

Creature Feature

screenplay by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The moon barely lights the tree covered ground. Only the faintest sounds of crickets trickle over the air waves. It would all be quite peaceful, except for...

FOOTFALLS. Running hard across the undeveloped forest floor.

HEAVY BREATHING. From over-exerted lungs.

A LARGE CREATURE, obscured by the darkness, crashes loudly through the undergrowth, obliterating the former silence.

SAM PERKINS, a man in his late twenties, runs as fast as he can maintain. His face is panicked. He doesn't turn around to see the lumbering shape that follows.

On either side of him, two other men, HORACE and JASPER, run in the same fashion, desperately trying to escape from whatever it is that chases them.

The three come upon a small creek and without thinking, plunge into the water (or leap across the gap). They reach the other side and look back for the shape.

HORACE

Do you think we lost it?

SAM

No.

Suddenly, the shape bursts out of the water (or out of the gap). They turn and run away from it again.

Jasper starts to drop back a little.

JASPER

I can't do it, Sam.

SAM

Come on!

They run a little further. Something snatches Jasper from his run. He screams, but Sam only closes his eyes and keeps running.

The scream continues across the suddenly quiet night until a hideous crunch cuts the scream off.

Sam and Horace continue running into the thick woods.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A passenger car navigates the road leading into a wooded area. By the looks of the scenery, one would think they were heading into Fangorn Forest.

The VOICE of EMMA DOBSON, early-twenties, drifts over.

EMMA (V.O.)

...and just based on the pictures,  
I think that having the arch on  
the back part of the lot with the  
woods in the background would  
look awesome...

INT. CAR - DAY

Emma sits properly in the front passenger seat of the car. Both feet are planted firmly on the floorboards and her seat is at a ninety-degree angle to the floor. She looks as if she could balance a book on her head despite the winding roads.

EMMA

The reception would be nearer to  
house itself, as far from the  
ceremony as possible so we don't  
mess up the wedding pictures with  
shots of the caterers.

MIKE HORTON, mid-twenties, sits casually at the wheel, driving. He smiles and nods as Emma speaks.

EMMA

We could use the kitchen to prepare  
the food and stuff, and of course,  
we'd use the house for changing.

MIKE

No where else out there to do it,  
really.

EMMA

Well yeah, Mike, but I love the idea of its isolation and we'll decide whether your summer house is in the running or not. I mean, we also have that big cathedral church downtown, which is also awesome, the church I grew up in, or that cute little wedding chapel on 91<sup>st</sup>.

MIKE

I don't remember you going to a church, Emma.

EMMA

Well, it's been a few years, so I'm really thinking about marking it off the list.

ETHAN (O.S)

Seriously, can you be quiet for two seconds?

ETHAN DOBSON, mid-twenties, reclines across the back seat. He looks like he was sleeping, or at least trying to.

ETHAN

I mean, I'm going to have to listen to this all weekend anyway. Can we have a break from it while we're driving?

Emma gets out her cell phone. Taps through the screens.

EMMA

You volunteered to come along, Ethan.

ETHAN

Mom volunteered me to come along. Something about making sure you two behave yourselves at this place in the middle of no where. Not that my being there will stop the weekend of non-stop P.D.A.

EMMA

You could have told her you'd come  
and just done something else.

ETHAN

She'd find out. She always finds  
out. Hey Mike, are we almost there  
yet?

MIKE

Just about. I'll let you know  
when there's about 15 minutes  
left.

ETHAN

How would you know that so exactly?

MIKE

You'll see.

He glances over to Emma speaking to her phone as she types  
something into it.

EMMA

Going ... to ... Mike's ... summer  
... home ... to ... plan ... for  
... wedding.

MIKE

Facebook?

She nods.

EMMA

Gotta keep my peeps up to date.

MIKE

You better finish quick, or you'll  
lose your signal.

EMMA

Why?

MIKE

No cell phone towers out here. Not allowed. So once we hit a certain point, the signal is completely gone, and you're left with a paperweight. We're very close to where my dad always grumbled about losing his service, so like I said, finish whatever you're doing.

Ethan groans.

ETHAN

So you're saying I'll be completely isolated with you two?

MIKE

'Fraid so.

ETHAN

Ok, tell me that your place at least has Dew or coffee or something.

MIKE

You should have brought that yourself.

ETHAN

What do you have?

MIKE

Water.

ETHAN

You're not serious.

MIKE

'Fraid so again.

ETHAN

I can't drink water.

MIKE

It's a fundamental element of the human body. Of course you can drink it.

ETHAN

I don't like it.

MIKE

It's good for you. You should drink more of it.

ETHAN

Yeah, whatever.

EMMA

Okay, done.

Emma's phone beeps as it suddenly reads no service.

MIKE

Just in time too. Be there in about fifteen minutes.

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

The car stops in front of the house, which is a common enough residential home but built into the side of a hill.

They all get out of the car and look at the front of the house. Emma cocks her head, as if studying the place.

EMMA

Well, it's less impressive in person, but I'm more here for the scenery than for the building itself.

Ethan stares at his phone.

ETHAN

Yeah, but who's going to want to come out here when there's no service?

They walk towards the front door as they talk.

EMMA

There's at least a house phone, right?

Mike shakes his head.

MIKE

Not even that.

EMMA

You're kidding. Why not?

Mike unlocks the front door and they all enter the house.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Mike talks as he gives them a tour of the house.

MIKE

This would be the living room. It's not too complicated really. My dad was a major workaholic, so my mother decided that for their vacation home, there would be no phone at all. That way, he couldn't obsess over what's going on at the office.

They walk into the hallway.

MIKE

Hall gives you the bedrooms and the bathroom's there at the end.

EMMA

Only one?

MIKE

'Fraid so, Emma.

ETHAN

Again?

MIKE

Yeah.

EMMA

That's weird on the phone thing.

MIKE

Well, his obsession with work was ruining our family time. They were always fighting about it when he was calling or being called. He sometimes left unexpectedly when he checked in. And this was anywhere we went.

They walk into the kitchen.

MIKE

Kitchen. Standard layout. Fridge, ovens, cabinets. You get it. It passes back through into the living room.

EMMA

So internet or anything?

MIKE

Nope. We have electricity, but zero communication with the outside world. That was how she wanted it here. I think there are phone lines in the house, but no jacks. She had blank plates put over the wire boxes.

Ethan points out the back door.

ETHAN

Backyard?

MIKE

Almost. One more stop first.

He walks through the living room (I think I got this right) to the door leading into the basement.

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY

They walk down the stairs into the basement area which is divided into four rooms.

EMMA

I think not having any communication would be scary. What if something happened?

MIKE

My mother has a satellite phone. She always had it charged when we were out here, but she hid it somewhere. Only she knew where.

ETHAN

Your dad ever find it?

MIKE

Nope. And believe me, he's tried before. She's busted him searching for it several times. She's never said where it is.

EMMA

These rooms would be perfect for changing and guests.

MIKE

Thought they might. Come on.

They walk back up the stairs.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

They walk back into the living room and Mike shuts the door behind them. They walk back toward the kitchen.

ETHAN

And your dad is military, right?

MIKE

Yup. That's all I've ever known him to do.

EMMA

But you didn't move around.

MIKE

Nope. He isn't typical military.  
He's never been deployed or  
anything. Doesn't do that kind of  
job.

Emma nods. Mike opens the back door and they walk outside.

EXT. HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

They all walk to the edge of a deck that overlooks the back yard  
as they chat.

EMMA

What does he do?

MIKE

Don't know. I only know what he  
doesn't do. Not what he does.

ETHAN

That translates to "secret military  
stuff."

Emma nods as she looks over the back yard, her jaw dropping in  
wonder. Whatever she sees in her head must be phenomenal as the  
back yard is nothing too spectacular.

EMMA

Oh wow. This will be perfect for  
the wedding.

She looks across the deck and then frowns.

EMMA

How do we get down?

MIKE

Oh, we have to go around to the  
side.

ETHAN

You'd think there would be stairs  
in the back.

MIKE

There used to be. They came down  
one year in a storm, and weren't  
salvageable to put back up. We  
just railed off the deck.

They walk around the side, but Emma doesn't take her eyes from  
the backyard. Upon seeing the stairs, she runs down them ahead  
of the boys and looks at the backyard surroundings carefully,  
still in wonder. The boys follow her.

EMMA

The arch would work perfectly  
right there.

She walks toward the back border of the yard.

EMMA

This is the aisle with chairs on  
either side. A carpet runs between  
them. My flower girls have strewn  
pedals over it.

She mimes walking down the aisle.

EMMA

And daddy walks me toward my future  
husband who waits for me next to  
the minister under the arch. My  
bridesmaids await my coming on one  
side as my fiancée's groomsmen  
accompany him on the other.

She reaches her "arch" and turns to face her invisible Mike, as  
he walks toward her with Ethan.

EMMA

And we take each others' hands,  
recite our vows, and live happily  
ever after.

She turns to the back of the house.

EMMA

And then we move on to our reception  
against the house.

She stares at the back of the house and stops. She taps her mouth with her index and middle fingers as she studies the back of the house.

ETHAN

What are you thinking about?

Emma freezes and rapidly lowers her hand into her pocket.

EMMA

Um, the reception. Just trying to decide whether we need to do anything with the back of the house.

MIKE

Tell you what: while you're working that out, I'm going to hit the bathroom. Can't wait any longer.

Emma nods. Mike walks back to the house, up the stairs and in. Ethan walks up to Emma and stands next to her, looking at the house as well.

ETHAN

A bit stressed, are we?

Emma laughs uncomfortably.

EMMA

You think?

ETHAN

Saw your fingers going there a minute ago. Are you needing a little something to take the edge off?

Emma looks at Ethan angrily.

EMMA

I swear, if you say anything about that around Mike, I will kill you.

She turns her gaze back to her imaginary reception across the back of the house.

ETHAN

I haven't. I won't. I doubt  
he'll care.

EMMA

I care, Ethan. I haven't had a  
cigarette in months, and I'm not  
going to change that now.

ETHAN

He has no idea?

EMMA

None. When we started dating, I  
changed clothes before I saw him  
and hit the mouthwash pretty hard  
to hide it.

ETHAN

I remember.

EMMA

He doesn't even know I ever smoked.  
You can't say I lied about it  
though. I mean, he's never asked.

ETHAN

Yeah, well, good luck with that.  
Are we ready to continue the tour?

EMMA

I'm still working on the reception.

