

TRAIL MIXED

Written by

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FADE IN:

1 (PHOTOGRAPH) EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY 1

A photograph of three hikers posing on a mountainside after a long trek. REBECCA stands with her arms around her best friend AMELIA and brother MARCO, all early 20's and glowing with victory.

Their bond is as tight as can be.

We recede to reveal that this photo is framed in a funeral home reception room.

2 INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY 2

MARCO (now 33, dressed business casual) slumps on a leather couch. Around him are the remains of a remembrance event. An URN sits on the coffee table in front of him. He's alone in the big room. It's somber and silent as he fidgets with a folded-up piece of paper.

BAM! Suddenly the door flies open and slams into the wall. Marco is startled, and turns to see--

Two MAIDS (BETTY and VERONICA, 70's) enter the room and start cleaning. They chat loudly in Spanish as they roll in a cart with squeaking wheels, supplies clacking together.

MARCO

Uh. Hi. Sorry, you're-- uh--?

BETTY

Betty.

MARCO

Hi, Betty. I'm grieving.

BETTY

Hello Mr. Grieving.

MARCO

No, not *Mr.* Grieving--

BETTY

Mrs. Grieving. Sorry.

She starts the vacuum and starts buzzing around the room.

Marco tries to think of a way to protest, but can't find the energy. After a moment, he just numbly accepts it, and goes back to zoning out with his piece of paper.

MARCO'S MOM (50s+) approaches, cleaning up the room here and there.

MARCO'S MOM
Doing okay, pumpkin?

MARCO
Hm? Oh, yeah. Good turnout. Nice to see everyone.

MARCO'S MOM
And did you ask around to see if--?

MARCO
I asked everyone under 60, mom.

She sits with Marco as he unfolds his small paper. They review a handwritten list:

"Phinney Ridge ✓"

"Uncle Bryson's Apple Tree ✓"

The final entry, not checked: "Mt. Norbert".

MARCO (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Yeah, I don't know...

MARCO'S MOM
I keep telling you, I don't mind a little fresh air.

MARCO
You *should* mind the rheumatoid arthritis. Unless you have a Groupon for a helicopter ride. Norbert is a tough hike.

MARCO'S MOM
Well. I'm leaving on Sunday and I'm not splitting any of her up in Tupperware.

They think.

MARCO'S MOM (CONT'D)
Did you... think of maybe asking one of Rebecca's friends?

She glances at the framed photo at the head of the room. Marco follows her gaze, and lingers painfully on the image of the inseparable trio, conquering the mountain.

MARCO

All of them that showed up. Guess
some others--

Betty's vacuum bumps his chair.

BETTY

Lo siento excuse me! Feet.

Marco grits his teeth and complies. Betty vacuums through
them, as they wait til she moves away.

MARCO

I guess some friends were just a
little too *busy* to come by.

MARCO'S MOM

Well, I know it's been a while for
you and Amelia...

MARCO

Ten years.

MARCO'S MOM

You're counting?

Betty is now back with the loud vacuum and barrels through
their space.

MARCO

(louder)

No! Definitely not counting!

MARCO'S MOM

(louder)

You should reach out.

MARCO

(louder)

She doesn't want to hear from me!

MARCO'S MOM

(even louder)

What, honey?

Betty continues to vacuum under his chair.

MARCO

(even louder)

I said I'm not calling her!

MARCO'S MOM

(even louder)

Who's "Nate Collinger?" The
comedian?!

MARCO
 I don't know, I haven't been up
 there in years. Come on, my mom is
 making me do the buddy system.
 We're buddies, right?

Andre chuckles and leaves.

MARCO (CONT'D)
 (calling after him)
 There's bears and stuff!

Marco sighs and sags against the wall.

He thinks for a long moment. Then scrolls his phone contacts.
 He reaches **Amelia's contact** and hovers his finger over it.

He decides: no. He hastily turns the phone off and pulls open
 the restaurant door.

MATCH CUT:

5 **INT. MARCO'S APARTMENT - CLOSET - NIGHT** 5

Marco pulls open a closet door. It's full of old hiking and
 outdoorsy equipment: tents, skis, sports gear.

He reaches in and pulls a hiking pole from the cobwebs. He
 swipes a finger through the dust, reminiscing.

This was clearly a load-bearing pole: A mountain of equipment
 cascades from the closet all over Marco. *Perfect.*

He's down, buried in hiking gear, and breathes. Life sucks.
 He slowly rises, and takes a moment to survey the damage.

Marco considers a shoebox amongst the junk. He slides it over
 to him. Opens the lid.

He sifts through the mementos of an old relationship. Movie
 stubs, photo booth pictures, a keychain from Madrid...

...and finally, an old **Engagement Ring Band.**

He contemplates his reflection in it.

6 **INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT** 6

Still wearing his work clothes, Marco sits on the couch and
 cleans the grime from his engagement band with a tissue.

He puts it back in the shoebox, now on the coffee table next
 to Rebecca's URN.

After a moment, he takes out his phone, and again scrutinizes his contacts.

Finally, he taps one. Holds the phone to his ear. And waits.

It rings. Marco breathes deep. It rings again.

The line clicks. Marco is on pins and needles.

AMELIA (PHONE)
Hi! Thanks for getting back to me so quick.

MARCO
Wh--

AMELIA (PHONE)
So he's an older Wiener, like the profile says. Do you have experience with feisty seniors?

MARCO
I...yes?

AMELIA (PHONE)
Great! You'll end up loving him. And those dates work for you?

MARCO
Amelia, this is... Marco. Clemmon.

AMELIA (PHONE)
Marco?

CUT TO:

7

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

7

AMELIA, 30, shoulders the phone to her ear as she fixes the circuitry of a flickering studio light. She's standing atop a ladder in an empty photo studio.

AMELIA
You're my dog-sitter?

INTERCUT MARCO/AMELIA:

MARCO
Uh, no. Just...calling.

AMELIA
Wow!

MARCO
Yeah! Crazy, right? Um.

Amelia descends the ladder and lingers on the bottom rung.

Marco slouches and searches for words.

AMELIA
How...uh, are you?

MARCO
I'm good! Really good.

AMELIA
You are?

MARCO
Well. Maybe not *really* good.

AMELIA
No, I was going to say. Jesus Christ, Marco, I am so sorry. I know it's been forever but I heard what happened. I'm sorry I couldn't make the remembrance.

MARCO
Ah. Well, your old pictures were a big hit.

AMELIA
Glad to hear that. And your mom, is she...?

MARCO
Alive?! Yeah, yes, doing alright, considering. She's actually taking Becca's urn back East on Sunday.

AMELIA
Ah. Marco, can I say that--?

MARCO
--Rebecca actually gave me a list of places she wanted her ashes scattered, and I did all of them but the last. Which is *Mt. Norbert*.

Silence from Amelia.

MARCO (CONT'D)
My mom needs the ashes by her flight. So I'm gonna be at the same trailhead tomorrow morning, 9am. Just do our old favorite route, and pitch a tent around Cameekee Curve.

AMELIA
And you want me to...?

MARCO

I mean, if you can! But, like, it was my mom's idea, I told her you'd probably be too busy or whatever.

Marco holds his breath, waiting for her answer.

Amelia slowly shakes her head, wrestling with her thoughts.

AMELIA

You know that Dutch activist who BASE jumped off a wind turbine?

MARCO

Uh...? Oh... Yeah, I think I've seen that video. Why?

AMELIA

Well... I booked her. I'm doing a profile piece, and she'll be in town for two hours Saturday, and two hours only before she has to fly to Denmark to officiate some huge same-sex penguin wedding.

He silently deflates. He's crushed, but hides it well.

MARCO

Oh nice, um, congrats! Wow, that's big. I totally get it.

AMELIA

Thanks, yea it could be years before I get another chance like this. My whole team is counting on me, everything is riding on it--

MARCO

--It's alright. Really. You have your... life. And you earned it. Good luck with your photoshoot. And your Wiener.

Marco and Amelia share a painful moment. Then he hangs up. And leans back on the couch, despondent.

MATCH CUT:

Marco leans back in his driver's seat, wearing old, ill-fitting gear. He finishes a coffee, then steps out, greeted by the first rays of the sun and the chirp of early birds.

He circles to the trunk and starts unloading camping gear to organize. He slides the URN carefully in his backpack.

MARCO

Ready for one last climb?

He checks everything over, he sees a can of BEAR SPRAY. He thinks, then decides: nah. He throws it back in the trunk and grabs an aerosol can of DEODORANT: OCEAN-WAVE instead.

He closes the trunk and crosses the lot.

HONK!

A driver SKIDS to a stop behind him.

Marco stares at the car. He sees beautiful long hair shift as the door opens. Amelia? He cracks a smile, disbelief on his face.

MARCO (CONT'D)

I really didn't think you'd--

He reaches the car and out steps...a LONG-HAIRED MAN.

LONG-HAIRED MAN

Watch where you're walking!

MARCO

Oh, sorry. You look like my friend.

LONG-HAIRED MAN

Nice try, junkie. Go shroom somewhere else.

The man stares him down. Marco awkwardly turns to walk away.

AMELIA (O.S.)

Hey.

Marco comes face-to-face with Amelia. She stands with her backpack on, full hiking gear ready. He smiles wide.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

So I absolutely need to get back to do the shoot by 5pm tomorrow.

MARCO

Right. Of course.

AMELIA

That means back in this lot by 3.

MARCO
Scout's Honor.

AMELIA
You're not allowed to say that if
you weren't a boyscout.

MARCO
Oh, you think you know me?

BEAT. They smile.

AMELIA
...She in your backpack?

MARCO
All crammed in there.

AMELIA
Strapped in tight so she won't be
able to get out?

MARCO
Taped her mouth and everything.

The Long-Haired Man glares from his car window.

AMELIA
These are called *jokes*, sir.

LONG-HAIRED MAN
I look nothing like her.

MARCO
Different friend.

9

EXT. TRAIL 1 - DAY

9

Amelia and Marco walk together, looking around at the
picturesque wilderness. They share glances from time to time,
then back to the view, and don't know what to say until--

MARCO
Glad you could make it.

AMELIA
Me too.

MARCO
I was ready to do this whole thing
alone. Was probably going to get
mauled by our local sasquatch.

AMELIA
She'd do it for us. And I think--

Her phone rings. She quickly silences it and sends a text.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Sorry.

MARCO

Is that...your Dutch lady?

