

APEX

Written by

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

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Contact info:

E-mail: richardjohnston83@hotmail.co.uk  
Address: 79 Monkhill Drive, Pontefract, West Yorkshire  
Phone Number: (+44) 7718 275 002

FADE IN:

EXT. DEEP FOREST - NIGHT

Rain pummels the earth, drumming against tangled roots and thick mud. Trees groan as the wind thrashes their branches, sending sheets of water cascading down like nature's own cold shower.

In the distance—the low purr of an approaching vehicle.

Headlights slice through the dense woodland, flickering between the trees like ghostly eyes.

EXT. FOREST - DIRT ROAD - NIGHT.

The engine dies. Headlights flicker—then vanish. Darkness swallows the scene whole.

The front doors creak open.

TWO MEN step out, figures obscured by the murk. They move in sync, rounding the vehicle's back—silent, predatory.

A moment of stillness.

THUNK. The boot pops open.

A flashlight beam slices through the dark, illuminating a bound, beaten figure inside—

DEVLIN (mid-40s to early 50s). Well-built. Tough. A survivor.

His face is a patchwork of bruises, dried blood clinging to his temple. A gag muffles his breath.

The flashlight blinds him—he winces, but his stare remains cold. Unshaken.

FINSTER (40s-50s), a thick-set bruiser with a fox tattoo on his wrist, grins as he angles the beam.

FINSTER  
(mocking)  
Wakey, wakey, sleepyhead!

Beside him, ROARKE (40s-50s), just as burly, smirks. His broken, sutured nose tells a hundred violent stories. A cigarette sags from his lips as he exhales a slow stream of smoke.

A matching fox tattoo marks his wrist.

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Roarke slips a hand inside his jacket.

Smooth. Unhurried.

He draws a REVOLVER.

With a practiced flick of his thumb—CLICK. The hammer pulls back.

He levels the barrel into the boot, eyes locked on Devlin's beaten face. His smirk never fades as he speaks his thick Irish tone comes clear in his voice.

ROARKE

Come on now. Don't give me any more of a reason to make this unpleasant for you.

(beat, amused)

You're better than this, Devlin.

Devlin's stare doesn't waver. He doesn't flinch.

A long, tense silence.

Then—he tilts his head ever so slightly.

DEVLIN

(muffled)

Mmmph

Roarke squints.

ROARKE

What? What's that?

Roarke and Finster drag Devlin from the back of the vehicle.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - GRAVE SITE - NIGHT

Rain continues to pummel down, turning the soil into a thick, muddy slop.

Devlin stands three feet down in a half-dug grave, shoveling mud as Finster and Roarke watch from above.

Finster angles a flashlight down, he smirks.

FINSTER

Well, Devlin, gotta say—this is a dream come true.

Devlin stops digging, wipes his brow—leaving a muddy streak across his face. He looks up, unimpressed.

DEVLIN

Yeah, I bet you're touching Roarke  
there real good tonight, hey  
Finster?

Finster scowls, grabs a rock, and hurls it down—it clips Devlin's shoulder

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Real tough, aren't you?

Roarke cocks the hammer on his REVOLVER—CLICK.

ROARKE

No one said you could stop, lad. We  
got places to be tonight.

Devlin shrugs, smirks.

DEVLIN

Well Roarke, you could help me dig  
if you wanted?

ROARKE

Shut the fuck up and get back to  
work!

Finster glances upward—something catches his attention.

FINSTER

Huh?

ROARKE

What?

FINSTER

Look, it's a meteor shower!

Above, meteors streak across the sky, glowing against the scattered clouds.

ROARKE

Well, ain't that a sight!

Devlin sees an opening, subtly shifts—but—

CLICK. Roarke pulls the hammer back again. Devlin freezes, raises his hands.

ROARKE (CONT'D)

Told ya. Don't be a funny guy.

Devlin sighs, resumes digging—slower this time.

Finster pulls a pair of STEEL CUFFS from his pocket, tosses them into the grave.

FINSTER

Alright, that'll do, now put them on and lay down with your back to us!

Devlin hesitates, then complies. He kneels, looking up at Roarke.

DEVLIN

Gonna shoot me in the back of the head Roarke? Bit of a pussy move don't you think? --  
(beat, then—turns to lock eyes with Roarke.)  
-- Even for you!

FINSTER

(laughs)  
Ice cold, even to the end!  
(to Roarke)  
You owe me fifty quid, mate.

Finster steps around, crouches over Devlin, grinning.

FINSTER (CONT'D)

You know, I heard stories about you...  
(chuckles, ruffles Devlin's hair.)  
...And I gotta admit, I was a little nervous about being the one to bring you here.  
(grins, leaning in close.)  
-- But it was easy. So easy in fact I feel a little disappointed.

DEVLIN

Sorry to have disappointed.

Roarke spits on the back of Devlin's head.

ROARKE

That's for my fucking nose you cunt.

Devlin grimaces, stays calm.

DEVLIN

Just so you know... I'm going to kill you. Then, I'm coming for the boss.

Finster bursts into laughter.

FINSTER

The balls on this guy! He's bound in his own grave, talkin' like he's John Wick!

(leans in, grinning)

NOW LAY THE FUCK DOWN!

Devlin lays flat.

Finster and Roarke turn away, laughing-overconfident.

CRACK. Devlin dislocates his thumb.

A VISCERAL ROAR ECHOES from the surrounding forest-close.

Roarke and Finster freeze. Their victory shattered.

ROARKE

What in the fuck--?

FINSTER

Reckon that bears still out there?

ROARKE

Shut the fuck up, Finster. The boss had that killed. Besides--there's no bears in the U-fucking-K

FINSTER

Then what was it?

ROARKE

I don't know! Why don't you go and find out?

FINSTER

Fuck off. You're the one with the gun.

A SHADOW MOVES in the treeline. Finster snaps the flashlight up, scanning.

DEVLIN

(mocking)

What's the matter fellas, too scared to look?

Roarke spins, aims into the grave.

ROARKE

Say one more fucking word -- I dare you!

FINSTER

(snaps back)

HEY! We ain't to touch him--no evidence. We bury him. That's it.

ROARKE

(twitchy, scanning the trees)

Bury him? Did you just fucking hear that?

Another VISCERAL ROAR shakes the night--closer.

Finster grips his gun tighter, scanning wildly.

ROARKE (CONT'D)

Alright, fuck this!

Devlin kneels, smirking.

DEVLIN

Sounds like it's getting closer.

ROARKE

(snaps, furious)

Devlin, you shut the fuck up, y'hear?!

FINSTER

(panicked)

What are we gonna do?!

Roarke snatches the flashlight from Finster.

ROARKE

Get on the blower to the house--let 'em know something's out here!

Finster yanks his phone out--

FINSTER

Shit. No signal.

ROARKE

FUCK.

Roarke aims the flashlight, scanning the trees.

ROARKE (CONT'D)  
ALRIGHT FUCKER, WE'RE NOT MESSING  
AROUND!

RUSTLE.

Suddenly--SOMETHING LUNGES.

Finster is YANKED into the trees.

A scream--CUT SHORT.

Roarke spins.

ROARKE (CONT'D)  
YO BOBBY? -- BOBBY , WHERE DID YOU  
GO?

Silence.

Devlin listens. Calm.

DEVLIN  
And then there was two!

Roarke whips the gun back to Devlin.

ROARKE  
Shut the fuck up Devlin, I ain't  
telling you again!

Silence. Too silent.

ROARKE (CONT'D)  
FINSTER? ... STOP FUCKING AROUND  
MATE!

A breath. Heavy.

Steam billows in the cold air behind Roarke.

A SHADOW LOOMS.

DEVLIN  
(taunting)  
You not hear that silence? That's  
natures way of saying --

ROARKE  
(spinning, yelling)  
FOR THE LAST FUCKING TIME. I TOLD  
YOU TO SHUT THE FU--

SOMETHING GRABS HIM.

Roarke is YANKED INTO THE SHADOWS.

BRUSH SHAKES VIOLENTLY.

BANG! A gunshot.

Devlin lowers himself, covers with mud.

Another gunshot—BANG. Then—SCREAMING.

Flesh TEARING. Bones SNAPPING.

Silence. Just the rain.

Devlin opens his eyes.

He calmly climbs out of the grave.

He runs—but HEAVY STOMPS give chase.

Devlin SKIDS TO A STOP.

He turns slowly.

His eyes widen.

We FOLLOW HIM as he faces something terrifying.

A final, deafening ROAR.

FADE TO BLACK:

SFX: A RIP. A TEAR.

CUE MAIN TITLE.

**APEX.**

FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING.

The sun rises over a lake. A road runs alongside it, surrounded by an endless forest in full bloom.

The song "SUICIDE BLONDE" grows louder as a BLUE CAMPER VAN speeds down the highway, slicing through the early morning calm.

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EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - CAR PARK.

The van pulls into a mostly vacant parking lot, stopping beside a second camper van--this one in green and black camouflage.

The engine dies. The music stops. The side door slides open.

LEO (early 20s, not the camping type) and JONAH (early 20s, bearded, rough, also not the camping type) step out.

ED (early 30s, survivalist type, soft around the edges) remains inside, wearing aviators, his gaze fixed ahead. He lights a cigar, exhaling a thick cloud of smoke.

INT. BLUE CAMPER VAN

NICK (mid-20s to early 30s, bearded, well-built) leans into the back, visibly irritated.

NICK

Ed! What have I told you about smoking in the van?!

Ed turns his head lazily.

ED

Dude, it's been a four hour drive.

NICK

No excuse, get the fuck out and take that giant shit stick with you!

Ed groans and drags himself out of the van.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - CAR PARK

Ed looks around, taking in the rustic diner and the crisp morning air.

ED

Man, that smells good!

LEO

Are you sure? All I smell is country and shit.

JONAH

He ain't lying!

Nick eyes the other camper van, then the diner windows. Inside, a man with a shaved head, LUCAS (late 20s, mid-build), waves eagerly.

Nick's face drops.

NICK

You have got to be kidding me! No!  
No way, back in the van we're going  
home!

ED

C'mon Nick! Don't be like that.

NICK

(pointing at diner)  
If he's coming with us, I'm out!

ED

Dude! Lucas called me. He said he  
had something for us, a lads  
adventure. Something to get the  
group back together again.

NICK

That's great but Lucas isn't one of  
the lads, now if you could kindly --  
get the fuck out of my way!

Ed offers a reassuring smile.

ED

Look, he said he had something  
REALLY good. Something that would  
make things right between us.

Nick glares but relents.

NICK

Fuck sakes...  
(sighs)  
Fine. But it had better be  
something fucking incredible.

Ed smirks, pats Nick's face.

ED

Atta boy!

He turns towards the diner but stops.

ED (CONT'D)

Gimme five minutes. Let me calm things down before they get out of hand, yeah?

JONAH

We'll have a smoke and we'll follow you in.

LEO

Make sure they get a pot of coffee to the table for when we get in!

ED

That's the spirit, lads!

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - MORNING.

The bell above the door DINGS as Ed steps in. He inhales deeply, appreciating the scent of breakfast.

ED

Morning love!

The WAITRESS (early 20s, Southern English accent) wipes the counter.

WAITRESS

Be right with you, take a seat anywhere!

