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**EXT. TILT - NIGHT**

A slow panoramic shot of a brick building on a snowy night in a small Alaskan city. *TILT* is written in big neon letters and below it, smaller: *Bowling Alley - Skating Rink - Arcade.*

The thumping bass of an 80's jam cranked all the way up to 100 ("Take On Me" by a-ha) can be heard in the parking lot, where a decent amount of vehicles are parked. ZAY (30s) is sitting on the bed of his truck lighting up a smoke. He's sorta handsome in a scruffy kinda way, with a full beard and glasses. He's lost in thought. Oblivious to the FOOTSTEPS on the pavement drawing closer.

CAT: (V.O.)  
 (re: cigarette)  
 I thought you quit.

Zay appears vaguely surprised to see CAT (30s) standing next to him, pulling out a pack of smokes from her purse. She's heavily made up to obscure her natural good looks, with cascading waves of honey-colored hair and a fake fur coat over a sexy form-fitting dress and thigh highs.

ZAY:  
 I did.

CAT:  
 Me, too. How's your mom?

ZAY:  
 The same.

CAT:  
 You're her world. Do you ever resent her?

ZAY:  
 Sometimes.

CAT:  
 Sorry. It's really none of my business, anyway.

ZAY:  
 Forget it.

A set of headlights from a nearby parked vehicle, a fairly beat-up looking pick-up truck in a dingy shade of blue, focuses a makeshift spotlight on Zay and Cat.

CAT:  
 My chariot awaits.

ZAY:  
Well, he's not yelling "Yo, bitch"  
out the window. Maybe this one will  
be a prince.

CAT:  
Big maybe.

ZAY:  
Don't die.

CAT:  
I've got nine lives.

Cat reveals the little armory she keeps hidden in her purse: a can of mace, a switchblade, a stungun, and a handgun. Zay doesn't let his discomfort show.

Cat puts out her cigarette, scurries across the parking lot, and gets in the passenger seat. She throws a peace sign at Zay as she rides by.

Zay watches the truck disappear into obscurity, finishes his smoke, and goes back to work.

**INT. TILT - NIGHT**

Tilt is moderately busy for a weekday. Most of the bowling lanes are in use. A birthday party for preteens is wrapping up at the skating rink. Teens are in the arcade.

Zay is getting a customer a pair of bowling shoes when CLAUDETTE (20s) approaches. She's attractive with long locks of blonde hair. She delivers a tray of booze to a group of oil men nearby.

CLAUDETTE:  
Where's Cat?

ZAY:  
She left.

CLAUDETTE:  
Alone?

ZAY:  
Dunno. I wasn't paying attention.

CLAUDETTE:  
Right. No biggie. I just worry  
about her.

ZAY:  
You're protective of your sister. I  
can dig it.

CLAUDETTE:  
It's her life.

ZAY:  
We're all trying to figure it out  
the best way we know how. Different  
people make different choices.

CLAUDETTE:  
I don't remember what choices I  
made to wind up in this hellhole.

ZAY:  
The choices your parents made play  
a part, too

CLAUDETTE:  
Glass houses.

ZAY:  
I'm in the same leaky boat, if it's  
any consolation.

CLAUDETTE:  
Well, there's maybe possibly  
potentially a shred of comfort in  
knowing we're drowning together.

ZAY:  
Everyone is drowning.

CLAUDETTE:  
That sounds about right. Oh, the  
damndest thing. This weird chick  
was asking about you.

ZAY:  
Weird chick? You'll have to narrow  
it down.

CLAUDETTE:  
Something was just off about her.  
She gave me bad vibes.

ZAY:  
Everyone gives you bad vibes. Did  
she give her name?

CLAUDETTE:  
No. She said she's a friend of a  
friend and she'll be back soon.

ZAY:  
Have you seen her before?

CLAUDETTE:

I don't think so. Keep an eye out.

**EXT. RIVER BRIDGE - NIGHT**

Snow is falling. A truck with fogged windows is parked under a bridge in the middle of the woods. Rocking.

**INT. KEITH'S TRUCK**

Cat looks dissatisfied as KEITH (40s) orgasms inside her. He's a stocky everyman, still smudged with grime from working on a rig just hours ago.

He unceremoniously rolls off top of her, sticks a cigarette in his mouth, lights it, and leaves.

CAT:

Hey! Where the fuck are you going?

KEITH: (V.O.)

I always take a piss right after.

Cat lights a smoke of her own and adjusts the heat.

CAT:

Your heat sucks.

**EXT. RIVER BRIDGE**

Keith is urinating into the frozen river when what sounds like a lyre PLAYS from somewhere in the forest. He scans the woods but sees nothing. He looks back at the truck.

**KEITH:**

Did you hear that?

Keith zips up and flicks his cigarette butt into the icy waters, unaware of a strange inhuman SHAPE moving amongst the trees behind him. Only brief details can be made out amongst the bark and snow: curled horns and hooved legs covered in thick fur.

**INT. KEITH'S TRUCK**

Cat is growing impatient. She opens up the passenger side door and calls out:

CAT:

Are you taking a piss or a shit?

No response. Then, louder:

CAT: (CONT'D)

Hey! Keith!

(to herself:)

I think that's his name.

**EXT. RIVER BRIDGE**

Cat leaves the truck and scans the area. No sign of Keith. She approaches the embankment where Keith was just standing.

CAT: (CONT'D)

Let's go! Did you forget where you parked?

She takes a drag on her cigarette. Then she notices signs of a struggle in the snow.

CAT: (CONT'D)

Keith?

She follows the trail but then stops when she sees something in the darkness under the bridge. Two people are doing something. It's difficult to make out. She uses the flashlight app on her phone to shine a light on:

Keith lying in a pool of bloody snow, his eyes frozen open with horror and his innards exposed. Mounted on top of his legs sits the SATYR, the mythological horned hoofed goat-man, shoving chunks of gore into its open maw.

Cat drops her cig and SCREAMS. The satyr looks at Cat and BLEATS. She runs back to Keith's truck and practically dives into it.

**INT. KEITH'S TRUCK**

Cat is ready to drive away from this nightmare but there's no key in the ignition.

CAT: (CONT'D)

FUCK!

She looks over at the open passenger side door and hesitates, too scared to move. She can't see anything through the foggy windows. Then she slips across the seat and reaches over, outside and...

...slams the door shut and locks it. She dials 911.

OPERATOR: (V.O.)

Fairbanks Police Department.

Suddenly, the passenger side door is RIPPED off the hinges and Cat SCREAMS, dropping her phone outside.

She reaches into her purse and grabs the handgun, firing it haphazardly at the open space where the door just was until it runs out of bullets.

She pockets the switchblade from her purse, scrambles back across the driver's seat, and bolts out of the truck.

**EXT. RIVER BRIDGE**

Cat struggles up the snowbank. The satyr, seemingly unharmed, follows closely behind. She reaches the pavement and runs across the bridge.

When she reaches the other side, a HUNTER (50s) emerges from the forest. He's a grizzly bear of a man, beefy and bearded, in a lumberjack shirt and trucker hat. He's clutching a sawed-off shotgun in his massive hands.

CAT:

SHOOT IT!

Cat stops. She eyes the bridge but the satyr is nowhere to be seen. When she looks back at the hunter, he has the shotgun pointed at her.

She opens her mouth and he pulls the trigger. Cat's head POPS like a bubble, spraying the snow with viscera and brain matter. Her lifeless body falls by his feet.

HUNTER:

Now it begins.

**TITLE CARD: GRASSWHISTLE****INT. TILT - NIGHT**

A bowling ball rolls down the lane and into the pins at the end, knocking all of them down in a strike. Then the ball rolls back into the underground track beneath the lane, up through the machinery, and back out where a set of fingers belonging to RORY (30s) waits. He's mid-80's NYC with platinum hair in a leather jacket and bleached denim. With him are:

His brother, RHYS (20s) is keeping score. He's fit and preppy and has the kind of smile that lights up the room.

Rhys' girlfriend, DARBY (20s) is the polar opposite. She's unabashedly punk, with purple hair and tons of tattoos and manages to always look pretty even while inhaling a tray of nachos.

Their friend, TISA (30s) is an exotic beauty. She's got dark skin and big breasts which are practically falling out of her clothes.

Rory bowls and gets another strike when Claudette hands him a beer. She looks up at the monitor.

CLAUDETTE:

Who's winning?

RORY:

Me.

Claudette looks at Tisa.

CLAUDETTE:

Babe? Last place?

TISA:

I know, I should kill myself.

CLAUDETTE:

Darby is beating you?

DARBY:

I resent that. Tisa sucks at bowling just as much as I do.

Claudette hands Rhys a beer and he hands her a dollar.

RHYS:

The drunker I am, the better I bowl.

It's his turn to bowl. He chugs half the bottle. He gets a strike and then finishes the bottle in celebration, unaware that Tisa has put him down for zero points. Claudette makes an "OK" hand gesture.

Rory approaches Claudette and places a small bag of marijuana in her palm. He taps his cheek and she kisses it.

RORY:

Where's Zay?

CLAUDETTE:

Where do you think?

Zay is in the arcade playing *Ghouls 'n Ghosts*. He puts a pill in his mouth and slurps it down with a Coke I-CEE.

Sir Arthur is hacking apart grim reapers in a cemetery. The colorful pixels blend into a dreamy haze as Zay falls into a lucid trance.

Familiar classics melt into a sensory melange around him: *Pac Man*, *Donkey Kong*, *Space Invaders*, *Asteroid*, *Defender*, *Cruis'n World*, *Mortal Kombat 2*, *Super Street Fighter 2*, skee ball, air hockey, etc.

Zay is a master gamer. In a single play-through, he has managed to make it to the final boss, an angry red devil with a face of fire sitting on a throne. Sir Arthur blasts him to bits with holy light.

RORY:  
Speed run?

ZAY:  
I guess.

RORY:  
Are you mad at me?

ZAY:  
No, I'm tripping.

RORY:  
Did you take that molly?

Zay gives a thumbs up.

RORY: (CONT'D)  
Groovy.

Rory pops a pill of his own.

**EXT. TILT - NIGHT**

Zay and Rory are smoking a joint on the bed of Zay's truck in the nearly empty parking lot later that night.

ZAY:  
Thanks for the smoke, I've been on edge all week.

RORY:  
Is that the only reason you're with me?

Zay lies through his teeth.

ZAY:  
No.

RORY:  
It's cool. If I minded it, I wouldn't hang around. Tell your mom "hi" for me.

ZAY:  
You aren't coming over?

RORY:  
Maybe tomorrow.

They kiss and Rory gets in his big white pedo van and leaves, honking as he drives by. Zay waves, puts out the roach, and is about to get in his truck when someone calls out:

LOCHLYN: (V.O.)  
I was looking for you.

He turns around to find LOCHLYN (30s) is standing where Rory's van just parked. She's stunning and stylish and her dark bob with bangs gives her a fairly edgy look. Zay is too stoned to be surprised.

ZAY:  
And now you found me. You were prettier as a blonde.

LOCHLYN:  
Happy to see you, too. Who was that? Billy Idol?

