

"The Village"

The Woods

by

M. Night Shyamalan

INT. HILLTOP - NOON

One might describe the scene as beautiful, if one could get by the child's coffin.

A wooden sign in the dirt reads.

"Here lies Daniel Nicholson.
Beloved by all.
Died October 3, 1897"

A wilting man in his late forties sits on the grass next to the, much too small box.

MAN(smiling)
Who will plague me with
questions now?... Who will
pinch me to wake me up? Who
will laugh at me when I fall?
(voice cracks)
Who's breath will I listen to so
that I may sleep? Who's hand
will I hold, so that I may walk?

The wilting man's face trembles.


Behind him, a respectful thirty feet away, stand a group of about sixty people, equally still.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUPPER TABLE - AFTERNOON

An enormous handmade wooden table sits in the center of a small village of log cabins. All sixty members of the village are seated for the meal.

The women wear bonnets. The men have their farmer's shirts rolled up at the sleeves.



A man in his late forties stands. He has the eyes of a child; innocent and pure. This is EDWARD WALKER.

WALKER


We came here to start anew-

Beat. Eyes look up one by one. Edward Walker stands silently, appearing suddenly overwhelmed. A hand reaches up and squeezes his arm. Edward Walker looks down to the wilting man we saw earlier. They look at each other quietly.

Walker turns back to the table.

WALKER

We came here to start anew.
We are grateful for the time we
have been given.



Walker sits. Movement begins across the table as hands begin to pass bread and corn and meat.


AND THEN WE HEAR IT. THE SOUND CARRIES THROUGH THE AIR AND BLEEDS INTO THE VILLAGE. IT COMES FROM THE WOODS.

SCREAMS. IT IS NOT HUMAN.

All movement at the table stops, except for a TALL BOY at the end of the table. He is barely in his twenties. He is mentally handicapped. He starts clapping wildly.

Everyone else sits uncomfortably still. No expressions on their faces. They wait.

THEN THE SCREAMS SLOWLY START TO MOVE AWAY.



The boy's clapping slows and then stops as well. The happiness trickles from his face.

The rest of the table waits till the last of the nonhuman screams have moved away. And then quietly hands start reaching across the table again.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATER PUMP – LATE AFTERNOON

A group of women and girls are washing and drying the wooden bowls and plates at a hand water pump that stands in the ground.

A strong older woman pumps the handle. Bursts of water spurt out from the pump's mouth. Two girls are holding bowls under the water. One girl gets splashed by the other. They both start laughing. The older woman makes a disapproving noise with her mouth. The girls look over, nod and return to washing the bowls; little grins on their little faces.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORCH – LATE AFTERNOON

Two young women sweep the porch of a cabin. One of the young women starts mimicking the other's movements. They begin to sweep in synch. They both begin to smile as they sweep. They begin to move around the porch like dancers.

They're giggling stops as one spots something. They both stop dancing. They look down at the base of the post that holds the porch roof up. There are two RED WILDFLOWERS peeking out from the fist full of weeds.

They bend down quickly and yank the red wildflowers out. They move off the porch and kneel down in the dirt next to the porch.

They use their hands to dig a small hole in the dirt. They put the crushed red wildflowers into the hole and methodically bury it.

The two young women stand, look around, and wipe themselves off before returning to the porch and picking up the brooms again.

CUT TO:



EXT. COURTYARD BELL – LATE AFTERNOON

A MEDIUM SIZED BRASS BELL hangs from a wooden t-post. A hand reaches out and takes hold of the rope that dangles from its side. The hand pulls once strong and hard.

CUT TO:

EXT. STORAGE CABIN – LATE AFTERNOON

Men stow away farm equipment. Hoes and sickles are stacked neatly in piles.


A LONG BELL TOLLS.

The men stop working. They put down their tools where they stand. One man leans into the storage cabin to tell those inside.

MAN

Drill bell.

CUT TO:



EXT. WATER PUMP – LATE AFTERNOON

The older women usher the girls into an orderly line as they leave the area of the water pump. Dirty dishes are left on the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLUSTER OF CABINS – LATE AFTERNOON

We see the courtyard. There are clusters of cabins on every side. We watch as one by one everyone in the courtyard and everyone coming in from the fields, disappears into different cabins like ants retreating into ant holes.



CUT TO:

INT. CABIN – LATE AFTERNOON

We are in someone's home. A group of about eight women and children walk in through the front door. They move to the back of the small cabin where a woman reaches down and pulls on a handle in the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. DIFFERENT CABIN – LATE AFTERNOON

We are in another two-room cabin. A group of men wait their turn as each man climbs into the trap door in the floor.

When the last is in. The final man reaches up and brings down the trap door, closing them all in.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND ROOM – LATE AFTERNOON

A collection of two men, four women and three children are huddled together in a four by eight space in the ground. The adults have to sit down to fit in this space.

A THIN STRIP OF LIGHT FALLS ON THE FACES from the seam in the trap door. All we hear is the nine of them breathing. Their eyes all stare at the CRACK OF LIGHT.


A child coughs. A woman reaches over a couple bodies and pats the coughing child on his back. The child settles. They all return to staring at the light. Beat.

THE BRASS BELL SOUNDS AGAIN.

The two men reach up and open the trap door. **LIGHT POURS IN.**

One by one, they all climb out of the four by eight space in the ground.

CUT TO:



INT. FAMILY CABIN - LATE AFTERNOON

The men, women and three children walk out into the afternoon light. One woman immediately grabs a broom and continues cleaning the porch.

The community returns to doing their chores.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

We are in the darkness, looking into the LIGHT OF A CABIN WINDOW. We see a child's bedroom - A small bed - A small wooden desk. On the child's desk there is nothing.

The wilting man lays curled up on the little bed. He stares out with red eyes.

CUT TO:



EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

In another cabin we see a woman pouring water from a jug into a large white bowl by the side of the bed. We see her speak to her husband who sits reading in bed. She leans over and begins washing her face with the water in the bowl.


CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT


Three children kneel and pray by their bedside. Their parents begin blowing out the oil lamps in their room.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER - NIGHT



A young man blows his nose into a handkerchief. He wipes his face and resumes standing. His eyes gaze down quietly. The ORANGE LIGHT FROM THE TORCH LIT NEXT TO HIM, FLICKERS ON HIS FACE.



He is standing on a platform, thirty feet in the air. It is a tower on the edge of this community. He is keeping guard.

Arms folded, he stares at the darkened woods.

CUT TO:


EXT. SCHOOL HOUSE – MORNING

A group of children carrying cloth bags with books in them, crowd around something in the dirt.

Edward Walker moves through the tiny gathering.

WALKER

What manner of spectacle has caught your attention so splendidly? I ought to carry it in my pocket to help me teach.