ED

Thanks.

At the back booth, Lucas stands grinning, arms wide.

ED (CONT'D)

Lucas! You son of a bitch!!

They bump fists, lock arms in an arm-wrestle. Tendons strain. Ed winces and pulls away.

ED (CONT'D)

Fucking hell mate, what they feeding you in the military--?

Lucas pats Ed's back as they sit.

ED (CONT'D)

Just so you know, Nick's about ready to fight you, so, no pressure here. But this best be good!

Lucas glances outside at Nick pacing.

LUCAS

Look, what I got is special, so special we are all going be to rich guys!

Lucas pulls a file from a duffel bag, slides it across the table.

Ed opens it. Notes, maps, black-and-white photos. The Ministry of Defence seal.

ED

And what exactly is this?

LUCAS

About 15-20 miles down the road. There's some gold buried out in that forrest.

ED

Bullshit.

LUCAS

No seriously. Back in WWII, when London was getting bombed, the banks buried gold across the countryside. Contingency plan.

ED

And they didn't come back for it?

LUCAS

They recovered half from what I found. Anyway, the rest got left around, this being one of them.

ED

And why would they just leave it there?

LUCAS

I don't fucking know, oversight, bureaucracy Maybe. Who knows?.

ED

(taps file)  
And this here's legit?

LUCAS

Er yeah! I found it at work.

ED

How much?

LUCAS

Ten million, adjusted for  
inflation. Now maybe worth 700  
million.

The bell DINGS. Nick, Jonah, and Leo enter. Nick glares.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

BOYS! Been a fucking minute!

Nick's not amused.

NICK

Lucas. Good to see you're still a  
loud prick.

LUCAS

C'mon Nick, let's put the past  
behind us. I miss you man.

NICK

Lucas - I got nothing to say!

The WAITRESS arrives.

WAITRESS

Morning fellas, what can I getcha?

ED

Those steak and eggs smell  
fantastic!

WAITRESS

They are the best in the county and  
you best believe that!

The guys nod.

ED

We'll take five plates and a jug of  
coffee please.

The waitress jots it down.

WAITRESS

15 minutes alright?

ED

Perfect, love. Thanks.

The guys return to the file.

JONAH  
So, what's this some kind of wind  
up?

LUCAS  
No! Look --

FLASH TO:

INT. MILITARY OFFICE - DAY.

Lucas, in army uniform, decrypts old MOD files.

LUCAS (V.O.)  
I was tasked with decrypting  
military files for public  
release...

The screen reveals unredacted documents. Lucas smirks, hits  
PRINT.

FLASH TO:

INT. DINER - DAY.

Jonah looks at Lucas, he doesn't buy it.

JONAH  
No one else knows?

LUCAS  
Nope. I erased the files as soon as  
I found them.

ED  
Isn't that illegal?

LUCAS  
Only if someone finds out.

Leo Googles "the value of ten million from 1940 to now", his  
jaw drops

LEO  
That's like 700 million!

ED  
Alright, keep your fucking voice  
down.

The guys lean in. Then, a POLICE CAR pulls into the lot.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - CAR PARK

SGT. TREVORS (late 50's grizzled) steps out of the police car, he spits on the ground and enters the diner, he eye's the camper vans on his approach.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER.

Sgt. Trevors approaches the counter, he speaks with the waitress as the guys all watch on from the booth.

JONAH

He looks like a mean mother fucker.

NICK

That ain't no lie.

Sgt. Trevors takes a seat at the counter, the waitress pours him a coffee.

The guys turn back to their food and conversation.

LUCAS

So come on boys, I got the digging gear, are we in?

A realization dawns on Leo.

LEO

Boys, I'll be back in a sec, there's something I got to go do!

Leo stands, exits the booth, and puts his phone to his ear as he heads outside.

LEO (CONT'D)

Hey baby, I've got some real bad news!

The guys watch Leo step out, then turn back to each other.

NICK

What the fuck is he doing?

ED

Fuck knows, anyway, Lucas, how we supposed to find this gold?

JONAH

If I wanted to dig, I would of played Minecraft.

LUCAS

Yes but you wouldn't be richer for doing it at the end of the weekend.

ED

Kinda not guaranteed we're gonna be richer this weekend is it though?

Ed takes a bite of his breakfast, savoring it.

ED (CONT'D)

Damn, she weren't lying. Leo had better hurry the fuck up or I will eat his.

At the counter, sgt. Trevors downs his coffee. He nods to the waitress, then stands. He approaches the booth, gravelly voice cutting through the chatter..

SGT. TREVORS

'Scuse me, lads. Mind telling me what you're up to around here?

NICK

Weekend camping trip.

SGT. TREVORS

Round here?

LUCAS

Yeah, we liked the look of it. That a problem, officer?

SGT. TREVORS

It's actually Sergeant. Sergeant Trevors. And that depends. We don't get many campers. Place smells like shit.

He lingers, the tension thick. Then, from his pocket, he pulls out a folded WANTED POSTER. He lays it on the table—a mugshot of DEVLIN, dangerous and wild-eyed.

SGT. TREVORS (CONT'D)

You haven't seen this guy on your travels have you?

The guys lean in. Ed squints.

ED

Ain't seen him mate. Is he dangerous?

SGT. TREVORS

(scoffs)

I'd say so. Enough that you might wanna rethink that camping trip.

NICK

What did he do?

SGT. TREVORS

Broke out of the local prison. Killed a couple guards. Few other folks are missing too. Real charmer.

The guys exchange uneasy glances.

OFFICER TREVORS

He ain't the only reason to stay outta the woods.

LUCAS

Oh yeah, the wildmen. Ooooooh, scary

Trevors SLAMS his fist on the table. The guys jump.

SGT. TREVORS

It's all fun and games till someone goes missing!

LUCAS

Alright, chill out, I didn't mean nothing by it.

SGT. TREVORS

You need to respect shit, kid. That's the problem with your generation. There's nothing but trouble in those woods.

NICK

You saying that 'cause of the gold?

Trevors glares, confused. Ed glares at Nick. Then he forces a nervous laugh.

ED

He's a fucking kidder this one! What's the trouble though, Sergeant? I can confidently say I have stayed in my fair share of wildlands.

POLICE OFFICER

Do me a favor. Find somewhere else to camp. These woods ain't for rookies -

(looks the group over)

-- And by the looks of you lot, you wouldn't last five minutes.

(leans in to Nick)

Especially you.

Trevors straightens, adjusts his belt, and walks out. As he leaves, LEO re-enters, walking back to the booth. The mood is tense. He looks around at the somber faces.

LEO

Okay so what did I miss?

JONAH

What - the - fuck - guys?

ED

(shrugs)

Beats me man.

NICK

That guy is a mean bastard.

LEO

Yeah, that's cool and everything but guess who's got two thumbs and is now single!

The guys glance at each other.

ED

Least three of us?

LEO

No motherfucker, I mean me.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - CAR PARK - COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

Ed leads as Jonah, Leo, Nick, and Lucas follow him out of the diner. They stop, something on the road catching their attention.

ED

What's this all about then?

A convoy of eight BLACK RANGE ROVERS, led and escorted by MOTORCYCLE POLICE OFFICERS, speeds down the country road, past the diner. The guys watch on, curious.

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

JONAH

Maybe, it's the annual rich boys  
lube-athon!

Ed pats Jonah on the back.

ED

Always the creative one hey Jonah?

Lucas stops by his CAMPER VAN, pulls out a MAP, and checks it  
over.

LUCAS

Right lads moment of truth. Who's  
with me here? We got ten miles of  
road to go till we walk through the  
forest.

LEO

I'm in!

ED

Well, carpe diem and all that  
bullshit right?

JONAH

I still could be doing this on  
Minecraft, but watching you guys  
break your backs could be fun!

NICK

I guess I don't have a choice  
seeing as the rental camper is in  
my name isn't it?

LUCAS

Atta boy! Now, Let's fuckin' go  
boys!

The lads go their separate ways to their respective vehicles.  
Lucas leads the mini convoy as they pull out of the car park,  
driving down the road in the same direction as the convoy  
that just passed.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A pair of CAMPER VANS drive in a mini convoy, winding through  
the narrow country roads. Trees surround them, sunlight  
breaking through the tiny gaps between the leaves.

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

From the lead van, HARDCORE, TERRIBLE DRUM AND BASS MUSIC blares out, rattling the peace of the countryside.

INT. BLUE CAMPER VAN - MOVING.

Ed drives. Next to him, Leo sits in the passenger seat, engrossed in a game on his phone. In the back, Nick flips through a magazine while Jonah lounges on the sofa bed, hoodie pulled over his face, feet propped up.

Ed WINCES as the muffled, awful music seeps into their van.

ED

Fuck me Lucas has a terrible choice in music.

NICK

Yeah, he hasn't changed at all.

ED

Seriously, you going to keep this up all trip?

NICK

Keep what up? I've been clear from the start -- I don't like him.

JONAH

Yeah, but you gotta let that go at some point. People do stupid shit when they're young.

NICK

Young? It was three years ago.

JONAH

Yeah that's a lifetime ago man. He was doing it in your favour.

NICK

And it cost me a house, a relationship and my xbox.

LEO

Fuckin' hell. Here we go again.

(beat)

Look at it this way -- We go do this we come away loaded!

ED

You really believe it?

LEO

Do you?

Ed shrugs.

ED

Fuck knows dude, we might end up camping, we might end up fighting big foot, we might find seven hundred million in gold... It's an adventure isn't it!

LEO

Wait, *what you mean might?*

ED

Well, you know... It's not guaranteed that there is gold out here.

LEO

Not guaranteed?

Leo blinks. A HORRIBLE REALIZATION sets in.

LEO (CONT'D)

-- Guys, I just dumped my high maintenance model girlfriend for a what if!

Leo fumbles with his phone, it FLIES out the open window, Leo watches on horrified.

JONAH

Money makes you do fucked up things bro!

NICK

She was super high maintenance though, you're doing yourself a favour here Leo.

LEO

(snaps)

Shut the fuck up Nick! I KNOW I was punching above my belt. That was why I tolerated her "high maintenance" bullshit!

NICK

Okay this has made it now totally worth it!

Leo stares out the window. His eyes well up.

LEO

She started to smash my xbox on the video call, and the television -- I fucking loved that Television.

ED

(gimacing)  
Ouch --

Ed suddenly notices something ahead. His expression shifts.

ED (CONT'D)

-- Hold up!

He grips the wheel tighter as the road ahead reveals...

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - LAYBY - DAY

LUCAS'S CAMPER VAN pulls to a halt on the side of the road. The BLUE CAMPER parks up behind it.

Lucas gets out, walks alongside the vans, and approaches the driver's window of the blue camper. He gently knocks. The window lowers.

ED

Yees?!

LUCAS

This is the best place to leave the cars, we're on foot from here.

ED

How far we walking?

LUCAS

About 3 miles inland.

LEO

*3 fucking miles?*

JONAH (O.S.)

Oh, that you have a problem with?

Leo turns to the back.

LEO

Shut the fuck up Jonah!

Something watches from a distance. Its breathing is HEAVY, SLOW, PATIENT. The guys, unaware, get out of the camper, pulling on thick jackets and loading up backpacks.

