

AMERICAN WITCH

Written by

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EXT. ABANDONED MINE - NIGHT

A storm rages in the sky flooding the earth below. The gaps between the thunder are filled with TAXED BREATHING.

Title: "1908, Appalachia"

From over a hill appears ICKA CROMBIE (60's).

A bloody SYMBOL has been carved on the forehead of the haggard witch. She scampers over the rough terrain with a HUMAN HEAD in hand.

Men HOLLER and dogs BARK close behind.

Icka punches herself hard in the stomach and projects a gallon of muddy swamp water from her mouth.

She reaches the abandoned mine entrance...

It's been boarded shut -- Vandalized with children's carvings of burning witches.

ICKA CROMBIE
Piss on ye fucks!

The hunting party is gaining.

Icka swats the severed head at the boards splattering them in blood.

Her eyes look to the mine top -- a sheer 100 foot tall rock face.

She bites the head's hair between her teeth and clammers up the side of the mountain.

EXT. MINE TOP - NIGHT

Icka scampers to a narrow hole in the ground.

She tosses the severed head in.

Icka swings her legs in as the hounds arrive-

They bite at her hands and arms.

She fights back like a wild beast. She sends one flying off the side of the cliff. The dogs WHIMPER away.

Icka wiggles to safety, but...

Her shoulders are too wide.

ICKA CROMBIE
These shit bones!

Icka snatches a nearby stone.

One, two, three whacks into her stubborn collarbone.

The bone finally SHATTERS and sinks in its joint.

The dogs return ferociously, shredding, ripping.

The witch nearly slips away when THREE PURSUERS wrench her from the earth.

JOHN (16) and JOSEPH (19) pin each arm as Justin(40), the stern and mean leader of the mob, kneels in front of Icka's snarling face.

JUSTIN
We boarded that one too, Icka.
Stake her!

The boys pound stakes through Icka's hands tying her to the soil.

She does not scream. She snarls.

ICKA CROMBIE
You and your boys so fuckin' dumb.
Can't burn me in the rain.

Justin sticks a bowie knife in her mouth and twists it to keep her teeth from clamping shut.

Icka grins as blood oozes from the corners of her lips.

Justin jams a stick of dynamite down her throat.

The witch GAGS it down into her stomach.

JUSTIN
Get back!

The boys obey.

Justin lights the fuse...

It burns wildly despite the rain.

Justin takes cover.

Icka bites off the fuse and spits it away. She yanks her hands free from the spikes and disappears down the dark hole.

INT. ICKA TRAP - CONTINUOUS

Icka's bare feet stomp on hard wood. She is trapped in the tight rocky compartment.

ICKA CROMBIE
My sister is down here with me,
Justin. Your boys wanna' kiss their
momma' goodbye?

Icka lifts the severed head showing it to the surface...

ICKA CROMBIE (CONT'D)
Can't burn me in the rain! Can't
burn me in the ground!

The grinning witch listens...

The surface has gone quiet.

Then... a SQUEAKY WHEEL

AT THE SURFACE

A HORSE DRAWN CART from the ridgeline carries FOUR MEN and a vat of BOILING TAR.

ICKA CROMBIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Can't burn me in the ground!

JUSTIN
In the hole.

The cart parks at the edge of the hole and the cart's Men dump the vat.

BELOW...

Tar rains on the cell filling it like a tub.

Icka opens the mouth of the severed head and shakes out the contents -- A bloody black walnut.

Icka crams the nut up between her legs inside herself.

The tar rains down.

ICKA CROMBIE
You can't burn me in the ground!
You ain't never gonna' burn me!

EXT. MINE TOP - NIGHT

The Men stake a heavy wooden cap on the cooling tar hole, condemning Icka to the earth.

John and Joseph hug their father as the rain pours.

JUSTIN

It's done. Your mother will be at peace.

THREE LOUD KNOCKS come from under the wooden cap.

STAKE MAN leaps away.

STAKE MAN

She's still breathing!

Three more KNOCKS strike the wood from below.

The horse whinnies and the dogs whine. The men scurry to the horse cart.

Justin pushes his children aboard. John, the youngest is white and shaking. Speechless.

Justin glares at the dancing wood top as three more knocks send them home into the night...

The sun rises quickly on the wood top, then sets, then rises.

A TIME LAPSE

Reveals a budding SPROUT growing from the cap and quickly becoming a large BLACK WALNUT TREE killing all living things around it.

- Hooded figures pray to it.
- Men hang from it... and vanish.
- Then it just sits through weather.

Time slows to a familiar speed on...

Title: "Present Day"

GRUNTS from a girl over the cliff. Then a second voice...

AMANDA (O.S.)

Legend has it that ancient tribes worshiped here. They'd send their kids up this same wall to prove they'd reached adulthood-

CRACK!

EXT. ROCK WALL - DAY

EMMA ORE (18), athletic and no makeup. She has an exterior as tough as the rock face she climbs. Inside, she's terrified.

A handhold has just crumbled in her fist.

She SCREAMS!

Emma's eyes follow -- Rocks smashing against the granite 100 feet below. No ropes. No crash pad. Then her eyes meet...

AMANDA ORE (36), plain faced, athletic and beautiful like her daughter. She wears a MILITARY WATCH.

AMANDA

Put your hand back on that wall.

Emma's breathing too fast. She's panicking.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Emma, put your hand on that wall.

Emma obeys.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

One breath at a time, Sweetheart.

Emma wills her breathing to slow controlled breaths.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Did you die?

EMMA

No.

AMANDA

Then back to work.

Emma gulps, rounds the top edge and hurtles her body to flat ground. She is eye to eye with...

EXT. MINE TOP - DAY

Feet. Two pairs of them.

Emma cranes her head up to the owners -- DR. BURNS (40's) refined, soft and academic, staring back at her. His face beams from behind a recording video camera.

Beside him, SADIE ORE (15), Emma's naive but loving sister and biggest admirer. Emma is her self-appointed guard dog. Sadie wears a CHARM BRACELET.

Emma shoots to her feet.

EMMA

Tell me.

Emma's head flips to the FIGURE leaning on AMANDA'S OLD STATION WAGON -- It's COLE FORGE (20) tall and handsome, he's owning the offbeat bad boy look. A cigarette hangs from his mouth. He's Emma's boyfriend.

EMMA (CONT'D)

What?

Amanda GRUNTS to the summit and joins the group in the shadow of the sprawling Black Walnut Tree.

AMANDA

Hold on, wait for me! This ol' girl ain't what she used to be.

Amanda hurries to Dr. Burns' side. She kisses him on the cheek.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Where is it?

Dr. Burns reveals a large envelope.

Amanda takes it from him and offers it to Emma.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

I'm shaking. I'm actually shaking.

Emma stares at the envelope reading the sender -- "STOVINGTON UNIVERSITY."

Emma looks like she's going to be sick.

Amanda puts the envelope in Emma's hands.

Emma's rough gritty fingers glide over the university's white EMBOSSED CREST.

Emma's eyes flick to her family -- They watch. Cole has even merged with the group.

You could hear a pin drop.

Emma tears open the envelope and unfolds the letter...

She takes a deep controlled breath.

Emma's eyes flit over the words.

She lowers the page.

Tears well in her eyes.

DR. BURNS

What does it say, Sweetheart?

Sadie's eyes blur with tears.

AMANDA

Emma, Sweetheart?

Now Amanda's eyes are getting misty.

Cole hides a smirk.

Emma folds the paper back up.

She looks at the view collecting herself.

Cole moves in to console Emma.

COLE

It's okay, Babe. Try again next semester.

Amanda lunges through Cole as if he wasn't there. She scoops up Emma in a big mom-hug.

SADIE

Oh, Emma. I'm sorry...

Emma locks eyes with her little sister.

EMMA

I got in.

Sadie's eyes go big.

AMANDA

You got in?

EMMA

I got a full scholarship...

Cole marches from the group and punches the looming Black Walnut Tree, his eyes burning. No one notices.

DR. BURNS

You did it!

AMANDA

You got in? You got what?

The emotion builds like a tea kettle.

Emma is in shock.

EMMA

I'm going to Stovington. Full
ride...

Amanda looks at Sadie.

AMANDA

She got a what?

DR. BURNS

I knew you could do it, Sweetheart!

Dr. Burns needs to hug someone. He squeezes Sadie.

SADIE

She got a full scholarship!

Amanda looks into Emma's eyes. Tears roll down both of their
faces.

AMANDA

My baby got a full scholarship!

Dr. Burns and Sadie join the family hug.

Cole disappears for a cigarette.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

We'll do whatever it takes, Emma.
One breath at a time.

Emma watches Cole go...

Her fake smile sinks to a frown.

She closes her eyes and squeezes her family with everything
she has.

EXT. MIKE'S COUNTRY CAFE - NIGHT

A finicky neon light *HUMS* off and on. It reads: "MIKE'S"

The diner's white stucco walls are stained with exhaust.
Flanneled clientele waddle from their big rig trucks.
Amanda's station wagon is parked among them.

We can see the family celebrating through the large picture window. Just the four of them. No Cole.

INT. MIKES'S COUNTRY CAFE - NIGHT

The family enjoys their bargain priced feast. Amanda can't stop reading the acceptance letter.

AMANDA

I'm so proud, Emma. I thought Cole would try to see you as much as possible now... I wish he could've made it.

Emma pouts.

SADIE

No, you don't!

AMANDA

Oh Sadie, yes I do.

EMMA

He said he was busy...

Emma plays with her food.

AMANDA

I'm sure you two can work something out-

Emma lets out an audible SIGH.

EMMA

What's the rush? I just graduated high school. A lot of kids are taking a semester off-

AMANDA

Absolutely not...

Amanda takes Emma's hand.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

You could get knocked up in a semester. It only took me spring break!

EMMA

Oh, wow-

A fat and jovial MIKE (50's) totters to the table side.

MIKE

And how are the Ore's doing?

The ladies smile.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(To Dr. Burns)

Rob. How you been?

DR. BURNS

Great. Our Emma just got into college!

MIKE

School? I was hoping you were going to waitress for me the rest of your life!

Emma opens her mouth-

AMANDA

Over my dead body.

EMMA

I can speak for myself.

MIKE

Your mom's probably right. You've got great things coming, mark my words. Bigger than this town! Chuck know yet?

The table goes quiet.

DR. BURNS

No. Mike.

MIKE

I'll have Cheryl bring over a piece 'a pie. Congratulations, my little chickadee.

EMMA

I don't want any-

Mike hobbles away not hearing any of it.

SADIE

(To Dr. Burns)

Dad do-

EMMA

Don't be THAT kid, Sadie.

AMANDA

Emma-

EMMA

Just call him Dr. Burns.

Tensions tighten.

Sadie stares down Emma.

SADIE

Dad, can I have your guac please?

DR. BURNS

Of course, Sweetheart.

The words are like nails on a chalkboard for Emma.

She sneers.

EMMA

Our dad- I mean CHUCK, I guess.
Would love to know if I got into
college.

AMANDA

Well, you'd have to find him first.
When you do, ask him for all the
child support he owes me.

EMMA

(To Dr. Burns)
He wanted us to write stories
together.

DR. BURNS

I heard he was a great story
teller.

Dr. Burns shoots Amanda a sly grin.

SADIE

Chuck loved to scare us...

EMMA

(To Sadie)
Remember his favorite story to
tell?

Sadie sickens at the thought.

SADIE

Yes...

AMANDA

Emma, don't scare your sister.

Amanda tosses a grain of rice at her.

DR. BURNS

What story?

EMMA

The Curse of Icka Crombie.

DR. BURNS

That's a good one. How do you tell it?

EMMA

See!

Emma tosses rice back at Amanda. Emma's eyes light up as she clears her voice to tell the tale. Amanda's heart warms.

SADIE

Please don't.

AMANDA

I'll be back. Please, go on without me.

Amanda leaves the table.

EMMA

Should you ever need to curse your enemies, find the witch's black walnut tree atop a mine in the deep dark woods. Steal a piece of its root and burn the root to ash...

The diner seems to quiet. The lights shrink. Darkness grows.

FROM THE LOBBY

Amanda spies on her family at the dinner table wrapped in Emma's story.

She pulls out her cellphone and finds a number -- The contact reads: "ASSHOLE CHUCK."

Amanda's thumb hovers over the "CALL" button. She hits it.

The screen reads: "Calling..."

She looks back at her family. All smiles. All happy.

Amanda hits: "End Call." Then: "Delete Contact."

