

T H E  
N O W H E R E  
G A M E

Written

by

Alex

Pototsky

**OVER BLACK -**

A scanner beeps. It beeps again.

**INT. SAFEWAY - NIGHT**

The harsh fluorescent glow of supermarket bulbs. An ATTENDANT is scanning canned goods, matches, garbage bags, bottled water. They look up at the customer, smiling, bored.

ATTENDANT  
Heading up north?

There's no response. We don't see the customer's face.

They pay in cash.

**EXT. SAFEWAY PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

The customer pushes the cart full of bags to a beat-up sedan set away in the shadows. The lot is nearly empty, but they parked here anyway.

He starts loading the bags into the backseat. Not the trunk.

**EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT**

We watch from across the lot as the customer fills up a brand new 5-gallon gas can. There's no one else at the station.

**EXT. COUNTY ROAD - NIGHT**

The sedan reaches the edge of a western town's business road. One final fast food restaurant. One last bank.

The edge of civilization. In the distance, dark mountains loom, blanketed by woods. Words appear across them.

**"THE NOWHERE GAME"**

The car heads on, high beams the only light but the moon.

**EXT. WILDERNESS - MORNING**

It's not quite dawn. Deep in the wilderness. The sedan drives along a rimy two-track path. The stars are fading into sky.

The car crosses a cattle guard, passing through an open gate. Off to the side, a sign reads in reflective red and yellow:

*"WARNING: UNINCORPORATED WILDERNESS AHEAD. NO RANGER STATIONS. PROCEED WITH EXTREME CAUTION."*

**INT. CAR - MORNING**

For the first time, we see **THE MAN** (40's) face. He keeps his eyes on the road as the wheel jerks around. The radio plays a country song that's being swallowed by static.

The Man pulls a cigarette out of his jacket pocket and slides it into his mouth. He clicks on the interior light to pull a lighter from the glove compartment, but there's nothing inside except makeup trays, chapstick, and Starbucks napkins.

Shaking his head, he puts the cigarette back in his pocket. His eyes glare in the rear-view. Beneath, a picture of two girls hangs off the mirror in a glittery frame.

This is not his car.

**EXT. WILDERNESS - MORNING**

The car pulls into a clearing and stops. The Man clambers out, walks back to the trunk, and pulls it open.

Lying inside, tied up and gagged, are two girls.

Their hands and legs are bound, and they're bruised and bleeding. The Man reaches in and grabs the first girl. She tries to scream through the gag as he lifts her out.

This is **ALLISON ELLIOT** (20). She's short. She goes by "Allie." Her bruises hurt.

The Man drops her to the ground like a duffel bag. She doesn't move. The Man reaches into the trunk to pull out the second girl. She's heavier. Built. Like she plays soccer.

This is **CARIN MCCARRAGH** (20). She's taller. It's pronounced like "Corinne." Her bruises don't hurt.

Carin kicks The Man's leg and tries to get away but the attempt is feeble. He grabs her and pushes her down onto the ground, holding his hand against her neck.

The Man pulls a tactical knife from his jacket and saws off the ropes tying Carin's legs. She tries to kick him in the face again. He grabs her left leg and sits on her right.

He holds the knife up to her face to make sure she sees it, and cuts a small gash into her ankle. She groans. He holds up the blade again, to make sure she can see the blood.

He pulls Carin up by her collar. She stares at him, defiant. When he pulls up Allie, she looks hopeless.

The Man returns to the car, digging through the backseat. While he's away, Carin looks to the dazed Allie. She puts her forehead on Allie's, trying to speak to her through the gag.

Allie looks back at her, so terrified she can't think.

The car door slams and the man returns, wearing a trekking backpack, carrying the grocery bags. He kicks Carin's back to split the girls apart, and she staggers forward.

She looks into the woods. They're endless.

From behind her, a muffled scream. Carin whips around.

The Man is behind Allie. He's putting a blindfold on her. He ties it tight, turning towards Carin. Her eyes go wide, and she turns away, trying to run. She doesn't get far.

From behind, the man clubs her head with something hard.

Everything goes dark.

**BEGIN CREDITS, OVER A BLACK SCREEN -**

Beneath the titles, we hear a series of sounds.

Carin's breathing. Intense, labored.

Fallen branches crunch as boots stomp through snow. Birds flap their wings, taking flight from the treetops.

Two pairs of footsteps. One light and erratic, the other heavy and confident. Almost militaristic.

Then...everything else starts to fade out, slowly. There's only one sound remaining:

A river. Nearby. The Man is following the river.

The sound fades out into silence.

As the titles end, the blindfold is ripped off and -

**INT. SMALL CABIN - DAY**

Light rushes, blinding and hazy. Carin blinks awake, trying to come to, squinting into the glare.

A fresh bright bruise on her temple. It felt like a dream.

It wasn't.

Realizing where she is, Carin bolts upright, looking around.

She's in a small cabin. It's one room and a loft, with a kitchenette bearing a propane stove topped by a kettle, a fireplace, an icebox, cabinets, and a small kitchen table.

Sitting in a chair, eyes wide open...is *Allie*.

Allie has a cup of tea. She looks nearly comatose. Carin scrambles to her side. As she does, she realizes her gag has been removed. Her hands are still bound.

CARIN

Allie! Hey, hey. Are you ok? *Allie*.

Allie doesn't say anything, staring into the distance.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Allison, come on. Please. Are you hurt? Did he hurt you? Talk to me.

Carin looks down at the cup of tea in her hand.

CARIN (CONT'D)

What's this?

Before Allie can answer, the door to the cabin opens. Carin stands up, her back against the wall. The Man enters. He looks over at Carin, and with a blank voice:

THE MAN

Good. You're up.

He's carrying the grocery bags. He sets them on the counter.

CARIN

Who are you?

The Man doesn't answer. He grabs another cup from the cabinet and pours another cup of tea. He sets it on the table, and pulls his knife from his jacket. Carin flinches.

THE MAN

Wrists.

He gestures at her bindings. Carin hesitates...and presents them. He saws off the ropes as she watches. Carin turns her hands over. Her wrists are red and raw.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

You're a tough girl. I had to carry you a long way.

CARIN  
What's wrong with Allie?

THE MAN  
(shrugging)  
You tell *me*. She better snap out of  
it soon.  
(nodding)  
Drink your tea.

She looks at the cup, untrusting.

CARIN  
What did you put in it?

THE MAN  
*Tea.*  
(beat, then)  
If I was going to kill you, I'd  
have done it already.

The Man walks back over to the kitchenette and digs through the grocery bags. He pulls out plastic sealed packs of beef jerky and puts them on a plate for Carin and Allie.

CARIN  
...we're vegetarian.

The Man stares. Then, he laughs, shaking his head. He cracks open a Bang energy drink and starts making himself a white bread and jerky sandwich. His nonchalance chills Carin.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Hey man. I asked you who you are.

THE MAN  
Look behind you.

Carin turns. Set up on a desk behind them is a computer. The desk is outfitted with a gaming chair, three monitors, a webcam, and a performance keyboard. The Man eats and talks.

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
I play a game professionally for an  
audience that watches and wagers  
online.  
(chewing, then)  
You're going to play it with me.

CARIN  
You're like...a streamer?

THE MAN  
I'll show you. It's almost time.

The Man finishes his shitty sandwich and wipes his hands on his pants. He walks past Carin and turns on the computer. She watches, mystified. Allie continues to stare, dissociating.

The computer boots, and the three monitors wake from sleep.

He is a streamer. Or something.

Each monitor has a different purpose: the left shows a Discord-style chatroom. The center has a video screen for him to speak, currently in-active. The right shows a leaderboard.

On top of the video-screen, a title reads -

*"Countdown to **The Nowhere Game: DoubleTrouble 6:07:10**"*

The seconds tick away.

The Man turns back to Carin, who watches, wary.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

That's me. #3.

He points at the #3 name on the leaderboard: *"AvengingAzrael"*

CARIN

...what's the game?

THE MAN

You're gonna be good at it.

The Man takes a key ring from his belt and walks over to the wood-paneled wall near the fireplace. He kneels down, pulling out a loose plank. Behind, a small-keyhole is visible. As he turns the key, he looks back at Carin...and *smiles*.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

*Watch this.*

Hidden inside the wall...is an armory.

Assault weapons, semi-automatics, submachine guns, pistols, hunting rifles, and blades line the shelves from the floor to the ceiling. Carin staggers backwards. The Man turns to her.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Pick one.

CARIN

What?

THE MAN

*Pick one.* I get extra points if you choose.

CARIN  
You mean, for me to use?

THE MAN  
For *me* to use. On *you*.

Carin stares at The Man. She grabs Allie's hand.

CARIN  
I thought you said...you weren't going to kill us.

THE MAN  
Well...not yet.  
(beat)  
Only when I catch you.  
(Carin doesn't understand)  
That's the game.

Carin looks at the screens. Her eyes fill with tears. Seeing it now...she understands.

CARIN  
The "game" is you...*hunting* us?

She reads the Discord chat.

*"Azrael i'm not worthy deliver us fresh meat Lord Kekreal"*

*"The little one is a keeper, donated"*

*"do you think I can watch at work? XD"*

Carin looks back, horrified.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Oh my god. You're a fucking maniac.

THE MAN  
I'm an apex predator. What's it gonna be?

Carin gapes. She doesn't speak. The Man's mood darkens.

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
Silence isn't going to save you. I told you to pick. Now tell me what -

ALLIE  
*That.*

Carin's attention snaps down to Allie, who has moved for the first time. She points forward, her arm slouched and limp, at a large, green crossbow in the corner. The Man picks it up.

## THE MAN

This is a Barnett Ghost 420. That 420 means that it shoots an arrow 420 feet in a second. That's longer than a football field. Any more force and the arrow would explode.

He mimes an explosion, and hangs the bow over his shoulder.

## THE MAN (CONT'D)

You have a six hour headstart. Most girls get 4, but if I want to win the season I need the time bonus.

(beat)

You also both get an allotment.

The Man reaches back into the closet armory and grabs two burlap sacks, handing one to each Carin and Allie. They each include a knife, a rope, a small metal water bottle, a woolen shawl, a flashlight, and a little black rock.

## THE MAN (CONT'D)

You can try and escape. Find somewhere to go. Higher ground. Climb a tree. Find a cave. Whatever you want. No one knows where you are except for me. No one is coming. No one will find you.

He tosses Carin the car keys. She turns them in her fingers.

## THE MAN (CONT'D)

There's a full can of gas in the car, if you can make it.

(beat)

You have six hours. And then I'll come for you.

Carin pulls Allie in close. The Man walks to his computer.

## THE MAN (CONT'D)

Hey.

(he hits a button)

*Smile.*

The webcam kicks on. Carin and Allie's terrified faces are visible in the frame. The Discord springs to life, the viewers all sending the same message:

**"Huzzah to an honorable hunt!!"**

A chime rings on the screen as the clock hits "6:00:00." Carin looks into The Man's eyes. He nods his head.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

*Boo.*

Carin grabs Allie's hand...and dashes out the door.

**EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS**

Carin bursts out the door with Allie right behind her. Her boot immediately punctures a pile of snow up to her ankles, and they're reduced to flailing and stomping. Carin leads Allie past the cabin into a gap in the trees.

There are two sets of footprints leading from the cabin - the way they came.

CARIN

Step in the footprints!

ALLIE

What?

CARIN

Follow the footprints! It's faster!

Carin marches through the snow, placing her feet directly in their footprints from the walk up. She turns around to watch Allie mirror her. Allie's making a bit of a mess.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Come on, Allie. *Hurry!*

The trees are enveloping. The branches coil together and trunks brush shoulders. So few people have ever been through them that the trees had no reason to part.

**EXT. WOODS - LATER**

Both girls are out of breath. They've been running for a while. The snow is lighter here and their tracks are harder to follow. Allie collapses to the ground, heaving.

CARIN

Allie. Come on. Come on. We have to keep going.

ALLIE

Car, what's happening? Is this real life? Is this really happening?

Carin tries to help her to her feet. Allie slumps down.

CARIN

Come on, come on, come on, you can do it.  
Al, this is nothing.

She gets Allie's arm around her shoulder.

ALLIE

Was it...? What happened?

CARIN

Don't worry about it now, ok? Worry  
about that when we get out of here.

ALLIE

Did we drink something? Was he  
watching us? Where were we?

Carin starts to help her walk, moving her feet for her.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Carin, I need a minute.

CARIN

No, we can't stop yet. Come on, Al.  
If you could make it through one of  
Melissa's fucking two-a-days, you  
can make it through this.

Allie slouches down and her knees hit the ground.

ALLIE

Carin...C...I...but...

She flops towards the ground. For a moment, she loses  
complete control of her muscles.

Carin grabs her shoulders and starts to lift her back up.  
She's supporting almost all of Allie's weight, the only thing  
keeping her from landing face-first in the snow.

CARIN

(doing an impression)  
*"Pick up the pace ladies! Hustle  
ladies hustle!"*

Allie - her eyes closed - flashes a flicker of a smile. Carin  
sees it and keeps going.

CARIN (CONT'D)

*"You have Mesa State in 21 days,  
ladies! Let's go Blackfish! Why are  
you running like fucking Fat Amy!?"*

Allie's begins to put one foot in front of the other.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
*"Countdown, Countdown! Last two  
 when I countdown do three more  
 laps. 5...4...3...2 - "*

ALLIE  
 - shut...the fuck up!