LEO (CONT'D)

You know I ain't no camper right?

ED

Dude, seven hundred million says  
you are.

LEO

Okay, you kind of got me there.

NICK

(to Lucas)

You got all the stuff we need for  
this, right?

LUCAS

(confident)

Course I have!

Lucas opens the back of his camper van. The guys look in.

ED

Fucking hell mate!

JONAH

Is this a treasure hunt or a  
surprise mass murder?

LUCAS

(playful)

Play your cards right it could be  
both!

Inside, a blanket lays out SHOVELS, METAL DETECTORS, and  
WOODEN CRATES. At the back, a LOCKED CHEST.

Nick notices the chest.

NICK

Who's carrying that then?

LUCAS

Don't worry about it. We're not  
bringing that. You all take a  
shovel each, I'll grab the  
detector.

The UNKNOWN PRESENCE continues watching as Lucas unravels a  
MAP. He holds a COMPASS, turning to find his bearings—his  
back to the unseen watcher.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Right, according to this map it's 3  
miles that way!

JONAH

Listen to him all confident and  
shit, like he does this for a  
living!

LUCAS

Err, I kind of do!

The group starts wandering into the wilderness, unaware of  
the eyes still watching them. The CAMPER VANS' LIGHTS FLICKER  
as the central locking kicks in.

NICK

No you sit in an office and  
decipher old documents for public  
release! Hardly the adventurer!

ED

Don't forget he spent 12 weeks  
training, out in the wild!

LUCAS

It was actually 16 weeks but who's  
counting.

NICK

Yeah that was like three years ago!

LUCAS

Fucking buzzkills, fucking  
buzzkills!

They disappear into the trees.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The guys trudge through thick woodland, struggling over vine-  
covered undergrowth, close-knit trees, and rocky climbs. They  
pause when they spot a deer. Ed snaps a photo before they  
move on.

EXT. FOREST - WATERFALL - DAY

A pristine waterfall cascades down a moss-covered rock wall,  
vines draping over its natural beauty. Clear water flows  
gently, a tranquil oasis in the dense forest.

The GUYS approach. ED suddenly stops.

SQUELCH.

ED

Ah fuck!

LEO

What's up?

ED

I stepped in something!

NICK

Something?

ED

I stepped in shit, okay!

Ed looks down, eye's widening.

ED (CONT'D)

Woah, I stepped in a massive pile of shit.

The guys gather around, examining the mess on Ed's boot

LUCAS

What the fuck?

LEO

Hey, there ain't no bears out here is there?

ED

What? Fuck no. Last bear in Scotland was, like, 1916 or something. Maybe it was a cow.

NICK

You see any farms round here?

LUCAS

Look, c'mon we're losing daylight here and I don't think we're far from camp. Wash it in the stream.

ED

Think it's also on my leg too!

LUCAS

Then wash it off in the stream!

From a distance, an UNKNOWN WATCHER observes as the guys argue. Ed lags behind, rinsing his leg under the waterfall.

LEO

You know, I'm not one for the outdoors, but it's kinda nice here. And that smell's faded... I mean, it's still there, but not as bad.

Ed jogs to catch up.

JONAH

I wish Uber was out here!

NICK

I ain't arguing with you there.

ED

Hey! We going for a piss break soon?

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP FORREST - DAY.

A SECURITY TEAM, clad in tactical gear and armed to the teeth, moves cautiously through the aftermath of last night's carnage. Eyes sharp. Fingers near triggers. They scan the area, boots crunching over dead leaves.

ALPHA, one of the team members, stops. Something catches his eye in the dirt— a SEVERED HAND. Torn, gnarly, and stiff with rigor. He picks it up, grimacing.

ALPHA

(holding up hand)

Sir, I got something.

A man in a sharp suit, BLEVINS, strides over. Calculated. Cold. He takes one look at the hand, unimpressed.

BLEVINS

Bag it. No evidence.

A team member zips the hand into a biohazard bag as Blevins turns away, already pulling out his phone. He heads toward his sleek, BLACK RANGE ROVER.

BLEVINS (CONT'D)

(into phone)

They're all dead. We found a hand, we'll need to test it.

(beat, listening)

No. No sign of Devlin. But let's be real—he didn't make it.

(MORE)

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

BLEVINS (CONT'D)  
(another beat, then a sly  
smirk)  
Tell them...it's almost time for the  
hunt.

He hangs up. A slow exhale. The wind rustles the trees.  
Somewhere in the distance... something growls.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAVE/ WOODS - DAY.

A naturally-formed cave, its large opening framed by  
overgrown vines and branches. The guys stand on either side,  
pissing against the rock wall. Lucas sits nearby, studying a  
map against his compass.

ED lets out a relieved groan.

ED  
That is so much better, I really  
needed that!

LUCAS  
(sniffs the air)  
Yeah, well I wouldn't stand around  
here for too long, that gas smell  
is coming from the cave. I'm  
guessing that might be a vent.

NICK  
Reckon it's dangerous?

ED  
Nah, it should be fine. No one's  
light headed are they?

The guys shake their heads, looking amongst each other. An  
awkward silence—punctuated by the sound of peeing.

JONAH  
So, boy's what we doing with our  
chunk of the gold?

LUCAS  
Ah mate! I don't even know. I'd  
sail I think.

NICK  
TVR Tuscan speed 5 rebuilt, like  
new!

JONAH  
(appreciative)  
Nice, man!  
(turns to Ed)  
Hey Ed, What about you?

Ed isn't listening. Something in the rock wall catches his attention. He moves in for a closer look.

NICK  
Ed! Jonah's talking to you!

ED  
Huh?!

Ed zips up, steps back, and pushes some vines aside.

ED (CONT'D)  
Hey! Fella's! You should come see this.

JONAH  
Finally found your cock then?

ED  
Oh ha fucking ha Jonah, I'm serious, come check this out.

The guys gather around Ed, looking at the rock wall with a mix of confusion and wonder.

LEO  
What is that?

The wall is covered in crude etchings—a mix of cave paintings and hieroglyphics. A large, white creature looms over the woods.

ED  
It looks old whatever it is!

Something else catches Lucas's attention.

LUCAS  
If you think that's off what about this?

They turn. A wooden totem, formed into a cross, stands nearby. Carved animal faces—each frozen in terror—stare out from the wood. Overgrown with vines, aged, but not ancient.

NICK  
Okay, so we're blatantly going to get murdered out here.

LUCAS

Oh, give over. Look at the state of this place—no one's been here for decades. Besides, that thing's a great deterrent. Makes me think we're on the right track.

Ed pulls out his phone. Pauses.

ED

No signal.

The others check theirs—same result.

Leo pats himself down, then remembers.

LEO

Fuck! Well, I wouldn't know guys.

LUCAS

It's alright guys I got a satellite phone in my backpack.

Ed snaps a pic of the cave wall. Circles the totem. Click.

Then—he turns the camera on the group.

ED

How 'bout a group photo?

The guys huddle around the totem. Ed props his phone on a tree stump, sets a timer, and runs back.

LUCAS

(hands up, chanting)  
Oi Oi, Savaloy!

SNAP.

Above the cave, an UNKNOWN FIGURE watches from the trees. The guys—clueless—continue their trek.

ED

How much further Lucas, we're kind of dying here man!

LUCAS

Not far, bout another mile.

NICK

For fucks sake!

Leo slows. A shiver down his spine. He turns, glances back at the cave.

JONAH

Leo? what is it?

LEO

I dunno, man. Just got a weird  
feeling. Like we're being watched—  
(laughs)  
—How paranoid am I?

He shakes it off. Catches up with Jonah.

JONAH

You need to lay off the bud.

LEO

Amen to that brother.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

The guys stumble into a clearing. LUCAS drops his backpack  
like it's made of lead.

LUCAS

This is probably the best place to  
set up camp..

The others exhale like they've been holding their breath for  
a week. Backpacks hit the dirt with a collective THUD.

LEO

Thank fuck! I can't walk another  
mile, "my dogs are a barking.

LUCAS

Well... we still got another half a  
mile to the dig site. But, we'll  
camp here tonight and sort that out  
tomorrow

Ed is already halfway through setting up his tent, moving  
with the efficiency of a man who's seen too many survival  
shows.

ED

Gotta admit, Lucas, not a bad spot.

LEO

Yeah, except that smell's still  
lingering.

JONAH

It's different though. Less  
"rotting corpse," more... I don't  
know, "feral gym sock"?

NICK

Smells like Bigfoot's dick.

ED

You'll get used to it, it's called  
camping, my dudes!

Ed looks around, nodding, pleased with himself.

ED (CONT'D)

Now why am I the only one setting  
up a tent?

As Ed moves, a SHADOWED FIGURE lurks behind the tree line,  
motionless, watching.

Ed suddenly stops. A chill runs up his spine. He glances over  
his shoulder.

Nothing but trees, bushes, and unsettling silence.

ED (CONT'D)

(to self)  
Probably just a deer or  
something...

Shaking it off, he turns back to the group.

ED (CONT'D)

Right then -- who's got the food  
supply?

JONAH

LEO

Lucas.

Lucas

Lucas freezes. Blank stare. Like a man who just realized he  
left the stove on at home.

LUCAS

Wait... was that supposed to be me?

NICK

Are you fucking kidding me?!

LUCAS

Ah, shit, my bad guys!

Jonah, mid-unpack, looks up in disbelief.

JONAH  
WHAT THE FUCK MAN?!

LEO  
Yeah, enjoy the walk asshat!

LUCAS  
Can't we hunt something? Like real  
camping!

LEO  
Get fucked and get jogging!

ED  
Yeah and don't fuck about -- we got  
four hours of daylight left!

LUCAS  
Fine!

Lucas yanks a SATELLITE PHONE from his backpack and holds it  
up triumphantly.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
I'm taking this with me though  
incase I get lost.

NICK  
Who you gonna call?

LEO  
Ghostbusters, duh!

Lucas stomps off. Nick frowns at his backpack. Something's  
missing.

NICK  
(under breath)  
*Shit!...*

He glances at the guys, all deep in tent assembly. Hesitates.  
Then:

NICK (CONT'D)  
Uh... so... I may have left my inhalers  
in the van.

Dead silence.

ED  
DUDE! FUCKS SAKES MAN! Did neither  
of you do a second check before we  
left?!

JONAH

Well, that sounds like a you  
problem if I'm honest.

LEO

Yeah, I have to agree.

NICK

Can't one of you guys go instead?

LEO

I ain't doing another 6 mile hike!  
Any of you fuckers fancy that?

Ed and Jonah exchange looks.

ED

(shakes head)

No.

JONAH

Not a chance!

Nick rolls his eyes and groans.

NICK

Fine! fucks sakes --

He stomps after Lucas.

NICK (CONT'D)

Lucas, hang on!

The SHADOWED FIGURE watches as Nick and Lucas disappear into  
the woods. Then, their attention drifts back to the remaining  
campers.

Ed hammers a tent pole in place with a plastic mallet, then  
hesitates, uneasy.

ED

Reckon that was a good idea?

LEO

They'll be fine. Probably good for  
them, gives them the time to talk  
things out.

JONAH

Or fight it out.

ED

Yeah... that's what I am worried  
about.

A distant SNAP echoes through the clearing.

