

Enjoy Your Stay

by
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FADE IN:

EXT. VERMONT FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

A lone farmhouse on a hill surrounded by a thick forest. The windows are darkened. The area silent.

A SCREAM cuts through the night. A young MAN bursts through the back door, his nightshirt soaked in blood. He runs for the trees.

JEFFERY (36) barrels after him like a freight train, catching him at the tree line. He tackles the man into the dirt. The man claws at Jeffery's hands as he closes them around his throat.

His heels dig into the ground as Jeffery tightens his grip. Then, his heels stop moving as his last breath escapes him.

A twig snaps behind Jeffery. He turns and sees EMILY (8) waiting curiously in bloodstained unicorn pajamas.

JEFFERY

(beat)

You said they were *both* in their room.

EMILY

They were. He went to the bathroom.

Jeffery sighs heavily and gets to his feet. He approaches Emily and looks down to her.

JEFFERY

What is the rule, Emily?

Emily diverts her gaze to the dead man. Jeffery snaps his fingers.

JEFFERY (CONT'D)

Look at *me*!

Everyone must be in the room, then you come get me. Understand?

EMILY

(mumbles)

Yes sir.

ANNA (O.S.)

That's enough, Jeffery.

ANNA (35) stands on the back porch wearing a nightgown. Emily turns from Jeffery and runs to her.

Anna hugs Emily tightly, then wipes a smear of blood from her cheek with her thumb.

ANNA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
There's fresh pajamas on your bed.

EMILY
(whispers)
I messed up again, didn't I?

ANNA
(warm)
You did amazing. Now, go get changed.
I'll be up soon.

Emily smiles and runs back to the house, disappearing inside. Anna crosses the field to Jeffery.

JEFFERY
You're coddling her.

ANNA
She's our child. What do you expect?

JEFFERY
I expect her to learn. We can't afford to make mistakes.

Anna looks down at the man, emotionless. She grabs his ankles and drags him towards the BARN.

ANNA
If you want her to learn, try *teaching* her.

Jeffery grabs the man's arms and assists.

JEFFERY
I am teaching her. Do you have any idea what would have happened if he escaped?

ANNA
We would have dealt with whatever came.
Like we've always done.

Jeffery doesn't respond. Anna smiles coolly.

ANNA (CONT'D)
She's our only child, Jeffery. Don't try to push her away so soon.

Jeffery and Anna make it to the barn and disappear inside. The sounds of an old machine fills the night air.

SUPER: TEN YEARS LATER

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM - DAY

EMILY (18), sits on her bedroom floor wearing dirty overalls. An unopened official envelope rests in her lap. She picks it up, begins to open it, then puts it back down.

ANNA (O.S.)

I can open it for you, if you want.

Startled, Emily looks at her bedroom door. Anna stands in the frame wearing similar overalls and with a warm smile. Emily smiles back but refuses.

EMILY

I can do this.

Emily tears the envelope open and reads it. Her face is unreadable at first. Then, a smile forms.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Emily bursts from the house, clutching the letter in her hand. She makes her way to the barn just as Jeffery (46) emerges from the barn shouldering two bags of **red fertilizer**.

She waits for him to notice. He barely glances at her.

EMILY

I did it!

Jeffery glances at the letter then back to her without a word. Emily's smile falters.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I got into college...

He blinks, then walks past her.

JEFFERY

That delivery isn't going to get to town on its own.

He disappears around the house.

Emily stands for a beat, then turns to head back in.

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Emily enters her room and stares at the emptiness for a beat. She throws the letter onto the bed, walks to the closet and puts on her boots.

Anna enters with a cupcake and a single lit candle humming the "birthday song".

EMILY

Really?

ANNA

There's more than one reason to celebrate today.

Emily musters a smile and takes the cupcake, setting it over on the table.

ANNA (CONT'D)

No wish?

EMILY

I'm a little old for wishes.

ANNA

(grabs the cupcake)

Humor me for one more year.

Emily rolls her eyes and leans forward. She takes a moment, then blows out the candle.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(reminiscent)

I remember when I used to carry you around everywhere.

EMILY

(mutters)

Don't start...

ANNA

You were the cutest little munchkin with a knack for disappearing all over the place.

EMILY

I feel like that constitutes bad parenting.

ANNA

Watch it.

Emily smiles and takes a bite out of the cupcake.

The door slams downstairs, followed by heavy footsteps. Emily stops chewing, the moment ruined.

EMILY
Speaking of bad parenting.

ANNA
Your father wants the best for you just as much as I do.

EMILY
How is getting into college *not* the best for me?

ANNA
You're his only child, Emily. You can't expect him to be overjoyed that you're leaving soon.

JEFFERY (O.S.)
Emily! Deliveries, now!

Emily sighs and sets the unfinished cupcake on the table.

EMILY
(mutters)
One could wish.

She exits. Anna turns to the half-eaten cupcake with concern.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Emily packs up an old beat up truck with crates of vegetables. She gets inside and drives down the long driveway.

Jeffery watches her from the porch like a warden. Anna joins him.

ANNA
You could have at least given her the day off.

JEFFERY
The farm doesn't stop for birthdays.

ANNA
The farm will always be here, Jeffery. Your daughter won't be.

She turns and enters the house. Jeffery remains silent.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SOME TIME LATER

A busy locale full of tourists and locals. The street is aligned with family-owned businesses and eateries.

Emily drives through, passing the more modern vehicles along the way. She pulls into the lot of the CORNER STORE and exits. A group of teenagers point and snicker at her as she makes her way into the store. She ignores them.

INT. CORNER STORE - CONTINUOUS

ETHEL (70s) works on a crossword behind the counter. Behind her, a wall of **MISSING PERSONS** flyers stick to a large cork board.

At the back of the store, RANDY (18) restocks the shelves. He grins as Emily enters.

RANDY
The usual, Emily?

EMILY
How did you know it was me?

RANDY
I can hear that rust bucket of yours from five blocks away.

He stands and grabs a basket. Emily grabs an apple and tosses it casually.

EMILY
That rust bucket has been in my family since before I was born.

RANDY
Oh, so eighteen-sixty-two?

Emily throws the apple at him. Randy catches it with ease.

ETHEL
Hey! You bruise it, you buy it!

EMILY
Sorry, Ms. Ethel! Vegetables are outside.

Ethel pulls away from the crossword and grabs a **delivery sheet**. She hobbles from around the counter and exits.