Zay starts to get into his truck but Lochlyn stops him.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)  
Sensitive. Sorry.

ZAY:  
What do you want?

LOCHLYN:  
To talk.

ZAY:  
I'm kinda in a hurry.

LOCHLYN:  
It won't take long. It's about Brick.

ZAY:  
I figured it would be.

LOCHLYN:  
You're the only one I could turn to.

ZAY:  
Story of my life.

LOCHLYN:  
He still loves you.

ZAY:  
Your brother and I broke up ten years ago.

LOCHLYN:  
I remember.

ZAY:  
Did he put you up to this?

LOCHLYN:  
No. He doesn't even know I'm in  
Alaska.

ZAY:  
Look, whatever scheme you and him  
are trying to cook up--count me  
out, alright?

Zay hops in his truck but Lochlyn prevents him from shutting  
the door.

LOCHLYN:  
I'm worried about him. You're my  
last chance.

ZAY:  
Tough shit.

LOCHLYN:  
He needs help.

ZAY:  
Who doesn't?

LOCHLYN:  
You're the only person he'll listen  
to. I'm pretty sure he's using  
again.

ZAY:  
I don't care.

LOCHLYN:  
I know about your mother.

ZAY:  
Know what?

LOCHLYN:  
She's dying.

This cuts bone. But Zay just looks at her with a blank face.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)  
She doesn't have to.

ZAY:  
Meaning?

LOCHLYN:  
Brick found it.

ZAY:  
It?

LOCHLYN:  
You may have moved on with your life, if you can call it that. But he didn't. He continued where you left off.

ZAY:  
I'm not that man anymore. That's not the man I want to be.

LOCHLYN:  
You can help your mother. I can help my brother. Everyone wins.

ZAY:  
If he's using again like you said, you can't take anything he says seriously.

LOCHLYN:  
Even if it's just a chance, wouldn't you do anything to save her?

ZAY:  
There are some things you just don't fuck with. The consequences are far too great. You can't imagine.

LOCHLYN:  
How much time do you think your mother has left? What would she say about all of this if you, you know, ask her?

ZAY:  
The answer is "no."

LOCHLYN:  
You don't sound so sure of yourself.

ZAY:  
Please don't think I'm above slamming your hand in this door until it breaks off because I'm not.

Lochlyn complies, hands Zay her card, and he starts his truck.

LOCHLYN:

Just think about it. For her.

Zay eyes the little piece of laminated paper in his hand:  
*Lochlyn Miles - Life Coach - ###-###-#### - l.miles@gmail.com*

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Back at home, a modest three-bed, two-bath tastefully decorated with abstract artwork and 60's style furniture, Zay goes through his nightly routine:

He takes a wet cloth and cleans his mother RENA (60s) the best he can, feeds her dinner, and gives her night pills. She looks like a mummy in her deathbed with a hollow face and straw for hair. Numerous tubes hooked up to a variety of medical machines are prolonging her pain. He absently tells her about his day.

He feeds his pet cat, SKITTY, a grey tabby impatiently pacing between his legs in the kitchen.

He eats a frozen pizza and watches *The Ren & Stimpy Show*.

He smokes a cigarette on the back patio.

He takes a shower and brushes his teeth.

He pokes his head in Rena's bedroom door and turns out the light.

ZAY:

G'night, Mom. I love you.

Then he lies in bed and smokes a joint while listening to dreamy new wave music ("Franchise" by RHEYA.) He stares at the ceiling and walls as they are blasted with stars from a night sky projector. A glowing kitty-shaped lamp changes colors. On the other side of the room, a purple lava lamp bubbles. Skitty sleeps peacefully at the foot of the bed. Zay takes Lochlyn's card in his fingers and looks at it, considering.

**INT. CELLAR - NIGHT**

By candlelight in the depths of a dark cellar filled with bizarre alchemical tools, BRICK (40s) stands completely naked, in some state of a trance. He's a tall and lithe Viking with a wild mane of dirty blonde hair and a matching beard.

He draws a massive circle in what appears to be blood on a blank stone wall.

Within the circle he draws a triangle.

Within the triangle he draws a square.

Within the square he draws a circle.

Then he places his bloody palm against the wall within the center circle and is overcome with transcendent euphoria.

**INT. TILT - DAY**

Zay is cleaning the arcade cabinets at Tilt when Claudette appears with a spray bottle of her own. She takes a knee nearby and starts scrubbing.

CLAUDETTE:  
Another day in paradise.

ZAY:  
Pretty much.

CLAUDETTE:  
How was your night?

Zay shrugs.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)  
That good, huh? Did that lady find you?

ZAY:  
Well...

CLAUDETTE:  
No shit? Was I right? Total weirdo.

ZAY:  
It's my ex's sister.

CLAUDETTE:  
Your ex? The crazy guy who lives in the woods?

ZAY:  
Uh-huh.

CLAUDETTE:  
Wasn't that, like, ten years ago? What the hell did she want?

ZAY:  
She thinks Brick might be using again.

CLAUDETTE:

And?

ZAY:

Well, I guess she wanted me to check on him. She insists I'm the only one he listens to.

CLAUDETTE:

Uh, hello. The Internet.

ZAY:

Yeah.

CLAUDETTE:

Get out. You aren't seriously telling me you're actually considering going with some crazy chick to go check on her crazy brother in the middle of nowhere?

ZAY:

Dunno. Actually, there's more to it but it's kinda out there.

CLAUDETTE:

More to it, my ass. The whole thing reeks of a set-up.

ZAY:

Maybe.

CLAUDETTE:

It has nothing to do with you.

ZAY:

What do you know about alchemy?

CLAUDETTE:

Alchemy? Um, I used to watch *Fullmetal Alchemist* on Toonami.

ZAY:

Me, too.

**EXT. TILT - DAY**

In the parking lot, Zay and Claudette are sitting on the bed of Zay's truck smoking cigarettes.

CLAUDETTE:

I don't think you should go. How well do you this woman?

ZAY:

Not very.

CLAUDETTE:

Isn't it possible that they're up to something?

ZAY:

Like what?

CLAUDETTE:

Well, I don't know exactly. But lots of crazy shit happens on that murder porn channel.

ZAY:

You're silly.

CLAUDETTE:

I'm concerned.

ZAY:

Got it.

CLAUDETTE:

What about Rory?

ZAY:

We aren't that serious.

CLAUDETTE:

Really? Does Rory know that?

ZAY:

He knows.

CLAUDETTE:

Ugh. Listen to me. I'm doing it again. Getting involved in shit that isn't even my business.

ZAY:

It's cool.

CLAUDETTE:

No, it's annoying. I'm annoying.

ZAY:

You're not that annoying.

CLAUDETTE:

Look, I think it's a bad idea. But I also think you're gonna do whatever you're gonna do no matter what.

ZAY:

When I was with Brick, I was a very different person.

CLAUDETTE:

Everyone changes.

ZAY:

I was into some pretty bad shit.

CLAUDETTE:

And you aren't now?

ZAY:

You're gonna think I'm nuts.

CLAUDETTE:

What are you talking about? You are nuts.

ZAY:

I was an alchemist. Brick still is one.

CLAUDETTE:

O...K?

ZAY:

Lochlyn made it sound like he found something.

CLAUDETTE:

Found what?

ZAY:

It's beyond comprehension.

CLAUDETTE:

I mean, is it like *Dungeons & Dragons*?

ZAY:

Maybe there's more to life than what we see with our own eyes. If so, maybe there's a way to save my mom.

CLAUDETTE:

Zay...

ZAY:

Pretty stupid, huh?

CLAUDETTE:

This entire situation is a category 5 in bad vibes.

ZAY:

Well, would you feel better if you came with?

CLAUDETTE:

As if! I wouldn't be caught dead on your death trip.

ZAY:

I'm shocked.

CLAUDETTE:

Take Rory. Make it a threesome.

ZAY:

Those aren't nearly as fun as they look.

CLAUDETTE:

You just aren't doing it right. You really should go with someone, though. Why not Rory?

ZAY:

Sure, take my boyfriend to stay at my ex's cabin in the woods. What could possibly go wrong?

CLAUDETTE:

Make it a group thing. Rhys and Darby would probably go for it.

ZAY:

Maybe. Would you do me a favor?

CLAUDETTE:

I'm afraid to ask.

**EXT. CLIFFS - DAY**

Gulls SING as they circle over ocean waves that CRASH into the jagged rocks beneath icy cliffs. Patches of grass are trying to break through the slush. Amongst the barren trees in the surrounding wilderness, a YOUNGER BOY (7-8) and OLDER BOY (11-12) are running. They look alike. Maybe brothers.

YOUNGER BOY:

Wait!

OLDER BOY:

Hurry up!

The older boy stops and grabs a handful of wet grass. He uses his shirt to dry off the blades. The younger boy emerges from the dead woods, exhausted.

YOUNGER BOY:

What are you doing?

The older boy holds a blade of grass between his thumbs. Then he presses the backs of his thumbs against his mouth and blows, emitting a shrill SCREECH.

YOUNGER BOY: (CONT'D)

How'd you do that?

The older boy hands the younger boy a blade of grass.

OLDER BOY:

Hold it between your thumbs like this, see?

The younger boy complies.

OLDER BOY: (CONT'D)

Then blow.

The older boy demonstrates. The younger boy tries.

YOUNGER BOY:

I can't do it.

OLDER BOY:

You aren't blowing hard enough. Try again.

The younger boy fails his second attempt. On his third try, he makes the grass SHRIEK between his thumbs and beams with pride.

The older boy approaches the edge and throws some grass into the air. The coastal wind carries the blades off. Then he stares at something at the bottom of the cliff.

YOUNGER BOY:

What are you looking at?

A mangled bicycle is lying amongst the rocks, its back wheel still spinning as waves wash over it. The dead body of a CHILD (5-6) lies near the bike, his head smashed wide open.

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Zay wakes up in a cold sweat. Skitty gives him a "wtf" look from the foot of the bed.

He gets out of bed, goes into the bathroom, and splashes some water on his face. He stares at his haggard reflection, almost unrecognizable from stress.

ZAY:

I hope you know what you're doing.

Zay goes into Rena's room. Her bedroom looks like a hospital room. She looks peaceful in a deep sleep with her breathing mask on. An incredibly deep sadness wells up within Zay. He crawls into his mother's bed, rests his head on her shoulder and cries himself to sleep.

**EXT. FROZEN LAKE - NIGHT**

A MAN (40s) on fire runs across a snowfield, leaving a trail of flaming footprints towards a frozen lake. He runs across the ice. It's very thick. More flaming footprints on the lake surface. He reaches the middle of the frozen lake and the ice melts in a little circle around him, which he falls through.

The little circle of dark water surrounded by snow-covered ice looks like an eyeball. It bubbles to a roaring boil.

Then a hand that isn't entirely human emerges from the lake and slams against the ice.

**EXT. ZAY'S HOUSE - DAY**

Zay and Claudette are on the front porch sharing a joint on a crisp morning.

CLAUDETTE:

I can't believe you're actually going through with this.

ZAY:

Desperate times.