Ethan looks at her for a long moment. Finally he shrugs.

ETHAN

Whatever. I'm going to see if  
anything inside has caffeine.

EMMA

Mike said you're out of luck  
already.

ETHAN

Looking anyway. I mean, everyone  
has coffee somewhere.

He walks toward the house as Mike walks out the back door.

EMMA

Good luck with that.

As she gazes at the house, her two fingers return to her mouth and tap.

Ethan passes Mike at the bottom of the stairs to the deck.

MIKE

There's only water.

ETHAN

How can you not have coffee?

MIKE

We just don't. My parents hardly come out here anymore. That's why brought our own food. I don't even think there are cans of anything in there.

ETHAN

I'm looking anyway.

Mike shrugs. Ethan charges up the stairs and disappears inside.

Mike walks toward Emma, who still stares at the house. Her eyes dart to his approach. She drops her hand into her pocket.

As soon as Mike reaches her, she breaks from her study of the house and throws her arms around. He stumbles momentarily off balance and takes her in his arms.

MIKE

Whoa! Hi there, beautiful.

EMMA

Oh, Mike, are we really doing this?

MIKE

It looks that way, yes.

EMMA

I mean, if I'm this crazy now, can you imagine how I'll be as we get closer to the date. And what about after we're married and the rest of our life happens? You know I'm bound to only get worse.

MIKE

Oh, you're fine.

EMMA

Oh, come on. How do you put up with me?

MIKE

I really don't know. Somehow I manage.

Emma laughs. Mike pulls her closer.

MIKE

Seriously, it's because I want to. I want you.

EMMA

I just don't want you to get tired of me and leave. You could, you know.

MIKE

I won't. I promise.

EMMA

Why not?

He smiles.

MIKE

Because I love you.

She smiles broadly.

EMMA

Really?

MIKE

Really.

EMMA

I love you too.

They kiss gently.

Beyond the edge of the backyard, something rustles in the leaves or grass. Mike and Emma break their embrace and turn in the direction of the sound.

Nothing is there. Mike looks concerned, however.

MIKE

Maybe we should head back inside  
for the moment.

She looks at him, a little afraid.

EMMA

There isn't anything dangerous out  
here, is there? I mean, you'd tell  
me if there was, right?

MIKE

Of course I would.

EMMA

I love the view, but I don't want  
to put anyone in danger either.

MIKE

Yeah, that would really put a  
damper on your wedding day.

She hits him playfully on the shoulder.

EMMA

I mean it.

MIKE

Look, I've never known of anything dangerous out there. Nothing's ever disturbed my family in all the years we've come here. If anything is out there, I figure it's always just stayed away from people. For the wedding, there will be so many people around that wild animals will completely avoid it.

EMMA

Ok.

MIKE

All the same, let's go ahead and head back in for now.

EMMA

Yeah.

They turn and walk toward the house hand in hand. The rustling sounds again. They turn back as they walk and

A DOG emerges from the brush. It doesn't look like a nice dog either.

MIKE

I don't think it looks happy.

EMMA

Is that your vet sense talking?

MIKE

Could be. Walk casual.

EMMA

The fear thing?

MIKE

Yeah, that and if we run, it'll chase us whether it would have before or not. It probably got separated from its family on a camping trip or something.

He glances back and the dog trots after them.

MIKE

Little faster.

They walk a little faster. He looks back and the dog is gaining. Fear etches Mike's face.

MIKE

Run, Emma. Run!

He pushes her ahead of him. She runs at top speed, and he runs close behind her. The dog breaks into a full speed charge.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Ethan closes a cabinet.

ETHAN

Honestly, how can there be no  
caffeine here?

He glances out the back door to see Mike and Emma running from the dog.

ETHAN

What the hell?

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Mike and Emma reach the stairs and Emma bounds up them two at a time. Mike takes the first step, but the dog has reached him. It grabs his ankle with its teeth.

Mike yells in pain and delivers a swift kick to the dog's face. It yelps and tumbles backward, rolling down the hill.

Ethan opens the door.

ETHAN

What's going-

Emma pushes him in. Mike bounds up the stairs. The dog recovers and chases him.

Mike charges through the door and slams it behind him. The dog runs into the door creating a wet, slimy mark from its nose on the outside of it.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Ethan jumps back from the impact of the dog against the door.

ETHAN  
(panicked)  
What the hell is that?!

Mike calmly looks at his ankle. There are distinct bite marks where the dog took a fair chunk of his skin. Mike wraps his hands around a pressure point on his leg.

MIKE  
What's it look like?

ETHAN  
You didn't say there were dogs  
out here.

MIKE  
Emma. Second room down the hall.  
Two belts. Then Bathroom. Dark  
Towel.

Emma nods and runs into the hall.

ETHAN  
What are you doing?

MIKE  
Need to make a tourniquet. Paper  
towels, please?

Mike juts a thumb to the counter. Ethan stands and finds the paper towels. He hands Mike the roll.

Mike takes several towels and works on the blood flowing out of his ankle. Ethan looks at the dog still standing at the door, occasionally butting his nose against it.

ETHAN

You see? This is exactly why I hate animals.

MIKE

This doesn't look too bad, really.

ETHAN

I hate them. Why anyone though it was a good idea to have those mini-wolves as pets is beyond. They all go wild.

MIKE

Ethan, they usually only react that way if they're in danger or feel threatened. The dog is probably hurt or sick in some way.

Emma returns with belts and the towel. Mike wraps the belt around his upper leg and keeps swabbing with the paper towels.

ETHAN

Hell, they're all sick when they're born.

EMMA

Do you think he has rabies?

ETHAN

Oh, wouldn't that be perfect?

MIKE

I've seen rabies before, and it doesn't look like that. I would be willing to swear he's not rabid.

He wraps the towel around his ankle and holds it in place with the other belt.

EMMA

We should take you to see a doctor anyway.

MIKE

It's just a bite. If it's rabid,  
then I'll just need a booster. That  
can wait till we get back.

EMMA

Are you sure?

MIKE

Yeah, don't worry about it.

Emma looks at him, concerned.

MIKE

Hey, I'll have it looked at when  
we get back into town. If it starts  
looking bad, we'll go back early.

Emma sighs heavily and looks at his ankle.

MIKE

Besides, we wouldn't get far with  
that dog roaming around out there.  
Hopefully, he'll have run off by the  
time we're ready to leave.

Emma nods.

EMMA

Ok.

Though it doesn't sound like she means it.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is like a small, lit beacon on a dark landscape.  
Something rustles the leaves in the woods at the edge of the  
house grounds.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma puts away the last of the dishes. Dries her hands with a  
towel. The deck creaks outside the kitchen door. She turns her  
head to the sound.

EXT. HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Looking back toward the house, something can see Emma walk away from the sink. She walks across the room and the lights go off.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma stands for a moment with her finger on the light switch, staring at the back door in the dark. She slowly walks to the door. Looks out onto the darkened backyard.

It seems peaceful when-

An animal howls. She jumps back reflexively, turning her head to the sound.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Ethan sits on the couch reading a book. His head snaps up at the howl. Fear etches across his face.

IN THE KITCHEN

Emma backs away from the door and walks

INTO THE LIVING ROOM

where she smiles when she sees Ethan's panic.

EMMA

You all right?

He moves his head back down to his book.

ETHAN

I'm fine.

EMMA

You're sure?

ETHAN

Yeah, sure.

EMMA

Sounds like that dog is still out there.

ETHAN

You're not helping.

EMMA

Oh, I'm sure he can't get through the door.

ETHAN

Yeah. Ha ha. Laugh at my expense.

EMMA

So what are you doing?

He holds up the book.

EMMA

Really? You?

ETHAN

You would think that being out of range of every local station, they would have satellite or cable, but no. Why even bother?

EMMA

You didn't bring anything to do?

ETHAN

If I knew there was nothing here, I might have brought my guitar. At least I could play it openly here.

EMMA

Does dad know you have it yet?

Ethan laughs.

ETHAN

You're kidding, right?

Emma shrugs.

ETHAN

Look, dad doesn't know, and he's not going to. As far as he's concerned, I'm one happy little car salesman, ready and willing to take over the family - quote-unquote - business.

He scoffs.

ETHAN

Stupid business.

EMMA

Right. Then you haven't told dad.

He scoffs again.

ETHAN

No.

She shrugs.

EMMA

Well, it's your future.

She turns to walk back to the bedroom.

ETHAN

Hey, how's Mike's ankle?

EMMA

He's lying down. Well, I made him lie down. He was insisting on cleaning up.

ETHAN

Well, keep me informed, ok?

EMMA

I will. Good night.

ETHAN

Good night. Don't make too much noise.

Emma pauses and closes her eyes.

EMMA

Oh, I'm sure you have nothing to worry about.

She walks back to the bedroom. Ethan returns to his book.

ETHAN

Why couldn't they have comic books?

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mike reclines on the bed with earbuds in both ears. Emma enters. He takes one earbud out.

EMMA

How are you doing?

MIKE

Fine. It hurts a little, but I'll live.

EMMA

You said you were going to change the bandages.

MIKE

Yeah, I had a look at it, and it looks awful, but most injuries look worse before they get better. I found some antibiotic to put on it, though, so that'll help.

EMMA

You washed it out real good, right?

MIKE

Yes. It feels fine at the moment. I should have cleaned it better earlier, but I took care of it.

EMMA

So you're feeling all right then.

MIKE

Top notch.

EMMA

That's good.

MIKE

I thought so.

She saunters up to him.

EMMA

I just thought that since you had three of us in a house with only two bedrooms, you must be planning something.

MIKE

Really? And what might that be?

He sits up. She climbs into his lap and kisses him. He responds. She breaks long enough to either unbutton her shirt. She kisses him again.

Mike moves back away from her, breaking the embrace.

EMMA

(confused)

What?

MIKE

Emma, we've talked about this.

EMMA

I thought we were going to sleep together.

MIKE

Sleep, as in unconscious in the same bed. You know how I feel about doing anything more at the moment.

She moves off of him but doesn't leave the bed.

EMMA

I do know, but Mike, but we're not in the same place your parents were. We're engaged.

MIKE

I know it's not the same, but I just don't want to take any chances.

EMMA

I'm on the pill.

MIKE

Which leaves a three percent chance.

She huffs and pouts.

MIKE

Look, I understand how hard it is for you to deal with this. You're still not used to someone like me. Someone who wants to love you for who you are, not what you put out.

EMMA

I just don't want you to leave me.