AMELIA

It's not her, though she does have a list of requests as long as a freaking CVS receipt. It's my assistant, but I'm telling her I'm unavailable.

MARCO

Ah. Well, you sure will be pretty soon. At least until we get reception at the summit.

AMELIA

I'm telling them all to go away, and not to bother me until--

She gets more texts and calls, dismissing them.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

--until we're all done. Phew. That was the last one.

MARCO

That's awesome that you're finally like a big shot photographer. That's-- I mean that was your dream. You've gone a long way.

AMELIA

Not quite a big shot yet. But after tomorrow...yeah, that's the hope, I'll be "in the circle". That's what I've worked for. I'm sure you've come a long way too.

MARCO

Oh, yep, doing great. With the restaurant, and, just overall.

He's about to continue, but she blurts out:

AMELIA

I'm with someone.

MARCO

Oh. Good. Me too. Pretty serious.

AMELIA

That's great. You seem pretty serious too. In a good way. More than before, I mean.

MARCO

Do I? Ten years can do that to you.

AMELIA

You're counting?

MARCO

Uh - *no*. Just saying; you're probably different in some ways too. That's life.

AMELIA

I guess I have learned to focus on myself more, these days, than I used to.

MARCO

Huh. Maybe not such a big change after all, then.

AMELIA

Come again?

MARCO

Like when you're in an airplane that's going down, you're supposed to put on your own oxygen mask first, before assisting others.

AMELIA

Can we not?

Marco's defense comes up again. They've been here before.

MARCO

I wasn't.

AMELIA

I dropped everything to come here. For Rebecca. The least we can do--

She gets another text, and answers it without thinking.

Marco's eyes narrow.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Just one sec--

MARCO

No problem. If you don't want to clear the air, then we don't have to, Amelia.

AMELIA

Did you invite me to hike, or fight? I'm taking *my time* to do this--

MARCO

Oh I'm well aware that *your time* is more important than everyone else's. You never let anyone forget it. It's always about you. Amelia here. Amelia there.

AMELIA

Don't be such a child!

MARCO

Amelia! Amelia!

VOICE (O.S.)

Amelia?

Both turn to see PERCY approaching. He's a spry 75. Hiking wear, fanny pack, water bottle clipped to his belt.

AMELIA

...Yeah?

PERCY

Oh my word, there she is! It's been, wow, how long has it been?

Amelia raises an eyebrow; she has no clue what to tell him.

PERCY (CONT'D)

I'm Gabby's grandfather! Percy!
It's so good to see you again. You look beautiful!

AMELIA

Hi! Yeah... Percy... Good to see you... again!

Amelia wears an uncomfortable smile as Percy gives her a big hug. She breaks from the moment. Marco looks unreceptive.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Uh, this is Marco.

PERCY

What's his problem?

AMELIA
He's grieving. And an asshole.

MARCO
Hi.

PERCY
"Marco" like...?

MARCO
Yes, like "Polo."

PERCY
Like Margaux Hemmingway. She was beautiful. Nice to meet ya, sad fella. You headed to the summit?

Marco is steamrolled, but lets it go.

MARCO
We are.

PERCY
Hot-dog, me too. Let's get a move on.

Percy marches past them. Marco and Amelia stare blankly; what just happened?

10 **EXT. TRAIL 2 - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

10

Percy confidently marches along. Marco and Amelia talk at a low volume, a short distance behind.

MARCO
So...family friend?

AMELIA
Uh. Actually. No. I don't know him.

Marco whips a confused look at her.

MARCO
What the hell?

AMELIA
I...I was in too deep.

MARCO
He knew your name.

AMELIA
I don't know a Gabby, or a Percy.

MARCO
Oh man. He...

Marco studies Percy as he marches ahead.

MARCO (CONT'D)
He could be some kind of psycho.
Like, dangerous.

AMELIA
He's old!

MARCO
So?

AMELIA
Killers aren't usually old.

MARCO
How old is Jigsaw?

AMELIA
I mean real ones.

MARCO
Did they catch Zodiac?

Amelia considers.

AMELIA
I would have definitely heard.

MARCO
Yeah. I think we have to *ditch* this
guy before we end up in a ditch.

AMELIA
You think you're clever?

MARCO
Wait, where'd he go?

The two look ahead and don't see Percy. Bird calls. Silence.

AMELIA
I--

Percy approaches from behind, drapes his arms around their shoulders, and starts walking in pace with a very startled Marco and Amelia.

PERCY
Ahh, Amelia, I remember the days of
going to the pancake restaurant
with you and Gabby. We'd just laugh
and laugh, wouldn't we?

Amelia plays along. Percy laughs to himself.

AMELIA
We sure would.

PERCY
And I'd order the... what was it I
always had?

Amelia's eyes go wide and she glances at Marco.

AMELIA
I...don't...

PERCY
Oh come on, what was it again?

Marco, eyes wide, mouths the word "PAN-CAKES".

AMELIA
...Hot Links?

Percy perks up.

PERCY
Hot links! Yes.

Amelia lets out a tense chuckle and forces a smile. She looks at Marco, who force chuckles too.

Percy gives Marco a pat on the stomach as he walks past him. Marco: "Oof". He isn't pleased. He stares icily at Amelia.

AMELIA
We'll be fine.

SMASH CUT:

11 **EXT. TRAIL 3 - DAY**

11

ECU: A bloody dead rabbit head, being held up by the ears!

PERCY (O.S.)
Hey would ya look at this!

Marco flinches, trying not to gag.

MARCO
(disgusted)
Amazing! Nature. Thanks, Percy.

Percy approaches Marco and Amelia, admiring the rabbit. Amelia tries to stay politely curious, even as Marco recoils.

PERCY

No bites taken out of her. Must
have died of old age.

MARCO

Or, deadly contagious diseases.

PERCY

She's a taxidermist's jackpot!

Percy marches happily off the trail with the rabbit.

Marco swivels accusingly toward Amelia as they hike on.

AMELIA

Okay he's *odd*. But he probably just
wants someone to talk to.

MARCO

I don't even talk to Uber drivers.

AMELIA

I know.

Marco's pace quickens as Amelia rolls his eyes at him.

Percy hurries to catch up, having disposed of the rabbit.
He's starting to breathe a little harder as he hikes up to
Amelia.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You doing alright?

PERCY

Yes, yes. This is what I train for.

She offers him some hand sanitizer.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Ah, thank you.

He takes the sanitizer and slicks into his hair like gel as
they join Marco's pace.

AMELIA

Oh, you hike a lot?

PERCY

Much as we can.

He flashes a wedding ring with a huge grin.

AMELIA

That's sweet. Is your wife here?

PERCY

Camping at the summit. I can smell those hot links now. Pop by! Claire always makes enough to share. Even with strangers.

(at Marco)

The vegan, sadly, will have to forge for nuts and berries.

MARCO

I'm not vegan.

PERCY

You sure? You seem kinda...?

MARCO

Kinda vegan?

PERCY

Exactly! So what brings you two lovebirds to this special trail?

He edges away from Percy, lightly guiding Amelia too.

MARCO

A very private family event, actually. So we're gonna...

He gestures up the trail, hoping Percy gets the hint.

AMELIA

And we're not lovebirds. Anymore. Just -- uh -- friend-birds.

MARCO

Oh, friend-birds? Hm.

Percy matches their stride, undeterred.

PERCY

Oh, I'm so sorry to hear. You seem upset about it, Margo.

MARCO

Nope. Totally over that whole thing.

PERCY

Over what?

MARCO

Over getting abandoned by my fiancé in rural Spain, if you must know.

Amelia looks accused and hurt. Percy swivels to her with a quizzical glance. *Is it true?*

PERCY
Now I must know.

AMELIA
I had good reasons.

She advances up the trail. Away from Marco.

Then after a moment she returns for the last word.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
And while we're on the subject...

She takes out a sealed envelope. Marco gives a wary look.

He takes and tears it open to find her old **engagement ring**.

MARCO
(swallowing the hurt)
Mm. Good.

AMELIA
Claire sounds amazing, Percy,
you're lucky to have found someone
like that.

She turns curtly to Marco for the final word.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
And for the record; ten minutes
outside of Madrid is not rural. You
just saw *one* llama. And you
assumed.

She marches off once more, biting back her feelings.

Percy evaluates Marco as he mopes over the ring.

MARCO
(sotto)
How often do you see a wild llama?

12

EXT. TRAIL CROSSROADS - DAY

12

Percy and Marco catch up to Amelia as she reads over a standing wooden **Trail Information Board**.

MARCO
What's the holdup? We take the
right fork, remember?

AMELIA

That's not what the sign says.

Percy points to the sign: left is labeled "THIS WAY ONLY".

PERCY

Says to take the left.

Marco shakes his head and pulls out a map.

MARCO

That doesn't make sense. We've always taken the right trail. That's a blue square. Medium level. We're not taking left. See the black diamond? That means expert.

Amelia shrugs and Percy gestures at the sign.

PERCY

Sign says left.

AMELIA

Yeah, that's what the--

MARCO

I know it's what the sign says!

AMELIA

Well. We're on Mt. Norbert...

MARCO

And?

AMELIA

So you get to make the choice, Marco. I mean, we could scatter the ashes here. I don't think we have enough time to circle all the way back around. And we're still honoring Bec.

Marco takes a breath; he traces a path on the map with his finger, then looks to the Trail Board.

MARCO

Some things never change. Soon as things get tough, you're gone, huh?

AMELIA

Didn't catch that.

Marco folds the map and stows it. He takes the right path.

MARCO

We stick to what we know, and play it safe.

PERCY

Say, who made you command-leader all of a sudden?

MARCO

Me. I did. I'm getting to that summit. That's what my sister asked for, and that's all that matters.

Amelia reluctantly follows Marco.

AMELIA

Come on, Percy.

PERCY

(to himself)

I'm not too sure about that one.

No one notices the edge of an orange warning sign: "**TRAIL CLOSED**" fallen in the underbrush.

13

EXT. TRAIL 4 RIGHT PATH - DAY

13

Marco and Amelia's shoes march side by side.

MARCO

See? Old familiar. Nice and easy.

AMELIA

We should still take it slow, Percy's struggling.

She gestures back. Marco looks, and sees Percy slowing down. Marco keeps an eye on him as he turns and is now backpedaling up the trail in front of Amelia.

MARCO

Oh. Maybe we'll survive after all.

AMELIA

Look at him. He's not dangerous.