Edward Walker parts the final layer of titillated children. He stares down at the thing on the ground. Beat. His expression becomes grave.

WALKER

Who came upon this?


It takes a moment before a little boy steps forward. His eyes never look up.

WALKER

Philip, did you move this?

PHILIP shakes his head, "No." Everyone watches Walker who turns and looks down again quietly.

IT IS HARD FOR US TO SEE THROUH ALL THE TINY LEGS AND FEET OF THE CHILDREN. THERE IS SOMETHING DARK AND MOIST LYING IN THE DIRT.



CUT TO:



INT. CLASSROOM – MORNING

The classroom is overcome by whispering. Walker uses chalk to write the date, "October 5, 1897" on a gray slate board framed in wood.

He turns to the children who range in age from seven to twelve.


WALKER

Okay, let's have it. What delicious conclusions have you come to?

THIN BOY

An animal God created was slain.

WALKER



Donald, please, try to speak plainly. It disturbs your mother, when you speak so darkly. Everything need not be said with such drama.

Another hand shoots up.

WALKER

Marybeth.

MARYBETH

I inspected it carefully. Its head was twisted back and much of its fur was removed.

WALKER

I see.

DONALD



It was murdered.

Now the children become quiet.

WALKER

So who is the culprit? Who has
done this heinous act?

Beat.

MARY

Those we don't speak of, killed
it.

WALKER

And there it is.

(beat)

Why would such a notion enter
your heads?

TWELVE-YEAR OLD BOY

Those we don't speak of, eat
smaller animals.

BROWN EYED GIRL


Those we don't speak of have
claws.

WALKER

Children... Those we don't
speak of have not breached our
border for many years. We do
not go into their woods and
they do not come into our
valley. We do not threaten
them. Why would they do this?

DONALD

It is a warning of the doom to
come.



WALKER
(stern)

Donald.

Walker gazes out at the classroom of concerned children.

WALKER

Is it possible, in your haste, you have missed the simplest explanation? That this small animal was slain by a slightly larger animal like a fox, and that this said fox carried it into our village to avoid other scavengers from coming and eating his prize. And when our village awoke and started its morning business, the fox was scared off and left its prize for us to find.

(beat)

I can't say if that's what really happened, but it's certainly more reasonable to think that, than something... unprecedented.


MARY

I did see two foxes on the hill yesterday.

Walker watches the image of the foxes scamper through the minds of the children.

WALKER

Does anyone have further questions pertaining to our immediate doom?



Walker winks at Donald. No one raises their hand.

WALKER

Then if it is agreeable, let us
begin our studies.

One by one, the children reach into their cloth bags and retrieve their notebooks.

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING HALL – AFTERNOON

We are in one of the largest cabins. Wooden chairs are scattered throughout. This is some sort of gathering place.

Twelve of the chairs have been brought together in a circle. Twelve of the oldest members of the village are seated in the chairs.

The Wilting man and Edward Walker are among them.

FIDGETY WOMAN

We ought not to overlook the Flight of the Birds. We didn't have it last year and I for one missed it desperately. I know Tabitha missed the children dressed in feathers and such.

A small, gentle woman with her hair tied back, looks up. TABITHA sits to Edward Walker's side.

TABITHA

I am fond of it.

The two women slowly turn to Edward.

EDWARD

I do not have a say in this matter. August Nicholson is Chair of today's meeting.

All eyes turn to the wilting man, AUGUST NICHOLSON. He appears exhausted. August nods as he shuffles the papers in his hand.

AUGUST

The Flight of the Birds will be returned to this year's Fall Festival.

The group nods quietly.

FIDGETY WOMAN

Let us speak of food then.

THERE IS A KNOCK at the far end of the room. All attention moves in that direction.

Another man in his mid forties steps in. He carries a tiny smile, his eyebrows are raised.

MAN

There is a young man who has requested a word with the elders.

The group looks to one another. This is unusual.

AUGUST

Do have him come forward.

The man with the raised eyebrows steps out. Beat. The door stays still for a moment, and then it opens.

A sinewy young man in his twenties steps in. His deep-set brow and dark green eyes never look up as he walks forward to the group.

There are many glances to a pretty elder in her forties. Edward looks to her as well. She stares back with the identical dark green eyes as the boy. She shakes her head slightly; She doesn't know why he's here.

The young man slows to a stop a few feet from them. His hand brings a paper up. He begins to read carefully.

GREEN EYES

My mother is unaware of the reason for my visit today. She did not give her consent or consult me in any form.

The woman with green eyes moves forward in her seat without knowing it.

GREEN EYES

I have spent all but my first years in this village. It is all that I know. It is a blessed place, this village. Our days are filled with love and compassion and joy.

His green eyes flick up, just for a moment... He returns to the paper.

GREEN EYES

But there is also some suffering and fear. The passing of little Daniel Nicholson from illness-

August Nicholson goes still.

GREEN EYES

-and other events have weighted on my thoughts. We have been taught of the greed and corruption that exists in the towns. And the countless wasted lives centered on the exchange of money there. But we have also been taught about their fascination with science and machines and medicine.

GREEN EYES

Could they have rescued Daniel
from his terrible illness?

(beat)

I ask permission to cross into
the forbidden woods and travel
to the nearest town. I will
gather new medicines and
information of what has
happened in the world, and I
will return.

Beat.

GREEN EYES

With regards to Those we don't
speak of, I am but a single
person, I am not a threat to
them, I am certain they will let
me pass.

(Beat)

Creatures can sense emotion
and fear. They will see I am
pure of intention and not afraid.
The end.

The young man with green eyes lowers his hands with the paper and stares
at the group.

No one moves at first. Edward Walker begins to smile.

WALKER

(soft)

Lucius Hunt, that is the most
I've heard you speak in many
years combined.

The young man with green eyes stands quietly before the group.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The pretty woman with green eyes sits on the edge of her bed in her night robe. She hears her son descend the ladder from the loft space he lives in.

ALICE HUNT watches him through her bedroom doorway.

ALICE

What goes on in that head of yours?

LUCIUS turns to face her.

ALICE

Say something Lucius.

Beat. Lucius stares.

LUCIUS

(soft)

Finton Coin is in the Tower. I promised to sit with him.

Alice lies back in her bed. She pulls the covers over herself. She gazes at her son from the pillow.

ALICE

Why do you not tell me what you feel? I do not know if you think about love. I do not know what your dreams are. When you stood today, you spoke in such a gentlemanly manner. I scarcely recognized you.

Her eyes close.

ALICE

How can a mother fail to
recognize her son? Tell me.
Tell me that...

Lucius watches his mother become quiet. Her breathing becomes steady and soft.

Lucius walks into her room and takes the quilt from the rocking chair and gently places it over his mother's sleeping shoulders. He whispers in her ear.

LUCIUS

I do think about love.