ED (CONT'D)  
You guys hear that?

LEO  
It was probably Tweedle dumbass and  
Tweedle dipshit!

ED  
No. That came from the opposite  
direction.

JONAH  
Maybe it's a deer. We saw a few on  
the way out here.

Ed nods.

ED  
Yeah, yeah I guess.

Leo pulls a tin of coffee from his bag, shakes it  
triumphantly.

LEO  
So-- how doe's one go about getting  
a pot of coffee on?

ED  
We're going to need to make a fire.  
I got a bottle of water in my  
backpack. How about you and Jonah  
find some wood and I'll finish the  
tents.

LEO  
That sounds like a fair exchange.

JONAH  
Yeah more than fair. I'm down.

Ed puts the finishing touches on his tent as Leo and Jonah  
vanish into the woods.

From the distant brush, THE WATCHER observes. Watching Ed.  
Alone. Clueless. Blissfully ignorant, he whistles a jaunty  
little tune.

CUT TO:

EXT. FORREST - DAY.

Lucas and a visibly exhausted Nick trudge through the woods. The only sound is birds chirping, filling the thick silence between them.

NICK  
Jesus, this place is like a goddamn maze!

LUCAS  
Ohhhhh, so he does talk then?

Nick stops dead in his tracks.

NICK  
I keep telling you Lucas, I ain't got anything to say to you.

LUCAS  
Oh, c'mon, man. It's been three years. You still can't let it go?

NICK  
Let it go? Lucas, you slept with my ex! A woman I WORKED with. A woman I had just bought a house with. And why? To "prove" she was a cheat?

LUCAS  
(remorseful)  
Well... yeah. But it wasn't malicious! I was trying to do you a favor-

Nick lunges—BAM!—punches Lucas right in the jaw. Lucas stumbles back, rubbing his face, wide-eyed.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
Okay, wow. Uncalled for!

Lucas tackles Nick. They wrestle, exchanging clumsy blows, grunting like cavemen. They roll, limbs flailing—until they topple over an incline.

SMACK! CRACK! SNAP! They hit every possible branch, rock, and dirt patch on the way down.

They land sprawled out, groaning.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
I totally won that!

Nick sits up, spitting out a leaf.

NICK  
Like fuck you --

He freezes, staring ahead.

NICK (CONT'D)  
-- What the fuck is that?

A large, furry black mass sits upright in the clearing ahead.  
Motionless. Silent.

Lucas follows Nick's gaze. His eyes widen.

LUCAS  
That...  
(lowers voice)  
.. That looks like a bear!

NICK  
(whispers)  
What?! Ed said there were no bears!

LUCAS  
(whispers)  
Well, explain THAT then!

The black mass doesn't move. Doesn't breathe.

NICK  
I.. I think it's dead?

LUCAS  
Or it's sleeping. And about to rip  
our faces off.

Nick swallows hard. Lucas takes a deep breath--

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
(yells)  
OI TWAT!

Nick flinches, ready to bolt--but the mass stays put. Lucas  
squints.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
Nah, it ain't moving I'm gonna go  
check it out!

NICK  
Mate, are you insane?

LUCAS  
You called me mate, we're making  
progress!

Lucas creeps forward, grabs a branch, and prods the mass. It flops over, revealing a DEAD BLACK BEAR...WITH ITS FACE MISSING.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
Oh... that's... concerning.

Nick staggers up, peering over Lucas's shoulder.

NICK  
What the f--

Lucas spots something else just ahead. His stomach drops.

LUCAS  
Oh, no. Nope. NOPE!

A SEVERED, TATTOOED HUMAN ARM lies in the dirt. Scratched up. Rotting.

Nick dry-heaves.

NICK  
(getting it together)  
Phone! CALL SOMEONE!

Lucas yanks out his satellite phone...

...and reveals a SHATTERED SCREEN.

LUCAS  
So. Tiny hiccup.

Nick gapes at the broken phone, shakes his head... and vomits again.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
Y'know, you could try problem-solving instead of just puking--

A GUTTURAL, EAR-SPLITTING ROAR erupts from the trees.

Both men SCREAM and take off running.

The forest comes ALIVE. Bushes SHAKE. TREES SWAY.

NICK  
Something's in the trees Lucas!

LUCAS  
THEN RUN FASTER!

Suddenly, silence.

Nick stops, wheezing.

NICK

Lucas... I need... my inhaler...

Lucas skids to a halt, runs back to Nick.

LUCAS

Nope! Not today, buddy! We're moving!

He hoists Nick up, practically dragging him forward.

ANOTHER ROAR. CLOSER.

Nick glares at Lucas as they scramble through the trees.

NICK

You... absolute... PRICK, Lucas!

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - CAMPSITE - DAY.

Jonah and Leo return to camp, each carrying a bundle of branches and a few logs.

LEO

(grinning)

The breakup ain't no bad thing.  
Least now I can finally have a crack at-

They both stop. Something's off.

The camp looks exactly as they left it. Silent. Empty.

LEO (CONT'D)

I thought Ed was supposed to be setting up the tents.

JONAH

He was.

LEO

(calling out)

YO ED? WHERE YOU AT?

CRACK! A twig snaps behind them.

onah and Leo whip around – ED stands there, hands up, looking guilty as hell.

ED

Hey guys.

LEO

(startled then annoyed)  
What the hell, man?! I thought you were—wait. What are you doing?

JONAH

And why the hell are your hands up?

ED

Okay, okay. There is an explanation. But first, I need you both to promise not to freak out.

LEO

(baffled)  
Well... That's never a good start.

A filthy, meaty hand clamps onto Ed's shoulder.

A revolver appears, pressing against Ed's temple.

Devlin, battered, grimy and beaten up, leans into view, eyes twitchy.

DEVLIN

What's going on fellas? Why you out here?

CLICK. He cocks the hammer back.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

And don't give me no bull shit!

Jonah and Leo immediately raise their hands, mirroring Ed.

LEO

We're looking for gold. We ain't looking for trouble.

DEVLIN

(squinting at Ed)  
Really? you weren't lying?

JONAH

No, look our mates got the map, we'll give it to you and you can have it.

DEVLIN

I don't give a rat's ass about gold. I need to know—do you got a ride?

Jonah and Leo nervously nod.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Good.

He **SHOVES** Ed toward them—then keeps the gun aimed squarely at his head.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

You got food?

ED

Uh... no. Our idiot friends forgot to pack it, so they went back to the van to get it.

Devlin **SIGHS**. This day just keeps getting worse.

DEVLIN

Great. Guess we're all going for a walk.

Beat.

LEO

Like a *friendly* walk?

Devlin levels the gun.

DEVLIN

What do you think?

Jonah, Leo, and Ed gulp.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Grab your backpacks. And water. You're not dying on me before we get to your ride.

He waves the gun.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Move it!

They trudge into the woods, looking like the worst hiking group in history.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)  
Grab your backpack and some water  
too!

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODLANDS - DIRT ROAD - DUSK

Lucas half-carries, half-drags Nick through dense trees. Nick gasps for air, wheezing like an asthmatic grandpa.

LUCAS  
We're nearly there, mate. Just  
keep-

NICK  
(staggering)  
I just-- need-- a second--

They stumble onto a dirt road--secluded, eerie, and definitely not the one they were hoping for.

LUCAS  
Shit! I got turned around!

Nick collapses like a sack of wet laundry, gulping air.

NICK  
(smirking)  
Lucas... This isn't where we  
parked.

LUCAS  
No, but it's a road! It's got tire  
tracks. Somebody's gotta come  
through.

NICK  
you got the map?

Lucas checks himself over.

LUCAS  
FUCK! It must of dropped out my  
trousers back in the woods.

NICK  
what?

LUCAS

Wasn't planning on you going all  
WWE back there or getting chased by  
WHATEVER the fuck that was back  
there.

Nick rubs his face, trying to process the sheer incompetence.  
Then—

NICK

(low, shaken)

What the fuck was that, Lucas?

Lucas notices Nick trembling. That's new. That's not good.

LUCAS

Hey? You good?

NICK

No Lucas, I am very fucking far  
from good, right now, and I dont th-

-

Nick stops. Eyes locked ahead. Lucas follows his gaze—

A police car, crawling towards them like it's sizing them up.  
Relief floods them both.

LUCAS

(laughing)

Oh, thank fuck!

The car stops. Out steps SGT. TREVORS--

SGT. TREVORS

(grumbling)

What the hell are you doing out  
here?

LUCAS

(relieved)

We were chased! Through the woods!  
We just need to get back to our  
vans!

SGT. TREVORS

(scoffs)

Your vans are about five miles  
back. You're on private land.

NICK

We didn't know, man! Something's  
out there. Please, we need help.

SGT. TREVORS  
And where's the others? I know  
there was more of you.

NICK

Back at camp. So if you could just—  
ZIP! Trevors snaps a plastic tie around Nick's wrists.

NICK (CONT'D)  
(outraged)  
—YO, YO, WHAT THE FUCK?!

LUCAS  
Whoa, why are you cuffing him?!

SGT. TREVORS  
Cause you're trespassing dumbass.

He shoves Nick toward the car. Nick resists, but it's like fighting gravity.

LUCAS  
(furious)  
You serious right now?! Our friends  
need help, and you're worried about  
fucking PROPERTY?!

SGT. TREVORS  
You best watch that mouth, son. You  
have no idea the shit you just  
stepped in. Now get over here so I  
can cuff you too.

Lucas clenches his fists, nostrils flaring.

LUCAS  
I ain't getting in that car.

SGT. TREVORS  
(smirking)  
I love it when they resist.

Before Lucas can react—BZZZT! Trevors fires his Taser. Lucas convulses like a dying fish before collapsing in a twitching heap. Everything goes BLACK.

INT. POLICE CAR - DUSK.

Sgt. Trevors drops into the driver's seat, cracks his neck. Behind him, LUCAS groans, still dazed. Nick, hands cuffed behind his back, leans forward, desperate.

NICK

You can't just leave our friends  
out there to die!

SGT. TREVORS

Oh, I ain't leaving them to die --  
(grabs radio, clicks  
button)

Big bear, this is night Wolf. I  
have two of the campers. There's  
three more out there somewhere  
between home base and Sanderson  
Lake.

The radio crackles. A voice--stern, female, OLD--cuts through.

GRAND OWL (O.S.)

Big Bear's out. This is Grand Owl.  
A team will be dispatched. Bring  
the two in.

SGT. TREVORS

Roger that Grand owl.

NICK

Who the fuck is Grand Owl?

SGT. TREVORS

You'll find out soon enough.

He turns the key--

A DEAFENING ROAR EXPLODES FROM THE WOODS. The windshield  
SPIDERWEB CRACKS. Trevors YELPS, hands flying to his ears.  
Lucas and Nick recoil in agony.

Then--silence.

Trevors exhales, shaking his head.

SGT. TREVORS (CONT'D)

What in the actual fuck?

He unbuckles, throws open the door.

NICK

What are you doing?

SGT. TREVORS

Shut the fuck up!

LUCAS

(groggy)  
What the fuck just happened?

NICK

Yup

LUCAS

Dick.

EXT. POLICE CAR/ DIRT ROAD - DUSK.

Trevors steps out, squinting into the woods. The last of the daylight bleeds away.

