

INTO THE FOREST

original horror screenplay by

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A terrified young WOMAN tears bare-foot through a forest of massive broad-leaved trees. Her appearance is pre-history; hide and simple cloth. Her hair long and flowing.

She knows the land; her direction changes at recognised trees. Anguished glances behind; the ground thumps to the beat of a huge yet swift pursuer splaying the canopy.

CLOSE ON her FEET- deftly *avoiding* stepping on ROOTS. The thumping sounds recede and she takes a breath behind a tree she again avoids touching. CLOSE IN as she feels for a LEATHER POUCH and we glimpse a WOODEN WEDGE.

A rustling noise turns her. In the middle distance, an old man and a girl of perhaps eighteen.

MAN

Quri esi juwes begti apo ji?

(Why are you running from him?)

GIRL

Prasau!!

(Please!!)

There's no choice here, the woman shakes her head, tears in her eyes. The man is aghast.

GIRL

Ne. NE! NE! NEEEE!

(No. NO! No! NOOOO!)

A twist in the girl's voice; in a fluid series of movements two life-sized WHEELS of bound branches rear up from behind, framing them like the *Vitruvian man*, from which LIVING TWINE binds their limbs and forms nooses round their necks.

The wheels *grow in circumference*- stretching the incumbents tight. The captives wail- the man's face turns bright red and his eyes bulge at the tightening ligature, then a sickening SNAP and his head pings up and off to the ground in a spurt of blood, his body twitching.

GIRL

AAARRRGHHH!!!

It's too much, the woman turns away. Five distinct SNAPS and

a thud. She HAS to look: the girl's head, hands and feet remain tied to the wheel, her body is on the ground. A heavy THUD and a shift in the shadows- it's there! The woman tears through the forest, bouncing off trees and tripping over roots at which the chasing thuds become closer.

EXT. THE WALL - FOLLOWING

2

She comes to a massive STONE WALL! Fully twenty foot tall with a deep bramble-filled DITCH. She doesn't break stride, running parallel and searching the thin line of sky above the wall. She sees it! A massive BRANCH stretching out beyond all others over the wall.

EXT. THE TREE - FOLLOWING

3

She frantically places the wood wedges into pre-cut HOLES running up the TRUNK, creating steps. The thuds near- hugging the trunk, she climbs!

The branch is forty foot high! Thick enough she can walk it. Beyond the wall the trees are PINE. She readies herself... then an earth shuddering thud shakes the branch and she falls! She grasps at it- dangling now, right over the ditch on the outer side- a sea of murderous brambles below! With all her will she pulls herself up with-

WOMAN

Aaaarrggghh!!!

Wraps round the branch. Pulls herself along like a caterpillar. Near the branch's end, she crouches- her arms outstretched for balance. A bushy PINE her target.

One...two...

Then a sickening WRENCHING SOUND and the whole branch moves up and back towards the forest- the monster is pulling the entire tree out of the ground!

It's NOW! She JUMPS!!!

CUT TO BLACK.

In the void, another visceral wrenching sound- the thickest trunk being torn asunder in violent anger.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE ROOM - DAY

4

A mass of POST GRADS piling into a tiered, old-school lecture theatre.

We INTERCUT between the lecture theatre and...

INT. CAMPUS INDOOR FOOTBALL ARENA - DAY

5

A competitive, physical five-a-side game.

MENA MILLS, twenty two, fit and fast, running down the line, shouts for the ball.

LECTURE THEATRE -- A stampede of feet on the wooden tiers echoes around the venerable space.

FOOTBALL ARENA -- The ALPHA PLAYER on the opposition sizes Mena up.

-- As the last students take their seats, a hush of charged anticipation pervades.

-- The alpha makes a SLIDING TACKLE, which Mena deftly jumps.

-- A handsome (and knows it) LECTURER enters the stage. Cords, brogues and elbow-patch jacket, very much enjoying the attention.

-- The prone alpha looks on, as Mena SMASHES the ball into the net. Her sweaty yet effortlessly gorgeous team-mate, SARA GOMEZ, embraces her.

SARA GOMEZ

Come on!!

-- The lecturer clears his throat in the packed silence.

-- Mena offers a hand-up to the alpha, but jogs off when he accepts. Rinsed! As he rises, she glances back, a MILITARY TATTOO on his arm catching her eye. This is TWEED TOMKINS. Sara jealously clocks this interaction.

LECTURER (V.O.)(PRELAP)

We can access pretty much any location we want, in any country we choose....

We END INTERCUT and...

CUT TO:

INT. UNI LECTURE ROOM - DAY

6

A huge WHITE SCREEN holds the title, 'GEO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND CARTOGRAPHY (masters)'

LECTURER

...without leaving our homes.

He CLICKS to start the POWERPOINT SHOW. A TECHNICOLOUR EARTH hones into view, gently spinning as it fills the screen.

INT. CAMPUS MULTI-SPORTS HALL - DAY - SAME

7

Mena, Sara, and goalie NATHAN PHILIPS (tall, bookish, bespectacled), slinging KIT BAGS over their shoulders.

MENA MILLS

You still up for Gino's later?

NATHAN PHILIPS

I might be a little late.

Right on cue, Tweed passes - specimen!

SARA GOMEZ

You gonna invite the Royal Army? He could use a friend, with the disadvantage of such terrible looks.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Who?

MENA MILLS

I'll see you later!

INT. UNI LECTURE ROOM - DAY - LATER

8

Mena tries to creep in, but the ancient CREAKING DOOR won't allow it. The interrupted lecturer fixes her a look. Sheepishly dumps her KIT BAG on an end seat.

LECTURER

Street mapping allows us to view places we might otherwise never see, and experience cities, landscapes and cultures in such an immersive way, we may not feel the need to go there for real!

The screen flashes images of StreetView, geo mapping, route plans. The students are HIS audience.

LECTURER

The world has shrunk at the hands of the web. We take for granted everywhere on the planet is explored, charted and mapped and made accessible to us, online.

Maps of near continental-sized land masses appear - North, then South America, Greenland, Eastern Europe, North Africa - in each slide areas blocked out in BLACK catch the eye.

Mena fishes a pretty NECKLACE from her pocket. From it, hangs a small SILVER FOOTBALL.

LECTURER

After all, everywhere has been mapped, hasn't it? There are no corners of our planet that we haven't been to, no places that can possibly remain hidden to us... right?

The money-shot: All the black holes fall next to each other. Jigsaw pieces that will never fit.

LECTURER

These black holes on our planet's surface have never been mapped.

The slides switch on his click.

LECTURER

Patagonia. Beautiful. On many peoples bucket list to visit before they kick it. Chilean Patagonia is largely unmapped. Yeah, surprising, isn't it? It's remote, has altitude, real cold. Fair enough... Only the Himalayas are higher and colder. They're mapped.

click.

Further up now, and we enter the Brazilian rainforest where there's a tract of deepest darkest jungle the size of Austria, in which no humans are allowed access. Why? Because it's home to several indigenous tribes, most of whom have never had contact with these strange Portuguese-speaking new kids in town... As such, this region is unmapped. Let's go

where the toilet flushes the right way...

click.

Greenland, to the world's largest national park on the northern edge. It's an inhospitable place, for sure, but you'd think every inch of Greenland would be charted. Just recently, several islands were discovered. They'd always been there. We hadn't. Got your passports?

click.

Eastern Russia, the Kamchatka peninsula. The size of California. Up until the fall of the Soviet Union, you could only visit with military clearance. There are more bears than people.

click.

Here's a doozy. This one's the odd one out. We're still in Russia, folks, but we're going to a forest contained within the arctic Boreal Tiaga. Again, it's very remote, and it's private land... Got your attention now! This forest, all 3380 hectares, is surrounded by a wall.

Mena looks up.

LECTURER CONT.

No one's allowed access. The place has never been mapped. Why? Draw your own conclusions... Down into The Sahara - although any desert will do - these places can't be accurately mapped...

The Lecturer's words FADE, as...

CLOSE ON -- Mena circles and underlines words she's written in her NOTE BOOK, 'Russian Tiaga. Private - not mapped! W-A-L-L-E-D...'

In a reverie, she underlines the last word repeatedly, while reaching automatically for the football charm.

FADE TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

9

A group of KIDS playing football. Between two rolled-up jumpers stands TEN-YEAR-OLD MENA. Muddy knees, plaster on her elbow, proper tom-boy. She makes a good save.

Behind her, an old imposing WALL marks the park's edge. Thick with ivy and moss, at odds with the manicured open space.

She hears rustling beyond the wall. The game approaches. She's torn between the arriving shooter and the noises behind. She parries the shot over the wall.

SHOOTER (O.S.)

Nice one, Mena! We'll never get that back.

OTHER KID (O.S.)

C'mon... let's go.

The others recede. Mena stands before the huge wall.