Lucius walks out of his mother's room and exits the cabin quietly.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER - NIGHT

FINTON COIN is a skinny boy with big curly hair. He is on the platform tonight, thirty feet in the air.

The trap door opens as Lucius climbs up. Finton immediately relaxes.

FINTON

Did anyone see your approach?

Lucius shakes his head, "No."

FINTON

I saw Christop Crane sniffing around. He suspects something. He has announced, more than once, in my presence that only one man should hold post in the tower each night. Why would he say such a thing if he didn't suspect? What a wretch he is? Is it so bad to be a trifle timid?

FINTON

Are you sure you were not
detected?

Lucius shakes his head again, "No" as he takes his seat in the corner. Beat.

FINTON

And I shared a portion of my
chicken with him not two days
ago. A fine, tender piece.

The two young men fall into silence; one sitting, one standing. And then out
of the silence-

LUCIUS

Do you ever think of the towns
Finton?

Finton turns to the sound of Lucius' voice.

FINTON

The towns? What for? They're
wicked places where wicked
people live, that's all.

Finton doesn't notice the expression on Lucius' face as he sits in the
shadows. Finton shrugs his shoulders and returns to looking out. Beat.

FINTON


(soft)

I do hope no one saw you.

CUT TO:

EXT. APPLE ORCHARD - DAY

Along the hilltop runs a group of twenty apple trees; their branches bursting
with deep red pickings.



On the ground near the trees are baskets filled with apples. A few are toppled over.

Standing in a tight group a few feet from the abandoned baskets are a group of women. The same quiet fearful expressions on their faces.


They stare at something at the base of a tree. We can't see what it is, but we can HEAR THE FLIES BUZZING around its dead carcass.

ALICE(o.s)

We understand the depth of
your worries, but you needn't
be alarmed.

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING HALL – AFTERNOON




Every member of the village is jammed into this little building. The elders are standing towards the front of the room.

Alice Hunt's green eyes look compassionately over the gathering.

ALICE

What we seem to have amongst
us, is a scavenger of some type.
Most likely a coyote or wolf.
It's manner of killing and
removing the fur, but leaving
the flesh torn may be a sign that
the animal may suffer from
madness.

An uncomfortable murmur flutters in the meeting room.



ALICE

For the next fortnight we should be vigilant for sightings of this coyote. Keep careful watch over the little ones as they play on the hills.

(lowers voice)

As for the other notion... we do not believe our boundary has been breached. Those We Don't Speak Of are much larger creatures than coyotes. We would know if they had been here.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD – AFTERNOON

We pick up Edward Walker as he leaves the meeting hall with the rest of the congregation. A young woman in her early twenties catches up to him. She has a round attractive face. She is the lively sort. She practically bounces to his side.

GIRL

It's frightful, this business with the coyote, is it not Pappa?

WALKER

Do not feel worried Kitty?

KITTY

You are not troubled?

WALKER

I am certain it will all end soon.

KITTY

Can we speak on other matters then?

WALKER
It would be a relief.

KITTY WALKER takes his arm and whispers in his ear as they walk.

KITTY
I am in love.

He looks at his daughter as they turn the corner onto a path where they are alone. Kitty beams at his side.

WALKER
I have great reverence for the word 'love' Kitty. It should not be thrown about lightly. It is the greatest force on this earth.

KITTY
These feelings are so strong, it can be nothing else Pappa.

WALKER
I see.

KITTY
You do not believe me.

WALKER
I have no judgment yet.

KITTY
It must have been bubbling inside me for a long time, for it came bursting forth not three days ago. I have thought of nothing since.

Edward nods his head.

WALKER
'Burting forth' is it?

KITTY
I realized since I'm the eldest
of your children and since you
were stricken with five girls
and no boys, I decided to act as
if I were the son and ask your
permission.

WALKER
I must correct you on the word
'stricken'. I would not trade
any one of my five daughters
for a hundred of the finest boys.
So now, what is it you are
asking permission for?

KITTY
I would like permission to
marry, Pappa.

WALKER
There is a proper manner in
which these things are to
happen. Such as the boy would
normally be standing next to
you at a moment such as this.
Where is the boy in all of this
Kitty?

KITTY
I haven't spoken to him as of
yet.

Now Edward stops walking.



WALKER

The young man is unaware of
your intentions?

KITTY

He has a quiet way. I was going
to talk with him, but I wanted
your blessings papa. I wont talk
with him without your
blessings.

Edward starts walking again.

WALKER

Kitty-

KITTY

It's Lucius Hunt.



WALKER

-Lucius?

Kitty sees the expression on her father's face.

KITTY

You think badly of him?

WALKER

No, no... I've just been
thinking on him recently.

Kitty's face returns to beaming.

KITTY

He's not like the other boys. He
doesn't joke and bounce about.



WALKER

He certainly doesn't.

KITTY

Do I have your blessings then?

He looks down at his eldest daughter. He nods, "yes."

She hugs him tight as they come to a stop in the far end of the courtyard at the base of the medium sized town bell.

WALKER

Do me one favor first Kitty. Do not tell anyone else of your 'burstings' until you have spoken with the young man.

Kitty nods earnestly. Beat. Edward Walker gets lost in his thoughts again.

KITTY

(whispers)

Papa, something does trouble you?

Edward looks down and sees the concern in his daughter's eyes.

Beat. He then reaches up and pulls long and hard on the rope that tolls the brass bell.

We see in the background everyone stops what they're doing and begins walking in lines towards the cabins.

We watch as people walk in from the stream and from the orchards. They disappear quietly into the cabins.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - AFTERNOON

Lucius stands at the edge of a field of crops. He methodically removes the clumps of dirt from the prongs of the tools he's used on the soil that day.



KITTY

Good afternoon Lucius.

Lucius' hands stop their work. He turns and looks over his shoulder at the young woman that stands before him. She rises on her tip-toes and returns to earth again. Lucius never lets go of his tools. He nods hello to her.

KITTY

I wanted to tell you something.

Lucius stares.

KITTY

My goodness, my heart is
pounding so fast, I think I may
faint right on this spot... You'd
probably catch me course,
before I fell.



Lucius continues to stare.


KITTY

Seeing as you're of age... and
seeing as I'm of age... and
seeing as we get along so well
like this... A thought entered
my head that may have entered
your head as well.

Lucius blinks his green eyes. Kitty takes this as a positive gesture and smiles sweetly.

KITTY

(soft)



I love you Lucius. I love you
like the day is long. I love you
more than the sun and moon
together. And if you feel the
same way, we should not hide
it any longer. It's a gift, love is.

KITTY

We should be thankful. We should bellow it with all the breath in our lungs, "Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"

Kitty finishes her flurry by rising up on the tips of her toes and returning to earth again.

Lucius stares.

CUT TO:

INT. WALKER CABIN – NIGHT

Kitty is wailing.

