

THE GREAT  
GOD PAN

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FADE IN:

PLANT

We're at the molecular level.

Green plant cells float through clear cytoplasm. Segmented membrane walls form a kaleidoscopic latticework.

Moving outward to the microscopic level, plant fibers as thick as rope bundle and entwine.

Then the rugose peaks and troughs in the surface of a LEAF.

A monstrous insectoid creature - an APHID blown up to a gargantuan size - navigates this endless landscape.

Its black eyes staring, antennae wagging, it studiously plunges its proboscis into the plant's flesh.

INT. NEW YORK CITY, NOAH'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The plant sits in a glass terrarium on someone's desk, the machinations of its small and alien ecosystem invisible to the naked eye.

Close by, NOAH BRIGGS (30) sits and scribbles in a notebook.

He has a pleasant face, wide and thoughtful eyes. He's currently lost in the music playing through his headphones, the pen on paper.

In his own ecosystem.

Someone places a mug of black coffee in front of him and he looks up at his girlfriend, ZOE (28).

She's pretty. Self-possessed. Dressed meticulously for work.

ZOE

So cute how you handwrite  
everything.

NOAH

Feels more organic.

Zoe sits on the edge of the nearby couch, pulls on her shoes.

They're in Noah's high-ceilinged studio apartment. Small but hip. Cluttered with books and interesting objects from his travels.

Noah sniffs the coffee.

NOAH  
Where'd you find this?

ZOE  
Back of your cupboard.  
(then)  
What're you working on?

NOAH  
Nothing. Just putting some thoughts  
down. Did you know the average  
American works eight weeks unpaid  
overtime a year? I tell ya,  
something's gotta give...

Silence.

Noah turns to see Zoe is distracted by her phone.

ZOE  
My god. These interns. It's not  
even seven o'clock.

She stands. Kisses him.

ZOE  
Don't forget we have Lacie's  
birthday thing tonight and we need  
to be there at eight.

NOAH  
Mmhmm.

ZOE  
That means there at eight. Not  
leave here at eight.

NOAH  
Got it. Have a nice day?

ZOE  
You too.

Zoe hurries out. The apartment door closes.

Noah looks to the paned window and listens to the rumbling  
sounds of New York City.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - MORNING

Dressed for work in shirt and tie, Noah waits on a crowded subway station. His headphones are on. Tunes out the world.

With a blast of hot air, a train arrives and expunges a load of passengers. Noah steps on.

INT. TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

He squeezes through the packed train, finds a corner.

Noah quietly observes the other commuters. They stand intimately close but resolutely to themselves.

Two girls experiment with filters on their phones. A kid stares transfixed at a tablet device. A woman works on her laptop.

Noah's eyes trail up to a grimy advertisement. An air freshener gives off curling vapor in front of a beautiful wooded vista.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, LOBBY - MORNING

Noah walks across the bustling lobby. He swipes his card at the security gate but it makes an unhappy BZZT.

A SECURITY GUARD at the front desk looks over.

SECURITY GUARD  
System isn't working. Sign in over here.

Noah walks over. The Guard watches him write down his details.

SECURITY GUARD  
How's your morning?

Noah forces a smile.

NOAH  
Great.

INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES - DAY

The bustling open-plan offices of EASON & PACE stretch away, a repetitious sea of cubicles.

Noah sits at his desk amidst it, phone to ear. He sifts frantically through a stack of files.

NOAH  
 (into phone)  
 I'm looking for January fifteenth.  
 No, I was never sent those.

Noah spies BILL (50s) - his avuncular boss - approaching down his aisle and he cusses quietly. He's running behind.

NOAH  
 (into phone)  
 Can you email it right away? Thank you. Same address.

Noah hangs up as Bill leans on his partition.

BILL  
 Noah. How's Philadelphia?

NOAH  
 I'll need a half hour to round it out.

BILL  
 Terrific.

Bill turns to Noah's coworker CASSIE (20s), who currently packs her belongings into a box nearby.

BILL  
 Cassie. All set?

CASSIE  
 Yep.

Cassie picks up the box and follows Bill across the office.

RYAN (20s), a cubicle over, notes Noah watching after them.

RYAN  
 Moving on up.

NOAH  
 She's going to North West?

RYAN  
 Yup. Apparently she crept onto the Keely audit.

They watch as Cassie is introduced to her new department.

RYAN  
(re. Bill)  
Think she'll ever climb down out of  
his ass now?

Defeated, Noah returns to his work.

INT. BROOKLYN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Noah sits at a crowded table next to Zoe in a hip Brooklyn restaurant.

Music BLARES and all present are forced to shout to be heard.

He looks around. Similar groups, similar loud conversations. People chat while thumbing their phones.

ZOE  
(to Lacie)  
You should talk to Noah. He's  
traveled through Asia.

The birthday girl LACIE (20s) leans across the table.

LACIE  
Oh wow. What part?

NOAH  
Nepal. Bhutan, mostly.

LACIE  
That would be amazing!

ZOE  
You should read his stuff.

NOAH  
Stop.

ZOE  
What?  
(to Lacie)  
Noah used to write these really  
smart social conscience pieces.  
He's been published all over the  
world.

LACIE  
I didn't know that. Why did you  
stop?

This is clearly a sore point for Noah. He shrugs.

NOAH  
No money in it.

LACIE  
I'll hit you up for some tips. I've  
always wanted to see Nepal.

Noah sinks back as the conversation rolls on without him.

He winces at a LOUD GIRL next to him, who chats with her  
friends at another table.

Under the thumping music and shouting, a droning BUZZ rises.

It's almost imperceptible but Noah reacts to it. Like it  
exists only inside his head.

A sudden subliminal flash: a towering and twisted TREE.

CUT TO:

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Noah snaps awake in the darkness of his apartment. Somewhere,  
someone SCREAMS, high and shrill.

Zoe stirs next to him as he gets out of bed and moves to the  
window.

ZOE  
What's happening?

Another scream, closer.

Down on the street, a group of people - clearly drunk and in  
high spirits - cavort through the shadows.

Noah watches as they disappear into the night.

INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES, BILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Noah taps on the doorframe of Bill's slick office. Bill  
glances up from his desk.

BILL  
Noah.

NOAH  
Hey, Bill. I know you're probably  
swamped right now.

BILL  
When am I not? What's up?

Noah closes the door and sits across from Bill.

NOAH  
Ah. I've been thinking and I guess  
I'm a little confused.

BILL  
Oh?

NOAH  
I feel like I should have been  
considered for North West.

Bill doesn't respond.

NOAH  
I've been here longer.

BILL  
Cassie came to me last year and  
asked to take on more work. She put  
in the time. She was here weekends.

NOAH  
So basically I need to play the  
game.

A slight shift in Bill's expression. He suddenly doesn't like  
Noah very much.

BILL  
I'm going to be honest Noah, I get  
the impression movement inside  
Eason & Pace hadn't really crossed  
your mind until now.  
(beat)  
Is that something you want?

NOAH  
I work hard, Bill. I guess I want  
something to show for it.

BILL  
Is that a yes?

Noah hesitates.

NOAH  
Yes.



BILL

Then let's do a reset. You show me you're committed and we'll circle back in a couple month's time.

Cowed, Noah stands and leaves.

NOAH

Thanks Bill. Appreciate it.

INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES - DAY

Noah returns to his seat, slumps into it.

As he returns to his work, his phone buzzes on his desk. He picks it up, sees a text from 'ANDREA'.

He reads it and his shoulders sag.

He's not having a good day.

INT. NEW YORK CITY, COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Noah heads through a packed coffee shop to meet ANDREA (35), his older sister.

She's sophisticated. A little conservative. Presents older than she is.

ANDREA

Hey.

NOAH

Hey, I can't be too long.

They share a cursory hug and sit together at a small table.

ANDREA

Did you want anything?

NOAH

No thanks. Why are you in the city?

ANDREA

I wanted to talk to you about Lindsey. I think she's missing.

NOAH

Missing how?

ANDREA

She went to some commune up in Vermont.

Noah relaxes.

ANDREA

I know she does this--

NOAH

Yeah and she'll be back in a week. It's our family curse. We're chronically dissatisfied.

ANDREA

I guess I missed that gene.

Andrea chooses her words.

ANDREA

Noah, I have a bad feeling.

NOAH

Have you heard something about this place?

ANDREA

No. Nothing. I don't know where it is or how many people are there...

NOAH

So what do you want to do? You want find her and drag her back? She's an adult.

ANDREA

I know we're not a close family Noah, but she's our sister. I need to know she's okay.

NOAH

Andrea, I have my own stuff going on right now. I don't have time for this.

Noah stands. Realizes he was too harsh.

NOAH

Lindsey's been to far more dangerous places than Vermont.

ANDREA

Well we still need to do something about her things. Her roommate's asking for rent.

Noah sighs.

NOAH

What's the address?

INT. APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Noah follows JENNA (20s), Lindsey's neurotic ex-roommate, into a pokey living room. The place is dingy and dark.

She gestures at a pile of Lindsey's belongings sitting in a corner.

JENNA

That's all her stuff. I'm really sorry, I can't afford to cover her anymore.

Noah walks to the pile, crouches to look through it. Books. Clothes. Knick knacks. It doesn't amount to much.

He finds a shoebox of old photographs. Sifts through them.

A younger Briggs family on vacation somewhere. Mother, father, and Andrea, Noah and Lindsey as kids.

NOAH

How much does she owe?

JENNA

Six hundred.

He flips to another photo. His younger sister LINDSEY (20s) with friends.

She smiles into the camera, youthful and defiant, but there's uncertainty in her eyes. She's always been lost.

NOAH

I'll write you a check.

JENNA

Thank you. I don't even know if I'll get the security deposit back after what she did to her room.

Noah looks at Jenna. What the hell did she do?

INT. APARTMENT, LINDSEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door squeals open onto Lindsey's old room. Jenna leans past Noah and flicks the light on.

The room is bare. A sagging bed. Thin curtains over a window that looks onto a brick wall.

Noah's attention is caught immediately by something on the far side of the room and he moves to it, awed by its scope and gripped by a sense of *déjà vu*.

From floor to ceiling, a TREE has been carved into the wall.

Its intricate branches stretch outward. Its trunk thick and twisted.

Noah spots two simplistic FIGURES carved under the tree and crouches for a better look.

NOAH

You said Lindsey went to a commune.

JENNA

Yeah, some place in the middle of nowhere. She always talked about this one old guy. I don't know why he's so special.

Noah studies the figures. The one on the left is an old man holding a shepherd's CROOK.

The old man smiles at the figure to the right, which is Lindsey herself - naked, arms raised towards the tree.

NOAH

Did she ever mention his name?

JENNA

Ah, Walter something? Dailey, I think. Walter Dailey.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rain cascades down the windows as Noah sits at his desk and looks through hard copies of his old articles.

He reads the headlines: 'The Disappearing Paradise of Patagonia', 'From Field to Table', 'The Endangered City'.

Noah thinks. Something's been nagging at him since Lindsey's apartment.

He opens a browser on his computer and types 'walter dailey'.

He gets several hits, clicks a link to a 'Wall Street Journal' article: 'THE C.E.O. AND THE TRIBAL APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT.'

The accompanying photo is a corporate headshot of a distinguished middle-aged man with a handsome, creased face.

Walter Dailey.

Noah types. Searches headlines that progressively tell a tale about this man's self-inflicted downfall:

'C.E.O. SELF-DESTRUCTS', 'MYSTERY MELTDOWN', 'JOB LOSS'.

Noah sits back, intrigued. He looks at another headshot of Walter. Clean-shaven. Authoritative.

Could it be the same Walter Dailey?

INT. MANHATTAN BAR - NIGHT

Noah weaves his way through a hole-in-the-wall bar. One side of the place is taken up by people playing Skee-Ball.

He moves along the bar to where ZANDER (33) sits. Assistant editor of a hip online publication, Zander cultivates an air of cool that's nearing its expiry date.

ZANDER  
(re. Skee-Ball)  
Can you believe this shit? Since  
when did Skee-Ball become a thing?

NOAH  
Are you high?

ZANDER  
Just coke. Want some?

NOAH  
(to Bartender)  
Better give me a whisky.

Noah's eyes fall on a FILE on the bar.

NOAH  
This everything?