YOUNG MENA

(to herself)

It's my ball.

Starts to climb. It's perilous. She slips occasionally, bloody scrapes and cuts for her efforts. At the top she sees the ball which is slowly ROTATING on the ground.

EXT. OVERGROWN SPACE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

10

Mena jumps down, runs to the spot, but the ball's vanished.

SARA GOMEZ (O.S.)(PRELAP)

Mena... Mena!

INT. GINO'S BAR - EVENING

11

Mena's staring into space.

SARA GOMEZ

Mena!

MENA MILLS

Huh?

SARA GOMEZ

You USB or bluetooth?

MENA MILLS

Huh?

Nathan approaches, a TRAY of BEER and CHASERS in hand.

SARA GOMEZ

You need recharging.

MENA MILLS

(snapping out of it)
Here's to the irrepressible,
unstoppable...

NATHAN PHILIPS

Un-shutup-able...

MENA MILLS

Un... drinkable...

SARA GOMEZ

'Undrinkable'?

MENA MILLS

As in you can't be out-drunked...
Out... dr-

NATHAN PHILIPS

You can drink anyone under the table
is, I think, what she's trying to say.

MENA MILLS

Yes. That! Here's to the newly
qualified nurse... who will be the
sexiest in uniform since...

They're all a bit blank at this. Eventually...

NATHAN PHILIPS

Barbara Windsor?

A beat, and they roll about. They down the chasers. Mena spots Tweed at the bar. He raises his glass. Sara notices.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Addenbrookes isn't gonna know what's
hit them!

Sara produces a packet of CIGARETTES and LIGHTER and rises.

SARA GOMEZ

Nathan's ripping up trees at the

University botanical gardens.
 (off Nathan's look)
 Darling, it's not meant literally.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)
 I'm now free to treat the great un-
 privately-catered-for... Now it's your
 turn, Mena. How do you make a living
 out of being a map nerd?

She exits. Mena scans for Tweed, but he's no longer there.

MENA MILLS
 Cartographer.

EXT. GINO'S - EVENING 12

Against a wall, Sara pulls on her fag and flicks it away. She
 wipes tears and scratches at SELF-HARM WEALS on her arm.

INT. MENA'S ROOM - EVENING 13

Mena at her DESK. Ordinary, but for a set of authentically
 old RUSSIAN DOLLS in a descending row.

She leans into her LAPTOP, her football necklace hanging
 loose. She taps away...

CLOSE ON -- 'Private unmapped forest in Russia'

The search engine returns no results. She thinks, types:

'Walled forest, Russian Tiaga'

The search engine returns, 'Okunevo Tsilma Tiaga', its
 location, but no other information.

Mena types, 'images of Okunevo Tsilma Tiaga'

It returns satellite images of thick forest canopy. Could be
 anywhere. She spots a sepia photo of a very large wall
 weaving its way through thick forest. The photo's old, the
 quality poor but the wall still looks ancient.

The impassive doll faces flicker in the laptop light.

INT. CAMPUS COFFEE BAR - DAY 14

Mena is TEXTING with 'Nathan'.

CLOSE ON -- their exchange...

Mena: 'It's in Russia- called Okunevo Tsilma Tiaga'

Nathan: 'A walled forest?'

Mena: 'In the middle of the Boreal Tiaga'

Nathan: 'I'll check the uni database - see what Cambridge can tell us about your hidden forest x'

MENA MILLS

'Hidden'?

TWEED TOMKINS (O.S.)

Hello!

Mena looks up, slightly startled.

MENA MILLS

Oh... oh, hi! Hello... Yes... er...

TWEED TOMKINS

You busy? I can...

MENA MILLS

No. No! Please... I was just...

Tweed sits opposite. Mena unceremoniously closes her laptop and notepad.

TWEED TOMKINS

I'm Tweed. Tweed Tomkins.

MENA MILLS

Mena. 'Tweed'?

TWEED TOMKINS

My name is Harris.

MENA MILLS

'Harris Tweed'. Ah...

TWEED TOMKINS

It's a regiment thing. Actually, it was an officer thing. In fact, it was a white public school thing. It's stuck now, so...

Mena glances at his shoulder.

TWEED TOMKINS

My tat. 22 R-E.

She's weighing this up.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

You recognised it, during the game.

MENA MILLS

My dad was in 24 Commando.

TWEED TOMKINS

That's part of 3 Commando - bad
hombres!

Mutual coffee sips.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

'Mena'?

MENA MILLS

My mum's Russian. Was Russian. She
died when I was ten.

TWEED TOMKINS

Er... Are you competitive generally,
or just playing football?!

She touches her charm.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

Look, uh... Would you like to get a
drink sometime? I know this bar.
Gino's. Bit of a drunken crowd, but
it's easy to find...

INT. MENA'S ROOM - NIGHT

15

Mena doing her date-face with Sara, whose pouring VODKA and a
threat of COKE.

MENA MILLS

Don't know why I'm letting you dose me
before my date.

SARA GOMEZ

Gotta make you appealing.
(off Mena's look)
You're all frumpy and sensible when
you're sober. You need loosening up a
little. It'll work, trust me.

MENA MILLS

Hmm. Don't want him to think I'm a

lush.

SARA GOMEZ

What do you want him to think?

As usual, Mena bites on Sara's command, but swallows her words at Sara's painfully insecure face.

MENA MILLS

Sara, you're my best friend.

SARA GOMEZ

Do not presume...

Sara shuns Mena's hug. Regret follows.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)

Are you sure this is what you want?
Are you certain this is who you are?

MENA MILLS

It was one night-

SARA GOMEZ

You need someone who can make you
happy. Someone who knows you...
intimately.

The sexual tension has ratcheted up several notches.

MENA MILLS

Sara... One night. It was one night
of... madness.

Saved by an email PING on Mena's laptop.

SARA GOMEZ

(to herself)

'Madness' was it?

CLOSE ON -- an email from Nathan,

'Hey... soooooo... quite the enigma, the Okunevo....'

Leading to two IMAGES of the forest. One, a THERMAL satellite image. The other, a TOPOGRAPHIC map.

Mena dials. Nathan picks up.

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)

Ha! Knew you'd call!

MENA MILLS

There's a fault line.

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)

There is?

MENA MILLS

The topographic map shows a large fault line - a cliff running north-east to south-west. And there's a river!

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)

Yeah, the Copernicus Sentinel satellite picked it up as part of a wider series of images to track the ice movements in the arctic.

Mena's glued to the screenshots.

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)

The weird thing is... the river isn't anywhere else.

MENA MILLS

What do you mean?

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)

Thermal images outside the walled forest show no river. Either both its source and end are within the forest, or it's an underground river outside.

MENA MILLS

It's as if the wall were built to surround it.

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)

Yeah, well, I'm having less luck in sourcing info on the forest make-up. By which, I mean no luck at all. No photos, records. It's like no one's been there.

SARA GOMEZ

Why would anyone want to go there?

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)

Then why the wall? And how big is it?

MENA MILLS

I found one old photo. Like *old*. It looked about fifteen foot.

SARA GOMEZ

In the trade, that's known as a 'fuck-off-and-leave-me-alone' wall.

Mena's phone BUZZES. A text from 'Tweed'.

MENA MILLS

Oh fuuuuck, I'm late!

Sara's inward triumph is obvious.

INT. GINO'S BAR - EVENING

16

They are seated in a corner BOOTH, sharing a BOTTLE of WINE.

MENA MILLS

Where are you stationed?

TWEED TOMKINS

I'm no longer Army. I work for myself.

Mena acknowledges, but offers nothing more.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

I'm, um, a caver by profession.

MENA MILLS

Oh, really?

TWEED TOMKINS

I run corporate team-building days. We set up actors in a cave system to scare and test fight-or-flight scenarios. I take the suits down and watch the fun unfold!

MENA MILLS

That sounds brutal.

TWEED TOMKINS

Blue chip orgs pay handsomely to see their finest brought down a peg!

MENA MILLS

Why are you at the university?

Her abruptness intrigues him.

TWEED TOMKINS

Conditioning. Got a mapping expedition coming up. Babysitting execs pays the bills but doesn't keep me fit.

MENA MILLS

Mapping?

TWEED TOMKINS

In Russia, actually. Underground mapping. Central Urals.

Mapping got her attention, only for her to flip to distant in the blink of an eye.

TWEED TOMKINS

Uhum... er... Someone wants to extract minerals or ore- iron, cobalt, plantinum. Or exploit the caves for tourism. Or to settle land disputes... They call me in. I kit up, go down and map the system.

MENA MILLS

Sounds...

TWEED TOMKINS

Physically, it's pretty demanding.

A heavy pause.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

What are you reading... at Uni?

MENA MILLS

I'm doing my masters. Geo Technology and Cartography.

TWEED TOMKINS

Cartography?!

MENA MILLS

It gets weirder.

