

VERVE

CHAPERONES

Written by

Sarah Rothschild

EXT. CAHOKIA MOUNDS STATE HISTORIC SITE - ILLINOIS - DAY

An excavation takes place on the grounds of the massive state park. A GROUP OF ARCHEOLOGISTS and FIELD CREW work in tandem at a large dig site.

INT. TOMB - DAY

A dark, cavernous chamber lit up by excavator lights. In the middle of the room, A SMALL GROUP hovers around what little is left of an exhumed body. Skeleton bones sit amidst thousands of shells, beads, arrowheads and axes. A shrine.

ARCHEOLOGIST

These were offerings meant to accompany him into the afterlife.

FIELD MANAGER

Over here. I found something.

The Field Manager shines his flashlight on a LARGE, SANDSTONE TABLET, half-embedded in dirt and rock. The archeologist walks over, bending down to study it. He uses a small brush to gently wipe away the sediment.

REVEALING: an intricate carving of a half-man, half-falcon.

ARCHEOLOGIST

Falcon imagery was reserved for the greatest warriors of the tribe. The positioning of the body with these offerings indicate that whoever he was? He must have been very, very important.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

PETE MCGUIRE (40s) drives the speed limit through a quiet, suburban neighborhood. Pete's our guy. He might not look like a badass now, with his slip-on loafers, freshly manicured hands and serious aversion to confrontation.

But you can't always judge a hero by his dad bod.

He waves to NEIGHBORS as he passes, leaving a trail of friendly "Hey Pete's" in his wake. He pulls into the driveway of a spectacularly landscaped house. Gets out of the car.

MEGAN (40s, college sweetheart) stands on the lawn, watering the flowers. Pete winces.

PETE

You're overwatering the Larkspur.

MEGAN

I gotta be honest. I have no idea
which ones those are.

He walks over to the tall purple stalks, drooping in a shady
corner of the yard.

PETE

I planted them here so the morning
sun hits them, but then by noon
they're shaded from the high heat.

MEGAN

This is like my second full-time
job, you know. Keeping these plants
alive. It's incredibly stressful. I
feel like you did it on purpose.

He laughs. They share a smile. There's a lot of love here.

Then, an unbelievably GOOD-LOOKING GUY, (30s, shirt off,
chiseled) turns the corner, sprinting up the street. He
finishes his run at the house. Breathless. Takes out an air
pod, smiling. This is BRODY.

BRODY

Hey, Pete! How ya doing, bud?

PETE

Hi, Brody.

Brody reaches for Megan, giving her a sweaty, sexy kiss.

Oh, right. Pete doesn't live here anymore. Megan is his ex-wife. Pete looks away, uncomfortable as the kiss lingers. Brody walks over, hand extended.

BRODY

How's the flower business, pal?

PETE

It's... landscape architecture. But
it's going well. Yep. Thanks. How's
the baseball?

BRODY

I'm still rehabbing my shoulder.
Gotta get back into fighting shape.

He mime-boxes Pete, jabbing him once not-so-lightly in the gut. Pete winces, swallowing the pain.

PETE
Feels like you're getting there.

BRODY
I'm gonna grab a shower, babe.
Great to see you again, Pete. You
look good, bud.

PETE
Yep, you look... you, too.

Brody walks in the front door, calling out--

BRODY
Cora! Your dad's here!

Pete gently massages his side, looks over at Megan.

PETE
You hate baseball.

She laughs. The front door opens. CORA (15, a whirlwind of hormones and lip gloss) rushes out. Pete lights up. This is his whole world.

PETE (CONT'D)
Hey, kiddo. You ready?

CORA
Oh, crap.

MEGAN
Cora. Did you not ask your dad about tonight? I told you to call him first.

CORA
I forgot. I'm sorry.

PETE
Ask me what? It's Friday date night, right? Dinner and a movie. I already bought the tickets.
CARNAGE. Looks absolutely terrifying.

(then, realizing)
Oh. Do you not want to go?

CORA
No, I do! It's just. There's this party.

MEGAN
Cora.

CORA

But I don't have to go. I can just skip it. I'll skip it. I'll text Kelsey right now and tell her not to pick me up.

She very *slooowly* pulls her phone out of her purse. A pathetic attempt at bluffing. Pete laughs.

PETE

Go to the party. It's fine.

MEGAN

Pete.

CORA

Really?

MEGAN (CONT'D)

She doesn't have to go to the party. You're already here.

CORA

Mom. He said it's fine.

PETE

Go. We can do date night next week. No big deal.

A car full of TEENAGERS pulls up, BLASTING MUSIC. THE DRIVER, KELSEY, (16, bubbly) leans out the window.

KELSEY

Hey, Mr. McG! Long time no see.

PETE

Hi, Kelsey. I see you got your license.

KELSEY

Yep. Sixth time was the charm.

PETE

That doesn't make me feel good. In any way.

CORA

Dad, it's fine. She's a good driver. Now.

MEGAN

Curfew is eleven o'clock, Cora. Not eleven oh-one. Not eleven oh-two. I mean it. Kelsey, you heard me.

Okaaay.

CORA

KELSEY
Got it. One hundo.

Cora hugs her mom. Pete holds his hand out for a handshake. Their special "thing." Cora smiles, uncertain. After a few flubbed movements, it's clear she doesn't remember it. Pete laughs, hiding his disappointment.

CORA (CONT'D)
Sorry. Guess I kinda forgot it.

PETE
Have fun. Be good, kiddo.

She runs to the car. As she gets in, A GOOD-LOOKING SKATER KID leans up from the backseat, calling out the window--

SKATER KID
Hey, Mrs. Griffin. Tell Brody I said, go Cubs!

MEGAN
Will do. Have fun. Be safe.

Megan waves. BEEPS of the horn. Pete frowns.

PETE
Who was that?

MEGAN
Wilder. Her boyfriend.

He gapes, stunned. Choking on the word--

PETE
Boyfriend? She has a boyfriend?
Since when? Wait, do we even allow her to have a boyfriend?

MEGAN
She's almost sixteen. There's not much we can do to stop her.

PETE
I wholeheartedly disagree with that statement. There are plenty of things we can do to stop her. Move out of the state, for one.

She laughs.

MEGAN
Relax. He's a good kid.

PETE
He's a teenage boy. That's an oxymoron.

MEGAN

Well, there are gonna be parents at this party tonight. I called to check. Much to her horror.

PETE

I just can't believe-- she didn't tell me she had a boyfriend.

MEGAN

She's a teenager. They don't tell us anything. And 90% of what they do tell us is probably a lie.

Pete stares off in the direction of the car. A sudden, terrifying thought seizes him with panic--

PETE

You don't think they... *you know.*

MEGAN

Do you really want to know what I think?

PETE

Yes, of course. Wait, no. No. Come on, she's only fifteen.

MEGAN

What were *you* doing at fifteen?

PETE

That's different. I'm a guy. Girls are different. Cora's... sweet.

MEGAN

I'd use a lot of words to describe her teenage years so far. Sweet is not in the top ten. Or one hundred.

PETE

I miss her. I feel like lately she's been pulling away from me. I wish there was a way we could spend more time together, y'know? I just don't want to lose her.

He holds Megan's gaze for a beat. Pointed.

MEGAN

You won't lose her. You're her dad. That's never gonna change.

(then, nervous)

But, while you're here...

(MORE)

MEGAN (CONT'D)
there is something I wanted to talk
to you about.

PETE
Yeah, of course. Shoot.

She takes a deep breath. Worried. Then--

MEGAN
Okay, I'm just gonna say it. Brody
wants to have a baby.

PETE
With *you*?

MEGAN
Yes, Pete. We are married, so I'd
probably be his first choice.

PETE
No, I just mean *your age*. Is that
even physically possible?

MEGAN
Okay, you're not making it better.
Plenty of women have babies in
their forties. I froze my eggs--

PETE
My eggs?

MEGAN
Well, they're *my* eggs. I don't
remember you taking any of the
excruciating hormone shots.

PETE
No, of course. I just meant because
we started the process together...
(recovering)
No. That's great. Whatever you want
to do, I support you. Obviously.
I'm happy for you. Both.

She looks at him, knowing that was difficult. Sincere--

MEGAN
Thanks. That means a lot. What
about you?

PETE
Oh god, no. You couldn't pay me to
have another baby. At my age?
They're exhausting.

MEGAN

I meant, how are you? Are you
dating anyone?

Pete stiffens, uncomfortable.

PETE

Yeah. Yes. I'm dating.

MEGAN

Who?

PETE

Wha? People. You don't know them.

MEGAN

I just want you to be happy. I
don't want you to be alone. You're
a good guy, Pete. You're a catch.

PETE

How come you weren't this nice to
me when we were married?

A flash of hurt across her face. She shrugs it off.

MEGAN

I was. You were just too busy to
notice.

PETE

No, that's not-- I was kidding. I
didn't mean-- Meg, wait--

She turns off the hose. Walking inside. He sighs.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Pete eats alone. A YOUNG FAMILY sits in a booth across from him. The HUSBAND feeds a BABY, while the WIFE tends to the TODDLER GIRL. They laugh and chat. Pete smiles. A warm wave of nostalgia.

A GROUP OF HIGH-SCHOOLERS walk in, grabbing a booth near him. LOUD LAUGHTER. Goofing off. Pete watches as ONE GUY slides his arm around a PRETTY GIRL. Kisses her neck. She giggles. They start to make out. Pete drops his burger. Suddenly ill.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Pete sits in a dark theater, eating popcorn.

SCARY MUSIC PLAYS. His whole body tenses--

PETE
No, don't, why would you open that--

He braces himself. Nothing. Relaxes. Then, a CHILLING SCREAM! Pete jumps, SHRIEKING! Throwing his popcorn into the air.

PETE (CONT'D)
JESUS GOD ALMIGHTY! Okay, no. Nope.
That's enough. I'm done. Excuse me.

He gets up, shimmying past OTHERS in his row.

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Pete walks in, tossing his keys and jacket. The modern, efficient bachelor pad of a workaholic. Blueprints spread out on a drafting table. Corrugated roll files stacked neatly on the floor. A long dining room table with only two chairs.

ON A BOOKSHELF: a framed picture of Pete, Megan and a YOUNG CORA (5) at the beach. Happier times.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Pete walks in. Flips on the lights. Sparse. Only a few hints of a teenage girl. Sweater draped across a chair. Small pile of make-up on the dresser. Two pictures taped to the mirror.

He looks around for a moment. Lost. Then sinks onto the bed, feeling something underneath him.

He pulls a thick, hardback ANCIENT CIVILIZATION textbook out from underneath the covers. He takes out his phone, texting.

CLOSE ON TEXT: *Hey, you left your ancient civ book here. Need for Monday?*

He waits. After a moment, the text displays: *Read.*

Then... nothing. He sighs. Gets up, carrying the book with him. A piece of paper slips out of the book onto the carpet.

CLOSE ON PAPER: FIELD TRIP PERMISSION FORM. CAHOKIA MOUNDS STATE HISTORIC SITE.

He scans it. Some phrases jump out at us: *Most sophisticated prehistoric civilization in North America. Sudden decline. Greatest mystery of North American archaeology.*

Next to the parent signature, there is a single box to check:

I would like to chaperone.

Pete stares at the paper for a long moment. Then, a smile. He grabs a pen off her desk, signing his name.

And checks the box.

He folds the paper in half, shoving it back inside the book. He shoots off a quick text: *I signed your field trip form for next week. Stuck it back in your book.*

After a moment... DING! A small, thumbs up emoji appears beside it. Pete grins.

EXT. OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING - ESTABLISHING

Your typical public high school in the burbs of Illinois. A line of three, yellow school buses sit parked out front. A handwritten placard taped in each of the windows: CAHOKIA MOUNDS.

INT. SCHOOL - FRONT OFFICE - DAY

A flurry of morning activity. TEACHERS dart in and out. A KID sits outside the PRINCIPAL'S door, awaiting his fate. AN OVERWORKED RECEPTIONIST answers the RINGING PHONE. Pete walks in.

PETE

Hi, I'm Pete McGuire. I'm chaperoning my daughter's field trip today?

Receptionist cradles the phone in her neck, handing him a clipboard.

RECEPTIONIST

Sign in. Auditorium is down the hall on the left.

Pete takes the sign-in sheet. Smiling.

PETE

I'm surprising her. She doesn't know I'm coming.

The waiting kid SNORTS a derisive laugh. Receptionist stares at Pete, blankly.

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sure she'll be thrilled.

Pete signs, handing back the clipboard. Turns to walk out.

WAITING KID
Loser.

He whips around, concerned. Kid stares down at his phone.

INT. AUDITORIUM - MORNING

The room BUZZES with the palpable, manic energy of *Field Trip Day*. Teenagers about to be released into the wild in small, arbitrary groups led by one, random parent.

Anything could happen.

Pete walks into the room. LOUD TALKING AND LAUGHTER all but drowns out the HISTORY TEACHER, MR. TRUITT, (50s, bitter) addressing the STUDENTS on the microphone.

MR. TRUITT
And there will be absolutely no
eating or drinking on the buses--

OBNOXIOUS KID
BLOW ME, TRUITT!

MR. TRUITT
Trevor Madison. I know that was
you. You, sir, can march yourself
right down to Principal Czarnecki's
office. I am not messing around
today, people.

LOUD OOOH'S from the students. A TEACHER shuffles the Obnoxious Kid out of the room. LAUGHTER, HECKLING.

MR. TRUITT (CONT'D)
You will stay with your assigned
group for the entirety of the trip.
You will not wander. You will not
lag behind. You will remain with
your chaperones, at all times.

ANGLE ON THE CHAPERONES

In the back of the room, a group of FIVE PARENTS hover by a folding table of lukewarm coffee and donut holes.

Now, if you were going to save the world, this sure as shit wouldn't be your starting lineup. We'll come to know them all much better in time, but for now...

A QUICK PAN AROUND REVEALS a less than impressive mix of FORTY-SOMETHINGS in khakis, comfortable walking shoes and fanny packs worn without irony.

MR. TRUITT (CONT'D)
You will be respectful to our parents who have volunteered their time and--

A LOUD FART NOISE REVERBERATES around the room. Students erupt in laughter. Pete chuckles quietly. Pours himself a cup of coffee. An enthusiastic, sing-songy voice startles him--

MICHELLE
Good morning!

He turns. MICHELLE, a 'Chaperone Leader' sticker on her navy cardigan, stands there. Michelle will smile-fuck you while she silently judges your shitty parenting.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Welcome! I'm Michelle Yang. Sam's mom.

PETE
Pete McGuire. I'm--

MICHELLE
Cora's dad. Of course. I know Cora. She and Sam aren't in any classes together. He's in the Honor's program. But Cora's very... popular. I hear a lot about her.

PETE
Good things, I hope?

Michelle smiles wide.

MICHELLE
Anyhoo, I haven't seen you at many parent functions. Gosh, what is it, since middle school!

PETE
Yeah. I guess my wife... *ex-wife* went to most of those.

MICHELLE
Oh, I'm so sorry. That's tough. Especially on the kids' emotional development. Well, you're here now, right? Better late than never.

She presses a round, yellow name tag onto Pete's shirt. Hands him a stack of pamphlets and a bulging fanny pack.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Now, you are our yellow group leader for today. Here is your itinerary, visitor's map, helpful museum pamphlets and your emergency kit with all your supplies. You've got two peanut allergies, a pollen sensitivity, three vegans and one of your charges is prone to panic attacks in dark, enclosed spaces.

PETE

Oh, wow. Those sound kinda serious--

MICHELLE

Word of warning, you do have a few spirited students in your group, so just, eyes wide open. 'Kay? You'll be great! It's gonna be a great day. So glad you're here.

She darts off. Pete calls after her, concerned.

PETE

Wait, but what does *spirited* mean?

CAM

It means asshole.

CAM (African-American, friendly dad) walks over. Shakes his hand.

CAM (CONT'D)

Cam Douglas. This your first time chaperoning?

PETE

Yeah. It is.

CAM

Word of advice? Don't try to be their friend. I get it, we all want to be the cool dad. But they will eat you alive. You have to take a hard line. Don't show any weakness.

PETE

Thanks for the tip. But I don't think I'll need to be too tough on anyone--

CAM

You will. Kids on field trips? Absolute animals. They're like death row convicts escaped from prison. My wife makes me come to keep an eye on our son. Make sure he doesn't get into trouble.

PETE

On a field trip? How much trouble can they really get into?

CAM

Last year, on a field trip to the planetarium? Two sophomores had sex. Nine months later, the girl went to the bathroom during science class and had a baby on the toilet.

A quiet, reserved dad, RISHI overhears. Horrified--

RISHI

That can't be true. That's just an urban legend... right?

CAM

Oh, it's true. Toilet baby. All kinds of crazy shit happens on field trips. These little horndogs are always trying to run off somewhere and hook up. Smoke weed. Sneak vodka in a water bottle.

RISHI

They put alcohol in their water bottles?