Allie and Carin both start laughing. They move towards a break in the woods. Carin turns around and flashes meaningful eyes at Allie. *"Did-we-do-it?"* eyes.

Carin, excited, starts to jog ahead of Allie. Allie even manages to pick up the pace. The closer Carin gets, the faster she's moving. It's a large gap.

A branchless blue sky is visible for the first time.

Carin runs until she's practically sprinting. Closer and closer and closer until....the smile drops from her lips:

The clearing is full of tree stumps in a circle 80 feet wide. Paths stretch out in every direction.

They're in the heart of a maze.

In the center of the clearing, Carin sees a sign nailed onto the tallest stump. A message is written, in old ink:

*"Welcome to The Nowhere Game. Which way will you go? :)"*

She stares at the page. Behind her...a small voice:

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
 Car...  
 (louder)  
 Carin.

Carin turns, slowly. Allie's eyes are wide. She's frozen. When Carin sees what she sees, she gasps, covering her mouth.

Hanging from a tree at the edge of the clearing...

Is the decayed body of a girl their age.

The body is falling apart, but still wearing her jacket. It's open. Carved into her torso, The Man has written:

**#1.**

Allie starts to scream. She falls to her knees and grips the snow-dusted ground. She screams again. Carin runs up and puts her hands on Allie's back. She tries to hug her.

Allie alternates between pushing her away, and clinging desperately to her friend. Carin stares into the distance.

There is nothing she can say.

**EXT. CLEARING - A BIT LATER**

Allie sits on a stump facing one of the paths.

She's gazing blankly ahead, a thousand yard stare.

A Roman Numeral "IX" is carved on a tree at the head of the trail. Allie lingers on the path, as if it's watching her.

A hand lands on her shoulder, and Allie jumps. It's Carin.

CARIN

Hey. You ok?

Allie looks up at her friend - her eyes puffy from crying.

ALLIE

(small)

What are we going to do?

CARIN

(with a deep breath)

We're gonna do this. Come here.

Carin pulls Allie to her feet and leads her to the center of the circle. Every trail has a Roman Numeral carved on a tree, but they're not a sequence - I, III, V, VI, VIII, IX, and XI.

Carin sees Allie's paralyzed fear. She stops, pulling her in.

CARIN (CONT'D)

We're gonna be fine ok? Look at me.  
This is what I do. I hike, climb,  
and camp. I live in the woods. He  
fucked up by picking us.

Allie snuffles. Carin is intense. Allie nods, believing her.

CARIN (CONT'D)

We have five and half hours before  
he even *starts* looking for us.

ALLIE

If he's not lying.

CARIN

I don't think he's lying. It's a  
game, right? Games have rules.

ALLIE  
Unless you cheat.

CARIN  
Well, *either way*, I've been looking around and I think that the best way to go is that way.

She points down the path marked **XI**.

ALLIE  
Why?

CARIN  
When we got here this morning, the sun was behind the mountains which were on our left.

She points up at the sky and traces her hand along the sun's path in the sky.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
It's rising from over there. That means that we came from whichever trail crosses that path, uh, *perpendicularly*, or whatever. We were walking alongside a river this morning. We need to find it. I think it's that way.  
(reading the tree)  
*Xi*.

ALLIE  
*Xi*?

CARIN  
The name carved on that tree. I don't know what it means.

ALLIE  
....You think that says "*Xi*?"  
(Carin doesn't get it)  
That's an 11. These are all numbered. Roman Numerals like X - I. You thought it said *Xi*? As in like, *Jinping*?

Allie starts to laugh. Even here, she still finds it funny.

CARIN  
Ok, I'm sorry I don't know *Roman Numerals*. How do you know that?

ALLIE  
How do you *not*?

CARIN  
Because I'm not *Roman*? Because it's  
not the year 2 and I have an  
iPhone.

Allie can't stop laughing. Carin is actually annoyed. This is  
the usual way she responds to being wrong.

ALLIE  
Ok. I'm not making fun of you. It's  
just funny.

CARIN  
It doesn't make sense *anyway*. How  
is that number 11 when there are  
only 7 trails?

Allie looks around. It doesn't take her long to realize:

ALLIE  
They're not numbered. It's a *clock*.  
What does that mean?

CARIN  
I don't give a fuck what it means.  
(starting to walk)  
Let's find the river, *Octavius*.

Allie watches her walk, amused by her friend's dedication.

But when her eyes once again fall on the girls' body hanging  
by the tree, her smile fades. She gulps, frozen again.

From behind, Carin grabs her head, turning it towards her.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Look at me.  
(dead serious)  
If he tries to hurt you, Allison,  
he's going to die screaming.  
(beat)  
Do you understand that? Do you?  
(Allie nods)  
Come on. Let's get out of here.

They walk on. Allie doesn't spare another look.

**EXT. TRAIL - LATER**

Carin and Allie are stamping on another trail. The woods are a bit more spaced out. There are no footprints down the trail. But they aren't far enough away.

CARIN

You know, I've been thinking I might not take any polisci credits next semester. I talked to Joanna about it and she was thinking it might be a good idea for me to wait and take it next year if I go abroad in the spring because the London program is apparently really good. She thinks I should take a master seminar instead.

(she carries on)

I thought that you might want to...um...you might want to take the Postdramatic Theater class that Idina took and said was great. The one that Linklater teaches?

(baiting for a reply)

You know?

ALLIE

Sorry, what? What are you talking about?

CARIN

The most important thing in these situations is to stay positive.

ALLIE

In *what* situations?

Carin doesn't have an answer. Allie wants to give attitude, but she knows Carin is trying to help.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I guess. Sure, maybe.

CARIN

Maybe what?

ALLIE

Maybe I'll take the Postdramatic Theater class. Sounds *thrilling*.

Allie slows, as she sees marks on the ground. They scare her.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

What are those?

Carin doesn't look down. She already knows what Allie means.

CARIN

Tracks.

ALLIE

...what kind of tracks?

CARIN

I don't know. Small tracks.

ALLIE

Those aren't bears tracks are they?

CARIN

No.

ALLIE

You're *sure* those aren't bears tracks? How can you tell?

CARIN

Why are you saying "bears" tracks?  
Just say *bear* tracks -

There's a rustling in the bush. Allie shrieks. Carin ducks down and pulls the knife out of her rucksack. Allie falls to the ground and throws her hands over the back of her head.

ALLIE

It's a bear it's a bear it's a bear  
it's a bear...

Carin raises the knife towards the trees near them. She takes a step back, as the rustling happens again. She can't find the source. Allie squeals again.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

AHH! It's a bear, oh my god...

CARIN

*Allie, shut the fuck up.*

The rustling is coming closer. Carin stands over Allie with her knife raised. She steels her expression, as if a stern face and a strong jaw will save them.

The noise comes closer and closer. And then it's upon them.

A deer.

Carin relaxes and frowns. Allie is crying on the ground underneath them. Carin reaches down to pull her up.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Come on, it's nothing.

Allie can't get herself up.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
A, it's a deer. Come on.

Allie nods, but she still doesn't move. Carin keeps walking.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Fine, stay there with your *bears tracks*.

Allie gets up to follow her, and the rustling scares the deer into the bushes. She yells after, to Allie.

ALLIE  
It's a possessive "s." As in, they belong to the bear. *Bear's Tracks*.

**AND WE SEE:**

The girls trek through forest. They pass small semi-frozen creeks and clearings. A hillside is covered in snow,

Pine trees, and aspens; trees with dead branches, some with dead leaves clinging to them.

They walk, on and on;

and the sun begins to set.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**OVER BLACK -**

A bell chimes.

**INT. SMALL CABIN - LATE AFTERNOON**

The glow of the computer screen is the only light in the room. The Man is sitting in front of it, wearing a devil mask and dressed for the elements. It's almost time.

THE MAN  
Alright, here we go.

The clock is counting down: 6...5...4...

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
3...2...1.

The Man shoulders his crossbow, and stands.

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
The hunt begins.

He's wearing a helmet with a mounted GoPro. He turns it on, and flashes a thumbs up, before turning off the computer.

He opens the door...and heads out, into the woods.

**EXT. BOULDERSIDE - LATE AFTERNOON**

Allie and Carin reach a large *erratic* sticking out of a grove of shorter aspen trees on a hillside.

It's not a mountain. It's just a rock, pushed by an old glacier, long melted. But it's an *exceptionally* large one. Smaller pieces that have fallen off lie abandoned around the edges, like piglets trying to suckle at the mother.

From the ground, it's obvious that the top of the boulder peaks out above the trees. It's *that* big. Carin walks up and runs her hand along it's edge. It's a straight cliff face with a deep crack leading almost all the way to the top.

CARIN  
This is like a 5.14c at least.

ALLIE  
A what?

CARIN  
A fucking Olympic-grade climbing rock. When we get out of here I'll have Outside magazine let me write a feature about it. People would fly here to climb this. For real.

Carin runs her hand along the rock. Allie's restless.

ALLIE  
Ok, cool. Can we keep moving?

Carin is staring at something nestled in the rock. *Is it...?*

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Car? Can we keep moving?

Carin pulls something out of the crack. *It's a note.* It's hard to read, scrawled on wet paper in berry juice.

CARIN

*"My name is Rebecca Sale. My parents are John and Carrie Sale. A man is trying to kill me. It is August 2023. If you find this, follow me up."*

Carin looks back at Allie, frowning. They both look up.

ALLIE

Follow her...up?  
(staring)  
Is it a trick?

Carin surveys the crack, tracking it all the way up.

CARIN

I don't think so.

ALLIE

Why would she go up there?

Carin stares at the top of the rock...above the treeline.

CARIN

*So she could see.*

The girls look at each other. *It's a good idea.*

CARIN (CONT'D)

I'll do it. I'll go up and see what's there.

Allie frets - it's very high up, and she's not sure.

ALLIE

Carin...are you sure you can do it?

CARIN

(she appraises the rock)  
Yeah. Yeah, I think I can.

ALLIE

What if he sees you up there?

CARIN

What's he gonna do if he does?  
(an Obi-Wan voice)  
*"It's over, Anakin. I have the high ground."*

Carin slides her hand into the crack in the rock. She feels around to test the sides for their grip.

She lifts her foot up but falls back down almost immediately and grabs her hand. She's got a slight cut and fresh red blood is smeared across the side of the hand.

She pauses for a moment before reaching into her bag to grab the knife. She stabs through the top of her allotment bag and begins to cut around in a circle.

ALLIE

We need that!

CARIN

Yeah, for shit like this.

When she has it completely sawed off, she slices it in half down the middle and ties one half around one hand each. She holds up her hands to Allie as if to say "I told you so."

Carin slides her hands back in the crack and begins to pull herself up. She swings her left foot up to one of the pockmarks on the rock face, but she's too spread out to put any weight on it. 100% of the force is coming from her hands.

She's a monster - crack-climbing with no rope. Allie looks on from the bottom. She's not worried. Carin knows what she's doing. She looks like she was born for the woods.

But at the top, the crack narrows. It doesn't run all the way through to the surface, instead coming about a foot and a half short.

Carin's heart skips a beat when she sees what she's going to have to do. She steals a glance downwards. She might as well be a thousand feet up in the air.

She searches along the rock face for the proper sequence - there isn't a clear choice. There is nothing to her left. On her right there is a small divot in the rock.

She tries to reach her hand out, but she has to stretch as far as she can to brush it with her fingers.

It's not worth it.

She looks up again - she has two choices: up or down. If she goes up, she'll have to push off her footholds while throwing herself up from the crack.

She doesn't have a rope to ride down: if she's going back, she's going to have to climb it backwards. No way.

At the top of the rock, Allie's scream can barely be heard as Carin throws herself up and over the ledge.

She grasps at the rock and starts to slip backwards, but she catches herself and pulls up onto the top of the rock.

She's bruised, sweating, and her hands are beat up, but she smirks to herself. She made it.

Carin leans over the edge and looks down at Allie. She flashes a thumbs up, but Allie says nothing, sick with worry.

Carin stands back up and looks around. It is one of the most magnificent sights she's ever seen.

The sun is setting to the west across the valleys.

To their north lies what looks like miles and miles and miles of completely unadulterated wilderness.

As vast as the forest seemed when they were inside it, it pales in comparison to the sight of the woods from above.

To the south, there is nothing but long rolling green hills.

ALLIE

So what's up there?

CARIN

Give me a minute!

Carin spots a smaller rock. She lifts it up, and - as she expected - finds something underneath: a knit hat. She turns it over. Inside, she finds two more pieces of paper.

She reads the first -

*"If you made it up here, I know it's not that fat piece of shit lmao. Your a good climber. If you are my rescuer, please follow me. Look to the left towards mountains. I am going to the fire tower."*

Carin sees it: a small, dilapidated hut at the top of an old fire watchtower peeking over the trees. Carin reads on -

*"Pls hurry. I am getting tired. - Bec"*

A final line follows.

*"P.s. If your another girl, I'm sorry."*

Carin's eyes are full of tears. This girl is a real person. Carin looks back to the firetower. It's far...but they could make it. She tries to memorize its location.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Carin!? Is something up there!?