BACK AT THE TABLE

EMMA (CONT'D)

Once you have the ash of root, you
must carefully creep into your
enemies home at night and blow the
ash under their bedroom door...

Sadie's eyes are saucers. She coils around Dr. Burns' arm.
Amanda rejoins Emma's side and hugs her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Knock on the door three times...
SOFTLY, so not to wake the victim.
And say the words... "Icka
Crombie."

Emma whispers the name and knocks on the table with three
measured THUMPS.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(Even softer)
Icka Crombie.

She knocks three more times. Slower. Harder.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(Softer still)
Icka Crombie...

Sadie and Dr. Burns lean in to hear.

Knock...

Knock...

EMMA (CONT'D)

Boo!

Sadie SHRIEKS!

Emma explodes laughing.

Dr. Burns hugs Sadie. Amanda shakes her head smiling.

CHERYL (60's), the waitress, limps over with a slice of
bourbon walnut pie. A single burning candle sticks out of it.
She slides it in front of Emma.

CHERYL

Great story, Hun. You'll have to
tell the kids at college. Congrats.

Emma watches the candle flame dance on the wick. The grin on her face sinks sullen.

She BLOWS it out to...

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

HOWLING wind makes dead leaves dance beneath heavy black clouds.

A sagging manufactured home sleeps alone among oak trees. In the dirt driveway squats Amanda's station wagon.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - AMANDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amanda's military watch rests on the nightstand. She is tucked away sleeping on one side of the bed next to no one.

A light rain tiptoes in pattering on the window.

The room is still and dark when...

A CREAK comes from down the hall behind Amanda's closed door.

The FOOTSTEPS reach her door and stop.

Silence...

Puffs of BLACK ASH blow under the door dusting the carpet.

WHISPER (O.S.)
Icka Crombie.

Three hallow raps come from the hall.

Amanda's brow furrows. A nightmare.

WHISPER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Icka Crombie.

TAP. TAP. TAP. On her door.

Amanda stirs in her sheets.

WHISPER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Icka Crombie.

Tap. Tap. Tap. Once more.

Amanda shoots bolt upright in bed and skitters into...

THE HALL

With a disturbing gate, barefoot, wearing only her underwear and jack-o'-lantern top.

Amanda creaks down the shadowy hall.

AMANDA

I'm going to the Gad House.

IN EMMA'S ROOM

Emma jerks from sleep.

Her eyes search the shadows surrounding her.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The dark rural home hunkers in the storm.

A FIGURE waits on the porch. It's a YOUNG BOY. It's too dark to make out much else.

The front door eases open.

Amanda steps out.

She takes the Young Boy's hand.

He leads her off the porch and they vanish into the dark and stormy night.

The front door sways open on its hanging hinges like a silent mouth screaming when-

A light is switched on inside the home.

Emma pads into the doorway and discovers -- ASH FOOTPRINTS.

EXT. DR. BURNS' HOME - DAY

It's a gray day. Rain not too far away.

This home is beautiful; a white picket fence, manicured lawn, roses. A for sale sign is posted in the grass declaring the home's been "Sold." A BMW sits in the driveway.

A sign hanging from the porch reads: "DR. ROBERT M. BURNS, PHD."

Title: "ONE YEAR LATER."

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Burns sets up his video camera on -- Emma, drumming her fingers on the couch.

They both look thin and tired. Pale. Beaten.

DR. BURNS
Just a second more, Sweetheart. I
promise.

Emma scoffs.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Sorry... How long has it been since
your last episode?

EMMA
Four-

DR. BURNS
Days? You are getting better.

EMMA
Hours. It's a good thing.

Dr. Burns drops into his chair across from Emma.

DR. BURNS
I thought we were getting passed
this...

EMMA
You mean, "getting over?" It's not
that easy for some of us.

DR. BURNS
This is why the attacks are getting
worse. Have you thrown anything out
yet?

She drums her fingers.

Dr. Burns looks her over. He relaxes.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Have you any question before we
begin?

EMMA
How can I opt out?

DR. BURNS

One attack where your pills are not around and the result could be... bad.

EMMA

Sounds like I just need a lot more pills.

DR. BURNS

We can beat this. I know we can. We'll get you to Stovington-

They lock eyes for the first time.

Emma looks away.

EMMA

Whatever.

Dr. Burns' heart breaks for her. He stiffens up.

DR. BURNS

The first time for anything is always going to be frightening-

EMMA

Like raising your little sister by yourself?

Dr. Burns winces.

DR. BURNS

A strong person makes the right decision, even when it is frightening. You are the strongest person I know.

Emma touches her wrist -- She wears AMANDA'S MILITARY WATCH.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)

We should get started. How much time before your dose wears off?

Emma glances down at her watch.

EMMA

Three minutes.

DR. BURNS

This is a gradual process. We are going to start small and slowly gain control of the attacks.

Dr. Burns rises from his seat and rolls a chair beside Emma.
Emma cannot hide the fear in her eyes.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
You have nothing to worry about. I
will never let anything bad happen
to you.

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME OFFICE - LATER

Emma sits in the rolling chair with her back to an open walk-in closet. Her wrists and ankles are tied to the chair.

Her leg jitters.

DR. BURNS
Just remember your words. Say them
out loud. One breath at a time.

EMMA
Five little words are better than
modern prescription medicine?

DR. BURNS
It is not a joke, you could give
yourself a stress induced heart
attack. Even at nineteen.

Beat.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
These are your words. Not mine. Not
Sadie's. Yours. Follow them.

EMMA
Can we get started?

BEEP-BEEP. BEEP-BEEP.

Amanda's watch chirps that time is up. A chill runs through Emma.

DR. BURNS
You are ready.

Dr. Burns silences Emma's watch and rolls her backward into the dark closet.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
I am right on the other side.

He feigns a smile and shuts the door.

Dr. Burns stares at the knob.

Fear fills his face.

EMMA (O.S.)
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two. Cashmere roses, wicker
shakes, twenty-two...

INFRARED VIDEO SCREEN - INT. CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Emma is left in the closet with a recording video camera and darkness...

EMMA
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two. Cashmere roses, wicker
shakes, twenty-two...

The shaking in Emma's leg spreads to her hands.

She pinches her eyes closed.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two.

The words become a plea.

THREE KNOCKS come from the darkness behind her... Echoing, as though the closet has become a cave.

Tears drop from her eyes when-

DARK VOICE
Icka Crombie...

Something stirs in the dark behind Emma...

Three more knocks. And they are coming closer.

EMMA
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two.

DARK VOICE
Icka Crombie...

A ROTTEN WOMAN emerges from the dark behind Emma. In the sick light we see...

Amanda's Corpse, broken, shredded and bloody -- A freshly carved SYMBOL bleeds from her forehead.

Dirt falls from her mouth as she opens her busted jaw-

AMANDA'S CORPSE
I'm still in the Gad House,
Sweetheart. I'm still waiting for
you to find me...

It's not Amanda's voice, this voice is slow as sludge and dark as pitch. A DARK VOICE... Amanda grins, her shattered neck lolling her head to one side.

AMANDA'S CORPSE (CONT'D)
I'm waiting in the mine.

Emma screams!

We hear Dr. Burns tug on the door but it won't open!

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
Say the words!

She's hysterical.

DR. BURNS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You need to say your words!

EMMA
She's in the Gad House!

The closet door flies open-

The outside light reveals Emma and the video camera. Alone.

Dr. Burns breaks Emma's restraints and cradles her in his arms.

DR. BURNS
You are okay, Sweetheart.

Dr. Burns fishes out of Emma's pocket a -- JAR OF
PRESCRIPTION PILLS.

He feeds one to her.

Dr. Burns kisses her on the forehead.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
She's gone. She left us...

EXT. DR. BURNS' HOME - DAY

Emma walks out onto the front porch carrying a backpack. Dr. Burns in tow.

EMMA

Sorry.

DR. BURNS

There is nothing to be sorry about.
You tried. That is everything.

Emma sulks her way down the stairs.

EMMA

You should commit me.

DR. BURNS

Everyone copes with loss in their
own way. We might never know
exactly why she left, but we can
find a story we can live with...

EMMA

Did you find yours?

The silence sits heavy as the storm clouds above their heads.

Emma rattles the pill jar in her pocket.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm running low, can I get a refill
from the secret stash?

DR. BURNS

The more you depend-

EMMA

The more I depend on them, the more
I'll need them.

Dr. Burns smiles.

DR. BURNS

Emma, we'll make a story we can all
live happily ever after with. My
next appointment is waiting- Are
you and Sadie busy tonight? I want
to come by and talk to you both...

Emma searches his face for a clue.

EMMA

Sure.

Emma turns her back.

Dr. Burns is about to close the door when-

DR. BURNS
What is a Gad House?

Emma is struck.

EMMA
What?

DR. BURNS
You said it when you were in the closet.

EMMA
I forgot all about that...

DR. BURNS
What does it mean?

EMMA
I have no idea.

Emma shifts her backpack onto her shoulder. She looks as if she's seen a ghost.

INT. PUBLIC TOILET - DAY

Emma tosses her backpack in the sink and stares at her reflection in the mirror. She is in her underwear.

She opens her backpack and puts on makeup. She is still getting used to it.

She reaches back into her bag and takes out an ugly server uniform. She slips into the dress and pins on a name tag: "EMMA."

She stares back at her own reflection and sighs.

INT. MIKE'S COUNTRY CAFE - DINNING ROOM - DAY

HANDS grab a dirty plate when they are cut by a knife.

The plate shatters on the floor.

EMMA
Fuck!

Mike, the gelatinous boss, is pinched between a booth seat and table. His head in paperwork.

His eyes ogle Emma. She can feel it.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I cut myself.

MIKE
Julio needs more walnuts.

EMMA
Julio can get his own nuts, I'm
bleeding.

Mike glares up from his paperwork. He beckons her with his stubby finger.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Fine, Mike.

MIKE
Here. Now.

Emma sulks tableside.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Do you think this dress is free?

Mike takes the hem between her knees in his fingers.

EMMA
No.

MIKE
What about these stockings?

His finger runs up her thigh.

She bats him away.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Who pays for them, my little
chickadee?

EMMA
You'll be paying for stitches soon
too...

Mike checks Emma's hand -- She's gripping a steak knife.

He goes back to his work.

MIKE
Get those fucking walnuts.

Emma disappears behind the swinging doors.

Mike gulps.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Tart.

INT. MIKE'S COUNTRY CAFE - KITCHEN - DAY

Emma storms through the doors. Cole is at the sink washing dishes.

EMMA

That fat piece of shit is lucky I need this job.

COLE

What did he do?

EMMA

He was born.

Emma marches into the pantry and comes out with a heavy sack of walnuts.

Cole takes them from her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You don't have to-

COLE

But I do.

He gives her a quick kiss on the lips and walks them off.

EMMA

It's the last bag. We're out.

Emma smiles. She hand dries the wet dishes at Cole's station.

Cole bounds back to her side and keeps washing.

COLE

Shitty day?

She leans on him.

EMMA

It's getting better.

Cole kisses Emma on the neck.

She laughs him off.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Freak.

COLE
You make me this way.

She flicks water in his face and heads back out on the floor.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Emma's home sags in a light rain. Amanda's station wagon still in its usual spot on the driveway.

Dr. Burns' BMW pulls into the drive and parks.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emma's room is dim and musty. Bare. Lifeless.

She is out of her makeup and uniform. Just jeans and a tee-shirt.

She is facing the her wall and hard at work... But we can't see on what.

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
Emma, could you come out here for a minute?

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sadie and Dr. Burns sit silent on the couch.

Emma senses she's walking into a trap.

EMMA
What's up? I'm busy.

Dr. Burns nods to Sadie.

SADIE
Dad-or... Dr. Burns has something to tell us.

DR. BURNS
Come sit with us on the couch.

Emma posts herself in front of Dr. Burns, arms crossed. Standing.

EMMA
What are you doing?

DR. BURNS
Let's make some room.

They clear a space for Emma.

EMMA
I'm good where I'm at.

Dr. Burns sighs.

DR. BURNS
Escrow finished today on my house.

SADIE
Congratulations.

DR. BURNS
Thank you.

Emma is waiting.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
I will be moving into a new home in
Stovington next week...

Emma knows where this is going.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
It has plenty of room-

EMMA
Nope. No way.

Emma stomps from the room.

Sadie and Dr. Burns share a look and find Emma in...