Edward carries his youngest daughter in his arms as his petite wife holds their next two youngest on their laps. They watch with concern as Kitty cries loudly from her bedroom

Kitty is being consoled by her closest sister. Kitty has her head in her sister's lap.

IVY WALKER strokes the hair of her older sister gently. Ivy is thin, almost too thin. Her long blond hair falls over her sharp striking face.

She wipes the tears from her sister's cheeks. Beat. Ivy begins to sing softly.

IVY

(sings)

Why are you sorrowful, why do you weep? Why do you ask me to rock you to sleep? Could you but see thro' this world's vale of tears...

Edward and Tabitha Walker hold their three youngest girls and listen quietly from the other room.

IVY
(sings)

Light would your sorrows be,
harmless your fears, all that
seems darkness to you would
be light, all would be sunshine
where now is but night...

Ivy wipes the last tears from her sister's face. Ivy's voice fills the cabin and wraps them all like a blanket.

CUT TO:

INT. AUGUST NICHOLSON'S CABIN - NIGHT

Lucius knocks on the half open door with his elbow. He waits a moment and pushes the door open. Lucius carries a large pile of firewood in his arms as he steps into the cabin.

He sees the wilting man, August Nicholson, sleeping in a chair.

Lucius moves to the hearth. Some of the kindling falls off the pile onto the floor. August stirs awake. He sees Lucius kneeling with the wood.

AUGUST
You are very kind.

Lucius nods.

AUGUST
You must pardon my manners.
I haven't slept in many nights.

Lucius nods again and starts making a pile next to the hearth. Beat.

AUGUST(o.s.)
-like a dog can smell you.

Lucius turns. August has his eyes closed. Beat.

LUCIUS

Did you say something Mr.
Nicholson?

August doesn't reply. He is fast asleep in the chair.

Lucius returns to the pile. He transfers the last of the firewood from his arms.

AUGUST(o.s.)

-you may run from sorrow. As
we have. Sorrow will find you.

Lucius turns to see August, eyes open this time, staring into the corner of the cabin.

AUGUST

It can smell you.

Lucius follows the elder's gaze to the corner of the room where a WOODEN BLACK BOX, one foot by one foot, sits on a table all by itself.

Lucius turns back to August.

AUGUST

(reverent)

There were pasteries with
cream in them.

Lucius watches as August Nicholson's eyes slowly close again. Beat.

Lucius rises to his feet. He walks across the cabin to the door.

AUGUST(o.s.)

-my wife and I, we used to
throw dinner parties.

Lucius looks back. August stares sleepily at him.

August's words are so soft, the crackle of the fire almost covers them.

AUGUST

(quiet)

-in town.

(beat)

We served pasteries with cream
in them.

Lucius waits till August is asleep again. The young man's green eyes stare quietly at the wilting man.

CUT TO:

EXT. BORDER – NIGHT

We are at the edge of the village. Yellow cloth flags are attached to the trees that create the natural border between the grassy slopes and the woods. The yellow flags and torch lit lamp curve into the distance as far as one can see.

A fifteen-year old boy in overalls stands on a stump right at the edge of the grass. His back is to the woods. His arms outstretched at his sides. His body makes the form of the crucifix. He is trembling.

YOUNG MAN(o.s.)

He has tears in his eyes,
Christop.

A group of young men are huddled behind a rock ten feet down the slope and watch the fifteen-year old standing on the stump.

CHRISTOP CRANE is a thin, tall, very neatly combed young man.

CHRISTOP

He's doing capitol. Just a few
more moments...

The young men fight each other for the best view.

CHRISTOP

Do not jostle about so. You'll
ruin my shirt.

The fifteen-year old's eyes are filling with water. He's straining to hold up his arms.

WE ARE IN THE DARKNESS OF THE WOODS. WE ARE BEHIND THE BOY. WE SEE THE SILOHUEETTE OF HIS SLIGHT FIGURE STANDING ON THE TREE STUMP.

The boy makes a noise – a slight whimper. A NOISE IS HEARD FROM THE WOODS.

The boy stiffens. He whispers out to the boys behind the rock.

BOY ON STUMP

(loud whisper)

They made a sound when I
made a sound. They mimic
before they attack.

Christop pops his head out.

CHRISTOP

(loud whisper)

That's a wives tale. It isn't true.
Do not falter... A few moments
more.

A BRANCH SNAPS IN THE WOODS. The fifteen-year old's eyes flick up. All the heads from behind the rock peek out.

The boy LISTENS desperately. He wants to look behind, but he doesn't.

THERE ARE NOISES IN THE WOODS. THE SOUND OF LEAVES BEING CRUNCHED.

The boy begins to shake.

A LARGE BRANCH SNAPS. The fifteen-year old lets out a SMALL SQUEAL as he lowers his arms and jumps from the stump. He starts running.

He runs past the young men hiding behind the rock. As he does, they start running too. Everyone evacuates in a hurry. They all start racing down the slope back to the FIRE LIGHTS FLICKERING in the distance from the village.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE COURTYARD – NIGHT

The gang of young men, are moving at a fast walk through the courtyard, trying to catch their breath. The fifteen-year old walks in the center receiving various pats on the back. His face is still ashen.

The group walks by a contemplative Lucius.

He doesn't look up as they pass in a flurry of youthful conversation.

Lucius moves silently in the opposite direction, the weight on his shoulders, almost visible.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD FIELD – DAY

The mentally handicapped young man we saw clapping at the supper table is wrestling in the dirt with two young men who try to restrain him. He is strong and quick. The two young men end up in the dirt over and over as the mentally handicapped young man slips them and throws them down.

The children watch the dust and dirt kick up as the three continue scuffling.

CUT TO:



EXT. SCHOOLHOUSE - DAY

A trail of dark blood runs down the forehead of a hysterical child. Kitty gently escorts him off the playground.


They pass Ivy seated on a bench that overlooks the back of the schoolyard.

Kitty speaks over her shoulder as she climbs the steps into the school building.

KITTY

Noah ought to be punished. He wacked little Joseph with a stick again.

Ivy nods. Kitty and JOSEPH disappear into the school building.



Ivy takes hold of the wooden cane lying next to her. She rises from the bench. She moves towards the NOISE OF THE PLAYGROUND. The wooden cane moves deftly back and forth in front of her.

Her STRIKING BLIND EYES focus on nothing.

CUT TO:


EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

The wrestling has gotten fierce. NOAH PERCY is almost pinned when he suddenly throws them and frees himself. The two young men immediately go for his legs.

IVY

Noah Percy, stop your fussing right this moment.

Noah stops and stares at Ivy.



The two young men on the ground stop. They realize they are holding each other's leg.

