

HUNTER'S MOON

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS - MAGIC HOUR

The moon rises above the Appalachian Mountains as dusk slips into night. Thick fog pours down the jagged peaks into the dense forest below.

Deep in the woods dozens of pick-up trucks surround a secluded wooden barn.

SEVERAL GUARDS - shotguns and cowboy hats - line the dirt road snaking into the darkness.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Two SAVAGE DOGS, a white pitbull and a black doberman, attack each other inside a crude fighting pit. The dogs GROWL, BITE and TEAR each other apart as they fight for their lives.

Dozens of FARM HANDS, BIKERS and TRUCKERS, drinking beers and moonshine, CHEER and CURSE as the dogs continue their battle. BETS are placed. MONEY exchanges hands.

A SAVAGE RIPPING AND CRUNCHING SOUND sends the crowd into a wild frenzy of applause.

ROD PEPPER - 50s, an ogre in farmer's overalls and lamb chop side burns - roars with laughter. He leaps into the pit and pulls his pitbull off the dead doberman.

ROD
Good girl. That's a good girl.

He cradles the pitbull like a baby, kissing and licking the blood out of her eyes before handing her off to a farm hand.

RANGER - 30s, muscled, lean and mean, with the feral eyes of a predator - turns away from the display in disgust.

Rod pushes through the crowd and bellies up next to the Ranger.

ROD
You don't like what you see,
Mister?

RANGER
These pups are lame. I'm looking
for a real fight.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEER VALLEY, NORTH CAROLINA - DAWN

Deer Valley is a quiet rural community, surrounded by dense woods and high mountains. It's the kind of charming farm town that has one high school, two churches and three bars.

Pick-up trucks rumble down main street. A banner flies over the road:

"BEAR HUNTING SEASON BEGINS OCTOBER 12TH."

EXT. DEER VALLEY HIGH - DAY

Dozens of kids hurry out of this 1950s campus. Happy intelligent faces. Bright smiles. The perfect high school.

EMMA HUNTER - 17, smart, effortlessly beautiful, but quirky with retro glasses and a leather biker's jacket - crosses the parking lot towards her vintage green VESPA MOPED.

Emma would be stunning, but there's something dark beneath the surface. Something haunted.

JIMMY MONTROSE - 17, good looking with an easy smile and a swimmer's body - runs up next to her.

JIMMY

Wait up, Emma. Did you finish the Andrew Jackson paper?

EMMA

Last night, and no, you can't copy it.

JIMMY

Do you want me to flunk history? Come on. Please. Don't make me beg. OK, I'm begging. Please.

EMMA

(mock severe)
On your knees, boy.

JIMMY

(drops to his knees)
Please. Please. I'll bring pizza.
Please. Please.

EMMA

OK. Fine, anything to shut you up. But I'm not doing the paper for you this time.

JIMMY

(springs to his feet)
You're the best. Tonight. I'll come to yours.

Jimmy runs across the parking lot.

EMMA
(calling after him)
Mushroom extra large. Thin crust.

ACROSS THE PARKING LOT

DOMINIC BUTLER - 18, lean, brooding and ruggedly handsome - walks out of school with his sister JESSICA BUTLER - 17, graceful, lithe and gorgeous.

These two have a natural grace that separates them from the awkward gangly teens around them. They keep to themselves as they cross towards Dominic's Jeep.

Dominic opens the door for his sister and then looks over at Emma.

Emma senses him watching her and turns. She stares back at Dominic. The look between them is intense, filled with longing and pain.

Finally Emma turns her back on Dominic, fighting the tears, and climbs onto her Vespa.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Emma speeds out of the parking lot and BAM, CRASHES into a Jeep in front of her. She flies over the top of the car, landing hard on the black top.

Dominic jumps out of the Jeep and runs to Emma's side. He leans over Emma, cradling her in his arms.

DOMINIC
Emma. Em, are you OK?

Emma GROANS and blinks at him, woozy.

DOMINIC
Say something.

EMMA
I'm... trying to remember how to breathe. I'm fine.

Jessica kneels down next to Emma.

JESSICA
You sure, Em? You want me to call 911?

Emma sits up.

EMMA
 No, I'm OK. Nothing broken.
 It's... it was my fault.

Dominic helps Emma to her feet.

DOMINIC
 Damn right. What the hell were you
 doing?

JESSICA
 (chiding)
 Dominic.

EMMA
 I got something stuck in my eye. I
 didn't see you.

DOMINIC
 You could have died.

RACHEL MARTIN - 17, sexy, pierced, high school hacker - runs
 over to Emma.

RACHEL
 Holyshit, Emma! Are you alright?

EMMA
 Yeah, I think so. I'm good.

Rachel brushes the dirt off Emma's back, ignoring Dominic.

RACHEL
 Put me down as a witness. He
 pulled out in front of you.

DOMINIC
 I'm standing right here, Rachel.

RACHEL
 You cut her off, asshole.

DOMINIC
 She hit my car.

Jimmy runs up behind Rachel and Emma.

JIMMY
 Because you pulled out in front of
 her, Dominic.

EMMA
 Jimmy don't.

JIMMY
 What? Dominic nearly killed you
 and you still want to defend him?

DOMINIC
 Back off, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Or what?

Dominic glares at Jimmy. It's scary. Jimmy glares right back.

EMMA
Stop it. Both of you.

RACHEL
Emma, this is the guy that just dumped you. Ripped out your heart and stomped it to pieces.

EMMA
(embarrassed)
Oh God, Rachel. Please shut up.

Emma turns to Rachel and Jimmy.

EMMA
Can you give me a minute here?
Please?

They nod and back away.

Dominic lifts Emma's Vespa off the ground and wheels it over to her. He shoots her a hangdog smile.

DOMINIC
The Vespa looks alright. You sure you're OK?

Emma tries to take the Vespa from him without a word. Dominic holds onto the handle bars.

DOMINIC
Look after yourself, Emma.
Seriously. I'm worried about you.

EMMA
(cold)
Oh, now you're worried?

DOMINIC
I know you're mad at me...

EMMA
You figured that out did you? I wonder why?

DOMINIC
I didn't want to hurt you.

EMMA
You dumped me cold without an explanation.

DOMINIC
You really want to get into this
now?

EMMA
Yes. I want to know what happened.
Did I do something wrong? What did
I do?

Dominic blows out his cheeks.

DOMINIC
You didn't do anything. When my
mother found out we'd been seeing
each other, she went nuts.

EMMA
Why? Because my mom's a waitress
and my Dad ran out on us. Because
I'm not good enough for you?

DOMINIC
No, it's not that. It's a thing
with my family. I'm not allowed to
date.

Emma glares at him.

EMMA
You're not allowed to date, or
you're not allowed to date me?

DOMINIC
I'm not allowed to date till I go
to college.

EMMA
You might have thought about that
before you said you loved me.

DOMINIC
I didn't know the rules then.

EMMA
Well, you should have asked. You
crushed me, Dominic.

DOMINIC
But I never lied to you.

Emma looks at him for a beat, fighting her tears as his words
sink in.

EMMA
I can't do this.

She spins around and marches back towards Rachel and Jimmy.

DOMINIC
Emma, don't leave like this. Emma.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST ROAD - SUNSET

A lonely road winds through a dense mountain forest. A blue Bronco rattles around the corner and pulls up next to an EIGHT FOOT WIRE FENCE. A sign on the fence reads:

LAKE HAVOC. PRIVATE PROPERTY, NO TRESPASSING. BEWARE OF GUARD DOGS.

Jimmy and Emma climb out of the Bronco carrying towels and flashlights.

EMMA
What's so important that you had to drag me all the way out here? I know it's not about the history paper.

Jimmy extends a hand to Emma.

JIMMY
It's a surprise. Climb up on the roof and hop the fence.

Emma notices the sign.

EMMA
Lake Havoc. You're sure it's OK for us to be here?

JIMMY
Of course I'm sure. I've been swimming here forever. This is exactly what you need.

EXT. LAKE HAVOC - NIGHT

A SILVER FULL MOON sparkles on the mirrored surface of this secret mountain lake. Thick woods surround the water's edge.

Jimmy and Emma walk out of the trees towards a wooden dock. Emma stops for a moment to admire the view.

EMMA
This is amazing.

JIMMY
Toldja.

Jimmy FLICKS her with a towel. Emma dodges out of the way and FLICKS him back. Gets him!

JIMMY
 (laughing)
 OW! Last one to the dock buys
 pizza tonight.

EMMA
 What? You already owe me.

Jimmy PUSHES Emma back down the trail and sprints past her.

JIMMY
 SUCKER!

EMMA
 You are so dead!

She races after him.

Jimmy reaches the end of the dock just ahead of Emma. He
 raises his hands in victory.

JIMMY
 (commentator voice)
 The Champ bows to a roaring crowd!

EMMA
 You cheated.

JIMMY
 Did not.

Jimmy pulls his shirt over his head, revealing a lean,
 muscled body. Emma checks him out for a moment and then
 pushes him into the water. He SPLASHES into the lake.

Emma sits down, hanging her legs over the edge of the dock.
 She looks around, stunned by the natural beauty.

EMMA
 Thanks, Jimmy. This is awesome.

Jimmy climbs up next to her.

JIMMY
 That's what friends are for. We
 are friends, right?

Emma shoots him a quizzical look.

EMMA
 Since the sandbox, Dufus.

JIMMY
 I gotta tell you, I hate the way
 that Dominic treated you. How he
 just dumped you like that. Now I
 don't want to mess up our
 friendship, but I would never treat
 you that way...

EMMA
I don't want to talk about Dominic.

JIMMY
This isn't about Dominic, it's
about us. I want to be with you,
Emma. And not just as some re-
bound guy. I want to be with you
for real.

Emma stares at him, lost for words. Jimmy takes this as a
signal.

JIMMY
Just stop me any time.

He moves in to kiss her. At the last moment, Emma turns her
cheek.

EMMA
Jimmy, stop. You're like my
brother for God's sake. Jesus, we
took baths together.

Jimmy starts to reply, but a GUTTURAL HOWL cuts through the
night.

EMMA
(looking around)
What was that?

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Massive first growth trees shoot hundreds of feet up from the
earth like ancient forest gods.

Jimmy and Emma hurry along an animal path, nervously peering
through the trees.

AHEAD

A FOREST RANGER - the same man from the dog fight, now in
uniform - blocks the path.

JIMMY AND EMMA

Stop in their tracks, startled, then relax when they notice
his uniform.

RANGER
What are you kids doing out here?

JIMMY
Just swimming in the lake, Sir.

RANGER
You're trespassing. That's what
you're doing. How many more of you
back there?

JIMMY
None, Sir. It's just us.

RANGER
Alright. I'll give you a pass this
time. Go on now. Get home.

EMMA
Officer, what was that howling just
now?

RANGER
(shifty)
I didn't hear anything. Come on
now. Hurry it up.

The Ranger steps off the trail and waves them past him. The
kids hurry forward. Emma walks a few steps and then turns.

EMMA'S POV

The Ranger has gone. Disappeared.

EMMA
Where did he go?

Jimmy and Emma look around.

ANOTHER HOWL cuts through the night. Closer now.

AN ANIMAL

FLASHES across the path in front of them.

JIMMY
(scared)
Holyshit! What was that?

EMMA
Coyote?

JIMMY
That was bigger than a coyote.
Could have been a wolf or
something. Go back.

EMMA
Where's the Ranger?

JIMMY
I don't know. Come on.

They turn back along the path. They take a couple of steps and stop.

THE ANIMAL

FLASHES across the path in front of them again.

EMMA
How did it....?

JIMMY
On three, we run for my car.

EMMA
You can't outrun a wolf, Jimmy.

JIMMY'S POV

To the left, a massive OAK TREE rises up from the forest floor.

JIMMY
Oak tree. On my left. NOW!

They sprint towards the oak. Jimmy slams backwards into the trunk and cups his hands.

JIMMY
Climb. GO!

Emma steps into Jimmy's hands and pulls herself up the branches.

Jimmy leaps at the tree. He grabs the branch and scrambles up.

THE ANIMAL

LEAPS UP AND CLAMPS ITS JAWS onto Jimmy's foot. We don't see the animal, but Jimmy does and he SCREAMS. HE KICKS down. He kicks again and again.

THE SHOE

Comes off in the animal's mouth and Jimmy's SHREDDED FOOT springs free. He scrambles up the tree, terrified.

EMMA
Jimmy, take my hand.

Emma pulls Jimmy up and he climbs up to her.

The branch sways under their weight. It starts to SPLINTER. Jimmy shuffles back towards the tree trunk, but it's too late. The branch CRACKS.

EMMA AND JIMMY

Tumble towards the ground. Their bodies SMACK from branch to branch as they fall.

JIMMY

Hits the ground hard and rolls into the undergrowth.

EMMA

Is not so lucky. She lands right in front of the SNARLING animal.

ANIMAL'S POV

Emma freezes, terrified.

EMMA

Oh Jesus!

QUICK CUTS. FLASHES OF FUR, CLAWS AND TEETH as the animal LEAPS, trying to tear Emma's throat out. Emma SCREAMS and catches the animal's CLAWS in her hands, holding off its SNAPPING JAWS.

CRACK! A tree branch SMASHES over the animal's head. Jimmy stands above the animal and SWINGS the tree branch again. The animal dives at Jimmy, bowling him into the trees.

EMMA

Jimmy!!!!

Jimmy is JERKED violently into the dark. A SCREAM comes out of the dark and then Jimmy's voice.

JIMMY

OH GOD! NO! NO!

The savage RIPPING sound of an animal tearing flesh and CRUNCHING though bone ECHOES through the forest.

EMMA

(horrified)

Jimmy?

JIMMY

(OS)

RUN! Emma, get out! GO!

Emma hesitates for a moment and then Jimmy'S SEVERED ARM flies out of the darkness. Blood SPLATTERS over Emma's face. Panic courses through her brain.

Emma spins around and sprints back down the trail. She charges through the dark at full speed.

EMMA'S FOOT catches a root. She cartwheels forward and lands hard. She scrambles to her feet, adrenaline pumping through her body, driving her forward.

EMMA'S POV

To the right, Jimmy'S BRONCO looms out of the darkness, beyond the fence, beckoning like a savior.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Emma flings herself over the fence and races around the Bronco. She tries the door, but it'S LOCKED.

EMMA

NO!

IN A BLUR, THE ANIMAL LEAPS OVER THE BRONCO AND CRASHES INTO Emma. She flies back into the air, hits the road and CRACKS her head on the blacktop.

Emma blinks as her vision swims.

