

101753

Villain
an original screenplay
by
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DARKNESS. A tiny white SPOT grows bigger and bigger as

TEXT APPEARS:

'In March of 1984, the Alaska Fire Service sent three people to watch for fires high in the mountains surrounding Crimson Valley National Park.'

'Thirty-five miles north of the arctic circle, the Crimson Valley spans approximately 1.7 million acres. Inside the park there are no roads or trails; the nearest town is more than one hundred miles away.'

The spot has taken shape, filling the frame. It's a NEWSPAPER. The Anchorage Sun. Dated April 29, 1984.

The headline reads: *'Murder At The Edge Of The World.'*

MORE TEXT:

'This is a true story. It is based on actual events that occurred in the Baird mountain range.'

FADE IN:

EXT. CRIMSON VALLEY NATIONAL PARK- DAY

Breathtaking. Sweeping plains, grasslands stretch out for miles. The dense boreal forests are punctuated with burnt black spots, extinguished fires. Barren tundra runs into snow-capped peaks surrounding the valley. Despite the arctic beauty of the land, the place is completely DESERTED.

A mechanical BUZZ grows louder and louder as we move through a charred forest towards the distant mountains.

WILL (O.S.)

I was on my way through El Paso when I first tried AA. It was awful. Good 'ol boys are breaking down, blubbering about Jesus. One guy even got up there with a guitar. Guess he thought it was some kinda talent show.

CLIMBING the Baird mountains, the forests are fringed with snow. We move up and up into the peaks.

WILL (O.S.)

Lucky for me, there's a cantina right across the street.

We reach a snowy CLEARING

At 4700 feet. Surrounded on all sides by white forests. The first signs of life are a small SHED and a WATER STILL. We move across the snowfield, over a well-worn trail of footprints.

WILL (O.S.)

Seems like your average place.
Mariachi band, sombreros. Strangest thing though, from the minute I walk in, it's like everyone already knows me. I pass one table, guy smiles, says 'Hola, Will'. I pass another, same thing: 'Hola, Will.'

And at last we SEE:

EXT. THE NEST

A tiny fire-spotter's CABIN. 9' X 9' X 8'. A claustrophobic cubicle, staring down at the world from the lonely mountain top. The front wall is made entirely of thick PLEXIGLASS to provide a pristine view of the valley. VENTS near the roof provide the only ventilation. The walls are pockmarked from storms. This thing is a rock, out here for the long haul.

WILL (O.S.)

Now I don't speak Spanish, hell if I know what's goin' on. Finally I ask the bartender 'hey amigo, how come everybody in here knows my name?'

INT. THE NEST- DAY

A heater BUZZES. The cabin's barely big enough for the following carefully organized items:

1) a twin bed 2) a stove 3) a heater 4) a desk 5) a chair
6) a two-way radio 7) a suitcase 8) a pan 9) a canteen 10) a battery-powered lantern 11) a digging trowel

And finally WILL FINN, pale but handsome, talking into the radio. He wears glasses, a green fire service parka. We get the sense there's a whole lot churning beneath his calm eyes.

WILL

Guy slams down a shot of tequila and points at my chest...I was still wearing my nametag.

A WOMAN'S VOICE laughs over the RADIO.

EVE'S VOICE

(filtered)

You didn't tell him where you were coming from, I hope?

WILL

I didn't have to. He said it happened about once a week.

EVERY FIVE SECONDS Will glances up to scan the valley below for fires. It's why he's up here, and he'll do it constantly, obsessively, no matter what else he's doing.

EVE'S VOICE

That's sick.

WILL

It's a sick world, darlin'.

EVE'S VOICE

You should try rehab. We sent my brother. Worked wonders.

WILL

Yeah. The thing about clinics--it's like AA--you can always leave and hit the bar. That's what's great about being up here. There isn't a drop of booze for a hundred miles.

EVE

(pausing)

I guess so. But what happens when you come back down?

Will looks at the wall where he's carved thirty-one little SLASH MARKS. Above them in small carved print: 'Sober Days.'

WILL

To be honest, I haven't thought that far ahead. It's hard enough just getting through today.

EXT. THE NEST- DAY

Clad in his parka, turtleneck, boots, and gloves, Will trudges outside with the canteen. He can see his breath.

At this altitude the woods are completely silent, not even a chirping bird. The only sound is snow crunching under Will's boots as he COUNTS his steps down to the water still.

WILL
(whispering)
One. Two. Three. Four. Five...

Will counts TWENTY-TWO steps before he reaches the still. He fills his canteen from the spigot and starts heading back.

WILL
One. Two. Three...

He checks his watch. 9:00 pm. The sun has not set.

INT. THE NEST- DAY

WILL
(grunting)
Seventy-eight. Seventy-nine...

Will does sit-ups in his long underwear. With each one, he checks the valley for fires. His shirtsleeves are pulled up; there are strange SCARS all up and down his forearms. Little faded dots, each the size of a dime.

Burns.

EXT. THE SHED- TWILIGHT

The sun is going down, shadows are long. Will stands outside the shed, pulls a KEY-RING off his belt and unlocks the shed.

INT. THE SHED

On the shelves are dehydrated meals, cans of propane, a first-aid kit. Will digs through bandages, penicillin. He finds a bottle of aspirin, pours eight pills into his hand, takes them dry. Just as he's about to leave, something catches his eye in the first-aid kit.

Alcohol swabs.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will looks at the picture on a meal packet: plump chicken surrounded by shiny green peas. It looks delicious. He pours the meal into the pan.

It looks like dirt. He starts taking out all the PEAS, counting.

WILL
One...two...three...

The alcohol swabs sit unopened on the desk.

EXT. FOREST- NIGHT

The woods feel different in the dark. Trees have become black shapes blocking out the light of the moon. The stillness is eerie, ominous. The only sound is *crunch...crunch*. Boots on snow.

WILL
(whispering)
...one-oh-eight...one-oh-nine...

Will holds the lantern, illuminating a trail of FOOTPRINTS that leads off into the woods.

At last he reaches an ancient wooden OUTHOUSE. He shines the lantern on the snow beyond, revealing a neat row of filled-in HOLES in the ground. He digs a new hole with the trowel, buries a meal packet full of leftovers.

INT. OUTHOUSE

Will shines the lantern down into the toilet. He can't see the bottom. He drops the alcohol swabs in. They vanish.

EXT. FOREST- NIGHT

Will trudges back through the snow. Suddenly he STOPS, shines the lantern on the ground. Crossing his footprints in a violent slash are a new set of TRACKS.

They're huge. A BEAR. Maybe more than one. Will shivers, looks around in the pitch black.

WILL
Hello?

A NOISE behind him. He WHIRLS.

Branches SHAKE on one of the trees. Something's just passed by. He looks around in the dark, scared. Panic grips him.

INT. OUTHOUSE

Will darts back inside, closes the door. He's breathing fast. He cracks open the door, tries to gauge the distance back to the cabin. He can't see a thing in the dark. He takes a deep breath.

WILL
(whispering)
One...two...three...

EXT. FOREST

Will CHARGES through the forest as fast as he can.

WILL
Fuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuck.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will bursts in, locks the door. He feels better inside his cabin. He holds the lantern up to the window. The plexiglass is a few inches thick, but still it's not much protection from the outside world. He presses a button on the radio.

WILL
Nest three to base. Eve?

There's no answer. Will pulls down a pair of BLACKOUT SHADES over the windows and curls up in bed, alone.

TIME LAPSE TO:

MORNING

Thin strips of light squeeze in around the shades, leaving streaks on the walls. Will's head BOBS unconsciously up and down, looking for fires.

His watch BEEPS. 4:00 am.

Will wakes, pulls up the shades. The morning light pours in, a blinding assault. It makes his head hurt, a sober hangover. He's still going through withdrawal. He's dizzy, disoriented.

He begins to carefully make the bed. He tucks everything neatly, brushes off all the wrinkles. He checks to make sure the corners are perfect, straight, precise. It's a ritual, the only thing he can control up here.

By the time he's done, he feels much better. He takes the digging trowel and puts another little slash mark into the wall. He exhales.

32 Sober Days.

WILL (V.O.)

Yeah, I'm having a pool party tomorrow. Hef's dropping by with the twins.

EVE'S VOICE (V.O.)

Uh-huh. How are we really doing?

INT. THE NEST- DAY

Will has eight aspirin laid out in a neat little row. He takes them one at a time, checking for fires as he talks.

WILL

Well, my shit's turned green. That's a new one for me.

EVE'S VOICE

Could be worse.

WILL

Lemme ask you, you've been a spotter, right? How often were you actually checking for fires?

EVE'S VOICE

I think once every couple minutes. But I ended up going a little crazy. Why? How often do you?

WILL

(pausing)
A lot.

EVE'S VOICE

Is this going to be too hard, Will? I can always swing up and get you.

WILL

(a wry smile)
Could we have dinner, maybe go for a quick roll in the snow?

Eve doesn't say anything.

WILL

Come on. It's not like there's anyone else up here--

EVE'S VOICE

I'm engaged, Will.

Will's smile fades.

EVE'S VOICE

So you--need me to come get you?

WILL

(brushing it off)
Thanks but I'll tough it out.

EVE'S VOICE

You sure? I've got the chopper.

Will looks up to check the lonely valley for fires.

WILL

Yeah. It's just two more months.

INT. THE NEST- DAY

Will reads a PLAYBOY in bed. There's motion under the covers. He's MASTURBATING. This is the only time he doesn't look up to check for fires.

WILL

Page thirty-one: Mandy's turn-on's include horses, jet-skis, and hockey players.

Will turns the page: he's right, the model's turn-on's are horses, jet-skis, and hockey players.

Suddenly the radio starts to SQUAWK.

EVE'S VOICE

Come in nest three. Nest three, this is base.

Will jumps like he's just been walked in on. He hides the magazine under the mattress, a reflex left over from puberty.

WILL

(into radio)
What happened, you dump the jerk already?

EVE'S VOICE

Better. You may be getting some company.

A strange expression crosses Will's face. Excitement, fear.

WILL

Really? Who?

EVE'S VOICE

Dunno. I just talked to Pete, up in nest two. Some tourist stayed with him last night. Asked about you.

WILL

Me specifically?

EVE'S VOICE

Some guy in an orange parka. Pete said he left before dawn. Seemed pretty keen on finding you.

WILL

That's what--a four day hike?

EVE'S VOICE

Should get there in a couple days.

WILL

(brow furrowed)

Huh.

EVE'S VOICE

What?

WILL

It's probably nothing, just...I didn't tell anyone I was up here.

EVE'S VOICE

Weird. Maybe they've got the wrong Will Finn.

Will stares out at the valley. Thinking.

INT. THE NEST- DAY

Will looks at an ELEVATION MAP of the valley. Locations are marked 'Nest One, Nest Two, Nest Three.' They're miles apart. Another location reads 'Base'. It's over 50 miles away.

Will goes over some different routes with a pencil, checking to see if it would be feasible to get down the mountain. Some of the elevation drops seem pretty drastic.

He's thinking about leaving.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will lies in bed, reading Tom Sawyer. He shuts off the light, tries to sleep. After a beat, his eyes open. He stares at the doorknob.

He gets up and locks the door.

INT. THE NEST- MORNING

The blackout shades are down. Slivers of light play against the walls. Will's sweating, tossing and turning in his sleep. First it looks like he's just having a NIGHTMARE, but soon his twitches and jerks become more violent. There's something else at work here. Maybe withdrawal, maybe not.

He bursts awake with a CRY, starts compulsively rubbing the burns on his arm.

He begins to make the bed. He tries to lay out everything so it's perfect, precise. It's not working, the sheets won't lay flat. Wrinkles keep popping up. He's getting upset. The wrinkles won't come out. He can't breathe. The nightmare's broken his routine. He's out of control.

Suddenly he OVERTURNS the bed, kicks over the chair in a rage.

INT. THE NEST- DAY, LATER

There's another slash mark on the wall. 33 Sober Days.

Will's curled up in the corner, SOBBING uncontrollably. The bed has been neatly made. Everything is back to normal.