CAM

Oh, yeah. And those peanut butter sandwiches they're eating? Full of shrooms. Half these kids are already tripping their balls off. And that's just your basic, garden variety stuff we already know about. Tik Tok has added a whole new layer of stupidity you gotta watch out for. You've got the Tide pod challenge, the blackout challenge, fairy feet, Nyquil chicken, dry scooping--

PETE

Dry scooping? What is that?

CAM

Kids eat a whole bunch of pre-workout powders without water and then drop dead of a heart attack.

RISHI

But *WHY* would they do that?

CAM

Because their frontal lobes aren't fully formed yet. They're basically one chromosome away from cavemen, just tiptoeing the razor's edge of everything that can kill them. And it's our job to stop them. We're the chaperones. You can't take your eyes off these kids for *one second*.

Pete and Rishi absorb this new information, alarmed. They look around the room at all the LAUGHING KIDS, now taking on a whole new meaning.

ANGLE ON THE FRONT OF THE ROOM.

MR. TRUITT

Your groups have been assigned by color code. You will look for your chaperone with the corresponding color on their name tag and assemble in these groups once we have arrived. Now, let's get on the buses and have a good day, people.

KIDS disperse. A TIDAL WAVE OF YELLING AND LAUGHTER rumbles toward the double doors. Cam catches sight of his son, A TALL KID goofing off with FRIENDS. Yells out--

CAM

CJ! Get your dumb ass on the bus!

He makes the "I'm watching you" gesture with his two fingers. CJ and friends hurry off. Pete scans the crowd.

CAM (CONT'D)

Which one's yours?

PETE

Cora McGuire. But she doesn't know I'm here. I'm surprising her.

CAM

Oh, shit. She doesn't know you're chaperoning? Bold move.

PETE
No, it's not like that. We're buds.
She'll be cool with it.

CORA (O.S.)
Oh my god, DAD?

They turn. Cora stands there, a face of PURE HORROR.

CAM
She looks cool with it. Good luck.

Cam drifts off. Cora walks up.

PETE
Hey, kiddo!

CORA
What are you doing here?

PETE
I'm... chaperoning.

CORA
Why? Am I in trouble?

PETE
What? No--

Kelsey and Skater Kid walk past.

KELSEY
Cora, come on--
(seeing Pete)
Holy shit, your dad's here.

Skater looks around, pumped.

SKATER KID
Brody's here? Dope!

Kelsey smacks him in the shoulder. Lower--

KELSEY
Shut up. No, her real dad. Brody's
her stepdad. Hey, Mr. McG! You're a
chaperone. That's so... cool.

CORA
I'll meet you guys on the bus.

Kelsey and Cora exchange pointed looks. Pete looks back and forth between them.

PETE

What? What are those faces?

KELSEY

Kaybyeeee.

Kelsey and Skater hurry off, whispering to each other.

CORA

Why didn't you tell me you were coming?

PETE

I wanted to surprise you. I thought it could be a good chance for us to hang out a little. But, now I'm thinking maybe it wasn't such a great idea. I'm sorry.

Cora softens, guilty.

CORA

No, Dad. It's fine.

PETE

(brightening)

Really? I mean, it could be fun, right? I've never seen the Cahokia Mounds. They sound kind of cool.

CORA

Yeah, sure, it'll be fun. I'm just gonna go grab my bag from my locker. I'll meet you on the bus.

PETE

I'll save you a seat.

EXT. OAK PARK HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

ROWDY KIDS file onto the buses. Pete looks around for Cora. He spots Kelsey in the crowd and points to a bus, *this one?* She smiles, giving him the thumbs up. He boards.

INT. BUS - DAY

LOUD TALKING AND LAUGHTER. A WEATHERED BUS DRIVER barks out--

BUS DRIVER

Everybody's ass in a seat! NOW!

Pete ducks into an empty row, looking out the window.

He spots Cora and Kelsey getting onto a different bus. He jumps up, heading for the door. The Bus Driver blocks him.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)
Where do you think you're going?

PETE
Oh, I'm on the wrong bus.

BUS DRIVER
We're all going to the same place.
Take a seat.

PETE
But, my daughter is on the other bus and I need to go with her--

BUS DRIVER
We've got a two hour drive ahead of us and I can't start the bus until everyone's butt is in a seat. So, if you want to be the reason everyone misses the field trip, please continue to stand in the aisle like a jackass. Let's everyone wait for Mr. Fancy Sweater to pick his very favorite seat.

HECKLING AND TAUNTS erupt from the kids. SHOUTS OF "SIT DOWN, FANCY SWEATER! PUSSY!" Pete sighs. Slumps back into his seat.

A WOMAN, LINDY, (40s, laidback, purple chaperone sticker) sitting in the row behind him, gives a sympathetic smile.

PETE
I think my daughter accidentally got on a different bus.

She LAUGHS LOUDLY. He reacts, upset, as he slowly realizes.

LINDY
Oh, shit. I'm sorry. I thought you were kidding.

PETE
No. I actually believed she'd be happy if I chaperoned. I don't know why I thought that.

LINDY
Don't take it personally. It's just that our kids can't stand the sight of us or anything we do or anything out of our mouths.

He laughs. She smiles.

PETE

I just don't get to spend as much time with her as I wish I could. She lives with her mom, so.

LINDY

Oh, yeah. I have the single parent guilt, too. It's brutal. But I'm pretty sure they'll blame us for all their problems no matter what we do? So, it's kind of liberating when you think about it in that way.

PETE

True. Good point. I'm Pete.

LINDY

Lindy.

They shake hands across the seat.

PETE

So, how'd you end up here?

LINDY

Ugh. I was shamed into it by Michelle. She's the chaperone leader, supermom head of every committee. I accidentally made eye contact with her one day at drop off and now, here I am.

PETE

She seems a little intense.

LINDY

Oh yeah, she's wound *pretty* tight. Trust me, it's gonna be a looong day with her in charge.

Pete looks out the window. He spots Cora and Kelsey on the bus next to him. They wave. Cora makes a sad face, *wrong bus.* Kelsey hands Cora a water bottle. *She takes a long swig.* Pete stares, alarmed.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Three yellow school buses turn off at an exit marked: CAHOKIA MOUNDS STATE HISTORIC SITE. THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF A BUS, we see Lindy and Pete laughing and talking.

EXT. CAHOKIA MOUNDS STATE HISTORIC SITE - DAY

A massive park spanning over twenty-two hundred acres. The buses pull into the parking lot of the visitor center.

SIGNS POSTED ANNOUNCE: *COMING SOON! BIRDMAN'S TOMB EXHIBIT.*

ON ONE SIDE OF THE PARK: a full, life-sized, re-created Cahokian village. ON THE OTHER: trails leading to eighty different earthen mounds of various sizes. The largest one at over 100 feet, *Monks Mound*, looms high in the distance.

EXT. VISITOR CENTER - DAY

The bus doors open, unleashing the pent-up energy of one hundred teenagers. Mr. Truitt steps off. A DOCENT, EVE (80s, kind) and A HANDSOME PARK RANGER, NATE, (40s, outdoorsy, manly) greet him.

EVE

Welcome to the City of the Sun!
We're so happy to have you. Ranger
Nate and I will be guiding the
students through the park today.

NATE

We're actually closed to the
general public on Mondays, so
you've got the entire park to
yourselves to enjoy. It's only Eve
and myself on staff this afternoon,
so we would just kindly ask that
your students follow all the posted
guidelines for safety purposes.

MR. TRUITT

Yes, of course. Everyone will be on
their best behav--

(then)

MR. COVATTA, MR. FOWLER!

He YELLS at TWO BOYS drawing a penis in sharpie on the arm of a wax statue. He storms over as they dart off.

ANGLE ON THE BUSES.

Michelle weaves through the students, all standing around on the sidewalk, talking.

MICHELLE

Please find your chaperones and
assemble into your groups!

Pete and Lindy step off their bus, still laughing.

LINDY

I gotta say, even with all the screaming and that fart contest going on in the back? That was not my worst bus ride.

PETE

What are they feeding those kids? One of them should be really concerned. He legitimately might have a disease.

She hands him back his sweater.

LINDY

Thank you for giving me your fancy sweater to tie around my face. Very chivalrous.

PETE

I will definitely be burning this.

She laughs. Looking at him. Hopeful.

LINDY

Maybe this day won't be so terrible after all.

They share a smile. Then, Pete looks behind her. Scowls, rolling his eyes. Lindy catches it.

LINDY (CONT'D)

What?

PETE

Here comes my daughter and the kid she's apparently "dating." Whatever that means. Look at him. You can just tell he's a loser by his stupid hair, can't you?

Lindy turns. Cora, Kelsey and Skater Kid make their way over.

PETE (CONT'D)

I've heard this kid talk. He is an idiot. And *Wilder*? What kind of pretentious name is that?

(snobby voice)
Wilder.

The kids walk up. Wilder looks at Lindy.

WILDER

Sup, mom.

LINDY

Hey, bud.

Pete freezes. *Oh. Shit.* Beat. Lindy looks at Pete.

LINDY (CONT'D)

It was my dad's name. He passed away when I was six.

Pete stares, frozen, mouth hanging open. Michelle streaks over, a whirlwind of manic energy--

MICHELLE

YELLOW AND PURPLE GROUPS! Your chaperone leaders are over here!
Yellow and purple, assemble here!

Kids with yellow and purple name tags wander over. Michelle holds out a large, clear bin.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Everyone, please drop your phones in here. No phones allowed on the field trip. You can have them back once we get back on the buses. Come on, drop 'em in.

LOUD GROANS from the kids, as they all surrender their most prized possession.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Yes, yes, the horror of not having your phone for a few hours. I know.

Michelle holds out the box to Pete and Lindy. They both hesitate. She gives them a condescending smile.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Grown-ups, too. We have to set a good example, don't we?

LINDY

Actually, Michelle, I have some work things going on, so I really should hang onto it.

MICHELLE

Lindy. We know work is always your top priority.

(MORE)

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

But maybe, just for a few hours,
you could try to disconnect and
really *be present*. Wouldn't that
feel great?

Lindy hate-smiles at Michelle.

LINDY

So great.

She drops her phone in the box. Pete drops his in.

MICHELLE

The park is actually closed to the
public today. But I was able to
pull some strings and get us in for
a private tour.

LINDY

Wow, Michelle. You're so amazing.

Michelle glares. Then hurries off toward Rishi's group.

MICHELLE

GREEN GROUP! Phones, please!

Pete makes a face at Lindy, *sheesh*.

PETE

You were right. She's intense. Hey,
listen, what I said about Wilder--

Lindy glares at him, turns on her heel and walks off.

PETE (CONT'D)

Right. Good job, Pete.

Purple group kids follow Lindy. Cora, Kelsey and Wilder fall
into step with them. Pete calls out, confused--

PETE (CONT'D)

Cora? Where are you going?

CORA

Oh, shoot. Dad, we're purple group.

She motions to the wrinkled purple name tag on their shirts.
The edges curl up, like it's been peeled off multiple times.

KELSEY

Oh, wow, that's so weird that we're
not in your dad's group.

CORA

Huh. Yeah, super weird. But, we'll all be in the same area. Pretty much. So it doesn't even really matter, right? But Mr. Truitt said we have to stay with our groups, so we gotta go. See you later?

KELSEY

Later, Mr. McG.

They hurry off. Pete sighs, defeated. He turns around to the SMALL GROUP OF KIDS that have congregated beside him. A motley crew of apathetic teenagers with yellow name tags, stare back at him. He feigns enthusiasm.

PETE

Okay! Hey, guys. I'm Pete. I'm Cora McGuire's dad.

ONE STONER KID, FRANCIS perks up.

FRANCIS

Cora's hot.

His stoner buddy, GRADY, SNARFS a laugh.

GRADY

Bro, shut up. That's her dad.

PETE

Yeah. Shut up. Bro.

GRADY

Oh, shit. He just bro'd you!

They shove each other, laughing. We recognize them as the dipshits drawing on the statues.

PETE

Now, I know this kinda stuff might seem boring to some of you--

A BOOKISH KID, DOOGAN, raises his hand.

DOOGAN

Actually, Mr. McGuire, Cahokia is pretty fascinating. I've been researching it for months in preparation for this field trip. It was the most sophisticated native civilization north of Mexico. With 20,000 people, it was like an early day Manhattan.

GRADY
Doooogan.

Some TITTERING from the group. Pete gestures, quiet down.

PETE
 You don't have to call me Mr.
 McGuire. You can just call me Pete.

DOOGAN
 Then, all of a sudden, the city was
 completely abandoned. Out of
 nowhere. And nobody knows why. It
 was like everyone just disappeared.

PETE
 See? Very interesting facts. So,
 let's all keep an open mind and
 maybe we can learn some new things
 and have a little fun today.

A FLIRTY LAUGH rings out. Pete looks over. Nate, our park ranger, talks with Lindy's group. He flashes a charming smile at Lindy and leads her group into the village.

Pete watches as Wilder grabs Cora's hand. Once they're
through the gates, Wilder pulls Cora off in the opposite
direction of everybody else. Pete reacts, alarmed.

DOOGAN
 I even joined their Junior
 Archeologist club online to have
 insider access to the excavat--

PETE
 Okay, let's hit the village!

DOOGAN
 But, Mr. Pete? I was hoping we
 could see the mounds first. The
 Cahokians were actually very
 skilled engineers. They designed
 and built 120 earthen mounds, which
 are pretty impressive architectural
 works, even by today's standards.

PETE
 Fascinating stuff. But, the village
 seems more fun, doesn't it?

DOOGAN
 Monks Mound is the highest one?
 It's 110 feet high.
 (MORE)

DOOGAN (CONT'D)

It was probably used for religious ceremonies or rituals.

PETE

Cool! And we'll see them all *right* after we tour the village.

DOOGAN

But inside it? *They found 250 buried bodies.* Human sacrifices.

GRADY

I want to see some dead bodies.

PETE

Well, too bad. Because we're hitting the village first. Yellow group, let's move!

Pete run-walks toward the village entrance. His group follows. The buses pull out of the parking lot, driving away.

EXT. CAHOKIAN VILLAGE - DAY

STUDENTS mill about the massive, replicated city. Wax figurines engage in various activities of daily, pre-historic life. Pete scans the village, searching for Cora.

Michelle's group stands at perfect attention, listening to Eve describe an exhibit.

Rishi, panicked, tries to contain his group. ROWDY KIDS LAUGH AND TALK, wandering off in all different directions.

RISHI

Maybe if we could all try to stay together and move as a unit?

ROWDY KID (O.S.)

SUCK IT, DOUCHE!

ANGLE ON CAM'S GROUP

They walk past some WAX VILLAGERS. A KID reaches out, touching one of the figures. Cam slaps his hand away.

CAM

Don't touch anything. Look at me. Look at me in my face. You high?

FREAKED OUT KID

What? No.

He stares into the kid's eyes, long and hard. Assessing.

CAM
I'm watching you.

Freaked Out Kid hurries off. Pete rushes up.

PETE
Hey, Cam. You haven't seen Cora, have you?

CAM
Aw, man. Already? *I told you.* You cannot take your eyes off them for one second. They could be anywhere. They're probably in the woods getting it on right now. Check all the enclosed spaces. They don't like to be out in the open. Over there, those huts. Prehistoric shagging cabins.

He motions to a group of large, clay huts. Pete rushes over.

INT. REPLICA CLAY HUT - DAY

Pete ducks inside, scanning the hut for Cora. Nate addresses Lindy's group.

NATE
The Cahokians performed their religious ceremonies in sync with many different astrological alignments. For example, today is the Fall Equinox, a major religious holiday for Cahokia. Does anyone know what the Fall Equinox is?

A few hands shoot up. Some KIDS YELL out answers. Pete spots Lindy. He squeezes past kids, sidling up to her. Whispers--

PETE
Hey.

She rolls her eyes, turning away.

NATE
The Equinox is the one day of the year when day and night are equal length. This was a very sacred day for the Cahokians.
(MORE)

NATE (CONT'D)

They believed it symbolized the struggle between light and dark. *That eternal battle between good and evil.*

PETE

Where are Cora and Wilder?

LINDY

I don't know. He's *pre-t-y* dumb, so maybe he wandered off into the woods and was eaten by a bear.

PETE

Look, I'm sorry. I don't think your son is an idiot. When I said that, I was just freaking out about the whole "boyfriend" thing and--

LINDY

OR maybe his stupid, loser hair got in his face and he couldn't see and he just fell right off a cliff.

She makes A WHISTLING NOISE, something plummeting.

PETE

You are obviously still very upset--

LINDY

Do you think I should go outside and yell his pretentious name?

PETE

Okaaaay, you hate me. I get it. But Cora and Wilder are missing--

NATE

S'cuse me.

Pete looks up. Nate smiles at him. It is not friendly.

NATE (CONT'D)

Hi. Maybe you could wait to have your conversation until I'm finished speaking. It's hard for the kids to hear what I'm saying if there are competing voices.

PETE

I'm sorry. I'm not competing with you.

Nate gives him a condescending smile.

NATE

I know.

Kids SNARF low laughter. Pete flushes, embarrassed.