Tisa emerges from the front door with coffee for all. She hands them their cups and kisses Claudette on top of the head. Then she takes the joint from her girlfriend's fingers and takes a hit.

TISA:

Get off his back. He made his decision.

CLAUDETTE:

When is Rory supposed to get here?

ZAY:  
Nine o'clock.

CLAUDETTE:  
It's almost eleven.

ZAY:  
He'll be here. Thank you both for agreeing to take care of things here while I'm gone.

TISA:  
Oh, don't mention it. You must have all sorts of drugs stashed.

CLAUDETTE:  
What Tisa means to say is, "We're happy to do it."

TISA:  
Well, I wouldn't go that far.

Rory pulls up to the curb in his big white pedo van with tinted windows and HONKS the horn.

Zay stands up and slings his heavy backpack over his shoulder. He takes another hit on the joint before passing it to Claudette.

ZAY:  
I'll be back Monday. Tuesday for sure. I don't know if there's any reception up there. If something happens--

CLAUDETTE:  
We'll hold down the fort.

TISA:  
Hurry back before we smoke all your shit.

Zay chugs what's left of his coffee. Then he heads down the sidewalk towards the van.

Rhys slides the side door open and WHISTLES as copious amounts of pot smoke waft out. Darby is sitting with her legs folded, ripping a bong.

JADE (20s) is beside her. She's an Asian-American hippie chick with wavy locks of sandy blonde hair. Darby kisses Jade, shotgunning pot smoke into her open mouth.

Rhys gives a "thumbs up" to Claudette and Tisa.

Zay throws his backpack in the back.

JADE:

I hope you don't mind my tagging along but I just couldn't pass up a weekend in the mountains. I brought mushrooms. Do you hate me?

ZAY:

Nah, Jade. You're cool.

Claudette exhales a steady stream of pot smoke and watches with glossy eyes as Zay hops in the passenger seat and the van drives off.

CLAUDETTE:

Bad vibes.

**INT. RORY'S VAN - DAY**

Hazy vaporwave music ("Summer Nightrunner" by A Gap Between) POURS from the speakers. Zay takes the wheel from the passenger seat so Rory can rip the bong.

RORY:

We probably shouldn't be the first choice when it comes to staging an intervention. You sure it isn't for us?

RHYS:

Mom and Dad tried that, remember?

Rory blows pot smoke at the windshield and hands the bong to his brother.

RORY:

Huge success.

DARBY:

What's the deal with this Lochlyn chick?

ZAY:

Brick's sister. She's kinda weird but so are we.

JADE:

Now by kinda weird, do you mean she walks to the beat of her own drum or do you mean she walks around in other people's skin?

ZAY:

Uh, the second one. The skin thing.

Jade can't tell if he's joking or not.

**EXT. HOTEL - DAY**

A leather boot with a pin heel steps out a cigarette butt. Pan up a pair of legs in dark hose belonging to Lochlyn. She's very put together in expensive and fashionable clothes. She's standing right outside the front doors of a hotel and is just about to light another smoke when Rory's van pulls up.

Zay rolls the passenger side window down and Rhys slides open the side door. Lochlyn raises an eyebrow at all the pot smoke. And the extra passengers.

LOCHLYN:

What is this, *Cheech & Chong*?

ZAY:

Sorta.

LOCHLYN:

This isn't a goddamn vacation. Who are all these people?

ZAY:

Serial killers.

LOCHLYN:

Hilarious.

RORY:

We come bearing drugs.

RHYS:

And booze.

ZAY:

You coming or not?

**EXT. ALASKAN WILDERNESS - DAY**

Dark synths from a coldwave tune ("Cruel Summer" by Black Marble) PLAY over a bird's eye view of Rory's van headed down a highway winding deeper through thick woodland across snowy mountains.

**INT. RORY'S VAN - DAY**

Darby is packing a fresh bowl of weed in the bong, an immaculate piece of tie-dye glass art. She offers it to Lochlyn.

DARBY:

You can hit the green if you want.

LOCHLYN:

No, thanks. I like to keep a clear head.

DARBY:

Me, too. Getting stoned clears my head.

LOCHLYN:

I'll pass.

Darby shrugs, rips the bong, and hands it to Rhys.

RHYS:

Your loss.

RORY:

It's dro. I've got reg, too, if you ever need anything. Uppers, downers.

LOCHLYN:

It's like I'm in a really bad after school special.

JADE:

We may not be going about it the right way, but we really do mean well.

LOCHLYN:

I'm so sure.

DARBY:

Can we drop her off on the side of the road somewhere? She's killing my buzz.

RHYS:

Let's vote on it.

LOCHLYN:

Hey, this is my brother's cabin we're going to. You burnouts didn't have to butt in.

ZAY:

C'mon.

LOCHLYN:

No, you're all treating this like a fucking field trip--

DARBY:

You and Zay can do the whole "this is your brain on drugs" thing with the egg, that's your business. The rest of us are gonna be getting wasted in the woods.

Lochlyn stares daggers at Zay.

LOCHLYN:

What did you tell them?

Zay shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

RORY:

Zay?

LOCHLYN:

What the fuck did you tell them?

ZAY:

I didn't tell them anything.

LOCHLYN:

Bullshit.

DARBY:

Jeez, take a pill.

ZAY:

You said Brick is using again. I wanted to help.

LOCHLYN:

By bringing a bunch of stoners?

RHYS:

Hey, I'm really more of an alcoholic than a stoner.

DARBY:

I'm a slacker.

JADE:

With all due respect, we all came along because we're Zay's friends. We won't get in the way of your intervention.

LOCHLYN:

Intervention? I get it now. Whatever Zay told you is a lie.

RORY:

Excuse me?

All eyes are on Zay.

ZAY:

Well, apparently Lochlyn here thinks Brick might know of something that can help my mom. Maybe.

JADE:

Is he a doctor?

ZAY:

Sorta. Well, he's an alchemist. I know it sounds bogus. I don't always believe it, myself.

RHYS:

An...alchemist?

RORY:

I'm confused. Even if Brick really is an actual alchemist for some stupid reason, how does that help Rena?

ZAY:

I've seen a lot of weird, inexplicable shit. Shit that defies the laws of the natural world.

DARBY:

You weren't just tripping?

ZAY:

I wish.

RORY:

Have we met? You're an alchemist?

ZAY:

Was. Everything I know, I learned from Brick.

LOCHLYN:

Isn't that convenient?

JADE:

I thought alchemy died out with the dark ages.

ZAY:  
Nothing ever really dies.

DARBY:  
Wait a minute. Alchemy is real?  
Like, really real? No shit?

LOCHLYN:  
As real as your hair color.

DARBY:  
Hold on. I'm not stoned enough for  
this shit.

Darby rips the bong.

ZAY:  
Medical science can only do so  
much. It scares me, how far I'm  
willing to go.

JADE:  
For your mom?

ZAY:  
That's what I tell myself. I tell  
myself I was just along for the  
ride. That it was all Brick's  
doing. Back then I was just a  
stupid kid testing the limits. But  
there are no limits.

DARBY:  
Limits?

Zay broods. He seems to be recovering some dark part of his  
past from the depths of his psyche.

JADE:  
It's never too late to do the right  
thing.

ZAY:  
I'm sure this, uh, unsettling  
development changes things. I'm  
sorry. If you guys wanna bail, I  
don't blame you.

RORY:  
I'm driving. It's my van. We're  
going to the cabin.

RHYS:

Let's just see what's up with this  
Brick guy. That's cool, right, Ror?  
Not jealous of competing with an  
ex?

He playfully messes up his brother's hair.

RORY:

Shut up, Rhys.

RHYS:

Besides, if he's half as crazy as  
his sister we can always fuck off.

Lochlyn rolls her eyes.

ZAY:

I'm trying to live with what I've  
done. I thought I could run away  
from it.

RORY:

Well, whatever it is, we're gonna  
face it together.

Rory takes Zay's hand in his own. Their fingers interlock.

**EXT. BRICK'S CABIN - DAY**

It is late afternoon and starting to snow by the time they reach Brick's cabin. It is a modest and quaint little place with a front deck encircling the front half. A row of icicles along the roof and frost in the windows give the picturesque quality of a winter postcard. A stack of firewood is in the process of being cut out front, with an axe imbedded in a tree stump.

The last remaining bit of daylight pools over the snowy mountain ridge in rays of bright gold shining through the barren woods.

Rory parks the van out front and everyone exits. They stretch from the long ride.

JADE:

Wow. It's beautiful out here. That  
PBS dude with the killer afro would  
paint this in a nanosecond.

RHYS:

Bob Ross is a pimp.

Darby holds her phone up.

DARBY:  
No signal. Oh, wait. My fucking  
phone isn't even on.

Zay breathes in deeply. He can remember the smell of the air here.

Lochlyn walks up the steps and KNOCKS on the front door.

LOCHLYN:  
Brick? It's Lochlyn.

DARBY:  
Anybody home?

LOCHLYN:  
He has to be here.

Lochlyn KNOCKS again. She tries the door but it's locked. She tries to look through a nearby frosty window but can't see much inside.

DARBY:  
Guys, there really isn't any signal  
out here.

RORY:  
Your phone on this time?

Darby gives Rory the middle finger.

RHYS:  
Maybe we took a wrong turn and this  
cabin belongs to an inbred family  
of cousin-marryin' banjo-strummin'  
psycho cannibals who are gonna  
mutilate our genitals, skull-fuck  
our severed heads, and piss up our  
butts?

JADE:  
I didn't bring nearly enough  
'shrooms for that.

LOCHLYN:  
No, this is the place. Right, Zay?

ZAY:  
This is the place. I can still feel  
it in my bones. Being here is  
surreal.

RORY:  
 You're trying to process a lot  
 right now. Just breathe. Do you  
 need to spark?

ZAY:  
 Do you even have to ask?

Rory lights a joint and hands it to Zay. They hang out by the van and smoke with Rhys, Darby, and Jade.

Meanwhile, Lochlyn heads around to the back of the cabin on her own.

LOCHLYN:  
 BRICK!

Rory takes a hit and passes it to Rhys.

RHYS:  
 (re: Lochlyn)  
 Can you imagine growing up with  
 that? No wonder Brick is nuts.  
 Allegedly.

Rhys puffs and passes to Darby.

DARBY:  
 Don't tell me we came all this way  
 for nothing.

Darby hands it to Jade when a shotgun BLASTS from the nearby woods.

Everyone exchanges concerned looks and bolts around the cabin to find Lochlyn standing near a back window armed with a rock just as the hunter approaches from a thicket of brush with a shotgun in one hand and a dead rabbit in the other.

RHYS:  
 I didn't know Zay was into bears.

HUNTER:  
 What the hell are y'all doin'?

He drops the dead rabbit in the snow by his feet and aims the shotgun in their direction. They put their hands up.

LOCHLYN:  
 Don't shoot. I'm Brick's sister. Do  
 you know where he is?

The hunter eyes them suspiciously.

**INT. BRICK'S CABIN - DAY**

The inside of Brick's cabin is equal parts rustic and modern. It is a treasure trove of art and relics. Like a mini museum in the mountains. Eerie paintings of mythological beasts adorn the walls.