MIKE

I'm not going to.

He leans in and kisses her.

MIKE

The time will come for us. I just don't want to risk bringing a child into the world before we're ready. I won't do that to anyone.

EMMA

And you're sure that will change when we're married. I mean, it's the same thing. Will you still have this fear?

MIKE

That's different. We'll be together because we choose to, not because of any kind of compulsion. I love you. And because I love you, I would rather wait.

EMMA

Mike, you're not your father.

MIKE

My step-father is my father. The asshole who knocked up my mother is nothing but a sperm donor.

EMMA

You're not the same.

MIKE

I just can't risk an accident like that ruining your life the way it ruined my mother's.

She sighs.

EMMA

Mike...

A loud pounding from the front door sounds through the house.

EMMA

Was that the door?

Mike nods and moves toward the door.

MIKE

Get your shirt on.

She grabs it and puts it on as Mike walks out the door.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike enters the room with Emma trailing behind. Ethan slowly approaches the front door. He and Mike exchange a glance.

ETHAN

What if it's the dog?

MIKE

The dog learned to knock?

Mike reaches the door and looks through the peephole. His eyes widen in surprise and he gasps.

He pulls open the door and Sam Perkins stumbles in. He is in bad shape. His clothes are disheveled, he is dirty, and he breathes heavily like he hasn't rested for some time.

Mike quickly closes the door. Everyone kneels next to the worn out stranger.

ETHAN

Emma, get us some...

Ethan looks at Mike. Mike rolls his eyes.

MIKE

...water. A glass of water.

ETHAN

Right.

Emma walks to the kitchen to grab the water. Ethan and Mike help Sam to the couch to sit. Sam is conscious, but not a lot of help.

ETHAN

Say, I don't suppose you saw a dog out there, did you?

Sam glances up at Ethan, confused. Ethan looks at Mike.

MIKE

Focus, Ethan.

Emma arrives with a glass of water. She hands it to Mike, who in turn, hands it to Sam. Sam chugs it thirstily.

SAM

Thank you...

MIKE

What's your name?

Sam brings the water down and takes a few deep breaths. His eyes are closed now.

SAM

Sam... Perkins.

MIKE

What happened, Sam?

Sam's breathing steadies and he doesn't respond. The three look at each other.

EMMA

What do you suppose...?

ETHAN

Maybe he was running from the dog.

MIKE

The dog was here.

ETHAN

I was hoping it wasn't.

MIKE

Then he just brought it back.

ETHAN

Oh.

MIKE

Well, there's no getting anything out of him now. He needs to rest.

EMMA

You think we should take off his shoes or something?

ETHAN

I'm not touching him.

MIKE

He doesn't look hurt. Just scared.

EMMA

Of what?

MIKE

We'll have to find out when he feels like telling us.

ETHAN

Should someone sit here and watch him?

MIKE

Thanks for volunteering, Ethan.  
I think I'll get some sleep.  
You coming Emma?

Emma smiles and follows Mike out. She waves to Ethan.

EMMA

Good night.

Ethan's jaw drops as he watches them go. The bedroom door closes. He looks between Sam and the bedroom.

ETHAN

What just happened?

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

IN THE BEDROOM

Mike and Emma sleep soundly. She is curled up onto his chest. While he sleeps, his hand absent-mindedly reaches to his leg and scratches lightly.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

the lights are on, and Sam sleeps where he originally passed out. Ethan sits in a chair, also sleeping.

Suddenly, Sam's breathing rhythm picks up. He moves violently. Ethan stirs. Sam sits up and screams. Ethan sits up, immediately awake.

Sam looks around, disoriented. His eyes fix on Ethan.

ETHAN

Dude, are you ok?

SAM

Who are you?

ETHAN

Ethan Dobson.

Mike and Emma enter the living room quickly. Sam darts his eyes to them.

SAM

Where am I?

MIKE

You're at my parents' vacation home. You stumbled in earlier this evening.

EMMA

Can I get you anything?

Sam stares at her for a long moment.

SAM

Water.

Emma takes the cup Sam used earlier and runs to the kitchen.

ETHAN

You sure drink a lot of water.

MIKE

Ethan, give it a rest.

(to Sam)

You said your name was Sam Perkins.

Sam nods.

MIKE

Can you tell us what happened?

SAM

How long have I been asleep?

Mike glances at a clock.

MIKE

About four and a half hours.

SAM  
Is it here?

ETHAN  
The dog?

Sam looks at Ethan confused.

MIKE  
I'd take that as a 'no.'

Emma returns with the water. Sam drinks it a bit more civilly than his last cup.

SAM  
No, the ... thing.

EMMA  
Thing?

Sam breathes a sigh of relief.

SAM  
You haven't seen it then.

MIKE  
I don't suppose so. Do you mind telling us what we haven't seen?

Sam closes his eyes and takes another deep breath.

SAM  
I don't know what it is. It's hard to explain.

ETHAN  
Short version?

SAM  
My friend Justin said that something bit him. We thought it was nothing, but then it got really infected, and he complained about itching and pain from other places on his body.

MIKE

So you have no idea what bit your friend?

Sam shakes his head.

SAM

I only know what he became. It was some kind of creature.

ETHAN

Creature?

SAM

I've never seen anything like it. It was huge. It wiped out my entire camp. When I got away, there was blood and ... stuff ... everywhere.

MIKE

We're in the woods. Something like that could be anything.

SAM

It wasn't just some animal.

MIKE

It was something inhuman, right?

ETHAN

(panicked)

Wait, there are other animals in the woods?

Mike and Sam both just stare at Ethan. Emma rolls her eyes.

ETHAN

What?

SAM

(to Mike)

Do you think I could get an aspirin?

MIKE

Yeah, I'll be right back.

Mike walks to the bathroom. Ethan walks after him.

ETHAN  
Seriously, what?

MIKE  
(as he disappears into the hall)  
Would you stay with Emma?

Ethan stops and turns back to his sister. She kneels down next to Sam, who lays his head back on the back of the couch. She seems to ponder her words carefully, as if afraid of upsetting the stranger.

EMMA  
So, what did this thing look like?

Sam shakes his head. He looks at the floor as tears and horror fill his eyes. He takes a deep breathe before he turns his gaze back to her and looks her in the eyes. He takes her hand in his. Ethan takes a reflexive step towards Sam. Sam ignores him.

SAM  
Listen to me. Promise me something.

Emma only stares silently and a little afraid.

SAM  
If I start acting like there's  
something inside me... Like I'm  
being eaten alive from the inside  
out. No matter how crazy it seems,  
I want you to kill me.

Sam looks at Ethan with the same desperation in his eyes.

SAM  
Please. I don't want to become  
whatever happened to Justin.

Emma shakes her head.

EMMA  
I can't-

SAM  
You must!

He lowers his voice to a forced, desperate whisper.

SAM

Your life depends on it. Your life.

(re: Ethan)

His life. Everyone's.

EMMA

Okay. Sure.

She looks at Ethan as if to say, "what else was I supposed to say?" Ethan shrugs. Sam appears satisfied with this, however. He releases her hand, leans back on the couch and closes his eyes.

Emma stands and takes a step away from him toward Ethan. She looks worriedly at Ethan for a moment.

EMMA

(mouthed to Ethan; MOS)

You think that dog...?

Ethan shrugs. Mike re-enters carrying two pills in his hand.

ETHAN

Hey Mike, maybe we should leave.

Mike hands the pills to Sam who instantly tosses them into his mouth and chases them with the water.

SAM

Thank you.

MIKE

(to Ethan)

Why?

ETHAN

Well, you know, this guy looks pretty bad off. Besides what he says happened to his friends, he also asked us to kill him if he starts acting weird.

MIKE

What?

ETHAN

I'm just saying...

Mike stands and walks to the kitchen, gesturing Emma and Ethan to follow.

IN THE KITCHEN

Mike turns to them.

MIKE

Look, we're not going to kill him. And the idea that there's something out there that's a danger to us is ridiculous. I've been coming out here since I was little and there has never been a problem.

ETHAN

Maybe it's changed out here though. How long has it been?

MIKE

Not very long. My dad's been really busy the last couple years and hasn't been keen on the total isolation on his vacations.

EMMA

I'm worried about ... whether he's going to be ok.

MIKE

We'll see how he is tomorrow morning, and if he wants to go into town, we'll take him then. There's no point in going out after dark, especially if there is something out there. We'd be safer leaving in the day.

Mike glances back to the living room where Sam has not moved.

EMMA

He just seems really certain about this.

MIKE

Look, his camp probably had an unfortunate run-in with a bear or something. It's rare, but it could happen. They're out there.

Ethan looks at him wide-eyed.

ETHAN

You never told me that.

MIKE

Dude, you freak at the sight of a puppy.

ETHAN

I just don't like-

MIKE

We'll be fine. Wild animals don't typically break into houses. We'll decide what to do in the morning. He can rest on the couch tonight. It looks like he needs it.

Back on the couch, Sam breathes deeply, already fast asleep again.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

The house looks almost peaceful resting in the morning daylight.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sam stands at the front window of the house looking out over the expanse of the front of the house like a sentinel on his watch.

Ethan casually walks up behind Sam.

ETHAN

Morning.

Sam nods. He never looks away from the yard.

ETHAN

So... What do you do for a living?

SAM

Auto mechanic.

ETHAN

Really? Well, I'm an auto salesman.  
Family business. Where do you work?  
Maybe I could refer people.

SAM

E and H Auto Repair.

Ethan nods.

ETHAN

Not sure where that is...

He glances to Sam who ignores him. Ethan mouths an "ok" and appears to be searching for something else to say.

ETHAN

So... Do you camp much?

SAM

Not anymore.

Ethan nods and rolls his eyes.

ETHAN

(more to himself)

Yeah, I guess I wouldn't either.

SAM

This was supposed to be the trial  
run for our great adventure. A  
cross country hike. We would  
live off the land. Be one with  
God and nature. All that.

ETHAN

Well, I guess you found nature.

Sam does not appear amused at all by Ethan's comment.

ETHAN

Sorry.

SAM

Three of us escaped the initial attack. Three. While we were running, it got another one of us. Horace and I were the only ones to get away. I lost him before I found you.

Ethan nods.

ETHAN

Um. I hope he's okay.

An awkward moment of silence.

SAM

So, how long have you been out here?

Ethan looks up in surprise - almost a little flustered, as if not expecting Sam to ask him anything.