Randy grabs a basket and begins placing items inside. Emily follows him.

RANDY

You know you could call ahead to have this stuff ready when you get here.

EMILY

That would require a phone.

RANDY

(mutters)

Which most teenagers have at this point.

The door bangs open. TREY DILLARD (19), athletic and pleased with himself, enters with THREE FRIENDS all equally dimwitted.

TREY

What's up, stockboy?!

RANDY

(low)

Fuck my life

(to Trey)

Hi, Trey.

EMILY

You know this guy?

RANDY

(to EMILY)

Oh, yeah. He's the bane of my existence.

Trey and his friends approach.

TREY

I'm here to pick up my order.

RANDY

Ethel has it at the counter. She'll be back in a second.

TREY

I'm kind of in a rush. Do you mind cashing me out now?

RANDY

There is nothing I'd love more than to have you out of here as soon as possible but I'm a little busy, as you can see.

Trey looks over to Emily with prowling eyes.

TREY

Yes, I can see.

He holds out his hand.

TREY (CONT'D)

Where are my manners, darling? I'm Trey Dillard.

Emily looks at his hand and furrows her brow.

EMILY

Emily.

TREY

Emily...?

EMILY

Just Emily.

TREY

(laughs)

Alright, *Just* Emily. Where you from?

RANDY

She's from here. Her family has a farm. She's not interested.

TREY

A family farm? It wouldn't happen to be that bed and breakfast buried in the middle of nowhere, would it?

EMILY

If it was?

TREY

(mocking)

I'd be worried. People say that farm is cursed.

RANDY

People also said the Dillard Farm chicken tasted like rubber. Who cares?

TREY

Easy there, Stockboy. We're just making conversation.

ETHEL

Well allow me to end it.

Ethel stands in the doorway, a completed list in her hand.

ETHEL (CONT'D)

Come on, Dillard. I'll cash you out.

Trey smiles sinisterly. Emily stares him down, unflinching.

TREY

See you around, *Just* Emily.

Trey and his friends walk up to the counter and cash out. Randy and Emily return to shopping.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Emily exits the store and reviews the payment. As she walks back to her truck, she bumps into TAYLOR (30s), a boyish tourist afraid of his own shadow.

TAYLOR

Oh! I'm so sorry!

EMILY

It's fine.

She smiles reassuringly and continues to her truck. Taylor hesitates, then calls after her.

TAYLOR

Excuse me? Are you a local?

EMILY

Yes?

TAYLOR

Great! I need your help. My phone is dead and I'm just about out of gas. Do you know of anywhere nearby I can stay for the night?

Emily begins to quote what she's been taught since she was little. She pauses, then goes off script.

EMILY

There's a motel just down the road. It's a fine place to sleep and close to town in case you need anything.

TAYLOR

(smiles)

You're a life-saver. Thank you!

He turns and walks away. Randy emerges from the store and passes the man. He raises a curious brow.

RANDY

New guest?

EMILY

Nah. I told him to try the motel down the road.

RANDY

The one with the bed bugs? What did he do to you?

EMILY

(laughs)

Nothing. I just...don't really want any responsibilities tonight.

RANDY

Does that mean you don't have any plans tonight?

EMILY

And if I didn't?

RANDY

I'd tell you that there's a bonfire happening. An end of the school year bash of sorts and although you were homeschooled--

EMILY

--I appreciate the invitation, but I can't.

Randy frowns. It's a response he's heard time and time again.

RANDY

Alright...

(turns to leave)

...if you change your mind or, I don't know, sneak out of your prison? I'll be waiting right here at eight-o'clock.

He winks and turns to leave. Emily blushes as she watches him walk away.

EMILY

You're going to waiting all night, you know!?

(Randy turns)

You'll miss the bonfire.

RANDY

Worth it.

He smiles and disappears back into the store.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - LATER

Jeffery is seen tending to the vegetable garden towards the back of the Barn. Anna hangs fresh laundry on the clothesline. The sound of the truck makes her drop the clothes and head to the front of the house.

Emily parks the truck and is immediately met by Anna. Anna grabs her hand and pulls her to the farmhouse.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A larger room with a few more vanities than Emily's space.

Anna closes the door and rushes to the wardrobe. She opens a shoebox and takes out a poorly wrapped package, holding it out to Emily. Emily looks confused.

ANNA

I know it's not the newest thing out there, but...

Curious, Emily takes the package and opens it slowly. It's an **old flip phone**. She cradles it like a holy grail.

ANNA (CONT'D)

(beat)

If you don't like it, I can always--

EMILY

--It's perfect.

She runs over to Anna and hugs her tightly.

ANNA

You're going to need a way to stay in touch with us when you're off to college.

EMILY

You get a family plan while you were getting this?

ANNA

No...but there was a buy one get one deal.

Emily laughs and hugs her tighter. She pulls back, her smile slowly fading.

EMILY

What if I didn't go?

ANNA
(concerned)
Why wouldn't you?

EMILY
(beat)
I don't know...the thought of leaving you
here with him. I'd feel selfish.

ANNA
You do understand I was with your father
long before you graced us with your
presence, right?

EMILY
Of course. But...

Anna smiles and walks past Emily. She kneels to the floor
and pushes on a false plank. She removes a **tin box** from
underneath the floor and opens it. It's filled with cash.

ANNA
I've been saving money since you were
still growing in my stomach. It was
supposed to be for college but it is your
decision to do with it as you please.

EMILY
(reaches for it)
Okay.

Anna slams the tin box shut and pulls it away.

ANNA
But whatever decision you make, will be
yours alone.
(Emily ponders)
You don't have to make the decision just
yet. But when you're ready, make sure
it's what you want to do.

Emily smiles and nods.

The door downstairs slams shut. Heavy footsteps ascend
the stairs. Anna quickly puts the tin box back into the
floor. Emily places the phone in her pocket. Jeffery
enters.

He stares between the two of them, suspicious. Anna and
Emily remain at attention and silent.

JEFFERY
What's going on here?

ANNA

Emily needed some things.

JEFFERY

Things?

EMILY

Yeah, I wasn't feeling well...

(Jeffery raises a brow)

...down there.

His eyes become wide.

JEFFERY

Oh. Right. Well, uh, hurry up and do what you have to do. Laundry needs to be finished.

He turns away and closes the door behind him.

