

THE RESONANCE

Written by

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EXT. GRAND COULEE DAM - WASHINGTON - NIGHT

An opossum rustles beneath a huckleberry bush, stopping as a distant rumble cuts through the night. It scrambles up a tree as the ground begins to quake.

The silence shatters as military vehicles roar across the desert, stopping near a hidden ventilation shaft. A concealed doorway opens, swallowing the convoy into the earth.

The camera rises, revealing the relentless cascade of water over the Grand Coulee Dam.

INT. VEHICLE GARAGE - NIGHT

A muscular man, SARGE, 50s, weathered and unapproachable, steps out of one of the vehicles. He checks his guns and other weaponry into a dedicated armament cage before continuing on.

INT. SECRET LAB - NIGHT

Sarge walks down a corridor and enters an office. He watches AMY, 40s, commanding a series of interactive computer screens with helical shapes on them. Amy finally looks his way.

SARGE

Nothing.

AMY

I trust you were the first to the scene?

SARGE

Yes ma'am. No signs of anyone else out there.

AMY

And the rock?

SARGE

We found a handful of softball-sized fragments. No trace of the paint.

AMY

Is that what we're calling it now? We'll have to escalate the procedure with Whitefish. He knows more than he's letting on.

Sarge raises an eyebrow to ask for confirmation.

AMY (CONT'D)

It's been over 6 months since our last discovery. The Senator's getting impatient. Whoever funds him can pull the plug on us any day.

SARGE

We'll move the subject to Delta Phase then, ma'am.

AMY

I don't like that freak either, but he's...

SARGE

Malignant, ma'am?

AMY

Compelling.

SARGE

Of course, ma'am.

Sarge stands.

AMY

Oh, and one more thing. Keep an eye on Agent Duns. That sick fuck is effective, but I don't trust him.

SARGE

Just say the word, ma'am. I'd be happy to.

AMY

No, no... no. We need his motivational skillset, but... keep an eye on him.

SARGE

Of course. Ma'am.

Sarge exits.

INT. SECRET LAB CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Sarge takes out a radio and calls out.

SARGE
(into the radio)
Bring in the fish.

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

WHITEFISH, 40s, pale skin, lay on a cot in a sterile room staring at the ceiling. The cell door bursts open and two GUARDS enter, carrying electrified batons. Whitefish slowly sits up.

GUARD 1
You've got a special visitor.

Whitefish rises slowly, extending his hands toward GUARD ONE in feigned compliance. Guard One begins to produce the restraints, but in a sudden, explosive move, Whitefish lands a brutal punch, disorienting the Guard.

He grabs the stunned man and slams him with force into the wall.

GUARD 2 shocks Whitefish with his baton, sending him to the ground. Both Guards work to put on restraints and get him to his feet.

INT. LAB CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The two Guards struggle to lead the restrained Whitefish down a corridor. Whitefish lets out guttural wails.

WHITEFISH
No!

The screams echo throughout the lab.

From the far end of the corridor, we see a very tall, slender shape, ALASTOR, 40s, crooked gait, secure with his malice for the world, wearing a pair of alligator skin cowboy boots and a western shirt with tassels.

Close on a bag of medical instruments.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

JOY, early 30s, black, wearing a vintage *Harry and the Hendersons* t-shirt, anxiously scans a handwritten packing list. Her eyes dart to the scattered camping gear sprawled across the floor.

A large blow-up SASQUATCH watches from the corner.

Joy's cat, RUDY, darts between the cluttered equipment and untidy belongings scattered around the apartment.

JOY
Critter cams. Check. Night vision
goggles. Check. Ghillie suit.
Check.

Joy looks at the clock on the wall that reads 5:03 PM.

JOY (CONT'D)
Shit.

Joy carefully steps over a precarious stack of worn Sasquatch books, including *Sasquatch: The Apes Among Us* by John Green and *Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science* by Jeff Meldrum.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Joy squats on the toilet and opens a pregnancy test kit. After a moment she holds the test underneath herself and starts to urinate on it.

A video chat notification pops up on her phone.

JOY
Ahhhhh. Okay. I got it.

She frantically starts to pull up her pants and opens the video chat at the same time.

Three other faces appear on screen, ALICE, 20s, a neurotic surfer's disposition about her. REGGIE, 30s, a young Neil Degrasse Tyson, and INGRID, 30s, poker-faced.

JOY (CONT'D)
Hey guys, sorry. I'm late.

Toilet flushes.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Joy rushes into the kitchen holding her phone in front of her for the video chat. She grabs a few more odds and ends and throws them in her pack.

ALICE
My favorite Giant Gorilla Fan Club members! I'm happy to report to y'all that I've added a reason why I stay close to the water and don't venture inland.

REGGIE

This is what's crazy to me. There are actual monsters in the ocean that will eat you.

ALICE

Sometimes the imagination is worse than the real world. Also, I never go in the water either.

INGRID

Don't let the man obsessed with space, tell you about real monsters, kid.

ALICE

Well, you already know about my fear of Grassman out there in Ohio, and Chupacabra, but I've been reading up on a new character! The Wendigo. Loves to eat humans. This thing is fifteen feet tall and...

INGRID

... Is said to be the result of humans suffering from too much greed. The Algonquin people are said to have been the originators of this creature.

Alice takes a hit from her joint.

ALICE

Yeah, yeah, well he was in X-Men too, and could probably go up against the Hulk straight up! I'm just saying.

REGGIE

Interesting I've never heard of a Wendigo.

INGRID

That's because it comes from THIS planet.

REGGIE

And what about your sense of humor? Does that exist on this planet or are we open to finding it in another dimension?

INGRID

Well, humor IS a skill, and naturally some people are better at it than others... I was actually reading a study on laughter the other day in the Association for Psychological Science...

REGGIE

(to himself)

Oh boy...

Reggie notices Joy is quiet.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Joy, have you heard about the asteroid, Apophis?

JOY

Uhh...

Joy suddenly freezes. Her gaze lands on the pregnancy test lying on the counter. Positive.

REGGIE

It will pass between the Earth and some communication satellites in 2029.

JOY

(to herself)

Ho-ly shit.

REGGIE

Exciting stuff, to be sure.

JOY

Oh... yes. I...

INGRID

Well, in current news, I'm sure you've all heard about the new dissection of the Patterson-Gimlin footage using AI.

ALICE

Now, I'm a damn believer but why are we still talking about footage of a guy who admitted to wearing a whole-ass Sasquatch suit

REGGIE

Maybe Heironimus was looking for publicity.

INGRID

There is strikingly clear evidence
of prehension in the Sasquatch foot
as it walks.

ALICE

I'm sorry pre-what now?

Joy looks up into the camera. Flustered.

JOY

It's the ability to grasp. Humans
don't have it!

ALICE

Oh, okay, Joy. Nice of you to join
the conversation.

Joy composes herself and takes a deep breath, slumping into
an armchair.

JOY

You know how much I love you guys.

REGGIE

Of course. The feeling is mutual.

JOY

I feel like I can tell you
anything.