ETHAN

Oh, um, well, we got in yesterday. The house belongs to Mike's family. They've had it for years.

SAM

We need to leave as soon as possible.

ETHAN

So, are you watching for that creature thing?

Sam turns to him, grim-faced.

SAM

There is nothing else worth looking for.

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Mike wears one earbud headphone whose line runs into his pocket. His foot rests on the edge of a counter and his pants are hiked up showing off the very nasty wound on his ankle.

The bite marks are black and swollen now. The area immediately around the wound is very red and turns to a jaundice yellow around its edges.

He lifts a sharp object and punctures the swollen area through a blackened tooth mark. Pus pours out and he catches it with a towel as he hisses in pain. He scratches around it.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Emma opens the door slowly.

EMMA

How is it looking?

MIKE

Not good.

He shows it to her. She winces.

EMMA

Oh, honey, that looks awful.

MIKE

Yeah, when we take our friend out there into town, we'll have to cut our own time out here short.

He squeezes some ointment onto an oversized bandage and places it over the wounds.

EMMA

Well, we've got the rest of our lives together. I'd rather you be taken care of right now.

He lowers his foot and places weight on it. He limps immediately.

MIKE

Oh. Yeah. I need that looked at.

They exit.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mike limps into the living room with Emma in tow. He walks over to Sam, who hasn't moved from beside the window.

MIKE  
How are you doing this morning,  
Sam?

SAM  
Fine.

MIKE  
I'm Mike, by the way.

Mike holds out his hand for a shake. Sam turns to him momentarily, shakes his hand, and then turns back to the yard out front.

MIKE  
Well? Is there anything out there?

SAM  
Not at the moment, but I know it's  
there somewhere.

MIKE  
Well, if there's nothing there,  
then we need to get going. You want  
to get out of here, and I've got a  
problem on my ankle that isn't  
getting any better.

Sam turns to him, finally.

SAM  
What happened?

MIKE  
Dog bite. Yesterday. Damn thing  
came out of no where.

SAM

Here?

MIKE

Yup. It must have had something I'm not vaccinated against, which is weird.

SAM

Why is that weird?

MIKE

I'm studying to be a veterinarian, and since I work in an vet's office, I'm vaccinated regularly against nearly everything an animal could bring in. Personally, I've never seen anything react this way.

Sam looks like he's thinking very hard about this. His eyes dart from side to side as he stares at the floor.

MIKE

So have you seen a dog out there?

Sam's eyes dart back up to Mike. He looks very frightened, but he shakes his head.

SAM

How does your bite look?

MIKE

Well, infected. About as bad as a bite can look.

Sam's eyes grow wider. His breathing shallows. He takes a step back from Mike.

SAM

I-

ETHAN

Hey, there's someone out there.

Ethan points out the window. Everyone looks out the window.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Across the open front yard at the line where the woods ends and the yard begins, a man emerges from the woodline. He looks exhausted, but smiles at seeing the house.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sam gasps.

SAM

Horace!

Without a thought, Sam turns and walks right out the front door.

ETHAN

Um, that's a really bad idea.

Mike limps out after Sam. Ethan shares a glance with Emma, but they follow Sam and Mike out.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

ON THE PORCH

Sam walks to the edge of the porch and calls out:

SAM

Horace!

AT THE WOODLINE

Horace looks up and spots Sam. He waves. He starts into a slow run to the house.

ON THE PORCH

Sam, Mike, Emma, and Ethan watch Horace run. Then, from behind him, they see a huge bi-pedal creature emerge from the woodline. It travels very, very fast. Their faces drop in horror.

SAM

Horace, run!

AT THE WOODLINE

Horace turns his head back to see what Sam saw. The creature is on him.

ON THE PORCH

everyone watches powerlessly as the creature grabs Horace and drags him into the woodline and out of everyone's sight.

SAM

No!

Ethan gasps and points, panicked.

ETHAN

Shit. Dog. Dog. Dog. Dog.

He bolts into the house, dragging Emma with him. The dog runs toward the porch from the side of the house where Ethan saw him.

MIKE

Get inside. Quick.

Sam is unresponsive, still staring where Horace disappeared. Mike drags him inside, limping still. He closes the door just as the dog comes up on the porch.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mike and Sam both fall to the floor. The dog thuds against the door. Sam is beside himself with grief.

ETHAN

What the hell was that thing?

Everyone looks at Sam. He recovers himself enough to answer.

SAM

That's what killed my friends.

ETHAN

I think we got that, but what is it?

SAM

Horace and I were the only ones left.  
Now, I'm the only one.

(to himself)

How do I tell everyone's families?

MIKE

Let's see if we can get out of here  
first? What can you tell us?

SAM

That thing used to be Justin. The  
one who was bitten.

EMMA

That thing out there used to be a  
friend of yours?

SAM

He got a bite just like you did.  
It swelled up like yours. I'll bet  
that dog is infected with whatever  
changed Justin. That means you're  
infected, and you'll change too.

MIKE

That's crazy!

SAM

Didn't you just see what happened  
out there?

MIKE

Yes. I saw it. Obviously that thing  
is capable of great harm. But it's  
more likely that your friend, Justin  
was infected by something, and that  
thing came from somewhere else to  
destroy your camp.

SAM

No, I told you what happened.

MIKE

Okay, so was it a dog that bit your  
friend?

SAM

I told you: he didn't know.

MIKE

Look, we know that this bite is serious. We know we've got to get out of here. So whether or not this is what you say it is makes no difference.

ETHAN

Mike, what if it is what he says?

MIKE

Ethan, it isn't rational. Seriously, a bite that will transform you - mutate you, as it were - into some inhuman beast? That dog has something. We can see that. It's crazy and gave me something that can hopefully be cured without my losing a leg.

SAM

I know what I saw.

MIKE

Do you really?

Sam only stares at Mike, caught off guard.

MIKE

I understand that something very traumatic happened to you. Losing your friends can't be easy, and I'm very sorry. But I say your friend's infection and that thing showing up are coincidence. It's at our doorstep now, and we have to deal with it, but I'm not going to turn into it. Why? Because the idea of a bite turning someone into a monster makes no rational sense. Not to be callous, but I'm sure what remains of your friend Justin is at your campsite, not within the DNA of whatever that is.

Sam looks at Mike for a long moment.

SAM  
I know what I saw.

Mike shakes his head.

MIKE  
Ok. You know what you saw.

SAM  
It started with the bite, and  
once it started taking over,  
there was no stopping it.

Mike glances outside to see the dog pacing in front of the house.

MIKE  
Well, looking outside, we have  
some time to see if you're right.  
We've got to get out of here, but  
we're definitely stuck until that  
thing wanders far enough off to  
leave.

SAM  
We should try and block the windows.

MIKE  
Animals don't usually-

ETHAN  
Eat people?

Mike starts to say something else, but decides not to.

ETHAN  
I think based on what we've seen  
blocking the windows would be a  
good idea.

MIKE  
Well, the only real vulnerable ones  
these along the front and probably  
the back door. We're lucky the  
dog didn't try to break the glass.

ETHAN

That should be easy then.

EMMA

(to Sam)

Do you think that will stop it?

SAM

I don't know. It couldn't hurt.

MIKE

All right. We'll block the windows.

EXT. HOUSE - DUSK

The dog paces in front of the house.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK

Something has been placed in front of the kitchen door.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Ethan and Sam stand at the window looking out into the yard through the furniture they used to block the windows.

SAM

You know, Justin was always a nice guy. The best. He never hurt anyone. Never mean to anyone. But after the bite...

Sam shook his head and sighed.

SAM

He was just... different. He'd lash out for no reason. He was violent just before. Before he changed.

ETHAN

How long do you think he'll stay out there?

SAM

No idea.

Ethan turns from the window and sits. Sam stays at the window.

ETHAN

Hey, Sam.

Sam turns to him.

ETHAN

Give it a rest for a minute. Have a seat. We're still not going anywhere.

Sam glances back outside for a moment and then walks to a chair and sits.

ETHAN

So, what do you do for fun when you're not running from flesh-eating monsters?

Sam gives him a dirty look.

ETHAN

Sorry.

Sam shrugs.

SAM

I just work on cars. I have an old one at home that I work on sometimes, but I stay pretty busy.

ETHAN

Just at the shop?

SAM

When I'm not at work, I'm helping the church keep their old vans and buses running.

ETHAN

They pay you for that?

SAM

They don't need to. They pay for the parts, but I do the labor for free. All of their vehicles really need to be replaced, but they're expensive. They finally replaced a bus recently, but I'm keeping the others going.

ETHAN

Well, that's all right then.

SAM

Yeah. What about you?

ETHAN

(proudly, with a flourish)  
Car salesman by day; musician by night.

SAM

Oh, are you in a band?

Ethan's shoulders drop.

ETHAN

No. I just play my guitar at home in my room.

SAM

Why secretly?

ETHAN

Because I'm supposed to be all about taking over the family business of selling cars, but I don't want it. If my dad ever found out I would rather be playing music, he'd kill me. I also have a girl I go out with sometimes when my dad doesn't make me work late.

SAM

Is she nice?

ETHAN

She's awesome. Great body. Great  
kisser. Freak in the sack.

Sam nods, looking away uncomfortably.

SAM

Hm. So how long have Mike and Emma  
been married?

ETHAN

Oh, they're only engaged.

SAM

Oh. But they're staying in the same  
room?

ETHAN

Yeah. What about it?

SAM

I just ... didn't think that was a  
good idea.

ETHAN

She's a grown woman. She can do what  
she wants. Granted, I'm only here  
to make our mom happy thinking I'm  
making sure nothing goes on, but  
let's be realistic. Stuff goes on,  
right? We're not children, are we?

Sam shakes his head, but more in disbelief than as an answer.  
Ethan appears annoyed by Sam's reaction.

ETHAN

Do you have anyone?

Sam shakes his head again.

ETHAN

Roommates?

SAM

I live with my parents.

ETHAN  
Really? At your age?

SAM  
You live with yours.

Ethan opens his mouth and then stops. He shrugs.

ETHAN  
Okay, good point.

SAM  
And I'm not hiding anything from  
mine either. Does your mother know  
your girlfriend is a-  
(finger quotes)  
-freak in the sack?

Ethan looks at Sam for a long moment, emotionless, but appearing caught.

ETHAN  
So... How 'bout them Chargers?

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DUSK

Mike reclines on the bed with his earbud headphone in his ear. Emma walks in and walks to a dresser. She opens a drawer and pulls out a brush. She runs it through her hair.