TWEED TOMKINS

Huh?

MENA MILLS

My dissertation is on a tract of unmapped land in northern Russia.

TWEED TOMKINS
In the boreal tiaga.

MENA MILLS
Yes.

TWEED TOMKINS
With a large wall around it...

MENA MILLS
The Okunevo!

TWEED TOMKINS
The Okunevo!

Mena is suitably stunned!

MENA MILLS
How...

TWEED TOMKINS
It's pretty infamous among Royal
Engineers. An 'impregnable' wall? No
self-respecting *wedge* is having that!

MENA MILLS
Sorry... 'impregnable'?

TWEED TOMKINS
There's no way in.

MENA MILLS
What do you mean, 'no way in'?

TWEED TOMKINS
There's no door. Just a huge wall with
a ditch like a... a sort of dry moat
around it. Pretty formidable, as walls
go.

MENA MILLS
No door. 'Fuck-off-and-leave-me-
alone'.

TWEED TOMKINS
Pardon?!

MENA MILLS
Sorry, something a friend said. How do
you know...

TWEED TOMKINS
Like I said, it's pretty infamous.

MENA MILLS

Is there no way in?

TWEED TOMKINS

Sure. It makes no sense to build a wall without a door. The thing is, it's way too remote. You're talking over a several hundred miles from civilisation. You gotta want to go there! That country is very inhospitable, very difficult to get to. Why would anyone want to get in?

MENA MILLS

Why would anyone want to build a wall around it?

TWEED TOMKINS

Some people can be very paranoid about privacy.

Tweed refills.

MENA MILLS

The wall's huge! And there's no door! That's taking paranoia to a new level.

He shrugs. They sip.

MENA MILLS

When is your mapping trip?

TWEED TOMKINS

I leave in two days.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

17

A SKINNY HARE pulls at some tough grass. A cold wind blows through the forest pines. Sensing something, he stops and peers into the forest.

A LOW HUM emanates from somewhere deep inside, as we are slowly DRAWN towards the impenetrable body of trees.

EXT. HOSPITAL SMOKING SHELTER - DAY

18

Sara's on smoko. Her phone registers a MESSAGE from 'Desperate Doctor'.

CLOSE ON -- 'You haven't responded to my offer to join me in the Cotswolds this weekend? We'll have my cottage all to

ourselves XX'

Her fag-butt takes the full force of her distaste under her shoe. A couple of GUYS are laughing at some memes on a PHONE.

NURSE 1

Oh, that's absolutely gross!

NURSE 2

You're trained in blood and guts! This is your canvas.

NURSE 1

Not animals!

NURSE 2.

Pussy. Sara, tell me what this is, or used to be...

As he shoves his phone in her face..

SARA GOMEZ

Boys, if my face doesn't say 'fuck off', I'm doing it wrong... Wait-wait... Show me again...

She GRABS the phone. The image is sepia. Thick woodland. A large animal carcass, ripped open mostly hanging from a tree, with the remains on the ground. In the background... a large WALL.

EXT. UNI CAMPUS - DAY

19

Mena pulls up on her BIKE. Spots Tweed loading kit into a 4X4. She makes to call but he gets in and drives off.

A PING on her phone. Picture message from Sara - the image of the carcass in front of the wall.

INT. BIOLOGY FACULTY, ANIMAL HOUSING - DAY

20

Mena wandering through what looks like an urban petting zoo, but the 'PUNTERS' are wearing white lab-coats.

A TUTOR is holding up the undignified aspects of a LEMUR to her assembled STUDENTS.

PROFESSOR ASTON

So you see, pendulous, completely external and enlarged clitoris. Perhaps necessarily so, given the

female mates for little more than two days in the year! Be gentle, please.

Spotting Mena, she hands the bemused mammal to a cooing pose of students. They walk to a quiet corner.

PROFESSOR ASTON

That was quite the picture you sent.
Where is it taken?

MENA MILLS

Russia, I believe. In the Boreal
Tiaga. Semi permafrost climate.

PROFESSOR ASTON

(Producing her PHONE from her lab
coat pocket)
Well, first of all, this is not semi
permafrost. Look at the trees!

MENA MILLS

But the location...

Off the professor's quizzical look..

MENA MILLS

Never mind... What do you make of the
carcass, professor?

PROFESSOR ASTON

It's rather dramatic, isn't it?

MENA MILLS

Yes, I suppose...

PROFESSOR ASTON

Mena, is this a joke? Did someone put
this together in Photoshop?

MENA MILLS

No, I don't think so... Why?

She removes her SPECTACLES for emphasis.

PROFESSOR ASTON

Mena, this doesn't happen in nature.
The carcass is mostly in the tree.
It's too big to have been dropped by a
bird. No animal could or would have
flung it up there. Why would they need
to? And... the quality isn't great...

MENA MILLS

It's an old photo.

PROFESSOR ASTON

Yes. Well, no animal eats that way. It's been... eviscerated, in the most random, violent manner. Carnivores, even scavengers, take great care in their eating. This has been done with something else in mind.

INT. CAMPUS MULTI-SPORTS HALL - NIGHT

21

Slinging her KIT BAG on her shoulder Mena hears a shout from the football pitch, glances over, searching a little too keenly. Of course he's not there.

INT. MENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

22

Mena's fallen asleep at her DESK. On her LAPTOP SCREEN, a MAP of RUSSIA. On a NOTEPAD, she's rough-drawn the WALL. The silver football charm loose on the desk. As we SLOWLY PUSH IN on it, we...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. THE WALL - DUSK

23

DREAM SEQUENCE. Mena is strolling through thick woods. On the path ahead, a BALL. She smiles as to an old friend. As she nears, it rolls off the path into the trees.

She looks for it- It's on the path where she started. It starts to spin slowly. This registers confusion, then recognition.

A LOUD KNOCKING. The ball spins faster.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MENA'S ROOM- NIGHT

24

Mena wakes with a start. A BANGING on her DOOR. Disorientated, adjusting as...

DORMITORY MATE (O.S.)

Mena! You awake? Mena? Urgh...

FOOTSTEPS RETREATING.

Something in her hand: the tiny football GLINTS in the laptop

light, as the dream comes back to her. Some inward compunction makes her type, 'Linworth Park' into GOOGLE MAPS.

LAPTOP -- A small urban park appears. She clicks the STREET VIEW icon and DRAGS it to the park ENTRANCE.

We see the neat, open space she played football as a kid. She SCANS right. The old, forbidding wall and beyond it the thick woods where the ball was lost.

Mena TABS along the ROAD looking for an entrance sign. Nothing. Tabs BACK to MAP VIEW. There, written over the green space...

'Tishina Woods'

She split-screens with the sepia image of Okunevo Tsilma Tiaga. Studies the two images, looking for a connection. In a NEW TAB, types, 'Land Registry of Russia'.

After trying to make sense of the translated site, she clicks on a tab marked 'By map'. A MAP of Russia appears, split into states with the respective capital marked. She clicks on the largely sparse region containing the Okunevo.

The region fills the screen, now split into land-owned tracts. She clicks on one. The name of the land, and a list of owners, starting with the current.

She clicks on a couple, the dates they were in possession, an address for contact. She clicks on the Okunevo...

'LAND: Okunevo Obnesennoye Stenoy Tsarstvo'

'OWNER: Dinastiya Molchat'

Not much to go on. The Russian dolls stare her down, seeing into her psyche. Almost by command, she enters, 'UK LAND REGISTRY'. Plays the same game with 'Tishina Woods'. A beat...

'Ganzorig Holdings, Ulaanbaatar.'

WTF?

MENA MILLS

'Ulaanbaatar'? Where the heck is...
Mongolia?!

She's spiraling down the rabbit hole. Types 'Ganzorig Holdings'...

A perfunctory web page announces, 'Ganzorig Enterprises and Holdings. Managed by Ganzorig Law and Partners.' Below, a small list of whom they represent. Mena scans the Russian and Mongolian names. Then stops, near the bottom...

'Molchat'

MENA MILLS

That can't... be...

She sits back, dumbfounded. Pulls up the maps of Okunevo and Tishina.

MENA MILLS

The Molchat dynasty own Okunevo... and
Tishina woods is registered to...
their law firm?

On a hunch, she grabs her PHONE and types, 'Tishina Russian translation'.

It returns... 'Silence'.

She's feeling for the little silver charm again.

INSERT

10 year old Mena returning from the park walking back to her HOUSE. As she nears we FOCUS ON the KITCHEN WINDOW.

END INSERT

At her desk, Mena regards the Russian dolls, then clicks on the EMAIL LINK for Ganzorig Law. types..

Subject: *Visit to Okunevo Tsilma Tiaga.*

EXT. UNI CAMPUS - NIGHT

25

Mena heading to the sports complex. Her phone 'pings'; a WhatsApp message from Tweed.

