

TIMBERLANE

"PILOT"

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. MINNESOTA HWY 59 - DAY

Trees are everywhere. Pine crowds in on oak, crowds in on birch, forming a thick wall of green. The highway fights through, barely able to carve out a path, on the verge of being swallowed once again by the forest.

Occasionally there is a break in the trees, revealing deep blue lakes lined with cabins. A blue Prius - a rental - winds its way down the highway.

MARIT (V.O.)

There is nothing like a Minnesota summer. Once you have lived through one, summer anywhere else is disappointing.

INT./EXT. BLUE PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

MARIT DANIELSON (30s), doesn't look like she's enjoying the view - in fact, it looks like she would rather be anywhere else. She white-knuckles the steering wheel and keeps her eyes focused, straight ahead. An ear bud sticks in one of her ears, attached to her cell phone - recording.

MARIT

There is something in the air.
Something magical that -

She hits the pause button.

MARIT (CONT'D)

No. That's stupid.

Her phone rings through her Bluetooth and she struggles to figure out how to answer. Finally -

MARIT (CONT'D)

Hello.

INT. NEW YORK OFFICE - INTERCUTTING

MARCY MORRIS (40s), stares at her computer

MARCY

I fucking knew it.

MARIT

Hey, Marcy.

MARCY

Have you seen the Times today?

MARIT

I've hardly seen cell service let alone the New York times.

MARCY

They say you're the next J.K. Rowling. That your final book will surpass Harry Potter in sales. Harry fucking Potter.

MARIT

That's great.

MARCY

I thought you'd be more excited.

MARIT

No, I am.

MARCY

Are you almost there?

MARIT

Yeah. Listen, I've changed my mind. I don't want to do this last leg of the tour. Can you be a good agent and just call this off?

MARCY

No, I'm sorry Marit. Penguin insisted and they already spent the money. It'll be great for publicity.

MARIT

I'm sure.

Something catches Marit's eye outside.

MARCY

Come on, you've built a career writing about your childhood. What's the -

MARIT

I have to go.

MARCY

Fine. Say hi to the...
 (reads from the New York Times)
 "...most wonderful family in America." Jesus fucking Christ now that's a quote.

Marit hangs up and cranes her neck to get a better view of whatever it is.

THUD!

The Prius hits something, hard, and Marit slams on the breaks. She checks her rearview mirror. A very cute - very dead - otter lies in the road.

MARIT

Fuck.

She slams the car into park and considers. She notices some Dairy Queen napkins on the floor, grabs them, and gets out of the car.

Marit stands over the otter for a second and glances back and forth down the road. Finally, she gingerly grabs it by the tail and slides it across the highway.

MARIT (CONT'D)

(to the otter)

Sorry sorry sorry sorry sorry
sorry.

We pull out to see what distracted her. Above Marit and the otter looms a giant billboard with Marit's smiling face declaring, "WELCOME TO PINE CREEK, HOME OF MARIT DANIELSON, WORLD FAMOUS AUTHOR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERIES, *TIMBERLANE!*"

SUPERIMPOSE: TIMBERLANE

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. SISTER WOLF BOOKS - DAY

Marit stands sandwiched between two large posters inviting the audience to "MEET MINNESOTA'S GREATEST TREASURE." She grips a podium made from tangled pine and varnished within an inch of its life. Eager, open, Midwest faces peer back at her, thrilled that she's in their presence, thrilled that they can call her one of them. It's standing room only.

Marit reads from a chapter in Book 6 of her series.

MARIT

"...Marit had always been proud of her brother. But to see him on the football field, celebrating his win, was pure joy. She watched as he lifted Amanda into the air and kissed her deeply. They looked so happy. A shiver ran up her neck but she wasn't sure if it was the crisp breeze of a Minnesota fall or pride in her brother. If only their mother could see him now. Marit's heart squeezed at the thought of her mother and for the millionth time that year wondered if death was very lonely. She took a deep breath and the air smelled like crumbling leaves and apple cider. Like her mother in the Fall."

You could hear a pin drop. Marit closes the book and smiles. The reverent silence gives way to boisterous applause.

INT. SISTER WOLF BOOKS - DAY

The podium has been replaced with a table. Marit sits, signing book after book for a line of people that stretches out the door and around the block.

Marit signs a book for a FAN and smiles a 60 watt smile.

MARIT

Thank you for reading.

INT. SISTER WOLF BOOKS - DAY

Down the line and a little out the door, JUNE MCGREGGOR (12), stands with MAZIE (13), and AVA (13). June hovers between childhood and teendom - awkward but trying not to be.

She looks really young for her age - especially against her more developed friends. She's smarter than them, though she doesn't want anyone to know.

Mazie holds up a cell phone.

MAZIE

Selfie!

The girls scrunch together and hold up their books (Timberlane: Book 6.) Mazie and Ava pull pouty lips and model eyes but June is all wide-smiled excitement.

MAZIE (CONT'D)

(typing on her phone)

#Timberlane. #MaritDanielson.

AVA

#Besties!

Ava pulls out her phone too and both girls type furiously, laughing occasionally. June looks at them, a little annoyed.

AVA (CONT'D)

Sorry June. It sucks your dad won't let you have a phone yet.

MAZIE

When do you get one again?

JUNE

When I turn 15.

Both girls look shocked.

MARIT

That's like, so old.

AVA

Your dad is harsh. I can't believe he let you come today.

JUNE

He didn't. I snuck out and biked here.

She looks guilty for a second. This is not her usual M.O. She tilts her chin, hoping it appears defiant.

JUNE (CONT'D)

I don't know why he cares anyway. He reads them too.

MAZIE

The whole town does.

AVA
The whole world does.

The line moves forward and the girls shuffle ahead excitedly.

JNUE
Do you think she'll be just like in
the books?

AVA
I am DYING to know what happens in
the next one.

MAZIE
When her mom died in Book 5 I cried
like, forever.

JUNE
Me too.

The girls look at June, guiltily.

AVA
Oh. Sorry, June.

JUNE
It's okay.
(then)
I think her and Ethan are
DEFINITELY going to get together.
They've been in love since 6th
grade.

The girls giggle.

MAZIE
I wonder who will play him in the
movie?

INT. SISTER WOLF BOOKS - DAY

Marit is getting tired but she's a pro and her smile stays on as she signs a collector's edition "Timberlane" plate with her face on it. MR. DAVIDSON (70s) shuffles away, clutching the signed piece of dishware.

MR. DAVIDSON
We're all real proud of you, honey.
And tell that dad of yours he owes
me a game of golf.

MARIT
I will, Mr. Davidson. Thank you for
reading.

Mr. Davidson disappears into the crowd and a grinning June stands in front of Marit, flanked by Ava and Mazie. Marit's smile blings on.

MARIT (CONT'D)

Hello.

JUNE

Hello Ms. Danielson. It is so nice to meet you. I love love love your books. It's like you just GET me. I mean, I'm sure you get that all the time but I just had to tell you. It's like you're writing them for me. I mean, I know you're writing them for the whole world but it feels like also to me - you know?

MARIT

Well it's nice to meet you too. What's your name?

JUNE

I'm June.

MARIT

June. That's lovely.

June looks like she might actually die from joy.

EXT. SISTER WOLF BOOKS - DAY

ERIC MCGREGGOR (30s) takes the steps two and a time and squeezes into the bookstore through the long line of people.

Despite his obvious agitation, Eric is handsome in a rugged kind of way - the kind of man who could cut down a tree and then carve you something from the wood.