Noah stands as the two young men lie on the ground. Noah smiles sweetly at Ivy.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUIET ROOM – DAY

A heavy lock is undone. The tall wooden door swings open. We look into a small cabin. It has only one room. It has a wooden chair in the center. A few potato sacks have been piled in the corner. The room is dusty.

Ivy and Noah stand and look in. Noah holds her arm.

IVY

You're in trouble you know?

NOAH

No hitting.

IVY

I'm to place you in the quiet room.

NOAH

-I'll cry quarts.

IVY

What if we strike a deal?

NOAH

Capitol! Capitol idea!

IVY

It would be prudent to keep our deal a secret. Can you do that?

NOAH

Like a church mouse.

This makes Ivy laugh. Noah laughs too.

IVY

You needn't go to the quiet room if you take an oath to never strike any person again.

NOAH

No hitting.

Ivy puts out her hand to shake.

IVY

No hitting.

Noah shakes hands, up and down big, like the elders do.

Ivy taps her cheek. Noah leans down, for he stands a good six inches taller than her, and kisses her softly once.

IVY

The deal is struck.

Noah is beaming. Ivy closes the door to the quiet room.

IVY

We ought not return right away.
What shall we do with our stolen time?

(beat)


Shall we have a foot race? Up the hill to the resting rock.

NOAH

No cheating.

IVY

What a deeply scandalous thing to say. I insist you take that back... Is that the school bell?



Noah looks back. Ivy takes off. She's a good ten feet down the path before he turns to see her not there.


CUT TO:

EXT. RESTING ROCK – DAY

Noah is bigger, stronger and faster, but he has a hard time catching the blind young woman running ahead of him. She moves effortlessly. She does not use her stick. She knows every step of these hills. She taps a tree as she runs by. She is laughing as she runs.

Noah passes her just as they finish. They both are out of breath as they reach the rock formation.

One rock juts out at the base of an enormous wall of rock buried into the side of the hill. There is shade here. This is Resting Rock.



There is someone sitting there when they arrive. Noah goes right over and sits with him. Ivy sits and catches her breath before looking in their direction.

IVY

My sister cried a lot.


Lucius stops eating the biscuit he has wrapped in his handkerchief for his lunch break. Beat.

IVY

Do you wonder how I
recognized you.

Lucius stares at the striking girl with the sweaty face and messed hair.

IVY



Some people, just a handful
mind you, give off the tiniest
color. It's faint, like a haze. It's
the only thing I ever see in the
darkness. Papa has it too.

Lucius gazes quietly at Ivy as if she was a sorcerer. Noah just smiles. Beat.

IVY

Do you wonder what your color
is? Well that, I won't tell you.
It's not ladylike to speak of
such things. You shouldn't
even have asked.

Lucius fights a smile. Noah runs off after some nearby birds.

Ivy smoothes her wrinkled, dusty frock. It is an uncharacteristic nervous
gesture.

IVY

(serious)

I know why you denied my
sister.

Lucius' smile melts away.

IVY

When I was younger you used
to hold my arm when I walked.
Then suddenly you stopped.


(beat)

One day, I even tripped in your
presence and nearly fell. I was
faking of course, but still you
did not hold me.

IVY

Sometimes we don't do things
we want to do, so that others
won't know we want to do
them.

Lucius is about to say something when Noah comes back. Noah sits down
between them. Lucius turns his piercing eyes back to his biscuit.



Noah reaches into his pocket. He clutches something in his hand. He puts it into Ivy's lap.

IVY

What's this?

She feels it in her hands.

IVY


A flower, what a splendid present.

Lucius glances over. He goes still. Beat.

LUCIUS

(low)

Be cautious. You are holding the bad color.



Ivy's face changes as she holds the RED FLOWER.

IVY

(even)

Noah it is not allowed. This color attracts Those We Don't Speak of. You must bury it.


She holds it out to a saddened Noah. Her hand is trembling slightly. He takes it back after a moment.

IVY

You ought not to pick that color flower anymore.

Lucius gazes at the flower in Noah's hand.

LUCIUS



He did not pick that now.

Beat. Ivy's head turns a quarter turn towards Lucius.

IVY

What's wrong? You're
breathing has changed.

LUCIUS

I've never set eyes on such a
flower.

Lucius and Noah look at each other. Beat.

LUCIUS

(quiet)

Noah... where did you find
this?

CUT TO:

EXT. BORDER – AFTERNOON

Ivy's fingers trace along Noah's arm. She finds his hand. She moves over his
finger that is pointing. She turns and faces that direction.

Beat.

IVY

Are you sure?

Noah nods.

NOAH

No cheating.

Ivy, Noah, and Lucius stand at the top of the hill and stare. Beat. Lucius
turns and starts walking down the hill.

LUCIUS(v.o.)
My mother is unaware of the
reason for my visit today. She
did not give her consent-

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING HALL - AFTERNOON

WALKER
Lucius.

Lucius' green eyes look up from his paper.

WALKER
You do not need to address us
so formally. You may just
speak.

Lucius stares at the group of elders seated on the wooden chairs before him.
Alice watches her son lower the paper at his side. He just stands there. Beat.

LUCIUS
We mustn't-

Lucius eyes drift down. He tilts the paper slightly as he tries to read the
words at a steep angle at his side.

LUCIUS
We mustn't-

Edward smiles.

WALKER
Lucius, you may read from the
paper if you wish.

Lucius brings the paper back up.

LUCIUS

-or consult me in any form:

(beat)

Today at Resting Rock. Noah
Percy handed Ivy Walker a
flower of the bad color.

Edward Walker sits up just a bit at the sound of his daughter's name.

LUCIUS

When asked where he found
this flower, for it was not like
others I have seen, he took us
there. He led us to the peak of
the hill, by the tree stump.
There he pointed to a bush
covered in flowers of the bad
color.

Lucius looks up. He doesn't look down when he says the next six words.

LUCIUS

He was pointing into Covington
Woods.

Lucius returns his eyes to the paper.

LUCIUS

By my eye, the bush of the bad
color was, at the very least,
seventy-five paces past the
forbidden line.

Beat.

LUCIUS

It is my belief that Noah Percy
has entered the woods, and has
done so on many occasions.

LUCIUS

It is also my belief, that because of his innocence, those creatures who reside in the woods did not harm him.

(beat)

This strengthens my belief that they will let me pass if they sense I am not a threat. I ask for further consideration in my request to travel into the woods so that I may gather medicines and informations from the nearby town.

Lucius slowly lowers his paper. He exhales very slowly. The elders just stare.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD – AFTERNOON

Noah makes monster sounds. He holds his hands up like claws as he slowly chases the pack of laughing and screaming children around the playground.

The group of elders have gathered at the edge of the schoolyard. They watch Noah carefully as he runs around with the other children.

Noah bares his teeth and growls as he catches one of the laughing ten-year-old boys in the pack. Noah picks him up and throws him to the ground hard. The child starts crying.

