

LURE

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A storm is coming.

Dark clouds swirl over pine trees. Their branches beginning to sway in the growing wind.

Rain starts to fall.

INT. RANGER STATION - DAY

EVELYN LANG (40, sad skin hanging off her bones) sits at her desk in a ranger uniform. Stares out the window.

On the desk. A PHOTO. Evelyn and her daughter **ANGELICA** (10, BIRTHMARK under her eye.)

Angelica holds an UGLY HAND MADE DOLL in the photo.

It also has a BIRTHMARK. Mimicking Angelica's.

Tucked behind the photo. Only a keen eye would see. A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING with an image of Angelica smiling at us.

Evelyn turns to the ranger station behind her. A large wood cabin. Equipment and essentials. Bunks. Kitchen. Fireplace.

She grabs a BACKPACK and starts to load it up.

AIRHORN. WHISTLE.

FIRST AID KIT.

She sneaks a look around. No one else here.

Opens a drawer.

A FLASK. She pours vodka into her morning coffee. Then tosses the flask into the pack.

She sips from her MUG. Exhales.

Relief.

She reaches back in the drawer. Pulls out Angelica's UGLY HAND MADE DOLL from the photo.

It's misshapen, but a kid would still love it.

She presses her lips to the doll. Inhales. Almost smiles. Eyeing the photo. Lost in some pleasant thought.

Only for a moment.

She comes back to reality. Places the doll into the backpack over the flask.

Then heads outside.

EXT. RANGER STATION - DAY

Thick forest surrounds the cabin.

Tall storm clouds loom over mountains in the distance.

A national park. Maybe in the Rockies.

Evelyn trudges outside. Sips her spiked coffee. Approaches TWO OTHER RANGERS at a wooden table.

COLBY ROTH (22, snarky as shit, newbie) sits atop the table. He WHISTLES a tune and fiddles with a WALKIE TALKIE.

JEN PARKER (60, by the books) glares up at the storm clouds. She hates trouble. And this storm looks like trouble.

Jen slowly rotates a small POLISHED SILVER STONE in her hand. Evelyn clocks her eying the clouds.

EVELYN
Maybe they'll move on.

JEN
You don't actually think that.

EVELYN
No. Not really.

Colby whistles loudly.

JEN
Knock it off kid.

He doesn't. Whistling louder still.

JEN
OY. KID.

COLBY
Don't call me that.

EVELYN
Colby.

He stops. Turns to Evelyn.

EVELYN
Please. It's early.

Evelyn winks. Colby smirks. Nods and turns back to Jen.

COLBY
So what's the plan, boss?

Jen points to a PARK MAP on a wooden info board. It shows miles of wilderness, cliffs, and a river.

JEN
Valley's a flood zone. Gotta move campers out of harm's way.

COLBY
Flood like "flash flood" flood?

JEN
Mhm. And as resident greenhorn you get to go way down to the gorge camp site and kick em out.

COLBY
I barely even know that area yet.

JEN
I don't make the rules.

COLBY
You clearly do.

JEN
Tough shit.

Colby turns to Evelyn. Help plastered on his face.

Evelyn sips. Sets her mug down.

EVELYN
I'll go Jen.

JEN
He's gotta learn.

EVELYN
During a storm?

Jen looks between the two. Shrugs.

JEN
Suit yourself.

Evelyn pats Colby on the shoulder.

EVELYN
I got you.

She clicks her radio on. Then heads down a trail into the woods. Jen and Colby watch her go.

JEN
She cut up your food for you too?

COLBY
And burps me before bed. Never says much though.

Jen turns. Nods to Evelyn's coffee mug.

Colby clocks it. Confused. Then picks it up and sniffs. Scrunches his face at the smell of booze.

COLBY
Woooooo. Shit.

JEN
She thinks I don't see. Can't say I blame her though.

COLBY
Why?

Colby dumps the rest of the mug out. The rain starts to come down a little harder.

JEN
Two kinds of people become rangers.
Bushy-tailed hippie types, and
folks tryna hide from something.

COLBY
She doesn't look like a hippie.

Jen nods. Turns.

JEN
We're gonna need the plywood from
the back.

Colby jumps up. Whistles as he walks away.

EXT. FOREST TRAILS - DAY

Rain trickles down through the canopy.

Harder now. The storm is closer.

Evelyn hikes down the trail. Careful not to slip on the slick wet rocks.

Ahead of her. A wooden trail sign.

**« CAMP SITE .4 Mi
GORGE TRAIL 2 Mi »**

Evelyn looks through BINOCULARS down the trail.

She catches a glimpse of TWO TENTS behind the trees.

She pulls out the AIRHORN. Lifts it over her head. Plugs her ears with a shoulder and finger.

HONK. HONK. HOOOOOOOOONK.

A warning for any campers still around. *Time to go.*

She stuffs the horn in her pack. Heads left to the campsite.

Presses down on her radio.

EVELYN
Getting closer now. I'll check back
in once I'm there.

The radio CRACKLES. Thick with static.

JEN (V.O.)
Roger. We heard your horn.

Evelyn continues on.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

The rain is really coming down now.

Evelyn steps out from the trees into a small clearing.

Two tents sit by a few chairs and a fire pit. Empty BEER CANS litter the area. Evelyn eyes them.

She clicks her radio down.

EVELYN
At the camp. Looks like there's a
few stragglers.

JEN (V.O.)
(breaking up)
C-py th-t. --anks.

A **CAMPER** (beard, 30s) sits just inside a tent. Staying dry.
Staring out into the woods. Fixated.

Evelyn walks up to him.

EVELYN
Hey. You heard the horn.

The camper slowly looks up to her. Nods.

CAMPER
Can't leave yet.

EVELYN
Mud slides, rock falls, floods.
They won't wait for you.

CAMPER
He hasn't come back.

EVELYN
Who?

The camper nods to the other tent.

CAMPER
My brother.

EVELYN
Where is he?

CAMPER
Morning hike.

EVELYN
He'll be right behind you then.

CAMPER
He said he'd be back two hours ago.

Evelyn pauses. Her eyes pop a bit.

This struck a nerve.

EVELYN
You think he may be lost?

CAMPER

Maybe.

EVELYN

Did he say where he was going?

The camper points.

CAMPER

The gorge trail along the river.

EVELYN

Anyone else with him?

The camper shakes his head. *Nope.*

EVELYN

Got a photo?

The camper takes out his phone. Scrolls through. Holds it up.

Evelyn eyes it. A **HIKER** (30, handsome) smiles in a suit with the camper at an event.

EVELYN

I'll find him and call it in.

CAMPER

I'm coming too.

EVELYN

No sir. You are not.

CAMPER

You don't get it. He's my brother.
I can't just leave him out here.

A small wince crosses Evelyn's face at this.

EVELYN

Yes you will.

The camper eyes her. Upset.

EVELYN

Look. I really do get how you feel sir. But this is why I'm here. And I won't allow you to get in my way and stay in danger. This area really can get bad.

The camper frowns. Giving in.

EVELYN

And if you don't leave I'll have
you forcibly removed and detained.

She looks like she means it.

The camper begrudgingly nods. Starts packing up.

INT. RANGER STATION - DAY

Jen polishes a SILVER STONE. SCRAPING it against sandpaper. A line of them on her desk. Rows of perfect smooth rocks.

Next to the rocks, a pile of magazines. Discover. Time. A NAT GEO peeks out from the bottom. "CAVE CRAWLERS" on the cover.

She checks out the window. Heavy rain. Wind blowing HARD.

THUMP. The door opens. Colby enters with stacks of PLYWOOD. He dumps them in the middle of the room. WHISTLING as he--

JEN

--That's getting on my nerves kid.

Colby scowls. Annoyed. Kid?

COLBY

My dad taught me. We used to drive
my mom insane.

JEN

I bet you still do.

COLBY

Nah. They uh... He... Nah.

Jen pauses. Glimpses up from her stone.

JEN

Sorry. I didn't mean--

COLBY

--No, no, he's uh... Good I think.

Colby eyes the ground. Uncomfortable.

Jen clocks it. Changes the subject.

JEN

Lemme radio Evelyn. Then we'll get
crackin'.

She gestures to the plywood on the floor. Colby nods.

EXT. FOREST TRAILS - DAY

Evelyn walks back up toward the trail intersection.

Rain more intense now. She wipes water from her face.

Her radio BLIPS.

JEN (V.O.)
It's look-ng re--ly bad out there.
Time to c--- back to the station.

Evelyn arrives at the trail intersection.

Eyes the back of the trail sign.

**◀◀ GORGE TRAIL 2 Mi
RANGER STATION .7 Mi ▶▶**

EVELYN
I've got a lost camper. I'm gonna
do a sweep of the gorge.

A moment. She listens through static.

JEN (V.O.)
Negative Evelyn. Report -ack now.

EVELYN
I'm not leaving them out there in
the storm.

JEN (V.O.)
It's too dan-erous. Bad rec-ption
in the gorg-. They can hunker down.
Wait fo- medi-vac. It's protocol.

EVELYN
But--

JEN (V.O.)
--That's an order. Evelyn.

Evelyn eyes the sign. Sips her flask.

EVELYN
Copy. Heading back.

Evelyn takes the left to the gorge trail.

Away from the ranger station.

EXT. GORGE TRAIL - DAY

A thin wet trail along the side of a steep cliff.

Below, a sheer sixty foot drop. Sharp boulders the whole way down into a rushing river.

It's deadly.

Evelyn moves slow and steady along the edge. Scanning the forest below as she goes.

The rain is thick. Hard to see through. She rubs water from her eyes.

She steps over a--

--THE ROCK SHE LANDS ON COMES LOOSE FROM THE CLIFF.

Evelyn loses balance. Falls on her ass.

EVELYN
SHIT.

Inches from the damn ledge.

She grabs hold of a root. Holds on.

Safe.

The loose rock tumbles down.

Down.

Down the cliff.

Breaking apart as it falls. Splashing into the water below.

Evelyn's ears RRRIIIIIINNNNGGGGG. All other sound fades.

She grabs her head. In pain.

Hurting deep in her brain.

RRRIIIINNNNGGGGGgggggggg. Sound returns. The pain dwindles.

Strange.

Evelyn catches her breath. Stands.

EVELYN
Okay. You're okay.

And then... a sound from the forest below.

Something unbelievable.

ANGELICA (O.S.)
Mom?

Her daughter's voice.

Evelyn freezes.

No. Not possible.

She looks through binoculars at the gorge.

Nothing.

She shakes it off. Until...

HIKER (O.S.)
Help.

She whips around. *That was real.*

She scans down across the riverbank.

Nothing. Nothing. Noth--

A RED BACKPACK. Barely sticking out of the bushes. She clicks down her radio.

EVELYN
I may've found him! Down by the river. Do you copy?

She listens. Just STATIC.

EVELYN
Jen? Colby?

Nothing.

EVELYN
Okay... HELLO?

She calls into the woods.

So faint...

HIKER (O.S.)
Help.

EVELYN
SIT TIGHT. I'M COMING.