ALICE

Oh, snap! Are you getting married
or something? Because I'm all for
it... but have you told this person
about what we do here?

Joy, in an attempt to shun her current predicament, tosses
the pregnancy test in an ashtray full of matchbooks on the
coffee table.

JOY

I'm going on an excursion this
weekend. I didn't tell any of you
because I just found out I have
Monday off from school and I
decided to hike up to Whittle Lake
to see what I can see.

ALICE

And who might you be bringing along
on this trip?

REGGIE

Yes, you know we don't go out into
the woods by ourselves, Joy.

ALICE

Well, we don't go into the woods
period, but yeah, who's going with?

Joy's eyes dart around in avoidance.

INGRID

This is not recommended, my dear.

JOY

I know. I know. Listen, I'll have
my transponder with me. If I'm not
back in three days then maybe I
finally found her.

INGRID

I've been hearing some weird stuff
come across the scanners from that
area lately.

REGGIE

Only weird if you believe we are
alone in the galaxy.

JOY

The thing is, I have to get out and
see some things for myself.

The group goes quiet.

JOY (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm going to have to cut it
short tonight. I've got lots to do.
I'll fill everyone in when I get
home.

REGGIE

Joy, please remember to set the GPS
history to public so that we can
access it.

ALICE

And bring bear spray!

JOY

I know, I know. I'll be ok. I gotta
go.

Joy closes the video chat and throws her phone down. She sits motionless, staring off for a few beats.

She picks up her GPS transponder and cycles through the menu. Just as she is about to change the setting to public. Rudy jumps on her lap and distracts her.

She rubs his face affectionately.

JOY (CONT'D)
I'll be back soon, I promise.

Joy picks up her phone and sends a TEXT to JAVON, whose picture pops up revealing a man in his 20s, black.

JOY (CONT'D)
(texting)
You are still able to feed Rudy
while I'm gone, right?

Javon responds right away.

JAVON
(texting)
Of course. I'm also available for
other things besides cat-sitting.

Joy rubs her temple in distress and starts a few different versions of a new message before writing:

JOY
(texting)
I'm just... busy. That's all.

JAVON
(texting)
I had a wonderful time with you but
no pressure.

JOY
(texting)
THX!

Joy throws her phone on the couch beside her.

EXT. OUTER SPACE - NIGHT

A minivan-sized meteor, that appears to be pulsating with a blue aura, hurdles towards EARTH.

EXT. METHOW VALLEY HIGHWAY - MORNING

Surrounded by Ponderosa pines, and flowing streams, A US Forest Service truck drives along a remote highway.

At the wheel is, MARION, early 60s, caught in a perdition of sorts, unable to enjoy the majestic scenery.

Indecipherable voices crackle over the scanner. Harry Belafonte croons softly on the radio.

EXT. 'BIGFOOT COFFEE' STAND - CONTINUOUS

Marion pulls into a roadside coffee stand, Sasquatch kitsch everywhere. A sign that reads: BIGFOOT MUSEUM hangs above an Airstream trailer next to the coffee hut.

Marion, rumpled uniform and all, walks toward the hut. She's greeted by BOOTSY, 50, an ebullient, rugged lady, missing a tooth or two.

BOOTSY

Well, hello Maid Marion! You look like you got yourself all tightened up. This day doesn't stand a chance against you. You ready to go on the tour this morning?

Bootsy nods toward the Airstream.

Marion cracks the corner of her mouth upward and nods at her thermos.

BOOTSY (CONT'D)

Some other time, then.

Bootsy takes the thermos.

Marion sees three PEOPLE exiting the Airstream with awe on their faces.

MARION

Jesus.

Bootsy returns with a full thermos.

Marion slides two dollars across the counter, then dumps some whiskey from a flask into the thermos.

BOOTSY

Okay, then. Whatever it takes,
Mama.

PERSON ONE taps Marion on the shoulder. She tucks the flask away.

PERSON ONE

Are you an actual Ranger?

Marion nods at Bootsy and walks away.

BOOTSY
We'll make a believer out of you
one day.

MARION
Well, you only got two weeks to
turn me.

The group follows her.

PERSON TWO
If anybody has seen 'Squatch,' it
has to be you!

PERSON THREE
Is it as big as they say? Does it
make a sound like a gorilla or is
it like a giant wolf or something?

PERSON ONE
What do they smell like? How big
are the babies when they are born?

Marion stops and wheels around.

MARION
I did see Bigfoot once. Told me the
next tourist came looking for it
with a weird ass Wookie fetish
would be strung up from a tree
without their limbs for everybody
to see.

The People look at each in horror.

Marion turns back around, satisfied, and heads to her truck.

INT. CAR - MOUNTAIN RIDGE ROAD - MORNING

Marion drives slowly, sipping from her thermos before pulling over to the side of a dirt road that looks out over the valley.

EXT. TRAIL - MORNING

Marion walks down a short trail from the road to a fire lookout stand. She walks up the stairs and takes a look across the valley.

She pulls her gun from its holster and massages the trigger.

Just then she hears a crackling sound in the trees. She points her gun towards the noise before eventually spotting an ELK in distress.

Marion climbs down and approaches the animal slowly and realizes its antlers are caught in some trees.

The exhausted animal lets Marion approach, who gradually is able to loosen the antlers.

The elk runs off and turns to drop a thankful glance at her.

Marion's phone rings. She looks at the caller ID and reluctantly answers.

MARION
(annoyed)
Cooper.

STEVE (O.C.)
Hey, Mare. Heard about the meth-heads you picked up off 27, trying to dump their truck in a two foot river.

MARION
World class thinkers out here in the Valley.

STEVE (O.C.)
Listen, I hate to ask this, but I need you to head over to Whittle Lake trailhead to check permits. There's been an influx of folks heading up there because of the asteroid showers or whatever.

MARION
Why the hell can't Jacobsen do it?

STEVE (O.C.)
His wife just went into labor this morning. Duff is filling in on the O.P. You're all I have at the moment, Mare.

MARION
Jeezuz. Ok. But I'm not writing any more reports, Steve. I swear to God...

STEVE (O.C.)

Okay. Fine. But just make sure we don't have too many unprepared 'Joes' up there at once. We only have one chopper at our disposal this time of year.

INT. TRUCK - MORNING

Marion pulls into a trailhead parking lot.

She passes multiple vehicles before spotting a white 18-PASSENGER VAN with the text *HEALERS OF THE BURNING SKY MINISTRIES* on the side. Marion rolls her eyes.

MARION

Dear, Lord. Thank you for the foresight to move my congregation elsewhere.

Marion parks near the trailhead leans back, and takes another sip of coffee. She pulls a brochure out of her pocket and unfolds it. It's for a retirement community called *Golden Horizons*. The slogan reads:

Golden Horizons Retirement Community: where carefree days meet warm, neighborly smiles.

MARION (CONT'D)

Can't think of a better place to die.

Marion folds up the brochure and notices that one of the parked vehicles, a SUBARU, is clouded with condensation from the inside.