OFFICER TREVORS

(shouts)

Alright, anyone out there? Identify yourself! I am a police sergeant!

INT. POLICE CAR.

Lucas, now fully awake, struggles against his cuffs.

LUCAS

What's he doing?

NICK

I think... I think we're in a cult movie Lucas, he was talking to a "Grand Owl"

LUCAS

Fuck! Yeah, that's some robe-wearing, blood-drinking shit right there.

EXT. POLICE CAR/ DIRT ROAD - DUSK.

Trevors unclips his TASER, sweeps a FLASHLIGHT into the trees.

SGT. TREVORS

I am armed! Last warning!

BAM! Nick SLAMS his head against the window.

NICK

MAYBE DON'T TEASE THE MURDER SOUND?!

Trevors flips him off without looking. Steps closer to the tree line.

Then-

A SHARP WHISTLE.

Trevors FREEZES. Eyes wide.

A HUGE, HANDMADE, CRUDE, WOODEN JAVELIN TEARS THROUGH THE AIR-

WHUMP!

It IMPALES Trevors mid-stride, LIFTING HIM OFF HIS FEET like a goddamn action figure.

He SLAMS into the side of the car-

THE WHOLE VEHICLE TILTS ON TWO WHEELS-

-and CRASHES back down.

Trevors is SKEWERED, the massive spear PINNING him to the frame. Blood bubbles from his lips. He stares down at the absurdly large weapon.

SGT. TREVORS

(wheezing)

Oh... you gotta be shitting me!

INT. POLICE CAR.

Lucas and Nick stare at the blood-drenched javelin jutting through the DASHBOARD.

LUCAS

Dude! That's through the engine.

NICK

Yup.

LUCAS

We're not going anywhere.

NICK

Yup.

Nick turns to look out the window-

Something is COMING.

NICK (CONT'D)

Okay, we need to get the fuck out.  
Now.

EXT. POLICE CAR/ DIRT ROAD/ WOODS - DUSK.

A MASSIVE SHADOW RUSHES FROM THE TREES.

INHUMAN SPEED.

IT SLAMS into the back doors—

WHAM! THE CAR ROCKS VIOLENTLY.

Inside, Nick and Lucas SCREAM.

The CREATURE ROARS, a sound so loud it SHATTERS THE PASSENGER WINDOW.

NICK  
FUUUUUUCK!

CUT TO:

EXT. DENSE WOODLANDS/ FRACKING SITE. - DUSK.

Leo, Jonah, and Ed stumble out of the thick woods, breathless, ragged. A few paces behind, DEVLIN limps, clutching his bloody side with one hand, his revolver steady in the other.

DEVLIN  
Why you stopped?

ED  
We've come to a fence.

Before them, a towering CHAIN-LINK FENCE blocks their way. Beyond it, an industrial FRACKING SITE sprawls—a cleared wasteland of drills, pipes, and heavy machinery humming ominously.

Devlin clocks the place. His jaw tightens.

DEVLIN  
Yeah... His lordships dirty little secret. Alright, we'll have to walk around it.

LEO  
What is it?

DEVLIN  
A fracking site, they been digging down deep for a while.

ED

That's why that cave smelt of gas.

DEVLIN

Alright, this ain't no national geographic special. Move it.

They slump back into the woods, exhaustion dragging their feet. Darkness creeps in. Ed eyes Devlin—pale, sweat-slicked, struggling.

ED

(low)

That's the guy the cop was telling us about!

LEO

So... Uh.. I don't really fancy dying this weekend, just putting it out there.

JONAH

Hard same.

ED

ook, once he gets to the van, he's gone. Besides, we could take him if we had to.

LEO

Oh yeah? You wanna try that?

ED

Nope.

LEO

Yeah, me neither.

DEVLIN (O.S.)

HEY!

They freeze, exchange guilty glances, turn.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

You know I can hear everything you're all saying right?

ED

Sorry mate. Just thinking out lou--

DEVLIN

I ain't your mate. Now shut the fuck up. Trust me, it will keep you alive.

LEO  
Say no more my man.

They trudge forward. Devlin lags, wincing. Ed watches, hesitant.

ED  
Mat... dude, you're leaking pretty bad. We got first aid in the pack if you-

DEVLIN  
Not your concern. Keep moving.

ED  
eah, sure, but, uh... you're leaving a blood trail.

Devlin glances down. Shit. He is. He growls.

DEVLIN  
Fuck!

He halts, nods at Ed.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)  
Fine. Gimme a bandage. But if any of you try anything-one or all of you die. Understood?

Leo, Jonah, and Ed nod rapidly.

Ed steps forward, hands raised, pulls out the first-aid kit, tosses Devlin a roll of bandages.

ED  
You need help with that?

Devlin lifts his shirt-three DEEP, JAGGED SLASHES rake across his torso.

LEO  
Uh... what did that?

DEVLIN  
Something bad.

He starts wrapping the wound. Ed takes a sip of water, leans against a thick bush-

A SOUND. Behind him. Low. Guttural.

ED  
You guys, there's something --

A SUDDEN, BLURRING SLICE—

ED'S HEAD FLIES CLEAN OFF, sailing through the air, mouth still forming words. It LANDS at Leo and Jonah's feet.

A BEAT. They stare. Then:

LEO  
ED'S LOST HIS HEAD!

They snap their gaze forward—

A MONSTROSITY stands before them. Eight feet of matted, dirt-clumped FUR, streaked with yellow grime. White, pupil-less EYES. A snout filled with too many teeth. Clawed hands dripping with fresh blood.

THE ENTITY.

It SNARLS. Dripping saliva. Its chest rises and falls, eager.

JONAH  
Should of stayed at home and played  
on my xbox.

LEO  
I know bro. Me too!

THREE GUNSHOTS—BANG! BANG! BANG!

The Entity staggers, bullet holes ripping through its chest. It ROARS.

Devlin LAUNCHES onto its back, arms locked around its thick neck. The beast thrashes, trying to shake him.

DEVLIN  
RUN YOU DUMB FUCKS!

Jonah and Leo SNAPP OUT OF IT—and RUN. Barreling into the trees, breath ragged, terror-fueled.

Behind them—

Devlin CLINGS to the Entity as it STUMBLES, SNARLS AND ROARS echoing through the now night forest.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT.

A SMASHED-UP COP CAR sits in the middle of the road.

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

Sergeant Trevors, impaled and very dead, slumps forward.  
Blood drips. A THICK FOG crawls along the asphalt.

The night is DARK.

The night is SILENT.

INT. POLICE CAR.

LUCAS and NICK huddle in the footwell, breathing hard, wide-eyed. They whisper.

LUCAS  
How--how long's it been quiet?

NICK  
Dunno. Maybe twenty minutes? Can't see my watch.

LUCAS  
Wanna check? See if it's still there?

NICK  
No, do you?

LUCAS  
Not really.  
(beat)  
Wanna check together?

Nick nods. They hesitate, then POP UP, steal a glance out the window--

--And DROP BACK DOWN.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
I think it's gone.

NICK  
So... What now?

LUCAS  
Okay. I'm gonna turn around. You break my wrist ties.

NICK  
How the hell am I supposed to do that? I'm tied too!

LUCAS

Use your foot, dumbass! The longer we sit here, the more we're a warm buffet..

Lucas peeks out again.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Coast is clear. Now quit screwing around.

Lucas awkwardly twists his back to Nick. Nick lifts his foot, hooks it onto the plastic ties.

NICK

Ready?

Lucas nods. Nick YANKS his foot back, Lucas leans forward.

NICK (CONT'D)

C'mon, put some muscle into it! I thought you were trained!

Lucas grits his teeth, pulls-

SNAP! The ties break-

-and Lucas' MOMENTUM hurls him forward-

CRASH! His head SMASHES through the passenger window.

Lucas recoils, groggy. Then shrugs, flexing his freed hands.

LUCAS

Well, that solves that problem.

NICK

That's great now untie me!

Lucas hesitates-then starts CLIMBING OUT THE WINDOW.

NICK (CONT'D)

Lucas! What the fuck??

Lucas turns back, smirking.

LUCAS

Admit it, I had you.

Nick glares.

NICK

Just untie me dickwad, this ain't the fucking time.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT.

Lucas stands outside as Nick clambers through the shattered window.

They take a moment. Look back at DEAD SERGEANT TREVORS.

LUCAS  
Don't feel bad for him.

NICK  
We should go.

LUCAS  
Yeah, we need to go find the others.

NICK  
Which way?

Lucas scans the road.

LUCAS  
Shit. The cop said the vans were five miles back down this road right?

NICK  
Yeah.

LUCAS  
So we need to get to the vans. I got something that might be able to help us.

NICK  
What are you talking about?

Lucas hesitates, sighs.

LUCAS  
(sheepish)  
I might have a pump action and some grenades stashed back in the van.

NICK  
You have what now?

LUCAS  
Alright, alright, shut the hell up. I don't have a license for them.

NICK  
Then why the hell do you have them?

LUCAS

(shrugs)

Dynamite's expensive. Got 'em off  
an ex-service buddy. Y'know... just  
in case.

(gestures around)

And, well—here we are. Case of.

NICK

And we're just leaving the others  
to die?

LUCAS

They'll be fine. We're three miles  
away. As long as they stayed in the  
clearing, they're safe. No tracks  
led through it.

Lucas starts walking. Opposite direction of the cop car.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Now, come on. It's got to be up  
this way.

Nick follows but glances sideways—

NICK

Hey! You see that?

Lucas looks. In the distance—a GLOWING MANOR HOUSE, walled  
off.

LUCAS

Is that a house?

NICK

It's a light. Could have a phone. A  
ride. Something!

LUCAS

Good point. Could save us a trip  
and some trouble.

They veer toward the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. DENSE WOODLANDS - NIGHT.

Jonah and Leo stumble through the dark forest, struggling  
with the rough terrain. Their breaths are heavy, their legs  
weak, but adrenaline keeps them moving.

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

Leo suddenly stops, bends over, and grabs his knees, gasping.

LEO  
J-- Jonah, I -- I need to stop!

Jonah stops and turns back to him.

JONAH  
We -- we can't. I -- I don't want  
to end up -- end up like Ed.

LEO  
Fucking Ed man, what the fuck? He  
didn't have to die like that.

JONAH  
What even was that thing?

LEO  
Whatever it was, I ain't ever seen  
nothing like it.

JONAH  
He killed it though right? That guy  
back there he shot it three maybe  
four times.

LEO  
It didn't look like it was going  
down though.

JONAH  
Fuck!

Leo straightens up, forcing himself forward. Jonah follows.

LEO  
What are we going to do Jonah?

JONAH  
We try and find some kind of help --  
(nods to behind them)  
-- And don't go back that way.

LEO  
That guy what was his deal??

JONAH  
He was trained, like army trained,  
he didn't even bat an eyelid, just  
jumped at the thing and was going  
at it.

LEO  
Think he's a goner?

JONAH  
Oh yeah, that's a given right?

TWIGS SNAP in the distance behind them.

LEO  
Okay time to pick up the pace.

They quicken their steps. Jonah suddenly SNAGS his foot on a thick root and goes down hard, SCREAMING in pain.

JONAH  
My ankle.