He searches the sea of people and his eyes come to rest on June, laughing and talking with Marit. Pain - or maybe panic - passes through his eyes but he doesn't move.

Marit turns towards him, like she can feel him watching, and their eyes meet.

She freezes. Her 60 watt smile stays plastered on but her face pales. Eric is rooted to the ground, unable to look away as something passes between them. With effort, Marit drags her eyes back to an oblivious June.

Somebody bumps into Eric, breaking the spell and he turns and walks out of the store.

EXT. SISTER WOLF BOOKS - DAY

June, Mazie, and Ava clutch their newly signed books and hop down the steps. June stops short when she sees Eric pacing by his truck.

JUNE

Dad.

ERIC

I asked you not to go.

MAZIE

Don't worry Mr. McGregor, we were all together.

His eyes take in Mazie's phone and belly shirt.

ERIC

That doesn't make me feel better.

JUNE

DAD.

ERIC

I'm sorry, June but -

JUNE

I just wanted to get my book signed.

ERIC

We talked about this.

JUNE

I know but it doesn't make sense. What's the big deal?

ERIC

I didn't know where you were!

JUNE

This is Pine Creek. It's not like anything's gonna happen.

ERIC

That's not the point.

JUNE

(glancing at Mazie and Ava)

Dad. Please.

Eric takes a shaky breath.

ERIC
 (softening)
 Okay. Fine. It's fine. I'm just
 glad you're okay.
 (then)
 Get in the truck, girls. I'll drive
 you home.

INT./EXT. PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

The girls ride in uncomfortable silence - Mazie and Ava on their phones and June resting her head against the window, thinking.

JUNE
 Dad. You and Ms. Danielson are the
 same age, right?

ERIC
 Yeah.

JUNE
 Did you two know each other? In
 high school?

Maize and Ava perk up and Eric's grip tightens slightly on the steering wheel.

ERIC
 Yeah, I knew of her. I mean, I
 didn't know much, but I knew her.

There is a surprised silence from the girls until they all start talking at once.

JUNE/MAZIE/AVA
 What?/No way!/Shut-Up!

JUNE
 How come you never told me?!

ERIC
 I don't know. I guess I didn't
 think much about it.

MAZIE
 Are you in the books?

AVA
 I read online she changed
 everyone's names but her family.

The other two girls look eagerly at Eric.

ERIC

No no. Not that I know of.

AVA

Still. You like, *know* a celebrity.

MAZIE

You're so much cooler than my dad.

INT. BAR - DAY

Marit bellies up to a bar primarily decorated with mounted fish. The bar is mostly dead and she stares at a mounted large mouth bass, lost in her encounter with Eric. Its black, glassy fish eye stares back.

She rubs a tattoo on her wrist that reads: MARCH FOURTH.

BARTENDER (O.S.)

Cool tattoo.

Startled, Marit jumps a bit.

MARIT

Oh. Thank you.

BARTENDER

Is that like, your motto or somethin'?

MARIT

Something like that.

BARTENDER

You spelled it wrong.

MARIT

I'm sorry?

BARTENDER

Your tattoo. Should be f-o-r-t-h.
March Forth.

MARIT

Oh. Yeah. Guess I was young and stupid.

BARTENDER

So what can I get you?

MARIT

A shot of whiskey please.

The BARTENDER looks a little impressed and a little judgemental and grabs a shot glass. He pours a healthy shot and sets it beside her.

BARTENDER
You on vacation?

MARIT
No.

She drains the shot in one, god-she-needs-this, swallow.

MARIT (CONT'D)
I'm home.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT./EXT. PRIUS - DAY

Marit turns the Prius down a narrow road lined with trees that are bowed from age. An old wooden sign, hard to make out because of the fading paint reads, "Welcome to Timberlane."

The sunlight is blotted out by the forest until a large wooden lodge comes into view.

Timberlane Lodge looks like something out of a forgotten fairy tale. It was grand once but now the wood is faded and the windows are yellowing.

Marit pulls up in front and steps out of the car.

EXT. TIMBERLANE LODGE - CONTINUOUS

For a working resort it seems a little too quiet. In the distance, a FAMILY OF FOUR makes their way down a path to the lake carrying an inflated alligator raft and sunscreen.

Marit stares at the giant lodge. It's been a long time.

INT. TIMBERLANE LODGE - DAY

Marit pushes open the door. It creaks with age and shafts of sunlight catch the dust in the air. Giant windows frame Crystal Lake, shimmering behind the foliage.

The lodge is old but comfortable. Everything is made from stained white pine. Old wooden water skis line one side of the wall and keys hang behind the desk.

It's vintage without being ironic.

There's a sign on the desk that reads "IF I'M MISSSIN', I'VE GONE FISHIN.' RING THE BELL."

Marit notices a photo of a her seven-year-old self, gap-toothed and grinning, proudly displaying a sunfish for the camera. A boy a few years younger than Marit makes bunny ears behind her.

MARIT

Hello?

She wanders deeper into the lodge, turning into the empty, tired dining room with a small bar.

INT. TIMBERLANE BAR - CONTINUOUS

She peaks behind the bar and sees her father, JOHN DANIELSON (60s), sprawled on the floor, his eyes closed.

MARIT

Oh my God! Dad!

She rushes around, pulling her phone from her pocket.

MARIT (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Siri. Dial 9-1-

John pops his eyes open.

JOHN

Marit?

MARIT

Dad?!

SIRI

Marit. Do you have an emergency?

MARIT

(into the phone)

No, Siri. Cancel.

(then)

What the FUCK Dad?

John sits up and we like him immediately. Kind eyes, warm and friendly - like an ourdoorsy Mr. Rogers.

JOHN

You've got quite a mouth on you.
Must be the Big Apple talking.

MARIT

Jesus. I thought you were dead.

JOHN

No no. Can't get rid of me that
easy. It's these new heart pills
I'm on. Thought I could sneak in a
quick nap. Hang on a second. What
time is it?

MARIT

4:00.

JOHN

Oh no. I missed your reading.

MARIT

It's okay, Dad. There are a few
more.

JOHN

I'm so sorry honey. And here you
came all the way home for it.

He opens his arms to Marit. She welcomes the hug.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's so good to see, sweetie. I
missed you.

MARIT

I missed you too, Dad.

He feels her back and rib cage.

JOHN
Don't they feed big time authors?
You're so skinny.

Marit laughs and the two stand up.

JOHN (CONT'D)
What's it been now, five - six
years?

MARIT
Two years, Dad. I saw you in the
hospital with Myles. In DC.

JOHN
That's right. Well anyway, it feels
like longer. How 'bout a Shirley
Temple to celebrate, 4 cherries
like you like.

MARIT
That sounds great.

He starts mixing her a Shirley Temple.

MARIT (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I haven't come back in so
long.

JOHN
Oh, that's fine. You can see this
old place anytime. Besides, you're
good for business.

Marit looks around doubtfully.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Well, maybe not good enough.

MARIT
Where is everybody? Summer is
supposed to be our busiest time.

JOHN
Times are changing. Folks don't
want this old cabin feel.

MARIT
Do you need help? I have the money.
I'd be happy to do it.

JOHN
Absolutely not. You worked hard for
that money. I'd never take money
from my kids.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)
Don't you worry, honey. Your ol'
dad is taking care of it.

