway. The beast is no longer there.

We PAN down, focusing on a MAN emerging from the darkness. The Man is young with similar features to Clancy.

END POV

Bing raises his eye from the scope, recognition in his face. He knows the Man.

But Bing's features harden, returning to his trademark mask of stone. He moves forward, the Remington leading.

A HUNDRED YARDS AWAY,

Mike trudges through the snow. He sees the Christmas-lights-bear-trap sprawled on the ground -- its mouth is open, strands of blood-matted fur on its jaws.

A guttural SNARL swells behind him.

Mike spins around, and SCREAMS. We DON'T see the beast, just HEAR its SNARL. Its claws CRUNCHING snow as it moves forward, its shadow engulfing Mike.

(CONTINUED)

Mike backs into a tree. Panic rising, unsure of what to do. With a desperate lunge, he begins to climb the tree like a frightened squirrel.

He hauls himself to the fork of branches, whirling around --

But the beast has not followed.

He nervously yanks out his cell, panting puffs of warm breath like cigarette smoke --

-- Behind him, large puffs SNORT out. He slowly turns, his

EYES

reflecting the profile of ANOTHER BEAST: its razor teeth arching for him. He doesn't get a chance to scream.

DOWN THE HILL,

Bing is crouched in a fighting stance, the Remington leveled, drawing a bead on the Man --

-- as a harsh RING stings the air, a bullet SLAMMING Bing backwards in a cut-spring sprawl.

THREE FIGURES melt out of the shadows, striding toward him. Their names are GRAY, BLACK, and WHITE -- their long winter coats, matching the color of their respective names, whip in the wind like pulsed Rorschach blots.

Black cradles a Winchester rifle, smoke dissolving out its barrel.

Bing winces, coughing blood as he feebly reaches for his Remington.

MAN

Come to kill me? Father.

The Man is at Bing's side, snatching the Remington from his grip. Bing glares at him, venom in his eyes.

BING

(bubbles blood)

You're not Denton. My son's been dead.

Denton tosses the Remington to Gray.

(CONTINUED)

DENTON

If it's any consolation, you'll
join him soon enough.

He kneels next to Bing.

DENTON

His shell is getting old,
though. It's time for me to trade
it in.

BING

There'll be others comin' for you.

DENTON

There were others before you. But
they all ended under my heel. You
should've stayed in that bottle.

A deep GROWL billows from behind him.

Denton steps aside. Bing sees the beast. Its shadow
sliding toward him like a thin veil, saliva dripping from an
unseen mouth.

Bing smiles. Accepting his fate.

BING

Come get me, you ugly bastard!

The beast ROARS. Loud. Terrifying.

TWO HUNDRED YARDS AWAY,

Tyler approaches Caleb's house. He hears the distant
ROAR. He swerves the snowmobile, narrowly missing a tree.

But SIDESWIPES the hidden tripwire -- instead of firing the
flare vertically, it LAUNCHES it horizontally at the trail
of leaking gas. Catching on fire.

Tyler sees the flame chasing him and leaps off, kissing
snow. The snowmobile CRASHES into the fence and EXPLODES,
spitting fire and debris.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The windows RATTLE from the explosion, the room illuminated
with an orange glow. Kara and Phoebe are startled awake.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caleb is still asleep. His room is still a cocoon, the outside noise inaudible.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

TYLER (O.S.)
Help! Somebody help me!

Kara leaps off the bed, and peers through the blinds. She immediately puts her hand in front of her face to shield her eyes from the bright Klieg lights.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She races to the backdoor, Phoebe at her heel. Tyler frantically BANGS on the door.

PHOEBE
Who's that?

KARA
Get Caleb! Now!

Phoebe reluctantly leaves the room.

Kara yanks open a drawer, grabbing a flashlight. In the b.g. the beast's shadow is seen through the window's curtains. The shadow overtakes Tyler's smaller shadow. Blood spraying on the window.

With a flashlight in hand, Kara yanks open the door. She pokes her head out, the flashlight's beam finding the blood on the window.

IN THE BACKYARD

The beast is not seen, but HEARD -- eating Tyler. In the b.g. Kara shines the flashlight toward the noise --

-- the beam illuminating the beast's silhouette. It lifts his head, its razor teeth menacing in the light.

KARA

disappears back inside, frantically LOCKING the door. Losing the power of speech.

PHOEBE (O.S.)
Who's at the--

Kara whirls around to find Phoebe peeking from behind the staircase. She forces herself to yell:

ANNA
Get Caleb!

Phoebe darts up the stairs.

An arm, the width of an elephant's trunk and covered in a carpet of black fur, PUNCHES through the window. Its claws SWIPE at Kara --

-- but narrowly miss her torso as she dives to the ground. Another arm, equally threatening, SMASHES through the door's window. Kara finally SCREAMS.

INT. BEDROOM

Phoebe's BANGING on the door.

PHOEBE (O.S.)
Caleb! Wake your ass up!

Caleb startles awake, crashing out of bed and into the dresser. The microcassette recorder slides across the floor.

He reaches for it with his right hand, extending his arms like a cross because his left wrist is cuffed to the bedpost.

CALEB
A little help here.

INT. HALLWAY

Phoebe doesn't hear Caleb. She stands at the top of the stairs, her back to the hallway window. A look of alarm washes over her face as she hears the COMMOTION from downstairs.

(CONTINUED)

PHOEBE

Kara?!

INT. KITCHEN

The beast's arms sway back and forth, its claws searching. Kara crawls to the cabinet, pulling out the Remington.

She begins to COUGH with frantic breaths. The beginning of an asthma attack.

PHOEBE (O.S.)

Kara?!

KARA

(coughing)

Stay upstairs!

The beast HOWLS in pain as its flesh SINGES as if burned by an invisible fire. The talisman, carved into windows frames, working.