MARCO

How do you know? Or maybe he causes some risky situation.

Amelia isn't impressed.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Yeah, this is man-made. By a large unit.

AMELIA
A unit... of... what?

He points at the edge of the hole.

PERCY
See those marks there? That's from a digger. We'll have to cut through the brush and circle around.

Amelia narrows her eyes, trying to see the marks. Meanwhile, Percy stands and reorients, piecing clues together.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Hm. This was certainly meant to impede any headway. They must have known I was coming.

MARCO
...Who, man? *Who?*

PERCY
It's getting precarious already.

Marco and Amelia stare. Something is off about Percy.

16

EXT. TRAIL 5 ROUGH TERRAIN - DAY

16

Percy emerges from the brush, followed by Marco and Amelia; cleaning themselves of leaves and nettles. The trail is starting to get rocky and jagged up ahead.

Percy stumbles. Amelia rushes up to catch up and help.

AMELIA
Careful!

PERCY
Bah. This makes you tough.

She holds his arm as he steps over a boulder.

PERCY (CONT'D)
You were always so rambunctious, I had to buy band-aids in bulk! Made you tough enough to survive anything.

Amelia turns to look at Marco a little ways behind them, consulting a map and gazing around at their surroundings.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Even *that*.

She decides to open up.

AMELIA

It was... actually not all bad.
With Marco, I mean. But we rushed
into things too young.

PERCY

Called it off while you were still
in the Congo?

AMELIA

Uh, Spain. I was thinking of
extending the trip for another
year. He flew out without a word
and asked me to come home and marry
him instead.

PERCY

Always tough to turn someone down.

AMELIA

...I said yes. For two days. Then
broke it off. Ugh.

PERCY

Oh dear. Actually, I think straight-
up rejection would have been
better.

Percy starts making his way up a rocky hill. Amelia
hesitates.

PERCY (CONT'D)

But why linger in the past? Onward
and upward! Stick with me and I'll
get you topside faster and safer
than Mr. Two-Day-Fiancé ever could.

She chuckles. Then Percy gets serious.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Just as long as you keep your head
on a swivel for me, copy? Given
what we've seen so far... your life
may depend on it.

AMELIA

Uh... why? Who is after you?

Percy scrutinizes her, and decides to trust her. He leans in.

PERCY
Operatives.

He shows her a concealed **KNIFE SHEATH** on his belt, and winks.

Amelia grows nervous. Percy nods knowingly and continues up the hill. Marco approaches to Amelia as she watches him go.

MARCO
What the hell was that? A knife?

AMELIA
Well... yeah, I think. But ya know you brought a knife... so...?

MARCO
A pocketknife! Not Crocodile Dundee's ceremonial machete. Come on; barehanding dead animals? Secret stalkers? This guy's unhinged.

AMELIA
I mean, fine, maybe a little! But what do you want to do?

Percy smiles and waves at them from up ahead. Marco fakes a smile and waves back, then turns to Amelia, deadly serious.

MARCO
I'm serious. This is our chance. If we cut across and make a beeline for the other path, it'll save us hours of walking.

AMELIA
But there's no trail.

Marco takes a deep breath. He can do this. He has to.

MARCO
I still promise you'll be back in time. Please?

Amelia looks him in the eyes and softens.

AMELIA
Scout's honor?

He nods. And puts up 3 fingers. Amelia glances to Percy, who seems to be making great time on his own.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Okay, Percy we're going to--!

Marco takes Amelia's hand and dashes off the trail.

Percy swivels and spots them. He begins to pursue, treating it like a game. A challenge.

PERCY

Ha! Race to the summit it is, then!
If bone cancer can't beat me, *you*
haven't got a chance, Margo!

17

EXT. THICK WOODS - DAY

17

Marco and Amelia - hand in hand for balance - trek through the trees and work their way through the thick underbrush.

AMELIA

Happy now?

They perk up at the **CRUNCH of a stick**, off in the woods.

MARCO

Did you hear that?

They detach their hands and spin to scan the wilderness.

The woods. Nothing. Silence. Marco's heavy breathing, Amelia's wide eyes.

AMELIA

What?

MARCO

Someone was there. I swear to god.

AMELIA

It's Percy.

MARCO

He's way behind.

AMELIA

This is a public trail.

MARCO

We're not *on* the trail.

AMELIA

Then an animal. This isn't *Blair Witch* just because you suck at hiking and don't trust the elderly.

ANOTHER **STICK BREAKS**. They freeze. Definitely someone there.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
 Okay, maybe it's a *little bit* Blair
 Witch.

MARCO
 Run!

Marco DASHES through the thick woods. Amelia follows, now getting freaked out too. Her tone is a blend of annoyance and anxiety - she *needs* this jerk right now.

AMELIA
 Wait!

18 **EXT. RIVER CROSSING - DAY**

18

Marco jumps between logs and stepping stones across a river. Amelia follows close behind, checking over their shoulders.

AMELIA
 I think we lost them. Or it.

MARCO
 Did we? Good. I was not in the mood
 for digging spike booby traps.

AMELIA
 I'm starting to think we watch too
 many movies.

She slips and splashes a foot into the water. Sighs with discontent.

MARCO
 We used to.

Marco offers a hand. She glares and takes it, climbing out.

19 **EXT. CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON**

19

A peaceful glade. Then, the bushes rustle.

Covered in sweat, Marco pushes through the brambles and emerges into the clearing. He checks the map and pumps a fist in triumph. Amelia joins him, picking leaves from her hair.

MARCO
 And here we are! Cameekee Curve
 clearing, just as promised.

AMELIA
I swear to god, if we'd just taken
the left trail we'd have been here
hours ago. I'm freaking starving.

Marco swivels around with the map, using his phone compass.

MARCO
Hmm... Seems like that divot where
we usually pitch our tent is gone.
And I guess they took down the old
hunting platforms that were up in
the trees there. And where's the...

Amelia takes a seat and looks around skeptically.

MARCO (CONT'D)
This isn't--

AMELIA
This isn't it.

They stare at each other. And Marco breaks it.

MARCO
Must just be a little farther.
Let's take that break, have some
snacks, and we'll--

Marco turns to face her. And his eyes grow wide with fear.

AMELIA
...what? What now?

He raises a trembling finger to point at Amelia's arm.

MARCO
Okay. Don't be alarmed, but...

AMELIA
Spider?

Amelia follows Marco's gaze down to her arm.

MARCO
Worse.

AMELIA
Don't say *worse!*

MARCO
Sorry! Just--!

AMELIA
What's worse than a spider?!

She unzips and peels off her jacket, shaking it out. Then, she looks at her arm and sees a gash. From the thorns. *Oh.*

Amelia wavers, dizzy.

MARCO

Woah there.

Marco rushes to her side and helps her to the ground.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Still doing *this*, huh?

AMELIA

I have since learned it's called vasovagal syncope, and no, it does not go away.

Amelia looks at her arm and wobbles before looking away.

MARCO

One of us has to have a Band-Aid. And by "one of us," I mean you.

AMELIA

Oh - you think you know me?

Amelia wryly hands Marco her bag. He starts rummaging through it, alongside his own gear. He pulls out some odd berries.

MARCO

The hell are these? They stink.

AMELIA

Cheeseberries. They're still good for a couple days.

MARCO

Gross.

AMELIA

You're gross.

Marco pulls out an old medical kit and grabs some gauze. He uses it to bandage Amelia's arm. She takes some deep breaths, relaxing, realizing she's not going to faint.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Wow, nice work. Maybe you *did* join the scouts since I saw you last.

He continues bandaging her up.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
What, are you worried about me?

MARCO
(bluntly)
Yes.

They have a moment. She's teasing him, but weirdly flattered.

AMELIA
Well. Don't be.

She tries to get up, and sags against a tree. Marco helps.

MARCO
Take it slow, I've got you.

AMELIA
Got me? Well let me ask, where the hell are we?

MARCO
I thought about it and following this stream will take us right to the real Cameekee Curve.

She gives him incredulous look.

MARCO (CONT'D)
(impersonating Percy)
Command-leader, here for duty.

She laughs a little as she regains her footing and follows.

20

EXT. DEEP WOODS - EVENING

20

Getting dark. Marco checks and re-checks the map as he walks.

Amelia studies him, anxiety and frustration building.

AMELIA
Marco.

MARCO
Any second! I mean I guess this map is kind of old, but-- I don't get it. The trail should still be here.

Amelia slows.

AMELIA
This map is kind of old? You aren't cross-referencing with the offline GPS map?

MARCO

The what?

AMELIA

The--! Do you not remember that Rebecca used to download new maps like a full day before heading out?

MARCO

I...guess I did not remember that.

AMELIA

So you have been saying this whole time that you know where we are but you actually have no idea?

MARCO

I have a general idea!

AMELIA

Then we're *generally* lost!

Tense moment. Marco unshoulders his pack and surveys.

MARCO

Look. Let's just camp here. It's getting kind of dark, and we can get to higher ground and re-orient in the morning. Alright?

She stares then huffs, drops her backpack, sits and loosens her boots. Then takes out her phone and turns it back on.

AMELIA

Not a word.

Marco backs off.

MARCO

Rebecca and I will grab some firewood. You'll be... okay here?

She looks up with pure venom in her gaze. He opens his bad and checks on the urn, and hands her a cliff bar.

Amelia takes it. And bites it. With venom in her gaze.

Marco walks off. Amelia checks her phone coverage. No service.

She sighs, deeply regretting her life choices.

JUMP CUTS as it gets darker:

1. Marco arranges the firewood.
2. He struggles to light it with his lighter. In the background, Amelia sets up the tent.

AMELIA
You got it?

MARCO
Oh I got it. I was good at this
part, remember?

Fire looks like it's catching on the dry pine needles.

MARCO (CONT'D)
I am Flame-Bringer. God of fi--!

The fire goes out. Marco's face falls.

3. He huffs and puffs on the struggling flame. Amelia now sits on a nearby rock and watches with chagrin.

AMELIA
Come onnn, Flame-Bringer! *Use your
powers!*

MARCO
Shut up.

It goes out. Marco groans. Amelia snorts a laugh.

A stick CRACKS in the scary woods; the mood drops instantly.

AMELIA
Hello?

4. Marco and Amelia are spooked, and both huff and puff on the fire, keeping an eye on the treeline. Finally, the tiny fire crackles to life.

They rise and Marco tries to high-five.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Too soon.

Marco high-fives himself with his other hand.