Behind him, the alcohol swabs sit on the table. They're covered in shit.

He's dug them out of the toilet.

INT. THE NEST- DAY

Will does lightning fast sit-ups, trying to shut out the fear welling up in his heart. The alcohol swabs sit on the table, unopened.

WILL
 (grunting)
 Twenty-eight...twenty-nine...thir--

He STOPS. His eyes focus on the forest thirty yards south.

MOVEMENT

At first it doesn't look like anything, a little winking spot. But gradually it starts to take shape, moving closer.

A MAN IN AN ORANGE PARKA

Moves along the edge of the forest. He's pacing, looking for something. Will watches, confused. He goes to the radio.

WILL
 (into radio)
 Nest three to base. Eve? Are you there?

Outside, the man looks up, spots Will's cabin. Spots Will. He just stands there. Staring.

EVE'S VOICE
 (breaking the silence)
 I'm here.

Startled, Will hits the radio.

WILL
 When'd that tourist leave Pete's?

EVE'S VOICE
 Today's Tuesday--so about two days ago. Why?

The tourist keeps staring. It's making Will shiver.

WILL
 Because I think I see him.

EVE'S VOICE
 That's impossible.

The man slowly turns his head. Now he's looking at Will's shed. At the water still. Almost like he's sizing it up.

WILL
 Eve, he's staring right at me.

EVE'S VOICE

That's a four day hike. What did he, not sleep?

The man turns and slowly heads back down into the forest. Will puts on his boots.

WILL

This is ridiculous. Hang on...

EXT. THE NEST

Will trots down towards the woods.

WILL

Hey, wait! Hello?
(no answer)
Is anyone there?

He scans the trees--a small arctic WOLF scurries out to one side. There's no one else out there.

INT. THE NEST

Will comes back in, shaken.

WILL

(into radio)
Strangest thing. Guy just took off.

EVE'S VOICE

You should give a call to Pete. Maybe he knows something we don't.

WILL

Nah. Honestly, I'm prob'ly just seeing things.

EVE'S VOICE

Wouldn't be the first time.

Will looks curiously out into the woods.

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Silent. A blanket of clouds covers the stars.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

The blackout shades are down. Will reads in bed by the light of the lantern. A long beat. A quiet SHUFFLING outside.

Boots crunching snow. Will's ears perk up just as the noise stops. Another long beat. Will returns to his book.

The footsteps return, a little louder. Will gets out of bed. He cautiously puts out a hand, pulls up the blackout shades--

There's no one outside.

Will looks off into the black, a little sad to be all alone.

WILL
(jumps back)
Jesus!

The man in the orange parka walks right past the window. His face is covered by a thick wool gator.

WILL
Sir? Can I help you with something?

The man disappears behind the wall. Will instinctively grabs the digging trowel, goes to lock the door.

WILL
Sir!...this is a state facility!

But it's too late. The doorknob's already TURNING. The door opens.

WILL
Oh my--

But now there's something else in Will's voice. Recognition.

WILL
Aidan?

AIDAN FINN, Will's older brother, steps in, knocks snow off his boots. He's got troubled eyes and an intermittent TIC, a repeated shrugging of the shoulders. He speaks with an odd intensity, like he's focused very hard on something other than what he's saying.

AIDAN
Hey, Billy-boy.

WILL
(relieved)
Man, you scared the piss outta me!
The hell are you doing up here?

Will puts his arms around him. Aidan hugs back a second late, something else on his mind.

AIDAN

I got bad news. Dad's dead.

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT

The nest glows with lantern light.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Aidan sits in the chair, backpack and parka at his feet, warming his gloved hands at the heater. Will makes cocoa at the stove, the keys are on his beltloop. He seems far from upset.

WILL

Take your gloves off, man. Warm up.

Aidan leaves them on, concentrates on the heater.

AIDAN

Sorry to spring on you like this. I thought you'd like to know.

WILL

No, trust me, I needed the company.

(thinks)

How'd you even find me up here?

AIDAN

Wasn't hard. Just did a little detective work.

WILL

Really? Who'd you talk to?

AIDAN

(a look)

Don't you even care how he died?

WILL

Does it matter?

AIDAN

He was up around Seattle. Been drinkin' again. Stumbled right onto some train tracks.

WILL
Jesus. When?

Now that Aidan's parka is off, Will can see Aidan has the same little dotted scars on his NECK. Dozens of them.

Cigarette burns.

AIDAN
Few months ago. Took me a while to track you down.

Aidan notices Will's gaze and pulls his shirt collar up. Will turns back to the cocoa, embarrassed.

WILL
I'm glad you told me, Aid. Stay as long as you like.

AIDAN
Thanks. I thought we'd do some catching up.

Will sets the alarm on his watch for 4:00 am. He puts it down on the desk.

WILL
Whatever you want. Like I said, I'm just happy for the company.

INT. THE NEST- MORNING

The watch reads 9:00 am.

Will's asleep on the floor on a bed of clothes. He opens his eyes, feels for his glasses.

AIDAN (O.S.)
I'm guessing you're more like this one. Brunette. Dynamite knockers.

EVE'S VOICE
(mortified, laughing)
Oh my God.

WILL'S POV

A BLURRY SHAPE stands at the stove. Will puts on his glasses. He can now see Aidan, lively, making eggs. His gloves are still on.

Will gets up, groggy, looks over to the bed. It's unmade. The keys are on the desk. Aidan took them off Will's beltloop in the night.

WILL
What time is it?

AIDAN
(into radio)
Let's ask Will.

Aidan turns. He's holding the Playboy.

AIDAN
Hey Billy-boy, which one of these
gals looks the most like miss Eve?

Will snatches the magazine, annoyed.

AIDAN
Aw, somebody's fulla cat-piss this
morning.

Will shoves the magazine into the desk drawer. Aidan throws on his parka.

AIDAN
Hey Eve, see if you can't cheer my
brother up, huh?

Aidan steps out into the cold, trots down to the shed. Will sees the time on his watch. He wants to panic, but knows he has to keep it together.

EVE'S VOICE
Hey Will. How we doin' today?

WILL
Apparently I'm full of cat-piss.

EVE'S VOICE
Little rough around the edges,
isn't he?

WILL
That just means he likes you.

Will takes the digging trowel, goes to put a mark in the wall. His hands stops short. Aidan's already done it. The mark is deeper, a scar. Not the work of the digging trowel.

34 Sober Days.

EVE'S VOICE

I think it's sweet, him coming all the way from Oregon. You two must be close.

WILL

(shaken)

I haven't seen him since we were kids.

EXT. THE NEST

Aidan pisses down by the shed. He's very much a little boy, whistling, twisting back and forth so his piss goes left and right. He stops, looks up, sees a WOLF out in the woods, nosing around for food. He stares at it intently.

INT. THE NEST

EVE'S VOICE

Really, why'd you guys lose touch?

Will doesn't answer. He stares at some PHOTOGRAPHS of Aidan and a LITTLE GIRL that are now in the drawer. Among them are:

- 1) Aidan holding the girl as they shoot down a slide.
- 2) The two of them tromping around in snorkeling gear.
- 3) Them together after a play, she's wearing a fake mustache.

There are dozens of photos, it's clear Aidan spent every waking second with this girl. He looks different in the pictures, too. Softer. Comfortable. These were warmer days.

EVE'S VOICE

Will? You still there?

Will stares at the last picture: the little girl is ALONE.

WILL

He got arrested.

BANG! Aidan bursts in. Will puts down the photos, startled.

WILL

Eve, I'll call you later, 'kay?

He hangs up.

AIDAN

Aw, why'd you do that? She sounded like a hot little piece of tail.

WILL

She's nothing special.

INT. THE NEST- LATER

Will nervously makes the bed. He hasn't touched his food. Aidan eats by the window, checking out the plexiglass.

AIDAN

What is this shit? Plastic?

WILL

Plexiglass. Insulates pretty well, plus it's thick enough to keep the bears out.

Out of the corner of his eye, Aidan notices Will struggling to get the sheets perfectly flat.

AIDAN

Goddamn, Billy-Boy. Stuff must cost a fortune.

WILL

Yeah. Hey, could you not call me that? I never really liked the nickname, even when we were kids.

AIDAN

Whatever you say, Will.

Aidan sits down on the bed, wrinkling the sheets. He puts his plate down, the egg fork falls onto the comforter. Will pretends not to notice.

AIDAN

So what is there to do up here, anyway?

EXT. THE NEST- DAY

WILL (O.S.)

Ready...set...go!

Two sets of BARE FEET blow over the snow.

Will and Aidan RACE down towards the woods. Their bare feet kick up snow. They each hold sticks, breathe hard.

AIDAN

Wooo! Burns like a sonuvabitch!

Aidan's the faster of the two. Will struggles to catch up.

WILL

So I gotta know. H-How'd you find me?

AIDAN

(grinning)

Honestly? Checked with the phone company. You called the old house from Fairbanks.

WILL

You sure w-went to a lot of trouble to tell me about dad.

They keep running in silence. The pain is getting worse.

EXT. FOREST- DAY

The brothers run faster. Trees blow between them. Their words take a great deal of effort.

WILL

S-saw you brought some pictures. That your little girl?

AIDAN

That's my Zoe.

WILL

She's a c-cutie. What's sh-she doing while you're up here?

AIDAN

(a look)

Mean you d-didn't hear?

WILL

Hear what?

Aidan runs even faster. His bare feet skip across the snow.

AIDAN

Fuckin' social services, man. I get home one day, there's a note on the door. She's g-gone. They won't even t-tell me where they stuck her. Her own daddy can't write her a letter.

WILL

Shit Aid. I'm s-sorry.

They keep running. Will's agony builds in silence until he can't take it any longer.

AIDAN

You should quit. You know you won't beat me.

Thwick. Will jabs his stick into the snow and starts racing back to the cabin. Aidan stands there, bare feet in the snow.

AIDAN

Aw, come on! Have a spine for once!

Aidan SNAPS his stick, starts running after him. Will's stick is lodged in the ground. Aidan's lies next to it, broken.

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT

The moon hides. The cabin sits alone in the dark clearing.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Aidan sleeps in bed, still wearing his gloves. On the floor, Will reads by the light of the lantern. After a few moments, Aidan starts to toss and turn. Will looks up. Aidan CRIES OUT in his sleep, a sickly feral groan.

WILL

Aid? Aidan?

Aidan's breathing hard. Will gets up. Aidan starts to shiver like a frightened child. Will grabs him.

WILL

Aidan! Wake--

AIDAN

(eyes snapping open)
--the fuck away from me!

Aidan LASHES OUT, jumps back like a scared animal. Will puts up his hands, frightened.

WILL
Whoa--it's okay. It's okay. You're
having a nightmare.

Aidan looks very confused, keeps shivering. Both their hearts race. Gradually Aidan becomes more lucid.

AIDAN
J-Jesus. Jesus Christ.

WILL
What were you dreaming about?

Aidan won't answer. He looks ashamed.

WILL
Lemme make you some tea, huh?

Will goes to the stove, starts boiling some water.

WILL
I have dreams about him too, you
know. Sometimes I'll catch a smell--
old cigarettes--I can feel my skin
burning. That ever happen to you?

AIDAN
I g-get startled easily.

WILL
Are you still taking your medici--

Will YELPS as he burns himself, knocks the pan on the floor. Water spills everywhere. Aidan starts LAUGHING hysterically.

WILL
The hell is so funny?

AIDAN
Look at us! Fucker's six feet
under, we're still a couple
crybabies!

WILL
(grabbing the pan)
Honestly, I don't even think about
it that much.

AIDAN

That's your problem, man. You don't let anything out. I can see it's just gnawing at your insides.

WILL

Really. I'm just glad he's gone.

AIDAN

(a look)
Yeah. Me too.

EXT. THE NEST- DAY

The brothers play SNOW BASEBALL. Aidan pitches snowballs; Will bats with a tree branch.

AIDAN

Get ready for a mean curve-ball.

Will swings, misses.

WILL

Strike four.