The beast's arms disappear as quickly as they had appeared. The wall SHAKES, plaster falling. The beast is climbing the house.

INT. BEDROOM

Caleb struggles to reach the microcassette recorder, his body rubbing against the desk causing books to rain on him. His fingers reach the microcassette, his teeth clinched as he pulls it into his palm. He presses PLAY:

CALEB (V.O.)

Thesaurus. Page 547. Strenuous, struggle.

He whips around to the thesaurus that has fallen behind the desk. His face drops.

He twists his body around as if he were playing an invisible game of Twister, reaching for the thesaurus.

Plaster falls on his head. His eyes go to the ceiling.

CALEB

(shouting)

Phoebe?! Stay away from the windows!

No answer. He grabs the thesaurus.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB
Phoebe?!

INT. HALLWAY

Phoebe hears Caleb's voice. She moves closer to the door.

PHOEBE
What?!

CALEB (O.S.)
(low)
... away from the windows!

She realizes her back is to the window. She spins around to see only darkness out the window.

But the DARKNESS IS FUR, the beast whipping around --

-- and we SEE its face for the first time. Its forehead long, its eyebrows slanted downward over huge red eyes sunken in its skull. Its nose punched in, its nostrils wide like a vampire bat, and its razor teeth extended out its mouth like bars on a football helmet.

It SNARLS, spraying saliva.

Phoebe SCREAMS.

CALEB

hears the SOUND of the window BREAKING. Phoebe's SCREAMS trailing away. He uncuffs himself, and lunges for the door.

KARA

sprints up the stairs with the inhaler in her mouth, and the Remington in her arms. She finds Caleb staring out the broken window. Phoebe gone.

The inhaler drops from her mouth.

KARA
Oh, God!

She rushes down the stairs.

CALEB
Kara, wait!

He scoops up her inhaler, darting into his room to grab his coat and boots.

EXT. BACKYARD

Kara is out the door, barely dressed for the cold. All she is wearing is a parka and boots over the flannel pajamas she went to bed in.

INT. KITCHEN

Caleb flies into the kitchen, yanking open a cabinet and grabbing five roadside flares.

EXT. FOREST

Battling the bitter cold, Kara trudges forward. The Remington leading.

A low GROWL rumbles from the darkness. She instinctively levels the Remington at the noise. She steps forward, unaware of the

TRIPWIRE

under her heel. It launches a flare, illuminating the night sky.

The beast's silhouette stands before her, its shadow as tall as the pecan trees.

She SCREAMS, the Remington SPITTING a round.

CALEB

sees the flare and gunshot in the distance. He sprints toward it, reaching the spot where Kara was moments ago. The Remington on the ground.

His eyes wash over the footprints in the snow. He drops a lit flare as a marker, and scoops up the Remington. He follows the footprints.

KARA

races past the trees, dodging their branches. Her breathing labored, asthmatic.

Behind her, the beast BARRELS through the snow. Lunging at her --

-- She leaps, falling on the frozen lake below. The beast flies over her, CRASHING through the ice. This causes the rest of the ice to CRACK, spiderwebbing toward her.

She crawls to the bank, her breaths coming out like a sputtering engine.

CALEB (O.S.)

Kara?!

She takes a deep breath, forcing herself to yell:

KARA

Caleb!

The ice COLLAPSES, swallowing her. Caleb dives, snatching her wrist. He pulls her out of the freezing lake, sticking the inhaler in her mouth. She takes a long drag, COUGHING water.

He hauls her to her feet, her breathing still asthmatic. With her arms around his neck for support, Kara uses all her strength to move her legs.

They run through the forest, using the dropped flares like breadcrumbs.

THE BEAST

vaults out of its icy tomb, SLAMMING its claws into the ice. It leapfrogs through the islands of broken ice to the bank.

A HUNDRED YARDS AHEAD,

Kara's legs become rubber, her body going limp in Caleb's arms. She is unconscious.

Caleb sees his house in the distance, his eyes whipping to the trees surrounding the house -- to the gasoline-doused web of ropes connecting the trees.

He digs in his coat, pulling out his last flare.

(CONTINUED)

A ROAR stings the air. The beast in pursuit.

He scoops Kara in his arms, running to the house. His face in a grimace, the combined weight Kara and the Remington are taking their toll.

Another ROAR is HEARD. Followed by another. The beast is getting closer.

He drops the dead weight, the Remington going to the ground. He runs faster. His legs scissoring, his teeth clinched.

Almost to the trees. Twenty yards. Fifteen. Ten.

He STRIKES the flare as he reaches the first tree, stinging it. Fire races across the rope to the second tree. Two trees become three... then four. The fire spreads clockwise, surrounding the house.

He marches past the wrecked fence, collapsing in the safety of his backyard. Kara lying peacefully at his side.

His eyes find the Remington -- forty yards away. The beast is nowhere to be seen.

Caleb makes a mad dash for the rifle.

The beast melts out of the darkness. Its eyes wild, teeth blaring in a lethal hiss.

Caleb scoops up the rifle, spinning his heels without breaking his stride. He runs hellbent for leather back to the backyard --

The beast is closing the distance, its stride long. Ten yards is all that separates it from Caleb.

The fire is at the last tree. The gap almost closed --

-- Caleb lunges at the gap, the flame singeing a piece of his hair as it SEARS over him. He hits the ground, and whirls around, the Remington leveled.

The beast slews to a stop, standing outside the perimeter of fire.

THROUGH THE FLAMES

Caleb and the beast lock eyes. It SNARLS, its nostrils flaring.

Then it's gone. Swallowed by the wind.

CALEB (V.O.)

The dreams started five years ago. I started sleepwalkin' not long after.

EXT. FOREST - UNKNOWN

Emergency vehicles occupy the snow covered landscape, at its mouth is a frozen lake.

Emergency Crews trudge from the lake, a small black body bag in their grip.