THE KITCHEN

Emma is staring at her acceptance letter on the fridge...
Alongside PAST DUE BILLS.

SADIE
Emma-

EMMA
Sorry, I can't just forget about
Mom that easy. I'm not like you
two.

Sadie's wounded.

SADIE
I didn't forget!

DR. BURNS

No one has forgotten. But she has moved on, so should we. You could enroll in Stovington.

Emma winces a tear.

EMMA

What if she comes back and we're not here!

DR. BURNS

Emma.

EMMA

Mom and Dad could come back, together...

Sadie shakes her head "no," as Emma's watch alarm BLARES.

DR. BURNS

Emma...

Emma locks eyes with Dr. Burns and slams a pill into her mouth.

EMMA

Dad was the last person she called. They're together and happy and he's stuck with us and it kills him. Now he's trying to kidnap us.

Dr. Burns is gutted.

DR. BURNS

Is that what you really think?

SADIE

She doesn't mean that. She thinks it was the witch...

He leaves.

EMMA

Let him leave- Everyone else does!

Sadie rushes Emma and wraps her arms around her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Go with him. Leave me here.

Sadie hugs her as tight as she can.

SADIE

If you don't go, I don't go.

Emma thrashes away and heads for the front door.

EMMA

Don't be an idiot. I hate it here.

Emma leaves Sadie.

SADIE

Me too...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Emma and Cole are wrapped up against a tree at the edge of the damp forest.

COLE

I can't believe they're leaving.

They kiss again and again.

COLE (CONT'D)

Just us... Our own place...

She kisses him long and hard and pulls away.

The lovers lock eyes.

COLE (CONT'D)

You're killing me.

Cole moves in for another but she turns her back on him.

COLE (CONT'D)

I found a kitten in Mike's alley today.

EMMA

Oh yeah?

COLE

She was going crazy, hissing and scratching me.

Emma stares at -- Amanda's military watch counting down.

COLE (CONT'D)

But she was just hungry and scared.

Cole lights up a cigarette.

COLE (CONT'D)

She needs me even if she doesn't
know it.

EMMA

You don't even like cats.

A tear rolls down Cole's cheek.

She looks at Cole for the first time:

- The cherry burning red as he draws in hot smoke.
- His dirty fingernails.
- His teenage-lighter with embossed snake and red plastic eyes.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Bye...

She walks for the road.

Cole watches her slip into the dark.

The embers of his cigarette dance in his dark wet eyes.

COLE

No.

EXT. DR. BURNS' HOME - NIGHT

Every light is off in Dr. Burns' immaculate home.

Emma reaches the porch muddy and rain-soaked. Crying.

She knocks on the door.

No answer.

She checks her watch again: 18 minutes and counting.

She searches the window for life and spots -- Candlelight in the dining room. TWO PEOPLE sit at a romantic table setting.

Emma raises her fist to knock again when she hears a WOMAN'S LAUGHTER from inside -- The Woman touches Dr. Burns' arm.

Emma, frozen in disbelief, does not see the lonely OLD LADY step under the street light behind her.

OLD LADY

Knock-knock!

Emma watches the couple flirt, her mouth agape.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
Knock-knock!

Emma hardens and sprints off into the dark.

A HAPPY CHILD walks into the lamp light beside the Old Lady.

HAPPY CHILD
Who's there?

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The tired home squats in the moonlight.

Storm clouds roll in. Rain tip-taps...

A naked tree branch BANGS against the window.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A clock on the wall points at midnight.

Emma enters the dark home. It's draped in shadow... Too many hiding places.

EMMA
Sadie?

Emma flicks on the lights.

IN SADIE'S ROOM

Sadie is lying on her bed with headphones on listening to music playing with SOMETHING in her hands -- It's a bottle of gin.

IN THE KITCHEN

Emma checks her watch.

She pours a glass of water and sets her pill jar on the counter when...

There's a knock at the front door.

She starts, scattering her pills onto the kitchen floor...

She moves to answer when...

The lights go out.

KNOCK.

KNOCK.

KNOCK.

Emma is shaking.

The front door opens...

IN SADIE'S ROOM

Sadie is reading the text on the bottle of gin. The words BLUR and her eyes sag heavy.

THE FRONT DOOR

Sits wide open.

Empty.

The wind HOWLS.

Emma shrinks back into the room. Her fear swelling.

A lightning FLASH fills the dark living room, for a split second we see...

Amanda's Corpse filling the doorframe...

She vanishes with the lightning.

Emma dives behind the couch.

The floor boards by the door CREAK. Amanda is moving into the home...

SADIE

Has fallen asleep in her bed. On her nightstand sit empty BOTTLES OF PRESCRIPTION PILLS.

Floor boards CREAK...

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Emma's belly to the floor. Tears flowing. Body trembling.

Lightning flashes and Emma spots -- bare muddy feet.

Amanda is just on the other side of the couch.

The scarred feet are about to walk when-

Emma's watch alarm goes off!

Another lightning strike.

The feet turn to face her...

AMANDA'S CORPSE (O.S.)

(Dark Voice)

I'm still waiting in the Gad House,
Sweetheart.

EMMA

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

The room flashes white with lightning.

The feet are gone.

SADIE

Lies peacefully asleep-

There's a KNOCK at her door...

Sadie's eyes stir. They pry themselves open to see -- The
door jump in its hinges from THREE MORE KNOCKS!

Words drain in a slur from Sadie's mouth.

SADIE

Emmmmmmma...

The power goes out.

Sadie sits in the dark.

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK.

SADIE (CONT'D)

Emmmmmmmma...

Sadie's eyes are glued to the doorknob -- It turns...

She can't keep her eyes from shutting.

The door swings open... Only darkness.

Sadie's lids are all but closed-

EMMA (O.S.)

SADIE!

CRACK!

Lightning strikes- Amanda's Corpse lunges for Sadie!

Sadie WAILS as THUNDER CRASHES to...

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma pulls herself across the floor and pushes a pill into her mouth.

She makes it to the countertop and slams the water there.

She turns to Sadie's room.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Emma scampers down the hall.

EMMA

Are you all right?

Emma reaches Sadie's dark room.

The lights flicker back on...

Sadie sits on the edge of the bed. Her back to Emma.

Emma sighs.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Did you see her too?

Sadie sits there. Slumped. Motionless.

Emma glances around the room and takes a step in. Her feet walk through -- BLACK ASH.

Emma looks up from her feet to Sadie...

Sadie is now on the edge of the bed closest to us. Facing Emma.

Eyes shut, Sadie lifts her wrist -- the one with the charm bracelet, and sticks a finger down her throat.

She pukes gin and pills all over her shirt.

Her arm rises as if holding an invisible hand.

Her head swivels toward Emma. A smirk spreads across her face...

SADIE
 (Dark Voice)
 I've been waiting for you.

Sadie stands on wobbly legs. Her gait is fitful and weak like she's learning how to walk...

She toddles to the window. Opens it.

SADIE (CONT'D)
 You know where to find me.

Sadie falls out of the window into the rainy darkness.

Emma runs to the window only to find -- an empty front yard.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emma bursts into her room.

An open window blows a stormy gust.

She turns to the wall where she was working earlier but we see it this time...

Her obsession. A wall plastered floor to ceiling with MACABRE IMAGES: newspaper clippings, photos, book pages; anything and everything to do with the witch.

Emma rips a page off the dark collage -- It reads: "CORNISH MINING TERMINOLOGY - GAD HOUSE: Storage room for miner's tools, chiefly "gads," or miner's spike."

Her eyes move to a drawing on the wall -- The Black Walnut Tree ablaze.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Emma springs out onto the porch stuffing her prescription pill jar into her pocket.

She searches the darkness.

FOOTSTEPS walk up the porch...

It's Cole. Smoking nervously.

EMMA
 Cole!

COLE
 I had to... See you.

He looks her over.

COLE (CONT'D)
Are you all right?

Emma falls into his arms.

EMMA
I need you.

They hold each other tight, but Cole squeezes harder.

COLE
I love you, Emma. So much.

EMMA
I need you...

Emma wipes her tears on Cole's jacket.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I need you to drive.

INT./EXT. EMMA'S CAR - NIGHT

The thunderstorm rages outside. The blue wagon carves the rural road.

Lightning reveals the ominous BLACK WALNUT TREE in the distance.

A PHONE RINGS.

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
You have reached Dr. Robert M. Burns. Please leave a detailed message.

IN THE CAR

Emma is on her cellphone. Cole drives.

EMMA
Sadie's gone. There was ash, like Mom. Cole's taking me to the mine. I need your help. If you don't hear from me by three... Burn the tree to the ground. It has to burn.

Cole sneers.

OUTSIDE

The car passes the hulking walnut tree.

EXT. ABANDONED MINE - NIGHT

The car's headlights reveal the rotten mine portal. It is crouched and dilapidated.

The sky pours.

Cole hops out of the car.

COLE
I'll take a look. Alone.

Emma gets out of the car. Her face determined. Her body trembling.

COLE (CONT'D)
You can't handle this.

Her heart THUMPS.

Her breath short.

The mine gapes at her like an open throat. DRIPPING.
CREAKING.

Emma reads something on the mine wall and draws in a slow breath.

She holds it.

Then lets it out.

Emma stumbles into the portal. Cole follows passing a sign that reads: "STAY OUT, STAY ALIVE."

INT. MINE ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

It's a wreck -- collapsed and forgotten.

Emma calls down the throat of the mine.

EMMA
Sadie?!

COLE
Emma, she's not here.

Emma freezes. She's spotted something in the mud -- Sadie's broken charm bracelet.

She grips it in her hand.

Cole's eyes turn to saucers.

Beat.

She puts it in her pants pocket and takes off her heavy jacket.

COLE (CONT'D)

Emma-

EMMA

I got my pills.

COLE

We should call the police.

Emma charges into the rubble of the mine -- There are broken crates and mine carts.

She finds a roll of cord and wraps it around her waist and secures it with a climber's knot.

Cole inspects it.

COLE (CONT'D)

That's fuse, Emma.

EMMA

Stay and spot me.

She holds out the fuse roll.

Cole takes it.

He looks into her pained eyes...

Cole ties the rope off on a timber support.

EMMA (CONT'D)

One more thing.

INT. MINE - DRIFT - NIGHT

The mine seems to have a life of its own, creaking, dripping, moaning. Emma snakes her guide rope around broken support timbers and fallen rocks by the light of her cellphone.

The path is barley wide enough for one small person at a time, Cole takes up the rear. He carries a car jack.

Emma checks her watch -- "03:02:47."

Cole checks the rocky roof.

COLE
This could all fall apart any
second...

Emma scoffs.

Beat.

COLE (CONT'D)
Why didn't you ask me to move to
Stovington with you?

Emma's hand lands on a broken support timber. It gives with a clunk. Dirt shakes from the ceiling.

Emma is stung with fear. Cole unflinchingly waits for an answer.

Emma stares at the roof.

EMMA
I'm trying to focus.

Cole's eyes burn.

She continues on. Carefully.

Emma arrives in an area wide enough for Cole to come up along side her. They stare at what looks like a dead end.

Emma crouches down and shines her light into a thin crevice between two boulders.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Jack.

Cole shines his light around the compact tomb.

COLE
No.

Emma GASPS.

She reaches for -- A BLOODY HANDPRINT dragged along the rocks.

Emma swallows hard. Her breath quickens.

Cole moves her hair.

COLE (CONT'D)
We'll die in there.

Emma grips the jack and tugs.

Cole won't let go.

COLE (CONT'D)

Emma.

Emma pulls harder.

COLE (CONT'D)

Emma!

Emma thrashes at Cole.

EMMA

I'm going in!

Her nails slash across his face.

Emma halts.

Cole's bleeding.

Their eyes meet, both wild and bewildered.

Cole wipes the blood from his face. Checks it on his fingers.

He sets the Jack.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'll set it.

COLE

NO!

Fury blazes in his eyes.

Cole jacks the crevice open click by click.

The earth MOANS with every growing inch.

Click.

Beat.

Click.

Beat.

Click.

The creaking crack can just fit Emma. She gives the jack a small shake.

EMMA

Good job.

Cole smirks.

The earth MOANS...

Emma strokes Cole's dirty face.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Sorry about that.

Emma squirms through.

Cole's smile drops from his smudged face.

His eyes flick to -- The jack. His fingertips gently caress it... all the way to the release button.

Beat.

He goes in.

INT. CREVICE - MOMENTS LATER

Emma scrapes through the gripping granite fissure. Cole is close enough to eat the soles of her shoes.