She carefully begins maneuvering over the side of the cliff.

EVELYN

Shit.

It's a torrential downpour now. Every step is life or death.

She climbs down. Placing her feet in grooves in the rock.

Descending best she can.

INT. RANGER STATION - DAY

BANG BANG BANG.

Jen hammers plywood on a window. Glances at the radio. Antsy.

Colby starts on the window by Evelyn's desk. BANG BANG. He eyes outside. Where the storm rages on.

COLBY

I dunno. Should be me out there.

JEN

Better her than you.

Colby eyes Jen. *The hell?*

JEN

Evelyn knows the land. And has more experience. She can handle herself.

COLBY

You two've been here a minute, huh?

JEN

Me yeah. She came aboard last year. Was a big time lawyer before... or accountant. PR manager? Something with lots of BS and paperwork.

COLBY

Sounds like burnout maybe.

JEN

Eh. If someone was looking for something quieter, this spot's probably not their top choice.

COLBY

Why?

JEN

Station's got a bit of a bad reputation.

COLBY
Because you're here?

She rolls her eyes. He smirks.

JEN
Lotta missing persons in the area.
Way more than the average over the
last fifty years or something.
Folks call it bad juju.

COLBY
Don't really buy that kinda shit.

JEN
Well, some of us do.

Colby spots the photo of Evelyn, Angelica, and the doll.

COLBY
Why would she pick this spot then?

Jen ignores him. Tries the radio.

JEN
Evelyn? Sound off. You almost back?

Colby WHISTLES. A nervous habit.

Jen frowns. But lets him. Sees him eying the photograph.

JEN
You should mind your own business.

Colby stops hammering. Looks closer at the photo.

Sees the corner of the newspaper clipping behind it.

JEN
Last year. Before she took the job.
Her daughter.

He takes out the article. Revealing the headline...

"LOCAL GIRL MISSING IN FOREST."

Colby turns to Jen. Eyes her. *Explain this shit.*

She sighs.

Sets her hammer down and turns to him.

EXT. GORGE CLIFF - DAY

Almost half way down now. Evelyn grips the wet rocks tight. Water spills off the side of the cliff onto her. Mud too. Another step down. Her foot almost slips.

EVELYN
ALMOST THERE. LET ME HEAR FROM YOU.

No answer. She goes to unzip her pack.

Shrugs it off her shoulder. Grabs at the airhorn.
AND THE DOLL FALLS OUT.

Bouncing down the cliff.

EVELYN
NO.

She quickly starts climbing back down when...

ANGELICA (O.S.)
Mom.

Evelyn stops.

Is she losing it?

ANGELICA (O.S.)
Mom.

She spots something. Just past the bushes.

The figure of a small girl. Could it be?

EVELYN
ANGELICA?

She whips around. Loses her footing.

And falls down the cliff.

WHAM. She hits the side. Deep cuts.

SNAP. A rock to the shin. Her leg bends impossibly.

SMACK. She bounces off a boulder. The way no human body ever should.

Her pack and the airhorn go flying.

THUD. Evelyn lands at the bottom of the gorge. Hard.

In the mud of the riverbank.

Unmoving.

For a long, long, moment.

EXT. GORGE BOTTOM - DAY

The tips of pine trees sway in the stormy wind. Their trunks growing thicker as we travel down with the rain.

Down past the cliffs.

Down past the rocky outcrops. Spattered with Evelyn's blood.

Down to the swirling river.

Finally landing on Evelyn's still body in the mud of the riverbank.

A bloody cut above her eye.

She lays still. Too long for comfort.

Raindrops land on her face. Slowly... her eyes flutter open.

She stares up at the tree tops. The grey sky.

Then at the cliff side.

It's SPARKLING.

She squints. Examining closer.

It's SILVER. Nuggets and lines of it stick out of the cliffs all over.

Shining in the rain.

Strange beauty.

Evelyn winces. In pain.

Fuck.

Her eyes go wide.

EVELYN
No no no no no.

She checks around. Frantic.

EVELYN
Where? Where? Where?

Her hand lands on THE DOLL. Nearby. Caked in mud. She exhales in relief. Holds it tight to her chest.

She catches her breath. Clutching the doll like she'll never let it go again.

Grabs her shoulder radio. Turns to it.

EVELYN
Hello? Hello Jen? Can you hear me?

Quiet static.

EVELYN
Jen. Colby. Come in please.

Static.

EVELYN
SHIT. Okay, okay, okay.

She turns best she can. Surveys the area.

Pines. Cliffs. The river.

By the water. A few body lengths away.

A DESTROYED TREE TRUNK.

Ten feet tall. Branches ripped off. Some exposed roots twist in all directions.

A LARGE GASH in the bark. Five feet up. Maybe from the antlers of a deer, or the elements.

Evelyn clocks the tree. Then her eyes drop.

At the base of the roots. HER PACK.

And just past it. THE AIRHORN. Stuck between rocks in the river. Jammed in with the current.

EVELYN
Okay. Okay.

She makes a move to crawl toward the pack.

A sharp inhale. JESUS.

Brutal pain. She looks down.

HER LEG IS BROKEN. Bent backwards. Mangled and bloody.

Bone sticks out through skin.

Evelyn seems to come out of her shock.

EVELYN
EEEEAAAAAAHHHHH.

The kind of wound you just want to look away from.

Her hand trembles as she reaches down to touch it.

A finger barely grazes the wound.

EVELYN
AAGGHHHH. Shit shit shit. SHIT.

Tears come.

Evelyn grimaces. Then looks over to the pack. Zipper open.

First aid kit inside.

Evelyn clocks it. Nods to herself.

Clicks down her radio.

EVELYN
If anyone can read me. This is
ranger Evelyn Lang. I've fallen in
the gorge. Compound fracture in my
right leg. I need medi-vac. Please.

She considers.

EVELYN
I will continue to try this
channel. Send help.

Clicks the radio off.

Breathes deep. Pumping herself up.

She grits her teeth. Clutches the doll. Reaches ahead and
digs her nails into the mud.

Then draaaaaags herself forward.

EVELYN
AAAAGGGHH.

Intense pain as her body barely moves a foot through the mud.

She stops. Breathing heavy already.

Grabs and pulls herself again.

EVELYN
GAAAAAH.

A little closer now. Trail of mud and blood behind her.

Again. She reaches. Digs into the silt and pulls.

EVELYN
AAAGGHH.

Close now. She reaches for the bag.

Still short.

She huffs. Focuses. And GROWLS.

Then pulls herself forward.

EVELYN
AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH.

She lunges. Her hand finally landing on the pack.

Relief. She pulls the bag toward her. Digs inside. Reaches for the first aid kit.

Nope. She pulls out her flask.

She swigs. Swigs. Swiiggs from it. Wipes booze from her chin and lets her breathing slow.

Her flask in her left hand. The doll in the right.

She holds her two burdens a moment. Then tucks them away in the pack.

EVELYN
Okay. Okay.

Evelyn eyes the airhorn. Still stuck on the rocks.

EVELYN
They'll hear. They'll come.

Two feet of water between her and salvation.

She pulls herself over to the water.

EVELYN
UGH.

She tries to reach to the rocks. Balancing on one hand.

Not even close. Her hand splashes into the water. The airhorn bobs ever so slightly with the ripples.

Damn. She peers around.

A BRANCH sticks in the mud. A foot or two long and sturdy.

Evelyn grabs it. Grips it tight and aims for the airhorn. Extending the branch out over the water.

She focuses.

The tip of the branch pokes the airhorn. It jostles slightly.

She pokes at it again. Straining to reach.

The airhorn comes free from the rocks. Barely held by the branch.

Slowly. Carefully. Evelyn guides the airhorn through the water. Keeping it from floating downstream with the branch.

EVELYN
C'mon. C'mon.

It almost comes free! She holds the branch steady.

She's gotta reel it in.

It's close now. Almost in reach.

She pulls. Sloppily. Maybe because of the pain from the wound. The cold. Or the vodka.

The branch shakes. The airhorn comes loose.

It floats away.

EVELYN
NO.

Desperation. She lunges with the branch for the airhorn.

AND STOPS IT.

Salvation.

She carefully reels the branch in. The airhorn barely stuck to it.

Evelyn grabs the airhorn and aims it up in the air.

Covers her ear and presses it down.

Hnnkkkk...

Water drips out of it.

EVELYN

No. No.

She brings it close.

The can is slashed open. By a rock when it fell.

She clicks it down over and over.

No sound. It's dead.

Salvation. Gone.

EVELYN

NO. No, no, no, no.

Evelyn turns onto her back. Defeated. Drops the airhorn.

Rain hits her face.

Her lip quivers a hint.

She pulls out the first aid kit.

She eyes it intensely.

Then eyes her leg. Blood and bone.

She clicks the radio on.

EVELYN

This is Evelyn. I'm uh... I'm
attempting to set the leg now.

Clicks it off. Sighs.

This is gonna fucking hurt.

EVELYN

This is gonna fucking hurt.

She opens the kit. Takes out some ISOPROPYL RUBBING ALCOHOL
and GUAZE.

Again, she returns to her trusty flask. Opens it and takes a
liberal swig.

She steels herself.

Unscrews the cap to the rubbing alcohol.

Hovers it over her leg.

Lets a drop fall onto it.

OUCH.

EVELYN

ACK.

She covers her mouth. Then pours.

The clear alcohol cleans away the blood. Revealing red flesh and white bone.

Evelyn GROANS. But pushes through.

Because this isn't the worst part.

EVELYN

Okay. Okay. God. God.

She looks around. Spots a short STICK.

Jams it in her mouth. Bites down.

She grabs below the wound.

WINCES. Lets go. Shakes her hands.

Prepares to try again.

EVELYN

(awkward, biting)

Okay. C'mon. C'mon.

She grabs below the wound.

EVELYN

COME ON. COME ON.

She pulls down.

Tears form.

She pulls harder.

The bone wiggles. She keeps pulling.

Harder.

Harder.

SNAP. The bone slides under the skin. Set in place.

EVELYN
AAAAAAAAUUUUUUUUUUUGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH.

She SCREAMS. The stick falls from her mouth.

Evelyn catches her breath. The worst behind her now.

Until. From deep within the woods.

AAAAAAAAUUUUUUUUUUUGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH.

Something screams back.

Distorted. Warped. But unmistakably a mimic of her scream.

Evelyn snaps out of her pain. Eyes the forest.

Dumbfounded.

She scans through the woods.

Just maybe, she sees a SHADOWY FIGURE through the trees and brush. Just as it drifts behind a tree.

She squints. But it's already gone.

The hell is going on?

She clicks the radio on.

EVELYN
This is Evelyn. Something is down
here with me.

She grabs the branch and presses it to her leg. Wincing. Then wraps the gauze around the leg and branch. Making a SPLINT.

She slings the pack across her shoulder and crawls to the cliff wall. Dragging her leg behind her.

Still groaning. Still hurts.

The silver in the cliff shimmers under the rain.

Evelyn grabs at the wet cliff rocks. But slips. Unable to support herself.