EXT. TRAILHEAD - MORNING

Marion exits her vehicle and walks towards the Subaru. She stops and looks in the window to see a woman rumpled up in a blanket in the back seat.

She raps on the window with her flashlight and looks over her shoulder to survey the surroundings.

Suddenly, the door flings open and Joy rushes out of the vehicle, swatting at the air. Marion is knocked off balance and stumbles backward. She regains her footing and draws her gun.

MARION

Hey! Hey! Stop right there!

Joy swats at the air for another beat and looks up to see Marion with her gun pointed at her. She stops swatting and puts her hands in the air.

JOY

Holy... I'm so sorry. I must have... I was in a space suit because there was no oxygen left on Earth and then...

Joy focuses on Marion's face.

JOY (CONT'D)

YOU came along and started knocking on my face shield. I thought you were trying to crack it!

Joy shutters one last time and begins to calm down and take in her surroundings.

MARION

Look, the only thing I'm trying to have a crack at is seeing your overnight permit.

Marion notices Joy's t-shirt which is a picture of the old Seattle Supersonics mascot, '*SQUATCH.*' She re-holsters her gun.

JOY

I'm so sorry, of course.

Joy goes back to her vehicle and scrambles through her pack, eventually pulling out her permit.

MARION

Jesus. I have to deal with druggies, nudists, Constitutionalists, cults... and then there's these Sasquatch huntin' nuts.

JOY

Oh, I can assure you I'm not hunting anything.

MARION

Uh-huh. How many nights are you here?

JOY

Just two.

MARION

Let me guess, the meteor shower
causes old Bigfoot to come out of
their hole in the ground to commune
with the stars in some crazy lunar
spectacle?

Marion looks around Joy's car and notices the Ghillie suit.

JOY

I don't know crazy, but I know
Karate...

Marion looks at the permit for a short beat, then sizes Joy up.

MARION

I think you got it backward. How
old are you?

Joy, sensing that her attempt at levity is going nowhere, straightens up.

JOY

Twenty-two, ma'am. I'm a student at
Western.

MARION

Hiking alone?

Joy gives Marion an earnest smile.

JOY

Yes ma'am.

Marion has a momentary break in her tough facade.

MARION

I'm no ma'am, kid. It's Marion.

JOY

Nice to meet you, Marion. My name
is Joy.

MARION

Well Joy, just try and be smart out
there. It's beautiful country but
can take you out in a heartbeat.
Not to mention all the other
weirdos and fanatics that might be
out there.

JOY

Thanks. I'll be okay.

MARION

Does your family know where you'll be?

JOY

Yeah... uh... I'll be okay.

Marion pauses.

MARION

Well, I hope you have some bear spray at least.

JOY

It was on my list. I'm a little scattered.

Marion hands the permit back and walks to her truck. She returns with a can of bear spray and hands it to Joy.

Joy accepts and nods in appreciation.

JOY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

Joy stops her hike to marvel at the view of an alpine lake. She spots a bald eagle through her binoculars, has a drink of water, and a handful of trail mix, and moves on.

EXT. WHITTLE LAKE - EVENING

Joy sees a small clearing near a lake and walks toward it.

When she arrives, she sees a group of six MEN and five WOMEN, looking quite disheveled, wearing only red hospital scrubs.

The GROUP is silently stacking piles of rocks into cairns along the pathway heading away from the lake.

JOY

Hiya! Are you all camping here overnight?

One of the WOMEN looks over at Joy and studies her. She goes back to her task.

JOY (CONT'D)

Okay, I might set up camp just down
there near the lake, if it's
alright with you.

No response from the GROUP. Joy moves towards the lake, sets down her pack, and begins to set up camp.

EXT. TREE LINE - EVENING

Joy straps some critter cams to multiple trees, double-checking they are powered on and working properly.

INT. JOY'S TENT - NIGHT

Joy zips herself into her tent and turns on a battery-powered monitor that shows a live feed of her critter cams. Nothing is happening, until she sees a deer walk by one of the feeds.

She powers down the monitor and lays her head back to listen to the chatter of a western TOAD.

INT. JOY'S TENT - NIGHT

Joy wakes to see a red LED light flashing on her monitor.

JOY

Okay, Miss Doe, just out for a
little midnight snack?

Joy lights up the screen to see a quiet forest scene, but then a face obscured by a mask looks directly into the camera.

Joy screams and drops the monitor. She feels around for her flashlight and her bear spray, then unzips her tent.

EXT. TENT - NIGHT

Joy emerges from the tent wearing night vision goggles, and runs away from the tent into a thick patch of underbrush and settles in.

After a few moments of scanning her surroundings, she sees a bright flash of light streak across the sky followed by a loud splash. She rips her goggles off and then begins to feel water falling from above.

EXT. WHITTLE LAKE - NIGHT

Joy rushes to the side of the lake to find waves still crashing at the shore. She takes a closer look to see a smoldering blue meteor, roughly three feet long, embedded in the bottom of the lake. Only a shallow layer of water remains.

After a few silent moments, a blue mist rises from the rock, in the shape of a lemniscate (infinity symbol).

It hovers briefly, before rushing toward Joy's face.

The mist disappears into her nose and mouth.

Joy begins to cough and thrash about, before stumbling backward. She puts her hands on her knees to regain her strength. After a few deep breaths, she begins to feel light-headed and goes back to her tent.

EXT. CAMPSITE - SUNRISE

Joy wakes up, and clears her head. She slowly starts to stand up and is overcome by nausea. She hurriedly unzips the tent and crawls a few feet away before throwing up.

Joy rolls onto her side and feels that her belly is very enlarged. She appears to be full-term pregnant.

She looks down and pulls up her shirt.

JOY

What the fuck is that? No, no, no!

Joy's breathing grows ragged as panic overtakes her. Rolling onto her back, her blurry vision catches the faces of three PEOPLE from the day before looming above her.

She fumbles for the bear spray and releases a frantic burst into the air before succumbing to exhaustion, and slipping into unconsciousness.

INT. TENT - EVENING

Joy wakes up in a large canvas tent, lying in a bed with a red robe on. She frantically feels at her belly, which has now lessened quite a bit in size.

JOY

What the hell?

EXT. FOREST - EVENING

Joy opens the canvas doors of the tent and looks out. She sees several PEOPLE, clad in dark robes and grotesque masks, standing in a circle surrounded by rock sculptures.

At the center of the circle lies Joy's BABY, swaddled in cloth, nestled among the rocks.

Smoke from burning sage clouds the area.

Joy can hear a low chanting coming from the group as the WORTHY MASTER, 50s, steps to the middle of the circle. His mask is more ornate than the others, covered in feathers and bones.

Joy is overcome with a sick feeling and bends over to vomit outside the entrance to the tent.

When she stands up she is met by two MEMBERS of the group that take her by the arms and lead her toward the circle.

WORTHY MASTER

Brothers and Sisters, the time has come. Under the watchful gaze of the ancient ones, we are offered this life to shepherd us into a new era of enlightenment. We must now change our mission from simply a practice of reverence for all things celestial to a guardianship.