EMMA'S BLURRED POV

The animal climbs to it'S feet just as a MACK TRUCK ROARS around the corner and SMASHES it into the dark.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Emma lies on a hospital bed, a gauze bandage around her head. The white room is Spartan, but clean. A harsh florescent light BUZZES in the ceiling.

Dominic sneaks into the room and sits on the bed next to Emma. He leans over and kisses her on the forehead.

Tenderly, he pulls down the bed sheet revealing a blood stained bandage covering Emma'S back. Dominic glances at the door and then gently peels back the bandage.

FOUR LONG SCRATCHES stretch across Emma's shoulders. Dominic's hand is dwarfed by the scratches.

DOMINIC

Je-sus.

DR. HELEN BUTLER - 40s, elegant, beautiful, and smart as they make them - opens the door and sees Dominic. He quickly replaces the bandage.

HELEN
What are you doing, Dominic?

DOMINIC
Nothing, Mom. Just came to see Emma.

HELEN
Go home.

DOMINIC
Is she going to be OK?

HELEN
You know how I feel about you seeing this girl.

DOMINIC
I know exactly how you feel, Mom. Are doing everything you can for her?

HELEN
Of course I am.

DOMINIC
What about the wounds on her back?

HELEN
I'm the doctor. Let me do my job.

DOMINIC
It looks like she was attacked by a wolf. Do you think...

HELEN
(interrupting)
You've had a long night, Dominic. Let me give you something to help you sleep.

DOMINIC
No, I don't want something to help me sleep. I want to know what's going to happen to Emma.

Helen's phone BUZZES. She checks the screen.

HELEN
Her mother's here. Go home.

Helen rushes out of the door.

INT. NURSE'S STATION - NIGHT

NURSE SHEILA ROBERTS - 21, sweet, sexy, country girl with a twinkle in her eyes - stands behind the nurse's station reading over a medical report. She looks up as Helen approaches.

NURSE SHEILA
 Doctor, it says here that Emma's
 wounds were dressed when she came
 into the hospital.

HELEN
 That's right. They were quite
 severe. I don't want anybody else
 to touch her, understood?

NURSE SHEILA
 Yes, Doctor.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Helen opens the hospital doors as a police car pulls into the parking lot.

SHERIFF LUKE BUTLER - 40s, rugged, solid as a rock - steps out from behind the wheel and nods to Helen.

DEPUTY BO ROBERTS - 26, gung-ho, farm boy with a badge - opens the back door.

MAGGIE HUNTER - 40, a trashy, fading beauty in a diner waitress uniform - climbs out of the car. Maggie rushes towards Helen.

MAGGIE
 Doctor Butler? Is she...

HELEN
 Emma's still unconscious. She's been in a nasty car accident and she's pretty banged up, but she should make a full recovery.

Maggie's eyes shine with tears.

MAGGIE
 Thank God. What about Jimmy?

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Jimmy emerges slowly out of the darkness. He is bloody and bruised, but still walking. His STUMP hangs limp at his side. Suddenly his ears prick up. He looks around. The forest is OMINOUSLY SILENT.

A trickle of sweat runs down Jimmy's face. He BOLTS, running through the trees at full speed.

SOMETHING chases him. WE catch only glimpses and shadows, but enough to tell that it is fast.

MYSTERY POV

Jimmy runs through the trees. We hear his THUMPING heart and ragged BREATH.

BACK TO SCENE

Jimmy leaps up over a fallen tree and trips over one of the branches. Jimmy hits the ground hard. He scrambles to his feet and looks over his shoulder. Whatever Jimmy sees makes the blood drain from his face. He drops to his knees.

JIMMY

No. Please don't. Don't do that... anything but that.

JIMMY'S POV

Emma stands in front of him like a wild forest creature, covered in mud and blood. She lifts his missing arm to her face and RIPS OFF A MOUTHFUL OF RAW FLESH.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Emma wakes up SCREAMING.

Nurse Sheila rushes into the room and reaches out to Emma.

NURSE SHEILA

Em? Emma, it's Sheila. You're okay. You just had a bad dream. You're alright.

Emma shivers, still lost in the nightmare.

EMMA

We've got to go back. We got to go...

She drops back onto her pillow, delirious. Nurse Sheila leans over her.

NURSE SHEILA

You're okay. You're safe now.

Emma focuses on Nurse Sheila.

EMMA

Where am I?

INT. HOSPITAL, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Helen leads Sheriff Butler, Maggie and Deputy Bo down the corridor.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Helen, Maggie, Deputy Bo and the Sheriff enter the room to see Nurse Sheila sitting on the bed with Emma.

NURSE SHEILA
She just woke up, Doctor.

EMMA
What happened?

Maggie crosses to the bed and takes Emma in her arms.

MAGGIE
It's OK, Baby. Everything's going to be OK.

EMMA
I can't get my head together. The drugs...

Emma tries to pull the IV NEEDLE out of her arm. Helen grabs her hand and lifts it away from the IV.

HELEN
There's been an accident. You had a concussion.

EMMA
Accident? Where's Jimmy?

HELEN
Lie back, Emma. Relax.

EMMA
Where's Jimmy.

MAGGIE
Listen to the doctor, Emma. She will...

EMMA
(interrupting)
WHERE'S JIMMY?

The adults share a look. Maggie leans forward.

MAGGIE
Honey, Jimmy didn't make it.

EMMA
 (to herself)
 Oh God. He's... Jimmy's dead?

SHERIFF
 He died on impact.

EMMA
 Impact?

SHERIFF
 From the accident.

EMMA
 What accident? We didn't have an
 accident. We were attacked.

SHERIFF
 Jimmy's car ran into a logging
 truck, Emma. You were thrown
 clear. That's why you survived.

EMMA
 But I remember... there was this
 Forest Ranger and an animal... a
 dog or a wolf... a giant wolf.

HELEN
 Your memory is playing tricks on
 you, Emma, blocking out the
 accident to shield you from the
 trauma.

EMMA
 But I saw it. I saw the wolf. I
 remember...

She breaks off as she chokes with tears, starts to sob.
 Maggie takes Emma in her arms.

Helen inserts a SYRINGE into the IV drip.

HELEN
 I'm giving you something to help
 you sleep, Sweetie.

Emma drops off into bliss.

EXT. NIGHT SKY - NIGHT

Clouds blow across the face of the moon.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATER

Deputy Bo stands guard outside Emma's room, reading FIELD AND
 STREAM magazine.

Nurse Sheila sashays down the corridor.

NURSE SHEILA
Hey, Bo. You haven't returned my
calls.

BO
Your Dad didn't like the idea of us
seeing each other... you being so
young and all.

NURSE SHEILA
You missed my birthday last week.
I'm twenty-one and ready to rumble.

JESSICA AND RACHEL

Hurry down the corridor together.

RACHEL
Hey, Sheila. Bo.

NURSE SHEILA
You here to see Emma?

JESSICA
(nods)
Don't tell my mom, alright?

Emma's door opens and Maggie steps out of the room.

MAGGIE
Emma's sleeping.

RACHEL
Is she OK?

MAGGIE
(smiles)
Yeah. I think so.

JESSICA
Thank God.

Jessica steps forward into Maggie's arms and breaks down in
tears. Maggie strokes her hair.

THE SHERIFF

Walks around the corridor corner with Helen.

SHERIFF
Jessica, what are you doing here?

JESSICA
Dominic told me what happened.

HELEN

Then he should have had the sense
to make you stay at home.

SHERIFF

Come on, I'm taking you back.

JESSICA

Dad.

SHERIFF

Now Jessica. Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEER VALLEY, MAIN STREET - DAWN

The sun rises over the town promising a new day filled with
murder and mayhem.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

EMMA'S GLASSES are on the bedside table, glinting in the
morning sun.

Rachel sits on a chair next to Emma's bed. She has a MAC
BOOK PRO propped up in her lap and her fingers fly over the
keys.

Emma's eyes blink open with the morning sunlight.

RACHEL

Hey, Em. How are you doing?

Memories come flooding back to Emma. Her face falls.

EMMA

Oh God. Jimmy's dead.

RACHEL

I know. I'm so sorry.

EMMA

(running a hand through
her hair)

Where's my Mom?

RACHEL

She went home to crash. I promised
to call her as soon as you woke up.
How are you feeling?

EMMA

You know what? It's weird. I feel
great.

RACHEL
You do?

EMMA
Yeah. Like I could run a marathon.

Emma climbs out of bed, but she doesn't put her glasses on, instead she takes the IV out of her arm.

RACHEL
What are you doing? I'm calling
Doctor Butler.

EMMA
I can't deal with her right now.

RACHEL
She said she needed to check your
bandages.

Emma opens her hospital gown. Her back is freshly dressed with a new bandage.

EMMA
Help me with this.

RACHEL
I don't think that's a good idea.

EMMA
Rach, I need to see my back.

Emma unpeels the bandage herself. She crosses to the mirror.

EMMA'S POV

The claw marks on her back have healed. Faint pink shiny scar tissue is all that remains.

Emma runs her fingers over the scars, confused and disturbed.

EMMA
I could have sworn my back was torn
to pieces.

RACHEL
Like I said, we should call Doctor
Butler.

EMMA
I have to get out of here.

RACHEL
You can't discharge yourself, Em.
It's against the rules.

EMMA
I don't care. I can't deal with
Dominic's mother, alright?

RACHEL
Alright, relax. Come on.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Emma and Rachel sneak out of Emma's room.

EMMA'S POV

Nurse Sheila is on the phone at the Nurse's station.

BACK TO EMMA AND RACHEL

As they creep down the corridor in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

This small, simple log cabin lies at the end of a country lane, nestled in the forest. The house is neat and well cared for but just a couple of steps away from white trash.

A classic Ford Mustang pulls up to the house. Emma and Jessica step out of the car.

A GOLDEN RETRIEVER

Charges out of the house. Emma holds her arms out to the dog, smiling from ear to ear.

EMMA
There he is!

The dog stops just short of Emma, GROWLING and SNARLING at her in fury.

EMMA
Bodie? Bodie, down!

The dog WHINES and gets down onto his belly, then he turns tail and runs away.

EMMA
Bodie! Bodie, come back boy!
Bodie!

RACHEL
I think you scared him off.

INT. HOSPITAL, EMMA'S ROOM - DAY

Doctor Helen Butler walks into the room, clipboard in hand.

HELEN
How are you feeling today, Emma?

She looks up and notices that Emma's bed is empty. EMMA'S GLASSES are still on the bedside table.

HELEN
Emma?

Helen spins around and opens the door.

HELEN
NURSE!

Helen dials her cell phone.

INT. SHERIFF'S STATION - DAY - INTERCUT

The Sheriff strides through the station. He takes out his phone.

SHERIFF
Everything OK?

HELEN
(into phone)
She's gone.

SHERIFF
What? How?

HELEN
I don't know, but you better find her.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - DAY

BACON FRIES in a pan.

Emma stands at the stove. A huge stack of pancakes teeters on a plate

Rachel and Maggie (Emma's mom) hold up their hands.

RACHEL
We surrender.

MAGGIE
 These are better than the diner
 Johnnie cakes, but I can't eat
 another bite.

EMMA
 It's not for you. I'm starving.

Emma takes the bacon from the pan and lays it onto a pancake. She covers the pancake with syrup and then lays another pancake on top.

RACHEL
 That's attractive.

MAGGIE
 I used to be able to eat like that.
 Now the food just moves straight
 from my mouth to my ass.

Emma grabs the pancake and bacon sandwich and takes a huge bite.

RACHEL
 Since when do you eat bacon, Em?
 You're supposed to a vegan.

EMMA
 (between mouthfuls)
 Not anymore. This bacon is the
 business.

Maggie shoots a questioning look over at Rachel. Rachel shrugs and points at Emma's eyes.

MAGGIE
 Emma, how many times do I have to
 tell you to wear your glasses?

EMMA
 I'm fine...

Suddenly her nostrils FLARE. She turns towards the window.

EXT. HUNTER HOUSE - DAY

Emma opens the window. She stares across the road at the trees.

IN THE TREES

Dominic lies flat on the ground, watching her.

INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Emma turns back to the others, freaked, her mind racing.

Maggie goes to the fridge and grabs a BEER. Emma notices and doesn't like it.

EMMA
I have to get to school.

MAGGIE
You can't go to school today.

EMMA
There's a memorial for Jimmy.

MAGGIE
Doctor Butler said you have to rest. Relax. I thought we could catch up our daytime TV.

Maggie CRACKS open the beer.

EMMA
Mom, I'm fine. We'll catch up later.

MAGGIE
Rachel, can you give us a minute?

RACHEL
Sure. I'll be in the car.

She shoots Emma a cautious look and leaves.

MAGGIE
Honey, are you alright about Jimmy and everything?

EMMA
I don't know how I'm supposed to feel, Mom. Right now I'm just numb.

MAGGIE
Takes a while for these kind of emotions to sort themselves through.

EMMA
(stiff)
OK.

MAGGIE
Are you mad at me about something?

EMMA
You're drinking again.

MAGGIE
Just a beer. This isn't about your father? Because he left us?

EMMA

It's got nothing to do with Dad.

Maggie takes a moment to study Emma.

MAGGIE

Where did my baby girl go? You have turned into a beautiful young lady.

EMMA

Mom, stop it.

MAGGIE

I wish your father could have seen you all grown up. He would have been so proud of you.

EMMA

Well he didn't. He left. And there's nothing either of us can do about it.

Emma turns and walks out of the door.

INT. MUSTANG, MOVING - DAY

Rachel drives. Emma stares out of the window, trying get her head together.

EMMA

I don't remember any crash, Rach.

RACHEL

Maybe you blocked it out.

EMMA

No, I remember being attacked in the woods.

RACHEL

Attacked by who?

EMMA

It was a dog or a wolf or something. And it's not like some distant memory, it's 100% HD quality.

RACHEL

Memory's a tricky thing. You've heard of repressed memories, right? Some social worker tells a kid he's been a molested and next thing you know, the whole school's accusing their grandparents of child abuse.

EMMA
 It's not my memory I'm worried
 about, it's my sanity.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of Jimmy Montrose in his high school football uniform stands outside the high school. Dozens of HIGH SCHOOL KIDS and TEACHERS hold a vigil around Jimmy's photograph.

TWO BROKEN ADULTS - Jimmy's parents - cling to each other while the other mourners drop flowers, poems, and other memorabilia next to Jimmy's portrait.

Rachel's Mustang pulls into the parking lot. Rachel and Emma climb out of the car and look on at the impromptu memorial.

Emma's eyes brim with tears.

EMMA
 Oh God. Jimmy.

Rachel puts her arm around Emma.

RACHEL
 Are you sure you even want to deal
 with school today? We can cut.