Emily and Anna laugh as he descends the steps in a hurry.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - LATER

A cold leaky area illuminated by a single dim lightbulb. A washing machine churns in a corner next to a large **water heater**.

Emily feeds bloody sheets into the washer, dumping an obscene amount of bleach in with them. She shuts the washer and looks toward the far wall. **Suitcases** and hiking packs scale the wall from floor to ceiling.

She ponders a moment, eyeing the stairs to make sure no one was coming down. Then she walks over and picks out a **black suitcase**. She opens it, finding a small **digital camera**. She turns it on.

PHOTOS ON THE CAMERA: a beach, a skyscraper, a fancy meal, and a **smiling couple** in front of a landmark.

She stops there, transfixed on the people for a beat. Then, she shuts the camera off and throws it back in the suitcase. A pop of color catches her eye as she closes it. It's a **yellow sundress with white flowers**.

She pulls it out and examines it, a smile on her face.

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Emily whimsically dances around her room with the yellow dress. She's in a world of her own, completely oblivious to the footsteps approaching her door.

She hears a knock on the door. Startled, she throws off the dress and shoves it between her mattress just as the door handle turns and the door creaks open.

Jeffery takes a step inside. Emily stands at attention. He looks around the room and frowns. Silence fills the room.

EMILY
Everything okay?

JEFFERY
Yeah...

Jeffery shifts nervously, reaching into his back pocket.

JEFFERY (CONT'D)
(mumbles)
I'm not much of a gift wrapper. But
here...

He hands over a **small wooden pocketknife**. Emily takes it and sees that her name has been elegantly carved into the handle. She smiles slightly.

EMILY
Dad, did you make this?

JEFFERY
Yeah...
(beat)
I, uh, can't always be there with you.
But just in case you need some backup.

EMILY
Thanks, Dad.

Jeffery tries for a smile but it comes across as distress. He nods instead.

JEFFERY
Alright then...
(beat)
How about you go out for the night?
Isn't there some boy down at the store
that keeps asking about you?

Emily stammers, not sure how to process the situation.

He nods and goes for another smile, this time it works. He exits and closes the door. Emily shrieks with excitement.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Emily emerges from the house wearing the sundress. Anna and Jeffery stand beside the truck and watch her as she steps down. Jeffery furrows his brow at her attire.

JEFFERY

Where did you get that dress?

Emily freezes. Anna steps in.

ANNA

It was a gift from me. You can't expect a girl to wear overalls all her life, can you?

Jeffery looks unconvinced but remains silent. Emily makes her way to the truck.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Don't worry about the farm. We can handle any guest who come in.

JEFFERY

I don't expect you to be back at a reasonable hour but don't push your luck.

EMILY

Yes, sir.

Emily enters the truck and starts it. Anna and Jeffery watch as she pulls down the driveway and onto the main road.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Emily drives with a new sense of freedom. She flips on the radio.

RADIO (V.O.)

Terror continues to sweep through the streets of Boston as another body has been found brutally murdered. In--

She swiftly turns the dial until it lands on an alternative music station. The music fills the car and she cruises down the highway without a care.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Anna prepares dinner. Jeffery walks over to a vinyl player in the LIVING ROOM and turns it on. A slow, sensual song fills the house. Anna pauses and smiles.

Jeffery enters and steps up behind her. He takes her waist and sways her softly to the music.

ANNA

How long has it been since we've danced like this?

JEFFERY

Eighteen years, give or take.

He pulls her away from the counter and spins her towards him. They sway face to face.

ANNA

You can't keep her here, Jeffery. She deserves a life outside of this.

JEFFERY

I know...

(beat)

...what if I'm not ready?

ANNA

(smiles)

We never will be.

Anna rests her head on his chest. Jeffery holds her tightly. The music continues for a few blissful moments before being interrupted by a desperate call.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Hello!

They freeze and look at each confused. Taylor yells again, springing them into action. Jeffery silences the record player and Anna heads for the front door.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Anna exits onto the porch. Taylor walks up with a relieved smile as he drops his hiking gear.

Jeffery exits and stands in front of Anna like a guard to a stronghold.

JEFFERY

Can we help you, sir?

TAYLOR

I don't usually do this but I saw your sign down the road. Do you have a room available, by chance?

ANNA

You walked here?

TAYLOR

Last few miles. Car broke down on the highway and my phone went dead an hour ago.

Jeffery and Anna glance at each other. Anna nods and heads back into the house.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

(suspicious)

If it's too much trouble, you can just point me to a visitor center or something.

JEFFERY

No trouble at all. My wife, Anna, is just heading in to get the room ready.

(steps off the porch)

You here alone?

TAYLOR

(takes a step back)

Yeah...I was going to hike one of the trails tomorrow morning.

JEFFERY

Figured as much. We get a lot of hikers passing through unannounced this time of year.

TAYLOR

I've got cash for payment.

JEFFERY

I'd hope so! We're a little old school in these parts.

Taylor smiles nervously as he grabs his bag and follows Jeffery inside the house.

EXT. CORNER STORE - LATER

The once busy streets have now been vacated. Moonlight casts a blue haze over the streets.

Randy stands outside his modern pickup truck eagerly checking the highway for Emily. He's just about to give up when the rattle of her truck echoes down the road.

Emily pulls up beside him. Randy approaches then stops as she exits her truck. Her hair is down and the yellow sundress fits perfectly. Randy blushes.

RANDY

My lord...

EMILY

Too much?

RANDY

If you'd done any more, I'd question why you were coming to a bonfire with a guy like me.

Randy opens his passenger side door. Emily gets inside placing her flip phone in the cup holder. Randy, climbs behind the wheel.

INT. RANDY'S TRUCK - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Randy drives, stealing glances at Emily.

EMILY

It's rude to stare, Randy.

RANDY

Sorry. I just can't believe you're actually in my truck right now.

EMILY

Don't get too distracted. I want to get to the bonfire in one piece.

RANDY

Done deal.

EMILY

So what should I expect?

RANDY

Music, drinks, of course the big fire in the middle of all of it.

EMILY

Sounds fun. Hope I'm not a buzz kill for you.

RANDY

I highly doubt you could ever be such a thing.

They pass a DEAD END sign and turn down a dirt track.

EXT. BONFIRE CLEARING - NIGHT

Music pounds across the clearing. Teenagers gather around a towering woodpile set ablaze. Others are seen dancing and drinking around parked cars.

Randy parks. Emily studies the fire through the windshield. Randy comes around to open her door. He holds out his hand.