They grunt and graze their bodies across the unforgiving stone.

COLE

I feel bad about... Something.

He gets nothing from Emma. She pushes forward.

COLE (CONT'D)

Did you hear what I said?

EMMA

Now? Really?

COLE

I've kept it a secret for a long time... But now seems right.

Emma does not break pace.

EMMA

Jesus, you're like a little girl.

Cole SCREAMS and beats his fist into the rock wall when-

The earth shakes above their heads. They're showered in dirt as... The roof springs a leak.

A waterfall bashes Cole in the face.

Cole's anger extinguishes. Fright fills him.

COLE

Move!

Cole's face slams into Emma's feet.

He squirms backward.

Can't.

COLE (CONT'D)

Fucking go!

He shoves her again.

More water's coming in. It's filling his compartment.

Cole wipes the mud from his eyes when...

The room shifts.

COLE (CONT'D)

Emma!

WHISPERING from the front...

EMMA

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

COLE

Just go!

Emma's deafening watch alarm goes off flashing: "00:00"

EMMA

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two.

COLE

Emma!

Emma's hand snakes into view. It searches for her pocket.

EMMA

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two.

AT THE FRONT

Emma's eyes are pinched tight. Beads of sweat pour down her face. The mine rumbles.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two.

Her watch SCREAMS and flashes.

Cole's voice yells from behind her.

All sounds fade but her words...

EMMA (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two.

PANIC ATTACK MONTAGE #1

A series of POV images flash:

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses...

- We are looking up at a tight shot of an embroidered rose on blue cashmere fabric. The cloth undulates rhythmically.

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...Wicker shakes...

- We slide on a hardwood floor and underneath a dark bed to a suspicious woven hatbox hidden in the shadows.

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...Twenty-two

- We move in on a door at the end of a long dark hall. Light pours from the cracks in the doorframe. When we're close enough to touch the door there comes THREE KNOCKS!

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Cashmere-

END MONTAGE

Cole's face is drowning in mud. He shoves the pill jar into Emma's hand.

She leaps from her trance. Swallows a pill.

And guns it.

Cole follows.

INT. MINE - BACKSIDE DRIFT - MOMENTS LATER

Emma falls out of the quaking crevice into the mine hall.

She picks herself up, reaches for Cole and yanks him by his arms as he fights to free himself.

Timbers buckle and boulders break behind him.

COLE

Emma!

Emma pulls with all her might.

Cole's nearly out.

The jack on the other end SNAPS under the pressure!

Cole's foot is caught in the crevice.

BOOM!

A rock splatters Cole's right ankle.

Cole SCREECHES in pain.

Emma pulls.

COLE (CONT'D)

Stop!

He cries!

COLE (CONT'D)

Don't touch me!

Emma lets go.

The rumbling stops. The collapse is over.

COLE (CONT'D)

I'm pinned. I think it's broken.

Cole tries to move himself.

He yelps.

COLE (CONT'D)

This is bad. Very bad... We shouldn't have come here.

(MORE)

COLE (CONT'D)
We should be home together. None of
this should have happened.

EMMA
Stay calm. I'll get help.

Emma searches her brain fighting panic.

The mine is different on this end. Deeper. Darker. More
alive.

A noise comes from down the long dank hall behind Emma.

Beat.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I'll find a way.

Cole cries out sobbing.

COLE
This isn't going to work, Emma. I
had plans...

Emma goes down on her knees to comfort him.

EMMA
Yes, it will. I'll get help.

She gives him her hand and he takes it.

COLE
There's something very bad down
here. I can feel it. Whatever you
do...

Cole is clammy, his lids droop, he's going to faint.

EMMA
Cole-

COLE
Whatever you do stay...

EMMA
Cole?

COLE
Stay...

EMMA
I have to go.

COLE
Stay out of the Gad House.

Cole drops.

EMMA
Cole!

Emma checks his pulse. He's alive.

Emma faces the long dark mine before her.

She loops the guide line in her fist.

EMMA (CONT'D)
One breath at a time...

And gulps.

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - NIGHT

Tarred tree roots hang from the ceiling like tentacles from a dead squid.

The shaft is long and craggy with no way out.

At the bottom of this pit is a scummy BODY.

It lies in ankle-high liquid -- viscous black tar.

It's Sadie.

Her chest rises. Her head stirs. Her eyes peel open.

Her groggy haze quickly becomes confusion then fear.

She flails in the ink...

And SCREAMS.

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME - DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Burns and his guest, ROSEMARY (40's) bookish but attractive, talk over messy dinner plates and low burning candles. They sip apéritifs.

ROSEMARY
I wish we had tried this sooner...

Dr. Burns blushes.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
Your cooking. You should have more
going away parties, Robert.

DR. BURNS
You are very kind.

Dr. Burns shifts in his seat.

ROSEMARY
It was amazing.

Rosemary reaches into her designer purse and produces a paper-wrapped package. She hands it to Dr. Burns.

DR. BURNS
Really Rosemary, you should not
have done this.

ROSEMARY
It's almost nothing, you mentioned
local legends once. I hope you like
it.

Dr. Burns opens the package revealing a book, its title
reads: "AMERICAN WITCH."

Dr. Burns is silent. Wounded.

DR. BURNS
Interesting...

ROSEMARY
You hate it. I've offended you.

DR. BURNS
No, of course not. You know my
obsession with these things. Thank
you for the gesture. Your timing is
impeccable-

ROSEMARY
Funny you should say, Robert- And,
this is going to sound hilarious
coming from me, but I found myself
drawn to a particular shop, then a
particular aisle, then a particular
shelf. It practically fell into my
hands!

Rosemary laughs, Dr. Burns thumbs the pages.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
Or it may just be the Dubonnet
settling in...

She smiles at Dr. Burns as she sips from her glass.

He is distracted by etchings in the book -- witches burning, witches drowning, a bare black tree surrounded by sad people from 100 years ago, their eyes staring directly at the viewer.

Rosemary feels neglected...

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
Perhaps we should excuse ourselves
to the parlor? Did I see a roaring
fire?

Rosemary's foot prods Dr. Burns. He's oblivious.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
Maybe you could read me something
on the couch?

DR. BURNS
I prepared a bedroom for you if you
need to stay the night-

ROSEMARY
Oh, my very own room?

She gulps her drink.

DR. BURNS
Great house... Goo house...

ROSEMARY
Excuse me?

DR. BURNS
God house... Gad House!

Rosemary finishes her drink in one toss. Her patience waning.

ROSEMARY
Now, what on earth is a Gad House?

DR. BURNS
Emma, mentioned it in today's
session.

She scoffs.

ROSEMARY
Amanda's girl? You're still seeing
them?

Dr. Burns flips the pages in his book.

ROSEMARY (CONT'D)
I understand your concern, but it
has been-

His head snaps up from the book.

DR. BURNS
One year.

The silence in the room is thick and awkward.

Dr. Burns returns to his page.

ROSEMARY
Robert, the ethics are-

DR. BURNS
Thank god for Stovington's looser
ethics.

ROSEMARY
You misunderstand-

DR. BURNS
No. I am sure you do.

Dr. Burns' foot moves away from Rosemary's.

Rosemary is on her feet.

ROSEMARY
Thank you for the dinner, Robert.

She wipes a tear from her eye and finds the door.

Dr. Burns gets back to his book.

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME - PARLOR - NIGHT

Wood burns wildly in the fireplace.

Dr. Burns sits on the couch drinking a Scotch reading his new
book.

His finger glides down the -- "G" section of the index.

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
Gad House... Gad House...

His finger finds no "Gad House."

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Damn.

Dr. Burns slams the book shut.

He tosses it into the fire and sips his empty glass fumbling it to the coffee table.

He wobbles to his feet and reaches for his landline telephone.

He dials a number by heart.

Straight to voicemail.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Hi Sadie, I am calling to see how
Emma is taking the noose- news.

His voice thickens.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
You girls do not deserve any of
this. I wish that...

He falls apart.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
I will see you tomorrow-

A bright white flash fills the room followed by the CRACK of thunder.

The power goes out.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Hello?

The landline's dead.

Dr. Burns chucks the phone.

The book burns to ash in the fireplace.

INT. MINE - DRIFT - NIGHT

An empty dark hall seeps rainwater from the surface.

There is a CREAK in the dark.

A light shines...

Emma holds her cellphone out to see the way. Her guide line trails behind her.

She treads lightly.

EMMA

Sadie?

Her voice echoes down the hall.

Suddenly the roof FLUTTERS!

Hundreds of leathery wings scrape through Emma's hair as high-pitched shrieks flap down the hall.

Emma drops to her knees fumbling her cellphone light and...

It falls through the floor and fades into an abyss...

Emma clears the dirt around her. She's been walking on rotten wood planks.

She freezes on the false floor crouched like a cat.

Beside her is a giant hole where someone has already fallen through.

Emma scoots forward. The planks MOAN begging to splinter.

CREAK...

She pauses. Braces for disaster.

She edges forward.

WHACK!

Something bright comes back through the floor and smashes into Emma's eye. She catches it -- It's her cellphone covered in coal dust.

She shines the light over the brittle floor.

A HUMAN HISS comes from below.

She quickly tugs her lead rope and scurries across the boards...

INT. MINE - DEMONIC CHAPEL - NIGHT

Emma's light searches the hall...

Ahead, a low alcove waits.

Her light can't seem to penetrate its darkness but above the passage she finds -- ICKA'S SYMBOL scrawled across the rock wall.

She enters...

Eon-old knives, mining equipment and empty boxes of Hercules dynamite litter the room; a time-line of mining history is scattered around her.

Her feet stick to the floor here -- drying blood clings to her soles like bubble gum. Her breath shortens. She follows the blood to...

A grizzly scene -- several cat skeletons lie at the base of a root stump, their heads obliterated by the rusty pickaxe that's stuck in the stained stump.

Emma steels herself and searches over her shoulder -- Her long guide rope dangles above the pit. Nothing is chasing her.

Yet.

There's a sudden SCUFFLE in the room.

Emma gasps and turns to find...

A DOOR.

It sits at the back of the low square room. She is not sure it had ever been there before.

Emma edges toward the large ancient door. It's been barricaded by thick chain and heavy lumber. Whatever is inside was never meant to get out.

EMMA

(Whispering)

Sadie, are you in there?

The hairs stand on Emma's neck, her breath quickens, her heart pounds.

She yanks the pickaxe from the blood-spattered stump and cocks it back.

She creeps forward.

More SHUFFLING behind the door.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Sadie?

Emma's grip works the pickaxe handle.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Icka?

Emma stands square to the door.

Frozen. Waiting.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Icka Crombie.

Her hand leaves the pickaxe handle and makes a fist.

She knocks on the door three times.

KNOCK!

KNOCK!

KNOCK!

The heavy beats echo throughout the mine.

The entire earth seems to hold its breath.

Emma reads the words scrawled in the door -- Words like:
"WITCH," "BURN" and "KNOCK."

She finds dark twisted roots creeping from around the door's
seams like blind snakes.

Emma pulls back her fist for another knock.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Icka Crom-

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK!

The door dances in its hinges. SOMETHING is beating it from
the other side...

Emma falls backward.

Sweat beads on Emma's forehead. Her throat sucks wind. Her
breath PUFFS white in the chilled mine air.

Silence.

Then-

There's a light tug on the rope around Emma's waist.

She peers back down the dark hall at the waiting pit. The rope sways carelessly.

ICKA CROMBIE (O.S.)
You found me, girl... I knew ye'd
get here.

The chilling DARK VOICE echoes in Emma's ears.

Emma's heart stops.

Again, there is a tug on her rope.

ICKA CROMBIE (CONT'D)
Come for your sister?

EMMA
Yes.

A long thoughtful beat.

ICKA CROMBIE
And mama, I expect.

Emma's eyes fill with hope.

ICKA CROMBIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Mama's too far gone. Sis though...
There'll have to be a trade.

Emma boils. There's another tug on the rope.

Emma ignores it.

EMMA
What do you want?

ICKA CROMBIE
Cole...

The words sink on Emma's face.

ICKA CROMBIE (CONT'D)
Save him or kill him, up to you.

Emma is yanked to the floor.

The rope fuse jerks like a fishing line with a whopper hooked.

Emma runs into darkness squeezing the bloody pickaxe...

INT. MINE - FALSE FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Emma inches across the moaning floor as fast as she can.

CHOKING echoes from down the hall.