INT. FISH HOUSE - DAY

A fish lies on a wood board, surrounded by the scales of fish gone before. MYLES DANIELSON (29), moves to the music coming from an old radio. He is handsome but haunted and a little too skinny. He's missing his leg from the knee down - replaced with a prosthetic - and it's clear from his pronounced limp that he hasn't quite gotten used to it. An old photo of ten-year-old Myles with his mom hangs on a rusty nail on the wall.

Below that, a group photo of soldiers - fully geared up - squinting into the harsh light of a faraway desert.

Cleaned fish are piled on top of each other in a bucket next to his feet. He grabs a filet knife and cuts into the belly of a fish, working quickly.

Myles deftly rips out the guts and throws them in the trash, working his knife under the scales in a nice clean cut.

MARIT (O.S.)
I still don't know how you can
stand the smell in here.

Myles sticks the knife in the board and turns around.

MYLES
It grows on you.

Marit steps into the fish house and wrinkles her nose. Myles limps over to give her a quick hug.

MARIT
Hi, Myles.

MYLES
What happened to your hair?

MARIT
I lightened it.
(then)
How's your leg?

MYLES
Fine.

MARIT
It looks better.

MYLES

Since DC? Well, it's had a lot of time to heal since then.

MARIT

You could've come to visit me.

MYLES

I never liked New York.

(then)

How was the reading?

MARIT

Good. I missed you.

MYLES

Yeah. Sorry I couldn't make it. I had some stuff to take care of.

He turns back to his work table, grabs another fish, and starts the process over again.

MARIT

Right.

(then)

I read the part about your championship game. Remember that?

MYLES

'Course.

MARIT

That was a great fall.

MYLES

(stabbing a fish)

At least that's how you painted it.

MARIT

Myles. Don't start.

Myles rips open another fish.

MYLES

How long you here?

MARIT

Only three days. I've got to get back. Work on my last book.

MYLES

Sure.

Marit notices the photo and her jaw tightens a bit.

MARIT
Why's mom on your wall?

MYLES
Just leave it alone, Mar.

A tense silence hangs between them, punctuated by the sound of Myles' knife. Marit changes the subject.

MARIT
I found Dad sleeping behind the bar.
When did he start taking heart pills?

MYLES
A few months ago I guess.

MARIT
Why didn't you tell me?

MYLES
Tried calling you a few times.
Guess you were too busy creating
the fantasy, didn't want to bother
with reality.

He gives her a look and throws the last fish in the bucket.

EXT. MCGREGGOR'S HOUSE - DAY

June sits on the back porch, painting her nails in the sun.

ERIC (O.S.)
Ice cream?

June glances up and finds Eric standing there holding two, dripping cones. June goes back to her nails.

JUNE
No thanks.

ERIC
Come on. It's your favorite, from
the Schwan Man. What are wet nails
in the face of delicious cold ice
cream?
(holding the cone out)
A peace offering.

June caps her polish and reluctantly takes a cone. Eric sits down beside her.

ERIC (CONT'D)
I'm sorry about earlier. It was my
crazy dad brain.

JUNE

It's okay.

ERIC

You're the best thing I've got, you know? I want to make sure I keep that safe.

JUNE

You can't always protect me.

ERIC

I know. Just promise me you won't ever wear a shirt like Mazie was wearing today.

JUNE

Dad.

ERIC

Ok ok. You know what always makes us feel better?

JUNE

What?

Eric holds up his phone and hits a button. The opening chords of AC/DCs rock anthem "Shook Me All Night Long" plays from his speakers. Eric jumps up and starts playing air guitar.

JUNE (CONT'D)

(rolling her eyes)

Dad.

ERIC

Come on June Bug. You know you can't deny the beat.

Eric does a few more classic dad moves and June can't help laughing. Finally she can't resist. As the screaming lyrics start she jumps to her feet, and joins in.

INT./EXT PRIUS - DAY

Marit punches the ignition button in her Prius and the dashboard lights up with warnings but the car doesn't start. She tries again. Just more flashing.

MARIT

Shit.

She gets out and slams the door.

EXT. TIMBERLANE LODGE - CONTINUOUS

She walks around to the front of the car and pops the front to look for the battery.

MYLES (O.S.)
Something wrong?

MARIT
I don't know. I'm out of gas. Or electricity. It's a rental - I thought it'd be good for the environment. Isn't it supposed to run on the sun or something.

MYLES
It needs gas to charge the battery.

MARIT.
Well.

She looks around helplessly. Myles doesn't want to but finally -

MYLES
Come on. I'll drive you.

EXT. CYRSTAL LAKE - DAY

Marit and Myles skim across the lake in Myles' old fishing boat, an empty gas can rattling on the floor. The water's choppy but Myles doesn't let up and the boat violently crashes against each wave.

Marit sits in the front, loving every second. For the first time since arriving she finally looks like she belongs here. She's relaxed, even happy. The water sprays her occasionally but she closes her eyes and grins.

EXT. PUBLIC DOCKS - DAY

Marit and Myles walk up the dock, the old fishing boat tied up behind them.

A beautiful green lawn stretches in front of them down to an impeccably kept sandy shore. Brand new jet skis and shiny speed boats bob on the water, tied to a richly stained dock. There are even a few massage tents.

A giant, frosted, ultra modern glass enclosure rises in the background. Stenciled on the outside in giant letters reads "PEACEFUL PINES."

MARIT
Where's Edna's?

MYLES
Got torn down. To build this.

MARIT
It's huge.

MYLES
It's an eyesore. And it's killing us. And every other small resort around here. They promote it using your books. Saying you grew up on 'their' lake and shit.

MARIT
That's crazy. Why would people come here when the real thing is right across the lake?

MYLES
People don't want the real thing. They want their own version of what they think the real thing is.

INT. PINE CREEK BAIT AND TACKLE - DAY

The shop is old and sells everything including live bait, candy bars, and gas. A sign on the counter reads "I DON'T DO MINNESOTA NICE."

JOE BERGSTEDT (60s), stands behind the counter, grizzled with a deep tan from spending most of his time on the water.

The front door dings and Myles and Marit walk through.

MYLES
Hey, Joe.

JOE
(to Marit)
Jesus...look what the cat dragged in. You famous now, or somethin'?

MARIT
Something like that.

MYLES
I need some jigs, maybe a few crankbaits.

JOE

Christ. Never seen a guy spend so much on lures.

MYLES

(re: his missing leg)
Yeah well, it's on the government.

INT. PINE CREEK BAIT AND TACKLE - TEN MINUTES LATER

Marit scans the rows of brightly colored bait - picking a few up to examine them more closely. The filled gas can sits beside her.

ERIC (O.S.)

What are you fishing for?

Marit spins around, hooking the inside of her hand with a brightly colored lure.

MARIT

Eric.

ERIC

Hi.

The pain in her hand is pretty bad but she tries to play it off.

MARIT

Wow. Hi.

There's blood now.

ERIC

(re: hook in her hand)
Are you okay there?

MARIT

What? No. I mean, yeah. It's fine.
It's just a little...

She waves her hand nervously and the neon green and orange lure flaps back and forth.

ERIC

Jesus.

MARIT

Oh. Yeah. It's not as bad as it looks.

She tries to pull it out herself.

MARIT (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm sorry I didn't tell you
I was coming back. It had been so
long and I just thought -

ERIC

Let me help you.

He gently takes her palm and eases the hook out of her hand.
He takes a handkerchief out of his pocket and wraps it around
Marit's palm.

MARIT

Thank you.

ERIC

Sure.

They look at each other, years of unspoken hellos between
them.

MARIT

You look good. Almost exactly the
same.

ERIC

You know what, this was a mistake.
I just saw you in here so I thought
maybe -- But I should go.

MARIT

Eric, please. Can't we at least be
civil. It was a long time ago.

ERIC

I'm glad you're over it.

MARIT

That's not what I meant.

Eric turns and heads to the door.

ERIC

Welcome home, Marit.

And he's gone.

MARIT

Okay. Bye.
(as Eric)
Great to see you, Marit.
(as herself)
You too.
(as Eric)
You look amazing.
(MORE)

MARIT (CONT'D)
 (as herself)
 Oh stop -

Myles walks up.

MYLES
 Ready?

MARIT
 (caught)
 Yep! Ok. Yep.

EXT. PINE CREEK THEATER - NIGHT

Marit sits on stage facing a rapt audience in the recently restored Pine Creek Theater. Myles and John sit near the back, John looking happier to be there than Myles.

GARRISON KEILLOR (70s), sits across from Marit. Two large radio microphones are beside them on a table. The stage is decorated warmly with a rug and soft lighting.

GARRISON KEILLOR
 And we are back with the lovely Ms. Danielson discussing her book series "Timberlane" on a very special edition of Prairie Home Companion. Now I'd like to turn to our young listeners in the audience to ask a few questions they have prepared.

Marit smiles warmly and squints out at the bright lights. Her eyes fall on Eric, who sits in the audience next to June. June's arm is wrapped around Eric's in excitement. Marit's brow furrows in confusion.

SPENCER (O.S.)
 Hi. I'm Spencer Jones.

Marit pulls her eyes away from Eric and June to focuses on SPENCER JONES (10), who stands at the microphone.

SPENCER (CONT'D)
 My favorite book is Book 3 'cause that's when Myles gets on the football team. Did he practice for a long time?

A light rumble of laughter from the audience.

MARIT
 What an excellent question, Spencer.

(MORE)

MARIT (CONT'D)

Thank you for being brave enough to ask it in front of all these people. And yes, my brother practiced for a very long time. He used to practice his tackles on me until our dad put a stop to that.

More laughter. Marit squints out to the audience and catches Myles' eye.

MARIT (CONT'D)

Myles was always very hard working. That was the great thing about my brother, he never gave up.

The audience claps as June steps up to the microphone.

GARRISON KEILLOR

Hello, young lady.

JUNE

Hello. I'm June McGreggor.

"McGreggor." Marit keeps her smile firmly on as she realizes that this must be Eric's daughter.

GARRISON KEILLOR

Hello, June.

JUNE

Hello. Ms. Danielson, in book five Marit declares that Ethan is the greatest love of her life. Would you still say that is true? Is he still the greatest love of your life?

The audience leans in and Marit stares at the lights for a while, lost at how to answer.

GARRISON KEILLOR

That's a very serious question for someone so young.

JUNE

Oh, I know I look young but I'm twelve. My birthday is on the only day that's also a sentence.

The audience laughs but Marit's forehead wrinkles.

GARRISON KEILLOR

And what day is that?

JUNE

March Fourth. March 4, 2006.

Marit has gone completely white. The bright lights buzz in her ears and her smile falters. She blinks a few times but her eyes won't focus.

GARRISON KEILLOR

Well, Marit. What do you say to this young lady?

Marit shakes her head and forces a smile.

MARIT

Um. Yes. Yes, I think maybe he was.

The buzzing gets louder and the light is shatteringly bright until -

EXT. PINK CREEK THEATER, BACKSTAGE ALLEY - NIGHT

Marit vomits behind a trash bin. When she stands up Eric is there.

ERIC

Marit -

MARIT

What the fuck?

ERIC

I should have told you.

MARIT

We gave her up, Eric. Together. We decided together that we would give her up.

ERIC

I know that's what you thought.

MARIT

Because it was the best decision for her.

ERIC

I didn't agree with that.

MARIT

But we agreed. So, why is our daughter... here?

ERIC

After you signed the papers and gave up your rights I filed. To keep her.

MARIT

And you didn't tell me?

ERIC

You made it clear you didn't want her.

MARIT

No. I *couldn't* want her. I was poor and living with five people in a shitty apartment in New York. I was in no place to raise a child.

ERIC

But I was.

MARIT

Oh Jesus. This is. Jesus. Does anyone else know?

ERIC

No. I told everyone June was the product of a one night stand.

MARIT

Okay. Okay. Good. No one can know. This would - my career would never recover.

ERIC

Your career?

MARIT

I'm sorry. I know that's not what I should be saying but Jesus, Eric. I can just see the headlines. "Beloved Children's Author Abandons Daughter." I've built my career on being a positive role model for kids. All of that would be ruined.

(then)

Do you want money?

ERIC

You think I want money? I didn't even want you to come home.

MARIT

Okay. Okay. I just...I don't know what to do.

ERIC

You don't have to do anything. And you're right. June can't know. But not because of your career.

(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)
Because it would destroy her. She
would know I lied to her. She
thinks her mom is dead.

This information is like a slap in the face.

MARIT
You told her I was dead?

ERIC
Yes.

Voices of people being let out of the theater bounce to the
alley as Marit takes that in.

ERIC (CONT'D)
(softer)
I'm sorry. It was cleaner that way.
I never thought you'd come home.
You said you were never coming back
here because of -

MARIT
I know.

Marit takes a deep breath.

MARIT (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay. You're right. It's
better this way. I'm going back in
two days and then we'll just...
keep going. Like we were. Nothing
has to change.

ERIC
Okay.

MARIT
It'll be fine. No one has to know
June's our daughter.

Right as the words are leaving her mouth Myles comes around
the corner. He freezes.

Off their startled faces we -

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT./EXT PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

Myles floors it down a gravel road as Marit white-knuckles the passenger seat.

MARIT
Slow down!

MYLES
Holy SHIT, Mar. You're a MOM?

MARIT
No. No. I'm not. I don't even know June.

MYLES
But, I mean, you *birthed* her.

MARIT
Yeah. It was a long time ago.

Myles reaches behind his seat and pulls out two Bud Lights. He tosses one in Marit's lap.

MARIT (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

MYLES
Marit. If there was ever a time for a roadie, now is that time.

He cracks open the can and takes a long chug from the beer.

MARIT

I'm not 16 anymore, Myles. It's illegal. I'm a children's author. What if we get caught?

MYLES

You just found out your ex-lover is raising the daughter you never knew he had and THIS is what you're worried about?

Marit considers that for a second and then shotguns her beer.

MYLES (CONT'D)

There you go.

MARIT

God, that's disgusting.

MYLES

Did anyone else know you were pregnant? Did Dad?

MARIT

God no. And no one ever can.

The turn for Timberlane approaches but Myles flies by.

MARIT (CONT'D)

You missed the turn.

MYLES

We're not going home.

INT. ZORBAZ PIZZA - NIGHT

The hottest place in Pine Creek is all rugged wood and bright, laminated menus. Vintage lake memorabilia and old tin beer signs hang on the wall. Every letter 'S' has been replaced with a 'Z'.

Marit and Myles sip drinks against a wall under a sign that asks "Please Drink Rezpnozibly."

MARIT

I can't believe you took me here.

MYLES

It's where I always come in a crisis.

MARIT

No no. This is not a crisis. I refuse to make this into a crisis.