RANDY

You ready?

Emily watches as a group of girls trot over to the fire, each wearing something slightly less formal. She hesitates.

RANDY (CONT'D)

We can always just stay here and watch the fire, if you want.

Emily takes a deep breath, smiles, then grabs Randy's hand.

EMILY

Where would be the fun in that?

Randy smiles and helps her out of the truck. Hand in hand, they walk towards the fire.

INT. FARMHOUSE - DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

Jeffery, Anna, and Taylor share a modest dinner at the table.

TAYLOR

I seriously can't thank you both enough for your hospitality. We don't get much of this treatment in the city.

ANNA

Oh, we've heard the stories.

JEFFERY

(jokes)

Most of them know how to stop for gas
when they need it though.

TAYLOR

(chuckles)

I know. I'm a little novice when it
comes to backpacking and hiking.

ANNA

What made you want come out here?

Taylor takes a sip of wine and ponders sadly.

TAYLOR

It's to commemorate my dad...
We used to hike trails together when I
was a kid but he's since passed.

JEFFERY

I'm sorry to hear that. The rest of your
family must be worried sick by now.

TAYLOR

(shakes his head)

My mom died while she was pregnant with
me. Dad never remarried after that.

ANNA

Oh, Taylor, I'm so sorry. Jeffery, let's
change the subject.

TAYLOR

No, it's fine. It's good to get it out in
the open.

Taylor wipes tears welling up in his eyes and smiles
reassuringly. Jeffery places his hand on his shoulder and
squeezes.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

That being said, you wouldn't happen to
have anything a little stronger than
wine, would you?

Jeffery beams.

JEFFERY

I think I can manage something in the
living room.

TAYLOR

Great, I'll help clean up.

ANNA

Absolutely not. You're a guest and I'm sure you must be exhausted from walking all this way.

Taylor stands and heads to the living room. Jeffery follows behind him, giving Anna a quick nod before exiting completely.

As Jeffery and Taylor get settled in the living room. Anna pulls out the makings for tea with an extra powdery ingredient.

EXT. BONFIRE CLEARING - SAME TIME

The woodpile burns into the sky. Emily sits on a log, taking it all in. Randy walks up with two drinks in his hand.

RANDY

I have a Vodka Cranberry Spritz or a Beer.

EMILY

I've never had alcohol before.

RANDY

Might want to stick with the spritz, then.

He hands her the cup and raises his beer.

RANDY (CONT'D)

To your first taste of freedom.

They toast and drink.

EMILY

(coughs)

Ugh, that tastes awful.

RANDY

Sorry, not a lot of trained bartenders at these things.

Randy sits next to her. They both stare out at the fire in silence for a beat. Between the flames, Trey and his friends watch them in a scheming way.

EMILY

Oh great, just when I was starting to enjoy the night.

RANDY

Don't worry about Trey. He's all talk.

Trey and his friends disappear among the crowds. The makeshift DJ starts a slow song.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Wanna dance?

Randy holds out his hand. Emily hesitates and peers around to the other couples heading to the dance floor.

EMILY

Sure...

She takes his hand and allows him to pull her closer. She wraps her arms around his waist. He laughs.

RANDY

Let's try something a little more comfortable.

Randy takes one of of Emily's hands into his and places the other on his shoulder. Emily watches their feet, trying to keep up.

EMILY

I'm not sure if I'm doing this right.

RANDY

Try focusing on me instead.

Emily looks into Randy's eyes. Transfixed, she begins to sway along with him effortlessly. He smiles.

RANDY (CONT'D)

See? You're a natural.

The two dance until the very end of the song. Randy pulls away.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Another drink?

(Emily nods)

I'll be right back.

He disappears amongst the crowd. Emily blissfully makes her way over to a stack of hay bales. She watches as the others continue to dance and drink amongst each other.

Trey appears from behind.

TREY

Hello, *Just* Emily. Finally escaped the murder farm?

Emily turns to see Trey and his friends surrounding her.

EMILY

What is your issue with my farm, Trey?

TREY

Nothing. Aside from the fact that out of all the farms here, yours seems to be the only one prospering.

EMILY

We make our own fertilizer. You should try it some time.

TREY

Is that a confession?

EMILY

Excuse me?

TREY

People say some really fucked up things happen up there. It's more than just people going missing.

Emily takes a step towards Trey, smiles.

EMILY

We grow vegetables, Trey. Just like everyone else.

She turns and heads deeper into the bonfire. Trey and friends watch her like a hawk.

TREY

We'll see about that...

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Jeffery and Taylor sit across from each other, drunk and merry. A more upbeat record plays. Jeffery laughs, refilling his own glass. While his back is turned Taylor **tips his bourbon into an empty vase behind the couch.**

TAYLOR

I'm telling you, it was big as a house!
Just standing on the side of the road!

JEFFERY

I've lived in these woods for years,
Taylor. There is no such thing as
Bigfoot!

TAYLOR

How the hell do you explain the big
antlers then?

JEFFERY

Antlers?

ANNA

Are you sure you didn't see a moose?

Taylor looks at her blankly for a beat, then points.

TAYLOR

It *was* a moose!

Jeffery and Taylor both cackle. Anna chuckles and takes
Taylor's empty glass, replacing it with a mug of tea.

ANNA

I think you've both had enough alcohol.

JEFFERY

Oh, come on! One more isn't going to
hurt.

TAYLOR

I have to agree with Anna on this one. My
head is swimming.

ANNA

The tea will help settle everything.

Taylor notices the powdery substance but still raises the
mug to his lips. He doesn't drink it.

TAYLOR

You know? I'm really sleepy all of a
sudden.

Anna walks over with a warm smile.

ANNA

That's the tea for you. Makes you sleep
whether you want to or not.

She helps him up. His knees buckle. Jeffery watches as
she guides him down the hall and into the

GUEST BEDROOM

Where she eases him onto a small twin bed. He slumps against the pillow in a drunken way.

TAYLOR

You wanna know something funny?

Anna pulls a blanket over him and tucks him in.

ANNA

What's that?

TAYLOR

You remind me of my college professor.
She was so kind and warm...

ANNA

(smiles)

That's nice, Taylor. Now try to get some sleep.

Taylor begins to snore softly. Anna quietly retreats out of the room. Just as she's closing the door, Taylor stirs.

TAYLOR

(mumbles)

Her screams were angelic.

