

## IN PLAIN SIGHT

EXT. ABOVE FOREST - NIGHT - FLASHFORWARD

The full moon rises high over the Appalachias, the mountains thick with trees. Owls hoot and crickets sing. A warm breeze ruffles the leaves.

Over the treetops, we see a dark, winged creature in flight. A bird, maybe? ... No.

It's covered in a layer of dense, black feathers with a ruff of larger feathers around its neck, twitching antennae, glowing red eyes, and wings that easily reach twelve feet on either side. It's like nothing you've ever seen.

It's exhausted, barely managing to stay in the air. It brushes the treetops before slamming into a particularly tall tree and collapsing, hitting every branch on the way down.

EXT. FOREST FLOOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

It rubs its head with a fuzzy hand, dazed. It looks around the forest before a bolt of panic shoots up its spine - it has realized exactly where it is.

We hear leaves crunching and twigs snapping in the distance, making a direct path towards its location.

It tries to get up, to run, to fly, but when it stretches its wings out it lets out a screech of pain. Something broke during the fall. It's trapped.

A group of three people burst through the foliage surrounding the area where it landed - a person with a camera, another one with a boom mic, and a third with a slate labeled "SKELETON CREW".

THROUGH NIGHT VISION CAMERA: We see the creature shakily rising from the ground as the camera begins to let off a series of warnings, the person with the slate shrieking loudly about the discovery.

It reaches a hand out to the camera, and alarm symbols flash and warnings beep loudly - before the camera feed burns out entirely with a small explosion.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. LIVING ROOM - PHOEBE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

PHOEBE WEBB (late 20's, large red-brown eyes, strangely lean, loner, chronically exhausted) sits on a secondhand couch, scrolling through Craigslist job postings on her laptop.

PHOEBE

Okay, personal assistant, female, 20s/30s only. Responsibilities: Cleaning, topless is fifty dollars extra per hour, cooking according to sperm retention diet plan, regular foot massages (the fungus is not contagious).

She pushes back onto the couch and slams her laptop shut. She checks her watch. Swears. Runs out the door.

MONTAGE:

The building blocks of Phoebe's life. Her eyes are dead. She sits center, the world moving around her.

- Checking out from the grocery store, bottles and bottles of HI-C and sugary drinks - no solid food. She's just short of the change she needs.

- Browsing through a thrift store, grabbing the thickest sweaters and cardigans she can find. She accidentally knocks a rack over and scrambles to pick it up.

- Back at the computer.

PHOEBE

Waste disposal technician - one hundred per hour. Perform all cleaning duties asked of you without question. Must have strong stomach and ability to keep secrets under torture. ... Lifting over two hundred pounds without vomiting is a requirement.

- Behind the till of the local gas station. Sunoco. Night shift. The back shelves weren't restocked. Her manager ANDERSON (late 40's, ridiculously well manicured for his station) ticks off a box on his clipboard - two points away from termination.

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- Checking her calendar. The full moon is twelve days away. Then eight. Then five.

- She cradles a wounded moth in her hands as she brings it into her apartment and out of the cold, putting a capful of nectar out for it. It got too close to the light. It burned.

- Back at the computer.

PHOEBE

Private donation firm looking to compile a list of possible donors for lifesaving organs. To apply, send your contact information, height, weight, daily schedule, whether or not you live alone, and if there are any weapons stored within reach of your bed?

Her mouse hovers over the "Apply" button before the screen blacks out and dies. She smacks the computer in frustration.

- Back at the gas station. She checks out a customer. And another, and another, and with each customer the day changes. Nothing else changes.

A man approaches the till and silently brandishes a gun.

PHOEBE

Next in line.

- Back at her computer.

PHOEBE

Documentary location scout - nature doc filming in Point Pleasant, West Virginia, twenty an hour.

She reads closer.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

New documentary series seeks local for scouting services. Flexibility, communication skills, knowledge of the area, and a passion for insects are required. Send all inquires to skeletoncrew@gmail.com.

She quickly writes an email to the poster.

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HI, MY NAME IS PHOEBE WEBB AND I'M A POINT PLEASANT RESIDENT OF TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS. I'M VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE LOCAL INSECT POPULATIONS AND I WOULD LOVE TO HELP WITH YOUR SHOOT. WARMLY, PHOEBE WEBB.