The Father, anguish in his face, is held back by an EMT.

CALEB (V.O.)

I was thirteen when my brother died.

The Father turns to Caleb who is off to the side. It is the Caleb of the present.

CALEB (V.O.)

In my dreams I step on the lake to kill myself, to be swallowed up.

Caleb walks on to the frozen lake.

CALEB (V.O.)

But I always wake up before I do.

INT. ROOM - MERCY HOSPITAL - MORNING

Caleb is at Kara's bedside. She is still unconscious. There is an I.V. line in her arm, and a breathing tube down her throat.

CALEB

The doctors called it regressed guilt. The dreams and sleepwalkin'. Five years is a long time to endure. That's the misconception of suicide: you don't really wanna die... you just don't wanna live with the pain anymore.

INT. HALLWAY - MERCY HOSPITAL - MORNING

Caleb exits the room. Garrymore is waiting for him.

GARRYMORE

They stopped the search half an hour ago. We covered twenty miles. The wind destroyed whatever track we could find, and the dogs lost the scent a mile from your place. At this temperature...

(stops)

I went to school with Bing's son, Denton. We played ball together, had the same homeroom teacher. I remembered the night it happened. He was walkin' home from practice when he was attacked. It wasn't bad -- cuts and bruises. He didn't remember much of it. I visited him in the hospital, and we joked 'bout it. A couple nights later, his family was attacked -- his mother and sister killed. Bing was injured durin', and lost an eye. Denton was never seen again. But I did see him again. Seven months ago I was patrollin' over by the Cooper Ranch, and I'd seen him as bright as day. I never told anyone. Part of me still doesn't believe it.

He looks at Caleb, studying him.

GARRYMORE

We can't kill it, can we?

Caleb meets his eyes, but he doesn't have an answer for Garrymore.

GARRYMORE

I've quarantined the area -- sent everyone chasin' a mountain lion in Cashion. Don't want anyone else to die.

CALEB

And you?

GARRYMORE

I'm off duty... but I'll wait till after the storm passes before I do anything.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Can you stay here if she wakes up.

GARRYMORE

Where are you goin'?

CALEB

I just need to be alone.

Garrymore nods, and enters Kara's room. Caleb walks away.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Caleb is at the desk, the Remington and microcassette recorder lying before him. He inserts a cassette into the recorder, and presses PLAY:

CALEB (V.O.)

This is Caleb Slater, and this is my verbal will and testament.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Caleb is outside a fence that is held together by barbed-wire. Hanging from the fence is the sign: Cooper Ranch. Private Property. Trespassers will be KILLED.

Caleb spies the Cooper Ranch in the distance.

CALEB (V.O.)

Evan, if you're listenin' to this then you know what happened. I'm sorry for dumpin' this on your doorstep. I just can't chew the leather anymore.

Caleb crosses the barbed-wire, trudging toward the nine-foot wall of trash wood. He sees the claw marks.

CALEB (V.O.)

Dad'll understand, but if you can, apologize to mom for me. She always called us the three musketeers.

BEYOND THE TRASH WOOD

He crawls through the under bush. His eyes focusing. He sees the cave hidden among the branches and dead trees.

INT. TOWERMART - MORNING

Caleb enters a Walmart-type store, pulling two shopping carts.

CALEB (V.O.)
I've never talked 'bout the day
until now. I just wanted to take a
shortcut. The ice started to crack
halfway through.

He maneuvers the carts through different aisles, filling them with items.

Some CUSTOMERS suspiciously stare at Caleb as they see the items in the cart.

CALEB (V.O.)
I heard him fall in. I grabbed his
arm, tryin' to pull him out. He
was thrashin' about,
panicking. Pullin' me under.

INT. CHECKOUT - TOWERMART - MORNING

The CASHIER stares at the items on the conveyor belt: A box of three electric saw blades, four pairs of twelve-inch hedge clippers, five propane tanks, nylon rope, a dozen roadside flares, a Supersoaker water rifle, a long deadbolt chain, two bowling balls, a parka, snowsuit, boots, and a Kenware Bow and Arrow set.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

CALEB (V.O.)
I was scared... and I let go.

Caleb clicks the microcassette recorder OFF.

He writes on a piece of paper.

He gets up, grabbing the Remington and microcassette recorder --

-- and walks out of the room, dropping the microcassette recorder in the trash.

INSERT - PIECE OF PAPER

which has the words: I won't be scared.

MONTAGE

Caleb's on the second floor of a house under construction, sawing off wooden beams.

He removes the blades from the hedge clippers. He blowtorches them together -- producing a very sharp metal asterisk.

He blowtorches the tips of the wooden beams, warping the wood to bend. He nails their axles to a metal base with the nailgun. With the nylon rope, he wrenches their tips taut. Creating a trebuchet catapult without the countermeasure.

He welds the bowling ball to the deadbolt chain, and attaches the end of the chain to the propane tank.

He positions the tripwire flares along the bases of several trees.

He assembles the Dacati's tires side by side, connecting them to the generator's motor. He CRANKS the genny, and the tires begin to SPIN. He places a baseball between the rotating tires -- the baseball SPITS out like a rocket.

He hauls the drums of gasoline into the new country club's three-story gymnasium, dumping the gasoline into its empty pool.

He's in the gymnasium's basement, under the pool. He cuts the line to the pool's heated tanks. Gas HISSES.

With the chainsaw, he SEVERs a large tree trunk from its base. The trunk sprays snow as it CRASHES next to two other trunks of equal size.

He pours potassium, sulfur, and sugar into two drums, stirring the concoction. He fills the Supersoaker and empty beer bottles with the Molotov liquid.

Pulling the nylon rope over the fork of a tree, he hauls two propane tanks up the tree. He ties a fish wire around their valves, winding it taut around a tripwire.