EMMA  
I hate manual labor.

MIKE  
I offered to help.

EMMA  
Not with your leg the way it is. I  
don't need it getting worse than  
it already is.

She finishes brushing. Places the brush back in the drawer and digs around for a moment.

MIKE  
What are you doing?

EMMA

I need to change shirts.

MIKE

You're fine.

EMMA

No, I sweat in this one. It's icky.

She pulls out a power adapter. She looks at it for a moment. Shows it to Mike.

EMMA

What's this for?

Mike looks at it for a second and than leans back again.

MIKE

It's to my mom's CD player. She usually ran it on batteries, but she said she kept an adapter here for listening to it in bed.

Emma places the adapter back in the drawer. She retrieves a shirt and changes it. Mike watches her. She catches his gaze.

EMMA

What?

MIKE

You do like to tempt me, don't you?

She smiles.

EMMA

If I can.

She walks to the bed and lies next to him.

EMMA

This isn't exactly how this weekend was supposed to go.

MIKE

I suggested games.

EMMA

I know, but how do you play games when everything is so somber?

MIKE

Yeah, that and Sam keeps looking out the window.

EMMA

Oh, I looked out there on my way in from the bathroom and Ethan's got him sitting down finally.

MIKE

Well, that's something.

They stare at the ceiling for a moment.

EMMA

How's it doing?

MIKE

It's fine.

EMMA

Are you sure?

MIKE

Absolutely. I feel fine.

He takes off his earbud and places his iPod on a night stand. He opens an arm to her. She looks at him and smiles.

She snuggles next to him. He puts his arm around her.

EMMA

Well, you've got to admit. This will be an interesting story for the children and grandchildren someday.

Mike chuckles.

MIKE

No one will believe it.

EMMA

Including us.

MIKE

You could tell it next week, and  
I won't believe it.

She laughs.

EMMA

Yeah.

He leans his face closer to hers. She turns her face to him.  
They kiss. She smiles at him and averts her eyes. He kisses her  
again. She responds to him.

He pulls his arm out from under her and rolls on top of her to  
kiss her again. She looks concerned.

EMMA

What are you doing?

He kisses her again.

MIKE

I need you.

EMMA

Now?

He kisses her again and then kisses her neck. She looks  
uncomfortable.

EMMA

Mike.

He looks at her.

EMMA

What about all that stuff you told  
me before about waiting and your  
biological father?

MIKE

You've wanted it long enough. Why  
not now?

EMMA

We weren't playing cards because of what's going on out there, and this takes a little more emotional commitment than that.

She props herself up on her elbows. He takes hold of her shoulders and pushes her down. She struggles against his grip, but he holds her arms tight against the bed as he kisses her neck again.

EMMA

Mike.

He continues what he's doing.

EMMA

Mike, you're hurting me.

He stops and looks at her again.

MIKE

What's wrong? I thought you wanted this. I thought you'd been around the block enough to like anything.

EMMA

I don't like it rough.

MIKE

You will.

Mike kisses her again on her neck. Then, he bares his teeth with a growl and bites her. Hard. She shrieks and hits him. He releases her.

EMMA

What's wrong with you?

MIKE

What's wrong with you? Haven't you wanted this since we met?

EMMA

Not like this.

They look into each other's eyes for a long moment, each with a very hard stare.

EMMA

Mike, get off of me.

Mike's stare breaks. Worry enters his expression, and he quickly climbs off her. He stands on the floor next to the bed. She quickly rolls off the bed and stands on the opposite side of the bed, facing him and rubbing her neck.

He turns to her, confused.

MIKE

I'm sorry.

EMMA

What was that?

MIKE

I... I don't know.

She sighs and looks away from him for a moment.

EMMA

What if... What if Sam is right?

Mike shakes his head.

MIKE

It's just not possible.

EMMA

Yesterday, I would have said the same about what just happened.

Mike stares at the floor. He nods.

MIKE

Maybe you should give me a moment.

Emma nods and leaves the room. Mike slowly sits on the bed, stunned.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Ethan and Sam relax.

ETHAN

So, once you get out of here, what are you going to do?

SAM

I don't know. Never wanted to do anything before. No more than I'm doing now, anyway.

ETHAN

You should go out with someone.

SAM

I think I will. Or I think I want to anyway. Never done it before.

ETHAN

Really? Never?

Sam laughs uncomfortably.

SAM

Big chicken.

ETHAN

Listen, maybe I can help you or something. I'll be your wingman.

SAM

Your girlfriend won't mind?

ETHAN

As long as I don't come home with anyone, she should be ok.

Emma enters. The guys look up at her.

ETHAN

Hey. Getting a little crazy back there?

EMMA

Heh, sure. We still have a dog?

ETHAN

Last time we looked.

She sighs.

EMMA

Can I talk to you alone?

Ethan shrugs. Sam stands and walks to the window. Ethan follows Emma into the kitchen.

ETHAN

What's wrong?

EMMA

He's getting worse.

ETHAN

Are you sure? You know he doesn't let these things get to him.

EMMA

Oh, I'm sure, and it's gotten to him. He's not getting any better.

ETHAN

And he feels the same way?

EMMA

Ethan, just trust me on this, ok?

ETHAN

Well, he's the doctor.

Emma scoffs.

EMMA

A veterinarian is not a real doctor.

ETHAN

We should find out what a veterinarian thinks of that.

Emma chuckles.

EMMA

You know what I mean. Even Mike is wanting a human medical doctor.

ETHAN

Nice clarification.

EMMA

(re: Sam)

What do you think of him?

Ethan glances back to the living room where Sam has resumed his sentinel stance at the window. Ethan shrugs.

ETHAN

You know, he's all right. He does think that dog is carrying whatever he thinks changed his friends. He's also convinced that Mike is going to change too.

EMMA

Do you think he will?

Ethan looks at Emma, surprised. He studies her face.

ETHAN

Did something happen?

EMMA

I'm just worried.

Ethan nods, not really believing her.

EMMA

So, Sam's an ok guy?

ETHAN

Oh yeah, he's fine. Kind of pathetic. He's older than we are and lives with his parents. Never dated. Lives at work and church. Made a point of saying something about you and your fiancée rooming together.

Emma scoffs.

EMMA

Wow. Welcome to the real world.

Suddenly, a scream issues from the bedroom. Ethan and Emma freeze a moment, as if they don't know what to make of it. They run down the hall and

INTO THE BEDROOM

where they find Mike standing next to the bed staring at it. He rubs his leg near his bite. He isn't putting any weight on the leg.

ETHAN

What's wrong?

Sam arrives behind them at the door.

MIKE

Something bit me.

EMMA

Where?

MIKE

I was sitting on the bed there, and I felt a sharp pain in my leg. It felt like something bit down hard and wouldn't let go.

ETHAN

Do you still feel it?

MIKE

No, I must have shaken it off. I guess it didn't hurt that bad. It just startled me.

ETHAN

How's your bite?

Mike raises his leg and shows the bandage covering it. The gauze on the bandage is completely soaked. The redness extends far beyond the edge of the bandage and almost his entire leg is yellowed.

EMMA

(horrified awe)

Oh, my God.

SAM

Nothing bit you. It wasn't anything in bed. It was the infection. It was the bite itself.

MIKE

Look, I know what it feels like when something bites me and this definitely felt like a bite from something external.

SAM

Have you ever felt something eat you from the inside?

MIKE

Of course not.

SAM

Then how do you know?

MIKE

Look, if it were a bacteria eating me from the inside out, then I wouldn't be able to feel it, would I? Bacteria flows through the bloodstream which doesn't have any nerve- Ow!

Mike jerks again, this time grabbing his arm. He scratches his arm, hard.

MIKE

What is it? Get it off!

SAM

Do you see anything?

Mike suddenly attacks his leg.

EMMA

What is it?

He frantically rubs and scratches his arms and legs.

MIKE  
Something... Biting... Burning...  
Hell, I don't know.

SAM  
I'm telling you-

EMMA  
Will you please shut up!

Sam stops and looks at her.

EMMA  
Look, I'm sorry about whatever  
happened to your friends, but  
this isn't some random person to  
me. Instead of telling us what's  
going to happen, which is apparently  
the worst thing we can possibly think  
of, why don't you help us?

Mike slowly stops scratching and breathes easier.

ETHAN  
Did it feel like-

MIKE  
Something eating me alive?

They all look at each other for a long moment.

MIKE  
We've got to get out of here somehow.  
We can come back for our stuff later.  
We've got to get me to a hospital.

SAM  
Medical treatment won't help.

ETHAN  
Listen, you. I'm not going to sit  
here and watch my future brother-  
in-law turn into whatever the hell  
you say he will. If you're not with  
(MORE)

ETHAN (CONT'D)  
us on this, then we're leaving you  
here, and I don't think I know you  
well enough to leave you inside.

Sam doesn't take long to think about this.

SAM  
I'm with you.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mike limps into living room leading the other three.

MIKE  
The dog is still out there, isn't  
he?

ETHAN  
Has been all day.

MIKE  
And our other problem?

SAM  
Haven't seen him since... You know.

MIKE  
Yeah. I think there's enough of a  
distance between the car and the  
woodline that we should be able to  
reach the car before it can reach us.

ETHAN  
What about the dog?

SAM  
Do we have anything to defend  
ourselves with?

MIKE  
There are a couple heavy iron  
skillets in the kitchen. If that  
dog is just persistent, you can  
probably beat it to death.

ETHAN

You want me to face off against it?

SAM

He wants us to.

ETHAN

Oh no, dude, I'm not taking on a dog.

EMMA

Grow up, Ethan. Be a man. I can't believe you're so afraid of a dog.

ETHAN

I have a right to be afraid of this one.

EMMA

You also have a responsibility to me and Mike.

Ethan takes a deep breath.

ETHAN

Ok, I'll be right back.

MIKE

Sam, at least keep him distracted, and then you and Ethan get to the car as fast as possible.

SAM

Ok. Hey, for what it's worth. I do hope you'll be okay.

MIKE

Thanks.

Ethan returns with two iron skilletts of different sizes.

ETHAN

Ok, I'm as ready as I'll ever be.

MIKE

Right.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The door slowly opens and Ethan and Sam exit first. Immediately, the dog bolts towards them.

ETHAN

(quickly, to himself)

Please, don't hurt me. Please,  
don't hurt me...

The dog pounces. Sam swings his skillet and the dog flies off to one side. Ethan yells and strikes the dog.