TEACHER

Noah Percy!

Noah stops acting like a monster. He runs and hides behind the other children.

The elders watch as the teacher pulls Noah off the schoolyard. Noah is throwing a slight tantrum as he is led to his punishment.

CUT TO:

INT. HUNT CABIN – NIGHT

Alice Hunt sits at her small table. Hands folded on her lap.

ALICE

We shall speak of the town, just
this once, and we shall never
speak of it again.

Lucius sits across from her. His eyes flicker from the lamp light on the shelf.

ALICE

When we lived there, the three
of us, you were but an infant. I
would be telling an untruth if I
said there was no joy. We were
contented souls: the three of
us... But contentment is an
unwelcomed alien in the towns.
There is something in the very
nature of the cities and towns
that rejects it. Society survives
on greed, and desire. Its heart is
fed by wants. It has no place
for something so untradable
and old fashioned as
contentment.

(beat)

Your father left for the market
on a Tuesday at quarter past
nine in the morning... He was
found robbed and naked in the
river two days later.

Lucius is shaking.

LUCIUS

(barely audible)

Why do you tell me this
blackness?

ALICE

So you will know the nature of
what you desire.

LUCIUS

I do not desire it!

Alice is sincerely unsettled by the sight of her son on the verge of yelling.

LUCIUS

My intentions are true to my
word. I think of nothing but the
people of this village.

Alice lowers her eyes. Beat. She speaks in a softer voice.

ALICE

I know that. Forgive me. I am
but scared for my only son's
life.

LUCIUS

I am not the one with secrets.

Alice's eyes lock on his.

ALICE

What is your meaning?

(beat)

Speak! Do not retreat to your
silence yet.

Lucius stands from the table. He moves across the small room.

LUCIUS

There are secrets in every
corner of this village. Do you
not feel it? Do you not see it?

Lucius points to the black box seated in the corner of the room on a small
table. It is identical to the one we saw in August Nicholson's house.

ALICE

That is for our own well being.
So the things that scare us do
not have power over us.

LUCIUS

Then let us open it.

ALICE

No-

Alice looks ready to rise from her chair to stop him. Lucius doesn't move.
Beat.

Alice visibly composes herself. Her hands return to her lap.

ALICE

(soft)

Perhaps we should speak with
Edward Walker together. He
may-

LUCIUS


He hides too.

Alice stares quietly at the stranger before her.

LUCIUS

(soft)

He hides his feelings for you.



Alice instantly rises from the table and moves into her room with great dignity.

LUCIUS

(calls to her)

Sometimes we don't do things -
yet others know we want to do
things - so we don't do them.

Lucius doesn't even understand what he said. Alice walks back out of her room.


ALICE

What nonsense are you saying?

Lucius is flustered. He gathers his thoughts and looks to his mother. Beat.

LUCIUS

You needn't worry. Nothing
will happen to me.



Alice gazes upon her son.

ALICE

(gentle)


You remind me of a colt
sometimes.

Alice moves back to the chair she started in. Lucius takes his seat across from her. Beat.

Alice cleans some dust off the table as she speaks.

ALICE

What makes you think he has
feelings for me?



Beat. Lucius thinks of other things as he says the words.

LUCIUS

He never touches you.

Alice shakes her head, "No" to herself. They both sit at the table plowing through their own thoughts. **CANLIGHT** flickers on this painting of a mother and son at a wooden table.

CUT TO:

EXT. BORDER – DAY

We are at the edge, where the grass ends and the woods begin. On every tree that touches the grass is a yellow slash of paint. Every fourth tree holds a flag of the same color.

Two young men replace a broken flag. They both wear hooded cloaks that touch the ground. The cloaks are a mustard-yellow.

The young man, who has been boosted up, loses his balance. He quickly grabs a branch and steadies himself. He looks down to his partner. They share a tension filled look as they glance into the forest. They work as if they are on a tight wire.


A third young man in a mustard yellow cloak passes them. Lucius carries a wooden bucket of yellow paint. He nods to them as he passes.

Lucius walks along the perimeter of trees. He stops a handful of trees down the line. The paint on this tree is fading. Lucius dips the handmade brush into the bucket and puts another coat on the tree.

He picks up his bucket and continues on. He glances over his shoulder as the figures of the two young men get smaller and smaller. Lucius keeps walking.

He passes the large tree stump.

Now he slows to a stop again. He looks to the woods... Seventy five paces away from where he stands, nestled between two thin trees, is **A BUSH BLOOMING WITH RED FLOWERS.**



He looks down the line of trees to the two young men; they move along the perimeter and slowly move out of sight.


Lucius steps to the edge of the grass. His shoes are inches away from the dirt of the forest floor. In the dirt, clearly visible to the eye, are groups of **LARGE CLAWED FOOTPRINTS**. The indentations from the claw points dig deep into the soil.

Lucius does not acknowledge any of this. He stares quietly into the woods, lowers his bucket to the ground. Beat.

HE STEPS OVER THE FORBIDDEN LINE INTO COVINGTON WOODS.

Lucius walks calmly. His shoulders graze branches as he moves. His eyes stay locked on the bush with red flowers.

WE HEAR A NOISE IN THE WOODS. Lucius does not look over.



He takes the last few steps to the bush. He reaches into it and snaps off a branch. He straightens up.

And then for the first time we sense him pausing.


He turns and looks slowly over his shoulder.

THERE IS SUDDEN MOVEMENT. LEAVES AND BRANCHES SNAP AS WE SEE, FIFTY FEET AWAY, THE DARK FORM OF A HUMPED CREATURE, STANDING UPRIGHT. IT SUDDENLY MOVES. WE SEE IT STRIDE AWAY INTO THE DENSENESS OF THE WOODS.


Lucius turns and starts walking. Branch in hand, he moves at a calm even pace as he heads back to the bucket with yellow paint.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALKING PATH – NIGHT



Lucius moves along a walking path. He passes by a **LAMP LIGHT**.



He gets pulled from the strong current of his thoughts by the rattling of a bush. He sees someone crawling around in the foliage.

GIRL'S VOICE FROM BUSH

There is no escape.


Lucius watches as Ivy Walker crawls out and stands. She looks in Lucius' direction.

IVY

Oh Hello.

Ivy runs her hands over her frock. Dirt and leaves fall off.

IVY



I was just playing a game with Noah. The rascal must have gone to hide in my house again. Houses are against the rules. He knows that.

Lucius stares at Ivy who has dirt and leaves in her hair. She bends down and picks up her cane.

IVY


Are you okay? Your quiet is a different quiet than your usual quiet.

Lucius nods.

IVY

I assume you're nodding.

Ivy smiles.



IVY

Well I better get back home and
confront the scoundrel.

(beat)

You could walk with me if you
like.

There is an awkward moment.