Anna pauses.

ANNA

Did you say something, Taylor?

Taylor's soft snoring continues. Anna watches him for a beat, unsure of what she heard. Finally, she closes the door.

EXT. BONFIRE CLEARING - SAME TIME

Emily and Randy dance close to the fire. Emily continues to check over by the haystack but Trey and his friends have disappeared. She takes a gulp from her cup.

RANDY

Slow down there, Emily. That's like your fourth vodka cranberry.

She ignores his warning, continuing to search the crowd.

Randy looks around as well.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Is everything okay?

EMILY

Hm? Yeah! I'm just...having a really good time.

She smiles reassuringly. Randy smiles back, uncertain. For a moment, Emily lets her guard down and enjoys the night with Randy.

Then, Randy's phone begins to vibrate. He ignores it.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Who's that?

RANDY

(smiles)

Doesn't matter.

They continue to dance. Emily starts noticing that everyone in the crowd slowly stops dancing and looks at their phones. Then, the music cuts out.

RANDY (CONT'D)

What now?

Randy takes out his phone and frowns.

EMILY

What's going on?

RANDY

Police are looking for somebody around here. A murderer.

Emily stops. She reaches for her phone, realizes it's still in the truck. She goes pale. She looks around as the murmuring grows.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Emily?

EMILY

Maybe we should go?

RANDY

Hang on, I think they're about to release a sketch of the prime suspect.

Emily begins to panic. Her breath gets short as the crowd begins to merge into each other.

EMILY

Randy...I don't think--
(vomits)

RANDY
(shocked)
Oh, fuck!

The entire crowd laugh and point their phones toward Emily and her vomit stained dress. Emily remains petrified.

Randy springs into action, pulling Emily from the crowd and grabbing two water bottles on the way to the forest line.

EXT. FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

Randy guides Emily deeper into the woods where a few couples have taken up residency for making out.

They find a clearing just out of view from the bonfire. Randy hands Emily a water.

RANDY
Drink this.

EMILY
Randy, I'm so sorry.

RANDY
Relax. You should have seen me with my first sip of alcohol. I could only finish half a hard cider before I upchucked.

Emily chuckles. Randy removes his shirt and wets it. Emily blushes and turns away.

EMILY
What are you doing?

RANDY
The last thing I want is your dad questioning why you were returned home with vomit on your dress.

Using his shirt, he cleans Emily's dress. She smiles and washes her mouth out with the water. Then, she takes a few gulps.

EMILY
You're a really good person, Randy.

RANDY
(winks)
Just looking out for my favorite customer.

He finishes the clean up and stands. Emily looks deep into his eyes. Randy brings himself closer to her. She lifts her chin slightly as Randy lowers his lips onto hers. It's brief yet tender kiss.

Randy's phone vibrates.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Gosh, damnit!

(pulls phone out)

Oh, shit. They released the sketch of the suspect.

EMILY

There's only one?

RANDY

Yeah, take a look.

Randy shows his screen, on it is an impressive sketch of Taylor's face. Emily examines the sketch trying to figure out where's she's seen him before.

RANDY (CONT'D)

We've got to get out of here.

Emily snaps out of her thought.

EMILY

What?

RANDY

There's a mandatory curfew while police search for him. Let's go.

Randy holds Emily's hand and guides her out of the forest. As they exit, she notices the crowd around the bonfire slowly dispersing as well.

INT. FARMHOUSE - SAME TIME

Anna quietly walks around the house locking the windows, doors and turning off all of the lights. She steps out into the

BACKYARD

And makes her way down to the forest line. Jeffery exits the barn, gripping an axe in his hand.

JEFFERY

Not joining?

ANNA

I'm sure you can handle this one on your own.

He enters the farmhouse and locks the door behind him while Anna continues to the tree line.

A plume of smoke rises in the distance. Anna lights a cigarette and watches the smoke drift toward the stars.

INT. FARMHOUSE - SAME TIME

SERIES OF SHOTS - JEFFERY PREPARES FOR HIS KILL

--Jeffery checks that all doors and locks have been latched.

--He unplugs the landline.

--He slowly makes his way down to the Guest Bedroom.

He takes a deep breathe outside the room, settling his grip on the axe. Then, he opens the door and enters silently.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Taylor is still fast asleep, the covers covering his body. Jeffery towers over him and slowly raises the axe above his head.

Beneath the bed, Taylor watches Jeffery's feet. A hunting knife rests against the floor beside his hand.

Jeffery brings the axe down. A pillow bursts, filling the air with feathers. He removes the covers, confused. Taylor slashes across the back of Jeffery's calf. Jeffery cries out and drops to one knee.

Taylor scurries from underneath the bed. Jeffery swings his axe but misses Taylor. The blade buries itself into the bed frame. Taylor makes a run for it. Jeffery grabs him by the shirt and throws him to the wall.

The two men strain against each other. Taylor grins through clenched teeth.

TAYLOR

(mocking)

No bedtime story, Jeffery?

Jeffery strikes Taylor with his fist then throws him to the bed. He reaches for the axe, Taylor slashes his hand with the knife and delivers a swift kick to his injured leg.

Jeffery buckles to the floor. Taylor grabs his head and slams it into the bedpost. Jeffery falls, unconscious.

Taylor watches him for a beat, then removes the axe from the bed frame, and exits the room.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Anna continues to smoke outside, completely oblivious to the struggle inside. She smiles in a reminiscent way.

ANNA
(softly)
Hope it's a great party, Emily.

TAYLOR
I'm sure it's to *die* for.

Anna swings around. Taylor strikes her across the head with the butt of the axe. She collapses to the ground, unconscious.

EXT. CORNER STORE - LATER

Randy parks beside Emily's truck. She gets out before he cuts the engine.

RANDY
Hang on, Emily! You sure you're okay to drive?

EMILY
(gets into her truck)
I'll be fine.

RANDY
You sure? I can follow behind you in case you start swerving.

Emily starts the truck and smiles over to him.

EMILY
I had a really nice night, Randy. Let's do it again soon!

RANDY
(smiles)
Any time.

She shuts her door and pulls out of the lot. Randy watches as she books it down the highway.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Anna opens her eyes. Her hands are bound behind a pipe bracket beside the water heater, her mouth is gagged. Jeffery sags beside her, tied to the same bracket. Blood pools beneath his leg.

Anna shoves him. His eyes open weakly for a moment then closes.