'Can you talk?'

She dials.

INTERCUT WITH --

EXT. RUSSIAN HIGHWAY / 4X4, MOVING - NIGHT

26

Tweed's on hands-free.

TWEED TOMKINS
Hey! I was just think-

MENA MILLS
Look, something has-

MENA MILLS
Sorry! You first.

TWEED TOMKINS
I was literally driving to the airport
when I got an urgent email. I pulled
over- I mean it's literally just come
through- I needed to tell you straight
away!

MENA MILLS
Tell me what?!

TWEED TOMKINS
It's from the regional government in
Krasnoyarsk-

MENA MILLS
(to herself)
'Krasnoyarsk'?

INSERT --

Mena's screen showing the map of Russia, CLOSE IN on the
region with the Okunevo- the capital: Krasnoyarsk.

TWEED TOMKINS (O.S.)
You're not going to believe this!
They're going to apply for the Okunevo
to be shortlisted for a UNESCO World
Heritage site!

MENA MILLS
What?! Like Stonehenge?

TWEED TOMKINS
Exactly like Stonehenge! They want the
wall surveyed for structural damage.

MENA MILLS
And they've asked you?

TWEED TOMKINS
I was a Royal Engineer! It's what I
did in the army, Mena. It's on my
website- they must have looked. I'm
having the kit I'll need shipped from
England... That'll take a month to get

together, so I kinda thought, since I
have some time on my side...

MENA MILLS

Yeah?

TWEED TOMKINS

I wondered if you're dancing?

MENA MILLS

Are you asking?

TWEED TOMKINS

I'm asking.

MENA MILLS

Then I guess I'm dancing!

Mena's luck is undeniable, yet her euphoria is subdued.

EXT. INSIDE THE WALL - NIGHT

27

Looking over an expanse of forest, the tree line just visible
against the night sky. An uneasy stillness pervades.

INT. GINO'S BAR - EVENING

28

Mena and Sara are nursing tall drinks at a corner BOOTH.

MENA MILLS

A week today.

Sara shakes her head through her straw.

MENA MILLS (CONT.)

C'mon! You said yourself you have
loads of leave to take!

SARA GOMEZ

My line manager is literally
threatening to ban me from the
hospital if I don't take some. But
Russia? I mean...*Russia*?!! It's St.
Tropez in the Summer Darling! Or
Capri.

Mena takes her friend's hand.

MENA MILLS

We'll need you. I'll need you.

Drinking in Mena's touch, Sara uses all her will to gently withdraw her hand.

SARA GOMEZ

Is this to do with your mum?

MENA MILLS

How..why? What do you mean? Of course not! It's a trip-

SARA GOMEZ

I'm sorry, It's just, You've...

MENA MILLS

Yes..?

Mena is fiddling with her charm.

SARA GOMEZ

You've been doing that an awful lot lately.

MENA MILLS

(Suddenly very self-conscious)
What? I er...em...

SARA GOMEZ

It's OK. I understand. Well, I don't. But I think you feel a connection to your Mother's country. Or something like that.

MENA MILLS

This hasn't got anything to do with my Mum! It's a chance for us to visit a truly unique bio-system that's-

SARA GOMEZ

-not been walked in for a thousand years...uhuh.

Mena is disarmed, making her more desirable.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)

You're gonna need medical support on an expedition like this. I'll be indispensable.

A heavy pause.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)

And Nathan will need sedatives for the plane.

MENA MILLS

And the car.

SARA GOMEZ

And the forest.

On cue Nathan arrives with a tray of drinks.

MENA MILLS

What are these?

NATHAN PHILIPS

Black Russians!

Suitably impressed, the three raise their glasses.

MENA MILLS

Here's to unchartered adventures!

NATHAN PHILIPS

You secured the owner's permission?

Mena hides her non-response through her drink.

NATHAN PHILIPS

The botanical department at Cambridge are massively excited by this project. To bring back cuttings of trees probably out-dating any in the known western world!

The girls share a private smile.

SARA GOMEZ

If sedatives don't work, there's always vodka.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Huh?

EXT. OPEN COUNTRY - SUNSET

29

Mena's walking through early spring fields with her DAD and his DOG. The sunset is fantastic.

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDENS - SAME TIME

30

Nathan and a COLLEAGUE are taking tree samples and keying data into a TABLET.

COLLEAGUE
OK, who's next?

NATHAN PHILIPS
Er, the Sessile Oak SO14007.

They scan the surrounds.

NATHAN PHILIPS
That big one there.

Nathan preps the screen, while his colleague takes a sample with a set of secateurs.

COLLEAGUE
He's a beauty.

NATHAN PHILIPS
'They'.

COLLEAGUE
Huh?

NATHAN PHILIPS
It's monoicous.

COLLEAGUE
So has both male and female flowers.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Hence, our friend here is gender fluid.

COLLEAGUE
Dick!

NATHAN PHILIPS
I sense you're not grasping the zeitgeist of the woke movement.

COLLEAGUE.
Oh, Svetlana has been again.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Huh?

COLLEAGUE.
She's left her calling card.

On the trunk, a CIRCLE has been carved, and within it a STICK FIGURE. Like a simplistic rendering of the Vitruvian Man.

NATHAN PHILIPS
What does it mean?

COLLEAGUE
She says this tree is Russian. That it belongs to the *tree spirit*... that it never should have come here.

NATHAN PHILIPS
How do you know all this?

COLLEAGUE
She's here quite often. I've chatted to her in her broken English. She's harmless, really.

NATHAN PHILIPS
How many trees has she disfigured?

COLLEAGUE.
Just this one. She often leaves a note...

He scans the trunk and spots a NOTE PINNED to the bark.

COLLEAGUE (CONT)
Yeah, here we are... Oh...

INT. ADDENBROOKES HOSPITAL WARD SIDE ROOM - SAME TIME 31

Sara's doing vitals on a TWELVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL wired to everything and comatose. Done, she takes in the pretty girl.

SARA GOMEZ
Oh, my Ekaterina, you're gonna knock 'em dead, if you can just pull through.

She straightens the bed cover, notices a piece of PAPER poking out. In the girl's hand is a PENCIL.

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDENS - SAME TIME 32

NATHAN PHILIPS
What? What does it say?

COLLEAGUE

Her notes usually say 'The tree is life' or 'The tree knows all' or 'My life to the tree'... Weird shit.

He shows the note to Nathan.

INT. ADDENBROOKES HOSPITAL WARD SIDE ROOM - SAME TIME 33

The paper is a mess of the same repeated drawing. The stick man inside a circle. Sara fails to notice the girl's head turning oh so slowly towards her.

EXT. BOTANICAL GARDENS - SAME TIME 34

COLLEAGUE

Looks like she finally lost her rubles.

The note says:

you will not return.

Something compels Nathan to look up; In the middle distance an OLD WOMAN wrapped in a HEADSCARF, watching.

INT. ADDENBROOKES HOSPITAL WARD SIDE ROOM - SAME TIME 35

Over the drawing, Sara looks right into the girl's dead-eyed stare.

EKATERINA

You will not return.

Sara's eyes are on stalks and she wants to get out but the girl's doll-stare follows her like the creepiest portrait.

EXT. MENA'S DAD'S HOUSE - FOLLOWING 36

Mena's getting in her CAR, when her dad comes out, the dog following. He hands her a serious-looking military-grade SATELLITE PHONE.

MENA'S DAD

I want you to take this. It's linked to a closed military satellite network. It'll work anywhere.

(off her nervous look)

Do not lose it.

MENA MILLS

But, Dad, I...

Her Dad's painfully concerned face stops her short. He reaches gently for her football charm, tears welling.

INT. MENA'S CAR, MOVING - NIGHT 37

Unnerved by his show of emotion, Mena watches her dad's empty wave in her rear-view mirror.

INT. MENA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 38

A large packed RUCKSACK on the bed. The GPS phone nearby, BOOTS on the floor. One last thing. She picks the smallest Russian doll and puts it deep in the rucksack.

EXT. PERM AIRPORT - DAY 39

The team exit the ARRIVALS TERMINAL to find Tweed leaning against a full-metal-jacketed 4x4.

EXT. PERM CITY LIMIT - FOLLOWING 40

We RISE up as the 4x4 leaves the main artery heading into open country, the vast Russian arctic circle stretching away.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY 41

They're passing through a densely forested valley, mountains on either side. In back with Sara, Nathan notices a bottle of VODKA poking out of her SHOULDER BAG.

EXT. WILDERNESS ROAD - DAY - LATER 42

The passengers asleep, Tweed pulls his COAT over Mena. Sara spies this through one un-blinking eye. They pass distant mountains, spruce forests and small, scattered settlements.

EXT. WILDERNESS ROAD - DAY - LATER 43

Tweed scans out his window, right into the face of an ARCTIC FOX. The fleeting meeting of eyes affects him.

