

THE WATCHERS

Written by

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Based on *The Watchers*
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FROM BLACK. TO:

1 EXT. FOREST - MIDDAY

1

WIDE.

SHOOTING THROUGH the winding, broken arms of ANCIENT ASH TREES. Twisting, uneasy. Their bulbous roots knot at the forest floor.

Moss covers everything-- A landscape of deep, dark greens.

White light filters through the branches, muddled by a FOG. An omnipresent *mist* that creeps, directionless.

This place seems near impossible to navigate.

2 EXT. SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE FOREST - MIDDAY

2

A MAN, (30s - Irish), gazes into the forest in front of him.

He might have been handsome once. Now he wears an unweildy backpack stuffed with supplies, hand-made tools. A dark hood over his head. From it, peeks an unmaintained beard.

CLOSER on his disturbed face. Yellowing, gaunt skin. Cold eyes that dart from left to right. *Reading*.

Reveal: On a boulder in front of him, someone has cut into the surface. Scratched childlike letters.

THE POINT OF NO RETURN - 108

The man steels himself.

MAN
(muttered)
No turning back.

The man clicks some buttons on his digital watch- (modern, sleek). Sets a timer for SUNSET.

He lingers for a moment longer.

Eyes flick to the boulder. The forest beyond. The watch.

MAN (CONT'D)
-Come on.

He takes a step deeper into the forest. Inhales sharply. Grunts gutturally.

Then, he TAKES OFF RUNNING-

3

EXT. THE FOREST - CONTINUOUS

3

The man is swallowed by greenery.

He runs, at top speed. Twigs catch as he goes, leaving clean incisions on his face and arms. But he doesn't seem to mind.

CLOSE ON HIS FEET, rhythmic and strong. Avoiding a divot here, mounting a root there. Precarious surfaces. The potential for injury within each step.

He's moving at quite a clip. *He might actually make it.--*

--The sheer exertion forces him to stop, and fold over for a moment. He pants, then coughs. He squeezes his eyes shut.

CLOSE UP. On the edges of frame, *movement*. A WOMAN'S CHIN enters. SHE WHISPERS IN HIS EAR-

THE WOMAN (V.O.)
(whispered)
John.

JOHN resuscitates. Looks around frantically. But he is alone here.

John slaps his cheeks, sobering himself. He consciously shortens his breath to conserve oxygen. He jumps in place twice.

Then keeps on running.

Twigs cut, feet land and kick. John's gaunt face grows more relaxed as he allows himself to *go somewhere*.

Prelap: A grainy soundscape. Affected orchestral score and MILKY VOICES. *The sound of an old movie.*

FLASH TO-

4

INT. (FLASHBACK) SUBURBAN HOME - EVENING

4

A cleanly shaven John sits at a kitchen countertop. His face is illuminated by a cellphone screen.

Behind him, A DOLL-LIKE WOMAN, (20s - Irish) watches a film. A romantic scene in a FILM NOIR. She turns to US.

THE WOMAN
Johnny? Don't you want to watch the
movie.

JUMP CUT TO:

5 INT. (FLASHBACK) SUBURBAN HOME - EVENING 5

Closer to her.

The woman extends her hand towards John. Tilts her head
innocently.

THE WOMAN
Come sit with me, John.

BACK TO:

7 EXT. THE FOREST - AMBIGUOUS 7

John shakes his head aggressively. Forcing the memory away.
But it persists.

FLASH TO-

8 INT. (FLASHBACK) SUBURBAN HOME - EVENING 8

John now lays on top of the WOMAN. She is swallowed by couch
cushions. He play chokes her.

JOHN
I'm so tired of this shit, baby.
Why don't we do something? Why
don't we ever do something?

THE WOMAN
It's movie night, Johnny.

JUMP TO:

8A INT. (FLASHBACK) SUBURBAN HOME - EVENING 8A

John and the Woman are in the same position as before.

JOHN
I'm taking you somewhere.

THE WOMAN
Like a date?

JOHN
Yeah.
(beat)
Like a date.

BACK TO:

9 EXT. THE FOREST - AMBIGUOUS 9

REAL time John stops at a tree, using it to support himself. He takes three deep breaths, and brushes his fingers across WHITE MOSS on the bark.

John looks up.

JOHN
Isn't this incredible?

FLASH TO-

9A INT. (FLASHBACK) JOHN'S CAR - MORNING 9A

The car moves fast on a RURAL ROAD surrounded by trees.

John drives. The Woman sits in the passenger's seat. She's dressed up.

John points out the window.

JOHN
Isn't this incredible? Look at
those branches, baby. Scotch Pine.

JUMP TO:

9B INT. (FLASHBACK) JOHN'S CAR - MORNING 9B

Moving fast still.

JOHN
They say there are these massive
woodlands around here. Places that
are completely untouched. Ancient
Ash trees that are centuries old.
Relics. Do you think we could
stumble on one?

A beat.

THE WOMAN
This is the date isn't it?
(beat)
Looking at trees?

BACK TO:

11 EXT. THE FOREST - AMBIGUOUS 11

John sobs. He's lethargic, gasping for air. But he won't stop moving.

Forward. PRELAP:

JOHN (V.O.)
What's wrong?

FLASH TO-

12 INT. (FLASHBACK) JOHN'S CAR - MORNING 12

The Woman reads a fresh copy of *Lolita* in the passenger's seat.

THE WOMAN
Nothing. I'm fine.

The woman pulls out her phone. Her screen flickers as they pass through a dark TUNNEL.

THE WOMAN (CONT'D)
John. Something's weird with my phone.

BACK TO:

13 EXT. THE FOREST - AMBIGUOUS 13

John wipes snot from his nose. Steels himself again.

JOHN
Probably just a glitch, angel.

FLASH TO-

14 INT. (FLASHBACK) JOHN'S CAR - LATER MORNING 14

Through the windshield lies the facade of a MASSIVE forest. A DIRT ROAD tapers off in front of them.

THE WOMAN
Are you sure we should go through
there?

INTERCUT WITH:

15 EXT. THE FOREST - AMBIGUOUS (PRESENT) 15

JOHN
Let's not think. Let's just go.

16 INT. (FLASHBACK) JOHN'S CAR - SAME 16

THE WOMAN
If you're sure.

17 EXT. THE FOREST - AMBIGUOUS (PRESENT) 17

JOHN
I'm sure, baby. I'm sure--
John sways, then steadies. And begins moving again.

18 INT. (FLASHBACK) JOHN'S CAR - LATER 18

John drives through winding Ash trees. The woman next to him grows uneasy.

THE WOMAN
Something's not right.

JOHN
Be present, honey... Look out the
window. Look how beautiful.

Then. The car LURCHES to a stop. All the lights in it go
BLACK.

John lifts his hands from the wheel slowly. His gaze travels
slowly to meet his wife's.

THE WOMAN
(whispered)
Johnny-

BACK TO:

19

EXT. FOREST - AMBIGUOUS

19

John SHOUTS as he runs. An expression of adrenaline. Of anger. Then--

John stops. He squints to see what's ahead in the mist.

In front of him, an anomolous shape. A figure crouched? No. A rock. A massive one... A boulder.

JOHN

No.

John draws closer... The boulder comes more into focus.

He loops around it, to see the front. It can't be.

JOHN (CONT'D)

NO-

It is. On the face of the boulder, familiar writing:

THE POINT OF NO RETURN - 108

John looks to the trees around him. Handheld. Distorted. The curving arms of ash seem to bend and move the longer he looks. An optical illusion.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Let me leave... Please, just let me go.

John has just returned to where he began. He sinks to his knees.

JOHN (CONT'D)

My god.
(beat)
My god--

Then, A HIGH PITCHED BEEPING. John looks around, then realizes- *it's coming from his watch.*

In the top right corner, a DIGITAL SUN is replaced by a DIGITAL MOON.

All at once-- HUNDREDS OF BLACK BIRDS TAKE FLIGHT. MOTHS FLUTTER FROM THE TREES. John shields his head instinctively.

And then...

The forest goes silent. DEAD SILENT. Except for John's breaths.

John forces himself to his feet. Scans the forest. His POV is shaky now. Everything looks the same. Aimless. Disorienting.

He looks up to the trees. To the forest floor. There's no escape.

Then. From somewhere far off in the forest.

A SHRIEK: Somewhere between a distorted SCREAM and a growl. Echoing. Resonant. *A predator's call.*

John's head twitches in the direction of the sound.

Then, he redirects his attention to the trees in front of him. Picks the tallest one. And beelines for it.

John begins climbing it like a ladder. He grunts with each rung.

Then, another SHRIEK. This one is closer. And multiplied. Three or four of them now. But John doesn't stop.

The ground grows smaller.

And *they're* drawing close. Close enough that we can hear them now. Bodies that sound like sandpaper. Breaking branches where they crawl. The moist smacking of their sticky secretions. *The fluttering of wings?*

Another SHRIEK, this time LOUD. John looks down to the forest floor. But sees nothing yet. Then-

A CHORUS OF SHRIEKS. One after the other, some overlapping. Different pitches. And MOVING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT... We can follow the sounds... CIRCLING John's tree. Closer and closer. They're moving in a *spiral*.

John grits his teeth and climbs further upwards. The sounds get further. He laughs deliriously. He's moving fast. Evading the predators.

John looks below him. There's movement at the base of the tree. The sound of the creatures *climbing*. Talons against bark.

John's eyes fill with determination, fear. Just as--

His foot hits a weak branch--

SNAP!

John is dislodged from his perch. WE catch his eyes just before--

--he PLUMMETS.

THE CRUNCHING OF BONES as John hits the forest floor.

The force is unbearable.

CLOSE as blood and spit seep from John's mouth. He coughs. On the edge of frame, his ELBOW IS BENT at an uncomfortable angle.

John tries to vocalize, but can't. He can only manage a gurgle.

Talons dig into dirt. Followed by SHRIEKS. They're coming closer.

John's vision blurs.

OUT OF FOCUS, we can read DARK SHADOWS APPROACHING.

John's breaths are short. Raspy. He wheezes. One breath. Then two. On the third-

JOHN IS VIOLENTLY PULLED.

HE IS DRAGGED BACKWARDS- CLOSE ON HIS FACE, IN ANGUISH. HE SCREAMS IN TERROR, CLAWS AT THE DIRT UNTIL -

JOHN IS PULLED UNDERGROUND.

CUT TO BLACK.

20 TITLE CARD: 20

THE WATCHERS

Then, a SUB-CARD that reads: October.

20A INT. PET STORE, GALWAY - MORNING 20A

CLOSE on exotic animals in large glass boxes. Smudged windows enclose fluorescently lit, individual terrariums.

A CANARY pecks at an artificial branch. A LIZARD ducks for coverage under rocks. A TURTLE floats in murky water. A SNAKE winds around a miniature tree.

OVER these images, the sound of a local IRISH NEWS CHANNEL.
[A TV has been switched on in the BACK ROOM.]

FEMALE NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

The search for the missing newlyweds from Dun Laoghaire continues this week. Family and friends describe them as a loving, idyllic young couple with a bright future. Disappearing without any word is reportedly out of character for the pair who had a close relationship with relatives in Dublin...

Pen against paper.

The SOUND comes from the WOMAN behind the register. Over HER CLOTHING, SHE (28 or so) , wears a green vest embroidered with a company logo. It reads: **The Pet Shoppe**.

THE WOMAN sketches onto a faded receipt. Every so often, she steals glances at the only CUSTOMER in the store: an ELEGANT, LANKY WOMAN (50s) who stares discerningly at a HAMSTER in a cage. She has distinctive BLACK HAIR, and every so often shifts from one hip to the other.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Can I help you with something?

A SHORT, AWKWARD MAN (30s) has appeared beside the ELEGANT WOMAN. He too wears a green **Pet Shoppe** vest.

ELEGANT WOMAN

Yes. I'm looking for my son, he turns eight this weekend... He's been begging us for a dog, but we don't have the space or time for a dog. So I thought I might compromise on something smaller, more manageable.

AWKWARD MAN

Certainly. Let me show you some of our reptiles. Really docile creatures. Good for a kid that age...

The pair disappears into the back.

WE RETURN to the woman behind the register who has now completed her receipt sketch. It depicts the CUSTOMER, with her back to us, staring into the cage of a hamster. It's made lifelike, with a distinctive use of shadow and light. A perfect replica.

20B EXT. PET STORE - LATER

20B

The WOMAN who was sketching leans against a discreet door by The Pet Shoppe's front window. She hits an ELECTRONIC NICOTINE VAPE and stares at the bustling city-scape before her: a vibrant GALWAY side street.

PEDESTRIANS move about, tucking into various stores, enjoying morning coffees.

AWKWARD MAN (O.S.)

Mina?

The Awkward Man has materialized by the woman, MINA, as she blows out a puff of smoke.

AWKWARD MAN (CONT'D)

Sorry-... There's no smoking, Mina.
Company policy.

MINA

Right. Sorry Burke.

A beat.

AWKWARD MAN/ BURKE

I'm sorry to hear about your
mother. That's not easy.

MINA

(beat)

We weren't very close.

BURKE

Still. Losing a loved one-

MINA

Really. It's not that big a deal.

BURKE

Okay.

(beat)

Could you come inside for a moment?
There's someone I want you to meet.

HARD CUT TO:

20C INT. PET STORE, BACK ROOM - DAY

20C

In the midst of a dingy, cluttered office, something BRIGHT YELLOW: A majestic PARROT flaps in a golden cage. Mina and Burke peer inside.

BURKE

A Golden Connure. Beautiful breed.
Intelligent. Fiercely loyal.

(beat)

They rescued him last night... One particularly depraved individual had been breeding them in awful conditions. Starving them, mutilating them. Guess the guy wanted to play God... This bird here's a real survivor.

MINA

Can he talk?

BURKE

Hasn't said a word since we got him. Not sure he'll ever be able to again.

(beat)

Anyways. There's a zoo up north that wants him. It's not the finest establishment but he'll be safe there. They've asked if you can deliver him tomorrow.

Mina weaves a finger through the bars of the cage. The parrot snaps its beak. Mina recoils.

MINA

Me?

BURKE

I'm giving you an opportunity,
Mina.

(beat)

I know it might not mean much to you. This job... But it does to me. We're doing a good thing here... I need employees that I can rely on.

(beat)

It'll take you less than a day to get up there.

A beat as Mina eyes the bird. He eyes her back.

MINA

Okay... Yeah. Yeah, sure.

HARD CUT TO:

20D EXT. GALWAY - EVENING 20D

Mina crosses a colorful street, the bird cage in her hand.

Embedded in the side of the street is an ANTIQUATED COSTUME SHOP. Mina moves to it.

20E INT. COSTUME SHOP - CONTINUOUS 20E

A musty, fantastical world in here. The racks are filled with period dresses and costumes, faded with age, sewn with expertise, as if for the theater.

The walls are adorned with various masks. A garish jester, a fair faced maiden, a lion. The holes where there eyes should be seem to stare.

The sound of a bell ringing indicates Mina's entrance. She crosses into the space, pushing through the claustrophobic space towards a partially hidden STAIRCASE.

WE MOVE across a row of MANNEQUIN HEADS, each adorned by a wig. WE land on one, missing its hair.

20F INT. OLD STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS 20F

The spine of an ancient building. Peeling paint, creaking wood. A winding helix.

Mina moves upward, swiftly, towards an APARTMENT DOOR labeled 2B.

20G INT. APARTMENT 2B - CONTINUOUS 20G

Mina sets the birdcage atop a countertop. The parrot follows her movements with beady eyes.

Mina strips from The Pet Shoppe vest. Cranks the AC. Plops onto the couch. Gets up again.

In the meantime, WE EXPLORE THE APARTMENT: It's small, fairly sparse. The white walls are in atrophy. A fly buzzes somewhere.

Eclectic furniture sits atop wood floors, without the pleasure of a carpet underneath. The only idiosyncratic feature:

INK DRAWINGS of FACES that hang on the walls. Strangers, SMILING. LAUGHING. CRYING. Emotions exaggarated to extremity.

Mina adds one to the wall - the receipt sketch, and moves towards the KITCHEN.

WE meet Mina at the fridge. On the front of it, a single picture: TWO LITTLE GIRLS, and what looks to be their MOTHER. One of the LITTLE GIRLS looks like Mina, long ago.

Mina opens the fridge door. Pulls out a beer.

20H INT. APARTMENT 2B - MOMENTS LATER

20H

Mina kneels by the birdcage.

MINA

I have to get ready. I'm going out tonight. There's beer in the fridge.

(beat)

Kidding. Obviously... Don't die, yeah?

Mina stands to go-

PARROT

Beer in the fridge! Beer in the fridge!

Mina turns back.

MINA

I thought you couldn't talk, you little shit.

PARROT

Don't die, yeah? Don't die.

Mina smiles.

HARD CUT TO:

20I INT. APARTMENT 2B, BATHROOM - EVENING

20I

Mina faces the mirror, head hung low. A HYPNOTIC BEAT plays from somewhere.

Mina meets her gaze in the mirror. She wears strange makeup, almost theatrical. Her hair has been pinned up.

Mina brings a JOINT to her lips. Inhales.

She then reaches into a cabinet, producing a DISTINCTIVE BLACK WIG. She expertly secures it onto her head. Shifts it here and there until it sits perfectly.

OFF an off expression.

THEN TO:

20J INT. PUB - NIGHT

20J

Mina, in her strange disguise, sits in the center of the bar. Her posture is different. More poised maybe.

She scans the lively room. It's filled with drunk PATRONS. Staggering FIGURES.