Taylor sits on the bottom stair, cutting slices from an apple with his hunting knife. He examines the collection of luggage.

TAYLOR
Let me guess. Big sale on Tumi?

Anna glares at him. He approaches the wall and opens one of the suitcases.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
I've got to hand it to you, Anna. You almost had me fooled. Warm, inviting BNB completely isolated from the world. It's the perfect set up! Wish I had thought of it...

Anna lunges as far as the cord allows. Taylor turns to her, emotionless.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
(flat)
You're both going to die tonight, Anna. It'll be brutal, gruesome, and unforgiving.

The sound of the truck pulling up the driveway makes Anna's eyes go wide with fear.

A sadistic smile stretches across Taylor's face.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - SAME TIME

Emily parks the truck and exits. She looks around the area. It's quiet. No sign of her parents, Taylor or even wildlife.

Aside from the kitchen light in the back, the farmhouse is completely dark and serene. Cautiously, she approaches the house and enters.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Emily makes her way down the entrance hallway. Dishes clatter in the kitchen. She stops. Someone else is in the house. She backs away towards the stairs. A floorboard CREAKS.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Is someone there?

She stops. Looks at the stairs, then decides against it. She lets her shoulder bump the wall. She laughs loudly at herself.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Emily enters in a drunken manner. She spots Taylor and screams.

EMILY

What the fuck?!

TAYLOR

Whoa, easy there!

EMILY

Who the fuck are you?!

TAYLOR

I'm just staying for the night. Your parents said it was okay!

Emily narrows her eyes at Taylor and approaches him.

EMILY

(suspicious)

Wait a minute. I *know* you.

Taylor becomes serious.

TAYLOR

I highly doubt you do.

Emily leans in closer. Taylor tightens his fist, ready to attack.

EMILY

Nope! I'm just drunk.
(she holds out her hand)
I'm Emily. Farmer's daughter.

Taylor narrows his eyes slightly but shakes her hand.

TAYLOR

Taylor. Confused guest.

EMILY

(whispers)
Can I tell you a secret, Taylor.

TAYLOR

Um, sure?

EMILY

I'm *really* fucking hungry right now.

She breaks away from Taylor and makes her way over to the fridge. Taylor watches her, assessing her behavior like a hawk.

Emily takes out the dinner from earlier and plops it on the counter. Then, she begins opening each drawer.

TAYLOR

I don't mean to pry, but aren't you a little young to be drinking?

EMILY

(chuckles)
Aren't you a little old to be asking teenage girls that question?

Taylor smiles, genuinely. Emily continues to search the drawers. She finds blunt objects but nothing that can be used for a weapon.

TAYLOR

You looking for something in particular?

EMILY

Cutlery?

TAYLOR

That's funny. I was looking for the same thing before you walked in. It's almost like your parents don't believe in sharp objects.

EMILY

Yeah, they can be a little weird.

(beat)

...where are my parents, by the way?

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Anna braces both feet and pushes herself up the wall. The cord bites into her wrists behind the pipe bracket. She gets halfway up, then one foot slides through Jeffery's blood. She falls back against him.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

A soft *THUD* comes from below.

Emily glances towards the basement door as she warms her food in the microwave while Taylor watches her from the dining room table.

EMILY

My parents have always been night owls.

I'm surprised they turned in so early.

TAYLOR

Guess we've all had a lot to drink tonight.

The microwave beeps. Emily removes her food then sits down across from Taylor. She picks at her food with her fingers.

EMILY

(mouthful)

I hope I'm not keeping you up.

TAYLOR

Not at all. I'm enjoying the company.

EMILY

Traveling by yourself must get pretty lonely.

TAYLOR

Not when you've got hospitable hosts like yourselves.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Anna spots the **breaker box**. She shifts her body up the wall once more then stretches her leg out towards the breaker box's lever. She almost reaches it!

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

TAYLOR

You seem a little nervous, Emily.

EMILY

It's not often I have such a captive audience while eating.

Taylor smiles. A heavy silence fills the room.

TAYLOR

You'll have to excuse my rudeness. I just find it fascinating...

EMILY

Find *what* fascinating?

TAYLOR

(flatly)

How good at lying you and your family are.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Anna throws her leg out, *SCHOOOMP!* The lever descends.

The farmhouse plunges to darkness.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Taylor's chair scrapes across the floor. Emily drives the table forward connecting to his stomach. He falls backward. She runs for the hall. His hand closes around her ankle and he brings her to the floor.

Taylor drags her toward him, pulling the hunting knife from his knee holster. Emily kicks frantically, hits the knife across the floor.

He grabs the back of her head and slams it into the floor once, twice. Emily breaks free and drives her heel into his stomach. Taylor falls back. Emily gets up and grabs a chair. Taylor charges her, Emily swings, knocking him to the side.

She drops the chair and disappears into the hallway as Taylor gathers himself. He stands, presses a finger to his temple and realizes he's bleeding.

TAYLOR

Alright then, Emily. Let's play.

INT. FARMHOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Emily slips behind the couch and waits, listening.

Taylor enters the HALL, hunting knife gripped in his hand. He checks the closets and up the stairs.

TAYLOR

It's obvious you know who I am, but I'm still not sure about you...

He spots the curtain behind the couch move slightly.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I mean, do you know what your parents have hiding in the basement?

He creeps closer. Behind the couch, Emily crouches, waiting for her moment to attack.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Are you part of their motive or just an innocent bystander?

He's inches away. Emily holds her breath.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Either way...

(beat)

...none of you are making it out alive.

BEEP! BEEP! A car horn blares from outside.

Taylor pauses as headlights flood the windows in a bright light. Trey and his friends holler out into the night, drunk.

TREY (O.C.)

Oh, Emily! I'm home!

Taylor stares into the headlights for a beat before exiting the living room. The back door opens then slams shut.

Emily breaks from behind the couch and heads up the stairs.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Trey and his friends have parked their truck right behind Emily's truck. They scatter around the farmhouse, destroying the property as they yell for Emily to come outside.

Taylor comes around the house, the knife hidden against his leg.

TAYLOR

Can I help you gentlemen?

TREY

I'm looking for Emily. You mind grabbing her for me so we can have a chat?

TAYLOR

Emily is a little tied up at the moment.
How about you and your friends go home?

Trey cackles at the request as his friends continue to destroy the farm. He steps closer to Taylor.

TREY

How's about you get the fuck out of my way before I beat the shit out of you too.