Joy and the two Members close in on the center of the circle. Joy looks around at the masked people in shock.

JOY

Who are you people?

WORTHY MASTER

Behold, the mother of the chosen one, the vessel of our future.

The Members bow their heads as Joy is brought forward and positioned near the baby. The chanting grows louder, filling the woods with an ominous resonance.

JOY

What the hell is this?

Joy looks down at the BABY, who has very pale-colored skin and black eyes.

The chanting becomes deafening as Joy collapses to her knees. Tears run down her face.

A thick white smoke begins to envelop the forest, Joy looks up to notice the Members of the group clasping at their throats and staggering back and forth to keep their balance.

WORTHY MASTER
Brothers and Sisters, we must unite
as one!

Red lasers cut across the smoke and land on the faces of the Members as they begin to collapse. The Worthy Master tries to stand strong, but succumbs to the smoke and eventually collapses.

Joy picks up the baby from her knees, and after a moment holds it close to her heart, ultimately passing out.

Two SOLDIERS in full military-style tactical gear appear from the woods and lift Joy by the arms as a third SOLDIER takes the baby from her.

EXT. REGGIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Reggie leans against his kitchen counter, stirring maté in a traditional calabash gourd with a sleek metal bombilla. His eyes scan the pages of a folded zine: *Field Notes on the American Sasquatch*.

From the other room, the sound of the TV show, *Ancient Aliens*, provides a backdrop.

Reggie moves to the living room, settling at a cluttered desk. His computer screen glows softly, displaying an open chat window with Joy. Pausing for a moment, he sets the gourd down, and begins to type:

REGGIE
(typing)
Joy? Are you there?

Reggie opens another chat window to Alice and begins to type.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
(typing)
Any news?

Alice's video chat window pops up within seconds. Reggie answers. Alice's face appears.

ALICE
Hey, Reg!

REGGIE
Anything?

ALICE

Well, I learned that the stage of a jellyfish's life when it swims freely in the ocean is called Medusa. Like the monster. It tracks. Reason number one forty seven I don't go in the water.

REGGIE

It's been three days, Al.

ALICE

I know. But she's fine, right? Probably just dropped her phone in the lake or something. Or maybe she found their secret hideout or whatever and she's been accepted into the clan because I'm not trying to imagine anything else.

REGGIE

It's not like her. She knows the code. She was supposed to check in on Monday at the latest.

ALICE

Ok, I'm adding Ingy. She's probably heard something from all her weird scanner thingies she's always monitoring.

Another window is added to the video chat as Alice rings Ingrid.

Ingrid pops up on the video chat.

INGRID

Hey guys.

ALICE

Have you heard from her!?

INGRID

No. But I have heard SOMETHING... My Okanagon feed had some strange activity last Saturday night, but I didn't really understand it. I had a friend from my Ham group do some digging into it and he was able to cross-reference the signal with a rarely used Civil War-era frequency.

(MORE)

INGRID (CONT'D)

Likely a militia group with some old radios they don't want anyone listening in on, or something.

ALICE

Oh my god, are you serious?

REGGIE

What would someone be doing with Civil War-era radios out there?

INGRID

Prepping for something.

REGGIE

Ok. That settles it. We need to go find Joy.

INGRID

You guys might have to go this one without me. I'm just too busy at work.

ALICE

I'm right there with you. I mean, those surfboards don't wax themselves. And my class load is pretty heavy right now.

Reggie shakes his head and composes himself.

REGGIE

I know we're all swamped with our own lives. I've got an iguana, a weekly D&D game... did I mention I have an iguana? Anyway, one of us has gone missing while chasing down the very mystery that brought us together. It's time for us to get out from behind our computers and get into the field.

After a beat.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

C'mon, guys! We stand as one, right!?

ALICE

Okay, Coach. I'm in.

INGRID

Yeah, I guess I can shuffle my schedule around.

INT. MILITARY VEHICLE - NIGHT

Joy and the cult members ride along in silence, bags covering their heads and hands bound. Four MEN in tactical gear accompany them. COOING sounds can be heard coming from the cab of the vehicle.

On the floor: the Baby. A blue light FLASHES across its eyes.

EXT. METHOW VALLEY REGIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Reggie sits behind the wheel of an old Toyota Corolla parked near the runway of a small airport. He nervously taps on the steering wheel.

A small jet lands on the airstrip and pulls to a stop. The door opens and the pilot steps out to let the stairs down. Ingrid appears in the doorway carrying a backpack. She hugs the pilot and walks towards Reggie's car.

Reggie gets out and stands next to the car as Ingrid approaches.

INGRID
You're taller in person.

REGGIE
You're richer in person. How was the private flight?

INGRID
He's just a friend from my aeronautical group. He owed me a favor.

REGGIE
Well, I hope you don't mind traveling in old Coral here...

Reggie taps the top of his car.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
It's a Corrola... So... I know, not very original.

INGRID
It's really good to see you, Reg.

Ingrid moves in for a hug.

INGRID (CONT'D)
We're gonna figure this out. I'm sure she's okay. Where's the kid?

REGGIE
We're supposed to meet her in town.

INT. CAR - DAY

Marion pulls to a stop near the general store and gets a phone call from her boss, Steve.

MARION
Calling to tell me to start my retirement early?

STEVE (O.S.)
You know I'd love to send you down the river with a bouquet of flowers, Mare...

MARION
Never been much for flowers.

STEVE (O.S.)
The overnighters at Whittle Lake... some came back but...

MARION
Let me guess, the 'Healers of the Sky' didn't make it back? Are we sure that cult didn't just decide to leave civilization behind?

STEVE (O.S.)
Well, that would be a whole different problem with all the God damn Cliven Bundy fans around here.

MARION
What about the solo girl? Joy.

STEVE (O.S.)
She hasn't signed back either.

Marion clinches her jaw.

MARION
Damn...Ok, I'll head up there and have a look.

STEVE (O.S.)
By the book, Mare. I don't want the Sheriff involved but...

MARION
I'll call you later.

Marion hangs up the phone and stares off for a few beats before pounding the steering wheel.

MARION (CONT'D)

Shit!

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Ingrid and Reggie are waiting on the street. A semi-truck pulls up in front of them and Alice climbs down.

She gives a cordial goodbye to the female DRIVER and closes the door.

The truck pulls away.

ALICE

Okay, that was the most terrifying thing I've ever done.

The group exchange hugs.

REGGIE

What happened to your bus?

ALICE

Broke down in Modesto. That, uh, kind 'lady' helped me the rest of the way.

INGRID

Everybody bring what we went over?

REGGIE

Copy that.

Alice spies the general store.

ALICE

Yes, yes. I just need a couple of things... This old store should have it.

Ingrid looks at her watch.

INGRID

I have to meet an old friend. I'll find you in 20.

REGGIE

Old friend? In Winthrop?

Ingrid is already on her way.

Reggie turns to Alice.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
I'll see if I can't find some
information.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Marion walks down the liquor aisle. She pauses as she starts to overhear Alice's voice at the counter talking with the CLERK.

Alice is pointing to the wall.