She closes her laptop and crawls into bed, annoyingly awake in the way only insomniacs are, looking up at the waxing moon through her window.

END MONTAGE

INT. SUNOCO GAS STATION - NEXT DAY

JUNE FONTENOT (early-mid 20's, warm colored hair, an artist type, eyes bright with enthusiasm) walks through the aisles, grabbing various snack items.

As she steps up to the register we see Phoebe, ringing up a trucker's shower with a dry smile.

PHOEBE

The shower stalls are down that hallway to your left, and the code to enter is oh-four-eleven. And please, God, don't waffle stomp, we've had to bleach the showers three times this week.

June steps up to the counter - and as soon as Phoebe sets eyes on her, the two women are pulled into a small, rosy bubble outside of time.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

(snapping out of it)

Hello. Hello. Welcome to Sunoco, can I get you anything today?

JUNE

I've just got this.

Phoebe begins to scan.

PHOEBE

So, are you new around here?

JUNE

I'm just passing through. Doing a project with some friends of mine.

PHOEBE

God, I wish. Lifelong resident. All twenty-seven years of it.

(MORE)

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PHOEBE (CONT'D)  
(feeling it out)  
How long are you here for?

JUNE  
We're here for a week or so.

PHOEBE  
If you're free I could show you -

A voice BARKS from behind June.

ANDERSON  
Webb! You've got a line twelve  
customers long and you're sitting  
here *chatting*?

They look - the line is now, somehow, twelve customers  
long. Anderson takes out his clipboard and pen.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)  
And that's the final mark on your  
disciplinary record. If there's  
even one more tardy, broken pump,  
or suspiciously timed insect swarm  
while you're here? You're done.

That's it. Phoebe whips off her work hat.

PHOEBE  
Fuck you, Anderson. Fuck you, and  
your power trips, and your shitty  
pumps. And I don't even know how  
you're blaming me for the insects!

Phoebe grabs a vape cartridge from the back wall as she  
storms out of the gas station, the bell CHIMING as the  
door slams behind her.

EXT. SUNOCO GAS STATION - DAY

Phoebe sits on the curb outside of the station in a tank  
top, shivering, work polo crumpled beside her as she  
furiously vapes. June sheepishly exits the station, bag  
in hand.

JUNE  
Are you alright?

Phoebe jumps, startled.

PHOEBE  
Warn a girl.

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JUNE

Sorry! ... Ugh, I'm sorry for all of that.

PHOEBE

It was a long time coming, don't blame yourself. Anderson's had it out for me since I broke the register the first time.

JUNE

(feeling it out)

You know, I'm actually hiring a location guide for a thing I'm shooting here. Would you happen to know any good places to find moths?

Phoebe's eyes light up.

PHOEBE

Absolutely! There's a ton in the McClintic area north of town, that's where most of us hobbyists go. I know the region pretty well.

JUNE

Perfect.

(pulling forms from thin air)

I'll just need you to sign this NDA, and this NDA, and this safety waiver, and this workmen's comp form. (It comes in handy more than you'd think.)

June stands up, pulling a startled Phoebe up from the curb.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I'm June Fontenot, your host, director, writer, producer, stunt coordinator, foley artist, and animal wrangler on *Skeleton Crew*. Welcome to the team.

They shake on it.

EXT. MCCLINTIC TRAILHEAD PARKING LOT - NEXT DAY

Phoebe sits in the driver's seat of her beat-up sedan, jamming out to the radio. She looks ridiculous.

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A white sprinter van pulls into the open spot next to her. The van's doors slam open as June and THREE CREW MEMBERS pile out. Phoebe turns off her car and exits to join them.

JUNE

Alright, it's top of day, let's huddle up.

A huddle forms behind the sprinter van.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Everyone, please welcome Phoebe to the crew! She's going to be our location scout for today, so if you've got any questions about the area, she'll probably be able to answer them.

The crew members wave hello.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Let's get our intros out of the way - you all know me, hi. My fun fact is that I can bend my thumbs behind my hand like this.