CUT TO:

EXT. WALKER BACK PORCH – NIGHT

Ivy and Lucius arrive in silence to the back porch of the Walker cabin. In the
LAMP LIT windows we see Kitty and her younger sisters talking.

IVY

We are tending to the children
tonight, Kitty and I... I should
be with her.

(beat)

Be well.

Ivy climbs the stairs and stops.

IVY

I heard my parents speaking of
you. I know of your request to
go to the towns. I think it is
noble, but I do not think it is
right.

Beat.

LUCIUS

There may be things we do not
know that may help us.

IVY

You speak as if we are plagued.
There is nothing to cure.

Beat.

LUCIUS

Are you not angry you have no
sight? Perhaps your eyes could
have been saved as a child by
knowledge held in the town's
medicines.

IVY

I know it upset Pappa very
much when it happened to me.
He would not speak for three
days I was told. But it does not
bother me Lucius.

LUCIUS

What of Noah then? What if
there was medicines for Noah
that could help him be still?
Help him learn?

Beat. This affects Ivy.

IVY

May we stop speaking of this?
It is putting knots in my
stomach.

Lucius nods. Ivy climbs a few more steps and stops.
She turns.

IVY

Kitty is to be married.

Lucius looks a little confused.

IVY

She has found love again. With
Christop Crane.

Lucius raises his eye brows.

IVY

(soft)

You think it an odd choice
right? You know he won't sit
back in his chair for fear of
setting wrinkles his shirts.

(beat)

But he does have a gentlemanly
way about him and he does care
for my sister deeply. I think
Kitty is blessed.

IVY

I am blessed as well... My
older sister is now spoken for. I
am now free to receive interest
from anyone... who might have
interest.

Lucius stares at the striking blind girl who stands in the shadows with a
mischievous smile.

IVY

(soft)

Goodnight Lucius Hunt.

Ivy turns and walks into the house. We see through the open back door as
Noah leaps out from behind a water basin and scares her. Ivy starts chasing
the tall boy around the room playfully.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWER - NIGHT

Finton Coin sits huddled in the corner of the tower perch. His knees are tucked into his chest. There is an oil lamp on the floor by his side.

The oil lamp moves as the tower creaks. Finton sits up. **THE LAMP LIGHT ON FINTON'S TENSE FACE FLICKERS AND THEN RETURNS.**

FINTON

Lucius?

SILENCE. Finton crawls over to the trap door in the floor. He listens a moment before reaching for the rope handle.

He pulls back the wooden door slowly.

Finton looks down the ladder that drops twenty feet away to the ground. The thick legs of the tower can also be seen.

FINTON

Lucius?

SOMETHING PASSES UNDERNEATH. IT IS DARK IN FORM AND MOVES DEVILISHLY QUICK INTO THE SHADOWS.

All the air leaves Finton Coin's lungs.

Finton shuts the trap door quietly. He moves the wooden bolt into the lock position. All his movements are slow and trancelike.

Finton places his hands on the railing and pulls himself up. He steadies himself on his feet. And then peers over the railing.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

People of the village move normally through the courtyard.

AND THEN THE WARNING BELL SOUNDS IN THE DISTANCE. IT IS VERY DIFFERENT THAN THE PRACTICE BELL IN THE YARD. ITS SOUND IS DEEPER MORE POWERFUL AND RESONANT. ITS SHORT REPEATED RINGING ECHOES THROUGH THE AIR.

Everyone in the courtyard suddenly freezes and then starts running.

Everyone except Lucius. He turns and looks over his shoulder towards the direction of the tower.

CUT TO:

INT. WALKER CABIN - NIGHT

Kitty and Ivy look up as they dress their little sisters for bed.

THE DISTANT REPEATED SOUND OF THE WARNING BELL silences all the chatter.

Beat.

Kitty turns to Ivy.

KITTY

(low)

Close all the doors.

Kitty scoops her little sisters off their bed and moves directly towards the trapdoor in the back of the cabin.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABINS - NIGHT

Lucius ushers a group of people into a cabin. He closes the door and shuts them in. He moves quickly across the path to a woman who tries desperately to close the shutters on her cabin. The shutters stick on their rusty hinges. Lucius comes over and closes it shut.

He turns as a SHADOW PASSES OVER HIM.

Lucius ducks into the darkness by the side of the cabin. There is movement all around him.

HE WATCHES AS A CREATURE MOVES SLOWLY TOWARDS THE FRONT DOOR OF THE CABIN.

Lucius steps back farther into the shadows. He presses his back against the side of the cabin and loses sight of the creature.

CUT TO:

INT. WALKER CABIN - NIGHT

Noah jumps up and down, agitated and excited. Kitty tugs at his arm as she pulls him towards the trap door. She looks across the cabin and sees Ivy standing in the open front door.

KITTY
(yells)

You must close the door!

Ivy looks out in the direction of the STRANGE SOUNDS.


IVY
Lucius is out walking.

Kitty leads Noah down into the crawl space where the two younger sisters wait frightened and silent.

KITTY
(yells)
He's inside safe somewhere.
Close the door!

Ivy turns and looks back at her sister, strain and strength on her face.

IVY
He'll come back to make sure
we're safe.



Kitty walks down into the underground room with Noah and the children. Only her head can be seen as she watches her little sister, across the cabin stand in the doorway to the outside.

Ivy puts out her hand through the open doorway. She holds it out to the darkness.

THE WARNING BELL RINGS OVER AND OVER IN THE DISTANCE.

STRANGE SOUNDS CAN BE HEARD THROUGH THE WALLS IN THE BACK OF THE CABIN.

Kitty listens to them, tears fill her eyes. Her head turns back to Ivy and screams across the cabin floor.

KITTY

Ivy please!

OUTSIDE:



THERE ARE SHADOWS ALL AROUND THE WALKER CABIN.

A HUMPED CREATURE EMERGES FROM THE DARKNESS. IT STARTS RUSHING TOWARDS THE PORCH.

Ivy holds her hand out as she stares blankly into the darkness outside. Tears stream down her face. She is terrified.

IVY

(soft)

No.

KITTY

Don't let them in!

THE LARGE DARKENED FIGURE OF THE CREATURE CLIMBS ONTO THE PORCH.



A HAND GRABS IVY'S HAND.

SLOW-MOTION: Ivy turns as Lucius moves with her through the doorway. They close the door shut quickly and bolt it. Lucius and Ivy run together across the cabin. Lucius never lets go of her hand.

They reach the open trapdoor. Lucius helps Ivy in and then follows her down. His arm spears out and grabs hold of the rope handle. The door shuts over their heads.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND ROOM – NIGHT

REAL TIME:

Six individuals huddle together in the darkness. A TINY STREAM OF LIGHT FALLS ON THEIR FACES.