Carin looks down over the edge back towards Allie.

CARIN

*Ye-uh-*

(tears choke her throat)

*Yeah. Co-coming back down.*

Carin takes a breath. She reads the other note.

But it's not a note...it's a drawing.

She's drawn what looks like a "mute-face emoji" - a circle with three dashes like eyes and a mouth.

Carin turns it over, but there is no other writing.

A drop of wet on the page. A tear, at the bottom.

ALLIE (O.S.)

Are you coming?

Carin looks around, her pulse quickening. She made her way up to the top of the rock, but that doesn't mean she can get down. She leans down towards the edge of the rock.

There's no good way back down. The rock is huge. A fall from this high could leave her seriously injured.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

How are you going to get down?

CARIN

I don't...I'll figure it out!

There's a divot in the rock a few feet down, near the crack she climbed up. She stands on the edge and leans over.

ALLIE

(anxious)

I don't know how to help you.

CARIN

I'll *tell* you if I need help.

She starts to ease her foot down the side of the boulder. It's getting dark. It was a bad angle to begin with, but it's even worse with the shadow from the setting sun.

ALLIE

There's a tree in the way!

Carin looks over her shoulder down at the tree brushing up against the rock ledge. If she wants to go down, she'll probably have to go through it.

CARIN  
I'll tell you if I need help!

ALLIE  
I can't see you!

CARIN  
*Allie!* Not helping!

Carin puts her foot in the divot. She stops. She leans over the rock. She starts to hyperventilate. It's a long way down. It feels like she's a million miles up.

She starts to snake her leg over, carefully, slowly. She gets her foot set and holds her weight on it.

First step success.

She has to do this in the blind. She starts to slide her other foot down to find a second divot. She can't find one. She has to start taking bigger risks.

Lower and lower with each step, she swings her leg around looking for a foothold. As she continues to swing down, she puts herself at risk of losing her grip on the plateau.

On one final great dip, her balance tilts and she tries to quickly pull back up. It's not enough.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
- AHH!!

She's sliding over. Her hands are too slick to stop her fall.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Shitshitshitshit...

Her weight topples backwards. She's going over. She desperately tries to grab onto something, anything.

And then she's in free fall.

The rush of grey and green and the red-burned evening sky blurring together as she plummets towards the ground.

A flock of birds rush from the leaves and a hard crack and Carin lets out a gasp. She grabs forward and her arms hit something. She hangs on, gasping. She's got a branch.

Carin tries to adjust herself. The branch starts to bend under her weight, and she tries to lunge forward, but it breaks off. It passes through the other branches on the tree, taking Carin with it, and crashes into the ground.

Allie runs up to Carin, tears streaming down her face.

ALLIE

Car! Carin! CARIN!

She pulls the branches off, and finds Carin at the bottom of the pile. Carin's chest heaves.

She's bruised and cut and bleeding from the head...but she's smiling. Allie is confused. She wipes tears away.

She's silent, and stares into Carin's twisted, smiling face. Carin stares to laugh. A real, honest belly laugh.

CARIN

I told you I had it.

She calls out - a victory shout. Like she just won the Olympic Gold. Allie, still shocked and terrified, starts to laugh too. She leans down and hugs her friend.

CARIN (CONT'D)

We're good. I'm good. I'm Gucci.

But as Allie hugs her, Carin's face convulses in pain.

Something is wrong with her shoulder.

Allie doesn't see.

**EXT. A NEW CLEARING - NIGHT**

The sun is just about set. The night is a greenish black, and the stars are already visible. The sky is full of them.

The girls walk into another clearing. Carin's wearing the hat Rebecca left them and walking lightly on her left foot. Allie is staring at the "mute-face" sketch.

ALLIE

So who do you think she is?

CARIN

Rebecca?

ALLIE

Like where do you think she's from?

CARIN

I don't know. How would I know?

ALLIE

I'm just asking where you think?

CARIN  
I don't *know*, Allie.

ALLIE  
I think she's from Colorado.

Carin spots a rock where she can rest. She heads towards it.

CARIN  
Let's stop here a minute.

Allie pauses and looks back, nervous about their pursuer, but Carin's already heading towards a tree. As she sits -

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Why do you think she's a Coloradan?

She sits down hard and starts to examine her leg. Her ankle is swollen. It's starting to put pressure on the shoe. She reaches to pull up her sock, but winces after touching it.

ALLIE  
Are you ok?

CARIN  
Yeah. Just want to take a look.

ALLIE  
A look at what?

Carin just gives her a look. She tries to unroll the sock down over her awkwardly positioned bones and tendons.

CARIN  
Why do you think she's from Colorado?

ALLIE  
Carin, your leg.

CARIN  
*Allie*. Why? Do you think?

Carin grabs a thick stick from the brush nearby.

ALLIE  
Uh, like you said, she's a climber.  
And she gave up the hat, so she doesn't mind the cold.  
(Carin groans)  
Carin, seriously, can I -

CARIN  
*Allie*.

Carin pulls the knife and the rope from her allotment bag. She cuts off a length of the rope and begins tying a splint.

ALLIE

She was here alone, so we know she was independent. I bet she wasn't a local. Or else people would ask questions. But she probably drove.

CARIN

*Mhmm.*

Carin tests the splint against her leg. It's weak.

ALLIE

Climber. Independent bad bitch who drove up here to explore by herself? I bet she's from FoCo -

CARIN

(cutting in)

- I think we're far enough away to set up camp for the night.

ALLIE

*Camp?* Because of your leg?  
(she's shocked)  
But...I mean, don't you think we're getting close to the tower?

Carin doesn't want Allie to have any doubts, so she hides her own. We see the worry cross her eyes. She covers it up.

CARIN

Yeah. But it's about to get really, really cold. We can make a fire here in the clearing and take shelter under those rocks.

She points to a huddling of rocks across the clearing.

CARIN (CONT'D)

If we use the wools and the sacks we might be able to shield a lot of the light. Keep it for a few hours. I think we'll be okay.

Allie stares over at the rocks.

ALLIE

Are you sure?

CARIN

Yeah. Do you trust me?

**EXT. CLEARING - LATER**

Allie's gathered up a bundle of sticks and leaves and arranged them in a pit of soil in the rock's shadow. She tosses another bundle onto the pile. She's moving with a nervous frenetic energy. She jumps at the slightest sound.

ALLIE

How dumb is this? Is this dumb?

Carin is in the process of setting her foot with RICE - Rest, Ice, Compress, and Elevate. She's sitting away from the fire with her foot resting on a snowbank.

CARIN

We need the fire. We need the rest. We had a six-hour head start, and he doesn't know which way we went.

ALLIE

Unless he cheated.

CARIN

There's no fun in cheating, Allie.

ALLIE

Spoken like a girl who's bad at it.  
(of the fire)  
How do I start this thing?

CARIN

(condescending, amused)  
You don't know how to start a fire?

ALLIE

Carin, the whole point of this trip was for you to "introduce me to nature." That includes shit like "how to make a fire."

CARIN

You could start with the *flint*!

ALLIE

(now *she's* annoyed)  
What the hell is a *flint*?

CARIN

Allie, open your bag.

Allie does, and pulls out the small rock. She deflates.

CARIN (CONT'D)

What did you think that *was*?

Allie starts hitting the flint against the side of her knife.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Tell the truth.

(smiling)

Tell me. Say it.

(Allie smirks)

Say you thought that was a rock.

(Allie chuckles)

*I'm stupid for not knowing ancient roman numbers, but you thought your death game allotment included one nice shiny...rock.*

Allie gets some sparks. Smiling, she doesn't turn around.

ALLIE

Carin, I'll kick your broken leg.

(beat)

Just watch me.

**EXT. CLEARING - LATER**

Allie and Carin are sitting around a fire. They've strung up their sacks with the rope like a clothesline to try and keep the light in. It kind of works. They gaze into the fire.

ALLIE

Back in high school, if I was like, a half-hour late coming home my mom would text me. If I didn't answer, I swear she'd call the cops.

She stares off into the fire. She stokes it.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Freshman year I used to call home every single day on my way to gym. Walking up Church St. I never really thought about it. It was always something really stupid about like, what I ate for lunch or...or...what happened on *The Bachelor* or something. Then I sorta just stopped.

(then)

They won't worry for weeks, Car. No one will. You're the only one who'd know I'm gone. And you're here.

CARIN

(as Allie starts to cry)

Ok. What about Jillian?

(MORE)

CARIN (CONT'D)

(Allie shakes her head)

There's Idina. And Ang.

(Allie is sobbing)

Allison. Seriously. Hey. People will miss you. They'll know.

ALLIE

(fully hysterical)

No. No, they won't. I never text them back. I never text them. It'll be too late when they know. We'll be *dead* by then. We'll be *dead*.

After a minute, she hears Carin...*laughing*. She looks up.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

CARIN

It's so funny.

ALLIE

What? *What* is so fucking funny?

CARIN

If we don't die, at least now you'll respond in your *group chats*.

A roar, in the distance. Something lurking, deep in the woods. The girls sit up straight, chilled to the bone.

ALLIE

Bear!?

CARIN

You're so scared of bears!

ALLIE

Yeah, if you had to watch *Grizzly Man* in film class you would be too.

CARIN

Ok but that guy literally tried to like fuck the bears.

(shifting up)

Here. Let me teach you what to do.

ALLIE

What do you mean?

CARIN

If you see one. You need to stand up as big as you possibly can, and speak in a loud, low voice.

ALLIE

What are you supposed to say?

CARIN

Do you remember all of the Pledge of Allegiance?

ALLIE

...what?

CARIN

The Pledge of Allegiance, do you remember it all? Because you have to recite the whole thing.

CARIN (CONT'D)

But you have to leave out the "under God" part because bears separate Church and State.

ALLIE

...ok, very funny. I get it. I get it!!

Carin stands up. She winces when she puts pressure on her bound foot, and leans on the rock for support.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Up. Come on, up!

After a moment's hesitation, Allie stands up.

CARIN (CONT'D)

"If it's Black, Fight Back. If it's Brown, lie down. If it's white, say goodnight."

ALLIE

What?

CARIN

Repeat after me. "If it's Black, Fight Back. If it's Brown, lie down." If it's a Polar Bear you're totally fucked, but we're not in the *arctic* so go like this.

She raises her arms straight up and bends her hands like they're topped with claws. She contorts her face into a comical growling sneer, like a kid trying to look scary for Halloween. Allie laughs. Carin is serious.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Do it. *Do it!*

Allie does it and she starts leering back at Carin. Carin matches her. This is fun.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
 Are you a *kitten*? If I was a bear,  
 I would've already eaten you!

Allie gets bigger and so does Carin. They're circling each other around the fire, snarling and snapping at each other.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
 Are you gonna let a bear eat you!?

Allie steps up to Carin, their faces almost touching.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
 ARE YOU GONNA LET A BEAR EAT YOU!!

ALLIE  
 NO!!!

CARIN  
 SCREAM "FUCK YOU, BEAR!!" COME ON!!

They're too loud. They have a fire, and they're too loud.

ALLIE  
 FUCK YOU, BEAR!! FUCK YOU, BEAR!!  
 I'LL FUCKING KILL YOU!!

CARIN  
 NOW HOWL!! *HOWL!!!*

They howl at the top of their lungs.

Like they're alone. But they are not.

**EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT**

Carin's eyes are closed. The fire is out.

Through the woods, a loud cry rings out in echo and birds take flight out of a nearby tree. It's a man's voice.

It's *The Man's* voice. In the distance - far away - The Man is calling out. He wants them to know he's coming.

Allie curls up into Carin's chest, asleep, but disturbed.

Carin's eyes, now, are wide open.

**EXT. CLEARING - MORNING**

Allie snaps awake and sits up immediately. Carin is gone.

She shoots to her feet. She grabs her allotment bag and checks for the knife - it's still there. Allie pulls the knife and starts searching for Carin in every direction.

The remains of the fire have been scattered and the soil's been rubbed over. Carin's covered it all up. Allie starts to walk around the circle, as -

CARIN (O.S.)  
HEEE-YA!

Allie falls to the ground brandishing the knife.

It's just Carin, holding up a spear she's made.

ALLIE  
Oh, you *bitch*.

Carin holds up the spear, displaying it proudly.

CARIN  
What do you think?

She's taken a straight branch about 5 feet long and tied her knife to it with a the rope. It's jury-rigged. But dangerous.

ALLIE  
...I don't know.

CARIN  
What's not to know? It's great.

ALLIE  
Do you think that was a good idea?  
Now you don't have rope or a knife.

CARIN  
Right. But I have a spear.

Allie watches Carin walk in front of her, limping off her ankle that's still roped up. They make it back over to their campsite. Carin looks for any trace they were there. *None*.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Come here. Check out what I did  
this morning.

ALLIE  
What time did you wake up?

CARIN  
(lying)  
Not much earlier than you.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

CARIN (CONT'D)

I took your advice. I thought if  
this is a game...let's cheat.

She points out footpaths stretching out in every direction.

She made them untraceable.

CARIN (CONT'D)

He won't know which way to go.

Carin smiles, pleased with herself. After a moment, she looks back over to Allie and her good humor vanishes. Allie's face is twitching, like she's fighting back tears.

CARIN (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

ALLIE

You know, for a few minutes there,  
I almost forgot where we were.