Emma supports Mike as they cross out the door. Ethan and Sam beat the dog into a bloody pulp. Even after it's dead, Ethan keeps beating what's left. Sam stares at Ethan, concerned.

SAM

Ethan, it's dead.

Ethan strikes it a few more times and then stops.

ETHAN

Sorry.

SAM

I guess we'll skip the omelets.

Mike and Emma walk down the stairs with Ethan and Sam close behind. A rustling sounds close.

SAM

Oh God. It's here. We've got to  
get back inside.

MIKE

We'll make it. Just keep an eye  
on that treeline.

Ethan and Sam stay close behind Emma and Mike as she supports his hobbling. They split and Ethan stays with Mike as Sam walks with Emma. Emma opens her door to get in. Mike opens the rear passenger side door.

Ethan takes ahold of the door as Mike hobbles around to get in the back seat. A shape arises from behind the car and approaches Mike. Ethan freezes. His eyes widen.

In a flash, the creature grabs Mike and drags him across the ground towards the treeline. He screams as he skids along the ground behind it. Ethan remains momentarily frozen.

EMMA

No!

Emma breaks into a run after them. Ethan breaks from his trance and goes after her.

ETHAN

Emma, no!

He tries to grab her but she shakes him off. He finally tackles her to the ground. She struggles against him.

ETHAN

Sam! Help me!

Sam arrives next to them. It takes them both to drag the screaming and struggling Emma back into the house.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan and Sam pull Emma inside. Sam closes the door. Ethan collapses with Emma. Emma immediately tries to go back out the door. Sam stops her.

She struggles desperately against him.

EMMA

No! Let me go! I've got to...

Her strength finally gives out. She falls to her knees and wails.

ETHAN

Emma... I'm sorry.

Emma looks at him angrily.

EMMA

You're sorry? You were right there. You were supposed to be protecting him.

ETHAN

It came out of no where.

EMMA

Why didn't you do something?

SAM

What could he do? Mike was dragged off before anyone could-

EMMA

(to Sam)

I've had enough of you! You've been nothing but negative since you got here. Give me a reason not to throw you out there right now.

ETHAN

Emma, this isn't his fault.

EMMA

We need to go after Mike.

ETHAN

We can't.

EMMA

Stop me.

Emma turns back for the door. Ethan steps forward and takes her by the shoulders.

ETHAN

I will, if you try to go out there.

Emma looks at Ethan for a long moment. Finally she falls into his arms and cries again.

ETHAN

I'm sorry. He's gone.

EMMA

There's got to be a chance.

SAM

I wanted to believe that too.  
I saw it snatch someone that was  
running right next to me. We all  
saw it grab Horace. He didn't  
come back.

Emma sobs against Ethan's shirt. He holds her and closes his eyes.

SAM

I'm sorry.

Silence. Not a sound as the trio holds an involuntary moment of silence for Mike except for the sound of Emma sniffing. Then-

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

Their heads snap up. Whatever is at the front door pounds again, loudly and desperately. Ethan rises to his feet. He glances at Sam. They both look scared as they slowly approach the door.

MIKE (O.S.)

Guys, let me in!

Emma's eyes grow wide and a shocked smile breaks on her face.

EMMA

Mike?

Sam looks thoroughly confused. He and Ethan take hold of their skillets and hold them at the ready. Ethan reaches forward and swings the door open.

Mike stands alone on the doorstep. He stumbles in, and they close the door behind him. Emma throws herself into his arms.

EMMA

Mike! Oh my God, I thought I'd lost you. Are you ok? Did it hurt you?

MIKE

I'm fine.

Sam and Ethan both stand over them, dumbfounded.

EMMA  
What happened?

MIKE  
It let me go.

ETHAN  
Just like that?

MIKE  
Yeah, it dragged me away from the car. Once we got past the treeline back there, it stopped and stood over me. Then it just ran off.

Emma hugs him.

EMMA  
I'm so glad you're ok.

MIKE  
Yeah, me too.

SAM  
You know, while I'm happy that you're ok, you'll have to forgive me for a moment if I have to ask why you're alive.

Emma rolls her eyes.

EMMA  
Can't you just be happy he's ok?

SAM  
I want to be. But this doesn't make any sense. I'm the only survivor out of nine people. I saw the bloody remains of some, and heard - yes, heard - it break the bones of another as I listened to him scream. Eight people died horrible deaths at the hands of this thing, and yet you lived.

MIKE

You act like this is a bad thing.

SAM

Don't get me wrong. I want it to be a good thing, but with your wounds, I'm not sure it is.

ETHAN

You just can't let it go, can you?

SAM

Someone's got to say it. I know none of you don't want to believe it, but this proves it. Mike, you're becoming one of them. It's the only explanation. They won't kill their own kind.

ETHAN

Those are pretty strong words. If they're that hostile, why not?

SAM

But why spare him? That's the only way this even makes sense. Why can't you see that?

MIKE

Since you're such an expert, what should we do?

Sam looks at him for a long moment. Everyone stares at him. He looks like he's about to rethink what is on his mind. He averts his eyes from everyone.

SAM

Well, I can't tell you what to do, obviously... But... I really think that... You know... if you're really turning into one of them... Then... You're... better off dead.

Everyone reacts negatively to this. Mike is almost instantly in Sam's face.

MIKE

Look if you have some kind of a problem with me, I'll let you take it up with that thing out there. You have no right to say something like that.

SAM

I wasn't trying to be cruel. You seem like a nice guy. I just know I wouldn't want to turn into that thing, and I'm sure you wouldn't either.

MIKE

You don't know me...

He punctuates the name by stabbing at Sam's chest with his finger. Sam reflexively backs away from Mike.

MIKE

...Sam. You don't know me at all. You can't even begin to guess what I want.

SAM

I'm sorry. I've just seen this happen once already, and I really think you're clinging to hope where none exists.

Mike makes a fist.

MIKE

I'm about to give you a dose of hope in the face.

SAM

I promise that's not necessary.

Ethan moves to stand next to Emma. He gives her a worried look. She looks worried as well. They stare back at Mike, dumbstruck, as this plays out.

MIKE

It'll make me feel better.

SAM

I'll let it go. I'm sorry.

Ethan finally steps forward.

ETHAN

Come on, Mike. Let's calm down.

Mike turns to Ethan with a crazy look in his eyes.

MIKE

Why don't you shut up, Ethan?!

Ethan freezes with a shocked look on his face. Emma's jaw also drops in surprise.

SAM

You know, just before Justin turned completely, he got really violent too. This is another sign that it's taking over. You have to try and resist.

MIKE

I think we've had enough of this creature talk.

Mike delivers his prepared punch to Sam's face. Sam spins from the impact and falls to the floor. He rolls to his back, blood streaming from his nose as Mike comes down on top of him for another hit. And another. And another.

Sam has his hand in front of his face in a desperate attempt at defense. Ethan grabs Mike's moving fist before it can impact again.

ETHAN

Mike!

Mike turns his face to Ethan, his eyes red with anger. Ethan flinches at the glare. He takes a deep breath.

ETHAN

It didn't need to come to this.

The two stare at each other for a very long moment. Finally, the anger melts away from Mike's face as if his personality shifted

entirely. His eyes dart around, like he's trying to recover his senses.

He looks down at Sam, who cringes at his glance. He looks over to Emma, who just looks scared. He lowers his arm as Ethan releases it.

Mike stands and walks away from all of them. No one moves. Mike stops near a wall, but doesn't turn back to them. They all watch him silently.

Mike turns and walks down the hallway. As Ethan tries to help Sam back to his feet, a door slams shut.

Emma looks toward the noise.

IN THE BATHROOM

Mike looks at himself in the mirror. His eyes are bloodshot and his skin is pale. He doesn't like what he sees. He opens the medicine cabinet and shifts some things around.

Pill bottles and other personal items fall into the sink and floor.

KNOCK KNOCK

EMMA (OS)

Mike? Mike?

He finally pulls a disposable razor out of the cabinet. He eyes it for a moment.

MIKE

(eyes never leaving the razor)

I'll be out in a minute.

EMMA (OS)

Are you okay? ... Mike?

He breaks open the razor and pulls the blade out. He throws his leg onto the counter.

He pulls the bandage all the way off. The wound looks even worse than it did before. He inches the blade closer to the bloody wound.

One last look in the mirror. Not liking what he sees, he opens one of the doors askewing his reflection.

IN THE HALLWAY

Emma looks beyond concerned. She rattles the doorknob again. Her voice barely holds its own against the worry on her face.

EMMA

Mike, let me in.

IN THE BATHROOM

He inches the blade closer and closer to his wound, completely ignoring Emma.

He closes his eyes, bracing himself.

IN THE HALLWAY

Emma leans against the door, playing with her engagement ring. Waiting. She fights back tears, but not very successfully.

Sam stands at the kitchen end of the hall holding a towel to his face. Ethan walks up to Emma.

ETHAN

What's he doing?

Emma shrugs and shakes her head.

EMMA

I've never seen him like this before. It scares me.

ETHAN

We're going to get through this. It will all be okay, you'll see.

EMMA

I hope you're right. It's just...

She looks down in defeat.

EMMA

Before Mike, I thought I knew what love was. Then he actually showed me what I was missing, and I don't want to lose that. There's never been anyone like him, and if something happens to him, I'm afraid I'll never find it again.

Tears are welling up.

Ethan moves closer to her and puts an arm around her. Comforting.

ETHAN

Nothing's going to happen to him.

EMMA

I wish I could believe that.

SAM

Could I get another aspirin?

SCREAMS issue from the bathroom

Emma and Ethan jump and look toward the door. Ethan grabs the handle and tries to turn it. Nothing.

ETHAN

Mike? Come on, Mike, let us in!

Crying and muffled screams come from inside the bathroom.

EMMA

Oh my God! Ethan, do something!

Ethan throws himself at the door.

Sam runs up to him as he tries again.

SAM

Let me!

Sam throws himself at it twice before

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The door flies open and Sam stumbles in, barely standing. He looks up. Horror and disgust fill his face. He quickly turns and leaves the room.

Ethan and Emma run in behind him.

Emma screams.

ETHAN

Jesus Christ!

Mike, now sitting on the floor, is covered in blood. Blood and infection cover the sink and mirror. Slowly dripping into the floor. A huge chunk of his leg is now missing.

Emma weeps loudly.

EMMA

What did you do?

MIKE

(whispered)

I want it gone. I want it gone.