Antiquated tools like a telescope, globe, and a wall of bookshelves loaded to the brim with difficult texts fill one side of the cabin, with technology (a stereo, a computer, and a flat screen) on the other. A fire roaring in the fireplace casts a warm orange glow.

Zay and the rest of the group feel just a little bit tense in the presence of the man who just had them at gunpoint.

The hunter seems to know his way around here very well. He helps himself to a bottle of local beer in the fridge and throws the rabbit in the sink.

He starts skinning the rabbit with meticulous precision. He holds the rabbit by its back legs and gathers some skin around an ankle, twisting until it breaks.

ZAY:

Who are you?

HUNTER:

That's none of your damn business.

The hunter pulls the skin down off of the rabbit's left leg, doing the same to the right. He works from the rabbit's hips to its head, pulling and tearing in masterful strokes.

He takes a pair of game shears and cuts off its feet and head. He takes a hunting knife and makes a cut along its belly through the rib cage and pelvis. Then he opens the sides of the belly and grasps the windpipe below its severed neck and pulls it out.

LOCHLYN:

Where's Brick?

HUNTER:

Around.

LOCHLYN:

Well, can we see him? It's important.

The hunter LAUGHS to himself as he begins butchering the rabbit meat.

HUNTER:

Important.

LOCHLYN:

Like it or not, I'm going to speak  
to my brother.

Lochlyn is about to start opening random doors when one of them opens and Brick enters the room. He's doesn't seem the least bit surprised to see a crowd in his cabin. He looks at Zay.

BRICK:

Are you still coming out of your  
mother?

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Claudette and Tisa are finishing the Indian take-out they ordered in for dinner. Claudette has a plate still half-full of chicken curry. Tisa soaks up some gravy with a piece of naan and eats it.

TISA:

So good. You can't be finished.

Claudette's mind is elsewhere. She's looking at her phone with a vacant expression.

TISA: (CONT'D)

Claudette?

Tisa reaches over the table and waves her hand in front of Claudette's face.

CLAUDETTE:

Sorry.

TISA:

Are you already full?

CLAUDETTE:

Yeah.

TISA:

Quitter.

CLAUDETTE:

You can finish it.

Tisa obliges.

TISA:

So, what's the matter, anyway?  
You've been weird since Zay left.

CLAUDETTE:

I haven't heard from Cat in three days. I went by her apartment. I don't know where she is.

TISA:

She's fine. This is your big sis we're talkin' about. Alley Cat. She can take care of herself and then some. C'mon. Remember when she fucked that guy with one leg and she left town for almost a month?

Claudette softens.

CLAUDETTE:

You're right.

TISA:

I usually am.

They kiss.

**EXT. DEATH PIT - NIGHT**

The cold misty air shimmers in the moonlight, casting a dreamlike haze over a secluded part of the forest.

The satyr's hooved legs trek through the snow in a heavily wooded area deep in the heart of the forest, dragging Cat's dead body, leaving a trail of blood.

There is something unsettling about the trees in this part of the forest. Instead of bark, they appear to be covered in human skin.

The satyr stops in the middle of a forest grove and throws the corpse into a death pit filled with mutilated bodies.

**INT. BRICK'S CABIN - NIGHT**

Rabbit stew with root vegetables is being ladled into bowls. The hunter is serving.

Brick is seated at the small kitchen table with Zay, Rory, and Lochlyn.

Rhys, Darby, and Jade are sitting on the sofa.

The mood is mostly tense, save for Brick and the hunter. The others don't know if they're guests or prisoners.

Brick's gaze is focused on Zay.

ZAY:

You're looking right through me.

Brick points to his forehead.

BRICK:

Open your mind. You'll find the truth you're looking for. A cure for a husk of a body. Your "sacred whore" mother rots in the skin of another.

Awkward glances are exchanged.

LOCHLYN:

What are the sleeping arrangements?

Rory looks at Zay. Brick looks at both of them.

BRICK:

You two can have my room. The rest of you can sleep in here.

LOCHLYN:

Are you serious? Your sister gets the shaft?

Brick looks right through Lochlyn.

BRICK:

You're nothing to me.

After dinner, the hunter has left. Rhys is rolling out the last of the sleeping bags in the living room, where two others are already occupied by Darby and Jade. Lochlyn has the couch.

Zay and Rory are in the bedroom, which could double as a library. The bed is covered in flannel blankets and incredibly inviting. Brick comes in.

RORY:

Thanks for giving us the bedroom.

Brick takes off his clothes and gets into bed. He strokes his beard with both hands.

BRICK:

Aren't you coming?

Rory raises an eyebrow.

RORY:

Not anymore.

He heads for the doorway and waits for Zay. But Zay just stands there. That says everything.

ZAY:

Rory...

RORY:

It's cool. We aren't that serious,  
right?

Rory leaves the cabin and SLAMS the door shut behind him.  
Darby looks up.

DARBY:

Gay guys are so dramatic.

**INT. RORY'S VAN - NIGHT**

Rory is in the driver's seat. He grabs a joint tucked behind the visor and lights it up. He looks at the cabin, expecting Zay to come out and ask him to stay. But that never happens. Then he starts the engine and drives off.

**INT. BRICK'S CABIN**

Upon hearing Rory's van drive off outside, Lochlyn nearly falls off of the couch in a panic.

LOCHLYN:

Is that 80's reject seriously  
ditching us?

She is nearly at the door when Rhys stops her.

RHYS:

Chill. He'll be back.

Lochlyn doesn't look convinced.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT**

Moody synthwave ("Oak Wood" by Drab Majesty) BLASTS as Rory's van speeds down a dark mountain road through the thickest part of the forest.

**INT. RORY'S VAN**

Rory DRUMS against the steering wheel and tokes. He is quite a ways down the road when he stops in the middle of the road.

RORY:

What am I doing?

He heads down the road just a little ways to find enough room to turn around.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD**

Rory's van pulls into a small alcove and his headlights shine on the satyr standing amongst the trees on the side of the road. It is looking right at Rory.

Rory looks terrified through the windshield.

RORY: (CONT'D)  
The fuck is that?

The satyr BLEATS and rushes forward. Rory tries to back up but it's no use. The satyr rams into the van, pushing it off the road.

Rory YELLS as the van tumbles over onto its roof in a snowbank.

RORY: (CONT'D)  
Shiiiiiiiiit!

**INT. RORY'S VAN**

Strapped into the driver's seat upside down, Rory looks around in a panicked daze. He unbuckles himself and crashes into the ceiling. He crawls across the ceiling (now the floor) and manages to get the passenger's side door open.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD**

Rory bolts from the van and heads into the woods. The satyr chases after him.

It's difficult to get traction in the snow. Rory darts from tree to tree, essentially propelling himself off of their trunks.

The satyr is nearly upon him when he tumbles down snowbank. He scrambles to his feet and runs for it. He makes a mad dash between two trees and his foot catches a tripwire.

It happens very fast--

Ropes concealed in the trees lash out like massive insect pincers at lightning speed. They're armed to the teeth with razor sharp metal can lids and pieces of sheet metal. Now dripping with blood.

Rory looks in shock at the stump where his right arm once was. His left arm is gone as well and spraying the snow with a fountain of blood. He falls off of his severed legs.

He is still conscious and watches as the satyr begins eating parts of his body strewn about in a bloody mess.

**INT. BRICK'S CABIN - NIGHT**

Film burns to the SMPTE color bars over hazy warped television static that bubbles and distorts to a melange of hyper-sexual psychedelic imagery fueled by sensual drug-induced carnage:

Zay and Brick are having sex in a melting tie-dye cube.

In horrific flashes, the satyr joins in. Sometimes taking the place of one of them. Sometimes Rory is with them. Sometimes pieces of his mutilated body.

A cartoon of a giant headless skeleton comes to live against a background of a starry nebula. It moves across the galaxy in leaps and bounds, using worlds as stepping stones, until it finds a skull floating in the deepest part of the abyss where the stars have been replaced by glowing magic crystals. Then the giant grabs the skull and puts it atop its neck, emitting a blinding light that floods the universe.

**EXT. FOREST GROVE - DAY**

Sunlight arcs through an icy forest grove where the trees resemble gnarled fingers. Rhys, Darby, and Jade are walking along a frozen stream while passing a joint amongst themselves.

DARBY:

I can't believe Rory bailed.

RHYS:

It's a lover's quarrel. I'm not getting in the middle of it.

DARBY:

Just 'cause they're gay. If it was Claudette and Tisa fighting, you'd be all over it.

RHYS:

Whatever.

Jade playfully squeezes Rhys's ass.

JADE:

Mmm, Rhys's pieces. A "straight" bubble-butt jock sandwiched between two bearded studs. That's the kinda manwich I like to sink my teeth into. You ever look into gay for pay?

Rhys swats her hand away and takes the joint.

DARBY:

God. Yes. Please. I've begged him only like a kajillion times.

RHYS:

In other words, you wanna see me getting man-handled for money?

DARBY:

That's all I've ever wanted. The drugs are just a bonus, sweetie.

She kisses her lips at him.

JADE:

Do you think Rory went back home?

RHYS:

No way. He'll be back any minute. He's just pissed at Zay.

DARBY:

If you say so.

They stop where the stream ends, at a thick cluster of trees against a mountainous incline. Stumps and boulders are like chairs. A great place to take a break.

Jade pulls a big zip-lock full of hallucinogenic mushrooms out of her pocket.

JADE:

Who's hungry?

Rhys and Darby eagerly put their hands up.

**INT. CELLAR - DAY**

Alchemical diagrams and archaic maps of the cosmos clutter a wall in the candlelit cellar of Brick's cabin. Old drawings of what alchemists perceived the natural world to be, with invisible cubes of matter representing the aether in the sky.

Zay is transfixed by the "squared circle" in blood on one of the walls.

ZAY:

Is that blood?

Brick is sitting at a desk funneling a strange blue liquid from a vial into an ornate flask with a steady hand. He's done this before countless times.

BRICK:

It's a door. Do you remember how to open it?

ZAY:

Where does it lead to?

BRICK:

Everywhere.

ZAY:  
Who's that big burly dude with the  
short fuse?

BRICK:  
Nobody.

ZAY:  
Gotcha. Look, as much as I hate to  
admit it, I need your help.

BRICK:  
Is that right?

ZAY:  
I want to save my mother.

BRICK:  
Why?

ZAY:  
It's all I can think about lately.

BRICK:  
Still defying death, tooth and  
nail. You haven't changed.

ZAY:  
That's funny, coming from you.  
Lochlyn said you could help.

BRICK:  
Lochlyn says a lot.

ZAY:  
She said you still love me.

BRICK:  
Don't believe everything you hear.

ZAY:  
I don't.

BRICK:  
Your boyfriend made a scene last  
night. I thought you hated the  
jealous type.

ZAY:  
Did he? I don't remember much. It's  
really hazy.

BRICK:  
That's probably for the best.

ZAY:

I figured he went with the others  
to take 'shrooms.

BRICK:

It's irrelevant.

ZAY:

Where is it? C'mon, I know you  
found it. I could sense it as soon  
as I got into the mountains.  
There's some kind of weird energy  
out here.