EMMA
 (wiping the tears from her
 eyes)
 I need to pay my respects to his
 parents.

They cross the parking lot and walk past a WRECKED CAR. It's Jimmy's Bronco, SMASHED up as if it had been in an accident. A sign above the car reads:

"DRINKING AND DRIVING KILLS"

Rachel and Emma stare at the wreck in shock.

RACHEL
 I can't believe you made it out of
 that alive.

EMMA
 This is bullshit. We weren't
 drinking. I'd remember that. You
 know I don't drink.

RACHEL
 Maybe Jimmy had a couple.

EMMA
 No, no, I would have noticed. This is total bullshit. There was no accident, Rach. There was no wreck. The Sheriff must have faked this whole thing.

Rachel leans over the Bronco and studies the front of the wreck. She scrapes paint off the bumper with her nail. Rachel looks close and then SNAPS several photos with her iPhone.

RACHEL
 Why would he do that?

EMMA
 I don't know.

BEHIND THEM

Jessica climbs out of Dominic's Jeep.

JESSICA
 My dad found empty beer cans in the car.

EMMA
 I don't care what he found. Jimmy did not die in a car crash, alright? We were attacked.

Emma spins around and comes face to face with Dominic. She steps back, startled.

DOMINIC
 What are you doing here, Emma?

JESSICA
 She doesn't remember the accident. She thinks Dad's making it up.

DOMINIC
 Making what up?

EMMA
 There was no accident, Dominic. We were attacked by a dog... or a wolf or something.

DOMINIC
 The coroner ruled Jimmy's death an accident. Car accident. End of story.

RACHEL
 That's not how she remembers it.

DOMINIC
It was a car accident, Emma. You guys were partying too hard. It happens all the time.

EMMA
Why don't you believe me?

DOMINIC
You just accused my father of faking a car crash to cover up Jimmy's death. That makes one of you a liar. You keep lying and my mother will have you locked up in a looney bin.

JESSICA
Dominic, that's enough.

Emma stares at Dominic, incredulous.

EMMA
Is that a threat?

DOMINIC
More of a prediction.

JESSICA
I'm sorry, Em. He didn't mean that.

DOMINIC
Actually I...

EMMA
SHUT UP!

Emma, furious, SHOVES Dominic back against a car. He SMACKS into the windscreen, CRACKING the glass.

EMMA
Stay the hell away from me.

She turns and marches back towards Rachel's car.

CUT TO:

INT. RACHEL'S CAR, MOVING - DAY

Rachel drives. Emma stares out of the window, churning with emotion.

RACHEL
You OK?

EMMA
No. I'm so pissed I want to break something.
(beat)
(MORE)

EMMA(cont'd)

Do you ever feel like you're going crazy?

RACHEL

Every day since the eighth grade. But if it makes you feel any better I think we just got proof that the Sheriff faked the accident.

EMMA

What kind of proof?

RACHEL

The Sheriff claims that Jimmy drove into a truck, right? But there wasn't any other paint on Jimmy's Bronco. Looks like it was crushed by a compactor.

EMMA

Are you sure?

Rachel passes Emma her iPhone.

RACHEL

Check the photos.

CLOSE ON

The iPhone as Emma scrolls through digital shots Jimmy's car.

EMMA

Jesus. You're right.

RACHEL

That's exhibit number one. Exhibit number two; I hacked into the Sheriff's system last night and downloaded the police report. The truck driver drove you to the police station himself and the Sheriff released him there and then. No breath test. No questions. Nothing. First off, how's the trucker gonna drive his truck if he crashed into Jimmy's Bronco? Second there's no way the Sheriff would have released him if he killed Jimmy. No way.

EMMA

Why would the Sheriff want to invent this whole car crash story?

RACHEL

It's a conspiracy.

EMMA

Come on, this is serious, Rachel.

RACHEL
I am serious. The army's got
people training dogs to go after
the Taliban in Afghanistan.

EMMA
What?

RACHEL
They train these dogs to follow a
scent, strap on a dynamite vest,
send the pup inside the cave and
BOOM, blow the poor bastard to
hell.

EMMA
That's horrible.

RACHEL
The government's got contracts with
kennels all over North Carolina.
Your Forest Ranger is probably one
of these military dog trainers.
That's why they're covering it up.
I say we blow the whistle on the
whole lot of them.

EMMA
How are we going to do that?

RACHEL
Get the proof and post it all over
the web. Bring them all down.

EMMA
Bring down the government?

RACHEL
Not the government, you moron, the
dog trainers. Jimmy deserves
better than this bullshit cover-up.
He would have done the same for us,
right?

EMMA
Yeah, but...

RACHEL
No, buts... end of discussion.
We're doing it.

Rachel pulls over.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

The Mustang pulls up next to the sign:

**LAKE HAVOC. PRIVATE PROPERTY, NO TRESPASSING. BEWARE OF
GUARD DOGS.**

Yellow police tape ropes off the surrounding area.

Rachel and Emma step out of the car. Emma looks around, nervous.

EMMA
What are we doing here?

RACHEL
Exhibit number three.

Rachel ducks under the police tape and searches the ground, camera phone in hand.

RACHEL
Even if they swept the road, this whole area should be covered with broken glass and debris from the accident... you know... if there was an accident.

EMMA
The animal that attacked us was killed by the truck. But the Forest Ranger could still be out here, Rach. I don't want to drag you into something dangerous.

RACHEL
Too late. You couldn't get rid of me now if you tried.

Emma stares out at the woods.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Jimmy is JERKED violently into the dark. A SCREAM comes out of the dark and then Jimmy's voice.

JIMMY
OH GOD! NO! NO!

The savage RIPPING sound of an animal tearing flesh and CRUNCHING through bone ECHOES through the forest.

EMMA
(horrified)
Jimmy?

JIMMY
(OS)
RUN! Emma, get out! GO!

BACK TO:

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Emma doubles over and VOMITS onto the road. She falls to her knees and shakes in fear. Rachel runs over to her.

RACHEL
Em... Emma, are you OK?

EMMA
No. I'm not OK. I don't think
I'll be OK ever again.

A POLICE SIREN CHIRPS behind the girls. They turn as a police car SKIDS to a stop. The Sheriff steps out.

Emma stands up and wipes her mouth. The girls share a look and Emma shakes her head slightly at Rachel.

SHERIFF
What are you girls doing out here?

EMMA
Just trying to makes sense of what
happened to me, Sheriff. I lost
part of my memory.

SHERIFF
That's bound to happen after an
accident like the one you had. You
best get back to hospital and let
Helen take another look at you.

EMMA
OK, if you say so.

SHERIFF
Yeah. I'll escort you back.

RACHEL
That's alright, Sheriff. We know
the way.

SHERIFF
I insist. Come on. I'll run...

Suddenly the Sheriff senses something in the forest. He stares out into the trees.

SHERIFF'S POV

Something moves deep in the woods.

DEEP IN THE WOODS

The Ranger ducks back behind a tree, hiding from the Sheriff.

SHERIFF
Girls, you know what? You go on ahead. I'm gonna stay out here. Clean up this tape.

EMMA
OK. Thanks again.

The girls climb into the car and drive away.

The Sheriff waves good-bye to the girls and then his smile fades. He steps into the woods and rips the police tape down off a tree. He balls up the tape as he advances into the woods.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSTANG, MOVING - DAY

Rachel drives away from the Sheriff.

EMMA
He's hiding something.

RACHEL
Definitely. I'm guessing we're not going to the hospital.

EMMA
No way.

RACHEL
Good. My cousin Sarah runs an animal rescue in Bonneville. If anybody's heard anything about killer dogs, it'll be her.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUCKY DOG RESCUE - DAY

TWO IRON DOGS adorn a pair of wooden ranch gates. A steel mesh fence surrounds the property.

Rachel's Mustang speeds up the dirt road towards a large farm house.

INT. LUCKY DOG, BARN - DAY

This massive barn has been converted into an animal rescue shelter. Dozens of animal cages spread out in every stall.

MARTHA HESSMAN - 30s, tall, lean and more comfortable around dogs than people - leads Emma and Rachel towards the cages.

MARTHA

Wild animals stay away from humans.
If it was a wolf, it must have been
starving.

EMMA

It didn't look hungry.

MARTHA

Then sick maybe. Have you been
treated for Rabies?

EMMA

I don't know.

MARTHA

That's something you want to find
out. Sooner you get treated for
rabies the better.

EMMA

It wasn't just hunting us. It was
playing with us, cutting us off,
turning us around. Like it was
enjoying it.

MARTHA

Animals don't kill for sport, Emma.
That's a human trait.

EMMA

There was a man with it... he
looked like a Forest Ranger.

MARTHA

Well, that's different. Must have
been a trained animal. It's
impossible to train a wolf, but it
could have been a husky or a wolf
hybrid...

RACHEL

I read that the army's been
training dogs to go after the
Taliban.

MARTHA

Sure. Schuzthund training. The
army's been using dogs since the
Second World War.

EMMA

So one of these dog trainers could
have ordered his dog to attack us?

MARTHA

It's possible but I doubt it.

EMMA

Why would the Sheriff claim that
Jimmy was killed in a car crash?
(MORE)

EMMA(cont'd)

Why would he want to want to cover up the truth?

MARTHA

Folks have bred pit fighting dogs for years up here. A prize fighter can be worth thousands of dollars in stud fees. It's disgusting, but it happens.

EMMA

I can't believe the Sheriff would be involved in something like that. The Butlers are such the perfect family.

RACHEL

Exactly. Too perfect.

As the girls approach the cages, the dogs begin to HOWL and SNARL. They throw themselves at the cages, trying to attack Emma.

Emma stares at the dogs, transfixed. The animals' fury washes over her.

RACHEL

Em...

Emma doesn't hear her. She stares fury at the animals. Rachel KICKS Emma, snapping her out of her trance.

EMMA

Ow. What?

MARTHA

You're provoking the animals.

EMMA

I'm not doing anything.

MARTHA

Get out before they hurt themselves. Now!

Marta hustles Rachel and Emma away from the animals.

EXT. FARM HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Martha leads Emma and Rachel back to the Mustang.

MARTHA

I have heard rumors about a trainer over in Branson.

EMMA

Branson? That's just a couple of miles from where we were attacked.

MARTHA

Name's Rod Pepper. He's supposed to train dogs for pit fights. He's got a farm at the end of Dupont Lane. But you stay away from him, girls. Rod's a nasty piece of work.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUTLER RANCH HOUSE - DAY

A long tree-lined driveway snakes up towards a magnificent stone ranch house nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian mountains. Deer graze on the grass. Rabbits run through the meadow.

The Sheriff's police car leaves a trail of dust as it speeds towards the house.

INT. BUTLER RANCH HOUSE, KITCHEN

The Sheriff, Helen, Jessica and Dominic sit around a large wooden table in this country style open plan kitchen. Mountains of roast lamb and vegetables sit on every plate.

The family all join hands and close their eyes.

SHERIFF

Lord, we give thanks for this bountiful food, for our family and for our home. Amen.

HELEN/JESSICA/DOMINIC

Amen.

SHERIFF

Dig in. Kids, I'm taking you out of school for the next couple of days. Your mother will send a note.

JESSICA

What? Why?

DOMINIC

Dad, I'm not a child anymore. I can take care of myself.

SHERIFF

I know that, Dominic. That's why I want you to keep an eye on Emma.

HELEN

I don't think that's a good idea.

SHERIFF
 (sharp)
 I've made my decision. It's not up
 for debate.

HELEN
 (backing down)
 OK.

JESSICA
 What am I supposed to do?

SHERIFF
 You will stay at the house. You'll
 be safe here.

JESSICA
 Dad!

HELEN
 You heard your father, Jessica.

DOMINIC
 Dad, I don't know how I feel about
 spying on my friends.

SHERIFF
 Family comes first, Dominic.
 That's how we survive.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - LATER

Rachel's car speeds past a sign that reads...

BRANSON POP 76.

INT. RACHEL'S CAR, MOVING - DAY

Rachel drives. Emma examines herself in the rearview mirror. She's sweating and twitchy. She wipes the sweat from her face.

RACHEL
 Are you getting sick or something?

EMMA
 Just a fever.

RACHEL
 Maybe you did get an infection from
 that dog.

EMMA
 I'm fine.

RACHEL
 Seriously, you should get checked
 for rabies. You were practically
 snarling at those dogs...

EMMA
 (snaps)
 I said I'm fine, alright?

RACHEL
 OK... Relax. No need to be such a
 bitch about it.

EMMA
 Sorry. I'm sorry. But if this dog
 trainer is responsible for Jimmy's
 death, he got to pay. I'm going to
 make him pay.

RACHEL
 Easy killer. We'll take a look,
 take a few photos, but you have to
 promise me that we're not going to
 do any citizen's arrest shit.

EMMA
 Right. Absolutely.

RACHEL
 Promise me.

EMMA
 I promise.

CUT TO:

EXT. OVERBROOK FARM, ENTRANCE - DAY

RAZOR WIRE stretches above a chain link fence, surrounding a
 huge farm property. A sign on the fence reads:

PRIVATE PROPERTY, NO TRESPASSING. BEWARE OF GUARD DOGS.

Rachel's Mustang pulls up in front of the farm.

INT. RACHEL'S MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

Rachel and Emma look into the farm.

EMMA'S POV

Beyond the chained and locked gate, a CANINE OBSTACLE COURSE
 complete with ladders, tunnels and human dummies sits in
 front of an old tumbledown farm. The farm yard is filled
 with dog cages.

RACHEL
I'll be right back.

EMMA
You're not going in there without me.

RACHEL
The guy trains dogs, Emma. You saw how the dogs freaked at my cousin's rescue.

EMMA
That was not my fault.

RACHEL
I didn't say it was, but we're just trying to get information, right? We need to keep it stealth mode.

EMMA
Alright, but if you're not back in five minutes I'm coming to get you.

Rachel climbs out of the car.

EXT. OVERBROOK FARM, ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel walks across to the locked gate and squeezes inside.

EXT. OVERBROOK FARM, YARD - CONTINUOUS

As Rachel approaches the fenced KENNEL, DOGS leap out of their shelters and SLAM into the fence, barking and growling.

RACHEL
Hello? Anybody home?

Rachel winds her way through the yard.

HUMAN DUMMIES swing from a yard-arm. There's an old wooden shack in the middle of the yard. The word OFFICE is painted onto the roof by hand.

TWO MASSIVE PIT BULLS

Charge out of the office towards Rachel, BARKING and SNARLING with fury.

RACHEL

Spins around and runs. She sprints back towards the gate as the dogs gain on her with every step. The dogs LEAP UP and KNOCK her to the ground.