She glances up the cliff. Sixty feet up.

Then peers down at her busted leg.

No chance.

She stops. Realizing something.

She's standing in six inches of water.

THE RIVER IS RISING.

The water is past the roots of the gashed tree.

Shit.

She eyes the forest across the river.

To where the figure was. Where the hiker's BACKPACK still is.

Higher ground.

Dry ground.

She nods to herself. Processing.

Clicks the radio on.

EVELYN

If anyone copies. I'm going to try
to get to the higher ground across
the river. That's where I'll be.

She clicks the radio off. Then crawls toward the water.

INT. RANGER STATION - DAY

Almost all the windows are boarded up.

Jen sits at her desk. Back to sanding her silver stone.

BANG BANG. Colby hammers at the last window.

He glances back at the photo of Evelyn and Angelica.

COLBY

So what about you then? Hiding from
anything?

JEN

Other than your whistling? No.

Colby rolls his eyes.

COLBY

Shouldn't we go after her? Y'know.
Instead of shining rocks?

JEN

Silver. Used to be mines all over here during the boom. Shut em down around nineteen-fifty after some dried up and some collapsed onto the people workin' inside. Besides, Medi-vac can't go out in this storm, and I'm trying her radio. This helps me relax. Takes away the rough edges. Makes something...

COLBY

New?

JEN

Familiar.

Jen sets the rock down by the others. Each smooth and shiny.

Colby finishes hammering the window.

Wipes sweat from his forehead.

Then heads for the door.

COLBY

Fine. Stay here if you want. But I'm going to look.

He starts dressing himself for the storm.

JEN

Kid. There's four-hundred square miles of wilderness out there. Zero visibility. And you're unfamiliar with all of it. You will get lost. Then I'll have two missing rangers.

Colby stops putting on a jacket. Deflated.

JEN

Evelyn can handle herself. We don't have a location. We go after the storm. That's protocol. And I didn't make those rules.

Colby grinds his teeth. Then sighs.

He takes the jacket off. Walks back toward the radio.

EXT. GORGE RIVER - DAY

Evelyn lays by the side of the river. She eyes the dry, higher ground under the trees across the water.

The hiker's backpack still in the bushes.

The river current is strong.

Water splashes over rocks all the way across.

Evelyn scowls.

She GROANS as she takes her pack off. Puts her radio inside.

Then holds the pack high over her head.

And crawls into the water.

GASP. It's freezing.

EVELYN
Jesus shitter.

She continues in. Pack over her head. Crawling with one arm through the water.

Up to her waist.

Her chest.

Her neck.

Evelyn struggles. Fighting the current.

She grabs rocks. Dragging herself through the water.

She huffs. Puffs. Shivers.

Twigs and sticks drift by in the stream.

She keeps pulling herself forward.

SOLID GROUND. She hoists herself up and gets her bearings.

Did she make it?

No. A large rock in the center.

She's only half way across.

EVELYN
FUCKER.

Evelyn catches her breath, then wades back in.
Rock by rock, she climbs along. Bag still held over her head.
Almost there now.
Evelyn turns upstream.
A LARGE BRANCH drifts right for her in the current.
THWACK. It knocks her in the head.
HER HAND SLIPS. Evelyn drifts downstream with the current.

EVELYN
SHIT.

The bag ducks under the surface for a second. She holds it back up.
She grabs at rocks. But they slip by.
Evelyn inhales water. COUGHS. Drifting away from safety.
She thrashes about blindly. Drowning.
She grabs the branch.
THWICK.
Evelyn stops drifting.
She turns. The branch is WEDGED BETWEEN TWO ROCKS.
She catches her breath. Keeps the bag up above her head.
Then shimmies across the branch.
Toward shore.

EXT. GORGE RIVER BANK - DAY

Sopping wet. Shaken up. Bleeding. Evelyn drags herself and the pack up the river bank with the TREE BRANCH.

Now her CRUTCH.
Covered in mud again. She props herself up against a tree.
The higher ground.
The dry ground.

The pitter-patter of rain hitting the canopy above.

Evelyn opens the pack. Takes inventory.

Doll. Flask. Radio. First Aid Kit. All there. All dry.

She exhales. Slight relief. Takes out the radio. Tries it.

EVELYN

Hello? Jen? Colby? Do you copy?

STATIC. Evelyn hangs her head.

Examines the nearby bushes.

THE HIKER'S BAG.

She tries to stand. GROANS and falls back down. Crawls for the bag.

Reaches with the branch. Strains.

Snags the strap of the bag and pulls it toward her.

She opens it. Rummages through.

A CLIFF BAR. FUCK YES. She rips it open. SCARFS it down in two bites. Barely chewing. Keeps searching through.

Water bottle. Sunscreen. FLASHLIGHT. Trinkets. Some clothes. It's not much. But it's treasure to Evelyn right now.

She pauses. Pulls out a PILL BOTTLE.

OXYCONTIN. 40mg.

She considers. Glances at her leg.

Cracks the Oxy open and downs one.

Eh, two for good measure.

She closes the bottle. Digs deeper in the bag.

A WALLET. She opens it up. The hiker's PHOTO ID. Credit cards. A few movie tickets and fortune cookie fortunes.

Tidbits of a life. Along with a PHOTO of the hiker with the camper from before. Evelyn sets them aside.

And then... she pulls out a FLINT from his backpack.

She holds it tight. Then looks around at the twigs and kindling around her.

EXT. GORGE FOREST CAMP - DUSK

Darkness begins to settle through the trees.

ssssssSSSSCRRRAAAAPE. sssssSSSSCRRRAAAAPE.

Evelyn sparks the flint against a small pile of kindling. The small embers GLOW with every attempt.

But they won't catch.

She reaches in the bag. Pulls out the flask. Unscrews it and tips it to pour on the kindling.

But stops before a drop falls.

She considers.

Takes a swig. Puts the flask back in the bag. And comes out with the first aid kit. She takes out the rubbing alcohol.

Pours some out onto the kindling.

Then tries the flint again.

ssssssSSSSCRRRAAAAPE.

The kindling lights!

Evelyn actually smiles.

FWOOSH. The twigs and branches ignite. Bathing the surrounding area in flickering orange light.

REVEALING THE HIKER STANDING RIGHT BEHIND EVELYN.

He just watches.

Still. Quiet.

Evelyn gets closer to the fire. Relieved and unaware.

Something rustles behind her. She turns.

The hiker is gone.

She turns back to the fire.

HE'S STANDING ACROSS FROM HER. Peering out behind a tree.

HIKER

Help.

Evelyn jumps.

EVELYN
JESUS.

He seems unhurt. Raincoat and clothes clean.

EVELYN
Thank God. You're okay... You are
okay, right?

He stares. Something off.

EVELYN
Sir?

HIKER
Help me.

EVELYN
Look. I'm hurt. Come get warm, and
when the storm passes we can call
out for a medi-vac.

She waits for a response. For anything.

He stares at Evelyn's pack for a moment.

Spotting HER DOLL.

He SHIVERS.

The RRIINNGGIINNGG returns. Evelyn grabs her head.

HIKER
Help me.

The ringing shrinks away. Evelyn blinks. Eyes the hiker.

Something is wrong with his face.

She reaches in her pack. Pulls out his wallet. Holds up his
ID and photos.

It's... him. But something isn't right.

His face. It's stretched and shrunk in places. Mouth too
wide. Eyes too big. Too dark.

He's not quite right. *Is it him?*

But before she can get a better view...

The hiker moves back from the tree. Into the dark.

Not just walking back.

Drifting.

HIKER
Help.

EVELYN
Sir. SIR? WAIT.

But he's much further away now. Only his dark figure and his eyes reflecting bright in the firelight remain.

And then he seems to sink into the earth.

Vanishing.

Evelyn watches. Stunned.

She reaches in her pack. Pulls out the radio. Clicks it on.

EVELYN
This is ranger Evelyn Lang.
Requesting immediate help. I am
stranded at the bottom of the
Northeast gorge trail. My leg is
broken. Possibly in shock. Missing
hiker found. But in state of
confusion. Please. Send help.

She adjusts a dial or two. Clicks it down again...

INT. RANGER STATION - NIGHT

BLIP.

Jen and Colby whip around to the radio as it crackles alive.

EVELYN (V.O.)
Repeat. Repeat. Thi-- Evelyn Lang.
--imme-- help. --Leg broken. In
shock. --hiker found...

SSSSKKKKRRRRR. Static.

Colby grips the table hard. Listening.

Staring. Willing the damn radio to work again.

EVELYN (V.O.)
...Bot--m of gorge trail.

Colby beelines for the door. Dressing as fast as possible.
Jen takes the receiver. Clicks it down.

JEN

Evelyn. This is Jen. We copy your location. I need you to sit tight and we'll get you a medi-vac as soon as the storm passes. Copy?

Colby has his raincoat on. Stuffs a backpack full.

WALKIE TALKIE. MEDS. WATER. FLASHLIGHT. ROPE. A FLARE GUN.

EXT. GORGE FOREST CAMP - NIGHT

Evelyn holds the radio so tight she could break it.

It CRACKLES.

JEN (V.O.)

Repeat. We --opy. Aft-r th- storm.

EVELYN

Please. Send help now.

SSSKKRRRRRRRR. The radio cuts to static.

EVELYN

Hello? Hello?

Nothing.

INT. RANGER STATION - NIGHT

Static on Jen's radio as well.

She SIGHS.

Colby readies his pack and flashlight.

He opens the door to pouring rain. Whipping winds. The dead black of night.

JEN

OY.

COLBY

I'm bringing her back.

JEN

The fuck you are.

COLBY

She's in danger because of me.

JEN
And she's much stronger than you.

Colby frowns at the dig. One foot out the door.

He considers. Staring Jen down. She stares back harder.

Colby turns on his light and heads out the door. Instantly drenched in the storm.

JEN
Colby get back here THAT IS A
FUCKING ORDER.

He turns. Shouts over the wind and rain.

COLBY
I HAVE TO. I'M SORRY.

He continues down the steps. Out into the forest.

Leaving Jen shaking with anger. Watching him go.

EXT. GORGE FOREST CAMP - NIGHT

Rain falls throughout the trees.

Evelyn's eyes stare out into the night.

She blinks. Her eyelids getting heavy.

EVELYN
Sit tight. You can sit tight.

She takes the spare clothes from the hiker's bag. Drapes them over herself.

She cups her hands over her mouth. Bellows into the woods.

EVELYN
SIIIRR??!!

No answer.

She scoots up close to the fire. Letting the flames lick her cold pale hands.

Evelyn takes out her flask. Gulps down some vodka.

Pulls her pack over and strains to lay down. GROANING at the effort of moving her leg.

She rests her head down on the pack. Some relief after her long and brutal day.

She blinks slow. Still peering into the night.

Blinks again. Slower.

Again.

And she's out.

She sleeps. Deep.

For a moment, the scene is almost tranquil.

Until a pair of reflected eyes open in the forest.

Watching.

Unblinking.