EMMA

Cole!

The boards buckle beneath her feet.

Emma lunges forward and...

Falls.

SNAP!

In an instant she dangles eight-feet above the pit floor.

Her gentle sway casts her pale light on...

MOANING MINER.

His clothes are from 100-years-ago. He's covered in coal dust. His neck is too long.

He wears a noose.

Emma screams as Moaning Miner lurches for her. She swings the pickaxe at him.

AT THE TOP

Her rope bites into the thin plank. It won't hold.

THAP-THAP-THAP

The planks snap in succession like falling dominos.

EMMA

Hits the pit floor.

Moaning Miner's black hands grope for her.

Emma clubs him with the pickaxe and runs for the wall behind her.

She expertly use the axe to bolt up the wall, the Miner clutching at her ankles...

AT THE TOP

Emma smashes her palm into the wooden ceiling.

One-two-three!

She's through but YELPS -- a rotten five-inch splinter jams through her palm.

She keeps moving.

INT. MINE - BACKSIDE DRIFT - MOMENTS LATER

Emma reaches Cole and finds him -- swinging from the timbers.

Someone has used Emma's guide line to tie a noose around his neck.

He's blue. SPUTTERING.

She watches him squirm for a beat. She could just leave him...

The lovers lock eyes.

Emma swings the pickaxe and cuts down Cole. He falls to the hard floor. Fresh blood pouring from his wedged foot.

Cole sucks air.

EMMA

Are you okay?

Cole is breathing through a straw but he's alive.

He shakes his head yes.

Emma falls on her knees. Tears in her eyes.

Cole can't speak. He just holds his throat.

Emma huddles shaking. Bloody. Battered. Whispering...

EMMA (CONT'D)

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

COLE

Emma...

Cole croaks.

BEEP-BEEP. BEEP-BEEP.

Emma's watch alarm is blaring. It reads: "00:00"

COLE (CONT'D)

Emma...

EMMA

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

Emma's ankle is just out of his reach.

He grasps at it.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

He rests. Bracing for the pain that's about to come.

Beat.

Cole lunges. There's a POP. An uncontainable SHRIEK splits his lips!

Cole has just enough length to grip Emma's ankle and pull.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

Cole's hand is in her waist pocket. He finds her prescription jar and manages a pill into her mouth.

Emma swallows.

Cole puts her pill jar in his pocket and takes off his JACKET. He wraps it around the shivering Emma as she calms.

Cole puts her arms through the sleeves and finds her slashed splintered hand oozing blood.

He unties the remaining guide line from around Emma's waist and uses it to bandage her wound.

The pill is working.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It's all my fault.

COLE

No. It's not.

Cole strokes her hair.

COLE (CONT'D)
None of this is your fault.

EMMA
You don't know that.

COLE
I know that.

He kisses her. She kisses him.

EMMA
You're so good to me. I couldn't
have made it without you.

COLE
I needed you just as much. More.
Always.

Emma cries into his arm.

COLE (CONT'D)
Just us. We don't need anyone. Not
your mom, not Burns, not Sadie.
Just us, right?

Emma's head lifts from him.

He checks her face waiting for an answer.

Emma is dumbfounded.

COLE (CONT'D)
Right?

Emma blasts to her feet using the bloody pickaxe as a crutch.
She paces.

EMMA
I found a room...

There's a shift in Cole.

EMMA (CONT'D)
She told me what I have to do to
get Sadie back.

COLE
Who?

EMMA
Icka!

The name echoes throughout the mine.

Cole's eyes burn.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I can get her back, Cole.

COLE
How?

Cole flexes his trapped leg. Tugs. He's not going anywhere...

Emma turns her back on him to think. He grabs a rock and hides it in his fist.

COLE (CONT'D)
You should do it.

EMMA
What?

COLE
Whatever you have to do to get
Sadie back. I know you. You'll do
whatever it takes.

EMMA
Shut up. I'm serious.

COLE
I'm dead serious.

EMMA
Cole, trust me.

Emma paces in thought.

Cole drops his head. He MUMBLES something.

EMMA (CONT'D)
What did you say?

Cole lifts his face from the ground. Tears stream down his cheeks. He reaches for her with one hand... hiding the other.

COLE
I said I'm sorry.

Emma drops the pickaxe and goes to him. She takes his hand.

EMMA
Sorry for what, Cole? You didn't do
anything. You're perfect.

He pulls her close. They hug cheek to cheek. She closes her eyes.

COLE

I was trying to tell you before.
But you never listen.

Cole's hand fumbles his sharp heavy rock.

He squeezes Emma tight.

EMMA

The only reason you're here is
because you wanted to help me...

Cole raises the rock high above his head...

EMMA (CONT'D)

I love you.

Emma's eyes open to see -- Cole's dead eyes staring into hers. No love.

Only hate.

COLE

How could you say that?

She moves just as the rock comes smashing down. It glances off her skull. She reels back.

COLE (CONT'D)

You never loved me!

He bashes her legs with the sharp stone, howling like a wild animal.

COLE (CONT'D)

I never came first! I'm the one who
loved. I'm the one that would do
anything for us!

Emma kicks away from the blows.

COLE (CONT'D)

You don't know half of what I've
done!

He pitches the rock hard into her back.

She squirms away.

COLE (CONT'D)

I saw you! I saw your eyes! You
were going to let me hang!

Emma is on her hands and knees when she notices, from the jacket Cole put on her -- a brown paper bag spilling ash onto the floor.

Emma dips her fingers into the ash.

COLE (CONT'D)
There were three people keeping us
apart. Now they're gone... and I
don't even get a thank you.

Cole takes a deep-deep breath.

COLE (CONT'D)
For saving us.

He plants his hands firmly.

He tugs his pinned foot with all his might. He ROARS in pain.

His bones SNAP and his skin SHREDS.

His ragged bloody foot is free.

Cole crawls for Emma.

COLE (CONT'D)
I promise, I'll cave my head in as
soon as I kill you. We'll be
together forever.

Cole lifts his rock.

Emma spins...

Planting the pickaxe into his head.

Cole lands on his side. Eyes wide. Stunned.

He sputters. Blood pooling around him. His eyes flicker.

He's dead.

Emma stands on shaky legs and hobbles into the mine. She sets her watch.

Cole's blood flows onto the black tree roots growing from the walls...

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - NIGHT

We are staring at the black inky pond we found Sadie in...

But she is nowhere to be seen.

The thick tentacle-like roots hanging from the top of the shaft shake.

We hear grunts and find...

Sadie, shimmying twenty feet up a root like a rope in gym class.

Her hands move up one after the other.

Her knees and feet squeeze the root when...

The roots suddenly ooze tar.

She begins to slide.

She grips harder. Pushes further.

But it's no use. The roots are gushing the slippery muck. She plummets into the pond.

The roots pour tar like a faucet. The black ink that was once at her ankles has quickly risen to her waist.

The roots stop.

A dim red glow pulls Sadie's eyes up to the top of her prison.

She sees -- a rocky ceiling slowly sinking toward her.

SADIE

Help!

Sadie's cries echo into...

INT. MINE - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

At the back of the hand carved garage-sized room sit THIRTEEN LOCKERS.

Each locker is a century old, covered in webs and has a thick black tree root plugged into the top like a high-voltage power cable.

Ten of the locker doors hang open. Three are closed.

A CLANG comes from one locker in particular. The brass plate reads: "11 - COAL BREAKER."

The steel door hops in its hinges then bursts open revealing -
- Amanda's Corpse.

She slogs out into the room and crawls into a crack in the wall.

INSIDE THE VENT

She worms around tree roots, navigating the twists and turns in the dark.

Rocks scrape her patchy haired skull. Roots rake her hands and knees.

She crawls up to...

EXT. BLACK WALNUT TREE - NIGHT

Like the walking dead from a grave she exhumes herself from the soil at the base of the giant walnut tree.

She limps through the storm straight for the twinkling city lights below...

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME - PARLOR - NIGHT

Dr. Burns sleeps on the couch in front of his cooling fireplace. A few candles burn low in the room. The power is still out.

His Scotch bottle is empty.

The Scotch tumbler is broken on the floor.

THREE KNOCKS come from his front door.

Dr. Burns stirs but stays asleep.

WHAM!

The front door flies open slamming into the wall.

Dr. Burns springs from his drunken sleep. He looks at his broken tumbler on the floor.

DR. BURNS
For God's sake, Robert.

He does not see Amanda's Corpse filling the doorframe behind him...

He cleans up the glass.

She floats up stairs.

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The storm rages through the hallway window.

Indoors the scene is still. A grandfather clock ticks away time.

Footsteps CREAK up the stairs...

Dr. Burns arrives on the landing holding a candle.

He steadies himself with help from the stair railing.

He focuses his vision down the hall to a cracked bedroom door.

He steps forward and SLAMS his toe into the banister. The jolt sends the candle out of his hands and over the railing to the floor below.

DR. BURNS

Shit!

Blinded by pain Dr. Burns does not see the bedroom door close.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck you!

He inspects his -- bleeding toe with a clumsy finger.

He hobbles to the end of the hall staring at his toe and steps into -- a PILE OF ASH at the threshold of the bedroom door.

He bends and touches the ash when...

There's a CREAK from inside the bedroom.

He fishes into his pockets and comes up with a small lighter.

He strikes it, takes note of the ash on the floor, puts his hand on the bedroom doorknob and opens to...

A pitch black room.

Bed springs SQUEAK.

He creeps into the room.

SQUEAK.

Another step.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)

Hello?

Lightning strikes and reveals Amanda's Corpse standing on the bed...

Dr. Burns SCREAMS!

The room is dark again in an instant.

He runs from the room.

A shadow floats toward him.

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME - PARLOR - NIGHT

Dr. Burns flies down the stairs nearly breaking his neck. The floating woman just behind.

He grabs the landline. Dead. He spins toward the stairs to see the shadow of Amanda three steps away.

Dr. Burns scrambles into...

THE ENTRYWAY

Sitting on the entry table is his CELLPHONE.

He scoops it up but it slips from his drunk fingers.

Dr. Burns scans the shadowy floor. His hands find the phone!

He dials 9-1-1 and almost hits send when he sees -- two blackened bare feet...

His eyes scan up the female figure to her shirt -- A torn Jack-o'-lantern smiling at him...

Lightning strikes again and without a doubt Dr. Burns is face to face with Amanda's Corpse.

Her body is littered with bite marks and she is covered in filth. On her forehead festers a crude carving, the same ICKA SYMBOL.

DR. BURNS

Amanda...

Thunder CRASHES!

The front door flies open on its own.
 The wind HOWLS outside blowing rain into the home.
 Amanda's Corpse passes the doctor as if he wasn't there.
 He goes to her...

EXT. DR. BURNS' HOME - NIGHT

Dr. Burns is pelted with stinging rain. His bare feet sinking into the swamp that was his front lawn.

Amanda's Corpse stops.

DR. BURNS
 Amanda...

She turns to face him. Her wet stringy hair dancing in the rain.

In an instant she darts into a flooding sewer drain.

Dr. Burns stands in the storm stunned.

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME - ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Dr. Burns slides to the floor and grips his cellphone.

He reads on the screen -- "ONE MISSED CALL & VOICEMAIL, EMMA ORE."

He listens.

EMMA (O.S.)
 Sadie's gone. There was ash, like
 Mom. Cole's taking me to the mine.
 I need your help. If you don't hear
 from me by three... Burn the tree
 to the ground. It has to burn.

DR. BURNS
 No-no-no...

The doctor pushes -- "CALL BACK."

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)	DR. BURNS
Hi it's me, Emma. Leave me a message. I might call you back.	Hi Emma- Shit!

BEEP-

Suddenly, all the house lights come on at once. He hangs up.

INT. DR. BURNS' HOME - NIGHT

RESCUE MONTAGE

- Dr. Burns pulls a flashlight from the kitchen.
- At the fireplace he grabs a lighter and a bottle of lighter fluid.
- From a locked cabinet in his study her takes a bottle of prescription pills.
- He snatches his car keys and sprints outside.

END MONTAGE

EXT. DR. BURNS' HOME - NIGHT

Dr. Burns' car roars to life. His headlights burn. His tires SCREECH.

He drives to the mountains.

INT. MINE - DRIFT - NIGHT

This dark mine passage is very old, very wet and very cold. The roof sinks in this area, the passage shrinks from eight-foot tall to two-feet. Roots twist their way throughout.