LEO  
Dude, you need to get up.

Leo rushes to help. Jonah grits his teeth as he tries to stand, but the pain is unbearable.

JONAH  
I-- I don't think I can.

LEO  
You got to c'mon!

Leo looks down—Jonah's ankle is bent at a sickening angle. BONE JUTS through torn flesh.

LEO (CONT'D)  
OH FUCK!

Leo gags, fighting back vomit. Still, he drapes Jonah's arm over his shoulders, half-carrying him as they limp forward.

Suddenly, DEVLIN—blood-soaked, beaten, and wild-eyed—BURSTS from the trees and nearly COLLIDES with them. All three let out HIGH-PITCHED SCREAMS.

JONAH  
What the fuck?!

DEVLIN  
What the fuck?! What the fuck are you two still doing out here?

JONAH  
My ankle is broken.

LEO  
What -- what about that thing?

DEVLIN

It's dead. But we need to move out of here, get to a road.

LEO

Nah, fuck that, if it's dead, you go, we told you the vans on the road-my mate here needs help and I ain't leaving him.

DEVLIN

You stupid son of a bitch! You really think that was the only one out here?!

Leo pauses, the realization hitting him.

LEO

Wait... What?

DEVLIN

I killed one last night, that was the second. I am under no illusion there isn't more --

Devlin studies them--trust is shaky at best.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Look, I know things were rocky when we met at your camp. But if we wanna survive, we need to work together. Got it?

He extends a hand to Jonah. Jonah hesitates, then grips it. With Leo's help, they get him back on his feet. Jonah leans on Leo as they start moving again.

JONAH

So where do we go from here then?

Devlin scans their surroundings.

DEVLIN

Too dark to navigate. We keep moving, hope we hit a road. You two recognize anything?

Devlin strides ahead. Jonah and Leo drag behind.

LEO

Motherfucker... This is woods. It all looks the same. We passed a cave and a waterfall on the way to the campsite though.

Devlin stops.

DEVLIN  
You say a cave?

LEO  
Yeah, had some etchings in rock  
around it.

DEVLIN  
Then we need to stay clear of that.

JONAH  
Why?

DEVLIN  
They will have to nest somewhere,  
as long as we stay clear and they  
don't have your scent we should be  
good.

Leo swallows hard.

LEO  
You say scent... Would they get  
that from pee?

Devlin stops. Turns slowly.

DEVLIN  
You desecrated their ground... They  
have your scent.

A tense beat. Then Devlin marches forward into the dark woods. Jonah and Leo share an uneasy glance before limping after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY MANOR - MAIN GATES - NIGHT

Lucas and Nick hurry toward the imposing wrought-iron gates, which loom over them like the entrance to a gothic nightmare. Beyond, the thick metal bars obscure the luxurious country manor, only the flickering glow of distant lights hinting at what lies within.

Lucas looks up, spotting a SECURITY CAMERA peering down at them like a mechanical gargoyle. He nudges Nick, who follows his gaze.

NICK

Great. Real private prison vibes here.

Lucas notices an INTERCOM mounted on the wall. Nick steps forward and jabs the button.

A CRACKLE from the speaker. Then—a voice. Soft, refined, distinctly British.

HILARY (O.S.)

Hello, can I ask who's calling?

NICK

Uh, hi! Sorry to bother you, but we need help—

LUCAS

Our friends are in danger! We're in danger!

HILARY (O.S.)

Oh dear. Well, I can't just let anyone in.

NICK

Madam—Miss? Mrs.? Please, we're desperate. Something is hunting us. We have no phone, and we just watched a police officer get—  
(beat, voice cracks)  
maimed. Please. You have to help us!

INT. MANOR HOUSE - SECURITY ROOM.

A dimly lit, dusty surveillance room filled with ancient monitors straight out of an '80s thriller.

HILARY WITHAM-SCYTHER (late 60s, warm but no-nonsense) sits watching the grainy footage of the two terrified men outside. She clicks the intercom.

HILARY

That sounds absolutely ghastly. One moment.

She presses a switch. The gates CREAK open.

HILARY (CONT'D)

Come round back. I will meet you at the kitchen entrance.

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - NIGHT.

Lucas and Nick step cautiously through the opening gates. The pristine grounds stretch before them like a billionaire's playground.

Their eyes land on a row of EIGHT BLACK RANGE ROVERS, lined up with military precision. SECURITY GUARDS stand like statues at various doorways, watching.

NICK  
This is... official.

LUCAS  
Yeah. Somebody's got a real  
"private militia" kinda budget.

They move along the side of the manor, keeping their heads on a swivel. They pass an OUTDOOR SWIMMING POOL, its still surface reflecting the towering manor above.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
You thinking what I'm thinking?

NICK  
If it's "why does a house need this  
many guards?" then yes.

LUCAS  
I was thinking secret underground  
fight club but—  
(off Nicks glare)  
-- yeah, your thing too.

They continue, passing the outer wall, which stretches into the night like the borders of a kingdom. At each corner—

A TOWER.

Lucas squints.

LUCAS (CONT'D)  
Is that a sniper tower?

NICK  
Don't be so daft!

Lucas keeps walking.

LUCAS  
Right. Rich people just love having  
random medieval turrets for no  
reason.

They approach the OPEN KITCHEN DOOR. Waiting for them is HILARY, dressed in a pristine suit, her hands folded neatly in front of her.

HILARY

So, what's all this fuss about, then?

LUCAS

We need a phone. Something is chasing us.

NICK

Our friends—please, they need help.

Hilary studies them for a long moment, then nods.

HILARY

Alright. I'm just the caretaker here—Mrs. Hilary Witham-Scythe. Let's get you inside. I'll have a word with the lord of the manor.

She smiles—warm, but with something unreadable beneath it.

HILARY (CONT'D)

We will get the help you need boys.

Nick exhales, relief washing over him.

NICK

Thank you, we really appreciate it.

HILARY

Very well, just  
(beat)  
Take your shoes off when you come in.

Lucas and Nick exchange a glance.

LUCAS

Right. Cause we don't want to track blood on the carpet do we?

Hilary smiles politely.

HILARY

Exactly.

She steps aside, gesturing them in. Lucas and Nick share one last wary look before crossing the threshold.

The door shuts behind them.

CUT TO:

INT. MANOR HOUSE - KITCHEN.

A cobblestone kitchen, pristine and orderly. A small dining table sits in the center. Lucas and Nick sit opposite each other. Hilary, a stern but well-kept housekeeper, stands between them, pouring hot water into a teapot.

HILARY

So what brought you lads out here?

NICK

You wouldn't believe us if we told you.

HILARY

I'll humour you.

NICK

Our mate here reckons there's gold buried in the forest. We came looking for it.

HILARY

(laughs)  
Gold, really?

LUCAS

Look, I had official proof from the government, alright?

Hilary stirs the teapot with a spoon. Nick watches her hand movements closely.

HILARY

Well, Sir Nigel is contacting the relevant authorities. Though, I have to say, this whole "monster" business—are you sure you lads haven't been, y'know—  
(gestures smoking)  
—partaking of the devil's bush?

LUCAS

Seriously, lady. A near nine-foot, sharp-toothed, hairy THING came after me and my mate. I joke a lot, sure, but this is the one time I'm not!

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

HILARY

If you say so!

She pours tea into two cups and hands them over. Lucas nods in thanks, taking his cup.

NICK

Look, I don't mean to sound pushy, but... How long is this "Sir Nigel" going to take?

HILARY

Son, you need to learn some patience.

Lucas takes a sip and notices a bizarre statue in the corner—a large owl skeleton, wings spread.

LUCAS

(chuckles)  
That's a bit creepy innit?!

Nick turns, sees the statue, and recoils.

NICK

Jesus Christ!

HILARY

boys not a fan of mother nature?

NICK

Can't say I am no.

They exchange uneasy glances. Nick reaches for a sugar cube. Before he can grab one—SMACK! Hilary slaps his hand away.

HILARY

(scolding)  
The tongs are there for a reason, dear.

Nick glares at her, rubbing his hand. Lucas downs his tea, shuddering as the taste hits him.

LUCAS

That's... uh... unique.

HILARY

(smiles)  
It's a special blend grown here in our garden.

Nick lifts his cup to sip but catches a strange odor. He discreetly sets it back down. Lucas, meanwhile, sways in his seat, blinking heavily.

LUCAS

So what's the deal with the range rovers outside? They look official?

HILARY

Sir Nigel is hosting a gathering. But that's nothing for the likes of you two to worry about.

Lucas giggles, his eyelids drooping. Nick picks up on the tension.

NICK

What's that supposed to mean?

HILARY

Sir Nigel is a great man. His family has protected these lands for generations.

NICK

You always this purposefully creepy?

HILARY

You always this rude?

NICK

Oh, constantly. Now, I don't care if your boss is back there beating his giggle stick, I need a ph-

THUD! Lucas collapses, his body slack. Nick shoots to his feet.

LUCAS

Twit-twoooo

Hilary lunges—Nick instinctively grabs his cup and hurls the hot tea in her face.

HILARY

(screaming)

YOU BURNED ME, YOU ABSOLUTE CRETIN,  
YOU BURNED ME!

She staggers, clutching her scalded face. Nick hoists Lucas up.

NICK  
Time to get up big boy!

Lucas drools, barely conscious. Nick KICKS open the kitchen door.

INT. MANOR HOUSE - HALLWAY.

A grand hallway, pristine. Rows of locked doors. At the far end, shadows loom behind the front door. Security guards.

Nick yanks a door—it's locked.

NICK  
Come on, come on!

He drags Lucas to another—locked.

NICK (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

The front door unlocks. Security shadows shift. Nick eyes a set of double doors, tries the handle—open. He drags Lucas inside just as the security team of five armed guards enters.

Hilary emerges, a damp cloth on her blistered face. She strides up to the security leader, Blevins..

HILARY  
Mr. Blevins, find them but do not  
kill them!

BLEVINS  
Yes ma'am.

Blevins nods, he raises a pointed finger swirling it in the air, signalling his team.

The guards nod, splitting up. Some head upstairs, others start checking doors, getting closer to the double doors.

INT. MANOR HOUSE - STUDY.

Nick peeks through the keyhole. Carefully, he lowers the latch, locking the door. Lucas groans, his head rolling side to side.

The door handle jiggles—then stills.

BLEVINS (O.S.)  
Move it upstairs!

Heavy footsteps retreat. Silence. Nick exhales, feeling along the wall for a light switch. Click.

A study-lined with ancient books, paintings. But something else.

NICK

You have got to be kidding me!

Mounted on the adjacent wall: Seven decayed heads of THE ENTITY, each with a plaque dated fifty years apart. Nick approaches, dumbfounded.

Behind him, a bookshelf swings open. Figures emerge, clad in flowing blue robes, wearing crude animal masks. Their leader, the BEAR MASK, steps forward.

Nick gets a bad feeling. He turns--ZZZT! A cattle prod JABS into his ribs. He convulses, eyes rolling back as he slams into the wall.

Blackout.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/ LAYBY - NIGHT.

The two camper vans sit still, parked and untouched on the roadside. Devlin, Leo, emerge from the woods, Leo carrying an injured Jonah in his arms aiding him to walk.

DEVLIN

Those your vans?