Zander nods and Noah gratefully slides the file closer.

He sifts through clipped articles, contact lists, xeroxed photographs of Walter Dailey.

ZANDER

You really think your sister  
shacked up with this guy?

NOAH

I still don't know if it's the same  
person.

(thinks)

I thought the name sounded  
familiar. Walter Dailey was always  
this cautionary tale, you know?  
We're supposed to aspire to the  
kind of wealth he just threw away.

Noah stops at a news clipping from a local Vermont paper  
called 'The Fordhill Tribune', written by Arnold Breiner.

He reads the headline: 'LOCAL POLICE SEEK DISGRACED C.E.O. ON  
INDECENT EXPOSURE CHARGE'.

NOAH

Wait. Fordhill. Is that Vermont? I  
wonder if I can get in contact with  
the guy who wrote this...

Noah gets out his phone. Googles.

ZANDER

Dude.

NOAH

What?

ZANDER

I don't know why you're killing  
yourself at that shitty office job.

(re. file)

You were built for this. Not  
sitting at a desk punching buttons  
and staring at numbers.

NOAH

Do you even know what I do?

ZANDER

Just say the word. I can talk to  
the features editor first thing  
Monday.

NOAH

I'm not going back to journalism.  
(off Zander's look)  
No one wants to read the kind of  
stuff I write, Zander. It took me a  
couple years but I finally got it.

Noah downs his whisky.

NOAH

I was never opening people's eyes,  
I was just reminding them how  
crappy and hopeless everything is.

ZANDER

Go fuck yourself. Can we get drunk  
now?

Noah smirks, gestures for another drink.

INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES - MORNING

Noah sits at his desk, talking covertly on his phone and  
scribbling in a notebook.

He currently speaks with gravel-voiced ARNOLD BREINER, the  
reporter from 'The Fordhill Tribune'.

NOAH

You're sure it's the same Walter  
Dailey?

ARNOLD (V.O.)

Dead sure. I did a stint with the  
'Financial Times'. I know the  
story.

NOAH

And this family who saw him walking  
naked along the hiking trail, this  
was the first anyone knew he was  
out there?

ARNOLD (V.O.)

Kind of a funny story. Police  
looked for him, but I think  
Walter's only found when he wants  
to be.

Noah sees Ryan watching with interest from across the aisle  
and swivels his back to him.

NOAH

Do you know what he's doing in those woods? I was told there's a commune.

ARNOLD (V.O.)

You'll see odd folk in town. Hippie-types. Whether they're congregating around him, I don't know.

NOAH

Is there any way to contact him?

Arnold is silent for a beat.

ARNOLD (V.O.)

You don't want to go looking for Walter.

NOAH

Why not?

ARNOLD (V.O.)

Because there are rumors. Most of it's jittery small town gossip but some stories stick.

NOAH

What stories?

ARNOLD (V.O.)

A girl went missing a couple years back. Sarah Willman. Bright young thing who walked into those woods and was never seen again.

Noah hurriedly types into a browser: *sarah willman missing fordhill vermont.*

The Vermont State Police Missing Persons Database opens.

NOAH

And you think Walter had something to do with it?

'Sarah Marie Willman' smiles shyly back at him from a school photo. She's pretty. Her blonde hair long and conservative.

ARNOLD (V.O.)

Me? I think the police never had anything to go on. But as I said, some stories stick.



INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES, RESTROOM - MORNING

Noah washes his face in the sink. He takes a breath, looks at himself in the mirror.

Walter, the missing girl, Lindsey - he finds the mystery of it all is igniting a familiar spark.

He opens the restroom door but falters when he sees groups of his coworkers heading for the BOARD ROOM.

The weekly debrief.

Noah lets the door close against it, an idea forming.

CUT TO:

INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES - DAY

Noah hurries through the empty cubicles to his desk.

He grabs up his things, stuffs them into his bag and flicks off his computer. He heads for the elevators.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Zoe watches Noah excitedly pack a bag on his bed.

ZOE

So you're just driving up to Vermont? What about work?

NOAH

I'm taking time off. I mean, I'm sure they'll eventually figure it out.

ZOE

How will you even know how to find this place?

NOAH

I'll ask directions.  
(off her look)  
I'm just going to see if Lindsey's okay.

ZOE

Are you sure? Because it kind of feels like you're going for this Walter person.

NOAH

Okay, maybe I find the idea of a wealthy C.E.O. now living in the woods kind of intriguing.

Zoe sighs. She's not convinced.

NOAH

Zo, he's a born-again hippie. Hippies are harmless.

ZOE

Tell that to Sharon Tate.

NOAH

That was dark.

Noah collects a notebook and pen. Packs them.

NOAH

Look, I'm not going in guns blazing. I'll say I'm interested in interviewing him for a story or something. People love talking about themselves.

ZOE

Just, if something feels off, use your head and leave, okay?

He smiles. It does nothing to assure her.

NOAH

I always use my head.

INT. CAR RENTAL CENTER, PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Lugging his bag, Noah follows a distracted CLERK through a parking garage.

CAR RENTAL CLERK

Everything works fine. You're obliged to pay for any damages incurred. Fill it up before you return it.

Noah takes the keys.

NOAH

Oh wait. Do you know how to get onto the Washington Bridge from here?

CAR RENTAL CLERK  
Got GPS on your phone?

NOAH  
Yeah?

The Clerk wordlessly turns and walks away. Bemused, Noah watches him go.

He walks for his rental car. Nothing can ruin his mood today.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RENTAL CAR, UPSTATE NEW YORK - DAY

Noah moves with the traffic along a flat highway. The green landscape of upstate New York rolls away.

The sun shines brightly, Spring air whips through the rental car from the open window.

He smiles.

EXT. NEW YORK/VERMONT - AFTERNOON

Noah drives. The day wears on.

He crosses an unassuming bridge, passes a sign: Welcome to VERMONT.

EXT. FORDHILL, OUTER LIMITS - AFTERNOON

Noah approaches the outer limits of FORDHILL.

It's a quaint town of church steeples and white brick buildings that gives way to rolling WOODS.

In the distance, low lying hills.

EXT. FORDHILL, TOWN CENTER - AFTERNOON

Noah passes through Fordhill's town center.

A large civic park surrounded on all sides by boutique stores, coffee shops and restaurants.

Hard to believe this place has its very own commune.

EXT. FORDHILL, STREET - AFTERNOON

Noah cruises slowly down a residential street.

He refers to his notebook and comes to a stop at the curb outside a RUNDOWN HOUSE, its front lawn overgrown and dead.

The Willman house.

EXT. FORDHILL, WILLMAN HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Noah stands on the Willman's porch and knocks on the door. No response.

He moves to peer through a dirty window.

EXT. WILLMAN HOUSE, STREET - LATER

Noah walks back towards the street. He spots a NEIGHBOR (60s) dumping garbage at the curb.

NOAH

Excuse me.

She squints against the setting sun as he approaches.

NOAH

Do you know the people who live in that house?

NEIGHBOR

Used to. George died eight months ago.

NOAH

I heard the daughter went missing. Do you know anything about that?

NEIGHBOR

Only that they didn't have the best home life. You a reporter?

Noah decides to roll with it, gets out his notebook and pen.

NOAH

Yeah.

NEIGHBOR

Not exactly current events.

NOAH

You mentioned their home life?

NEIGHBOR

You'd hear them screaming all hours. One time the police brought Sarah home after they found her walking butt naked along Boundary Road.

The Neighbor scoffs - can you believe it?

NOAH

Boundary Road. That runs through the woods outside town?

NEIGHBOR

What's your interest in this?

A nanosecond beat.

NOAH

I'm writing an article on how bureaucratic red tape fails the loved ones of missing persons.

NEIGHBOR

Well, for what my opinion's worth, I think she went to California to live with her mother.

NOAH

So no one lives here?

NEIGHBOR

Not anymore.

The Neighbor heads for her front door and Noah looks back to the dark Willman house.

EXT. WILLMAN HOUSE, BACKYARD - DUSK

It's dusk and Noah treads down the side of the house to the backyard.

He tries the backdoor - locked - then tests a kitchen window. It gives a little, so he forces it open the rest of the way.

INT. WILLMAN HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Noah pulls himself through the window onto a cluttered countertop. As he climbs down, he surveys the dim kitchen.

Piles of empty beer cans. Dishes caked with ancient food.

INT. WILLMAN HOUSE, HALL - DUSK

Noah moves down the gloomy hall. He looks at framed photos on a credenza. The Willmans. Mother, father, and Sarah.

He notices the way George Willman's hand rests on Sarah's leg in one of the photos. It's too intimate.

To Noah's right, he can see what must have been George's bedroom: sagging bed, mountain of beer cans, dark furniture.

Noah moves to a closed door and carefully turns its handle.

INT. WILLMAN HOUSE, SARAH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door opens onto Sarah's room. He tries the overhead light but it doesn't work. Power's been cut.

The curtains are cracked, letting in diffused light on the typical bedroom of a teenager on the brink of womanhood.

Posters and photos stuck to the walls. Plush toys on the bed.

Noah spots something on the wall on the other side of the room. He opens the curtains wide to let in more light.

A familiar TREE has been painted over the wallpaper in dark grays and greens.

He sees the familiar figure of the old man under it, holding his shepherd's crook.

Another figure. Must be Sarah. Naked, like his sister's carving. Arms raised to the tree.

Noah stops when he sees a THIRD FIGURE. A man holding an object that looks like a large ACORN.

As he studies this figure, he gets the eerie sense he's looking at himself, rendered on the wall of this missing girl's bedroom.

NOAH

What the hell's going on?

INT. FORDHILL, HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Noah turns the light on in his overdecorated hotel room. Too many pillows and cushions. Ruffles.

He puts his bag down and wanders to the window.

From the second floor, Noah has a view out across the township, its lights twinkling in the night.

Beyond, the dark hills silhouetted against the sky.

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE:

Darkness.

Murky shapes emerge. Twist. Bodies move against each other in the gloom. Hard to discern the individual.

A persistent droning BUZZ.

INT. FORDHILL, HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Noah lies in the delirium between sleep and waking.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Noah.

NOAH

Zo?

He opens his eyes on the dim room. Gazes towards the foot of the bed where a naked WOMAN stands, her face in shadow.

He JOLTS, sits up.

He's alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COLETTRIE FOREST, VERMONT - MORNING

Noah drives his rental along a back road through verdant Vermont forest.

INT. RENTAL CAR, FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Dressed in new hiking gear and boots, Noah eyes the passing wall of dense forest.

He spots a sign up ahead: IRON TRAIL - COLETTRIE NATIONAL FOREST. He refers to an open notebook on his lap.

On a page of notes: 'COLETTRIE FOREST. BOUNDARY ROAD. IRON TRAIL.' It's a starting point.

Noah cruises to a stop in the trailhead parking lot.

EXT. FOREST, TRAILHEAD PARKING LOT - MORNING

Noah hefts a backpack from the car's trunk. As he shrugs it on, he notices a sales tag still attached to his jacket.

He rips it off and he's ready. Or he thinks he is.

He looks down Iron Trail, a lonely track that curves out of sight into the forest, struck by the silence of this place.

He heads in.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST, IRON TRAIL - DAY

Noah wanders the trail. It's tranquil here, the trees tall and still. He breathes in the clean air and smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST, IRON TRAIL - LATER

Noah's been walking for hours. He winces, limps to a stop.

His new hiking boots are killing him.

A large map of Coletrie Forest stands nearby and he walks to it, finds his location.

He's a way along Iron Trail, but it's starting to loop back towards civilization. He's not going to find Walter this way.

Noah considers the trees beyond the trail.

Resolved, he steps into them.

Heads deeper into the forest.

EXT. FOREST, CREEK - AFTERNOON

Noah emerges from the trees onto the bank of a steadily flowing creek. His new boots squelch in soft earth.

Across the creek, more dense forest.

He checks his cell phone, notes there's no signal, then squints towards the sun - it's getting late.



Continuing along the bank, he spots something.

A hundred feet away, he can see a small wooden structure,  
swallowed by the underbrush.

EXT. CREEK, OLD SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Noah approaches a collapsing SHELTER. Constructed from old  
pilfered wood, it's long been abandoned.

He crouches and peers inside. A tatty animal skin lies across  
the shelter's dirt floor. Someone's bed.