Mina hones in on ONE - A BURLY MAN (40s) who takes the seat next to her. She coquettishly looks away.

BURLY MAN

You're new here?

Mina looks up, a glint in her eye. She seems different. Confident.

MINA

Is it that obvious?

BURLY MAN

No. I just would've recognized a woman like you.

(beat)

What's your name?

A beat.

MINA

Caroline... And you?

BURLY MAN

Collin.

Mina, a.k.a. "CAROLINE" extends her hand. COLLIN shakes it.

COLLIN

And what do you do, Caroline?

"CAROLINE"

Well, I've got a son. He turns eight this weekend.

COLLIN

Oh wow.

"CAROLINE"

But I used to be a dancer.

COLLIN

No. Really?

WE begin moving away from Collin and "Caroline".

"CAROLINE"

Really... Ballet.

COLLIN

That's-. That's amazing. I don't think I've ever met a ballet dancer.

"CAROLINE"

Well now you have.

COLLIN

Caroline the ballet dancer.

Collin moves his chair closer to "Caroline".

COLLIN (CONT'D)

So your kid. He's eight?

WE lose the pair in the CROWD.

HARD CUT TO:

20K INT. APARTMENT 2B, BEDROOM - MORNING

20K

Mina's face is distorted by smeared makeup. The BLACK WIG still hangs, partially on her head, lopsided. She is sprawled on the bed, on her stomach.

Mina's eyes flutter open. The parrot is perched on the bed right beside her. Staring.

Mina groans. Shuts her eyes. Then reopens them again. The bird is still staring.

MINA

Don't look at me like that... I'm not crazy or anything.

(beat)

Sometimes you just want to be someone else.

PARROT

Don't look at me! Don't look at me!

Mina turns onto her side towards the bird, resting her head on her hand.

MINA

Her name was Caroline. She was an ex-ballet dancer who shattered her hip during a performance of the Nutcracker.

(beat)

It was a terribly traumatic incident for everyone involved.

Mina lays back onto the bed. Covers her face with a pillow.

33 EXT. COSTUME SHOP - MORNING 33

Mina's car is parked outside the costume shop, hazards on. She slams the trunk shut, rushing. She's late.

34 INT. MINA'S CAR - MORNING 34

Mina slides into the front seat. She glances in the rearview mirror. The parrot flaps in his cage.

MINA

I thought of a name for you.

(beat)

Darwin. Because you're a survivor.

Mina clicks into the navigation on her phone.

MINA (CONT'D)

Ready?

35 EXT. GALWAY - MORNING 35

Mina's car pulls through Galway city center. Takes a turn off the busy street, to a road that leads outward.

36 EXT. RURAL IRELAND - MORNING 36

Effortlessly beautiful landscapes. God-like mountains that taper off into water. One cleanly paved road.

MINA'S CAR speeds. Agressively fast. A blemish in it all.

Off to one side a COLD OCEAN CHURNS.

36A EXT. RURAL GAS STATION - DAY

36A

Mina leans on the hood of her car as it fills with gas. She wears a scarf around her head, and oversized sunglasses. She leafs through a magazine and snacks on a bag of crisps.

There is no one else in sight. Most of the gas pumps are OUT OF ORDER.

Mina's phone rings. She checks the Caller ID and declines the call.

36B INT. MINA'S CAR (PARKED) - MOMENTS LATER

36B

Mina sits in the drivers seat, with her car still parked at the pump.

She holds up her phone for Darwin to see. On the home screen:
1 VOICEMAIL.

MINA

My sister, LUCY. This should be good.

Mina plays the voicemail.

LUCY (V.O.)

Mina, I was really hoping to see you today... It was a beautiful ceremony. A choir sang Ave Maria. There were white flowers all over. Mom would have liked it...

(beat)

I wasn't sure how the boys would handle it. How are kids supposed to understand something like death? But they're big now. They're smart too. You should see how much they've grown. Honestly, I ended up being the one who needed someone...

(beat)

You should have been there, Mina... I know you went to Galway to be alone. I know you think you have to be alone to find yourself... But this was our mother's funeral-

Mina clicks out of the call. And without a word, shifts the car into drive.

- 36C EXT. RURAL GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS 36C
- Mina's car pulls away.
- She speeds past an exterior posterboard, littered with flyers. They flutter with the inertia from the passing car.
- WE take a moment to explore: The flyers are old- weathered by rain and dirt. Some look fresher than others.
- Smiling faces are plastered across the fronts. Some are handwritten. Some are typed and laminated. But they all share a common plea, for a loved one who has gone MISSING.
- 36D INT. MINA'S CAR, ANOTHER RURAL ROAD - LATER 36D
- CLOSE on Mina, stoic in silence. She looks out the windshield. The wide road before is empty.
- Mina glances down the odometer. Then puts pressure on the gas.
- The speed climbs. 100 KPH. 130. 150. 170.
- Mina rolls down all of the windows. Wind beats inside. Mina's hair whips wildly around her.
- Darwin begins to squawk wildly from the back seat.
- Suddenly, MINA SLAMS THE BRAKES.
- 36E EXT. THE EDGE OF THE FOREST - CONTINUOUS 36E
- Mina's car comes to a screeching halt on the side of the road.
- 36F INT. MINA'S CAR (PARKED) - CONTINUOUS 36F
- She rests her head on her wheel, catching her breath. Then she looks out. Her gaze moves from the road ahead, to the view on her left --
- A CLEAN LINE OF DARK TREES. The sharp edge of a massive, dense FOREST. Gentle movement beyond where the winding branches of ASH trees are touched by wind.
- The grassy field in front of the forest is matted, where cars have driven towards it.
- Mina stares for a moment. The dark GREEN within seems to beckon to her.

Mina then looks into the rearview mirror, at Darwin.

Suddenly, the RADIO switches on. DEAFENING STATIC FILLS THE CAR.

Then, through the static: THE SOUND OF A CHILDREN'S CHOIR. They sing *AVE MARIA*.

Mina freezes in disbelief. She hits buttons on the dashboard. The radio shuts off.

Mina's expression softens. Almost in a daze, she kicks the car back into drive. Cranks her wheel to the left. And begins driving.

Mina checks her phone. The time reads **13:28**.

Mina sets down her phone and hits the gas. The phone screen flickers. But she does not notice.

She moves forward, fast. And hits the edge of the forest, plunging into GREEN-

HARD CUT TO:

36G EXT. FOREST - DAY 36G

Mina's car is dwarfed by MASSIVE TREES as she drives along a makeshift road cut into the dirt. Mist creeps towards her wheels.

47 INT. MINA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 47

Mina squints, at the abstract green ahead. All around.

MINA

Where are we?

Mina glances down at her phone. The GPS is rerouting. Indicating she should move *forward*.

The road she is following seems to thin. Her CAR meets a more rustic terrain, shuddering over rocks... dirt.

MINA (CONT'D)

The goddamn car... Come on.

Mina reaches for her phone. The time now reads **13:52**. Strangely- THE SCREEN FLICKERS AGAIN... Then- GOES BLACK.

Still driving, Mina rummages for a charger. She plugs it into her phone, but before anything can happen-

THE CAR STOPS.

All the lights inside go dark. It's as if everything just *shut off*.

Mina lifts her hands from the wheel. For a moment, she is frozen.

MINA (CONT'D)

Shit.

(beat)

What happened?

Mina presses buttons on the dashboard. Shifts the car's gears. But to no avail. It's completely unfunctional.

MINA (CONT'D)

What the hell happened?

Mina hits the steering wheel, hard. It lets out a HONK.

48 EXT. THE FOREST - CONTINUOUS 48

The honk vibrates wide.

49 INT. MINA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 49

Mina unlatches her seatbelt. Opens the driver's side door.

50 EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS 50

A chill runs through Mina's spine as she scans the forest. Birds caw. Bugs chirp. The rain is softer here, scattered by the trees above.

A familiar mist creeps towards Mina's feet. Darwin squawks from the car.

MINA

Shhhh.

She looks behind her. Then to the dense forest ahead. There's a strange ROCK up ahead. She moves towards it.

51 EXT. THE POINT OF NO RETURN 12 - CONTINUOUS 51

Mina kneels beside the strange rock. Carved into the opposite side, in untidy letters...

THE POINT OF NO RETURN - 12

Mina places a finger on the etching.

HARD CUT TO:

52 INT. MINA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER 52

Mina opens the back door. She begins collecting the items strewn in the back. Shoving them into a bag.

MINA

I think someone lives nearby.

She straps the bag across her body. Then reaches for Darwin's cage.

53 EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS 53

Mina shuts the car door. Pulls her hood over her head.

MINA

We're in agreement then.

Mina looks deeper into the forest. The uncharted way forward.

MINA (CONT'D)

We'll walk.

Mina and Darwin start walking.

We are consumed by the sounds of the forest. Wind, birds, and not much else.

Mina and Darwin pass that strange rock. Deeper into the forest.

Mina tightens her jacket around her. It's cold in here, where the light struggles to reach.

Her breath gets shorter as she goes. Uneasy. Ten paces. Fifty. A hundred.

MINA (CONT'D)

HELLO?!

(beat)

My car broke down!!! I need some help!

Deeper and deeper they go. Climbing over winding roots. Shoes sticking in the mud.

MINA (CONT'D)

Hello??

Mina shudders. Then stops.

MINA (CONT'D)

Let's go back to the car. We'll
honk, and someone will hear us.

Mina and Darwin turn back around. They begin walking the way they came, or so it seems. Climbing roots. Passing trees.

MINA (CONT'D)

We're almost there, Darwin. Almost
there.

Another fifty paces. One hundred.

MINA (CONT'D)

Where is it?

Further. But all that lays in front is more green.

MINA (CONT'D)

Where's the rock?

Mina picks up her pace.

MINA (CONT'D)

Where's the car?

She turns into another direction. Mina is now jogging.
Darwin's cage swings wildly. Branches cut at her face.

Mina spins. The trees around here are dense, criss-crossing.
Every side looks the same.

MINA (CONT'D)

Where is it?

She walks and walks. No rock. No car.

MINA (CONT'D)

WHERE IS IT?

CUT TO:

The sound of a lighter clicking over and over.

Mina crouches at the base of a tree, trying to light a pile
of collected sticks. But they're too damp.

CRACK.

-A sound from the forest behind Mina. She jumps to her feet. Holds her breath.

Mina looks around. It appears there's nothing but trees.

Mina takes a seat on the forest floor. Shuts her eyes.

MINA

We need to breathe. We just need to breathe.

The sun begins to set through the trees.

BEEP BEEP BEEP. (High pitched. Electronic.) Mina's eyes open. She looks around.

BEEP BEEP BEEP. The sound seems to emanate from nowhere. Everywhere. But it's muted. As if coming from *underneath*.

The beeping stops.

Mina's gaze falls upon movement- A BLACK AND WHITE MOTH, fluttering by a flower. It kicks off, flying upwards. Mina follows it with her gaze to reveal

BLACK BIRDS picking up from the trees, disappearing into the sky... Dozens of them. Mina follows them with her gaze as they disappear into *grey*.

The forest goes silent.

All that is audible is wind and Mina's breath.

And then...

THERE'S A RUMBLING FROM DEEP UNDER MINA'S FEET. THE GROUND BENEATH HER SHAKES. HER PILE OF COLLECTED STICKS TUMBLES. DARWIN SQUAWKS WILDLY.

Mina stands. She picks up the cage.

MINA (CONT'D)

What is that?

Mina collects her items, and begins to walk nervously, checking over her shoulder every so often.

The rumbling stops.

Mina's gaze travels up to the tree tops, where the sun has almost disappeared. The evening light is cold. GREY.

Then....

THE FIRST SHRIEK. From far off.

MINA holds her breath as, slowly, she turns in the direction of that *awful sound*.

MINA TAKES OFF RUNNING. In some direction. Branches cut her skin as she moves. We've been here before. Mina SPRINTS.

She eyes the sun as she moves. The forest grows darker by the second.

DARWIN SQUAWKS MADLY.

Then she hears something else. Footsteps.

There's movement in the forest... Mina freezes.

The crunching of leaves.... Then... A PERSON.

MINA (CONT'D)

Hey!

It's a WOMAN, HUNCHED OVER, WRAPPED IN DARK BLANKETS. SHE FACES AWAY FROM MINA, AND DISAPPEARS BEHIND TREES.

MINA (CONT'D)

HEY!

Mina chases after the WOMAN. She appears here and there, in glimpses, weaving through the complex forest-scape.

MINA (CONT'D)

WAIT! I NEED HELP!

Mina runs hard. Chasing after the elusive FIGURE. THE WOMAN disappears once again.

Mina stops. Up ahead, there's a strange SLEEK STRUCTURE in the woods. It opposes the trees around it, this rectangular box, made of FORTIFIED GREY METALS. It's the size of... a small house.

And on the side facing Mina, there's a distinctive INDUSTRIAL DOOR.

MINA (CONT'D)

Yes. Look, Darwin.

(beat)

YES!

She sprints as fast as she can... in the direction of that door.

MINA (CONT'D)
HELLO!! PLEASE! MY CAR BROKE DOWN!
AND THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE!

The forest darkens further as Mina gets closer. And then-
THE FRONT DOOR SWINGS OPEN.

Standing in it, in shadow, is the shape of the HUNCHED WOMAN.

MINA (CONT'D)
HELLO! OH GOD. LET ME IN. THERE'S
SOMETHING BEHIND ME!

The Woman does not move. But Mina is close now. Close enough
to hear-

HUNCHED WOMAN
You have five seconds before the
door is sealed.

MINA
What?!

HUNCHED WOMAN
Five.

Mina bolts as fast as she can.

HUNCHED WOMAN (CONT'D)
Four... Three.

Mina gasps for breath. The door is close.

HUNCHED WOMAN (CONT'D)
Two...

Mina is gripped by a pair of strong hands that pull her into-

54A INT. THE COOP - SUNSET

54A

Mina hits a concrete floor.

The sound of a DOOR being vacuum sealed. Locks being turned.
Mina is gripped now by TWO pairs of hands. She's dragged
across dark concrete-

VOICE ONE
Lights are on.

Before Mina can see anything, the room is filled with
BLINDING WHITE LIGHT. Mina shields her eyes.

VOICE TWO
I knew I heard a car.

VOICE THREE
Is that a parrot?

MINA
What was that? What were those
sounds?

Mina is released. She falls back.

Above her, stand THREE STRANGE PEOPLE: The HUNCHED WOMAN (60s), weathered, wrapped in a blanket. A doll-like YOUNG WOMAN (20s). A BOY (19 or so), somewhere between man and child.

They are lit by a strong fluorescent light.

HUNCHED WOMAN
How did you get here? In a car?

MINA
Yes.
(beat)
But-

HUNCHED WOMAN
How long until it broke down?

MINA
Twenty minutes maybe. How did you
know-

DOLL-LIKE WOMAN
Did someone send you? Did someone
tell you we were here?

MINA
No. I was heading up North. And
then my radio-

HUNCHED WOMAN
After the car broke down. How far
did you walk?

MINA
I don't know.

HUNCHED WOMAN
What time did you enter?

MINA
Midday maybe.

The Hunched Woman turned to the others.

HUNCHED WOMAN

That could be fifty kilometers.
Perhaps more.

(back to Mina)

Did anyone know where you were
going?

MINA

Wait-. I need a second.

(beat)

I just need a second, please.

The Hunched Woman nods.

HUNCHED WOMAN

Let's give her some space.

Mina takes a breath as the Strangers step away. Her vision adjusts and she scans the room.

The room is strangely sparse. FIVE HARSH SPOTLIGHTS shine from the cieling, onto the floor. Within each, a different tableau. A DINING TABLE with SIX CHAIRS and a RUG underneath. A COUCH facing a TV SET. AN ARMCHAIR set beside an ANTIQUE RECORD player. A mid-century leather DAYBED adorned with RUGGED BLANKETS. A BUCKET topped with a plank, (a poorly made toilet.)

On one side of the rectangular room, there is a hefty STEEL DOOR, sealed with a NUMBER OF ECLECTIC LOCKS.

And one WALL is MADE COMPLETELY OF MIRRORED GLASS - the reflection of the entire space sits within it.

MINA

Where are we?

BOY

We call it The Coop.

MINA

Do you live here?

Before anyone can answer, there is a SHRIEK from outside. It sounds far away.

HUNCHED WOMAN

There's no time. Help the girl to
her feet.

The Boy and the Doll-Like Woman move towards Mina with militant speed.

MINA

Wait. What's happening?

HUNCHEW WOMAN

Into the light now. They're coming.

MINA

Who's coming?

The Boy and the Doll-Like Woman each take an arm, and heave Mina to her feet. They begin guiding her across the floor.

MINA (CONT'D)

Where are we going?

HUNCHEW WOMAN

To the center. It's time to present ourselves.

-A strange NOISE. The crunching of leaves, the breaking of branches. The forest outside is alive with movement.

MINA

What's that sound?

BOY

That's them. They visit The Coop every night.

Mina is released in the center of THE COOP, facing the large MIRROR. The others line up beside her, in a practiced fashion.

MINA

Why? What do they want?

DOLL-LIKE WOMAN

They want to *watch*.

MINA

Watch?

HUNCHEW WOMAN

The Mirror you see before you is not as it seems. It's been designed to shift at night. To obscure our view of what's behind it.

(beat)

But on the other side, it stays as it is. A WINDOW.

SOMETHING OUTSIDE **SHRIEKS**.

There it is again. Another SHRIEK from another direction.