A WHISTLE cuts through the yard and the dogs whine. They circle Rachel, GROWLING, inches from her face, but they don't attack.

ROD PEPPER

The ogre from the opening of the film - marches up behind the dogs and aims a SHOTGUN at Rachel.

ROD
Give me one good reason I shouldn't
blow your head off.

RACHEL
(riding her fear)
I just want to buy a puppy, Mister.

ROD
Bullshit. The gate's locked for a
reason. You're trespassing, little
Miss.

RACHEL
Please don't hurt me.

Rod licks his lips.

ROD
I'm gonna teach you a lesson you
ain't never gonna forget.

THE GATES

SMASH open and Rachel's Mustang comes ROARING through at forty miles an hour.

The car SMACKS into Rod, knocking him into the air. The SHOTGUN flies out of his hand.

Rod lands heavily, BREAKING his arm. He ROARS in pain, but still crawls towards his shotgun.

A FOOT steps onto the barrel and Emma YANKS the shotgun out of Rod's hands.

Rachel stares at Emma, astonished.

RACHEL
Sweet.

Rod WHISTLES for his dogs. They charge towards Emma. Emma turns and STARES at the dogs.

EMMA
(growls)
DOWN!

The dogs stop and retreat, WHIMPERING in fear.

Emma aims the shotgun at Rod.

EMMA

Give me one good reason I shouldn't blow your head off.

ROD

What? What the hell do you want?

EMMA

I was attacked by some kind of wolf or dog at Lake Havoc.

ROD

What's that got to do with me?

Emma STOMPS on Rod's arm. He ROARS in pain.

EMMA

You want to bullshit me? Fine, I've got all day.

ROD

I swear to God. I don't know...

Emma steps on Rod's arm and puts her weight on it. Rod SCREAMS in agony.

EMMA

I can smell you lying to me, Shithead. If you lie to me again, I'll rip your arm off and feed it to the dogs. You do train fighting dogs, don't you?

ROD

OK. OK. There was a guy. A trainer. He showed up a couple of weeks ago with a fighting dog. Wolf mix.

EMMA

Go on.

ROD

I put my best dogs in the pit with him and they were torn to pieces.

EMMA

What did he look like?

ROD

Thirties. Real tall.

EMMA

Name?

ROD
I don't know.

EMMA
Where can I find him?

ROD
I swear to God, I don't know.
Night of the fight, he took his
winnings, he just up and left...
disappeared. Haven't seen him
since.

EMMA
There's something you're not
telling me.

ROD
OK. This is gonna sound crazy, but
one of my dog handlers, a Mexican
fella, got real spooked... said the
man was a diablero.

EMMA
Diablero? What's that?

ROD
A werewolf.

Anger courses through Emma's veins. She SMASHES the shotgun
butt over Rod's head.

EMMA
A werewolf? Don't screw with me.

ROD
It's the truth.

She picks Rod off the ground and SMASHES her fist into his
face, lost a red mist of fury.

EMMA
You think I'm kidding around here?

Emma PUNCHES him again. Blood GUSHES from his nose,
splatters on her face.

EMMA
My friend is dead.

Emma PUNCHES him again.

EMMA
And you....

RACHEL
(interrupting)
Em... EMMA! STOP! EMMA!

Rachel pulls Emma off Rod. Emma turns on Rachel with crazy eyes, caught up in the blood lust.

EMMA
Get your hands off me.

RACHEL
You're going to kill him.

Emma looks down, breathing hard and is shocked to see Rod lying in a pool of his own blood, barely conscious.

Emma releases him and climbs to her feet.

CUT TO:

INT. RACHEL'S CAR, MOVING - DAY

Emma wipes the blood off her face, shaking as adrenaline courses through her system.

RACHEL
There's something seriously wrong with you, Emma.

EMMA
(defensive)
I've got it under control.

RACHEL
First your scars heal. Then you don't need your glasses. Now you're throwing that redneck around like he was rag doll. How is that possible?

EMMA
(attacking now)
I don't know, Rach. Maybe I've lost my mind. They say a psycho has the strength of ten.

RACHEL
I'm not kidding. It's scary, Emma.

EMMA
Maybe I did catch a virus or something.

RACHEL
We should head over to the hospital and have Doctor Butler check you.

EMMA
Right. Because she likes me so much.

RACHEL
 She may be a bitch, but she's still
 a doctor. You need help.

EMMA
 Don't tell me what I need, alright?

RACHEL
 Yeah. Good. Lash out at your best
 friend. That's really going to
 help.

EMMA
 I'll tell you what I don't need. I
 don't need another damn lecture
 from you.

The girls glare at each other, stewing with anger.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - LATER

The Mustang skids to a stop outside Emma's front yard.

INT. RACHEL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Emma snaps out of her seatbelt in silence, still pissed.

EMMA
 Catch you later.

RACHEL
 Whatever.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Emma jumps out of the car and SLAMS the door.

Rachel GRINDS the gears and speeds away, spraying gravel
 everywhere.

CUT TO:

EXT. OVERBROOK FARM, YARD - DAY

Rod limps out of his office, leaning heavily on a walking
 stick. His face is bloodied and battered.

THE KENNEL DOGS

BARK and GROWL in fury.

ROD
SHUT UP!

He turns and comes FACE TO FACE WITH THE RANGER.

RANGER
That's no way to talk to your dogs.
You should know better.

ROD
(scared)
I'm sorry, Mister.

RANGER
You haven't seen anybody round here
asking about me, have you?

ROD
No, Sir.

RANGER
You sure about that?

CUT TO:

EXT. OVERBROOK FARM - NIGHT

Dogs BARK and SNARL in the dark.

HEADLIGHTS sweeps across the open gates. The Sheriff pulls up in his cruiser. He steps out of the car and something catches his eye. He shines his police spotlight and stares through the fence in horror.

SHERIFF'S POV

The spotlight hits ROD HANGING NAKED FROM THE YARD-ARM by his neck, his STOMACH RIPPED OPEN.

A PACK OF DOGS

Fight each other as they TEAR the flesh from Rod's body, eating him piece by piece.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Emma stands under the shower, allowing the hot water to pound her tired body.

She steps out of the shower and wraps a towel around herself. She walks to the mirror and wipes the steam off. She stares at her reflection in the mirror.

EMMA'S POV

Her face is freshly scrubbed. She opens her mouth and inspects her gums.

She finds some floss and starts cleaning between her teeth. BLOOD starts to run from her gums.

EMMA
Dentist is going to kill me.

Suddenly BLOOD SPURTS from her mouth as her TEETH ELONGATE INTO SAVAGE JAWS.

HAIR boils and sprouts from her face.

Emma BUCKS AND CONVULSES in agony. She SCREAMS as her nose and mouth MORPH into a wolf's snout.

EMMA
NOOOOOOOOOO!

Emma HEADBUTTS the mirror. She stares at herself in the cracked glass... She's back to normal.

Emma SHAKES as she examines herself. Tears well up in her eyes and she starts to cry. She collapses onto the bathroom floor and weeps.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEMLOCK TAVERN - NIGHT

COUNTRY MUSIC blasts out of this redneck bar. A fleet of pick-ups fills the parking lot.

A COUPLE stumbles out of the bar, drunk, giggling. The man, dressed in tight jeans and a cowboy shirt, twirls his girlfriend around, still dancing to the music. He leans in to kiss her.

CLOSER

It's Nurse Sheila, tipsy and filled with lust. She spins around to reveal the Ranger smiling at her seductively.

RANGER
That's better. I couldn't hear myself think in there.

NURSE SHEILA
(flirty)
What did you wanna ask me?

RANGER
Over here.

He pulls Sheila around the building into a side alley.

EXT. HEMLOCK TAVERN ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

A FLICKERING LIGHT illuminates garbage bins at the far end of the alley.

Sheila giggles as she enters the shadows. The Ranger stops at the entrance of the alley, blocking her exit.

NURSE SHEILA
What? You trying to scare me now?

The Ranger smiles at her.

RANGER
Why would I want to do that?

NURSE SHEILA
(knowing smile)
So I could snuggle up to you for comfort.

She wraps her arms around his neck. He kisses her hands.

RANGER
I wanted to ask you about the girl that was brought into hospital last night.

NURSE SHEILA
The girl from the car crash?

RANGER
Right, the car crash. What was her name again?

NURSE SHEILA
I can't tell you that.

He leans down and kisses her lightly on the lips.

RANGER
Sure you can.

NURSE SHEILA
No, I can't. It's confidential.

The Ranger smiles and kisses her again. It's a deep, long, savage kiss. Sheila breaks away.

NURSE SHEILA
You bit me!

RANGER
Just a little. Now tell me her name like a good little girl.

NURSE SHEILA
No. Seriously, I could lose my
job.

RANGER
Alright. OK.

The Ranger kisses her hand. He takes one of HER FINGERS and sucks it.

Sheila SQUEALS in delight.

The Ranger BITES down on her finger and RIPS it out of his mouth, STRIPPING THE FLESH from her finger bone.

Shaking, Sheila looks down at her finger bone.

NURSE SHEILA
What the hell...?

The Ranger grabs her by the throat.

RANGER
Give me the name.

NURSE SHEILA
(choking)
Emma...

RANGER
Emma what?

NURSE SHEILA
Emma Hunter...

RANGER
Where does she live?

NURSE SHEILA
I don't know. I...

Suddenly Sheila KNEES the Ranger in the balls, turns around and runs for the exit.

A BLACK SAVAGE WOLF

EXPLODES out of the dark. It chases and LEAPS. It's JAWS TEAR into Sheila's shoulder and they go down in a tangle of limbs and fur.

Sheila scrambles towards the exit on her hands and knees.

SHEILA'S POV

A couple of RANCH HANDS share a beer and a laugh on the tailgate of their truck.

SHEILA
HELP ME!

COUNTRY MUSIC DROWNS OUT her cries for help.

Sheila is YANKED BACK into the dark.

SHEILA

Holds up a hand to fend off the animal. The wolf SNAPS THE HAND CLEAN OFF. JAWS. BLOOD. TEETH. The wolf RIPS HER PIECES.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma wakes up SCREAMING, covered in sweat and shaking with fear. Her mom rushes into the room.

MAGGIE
Em, are you OK? What is it?

EMMA
(delirious)
I saw a... it must have been a nightmare.

MAGGIE
Go back to sleep. Go on. I'll lie on the bed with you.

Maggie climbs onto the bed and curls up next to Emma. Emma closes her eyes. Her eyes snap open.

EMMA
(bitter)
I can smell the whiskey on you, Momma.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEMLOCK TAVERN - DAWN

The bar pulsates with blue and red flashing lights. Police cars. Paramedics. Pandemonium.

The Sheriff takes in the scene as he climbs out of his cruiser. He is not happy.

Deputy Bo runs over, eager as a puppy.

DEPUTY BO
Morning, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

You should have called me as soon as this was reported, Bo.

BO

Just trying to do my job. I brought in the forensics team from Banning and everything. I didn't want to disturb your family time.

SHERIFF

For the record, Bo, next time we have a homicide, I want to be disturbed. If I think we need to call in folks from the outside, I'll make that decision myself. You got that?

BO

Alright. I'm sorry, boss.

SHERIFF

What have we got here?

Bo leads the Sheriff around the side of the building.

EXT. HEMLOCK TAVERN ALLEY - DAY

FLASH! FLASH! A FORENSICS PHOTOGRAPHER shoots the scene.

A HUMAN BODY

Lies in pieces all over the ground.

HALF A MANGLED HAND

Claws the dirt.

A HUMAN LEG

Has been eaten to the bone.

ENTRAILS

Cover the ground like yesterday's spaghetti.

NURSE SHEILA'S SEVERED HEAD

Stares up from a pile of trash, her face frozen in a rictus of horror.

SHERIFF

Dear God.

The Sheriff examines the body, clearly disturbed. He spots a set of PAW TRACKS. He walks over to the tracks and starts to cover them.

DEPUTY BO

Watch where you step, Sheriff.

The Sheriff pretends to notice the paw tracks for the first time. He steps gingerly away.

SHERIFF

Thank you, Bo.

BO

From the size of these tracks, I figure this dog must weigh two hundred pounds. What kind of hound get that big?

SHERIFF

Hunting dog. Mastiff maybe.

BO

Or a wolf? Emma Hunter said she saw a wolf, right?

SHERIFF

Miss Hunter was in a car accident.

BO

Maybe she saw it on the side of the road.

SHERIFF

She was delirious.

BO

Still we should set up a search party. My Uncle Rod's got a pack of hunting dogs. We gotta kill this animal before anybody else gets hurt.

SHERIFF

I'll take care of it.

BO

I'm talking about right now.

SHERIFF

I am not about to let a bunch of armed yahoos trample all over the county shooting at shadows.

BO

I don't appreciate that Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Look I don't want a panic on my hands. You go running your mouth off about wild animals and somebody is liable to get shot by accident. Best thing for you to do is to let me handle this. You got that?

BO

Yes, sir.

SHERIFF

Now get those Banning cops away from my crime scene. I need a minute here.

BO

Yes, sir.

Bo walks over to the other cops.

BO

Okay Guys, show's over.

The Sheriff stares down at Nurse Sheila's body, deeply troubled.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - DAY

HOT CHOCOLATE pours into a large mug. Maggie squirts whipped cream onto the top. She squirts a little whipped cream into her mouth and turns towards the staircase.

MAGGIE

Hot chocolate's ready.

Emma comes down the stairs dressed in sweats. She twitches with nervous energy, glassy eyed and sweaty.

MAGGIE

Where are you going?

EMMA

Nowhere. Just got the chills.

MAGGIE

Drink this. It'll warm you up.

Emma takes the hot chocolate.

MAGGIE

You want to tell me where you were yesterday?

EMMA

I went to school.

MAGGIE

That's funny, because Principal Warner called me at the diner and said you never showed up.

EMMA

OK Mom. I went to school and got into a thing with some kids there, so I split.

MAGGIE

And did what?

EMMA

Do we have to talk about this now?

MAGGIE

I just want to help you, Emma. Talk to me.

EMMA

OK... I went looking for the guy that killed Jimmy.

MAGGIE

I know you're upset, but it was just an accident, Sweetie.

EMMA

No. That's not true. We were attacked by an animal, Mom. I found out about this man, this Forest Ranger, who trains fighting dogs. He's responsible for Jimmy's death and I'm going to prove it.

MAGGIE

Emma Grace Hunter, if you have information about Jimmy's death, you need to give it to Sheriff Butler.

EMMA

Like the Sheriff's going to do anything about it. He's covering it up. There's a whole dog fighting ring right here in town, Mom.

Maggie puts her hand to Emma's forehead.