CARIN

Hey. Hey.

(beat)

I haven't. So let's move. We're  
almost where we need to be. Every  
minute we're alive is a minute  
we're moving. Every minute we're  
moving his odds of catching us go  
down, quicker and quicker.

(beat)

And now I have a spear.

She takes a few steps towards the forest and Allie follows.  
Carin steps on uneven ground with her bad foot.

CARIN (CONT'D)

AHH!

She hops on her other leg and grabs her ankle. She grits her  
teeth and shakes it off.

ALLIE

Are you sure you're ok?

CARIN

I told you. I'm *Gucci*.

Carin supports her weight with the spear.

She makes little marks in the ground beside them as they go.

**EXT. OPEN FOREST - MORNING**

They're moving near the forest's edge. There are more wide open fields. The trees are fewer and farther between.

Carin's looking back at Allie, who is starting to slow down. It's been almost a day since they've had any water or food.

CARIN

Should we play I, Spy or something?

Allie stares straight ahead.

ALLIE

I, Spy with my little eye a tree.

CARIN

Ok.

(beat)

Ok, so, I'm thinking of a person.  
You ask yes or no questions to see  
if you can figure out who I am.

Allie doesn't say anything.

CARIN (CONT'D)

You might want to start with like,  
am I male or female, you know? I'll  
give you a freebie: I'm female.

ALLIE

Are you Hillary Clinton?

CARIN

No, surprisingly. And you can only  
guess three names before I win. I  
won't count that one. So try again.

Allie is really dropping off. Her eyes droop. Carin worries.

ALLIE

Are you famous?

CARIN

Oh, uh, no. I'm not famous.

Carin's distracted. She sees something through the trees.

ALLIE

Are you on TV?

CARIN

Well, I said I'm not famous.

ALLIE

Just cause you're on TV doesn't  
mean you're famous.

(beat)

Where are you going?

Carin is walking off the path towards what she saw.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Hey.

Allie follows. They stomp through the underbrush, crushing sticks and stone beneath their feet. Allie sees it now.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

What is that?

CARIN

A *camp*.

In a small clearing, the girls find the remains of a camp. An old lean-to, still standing, the scattered ashes of a fire...

And an animal trap.

A tiny bound skeleton - long decomposed - is caught in an activated treadle spring snare. It's a complex trap, falling apart in the elements. The girls stare at the body.

ALLIE

Poor little guy. What was he?

CARIN

A fox.

ALLIE

Do you think Becca did this?

CARIN

She was here in August. This has  
been here a lot longer than that.

(probing the skeleton)

Whoever did this *does* this.

ALLIE

What do you mean?

Carin kneels down next to the trap. Steady hands made it.

CARIN

I mean I don't think someone did  
this while they were running for  
their life. Maybe the creep isn't  
as alone out here as he thinks.

ALLIE  
Who would be out here?

CARIN  
Well I don't exactly think there's  
a *Four Seasons* out here, Allie.

ALLIE  
So who then? ...*woodspeople*?

CARIN  
(laughing)  
What the fuck are *woodspeople*? You  
mean like, *elves*?

ALLIE  
I don't mean *elves*, Carin, I mean  
like off-the-grid weir..dos...

Something catches *Allie's* eye and she trails off. She reaches  
into her pocket and holds up Becca's note. Carved onto a tree  
in front of her...

Is the symbol from the page. Allie gapes.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Oh my god...it's a *morning star*!

CARIN  
What?

ALLIE  
I know this! I know this from my  
Native American Art class! Look!

Allie runs over to Carin to compare, holding up the sketch.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I didn't recognize it out of  
context. This is a morning star!

CARIN  
What does it mean?

ALLIE  
It means "guidance" and hope. Um,  
in Cheyenne I think it was like -

Carin watches Allie look around the woods, searching for...

There it is - another one.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Oh my god. Someone left a path.

CARIN  
Are you sure!?

ALLIE  
The morning star means like the  
ancestors are watching over you?  
Cheyenne hunters would leave these  
markings to guide them back to the  
group. Whoever made this camp drew  
a *path back!!*  
(beat)  
That's why Becca left the drawing -  
she's following their trail!!

Carin can't believe it. She pulls Allie into a hug.

CARIN  
Thank you for going to your  
required fucking classes.

Allie laughs. Carin does too.

But Carin's smile fades.

*Quickly.*

She turns white, seeing something over Allie's shoulder.  
Petrified, she starts to back up, slowly. She doesn't let go.

ALLIE  
Carin?

CARIN  
*Don't turn around. Walk to me, ok?*

ALLIE  
(whispered with terror)  
*Carin is it him?*

CARIN  
(level, walking backwards)  
No. You're ok. You're totally fine.  
Just walk towards me.

Allie, trembling, creeps with Carin. She tries not to cry.

ALLIE  
Carin. Carin, what's behind me?

CARIN  
Just walk towards me. It's  
ok.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Carin, please tell me.  
Please.

Allie can't help herself. She turns to see what's behind her:

Sitting by himself, adorable, is a little bear cub.

A brown bear cub.

It's Allie's greatest fear. But it's just a cub. She almost relaxes.

CARIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Allie, now. Please, please. Quietly  
come back towards me. Now.

ALLIE  
(turning back)  
He's just a baby!

Something about saying it out loud makes her realize it too. The color drains from her face. The bear whines again...and a second whine answers. Only about 10 feet from them, covered in a bundle of trees, is a second bear cub.

CARIN  
ALLIE, RUN!!!

Carin dashes off through the woods.

Allie hesitates for a moment, and follows.

Behind them, it erupts. Through the trees:

A deep, guttural roar. Mama Bear.

Before, Allie was slower than Carin. But because of Carin's ankle injury, the tides have turned.

Carin grits her teeth harder with every step, her bound ankle cracking and bowing under the pressure. Allie's grabbing her arm to keep her up.

They don't check behind them. They don't have time.

Step after step after step - running along the forest's edge to keep their direction - they're charging and charging and charging and slacking and slacking and slumping and slumping and falling and crashing and -

PLOP!

ALLIE  
AHH!

The ground gives out from under Allie's foot and she stumbles forward. She steps back and looks down at her now-soaked leg.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
What the hell?

She stepped into a muddy puddle of standing water. Carin turns around:

*No bear.*

She didn't pursue them. Carin relaxes, as Allie shakes off her wet foot.

At the same time - they both hear it. A rushing sound, just ahead. They're upon it.

The river.

They exchange a glance, and dart out of the trees onto the hilly expanse - and into the sun.

**EXT. RIVER PLAIN - CONTINUOUS**

They come over a ridge and see it. It's about 30 feet across, and from above it looks perfectly blue. Like a postcard.

Allie and Carin sprint down the hill towards it. Allie leads the charge, dashing towards the water's edge. Carin limps behind her, taking it slower.

Allie reaches the riverbank and wastes no time, leaning her head over the edge and collapsing to drink.

Carin follows. She falls face first into the water. Carin gulps as much as she can, her head fully submerged. Her face glows blue and the world goes away. She stays there.

When she pulls out from the water, she sees the majesty around them. The enormity of the river, the hills, the mountains. Allie's laying back in the grass.

ALLIE  
Were you Melissa?  
(Carin is confused)  
In the game? Were you Melissa?

CARIN  
Oh.  
(actually impressed)  
*Yeah, I was. How'd you know that?*

ALLIE  
You made the joke before, about her. She was on your mind. That's usually how that game works.

Carin nods - "*interesting.*" She has a thought.

CARIN  
Give me your water bottle.

Allie opens her pack and tosses her bottle to Carin. Carin walks down to the river's edge and fills them up.

ALLIE  
God, Idina would be so jealous of  
this view.

As she fills the bottles, she pulls up her pantleg to look at her ankle. Her sock isn't white anymore. She starts to check to see what's saturating it but she doesn't want to look.

CARIN  
You should've seen it from the top  
of the rock.

Carin finishes filling both bottles and starts limping back.

ALLIE  
We were supposed to lie down.

CARIN  
What?

ALLIE  
"*If it's brown, lie down.*" They  
were brown.

CARIN  
Well, actually, I think they were  
cinnamon bears.

ALLIE  
"Cinnamon Bears?" What is that, a  
breakfast cereal?

CARIN  
They're small black bears that are  
actually brown. But they're still  
technically black bears.

Carin sits down in the grass. Allie is non-plussed.

ALLIE  
Seems like a pretty big gaping  
fucking hole in your slogan.

CARIN  
Yeah, pretty much. At least you -  
(she elevates her leg)  
(MORE)

CARIN (CONT'D)  
- aren't going to lose your foot  
running away from one.

ALLIE  
...you don't think you're gonna  
lose your foot do you?

CARIN  
No. I don't think I'm going to *lose*  
my foot. It just hurts.  
(beat)  
I'll be fine.

Allie can't hold back tears. She tries to wipe them away.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Hey. *Hey*, Allie. I'll be fine.

ALLIE  
How are we ever going to be fine? I  
want to be the same.

Carin sits up, sliding over to Allie, now fully crying.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I don't want to have PTSD, Carin. I  
don't want to be fucked up forever.

Carin pulls Allie into an embrace.

CARIN  
Hey. Hey, I'm gonna get you out of  
here, ok? We're gonna follow the  
morning stars.  
(beat)  
I'm gonna get you out of this. You  
know that? I've got you.

She clenches her eyes tight over Allie's shoulder.

She has to make herself believe it. She has to.

**EXT. CLEARING - DAY**

Trees fill the frame. We hear heavy breathing.

We're in the POV of someone moving through the woods. They  
come upon a clearing...the clearing where Allie and Carin  
slept the night before.

The Man has found it.

He steps through the trees...and immediately identifies the camp Carin tried to cover up. He studies it, looking for their tracks. Searching for their scent.

He studies the different tracks Carin made, amused. *He's mildly impressed.* Each with two sets of footprints. Each the same age.

The Man walks around in a circle. He speaks to his audience.

THE MAN

Well, they're clever aren't they?

He notices Carin's footprints all over the clearing.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

At least the big one is.

The Man looks around. He searches, increasingly frustrated, for the right path. For a while, he can't see it.

...but he's an expert. He smiles.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

You know there's always a tell.

Down one path, he spots an extra trail to follow:

The tiny marks of a spear, Carin's walking stick in the soil.

**EXT. FOREST BY THE RIVER'S EDGE - DAY**

Another morning star carved onto a tree, leading the way. Allie brushes her hand over it as they walk by.

ALLIE

Do you think Becca followed the morning stars too?

CARIN

Well, we're still going in the direction of the tower. So, maybe.

ALLIE

Wouldn't it be crazy if they met? Like if he was out hunting and she just came out of the trees.

(beat)

He would've thought she was crazy.

CARIN

Who said they're a "he?" You think a woman couldn't make those traps?

ALLIE

Are you calling her a...*Trap Queen*?

Allie chuckles. Carin rolls her eyes. Allie's stomach growls.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

God, I'd kill for like...I don't know. Like, fish and chips.

(Carin doesn't answer)

If you could eat anything right now, what would it be?

Carin coughs. We see her face - she's *really* feeling pain.

CARIN

A Qdoba bean and cheese burrito with peppers and onions, queso, sour cream, and extra guac.

ALLIE

When we get back to Boulder, It's on me.

(beat, thinking)

Do you think you could make a trap? If you had to?

CARIN

Maybe. But I don't know if I could eat what we caught.

ALLIE

If there was ever a time to break from ethical vegetarianism I'd say it's now, Car. I think Jonathan Safran Foer would understand.

CARIN

Hey! Look!

She picks up the pace as they come to a break in the woods.

**EXT. WIDE EXPANSE - CONTINUOUS**

Standing above the trees, visible in the distance but getting closer, is the fire watch tower. They can't be that far away.

ALLIE

You got us there! You did it!

CARIN

Hey you helped! You and Trap Queen.

Allie throws her arms around Carin's shoulders. Carin gasps, and pushes away. Her shoulder hurts.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Not the shoulder.

ALLIE  
(nodding, then)  
Let's get to that tower.

CARIN  
And then the car.

They look ahead. There is nothing but wide rolling hills for at least the next half-mile.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
There's no cover. Let's be quick.

Carin looks back and sees Allie isn't looking at her. She's turns to find what Allie is looking at. She sees it.

Floating down the tide, twisting in little circles:

A black plastic bag.

And floating right behind...is the *rest of a backpack*. Its contents are strewn about in the water. Someone dropped it.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Come on. Let's go.  
(Allie doesn't move)  
*Allison*. Let's go. *Now*.

Allie stares at the pack floating by. She's transfixed.

ALLIE  
Carin, what if someone is *here*.  
Someone who could help.

CARIN  
Yeah, or what if it's *him*.

ALLIE  
It could be Trap Queen! It could be a search party here to rescue us!

Carin wants to move. Allie wants to stay.

CARIN  
*Or it could be a trick*. Allie, he could be here. He could be here any minute.

ALLIE  
*But what if he's not.*  
 (intense)  
 Carin, what if *he's* not. Carin -

ALLIE (CONT'D) CARIN  
 What if it isn't him? Al, *please*. Please let's go.

Allie turns around desperately and looks upstream.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
 We could scream. Right now. Jump up  
 and down. Someone will find us.  
 (talking herself into it)  
 Carin, I don't think it's him. I  
 don't. We could cry out.