The SHRIEKS multiply, from all angles. *There are dozens of them out there. If not more.*

THEY begin to circle The Coop. SHRIEKING as THEY move.

MINA

Oh my god-.

-And then THEY are silent. Mina looks to the Strangers beside her, but they are still, and facing the Mirror.

HUNCHED WOMAN

What is your name?

MINA

(beat)

Mina.

MADELINE

My name is Madeline. Next to you is Ciara and Daniel.

(beat)

I want you to know that you'll be okay, Mina. You're going to survive this night. Just stand still, and let THE WATCHERS have a good look at you.

Then, from outside the Mirror comes a strange noise. At first, like something hitting a tree, repeatedly. A steady rythmn.

Then more of it. DOZENS OF HITS, RAPPING AGAINST TREES. OVERLAPPING RYTHMNS. MAYBE EVEN HUNDREDS.

MINA

What are they doing? What is that?

The sound swells...

MADELINE

Applause.

(beat)

For you, Mina.

Mina's eyes widen.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

A welcome... to the show.

Shooting from outside. That massive mirror *is* a window from the outside. We can see through it. Into that strange space. Those pools of light. The small figures within it. Everything around it is dark.

HARD CUT TO:

56A INT. THE COOP - SUNRISE

56A

Mina's eyes are red. She has not slept. Instead, she stares at the Mirror, seated on the floor.

There's an *electrical whirr* from the Ceiling.

The spotlights above Mina fade. And so does her reflection. The silver hue atop the MIRRORRED GLASS dissipates, revealing a A CLEAR WINDOW. Beyond it, the DEEP GREEN of the FOREST.

The rising sun casts a gentle golden tone over everything. It's almost... beautiful.

Darwin squawks from his cage as Mina springs into action. She moves swiftly, but discreetly, collecting her items. Packing them into her bag.

MINA

We're going home, Darwin.

She turns to find-

Madeline, standing in front of her.

MADELINE

You won't make it.

(beat)

Ciara is waiting outside. You'll move together today.

56B EXT. THE COOP - MOMENTS LATER

56B

Mina (holding Darwin's cage) and Madeline exit through the STEEL DOOR together, into the FOREST. Daniel and Ciara wait out front.

MADELINE

Ten hours, two minutes of sunlight.
May we meet again before dark.

Daniel nods and heads off in one direction. Madeline moves in another.

Ciara waits. Offers Mina a smile.

56C EXT. THE FOREST, SOMEWHERE - LATER MORNING

56C

The Golden Birdcage dangles from Mina's hand as she tries to keep up.

Ciara seems to float in front of Mina. She effortlessly navigates the terrain, weaving through the massive TREES.

Every so often, she bends down and plucks a FLOWER from the forest floor.

CIARA

Primula Vulgaris. I make a paste from them. For pain relief.

DARWIN

Vulgaris.

MINA

How do you know all this?

CIARA

My husband, John is a botanist. He loves trees, and I love flowers. A wife is supposed to take interest in her husband's passions. That's how you make a marriage work.

Ciara disappears behind a WINDING ASH TREE.

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

John was studying the bark. He thought there was a pattern in the moss that grew on it. Something that indicated an opening... He left just a couple days ago. I thought he might have sent you to help us.

Mina scans the forest. It's disorienting. Haunting.

CIARA (CONT'D)

The others are cynical, but I know my husband. If anyone could make it out, it would be him.... He'll come back to save us.

Ciara reappears next to Mina. In her hand she holds a DELICATE CROWN- pale yellow flowers knotted together in a ring.

Ciara places it atop Mina's head.

CIARA (CONT'D)
You're beautiful.

MINA
(beat)
Thank you.

Ciara takes a moment to admire her handiwork. Then continues on her path. From behind her-

MINA (CONT'D)
So what are they? The *Watchers*. I work with animals. Maybe I can help.

CIARA
Do you want to know the truth?

MINA
Yeah.

CIARA
We have absolutely no idea.

MINA
What?

Mina stops in her tracks.

MINA (CONT'D)
What do you mean?

Ciara stops too, turning back.

CIARA
Well none of us have seen one. They only come out in the nighttime, and that's when the window turns.
(beat)
Madeline thinks it's a blessing in disguise. She has a theory that just seeing one could drive a person mad.

Ciara leans down and plucks a PURPLE FLOWER from the forest floor.

CIARA (CONT'D)
Salvia Verbenaca.
(beat)
We can boil these. Good for a bad stomach and itchy eyes.

DARWIN

Itchy eyes. Itch-y eyes.

MINA

Okay. So you've never seen one...
And they don't come out in the
daylight... Why don't you just run?
Why don't you try to leave?

A beat.

CIARA

This forest is a very strange
place. It's like it wants to keep
you here... We have landmarks and
things to help us move around, but
we haven't found an exit yet. And
we've really tried... It all seems
sort of infinite.

(beat)

Come on.

Ciara reaches for Mina's hand.

CIARA (CONT'D)

I want to show you something.

59

EXT. CLEARING - SOMETIME LATER

59

Mina, Ciara and Darwin struggle across the uneven terrain.
Towards a clearing in the trees.

Then they see it.

In the ground up ahead is a MASSIVE HOLE. Nearly three meters
in diameter.

CIARA

We'll keep this between us, okay?
We're not supposed to go close to
The Burrows.

(beat)

It's where The Watchers hide during
the day.

Mina and Ciara draw closer to the hole, which we can now see
extends *downward* into dark abyss.

CIARA (CONT'D)

They're all over the forest.
Madeline thinks they're connected
underground. Like a system of
tunnels.

Mina stares down. The BLACKNESS before her seems to grow. All is silent but for the sound of wind. A wind that WHINES.

CIARA (CONT'D)
Do you hear them?

MINA
I don't hear anything.

But maybe there is something. An ever so faint tone from deep inside the hole.

CIARA
That's *them*. That's them screaming underground.

A beat. Mina looks to Ciara-

MINA
How long have you been here, Ciara?

CIARA
I don't know... It's hard to keep track of the days, but not that long. John and I were the last to arrive. Before you, that is.
(beat)
If I had to guess... I'd say-
(beat)
Nearly five months.

Mina stops. Takes a couple steps backwards.

Then, Mina takes OFF in an opposite direction.

CIARA (CONT'D)
MINA! Where are you going??

But she's already too far off.

60 EXT. DEEPER FOREST - CONTINUOUS

60

Mina sprints. Darwin's cage swings wildly. Faster. Faster. Her face is cut by branches, by leaves.

Mina KEELS over, gasping for breath.

She catches her breath. Looks up. There in the distance, LIGHT. It looks like an OPENING.

MINA
Yes. Yes!

Mina begins to run again, as fast as she can. Closer and closer towards the light.

She's almost there!

Mina stops in a patch of BRIGHT SUNLIGHT. But all around her, only MORE TREES.

The sun shifts, moving away from the trees. And Mina is swallowed by dark green.

CRACK. Something moves behind Mina. She jumps.

For a moment, silence. Then-

CRACK.

61

EXT. SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE FOREST - LATER DAY

61

A BLACK BIRD is catapulted from a branch. Caught in a NOOSE made of rope. IT'S NECK BREAKS....

Daniel hops from a tree branch and lands on the forest floor. He's got the dead CROW on a rope looped around his neck.

Daniel stiffens as he feels something moving in the dark forest beyond. *Mist creeps...*

In shadow, a FIGURE passes behind a tree. Walking slowly, swaying as if drunk.

Daniel pulls a knife from his belt. Cocks it out in front of him. Just in case. He draws closer.

The knife shakes as he readies himself to meet whatever, whoever is up ahead.

Then, from a distance-

DARWIN (O.S.)
VULGARIS. VULGARIS.

DANIEL
Mina?

Daniel loops around a tree, revealing MINA in a clearing, looking dazed.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

MINA

I heard something. There was something out there with me.

DANIEL

It's the adrenaline. Your body's on edge... But you're safe, Mina. The Watchers only come out at night.

Daniel pockets his knife.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

C'mon. It's almost half-day.

63

INT. THE COOP - NIGHT

63

A SINGLE RECORD sits atop the record player. A withered hand brings the needle close. The record spins.

ITALIAN OPERA FILLS THE SPACE.

Daniel, Ciara, and Madeline sit around the dining table, ravenously cleaning their plates of GREY MEAT and BERRIES.

Mina sits on her own, some distance away. She feeds berries to Darwin.

DANIEL

(with a mouth full of food)

I hate this bloody song.

MADELINE

Music is good for digestion... And it's the only song we have.

DANIEL

The Colonel had horrible taste. If I ever get to meet the bastard, I'm going to punch him in the face.

CIARA

It's classic. Classic things are beautiful.

DANIEL

It's boring.

CIARA

You're boring.

MADELINE

Mina? Why don't you come sit at the table?

The others quiet.

MINA

That's alright. I'm fine over here.

MADELINE

Please join us. There are some things to discuss.

A beat.

Then Mina stands and brings her plate to the table. She eats a bite of the meat. As she chews-

MINA

Mm. Good stuff.

MADELINE

There are a few rules you should know about if you're going to be staying with us.

(beat)

The Watchers come at nightfall. We have to be inside The Coop, every night, by that time.

(beat)

For our own safety, we do not open the door after sunset. Not for any reason.

(beat)

And we always stay in the light where they can see us... Do you understand?

MINA

Sure. Yes.

MADELINE

Are you certain you can abide by these rules?

MINA

Yes.

MADELINE

These are not suggestions, Mina. It's a matter of life and death.

The record stops. The song has finished.

MINA

I got it. You don't have to worry
about me.

63A INT. THE COOP - LATER NIGHT

63A

Madeline snores in the ARMCHAIR. CIARA is wrapped in a bundle of blankets on the DAYBED. Daniel is facedown on the COUCH.

Mina sits on the floor. Her eyes on the TV.

ON SCREEN: *An early 2000's UK REALITY DATING SHOW. Grainy footage of HOT SINGLES IN A HOUSE. They LAY on couches. They PLAY DRINKING GAMES. A MUSCULAR DUDE is being interviewed.*

Mina turns a DVD sleeve in her hand. The cover is faded, but still legible. It reads: LAIR OF LOVE SEASON 3.

MUSCULAR DUDE

Olivia and I have got a good thing going. She's a top notch bird, you feel me? Sweet as hell too. Like, I could bring her home to my parents. But I've got to be honest. I feel like I'm getting some vibes from Daria. And, I mean. Daria's got the most bangin' bod in the house-

Mina sets down the DVD sleeve and discreetly checks that everyone is asleep.

The show continues on screen.

Mina's bag has already been packed. Quietly, she helps Darwin into his cage. Loops the bag around her shoulders.

Mina stands. She tiptoes away from the couch, in the direction of the front door.

She checks behind her once. Everyone is sound asleep.

Closer to the STEEL DOOR. CLOSER.

Mina reaches out for the FIRST LOCK-

A PAPERY HAND INTERCEPTS.

MADELINE

We do not lie to each other. That's
another rule.

Madeline peers at Mina with beady eyes. Her hand is still firmly planted on the door.

MINA

(beat)

I was just looking. I wasn't going to open it.

MADELINE

Do you think we're stupid?

MINA

No.

(beat, whispered)

I think you're all batshit crazy.

Madeline is stoic. Unphased. After a moment, she removes her hand from the door.

MADELINE

You can open the door.

MINA

Really?

MADELINE

On one condition.

(beat)

Step out of the light.

MINA

What?

MADELINE

You heard me. If you want to break the rules, let's start small.

(beat)

Step out of the light.

A beat.

Mina turns away from Madeline. She hesitates, then starts walking to the edge of the harsh spotlight. Drawing closer and closer to the shadow.

SHE STEPS FROM THE LIGHT INTO THE VOID-LIKE DARKNESS.

Mina turns back to Madeline.

MINA

Is something supposed to happen?

Before Madeline can answer-

THERE'S A ROARING OF SOUND. HUNDREDS OF SHRIEKS ON TOP OF EACH OTHER. A DESPARATE, VIOLENT WARNING CALL. THE SHOCK THROWS MINA TO THE GROUND. SHE COVERS HER EARS.

CIARA AND DANIEL WAKE. MADELINE IS ALREADY WALKING BACK TO HER ARMCHAIR. THE SOUND RATTLES THE MIRRORED WALL.

DANIEL
MINA! MINA! THEY'LL SHATTER THE
GLASS!

We cannot see Mina in the chaos. The SHRIEKING persists. Daniel rushes to MINA and DRAGS HER BACK INTO THE LIGHT.

All at once, the screams stop.

Mina looks back to the others, wide-eyed, panting. Then to Madeline who is seated once again.

MADELINE
I'm going to sleep. Do as you
please.

Madeline shuts her eyes.

HARD CUT TO:

65 INT. THE COOP - SUNRISE

65

Daniel stands above a sleeping Mina. He shakes her awake.

DANIEL
Madeline says you think we're all
crazy.

Daniel stands. Tosses something towards Mina. She catches it. It's a STOPWATCH.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
You'll walk with her today.

HARD CUT TO:

67 EXT. THE POINT OF NO RETURN 134 - MIDDAY

67

A strangely shaped rock formation has been inscribed with small lettering.

THE POINT OF NO RETURN - 134

MADELINE
Stop the timer.

Madeline, winded, crouches down by the rock, then beckons Mina over.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

There's a notebook in my bag.

Mina follows the instructions, producing a small, leather bound journal. Hands it to Madeline.

Madeline scribbles something inside. Then turns it towards Mina. Inside, there's a HAND-DRAWN CHART. It depicts various numbers and timings underneath.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

The Point of No Return *one-thirty-four*. Four hours and thirty-two minutes. Direct northeast from the coop. Twenty minutes longer than the last trip.

Madeline seals the notebook.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

They're landmarks. Etched onto distinctive rocks or trees. Placed in a perfect circle around The Coop. They represent a half day's journey back to safety.

(beat)

We're not sure who was here before us... Daniel and Ciara have taken to calling him The Colonel... But whoever it was, left these as a warning... An indication that if you step past this line to attempt escape-

MINA

There's no turning back.

Madeline stands.

MADELINE

I always felt different from those around me. I know what that does to a person. Lonliness can turn you into something you don't recognize.

(beat)

But Daniel, Ciara and I are not your enemies, Mina. *The Watchers* are.

Madeline begins walking back the way she came.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

The winters are violent. There's so little sunlight that escape is not even a consideration. There're barely birds to hunt, and the cold itself can kill you if you're not careful.

(beat)

I've lost count of the days. But I'm certain I've been here a year. Maybe two... You don't know what it's like... You don't know what *they're* like.

MINA

What *are* they like?

MADELINE

The Watchers are nothing like us. They feel nothing. They show no mercy. They are guided only by two central instincts. The urge to Watch. And the urge to kill.

Madeline picks up her pace. Mina falls behind.

MINA

Wait!

MADELINE

We've wasted exactly four minutes discussing the matter. We'll have to make that up on the walk back. As well as the minutes we lose to fatigue.

(beat)

Not another moment to waste, Mina.

68 EXT. THE COOP - NIGHT

68

SHADOWS close in on The Coop.

Through the window- Mina, Madeline, Daniel, and Ciara sit together at the dining table. Like one happy family.

69 INT. THE COOP - LATER

69

LAIR OF LOVE SEASON 3 PLAYS ON THE TV. ON SCREEN: *An INTERVIEW with a DUDE WITH FROSTED TIPS.*

FROSTED TIPS DUDE
Tonight's Daria's twenty-fourth
birthday. I want to make her feel
special, make her know, like, that
she's special and that she's mine.
I know I've been a bit of a geezer
in the past, but Daria, she's
really changed me, man.

FROSTED TIPS DUDE steps out onto the back patio. He's holding a CAKE with lit candles. Frosted Tips looks shocked to see DARIA with another man in the hot tub. It's MUSCULAR DUDE, from earlier. Frosted Tips SLAMS THE CAKE in Daria's face.

Mina mutes the TV. She turns her head to the mirror. She stares for a moment at her own reflection.

Behind it, nothing but the sound of branches hitting the glass, moved by wind.

A beat. There's no response.

Mina stands. Moves towards the glass. Raises her hand towards it.

Tap. Tap. Tap.

Nothing.

Tap. Tap. Tap-Tap. Tap.

Again, no response.

Mina turns away. She shuts off the TV. Lays down on the couch. She does her best to shut her eyes.

Suddenly-

BANG BANG BANG

Mina freezes. Another beat-

BANG BANG BANG-BANG BANG

THE GLASS RATTLES. MINA JUMPS UP TO FACE IT. HER BREATHS ARE SHALLOW. SHE WAITS. BUT THERE IS NOTHING ELSE FROM BEHIND THE GLASS.

-A rustling from within The Coop. Mina turns around. It's Madeline. She's awake, sitting up.

HARD CUT TO:

71 EXT. THE COOP - SUNRISE

71

Daniel and Ciara wait outside The Coop. The Steel Door is propped ajar. Madeline and Mina are discussing something inside. WE cannot hear them.

After a moment, Madeline and Mina emerge into the forest.

MADELINE

Nine hours, fifty-one minutes of daylight. May we meet again before dark.

Madeline nods to Daniel and Ciara who begin walking in various directions.

Mina chases after Daniel.

MINA

Hey.

(beat)

Hey! Madeline said I could come with you today. That you'd show me how you hunt.

Daniel stops. Turns towards Mina, unamused.

DANIEL

Fine.

71A EXT. THE FOREST - LATER MORNING

71A

Daniel is perched on a tree branch, tying knots into rope. Mina waits on the forest floor.

DANIEL

My father and I used to hunt deer together. Only time we got along, actually.

