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 91st.

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

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.

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?
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

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

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 then 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 skillets 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 sniffling. 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. Wincs 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

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