EXT. VUKTYL - DUSK 44

Snow-covered outpost. A petrol station, a few houses and one honest-looking hotel. They pull in out front.

INT. BEDROOM CORRIDOR - DUSK

45

The four weary travellers come to their adjoining bedroom doors.

MENA MILLS
 (opening the DOOR)
 Last two rooms left?

TWEED TOMKINS
 Can you believe it?

SARA GOMEZ
 What's going on, the local snowman
 building competition?

TWEED TOMKINS
 I didn't have enough Russian to ask,
 and she didn't have enough English to
 say.

Mena opens and walks in as-

MENA MILLS
 At least it's warm.

Nathan looks down the drab corridor and double takes- a PICTURE at the end of the corridor; an old woman standing next to a large OAK tree. That *can't* be the old woman from the botanical gardens...?

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

46

A strip-lit functional café with wooden furniture and lots of lace. Quite busy. The four in a window booth poring over a MAP spread between empty PLATES and full BEERS.

TWEED TOMKINS
 We've done just shy of four hundred
 miles today. The same tomorrow to get
 to the cabin. Then around seventy-five
 on foot.

MENA MILLS
 A proper cabin in the woods, huh?

TWEED TOMKINS
 (his best redneck accent)
 Uh, yes, ma'am!

MENA MILLS

You best have some moonshine there,
John Boy.

TWEED TOMKINS

Rootin' tootin'!

The joviality attracts the attention of the locals. A passing WAITRESS takes in the laid-out map and blown-up SEPIA IMAGE of the Wall. A booth of LOCALS beckons her. They mumble conspiratorially.

TWEED TOMKINS

They're on to us.

SARA GOMEZ

They'll alert the Kremlin.

NATHAN PHILIPS

(Utterly missing the irony)
Wh-what do we do?

TWEED TOMKINS

Shouldn't take more than a week for
them to get here. We'd better move
fast.

He drains his beer and the others follow- Sara effortlessly besting Mena. But it's a beer too far for Nathan. No-one notices one of the locals on his mobile.

NATHAN PHILIPS

(turning green)
Oh...oh.....

And he runs out. Mena and Tweed look expectantly at Sara who casually rolls her eyes.

SARA GOMEZ

Uhuh.

Saunters past the watching locals like the no.1 attraction at a swingers party.

MENA MILLS

Caving is a peculiar career choice?

TWEED TOMKINS

I've caved all my life. Ever since I
fell down a well as a nipper. I tried
to climb out, got halfway, and the

wall fell through to a small natural cave. It was rock and... space... hidden. I can still remember the feeling. Like I was in Aladdin's cave... It was like living a dream for me. I loved it down there!

MENA MILLS

Weren't you scared?

TWEED TOMKINS

I was filled with wonder. I knew I was the first person to explore that place. It was mine. Mine alone. I could hear my dad frantically calling. The Fire Brigade brought me up kicking and screaming... What about you? You don't give off a unicorns and Barbie childhood.

Mena deftly produces a hench-looking HUNTING KNIFE, spins it mid-air, and flings it into the map, hitting the Okunevo dead centre!

INT. THE BOY'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME.

47

Sara is swigging from a vodka bottle while Nathan retches in the lav.

SARA GOMEZ

Two paracetamol and a pint of water and you'll be a new man in the morning.

Nathan looks up into the vodka bottle.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Oh....eurgh.....

INT. CAFE - SAME TIME

48

Locals share meaningful glances as Mena self-consciously picks the knife from the table.

MENA MILLS

Most of my childhood was spent in camouflage.

TWEED TOMKINS

Bad Hombre?

MENA MILLS

When I was a kid, I thought my dad was preparing me for World War Three. But I think he just wanted a boy...

She scans two DOORS on the end wall.

MENA MILLS

Do you think that says 'women'? I've not seen anyone go in.

TWEED TOMKINS

Fifty-fifty.

Mena heads off. Tweed illustrates empty beer glasses to the waitress. Distracted by the map, he fails to notice a POSSE OF LOCALS enter the café. The conspiratorial table point to him.

Through the posse, an aged woman in an elegant green and brown DRESS with a matching HEADSCARF, approaches. She looks professionally concerned.

She beckons Tweed to stand. Nonplussed he complies. She places some dried LEAVES on the table. She touches his neck, he flinches. She puts a finger to her mouth as though someone may hear. She crushes the leaves and rubs them round his neck, her eyes closed. A tear falls down her cheek. Tweed's properly freaked out.

ANGLE ON -- Mena comes out of the toilet.

MENA MILLS

What the fuck?

Through the crowd, she catches Tweed's eye. He opens his mouth but says nothing. The woman gently cups his face and shakes her head. Mena pushes through as the woman leaves with the whole café in tow. The waitress picks up the photo.

MENA MILLS

What was that?

WAITRESS

She tried to help.

MENA MILLS

Help who?

The waitress gestures to Tweed.

TWEED TOMKINS

I couldn't... I couldn't speak. When she was touching me.

MENA MILLS

What did that mean?

WAITRESS

She can't help him. No one can.

Mena snatches the photo.

WAITRESS

You won't come back.

MENA MILLS

You're damn right. This place is off the scale.

They exit.

WAITRESS

Not from here.

INT. THE BOY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

49

Nathan soundly asleep. Tweed in the foetal position, staring wide-eyed at the wall.

INT. THE GIRL'S ROOM - SAME TIME

50

Mena turns the photo in her hand and reaches for her charm with the scent of an un-grasped connection between the two.

EXT. INSIDE THE WALL - NIGHT

51

The ancient wooded landscape. Deafeningly silent. We focus on a densely packed vista of thick trunks. Slowly PULL IN until we...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL - MORNING

52

Bitterly cold. No one about. The four approach the 4x4.

TWEED TOMKINS

What the...

Each window has been completely covered in a neat BLANKET OF LEAVES, held together by small twigs like a patchwork.

MENA MILLS

Tweed.

TWEED TOMKINS

Yeah?

MENA MILLS

Let's get the fuck out of here.

EXT. WILDERNESS ROAD - DAY

53

They leave the village in silence. Each lost in uneasy thoughts.

LATER --

Mena and Nathan dozing. In the rear view mirror, Tweed locks eyes with Sara. He blinks first- she smiles inwardly. He clicks the RADIO and scrolls through Russian music and talk radio stations... until with relief he finds a country & western station. Mena wakes. Off her look

TWEED TOMKINS

Russian country and western. Who knew?

A beat as they chew their thoughts to the up-beat music. Sara pointedly puts on EARPHONES.

MENA MILLS

You OK?

(beat)

Do you wanna ta--

TWEED TOMKINS

(checking Sara is not listening)

You, er... said your mother passed when you were young?

Mena considers.

MENA MILLS

It was a long time ago.

A small outpost looms ahead to save the heavy silence.

EXT. OUTPOST PETROL STATION - DAY

54

Tweed's checking under the bonnet while an ATTENDANT fills her up. Nathan goes into a small CAFE. Mena watches him absently until several SEPIA PICTURES on the wall catch her eye. That can't be the wall? She gets out and heads across...

INT. PETROL STATION CAFE - DAY

55

Strip plastic wood-effect walls, cheap formica tables. A couple of LOCALS drinking tea. On the walls are several SEPIA IMAGES of people standing in front of the Wall;

CLOSE ON -- A group is standing over a large dead animal. It's been ripped apart, violently torn.

Another shows four women pointing at the wall, or more precisely over it. Stony, lifeless expressions.

In another, a man is perched on top of a wooden LADDER leaning against a large tree. He is pointing to a wooden circle containing the same depiction Nathan saw in the botanical garden; a stick figure, lashed to the circle by the limbs and neck.

Mena's reaching for a thought, a memory perhaps? The tea drinkers are staring at her. The hairs on her neck lift. Sara touches her shoulder - a MASSIVE jump scare!

MENA MILLS

FUCK!

SARA GOMEZ

JESUS!

EXT. WILDERNESS ROAD - NIGHT

56

Pushing on through a blizzard. It's hard going. The radio now offering only STATIC. Mena is lost in a troubled reverie.

EXT. REMOTE HUNTING LODGE - NIGHT

57

Dead of night. The 4x4 pulls up to a solid wooden lodge. A single dwelling in a never-ending wilderness.

INT. THE CABIN - NIGHT

58

Rustic open space, roaring fire, cosy. Mena comes down the stairs, to find Sara laughing with Tweed.

MENA MILLS

What have you two been talking about?

Tweed gives off sheepish. Sara couldn't have scripted it better.

SARA GOMEZ

I was complementing Mr Tomkins on the

size of his firearm... Well, I'm
bushed. I'll say nighty-night.

She saunters past Mena.

TWEED TOMKINS

She's quite the character.

MENA MILLS

She's a terrible flirt, but a great
friend.