Marco and Amelia eat pre-packaged food in front of a raging campfire. The large tent is pitched a few feet away. Amelia shivers and warms her hands.

MARCO
Forgot how cold it gets up here.

Nothing from her.

MARCO (CONT'D)
It's the altitude.

AMELIA
I know.

MARCO
I know you know. And now you know
that I know.

Amelia rolls her eyes.

MARCO (CONT'D)
It's the thinner air.

AMELIA
I know!

MARCO
Because we're closer to space.

Silence. Marco is just messing with her now.

MARCO (CONT'D)
It's cold in space.

She can't even help but laugh a little.

AMELIA
Oh my god. Shut up.

She leans back and looks up at the stars. Marco does too.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
It *is* pretty though.

MARCO
Don't really get see stars in the
city, do you? Not even in Yoo-rope.

This seems to sink in for her, maybe for the first time.

AMELIA
Only some nights. Not enough.

Marco seems to realize something is off, something is wistful
about her. Is she unhappy? Does she not really have it all?

MARCO
You should take up hiking again.

AMELIA
After *this*?

MARCO
Yeah! Cliffs, snakes, and serial
killers? Easy. We used to crush one
of these a week.

AMELIA
That would be a dream, Marco, but
that would require time. And my
time is in short supply nowadays.

MARCO
Just how you like it.

She thinks, shrugs, and admits:

AMELIA
Just how I like it.

They look at Rebecca's URN, sitting with them at the fire.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
She did love these trips. Even when
it rained.

MARCO
Yeah. I don't know if it was the
fresh air or the company, but she
was always smiling.

AMELIA
It was the fresh air.

Marco snorts a laugh.

23 **INT. TENT - NIGHT**

23

Amelia sleeps in the tent. After a moment, she opens her
eyes, and looks over to see Marco shivering.

AMELIA
Hey?

Marco squints and shields his eyes as she turns on her
electric lantern.

MARCO
S-sorry... d-dddid I wake you up?

AMELIA
Come here.

MARCO

Huh?

Amelia holds open her blanket. And motions for him.

He shakes his head.

She motions again.

He shakes his head.

She motions very aggressively.

He crawls over and shuffles under the blanket. Amelia wraps it around them and Marco sighs in relief.

AMELIA

Don't get any funny ideas.

MARCO

I was going to say the same to you.

AMELIA

I swear. Willing to freeze to death just to avoid an awkward situation.

Marco turns to face her.

MARCO

It's not an awk--

Marco is face-to-face with Amelia. They stare at each other.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Just two friend-birds. Hanging out. In a bag.

BEAT. She moves her face a little away from him as they settle in.

AMELIA

Did you want to... clear the air?

BEAT. Marco sighs and plays it cool.

MARCO

No need.

AMELIA

Alright. Good. **(BEAT)** I'm just-- sorry. Okay?

MARCO

For what?

AMELIA
For ending things the way I did.

Marco takes it in and finally decides to speak his mind.

MARCO
Well I hope it was worth it for all those new artsy friends that you chose over me.

AMELIA
Hm?

MARCO
They were the ones always saying I wasn't enough, or I was holding you back or whatever.

AMELIA
Not fair.

MARCO
Come on. We were perfect. Until you let everyone else tell you we weren't.

She sits with that but becomes defensive.

AMELIA
Yes, there was pressure and yes, I regret *how* I broke it off... that was a bad... choice. But it *was* my choice.

Marco confronts her like she's on the stand at trial.

MARCO
The choice to break it off was bad? Or just how you did it?

AMELIA
(deep breath)
I know that you deserved closure. So, I'm sorry I walled up, and moved away, and we never talked about what happened.

Marco sees she's not really answering, but drops it.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
It was hard for me too. I tried to stay close with Rebecca afterwards, but she never looked at me the same. I've never had a friend that close again.

MARCO
 (imitating Percy)
Onward and upward. I guess.

They rest for a while, unsure what to say.

MARCO (CONT'D)
 Do you think Percy killed that
 rabbit? Or he really just, like...
 found it?

AMELIA
 I'm choosing to think he just loves
 nature. And wanted to share that
 love with us.

MARCO
 Mm, I get the feeling that if we
 weren't here, he would have eaten
 it raw.

Amelia perks up at the sound of **SNAPPING BRANCHES** outside.

AMELIA
 What was that?

MARCO
 I don't know. Go check it.

AMELIA
 YOU go check it!

MARCO
 Well actually I didn't hear
 anything, so you should go. Whoever
 smelt it, dealt--

ANOTHER **SNAP**. They whisper loudly:

MARCO (CONT'D)
*Oh shit, it's Percy. He's back for
 revenge.*

AMELIA
*Uhhh, oh, god, yeah, he's probably
 so mad. Maybe we...apologize?*

MARCO
*He'll take it as a sign of weakness
 and pounce.*

AMELIA
 Let me do it. He hates you.

MARCO

UGH. He's gonna chop us into hot links, I freaking knew it. I could see it in his eyes since the start.

The low growl of a bear. Marco and Amelia freeze.

The massive form of a **bear's silhouette** appears on the sidewall of the tent! It plods around the exterior as they are scared out of their minds.

MARCO (CONT'D)

I don't think that's Percy.

Amelia quietly fumbles through the packs.

AMELIA

Thank god you brought Bear Spr--

She pulls out an aerosol can. Marco knows he messed up.

MARCO

It's deodorant. Ocean-Wave.

Amelia looks baffled.

AMELIA

Oh. Good. At least we'll smell like low-tide when we're dying.

The bear's snout pushes into the tent wall, rubbing against the fabric as it sniffs at their heads. Marco and Amelia hold each other - and hold their breaths - as the snout retreats.

The bear's form shrinks as it plods away.

Marco and Amelia let out their breath.

MARCO

Holy hell, that was close.

Silence. Then **BAM!** The bear charges the tent! The walls buckle, the fabric rips, the bear **roars!**

Amelia and Marco scream as they scramble to their feet.

24

EXT. DEEP WOODS - CAMPSITE - NIGHT

24

Marco scrambles outside and Amelia accompanies him with the lantern to see the bear tearing up the tent and scattering supplies. As it sees them, it turns to them with a snarl.

Marco and Amelia cower and backpedal. He feebly picks up a stick; she feebly holds up deodorant can.

MARCO
I'll knock him out. Get ready to run!

He throws the stick as hard as he can. It misses.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Okay, new plan! I think play dead!

PERCY (O.S.)
No time for playtime, Margo!

Percy makes a heroic entrance, smashing out of the woods covered in twigs and leaves like a wildman.

AMELIA
Percy!

MARCO
Uh--! Quick, throw me your knife!

PERCY
Throw me your campfire lighter!

Marco throws him his lighter. Percy throws his knife sheath.

Marco catches it like James Bond, unclips the sheath, goes to grab the knife, but instead pulls out a pack of Band-Aids.

MARCO
What the hell is this?!

PERCY
Band-Aids!

Marco's jaw drops.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Give me that can, Amelia!

The bear roars and scratches at the ground, preparing to charge. Amelia throws Percy the can of deodorant, and he steps in front of Marco and Amelia -- holding up a lighter.

PERCY (CONT'D)
"Only you can prevent" -- THIS!

He backpedals slowly as he BLASTS deodorant through the lighter in a flame-thrower! Marco and Amelia stay behind him.

MARCO
I think it's just pissing him off!

PERCY
Fire support, Margo, STAT!

Marco grabs Amelia's backpack from the ground and digs through. He pulls out the cheese-berries.

Percy is running out of spray -- the flame flickers.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Now, slowpoke!

Marco takes a deep breath -- and HURLS the berries.

They land in the woods, behind the bear. Percy's flames run out.

A tense moment. Then the bear sniffs the air.

Marco throws one more handful behind the bear.

The bear looks behind, sniffs more, and grumbles away in pursuit of the pungent fruit.

Marco, Percy, and Amelia flee.

25

EXT. DEEP WOODS - BUSHES - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

25

The trio settles into a hiding spot. Amelia hugs Marco tight.

AMELIA
Don't you ever do something stupid
like that again!

MARCO
(dry)
Why? It worked. No more cheese
berries.

They catch their breaths.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Though now we're out of deodorant.
And tomorrow, we are going to smell
the consequences.

Nobody knows what to say to that. Marco turns to Percy.

MARCO (CONT'D)
I... owe you an apology, man.

PERCY
Do you?

MARCO

Uh. Yeah. You saved our asses. I shouldn't have ditched you back there. We thought you were--

AMELIA

Marco thought.

MARCO

--you were a...uh. Murderer. Maybe.

PERCY

Murder, huh? No, no, I have enough hobbies.

MARCO

Right.

PERCY

But it's good to be careful these days. Shady characters have been lurking behind every tree and blade of grass on this trip.

MARCO

See, Percy, this is where I got the murderer idea. Who do you mean?

Percy grabs his shoulders and face and makes him scan the dark and endless woods. CRICKETS CHIRP.

PERCY

Are you looking closely?

MARCO

I...guess...I'm not...?

PERCY

That's because you're looking at the forest. Not *through* it. But you'll learn, son. You'll learn.

MARCO

(sweetly)

I'm... not your son, by the way, just in case you were confused--

After a moment, Percy claps him on the back.

PERCY

All is forgiven, Margo, just don't abandon your superior office in the field again. Or next time, you might not be so lucky. Deal?

Amelia finds Marco sitting on a log, head in his hands. His half-filled backpack rests by his feet.

No urn in sight.

AMELIA

Hey.

MARCO

The bear. The bear must have carried it off. That's the only thing I can think of.

AMELIA

We'll keep looking. And if the bear took it... we just... head back down the mountain, and you can call your mom and explain.

She's trying to comfort him, but Marco turns with a glare.

MARCO

Explain what? That I lost my sister, so none of my family gets any of her ashes? That mom's not gonna have the urn her mantle for the rest of our lives?

AMELIA

Rebecca is not the urn, Marco. She's wherever you need her to be. And no matter--

Her phone buzzes. Surprised, she checks it. A moment passes.

MARCO

You're getting service?

AMELIA

I guess a little. Here and there.
(she reads a text)
Shit.

MARCO

What is it?

AMELIA

Nothing.

MARCO

(checking his watch)
You said 3pm. It's eight.

AMELIA
I know that. I'm sorry. I'm trying
my best.

MARCO
You're barely even *here*.

AMELIA
Now you're just making stuff up.

MARCO
You've been trying to find an
excuse to end this trip since it
started!