Leo sets Jonah down by the blue camper. Jonah groans.

LEO

Yup.

DEVLIN

Got the keys?

LEO

No, Lucas and -- oh shit, Ed did!  
Fuck!

DEVLIN

Then I'm breaking in.

JONAH

The camo one. Not a rental.

LEO  
Where the hell are Lucas and Nick?  
They should be here.

DEVLIN  
Maybe they didn't make it.

LEO  
You can hotwire a car, right? No  
offense, but—

DEVLIN  
(cutting him off)  
—Yeah, I can.

JONAH  
That was a bit judgemental Leo.

LEO  
What?! It was an honest question.

Devlin smashes the passenger window of the camo van, reaches in, and unlocks the door. Jonah and Leo exchange uneasy looks.

LEO (CONT'D)  
Lucas is gonna be pretty pissed,  
huh?

JONAH  
If he's still alive.

INT. LUCAS'S CAMPER VAN.

Devlin climbs into the driver's seat, yanks wires from beneath the dashboard. Just as he's about to create a spark—something in the distance catches his eye. He narrows his gaze, then silently moves to the back of the van.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/ LAYBY - NIGHT.

A BLACK RANGE ROVER approaches, high beams slicing through the darkness. It slows, then stops. Five MEN in tactical black uniforms step out, armed and scanning the area.

SECURITY GUARD (1)  
Hey? Anyone here?

Leo steps from the shadows, hands raised.

LEO  
Hey, my friend here-- He's hurt  
needs help.

The guards immediately aim their weapons.

LEO (CONT'D)  
Whoa, whoa! We're not looking for  
trouble!

SECURITY GUARD (1)  
Yeah? Well, trouble found you. How  
many others?

LEO  
Just me and my friend. We were with  
another guy, but--there's a monster  
out there. It killed him!

Two guards grab Leo, forcing him to his knees.

SECURITY GUARD (1)  
Monster huh?! Guess it ain't your  
night.  
(to his men)  
Check the other guy.

They haul Leo to the other side of the blue camper, dropping  
him beside Jonah, who has a cigarette dangling from his lips.

JONAH  
(sighs)  
Fucks sakes. So much for coming  
home rich then!

The guard cocks his sub machine gun.

SECURITY GUARD (1)  
Sorry lads, Your more useful as  
bait.

Jonah takes a long drag, exhales. He nods to the left.

JONAH  
And what about him?

As the smoke clears, DEVLIN stands beside them--smirking, pump-  
action shotgun in hand.

He cocks it.

BOOM!

Two guards go flying.

The third and fourth scramble, raising their weapons--

BOOM!

Another shot drops one. Devlin tosses the shotgun--

CRACK! The butt slams into the fourth guard's face, breaking his nose. Blood spurts. He stumbles. Devlin rushes in, yanks the guard's sidearm, shoves it under his chin--

BANG! BANG!

The last guard, SECURITY GUARD #1, bolts for the Range Rover. He reaches inside, grabbing the radio.

SECURITY GUARD (1)  
Devlin, he's alive! Dev--

BOOM!

A shotgun blast rips him off his feet, sending the radio flying. The radio crackles.

HILARY (O.S.)  
Did-- did you say Devlin?

Devlin steps up to the smoking Range Rover, eyes locked on the radio. Hilary's voice comes through again.

HILARY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Report, did you say Devlin?

Devlin rips the radio from its cradle, tosses it into the road. He turns back to Jonah and Leo.

DEVLIN  
You guys okay?

JONAH  
No, but we're alive.

LEO  
Speak for yourself!

CUT TO:

INT. MANOR HOUSE - COMMUNICATION ROOM.

Hilary sits at a HAM radio, tense. A nearby Belvins watches her.

HILARY

Get all our security teams together. I think our old friend Devlin is coming.

BLEVINS

Should I still send a team to activate the drill?

HILARY

Of course. Nothing disturbs Sir. Nigels hunt.

Blevins nods, reaching for his radio.

BLEVINS

Be warned Devlin is alive. All teams, code black. Devlin must be stopped at all costs.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/ LAYBY - NIGHT

Devlin pulls an ammo clip from the dead security guard. He glances over at Jonah and Leo.

DEVLIN

You boys get out of here.

Jonah, wounded but defiant, steadies himself with Leo's help. They stand their ground.

JONAH

No! They have our friends, we're not leaving them behind.

DEVLIN

You boys ever killed anyone? Ever fired a gun?

Jonah and Leo exchange a look—blank.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Yeah, I didn't think so.

Devlin yanks open the driver's door of a black Range Rover and climbs in.

INT. BLACK RANGE ROVER.

Jonah and Leo slip into the back. Devlin turns, exasperated.

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

DEVLIN

What the fuck do you think you're doing?

LEO

No keys, no weapons. Out there, we die for sure. In here? We might stand a chance.

JONAH

Yeah, I ain't dy-

A DIRT-COVERED, FURRY FIST EXPLODES through the rear passenger window—SMASH! Glass showers the interior. The car rocks violently as Jonah dives toward Leo.

Devlin snatches the shotgun off the passenger seat and slams the butt into the intruding limb. The arm flails, raking claws across Leo's face, opening a deep, bloody gash.

Leo reels back, clutching his wound. Blood seeps between his fingers.

The arm SNAPS forward, latching onto Jonah's throat, throttling him, trying to yank him through the shattered window.

Devlin doesn't hesitate. He turns the key, slams the vehicle into gear, and floors it.

A sickening TEAR. A THUD. The arm flops onto Jonah's lap, still clenched around his throat, severed from its owner.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/ LAYBY - NIGHT

The Range Rover PEELS OUT, sparks flying as it scrapes along the side of Lucas's van, smashing the mirror clean off.

INT. BLACK RANGE ROVER.

Devlin glances in the rearview mirror.

DEVLIN

You guys still breathing?

Jonah wrestles the disembodied arm off his neck, dazed, bloodied. He nods.

He turns to Leo, who pulls his hand from his face, revealing the gruesome gash.

LEO  
Is it bad?

JONAH  
(croaky)  
You look better than Ed.

A weak chuckle. They slump back, exhaling relief.

Devlin's eyes harden. He grips the wheel.

DEVLIN  
Don't relax yet boys it isn't over.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT.

THREE MORE ENTITIES race after the speeding SUV, moving like rabid primates. Their guttural ROARS shred the night.

The Range Rover accelerates, widening the gap. The creatures slow, pounding their chests, snapping at each other. They surround their fallen kin—now a mangled, armless corpse.

Then, headlights swing back. The Range Rover SCREECHES into a tight 180-degree turn. Tires SQUEAL, smoke billows.

The creatures barely react before—

IMPACT.

They scatter like bowling pins, one rolling up the hood before slamming back onto the pavement.

INT. BLACK RANGE ROVER.

Jonah watches through the shattered rear window, then turns to Devlin.

JONAH  
How many of these things are there?

DEVLIN  
Guessing this is their turf.  
Something upset the balance. And  
like any apex predator, they'll  
defend it to the death.

LEO  
But what's pissed them off this  
badly?

DEVLIN

When Sir Nigel, got access to fracking, their activity increased.

JONAH

And how do you know this?

DEVLIN

I used to be head of security, I didn't like what I saw. Nigels family has a lot of dirty secrets. Those things are one of them. Been roaming these lands as long as anyone knows.

Leo winces, pressing a torn cloth to his wound.

LEO

Well, there's the reason no one went for the gold.

DEVLIN

Listen, I can drop you off, there's a diner way about 5 miles down the road.

JONAH

No. We're getting our friends.

DEVLIN

Look... I don't know how to tell you this, but they're either dead-or they will be. If they're with the order, they'll be sacrificed for the hunt.

LEO

The what now?

JONAH

And what are you going to do when you find "the order"?

DEVLIN

Keep to my promise. I'm going to kill them all.

Leo exhales, staring out the window, his face unreadable.

LEO

Sounds hot bro.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The battered Range Rover disappears into the dark. Behind it, the road is littered with twisted bodies.

More figures shift in the treeline.

Watching.

Waiting.

The night is theirs.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAVE - NIGHT.

Lucas stirs, groggy. His face flickers in firelight. A muffled sound grows clearer—Nick's panicked SCREAMS, and a haunting CHANT from unseen voices.

NICK (O.S.)  
WAKE UP, LUCAS, WAKE THE FUCK UP!

CHANTING CROWD (O.S.)  
In touch with the ground!

Lucas winces.

LUCAS  
Eugh... That smell.

CHANTING CROWD (O.S.)  
I'm on the hunt I'm after you!

Lucas blinks, fully alert now. His hands—bound. He's tied to an altar outside the cave. Behind him, Nick is strapped to a massive wooden totem.

LUCAS  
What the fuck is going on?

CHANTING CROWD  
Smell like I sound, I'm lost in the crowd!

NICK  
They're going to sacrifice us, something about a hunt.

CHANTING CROWD  
And I'm hungry like the wolf!

Lucas strains against the ropes, scanning the scene—  
A CROWD of figures in crude animal masks, robes flowing. Some  
clutch torches, others grip HUNTING RIFLES. They chant,  
transfixed on the altar.

One steps forward—SIR NIGEL ALFERTON (50s, posh, built like  
an aging action star). A BEAR MASK obscures his face. He  
waves his arms, leading the chant.

LUCAS  
(visibly confused)  
Is that Duran Duran?!

A crowd dressed in the robes, with the crude animal masks  
stands gathered around the treeline, there is many, some hold  
lit torches, others hold large hunting rifles and shotguns,  
they stare at the altar, focused in their chant. Stood  
between the crowd and the altar is the one with the bear  
mask, SIR. NIGEL (early 50's, upper class type, macho) he  
waves his arms to the crowd as they chant.

CHANTING CROWD  
Straddle the line, in discord and  
rhyme.

LUCAS  
(shouts out)  
OI CUNT! WHAT THE FUCK?

CHANTING CROWD  
I'm on the hunt now after you!

The crowd silences. Nigel lowers his arms, removes his mask,  
revealing his Botoxed, sinister grin. He strides toward them.

SIR. NIGEL ALFERTON  
You like the chanting? I figured it  
adds atmosphere -- I would imagine  
you both have questions!

LUCAS  
Yeah—how about you let us down?!

SIR. NIGEL ALFERTON  
Regrettably, I cannot. You are bait  
for a grand tradition. The Order of  
the Crimson Forest shall hunt  
tonight! And in doing so, reaffirm  
man as the apex predator of this  
land!

NICK  
What the fuck is he talking about?

LUCAS

I don't know, something about  
sucking dick!

The crowd erupts in laughter. Nigel chuckles too, but there's  
an edge.

SIR. NIGEL ALFERTON

Amusing. You both have spirit.

NICK

WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU PEOPLE?!

SIR. NIGEL ALFERTON

We are the Order of the Crimson  
Forest. The elite. The finest,  
purest English blood, born of  
privilege—

LUCAS

(cutting in)

-- Blah blah blah—rich, poncey,  
probably noncey bastard.

Lucas SPITS on Nigel. A hush. Nigel's jaw tightens as he dabs  
his face with a silk handkerchief, eyes narrowing. He turns  
to the crowd.

SIR. NIGEL ALFERTON

My brethren! Tonight, we hunt! The  
Beast has returned, and we shall  
claim its head!