Shuffling in further, he inspects a scattered collection of  
things: an old fishing reel, a battered tin can, a tangle of  
fishing line.

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

Noah trudges through the trees. The forest is growing dark.

NOAH  
(calls out)  
Hello! Walter Dailey!

No response.

NOAH  
Lindsey!

Desperate, Noah looks for a familiar landmark. A trail. A  
road. A sign of the commune.

Nothing. He's lost.

NOAH  
Fuck!

Noah checks the signal on his phone. Reins in rising panic.

He heads off through dense underbrush.

There's no end to this place. White pine, birch, and ash  
crowd together, muting the sunlight.

The silence is broken only by the titter of a bird.

NOAH  
Hello!

His voice startles an animal from hiding. Rapid thumping  
FOOTFALLS off to his left.

NOAH

Oh shit!

He freezes. Nothing moves. Probably just a rabbit--

The animal dashes noisily through the shrubbery behind him and that does it: Noah turns and crashes away through the forest.

NOAH

*Shitshitshit.*

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Noah bounds through the trees. Ducks under low branches. He's being overwhelmed by a shrill and irrational fear.

The droning BUZZ rings in his ears as his limbs pump. Breath blasts. He's all adrenaline and survival.

Too late, he sees a fallen tree in his path.

His shins collide and the momentum pitches him messily on the other side.

Winded, Noah waits for the pain of a broken bone. None comes.

He rolls carefully onto his back, and sees something silhouetted above him.

A towering structure.

He gets to his feet and gapes at a twelve-foot-tall wicker ARCHWAY. It's woven with the skulls and bones of small animals, the bleached antlers of a deer.

Although the woods on the other side look no different, there's a sense Noah stands at a threshold.

He steps through.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

The light dies in the forest as Noah unwraps his sleeping bag, resolved to spending the night out here.

He settles against the base of a tree and unhappily pulls the bag around himself.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Night has fallen. Stars peek through the canopy, but the forest is awash in heavy darkness.

A murky shadow sitting against the tree, Noah shivers, wrapped tight.

Stealthy movement nearby and he holds his breath.

Something moves through the underbrush towards him. An animal on some nocturnal errand.

Noah stares as a SHAPE separates itself silently from the shadows. Too tall to be a quadruped.

Noah fumbles for his phone, turns on its flashlight.

Shadows stretch ominously as he passes the beam around.

Whatever it was - an animal, a person, or his own fevered imagination - it's now gone.

A mournful CREAK and Noah turns the light on the forest.

The shifting shadows make it seem for a moment that a tree moves. Its branches reach and turn.

Noah stops moving the flashlight and all falls still. An optical illusion.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Noah traipses through the trees, his voice hoarse from dehydration.

NOAH  
(calls out)  
Hello! Can anyone hear me?! I'm  
fucking lost!

Noah moves to a tree, slumps against a tree. He fights a wave of despair and self-pity.

NOAH  
Shit.

SNAP! A sharp metallic crack close by.

Noah reacts, listens to a faint SQUEAK. A small animal in distress.

He follows the sound. Spots it.

NOAH

Oh god.

An OPOSSUM, its body twisted in a rusted trap, takes its last rasping breaths. Disgust and fascination mingle as Noah edges closer.

Then he has a thought. Someone set this trap. Maybe Walter.

He hurries behind a nearby tree, checks his line of sight.

Satisfied he has a clear view of the trap, he settles in.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

Sunlight slants through the canopy, but another day is almost over.

Frustrated and bored, Noah sits against the base of his tree.

The trap sits untouched. Flies busily inspect the opossum's carcass.

NOAH

Come on, old man.

Noah flinches when birds ERUPT from shrubbery nearby and flit up into the treetops.

As he scans the forest for the source of their alarm, there's sudden movement behind him.

WALTER (O.S.)

Any particular interest you have in my possum?

Seemingly out of nowhere, WALTER DAILEY (60s) strides past him towards the trap.

Noah scrambles to his feet.

The man is grizzled and barefoot. Gray stubble on his weathered face. A far cry from the civilized businessman.

Noah takes in Walter's clothes: tattered pants, a dusty buttoned shirt, a jerkin made from animal skin.

NOAH

Walter Dailey?

Walter crouches, works to release the opossum.

NOAH

My name's Noah Briggs. I'm a  
journalist from New York. I heard  
about what you're doing out here  
and I'd love the chance to  
interview you.

Walter wrenches the opossum free, picks up his trap.

NOAH

I think your story would really  
inspire people.

WALTER

What do I care about inspiring  
people?

As Noah searches for a response, Walter wanders away through  
the trees.

Noah snatches up his backpack and hurries after him.

EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

Walter glides through the forest. Knows every part of it.  
Every tree and stone.

Noah struggles to keep up, talks a mile a minute.

NOAH

We have these, ah, expectations  
placed on us from birth. All of us.  
They dictate our lives, how we  
interact with the world and each  
other. I want to know how you came  
to live out here--

Walter stops.

WALTER

What did you say your name was?

NOAH

Noah. Briggs.

WALTER

Well Noah Briggs, it'll be night  
soon and you don't want to be  
stumbling around these woods after  
dark.

NOAH

Why?

Walter gives him a mean grin, holds up the opossum.

WALTER  
I have traps all over.

Again, Walter walks away through the trees.

EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON

Noah doggedly follows Walter.

He sees the man is headed towards a wide clearing, at the far side of which stands a rustic SHACK.

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Noah stops on the boundary of Walter's "property."

Unlike the old shelter by the creek, the shack has four walls, a roof, and windows made from dusty glass.

The rest of the clearing holds various amenities. A campfire and cooking pot. A blood-stained workbench. A sagging clothesline.

No sign anyone else lives here. No sign of Lindsey.

NOAH  
I was told this was a commune.

Noah steps into the clearing as Walter throws the opossum on the workbench.

NOAH  
Where is everyone? My sister...

But he trails off. This is weird. He decides to double down.

NOAH  
So? Do I get an interview?

WALTER  
I believe I made myself clear.

NOAH  
The shit that's happening out there right now.

Noah blanches when Walter unsheathes a HUNTING KNIFE from his belt, sticks it in the opossum's belly and slices it open.

WALTER

You don't need to tell me what  
state the world's in.

NOAH

Then can't you see how sharing your  
experience, where you came from and  
how you live out here, maybe it'll  
give some people hope?

This isn't working. He watches Walter pull the guts from the  
opossum. Not a part wasted.

NOAH

(frustrated)

Look, I came all this way. I spent  
last night under a tree. The least  
you could do is answer a couple  
questions.

Walter drops the knife on the bench and stalks toward Noah.  
He snatches up his hands, looks him in the eye.

WALTER

When was the last time you had your  
hands in the earth? Or killed the  
meat you ate? Until you know what  
those things are, you're a tourist,  
writing about being a tourist.

Walter goes back to the workbench and Noah looks at the blood  
smeared on his hands.

WALTER

I formally decline your offer to  
elucidate the masses. Now scuttle  
back to your city.

Noah looks up at the sky as Walter moves to a bucket and  
washes his hands. The sun will be down soon.

NOAH

Could I at least get some water?

Walter throws a thumb over his shoulder as he disappears  
inside his shack.

WALTER

Creek's that way.

The door shuts.

EXT. FOREST, CREEK - DUSK

Noah crouches on the muddy bank of the creek and angrily washes the blood from his hands.

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - NIGHT

Night has fallen. The forest sits heavy and dark.

An interloper, Noah huddles in the treeline on the boundary of the clearing.

He watches Walter sit by the fire and eat from a battered metal bowl. To him, Noah isn't here at all.

Noah rummages for a granola bar in his backpack. He unwraps it, chews sullenly.

He quickens at the crash of a small animal darting through the shrubs behind him.

He'll never get used to these woods.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - DAWN

Noah wakes in his sleeping bag and sits up. A thin mist clings to the trees as the sun pierces the canopy.

His joints pop as he stretches and looks toward the clearing.

No Walter.

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - MORNING

Noah hurriedly investigates Walter's clearing. The blood-stained workbench. The tanning rack.

He moves to the shack's windows. Too dark to see inside.

Noah sees the door is ajar. Moves to open it--

He steps away quickly when Walter walks into the clearing from the forest, a rucksack over his shoulder.

WALTER  
Still here?



NOAH  
I didn't become a journalist to  
take the first "no".

Walter empties the rucksack onto the workbench. Three dead squirrels tumble out.

Noah approaches.

NOAH  
What can I do?  
(off his look)  
I'm not a tourist.

Walter unsheathes his hunting knife and places it on the bench. Waits.

Noah picks up the knife. He takes a squirrel, ignores its beady dead eyes glaring up at him.

NOAH  
(gestures)  
This way?

WALTER  
Uh huh.

Noah psyches himself. Drags the knife along the squirrel's stomach. He fights bile when intestines worm from the incision.

WALTER  
Guts go in here.

Walter puts a bowl on the bench and walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - LATER

Noah throws up in shrubbery a dignified distance from the clearing. He wipes his chin, looks up as it starts to rain.

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - DAY

Noah sits under a tree, hugging his knees as the rain pours.

He looks balefully over at Walter's shack. Its windows glow warmly.

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - NIGHT

Night again and the rain has cleared. Walter sits in quiet contemplation next to his fire.

Noah sits on his sleeping bag on the edge of the clearing again. He thinks, gets to his feet.

Walter doesn't react when Noah approaches and gestures at the fire.

NOAH  
Do you mind?

No response. Noah sits anyway, warms his hands.

Silence.

NOAH  
I need to apologize. I didn't make the best first impression but you'd have to admit your story is pretty intriguing.

Still no reaction. Noah tries a different tack.

NOAH  
I'm leaving tomorrow but I need something to take back to my editor. Can I ask you one question? Just one? Has anyone else ever come here? Besides me?

Again, it seems Walter won't respond...

WALTER  
From time to time.

NOAH  
Who?

WALTER  
Some come looking to escape their lives. Doesn't take long to realize they're not built for it.

NOAH  
And the ones who are?

Walter falls silent.

NOAH  
What happens to them?

WALTER

*Enough.*

NOAH

Just trying to understand what this is about, man.

WALTER

What you're trying to do is manipulate a situation that didn't turn out your way. Stop asking questions and *listen*.

Walter gets to his feet, stalks away towards his shack.

NOAH

Night.

The shack's door slams shut.

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE:

Murky darkness. Blurred naked shapes.

A woman's voice. It becomes more insistent.

VOICE (V.O.)

Noah. Noah.

The BUZZ crescendoes then--

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - NIGHT

Noah awakens in his sleeping bag. His teeth chatter in the chill night air.

The fire burns low, barely more than smoldering wood.

NOAH

Oh Jesus.

He pulls the sleeping bag tighter, then becomes aware of a sound in the forest - a CREAK.

His eyes are drawn to the silhouetted tops of some swaying trees. It's as though something large passes through them.

In the inky darkness on the other side of the clearing, there comes a low goatish sound. An animal moves through the underbrush.

With numb hands, Noah finds his phone. He passes the flashlight around the clearing.

The light glints off the windows of Walter's dark shack.

The animal BLEATS as it circles the clearing and Noah catches a fleeting shape in his beam.

NOAH

*Come on, what are you?*

There comes the persistent BUZZ from the trees. A hum that rises and falls on the periphery of his hearing.

The trees continue their sonorous sway and Noah gets to his feet, hurries across to Walter's shack.

He bangs on the door.

NOAH

*Walter? Walter.*

And like that, the forest falls silent. The trees stop their creaking. The animal pads away into the night.

There's something very wrong with this place.

Noah turns back to the shack's door, listens. No movement inside.

NOAH

*Walter?*

He reaches out and pushes on the door. It swings open.

INT. WALTER'S SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Noah steps over the threshold, shines the flashlight around.

The bed is empty. A wooden frame holds an old mattress losing its stuffing.

Noah studies a small table and stool. Furs hang from the raftered ceiling. He spies something on a shelf and moves to it.

A framed photo of a younger Walter with his wife and two daughters. Seems some sentiment lingers.

He crouches to peer beneath the bed and a floorboard creaks under his foot.

Noah feels along the board, pokes his fingers into a natural knothole. It lifts away.

He looks down into a dark space beneath the floor, reaches in and takes out a dusty green bottle containing a DARK LIQUID.