MAGGIE

Emma, listen to me. You're not making any sense. You're burning up. I'm taking you back to Doctor Butler.

EMMA

(hysterical)
So she can lock me up? You'd like that wouldn't you?

MAGGIE

No, of course not. I love you, but you're delirious.

EMMA

I'm not delirious Mom. I'm awake. It's like I've been sleepwalking ever since Dad left us and I've finally woken up. I kicked ass yesterday. There was this redneck that had dogs and was holding a gun on Rachel...

MAGGIE

Oh Rachel... is she part of this too?

EMMA

She's not part of anything, Mom. I'm trying to explain to you what's happening in my life and you're not listening.

MAGGIE

Let me take your temperature...

EMMA

I am not sick, Mom. I'm more alive that I have ever been before. I can see better. Hear better. Taste better. Smell more. I feel strong. Fast. I wasn't scared when I hit that redneck. It felt good. Great even.

MAGGIE

That's it. I'm calling the doctor.

Maggie walks over to the phone.

Emma hurdles the couch and grabs the phone. They wrestle over the receiver

MAGGIE

Emma! Let go of the PHONE!

EMMA

No, Mom! Listen.

MAGGIE

GODDAMNIT!

Maggie ELBOWS Emma in the face by accident. Emma's nose GUSHES blood. Emma glares at Maggie, furious. It's scary.

Maggie puts a hand to her mouth.

MAGGIE

Oh God, Honey. I'm so sorry.

EMMA
Forget it.

Emma storms out of the house and SLAMS the front door.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Maggie follows Emma out of the house.

MAGGIE
Emma! Emma, get back here.

Emma starts to run.

MAGGIE
EMMA!

Emma disappears around the corner.

Maggie leans back against the house, tears in her eyes. She pulls a SILVER FLASK from her pocket, takes a slug and walks back inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Anger drives Emma as she runs down the road. She SCREAMS in frustration. She slows and finally stops, wiping the tears from her face.

She takes a few ragged breaths, senses something and suddenly looks up.

EMMA'S POV

Dominic stands on the other side of the road. He chuckles.

DOMINIC
Mother-Daughter issues?

Emma bristles.

EMMA
(furious)
Are you spying on me?

Dominic starts to laugh.

DOMINIC
You've really got to get that temper of yours under control.

EMMA
Do I really? What do you know about me, Dominic? Nothing.

DOMINIC
I know exactly what you're going
though.

Emma marches across the road.

EMMA
What exactly am I going through
then?

DOMINIC
I can't tell you.

EMMA
You can and you will.

DOMINIC
I'm not allowed.

EMMA
I don't follow.

DOMINIC
(sexy smile)
You always were a little slow.

EMMA
You're going to pay for that.

Dominic leaps to his feet and runs.

EMMA
Hey!

Emma sprints after him.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Dominic sprints into the trees. He chances a look over his
shoulder.

DOMINIC'S POV

Emma runs twenty feet behind him.

DOMINIC

Puts on an extra burst of speed.

EXT. FOREST GORGE - DAY

Dominic runs down an animal trail and sees a deep gorge
ahead. A tree spans the gorge like a bridge.

Dominic digs deep, sprinting down the trail for all he's worth. He leaps up onto the tree trunk and keeps running, his balance perfect.

EMMA

Charges after Dominic. She leaps onto the tree, but slips up, falls backwards and tumbles off the tree.

She grabs hold of a branch and holds on for life itself. She CRIES OUT in fear.

EMMA'S POV

A forest stream gurgles over rocks one hundred feet below.

EMMA

Swings her right leg, but she can't quite make it.

DOMINIC

Appears above her. He reaches down.

DOMINIC

Need a hand?

Anger gives Emma an extra surge of adrenaline. She muscles herself back onto the trunk.

EMMA

I don't need any help from you.

Dominic backs up along the tree to the edge of the ravine.

DOMINIC

Macho Mamma now, huh?

EMMA

What do you mean now?

DOMINIC

You're changing. You feel stronger, right? Faster.

EMMA

How could you know that?

DOMINIC

It wasn't an ordinary wolf that bit you, Emma.

EMMA

What are you saying?

Dominic takes her hand and presses it to his heart.

DOMINIC
Can you feel that? Feel the blood
pumping through my body.

Emma stares at him, hypnotised. She can feel it.

DOMINIC
Can you hear our hearts beating
together as one?

Emma closes her eyes. BABOOM. BABOOM. BABOOM.

EMMA
Yes.

He leans in to smell the side of her neck.

DOMINIC
We're connected now. You feel how
much I want to kiss you.

EMMA
(breathless)
Yes.

DOMINIC
And I can feel how much you want me
too.

Emma leans in for the kiss. Dominic leans in close and
whispers.

DOMINIC
But you have to catch me first.

Dominic ducks under her arm with a wicked smile and RUNS.

EMMA
Asshole!

Emma now SPRINTS after him.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAY

Dominic leads Emma deeper into the forest. They run through
the trees with wild abandon. Dominic laughs as he ducks
under fallen branches and spins around trees, trying to lose
Emma, but Emma stays right on his tail.

Adrenaline POURS through Emma as she hunts Dominic through
the forest. She laughs, lost in the thrill of the chase.

EXT. FOREST STREAM - DAY

Dominic runs towards an idyllic forest stream. He leaps over the water and runs alongside the far bank.

Emma matches him step for step. He looks over his shoulder. She's gaining on him.

AHEAD

The stream cascades down a waterfall into a magical pond thirty feet below.

DOMINIC

Comes to the edge of a cliff and slides to a stop, teetering on the edge.

He looks back at Emma.

DOMINIC
I wanted you to see this.

Emma keeps running and TACKLES him off the edge of the waterfall. They fall through the air and SPLASH into the water below, disappearing beneath the surface.

EXT. FOREST LAKE - UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Thousands of air bubbles rise to the surface as Emma and Dominic float towards the bottom of the lake.

Emma smiles at Dominic and he smiles right back. Dominic reaches out to Emma and she pulls him towards her. Emma takes Dominic's face in her hands and kisses him.

EXT. FOREST LAKE - DAY

Emma and Dominic surface locked in a deep embrace. Dominic carries her to the shore. Emma tears off Dominic's shirt, revealing his muscled torso.

Emma pushes Dominic to the ground and straddles him. Dominic helps Emma out of her sweat shirt. He kisses her neck. Emma moans and bites his shoulder.

Dominic reaches into his back pocket and suddenly stops.

DOMINIC
Oh God. I can't do this.

EMMA
What? What's wrong?

DOMINIC
I'm sorry, Em.

Dominic PLUNGES a syringe into her neck. Emma looks at him in horror. She struggles to stay conscious and then collapses.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Emma sweats like a racehorse. She MOANS and thrashes from side to side, unconscious. Then Emma's eyes blink open, she looks around feverish, trying to make sense of her surroundings.

EMMA'S POV

She's lying on a hospital gurney inside a plexiglass CELL. Her arms and legs are strapped to the gurney with THICK LEATHER MEDICAL RESTRAINTS.

A BAG OF PLASMA hangs above her head. An IV runs into her arm.

The cell is inside a stone basement. A sturdy wooden staircase leads to a door above.

EMMA
Hello? Anybody there? HELLO?

The DOOR opens and TWO FIGURES stand at the doorway in silhouette. We can't quite make out their faces.

Emma calls out from her gurney.

EMMA
Hello? Can you hear me? HELLO?
Please, let me out of here.

THE FIGURES' POV

Emma looks like an animal specimen in a lab cage.

BACK TO THE FIGURES

It's the Sheriff and his wife Helen.

HELEN
Her fever's still running very high. I don't know if she's going to make it.

SHERIFF
What are her odds?

HELEN
Fifty-fifty, but she's a fighter.

SHERIFF
That's for sure. How much does she know?

HELEN
Nothing yet.

EMMA

Pulls against the restraints.

EMMA
Please. Listen to me. I need help. LET ME OUT OF HERE! PLEASE!

THE SHERIFF AND HELEN

Turn away from Emma.

HELEN
She needs to rest.

Emma strains to see the figures.

EMMA
I can hear you. HEY! I DON'T NEED TO REST! I NEED TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE.

The Sheriff and Helen turn out the lights.

Emma SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEER VALLEY DINER - DAY

Rachel steers her Mustang into the parking lot and hops out.

INT. DEER VALLEY DINER - CONTINUOUS

Maggie looks up from the coffee machine as Rachel walks into the diner. They both cross to the counter.

RACHEL
Hey there, Mrs. Hunter.

MAGGIE
Rachel, have you seen Emma?

RACHEL

No. I was hoping you might know where she was. I've been calling, but her phone goes straight to voicemail.

MAGGIE

I had a fight with Emma this morning. A bad one. She walked out on me. I don't know what is going on with that girl. You think she's OK?

RACHEL

I think maybe she's still in shock or something.

MAGGIE

It's not just like her not to disappear on me.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUTLER RANCH - SUNSET

The sunlight pours, blood red, through the trees.

INT. BUTLER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A massive STAG'S HEAD looks down from the wall. Bear, deer and caribou heads cover the rest of the wall space.

Helen sits in front of a roaring log fire. She forces a smile onto her face and dials the phone.

HELEN

Maggie, it's Helen Butler.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Maggie turns away from her customers at the counter.

MAGGIE

Doctor Butler? Have you seen Emma?

HELEN

Emma's fine. She came over with Dominic and they both crashed out on the couch.

MAGGIE

Oh. OK. You want me to come pick her up?

HELEN

No, not at all. But I was thinking that it might best to let her sleep here for the night. That way I can keep an eye on her.

MAGGIE

She's been acting real strange, Doctor. I'm worried about her.

HELEN

Post-traumatic stress. Panic and paranoia are fairly typical with accident survivors. Nothing to worry about.

MAGGIE

OK. Good. That makes me feel a little better.

HELEN

So is it alright if Emma sleeps over? I'll make sure they're in separate bedrooms.

MAGGIE

That's fine. Thanks for calling Doctor Butler. I appreciate it.

HELEN

You're welcome. I'll check in with you in the morning.

Helen sets the phone down in the cradle and her smile dissolves.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

POV of running through the trees. Dark. Scary. Low. Fast moving. We hurtle through the trees.

AHEAD

The moon rises over Lake Havoc. WE stop for a moment to admire the lake and then run down towards it.

We near the lake, gaining speed with every step and then SPLASH into the water.

SOMETHING rises from the depths of the lake. Suddenly we recognize a decomposed HUMAN BODY... then another... and another.

The whole lake is covered with ROTTING CORPSES.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Emma wakes up SCREAMING in the plexiglass cell. She PULLS against her restraints. Her skin is CHAFED RAW. Blood runs down her arms, but she doesn't stop.

She JERKS against the restraints again and again. The glint of determination in her eyes borders on madness.

The lights FLICKER on. Emma turns towards the staircase as the door opens and a figure comes through.

EMMA

Who are you? Why are you doing this to me? ANSWER ME!

The figure walks down the steps carrying a MEDICAL TRAY and a PITCHER OF WATER.

He walks into the light and Emma's face clouds in confusion.

EMMA

Sheriff Butler?

SHERIFF

I'm sorry for the restraints, Emma. They are for your own protection.

EMMA

What? What are you talking about?

SHERIFF

You and Jimmy Montrose were not attacked by a wolf, Emma.

EMMA

The rest of the town might believe your bullshit car accident story, but I know what happened. It was a wolf.

SHERIFF

It may have looked like a wolf, but it was something else.

EMMA

Just let me out of here.

The Sheriff unlocks the plexiglass cell and sets the tray and water next to Emma.

SHERIFF

It is very rare for a somebody to survive a lycanthrope attack. Most people are killed by the trauma.

EMMA

Lycan-what? What did you say?

SHERIFF
Lycanthrope. Sounds crazy doesn't
it?

EMMA
You let me out of here RIGHT NOW!

SHERIFF
You were bitten by a werewolf.

EMMA
Shut up.

SHERIFF
A shapeshifter.

EMMA
You're lying. You're a damn liar.

SHERIFF
I have no reason to lie to you,
Emma.

EMMA
I don't believe you. I DON'T
BELIEVE YOU!

SHERIFF
It is hard for the human mind to
accept something which has been
taught as fiction or fairy tale,
but it's the truth.

EMMA
DOMINIC! DOM!

The Sheriff takes off his shirt.

EMMA
What are you doing?

THE SHERIFF'S EYES

Change from blue to brown.

THE SHERIFF'S HANDS

Boil with hair. His fingers, shorten, MORPHING into vicious
CLAWS.

THE SHERIFF'S TEETH

Elongate into JAWS.

He drops to his knees and MORPHS into a GIANT SILVER WOLF.

EMMA

SCREAMS and SCREAMS, terrified out of her mind. She BUCKS against her restraints and passes out.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

Dominic leans over Emma, wiping the sweat from her forehead. Blood runs from her nose and ears.

DOMINIC

I told you she wasn't ready.

HELEN

You should prepare yourself for the worst. Not many survive the Change.

Helen leans over Emma. She pulls back one of her eyelids. Emma bolts up. She SCREAMS and SCREAMS like a lunatic.

HELEN

Emma! Emma, listen to me. You have to calm down.

Emma SPITS BLOOD in Helen's face.

EMMA'S RIGHT HAND RESTRAINT

SNAPS and she PUNCHES Helen in the face. Helen flies across the room. Emma unties her other restraint.

HELEN

GET A-HOLD OF HER!

Dominic jumps on the arm. Emma DIGS HER FINGERS INTO DOMINIC'S NECK. Dominic CHOKES in Emma's grasp. He tries to break her grip, but just can't do it.

Helen takes a SYRINGE from the medical tray and PLUNGES it into Emma neck. Emma SCREAMS and THRASHES, but her hands drop away from Dominic. Dominic falls to the floor, gasping for breath.

Emma pulls the syringe from her neck.

HELEN

It's a sedative, Emma. Just to help you sleep.

Emma SWINGS the syringe at Helen like a knife. Helen ducks back and Emma swings it again, but weaker now. Emma blinks, stares at Helen, wide eyed and then falls back on the bed.

Dominic picks himself up from the floor. He looks over at his mother.

DOMINIC
That went well.

FADE OUT:

INT. PLEXIGLASS CELL - LATER

Emma's eyes blink open. She looks up at Dominic with a weak smile. She's scared but rational now.

EMMA
Hi.

DOMINIC
(smiling in relief)
Your fever broke.

EMMA
Have I gone crazy, Dom? Is that
why I'm here?

DOMINIC
No. You're not crazy. Here, let
me untie you.

He starts to untie the medical restraints.

EMMA
What's happened to me? I keep
hallucinating.

DOMINIC
You're not hallucinating.