CARIN ALLIE (CONT'D)  
 Allie... We could end this, right now.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
 Allie, no. Stop. We're so close to  
 the tower. Let's follow the morning  
 stars. Let's follow them.

Allie moves towards the river, but Carin grabs her arms.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
 Allie, stop, come here.

Allie tries to kick off of her, but Carin holds on, dragging  
 them both to the ground.

ALLIE  
 Carin, let go!

CARIN  
 No! No!

Allie tries to push off Carin. She's only able to make it  
 halfway onto her feet until Carin wrestles her back down and  
 pulls her into a full nelson under the tree.

CARIN (CONT'D) ALLIE  
 STOP! *STOP!* Let go of me!

Carin wraps her good leg around Allie and holds her hand over  
 Allie's mouth. They're rolling around, struggling. Half-  
 fighting, half-hugging.

Allie puts her hand on Carin's back left-shoulder and Carin  
 cries out as if she's been stabbed. Not even that much  
 pressure, just a placed hand.

Allie pulls her hand away and looks at Carin. She stares at Carin gasping on the ground as she tries to stop the pain on her back. Allie's disturbed -

Carin's shoulder is getting much worse.

When Allie leans towards her, Carin grabs Allie's head, her thumbs to her cheeks and her fingers behind her neck.

Straddling her, staring into her eyes, whispering fiercely:

CARIN (CONT'D)  
*I'm not going to let anything happen to you. I'm not going to let anything happen to you. I'm going to get you out of here. Please. I promise. Help me keep you safe.*

ALLIE  
 How can you promise that? How?

A long pause as Carin looks for the right answer.

CARIN  
 I've done it so far, haven't I?

Allie stares back at her. She knows that's not enough. But...

CARIN (CONT'D)  
 Do you trust me?  
 (beat)  
*Allie, please. Please, answer me.*  
 Do you trust me?

Allie wants to scream. But she does. She trusts her.

ALLIE  
 Yes.  
 (it's true)  
 I trust you. I do.

Carin relaxes. She nods, and buries her head in Allie's shoulder, if only for a moment. She leans back, imploring:

CARIN  
 When we go, we go. Are you ready?

Allie has a lot she wants to say. But the look in Carin's eye brokers no argument. Allie nods, saying nothing.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
 Come on.

Carin stands, pulling Allie to her feet.

**EXT. SLOPING FIELDS - CONTINUOUS**

The girls march across the field, along the river's edge staring straight ahead towards a cresting hill. Carin uses the spear for support.

She's determined. Focused. She's not looking back.

Every so often her muscles spasm, violently.

Allie stares at Carin's limping, twitching, charging frame. The girl is *determined*. But she's very injured.

At the edge of the hill, the view opens up: another wide expanse leads down another sloping vista.

At the end is another patch of forest: their next cover.

Carin takes a step down the hill, but she skids forward and puts a hard step down on her bad ankle. She falls down to her knees and groans in exasperation.

CARIN

*Fuck you, you fucking foot.*

They don't have time to be delayed. They're too exposed. Allie reaches down and picks her friend up by the hips after almost grabbing her shoulders. She learned that lesson.

ALLIE

(pulling Carin up)

Come on. Come on babe, let's go.

Allie reaches her arm in and grabs Carin around the hip, pushing through Carin's protest.

CARIN

No, I'm ok. I'm ok.

ALLIE

I'll carry you, come on.

Carin lifts her left leg off the ground and hops forward with her arm draped over Allie's shoulder, using the spear in her right hand as a walking stick.

They hop laboriously towards the next group of trees.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

(difficult)

It's one of those Field Day races.

CARIN

Yeah, sorry. I always lost those.

ALLIE

Yeah cause you're so fucking bossy.  
Follow my lead.

Carin's moved. She nods, letting Allie lead.

Her shoulder *really* hurts. Carin's face is crimson red and she's biting down hard on her lip. Allie sees this.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Wanna pick up the pace?

Carin's face is swollen and her eyes are clouding with tears.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Come on, you got this. You climbed that goddamn rock. You're a fucking beast. Let's pick up the pace. We're just going to the tree.

Allie looks back over her shoulder. She can see hundreds of yards upstream of the river, and it's open on every side. They're the only things standing in every direction.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Come on, Car. Imagine I'm Melissa, right?

(she does the voice now)

*I don't care if you have fucking down syndrome, McCarragh, I will punch you in the dick if you don't go faster. I will literally fuck your dad if you don't pick up the -*

**BANG!**

The girls scream and hit the deck. The sound reverberates through the hills, echoing above them.

A gunshot. From a large, loud rifle.

Carin groans. She aggravated her shoulder. Allie, gasping -

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Come on! Crawl. **CRAWL!**

The girls crawl forward. They're a hundred yards away, at least, from the forest's edge.

*Cover.*

Carin is breathless with pain as she moves along, gruelingly. Allie tries to talk her through it.

But every movement of Carin's arm is making her shoulder worse and worse. She's tearing it apart.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Come on, *come on*, Car. You're good.  
You're so good. Let's go.

Allie gets to her feet, staying crouched low, as another shot rings out in the distance. Carin screams. Allie's fully focused on the treeline before them, getting closer.

Carin hobbles to her feet behind Allie. Allie grabs her arm. They run together, Carin avoiding her bad foot.

They reach a long slope heading towards the forest. It's an incline straight down to cover. Neither looks behind to see if they're being pursued.

Allie looks to Carin. Tears leak from Carin's face, a mix of fear, frustration, and pain. She's so determined.

CARIN  
Allie...look...

Allie turns. Before them, coming closer, carved into the branch, is another morning star.

*Guidance.*

Resolving, they make their way into the trees.

**EXT. THE SAFETY OF THE FOREST - CONTINUOUS**

Allie and Carin collapse behind the morning star pine, taking shelter in its shade. Their chests heave. After a moment, Carin pulls Allie into her arms.

CARIN  
I love you, Allie. I love you.

Allie hugs Carin back, and they catch their breath. But something occurs to Allie. At first it's a small thought.

ALLIE  
*...he has a bow.*

Carin thinks about the words. She leans back to look at her friend, curious, still breathing heavily.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
(the thought grows)  
He has a bow. He doesn't have a  
gun. He doesn't have a gun, Carin.  
(MORE)

ALLIE (CONT'D)

(holy shit)

It wasn't him. *Carin, it's not him!*

It clicks for Carin. *Holy shit.* Carin doesn't waste a second. She stands up, grimacing, and starts to walk back.

CARIN

I'm going back. I'll get help.

ALLIE

What? No, you wait here. Your leg -

CARIN

- is *fine*. I'll get help and bring them back. You stay here.

ALLIE

Carin, you can barely walk!

CARIN

Allie, I'm *fine*.

Carin starts to hobble back to the expanse.

ALLIE

No, Carin, *stop*. Let me go. Carin!

(Carin turns)

Why are you so *insistent* on doing everything? Why don't you trust me?

CARIN

I *do* trust you -

ALLIE

Do you? Then why do you *insist* on treating me like I'm a fucking baby!?

CARIN

You think *I* treat you like a baby?

ALLIE

It's all you've been doing since the minute we left the cabin! How can you tell me you trust me when you talk to me like I'm a *child*?

CARIN

Because you don't know what the fuck you're doing, Allison!

(that stung, but)

(MORE)

CARIN (CONT'D)

You don't know how to hike or climb  
or camp or make a fire or how to  
tell deer tracks from fucking bears  
tracks! You're completely helpless  
without me and...and...

ALLIE

*And what!?*

CARIN

*And you shouldn't be here!!* You  
think I don't know this trip was my  
idea!? You think I'm not carrying  
that with me!? That I brought you  
into this!

ALLIE

Carin, I don't blame you for that.

CARIN

*I do!!*

Allie softens. Carin is crying.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Of course I do. This is all my  
fault. You think I want you to be  
fucked up? You think I want you to  
have PTSD? I am trying to make  
*right* by you, Allison. I have to.  
(beat, small)  
So I'm going to get help.

Carin turns and takes two steps towards the expanse -

ALLIE

Carin, wait -

A loud crack interrupts her.

Allie recoils. We watch her face, contorted in confusion, as  
swell of motion lifts before her.

A flock of birds fly from the morning star tree, as Carin is  
lifted into the sky.

She screams.

Carin is dragged upward by her bad foot, tangled in a snare,  
as a bent tree snaps to the canopy.

She's stepped on a trap. Carin's damaged shoulder and head  
slam into the ground as the trap pulls her from the ground.

Carin shrieks, sobbing hysterically in pain.

CARIN  
HELP! HELP, ALLIE, PLEASE!

Allie is mortified, moving her hands to and from her mouth.

ALLIE  
*Carin, oh my god, Carin.*

Allie looks around, trying to figure out what to do, her thoughts clouded by Carin's screams. Then she sees it:

*Carin's spear.*

Allie grabs the spear and lifts it to the rope. Marshaling her strength, she swings it with all her might.

It only takes one hack. She splits the rope, sending Carin careening to the ground. It's a bad fall.

She lands directly on her bad shoulder, crumpling onto the ground. Carin's whole body shivers as she's left sobbing and gasping. Allie cries for her friend.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Carin...Carin, I'm so sorry.

Allie rests her head on her chest. In the distance, another gunshot rings out. Allie almost laughs.

The shot is far off now. They're going the other way.

The girls would never find them, even if they wanted to.

Allie's eyes land on the Morning Star carved into the tree.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Please help us. You have to. You  
need to show us where to go.  
(beat)  
You're all we've got.

No one will answer her. They're alone.

**EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - AFTERNOON**

It's the afternoon. They've been walking for a while.

Allie's following behind Carin, watching her go.

Carin's ankle is bent permanently inward. She's shuffling along. It's like watching the Bataan Death March. Out of nowhere, Carin stabs her spear into the water. It splashes.

ALLIE  
What was that?

CARIN  
(mutely)  
I saw a fish.

She turns over the spear, and stabs again. And then again.

ALLIE  
(stopping her)  
Ok, ok, Pocahontas. That's enough of that.

Carin doesn't argue. They keep moving. Allie tries to banter.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
A kid in Sigma Nu did that once. Trent? I can't remember his last name. The guy Bailey was hooking up with. They got it on film. I think it went kinda viral on TikTok. They did an edit with a Luke Bryan song or something or like, some old song, like Florida-Georgia Line or something. It was one of those like, hunting kinda things that are like, steel. I think that they -

CARIN  
Allie, can we? Can we just...?

She means "*be quiet.*" Carin wipes her forehead. She's sweating. Even though it's freezing. Allie notices the dab.

ALLIE  
Do you want to walk in the water?

CARIN  
What?

ALLIE  
Here.

She grabs Carin's hand and pulls her to the river's edge.

CARIN  
What are you doing?

ALLIE  
It'll be good for your foot.

CARIN  
My foot is fine.

ALLIE  
It's not, Car. We should chill it.

CARIN  
No, it's *fine*.

ALLIE  
Then we'll make it fine-r.

Carin refuses to move. After a second, Allie relents. They keep moving. After a few moments in silence, Allie tries to jump start conversation again.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
That guy Trent, he was friends with that guy who would always pretend to be drunk. Like when we would go out he would pretend to be drunk with us but then we realized he wasn't. What was that guy's name?

Carin wipes her forehead again. She stumbles forward and rests up against a tree. She's breathing heavily.

She turns back to see Allie staring at her, accusatorially.

CARIN  
Allie.

ALLIE  
I want to help. What can I do?

CARIN  
Just...

Carin scowls. She's basically going white. Then, releasing -

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Jordan.

ALLIE  
What?

CARIN  
The fake-drunk guy. His name was Jordan. Fuck.

Allie is bewildered. She fumbles around for what to say.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Let's just get to the watch tower.

Carin keeps shuffling along. She tries to pick up the pace, but she stumbles forward over some rocks and catches her foot on a thicket of roots.

She trips, landing on the ground with a shout.

ALLIE

Hey -

Allie moves to help, but Carin pushes her away.

CARIN

I'm *fine!*

She stands up and tries to power through it. She makes it about three feet before collapsing back to her knees.

Carin starts to unzip her jacket. Allie tries to stop her.

ALLIE

What are you doing?

CARIN

It's fine...it's fine...

Carin can't get the jacket off. It's sticking to her back.

ALLIE

Carin, you'll get hypothermia.

CARIN

It's just for two minutes.

ALLIE

Car, *seriously!*

Carin starts to pull the jacket, groaning in pain.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

Carin looks back at her, frowning.

CARIN

I'm fi-

ALLIE

Don't you *dare* say "fine" again. I swear to God, don't say it.

She stands up and limps over towards the edge of the river.

Allie watches her walk through the trees.

Carin stands at the river's edge and starts to pull the jacket off. She removes her right arm with ease, but struggles with the left.

She's sweating harder than ever, her face a polymorphous blend of purples, reds, and blues.

CARIN  
(looking straight ahead)  
Allie...bring me the rope.

Allie hesitates before running over to hand off a coil of the rope. Carin balls it up, staring at it.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Don't look at me.

Allie's confused but she doesn't look away. Carin balls the rope up and bites on it.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
Don't look at me!

She takes a deep breath. She nods forward - 1...2...3 -

She tears off the jacket, biting down hard and screaming into the rope.