AIDAN

Hey, you never got a call from social services, did you?

WILL

No. Why do you ask?

Will swings again, misses.

AIDAN

Just curious. I know sometimes they try and contact the family members.

WILL

Yeah, no. I didn't hear a thing.

AIDAN

I just felt awful. Zoe was already crushed when her mom split. Thought of her with some foster family just breaks my heart.

WILL

She was something special, huh?

AIDAN

I felt okay when she was around.
Long as I got to be daddy, nothing
else mattered, you know?

Will doesn't say anything. Aidan packs another snowball.

AIDAN

So they never told you why they
took her?

WILL

(nervously)

I told you I didn't talk to them.

Aidan pitches the snowball just a little CLOSER to Will. Will
inches out of the way.

AIDAN

Come on. You musta heard something.

WILL

(getting out of stance)

Aidan, what're you doing up here?

AIDAN

We're just talking. What's the
problem?

Will waits a second, then starts practice swinging.

WILL

What happened is between you and
Zoe. It's none of my business.

Aidan throws the ball. It's way off.

AIDAN

It was silly. I went off my
medicine, started having
nightmares. I must've gotten a
little--confused.

WILL

What were you dreaming about?

Aidan throws again. At last Will HITS it. The snowball
explodes. A home-run. Aidan looks at him eerily, like he's
sizing him up.

AIDAN
You sure you never called--

WILL
Aidan.

AIDAN
I'm sorry. You know what--all water
under the bridge. C'mon inside. I
got a surprise for you.

INT. THE NEST- DAY

Aidan pulls out a bottle of WHISKEY out of his pack.

AIDAN
I thought we should celebrate. A
toast to the old man.

Will immediately begins to look very uncomfortable.

WILL
I don't drink.

AIDAN
Get outta here. You used to brush
your teeth with this stuff.

Will eyes the slash marks on the wall. 35 Sober Days.

WILL
You know that's why I'm up here.
Now please get rid of it.

Out of the corner of his eye, Aidan notices Will's hand
SHAKING. Aidan takes a drink. Will's furious.

WILL
You think I'm stupid? I can tell
you're pissed about something. Stop
playing games and lose the bottle.

Aidan looks at him mischievously, but with a glimmer of
something darker, more hateful.

AIDAN
I don't know what your problem is,
Billy-boy. I'm fine.

Aidan takes another drink. Will's about to explode. He buries
his anger, calmly gets up and walks outside.

EXT. THE NEST- DAY

Will pisses against a tree. He's boiling over, breathing fast. He wipes a hand over his face, trying to calm down.

WILL
Idiot. Idiot.

INT. THE NEST- DAY

Aidan drinks whiskey, speaks into the radio.

AIDAN
(into radio)
Thanks so much, Eve. Will can't wait.

He hangs up, sits. He can see Will outside, washing his face by the shed. Aidan takes a gulp. Keeping an eye on Will, Aidan pours a bit of whiskey on the PILLOW Will's been using on the floor.

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT

It's begun to SNOW silently. The light in the cabin is off.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will sleeps on the floor in his long underwear. The heater buzzes, the shades are down. The place is pitch black.

Will's head bobs up and down, unconsciously checking for fires. A low CREAK in the floorboards. He opens his eyes, puts on his glasses. He can barely make out a SHAPE curled up and shivering in bed. He fumbles for the lantern.

WILL
Aidan?

Will shines the light on Aidan. He's GROANING. Will slowly goes to him, puts a hand on his shoulder.

WILL
Aidan. Aidan. Wake up!

Aidan cries out. Will shakes him. Aidan keeps shivering harder and harder. It looks like he's on the verge of CONVULSIONS.

Will can't wake him.

WILL

Fuck.

Will snatches the keys off the desk.

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will runs to the shed barefoot, in just his long underwear.

INT. SHED

He digs through the first-aid kit, finds a pair of SMELLING SALTS.

EXT. THE NEST

Will runs back across the snow, rips them open.

INT. THE NEST

Will bursts through the door, STOPS in his tracks.

The bed is EMPTY.

Aidan stands silent at the desk. His back is turned, his shoulder shrugs. For the first time, his gloves are off and Will catches a glimpse of his HANDS.

The smelling salts fall idly from Will's fingers.

Aidan's right hand is covered in SCARS from top to bottom. It's missing the RING FINGER. The rest has been stitched together like a baseball glove. He doesn't turn around.

AIDAN

(ominous)

Sure gets awful quiet up here. No one around for miles...

WILL

Aidan--

AIDAN

You know what dad said right before he put my hand in the thresher?

Will's eyes dart to the radio. It's been GUTTED. Wires poke out like brambles.

WILL

What the fuck is going on?

AIDAN

He said 'scream and Billy-boy's next.' I didn't make a peep.

Aidan slowly closes the door.

AIDAN

A doctor once said that might've made me a little sadistic.

At last Aidan turns around. He's holding a HUNTING KNIFE.

AIDAN

Do you think I'm sadistic?

Will steps back. The wood creaks under his bare feet.

WILL

What--what d'you want?

Aidan starts taking slow steps forward, inching closer and closer to violence.

AIDAN

I stopped by your house. You weren't at home. You won't believe what I found on your dresser.

Aidan looks at the photo of Zoe standing ALL ALONE.

AIDAN

It was taken a year after they stole her from me.

Will's face floods with fear.

WILL

Aidan--I swear to you, I've never seen that before in my life. I think you're really confused. You need your medicine--

Aidan knocks the photos off the desk. They scatter all over the floor. He steps closer. Will backs up into the corner. He's got nowhere else to go.

WILL

There's been a mistake--I'm begging you. I would never go behind your back! Please--it was always you and me together.

Aidan softens. His shoulders relax. The hardness in his eyes vanishes. He puts his grotesque hand to Will's face, brushes the hair back.

AIDAN

You're right. I could never hurt little Billy-boy. Not after all we've been through.

WILL

(almost in tears)
You know I love y--

Aidan STABS the blade into Will's stomach.

Will screams, falls backwards, smashes into the heater. Blood pours out of his stomach, through his fingers.

Aidan stands over him, eyes wild, a beast. He brings the knife down again. Will uses all his strength to catch Aidan's arm.

Will lifts up his head, bites into Aidan's hand. Aidan's so scarred, he doesn't even notice. He keeps pressing down on the knife.

Will's free hand inches towards the smelling salts. He grabs them, thrusts them into Aidan's eyes.

Aidan cries out, drops the knife to the floor. Will kicks him backwards. Aidan's head smacks against the glass, he wipes frantically at his eyes.

Will rolls for the door. For a split second there's something strange in Aidan's voice.

AIDAN

(afraid)
Don't go.

In a flash, Will grabs his boots and darts out into the pitch black night.

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will races wildly towards the forest. He's barefoot, in just his long underwear. One hand clutches his boots, the other covers the bloody gash in his stomach. He screams into the empty valley.

WILL
 Help me! Please God somebody
 fucking help me!

Aidan stands in the doorway stuttering orders like he's possessed. His shoulders spasm. He's a demon.

AIDAN
 No! No! You t-turn around! Fucking
 l-liar! Lit-little mealymouthed
 cunt!

Aidan runs back inside. He bursts out the door with the knife and lantern.

EXT. FOREST- NIGHT

Will breathes hard, running dizzy, one hand on his gut. His naked feet skip on the snow. Pine needles whip his flesh. Behind him

AIDAN

Barrels into the forest like a machine. His legs pump. His arms churn. His breath billows out like smoke.

AIDAN
 Where is she?!

ON WILL

Nearly out of earshot. He darts behind a tree, panting. He lifts pressure off his stomach.

WILL
 Oh fuck, oh fuck--

Blood starts pouring out like a faucet. He crams a fist in the hole, tries to struggle into his boots.

ON AIDAN

Sweeping the lantern left and right, tearing through trees.

ON WILL

Starting to get dizzy. The second boot isn't slipping on. He steadies himself against the tree, bloody FINGERPRINTS smear the bark.

The bobbing lantern appears behind him.

AIDAN (O.S.)
Where's my little girl?!

AIDAN

STOPS dead. He spots Will's bloody fingerprints.

BEHIND THE TREE

Will's breath comes in quick asthmatic gasps. He can see the lantern scanning the woods behind him. It stops on Will's tree. He can HEAR:

Aidan's boots CRUNCHING the snow.

One step. Another.

Will presses harder into his stomach. His blood drips down onto the snow.

The lantern bobs steadily closer. And then Will HEARS:

AIDAN'S VOICE
(right behind him)
Billy-boy?

Crying silently, Will takes his boot and THROWS it. It crashes through the branches in the distance.

Aidan snaps to attention, DARTS OFF after it.

Will exhales, waits for Aidan's footsteps to die out. Then he turns and runs, dizzy, one naked foot nipping the snow, back towards the cabin.

AIDAN

Races through the woods, sweeping the lantern--

Suddenly he STOPS. Listens to the silent woods. He starts racing back up the hill.

Will's BOOT sits on the snowy ground.

EXT. CLEARING- NIGHT

Will hauls himself towards the cabin. He runs a clumsy ten yards, dripping blood.

AIDAN (O.S.)
(barking)
No! No! No!

Aidan bursts out of the woods behind him.

Will's halfway there. He crams his fist into his gut, steadying himself. He can see the open door of the cabin.

But Aidan's moving twice as fast. Mad with rage. He's ten yards behind...five yards behind...

And Will's getting dizzy, slowing down.

ON AIDAN

Knuckles whitening on the knife.

ON WILL

Legs churning, almost there.

ON AIDAN

Reaching out, fingers touching Will's back. But it's too late.

INT. THE NEST

Will bursts through the door, tries to slam it. Aidan gets a FOOT in. Will grabs the digging trowel, stabs it into Aidan's foot. Aidan SCREAMS, yanks his foot out of the door.

Will slams the door, locks it. He darts to the radio.

WILL
Hello? Hello?!

No signal.

He can hear Aidan outside, screeching like a wolf caught in a trap. Will stumbles, knocks over the stove. He opens the shades, screams out through the tiny air vents.

WILL
Somebody fucking help me!

Will grabs the alcohol swabs from the drawer, tries to clean his cut. Aidan POUNDS on the glass like a mad dog, the trowel still stuck in his foot.

AIDAN

L-Liar! Thief! C-Coward! Snake!
Will, you fuck-fucking snake!

The plexiglass isn't bending. Aidan slows down, pulls the trowel out of his foot. Will reels, holds his stomach.

AIDAN

(muffled, through vents)
You think that smarts? I promise by the time I'm through, it'll feel like a fucking paper cut.

Will's about to faint. He steadies himself against the glass.

AIDAN

Easy. Don't pass out on me. We got a long night ahead of us. You might wanna put something on that stomach. Stop the bleeding.

Will unfastens his BELT, buckles it tight around his stomach. A tourniquet. He grabs the fry pan.

AIDAN

Good. Now...do I have your undivided attention?

Will nods shakily. All the life drains out of his face.

AIDAN

Why don't you tell me everything you know about St. Mary's.

WILL

(confused)
What's S-St. Mary's?

CLANG--the fry pan falls out of his hand. He collapses, unconscious.

Aidan bangs on the glass.

AIDAN

No! Not yet! Not yet!

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BASE- DAY

Sunny. A RANGER CABIN sits at the outskirts of the park.

INT. BASE

TIGHT ON: a magazine of WEDDING GOWNS. A familiar VOICE.

EVE'S VOICE

I still like this one.

EVE makes wedding arrangements with her fiance, TOM, a cop. She wears a modest engagement ring, a green parka, a patch that says 'E. DEWITT'. He flips through a small book.

TOM

I thought we said strapless?

EVE

Do Inuit women even wear wedding dresses?

TOM

Not from Chanel, hon.

She sighs, closes the magazine.

EVE

Big day today?

TOM

I need to borrow the chopper. Meeting the priest. Maluuktuk, or whatever.

She consults a piece of paper.

EVE

Tuuluuwaq. Maluuktuk is an usher.