Emma stares at him in disbelief.

EMMA
So your dad is a ...?

DOMINIC
A werewolf? Yeah. So am I.

EMMA
How... how did it happen?

DOMINIC
I was born like this. A pureblood.

EMMA
Pureblood?

DOMINIC

Either you are born to werewolf parents in which case you are a pureblood or you get bitten and then you're a mutt.

EMMA

A mutt? Nice.

DOMINIC

The werewolf community is not known to be politically correct.

EMMA

Jesus Christ. I can't believe we're having this conversation. So your Mom and Jessica are both...

DOMINIC

My Mom is a full blooded werewolf. She can trace her family back for centuries. Jessica carries the genes, but they're recessive so she can't make the Change.

EMMA

Is that a bad thing?

DOMINIC

Not necessarily. It's rare but it does happen. Jessica's family, but she will never be a full member of the Pack.

EMMA

Couldn't you vote her in or something?

DOMINIC

Pack law is absolute. There's no democracy.

EMMA

So the wolf that attacked me is...

SHERIFF

(os)
...not one of us.

The Sheriff walks down the stairs.

SHERIFF

He's a rogue werewolf... a drifter from outside our territory.

EMMA

The Forest Ranger?

SHERIFF

That's one of his disguises.

EMMA
Then he's dead. I saw him hit by
the truck.

SHERIFF
We are not so fragile as humans,
Emma. He's alive.

EMMA
How do you know?

SHERIFF
Because he killed Sheila Jones last
night.

EMMA
Sheila the nurse? Oh God. Why?

SHERIFF
I'll explain after you get
something to eat. You must be
hungry.

EMMA
Starving.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTLER RANCH HOUSE, KITCHEN

A STEAK SIZZLES on the griddle.

SHERIFF
Your metabolism is much faster now.
You need to eat three times as much
as you did before.

Emma and Dominic sit at the kitchen counter as the Sheriff
heaps their plates with steak and eggs. They both drink
large glasses of milk.

The Sheriff opens a carton of milk and drinks it straight
down.

SHERIFF
We have to stop the Ranger before
he kills again.

EMMA
Isn't that what you do?

DOMINIC
What?

EMMA
Werewolves. Kill people?

SHERIFF

There are as many different kinds of werewolves as there are humans. The werewolf council banned hunting humans more than one hundred years ago. In the past werewolves hunted on the fringes of society; drunks, drug addicts and whores... people who were never missed... their bodies were destroyed and their remains buried in the woods. This rogue werewolf, the Ranger, is leaving human remains in the open. It is a direct challenge to my authority.

EMMA

But what does he want?

DOMINIC

You.

EMMA

What do you mean, me?

SHERIFF

The Ranger has marked you, infected you with the virus. Now that you're Changing, your pheromones attract him like a drug. He will track you and he will find you. But he cannot mate with you until your Change is complete. The trauma would kill you.

EMMA

Mate with me? You're kidding, right?

SHERIFF

Female werewolves are hard to find.

EMMA

And I'm guessing I don't have a say in the matter.

DOMINIC

Don't worry. We'll protect you. You're one of us now... one of the Pack.

EMMA

I don't want to be one of the Pack. I don't want to be a werewolf. I want the cure.

DOMINIC

There is no cure.

EMMA

There's got to be something I can do.

SHERIFF

The only way to stop the Change is to sever the bloodline. You must kill the werewolf that infected you before your Change is complete.

DOMINIC

I thought that was a myth.

SHERIFF

There are no modern records, but...

EMMA

(incredulous)

Kill the werewolf? How am I supposed to do that? Silver bullets or something?

SHERIFF

Silver bullets, wolfsbane and the full moon, that's just mythology. This is real Emma. We're tough, but any weapon that will kill a human will kill a werewolf. And you have an advantage. You are like junk to a junkie. He'll come looking for you and he will find you.

EMMA

That doesn't sound like much of an advantage.

SHERIFF

We'll be waiting and when he shows himself, we will strike.

EMMA

So I'm the bait?

SHERIFF

Exactly.

DOMINIC

No. Dad, that's way too dangerous.

HELEN AND JESSICA

Walk into the kitchen in their dressing gowns, rubbing the sleep from their eyes. Helen has a nice shiner under her eye.

HELEN

That's quite right hook you've got, Emma.

EMMA
I'm sorry.

Helen smiles at her. She takes the MILK CARTON out of the Sheriff's hand and passes him a glass.

HELEN
Just because you're a werewolf,
doesn't mean you have to drink like
an animal.

The Sheriff rolls his eyes. Helen smiles back at him.

JESSICA
How are you feeling, Em?

EMMA
Upside down. Everything I have
ever known to be true is wrong.

JESSICA
That sounds about right.

DOMINIC
It's going to be OK.

Emma smiles at him. Dominic reaches out and takes her hand. Helen doesn't like the look between them.

HELEN
Emma, even if you do survive the
Change, you're too young to take a
mate.

DOMINIC
Mom!

HELEN
I see the way she looks at you.

EMMA
OK, this is getting creepy now.
I've always been a little jealous
of your family, of how close you
are, but I don't want to be a
werewolf. I don't want any part of
your pack. I just want to get my
life back.

SHERIFF
That's what we want too. That's
why we need to help each other.

EMMA
You locked me in a cage, Sheriff.
I don't really feel like helping
you. I'll find my own cure.

HELEN
That's impossible.

EMMA
Then I'll find a way to kill the
Ranger myself. Unless you plan on
keeping me locked up here forever.

DOMINIC
No. Em, we'd never do anything
like...

HELEN
(interrupting)
That's not your decision, Dominic.

Emma turns to the Sheriff.

EMMA
Well, are you going to let me go or
not?

SHERIFF
(nods)
I don't want to make you a
prisoner, Emma. But I want you to
understand that it is not safe for
you outside this house. He will
find you. I won't be able to
protect you out there.

EMMA
I don't want your protection. I
don't want anything to do with you.

Emma pushes past Helen and leaves.

Dominic gets up, but the Sheriff holds him back.

JESSICA
Dad, what are you doing? She'll
die on her own.

HELEN
You heard Emma. She doesn't want
our protection.

JESSICA
She doesn't understand.

DOMINIC
This is bullshit.

Dominic twists away from his Dad's grasp and runs after Emma.

SHERIFF
(calling after him)
Warn her.

EXT. BUTLER RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

Emma walks down the driveway. Dominic runs out of the house and chases after her.

DOMINIC
Wait up, Emma. I'll give you a
ride back into town.

EMMA
Get away from me.

DOMINIC
I have to warn you, you can't tell
anybody about...

EMMA
... about you being a damn
werewolf? You really think anybody
would believe me?

DOMINIC
Look, I don't think you would say
anything anyway, but there are
rules for people who expose us.

EMMA
Are you threatening me?

DOMINIC
No, but I want you to understand.

EMMA
Oh, I understand, alright. "Keep
your mouth shut, or I'll rip your
throat out."

DOMINIC
That is not what I said.

EMMA
But it's what you meant.

DOMINIC
It's five miles into town.

EMMA
I feel like walking.

DOMINIC
Emma, please.

Emma just keeps on walking.

INT. BUTLER KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Helen turns on the Sheriff.

HELEN
You think it's safe to let her go?

JESSICA
Emma would never say anything.

SHERIFF
She'll flush the Ranger out into the open. Then we can finish him off ourselves.

JESSICA
What if she's killed?

HELEN
Then that's one less thing we have to worry about.

JESSICA
That's not fair.

SHERIFF
It's not my job to be fair. It's my job to protect my family. You should know that.

Dominic walks back into the room.

DOMINIC
That's not good enough, Dad. If anything happens to Emma, you will never see me again.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Emma strides down the deserted road, hands in her pockets, shivering from the cold.

HEADLIGHTS pierce the darkness. A beaten-up Ford pick-up truck slows. The window rolls down.

THE RANGER

Leans out of the window, grinning from ear to ear.

EMMA

Glances up at him and FREEZES, terrified.

RANGER
You want a ride into town?

EMMA
No thanks.

Emma keeps walking.

RANGER
Come on. I won't bite you.

EMMA
I'm fine.

RANGER
Yes, you are. What's your hurry,
Sweetie?

EMMA
No hurry.

The pick-up LURCHES forward and stops in front of Emma,
blocking her path. The Ranger jumps out of the truck.

Emma spins around and BOLTS back towards Dominic's house.

RANGER
Wait up, Honey.

The Ranger catches up to Emma and grabs her by the arm. Emma
twists away.

EMMA
HELP! HELP ME!

The Ranger covers Emma's mouth and grabs her by the waist.
Emma kicks her legs into the air, but can't break free.

RANGER
You're a feisty one, aren't ya?
You're almost ready for me. I can
smell it.

The Ranger paws her blouse. Emma twists away.

EMMA
Don't.

RANGER
I'm gonna love you something
fierce.

Emma BITES down on his hand. The Ranger ROARS with pain and
throws her to the ground.

RANGER
You like to play rough? I'll show
you rough.

The Ranger hears something and looks over his shoulder.

RANGER'S POV

Dominic's Jeep SCREECHES to a stop. The Sheriff and Dominic charge out of the Jeep, MORPHING into TWO WOLVES, one grey and one silver.

The wolves LEAP over the truck and HIT THE RANGER, KNOCKING him to the ground.

THE RANGER

Rolls back and MORPHS into a MASSIVE BLACK WOLF. The wolf SNARLS and SNAPS at the other two wolves.

EMMA

Circles away from the truck, behind the wolves.

DOMINIC AND THE SHERIFF

Circle the Ranger and then ATTACK. Teeth and claws RIP AND TEAR through fur and flesh.

The werewolves twist and tumble, lunge and retreat as they fight for their lives.

BLOOD. TEETH. CLAWS. HOWLS. It's a savage fight to the death.

Dominic SNAPS the Ranger's paw between his jaws. The Ranger HOWLS and SINKS HIS JAWS into Dominic's side, RIPPING his flesh open. Dominic springs back.

The Sheriff RIPS into the Ranger's hind leg and shakes him from side to side.

The Ranger rolls over backwards on top of the Sheriff. The Sheriff releases him for a moment and the Ranger RUNS.

Dominic and the Sheriff share a look and then the Sheriff bolts after the Ranger.

EMMA

Watches the two wolves disappear. She turns around to see Dominic lying naked on the ground in human form. Blood streams from a SAVAGE BITE WOUND on his side.

Emma rushes over to him.

EMMA
You're bleeding!

Emma rips her jacket off.

EMMA
Here.

DOMINIC
I'm OK. I've got a spare set of
clothes in the car.

He covers himself with the jacket and stands. He staggers
and slips. Emma catches him and holds him up.

EMMA
I've got you.

Emma puts Dominic's arm around her shoulder and helps him to
the car.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The Sheriff, in wolf form, chases the Ranger deep into the
forest. They streak through the trees like bullets. The
Sheriff catches up to the Ranger and LEAPS.

INT. DOMINIC'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Emma helps Dominic into the car. He lies back against the
seat, woozy from the blood loss.

Emma climbs in the other side.

EMMA
That was your dad, right?

DOMINIC
(nods)
Yeah. He'll catch the Ranger. He
won't let him get away again.

EMMA
So it's all over?

DOMINIC
(smiles)
It's over.

EMMA
Let me look at that bite.

DOMINIC
It's not so bad.

She lifts the jacket. Dominic's whole side is wet with
blood.

EMMA
Jesus. You've lost a lot of blood.

She grabs his t-shirt off the back seat.

EMMA
Hold this against the wound. We
should get your mom to stitch you
up.

Dominic presses the t-shirt against his side.

DOMINIC
I can't deal with my mom. I'll be
fine. We heal faster than humans.
I just want to be with you right
now.

EMMA
(smiles)
That works for me.

Emma GUNS the Jeep.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Emma pulls Dominic's Jeep around the house. Lights shine
from inside.

INT. DOMINIC'S JEEP - CONTINUOUS

Dominic looks out at the house.

DOMINIC
You can't let your mom see me like
this.

EMMA
Lights are on a timer. She's
working tonight. Come on.

Emma helps him out of the car and they go in through the back
door.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Bodie, Emma's dog, hides under the bed with his paws covering
his eyes. He WHINES, submissive and scared.

A BOTTLE OF IODINE, BANDAGES, SCISSORS lie on top of the bed.

Emma sits on the bed dressing the wound on Dominic's side.
He stands in front of her, stripped to the waist.

Emma gently wraps a bandage around his ribs. He stares at
her and smiles. Emma smiles back and pulls the bandage
tight.

DOMINIC
OW! Careful.

EMMA
Don't be such a wuss. You're a big
bad werewolf, remember?

Dominic looks away, his emotions guarded.

EMMA
What's wrong?

DOMINIC
You're not... you know... disgusted
by me?

EMMA
Why should I be? You're still you,
right?

DOMINIC
But you saw me Change into a wolf,
Emma. That didn't freak you out?

She takes his face in her hands.

EMMA
You saved my life, Dominic.

DOMINIC
What about my family? You saw how
they are. Doesn't get any weirder
than that.

EMMA
At least you have a family. People
who love you.

DOMINIC
Yeah. I know.
(beat)
I never wanted to break up with
you, Emma.

Dominic leans over Emma, their faces are just inches apart.
They stare at each other, the chemistry intense, the tension
building.

Emma leans up and kisses him, pulling him towards her.
Dominic kisses her back. They kiss with the fierce intensity
of first love, drowning in each other's souls.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAWN

As the first fingers of dawn brighten the sky, the Sheriff's
cruiser pulls up outside the house and parks across the road.

THE SHERIFF

Rolls down the window revealing LIVID SCRATCHES over his face. His neck is bandaged with gauze.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - DAY

Emma and Dominic sleep in each other's arms. Dominic's phone RINGS. He wakes up, bleary eyed and GROANS and picks it up.

DOMINIC
Hey Dad. What? No. OK.

He puts the phone down.

EMMA
What's wrong?

DOMINIC
My Dad lost the Ranger.

EMMA
Oh Jesus.

DOMINIC
It's going to be OK. Dad's going to stand guard for a while. We're taking it in turns to watch you.

EMMA
I don't want your family to...

DOMINIC
(interrupting)
He's not doing it for you. He's doing it for me.

Emma peers out of the window.

EMMA'S POV

The Sheriff waves from across the street.

DOMINIC
I have to go.

Dominic takes her face in his hands. He kisses her on the forehead, on the cheek and on the end of her nose.

DOMINIC
I love you, Emma.

EMMA
I love you too.

Dominic gives her one last kiss and then he climbs over the bed and jumps out of the window.

Emma waves good-bye and closes the window behind him. She flops back down on the bed, lost in thought. A WHINE interrupts her thoughts. She smiles.

