

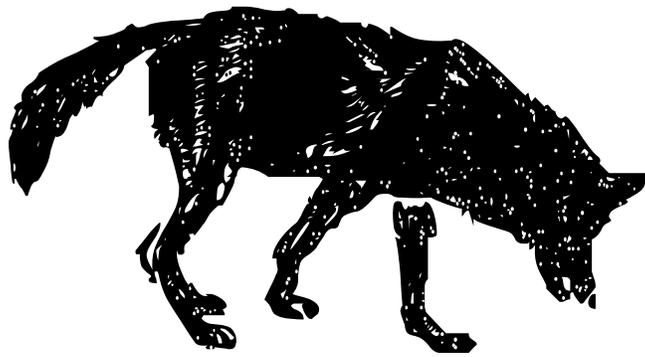


FRESH BLOOD SELECT

D Λ R W Φ Π ' S G Λ M Σ

Written by

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OVER BLACK:

An anguished wind HOWLS. Its lonely ballad building in pitch.
Whipping against --

EXT. WILDERNESS - NIGHT

A dark ocean of evergreens that extends far beyond our field
of vision. Its thicket impenetrable, its interwoven foliage
harboring hidden secrets.

We DRIFT down from its verdant heights to:

A rural HIGHWAY that ventures deep into its darkness.

The road bordered by an open GATE. Unmarked and
inconspicuous. Its metal frame RATTLING in the wind.

An ominous introduction to the place beyond its gape.

The wind's tortured wails escalating in pace and ferocity,
PRE-LAPPING the roar of its artificial counterpart:

INT. BREAK ROOM, K-MART - NIGHT

A large, industrial AIR CONDITIONER.

DRONING against streaks of tissue paper attached to its
grills.

Creating an eerily frigid environment for an employees'
lounge in disarray.

Grease-laden plates adorn its tables. Unwashed coffee mugs
litter its counters. A miserable vending machine rests
against its fraying wall.

This is the dismal mundane behind the scenes of the American
box store.

INT. THE SHOPPING GROUNDS, K-MART - NIGHT

A mundane we experience in full as we navigate aisle after
aisle of its dreary interior --

The over-stuffed shelves that extend far beyond the reach of
consumers.

The monster shopping carts that counter notions of "less is
more."

The flickering LED's that cast everything edible in a nauseating light.

And that one overweight shopper that puts on a down jacket in preparation for spending ten minutes in the frozen section.

For some, this is heaven. For others, purgatory.

As we PUSH towards the --

CHECKOUT LINE

Where we greet our nametagged heroine --

AVA MOORE. 26 and dejected. Sporting her red K-Mart apron like an affliction. Tired eyes worn from the monotony of her small town life.

The same eyes that now look past the empty interior around her. Past the vibrant price tags that boast of "never before seen" deals seen every week.

And towards an industrial-sized CLOCK that hangs from the store's upper echelons. Its second-hand painfully ticking past ten.

Her steady gaze burdened by the boredom of the graveyard shift.

EXT. PARKING LOT, K-MART - LATER

Empty. Dark.

Its orange lamps flickering. Shopping carts dispersed without any direction.

An exasperated Ava navigates the fray to her beat up Toyota Camry. Parked alone at the far corner of the lot.

Walking alone towards it.

Eager fingers fumble with the car keys as she unlocks the vehicle.

Ripping off her apron in haste. Tossing it to the passenger seat before --

INT. AVA'S CAMRY, PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Sitting down behind the wheel.

She stops for a second. Breathing deeply. Eyes glazing over. Staring off into the empty space before her. The numbing dullness of her day having taken its toll.

She lets out an exasperated SIGH, before she inserts her key into the ignition.

And starts her sputtering engine. The radio coming alive with something electronic and moody like FKA Twigs.

INT. AVA'S CAMRY, RURAL HIGHWAY - LATER

She navigates the dark road before her. HEADLIGHTS peering into the night.

MUSIC blaring. Quiet fingers drumming on the wheel to its ambient chorus.

Unconscious of the harrowed wilderness around her.

While her vehicle approaches a lone STOPLIGHT.

Its red bulb flickering above.

An abandoned Texeco station dwells on her left. Depressed and dreary.

Not a single car in sight.

She comes to a gradual stop, flicking her blinker to the right. Its *CLICK, CLICK, CLICK* joining her radio's undulating mood.

Before turning down an even *darker* country road...

Devoid of all street lights. The blackness before us baleful and foreboding.

As she ventures deeper into its aura.

Eyes escaping through her windshield.

Into its abyss.

Merely a few feet illuminated before her at a time.

Two white hashmarks

Disappearing and reappearing with each passing second.

PULLING us back --

Into the front seat with Ava.

Engrossed in the ambience of her music.

As we now DRIFT *past* her...

Past the clutch...

And into the back seat.

Where we join a **HOODED FIGURE**.

Riding along without her knowledge. Facial characteristics obscured in the night.

Clutching a SYRINGE in his fist.

That he suddenly *JERKS* forward-- and PLUNGES *into her neck*.

Her blackout instantaneous.

The car LOSING CONTROL--

AS WE *SMASH* TO
BLACK.

Over the sound of her vehicle LURCHING to the left, VEERING off the road, and *SLAMMING* into a tree...

As we unveil our haunting title:

DARWIN'S GAME

Prompting a FADE into:

TWO EYES.

Lids closed.

Lashes rustling.

Easing awake.

Slowly parting to view what appears to be an --

INT. BEDROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - DAY

The clarity of our PERSPECTIVE improves as the familiar voice of Carole King beckons our return to reality.

Where we find ourselves staring at a new pair of EYES.

A DEER'S.

But there's something bizarre about them. Something *lifeless*.

As we PULL back to the rest of its figure:

Taking in its stillness. Its matted fur. *Its severed head--*

And the PLAQUE that rests behind it.

Our fears momentarily subside as we realize the nature of its existence -- *a taxidermy trophy*.

But now that we have a full purview, we notice that it's surrounded by similar relics, other woodland creatures that have been killed, gutted, and stuffed for decoration.

In fact, the whole room is overburdened by them.

As a now fully conscious AVA comes to in a bedroom reminiscent of a most idyllic hunting lodge.

Wood paneling. Nostalgic amenities. Taxidermy galore.

A stone bathroom on her left.

Quilted blankets before her.

Carole King's "It's Too Late" rising from an antiquated alarm clock on her bedside table.

All of this unfamiliarity triggering panicked questions of "*where am I?*" "*How did I get here?*"

While the room's pine door opens for:

MRS. PALFREY. Late 60's/early 70's. Radiant with two sides of cheerful. A temperament that ranges from nice to too nice.

Entering with fresh towels and a welcoming smile.

MRS. PALFREY

Rise and shine, Sleeping Beauty.

She sets the towels on the bedside table. Turning off Carole.

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)
How'd you sleep?

Her eyes gauge Ava's startled confusion; the crippling anxiety of waking up somewhere unknown.

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)
(slow & reassuring)
Don't you worry, hun- I know my face and this place- they ain't familiar. But trust me; you're in good hands here.

She carefully reaches out to our heroine's arm, who recoils at her touch.

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)
(kind)
Sweetheart, I'm not tryna hurt you.
I just need to adjust your IV.

Sure enough, Ava notices the needle sticking into her arm. Its clear tubing leading up to an *improvised IV* resting on the bed's headboard.

Driving Ava's mind towards darker answers to her earlier questions. Struggling to sift through her uncooperative memory for clues, figments, *anything...*

As she allows her visitor to gently remove its tip from her vein while the old woman explains:

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)
I know how this all looks. But it ain't bad, hun. It ain't bad at all. We took good care of you. Sure, head might feel a little jumbled. Memory hazy. Stitches a bit sore. But John used to run the oncology wing at Mass General. And he knows what's he's doing.

At the mere mention of the word "stitches," Ava's attention drifts down to her body.

Roughly pulling back the covers to reveal:

A grisly web of BLACK STITCHES. Running across a GASH on her inner thigh.

The sight taking her breath away. Confirming that something *terrible--*

AVA
 (trembling)
What the hell happened to me?

Her visitor smiles, running a reassuring hand through Ava's hair.

MRS. PALFREY
 Nothing too serious, hun. You was just in an accident.

AVA
 (breathless)
 An accident...?

MRS. PALFREY
 Nasty little wreck. But you're okay. And you're alive.

AVA
 (processing)
 So you found me... all crashed up and all... and brought me *here*?

MRS. PALFREY
 Sure thing, hun. Patched you right up, too. Funny thing 'bout living off that beaten path though- when that path beats you, ain't no hospital to go runnin' to, that's for sure.

She pauses, wrapping the used IV in one of her towels.

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 But don't worry. There ain't no debts to be paid- no lives owed or nothin'. We're all about hospitality here. Stay as long as you want, as long as you need.

Ava smiles politely, panicked thoughts still circulating.

AVA
 Where exactly... is here?

MRS. PALFREY
 (smiles)
 You're at the Lodge, hun.

AVA
 I'm sorry?

MRS. PALFREY

The Lodge- a sunny little B&B my husband and I have ran together since we retired. Unfortunately, we don't get many guests up here- nor do we have many that stay that long, so we're more than delighted to have you with us as long as you need, Ava.

Ava stops at the sound of her name. Heart dropping for a second.

AVA

How- how do you know my name...?

But her host just smiles --

And gestures to Ava's wallet resting on the bedside table.

MRS. PALFREY

Them three beautiful letters be on that ID, sweetheart. Hope you don't mind; we pulled it straight from the wreckage.

She pauses, remembering:

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)

Oh, and speaking of that wreckage, our local mechanic- that good ol' Lewis boy down on Old Wind Road- he has your car. We're friends of the family, so trust us when we say it's good people all around.

(smiles)

I'm sure he'll have her fixed up in no time. Maybe even by tomorrow, if you're lucky.

AVA

(slow reaction)

Sorry- I'm just like- still processing. This is a lot to take in-

MRS. PALFREY

No, no worries at all. I know everything's still a bit hazy. But if you need anything, just holler for Judy. That's me. And if you can't get me that way, try the bell at the front desk.

(MORE)

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)

But really, don't hesitate to make yourself feel at home here, alright? At the Lodge, what's ours is yours, too.

She gathers the towels with a smile, and heads towards the door, stopping momentarily at its threshold.

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)

We're really glad to have you 'round here, Ava. We've been hoping to have a guest like you for a *real* long time.

And with that, she leaves our heroine alone in her new surroundings.

Surroundings Ava can now observe in full. Eyes scanning across her immaculate interior. Taking in the taxidermy animals that eerily stare *right* back.

Weird would be an understatement.

She throws the covers off herself, her hands reaching to the bedside table for her wallet.

Now slowly getting out of bed. Wincing. Clearly burdened by her wound.

Gathering her belongings.

And making her way out the open door into the --

HALLWAY

Peering curiously at its strange aesthetic.

Hollowed, cavernous, and symmetrical. Bred from the darkest Stephen King nightmare.

Identical doors housing identical rooms. Their pine frames numbered **ONE** through **EIGHT** in dripping, black paint.

The severed heads of BUCKS mount the walls. Their antlers sharp and threatening.

Hanging glass lanterns illuminate the fray. Casting the forest green wallpaper in a harsh, flickering ambiance.

At its far end, a MIRROR rests above a small dresser. A sacrificial Navajo BLADE decorating its countertop. *Yes, you read that right: a sacrificial Navajo BLADE.*

Ava ventures deeper into its hall.

Pacing down its dark corridor warily.

Past the watchful eyes of the bucks. The lanterns. An air conditioning vent by the floor.

Stopping before the mirror to take a look at herself.

A sickly bruise colors her forehead. Her eyes weary and strained from her concussion.

But she looks otherwise *refreshed*. Sleep having rejuvenated her. No longer the visibly dejected K-Mart cashier we first met.

She even smiles until her eyes peer down the dark, deep hallway behind her. Her smile disappearing at its sight.

She looks down at the Navajo blade. Curiously bringing her hands around its hilt. Examining its cold steel. Weighing it in her grip.

Before setting it back atop the dresser.

And heading down the Lodge's grand staircase --

LOBBY

Its decadent, pine steps leading to an entrance "ostentatious" doesn't even begin to describe. Its alluring presentation leaving Ava in awe.

A stone fireplace of hyperbolic proportions anchors the room. Bordered by a concierge's desk of dark oak. A golden bell holds court atop its polished surface.

Decorative veneers crawl up wooden walls adorned with paintings of nature's most serene moments. Antique firearms and fraying snow shoes join their ranks.

Panoramic windows look out at the great outdoors beyond their panes. Shafts of SUNLIGHT seeping through --

Showcasing the room's most indulgent amenity:

A triumphant, full-sized LION perched atop a decorative cliff of black rock. Jaws open. Teeth extended. Mane groomed.

The most prized collection of a hunter. A proud taxidermy boast, purposefully positioned in the lobby for all to see.

As Ava reaches the stairwell's final step, her eyes scan across the captivating interior.

Until they settle on two gargantuan, wooden DOORS at the front of the Lodge.

She pushes them aside as she steps out onto the --

EXT. FRONT PORCH, THE LODGE - AFTERNOON

A large, oak awning shades a company of wooden deck chairs. All overlooking an unkept meadow that bleeds into the front lines of an evergreen forest.

A breath-taking sight that Ava takes in full.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Beautiful, ain't it?

Ava turns to the source of the voice:

A WOMAN lounging on a deck chair to Ava's right. Sunglasses on. Eyes craned forward at our natural setting.

WOMAN

A few hours here and I never want to leave.

Ava nods her agreement.

AVA

(hesitant)

It's really something...

The woman smiles, taking off her glasses for a closer look at her guest. As we meet for the first time:

ATHENA FERREIRA. Early 30's. A professional demeanor that rivals the strength, drive, and intrigue of Cersei Lannister. A presence in a room without uttering a word.

ATHENA

You just get in?

AVA

Something like that.

Athena looks up at her quizzically.

AVA (CONT'D)
(explaining)
Got in a little fender bender
nearby. Guess I spent a while
sleeping it off.

ATHENA
(smiles)
Looks like that makes two of us.

AVA
You got in a wreck, too?

ATHENA
Yup, and I guess by the makes of
it, we probably hit each other.

Ava laughs. But we know otherwise...

AVA
I'm Ava.

ATHENA
Athena.

They make each other's acquaintance.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
You got any idea where we are?

Her attention drifts to the triumphant meadow before them.

AVA
Can't say I've seen any of this
before.

ATHENA
Me neither.

AVA
You try geolocating?

ATHENA
Haven't been able to find my phone
since waking up. Got yours?

Ava feels down into her pockets, realizing --

AVA
Nope.

ATHENA

Guess that's supposed to be the point of a place like this? Getting off the grid?

AVA

Off the grid with running water, fresh towels, and a California King mattress.

Athena cracks a smile.

ATHENA

Hey, we can all enjoy nature in our own way.

AVA

(smirking)

If you can call that nature.

SMASH INTO:

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Too bright. Too pristine.

LEDs hum with electricity. Generators roar with tenacity.

[NOTE: In this unknown location, we will never see faces. Just their bodies cut below the head.]

A housekeeping CART rolls into frame. Burdened by cleaning supplies, fresh towels, new sheets, etc.

Pushed by an unknown FIGURE clad in an archaic maid get-up. Its lace freshly ironed. Its white bow neatly tied.

The sound of a key waging war with its lock PRE-LAPS --

INT. HOTEL ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - LATER

Our cart's arrival in a five-star bedroom. Neutral in color. Modern chic in design.

Glass and silver amenities. Top shelf electronics. And notably, *no windows*.

Once inside, our MAID goes to work. Quickly commencing a rash, frenetic MONTAGE of:

Replacing the sheets. Making the bed. Dusting the counters.

Before setting a delectable gift BASKET on the bedside table. Chocolate truffles, fresh caviar, and fine whiskey among its ranks. A proud "**WELCOME**" penned on its front.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: A threatening WOLF.

Teeth bared and menacing. Eyes yellow and sinister. Deadly still in its taxidermy state.

ATHENA (O.S.)
The Palfreys said some Lewis boy'll
have my car back here tomorrow-

INT. LOBBY, THE LODGE - AFTERNOON

We rejoin Athena and Ava. Now inside and heading to the concierge's desk.

A muffled WHISPER on her right catches Ava's attention as she peers across the lobby's threshold into the **LIVING ROOM**, where two rugged-looking GUESTS (one African-American, one Asian, both men) quietly converse.

Feeling her stare, they both make sudden eye contact with her, contact she quickly breaks courtesy of:

ATHENA
Then I'll have to bid this place
adieu.

AVA
(turns back to her)
You're headed somewhere?

ATHENA
(nods; jokingly sarcastic)
Toronto. Was actually en route when I crashed. They got like the Super Bowl of insurance conventions up there. Just instead of half time Beyoncé, it's the salesman of the year award. And replacing the fireworks, post-game's got sweaty, drunk, married men playing grab ass with anything under thirty-five...
hell of a time, if you ask me...

Ava chuckles as they reach the concierge's desk. Athena inching towards its golden bell.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
 Just need to call the boss and let
 him know of the hold up.

She presses it. Its RING shrill and high-pitched.

The two wait there patiently, the bell surprisingly having
 inspired no new movements. No rapidly approaching Palfreys.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
 Weird. You'd think those two would
 jump the gun the second they felt
 needed.

She tries again, this time, after a moment's wait, ushering
 in a frazzled Mrs. Palfrey, who emerges from the **MANAGER'S
 OFFICE** directly behind the desk.

MRS. PALFREY
 (catching her breath)
 I'm so sorry, hun. We're a bit
 tangled up at the moment. What can
 I get ya?

ATHENA
 Just looking to use the phone real
 quick. Can't seem to find mine and
 kinda want the boss to know where
 I'm at.

Her host shakes her head.

MRS. PALFREY
 I'm sorry, Miss Ferreira. But
 that's just not possible.

ATHENA
 (confused)
 Come again?

MRS. PALFREY
 It seems that we've been having
 trouble with the phone lines today.
 Bastards just don't want to
 cooperate.

ATHENA
 How about the Internet- you guys
 got Wi-Fi? E-mail? Anything?

Judy shakes her head again; this time, regretfully.

MRS. PALFREY

John and I are a bit on the old-fashioned side of things.

She pauses, before suggesting:

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)

Try checking with us tomorrow?
Maybe that phone'll be doing
exactly what it's supposed to by
then.

Athena smiles cordially, but is clearly peeved.

ATHENA

Thanks, Judy. You've been a great
help.

While they exchange more pleasantries, Ava's attention slowly drifts away from them, instead escaping upwards to the:

STAIRWELL.

Where she notices a Native American TEEN quietly descending. Anonymous and *mysterious*. Clad in a white, fraying blouse that has never seen the inside of a Whirlpool washing machine.

The two making long, eerie eye contact as we --

SMASH TO:

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

MOVEMENT.

FIVE confident bodies powering forward, our FOCUS crispening to find --

Ten Hugo Boss DRESS SHOES CLACKING on the cold floor, their assertive steps echoing in our cavernous interior.

Dress shirts, ironed slacks, leather briefcases; carbon copies of the models who grace the catalogues of Emporio Armani.

The posse veers left down a carpeted hallway, its grey, sleek surface absorbing their expensive footsteps.

Each pair branches off individually, bee-lining to their rooms.

As we follow one in particular -- black, laced, and polished.

Reaching their door. Key enters lock, prompting its frame to part, revealing --

HOTEL ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

The maid's dedicated work having rendered the chic interior spotless.

Our suit takes in his elegant lodgings. Specifically the gift basket that awaits him.

He peels back its plastic wrapping to get to the whiskey and the roller glass that accompanies it.

Pours himself a generous finger.

Downs it.

And sets his briefcase on the carefully made bed.

ATHENA (O.S.)
Tell me you've had time to explore
this place.

CUT TO:

INT. DARK HALLWAY, THE LODGE - AFTERNOON

Dark wood. Hazy lighting. Black and white hunting portraits bordered by the taxidermy heads of more defeated prey.

All welcoming Athena as she branches off from the lobby, leading a curious Ava into the fray.

AVA
Nah, I told you- just got up.

ATHENA
Damn, you've been missing out then.

She turns towards Ava, jokingly miming the macabre fascination of a haunted house tour guide.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
Place may be gorgeous on the
outside, but it's the *inside* that's
something else. It's massive- like
way bigger than it looks.
Definitely giving off some low-key
creepy vibes. The stuffed animal
carcasses all over?

(MORE)

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Makes the whole place feel like a
Republican version of the *Shining*.

She leads Ava past the closed doors of unknown rooms. Past another line of taxidermy victims as they venture deeper down the hall's length.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

(joking)

The Palfreys may be nice, but
living in a house full of posed
dead animals? Certifiable psychos,
mark my words.

Athena chuckles, opening the door at its end, its frame
CREAKING to reveal the --

INT. DINING ROOM, THE LODGE - CONTINUOUS

Dark, intricate paneling. Low-lighting. Mounted birds of prey surrounding an exquisite dining table. No other entrances/exits visible.

Athena quickly plops down at its head, while a curious Ava peruses the new, strange room.

AVA

What about the other guests?

ATHENA

What about them?

AVA

I mean- are there other guests? I
saw a girl on the stairs. And two
dudes in the living room.

ATHENA

There's a handful. Five or six,
maybe? Real quiet bunch from what
I've seen.

Ava pauses, eyes engrossed in the looming form of a taxidermy hawk, a stuffed mouse helplessly trapped in its talons.

AVA

Have you tried talking to them?

ATHENA

Yeah, I tried. But everyone seems
to want to keep to themselves.

(beat; then)

(MORE)

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Then again, I'm pretty loud and forward.

AVA

Isn't that what most people call friendly?

ATHENA

Off-putting is another popular choice.

AVA

Trust me, there are definitely way more--

WHAM! The WALL in front of Ava SUDDENLY SLIDES OPEN-- AN UNKNOWN MAN EMERGING--

AND CRASHES into her--

The TRAY of WINE GLASSES he carries SPILLING down her blouse. Its GLASS SHATTERING on the floor, a CARVING KNIFE CLATTERING down with it.

The action so sudden, even Athena takes a moment to recover.

MAN

Oh my god, I'm so sorry.

He reaches forward to assist her.

Upon further inspection, the man is nowhere near as terrifying as his entry; just old.

Blessed with astute eyes and a dignified face. Both now craning down at Ava's wine-drenched front.

AVA

(shaken)

It's totally fine.

MAN

No, it's not. Here, let me help you with that.

He starts to wipe her down with the tray's white napkin. It's weirdly intimate, so she stops him.

AVA

Really, it's okay.

MAN

I just don't want it to stain.

He makes one last ditch effort, before giving up.

MAN (CONT'D)

Guess I should probably introduce myself after getting you all wet.

He extends a hand.

MR. PALFREY

John Palfrey. Serial glass breaker.

She smiles.

AVA

Ava. Just Ava.

They shake.

ATHENA

(confused)

Where the hell did you even come from...?

MR. PALFREY

Kitchen actually. This here's just a little passageway, a short cut of sorts. House's is full of 'em. Kind of like a labyrinth when you see the whole thing drawn out.

Ava's eyes drift to the large carving knife on the floor, which he notices.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

(re: blade)

That knife's really something, huh? Got that bad boy right there hunting panthers in the jungles outside Calcutta. Real tough bastards. Quick on the jump and quick to the jugular.

AVA

(hesitant)

Yeah... it's something alright. Could've cut through my hand if we bumped a little differently.

MR. PALFREY

You'd be surprised what it can cut through.

(an uneasy beat; then)

It's perfect for venison. Which we actually got for y'all tonight.

(MORE)

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 Judy's knock-out recipe. A most
 tender rack. *Definitely* worth
 looking forward to-

His excitement is beyond apparent.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 Anyway, now that I have you both
 captive, I wanted to extend a warm
 welcome to you. Although- a little
 wine shower and a close call with a
 carving knife is as warm a
 welcoming as you can possibly hope
 for 'round here.

AVA
 (smiling politely)
 Sounds like it.

MR. PALFREY
 Again, my apologies for the spill.
 I suggest you go get cleaned up
 before dinner comes around. We eat
 early here.

He bends over and starts to gather the broken glass with his
 hands.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 Early...

But as we and Ava watch him, we start to notice the growing
 presence of *BLOOD*, the shards cutting his skin.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 ...and often.

Yet he *continues, unperturbed...*

OFF: Ava and Athena sharing an uneasy look while the sound of
 RUNNING WATER rushes us into:

INT. SHOWER, AVA'S ROOM - LATER

Ava steps gingerly inside.

Running her hair under its spout. Eyes closed. Letting its
 water cascade down her body.

It's almost peaceful.

Her calm state of mind, unfortunately...

Interrupted--

When her eyes catch something *peculiar* in the shower's grout work.

With the dining room's passageway still on her mind, she can't help but think that its side wall looks like...

The outline to a door.

No way, she thinks as she shrugs off her fears as paranoia.

But while she reaches for the shampoo, we catch a glimpse of something else that startles us:

A black SPECK high up in its tiling.

Barely noticeable, but large enough to demand our attention.

An attention that grows suspicious after we witness the SPECK dilate, a clear ZOOM that undoubtedly belongs to:

A CAMERA LENS.

Giving us the distinct feeling *that she's being watched...* as we hear --

INT. BATHROOM, HOTEL ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Our UNKNOWN SUIT inhale a perfect line of cocaine. Breathing deeply. Letting the drug enter his bloodstream with full force.

Satisfied, he turns on his shower to *full hot*.

We watch his muscular back endure a perfect set of push-ups.

Until he enters the shower's steamed interior. Letting the scalding water dribble down his chiseled frame.

INT. BEDROOM, AVA'S ROOM - LATER

Towel wrapped around her body, Ava frowns at the wine-stained clothes lying on her bed. Peering curiously around her room for other options.

Eying a wooden dresser on the room's right.

Approaches.

Rifles through its drawers. Finding an unflattering flannel and jeans.

She stares at them, shrugging her shoulders. *It'll do.*

INT. BEDROOM, HOTEL ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Picking up a sterling silver razor, the UNKNOWN FIGURE shaves above us. His hands steady even *after* a single drop of blood dribbles *down* the white walls of our porcelain sink...

Upon drying off, he climbs into a neatly-pressed undershirt.

His suit process continues with pleated, black slacks. A form-fitting, black shirt. A sleek, Armani jacket. And a thin, black tie expertly wound into a Windsor.

The Hugo Boss shoes return. Joined now by a unique pair of dress socks -- *shark-covered* to be exact.

He slips on a silver Rolex. Adjusts his cuff-links.

Walks through a cloud of cologne.

And is now officially ready for whatever the night brings.

INT. BATHROOM, AVA'S ROOM - LATER

Now dressed, Ava finishes drying her hair, eyes peering into the mirror at her reflection, when she hears --

The sound of a BELL. Loud and pronounced.

Coming from *outside her room*.

Curious, she prods forward. Opening her door to the --

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Where she stops *dead*.

Staring at a peculiar exodus of GUESTS.

The others that Athena spoke of, including both men and the Native American teen. All walking quietly down the hall as if stuck in some anti-social *trance*.

Her mind races with a flurry of alarming questions that can be best summarized as *what the fucking fuck?*

She watches the procession that seems completely oblivious to her presence.

Until she notices *Athena* among them...

Who thankfully, turns to our hero and smiles.

ATHENA
You coming?

AVA
(confused)
Coming where?

ATHENA
To dinner apparently.

AVA
Is that what this is?

ATHENA
Yeah, some kind of dinner bell.

AVA
Makes so much more sense. I thought-

But she stops herself. *Never mind what she thought.* Instead:

AVA (CONT'D)
Yeah, hold on a sec. I'll be right
down.

She darts back to her room to gather her belongings as we --

DRIFT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM, THE LODGE - LATER

Our CAMERA becomes mobile as it navigates the room's now transformed interior. Darker and more macabre in the early evening.

A candle-lit chandelier casts eerie shadows against the birds of prey that mount its walls. Flickering in and out of darkness.

Illuminating a dining table now lined with old-fashioned serving plates. Silver utensils draped on lace napkins. Decorative amenities basking under its ambient glow.

The Palfreys lounge at its head. Looking over their guests with decorum. As we visually meet the others:

IZABELLA. 20's. Indian, elite, and alluring. An urban sophisticate of the highest breed.

JAX. Late 20's. British, cold, and rebellious. Your run of the mill punk rock burnout.

MARTINA. 17. Hispanic, mellow, and beat. Years of homelessness having taken their spiritual toll.

Our two men --

BRAYDEN. 30's. Asian, brooding, and mysterious. A sleeve of menacing tattoos mirroring his hardened demeanor.

CARTER. 40's. African-American, stoic, and haunted. A war veteran that fits the part.

Both sit across from Ava and Athena. The latter positioned next to our Native American TEEN as well --

MIKAYLA. 19. Quiet, observant, and reactive. An edge to her that lives beneath the surface.

As Mr. Palfrey stands before his congregation. Wine glass in hand. Clearing his throat. His sensual gaze catching his wife's knowing eyes.

MR. PALFREY

Thank you for joining us tonight.
It's wonderful to have eight new
souls to share this intimate
evening with.

He gestures to his guests while he talks.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

You know- back when we first
started the Lodge, we did it for
the people- the thrill of welcoming
each new group of guests that
passed through our gates. Sure,
you're unrelated. Many of you live
very different lives. Come from
different sectors, different
cities, different backgrounds. But
tonight, you all have one thing in
common. Your paths have all crossed
here, sitting at *our* table, with
us.

His eyes almost twinkle.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

Each meal Judy and I are blessed to
share with you is an opportunity to
bask in the warmth of new people.
So, join my wife and I in a toast
for the eight new bodies that grace
us with their presence tonight.

(MORE)

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 You are the reason we pursued this
 venture, and the reason we continue
 to do it each and every day.

He raises his glass.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 And for that, we thank you.

EVERYONE
 (in unison)
 Cheers.

They all take a polite drink.

He now looks across the table to his wife.

MR. PALFREY
 Judy, will you do the honors?

Her eyes intimately lock with her husband's as she nods.

MRS. PALFREY
 Course.

Her fingers reach for a single platter at the table's center.
 Gripping its silver handle carefully.

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 Now, be warned. The smell takes a
 little getting used to.

Mr. Palfrey chuckles as Ava's eyes drift warily to the dish.
 Suddenly becoming suspicious of what lurks *beneath* its
 serving cover.

The very cover that Mrs. Palfrey now holds in her hands.

Our hero watches attentively.

As her host ever so slowly...

REMOVES its top--

Revealing a beautiful, venison roast. Nothing more.

Mrs. Palfrey takes a deep inhale of its aroma as Ava's breath
 returns.

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 There's just something about
 rosemary that always makes for the
 sweetest smelling marinades.

She smiles as she PLUNGES a huge carving knife into its meat.

MRS. PALFREY (CONT'D)
Now, who prefers rare?

A Bach SONATA drives our escape into --

INT. RECEPTION ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Its mellow chords rise from an antiquated gramophone, setting the pace for a formal gathering best described as opulent.

Champagne flutes flow in a wood-paneled space decorated with a tasteful spectrum of art history.

Silver trays boast a delectable array of hors d'oeuvres. The waiting STAFF that carries them tux-clad.

Our group of five loiters near a Neoclassical bust. Three of them sip Old-Fashioneds. The fourth, a Manhattan. The fifth, straight scotch.

Their body movements are animated. Laughing at an unheard joke. Enjoying their upscale party.

ATHENA (O.S.)
I have to ask- what's with the
taxidermy?

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM, THE LODGE - LATER

The forks and knives stop clattering against china plates, Athena's question breaking a conversational lull.

Mr. Palfrey chuckles in response.

MR. PALFREY
Do you find them unsettling, Miss
Ferreira?

ATHENA
It's just- there's a lot.

He smiles.

MR. PALFREY
Guess the obvious answer would
be... Judy and I, well, we love to
hunt.

His eyes gauge his audience's reaction.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
How long have we been at it, hun?

MRS. PALFREY
God, I'd have to say forty or fifty years?

MR. PALFREY
Forty or fifty years of playing predator and prey. Everything we've ever shot, everything we've ever stuffed, we have here with us.

ATHENA
You stuff them personally?

MRS. PALFREY
Very much so. John is *quite* the taxidermist.

MR. PALFREY
What can I say? I have a surgeon's hands.

His comment inspires uneasy laughter.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
Truth be told, we've traveled far and wide for our collection, even before we started this place. Always game for a new species we haven't tracked before. A new member to join our ark.

He pauses, letting his words marinate.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
You know- it's always hard for me to describe it to someone that don't see it like I do, but, for me, there's something about the hunt that's just so... *fulfilling*. Each and every one of us, no matter what species, what gender, what build- we *all* react so differently when forced into life's most basic interaction- to kill or *be killed*. For it's *only* in that life or death situation, that you can learn something so basic, so human about yourself.

(MORE)

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 About the animal inside of you.
 About your place in nature's
 violent hierarchy.

His loving eyes look up at his wife.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 I'd have to say some of our best
 memories together are from out on
 that carnal trail.

He pauses, silently recollecting with a smile.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 So our dream, once we retired,
 beyond meeting new wonderful people
 like yourselves, was to find a home
 for all our conquests- some kind of
 physical monument for everything
 we've been through together.

There's something about their eye contact that's almost
 touching.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
 And that, I can proudly say, is
 something we've achieved.

Mrs. Palfrey returns his smile.

MRS. PALFREY
 Something we're so proud to share
 with you.

The guests purr. The Palfrey's sentimentality *almost* heart-
 warming... as we --

DRIFT TO:

INT. RECEPTION ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

We rejoin the party amidst a toast. Its words drowned out by
 the pleasant notes of Bach. The heads of all its listeners
 still cut off by our frame.

Our group of five takes a cordial sip at its conclusion,
 before resuming their unheard conversation.

After another round of laughter, one of them catches a
 passing waiter.

They have an unheard exchange before our suit hands him his
 Blackberry.

He gathers the group together for a quick photo. A snapshot that preserves the moment for eternity.

A moment that quickly passes into the next as conversation picks up where it left off.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP: A ferocious BEAR.

Towering in stature. Claws elevated and extended. Dark eyes blending in with the flickering darkness of our interior.

MR. PALFREY (O.S.)
You're more than welcome to lounge
as long as you want-

INT. LOBBY, THE LODGE - NIGHT

Clutching hearty glasses of wine, the dining party ventures through our ostentatious entrance.

Laughing. Joking. Comparably more amicable after enjoying a meal together.

MR. PALFREY (O.S.)
-but Judy and I, well-

All heading into the --

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A room that *breathes* of comfort. A vintage fireplace. Plaid couches. The softest animal furs draped on its floor. A record player hums with yet again, Carole King's "It's Too Late."

In 1971, this would've been *the* spot. And even today, it's quite welcoming in a nostalgic sort of way.

While each of the guests find a cozy place to sit, Mr. Palfrey continues to address them while standing with his wife at its threshold.

MR. PALFREY
-we're part of that "early to bed,
early to rise" camp. So
regretfully, we're gonna have to
call it an night.

He looks out at the eight, a friendly smile on his face.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

But the fire's going, the wine's flowing, and the music's nice. So don't let our absence stop you from having a hell of an evening.

He pauses genuinely.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

It's probably the last night you'll spend together. Might as well make it a great one.

And with that, he and his wife disappear from the living room, into the **LOBBY**, and up the **STAIRS**, his smile turning all the more *unsettling* with each step he takes...

The two of them leaving behind a silent, now awkward environment.

Eyes scanning the room, avoiding contact. An ice settling that a slightly buzzed Athena yet again has to break --

ATHENA

Ever thought it possible for someone to be *too* nice?

People chuckle, slowly getting comfortable again.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Like I totally get the first impression "I gotta be nice so they don't think I'm an asshole" thing. But after a while, it just feels a little... aggressive?

She pauses.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

But hey- can't complain. Good food, bottomless wine, free lodging- I'll take it.

She eyes the smirking circle around her.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Just curious, are any of you actually paying guests?

To her and Ava's surprise, everyone slowly shakes their head "no"...

IZABELLA

Even offered, but as soon as I got out the Amex, they told me to put it away.

ATHENA

You up here on vacation?

IZABELLA

No, course not.
(chuckles)
Car broke down.

ATHENA

(thoughts churning)
Weird...

Her eyes curiously pan to the other six guests.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

And the rest of you...? Same kind of deal?

BRAYDEN

(abrupt)
Yeah- car wreck.

ATHENA

(gestures to Ava)
Us, too... recent?

He nods.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

(to Martina)
How 'bout you?

Martina awkwardly stares at her feet.

MARTINA

(mutters)
Picked me up begging.

Mikayla speaks up.

MIKAYLA

Got me hitchhiking.

Carter concurs.

CARTER

(cold)
Veterans' counseling group.

ATHENA

(to Jax)

And what about you, Kurt Cobain?

Jax smirks smugly.

JAX

Them old folks found me in the woods. High as a kite. Pupils the size of Jupiter. Apparently muttering sweet nothing's about the Devil walking the Earth again.

Silence.

ATHENA

(jokes)

Guess they were right when saying we're from all sects of life.

A few of them laugh.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

And sure- maybe I can't help but feel that it's a little bit odd that we're all here because the Palfreys actively sought us out.

Her concern now dissipates into a smile.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

But hey- maybe there are just genuinely good people left in this world. And maybe *too nice* is simply a welcoming change from everything but. So with that in mind-

As we now join...

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The five SUITS strutting down the corridor again.

An excitable rush to their movements as they near the sleek, metallic doors of an ELEVATOR.

ATHENA (O.S.)

-let's have our own toast.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE LODGE - CONTINUOUS

She raises her wine glass into the air.

ATHENA
To the Palfreys-

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

A suit's GLOVED HAND presses the "UP" button.

ATHENA (O.S.)
-and their surprising kindness.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Her fellow guests, including a hesitant Ava, lift their own in response.

ATHENA
May we forever live in their
example.

EVERYONE
(in unison)
The Palfreys.

As the sound of HEAVY DOORS parting--

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

Preludes the elevator opening. The five filing inside.

The same gloved HAND reaches forward and presses one of two
BUTTONS on its panel --

Sending the elevator *upwards* towards the only other floor on
its shaft...

FADE TO AN
UNEASY **BLACK.**

As we COME TO:

LATER.

The night darker. More mysterious.

The space before us having grown increasingly ominous as we --
FLY through the Lodge's interior.

DRIFTING down its harrowed corridors.

Past the shadows flickering against its walls.

The mounted animal heads.

The *numbered* doors.

Arriving at our mirror. HOLDING there.

Noticing that the Navajo blade that once decorated its wooden cabinet... *is now--*

MISSING.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE LODGE - NIGHT

Embers dance in the fireplace, while "It's Too Late" continues to emanate from the record player.

The room is almost vacant now. Only Athena and Ava are left lounging on its couches, twirling glasses of Merlot.

ATHENA

(prodding)

So Ava... what do you do?

AVA

Wow. Pulling out the cocktail ice breakers now?

ATHENA

(smirking)

I'm just curious is all. Told you what I do. It's only fair you return the favor.

AVA

Fine.

(beat)

Guess I'm kinda between jobs at the moment.

ATHENA

That an honest answer?

Ava smiles, found out.

AVA

Not exactly.

ATHENA

There's no shame. I'm a fucking insurance salesman for Christ's sake. The scum of the Earth by most people's standards.

AVA

Can't be much worse than working at a box store.

ATHENA

Like a Walmart?

AVA

Exactly like a Walmart.

ATHENA

Could be worse?

AVA

Not much, trust me.

She pauses for a second, mulling over her next words carefully.

AVA (CONT'D)

You know... I think what scares me a little bit about working there and all- is that it makes me feel so *stuck* already... like I'm twenty-six, but I go to work every night feeling like someone two years from retirement. Dealing with the same shit every day, every hour- knowing that the best news I can hear all night is "clean-up on aisle three," because at least then, I actually get to do *something*.

The strain in her voice is apparent.

AVA (CONT'D)

Guess I'm kinda just waiting for something, *anything* to jolt me out of this coma. And it's not like I want to wait either- like what I really want is to *do* something about it. But I've just been lulled into this state that I just can't get out of...

Athena nods, understanding that feeling all too well.

ATHENA

Then maybe... being stranded here
is just the jolt you need to change
things up? Let the real you take
the wheel again?

AVA

(smiles)

That'd be nice.

They chuckle warmly, enjoying another sip of wine in the otherwise content silence. Perfectly relaxed as the somber lyrics of "It's Too Late" pick up in pitch, driving us into:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, THE LODGE - NIGHT

Quaint. Wood-furnished. Framed photos of the Palfrey's resting on bedside tables.

An empty master bed comes into view. Its sheets neatly tucked beneath its comforter. Its pillows *undisturbed*...

INT. LOBBY, THE LODGE - NIGHT

Too still. Too silent.

But as we peer through its dark windows...

We notice:

STEEL WINDOW COVERS cranking down. Slowly. Covertly. Unheard in the night.

As they securely take their place across the frames.

Thwarting any light from entering. *Barricading the glass.*

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE LODGE - LATER

Comfortable in a thoughtful silence, Athena finishes the last of her wine before slowly getting up from her coach perch.

ATHENA

(gesturing upstairs)

You making moves?

AVA

Nah, I think I'm gonna stay up a bit longer. Enjoy the ambiance.

Athena nods. Heading towards the threshold.

ATHENA
Want me to leave the record on?

AVA
Has it been playing that same song
since we got here?

ATHENA
(smirks)
I think so.

AVA
Yeah, then just leave it.

ATHENA
Alright- then I'll see you
tomorrow?

AVA
(smiles)
Sure thing. Good night.

ATHENA
Night.

She slinks out of the room, leaving a pensive Ava by herself. Carefully pouring herself another glass from a nearby bottle, while...

INT. NEW ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Our limited purview reveals a sleek and spotless interior with a distinct metallic character.

Where our five SUITS shake the wrinkled HAND of a SIXTH MAN. The latter making his way around their circle. Murmured pleasantries exchanged between all.

[NOTE: their heads are still beyond our frame.]

After finishing his round, he cordially excuses himself.

Heading over to the triumphant silver doors of an ELEVATOR. Extending his finger towards the black SENSOR on their right.

The system immediately recognizes his touch. A panel below the sensor slides away, revealing the elevator's controls.

He presses "DOWN."

Waits for just a second before its doors part. Revealing another FIGURE inside, this one convincingly feminine.

Our man walks in, joining the waiting party at the back of the elevator.

And, as its doors begin to close...

We PAN UP for the first time.

Revealing the identity of the two inside its car:

MR. AND MRS. PALFREY.

Leaving the suits behind in the unknown room as they descend down to the STERILE HALLWAY below... as we--

RETURN TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE LODGE - NIGHT

Ava slowly sips from her wine glass, mulling over her percolating thoughts. Miles away from her present. A deaf ear turned to the record player.

When--

THE LIGHTS SUDDENLY GO OUT.

No rhyme. No reason. Just darkness.

Ava abruptly sits up. Mind aghast with "what the hell?"

She pans her surrounding cautiously. A few dying embers in the fireplace her only source of illumination.

Her eyes slowly become accustomed to her new environment, as she carefully sets her glass down on the wooden coffee table.

And ever so cautiously, gets up from the couch.

Her hesitant steps prodding towards the --

LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Finding it shrouded in *utter darkness*. All light non-existent. All candles expunged.

Bizarre.

She feels through blackness before her.

Stepping into its abyss.

Feet locating an unseen stairwell.

Fingers gripping the railing.

As she inches forward.

Step.

By excruciating step.

Up its circumventing flight.

The once ostentatious entry shrouded by an impenetrable shadow.

Her environment invisible.

Her surroundings unknown.

Burdened by the terrifying reality that *anything* could be lurking within its shroud.

As she reaches the --

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Its depths blanketed by the pitch black before her.

She feels along its walls carefully.

Passing over the head of a--

BUCK--

Startling herself as she feels for its snout. Running her fingers through its fur...

Before coming into contact with our mirror.

She takes a second to stabilize herself against its cabinet. Letting loose a harrowed breath.

Before venturing down its dark hallway.

Her timid steps

Slinking across the rugged floor.

Eyes now getting more and more accustomed.

Discerning more and more in the darkness before her.

When she catches the sudden sound of FOOTSTEPS.

Loud and definitive.

Forcing her to stop.

Heart thumping. Petrified in fright.

Anxious ears perking up. Cold sweat trickling down her spine.

But the sound is *unmistakable*.

Their pace quick. And perpetual.

Storming towards an unknown destination.

Seemingly emanating from...

WITHIN THE HALLWAY'S WALLS.

A trembling Ava carefully gets on her hands and knees.

Following the disturbance.

Tracing it to the air conditioning VENT just visible on her right. Its metallic guarder slightly above the ground.

The FOOTSTEPS ringing louder and clearer here.

Echoing beyond its grill.

Coming CLOSER.

And CLOSER to us.

Her eyes peering deeper and deeper inside. Her face getting *closer and closer--*

UNTIL a DRESS SHOE CROSSES the VENT.

RIGHT before our eyes. So close we can see its laces. Hear the BREATHING of its owner...

Ava stifles an unsettled GASP--

As the shoe now disappears from view.

Into the dark unknown *beyond our walls...*

Our heroine deeply confused in the darkness of the hallowed hallway.

Oblivious to a subtle, synchronised CLICK from the doors to *rooms ONE through FOUR.*

Their DEAD BOLTS sliding securely *shut.*

LOCKING their guests inside...

SMASH TO:

INT. ROOM ONE, THE LODGE - NIGHT

A still and silent bedroom.

The form of Jax just visible beneath the covers.

Head draped atop his pillows. A tuft of hair blowing back and forth at the guidance of his steady, slumbered breathing.

Breathing that's *crudely* and *immediately* VIOLATED...

WHEN A BLADE DRIVES THROUGH HIS CHEST.

STAINING his sheets with a mid-sleep SLAUGHTER.

INT. ROOM TWO - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Izabella tosses and turns restlessly. Unable to sleep.

Frustration slowly building.

Her anxious eyes peering at the bedside clock --

11:06

Sighs.

Stares at the ceiling. Pre-dreams circulating--

When she hears *something*.

A slight disturbance.

Somewhere within her room.

Weird.

She sits up. Becoming incredibly still. No falling asleep now.

Ears perked up, seeking confirmation of--

There it is again.

Barely audible.

But definitely there.

Something solid coming into careful contact with the bathroom's tile floor.

We take Izabella's **POV**:

As she peers out into the darkness before her.

Unable to see *anything*...

But she hears it *again*. The same, hesitant sound.

Izabella sinks deeper into her covers.

There is undeniably something in her room.

The sound returns, louder now. Less careful.

Unmistakably, a FOOTSTEP.

It is not a something in her room. But a someone.

Izabella pulls tightly on her sheets now.

Feeling increasingly vulnerable in bed.

Nowhere to go.

Nowhere to hide.

A new STEP rings out in the darkness. Closer now.

Her body petrified.

Can't move.

Can't scream.

The darkness before her overwhelming.

Impenetrable.

Distinguishing anything impossible.

She fearfully closes her eyes now.

Robbing us of our PERSPECTIVE.

Putting us in an even darker darkness.

As another STEP emanates beyond her eyelids. Louder and *closer*.

Followed by another.

And another.

Sensing a body now. *Most definitely a body.*

There it is *again.*

This time, the final step.

Stopping before us. Lurking above.

We feel them. Hear them breathing.

But can't see them.

Her body trembles.

Her hesitant eyes slowly *opening...*

Looking up *at--*

DARKNESS.

But *something* is up there.

Standing above us.

Our eyes grow accustomed to its pitch.

Peering out into its abyss.

Suddenly recognizing the GLINT of SILVER...

And the AX SWINGING DOWN TOWARDS HER--

SKEWERING her in bed. A Pollock SPLATTER on white sheets.

Her attacker visible for merely a millisecond:

The fur-laden MASK of a DEER emerging from the darkness.

Before *disappearing* back into its shroud...

INT. ROOM THREE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Dark. Silent.

A restless Martina stuck in an insomniac's perpetual staring contest with the ceiling.

She loses. Breaking her gaze. Brushing aside her comforter.

Climbing out of bed en route to the bathroom.

Glazed eyes. Tired pace.

Prodding forward. Feet now on tile.

Feeling carefully before her. Blind hands navigating the darkened fray.

When she stops. Sensing *something*.

A *presence*.

On her right. By the shower.

Invisible to her. Yet definitely *there*.

She peers forward. Squinting now.

Nervous eyes sifting through the dark until they discover...

The HEAD of a **BEAR**.

Yes, we see it, too...

Seemingly suspended in mid-air above us. Surrounded by a blanket of darkness.

Too still. Too silent.

Its spatial placement *too* bizarre for taxidermy decoration.

Martina's mind racing with a hundred "*what the fuck's.*"

Taking a careful step backwards. Unsure eyes craning up at the animal before her.

MARTINA

(trying)

Hello...?

There's no response.

No movement.

The grizzly's head as still as can be.

Martina's confusion sets in. Compounded with a building sense of paranoia.

Paranoia that finds itself confirmed when--

The bear TILTS its head SIDEWAYS.

Its black gaze now locking onto her human form.

Predator assessing prey.

As the figure takes a firm step forward.

Emerging from the darkness in full force--

Black Armani suit. Black dress shirt. Black Windsor knot.

Its MASK tailored from the fur of a previously hunted BEAR.
Its fashion choices oddly complementing:

The glinting, silver AX in its gloved hand.

An AX that comes SWINGING at Martina with FULL FEROCITY--
SLICING through the air with the intent to KILL--

An intent stymied by a DIVING Martina-- PLUMMETING to the
bedroom floor--

Quick on her feet now-- PULLING herself up--

SPRINTING towards her bedroom door-- GRABBING at its handle--

Desperate hands FINDING it--

LOCKED...

Her eyes fear defeat as the sound of confident FOOTSTEPS
behind her announce her attacker's casual approach.

Dress shoes CLACKING loudly against the tile. Her fate
growing all the more dire by the second.

So she does the only sensible thing she can do...

She lets loose a guttural SCREAM--

BANGING on the bedroom door with desperate fists...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Fists heard on the other side by a startled Ava.

Jolting her up from the floor by the air vent. Spurring her
SPRINT down the dark passageway.

Reaching the door of **ROOM THREE**. The BANGING and SCREAMING
louder. Confirming its source.

Ava jerks down on its handle.

Finding it *LOCKED...*

ROOM THREE - CONTINUOUS

The handle jerking down seen by a crying Martina. Giving her a last drop of hope.

MARTINA
(terrified)
Help- help me...

As the CLACKING SHOES behind her only get closer...

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A panicking Ava wages war with the handle.

But it's futile.

Desperate eyes scan the dark interior for something, *anything* to pry the door open.

Options running thin.

Time running out.

AVA
(mind racing)
Fuck- fuck- I- I don't know...

ROOM THREE - CONTINUOUS

The CLACKING nearly on top of her now.

An adamant Martina unwilling to look back. Tears cascading down her cheeks.

MARTINA
(a desperate whisper)
Hurry... just- hurry...

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ava trying to. Fingers still roughly wrestling with the door handle.

But to no avail. As we *suddenly...*

Hear *it*.

The blood-curdling sound of an AX--

DRIVING THROUGH FLESH.

...AGAIN...

...AND AGAIN...

...AND AGAIN.

Martina's cries having died down now. Suddenly and violently stopped forever.

We hear her defeated body SLIDE down the door frame. Blood audibly smearing against its wood. Undeniably the darkest slip n' slide in cinematic history.

As now, all Ava can discern from beyond its frame is the --

HARROWED BREATHING of her masked attacker. A murderer that she never sees.

Standing against the door. Aware of her presence on the other side.

There's something almost intimate about it.

As he regains his composure. Each breath slightly muffled by his restrictive mask. *But growing more and more euphoric.*

Prompting Ava's blood to run cold.

Her wary eyes turning towards the *seven* other doors in the hallway. Her fear palpable.

AS WE SMASH TO:

INT. ROOM FOUR - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The SCREAMS having jerked awake a sleeping Athena. Bolting upright in bed. Startled. Alarmed.

Staring bewilderingly into the night directly before her. Cold sweat beginning to drip... drip... drip... *WHEN--*

AN AX COMES SWINGING AT HER HEAD-- an unknown ASSAILANT EMERGING from the darkness--

Athena DIVES out of its way--

Its VILE EDGE SPEARING through her pillows-- DRIVING a flurry of FEATHERS *airborne*-- CRASHING into the wooden bed frame--

ATHENA

quick on the draw, ROLLS to the other side of the bed, PROPPING herself up while--

HER ASSAILANT

struggles to DISLodge his ax from the frame--

As her desperate hands now RIFLE through the bedside cabinets, fingers coming into contact with a small MATCHBOOK--

Now STRIKING the first match--

Its light illuminating...

Nothing.

Her bed now abandoned. Its sheets ruffled.

Her pillows nothing but cotton carnage. Their feathers still drifting down. Past the ghastly AX WOUND in the bed frame.

Definitive proof that the previous horrors occurred.

Horrors still very much alive...

As she PANS across her interior.

Peering into its darkness.

The limited light of her match illuminating merely a few feet in front of her at a time.

Its flame burning down to its wooden end as her PAN nears its close.

Its last flicker revealing...

A MASKED COUGAR CHARGING RIGHT AT HER--

Black Armani suit. Silver, glinting ax.

EMERGING from her RIGHT-- SWINGING his blade *just* as her match GOES OUT...

Throwing us into a terrifying DARK UNKNOWN.

Hearing the carnal battle without seeing it.

AX hits WOOD. Bodies struggle. A LAMP falls. Glass SHATTERS. A match STRIKES--

Returning light to a space in disarray.

A dresser HACKED. A lamp BROKEN. Clothes STREWN everywhere.

A trembling Athena clutches the match. Eying the Cougar getting up a few, dangerous yards away.

Her gaze drifts to the broken lamp on the floor before her. The glass of its light bulb scattered across the rug.

Her eyes crane back up at the now approaching Cougar. A *desperate idea coming to the surface...*

As she makes a last-ditch GRAB at the LAMP.

RIPPING off its SHADE-- GRIPPING its shaft--

And *LUNGING* with the SHARP REMAINS of its BULB geared forward like a weapon--

PLUNGING its SHARDED TIP through the Cougar's NECK--

BLOOD SPUTTERS-- SPLURTING-- DRIBBLING down his black suit as he DROPS his ax-- his defeated body PLUMMETING to the floor for the final time.

An exasperated Athena breathes heavily, her match going out yet again.

She strikes another one. Thankfully, finding the Cougar's defeated corpse still there. Still dead.

She bends over, examining his body. Checks his pulse to confirm his fate.

Now staring at his head curiously as she elects to ever so carefully, *unmask* him.

Finding...

A handsome MAN of elite pedigree. Clean shaven but unfamiliar.

What the fuck, she thinks, as she picks up his ax. Using another match to find a way out of the bedroom.

Tries her door first. But finds it locked.

HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The TWITCH of its handle drawing Ava towards it while--

ROOM FOUR - CONTINUOUS

Athena lights another match. Prodding towards the bathroom.

Stops before the shower. Mouth suddenly agape as we join her perspective:

Its back wall, if we can call it that...

Is SLID OPEN, revealing a *secret passageway* housed *within* the Lodge's walls.

A passageway she now enters. Hands firmly gripping the ax. Match leading the way into the darkness...

Nowhere else to go but down...

JUST AS:

HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Desperation brimming, Ava's eyes catch those of a taxidermy BUCK majestically mounted on the opposite wall. *An idea crosses her mind.*

She approaches the still animal. Feeling the sharp, *thin* points of its antlers.

And with one quick jerk of her fist, BREAKS one off the beast.

Returning to the door of **ROOM FOUR**. Attention drifting to its bronze hinges.

Positions the antler directly below the top HINGE PIN.

And with her fist as a makeshift hammer, *DRIVES* it out. The pin CLATTERING to the dark floor.

Now making quick work of its bottom one, the door teetering off its hinges.

Falling, parting to reveal the interior carnage of --

ROOM FOUR - CONTINUOUS

The bed in disarray. Pillows slaughtered. Visually reminiscent of the carnal fight that unfolded here.

Our unmasked Cougar's body disturbingly still. Blood still wet, pooling on the decorative rug.

A trembling Ava inches forward. Venturing into the fray. Terrified eyes craned at the corpse before her.

Slinking through the disheveled bedroom. Into its bathroom. Finding it:

Empty. Pristine. *Its SHOWER WALL closed.*

She turns her back. Oblivious to the reality we know.

Her grimace grows. *Deeply* unsure about Athena's whereabouts. And profoundly *rattled* by it.

SMASH INTO:

A frenetic, quick MONTAGE:

Sharp. Biting. Unrelenting.

The committed ANTLER *DRIVING* through PIN...

AFTER PIN...

AFTER PIN.

Door after door parting for Ava, even the ones unlocked:

The bloody remains of Jax in **ONE**. Izabella's mangled form in **TWO**. A restless Carter in **FIVE**. A frightened Mikayla in **SIX**. An unnerved Brayden in **SEVEN**. Her own empty room in **EIGHT**.

Leaving us in the:

HALLWAY

With our group of four. An unsettling confusion sinking in among them. Terror finding new hosts.

Carter gestures to the closed door of **THREE**.

CARTER

What's in three?

Ava makes serious eye contact with her trio, its inexplicit meaning clear.

AVA

(stern)

We don't open three.

MEANWHILE:

INT. CONTROL ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

A gloved FINGER reaches forward towards a singular, BLACK BUTTON.

Presses down.

The motion TRIGGERING:

WITHIN THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The building's hidden mechanical UNDERCARRIAGE to come alive.

An army of gears turning. Intricate machinery GROANS.

As rising from its robotic depths:

Is a PLATFORM. Retrofitted with a...

BEAR TRAP.

Reaching a MOLD in a metallic ceiling. A perfect fit. Its menacing teeth LOCKING into place.

As we now PULL up *through* this "ceiling."

And into the --

INT. HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Finding our trap concealed by an ornamental rug. The Lodge's sinister undercarriage hidden from view.

A considerable distance down the dark corridor, our oblivious four are just where we left them -- terrified and confused.

CARTER

I'm sorry, I just can't wrap my head around-

(swallows hard)

Four bodies, a **fifth** missing, and you say you saw *no one* come in or out...?

AVA

It's not like it makes much sense to me either... the doors were locked from the inside.

Brayden gestures to the disheveled interior of Room Four.

BRAYDEN

And the dead dude in the suit? Never seen him before?

AVA

No, and I have no idea where he came from... or where Athena went.

Carter shakes his head in disbelief.

CARTER

So you're telling me four of us were locked inside- and *slaughtered* like, uh... penned up animals or some shit?

AVA

I know it's hard to believe-

CARTER

It's not *that* hard when we have their bodies right there.

BRAYDEN

What worries me was that ours were kept purposefully unlocked...

CARTER

Which means they kept us alive.

BRAYDEN

But why...?

Ava's eyes harbor her growing fear, but she suppresses it.

AVA

Look, it doesn't fucking matter what's going on... or what goddamn nightmare we just woke up in. We *need* to get out of here. And we need to do it *fast*.

Everyone nods, the sentiment shared. Except for Mikayla who has suddenly stopped, body going rigidly still--

MIKAYLA

(speaking up)

Guys...

She holds her hand up to silence the group.

MIKAYLA (CONT'D)

Guys, do you hear that...?

The rest of them now come to an abrupt *halt*.

Joining her stillness. Staring at her curiously while their ears search for--

MIKAYLA (CONT'D)

(specifying)

That.

And with the hallway now eerily quiet, they all begin to notice...

The subtle return of our FOOTSTEPS.

Echoing in our cavernous interior. More of them this time. Dark and purposeful. CLACKING without remorse.

BRAYDEN
(whispering)
What the... hell?

MIKAYLA
(whispering; manic)
It makes no sense... there's *no one*
out here...

AVA
Exactly...

They all turn to her as she realizes--

AVA (CONT'D)
I think they're coming from the
walls.

Their eyes glance fearfully at the dark barriers between themselves and whatever lurks *within* them.

The FOOTSTEPS closer now. Becoming all-encompassing.
Suffocating.

MIKAYLA
(whispering)
What the fuck is going on, man...

AVA
(whispering)
I don't know...

She pauses fearfully.

AVA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I really don't know...

As they begin to quickly trek down the hallway, unknowingly approaching *the trap hidden beneath its floor...*

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Athena ventures deeper and deeper into the fray, ax extended before her. Lighting match after match to illuminate her way.

Until she reaches the main thoroughfare:

A dark, concrete tunnel lit by hazy LED's. The power very much in operation here.

Her ears pick up on the same FOOTSTEPS emanating from deep down the tunnel's depths.

She gulps, pocketing the matches. And takes a committed step into its realm.

INT. HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Our group very much mobile now. Racing forward through the darkness. Desperate to escape.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS all around them. Driving them forward. Setting the frenetic pace of their beating hearts.

Brayden leads the pack. Survivalist instincts kicking in. Fear and adrenaline powering his movements.

We watch his FEET rip across the rug. Relentless and committed.

Paced steps blending into the next.

Momentum taking the wheel. A mere gear away from an all-out sprint.

Feet. Rug. Feet. Rug.

Each step covering new ground. Coming into contact with new space.

Until they reach what we fear awaits them--

One second, a foot is airborne.

The next, it comes down on the deceptive slab of rug--

The BEAR TRAP **SPRINGING UP** and **DEVOURING** his LEG.

His body PLUMMETS to the ground. A SCREAM of agony ERUPTING from his LUNGS--

Our group watches in terror as he goes down in front of them.

Quickly coming to his assistance. Staring at:

BLOOD. *Everywhere.*

Its metallic teeth have breached his ankle. Their clench breaking *through* the bone. Severed flesh and tendons in their bite.

BRAYDEN
(trembling)
Oh God- oh fuck-

AVA
(uneasy)
Jesus... alright, just- stay calm.
We'll- we'll get you out of here,
okay, man...?

She seeks Carter's gaze for confirmation, the veteran crouching down, gauging the strength of the trap's grip on Brayden's ankle. Feeling for weaknesses in its design.

Finding none.

Carter stops, defeated eyes craned to Ava. The FOOTSTEPS around them growing *louder* by the second.

Closer now. Circling their prey. *Leaving our trio with a terrible decision to make.*

Brayden's fearful eyes glancing down at his horrific wound. The walls around them. Realizing the gravity of his fate. The same dire fate he's imposing on the others.

BRAYDEN
(clenched teeth)
Just... *go.*

AVA
What? *No.*

BRAYDEN
Yes- just do it.

AVA
No, we can't leave you.

The FOOTSTEPS grow even *more* deafening.

BRAYDEN
You have to.

AVA
We *can't.*

BRAYDEN
(stern, decisive)
You *fucking* have to.

He grabs her arm and stares into her eyes. His message clear and unrelenting. The FOOTSTEPS nearly on top of them now.

MIKAYLA

They're gonna be here any second.

CARTER

It's either now or never,
sweetheart...

AVA

(still staring at Brayden)
Okay...
(beat)
Okay, I'm coming.

Eyes never leaving the fallen Brayden, she follows the other two down the hallway, heading towards the **STAIRS**.

Leaving Brayden bleeding out onto the rug.

Breath slowing. Fear growing. Withering in pain.

Hearing the terrifying FOOTSTEPS get closer... and *closer*.

Waiting to die...

A wait he only has to endure for a few painful seconds...

Before the WALL behind us parts for an unknown FIGURE in an all-black suit.

His dark form blending in with the equally dark hallway.

The back of his head covered by the auburn fur of a **FOX MASK**.

His pace confident and calculated.

Bearing down on a cowering Brayden.

Brandishing *our missing Navajo blade*...

Flanked by the accompanying, domineering figures of BEAR and DEER...

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Athena continues to venture deeper down its path. Passing lanterns BUZZING with electricity.

The FOOTSTEPS growing louder and louder. Closer and closer to her.

She clutches her ax tighter and tighter.

Until she makes out MUFFLED VOICES heading her way.

Her eyes grow panicked. Scanning her perimeter for somewhere, *anywhere* to hide.

The VOICES getting louder as her pace picks up.

Desperation building now.

Two FIGURES nearly coming into view--

When she spots a THRESHOLD on the right of the tunnel.

Quickly filing through. Hiding behind its wall.

Eyes geared out at the passageway. Praying that they don't make the same turn.

The VOICES and FOOTSTEPS becoming excruciatingly loud.

Any minute now...

Deep breath, Athena. Deep breath.

Palms sweaty.

Knuckles whitening.

Ax trembling...

WHEN BEAR AND DEER RACE PAST.

Axes glinting. Suits black and impeccable.

Blowing right past her without sensing her presence.

But notably...

DRAGGING an unconscious BRAYDEN in their wake.

She lets out a horrified breath as they pass. Her tension far from subsiding.

Tension that finds itself exacerbated as soon as she turns around and sees the room within which she chose to hide --

An ARMORY.

Weapons of all shapes and sizes. From all centuries of warfare. All empires. All continents.

Hunting knives. Crossbows. Daggers. Medieval torture instruments. Contemporary power tools. Blades the word "sinister" doesn't even begin to describe.

Athena gulps, taking in the threatening sight before her. And the death it's capable of.

The Lodge she thought she knew most certainly a lie...

INT. STAIRWELL, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

A lie slowly realized by our trio as they race down its ostentatious steps, two at a time. Ava notably limping. Their paced movements inflaming her stitched wound.

AVA
(mid-stride)
We shouldn't have left him.

CARTER
We had no choice.

They reach the bottom step, crossing into the --

LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Wasting no time in their approach to its magnificent, front doors.

AVA
(sotto)
Please-

She forces down the doors' golden handle...

Meeting immediate *resistance*. Its frame cruelly LOCKED.

CARTER
Goddamn bastards.

AVA
Try the windows?

Mikayla peers through their frames at the steel window covers staring right back.

MIKAYLA
Fortified.

CARTER
All of them?

Mikayla cranes her neck in the direction of the **LIVING ROOM**.
Its glinting windows likewise shrouded by steel.

MIKAYLA
(nods)
Jesus...

CARTER
Fuckin' eh, they're trapping us in.

AVA
(realizing)
They're doing more than that...

She shakes her head, slowly comprehending the vile nature of
their predicament.

AVA (CONT'D)
First rule of hunting... always
contain the grounds.

CARTER
(surprised)
You hunt?

AVA
(shakes her head)
Nah, but my Dad did. Even tried to
take me out a couple times. I never
did fire that gun, but I heard his
goddamn rules at least a hundred
times.

MIKAYLA
(desperation mounting)
So, you're saying...

She swallows hard, barely able to bring herself to muster--

MIKAYLA (CONT'D)
(terrified)
-you're saying there's no way
out...?

AVA
(nods solemnly)
Not here. But doesn't mean there
isn't one.

Her thoughts circulate before she remembers--

AVA (CONT'D)

There's an old-school passageway,
kinda back by the dining room. We
found it earlier. No idea where it
leads, but I think it's our best
shot-

She scans their dark interior, eyeing the concierge's desk and
the dismal **MANAGER'S OFFICE** behind it. Gesturing towards
them.

AVA (CONT'D)

But let's at least try and find a
light or a working phone while
we're here, yeah?

The other two nod their uneasy agreement as she leads them in
that direction...

While we slowly DRIFT past them.

UP the daunting flight of stairs to its top step.

Now peering through the darkness at:

A TAXIDERMY **WOLF HEAD**.

Resting on top of a standing black suit. A 270 millimeter
GYUTO BLADE glinting in his gloved fist.

Observing our trio from a distance. Shrouded in the safety of
the shadows.

Knowing that he is capable of cornering his prey whenever he
pleases.

But the hunt is just too damn exhilarating...

INT. ARMORY, SECRET PASSAGEWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Athena sets down her ax, perusing her vile and violent
options. A katana. A chainsaw. Even a fucking Shiv.

She settles on a hefty-bladed hunting knife. Efficient. Would
do the trick if push came to stab.

She feels the weapon in her hand uneasily. Running her
fingers over its hilt.

Gathers herself. Her belongings.

And inches out into the tunnel. Alert eyes scanning its
depths for company. *The coast clear.*

Veering in the *opposite* direction in which the Deer and Bear were headed.

CUT TO:

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Disheveled and dreary. Large, industrial file cabinets. Archaic electronics. A desk littered with papers. Even a Big Mouth Billy Bass adorns its walls.

The room welcomes our trio who quickly scan its perimeter in a desperate search for the instruments they need.

Rifling through its drawers for a flashlight.

Carter's gaze darting towards a red landline. Rotary dial and all.

He picks up its phone, only to hear the obnoxious DRONE that confirms its useless state:

CARTER
(bummed)
Disconnected.

Ava pulls back a manila folder in a desk drawer to find:

A black, tactical FLASHLIGHT. A welcoming sight in all this hell.

She waves it to the other two.

AVA
Not so futile after all.

She turns on its bulb, light returning to our dim space. Its beam dancing across the interior.

She illuminates a pair of framed photographs on the desk. One of which features Mr. and Mrs. Palfrey holding an upside down *tiger* between the two of them.

Astute eyes will notice that the former grips a large hunting knife reminiscent of the very blade Athena now carries.

CARTER
Smug, old bastards.

He shakes his head, frustrated.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What kind of fucking shit did they
get us into?

A question that lingers on all our minds as we HOLD on their
smiling, photographed faces...

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Athena prods through its dark. Blade at the ready. LED
lanterns flickering all around her. Their collective glow
illuminating the tunnel's end now looming before her:

A wood-paneled WALL equipped with a sterling silver handle. A
stark deviation from the tunnel's dark facade.

She grips its metallic body. Cold to the touch.

Takes a deep breath.

Before pulling down. Sliding its frame.

Finding herself miraculously in the --

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Standing to the left of the record player. The wall before
her having parted for her entrance.

The passageway behind her covertly traversing the entire
Lodge. Our interior labyrinth a sinister mechanism of travel
for the terrors that lurk within its walls.

She stares out at the darkness before her, the full gravity
of her location setting in.

This is definitively a hunting ground.

One that she is utterly stuck in it...

INT. HALLWAY, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The flashlight's beam dances across the dark interior before
them. Our trio slinking down its length carefully.

Eerie enough during the day, at night, this trek is
excruciating.

Our eyes jerk warily to the walls, our knowledge of the
passageway beyond it triggering a perpetual sense of
paranoia.

While an uneasy Ava leads the duo into the --

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Its table long since cleared. The birds of prey on its walls watching the entering party with still, dead eyes.

While Carter meets their gaze with a look of disgust, Ava approaches its back wall -- the *same* wall from which Mr. Palfrey crashed into her earlier.

She feels along its wooden frame, its paneling slightly disconnected from the wall around it.

So she gives its body a gentle push. Its hinges *slowly*... WHINING as it parts--

Revealing a SECOND, *darker* **HALLWAY**.

A hallway the other two guests stare down with confused eyes.

MIKAYLA

How'd you know 'bout that?

AVA

Long story. *Very* boring.

She directs their beam into the foreboding darkness before them.

And takes a careful step into its ominous fray...

LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Athena creaks through the shadowed interior.

Step.

By trembling step.

Her blade and flickering matches leading the way.

Oblivious to the WOLF observing from the top step above...

HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Too dark. Too silent.

Hunting pictures of smiling Palfreys and slaughtered animals accentuating the vile mood.

A timid Mikayla scans her new surroundings fearfully. An unsettled Carter prods behind.

Ava still leads, pacing along its right wall as she ventures deeper down the passageway *until--*

Reaching a DOOR on their right. Gracing down its handle to open up on the --

THE TROPHY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Expansive beyond belief. Possibly the largest room in the Lodge. Its ceiling towering. Ava's flashlight illuminating mere glimpses of the oddity it houses:

Row after row of TAXIDERMY ANIMALS covered by white sheets.

Hundreds of them, if not a *thousand*. Full specimens standing upright or on all fours.

Aisle after aisle of sheeted beast after sheeted beast. Regimented and organized like a hunter's rendition of the Terracotta Soldiers.

By the looks of it, a room full of ghosts.

Her face a combination of shock and awe, Ava approaches the nearest specimen.

Yanking off its cover to reveal:

A FEARSOME TIGER. Orange and black fur triumphant and pristine. Its yellow eyes still but piercing. Its ferocious snarl preserved for eternity.

CARTER

What even is this place?

As all three have no answer to his quandary... while--

DINING ROOM - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Athena gingerly enters the fray. Eying the open passageway at the far side of the room warily.

Clutching her knife tighter. Her mind wrought with thoughts of the unspeakable terrors that await her...

MIKAYLA (O.S.)

It's fucking creepy, that's what it is.

THE TROPHY ROOM - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The trio peruses their environment carefully. Taking off the occasional white sheet when their curiosity gets the better of them.

MIKAYLA

What's this supposed to be anyway?
The reject room for every dead
animal that didn't make the lobby?

The three of them pace down the same, central aisle. Eying the hooded beasts that surround them.

CARTER

I think them old timers got
themselves a pretty serious hunting
addiction.

Ava's gaze continues to follow the beam of her light. Pacing down the ominous aisle before her.

AVA

There's gotta be an exit here
somewhere.

MIKAYLA

Ain't no windows. This place is *too*
damn dusty for light.

She pulls off the sheet of a grazing ANTELOPE. Its majestic horns preserved in death.

CARTER

Kinda makes you wonder what else is
hidden if a room this big was down
a secret passageway?

He removes one off a dignified ZEBRA. Its posture perfected in its stuffed state.

While Ava's sweeping beam momentarily crosses--

THE DEER. Standing in the darkness at the far end of the room. STARTLING her--

She quickly doubles back, but he's *disappeared*... her beam catching *nothing* in its return to his spot. The room's eerie stillness convincingly lifeless again.

She shrugs it off, resuming her search for an exit as if nothing had happened. But we can tell from her shaking beam that she's deeply rattled.

MIKAYLA

Or what kind of creepy ass place
has so much shit hidden in the
first place?

She unveils a black PANTHER. Its dark form surprisingly
uncanny.

AVA

Or what sick joke of a hunting
lodge actually has its own guests
hunted?

He disrobes a LEOPARD. Its spotted hide a clash of colors
even under our shroud of darkness.

AVA (CONT'D)

(on second thought)

Or if it's really even a hunting
lodge *at all...?*

Mikayla cranes her eyes towards a peculiar looking specimen
now directly before her.

Standing upright on two legs under its white sheet. Tall and
menacing. Sparking her curiosity.

MIKAYLA

Yo, Ava. Shine that shit over here
one sec. This one's shape's kinda
wonky.

Without thinking, Ava quickly directs her beam at the sheeted
beast that Mikayla has already begun to reveal-- illuminating
the SHEET's removal for just a split second *BEFORE--*

[This happens so fast, we barely have time to comprehend the
action.]

BEAR HEAD-- BLACK SUIT-- AX CRASHING-- MIKAYLA'S HEAD-- **BLOOD
EVERYWHERE.**

Ava and Carter unable to even process the horrific turn of
events.

Mouths agape. Eyes huge. Staring bewilderingly at --

THE BEAR.

Stepping down from his perch atop a decorative stand of black
rock.

Removing a white handkerchief from inside his suit pocket.

Wiping the blood off his glinting, silver AX.

Directing his gaze down to the *grisly* body of Mikayla. The blood splatter having soiled the white sheet of the animal directly across from him.

He shrugs, brushing her corpse aside.

As he begins to pace down the aisle of sheeted animals to the still shocked forms of Carter and Ava.

The latter now directing her flashlight into the eyes of their approaching killer.

BLUE. And very much *human* underneath his bear façade.

But our duo are weaponless. Helpless. Hopeless.

Slowly retreating backwards to the room's far wall.

As the beast gets closer...

...*closer*...

...and **CLOSER**.

Twisting his ax in his hands gleefully.

Relishing in the prospect of more killing.

WHEN--

He *suddenly* speaks, the act alone startling us like a jump scare.

THE BEAR

You have no idea what kind of sport
you just stepped into, do you?

Our two are too terrified to respond. Precipitating a smile from our killer that we never see.

As he grips his ax joyously, preparing to *strike*--

WHEN A BLADE **BURSTS** THROUGH HIS STOMACH.

Sudden. Abrasive. And primal.

Blood soaking through his impeccable suit. Wound ghastly and dire.

He falls to his knees. His strength fleeting.

Collapsing to the floor in a defeated heap.

Revealing ATHENA standing behind him. Hunting knife extended and bloodied.

Staring at our duo with a mixture of horror and relief.

ATHENA

I thought-

(tears welling)

I thought you guys were all dead...

A rattled Ava shakes her head, running over and embracing her friend. Who turns around and hugs an approaching Carter as well.

These three strangers united in the horrific circumstances in which they find themselves. Finding solace in that fact alone.