TOM

(reading)

Gotta say, I'm not crazy about some of these ceremonies. You know the groom's supposed to kill a seal?

EVE

I don't want you killing any seals, Tom. That's barbaric.

TOM

I thought you wanted authentic?
They don't serve tea and crumpets.

She gives him a look.

TOM

I'll see what I can do.
(closing his book)
How're your spotters holding up?

EVE

I talked to those Finn boys last
night. Tell you something, Aidan's
starting to give me the creeps.

TOM

What d'you mean?

EVE

He asked if they could go camping.
Said not to call because they
wouldn't be on the radio.

TOM

I'm sure it's nothing. If you're
nervous, Jacob's up there doin' the
bear count. He can check on 'em.

EVE

(thinking)
Yeah...hey, could you check Aidan's
record just in case? Will said he
was arrested when they were kids.
I'm kinda curious why.

TOM

Nancy Drew over here.

Tom pulls his parka off the wall, makes ready to leave.

EVE

When are you gonna be back?

TOM

'Morrow night.

EVE

(a look)
You said you'd help hang the moose
head. It's too heavy for me.

TOM

I tryin' to do right by you, hon.
You wanna get married on some
stuffy golf course?

He puts an arm around her, gives her an ESKIMO KISS.

EVE

You've got Eskimo breath.

Tom breathes in her face, she pushes him away. He winks,
exits.

TOM

See you soon.

She stares at her engagement ring, lonely.

EXT. CRIMSON VALLEY NATIONAL PARK- DAY

The sun sits high in the sky. The view from the cabin is
breathtaking and solitary.

INT. FINN'S CABIN- DAY

Will lies on the floor, surrounded by dozens of photos of
Aidan and Zoe laughing, smiling. Will's chest slowly rises
and falls.

He's still alive.

His eyes flicker open. His glasses are gone. He panics,
quickly finds them on the floor. He starts looking outside
every five seconds, now checking for his brother.

Aidan's vanished.

A rock and some broken tree branches sit next to the bloody
digging trowel. There are DENTS all over the plexiglass. One
looks particularly nasty, a deep gash.

Will rises slowly, still wearing one boot. He checks the
heater, it's broken beyond repair. The comforting buzz is
gone. He notices a small LEAN-TO off in the woods, made of
tree branches.

Will grabs the canteen, drinks the last little bit of water.
He looks outside at the water still. Not an option. He checks
the belt wrapped around his stomach. The bleeding's stopped,
but the flesh is puffy red. The belt probably saved his life.

He digs through the scattered photos, finds what he's looking for:

the photo of Zoe alone.

The DATE STAMP reads 12/26/83. Four months ago. In the pic, Zoe looks to be about six. She stands outside a BRICK BUILDING. A tiny SIGN hidden away in the background of the photo reads:

WILL
(whispers)
St. Mary's.

EXT. FOREST- DAY

The first spring berries poke through the snow. A MOUNTAIN GOAT approaches, begins to gnaw at them.

A NOISE off in the woods. The goat looks up for a second.

WHAM! A makeshift SPEAR lands in the snow, just next to the goat's head. A knife tied to a branch with some shoelace.

The animal bolts.

Aidan grabs the spear and angrily snaps it in half. He looks around. The woods are quiet. He tries to eat the rest of the berries, winces. They taste awful. Just as he's about to head off, he hears a CRUNCHING noise.

Another goat. Aidan furrows his brow. This one's chewing on a bag of CAMP FOOD.

EXT. OUTHOUSE

Aidan follows a trail of hoofprints. Jackpot. Two more goats graze from the HOLES where Will buried his leftovers.

AIDAN
(scattering the animals)
Shoo--shoo--get out of here!

Aidan digs into one of the holes. He pulls out a meal packet, smiles. A chicken dinner. He opens the bag, furrows his brow.

It's entirely full of PEAS.

INT. THE NEST- DAY

Will looks at the wreckage that was once his pristine cabin. He sees the whiskey and thinks about tossing it outside.

EXT. THE NEST- DAY

UNKNOWN POV

Someone watches as Will puts the whiskey in the desk drawer.

INT. THE NEST

Will starts to dig through Aidan's backpack. He finds:

1) a tent 2) matches 3) a camp meal 4) mail, all of it addressed to 'Will Finn'.

Will looks at the envelopes, they've been torn open. It's mostly bills, advertisements.

He shakily goes to the slash marks on the wall. He's got no trowel, so he takes a pencil out of the desk and writes in another mark.

36 Sober Days.

AIDAN (O.S.)

Just another day in the woods.

WILL

(startled)

Jesus!

Aidan's right at the window. He's smiling, enjoying himself, munching on peas.

AIDAN

If you aren't gonna finish that whiskey, feel free to hand it over.

WILL

Aidan, listen to me. You're having a psychotic episode. It's happened before. I think you need your medicine--

AIDAN

Whoa-whoa, Billy-boy, slow down.

Aidan takes an orange PILL out of his pocket. He pops it in his mouth with some more peas.

AIDAN

I never miss a dose.

Aidan puts the trowel up to the large dent, starts HAMMERING the handle with the rock. It makes a dull thud.

WILL

(terrified)

W-what are you going to do to me?

AIDAN

That depends. How fast can you talk?

WILL

You don't understand--I couldn't have taken that picture. I haven't been back to Oregon in six months!

Aidan keeps hammering. He could get in at any second. Will scoots against the far wall, grabs the radio, tries to make sense of the wires.

WILL

J-just call my hotel in Fairbanks! It's the Red Stag. Ask if anyone saw me with a little girl.

AIDAN

They didn't. That's what's so confusing.

(points to photo)

She was someplace called St. Mary's a few months ago. First I thought it was a church, a school she's registered in. I checked around. No one's got any record of a Zoe Finn.

WILL

There must be a million St. Mary's! I don't know what else to tell you.

AIDAN

How 'bout what you're really doing in the middle of nowhere.

Will's not getting anything from the radio. He starts to cautiously moving furniture against the glass, a futile barricade. He's weak, slow. Aidan keeps hammering.

WILL

I was blacking out, alright? I thought I could handle it, then one morning I wake up on the sidewalk, my forehead's bleeding, I've got a busted jaw. That's when I came up here.

Aidan STOPS hammering.

AIDAN

Funny. Like father, like son.

WILL

(glares)
At least I never terrorized my daughter.

Aidan's face clouds. Will's struck a nerve. He eggs Aidan on.

WILL

Yeah, I heard why they took Zoe. This isn't the first time you've chased someone with a knife, is it?

Aidan POPS like a balloon, unloads a torrent of stuttering rage.

AIDAN

You sh-shut your mouth! Look at those pictures! She was my whole world! Then to lose her because of a few nightmares--

The two brothers stare, each intense on either side of the glass.

AIDAN

Now drop the act. I know you talked to social services--

WILL

How?! How do you know? Did fucking voices tell you?

Suddenly a VOICE sounds off in the woods.

MAN'S VOICE

Hello?!

AIDAN

(turning)

Shit.

Will looks scared but hopeful as a MAN in a green parka trudges up through the woods. Will's eyes dart to Aidan.

Aidan's staring at the blood on Will's long underwear. At the wreckage inside the cabin. Will can see the wheels turning.

WILL

Don't--do anything stupid.

MAN (O.S.)

Everything okay up there?

Aidan hides the bloody trowel in the snow.

AIDAN

I'm not a monster. I'll give you the chance to save him.

WILL

(terrified)

W-what do you want?

Aidan points to the picture of Zoe.

AIDAN

What's St. Mary's?

WILL

For fuck's sake--I don't know!

AIDAN

Tell me or he dies.

WILL

Jesus--he's just a kid!

Will can see now the man is a FIRE SERVICE RANGER, not much older than 20.

EXT. FOREST

The short, dopey ranger moves up through the forest. He can see Aidan's orange parka. He wears a patch that says 'J. Dewitt.' This is JACOB. Eve's brother.

INT. THE NEST

Will stares tensely at the ranger. Aidan moves the knife back and forth like a ticking clock.

AIDAN

Ten seconds.

WILL

I swear to God--I've never seen the picture in my life!

JACOB (O.S.)

Everything okay up there?

AIDAN

Come on, Billy-boy. This is between you, me, and Mr. Stainless Steel.

A long beat. Jacob moves closer. Will won't talk.

AIDAN

I'll tell him how stubborn you are.

Aidan starts to turn...

WILL

Aid, I'm sorry--

AIDAN

(turning back, a smile)

Yes?

WILL

I'm sorry you always had it tougher than me. But if you want some big confession, I'd just be pulling it out of thin air. There are only two things that makes sense. A: someone is fucking with us, or B: you're crazy as a shithouse rat. If it's B...I don't even wanna think about B--but if it's A, godammit I wanna get to the bottom of this as much as you do. So please...let's figure this thing out together.

Aidan looks at him, sizing him up, trying to see if he's lying or not.

WILL
Please Aidan. I love you. Let's
just go home.

JACOB (O.S.)
(closer)
Hey sir? Sir?

AIDAN
To be continued...

In one fluid motion, Aidan tucks the bloody knife into the back of his jeans and turns to face the ranger.

AIDAN
Hey friend!

Aidan trots away.

WILL
Fuck.

Will buttons his parka, hides the blood. He scrambles to clean up bits of the heater, the radio. He spits in his hand, wipes the blood off.

EXT. FOREST- DAY

Aidan eyes the fire service badge, the PISTOL and WALKIE-TALKIE at Jacob's hip.

The knife behind Aidan's back looms over the conversation.

JACOB
Everything okay, sir? Swear I heard
some yelling last night.

When Aidan speaks, his eyes soften, even the pitch of his voice changes. He's like a different person. All charm.

AIDAN
Gee, I sure hope so. We ran into
one heckuva grizzly.

JACOB
(sees the dented glass)
Really? Jeez. Never seen 'em
scratch someone up so bad.

As Jacob turns, Aidan's hand inches closer to the knife.

INT/EXT. THE NEST

Will stares at the knife at Aidan's back, petrified.

AIDAN

So what're ya doin' this far
north...?

Jacob extends a hand. Aidan lets go of the knife to shake.

JACOB

Jacob. My sister told me to check
on you guys. Think you know her.
Eve?

AIDAN

(smiles)
She's a super gal. Hey, why don't
you come inside, get off your feet?

JACOB

Thanks, but I'd just as soon keep
moving.
(waves to Will)
Afternoon, buddy!

Jacob starts to take off. Will waves back, doing his best to
mask his relief.

AIDAN

Sure we can't get you something? I
make a mean freeze-dried egg.

JACOB

(stopping)
Well, I'm not really s'posed to...
but I sure wouldn't mind a nip of
something, if you've got it.

Aidan turns to Will, smiling wide. Will starts to sweat.

AIDAN

Say Will, you didn't finish that
hooch, did you?

WILL

(frantic)
I'll bring it right out!

Will fumbles the drawer open, digs for the whiskey. He grabs
the pencil and the MAP.

Footsteps crunch closer outside. They're coming inside.

AIDAN (O.S.)

Aw, why don't we all sit down like
civilized people!

Will's anxiety builds. His hands in the drawer, he scrawls
shaky words on the map:

'STAY CALM. GET HELP. HE'S GOT A KNIFE.'

EXT. THE NEST- DAY

The cabin door opens and Will steps outside, bottle in hand.
He starts to clunk down to them, still in one shoe. He holds
his stomach. It's painful to walk.

WILL

S'okay. I could use the fresh air.

JACOB

Know you're missin' a boot?

WILL

(off Aidan's look)

I got a bit of snow in it. It's
drying out by the heater.

Aidan nods to Will. Jacob takes the bottle, drinks. Will
positions himself up the hill, closer to the cabin. He stares
at the gun at the boy's hip.

Out of the corner of his eye, Will sees Aidan staring at the
gun too, thinking. The ranger notices.

JACOB

Just tranks. We're pretty careful
about grizzlies.

WILL

(re: bottle)

Finish that, if you like.

Jacob wipes his mouth, pulls out his RADIO.