There are a series of trap doors built into the ceiling and the floor.

A mine cart sits alone at the back.

Emma slogs through the ankle deep muck. Her warm breath visible in the room's chill.

She wears Cole's blood on her face and hands. She is worn and weary. Nearly broken.

She stops at the low roof but dares not enter.

EMMA

This is wrong...

She looks back down the hall trying to get her bearings.

She calls down the shrunken passage in front of her.

EMMA (CONT'D)
We had a deal!

Emma chucks a rock down the tunnel.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Give me back my sister!

Emma's own voice echoes back to her. She's all alone.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Oh, God.

A small voice comes from down the dark hall.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
God?

Emma halts.

The mine drips and groans.

The voice came from a lonely cart. It's a short cart, only a foot tall- built for a child to push and pull in the narrow passage.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
God, you say? Don't know him. He
must work in some other mine.

His voice is young and innocent- haunting in such a terrible place.

EMMA
Icka?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Now I do know her, a'course.

EMMA
I need to find her. Where is she?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Just open your eyes...

Emma sees nothing but -- twisted black tree roots.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
But if you really want to see the
witch at work, I'll tell you what
you do. Peel off a bit'o root there
and burn it to ash out in the woods
somewhere's.

Emma strains to see where the little voice is coming from.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Keep that ash secret and get into
someone's house- where they sleep.
Has to be where they sleep. Blow
that ash under their door and knock
three times three saying the
witch's name. You'll never see that
person again.

EMMA

Who are you?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Will you try it?

EMMA

What's your name?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

You gotta' try it, it's a real
laugh. They call me Trap Boy.

EMMA

Come out so I can see you.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

I'm stuck in the cart.

EMMA

I need to find Icka, can you help
me?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Shoot, I'm supposed to be helping
her. But I ain't got no use now, I
just sit in this here cart.

Emma's stomach sinks. Something is not right.

EMMA

I'm leaving now.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Well hold on. I've been stuck here
a real long time. Say you come move
me a bit and I'll get you where you
need to go.

Emma checks her watch.

She eyes the cart -- ten paces down the tight passage.

Emma sinks to her hands and knees and crawls into...

INT. MINE - TRAP PASSAGE - NIGHT

Emma inches down the low rocky shoot toward the cart.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
You still there? We got a deal?

EMMA
I'm coming. Where should I take
you?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
What ever you do, don't look in the
cart.

Emma freezes.

EMMA
Why?

CHILD'S VOICE
'Cause I don't like it much...

EMMA
Are you going to hurt me?

CHILD'S VOICE
Ma'am, I couldn't hurt a fly.

Emma reaches the beaten wooden cart. She nudges it forward.

The child LAUGHS gleefully.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh, thank you miss, thank you!

Emma can't help but smile. He sounds so sincerely happy.

EMMA
How far are we going?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Just passed this next trap in the
floor here.

EMMA
That's it?

Emma is crouched on top of the trap door, her hand on the
cart.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
That will get you where you need to
go. Pull that switch over there.

Emma spots a wooden lever.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Can I just ask one favor?

EMMA
What is it?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Can you just give me one hard push?
I want to feel like I'm flying!

EMMA
I just have to pull this one and
I'll find Icka?

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Cross my heart, wherever that may
be.

Emma sets up to give the cart one giant push. But...

She can just see over the cart's lip and curiosity gets the
better of her...

She cranes her head over the lip and sees -- TRAP BOY, a
sweet faced eight-year-old, his face covered in soot. The
familiar ICKA SYMBOL carved into his forehead. And that's it.
He's just a head.

Emma drives the cart away with all her might!

Trap Boy SHRIEKS in pure joy, the echoes float into the dark
mine.

Emma puts her hand on the lever and pulls.

The trap door beneath her opens slowly to darkness.

She crawls in.

INT. MINE - DEMONIC CHAPEL - NIGHT

Emma is in familiar territory; the bloody stump, the dead
animals, the barricaded door.

EMMA
We had a deal.

The room is silent.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Icka!

She SLAMS her fist against the door.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Give me back my sister!

Only silence comes back to her.

Emma examines the door, her light moving around the door seam. She halts at the top. What she finds stops her dead...

A withered hand-carved sign reads -- "GAD HOUSE."

Her shock turns to rage.

She snatches an old knife from the stump altar and jams it into the door's seam.

She pries.

The knife snaps.

A thick wet CACKLE comes from behind the door.

ICKA CROMBIE (O.S.)

Oh, girl... It's no use. I never stop workin'. You think you're talkin' to me... But I'm workin'- Right now. Workin' on your boyfriend. Workin' on your sis, your mama, your make-believe daddy...

Icka wheezes in LAUGHTER.

EMMA

I'll kill you.

Emma scans the room. She spots a box that reads: "HERCULES DYNAMITE." She pounces on it. It's filled with cobwebs.

ICKA CROMBIE (O.S.)

Most of all, I'm workin' on you...

Emma tears the room apart in a flurry.

She smashes anything and everything.

She stops to catch her breath.

Icka laughs.

ICKA CROMBIE (CONT'D)
Don't waste your time. You'll need
it, slut...

Emma checks her watch, it reads: "00:32:15."

She searches her pockets. She doesn't have her pills.

ICKA CROMBIE (CONT'D)
Cole's not far, just 'round the
corner in the locker room. Hope you
see him...

Emma retreats into the mine.

ICKA CROMBIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Before he sees you...

INT. MINE - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Emma edges into the dark locker room.

The room is alive with groans and whispering wind.

Her cellphone flashlight throws strange sickening shadows on
the rocky mine walls.

She takes one cautious step in...

Then another...

Something catches her eye -- The shadow of Amanda's Corpse
darts off the wall-

EMMA
Mom?

Emma is stunned when-

The room goes black.

Emma's cellphone is dead.

She is wrapped in complete darkness.

A CLANG comes from the back of the room.

Emma quickly shines her watch screen. The dim light is a pale
LCD green. It's not very strong. She can only see as far as
her feet.

Emma inches further.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Cole?

Emma finds a broken plank on the floor. She lifts it ready to swing. She puts her back on the left wall and slides to the rear of the room.

She reaches her first locker. Its door hangs open. The brass name tag reads: "1 - TRAP BOY."

Emma moves down the line. The next locker belongs to: "2 - WELL DRILLER." It's door is open too.

Another CLANG from a locker at the end of the row.

Emma scoots forward -- an inch-deep pool of blood laps at her toes.

She wades into the crimson pond.

Her watch reads: "00:24:12."

The bloody trail leads into one of the last lockers.

Her light finds -- The pickaxe. Resting alone in Cole's blood. She takes it.

Emma's eyes search the floor...

There's no body.

Her hands strangle her wooden weapon.

She's shaking.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Cole!

CLANG-CLANG!

She's at the last two lockers, these are the only doors closed and locked tight. Emma plods forward toward the ominous clanging...

One locker reads: "12 - FIRE BOSS."

The other reads: "13 - SEED SOWER."

There's a RUSTLING from behind door 12.

Emma's watch reads: "00:21:02."

Her breath quickens.

She SCREAMS AT THE TOP OF HER LUNGS-

EMMA (CONT'D)
Give me my pills!

She yanks on the locker door furiously.

It won't budge. It's padlocked.

CLAWED SCRATCHING comes from inside. Emma's stirred something.

A filthy rat the size of a cat squirms out of locker 11.

Emma starts.

The rat scurries into the dark. Emma watches it go when her eyes find something in the open locker...

Hanging inside locker 11 is a piece of cloth -- It's dirty with an unmistakable pattern... Amanda's jack-o'-lantern shirt.

Emma takes the torn cloth.

Beat.

A sudden tremor starts in her hands and spreads through her body, when-

BLOOD CURDLING SHRIEKS come from inside locker 12.

Emma tightens. Petrified.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Cole...

Cole's SCREAMS are violent. He's suffering.

Emma's eyes are fixed on -- The FIRE BOSS locker tag when...

The name tag blooms a hot orange.

The glow quickly spreads the width of the locker revealing -- a BEASTLY SILHOUETTE trapped inside.

The HOWL from within the locker forms three words...

COLE
YOU ARE THIRTEEN!!!

Emma rushes out of the ever warming room.

The metal door glows white hot. The name tag liquefies. The padlock melts off its latch like butter on burnt toast.

WHOOSH!

The room is engulfed in flame.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Dr. Burns' car rounds the bend nearly sliding off the rainy road.

His headlights peer out over the ledge and shine on -- Amanda's Corpse standing at the foot of the ominous Black Walnut Tree.

Dr. Burns parks at the guardrail.

He gets out of his car with his flashlight, lighter and can of lighter fluid.

Drenched by the rain and chilled by the wind he locks eyes with Amanda's Corpse who waits in his headlights.

He throws a leg over the guardrail and makes his journey down the sheer mountainside...

But the rain-slicked rocks trip him and he tumbles down the ravine.

End-over-end he SMASHES into the unforgiving earth CRUNCHING his bones. He nearly slides off the cliff when-

Amanda's Corpse grabs him.

His feet dangle over the edge.

She pulls him up.

Dr. Burns holds his ribs and gazes up at the silhouette of Amanda.

In the raging storm she almost looks alive.

Amanda's Corpse leaves him.

DR. BURNS

Amanda!

She hunches onto her hands and knees and bores into the earth.

He brandishes his lighter then sniffs the air. In his hand is -- a leaking can of lighter fluid.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
No. Damn it.

He inspects the lighter. It's cracked too. But it strikes.

He rolls to the tree and squeezes the can. Hardly a sprinkle of liquid left.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Come on you bitch!

He does not give up.

He shoves the can into a crack in the tree bark. He sparks a flame and holds the lighter to it.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Come on, come on...

The can ignites!

A flame swells...

Then dies.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Fuck!

Dr. Burns tries to light it again and again and finally gives up.

He thinks...

It hits him.

He looks up hill to his car.

INT. MINE - WINZE - NIGHT

FRANTIC FOOTFALLS echo through the dark mine.

Someone is running for their life.

Emma sprints around the bend. Ducking. Dodging. Slipping. Sliding.

Then we see it...

A flame is chasing her and it is ROARING!

Emma trips on a cart rail and pitches forward...

Her face halts inches from a deep ore shaft.

She's cooked...

Then her eyes find -- An ore cart dangling by a rope just out of reach.

She looks back. No fire. Only the sound of...

HEAVY FOOTSTEPS.

Emma scuttles out onto the narrow ledge around the rim of the ore shaft. She finds a cutout behind a timber beam. Her toes dangle over the narrow edge of the shaft just as...

The BOOMING STEPS shake the earth.

THE FIRE BOSS has arrived.

She cannot see him. But he is so close she can feel the heat coming off his giant body.

He looks over the ledge into the shaft -- His face is covered with a burnt miner's respirator. Carved on his forehead is ICKA'S SYMBOL.

TICK-TICK-TICK-WHOOOOOSH

Sparks jump off his wrists and a flame jets into the winze.

If he should turn his head just three-degrees to his left he'll find Emma...

She holds her breath.

His head turns.

She has one chance. Move or burn.

Emma tugs him over the ledge.

He goes down...

And Emma goes with him.

INT./EXT. BLACK WALNUT TREE - NIGHT

Dr. Burns battles up the rocky ledge and tumbles into his car.

He snaps into his seat belt, twists the ignition key and slams the car into reverse. He backs up and stops.

He eyes -- the guardrail.

Beat.

The tires screech as he thrusts the car into drive and he -- stomps the gas.

The back wheels spin searching for traction. The engine REVS. Like a bolt of lightning the car SMASHES through the guardrail posts and careens over the side.

Dr. Burns slams on the brakes but there's no stopping.

He white knuckles the steering wheel keeping a head-on collision course with...

THE BLACK WALNUT TREE

The car CRUMPLES into the ancient tree like an empty can of cola.

Dr. Burns' face whips into the airbag. Glass flies. Steam rises.

The only sound now...

Rain pelting the busted sheet metal.

Dr. Burns flops out of the car.

His face is bloody and arms are cut up but he's mostly okay.

He takes a sharp rock into his hand and wiggles under the wreck to the...

GAS TANK

He stabs at the tank over and over. The rock slips and cuts his hand.

He picks it up and stabs again.

DR. BURNS
Fuck you. Fuck you!

Dr. Burns does not see Amanda's Corpse crawl back out of the ground...

She is nimble and silent. She creeps toward the unsuspecting doctor just out of his sight.

He slams the rock home and CRACK -- Gasoline drains out and pools around the tree.