ALICE
I know I definitely need some of that bug spray up there. And some of those flares, and do you have any machetes or I dunno, swords? And, are you sure you don't have any Tom's of Maine? I forgot mine, and I'm here for who knows how long cause we're trying to find our friend. Have you seen her? She's about... actually, I don't know how tall she is because I've never seen her in person. She's African American, always smiling and nuts about Sasquatch.

The Clerk grinds on a piece of beef jerky.

CLERK
These woods have been acting up lately. No telling what sort of trouble your friend got up to.

Alice's face goes long, then she realizes the Clerk is waiting for her money.

CLERK (CONT'D)
Sorry, no Tim's of Maine.

Marion lets Alice leave the store. Then approaches the Clerk.

CLERK (CONT'D)
Morning, Mare. How much time you got left?

Marion slides a bottle of whiskey across the counter with a \$20 bill.

MARION
I suppose that depends...

Marion looks out at Alice.

CLERK
Well, don't be a stranger.

Marion nods and walks out.

CLERK (CONT'D)
You want your change?

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Reggie finishes up a conversation with a MAN on the corner. We see the buildings of this small mountain town are built with an old-time Western aesthetic.

He sees Alice vaping across the street, pacing back and forth.

Marion opens her bottle and watches Reggie head toward Alice.

ALICE
(to herself)
You said you were never going to put yourself in this position. I mean there's a reason you stick to the beach and don't go in the water. Sharks can't get you there and there's nothing for anything to hide behind. Now you got yourself up here in the woods and this shit is real. I just know it. I'm going to come face to face with Big. Ass. Freaking. Foot! And there's nothing I can do about it...

Reggie walks up.

REGGIE
The owner of the diner said he heard rumblings about several vehicles being at the Whittle Lake trailhead for longer than they were permitted. Beyond that, he didn't know anything.

Alice chokes back her fears and takes one more large pull from her vape.

ALICE

Then that's where we go.

REGGIE

He also mentioned there were a number of "weirdos" heading up there because of the meteor shower.

ALICE

Well, I'm sure it was nothing.

Reggie smiles at her outward fortitude, then looks across at Marion in her uniform.

REGGIE

She might know.

Reggie walks towards Marion, who begins to walk away.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

You wouldn't happen to know anything about the campers at Whittle Lake, would you?

Marion keeps walking.

MARION

Not my territory.

REGGIE

Surely someone in your department has some information.

MARION

You shouldn't pay attention to rumors.

REGGIE

Well myself and two other inexperienced friends are heading up that way. In all likelihood, we'll become lost and get poison ivy or lose a limb or two from hypothermia if you don't give us some guidance.

MARION

You want guidance? Stay out of the bushes and lakes. Drink plenty of fluids.

Reggie eyes the brown bag in Marion's hand.

REGGIE

Like the fluids, you got in the bag? How long does it take you to go through a bottle? A week? One day if you find the right spot in the woods where nobody will bother you?

Marion stops. She turns around and walks back towards Reggie.

MARION

If I had a dollar for every punk that overstayed their permit out in these woods...

Reggie stands his ground but squints his eyes in preparation for contact.

Marion stops with her face inches from Reggie's.

MARION (CONT'D)

Between the tickity tokers, the doomsday mouth breathers, and the fucking furries, I'm lucky to make it through an hour on the job without killing this bottle.

Reggie opens one eye as Alice sidles up next to him.

ALICE

She's never been hiking before... our friend.

Marion contorts her face and grits her teeth.

MARION

I really can't have civilians follow me on an investigation.

REGGIE

Wait. There's an investigation? What do you know?

ALICE

Has she been hurt?

MARION

Jesus. I'm gonna regret this but, I'm on my way up to the trail right now.

ALICE

Please take us with you, lady... uh miss... I mean, ma'am.

MARION

Meet me at the Cardinal gas station
on the east end of town in twenty
minutes. I won't wait.

Marion walks away.

ALICE

(calling after her)
Thank you!

Reggie and Alice hurry down the street.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Reggie and Alice rush toward their car and notice a crowd
gathered, along with a news truck near a PARK.

ALICE

Maybe it's something about Joy.

Before Reggie can dissuade her, Alice walks toward the crowd.

REGGIE

We have to get Ingrid!

EXT. PARK - DAY

HOYT, a sharp-dressed man, 45, stands in front of a makeshift
lectern.

HOYT

I'm honored as your Senator to be
here in Winthrop, Washington to
open the recently finished
Riverside Bridge. This bridge
represents the hard work of so many
people. People who believe that we
need to get back to what's
important in our communities.

There is a round of applause from the locals.

HOYT (CONT'D)

I'm honored to have played a part
in securing the funding and...

ALICE

(to Reggie)
Who is this d-bag?

Reggie is scanning the crowd.

He spots Ingrid talking to a man, WILL, early 20s, dressed in a suit looking like a finance bro, on the side of the stage.

REGGIE
(to Alice)
I'll meet you at the car.

HOYT (O.S.)
The good folks from El Patio are here and have brought some delicious tamales and such to enjoy. Now let's celebrate! Thank you.

There is another round of applause. A band begins to play.

Reggie heads toward Ingrid who is now shaking hands with Will.

She leans in close to him. He nods his head in response before they part ways.

Reggie grabs Ingrid's arm.

REGGIE
We have a lead, but we have to go now.

INGRID
Quite the detective skills, Reg.

REGGIE
Who's the suit?

INGRID
Do you want to sit and have tea too or get on this lead?

Reggie rolls his eyes and they all turn and hurriedly walk towards the car.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Alice is stuffing the supplies she purchased into her pack.

INGRID
I know you're wondering... In a strange twist, he happens to be in another one of my online groups.

REGGIE
Oh, I see now. One of your "young capitalists" clubs?

Ingrid rolls her eyes.

INGRID

Will's from my Gemology Group. I know he doesn't look it, but he's quite the geode hunter. He also happens to be an aide to the Senator. I figured any help we could get in the matter, especially in high places. He said there were some meteor strikes up in the mountains over the weekend. Lots of people go crazy for the minerals in those things.

Ingrid notices that Alice is holding back tears as she fills her backpack with unnecessary items.

INGRID (CONT'D)

We're going to find her, Al. I promise.

Alice wipes away a tear.

ALICE

I told her not to go alone.

REGGIE

We have a ranger that will take us to her campsite.

INGRID

Is that a good idea? We don't need any law enforcement asking too many questions.

REGGIE

Really?

Reggie and Alice get in the car and close the doors.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

You coming?

Ingrid looks around and then gets in. They drive off.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

The military vehicle sits idling on the side of the dusty road as armed militia members bark orders, pulling PRISONERS from the back one by one. Hoods are yanked off, and each person winces, shielding their eyes from the relentless sun overhead.

Hands bound tightly, the group is divided. WOMEN herded in one direction, MEN in another.

Joy stumbles, disoriented without her glasses, her vision blurry as she crouches a few feet away from SHEENA, one of the women from the cult. As she relieves herself, Joy scans the barren horizon.

SHEENA
Where are we?