JACOB

That's okay. Ya know, I should
prob'ly give Eve a call. She'll
wanna come up, inspect the damage.

Aidan's eyes flash. He GRABS the knife. Will springs into action, putting a hand on the radio.

WILL
 (panicky)
 Whoa--whoa, kid--take it easy.
 There's a certain way we do things
 up here.

Aidan watches Will sweat with detached amusement, his hand on the blade.

JACOB
 Sir?

WILL
 We already reported it to Forestry.
 You report it to sis, we get
 paperwork out the ass.

Will looks at Aidan. 'Say something'.

AIDAN
 Forestry's already sending someone
 to take a look at it.

Jacob thinks for a moment. Will holds his breath.

A tense beat.

JACOB
 (putting radio down)
 Okay. But if he comes back, you
 gotta call the fire service, okay?

Will exhales. Aidan takes his hand off the knife.

WILL
 Scout's honor.

JACOB
 (buttoning his coat)
 Right. Thanks for the whiskey.
 'Preciate if you didn't mention it
 to Eve.

AIDAN
 Our lips are sealed.

The boy starts to mosey off. Will looks back at the cabin, unsure if he should run for it. Aidan looks hungrily at Will.

WILL

Hey!--by the way--you know any good hiking trails around here?

JACOB

(turning)

Sure do, sir.

WILL

Think I got a map here somewhere--

Will's eyes flicker with hope as he starts to pull out the map. To his dismay, Jacob pulls out his OWN MAP first.

JACOB

I got it. Where're you lookin' to go?

Aidan watches curiously, starting to suspect something. Crestfallen, Will points on the map with a shaky hand.

WILL

Just up around White Pine. You--

Then Jacob notices Will's boot. BLOOD'S dripping onto it from under Will's parka.

JACOB

(eyes going wide)

Sir, you're bleeding...

Will's eyes dart up to Aidan.

Jacob's pistol is already in Aidan's hand.

WILL

No!

Aidan SHOTS the kid point blank. The tranquilizer dart sticks the map to his chest like a savage pushpin.

WILL

Races for the cabin.

AIDAN

Aims, fires again. The dart MISSES, hits the cabin wall. Will frantically opens the cabin door.

Thwick. A dart hits Will in the SHOULDER. He cries out as he falls through the doorway.

INT. THE NEST

Will bolts the door. He pulls the dart out, stumbles, tries to stay on his feet.

EXT. THE NEST- DAY

Jacob's eyes droop as he tries to pull out his walkie-talkie. The map of the valley is still stuck to his chest.

AIDAN

Sorry, kiddo. Next time try and be a little quicker on the draw...

Aidan gently plucks the walkie-talkie out of the boy's hand. He shrugs ticcishly as Jacob slips into unconsciousness.

INT. THE NEST

Will's strength is vanishing. He falls to his knees.

WILL

I swear to God--If you touch one hair on his head--

Outside, Aidan yanks the dart out of the ranger.

AIDAN

You never let me finish.

WILL'S POV

Everything sounds muffled, far away. Darkness begins to close in from all sides. Aidan moves closer.

AIDAN

Like I said, I know you talked to social services...

WILL

I--d-don't understand--

Aidan pulls a piece of paper out of his pocket.

Will's phone bill.

AIDAN

You called 'em all the time.

Will's eyes fill with dread as he falls back onto the mattress. The last thing he sees is the big GRIN on Aidan's face.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BASE- NIGHT

Cloudy. A light on in the ranger cabin.

INT. BASE- NIGHT

A TV in the corner plays the news. Eve sits at her desk.

EVE
(into radio)
'Kay, Pete. Glad you're feeling better.

The radio BUZZES. Eve pushes buttons on the switchboard.

EVE
Howdy, hon. How's Tuuluuwaq?

TOM'S VOICE
(through radio, filtered)
This is gonna be one helluva ceremony. Tulie wants to serve these special fish, after the vows we're supposed to bite the heads off--if it tastes sweet, it's a sign of good luck.

EVE
(smiles)
It's cute seeing you so excited. Find anything juicy on Aidan?

TOM'S VOICE
That's what I wanted to tell you. I made a few calls. You were right, those boys have some history.

EVE
What d'you mean?

TOM'S VOICE

Their old man knocked 'em around pretty bad. Burns, beatings, real twisted shit. Guy managed to hide it for years, too. Finally ended up doin' some time.

EVE

Jesus. So why was Aidan arrested?

TOM'S VOICE

Arson. Guess dad used to take the boys out to this old barn where he'd work on 'em...one day Aidan just snaps--burns it right to the ground. That's when the whole story came out. Crazy part is--Will denied it for years.

EVE

Holy shit.

TOM'S VOICE

Have you heard anything from Jacob?

EVE

Not a word. I'm starting to get really worried, hon.

TOM'S VOICE

If it makes you feel better, everything in Aidan's file is ancient history. Only thing recent is something with social services.

EVE

Can you check into it? I couldn't live with myself if anything happened to Jacob.

TOM'S VOICE

No problem, hon. I wouldn't worry. You know Jacob. I'm sure he just shut off his radio.

EVE

Yeah, I know. So I'll see you tomorrow then, huh?

TOM'S VOICE

I'll tell Tuuluuwaq you said hello.

EVE

Thanks, hon. I miss y--

But he's already hung up. Eve stares at the TV weather report, lonely again.

TV NEWSCASTER

--means fair weather at Kingfisher.
At Crimson we can expect showers,
maybe even a full-fledged
thunderstorm as the week continues--

INT. FINN'S CABIN- NIGHT

Will lies asleep on the floor, photos of Zoe all around him.

His eyes flicker open. He struggles to stand, shivers. His breath forms a cloud of freezing air. He looks outside.

Aidan and Jacob are GONE.

Will turns on the stove. In the flickering light, he can see the bedsheets. They're wrinkled again.

He goes to straighten them out, stops himself, realizes he's being ridiculous. He leaves the wrinkles, pulls pencil and paper out of the desk, and starts writing a NOTE:

'If anyone finds this message, know that I, William Finn was murdered in cold blood--'

Will looks at the pictures scattered all over the floor. At Aidan laughing, smiling. He's a different person with Zoe. Happy. Will crosses out what he's written, writes:

'Consider these words not only my last will and testament, but also a confession--'

Snap. The pencil breaks. Will's eyes wander back to the bed. He gets up, straightens the wrinkles out. He turns back around to the desk.

All of a sudden he goes white.

THE BODY OF A MAN now sits in his chair. Will can't see who it is, only that it's wearing a green parka, facing the wall, and tilting its head at a inhuman angle.

Will approaches it slowly, shivering. His footsteps creak on the wooden floor. He starts to reach out a hand...

The head FLOPS sickeningly to the side.

It's Will.

By the light of the stove, Will catches a glimpse of his own REFLECTION in the window.

He's become Aidan.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will bursts awake from his NIGHTMARE with a violent shake. He's on the floor, dripping sweat, still weak from the tranquilizers. He can barely move. It's like coming out of a coma.

It's too dark to see outside. There's something stuck to the window with the blade of the digging trowel.

Will moves slowly towards it. It's the PHONE BILL.

AIDAN (O.S.)
Nightmare?

Will JUMPS again.

Aidan flicks on the lantern. He's right outside the window, drinking from Jacob's canteen, eating Will's peas.

Jacob is sprawled out on the snow, unconscious. There's a sock in his mouth, his hands have been bound with torn strips of shirt.

AIDAN
(points to Will's crotch)
Ho, look at that!

Will looks down. He's PISSED his pants. Suddenly he doubles over, grabbing his stomach. He stumbles for the door, thinks better of it, then THROWS UP into the corner of the cabin.

AIDAN
Those darts sure take the wind out
of your sails, huh?

WILL
(reeling)
What are you g-going to do to him?

AIDAN
He's gonna help you loosen that
tongue. Do me a favor and toss me
the suitcase and chair.

WILL
N-not a chance.

AIDAN
Relax, I won't try anything. I'll
stay right where you can see me.

Will won't budge.

AIDAN
(pulling the knife)
I can kill him now if you'd
rather...

WILL
Okay--alright!

Will dumps the clothes out of the suitcase. He quickly opens
the door and tosses it outside along with the chair, then
locks the door.

Outside, Aidan sits Jacob up in the chair. He starts heading
down to the water still with the suitcase. Will watches,
confused, dizzy.

AIDAN
(calling out)
This'll only take a minute!

Will gets nervous as Aidan fills the suitcase with water and
drags it back up to the cabin. Aidan takes off Jacob's shoes
and socks and puts the boy's bare feet in the water.

WILL
What are you--

AIDAN
Don't worry. I gave him an extra
dose. He won't feel a thing.

Aidan dips the knife into the water behind Jacob's ankles.

WILL

No!

The water starts to turn blood red. Aidan's cut the back of Jacob's ankles open. Will starts to SCREAM.

AIDAN

There are bandages in the shed. To be a hero, all you have to do is count how many times you called social services.

WILL

(banging on the glass)
You fucking monster!

AIDAN

(checking watch)
Hurry now. The number ends six-two-oh-seven.

Will darts to the phone bill. Jacob doesn't move. The water in the suitcase gets redder and redder. Aidan pops peas in his mouth. Will scans the page as quickly as he can.

WILL

Five--fucking five, alright. Now take his feet out.

AIDAN

(mouth full)
Not even close.

Will looks more and more ashamed as he reads the phone bill. He WHISPERS something inaudible.

AIDAN

What was that? I didn't hear you.

WILL

(quiet)
Twelve.

AIDAN

Twelve times, Will. You called them twelve times in January alone.

(beat)
Now I'll ask you again: what's St. Mary's?

Will stares at the picture of Zoe. At Jacob, who keeps bleeding into the water.

WILL
(about to cry)
It's an or-orphanage.

Aidan erupts with joy. Finally!

AIDAN
(shaking Jacob)
You hear that, you little shit?!
That's all I've been waiting for!

WILL
Stop it! I don't even know if she's still there. Now take his feet out!

AIDAN
Humor me. I want some details. Did they tell you why they went after me in the first place?

WILL
(even more pained)
Be-Because I told them to.

All the joy is sucked out of Aidan's face.

AIDAN
What?

WILL
I heard what you did to Zoe. I thought about this sweet girl going through the same shit we did, no one standing up for her--

Aidan starts to tic. Will looks desperately at Jacob, who's losing all color in his face.

AIDAN
Wh-why an orphanage? Why didn't you just t-take her?

WILL
I tried. Social services wouldn't let me. You saw the house. All the bottles. That's why I kept calling. I'd promised to get clean, even spent Christmas in a clinic.

(MORE)

WILL (cont'd)

But I knew she belonged at St. Mary's. They take these scared kids, turn them around. For once, I wanted to do something good. I knew what would happen if she stayed with one of us...she'd turn out just like we did.

Aidan's so mad, he's shaking.

WILL

Now please. I've told you everything. L-Let the kid go.

Aidan eyes the DATE on the picture. 12/26.

AIDAN

Hold it. If you spent Christmas in a clinic, who took the picture?

Jacob FALLS OUT of the chair, completely limp. Blood goes all over the snow.

WILL

Jesus--get the fucking bandages!

AIDAN

What was it doing in your house?

WILL

We don't have time for your bullshit games!

Aidan eyes Jacob. The boy's going stark white.

AIDAN

Give me your keys.

Will looks out anxiously at the shed. Jacob keeps bleeding. Will stands up on the desk, shakily takes a key off his key ring and slides it through the vents. It falls onto the snow.

WILL

Now hurry!

AIDAN

(picks up the key, grins)
Thanks.

Aidan starts walking casually down to the shed.

WILL

What the fuck are you doing?!

Aidan tosses the packet of peas off into the snow.

AIDAN

(over his shoulder)

You can relax. He's been dead almost an hour. I'm just sick of these fucking peas.

Will SCREAMS, bangs on the glass in a complete rage at Aidan and at himself for being so helpless. He starts to break down, turning his rage inward, CRYING hysterically.

Aidan drops his CANTEEN into the snow.

AIDAN

I'm leavin' this here for you. Come out when you feel like finishing your story.