INT. TENT - DREAM - DAY

A cozy camping set up.

Bright sunlight warms the tent canvas. Inside, Evelyn and Angelica sit with each other.

Big smiles all around.

Evelyn finishes sewing a button eye on the ugly doll.

Embarrassed, she hands it to Angelica. Who laughs. She loves it. Hugs it tight.

Angelica reaches behind her back. Brings a gift out for Evelyn in return.

She hands Evelyn her flask.

Evelyn pauses. Takes it. Looks up to her daughter.

ANGELICA'S EYES ARE NOW SHINING SILVER.

Rain, or tears, stream down out of them.

Filling the tent.

Flooding it.

Evelyn SCREAMS. But no sound comes out.

Angelica SCREAMS BACK. Piercingly loud.

As Angelica is RIPPED out through the front of the tent. Into the blinding light outside.

But her scream gets louder.

aaaaaaaaAAAAAAAGGGGGHHH.

EXT. GORGE FOREST CAMP - NIGHT

AAAAAAAGGGGGHHH.

Evelyn jolts awake.

The scream was real.

It echoes through the trees.

The fire is dim. Burning lower. Evelyn scans the darkness.

Only the shadows and silhouettes of the forest.

Trees. Branches. Rocks. Bushes--

--Something is moving.

A slumped over figure. Pulsating. Contorting.

EVELYN

S-sir..?

The figure freezes a second. Then continues to shudder. A wet SQUISHING sound coming from it.

Evelyn pulls the bag toward her. Never taking her eyes off the figure.

She reaches inside and pulls the FLASHLIGHT out.

Clicks it on. Shines the beam at the figure.

THE HIKER.

Something horrible has happened.

He's bent over brutally.

His eyes are misaligned. Too high and too low.

Nose too small.

Hair so long.

Mouth massive and tilted. Curled into a grotesque smile.

He opens the mouth.

WWWAAAAAAHH.

A YOUNG GIRL'S CRY COMES OUT.

EVELYN
CHRIST.

The hiker SHIVERS.

RRRIIIINNNNGGGGG. Evelyn grabs her head.

Drops the flashlight.

Scrambles to find it. Scoops it back up and shines it back at the hiker.

He's gone.

Evelyn's breaths quicken.

Panic setting in.

A RUSTLE to her left. She turns.

Leaves shake to her right. She whips back around.

Sounds overlap all around her. Overwhelming. Until.

ANGELICA (O.S.)
Mom.

Evelyn whips the flashlight to the sound.

Standing at a nearby tree...

Angelica. In the flesh.

Clear as the malformed hiker just was.

ANGELICA
Mom.

Evelyn stares. Stunned.

EVELYN
I...

It's her daughter. Hair, clothes, everything.

Evelyn can't help but tear up and smile.

EVELYN
Angelica. Baby.

ANGELICA
Help.

Angelica drifts back slightly. A little further away.

EVELYN
No wait, baby wait.

ANGELICA
Help.

She drifts further away.

EVELYN
No no no no no no.

Angelica drifts into the dark. Just beyond the light.

ANGELICA
Mom.

Evelyn goes to stand. Almost forgetting her broken leg. Still in its makeshift splint.

She GROANS. Breathes hard. Reaches deep.

And pulls herself up with her crutch branch. Unnaturally determined. As if in a trance.

She wobbles a moment. Then gains her balance.

She reaches in the pack and pulls out some of the hiker's BOXERS. She RIPS them apart.

Picks up a stick. Ties the boxers to the top.

Douses it with the last of the rubbing alcohol. Holds it to the fire. FWISH. It catches.

Evelyn dons her pack. Turns to the forest.

Where her DAUGHTER'S EYES reflect the torchlight.

Watching her.

And Evelyn limps with her crutch and torch into the night.

Following after her daughter.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The forest is a deep and unnatural dark.

Rain PATTERS on the canopy above Evelyn as she limps through the trees.

Torch burning just bright enough to see in front of her.

A bit ahead. Angelica's eyes glow. Staring back at her.

She drifts further away. Swaying as she moves back between trees.

Evelyn pushes through wet leaves and branches. Hypnotized.

ANGELICA

Mom.

With each step Evelyn takes Angelica drifts further back.

But Evelyn is slowly gaining ground on Angelica.

Like she's letting her catch up.

EVELYN

Baby. Baby I'm here.

Closer now. Angelica is definitely slowing down. She turns behind a tree. Evelyn follows.

To see Angelica has led her to the BASE OF A CLIFF.

And sticking out of the cliff...

EXT. MINE SHAFT - NIGHT

A large HATCH door and old wooden structure.

Long dark tunnel leading down into the depths of an ABANDONED SILVER MINE.

A decrepit sign sticks out of the dirt.

*DANGER. CONDEMNED.
STAY OUT! STAY ALIVE!*

Angelica's figure stands just next to the sign.

Right by the ajar hatch to the mine.

Evelyn pulls out the doll. Holds it up for Angelica. Trudges closer through the rain.

ANGELICA

Mom.

EVELYN

Here. I kept it. See?

Closer to her daughter. Fully entranced.

Her figure coming into the torchlight.

Something is very wrong.

Her eyes are off.

Mouth wide and curled.

Her skin rubbery.

Artificial. Like a mannequin.

Almost human, but just not quite there.

The epitome of the uncanny valley.

ANGELICA

Mom. Mom.

Evelyn frowns. Confused. But still spellbound.

ANGELICA

Mom. Mom.

That voice.

IT'S ON A LOOP. As if recorded.

But Evelyn is fixated on her daughter standing before her.

A QUICK FLASH OF DREAM ANGELICA IN THE TENT.

Back to reality. Angelica stares with her strange eyes.

EVELYN

They told me I was wrong. But I never gave in. Never.

Angelica just stands there. Swaying slightly.

EVELYN

I knew. I knew it.

ANGELICA

You. You.

EVELYN
I'm here. Mommy's here.

ANGELICA
You let them. You let them.

EVELYN
Let them what baby?

Angelica SHIVERS.

The RINGING returns to Evelyn's ears.

She GROANS. Clutches her head.

SOMETHING JUST BEHIND ANGELICA MOVES.

Evelyn sees it.

ANGELICA
You let them. Stop looking for me.

Evelyn's smile vanishes.

EVELYN
Nuh... no. No I...

ANGELICA
You let them. Stop looking for me.

EVELYN
No. No baby please I swear, they
said it was you but I knew deep
down it wasn't. How could they even
tell? It was so... so...

Angelica SHIVERS again. Then slowly opens her wide mouth. But
her voice doesn't come out of it.

ANGELICA
(Hiker's voice)
You stopped looking for me.

The color drains from Evelyn's face.

She looks down at the doll. Then scans over her daughter.

The birthmark on the doll isn't on Angelica's face.

EVELYN
Wuh... what?

She snaps out of the trance.

ANGELICA
(Hiker's voice)
You stopped. You stopped.

As if recorded. Looping.

EVELYN
No.

She cautiously approaches the image of her daughter.
Gets right up to her. Shines the torch over her strange face.
Then shines it behind Angelica.
A THICK WIRE sticks out of the middle of her back. Like a
slimy, black hose.

It goes through her clothes. And leads back through the ajar
hatch door.

Trailing deep into the dark mine shaft.

Evelyn steps back. Eying her "daughter."

EVELYN
What are you?

Evelyn reaches out to her daughter's strange skin.
And places her hand on her cheek.
A moment.
She holds it there. Feeling Angelica again.

AND HER HAND SINKS INTO HER DAUGHTER'S SKIN.

Angelica's cheek folds over Evelyn's hand.
Her fingers sucked into her head.
Evelyn stares. Horrified.
As her daughter's face caves in on itself around her hand.
She tries to pull it out.
But it's stuck. Like a bug on fly paper.

EVELYN
AAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH.

ANGELICA
AAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH.

Angelica mimics her cry. Horrible. Distorted.
Their screams ECHO through the woods.
As Evelyn is dragged toward the hatch door.
She pulls against her daughter. But she's impossibly strong.
Her feet give out and she tumbles to the ground.
Landing on her bad leg.

EVELYN
GYAH.

She grabs her wound. Agony as she's pulled through the mud.

ANGELICA
Mom. Mom.

Angelica pulses. Her skin bubbling.
Evelyn is pulled to the hatch. Staring down the darkness.
She drops her torch and clings to the door.
Holding on for dear life.
But the hatch is wet.
Her fingers slip.
And Evelyn is pulled into the pitch black.

INT. MINE SHAFT - NIGHT

Darkness. Rock.
A long, straight mine shaft. It gradually slopes down into the ground. WATER from outside streams downhill.
Evelyn is dragged over the rough wet ground by Angelica. Her skin SCRAPING OFF as she goes.
She pounds on her hand. Trying to free herself.

Angelica releases. Then STRIKES again. Latching onto her good leg. She pulls Evelyn toward the end of the mine shaft.

There, a wide PIT. A sheer drop down into the earth.

EVELYN
No. No no no no.

She's dragged closer to the drop.

A LOAD BEARING BEAM. It sticks into the floor and ceiling by the pit.

Evelyn grabs it. Holds on tight.

Dust and rocks crumble out of the ceiling where the beam begins to wiggle.

It's loose. Dangerous.

Angelica pulls. The beam might give. Evelyn lets go. She's dragged closer to the pit.

And pulled over the edge.

But she grabs A ROCKY OUTCROP sticking over the ledge.

She holds on.

Dangling in the air above the pit.

EVELYN
Nonononononono.

She clings to the rock. Angelica sticks to her leg. Pulling her down.

From below...

ANGELICA (O.S.)
Mom. Mom.

HIKER (O.S.)
Help me. Help me.

EVELYN (O.S.)
Baby. What are you. What are you.

All of the loops playing at once. *Even her own voice.*

She closes her eyes. As if that will block them out.

Somehow... it works. The voices go silent.

No.

They're just replaced by something else.

Something much worse.

A low. Wet. GURGLE.

GGGRRRGGGRRRGGGRRGGGGGG.

Deep. Menacing.

BIG.

Evelyn blinks her eyes open.

Then looks down into the dark.

A massive wriggling FIGURE.

Deep in black of the pit. She squints. Barely making out...

A MASSIVE TOOTHED MAW.

Hundreds of fangs. Rows and rows of them. Each a foot long.

The mouth of some huge, grotesque CREATURE.

This is **THE ANGLER.**

The tentacled images of people its **LURE.**

Angelica TRANSFORMS. Her lumpy skin becoming grey. She shrinks. Sucked down into the wire.

Leaving only a snake-like tentacle clinging to Evelyn.

The tentacle pulls. One of her hands falls from the outcrop.

Only five fingers hold her from death.

Four. Her pinky slips.

Three. Her thumb.

THE ANGLER'S LARGE YELLOW EYES are locked right on her.

Two.

The eyes GLOW in the fire light.

One.

...Wait. Fire light?

Evelyn's last finger slips.

AND SHE'S GRABBED FROM ABOVE.

Colby. One hand clings to Evelyn. The other arm wrapped around the loose beam holding Evelyn's TORCH.