BLACK SCREEN

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma finishes taping up Mike's bandages. He never turns to her. Her eyes tear up as she looks at him, worried. She touches his thigh. Begins to say something but stops. She slowly moves her hand away and steps back from him.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma steps out of the room. Ethan and Sam meet her.

ETHAN

Is he okay?

EMMA

What do you think?

Ethan rubs her shoulder. She looks over at Sam.

EMMA  
How are you doing?

SAM  
Been better.

He smiles but it quickly fades. He motions to the bedroom.

SAM  
May I?

Emma shrugs.

EMMA  
Be my guest.

Sam slowly walks

INTO THE BEDROOM

and crosses slowly to the bed. Emma and Ethan stand outside the door, watching. Mike lies on the bed facing away from the door.

SAM  
Mike? ... Mike, can we talk for a moment?

Mike doesn't turn to him.

MIKE  
I'm sorry, Sam.

SAM  
Mike, you have to realize what's going on.

Mike nods.

MIKE  
I've spent my life as a pacifist. Never hit anyone in my life. I've made it my nature because of my biological father. When I was little, this man beat me and my  
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

mother every night. Just because he felt like it. Wanted to let off steam. Whatever. I still have scars on my back that look like a run-in with Freddy Krueger because of him. My step-father is the man I call dad, but I've always been afraid that I've had some of that violence within me. So afraid.

He sighs, almost on the verge of tears.

MIKE

And now...

SAM

Mike, that wasn't you.

Mike turns to Sam.

MIKE

No? Who was it then?

SAM

I think you already know. Why else would you have done what you did?

Sam looks down to Mike's bandage. Mike follows his gaze. Tears well up in his eyes and he looks away again.

MIKE

Sometimes, it feels like there is someone else in here with me. Trying to get out. Maybe I am my father's son.

EMMA

No...

MIKE

Emma, what else am I supposed to believe?

EMMA

Why don't you believe him? I've never seen you act this way.

ETHAN

I haven't either, and I've known you longer. I've seen you turn the other cheek when I never would have. Time was, you would have just blown off what Sam said. Maybe you should listen to him now.

MIKE

But it doesn't make sense.

EMMA

Neither does anything else.

Mike looks at Sam, a new determination in his eyes.

MIKE

Do you know exactly what's happening to me?

SAM

I only know what I saw my friend go through. It'll get worse.

Mike nods. Sits up and turns to Emma.

MIKE

If I am changing into whatever is out there, then I'm a threat to you. To all of you.

EMMA

I'm sure you can control it, if you try.

Mike gets to his feet. Winces at the pain.

MIKE

Emma, I've never hurt anyone in my life, and tonight, I gave this man a bloody nose.

Slowly he limps out of the room and

INTO THE HALLWAY

shrugging off any attempts from the others make to help him.

MIKE

I couldn't control it then, and if  
it'll get worse, then I won't be  
able to control what's coming.

ETHAN

So what do you want to do?

MIKE

I need to be locked up.

He limps to the basement door and opens it.

MIKE

Lock me in the basement. Once I'm  
down there, lock this door and  
don't open it again until you can  
get help. Hopefully, I'll still be  
down there when you return.

EMMA

We could try leaving again.

MIKE

I don't think it'll let us. Or  
rather, I don't think it'll let  
me.

ETHAN

Just you?

MIKE

Just me.

He limps

INTO THE BASEMENT

leading the way, limping down the stairs. He reaches the bottom  
of the stairs and turns to them.

MIKE

Remember, leave me here. No matter how much I cry, beg, or scream, don't unlock that door. Put something in front of it. At the first light of day, get to the car and get out of here. Tell the authorities about what went on, and that you think I could be dangerous as well. Not sure how they'll believe you.

ETHAN

We'll think of something.

Mike nods. Emma walks up to him and throws her arms around him. She kisses him.

EMMA

I don't want to leave you here by yourself.

MIKE

And I don't want to hurt you.

EMMA

I know you won't.

MIKE

I don't.

He holds her for a moment longer and then releases her. He looks at Ethan.

MIKE

Take care of her.

ETHAN

Hey, it's my job.

MIKE

Sam.

Sam takes a step back from Mike.

MIKE

Relax, I just want to hear about what happened. I'm supposed to be married in a few months, and now, as ridiculous as it sounds, it looks like I might be changing into something that will take that away from me.

Sam only stares at Mike. Mike holds up his hands and walks to the far end of the basement. He takes a chair and sits. He absent-mindedly scratches his leg near the wound. Blood and pus run down out of the bandage which is soaked through again.

MIKE

Better? You can stand there if you want. Just in case.

SAM

What do you want to know that I haven't already told?

MIKE

I need details. I know that will be hard for you but I need to hear as much as you can remember.

Emma and Ethan sit near the top of the stairs while Sam remains standing on the floor.

SAM

We had been out here a couple days when Justin went missing. A couple hours later, he came back and said he didn't know what had happened, but he woke up lying on the forest floor with a bite on his ankle. Little by little, he reacted just like you. The wound got worse. He scratched all over. Complained of something eating him from the inside out. Had violent outbursts and fought with us. The night before last, Justin went to bed early. We all did.

Sam sighs. He takes a deep breath before continuing.

SAM

When the creature attacked that night, I got a good look at its face in the moonlight. I saw there the faintest resemblance of Justin. You asked me how I knew. That's how. I stood ten feet from the thing, and I recognized him. I have no doubt. His eyes never changed. That's when I ran and found my way here.

Mike stares at Sam, concerned.

MIKE

I'm at the end of day two with this thing. How long will it be?

SAM

Justin was bitten about two nights before he changed fully. It was overnight, so I'm not sure he carried it before he was gone.

MIKE

You should never have come here.

SAM

What?

MIKE

You brought it with you. It's your fault I'm like this.

SAM

I didn't mean to. It followed me. I needed help.

Mike stands. Sam takes a step back to the stairs.

MIKE

If you hadn't come, this wouldn't be happening to me.

Sam turns to the stairs. He looks up to see Emma and Ethan stand up in shock. Sam freezes. He turns his head to find Mike directly behind him.

MIKE

I had a perfect life before you showed up. I was getting married to that beautiful girl up there. You know, we've never had sex. Ever. I told her that I couldn't take the chance of getting her pregnant because of my father. I didn't want to take the chance of ruining her life. Apparently, you don't share that level of respect for people.

SAM

I'm sorry.

MIKE

Because of you, I've lost everything!

On "everything," Mike grabs Sam and flings him across the room. Sam hits a wall and crashes to the floor. He coughs, out of breath, as Mike walks to him. Ethan runs down the stairs.

SAM

Please...

Mike steps next to Sam's head. Sam glances to Mike's wound as Mike places his full weight on the foot. The bandage is hanging freely. The skin around the wound is cracking and peeling away. Blood and goo flow freely out of it.

Mike grabs Sam and pulls him to his feet effortlessly. Ethan takes Mike's arm.

ETHAN

Mike, what are you doing?

Mike swings the arm Ethan grabbed and tosses him across the room into another wall. Emma runs down the stairs to Ethan.

Mike throws Sam against another wall, closer to him. Sam falls to the floor again. Mike brings his knee down into Sam's chest, cracking Sam's rib cage. Sam exhales heavily and struggles for breath as Mike lays his weight into Sam's now vulnerable lungs.

MIKE

How about this!

Mike punches Sam's face hard. Bones crack. Blood flies.

MIKE

I'll give you some help!

Mike punches with his other hand cracking Sam's jaw. Teeth fly out and clatter across the floor. He continues punching punctuating his words with a hit.

MIKE

You want  
                   (punch)  
 to take  
                   (punch)  
 away my life  
                   (punch)  
 I'll take  
                   (punch)  
 away yours!

Instead of hitting again, Mike leans down and bites into the thyroid cartilage of Sam's neck. Emma and Ethan watch powerlessly in horror.

Mike tears out Sam's neck with his teeth. Sam's mouth opens noiselessly (as his larynx is in Mike's mouth). Blood flows freely from his torn neck veins and arteries. Mike spits out the neck and breathes heavily from the rush through a smile.

Emma and Ethan slowly stand and edge their way to the stairs. Mike blinks. His smile drops. He looks frantically over the mess beneath him.

He turns to look at Emma and Ethan slowly edging up the stairs. As their eyes meet, Emma and Ethan run as fast as possible up the stairs. The door slams and locks.

Mike breathes heavily again as the entire situation crashes in on him.

MIKE

(anguished)

NO!

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan turns the lock on the basement door. Emma collapses on the floor of the living room and screams through her tears. Ethan looks completely stunned and leans against the basement door.

Emma finally winds herself down to sobs. Ethan moves away from the basement door and quickly moves a piece of furniture in front of the basement door.

He turns to Emma and sits next to her. She turns to him and throws her arms around him. He holds her.

He pats her on the back.

ETHAN

We need to get ready to go.

EMMA

We can't. That other thing is still out there. I thought we were waiting till daybreak.

ETHAN

We can't risk it. Before we know it, we'll have one of those things in here...

Emma closes her eyes and turns away from him. He only pauses for a moment.

ETHAN

We need to do something.

She nods.

ETHAN

We have stuff to fight with. The skillets, knives. We'll look around for anything else.

She doesn't move.

ETHAN

If it used to be human, then we have a chance of at least holding it off long enough to get in the car if we're ready for it. I mean, we beat the dog, didn't we?

She sniffles.

EMMA

(almost a whisper)

What about Mike?

ETHAN

We don't have a choice. He was in his right mind when he said to leave him, and based on what...

Emma nods.

EMMA

Yeah.

Emma gets up and walks into the kitchen. Ethan follows.

ETHAN

What are you doing?

She stands in the kitchen and looks it over.

EMMA

I was just wondering if we could find Mike's mom's satellite phone.

ETHAN

I doubt it. If not even his dad could find it, we're probably out of luck. Besides, even if it is out here, it's probably got a dead battery and no service. Hence, we'd not only need the phone, but a charger and service.

EMMA

Charger, yes. Service, no.

She looks in and around the cabinets.

ETHAN

You can't call anyone on a cell phone without some kind of service.

EMMA

Wrong. You can call nine one one. Phones are required to be allowed to connect to it.

She looks around the kitchen again. She or opens up a pantry containing non-perishable items.

ETHAN

So where would you hide a phone from a workaholic?

Emma reaches behind some canned good and pulls out a small phone.

EMMA

Workaholics don't cook. Either they eat out or someone cooks for them. So you hide it with the uncooked food.