(MORE)

MARIT (CONT'D)
I'm leaving soon. And we can just
forget about this whole thing.

MYLES
I'm an *uncle*.

MARIT
Oh, Jesus.

From across the room there is a WOMAN'S SQUEAL.

WOMAN
MARIT!!

JENNY OLSON (30s), bursts through the crowd. She's got the
blue collar bounce of someone who is used to hard work.

MARIT
Oh my God, Jenny.

JENNY
I don't know whether to slap you or
hug you.

MARIT
What?

JENNY
Book 6. You made me look like a
little bit of a whore.

Jenny grins and wraps Marit up in a huge bear hug. Marit
tries to pull away too soon but Jenny is not letting go.

MARIT
(into Jenny's shoulder)
Hey, Jen. Good to see you.

They pull back.

MARIT (CONT'D)
What's it been, six years?

JENNY
Twelve. Not since graduation. You
sure haven't changed a bit.

MARIT
You either.

JENNY
How about some welcome home shots?
Todd's got the kids tonight.

MARIT
You have kids?

JENNY
Three of them. You?

Myles chokes on his beer.

MARIT
Nope.

JENNY
Probably better. You always were
terrible with kids.

Jenny laughs good-naturedly but Marit's smile tightens.

MARIT
How about those shots?

INT. TIMBERLANE LODGE OFFICE - NIGHT

John sits in front of his old desk in his cluttered, cramped office. Overdue bills and late fee notices are piled on his desk.

From an old 45 in the corner comes some soft, old jazz.

A contract lies on his desk. It's opened to the last page and he stares at the signature line.

He takes a deep breath, grabs a pen, and signs. He shoves the contract into a manila envelope with a coffee stain on the front. Then he leans back in his chair and let's the music carry him away.

INT. MARIT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Marit lies in a tangle of covers in her childhood bedroom. Daylight pours in through her window highlighting an old Savage Garden poster that hangs next to a drawing of the Bronte sisters.

Her phone buzzes relentlessly. Marit feels around for it and answers.

MARIT
Hello?

INT. MARCY'S OFFICE - INTERCUTTING

Marcy sits at her desk.

MARCY
Were you sleeping?

MARIT
Mmmhmmm.

MARCY
Well, wake up because I have a last minute appearance for you. It's tomorrow and it's this new resort that's getting a lot of press.

MARIT
Okay.

MARCY
The place is called Peaceful Pines.

Marit sits up in bed but that does not go well, last night's tequila hitting her hard.

MARIT
Oh shit. Marce. I can't.

MARCY
Why not? I'm looking at your calendar and you're free.

MARIT
It's not that.

MARCY
It's easy. You don't even have to read. Just cut a ribbon or some shit.

MARIT
Listen, it's complicated but I can't.

MARCY
I've already scheduled the press. The New York Times is coming - apparently they're doing a piece on resorts. I can't tell them no.

MARIT
Okay. Fine. Fine. I'll do it.

MARCY
Thank you. I owe you. And hey - aren't you late for that church thing?

Marit looks at her clock.

MARIT

Oh dammit!

EXT. GOOD SHEPARD LUTHERAN CHURCH - ESTABLISHING

The white clapboard church hums with organ music that gently rattles the brightly colored stained glass windows.

MARIT (O.S)

Holy shit.

INT. GOOD SHEPARD LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

Marit stands in a pew at the back of the sanctuary next to Myles and John. The old church is simple and beautiful with soaring wood beams and handmade church pews.

The congregation sings "Lift High The Cross" but Marit has her eyes locked on Eric who sits in the front next to June.

MYLES

Well this is healthy.

MARIT

They go to this church?

MYLES

Everyone goes to this church.

MARIT

I didn't know he was religious. Do you think he's raising her religious?

MYLES

I think even if he was raising her Satanist you wouldn't get a say.

The song ends and PASTOR TERRY ANDERSON (50s), takes the pulpit.

PASTOR TERRY

Peace be with you.

CONGREGATION

And also with you.

This catches Marit and Myles off guard and they hurriedly try to pick it up with little success.

PASTOR TERRY

As some of you know we have a very special guest today to deliver the children's sermon.

MYLES

Here we go.

PASTOR TERRY

To introduce her is one of our own budding writers. June McGreggor.

Marit pales.

MARIT

She writes?

MYLES

This is the best service I've ever been to.

Marit shoots him a look as June takes the pulpit and smiles, nervous but with a confidence beyond her twelve years.

JUNE

Marit Danielson's books have affected a generation of young people and have put our little town on the map. When people found out she actually went to this church I think our congregation doubled - and like Pastor Terry says, we'll take what we can get.

Light, polite, Lutheran laughter rumbles through the pews.

JUNE (CONT'D)

On top of all of this, as a young woman today it is hard to find role models worth looking up to. But I - and thousands of other kids - have finally found one in her.

MARIT

Oh Jesus.

MYLES

This was really worth getting up for.

JUNE

Please welcome, Marit Danielson.

The applause explodes in a very un-church like way. Marit is pale but stands, her smile firmly in place. She catches June's eye, who beams at her adoringly.

INT. GOOD SHEPARD LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

Marit grips the pulpit, reading from Timberlane, Book 4.

MARIT

"...Marit had seen the church at Christmas before but never like this. She held the small candle in front of her and for the first time since they arrived she wasn't thinking about her presents."

INT. GOOD SHEPARD LUTHERAN CHURCH - FLASHBACK

Almost twenty years ago and the church looks exactly the same but for some added Christmas spirit. The congregation quietly sings Silent Night, the only light coming from the flickering candles everyone holds.

MARIT (V.O.)

"When her father had suggested the midnight service she and Myles had scoffed but now, surrounded by all the light of the candles, she understood why they had come."

YOUNG MARIT (15) stands in the front pew staring at her small candle next to YOUNG MYLES (13) and YOUNG JOHN (30s). Shadows dance off the walls and YOUNG PASTOR TERRY (30s) stands at the front, leading everyone in song.

MARIT (V.O.)

"Marit stared at the giant Christmas tree, covered in lights and stars."

Young Marit turns her head toward the tree. It's small and wrapped in a single strand of lights. The only star sits on the very top and leans precariously to one side. It's nothing like Marit has described in her book.

MARIT (V.O.)

"It was magnificent, the most beautiful tree she'd ever seen. Marit glances at Myles to share some of the magic and he grins, their earlier fight far behind them. "Merry Christmas," she whispers.

Young Marit glances at Young Myles and gives him a tentative smile. He doesn't return the gesture and instead, leans over and blows out her candle.

INT. GOOD SHEPARD LUTHERAN CHURCH - PRESENT, AN HOUR LATER

Myles stands by a stained glass window, waiting for Marit who is surrounded by fans.

Out of the corner of his eye he sees MATT BREWSTER (30s), step out of the sanctuary. Matt, a handsome but nerdy junior high history teacher, notices Myles and tries to cover his surprise.

MYLES

Hi, Matt.

MATT

Myles! You're coming to church now?

MYLES

I'm here for Marit. I was hoping I'd see you. You look great.

MATT

Thanks. You too.

MYLES

It's been awhile.

MATT

I know. And I'm sorry. I've been busy. It's been hard to get away.

There's a restrained intimacy between them.

Matt is about to say more when his beautiful wife, MARIE BREWSTER, and their two adorable twin boys HENRY and MICHA (2), spill out of the sanctuary.

MARIE

Hey, Myles!

MYLES

Marie. Hi.