COLBY

I got you.

Colby pulls.

The creature pulls too.

Colby struggles against the force. Confused.

He can't see the tentacle.

He drops the torch on the ledge. Clutches the beam tighter.

The beam moves. More rocks crumble from the ceiling.

Evelyn sees it.

EVELYN

No. Let me go.

COLBY

Fuck you. Climb!

Evelyn YELLS as she reaches up to the ledge.

HER HAND LANDS ON THE TORCH. She grabs it.

The beam is about to give. A huge ROCK shifts above it.

COLBY

C'mon!

Evelyn eyes the torch in her hand.

Then the tentacle. Then the ceiling.

SHE JABS THE TORCH ONTO HER LEG.

Onto the tentacle.

EVELYN

GAAAH.

Her skin BURNS. The tentacle SIZZLES. HISSES.

And releases Evelyn. Sinking down into the pit.

And Colby ppuuuulllssss Evelyn up over the ledge.

Safe on solid ground. The two sit there a moment. Catching their breath. Processing.

Evelyn checks her bloodied arm. Her torn skin. Her burnt and broken legs. She's in rough shape.

COLBY

You okay?

Evelyn nods.

Then slumps over. Passed out.

INT. TENT - DREAM - DAY

Evelyn and Angelica sit in the tent once again.

Evelyn reaches out to her daughter.

But she's not there anymore.

Just the doll.

It's WET. Bloated and pale. Decomposing.

EXT. GORGE FOREST CAMP - NIGHT

Evelyn snorts awake. Looks around.

The fire from her campsite CRACKLES before her.

Rain still pours onto the canopy above.

COLBY

Hey.

Evelyn jolts up.

Colby sits next to her. Munching a cliff bar.

He offers it out to her. Evelyn scooches away from him the best she can.

COLBY

Hey, hey, hey.

He inches closer. Trying to console her. Evelyn keeps her eyes fixed on him. *Does he look...*

EVELYN
Stay back.

Colby holds his hands up. *Fine*. Then stuffs the rest of the cliff bar in his mouth.

EVELYN
Say something.

COLBY
Huh?

EVELYN
Say something specific.

COLBY
You put booze in your coffee this morning.

Evelyn scowls. But relaxes a bit.

COLBY
What's got you worked up?

EVELYN
I found him. But it wasn't him. And it... it. I saw my daughter.

COLBY
Hey, hey. Woah. Slow down.

Colby pulls out her FLASK from her bag. Takes a swig. Holds it out for her. Evelyn eyes it.

Then takes it and drinks.

COLBY
Now talk.

EVELYN
Something is out here. It had me in the mine.

Colby raises an eyebrow.

EVELYN
What does that mean?

COLBY
That you're even alive right now is insane. But you're in shock.

EVELYN

So what then? I was just dangling
there because I felt like it?

COLBY

Maybe you tripped on a root.

EVELYN

Bullshit a fuckin' root! Did you
try not to see kid?

COLBY

DON'T.

He hurls a branch in the fire. It PLUMES up. She hit a nerve.

EVELYN

Okay. Hey, hey. I didn't mean it.
You saved my ass. Thank you.

She sips. He softens.

EVELYN

But you should've waited until it
was safer to come out here.

COLBY

If I didn't come you'd be a pancake
at the bottom of a pit. And now we
just wait until morning to go.

EVELYN

No. We can't stay here.

COLBY

It's warm enough and it's dry
enough. Barely. But enough. Storm
will pass, I'll get a signal out,
Jen will come. Sound like a plan?

Colby holds up his WALKIE TALKIE. Evelyn clocks his PACK.
ROPE, FLARE GUN, and assorted hiking equipment inside.

She sips the flask. Colby holds out his hand for it. Evelyn
hesitates. Not ready to give it up.

But she does.

Colby takes the flask. Puts it away deep in Evelyn's pack.
Evelyn eyes it longingly. Exhales.

Colby pauses. Digs in the pack and pulls out the Oxycontin.

COLBY
Jesus.

EVELYN
I... look. The hiker may still be out there. But you have to listen to me. There is something here. Something... trying to be human.

Colby listens. Stone faced.

EVELYN
It looks like... her. Took her face for itself. Don't believe it.

COLBY
Jen told me about her. I'm sorry.

EVELYN
And?

COLBY
You're delirious. Or high. Or both. Don't you think you might... be seeing what you want to?

EVELYN
You don't get it.

COLBY
I do.

EVELYN
How could you? You're just a fuckin' kid.

COLBY
I said don't.

EVELYN
Judging me like you'd know anything about this shit.

COLBY
I KNOW IT ENOUGH.

Evelyn quiets.

Colby takes a tipsy breath.

Grits his teeth. Uncomfortable.

COLBY

I dunno. Look. I never told y'all why I came out here. My dad. He... Fucking throat cancer man. Can't talk. Or whistle. So I uh. I ran. But fuckin' A. Wish I could have another real talk with him. But we don't get that. And our brains are powerful. I've been dreamin' about him. I don't even know... what exactly happened with your daughter. I know it's not the same. But maybe it's halfway there?

Evelyn really absorbs this.

EVELYN

It was a really busy week at work. Big, high profile case. But it was my weekend with her and she wanted to do something fun. Begged me to go camping. The hell did I know about camping? It was near here. We could barely get the tent up, and were covered in mosquito bites, but she loved every second. And so did I... But I really put myself into my work after her dad and I split. She could tell I was preoccupied. Made me promise I wouldn't bring any work with me. But I did. Just some forms. She wanted to go fishing by the river. Told her I'd be right behind her. I lost track of time and when I wrapped up... I looked everywhere. But it was getting dark. So I called it in.

She's a little shaky now.

EVELYN

We looked. For days. And then they just stopped when... Anyway, after it all, folks started avoiding me. So I started going to the bars just to have someone to talk to. But I could tell even the bartenders blamed me. So I left. Came out here. Thought maybe... I dunno.

Evelyn looks up at Colby.

COLBY

Evelyn... Jen told me. Said they found her a month later. Ten miles down river.

EVELYN

I just can't belie--

COLBY

--Said you refused to identify her body. Stopped taking their calls... But the dental records matched.

Evelyn opens her mouth to respond. Hesitates.

Swallows. Lump in her throat.

Fidgets. Looks in every direction except Colby's.

Tears well up. She shakes her head no as if it'll stop them.

It doesn't.

She lets the tears come.

EVELYN

S-sometimes I still see her out of the corner of my eye. I smelled her in a crowd once in town. Smelled her. How? How was I supposed to let her go? She's everywhere.

Evelyn lets out a deep exhale. Wipes some tears away.

But after all that. She looks a little better.

Colby considers. Nestles back up against a tree. Drapes a spare jacket over himself for a blanket.

COLBY

Even the bartenders, huh? Oof.
That's low.

Evelyn cracks the smallest of smiles.

EVELYN

I bet your dad is proud.

Colby considers. Evelyn clocks the sadness there.

EVELYN

Jen is gonna beat our asses good when we get back, isn't she?

They laugh together. A nice moment. Then Colby YAWNS.

COLBY
We need rest.

EVELYN
Please. We can't stay.

COLBY
Just for a bit.

EVELYN
I'm not just seeing what I want.
That's natural. This thing isn't.

COLBY
Well I wager you can't make it up
the cliff without me. So keep watch
for ten minutes. Then wake me.

Evelyn deflates. He's got her there.

EVELYN
Okay. Okay fine. Ten minutes.

Colby lets out a quick WHISTLE and closes his eyes.

Evelyn gazes out into the woods.

She blinks. Her eyes heavy.

INT. RANGER STATION - NIGHT

Jen sits by the radio. Anxious. She looks like a mess.

Peers through the boards on her window at the rain. Then to
her polished rocks.

SMASH. Jen leaps in her chair.

A BRANCH has broken through one of the windows. A board is
knocked loose.

WIND HOWLS. Rain drips in.

Jen gathers herself. Takes in just how bad it is out there.

And it's bad.

She stands. Picks up her hammer and heads for the window.

Then glances back at the radio.

EXT. GORGE FOREST CAMP - DAWN

The pure black dark of night has faded to the deep dull blue of early morning.

Hundreds of FIREFLIES dance in the air. Twinkling as PEEPERS CHIRP in the blue dark.

The fire CRACKLES. Rain POURS on the canopy.

It's peaceful.

Colby lays up against the tree. Unmoved.

He slowly blinks awake. Gazes around at the fireflies. Then turns to Evelyn.

Still sleeping. A much needed rest.

Colby stretches. Sips from a water bottle.

COLBY

Alright.

Evelyn doesn't budge.

COLBY

C'mon. Time's up.

Nothing. She's out cold.

Colby rolls his eyes and WHISTLES at Evelyn. Loud.

She barely stirs.

He smirks. Starts packing up some of their--

--wwwwwwWWWWHHIIIIISSTTTLLLEEEEEE...

The peepers go silent. The fireflies all go dark.

Colby stops.

...

It came from out in the woods.

Again... WHIIIISSSTTTLLLEEEEEE.

Colby rises up from his tree. Slowly walks over to the edge of the campsite.

Pushes some branches aside. Peers out into the dark.

Squints. Shadows all over.

Can't make out much.

Colby WHISTLES again. Keeps looking out into the woods.

A moment.

Maybe... Something just barely moves in the distance?

WHISTLE.

Close. In the branches right to his side. Inches from him.

A FACE IN THE LEAVES. Only a blur. It slips away quickly.

COLBY

SHIT.

Colby trips backwards. Falls hard. Next to the fire.

Backs up. Eyes the bushes in front of him.

Nothing.

HE'S GRABBED FROM BEHIND.

EVELYN

Don't trust it.

COLBY

JESUS.

Evelyn holds onto him. Awake and panicked.

The bushes RUSTLE in front of them.

COLBY

GAH.

RRIINNGG.

Colby clutches his head.

EVELYN

It knows.

Movement. To the right.

Left.

WHISTLING. All around them.

Colby stands. Picks up a thick BRANCH.

A DRAGGING. Like something slithering over the underbrush.
Evelyn braces. Colby watches.

EVELYN
Not my baby. Not again. Please.

Bushes rustle ahead in the trees. Colby readies the branch.

COLBY
Easy. I got you.

The rustling gets closer.

Closer.

RIGHT ON THEM.

Evelyn closes her eyes. Not ready to see the desecrated image of her daughter again.

MAN (O.S.)
Hey kid.

Evelyn opens her eyes.

MR. ROTH (65, frail, kind eyes) stands on the edge of the bushes. Smiling in the fire light.

Colby's face falls. He drops the branch.

COLBY
Dad.

Mr. Roth smiles, but his face is lopsided. Skin too tight.

MR. ROTH
Hey kid.

Evelyn's eyes go wide. She spots the wire in his back.

EVELYN
No. NO. Colby. It's not him.

She props herself up. Scooches through the mud toward Colby. Dragging her leg behind her.

Colby stares at his father. Mesmerized.

COLBY
You... your voice is back.