(beat)

When you've got your eyes on one, you have to get really slow, really still, so it doesn't know it's being hunted. My father always said to kill the deer, you have to become like it.

(beat)

Deer don't come around here. But the idea's the same. To hunt the bird, you have to become the bird.

A beat.

MINA

You know I once saw this program on the Discovery Channel. It was talking about animal hierarchy. And I guess in most breeds, the best hunters are the leaders. I guess nature favors those who have access to the food.

DANIEL

Really?

MINA

Yeah. I mean, I'm just saying. I don't think you should let Madeline push you around like she does.

(beat)

It's not right.

THUMP. Daniel lands on the forest floor, startling Mina.

DANIEL

I know what you're trying to do. Madeline said you might do something like this. Try and break us apart.

MINA

That wasn't my intention.

(beat)

I just felt like... Like maybe you deserve better.

Daniel stares Mina down.

MINA (CONT'D)

Daniel... I heard something last night. While the rest of you were asleep, I tapped the glass. And *they*, The Watchers, tapped back.

(beat)

It woke Madeline up... But the way she was staring... she didn't look too surprised.

DANIEL

You think she knows something?

A beat.

MINA

I'm not sure. But these rules, the fact that none of you have ever seen one.

(MORE)

MINA (CONT'D)

(beat)

I find it all hard to believe.

(beat)

So... I want to try something. It's totally unhinged. But maybe that's what we need.

(beat)

And I think you can help me.

HARD CUT TO:

72 EXT. A BURROW - DAY

72

Mina and Daniel push through trees into a clearing. Daniel has a coil of rope around his shoulder.

In the ground up ahead, a DEEP, BLACK HOLE.

DANIEL

Madeline will blow our brains out if she finds out.

MINA

She won't.

(beat)

You're in charge, Danny. Tell me what to do.

Daniel and Mina stop at the edge of the Burrow.

73 EXT. BURROW - MOMENTS LATER

73

Looking UP at the sky from *underneath*. Within that bright circle of light, Mina dangles, suspended in the air by a makeshift harness of rope.

Daniel peers down from above.

DANIEL

We don't have much time. You need to be quick.

Mina is lowered deeper into the hole. It grows darker by the second.

MINA

Got it.

Lower still. The walls of the Burrow are rough, textured by broken branches, rocks.

DANIEL

Keep your eyes on the sun. You'll
be safe as long as you can see it.

Mina holds her breath as she goes deeper. The sounds of the forest (wind, birds, bugs) are replaced by the sounds of the underground. A deep rumbling. Echoes of the creatures within.

Mina looks below her.

MINA

I think there's a landing.

The Burrow bulges into a rounded space, that almost feels like a tiny room.

Mina lands with a plop on solid ground. From above, Daniel's voice echoes. It's far off.

DANIEL (O.S.)

TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE!

MINA

OKAY!

Mina squints in the darkness, and reaches into her pocket. She produces the lighter. Flicks it.

The tiny flame illuminates the space.

On one side, the tunnel extends off to the side. At some point, it SPLITS, into TWO DARK TUNNELS, cut into the mud.

On the other, (as Mina moves the flame), there's a MOUND.... Mina draws closer, and discovers... it's made of THINGS. Human things. Dirtied, matted clothing. Disassembled CAR PARTS. Distressed books, cameras, backpacks. Other undiscernable items.

The things are stacked with no order. Hoarded.

MINA (CONT'D)

Daniel! There's a bunch of stuff
down here! This is amazing!

Mina steps closer to the mound. And begins rummaging through it.

There's a resounding CRACK from one of the tunnels behind Mina. She freezes. Listens for a beat.

But there's nothing more. Mina moves again from the mound. She pulls a DAMP NEWSPAPER from the pile. The date reads **APRIL 1992**. She discards it.

Mina reaches deeper into the pile. She grabs onto something. Pulls it out. She brings the lighter close.

It's a STUFFED BUNNY. It's missing one eye.

A BEETLE scurries from the eye-hole and Mina drops the toy. She shakes off her hand. Goes back in...

Mina plucks something silver and compact from the mound. It's a **90's CAMCORDER**, caked in mud. She presses buttons. Flips open the screen. Nothing.

Mina reaches her arm deeper into the pile. Deeper. And then-

The sound of a bell. Mina stops. She grabs ahold of something. Yanks it out.

The pile sags slightly. Mina falls back with the force.

In front of her, sits a WHITE BICYCLE. It's rusted, but for the most part, still intact.

HARD CUT TO:

73A INT. THE BURROW - MOMENTS LATER

73A

The bike begins to rise, dangling from the rope. The basket attached to the front has been filled with ITEMS scavenged from the mound. The CAMCORDER peeks out from the top.

The bike swings and spins as it moves towards the light in the sky. Mina stands on the ground. Untethered.

Suddenly,

There's a CRACK from deep within the tunnels. Mina turns abruptly. Holds the lighter out in front of her.

It's quiet. Too quiet.

THEN... THE GROUND BEGINS TO RUMBLE. THE RUMBLING BECOMES MORE DISTINCTIVE. LIKE FEET AGAINST THE GROUND. BODIES RUNNING THROUGH TUNNELS AT FULL SPEED. HUNDREDS OF THEM.

MINA

Daniel.

She looks up to the sky, where the hole and the bike have disappeared.

MINA (CONT'D)

DANNY!

She waits for a moment. The lighter in her hand shakes.

A sound from the top, as the rope is once again tossed over the edge of The Burrow. It falls next to Mina.

Rapidly, urgently, Mina begins wrapping the rope around her waist. Securing it with knots as best she can.

CRACK. Something moves in the dark tunnels. It's closer.

MINA (CONT'D)

Pull me up Danny! Pull me up!

The rope grows taught, and Mina's feet lift off the ground. It's slower this way. Lethargic.

MINA (CONT'D)

HURRY!

There's another SHRIEK from the depths beyond. Mina lifts higher. The split tunnels move further from her.

She looks down one last time--

A shadow moves. She holds the lighter below her to reveal...
A silhouette... It almost looks like

A PERSON.

MINA (CONT'D)

Wait-

She goes higher, and the FIGURE is out of sight.

MINA (CONT'D)

Wait!

Mina is almost at the top. She is gripped by strong hands, pulled onto-

74

EXT. THE BURROW - CONTINUOUS

74

The edge of the burrow.

Mina collapses on top of Danny. Panting for breath. She sits up. Daniel does too.

DANIEL

What happened? What happened?

MINA

I don't know. I thought I saw-

DANIEL

What?

MINA

Nothing. I don't know.

Daniel huffs and falls back onto the forest floor.

HARD CUT TO:

75

INT. THE COOP - EVENING

75

The Coop door is propped open.

The OLD BIKE stands upright in the center of The COOP. Madeline, Mina and Ciara examine it.

Daniel sits by the TV, fiddling with the old CAMCORDER in his hands.

MINA

The tires look intact. We could move way faster on a bike. One of us could get out. Get help.

MADELINE

You two say you found all this in the woods.

MINA

Yeah. Buried underneath the mud. Looked like someone had stashed it.

MADELINE

Right.

(beat)

The sun is setting. We'll sleep on it. And come to a group decision tomorrow.

Madeline stands, turning her attention to Daniel. He's pulled off the back panel of the TV set, dismantling wires. GREY STATIC on the screen.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

DANIEL

The electronics break down out there. But somehow they work in here.

Mina and Ciara join the others by the TV.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

The Colonel must have created some sort of power source. My best guess is it's underneath us, 'cause all the chords all go into the ground. We had this old TV at home. The commercials kept my dad calm. Every time it broke, I'd play with the wires. I got pretty good.

Daniel clamps the -- and the SCREEN CHANGES: It now shows a LIVE FEED of The Coop.

Daniel picks up the camera. Pans it around The Coop. A grainy image is displayed ON SCREEN.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Our very own security camera.

The others gasp.

MINA

Oh my god.

CIARA

It's fantastic Daniel!

DANIEL

I figure if we put it outside during the night-

MINA

-We'll be able to see them.

HARD CUT TO:

75A INT. THE COOP- NIGHT

75A

The record plays opera.

The Coop door has been sealed. A wire runs from underneath it, to the TV. The screen displays a LIVE FEED of the dark forest outside. Low, as if the camera has been set on the forest floor.

Mina, Madeline, Ciara and Daniel sit around the dining table with full plates. But no one eats.

DANIEL

Where are they? They should be here by now.

CIARA

They'll come. They always come.

A beat. Silence. The forest outside looks empty.

MADELINE

This was a foolish idea. We should eat.

The others nod. Begin nervously picking at their plates. Ciara looks up.

CIARA

Did you hear that?

The record CUTS.

CIARA (CONT'D)

It sounded like-

Knock knock knock.

A sound at the front door.

Everyone stiffens.

MADELINE

Quiet. Everyone.

The room is silent. Until.

Knock knock knock-knock knock.

CIARA

Someone's at the door.

There's a beat of silence.

MADELINE

No one move a muscle.

Ciara looks to the TV screen.

CIARA

Look. Someone's out there.

On screen: Something CLOSE to the lens. Obscure. But distinctive. A pair of BARE FEET.

MADELINE

Impossible. No one survives the forest after nightfall. This is a trick.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. There it is again. Mina swallows. The feet on screen are still. Statue-esque.

MINA

Today...

(beat)

I thought I saw...

MADELINE

Spit it out.

MINA

I thought I saw... a person.

Knock knock knock. There it is again.

MADELINE

Mina. Listen to me very closely. I know you're lying to me about where you found the bike. I need you to be honest with me now.

(beat)

What did you do?

Suddenly... There's an ever-so-subtle groaning outside. It gets louder. Then, something that sounds like a voice. A man's voice.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hello.

(beat)

Hello?

Ciara stands.

CIARA

(whispered)

Oh my god.

MADELINE

Wait-

-But Ciara is already rushing towards the front door. The others follow suit quickly.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Is anybody there?

CIARA

John?

(beat)

Is that you?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yes.

CIARA

He's back. My husband came back.

Madeline intercepts, standing between Ciara and the door. Mina and Daniel move towards the TV screen- the FEET that now move, ever so slightly.

CIARA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MADELINE

You're smarter than this Ciara.

CIARA

I told you he'd come back.

Knock Knock Knock.

CIARA (CONT'D)

John! I'm opening the door.

Ciara reaches for the lock, but is again, intercepted by Madeline.

MADELINE

We do not open the door after sunset. No matter what. That's the rule.

A beat.

CIARA

Are you kidding? The rules don't matter anymore. My husband's out there.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Honey. It's very cold out here.

(beat)

Could I come inside?

MADELINE

The Watchers are playing with us. Baiting us. This is a trick.

CIARA

I know my husband's voice. It's him.

Ciara swats at Madeline's hand. But it's unmoving.

DANIEL

Even if it's not John... If there's someone out there, we should help them.

MADELINE

We do not open the door for anyone.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Why won't you help me baby? I need your help.

Madeline's gaze shoots to Mina.

MADELINE

Tell me what you did, Mina. Tell me where you went.

A beat.

MINA

I went down. Into A Burrow.

MADELINE

My god...

DANIEL

She wasn't alone. I helped her.

MADELINE

(to Mina)

Daniel is very young and very naive. You knew he would follow you if you were convincing enough. Whatever happens tonight is because of your decision.

MINA

I had to try something. And it worked. We found all this stuff!

MADELINE

And what if something had gone wrong? What if something had happened to Daniel?

A beat.

MINA

I don't care. I needed to get out. I can't be here! I can't be stuck where I don't want to be! I need to leave!

CIARA
Shut up! Everyone just shut up!
(beat)
John is outside. And I'm opening
the door.

Ciara SHOVES past Madeline-

MADELINE
STOP!

Ciara freezes momentarily.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Wait for one second... Just ask him
something. Ask him something only
he would know.

CIARA
Why?

MADELINE
Just *do it*.

Ciara looks desparately to Mina.

MINA
I think you should do it. You'll
know if it's him.

Then-

CIARA
Honey? I'm so sorry, John.
(beat)
What book am I reading?

Silence from the other side.

CIARA (CONT'D)
John?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Book? I don't know.

CIARA
Yes you do, baby. You know. We
bought it together in that
beautiful book shop in Dublin. You
knew I would love it. You said it
reminded you of me.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
It's time to let your husband in.

Ciara turns desperately to Madeline.

CIARA

What's wrong with him? What did they do to him?

MADELINE

Think rationally, Ciara. Why would they spare him? Why would they let him survive?

CIARA

I don't know! I just need to open the door!

DANIEL

They're out there with him. The Watchers are out there.

CIARA

No! John would never do that to us.

MINA

He might not have a choice.

Madeline puts a hand on Ciara's shoulder.

MADELINE

They come every night, Ciara. *Every night*. Why would tonight be an exception?

A beat. Ciara thinks.

CIARA

John.

(beat)

John, there's a camera at your feet.

MADELINE

Ciara-

CIARA

I need you to pick it up. Bring it to your face. The others just need to see that it's you. Then we'll open the door and you can come inside.

MADELINE

CIARA.

There's a beat of silence. The image on screen flickers: The Camcorder outside is LIFTED from the forest floor. It pans off to the DARK forest as it is being handled. For a moment, the image is DARK.

Then, suddenly - THE CAMERA WHIPS TO A FACE. A MAN. IT LOOKS LIKE JOHN. BUT HIS EYES ARE SUNKEN, BLOODSHOT. HIS MOUTH DROOPS TO ONE SIDE. HE IS BARELY RECOGNIZABLE.

CIARA

Oh my god. What did they do to him?

The CAMCORDER is dropped to the FOREST floor.

Footsteps. The crunching of leaves as SOMEONE walks away.

CIARA (CONT'D)

John. COME BACK JOHN!

Then. Silence-

Everyone crowds by the TV screen. The image is black. WE can read the DARK SILLOHUETTE of trees.

Then on screen, there is movement-

At first, only a pair of GLOWING EYES. Then another. Then another. In the darkness, SHADOWS materialize from the trees. BODIES WE CAN'T QUITE MAKE OUT, CRAWLING ON ALL FOURS. THEY MOVE TOWARDS THE COOP. THE CAMERA FEED GOES BLACK!

The sound of CLAWED FEET against hard ground. The cracking of branches. A symphony of the FOREST MOVING, just outside of The Coop.

MADELINE

Get away from the door. Everyone.
They're coming... HURRY!

THE WATCHER'S SHRIEK RELENTLESSLY as Madeline, Ciara, Daniel, and Mina rush away from the door.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Get down.

Everyone crouches low.

Then, THE WATCHERS BEGIN TO CIRCLE the coop. ROUND and ROUND. SHRIEKING, CHASING. DRAWING CLOSER AND CLOSER. AN ATTACK SONG.

The barrage grows LOUDER AND LOUDER. The group covers their ears.

The Mirrored Wall begins to shake. More and more rigorously.
Then, everything stops.

BANG. A violent hit against the glass.

BANG. Again.

BANG!

The Mirrored Wall CRACKS. Lines cut deep into the Mirrored Glass, spider out.

Then suddenly, everything is silent.

HARD CUT TO:

76

EXT. THE FOREST - THE NEXT MORNING

76

The sound of something heavy being dragged across dirt.

It's Madeline. She lugs the WHITE BIKE with two hands. The others follow her, reticent, carrying the various ITEMS poached from The BURROW.

Madeline lands at the edge of a Burrow. Madeline stares into the abyss. Then, without further hesitation, tosses the bike into the deep chasm. The others follow suit.

MADELINE

We'll find another way.

Madeline looks to Mina.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Are you with us?

Mina nods.

The group of four stares down into the hole. And WE begin to descend. Into darkness. Moving fast through the cramped space, and into the chasm below. The Bike and other items hit the ground. And WE continue moving.

In the darkness-- WE GLIMPSE EYES. GLOWING EYES.

THE WATCHERS SHRIEK.

FLASH TO:

77

INT. (FLASHBACK) MINA'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NIGHT

77

A warm house illuminated by a burning fire.

A WOMAN sits in a chair, facing the window. SHE is wrapped in a blanket.

There's a wild storm outside the windows. Heavy rain and LIGHTNING.

The woman turns to us. She looks a bit like Mina, but older. We may recognize her from a photo on a fridge. Mina's MOTHER.

MOTHER

Did the storm scare you?

On the opposite side of the room, a LITTLE GIRL (8) has emerged from a doorway. It's YOUNG MINA. She's dressed in pajamas with a costume dress on top.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Come here, Mina.

The Mother extends her hand.

YOUNG MINA

I'm not Mina.

MOTHER

Oh. Who are you?

YOUNG MINA

My name is Odessa. And I'm a Princess.

Mother smiles kindly.

MOTHER

Right. Well then, Princess Odessa.
Come sit with your mother.

Young Mina approaches-

MOTHER (CONT'D)

You too, Lucy.

Reveal; an OLDER GIRL (12). She stands in the same doorway, having emerged from her BEDROOM.

The girls approach their Mother. They climb into her lap. They lay on her chest.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

My beautiful girls.

Mother wraps her arms around her daughters.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
 Promise me the three of us will
 stay like this forever. Promise me
 nothing will ever change us.

(beat)
 I need to hear it.

Mina looks up to her Mother with adoring eyes.

YOUNG MINA
 Promise, Mama.

The sisters nuzzle deeper into their mother's chest.

HARD CUT OUT.
 OVER BLACK:

A CARD reads: January.

78

INT. THE COOP - MORNING

78

ON THE TV SCREEN: *FOUR SINGLES* play a secret game of *TRUTH OR DARE* in the *KITCHEN*. A woman with *FAKE BREASTS* dishes out the first dare.