With the Tahoe tugging the rope, a tree trunk is hauled up to the crown of a tree.

He drops the pieces of welded metal, and empties a box of nails into the two Molotov drums.

(CONTINUED)

He cleans the inside of the last two drums. He deposits the Kenware Bow and Arrow into one drum. He drops the parka, snowsuit, and boots (all in Phoebe's size) into the other.

He tries out the catapult by placing the bowling ball on the board of one of the catapults, cutting the rope. The bowling ball is LAUNCHED into the air as if shot from a canon.

END MONTAGE

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Caleb stares at the forest, the Remington in his arms. Snow flurries dance around him. The wind picking up loose snow, making it stand and wave its arms.

The storm is approaching.

He COCKS the Remington, marching into the forest.

EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

Caleb stands outside its mouth, taping a flashlight to the Remington's barrel.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

He enters, and quickly moves through the darkness -- the flashlight washing over the ground, catching a glimpse of a bone here and there.

INT. CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

He enters a dirt chamber, and ignites a flare -- illuminating three dark tunnels that stare at him like hollow eyes.

He drops the flare as a marker. He roves the Remington, its beam playing over each tunnel: Which one leads to Phoebe?

Desperation sweeps his face, his eyes playing hopscotch with the tunnels. Time is his enemy.

He dips his head in frustration, looking at the ground. His eyes narrow. Seeing something --

-- he brings the beam closer, illuminating a Skittle.

The beam finds another Skittle, and another. All leading into the left tunnel.

INT. LEFT TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

He moves swiftly through, the Remington ready to sling lead.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

He enters the cavern, its wall consumed by darkness.

A row of cages litter the floor, Phoebe inside on of them. She's blindfolded with her wrists tied behind her back to the cage's bars.

CALEB
(sharp whisper)
Phoebe.

PHOEBE
Caleb?!

CALEB
Hold still.

With the butt of the Remington, he BREAKS the cage's padlock.

He immediately yanks off the blindfold, cutting her wrists free. She hugs him.

PHOEBE
Knew'd you come. Left a trail for
you...

She opens her palm, revealing an empty Skittles bag.

CALEB
Next stop, NASA.

A guttural SNARL echoes from the tunnel. They whip their heads to the noise.

CALEB
There's always free cheese in every
trap.

INT. LEFT TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

He leads her out, the Remington leveled.

A ROAR stops them in their tracks. Caleb rips the flashlight off the barrel.

CALEB
Hop on my back! Quick!

He slings the Remington by its strap over his shoulder. Phoebe hops on his back, her arms around his neck.

He retreats backwards --

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

-- past the empty cages.

A shape forms, the beast rising out of the shadows. Barreling at them.

Caleb spins around, hauling ass deeper into the cavern. Darkness around them. The flashlight's beam desperately searching for an exit --

-- Thirty yards ahead is a room. Its door open.

Phoebe looks over her shoulder. Her eyes SCREAM.

PHOEBE
It's behind us!

Her arms go tight around his neck.

CALEB
(gasping)
You're chokin' me...

He pulls out a flare --

CALEB
Left pocket! Supersoaker!

-- Phoebe whips out the Supersoaker. Caleb spins around, the flare lit in his hand.

The beast continues its CHARGE, its claws out. Ten yards is all that separates them --

(CONTINUED)

-- Caleb levels the flare under the Supersoaker's barrel, Phoebe SQUEEZING the trigger. A flame ARCHES outward like a lightning bolt.

The beast HOWLS in pain. The left side of its face on fire.

INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Caleb's already inside, Phoebe sliding off his back. He SLAMS the large door (its frame six-inches thick), securing it with its latch.

With the flare as their only light, Caleb surveys the room: It's empty except for five metal chests resting against the back wall. There is not another exit.

The beast angrily CLAWS at the door, its wooden frame pulsating. The door is as sturdy as a castle gate, but the animal is too strong and it is only a matter of time before it breaks in.

PHOEBE

Please tell me you didn't pull a Leroy Jenkins. You have a plan, right?

Caleb whips his head to the chests --

CALEB

Move 'em to the door!

They push one of the chest, grunting at its weight.

PHOEBE

This bitch is heavy!

The chest tips over, spilling gold coins.

PHOEBE

WTF?

CALEB

They have money...

PHOEBE

Like a group of furry-ass-chompin' Kardashians.

Caleb's eyes dart to the empty space where the chest was. He pushes away another chest, revealing a sewer grate. Caleb and Phoebe stare at it dumbfounded.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Deus ex--

He lifts his head, meeting Phoebe's eyes.

PHOEBE

--machina.

He KICKS the grate, BREAKING it free.

The beast RAVAGES the door, showering wood splinters. It HOWLS in anger, the left side of its face scarred. HENCEFORTH the beast will be known as SCAR.

Caleb pushes Phoebe into the sewer tunnel.

Scar creeps toward Caleb like a lion eying its prey. Its teeth blaring, saliva spraying. Scar LUNGES --

-- Caleb dives into the tunnel. Scar CRASHING into the wall above him.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Caleb slides onto the frozen lake. Phoebe's at his side, shivering from the cold. He wraps his coat around her, carrying her off the lake.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Battered by whirling snow and exhaustion, Caleb pumps his legs, clutching Phoebe and the Remington with grit teeth.

He passes the first Molotov drum that is surreptitiously hidden in the snow.

He passes the second drum that is equally hidden.

He approaches the third and fourth drums, sliding next to them. He pops open their lids, pulling out the Kenware Bow and Arrow, and tossing the parka, snowsuit, and boots to Phoebe.

He turns to the four-warped-beam-catapults a few feet away, placing the homemade metal asterisk on three of the boards.

On the fourth board, he loads the propane tank with the deadbolt chain, the bowling ball its anchor.

He whips out a knife, cutting the propane's hose. Gas HISSES. He tapes a lit flare near the escaping gas.