MARIE

Glad to see you here.

(then, to Matt)

We should go, honey. The boys need to be unleashed in the back yard while mommy has a cocktail.

She grins and ushers the boys out, calling over her shoulder at Myles.

MARIE (CONT'D)

We'll do a BBQ soon!

MATT
I should go.

MYLES
Yeah.

Matt leaves and Myles watches the family through the stained glass window - their images changing to bright distortions.

MARIT (O.S.)
Who's that?

Myles jumps, caught off guard.

MYLES
No one.

MARIT
He's cute. I could see you guys together.

MYLES
He's married.

MARIT
The gay ones always are around here.

EXT. GOOD SHEPARD LUTHERAN CHURCH - DAY

Eric picks up the programs left behind by the congregation. Without the people, the old church seems cavernous and cold. Marit quietly walks down the aisle.

Marit stands there for a second, unsure of what to say.

MARIT
Listen, I just wanted to -

Before Marit can continue, John pushes the sanctuary doors open with June following close behind.

JOHN
Found this trouble maker searching
for her dad.

ERIC
Oh, thanks John.

JUNE
Ms. Danielson! You were so
wonderful today.

MARIT

Please, you can call me Marit. And thank you. Your introduction was just perfect.

JOHN

Looks like we've got another Marit Danielson on our hands.

June flushes with pride.

ERIC

She did win the state fair writing competition last year.

JUNE

Dad...

JOHN

Marit won that same competition when she was your age. You girls are like two peas in a pod.

June grins and impulsively gives Marit a huge hug. Marit stiffens, desperate not to feel anything. She tries to make eye contact with Eric but he looks away. Before she can stop herself, Marit gives in to the hug.

It almost breaks her heart.

INT. MARIT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Marit throws sweaters and socks and anything she can find into her suitcase, desperate to separate herself from June. A knock on the door disturbs the urgency in the air and Marit pulls it open and goes back to packing.

Jenny stands holding a hotdish wrapped in a towel.

JENNY

Hello hello!

MARIT

Hi.

JENNY

I brought you a Welcome Home Hotdish.

MARIT

Oh, thanks.

JENNY

Are you leaving?

MARIT

Yes.

JENNY

What about your final reading for the Summer Fun Fest?

MARIT

I know. I'm sorry. I just, I can't stay here anymore.

JENNY

Is everything okay?

MARIT

I'm fine.

JENNY

Mar, come on. You can tell me.

MARIT

There's just, um, too much history here. You know? Too many memories.

JENNY

Okay.

MARIT

And I'm really behind on my last book so...it'll be good to get back to work in New York. Where I can focus.

JENNY

Sure, I guess.

Jenny sets the hotdish on the table and turns to leave but pauses at the door.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Listen. I know you think I'm not as smart as you because I haven't written any famous books and never met Oprah. But I do know that running away from your problems doesn't help. I thought you, of all people, would have learned that by now.

EXT. DOCK ON THE LAKE - DAY

June, Mazie, and Ava lay sprawled out on a dock in the sun. June trails her finger in the lake with one hand and grasps a dripping ice cream cone, which she licks furiously, in the other. Mazie and Ava sip Italian ices. The three are poster children for idyllic summer days.

MAZIE

Ugh. I have like, the worst cramps.

AVA

I had mine last week and Kyle Fisher said he could smell when I have it.

JUNE

Ew!

MAZIE

Boys are so lame. Just wait, June. You're lucky you don't have yours.

AVA

It's the worst. Remember when Makayla Perkins bled through her white overalls?

MAZIE

And Dana sent a Snapchat to like, the whole school.

AVA

Girls can be so mean.

Beat.

MAZIE

Jeez. June. How's that ice cream?

Mazie and Ava laugh. June looks up, a bit of chocolate fudge on the side of her mouth.

JUNE

What?

MAZIE

Nothing. I just don't know how you can eat like that. I'd be totally fat if I did.

AVA

Yeah. These ices have way less calories.

A little down the lake, two jet skis skim the water, faster than is probably legal, headed right toward them.

MAZIE

OMG. I think that's Jackson Shea.

The jet skis skid to a stop, splashing the girls a little who squeal, obligingly.

JACKSON SHEA (15) and DYLAN THOMPSON (15) grin. Both boys look like they should have their own tween YouTube show.

The girls giggle nervously as Jackson and Dylan float up to the dock closing in on their easy prey.

JACKSON

'Sup.

Mazie and Ava assume "I don't care" attitudes but June smiles.

JUNE

Hi.

DYLAN

What's new?

MAZIE

Nothing.

JUNE

We met Marit Danielson.

MAZIE

JUNE.

JACKSON

Doesn't she write books for like little kids?

AVA

Yeah. It was totally stupid.

June looks hurt but bites her tongue.

DYLAN

Hey, my parents are out of town this weekend. You guys should come over tonight.

MAZIE

Cool.

AVA

Totally.

JUNE

I don't know if my dad will let me.

MAZIE

Just sneak out again.

(to the boys)

June totally tricked her dad the other day and he freaked.

JACKSON

(to June)

That's cool.

He gives June his best teen-dream smile. She goes a little pink.

DYLYAN

See you guys later?

MAZIE

Totally.

JACKSON

Bye June.

The boys race off and Mazie and Ava almost die.

MAZIE

He TOTALLY likes you.

AVA

I'm so jealous.

June smiles a little - this is a first. Mazie pulls out her phone.

MAZIE

I've got to text Emma.

She types furiously and June moves to take another bite of her ice cream but pauses. She glances across the water at Jackson's wake and then drops her cone into the lake. She watches as the fish swarm around it, eating the empty calories.

EXT. TIMBERLANE DOCKS - DAY

Myles stands in an old paddle boat, scrubbing down the inside while John kneels on the dock, staining the wood.

JOHN

Be careful, Myles.

MYLES

Just because I'm a cripple doesn't mean I can't clean a boat.

JOHN

You're not a cripple. Stop saying things like that.

Myles reaches under one of the seats with his rag and it comes back black with dirt.

MYLES

When's the last time you cleaned this thing out?

A brush clatters on the dock.

MYLES (CONT'D)

Dad?

Myles turns around to find his father, splayed out on the dock. This time, he's not asleep.

MYLES (CONT'D)

Dad? Oh my God. Dad!?

Myles struggles to get back to shore but the paddle boat has drifted a little. He tries to step out but his artificial leg catches on the side and he falls.

MYLES (CONT'D)

Hold on, Dad. Just hold on.

He struggles to get back up but his leg is caught. He tries to yank it free but it's wedged under the seat.

MYLES (CONT'D)

Fuck.

(calling)

Help! HELP!!!

INT./EXT. MARIT'S PRIUS - DAY

Marit speeds past the giant trees and the billboard with her face on it, heading out of town.

Beside her in the seat, her phone lights up with a call from Myles but she just keeps driving.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Myles sits in his father's hospital room, staring out the window. His father lays in bed, looking a little more like a corpse than Myles is comfortable with. The machines beep that sterile, sickening hospital beep.

Marit rushes in - breaking the nauseating silence.

MARIT

Oh my God. Dad.

Myles doesn't look away from the window.

MYLES

Where were you?

MARIT

Is he okay? Is he going to be okay?

MYLES

They think so. The doctors say he's stable. I tried calling you. A lot.

MARIT

I'm sorry. I was - I had my phone off.

MYLES

I couldn't get to him. My leg - the fake one - got stuck. I couldn't get to him. All I could do was scream for help.