MISS FAKE BREASTS
*Connor... I dare you to do a body
 shot off of Millie.*

The FOUR SINGLES giggle. The other woman, MILLIE begins to unbutton her shirt. She lays on a table. CONNOR, a.k.a FROSTED TIPS takes the body shot.

In the real world, Mina sits on the couch, watching the TV. She wrapped in a blanket. She looks different. Her cheeks are gaunt. Her eyes are yellowing. WE can see her breath. Darwin rests in her lap.

DARWIN
Body shot off of Millie.

ON SCREEN: *Suddenly, the door opens, revealing DARIA. She is SHOCKED! She runs off crying. CUT TO an interview with Frosted Tips/ Connor.*

FROSTED TIPS DUDE
*Shit. Yeah. I mean, I do feel a bit
 bad about the situation with Daria
 and seeing me do a body shot.*
 (MORE)

FROSTED TIPS DUDE (CONT'D)
*We had a chat and I did tell her I
 had all my eggs in her basket. But
 I mean, this was just a bit of fun.
 It didn't mean anything. And...*

FROSTED TIPS DUDE (CONT'D) MINA
 I am a man after all. I am a man after all. *

She turns her head towards the Window. CIARA sits dazed in the armchair, facing the trees outside.

INT. THE COOP - LATER MORNING

The sound of someone sketching.

The concrete floor of the coop has been drawn on. In black charcoal, a massive, detailed MAP of the forest. Peppered through, are shaded illustrations of various landmarks. Of particular plants and their growing zones. The burrows, organized in a perfect spiral. And in the center of it all, The Coop.

It's strange to see the forest like this, comprehensively. It's somewhat beautiful.

Mina sits on her knees, scratching with charcoal onto the hard ground, in the northeast corner of "the forest".

Darwin hops across the illustrated Map. Mina pets him.

Ciara still sits in her chair. Stoic.

78A INT. THE COOP - DAY

78A

Mina kneels beside Ciara, holding shredded grey meat close to her lips.

MINA
 You need to eat.

But Ciara is unresponsive. She doesn't open her mouth.

MINA (CONT'D)
 You're getting so thin. You can't
 just starve yourself.
 (beat)
 We have to try and stay sane,
 Ciara. The four of us, it's like
 we're all falling apart. Like we're
 cracking. We need to try... To hold
 it together.

Still no response. Mina sets down the food.

78B INT. THE COOP - DAY

78B

The ITALIAN OPERA RECORD SPINS. Mina spins too, wildly, in a circle around The Coop.

Mina stops in front of the Window. She is faced with the massive CRACK. A symbol of *that night*.

81 INT. THE COOP - DAY/EVENING

81

Mina is sitting cross legged in front of Ciara who stares off, dazed.

MINA

I have an older sister. Her name is Lucy. When we were little, it was just our mother and us. We were really happy, the three of us.

(beat)

But the older I got, the angrier I got. I don't know. I guess I just found it hard to cope. With the world. With whatever I was seeing on the news, or around me.

(beat)

There was one night I got into it bad with my mom. She was screaming at me, my sister was screaming at her, I was screaming at everyone... And then I hit her... I hit my own mother. She fell, hit her head I think. And the way she looked at me...

(beat)

I've always known there was something evil inside of me. Some monster I had no control over... So it was easier to just leave. To keep myself away from anything meaningful. Anything I could destroy.

(beat)

I didn't even go to her funeral. After everything, I just didn't know how.

(beat, whispered)

I'm sorry, Ciara. What happened that night was *my fault*.

Mina stands. Moves to the other side of The Coop.

There's a rustling from Ciara's chair. She's now staring at Mina. There's desperation in her eyes.

CIARA
Daniel and Madeline. Shouldn't they
be back by now?

82 EXT. THE COOP - MOMENTS LATER

82

Ciara and Mina stand outside the front door, facing the forest beyond. Mina checks the stopwatch.

MINA
Where are they?

CIARA
Something's wrong.

She looks back to the forest... It's all quiet.

Until ...Footsteps.

SOMEONE is emerging from the trees.

It's Daniel. And he's all alone.

CIARA (CONT'D)
Daniel.
(beat)
Where's Madeline?
(beat)
What happened?

But Daniel says nothing. He passes them, moving into

83 INT. THE COOP - CONTINUOUS

83

Mina and Ciara follow him in.

MINA
What's going on? Where is she?

Daniel is taking off his shoes... Setting down his items.

Ciara kneels down by him. Puts a hand on his cheek.

CIARA
Talk to us, Danny.

He turns to face Ciara.

DANIEL
It doesn't matter.

MINA
What? Where's Madeline.

DANIEL
I'm tired of killing birds. I'm
tired of doing things her way.

Daniel looks up to the others.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
She hit me. I swore I would never
let anyone hit me again.

Ciara's expression darkens.

CIARA
What did you do, Daniel?

No response. Ciara looks to Mina, desperately.

MINA
Where is she?
(beat)
Tell us where she is.

A beat. He looks up to her. Then points to a spot on MINA'S MAP.

Without another thought, Mina turns, and RUNS out of The Coop.

84 EXT. FOREST - DAY/EVENING

84

Mina pants as she runs fast. Branches and twigs cut her. But she's not slowing down.

Mina stops. Catches her breath. The forest ahead might look the same to us-

But Mina reaches up to the tree in front of her. Hanging from a branch, tethered by string, is a birds wing- devoid of skin and feathers. Just bone.

Then-

MADELINE
I CAN'T BREATHE.

MADELINE LUNGES OUT INCHES FROM MINA'S FACE.

Mina jumps back, but Madeline is yanked back by something. A rope, tied around her neck, secured behind her to the base of a tree. A leash.

Madeline thrashes. Claws at the rope secured around her neck.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
I CAN'T BREATHE.

Mina springs into action. She grabs the rope around Madeline's neck. Slices it with a knife.

Madeline keels over. Gasping for air. On her hands and knees- She looks up. Her eyes wide with anger and fear.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
I'll kill him for this.

MINA
We don't have time. The sun's setting.

Madeline nods.

85 EXT. THE COOP - EVENING

85

Madeline and Mina sprint in the direction of The Coop.

But the door has already been sealed.

Mina pounds on the door.

MINA
DANNY! DANIEL!!!

There's no response.

MADELINE
Open the door, Daniel.

DANIEL (O.S.)
No.

CIARA (O.S.)
Please, Daniel.

MADELINE
You'll listen to me Daniel. Open this door.

DANIEL
 I don't listen to you anymore.
 (beat)
 I'm in charge now.

Mina glances at Madeline.

MINA
 The sun's going down, Daniel! We'll
 die!

A beat. No response. The sun is moving fast. The forest
 darkens.

Madeline grabs Mina's wrist.

MADELINE
 Let's go.

She yanks Mina forward. And begins running.

86 EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

86

Mina and Madeline run at full speed as the sun lowers. The
 forest grows darker still, colder...

MINA
 We should reason with him. I think
 he'll let us inside! We can reach
 him!

MADELINE
 It's too late.
 (beat)
 Hurry.

INTERCUT WITH:

87 INT. THE COOP - SAME

87

Daniel still has his hands against the doors. The locks are
 sealed. Ciara comes up behind him.

CIARA
 (gently)
 Daniel-. What did you just do?

DANIEL
 Come on, Ciara. They'll be here
 soon.

Daniel moves to the window. Stands in front of it, waiting.

There's that familiar WHIRR and the window FOGS, becoming a MIRROR once again.

The spotlights turn on.

BACK TO:

88 EXT. THE HILL - SUNSET

88

Madeline and Mina mount a hill, and push through some trees to a LEDGE.

The view in front, down the slope, is THE COOP. The corner of it peeks out from a clump of trees. And in the center of this side- THE WINDOW.

[A small Daniel and Ciara stand in front of it, holding hands.]

Madeline yanks Mina's wrist. Tucks her underneath a protruding rude.

MADELINE

They won't be able to smell us here. Look at the bark.

Mina looks to the bark around them. It's discolored, textured.

MINA

It's rotting.

The sun plunges beneath the horizon. Now it's dark.

THE GROUND SHAKES. There's a SHRIEK from somewhere in the forest. Mina and Madeline peek over the root at THE COOP.

MADELINE

I suspect the Watchers will be very upset that two of us are missing.

MINA

What do we do?

Another SHRIEK.

MADELINE

We wait for our moment.

89 INT. THE COOP - NIGHT

89

Ciara and Daniel hold hands in front of the Mirror.

CIARA
Where are they?

DANIEL
They'll come. They always come.

90

EXT. THE HILL - NIGHT

90

Mina and Madeline breath heavily.

BRANCHES BREAK CLOSE TO THEM. Mina reaches for Madeline's hand. She takes it.

Madeline puts a finger to her lips.

A WATCHER SHRIEKS. This is closest one has ever been. So close, we can hear its BREATH. *Heavy. Raspy. Moist.*

Mina and Madeline tuck in deeper. And that's when we see it.

SOMETHING emerges from the trees beside them.

THE LIMBS HAVE MANY JOINTS. BENDING. CRACKING. IT'S SPINE IS ARCHING. PULSATING, PERHAPS. A MASSIVE BEAST. CRAWLING ON ALL FOURS. BRANCH LIKE APPENDICES EXTEND FROM ITS SHOULDERS. ITS ARMS. ITS SKIN IS RAW, DARK AND TEXTURED. ALMOST LIKE ROTTING BARK.

The Watcher seems to sense this movement, as it cocks it's head in the direction of Mina and Madeline.

IT'S FACE IS FEATURELESS. SKIN STRETCHED OVER PORTRUDING CHEEKBONES. THE ONLY DISTINCTIVE FEATURE, TWO GAPING HOLES WHERE EYES SHOULD BE, AND SOMETHING GLOWING WITHIN THEM.

Madeline's hand loops around Mina's face, covering her mouth.

The Watcher sniffs the air. Then turns back in the direction of the coop.

Then, something strange....

The Watcher's sways back and forth. It's front legs lift off the ground. It leans back and STANDS ON TWO FEET. It looks almost, *humanoid*.

THE WATCHER STAGGERS, THEN STEADIES. IT TAKES A STEP LIKE... A PERSON.

And then we see others...

SHADOWS approaching the coop. *Closing in.*

Mina shuts her eyes...

91 INT. THE COOP - NIGHT 91

There's a SHRIEK from outside of the glass. Then ANOTHER.

Daniel squeezes Ciara's hand tighter.

DANIEL

Don't move. It'll be okay.

THUMP. Something hits the glass.

THUMP. Again.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

They're not here! They're not in
here with us!

Daniel is distraught. Tears streak his face.

Then, DOZENS OF WATCHERS SHRIEK from outside... The sound of
CLAWS AGAINST THE GROUND.

BACK TO:

92 EXT. THE HILL - SAME/CONTINUOUS 92

The shadows by the window move FAST. A PACK dispersing.

THE WATCHER CLOSEST TO MINA AND MADELINE SHRIEKS. AND BOUNDS
OFF. DISAPPEARING INTO THE FOREST.

Slowly, Mina opens her eyes. Madeline lowers her hand from
Mina's mouth.

The two women look at each other in horror.

MADELINE

They're looking for us.

(beat)

Let's go. Quickly.

93 EXT. THE COOP - NIGHT 93

Mina and Madeline approach and POUND ON THE FRONT DOOR.

MINA

DANIEL!! DANNY PLEASE!!

MADELINE
Open the door, Daniel!

MINA
DANIEL PLEASE!

There's a SHRIEK somewhere behind them.

MADELINE
Daniel? I'm very sorry for hitting
you. It was wrong and it won't
happen again. I was just upset.

Nothing. Mina and Madeline exchange a desperate glance.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
We don't have much time, Daniel. Do
you understand? We do not have
time.

Still nothing.

MINA
Daniel. Listen to me.
(beat)
I know you. You're a good kid. You
don't know what a mistake like this
will do to you. You'll hate
yourself for the rest of your life.
I know it might seem like the best
option right now because you're
angry, but it's not.
(beat)
Come on, Danny... We're in this
together... We protect each other.

From the other side, the sound of the locks being turned.

All at once. The door is opened. Mina and Madeline are pulled
into-

94 INT. THE COOP - CONTINUOUS

94

Mina and Madeline hit the ground.

Ciara seals the door behind them. Daniel stands in the
corner. His back to them.

Ciara goes over to him.

CIARA
Daniel-

But Madeline is already standing. She lunges towards Danny.

MADELINE
You ungrateful child. *I kept you
alive.*

DANIEL
Stay away from me.

MADELINE
*I should have killed you months
ago. Cut your goddamn throat.*

Ciara stands between them.

CIARA
Everybody stop! STOP! They're
coming.

MINA
What are they going to do?

MADELINE
We've broken too many rules.
They'll be angry.

There's a SHRIEK from far away. These ones sound angrier.
More violent.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
There's a chance we may not survive
this night. Do you all understand?

Daniel, Ciara, and Mina nod.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
But if we are going to try, you
should all know what we're up
against.
(beat)
In front of the Mirror now,
everybody.

The group of four moves to the Mirror, assembling in a line.
The forest outside rumbles with movement.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
I told you I would never lie to
you. And I haven't. But there are
certain things I'd hoped to protect
you from...
(beat)
(MORE)

MADELINE (CONT'D)

I came to this forest in a different manner than the rest of you. I came here because I *wanted* to. Because I knew what was inside. I'd heard the stories.

CIARA

What stories?

MADELINE

Legends, myths, that I, myself, didn't fully believe. I suppose I was hoping to be proved wrong... And I was.

(beat)

Everything changed the night I saw one for the first time.

DANIEL

You told us you'd never seen one.

MADELINE

Actually, I didn't. You assumed my experience was the same as yours. But I lived many days in this forest before any of you.

CIARA

What did you see?

MADELINE

I had been hunting. I stayed out too long. We all believe we're exempt from the rules at some point or another. I returned to The Coop as the night was falling. I heard something there, in the forest behind me.

(beat)

When I turned, I thought I'd finally lost my mind.

A WATCHER SHRIEKS. This time closer.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

It drew closer to me. And I knew the horrible thing I was seeing was *real*.

CIARA

What did you see?

CUT TO:

95 EXT. (FLASHBACK) THE COOP - NIGHT

95

The flashlight casts a pool of white light into the trees. There's something there, in the dark. Moving. Obscured by shadow.

MADELINE (V.O.)
I saw... myself...

Into the light, steps MADELINE... But NOT MADELINE. A distorted version. NAKED. ONE EYE IS BIGGER THAN THE OTHER. A HAND HAS SIX FINGERS. THE LEGS ARE LONG AND LANKY.

THE WATCHER SMILES.

BACK TO:

96 INT. THE COOP (PRESENT) - NIGHT

96

MADELINE
Not a perfect replica. Everything
was sort of *off*. And it was longer.
Leaner.

Madeline looks up to the others. Her eyes brim with emotion.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
You see, The Watchers have the
ability to change their form. To
shift from their monstrous natural
state, into something that looks a
bit like *us*. That night, the
creature had chosen to appear
looking just like me.

CIARA
It's not possible.

MADELINE
There are terribly strange things
in this world. I think we all know
that for a fact.

There's a CHORUS of SHRIEKS nearby. *They* are communicating.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
The Watchers are descended from
some of the most ancient creatures
on this earth. The things of legend
and lore. They go by many names.
The Winged People. The Fairies.
Changelings. There are stories as
far back as Ireland goes.

(MORE)

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(beat)

This is why they watch us. They mean to study us. So that they can *become us*.

(beat)

We are their playthings. Their *muses*. And that is why... they will never let us leave.

Then...

BANG BANG BANG at the front door.

CIARA

(whispered)

They're here.

BANG BANG BANG.

Mina turns to Madeline.

MINA

What do we do?

MADELINE

We stay still. We hope they choose to forgive us.

BANG BANG BANG.

Then, there's a voice from outside. It's distorted. Deep. Like a sound byte being picked up on a nearby radio wave. It sounds like a YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE.

A WATCHER

OH GOD! DEAR GOD! THOSE HORRIBLE THINGS! SOMEBODY! ANYBODY! IS ANYONE THERE!

Everyone stiffens.

CIARA

Is that them?

Madeline nods.

MADELINE

Tricky little monsters, aren't they?

Then, from another side of the coop, AN OLD WOMAN'S SHAKING VOICE... SINGING-

A WATCHER

Too-ra-loo-ra-loo ral, Too-ra-loo-ra-li, Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Hush now, don't you cry

From the opposite side, a MAN'S VOICE-

A WATCHER (CONT'D)

I'm certain it's the femoral vein that's been severed. I don't have much time.

From behind the mirror, A LITTLE BOY'S VOICE-

A WATCHER (CONT'D)

MAMA? MAMA? I WET MY PANTS.

THEN, A DEEP GUTTURAL VOICE-

A WATCHER (CONT'D)

GODDAMN WHORE. FUCKING WHORE. I SHOULD BREAK YOUR NECK.

Heads turn in the direction of each new voice, more chilling than the last.

BANG BANG BANG. The front door shake.

BANG BANG BANG. Then SCREECH. The edges of the metal door are being bent in by something very strong.

CIARA

They're gonna get in.

DANIEL

We need to push the table in front of the door.

Daniel, Ciara, Mina, and Madeline spring into action, beelining towards the dining table. They each take a corner. And begin to PUSH.

A WATCHER

May it rest so lightly over you that your soul may be out from under it! Quickly up and off on its way to God. Now may the Lord kiss you and kindly, Amen!