(CONTINUED)

In the distance, the beasts ROAR in unison. The hunt is on.

Caleb looks up, smiling so fast it might have been a nervous twitch. He turns to the catapults, and SLICES their ropes with liquid grace.

DENTON AND HIS MEN

slog through the snow, rifles in their grips. White looks up --

WHITE

Incoming!

They scatter, narrowly dodging the metal asterisks and propane tank. Denton whirls to the propane tank, the flare licking the gas --

-- the tank EXPLODES into the air like a rocket, the chain on the bowling ball its anchor.

The propane tank RICOCHETS back and forth like a tetherball from hell, its chain SLICING through anything in its path.

CALEB

ignites the tips of twenty arrows. He slides a lit arrow into the Kenware, taking aim --

DENTON

steps to the propane tank, FIRING his Winchester rifle. The tank EXPLODES. The deadbolt chain falling to the ground, splayed like a dead snake.

An arrow PIERCES the Molotov drum hidden in the snow. Followed by another arrow.

Denton levels his gaze to the barrage of fiery arrows sailing toward them like tiny comets.

The drum EXPLODES, spitting fire and shrapnel. They're all thrown off their feet like rag dolls.

Denton's on his feet, spinning to the second drum ten yards away. Another barrage of arrows sailing toward it.

DENTON

Move!

As soon as the last word rolls off his tongue, the drum EXPLODES. Fire and shrapnel SPRAYS out, SLICING into Gray's neck.

CALEB

sees the explosion, dropping the Kenware. Phoebe joins him wearing her new winter attire.

The beasts materialize out of the shadows like demonic apparitions. Moving through the trees.

Phoebe's face goes wan, but Caleb remains stoic. His eyes moving upwards to the tree trunk held delicately by the nylon rope overhead.

The beasts continue their charge. As if on springs, two of the animals LEAP at them --

-- Caleb SLICES the rope, the tree trunk swinging free like a pendulum. It SLAMS into the two beasts like a semi, sending them into the darkness.

Scar LUNGES at them, anger flaring in its nostrils.

Caleb STABS the rope, the second tree swinging free --

-- but Scar dodges it like a running back heading to the end zone. Eight hundred pounds hurling at them.

Caleb grabs Phoebe, and they both kiss the snow. He sways the knife, CUTTING the rope to his right. The rope disappears, the last tree trunk free --

-- it flies over them, licking the back of their heads as it COLLIDES into Scar. Sending the beast into the night.

Caleb and Phoebe are back on their feet, racing away.

DENTON

stares at the forest, a small grin curling his lips. Challenge accepted.

Behind him, Gray holds his neck -- blood oozing through his knuckles.

GRAY
(burbling blood)
I wanna go back...

Denton ignores him.

(CONTINUED)

GRAY

(angry)

Did you hear what I said?!

Denton spins around, FIRING his Winchester. Gray crumbles in a heap, his chest blooming crimson.

Black and White stare at Gray's corpse. A look of utter shock occupies their faces.

DENTON

There's no going back!

(re: Caleb)

I want him!

WHITE

(re: Gray)

You know the rules. We gotta bury him.

DENTON

We're moving.

WHITE

If they double back and get his body... his blood -- they can come after us, too!

Denton levels his Winchester at him.

DENTON

More of a motivation to get this hunt over with.

White raises his hands in defeat.

Denton slings his Winchester rifle over his shoulder, and marches deeper into the forest. White and Black reluctantly follow.

GRAY'S BODY

lies in the snow with a pool of blood around his body, his lifeless eyes staring into the heavens.

Three large shadows loom over the corpse.

The beasts POUNCE on the body. TEARING flesh. Scar lifts its head, UNLEASHING a looming roar.

CALEB AND PHOEBE

scuttle past trees, their heads whipping in the direction of the roar.

DENTON

stops. He hears the roar, too. Black and White exchange nervous glances.

DENTON

Split up.

CALEB

stops Phoebe, pointing with his nose to the tripwire that leads to the two propane tanks hidden in the trees.

CALEB

Three hundred yards east is the house.

PHOEBE

We're a team!

CALEB

This ain't one of your games!

PHOEBE

You need me, noob!

Caleb knows he's not going to win this argument.

CALEB

Up the hill is a genny. Crank that sucker up, and light the beer bottles next to it.

He tosses her a lighter.

A bullet STRIKES his chest, the Kevlar vest taking the round. He crashes backwards, GASPING for air. The Remington flying from his hands.

CALEB

(coughing)

Run!

Phoebe darts up the snowy hill. Caleb staggers toward the Remington --

(CONTINUED)

-- two more bullets SMACK his chest, spinning him like a top.

Black creeps toward Caleb's position, using the trees as cover. He reloads his .22.

Forgetting the Remington, Caleb crawls to the tripwire. His hand reaching for it.

PHOEBE

reaches the top of the hill, surrounded by the new housing construction. She sees the generator and CRANKS it with practiced ease. The machine GRUMBLES to life, the Dacati tires spinning.

She lights the Molotov cocktails. With one bottle in her hand, her eyes fall on the spinning tires. She knows where to put the bottle.

CALEB

grabs the tripwire. A bullet EXPLODES the ground, spitting snow at his face.

White appears behind him, smoke billowing from his rifle. Black also approaches, his .22 leveled at Caleb.

BLACK

Let go of it.

Caleb reluctantly releases the tripwire.

A bottle sails by White's head. He whirls around to see more bottles fly past.

WHITE

The girl!

Black races up the hill in pursuit of Phoebe.

Caleb uses the opportunity to yank the tripwire. The valves of the propane tanks jerk open, HISSING gas.

White swings his rifle like a baseball bat, HITTING Caleb across his chest. He pins Caleb to the ground, pressing the weight of the rifle against his neck --

-- Caleb JAMS his knee into White's gut, and KICKS him backwards through the thin wall of HISSING gas.