AMANDA'S CORPSE

Oh, Bob...

Amanda's Corpse grins.

Dr. Burns JUMPS, bumping his head on the undercarriage.

AMANDA'S CORPSE (CONT'D)

I don't need your help. I like it here.

Dr. Burns' face hardens. He slides out from the car and takes off his coat. He dips it into the puddle of gas and lets the coat soak.

Dr. Burns stuffs the coat into a tree hollow and lights the sleeve.

WHOOSH!

The tree goes up immediately.

Dr. Burns retreats from the heat.

DR. BURNS

I hope this can give you peace.

Amanda's Corpse laughs.

AMANDA'S CORPSE

This tree has seen more fire than hell. This tree can't burn, Bob. And I don't need your help.

The gas burns off the tree. The flames vanish. The Black Walnut Tree is unharmed.

AMANDA'S CORPSE (CONT'D)

Emma though...

A WOMAN'S SCREAM echoes through the earth.

AMANDA'S CORPSE (CONT'D)

Emma needs you.

Dr. Burns freezes.

DR. BURNS

What was that?

AMANDA'S CORPSE

Emma's having some trouble with Cole. Will you go down and straighten that boy out? I never liked him.

EMMA (O.S.)

Help me!

DR. BURNS

Emma!

Dr. Burns hunts for the sound in the ground.

Amanda's Corpse sneers. She follows him.

AMANDA'S CORPSE

Just through there. It's a tight squeeze.

Amanda's Corpse points to -- a dark rooted burrow between two massive tree roots.

Dr. Burns shines his flashlight on the hole. His mind goes to work.

AMANDA'S CORPSE (CONT'D)

Please Bob, she'll die...

Dr. Burns mulls this over. His eyes find the answer over the edge of the rocky cliff that nearly killed him...

AMANDA'S CORPSE (CONT'D)

Please, do it for me...

DR. BURNS

Goodbye, Amanda.

Dr. Burns shoves Amanda's Corpse over the cliff.

She SPLATTERS on the rocks below.

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - NIGHT

Sadie is sitting in the inky pool that laps all the way up to her chin now. She shivers in the cold and glances at the ceiling -- It too is much closer now.

The long roots have swarmed the chamber like a thicket of greasy eels.

Sadie shuts her eyes.

She breathes softly.

A SCREAM echoes into the chamber.

EMMA (O.S.)

Help me!

Sadie's eyes burst open.

She stands and bumps her head on the ceiling.

SADIE

EMMA!

A tarry root suddenly snakes its way into Sadie's mouth.

INT. MINE - SUMP - NIGHT

Emma treads in murky freezing water. She studies her surroundings -- high slick walls, floating wooden crates and ore carts.

She searches the water... The Fire Boss is down there, beneath her feet... Somewhere.

Her teeth CHATTER.

EMMA

Help!

Emma swims to the nearest wall. It's been cut perfectly smooth. She's a rat trapped in a trash can.

Emma uses a bobbing crate as a raft...

She wipes the muck off her face and checks her watch, it reads: "00:18:02."

Suddenly... The water swirls around her.

It's The Fire Boss...

Circling her from below.

Air bubbles rise behind her. She twists and turns keeping the bubbles in sight.

Emma sticks her glowing watch into the murk and sees -- only her shoes against the dark water.

Then...

A crimson glow comes from the very bottom of the pool.

It's small at first then it grows...

BELOW

The Fire Boss has sunk 100 feet to the bottom of the sump.

He is shooting a red flame up at Emma's feet. He flexes and the flame becomes WHITE HOT.

AT THE SURFACE

Emma is no longer shivering...

Steam begins to rise around her face.

Terror washes over her as she realizes his plan.

She scurries up onto the crate and out of the water but falls back in with a SPLASH!

More steam.

She tries again.

And falls again.

The water churns.

Emma SCREAMS!

She abandons the crate and swims for an ORE CART.

She launches herself in just as the water BOILS.

Emma watches cloudy sheets of steam fill the room when she YELPS!

At her feet she finds -- A leak.

She scoops the water out but...

She scalds her injured rope-wrapped hand.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Stop Cole, please!

The water rages.

Emma's face is red with sweat.

Water rises in her raft.

She lifts her feet out of the boiling water but slips -- her foot plunges in.

She SCREAMS and yanks out her pink poached ankle.

She looks over the side of her floating cart. The water is at a rolling boil. Nowhere to run.

Emma rocks in her tiny sinking ship.

Her eyes turn to the sky for help...

The white steamy clouds float up the shaft like a chute to the heavens when...

She sees it.

The dangling ore cart is being lowered from the winze.

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
Emma, get in!

Emma clammers in and Dr. Burns tugs her up to the...

INT. MINE - WINZE - NIGHT

Hand-over-hand Dr. Burns pulls Emma to safety. He is slathered in mud. Steam licks at Emma's heels.

Emma leaps into his arms.

They hug.

DR. BURNS
Are you alright?

EMMA
Yes, yes I'm alright.

DR. BURNS
Are you alright?

EMMA
I didn't think you'd come.

She squeezes him.

DR. BURNS
Of course.

EMMA
I saw you with that woman at your house. You moved on...

DR. BURNS
Sweetheart, I will never leave you.
Ever.

Dr. Burns hugs Emma tight.

DR. BURNS (CONT'D)
Where is Sadie?

He locks eyes with her.

EMMA
I think she's in the Gad House. I
don't know.

Her eyes flick to the steam rising from the sump.

EMMA (CONT'D)
We need to keep moving. He'll find
us.

DR. BURNS
Who?

EMMA
Cole. He did this. He called Icka.

DR. BURNS
I know the way out. I'm going to
get you safe and find Sadie. I
promise.

INT. MINE - AIR VENT ENTRY - MOMENTS LATER

They stop half-way down the passage.

Dr. Burns points up.

DR. BURNS
It will be a tight squeeze for
fifty-yards or so. It goes right to
the surface.

Emma inspects the hole in the ceiling -- It's just wide
enough to fit a small adult.

He boosts her up.

Emma crawls into...

THE AIR VENT

It is tight as a tomb. Roots weave their way through, loosening the soil around heavy rocks that beg to drop.

Emma's breath quickens.

She checks her watch: "06:27"

EMMA

I don't have my pills. How long
will it take to get out?

Emma gazes down the hole to Dr. Burns who fishes in his pocket.

DR. BURNS

You will be fine.

In Dr. Burns' hand is -- the spare jar of prescription pills.

He cocks back his hand to toss when...

WHOOSH!

Orange light blazes down the tunnel.

Just as the inferno licks at his heels Dr. Burns rolls out of the way and into a muddy ditch. The pills -- sink into the muck.

EMMA

Up, up, up!

Dr. Burns gets to his feet.

Emma hangs from the roof with her hand out.

He reaches and they clasp hands.

But Dr. Burns' muddy hand slides right through Emma's.

It's getting hotter.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Try again!

DR. BURNS

Emma, it is fine.

EMMA

He'll kill you!

Burns tosses Emma his lighter.

DR. BURNS
I'm going to find Sadie.

WHOOSH!

Dr. Burns takes cover.

Emma slides back into the vent.

She's panicking- crying.

EMMA
Please don't leave me, please!

It breaks Dr. Burns' heart to abandon her like this.

He waves her away.

DR. BURNS
Hide! And remember your mantra, you
don't need the pills!

Dr. Burns looks back at the surging flames then races away.

INT. MINE - AIR VENT - CONTINUOUS

The vent is tight.

Emma is slithering more than crawling her way through the passage.

The great BOOT FALLS of The Fire Boss sweep under the hall below Emma's belly.

She freezes.

Her heart BEATS in her throat.

He's Closer...

Closer...

He passes.

EMMA
(whispering)
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two. Cashmere roses, wicker
shakes, twenty-two...

She squirms through the passage. Eyes pinched shut.

Then-

ECHOING VOICES reach her ears.

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
Cole?

FEET RUN.

THE FIRE BOSS (O.S.)
Burns... She didn't come for you?

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
What are you?
(Beat)
You marked the guest room.

THE FIRE BOSS (O.S.)
My mistake.

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
No!

MORE RUNNING

DR. BURNS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hey, no-no-no-no!

TICK-TICK-TICK-WHOOSH!

Dr. Burns SHRIEKS like a stuck pig.

The space is so tight Emma can't bring her hands to cover her ears. She must listen to him die.

EMMA
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

She SCREAMS it!

EMMA (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two!

Tears run down her face.

The roaring fire below her rages.

The vent seems to constrict around Emma.

Sweat pours from her brow.

We can hear Emma's HEARTBEAT and it is POUNDING!

Her voice becomes a WHEEZE- She's breathing through a straw.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses... Wicker shakes...
twenty-two...

PANIC ATTACK MONTAGE #2

A series of POV images flash:

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses...

- We look up at an embroidered rose on blue cashmere undulating. It walks away from us revealing it's a design on the robe of a YOUNG WOMAN. We cannot see her face. She carries a lit candle down a long dark hall.

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Wicker shakes...

- We slide under a bed to a woven hatbox. The hatbox lid POPS up and falls. Something is inside trying to get out.

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Twenty-two...

- We move in on a door at the end of a long dark hall. THREE KNOCKS then a HARROWING SCREAM from inside.

END MONTAGE

The earth shifts around Emma. Rocks fall. Dust flies-

It's some kind of earthquake.

Emma's eyes spring open wide full of shock!

Her body seizes.

Her left arm locks up.

She passes out.

INT. MINE - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Dr. Burns' burnt body is thrown into a locker by the hulking Fire Boss. He slams the door shut.

The tag to this one reads: "13 - SEED SOWER"

The Fire Boss marches off into the mine.

Blood oozes from locker 13...

It flows onto a gnarled tree root that sucks up the blood.

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - NIGHT

Sadie wrestles with the root that has invaded her mouth.

Her screams are muted to mere whimpers.

Suddenly the root begins to excrete tar.

Sadie's eyes fill with panic.

The black sludge flushes from the corners of her mouth, nose, ears and eyes.

She wrenches the root out of her body.

SADIE

Help me!

The room fills.

INT. MINE - DRIFT - NIGHT

The Fire Boss marches down the hall. Pauses. Inspects. Continues.

THE FIRE BOSS

It's done Emma!

He listens.

THE FIRE BOSS (CONT'D)

She has what she needs. She doesn't need you anymore.

He plods along.

THE FIRE BOSS (CONT'D)

This will be quicker than starving to death.

His words echo down the lonely hall.

THE FIRE BOSS (CONT'D)

Why wait? We're all dead here...

There's a sudden noise.

The Fire Boss pauses. Listens. Nothing.

The noise again...

It's distant but unmistakable.

It is Emma's watch timer...

BEEP-BEEP! BEEP-BEEP!

The Fire Boss SPARKS UP.

THE FIRE BOSS (CONT'D)
Good girl.

INT. MINE - AIR VENT - NIGHT

Emma's alarm is BLARING.

Her eyelids lift.

She attempts to silence the watch on her right wrist but her left arm won't move. It just flops at her side.

She can't shut it off.

SADIE (O.S.)
Help me!

EMMA
Sadie...

WHOOSH!

A plume of flame flashes through the vent.

THE FIRE BOSS (O.S.)
Your pills are right here in my pocket. Give me a kiss and you can have one.

BELOW

The Fire Boss waits for an answer.

EMMA
Sadie, I'm here!

WHOOSH!

He blasts again.

THE FIRE BOSS
Sadie? She's done. Come down and I'll show you.

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - NIGHT

SADIE

Help!

The tar is now inches from the ceiling. The roots snake around Sadie. Her nostrils just peeking above the sludge.

Emma's CHIRPING alarm echoes into the room.

BEEP-BEEP, BEEP-BEEP.

SADIE (CONT'D)

Emma!

INT. MINE - AIR VENT - NIGHT

Sadie's cries reach Emma's ears!

SADIE (O.S.)

Emma, help me!

Emma strikes the lighter Dr. Burns gave her.

She crawls...

Flames shoot up behind her.

Emma keeps moving and reaches a fork in the vent.

Sadie's CHOKING CRIES echo from both directions... Thick roots come from only one end.

Emma checks her BEEPING watch -- It flashes: "00:00"

She lets it chirp a moment longer and makes a decision...

Emma bites the watch strap and removes the watch from her wrist. She launches the watch as far as she can down one vent...

Then crawls through the other... Where the roots grow.