He puts it aside and shines the flashlight down at a jumble of personal belongings - a hair clip, a wristwatch, a necklace.

Something catches his eye. He reaches in and brings it out.

A rainbow WRISTBAND. A cheap piece of woven jewelry threaded through two plastic beads.

On each bead is a letter: L.B.

Lindsey Briggs.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - DAWN

The forest fills with dull morning light as Noah waits next to the dead fire. He sees movement through the trees.

Walter emerges and walks across the clearing, dumps a cluster of traps.

Noah approaches and watches Walter's back as he busies himself at his workbench.

NOAH

What's really happening out here,  
Walter? What is this place?

Walter doesn't respond, so Noah takes Lindsey's wristband out of his pocket.

Walter catches sight of it and stops. He finally looks Noah in the eye.

WALTER

You really a journalist?

NOAH

No. Yes. Once.

(then)

Did you hurt her?

WALTER  
No I didn't hurt her.

NOAH  
So you know whose this is.

Noah follows Walter around the clearing as the man continues his chores.

NOAH  
Where is she?

WALTER  
She moved on.

NOAH  
Moved on? What the fuck does that mean? To Mexico? To a higher plain?

Walter doesn't respond.

NOAH  
Walter, I swear I'll go to the police. Where did she go? Why did she come here?

WALTER  
Why is this your business?

NOAH  
She's my sister.

WALTER  
That right? Where was this concern when she tried to end her own life six months ago?

Noah reacts. He had no idea.

WALTER  
She came here because no one else cared to listen. She saw a world designed to use her up, hurtling towards its own annihilation.

(then)  
I helped her when no one else would.

NOAH  
Helped her how?

Again, Walter doesn't respond. Crouches to feed kindling into the fire.

NOAH  
Walter. Show me.

WALTER  
No.

NOAH  
Why?

WALTER  
Because you're an empty vessel  
waiting for someone else to fill  
you up.

NOAH  
Something is happening here. Last  
night, it was like the whole place  
was alive.

WALTER  
Go home, kid.

Noah has a sudden thought as he follows Walter back across  
the clearing.

NOAH  
What does the tree mean?

Walter looks at him sharply.

NOAH  
I've seen it. A couple times.  
Lindsey had carved it into her  
bedroom wall. And I feel like I've  
dreamt it...

Walter considers Noah, expression unreadable.

NOAH  
What does it mean?

EXT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - MORNING

Noah follows Walter into a darker, forgotten part of forest.  
The hazy air is filled with the strange WHIR of insects.

Noah slows at a familiar sight ahead.

A towering GREAT TREE stands at the center of a gloomy  
clearing. Its massive trunk is twisted, its branches reach  
hungrily outward.

Noah moves towards it with the same sense of *déjà vu*.

This tree isn't native. It looks both ancient and as though it erupted impatiently from the earth.

NOAH  
What is this?

Walter puts a reverent hand on its black bark.

WALTER  
A beacon. This tree is a signal  
fire for all who hear the call.  
(then)  
Once you start down this path, you  
can't turn back.

Noah spots something in the treeline behind Walter.

NOAH  
Oh.

A small DOE. It watches them, still as a statue.

Walter smiles fondly, wanders towards it.

WALTER  
Hey girl.

NOAH  
You'll scare it.

WALTER  
No. She's here for you.

Walter crouches and the deer brazenly moves to nuzzle his outstretched hand.

His other hand gently unclips something at his belt. Too late, Noah realizes it's the hunting knife.

NOAH  
Wait--

With a flash of the blade, Walter gashes the deer's throat.

Blood gushes as the animal sinks to the ground. Walter supports it, caresses its pelt. He sees Noah's stricken expression.

WALTER  
Don't worry. They feel no suffering  
here.

DISSOLVE TO:



EXT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - NIGHT

Noah sits as Walter paints patterns in the deer's blood on his bare torso. This feels deeply pagan. Ritualistic.

Walter produces the glass bottle Noah found under the shack floor, pours a small amount of dark liquid shot with deep jade into a metal mug.

NOAH  
What is that?

WALTER  
A gift.

Walter passes the mug to Noah.

NOAH  
What, like a psychotropic?  
(off Walter's look)  
I've read *The Teachings of Don Juan*.

Noah hesitates.

NOAH  
I mean, I get why people do it. I know there are benefits. I guess I thought there'd be more to this than microdosing in the woods.

Walter presses his thumb into Noah's forehead, leaving a bloody spot.

Noah studies the black liquid.

NOAH  
What do you see?

WALTER  
What you need to see.

Noah shrugs. Bottoms up.

He throws the liquid back and sputters. It burns like whisky.

NOAH  
Ugh. God.  
(waits)  
When will I start feeling it...

He's overcome by a sudden wave of euphoria and goes slack.

EXT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - LATER

Walter watches Noah wander the clearing. A newborn gazelle finding its feet.

Noah grins wide. Looks to the trees where vivid colors ripple.

The stars are brilliant flaring pinpricks overhead, so close he could touch them.

Whatever Walter gave him, it's working.

NOAH  
Why didn't anyone tell me?

Noah turns his head. He wanders away, head cocked.

NOAH  
I hear something. What is that?

WALTER  
It's Pan.

NOAH  
What?

WALTER  
He's the font of all life.

NOAH  
The guy with the goat legs?

WALTER  
He calls you. He calls to all of us. You need to learn to listen.

Noah staggers towards the forest.

WALTER  
He's there, kid. Just past the veil of this world.

Things just beyond comprehension flit through the trees. Noah feels a stab of panic.

WALTER  
We adored Him once, gave Him tribute. But we strayed too far and we were locked out.

Noah winces. The low droning BUZZ emanates from the trees, pierces his head.

WALTER  
Don't resist it.

NOAH  
It's too much.

Walter grabs Noah's shoulders.

WALTER  
I know it frightens you but you're  
part of it. Fear the world out  
there if you have to fear anything.

NOAH  
No. Wait.

Noah pushes him away, doubles over and vomits a gout of black liquid onto the dirt.

EXT. FOREST, CREEK - DAWN

Noah sits in the shallows of the creek, staring at the opposing wall of forest as the sun peeks over the horizon.

His eyes are glassy, his lips slack.

Walter sits on the bank and watches him closely.

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - NIGHT

Noah lies in the light of the dying fire. He turns Lindsey's wristband in his fingers.

He rolls over and looks up at the night sky.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Walter keeps a good pace through the forest. His callused feet tread softly over the moist soil.

Noah follows.

Walter crouches at a cluster of large mushrooms. He gently lifts them whole out of the dirt, puts them in his rucksack.

Noah crouches at another patch of the mushrooms and attempts to pick them. To his irritation, they break apart in his hands.

NOAH  
Is this part of it?

WALTER  
Gotta eat.

They pick in silence, then:

WALTER  
You married?

NOAH  
Girlfriend.

WALTER  
I married young. Had my first kid soon after. Used to lie awake just wondering how the hell I was going to keep a family alive.

NOAH  
Obviously it worked out for you.

WALTER  
Too well.

Noah scoffs quietly.

WALTER  
Some days I'd realize I'd been sitting at my desk sixteen hours straight. We open our eyes on an infinite universe for one fleeting moment and what do we do with our time here?

NOAH  
But we need to be pragmatic, right? As you said, we have to eat. Have a roof over our heads. A few need to call the shots, otherwise it'd be anarchy.

WALTER  
You think "anarchy" means chaos, without rule. It actually means to live without a ruler, or master. Does that sound so bad?

Before Noah can respond, Walter stands and keeps moving.

EXT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - DAY

Sweat cascades off Noah as he sits on the ground before the Great Tree, caught in the throes of another hallucination.

Walter circles him.

WALTER

Clear your mind of right and wrong.  
Revere the cycle of creation and  
rebirth. Exultation and pleasure.  
Freedom and self-rule.

From the darkness, a strange ululating CRY, and Noah tenses.

The air behind Walter becomes lightly fractal with invisible angles.

WALTER

Our bodies are the least of us. Do  
you understand?

The trees groan soulfully. Things flit and moan.

WALTER

The part that senses and feels,  
that's what passes over.

NOAH

Passes...

Walter grips his face in his grimy fingers, forces him to focus.

WALTER

You let life drag you, kid. You  
don't live on your terms. Fill your  
heart with defiance.

Noah nods dumbly but Walter is no longer there. He now wanders the edge of the clearing. Time has lost its meaning.

Noah attempts to rein in his fear as the sounds from the forest crescendo.

He descends into the hallucination and Walter watches.

- Noah lies on the ground, shivering and whimpering.

- Noah wanders the clearing, sweat pouring off his face. He grins maniacally as phantoms dash just out of sight.

- Noah stares transfixed at a leaf on the ground. He can see the life coursing through it.

- Noah stares at his own hand. The veins pulse darkly under the skin. He BELLOWS incoherently.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - MORNING

Noah sits in the dirt, blank eyes fixated up at the Great Tree.

He blinks, has no idea how long he's been here.

He hears soft birdsong and looks around to see Walter is no longer there.

EXT. FOREST, CREEK - DAY

Noah wanders from the treeline to see Walter stands knee-deep in the creek, watching the water closely.

Noah sits shakily on the bank. He's pale, still coming down from last night's trip.

NOAH

What're you doing?

Walter ignores him, submerges his hands and gently lifts out a sizable fish.

Noah blinks. Did he just see that?

Walter walks onto the bank and dash the fish against a rock.

Noah watches Walter for a moment.

NOAH

You really believe it's Pan? It's not a concept. You believe it exists?

WALTER

He exists.

NOAH

I've traveled all over. I've never experienced anything like it.

Noah feels his phone vibrate in his pocket and takes it out.

He chuckles when he sees there's nothing on the screen. No notifications.

NOAH

Damn. I'm so tuned into this thing, I swear I just felt it vibrate.

WALTER

This the latest gadget?

NOAH

Nah. I can't really justify dropping two thousand bucks on a phone.

WALTER

May I see it?

Smug, Noah hands the phone over.

Walter feigns interest as he examines it, nods, then hurls it out over the water.

Noah can only watch its arcing trajectory in stunned silence then PLONK! He gets to his feet.

NOAH

What the fuck?!

Walter wades back into the water.

WALTER

We are a species profoundly bored with itself.

NOAH

Why did you do that?! My whole life's on that thing! You owe me--  
*Fuck!*

WALTER

Stop for a moment and reflect on why you feel this passionately about a piece of plastic.

NOAH

You know, I thought I'd come here and you'd-- You're a fucking joke, dude. What was I thinking? I thought I could learn something from you. Instead you're out here playing Davy fucking Crockett.

WALTER

Then consider that your first lesson. Now hush, you're scaring away the fish.

Walter cackles at his own joke.

NOAH

Fuck you, man.

Noah stalks away into the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Noah strides through the forest, his face flushed red with anger and humiliation.

He stops to get his bearings. Trees. Shrubs. Thick canopy overhead. It all looks the same.

He starts in another direction but hears a familiar CREAK.

Feels the first prickle of adrenaline.

NOAH

Stop.

A noise in front of him. A WHISPER.

Noah stares into the forest.

NOAH

Who's there?!

Silence.

He catches movement to his left. Someone slips out of sight between the trees.

NOAH

Lindsey?

He heads in that direction. Searches.

NOAH

Lindsey!

Movement to his left. Another whisper.

A change in the air. The hairs on Noah's neck stand up.

Behind him, unseen, something gigantic and incomprehensible shifts.

It turns gossamer and blends with the trees as it phases in and out of reality.

Noah spins. Finds he's alone.

He staggers as the forest lurches. The BUZZ rises and he covers his ears.

NOAH

What's happening? Walter!

Noah clutches his chest. He can't catch a breath.



He swoons. He's going to pass out.

NOAH

What's...

HANDS grip him and he suddenly stares into Walter's clear blue eyes.

WALTER

Breathe.

The buzzing rises.

NOAH

I can't. Walter, what is this? *I think I'm having a heart attack.*

Walter taps Noah's chest. Puts a palm flat against his stomach.

WALTER

Don't breathe from here. Breathe from down here.

Noah nods, does as he's told. He draws a clear breath. The panic begins to subside.

WALTER

Now listen.

Noah listens.

The world rights itself gradually. The buzz is replaced by the soft sounds of the forest.