(CONTINUED)

Caleb rolls on his stomach, seeing a bottle burning in the snow before him. He snatches the bottle, flinging it behind him --

-- causing the thin wall of gas to ERUPT, engulfing White in its FURY. He lunges out of the flames, his coat on fire.

He angrily CHARGES at Caleb.

The second beast TACKLES White, blood spraying the snow. The beast RIPS into his torso, flesh everywhere.

Caleb quietly scoops up the Remington, surreptitiously racing away.

PHOEBE

is about to light another bottle when Black snatches her wrist. She SCREAMS, ramming the bottle into his face. He releases her, broken glass sticking out of his flesh.

Phoebe climbs to the second floor of the house, hiding behind a wall of pipes and insulation.

PHOEBE

(mimics Bruce Willis from Die Hard)

Come out to the coast. We'll get together. Have a few laughs.

Black climbs a scaffold, his face dripping blood. He creeps toward the pipes and insulation, his .22 leading.

He whips around the wall --

-- and is met with a FLASH of fire escaping the Supersoaker in Phoebe's grip, the lighter under the barrel.

Black's head is like the tip of a lit matchstick. He leaps of the second floor, burying his head into a pile of snow.

With a desperate lunge, Phoebe is on her feet, jumping to a pulley. She grab's the pulley's rope, clumsily swinging to another scaffold on the opposite side. She CRASHES onto its wooden beam, coughing dust.

Black pivots around, drawing a bead on her retreating form. His finger wrapped around the trigger --

-- Caleb PUNCHES him, the rifle MISFIRING. Black lunges at him. The two wrestle in the snow.

PHOEBE

lies on the scaffold, catching her breath.

A fury fist PUNCHES through the wooden platform --

-- Phoebe whirls around, her eyes locking with the third beast.

It RIPS the end of the floorboard, spraying wood.

Phoebe starts to slide toward the beast. Her arms wrap around a beam. Grabbing another. She starts to climb the structure as if it were a Jungle Gym.

She rolls onto another scaffold. The beast SWIPES at her, missing her torso by inches.

She's on her feet, racing across the scaffold to another pulley at the far end.

THREE STORIES UNDERNEATH

the scaffold, Caleb and Black continue to fight near the pulley's rope.

Caleb snatches the rope, wrapping it around Black's neck --

PHOEBE'S

at the pulley. The beast moving at her, its eight-foot frame gracefully gliding over the scaffold.

She spins around, her eyes falling on the pulley's bucket. A full toolbox and sledgehammer are in it. She leaps into the bucket, releasing its safety lever.

The combined weight of Phoebe, the toolbox, and sledgehammer act as a countermeasure, carrying White to the top of the scaffold --

-- where the beast awaits. Black's eyes scream as the beast's distensible jaws lunge at him.

CALEB AND PHOEBE

sweep through the maze of construction. Passing bulldozers and scissor-lifts.

(CONTINUED)

Caleb's BROADSIDED by the butt of Denton's Winchester. He collapses in a heap, blood gushing down the side of his face.

CALEB
(to Phoebe)
Go!

Phoebe races away. Caleb is on his feet, TACKLING Denton.

Denton hurls him against a bulldozer. Caleb slumps to the ground, bleeding.

Denton scoops up the Remington, stabbing the barrels of the Remington and the Winchester in the snow. He faces Caleb.

DENTON
Many have tried. None have
succeeded.

Caleb surreptitiously removes the handcuffs from his pocket.

Denton squats before him, their eyes leveled.

DENTON
For my sins, I was buried
alive. Left to rot in the
earth. Left to rot because of the
children -- what was left of
them. The parts I didn't eat. But
do you want to know what my real
sin was? My real sin was being
born. Because I am evil. I'm the
dark wind after a storm. I've been
given many names. Had many
faces. And after tonight I'll have
yours. The little girl I'll turn
into one of my pets. That's the
price one pays for immortality--

PHOEBE (O.S.)
Hey!

Denton spins around in time to see Phoebe doing her very best Barry Bonds impersonation. In her hands is a wooden beam.

WHAP! Denton flies to the ground, his teeth Chicklets.

PHOEBE
The price is wrong, bitch!

Caleb cuffs Denton's wrist to the bulldozer.

PHOEBE
(ala Jack Burton from Big
Trouble in Little China)
It's all in the reflexes.

Caleb grabs the Remington, leveling it at Denton. They lock eyes.

A HOWL stings the cold air. The beasts are in the distance.

Caleb lowers the rifle, grabbing Phoebe's hand. Her other hand darts behind her back, giving Denton the finger as they disappear into the night.

Denton slumps against the bulldozer, tugging at his cuffed wrist. He stops. Slowly lifting his head.

The beasts creep toward him, their shadows tanning him.

DENTON
Go after them!

Scar GROWLS. Glaring his teeth.

DENTON
I made you! You were
dead! Nothing but roadkill! I
gave you life!

Scar leaps at him, pinning Denton to the bulldozer.

DENTON
(pleading)
I'm home...

Scar BITES into his face, RIPPING it off as if it were a Halloween mask. The other beasts join in the carnage, raining flesh.

CALEB AND PHOEBE

slog toward the country club. Behind them, a flare LAUNCHES into the snowy night.

Followed by another flare. The beasts are in pursuit, again.

Caleb and Phoebe slide under the fence, and move toward a scissor-lift parked next to the country club's main structure.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

Get on!

She hops in the lift's bucket. Caleb STARTS it up, the motor HUMMING. Phoebe begins to rise twenty-feet off the ground.

CALEB

You'll be safe there.

PHOEBE

We're a team--

Caleb ignores her as he darts toward the three-story gymnasium.

INT. GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS

He dashes past the gasoline filled pool, running to a scaffold leading to the gym's skylight.