MR. ROTH
You left me.

COLBY

W-what?

MR. ROTH

You left me.

Colby winces. Hurt by the truth in this.

As Evelyn continues to crawl toward him.

EVELYN

Colby no. No.

But Colby takes a step toward his dad.

Entranced. Just like Evelyn was.

MR. ROTH

You left me.

COLBY

No.

The voice comes out exactly the same every time.

Like a recording.

MR. ROTH

You left me.

COLBY

No. I...

MR. ROTH

You left me.

Colby frowns. Breaking.

COLBY

I didn't mean to.

EVELYN

Colby no. Please.

MR. ROTH

Son.

COLBY

I'm sorry.

Mr. Roth says nothing. Drifting slightly.

Evelyn moves for Colby. Fast as she can. But brutally slow.

EVELYN
It knows what you want.

Colby cocks his head to the side. A confused dog figuring out the situation.

He takes another step closer.

MR. ROTH
Son.

COLBY
I'm here. I'm here.

EVELYN
Don't touch him.

Colby takes another step. Very close now.

He leans in. Examining his father. Still under the spell.

MR. ROTH
Son.

EVELYN
IT'S NOT HIM.

Colby pauses. Turns back to Evelyn as she claws through the mud toward him.

COLBY
I... You may be right.

Evelyn stops.

She can't believe it.

Colby turns back to his dad. Fully hypnotized now.

MR. ROTH
Hey, kid.

COLBY
Hi dad.

And Colby hugs him.

EVELYN
NO.

Mr. Roth's arms slowly fold around Colby's waist.

A moment. Nothing happens. Colby holds his dad in the long overdue embrace.

He closes his eyes and smiles.
Squeezes his dad tight.
Crying into his shoulder.
But Mr. Roth's blank eyes just stare ahead into nothing.

Then they flick to Evelyn.

Fuck.

Colby winces. Tries to pull back. The spell seemingly broken.
He can't.

Mr. Roth's hands FUSE TOGETHER. Finger, skin, and bone meld into one appendage wrapped around Colby.

It starts to constrict.

COLBY
Ah. AH.

EVELYN
No!

Evelyn keeps crawling through mud.

Almost to him.

Colby's wide eyes continue to stream tears as his dad collapses in on him.

Deflating and folding over his body.

Evelyn reaches for Colby.

As FANGS stick out of Mr. Roth. Into Colby's skin.

Piercing straight through his arms and legs.

MR. ROTH
(Angelica's voice)
Mom.

Evelyn stops at that.

Her hand inches from Colby.

COLBY
Dad, dad, dad, dad dad dad dad.

Mr. Roth's arms pull in.

Tight.

Tighter.

COLBY
Daddaddaddaddaddaddad.

SNAP.

Colby's ribs break.

Blood spurts onto Evelyn's face. Into her mouth. She GAGS.

Colby SCREAMS into his dad's shoulder. Still stuck.

As Mr. Roth starts to retreat back through the bushes.
Pulling Colby with him.

And Colby's pained, scared screams fade away into the forest.

Leaving Evelyn alone.

Still holding her hand out. Where Colby just was.

Evelyn is destroyed.

Terrified.

She looks around the camp. Clocks Colby's pack.

A coiled up ROPE sticking out the top.

Fast as her injury will let her. She starts throwing things together into her own pack.

The rope. Radio. Flask. She drinks.

She finds the FLARE GUN in Colby's pack. Takes it too.

Then spots Angelica's doll in her pack. A moment.

She zips up the bag.

Grabs her crutch.

EXT. GORGE RIVER BANK - DAWN

Dull grey blue. The sun not over the mountains yet.

The silver in the cliff still shining wet.

Rain falls onto the muddy shore. Trees sway in the wind of the storm.

Evelyn emerges from the tree line.

She limps down the hill toward the water. Crutch wobbling in her hand.

She stops. Gazing over the river.

EVELYN

No...

The river is RAGING.

Rapids race downstream. Ferocious. Brutal.

Across the water. The SLASHED TREE.

The waves splash up against the gash in the bark. Nearly five feet higher than it was before.

There's no way she can get across in her condition.

EVELYN

No, no, no, no.

She looks back to the woods.

Then to the river.

And makes her choice.

She hobbles into the river. Feet splashing into the water.

She takes the pack off and holds it over her head as she wades deeper in.

Water splashes over her knees. She sloshes.

She MISSTEPS. Almost falls into the water. Waves splashing into her mouth. She COUGHS.

It's up to her waist.

Evelyn steadies herself.

Scans across the river. So much more to go.

This is suicide.

Evelyn's off balance.

Any further and the current will take her.

EVELYN
I'm sorry. I'm sorry baby.

She goes to take another step deeper.

BZZZZZZZTTT.

She stops.

COLBY (V.O.)
Ev-lyn?

Her radio.

She lowers her pack. Takes out the radio.

EVELYN
Colby? Colby?

KZZZZTTTTT.

EVELYN
COLBY?

More static...

COLBY (V.O.)
Don't le-ve me.

Oh man.

EVELYN
Where are you?

KZZZTTT.

EVELYN
Colby?

COLBY (V.O.)
It's so dark.

Evelyn closes her eyes. Dreading what she's about to do.

She turns around and wades back through the river. Toward the close shore. Her blood covered face determined.

SHE TUMBLES! Splashing down under the water.

The rapids race down stream. *Did they sweep her away?*

No.

Evelyn slowly rises out of the river. Her crutch jammed between two rocks. Holding her steady.

The water washing the blood down off her scowl. Cleaning her.

Evelyn climbs up out of the river. Walking over the shore and up into the woods.

To Colby.

EXT. MINE SHAFT - DAWN

Evelyn pushes through the trees and bushes.

Walking out into a clearing.

The mine shaft in front of her. Water trickles in through the open hatch door.

LIGHT. It hits her face. She recoils a moment. Then examines the source.

THE SUN barely peeks through the clouds as it crests over the distant mountains.

Evelyn watches it.

But it vanishes behind the grey clouds again.

Rain continues to fall.

Evelyn kneels down. Takes the pack out.

Takes out the FLARE GUN.

Checks. One shot.

Then brings out her makeshift TORCH and flint.

Goes to light it.

SCRAPE. SCRAPE. It won't light.

Evelyn takes out the rubbing alcohol.

EMPTY.

She SIGHS.

Takes out her flask.

Shakes it. A little left.

She grinds her teeth.

Then pours out the rest of her booze onto the torch.

AND HURLS THE FLASK INTO THE WOODS.

Evelyn watches it disappear into the leaves.

She SCRAPES the flint.

The torch lights!

She slings the pack over her shoulder. Grabs the radio.

EVELYN

Colby. I'm at the mine.

Thick static a moment. Then his voice crackles through.

COLBY (V.O.)

It's worse than you think.

Evelyn stares ahead at the mine shaft.

Fearful. But resolute.

She grabs the hatch. It CREEAAAKSS open.

And Evelyn heads into the mine.

INT. MINE SHAFT - DAY

Evelyn creeps down the long mine. Carefully limping over the wet, jagged ground.

The light of the hatch grows small behind her as she heads deeper inside.

Streams of water pour down into the dark mine shaft.

She holds the torch ahead of her as she limps.

Her makeshift crutch CLUNK, CLUNK, CLUNKS as she goes.

Deeper now.

CLUNK. CLUNK.

Up ahead. Evelyn sees THE PIT dropping deep into the mine.

The hatch door is barely a bright speck. Fifty yards behind her now.

She moves for the pit. Passes the load bearing beam.

Creeps to the edge of the drop.

Slowly holds the torch out.

Bareellyy peeks over.

Looking down into the darkness.

No creature. No eyes or teeth.

She kicks a ROCK into the pit.

It vanishes into the dark.

...

CLUNK. SPLASH. It hits the bottom. Maybe eighty feet down.

The sound echoes throughout the whole mine.

At least it has a bottom.

She sets her pack down. Takes out Colby's ROPE.

With one hand she KNOTS a loop around the loose beam.

She tugs on it. Testing.

Lots of movement. More rocks fall. But it barely holds. It'll have to do.

She unravels the whole rope and tosses it over the edge.

It falls into the dark.

Evelyn goes to put the backpack on.

But spots Angelica's doll peeking out at her.

She takes the doll out. Holds it close.

And doesn't notice...

THE ROPE TWITCHES.

Evelyn kisses the doll.

EVELYN

I'll get him. I'll get him.

The rope WRIGGLES as something pulls on it down below.

Evelyn places the doll back in the pack. Puts it on.

The rope is TUGGED. HARD.

Wrenching left and right.

Evelyn stands.

The rope stills.

WWHHIISSTTLLEE.

Evelyn freezes.

COLBY RISES UP OUT OF THE PIT. Suspended by the long wire-like tentacle.

His face twisted. Rough.

The lure.

He opens his mouth wide. Doesn't purse his lips. And the WHISTLE comes out again.

Colby moves closer.

EVELYN
Back. BACK.

But Colby drifts closer still.

So close now.

And STOPS before touching Evelyn.

He hangs there. So close.

BUT NOT TOUCHING HER.

Evelyn considers...

Just waits a moment.

AND LUNGES. Pressing the torch to his face.

He WHISTLES in response. Backs off. Hovering over the pit.

COLBY
(mixed voices)
Mom. Help. Son.

His face SIZZLES for a moment. The flames burning away skin. Revealing a smooth grey surface.

Colby SHIVERS. Pulses.

COLBY
(Angelica's voice)
Mom. Mommy.

EVELYN
You. Aren't. Her.

COLBY LAUNCHES AT EVELYN. Like a snake striking.

He latches onto her in a tight hug. Sticking.

She grips the torch instinctively.

EVELYN
SHIT.

As Colby pulls her down into the pit.

INT. LOWER TUNNEL - DAY

Evelyn is ripped down into the base of the pit, and pulled into a long, dark TUNNEL.

SMACKED against jagged walls. Dragged over rocky ground.

The light of her torch zipping through the dark.

Colby's face is right next to hers.

Staring her down.

Fangs grow out of his face.

They scrape Evelyn. Cutting her cheeks.

As Colby starts to morph.

ANGELICA'S FACE GROWS OUT OF HIS NECK.

MR. ROTH'S FACE OUT OF HIS CHEST.

COLBY
(mixed voices)
Help me. Help me.

EVELYN
GAAAAAAAH.

Evelyn can just barely maneuver her arm.

AND SHE SHOVES THE TORCH INTO COLBY'S MOUTH.

The faces let out an ungodly SCREECH.

And Colby lets go of Evelyn.

She collapses in a FOOT OF WATER. The tunnel is flooding.

She SCREAMS in pain. Grabs her leg.

Then kneels. Keeping the torch dry.

The lure turns back into Colby. Then creeps away from her. Deeper into the darkness of the tunnel.

His eyes glowing in the torchlight.

UNTIL HE SLIDES UNDER THE WATER.

Vanishing. Water sloshes as he slinks away under the surface.

Evelyn watches him go. Then looks down at herself.

She's bruised. Broken. Bloodied.