Too grateful for each other to notice the sound of a WALL closing shut as our DEER escapes back into the Lodge's passageway.

Leaving our new trio in the dark interior, surrounded by rows and rows of dead animals.

Joined by the bleeding body of Mikayla. Still and dead on the trophy room floor.

Now finished with their pleasant exchange, a stern Athena turns to the two of them with a serious look in her eyes.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Come on. I need to show you something.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE LODGE - MOMENTS LATER

Flashlight before them, our trio cranes their eyes down the dark passageway.

The wall parted and open. Faint LED lights flickering along a path slithering towards a vanishing point of impenetrable darkness.

AVA

(terrified)

And you say... this connects to our bedrooms?

ATHENA

My guess would be the entire house.

She grimaces at the thought.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

It's how they get around so seamlessly. Popping in and out unnoticed. Catching us when we're most vulnerable.

CARTER

They being those-

ATHENA

Animal heads? Yeah. Don't let the suits fool you. Those killing fucks are the farthest things from classy.

She gestures to Ava's flashlight.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Which is why you need to turn that off. Draws too much attention.

Ava nods. Flicking its switch.

AVA

So you're saying this is our best chance at an exit?

ATHENA

Bastards had to have gotten in somewhere. And *that* somewhere can be our way out.

CARTER

And... if you're wrong?

ATHENA

(resigned)

There's only one way to find out.

He nods, accepting the hopeless reality of their predicament. Directing his attention forward.

CARTER

Shall we?

He extends a leading hand down into the tunnel's depths.

Athena nods, taking an intrusive step into its interior. Followed now by the others. All three disappearing into the passageway...

Oblivious to the FIGURE that lurks in the living room behind them.

A figure watching from under the cover of the room's curtain, barely visible through its translucent fabric. Only the shape of his mask giving away his identity...

THE FOX.

Emerging now from his hiding spot. Clutching his Navajo blade close to his chest. Visually tracking his helpless victims' venture into the perilous unknown.

A sight now visible to us on a...

SURVEILLANCE SCREEN.

Situated within --

INT. CONTROL ROOM, UNKNOWN LOCATION - SIMULTANEOUSLY

As we slowly PULL back, getting more and more of its unsettling interior:

A mosaic of SCREENS suspended up on its wall. Twenty. Thirty. Forty. Possibly even a hundred.

Covering every nook and cranny of the Lodge. Every square foot accounted for. Every space visualized.

This is the hub of the Lodge.

The GLOVED hands of its observer dancing across its electric control board. Sifting through its colorful pastiche of buttons.

Changing perspectives on the screens. Following our unknowing trio as they continue their trek down the secret passageway.

Our CAMERA now giving us a purview of the observer's identity.

PULLING back to reveal the masked extent of his facial region. His elegant black suit. His perfect Windsor tie.

THE WOLF.

Terrifyingly focused on the task at hand. The green eyes beneath his mask scanning the screens before him with the upmost diligence.

His sinister smile shrouded by his mask's snout...

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY - LATER

Athena in front, the trio continues to trek deeper into the shadowy fray, the LED lanterns lighting their way.

ATHENA
Watch your left.

Their eyes pick up the entrance to a room emerging on the side of the tunnel. Their pace coming to a gradual halt as they approach it.

Upon arriving, they veer left through its threshold into what we recognize as the **ARMORY**.

Our group stares out at the emporium of weaponry before them. A grim expression crossing Carter's face as he takes in the wide variety of killing instruments at their disposal.

CARTER
Jesus...

She starts to rifle through the inventory. Whipping through an assortment of blades. Pocketing a cluster of DYNAMITE.

ATHENA
Grab whatever you can.

Carter equips himself with a slew of tactical weapons. Gripping the steel edge of a contemporary crossbow.

While Ava picks up an obsidian BOWIE KNIFE. Weighing it in her palm. Staring at it hesitantly.

AVA
Are we really gonna-

She can't even bring herself to finish.

ATHENA
Ava, you want to get out of here
alive?

Ava nods slowly.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
Then think of this as trying to
ensure that.

She shrugs her shoulders.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
The rest is just not thinking.

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY - LATER

Our trio slinks deeper into the fray, passing series after series of tributary tunnels branching off the main flow. Each of them leading to unknown corners of our Lodge.

A close cluster of eight now comes into view. Contextually, we gather that they're connected to the guest bedrooms.

CARTER
(sick to his stomach)
Damn... bastards had such easy access. Kept us locked in. Vulnerable. Easy to pick off one-by-one.

Carter's somber eyes drift to his feet.

CARTER (CONT'D)
This place, man- it's just a fuckin' slaughterhouse.

ATHENA
(dark)
I know.

She pauses. Mulling over her next thought carefully.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
But like, the thing about slaughterhouses, is- in every single one of 'em, *someone* does the slaughter. Usually, it's some poor soul hacking away for \$10.50 an hour and health insurance.

The tunnel before them nears a large, illuminated opening: an unknown ROOM at its end.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
But here? Here, we have no idea who that someone is. And that's even more *terrifying*... because we're the ones being led to slaughter.

MEANWHILE:

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The FOX and DEER take their first steps into the passageway. Brushing past its open wall. Tailing their unknowing victims with *pace*.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, SECRET PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Victims that have now ventured up the last few feet of the tunnel, crossing the threshold... and *into* the mysterious room.

A space we immediately recognize from its metallic elevator, fingerprint sensor, and luxurious amenities --

Our UNKNOWN LOCATION fully realized.

Visually, think an elevated Equinox locker room -- pristine and lustrous with a brutalist flair. A country club aesthetic meets the sleek interior of Patrick Bateman's boxing gym.

Open, steel lockers showcase designer sport coats hung from wooden hangers. Unused fur masks line their upper echelons, their shelves otherwise spotless.

An aluminum bench splits our rows of lockers. The fresh towels that adorn its reflective surface are all folded and pressed.

Dark tiled showers lurk in an elegant bathroom beyond our back wall. Its delectable interior certainly inviting.

But despite this immaculate appearance, Ava's attention instead drifts to something else entirely. Something that actively demands our entire trio's gaze:

For suspended up by the ceiling near the room's back wall is:

A FLAT SCREEN TELEVISION.

Motion sensitive. TRIGGERED ON by their entry...

On which we WATCH:

The beginnings of a short video that almost makes us forget our horror genre.

Its opening punctuated by alluring shots of the majestic American landscape. Snow blanketing an evergreen forest; wind whipping across amber waves of grain; a purple sun setting on the Appalachians, etc.

All before we FADE IN on:

MR. PALFREY.

Standing before these beautiful images in another rendition of seductive corporate advertising. If you're having a hard time picturing this, think of the transcendent imagery of a Malick film... but repurposed as an ad for Goldman Sachs.

MR. PALFREY

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to the **Lodge**. The most premier sports and gaming facility in the US of A, and a **proud** member of the world-renowned Darwin Collective.

His shit-eating grin is undeniable.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

Allow me to introduce myself. My name is John Palfrey, and along with my wife, Judy, we have brought you the most unique and **delectable** hunting experience available on our planet for the past **fifteen** years.

As his bravado builds, the images behind him begin to feature the taxidermy-laden interior of the Lodge.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

Make no mistake, ladies and gentlemen- tonight, you are in for a treat of a lifetime. Tonight, you will embark on a hunt unavailable to the everyday consumer. A hunt no game preserve can publicly boast of. A hunt most hunters could only dream of.

(beat)

Tonight, ladies and gentlemen, you are about to experience the **thrill** of taking a human life.

He smiles like a used car salesman pitching a lemon.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

Currently, you stand in our facility's exquisite locker room. Located on your right-

He gestures in the direction of the room's right wall, where a **THRESHOLD** leads to --

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

-you'll find the control room. Here, as the name suggests, you can control your hunting grounds. We at the Lodge are proud to have over three hundred different button-operated manipulations at your disposal. Lock their doors. Seal their windows. Incorporate hidden traps. **Build** your playing field to your heart's desire.

Images of bear traps and the like flash across our green screen background.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

Here, you can also monitor your prey. And do so **carefully**. The human being is unlike any other species on the planet. We are the top of the food chain, and therefore, are not hunted without a fight. So plan your stratagems accordingly. Your success on this hunt depends on it.

He now points directly behind our trio.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

The passageway behind you provides unlimited access to the Lodge's hunting grounds. It also houses the armory. Our weapons selection is not just expansive but is designed in a manner to **best** help you fulfill your darkest fantasies.

(pauses; then stern)

But **remember**- **all** hunters must wear their masks at all times. To ensure this, we have provided you with variety of options available within your lockers. Mirrors can be found in the lavatories at the room's posterior.

He clasps his hands with feigned sincerity.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

That being said, we, the partners and game wardens of the Darwin Collective, would like to thank you for your business.

(MORE)

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

*We wish you best of luck on your hunt- and invite you to consider our annual membership program. Details can be discussed with either my wife or myself, but the program notably includes discounts at all **twelve** of our worldwide locations.*

In a most terrible theatrical fashion, a butler's HAND from screen left hands him a champagne flute for a final gesture.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

*And, for your upmost pleasure, we will also be hosting a champagne brunch tomorrow morning in the main dining room. We look forward to your attendance and hearing **all** about your thrilling adventures tonight.*

(smiles into the camera)

*So without further adieu, my fellow hunters, may your hunt be most fortuitous... and ever so **satisfying**.*

FADE TO BLACK.

Returning us to our:

LOCKER ROOM

Where our three stare up at the screen. Fear of the unknown now replaced by a boiling anger. Understanding the full horror of their situation and its depraved implications.

Ava's eyes even catch a white board on the room's far wall that reads:

A WARM WELCOME TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF WELLINGTON CAPITAL

Her heart sinks. Anchored down by a growing rage.

Athena stands fuming next her. Carter shaking his head in disgust.

CARTER

Those rich *fucks*.

He spits for emphasis as a silence builds amongst the three.

Prompting a rattled Ava to prod forward past the lockers, and into the --

CONTROL ROOM

Hearing a livid Athena mouth off to her as she follows Ava inside, both of them staring up at the mosaic of screens before them.

ATHENA

So, what...? We were just gathered here as *prey*?

Ava silently feels across its control panel. The array of buttons before her *warm* from recent use.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Nothing here was ever about hospitality or having "interesting souls" around a goddamn dinner table. It was *all* an outright *lie*.

AVA

I know.

Ava brings her attention to a red one on its upper right.

ATHENA

Half of us were homeless for Christ's sake!

And ever so carefully... *PRESSES* it.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

(shaking her head)

To be killed by the rich for a fucking *price*..

Watching the FLOOR *disappear* in a dark **HALLWAY** on a surveillance screen to her left. Its gape revealing a spiked snare trap below. Its sharpened ends capable of skewering anyone or anything that falls in its path.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

Just a pretty penny for some lazy weekend leisure killing, right? *Wrong*- it's *more* than that. This is killing two birds with one stone. Entertainment that simultaneously wipes out those that don't matter...

Ava grimaces as the visual reality of the house's hunting ground sinks in.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

...the socially inferior...

She carefully withdraws her hand from the control panel.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
...the financially forgotten.

Now seeing the FOX and DEER race up the secret passageway towards them.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
Never to be heard from again.

Disappearing and reappearing from one surveillance screen to the next.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
No one to come looking. No one to care.

Both of their axes visible from our feed.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
This is not just *murder*. This is Social Darwinism in its most capitalist form.

Threatening even in this voyeuristic light.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
And we are its victims. We were selected against.

Ava senses Carter enter the control room behind them. A look of deep disgust ingrained on his face. A disgust that grows deeper and deeper as he peers up at the screens before him.

AVA
(without turning around)
You guys see that?

She gestures towards the approaching duo.

CARTER
Yeah, I do.

AVA
You thinking what I'm thinking?

CARTER
If that involves a lot of senseless violence, then yes.

He pauses, a stern seriousness crossing his face.

CARTER (CONT'D)

But first, you *need* to see this.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM, LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Our trio stands before a sight so sickening even the power lifter in the back of the theatre vomits in his bag of cheat day popcorn.

A makeshift operating table has been jammed up against the shower wall, Brayden's violated *corpse* positioned on top its metallic frame.

Deep, surgical cuts riddle his exposed torso. No rhyme or reason to the incisions. Their sheer number excessive and unmedical. If anything, they seem merely exploratory.

A small assisting table provides clues of the vile actions that unfolded: a scalpel, a bone saw, and a power drill rest among other terrifying instruments of torture.

Our black shower walls host the operation's splash zone: a dripping splatter work. Its floor comparatively less artistic: flesh, blood, and excess tissue soiling its tile.

That disturbing knot you feel in your stomach while you read this, well... it's a *thousand* times worse for our trio.

ATHENA

I can't fucking look at that.

She redirects her gaze away. We notice Ava's eyes geared at her feet. Even Carter can't stomach its sight.

CARTER

You know- I've seen shit in my life. Men, women, children- all slaughtered. Bodies blown to pieces by IED's. Parts of the human body that the skin hides for good reason. But that- that was *war*.

He pauses, swallowing painfully.

CARTER (CONT'D)

This? This is something else. Something *worse*. A sick, fucked up sport that these rich assholes play because they *can*.

He angrily turns his back on the carnage. Heading back out of the bathroom.

CARTER (CONT'D)

So, *fuck* that. And *fuck* this. This is war- a war we have no choice but to fight. Because if we don't, we'll just end up like Asian muscle boy over there. Some sick perv's dirty fuckin' entertainment.

He crosses into the --

LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Followed by Ava and Athena. Now gesturing towards the elevator on the opposite wall.

CARTER

That the exit?

Ava nods.

He moves towards it, forcibly inserting his hands between its frames. Desperately trying to pry them apart...

But to no avail.

Athena even tries the fingerprint sensor. Its red light flashing. BEEPING -- access denied.

ATHENA

Guess not for us. Which means our only way out-

AVA

(breaking her silence)
-is *through* Thing One and Thing Two.

Athena and Carter turn towards her, acknowledging the stern resolution on her face.

ATHENA

(nods)
Alright.

CARTER

Alright is right.
(beat)
Time to kill these mother fuckers.

While they quickly gather their weapons, our attention drifts to *something* beyond them:

A slight *disturbance*.

Unnoticed by our trio, but noticed by us.

A supply closet on the room's perimeter. Its door slightly ajar --

Slowly *CREAKING OPEN* under our gaze.

Merely a centimeter at a time. But moving nonetheless.

Confirming the presence of someone or *something* hidden beyond its frame...

In the same room as our unsuspecting trio...

CUT TO:

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY - MINUTES LATER

FOOTSTEPS. Two sets. DRESS SHOES. Hugo Boss.

Echoing from deep behind us as we PUSH through our tunnel towards the **LOCKER ROOM**.

Finding *two eyes*--

Peering out from behind the room's threshold. Looking deep into the dark passageway. Monitoring its interior.

Both belonging to Ava. Her body pressed against its wall, the room's FIRE EXTINGUISHER cordoning her hidden position.

The FOOTSTEPS continue. Their pace relentless.

Getting closer and closer by the second.

AVA

(whispering)

So when they walk through?

She directs her nervous attention back behind her to Athena and Carter -- both standing armed and ready.

CARTER

(whispering)

Knife to the throat. Don't think.
Just stab. We got Thing Two.

He gestures to his crossbow -- a proverbial "we."

AVA
 (whispering)
 Roger that.

She takes a deep breath, gaze returning to the tunnel.
 Listening to the CLACKING of DRESS SHOES on cement floor.

A daunting two-step building in pitch.

Louder and louder the closer they get.

The wall's LED's now catching two SHADOWS. Larger-than-life
 forms dancing across the tunnel interior.

Tall. Lengthy. Terrifying.

The outline of their masks animalistic, permitting their
 silhouettes to live, for just a brief second, as mutants, a
 shadow hybrid between man and beast.

CARTER
 (whispering)
 Get ready.

The three begin to brace for combat. Their tension palpable.
 Their gaze stern.

But just as the two shadows near their purview, we notice:

THE WOLF.

Slinking *behind* our preoccupied trio. His steps unheard. His
 approach covert.

Our closet dweller out in the open. Inching towards an
 unsuspecting Carter.

Gyuto blade extended. Glinting. Ready to kill. While--

AVA

stares down into the passage's depths. The shadows getting
 smaller and smaller until:

The FOX and DEER come into view.

Their forms haunting in the tunnel's darkness. Their masks
 deeply sinister. Blood-curdling even.

Both prompting Ava to turn around quickly to warn the
 others...

Only to see the WOLF--

AVA
Carter! Watch out!

DRIVE HIS GYUTO THROUGH CARTER'S NECK.

The action so sudden. So abrasive. So precise.

The carotid artery severed. Our final two WATCHING in utter horror as--

Blood *CASCADES* from the wound, *SPLATTERING* down his chest, *SOAKING* his clothes...

If the National Park Service hired Tarantino to reboot Niagara Falls, it would look like this.

While we watch Carter's body crumple in an ocean of carnage, the Wolf stands up behind him.

Wiping his Gyuto on his black slacks.

Turning to his prey with a fresh blade. Lavishing in the tense moment as he approaches.

A moment that only lasts

A few, painful seconds.

WHEN--

THWACK!

Athena *CLATTERS* the FIRE EXTINGUISHER against his SKULL.

Our heroine having unhinged the device from the wall while we trembled over Carter's remains. Delivering an immediate but brief blackout.

ATHENA
We need to get out of here *right*
now.

She quickly reaches for the Wolf's arm, and along with Ava, drags his unconscious body in the direction of the elevator.

Promptly using his finger to press the door's sensor.

The system recognizing his touch. The panel sliding away.

Athena presses its "DOWN" button.

Waiting with Ava for the doors to part. Both their eyes craned towards the tunnel where the Fox and Deer *SPRINT* towards the threshold... *towards them*...

Come on... come on...

The Wolf even begins to stir on the ground.

Any minute now...

Finally, the elevator DINGS.

Its door opening to reveal its sleek, metallic interior.

As they both file inside. Hearing the CLACKING of the Fox and Deer's shoes against the Locker Room floor...

Fuck-- they've made it...

Athena *desperately* reaching for the "Close Doors" button. A panicking Ava deciding between the two buttoned floors.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
Just press the DOWN one!

Ava does precisely that, the doors now CLOSING WAY too slowly...

ATHENA (CONT'D)
(muttering)
You've gotta be kidding me.

The Wolf slowly rising to his feet before them. Consciousness returning. Grabbing at his blade.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
(to the doors)
Go, you fuckers! Go!

Inches away from shutting...

Centimeters now...

WHEN AN AX CLAWS into the RIGHT DOOR-- VIOLENTLY RESISTING its force--

The Fox and Deer emerging. *PULLING* the DOORS apart with *all* their mite...

And, for a second, they just might *do it*. The girls' lives hanging in the balance...

But the door's momentum is just *too* strong.

Speeding SHUT with a salvaging CLANG.

Deep breaths emanating from both Ava and Athena as the elevator *immediately* kicks to life.

Descending down into the depths of *God knows where...* leaving the three masked horrors behind...

AVA

Whew.

ATHENA

You can say that again.

They sit there in an exhausted silence until the elevator comes to a gentle *stop*. Reaching its destination one floor below.

A mellow DING announcing its parting DOORS --

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, BENEATH THE LODGE - CONTINUOUS

A spotless, future-chic wall stares back at a newly arrived Ava and Athena. No decor. No personality. No nothing.

Growing exceedingly wary, the two of them carefully step out into the fray. Taking in the bizarre interior with nervous eyes --

White, metallic, and immaculate, our UNKNOWN HALLWAY from before fully realized.

To their left and right, the over-lit passageway seemingly extends into oblivion. Low-hanging LED's blur its edges, creating a mirage of spatial perpetuity.

Not a single sign of life is present within its aseptic depths. Visibly, the complete *antithesis* of the wooded, taxidermy-abundant interior of the Lodge a floor above.

ATHENA

The fuck...?

They both take a moment to digest its peculiar appearance.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

So this shit was just sitting *under* us the entire time...

Ava's desperate eyes peer down its endless halls, searching for their needed exit.

AVA

How are we supposed to get out of here?

Her question becomes all the more pressing when the elevator doors suddenly *close* behind them...

Followed by its abrupt SURGE UP as it begins its venture back to the **LOCKER ROOM**.

AVA (CONT'D)
Shit. They must've-

ATHENA
-quick.

She grabs Ava's shoulder as they immediately bee-line down the left hall.

Sprinting with an unforgivable pace. White walls blurring in their wake.

Their CLACKING footsteps becoming a chorus with the hallway's HUMMING generators.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
We need something. *Anything.*

As they now reach a series of grey, industrial doors.

Breaking off separately. Trying their sensors desperately.

Their fingerprints denied.

AVA
We're locked in.

She tries another door to no avail. Slamming her fist against its frame.

AVA (CONT'D)
Goddamnit...

They continue to race forward, adrenaline in the driver's seat.

Past the carpeted hallway from earlier. The slew of hotel rooms visible for just a second as our duo sprints on.

Nervous eyes perpetually craning back towards the elevators.

Panic brimming up inside.

Their fate on the wire. Precious seconds ticking away as they RUN...

INT. LOCKER ROOM - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The elevator arrives with a triumphant DING. Its DOORS parting for our terrible trio while --

INT. STERILE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ava's frustrated fingers unsuccessfully try another sensor. Its door labeled "**PARKING GARAGE.**"

AVA

They even got a lot down here.

ATHENA

Probably full of rich ass cars we can't escape in.

Her nervous eyes crane back to the elevator far behind them.

ATHENA (CONT'D)

(manic)

Oh *God*, we're so fucking *fucked*.

AVA

There's gotta be another way out of here.

And just as she says it, we see it:

An unattended LAUNDRY CART on their left. The duo quickly nearing its steel hull.

Now both noticing what we see: directly *above* its hamper, is the opening to a *laundry chute*.

The beginning of a glinting, silver vent system. Its path a steady incline from the cart, traveling up its wall, before disappearing into the ceiling to the Lodge above.

A hopeful Ava quickly turns to Athena, *an idea coming to the surface...*

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, THE LODGE - MOMENTS LATER

Still and empty.

The metallic doors to our elevator shaft static prior to its...

Echoing DING.

Announcing the arrival of our fearsome trio. Its parting doors revealing --

The FOX, DEER, and WOLF.

All three now armed with HUNTING RIFLES.

Slinking out of the elevator and down our immaculate corridor. No sign of Ava or Athena anywhere.

They quietly file forward.

Silently communicating to each other with military-esque signals.

Each of their steps punctuated by the bone-chilling sound of their DRESS SHOES on industrial ground.

Their black suits matching our white walls delectably.

Their movements down the corridor's depths simultaneously both cautious and *excitable*.

Growing closer and closer to the vents with each passing second.

Vents we now PUSH towards:

Their glinting, silver walls inauspicious. Their gradual incline as still as can be.

But as we DRIFT near its frame...

We notice a slight *crack* in its body.

A crack through which

An EYE stares.

Right back at us. Its dark pupil dilated in fear.

Fear we get CLOSER and CLOSER to.

Until we join it within the --

INT. VENTS, STERILE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Claustrophobic. Metallic. Suffocating.

Our eye belonging to a trembling Athena as she and Ava slowly inch up the vent's shaft. Careful not to make a sound. Knowing their very lives depend on it.

AVA
(mouths)
They're here?

Athena nods.

ATHENA
 (mouths)
 And armed.

Ava does the universal "come again?" face.

ATHENA (CONT'D)
 (mouths)
Guns.

Terror joins Ava's perplexed expression.

AVA
 (mouths)
 Where'd they get...

Athena shrugs, abandoning her lookout to crawl a mere foot up the shaft. Ava following suit.

Still both wary of avoiding noise. Powering forward nonetheless. But even the least keen eyes will notice:

There's a newfound desperation to their movements...

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The terrible trio having ventured deeper into its fray.

Guns trained before them. Nearing the front line of doors.

The macabre chorus of their FOOTSTEPS continuous.

The DEER clocks the first sensor on his right. Understanding its implicit obstacle.

Turning to his fellow hunters... nodding. *Their prey can't be far--*

INT. VENTS, STERILE HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The very same prey continue to race against the clock. Pulling their bodies forward up the incline. Clothes scraping against its metallic floor. Desperate eyes craned forward.

ATHENA
 (whispering)
 Just- keep- going...

INT. STERILE HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The hunters slink past their hotel rooms without a moment's hesitation. The laundry cart now approaching on their left.

Their FOOTSTEPS slow as their RIFLES turn to its hull.

Each of them growing visibly still. Surrounding what they believe to be their prey's only hiding spot.

The FOX runs point. Approaching the cart with prodding steps.

Peering over its edges at the mass of white towels kept within its frame.

His gloved fingers reach forward, abruptly *PEELING* back its first cotton layer--

Finding no cowering bodies.

Instead, just more towels.

He now roughly rifles deeper into its mound. Finding no prey buried beneath the fluff.

As he turns around frustrated, the slightest sound of *movement* catches his attention...

He turns back... still and silent. Listening carefully for..

There it is again. 100%.

A body. *Moving*. Coming from DEEP *within* the--

INT. VENTS, STERILE HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The sound of *his* BREATHING now echoing within the shaft...

Both our heroes hearing this.

Suddenly *stopping*.

Terror creeping across their faces as they realize the source of the disturbance. *And the sudden danger they find themselves in.*

ATHENA
Jesus fuck, GO!

They *POWER* forward, *CRAWLING* for their lives *JUST AS--*

BANG!

A BULLET *SMASHES* through the VENT WALL-- *BURSTING* through its METAL-- *COLLIDING* into its opposite wall--

BANG!

A SECOND *SOARS* above Athena's trailing FEET--

BANG!

A THIRD nearly *SPLATTERS* Ava's SKULL--

BANG!

A FOURTH *RICOCHETS* past Athena's extended HAND--

INT. STERILE HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

SHOTGUNS geared towards the upper echelons of the VENTS, our predators PELT its HULL with BULLETS--

INT. VENTS, STERILE HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

BANG! BANG! BANG!

INCHES away from the top. INCHES away from carnage. TEARS flow. WHIMPERING heard--

INT. STERILE HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The VENTS' exterior riddled with BULLET HOLES. GLIMPSES of their fleeing PREY now VISIBLE--

The WOLF directing his BARREL up at his discernible TARGET--

INT. VENTS, STERILE HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Athena PULLING herself through the top, a vent straightaway on the Lodge's first floor. Ava mere centimeters behind her. About to join *WHEN*--

BANG!

The Wolf's final BULLET *BLASTS* through the VENT'S WALL--

GRAZING her trailing CALF-- *PIERCING* SKIN-- BLOOD *SHOOTING* from its entry-- *SPLATTERING* on its metallic walls--

Ava lets loose a painful SCREAM as Athena PULLS her up to the straightaway.

Eyes quickly directed to her wound.

ATHENA

You okay?

Ava brings her fingers to her bloody calf. Feeling around its vindicated skin. Wincing, but realizing its lack of depth.

AVA

(exasperated)

Don't think it entered.

ATHENA

Good, because even it did, we still gotta get the *fuck* out of here.

Wasting no time, she crawls forward. Ava ignoring the pain and following. A small trail of blood in her wake. While--

INT. STERILE HALLWAY, BENEATH THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Indiscernible SHOUTING echoes in our cavernous corridor.

The three hunters sprinting back to the elevator. Gloved hands desperately JAMMING its "UP" button.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

A laundry shaft just above its floor comes CLATTERING open as Athena forces her way through.

Pulling up Ava behind her. Both staring into the room's dreary darkness.

ATHENA

You okay to run?

AVA

I'll be in a world of pain ten times worse if I'm not.

Athena silently concurs as they bolt forward out of the room.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, SECRET PASSAGEWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

While the elevator DOOR parts for the three savages.

INT. LOBBY, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Ava and Athena now racing past the triumphant, taxidermy lion. The former powering through her wound as they come to a stop before the front door.

AVA

What are we doing? It's locked.

ATHENA

Which is why I grabbed this.

She removes the cluster of DYNAMITE from inside her blouse. Taken earlier from the armory.

AVA

Oh God, really?

ATHENA

Just trust me.

She grabs her matchbook from her pocket--

INT. ROOM ONE, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The hunters filing out of the shower passageway--

INT. LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Hands STRAPPING the DYNAMITE to the FRONT DOOR--

INT. HALLWAY, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Our killers storming down the dark corridor--

INT. LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

STRIKING a lone match--

INT. HALLWAY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Their expensive FOOTSTEPS reaching its end--

INT. LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Its FLAME burning down the cluster's black thread--

INT. GRAND STAIRWELL, LOBBY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Greeting the trio POWERING down its steps with a resounding--
 -- *THWA-BOOM!* --

The air seemingly *combusts*.

Our world disintegrating in an ABRASIVE FLASH. A hurricane of FIRE touching ground as...

The doors DETONATE-- EXPLODING in a vibrant vortex of wood and metal-- an ORCHESTRA of FLAMES-- a SYMPHONY of DESTRUCTION crescendoing in a deafening cacophony.

Our vision momentarily lost in a FORMIDABLE BLACK SMOKE...

Yet we hear COUGHING coming from deep within it.

Now joined by the sound of SPRINTING FOOTSTEPS.

The smoke slowly parting for us to witness:

Ava and Athena *DARTING* through the *BURNING CARNAGE*.

Racing out onto the --

EXT. FRONT PORCH, THE LODGE - CONTINUOUS

Climbing down its steps two at a time.

Running out into the vast **MEADOW** before them.

Its overgrown grass WHIPPING past their knees as they scurry forward.

A FULL MOON overlooking the carnal pursuit.

Ava bearing her bleeding CALF.

Bent on reaching the thicket of FOREST beyond the field.

Too determined to look back at the porch behind them.

A porch that demands their attention WHEN--

BANG!

A BULLET WHIZZES OVERHEARD. FLYING past them.

BANG!

A SECOND FALLS SHORT.

The hunters FIRING from the front porch. Having crossed the burning wreckage of the door. Bent on stopping their prey.

OUR WOMEN

powering forward. Undeterred. Relentless.

THE HUNTERS

storming down its steps. SHOOTING as they run into the meadow.

ATHENA

Ava! Start zigzagging!

BULLETS WHISTLE through the air. Disappearing amongst the lengthy blades of grass.

A perpetual chorus of **BANG**'s reverberate across our otherwise Walden-esque environment.

The chase vilely disrupting its serenity.

OUR WOMEN

whisking through the meadow. Their routes circular and calculated. Dodging bullets left and right.

THE HUNTERS

gaining on them. FIRING recklessly. Missing them over and over again.

OUR WOMEN

now BURSTING into the woods. Their sprint continuous. Never looking back.

THE HUNTERS

firing their final rounds into the dark thicket, before coming to a halt before its treeline.

Gathering themselves. Reloading their weapons. Whispering quietly.

Before beginning a gentle stroll into its wooded depths.

Their lack of urgency indicative of *something sinister beyond our knowledge.*

Something that makes them unworried about their prey escaping tonight...