SOUNDS OF SCRATCHING AND CLAWING CAN BE HEARD ON THE WALLS OF THE CABIN. THE DISTANT SOUND OF THE WARNING BELL IS MUFFLED IN THIS UNDERGROUND SPACE.

Kitty holds her little sisters tight. Noah claps his hands joyously in the small space he has to move.

Lucius and Ivy are crouched together close to the stairs. Their faces are almost touching. They both stare up at the crack in the door and listen. They both breathe hard; their breath falling on each other.

Ivy's face tilts slowly to her lap. Lucius' hand is still holding hers.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDER GROUND ROOM #2 – NIGHT

A large number of men and women are crammed together in another underground room.

THEY LISTEN AS NOISES AND GRUNTS MOVE AROUND THEM OVERHEAD.

CUT TO:



INT. UNDERGROUND ROOM #3 - NIGHT

A group of children are huddled together in the darkness of another underground room. The children's hands cover their ears. They try to block out the SOUNDS STABBING AT THEM THROUGH THE CRACKS IN THE TRAP DOOR.


We see their tiny bodies jerk with every sound.

Their scared faces dissolve into the darkness.

FADE TO BLACK:

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY



A gentle breeze pushes leaves around in circles. There is no one in the courtyard. There is no one on the walking path.

The front doors of the cabins are closed. On each door are TWO RED SLASHES OF COLOR FORMING AN "X". The crimson markings are seen throughout the empty village.

CUT TO:


INT. MEETING HALL - DAY

All members of the village, young and old, are gathered together. THE SOUND OF SOME CHILDREN WHIMPERING can be heard in the tense silence.

Edward looks at the faces.

WALKER

We may question ourselves at times such as these. Did we make the right decision to settle here?



WALKER

We must remember why we
came here. It was for goodness
and a rare type of innocence.
That is worth a struggle I think.

(beat)

Let it be known for all to
comfort in, that no person was
injured last night. We have
always had, from the day we
settled here, a gentle
understanding with those who
visited us.

(beat)

I have always pictured them, in
some ways, as our protectors.
They have allowed us to live
here nestled amongst them in
this untouched place.

(beat)

By the markings we find this
morning on our homes, I feel
they were warning us. They
acted as if threatened. We will
do our best to discover what it
is that has set them to action.

Beat. Edward suddenly looks older. His childlike eyes flicker with emotion.

WALKER

(soft)

I myself wonder if this simple
way of life can go on... If it
was meant too...

August touches him on the shoulder in a brotherly way to stop him from
speaking. August looks out over the congregation.

AUGUST

If any want to talk of their
worries or concerns, we would
welcome them.

A note is passed from the gathering. Vivian Percy is the closest of the elders
and accepts it. She checks the front and back for an inscription. She looks
out over the room of faces.

VIVIAN

Who has written this note?

The room of faces do not respond. Vivian opens it.

Vivian turns to the elders at her side.

VIVIAN

It is the wish of the writer for
this to be read aloud.

They all nod. Vivian throws a quick look to Alice before turning back to the
paper.

VIVIAN

(reading)

Please read so that all may hear.

(beat)

My mother is unaware that I
wrote this note. She did not
give her consent or consult me
in any form.

(beat)

I have brought this burden upon
us. On the day before last, I
crossed the forbidden line into
Covington Woods and was
witnessed there by Those We
Don't Speak Of.

Whispers fill the meeting hall. Alice closes her eyes. August looks down.

VIVIAN

(reading)

I am deeply sorry. I have
shamed myself and my family.
I pray that my actions will
cause no further pains.

(beat)

With deepest sorrow, Lucius
Hunt.

Ivy sits in the crowd. She stares blankly at a point in space.

There are nothing but murmurs for a moment. Edward Walker silently steps forward. The crowd moves aside as he walks through them.

He moves to the back corner, where the crowd parts and reveals Lucius sitting against the wall. His eyes are red. Tears fall from his cheeks.

Edward Walker kneels down in front of him.

WALKER

Do not fret.

Walker's face trembles with emotion as he stares at the young man. Edward Walker leans forward and whispers in the young man's ear.

WALKER

(barely audible)

You are fearless in a way, I
shall never know.

Lucius looks up. The two men stare at each other. The crowd goes quiet around them. The overwhelming pride and emotion in Edward Walker's eyes slowly start to change Lucius. He grows stronger with every second he gazes at his elder.

DISSOLVE TO:



INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Vivian Percy claps her hands.

MRS. PERCY

Ta. Tee-tee. Ta.

CLASS


Ta. Tee-tee. Ta

MRS. PERCY

Splendid. Shall we take it from
the first phrase of the song?

She stares at the quiet faces of the children.

MRS. PERCY




It has been difficult to
concentrate, I admit. The visit
from Those We Don't Speak
Of three weeks past, are still
with us... I know some of you
are frightened still. This is why
our job is so vital. We must lift
everyone's spirits. Kitty
Walker's wedding will be a
glorious time. We will sing and
dance and be merry again.
Now let us be strong little souls
and begin the song again from
the very beginning.

The children nod gently. They are ready.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEARING - DAY



A collection of fifteen men and women are constructing a wooden canopy.

Noah Percy helps cut a rope that tethers one of the frames of the canopy to a statue in the ground. An elder holds the rope and points. Noah slices it. He laughs when the rope splits. He waves the knife in the air joyously. The elder quickly takes the knife away from him and smiles.

Edward and Tabitha Walker guide the others as the two sides of the canopy-frame are brought up into their standing positions.

They look up at the structure for their daughter's wedding with wonder in their eyes. Beat.

They are gathered by the others and begin tying garlands of flowers to the frame.

CUT TO:

EXT. RESTING ROCK - DAY

Lucius unwraps his biscuit from his handkerchief.

IVY(o.s.)

I know you have been ignoring me.

Lucius looks up to find Ivy standing before him.

IVY

It is the day of my sister's wedding and I am beginning to believe you would let the day pass without saying a word to me.

Lucius doesn't say a word.

IVY

Perhaps you sensed I was angry when you revealed you crossed into the woods. In fact I was. If you want to act foolish, that is

your choice. But I do not find
any reason to risk such dangers
in the woods for anything. It
was wrong.

(beat)

I say this as your friend,
because friends may say
anything to each other.

Ivy lets out a breath.

IVY

I'm glad we've had a chance to
talk.

(beat)

Kitty needs help getting ready.
Enjoy your biscuit.

Ivy turns and walks away. Lucius' green eyes watch her as he brings the
biscuit to his mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUPPERTABLE - AFTERNOON

WALKER

We came here to start anew-
We are grateful for the time we
have been given.

Edward Walker looks to Kitty at his side. Christop sits across from her. They
are both dressed in white. Edward smiles to them as he takes a seat.

August stands. It is unexpected. Eyes watch him.

AUGUST

These are the experiences we
came here to have. This is
good. This is pure.