BRICK:

Is that right?

ZAY:

Let's just not with this bullshit  
cloak and dagger routine, alright?  
If you really found the  
philosopher's stone, I wanna see it  
for myself. Now.

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE - DAY**

Tisa is in the kitchen smoking a joint and opening a can of  
cat food. Skitty MEOWS in anticipation. Tisa puts the can by  
a bowl of water on the floor.

TISA:

Eat up, fat cat.

She pets Skitty and her cell phone RINGS.

(NOTE: Intercuts between Tisa at Zay's house and Claudette at  
Tilt as necessary.)

TISA: (CONT'D)

Tisa's party line.

CLAUDETTE:

Hey, I'm gonna be late.

TISA:

How late?

CLAUDETTE:

After midnight.

TISA:

Jeez. Overtime?

CLAUDETTE:

We'll see. Hope so. How are things over there?

TISA:

I just fed Skitty.

CLAUDETTE:

What about Rena?

TISA:

Yes, dear. I know Zay is like your best friend and you've got a really big heart but that sick old lady creeps me the fuck out.

CLAUDETTE:

Why?

TISA:

She just does. All the machines keeping her alive when her body just wants to die, I don't know, there's something just really unnatural about it.

CLAUDETTE:

I'm sorry. If you don't feel comfortable there, you can go home, it's fine.

TISA:

No. No, I'll stay. For you. But Zay better be back soon.

CLAUDETTE:

You're a doll. I'll see you tonight.

TISA:

Ciao.

Tisa hangs up. Then she walks down the hall and stops outside the door to Rena's room. She hesitates for a moment but goes inside.

It's ice cold compared to the rest of the house. The medical machinery quietly BLEEPs and DRIPS and WHIRS. Rena appears to be asleep.

Tisa quietly walks over to Rena's bed, takes a long drag on the joint, and exhales pot smoke over Rena's face. Then she leaves the room and Rena's eyes open.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY**

Lochlyn is walking down the mountain road. She's smoking a cigarette and listening to a sensual dreampop tune ("Shared Dreams" by You'll Never Get to Heaven) on her phone. She's trying to find a signal.

While holding the phone up she sees something further down the path. She runs to get a closer look and is shocked to see Rory's van upside down in a snowbank.

LOCHLYN:  
That can't be good.

She walks around and peers inside the open passenger side door, half-expecting to see Rory's dead body inside the van. But he's nowhere to be seen.

She looks around the surrounding woods. They suddenly look sinister in the stark white of winter. A chill runs up her spine.

She calls out:

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)  
Rory?! RORY?!

No response other than the mountains echoing back at her.

She climbs on top of the van and holds her phone up, focused on the zero bars in the top right corner of the screen. But then something catches her eye. It's difficult to tell what it is in-between the trees.

She jumps off of the van and works her way down the snowbank, heading further away from the road. Then she sees it:

Blood splattered in a ten foot radius in the snow.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)  
Nonononono...

She turns around to head back to the road and sees the hunter standing there with his sawed-off. She opens her mouth to say something when he SMASHES her in the face with the butt of the gun. She's out cold.

**EXT. FOREST GROVE - DAY**

Rhys, Darby, and Jade are in the woods tripping on 'shrooms.

Hallucinatory imagery distorts in a kaleidoscopic effect over a backdrop of pulsating colors and spinning shapes:

A cartoon window to a starry twilight opens endlessly in a blurry loop. The stars turn into open eyeballs all straining to see some existential ancient.

An unusual-looking meteor plummets from the abyss and crashes into the earth, leaving a massive cluster of magic energy crystals in its wake.

The lifespan of flowers (lavender, snapdragons, pansies) from seedling to bloom to pollination is shown in fast-forward.

A broken egg in a frying pan is siphoned back into its reformed shell.

Frosted cupcakes with cherries on top are smashed into infinite blinking neon mouths.

The entire forest seems to be spinning. Rhys has his back against a tree and is hugging his knees to his chest in a state of paranoia.

Darby is playfully prancing from tree to tree like a wood nymph.

Jade is making snow angels.

What sounds like a lyre PLAYS from somewhere deeper in the forest. Only Darby seems to hear it. She holds another mushroom up high in the air and looks at it. She opens her mouth, drops it, and catches it in-between her teeth. She swallows and dances away.

**EXT. SHRINE - DAY**

In her drug-addled trance, she doesn't care that she's now far away from Rhys and Jade. The sky appears to be a tie-dye haze.

She follows a bright glowing light to an unsettling statue of a satyr in a strange makeshift shrine to the mythological creature. Made of weathered stone and covered in dead foliage, the goat-man is holding a lyre. Its scary visage seems contorted in a state of despair. Its eyes seem to be burrowing through Darby's soul.

Darby rubs her body against the satyr statue suggestively and cuts herself. Suddenly, dread washes over her.

She turns and starts to head back towards Rhys and Jade but her foot catches a tree root buried under the snow and she falls down onto her hands and knees.

She tries to get back up but something is keeping her pinned to the earth. She has to rip her hands off of the ground and SCREAMS as she leaves bloody handprints in the snow.

Little roots seem to be growing out of her extremities, tethering her to the earth.

DARBY:

Wh-wh-what the fuck is happening to me?

Darby brushes off the bloody roots growing out of her hands but more just keep growing.

She uses the satyr statue for leverage and tries to pull her legs out of the ground. She SCREAMS as she painfully manages to make herself upright.

She looks down and sees that she is missing her right leg below the knee. The severed limb lays nearby, completely rooted, quickly becoming less human and more tree as the skin turns to bark.

Darby SCREAMS. Her limbs are now bloody branches. Her body is turning into a tree and there is nothing she can do but watch in horror as the roots encircle her and violate her throat and orifices while bark covers her from toe to tip, silencing her forever.

**EXT. FOREST GROVE - DAY**

Rhys is coming down from his high when he hears Darby's SCREAMS from deeper in the woods. This sobers him considerably.

RHYS:

Darby? Where the hell is she?  
Fuckfuckfuck...

Rhys hurries over to Jade, sleeping in her angels, and slaps her awake.

JADE:

What's your problem? Just five minutes.

RHYS:

No, c'mon, Darby's missing.

JADE:

Dude...

RHYS:

Darby is fucking gone!

JADE:

Huh?

Rhys yanks Jade up and she wakes up enough to stand.

RHYS:

Where's Darby?

Jade points to the trees Darby had been dancing amongst moments earlier.

JADE:

She was right...there.

RHYS:

Yeah, well, she's not now.

JADE:

Relax.

RHYS:

Are you serious? No, I'm not going to "relax" my girlfriend is lost in the woods and to make matters worse, she's tripping on fucking mushrooms!

JADE:

Okay, panic. Whatever! Let's just find her, okay?

Rhys is cool with this.

They call out to the surrounding forest:

RHYS:

DAAARBYYY!

JADE:

DAAARBYYY!

No response. They exchange concerned glances and then follow footprints in the snow deeper into the barren woods.

**EXT. SHRINE - DAY**

Rhys and Jade are in the same part of the forest where Darby turned into a tree.

RHYS:

DAAARBYYY!

JADE:

DAAARBYYY!

Just as the last bit of daylight stretches in broad gold waves across the frosty landscape, they approach the exact spot where the satyr statue was standing just moments before. It's gone now.

The footprints stop at a patch of bloody snow surrounding the Darby-tree, which almost blends in with the other trees.

RHYS:  
Shitshitshit fuckfuckfuck? DARBY?!  
DARBY?!

JADE:  
Is that BLOOD?!

RHYS:  
What the fuck happened to her?  
Where is she?

JADE:  
She couldn't have just disappeared  
into fucking thin air!

Rhys and Jade look at the Darby-tree. There's something off-putting about its severely gnarled branches.

RHYS:  
It can't be.

Rhys is suddenly compelled to tear off a chunk of wood and is mortified to recognize the bloody tattoos on the underside of the skin-bark in his hand. Jade is disgusted.

JADE:  
Omigod, what is that?

Rhys comes to the grim, unfathomable recognition:

RHYS:  
I think it's Darby.

JADE:  
No. There's no way.

Rhys holds up the tattooed skin-bark.

RHYS:  
THESE ARE HER FUCKING TATTOOS!

JADE:  
It's impossible!

RHYS:

We gotta help her. We gotta take her back with us. C'mon, Dar, let's go back home. You're okay, I love you, you're okay, I love you. We're going.

He grabs a branch and inadvertently pulls off an arm.

Rhys breaks down and Jade vomits. Something is watching them from behind a tree.

**EXT. METEOR CRASH SITE - NIGHT**

It is snowing. Brick and Zay are on a snowmobile. Zay has his arms wrapped around Brick's waist. They are riding through a dark, primordial section of icy woodland deep in the mountains. A hazy mist settles over serpentine trees. The night sky shimmers with ribbons of aurora.

BRICK:

We're almost there.

Brick parks the snowmobile and heads off on foot up a rocky crevasse. Zay is right behind. They work their way up severe terrain, using boulders and trees to climb further into the void.

The atmosphere around here seems to pulsate with an arcane energy. The closer they get, the more intense it becomes.

Standing side by side along a snow-capped ridge, Brick points at it:

The earth is burnt in a wide asymmetrical circle around a glowing meteorite about the size of a small car. It is partly covered in colorful crystals.

Brick seems entranced by it. He drops to his knees near it, warming his hands on the warm aura it gives off.

ZAY:

What are you doing?

BRICK:

Don't you recognize it?

ZAY:

It's just a meteorite. I wouldn't get so close.

BRICK:

You've been here before. In another skin. Does it feel any different?

ZAY:

I've never been this far in the mountains. It was someone else.

BRICK:

You aren't even living your own life.

ZAY:

Who is?

BRICK:

Why did you come all this way? If you want the suffering to end, you have to make an offering. You know the rules. You've broken them before.

ZAY:

I just want to help my mother. Tell me what I must do.

BRICK:

Help harms, in this case. Tube-fed some sick incarnate. You say you "love" her. Let her die.

ZAY:

You make it sound so easy.

BRICK:

It is.

ZAY:

No, it's not. It's really not. It's the hardest thing I've ever had to do.

BRICK:

Death transcends.

Brick breaks off a piece of crystal from the meteorite and offers it to Zay.

He is tempted to take the crystal from Brick's hand but there is something disturbing about the dark energy that seems to resonate off of it.

He reaches for it but instead takes Brick's wrist and shoves up his jacket sleeve. The light given off by the crystal is enough to see the track marks running up his forearm. The tell-tale dots look like flesh-tone eyeballs.

Zay looks Brick in the eyes. He's in some faraway place. Whether by drug or by crystal, Zay isn't sure.

ZAY:

I've been down so many roads in my life. They all lead me here. To this very moment.

Zay takes the crystal and looks at it, half-expecting something inexplicably magical to happen but nothing does. He doesn't let his disappointment show.

BRICK:

If you speak, it will listen. You will feel it all around you.

ZAY:

Why do you think a meteor is the philosopher's stone?

BRICK:

You don't see it?

Zay examines the crystal up close. Its dramatic clusters of blue-violet are vivid and detailed and there is something almost demonic about it.