She can. It's gross. COLLIN BERNARD (mid 20's, First Nations, tall and broad with thick body hair, buttery leather gloves in the summer, Portland hipster, perfectionist) sighs.

COLLIN

I'm Collin, I'm our cinematographer. My fun fact is that the last project I worked on was a Vietnam documentary for the History Channel.

IRENE AMATO (early 30's, dark hair and eyes, sharp teeth, damp, pathologically calm, a tattoo of four curved lines on each side of her neck) speaks next.

IRENE

I'm Irene, I'm location and post-production sound. My fun fact is that I don't share fun facts about myself. Keeps the mystery alive.

She pulls a Ziplock bag full of homemade jerky out of her pack and starts to gnaw on it.

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BEN DUSEK (late teens-early 20's, California born and raised, easygoing, a charmed life, clumsy) finishes us off.

BEN

Hi, I'm Ben, and I'm your PA! My fun fact is that this is my first professional production. I'm taking a gap year before starting at UCLA.

(nudging Phoebe)

What's your fun fact?

PHOEBE

Uh, I guess my fun fact is that I've been studying the insect populations of Point Pleasant for almost two decades!

Collin and Irene immediately clock her as a weirdo.

JUNE

Perfect. Now, we've got a pretty full day ahead of us so let me get something out of the way. I haven't been completely honest with you guys.

(barreling forward)

We are here to study moths - well, a moth in Western Virginia. We're here to study Point Pleasant's most famous moth - Mothman.

Phoebe's vision goes blurry. The world is spinning and fading. Her ears are ringing with a high pitched tone and if they're talking she can't make sense of it. She stumbles as she runs for the mouth of the trail.

PHOEBE

Be right back, just need to - scout ahead. Yeah.

COLLIN

Do you want any help with that, or-

She's gone.

EXT. TRAILHEAD - CONTINUOUS

Phoebe runs until she's just out of sight, sinking to the ground as she struggles to take in breath.

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PHOEBE

(to herself, quietly)  
 Idiot. Of course. Of fucking  
 course they're looking for  
 Mothman. No one has a genuine  
 interest in local moths besides  
 you. Loser.

She's hugging her knees, resisting the temptation to hit her head in frustration.

She finally manages to gulp down some air. She looks up to find a moth resting gently on her boot. It calms her.

PHOEBE (CONT'D)

You don't know what they know.  
 Play it cool. We'll run if we have  
 to. We'll make it out of here.

She walks back to the parking lot, hands still shaking.

EXT. MCCLINTIC TRAILHEAD PARKING LOT - DAY

IRENE

- But if you try and lie to us  
 again, we'll stick your head so  
 far up your ass you can use your  
 ribs for braces.

JUNE

Great! Glad to know we're on the  
 same page.

(noticing Phoebe)

We're going to do one last gear  
 check and then we'll be ready to  
 go!

The crew spreads out and rifles through their gear, testing levels and replacing batteries. Phoebe inspects the trail map. Collin cradles his camera like a child.

JUNE

(calling distantly)

Hey guys, could you come over here  
 real quick?

The crew sets down their supplies and make their way to June, who is holding an odd, boxy device.

JUNE (CONT'D)

This EMF meter has been on the  
 fritz, would y'all mind helping me  
 recalibrate it?

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BEN

Ooh, what's it do?

JUNE

This handy device signals when a paranormal entity is close by.

The EMF meter clicks on. June points it at herself.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Clean reading. Now, let's try it on you guys to be sure -

She points the meter at Phoebe. It SCREAMS. She hits it a few times before pointing it at her again. It SCREAMS again, beeping rapidly.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Hold on.

June points the meter at Collin, then at Irene. It BEEPS loudly each time it's pointed in their direction, but stops when it's pointed at June or Ben. June tests this several times.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Damn it, these stupid things never work right. I guess we'll scrap that bit.

(reset)

So, Phoebe - where should we start?

PHOEBE

(gesturing to trailhead map)

There's actually a spot a few miles up this trail - he was originally sighted around a few of the TNT bunkers. Don't worry, they emptied those out ages ago.

JUNE

You heard her. Let's get going! We have a lot of ground to cover before nightfall.

June marches past everyone and onto the trail.

COLLIN

Wait, TNT bunkers?