AMELIA
Hey! I'm sorry about the urn, but
you do remember the part where *I*
have worked my entire life for
this, right? And then you come
outta nowhere barreling back in my
life, and need me to drop
everything for you.

MARCO
This isn't for me!

AMELIA
Oh it's not?!

Silence. She's still stern.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
I want to be here, it's important
to me. But so is my work.

MARCO
Okay. (BEAT) I'm sorry, I
understand. (BEAT) Can we at least
find her?

She softens.

AMELIA
Alright. But then I really do have
to go. I'm sorry, Marco.

Marco bites back his words and nods, surrendering.

Amelia reaches a sleeping Percy and rocks his shoulder.

PERCY
Claire...Claire...

AMELIA
 Percy, it's morning.

Percy opens his eyes. He blinks as he adjusts to his surroundings and sees Amelia. Confused, he studies her.

PERCY
 (sketched out)
 Hello...?

AMELIA
 It's Amelia.

A moment.

PERCY
 Well of course it is.

He looks around, remembering where he is.

PERCY (CONT'D)
 I had the most horrific dream. Oh,
 that beast! That...

He does some charades with his hands.

PERCY (CONT'D)
 That... great--! Giant--! Beaver!

AMELIA
 It was a bear.

PERCY
 A bear?! My god!

She nods outside the tent, back in Marco's direction.

AMELIA
 Something pretty bad happened.

PERCY
 It got Margo?

AMELIA
 His sister.

Percy sighs solemnly.

PERCY
 Have the limbs been.. consolidated?

AMELIA

What? No, she's not--! Well, she is--
- we're going to get her back.

He surges to his feet.

PERCY

Ah. So you're saying there's hope!

AMELIA

Percy, I need to explain--

PERCY

No explanation necessary, my dear.
Clearly it's time that we--

30

EXT. FORREST - DAY

30

Percy yanks a plant out of the ground.

PERCY

Commence rescue operations!

He sniffs it deeply. Releases a few leaves to test the wind direction. Then he bounds off, the next clue in his sights.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Keep up, slowpokes.

Marco and Amelia follow, observing warily.

PERCY (CONT'D)

We'll track the beast to its lair
and lay siege! If there's any
chance of rescuing your sister
alive, we must act decisively.

Percy hunches low to the ground tracing the edges of a bear track. He checks the moss and scratches on a nearby tree trunk. This inspires him to "be the bear" - to inhabit its mind - growling and scratching at the tree. Sniffing the air.

MARCO

Yeah, she's-- that's the thing.
She's not alive.

PERCY

Mustn't think that way, Margo. Our
squad has no place for defeatists.

MARCO

No, I'm telling you, dude, listen.
Rebecca, my sister, she was
cremated. Weeks ago.

Percy slows, turning to Marco with shock and sympathy.

PERCY
How did she pass?

MARCO
Heart stuff.

PERCY
I am so sorry. If there's anything
I can do--

MARCO
Well, I appreciate that, Percy. But
pretty much the best thing you
could do for me right now is stop
growling and tell us where the hell
we are.

Percy takes a pinch of animal hair from the leaves. He sniffs
at it, tastes it a little, then lets it fly in the breeze.

PERCY
We're close.

MARCO
You can really... track?

PERCY
If the mission calls for it.

MARCO
Right. And before we go on a
freaking bear hunt with you, can
you just tell us you're not crazy
and explain what's really going on?

PERCY
Oh, I don't know if you want to
hear that old tale...

AMELIA
Percy...

Amelia furrows her brow, coaxing him to say more. He sighs
and concedes.

PERCY
I'm... I'm a decommissioned agent
with the park service, in addition
to a few other secretive branches.

Percy continues forward through the woods. They follow.

PERCY (CONT'D)
 But naturally after a career like mine, a man knows too much, so they're trying to bring me in to ensure my silence.

Percy looks to them like: "any questions?"

Marco and Amelia stare, dumbfounded.

PERCY (CONT'D)
 I've been forced to go rogue to find and extract... someone very important from these woods, before they get me. Probably one of the last ops I've got in me, so ya might as well know my cover.

MARCO
 You're here to... extract Claire?

PERCY
 She's laying low up there on the summit, waiting for me. I admit my personal investment makes things complicated, not to mention the ravenous beasts. But can't give up.

Marco consults Amelia with a glance. They're not sure what to believe anymore.

PERCY (CONT'D)
 Only problem is, local Law Enforcement doesn't know I'm undercover. I've tried to remain casual about this because if any attention gets raised and they haul me in, then my mission is over.

MARCO
 And then what?

PERCY
 Heard of government blackout-sites?

MARCO
 Uh -- in movies?

PERCY
 Oh, movies, well, think *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, with a dash of *Zero Dark Thirty* and a sprinkle of *Shrek 3*. But no need to skip to the end, my eager amigo.

He points through the foliage.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Not before you've conquered the
beast.

Up ahead, in a clearing: the mouth of a cave.

31 **EXT. WOODS NEAR CAVE - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

31

Percy, Amelia, and Marco peek out from behind the trees, hunching low behind cover. They scan the cave warily. The entrance is strewn with scavenged trash, wrappers, and junk.

MARCO
No way. You really tracked it.

AMELIA
Percy, you're a geriatric Rambo.

PERCY
Let's not congratulate ourselves yet. What's your status, Marco?

MARCO
Not good? What do you mean?

PERCY
We need to know if you're deployment-ready.

MARCO
You mean ready to go *in* there?

PERCY
Not quite.

He points. Marco squints, following Percy's gesture. After a moment, his gaze falls on: THE URN. Sitting among the trash.

PERCY (CONT'D)
You'll make a stealthy approach, grab the objective, and exfiltrate. Easy as a ding-dong ditch.

Percy and Amelia turn to Marco expectantly. He pales.

MARCO
Right, but, maybe we should stake it out for a while and make sure nobody's home first? I don't think Rebecca's last wishes involved me getting *devoured*.

PERCY

I'm sensing fear, Margo. And if I can smell it, guess who else can?

MARCO

You guys *aren't* afraid?

PERCY

Oh, I am. But you -- you're something worse. You're unprepared.

Percy applies stripes of mud on his own face as camouflage.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Millions of years ago, bears ruled the earth. And the echoes of their conquest persist to this very day.

He pulls out a California flag handkerchief and shows off the bear. As he speaks, he ties it around his head bandana style.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Through blood, bullets, and bravado, mankind fought them back to Earth's darkest fringes. You must understand that we are in enemy territory now.

He draws a bear in the dirt with a long stick.

PERCY (CONT'D)

To survive in this primordial arena, you must trust and rely upon each other entirely, become a perfect team.

Marco and Amelia glance at each other.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Rule one: know your enemy. With grizzlies, play dead. It'll likely give up if you survive the initial tasting period.

AMELIA

It was a South Cascade black bear.

Percy shudders gravely, muttering under his breath.

MARCO

Oh. Dear lord, is that bad?

Percy applies mud camo makeup to a glum and reticent Marco.

PERCY

Forget the lord, Marco. He's powerless here. It's the Gods of South Cascadia you should be praying to.

He begins to tuck leaves and foliage into Marco's clothes.

PERCY (CONT'D)

You'll need to ignore every instinct of your vegan homeschooler upbringing, and fight back with all you've got. Even the slightest contact with this species could be fatal for someone like you.

MARCO

A... standard guy?

PERCY

Which brings us to rule two: be obnoxious. This should be easy for you. Blast a whistle, honk a horn. Bellow a battle cry.

He gives a mighty war whoop that scares the crap out of Marco and Amelia.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Copy?

MARCO

How did you know I was homeschooled?

PERCY

It's obvious, Margo, stay focused. You'll also want to prep for bites. Meaning, three: armor up!

32

EXT. WOODS NEAR CAVE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

32

Amelia straps the last strip of tree bark to a terrified Marco using tape from the medical kit.

Percy coaches them like a drill sergeant.

PERCY

Every inch uncovered is another morsel for the cubs! You must clad yourself in bark and become as proud and mighty as a Sherman tank.

MARCO

My god. Why would anyone agree to do this?

AMELIA

DiCaprio won an Oscar for doing this.

MARCO

That bear was fake.

He takes off his backpack and hands it to Percy.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Any chance you guys might want to... I don't know... come with me?

PERCY

You need a lookout. In case enemy patrols return to HQ.

AMELIA

Yeah, and I mean...two lookouts are better than one, right? Do we really want to upend the ecosystem by stripping all this bark?

MARCO

You're playing the eco card?! Did that Dutch lady teach ya that?

PERCY

Enough! Huddle up, team.

Percy draws the team into an uncomfortably close huddle.

PERCY (CONT'D)

Margo. Do you love your sister?

MARCO

What? Yes.

PERCY

Would you give up on love?

Marco's gaze flickers - quickly - to Amelia.

MARCO

Um... no?

PERCY

Precisely. Love brought you into this mess, and by god, it'll get you out of it. *If* you can find the courage to use it. Can you?

The group jumps a little as somewhere deep in the cave: a bear LOW **GROWLS** and vocalizes.

Marco summons his courage.

He turns, takes a deep breath, and creeps forward through the trees. Amelia anxiously watches him go. After a moment--

AMELIA

Wait!

She finds her courage too. She hands Percy her backpack, applies strips of mud face paint, and follows Marco.

33

EXT. CAVE CLEARING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

33

Marco creeps into the clearing, hiding behind shrubbery.

His POV centers on the urn. Lying amidst the rubbish. Then, he looks to the cave entrance behind it: dark and intimidating.

Amelia spooks him as she sneaks up behind him. They whisper.

MARCO

So you are coming? You don't even have the protective--? Foliage?

AMELIA

I'm not letting you one-up me on this. You would never let me hear the end of it.

MARCO

Oh, what, you want to keep in touch after this?

AMELIA

*(sincere)
Yes.*

He's touched, and tries to think of a response. Before he can, he jumps to attention. From the cave: another low **GROWL**.

He meets Amelia's gaze. She puts a hand on his shoulder. She's not going anywhere. He grits his teeth.

Marco creeps up to the urn.

Closer.

Closer.

He glances up at the cave. Still no sign of the bear.

He reaches down and delicately plucks the urn from the trash. He finds the lid, and carefully slides it back on.

Seems ok. He turns back to show it triumphantly to Amelia.

She's staring behind him with a hand clamped over her mouth. Percy too, behind her, waves his arms and gestures madly.