NICK

(becoming aware)

Wait. You think there's one?

Lucas SNORTS.

LUCAS

Mate, I think he thinks there is!

Across the clearing, Hilary (masked, with a grand owl mask  
poised, deadly) observes. She lifts a radio.

HILARY

Security team, confirm traps are  
set and the drill is running.

EXT. FRACKING SITE.

A SEVERED HAND grips a radio. STATIC CRACKLES.

HILARY (O.S.)  
Security team come in?

EXT. CAMP SITE.

A SECURITY GUARD dangles IMPALED on a tree branch. His radio hisses with static.

HILARY (O.S.)  
Security team??!

The site is a bloodbath—mangled bodies, shredded tents, smoldering remains.

EXT. WOODS - CAVE - NIGHT.

Lucas and Nick wrestle their bindings as Nigel riles up his followers.

SIR. NIGEL (O.S.)  
With the blood of the Beast, we  
celebrate another fifty years of  
prosperity!

NICK  
(whispering)  
I can't get it loose!

LUCAS  
Na, me neither-- tight as fuck.

Hilary approaches Nigel, urgent.

HILARY  
(whispers)  
Sir-- we have a small problem!

LUCAS  
(smirks)  
Whooo-hoooarr ha! That's not good  
is it?

HILARY  
(whispering)  
I believe the security team is  
dead.

Nigel stiffens. Regains composure.

SIR. NIGEL  
The hunt has begun early. Ready  
yourselves!

A SCREAM from the darkness. The crowd WHIPS around. A masked cultist is DRAGGED into the trees. Another follows. Then—

A LARGE, HAIRY FIST punches through a robed figure's chest. BLOOD SPRAYS.

The crowd ERUPTS into chaos. GUNSHOTS crack. Torches drop, their glow streaking into the woods as cultists SCATTER— Only to be PICKED OFF one by one.

Lucas and Nick frantically struggle free—

CLICK.

A GUN COCKS. They freeze.

Nigel, trembling, levels a PISTOL at them.

SIR. NIGEL (CONT'D)  
There was only supposed to be one!

He squeezes the trigger—

WHOOSH—

He's RIPPED SIX FEET into the air—  
SCREAMS—  
Then TORN IN TWO.

Lucas and Nick GAWK, bound, helpless—

NICK  
WHAT THE FUCK IS THAT LUCAS?!

REVEAL—

THE ALPHA APEX.

Bigger than the others. All muscle. Primate meets wolf. Black, soulless eyes. Drooling, hungry.

NICK (CONT'D)  
I-- I don't think we're going to  
make it, mate.

LUCAS  
(sobs)  
I'm so sorry, you were my best—

WHISTLE.

A GRENADE lands between them and the Alpha.

Lucas squints—

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Hang on a sec, that's one of --

BOOM.

The CAVE EXPLODES. The shockwave FLINGS them clear. The Alpha staggers, SINGED but unfazed. It SNARLS--

BOOM! A SHOTGUN BLAST knocks it sideways.

DEVLIN (O.S.)

Oi cunt!

DEVLIN steps out, pumps the shotgun--

BOOM. Another shot. Blood spurts, but the Alpha keeps coming.

Leo bursts from the bushes, untying Lucas and Nick.

LUCAS

Am I glad to see--

(notices wound on Leo's  
face)

FUCKING HELL WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR  
FACE?!

Leo helps the guys with their remaining binds.

LEO

Yeah good to see you too Lucas,  
Jonah's back in the range rover, we  
need to go.

LUCAS

Range rover? Where's my Camper  
van?!

LEO

Later!

Devlin fires again--useless. He tosses the shotgun, unhooks a  
GRENADE BELT.

DEVLIN

YOU GUYS NEED TO GO NOW! GET TO THE  
ROVER!

Leo, helps Nick and Lucas to their feet, they nod to Devlin  
and run back off into the woods.

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Let's see what you've got fucker!

The Alpha CHARGES. Devlin stands his ground, pulling a pin--

He HURLS the belt-

DEVLIN (CONT'D)

Hey fuck face--  
(spits some blood)  
-- come get some!

BOOM! The cave ERUPTS, swallowing the Alpha and Devlin in fire as they charge at each other, both ready in the heat of battle and straight into FIRE.

EXT. DENSE WOODLANDS - NIGHT

Leo, Lucas, and Nick tear through the forest, stumbling over roots and dodging low-hanging branches. The darkness is thick, but the blood-curdling HOWLS behind them keep their feet moving.

An EXPLOSION erupts in the distance—bright, violent, shaking the trees.

NICK

What the fuck was that?

LUCAS

(grinning)  
I'm guessing that was my grenades!

NICK

You were just cruising around with those in your van?!

LUCAS

And look! Useful! You're all very welcome.  
(to Leo, panting)  
How much further?

LEO

It's about 5 minutes -- straight ahead!

NICK

Cool. And which way is 'straight ahead' when I CAN'T SEE SHIT?! AND WHERE THE FUCK IS ED?

LEO

Ed didn't make it. So just trust me right now okay!

LUCAS  
(not looking back)  
They're still chasing us!

he ground suddenly SHUDDERS. The howls stop. A sharp, deep CRACK RIPS beneath Nick's feet. He skids to a stop, staring at the fresh, gaping TEAR in the earth.

NICK  
GUY'S THE GROUND IS FUCKING COMING  
APART!

Lucas and Leo whirl around—another quake nearly knocks them off their feet.

LUCAS  
That cave gas must run under the  
whole damn forest

LEO  
Then let's NOT be here!

Leo pivots to run—but WHAM! A heavy WOODEN BRANCH SLAMS into his face. He hits the dirt.

Lucas and Nick freeze. Ahead, standing in the flickering light of growing flames, is Hilary—filthy, battered, furious. She levels a hunting rifle at them.

HILARY  
DON'T YOU COCKY LITTLE FUCKERS  
MOVE!

Nick and Lucas raise their hands. Around them, the forest IGNITES—fire licking up trees, smoke curling, the ground still trembling. Distant CREATURES SHRIEK as they're caught in the blast.

NICK  
She's still alive?! This hag just  
won't quit!

Hilary steadies her aim—face twitching, breath ragged.

HILARY  
If I'm going to hell, I'll be  
smiling knowing I took you two with  
me!

LUCAS  
(exasperated)  
That is seriously harsh.

Suddenly—a CAR HORN BLARES.

Everyone turns.

A BLACK RANGE ROVER EXPLODES THROUGH THE TREES.

Before Hilary can react, it SLAMS INTO HER, CRUSHING her against a jagged tree stump. A sickening SNAP—she's IMPALED.

She COUGHS BLOOD, eyes flickering.

HILARY  
(small, weak)  
Oh buggar!

She slumps. Dead.

Nick and Lucas slowly unbrace, breathing hard, processing their survival. The Range Rover idles in front of them, door swinging open.

Behind the wheel, JONAH smirks.

JONAH  
You going to keep fingering each other or do you want to live?

Nick and Lucas exchange a look—then scramble to grab Leo and shove him into the back seat.

The doors SLAM.

INT. RANGE ROVER

Nick slides into the front seat, turning to look at Jonah, who grips the wheel.

NICK  
(concerned)  
Aren't you a little too fucked up to be driving.

The car violently SHAKES as the ground TREMBLES outside. Jonah slams the gear shift into reverse.

JONAH  
You want to argue about this now?

EXT. DENSE WOODLANDS - NIGHT.

he Range Rover REVERSES hard. Flames ERUPT from the trees as creatures, engulfed in fire, SCREAM and flee.

The ground SHUDDERS beneath them, the woods COLLAPSING in on itself.

The Range Rover SPINS, speeding through the inferno, dodging trees, CLIPPING others. The ground CRACKS open beneath them. As we PAN UP, the entire forest IMPLODES—a mix of FIRE, ASH, and SMOKE consuming everything.

A MASSIVE EXPLOSION—debris FLIES into the air. Among it, Ed's DISMEMBERED HEAD sails UPWARD, ignites, and CRUMBLES into charred bone as it PLUMMETS into the fireball below.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER/ COUNTRY ROAD - DAWN.

A POLICE OFFICER stretches crime scene tape across the road. Behind him, FIRE CREWS gather, their sirens illuminating the smoky dawn sky. Paramedic trucks PARK outside the diner.

Clusters of emergency personnel huddle in groups, strategizing. Others work the scene, dousing the still-smoldering trees. Police officers struggle to keep back a curious crowd.

A MASSIVE, SMOLDERING CRATER now scars the landscape where the woods once stood. Smoke and ash CREEP toward the diner, filling the air with an eerie, lingering mist.

A firefighter squints into the haze.

FIRE CREW MEMBER (O.S.)  
Hey there's someone coming!

From the ashen fog, FOUR SILHOUETTES emerge—LUCAS, NICK, JONAH, and LEO. Jonah, battered and limping, leans on Nick and Leo for support. Their clothes are TATTERED, their faces bruised, eyes hollow with exhaustion.

Fire crews RUSH toward them. Lucas BREAKS from the group, moving toward the diner.

POLICE OFFICER  
Hey -- What happened out there?!

Lucas stops, glancing back. He exhales, considering his answer.

LUCAS  
A lot mate.

Lucas turns and enters the diner.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - CONTINUOUS

A BELL above the door DINGS as Lucas limps in. He moves to the counter, breath ragged. A RADIO plays softly in the background.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
The prime minister has been reached  
for comment, but at this time his  
location is unknown..

A WAITRESS steps out from the kitchen. She spots Lucas's disheveled state and gasps, hand covering her mouth.

WAITRESS  
Oh my God-- are you okay?!

NEWS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
... In other news today, a  
satellite over the dark side of the  
moon has gone dark...

Lucas collapses onto a stool, exhales deeply, then offers a small, weary smile.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
... Researchers at both NASA and  
Star link have been trying to  
attempt reconnecting for the last  
48 hours...

LUCAS  
Nothing four coffees won't fix!

The waitress eyes him, hesitant, then punches it into the till.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
This just in, an explosion has  
occurred out in the south part of  
West Norfolk.

WAITRESS  
That is ten fifty please love.

Lucas reaches into his pocket--pauses. No change. He rolls his eyes.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
... More news on the situation as  
it evolves.

Lucas sighs, then pulls something from his pocket and places it on the counter.

Ritchie "Stonian" Johnston

A SOLID GOLD BRICK.

We PAN INTO the glimmering surface, its shine reflecting the diner's light.

LUCAS  
I'm really sorry, but do you reckon  
you could make change out of this?

Lucas places a solid gold brick down on the counter, we PAN INTO the glimmering, brick.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END.

FADE IN:

EXT. CRATER SITE - DAY

Smoke curls through the ashen air. The ground is a battlefield of shattered trees, torn earth, and mangled bodies—human and not.

Then—A SHIFT. Subtle at first.

The debris TREMBLES. The earth BUCKLES.

A FIGURE ERUPTS from the wreckage—an ENTITY, still alive.

It stands, towering, its form silhouetted against the rising sun.

And then—

A ROAR.

Guttural. Endless. It RIPS through the silence, echoing across the smoldering wasteland.

Dark. Ominous.

This isn't over.

FADE TO BLACK: