



# Bloodlist 14

ALMA'S GRAVE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS/CABIN - DAY

It's early. The sun is low in the sky, ushering in a new day.

A light fog still hangs low to the ground as we descend upon a sprawling mass of green forest.

FLOATING through tall pine trees...

...towards an intimidating A-FRAME CABIN far off in the distance.

The cabin sits nestled between a thicket of trees atop an incline - grand and formidable in the morning haze. The only home or man-made structure in sight.

Moving closer, the sound of a MAN AND WOMAN'S VOICE can be heard.

SHOUTS from what sounds like a heated argument, which can't quite be made out.

The intensity of their conversation, and their voices, continue to raise.

Shouts turning to SCREAMS, until -

BANG!

The sound of a gunshot.

Birds scatter from the trees above.

Then silence as everything becomes far too still.

INT. DANIEL'S KITCHEN - DAY

A knife slices into raw red MEAT, carefully separating it into two pieces.

Then the cut is dropped into a pan, sizzling in butter.

A handsome man, DANIEL, commands the space as he cooks in a large, bright white, modern kitchen.

He's forty-years-old, white, immaculately groomed and in shape. The sort of man whom one can almost immediately deduce has gotten far on charm and good looks and has always known comfort.

The home is upscale, bright and airy with modern, minimalist decor and large windows. UPBEAT MUSIC plays low in the background.

An elegant woman, MANDY, approaches Daniel from behind. She's thirty-eight, tall and slender.

She puts her manicured hands on his shoulders as she peers over into the pan. She wears an expensive ring.

Side by side, they look like a too-perfect match, the way couples in commercials do.

Mandy breathes in the aroma of the meat.

MANDY

Mmm. Smells amazing.

Daniel dips a spoon into a pot of red liquid and turns around towards Mandy.

DANIEL

Taste.

He holds the spoon and feeds her as she tastes the sauce. Mandy's eyes widen with delight.

MANDY

Oh my god.

Daniel grins.

DANIEL

Yeah?

Mandy nods.

MANDY

Incredible.

Daniel pulls her close and sways to the music with her.

DANIEL

Taking that cooking course last summer was probably the second best decision I've ever made.

MANDY

What's the first?

Daniel flashes a charming smile then kisses Mandy.

BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ.

Daniel's phone vibrates loud against the marble countertop, startling him briefly.

He picks up the phone from off the island and looks at the caller: ALMA.

MANDY (CONT'D)

You wanna grab that?

He frowns and ignores the call.

DANIEL

Nah. It's nothing important.

Mandy looks a little stressed.

MANDY

So I wanted to check. Is the twelfth still good?

DANIEL

The twelfth...

Daniel stares at her blankly, clearly forgetting something. Mandy looks at him expectantly.

MANDY

For our appointment?

DANIEL

Right! Of course.

MANDY

You forgot, didn't you...

DANIEL

No, I just have a lot going on at work right now. Hard to keep my schedule straight.

MANDY

Well, I called your secretary and she said you might have a client closing that day, but I told her we've had this appointment for weeks and we really can't keep rescheduling--

DANIEL

Hey, don't worry. I'll be there and we'll figure this out, okay?

Daniel lovingly takes her hand. Mandy looks down with some sadness.

MANDY

What if...what if there's nothing they can do? What if I'm not meant to be a mother?

DANIEL

Of course you are. You'll be a wonderful mother. And we've got the best fertility specialist in the state. So just breathe. We're in this together.

MANDY

Yeah, I know Dr. Elliot is great. It's just we've been trying for so long and I don't know...maybe God has other plans for us.

BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ.

Daniel's phone vibrates incessantly on the counter. He looks over at it, irritated.

MANDY (CONT'D)

Wow. Someone really wants to get ahold of you.

Daniel picks up the phone to see -

It's Alma calling again.

DANIEL

Yeah. I'd better get this. Keep an eye on the...

He motions to the stove as he hurries with his phone (still buzzing) out of the room to take the call.

INT. DANIEL'S BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

Daniel enters the large, dark bedroom, careful to close the door behind him. He answers the phone and lowers his voice, already impatient as he speaks.

DANIEL

What? I told you not to call on weekends.

A woman's voice (ALMA'S) responds on the other end, agitated.

ALMA (V.O.)

Well, I tried earlier this week--

DANIEL

And I said I'd call you.

ALMA (V.O.)

But you didn't. I've been trying to talk to you for nearly two weeks now!

DANIEL

Alma, I'm busy right now. I'll call you on Monday--

ALMA (V.O.)

It doesn't look like you're very busy.

DANIEL

What?

ALMA (V.O.)

I mean, your car is in the driveway.

Daniel's face scrunches in confusion for a moment, then realization enters his expression.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Daniel exits through the front door with caution and hurries down the long driveway of the home, modern and sleek like the interior. He looks like his head might explode from rage.

A young WOMAN stands at the end of driveway leaning on Daniel's sports car with an amused smirk. This is ALMA (twenty-seven, attractive with a bit of an edge). She's self-assured and uniquely alluring.

He grabs Alma by the arm with a firmness and leads her away from his house towards the sidewalk.

DANIEL

Just what the fuck do you think you're doing here?

Alma feigns innocence.

ALMA

(playful)

What? I just wanted to see you, Danny boy.

Daniel's eyebrows raise.

DANIEL

You think this is funny? This isn't a game, Alma. My wife is right inside. You can't be here.

Alma crosses her arms.

ALMA

Well, maybe if you didn't dodge my calls all week, I wouldn't have to show up on your doorstep to get your attention.

Daniel keeps glancing over his shoulder towards the house.

ALMA (CONT'D)

You've been so distant lately, I've barely seen you all month. I just want to be able to spend time together like we used to, you know? And I've been needing to talk to you--

DANIEL

You're right. I'm sorry.

He puts his hands on her shoulders in reassurance and searches for a quick solution. He talks to her sweetly like she's a child.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Look, how 'bout...how about we go up to the lake for a long weekend. Away from all of this. Just us. Would you like that? Does that sound good?

Alma smiles, enormously pleased.

ALMA

Yeah, that sounds perfect.

DANIEL

Good. I'll call you tomorrow.

Daniel leans in and kisses her quick. He whips around and hurries back to the house, leaving Alma.

INT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daniel sneaks in and shuts the door quietly, trying his best not to be noticed.

MANDY (O.S.)  
Hey, what's going on?

Daniel turns around to face Mandy. He freezes as he's put on the spot suddenly.

She waits for an answer.

DANIEL  
Oh, um. There was just someone at the door.

MANDY  
Really? Who?

DANIEL  
Yeah, wrong house. Looking for the Millers. Sent them in the right direction.

MANDY  
Hm. That's funny, I didn't hear the doorbell ring.

DANIEL  
Right, so listen. That was work calling. Bit of an emergency with a client up in Silicon Valley. You know how it is with those guys. Long story short, I'm gonna have to go up there for a few days next week to um. Smooth things over.

MANDY  
Oh. Well, I hope everything is ok.

Mandy looks disappointed. She seems like she wants to say something more on the matter but doesn't. Daniel is oblivious to this.

DANIEL  
Yeah, yeah it'll be fine. Just need to tie up some loose ends.

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP!

The fire alarm blares in the kitchen. Daniel races towards the source.

INT. DANIEL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

THICK SMOKE fills the kitchen.

Daniel rushes over to the stove.

He takes the pan, with the now blackened meat, and tosses it into the water in the sink with a loud HISS.

EXT. ALMA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Alma stands at the curb outside of an old apartment building with a duffle bag in hand.

Daniel's car rolls to a stop a few feet away.

He keeps the car running, windows rolled up, and pops open the trunk. Much like a taxi.

She tosses her bag in the trunk, excited, and climbs in the front seat.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

AN AERIAL VIEW OF DANIEL'S CAR as it snakes through a narrow, twisty, two-lane road in the cover of vast mountains.

The landscape is mostly tall pine trees with few signs of inhabitants and few other vehicles.

ALMA (O.S.)

I'm really glad we're doing this.

INT. CAR - DAY

Alma looks over at Daniel as he drives. She smiles warmly.

He gives a quick, tight smile, keeping his eyes fixed on the road.

DANIEL

Me too.

ALMA

I don't know why we don't do stuff like this more often. Cancun was so much fun.

DANIEL

Well, this place is no Cancun. There's not a whole lot to do up here this time of year, honestly. Not even a grocery store for a good forty miles.

Daniel glances at Alma and makes an effort to sound more enthused.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

But um. It'll be good to get away from the city.

ALMA

I don't care where we're at, I'm just glad I've got you all to myself.

BUZZ, BUZZ, BUZZ.

Daniel's phone VIBRATES loud, visible in the cup holder.

**It's Mandy calling**, with a smiling picture of the handsome couple lighting up the screen.

Alma looks down at it and frowns, her mood now soured.

ALMA (CONT'D)

You gonna get that?

Daniel glances down to see who is calling, noticing that Alma has seen with discomfort.

Daniel ignores it after a moment.

DANIEL

Um. No, that's alright. It can wait.

Alma is already put out.

ALMA

Are you sure? Because you can get it if you want.

DANIEL

Alma, please.

ALMA

No really. Call her back.

DANIEL

I'm here to be with you.

ALMA

Don't let me stop you, go ahead.

Daniel is fast running out of patience. He turns to her, snapping in anger.

DANIEL

Alma, would you stop acting like  
such a fucking child--

Alma's eyes widen suddenly as she looks towards the road.

ALMA

Daniel!

Daniel looks back at the road, but it's too late as he  
momentarily spots in a FLASH -

The face of a small, delicate FAWN then -

THUMP, CRUNCH, CRACK!

The car shakes and SPUTTERS loudly as the body of the animal  
rolls underneath the car.

Alma covers her mouth in horror, visibly upset as tears pool  
in her eyes.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Oh my God...oh my God...

Daniel is in shock, eyes fixed forward and incredibly tense.  
He dare not look back.

The car struggles along the lonely mountain road now, not  
running quite as smoothly as it was moments before.

Alma watches him in disbelief as he continues to drive.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Daniel, stop the car.

He doesn't look at her.

ALMA (CONT'D)

What are you doing? *I said stop the  
fucking car!*

Daniel yells suddenly.

DANIEL

For what, Alma? For what?

ALMA

W-we have to go back and check on  
it or at least move it out of the  
road, it could be suffering--

DANIEL

Check? We hit it doing seventy. The thing is fucking dead!

They sit in uncomfortable silence for a moment.

Alma wipes the tears away, shaken up.

ALMA

It just doesn't seem right to leave her there to die.

Daniel sees that she's hurt and collects himself after a moment.

He takes her hand in an attempt to comfort her.

DANIEL

I know. I'm sorry I yelled. It's awful, it really is. But it's already done, so we just have to...move on. That's all we can do.

Alma watches out the window as the trees pass by, still unnerved.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Daniel's car pulls into the dirt driveway of a dark A-FRAME CABIN surrounded by tall pine trees. The same lonely cabin we saw earlier. It's almost invisible in the darkness, if not for the moonlight.

Daniel cuts the engine.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

On the face of a snarling TAXIDERMY BEAR, claws out and ready to strike.

Alma stands close to the bear and stares up at it, slightly put off.

ALMA

Didn't really take you for the hunting type.

Daniel comes down the stairs a few feet behind her into the living room, more relaxed now but worn out from a long day.

The space feels claustrophobic with TAXIDERMY ANIMALS lining the walls and corners - a pair of eyes seemingly in every direction.

A door next to a small table leads to the back deck and the kitchen is plainly visible, adjacent to the living room. The decor appears as if it hasn't been updated much since the '70s with a few modern appliances and fixtures.

DANIEL

Oh, I'm not. This is all my dad. He passed away last year. So now this place is mine. Along with all the crap in it. Would redecorate but Mandy hates coming here anyway. Probably gonna sell soon.

ALMA

Well, I love it.

Alma goes towards the fireplace as something catches her eye. A SHOTGUN is mounted above the mantle.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Even with the interesting choice of decor...

Alma moves a hand towards the shotgun to touch it. Daniel lunges forward in a mini-panic and grabs her hand before she can touch it.

DANIEL

Don't!

Alma flinches, a little startled. He moves her hand away from the gun gently.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Um. Don't...touch that.

ALMA

Oh, sorry. I didn't mean to--

DANIEL

It's fine. It's just my Dad sometimes kept it loaded. Just in case. We get a lot of bears up here.

Alma raises an eyebrow, incredulous.

ALMA

Wow, that's um.

DANIEL

Dangerous? Yeah. He was a little off. To tell you the truth, I'll be sort of glad to get rid of this place.

Daniel starts making himself a drink a few feet away in the kitchen.

Alma follows. He pours her a glass of wine.

ALMA

Really? How come?

DANIEL

Yeah, I don't know. I guess it always kind of gave me the creeps when I was a kid. How my dad ended up buying it was pretty grim. Didn't help that my brother was always trying to freak me out.

ALMA

Grim? Like how?

Alma leans over on the counter, intrigued.

Daniel hesitates, his expression darkens. Something troubling him as he considers it.

DANIEL

I...probably shouldn't say. I don't want to ruin the trip.

ALMA

Oh come on! Now you *have* to tell me.

Daniel takes a sip of his drink and brushes off the feeling.

DANIEL

Well, my dad picked up this property real cheap back in the day. I mean too cheap. Bought up a few miles of land around it too with a private lake and all that. Thought he was getting a steal. Turned out the previous owners died here. Murder-suicide.

ALMA

No! Really?

DANIEL

Mhm. Wife caught the husband with another woman, so she killed them both. Then herself. Right upstairs.

ALMA

Shit...

Alma tilts her head to look up at the ceiling for a second then back to Daniel.

ALMA (CONT'D)

*Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, nor Hell a fury like a woman scorned.*

Daniel takes a large sip of his drink.

DANIEL

Yep. Guess Shakespeare knew a thing or two about love.

ALMA

That's um, Congreve, actually...

Beat.

ALMA (CONT'D)

What do you think happens when we die?

DANIEL

Alma, c'mon. I just want to relax. Let's not talk about this stuff anymore. It's morbid.

ALMA

It's not morbid, it's just part of life. The big question.

Alma plops down on the couch, making herself at home.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Y'know?

Daniel is tired and doesn't want to play along. He plops down next to her.

DANIEL

I don't know.

ALMA

Well, you must've thought about it.  
Everyone does. So what do you  
think?

Daniel shrugs and shakes his head, slightly annoyed.

DANIEL

I don't think anything happens. I  
think when you die, you die. You  
clock out and that's that.

ALMA

Hmm. I dunno, maybe there is  
something else out there. I mean,  
our life force is like this  
powerful interconnected energy,  
right? So maybe that energy can  
linger.

Daniel fidgets, growing uncomfortable.

ALMA (CONT'D)

You know, some cultures believe if  
someone's in enough pain when they  
die, part of their soul stays  
behind. Even after their body  
leaves.

Alma reflects a moment, her mind wandering somewhere else.

ALMA (CONT'D)

My um...my grandmother lived with  
us for a while when I was a kid.  
After she died, I swore I could  
still feel her standing there next  
to me whenever I would go in her  
room. It was like...like that  
feeling you get when you're in the  
dark but you know someone is  
watching. When you can feel their  
eyes staring even though you can't  
see them.

Alma is deep in thought. She compulsively fingers the tiny,  
ornate PENDANT she wears around her neck.

Daniel looks unsettled as he reflects on her words. Perhaps  
conjuring a memory of his own...

He pushes the uneasiness down after a moment.

DANIEL

Well, I think our minds have a way of filling in the blanks when we're grieving. Now, can we please talk about something less bleak? We're here to have a good time.

ALMA

Yeah, you're probably right. It is pretty fucked up that your dad bought a murder house though. Even if it's gorgeous.

Alma goes over to get her bag from the kitchen counter.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Anyway. You wanna do some molly?

She digs around in her large purse and pulls out a **red tin**. She gives it a shake.

DANIEL

Maybe tomorrow night, I'm pretty tired.

ALMA

You sure? I've got uppers, downers, and all-arounders. Whatever you want, babe.

DANIEL

I'm honestly wiped out, Alma. Really. Can we take it easy? Maybe just watch a movie and turn in early tonight?

Alma deflates.

ALMA

Oh yeah, totally. That's alright.

A pause. Her face lights up after a moment.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Actually, I almost forgot. I have a surprise...

DANIEL

(intrigued)

Yeah?

She digs around in her bag again and pulls something out. She quickly hides the object behind her back for a moment, eager.

She hurries excitedly to the couch. Alma hands a DVD to Daniel entitled "*DEAD PROM QUEEN'S REVENGE 4.*" An image of Alma's blood-splattered face in mid-scream decorates the cover.

ALMA

Now we can finally watch together!

Daniel doesn't quite seem to know what to make of it. He gives a polite smile.

EXT. HIKING TRAIL - DAY

Alma and Daniel walk up a hill through an easy trail path in a stretch of woods towards the cabin.

DANIEL

I'm not saying you weren't good, I just don't like horror movies. That's all!

ALMA

Really, Daniel? I finally get the lead in a feature and you can't just be happy for me? Or, I don't know, at least *pretend* to be?

DANIEL

All I meant was that you're better than that sort of thing. It's a compliment!

Alma crosses her arms, taking offense.

ALMA

Better than what exactly? I'm really proud of the work I did.

DANIEL

Look, I just don't think you need to do these low-brow--AGH!

Daniel stumbles forward and falls suddenly into **a wide, shallow hole**. A large mound of dirt is piled carelessly next to it.

Alma gives him a hand to help him up.

ALMA

Oh shit! Are you okay?

Daniel climbs out and brushes the dirt off himself, infuriated.

DANIEL

God damn it! I told them to fill this fucking thing when they were done.

ALMA

What is it?

DANIEL

The damn landscapers removed this stupid old tree that had roots growing into the pipes that were fucking up the plumbing. I told them to fill the hole before they left so there wouldn't be a huge mess when we got here.

ALMA

It's okay though, right? I mean, it's just a hole.

Daniel takes out his phone and starts to make a call. He holds the phone to his ear as he continues to rant.

DANIEL

No, it's not okay. When I pay someone to do a job, I expect it to be done. Now I've got to take care of this shit and find somewhere to get the car checked out before we leave. Who knows what kind of damage that deer did.

ALMA

Maybe I could take a look. I took auto shop in high school.

Daniel scoffs, slightly annoyed.

DANIEL

Alma, please. We don't need to make it any worse--

Someone on the phone answers.

Daniel turns and walks away a few feet for some privacy but Alma can still hear clearly.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Hi, Hector. It's Dan...No, I'm not happy with the work. There's a giant hole in my yard that you were supposed to fill when the tree was removed...that's not good enough--

Daniel is flustered and impatient as he listens to the man on the other end of the phone talk.

Alma tries to seem like she's not listening, though her face reveals her disappointment in his diverted attention.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Well, if next Friday is the soonest you can be here, then I guess I really don't have a choice.

He hangs up, agitated.

ALMA

Everything alright?

DANIEL

They'll be here after we're gone to take care of it. I'm sorry, I just-- I wanted everything to be perfect for you. I had the whole place cleaned from top to bottom and I had a ton of different food sent over since town is so far and I didn't know what you'd want to eat. Then I show up and there's this big mess--

Alma puts a comforting hand on his arm.

ALMA

Hey, it's ok. Let's just forget about the hole and the car and everything else. All of it can wait. We never get this kind of time together and I want us to be present and live in the moment. Without the distractions of the outside world. Can we just...can we agree to no phones for the rest of the trip? Please?

Daniel collects himself and nods after a moment.

DANIEL

Yeah, alright. No phones. No distractions. Just us.

Alma smiles back at him, satisfied.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Alma and Daniel sip wine and have dinner out on the deck, overlooking the vast darkness of the surrounding forest. They are in high spirits, laughing and joking, their plates already cleared.

DANIEL

No way! I don't believe that for a second!

ALMA

It's true, I swear!

DANIEL

That's insane. How do you go from pre-med to theater major after three years? Your parents must've been pissed.

ALMA

Oh trust me, they were.

DANIEL

So why the sudden switch?

ALMA

I always knew I wanted to act, but my parents wanted me to go into medicine like them. That was always the plan and I didn't want to disappoint them. One day, I looked around and was like, do I really want to do *this* for the rest of my life? Then I just decided to stop living my life the way everyone else wanted me to and started living the way I wanted. And sure, we're not very close anymore, but at least I'm living my truth.

Daniel looks at her with some admiration.

DANIEL

Wow. That's really something. I can't picture you as a doctor.

Alma sips her drink.

ALMA

Why? Don't think I'm smart enough?

DANIEL

I just can't see you doing something so...ordinary?

ALMA

Then I guess that must mean you think I'm *extraordinary*.

DANIEL

Mhmm.

He leans in and kisses her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Now, let's do some of that molly and fuck.

Alma raises an eyebrow in pleasant surprise.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alma and Daniel lay in bed, bare skinned under the sheets in drug-aided bliss staring up at the slanted ceiling.

The room is free of taxidermy animals, unlike the rest of the house, and a master bathroom is attached. A large bed sits in the center of the room and a large window overlooking the back of the property.

Alma runs her fingertips across Daniels's bare chest, slow and deliberate.

ALMA

Do you feel that?

DANIEL

What? You wanna go again?

Alma GIGGLES.

ALMA

No, I mean all of that electricity. Like little bolts of lightning in my fingertips.

DANIEL

Yeah, I feel it.

Daniel grins taking in the pleasant feeling of Alma's touch. He kisses her slowly with passion.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You make me feel so alive. I never do anything like this anymore.

ALMA

Wanna know something crazy?

DANIEL

What's that?

ALMA

The way ecstasy works--do you know what it does? Why everything feels so good?

DANIEL

Not a clue.

Alma slides on underwear beneath the covers and sits up in bed.

ALMA

Well--

She pulls on a shirt, her back to Daniel.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Your brain has these chemicals that effect your mood and the way you feel pleasure.

She turns back to him, sitting on the edge of the bed as she talks excitedly, a bit spaced-out in her own world.

ALMA (CONT'D)

So it tells your brain to release a bunch of those happy chemicals all at once, which is why everything feels so intense.

Daniel smiles at her, still high and not really listening.

DANIEL

Whoa, cool.

ALMA

But the crazy thing is it can sometimes fuck your shit up if you don't have very much of those chemicals to begin with. Like if you're really depressed or something. 'Cause they're supposed to be released slow to regulate your mood and stuff.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

So if your brain's running on empty  
then like, all of the bad stuff  
feels like...more bad.

DANIEL

Crazy.

Alma lays back down.

ALMA

I love it here, being surrounded by  
all the trees on a private  
lake...how could you wanna sell it?  
I know there was the whole...

She motions loftily in the air with a hand.

ALMA (CONT'D)

But that was so long ago. Did  
something else happen?

Daniel's mood deflates.

DANIEL

Yeah--well, um no. I mean not  
exactly.

Alma LAUGHS a little.

ALMA

Things either happen or they don't.  
So...?

She waits for him to fill in the blank.

Daniel becomes tense considering it.

DANIEL

It's just...I saw something when I  
was a kid. Or at least, I thought I  
did.

ALMA

Really? Like what?

DANIEL

You don't wanna hear about it. It's  
nothing. You'll probably laugh  
anyway.

ALMA

No, I do! I really do. C'mon. I  
promise there's no judgment.

Daniel hesitates a moment.

DANIEL

Well, I um. I used to come here every summer with my folks, right? My mom and I would go swim at the lake and my dad would always go hunting with Adam, my brother. He's four years older so I was always wanting to do whatever he did. You know, trying to keep up. So when I'm ten, I decide I'm big enough to go hunting too. We get out there and we see this rabbit. My dad helps me set up the shot and my finger is right on the trigger...but I can't do it. My dad's yelling at me to take the shot and I'm telling him that I don't want to. Then Adam...he just shoots it. And they both see me start crying and...*laugh*.

Daniel's face scrunches up, still confused and pained by the memory.

ALMA

Oh that's really awful. I'm so sorry, Daniel.

DANIEL

It was so cruel. I didn't understand how they could do that. I was so upset, I ran all the way back up to the cabin. But when I got up to the house, I saw something upstairs in my parent's room. This room...

EXT. CABIN - DAY (FLASHBACK)

DANIEL'S POV looking up at the back of the cabin from the ground at a distance...

DANIEL (V.O.)

A woman...

There is a FIGURE standing in the window of the upstairs master bedroom.

DANIEL (V.O.)

It wasn't my mom though. Her hair was different.

Upon closer examination, the figure is a WOMAN in a bright red vintage dress with dark hair, though her facial features are mostly indistinguishable from the distance.

DANIEL (V.O.)  
She was just standing there.  
Staring out the window.

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUED

The house seems to have a hold on him...a power over him. Daniel is unnerved, a million miles away.

Alma notices the shift.

ALMA  
Is that all?

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN - DAY (FLASHBACK, CONTINUED)

The woman in the window raises what looks like a REVOLVER to her own head.

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUED

Daniel seems disturbed by the thought.

ALMA  
Daniel?

Daniel comes back to reality, quickly shaking off the feeling.

DANIEL  
Yeah. Yeah, that was all. I mean, it doesn't matter. It was just a weird thing. Probably the shock of the whole ordeal. Doesn't even feel real now that I say it out loud. Couldn't have been.

It's clear Daniel doesn't totally believe the words as he says them.

ALMA

Well, it's super creepy either way.  
Did anything else like that ever  
happen?

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

QUICK FLASH FROM DANIEL'S POV. A red droplet that looks like  
blood drips down from the ceiling.

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM - PRESENT

DANIEL

Small stuff here and there but  
nothing quite like that. I think  
most of it was just Adam trying to  
freak me out. Plus, it's an old  
house. Creaky floor boards, noisy  
pipes and all that.

Beat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Anyway, it was really one last  
little jab, my old man leaving this  
place to me. He knew I didn't like  
coming here, especially after that.  
Left my brother all the surrounding  
land, which is worth a lot more  
than the property is. Bastard.

Alma springs to her feet.

ALMA

Alright, that's enough childhood  
trauma for one night. We need some  
music. Got any good speakers in  
this place?

DANIEL

Um yeah, downstairs in the living  
room there's speakers and a turn  
table if you feel like digging up  
some records.

ALMA

Groovy.

She gives a playful smile and exits.

Daniel sits with the uncomfortable memory for a moment, still bothered.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

An exhausted Daniel hides behind sunglasses and sits in a beach chair. He enjoys the scenery as Alma splashes around in the water nearby.

ALMA

C'mon, Danny boy! The water is great!

DANIEL

It's freezing!

ALMA

Don't be a pussy! This is nothing.

Daniel's phone BUZZES in his pocket. He discreetly checks it -

**There are multiple missed calls and texts from Mandy.**

Alma gets out of the water and dries off on the sandy shore.

Daniel quickly slips his phone back into his pocket before Alma sees.

She plops down in the sand on the beach towel that she dried off with.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Hey, are you really not gonna get in?

DANIEL

Ah, I'd better not. I'm still kinda sore from last night. I just want to relax.

Daniel gets up.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Actually, I'm gonna go up to the house and grab a couple of beers. Need anything?

Alma looks disappointed.

ALMA

Oh, um no. That's okay.

Daniel makes his way towards the woods, leaving Alma alone by the lake.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Daniel walks through the cover of the tall trees near the lake, now far from Alma.

He looks over his shoulder with caution for a moment, then pulls out his phone. He calls Mandy.

MANDY (V.O.)

Hey, what's going on? I've been calling and texting you all weekend.

DANIEL

I know, I'm sorry. The reception here is terrible.

MANDY (V.O.)

(skeptical)

The reception. In Silicon Valley.

DANIEL

Yeah, they uh, they have me doing some business outside the city. Up in the mountains. Plans for a resort. It's like a black hole out here.

Daniel sort of winces at this terrible lie.

MANDY (V.O.)

Hm.

DANIEL

I'm sorry, I should've called sooner. I'll probably be out of touch for the rest of the trip, but no need to worry. I just have to wrap some things up here and I'll be home before you know it. All yours.

MANDY (V.O.)

Well. I'm sure you have plenty of business to get back to.

DANIEL

I really miss you.

Long pause.

MANDY (V.O.)  
Miss you too.

DANIEL  
I love you...see you soon.

He hangs up. He looks down at the smiling photo of himself and Mandy on his lock screen for a moment with a little guilt.

A HAND snatches the phone suddenly.

Daniel looks up to see a very enraged Alma.

ALMA  
Was that her?

From the look on her face, it's clear she already knows the answer. Daniel's mouth hangs agape as he searches for an excuse.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
We agreed no phones for the rest of the trip so we could spend time together. You promised!

DANIEL  
I know, I know. I'm sorry, I just-- I needed to make a quick call and didn't want it to be a big thing. It won't happen again. Now, can I have my phone back, please?

Daniel takes a step towards her to take the phone.

She steps back towards the water and holds the phone away from him.

ALMA  
Oh no. You're not getting off that easy.

DANIEL  
Alma, I don't want to play games. Just give me the phone.

ALMA  
You promised and then just sneak off to call *her*? You lied to me! This trip was supposed to be about us.

Daniel grows impatient.

DANIEL

I said give me the phone!

Daniel lunges towards her to take the phone but she turns and throws the phone far out into the lake.

Daniel's eyes grow wide in enraged disbelief.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

What the fuck! Are you insane!?

ALMA

No more phones and no more lies.

Daniel looks like he's ready to explode. He tries to hold it in.

DANIEL

You know what? Fuck this. I'm done with this shit and I'm done with you.

He turns and storms away up the hill towards the house.

Alma's frustration immediately turns to regret.

ALMA

Daniel wait! I'm sorry. Can we just talk?

She tries to follow after a moment.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Daniel!

He continues to walk, ignoring her.

She stops.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I'm pregnant.

Daniel stops walking, his back to Alma still. The silence is uncomfortable.

Alma grows anxious.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Did you hear me? I said I'm--

DANIEL

I heard you.

ALMA

Well, say something.

Alma takes a few timid steps towards him.

He whips around.

DANIEL

What do you want me to say, Alma?

ALMA

I don't know. Anything.

DANIEL

Doesn't seem like there's much to say. Seems like there's a simple solution here that'll work for everyone.

ALMA

I'm keeping the baby.

He stares at her, dumbstruck.

DANIEL

Is--is it money that you want? I'll give you the money. Just say the number.

ALMA

I don't want your money. You're going to be a father.

Daniel thinks a moment.

DANIEL

How can you be sure it's even mine?

ALMA

It's yours.

Daniel shakes his head in angry disbelief.

DANIEL

No, no, no. No, *this* can't happen. You're keeping it? What the fuck, Alma!

ALMA

This is my decision. Why are you so mad?

DANIEL

*Why am I mad? Why am I...? What exactly did you think was gonna happen here?*

ALMA

I--I don't know. I just thought...

DANIEL

You thought what? That I'd be happy? That we'd ride off into the sunset? What is it you want from me?

Alma is hurt. She fights back tears as they begin to pool in her eyes.

ALMA

I thought...you've been trying to have a baby for so long and you seemed so desperate with all the doctors and everything, and then with us it happens by chance. Like maybe it's fate. I just thought you'd be happy that you could have a family. With me.

DANIEL

You want me to blow up my life to start a family. With you. You can't be serious.

Daniel is incredulous. He searches her expression a moment.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Oh God. You didn't think this was serious, did you? Wow. I mean this, it's...it's sad, really.

ALMA

Don't act like I'm crazy, you said you loved me! You said you were gonna leave her and that we'd be together! Or was that just more lies?

Daniel lets out a bitter LAUGH.

DANIEL

You wanna know why I brought you here?

(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)

After that little stunt you pulled showing up at my house, I wanted you as far away from Mandy as possible when I said I don't want anything to do with you. And yeah, maybe get in one last fuck, which is selfish I'll admit. But you knew what this was when you got into it. I mean c'mon Alma, you're a wannabe actress fast approaching thirty. Grow up. I don't know what fantasy land you're living in, but I love my wife and I want to start a family with her. Not you. I will never want you or your baby.

Alma is deeply stung.

Daniel starts to walk away, leaving Alma.

ALMA

(quietly)

I'll tell her.

Daniel turns around and goes back to Alma, intense.

DANIEL

Excuse me?

ALMA

I'll tell her everything.

Alma is very sober as she says this. Daniel can see she's serious.

ALMA (CONT'D)

She'll leave you in a second.

Daniel menaces towards Alma, becoming threateningly close to her.

DANIEL

If you even so much as *breathe* near my wife, I will destroy you.

Alma LAUGHS mockingly.

ALMA

You'll destroy *me*? And just how the hell do you think you're gonna do that? After all, I'm just a wannabe actress doing trashy B-movies, right?

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)  
Me, well, I've got nothing to lose.  
But you...I'll ruin you in every  
possible way you can imagine.

Fear and fury enter Daniel's expression as he sees the seriousness in her eyes with this threat.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
You really think Mandy will stick  
around after you got another woman  
pregnant? Oh boy, will she be  
pissed.

DANIEL  
For once in your life, you better  
shut the fuck up.

Rage boils in Daniel but Alma presses further.

ALMA  
And she'll take everything you own  
until you're left alone and broke  
with nothing.

DANIEL  
Shut up!

ALMA  
You can kiss your perfect life  
goodbye.

DANIEL  
You stay away from her!

**Daniel snaps and grabs Alma by the throat.**

Alma tries to break free from his grip but he wrestles her to the ground.

She tries desperately to fight him off as he strangles her. She GASPS.

ALMA  
Daniel...please...

Tears stream down her face. She claws and pries at his hands around her throat, the tiny pendant around her neck coming off in her struggle.

He's in a blind rage as he continues to choke her.

DANIEL  
Stay the fuck away from my family!  
You hear me? You stay away!

She grows weaker as the life drains from her eyes and then...she stops fighting.

*Her eyes flutter closed and her limbs become still.*

Daniel's face suddenly sinks.

He comes back to reality and realizes what he has just done, scrambling off of her.

He looks at Alma's motionless body in horror.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

A-Alma?

She remains still.

Daniel starts to panic.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Fuck!

He looks around, helpless in the vast emptiness of the woods. Then he sees a few feet away -

**The large hole from the uprooted tree.**

Daniel sobers up and goes into survival mode. He quickly grabs the towel from around her waist and moves her body onto it.

He drags her on the towel the few feet to the shallow hole and shoves Alma's body into it.

He glances down at her muddied face, extremely unnerved as a FLY lands on her cheek.

He places the towel over her body so it's no longer visible.

Daniel moves the pile of dirt by hand over her body as fast as possible, filling the hole in a frenzy.

He steps back and looks at the now filled hole for a moment, shaking, and rushes away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel stands blank-faced in front of the fireplace as the flames burn bright.

He strips off his clothes and tosses each article of clothing into the blaze one by one.

Now in the nude, Daniel drinks straight from a bottle of whiskey as he watches the clothes become engulfed by the swirling flames and burn away.

It's as if he's in a trance. Numb and in shock.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Daniel steps in front of the frosted mirror having just gotten out of the shower and changed, steam still in the air.

He opens the medicine cabinet and grabs a pill bottle. He shakes a few pills into his hand.

He grabs the nearly empty bottle of whiskey off the counter and takes a big, sloppy swig to wash down the pills.

Daniel wipes the glass and stares at his reflection, filled with deep self-loathing. He fights back tears as the weight of what he's done finally sets in.

DANIEL

*What did you do...oh God, what did you do?*

He suddenly hits himself...over and over.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Through the window, Daniel can be seen having a self-destructive meltdown in the master bedroom.

He explodes in an animalistic SCREAM.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He sinks down to the floor in drunken abandonment, cradling the bottle of whiskey as he SOBS uncontrollably.

DANIEL

*Oh God, oh God. Alma!*

He pulls himself onto the bed and weeps as he drinks, steeped in pain and self-pity.

Daniel tosses back the rest of the alcohol and drops the now empty bottle onto the floor, a mess. He climbs under the covers.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

The sun is high in the mid-morning sky behind the cabin.  
Peaceful.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Daniel lies asleep on his side in bed. He rolls over -  
- and awakens with a sharp GASP as he comes face to face with  
**Alma laying right beside him.**

He jumps upright, alarmed. He stares down at her, mouth agape  
in shock and disbelief.

Alma breathes in and out, eyes closed, not a scratch on her.  
As if nothing happened.

Daniel looks down at her sleeping peacefully then around at  
the room, questioning his sanity.

He approaches her and touches her shoulder timidly, his hand  
trembling a little.

She GRUMBLES, tired. She turns towards him.

ALMA  
(groggy)  
What's up?

DANIEL  
(whisper)  
Nothing. Go back to sleep.

He strokes her head with a tenderness.

He sits back down on the edge of the bed and hangs his head  
in his hands and SIGHS in relief after a beat.

Everything is...*normal*.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Alma quietly HUMS the song "DANNY BOY" to herself as she  
cooks eggs.

Daniel shuffles into the kitchen clutching his head then  
slumps down into a chair at the little dining table. He looks  
exhausted.

Alma grabs a steaming mug of black liquid from beside her and  
sets it in front of Daniel.

DANIEL

Thanks.

He takes a big gulp of the hot liquid. He makes a face and nearly spits it out, not expecting the taste.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

What is this?

ALMA

Herbal tea with ashwagandha root.  
Best cure for a hangover.

Alma serves up the eggs and sets a plate down in front of each of them.

ALMA (CONT'D)

And by the looks of it, you'd  
better drink up.

She sits across from him.

DANIEL

God, my head is killing me.

He takes a big bite of eggs.

ALMA

(teasing)

Getting too old to keep up?

Daniel ignores the comment, in a fog. Trying to piece things together.

DANIEL

This is sort of embarrassing but  
um. What happened last night?

ALMA

Well, there was drinking clearly.  
Lots of that.

DANIEL

Yeah but what happened? I mean, I  
can't remember anything. Just  
this...dream.

Daniel pokes at his food, somewhere else mentally with a look of unease.

Alma thinks a moment, trying to recall.

ALMA

Y'know, it is kind of a blur. But  
the best nights are usually the  
ones we can't remember, right?

Alma gives a flirty smile and takes a bite.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Must've had too much fun.

Daniel pushes the uneasiness away.

DANIEL

Yeah, you're probably right. Think  
I just need to clear my head.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Daniel runs along the shore by the lake.

He stops for a moment to catch his breath and takes in the  
peaceful scenery.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Daniel continues to jog through a narrow path in the woods  
towards the house.

He gets closer to the back of the house, nearly out of the  
woods...then stops.

An unsettled look enters his expression. He turns around and  
sees -

- *The once massive hole in the ground is freshly covered.*

Daniel approaches the plot of dirt with caution. He kneels  
down and touches the dirt in disbelief.

His hand finds something partially buried...

Alma's necklace.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Daniel looks down at Alma's lifeless body in the hole.

BACK TO:

EXT. WOODS - PRESENT

The meaning of the hole and the necklace connects with Daniel. The color drains from his face with the realization of what he has done.

He covers his mouth in horror as he starts to panic, his breathing frantic and uncontrollable. Everything around him starts to spin.

ALMA (O.S.)  
(distant)  
Daniel?

Daniel's quivering hand drops the necklace back in the dirt, startled by Alma's voice in the distance.

He jumps to his feet and hurries away from the sound of her voice, going around the other side of the cabin.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Daniel looks around, paranoid as he hurries into the car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Daniel gives the key a few turns as the car struggles to start, making a CLUNKING sound.

But the engine suddenly comes to life after a few tries.

Daniel whips out of the driveway and speeds down the dirt road.

Daniel presses buttons on the navigation system in a frenzy, trying to input a route as he continues to drive.

He glances up and sees the BLOODY CARCASS of a massive animal in the middle of the road ahead.

Daniel slams his foot on the breaks but nothing happens. He pumps the breaks again and again in dismay as the carcass comes up fast. He jerks the steering wheel to avoid it -

CRASH!

EXT. DIRT ROAD - LATER

The car is on the side of the road against a different tree.

Some white SMOKE puffs out from under the hood.

INT. CAR - DAY

Daniel's head is on the steering wheel. He blinks his eyes open and clutches at his head. He looks around a little dazed.

He looks back towards the road where the animal carcass was -

But nothing is there. No animal, no blood...nothing. Just a clear path.

Confused and head pounding, he tries to start the car. It makes the same terrible CLUNKING sound as he turns the key in the ignition.

He turns the key again and again as it makes the same sound.

DANIEL

Come on...come on!

He keeps trying desperately to start the car with no luck as the engine SPUTTERS and HISSES.

He slams his hands on the wheel in defeat and shakes violently. He SCREAMS in anger.

EXT. LAKE - EVENING

Daniel looks out over the serene lake as dusk settles in. He looks numb as he processes all that has happened.

He takes off his shoes then strips down to his underwear. He walks into the freezing lake, welcoming the shock to his senses.

He lets the cold water envelop him as he walks further and further out.

He lets himself float, his expression unchanged.

What was once a peaceful view is now chilling with the lake appearing like an endless darkness that seems to swallow Daniel whole.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel enters through the front door, more collected now but damp and on edge.

Alma hurries downstairs as Daniel closes the door.

ALMA

Hey, mind telling me what the hell is going on? You say you're going for a jog then take off all day and just leave me here. I--wait, why are you all wet?

DANIEL

(distant)

The...the car won't start. It's stuck a few miles up the road. Had to hike back.

ALMA

Oh shit. Guess that deer really did do some damage.

DANIEL

I need to use your phone.

Alma looks a bit sheepish.

ALMA

Um, well the thing is...I don't actually know where it's at.

DANIEL

What? What do you mean?

ALMA

I mean, I've torn this place apart and it's not here. I think I might've lost it at the lake or on the hike.

Daniel attempts to conceal his panic. He paces back and forth.

DANIEL

Mhm. Mhm.

ALMA

There's gotta be tools around here somewhere. Can't you fix the car or something?

DANIEL

How the hell would I know how to fix a car? Do I look like a mechanic?

ALMA

Ok, ok. Sorry. It was just a thought. Couldn't you walk to town? Or find a neighbor for help?

DANIEL

The closest town is nearly forty miles away. And the main road is nearly as far. Most of the land up here is undeveloped and since the lake is private, there probably aren't any neighbors for miles either. At least none I've ever seen. I mean, it's nothing but trees out there and if you get lost after dark, you're as good as...dead.

He glances at her with some nervousness at this last word, but Alma doesn't seem to notice.

ALMA

Hm. Well, someone maintains the property, right?

Daniel perks up a little.

DANIEL

Yeah. Yeah, the landscapers will be here Friday and the cleaning crew is supposed to come sometime next week.

ALMA

See? Nothing to worry about. Just a few extra days we get to spend together.

DANIEL

Just a few days.

Daniel looks her over anxiously.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

UPBEAT '70s MUSIC plays loud. Alma dances around the living room in her pajamas. She picks up one of the records from the table and looks it over.

ALMA

Your parents have great taste.

She sets the record down and continues to dance.

Daniel sits in an armchair with a bottle of wine, clearly more than a few drinks in.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
Dance with me!

Daniel shakes his head.

DANIEL  
I don't dance.

ALMA  
C'mon, Danny boy. Pull that stick  
out of your ass for a few minutes.

Alma gives him a teasing wink. She grabs his hand and pulls him to his feet.

He takes a swig of his drink and sets it down. He begrudgingly sways with Alma to the music.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
Loosen up a little!

He looks her over, as lively as ever, her smile reassuring. His reservations seem to fade after a moment.

He dances along with Alma, to the music seeming to forget all that has happened.

Alma grabs his hands and starts to spin them both around in unison, each GIGGLING and LAUGHING like kids.

Spinning faster and faster with the song as the tempo picks up.

Daniel focuses on her smiling face, free and playful. His relaxed expression falters as anxiety creeps in.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

QUICK FLASH - Daniel envisions a disturbing image of Alma's lifeless corpse in the hole. Her eyes cloudy and flesh rotting.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PRESENT

Daniel suddenly recoils away from her touch, overwhelmed as he stumbles backwards.

ALMA  
Is everything ok?

Alma approaches him.

He backs way from her, nearly tripping over the coffee table.  
He avoids looking her in the eyes.

DANIEL  
Yeah. Just too much to drink. I'm  
gonna go to bed and um. Sleep it  
off.

ALMA  
Oh, alright.

Daniel rushes away, and hurries up the stairs, leaving Alma  
alone and puzzled in the living room.

INT. CAR - DAY

Daniel drives down a secluded mountain road, the same road  
that he drove on the way up to the cabin. Everything is  
peaceful and slow now.

He looks over to the passenger seat.

Alma is next to him. She looks over and meets his gaze. She  
smiles at him warmly.

She looks back over at the road and her eyes grow wide.

ALMA  
Daniel!

Daniel looks to the road to see -

A very pregnant Alma stands the middle of the road in a  
bright white dress.

Daniel slams his foot on the brakes as he tries to stop but  
it's too late. The car skids forward.

Just as the car is about to hit her...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

...A loud SCREECH causes Daniel to awaken with a jolt.

He sits upright in bed, drenched in sweat. He looks beside  
him.

Alma isn't there.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel descends the stairs in search of the source of the loud continuous sound.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A tea kettle WHISTLES incessantly on the stove.

Daniel quickly removes it from the heat and turns off the burner.

He shakes his head and takes a deep breath. He tries to collect himself in a moment of quiet stillness in the dark kitchen.

The sound of a BABY CRYING from somewhere in the house suddenly disrupts the silence.

A chill runs through Daniel's entire body. He stiffens, afraid to turn around.

The cries grows louder...

Daniel whips around and finds himself face to face with Alma. The crying is gone in the same instant.

DANIEL

Jesus.

He catches his breath, startled.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You scared me half to death. You can't just sneak up like that.

Alma stares at him blankly. The look in her eyes is like that of an entirely different person.

Like she doesn't recognize him.

Daniel notices with some fear.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Alma...?

She continues to stare, her expression placid.

Daniel cautiously puts a hand on her shoulder.

His touch seems to break the spell. Alma INHALES SHARPLY, seeming to awaken from a sort of sleep or trance. She looks around a bit disoriented.

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
You alright?

ALMA  
Yeah. Can't sleep.

DANIEL  
Do you want your uh...tea?

ALMA  
What?

DANIEL  
You were brewing tea.  
(pause)  
Right?

ALMA  
Oh. Right. Guess I forgot.

She goes and pours a cup.

Daniel watches her, unnerved.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Daniel awakens, more peacefully this time. He rolls over onto his back and looks up at the ceiling.

He scrunches up his face as he sees something. He sits up...squinting to get a better look -

- It's a small **rust-colored spot** the size of a quarter on the ceiling.

It appears as though it could be dried blood.

Daniel goes over to the window and pulls back the curtains to look outside.

The sun peeks out over the trees, just beginning to rise. Birds flutter and chirp in the surrounding trees.

Daniel's tired eyes scan downwards to the deck.

Alma does yoga on the deck.

EXT. DECK - DAY

Daniel exits the house onto the deck.

Alma looks up at him from her current pose and jumps to her feet.

ALMA

Oh perfect, you're up.

Alma hurries inside, leaving the door open.

Daniel looks out into the woods towards the place where Alma's body is buried, unsettled.

Alma comes back out with a steaming cup. She hands a cup to Daniel then sits down at the little table.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Just brewed. Always best when it's fresh.

He takes a sip then sits down as well.

DANIEL

Kinda early, isn't it? Thought you'd wanna sleep in after being up so late.

ALMA

Yeah, I couldn't really get back to sleep.

She looks a little troubled as she says this but quickly brushes the feeling aside.

ALMA (CONT'D)

But that just means there's more of the day to enjoy, right?

Daniel looks back at her for a moment as if searching for something...

But doesn't find it. Some of his uneasiness melts away and he gives a sad smile.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Alma and Daniel sit at the dining room table and eat dinner. Daniel appears more relaxed now, though there's still an underlying rigidness about him. The pair seems normal otherwise.

Alma pours wine into Daniel's glass, topping off his drink and finishing off the bottle.

DANIEL  
Not gonna have a glass?

ALMA  
I'd better not. Looks like you finished this one off anyway.

DANIEL  
Oh sorry, didn't realize how much I had.

He takes a big sip, speech a bit slurred.

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
I can't tell you how nice it is not to have to cook for a change.

ALMA  
(flirty)  
Think you could get used to it?

Daniel hesitates for a second, then nods.

DANIEL  
Yeah.

Alma smiles back at him, then becomes very serious after a moment.

ALMA  
Listen, Daniel. There's something I've been meaning to talk to you about. I've been waiting for the right time to bring it up but I don't think there will ever be a right time. So I'm just going to say it...

Daniel panics as he braces for the worst.

<p>DANIEL Alma, I swear it was an accident--</p>	<p>ALMA (CONT'D) I'm pregnant.</p>
--	--

Daniel is immediately relieved.

Alma looks a little taken aback.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
What? Of course it was an accident. How did you...?

Daniel's mouth hangs agape for a moment as he searches for the words.

DANIEL  
Um. Intuition I guess.

He feigns surprise.

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
Pregnant. Wow. That's...that's something.

ALMA  
You don't have to make any decisions right now, it's still really early, but I wanted you to know because I'm gonna keep it. I know this is a lot to take in and I wasn't expecting it either. But I thought maybe it could be a good thing. Like a...a fresh start?

Alma says this last part timidly.

Daniel sees the earnestness in her expression and a deep sadness sets in.

DANIEL  
Yeah, a fresh start.

Alma is surprised by his calmness.

ALMA  
I get that it's asking a lot for you to leave your whole life behind and start over but I think we could be happy and--

DANIEL  
A fresh start sounds nice.

He gives a sad smile.

ALMA  
Really? I mean, I know we had talked about starting over together here and there, I just didn't expect for it to happen like this with the baby and all. Are you sure?

DANIEL  
Sure, Alma. Whatever makes you happy.

Alma beams.

ALMA

I think you've just made me the  
happiest woman alive.

She gets up and clears the dishes from the table.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She takes them over a few feet out of the room to the kitchen  
and puts them in the sink.

Alma suddenly collapses to her knees.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alma COUGHS violently on the ground in the other room, just  
slightly out of Daniel's eye line.

Daniel sets his drink down and rises to his feet.

DANIEL

Alma?

He slowly approaches her.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Daniel creeps around the corner of the doorway into the  
kitchen.

She continues to cough, facing away from him on the ground.

He gets closer and sees...

Alma coughing up dirt all over the floor.

Daniel GASPS.

Alma looks up at him from the ground in horror, CHOKING on  
dirt and clutching at her throat.

She reaches a trembling hand out for help and croaks out to  
him in desperation, terrified.

ALMA

Daniel...what's happening?

Daniel starts to hyperventilate. He stumbles back and out of  
the room.

INT. STAIRS/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Things start to **slow and warp** as he climbs the stairs to the upstairs hallway and makes his way towards the bathroom, dizzy and disoriented.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

QUICK FLASHES:

- Daniel and Alma arguing in the woods.
- Daniel's POV on Alma. She struggles to breathe as he strangles her.
- Daniel drags Alma's body towards the hole.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel stumbles into the bathroom and locks the door, having a full on panic attack, unable to believe what he saw.

He searches around for a bottle of pills and dry swallows a few with a hard GULP.

He climbs into the shower/bathtub, pulling the shower valve on.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

- A fly lands on Alma's lifeless face.
- Daniel covers her body with the towel.
- Daniel looks down at her body in the hole as he buries her.

INT. BATHROOM - PRESENT

The water from the shower runs over Daniel as he continues to panic, tormented by the memory as he cries silently.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Daniel lays in bed as he stares up at the ceiling.

The red spot on the ceiling is larger now, seemingly spreading.

Some of the red substance has gotten onto the white comforter on the bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daniel descends the stairs.

Alma stands at the back door. She watches out into the backyard towards the woods. It drizzles lightly outside the window.

ALMA

This place, it's so...peaceful.  
Being so close to nature, away from  
all the noise in the city. The  
fresh air, clear skies...

Daniel comes to stand next to her with some discomfort as he notices her looking out towards where she is buried.

She doesn't look at Daniel as she speaks, continuing to stare out into the woods. Detached.

ALMA (CONT'D)

It's funny though. I haven't been  
able to sleep hardly at all since  
we've been here. And for some  
reason, I'm not even tired.

She finally looks up at Daniel. His nerves bubble up under her gaze.

DANIEL

Probably just that story about the  
previous owners got under your  
skin.

ALMA

Hm.

Daniel can see Alma is still distant.

DANIEL

I sometimes had trouble sleeping  
here when I was a kid too. But it's  
just a house. I'm sure you'll be  
fine when we're back in town.

ALMA

Yeah, you're probably right.

She resolves her preoccupation and turns and goes to the kitchen.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Coffee?

DANIEL

Um, sure. Thanks.

ALMA

By the way, you haven't seen my necklace anywhere, have you?

Daniel becomes tense.

DANIEL

Necklace? What necklace?

ALMA

My pendant? The one I always wear. It's missing. I've been looking all over for it.

Alma pours a cup of coffee and hands it to him.

DANIEL

Oh, right. Don't worry about it. I'll just buy you a new one. Anything you want.

ALMA

No, I have to find it. It was my nana's necklace.

DANIEL

Well, I'm sure it'll turn up. Maybe with your phone.

Alma gives him a tight smile as she takes her cup of coffee and exits.

He looks back out to the spot where Alma is buried with unease.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

CLUNK, CLUNK, CLUNK.

The dryer shakes violently against the concrete floor.

Daniel rushes over. The sound stops as soon as he opens the old dryer.

He pulls out the laundry into the basket on the floor. He pulls out the comforter and pauses.

Daniel holds the stained comforter in his hands, fixated on the spot. Bothered...

CREAK, CREAK, SCREECH.

A loud sound from the pipes above startles Daniel.

DANIEL  
Stupid fucking pipes...

He grumbles under his breath and picks up the laundry basket, hurrying away.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Daniel enters the bedroom, laundry basket in hand. He dumps the laundry onto the bed.

A shirt falls out of the basket and onto the ground.

He kneels to pick it up, annoyed. He peeks under the bed as he grabs the shirt.

Then, he spots Alma's duffle bag underneath the bed.

He goes around to her side of the bed and picks it up hesitantly. He looks over his shoulder for a moment then unzips the large bag.

He cautiously digs through Alma's stuff.

It's mostly a disorganized mess of clothes and makeup. His hand finds something -

**A small red tin.**

Curious, he picks it up and shakes it a little.

ALMA (O.C.)  
What are you doing?

Alma is right behind him in the doorway.

Daniel shoves the tin back in the bag and jumps to his feet. He looks at her a moment, caught red-handed.

DANIEL  
Oh sorry, I um. I was just looking  
for your phone again. I thought--

ALMA

You thought what? That you'd go through my stuff without my permission? What the hell, Daniel?

DANIEL

I just thought maybe you might have missed it when you were looking.

ALMA

Don't you think I would've found it by now if it were in my bag? I already tore this whole place apart looking for it and I told you it's not here, so I really don't appreciate you digging through my shit.

DANIEL

Ok, ok. I'm an asshole, alright? I'm sorry. I won't touch your stuff again. I just want to get out of here.

ALMA

I get it, I wasn't planning on being here more than a few days either. I mean, I've already missed an audition. But the landscapers are supposed to be here tomorrow, right? So just chill.

Alma exits and Daniel takes a breath.

EXT. ROAD - EVENING

Daniel jogs down an empty dirt road with an intensity. Eyes fixed forward in concentration.

As he runs, he sees brief flashes of the brutal moments where he killed Alma...

EXT. WOODS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

QUICK FLASHES:

- Daniel's POV on Alma. She struggles to breathe and begs for her life as he strangles her.

- Alma's POV on Daniel's face, crazed and enraged, as he kills her.

- Daniel burying Alma's body.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUED

Trees blur as he speeds past.

He runs faster and faster as if he is being pursued, like he's trying to escape something.

He looks very pained like he may cry, red faced and bleary-eyed, holding all of his emotion in.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

The lake is calm and still. Moonlight reflects off of the surface. Undisturbed.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daniel lays asleep, peacefully breathing in and out. Only the sound of his breath can be heard in the dark room. Then -

**A pair of hands close around his throat.**

Daniel's eyes shoot open in shock to see his assailant.

*Alma is on top of him, strangling him.*

She has a crazed look in her eyes like that of a rabid animal.

She doesn't look at all like herself, like she is possessed by something else entirely.

Daniel shoves her off of him onto the floor as he gasps for air.

Alma seems to awaken, disoriented and in a haze. She regains herself quickly, confused as to what just happened.

Daniel COUGHS and WHEEZES trying to catch his breath.

DANIEL

What the fuck?!

Alma realizes that she's unknowingly hurt him.

ALMA

Oh my God, Daniel--

She moves to try to go to his side. He moves away from her.

DANIEL

Stay back!

Alma starts to tear up. She shakes her head.

ALMA

I-I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...

DANIEL

What were you doing?

She is in shock.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Alma! What the hell was that?

ALMA

I don't know, I don't know what happened. I don't remember anything. I just woke up and my hands...they were around your neck...and I don't remember how-- I'm so sorry, Daniel. I must've been sleepwalking or something.

Alma sits down on the bed, distressed. Tears roll down her cheeks.

Daniel is dismayed as he processes what she's saying.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I don't know what's happening to me. I keep waking up in strange places and forgetting things. I can't explain it. I just don't feel like *me*. That wasn't me. I don't know if it's this place or--or what, but something is really wrong here.

She continues to cry, shaken up by the unsettling situation.

She rests her head against Daniel's chest and throws her arms around him.

Daniel doesn't seem to know what make of it all.

After a moment he puts a trembling hand on her shoulder. He looks down at her with apprehension.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

On swirling bright-red liquid inside a blender.

Alma turns the blender off.

The song "DANNY BOY" plays over the speakers from the record player. Alma HUMS along and pours the liquid into a single glass.

Daniel enters behind her. He looks exhausted, the unrestful nights starting to show in his appearance.

ALMA  
Smoothie?

DANIEL  
Um, sure.

Daniel takes a sip of the smoothie and sets it on the counter in front of him. He notices the music with discomfort.

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
Where did you find this record?

ALMA  
With the others. Why?

DANIEL  
Thought I tossed it out a while ago. I hate this song.

ALMA  
Really? How come?

DANIEL  
Yeah. My parents used to play this song all the time. Just brings back bad memories.

Beat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
Anyway. Have you seen anyone come by yet?

ALMA  
Not yet. I'm sure they'll be here soon though. You wanna go for a run or something?

DANIEL  
No, I want to make sure I'm here at the house whenever they show up.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daniel looks out the window into the front yard. Rain hammers down on the window.

His eyes scan the front of the house a moment more, then he lets the curtains close.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Daniel stands on the bed and scrubs the red stain vigorously with a rag. The spot is noticeably larger than when it first appeared.

He takes a step back to look at it and it seems to be coming up.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Daniel watches out the window into the empty driveway as the rain pours down miserably now.

Not a single sign of anyone else coming or going.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daniel sits planted on the couch. Waiting.

Time passes and Daniel stays in the same spot...

Drinking and waiting.

TIME PASSES - shadows move across the walls and day turns to night.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel is in the exact same spot on the couch. He stares forward, tense.

ALMA (O.C.)  
(calling)  
Dinner is ready!

Alma enters behind him.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
Did you hear me? Dinner's ready.

DANIEL  
They didn't come.

ALMA  
They probably just got tied up today. You did ask them to come way the hell out here just to fill a hole.

DANIEL  
*They didn't come.*

ALMA  
(annoyed)  
They'll probably come by tomorrow. I doubt filling a hole at a property no one actually lives at is at the top of anyone's to-do list.

Alma exits.

Daniel sits there another moment, trying to resolve the situation in his head.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel mechanically moves food into his mouth. Numb.

Alma's food has barely been touched. She stares down at her plate of pasta and twirls her noodles, bothered.

They both seem very alone as the silence lingers.

DANIEL  
Aren't you gonna eat?

ALMA  
Not really hungry.

It's quiet and uncomfortable again. Daniel goes back to eating after a moment.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
What does it taste like to you?

DANIEL  
Um, it's. It's great.

ALMA  
It doesn't seem funny at all?

DANIEL  
Should it?

ALMA  
I guess not.

Daniel nods and takes an awkward bite. Alma considers it for a moment.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
It's just...it doesn't taste the way it should to me. It tastes earthy like...

She searches for the right words.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
Like dirt.

Daniel looks up at her with unease.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
Everything tastes that way. I feel so...strange. It's like I'm here, but I'm not. And I have this horrible pit in my stomach all the time like there's something terribly wrong. Nothing feels right.

She looks down at her plate of food.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
I'm worried that there's something wrong with the baby.

Daniel CLEARS HIS THROAT nervously, trying to hide his discomfort.

DANIEL  
We'll um. We'll get you to a doctor as soon as we're back in the city.

She nods absently, somewhere else mentally.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

In the distance, the cabin sits darkly in the middle of the woods with all the lights off.

The faint sound of a CRYING BABY from inside the house pierces the quiet of the night.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daniel lays in bed. His eyes flutter open at the sound of the crying. He looks to the other side of the bed.

Alma isn't there.

He leans over and turns on the lamp on the night stand. He blinks the sleep away as he sits up.

The bedroom door is wide open. The source of the crying is coming from far down the dark hall.

Still in bed, he cautiously tries to see what the source of the commotion is. His eyes strain as he peers into the darkness.

He sees the shape of something...

A FIGURE...standing very still. Watching him from the shadows. At a glance it looks like the Woman in Red that he saw in the window as a child.

He leans in and squints to get a better look.

DANIEL

Alma?

The figure suddenly darts towards him with the swiftness of a predator going in for the kill.

It *is* Alma. But she isn't herself.

She seems to be sleepwalking in sort of terrifying trance. It's like she is possessed by a demon, her face contorted and frightening in the shadows.

Daniel scrambles out of bed and races to the door in a panic as she speeds towards him from the end of the hall.

They come almost face to face as Daniel SLAMS the door shut and locks it.

The door knob jiggles rapidly.

ALMA

Open the door!

Alma SCREAMS and pounds her fists on the door.

ALMA (CONT'D)

What did you do?

Daniel retreats back to the bed, terrified and overwhelmed as she continues to bang on the door relentlessly.

ALMA (CONT'D)

What did you do to me and my baby?

The sound of the baby cries grow louder in his ears.

He starts to cry and covers his ears in his torment.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Daniel awakens with a bit of a jolt. He's sitting up in bed having fallen asleep that way. He looks to the door.

It's wide open.

He scans the room for signs of last night's chaos but everything seems to be perfectly in order.

He looks up at the ceiling.

The stain is back and has spread even larger than before.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daniel cautiously looks around the living room.

DANIEL

Alma?

Alma isn't there. He seems relieved.

He goes over to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Daniel grabs a mug from the cabinet and pours himself a cup of coffee, a brewed pot conveniently waiting.

He looks over his shoulder then tops off his coffee with some liquor. He glances out the window as he does so and frowns.

After a moment, his eyes grow wide as he sees something outside that troubles him.

He rushes away.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Alma stands barefoot above the plot of dirt where her body is buried, staring down at the spot.

Daniel rushes outside. He slows to stand a few feet behind her a bit panicked, but trying not to appear that way.

DANIEL

Hey, what's going on? What are you doing out here?

ALMA

There's something about this spot. When I stand here, I get this feeling. A sort of...coldness in my blood. Like nothing I've ever felt before. But it feels like I'm being drawn here. Like a magnet. Nowhere else but this spot. Just this...

She kneels down and touches something in the dirt.

She pulls up her necklace.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Spot.

Alma examines it with some confusion.

Daniel sees what she's holding and a wave of dread enters his expression.

DANIEL

It's uh...a little cold to not be wearing shoes, don't you think? Probably why you're not feeling well. Let's go back inside.

ALMA

If the landscapers didn't come, then why is the hole filled?

Daniel searches for an excuse.

DANIEL

Y'know, the landscapers must've come by early in the morning and filled it.

Alma stands and turns to Daniel with a look of fear and desperation.

ALMA

I have to get out of this place.  
Something isn't right.

DANIEL

The cleaning crew should be here  
any day--

ALMA

No, Daniel. I can't wait around and  
hope that the cleaning crew shows  
up when they're supposed to. You  
were right about that house.  
Something is very, very wrong. I  
can feel it. This place...

She looks out into the vast woods with trembling uncertainty;  
skittish.

ALMA (CONT'D)

It's fucking with my head. I can't  
stay here.

Daniel searches her expression, conflicted. Guilt and fear  
weighing on him equally.

DANIEL

You're right. I'll...I'll try to  
get up to the main road tomorrow.  
It's probably a fifteen mile hike  
south, but I'll get up early and  
try to find my way down there and  
see if I can get help before the  
sun goes down. Okay?

ALMA

Alright.

Daniel puts his arm around her and steers her towards the  
house.

DANIEL

Now, why don't we go inside and  
have some of that tea you like?

Daniel glances back over his shoulder at the hole then at  
Alma with unease.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A red-stained rag plunges into a bucket of rust colored  
water.

Daniel wrings the rag tight, squeezing the water out with all of his strength.

He climbs on the bed and scrubs the large red spot on the ceiling but it's not coming out.

His scrubbing becomes faster and faster...

...more and more aggressive, almost crazed in his obsession.

He pulls the rag away to see his work. The stain has faded but is still visible.

He looks down and his hands are now red and raw, bleeding a little.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel sits in an old arm chair staring deep into the fire, transfixed as it flickers hypnotically.

Alma enters from the kitchen behind him. She hands him a mug of hot tea.

He doesn't look up at her.

DANIEL

Thanks.

He grabs a bottle of whiskey nearby and pours a large amount of it into his mug. He takes a big sip.

Alma sits on the floor right in front of the fireplace with a mug of her own. She looks into the fire, contemplative.

She puts her hand close to the flames. Glowing embers crackle and pop.

ALMA

I can't even feel it. The heat. Not even a little.

DANIEL

Nothing at all?

Daniel's gaze shifts to her. He watches her carefully.

She speaks slow and soft. There's something unsettling about her energy; a noticeable shift in her demeanor.

ALMA

Not really. Just a shadow of what I know it should feel like.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

Ever since I was outside today, by that spot...I can't get warm at all. I still feel the same chill. Like my bones are made of ice. That's all I can feel. Nothing else. No heat, no pain...

Daniel nervously sips his drink.

She brings her hand closer to the fire. Dangerously close as the flames threaten to lick her skin.

She remains unbothered, showing no signs of pain. She pulls her hand away.

ALMA (CONT'D)

All of it is so strange. But the strangest thing of all...

She trails off.

Daniel leans forward, hanging on her words.

DANIEL

What is it?

ALMA

I have these gaps of time that seem to be missing. At night, I'll wake up in a different places and don't remember how I got there. Sometimes in the house, sometimes outside. I thought maybe I was sleepwalking. Then it started happening during the day while I was awake.

Daniel becomes increasingly disquieted as she speaks. He tries to hide his nervousness as his breathing becomes heavier and quickened.

He sinks back into his seat and takes a shaky sip of his drink.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I tried to take a walk down to the lake this morning. It's been raining so much, I hadn't been outside hardly at all. But every time I'd go more than maybe...a hundred yards off the property, I'd end up back in that spot where the hole was and couldn't remember how I got there. Every single time. Right back in that spot.

(MORE)

ALMA (CONT'D)

Isn't that a peculiar thing to not remember how you got from one place to another?

She turns to look at Daniel now.

Daniel's eyes grow wide as he sees heavy bruising on her neck as if she's been strangled.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Why do you think that is, Daniel?

Alma's voice seems to ECHO around him and she seems to grow further away.

Daniel looks as if he might be sick as he sweats, the color draining from his face as anxiety takes over.

DANIEL

I...um...

The sound of a BABY CRYING can suddenly be heard somewhere in the house.

Daniel whips around looking for the source of the sound.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

D-do you hear that?

ALMA

Hear what?

His eyes dart around the room at all of the dead animals mounted on the walls that seem to stare at him in all directions.

DANIEL

That *sound*...

He looks into the eyes of a deer mounted on the wall.

INT. CAR - DAY (FLASHBACK)

QUICK FLASHBACK TO DREAM.

Daniel looks into the eyes of a FAWN in the middle of the road as he drives.

The car barrels towards the animal and in a flash, it is instead a very pregnant Alma.

Her eyes grow wide with fear.

BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUED

Alma is concerned as she watches Daniel in his torment.

ALMA

You don't look too good, Danny boy.

The crying grows louder.

DANIEL

You seriously don't hear that?

He sloppily tries to get up out of the armchair, hitting the remote on the way up.

The TV flicks on suddenly with a loud female SCREAM.

Alma's face is on screen in DEAD PROM QUEEN'S REVENGE 4. She is covered in blood with a crazed look in her eyes.

Daniel starts to hyperventilate. He fumbles around, looking for the remote, trying to make the bloody scene stop.

The record player starts playing DANNY BOY loud over the speakers, competing with the other noises.

He is incredibly dizzy, overwhelmed. The room seems to wobble and distort.

ALMA

Daniel, is everything alright?

The sound of crying is incredibly loud now. Alma moves towards him.

Daniel stumbles back in fear.

DANIEL

I just...I-I need some air.

Daniel hurries towards the door in a panicked, drunken flurry. He flings the back door open.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

And goes out onto the deck. Daniel runs towards the woods.

ALMA

Where are you going?

Alma rushes out to the deck and watches him run off into the darkness of the night.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Daniel! You'll freeze!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Daniel jogs barefoot in a panic-fueled rush of fear and adrenaline. The cavernous woods seem to consume him in the inescapable darkness.

The wind howls through the trees as their branches sway and groan. The sound of a CRYING BABY comes from behind him.

He whips around looking for the source without stopping and quickens his pace.

ALMA (O.S.)

Daniel!

*Alma's voice echoes around him with the sound of baby cries. The sounds grow more and more overwhelming as Daniel tries to outrun them.*

Everything is heightened - the howling of the wind through the forest, the painful thwack of branches into his face as he whirls around in search of the sounds.

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

Where are you going, Daniel?

Daniel runs faster and faster through the shadowy woods.

The trees seem to be alive, breathing and swaying around him in an unnatural way.

Sinister LAUGHTER comes from behind him.

DANIEL

This isn't real...this isn't  
real...this isn't--

ALMA (O.S.)

You can't run away, Danny boy.

He shivers violently as he looks around.

Alma hides in the shadow of the trees as he runs by, her face in anguish as she cries.

ALMA (CONT'D)

What did you do to me?

Horrible noises like wild animals dying come from in the darkness of trees as Daniel tries to run away from the terrible symphony of sounds.

Daniel hyperventilates and shakes. He screams back at the voices.

DANIEL

Just go away! Go away!

Daniel is in a state of pure primal fear.

It's like everything in these woods has come alive to torment him.

ALMA

What did you do to my baby?

Alma lunges at him aggressively from out of the shadows, crying out to him as he passes by.

Daniel stumbles back and falls to the ground.

He quickly picks himself up, trying desperately to get away.

He looks back at the spot where Alma was as he tries to make sense of what's happening. Just as he turns to face forward...

He comes face to face with Alma, stone-cold sober as she looks him right in the eyes, mere inches away.

Daniel's eyes grow wide from shock then roll back into his head as he suddenly collapses to the ground with a hard THUMP.

BLACK.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The sun has barely come up, the sky still tinted blue in the early morning as the night creeps into day.

*Drip...drip...drip...*

A tiny RED DROPLET falls onto Daniel's face as he lays alone in bed. Then another.

Daniel's eyes blink open, bothered by the feeling and disoriented.

He sits up and wipes at his face, smearing the red. He looks down at his hand and it appears to be blood that he's wiped off.

His face contorts and becomes disturbed as he looks up at the ceiling, seeing what the source is.

*The stain on the ceiling now looks like a gaping bloody wound, slowly dripping.*

Daniel pulls the sheets off of himself in a hurry as he scrambles out of bed.

He stares up at the spot on the ceiling, deeply troubled.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel hunches over the sink and splashes water onto his face rinsing the red off of his face.

He turns the water off and looks himself over, clearly coming unhinged on the verge of a breakdown. He hunches over the sink and stares at himself trying to get a grip.

Water drips from his face. He looks like he's aged nearly ten years in a week's time, battered by the weight of guilt and self-loathing.

Deep, dark circles have settled under his eyes from the mounting sleepless nights. His face is scruffy and unshaved, hair unkempt.

He dries his face with a nearby towel. He pauses as something catches his eye in the connected master bedroom a few feet away...

Muddy footprints lead from the bed to the bathroom. He looks up and notices that the spot on the ceiling that was dripping just moments earlier is now gone completely, like a mirage.

He looks down.

His bare feet are muddy.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Daniel descends the stairs, holding his breath as he does so, careful not to make a sound. He's fully dressed with his coat and shoes on ready to go outside.

He tip-toes past the couch towards the mantle where the shotgun hangs. But he suddenly realizes -

*The gun is no longer there.*

ALMA (O.S.)  
Where are you going?

Alma's voice comes from behind, startling Daniel.

He turns around to see her sitting at the kitchen table.

There's a plate of eggs and toast next to a steaming mug on one end of the table, placed neatly in front of an empty chair meant for Daniel...

And the missing shotgun on the other end of the table in front of Alma.

Daniel's mouth hangs open in shock.

Alma looks at him expectantly, her expression icy.

ALMA (CONT'D)  
Well?

He CLEARS HIS THROAT, nervous.

DANIEL  
I-I was just going to try to hike to the main road. To find help.

ALMA  
On an empty stomach?

DANIEL  
I'm not very hungry.

ALMA  
That's...how far did you say it was? Something like forty miles? Surely you'll need to eat something.

DANIEL  
It's ok, really. I should go--

ALMA  
(firm)  
Sit.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Daniel looks at the shotgun and then at her, tense.

He obeys and takes a seat at the table in front of the plate of eggs.

ALMA

Go ahead.

Daniel takes a few bites, keeping an eye on Alma.

He takes a gulp of hot coffee, drinking it all down in just a few sips.

DANIEL

Alma, what is all of this?

ALMA

We're having breakfast. Just like any other day.

DANIEL

I don't want to play this game anymore. What's going on?

ALMA

That's funny. I was going to ask you the same thing.

DANIEL

What?

ALMA

There's something you're not telling me.

DANIEL

I don't know what you're talking about--

Alma SLAMS her fist on the table, impatient.

ALMA

Don't lie to me! God, I swear. Every other word out of your mouth is a fucking lie! I'm sick of it. No more lies. I know there's something you've been hiding. You're going to tell me what it is. Something's changed. The way you've been acting...the way you look at me.

Daniel tries not to let his increasing panic show as she pieces things together, but his expression betrays him.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I can't eat. I can't sleep. I can't  
feel. Like I'm a shell.

DANIEL

We'll...we can get you to the  
doctor once I go get help.

His voice shakes as he speaks. Tears well up in Alma's eyes.

ALMA

The longer I'm here, the more I  
don't feel like I'm even me. But  
the worst part is I can't seem to  
leave. Early this morning, I tried  
to walk down the street. I get  
maybe a hundred feet away, then  
suddenly I'm back in this...this  
horrible house like I never left.  
Over and over I've tried and it's  
the same thing. And I can't ever  
remember walking back at all.  
Nothing. Like I'm stuck in a waking  
nightmare. I thought maybe I was  
going crazy, cabin fever or  
whatever. But then I noticed this.

She reveals her neck from under her robe.

There's heavy bruising.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (FLASHBACK)

QUICK FLASHES OF IMAGES:

- Alma's POV on Daniel's deranged face as he chokes her.
- Daniel's POV on Alma. She struggles to breathe as he strangles her.

BACK TO:

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUED

Daniel averts his gaze, pained by the sight of her wounds.  
His actions weigh heavy on him.

She studies him a moment then wipes away a tear from her  
cheek.

ALMA

And for whatever reason, you don't seem phased by any of it. Why is that?

DANIEL

I-I don't know. I don't know what you're talking about.

Alma's tone shifts, now scared and pleading.

ALMA

Daniel, please. I need to know what you're not telling me. Whatever it is, I can handle it.

DANIEL

I can't...I can't. Please don't make me.

He turns away from her, unable to look her in the eye. Plagued by his guilt.

Alma goes to him. She's on her knees looking up at him, holding his hands in hers.

ALMA

Is it me? Is it the baby? I can tell that you know more than you're saying.

She's begging. Daniel shakes his head, more to himself than to her. Not daring to say the truth. Tears stain his cheeks.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I need the truth. I'm scared, Daniel. I'm so scared. Please, I need to know what's going on. If you know something, you have to tell me--

He can't bear the agony of holding it in any longer.

DANIEL

(shouting)

You're dead! Okay? You're dead.

It's clear he immediately regrets saying this.

Alma stands, her face very serious.

ALMA

That's not funny. Why would you say something like that?

Daniel can't find the words.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Did you hear me? I said I'm not laughing. You'd better tell me what the fuck is going on right now, Daniel.

DANIEL

It happened a few days ago. I thought maybe it was all a terrible dream at first. I wanted it to be. I wanted it to be a dream so bad, but it wasn't. I'm...I'm sorry.

She examines him and sees Daniel's tortured expression is unchanged.

Her face contorts as she realizes. Tears roll down her cheeks as it all seems to click.

She shakes her head violently, not wanting to believe it.

ALMA

No. No. No. That's not true. I'm not--I can't be. I'm right here. That's not true. It's not possible. You're just playing a mean trick. You're lying!

DANIEL

I'm not. I-I wish I were, but I'm not. I think deep down you probably know it too.

She pounds on his chest desperate and angry. Shattered.

ALMA

That's not true! You're a liar! You're lying!

Alma suddenly bursts into anguished, uncontrollable tears. She melts into Daniel's arms.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Tell me it's not true. Tell me you're lying! It's not true! It's not true...

Alma collapses to the ground in agony as she mourns herself, **WEEPING.**

Daniel is hit with an overwhelming pang of sorrow.

He goes to the ground and puts his arms around her. The sounds of Alma's sharp, heaving SOBS shred at his nerves. He cries too as he holds her.

He whispers and tries to comfort her.

DANIEL

I'm sorry...I'm so sorry.

Alma looks up at him and takes a big gulp of air, trying to process everything.

ALMA

How did it happen?

Daniel's face sinks. He suddenly looks like a deer in headlights. Paralyzed.

DANIEL

I um...well you...um.

She sees the guilt in his eyes...his sin betraying his expression.

She stops crying and becomes serious. She stands.

ALMA

Daniel, what happened to me?

He stands too.

DANIEL

It was...there was an accident.

Alma searches his tortured expression a moment.

Then it dawns on her. Her face darkens.

ALMA

No...there wasn't.

She turns away from him and paces, piecing it all together.

ALMA (CONT'D)

(slowly)

I...remember now. I thought it was a dream too...but it all makes sense now. It was you. It was always you.

Daniel's growing fear is apparent. He eyes the gun on the table a few feet away.

DANIEL

I didn't mean to, I swear. I didn't mean to. I could never--just listen.

ALMA

It was an accident, right? An accident.

DANIEL

Alma, please. Let me explain.

Daniel inches towards the gun.

She whips around with angry tears in her eyes.

ALMA

Explain what? How you stole my life from me? How you killed me and our baby then dumped us in a shallow hole like trash?

Alma notices him eyeing the gun.

Daniel sees her look too.

Their gazes meet for a moment, then they both lunge across the table in a quick race towards the gun.

Daniel snatches the weapon.

He points the barrel of the gun at her.

She lets out a bitter LAUGH, unfazed.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Really? What are you gonna do with that? Kill me again?

Daniel shakes, internal turbulence and fear mounting. He keeps the gun aimed at her.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Or did you forget that *I'm already dead!* Can't kill me twice, Danny boy!

DANIEL

You have to believe me, I didn't mean to. You just kept saying all those things about Mandy and wouldn't shut up! I never would've...would've done that.

ALMA

But you did. And how? How could you do that to me? I loved you, Daniel! We could've had a life together. A family. We could've started over. But it's too late.

Daniel is sobbing now, overwhelmed.

DANIEL

Alma, I'm sorry! I'm so fucking sorry. All I want is for you to be at peace. To be able to move on.

ALMA

(incredulous)

You're sorry? Your sorry? He's sorry! Sorry, sorry, sorry!

Alma looks at him with deep loathing.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Incredible. Even in death it's still all about you. Alleviating your conscious, making you feel better. Thinking I'll just disappear when you say those magic words, right?

DANIEL

I've never regretted anything more in my life. I know that doesn't mean anything but if I could take it all back, I would. In a second. All I see is you in that hole. Day after day after day. When I'm awake, when I'm asleep. I can't take it. It's like it's burned into my brain, playing over and over on a loop.

He motions to his head with the barrel of the shotgun. Daniel has fully come unhinged in a state of complete dread and guilt.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

And then there's the crying. All of the *crying*. Every single night it keeps me awake. It's torture, it feels like I'm in Hell.

ALMA

Hell would be too kind for you. You deserve every single minute of your misery. But that's nothing compared to what's coming your way.

DANIEL

(shaky)

What? What do you mean?

ALMA

When the police figure out what you did--and they will because let's face it, you didn't do a very good job covering your tracks--what do you think they'll give you? I mean...you're probably looking at two life sentences, one for each of the lives you took.

A look of growing horror creeps onto Daniel's face as realization sets in as she speaks.

He shakes his head.

DANIEL

No. No, that won't happen!

ALMA

Oh-ho yes it will. You couldn't buy me off and you sure won't be able to buy yourself out of this one. I'll be reported missing pretty soon. All my friends know who I was with and where we were going, so you're fucked. Any day now, they're going to tear this place apart and find my body out in that hole and my D.N.A. all over the place. I don't think you'll do too well in prison, Danny boy.

She takes some pleasure in seeing his panic--in seeing him squirm.

DANIEL

Why couldn't you have just stayed dead?!

He waves the gun at her, completely deranged now as he shouts.

She matches his intensity.

ALMA

Well, I wish I'd stayed dead too!  
 But instead I'm stuck here in an  
 endless nightmare because of you!  
 And when you get out of here, I  
 hope that you can never leave this  
 place either. I hope you see my  
 face every day for the rest of your  
 miserable, pathetic life stuck  
 inside a cage like the monster  
 everyone will finally see you for.  
 I hope you hear your unborn baby's  
 cries every night until you rot  
 away from the inside out!

Daniel's expression shifts as he seems to mentally process his inevitable future.

He suddenly sobers up in an instant and turns the barrel of the gun towards his own head.

BANG!

Daniel drops to the ground in an instant.

Alma jumps and covers her mouth in shock.

Blood and brain matter paint the wall in a messy splatter directly behind where Daniel was just standing moments ago.

Alma pulls out her phone from the pocket of her robe and dials 9-1-1, shaking like a leaf as she does so.

ALMA (CONT'D)

(crying)

Hello? Can you hear me? There's  
 been an accident. It's my  
 boyfriend...he shot himself. I  
 think he's dead. I-I need  
 help...one-hundred oak canyon  
 drive. Please, come quick!

She hangs up and her expression falls blank all too quickly.

She wipes the tears from her eyes, some tiny droplets of blood smearing on her face as well.

Blood spreads across the wood floor, creeping towards her bare feet. She takes a small step away from the mess, disgusted.

His fingers twitch ever so slightly.

ALMA (V.O.)  
You stupid fuck.

Alma looks down at Daniel with a detached coldness.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE.**

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Daniel is on top of Alma on the ground as he strangles her. She tries desperately to fight him off...

ALMA (V.O.)  
It takes less than two minutes to lose consciousness from lack of air during strangulation.

Then stops fighting as her body goes limp.

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Daniel quickly drags Alma's body on the towel over to the hole. Her eyes are closed and she remains still.

Daniel pushes her body into the hole.

Daniel glances down at her muddied face, unnerved. He places the towel over her body so it's no longer visible.

ALMA (V.O.)  
And another three to five minutes of continued strangulation before death occurs.

Daniel moves the pile of dirt by hand over her body as fast as possible, filling the shallow hole.

He looks at the now filled hole for a moment, shaking. He stumbles back, away from the hole and hurries back towards the house.

ALMA (V.O.)  
After loss of consciousness, breathing is still restricted and the heart rate can become so low that both are nearly undetectable.

SLAM. The back door to the cabin shuts in the distance. Crickets chirp and hum.

It's almost peaceful in stillness after so much chaos just moments ago.

After a second on the freshly covered hole -

*The dirt moves as a HAND slowly burrows to the surface.*

ALMA (V.O.)

But you wouldn't know that.

Then Alma's arm shoots up from the ground, followed by her other hand and face with a GASP.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Alma coughs and tries to catch her breath as she runs away from the house deeper into the woods.

ALMA (V.O.)

With no neighbors...no nowhere to run...and my phone back in house...I had to move quickly.

She checks over her shoulder every few seconds, skittish like a frightened rabbit.

EXT. LAKE - EVENING

Alma shoots up from under the surface of the water. She shakes, both from the cold and emotional shock, cleaning the dirt off of herself.

She begins to cry as the trauma of what she's just endured pours out.

ALMA (V.O.)

Couldn't go inside. Not yet. You would've made sure I wasn't walking away a second time.

She allows herself to sink down beneath the surface of the dark lake and lets out a SCREAM, the sound muffled underwater.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Alma stands in the shadows of the trees.

ALMA (V.O.)

So I waited...and had time to think.

She's sobered up, fully in control now with a sense of determination and chaotic abandon about her. There's an intensity in her gaze as she looks up...

At the cabin. Through the orange glow of the bedroom window, Daniel can be seen having a self-destructive meltdown in the master bedroom.

He takes a swig of alcohol then explodes in an animalistic SCREAM.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Daniel lays in bed, knocked out cold from the drinking and drugs.

ALMA (V.O.)  
I thought about calling the  
police...

Alma stands at the foot of the bed staring down at him with burning malice.

ALMA (V.O.)  
But men like you rarely get what  
they deserve.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Alma winces as she delicately dabs concealer onto the bruises forming on her neck.

ALMA (V.O.)  
You needed to pay...

She carefully covers up all traces of the attack on her body with the makeup.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

In the driveway, Alma silently lifts the hood of Daniel's car.

ALMA (V.O.)  
To suffer.

She looks down at the engine.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alma tip-toes to the bed. She carefully lays down next to Daniel, careful not to disturb him.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Alma is alone in the kitchen. She opens a **red tin** to reveal a plethora of narcotics -

A large amount of which are PILLS and tiny MUSHROOMS.

ALMA (V.O.)

All you needed was a little push.

She plucks a mushroom out and examines it thoughtfully in her hand.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Alma grabs a steaming mug of black liquid from beside her and sets it in front of Daniel.

She watches as he takes a big gulp.

EXT. DECK - DAY

Daniel watches out into the woods towards the place where Alma's body should be buried.

Alma comes outside with two cups. She hands a cup to Daniel then sits down at the little table.

He takes a sip then sits down as well.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Alma hands Daniel a bright red smoothie. He takes a sip.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Alma and Daniel sit at the table and eat dinner.

Alma pours him a glass of wine. She watches him as he takes a big sip.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel sits in an old arm chair staring deep into the fire as it blazes bright. Alma enters and hands him a mug of hot tea.

He grabs a bottle of whiskey nearby and pours a large amount of it into his mug. He takes a big sip.

EXT. DANIEL'S HOUSE - DAY

POV FAR AWAY, WATCHING OUTSIDE THROUGH A WINDOW -

Daniel and Alma stand at the end of the driveway as Daniel tries to appease her.

ALMA (V.O.)

And if you didn't come back for a few more days...

Alma smiles at Daniel.

ALMA

(distant)

Yeah, that sounds perfect.

DANIEL

(distant)

Good. I'll call you tomorrow.

As Daniel leans in and kisses her, Alma glances up towards the large house at a window -

And **catches Mandy's eye** as she plainly sees Alma kissing her husband.

Mandy's gaze, although brief, is icy and unsurprised.

ALMA (V.O.)

Well. You wouldn't be missed.

The curtains close as Daniel whips around.

He hurries back to the house, leaving Alma alone at the end of the driveway.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alma collapses to the ground and coughs.

Daniel jumps to his feet and slowly approaches her from behind.

She continues to cough, facing away from him on the ground.

He gets closer and sees...

Alma coughing up dirt all over the floor.

Alma looks up at him from the ground. She reaches a weak hand out for help.

ALMA (V.O.)

They say guilt is the worst kind of  
demon...

Daniel starts to hyperventilate. He stumbles back and out of the room.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Alma watches Daniel from the hall as he's asleep in bed.

She looks down at her phone:

**ON PHONE SCREEN** - she presses play on an audio file and the sound of a BABY CRYING starts.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

ALMA (V.O.)

It takes root as it consumes the  
heart...

Daniel's eyes flutter open at the sound of the baby crying. He looks to the other side of the bed in search of Alma.

He leans over and turns on the lamp on the night stand. He blinks the sleep away as he sits up, fearful.

He looks towards the darkness of the hall.

ALMA (V.O.)

Slowly suffocating your soul...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Alma watches from the shadow of the trees as Daniel stumbles through the dark woods having a bad trip.

ALMA (V.O.)

Rotting away the mind like a  
disease.

He shivers violently as he looks around in increasing drug-induced paranoia.

DANIEL  
 (distant)  
 This isn't real...this isn't  
 real...

The sound of BABY CRIES come from where Alma hides as she watches Daniel succumb to madness.

ALMA (V.O.)  
 And I got a front-row seat.

A small, wicked smile creeps into her expression.

**END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE.**

EXT. LAKE - DAY (PRESENT)

A SWEEPING ARIAL VIEW OF THE LAKE moving over the water and through the trees...

EXT. CABIN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Towards the formidable cabin -

A daunting structure in the mass of forest. The sun is just beginning to fully rise and the morning mist starting to dissipate.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Alma sits on the edge of the porch wrapped in a blanket with a cup of coffee in hand.

ALMA (V.O.)  
 Sure, it was selfish I'll admit.  
 But I just wanted to give you what  
 you deserved.

Her face is red and raw from crying, but there's a chilling sort of calm about her. Something like peace.

ALMA (V.O.)  
 One last fuck.

Alma sips, stone-faced as she watches RED AND BLUE LIGHTS flash in the distance.

FADE TO BLACK.