The table moves with a SCREECH, pulling up the carpet beneath it. It collides against the door with a THUMP.

The Watcher right outside SHRIEKS! The others follow suit.

BANG BANG BANG.

CIARA (O.S.)

What's that?

The others turn back to Ciara. She's gazing down at the floor where the carpet has been pulled up.

Peeking out from underneath, is a metallic sheet. That looks to have been nailed down.

CIARA (CONT'D)

What is that?

Daniel moves to it. Pulls the carpet back further.

REVEAL: A SQUARE cut into the cement. It's a meter long on each side.

CIARA (CONT'D)

Oh my god. What is it?

Daniel moves to it. Leans down. He knocks on the surface. It echoes, as if

DANIEL

It's hollow.

A WATCHER SCRAPES THE METAL OF THE FRONT DOOR. A BLOODCURDLING SOUND.

A WATCHER

**LET'S HAVE A CUP OF TEA LIKE WE
USED TO. LET AN OLD FRIEND INSIDE.**

Daniel tries to move the metal piece, to no avail.

DANIEL

It won't budge.

MADELINE

Nothing good can come of going
down. That's where they live.

From outside-

A WATCHER

**My stomach is grumbling. It hurts
so bad. Isn't there anything you
can do?**

DANIEL

Get me something heavy.

Ciara drags over a chair. Daniel stands. Rolls up his sleeve.

He lifts the chair high, then lets it crash down upon the metal. There's a big dent in the center.

He lifts it again. Throws it down with force. Then again.

The dent deepens, and the edges of the metal piece begin to bend upward.

Daniel gets on his knees, and begins to *punch it with his fist*. He grunts. Again. Again. The skin on his knuckles splinters.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

COME ON!

[THE METAL OF THE FRONT DOOR BEGINS TO BEND. A SET OF HUMAN LOOKING FINGERS SNAKE THROUGH THE OPENING. THEY ARE LONGER THAN THEY SHOULD BE.]

A WATCHER

***I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE DONE. ONE CANNOT
HIDE FROM THE EYES IN THE TREES.***

He hits it a final time. The piece dislodges. And we reveal what is below.

Smooth metal and SMALL HATCH, adorned with a SILVER WHEEL. Like that of a bank vault.

CIARA

It's a door.

A beat.

MINA

Open it.

Daniel yanks it counterclockwise. A deep, mechanical CLICK is followed by a puff of air. Like something releasing.

OUR group looks down into-

A DARK HOLE. Similar to the burrows but sleeker, more polished.

Leading down is a STEEP INDUSTRIAL LADDER, quite precarious at a glance. It's dark. An abyss.

THE WATCHER AT THE DOOR SHRIEKS. THE FRONT DOOR BENDS FURTHER.

MINA (CONT'D)

I'll go.

(beat)

Hand me my bird.

Ciara retrieves the bird. Hands him over to Mina.

Mina takes a deep breath, and swings her feet over the hole. She turns. Her foot connects with a rung.

HARD CUT TO:

97

INT. THE BUNKER - MOMENTS LATER

97

WIDE of a halo of light shining down on the thin ladder. Mina moving down it. Small like a bug in this frame.

Mina's descends the precarious ladder. The climb seems to go on forever. Her feet land with a THUMP. It's dark in here. Completely dark.

Her breaths shorten with haste and fear as she feels around the walls. Her hand hits something hard. Something distinct.

MINA

I think I feel-

CLOSE ON MINA'S FACE AS THE LIGHTS COME ON. Mina scans the room. Her face is unreadable at first.

CUT TO MINA'S POV:

A HIGH WALLED INDUSTRIAL BUNKER FILLED WITH.... *THINGS*.

Everything is antiquated. Early 2000's era. On one wall, dozens of TV's. A messy desk with stacks of papers, books, notes. On it a desktop. A stained cot in the center. A DINGY SHOWER and TOILET. A FADED ORANGE COUCH. A coffee table packed to the BRIM with strange items. MAPS, trinkets, BOOKS, ANIMAL SKULLS.

And behind this lived in tableau, ROWS AND ROWS of shelving. Filled with CANS OF FOOD, JUGS OF WATER. BLANKETS. CLEANING SUPPLIES. LIQUOR. And VCR movies. And a record player.

A place of wonder. Like Oz in color.

Mina scans the ceilings where thick electrical wires run, twisting, and leading towards a generator.

And at the far end of the room. There's a desk... With a computer.

Mina moves towards it as the others descend the ladder. The sound of the HATCH being closed behind them. THE SHRIEKS AND SCRATCHING OF THE WATCHERS UPSTAIRS IS MUFFLED.

Daniel, Ciara and Madeline reach the ground.

CIARA (O.S.)
This has been under our feet the whole time?

DANIEL (O.S.)
Look at all this food. We could live for years like this. No more hunting.

MINA
Look.

Mina points to the computer desktop.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. THE BUNKER - MOMENTS LATER

An antiquated APPLE ICON appears on a black screen. CLOSE on pixels of a screen. A CLUTTERED DESK TOP.

MADELINE
My god.

EVERYONE LOOKS IN as Mina navigates towards a folder labeled: TAPES.

It opens to a list of uploaded videos. Mina clicks the first.

The screen is filled by something filmed in this very spot.

AN PROFESSORIAL MAN, (50s IRISH), sits on the very same chair as Mina. He looks into camera.

Mina hits play.

KILMARTIN
Professor Rory Kilmartin. September the twenty-fourth, 2009.

DANIEL
It's The Colonel.

The MAN ON SCREEN scratches his head. Then begins talking.

KILMARTIN

This the first day of the future. A future in which Fairytale are not just stories anymore. A future in which legends become synonymous with history. And I am the man at the helm of it all.

(beat)

I am a scholar before I am a man. And I have always been prepared to give up my life to prove the existence of the changelings. To study them if I could get close enough... And anyways. There was nothing left for me in the outside world. I've lost everything. My credibility. Everything.

(beat)

So this too, is the first day of my life. My real life. The purpose I was meant to fulfill.

Kilmartin leans forward. Clicks off the camera.

Our group is left in silence.

CIARA

Are there more?

Mina clicks back into the main folder. An array of THUMBNAILS pops up. Mina picks one.

KILMARTIN reappears. A bit more haggard. His facial hair has grown slightly.

KILMARTIN

On our first scout to edge of the Forgotten Wood, we discovered the small problem of the technology breaking down. We designed the work around. Solar power. Military grade generators embedded into dirt below us. But I couldn't discern the source of this phenomenon. How the forest could disable things in such a manner.

(beat)

I have a theory that the system of tunnels underneath this place have a particular effect. It's possible isn't it?

(MORE)

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

That the energy emanating from the Changelings themselves, for all of those years trapped underground, has culminated into a sort of force field that works in their favor.

(beat)

When bees land on the beautiful Pyrethum plant in search of pollen, they are fed instead with toxins. This is the way of nature. An elegant killing machine.

(beat)

In this case, it's the blockage of technology, the magnetism that seems to draw wanderers in. The disorienting appearance of the trees that make it nearly impossible to navigate. And the memories that come back like vivid flashes, that imbue us with a sense of guilt, perhaps even in some cases, suicidality. It's all in a means to weaken us.

(beat)

This is the perfect hunting ground.

Mina looks to the others.

DANIEL

He knew everything.

Mina clicks out of this video into the next.

KILMARTIN some days later:

KILMARTIN

Every night here shakes me. I suppose I should have been prepared for how they appear behind the window. My renderings were not too far off. But they are, most bluntly stated, heinous. It is said that the Fairy People were once incredibly beautiful. Alluring. What remains of them is something else altogether. Dark and brutalist.

(beat)

I suppose those years underground changed them. It is their nature to adapt to their environment. And I can say, from my own experience, that living underground is cold and heartless.

(MORE)

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

And when they appear looking like
me. It takes a strong man to bear
that sight.

Mina scrolls. Navigates to another.

KILMARTIN has his head down. His beard has grown. He sighs.
Then looks up to camera.

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

I keep thinking About the gun.
About the single bullet I loaded.
Just in case.

(beat)

I'm afraid even in the daylight
now. I fear I'm being followed.
Feel I'm being watched. I even
thought I saw... It's not
important.

(beat)

I installed dispensers of sodium
nitrate around the window. They
trigger at nightfall, with the
lights. I just couldn't bear the
sight anymore. It was messing with
my head. I suppose that makes me a
coward.

(beat)

I need to confess. The guilt is
eating me alive. And I'm afraid if
I don't speak on it... It'll kill me.

Madeline leans in.

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

This wondrous place, the structure
I spent years designing, was built
on the blood of innocent men. I'm a
murderer, you see.

(beat)

Three troops of young men. That's
what it took. Three trips and three
troupes. They came at sunrise on
horseback, with the tools I had
instructed them to and worked on a
strict schedule until nightfall.
Stacking bricks, slathering
concrete. They got as far as they
could those days... They built with
incredible efficacy. Because I told
them to.

(beat)

(MORE)

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

What I did not tell them was that they were never leaving. When the darkness came, I told them to take supper outside. And quietly. I locked the doors. Came down to the bunker.

Ciara turns away from the computer. She takes a seat on one of the chairs.

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

I could still hear their screams. Even being so far from them. I could hear them being torn apart. I could hear as their tools, their horses, everything left of those men, were dragged down into the Holes.

Daniel retreats too. Then Madeline.

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

Sacrifice is neccessary. Especially in the pursuit of knowledge and progression. But the memories... Those screams... This is different. I-

(beat)

I am a monster.

98

INT. (PRESENT) THE BUNKER - NIGHT

98

Mina's eyes are heavy, red, as she stares at the computer screen. At Kilmartin's face.

Behind her, Daniel, Ciara, and Madeline are seated on the floor. They have pooled the ITEMS from the shelves between them, organized in neat piles. Food, water, supplies.

CIARA

Three-hundred and seventy cans of food. Forty 5-gallon containers of water.

(beat)

If we're conservative, we could survive for eight months down here.

MADELINE

That takes us through the summer.

DANIEL

We could make it in the summer. When the days are longer. Right?

MADELINE

Maybe.

Still fixated on the computer, Mina navigates to menu. Clicks a button that reads LIST. File names and their dates pop up in sequential order.

Mina thinks for a beat. Then scrolls all the way to the bottom. Clicks on the last one.

Kilmartin's face pops up once again. His head is down.

Mina presses play.

KILMARTIN

We think we can escape fate. But a man is made a man by his destiny. My destiny was always to die here.

(beat)

The silliest thing happened. I tripped on a root. Injured my ankle... I tried to reset it. But the bone hasn't healed properly... And now... I can't walk.

(beat)

I've accepted it. Really. This will be penance for my sins. The lives I took to build this place. The morals I've abandoned. I'll happily give my life in return.

(beat)

But I can't shake the thought. What if, even after my death, I am still sinning. If anyone were to find my research. If anyone were curious enough to come here--.

(beat)

So. I have no other option but to beg.

Mina leans in.

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

If there's someone watching this. On the off chance fate has brought you here... I need to ask a favor.

(beat)

My research is at the University. NUI Galway. If my office is still there, I need you to go. There's a metal box under my desk. Full of papers. Maps. My writings.

(MORE)

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

Everything that indicates or even mentions the location of this forest.

(beat)

I need you to go there. And destroy it all...

(beat)

And the way you're going to do that...

(beat)

Is you're going to get to my boat.

Mina's eyes widen. Kilmartin leans in. Almost in a whisper-

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

There's a river a short distance from the Point of No Return 44. The issue of escape is not an unsolvable one. The forest does its best to disorient you. But you can make it if you move in a completely straight line...

(beat)

If you need help, the birds know the way.

Kilmartin leans back in his chair. Sips WHISKEY from the bottle.

KILMARTIN (CONT'D)

Please do this for me.

(beat)

Let me die in peace. Let them all believe I was mad.

Kilmartin rummages for something in his desk. Then stands. He leaves the video running as he moves to the back of the bunker. We may clock something silver in his hand as he mounts the ladder. Climbs upward. He disappears into The Coop.

Moments later, there's the sound of a GUNSHOT. The video goes on.

She is frozen. After a beat-

Mina turns to look at the others. They are now standing, staring at the computer screen.

HARD CUT TO:

99

INT. BUNKER - NIGHT

99

Daniel, Mina, Ciara and Madeline move about the bunker.

CIARA

There's no way. We've tried so many times. If there was a way out, we would have found it.

DANIEL

He crazy bastard shot himself. What reason would he have to lie?

MADELINE

We can't trust the word of a madman.

MINA

It's possible. There's no way to know if we were moving in a completely straight line. Maybe the answer's more simple than we thought.

CIARA

Even if we did make it to this river, what if the boat's gone? There's no way of knowing how long ago it was placed there.

MADELINE

What if there never was a boat?

DANIEL

It'll be there. The boat will be there.

CIARA

How can you be so sure?

A beat.

MINA

Madeline. You know this forest better than the rest of us.

(beat)

What do you think?

Madeline turns to them. Solemn.

MADELINE

I think... We don't have another option.

(MORE)

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(beat)

We have to try it.

OUT on her eyes. Determined.

100 INT. THE BUNKER - LATER NIGHT

100

SCRATCHING AT THE METAL HATCH. The Watchers have made it inside the COOP.

Mina pulls a cassette from a dusty bin. Pushes it into the player. She moves the pin to the edge. Turns up the volume, high.

[CUE: A HIT FROM THE 80's, Like ABBA'S *SUPER TROUPER*.]

Madeline is hunched over the computer screen. Looking through various files.

Daniel sits by the coffee table, leafing through a stack of **POLAROID**S.

They depict the same frame, taken at various times: The Coop, in stages as it's being built.

- The first photo is just a deep cavern cut into the ground. A group of YOUNG MEN stands in front of the building proudly. There's a date at the bottom.

- The next photo is the same frame. Metal beams have been erected above the cavern. The bones of The Coop. A different group of YOUNG MEN stands proudly.

Ciara's hand suddenly conceals the photos. Daniel looks up.

CIARA

Stop looking at those.

She extends her hands towards him.

CIARA (CONT'D)

Come on. If this is maybe our last night on earth, we're gonna dance.

DANIEL

No way.

CIARA

Come on, idiot.

Daniel hesitates. Then joins Ciara. Together they move. Sweetly. Awkwardly.

Mina takes a seat on the couch. She watches Daniel and Ciara as they dance for a moment. And lets her eyes close.

101 INT. THE COOP - SUNRISE

101

There's an electrical CLICK and the lights go off. Mirror turns to glass, and hopeful white light enters the Coop.

The front door has been completely BENT OUT OF SHAPE. The rest of the coop has been ravaged. Furniture torn into. Walls scratched. The mirror is shattered in the center.

A CLICK at the hatch.

Ciara's doe eyes peek through. She lifts it completely. Daniel pokes his head through. Then Mina. Then Madeline.

MADELINE

We wouldn't have made it through
the night.

They scan the room.

102 INT. THE COOP - MOMENTS LATER

102

Everyone stands at the front door. Hopefully for the last time.

DANIEL

My father was a drunk.

(beat)

He used to hit me. Nearly to death
sometimes.

(beat)

One day he passed out on the couch.
Left his keys out on the table. I
took the bike and drove as far as I
could. As fast as I could. I
thought anyplace would be better
than there.

(beat)

I can't go back.

Another beat.

CIARA

Danny?

DANIEL

Yeah?

CIARA

You can come stay with me, alright?

Daniel nods.

MADELINE

Everyone ready?

(beat, affirmative)

It's time to go.

Daniel swings open the door.

103 EXT. FOREST - MORNING/DAY

103

Surreal.

The group of four passes through the greenery. Climbing the uneven surface in a line lead by Madeline.

They step in rythmn. In sync. Like a funeral procession.

103A EXT. FOREST - LATER MORNING

103A

Ciara is at the end of the line. She lags a bit. Thinking. Mourning. Daniel turns back towards her.

DANIEL

Alright?

CIARA

Fine.

A beat. A few steps forward.

DANIEL

We found a way out. Maybe John did too.

Ciara nods.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You'll find each other again. I know it.

Another nod. Then-

Beep beep beep. Something muffled. Quiet. Familiar.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

You okay?

Ciara stops.

CIARA
 Fine. Keep going. I'm right behind
 you.

Daniel hesitates, then turns away. Follows the rest of the pack.

Ciara leans down. Reaches into the mud. She retrieves something metal. JOHN'S WATCH. The face is cracked.

Ciara stares at it for a minute. Her gaze moves past the watch, where there are distinctive DRAG MARKS. She follow the trail. At the end of it, in the distance, there's A BURROW.

A beat.

Ciara pockets the watch. Follows the others.

Daniel looks up to the trees. Hanging above them, are strings, with BIRDS FEET attached.

They continue on. In silence. Until-

CIARA (CONT'D)
 It's so cold.

A beat.

MADELINE
 We'll make it.

DANIEL
 How many hours do we have until
 sunset.

Madeline retrieves the stopwatch from her pocket. Checks it.

MADELINE
 Five and a half hours.
 (beat)
 We'll make it....

They press forward.

104 EXT. THE POINT OF NO RETURN 44 - DAY

104

The Four stand facing a strange boulder. Engraved in the front, tiny letters:

THE POINT OF NO RETURN - 44

MADELINE

This is it.

(beat)

As it says... the point of no
return.

The group begins moving again. They step over the line into--

105 EXT. UNEXPLORED FOREST - CONTINUOUS

105

They push through trees. Climb roots. They are short of
breath now.

DANIEL

There's something there. Up ahead.