He climbs the scaffold. Reaching the top. He waits...

THE BEASTS

enter, Scar leading. It lifts its head to the scaffold. Seeing Caleb.

Caleb strike a flare, igniting it. Caleb and Scar lock eyes.

He tosses the flare into the pool. Scar leaps at the scaffold.

ON THE GYMNASIUM'S ROOF

Caleb climbs out the skylight.

THE POOL

ignites -- a SWATH of fire CONSUMES the second and third beasts. They SCREECH in pain.

Fire is everywhere.

IN THE BASEMENT,

under the pool, the fire licks the gas. A flame whirls back to the heated pool like an orange jellyfish.

CALEB

dives into the garbage chute. The roof SHAKES as the building EXPLODES.

He slides out the chute and into a dumpster --

-- the explosion BLASTS out walls, exhaling glass and rubble. The dumpster is thrown from the force of the explosion. Landing on its side.

Caleb kicks open the dumpster's lid, spilling out.

He sees Phoebe, still on the scissor-lift, frantically waving her arms, pointing and yelling -- trying to get his attention. To warn him.

Scar lurches at him. ROARING --

-- Caleb dives back inside the dumpster, closing its lid. Scar DENTS its shell. Angrily CLAWING at it.

INSIDE THE DUMPSTER,

Caleb whistles around the interior like a lotto ball, trying desperately to grip the Remington.

SCAR

drives the dumpster through the wooden frame of an adjacent building under construction.

Caleb tumbles out. His eyes dart to the Remington. It lies twenty yards away.

Scar SNARLS. Taunting Caleb to grab the rifle.

Caleb doesn't take the bait. He swirls around to the nearest scaffold, and lunges for its middle bar. He pumps his arms and legs, climbing the scaffold as fast as he can.

Scar RAMS into the scaffold's base -- causing it to sway like a clothesline in high wind. Caleb grips the scaffold's railing, his knuckles white.

(CONTINUED)

Scar POUNDS the scaffold, again. It teeters, beginning to fall --

-- except, its safety rope (tied to the building's framework) goes taut, preventing the scaffold from falling.

Caleb continues to climb, reaching for the framework's platform. He paws air, his fingers inches from the platform.

Scar angrily RAMS its torso into the scaffold causing the safety rope to SNAP.

With a desperate lunge, Caleb leaps from the scaffold to the platform. His chest CRASHING at its edge --

-- as the scaffold COLLAPSES on Scar.

With a grit-teeth stone face, Caleb pulls himself onto the platform. Like a cat, he's on his feet. Sprinting across the platform.

He speeds by an open toolbox, and swipes a hammer without breaking his stride. He spins around, hammer in the air.

But, Scar has not followed. Nothing but whirling snow.

From below, Scar's powerful claw SWIPES at Caleb. Missing his knee by inches.

Caleb leaps to another scaffold.

Scar leaps fifty-feet to a parallel framework, hanging from it like a gorilla to a tree. The beast twists itself to face Caleb, baring its fangs in a lethal HISS.

It leaps at Caleb -- eight hundred pounds of fury sailing at him.

Caleb dives for the scaffold's rope. Propelling down to the scaffold's axial --

-- as Scar CRASHES above. Missing Caleb by seconds.

The force of the crash causes the scaffold to teeter. Its safety rope SNAPPING.

Gripping the rope, Caleb pushes off the falling scaffold for momentum, and swings across to the parallel scaffold. His upper body SMACKS the gangplank, his nails digging into its wood.

Scar and the other scaffold continue to fall. Their looming shadow engulfing Caleb.

Face red from strain, Caleb hauls himself up. Diving into the framework --

-- as Scar and the scaffold COLLIDE with it. Metal and wood IMPACTING in a powerful THUNDERCLAP. The ground is littered with debris, splintered wood standing up like spears.

Caleb and Scar are in the wreckage.

Phoebe trudges to the wreckage, dragging the Remington behind her.

PHOEBE

Caleb?!

Caleb's eyes flutter open. He's covered in debris, a naked plank on his chest.

PHOEBE (O.S.)

Caleb?!

He groans in pain as he pushes the plank off his chest. His eyes find Phoebe.

CALEB

(low; sharp)

What're you doin' here?!

PHOEBE

(sees him)

Climbed off the lift, genius. I should get a 'thank you' for luggin' this heavy piece of shit here.

(looks around)

Where's the fury bast-

The debris stirs. Scar emerging from it like a vampire from its crypt.

PHOEBE

-tard... Shitballs!

Scar's eyes lock on Phoebe. She drops the Remington, sprinting away on the debris of boards and planks --

-- but the carpet of debris is not stable. The ground shifting under her weight.

TWO STORIES ABOVE,

Caleb grabs the scaffold's rope, immediately tying a noose. He tosses it to her.

She snatches it, sliding her foot into the noose. Caleb strains as he pulls her up.

Scar pushes through the wreckage. The debris shifts under Scar's weight as it leaps for her, causing a less than spectacular jump --

-- the beast misses her. CRASHING into a load-barring beam instead. The fragile framework starts to teeter.

Phoebe dangles from the rope. Caleb grabs her wrist as the framework continues to teeter. Caleb slides off the platform -- one arm wrapped around the beam, his other hand gripping Phoebe's wrist.

Scar wrenches itself from the debris. His eyes go to Phoebe, dangling above like a worm on a hook.

She's slipping from Caleb's grip.

Caleb is also losing his grip on the beam. His knuckles white, his fingers digging into the wood. His arms outstretched like hands on a clock.

His eyes fall on Phoebe. Fear on the little girl's face. Pain surges in his muscles. He cannot hold on to both --

-- but he is not going to let go of Phoebe. He musters all his strength to sway his arm, swinging Phoebe to the safety of the platform.