Marco's face falls. He's scared to turn and look--

ROAR.

He spins and backpedals to Amelia's side, as **THE BEAR** emerges from the cave, staring them down.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Don't run! Don't run, it'll charge!

MARCO
Any more cheese-berries?

Amelia shakes her head sadly. Is this the end?

Marco sets his jaw. No.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Alright.
(to the urn)
Onward and upward?

Marco ROARS BACK, raising the URN high! After a second, Amelia joins him, lifting the edges of her jacket out like wings, screaming and howling and growling like maniacs.

THE BEAR -- after a long, terrifying moment -- BACKS OFF!

Marco and Amelia stand in stupefied shock for a moment.

Until Marco JUMPS with a yelp as something grabs his shoulder from behind. It's Percy! He gestures to the woods.

PERCY
Come on!

Amelia grabs Marco's hand and tugs him into the forest, crashing through branches and leaves after Percy.

Terrified. Exhausted. Triumphant.

34

EXT. THIN WOODS - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

34

The trio slows their pace and checks behind them. No bears.

MARCO
Did we really just--?

AMELIA
YES!

PERCY
What's the after-action report?
Mission success?

Marco claps Percy on the shoulder and shakes his hand, smiling, holding the URN.

MARCO
You really *do* know your stuff.

PERCY
How's the damage? Do you mind?

MARCO
Mind...?

Percy gestures at the urn.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Oh. Uh, sure.

Marco hands it over. Percy returns Marco's backpack to him, then proceeds to examine and clean the mud off the urn.

As he does, Marco and Amelia splash a water bottle onto their hands, and scrub their faces clean of camouflage.

PERCY
Little spit and polish, and it's
good as new.

Percy takes another beat, really admiring the URN.

PERCY (CONT'D)
You know, Marco, letting go of what
you love isn't easy. I've held on,
then let go, to quite a few of
these. This one feels wonderful.

MARCO
She was wonderful.

Percy hands the URN back, pointing to a tree behind Marco.

PERCY

I think her little detour actually brought us in the right direction.

Marco and Amelia dry their faces. They follow his gesture and see a trio of rectangles painted onto the trunk.

AMELIA

It's a trail marker! That means the trail's nearby! We're back on track!

Marco and Amelia high-five, then hug, and notice that they're hugging, then part. Percy hands Marco the URN and he talks to Rebecca in jest in front of the others.

MARCO

Thanks for pointing us in the right direction.

Running a hand on the urn, he starts to notice several chips and cracks in the surface. Marco frowns. Hesitantly, carefully, he takes a moment to open the lid.

Glancing inside, his face slowly falls.

MARCO (CONT'D)

No. No, no, no, no!

AMELIA

What is it?

He shows her the interior. It's almost empty. Only a handful of ashes left. Tears build in Marco's eyes.

MARCO

This was over half full! She's... gone.

AMELIA

There's some left!

MARCO

Not enough to scatter, and also share with my mom!

(he shakes his head)

I lost her. Again.

He sags onto a tree stump, tearing up.

Amelia's heart breaks. She sits and puts an arm around him.

AMELIA

You didn't lose her. You saved her.

She comforts him for a long moment. Percy slowly approaches, keeping a respectful distance. Just as he's about to speak--
Amelia's phone buzzes again.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Reception must be back. I'm turning
it off...

Marco shakes his head, gives her a quick hug. Then stands, dries his eyes, and trudges up the trail toward the summit.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

MARCO
To finish what I started. We
agreed, right? Find her, then you
go. If you leave now, you'll have
time to get back. So. That's it.

Her phone keeps buzzing. Amelia looks down at it, desperately trying to weigh her choices.

AMELIA
I'm just... *so close*, Marco.
Something like this only comes by
once in a lifetime.

MARCO
Then you should take it.

Amelia looks down the long path leading down the mountain. She turns to look at Marco. He nods, then walks away.

He passes by Percy.

PERCY
Safety in numbers, soldier...?

MARCO
Thanks man, but you should go get
Claire. I think this is something
I've got to do alone, sorry I
dragged you guys into this.

Marco takes off.

Sadly, Amelia smiles to Percy, then turns and starts heading down the trail, phone in her hand.

Percy nods back, then proceeds up the trail, far behind Marco.

MARCO

No it's not, what are you going to take back east? What are you going to put on the mantle?

He steps to the edge, kneels to the ground and sets the URN in front of him. He pulls off the lid and sets it aside.

MARCO'S MOM (PHONE)

Tell you what... I have an idea. Just save a tiny pinch. That's all I need.

MARCO

You're sure?

MARCO'S MOM (PHONE)

I'm sure, pumpkin. You focus on saying what you need to say.

Marco looks glum.

MARCO'S MOM (PHONE) (CONT'D)

Did Amelia end up making it, by any chance? I always thought... you know, the two of you...

MARCO

She chose her own life. That's where she's happy.

MARCO'S MOM (PHONE)

Ah. I understand. Take as long as you need. But you know, not too long, I leave tomorrow.

MARCO

Mom.

MARCO'S MOM

(scoffs)

Not a time to kid around, sorry! I love you, Marco. Just remember. Little pinch.

MARCO

Love you, mom.

He hangs up.

Marco looks out, then down at the open urn.

MARCO (CONT'D)
 I guess I *did* have one more climb
 in me. Fine. You told me so. Your
 famous intuition strikes again.
 (BEAT) Just like you were right
 that your dog didn't eat mom and
 dad's anniversary cake off the
 counter. That was me. So. Please
 tell Diego that was my bad.

He's making this up as he goes, but he tries his best.

MARCO (CONT'D)
 If I tried hiking alone, I would've
 turned back halfway.

The *VOICE OVER* audio of his eulogy underscores the following:

37 **EXT. TRAIL 6 NEAR SUMMIT - DOWN - DAY - MEANWHILE** 37

Amelia marches down the trail on her own, despondent.

MARCO (V.O.)
 You never let me be lame enough to
 give up.

She slows down, and eventually stops, lost in thought.

Silently, to herself, she mouths these words alongside Marco:

MARCO (V.O.)
 I miss you.

CUT TO:

38 **EXT. TRAIL 6 NEAR SUMMIT - UP - DAY - MEANWHILE** 38

Percy fidgets with his ring amongst the beautiful serene
 forrest.

MARCO (V.O.)
 I wish I could have pushed you like
 you pushed me. But I know you'll
 keep doing it. You'll never stop.

Percy takes another moment with the wedding ring and then
 continues his hike.

CUT BACK TO:

39 **EXT. SUMMIT - DAY** 39

Marco finishes his eulogy.

MARCO

So thank you... for... being a,
beacon when I'm lost. Which is kind
of frequent to be honest.

He grabs some Advil from his bag and dumps the pills into a pocket. He then takes a small pinch of ashes and sprinkles them into the empty Advil bottle with it.

Then he lifts up the URN and throws the remaining powder to the wind.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Meet you up the trail, Becks.

He takes a moment. Then glances behind him to notice AMELIA standing at the treeline, listening. She approaches, crouches down, and puts a hand on his shoulder. He nods thankfully.

She pulls him into a hug.

AMELIA

That was beautiful. She would have
loved that.

He melts in her arms. She strokes a hand through his hair.

PERCY (O.S.)

Death doesn't take away everything.

They look up, shocked to see Percy at the edge of the woods.

PERCY (CONT'D)

You could never forget someone who
gave you so much to remember.

He plods over and pats Marco on the shoulder.

PERCY (CONT'D)

We don't always get all the time we
want with people. We take it for
granted. That's why we need to make
hay while the sun shines.

AMELIA

I'm sure it means the world to her
that you'd do all this.

Nothing from Marco.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

You battled a freaking *bear* to save
her. Twice.

Marco snuffles. BEAT.

MARCO
I guess I was pretty badass, huh?

AMELIA
Well, if it wasn't for my cheese-
berries...
(*off his look*)
No, no, you're right, very badass.

Marco takes a settling breath and wipes his face clean. Both turn to look over the vista.

MARCO
Nice, clear air.

BEAT.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Wait, what about your shoot?!

Amelia nods, slowly, coming to terms with the fact that she's lost her big chance.

AMELIA
I guess I'm going to miss it. And
I'll just have to keep trying.

PERCY
Poppycock! Me and Claire would
never stand for it.

AMELIA
Is she here? Where is she?

Marco and Amelia observe with concern as Percy looks left. Looks right. Shades his eyes and checks the woods.

PERCY
Good point. I must have been
holding the map upside down. Which
means... she's not up here,
she's...

Percy gets a mad gleam in his eye. They watch it build.

MARCO
Percy...

PERCY
With the speed of Hermes.

AMELIA
Percy, no...

PERCY
It *is* always faster going down.

AMELIA

Only if you want to give yourself a heart attack!

PERCY

Had six of 'em! They're spitballs bouncing off Air Force One!

MARCO

That doesn't mean try for lucky number seven! Percy!

Percy has already taken off.

PERCY

Come on, troops, move out! *Claire's at the bottom!*

Marco and Amelia drag themselves to their feet, and follow.

40

EXT. TRAIL 6 NEAR SUMMIT - DOWN - DAY

40

Marco and Amelia jog side by side to catch up with Percy.

MARCO

He's actually pretty fast.

AMELIA

Uh.. physically, yes. Mentally...? I think this pretty much confirms we're chasing a memory here.

MARCO

You think that'll be us some day?

AMELIA

Memories?

MARCO

No, I mean - do you think we'll ever be with someone who would run up and down a mountain for days, just to find us?

AMELIA

Yeah. Actually, you know what? I think so. I think we deserve that. (BEAT) At least *I* do.

MARCO

You twerp.

She laughs and runs ahead. Marco pursues, and they catch up with Percy. Percy looks delighted to see them again.

PERCY
You two are just going to love her!

FADE TO:

41 **EXT. TRAIL 5.5 VARIOUS - DOWN - DAY** 41

MONTAGE:

- Marco marches down through the tall trees, Percy and Amelia at his side. Their spirits are high: a weight has lifted.

MARCO (PRE-LAP)
Actually, I'm kinda *jealous* of him.

42 **EXT. RIVER CROSSING - DOWN - DAY** 42

- Marco, Percy, and Amelia hop across stepping stones to cross a stream. Marco is about to slip; Percy catches him.

AMELIA (PRE-LAP)
Of what?

43 **EXT. TRAIL 5.5 VARIOUS - DOWN - DAY** 43

- We catch up to the pre-lap as we find Marco and Amelia consulting the map, while Percy marches excitedly ahead.