ETHAN

Where did you learn that?

Emma gives him a look that asks if he really needs to ask.

ETHAN

One of your-

Emma nods with that same look. Ethan nods.

ETHAN

Right. Charger?

Emma shakes her head.

EMMA

It wasn't back there. I wouldn't begin to know where to look.

Emma presses the power button on the phone and nothing happens. She sighs.

EMMA

I expected that.

She stares at the phone silently for a long moment. It doesn't look like she's actually looking at the phone though.

ETHAN

How are you doing?

Emma laughs, as if surprised he needed to ask.

EMMA

I'm trying to ignore it.

Ethan nods.

ETHAN

Well, come on. We need to see if there's anything in this house to defend ourselves with. We can keep an eye out for that charger while we look. I'm hoping for a gun.

Emma nods.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The creature, visible only in shadow through the darkness, moves closer to the house. Through the windows, it can see Emma and Ethan moving around.

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Mike paces. He scratches his arms and neck and legs as he moves, impatient. As he scratches his arm, a chunk of skin falls off revealing a pale pink skin below. Blood flows around the new skin.

He holds the piece of old skin in his hand for a moment before he drops it on the floor. He puts his hands on his legs. His pants are a lot tighter than they were before. They stretch tight across his legs now.

He scratches his torso. He finally pulls up his shirt and notices that his skin is cracking and bleeding. He breathes heavily in a panic.

MIKE

Help! Help me! Please!

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ethan and Emma check the top shelf of a closet.

MIKE (V.O.)

(distant)

Please help me!

They pause and look at each other.

ETHAN

Sorry.

She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath. She wipes away a tear. She walks across the room and looks at the dresser where she had put her clothes. An idea crosses her face.

She opens a drawer and pulls out the adapter that Mike stated had gone to his mother's CD player. She looks at it closely. Ethan looks at her.

ETHAN

You found it?

EMMA

I don't know. Mike said this went to his mom's CD player, but I'm wondering if that's actually true.

ETHAN

Why would he lie?

EMMA

I don't think he did. But if Mike found this once, she probably would.

Emma plugs the adapter into an outlet and fits the plug into the phone. It's a perfect fit. She presses the power button. It powers on. They both smile in relief.

She dials 911.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Nine one one emergency.

EMMA

Hi, we have a medical emergency and we're in danger from a prowler outside.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

What is the nature of the medical emergency?

EMMA

My fiancée got infected and he's in a lot of pain. We're afraid it's spreading.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

And when was the last time you saw your prowler?

EMMA

Earlier tonight. We tried to take my fiancée into a hospital, and he attacked us. We're holed up inside the house right now, but we're afraid he's still out there.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

I'm showing that your signal is originating from an area in a military jurisdiction.

EMMA

Well, it's my fiancée's parents' house. I know we're deep in the woods, but I'm not sure exactly how to get here.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

I'm showing the GPS active on your phone. Leave this line open and we should be able to track your location.

EMMA

Thank you.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

I will have you on hold while I contact the military authorities.

EMMA

Ok.

She places the phone down on the floor. Looks at Ethan.

EMMA

Well, I called.

ETHAN

We should still try to leave.

EMMA

We should wait for them.

ETHAN

I doubt we'll have time. When they get here, they'll have their own mess to clean up. We'll call again when we get a signal on our own phones.

Emma nods.

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Mike runs up the basement stairs. As he steps, skin flakes off onto the steps.

MIKE

Please! Don't leave me here!

He pounds on the basement door with both hands.

MIKE

Take me with you!

As he pounds, he leaves bloody marks on the door. Skin falls off his hand which drip with blood and goo. He brings his hand back after a pound. A line of goo stretches from his hand to the door.

He looks on his hands in horror. He looks back to the door and pounds.

MIKE

Don't leave me like this! Please!

Some of his yells morph into animalistic growls.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Faint sounds of Mike's growls and cries can be heard across the night. The creature's head perks up and looks around. It is now next to the house.

It walks around the deck on the outside of the house.

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Mike pounds once more, but he looks tired. Blood and pus drip down the door and skin has piled at the base of the door. His cries are out of energy and motivation.

MIKE

Please...

He leans against the door and takes in two lungs-full of air.

MIKE

Help me!

He stumbles and rolls down the stairs. As he lands, more skin flakes off. At the foot of the stairs, his body convulses. His skin cracks all over. Blood and pus bubble out of the myriad of new wounds and soak his clothes.

He rolls over and arches his back, almost animalistically. His clothes tear. Skin falls off in heaps. A new MIKE-CREATURE steps

out of a bloody Mike-skin and lets out an inhuman roar to the floor above him.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ethan and Emma look up, both look concerned. Before them, they have a couple of knives and the iron skillets. Ethan looks at Emma.

ETHAN

Oh, shit.

Another roar sounds from outside the house. They whip their heads around to the direction of the howl, which is very, very close. Ethan's voice raises in panic.

ETHAN

Oh, shit again.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The creature outside has reacted to the roar from inside the house. It finishes its roar and runs around the deck to the back of the house.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ethan and Emma take a knife in one hand and a skillet in the other and walk towards the living room. The creature crashes through the door behind them throwing their barricade aside and enters the kitchen.

They run

INTO THE LIVING ROOM

where Mike Creature bursts out of the basement, tossing aside their barricade, blocking their exit through the front door.

With Mike Creature in front of them and the original creature behind them, they are quite trapped.

EMMA

What the hell do we do?

ETHAN  
Gotta get out the back.

EMMA  
How?

ETHAN  
Don't know.

The creatures rush them as one. Ethan and Emma duck away from them and the creatures slam together.

ETHAN  
There's our advantage.

EMMA  
What?

ETHAN  
This house ain't big enough for  
the two of them.

Without missing a step, however, they turn to Ethan and Emma. There is a small space between the original creature and the Mike Creature.

ETHAN  
There! Go!

Ethan and Emma break for the back door (or what's left of it). As they run, the original creature grabs for them and snags Emma's shirt.

Emma screams and tries to get away from it. She swings the knife around and plants it in the creature's shoulder. It sinks in and disappears. It doesn't even acknowledge it.

She tries to remove her shirt, but as she brings her arms up, the creature grabs one of her arms.

Ethan yells and attacks the creature, beating it violently with the skillet. Skin and blood fly everywhere. It releases Emma and grabs Ethan.

ETHAN  
That's right! Just try it.

The Mike Creature stares at Emma from behind the original one. He is trapped behind the encounter between Ethan and the first creature.

Ethan continues beating the creature, but the creature brings Ethan to its jaws and bites into his chest. Ethan screams in pain. He beats the creature in the head recklessly.

The creature howls and tears Ethan's arm off. Ethan screams again as the creature tears Ethan's neck out causing a spray of blood all over the place.

Emma screams, but she notices that with the creature concentrating on Ethan now, the Mike Creature is free to pursue her. She runs out the kitchen door.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Emma runs straight across the deck without looking to one side or the other and leaps off the deck onto the ground below. She rolls briefly before coming back to her feet and runs across the back yard.

Mike Creature leaps well off the deck as well, flying over a good portion of the back yard before he lands near Emma, knocking her down.

She tries to run, but he sinks his fingers into her leg. She screams. When he releases his fingers to move, she flips over onto her back and tries to back away from him. He moves much quicker as he crawls and pins her down.

He breathes heavily as he looks into her face, his mouth salivating for the kill. As she looks into the eyes of the monster, she sees Mike's eyes. He opens his mouth and closes in on her.

EMMA

Mike.

He pauses. She adopts the calmest voice she can muster to sound the most like herself.

EMMA

Mike, please don't do this.

He blinks. The beast backs off just a little bit. She doesn't wait. She backs away from his grasp and runs full out through the woods behind the house, leaving it all behind her.

Creature Mike watches her for a long moment. His eyes revert. He rears back and howls which echoes across the night through the woods.

As Emma runs, tears flow down from her eyes.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A lone truck drives along the road. Emma emerges from the treeline and spots the truck. She walks right into the road and flags him down. The truck stops.

It is a plain white pickup with a large cage in the back. A cage large enough to hold, say, a psychotic dog. She doesn't notice. She gets into the passenger side.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Emma sits in the passenger seat and breathes heavily. The driver is a man dressed casually in jeans and shirt.

EMMA

Thank you.

DRIVER

You're welcome, Emma.

Emma opens her eyes and looks over to the driver. He is an older man in his 50's with a hard but kind face. She smiles.

EMMA

Dr. Horton?

DR. HORTON

What happened?

EMMA

Oh, my God. I don't know how to tell you this...

DR. HORTON

Is it about Mike and Ethan?

EMMA

Yes, sir. Mike... You're not going to believe me.

DR. HORTON

Give me a chance.

EMMA

Your son turned into a monster somehow and killed this other guy who had escaped from another monster who killed my brother and some other people. Oh God, that's confusing.

DR. HORTON

Give me a moment.

Dr. Horton picks up a phone attached to the dash of the truck.

EMMA

I thought cell phones didn't work out here.

DR. HORTON

This isn't a cell phone.

(to phone)

Yes, I have the girl ... Yes ...  
It appears that way ... Yes, sir  
... I understand ... No, no problem.

He places the receiver back in its cradle. He places the truck in drive and moves off the shoulder.

EMMA

Where are we going?

DR. HORTON

I am sorry you got mixed up in this, and I'm sorry to hear that Mike did as well. But there are some security issues we do have to deal with now.

EMMA

Oh, I won't tell anyone. I promise.  
No one would believe me anyway.

DR. HORTON

I'm sure that's true.

He pulls into a darkened part of the woods and stops.

EMMA

Where are we?

Dr. Horton turns to her.

DR. HORTON

Listen, I believe you, but we can't  
afford to take any chances. This is  
just procedural. It'll be over  
before you know it. Again, I'm very  
sorry. I think you would have made  
a wonderful daughter-in-law.

She smiles.

EMMA

Thank you.

DR. HORTON

Let's go.

He opens his door and gets out. She does the same and closes the  
door behind her. The doors power lock behind her. Then his door  
closes.

EMMA

So where are we going?

The engine revs up and the truck backs away from her. She turns  
to find Dr. Horton driving away, leaving her stranded. She runs  
after him.

EMMA

NO! Please!

She stops as his taillights disappear.

EMMA  
(whimpered)  
Don't leave me here...

Growls issue from behind her. From the shadows of forest, two creatures emerge. They both move incredibly fast and attack.

She screams.

THE END