WILL

(weeping)

You'd better fucking kill me, Aidan! Because if you think I'll tell you an-nother word--

AIDAN

Save those tears. You need all the water you can get.

Aidan shuts off the lantern and vanishes into the shed.

EXT. CRIMSON VALLEY NATIONAL PARK- NIGHT

Everything is still except for the swish-swish of something being dragged across the snow.

EXT. FOREST- NIGHT

Aidan grunts as he drags Jacob through the forest. He's approaching a FROZEN STREAM. His tic is starting to flare up more frequently now.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Something has snapped in Will. He's shivering, feverish, horribly dehydrated, completely topsy-turvy.

But for the first time ever, DETERMINED.

He SMASHES the heater against floor until the handle breaks off. He begins to SCRAPE it against the side of the stove, sharpening it.

EXT. FROZEN STREAM- NIGHT

It's just beginning to thaw. The suitcase waits for Aidan on the bank. He takes the digging trowel out of his pocket, begins to stab it into the ice. The ice starts to crack.

Aidan's shoulder is twitching like mad. He takes a baggie of PILLS out of his pocket.

There's only one left. He takes it, nervous.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Zoe's picture stares at Will as he sharpens the heater handle. He gazes longingly out at canteen. The water still.

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT

The door opens and Will steps out, hesitant, fry pan in hand. He spots a TRANQUILIZER DART still stuck in the cabin wall. He yanks it out, touches the needle tip.

It's wet.

He digs the pan down into the snow, fills it up, and runs back inside.

EXT. FROZEN STREAM- NIGHT

Aidan's dug a hole in the ice. He grabs the suitcase, pours the bloody water into the stream. He drags Jacob closer, tries to push him in. The hole's too small. Aidan grunts, getting angry as he forces the boy down.

Jacob won't budge.

Aidan stops, wipes his face, trying to calm down. He looks around, thinking. He starts breaking branches off the surrounding trees.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Trees shake in the distance.

The pan of snow cooks as Will inspects the tranquilizer dart: it's a silver tube with a tiny red plunger. He pushes it. FLUID bubbles out of the tip.

POP-POP-POP

Will jumps as the stove begins to SPATTER. He opens it. The propane gauge needle quivers on empty.

WILL

Are you fucking kidding me?!

Will kicks the stove, furious. He wipes his face. He looks just like Aidan, trying to calm down.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE NEST- DAWN

Clouds fill the sky. The cabin sits alone in the clearing.

INT. THE NEST- DAWN

Will's turned the handle of the heater into a makeshift KNIFE. He uses it to dig another slash mark in the wall.

37 Sober Days.

Will struggles to stand, stares out the window. He's fast become a deathly shell. Freezing, feverish, dehydrated beyond belief. And worried because now he can see Aidan out in the woods, behind some trees. Will can't tell what he's doing.

Will sips what little snow has melted. He shivers, lifts up his shirt. The belt's rubbed the cut raw, it's BLEEDING again. Infection can't be far off.

He stares longingly out at the shed. The distance seems to stretch out into infinity.

Will grabs his knife.

EXT. THE NEST- DAWN

The door cracks open and Will steps outside, still in one shoe. He holds the knife and pan like a sword and shield, locks the door behind him.

In the woods, Aidan has his back turned. Will looks at the twenty-two steps to the shed.

WILL

(mouthing)

One.

He steps softly, keeping an eye on Aidan's orange parka. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Trying not to make a sound.

Aidan doesn't turn around.

Eight. Nine. Ten. Eleven. Twelve. Thirteen. Fourteen. Fifteen. Will's at the canteen. Dizzily he picks it up, unscrews the cap, gulps.

He CHOKES, spits everything out.

Aidan's filled the canteen with WHISKEY.

Will tries not to have a panic attack. Shaking, he puts the canteen down, lets the whiskey pour out onto the snow. He looks at the shed. It's not that much farther. He leaves the booze, starts walking again. Sixteen. Seventeen. Eighteen.

Aidan still hasn't noticed him.

Nineteen. Twenty. Twenty one. Twenty two. Will's at the water still. He puts the pan under the spigot, turns it.

SQUEAK! Will's eyes dart to Aidan. A tense beat.

Aidan doesn't turn around.

The pan fills with water. Will drinks a little. It's like nothing he's ever tasted. He cautiously enters the shed.

INT. SHED

The meal packets have been ravaged. Will opens the first-aid kit, grabs a syringe of PENICILLIN. He puts it up to his arm. He's shaking so badly, he can't even keep the needle in place.

He takes a deep breath, JABS the needle into his thigh. He winces, struggles to stay upright as the drug floods into his veins. He grabs bandages, a tank of propane. He's so weak, he can barely lift it.

EXT. SHED- DAWN

Will's eyes shoot instantly to the woods. A sigh of relief.

Aidan still hasn't noticed him.

The wind's picking up, blowing flurries off the ground. Will grabs the pan, now full of water. He tries not to spill a drop as he carries everything back towards the cabin.

In the forest, wind blows snow off the trees.

Weak, Will starts dragging the propane on the ground. After a few steps, he starts looking very worried.

It's strange, how Aidan still isn't moving. Not at all.

And then Will STOPS in his tracks.

A FLURRY OF SNOW falls off a tree, covering Aidan. Color starts to drain out of Will's face.

Because Aidan still isn't moving.

And then Aidan CRUMPLES like a rag-doll.

WILL

No.

Jacob's body falls out limp from behind the trees. Aidan's propped him up with branches like a marionette.

Will turns slowly back towards the cabin.

THE WATER pours out of the pan.

AIDAN

Stands by the cabin doorway wearing Jacob's GREEN PARKA. He holds the pistol.

AIDAN

Like the coat?

Will looks at his brother. Back at the woods. The wind blows in his face.

A standoff.

WILL

(putting up a hand)

Wait--

Aidan cocks the pistol.

In a flash, Will drops the pan and the propane and RUNS for the woods.

EXT. FOREST

Will darts through the trees, heading for the frozen stream.

Aidan fires a dart, misses. He limps after Will, pulls the trigger again. Click. Out of ammo.

He throws away the pistol, breaks off to the side.

EXT. FROZEN STREAM

Will runs alongside the stream. He stumbles on some rocks, TRIPS.

His GLASSES fall off and skitter onto the thin ice. He quickly grabs a tree branch, whirls around.

AIDAN

Right behind him, SLASHES Will in the face.

Will cries out. Blood gushes from his cheek, he stumbles backwards onto the ice.

WILL'S POV

He can barely make out his glasses a few feet in front of him on the ice. Aidan, a dark FORM, stands on the bank.

CRACKS appear under Will's boot. He takes a step towards his glasses. Aidan steps out onto the ice. Will swings his branch blindly.

WILL

It's the spring thaw. It won't hold!

AIDAN

Finish your story.

Will steps closer to his glasses, reaching out. The cracks under his boot get bigger.

WILL

Get the fuck off the ice!

Aidan takes another step forward. Water rushes beneath them.

AIDAN

Who took the picture?

WILL

Please--you'll kill us both!

Aidan takes another step forward. Will's inches from his glasses. The ice around the hole begins to crumble.

AIDAN

Who's she smiling at?!

The ice all over the stream begins to POP and HISS. At last Will GRABS his glasses.

WILL

Who do you think?

Aidan goes WHITE just as

CRACK!

The ice BREAKS and both brothers fall in the stream. Will slips underwater.

UNDERWATER

The current's too strong. Will floats away under the frozen surface. Bubbles pour out of his mouth. He's holding onto his glasses for dear life.

ON THE SURFACE

Aidan stabs his knife into the dirt, pulls himself out. He looks quickly downstream.

He can see Will under the ice, terrified, scratching at the frozen surface.

UNDERWATER

Will's cries are muffled by the water. He tries to punch through the ice. It's too thick.

WILL'S POV

It's so blurry, he can't even tell up from down. He spins out of control, moving farther downstream.

ON THE SURFACE

Aidan RACES as fast as he can. His eyes dart left and right. He spots an outcropping of snowy rocks.

UNDERWATER

Will slows down, weakness and cold taking over. He can't fight it any longer, he's losing consciousness. Gradually he stops moving, goes limp.

His fingers let go of his glasses. They float away.

A muffled CRASH as a rock breaks through the frozen surface just up ahead. A tree branch comes down behind it.

ON THE SURFACE

Aidan sticks the tree branch down through a hole in the ice. The pine needles snag Will like a catcher's mitt. He reaches into the water, hauls out Will's lifeless body.

AIDAN

Will? Will?!

But Will's gone. Aidan snatches the keys off Will's belt.

INT. THE NEST

Aidan bursts through the door, carrying Will in his arms.

AIDAN

(soaked, shivering)

It's okay--you're okay.

Aidan sets Will down onto the floor, puts an ear up to his mouth. Will's not breathing.

Aidan unbuttons Will's parka, begins to do CPR. He breathes into Will's mouth, pumps Will's heart.

AIDAN

Come on, Will. Come on, Will.

Aidan's pumps become more and more intense. Soon he's pounding on Will's chest. TEARS stream down his cheeks.

AIDAN

Tell me it wasn't him! Tell me it wasn't him! You tell me it wasn't dad!

Suddenly water EXPLODES out of Will's mouth in a violent burst. Will lurches into consciousness, shivering uncontrollably.

Aidan becomes instantly caring, rubbing Will's arms like he's nursing a sick puppy.

AIDAN

That's it, Billy-boy. Deep breaths.
Can you feel that? Jeez, you're
freezing. Can you feel that?
(no response)
Gotta get you warmed up.

Aidan turns the stove on. It won't light. He lights a match at the burner. No gas. He checks the propane tank.

AIDAN

Don't move.

Aidan pockets the matches, shoots out the door. Will shivers, puts his hands in his parka.

EXT. THE NEST

Aidan bursts out of the shed, races back to the cabin with an emergency blanket. He grabs the tank of propane off the snow.

INT. THE NEST

AIDAN

Put this on.

Aidan tosses Will the emergency blanket, starts putting the new propane tank in the stove. Will shivers.

AIDAN

Talk to me. Can you talk?

Will tries to talk. Choking noises come out of his throat.

AIDAN

Then put up one finger for yes, two
for no. Can you do that?

Will shakily puts up one finger.

AIDAN

Good. Did dad take that picture?

Will puts up one finger.

AIDAN

What happened? He took her from St.
Mary's?

Will puts up one finger. Aidan turns on the stove.

AIDAN
Did he hurt her?!

Will puts up one finger.

AIDAN
So where is she now?

Aidan PICKS UP his shivering brother. He staggers, struggling with the weight. He puts Will on the desk.

AIDAN
Shit--the c-cold really takes it
out of you...

Suddenly Aidan starts to look very CONFUSED. His eyelids droop. He stumbles.

AIDAN
Please, Will--I'm begging you--I'll
do anything you want--just tell me
what happened--

Will's gaze flickers to Aidan's leg. Aidan LOOKS DOWN.

WILL
D-D-Don't worry.

AIDAN
Fuck me.

WILL
I m-made sure he got what he
deserved.

The TRANQUILIZER DART is lodged in Aidan's thigh. Will's pushed the plunger in.

AIDAN
How...

Aidan pulls out the dart. He reaches for the knife, but the drug works too quickly. He slumps to his knees, falls to the floor.

Will shivers on the desk.

EXT. THE NEST- DAY

The sky's darkening. A storm's coming.

Will DRAGS Aidan outside onto the snow. Heaving, Will raises the knife over his brother's head, ready to end it. He takes a deep breath.

The blade trembles in the air.

It comes down, sinks into the snow an inch from Aidan's neck.

He can't do it.

He grabs Aidan's arms and begins to drag him towards the shed. He counts his steps now to guide his blind eyes.

WILL
One...two...three...

INT. SHED

WILL (O.S.)
Twenty one...twenty two...

Will pulls Aidan into the shed. He grabs the first-aid kit and stumbles out.

EXT. SHED

Will closes the lock, sealing Aidan up in the shed. He shivers, looks out at the woods.

Will's POV

The sky is turning black. Without his glasses, the forest is an impenetrable blur.

To venture into the woods in this condition would be suicide, and Will knows it.

So he starts walking back to the open door of the cabin, counting silently. After a few steps, he starts to pat down his parka. Looking for something.

And then very gradually, a look of DREAD creeps across Will's face.

INT. SHED

Aidan lies passed-out on the floor. FOOTSTEPS run back towards the shed. Outside, Will starts to bang on the door, SCREAM.

Clipped to Aidan's belt are the KEYS to the cabin.

FADE OUT.

EXT. RANGER BASE- NIGHT

Raining. Lightning flashes. A helicopter whirs down. Tom steps out carrying two huge caribou ANTLERS.

INT. RANGER BASE- NIGHT

EVE
(into radio)
Base to nest three. Come in, Will--

Tom enters with the antlers, grinning. He puts them up to the wall, testing them out.

TOM
That Tuuluuwaq is a prince! Look
what he gave me for the den.

EVE
Are you kidding? You're gone two
days and that's what you bring
back?

TOM
I thought you'd love 'em...

EVE
Tom, look at them!

They're both LEFT-SIDE antlers. Obviously from two different caribou.

TOM
Goddammit.

EVE
I think you just got scalped.

TOM

Savages! I bet they're all huddled around the campfire, laughin' hysterically.

EVE

Don't get too bent outta shape. I'm gonna need you for something.

TOM

You still haven't heard from Jacob?

EVE

I'm scared. I got a call from the sheriff's office. They got an arrest warrant.

TOM

That's impossible. I checked Aidan out.

EVE

Hon, it's for Will.

TOM

(whistles)
No shit.

EVE

How fast can we get up to that cabin?

TOM

(checking out the window)
Soon as this lightning clears up, I guess.

EVE

Are you serious? That could be morning.

TOM

I can't fly in this shit, hon. I barely made it here.

EVE

I know. I just wish I could get someone on the radio.

TOM

Keep tryin'. I'll hit Crimson, grab some gas. We'll head up as soon the storm clears.

EVE

Just hurry, alright?

TOM

Back in a flash.

He exits.

EVE

(into radio)

Come in nest three, this is base. Will, are you there? Come in nest three, this is base...

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT

The shed door stays closed. Rain beats down on the cabin, washing away the blood in the snow.

Will's lodged the broken tip of the knife blade in the keyhole, a desperate attempt to keep Aidan out.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Stove, desk, mattress--all the furniture barricades the door. Will's huddled around the stove, blind, surrounded by first-aid supplies. He clutches Aidan's broken knife. A meal cooks. The only light comes from the stove's tiny flame.

Will sips from his canteen, trying to nurse himself back to health. His eyes droop as he checks on the shed every five seconds. Finally they close.

A long beat.

EVE'S VOICE

(static)

--lo--ill?

Out of nowhere, the RADIO explodes with sound.

Will darts for it, bumping into furniture. He knocks the food onto the floor, grabs the receiver.

WILL
 (into radio)
 Eve, this is Will! If you can hear
 me, send help! It's Aidan, he's
 gone mad!

EVE'S VOICE
 --he--n--

WILL
 What?! I can barely hear you!

EVE'S VOICE
 --edy--side---

WILL
 Eve, I can't hear you! Please--send
 help!

EVE'S VOICE
 --all--red--

Will frantically taps the call button.

--SSSSSS--

the radio signal is lost.

WILL
 What? Eve! I can't hear you! I
 can't hear you!

But it's no good. Will sighs, defeated. And then a VOICE
 filters out of the static, crystal clear.

Only it's not Eve.

AIDAN'S VOICE
 (through radio)
 She said I'm already inside.

WILL
 What the fuck--

Will trips over the desk, falls flat on his back.

AIDAN'S VOICE
 Look what you've done.

Through the static comes the sounds of men and women
 SCREAMING, as if hell itself is on the other end.

EVE'S VOICE

Oh my God! HELP ME!

WILL

SHUT UP!

Will takes the fry pan and SMASHES the radio. Broken metal flies everywhere. The screams continue.

AIDAN'S VOICE

You'll never get clean. The problem isn't the booze. It's your dirty blood.

Will keeps swinging. He knocks the radio onto the floor. There's a little flashing light in the nest of twisted metal.

AIDAN'S VOICE

You can't change what you are.

WILL

WHERE ARE YOU!??

A HAND

behind Will catches the pan.

AIDAN'S VOICE

(right behind him)

Here.

Will WHIRLS around.

AIDAN stands right behind him, holding the knife. He sinks it deep into Will's chest.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. NEST- NIGHT

Will bursts awake from his NIGHTMARE, gasping. He looks at the radio. It's untouched. The furniture still barricades the door. Even his mind is turning against him.

WILL

(calling out in the dark)

Aidan?

From the shed comes an awful sound: Aidan RETCHING as he wakes up from the tranquilizers.

INT. SHED- NIGHT

Total DARKNESS. We can only HEAR:

Aidan heaving. Footsteps. Shuffling. Banging on the door.
Propane tanks clinking.

And then the sharp hiss of a MATCH being lit. Aidan's face
takes on an eerie glow. He looks crazed, eyes wild. He's
right next to a WARNING on the propane tanks:

'Flammable.'

He sizes up the room, empties his pockets. He's got:

1) his wallet 2) camp meals 3) matches 4) propane tanks
5) his watch 6) Will's keys

He checks out the door. He can see the SCREWS that hold the
locking mechanism on the outside.

He digs through his wallet, pulls out a credit card.

The match goes out.

Three left.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will stares at the shed, blind. He can't see whether the door
is open or closed. There's something new in his voice now.
Hints of madness.

WILL

Aidan? I know you can hear me. For
what it's worth, I probably saved
her life! I caught up to them in
Seattle, she was black and blue! I
took her back to St. Mary's! She's
finally safe now!

(no answer)

He had it coming to him, Aid, I
swear! I did it for both of us!

His ears perk up at a SOUND. It's behind the wooden wall. A
sniffing. Will listens, tracking the movement. It's low down
to the ground.

WILL

Aidan?

The WOLF peers at Will through the glass.

INT. THE SHED

Another match lights.

Aidan's trying to work one of the screws with his credit card. It's too thick. He takes off his WATCH, tries to use the edge of the metal band as a screwdriver. Too thick.

He starts FILING the edge of the band down on the cuff of a propane tank. He puts it back in the screw. Still too thick.

The match goes out.

Two left.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT, LATER

Will's on the edge of sleep, an exhausted delirium. Huddled up in the emergency blanket, it looks like he's aged a hundred years. His eyes start to close.

He can't fight exhaustion much longer.

INT. SHED- NIGHT

Rain beats down on the shed. Thunder rumbles.

Another match lights. Aidan's turned the watchband into a little BLADE. He sticks it in the screw.

Slowly but surely, the screw begins to TURN.

The match goes out.

One left.

FADE TO:

EXT. THE NEST- NIGHT, LATER

The rain has stopped. LIGHTNING flashes.

INT. THE NEST- NIGHT

Will's sleeping on the desk, blocking the door. His head bobs up and down, scanning for fires.

Beyond the windows, everything is in darkness. Every few seconds, a bolt of LIGHTNING illuminates the whole valley, showing us what's outside.

A creaking noise. A FLASH OF LIGHTNING

The shed door is OPEN.

Darkness. Thunder. Soft footsteps in the snow.

LIGHTNING

Aidan's right by the window. Moving towards the door.

Darkness. Thunder. The SOUND of keys jangling. The doorknob quivering but not turning.

Footsteps getting softer.

LIGHTNING

Aidan's pulling a tank of propane out of the shed.

LIGHTNING

Aidan's GONE. The clearing is empty.

Then very quietly from back behind the cabin comes a sound, faint but sinister. It's the HISS of Aidan's last match being lit.

Then comes the deep BURST of propane taking to flame.

Will keeps bobbing his head in his sleep. Very slowly, a thin line of SMOKE begins to creep in through the back wall. The single plume turns into two. Then three. Four. A little orange FLAME peeks through the slats.

The flame grows bigger, brighter. Soon it's throwing light on Will's face. It creeps across the floor. The walls start to catch. The wood starts to creak. Pictures of Zoe burn on the floor. The cabin comes alive with orange.

Will coughs in his sleep. The flames move towards the stove, dangerously close to the full tank of propane.

And Will keeps bobbing his head up and down, looking for fires until...

SSS! a SPARK leaps up, lands on his cheek.

WILL

Ow--

Will jolts awake, looks around frantically.

WILL'S POV

The flames are leaping orange blurs closing in from all sides. He's got nowhere to go.

He watches in horror as everything keeping him safe burns. And even though he can't see a thing, he knows this is the end of the line.

A DESK LEG SNAPS

Will falls to the floor. The knife flies out of his hand. His arm lands in the blaze, catches fire. He cries out.

His hands find the emergency blanket, smother his parka.

He keeps smacking blindly at his body, putting out invisible flames. He wraps the emergency blanket around his shoulders like a cape. His entire body pounds with adrenaline.

He puts out his hands to guide him, smacking himself wherever he feels heat. He kicks at the furniture, searching for something.

Flames inch up around his bare sock. The fire licks the full tank of propane in the stove.

WILL

Aidan?

The plexiglass starts to HUM as small holes worm through. Will puts a hand out, flinches at the melting glass.

The pictures of Zoe start to bubble.

Will grabs the empty propane tank. It's burning hot. He starts to SMACK it against the plexiglass. The glass begins to chip away, brittle from the heat.

CRASH! Someone begins to PUNCH through the flaming door. A gloved HAND reaches through the hole and unlocks it.

The door OPENS.

Aidan stands in horrible silence. Flames blaze up all around him.

Without a word, Will HURLS the empty propane tank through the melting plexiglass. It lands on the snow outside.

Aidan takes a slow step towards the knife in the corner.

Will doesn't move. Listens to the flames.

Aidan reaches down for the knife.

And all is silent until...

BANG! The full propane tank EXPLODES inside the stove. Aidan SCREAMS, clutching his face.

In a flash, Will LEAPS out through the plexiglass window.

EXT/INT. THE NEST

In the next INSTANT:

- 1) Will hits the snow with a hiss.
- 2) Aidan screams as melted bits of metal sting his face.
- 3) Will bursts off the ground, darts for the woods.
- 4) Aidan shoots out the door.
- 5) Zoe's pictures are eaten up by the flames.

EXT. CLEARING

Will runs blind, one shoe on, an exhausted zig-zag, arms out in front of him.

Aidan tears after him, face still smoking from the explosion.

EXT. FOREST

Will barrels into the woods. Branches cut his face, his outstretched arms. Trees knock into his shoulders.

WILL'S POV

Trees are blurred dark blotches whipping past at furious speed.

ON AIDAN

Struggling to follow Will's prints. They run right up to trees, through branches. The glow from the cabin gets dimmer.

ON WILL

Pushing harder. He hits a tree, bleeds from the mouth.

ON AIDAN

Watching in despair as the light gets dimmer still. He can't see the footprints. Panic starts to set in.

WILL

Slows down, weakness taking the place of adrenaline.

AIDAN

Blows by trees, blind.

AIDAN

Will!

WILL

Hears Aidan's cry. He digs under the branches, huddles close to the ground.

AIDAN

STOPS in his tracks. Looks left and right, scanning the darkness.

WILL

Waits. Huddled up. Not even breathing.

No one makes a sound.

AIDAN

Takes off into the night, AWAY from Will.

Will listens as Aidan's footsteps get quieter. And then quieter still.

At last he exhales when they're gone altogether. Slowly he gets up, starts to move in the opposite direction. His breathing is labored, his head heavy. He pushes aside branches, making painstaking progress down the mountain. But it's not long before he finds his stride. He's moving a little faster now--

When out of nowhere his foot hits a FALLEN TREE.

Will falls face-first onto a pile of rocks and blacks-out.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. THE NEST- DAWN

The sun peeks over the mountains. The nest is completely burnt to the ground. Bits of charred wood, melted glass are all that remain.