NATE (CONT'D)

Now, today we will see something very cool. Every year, *only on the Fall Equinox*, the setting sun aligns precisely with the tip of Monk's Mound. Which is the largest mound you see right out here--

He points out the hut window to Monk's Mound in the distance.

NATE (CONT'D)

Historians say the significance of this alignment is that the tribe believed, in that moment when the sun hits the mound, the veil between here and the afterlife is lifted.

(beat)

And the dead can be brought back to life.

A ripple of OOHs and LAUGHS from the STUDENTS. Nate smiles.

NATE (CONT'D)

Of course, no need to worry, because that is just ancient mythology. Now, if you'll look over here, you'll find some of the tools of every day Cahokian life--

As Nate continues speaking, Lindy whispers to Pete--

LINDY

Don't be so dramatic. They're not missing. They probably just wandered ahead. And what do you think it is they're doing, exactly?

PETE

I don't know. But I know what most boys want to be doing.

She SCOFFS. Under her breath--

LINDY

From what I hear, it's not my kid we should be worried about.

PETE

What? What did you say?

LINDY

Nothing. What?

PETE

You are purple chaperone. You are supposed to be keeping an eye on purple group.

LINDY

Seriously? You literally have no one from your group with you. Not one kid from yellow group is in here.

PETE

I know exactly where they are. They are all *right* outside this hut.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. VISITOR CENTER - SAME

Francis and Grady, *yellow name tags*, wander around. Alone. They come to a room marked: *Conservation Laboratory*. A lab where specialists preserve and restore artifacts.

THROUGH THE WINDOW WALL: all kinds of ancient objects are spread out on a long, lab table. Ceramics, pottery, tools.

GRADY

Look. A prehistoric bong.

He points to bong-shaped pottery. The boys grin at each other and open the door marked, **"Do Not Enter. Staff Only."**

INT. CONSERVATION LABORATORY - DAY

They walk around, touching all the things you definitely shouldn't touch. Grady hovers over a table, giggling.

GRADY

Yo. Look at this.

He turns, holding up a large, sandstone tablet to show Francis. We recognize it as the tablet from the tomb.

On the carving of the half-man, half falcon, he's drawn a sharpie penis. Francis reacts.

FRANCIS

Bro! What?! You can't do that!
We'll go to jail and shit. You
gotta get it off.

Francis hurries over. Tries to rub out the penis, while Grady giggles. He bobbles the tablet, dropping it on the floor.

It cracks in half.

GRADY

Oh, shit. My b.

They stare at the two pieces lying on the ground at their feet.

After a beat, a long, black wisp of smoke curls up out of the two broken halves. It coils like a snake, hovering in the air between them. They stare, stunned.

FRANCIS

Whaaat is that?

Outside the room, Mr. Truitt walks past, catching sight of them through the windows. He stops. A face of fury. He beelines for the door, storming in.

MR. TRUITT

Mr. Covatta and Mr. Fowler. What are you two doing in h--

The black smoke surges into Truitt's open mouth, as if inhaled.

He chokes. Briefly stunned. He starts coughing. It morphs into VIOLENT HACKING. He grabs at his throat, desperate for air. Suffocating. He falls to his hands and knees; his eyes close. His entire body begins to tremble. Then, starts convulsing wildly. The boys look on, helpless. Fearful.

After a moment, the trembling stops. His head hangs down.

GRADY

Yo, Mr. Truitt. You good?

TRUITT JERKS UP, HIS EYES BURST OPEN. Round black saucers. Slowly, he stands.

And his entire body starts to rise up off the ground.

FRANCIS

Oh, fuck. Why is Truitt floating?

A large axe laying on a table starts to vibrate.

It slowly rises up, hovering in the air. Then, sails over to Truitt's outstretched hand.

He gives them a terrifying smile, revealing a gaping black abyss. THEY SCREAM!

EXT. CAHOKIAN VILLAGE - DAY

Lindy's group files out of the hut. Pete and Lindy argue.

PETE

And what did you mean when you said
'from what you hear' your kid
wasn't the one we should be worried
about? What exactly do you hear?

LINDY

Nothing. Forget I said anything.

PETE

No, no. You can't do that--

A LOUD RUMBLE OF THUNDER. They stop, looking up. Black storm clouds have gathered. The wind picks up, whipping the trees. A SHARP CRACK OF LIGHTNING pierces the sky. Fat drops of rain begin to fall. Nate hurries over.

NATE

The radar was clear today. Probably just a small storm that popped up. We can all move into the visitor center until it blows over.

MICHELLE

EVERYONE, LET'S ALL GET INTO THE VISITOR CENTER! QUICKLY!

KIDS SQUEAL as the rain picks up. Everyone runs for cover. Pete looks around for Cora.

LINDY

They're probably already inside.

He reluctantly follows her.

INT. VISITOR CENTER - LOBBY - DAY

Everyone files in, soaking wet. Eve directs the kids into the large auditorium, where a video about Cahokia plays on a loop.

EVE

Right in here. We can all watch a short movie on the history of the city, and then get right back outside after this little rain passes over us.

Pete scans the kids for Cora. She's nowhere in sight.

FRANCIS (O.S.)

MR. TRUITT IS GOING TO KILL US!

Pete turns. Francis and Grady sprint down the hallway toward them. Breathless, stricken. Pete sighs, rolling his eyes.

PETE

What did you two do?

GRADY

No, you don't understand. MR. TRUITT WAS LEGIT GOING TO MURDER US-

FRANCIS

WITH AN AXE!

GRADY

But we bolted. We gotta get out of here. Pretty sure we're all about to die.

PETE

Okay, just calm down. Tell me what happened.

They inhale deep breaths. Then, overlapping--

FRANCIS

So, we were just looking for the bathrooms and got lost--

GRADY

And we were trying to find our way back to the group--

FRANCIS

But we accidentally went into this room with all this dusty, old shit--

GRADY

And there was this big stone with a weird, half-bird dude. And I accidentally bumped into it. Like, I barely touched it. And it just fell and cracked in half--

FRANCIS

Yeah and then all this black smoke
came out of it. Like a snake. And
then Truitt saw us and came in to
bust us--

GRADY

But the smoke snake shot into his
mouth like a massive bong hit--

FRANCIS

And his eyes turned black and he
started shaking and floating--

GRADY

And then he tried to kill us with
an axe.

Beat. The chaperones stare at them.

CAM

Are you two high?

FRANCIS

(yes)
What? No. That's illegal
during school hours.

GRADY

(yup)
High? I don't understand the
question.

They all react, *that explains it.*

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

No, I'm telling you! This shit was
real. Truitt's some kind of
possessed, demon monster. And he's
gonna kill EVERYONE.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSERVATION LABORATORY - DAY

Quiet, empty. The chaperones walk in, looking around. Francis and Grady linger in the doorway, scared. Pete sighs.

PETE

Okay, so where's this demon
monster, guys?

MICHELLE

It's a stupid Tik Tok prank. I've
seen this one all over the
internet. Someone jumps out to
scare us and they film it.

FRANCIS
NO. It was REAL. I swear.

Cam leans down in the boys' faces, waving his hands around.

CAM
Is it shrooms? Yep. They turned on you, didn't they? Last year at the Field Museum, a kid dropped acid. Thought he was a glass of orange juice the entire day. Screamed anytime anyone came near him cuz' he thought he would spill.

Eve spots the two halves of the broken tablet lying on the floor behind a table. She GASPS. Michelle follows her gaze.

MICHELLE
Boys! Did you two break that? I am so sorry, Eve. What is it?

GRADY
That penis was there when we found it.

EVE
Archeologists have just begun excavating Mound 81. It's taken years to secure the necessary funding and permits. Inside the mound, they uncovered the tomb of a great Cahokian warrior, *The Birdman*. They found this stone tablet inside his tomb.

FRANCIS
Something gnarly and evil came out of that thing. We saw it. And it's not just because we're high.
(beat, realizing)
Which we are *not*.

EVE
They've pieced together a story from ancient drawings found on the walls inside the mound. The Chief of the tribe's wife died, and he was overcome with grief and despair. In an attempt to bring her back from the dead, he accidentally summoned a terrible demon from the underworld. The demon terrorized them, enslaving them. Requiring human sacrifices.
(MORE)

EVE (CONT'D)

The entire tribe was almost completely wiped out. Until the Birdman was able to trick the demon and trap him.

(beat)

Inside this stone tablet.

They all stare at it. Broken open.

GRADY

Until now. That bitch got out. And he is PISSED.

Nate picks up one half of the stone tablet.

NATE

Eve, let's not get carried away. It's just a story. This is what ancient tribes did. They used folklore and mythology to explain disease and changes in the weather that brought about hardships for their crops. Now, do you two boys want to fess up to what really happened to this tablet? Because as sure as I am standing here, there is no ancient demon on the loose--

THWACK!

An axe slices through the air. Embedding itself right between Nate's eyes. Blood squirts out onto Rishi's face, standing next to him.

Nate drops to the floor, dead. The stone falls from his hands. They all look up. *Mr. Truitt scurries across the ceiling. EVERYONE SCREAMS!*

CAM

What is that!

FRANCIS

It's Mr. Truitt!

Or what used to be Mr. Truitt. His skin is now grey and scaly. His eyes black. Veins protrude from his gaunt, hunched body. His clothes hang, partially shredded. His hands contort into grotesque claws. *He drops down in front of them, hovering above the ground.*

CAM

Oh. Uh uh. My man's feet are NOT touching the ground.

GRADY
WE TOLD YOU!

LINDY
Mr. Truitt?

A sinister voice we haven't heard before--

MR. TRUITT
Your Mr. Truitt is gone. And soon
the sun will give birth to the
portal and my reign will begin
again. It cannot be stopped now.

THROUGH THE WINDOW: a web of lightning flashes, lighting up
the sky and ILLUMINATING THE PEAK OF MONK'S MOUND.

MR. TRUITT (CONT'D)
And all of you will die.

MICHELLE
MR. TRUITT, YOU STOP HOVERING RIGHT
NOW! YOU ARE SCARING THE CHILDREN!

Truitt looks at Francis and Grady, raising a claw-like hand toward them. *Grady starts to rise up, hovering into the air.* His sneakers dangle, dragging along the floor as he floats toward Truitt. GRADY SHRIEKS!

Eve grabs the other half of the stone tablet, standing in
between Grady and Mr. Truitt. Holding it out like a shield.

Truitt shrinks back, a terrified look. Grady drops back to the floor. WITH AN OTHERWORLDLY SHRIEK, Truitt turns and CRASHES THROUGH the windows to the outside, sending shards of glass spraying. He disappears into the blackness.

Beat, as they stare after him. Then...

PURE FUCKING PANIC. Everyone loses their collective shit.

PETE
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!

Michelle looks down at Nate, on the floor. His eyes wide open. Blood pooling beside his body. SHE DRY HEAVES.

MICHELLE
Is he dead? IS HE DEAD?

LINDY
He looks pretty dead, Michelle!
He's got an axe through his face!

Rishi stands frozen, blood spatters on his face. Stunned.

RISHI

It... got in my mouth. His blood.
Some of it got in my mouth. *Can you
get a disease from eating someone
else's blood?!* I think it's one of
the Hepatituses?

MICHELLE

Someone should perform CPR. Mouth
to mouth!

LINDY

On which half of his face?

Pete looks at Eve, still holding half of the stone. She
breathes heavy, winded.

PETE

How did you know to do that?

EVE

I didn't. I took a shot.

CAM

Okay. Okay. Everyone just HOLD ON A
SECOND. So you're telling me, these
boys knocked over an ancient tablet
and unleashed some demon who can
just take over people's bodies?

EVE

No. According to the legend, the
demon can only enter the body of a
virgin. Once the host body is used
up, it needs another one to
survive.

Beat, as they all absorb this.

FRANCIS

MR. TRUITT WAS A VIRGIN?

(looks at Grady)

*Bro, he was trying to take you. You
said you banged Allison Campbell in
the basement at Devon's party.*

GRADY

She gave me a BJ. It's the same
thing!

FRANCIS

Nah, blowies don't count.

GRADY

Blowies count!

MICHELLE

BOYS! Stop saying blowies.

CAM

WHAT DID I SAY? Crazy shit happens
on these field trips. I said, DO
NOT TAKE YOUR EYES OFF THEM FOR ONE
SECOND. I said, DO NOT TRY TO BE
THEIR FRIEND.

PETE

I was looking for Cora! Because
someone let them just wander off.

LINDY

Are you serious right now? It was
YOUR IDIOT YELLOW GROUP KIDS who
literally unleashed a demon that
JUST KILLED A PARK RANGER!

MICHELLE

The kids.

They all exchange panicked looks, then race out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

The chaperones throw open the double doors. The boring video plays on a loop. Kids TALK AND LAUGH. Safe. Oblivious. They quietly shut the doors.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

They all stare at each other for a beat. Eve breathes heavy, winded. Lindy helps her into a chair at the information desk.

LINDY

Eve, are you alright? Here, sit
down.

MICHELLE

Okay. No one panic. Everything is
totally under control. There is a
standard emergency protocol we have
to follow as chaperones. And as
your leader, I have it right here.

She pulls papers out of her fanny pack. They shake wildly in her hands, as she reads--

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
First, notify the police. Yes. Good idea. Cam, why don't you be in charge of that?

Cam nods. He runs to the phone on the information desk.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Next, assess if anyone needs medical intervention. Well, unfortunately, I think Ranger Nate might be beyond that now, but--

Lindy slaps the papers out of her hands. They flutter all over the ground.

LINDY
Stop trying to organize the situation, Michelle! This isn't the school bake sale. There is a demon from the underworld on the loose, killing all the virgins!

Cam hits buttons on the landline repeatedly.

CAM
It's dead.

PETE
We need our cell phones.

Lindy glares at Michelle.

LINDY
She took all of our cell phones.

MICHELLE
OH EXCUSE ME for wanting everyone to engage for ONE afternoon.

LINDY
Well, congratulations, because now we're all going to die. I hope you're happy.

FRANCIS
We're not *all* going to die, right? Just the virgins. Like Grady.

GRADY
Dude, shut up. BJ's count.

FRANCIS

The demon doesn't seem to think so,
that's all I'm saying.

PETE

Oh, god. Cora and her friends are
still out there somewhere.

Michelle scoffs. Under her breath--

MICHELLE

I don't think you have to worry
about *Cora*.

PETE

What is that supposed to mean?

LINDY

Oh, for crying out loud, you cannot
be this naive. Cora is in the
popular crowd. They drink! They do
drugs! *They have sex*. They keep
"body counts," for crying out loud.

RISHI

They are also murdering people?

LINDY

Body counts are how many people
they've slept with.

Pete reacts, stunned. Flustered.

PETE

No. No, not Cora.

Quiet murmurs of disbelief ripple through the other parents.
Even Francis and Grady nod, *yeah*. Lindy rolls her eyes.

LINDY

*My kid doesn't drink or try drugs
or have sex. Get real. They're all
doing it! Except Michelle's kid.
He's not.*

MICHELLE

Thank you--

LINDY

I did not mean that as a
compliment.

(MORE)

LINDY (CONT'D)

You have that poor kid on such a tight leash, the second he gets away from you he's going to be snorting cocaine out of stripper's buttholes. Believe me.

MICHELLE

That is disgusting. Oh, I'm sorry I'm not the 'cool mom' like you, right, Lindy? 'Here kids, let's all sit in my basement and take a bunch of pot'--

LINDY

You don't 'take pot.'

MICHELLE

You would know--

CAM

LADIES! Is this really important right now? We need to find those missing kids, get on the buses, and get the hell out of here.

MICHELLE

I... sent the buses back. They won't be coming to pick us up for at least another three hours.

(off their GROANS)

It was the most cost-effective option! Oh, okay, one of you A-holes try managing the class budget then. You think it's so easy. Being class mom is a like walking a tight rope of logistical nightmares.

Rishi runs over, ripping her 'Chaperone Leader' sticker off her sweater, tearing it in half. Stomping on it. She GASPS.

RISHI

You don't deserve to be Chaperone Leader. You have led us all right to our deaths.

PETE

I am NOT dying on a field trip.

Pete turns to Eve, sitting behind the desk.

PETE (CONT'D)

Eve, are there any other phones here? Walkie talkies? Any way for us to call for help?

Beat. Eve stares, eyes wide open. Lindy puts a gentle hand on her shoulder--

LINDY
Eve? Are you okay--

Eve slumps forward, hitting her face on the desk. They all react, horrified. Lindy checks her pulse. Stunned--

LINDY (CONT'D)
She's dead.

RISHI
Are you kidding me? *From what?!*

CAM
Well, I'm no doctor but I would assume the stress of a virgin-killing demon on the loose when you're 105 years old might just take a toll on your heart.

RISHI
What are we supposed to do now?

MICHELLE
We lock all the doors, stay inside and wait for the buses to come back to get us.

PETE
I'm going out there to find Cora.

LINDY
I'm going with you.

PETE
No, it's too dangerous. I can't be responsible for your safety.