Daniel points to the trees up ahead. To a clearing. They move
closer, following Darwin's lead. They push into-

106 EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

106

The trees here have grown outward, as if repelled by what's
in the center...

A MASSIVE WHITE STONE EMBEDDED INTO THE EARTH. IT'S CIRCULAR.
AND LOOKS TO HAVE BEEN CHISELED INTO SHAPE BY BLUNT TOOLS. IN
THE CENTER OF THE STONE, THERE'S A STRANGE CARVING. A RUNE.

The group stops.

MINA

What is that?

Madeline goes to it. Kneels down and touches the stone.

MADELINE

Unbelievable.

She looks to the others.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

It is said that fairies once lived
among us. That they watched from
the trees as cities grew bigger. As
men grew greedier. And The Winged
People waged war.

(beat)

The legend goes on to tell the
story of a Great King who called
for a truce, deep within the woods.

(MORE)

MADELINE (CONT'D)

But when the Fairies came to strike a deal, he lead them into a tomb he had built deep underground. Sealed them in with a *door* carved from white stone. It is said to be marked with a spell that prevents them from ever returning the way they came...

(beat)

I never believed it could be real.

(beat)

We need to keep moving.

107 EXT. DEEPER FOREST - EVENING

107

Mina can see her breath. She shivers, wraps her coat in tighter. The bird cage trembles.

CIARA

How long until sunset?

Madeline slowly looks down to the stopwatch. Then back up.

MADELINE

Thirty minutes.

Something WET drips onto Mina's forehead. She looks up to the sky, still shivering. It's grey.

It starts raining. At first just a mist. Then in a moment, a severe shower.

Everyone is drenched, but Madeline never stops. Mina shouts to the front of the line-

MINA

We'll never make it in this!

MADELINE

We have to! Stay close, everyone.

They tighten their line. Closer to eachother.

Eyes squint as rain streaks across their faces. Feet slosh in the mud.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Stay close-

Madeline slips suddenly, and out of frame.

She is caught by DANIEL, who grips her forearm. He looks down at her. Then yanks her back onto solid ground.

Everyone is drenched. Madeline stands. Moves forward.

Ciara follows, then Danny and Mina. Ciara takes the hands on either side of her. Danny takes Mina's. They are all linked...

MADELINE (CONT'D)
We keep moving.
(beat)
We'll be there any minute now. I
can feel it.

They are all linked by the hand again. The sun is lowering.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Any minute now. Any minute-

There's a sound. FLAPPING WINGS. Everyone stops to turn.

Quickly approaching, is a FRANTIC PACK OF MOTHS. They fly RIGHT at the group. Madeline, Ciara, Daniel, and Mina shield their heads. The moths pass by them.

Everyone stands. Then--

There's a SHRIEK from somewhere behind them.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
We need to run.

A beat.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
LET'S GO!

The group takes off running. Fast through the trees. The steady rythmn of Madeline's walking stick is gone. It's cutting wing and leaves now.

Mina's feet hit the ground. Hard. Her chin lifts, strained for air.

The forest ahead of her seems to thin. Or is it an optical illusion.

No. There. Past the trees... *there is light.*

Mina pushes harder. Harder still. She pushes through the trees onto

Mina stops. The rain does too, in-

a stunning LANDSCAPE.

ROLLING HILLS. GRASS MOVING ETHEREALLY WITH THE WIND. VIBRANT PURPLE FLOWERS. A SLIVER OF ORANGE, SETTING SUN THAT BALANCES JUST ABOVE THE HORIZON LINE.

Moths flutter delicately into the sky. The BLACK BIRDS fly in a pack, against the darkening sky. They disappear.

AND THERE'S THE SOUND OF RUSHING WATER.

Madeline steps up beside Mina, emotional. The elegant landscape is reflected in her moist eyes.

Ciara steps up, then Daniel. Everyone oggles for a moment.

Then, Daniel laughs.

DANIEL

We're out. We actually made it out.

He swings Ciara like a little girl. Kisses her on the forehead.

Mina's gaze follows the sound to a RIVER. Sitting on the shore just beside it... a mound covered by leaves and sticks. Underneath it, peeking out- WOOD.

MINA

There's a boat.

MADELINE

My god. All this time-

THE WATCHERS SHRIEK IN THE FOREST BEHIND THEM. CLOSER.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Go... GO!

They take off running. Again. Down the hillside. Gravity pushes them faster and faster-

109

EXT. THE RIVER - CONTINUOUS

109

A fast rushing river. The boat sits atop the rocky shoreline, tethered by a single, metal chain, that's been rusted and secured around a rock.

Ciara goes for the tether, as Mina and Madeline go towards the boat. They pull it towards the water. Wade in, dragging it...

Madeline chokes a bit as she moves. Neck deep.

Her papery hand grips the wood. Mina heaves her upward. She clunkily tumbles into the boat. Mina hands Madeline the bird cage.

CIARA

I can't get the chain!

Mina wades back to Ciara.

MINA

I'm here.

Together, they muscle it. And the chain comes loose.

CIARA

Wait!

(beat)

Where's Daniel?

But Madeline is already pointing to him, all the way up the hillside, just outside the mouth of the forest.

Daniel looks into the trees. His mouth moves, but we can't hear him.

CIARA (CONT'D)

Daniel! What are you doing?

He can't hear her.

CIARA (CONT'D)

(to the others)

Who's he talking to?

SOMEONE steps out from the edge of the forest. From here it looks like-

Ciara jumps to her feet.

CIARA (CONT'D)

DANIEL! IT'S NOT HIM!

(beat)

IT'S NOT JOHN!

But Daniel can't hear. And NOT JOHN staggers forward towards Daniel. We can't hear what they're saying to each other.

CIARA (CONT'D)

Oh my god. He can't hear us.

Mina turns to Madeline, who watches from the boat.

MINA

I'm going to get him.

Mina makes a move to leave the boat, Madeline pulls her back.

MADELINE

We don't have time.

MINA

He's just a kid. We need to help him.

CIARA

DANIEL! RUN, DANIEL! IT'S NOT JOHN!

But it's too late. The hill grows darker. And FOUR MORE SHAPES emerge from the forest line. They ALL look like John, just taller. *Leaner*.

They walk slowly towards Danny.

MADELINE

If we want to leave this place, we have to go now.

MINA

We can't leave him! He's one of us. We protect each other!

MADELINE

It's already done. Daniel belongs to the forest now.

Daniel is now completely SURROUNDED. The Watchers, the Not-John's are much bigger than him. They stand in a perfect, geometric circle...

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Get in the boat. We'll wait as long as we can. Get in.

One of the Watchers extends a hand as Mina and Ciara wade into the water.

It pokes Danny with an extended finger as Mina and Ciara mount the boat.

Daniel turns to them, one last time. His face is full of regret.

CIARA

DANNY! DANNY!

MADELINE

Look away.

Ciara turns her head into Madeline's chest. Mina grabs an oar, as DANIEL'S SCREAMS RING OUT INTO THE AIR. HE IS DRAGGED BACK INTO THE WOODS.

Mina begins to row. At first lethargically.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Faster!

Mina turns back. There are more Watchers, maybe twenty of them. They walk slow, descending the hillside. They all now appear as DANIEL.

The depictions of him are off. Slightly different. Not him.

Mina paddles faster. The boat is moving. Faster. Faster.

The sound of THE WATCHERS almost at the shoreline.

MINA

Can they swim?!

MADELINE

Faster, Mina!

Mina pushes as hard as she can, frantically, emotionally.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Mina.

Mina doesn't hear her.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Mina.

Mina turns.

Ciara is still in Madeline's arms. The sun has set completely- the sky is calm. Navy blue. And the shadows of the WATCHERS now climb up the hill, returning to their forest.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

They're gone.

(beat)

They're gone.

Mina looks up to the sky. There are stars out.

110 EXT. RIVER'S END - MORNING

110

The river narrows and slows. The banks are different here. Steeper, cleaner. They look manmade.

The wooden boat moves with the water. It appears empty.

But up ahead... Grey stones are built out over the river. A bridge.

Darwin flaps.

Mina sits up stiffly, suddenly wide awake.

MINA

Wake up. Wake up.

Ciara and Madeline groan from the bottom of the boat, and wake themselves. Mina is staring straight ahead.

There's a bridge.

112 EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

112

Mina, Ciara, and Madeline stand in the center of a gravel road.

In the distance, the road seems to shimmer. Movement.

We can make it out now, movement. It's a TOUR BUS. Single layered, somewhat dingy. It careens towards the three women but they do not move.

The BUS lets out a honk.

113 INT. TOUR BUS - MOMENTS LATER

113

A BUS DRIVER (60s, IRISH) swings open the side door.

The three strange women and the bird board the bus. They are haggard. They look as if they haven't seen a bath in months.

TOURISTS with cameras and sunglasses, seated in the rows, stare.

BUS DRIVER

Are you ladies alright?

Mina steps forward.

MINA

Where's the bus going?

The Bus Driver examines them. After a beat-

BUS
This line goes all the way to
Galway.

MINA
Galway.

She turns to the others.

MINA (CONT'D)
That's where I live.

She turns back to the bus driver.

MINA (CONT'D)
Can you take us there?

BUS DRIVER
I don't see why not.
(beat)
Get in, then.

Mina looks to the others, then *steps into the bus*.

The three women grip the seats as they move, making eye contact with various PASSENGERS. They make their way to the very back row.

Mina, Madeline, and Ciara take a seat on the bench.

THE MAN in front of them glances once, then looks away. He balances a speaker on his shoulder. He plays a SONG, very low.

Mina reaches forward.

MINA
Excuse me, sir.
(beat)
Could you turn that up?

The Man With the Speaker nods. Cranks the volume a couple notches.

[CUE: Something undeniably pleasant. Classic. Like BILL WITHERS' *RUBY LEE*.]

Mina leans her head back on the seat.

The streets are quiet, slicked down. Restaurants are illuminated, preparing for the dinner rush.

The TOUR BUS curves into the street, landing at a BUS STOP.

As it pulls away, we reveal Mina, Madeline, Ciara, and Darwin, stoic.

They linger for a moment, without speaking. Then-

MINA

My apartment's only a five minute walk.

A beat.

MADELINE

I should go home.

Another beat.

CIARA

Me too. I have to call my parents.

(beat)

I have to call John's parents. And the house... I can't imagine the state it's in..

MINA

Are you sure? You can spend the night and go in the morning.

CIARA

I should get back.

MADELINE

Me too.

Silence. Then-

MADELINE (CONT'D)

We'll be okay. Won't we.

MINA

Yeah. Yeah, we will.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT 2B - NIGHT

Mina stands in front of the door labeled 2B. She lingers for a moment. Then-

118 INT. APARTMENT 2B - CONTINUOUS

118

A rustling at the front door as Mina jams her key in. Unlocks the door. She pushes in, sets Darwin's cage down.

The place is exactly as she left it. Untouched.

INT. APARTMENT 2B, BATHROOM - NIGHT

The mirror above the sink fogs, as HOT WATER streams from the showerhead.

Mina steps in, and lets the water run over her face, her body. The mud that has been caked on her for months falls to the shower floor, disappearing into the drain.

119 INT. APARTMENT 2B - NIGHT

119

The sound of gentle traffic outside. Chatter and music on the street below.

Mina sits on the floor. A box of DRAWING PENCILS and paper have been set out in front of her.

She picks one, and begins sketching something.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. APARTMENT 2B - NIGHT

Mina stands by the window as the phone rings. She's sent to voicemail.

MINA

Lucy. It's me. I've been gone for a bit. I don't know if you even knew.

(beat)

I guess I was calling to say...
Well to say I'm sorry. You were
always the strong one, you know.
And me, I could barely keep it
together.

BACK TO:

INT. APARTMENT 2B - NIGHT

CLOSE on intricate shading. A pair of charcoal EYES.

MINA (V.O.)
 I always felt so scared. So *angry*.
 And it made me do all this crazy
 shit. I was just... a monster to
 Mom. I didn't know how to cope with
 the fact that.. that I just didn't
 want to *be me*.
 (beat)
 But I'm seeing things differently
 now.

INTERCUT:

INT. APARTMENT 2B - NIGHT

--Mina, by the window.

MINA
 And I'm not so afraid anymore.
 (beat)
 Anyways... I'd love to see you. I'd
 love to see the boys. I can't
 imagine how big they must have
 gotten. Oh, and I have a parrot
 now... Okay. Call me back
 sometime... Love you.

Mina clicks out of the call.

FINALLY, BACK
 TO:

INT. APARTMENT 2B - NIGHT

Mina stands. Moves to the wall of FACES. She secures THREE
 NEW sketches to the wall and moves away.

REVEAL: Perfect depictions of CIARA, DANIEL, AND MADELINE.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT 2B, BEDROOM - MORNING

Mina shoots out of fraught sleep with a gasp. Her hair clings
 to the sweat on her face.

She looks around. She is safe.

125 INT. TRAIN - MORNING 125

Moving fast past beautiful landscapes.

Mina looks out the window. Her face, and the delicate landscape beyond are reflected. Doubles.

She is dressed up. Wears a pair of fake GLASSES.

126 EXT. NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND GALWAY - DAY 126

Stunning architecture. Arches, columns, warm grey stone. The ground is damp, made reflective. STUDENTS IN COATS walk in pairs, in trios. In quads.

Mina walks amongst them, moving with purpost towards a building that says: VISITORS CENTER.

127 INT. UNIVERSITY RECEPTION AREA - DAY 127

From afar in a lobby made nice with flowers, modern finishes. Mina stands at the front desk, speaking to a RECEPTIONIST.

The receptionist seems to be giving Mina directions. She points past Mina towards the Campus beyond.

128 INT. NUI HISTORY BUILDING - DAY 128

A spritely UNIVERSITY STUDENT leads Mina down a HALLWAY.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT

Normally they would have vacated the office. Given it to a class or something. But a group of your Uncle's students started a fund to keep his office and research as it was.

The woman stops at a sealed WOODEN DOOR. She fishes for the right key on a keychain.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT (CONT'D)

You know, there's a guy that's been trying to get in touch with Professor Kilmartin. I think his name is Giles-something. Giles Bowden. He's called, like, a dozen times. I'll pass along your name.

She wrestles open the door, and we step into-

129 INT. KILMARTIN'S UNIVERSITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 129

A massive room. Vaulted ceilings, and messy bookshelves. On one wall a massive tapestry, depicting a *fairytale scene*.

In the center of the room, a desk. Underneath it, just as Kilmartin instructed, there's a metal file box.

The Student lingers for a moment, at the door.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT
You have to tell me. Did he
actually believe in it all? In
Fairies?

MINA
Yeah. Yeah he did.

Mina moves to the desk.

Mina picks up a framed photo. In it, PROFESSOR KILMARTIN stands proud, with a group of UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

MINA (CONT'D)
That's him. Old Uncle Rory.

UNIVERSITY STUDENT
I'll be outside if you need me.

The University Student exits, shuts the door behind her.

130 INT. KILMARTIN'S UNIVERSITY OFFICE - DAY 130

Mina sits cross legged in front of the metal file box. She glances once to the door. Then opens it.

Inside, everything has been pristinely organized. Papers of various widths and weights filed cleanly into folders.

Mina begins leafing through.

She produces a MARKETING MOCK UP, for Kilmartin's book. On the cover, an image of a Joseph Neal Patron work- *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*. And a working title: THE CHANGELING DILEMMA.

Mina pulls out a rendering on parchment. An anatomical sketch of a WATCHER. Kilmartin has signed his name at the bottom.

The next document. A folded long sheet. Mina reveals it. Within it, a detailed blueprint of the coop. And the bunker underneath.

The next document. A map of the forest. Drawn to perfection, shaded, labed, scaled. It's much better than Mina's.

131 INT. KILMARTIN'S UNIVERSITY OFFICE - LATER DAY 131

Mina seals a stack of documents into a briefcase she's brought. She lets out a breath of relief.

Mina's approaches the massive tapestry. She puts a hand to the stitching. Touches the likeness of a RADIANT FAIRY QUEEN. SHE is beautiful. Majestic. Embroidered with glowing WINGS.

Mina's fingers move across it, towards the shelf beside it. She stops. Picks up something.

It's a stack of photos. Just a few of them. Mina begins leafing through.

They depict a night out. Blurred snapshots of a GALA of some kind: Kilmartin, in a tux. His hand looped around the waist of a WOMAN.

The next photo: Kilmartin, that same night, sitting at a circular table with COLLEGUES. A WOMAN'S ARM is draped around his neck.

Mina flips the next photo. Her eyes widen.

132 INT. RECEPTION AREA - EVENING 132

The RECEPTIONIST peers into a compact mirror. She applies pink lipstick, a sickly shade.

MINA (O.C.)

Do you know this woman?

The Receptionist looks up to discover Mina, with a photograph in hand. She takes it.

RECEPTIONIST

This woman?

The receptionist puts on wire-rimmed readers. Takes a closer look.

RECEPTIONST

Oh yes. That's Professor Rory Kilmartin's wife.

MINA

Do you know her name?

RECEPTIONIST

I could find it. I believe she
taught an English course here one
term.

The receptionist types. Places the photo face down.

RECEPTIONIST

That's right. Madeline. Madeline
Kilmartin. Lovely woman.

Finally, we reveal the picture: KILMARTIN, in the tux, hugs
his wife. SMALL, PETITE, PRETTY. With a familiar face.--

--MADELINE'S FACE.

MINA

My god. Of course she came to the
forest. *She followed him.*

RECEPTIONIST

Shame what happened to her?

Mina looks up.

MINA

What? What happened to her?