Slashed. Burnt.

Tired.

Evelyn STRAINS to stand. Summons her strength.

Breathes. And pulls herself up.

She gets her bearings.

Behind her. The bottom of the pit. Her rope still leading up into the mine shaft.

Ahead of her. A single long, claustrophobic tunnel.

More water runs down the walls of the pit.

Through cracks in the ceiling.

The water is rising.

Evelyn gingerly limps forward. Down the tunnel to where the lure vanished.

She GASPS. Looks down.

Her leg wound has reopened. Blood and bone.

Fuck. She supports herself on the wall. Keeps her bad leg up. But every step is pain.

Her torch leads the way. She's barely able to see.

Something catches her eye to her right. She turns.

A concave area. Inside.

A HUMAN SKELETON. Sitting half submerged in the water. Evelyn recoils. Then shines her light closer.

Old helmet. Torn and dilapidated MINER UNIFORM. It's been here a long time.

Evelyn raises the torch. Above it. Carved into the wall.

WE DUG TOO DEEP

She takes it in. Then clocks that the skeleton still clutches a PICK AXE.

Evelyn reaches down. Rips the pick axe from the skeleton's tight grasp.

Almost drops the heavy tool. Then shoves it under her arm. Another crutch.

She turns the torch down the tunnel.

MORE UNIFORMED MINER SKELETONS sit crumpled in the water.

SLOSH. SLOSH. She keeps moving. Navigating around the skeletons. Five or six of them.

The torchlight illuminates more CARVINGS IN THE WALL as she walks by each skeleton.

IN OUR HEADS

OLD AS THE ROCK

WHO IS REAL

The walls are covered in carvings. Final, frantic messages.

She tries her radio. Whispers into it.

EVELYN
Colby? Colby?

Not even static. She checks. It's soaked. Totally dead.

EVELYN
Shit.

Evelyn watches ahead. Calls out. Quietly.

EVELYN
C-Colby?

No answer. She yells.

EVELYN
COLBY.

COLBY-Colby-Colby echoes through the tunnel.

She pauses. Listens.

COLBY (V.O.)
Heerree...

Muffled. Deep in the tunnel ahead.

She keeps moving.

Turning at every drip. Every splash. Then she spots something. Ahead at the end of the tunnel.

A dull BLUE GLOW.

She presses on toward it.

SOMETHING BUMPS AGAINST A SKELETON IN THE WATER BEHIND HER.

She turns... Nothing.

Then keeps moving forward.

At the light now. She's engulfed in blue as she trudges into...

INT. THE LAIR - DAY

A large, rocky CAVERN. Filled with a foot of water.

HUNDREDS OF GLOWING BLUE VEINS cling to the walls. Like thick, rubbery garden hoses.

SILVER in the rock sparkles in the blue glow.

Evelyn gazes in horror.

HUMAN CORPSES HANG FROM THE WALLS. Some still rotting. Some fully skeletons. Dozens.

All in old raincoats. Decades of kills.

The blue veins latch to the bodies. Absorbing. A repulsive SLURPING sounds quietly in the lair.

THE HIKER hangs from the wall.

Dead. His legs completely rotted. Half his face too. Overcome with the veins.

Hanging next to him...

COLBY
You came back...

COLBY. Bloody. Veins eating away at his arm.

But alive.

EVELYN
Jesus Colby.

Evelyn sloshes toward him.

Grabs his arm. Holds it there a second. They lock eyes.

Is it...

COLBY
I think I buy the bad juju shit
about this place now.

She pulls her hand away. It's him.

EVELYN
I got you.

COLBY
I think my ribs are broken.

EVELYN
Okay. Okay.

Evelyn hoists the pick axe up. Straining under its weight. She takes a deep breath.

Colby closes his eyes. Bracing.

Evelyn swings.

CLANG. The pick axe severs a blue vein by his hand.

CLANG. Another. Then another. CLANG. CLANG.

Evelyn lowers the pick axe. Starts ripping away at the loose veins. Pulling Colby down.

COLBY

It's been in here a long time.

EVELYN

Okay. We have to hurry before it comes back.

COLBY

No... It's still here.

GUUUUURRGGLLLEEEE.

Evelyn stops. Turns around.

WHERE THE FAR WALL IS COMING ALIVE.

A large chunk of the rock shifts. Wriggles.

AND OPENS INTO A HUGE MOUTH. Long fangs stretching out.

Lumpy yellow eyes open from the rock.

What looked like ROOTS uncurl into six huge INSECTOID LEGS.

A wiry tentacle sticks out from its head. Leading down into the water.

THE ANGLER. Part of the mine shaft itself.

One of its long legs reaches out to the body of the hiker.

It plucks him off the wall. And drags him to its mouth.

Evelyn and Colby avert their eyes as it CRUNCHES and SLURPS.

The animal GURGLES again. Then spots Evelyn and Colby.

Evelyn gulps. Then sloooowlyy turns back to Colby. Starts pulling the veins away.

Each vein she pulls SQUEALS and droops.

And the angler GROWLS.

COLBY

You're pissing it off.

EVELYN

Shh.

Evelyn pulls another vein. Freeing Colby.

Helps him down. He throws her arm over his shoulder. Taking the weight off her leg.

EVELYN
C'mon. Slowly.

Evelyn grabs the pick axe. They creep toward the lair exit.

Closer to the tunnel.

They're almost there.

As Angelica rises out of the water in front of them.

Evelyn scowls at her daughter. Face incorrect and muddled.

They adjust. Try to go around.

ANOTHER ANGELICA COMES OUT OF THE WATER NEXT TO THE FIRST.

They try to adjust direction again.

Another Angelica. Then another. They slowly rise up on either side of Evelyn and Colby. Staring at them.

Until four Angelicas fully box them in. Blocking the way out.

Each attached to a wire in their back leading to the angler. They all speak in unison.

ANGELICAS
Mom. Mom. Mom.

COLBY
What now?

GURGLE. They turn.

The angler's legs reach out and PUSH against the rocks.

The huge creature GROANS as it pulls itself from the wall.

It SPLASHES into the water.

AND CRAWLS TOWARD THEM.

Evelyn and Colby move left. The lures move left too. Back to the right. They follow.

ANGELICAS
Mom. Mom.

The Angelica near Colby rears back. Aiming for him. Ready to strike. He sees it.

It attacks.

He ducks. Splashing down in the water.

He comes up. *Did it get him?*

ANGELICAS
Ommommom.

No. Angelica collided with another lure.

THEY'RE STUCK TOGETHER. Mouths, faces, arms and legs writhe as they try to free themselves.

Evelyn clocks it. Looks as the angler ROARS. Closer now.

Another Angelica rears back. Focused on Evelyn. Colby goes to get up, but Evelyn holds her hand out. *Wait.*

She moves left. Wincing in pain.

The lure moves left too.

Evelyn eyes the single Angelica now blocking the exit.

She slowly moves in front of it. The lure tracks her.

It prepares to strike. Evelyn braces.

It launches.

Evelyn dodges to the side.

It worked! The lure collides with the other Angelica. Stuck together.

But Evelyn is pulled toward the wriggling pair.

ONE OF HER BACKPACK STRAPS. The lure connected with it.

Evelyn is thrown around. Pulled in closer. About to be engulfed by the two bodies.

As Colby leaps up and grabs her.

He pulls. Hard.

RRRRIIPPPPPP.

Her backpack tears. The strap flies off. Evelyn is free.

The angler is almost on them. SCREECHING.

The two pairs of lures thrash about. Aimless.

No longer blocking the exit.

AN OPENING.

Evelyn and Colby duck through the tangled lures.

The two limp out of the lair. Supporting each other's weight. Splashing through the water as fast as possible.

The angler ROARS as it follows close behind them.

INT. LOWER TUNNEL - DAY

Evelyn and Colby trudge back through the tunnel together. Passing the miner's skeletons.

The water is higher. Hard to move through.

SOMETHING RIPPLES UNDER THE SURFACE. Moving by them under the water down the tunnel. Bumping the skeletons.

Evelyn glances back at the angler. Closing in.

COLBY

Oh my God.

Evelyn turns back around.

The Angelicas rise out of the water in front of them. Still a tangled mess.

They press together. Molding and morphing into one figure.

Skin, faces, bodies all sliding together into a huge AMALGAMATION.

Angelica, but now Mr. Roth, The Hiker, and Colby too.

And in their center, a distorted image of EVELYN.

All melded together. The angler is trying everything it can.

LURE

(every voice)

Mom. Son. Help. You left me.

A distorted, demonic cacophony of voices.

The angler behind them. The lure in front. They're stuck.

The angler is close now.

The lure moves in.

COLBY
AAAHHH.

Colby grasps the pick axe and DRIVES IT into the lure.

Right on Evelyn's distorted face.

The thing SCREAMS in every voice and winces to the side.

Evelyn and Colby slink around the lure and hurry down the tunnel. Still supporting themselves on each other.

The lure shivers. And slowly pushes the pick axe out of its flesh. Then follows after them.

The angler squeezes through the tunnel behind it. Mouth open.

Hungry. Closing in. Fifty feet.

They push forward. The ceiling opens up above them.

The base of the pit.

The rope leads up into the mine shaft. Colby moves for it and grabs hold.

COLBY
I'll pull you up.

EVELYN
No, I can--

COLBY
You have one fuckin' leg Evelyn.
Let someone else help.

Colby grabs the rope. Tugs it.

Above. The beam jostles. Almost coming loose.

But Colby digs his legs into the wall, and climbs. GROANING at his hurt arm and ribs.

He vanishes up into the dark of the pit.

Evelyn holds the rope. Turns to the tunnel.

THE LURE AND THE ANGLER. Close now. Twenty feet.

She reaches in her busted pack. Pushes past the doll to the FLARE GUN.

She aims it.

EVELYN
Colby.

They're almost on her. Ten feet.

EVELYN
COLBY.

She pulls the hammer back on the flare gun. Grips the rope and her broken, loose backpack tight.

The angler pulls the lure back.

LUNGES WITH ITS HUGE JAW AND TEETH.

AS EVELYN IS PULLED UP.

The angler misses.

Colby pulls Evelyn up the pit with all his might.

She adjusts the rope in her hands as Colby YANKS.

She stumbles. Holds on.

And drops her pack.

ANGELICA'S DOLL.

It falls.

Down. Into the water.

EVELYN
NOOOO. NO. NO. NO.

She almost lets go. Wanting to go after it.

COLBY
YOU'RE ALMOST THERE. CLIMB.

Evelyn holds on.

Watches as the doll sinks under the surface.

And the angler moves over it. Staring up at her.

It's gone.

COLBY
CLIMB.

Evelyn turns away from the pit below.

Summons every last ounce of strength.

Pushes through the agony. Her hurt leg dangling.

She lets out a primal **SCREAM**.

AND CLIMBS.

Up to the top of the pit.

INT. MINE SHAFT - DAY

Colby grabs Evelyn. Tosses her up over the edge of the pit.

They fall backward. Grimacing in pain and exhaustion.