MARIT

Myles. Don't do this.

MYLES

He's was unconscious for a really long time, Mar. A really long time before any one came.

MARIT

It's okay. He's okay.

Myles looks like he doesn't really believe that. He stands.

MYLES

I need some air.

MARIT

Myles. Stop. It's not your fault.

He turns around, shattered.

MYLES

I thought he was dead, Marit. I
thought we'd lost both of them. And
it would have been my fault. Again.

He walks out and leaves Marit, staring after him. The beeping of the machines go on and on and on.

INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Taylor Swift bops on the radio as June moves around her bedroom. Her window is open letting in a sweet, summer breeze.

She pulls on a t-shirt and looks at herself in her full length mirror. She turns from one side to the other. She frowns a bit and pulls her t-shirt up a little to expose her belly button, and then a little tighter so it stretches across her chest. She takes in her body, all flat lines and angles.

She frowns, digs through one of her drawers and finds a small sock. She rolls the sock up and stuffs it inside her bra.

She looks again in the mirror. The sock makes her look distorted, cartoonish. She turns from side to side.

Suddenly the door opens.

ERIC

I'm going to run out for a second -

JUNE

DAD!

She rips out the sock as her face turns scarlet.

JUNE (CONT'D)

You have to knock!

ERIC

(surprised)

Sorry.

JUNE

Just, knock. Please.

ERIC

Okay. I wanted to check if you still wanted me to drive you to Mazie's for the night.

JUNE

I don't know.

June's open laptop dings. She moves over to her desk and plops down. Mazie's picture pops up on Skype with a message.

MAZIE

(on Skype)

U coming?

June gives Eric a "please leave" look.

ERIC

Ok. Ok.

He softly closes the door.

June considers. She catches another view of herself in the mirror.

JUNE

(on Skype)

I can't. My dad won't let me.

MAZIE

(on Skype)

OMG. He's so harsh!

JUNE

(on Skype)

Yeah.

MAZIE

(on Skype)

Sneak out!

JUNE

(on Skype)

Can't. Sucks.

She shuts her computer decisively and gets up. She grabs a Timberlane book from her shelf and pulls a matted, well-loved stuffed elephant from behind her pillow. June settles on her bed and opens the book.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

Myles looks wrecked, his head back on the seat listening to something vaguely familiar on the radio. A half empty bottle of Jack Daniels has been thrown on the passenger seat. His truck idles outside a quaint, single family home - its windows warm with light.

He can't stop staring at those windows, watching happy shadows pass back and forth behind the curtains.

He hits redial on his phone and it lights up: "Calling Matt."

No answer.

Myles dials again. This time it goes straight to voice mail.

He takes another swig of Jack Daniels, reaches over and pops open the glove compartment. A handgun sits on top of old registration forms and forgotten papers. He stares at the gun for a little too long.

Finally, he slams the glove compartment closed, shoves his truck into gear, and speeds away.

INT. PEACEFUL PINES - DAY

A walk-in pool gently laps by Marit's feet and the air looks like it smells of cucumber. Employees in matching polos and khakis carry drinks to guests who lounge on chairs made of knotty pine topped with comfortable cushions. High-end fishing poles are available to rent and a sign announces s'more making lessons that night. The whole place has a fake rustic quality - like a Northern Minnesotan Pottery Barn.

Marit wears sunglasses and sips a Caribou Coffee.

BURT TORRES (40s), the owner of Peaceful Pines shouts his tour.

BURT

Our spa facilities are the best in the tri-state area. We're known for our special regional treatments like a purifying Lake Water Facial which we'd love to offer to you as a thank you for coming down today. The great thing about this place is that it feels rustic but has all the amenities of a high-class vacation.

Burt stops his tour and looks expectantly at Marit.

BURT (CONT'D)

Any questions?

A NAKED CHILD runs past her, trying to escape his care taker who sports the Peaceful Pines polo.

BURT (CONT'D)

Of course we also offer full time child care.

MARIT

Of course.

EXT. PEACEFUL PINES MARIT DANIELSON COMMEMORATIVE PLAYGROUND - DAY

Marit stands holding a giant scissors before a ribboned-off playground that is an exact, kid-sized replica of Timberlane. Even the fish house has been recreated to pint-size perfection with a sign above the door reading "MYLES' FISH HOUSE - NO GIRLS ALLOWED." It's weird and she feels weird about it.

Marit cuts the ribbon as camera's flash and pop. Marit smiles her sixty watt smile.

Something catches her eye by the lake. Myles idles in his boat, staring at her accusingly.

MARIT

Dammit.

She drops the scissors and starts to move toward the dock but Myles kicks the boat in gear and speeds away. Burt approaches behind her.

BURT

Say, before you go I just wanted to tell you I was so sorry to hear about your father.

Marit watches her brother's wake, distracted.

MARIT

Thank you. The doctors say he's recovering well.

BURT

Good. Please tell him he can take all the time he needs before he signs the papers.

MARIT

What?

BURT

To sell us Timberlane. I'm thrilled your family trusts us to carry on the legacy. We have big plans for that place.

Off Marit's shocked face we -

INT. TIMBERLANE OFFICE - DAY

Marit rifles through papers and drawers. In the cold light of day John's office doesn't look cozy, it just looks crazy.

Myles steps into the door frame.

MYLES

How could you do that?

MARIT

Myles. I'm sorry. My agent set it up and I couldn't get out of it.

MYLES

That place is sinking Dad. Sinking me. And you're promoting it? You're going to let them pretend that you grew up there?

MARIT

It was for work.

MYLES

No. This is personal. I know you have a hard time understanding that but this place means everything to me. To dad.

MARIT

Maybe not to Dad.

MYLES

What? What are you doing in here?

Marit holds up a clump of bills and late notices.

MARIT

Look at all of these. There are so many of them. Months and months late. And look at this.

She opens a giant green leather bound ledger.

MARIT (CONT'D)

We're in debt. Severely. Do you know anything about this?

MYLES

No. Dad took care of all the money stuff. I mean, it's been slow but not that slow.

MARIT

I don't know where all the money is going. I found checks made out to cash for thousands of dollars.

MYLES

That can't be right.

MARIT

There's something else. The guy that owns Peaceful Pines told me Dad was considering selling them Timberlane.

MYLES

What?

MARIT

But I can't find the contract. It's gone.

INT. JUNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

June sits in front of her computer, watching a YouTube recording of the Garrison Keillor program. From the computer, Marit smiles.

MARIT

(on the computer)

I moved to New York right out of high school and struggled for years until the first book was published.

June pauses that, scrolls back, and hits play again.

MARIT (CONT'D)

(on the computer)

I moved to New York right out of high school -

June pauses it again and looks out her window. Eric mows their expansive yard, sweating in the summer sun.

INT. ERIC'S OFFICE - DAY

June pads into Eric's office. It's full of childhood drawings from June and hand-built, wood furniture. June kneels down in front of a safe, making sure she still hears the purr of the mower, and turns the dial to the code - her birthday.

It clicks open easily and she rummages through papers and important looking documents until she finds what she's looking for. Her birth certificate.

She pulls it out and reads. The MOTHER line has been redacted but June stares at the location: NEW YORK, NEW YORK.

After another quick glance outside she closes the safe and gets up - taking the birth certificate with her.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Myles sits in a chair pulled up next to the bed. A few nurses quietly pad by the door but other than that the room is quiet.