A beat.

RECEPTIONIST

Sorry, dear.

(beat)

She died some years back. Lung
cancer I think it was.

Mina takes a closer look at the image.

MINA

When? When did she die?

In this photo, she's *smaller* than we remember. Her features
are soft, her eyes gentle. She's much more... *human*.

RECEPTIONIST

2004. Maybe 2005... If I remember
correctly, Rory was heartbroken.
Nearly went mad. Disappeared on
some reckless research
expedition...

HARD CUT TO:

133 EXT. UNIVERSITY - EVENING

133

The sun is setting.

Mina bolts across the cobblestone, carrying the briefcase between her arms.

Mina holds her phone to her ear. She strains for breath, running hard.

HARD CUT TO:

137A EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

137A

A TAXI CAB pulls up to a suburban rowhome, set against many others like it. Various versions of the same thing. This one is the only one with no light inside.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Mina hold up her phone. She has it open to a NEWS ARTICLE about the MISSING COUPLE FROM DUN LAOGHAIRE. Within the article, is a photo of ROWHOMES. One is dressed with CAUTION TAPE.

Mina holds the phone up to the window, comparing it with the sight outside. It's a perfect match to the home with no light.

To the TAXI DRIVER-

MINA

I think this is the one.

(beat)

Thanks.

EXT. CIARA'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Mina exits from the back of the Taxi..

Mina mounts the front porch cautiously. She knocks on the front door. There's no response.

A beat.

Mina raises her hand to knock again-

The door swings open. Ciara stands in the threshold, wrapped in a blanket. The house behind her is dark. She is partially obscured by a shadow.

CIARA
Mina.

MINA
Jesus. Didn't you get any of my
messages? Are you okay?

CIARA
Sorry, my phone wasn't working. But
I'm fine. What's going on?

MINA
Have you heard from Madeline?

CIARA
No. Have you?

MINA
Ciara, I need to tell you
something.

Ciara wraps the blankets tighter around her shoulders.

CIARA
Do you want to come inside?

137B INT. CIARA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

137B

Ciara shuts the door behind Mina.

She is met by a DARK FRONT HALLWAY. A NARROW STAIRCASE
LEADING UPWARDS. A KITCHEN TO ONE SIDE, A DINING ROOM AND
LIVING ROOM TO THE OTHER.

CIARA
Can I get you a cup of tea?

MINA
Thanks.

Ciara leads Mina into -

137C INT. CIARA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

137C

CIARA
Sorry about the lights. Power
company cut the service. I guess
eight months of unpaid bills will
do that to you.

Mina scans the room. In the daylight, this place might be
sweet.

CIARA (CONT'D)

What did you want to tell me?

The window above the sink is open. Ciara moves towards it.
Fills a kettle with water.

MINA

I went to the University, Ciara. I found everything. All of Kilmartin's research. Blueprints of the Coop. Renderings of the Watchers.

CIARA

Oh my god! Did you get rid of it?

MINA

Yes. I burnt it all. But listen, Ciara... I found some photos. Pictures of Kilmartin and his wife at some event. Ciara... it looked like her.

Ciara steps away. The sound of dishes being moved. A tea kettle being filled with water.

CIARA (O.S.)

Looked like who?

MINA

Like Madeline.

Mina moves towards Ciara. She steps further into the dark.

CIARA (O.S.)

What do you mean? Madeline knew the Professor?

MINA

Yes. But no.

(beat)

Ciara. The lady at the University told me Kilmartin's wife died. Years before Kilmartin ever left for the forest. Meaning Madeline... the Madeline we knew in the woods was someone else... *Something* else.

CIARA

You mean.. Madeline was-

MINA

A Watcher.

(beat)

(MORE)

MINA (CONT'D)

Somehow she must have gotten ahold of a photo of the wife. I don't know. But all that time... there was one of them in there with us.

Mina looks down into the sink. There are stacked plates. Leftover food that has atrophied and molded. ROACHES scurry across the surface.

Ciara re-emerges. Standing in shadow.

CIARA

But we've seen her in the daylight.
How could that be possible?

MINA

I guess she's different.

Mina looks up to the window. The curtain that moves in the gentle wind.

CIARA

Are you sure?

MINA

I'm sure.

Mina closes her eyes. *Listens*.

CIARA

We have to tell someone. If there's one of those *things* out there, we have to tell someone.

Mina's eyes shoot open.

MINA

It's so quiet.

CIARA

What?

MINA

No birds. No bugs.

Mina turns abruptly. CIARA is standing right behind her. We can see her face clearly now. It's strange, slightly distorted. This is NOT the Ciara we recognize.

MINA (CONT'D)

You're not Ciara.

Ciara, rather NOT CIARA smiles.

NOT CIARA
I haven't gotten it quite right
yet.

NOT CIARA'S FEATURES BEGIN TO MOVE. HER SHOULDERS BEGIN TO
SHUDDER. HER BONES BEGIN TO CRACK.

Mina makes a run for it. She exits into -

137D INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

137D

Calm footsteps behind Mina as she darts into the room. She
scans for an exit, a weapon. There's nothing in here but a
dining table and chairs.

MADELINE
We had fun in the woods together,
didn't we?

Mina turns. THE WATCHER now appears as Madeline.

Mina backs away, tipping the dining room chairs over. They
hit the ground with a crash.

MINA
How do you walk in the daylight?

MADELINE
It's something I was born with. An
anomaly.

Madeline agilely steps over the chairs.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
My family chose to see it as a
curse.

THE SOUND OF CRACKING BONES as Mina darts out of this room
into-

137E INT. CIARA'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

137E

The hearth is alight. Mina beelines towards it. She pulls an
iron poker from the side. She turns to meet-

DANIEL, or a strange imperfect version of him.

NOT DANIEL
You don't know what it was like in
that place Mina. Completely alone.
Exiled by my own kind.

Not Daniel draws closer. Mina backs towards the hearth.

NOT DANIEL (CONT'D)

Things changed when the Professor came to the forest. I know he dropped her photo on purpose - the photo of his *lovely, dead, wife*. It was clear what he wanted me to do, he wanted me to become her.

(beat)

We were friends for some time like that. We talked about the world outside. About art and science. About sex.

(beat)

And then the bastard shot himself.

Mina SWINGS the poker into the fireplace, dislodging the wood. EMBERS and FLAMES tumble onto the floor. NOT DANIEL jumps back and MINA RUNS.

137F INT. FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

137F

Mina runs at full speed towards the front door.

Behind her, the sound of GLASS BREAKING. Then, the BUZZ of WET, FLUTTERING WINGS OUTSIDE. And A THUMP.

Mina opens the front door.

137G EXT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

137G

Mina stops in her tracks.

Someone is sitting on the porch swing, facing out onto the street. It looks like...

PROFESSOR KILMARTIN.

NOT KILMARTIN

I think I would have been content staying in that place with you three as my pets. Studying you, mastering you.

(beat)

But now that I've seen what's outside... How could I ever go back?

Not Kilmartin turns towards Mina. His features are distorted. MONSTROUS.

NOT KILMARTIN (CONT'D)
The face is the most difficult
part. There are those little
qualities that are hardest to
replicate. The emotion in someone's
eyes. The quivering of their lips.
The ineffable thing that makes
someone appear truly human.

Mina ducks back into-

137H INT. FRONT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 137H

Mina slams the front door shut. She deadbolts the door.

[From outside, FLUTTERING.]

Mina turns. NOT KILMARTIN is at the backdoor. HE'S TALLER
NOW, NEARLY SEVEN FEET. HE CRANES HIS HEAD TO PEER THROUGH
THE WINDOW INSIDE. HE RATTLES THE DOORKNOB.

NOT KILMARTIN
I CAN SMELL YOU.

Mina darts up the stairs.

137I INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER 137I

Mina desperately fishes around in the dark for something. She
hones in on a tray of PERFUMES.

She opens one bottle, pours it on the floor. Then a second
bottle...

Mina turns to exit-

SOMEONE IS COMING UP THE STAIRS... A LITTLE BOY. HE GIGGLES
AS HE RUNS UP THE STAIRS.

Mina tucks back into the room. Hides.

After a moment, the house is silent. Mina scans the room.
Wide-eyed. Desperate.

On the far side of the room, there's a window. Just big
enough for Mina to crawl through.

Mina slips off her shoes. She takes a deep breath. One step
forward... then another-

CREAK!

Mina freezes. Shuts her eyes. Silence. No movement.

Then, she takes another step forward. SOMEONE EMERGES BEHIND HER. It looks like JOHN. A DISTORTED VERSION.

Mina is PULLED OFF HER FEET-

137J INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 137J

MINA IS DRAGGED BACKWARDS. FAST.

SHE CLAWS AT THE FLOOR.

AS SHE IS PULLED INTO -

137K INT. DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 137K

Mina lands with a THUMP. THE DOOR shuts behind her.

It's completely dark in here. The sound of Mina rifling in her pockets.

An iPhone flashlight comes on, casting an eerie cold hue in the room. This space is full of mirrors. Mirrored closet doors offset on angles. And infinite reflections of MINAS.

Mina makes her way to her feet. Her phone flashlight shakes in front of her. Mina scans the versions of herself.

She stops.

ONE OF THEM stares back, slightly off. NOT MINA takes a step. She's behind real Mina. She steps closer.

NOT MINA

You were always my favorite to watch. Perhaps the most challenging. I think it's because you reminded me of myself.

MINA

You and I have always been similar.
(beat)

And that's how I know you didn't kill Ciara. You may have tried. But I know you loved her. You loved all of us.

Not Mina is now right behind Mina.

MINA (CONT'D)
 You can pretend as much as you
 want, but I know you Madeline. I
 know you're not a monster.

NOT MINA steps forward. Strangely, she loops her arms around
 her. Leans her head on her shoulder. Like... a HUG.

NOT MINA
 That's where you're wrong.

NOT MINA'S FACE BEGINS TO STRETCH. BONES POKE AND MOVE
 UNDERNEATH THE SKIN. NOT MINA BEGINS TO SHIFT. GETTING
 ROUGHTER, DARKER, BIGGER. UNTIL SHE HAS THE DOMINEERING BODY
 OF A WATCHER. STRANGE ELEMENTS OF MINA'S FACE ARE DISTORTED
 WITHIN THE WATCHER'S FACE. GROTESQUE WINGS SEEM TO POKE OUT
 OF HER BACK.

NOT MINA/ THE WATCHER
*I am **Ainriochtán**. The Strange One.
 A name I wear with pride.*

THE WATCHER BEGINS TO LOOP ITSELF AROUND MINA. TIGHTENING
 LIKE A BOA CONSTRICTOR.

NOT MINA/ THE WATCHER (CONT'D)
*Your people buried us underground.
 We clawed at the dirt, digging from
 underneath, hoping we might make it
 back to the surface one day. It
 took centuries... But I... I am the
 one to make it. To live as our kind
 once did, undetected amongst the
 humans. I am no abomination. I am a
 hero.*

THE WATCHER'S TALONS CREEP ACROSS MINA'S FACE. IN HER HAIR.
 ENGULFING HER. CONSUMING HER.

MINA
 We don't have to be like our
 ancestors. We can make peace. I'll
 keep your secret.

NOT MINA/ THE WATCHER
*You and I are on opposite sides of
 a war.*

MINA
 We don't have to be. We don't have
 to listen to our anger.

TIGHTER. MINA'S FACE IS RED. SHE STRAINS TO BREATHE.

NOT MINA/ THE WATCHER
*You're trying to manipulate me.
 Play the role of my friend.*

MINA
 I'm not pretending anymore. Look at
 me. This is me!

MINA SHUTS HER EYES. CLOSER AS THE LIFE IS BEING SQUEEZED
 FROM HER.

NOT MINA/ THE WATCHER
*There's no choice, Mina. I am a
 monster.*

MINA
 I thought that of myself too.
 (beat)
 But we're not monsters.

Then. THE WATCHER LOOSENS ITS GRIP. AFTER A MOMENT, Mina
 opens her eyes.

Not Mina, the Watcher is staring at itself in the mirror. At
 it's own grotesque form.

Mina catches her breath. Then-

NOT MINA FLUTTERS, CRASHING INTO THE DOORWAY. THEN INTO THE
 NEXT ROOM.

Mina follows her into -

137L INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

137L

THE SOUND OF THINGS BREAKING.

NOT MINA IS PERCHED IN A WINDOW SILL. THE GLASS IS SHATTERED
 BEHIND HER. She looks back to Mina.

NOT MINA
 We were beautiful once.
 (beat)
 Your friend is in the garden.

THE FLUTTERING OF WINGS... and then she is gone.

Mina stands still for a beat. Then rushes to the window. She
 looks out.

ON the dark, wet street, SOMEONE is limping away.

154 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 154

The glass door slides open, and a barefoot Mina steps into

155 EXT. THE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS 155

A fenced off garden, made colorful by overgrown flowers. In the center, a HAND POKES OUT OF THE DIRT. AND A KNEE.

Mina rushes towards it, and begins to DIG. She excavates Ciara's face quickly. She listens close. She's still breathing.

Mina digs deeper and HEAVES CIARA OUT onto the bed of flowers. She shakes her. Attempts CPR. After a beat.

Ciara rouses with a GASP. She swats at Mina violently.

MINA

It's me!
(beat)
It's me.

Ciara settles.

CIARA

Madeline. She was-

MINA

I know... I know.
(beat)
She's gone.

CUT TO BLACK:

Then, a card that reads: March.

156 EXT. CAFE - DAY 156

[CUE: Somethihg like ROGÉR FAKHR'S FINE ANYWAY]

Mina sits at a cafe table with earphones in. She sketches into a notepad. Violent illustrations of WATCHERS.

Someone taps Mina on the shoulder. She jumps. It's a LITTLE BOY (8). Mina unplugs her earphones.

[THE SONG CUTS.]

MINA

You scared me Olly!

The little boy, grins.

OLLY

That man over there says he knows
you Aunt Mina. He says he wants to
talk to you.

Olly extends a finger. Points across the cafe to A MAN IN A
TAN SUIT. He is staring at Mina. He quickly looks away.

At the same time, A WOMAN (40s) is approaching the table,
with another YOUNG BOY (12). She looks a bit like Mina. She
could be- HER SISTER.

LUCY

The line was so long. I guess the
Irish like their coffee.

LUCY sets down a tray of coffees in the center of the table.
Takes a seat next to Mina.

MINA

Thanks Lucy.

Lucy looks out to the busy Galway street.

LUCY

This place is cool.
(beat)
It suits you.

MINA

Thanks. I think I might stay for a
while.

Mina's gaze moves back to the Man in the Tan Suit. He's
staring at her again. His eyes dart away.

MINA (CONT'D)

Will you guys excuse me for a
second? I gotta make a call.

LUCY

Course.
(beat)
Olly! Get that out of your mouth.

Lucy is distracted by her youngest son, who's chewing on his
toy. Mina stands.

Mina walks away from the cafe, and onto a BUSY street.

She checks behind her. The TAN SUIT MAN is getting up from his table. Moves in the same direction.

She tucks onto a side street.

158 EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY 158

Mina hears footsteps behind her. She picks up her pace, turns again. Into-

159 EXT. ALLEY - DAY 159

Mina is met by a dead end. Apartment windows that face down from the street.

She turns to face her stalker. He appears around the corner. Stops about ten meters away.

MINA
Madeline? Is that you? Show yourself.

THE TAN SUIT MAN takes a step forward.

MINA (CONT'D)
Stay right there.

TAN SUIT MAN
I'm sorry. I just wanted to talk. I saw what you were sketching.
(beat)
My name is Giles Bowden.

MINA
Please leave me alone.

Mina turns to go.

TAN SUIT MAN/ GILES BOWDEN
The University told me Kilmartin's niece had been by. Kilmartin didn't have a niece.

MINA
I think you have the wrong person. Sorry.

GILES BOWDEN
I don't think I do.
(beat)
You've seen them too, haven't you? The Changers.

The man draws closer. Mina tightens.

GILES BOWDEN (CONT'D)
What's your name?

MINA
Mina.

GILES BOWDEN
I've seen them too, Mina. I know
what they are.

Mina eyes the dapper man. They circle each other, so that
Mina is now facing away from the open end. Escape.

MINA
I have to go. My family's waiting.

Mina hurries off.

GILES BOWDEN
Did you think she was the only
Daywalker?

Mina stops. Turns back to the man.

MINA
What?

GILES BOWDEN
You called me Madeline. So you
thought I was one. And the sun is
out.

(beat)
It's rare. But there are others.
Other Daywalkers. Other nests. You
wouldn't believe how many.

(beat)
They've gotten out, Mina. They're
hiding in plain sight. Living like
normal people, working jobs, eating
at restaurants, taking the train.

MINA
No. No. That's impossible.

GILES BOWDEN
I've been tracking them for months.
Mostly in Ireland. Some in Scotland
and a few unconfirmed sightings in
England. Since their habitats have
been cut down, they're
assimilating.

(beat)

(MORE)

GILES BOWDEN (CONT'D)
They're coming back, Mina. And
they're angry with us for what we
did to them.

MINA
I'm sorry. I can't be a part of
this.

Mina turns to go. Starts to walk away again.

GILES BOWDEN
But you're already a part of it.
(beat)
Mina... I don't know what you've
been through. But if you've seen
the Changers, you've just become
part of something much bigger.
(beat)
This is just the beginning. And I
need your help.

Mina stops. Considers. Then she turns back. With a glint in
her eye-

MINA
Where I'm from...
(beat)
We call them *The Watchers*.

CUT TO BLACK.