MARCO
In his world... she's not gone.

Amelia nods, acknowledging the bittersweet truth of it.

They look up and watch Percy trudge happily through the idyllic landscape, without a care in the world.

FADE TO:

44 **EXT. TRAIL 5 ROUGH TERRAIN - DOWN - DAY** 44

Five hours later, the group is getting toward the bottom.

PERCY
Would you look at that - we're making great time. The lesson here is clearly that you should have stuck with me as command-leader from the start.

AMELIA

Well, you were just a *bit* sketchy at the beginning there.

PERCY

Sorry for the secrecy. I hadn't evaluated you in the field. In the interest of truly cleared air, we won't go another step until we have agreed on full disclosure from now on, and aired out any remaining secrets, schemes, or lies. Deal?

AMELIA

Deal.

MARCO

Mm... Deal.

PERCY

Something you want to say, Marco?

MARCO

Uh, I dunno, I just-- at the start, I lied about.. being with someone.

She gives him a funny look. Just as she's about to speak--

PARK RANGER (O.S.)

There!

An echoed yell from far away. Marco and Amelia turn to see two PARK RANGERS in the distance, cutting through the woods towards them. One of the rangers is pointing at the group!

AMELIA

What...?

Marco looks with concern to Percy, who now stands frozen on the trail. He's staring at the Park Rangers in a panic.

PERCY

I don't believe it... th-th-they... they f-found me...

AMELIA

Percy? Who are they?

PERCY

The operatives!

Percy turns and hurries off through the woods.

MARCO

There's no way--?

PARK RANGER
 (megaphone)
 Percy, we see you! Stop!

Marco and Amelia lock eyes. They run after Percy.

45 **EXT. THICK WOODS - DOWN - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 45

Amelia and Marco dodge through trees and underbrush as they try to follow Percy. The rangers are far away, but gaining.

MARCO
 He was telling the truth?

AMELIA
 I guess so!?

46 **EXT. TRAIL CROSSROADS - DAY** 46

Marco and Amelia emerge onto the trail, close behind Percy. They're back at the fork which sent them down the bad trail.

MARCO
 What's the plan, here?

AMELIA
 We just need to reach the bottom of
 the mountain!

MARCO
 And then what?

Amelia keeps jogging.

MARCO (CONT'D)
 And *then* what?

AMELIA
 Well, oh I don't know! Let's just
 play it by ear!

The trio hurries down the trail, narrowly dodging branches and rocks. They catch up to Percy.

MARCO
 Hey we're down to help you escape
 the operatives, but are you not
 just slightly worried your heart
 will explode here, man? Or mine?

PERCY
 We keep going till we lose them!
 Then wait till dark and camp.

(MORE)

PERCY (CONT'D)
 Surveil and reassess. Given my
 training, we can sustain ourselves
 indefinitely, depending how fast
 you acclimate to possum meat--

The trio rounds the bend, and come to a halt.

Two more PARK RANGERS patrol the trail ahead. The lead
 ranger, SETH - mounted on an ATV - sees and points them out.

He guns the ATV into shouting distance.

RANGER SETH
 End of the line, Percy. Folks, just
 let us do our thing. This is for
 his own good.

AMELIA
 What did he even do!?

MARCO
 Yeah, you're scaring him! What
 about this is for his own good? He
 does all this work for your
 organizations and this is how you
 treat him?

RANGER SETH
 Excuse me?

MARCO
 He...used to work for you guys.

Ranger Seth looks shocked. He dismounts. Approaches slowly.

RANGER SETH
 That so?

AMELIA
 I mean, you're going full SWAT team
 on him, it's obvious!

RANGER SETH
 Percy suffers from dementia and
 bouts of Alzheimer's.

Marco and Amelia share a pained look.

Percy remains unreadable, his gaze locked on the ground.

AMELIA
 Ok... maybe a *little*?

MARCO

A smidge.

Ranger Seth reaches Percy's side, and slowly starts guiding him back down the trail. Percy is silent, and makes no protest, as if he has receded into a mental fog.

RANGER SETH

More than a smidge, sir. I'm sure he truly believed what he told you, but you cannot trust any of it.

Marco and Amelia share a troubled look as Ranger Seth leads Percy up to the ATV and sits him gently on the back. They concede their defenses.

MARCO

You guys will treat him right?
Maybe get in touch with his family?

RANGER SETH

We'll do what we can, sir. In this state, best thing for him is to--

Percy grabs the ATV controls and GUNS it, back up the trail.

AMELIA

Percy, wait!

47 **EXT. TRAIL 4 RIGHT PATH - DAY - MOMENTS LATER**

47

Percy drives the ATV with maniacal glee.

PERCY

You'll never lock me back in that paddy wagon, you jack-booted...jag-offs!

He's heading for the ravine that Marco almost fell into!

48 **EXT. TRAIL 4 RIGHT PATH - BEHIND PERCY - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 48

Marco and Amelia jog up the trail, rangers lagging behind.

Their eyes alight with panic as they hear a CRASH up ahead - Percy YELPING with surprise.

PERCY (O.S.)

Gah! Claire--! Claire, help!

Marco and Amelia share a worried look, and speed up.

49 **EXT. EDGE OF RAVINE - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

49

They come to the edge of the ravine, and gasp with concern as they look down to see Percy lying dazed by the crashed ATV.

MARCO

Percy, are you alright?!

Without thinking, Amelia jumps into the pit!

MARCO (CONT'D)

Why are you --? Guys! Stop doing stuff! Good lord!

50 **EXT. RAVINE PIT - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

50

Down below, Amelia helps Percy to his feet, brushing the dirt off him. His ankle is clearly hurt.

AMELIA

Percy, are you okay?

PERCY

I was in Normandy, dear, it's going to take a few more knocks to keep me down.

AMELIA

You were in the war?

PERCY

No, business trip in '93, but it was *bad*.

Percy winces as he puts his weight on his ankle.

AMELIA

Careful! Does that hurt? It might be sprained.

MARCO (O.S.)

Guys...? Like, don't panic? But wasn't there a whole nest of--?

CLOSE UP: the leaves in front of Amelia and Percy begin to twitch and rustle as hissing **SNAKES** slither through them.

They leap back, Amelia supporting Percy to keep him up. He holds out a stick like a sword.

PERCY

Stay back, you bastards! They're jealous, Amelia. Rabid with envy for our hot blood and our *legs*.

A snake emerges from the leaves and HISSES menacingly.

AMELIA
Marco! Get help!

51 **EXT. EDGE OF RAVINE - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

51

Marco turns and waves his arms as two of the pursuing PARK RANGERS, ANDY and SETH round the bend and follow them.

Ranger Andy - the subordinate of the two - yells unnecessarily through his megaphone.

RANGER ANDY
Attention, citizen! We would like to reiterate that this elderly gentleman has misled you about the situation--!

MARCO
Hi! Yes, thank you! Over here!

The rangers approach warily. Seth grabs Andy's arm, holding him back - the wise mentor.

RANGER SETH
Easy there, rookie. This fella's been aiding a fugitive. Could be a trap. Take it slow.

RANGER ANDY
(still through megaphone)
You are legally required to tell us if you are luring us into a trap!

MARCO
I am *right here*.

The rangers approach and peek over the edge.

RANGER SETH
That's quite a tumble! He alright?

MARCO
For now! There are snakes, please, can you help?

Ranger Seth nods. He nods at Andy, and pulls out a walkie.

RANGER SETH
Ranger Andy, I place you in temporary command.
(MORE)

RANGER SETH (CONT'D)
I'll report the situation and call
in some extra help, rope, and
antivenom.

RANGER ANDY
Roger that. I can handle it, sir.

RANGER SETH
Show me, rookie. Show us all.

He claps Andy on the shoulder and marches off, calling for
backup through the crackly radio. Marco looks to Andy.

MARCO
Well?!

Summoning an air of authority, Ranger Andy takes off his
jacket and begins knotting the sleeves together.

RANGER ANDY
Sir, I'm going to request that you
disrobe and provide me with your
shirt, so as per the guidebook, I
can fashion a rudimentary harness--

MARCO
Oh my god, you people are useless!

He takes a deep breath. Finds his courage once more. Then
jumps into the pit.

RANGER ANDY
Sir! I officially advise *against*
this! It's official.

52

EXT. RAVINE PIT - CONTINUOUS

52

Marco dodges and dances through the snake-infested leaves,
circling closer to Percy and Amelia. He growls, snarls, and
makes himself as big as possible, as with the bear encounter.

MARCO
Yah! Back! Get back!

AMELIA
That's bears, not snakes!

PERCY
For god's sake, man, snakes are
biologically immune to fear!

MARCO
Well so am I! Yah!

He yells, roars, and kicks at the snakes until he regroups with Percy and Amelia at the far end.

MARCO (CONT'D)
You guys okay?

AMELIA
His ankle's hurt, he can't climb.

MARCO
(shouting, to ranger)
Circle around to us and get ready to lift!

As Ranger Andy circles around and lets down his jacket to grab onto, Marco boosts and lifts Percy up to reach it.

PERCY
Come on, Marco! Put those spindly little bird-bones to work and LIFT!

He scowls as he comes face to face with Ranger Andy.

PERCY (CONT'D)
An operative! Change of plans, I'll take my chances with the diamondbacks--!

MARCO
No, Percy, just GO!

Marco gives one final huge push, and Percy is able to GRAB the end of the jacket. Ranger Andy lifts him to safety.

A snake SNAPS at his boot, and he relocates with Amelia, circling around the edge of the ravine with her.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Okay, same deal, I'll lift you, you grab the thing.

He boosts up Amelia. Percy and Ranger Andy lean almost all the way over the pit, dangling the jacket lower...

Amelia JUST BARELY GRABS IT --

--and the sleeve rips. Tearing the whole thing in half.

Marco does his best to break her fall.

The snakes are closing in. The hissing intensifies. One of them SNAPS at their ankles viciously.

RANGER ANDY (O.S.)
Please remain calm! My colleague will return shortly with rope!

PERCY (O.S.)
 (to Andy)
 You gutless goon!

Andy and Percy squabble at the edge, out of view. Meanwhile, Marco slowly backpedals with Amelia, jabbing at the snakes.

AMELIA
 Okay if we're going to die I have
 to tell you something.

MARCO
 I have to say something too.

AMELIA
 ...Breaking up with you was the
 biggest mistake of my entire life.