INT. MINE - DRIFT - NIGHT

The Fire Boss quiets his flame. He listens...

The watch's ALARM reaches his ears.

He SPARKS his wrist flames...

And chases the sound deep into the mine.

INT. MINE - GAD HOUSE - NIGHT

Emma emerges from a hole in the wall.

She falls into the room on the other side of the Demonic Chapel, the room whose door was indestructible...

The room is tall and littered with pickaxes, lanterns and empty dynamite crates. Roots grow downward in a column from the roof and stab into the ground below.

SADIE (O.S.)

EMMA!

Sadie's cries come from below Emma's feet.

The roots in the room are depressing the floor, smashing Sadie just beneath the surface.

Emma takes up a pickaxe and swings away at the soil. She hacks the roots and stabs the dirt.

The ground weeps tar.

The roots bleed black.

Emma's pickaxe finally breaks into the chamber below creating -- a peephole the size of a silver dollar. Emma hauls back the pickaxe for another blow when...

An eye fills the peephole in the ground.

Emma tosses the pickaxe aside and falls to the floor, eye to eye with the peephole.

She strains to see into the darkness below.

EMMA

Are you okay?

The eye in the peephole blinks...

The pupil constricts to nothing, leaving the eye a vacant glowing white. Tiny black tree roots pipe into the cornea like blood vessels.

Emma crawls to her pickaxe and goes back to work digging into the pit below.

Long tarred fingers emerge from the peephole...

Emma works so hard she doesn't notice.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I'm here! I'm right here!

The black fingers dig themselves out...

BOOM!

The Gad House door is slammed from the other side.

Emma looks back to the peephole and sees -- Two sticky arms birthing itself from the ground. The arms give way to...

REBORN ICKA, she is a hybrid of Sadie and something else... Half-tree-half-woman and covered in tar. Her skin is soft tree bark, roots grow into her spine and throughout her body, the ICKA SYMBOL on her forehead.

She tremors. Weak from delivery.

Reborn Icka ROARS!

Emma drives her pickaxe into one of the roots connected to Reborn Icka's spine.

Reborn Icka JOLTS in pain. SCREAMING in Sadie's voice.

Reborn Icka claws after her attacker.

Emma leaps on top of a crate.

Reborn Icka creeps closer brandishing her razor-sharp wooden teeth.

BOOM!

Another hard CRASH comes from behind the door.

THE FIRE BOSS (O.S.)
You'll die down here!

Reborn Icka drags herself inches from Emma's feet...

REBORN ICKA
You'll die down here like we did...

Emma looks at the lighter in her hand then up at the roof to -
- the hole where the roots grow from. There's a narrow passage between the roots.

Emma climbs.

Reborn Icka chases her.

Emma disappears into the chamber above.

REBORN ICKA (CONT'D)
 (To The Fire Boss behind
 the door)
 Get her up top...

INT. MINE - ICKA TRAP - MOMENTS LATER

Emma shimmies into the trap room where Icka died over one hundred years ago. The tiny fire from her lighter guiding the way.

It is cramped and overrun with roots.

Suddenly the tunnel shakes.

REBORN ICKA (O.S.)
 I'll burry you in there, you little
 slut!

Emma crawls toward the surface.

Her breath WHEEZING.

Her heartbeat RAGING.

Her pace slowing...

EMMA
 Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
 twenty-two...

REBORN ICKA (O.S.)
 You'll fuckin' rot and die in
 there, you sour cunt!

Emma's eyelids sag heavily-

A root whips, shaking dirt and rattling rocks.

BELOW

In the Gad House, Icka throttles a root lashing it with all her might.

REBORN ICKA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Suck the fire or eat the dirt, your
 choice!

ABOVE

Emma shimmies further and further up. The sawing root shrinking Emma's path.

A falling rock knocks her lighter out -- It's useless.

EMMA

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

Emma strikes the lighter and gets a flame.

She keeps crawling through the barrage of dirt and rock.

Inch by inch she wills herself up.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Cashmere roses, wicker shakes,
twenty-two...

She breathes in dirt and COUGHS out thick black mud. Her dirty drool spills down her face. Her eyes nearly shut.

The tunnel is so tight now her shoulder is pushed into her mouth.

The earth squeezes tight pinching her ribs and collapsing her lungs.

Emma keeps moving, when-

Her lighter finds something in the chaos -- The vacant eyes of a decapitated head, its mouth gaping wide open.

Next to the head -- a bony foot persevered in tar. Higher up, knees, then a torso and...

THE CORPSE OF ICKA CROMBIE.

Emma is face to face with Icka's old tarred grin. Dirt rains down sealing Emma's tunnel up completely.

Emma can't budge. The oxygen is gone.

She is tired...

Ready for sleep.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You never burned...

She sees something -- a STICK OF HERCULES DYNAMITE. The one Justin stuffed in Icka's throat all those years ago.

Emma wriggles her lighter toward the old explosive but...

The flame shrinks and goes out.

Emma STRIKES.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses...

The flame goes out...

Emma STRIKES.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Wicker shakes...

The flame goes out...

Emma STRIKES.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Twenty-two.

The flame goes out...

And stays out.

PANIC ATTACK MONTAGE #3

A series of POV images flash:

EMMA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Cashmere roses...

- We follow the Young Woman with the candle and the cashmere robe as she hovers down the hall. THUNDER BOOMS! The woman turns to face us, it's Emma's mom, YOUNG AMANDA (23). She is beautiful and smiling.

BREATHS hyperventilate.

YOUNG AMANDA
One breath at a time, Emma. You'll be alright.

Young Amanda opens her robe and YOUNG EMMA (5) cuddles up under the cashmere robe PANTING.

EMMA (O.S.)
Wicker shakes...

- We slide under a bed to a woven hatbox. The hatbox lid POPS up and falls excitedly. From inside the box comes a TWEET!

YOUNG EMMA (O.S.)
She's alive! She's alive!

DR. BURNS (O.S.)
I knew you could save her,
Sweetheart!

Young Emma's hand gently opens the hatbox revealing -- a small bird with a mending wing. Young Emma turns to YOUNG DR. BURNS. They hug.

EMMA (O.S.)
Twenty-two...

- We move in on a door at the end of a long dark hall. THREE KNOCKS then a SCREAM from inside. The doors push open. Young Amanda lays on a delivery table. A NURSE hands her a small bundle.

Young Amanda notices us coming in. A GROUP of people let us through...

YOUNG AMANDA
Come in Sweetheart, it's okay.

We approach the bedside.

YOUNG AMANDA (CONT'D)
You know what day it is?

YOUNG EMMA
Twenty-two?

Young Amanda laughs.

YOUNG AMANDA
Yeah, it's your sister's birthday.

Young Amanda dips the bundle. Emma and BABY SADIE meet eyes for the very first time...

YOUNG AMANDA (CONT'D)
Do you love her?

BACK TO SCENE

Emma is cocooned in dirt. Lungs flat. Eyes just open.

She breathes one breath-

At.

A.

Time.

EXT. BLACK WALNUT TREE - DAY

The rain comes down hard.

Lightning dances in the sky.

Thunder ROARS.

The tree sits how Dr. Burns left it... His car smashed into its trunk.

The sun rises somewhere behind the storm.

The scene of raw nature plays out for a moment when...

The ground at the foot of the tree flexes.

Thunder roars.

SOMETHING breaks the surface.

It's Emma's hand.

She pulls her body out of the earth, very much alive. Her eyes smolder. Focused.

She drags a rope from the hole, the one that was wrapped around her hand to stop the bleeding. One end is tied around her wrist, the other end disappears down into the hole she crawled from.

Emma drags herself...

TO DR. BURNS' CAR

She throws open the door and pushes the cigarette lighter in.

She waits in agony for the lighter to heat.

Rain TAPS the sheet metal.

Thunder BOOMS in the distance.

CLICK!

The lighter pops out hot and ready-

Emma is ripped out of the car.

THE FIRE BOSS

Is pulling her hand-over-hand towards him.

THE FIRE BOSS
I was worried you got buried!

Emma claws her nails into the ground but it's no use. He's too powerful.

He pulls her into a bear hug. She is face to face with the monster.

Emma shivers.

EMMA
No.

The Fire Boss wraps his fingers around Emma's rope -- The rope crosses his wrist catching on his igniter.

THE FIRE BOSS
Embrace this...

TICK-TICK-TICK!

The Fire Boss's ignitor throws three SPARKS and catches the rope on fire.

It SPARKLES burning in two directions.

EMMA
I never really loved you.

The flame sizzles around her wrist burning to ash.

The other end CRACKLES down into the hole at the base of the tree.

THE FIRE BOSS
You'll learn to...

THE FUSE

Races down the hole.

THE FIRE BOSS

Pulls Emma in tight. His large hands wrap around her skull -- His flame throwers point into her ears.

THE FIRE BOSS (CONT'D)
With the warmth from my heart.

THE FUSE

Rages into Icka's den -- up her bones -- and ends in her throat... AT THE DYNAMITE.

THE FIRE BOSS

Strikes his ignitors...

Tick-T-

BOOM!

The dynamite blasts from below and launches the Fire Boss. Emma is thrown free from his hold.

The Black Walnut Tree erupts in flames. Its knotted limbs melting like candle wax.

The Fire Boss is on his hands and knees squirming. Crawling toward Emma who-

SMASHES a rock into his skull.

TICK-TICK-TICK

The Boss's wrists spark but TAR splatters from his flame throwers.

His body deflates into a puddle of goo joining the melting tree that pours into the hole it once grew from.

Emma watches the sludge that was The Fire Boss trickle into the tree hole.

All at once she is alone in the rain...

A SHRILL SCREAM echoes out of the mine. It's Reborn Icka from down below.

EMMA

Sadie!

Emma crawls on her hands and knees to the edge of the sinkhole and peeks over...

Gooey tar slops onto the Gad House floor. SOMETHING moves down there.

BELOW

It walks crooked and weak. It's covered in tar...

TARRED WALKER

Emma?

It's Sadie.

Emma pulls her sister out of the mine hole to...

THE SURFACE

They hug.

EMMA
Sadie-

SADIE
I'm okay, Emma.

EMMA
I thought I lost you. I thought I
was alone.

The rain lets up. Streaks of sun shine through the parting clouds.

Emma does her best to clean her sister's face.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I was so scared.

Sadie smiles.

SADIE
And you did it anyway.

Emma reaches into her pocket and pulls out -- Sadie's charm bracelet. She fastens it around Sadie's wrist.

They squeeze each other tight.

And follow the road back home...

We stay by the tarry pit, watching the sludge drip into the earth.

There's a FAINT CLANG from below...

INT. MINE - LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The long hall leading to the locker room is littered with burning tree roots.

LOUDER CLANGING.

A root as wide as a barrel gets our attention... It's PULSING.

We follow this root through the locker room to the back where it grows into a locker.

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG!

The door hangs crooked but we see the tag clearly: "13 - SEED SOWER"

The fat root writhes and catches fire, melting like a candle.

We hang in the quiet room for a moment. The spot fires around us licking toward the mine roof when...

Locker 13 CREAKS open.

EYES in the dark catch the firelight.

A grin shines out of the dark.

SPLAT!

Tar explodes from the locker splattering dozens of glossy TAR BALLS everywhere...

One of the tar balls rolls into a stream of water and washes clean...

It's a BLACK WALNUT.

It follows the stream through the dark mine...

Out into the sunshine...

Through the valley into...

EXT. WALNUT FARM - DAY

Where it washes out through a culvert beside a grove of walnut trees.

It tumbles to the feet of CARL (30), a picker, carrying a crate of walnuts. He picks up the grotesque Black Walnut...

His face sours on inspection.

He is about to chuck it when...

MIKE (O.S.)
Hurry up, ain't got all day.

Carl snarls and lets the nut drop into the crate among the friendlier looking walnuts...

AT MIKE'S TRUCK

Carl drops the crate into the truck's bed.

The diner owner, Mike, is there drooling over a WORKER GIRL (16).

MIKE (CONT'D)
That it, son?

CARL
That's it.

MIKE
They as good as the last bunch?

Mike snatches one from the crate -- THE BLACK WALNUT and shoves it in his pocket.

Carl smiles.

CARL
You bet.

INT./EXT. MIKE'S TRUCK

Mike drives his truck down the rural highway back toward town.

He holds the Black Walnut out of the window and crushes it in his hand.

Without batting an eye he blows the shell pieces from his palm...

And shovels the walnut meat into his mouth.

THE END.