Marit is about to come in but pauses outside the door and looks at her brother. He looks small and tired. He absently rubs the stump where his leg should be.

MARIT
How's he doing?

Myles shrugs.

MYLES
Hasn't woken up long enough to have any real conversations. I just - I don't know how this is going to work without him for the summer. And those bills...

MARIT
Yeah. Listen, Myles. With Dad and the lodge and everything.

She takes a deep breath.

MARIT (CONT'D)
I'm going to stay for the summer.

Myles keeps his eyes fixed on the bed.

MARIT (CONT'D)
Myles?

MYLES
I heard you.

Beat.

MYLES (CONT'D)
Thank you.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. TIMBERLANE LODGE - DAY

Myles sits at the front desk, staring at the computer. Marit comes through the door.

MARIT
Hey. I'm going to have my assistant
ship some of my -

She stops, seeing the look on Myles' face.

MARIT (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

MYLES
The reservations. They've doubled
for this summer in the last five
minutes.

Marit comes around to look.

MARIT
There's another.

MYLES
And another.

Marit's phone dings. It's a text from her agent.

MARCY
(via text)
"Oh My Fuck. #ATimberlaneSummer is
trending!"

Myles sees the text.

MYLES
What's "A Timberlane Summer"?

MARIT
I don't know.

Myles googles "#ATimberlaneSummer." Countless pages and articles come up - The Huffington Post, People Magazine, and of course, Twitter, announce the news that Marit is staying at Timberlane.

MARIT (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

MYLES
So you staying is just a publicity
stunt?

MARIT

No. I had nothing to do with it. It must have been Marcy.

MYLES

All these people just want to meet you. They don't care about this place.

MARIT

Myles. Who cares. Look at the reservations. Dad needs this money.

MYLES

I won't live in your fantasy all summer.

MARIT

You're the one who said it's the version people want. Let's give it to them.

Another five reservations click through.

MYLES

We're going to need a bigger staff.

EXT. TIMBERLANE LODGE DOCK - NIGHT

Marit sits alone on the dock, watching a few loons float in the distance.

ERIC (O.S.)

You're staying?

Marit looks up.

MARIT

Hi. I see the small town gossip mill is alive and well.

ERIC

Actually, I read it on Huffington Post. Apparently you're trending.

MARIT

Great. My agent'll love that.

ERIC

Were you going to tell me?

MARIT

I'm sorry. Things have been crazy here.

ERIC

I know. I'm so sorry about your
dad. How is he?

Marit shrugs a little and Eric sits down beside her.

MARIT

Listen, I'll keep my distance from
June and -

ERIC

It's okay. Let's not worry about
that right now.

MARIT

Thank you.
(then)
You didn't have to come.

ERIC

I know. But I did. For old time's
sake.

They sit like that for a while. Occasionally a laugh comes
from across the lake or a fish jumps in the distance but
mostly it's quiet. Finally -

MARIT

June is amazing.

ERIC

Yes. She is.

MARIT

I've spent so much time trying not
think about her. To see her in
person is...

ERIC

I'm sure.
(then)
You know, when you left for New
York that first time I kept waiting
for you to change your mind. Kept
expecting you would come back. Then
after June... Jesus, I don't know.
Sometimes I look at her and I
wonder how someone could possibly
leave a little person that amazing.

MARIT

That's not fair.

ERIC

I know.

She forces brightness into her voice, desperate to change the subject.

MARIT

I don't understand how you kept this a secret in a town where every one knows everything.

ERIC

People see what they want to see. Everyone thought I was a hero.

(then)

Plus, I got so much sympathy sex.

Marit barks out a laugh.

Their eyes meet and a long-ago chemistry hangs between them. They stare at each other just a little bit too long.

Eric stands, abruptly.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I should go. I'm glad you're okay.

MARIT

Right. Thanks again for checking on me.

Eric walks away and a loon lets out a long, desperate call.

EXT. PINE CREEK RECREATIONAL PARK - DAY

A banner that announces the SUMMER FUN FEST stretches across a crowded path. People swarm around various booths buying local food and crafts. Marit stands surrounded by a LOCAL GIRL SCOUT TROOP, posing for a photo.

The photo snaps and Marit turns to see Eric approaching through the crowd.

MARIT

Well, hello again.

ERIC

Marit, I wanted to introduce you to someone.

ALLISON NEWMAN (late 20s), approachably pretty, steps out from among the crowd.

ERIC (CONT'D)

This is Allison, my girlfriend.

Marit blinks in shock as Allison smiles an incredibly sincere smile and shakes Marit's hand warmly.

ALLISON

Hi. It is just so nice to meet you. Eric always said you two were friends growing up. I love your books. Juney actually turned me on to them.

Marit winces at the way she says "Juney."

MARIT

Oh. It's ah, nice to meet you too.
(to Eric)
I didn't realize you had a girlfriend.

The crowd presses against them, forcing them closer.

ERIC

Yeah. I was going to tell you but with everything going on I -

MARIT

Well that is great.

That comes out a little too loud.

ERIC

Right. Good luck today, Marit.

MARIT

Thank you.

ALISON

Wonderful meeting you.

Allison slips her hand in Eric's as they walk away. Then, as an awkward habit -

MARIT

Thank you for reading!

EXT. PINE CREEK RECREATIONAL PARK - DAY

Marit stands at a podium in the sand, the sun sets behind her, painting the lake with orange. Thousands of people have gathered on the beach and the gentle grassy hills. Lawn chairs and blankets are spread out holding families with picnic dinners. Marit reads from Timberlane, Book 4.

Eric and Allison sit on lawn chairs, a chair in between them noticeably vacant.

ERIC
(re: chair)
She's missing it.

ALLISON
Relax, honey. I'm sure she's
sitting with her friends.

Eric nods, not entirely convinced and reluctantly turns his attention back to the reading.

MARIT
"...Marit watched Myles plunge into
the water. It was still a little
cool, it was only June. He was
always so brave and Marit wished
she could be more like him."

INT. PEACEFUL PINES - DAY

A POSTAL WORKER delivers the mail to the front desk.

MARIT (V.O.)
"She decided, in that moment, that
this summer she would learn to be
brave, like her brother. She took a
deep breath, raised her hands above
her head, and threw herself into
the lake."

There are multiple letters, a few packages, and the manila envelope with a coffee stain on the front that holds the signed Peaceful Pines contract.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

John lies in bed as nurses and doctors bustle in the hall.

MARIT (V.O.)
"The water sent shock waves down
her body and her lungs felt like
they may collapse. The cold knocked
the breath out of her and she lost
track of where she was in the deep
lake - which way she should swim to
find air."

John's heart monitor beeps a consistent beep until, suddenly, it flat lines.

INT. PINE CREEK PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

June sits at a large oak table, surrounded by Pine Creek Year books. She stares at the one open in front of her, barely breathing.

MARIT (V.O.)

"And then Marit saw the sun. She kicked her legs and swam toward it, breaking the surface, spitting and coughing and breathing in great gulps of air."

There, in the center of a page full of candid photos, are a very young Marit and Eric. Marit sits on Eric's lap, her arm slung around his shoulder. They are both laughing hysterically at something. The caption underneath reads "Future Mr. And Mrs."

MARIT (V.O.)

"She was terrified, yes, but felt something more than that. Exhilaration. That's what it was. Because in that moment she knew."

June stares at the photo tracing the outline of it with her finger.

MARIT (V.O.)

"This would be the best summer of her life."

THE END