The angler ROARS from below.

COLBY

C'MON.

Evelyn's leg is bad. Covered in fresh blood. She can't stand.

As the angler's legs REACH UP and grab onto the ledge.

PULLING the massive animal up.

Its eyes lock on to Colby and Evelyn.

The lure rises with it.

Now fully Angelica.

Colby grabs Evelyn and drags her up the mine shaft. Toward the white light of the hatch. Fifty yards away.

The heavy angler struggles as it climbs more out of the pit.

The lure moves ahead. Tailing close behind Evelyn and Colby.

Angelica is right on her.

Evelyn takes the flare gun. Aims it at her daughter.

But she looks... almost perfect.

ANGELICA

Mom.

Evelyn stares into the lure's eyes.

Entranced.

INT. TENT - DAY

Evelyn sits in the tent. Bloody and broken just as she was in the mine. Angelica sits across from her.

Evelyn still aims the flare gun at her daughter.

Angelica looks at her. Concerned.

Evelyn lowers the gun.

ANGELICA

I love you.

Evelyn slowly reaches out to her.

COLBY (O.S.)
No! Fight it! Fight!

She pauses.

INT. MINE SHAFT - DAY

Evelyn snaps to. She takes her hand away from Angelica.

Colby keeps pulling her. Thirty yards to the hatch.

ROAR.

The angler is over the edge of the pit. The beam shakes.

THE LOOSE BEAM. Supporting the rocks above.

The angler climbs.

The lure rears back to strike.

And Evelyn aims the flare gun.

Focuses.

Fires.

POP. FWIIIIIIIIIIISHHH. The flare shoots past the lure. Skidding across the wet ground.

THWACK. It hits the beam.

Then just sits against the wood.

EVELYN

No.

POW. The flare erupts into a bright red flash.
Engulfing the beam as the angler climbs over the pit.
The beam burns. Weakening.

CRACK.

It splits apart. Falling into the angler.
Shaking the mine shaft.
The angler lurches back. Singed.
It SLAMS into the back wall of the mine.
The shaft rumbles. Then SHAKES VIOLENTLY.
THE CEILING ABOVE THE PIT COLLAPSES DOWN ONTO THE ANGLER.
Sending it tumbling into the dark.
Tons of rocks crash down into the pit. Crushing the animal
under their massive weight.

It GROANS.
Stuck under the rock. Completely cut off from the mine shaft.
Gone from sight.

Angelica freezes. Dead eyes lock onto her mother.

She gives one big shiver.
And collapses.

Motionless.

The rocks settle. Almost fully filling in the pit.
Colby pulls Evelyn closer to the hatch. She watches the image
of her daughter grow distant.
Vanishing into the dark.

EXT. MINE SHAFT - DAY

Swirling grey skies. Wind. Rain.
Colby bursts from the hatch. Carrying Evelyn out.
He props her up on a rock by the shaft.

A moment. The two catch their breath.

Colby peers up. Lets the rain hit his face.

Evelyn does too.

The two look at each other. Clocking just how injured they really are.

And they start to laugh. Reserved at first. Almost in disbelief.

But it quickly grows into the kind of wild laugh you only get after something this absurd.

They laugh through the pain together.

COLBY

We friggin' did it. We just have to wait out the storm now.

EVELYN

Colby.

Evelyn gestures to them both.

Completely destroyed. Losing A LOT of blood.

Near death.

EVELYN

We're not gonna make it 'til then.

CREEAAAKKK. The hatch door moves.

EVELYN

The radios are fried. Even if we did outlast it. We can't--

COLBY IS YANKED BACK THROUGH THE MUD.

Angelica grabs hold of him. Sticking to him.

EVELYN

NO.

COLBY

AGH.

He's pulled back toward the hatch.

Angelica starts to slide back into the mine.

Bringing Colby into the dark.

EVELYN
Angelica.

Angelica stops. Turns to Evelyn. Standing in the mine.
One arm gripping the hatch for support. The other reaching out to Angelica.

EVELYN
Come to me baby. I'm here.

Angelica shivers. As if considering.

EVELYN
I missed you.

COLBY
Evelyn no.

Angelica slowly moves for Evelyn. Still clinging to Colby.
Evelyn takes a step back. Out of the mine.
Angelica follows.

Lured out of the mine shaft. Into the doorway.

EVELYN
That's right. Here.

Evelyn steps back again.

Angelica floats closer.

COLBY
You don't have to do this.

Evelyn stands next to her daughter in the entrance of the mine shaft.

ANGELICA
Mom. Mom.

EVELYN
Yeah. I do.

AND EVELYN SLAMS THE HATCH CLOSED.

BANG. It whacks into Angelica. She falls to the ground.

ANGELICA
Mom.

Her grip loosens on Colby.

Evelyn slams the hatch again.

WHAM.

ANGELICA
Mom.

She almost lets go.

WHAM.

ANGELICA
Mom.

WHAM.

ANGELICA
Mom.

Angelica lets go. Colby crawls away. Out of the mine.

Angelica goes limp. Battered. Misshapen. Weak.

Evelyn stops.

Angelica looks up at her. Still halfway out of the hatch.

ANGELICA
I... Love... You.

Her voice slows and lowers as she speaks. Like a record being turned off.

Evelyn pulls the hatch back. Preparing the killing blow.

thumpthumpthumpthump...

She stops. Listens.

thumpthumpthumpthumpthump...

Evelyn cranes up.

THUMPTHUMPTHUMPTHUMPTHUMP.

A HELICOPTER ROARS OVER THE TREES ABOVE THEM.

It pulls a hard turn. Circling over the clearing. Colby crosses his arms over his head and waves.

The helicopter hovers. Then starts to lower.

JEN stands in the back. Helmet on. Waving down at them. The helicopter is deafening now.

Evelyn peers back to the hatch.

Angelica is gone.

Colby comes over and pulls Evelyn from the hatch.

As the helicopter descends down on them both.

AND IT ALL GOES DARK.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

White fluorescent light fades in. Machines and screens beeping and showing vitals.

Evelyn sleeps in bed. Clean. Bandaged. IVs. Leg in a cast.

It's weird to not see her covered in blood and dirt.

SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE.

Evelyn gently wakes. Blinking slowly in the bright light.

Jen sits by her side. Polishing a rock with sandpaper.

JEN

Dreaming?

EVELYN

Nope.

JEN

Sounds peaceful.

EVELYN

Guess so.

JEN

Doctor said you had hypothermia,
infected cuts, water in your lungs,
lost two liters of blood, and may
never walk without help again.

Evelyn smirks.

EVELYN

Yeah, but you sh--

JEN

--Tell me to see the other guy I'll
add broken nose to your chart.

They chuckle a moment.

JEN
I can't believe we found you.

EVELYN
I thought you couldn't go out in
the storm. I know the rules.

JEN
Fuck the rules. You're okay.

Evelyn smiles weakly at her.

JEN
So. What happened out there?

The smile fades. She doesn't answer.

JEN
No. It's fine. When you're ready.

A long pause from Evelyn. Then.

EVELYN
Why'd you take the job, Jen?

Jen stops sanding her stone.

EVELYN
Being a ranger. I mean, maybe it's
better than the bullshit I was
doing before. But it's lonely as
all hell sometimes.

Jen shrugs.

JEN
Never had much. People or things.
Just, made my own way. I liked it.
Figured I might as well get paid
for it. But now I... have more.

A moment.

EVELYN
What do you think happened to her?
Really.

JEN
Jesus. Evelyn we don't have to--

EVELYN
--Tell me.

Jen considers.

Really considers.

JEN

I think she slipped, fell in the river, and drowned. That's it.

Evelyn eyes her. *That's it?*

JEN

I uh. It's natural to want some big, crazy thing to explain the pain. Y'know? Something to justify how fucking awful it all feels. But we don't always get that. Sometimes it's just... what it is. I dunno.

Evelyn absorbs that.

EVELYN

Where's Colby?

Jen sets the stone down.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

Jen rolls Evelyn down the hallway in a WHEELCHAIR.

Parks Evelyn outside another hospital room.

INSIDE. Colby lays in bed.

His arm curled in a sling. Bandages damn near covering his entire body.

MR. ROTH. The real one, sits by his side.

Old, frail, mute, but smiling at his son.

Colby talks. Mr. Roth gestures. Getting reacquainted.

Mr. Roth pokes at Colby's arm. He winces at the touch. Then smacks his dad's hand away.

A moment. Then the two laugh together.

And Colby glances up at Evelyn.

He nods to her.

She nods back.

And then Evelyn starts to CRY.

Hard. Bawling her eyes out.

JEN
Whoa, whoa. You okay?

Evelyn gulps in a breath between her sobs.

EVELYN
No. Not really.

She looks up at Jen. *But maybe eventually.*

EXT. MINE SHAFT - DAY

Sunshine. Birds chirping in the trees.

The leaves are red. Turning in autumn.

Some time later. No signs of the brutal events from before.

The rusty mine shaft hatch sits closed.

PADLOCKED.

Evelyn hobbles up to it. Cane in hand. Flowers in the other.

Her leg mostly healed. But probably never the same again.

She's okay. A little more tired.

But more at ease.

She takes in a deep breath. Unlocks the padlock.

The door creaks open. And Evelyn heads inside.

INT. MINE SHAFT - DAY

Evelyn slowly limps down the mine shaft. Flashlight beam leading the way.

She carefully moves over rocks and rough ground.

It's a bit of a struggle. But she handles it.

She arrives at the edge of the pit.

Almost fully filled in with rocks.

A SHRINE sits by the pit.

Melted candles, old flowers, and the photo of Evelyn and Angelica.

Evelyn sets the new flowers down. Picks up the photograph.

She purses her lips. And WHIIISSTTLLEES.

Evelyn moves to the edge of the pit.

A low, pained GURGLE. Muffled deep in the pit.

The angler is still alive down there. Crippled and trapped.

Through a crack in the rocks. ANGELICA slinks up out of the pit and hovers before her mother.

ANGELICA

Mom. Mom.

Still weak. Frail from their showdown.

But now more human than before. Gone are the mismatched eyes and rubbery skin.

She almost seems perfect.

As she once was.

Evelyn holds out the photo. Showing it to the lure.

Angelica shivers. Her eye moves slightly. Bone structure adjusts a tad.

And her BIRTHMARK shows up. Evelyn pulls the photo away.

EVELYN

There.

Evelyn stares at her perfect daughter a moment.

Angelica starts to drift toward Evelyn.

Close.

Too close for comfort.

And Evelyn pushes her back gently with her cane. Keeping her at a safe distance.

She goes and sets the picture down at the shrine.

EVELYN

Back again soon.

Evelyn turns and moves back up the mine.
It takes her a moment with her limp.
But she reaches the hatch and turns back.
ANGELICA FLOATS RIGHT BEHIND HER.

ANGELICA
I... Love... You.

Evelyn flashes a sad smile.

EVELYN
I miss you, baby.

She steps outside and closes the hatch.
The padlock CLASPS.
And we're left in darkness.

FADE OUT.

THE END.