EMMA
Come on, then.

Bodie jumps up onto the bed and into her arms.

EMMA
Good boy. Yes, you are. I love
you too, Bodie. Yes, I do.

INT. DEER VALLEY DINER - DAY

Maggie pours a cup of coffee for a customer at the counter. She smiles at him, flirting a little.

MAGGIE
You've been sitting there for
hours, Harry. You must really like
the coffee.

The Ranger smiles back her, wearing a new set of clothes.

RANGER
Not as much as the company, Miss
Maggie.

MAGGIE
Stop. Now you're making me blush.

RANGER
Who says I can't pay a pretty woman
a compliment?

MAGGIE
I am way too old for you, Honey.

The Ranger shoots her seductive smile.

RANGER
I don't think so. Maybe I could
walk you home. What time do you
get off work?

MAGGIE
Oh my God. I have to get a glass
of ice water.

Maggie spins away from the Ranger, smiling from ear to ear.

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

Maggie and the Ranger walk down the wooded lane, arm in arm, smiling and laughing together.

Maggie takes a swig from a SILVER FLASK and passes it over to him.

MAGGIE
Go on. It'll put hairs on your chest.

The Ranger takes a swig, swallows half and SPITS the rest out. Maggie cracks up, laughing.

RANGER
What the hell is that?

MAGGIE
100% genuine North Carolina moonshine from my Uncle Josiah.

RANGER
More like rocket fuel. You could run a car on that crap.

MAGGIE
He does...

They both laugh. Maggie stops, noticing the Sheriff's car outside her house. Her faces creases in worry.

MAGGIE
Emma!

She runs towards the house.

RANGER
Wait!

The Ranger bounds after Maggie, grabs her by the arm and JERKS her violently into the trees.

MAGGIE
What are you... ?

RANGER
Shut up!

He holds his hand over her mouth. Maggie pulls away from him.

MAGGIE
Get off of me!

The Ranger grabs her by the face and SNAPS her neck. Maggie falls to the ground, dead.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - LATER

Emma sits at the kitchen table eating cereal and flipping channels on the TV.

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Rachel drives up to the house. She climbs out of her Mustang and notices the police car across the road. The Sheriff waves to her.

Rachel waves back, confused and knocks on the door.

INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Emma peeks through the window and unlocks the door. Rachel walks inside. They stare at each other in angry silence for a moment and then Emma cracks a smile.

EMMA
I'm sorry.

RACHEL
(smiling back)
Me too. Are you feeling any better?

EMMA
Yeah. A little.

RACHEL
You kind of disappeared on me.

EMMA
I know.

RACHEL
Is your Mom here?

EMMA
Not yet. She had the late shift again.

RACHEL
So are we going out tonight?

EMMA
I don't think so.

RACHEL
Lemon Sun are playing the Hemlock
and it's all ages, so everybody's
going to be there.

EMMA
I have to check with Dom.

RACHEL
You do know that his Dad's outside
in the car?

EMMA
Yeah.

RACHEL
What's he doing here?

EMMA
I can't really talk about it.

RACHEL
Why not?

EMMA
I just can't, alright?

RACHEL
OK. Now you're sounding like
Dominic... Well, can we hang out at
least?

EMMA
I'm sorry.

RACHEL
I'm NFI'd?

EMMA
It's not a social thing, Rach.
We're going after Jimmy's killer.

RACHEL
And what were we doing before?

EMMA
That was different. We were just
trying to figure out what was going
on. This is real, Rach. I don't
want you to get hurt.

RACHEL
As soon it gets interesting or more
importantly as soon as Dominic gets
interested, you dump me.

EMMA
You don't understand.

RACHEL
 No, I think understand perfectly.
 Before you needed me. Now you
 don't.

EMMA
 Rach...

RACHEL
 Call me when he dumps you again,
 OK?

Rachel spins around and walks out of the house.

EMMA
 RACH!

The door SLAMS in her face.

INT. SHERIFF'S CAR - DAY

The Sheriff watches as Rachel storms over to her car. He
 dials his cell.

SHERIFF
 Emma, is everything OK?

EMMA
 (os)
 Just girl drama, Sheriff. Nothing
 for you to worry about.

INT. RACHEL'S CAR, MOVING - DAY

Rachel speeds away from Emma's house, tears brimming in her
 eyes.

THE RANGER

Sits up from the back seat and GRABS HER BY THE THROAT.
 Rachel SCREAMS.

RANGER
 SHUT UP!

The Ranger leans over and takes the wheel.

RANGER
 Keep driving.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - DAY

Emma's phone RINGS. She runs over and picks it up.

EMMA
Rach? I'm sorry, I....

INT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY - INTERCUT

Rachel is BOUND hand and foot in the back seat, shaking in fear. A rough hand strokes her cheek. The Ranger holds Rachel's phone to his mouth.

RANGER
Hello Emma.

EMMA
Who is this?

RANGER
You know who I am. Your little friend Rachel wants to talk to you.

RACHEL
(shaking)
Please, Em. Do what he says. He's going to hurt me. Please don't let him hurt me.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUTLER RANCH HOUSE - DAY

The Sheriff and Emma drive up to the house, jump out and run inside.

INT. BUTLER LIVING ROOM - DAY

KER-CHUNK! Dominic loads a pump action SHOTGUN.

The living room has been transformed into a small arsenal, littered with guns and ammo.

Helen helps Jessica into a Kevlar bulletproof vest. They all look up as Emma and the Sheriff walk in.

HELEN
Tell us exactly what the Ranger said.

EMMA
He wants to meet me at the Hemlock Tavern at ten tonight. Clean swap. Rachel for me.

SHERIFF
Public place. He knows we can't change in there.

DOMINIC
But nor can he.

HELEN
Maybe he doesn't care. This isn't his territory.

SHERIFF
Emma, even if you do go to the rendezvous, the Ranger will try to kill Rachel. You know that, right?

EMMA
That's why I'm here. I need your help.

HELEN
We promised Dominic we would protect you and we will, but why should we help you rescue Rachel?

DOMINIC
Mom...

EMMA
Because it's the right thing to do, Doctor Butler and you know it. Deer Valley is your home. This is where you live, where you raise your kids. I don't know why the Ranger came here and I don't care, but this is your turf and you need to defend it. You may not be human, but you're more humane than most people I know. You can't let him walk away. He's killed at least two of our friends here... Two of your friends. You can't let him get away with that.

The Sheriff looks over at Helen. She nods.

SHERIFF
OK, Emma, we'll help you, but we do it my way.

EMMA
Thank you.

SHERIFF
You'll rendezvous with the Ranger as planned inside the Hemlock. Make sure you stand at the bar itself, surrounded by people. You'll be safest in public. When the Ranger releases Rachel you must refuse to leave until she is safely out of the door, only then can you allow him to take you out to the parking lot. We will take care of the rest.

Emma looks over at Dominic.

EMMA
That works for me.

DOMINIC
What works? What kind of plan is that? What if he decides to kill you inside the bar?

HELEN
He doesn't want to kill her, Dominic. He wants a mate.

The Sheriff takes a REVOLVER and a BOX OF BULLETS from the table.

SHERIFF
You know how to use a gun, Emma?

Emma nods.

EMMA
Only thing my dad ever taught me.

SHERIFF
These bullets are hollow points. They'll do the job.

Emma takes the gun and loads it. Dominic puts his arm around Emma.

DOMINIC
I'll drive you into town.

SHERIFF
Alright, but come right back. We need to plan our ambush.

DOMINIC
Who's going to look after Emma?

Emma CLICKS the gun shut.

EMMA
I can take care of myself.

HELEN
Honey, you have no idea what you're dealing with.
(to Dominic and the Sheriff)
I'll watch her house. You two can rest up for tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMMA'S HOUSE - SUNSET

Helen patrols the woods around Emma's house as the sun disappears behind the mountains. Her phone rings and she answers.

HELEN
 (into the phone)
 Yes... I know you're in charge.
 Yes. Of course she's safe.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emma stands in front of the mirror getting dressed for the night. She pours herself into a pair of black, tight jeans.

She pulls a black tank top over her head. Black boots cover her feet. And finally a black leather jacket completes the outfit. She is smoking hot and bad-ass to the bone.

She dials her phone. It RINGS and goes to voicemail.

MAGGIE
 (OS)
 This is Maggie. The beep is coming. You know what to do.

EMMA
 Mom, it's Emma. Call me. Please.
 It's important. I love you.

Emma takes the GUN off the counter and tucks it into her pants behind her back.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTLER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Sheriff talks on the phone as he loads a HUGE BORE RIFLE with explosive rounds.

SHERIFF
 (into the phone)
 Two or three days, Bo. Yeah. Why don't you go hunting? No problem. You're welcome. See you next week.

He looks up as Dominic walks in.

DOMINIC
 I don't feel right about sending Emma into the Hemlock on her own, Dad.

SHERIFF

The Ranger told Emma to go to the meeting alone. We can't go inside without risking Rachel's life or yours.

DOMINIC

I know you don't think I'm old enough, but I'm ready for this.

SHERIFF

You may be ready, but I'm not sure I am.

DOMINIC

Dad, please.

The Sheriff studies his son for a moment and then comes to a decision. He smiles.

SHERIFF

You're right. Tonight we fight together as father and son.

DOMINIC

(smiles back him)
Finally.

SHERIFF

We need to prepare the cell. If we capture the Ranger alive I'll need to question him.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dominic watches the Sheriff unlock the plexiglass cell.

SHERIFF

We need new straps on the gurney.

Dominic steps inside the cell and crosses to the gurney. The Sheriff quickly shuts and LOCKS the door behind him.

DOMINIC

Dad, what are you doing?

SHERIFF

It's for your own good, Son.

DOMINIC

What? No. NO!

Dominic POUNDS the plexiglass.

SHERIFF

I'm sorry.

The Sheriff turns around and walks up the stairs, his face creased in regret.

DOMINIC
Let me out of here! Dad! DAD!

CUT TO:

EXT. HEMLOCK TAVERN - NIGHT

Emma rides up to the Hemlock on her Vespa and parks in the back.

Emma takes off her helmet and checks her cell phone. NO MESSAGES. She dials.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dominic's phone RINGS on the floor just outside the cell.

"EMMA" lights up on the display.

INT. PLEXIGLASS CELL - NIGHT

Dominic spots the phone and SCREAMS in frustration. He takes the gurney and WHACKS it against the plexiglass. The wall shudders, but doesn't crack. Dominic WHACKS the wall again and again.

EXT. HEMLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Emma allows the phone ring to voice mail.

EMMA
Dom, I'm at the Hemlock. It's almost ten. If I don't hear from you in the next five minutes I'm going in without you.

INT. BUTLER HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

The fridge door opens. The Sheriff reaches inside and opens a CARTON OF MILK. He chugs the milk straight from the carton.

Helen walks into the kitchen.

SHERIFF
Ready to go?

HELEN
Can you please use a glass, Luke?

He puts the carton down with a sigh and takes the glass that Helen offers him.

HELEN
I don't like you risking your life
for a human.

SHERIFF
We have to stop the Ranger before
he exposes us all. You know that.

HELEN
We could move.

SHERIFF
This is our territory, Helen. Our
home. We have a good life here.
That's something worth fighting
for.

HELEN
I know, but I'm scared.

SHERIFF
It's going to be fine.

He takes her in his arms. Helen puts her head on his shoulders.

HELEN
Is Dominic safe in the basement?

SHERIFF
(nods)
Still screaming. I hope he
forgives me.

HELEN
He'll get over it. And so will
you.

SHERIFF
What do... whaat doooo....

SHERIFF'S POV

Helen's face distorts as his vision swims.

HELEN
I'm sorry.

The Sheriff drops the glass in his hand. The glass SHATTERS
on the floor.

The Sheriff reaches out to his wife and collapses.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEMLOCK TAVERN, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Emma locks up her Vespa and heads towards the entrance.

EXT. HEMLOCK TAVERN - NIGHT

Emma walks towards the line at the front door. Animal magnetism oozes from her every pore. Heads turn. Men stare.

The DOORMAN waves her to the front. He looks her up and down, drooling like a fat kid at a cake store. He swallows hard.

DOORMAN
ID please.

Emma hands her Driver's License over. He gives her an under-21 wristband.

DOORMAN
No charge for you, Darlin'. You can buy soft drinks at the bar, but no alcohol or cigarettes.

EMMA
I got it.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dominic continues to POUND the plexiglass cell. He's relentless.

Helen walks down the steps.

HELEN
Do stop that, Dominic. You're giving me a headache.

DOMINIC
Let me out of here, Mom.

HELEN
I can't do that. I made a deal.

DOMINIC
What? You did what?

HELEN
I made a deal with the Ranger. He's agreed to move on to the next territory so long as he can take Emma with him.

DOMINIC
You gave Emma to the Ranger?

HELEN
Those were his terms.

DOMINIC
But... I love her, Mom.

HELEN
You're too young to know about
love, Sweetie. It's what's best
for the family.

Furious, Dominic HURLS the gurney at the cell door. The corner of the gurney catches the door hinges and the plexiglass SPLINTERS.

Helen steps back.

Dominic RAMS the gurney into the corner, SMASHING the hinge. He KICKS the door open.

Helen stands in front of him, blocking his path.

DOMINIC
Get out of my way, Mother.

HELEN
There's something else I have to
tell you.

DOMINIC
I don't want to hear it.

HELEN
It's too late for Emma. She'll be
gone already.

DOMINIC
You better pray that she's not.

Dominic shoulders past his mother and runs up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. HEMLOCK TAVERN - NIGHT

A COUNTRY ROCK BAND struts on stage behind chicken wire. The sawdust covered dance floor is packed with drunk locals and kids from the high school.

Emma scans the room. She doesn't see the Ranger, but every man in the place knows that she's there. She crosses to the bar.

The BARTENDER walks away from a couple of DRUNK LOCALS and smiles at Emma.

BARTENDER
What can I get you, Honey?

EMMA
Coke. No ice.

BARTENDER
Coming up.

THE DRUNK LOCALS

Turn to look at Emma. KENTON BARNES - 50s, huge, unshaven, gross - nudges his friend HARRIS COOBMES - 20s, rat faced, greasy ponytail.

KENTON
Bingo.

They stumble towards Emma and belly up to the bar either side of her.

KENTON
How do, Sweet Cheeks?

Emma shoots Kenton a look that would send most men scurrying for the exit.

EMMA
Get away from me.

HARRIS
That's not polite. You need to learn yourself some manners.

EMMA
I'm warning you. I am not in the mood for this.

HARRIS
We can work on that, can't we Kenton.

KENTON
We sure can.

