

FADE IN:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Three large heavy tents in a Pacific Northwest rainforest around a large campfire.

At a folding table near the fire, KATE (30s), a spitfire redhead in khakis, flips through photos on her tablet. The photos depict a dark Mayan-like stone temple mostly obscured by evergreens.

ALEJANDRO (30s), rugged outdoorsman, machete strapped to his thigh, jabs his finger down on one of the pictures.

ALEJANDRO

There! The orientation, the lines, the steps. Exactly like Chichen Itza.

KATE

Similar, but you can't say these were Mayans. They have an entirely different culture.

ALEJANDRO

Because of the geography. Different resources, interactions with the Haida. Even the stars are different.

Nearby, ALIYA (10) bounces a red ball. It hits a root and rolls into the trees.

KATE

But that wouldn't change their religion. These people worshipped apes.

Aliya stands at the edge of camp peering down a gentle slope. She takes a hesitant look back at the table.

ALEJANDRO

Yes! It's the Pacific Northwest, how did they even know what apes look like? They must have come from Mexico or Latin America.

At the edge of camp, Aliya is gone.

EXT. ROCK FACE - NIGHT

Aliya creeps through the underbrush searching for her ball. She comes to a high rock face. A large crack runs through it, widening to a gaping, jagged hole at the base.

She spots her ball next to the hole. She picks it up--

A faint green glow pulses slowly from within the crack. She gets on her knees to look.

Excited, Aliya crawls inside to investigate.

INT. ROCK CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Aliya emerges in a round chamber, perfectly hollowed out of the rock. A shiny metal disc is embedded in the center of the smooth rock floor.

A metal box, about her height, stands in front of an archway bricked up by the same dark stone as the temple. The top of the box slowly pulses with green light.

Two metal tubes with dark, opaque windows stand on either side of the archway.

Aliya touches the metal disc with the toe of her shoe. Nothing happens. She steps onto it--

One of the tubes flashes with green light.

EXT. ROCK FACE - NIGHT

Green light strobos brightly from the crack. Sizzling energy echoes from within, pierced by Aliya's scream.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Kate looks up from the table, alarmed. She scans the camp for Aliya.

KATE

Aliya?

Alejandro pulls back the flap to their tent, sees it's empty. He draws his machete.

ALEJANDRO

Aliya!

The flap to a second tent lifts as a worker, HERNANDEZ, looks to see what the commotion is about.

LUKA (50s), weathered, wearing buckskins, emerges from the forest carrying an unconscious Aliya.

Kate runs for her daughter, takes her from Luka.

LUKA

She was lying on the slope.

Kate gently shakes Aliya but the girl's eyes remain closed. Alejandro checks her vitals.

ALEJANDRO

Good breath, strong pulse. Are there any marks on her?

KATE

Wake up, sweetie. Please!

Aliya remains unresponsive.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Kate closes the flap to their tent, eyes red with crying.

Alejandro throws his satellite phone on the table.

ALEJANDRO

Fuck! Just static.

Kate pulls out her own phone, dials 9-1-1.

ALEJANDRO (CONT'D)

There's nothing around here. What could be causing interference?

KATE

We're leaving. She needs a hospital.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Hernandez picks up deadwood from the forest floor. A dry twig snaps nearby. His eyes search the darkness warily.

A red ball flies out of the underbrush and bounces towards him. Hernandez drops the wood in fright.

HERNANDEZ

Put a madre!

He crouches to catch the ball.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Luka spots Hernandez kneeling on the ground at the edge of the firelight.

Alejandro helps Kate put on a massive backpack.

ALEJANDRO

We'll be gone a day or two. It'll probably rain so keep the gear covered.

KATE

Keep everyone away from the temple.

Luka waves his understanding but his attention is on Hernandez. The worker hasn't moved. He approaches cautiously.

LUKA

Hernandez? Que pasa, amigo?

He touches Hernandez's shoulder. No response. Looks at the man's face--

The front of Hernandez's head is gone, his entire face sliced off with surgical precision. Blood drains down in rivulets, splashing onto his shirt and pants.

Between his knees, Hernandez's face lies flat on the ground, staring upwards with a frozen expression of surprise.

Luka stumbles back to the fire, wailing in horror.

KATE

What happened?

Luka can't find the words, badly shaken. He makes several signs of the cross, eyes locked on Hernandez's body.

Kate watches Alejandro draw his machete and approach Hernandez. He recoils, put his hand up in warning.

ALEJANDRO

He's dead. Don't come over here!

KATE

Dead? How?

ALEJANDRO

Probably a machete.

Kate, alarmed, yanks open the tent flap to check on Aliya. Relieved to see her sleeping on the cot.

LUKA

Who could do such a thing?

Alejandro peers into the dark forest.

ALEJANDRO

Maybe a native. Or a zealot.

(to Luka)

Build up the fire. We can't leave now.

KATE

What about Aliya?

ALEJANDRO

I'll monitor her.

KATE

Whoever killed Hernandez must have done something to her. We can't just wait.

ALEJANDRO

What he did to Hernandez--no, we wait for morning.

Kate shrugs off the pack. She takes the machete from Alejandro.

ALEJANDRO (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Kate chooses a sapling and hacks at the base.

KATE

In Guatemala, Aliya's father pissed off a tribal chief. It got ugly.

The sapling parts.