Taylor stares blankly at Trey.

TAYLOR

Come on, boys. Let's not shed more blood than needed.

Trey laughs comically.

TREY

You're weird as shit! Can't be from around here. Although...
(leans closer)
...Why do I feel like I've seen you somewhere before?

SCHWIP! Taylor's arm slides across Trey's neck. Trey gasps for a breath that doesn't come. A stream of blood pools onto his shirt.

TAYLOR

(nonchalant)

Just one of those faces, I guess.

Trey buckles to the ground and convulses. His friends watch in shock as he struggles to breathe. One of them charges Taylor and throws a fist. Taylor stabs him in between his knuckles and rips the knife violently.

The boy screams in agony as he looks at his deformed hand. Taylor grabs the boy by his hair and shoves the knife into his temple. The screaming stops. The boy goes limp.

The other two scream and run towards the forest line. Taylor lets the boy drop to the ground and calmly walks after them.

INT. EMILY'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Emily watches the entire scene unfold. She waits until Taylor disappears into the forest before grabbing the **pocket knife** from her bed and heading down the stairs.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME TIME

Randy pulls into his driveway. As he gathers his things, something *clunks* to the floor. He looks down, it's Emily's phone.

He smiles and picks it up. He ponders for a moment, then starts the car up. He pulls out and heads back to the highway towards her farm.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Emily rushes down the stairs and hears Anna and Jeffery struggling to get free. She finds the breaker and lifts the lever. The lights return.

Anna and Jeffery give muffled yells to Emily. She goes over and removes the gags.

ANNA

Are you okay?!

EMILY

I'm fine! Just hold on.

She cuts the restraints from both of them. Anna hugs Emily tightly. Jeffery struggles to keep himself upright.

JEFFERY

Where is he?

EMILY

Outside. Dealing with the others.

ANNA

Others?

EMILY

A boy named Trey and his friends.

JEFFERY
(enraged)
You brought people *here*?!

EMILY
I didn't invite them! They just--
(notices the pool of blood)
Dad...?

Anna follows Emily's gaze.

ANNA
Emily, go get the first aid kit.

JEFFERY
I'm fine. We need to find him before it's
too late!

Jeffery charges for the stairs and crumbles to the ground.

ANNA
Don't move!

Emily dashes back up the stairs. Anna grabs a dirty shirt and presses it to Jeffery's wound. He winces.

JEFFERY
I'm going to kill that little bastard.

ANNA
You'll get your chance. First we need to
take care of this.

Emily returns shortly after with the first aid kit. Anna takes it and gets to work. Emily watches in complete shock.

ANNA (CONT'D)
How many were out there?
(Emily doesn't respond)
Hey! Focus, Emily.

EMILY
Four. He killed two. The others ran into
the woods.

JEFFERY
Those woods are treacherous and stretch
on for miles. He'll never find his way
back.

ANNA
He'll find a way.

EMILY

How can you be so sure?

ANNA

Have we ever let anyone live past the night here?

Anna looks between Emily and Jeffery. All three nod.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - LATER

Light fills the windows. Music drifts across the yard from the record player.

Taylor emerges from the woods alone. Wipes the knife on his trousers. He stops beside Trey's body then looks up to the second floor window. A shadow dashes past.

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY

Taylor enters. The music reaches the end of the record. A dry, repeating CLICK is all that's heard.

He looks into the kitchen. The basement door is open along with an overturned table and broken chair.

He looks towards the foot of the stairs, a dark red smear is plastered on the wall. Another on the banister. A floorboard creaks overhead.

TAYLOR

Aren't we a little old for hide and seek?

He receives no answer.

He grips the knife and follows the blood upstairs. Emily crosses the landing, sees him, then runs into her bedroom, closing the door. He approaches the door and tries to open it but it's locked.

Behind him, Jeffery emerges from the bathroom, axe raised. He swings. Taylor ducks. The axe SPLINTERS the doorframe.

Jeffery wrenches it free as Taylor slashes at him. He blocks the knife with the axe handle and slams Taylor against the wall. The knife CLATTERS to the floor.

Jeffery strikes again, catching Taylor across the face and sending him tumbling down the stairs. Jeffery descends the stairs with the axe.

Taylor struggles to his feet. Jeffery raises the axe and brings it down. Taylor dodges to the side. The blade buries itself in the floor. Taylor kicks his wounded leg, causing him to buckle.

Taylor lunges, grabs Jeffery by the head, and drives his face into the exposed axe blade. The pick PIERCES his eye. Jeffery lies motionless. A faint twitch runs through his fingers.

ANNA
(horrified)

NO!

Taylor looks up to Anna and Emily. He smiles and kicks Jeffery's body to the side. He removes the axe from the floor and points it to the two of them.

TAYLOR
Don't worry. You'll see him soon enough.

He marches up the stairs. Anna and Emily run back into

MASTER BEDROOM

Locking it behind them.

Taylor kicks the door open. It's empty. A small breeze flows through from the open window. He approaches it.

Emily leaps onto his back, plunging her pocket knife into him again and again. Taylor howls, clawing at her before grabbing her hair and hurling her to the floor.

He raises the axe, Anna slams into him. They crash to the floor, wrestling for the weapon. Emily charges, knife raised. Taylor sees Emily and releases the axe, sending Anna stumbling backward.

He dodges Emily's blade and drives an elbow into her face. Anna swings, sinking the axe into Taylor's shoulder. He screams, kicking Anna hard in the stomach. She collapses.

Taylor rips the axe free and buries it in Anna's chest.

EMILY
NO!

Anna reaches desperately toward Emily as she slides down the wall, a streak of blood trailing behind her. Taylor plants his boot against the axe, driving it deeper. Anna goes still.

He tears the axe free and turns to Emily, trapped and terrified. He advances, a cruel smile spreading across his face. He raises the axe.

Then, thundering footsteps!

Jeffery bursts through the doorway, bloodied and battered. He tackles Taylor. Both men crash through the window. Glass shatters followed by a distant, sickening **THUD**.

Silence.

Emily crawls toward the shattered window. Below, Taylor and Jeffery lie twisted and motionless. She watches Taylor closely, waiting.

Anna coughs softly behind her. Emily spins and scrambles to her side.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Mom!

Emily rushes to Anna, wrapping her arms around her. Anna smiles weakly, stroking her daughter's hair.

EMILY (CONT'D)

He's dead. We got him.