He loses his grip on the beam. And falls to Scar. It HOWLS in triumph --

-- but the debris COLLAPSES under its weight. Swallowing them both in a cloud of dirt and snow.

There's silence.

Caleb's eyes snap open. He grimaces, glancing at his leg. It's slick with blood.

He frantically looks around, his eyes searching for the beast. But Scar is nowhere to be found. Caleb's eyes go to the platform.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB
(low; sharp)
Phoebe?!

Phoebe stirs, her eyes opening. Consciousness returning to her.

CALEB
Phoebe?!

PHOEBE
(groans)
I'm here.

Caleb rolls on his stomach, crawling through the wreckage --

-- Scar BURSTS through the debris like a claymore explosion, freeing itself from the broken pipes and debris.

Caleb pulls himself to his feet. Limping over splintered boards and planks.

Phoebe whips around to see Scar in pursuit of Caleb. Her eyes tickle back and forth, searching --

She sees the Remington. It lies on the ground, thirty yards away. And a couple feet below.

Caleb grimaces as he climbs a twisted pipe, pulling himself onto a long platform. He runs in a staggered limp across it, realizing halfway that it is a dead end.

He spins around --

-- but Scar is already on the platform. Stalking toward him.

Below them, Phoebe drags the Remington to a broken plank. She places the rifle on the plank's end --

PHOEBE
Caleb!

She leaps on the other end of the plank, CATAPULTING the rifle into the air --

-- Caleb turns, and snatches the rifle in midair.

PHOEBE (O.S.)
Say somethin' cool!

Caleb spins around, COCKING the Remington. Locking eyes with Scar, barreling toward him.

CALEB

This is my boomstick!

He FIRES, the Remington SPITTING a round into Scar. He FIRES, again. And again.

The FORCE of each blast pushes Scar backwards, and over the end of the platform --

-- and onto the splintered wood standing like spears below.

Impaling the beast.

Caleb limps to the end of the platform. Phoebe climbs next to him. They stare at the dead monster below.

PHOEBE

Army of Darkness, really?

CALEB

Hail to the king, baby.

Phoebe glances around at the rubble. The country club in ruins.

PHOEBE

Think they'll wanna play golf here, now?

INT. ROOM - MERCY HOSPITAL - MORNING

Caleb and Phoebe enter the room. Kara is on the bed, her eyes still closed. But the breathing tube is gone.

PHOEBE

Kiss her.

CALEB

Wha?

PHOEBE

Like Tom Cruise in Legend.

Caleb stares at Kara -- it's not the worst idea in the world. He leans in. His lips touching hers --

-- and Kara's eyes flutter open. Focusing an accusing eye on Caleb.

He immediately pulls back, and points an accusing finger at Phoebe.

(CONTINUED)

CALEB

She told me to do it.

Kara sees Phoebe, relief fills her eyes.

KARA

Feeb!

Phoebe rushes into her arms for a long embrace that only sisters can give each other.

GARRYMORE (O.S.)

(re: Kara)

She came out of it last night.

Garrymore stands at the door, cradling a cup of coffee.

CALEB

Thanks for stayin'.

Garrymore nods.

GARRYMORE

Got a call over the wire. Somethin' happened over at the Woodmont Country Club.

CALEB

Wouldn't know 'bout that. Was lookin' for Phoebe. Found her out by the Cooper Ranch.

PHOEBE

You should probably check out that place. It's a treehouse of horrors.

Garrymore studies them.

GARRYMORE

And you both know nothin' about what happened at Woodmont?

CALEB/PHOEBE

(in unison)

Nope.

A small smile curls Garrymore's lips.

GARRYMORE

That's what I thought.

PHOEBE

Let's give 'em some privacy.

She pushes Garrymore out of the room. Caleb and Kara are alone.

KARA

Thanks for rescuing my sister.

CALEB

You're welcome.

(beat)

They say it's as easy as lyin'.

KARA

(confused)

Are we talking about dancing?

CALEB

You are.

He leans in, and they kiss.

PHOEBE (O.S.)

(scoffs)

You call that a kiss?

They turn to her.

PHOEBE

French it up.

CALEB/KARA

(in unison)

Git.

Phoebe darts her head back out. Giggling.

Caleb and Kara resume their kiss.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

(prelap)

Taken from the pages of a Brothers Grimm tale, the recent animal attacks have been attributed to a family residing in the infamous hinterland, north of the metro. In an ironic twist, the very family were killed by the animals they had trained to kill.

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - DAY

Caleb is typing on his laptop. The television BLARES across from him:

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

It has been five days since their deadly rampage ended. The animals were killed from a gas explosion after they had wandered into the new Woodmont Country Club. Police theorize they ruptured a gas tank, sparking an explosion. A spokesperson for Woodmont Estates confirms that due to the recent tragedies, they plan to rebuild on a new location twenty miles away. This is Irene Armendariz with the Greek Chorus.

Caleb turns off the television. He finishes typing, closing his laptop.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - HOUSE - DAY

He steps outside. Kara is talking to a CONTRACTOR near the contractor's truck. On the truck's hood is an architectural blueprint.

She lifts her head, seeing Caleb.

KARA

How's the writing coming along?

CALEB

Easier. How's the construction comin'?

KARA

The school's quad is gonna cost another hundred grand.

Caleb scoops up some snow, packing it into a ball.

CALEB

Let's ask our accountant.

INT. PHOEBE'S ROOM - HOUSE - DAY

Phoebe is busy playing with her Wii. A large television covers half her wall. Numerous video game boxes litter the floor.

A snowball SMACKS the window.

She opens the window, seeing Caleb staring up at her.

CALEB

Hey Tomb Raider, it's gonna cost
another hundred grand. We good?

She glances over her shoulder to the five metal chests, each filled with gold, stacked neatly in the corner.

She turns back to Caleb, a Cheshire cat grin on her face.

PHOEBE

We good.

FADE OUT.

THE END