Joy notices an opossum scurry across the road.

JOY
Virginia.

SHEENA
Impossible. Unless they drugged us.

JOY
That's the breed of Opossum. Only find them on the East Coast and in Washington State. I'm guessing we're somewhere in the Okanogan.

SHEENA
The Worthy Master will save us.

JOY
Yeah? How?

SHEENA
He sees all.

JOY
Except for the armed men with laser guns storming the camp?

Joy realizes Sheena is on the verge of tears.

JOY (CONT'D)
Joy.

SHEENA
Huh?

JOY
My name. It's Joy.

SHEENA
Oh... hi... I'm Sheena.

Joy finishes her pee and stands to pull her pants up. She sees blood on the ground where she peed.

SHEENA (CONT'D)

The bleeding. It'll stop in a few days. I'm sorry you and your baby got pulled into this.

JOY

What is 'this?'

SHEENA

It has to be the government. They had to know we were close to something with the celestial readings we were getting.

Suddenly a skirmish breaks out where the men have gone to pee.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - DAY

Sarge stands next to the vehicle talking on a phone. He watches the skirmish from a distance as he talks.

SARGE

(into phone)

We ended up with a few more than we planned. There was a cult or something up there with her...
yes... I know... we'll take care of it. Don't worry, ma'am. I think you'll be pleased with this one.

Sarge notices a few of the SOLDIERS begin to chase after the Worthy Master as he tries to run away. Sarge calmly walks to the cab of the vehicle and pulls out a rifle with a scope.

SARGE (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Yes ma'am. We traversed the region. Nobody could know where we are. We should be there at 23 hundred hours.

He hangs up and sets the phone on the hood of the car followed by the rifle. Sarge calmly and methodically leans in to look through the scope.

He draws a bead on the men running after the Worthy Master--they're 20 feet behind him. He moves the sight over to the Worthy Master's head and takes the shot. Down he goes.

Sarge pulls out his radio to call to the men.

SARGE (CONT'D)
(into the radio)
Get 'em all back in the truck.
Bring the body. We'll take care of
it back at the lab.

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The SOLDIERS forcibly usher the PRISONERS back to the vehicles. As they file towards the truck, one of the SOLDIERS shoves Joy in the back and she falls to the ground.

SOLDIER 1
Get back on your feet! Let's move
it!

He jerks her violently back to her feet. As she continues to move, we see that her GPS tracking device has fallen off her belt to the ground.

The PRISONERS load back into the vehicles and the doors are closed behind them.

EXT. WHITTLE LAKE TRAILHEAD PARKING LOT - DAY

Reggie, Ingrid, and Alice peer out the windows of the car as they follow Marion's vehicle into the gravel parking lot. They park and exit the vehicle. Joy's car and the cult bus are still there.

Marion does an inspection of both vehicles.

MARION
Ok. We're on foot from here. Grab
what you need and let's get moving.
I go at a 3-mile-per-hour pace, so
keep up.

The group scrambles to strap on their packs, etc. Alice has way too much stuff. Marion gives the pack a groan.

Marion rifles through the pack, and pulls out a giant make-up bag.

MARION (CONT'D)
No.

Then a bag of perfumes and lotions.

MARION (CONT'D)
God, no.

Finally, she pulls out a life preserver.

MARION (CONT'D)
Jesus, you really are planning on
falling into a lake... but no.

Marion rushes off.

ALICE
(to Reggie)
Do we really need her?

REGGIE
She knows the area and we don't.

Ingrid, carrying some electronic instruments and a small pack, sidles up next to Marion who is at her truck putting some items into her pack.

INGRID
Did you catch any strange
frequencies coming outta here on
Sunday? I picked up an old, rarely
used H-wave frequency.

MARION
You won't need those gadgets. Just
your eyes and ears will be enough
to know there's a lot of darkness
in these woods.

Ingrid ponders this comment for a moment and then notices Marion's name badge on her shirt. She also notices the top of a whiskey bottle sticking out of the paper bag on the passenger seat.

INGRID
Marion? Don't hear that one too
often anymore. Your last name isn't
Cooper, is it?

The others are still loading up their packs, unaware of the conversation.

MARION
I'll be honest. Not interested in
making new friends at this point.

INGRID
Did you have a daughter?

Marion ignores this question.

INGRID (CONT'D)

It's just that we're about to trust
you with our lives up in these
woods.

MARION

If you have other options, by all
means. How about I keep my business
to myself and nobody here tells me
about their childhood or their
fetish for mythical creatures?

INGRID

What sorts of things do we need to
look out for?

MARION

Well, fuck me. You mean to tell me
those gadgets didn't tell you what
might go down in one of the most
remote wilderness areas on the
planet?

Ingrid finds herself speechless. Marion finishes her packing
by throwing the whiskey bottle into her bag and closing it
up.

She throws the pack over her shoulder and gives Ingrid a
sideways look.

MARION (CONT'D)

(to the group)

Time to move! Stay on the trail and
don't eat any Goddamned mushrooms!

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

The group crests a beautiful vista and Alice plops down for a
break. She pulls a protein bar out of her pack.

Marion has a slug of whiskey.

REGGIE

It truly is some beautiful country
up here. I can see why Joy was
drawn to it.

ALICE

Yeah, but why's it gotta be so
hilly!?

The group ignores this comment. Ingrid takes her listening
instrument out of her pack and sets it up, scanning the area.

INGRID

I keep getting a weird
interference. Like something is
impeding the signal.

Ingrid points West.

MARION

That's our destination. We're about
2 miles out.

Ingrid, Marion, and Reggie move out. Alice lags behind... she
hears a CRACKLING sound from the bushes above them. This
causes her to giddy up.

EXT. WHITTLE LAKE - DAY

The GROUP emerges from the forest, following the trail as it
opens into a wide clearing overlooking the calm, reflective
waters of Whittle Lake.

ALICE

Wow. Look at that.

MARION

I've never seen the water this low.

REGGIE

Look! Over there!

Reggie points to a small tent set up near the lake. They all
spot it.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

That has to be Joy's.

They run over to the tent as Marion hangs back a little
scanning the area.

EXT. TENT - DAY

Reggie is the first to the tent and plunges through the
entrance. Joy's things are all still inside.

REGGIE

Shit. It doesn't look like she was
planning on going anywhere.

He starts calling out for Joy.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Joy! Joy! Where are you!?

Ingrid begins to inspect the area around the tent. She notices a small campfire setup and bends down to feel the burnt wood.

INGRID
Doesn't seem like this has been used for a few days.

ALICE
This is creeping me the hell out.
Where could she have gone?

Ingrid moves to Joy's tent and looks at her items inside. She locates the monitor for the trail cam.

INGRID
Joy must have set up some wildlife cameras.

She turns the monitor on and navigates to the playback function. She begins to fast forward through the footage. Reggie and Alice crowd around Ingrid watching the screen.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Nothing... oh, there's a deer.

She lets the video play for a few seconds then resumes fast forwarding.

REGGIE
Dammit. This is a waste of time. We need to fan out and scan the area to see what we can find.