ANNA

(weakly)

That's my girl.

Emily notices the blood soaking Anna's clothes.

EMILY

I'll go get the kit.

ANNA

No. Stay here with me.

EMILY

Mom, you'll...

ANNA

Shh. Just for a little while.

Emily hesitates, then settles beside her.

EMILY

(beat)

I know what I want to do with the money.

ANNA

Yeah?

EMILY

I want to go far away with you. We'll get another farm and raise animals as well as grow vegetables.

(beat)

But we'll do it *our* way instead. How does that sound?

ANNA

(weakly)

Sounds beautiful...

(beat)

...but I don't think I can join you this time.

Emily shakes her head, tears beginning to spill.

EMILY

No. You have to. It's my decision. It's my *wish*.

ANNA

(wipes the tears)

What happened to being too old for wishes?

EMILY

(beat)

Mom...I can't do this without you.

ANNA

You can.

Take the money. Burn this place.

Disappear.

EMILY

(mournful)

I can't...

ANNA

You *can*.

It was always going to end like this, Emily. We all get what we deserve. You deserve better.

Emily breaks, pulling her mother into a tight embrace. Anna holds her. For one fleeting moment, they're just mother and daughter.

Then, Anna's grip loosens. Her hand slips from Emily's back.

EMILY

Mom?

Nothing. Emily pulls away. Anna is gone. Tearful, Emily gently brushes the hair from her mother's face, then kisses her forehead.

She crosses to the bed and lifts the loose floorboard, taking the tin box out. She looks back at her mother one last time before exiting.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Emily stumbles onto the porch. Headlights sweep across the driveway. Randy pulls up, spotting her bloodied clothes. He jumps out, holding her phone in the air.

RANDY

You'd lose your head if you--Emily?!
Jesus, what happened?!

EMILY

Randy, what are you--

Behind him, Taylor staggers from the darkness, bloodied and barely standing. The axe hangs from one hand.

EMILY (CONT'D)

--RANDY!!

Randy turns but it's too late. The axe swings. A sickening SCHWICK cuts through the air.

Randy's head hits the dirt, his body follows a moment later.

Emily is petrified. Taylor smiles sadistically, blood dripping from the axe.

TAYLOR

You didn't think it would be that easy,
did you Emily?

Emily bolts towards the BARN.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

That's right, you better fucking run!

He hobbles after her.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Emily slams the door behind her. Moments later, Taylor kicks it open.

It's dark and filled with farm tools. A massive industrial composter looms at the far end.

TAYLOR

Emily?

Taylor wanders deeper inside.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Was that boyfriend back there? He seemed nice.

The composter roars to life. Taylor spins and sees the machine churning but no Emily.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

You want to know something funny? I hadn't planned on killing any of you tonight.
I was genuinely looking for a place to crash!

A creak is heard overhead. Taylor looks up. Emily drops from the rafters, driving a **pitchfork** into his chest.

Taylor staggers, dropping the axe. Emily screams, forcing him backward toward the machine.

EMILY

In that case...
I hope you *enjoyed your stay!*

She gives one final shove. Taylor tumbles into the composter. His screams vanish beneath the grinding machinery. Blood spatters the inside of the machine.

Emily watches, trembling, as the last of Taylor disappears into the machinery. Only bloodied mulch remains. She shuts it off. Silence fills the barn.

She catches her breath, then grabs a gasoline can by the door. She exits.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - LATER

The farmhouse and barn burn against the night sky.

Emily watches from the tree line, firelight dancing across her bruised face. The tin box in one hand, her acceptance letter in the other.

Distant police sirens approach.

Without looking back, Emily disappears into the woods.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

An empty stretch of road, surrounded by endless fields. Emily trudges along, bloodied and exhausted. In the distance, a lonely gas station comes into view.

INT. GAS STATION

A small establishment with typical gas station inventory. A YOUNG CLERK (18) scrolls through his phone behind the counter.

Emily enters and approaches the counter. He doesn't acknowledge her.

EMILY

Can I please use your restroom?

YOUNG CLERK

(nonchalant)

Customers only.

Emily stares at him blankly, then looks over to a rack of cheap clothing. She grabs a hoodie, shirt, and pants, dropping them on the counter with a hundred-dollar bill.

YOUNG CLERK (CONT'D)

Can't break a hundred.

EMILY

(tightly)

Keep the change.

He shrugs and hands her the restroom key.

INT. GAS STATION - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A cramped restroom. One stall and a cracked mirror is all that inhabit it.

Emily sits curled on the floor, dressed in her new clothes. Her old bloodied attire is piled in the trash can.

She sobs as everything she's endured finally catches up with her. After a moment, she forces herself up. In the cracked mirror, a battered stranger stares back at her.

She washes her face, straightens her hair, then tries her reflection once more. She goes for a smile but can't keep it for long. Tears continue to well in her eyes.

MOMENTS LATER

She exits the bathroom, returning the key to the counter. On her way out, she snatches a pair of sunglasses from a display.

YOUNG CLERK

Thank you, come again.

EXT. GAS STATION - MORNING

Emily steps into the sunlight, sunglasses on, tin box tucked under her arm. She starts down the highway. It's not long before a **semi-truck approaches**.

Emily sticks out her thumb. The truck slows to a stop. An older TRUCK DRIVER rolls down his window.

TRUCK DRIVER

You alright, miss?

EMILY

Heading to Boston. How close can you get me?

TRUCK DRIVER

My route goes right through it.

(looks her over)

Aren't you a little young to be hitchhiking?

Emily peers over her sunglasses.

EMILY

It's rude to ask a woman her age.

The driver chuckles but still looks concerned.

TRUCK DRIVER

Alright. Well, if that's where you're headed, hop in.

Emily climbs aboard.

INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Emily settles into the passenger seat. The driver glances over to her.

TRUCK DRIVER
(concerned)
You're awfully comfortable hitching a
ride with a complete stranger.

EMILY
Should I be worried?

TRUCK DRIVER
Well, I could be a serial killer.
(beat)
I'm not, but I'm just saying.

Emily stares at him, then bursts into laughter.

TRUCK DRIVER (CONT'D)
What's so funny?

She settles her laughter and looks out the window.

EMILY
I was just thinking...
(beat)
What are the odds of two serial killers
in the same place?

She loses herself in more laughter. The truck driver's concern grows.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The truck continues down the empty road.

Emily's laughter echoes.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END