Harris slips his hand onto her butt and squeezes.

HARRIS
You are ripe, Honey. Ready for the plucking.

Furious now, Emma takes Harris' wrist and TWISTS it back to the breaking point. Harris SQUEALS in pain.

HARRIS
OWWWWWW!

Emma forces him down onto his knees.

EMMA
 You need to learn to some manners,
 asshole.

Kenton grabs Emma by the shoulder. She spins around and SMASHES a beer bottle over Kenton's head. Kenton falls back into the crowd.

DOMINIC

Pushes through the crowd. He grabs Emma by the arm.

DOMINIC
 Time to go.

EMMA
 I'm not done.

DOMINIC
 Now!

He pulls her through the crowd towards the exit.

EXT. HEMLOCK TAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

Dominic leads Emma into the alley behind the Hemlock.

DOMINIC
 What were you thinking, going in
 there alone?

EMMA
 That was the plan, Dom. I called
 you. You never showed.

DOMINIC
 My parents locked me in the cell.

EMMA
 What? But your Dad said...

DOMINIC
 He lied to you. He lied to both of
 us.

RANGER
 (os)
 EMMA!

Emma spins around.

THE RANGER

Walks across the parking lot, his arm wrapped around Rachel's neck. Rachel struggles like a fish on a line.

RANGER
I told you to come alone.

EMMA
I did. I swear to God. Dominic
just showed up here. Please don't
hurt her.

The Ranger looks around, searching for the Sheriff.

RANGER
We'll try this again tomorrow,
Emma. Tell the Sheriff to stay
away next time or this is what will
happen to daughter.

The Ranger pulls Rachel's head back and RIPS HER THROAT OUT.
Arterial blood SPRAYS.

EMMA
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!

The Ranger drops Rachel and then takes off running across the
parking lot.

Emma and Dominic charge towards Rachel. Emma reaches Rachel
and tries to staunch the bleeding.

EMMA
Rach! Rachel?

Rachel's face twitches. A blood bubble forms in her mouth.
Her eyes flicker open.

Rachel GASPS and her eyes roll back.

EMMA
Rach? NO!!! Open your eyes. Look
at me, Rach. Open your eyes.

It's too late. She's already dead.

EMMA
Don't go. Oh God! No. No. No.

EMMA'S POV

The Ranger drives out of the lot in Rachel's Mustang.

CLOSER

JESSICA sits up from the back seat, hand-cuffed and gagged.
Her eyes plead for help.

BACK TO EMMA

As she leaps up, covered with blood.

EMMA
He's got Jessica.

DOMINIC
What?

EMMA
Get the car!

Emma sprints after the Ranger.

AHEAD

A fat bearded BIKER REVS his Harley in the parking lot.

EMMA
I need your bike.

BIKER
Get the hell outta here.

Emma grabs the Biker by his collar with one hand and YANKS him off the bike. She jumps in the saddle and peels away.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Emma ROARS down Main street and spots the Mustang ahead. She GUNS IT.

INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

The Ranger looks over his shoulder and smiles as Emma catches up to him.

He changes gear and PUNCHES THE GAS.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

Dominic SCREECHES around a corner and pulls up to a red light as a freight train RUMBLES past.

INT. DOMINIC'S CAR - NIGHT

Dominic looks around for Emma.

DOMINIC'S POV

Through the gaps in the freight train, Dominic sees the Mustang SPEEDING down the road on the opposite side of the train tracks with Emma in hot pursuit.

DOMINIC
SHIT!

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

The Jeep tires SMOKE as Dominic reverses away from the train and swerves onto a road running parallel to the tracks. He punches the gas, chasing after Emma.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Emma ROARS down the road catching up to the Mustang.

THE MUSTANG

Speeds towards a LOGGING TRUCK and overtakes as the truck negotiates a corner.

EMMA

REVS the bike, chasing right on his tail.

THE RANGER

Cuts in front of the logging truck.

REVEALING

A MACK TRUCK JUST AHEAD. The Mack truck BLASTS ITS HORN as it speeds towards Emma... No time to stop.

EMMA

GUNS her engine and cuts in front of the logging truck just as the Mack truck SCREAMS past.

THE MUSTANG

Slides sideways off the next exit and ROARS over a bridge.
Emma follows right behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

THE FULL MOON rises above this dark wooded road.

The Mustang SCREAMS around the corner with Emma right behind him. Emma pulls up to the Mustang. They ride neck and neck.

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

The Ranger JERKS the wheel left.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Mustang SMASHES into Emma's Harley. Emma SWERVES off the road, hits the hedge and CARTWHEELS into the woods.

The Ranger SKIDS to a stop and drags Jessica out of the car.

EMMA

GROANS as she tries to climb to her feet. She reaches for THE GUN behind her back.

THE RANGER

KICKS the gun out of Emma's hand and PUNCHES her in the face. Emma falls to the ground, stunned.

RANGER

How you feeling, Honey?

Emma spits blood out of her mouth. She looks up at him with grim determination.

EMMA

You're going to die tonight.

RANGER

(smiles)

What makes you think that?

EMMA

You killed my friends.

RANGER
I'm a full blooded werewolf. You
really think you can hurt me,
little girl?

Emma climbs to her feet.

EMMA
Not me. The Sheriff. You invaded
the pack territory. The werewolves
are not going to stand for that.

RANGER
You'd be surprised what werewolves
will stand for these days. I made
my deal with the doctor; I leave
town nice and quiet and I get to
take you with me as my mate.

EMMA
Bullshit.

RANGER
Doctor Butler offered me the deal
herself.

EMMA
You're lying.

RANGER
No, I'm not. You can see the truth
in my eyes, Emma. The good doctor
couldn't wait to get rid of you...
something to do with you not being
good enough for her son.

Emma shoots him a bitter look.

EMMA
Doctor Butler never did like me.
But what about Jessica? She's her
daughter.

RANGER
Jessica's just insurance to make
sure they keep their end of the
bargain. And Jessica doesn't mind
keeping me company. She's the one
who brought me here.

EMMA
What?

The Ranger pulls down Jessica's gag. Jessica's face is
drawn, her eyes red with tears.

RANGER
Tell her.

Jessica shakes her head. The Ranger shakes her like a rag doll.

RANGER
TELL HER!

JESSICA
(crying now)
I'm so sorry, Emma.

EMMA
What? What are you talking about?

Jessica SOBS.

RANGER
Genetic fluke, that's what she's talking about. She couldn't make the Change. Great disappointment to her family. Momma was so ashamed and Daddy wouldn't let anybody bite her before she turned eighteen. But Jessica didn't want to wait.

EMMA
So you went looking for a werewolf?

JESSICA
(nods)
I didn't know he would follow me back home.

RANGER
I gave her the gift of Change, just as I gave it to you. I took her as my mate. But the Butlers didn't think I was good enough for their daughter. They didn't like me teaching her how to hunt humans.

EMMA
(to Jessica)
So it was you, Jess? You attacked us? You killed Jimmy?

JESSICA
He made me do it. It was so dark. I didn't know it was Jimmy.

Jessica falls to her knees, tears rolling down her face.

RANGER
Don't beat yourself up, Sweetie. A new werewolf doesn't have any kind of self-control. Hunting a human is the ultimate rush... the feel of flesh tearing between your teeth, the taste of blood spilling down your throat.

(MORE)

RANGER(cont'd)

It's like being plugged into Mother Nature herself. That's not something you can stop.

EMMA

You're a monster.

RANGER

No. I am a natural predator. Top of the food chain. The next evolution.

EMMA

You don't kill for food, you kill for pleasure. That's what makes you the monster. There's nothing natural about that. You're sick. Twisted.

RANGER

(laughs)

You don't back down, do you? Even when you're beat you keep on fighting. That's a rare quality. I like you, Emma. I like you a lot. You'll make one hell of werewolf.

EMMA

You forgot one thing.

RANGER

And what is that?

EMMA

I don't want to be a werewolf and according to the Sheriff, if I kill you, I break the curse.

The Ranger smiles. He walks up behind Emma and puts his arms around her.

RANGER

(whispers)

The Sheriff lied to you. You will change tonight. You're ready for me, Emma. I can smell it.

EMMA

Get off me.

Emma twists away from the Ranger, but he pulls her back to him.

RANGER

You are going to be my mate. We'll start a family together, a new pack.

EMMA

I'd rather die.

RANGER
That's choice number two. Live or
die, what's it gonna be?

Emma stares at him for a moment. He means every word. She swallows her fear.

EMMA
If I agree to leave with you, you
have to let Jessica go.

RANGER
Deal.

EMMA
You have to let her go right now.
She takes the car now. If you do
that, I'll go willingly and... and
I'll be your mate.

RANGER
I believe you, Emma. I do. You
seem like a straight up girl. But
I need you to prove it.

EMMA
Prove it how?

RANGER
I want you to kiss me. That's all.
Kiss me like you mean it. I want
to smell your scent. Taste your
lips.

EMMA
(breathless)
OK.

Emma closes her eyes and the Ranger kisses her deep and rough. Finally he breaks away, licking his lips.

RANGER
Yummy. That was nice. It really
was. But it wasn't real.

EMMA
What? Yes... it was.

RANGER
You're faking. And I hate that.
But the good news is, you don't
have to give me your love, I can
just take it.

The Ranger **THROWS** Emma to the ground and jumps on top of her. He **RIPS** her jacket off.

Emma **BUCKS** and **THRASHES**. He grabs her throat, **SQUEEZING** with an iron grip. He licks the side of her face. Emma tries to pull his hands away, but is no match for his strength.

JESSICA

Sneaks up behind the Ranger. She slides her handcuffs over his neck and PULLS.

JESSICA
Get off of her!

The Ranger's head JERKS BACK. He reaches around to pull Jessica away, but can't get to her.

Emma grabs the Ranger's face and PLUNGES her THUMB NAIL into his eye. The Ranger SCREAMS as his eye POPS, spraying blood over Emma's face.

Jessica JERKS the Ranger back, CHOKING HIM.

EMMA
You want a kiss now? I'll give you a kiss.

Emma kisses the Ranger full on the mouth. She shakes her head like pitbull, BLOOD pours from her mouth.

The Ranger PUNCHES Emma, knocking her down. Emma falls to the ground.

The Ranger leans back, GRABS Jessica by the shoulders and THROWS her over Emma's head.

JESSICA

Flies through the air and SMACKS into a tree, head first. She drops to the ground, unconscious

EMMA

Stands up and SPITS the bloody end of the Ranger's TONGUE onto the ground.

RANGER
(lispig)
YOU BITCH!

EMMA
Could not have described you better myself.

The Ranger MORPHS into A MASSIVE BLACK WOLF and LEAPS at Emma. Emma catches the Ranger's CLAWS in her hands and rolls backwards holding his SNAPPING JAWS at bay.

Emma SCREAMS in agony as she STARTS TO CHANGE.

Emma's EYES change from green to orange. Emma'S HANDS boil with hair.

Her fingers, shorten, MORPHING into vicious CLAWS. Emma's TEETH elongate into JAWS and her SCREAMS turn into HOWLS.

She drops to her knees and MORPHS into a GIANT GOLDEN WOLF. Emma stands on all fours and stares at the Ranger.

The Ranger circles Emma but does not attack. Then Emma starts to SNARL. The Ranger SNARLS back, baring his teeth.

The two werewolves face off and LEAP at each other. They collide mid-air. TEETH and CLAWS RIP through fur and flesh.

The werewolves roll and tumble, lunge and retreat as they fight for their lives. They attack again and again.

Finally Emma falls onto her back. Blood runs from dozens of wounds and mud cakes her fur.

The Ranger LEAPS at Emma, but suddenly DOMINIC (in grey werewolf form) CRASHES into the Ranger, tackling him away from Emma.

Dominic and the Ranger face off. They CHARGE at each other and attack in blur of SNAPPING JAWS, RIPPING CLAWS and TEARING FLESH.

Neither werewolf is able to gain an advantage until...

EMMA

ATTACKS the Ranger from behind. She RIPS OUT his HINDQUARTERS, hamstringing him. The Ranger slips and falls backwards.

DOMINIC

DIVES FORWARD and RIPS THE RANGER'S STOMACH open. The Ranger tries to climb to his feet, but his GUTS slip out of his stomach and he collapses.

Emma and Dominic stand over the Ranger panting. The Ranger WHINES in submission and turns to Dominic.

Emma BITES DOWN AND TEARS THE RANGER'S THROAT OUT. Blood pours into the earth and the Ranger falls back, dead.

Emma and Dominic nuzzle each other in wolf form. They trot over to Jessica, blood dripping from their jaws.

Emma leans over Jessica and LICKS her face. Slowly Jessica comes around. She reaches out to the wolves.

JESSICA

Emma?

Emma HOWLS at the moon and runs off into the night. Dominic HOWLS and chases after her.

EXT. LAKE HAVOC - DAWN

Emma sleeps naked, in human form, on a pile of pine needles. Cuts and bruises tattoo her face.

THE CAMERA RISES revealing an arm draped over her shoulder. Dominic lies on the ground, spooning her.

THE CAMERA RISES HIGHER as the two young lovers sleep together, innocent as babes in the wood.

FADE TO:

EXT. BUTLER HOUSE - LATER

The Sheriff pulls up to his house. He climbs out of the cruiser and walks inside.

INT. BUTLER KITCHEN - DAY

The Sheriff takes off his hat as he enters the room. He spots Helen at the kitchen table, weeping with Jessica at her side.

SHERIFF

I can't find them anywhere...

Helen points to a letter on the kitchen table.

HELEN

They left this upstairs.

He crosses to the table and picks up the letter.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESOLATE HIGHWAY, ARIZONA - DAY

A lonely road cuts through this barren desert landscape. A Jeep speeds towards us, kicking up a plume of dust behind it.

INT. DOMINIC'S JEEP - DAY

Dominic drives. He's unshaven and tired. He keeps checking his REARVIEW MIRROR. Emma leans against his shoulder and smiles up at him.

DOMINIC

What are you smiling about? You know they're going to come looking for us.

EMMA
So we'll keep moving.

DOMINIC
You don't get it. We're on the run
now. We need new names. New
identities. We have to disappear.

EMMA
I don't care as long as we're
together. And...

DOMINIC
And what?

EMMA
(shrugs)
I always wanted to travel.

Dominic laughs and kisses her.

DOMINIC
God, I love you.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESOLATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Dominic's Jeep speeds past an old sign peppered with bullet
holes and the words...

MEXICO 10 MILES

The Jeep disappears into the sunset and a WOLF steps into
frame, silhouetted against the dying sun.

The moon rises over the horizon and the wolf HOWLS.

FADE TO BLACK.