MARCO
 Pressuring you to come back home
 was mine.

AMELIA
 I never should have taken you for
 granted. I've never met anyone else
 like you, and Becks, and I don't
 think I ever will.

MARCO
 I was holding you back. You're
 like, amazing, and need to go do
 amazing things. I get it.

AMELIA
 I lied about being with someone
 earlier too.

MARCO
 You-- Really?
 (fuck it!)
 I love you!

He looks at her. She looks back. Adrenaline is high, but it's a charged moment. Is she going to say it back--?

A rope falls next to Marco, jump-scaring him.

PERCY (O.S.)
 Grab on, lovebirds!

Marco climbs triumphantly from the ravine, hand over hand. He's filthy, covered in sweat and mud.

He reaches the top, and comes face to face with--
 AMELIA, who has been holding the rope.

He saved her, she saved him.

Marco blinks.

And she kisses him!

Music swells and camera spins around them as they kiss and
 kiss. HOLY HECK, THIS IS HAPPENING.

Until they pull away. Surprised. Unsure what to do with this.

PERCY (O.S.)
 And looky there.. Breakups.. Loss..
 Love *does* conquer all.

They look up, and break away, suddenly saddened to see the
 rangers each keeping a hand planted on Percy's shoulders.

PERCY (CONT'D)
 Even fascism.
*(gesturing "subtly" to his
 captors)*
 Spinning back kick. Hurry!

RANGER ANDY
 You can't just spinning back kick
 all your problems away, Percy. Not
 today.

RANGER SETH
 Per regulations, we'll get this
 fella back to the home in Davis.
 It's a wonder he didn't get hurt or
 even killed out here. Bear
 sightings, you know?

Marco and Amelia look at each other, dazed.

54

EXT. TRAIL PARKING LOT - DAY - LATER

54

Amelia sits alone on the guardrail of the parking lot. She
 watches with concern as the park rangers load Percy into the
 back of the ambulance.

Her phone rings.

She checks the time. 3:35. She winces. Answers it.

AMELIA
 Hi! So sorry for being out of touch, I just had an important--
 (then)
 Yes, I absolutely recognized the limited nature of your offer--
 (then)
 ...Of course. I understand.

A distant look develops in her eye.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
 Yes. Thank you for the opportunity.
 Safe travels.

The caller hangs up. Amelia looks at her phone until it times out and turns off. She contemplates her reflection in its black surface. She turns it off. Lies down in the grass.

Marco approaches, limping slightly as well. He lies down in the grass next to her. Filthy and exhausted, they breathe.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
 The ship has officially sailed.

MARCO
 I am... I'm so sorry, Amelia. I don't even know how to begin to thank you for everything you did for me here. This is all my fault.

AMELIA
 No. Maybe it was a bad decision, but... it was mine. I chose to stay. I'm glad I did.

MARCO
 Me too.

BEAT.

MARCO (CONT'D)
 Well, what now? Is there another Dutch lady you can work with?

AMELIA
 I wish. I guess I'll just have to keep trying. Work hard like I've been. Ugh. Go to more mixers, make new contacts, I know how to do it. Relationships are pretty much everything, they're important. Maybe the *most* important.

MARCO
 They are, aren't they.

They chew on that for a moment.

MARCO (CONT'D)
How do you feel?

AMELIA
I'm still going to get there. But
I've been kinda treating it like a
race. It's not, you know?

MARCO
It's a hike.

AMELIA
It's a--

She gives him a look: "that was dumb. But I'll allow it."

MARCO
I owe you. Big time. Saw a Waffle
House on the way here - no *obvious*
bullet-holes in the glass...?

She laughs, and leans her head on Marco's shoulder. He looks
down at her. It seems for a moment they may kiss, but they
shy away and rest their noses on each other's cheeks instead.

AMELIA
I guess I do have the week off now.

MARCO
That's a lot of waffles.

AMELIA
And hot links.

MARCO
Speaking of Wieners...

AMELIA
Oh yeah. Guess I have to cancel
with the sitter now.

MARCO
Would love to meet the little guy.

AMELIA
(messing with him)
The sitter?

MARCO
(messing back)
Yeah.

They rest together, as the cop car and ambulance pull away.

After a moment, Marco gets up and scratches at his ankle.

AMELIA
You okay?

MARCO
Now that the adrenaline's wearing
off just feeling kinda...itchy? You
think there was maybe poison ivy
down there somewhere--

He pulls up his cuff to reveal a constellation of ugly snake
bites all along his ankles and legs.

AMELIA
Um. Are those...? You got bit?

MARCO
Oh. Uh.

AMELIA
(building urgency)
Ten -- twelve times?!

MARCO
You're counting?

Amelia looks up.

AMELIA
The ambulance...!

It's driving - about to leave the lot.

They look at each other with desperation - and exhilaration.

MARCO
Uh! Excuse me! Ambulance-- people!

And they TAKE OFF after it. Amelia jogging, Marco hobbling as
fast as he can - both yelling and waving their arms.

We crane up away from the woods, and the entrance to the Mt.
Norbert trail. Offscreen, we hear the screech of brakes.

After a moment: a **BEAR ROARS** somewhere in the woods,
scattering a flock of birds from the trees.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN on Percy, sitting in a communal living room at the
care home. He stares out a window at the nature beyond.

In the window frame, he looks imprisoned in a little box.

56

INT. MEMORY CARE HOME - DAY - CONTINUOUS

56

SENIOR CITIZENS around the room play board games and watch TV. Some sleep in armchairs. They seem happy, but inactive. Stationary. Stagnant. At least to Percy.

He sighs at the great outdoors past the glass.

An ORDERLY approaches, carrying a vanilla pudding and a small cup of pills. Percy notices and pretends to fall asleep.

ORDERLY (O.S.)
Time for your meds, Percy. You up?

Percy just grunts and twitches.

Someone else just out of frame approaches.

AMELIA (O.S.)
I'll take it from here. Percy has some very specific instructions for his care today.

ORDERLY (O.S.)
Oh. You sure?

AMELIA (O.S.)
I'm sure.

Percy peeks through his squinted eyes, then perks up and turns to see Amelia. She's wearing scrubs and a lanyard. Huh?

PERCY
Oh! No, no. You're not... you're...

Percy screws up his face as he tries to think. Amelia takes a seat next to him, and smiles, showing him her lanyard.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Anna! From the--?

AMELIA
Amelia, yes! Shh. From the...

She checks around, then quietly mimes a bear snarling.

PERCY
You work here now? How did they get you, was it money? Brainwashing? They have your family compromised?

AMELIA
No, no, nothing like that.

She stealthily pulls her tag out of the lanyard.

AMELIA (CONT'D)
Remarkable what you can do with
Photoshop these days.

PERCY
You run a shop?!

She smiles.

AMELIA
Let's say that I'm on a high-stakes
undercover assignment of my own.
Need-to-know, of course. But if you
want to join me for a... normal,
perfectly routine checkup... now's
the time.

Percy is thrilled. This mission is already on.

PERCY
Glad to see you dodged those G-Men
too. Keeping you glued to your
phone, during your personal nature
time? Shameful.

AMELIA
That was a close escape, for sure.

She nudges her head towards the far wall, by the door. Percy follows the gesture to see MARCO waiting with dark glasses, an earpiece, and hat pulled low. He nods back. He's ready.

PERCY
Will your partner be joining us?

AMELIA
Oh, that's, uh -- yeah, Marco. How
did you know that we're...?

He nods knowingly at the ENGAGEMENT RING on her finger.

PERCY
I'm perceptive, dear. You don't do
fifty ops undercover with the EPA
without learning a few tricks.

Percy glances around briefly for onlookers, then withdraws and throws an ID Badge on the table.

It's an Undercover Agent Badge. Looks real. Amelia is taken aback. She looks curiously at Percy.

AMELIA
 ...Wow. Okay. Well I think your
 skills are needed once again.

She looks to the front. Motions to Marco. Gives Percy a
 squeeze of the hand, then steps away to distract the orderly.

Marco cautiously approaches. He carries a backpack. Checking
 for onlookers, he pulls out a new pair of hiking shoes.

MARCO
 You have like ten seconds to put
 these on before we get charged with
 like four different misdemeanors.

Percy grins. He starts putting them on, glancing around for
 danger and escape routes.

PERCY
 Say, Margo, nice ring!

Marco smirks a little, and shows off his engagement band. The
 old one, from the closet shoebox. Percy flips out glasses.

MARCO
 Oh. Thanks. Guess we're just
 kinda...trying them on for now.
 Seeing how they fit, you know?

PERCY
 That sparkle! That shine!

MARCO
 Good eye Captain. Memorial ash.

Percy puts down the glasses and looks up at him, questioning.

MARCO (CONT'D)
 My mom's a jeweler. I saved her
 just a pinch.

PERCY
 Hot-dog, that's perfect.
(he gestures at the shoes)
 This is perfect. Thank you, Marco.

Marco beams.

57

INT. MEMORY CARE HOME - FRONT DESK AREA - DAY

57

Marco follows close behind as Amelia pushes Percy in a
 wheelchair toward the doors. He's mostly covered by a
 blanket, feigning senility and exhaustion.

Commotion and shouting from behind them:

ORDERLY (O.S.)
 Hey! You two! You bring Percy back
 right now!

They turn. Take one look at each other. And they BOLT out the doors, pushing an exhilarated Percy ahead of them.

58 **EXT. MEMORY CARE HOME - PARKING LOT - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 58

Percy hurls off his blanket and reveals that he's now decked out in his new hiking boots and assorted accessories.

He gets up from the wheelchair and bolts towards the woods.

Marco and Amelia follow close behind, barely able to keep up. Amelia tosses off her disguise, revealing hiking gear as well. Marco discards his fake earpiece and cheap glasses.

He stumbles a little over the curb, and a beaming Amelia reaches back to give him a hand.

He smiles up at her. He takes her hand.

The rings on their intertwined fingers sparkle with memorial ash.

It's Rebecca - holding them together.

PERCY (O.S.)
 Let's get going, huh, slowpokes?!

59 **EXT. MEMORY CARE HOME WOODS - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 59

Hand in hand, Marco and Amelia follow Percy into the woods, toward an open trail. Onward and upward.

To another adventure.

SNAPSHOT.

We recede slowly from this frozen frame, captured as if by a camera shutter, like Rebecca's photo at the beginning...

...until we slowly FADE OUT.

THE END