KATE (CONT'D)

We had machetes. They had spears.

She lifts the pointed end of the sapling to inspect it. Her face clouds.

KATE (CONT'D)

Spears are better.

LATER

Kate pulls the sharpened end of a freshly made spear out of the fire as Alejandro emerges from Aliya's tent.

ALEJANDRO

No change. I still can't find anything wrong with her.

LUKA

We will need more firewood.

ALEJANDRO

Yes, of course. I'll go with you.

LUKA

(relieved)

Gracias.

KATE

We should stay together.

ALEJANDRO

We need the light. It won't take long.

Kate positions herself at the flap to Aliya's tent, spear at the ready. Alejandro kisses her.

KATE

Be careful.

ALEJANDRO

Te amo mi chica bella.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Alejandro picks up deadwood as quietly as he can. He looks up at Luka doing the same a short distance away.

He hears a WHISPER to his left. Motions for Luka to be still.

ALIYA (O.S.)

(distant)

Mama? Mama, where are you?

Startled, Alejandro looks back towards the camp but doesn't have a view of Aliya's tent or Kate.

ALIYA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(closer)

Is that you, mama? I'm scared.

LUKA

Aliya! We are here!

Alejandro waves frantically for Luka to be quiet.

ALIYA (O.S.)
(overhead)
Maaamaaa, where aaaare yooooou?

Luka looks up at the trees--

Alejandro starts to look up as well--

THUMP! Something rolls through the brush towards Alejandro, like a ball. He raises his machete--

Luka's head rolls into view, a look of terror on his face. His lips move as though trying to speak but without breath they don't make a sound.

Luka's body still stands as though unaware it has lost its head. Blood spurts from the cleanly sliced neck.

Alejandro screams and runs pell-mell through the brush.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Kate grips her spear tighter, frightened.

KATE
Alejandro!

Alejandro stumbles into view, shuffles towards her as though exhausted. Kate rushes to help him.

KATE (CONT'D)
Thank God! I thought--

Kate drops her spear to grab Alejandro as he falls to his knees.

Alejandro looks at her blankly. Touches her face, smearing her cheek with blood.

Kate lifts her hand from behind his back. It drips with blood. She looks at the back of his head--

The crown of his head has been sliced off.

Kate scrambles away, horrified. Alejandro falls heavily to his side.

Kate shakes violently, hand clamped over her mouth to keep from screaming.

ALIYA (O.S.)
Mama?

Kate turns slowly, fearfully--

Aliya stands in front of the tent, rubbing her eyes.

ALIYA (CONT'D)
My eyes hurt.

KATE
Ali!

Kate leaps to her feet--

And freezes. Behind Aliya, at the treeline, a pair of glowing, pupil-less GREEN EYES stare out of the darkness.

Kate holds out her hand.

KATE (CONT'D)
Sweetie, come over here.

Aliya takes a step, still rubbing her eyes.

ALIYA
I feel funny.

Kate slowly picks up the spear, watching the strange eyes.

KATE
Just follow my voice.

Aliya takes another step--

An ape-like ROBOT, a bit larger than Aliya, springs from the trees, long arms reaching--

Kate raises the spear but she's too late, it's going to get Aliya--

The robot sails over Aliya's head and lands in front of the girl.

Two metal tentacles tipped with smooth bulbs spring out of its back. Kate stands transfixed as the bulbs shimmer and flow into long, slender blades.

The tentacles whip towards Kate's head faster than she can flinch--

And stop inches from her surprised face.

Aliya stands with her hand outstretched as if somehow holding the blades back. Her eyes are the same as the robot's.

ALIYA
Don't worry, mama. This is my friend.

The blades flow back into bulbs and the tentacles retract.

KATE

What did it do you you?

ALIYA

Nothing. I told you, we're friends.
I'll show you.

The robot stands upright and raises its head to the sky. The torso splits and the metal flows apart, revealing a hollow interior filled with lights and displays.

Aliya steps in front of the robot, smiling. The robot continues to flow open down its arms and legs.

ALIYA (CONT'D)

It just wants to go home.

Kate holds out her hand desperately.

KATE

Aliya, come here right now!

Aliya steps backwards into the robot, a perfect fit. Wires lash to her skin all over her body.

ALIYA

I'm going to get the rest of my
friends now. They're waiting for
me.

The metal begins to flow closed over Aliya's arms and legs.

KATE

No. I can't let you go.

Kate raises the spear tip until it points straight at her daughter's heart.

KATE (CONT'D)

Please don't. Please.

Aliya gives her mother a disapproving look.

The metal begins to flow across Aliya's chest. The spear tip wavers--

Aliya flashes a warm, childish smile as the robot's head lowers and the chest flows shut, sealing her inside. Kate drops the spear.

ALIYA (V.O.)
(filtered)
I'll come back soon, mama. I
promise.

The robot leaps into the trees, swings through branches and vanishes into the darkness.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAWN

Kate sits in the dirt staring into the ember remains of the campfire.

A loud CRACK! splits the air. The ground RUMBLES.

The temple, silhouetted against the pre-dawn sky, suddenly splits open. Rock blocks slide apart and widen like a blossoming flower.

The rumble stops, replaced by a high-pitched otherworldly whine. A silver spacecraft rockets skywards, blazing blue light behind it.

Kate glares after, seething with anger.

KATE
I'll be waiting.

FADE OUT.

THE END