ZAY:

I don't.

BRICK:

Look closer.

Zay complies.

ZAY:

Well, it's a pretty cool paperweight, I guess. And I've never been this close to a meteor before, so, bonus points. But this is not what I expected.

BRICK:

"He who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster. And if you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you."

ZAY:

Ah, yes. Nietzsche. Psych 101.

BRICK:  
You don't even remember anything  
about yourself. I pity you.

ZAY:  
I'll keep that in mind. C'mon,  
let's start heading back before our  
nuts freeze off.

BRICK:  
Do you know what happens if you  
crack open the egg of time?

Zay pockets the crystal and tries to pull Brick to his feet,  
but as soon as he does Brick slugs him.

Zay wipes blood from his nose and watches Brick return his  
attention to the crystal-covered meteor. On all fours, he  
appears to be worshipping it in a state of frenzied  
transcendence.

Zay looks around in horror at the woods which seem to be  
coming alive with an evil older than time itself.

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Tisa is in the shower. Water cascades over her buxom naked  
body.

Unbeknownst to her, there is an unnatural disturbance going  
on in Rena's room. The medical monitors begins to flicker in  
frenetic harmony as some horrific unseen Lovecraftian  
transformation takes place.

Tisa emerges from the shower and towels off. She puts on an  
oversized faded Garfield T and a pair of panties.

In the living room, she curls up on the sofa with a lo-fi  
shoegaze tune on her phone ("Dew" by PYNKIE) and a joint.  
Skitty hops up on the coffee table. Tisa pets the cat  
affectionately and blows pot smoke at her.

What sounds like a loud CRASH from Rena's room is hard to  
discern from the melodic haze. She pauses the song and looks  
at Rena's door from her seat on the couch.

TISA:  
Rena?

Silence.

Tisa gets up and goes to Rena's door. She presses her ear to  
the door but can't hear anything amiss.

She takes a long drag and exhales before she KNOCKS on the door and goes inside.

Tisa SCREAMS at the inexplicable horror before her:

Rena is a fleshy mutated mass of extra flailing limbs. The skin-covered medical machinery's tentacles flood her writhing body with an unholy energy.

The entire room seems to be alive around her, like an organ being used for the very first time. The skin-door SLAMS shut and Tisa kicks it in her desperate attempts of terrified futility.

A tentacle shoots out from in-between Rena's legs and wraps around Tisa's neck. She GASPS for air as she is dragged across the floor. She claws at the slimy coil around her throat but escape is impossible. She opens her mouth to try and SCREAM but soon another gooey tentacle lashes out, this one ramming itself deep down her throat. The icky tendrils appear to be extracting some form of nutrients from Tisa as her body spasms and contorts horrifically.

In the living room, Skitty watches Rena's closed door.

#### **INT. HUNTER'S SHACK - NIGHT**

Lochlyn lies unconscious in the stirrups on a bed in a makeshift surgical room in a grimy mountain shack. Static from a small radio WARPS and BURBLES in-between fragments of a classic country ditty ("Mama Tried" by Merle Haggard) while the hunter washes bloody goo from his hands in a rusty sink.

He moves a hand over a metal tray containing an array of barbaric medical instruments: saws, chisels, forceps, etc. and grabs the rustiest, most painful looking amongst the bunch, an osteotome (essentially a miniature chainsaw with a spike affixed) and begins washing its blade in the sink.

Lochlyn comes to in a daze. Her eyes focus on the light swinging overhead. She blinks a few times and looks around. The room is still spinning. She sees the surgical tools nearby. The hunter's back is turned. When he faces her, Lochlyn feigns being out cold.

He approaches her with the osteotome in his hand, its spike open and ready to go in the back of her skull.

Then Lochlyn jolts up, swinging her left arm out in a single motion. The small handheld saw in her death grip is dripping with blood. Her arm shakes and she drops the bloody saw.

The hunter drops the tool and clutches his wide open throat as a fountain of blood runs down his shirt. Little tentacles emerge from the gaping wound like roots thirsty for water.

Lochlyn SCREAMS and scrambles out of the stirrups.

She bolts for the door as the hunter's head violently flops backward in a volatile spray of blood and brain matter, allowing for more and more tentacles to lash out haphazardly.

**EXT. HUNTER'S SHACK**

Outside, Lochlyn makes a mad dash through the snow while the ever-mutating hunter breaks through the open doorway of his shack.

Lochlyn hides behind a tree. She peeks behind the trunk as the hideous monster wanders off in search of her. She has to cover her mouth to keep from making a sound.

When she think the coast is clear, she runs off in another direction.

She runs amongst the trees. Every direction looks the same. Then she suddenly falls into the earth and SCREAMS as the ground opens up around her and swallows her...

...but she sinks her hands into the dirt and holds on for dear life. She looks down at the open pit she nearly fell into. The bottom is lined with myriad jagged spikes, their massive tips splintering. Perfect for tearing flesh.

She struggles to pull herself up. She can't seem to do it. Clumps of earth and snow shift as she tries to climb out.

Lochlyn finally manages to get out of the spike pit and then she runs off just as the monstrous hunter drifts into frame.

**INT. TILT - NIGHT**

Claudette is closing at work. She waves goodbye to a couple of coworkers leaving through the front doors. She heads into the employee lounge in the back of the building and gathers her purse and jacket from her lockers.

She pulls out her phone and tries calling her sister, only for the voice mail to pick up:

CAT: (V.O.)

It's Cat. Leave a message.

CLAUDETTE:

Where are you? Why won't you answer the damn phone? You know, Tisa told me not to worry but I think I'm going grey from stress. I've been by your place, like, ten times. Tell me what it is so I can help. Call me when you get this.

Claudette heads down a hallway past a series of doors leading to party rooms. Each door is labeled with a colored drawing:

Tinkerbelle for "Fairyland."  
 Batman for "Super Friends."  
 A skull and crossbones for "Treasure Island."  
 A smiling clown for "Circus Party."  
 A lion for "Animal Safari."  
 A wizard for "Magic Knights."  
 A green martian for "Space Adventure."

Claudette walks back through the main part of the building over an endless stretch of day-glo patchwork carpeting. Squares of blue, red, green, and yellow seem to go on forever in a hypnotic loop beneath her purple ballet flats.

Neon signs spelling out "SKATE" in different colors are like pastel stars in the dark of the skating rink. Glowing images of roller skates are candy-coated beacons. It looks completely different at closing time.

Claudette is almost at the front doors when the sound system starts playing a neo-disco tune ("Cherry" by Chromatics) on full blast.

Claudette scans the area. Someone is standing in the center of the skating rink.

She tries to call out over the sparkling synths:

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)  
 We're closed!

The person just stands there. It's difficult to make out in the darkness but it looks like it might be Tisa.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)  
 Tisa?

Tisa isn't budging. Thinking it some sort of spontaneous romantic gesture, Claudette grins.

She exchanges her shoes for a pair of skates at the rental booth and heads out onto the hardwood skating surface. She coyly skates over to Tisa.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)  
 What are you doing here? Did you miss me that much?

Tisa won't look at her.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)  
 What's wrong?

Claudette skates around.

Now close enough and with the spinning disco ball overhead giving off just the right shimmer, Claudette is horrified to see that this is most definitely not the Tisa she knew. This is a doppelganger with milky white dead eyes and a frenzied row of tiny hungry tentacles for a mouth akin to Cthulhu and Claudette SCREAMS.

Tisa is quickly upon her and knocks her to the floor. She has the upper hand, pinning Claudette's shoulders, her slippery mouth-appendages trying to gain access to a new host.

Claudette yanks Tisa's tentacles which then wrap around her hands. She takes the wet unnatural flesh in-between her teeth and rips out a chunk, blood dripping down her chin. Tisa WALLS in agony and Claudette wriggles free from her.

Claudette manages to get up and starts skating away. Tisa isn't far behind.

Claudette leaves the skating surface and practically flies out of her skates and back into her flats. She darts for the front door.

**EXT. TILT**

There is an odd dreamlike haze outside. No signs of life. Like a ghost town.

Claudette bolts through the front doors of Tilt and makes a beeline for the only car in the parking lot, a yellow Volkswagen. She uses her remote to unlock it and hops in...

**INT. TILT**

...only to CRASH through the fluorescent light above an air hockey table and lands on it with a loud THUD.

She's back inside Tilt. In the arcade. How?

She's in a daze. Looks around. Rolls off of the table. Tries to get her bearings.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)

What...? How...?

Claudette gets back on her feet. She can hear Tisa approaching. Her hideously deformed shadow on the wall gets bigger and closer.

Claudette scrambles over to a *Space Invaders* arcade cabinet and hides behind it, covering her mouth to keep from screaming.

Tisa approaches the air hockey table covered in glass. Examines it. Her mouth-appendages sense the air. Claudette goes for it. She runs like hell towards the main area of Tilt. Tisa chases her with an inhuman mobility.

Claudette heads for the front doors but stops at the inexplicable sight before her:

Outside, an endless mass of swirling static fizzles in and out. A distortion of time-space CRACKLES in the hypnotic vortex.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)

Where am I....?

Tisa is quickly approaching, her tentacles violently lashing out like a rapid-fire series of ooey gooey whips hunting for their prey.

Claudette sprints past the snack bar towards the back of Tilt where the party rooms are. She bolts past the colorful drawings. Tisa rampages after her, constantly evolving with every step. More flesh. More appendages. No longer even remotely recognizable as Tisa. Unfathomable that this tentacled entity could have once been human.

The exit sign above the red door at the end of the hall never seems to get closer. Claudette keeps running but the hallway contorts and stretches around her endlessly.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)

What the fuck?!

Tisa is practically upon Claudette when she runs into the "Space Adventure" party room and SLAMS the door shut behind her. The walls and ceiling are painted to look like a starry galaxy complete with planets, spaceships, and aliens.

Claudette barricades the door with a table and then backs up against the wall, the nebula framing her terrified face as she watches Tisa make quick work of it.

She SCREAMS and arms herself with the only thing she can, a chair. A tentacle grabs it from her and flings it across the room.

Claudette grabs another chair and holds onto it for dear life when another slippery skin-whip entangles this one and swings it forth towards Tisa's ravenous coiled maw. She drives its metal legs into what used to be Tisa's breasts, now hideously festering bubbling boils. Tisa WAILS as Claudette drives the legs all the way down. She scrambles over the broken pieces of table in front of the door and out into the hall...

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE**

...and CRASHES through the mirror in Zay's bedroom and lands on his bed in a flurry of glass and feathers. The night sky projector casts a swirl of astral lights around her in a kaleidoscopic haze.

Claudette rolls off of the bed in pain. Struggles to get upright. The wall where the mirror was looks normal.

She grabs the nearby telephone, a vintage see-through corded model and dials 911 but as soon as she presses the speaker to her ear she hears the loud HISS of static. Like an old dial-up modem connecting to the Internet.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)  
It's a nightmare.

She pulls out a lighter and runs it under her free hand.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)  
Wake up, wake up, wake up, wake up,  
wake up...

She winces from the pain as her skin blackens and blisters from the hot flame.