INGRID
Wait! What the hell is that?

Ingrid stops the playback on an image of two figures carrying something. The footage is grainy and hard to make out.

ALICE
That's weird. It kind of looks like... a body!

REGGIE
Stop!

Ingrid pauses the playback.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Can you zoom in?

INGRID
Let me see.

She fiddles with it for a few seconds and finally finds the zoom function.

INGRID (CONT'D)
Here we go.

She zooms in on what now becomes clear to be a body being carried.

ALICE
Oh my god.

REGGIE
There! Look. That's Squatch, the Seattle Supersonics mascot on the shirt. That has to be Joy!

ALICE
God, I knew I was going to die up here!

Marion, who has been quietly scanning the area this entire time finally chimes in.

MARION
Probably those celestial nuts. I saw some rock cairns leading along the lake trail that direction. And by the looks of this pile of vomit right here, they might've drugged her.

Marion points to the spot where Joy had vomited outside her tent. Then she sees the rumpled up Ghillie suit in the bush. She reaches down and holds it up.

ALICE
I knew Joy wouldn't go down without a fight. She killed whatever that thing is.

INGRID
I believe it's called a Ghillie suit. She tried to camouflage herself.

REGGIE
Shit! Well, they must still be in the area somewhere. Their bus was still in the parking lot. C'mon! Let's go!

MARION

Ok. Let's calm down for a minute here. We don't know what happened, but if your friend was truly taken by these people, they could be dangerous. The next campsite is a quarter mile West into the woods. We should check there.

Marion opens her pack and takes out a flare gun and a can of mace.

MARION (CONT'D)

In case we get separated.

She hands the flare to Reggie and the mace to Alice.

INGRID

What about me?

MARION

I'm sure you can just use those fancy listening devices of yours, huh?

Marion pulls a handgun out of her holster and opens the chamber to check the bullets. She snaps it back closed.

MARION (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's get moving.

EXT. WHITTLE LAKE - DAY

They start walking along the lakeside trail. Alice stops to peer out at the water.

ALICE

Guys, what the hell is that?

Alice points to something sticking out of the water in the middle of the lake.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Is this an active volcano? Oh God, do you think it will erupt?

INGRID

Easy, Al. We're miles from a volcano.

MARION

Like I said. I've never seen the lake this low. Might have just been there all along.

Reggie takes out his cell phone and zooms in on the object.

INGRID

What is it, Reggie?

REGGIE

It's got a very unique shape and it looks like it has a shiny crust.

INGRID

Volcanic?

ALICE

You said...

REGGIE

A meteor.

The group goes silent.

INGRID

That would explain some of the odd readings from Sunday night. And my instruments being all jammed up.

ALICE

Do you think there could be little Martian critters wandering around here?

REGGIE

I'd love to get a closer look.

MARION

We should stay focused.

Reggie is transfixed on the object.

ALICE

Reggie, you're scaring me. We need to find Joy.

Reggie eventually comes around and follows after the group.

EXT. GROUP CAMP - DAY

Reggie is the first to arrive at the makeshift ceremonial site.

He kneels down in the center of the altar.

The others arrive. Ingrid is carrying Joy's pack.

ALICE

Oh, Jesus!

INGRID

I don't think that's who they were
worshiping here.

REGGIE

Is it some sort of fucking
sacrifice?

MARION

From what I know, they were
honoring something in their weird
way but there's something else
going on here.

EXT. TREE LINE - CONTINUOUS

From SOMEONE or SOMETHING'S POV:

Marion walks over and kneels to the ground on the far side of
the camp. She sees tire tracks.

EXT. GROUP CAMP - CONTINUOUS

MARION

These tracks look pretty fresh.
There's an old logging road just
through here that only gets used by
a few overlanders anymore.

Marion motions towards the trees.

REGGIE

Then why park a bus at the
trailhead?

MARION

These tracks aren't from your
average off-road vehicle. They're
giant. And it looks like there were
multiple.

INGRID

Since when do cults have monster
trucks?

MARION
It looks military.

REGGIE
What the hell is going on here?

Ingrid sets up her listening device.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
We should split up and look around.

He picks up a rock and hurls it into the woods.

MARION
Not a good idea.

ALICE
Hey, look. There's still hope Joy's alive. We don't know what happened out here, but she's probably wherever these people went.

Marion has a ripple of fear run through her, causing her to visibly shake. She walks away and breathes deeply. Ingrid watches her closely.

REGGIE
This is bullshit! What now? We just go home?

ALICE
We should go to her house and see what else we can learn. Ingrid found her keys in the tent.

REGGIE
Of course. The tracker. We need to get to cell service.

Ingrid squints her eyes.

INGRID
Guys. We have company.

A few seconds later, a helicopter is heard by the rest of them. Marion rushes back to the group and guides them under cover of the trees.

They all watch a chopper fly low over the trees towards the lake.

REGGIE
Is that forest service?

Marion shakes her head.

From cover, they all watch the helicopter hover over the middle of the lake. A cable descends from the chopper, followed by a figure who jumps into the water. After a few moments, the meteor is strapped to the cable--hoisting the figure and the meteor out of the water. It disappears into the horizon almost as quickly as it appeared.

ALICE

What in the actual fuck is happening?

Marion looks at the sky.

MARION

I have no power in whatever this is. I learned that a long time ago. I think we're best leaving this to the F.B.I.

The group responds in unison:

GROUP

No F.B.I.!

MARION

Well, it'll be dark soon. I don't think we should linger up here any longer.

ALICE

I'm with you. Let's get out of here.

They begin to set out. Reggie rushes up to Marion and stops her.

REGGIE

Look, Marion... this is way above all our heads... we could really use someone with your knowledge of the area and connections on our side.

MARION

Kid, I'm 9...no, 8 days away from being done with this shit for good. I'm not about to open whatever this is.

Marion begins walking again. Ingrid calls out from behind.

INGRID
Ms. Cooper, please...

Marion stops but does not turn around.

INGRID (CONT'D)
I think you of all people can see
that this is much bigger than all
of us.

Marion looks up at the sky.

MARION
When we get back, you go check out
her apartment. Find out what you
can. I'll make some calls about the
church to see who was all up here,
and check with ops to see if that
chopper had clearance.

From the POV of SOMEONE or SOMETHING: Marion leads the charge
down the mountain. The group follows.

INT. PUB - DAY

The Senator's aide, Will, sits at a dimly lit bar eating a
burger.

The door to the pub swings open. Standing in the doorway is
Alastor, wearing a garish Western outfit.

Alastor moves to the bar and sits next to Will, who avoids
direct eye contact with Alastor.

ALASTOR
Hey barkeep. Macallan 18. Neat.

The bartender gives Alastor a sideways glance before fixing
his drink. He shoots it across the bar at him.

BARTENDER
Here you go... pard'ner.

Alastor takes a long drink, his fingers resting on the glass.
A large ring on his finger catches the light, its stone
shifting between red and green.

WILL
Is that Alexandrite?

Alastor replies without looking at Will.