A light breeze teases the canopy.

Noah exhales. He's filled with a joy almost too much to bear. His knees buckle and Walter holds him up.

It passes, and Noah is left with a strange mingling of fear and jubilation.

NOAH

What was that?

Walter pats him on the shoulder and walks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - DUSK

Noah and Walter sit by the fire. Noah pensively picks at his fish. His experience today lingers.

NOAH

How did you know? How did you know  
it was out here?

WALTER

Eight years ago, found out I had  
stomach cancer. Nasty shit. Doctors  
would cut out a piece of me. It'd  
come back. They'd take a little  
more. Started feeling like I was  
being erased. Still turned up to  
work, when I could. My colleagues  
didn't have a clue. Started getting  
a ringing in my ears. Tinnitus.  
Thought it was the treatment.

Walter's eyes go blank at the memory.

WALTER

I came to one night digging in a  
neighbor's garden with my bare  
hands. My wife was hysterical, she  
was... Not long after that I let  
everything go. Started walking  
until I was here.

Noah watches Walter closely.

NOAH

Walter, where's Lindsey?

WALTER

I told you.

NOAH

No, where is she? Physically?

WALTER

She's with Him.

Ominous. Noah picks his words carefully.

NOAH

Then I want to go to him too. I  
want to see Pan. I want to see my  
sister.

WALTER

You're not ready.

NOAH  
I've come this far.

WALTER  
You still resist. You're still too  
much a part of the world out there.  
You'll see Him when it's time.

NOAH  
When will that be?

WALTER  
When it's time.

Noah watches Walter, who stares into the fire. It's light  
makes a craggy map of his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - NIGHT

Noah lies in his sleeping bag. The fire has died and the  
clearing sits in darkness.

A noise from the shack and Noah lifts his head slightly, sees  
Walter's shadow move for the forest.

Noah waits, then gets out of the bag and moves for the shack.  
He carefully opens the door.

INT. WALTER'S SHACK - NIGHT

Using his hand to mute his phone's flashlight, he goes to the  
loose floorboard. Lifts it.

He rummages inside but comes up empty handed.

He searches desperately. Looks over shelves. The table.

Noah comes to a wooden crate in the corner and he finds it  
inside: the bottle of dark liquid.

EXT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - NIGHT

Using his flashlight to lead the way, Noah hurries into the  
clearing.

The Great Tree looks sinister in the harsh light. Its bark  
mottled and otherworldly.

Working quickly, he sets about recreating his previous times here. He removes his shirt, kneels in front of the tree.

He unstops the bottle. A moment's hesitation then he lifts it and starts guzzling the liquid.

Green-black fluid spills down his chin and chest. He sputters and drinks, relentless. He finishes the bottle and casts it aside.

He's already feeling the effects. He groans as the woods come to life around him.

Dark flitting shapes. Laughter and cries.

Noah is plummeting. A rushing, cacophonous abyss opens in his mind, the Great Tree at its center.

He tries to stand but can't.

Walter's FACE suddenly melts in and out of focus as Noah tries to follow what he's saying.

NOAH

Walter? Are you here?

WALTER

*What did you do?*

The words echo and stretch, but to a forgotten part of Noah's mind, they're a revelation.

Noah's glassy eyes trail to the tips of the silhouetted trees and he laughs, teetering between joy and terror.

NOAH

How long have I been here?

Noah's ears prick as Walter's words of admonishment drift away. He can hear something, peers with mad wonder into the dark forest.

NOAH

I hear Him.  
(laughs)  
*I can hear Him.*

He reaches out and pushes against an invisible fractal wall.

It ripples with strange geometry under his hand, and in certain angles, he sees a naked woman.

Walter is in front of Noah again.

WALTER

You need to do it now, kid.

Noah stares at Walter's lips, tries to fathom what he's saying.

Walter slips his HUNTING KNIFE from its sheath.

Multiple Walters hold the knife out to Noah.

WALTER

You need to discard it.

WALTER

Discard your body.

Noah finds the knife's hilt in his hand. He looks at it. Uncomprehending.

WALTER

He is the font of life.

WALTER

Return to Him.

But Noah can hear the droning BUZZ again. It penetrates his skull and he groans.

WALTER

Listen.

WALTER

Hear Him.

NOAH

Wait. No.

The forest is alive with dark wails and cries. It's no longer a thing of beauty. It's savage. Predatory.

Noah feels the familiar shrill panic. Shakes his head violently.

NOAH

No. NO.

Noah drops the knife and holds his head. He cackles and wails, hit with waves of joy and fear.

He's aware Walter bellows at him. Can't make out the words.

NOAH

It's too much!

Noah feels Walter's hands trying to calm him.

He sees the glinting knife.

Noah roars, all instinct and fear. He lashes out, staggering Walter.

As the world lurches, Noah runs for it, swallowed by the trees.

EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Branches whip Noah's face as he speeds away through the dark forest.

Walter's silhouette falls behind. His calls fade and warp.

Around Noah, the trees become twisted and towering. A nightmare.

Noah stops, panting. He peers behind him. He's lost Walter but he's still out of his mind.

He looks around. This is somewhere new. Insects trill loudly and shadows flit in his periphery.

He laughs deliriously, his senses overwhelmed. He spots something on a tree's trunk and approaches.

A dark fungus turns perpetually in on itself. The pattern in its waxy flesh shifts lazily.

Distracted, Noah heads deeper in.

EXT. ARCADIA - NIGHT

Noah moves down a slope into a biome of deep greens and jades, thick with trees that crowd close.

The air hangs humid and wet.

Small animals begin to follow his path. Scurry through the underbrush.

Noah glimpses a small rodent with a human-like face and he groans.

There's an alien and primal beauty here. This isn't Vermont. This doesn't look like anywhere on Earth.

He doesn't know it, but he's slipped into ARCADIA - Pan's realm.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Noah.

Noah spins. Searches the surrounding trees.

NOAH

Hello?

From a distance, through the green gloom, there comes the sound of something gargantuan.

A COLOSSUS lumbers through the trees.

Noah nervously pushes on and catches sight of a naked woman, blonde hair cascading down her back, as she slips away into the shadows.

NOAH

Wait!

EXT. ARCADIA, GREAT TREE - NIGHT

Noah hurries into a clearing to a familiar sight - Walter's GREAT TREE, which exists simultaneously in both worlds.

Naked people sit high up in the shadows of its branches. Men and women who watch him passively.

Sarah Willman, the missing girl from Fordhill, stands in the clearing. She smiles and turns, directing his gaze to someone who stands beside the tree.

Noah's breath catches.

LINDSEY. She's serene, no longer the brittle, restless girl he knew.

He staggers towards her.

NOAH

Lindsey? Where are we?

Noah hears the crash of trees behind him, but no one in the clearing reacts.

NOAH

What is that?! Lindsey, *what is it?!*

A rib-rattling ROAR shakes the forest.

The mingled bellow of an elk in heat, the hot drone of pestilence, a squall of death and rebirth.

Noah covers his ears but the sound shudders through him. He looks to Lindsey for help but she merely smiles.

NOAH

Lindsey!

He sees it. A massive CREATURE closes in, shattering ancient trees in its path.

Noah FLEES.

EXT. ARCADIA - CONTINUOUS

Noah crashes through the forest, the monster in single-minded pursuit.

The ground under his feet starts to soften and he realizes he's sinking.

He struggles on and the ground swallows him up to his shins.

NOAH

I want to wake up! I WANT TO WAKE  
UP!

The monster ROARS - thunderous and close - and Noah looks over his shoulder. A maniacal scream rips from him.

A lumbering amorphous MASS squeezes between the groaning trees. Primordial chaos. Chittering, gnashing mouths. A multitude of seeking eyes.

THE GREAT GOD PAN.

Out of his mind, Noah swims through earth that's turned to liquid. He flails but can't find purchase. The mud swallows him up to his chest.

NOAH

Wake up. WAKE UP. Ohgodwakeup.

Noah sinks to his neck. He screams and his mouth fills.

He goes under.

Darkness. Until...

The roar of rushing blood.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAWN

Noah opens his eyes into the falling rain. Has no sense of where he is. He's altered, but doesn't know it yet.

He lifts his head and sees he lies on the forest floor. The rain mingles with the dirt on his skin.

He groans and sits up. That was one bad trip.



EXT. FOREST, CREEK - MORNING

Noah crouches in the shallows of the creek. Washes his face, arms and chest. He inspects scratches on his skin.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

It's stopped raining and Noah wanders. He's lost, exhausted.

NOAH

Walter, you prick! What the fuck  
did you give me?!

Noah cups wet leaves, catches the residual rain in his mouth.

Dissatisfied, he looks around the forest floor. He spots a cluster of mushrooms. He examines them, puts a piece in his mouth then spits it out.

He's hit by a wave of despair and he sits against the base of a tree.

A large beetle trundles across the forest floor near him, its shell a brilliant iridescent blue.

Noah lowers his hand and the insect mindlessly walks onto it.

He peers closer at the beetle. Its wings flutter open and it flies lazily away.

There comes a distant RUMBLE and Noah scrambles to his feet.

As he listens, he hears something familiar - a steady mechanical clatter. Machinery.

Hopeful, he starts towards it.

EXT. FOREST, TRAIN TRACKS - AFTERNOON

Noah hurries from the trees to see a FREIGHT TRAIN rattle by.

He watches it disappear down tracks that cut through the forest. It's not civilization, but it'll lead there.

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Noah limps barefoot along the edge of a highway with his thumb out.

No one seems willing to give him a ride and he realizes why: shirtless, barefoot, torn pants. He looks crazy.

INT. FORDHILL, HOTEL LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Noah enters the hotel lobby. He approaches the wary HOTEL CLERK.

HOTEL CLERK  
Mr. Briggs?

NOAH  
I lost my key.

INT. FORDHILL, HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Noah lets himself in and closes the door. He moves into the room.

Everything looks lifeless and flat.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Noah stands under the shower, the dirt swirling down the drain.

He shuts off the water and moves to the fogged-up mirror, wipes it clean. He stares at himself.

As he does, a minuscule black vein creeps across the white of his eye.

He leans in to look closer and the vein fades.

Noah blinks. Did he just see that?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Noah sits on the edge of the bed in a hotel dressing gown. He talks to Zoe on the room's landline.

ZOE (V.O.)  
Why're you calling from a landline?

NOAH  
I lost my cell.

ZOE (V.O.)  
What? What happened?

Noah doesn't respond. Doesn't know how.

ZOE (V.O.)  
Noah?

NOAH  
Nothing. I'm fine.

ZOE (V.O.)  
Did you find Lindsey?

NOAH  
Yeah. She's fine too. It's exactly  
how I thought it would be. Bunch of  
hippies weaving baskets in the  
woods.

ZOE (V.O.)  
Are you coming home?

NOAH  
I don't have the whole story yet.

ZOE (V.O.)  
What? Noah, you're freaking me out.  
What happened?

NOAH  
I'll be a couple more days. I gotta  
go, okay Zo?

Before she can respond, he hangs up.

INT. FORDHILL, BOOKSTORE - DAY

On a mission, Noah moves along the shelves of a quaint  
bookstore.

He finds the stationary section, peruses the notebooks - all  
cutesy, adorned with watercolor woodland animals.

Better than nothing. He collects several.

INT. FORDHILL, DINER - DAY

Noah sits in the booth of a bright diner and hunkers over his  
notebooks and laptop. He's in his good place - focussed,  
exploring the layers of a story.

- He writes: *paganism? shamanism? look at connection between  
worship of nature gods and mental illness. shared delusions?*

- *psychotropics. dmt.*

- On the laptop, Noah types "panic in forests". Eyes scan  
words: "deafening silence", "buzzing in ears", "inexplicable  
terror".

- Noah clicks a hyperlink. A site opens.
- An ILLUSTRATION of a man with horns and the legs of a goat, cavorting in a forest glade.
- He scrolls. Stops on the word 'Pan'. He types, studies more images.
- PAN as the goat-legged hedonist depicted in Greek mythology. Pan playing his pipes. Drinking wine. Engaging in intercourse with a goat.
- Noah clicks another link. He stares at a scene of naked Rubenesque women - the free-spirited NYMPHS of mythology - cavorting around an admiring Pan.
- Noah scrolls, stops and studies an illustration:

A naked woman stands facing a twisted tree. Behind her, a bearded man in a simple shepherd's tunic waits with a knife.