This is the first time we've seen her without a jacket.

The only thing she has under it is a blue tank top. The left side is purple.

Nearly the entire left side of her back and upper arm is torn and shredded. The blood had dried to the jacket, adhering it.

Pulling off the jacket reopened old wounds.

Her back looks like she's been scourged.

ALLIE  
(horrified)  
Oh my god, Car...

Brown and green pus has collected around the open sores.

Allie doesn't know what an infected wound looks like.

If she did, she'd know how bad it is.

Carin stands at the edge of the river. She kneels down and sticks her hand in.

CARIN

I said don't look at me.

She grimaces. It's freezing. Carin doesn't turn around as she stands at the water's edge.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Please. Please, don't look at me.

Carin takes a step into the water. She puts her left foot in first. She keeps her right foot on the bank.

She starts to slip.

But Allie is there. She grabs her.

Carin looks back, afraid. Allie's afraid too.

ALLIE

Let me help you.

(beat)

We'll do this together.

Carin, finally, nods. Using Allie for balance, she attempts to lower her left side into the water. As she gets closer and closer to the water, she recoils.

CARIN

Shit. Oh that's so cold.

ALLIE

Did you expect it to feel like  
Bali?

They almost smile. They're going to do this together. Carin sets her left hand down into the water, and they move slow.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Good. Good, you've got this.

Carin lowers down slowly...but her foot slips forward in the underwater river much. She falls straight down into the water, almost taking Allie with her.

It's shallow, but it's brutally cold, and she falls directly onto the wounds on her back. She gasps, and immediately starts seizing in the frozen water.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck! CARIN!

Allie steps into the water herself cringing at the searing cold on her boot-covered feet.

Carin is convulsing. Her eyes roll back in her head and her body bends and pops like a fish on a dock.

She gasps for air and tries to scramble out of the river. But she stops herself.

In agonizing pain, she forces herself back into the icy water. She scrubs at her back with her hand, trying to force water into her flayed skin. Allie can't help.

Carin steps out, reeling. Her body is spasming.

Allie grabs the blankets from the pack and holds it over Carin. She curls up in a ball on the ground. Allie tries to pull her up.

CARIN  
(delirious)  
Gemma, I'm sorry.

Allie wipes tears out of her eyes. Carin is hallucinating.

ALLIE  
*Gemma?*

CARIN	ALLIE (CONT'D)
GemmI'm sorry. I'm sorry.	We're almost there, Car. Come on.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
(through tears)  
I'm so sorry. I'm the worst friend ever, I know.

ALLIE  
Carin, come on.

CARIN	ALLIE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I'm the worst.	Carin, come on, shhhh.

CARIN (CONT'D)  
I'm so stupid.

ALLIE  
(begging)  
Carin, let's go. *Please*. None of this is your fault.

CARIN  
It is! I forgot your birthday!

Allie sits back and watches her friend mumble nonsense.

CARIN (CONT'D)

I'm the worst. I was gonna...I was gonna geyou...s'gonna...geyou tickets to seelyon'ing. I was gonna get you tickets to Lion King. But I for...I forgot because Brookesaidsheedo. And Ijus...Ididnnnowhaata say...

Allie has trouble wiping tears from her eyes.

ALLIE

It's...it's okay.

She gives Carin a hug. Carin's shoulder doesn't even feel it. It's mostly dead.

Allie stares off into space.

She doesn't know what to do.

**EXT. BENEATH THE FIRE TOWER - DUSK**

It's dusk. The sky is orange. The fire watch tower looms above them, only a few hundred feet away.

Carin is draped over Allie's shoulder, wrapped in the wet woolen and her other wet clothes. Allie carries the huddling Carin as best she can.

CARIN

Allie...Allie...wait.

Allie doesn't let them wait. They're too close. She keeps marching forward, leading Carin to a rock at the base of the fire tower ladder.

CARIN (CONT'D)

Al...hey...

Allie lifts Carin's arm off her shoulder. She helps Carin to the rock, sitting her down.

ALLIE

Hang on right here for a second, ok? Just wait right here. I'll be *right* back. I'm going to call for help.

Carin nods. Allie isn't sure if she understood. She looks up to the fire watch tower above her, looming. This is it.

She starts the climb.

**EXT. FIRE TOWER - DUSK**

Allie ascends to the top rung. She looks around, keeping an eye for traps, careful not to make the same mistake a second time. Seeing none, she steps onto the platform.

The fire tower is long out of service. In abject disrepair, the windows are cracked and broken, the paint has chipped from the elements, the wood gnawed at by mites.

The door is open.

**INT. FIRE TOWER - CONTINUOUS**

Allie creeps inside. She clicks on the flashlight. It's spooky. Massive cobwebs cover the corners over milky shadows. The last light of the day peers inside, looking like the fire someone once sought from this place.

Allie clicks on her flashlight. An old kitchenette, a table, a desk still topped by a fossilized mug merging into the wood grain. The place has been petrified.

On the ground, Allie notices a footpath through the dust. She shines the flashlight along the trail. At the end, something large and mechanical is set up against the wall.

A radio.

Allie gasps, and her eyes fill with tears - *salvation*. She dashes up to it, scouring it, looking for the power.

She *smiles*.

It's very old, and its covered in cobwebs and grime. As Allie frantically flips its switches and dials, her smile curdles.

There's nothing.

It's dead.

Refusing to believe it, Allie searches the room, looking for a generator or a batteries or breaker.

All she finds, resting on a side table...is a note.

She knows the familiar handwriting, and reads the first line.

*"Whoops."*

Allie looks away, clenching her eyes closed. *Fuck.*

She forces herself to continue reading.

*"If you followed the morning stars I drew, you can kick my ass when you see me in hell.*

*I thought this was the way. I was wrong.*

*If your coming to rescue me, I can't stay here.*

*If your that ugly fuck, fuck you.*

*If your the next girl,*

*I love you. Bec."*

Allie crumples up the note in her hand. She tries not to cry as the sun goes down across her face. Everything they did was wrong, and Carin is dying on the ground beneath her.

She spots a sunbeam cascading onto the door to the bedroom.

She creeps to the edge, and for the first time...looks out.

She's in the absolute middle of nowhere. In every direction, there is nothing but trees, hills, and mountain plains.

This was not the way out.

If anything...they're more lost then ever.

She collapses into the table, and retches. Then again.

Outside the window, the sun is going down.

#### **EXT. BENEATH THE FIRE TOWER - NIGHT**

The dusk has turned to early night. It's about to get colder.

Allie descends the ladder from the fire tower. She looks to Carin, still huddled under the blankets. *Is she...?*

ALLIE

(shaking her)

Hey. Hey, Carin. You with me?

Carin comes to. She nods. It's a faint nod.

CARIN

Did you do it?

ALLIE

Do what?

CARIN

Call for help?

Allie doesn't answer.

ALLIE  
Let's go. This way.

Allie clenches her eyes, lifting her best friend to her feet.

Across the expanse, we watch the girls stagger off arm-in-arm, the final moments of sun falling asleep behind them.

**EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT**

Allie has gathered sticks in the center of a clearing.

There's a strange mist in the air. Allie can feel it in her hands. The river is much louder than it was before.

Carin's huddled under the shawls, sitting beside a rock. She's barely shivering anymore. Her eyes are closed.

If she is still awake, it's very faint.

Allie strikes the flints together. Nothing is happening. The sticks are too damp from the mist in the air. It's not working.

Allie looks back at Carin, anxious. She needs a fire, now, and it's not working.

She strikes the flints again and again, harder and harder until she's flailing her arms back and forth, hysterical. She drops the flint into the pile and groans.

She collapses on the ground in front of the pile, her chest heaving. She slumps over, landing on the burlap sack. Almost immediately her eyes shoot open.

The burlap sack.

Allie pours everything out of her sack onto the ground, throwing the empty twine on top of the sticks.

She strikes the flints above the burlap. One strike. Two...

On the third strike, a flame lights. In just a few moments, a fire begins. It's hot, and bright.

Allie pulls Carin's nearly comatose body as close to the fire as she can without shoving her into it.

She lays down on top of her, holding her close underneath her body. Carin starts to shiver again. She takes deep breaths.

ALLIE  
There you go.

They lay there.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I've got you.

Allie keeps one eye open, staring into the black. The trees are staring, and the forest has a mouth.

It's alive, and it wants to swallow them up.

Carin coughs.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I've got you, Carin.

Allie holds her close. Warming her bones.

**EXT. HILLSIDE CLEARING - NIGHT**

Allie is sitting up, staring into the woods, her back to the fire, scanning. Alert. Carin speaks from the ground.

CARIN  
Trent Pelland.

ALLIE  
What?

CARIN  
Trent Pelland. The guy who caught the fish. That was his last name.

It takes Allie a minute to adjust to Carin's sentience.

But it makes her really, *really* happy.

ALLIE  
...yeah!  
(she laughs)  
Yeah, that's it.

CARIN  
Honestly? He was smart and cool and it was cool he caught the fish.

ALLIE  
Yeah, it was, wasn't it?

Carin sits up, coughing. Allie looks over at her, hopeful. But Carin doesn't make eye contact.

CARIN  
Allie, I'm sorry -

ALLIE  
Hey, I told you, I don't blame you -

CARIN  
Not about that.  
(she's very weak)  
I'm sorry I said you were helpless.  
I didn't mean it.

ALLIE  
Oh, it's ok, Car.

CARIN  
No, I mean it.  
(beat)  
I don't believe that. You've done  
so good to get us here.

ALLIE  
Oh, I don't...  
(beat)  
...thanks.

CARIN  
Listen. I have some things I want  
you to tell some people for me.  
(Allie's quiet)  
I really want you to remember them.

ALLIE  
Wait. What are you saying?

CARIN  
When you make it out of here. There  
are some things I never said. I  
want you to make sure they know.

ALLIE  
No. Hey, no. No.  
(sitting up)  
None of that -

CARIN  
Allie. Allie, come on.  
(very tired)  
Come on. Just...  
(a long breath, then)  
Remember these things. For me. Ok?  
(another long breath)  
I want you to tell my dad that I'm  
sorry about the Volvo. He'll laugh.

ALLIE

(she can't listen to this)  
Carin. You'll tell him yourself.  
You'll tell him yourself, ok? I'm  
gonna...  
(the only thing)  
I can't do this without you.

CARIN

Yes. Yes, you can. You have to.

ALLIE

No. I'm gonna get you out of here.

Allie grabs her face and points it towards hers, gently.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

You know that? I'm gonna get you  
out of here, ok? You know that?

She smiles mutely, holding Carin's face in her hands.

CARIN

I love you, Allie.

Carin looks back at her. Her sad eyes start to smile.

Before Allie has a chance to say anything else, she hears a  
dull thud and her face is sprayed with blood.

Time seems to slow down, the smile draining from Allie's face  
as the blood drips down her skin. She looks down.

An arrow is sticking out of her shoulder.

She doesn't feel any pain. Her face bears nothing but  
confusion, as if she's wondering how it got there.

She looks up.

Carin's face is still smiling.

But there's a gaping hole through her neck.

*He's here.*

The Man is here.

And his arrow passed right through Carin.

Time still slow from the shock, Allie looks into her eyes,  
one more time, as her smile fades and they fall closed

Just like that, she's gone.

There is nothing Allie can do. Carin slips away in front of her. Her body falls out of Allie's hands and into the fire.

Allie stumbles back, coming to just as a second arrow flies past her head, and she sees him:

The Man is standing at the lip of the woods, alone in a packet of trees, holding the crossbow at his shoulder.

He's wearing nightvision goggles and a tactical camouflage jacket. The nightvision goggles glow green against the black.

Above the nightvision goggles, she sees the little red light of the Go-Pro Camera on his helmet.

Allie doesn't have time to think. She grabs Carin's pack and spear off the ground and dashes away.

She runs through the woods in the dark, stepping over fallen branches and nearly tripping on raised roots.

The roaring of the river intensifies and the mist in the air is thicker.

Faster and faster she dashes through the woods, feeling The Man at her back.

When she bursts through the forest's edge and into the moonlight, she finds the source of the mist:

A long, sweeping waterfall cresting off a cliff and into an abyss below.

Allie pauses at the edge.

There's nowhere else to go.

She jumps into the river, and sails over the edge.

Everything goes dark.

### **IN THE DARK**

Allie hears voices.

All her friends and family. Carin's voice.

Movies quotes, her favorite shows, the TV news.

Melissa screaming at her at morning practice.

Trent Pelland stabbing a fish with a spear.

Her dog barking. Carin's voice.

Everything she's ever been given.

Everything she's ever taken.

Spilling out.

And dark.

**EXT. RIVERBANK - MORNING**

A beaver is rubbing his face like beaver's do. He's got something.

*Allie.*

She's washed up in a sandy alcove, caught in a patch of reeds. The beaver pulls at her hair.

Allie's eyes open slowly. She's staring the beaver in the face. She doesn't have enough energy to do anything about it.

She reaches an arm forward to climb up onto the beach, and the beaver dashes off into the riverweed.

She coughs, and shivers. She's weak. Her chest heaves. She claws forward and pulls herself forward. She fights.

Allie climbs off the beach onto a patch of dirt and grass, and surveys the new surroundings.