INT. FOREST - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Something that comes to full realization just minutes later.

Our two SPRINTING past blurred evergreens.

Navigating its labyrinth of foliage.

SPLASHING across a shallow creek bed.

Hurdling fallen timbers.

Before reaching a second CLEARING that reveals all.

The grass here having long since died out. Its sight dreary and uninviting. This natural ecosystem vanquished by the daunting barrier standing tall before them:

An ELECTRICAL FENCE that runs along the Lodge's perimeter.

A yellow sign warns of "**HIGH VOLTAGE.**" A warning unrealized by the dead, illiterate birds that litter the ground near its base.

Both panting, the two stand there, hands on their knees. Momentarily defeated. Definitely *trapped* within the property's contained hell.

Ava's leg even trembles from the run. Blood dribbling uninhibited from her wound.

ATHENA

They don't give us much choice now,
do they?

Ava lets loose a harrowed breath before standing back up. Slowly regaining her composure. Eyes gradually coming alive with a newfound ferocity.

AVA

We didn't get much choice to begin
with.

Nodding to each other, they both turn their backs on the electrical fence. *Resigned to their primal fate.*

Hands now disappearing into back pockets. Each of them procuring their blades. *This is their only option.*

ATHENA

You ready?

AVA
Don't make no difference either
way.

They take a determined step back into the woods, bent on
facing their horrors *in the flesh...*

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FOREST - LATER

The FULL MOON peeks through the interwoven foliage at our
eerie battleground. Its frays too still. Its branches too
silent. All its wildlife long since deceased.

FOOTSTEPS approach. Our hunters prodding across the forest
floor. Rifles extended before them. Spreading out to cover
more ground. Ears perked up, scanning for their prey.

A CREEK BED is just visible in the distance before them.

The very same bed we PUSH towards now, where we find --

ATHENA

crouching underneath the overhanging cover of an evergreen's
roots. The mossy terrain's decline into the creek creating a
makeshift hiding place for her -- a rooted canopy of sorts.

Clutching her blade in her fist, she sits facing the creek,
her back to the approaching hunting party.

Their near silent trek the only sound discernible in our
eerily quiet environment.

Careful FOOTSTEPS resonate.

A progression of dress shoes pressing into damp dirt.

A perpetual pitter-patter.

Crunching leaves.

Breaking twigs.

Inching closer and closer by each painful second.

Quiet step after quiet step.

We don't see them, but boy, do we feel them.

Now nearing our vicinity.

Getting so close *we can hear their harrowed breathing.*

The tension is *excruciating...*

Athena now signaling in the direction of a CLOVER FIELD on her left under which --

AVA

lurks, nearly invisible beneath its three-leafed cover. Lying on the soil. Still as death. Gripping her blade like the security precaution that it is.

Suddenly hearing a single pair of SHOES brush past the field's front lines.

A BODY now slinking forward through the clover at the field's far end.

Eager steps navigating the fray.

Moving in her direction.

Ava unable to see its source beneath the leaf-line.

But senses its ever-approaching presence.

Cold sweat dripping down the small of her back.

As she mentally prepares herself... while--

ATHENA

now hears a pair of FOOTSTEPS behind her.

Less cautious in their approach.

But nonetheless approaching her tree.

Coming to a sudden stop before the terrain's decline into the creek bed.

Resting behind her evergreen.

The sound of his MASKED BREATHING emanates.

Harrowed and anxious.

So LOUD it's almost as if she feels his breath tickling her neck.

She becomes agonizingly still.

Muscles taut.

Growing tenser.

Bracing for his *sudden emergence*...

But it doesn't come.

At least, not yet.

Instead, he slowly creeps down the terrain decline on her right.

Oblivious to her presence.

His black slacks dragging through the dirt. The tufts of orange in his mask revealing his identity -- *the FOX*.

As he nears the creek itself.

His RIFLE leading the way.

His back vulnerably turned towards the armed Athena.

Who clutches her knife all the more tightly in preparation for her *moment*... while--

AVA

still lies pressed against the soil. Staring out at the labyrinth of clover stems before her.

Still hearing the sound of approaching FOOTSTEPS. Still hidden from her hunter's eyes.

When she suddenly notices--

Two DRESS SHOES. Three arm lengths away.

Now two... and *closing*... as--

ATHENA

silently rises to her feet. Careful not to make a sound.

She takes a quiet step out from underneath her root canopy.

Gauging the distance between her and the Fox. *Roughly ten yards*.

Two steps later we're down to seven.

The Fox oblivious to her approach as he gingerly puts a dress shoe into the creek.

Now five yards.

The Fox dipping the second shoe into the water *JUST AS--*

Athena makes a break for it. A FULL OUT SPRINT--

Desperately PLUNGING her HUNTING KNIFE into his BACK.

Shocking him to his very core as his strength suddenly leaves his BODY-- unable to continue standing--

Now CRUMPLING to the creek bed in a defeated heap-- BLOOD staining its brackish water a vile crimson as he dies in its pool... while--

AVA

watches the two shoes before her come to a STOP. A response to the sound of a far-off COMMOTION.

A response triggering a sudden--

BANG!

The GUNSHOT ringing out in the dark stillness of the forest. Prompting --

ATHENA

to stare down at her chest. Noticing a large, red WOUND pooling under her blouse.

The pain suddenly reaching her brain. Immediately comprehending her horrific reality...

She's been SHOT.

Its entry point becomes excruciating. Desperate fingers prodding down at the wound. Trying to stop its outflow.

She falls to her knees. Letting loose a WHIMPER of agony. A whimper heard by --

AVA

who immediately recognizes Athena's voice. Her pain. The GUNSHOT fired above her... *oh God...*

The owner of the SHOES just KILLED her friend.

Rattling her to her very core. Her eyes betraying her anger. Adrenaline taking the wheel. Driving her to do the unthinkable--

RISING up from her clover hiding place, her clothes muddy-- the assailant's BACK to her-- belonging to the DEER.

As she JUMPS ONTO his back-- wrapping her arms around his neck-- giving him no time to react as she--

CLAWS her fingernails into his mask's eye sockets-- driving a guttural scream from his lungs as she pierces his sclera--

It's carnal, brutal, and bloody.

Ava HOLDING on for dear life as he wildly STRUGGLES-- desperate to throw her off-- her other hand gripping her blade tightly before--

THRUSTING it into his NECK-- AGAIN...

AND AGAIN...

AND AGAIN.

BLOOD CASCADES from his wound-- the bloodshed otherworldly-- the mask's taxidermy fur now being painted a vile crimson while he collapses--

Ava landing in an exasperated heap on top of his defeated frame.

Silence returns to our eerie forest exterior.

As Ava breathes deeply, regaining her composure. Shocking even herself at the line she just crossed WHEN--

A sudden outburst of RUNNING FOOTSTEPS quickly reverberates across the woods. Abrupt and desperate. Pace fervent and animalistic.

Ava craning her neck up from the bloodied clover field to see:

A BLACK SUIT darting through the trees. Gun flailing at his side as the WOLF flees for his life. Abandoning his two fallen partners shamelessly.

The latter whom Ava now sees as she directs her attention to the creek bed on her right.

Taking in both the Fox and Athena lying in its dark red water, defeated. *Beyond dead...*

A stream of tears begins to trickle down her cheeks. Mind racing. Somber thoughts meeting those of anger. *These monsters did this to us. To her. To Athena.*

Ava's eyes leave her fallen comrade for the final time, unable to look any longer.

Drifting instead to the body of the Deer before her while she cries.

Taking in the splatter on his Armani suit. The mud on his Hugo Boss shoes. His Rolex watch still spotless and pristine.

Even his now abandoned HUNTING RIFLE reeks of class. Its barrel polished. Its stock carved from beautiful oak.

So Ava now turns towards the fleeing Wolf. Huffing and puffing as he runs.

But there's something new in her eyes. *Something vengeful.*

As she COCKS back the rifle's hammer.

Dark thoughts percolating as she notices just thirty yards before her --

A single-lane COUNTRY ROAD.

Leading through the forest in the direction of the Lodge. *An access point to the property.*

And presumably, the only means of escape...

Her knowing eyes returning to the dead DEER before her, *an idea slowly coming to the surface...*

EXT. FRONT PORCH, THE LODGE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

While the Wolf races up the steps inside, the sound of an ENGINE STARTING --

SMASHES US INTO:

EXT. FIELD, BEHIND THE LODGE - LATER

A GRASS MOUND on the field's outskirts OPENS mechanically, revealing a garage door in camouflage. Its mouth positioned at the beginning of the Lodge's back road.

Its frame parting for the sleek body of an AUDI R8. In midnight black, of course.

Lurking behind the wheel is the WOLF. Maskless. Coiffed hair. Sharp features. Clean shaven. *A true Wolf of Wall Street.*

His foot SLAMS down on the accelerator as the sports car *ROCKETS* to life --

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Headlights peering into the darkness before it, the R8 *TEARS* through the forest.

INT. AUDI R8, COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The elusive voice of Frank Sinatra rises from his radio as the illustrious vehicle *WHIPS* past the endless rows of trees.

Its foliage blurring in the Wolf's peripheral. The towering *FRONT GATES* of the Lodge's electrical perimeter getting *closer* by the second...

His gloved hands grip the wheel tightly. Bent on escaping the premises. Desperate to flee this growing nightmare.

A nightmare that

SUDDENLY and ABRUPTLY RETURNS on the ROAD BEFORE HIM.

A DEER visible in his headlights. Its fur head craned towards his rapidly approaching vehicle--

Our hunter *SLAMS* on his *BRAKES*, *two seconds too late*--

TIRES SCREECHING-- IMPACT IMMINENT--

The Wolf's *HEADLIGHTS* giving him a momentary glance at his *ROAD KILL...*

And the BLACK, ARMANI SUIT it wears.

As he realizes exactly *which DEER* awaits his weapon-on-wheels...

A *second* before his R8 *SLAUGHTERS through* his friend's body--
CARNAGE SPLATTERING on his wind-shield--

The vehicle blindly *PLOWING through* the Lodge's *ELECTRIC GATES-- RIPPING* them *OFF* their hinges in a flurry of *SPARKS--*

As the Audi *VEERS* off-road--

And SMASHES into a TREE.

The excruciating sound of *CRUNCHING METAL* and *ROARING AIRBAGS* violating our eardrums before we meet --

SILENCE.

SMOKE slowly billows from the wreckage. The interior of the car now shrouded in a thick cloud. The obnoxious DING of a seat belt sensor audible.

We hear COUGHING from within, joined now by the sound of the door opening. The exposure to the outside air giving us visibility.

As the Wolf painfully brings himself out of his --

EXT. AUDI R8 - CONTINUOUS

Barely mustering the strength to stand up. Wobbling. His balance failing him. Clearly concussed from the accident.

So concussed that it takes him an extra second to comprehend the RIFLE now *PRESSED* into his forehead. AVA having emerged from the treeline for this moment.

AVA
Hunt's over, *bitch-*

Without hesitation, she ***FIRES***. *Point blank. Into the WOLF'S FACE.*

Body crumpling instantly. A blood ocean pooling from the wound.

And as his body lies there in still death, we notice, for the first time, the all too familiar *chic shark patterns* on his dress socks.

As now, still gripping the gun, Ava prods beyond the mechanical carnage of the R8.

Past the physical carnage of the Wolf.

And now joins the main road. Walking in the direction of super fucking far from here.

MRS. PALFREY (O.S.)
We had a feisty group tonight.

EXT. FRONT PORCH, THE LODGE - NIGHT

Twirling glasses of Merlot, the Palfreys look out across their meadow at the dark forest before them. A billow of smoke rising above its treeline, emanating from our wreckage.

MR. PALFREY

Will be great for business. There's
a premium to be paid for tough
prey.

She takes a nervous sip.

MRS. PALFREY

And the girl?

CUT TO:

EXT. WILDERNESS - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Our country road weaves around a bend to the METAL GATE from
our opening scene. The sinister place beyond its gape no
longer a mystery.

Its frame continues to rattle, battered by an errant wind, as
an armed Ava approaches.

She slips through its opening into the night, joining the two-
lane rural HIGHWAY beyond it.

And as we look up at her ash-ridden face, we notice that:

A smile finally breaks. *After a night of unspeakable horrors,
she has made it out alive...*

EXT. FRONT PORCH, THE LODGE - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Palfrey nods solemnly.

MR. PALFREY

Measures have already been taken.

MRS. PALFREY

Backup team on call?

MR. PALFREY

(shakes his head)

Won't be necessary.

He graces a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)

Relax, hun. It's been fifteen years
without fault. Fifteen flawless
years.

He clinks his glass with her's.

MR. PALFREY (CONT'D)
Here's to fifteen more.

They share tender eye contact while--

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY, WILDERNESS - NIGHT

Ava treks deeper into the night. A stray eye on her evergreen surroundings -- lifeless, still, and eerie.

She continues to march onwards. Gun draped over her shoulder.

When the sound of an APPROACHING VEHICLE beckons her attention behind her.

Paired now with a blinding pair of HEADLIGHTS. Brights on, shining like a ghastly spotlight.

She turns around, shielding her eyes from its glare. Unable to see the vehicle itself until it comes to a halt right next to her, revealing:

A rust-burdened TOW TRUCK.

Strong and sturdy in stature. A front grill of intimidating steel. Its ENGINE bellowing a masculine ROAR.

Ava's eyes drift down to its passenger door reading "**LEWIS & SONS TOWING**" in chipped black paint.

She looks up into the dark interior of the vehicle. The driver's figure shrouded in shadow.

DRIVER
(rough voice)
You look like you could use a ride.

The sound of a CAR DOOR SLAMMING pre-laps --

INT. TOW TRUCK, RURAL HIGHWAY - SECONDS LATER

Now seated in the passenger seat, Ava peers at the driver, his face still blanketed by darkness.

The only light in its interior comes from the burning embers of his cigarette and the neon glow of the radio.

DRIVER
Where to, hun?

Ava's eyes drift out the windshield.

AVA
 (distant)
 Far, far from here.

The driver nods in the darkness, understanding the sentiment. He gradually presses the accelerator, the truck lurching forward with a start.

DRIVER
 Mind if I play some music?

AVA
 Sure thing.

His GLOVED HAND reaches into the radio's neon light, turning up its volume...

The voice of *Carole King* picking up with another round of "*It's Too Late*"...

While our blood curdles at its familiarity, her lyrics trigger something else in Ava's memory...

Something that RATTLES her to her very core--

INT. BEDROOM, THE LODGE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Mrs. Palfrey staring down at her lounging body.

MRS. PALFREY
 ...local mechanic- that good ol'
Lewis boy down on Old Wind Road...

INT. LOBBY, THE LODGE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Athena leans on the concierge's desk.

ATHENA
 ...some **Lewis boy**'ll have my car
 back here tomorrow...

EXT. TOW TRUCK, RURAL HIGHWAY - SECONDS BEFORE (FLASHBACK)

TIGHT on "LEWIS & SONS TOWING" painted on its door. As we--

SMASH BACK INTO:

INT. TOW TRUCK - PRESENT

Ava peering back into the darkness at her driver. A look of terror growing on her face. FINGERS slowly gripping the hammer of her gun.

As we PULL BACK *through* the vehicle's rear window --

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Watching the truck make its way down the empty road as we continue to DRIFT *higher* and *higher* up.

Its blinding HEADLIGHTS peering deeper and deeper into the darkness before it.

The fates of its passengers hanging *cruelly* in the balance..

As we finally, *gently*...

FADE to **BLACK.**