Peering from behind the tree with a lascivious smile, is Pan.

Noah scrolls.

Another illustration: A woman lies prone, a beatific smile on her face, as her spirit wanders into Pan's primordial forest.

Scrolls. Stares.

An illustration of a man, nicking his own skin with a knife. Black ichor trickles from the his wounds into a clay jar.

Unseen by Noah, a thin BLACK VEIN creeps under the skin of his right hand, pulsing in time with his heartbeat.

He rubs his hand idly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The hotel slumbers as Noah ascends the stairs into the long corridor, head clamoring.

Moving in a daze towards his room, he comes to a vending machine and feeds coins into it.

He winces suddenly. Pain shoots down his right arm. It passes and he punches in his selection.

Pain flares again and he cries out, grips his forearm.

He stops. His gaze falls on dry leaves that flutter against his shoes, carried on an inexplicable breeze.

LINDSEY (O.S.)

Noah.

Noah turns to find Lindsey stands naked at the far end of the corridor. He stares dumbly.

NOAH

Lindsey?

He waits for the hallucination to fade. It doesn't.

NOAH

Are you real?

She raises her arms. A warm, beckoning gesture.

This is too much for Noah's already frayed mind.

He backs away.

Turns to flee.

But Lindsey now stands in his way.

This close, he sees there are no whites to her brown eyes.

Her pupils are horizontal, like a goat's.

She places her hands on his chest and he's assaulted by a series of flashing images.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - NIGHT

- Bathed in firelight, Lindsey lifts a cup to her lips and drinks the black liquid.

- Lindsey kneels, peering up in wonder at Walter's Great Tree. Tears of joy spill down her cheeks.

- Walter hands her his hunting knife. Without hesitation, she presses the blade to the smooth skin of her throat.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR/ARCADIA - NIGHT

And now Noah and Lindsey stand in ARCADIA, the primordial forest.

It's dark, the air thick. Twisted branches close in - the hotel corridor is now a CORRIDOR OF TREES.

The air trembles when Pan ROARS in the distance.

NOAH

No.

In blind terror, Noah turns and runs from Lindsey. She passes out of view as he pushes through the scratching, grasping foliage.

The trunks of the trees begin to grow closer together until he's forced to turn sideways to squeeze between them.

He gets stuck, scrabbles at the wet bark, pulls himself free--

And comes face to face with a MAN IN PAJAMAS. His lips move but Noah can only hear the droning BUZZ in his own head.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Noah stands in the bright hotel corridor.

No primordial forest, no Lindsey. Just a concerned man in pajamas.

MAN IN PAJAMAS

--buddy? Are you okay? You need me to call the front desk?

NOAH

No. No.

Noah turns and staggers for the stairs.

MAN IN PAJAMAS

You don't look so good.

INT. FORDHILL, HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

Noah hunches at the lobby payphone and speaks with Zander.

He faces the corner, away from the Hotel Clerk and a family who check in at the front desk.

NOAH  
I think I fucked up.

ZANDER (V.O.)  
Where the hell are you?

NOAH  
I'm still in Vermont. Zander,  
Walter Dailey's an old school  
pagan. He's out there worshipping a  
fucking nature god or, I don't  
fucking know.

ZANDER (V.O.)  
Was your sister there?

NOAH  
Listen to me. He gave me something.  
I don't know what it was but it  
made me trip. Hard.

Zander laughs.

NOAH  
Dude, it's not funny. I think it's  
still in my system. I'm seeing  
things.

ZANDER (V.O.)  
Like what?

NOAH  
You've taken acid. Did you ever  
have flashbacks?

ZANDER (V.O.)  
My mom's bathroom tiles moved after  
Burning Man once.

Noah glances over his shoulder.

NOAH  
I saw Lindsey. She was there and  
she wasn't. I don't know how else  
to explain it.

ZANDER (V.O.)  
What do you mean you *saw* her?

NOAH  
Out in the woods. And then I saw  
her standing naked in the hotel I'm  
staying at. What the fuck does that  
mean?

ZANDER (V.O.)  
You hallucinated your naked sister?

NOAH  
*I don't know how else to explain  
it, Zander.*  
(beat)  
Say something. I feel like I'm  
losing my mind.

ZANDER (V.O.)  
Okay man, calm down. You had a bad  
trip. It's all this is. Get some  
sleep, have some maple candy.  
You'll be fine.

The Hotel Clerk looks over and Noah moves further into the  
corner.

NOAH  
I think he did something to her.

ZANDER (V.O.)  
Are you serious? Dude, go to the  
police.

NOAH  
What do I tell them? Hey, I was  
tripping balls in the woods and by  
the way, I think I'm seeing the  
ghost of my murdered sister?

ZANDER (V.O.)  
Then what're you going to do?

Defeated, Noah rests against the wall and closes his eyes. He  
knows he's already decided.

EXT. FOREST, TRAILHEAD PARKING LOT - DAY

A pickup truck coasts to a stop near the Iron Trail parking  
lot. Noah gets out, thanks the driver, and it continues down  
the road.

Noah's rental sits where he left it, covered in forest  
detritus.

EXT. FOREST, TRAILHEAD PARKING LOT - LATER

Noah checks his watch, scribbles something in a notebook. He  
tears out its page and slips it under the car's wiper blade.



He checks himself over. He's purchased new hiking boots, and a small KNIFE hangs in a sheath at his hip.

He heads for the trail.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Noah moves carefully through the trees.

He spots the wicker arch ahead. He's headed in the right direction.

He hears a breathy whisper and turns to see movement between two trees. He hesitates.

NOAH

Lindsey?

He's being shown the way.

Noah continues on.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - DAY

Noah walks into the clearing. The Great Tree towers at its center.

He hears Lindsey whisper and on autopilot, he gets to his knees and digs.

His fingers scrape something buried in the earth and he digs faster, uncovers dirty cloth. A patterned t-shirt.

Clawing further, he finds the gray mottled skin of an arm.

Noah falters. He moves to where the face must be.

Uncovers the nose. Mouth. Sunken eyelids.

It's Lindsey. Buried. Decomposing.

The stench hits him and he gags, cries out.

WALTER (O.S.)

She told me you wouldn't leave this alone...

Noah scrambles to his feet and brandishes his small knife. He's wild-eyed. Terrified but filled with fury.

Walter watches from the treeline.

WALTER  
I understand why now.

NOAH  
*You crazy piece of shit.*

Walter wanders into the clearing, unfazed by Noah's knife. He crouches, peers down at Lindsey.

NOAH  
Get away from her!

WALTER  
Remember what I told you. This part is the least of us. Your sister lives forever. She'll experience joy over an eternity most people will never conceive.

There's a mad fervor in Walter's eyes as he stands up. Noah takes a step back.

NOAH  
No. No, you filled her head with your bullshit.

WALTER  
You saw it with your own eyes, kid.

NOAH  
You poisoned me! I would've seen anything you told me.

WALTER  
Why'd you come here? What pulled you from your life to seek me out?

NOAH  
Walter.

WALTER  
What brought you back? Even when you thought you might be in danger.

Walter catches Noah's wrist, stilling the knife in his hand.

NOAH  
I came here to find Lindsey.

WALTER  
It was Him. He called you.

NOAH

Stop!

WALTER

He calls you now.

Walter presses his dirty fingers into Noah's forearm. The veins under his skin pulse black.

WALTER

There is a seed inside you and it wants to grow. Be His shepherd, Noah.

NOAH

Walter--

WALTER

Go out there. Let them come. They will and they won't know why but you'll show them. Change the world like you wanted. *Help them hear.*

Noah yanks his arm free.

NOAH

Jesus Christ. How many are here?

Walter sees Noah won't be convinced. He turns and looks up into the gnarled branches of his beloved tree.

WALTER

I suppose you'll go to the police? They've been looking for a reason to lock me away.

Walter unclips the sheath at his belt. Pulls out the hunting knife.

WALTER

The cancer will wake up and eat me alive. I'd die in agony.

NOAH

Walter.

WALTER

You'll never feel at peace out there, kid. Not after this.

NOAH

*Walter.*

WALTER  
Be His shepherd.

With that, Walter slashes the knife across his own jugular.  
Blood sprays.

He drops to his knees, eyes fix on something beyond Noah.  
Something wondrous.

NOAH  
*Oh god.*

Walter's gaze sharpens, finds Noah. He speaks but it's lost  
in the gurgling blood flooding his mouth.

He lands in the dirt. The soil hungrily accepts his blood.

Noah swoons, watches as the light fades from the man's eyes.

NOAH  
*Oh shit. Oh god.*

He sees her. Lindsey watches from the edge of the clearing.

A smiling apparition that turns and disappears into the  
forest.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BACK ROAD, RENTAL CAR - DAY

Noah sits in the open door of his parked rental. He's pale,  
his hands shake badly.

A breeze flutters the piece of note paper he left under the  
wiper blade. He reaches around to grab it.

He reads it - *Noah Briggs entered these woods at 11:08 on  
April 15th* - then screws it up.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. FORDHILL POLICE STATION, WAITING ROOM - DAY

Noah enters the Fordhill Police Station. He approaches the  
DESK CLERK.

INT. FOREST, GREAT TREE - AFTERNOON

Walter's body is zipped up in a body bag.

A SERGEANT stands, hands on hips. She gazes in wonder up at the Great Tree.

Spanning outward across the clearing, DEPUTIES work with gloves to uncover multiple graves. Ten in total.

INT. FOREST, WALTER'S CLEARING - AFTERNOON

Several Deputies move into Walter's clearing.

They take in his rustic "homestead."

INT. FORDHILL POLICE STATION, ROOM - NIGHT

Noah obediently submits to a physical examination in a sterile room.

A Deputy takes mouth swabs. Scrapes under his fingernails.

INT. FORDHILL POLICE HOUSE, BULLPEN - NIGHT

Noah sits with a Deputy at a desk in the bullpen, robotically answering questions.

He looks over when Andrea, accompanied by her husband and two young children, are escorted in.

Andrea sees Noah and hurries to him. She clutches him tight, shoulders hitching.

Noah hugs her back, but his eyes are dull.

END MONTAGE.

INT. FORDHILL, HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Noah closes the door on his hotel room. He wanders to the table and slumps into the seat at his makeshift desk.

He pulls a notebook closer. Begins to write.

It's all he knows to do.

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE:

Darkness.

Colors bloom suddenly. Flowers, their petals waxy and broad, with the vivid textures of a lucid dream.

Silent fleeting images of the PRIMORDIAL FOREST. Its savage, terrifying beauty towering above. Gnarled, dark and wet.

Noah walks naked through this landscape. Every nerve and fiber of his body firing.

His bare feet leech water from the ground.

Dusky naked bodies cavort around him in the murky shadows. An endless dance.

In fleeting moments, Lindsey is among them. She exudes a dark, unapologetic sensuality.

The BUZZ rises. Becomes unbearable.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK CITY, UBER - DAY

Noah wakes up in the back of an Uber, clutching his dirty backpack. The dream evaporates but the sensations linger.

He watches the traffic, the crowded city street of New York on the other side of the window.

It's disorienting, overwhelming. Too fast and loud.

NOAH  
(to driver)  
Let me out here. Let me out.

EXT. BROOKLYN, PROSPECT PARK - DUSK

Noah wanders through sprawling PROSPECT PARK.

Buildings loom in the distance, but here the grassy slopes roll pleasantly into the park's wooded area.

Noah watches the wall of trees uneasily, then forces himself towards them.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK, WOODS - DUSK

Noah wanders through the trees.

The grumbling sounds of the city fade.

He could be anywhere. He could be back in Vermont.

He closes his eyes.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door unlocks and Zoe lets herself in. She turns on the light and flinches.

Noah stands in the middle of the apartment, back to her.

ZOE

Noah?

He turns, blinks in the bright light.

NOAH

Hey.

An uneasy beat, then Zoe moves to hug him.

ZOE

Ah, Celia said I can take the day off for the funeral. I'll try to move some things around so I can be here as much as I can--

NOAH

You don't need to look after me, Zo. I just want things to go back to normal.

She peers at him carefully. She's not equipped for this.

ZOE

Okay. Do you want, ah, I'll make some tea.