She's in a very different part of the woods. She's much closer to the mountains and there's even less snow than there was before. She's clearly gone down in altitude.

She travelled down the river a long way.

Allie surveys what she has. Carin's pack survived the trip down the river, but the only things still inside it are the soaking wet rope and the flint.

She feels something in her shoulder.

The arrow. It's still inside her.

When she sees it, she remembers what's happened.

Carin is gone.

She collapses onto the ground.

Crying hysterically.

**EXT. WOODS - LATER**

Allie wanders through the woods, shuffling forward like a zombie. The biggest moves she makes are the occasional full body quakes of her rapidly freezing frame.

She's pulled the arrow out of her shoulder. She's carrying it in her hand.

She drops to her knees in a bush. She could give up, die in the bush, and no one would ever notice.

Her body is somehow still whole. But her spirit is broken.

Allie stares up into the tree tops and watches the yellow-gray light bleed through the leafless branches.

She closes her eyes.

ALLIE

Oh, Carin.

She thinks about giving up. She could do it.

No.

Allie's eyes shoot open. *Not like this.* She tries to sit up, but her muscles don't work.

She groans out, and tries again. Still nothing.

She forces her body to sit up. Her bones and muscles and sinews scream in protest but Allie forces herself up.

She has to. But she can't.

*But she has to.*

**EXT. LARGE CLEARING - MORNING**

Allie stumbles forward, walking painfully, but with a purpose, into a large clearing. A large mesa rises in the near distance. The clearing is just at the mesa's foot.

Allie notices immediately that something is different.

In the center of the clearing is a firepit. There are two tracks running around the firepit in circles.

There's a clear entrance and a clear exit.

She's at an old campsite. The age-old remains of a fire are burnt out in the pit.

It's overgrown. If other people had come to this place it was a long, long time ago.

Allie looks around, wildly, foolishly, for any sign of human life nearby.

During her search, she sees something hanging between two old trees. It looks like a massive coil of spider web, or a single power line.

She crosses the firepit to get a closer look. It's a metal wire. A single metal wire pulled taut between the two trees.

Allie reaches up and touches it. It's not sharp.

She runs her finger over the top. A red and brown crumbling mush comes off.

She holds it up to her eye to identify it. She can't. It looks like old feta cheese.

She brushes it off onto her pantleg, and pulls on the wire again.

It's easy to miss and incredibly strong.

**EXT. BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN - CONTINUOUS**

Allie wanders towards the edge of the mesa, still searching.

A small bush catches her eye. The bush is growing normally, except for a dead divot extending down its edge.

It holds Allie's attention. It doesn't look biological. She walks up and takes a step over it.

She follows a series of more bisected bushes - they look like they've been marked with a knife or a machete, pieces hacked apart to indicate a trail.

They wind through the forest's edge until Allie finds herself at the rocky foot of the mesa.

A very specific path has been cut through the brush and up the sloping side of the mountain.

Allie pauses. She scans for tracks.

Seeing none, she climbs up the path.

The trail is very faint, based more on where she *can't* step than where she *should* step, but it's marked the entire way by more machete marks.

Allie follows her way winding up the trail, higher and higher, until she's above the trees. She doesn't look down.

About halfway up the mountain, the trail dead-ends into a group of rocks. They lead up to a large hole in the cliff face, almost like steps.

Even from below, Allie can tell the cave opening is huge. It looks like a cartoon cave. Enough room for her to stand.

It isn't a difficult climb. It's just hard to see how to get up. She grabs onto the first rock, expecting it to shake. It doesn't. She pulls herself up, and climbs into the cave.

She rolls up and over and her eyes flicker when she sees what's in the cave.

She doesn't tear up, or gasp, or shriek. She barely reacts.

It's a half-decayed corpse.

It's sitting before her, leaning up against the cave wall.

The body was once a girl, probably Allie's age. She's wearing a bright green puffer skijacket and multiple layers of pants.

The left half of the body is inside the cave, while the right half is exposed to the outside. The head is tilted towards the woods.

She died looking out.

As a result, the side inside the cave is still in the process of decomposition, while the exposed half has almost completely skeletonized.

Allie crawls over towards the body. She isn't afraid of it.

She turns the girl's arms over.

Two deep gash marks paint each wrist. A knife sits unceremoniously next to her.

Behind the knife is a burlap sack. She was part of the game.

ALLIE  
(sadly resigned)  
I know you, don't I?

Allie reaches her hand into the burlap sack. Two items remain: a **lighter**, and her small plastic **flashlight**. Allie rolls the flashlight over in her hands.

She clicks it. It still has power.

Allie shines the flashlight around the cave.

When truly illuminated, the cave is much smaller than it appeared from the outside. The cave extends only a few meters, but it's snug and cozy.

Allie wanders in. When she arrives in the deepest section, she exhales and falls to her knees.

The cave is a hot pot. The hot gas under the mountain leaves the inside warmer than the outside mountain air.

Her shivers and convulsions calm. For the first time since they arrived in the woods, her body is comfortable.

Allie shines the flashlight around the cave.

The girl had made herself a successful little shrine. A small hutch in the back made out of sticks and mud.

Sitting inside the hutch are a number of twigs and branches, ranging from a few inches to a yard or more.

She's been drying out wood.

Allie smiles to herself - the girl's *good*.

Next to the hutch is a metal waterbottle - the same make as the one Allie and Carin had been given that were now lost.

She tries to pull it open and fails, badly. She underestimated how difficult it would be to unscrew the cap.

She tries again, but the cap doesn't come close to budging.

It's vacuum-sealed shut.

Allie looks around for something to use to open the water bottle. Her sights settle on the knife by the girl's arms.

She grabs the knife and tries to pry the top off. She shakes her head. The idea was dumb.

She takes the knife handle and knocks around on the edges of the cap. She keeps knocking until she hears a whooshing, clicking noise leak out.

She pops the top off, but she doesn't waste anytime feeling accomplished.

Inside the waterbottle are three long, brown, fleshy strips.

It takes Allie a moment to understand what she's holding. And then she does:

Dried meat.

Allie dashes over to the cave's mouth to hold the strips in the light. She runs her hands along the edges, desperately searching for imperfections she might recognize.

It looks fine. She smells it again. But she has no idea what she's smelling for.

She presses her tongue against the dried strips. It's not exactly a filet mignon, but it'll do. She takes a bite.

She finishes the first strip within seconds.

She looks down at the girl and smiles.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I fucking love you.

She leans over and rummages through the girl's pockets.

She finds a Jackson Hole lift ticket in one pocket.

In the other pocket she finds the girl's wallet.

Allie hesitates before opening it. Her fingers move as if she wants to, but she almost doesn't do it.

She opens the wallet and takes a look inside. She's staring at the girl's ID. A Colorado drivers license -

Belonging to **Rebecca Sale**.

Allie shuts her eyes and breathes deep.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Oh, Bec.

She reads on. 168 Gardenia Drive,

Fort Collins, CO.

Allie was *right*. She stares at her picture.

Rebecca's smile is almost too big. Gummy, as if her teeth were going to pop out of her skull from too much pressure.

She looks so happy. She looks like a *horse girl*. Her long dry straight hair. Freckles. She's so...*normal*. Just a girl.

Allie stares at the picture. She doesn't look at the body.

Rebecca Sale. Their guide. Carin's doom. Kindred.

Allie keeps flipping through the cards in Becca's wallet. A AAA Card, a *Regal Crown Club* card, an NRA membership card.

Allie pulls out a punch card from Qdoba. "Buy Ten Burritos Get One Free!!"

She had nine punches.

Allie looks up at Rebecca's half-rotted face for the first time since finding the wallet. This is too much.

She starts hysterically laughing.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

You almost made it, Bec. Just one more burrito. Just one more left.

(beat)

Give the free one to Carin. It's what she would've wanted.

#### **EXT. RIVER - AFTERNOON**

Allie returns to the river where she washed up.

She fills the waterbottle in the river.

On a hill across the river, Allie watches a deer wandering across the grass.

Without warning, a mountain lion dashes out of the forest and mauls the deer.

The mountain lion tears the deer apart.

It never stood a chance.

#### **INT. CAVE - DUSK**

Allie arranges a small circle of dry sticks in the back of the cave. She lights a fire with her flint and Becca's knife.

The waterbottle has a little hole on top for attaching to a keychain or a carabiner. Allie's tied the rope through the hole and tied the other end around a branch.

It's like she's fishing.

She sits back and waits for the water to boil.

**INT. CAVE - NIGHT**

Allie sits across from the Rebecca again, drinking her clean water. She pulls up a piece of dried meat, trying to decide how much to break off.

She looks back at Rebecca, as if she might give advice.

ALLIE

What do you think? A little more?

She breaks off a tiny bite. That's all she can take.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

You really did a great job with this. Carin would tell me not to have anymore. She'd say save it.

(chewing)

But she didn't know *everything*.

(chewing)

She just *thought* she did.

Allie chuckles at her friend's expense. Just teasing.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

I don't blame you. About the morning stars. By the way. I know you were just trying your best.

In the distance, the moon passes behind the clouds.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

He never found you, did he? You were just out here.

Allie grabs Rebecca's hand. She slowly sways from side to side holding her hand.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

You were just out here. You know that drove him crazy.

(she laughs)

That must have driven him *crazy*.

Allie grabs the other hand. She rocks back and forth.

It's almost like she's dancing.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

He must wonder. He must always wonder. Wonder where you are.

Allie starts to smile. She looks insane.

But in her mind, it all makes perfect sense.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
He probably thinks I'm dead. He  
probably thinks he got me.

She looks out onto the expanse below.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
What's he gonna say when he learns?  
(holding Rebecca's hands)  
What's he gonna say when he learns  
I'm *alive*?

**EXT. RIVER - AFTERNOON**

At the river, Allie picks up a rock. She tries to throw it across to the other side but she doesn't have the arm.

It lands in the water. The splash echoes across the fields.

She calls out.

ALLIE  
HEY!!! HEY YOU FUCKING ASSHOLE!!!

It echoes across the hills.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
YOU MOTHERFUCKER!!!

She does it again.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I'M ALIVE!!!  
(again)  
I'M ALIVE!!!

Her face is red with blood and rage.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
I'm DOWN HERE!!!!!!  
(chest heaving)  
COME GET ME!!!!!

She's expended all her energy screaming.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
(out of breath, quiet)  
*...give it your best shot.*

There's no response.

As Allie gets her breath, she hears a smack, and looks down towards the reeds along the riverbank.

*The beaver's back.* He's messing with something else this time, trying to snap it in his jaws. Allie squints to get a better look. She recognizes it.

Carin's spear.

She dashes over, wading into the water through the reeds

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
(to the beaver)  
Hey. Hey, fuck off.

The beaver jumps into the water as Allie grabs the spear. She can't believe it, staring down at it. It's perfectly intact.

Allie looks up towards the heavens, shaking her head.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
Thanks, Car.

She turns it over in her hands.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
"Now I have a spear."

#### **EXT. CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON**

Allie walks across the campsite, on her way back towards the cave. As she's about to step into the firepit, she stops.

She stares at it. Her eyes dawn with recognition.

It was the fire that got them caught.

It was the fire that got Carin killed.

He can find the fire.

Allie looks down at the spear in her hands and grips it tightly. Her hands subtly imagine stabbing, just like they did with the knife.

She looks over to the metal wire that Rebecca used to dry out the meat.

She looks back and forth from the metal wire to the firepit and up to the cave.

She takes a step back...

Finally, she looks down at the arrow in her hand, the arrow she hasn't let go of since Carin died.

Allie rubs her thumb along the dried blood.

She has an idea.

Allie walks over to the metal wire and starts to uncoil it from the trees. It's dug in tightly.

She makes a note of how Rebecca had secured it in place.

She's going to make a plan.

**INT. CAVE - DUSK**

The sun's going down. Allie sits next to Rebecca.

Allie turns the spear over in her hands and looks out into the wilderness. The sky is bleeding.

It really is magnificent.

And completely indifferent.

Allie turns to Rebecca.

ALLIE

I wish you could've met Carin. I think you two would've been best friends.

(beat)

She climbed that rock. I bet you didn't think anybody was gonna do that, but she did it. She didn't even think about it.

(beat)

She just did it.

Allie takes a sip of boiled water. She's got her strength.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

I asked Carin to show me the wild. That's why we went on this trip.

(she twists the spear)

But I think it's time for the trip to end.

Allie stands up and starts taking off her jacket. She speaks with so much gravity, it's like she really thinks Rebecca's alive to hear.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

I've got a plan. I'm going to need  
your help. I don't know if it's  
going to work. But I'm gonna try.

(a breath)

I'm either going home...

Holding her jacket in her hands, Allie kneels down right in front of Rebecca's hollowed-out face.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

Or I'm gonna kick your ass in hell.

Allie leans over to Rebecca's body and we cut to -

**EXT. CAVE - DUSK**

Allie's walking down the hill from the cave.

But she's wearing Rebecca's clothes.

She reaches into her bag, and pulls out the rope. Allie surveys the rope's length and nods - it should be enough.

She's very nervous.

It's almost time.

**EXT. CAMPSITE - DUSK**

Allie scans each of the trees around the campsite, looking for the right one.

She stops in front of a towering blue spruce, half-burned and dead from a decades-old lightning strike.