A GLOVED HAND

Reaches down, pulls a blackened heap of metal from the wreckage. It wipes a smudge of ash off to reveal

A CHARRED RADIO RECEIVER

Tom and Eve dig through the remains of the cabin. The helicopter sits by the edge of the forest.

TOM

Any sign of Jacob?

EVE

Not yet. When d'you think it happened?

TOM

Had to be last night, right?
Otherwise all the ash would be soaked.

EVE

I'll grab the air-horn.

She takes off towards the helicopter.

TOM

(calling out)
Flare gun too, huh?

EXT. FALLEN TREE- DAWN

Will lies sprawled out under a tree. He's not moving. His HANDS have fallen into the snow. They've lost all color.

The air horn blares far off in the distance. Will doesn't stir. The air horn blares again.

Will WAKES with a gasp.

He rolls over, barely able to move. He shivers violently, inches from death. He picks up his hands.

He can't see that they're horribly FROSTBITTEN.

EXT. CLEARING- DAWN

Eve stands at the helicopter, air horn in hand. She loads a charge into the flare gun.

EVE
Jacob? Jacob!
(to Tom)
Gonna need a search party!

Tom starts snooping around the edge of the forest. He notices something in the snow.

FOOTPRINTS

leading off into the woods. One of them has the treads of a boot-print, the other is flat and round.

EVE (O.S.)
Got something down there?

TOM
Somebody lost a boot!

EXT. FALLEN TREE

Will breathes hard, struggling to get up.

WILL'S POV

The forest looks strange, distorted. He tries to make sense of where to go. Suddenly out of the blur, a dark SHAPE comes into harsh focus.

AIDAN'S FACE

Appears inches away from Will's. It's horribly DISFIGURED, pocked with melted shards of metal from the propane explosion. He's become a monster.

AIDAN
How do I look?

Will tries to scream. Aidan puts a hand over his mouth.

EXT. FOREST

Tom follows the footprints into the forest. They're confusing, running right up to trees.

TOM
(calling out)
These footprints are all over the
place!

EVE (O.S.)
Maybe he relapsed!

Tom moves further into the forest.

EXT. FALLEN TREE

Aidan sits on Will's chest, holding Will's arms down with his
knees. Will can't see anything. He can only HEAR

AIDAN'S VOICE
Scream and I'll kill them all.

A slow SCRAPING NOISE. Like the grinding together of two
stones. Aidan's hands move back and forth.

WILL
Please--they're coming. You have to
give yourself up.

AIDAN'S VOICE
I know why you don't want me to see
her. Really, it was only that one
little mistake I made.

scraaaape.

AIDAN'S VOICE
I could've been so good to her.

Will tries to lift his head up. He doesn't have the strength.

WILL
Wh-what's that noise?

scraaaape.

AIDAN'S VOICE
I'm only going to ask you once,
then I'll have to start working on
you...

Will starts to WEEP.

AIDAN'S VOICE
Have it your way.

Aidan tosses something by Will's head. It's a STONE with little slash marks in it.

He's been sharpening the knife.

EXT. FOREST- DAY

Tom bends down, curious. Footprints run every which way.

TOM

Got three sets of tracks here!

EVE (O.S.)

Can you tell which one's are
Jacob's?

He finds the wide track where Jacob was dragged. He furrows his brow.

EXT. FALLEN TREE

Will's growing more and more frightened. He can see Aidan's hands moving.

AIDAN'S VOICE

Can you feel that?

WILL

No--Aidan, please--

AIDAN'S VOICE

Feel it now?

WILL

(horrified)
It tickles.

Will's face goes increasingly white. He struggles, but Aidan's dead weight on his chest.

AIDAN'S VOICE

It's funny...there's almost no
blood.

WILL

What--what are you doing to me?

AIDAN'S VOICE

Making us even.

EXT. FOREST

Tom spots a few drops of BLOOD in the snow. He moves fast now farther into the forest.

And then he TRIPS--

TOM
What the fuck?!

EXT. CLEARING

At the helicopter, Eve jerks to attention.

EVE
Tom?!

EXT. FOREST

Tom stands at JACOB'S BODY, covering his mouth with a hand.

The boy lies covered in snow. He's like some horrible wax figure, his parka full of sticks.

TOM
(pulling his gun)
J-Just stay there, honey! Okay? I
want you to stay by the chopper!

He starts to RUN down through the woods.

EXT. CLEARING

Eve's getting frightened, confused.

EVE
Tom, what's going on?!

She starts to cautiously wander down towards the edge of the woods.

EXT. FALLEN TREE

Will's breathing fast.

AIDAN'S VOICE
Feel it now?

WILL
Fuck, fuck--yes.

AIDAN'S VOICE
 (grunting, strains)
 How about now? Feel that?

Will involuntarily SCREAMS. Aidan's hand covers his mouth.

AIDAN'S VOICE
 Now do you have something you want
 to tell me?

Will's in such horrible pain, his face looks like it's
 twisting apart. Aidan's hand slowly comes off Will's mouth.

WILL
 K-kill me--

EXT. FOREST

Tom RACES through the woods, gun drawn. He's getting closer
 to the fallen tree.

EXT. FALLEN TREE

Will's breathing gets faster and faster. He's
 hyperventilating.

AIDAN'S VOICE
 I can make it all stop...it'll be
 so easy...come on, Will...come on
 Will...just tell me the truth...

WILL
 K-key--

AIDAN'S VOICE
 What? Key--what?

WILL
 My--k-keys--

Aidan pulls the KEYS off his belt, stares at them. His
 shoulders begin to shrug.

All the color drains out of his face.

AIDAN
 Wait--

WILL
 I'm sorry. The truth was too
 simple.

Attached to Will's keys is a little silver EMBLEM:

'28 Days Sober. St. Mary's Treatment Center.'

TOM (O.S.)

Will?!

AIDAN

(jerking up)

Don't move.

Aidan DARTS OFF, vanishes into the woods.

EXT. FOREST

Eve's only a few feet away from her brother.

EVE

Tom! Where are you?

EXT. FALLEN TREE

Will hears someone coming.

WILL

Who's there?!

Tom bursts through the trees. He points the gun at Will.

TOM

You, put your hands up!

WILL

(raising hands)

Wait, what are you doing?

TOM

Jesus Christ--

Will's in tears. He can't see a thing.

WILL

What-what did he do to me?

Will holds up his frostbitten hands. His RING FINGER is missing.

TOM

(whirling)

What the fuck is going on?!

WILL
It's Aidan--he's in the w-woods.

Suddenly they hear a horrified SCREAM.

TOM
Oh God--Eve.

UP THE HILL

Eve's spotted her brother's body sprawled out in the snow. She starts to RUN down through the woods, screaming.

ON WILL AND TOM

TOM
Eve? Eve, are you okay, baby?!

EVE (O.S.)
(crying)
Tom, where are you?!

TOM
I'm right here, honey!

Tom backs up against a tree, breathing fast. Will tries to pick himself up.

TOM
I don't know how to tell you this,
Will. We have a warran--

Very slowly, a KNIFE BLADE appears at Tom's neck.

AIDAN (O.S.)
Don't scream.

Aidan steps out from behind the tree, holding the knife at Tom's throat. They can hear Eve getting closer.

EVE (O.S.)
Tom?

AIDAN
Don't answer.

EVE (O.S.)
Tom?!

AIDAN
Drop the gun.

Tom DROPS his pistol into the snow. Will hears it hit the ground. Aidan's shoulder tics wildly as he presses the knife to Tom's throat.

TOM

P-please put the knife down.

AIDAN

(motions to Will)

It's him you want. He killed our dad--

TOM

Y-you're confused, Aidan. Please put the knife down.

EVE (O.S.)

Freeze!

Eve appears, flare gun pointed at Aidan. Aidan whirls, holding Tom in front of him.

Will feels around for Tom's gun, grabs it. He jams a finger onto the trigger, points it blindly at Aidan's back.

WILL

Don't you move, Aid!

Aidan whirls back around.

EVE

Will, drop the gun. We've got a warrant for your arrest.

AIDAN

Will--what the fuck is going on?

WILL

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

TOM

We know about Zoe, Will.

AIDAN

H-How do they know her name?

EVE

(cocking flare gun)

I won't ask again.

Aidan's shoulder spasms, forcing the knife into Tom's neck.

TOM
Eve! Relax!

Eve's eyes dart between Will and Aidan. A long tense silence. Aidan looks like he's going to cry.

AIDAN
Where--where's my little girl?

WILL
(shaking)
It was just one little mistake. The night I blacked out--

Aidan starts to go white.

WILL
She wasn't wearing her seatbelt.

AIDAN
No--

Aidan's grip on the knife LOOSENS.

TOM
Eve! Shoot him!

AIDAN
startled, slits Tom's throat.

TOM
gasps like he's drowning.

EVE
squeezes the trigger of the flare gun.

WILL
pulls the trigger of the pistol.

AIDAN shakes violently as the bullets tear into his shoulder and the flare digs into the back of his parka. The flare smokes, glowing bright red. Aidan stumbles off into the woods, SCREAMING.

Eve runs for Tom. She tries to hold his head up. He's not breathing.

EVE

Please baby, don't leave me! Don't leave me, baby...

AIDAN

zig-zags left and right, leaving a trail of red smoke behind him like a plane that's been shot out of the sky.

When he gets twenty yards away he finally collapses into the snow. The flare, still lodged in his parka, burns for another thirty seconds before finally fizzling down into nothing.

FADE TO BLACK.

The sound of a HELICOPTER builds and then fades away.

EXT. FAIRBANKS PSYCHIATRIC- DAY

A squat brick hospital sits at the base of a snowy mountain range.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM- DAY

A HAND with no ring finger picks at a tray of food. Slim scraps of chicken. Peas.

WILL stares at his new surroundings. He's locked in a claustrophobic grey cubicle room. It's about the size of his cabin. He's got:

1) a desk 2) a chair 3) a bed 4) a book

There are dozens and dozens of little SLASH MARKS in the wall. He takes the plastic knife from his meal tray and carves in another.

90 Sober Days.

INT. FAIRBANKS PSYCHIATRIC, HALLWAY- DAY

A DOCTOR walks past closed doors. Behind him are Eve and an older MAN and WOMAN. Tom's parents.

DOCTOR

The state doesn't really know where to put them. We'll hold them till the trial...we just don't get a lot of cases like this up here.

They turn a corner, enter another hallway.

INT. OBSERVATION HALLWAY

The walls are lined with one-way viewing windows that look into grey rooms.

TOM'S MOTHER

Eve said--one of them tried to save him.

DOCTOR

That may be true, Mrs. Berg. But I've worked with both these men extensively and I can tell you, one thing is absolutely certain...

The doctor leads Tom's family to two windows that look out onto

TWO IDENTICAL ROOMS

In one, AIDAN sits at his desk, writing a letter. In the other, WILL sits at his desk, finishing 'Tom Sawyer'.

Will's bed is unmade.

DOCTOR

Neither one of them is any kind of hero.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM

Will looks up at the mirror behind him. It's faint, but he can barely hear muffled VOICES.

He stares at the wall separating him from Aidan.

INT. HALLWAY

Tom's parents stare sullenly at the brothers. Eve stares at the engagement ring on her finger.

DOCTOR

I'm so sorry for your loss. I can
try to answer any questions you may
have...

Will closes his book, turns eerily and looks at them.

TOM'S FATHER

Which one's which?

FADE TO BLACK.

TEXT APPEARS OVER BLACK:

*'AIDAN BRYCE FINN was charged by the State of Alaska with the
murders of Thomas Berg and Jacob Dewitt. He was sentenced to
thirty-five years in a maximum security prison.*

*Three years into his sentence, he was shot after attacking a
guard. He died in the hospital.*

*'WILLIAM NEIL FINN pled guilty to manslaughter for the death
of his niece, Zoe Finn. He was sentenced to six years in an
Alaska State penitentiary.*

He currently lives in Anchorage.

He is still sober.'

FADE OUT.

THE END