TWEED TOMKINS

Certainly looks out for you. I got a
bit of a grilling!

This hangs uncomfortably a while. Tweed tends the fire. Mena
settles into an armchair, lost in the flames.

FADE OUT.

EXT. INSIDE THE WALL - DAY

59

Dream Sequence. Serene. Birdsong, trees gently rustling.
Mena, alone, walking.

She hears a BALL BOUNCE, can't place the sound. And again.
Puzzled, she looks about her. Down the path a way, the BALL,
gently spinning. As she approaches it, a rustling sound off
to her side catches her.

INT. THE CABIN, - NIGHT

60

She wakes, still in the armchair. Everyone's gone to bed. The
fire is still pretty sexy. Tweed's DAYSACK is open, she
casually flips through; Playing cards, torch, gloves, then...
a DIARY.

She flips it open and a couple of inconsequential BUSINESS
CARDS drop out, together with a folded paper.

CLOSE ON -- a LEGAL CONTRACT between the regional government
of Krasnoyarsk and Harris Tomkins, in which he will be paid
£750,000 to undertake a full structural survey of the wall
surrounding the Okunevo. Its drawn up by GANZORIG LAW.

Confused and troubled, Mena stares at the fire.

EXT. THE CABIN - DAY

61

The four are readying themselves for the trek. Mena helps

Nathan with his rucksack. He spots the HUNTING RIFLE strapped across Tweed's back.

SARA GOMEZ

In case one of us goes lame. It's kinder.

MENA MILLS

We're in a very remote part of the world, on the edge of the arctic tundra. There are very few people out here and way more animals.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Wha- I thought we brought food?

TWEED TOMKINS

To warn off. I won't be killing anything.

SARA GOMEZ

He's being coy. If Mena gets bitten by a wolf and starts salivating at the sight of your ankles, we're fucked.

She lights up.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)

Did you pack silver bullets, Tweed dearest?

A discernible pensiveness as they march away from the cabin.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAY

62

Rough terrain, no path. An even covering of snow, but the sun is out and they remove their coats.

LATER --

Solid, serious backpacks, a hunting rifle strapped to one, bob through thick snow-covered undergrowth.

LATER --

The snow is perceptibly thinner. Light laughter bounces off trees. They're loosening up.

Packs down, they've been resting a while. Every sound is enhanced by the natural forest sound-box.

MENA MILLS

We're heading north, right? Where's
the snow going?

Tweed shrugs at the absurdity of it. They chill in silence
until...

SARA GOMEZ

What supplies do we have?

TWEED TOMKINS

It's a day-and-a-half trek there. I'm
allowing two to get round the wall,
then back.

MENA MILLS

(slightly deflated)

Five days.

TWEED TOMKINS

I've packed for eight. You can never
be too careful.

He winks as they rise to go.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

63

Melting snow is dripping from leaves and branches. Mena ties
her top round her waist. Passing over an OUTCROP, she views
the route they travelled. Nothing but wilderness.

NATHAN PHILIPS

How far from the wall are we?

TWEED TOMKINS

Forty miles or so.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Who built it, and when?

Tweed's hacking at bramble with a MACHETE.

TWEED TOMKINS

If UNESCO are interested, it's gotta
be at least five hundred years old.

MENA MILLS

Try again.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Huh?

Following, Sara checks out Mena's arse.

MENA MILLS

The Russian land registry records go back a long way. A *long* way. But not long enough.

She's got Tweed's attention.

MENA MILLS (CONT.)

The Okunevo 'walled realm' is owned by the Molchat dynasty.

NATHAN PHILIPS

'Dynasty'?!'

MENA MILLS

They've been the sole owners since records began. In 1042.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Wh-What?

MENA MILLS

One owner. In a thousand years. It pre-dates the Domesday Book.

EXT. THE FOREST - EVENING

64

Sunset. Beautiful oranges and reds breaking through the ferns. They come across a series of stone plaques sticking out of the ground- it looks like a graveyard. Tweed leans in and brushes one.

MENA MILLS

What does it say?

TWEED TOMKINS

Its Russian.

Nathan clicks his fingers.

NATHAN PHILIPS

I have an app that'll tell us exactly what this says. It's brilliant. Can translate oral and written text.

He snaps the stone.

NATHAN PHILIPS

I run the photo through the app and...

'Turn your back'? 'Turn back',
presumably. It's a literal
translation. 'Chances run away'...

SARA GOMEZ
'Chance'. Last chance?

NATHAN PHILIPS
'Beyond is...'

MENA MILLS
Nathan?

NATHAN PHILIPS
'Him'.

SARA GOMEZ
Last chance to turn back. Or face...
HIM.

Mena goes to another.

MENA MILLS
It's the same inscription.

The four take in the meadow. All the stone plaques have the
same message.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Anyone else worried?

Tweed purposefully heads off.

SARA GOMEZ
Way to set the mood, Nathan.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Can anyone here speak Russian? You're
welcome.

LATER --

A welcome evening breeze lifts sagging shoulders. Mena takes
in the scenery and notices a thrush on a low branch, looking
where they are headed.

She follows its gaze like a pointer. Another bird, then
another, sit on branches nearby, all looking in exactly the
same direction.

LATER --

Camp set. Empty BILLY CANS by the small fire. Nathan's gone to bed. Sara and Mena hug a goodnight and Sara gets in her tent. Tweed pours COFFEE DREGS away as Mena joins.

TWEED TOMKINS

We made good progress.

MENA MILLS

Mm. I'm bushed! I could sleep right here...

Anyone gonna make a move? Nope.

MENA MILLS

Well, goodnight, then.

TWEED TOMKINS

'Night. Sleep well. I'll wake you at first light.

The space between them is charged. Mena retreats to her tent, unable to resist a look back. Tweed, desperate to do likewise, pokes wistfully at the dying embers.

INT/EXT. TWEED'S TENT / DEEP FOREST - NIGHT

65

Pitch black in Tweed's TENT. He opens his eyes wide. The sound of PADDED FEET outside. He pulls back his sleeping bag, reaches for his rifle, and gingerly UNZIPS the tent.

As the light adjusts, he sees a WOLF about ten feet away, looking right at him. He aims. Ready for an attack...But the wolf doesn't move. Crouching, as his eyes adjust to the dark, he sees another fifteen wolves.

An instant of panic, until he realises they aren't looking at him. He lowers the gun and follows their gaze... to THE WALL. As we are drawn into the black thick canopy, a low hum comes on.

INT. TWEED'S TENT - MORNING

66

His tent unzips and Mena pokes her head in. Tweed bolts up!

TWEED TOMKINS

HUH?!

MENA MILLS

JEEZ! Tweed- Hey, it's morning! You slept in, sleepy head.

TWEED TOMKINS
Wh-what time is it?

MENA MILLS
Seven thirty. I made coffee.

And retreats. He looks about the tent. WTF?

EXT. DEEP FOREST - MORNING - MOMENTS LATER

67

Tweed emerges, confused. Sara and Nathan are nursing hot tin mugs. Mena holds one out for him.

MENA MILLS
Er, it's here.

TWEED TOMKINS
We should go.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAY

68

Steam rising as morning dew is caught by sun rays through the canopy. Tweed moving fast, focused, yet somehow distracted. The rest struggling to keep up, but not wanting to question him.

He sees a weasel and double-takes as it seems to look in the direction they're taking. Dismisses it. Wherever he sees birds, they are unmistakably facing THE WALL. He's starting to struggle to deal with this, not sure where to look.

SUDDENLY --

MENA MILLS (O.S.)
Oh, fuck- OUCH!

Tweed spins a little too frantically.

TWEED TOMKINS
Mena! What is it?

She's fallen over, trying to extricate bramble from her boot.

MENA MILLS
It's... nothing... I just got caught on... Huh?

She kicks out at an unseen piece of wood.

SARA GOMEZ
What is it?

TWEED TOMKINS

It's a... Another sign of some sort.

He hacks at the bramble with his FIELD KNIFE, freeing the broad wooden plaque and wiping dried mud and leaves away.

Far more ornate than the grave stones. It's five foot across, three high. Carved words in another language. Not Russian. Bordering the words are symbols; Some are simple faces, crossed out, others of a figure with a thick wooden body.

All along the bottom are faces with open mouths and closed eyes. Beneath this...

NATHAN PHILIPS

Flames. Fire.

MENA MILLS

They look like they're screaming. What does it say?

NATHAN PHILIPS

(using the app)

It's not Russian. This is very, very old.

SARA GOMEZ

It's beautifully carved.

NATHAN PHILIPS

The relief is too weathered for the app to make out the words.

SARA GOMEZ

But why is it here? What does it mean?

TWEED TOMKINS

It looks like a warning. 'Stay away... Not safe... Keep out'.

Off her slightly alarmed look...

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

We're in an old land. Not much has changed here in hundreds of years.