Zoe walks to the kitchen and Noah stands as still as a statue.

Listening.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANDREA'S HOUSE, ENTRY HALL - DAY

Noah stands in the entry hall archway of Andrea's Westchester County home, looking into a living room filled with mourners.

Lindsey's wake.

He watches Andrea speaking with an elderly aunt. Zoe, who steals glances at him across the room from the buffet.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES, BILL'S OFFICE - MORNING

Noah's back in the Eason & Pace offices, dressed in a tie and business shirt.

He sits across from Bill - who watches him guardedly - and an HR MANAGER who flips through a multi-page document.

HR MANAGER

It's pretty straightforward. Just a few points to be actioned and an agreement that you won't take off on us again without advance request.

The HR Manager smiles, slides it across the desk to Noah. He picks up a pen.

HR MANAGER

Oh, you're welcome to look over it first.

Noah doesn't. He signs.

INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER

The HR Manager exits Bill's office, followed by Bill and Noah. They pause and Bill smiles consolingly.

BILL

It's a formality. You know that.

NOAH

Bill, I'm back. I'm committed to this place. I want to build a career here. I'm sorry I disappeared. It won't happen again.

BILL

Did you receive the flowers?

NOAH

Yeah. Thank you.

Bill squeezes Noah's shoulder and goes back into his office.



INT. EASON & PACE OFFICES, BOARDROOM - DAY

Noah sits against the wall in a packed boardroom. The light is stale, too bright.

A meeting is underway at a long conference table. Metrics. Optics. It all starts to turn into white noise.

Noah discreetly gets out his new phone and thumbs through a NEWS SITE until he finds a small article:

'LAST BODIES IDENTIFIED IN VERMONT RITUAL KILLINGS'.

Seems Walter is fading from the news cycle.

Noah catches Cassie watching him curiously. She gives him a quick sympathetic smile then looks away.

PRE LAP: Lively music

INT. WAREHOUSE APARTMENT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

A crowded party in a warehouse apartment.

Noah stands overwhelmed in the corner of the kitchen, while Zoe chats with Lacie and some other friends.

LACIE

Did you know she refused to catch the subway so her parents bought her a car? Honestly, the only thing that might give her any kind of perspective at this point is like, surviving a plane crash.

Lacie's boyfriend SETH walks in and opens the fridge.

SETH

(to Noah)  
Hey, man. Beer?

NOAH

Thanks.

Seth clinks his bottle off Noah's.

SETH

Good riddance to that psychotic asshole, huh?

LACIE

(warning)  
Seth.

SETH  
What?

                  LACIE  
Would you stop?

                  NOAH  
It's okay.

All eyes are now on Noah. Their curiosity is palpable.

He glances at a tense Zoe.

                  NOAH  
He can't do it to anyone else.  
That's the important thing.

                  ZANDER (O.S.)  
Heeeeey, here's my boy.

Zander arrives through the crowd, arm slung over a pretty girl. He slides his arm around Noah's shoulders.

                  ZANDER  
I'm gonna steal him away for a  
second.  
                  (to Noah)  
Cool?

EXT. WAREHOUSE APARTMENT, FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Noah stoops to follow Zander through the window onto the fire escape. Bushwick bustles below.

                  ZANDER  
There's much to discuss.

                  NOAH  
Do you have any weed?

Zander gives him a look - am I new? - and produces a pipe as he sits on the metal stairs.

                  ZANDER  
Hey. Sorry I couldn't make it to  
your sister's, you know. Schedule's  
all over the place.

He hands the pipe and a lighter over and Noah leans on the railing, smokes.

                  ZANDER  
How've you been?

NOAH

Fine.

He watches the busy street below.

NOAH

You want to know something fucked up? After all this, Lindsey, all those bodies they found, I'm finding I agree with him. Isn't that fucked up?

ZANDER

These guys are charismatic. It's how they end up leading cults full of impressionable young women.

NOAH

It wasn't that. He has a point. You know? We've removed ourselves so far from the earth, it's alien and terrifying to us now.

Noah thinks.

NOAH

He'd tapped into something up there, Zander. A part of our brains we never use, our subconscious, I dunno. I wish I could feel it again, just a small part of it.

Zander watches Noah as he takes back the pipe. He's building to something.

ZANDER

Hey so I got some news. I brought this to my boss.

NOAH

Brought what to your boss?

ZANDER

They want you to write something. Got them to four dollars a word. Maybe a podcast but everyone's doing those now.

Noah stares at him.

ZANDER

Dude, who better to tell your side of it?

(MORE)

ZANDER (CONT'D)

Do it before someone else does. And I guarantee you, this will open doors.

NOAH

What the fuck is wrong with you?

ZANDER

It makes sense. You were there!

NOAH

Yeah I was there. And I still don't know what the fuck happened.

(then)

Why the fuck did you say that, man? She was...

Noah can't continue. He goes back into the apartment.

ZANDER

Dude, I'm sorry. *Fuck.*

INT. WAREHOUSE APARTMENT - LATER

The music pumps and Noah stands against the wall, watching the partygoers dance in the apartment's living space.

People film each other, dance for the camera. All pantomime.

As Noah stands there, the BUZZ rises under the music. He reacts, winces as sudden pain shoots through his chest.

The buzz intensifies and he grips his arm.

For a fleeting moment, Noah thinks he sees Lindsey standing through the crowd.

A fresh wave of pain hits him and he pushes his way through the crowd. The music begins to echo.

Zoe appears in front of him. She peers into his face, concerned. Her words muffled under the growing buzz.

ZOE

Are you okay? Noah?

Noah pushes past her towards the bathroom.

INT. WAREHOUSE APARTMENT, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Noah locks the bathroom door against the party. He cries out as pain shoots through his chest and down his arms.

He grips the sink. Tries to control his breathing.

A knock on the door.

ZOE (O.S.)  
Noah? What's going on?

Another wave of pain and he pulls up his shirt sleeve: angry BLACK VEINS pulse down his forearm.

NOAH  
*Oh god. Oh my god.*

ZOE (O.S.)  
Noah, let me in.

NOAH  
I'm fine!

LINDSEY (V.O.)  
*Noah.*

Lindsey's voice. Close. As though she's standing right next to him.

LINDSEY (V.O.)  
*Noah.*

ZOE (O.S.)  
Noah.

Noah looks frantically around the bathroom. He's alone.

LINDSEY (V.O.)  
*Come.*

That does it. Noah wrenches the bathroom door open.

INT. WAREHOUSE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Embarrassed, Zoe follows Noah through the crowd as he heads for the door.

ZOE  
Noah, what the hell is going on?

NOAH  
I gotta go.

ZOE  
What?

Noah reaches the front door.

NOAH  
Stay, Zo. Please. I'll call you  
tomorrow.

Noah leaves and Zoe turns to see her friends watching.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Noah hurries onto a train, squints in the bright light. He grabs onto a pole and buries his head in his arm.

NOAH  
Hold it together.

He looks up to see an OLD WOMAN watches him guardedly.

Noah steps towards her and she grips her handbag tighter.

But it's the window behind her that he stares at, because there are trees in the subway tunnel. Their foliage whips inches from the glass.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, STREET - NIGHT

Noah comes up the subway stairs onto a busy street.

He heads along the sidewalk, shielding his eyes from the disorienting light.

NOAH  
(under breath)  
What's happening to me? What's  
happening?

He bumps into a shocked couple. Hurries on.

NOAH  
I'm sorry. Sorry.

He glances across the street and stops dead.

Lindsey stands there, watching him. Pedestrians mill around her as though she's not there.

NOAH  
Lindsey?

Passing people give Noah a wide berth - a crazy man screaming at phantoms.

Noah staggers into traffic. The screech of brakes. Blaring HORN.

He makes it to the other side to see Lindsey disappearing around a corner into a side street.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Noah follows.

Lindsey walks away from him down the middle of the dark street.

NOAH

Lindsey! How do I make it stop?!

Lindsey ignores him. Continues toward the end of the street that appears smothered in darkness. No light penetrates the deep shadows there.

As Noah follows his sister, he realizes what he's actually looking at is the PRIMORDIAL FOREST.

Towering trees, as tall as the surrounding buildings, sprout from the road.

Arcadia spills into this world.

His eyes are drawn to a massive shifting SHAPE between the trees. A churning shadow that begins to expunge itself from the darkness.

Pan ROARS.

The street, the very air, trembles and Noah trips over his own feet in his haste to get away.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Noah hurries down the corridor towards his apartment door, fumbles with his keys. Drops them.

As he picks them up, he hears the soft NICKER of an animal behind him.

Noah turns to see the bland carpet and beige walls of the corridor melt into the dark primordial forest.

Noah shoves the door open into his apartment.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Noah slams the door.

He cries out as the black veins ripple up his arms.

Manic, Noah flicks the light on in the kitchenette. He goes to a drawer and rips it open

Looks at an array of SHARP UTENSILS.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The elevator doors open and Zoe exits. She heads to Noah's door, gets the spare keys from her bag.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Zoe lets herself in. The place is empty.

ZOE

Noah?

Zoe sees a scattering of utensils on the kitchenette floor.

As she looks closer, she spots smudges of black fluid.

Alarmed, she follows a trail of it to the closed bathroom door.

ZOE

What happened tonight?

She listens. Hears ragged breathing.

No response.

ZOE

I'm opening the door.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She opens the door and her breath hitches.

Noah sits shirtless on the bathroom floor. He dreamily examines slashes in his skin that bleed black liquid.

A small paring knife sits discarded on the tiles.

ZOE

*What did you do?*



He looks up, eyes glassy and bright. His face splits into a manic grin.

NOAH  
Zoe. Listen.

He gets to his feet, watches the black fluid cascade down his arms.

Zoe backs away.

ZOE  
Noah. What is that?!

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Noah follows her into the apartment, advances on her.

NOAH  
It's a gift. From Him.

ZOE  
*You cut yourself.*

NOAH  
*Can you hear Him?*

ZOE  
Noah. Noah. Don't. Please.

Noah grabs her arm.

ZOE  
No!

Zoe slaps at him, tries to pull away. The couch catches the back of her legs and they both go down onto it.

NOAH  
I want you to hear Him.

ZOE  
Noah!

He pushes his palm against her lips. Tries to force the black liquid into her mouth.

She thrashes and it smears her chin.

ZOE  
Why are you doing this?!

Zoe remembers she holds the keys and JAMS them into his side.

Noah grunts and tumbles to the floor.

Zoe gets to her feet, brandishes the keys.

ZOE  
Stay back!

NOAH  
Zo...

ZOE  
Stay back, Noah.

He looks down at himself, at the gashes in his arms. He peers up at her and she sees the Noah she knows.

He despairs.

NOAH  
I thought I could cut it out.

INT. HOSPITAL, WARD - NIGHT

Noah sits, arms bandaged, on a bed in a busy hospital. He glances up at a bright fluorescent light buzzing above.

He watches closely as a NURSE draws blood with a syringe. It comes out red.

Meanwhile, a cheerless PSYCH REGISTRAR evaluates him, ticks off a checklist on a clipboard.

REGISTRAR  
In the last two weeks, have you found it difficult to feel joy in your everyday life?

NOAH  
Yeah.

REGISTRAR  
In the last two weeks, have you experienced feelings of despair or helplessness?

NOAH  
Hasn't everyone?

The Registrar studies him.

REGISTRAR  
Are you having trouble with light? Photosensitivity?

NOAH  
It's bright in here.

The Registrar takes a penlight from her pocket and comes in close. She shines it into his eye.

REGISTRAR  
Look left please. Right. Up. Down.

She moves to his other eye.

REGISTRAR  
Same again.

Noah looks left.

He looks right and tenses.

Through the flare of the penlight, he can see Lindsey standing behind the Registrar.

The Registrar flicks off the penlight and tucks it away - Lindsey is gone.

REGISTRAR  
Would you consent to remain under  
observation for twenty-four hours?

Noah makes eye contact with Zoe, who sits guardedly across the ward.

Something tacit passes between them. As far as road bumps go, this is a big one.

He nods and the Registrar hands him a form to sign.

INT. HOSPITAL, CORRIDOR - MORNING

Noah sits on a plastic bench in the bustling hospital corridor. His eyes are closed, rests his head against the wall.

Directed from the nurse's station, Andrea approaches with a small overnight bag.