She isn't waking up from this nightmare. There are three doors she can use:

Hallway.  
Bathroom.  
Closet.

The door to the adjoining bathroom is open. She goes inside to find the floor, walls, and ceiling are covered in innumerable bloody squared circles (a large circle containing within it a triangle, within the triangle a square, within the square another circle.) The dizzying work of alchemical-driven madness.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)  
Zay...what the hell have you  
done...?

**INT. BRICK'S CABIN - NIGHT**

Rhys and Jade burst into Brick's cabin in a terrified panic and barricade the door with the sofa.

RHYS:  
What the fuck was that thing?!

JADE:  
No clue. I don't really wanna hang  
around to find out.

RHYS:  
It wasn't human. We are really  
fucked, huh?

JADE:  
No. No, we just have to figure  
something out.

Jade tries the bedroom and opens the cellar door, calling out  
into the dark abyss:

JADE: (CONT'D)  
Zay? Anybody?

They're all alone in the cabin.

JADE: (CONT'D)  
Nobody's here. I thought Rory would  
have been back by now.

RHYS:  
That thing probably got 'em. Or  
maybe they turned into fuckin'  
trees. What the fuck was in those  
mushrooms you gave us, anyway?

Jade gets defensive.

JADE:  
Nothing! You think I did this?

RHYS:  
Hey, everything was fine until we  
took 'em.

JADE:  
Fuck you!

RHYS:  
Maybe this is just a really bad  
trip. We're tripping, right? Darby  
isn't dead.

JADE:  
Rhys...

Jade tries her cell phone but there's no service.

JADE: (CONT'D)  
Do you have your phone?

Rhys goes over to his backpack and pulls out a bottle of  
whiskey which he unceremoniously opens and starts nursing. He  
grabs his cell and throws it to her.

RHYS:  
(re: phone)  
Knock yourself out.

There's no bars on his phone, either. She tries dialing 911 on both phones but only gets the horrible SCREECH of what sounds like a blade of grass whistling fading in and out over warped static fuzz.

JADE:  
We have to get out of here.

RHYS:  
No. We're still tripping from those fucked up mushrooms you gave us. I'm gonna keep my ass right here and get drunk enough to shit my pants. Then I'll wake up and everything will be normal.

JADE:  
You're seriously gonna sit there getting drunk even though there's a monster in the woods and your brother is still out there?

RHYS:  
That's the plan.

JADE:  
You're a dick.

RHYS:  
Hey, I don't write the rules.

JADE:  
Well, what are you gonna do if that thing gets in here?

RHYS:  
I'll wake up by then.

Rhys is starting to feel the whiskey. Jade is exasperated. She heads into the cellar.

**INT. CELLAR**

She uses the flashlight app on her phone to shine a ray of light into the darkness. She carefully goes down the steep wooden staircase.

She casts her beam across an assortment of bizarre alchemical tools and archaic drawings as well as the familiar bloody symbol on the wall.

Jade is unnerved by it. The dark energy radiating from the bloody squared circle is tangible.

JADE:

What the hell is this? What does it mean?

**EXT. ALASKAN WILDERNESS - NIGHT**

Zay is riding the snowmobile alone through the deep woods. His POV is a hypnotic tunnel into a bleak void of snow and ice and barren trees. Stark blacks and whites blend together in a dreamy haze. He's a man on a mission. He's so focused he doesn't even notice when Lochlyn bolts out from some trees as he rides by.

LOCHLYN:

HEY! HEY, YOU FUCK!

Lochlyn waves her arms and watches in dismay as Zay rides off into the distance.

She heads off in the other direction on foot. She is drawn to an unusual glow in the sky.

**EXT. METEOR CRASH SITE**

Lochlyn reaches the meteor crash site to find Brick still worshipping the space stone in a trance.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)

Brick?

She slowly approaches from behind.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)

Brick? What are you doing?

He is in another world.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)

What is that? Why are you sitting so close?

His frenetic veneration continues wordlessly.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)

Your friend tried to kill me. He turned into something. He's still out here somewhere. It's not safe. Let's leave, okay?

She touches his back and he rages on her in a mad fit, punching her in the face repeatedly. Her face a bruised, bloody mess, she GARGLES on blood from her cut lip.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)  
P-please. S-stop.

He looks her in the eyes. Listens.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)  
I love you.

This disgusts him. Vehemently enraged to a primal animalistic rage and driven by some ungodly force, Brick grabs Lochlyn by the throat.

BRICK:  
Why did you come here?

She can barely speak within his mighty grasp.

LOCHLYN:  
To...help...you...

BRICK:  
You? Help me?

LOCHLYN:  
Yes...

He pushes her face closer to the crystallized surface of the meteorite. It radiates with a bizarre energy. The source of the glow she followed here. It burns.

She struggles but is powerless to stop him.

LOCHLYN: (CONT'D)  
Brick. Don't.

He presses her cheek against it and she SCREAMS as her skin bubbles from the sizzling heat. Then he continues to bash her skull into the rock repeatedly, breaking bone and cracking teeth until her face is hot jelly.

He dips his fingers in her bloody crushed face and draws an eyeball on his forehead. He resumes worshipping the meteorite. It begins to crack like an egg.

**EXT. HUNTER'S SHACK - NIGHT**

The snow is whipping up to a big white flurry. Zay is practically within view of the hunter's shack when the snowmobile SPUTTERS to a stop.

ZAY:  
Shit.

He tries revving it but it's no use. Out of gas. End of the line.

He can hear what sounds like the HISS of static fuzz in the distance.

He gets off of the snowmobile and heads towards the noise. Soon he sees a tiny shack in the distance. The light glowing from within is a lantern in the dark of the forest. It casts a golden gleam through a broken piece of wall out front.

ZAY: (CONT'D)  
Hello? Anybody?

**INT. HUNTER'S SHACK**

Zay walks through the splintering wood where a door used to be and eyes the rundown shack therein:

A makeshift surgical room, bottled water, assorted canned goods (tuna, peaches, beans, etc.) in a grimy kitchen on one side of the room and on the other, a filthy soiled mattress, a flickering box TV, and a radio.

Zay turns off the radio. There is something creepy about this place. He doesn't plan to stay long. Is there something he can use?

ZAY: (CONT'D)  
There has to be something...

Zay starts tearing the place apart. A couple of red gas canisters catch his eye. Most of them are empty, but the last one he checks is almost completely full.

ZAY: (CONT'D)  
Bingo.

**EXT. HUNTER'S SHACK**

Zay is almost back at the snowmobile when he notices something moving in the darkness. Something big. Something not entirely human. With tentacles.

Frozen with fear, all he can do is watch. The monstrous hunter-beast doesn't seem to notice him as it works its way through the wilderness, changing shape with sickening pained WARBLERS in its desperate primal quest for the perfect evolution. Then Zay realizes what it is heading for right now: the snowmobile.

The ghastly thing stops at the snowmobile and examines it, its tentacles coiling over the shiny black metal surface. Smelling it. Picking up Zay's scent.

Then the hideously evolved hunter stares directly at Zay with what used to be a human face and HOWLS in horrific glee.

An inexplicable siren-like drone. A mix of human and other. As if calling something.

Zay quickly scrambles back through the snow towards the shack. The hunter glides effortlessly across the icy terrain in great strides. Closing distance.

ZAY: (CONT'D)  
Damnshitfuck!

A tentacle lashes out and wraps around...

...a branch as Zay ducks down under it in his hasty retreat. Breaks it off and disposes of it. Another tentacle strikes and grabs his ankle. He missteps and falls onto his back. The gas canister spills. More tentacles rapidly whip his entire body in what appears to be the beginning of some alien mating ritual. A slimy tendril grabs his other ankle, spreading his legs in the snow. Two more ensnare his wrists. A sickening bramble of myriad tentacles unfold and slither inappropriately over Zay's body. Wanting him. Needing him.

Zay eyes the gasoline spilling into the snow in a puddle about ten feet away. A broken branch is nearby.

Zay takes a chunk of slippery tentacle in his mouth and bites. Blood pools into his beard and the hunter WAILS in pain. Zay takes another bite, tearing and ripping and most of the tentacles withdraw just enough for him to scramble to his feet.

He goes for the gas canister. There's still a little bit left. He sprinkles gasoline over the hunter like a priest using holy water during an exorcism. Then he uses a nearby broken branch to create a torch:

He dunks the splintered end in the pool of gasoline, pulls his lighter out of his pocket, and lights the end.

ZAY: (CONT'D)  
Burn, bitch.

He tosses the branch and the mutated hunter goes up in flames. An ungodly agonized SCREECH emits from its burning maw.

Zay runs like hell. The hunter is a fireball on the hunt.

He comes across the spear pit Lochlyn nearly fell into earlier and stands on the edge, peering down at certain death. The blazing beast is a wisp in the woods coming closer. Its tentacles fire whips striking out haphazardly in its agonized frenzy.

Zay waits until the last second and leaps out of the way. The burning abomination falls into the abyss, fire whips lashing as it is skewered like a pin cushion.

Zay watches from the ledge. Its flames continue to flicker as its burnt coils weakly lash out at the walls of the pit in its death spasms.

He collapses, his back against a tree. Looks up at the sky. It's a black void peppered with dizzying white specks. Like the inside of a nightmarish snow globe.

He pulls the mystic crystal Brick had broken off of the meteorite from his jacket pocket and eyes its jagged clusters. He's mesmerized by its unnatural glow.

ZAY: (CONT'D)

What am I supposed to do?

Then the crystal sinks into his palm, his skin growing over it as the purple cursed stone becomes a part of him.

**EXT. METEOR CRASH SITE - NIGHT**

Brick is still worshipping the meteorite when whatever sick thing it gave birth to stands over him. Only brief flashes show a humanoid covered in a translucent crystalline shell standing over him.

Brick looks up in incredulous awe. Is it really happening?

BRICK:

What's the next step?

He reaches out to touch...

...and the blood, organs, and bones are sucked out of his body in an instant, leaving a heap of useless withered flesh in the snow.

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The television in Zay's living room is on. An emergency broadcast system is playing on repeat over a bright blue background:

RECORDING: (V.O.)

"ATTENTION. ATTENTION. This is the Emergency Broadcast System. Take shelter immediately. This is not a drill. Repeat: Take shelter immediately. This is not a drill."

Then flashes of extreme gore intercut with family videos:

A WOMAN (30s) with no face CHATTERS incoherently with her skinned maw.

A BOY (5-6) surrounded by a happy family blows out candles on a birthday cake.

A MAN (30s) is still conscious when the cameraman dismembers him with a chainsaw.

A gaudy gold star is placed upon the top of a Christmas tree. Pulled teeth, plucked eyeballs, etc.

The hypnotic imagery flickers and fades.

Claudette is lying on the sofa in a drug-induced haze, absently petting Skitty and watching the chaotic bursts of carnage.

CLAUDETTE:

Is it real? Is anything real? Am I real? Is God punishing me for something? I have no faith. I never did. Not that kind, anyway. Could that be it? Only faith will save you? All 'cause I try to do something nice for Zay and his...Zay and his...mother...

She looks at the door to Rena's bedroom. Considers something.