As a full stop, he goes to leave.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

Is your foot OK?

MENA MILLS
Yeah... Yeah, sure it is.

Tweed offers an arm up, but Mena refuses, hiding a grimace.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DUSK

69

They walk on in silence. Mena's trouser leg ripped. An intensity in the air irritates them. They swat mosquitoes that aren't there, sweat dripping. A hissing, low hum ever present.

Tweed turns a thick bush aside and ahead... an avenue of sorts through the trees. Tied to every trunk is the circled stick figure motif. The sense of foreboding hits home.

Ahead, the never-ending canopy appears to lighten. Sky?! Tweed picks up the pace. Sara and Nathan follow.

Mena, hot and pissed off, becomes aware of dark shapes moving through the trees, tracking her. ELK. As many as twenty, ignoring her completely- walking and looking forwards. Freaked out, she bumps into the group.

MENA MILLS
Fuck- Tweed, look...

She trails off when she sees that they're staring at...

THE WALL.

Massive. At least TWENTY FOOT TALL. Imposing yet ancient, stretching away into the distance. A single line of clear sky marks it out in the otherwise complete canopy.

MENA MILLS
Tweed. Look.

The others register the elk; Standing stock still and staring at the wall. Nathan instinctively goes to run- Tweed grabs him and covers his cry. There's fear but also fire in Tweed's eyes.

TWEED TOMKINS
We're going to set camp right here.
Tomorrow we start.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - NIGHT

70

Tweed, alone, sits on a log, rifle across his lap, staring at the wall, troubled.

INT. MENA'S TENT - NIGHT 71

Mena in her sleeping bag, eyes piercing the roof of her tent, mind racing, hears Tweed moving about.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - NIGHT 72

She emerges, wearing a fleece top and, as Tweed can't help but notice, not much else.

MENA MILLS

(considers)

I was the one that found my mum's
body.

Tweed makes to offer a word or two, but thinks better of it. She addresses the wall.

MENA MILLS

I'd been playing...in the park.

INT. YOUNG MENA'S KITCHEN - DAY 73

Through the FROSTED GLASS of the kitchen DOOR, we hear the front door go.

MENA MILLS (V.O.)

I'd lost a..a ball.

We see the silhouette of Mena kicking off her muddy trainers.

YOUNG MENA (V.O.)

Before you shout, I'm taking my shoes
off!

Mena pushes through into the kitchen and stops dead- her breath caught in her mouth.

Mena's MUM is slumped over the sink, her head submerged and her FLAME-RED HAIR floating in the soapy water. She looks beautiful. Mena slowly approaches, takes her Mum's hand. It's cold.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - NIGHT 74

TWEED TOMKINS

Heart attack?

MENA MILLS

She never knew a thing. Everyone
thought fat middle-aged men own heart

failure. Just like my mum to buck the trend.

TWEED TOMKINS

How old?

MENA MILLS

Thirty-six. Dad was attached to the UN in Syria. I've always thought it a bit funny....It's really not. Dad was this serious soldier with medals and honour and courage, but Mum was the strong one. He was completely broken.

Mena is lost in memory, fiddling with her charm. Tweed notices.

MENA MILLS

She was a crazy mad Zenit Saint Petersburg fan!

TWEED TOMKINS

Is that where she was from?

Mena nods. He pokes some life into the embers of the fire.

MENA MILLS

She would get very animated when they played Spartak. She'd spit at the TV! Crazy woman. She bought me a football signed by the Zenit team for my tenth birthday.

TWEED TOMKINS

Wow!

MENA MILLS

Yeah. Dad had to use his contacts to get it, 'cause Mum wouldn't go back there. She always swore she'd never go back.

TWEED TOMKINS

To Saint Petersburg?

MENA MILLS

To Russia. When she was angry or drunk, she'd say, 'I won't be its toy, I won't be its toy', over and over.

TWEED TOMKINS

'Its toy'?

MENA MILLS

(shrugs)

She was military. Met Dad in Kosovo when they were UN peacekeepers, but she'd refuse point blank to talk about her life before. I liked to imagine she was a secret agent who'd defected... After she died, it helped me deal with the uncertainties of her past. Silly, really.

TWEED TOMKINS

Do you still have it? The ball?

Mena darkens instantly. She suddenly feels exposed, like she's being watched. Retreats to her tent.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - MORNING

75

Putting on rucksacks. Tweed searching Mena's face... in vain.

TWEED TOMKINS

We'll head north.

SARA GOMEZ

What are we looking for... exactly?

(off his look)

I mean, there isn't a door, right?

He considers, chewing his words.

TWEED TOMKINS

Best to have an open mind. But there is a way in. And we'll find it.

With a wink, he turns.

LATER --

Mena's POV as they walk... The wall, moving by them slowly, never ending, towering over, moss covered, wet in places.

It slopes slightly away, like the side of a mountain. At the base, it disappears into a deep and wide bracken-filled ditch, making it impossible to get close to it.

No noise. No bird song, even the trees are still. Expectant. Mena is chewing on something she can't hold in any longer.

MENA MILLS

Tweed. The animals... Did you notice--

TWEED TOMKINS

(without looking back)

Yeah.

LATER --

Hours later. They are hot and thirsty. Tweed driven.

SARA GOMEZ

Jeez... it doesn't change. We could be where we started. Let's take a break?

Watching Tweed continuously look for the entrance is exhausting. Sara produces her WATER BOTTLE. Nathan beckons a swig.

SARA GOMEZ

Not *this* bottle darling.

Mena absently notices FIVE LIGHTER STONES IN A COLUMN.

LATER --

They eat PROTEIN BARS. Tweed seems to be going through the motions.

SARA GOMEZ

(watching Tweed dispassionately)
Looks like Bear Grylls is running out of steam.

NATHAN PHILIPS

There has to be a way in- a door. I mean, look at it!

MENA MILLS

Ah, that's interesting.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Huh?

MENA MILLS

See the four lighter stones in a row. There...

SARA GOMEZ

(glances)
Yeah?

MENA MILLS

About an hour back there were five,
just like... that... in a...

LATER --

We are looking at three light stones in a column as the group arrive, breathless and energised.

MENA MILLS

What do you think it means?

Answered with broad smiles. The moment is broken by a distant WRENCHING sound. Like a tree being uprooted. Tweed and Nathan peer into the forest, Mena looks above the wall.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - DUSK

76

They've been chasing shadows all day.

TWEED TOMKINS

We're losing the light.

MENA MILLS

Damn.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Do you think we missed them?

TWEED TOMKINS

We'll camp here tonight.

He drops his pack and heads into the trees for wood. Another WRENCHING sound. Closer now, which unsettles Nathan.

Mena regards the top of the wall and swallows.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - NIGHT

77

More WRENCHING sounds cut the dead of night. They emerge.

SARA GOMEZ

What the fu-

Another VERY loud one, like a Redwood being ripped in two.

TWEED TOMKINS

That's right on the other side.

Adjusting his glasses, Nathan backs into the others as....

NATHAN PHILIPS

G-g-g-gun...

A pack of BROWN BEARS in the tree line, looking up at the top of the wall. Un-moving.

TWEED TOMKINS

Get in the tent. Slowly.

MENA MILLS

(incredulous)

Seriously?

TWEED TOMKINS

Just do it.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - MORNING

78

Packed... but not prepared.

TWEED TOMKINS

It's too dangerous.

MENA MILLS

There's just two more markers left.
Tweed, don't do this to me!

TWEED TOMKINS

You saw those bears last night.
Fucking bears! We've all seen how
animals behave here. And the
weather... This place is...

MENA MILLS

What?

TWEED TOMKINS

This jars every rational bone in my
body, but... we shouldn't be here.

He subconsciously rubs his neck. Sara lights up.

MENA MILLS

What happened in the café?

TWEED TOMKINS

Huh?

MENA MILLS

Tweed?

Something gives.

TWEED TOMKINS

She looked into my eyes. And she started to cry. She was trying to save me.

MENA MILLS

Tweed, they're superstitious outliers. We're in an old country, remember?

TWEED TOMKINS

The waitress said no one can save me.

MENA MILLS

Save you from what?! A few wild animals with a wall fixation? Look at you! No one's taking you down, Harris Tomkins. we're getting inside that fucking wall. And we'll find out what's making those noises.

Sara toasts her as Mena purposefully marches away.. Nathan grabs the bottle and takes a stiff swig. Tweed looks fatefully at the wall, feeling his neck.

LATER --

Mena in front, constantly scanning the wall, consumed with purpose. Sara stops in her tracks- swallows hard. Hanging in a tree top, as though having been flung, a mangled gory CARCASS of something large, perhaps an Elk.

NATHAN PHILIPS

How did it get there?

Tweed scans the area for answers, before it dawns on him. He draws a line with his eyes from the carcass... to the wall.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - SAME TIME

79

Within the woods, unnoticed by the group, a wolf stares obediently at the wall. A rustle and another joins.