That's the one.

Allie takes the steel wire and attempts to wrap it around the base of a small tree directly across from the blue spruce.

She can't figure out how Rebecca secured the wire.

After a few attempts, she wraps the wire completely around the tree and tucks the loose end into the new circle. She pulls it tight. This is the new Allie. She figures it out.

She drags the wire taut as she walks it to another tree, across an entrance to the campsite.

**EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER**

Allie sits in the clearing, attempting to tie a loop knot in the rope. She struggles to maneuver the pieces with her nearly completely black, frostbitten fingers.

The nerves are dead. She has to guess how they work.

**INT. CAVE - LATER**

Allie gathers the drying pine branches from behind the rock.

On her way out of the cave, she looks down at Rebecca.

Allie's dressed the body in her clothes.

**EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER**

Allie walks over to the campsite's fire pit. She's about to drop the branches, but she hesitates.

She tosses her burlap sack in first.

She sets the smallest sticks in the center, and arranges the larger branches in a tipi formation above it.

**EXT. CAMPSITE - TWILIGHT**

Allie's pulling on a rope, leaning the entirety of her weight into it as hard as she can.

Her heels dig into the dirt, bulldozing the fallen leaves as she falls backwards.

She strains and huffs and tugs, pulling the rope toward a large grey boulder a few feet behind her.

Once she's brought the rope all the way to the ground she pulls out Rebecca's knife and jams it through the rope, before sliding the boulder onto the end. It holds.

Hanging from the tree, wearing Allie's clothes, is Rebecca.

Allie looks up at her work and nods. She's done it.

It's time to wait.

**EXT. CAVE - TWILIGHT**

Allie sits in the mouth of the cave, looking down into the campsite and out onto the purple twilight.

She's turning the arrow over and over in her hands.

She runs her finger over the dried blood on the end.

She spits on it and rubs again.

This time, the blood comes off onto her thumb.

**EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT**

Allie stands over the fire pit. She has the spear in her right hand, and the arrow in her left. She stabs the spear into the ground, and pulls Rebecca's lighter from her pocket.

She stares into the pit, flicking the lighter on and off.

She takes a breath. This is it.

Allie flicks the lighter once more, and with a sigh, tosses it onto the pile.

This time there is no waiting. The pile erupts into flame.

Allie almost collapses from the blast of heat.

The feeling is incredible to her. She stands as close to the fire as she can without falling in.

She breathes in the warmth and smoke. She wants to fall inside it. But there's little time.

Allie looks around the campsite one more time to make sure everything is in place.

Rebecca's body is propped up against the tree.

From a distance, she could look just like Allie.

Allie runs her hand along the corpse's decaying arm, now wearing her puffy bright jacket. She squeezes Rebecca's palm.

ALLIE

You got this, Bec. Thank you for everything. Let's do this.

Allie unsheathes the spear from the ground and moves behind the blue spruce, spry and agile, like a mountain lion. She kneels in the tree's shadow, on the other side from Rebecca.

She glances at the rock holding the rope in place.

She'll only have one shot.

In her right hand: the spear

In her left hand: the arrow.

In her right pocket: the flashlight.

With her left hand - still holding the arrow - Allie pulls out the flashlight and clicks it. It still works.

She waits.

**EXT. CAMPSITE - OVER TIME**

Allie stares at the arrow, and she begins to drift off.

Her face zones out. She's slipping.

Minutes fly back, then ten, twenty, thirty.

Maybe it isn't working? She's starting to worry.

Allie's eyes flutter open and closed. Her head lulls back and forth. She licks her dry and cracking lips.

But she keeps her eyes focused on the arrow. She doesn't break her gaze.

And then...

*THUD.*

There it is.

It's happening again.

Allie's eyes focus, her neck stiffens and she understands.

He's here.

Instinctively, Allie swings the spear and cuts the rope. She hears Rebecca fall to the ground.

Allie drops the arrow and pulls the flashlight out of her pocket. She whips around and ducks, crouched to the earth.

Rebecca's body lies on the ground, an arrow sticking out through her neck. The fire has dimmed but it's still blazing.

Allie can't see The Man. She stays low, her eyes darting around the campsite. *Where is he?*

She can't see him. He could be anywhere.

Side to side, she scans, desperately trying to see his camouflaged body in the rough. Finally she hears it -

THE MAN (O.S.)  
AHH, fuck!

The Man collapses to the ground with a hard crash. Allie sees him. He's tripped over the steel wire.

Just like she intended.

He's holding the crossbow in his right hand, and he's still wearing the night vision goggles.

*Just like she intended.*

Allie dashes out of the bushes towards him. The Man hears her and stands up, lifting his crossbow, but he doesn't have a direction.

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
*Who's there?*

And then she does it:

She rushes through it. The fire. Directly through the center of the fire, she charges, disguised in its light.

The Man doesn't see her until it's too late: Allie emerges, shooting flashlight into his eyes as she runs towards him.

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
AGHH!

The Man staggers back, blinded. He fires the arrow wildly in Allie's general direction, nearly skimming her face.

Allie screams a bloody war cry as she runs towards him. He can't see, and he turns away from her to retreat....

*But he trips over the wire again, twisting and landing on his back into the muck.*

He tries to scramble up, but Allie is too quick and she leaps on top of him. He tries to push her off, but he's all tangled up. And now, she's strong.

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
No, wait!

Allie doesn't wait. She brings the spear down directly onto the man's gut, as hard as she possibly can. Her aim is true.

And the spear snaps right down the middle.

The knife shoots off The Man's body into the brush as the wood splinters. It takes Allie a moment to understand what's happened. She's holding the wooden remains in her hands.

Underneath his camouflage, the man is wearing body armor.

It completed resisted the knife.

In the half-light of the fire, Allie's eyes bulge. She can't believe it. The Man rips off the night vision goggles, knocking off his Go-Pro at the same time.

Allie's staring into his ugly, bearded face.

ALLIE  
(almost breathless)  
You *cheated*.

His eyes are as wide as hers. He's in mortal danger, too.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
(stupefied)  
You're a cheater.

The Man's hands shoots up and grab her neck. Allie - acting purely on instinct - jabs the splintered wood remaining of her broken spear at his eyes.

She strikes something, and he cries out, releasing her.

Allie doesn't wait - she kicks off him and heads towards the fire. Running, stumbling, past Rebecca's body, Allie dashes out of the firepit.

#### **EXT. WOODS - NIGHT**

Allie runs through the woods, holding her arms before her to shield from the whipping branches.

The full moon shines through the leaves, dousing her in dangerous light.

Behind her, she can hear The Man in pursuit.

THE MAN  
*Where are you, you bitch!?*

Allie sprints as fast she can, with no care for being quiet.

She turns and heads down a trail, being sure to avoid the rocks. She's quick, but careful.

But not careful enough.

Allie's steps catch an errant root, and before she can stop it, her balance is going out from beneath her. With a crash, she falls to the ground.

The Man turns to the sound. Through the trees, he sees her.

Allie turns to see him raise the bow and ready the shot...

He fires...

Allie ducks just in time.

This was an even closer miss. The arrow thumps into a tree trunk, bouncing off, and landing at her feet.

Allie reaches down and picks it up.

Before he can prepare another shot, Allie scrambles onward.

#### **EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - NIGHT**

Allie reaches the end of the woods, coming to the same place on the river where she washed up. She's panicked, holding the arrow, and nearly out of breath.

She looks for somewhere to go.

There is nowhere to hide. Nowhere to run. She's at the edge of the world, and he's found her.

Allie looks up at the moon.

She thinks about Carin.

She thinks about Rebecca.

She thinks about this wild land.

She's alone with all of them...

And she's at the end of the line.

Her eyes follow the light of the moon down, down from the night sky, past the mountains, and across the horizon line...

Across the rippling water of the river...

And she sees, carved onto a rock on the bank of the river...

A morning star.

*Rebecca's Guidance.*

Allie looks down at the arrow in her hand.

She knows what to do.

**EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - MOMENTS LATER**

The Man emerges from the woods, brandishing the crossbow. He's bleeding from the forehead, and furious.

He looks around, wildly. The bow is loaded.

THE MAN  
Come out. You lost. I caught you.

He can't see Allie, anywhere. He scans the riverbank...

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
I found you. You lost the game.

He still sees nothing.

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
What are you going to do? It's  
checkmate. Come out and resign.

He silences his breathing, listening...and watching...

And he sees her footprints.

They're heading right to the morning star rock.

The Man smirks, knowing he's got her.

THE MAN (CONT'D)  
Come out. It's time.  
(beat)  
Come out and join your friend.

He creeps slowly towards the rock. The closer he gets, the more certain he is that he's found her.

*He can even see her shoe,* sticking out from behind the cover of the rock. Ever so slowly The Man moves towards his prey.

He's almost on it now. He raises the bow for the final blow as he approaches the rock....

But we watch him from the water.

Crouched low, completely submerged, and waiting for her moment...someone waits.

The Man whips around the rock, prepared to shoot.

But there is nothing behind the rock except an empty shoe.

Behind him, emerging slowly from the water like a wraith...

Allie rises.

The Man doesn't realize what's happening until it's too late. He hears the fearsome war cry, and turns, gasping...

As Allie jams the arrow directly into his open mouth.

She brings it down with so much force it bursts out the back of his throat, piercing the skin from the inside.

He stumbles backwards over the painted rock as Allie screams above him, loud and long, into his face.

She screams and screams. Anguish, heartbreak, and victory.

The Man gurgles, blood spurting from his mouth and nose. He stares into her eyes, unable to comprehend what's happened.

Allie staggers back, exhausted. She falls to her knees, her chest heaving, all the light gone from her face.

Beneath her, The Man coughs and gasps, fighting for life.

She stares down at him, hyperventilating.

Allie turns her face towards the fire.

It's covered in blood and moonglow.

Through the fire we see the flash of an idea cross her eyes.

#### **EXT. FIRESIDE - NIGHT**

Allie walks slowly above Rebecca. She pulls the arrow from her neck. Next to her body, nestled in the grass, she finds the other arrow.

*Carin's.*

Beyond the fire, she seems something else:

The little red light of his GoPro camera.

**EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - NIGHT**

Allie stalks back from the fire, limping menacingly towards The Man's death rattling body.

In one hand, she holds the arrows.

In the other, the camera.

She reaches his body and stands above him. His eyes find hers. He only has a few moments of life left.

Allie raises the camera to show his face.

ALLIE

Say hi.

His eyes widen, pleading for his life.

Allie kneels down on his hips, and rips open The Man's jacket, finding the body armor underneath. She pulls it down, exposing the flesh of his chest. He tries to stop her.

There's no chance. With brutal efficiency, Allie slams Rebecca's arrow down hard under his clavicle, driving it into his body, captured all on camera.

Deliberately, Allie lifts Carin's arrow.

She spares one last look for the last bits of dried blood still remaining. Then, she looks down at him.

ALLIE (CONT'D)

I win.

Allie brings the arrow down hard into The Man's left eye, killing him instantly. All her energy spent, she drops the camera and slumps off his body.

He's vanquished.

She can finally rest. But not for long.

With the light of the fire still crackling behind her, Allie pats down the dead man's pockets and starts emptying them. At first, she moves slowly...but she quickly realizes...

It's a treasure trove.

Clif Bars, a compass, a knife, his own waterbottle, arrows...

And a map.

She holds it up to see in the light. She can't believe it.

The map used to find them all along, annotated and circled and sketched, with detailed orienteering directions.

She leans her head back as the wave of feeling rushes over her. She doesn't know what to do. Her chest begins to heave.

Allie howls.

When her breath has run out, she howls again.

**EXT. FOREST - MORNING**

Allie marches through the woods. It's the next morning.

She's following the map. She's wearing the dead man's jacket and carrying his crossbow slung over her shoulder.

She walks with poise and confidence. She has no predators.

Something crosses in front of her path. A rumbling.

She hears a rustling from the trees nearby.

She sniffs at the air - she can smell it. And then it appears in front of her.

A black bear.

They stare at each other. Allie raises the crossbow.

The bear looks at her, a blank, dumb look on its face. Allie lines up the shot.

She takes a deep breath...steady...

And she lowers the bow. She raises her hands above her head and speaks in her lowest, loudest voice.

ALLIE  
YOU'RE NOT GONNA EAT ME BEAR!

The bear stands up and looks at her. She doesn't back down.

Louder, this time. Louder, *each* time.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
YOU'RE NOT GONNA EAT ME BEAR!  
YOU'RE NOT GONNA EAT ME BEAR!!

The bear backs down. It recedes, as if it's bowing to her.

ALLIE (CONT'D)  
YOU'RE NOT GONNA EAT ME BEAR!

She lets out her wildest, loudest scream.

The bear turns...and dashes down the trail.

Allie watches him go. She glances down at the crossbow and throws it away into the forest.

She doesn't need it.

**EXT. THE CLOCK - MORNING**

Allie comes out of the bushes and into a clearing.

The same clearing that they found themselves in right at the very beginning. The clock.

Allie walks towards the center of the tree stumps and mashed ground and finds herself on the map.

She can see she's almost home.

She locates the trail she needs to walk, and starts down it.

The trail marked **IX**.

She always knew. She had the wild in her, all along.

She wanders onward, down the trail.

Farther and farther.