**INT. BRICK'S CABIN - NIGHT**

Rhys is good and drunk when Jade comes up from the cellar.

JADE:

We have to leave. Now.

RHYS:

Leave what?

JADE:

This cabin. C'mon.

She starts trying to drag him towards the couch barricade but he won't budge.

RHYS:

Pffft.

JADE:

Damn you, Rhys, I can't get you out of here by myself.

RHYS:

Out?

JADE:

Yes, out. We can't stay here anymore. There's some pretty fucked up shit in the cellar. I think that Brick guy is responsible for everything.

RHYS:

Brick?

JADE:

The crazy guy.

Rhys starts to doze off and Jade SLAPS him lightly.

JADE: (CONT'D)

Nonono, you have to stay wake, you have to stay with me. There's something really wrong with this place. We have to get out of here.

RHYS:

Chill. You're just tripping. I'm never taking mushrooms again as long as I live.

JADE:

Goddammit, we are not still tripping! There really is something going on! I can't explain it, either, but it's not the drugs. Rhys, please. I can't do it alone.

RHYS:

Huh?

Rhys is half-asleep and Jade SLAPS him again.

JADE:

RHYS! LET'S GO!

RHYS:

Go where?

JADE:

Anywhere. It's not safe.

RHYS:

You wanna go back outside? With that thing still out there? Be my guest!

JADE:

I think this cabin is cursed. Maybe the whole mountain is.

RHYS:

In that case, we're both fucked whether we stay or go. So, I'm stickin' with my original plan of gettin' shit-faced.

JADE:

Rhys, please!

RHYS:

No, fuck off. You're fucking nuts if you wanna go with that thing still out there.

He's adamant. He sticks the bottle back down his throat and gives her the middle finger. She throws her hands up in frustration and starts to move the sofa out of the way by herself.

JADE:

What-the-fuck-ever.

She looks back at Rhys one last time before she heads out the door...

**EXT. FROZEN LAKE**

...and inexplicably tumbles down a snowbank and rolls over the edge, falling a few feet through the air, landing hard with a CRACK on the ice surface of a frozen lake deep in the snowy mountains.

JADE: (CONT'D)

Wh-wh-what the fuck? Am I dreaming?

She carefully sits up, the brittle ice splintering in places beneath her.

JADE: (CONT'D)

This can't be real, this can't be real, this can't be real...

Jade gets up and looks straight forward and SCREAMS at what she sees across the ice:

The satyr is looking right at her and already heading for her. Jade tries to scramble away but slips and falls on the slippery surface and the satyr gets closer and closer as she struggles to get up.

Jade finally manages to get to her feet and tries to run on the ice but doesn't make it very far before the satyr is upon her and the ice shatters beneath them.

**EXT. UNDERWATER**

Jade and the satyr crash through the ice into the frigid waters. She struggles to swim through the impossibly cold dark blue void but her limbs seize up as she simultaneously freezes and drowns. The satyr watches as the last oxygen bubbles escape her open mouth as her body appears to crystallize from the sub-zero temps.

**EXT. FROZEN LAKE**

The satyr's horns break through the ice near the coastline. It emerges from the frozen lake dragging Jade's frozen corpse. It shakes itself dry and bleats.

**INT. HUNTER'S SHACK - NIGHT**

Zay scrambles into the hunter's shack holding up his infected hand. It is quickly going rancid with some kind of ancient evil. The cursed gem pulsates like a heartbeat within his decaying flesh. Clusters of gem break through the dead skin. It's spread halfway up his forearm.

He tries washing it in the sink to no avail.

ZAY:

Fuckfuckfuckfuckfuck...

He has to act fast. He grabs a washcloth and forms a tourniquet around his bicep, using a metal spoon to help tie it very tight. Then he turns a hot plate on its highest setting, and grabs the biggest cleaver he can find.

He rests his infected arm on a flat surface close to the hot plate. His eyes are focused on the little light by the hot plate's temp settings. He slowly raises the cleaver in the air, his hand shaking. Sweat gushes down his forehead.

ZAY: (CONT'D)

Think happy thoughts.

The light turns red and the hot plate DINGS and Zay SLAMS the cleaver down on his infected arm cutting it off just below the elbow and SCREAMS in horrified pain.

He slams his bloody stump into the hot plate surface and SCREAMS again as the torn meat and viscera sizzles and burns.

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Claudette is prepping a mini survival kit. She is loading an overnight bag with snacks and bottled water. She takes cat food, too. Medicine, bandages, scissors, etc.

Then she pulls all of the drawers out of the kitchen counters, sending cutlery flying over the floor. She pockets a butcher knife.

She grabs a can of hair spray from the bathroom.

Then she bursts into Rena's room with the hair spray and a lighter.

The bedroom is a skin-covered womb. Tentacles attached to machines imbedded in the fleshy walls are connected to the multi-limbed tumorous abomination.

As soon as tentacles lash out, she swings with her knife, cutting off the slimy tips as they come her way. This allows her enough time to lop off the skin-tubes connected to the deformed machinery (intercut with shots of disconnecting life support on a normal Rena.)

Claudette aims the nozzle forward and lights the lighter and sprays a cone of flames over the horribly super-evolved Rena (intercut with shots of a normal Rena burning alive in her bed.)

CLAUDETTE:

I'm sorry.

Rena WAILS and Claudette flees.

She grabs Skitty.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)

C'mon. You're all I have now. I'm all you have, too. I know, tough shit.

Claudette opens the front door and stares at the rectangle of static distorting in the spellbinding vortex of hazy flux. She closes her eyes and walks into it. The infinite flickering mass swallows her whole with a singular BLIP.

**EXT. VOID**

Clutching Skitty close, Claudette wanders through the warping overlay that distorts unnaturally around her.

CLAUDETTE: (CONT'D)

(distorted)

Is this life?

Claudette flickers in and out, repeatedly looking over her shoulder in an eternal loop while her physical form morphs:

Human. Infrared Scan. Pencil Sketch. Colored Drawing. Cartoon. Polygons. 3D Model. Repeat.

**INT. CELLAR - NIGHT**

Rhys wakes up from his bender half-drunk. He is tied to a chair in the cellar of Brick's cabin.

Zay appears to be working on something by candlelight at the desk nearby. He appears to be covered in a see-through crystalline coating.

RHYS:

Zay?

Zay is too focused on whatever frenzied alchemical process he is undergoing. He never looks up from his work.

RHYS: (CONT'D)

Dude. Did you tie me up? Is this some sorta sex game? I'm flattered, but...

Rhys struggles against his bindings.

RHYS: (CONT'D)

Pretty kinky. Man, I feel like shit. I had the worst trip ever. I thought Darby had turned into a tree and died. Then something with a goat head was after me. That was my first and last time doin' shrooms. I guess I'm just not cool enough. Zay? Yo?

Zay's crystal-fleshed double (with both arms intact) finally looks at Rhys. Brick's face is over his own like a mask.

RHYS: (CONT'D)

WHAT THE FUCK, MAN?!

ZAY:

It was all for nothing, wasn't it?

RHYS:

DUDE, WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOUR FACE?!

Crystal-Zay attacks. He rams a funnel down Rhys' throat and begins pouring a steady stream of whiskey from his own bottle down. Then he lights a match on the candle's flame and drops it in the funnel.

Rhys is burned from the inside out in a massive pillar of flame. The entire cellar is quickly engulfed in the compound inferno.

**INT. HUNTER'S SHACK - NIGHT**

Zay is fading in and out of consciousness when a few notes from a lyre PLAY.

He looks in horror at his burnt stump. He picks up his severed arm, the gem still skinned over in the palm. He tries to reattach it just by holding it in place. No good.

He breaks down.

The haunting melody from the lyre continues. He is entranced by it.

**EXT. HUNTER'S SHACK**

Wandering away from the shack, Zay follows the music through the woods. Frost in his beard and still carrying his severed arm like a grim trophy.

**EXT. CAVE**

The music is coming from a cave deep in the forest.

**INT. CAVE**

Zay goes inside. He uses his phone to cast a beam of light in the pitch black. There are primal etchings in blood on the cavernous walls:

A meteor appears in the sky.  
It crashes to the earth.  
Trees grow from the flame.  
From the flame a goat-headed beast is born.  
The cycle renews.

There are human bones scattered. At the back of the cave Zay comes across a suspicious mound of earth.

Driven by something, possibly madness, he falls to his knees and digs handfuls of dirt. His fingers hit something.

He pulls a filthy lyre out of the ground. There is something off-putting about it. It appears to be made from human skin.

Something BLEATS and Zay looks forward. The satyr is standing at the cave entrance.

Zay kills the light and lays against the back wall of the cave. Covers his mouth. Closes his eyes.

When he finally opens his eyes, the satyr is staring right at him and it BLEATS.

Zay closes his eyes again and the satyr rubs its body intimately over his. When Zay opens his eyes...

**INT. HOSPITAL**

...he is standing in a delivery room in a hospital. Rena is giving birth to him as a BABY. The baby CRIES.

The image distorts like VHS overlay and Zay is transported again...

**INT. BARN**

...this time to the inside of a barn. Grainy film stock flickers as suggestive flashes show what appears to be a snuff film featuring Rena and a goat.

Zay closes his eyes...

ZAY:

No, it didn't happen. No, it didn't happen. No, it didn't happen. No, it didn't happen. No, it didn't happen.

**EXT. DEATH PIT**

...and opens them to find himself in a death pit. He is surrounded by mangled corpses and body parts. His severed arm glows with a dark magic at the bottom of the pile.

Zay worms through the slippery bloody chunks towards his missing piece.

Reunited.

The satyr drags Jade's frostbit corpse to the pile and throws it in. Zay hides amongst the other dead bodies. Reconsiders.

Zay waves his severed arm.

ZAY: (CONT'D)

HEY! HEY, YOU FUCK! EAT THIS!

The satyr BLEATS and bites into Zay's cursed arm and becomes crystalline. Zay pulls the arm down and the satyr CRASHES into a million pieces, showering the death pit with little sparkling gem-like pieces of fur, blood, and bone.

Through the sea of bloody corpses around him, Zay gazes up at the sky. It resets with the first signs of what appears to be a normal sunrise.

Zay closes his eyes.

**INT. ZAY'S HOUSE - DAY**

Zay wakes up with a start in his bed. He still has his arm. It's morning. Skitty is at the foot of the bed.

Everything appears normal.

He puts his head back down on the pillow...

...and blood begins to pool from his skull.

He sits up again as more and more blood gushes from the giant crack in the back of his head.

ZAY: (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck, oh, fuck, oh, fuck...

The whole back of his head is missing.

**EXT. CLIFFS - DAY**

The dead child at the bottom of the cliffs is nearly washed away by the ocean waves.

Up on the edge of above, the younger boy and older boy watch the grisly scene.

YOUNGER BOY:

(re: body)

Who is that?

OLDER BOY:

That weird kid who lives on the farm. Did you know his mom fucked a goat for money?

YOUNGER BOY:

No, she didn't.

OLDER BOY:

Believe what you want.

Both boys pull out their phones and take pictures.

The bicycle wheel keeps spinning.

THE END.