ALASTOR

I don't swing that way, kid.

WILL

Oh, no... I was...

ALASTOR

I mean, if you're buying, I can be convinced.

WILL

No, no... um, your ring.

Alastor smacks his lips together dramatically.

ALASTOR

Some people like to add a splash of water to their Scotch. Say it opens up the aromas, and softens the flavors.

WILL

I wouldn't know.

ALASTOR

I'm more of a purist. Let a thing be the thing it was intended to be.

Will holds out his hand.

WILL

Will.

Alastor studies him for a beat.

ALASTOR

Working for Senator Hoyt everything you envisioned or have your dreams taken a hit?

Will stiffens. He wipes his mouth and starts to stand.

ALASTOR (CONT'D)

Relax. I'm a fan. At least for now.

Alastor leans in closer and whispers.

ALASTOR (CONT'D)

It must be tough, though, being the one behind the scenes. Doing all the work, getting none of the credit.

WILL
I should be going.

ALASTOR
You got aspirations. I can smell it on you.

WILL
What exactly are you getting at?

ALASTOR
Let's just say I'm in a position to help a guy like you. Fast-track your career. Get you into the rooms where real decisions are made.

WILL
And what would I have to do in return?

ALASTOR
Nothing unethical. Just... keep me in the loop. Lawson's working on some big things, right? Infrastructure bill, maybe a foreign policy shake-up? A little insight here and there could go a long way... for both of us.

Will stares ahead, the wheels spinning in his head.

WILL
You want me to spy on my boss?

ALASTOR
Spy? No. Think of it as... sharing information. You'd still be doing your job. Just with a broader audience.

WILL
Who the fuck are you?

ALASTOR
That's the spirit.

Will squints. He takes a swing at Alastor and is quickly subdued by Alastor's off-hand, which grabs the back of Will's leg.

WILL
What are you doing?

ALASTOR

No need for a scene, now. What you feel is the Semitendinosus, Semimembranosus, and Biceps Femoris. Otherwise known as the hamstring. Rarely a muscle group you think about until it's under duress. I'd hate for a young man like you to have use a cane for the rest of your life, as distinguished as it may be.

Will sits. Alastor loosens his grip on Will's leg.

ALASTOR (CONT'D)

Like I said. Just an exchange of information.

Alastor removes the ring from his hand and slides it in front of Will. After a moment, Will picks it up.

INT. JOY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door creaks open as Ingrid, Reggie, Alice, step inside. The room is exactly as Joy left it, with pizza and miscellaneous camping gear scattered around.

REGGIE

You guys look for anything that would have made her so anxious to get up that mountain. I'll find her laptop. It's not like her to have forgotten to switch her tracker to public.

Ingrid and Alice start picking through Joy's belongings.

ALICE

Yo. This place is messy. I like her more and more every day. I think it's because she is so creative.

Alice pulls a pair of pants from a canvas draped over an easel, uncovering a haunting oil painting. The artwork reveals a group of alien-like creatures assembling a human figure.

Ingrid looks it over.

INGRID

Messiness can be a sign of depression too.

REGGIE

We know she had a lot going on at school. She was trying to hold down a full-time job too.

ALICE

Yes, but she seemed... distant.

Reggie finds a laptop in the dishwasher.

REGGIE

Found it!

Reggie sits at the kitchen table and begins to grind on the keystrokes.

Ingrid begins picking things off the coffee table, art supplies, and creature zines.

Alice runs her hand along the inflatable 'Squatch.'

ALICE

Handsome fella.

Alice pulls out a joint and lights it.

REGGIE

Might need some help with a password for this tracking sight.

Reggie hammers more keys.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I've got three more tries.

ALICE

What was the old mascot for the basketball team that she was so crazy about?

REGGIE

Squatch! Of course.

Reggie tries and fails.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Shit.

INGRID

Isn't she a sucker for those eighties high school movies?

REGGIE

Of course. *Say Anything*. She always talked about the Director... what was his name?

ALICE

Cameron Crowe.

REGGIE

Impressive.

ALICE

He wrote *Fast Times*!

REGGIE

I'm going with it.

Ingrid picks up the pregnancy test from the ashtray.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Shit! Last try... wait doesn't she have a cat?

Ingrid stares at the pregnancy test.

INGRID

Guys. I think I might know why she was so stressed.

REGGIE

Not now, Ingrid! This is our best chance to find her...

ALICE

Yeah, stay focused. We have to figure out the name of that fucking cat!

Just then the apartment door opens up and in walks Javon with the cat on a leash.

JAVON

The cat's name is Rudolph. Rudy for short.

Everyone stops moving for several moments.

Ingrid puts the pregnancy test in her pocket.

REGGIE

Rudolph? Like Valentino?

Rudy runs up to Alice and rubs on her leg, showing his bright red nose to her.

Alice gets low and cuddles with the cat.

ALICE
I'm guessing like the reindeer.

JAVON
Who are you guys and what are you
doing in Joy's apartment?

REGGIE
Who are we? Who are you?

JAVON
A friend. She asked me to take care
of Rudy while she was gone. I
thought she'd be back by now. Do
you know where she is?

REGGIE
I don't think we have time to bring
you up to speed... are we going
with Rudolph?

ALICE
Yes!

Reggie mashes buttons.

REGGIE
Bingo!

Alice and Ingrid rush to the computer.

The screen shows a map with a series of location pings.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
The last one is from yesterday at
noon.

Ingrid traces the path with her finger.

INGRID
Highway 20. Heading out toward
Coulee City?

JAVON
You guys are the Sasquatch group
aren't you? She talked about you
all the time. Did something happen
to her?

Ingrid, Reggie and Alice look at each other.

INT. REGGIE'S CAR - DAY

Ingrid, Reggie, Alice, and Javon get into Reggie's car, plus Rudy. Reggie starts the car and they drive off.

INT. SECRET LAB - NIGHT

The captives are led down the staircase. JOY is separated from the others and taken to a small, windowless room. Her hood is removed. She takes in her surroundings: a small bed, a sink, and a locked door.

She tries to gather her bearings but the lack of windows makes it impossible. After a long wait, the door opens, and Alastor enters.

ALASTOR

Quite an eventful 48 hours for you,
I'd say.

JOY

What the hell is this place? I...
what happened to the baby!?

ALASTOR

I need you to tell me about the
meteor you saw.

JOY

The meteor? It was bright and fell
from the sky. What the hell do you
want from me?

Alastor slowly shakes his head and closes his eyes.

He turns to nod to one of the GUARDS, who exits the room briefly and returns holding a baby. Joy's eyes widen in shock.

ALASTOR

The child is hungry, Joy.

The men leave, closing the door behind them. Joy is left alone with the baby. She is overcome with a mixture of sadness and elation. She looks at the child, her resolve softening.

Tears well up in her eyes as she grapples with the notion of trying to feed the child. The baby makes a strange cry that echoes into the chambers of the lab.

INT. CELL - NIGHT

The strange cries of the child reverberate out into the cell block of the lab.

The eyes of Whitefish pop open as he sits up quickly in his cot.