LINDY
Please. I placed second in an Ironman last year. You're wearing very shiny penny loafers.

PETE
Okay, well, it's not a competition.
(then)
You guys stay here. Protect the kids with that stone. The demon is clearly still scared of it. Look, all we have to do is keep everyone alive for three hours until the buses get back.
(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)
 We can do that, right?
 (off silence)
 RIGHT?

Looks of fear. Unconvincing MURMURS of agreement. Lindy hurries toward the front doors of the center. Pete follows. She grabs a spear out of the hand of a wax Cahokian figure by the door, rushing outside.

Pete tries to grab a shield. It's too heavy. He bobbles it. It goes CLANGING to the floor. He tries to lift it up, dragging it. It's awkward and unwieldy. He drops it. MORE CLANGING. He finally leaves it on the ground. Runs outside after Lindy. The glass doors slide closed.

Beat.

CAM
 And that is the last time we will ever see them alive again.
 (off their looks)
 We were all thinking it.

EXT. CAHOKIA MOUNDS STATE HISTORIC SITE - TRAILS - DAY

The rain has slowed to a drizzle. A dense black fog has rolled in, obscuring their view. Pete and Lindy walk the heavily-wooded trail through the mounds. Whisper-shouting--

PETE
 Cora! Kelsey!

LINDY
 Wilder! God, where are they? And what were they even doing out here by themselves anyway?
 (then)
 Don't say it. My son did not lure your daughter out into the woods like some crazed, sex maniac.

PETE
 I never said that.

LINDY
 You didn't have to. I can *feel* you thinking it.

PETE
 No. No, that is not true.

They walk for a beat.

PETE (CONT'D)

But... what Michelle said back there. About you being the kind of mom who gives their kid weed--

LINDY

See? Ugh, I knew it. I knew it!

PETE

What? I'm just *asking* if that information was accurate--

LINDY

Are you freaking serious right now?

PETE

I just think if our kids are "dating," I have a right to know what kind of parent you are--

LINDY

We are literally probably about to die out here and you're worried about what kind of parent I am? You are unbelievable. SO judgmental.

(then, lower)

No wonder Cora doesn't tell you anything.

He reacts to this, stung. They walk in silence for a beat. Then, he sighs, defeated.

PETE

I'm sorry. You're right. It's not you. I'm worried about what kind of parent I am. I obviously don't know anything about my own kid. One minute we're best friends and we do everything together. And now, I don't know. She's a complete stranger to me. And she doesn't want to be anywhere around me. It's like she can't stand me anymore.

Lindy takes in his face of angst, softening a little.

LINDY

It's just their age. They want to be independent. They want to be away from us. It sucks and it hurts, but it's normal.

PETE

I just... I messed up a lot of things with Cora's mom. And then after our divorce, I feel like maybe I wasn't around enough for Cora. And I don't want to make the same mistakes again.

LINDY

Divorce is shitty for everyone no matter how it goes down. There's no right way to do it.

(then)

What happened with you and your ex? Why'd you two break up?

PETE

I don't know. It's hard to pinpoint just one reason--

(beat, sigh)

That's not true. I *do* know. I stopped paying attention. I worked all the time and kept putting Meg on hold. One more big job, one more long work trip and *then* I'll be a better husband. She just got tired of waiting. And now she's having a baby with her new husband and they'll all be one big, happy family. And Cora won't need me at all anymore.

LINDY

You're her dad. She's always gonna need you. Even if she won't admit it.

PETE

I guess deep down I'm just scared that... I'm a shitty parent.

LINDY

Well, duh, we're all scared of that. Parenting sucks! It is SO HARD.

PETE

It is, right?!

LINDY

Yeah. It's the fucking WORST.

PETE

Why is it so hard?

LINDY

Because none of us know what the fuck we're doing. We all have these helpless, little beings that we have to somehow keep alive for eighteen years, only they HATE us, and they don't EVER listen to us, and they do the exact opposite of every single thing we say. God, they're such dicks.

He snorts a laugh. Then--

PETE

I'm sorry I said Wilder was an idiot.

LINDY

Don't be. He is, most of the time.

PETE

And it's not a pretentious name. I'm so sorry about your dad--

LINDY

Wilder's not named after my dad. And my dad's not dead. I just said that to make you feel bad. You deserved it.

After a stunned beat, he laughs. She smiles. Then--

LINDY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I said Cora was kinda slutty and a bad influence.

He pauses, confused--

PETE

You didn't?

LINDY

(fumbling)

Right, yeah. Because it's not true. So I wouldn't say it--

RUSTLING IN THE WOODS beside them. They freeze. Pete steps in front of her, protective. Lindy clocks this.

LINDY (CONT'D)

What was that?

PETE

Probably just the wind.

LINDY

You're just pretending you're not scared, aren't you?

PETE

Yes. Is it working?

LINDY

No. I wish we had a flashlight.

Pete reacts, an idea. He unzips his fanny pack, rummaging through. Pulls out a small mag lite. Yes! He turns it on. Lighting up the bushes. MORE RUSTLING.

PETE

Cora?

Beat.

A squirrel darts out of the brush. THEY SCREAM, startled! It scampers away. They exhale shaky sighs of relief. Pete turns to Lindy, gesturing to the fanny pack.

PETE (CONT'D)

The good news is, Michelle put a TON of shit in here. So we're pretty much prepared for anyth--

FWUMP!

A LARGE CREATURE LEAPS OUT OF THE WOODS, TACKLING PETE. LINDY SHRIEKS! Pete crashes to the ground, the beast on top of him.

Not of this world, it has a wolf-like body with scales instead of fur. Red eyes. Long claws. Sharp fangs.

Pete holds the monster off by the throat, its massive jaws snarling and snapping at his face. LINDY SCREAMS!

LINDY

What is that thing?

PETE

I don't know! Stab it with your spear!

Lindy looks down at the spear in her hand, realizing--

LINDY

Oh right, okay!

Pete and the creature writhe on the ground. Struggling. Lindy tries to take aim. Scared--

LINDY (CONT'D)
 Can you try not to move so much? I
 don't want to stab you by accident!

Jaws snap closer to Pete's throat. Saliva dripping on his face. He's losing the battle...

PETE
 (out of breath)
 Stab. It.

LINDY
 Right, I'm sorry. Stabbing, I'm
 stabbing!

She lunges with the spear, grazing the beast in the hind leg. It YELPS. Springs off of Pete. Pete scrambles backwards. The beast turns toward Lindy. Eyes glowing. SNARLING.

LINDY (CONT'D)
 Oh, shit.

She backs up, tripping over a tree stump and falling. The spear bounces out of her hands. She scrambles backward on her hands, as the beast slinks closer.

Poised to pounce...

But Pete DIVES ONTO ITS WOUNDED LEG, tackling it. Beast YELPS, biting at Pete's arm. Pete shoves him off.

PETE
 GAAAH!

Pete grabs his arm. Red blood blooms underneath his shredded shirt. The beast turns, head low, ears back, ready to charge. Pete looks around for a weapon. Stick, rock. There's nothing.

Beast SNARLS AND LEAPS...

And the spear sails right through the side of its head. It falls on top of Pete with a THUD, dead.

REVERSE TO REVEAL: Lindy, standing a few feet away. Having just nailed the perfect shot.

PETE (CONT'D)
 Off, off. Please get it off.

She runs over. They both struggle to push the creature off.

LINDY
 He's so heavy--

PETE

Oh god, he's leaking on me. The
juices smell terrible. They're hot.
(dry heave)
It's so disgusting.

They both GAG, finally managing to shove its lifeless body off of Pete. It lands in a heap. They stare at it.

LINDY

What *IS* that?

PETE

Some kind of demon wolf?

Lindy looks down at Pete's arm.

LINDY

You're bleeding. Shit. That is A
LOT of blood. It looks really bad.

PETE

You'd make a great nurse.

LINDY

I'm sorry! Shit, here.

She unzips her fanny pack. The contents spill out onto the ground. Gauze, wraps, creams, inhalers. She begins tending to Pete's arm with whatever she can find. Trying not to gag--

LINDY (CONT'D)

It's fine. It's actually not that
bad. It probably won't even scar.

He watches, amused. She finishes wrapping, looks at him.

LINDY (CONT'D)

You saved my life.

PETE

I think you have that backwards.
You saved mine. That was an
unbelievable shot.

LINDY

Javelin throw. I did track and
field in college. But you tackled
that thing.

PETE

Yeah, I don't know what I was
thinking. It was the adrenaline.
Believe me, I'm not a hero.

LINDY
Could have fooled me.

They smile at each other for a beat. She helps him up. Pete looks around, worried.

PETE
Come on. If there are any more demon wolves running around out here, we gotta find the kids.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME

Michelle, Rishi and Cam stand in the back of the room, guarding the doors. Michelle holds the stone tablet, now duct taped back together. She paces, wild-eyed. TWO BORED GIRLS approach.

BORED GIRL
We have to go to the bathroom.

MICHELLE
NO! NO ONE CAN GO TO THE BATHROOM!

The girls jump, startled. Cam gives Michelle a look, *relax*.

CAM
Sorry, ladies. There's a little plumbing issue. They're working on it.

ANNOYED GIRL
Ugh. How much longer do we have to sit in here?

MICHELLE
EVERYTHING'S FINE! GO BACK TO YOUR SEATS!

CAM
Not much longer, girls.

They stare at Michelle, then walk off, whispering. Cam looks around. The kids fidget in their seats, restless, bored.

CAM (CONT'D)
Some of these kids are gonna have to go to the bathroom.

MICHELLE
We can't let them out of this room. They're not safe out there. NO ONE IS SAFE.

RISHI

But the demon only goes after the
virgins, right?

CAM

Yeah, but how do we know which ones
are the virgins?

MICHELLE

I can tell.

She scans the crowd of kids. Pointing--

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Him. Him. Definitely NOT her. Her.

CAM

You can't tell who's getting down
just by looking at them. The quiet
ones will surprise you. Look at
Hermione Granger over there. She
might have an Only Fans account for
those pigeon toes, we don't know.

He gestures to a NERDY GIRL in a Harry Potter shirt.

RISHI

That's my daughter, Nema. What is
Only Fans?

MICHELLE

Well, then we'll just ask them,
won't we?

She heads for the stage.

CAM

Oh, shit.

He follows; Rishi on his heels.

RISHI

But what is Only Fans? Is that the
website where they make jewelry and
small trinkets to sell?

CAM

Sure.

INT. AUDITORIUM - STAGE - DAY

Cam grabs Michelle's arm, as she makes her way to the podium.

CAM

Let's think about this for a sec--

She whips around, wild-eyed. Pulls her cardigan to the side, revealing her 'Chaperone Leader' sticker that has been taped back together.

MICHELLE

I am the Chaperone Leader. And I am in charge here.

Cam holds his hands up, *okay*. She walks up to the podium.

CAM

Oh, yeah. She's totally lost it.

She turns the mic on. A LOUD WHINE. The kids all turn to the front of the room, expectant. Michelle gives a big smile--

MICHELLE

Hey, everybody. Thank you so much for your patience.

STUPID KID

BALLSACK!

A RIPPLE OF LAUGHTER. Michelle smiles wider.

MICHELLE

Yes, hilarious commentary, Hunter Cosgrove. Ballsack, indeed. Now, there's been a slight situation. But everything is fine. There is absolutely nothing to worry about. I just need to get a little head count.

(then)

So, if all the virgins in the room could just raise their hands for me? Hmm? Show of hands, who here is a virgin?

Beat. No one moves. Kids looks around. SNORTS OF LAUGHTER.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

No one? Mm hmm. Okay. Well, a vicious, soul-sucking demon from the netherworlds has been unleashed from an ancient stone by these two gentlemen--

She motions to Francis and Grady standing off stage. They throw up heavy metal hands, tongues out.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
But apparently, it only sucks the life out of the virgins. So, for safety purposes, we're gonna need to know.

Stunned silence. A FEW INCREDULOUS SNORTS. Kids look around, is she for real?

Suddenly, the auditorium doors burst open. Our two Bored Girls who needed the bathroom rush in, freaking out.

BORED GIRL
*THERE IS A DEAD GUY ON THE FLOOR
OUT THERE!*

BATHROOM GIRL
HE HAS AN AXE THROUGH HIS FACE!

SHOCKED GASPS. SHRIEKS OF PANIC ripple through the room.

Slowly, hands begin to raise.

EXT. MOUND 81 - DAY

Pete and Lindy come to the excavation site. A large, earthen mound, resembling a flat-topped pyramid is roped off, marked with *Do Not Enter* signs.

LINDY
Pete, look.

She points to the plastic sheeting used to seal off the entrance to the mound. One side has been ripped away. It flaps in the breeze. They hurry inside the mound.

INT. MOUND 81 - DAY

Dark and damp. A labyrinthine network of passageways lead deeper into the belly of the mound. Shafts of sunlight break through the various layers of earth and stone, casting a dappled light on the ground.

Pete and Lindy make their way down a narrow, winding path. He stops. Lindy whispers--

LINDY
What?

PETE
I thought I heard something. I guess it was noth--

A BAT FLIES OUT OF THE TUNNEL, straight into Pete's face. He YELPS, throwing up his hands. It flaps around him. They both SHRIEK!

PETE (CONT'D)
IS IT ON ME?!

LINDY
I DON'T KNOW! IS IT IN MY HAIR?

They flail around wildly, swatting their arms, shaking their hair. After a few moments, the bat flies off.

PETE
Shit! Goddamn it! WHY do they have
to fly right at your face?

CORA (O.S.)
Dad?

Cora's frightened voice filters up from the tunnel.

PETE
Cora?!

Pete and Lindy run further down the passageway. It widens, opening up into a large chamber. We recognize it as our tomb from the first scene. Cora, Kelsey and Wilder huddle together in the middle of the room, panicked faces. Cora lights up when she sees Pete.

CORA
Dad!

She runs over to him. He scoops her up into his arms. Lindy grabs Wilder, hugging him. Kelsey wraps her arms around both Pete and Cora, squeezing them, eyes closed.

KELSEY
Mr. McG! I've never been so happy
to see a figure of authority in my
entire life.

PETE
Are you guys okay?

CORA
Yeah, we're okay.

LINDY
What happened? What were you three
doing all the way out here?

They quickly glance at each other. Then, *slightly rehearsed--*

CORA

We got bored of the village, so we walked up to see the Mounds--

KELSEY

But then it got really dark and started raining and hailing, so we tried to turned back--

WILDER

But then, mom, we saw this *THING*. In the woods. It had GLOWING EYES. It was like, I don't know, a wolf, but not really a wolf--

CORA

And it started chasing us! So we just ran in here to hide and we must have lost it somewhere in the tunnels--

LINDY

It wasn't a wolf.

WILDER

No, mom, I swear--

LINDY

It was a *demon* wolf from hell. One of them attacked us, too.

Cora looks at her dad, now noticing his bandaged arm.

CORA

Dad, your arm!

PETE

It's alright. I'm okay.

KELSEY

Can someone please tell us what's going on? Why are there demon wolves out there chasing people? *And what is a demon wolf?*

PETE

Nobody panic. Okay, how do I put this--

LINDY

Your idiot classmates broke open a sacred stone that had an ancient demon trapped inside it.

(MORE)

LINDY (CONT'D)

The demon got out and took over Mr. Truitt's body. He was hovering around, climbing on the ceiling. Black teeth, grey skin. He did NOT look good. He threatened to kill everyone, and then he jumped out a window and disappeared.

They all stare, stunned. Horrified. Beat. Then, cheery--

PETE

But everything is going to be *fine*.

CORA

WHAT? What are you talking about? How is it going to be fine?

WILDER

Is Mr. Truitt dead?

LINDY

Mmm. Dead-ish. It's hard to say definitively at this point? But the demon is inside his body.

KELSEY

Holy. Shit. I have detention with him next week.

LINDY

TBD if he's gonna make that.

CORA

So what are we going to do? This is insane! I am *totally* freaking out!

WILDER

Everything will be okay.

Wilder wraps an arm around her, comforting. Cora whimpers into his shoulder. Pete looks at them. Now fully taking in her appearance. Disheveled. Glassy-eyed. *Wait a fucking second.* Is her shirt--

PETE

Is your shirt on inside out?

Cora straightens up. Adjusts her shirt, flustered.

CORA

What? No. This is how I wear it. Dad, what does that even matter? There's some demon on the loose and Mr. Truitt is sort of dead?

He looks at their water bottles, dangling from carabiners on all of their backpacks.

PETE
Were you kids up here drinking?

Beat. A REFLEXIVE RUMBLE OF DENIALS from all three.

CORA
Dad. Are you serious right now?
Like, is this *really* the time to
ask me this question--

PETE
Cora, look me in the eye and tell
me you guys did not sneak up here,
into the woods to drink alcohol.

Cora looks him in the eye, steady.

CORA
We were *not* drinking. Here. Take a
sip if you don't believe me.

She holds out the water bottle. A stand-off. Pete relents.

PETE
Fine.

LINDY
Okay, we need to get back to the
visitor center and get the hell out-

Pete snatches the bottle out of Cora's hand, taking a long swig. He spits it all over the ground. Disgusted.

PETE
THIS IS VODKA! And what is that?
Lemon lime Gatorade? Yech!

CORA
I cannot believe you don't trust
me!

PETE
You literally just lied right to my
face.

CORA
Oh, great, so now you think I'm
just some big liar?

PETE
YES! Apparently!

LINDY

Okay, let's all take some deep breaths. I don't know if now is really the time to get into this--

CORA

And seriously, I'm a sophomore in high school. What do you expect?

PETE

Exactly. You are *FIFTEEN*. You can't drive; you can't vote; you can't even rent a hotel room by yourself. The government trusts you with literally *NOTHING*. You are not allowed to be drinking, young lady.

She rolls her eyes. SNORTS a laugh. Lower--

CORA

Since when do you even care?

PETE

WHAT?

CORA

What? I just mean, Mom is the one who does all this stuff. The *parent* stuff. You're like, fun dad that I hang out with on weekends and go on date nights with or whatever.

Pete absorbs this, stunned.

PETE

I am *NOT* fun dad. I am your parent. I do parent stuff.

CORA

Pffffth. Yeah, okay.

PETE

Okay. Okay. You are grounded. *For a month*. How's that for parent stuff? Hmm? That parent-y enough for you?

CORA

Are you kidding me right now? You cannot ground me for a month.

PETE

Just did. Just did it.

CORA
You have NO CHILL.

PETE
I have no chill? Oh, I have chill,
baby. I can chill *allll* day long--

He folds his arms, leaning against the wall. His back presses into a large stone, protruding at a different angle than all the others.

THE STONE SLIDES INTO PLACE, FLUSH AGAINST THE WALL, WITH A CLICK. Pete leaps up, startled. LOUD RUMBLING NOISES START TO ECHO THROUGH THE TOMB. The group huddles together in the center of the room.

A large stone slab in the wall begins to quiver, shaking loose. Smaller rocks and clumps of earth crumble to the ground, as the stone slides open.

Revealing a smaller, hidden chamber.

KELSEY
No freaking way.

They all creep closer, peering inside. Pete hangs back.

PETE
Nope. We should NOT go in there.

Lindy and the kids disappear into the room. He sighs, following them in.

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - DAY

Piles of ancient artifacts sit stacked around the small, musty room. Pottery, beads, stone tools, jewelry. Alcoves dug into the walls contain small, copper figurines in the shape of various animals: snakes, birds, panthers.

KELSEY
Look at all these shells, there must be a million-- EW, EW. They're teeth. Those are teeth.

PETE
No one touch *anything*. If you've seen Indiana Jones, you know that the minute you pick something up, this room is going to close off and start filling up with water. Or snakes.

Lindy shines her flashlight at the wall, illuminating a vibrant mural painted with clay and ochre. Bold strokes of yellow, orange, red and purple. Some of it has worn away with time and erosion, but what's left depicts a gruesome scene.

CLOSE ON WALL: a demon figure wreaks havoc on the tribe. Floods and lightning. Fires. Death. Animals transform into terrifying versions of themselves.

LINDY

It looks like it's telling the story of the demon.

PETE

Yep. Demon wolves. Check.

Wilder points to figures rising from the dead. A *dark mist surrounding them*.

WILDER

Oh shit. Are those zombies?

LINDY

Wait. This symbol. I've seen it before.

CLOSE ON SYMBOL: **sun and moon of equal size**. Next to it, the sun touches the tip of the largest mound, forming a giant hole. Hundreds of demons pour out from the opening. The tribe all lay dead.

Lindy opens her fanny pack, rummaging through. Pulls out her visitor's pamphlet. *Cahokia: Welcome to the City of the Sun!* She opens it, pointing to the symbol on the brochure.

LINDY (CONT'D)

Here. Sun and moon, the same size. It's the symbol for the Equinox. *When day and night are equal length*. Nate said when the setting sun aligns with the tip of Monks Mound, the tribe believed the dead could be brought back to life. Maybe that's when the Chief tried to bring his wife back from the dead, but summoned the demon instead?

PETE

Wait, Demon Mr. Truitt said something. Remember? About the sun giving birth to a portal. And his reign would begin *again*.

LINDY
The Equinox is today.

KELSEY
Hold the fuck up. So this is happening today? When the sun hits that big mound out there, this giant hole is gonna appear and a bunch of demons and zombies are gonna come pouring out of it?

They all stare at the drawing. Beat. Pete shakes his head.

PETE
Mmm, no. I don't think so. I think it's open for interpretation. This could mean a lot of different things.

Lindy shines her flashlight further down the wall. The rest of the drawings have eroded away.

LINDY
That's it. That's all that's left.

PETE
Of course it is.

CORA
Dad, what are we gonna do?

PETE
We're gonna go back to the visitor center, get on the buses and get the hell out of here.

CORA
But what about these drawings? The portal opening? The demons?

PETE
Let's not panic. We don't even know if this is real. These are just some pictures painted on a cave wall hundreds of years ago.

He points to a long, squiggly line encircling a man.

PETE (CONT'D)
Like this squiggly line thing. What is that? That could mean anything. Or nothing at all. We have no idea.

Lindy and Pete exchange worried looks. Cora catches it.

CORA

Dad, stop treating me like a little kid. I'm an adult--

PETE

Adults don't pour alcohol into their water bottles-- okay, some do, but they have serious problems. You are a *kid*. And way more immature than I thought.

She reacts, stung.

WILDER

Mom. We should ask that park ranger guy. Nate? He knew everything about this place.

Beat. Pete and Lindy exchange quick looks.

LINDY

Good idea. We'll ask Nate. When we get back. Come on, let's go.

They start to walk out. Kelsey stops, worried.

KELSEY

Wait, what about the demon wolves? Are they still out there?

CORA

(under her breath)

I'd rather be out there with a demon wolf.

PETE

Oh, you would? You would rather fight a mythological beast from the depths of hell?

CORA

YES! If it means I don't have to be stuck in here with *you*.

She stomps out of the tomb, Pete on her heels. Their arguing recedes down the tunnel. Lindy sighs.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

A dark, thick mist has settled. The group cautiously makes their way down the trail. Pete leads the charge, a few paces ahead. Wilder sidles up to him. Some nervous shuffling.

WILDER

Um. Mr. McGuire?

PETE

Yes, Wilder.

WILDER

I just wanted to say... I'm sorry.
Y'know, for the drinking stuff back
there. That was really wrong.

PETE

Well, I appreciate you admitting it
was wrong for you to bring alcohol,
but that doesn't--

WILDER

Oh, no, I didn't bring it. I don't
drink. I'm really into sports, and
that stuff would just mess me up. I
play baseball? That's why I really
look up to Cora's stepdad, Brody.
Playing for the Cubs, I mean, wow.
That's my dream, you know?

Pete sighs, closing his eyes. This is his nightmare.

WILDER (CONT'D)

Anyway. The point is, I also didn't
stop the girls from drinking. Which
I should have. They were just
really excited--

PETE

Okay, you know what? We can talk
about this another time--

WILDER

And I didn't want to seem lame, you
know? In front of Cora. Because
she's so cool. She's like the most
popular girl in school.

PETE

I'm sure there are other girls who
are more popular--

WILDER

No. She's it. Everyone wants to
either be her or be with her.

(realizing, flustered)

Not like that! And sir, I just want
you to know, *nothing happened*. With
me and Cora up there.

(MORE)

WILDER (CONT'D)

Okay, yes, she did take her shirt off. But only for like a second--

PETE

Oh, god--

WILDER

And I told her to put it back on right away.

Wilder fidgets, flustered. Then, lower--

WILDER (CONT'D)

It's like, I just don't even know if I'm ready for all that stuff yet? I mean, I know I'm supposed to act like it's no big deal. Because EVERYONE is just doing it. Like, everywhere, all the time--

PETE

No. Not everyone. Guys talk a big game, believe me. I was one of them-

WILDER

It's not just the guys. It's the girls, too. They're so aggressive! They send naked pics and tell you what they want you to do to them. And sometimes, I don't even know what they mean. The Mexican pancake? The Cleveland hot waffle? The Cosby Sweater? Like, what even is that--

Pete stops walking, whips around to face him.

PETE

Wilder! Honestly, I can think of nothing worse than having this conversation with you right now--

A MONSTROUS SNAKE, the kind you see in YouTube videos from South America with ten men wrestling it, drops from a tree.

It wraps its thick, black body around Pete. EVERYONE SCREAMS!

The snake rears up, HISSING. Long fangs dripping poison protrude from its mouth. Red eyes. Black scales. Whatever this thing is, it's sure as shit not natural.

KELSEY

What is THAT?

LINDY
I think it's the squiggly line!

Pete's face is bright red. Eyes bulging.

PETE
He's... squeezing... really...
tight.

CORA
Dad!

Cora looks around. She grabs a sharp stick from the woods. She runs over and starts hitting the snake on its body where it's holding Pete.

Its long tail sweeps around, flicking her away. She goes flying backward, landing on the ground.

Her backpack breaks open and some items spill out. Lindy looks down, *sees something*. She grabs it-- too quick for us to see-- along with A BIG CAN OF HAIR VOLUMIZER.

She runs over to the snake. Its massive head weaves in front of her, mouth open. HISSING. She SPRAYS THE VOLUMIZER all over its face. It barely flinches.

KELSEY
That's just hair spray! It's not
gonna do anything!

LINDY
Yeah, but *this* will.

She holds up the second object.

A lighter.

She flicks it on. Spraying the volumizer directly into the flame. IT TURNS INTO A BLOW TORCH, IGNITING THE FUME'S AROUND THE SNAKE'S HEAD. She yells to Kelsey--

LINDY (CONT'D)
Your water bottle!

KELSEY
But mine's just water, I swear--

LINDY
NOT THE TIME, KELSEY!

Kelsey tosses her the bottle. Lindy opens it, throwing the contents into the fire. The vodka stokes the flames, igniting the snake into a massive fireball!

The snake drops Pete. They watch in horror as the flames spread down its body. The beast writhes on the ground, slowly melting into a thick, black, smoking pile of goo.

Everyone stares, open-mouthed. Shocked. Kelsey looks at Pete, now covered in black muck.

KELSEY

EW.

They run over to him. He clutches his throat, COUGHING. Catching his breath. Cora kneels beside him.

CORA

Are you okay?

He nods, *yes*, trying to get something out.

CORA (CONT'D)

What? What is it? Dad! Are you in pain?

He coughs, hoarse. Finally manages to croak out--

PETE

Why... do you... have a lighter in your bag?

CORA

DAD. Seriously? It's for like, candles. I can't even believe you right now.

She storms off, pouting a few feet away. Kelsey and Wilder comfort her. Lindy walks over. Pete looks up at her.

PETE

That's the second time you saved my life tonight.

LINDY

It's not a competition, remember?
(beat, smile)
But if it were, I'd be winning.

PETE

I smell burnt hair. Is my hair burnt?

He turns to the side. Revealing a large patch of singed hair. Lindy winces, then shakes her head. Covers with a smile.

LINDY

Nope. You're good.

She helps him to his feet. He looks at her.

PETE
Thank you. Again.

LINDY
Anytime. Well, not anytime because this is the last field trip I'll ever chaperone. You know, if we live.

He laughs. They hold each others' gaze for a loaded beat. Like they might even... Lindy starts COUGHING.

LINDY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, you just smell SO AWFUL.

She covers her face, motioning to the black goo all over him.

LINDY (CONT'D)
I think it's the snake guts.

PETE
Yeah, no, I can smell it, too.

LINDY
It's making my eyes burn.

WILDER
Mom! Come on.

LINDY
Coming. We're coming.

They follow the kids down the wooded path, toward the faint lights of the visitor center glowing in the distance.

INT. VISITOR CENTER - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Cam and Rishi stand guard at the doors. Our group bursts in, looking like hell. Cam and Rishi react, stunned.

CAM
You're alive?! Holy shit, I gotta be honest with you, man. I did not think you would survive out there. No offense.

PETE
None taken. Neither did I.

Rishi clocks the black goo all over Pete's clothes.

RISHI
 What is all over you?

Pete looks down at his shirt.

PETE
 That would be the insides of either
 a demon wolf or a demon snake. Hard
 to tell. Both tried to kill me.

RISHI
 What is going on out there?

LINDY
 What is going on in here?

She gestures to the kids in the auditorium, now divided into
two groups on either side of the room.

ON ONE SIDE: kids huddle together, whispering. Fearful.
 Panicked. Some cry. Michelle stands guard over them with the
 stone. ON THE OTHER SIDE: kids laugh and joke around.

CAM
 It got a little Lord of the Flies
 in here. Michelle divided them up,
 virgins and non-virgins. Thought it
 would be easier to protect them
 that way.

Cora, Wilder and Kelsey SNARF stunned laughs.

CORA
 What?

CAM
 Long story. Apparently this demon
 can only inhabit the bodies of
 virgins.

KELSEY
 THANK GOD.

Everyone looks at her.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
 --that we're not still out there
 then. Because then we'd be in
 danger. Obviously.

LINDY
 Why don't you guys just sit down
 with the others.

PETE
And don't go anywhere.

CORA
 I guess I won't be going anywhere
 for a long time, will I?

They walk off. Pausing between the two groups of kids: virgins and non-virgins. They look back and forth. Beat.

Pete waits, watching. Cora glances back at him, then walks over to the virgins group. She sits with a LOUD HUFF.

Pete reacts, relieved. He gives Lindy a satisfied look, *see?* Michelle notices them, hurrying over.

LINDY
 Guys. We found something out there.

CAM
 No. Nope. I can already tell by
 that face that whatever it is, I do
 not want to know.

PETE
 We found some hidden paintings
 inside the Birdman's tomb. They
 seemed to suggest that tonight,
 when the sun sets and hits Monks
 Mound, a portal is going to open up
 and unleash all the demons of hell.

CAM
 Goddamn it. I knew I shouldn't have
 chaperoned today! I just had a
 feeling. I told my wife, I said,
 Baby, let him stay home. He can
 miss one field trip. She said, It's
 educational. HA! I wish I had my
 cellphone so I could call her and
 say *I told you so* JUST ONCE before
 I die.

RISHI
 But they're just cave drawings,
 right? It doesn't mean they're all
 real. Nate said some of them were
 just made up stories--

LINDY
 Nate has an axe through his face.
 And so far, every single thing
 about the demon in those paintings
 have tracked.

PETE

I would know, I've been almost killed by most of them.

LINDY

If this portal is gonna open, we have to find a way to stop it.

CAM

Stop it? *What?* We can't stop anything! We are not superheroes. We're just *chaperones!*

MICHELLE

Yes. And as chaperones, we took an oath to protect these kids--

CAM

From poison ivy and peanut butter.
Not from the demon apocalypse. I am an insurance adjuster for crying out loud! I'm not qualified for this.

PETE

None of us are. But no one else is coming. And when that sun sets in--
(checks watch)
Less than two hours, all of our kids are going to be in serious danger.

They look around the room at all the kids. Then, quietly--

RISHI

My daughter, Nema. She's completely embarrassed by me.

LINDY

Come on, Rishi, don't say that. I'm sure she's not--

RISHI

No, she made a Tik Tok video called, *My Dad is So Embarrassing.* She dresses up like me and imitates things I do. It has over 4,000 likes.

CAM

God, kids are dicks. Creative little fuckers though, aren't they?

RISHI

It was actually quite good. She completely captured my mannerisms. And while extremely hurtful on a personal level, I am quite proud. She's very interested in content creation. We've been looking at some great schools on the east coast.

Murmurs of agreement, *East Coast schools are good.*

RISHI (CONT'D)

But, I would like the chance to show her that I am not just that guy who humiliates her with all his weird, compulsive behaviors. I want to show her that she can count on me to be there for her, when she really needs me.

The others absorb this. Cam looks at them.

CAM

I used to be cool. I had style. Like, look at these sneakers. Are they cool? I don't know. I have no idea. I just bought them off Amazon, blind. I could be walking around in some lame ass sneakers right now and have absolutely no idea.

MICHELLE

I think they are very cool.

CAM

See? And what's worse is CJ used to think I was cool. Now, we can't even talk to each other.

RISHI

Because you humiliate him as well?

CAM

No, because I don't understand anything that comes out of his mouth. I literally don't know what the words he's using mean. I've never even heard most of them before. For example, last week? I read some of his text messages just to see what he was up to. He said, and I quote: *The birdies are PU.*

(MORE)

CAM (CONT'D)
No cap. Ya'll gotta slide.
 (beat)
 What the fuck does that even mean?

RISHI
 It sounds very sexual.

LINDY
 I think Birdies are girls. I've
 heard that one before.

MICHELLE
 And no cap sounds like it means no
 condoms.

RISHI
 Definitely. Sex with the birdies
 with no protection.

CAM
 Cap means to lie. You wanna know
 how I know?
 (beat, ashamed)
I plugged it into Urban Dictionary.
 I had to use urban dictionary to
 understand my own son. What's
 happened to me?

They all react, sympathetic. Rishi puts an arm around him.

LINDY
 They should have Shazam, but for
 teenagers. So we know what they're
 saying.

MICHELLE
 That sounds very frustrating for
 you guys. Fortunately, Sam and I
 have very clear and open lines of
 communication--
 (off their GROANS)
 What? But I'm sure a Shazam-type
 application would be very helpful
 for parents like you!

RISHI
 Okay, so yes, our kids are
 humiliated by us--

MICHELLE
 Mine's not--

LINDY
Michelle!

RISHI

And we don't understand most of what they say and do. And I know we can't protect them from every single bad thing in the world.

(beat)

But we can try and stop this from happening.

They all absorb this. Steely-eyed looks of determination.

MICHELLE

So, how do we defeat the demon?
What did the drawings say to do?

Pete and Lindy exchange looks.

PETE

They... didn't. That part was kind of washed away.

CAM

Washed away?

PETE

Erosion, I guess? I don't know a lot about the topography of caves--

CAM

So the only part we need to figure out how to save the day is *missing*?

RISHI

Maybe you should have led with that.

LINDY

Look, the Birdman stopped the demon once before, right? So there *must* be a way. We just have to figure out how he did it.

CAM

Oh, okay, we'll just figure it out. Sure! That shouldn't be too hard. And *HOW* are we going to do that? The answer is not going to just appear right in front of us.

Lindy looks at Michelle, holding the stone tablet to her chest. The carving of The Birdman peeks out from her arms.

LINDY

Maybe it will.

She tries to take the stone from Michelle's arms. Michelle yanks it back. They have a brief back and forth.

LINDY (CONT'D)
Michelle! Let go!

Michelle finally releases it. Lindy turns it over. ON THE OTHER SIDE: a series of small symbols and pictographs carved into the stone. They all study it for a moment.

CAM
 Okay, none of us know what we're looking at. We have no idea what any of these symbols mean.

PETE
 No. But I know someone who might.

CUT TO:

DOOGAN SITS AT A TABLE, STARING DOWN AT THE STONE IN AWE.

DOOGAN
 This is *so cool*. You actually got this from Birdman's tomb?

He looks at a large, dark splotch of red on the corner.

DOOGAN (CONT'D)
 Whoa. Is that blood?

ALL
 (yes)
 NO.

PETE
 Doogan. You said you've been researching Cahokia for months, and you joined some archeology club online--

FRANCIS (O.S.)
Doooogan.

They all look over to the side. Francis and Grady stand there, eavesdropping. Beat.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)
 My b. Go on.

PETE
 Have you seen any of these symbols before?

DOOGAN

Not all of them? But I recognize some. It's pretty cool, they send out a weekly newsletter with messages you can try to decode and--

CAM

GREAT. What does it say?

Doogan studies it. Lights up at something.

DOOGAN

Ooh! These here? They're the symbol for human sacrifices. To some dark force? A ghost? No, a demon!

(then)

Which were most likely virgins, because in prehistoric cultures that was standard pract--

CAM

Yep, already got the virgins part. What else?

DOOGAN

Hmm. This might be the symbol for corn? Or was it famine?

RISHI

We are all going to die.

LINDY

Take your time. You're doing great.

DOOGAN

(reading)

Okay. Hmm. Okay yeah! A great warrior, ooh the Birdman! Yeah, he gave the demon something as an offering? I can't tell what it is. But it doesn't matter, because it was just a trick. The sun was supposed to hit the top of Monks Mound, but when it hit this object instead, the demon was sucked inside it.

LINDY

It's gotta be talking about the stone. *The Birdman must have given the demon this stone.* As a fake offering.

PETE

Yes! And when the sun hit the stone
on the Equinox, it trapped the
demon inside it.

RISHI

But Demon Mr. Truitt will never
fall for that twice. He's terrified
of that stone now. He won't touch
it. We'll never get it near him.

LINDY

And we can't get it to the peak of
Monks Mound without him knowing.
He's already up there, waiting for
his portal to open.

Pete thinks for a moment. A realization--

PETE

Maybe we don't have to get *the*
stone to the top of Monks Mound.
(then)
We could build a heliostat.

MICHELLE

What's a heliostat?

PETE

I use them in my work all the time.
It's a device that uses reflective
surfaces to track the movement of
the sun and redirect its light to a
specific location.

CAM

Are you an engineer?

PETE

Landscape architect.

Beat.

CAM

*We're putting our lives in the
hands of a gardener?!* No offense.

PETE

Okay, well, there's a lot more
involved than just gardening--

LINDY

How does it work?

PETE

In theory, we could hide the heliostat at the top of Monks Mound. When the sun hit it, it would redirect the light to a place where we would have the stone waiting. Surprising the demon and, hopefully, trapping him inside.

RISHI

And you've built these before?

PETE

Not technically, no. But I know how. *Mostly*. And we're running out of time and options.

LINDY

What do you need to build it?

PETE

Mirrors, reflective surfaces of any kind.

MICHELLE

There might be some things down in the gift shop.

LINDY

I'll go with you.

PETE

And I'll have to build a makeshift solar tracker. I'll need batteries and some kind of small motor to construct a microcontroller--

RISHI

What about using the interactive displays in the exhibits? Don't some of them run on motors?

PETE

Yes. Great idea, Rishi. Alright, we should split up and meet back here with the supplies.

LINDY

But who's gonna watch the kids?

Francis steps up. Gestures to Grady and himself.

FRANCIS

We can handle that.

GRADY
We got you, bruh.

Pete gives them a look. *Seriously?*

FRANCIS
No? That's fair.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Point taken.

MICHELLE
Sam can do it. He's very
responsible. He just got a summer
internship to MIT.

LINDY
Had to throw that in there.

MICHELLE
Sam!

Michelle's son, SAM, (quiet, geeky) hurries over.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
I need you to be in charge, okay, honey? No one leaves this room until we get back. And guard this stone with your life. It's very, very important. Can you handle that?

SAM
Yes, mom. Of course.

Michelle gives them a patronizing smile. Lindy rolls her eyes. The chaperones hurry out of the room. Sam pulls the doors shut, locking them. He turns. Francis and Grady stand there, staring at him. Big grins.

INT. VISITOR'S CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Michelle and Lindy race down the hall, following signs to the gift shop. They pass the Conservation Laboratory. *Through the windowed wall, we can see inside.*

ON THE FLOOR: Two legs in cargo pants and brown boots stretch out from behind a table. Nate's lifeless body.

Finger-like wisps of black mist drift in from outside through the shattered window. The mist snakes along the floor, reaching Nate's legs. Wafting over top of them, then drifting out the open door into the hallway.

Beat. One brown boot twitches.

INT. GIFT SHOP - DAY

An impressive, two-story room full of museum paraphernalia. Racks of clothes and sweatshirts. Kiosks and display cases offer jewelry, mugs, hats, and clothes. Michelle and Lindy race in. Looking around.

LINDY

Grab anything reflective.

They split up, running to different sections of the shop.

WE STAY WITH LINDY. She rifles through a children's toy section. Grabbing shiny things off the shelves and discarding others on the ground. Keychains, crystals, jewelry, a sequin sweatshirt. She sprints off down another aisle.

She runs into Michelle, who *holds a shopping basket*. Michelle looks at Lindy's arms, piled high with items. Lindy struggles to carry it all; things spill out onto the ground at their feet. Michelle purses her lips. Judge-y.

MICHELLE

Ooh. We should probably try to keep things organized as best we can.

(re basket)

See, I have mine separated by category--

LINDY

Jesus, Michelle! Not everything is a competition. Okay, yes, YOU WIN. You're a better mom. Your kid is smarter and going to be more successful. He'll probably run a fortune 500 company and my kid will run a failed Ponzi scheme out of my basement. WE GET IT. You're perfect. But do you have to be such a bitch about everything?

Michelle stares at her for a long moment. Her lower lip starts to quiver. Her face scrunches up.

LINDY (CONT'D)

Wait, what are you doing?

SHE BURSTS INTO TEARS. HIGH-PITCHED WHIMPERS. Lindy GROANS.

LINDY (CONT'D)

Come on! You're seriously gonna do this now?

Michelle wipes at her face.

MICHELLE

I'm sorry my breakdown is coming at
an inconvenient time for you.

LINDY

Well, I mean yeah, kinda. There *is*
a demon trying to kill us all--

MICHELLE

You'd probably be happy if I died!

LINDY

That's not true--

MICHELLE

I'm not an idiot. I know everyone
at school hates me. All the
parents. The kids. Even the
teachers.

LINDY

They don't hate you--

MICHELLE

You don't think I know what they
say behind my back? That I'm a
control freak? An uptight bitch? A
frigid shrew?

LINDY

Come on, no one thinks that. You're
reading too much into things--

MICHELLE

No. I actually *read* those things.
Connie Schroder accidentally cc'd
me on a group email.

LINDY

Well. I heard she's going through a
divorce, so it's probably a little
bit of misplaced anger--

MICHELLE

Do you want to know why I'm the
head of every committee? Why I run
every school function? Why I
organize and chair every single
event?

Lindy shifts, adjusting everything in her arms.

LINDY

Sure? But maybe after--

MICHELLE

Because it's the only way I'll be included. Nobody invites me to anything. None of the other moms ask me to join their little group dinners or mom happy hours. Not even a coffee. So, if I don't organize it, I don't get to go. It's as simple as that.

(beat)

And I just always worry that Sam... I don't want him to end up like me. To be excluded from everything like I am. Because it's just a really lonely place to be.

Lindy absorbs this. Softening. She sighs.

LINDY

I'll get drinks with you.

MICHELLE

You're just saying that because you feel bad for me.

LINDY

No. That's not... the *only* reason. Look, we're both moms who are just worried about our freaking kids all the time. We probably have a lot more in common than we know. So, if we live after today, we should go get drinks together. Really.

Michelle smiles. Then--

MICHELLE

Who knows. Maybe you'll even start volunteering at school. It's never too late to get involved--

(off her look)

But drinks are great. Perfect.

Suddenly, the lights flicker and go out. They turn, and STANDING IN THE DOORWAY OF THE GIFT SHOP ACROSS THE ROOM IS...

EVE. Her small outline is illuminated by the soft glow of safety lights. Her head hangs lower, obscuring her face.

LINDY

Oh my god, Eve?

Michelle leans in, whispering--

MICHELLE
You said she was dead.

LINDY
I thought she was! I'm not a doctor. She looked pretty dead. She didn't have a pulse.

MICHELLE
Eve, are you okay? Lindy told us all you were dead.

LINDY
Seriously?

Eve slowly extends a frail hand toward them.

MICHELLE
I think she wants you to go over there.

LINDY
YOU go over there. Eve? Are you okay?

Eve lifts her head. Grey skin. Sunken, black eyes. Hollow face. She opens her mouth in a silent scream, revealing a horrifying black abyss.

LINDY (CONT'D)
Oh, shit. She's dead. She's definitely dead. She's a zombie.

Eve leaps up onto the counter effortlessly. Crouched on all fours like an animal. HISSING. THEY SCREAM!

MICHELLE
Run!

They turn and sprint through the store, splitting up. Lindy races down an aisle. Eve scrambles over the tops of shelves with supernatural speed and agility. She drops down in front of Lindy, cutting off her escape.

Lindy looks around, desperate. She grabs an umbrella from a rack for sale, wielding it like a sword. Eve HISSES and lunges for her. Lindy stabs at her, plunging the metal tip of the umbrella through her eye. Eve doesn't flinch.

She steps back and pulls the umbrella from her eye, her gooey, black eyeball impaled on the end. Lindy DRY HEAVES.

LINDY
Oh god, that is so disgus--

Eve LEAPS onto her chest, knocking her over. They fall backward. Lindy struggles to fight her off. Eve SNARLS AND SNAPS at her face, getting closer...

THUNK!

The butt of a fire extinguisher makes contact with the side of Eve's head, crushing her skull.

She falls limply to the side. Lindy looks up, breathing heavy. Michelle stands over top of her, holding the fire extinguisher. She looks down at Eve.

Then, drives the canister down on top of her head once more, hard. Bits of Eve's skull spray up. Lindy jumps, startled.

MICHELLE

Just to be safe. In movies, zombies always leap back up to get you when you least expect it.

Michelle tosses the extinguisher. Smooths her hair and wipes a bit of "goo" off her cardigan. Holds a hand out to Lindy.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

You okay? Did she bite you?
Wouldn't want to have to kill you,
too. I'm kidding.

Lindy cautiously takes Michelle's outstretched hand.

INT. CAHOKIAN EXHIBITS - SAME

Cam, Rishi and Pete hurry through rooms full of interactive exhibits: various multimedia presentations on Cahokian life.

CAM

What are we looking for?

PETE

Anything that's running on a small motor.

Rishi pauses at an exhibit. A group of wax figures with bows and arrows hunt a large, stuffed bison. He stares at their faces, posed in fierce battle cries. A sudden thought.

RISHI

These statues. They can't suddenly come alive and kill us? Can they?

Pete looks over. Beat.

PETE
No.

CAM
You hesitated! What was that?

PETE
What? I'm pretty sure the demon can
only affect living things.

RISHI
Pretty sure?

They move to another exhibit: "WATERWAYS OF CAHOKIA." A large-scale 3D model of the city takes up the entire room. Water rushes down a series of canals and rivers. Pete dips his hand into the running water.

PETE
This water needs a pump. And that
pump runs on a motor.

He ducks down, searching underneath the massive table. Spots the pump housing. He finds a protective plate, struggling to yank it off. After a few hard tugs, it breaks free, revealing a small electrical motor. He looks up at Cam and Rishi--

PETE (CONT'D)
Now, we just have to disconnect it
without getting electrocuted.

They stare at him, eyes wide. Mouths hanging open. Frozen.

PETE (CONT'D)
I mean, it shouldn't be *that* hard.

CLOSE ON PETE: a small, red droplet falls onto his shoulder. He looks down at it. Slowly, turns to see...

Nate.

Standing over top of him, the axe still embedded into his face. His eyes are black. Skin, grey. Blood runs down the handle, dripping onto Pete. They all freeze in fear.

CAM
Heyyy, Nate. We didn't know you
were... alive, buddy. Or we would
have tried to get some help. For
that... face situation.

RISHI
(lower)
Is he mad? Does he look mad?

CAM

It's hard to say. The axe is covering most of his facial features--

In an explosive BURST, Nate GRABS Pete by the throat, choking him. Cam and Rishi SHRIEK!

RISHI

He's mad! He is definitely mad!

Rishi, panicked, unzips his fanny pack. Searching. *He pulls out a kid's epipen. SQUEALING, HE STABS Nate in the neck.* Nate releases Pete; Pete scrambles backward.

Beat.

Nate reaches up, grabbing the handle of the axe. Begins to rock it back and forth, slowly pulling it out of his own face.

CAM

I think the epipen only made him stronger.

Nate yanks the axe free. Rishi DRY HEAVES, VOMITING a little at his feet.

They all scatter, as Nate SWINGS THE AXE AT PETE. Pete leaps out of the way. The axe hits the table, SMASHING IT! Water pours out all over the ground.

Pete scrambles over the wreckage, as Nate repeatedly swings the axe down around him. Pete rolls side to side, barely missing the sharp blade. He manages to get to his feet, just as...

An arrow whizzes past his head, impaling itself into the wall behind him.

He whips around, looking over. Rishi and Cam stand by the hunting exhibit, holding prehistoric bows and arrows.

Rishi's hands shake wildly, as he loads another arrow.

PETE

Are you trying to shoot *him* or *me*?

RISHI

I'm sorry! There's a steep learning curve. I've never shot a bow and arrow before, I'm a freaking dentist!

Nate swings the axe; Pete grabs for his arm. They struggle. Another arrow SLICES through the air, grazing Pete's leg. He YELPS in pain.

CAM (O.S.)
Sorry!

PETE
SHOOT HIM, NOT ME! HIM!

CAM (O.S.)
Working on it!

Nate overpowers Pete, wrestling him to the ground. He presses the axe closer and closer to Pete's face. Pete strains against him, as the blade hovers just millimeters above him...

FWUMP! One arrow pierces the wall beside them. FWACK! And one arrow slices right through the side of Nate's head. He falls on top of Pete. Still.

REVERSE TO REVEAL: Cam and Rishi both holding bows. They celebrate!

RISHI
I can't believe I got him!

CAM
I got him. Yours hit the wall.

RISHI
No, mine clearly went through his head. You shot first and yours hit the wall.

CAM
Uh, nooo--

PETE (O.S.)
Guys? Little help here, maybe?

They look over. Pete struggles to push Nate's body off of him. They run over to help. Michelle and Lindy burst into the room, panicked--

LINDY
THERE ARE--
(sees the situation)
Zombies. Okay, yeah. So, those are apparently a thing we have to watch out for now.

MICHELLE

Lindy might also turn into one. But I'm keeping an eye on her.

(off Lindy's look)

What? I said *might*. But I'm sure you'll be totally fine.

Michelle discreetly shakes her head at the guys: *not so sure*.

INT. EXHIBIT - DAY

Cam, Rishi and Michelle use tape and string to fashion a wooden frame around all the mirrors and reflective items. Lindy walks past them into a smaller, adjacent room.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Pete works to build a crude solar tracker for the heliostat. Lindy watches him from the doorway for a moment.

LINDY

Do you think it will work?

He looks up.

PETE

Yes. I do.

LINDY

You have no idea, do you?

PETE

None, whatsoever.

LINDY

God, this sucks!

PETE

I mean, to be fair, it's actually pretty solid considering what I had to work with?

LINDY

Not that. I was actually starting to like you! And now you're gonna go up there to that mound to try and stop a demon and probably die--

He reacts, alarmed.

PETE

I... might not? Die--

LINDY

Or at the very least be horribly
disfigured--

PETE

You are not making me feel
confident about this decision--

LINDY

And it's really hard to meet good
guys! I can't even find a guy who
cares enough to ask me a *single*
question about myself and then
actually *listen* to the answer, and
here you are building a hella--
heller-- hellu--

PETE

Heliostat.

LINDY

To save the whole world!

She slumps into the seat next to him. Sighs.

LINDY (CONT'D)

It's not fair.

PETE

If it makes you feel better? I'm
not trying to save the whole world.
I'm just trying to get my daughter
to talk to me.

(off her laugh)

And... I haven't dated anyone since
my divorce. It's been, god, three
years? Wow. That's depressing.

LINDY

Why not?

PETE

I don't know. I guess I was just
holding onto the past. But you
can't bring the dead back to life,
right?

LINDY

You're not missing anything, just
so you know. Dating is the worst.
It's AWFUL out there. Believe me,
you'd rather be fighting the demon
apocalypse. Less assholes.

He laughs. They share a smile. A loaded beat. He leans in... AND GENTLY KISSES HER. After a moment they pull back, staring at each other. Breath heavy. Tension building. Both wanting the same thing...

PETE

Fuck it. I'm probably going to die out there, right?

LINDY

We can be quick.

PETE

Oh, it will be quick.

He grabs for her and it's on. KISSING. DEVOURING EACH OTHER. HANDS ALL OVER. TUGGING, TEARING, PULLING OFF CLOTHES. In between kissing, overlapping-

LINDY

I didn't shave my legs today. I just didn't think I would be having sex on a field trip--

PETE

I haven't worked out in a couple... years. I meant to get back in the gym, but work's been really busy--

LINDY

Shit, I think I forgot deodorant--

PETE

I have a little work to do in the love handle area--

They laugh. Nervous. Giddy. More kissing as they slowly lower to the floor out of frame.

INT. VISITOR CENTER - LOBBY - LATER

Our chaperones approach the double doors of the auditorium. SOUNDS OF HOUSE MUSIC THUMPING FROM INSIDE THE ROOM.

CAM

What the hell?

He pulls on the doors. Locked. He knocks. A teenage voice on the other side--

VOICE (O.S.)

What's the password?

CAM

Open this door right now.

VOICE (O.S.)

Oof. Can't do that. Wish I could.
I'm gonna need the password.

MICHELLE

Angelo De Luca, is that you? Do you want me to call your mother when we get back? Open this door right now.

SOUNDS OF THE DOOR UNLOCKING. Cam pushes it open.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Kids party, drinking from their water bottles. The theater sound system is now rigged up to a small MP3 player, BLASTING HOUSE MUSIC. A TIPSY KID runs past them--

LINDY

What is going on in here?

TIPSY KID

It's an end of the world party!

Michelle looks around, horrified.

MICHELLE

Is everyone drinking?

TIPSY KID

No, not everyone. A kid also passed out Molly.

They look around. Kids dance and make out.

CAM

Are they taking shots from the stone up there?

ON STAGE: A GROUP OF KIDS use the stone as a luge, pouring liquid down the carvings from their water bottles. One kid kneels underneath it, taking the shot. Michelle GASPS.

MICHELLE

Sam?!

Sam stands up. He wobbles, looking out into the audience. Sees his mom. Throws his hands up in drunken celebration--

SAM

I DON'T WANT TO DIE A VIRGIN!

KIDS GO CRAZY, CHEERING! LOUD WOOS! Lindy looks at Michelle.

LINDY

I mean, at least he's being included? That's good, right?

CAM

Kids are idiots.

Pete walks through the crowd, searching for Cora. Lindy follows. Francis and Grady talk to a GROUP OF GIRLS.

FRANCIS

Honestly? *You'd be saving his life.*
One of you would be a legit hero.

The girls roll their eyes, walk off. Francis sees Pete.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Mr. McGuire, I tried to stop everyone. I was like, *Guys. We should NOT be partying right now.* *There is a demon out there trying to kill all the virgins--*

PETE

Where's Cora?

Francis points backstage. Pete and Lindy head off. Francis looks over at ANOTHER GIRL sitting nearby. Smiles.

FRANCIS

Crazy times, huh? Did you hear this demon only goes after the virgins? Wild. I guess that means there's only one way to be safe, right? Have you met my friend, Grady?

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Cora, Wilder and Kelsey sit backstage. Pete and Lindy approach. Cora gives an annoyed, teenage eye roll.

CORA

I'm not drinking. Even though like, everyone else is.

PETE

Can I talk to you for a second?

Wilder looks at Lindy. Confused.

WILDER

Mom, is your shirt on backwards?

Lindy and Pete both react, flustered. Wilder looks between them, as they fumble. Lindy straightens her hair and shirt--

LINDY

No, what? I... got something on it. Right.

PETE

Yeah, remember you spilled that... coffee. Earlier.

WILDER

Mom?

LINDY

Come on, let's give them a minute.

They all walk off, leaving Pete and Cora alone. He takes a deep breath. Then--

PETE

I just wanted to say, I'm sorry.

CORA

For completely overreacting and grounding me for a month like a total psycho?

PETE

Oh, no. I was right on with that. You are definitely grounded. That was amazing parenting on my part.

He gives a chef's kiss. Cora SCOFFS. Then, serious--

PETE (CONT'D)

But, everything up until that moment? Questionable at best.

CORA

What do you mean?

PETE

I don't think I did such a great job all the time. You know, of being a dad. After your mom and I got divorced--

CORA

Dad, stop. It's fine. People get divorced all the time. It's not a big deal. I'm not, like, scarred.

He looks at her.

PETE

I should have been better. I *wish* I'd been better. Your mom deserved that. You deserved it. I was very selfish and too caught up in my work. And I was wrong. About a lot of things. But I loved your mom very much. I should have told her that more often. And I'll regret that for the rest of my life.

Cora blinks, absorbing these words she didn't even know she needed to hear until now. She gathers herself.

CORA

Mom's good now. She's happy.

PETE

I know. And that makes me really happy. And now she and Brody are getting ready to have another baby--

CORA

Wait, *WHAT?* A baby?

PETE

Oh. She didn't... mention that?

CORA

But, *how?* She's like, *so old*. Is that even physically possible?

PETE

Yeah, don't say that part to her. She does not like it. And just... also don't tell her I told you. Let's forget about it.

They share a small laugh. Cora shakes her head, stunned.

CORA

Wow. A baby. That's so weird.

PETE

Tell me about it. I feel like I blinked and you went from five to fifteen. How does that happen?

CORA

I dunno. I just grew up.

PETE

Yeah. You did. And I'm really proud of you.

CORA

You are?

PETE

Yes. Just no more drinking. Ever.

CORA

Okaaay, Dad.

She rolls her eyes. He laughs. Looks at her. Then--

PETE

Wanna know my best and worst day as a parent? They were the same day. The day you were born.

She SCOFFS.

CORA

Thanks a lot.

PETE

It was the best day because you were finally here and I just couldn't believe I could love something so much.

(beat)

And the worst, because I knew from that moment on, I would never have another day where I wasn't worried about you. My heart would forever be on the outside of my body.

She absorbs this.

PETE (CONT'D)

I have to go take care of something now. But I'll be right back, okay?

CORA

Okay?

He looks at her. Swallows the lump in his throat--

PETE

Be good, kiddo.

He walks out. Cora stares after him, confused. Then, jumps up, following him.

CORA

Wait. Dad! Where are you going?

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Pete and Lindy move through the partying kids toward the other chaperones. Cora, Wilder and Kelsey on their heels.

CORA

Dad, stop! What are you doing?

PETE

Cora, just wait here until I get back.

CORA

Get back from where? Dad, are you crazy? You cannot go out there alone.

Rishi steps forward, the ancient bow and arrows slung across his back.

RISHI

He's not. We're going with him.

CAM

Aw man, I knew it.

Rishi's daughter, NEMA, perks up, overhearing. Alarmed.

NEMA

Dad? Where are you going?

He looks at her. Chest puffed out.

RISHI

We're going to stop a demon from taking over the world.

(beat)

With this.

He steps aside, revealing the crude, makeshift heliostat. Its base is made from wooden sticks duct-taped together. Wires protrude from the small motor, connecting out to two AAA batteries. A frame fashioned from duct-taped pencils holds a bunch of toy compact mirrors and shiny sequin keychains together to form one large, reflective shield.

They all stare at it. Beat.

PETE

Surprisingly, it works a lot better than it looks.

One sequin keychain falls off. When it hits the table, it lights up and begins PLAYING AN UPBEAT KID'S TUNE.

Beat. Pete grabs it, turning it off and sticking it back on.

PETE (CONT'D)
We should go.

NEMA
But, Dad. Are you gonna be okay?
And what's on your shirt? Is
that... vomit?

Rishi looks down.

RISHI
Yes. And blood. Oh god, with some
hair in it. And little chunks. Is
that brain?

He starts to lose it, DRY HEAVING. Cam leans it, lower--

CAM
You got this. Keep it together.

Rishi swallows it back down. Straightens up. Then, unzips his fanny pack, pulling out a little Handiwipe packet. He tears it open with his teeth and wipes off his hands and shirt.

A ripple of "Oh, good idea. I didn't know we had those" from the other chaperones. They unzip their fanny packs, following suit. Beat of silent wiping.

Then, Rishi crumples up the wet paper, throwing it down on the floor with a FWAP.

RISHI
Let's go save the world.

CAM
CJ! I'll be back! DO NOT TELL YOUR
MOTHER ABOUT THIS! And stop
drinking! I SEE YOU.
(then)
Screw it.

He grabs a KID'S water bottle, taking a long swig. Makes a face of disgust. COUGHING.

CAM (CONT'D)
What is that?

DUMB KID
Benadryl.

CAM
Seriously?

DUMB KID
I'm sorry.

INT. VISITOR CENTER - LOBBY - DAY

The guys head toward the doors to the outside. Pete carries the heliostat. Rishi holds the stone. Michelle and Lindy stay back with the kids, lingering in the hallway.

LINDY
Pete! Wait!

He turns. She runs up, giving him a long kiss. Wilder's mouth drops, horrified.

LINDY (CONT'D)
See you when you get back.

He smiles. Walks out. Lindy puts a comforting arm around Cora. Wilder stares at his mom, aghast.

THROUGH THE SLIDING GLASS DOORS: they watch the guys jump in a grounds crew golf cart and zip away down the wooded trail.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

The sun sinks lower in the sky, toward the tip of Monks Mound. Cam drives with Pete shotgun. Rishi sits in the back.

CAM
So what's our plan?

PETE
I'll get the heliostat to the top of Monks Mound and position it so when the sun hits it, the light will be redirected to a spot down at the bottom. Where one of you will be waiting with the stone.

CAM
But how do we get Mr. Truitt away from the top of the Mound?

RISHI
Guys?

PETE
Someone will have to... lure him.

CAM

Lure him with what?
 (off his hesitation)
Ourselves? Oh, hell no.

RISHI

Hey, guys?

CAM

That is a terrible plan! Who's
 going to do the luring?

PETE

Well, I would lure him but I have
 to set up the heliostat. I'm the
 only one who knows how it works.

CAM

Uh, no offense but that thing
 doesn't look too sophisticated. I'm
 sure I could figure it out--

RISHI

GUYS!

CAM/PETE

What?

RISHI

How fast does this golf cart go?

CAM

Twenty-five, thirty miles an hour?
 Why?

RISHI

And how fast do you think a demon
 wolf can run?

They all spin around, looking. About fifty yards behind them,
 standing in the middle of the trail, is a black wolf. Head
 low. Eyes glowing red. SNARLING.

CAM

We can outrun him.

Cam floors it. The wolf takes off, quickly gaining ground.

RISHI

Nope. He's faster. He's definitely
 faster.

PETE

The bow and arrows!

Rishi lights up, remembering. He pulls the arrows out of the leather sling, just as Cam hits a bump in the trail. The golf cart catches some air, LANDING WITH A THUD. The arrows spill out of Rishi's hand, all over the ground behind them. Beat.

RISHI
The arrows are gone.

CAM
Reach back there in the engine compartment and pull off the governor!

Rishi climbs over the seat, yanking open the small engine compartment at the back of the cart. The wolf gets closer, SNARLING AND SNAPPING. Rishi stares down at the engine.

RISHI
Which one is the governor?

CAM
It's a little black handle attached to the throttle!

The wolf is right on top of them now. Inches away. Rishi reaches down, YANKING ON A SMALL, CONTROL ARM. It comes off in his hand just as the wolf leaps up, front legs on the cart, biting at Rishi's leg.

RISHI SHRIEKS! CAM SLAMS HIS FOOT DOWN ON THE GAS. A LOUD BACKFIRE NOISE as the cart gains more juice. Cam takes a hard turn, and the wolf rolls off into the brush.

RISHI
He's gone! We're good!

MORE RED EYES APPEAR THROUGH THE TREES. Two wolves take off, running along side them.

RISHI (CONT'D)
We're not good! NOT GOOD!

Cam floors it, threading through the trees, branches scraping against the cart. Pete tries to hold the fragile heliostat together, as they jostle up and down over the uneven ground.

One wolf gets dangerously close. Rishi hangs off the cart, scooping up a tree limb from the ground as they fly past it.

Wolf leaps. Rishi SCREAMS! Uses the limb to catapult the wolf over their heads and into the brush. He rolls away, injured.

Still one left. He charges for them, leaping...

Cam jerks the wheel, cutting a sharp turn. *Driving them into a swampy pool of mud.* The wheels spin, stuck.

The wolf doubles back. Slinks closer, ears back, teeth bared. They brace themselves...

LOUD ROAR OF AN ENGINE AS A JEEP CRASHES THROUGH THE UNDERGROWTH, FLYING THROUGH TREES!

Kelsey is behind the wheel. Cora rides shotgun with Wilder in the back.

CLOSE ON LICENSE PLATE: N8TE

The jeep RAMS into the wolf, sending him flying into the woods. Kelsey swerves to a stop. Mud sprays up on everyone.

PETE

Cora! What are you guys doing out here?

CORA

Saving you!

KELSEY

Some claustrophobic kid started having a panic attack and we snuck out. Ranger Nate's jeep was in the parking lot and his keys were under the seat. So not hard to find.

PETE

This feels like something you've done before.

KELSEY

(for sure)

Definitely not. That was my very first time stealing a car.

PETE

You have to go back. Right now. It's too dangerous out here.

CORA

No. I'm not leaving you.

PETE

Cora.

RISHI

You really want to send them back out there by themselves? With those things running around?

CAM
And we need that jeep.

Pete considers this. Sighs.

PETE
Fine, but you guys are *staying in the car the entire time*.

They all pile into the jeep. Pete looks at Kelsey.

PETE (CONT'D)
That was some serious driving back there, Kelsey.

She shrugs.

KELSEY
It wasn't that hard. I hit things all the time.

PETE
Okay, I'll drive.

She climbs in the back. They take off.

EXT. MONKS MOUND - ALMOST SUNSET

The clouds melt across the sky in streaks of red and orange. The jeep sits at the bottom of Monks Mound, parked at the edge of the woods, hidden in some brush.

A long staircase made of compacted earth and clay winds up the side of the Mound. Black mist hangs heavy at the top, obscuring their view. The sun sinks closer to the peak.

CAM
That sun's gonna hit any minute now. You gotta get up there--

WILDER (O.S.)
So what, are you and my mom just like a *thing* now?

Everyone turns. Wilder sits in the back seat, arms crossed. Spiraling.

WILDER (CONT'D)
Are you guys dating or whatever?

PETE
Wilder, maybe we can talk about this later?

WILDER

Oh, sure thing. *New Dad.*

Pete sighs. Rishi looks to the top of the Mound.

RISHI

How are we going to get Demon
Truitt down here, close enough to
the stone to trap him?

CAM

Someone's gotta lure him out.

They all look at each other. Then--

CORA

We'll do it.

PETE

Absolutely not. No way.

CORA

You said the demon can only inhabit
the body of a virgin, right?

CAM

Well, yes, but--

CORA

So, he'll only come after one of
us. We'll go. We'll be the bait.

CAM

(re virgin)

But... um, can you guys?

CORA

YES!

She looks at Kelsey for confirmation. Beat. Not convincing--

KELSEY

Oh, totally, yeah.