Unnoticed, she stops and studies her brother for a beat.

ANDREA  
Hey.

Noah opens his eyes. A patch of vividly colored fungus blooms at Andrea's feet.

ANDREA  
I brought a couple things. I didn't  
know how long...

Noah gives her a tired smile.

NOAH  
Thanks.

ANDREA  
Where's Zoe?

Noah shakes his head. Andrea sits next to him, careful not to invade his space.

ANDREA  
Do you want me to stay?

She's surprised when he grips her hand.

NOAH  
She's not gone.

It takes Andrea a moment but she realizes who he's talking about.

ANDREA  
Noah.

The corridor continues to fill with strange flora and Noah shuts his eyes against it.

NOAH  
It's real. Everything Walter showed  
me. Lindsey's over there, Andrea.

ANDREA  
Noah, you found her body. You saw  
it.

He shakes his head, utters a brittle laugh.

ANDREA  
What happened in Vermont, no one  
expects you to be okay after that.  
You're in the right place. And  
tomorrow, why don't we talk about  
maybe you coming to stay with us?

NOAH  
Can't you hear Him? It's so loud.

Noah begins to weep with joy and sorrow. There's mad wonder in his eyes.

NOAH

I don't know how much longer I can  
bear it.

As he sobs and laughs, Andrea watches him, deeply unnerved.  
He's farther gone than she thought.

INT. HOSPITAL, PSYCHIATRIC WING, ROOM - NIGHT

Noah sits in the corner of the room in a hospital gown. The  
room he's in is bare but comfortable.

Dark flora ripples across the floor and up the walls around  
him.

Noah watches this impassively. An idea forming...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SNITCH, ZANDER'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Zander sits at his desk, the glass walls of his office  
looking out onto the split level offices of hip online  
publication SNITCH.

His phone buzzes and he distractedly glances at it. Sees a  
text from Noah. Opens it.

It reads: *I'll do the article. Come by at 7.*

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Zander comes to Noah's apartment door. He knocks but finds it  
ajar.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Zander enters the apartment.

ZANDER

Hello?

A clatter from the bathroom and Noah emerges. He's bleary-  
eyed and agitated.

NOAH

Hey.

ZANDER  
(re. bandages)  
What happened?

Zander watches Noah arrange cushions on the couch to make a pillow.

ZANDER  
Are you okay?

NOAH  
I'm great.

ZANDER  
So ah, do you want to grab a drink,  
talk about this piece?

NOAH  
Yeah. Sure. It just needs an  
ending.

ZANDER  
Ending?

Zander watches Noah run a glass of water. Put it next to the couch. The vibe is weird.

NOAH  
I need a favor. A pretty big one. I  
need you to revive me.

ZANDER  
What?

NOAH  
Your brain survives six minutes  
without oxygen. That's what I read  
online, anyway.

ZANDER  
Wait, what the fuck are you talking  
about?

NOAH  
I figured it out. Lindsey's there.  
I'm here. I need to die. That's how  
it works. Our body's are the least  
of us, that's what he said.

Zander stares at Noah.

NOAH  
I'm not crazy, Zander. I know  
Lindsey's dead.  
(MORE)

NOAH (CONT'D)

But whatever she's been trying to tell me, whatever she needs me to do, I can only do it over there.

ZANDER

Okay. Whatever this is, a psychotic break, a lame fucking joke, just no. Forget about the article.

Zander walks for the door just as Noah teeters, collapses to the floor.

Zander freezes.

ZANDER

You asshole. *You already took something?*

Zander kneels next to Noah as he drifts in and out of consciousness. Dials 911.

Noah's glassy eyes start to close. Zander slaps him hard.

ZANDER

Stay awake. Fucking unbelievable.

Noah looks up at Zander, who phases in and out of view. Trees erupt around him as his words echo.

ZANDER

(into phone)

I need an ambulance. I think my friend took pills. Jesus Christ.

Zander gives the operator the address but it warps and echoes as Noah plummets into...

DISSOLVE TO:

Darkness.

The whir of insects.

EXT. ARCADIA, PRIMORDIAL FOREST - DAY

Noah wakes up naked on the forest floor, sunlight glinting through the thick canopy above him.

He's back in the primordial forest.

Back in Arcadia.

EXT. ARCADIA, PLAINS - DAY

Noah wanders from the forest's treeline, awed by the sight of a sunlit expanse.

A plain of golden grass rolls away.

At its far side, dark forest gives way to a black and jagged mountain range that thrusts into the pale sky.

An alien landscape of savage beauty, its massive proportions eclipsing anything found on Earth.

A multitude of naked people wander serenely across this plain.

NOAH

Hey!

They ignore him, endlessly transfixed by the landscape.

Noah approaches a YOUNG MAN, who smiles. The man has horizontal pupils.

NOAH

I need to find my sister. Do you know her? Lindsey?

The Young Man's smile broadens and he reaches up to touch Noah's face. Noah ducks his head out of the way.

A familiar roar trumpets through the nearby forest, and the Young Man turns toward the sound, raises his arms.

Noah sees the others raising their arms as the tops of the trees begin to sway.

Pan approaches.

Noah turns and sprints away across the plain towards the far line of trees.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Zander opens the door for two PARAMEDICS.

They hurry into the apartment, lugging medical equipment.

Zander stands back and watches them go to Noah. They examine his unconscious body. Speak between themselves.



EXT. PRIMORDIAL FOREST, WATERFALL - DAY

Noah runs through the forest.

Pan is on his tail. Splintering ancient trees in his path.

Noah cries out, almost plummets over a cliff.

He stands at the top of a tall WATERFALL. A pool churns below, giving out to a broad and fast-flowing river.

Noah turns.

He can hear Pan's approach. And something else. A shrill SCREECH and the sounds of BIRTH.

Noah becomes aware of a thudding, galloping sound.

Two MONSTROUS OFFSPRING - the size of elephants with chittering mouths and lashing tentacles - burst from the trees.

They come shambling towards Noah and he has no choice.

He jumps.

EXT. PRIMORDIAL FOREST, RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Noah drops fifty feet into the churning pool.

He emerges, gasping for air, as he's carried away down the river.

He looks back. Sees the two Monstrous Offspring making their way swiftly down the cliff face.

Noah is carried downstream. He pushes, hooks his elbow around a tangle of fallen branches, scrabbles onto the opposite bank.

The first Offspring heads along the opposite bank.

The other crashes through the water on hoofed feet, straight for Noah.

Noah attempts to dash from the river to the treeline, but the thing is FAST.

It whips out, snares him.

Noah thrashes against its slimy mass but it grips him tight and drags him into the trees.

INT. NOAH'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Noah is jostled as he's lifted onto a stretcher.

Zander moves out of the way as Noah's wheeled out the door.

EXT. ARCADIA, PRIMORDIAL FOREST - DAY

Noah continues to flail, ensnared by the monster. On the brink of insanity, he's dragged through mud and whipping foliage.

NOAH

Help me! Oh god help me! Walter!

EXT. ARCADIA, GREAT TREE - CONTINUOUS

Noah is tugged onward.

He's released suddenly and it takes him a moment to realize the Monstrous Offspring is backing away.

He hears ululating voices around him. A meaningless cacophony of humming and groans. Ecstasy.

He sits up to a familiar sight.

Walter stands next to his GREAT TREE, bathed in golden sunlight.

A multitude of naked people, all races and ages, dance around the tree.

Lindsey is among them. As is Sarah Willman, no longer the conservative girl on the missing persons site.

Noah gets to his feet and the clearing falls into an expectant silence. All eyes on him.

NOAH

Walter. How do I make this stop?

Noah turns to Lindsey.

NOAH

Lindsey. Help me.

She merely smiles and he looks to the faces around the clearing.

NOAH

Can't you see this place, it isn't what you think it is! You're its pets! Our world is broken, I know, and I know it feels impossible but we can fix it...

(loses steam)

We can fix it.

Walter speaks, a strange dual-tone quality to his voice.

WALTER

There's no fixing it. There's no solution. The world out there is already gone, kid.

NOAH

Walter. Please.

WALTER

This place is mankind's only hope.

A murmur ripples through the congregation.

WALTER

Be His shepherd. Save those who come. As many as you can. Send them here.

Lindsey moves forward. She smiles fondly at Noah, gently turns him to face the outer edge of the clearing.

LINDSEY

Be His shepherd.

Pan is there, silently presiding. Towering over the trees and disappearing into the sky, incomprehensibly large.

Noah is thunderstruck.

In the golden sunlight, Pan is truly alien. A form beyond human understanding. Beautiful and unfathomable. A phantom from genetic memory.

Noah can only take in its features one at a time - black skin that radiates a golden hue, a protean mass that refuses to conform to one shape.

The BUZZ vibrates around Noah. It comes from Pan, a sonorous vibration that causes Noah's body and eyes to ripple with black veins.

Noah wanders across the clearing, awe eclipsing his terror.

He stares up at the god. Black tears spill down his cheeks.

NOAH  
Beautiful.

Noah looks to Walter for guidance, but the man merely watches. This was fated.

Noah reaches out and touches Pan's mottled skin. It shudders under his touch and a network of pores open.

Black liquid - Pan's milk - cascades from them over his fingers and down his arm.

Noah nods, his voice thick, eyes bright with something infinite.

NOAH  
Yes. Yes.

Pan lets loose a mighty ROAR.

Noah's hand sinks into the wall of flesh.

A multitude of eyes open to watch Noah as he's drawn in. Grasping appendages cling to his shoulders and hair. Pull him closer.

Noah disappears, subsumed by Pan.

INT. PAN

Noah SCREAMS, passes through a pressing, claustrophobic tunnel of flesh that swirls with psychedelic patterns.

He attempts to claw his way out. Up, down. It seems he'll be crushed until...

A silent vista opens up before him and his screams wither.

He stares. A toddler witnessing something wondrous.

A massive ball of dull light sits suspended in an endless expanse devoid of stars.

Around this light, amorphous CREATURES orbit lazily.

As sound rushes back, Noah sees something resides within the light.

It turns and twists like an embryo in a translucent egg.

CUT TO:

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Noah comes to in the back of the ambulance, thrashing and choking.

Hands attempt to hold him down as the veins pop in his neck.

Something hard and unyielding passes up his throat.

PARAMEDIC

Sir, lay down!

Noah's face goes red. He can't breathe. He drives his fingers into his mouth to dislodge whatever it is.

PARAMEDIC

He's choking.

The Paramedics try to help but with a horrific wrenching grunt, a slimy object tumbles from Noah's mouth and rolls across the floor of the moving ambulance.

The Paramedics are shocked into inaction, and Noah sees his chance.

He wrenches out the IV, scrabbles off the gurney and grabs up the object - a smooth and mottled SEEDPOD. He pushes on the ambulance doors.

The Paramedics attempt to hold him back.

PARAMEDIC

Wait! Sir!

(to driver)

Stop! He's trying to get out!

The squeal of brakes and Noah and the Paramedics are shunted violently as the vehicle comes to a messy stop.

Noah pushes the doors open and falls out.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY, STREET - CONTINUOUS

He hits the road and loses the seedpod.

Singleminded, he chases it through the traffic, narrowly missing a swerving car.

He gets his hands on the seedpod as the Paramedics emerge from the ambulance.

Noah runs into the night.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK - NIGHT

Noah walks through dark Prospect Park. The distant and brilliant city skyline glows beyond the treeline.

He heads for the trees.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK, WOODS - NIGHT

Noah drops to his knees in the quiet wooded area and starts to dig a hole.

He looks over to see Lindsey's dark and watching figure.

He drops the seedpod into the hole, covers it, and moves back.

The ground in front of him bulges then sinks.

What looks like a black tentacle erupts from the soil and within seconds, a GREAT TREE - Noah's tree - rapidly unfurls above him.

It crowds out the other trees. Its branches reach and ensnare until it finally settles.

A new beacon.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK - NIGHT

Noah walks from the treeline and looks across the park.

A group of people make their way down the hill towards him. A homeless woman. A teenage girl. A middle-aged man.

They approach, curious. They don't know why they came but they sense Noah will show them.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CONTINUOUS

Moving up and above Prospect Park, the circulatory system of streets and highways stretches away.

A city filled with the disillusioned and downcast, who will hear Pan's call.

FADE TO BLACK.