WILDER

Why would she just kiss you like
that? Out of the blue. It makes no
sense. So what, do you like, love
her now? She and my dad are
probably getting back together,
just so you know.

CORA

Dad, you know I'm right.

PETE

No. No way. It's too dangerous out
there. *I'm not letting you go.*

She looks at him. A brave, young woman. Not a little kid.

CORA

You have to trust me.

She nods to the four sets of terraced steps winding all the way up the side of the mound. Disappearing into the mist.

CORA (CONT'D)

Now get moving, because those are a lot of stairs.

She takes off, running into the large, grassy expanse at the foot of the mound. Kelsey and Wilder scramble to follow her.

CORA (CONT'D)

HEY, MR. TRUITT! WE'RE DOWN HERE!
COME AND GET US!

PETE

Shit, Cora!

Pete starts after her, but Cam grabs him--

CAM

You've got to get up there. We
won't let anything happen to them.
(off his look)
I promise.

Pete grabs the heliostat, running over to the stairs.

EXT. MONKS MOUND - DAY

Pete races up the stairs, two at a time. Breathing heavy. He pauses at one landing, looking up. Three more sets to go.

PETE

I have got to get back in the gym.

The wind picks up in intensity. LOW MOANING SOUNDS.

Pete looks around, alarmed. Small patches of earth around him begin to shake and vibrate. Rocks shift and crumble, as something pushes through the surface. He leans down, looking--

A decaying hand rises up from the ground. Yellowed nails. Black and grey mottled flesh hangs loosely from exposed tendons.

Pete jumps back, horrified. All around him, hands and arms burst through the earth, clawing their way out of the mound.

250 human sacrifices breaking free from their ancient tomb.
MOANING AND WAILING.

Pete starts to run, but a hand grabs his ankle, pulling him down. He falls, the heliostat tumbling from his grip. He scrambles to get up, but another hand bursts forth, grabbing him. Pinning him to the ground.

He struggles, pulling at the gruesome hands blooming all around him. As quickly as he breaks free from one grip, another hand appears, pulling at him. Holding him down.

A hand bursts forth, covering his face, obscuring his vision. He sinks down into the earth...

A LOUD SHRIEK! A foot comes STOMPING DOWN. SICKENING CRACK OF BONES SMASHING. THEN, A DRY HEAVE.

Rishi.

Rishi pulls the gruesome appendages from Pete's body. Rotting fingers come off in his hands. He SHRIEKS, tossing them aside. Trying not to vomit. He yanks Pete to his feet.

Pete runs over, grabbing the heliostat. The motor hangs limply from a wire. They stare at it.

RISHI

That looks broken. But it's just so hard to tell because it already looked broken when you built it.

PETE

It will still work.

RISHI

It will?

Another hand pops up; Pete STOMPS on it.

PETE

I don't know. Come on.

They take off running up the stairs.

EXT. MONKS MOUND - PLAZA - DAY

A large, open area at the foot of the mound, scattered with stone ruins. The kids make their way through the remnants of the ancient city. Cam waits, poised at the edge of the woods.

CORA
HELP! WE'RE SO LOST!

WILDER
Did you know about this? Did you
know our parents are together?

KELSEY
JUST A COUPLE OF LOST VIRGINS,
WANDERING AROUND OUT HERE!

WILDER
They're like, a couple. And you're
not even a little weirded out by
that?

Cora turns, exasperated.

CORA
Wilder! There are a little more
important things going on right
now, okay?

KELSEY
Wait. That means you guys could be
stepbrother and sister one day.

CORA SCREAMS!

WILDER
Finally. Yes, thank you. The
reaction I've been looking for.

She points behind them, terrified. They turn.

Mr. Truitt stands in the clearing. Black eyes. Veins pulsing
on his sunken, hollow face. Flesh rots from his shriveled
body, peeling away to reveal the bone underneath. His breath
is ragged and labored. His energy fading...

Cam rushes out from the woods, holding the stone. Truitt
raises an arm toward him. Cam goes FLYING BACKWARD. He hits a
tree, crumpling to the ground, unconscious. The stone breaks
apart; the two pieces scattering in the tall grass.

CORA
RUN!

The kids take off, hiding amongst the ruins.

ANGLE ON KELSEY

She hides behind a partial stone wall. Breathing heavy.

She leans around the edge, peering out. Nothing. She pulls back...

Cora is beside her.

She YELPS, startled. Cora wraps a hand around Kelsey's mouth, stifling the scream. They both breathe a sigh of relief.

A SCREAM!

They shoot up, looking over the wall. Mr. Truitt has Wilder by the throat, holding him in the air. Wilder twists and kicks, struggling to get away.

Truitt leans his head back, his neck bending at an ungodly angle. He opens his mouth...

A long line of black smoke begins to curl up out of Truitt's body. Cora and Kelsey watch, horrified.

EXT. MONKS MOUND - PEAK - SAME

The sun is a glowing, red ball of fire falling from the sky. Pete and Rishi finally reach the top, panting. They spot a large, ornate sundial, marking the very center of the Mound.

CORA (O.S.)
WILDER!

Cora's terrified yell ECHOES from below. The rays of the sun creep along the ground, inching closer to the sundial. Pete runs over. Hands shaking, he sets up the crude machine on the dial plate. Reconnects the wires to the battery.

Beat. Nothing.

PETE
Come on!

He smacks the batteries in his hand. Once. Twice. *The motor kicks on, tilting the reflective shield, just as the sunlight starts to sweep across the face of the dial.*

RISHI
How will we know if it's working?

AN EXPLOSION OF LIGHT SENDS THEM TUMBLING BACKWARDS.

EXT. MONKS MOUND - PLAZA - SAME

Cora runs toward Mr. Truitt and Wilder.

CORA

Let him go!

A BEAM OF LIGHT BLASTS DOWN IN FRONT OF THEM, KNOCKING CORA OFF HER FEET. She goes flying, landing on her back in the grass.

The bright light hits a spot on the ground. The air around it begins to shimmer and ripple, like a wave of intense heat. A seam appears in the air, slowly tearing apart.

Forming a portal. LOUD WAILS AND SHRIEKS EMANATE FROM INSIDE.

ANGLE ON MR. TRUITT

The black smoke fully exits his mouth. His body falls to the ground like a discarded suit. Wilder drops from his grip. He scrambles backwards on his hands toward the woods.

The smoke snakes through the air toward him. Winding around his legs. Traveling up the length of his body.

Cora looks beside her. *One half of the stone tablet sits in the grass.* She jumps up, grabbing it. Searching around for the other half. Can't see it... there! She grabs it and runs for the portal.

The light is blinding. She stands in front of it, squinting. She looks into the abyss...

TERRIFYING DEMONIC FACES SCREAM AT HER. LOST SOULS SHRIEKING AND WAILING. Reaching for her...

She reacts, terrified. Looks over at Wilder. *The smoke dances around his closed lips, waiting.* Wilder's eyes are wide with terror. Desperate to take a breath...

She closes her eyes, stepping into the beam of light. Holding the two halves of the stone together, above her head.

KELSEY

Cora, no!

THE STONE RISES UP OUT OF HER HANDS. The drawings and pictographs begin to glow with a golden light, swirling and moving like the gears of a clock.

A LOUD, WHOOSHING SOUND AS THE STONE FORMS A VORTEX, BEGINNING TO SUCK EVERYTHING INSIDE OF IT.

The wind whips up fiercely around them like a tornado. The kids brace themselves, holding on to whatever they can find.

Cora clings onto a ruin, her legs stretched out in the air behind her. Her fingers clutch the wall tightly. Straining to hold on.

She loses her grip. She flies backward toward the swirling abyss with a terrified SCREAM...

A hand grabs hers.

Pete.

PETE
I've got you.

He pulls her into him. They cling to each other, bracing against the gravitational pull from the stone.

The black smoke morphs into a demonic figure clawing along the ground to get away, as the stone drags it backwards.

WITH ONE LAST SHRIEK, THE DEMON IS SUCKED INTO THE STONE. The stone tablet seals up tightly and falls to the ground. The wind dies down. The black mist dissipates. Birds CHIRP.

Beat.

KELSEY (O.S.)
Holy shit, you guys. That. Was.
INSANE.

Kelsey stands up from behind a ruin, hair askew. She runs over to Wilder, helping him up. They hug.

Rishi rushes over to Cam, still lying on the ground. He slowly comes to, sitting up in the grass. Looks around, dazed.

CAM
Did we do it? Did we save the world?

Pete holds Cora in his arms. They both exhale a shaky laugh.

PETE
Yeah. I think we did.

They stand up, dusting themselves off. Hug each other tightly. Then, Pete looks at Cora. Something on his mind.

PETE (CONT'D)
So... the demon. He just went straight for Wilder, huh? No hesitation.

She looks at him. *Seriously?*

PETE (CONT'D)
What? I was just asking. Doesn't matter. That was unbelievable back there. You were really brave.

She looks at him. Smiles.

CORA
I get it from my dad.

He hugs her. Then, pulls back.

PETE
I know you're growing up. And you're not my little girl anymore. But I just want to tell you...
(rushed, awkward)
Don't send naked pictures of yourself over text. You can never, EVER get rid of them. They exist on the internet forever.

CORA
DAD.

PETE
And sometimes you think you're sending the picture to a teenage boy? But it's a scam. It's really a group of adults in a foreign country who then use it to blackmail you for money.

CORA
Okay, dad. KELSEY
Ohmygod, Mr. McG.

The kids walk off. Pete calls after them--

PETE
It's called Sextortion! I saw it on Dateline! This is a real thing, guys. You have to be smart!

Cam and Rishi walk up. Sympathetic faces. Pete winces.

PETE (CONT'D)
I blew that dad moment, didn't I?

CAM
Yep. Sure did. RISHI
That was very uncomfortable.

Cam puts a comforting arm around him.

CAM (CONT'D)

It's okay. I get it. Those dick
pics will come back to haunt you.
That's why I'm always telling CJ,
"Keep your peen off the screen."

Murmurs of agreement. They all walk off together.

EXT. VISITOR CENTER - EVENING

Three yellow school buses pull into the parking lot. The doors slide open on one, revealing the Weathered Bus Driver. She looks at our chaperones, lined up on the sidewalk.

Bloodied, bruised. Wild hair. Streaks of vomit and black muck on their torn clothes. Pete has his bandaged arm wrapped around Lindy. Michelle has an axe slung over her shoulder. Cam chugs from a kid's water bottle. Rishi unzips his fanny pack. Takes a long hit from an inhaler.

BUS DRIVER LETS OUT A LOUD CACKLE.

BUS DRIVER
Field trips aren't for pussies.

Michelle's 'Chaperone Leader' sticker falls off her shirt, fluttering to the ground.

CHYRON: ONE YEAR LATER.

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Pete, freshly showered and dressed, checks himself out in the mirror. He meticulously moves strands of hair into just the right place. Smiles. *Perfect.*

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

He walks past Cora's bedroom. Pauses to look in. Empty. He flicks off the light.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Empty. Pete walks in. A voice--

CORA (O.S.)
So, what are you wearing?

He walks over to the couches, where Kelsey and Cora lie, scrolling on their phones, obscured from view. Snacks, drinks, magazines, and other teenage detritus lay scattered across the coffee table.

They both sit up, assessing his outfit. Pete waits. Finally--

PETE

And?

CORA/KELSEY

Shoes.

He looks down at his shiny penny loafers.

PETE

What about them? These are my dress shoes.

Cora jumps up, rummaging through a hall closet. Pulls out a pair of high-top sneakers. Pete frowns.

PETE (CONT'D)

No. Really? For date night?

KELSEY

Yeah. They're giving hot, single dad.

CORA

Gross, but she's right.

He slips them on. Cora looks at him, assessing. Then, musses up his hair. The girls nod, satisfied.

KELSEY

Much better.

PETE

Kelsey, you sleeping over again tonight?

KELSEY

Yeah. I mean, no offense to Mrs. G's new baby-- Molly is adorbs and all-- but the *crying is REAL*. Your place is just much more chill.

Pete smiles at Cora.

PETE

Hear that? I'm much more chill. I have the chill.

Cora rolls her eyes. Lighthearted.

CORA
Your place is chill. Not you.

PETE
That's not how I heard it.
(off her laugh)
Okay, I'm gonna go. Are you girls
just hanging in tonight, then?

Cora and Kelsey exchange a quick glance. If you blinked, you missed it. Then, casually--

CORA
I think we're gonna go out for a
little bit. Our friend Zack is
having a few people over. Nothing
maje.

PETE
Zack?

KELSEY
Brennan.

CORA
I've definitely talked about him
before. He's really nice.

KELSEY
So nice.

PETE
Okay. Are his parents home?

CORA
Yeah. For sure. KELSEY
One hundo.

Pete looks at them. Cora laughs, holding out her phone.

CORA (CONT'D)
You can call them if you don't
believe me.

Beat. Pete smiles.

PETE
Just be home by midnight. Kelsey,
drive safe.

KELSEY
You know I always do, Mr. McG.

PETE
Okay, well, that's... not true.

He grabs his keys and wallet off a bookshelf.

CLOSE ON BOOKSHELF: a new framed picture. Cora and Pete, present day. A new chapter.

CORA
Hey, dad, wait.

She meets him at the door. Holds her hand out for their handshake. They execute it perfectly. Pete smiles.

PETE
Be good, kiddo.

CORA
YOU be good. Oh, and tell Wilder I said what's up.

KELSEY
Don't do anything we wouldn't do!
Or would!

Pete closes the door on their giggling.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Pete knocks on the door of a cute home. It opens, revealing Wilder. He is not smiling. Curt--

WILDER
Hello, Mr. McGuire.

PETE
Hey, Wilder. How are you, bud?

WILDER
Fine.

PETE
Y'know, I keep telling you, you don't have to call me Mr. McGu--

WILDER
My mom will be down in a minute.
For your date.

PETE
Okay, thanks.
(then, searching)
(MORE)

PETE (CONT'D)
Oh! Cora said to say hello.
Actually, she said to say 'What's--

He slams the door in Pete's face.

PETE (CONT'D)
--up.

Pete waits on the step. After a beat, Lindy emerges. An apologetic smile.

LINDY
Ugh, I'm sorry. He's still giving you a hard time?

PETE
No, no. It's fine.

LINDY
I think it's just the whole Cora break-up thing and then us getting together. It made things really weird for him. It's gonna take a minute, but he'll warm up to you. I promise.

PETE
I'm not worried. You look beautiful. Hi.

LINDY
Hi. Nice shoes.

He kisses her. They pull back, smiling at each other. THROUGH THE WINDOW: Pete sees Wilder glaring at him from inside. He reacts, startled.

PETE
Should we go?

He takes her hand, leading her off the porch.

LINDY
How is Cora?

PETE
She's great. I feel a little guilty, but ever since Meg had the baby, Cora's been staying with me a lot more. Her friends are always sleeping over. It's loud. The place is a mess. And I love it. Hey, do you know a kid Zack Brennan?

LINDY

Oh. Yeah. He's a senior. Lacrosse player. Really hot. All the girls love Zack.

Pete blinks, absorbing this information.

LINDY (CONT'D)

Why?

PETE

Cora said he was having a few people over.

(beat)

But the parents are home. So, I'm good. I trust her.

LINDY

Good.

They get into the car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Pete starts the engine. Lindy looks at him.

LINDY

We're going to Zack Brennan's house, aren't we?

PETE

Oh, yeah. *Juuust* a quick drive-by.

(off her look)

I said I trust Cora, not this lacrosse douchebag. Why is a senior hanging out with sophomores? For ONE reason. Do you know his address? Call Michelle, she'll know it. And call Cam and Rishi.

Lindy smiles, resigned. She reaches for her seat belt, as Pete SCREECHES out of her driveway.

And we...

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER CREDITS:

SHOTS OF A RAGING HOUSE PARTY.

-- Kids dance and drink to loud music

-- Guys play beer pong with expensive crystal glasses. ONE KID CHUGS the beer, then VOMITS all over the table. CHEERS!

-- A KID'S FACE is buried in a bong. He sits up, exhaling a huge cloud of smoke. **WE SEE IT'S SAM.** He high-fives the kids on either side of him: **Francis** and **Grady**.

-- In the living room, kids inexplicably stack furniture into a giant mountain. One tries to climb it, falling off. **It's CJ.** He falls into a pile of broken furniture, laughing.

-- In the laundry room, a girl makes out with A NERDY HARRY POTTER LOOK-A-LIKE GUY. **NEMA.**

-- In the kitchen, **Cora** flirts with a HOT JOCK. This must be **Zack.** Her phone BUZZES. She looks. *Dad. She sends it to voicemail.*

-- **Kelsey** runs in, clothes soaking wet from the pool. Yells: "COPS ARE HERE!" Everyone panics.

-- LOUD SIRENS. COP CARS pull up outside. Kids scatter like ants. Jumping out windows into the pool. Running through the neighborhood. Total chaos.

-- Pete's car pulls up. He and Lindy stare out the window. The red and blue police lights shine across their horrified faces, as they absorb the scene.