TIME-LAPSE of the sun moving through the sky, bringing us to...

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - DUSK

80

The light is fading. Mena and Tweed are almost jogging along the wall in a frenetic race against the sun. Mena nearly

falls into the ditch but hardly cares. Sara and Nathan are no-where to be seen.

Two lighter stones up ahead; Mena shouts in triumph!

MENA MILLS

YES! Yes- I knew it!

She turns right into Tweed. An impulse KISS. Full and hard. Becoming harder. She pulls away, animal breaths, wipes her mouth lasciviously. They hear the others. A shared conspiratorial look of filth and they back off, guiltily.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Yes! Yes - we must be really close now!

He heads off into the dusk.

TWEED TOMKINS

(Dropping his rucksack and scanning the sky)

We have to stop... We'll miss it if we keep looking.

Sara sees through Tweed's and Mena's conceit as though they were fucking in front of her.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - MORNING

81

Soft rain on the posse of tents.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE WALL - DAY

82

The canopy is a concert hall, magnifying the soft sound of rain on leaves. Mena scanning the wall earnestly. Tweed listening more than looking. Nathan sticks out an arm over the ditch to feel the wet. Sara, in back, eyes Tweed and Mena, zero interest in the pursuit.

LATER--

The four are looking up at a SINGLE WHITE STONE. The rain is harder now, the sound heavier, louder- building.

LATER--

The four are spread out, moving slowly away from the wall either side of the marker.

TWEED TOMKINS

Be careful of dips and troughs.

MENA MILLS

A tunnel?

TWEED TOMKINS

Or cave. Look for markers, signs,
stone cairns, anything out of place.

NATHAN PHILIPS

How far do we go?

Sara swigs from her 'water' bottle. They scan the ground methodically, lifting bracken and rocks, pushing against trees. Nathan distracted by flora.

MENA MILLS

It's too far. We must have missed it.

SARA GOMEZ

(to herself)

Missed what?

And drains the bottle before retrieving a bottle of VODKA from her sack. Refills then TOSSES the empty into the bracken.

Mena retraces, scanning like a bloodhound. She becomes aware the rain is falling more freely, suggesting a break in the canopy and simultaneously feels uneasy. She looks up; Double-takes.

MENA MILLS

Oh my... Tweed!

The others run over.

TWEED TOMKINS

What?

She points up. Within an endless sea of fir trees, they are standing in a perfect circle of mature OAKS, thirty feet in diameter. Within, a carpet of heavy thorny bracken.

Mena is getting dread chills.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Astonishing! Oaks! These were planted
on purpose. A perfect circle.

MENA MILLS
 (a little too dismissively)
 There's nothing here.

Tweed hacks at the bracken.

TWEED TOMKINS
 What's...

MENA MILLS
 Huh?

TWEED TOMKINS
 The roots are so strong.

NATHAN PHILIPS
 These are ancient.

TWEED TOMKINS
 There's something underneath.

Tweed HACKS at the roots with his machete until it hits metal.

TWEED TOMKINS
 What the fuck?

Nathan and Tweed pull aside the shattered roots and remaining bramble, to reveal a round METAL GRILLE fixed against STONWORK.

Sara's noticed Mena is quietly freaking out. Tweed pulls at the grille.

TWEED TOMKINS
 Damn, it's solid.

SARA GOMEZ
 Tweed, do you think-

NATHAN PHILIPS
 Is there a hinge?

TWEED TOMKINS
 It's fixed into the stone.

Mena starts to back away.

SARA GOMEZ
 Boys, I think perhaps we should-

TWEED TOMKINS

The iron is so thick! Hold on...
there's some corrosion.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Careful Tweed. You don't know what's
below.

MENA MILLS

This is a bad idea.

TWEED TOMKINS

If I...

He STAMPS his foot against the grille. Checks for give, tries
again. Mena looks imploringly to Sara.

TWEED TOMKINS

Hmm. Just a little bit of...

Tweed SLAMS his foot on the grille, causing an echo deep
below ground. An answering WRENCHING sound jerks Mena's head
to the wall and triggers...

RAPID MONTAGE:

- The ball on a path.
- Her mum's cold dead hand.
- The Wall.
- Mena, with the ball in her hands, hears the wrenching
sound.
- A mangled carcass dripping blood from a tree.
- Her mum's dead hand clenched around something.
- Ten-year-old Mena, crying.
- Wolves staring, snarling.

TWEED TOMKINS (O.S.)

AARRGGHH!

Shocked out of herself, Mena sees metal dust and dirt fly.
Tweed's fallen through the grille!

MENA MILLS

TWEED!

NATHAN PHILIPS

Tweed! Tweed!

They frantically scan the darkness.

MENA MILLS (CONT.)

TWEED! TWEED!!

TWEED TOMKINS (O.S.)

I'm... I'm OK! I'm OK. I think. I fell
down... Hold on...

MENA MILLS

What is it?

Tweed emerges from the void.

TWEED TOMKINS

Steps. There are steps! I fell down
them.

He begins to descend.

MENA MILLS

I don't think--

TWEED TOMKINS

Mena! This is what you wanted. We've
found it. The entrance To Okunevo!

MENA MILLS

But why is it hidden?

TWEED TOMKINS

That's what we're going to find out.

MENA MILLS

But... the rations. You said--

TWEED TOMKINS

We'll be alright!

MENA MILLS

Tweed!

TWEED TOMKINS

I FUCKING NEED THIS!

He's scratching his neck. A heavy pause while Sara tries to
look distracted and Nathan peers uneasily down into the
darkness.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

I... I need to know.

He searches Mena's face. A pause.

MENA MILLS

It was spinning. Then it disappeared.

The others know to shut the fuck up.

MENA MILLS

(through tears)

I climbed a wall. A wall!

INSERT -- an overgrown space, the ball spinning...

MENA MILLS (O.S.)

It was spinning... Why? Why was it
doing that...? I... I ran to it but...

OUTSIDE THE WALL --

MENA MILLS

I'm sorry, Mama! I'm so sorry!

Her tears turn angry. She kicks out at an oak. Sara takes her
in her arms. Mena melts.

MENA MILLS

Why did I lose it?! WHY?! It was just
a fucking football!

After a long moment, her belligerent dignity returns. She
gives a watery smile to Sara who wipes tears from her face.

SARA GOMEZ

Are you done being a massive cock?

Teared laughter.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)

(taking Mena's hand)

C'mon. Let's explore your secret
garden.

They approach the steps, Tweed steps aside. Nathan looks
frankly terrified. Mena swaps Sara's hand for Nathan's and
they descend together, Sara follows. Tweed surveys the forest
then follows.

They're gone and in a second it's as though they were never

there. The forest is *silent*.

DEAD SLOW pull in.

SLOW FADE:

INT. THE TUNNEL - DAY

83

The four put on HEAD TORCHES. A gun-barrel-straight tunnel in stone; large stone slabs on the floor, curved stone sections for the wall. Supreme craftsmanship.

SARA GOMEZ
It's... clean.

NATHAN PHILIPS
It looks old.

Tweed studies the lines between the floor slabs.

TWEED TOMKINS
The stonework is..is pristine.

MENA MILLS
What do you mean?

TWEED TOMKINS
like..

NATHAN PHILIPS
Like it's never been used.

SARA GOMEZ
Oh look... drawings.

The now familiar circled stick-man image running along both wall lengths. Beneath, a constant line of fire.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)
This again.

NATHAN PHILIPS
There's no narrative. They just repeat. A man in a large ring, above fire.

SARA GOMEZ
Am I the only one getting properly creeped out?

NATHAN PHILIPS
 (gently touching the drawings)
 It's ancient. Yet it's in remarkably
 good condition.

A distant yet perceptible Jurassic park-style thump. Tweed and Mena exchange the briefest look. Tweed moves on.

Honing into view, two large WOODEN STRUTS sticking out at 45 degrees from where the floor meets both walls. Tweed's eyes widen.

SARA GOMEZ
 What are these for?

TWEED TOMKINS
 Don't touch those!

SARA GOMEZ
 Tweed darling, you sound sooo virile
 when you issue instructions.

MENA MILLS
 Sara.

TWEED TOMKINS
 (examining)
 They're collapsing struts.

NATHAN PHILIPS
 What?

TWEED TOMKINS
 Loosen them and the arc of stone
 around us becomes unstable. The tunnel
 will collapse.

NATHAN PHILIPS
 What??

SARA GOMEZ
 Why??

MENA MILLS
 How...

TWEED TOMKINS
 Seen these devils before. Mighty
 effective as a last line of defence.

The others are collectively WTF.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

This is private land. We have locks and alarms. They have this. Call it perimeter security.

Just then another thud- nearer, louder.

NATHAN PHILIPS

What was that?

SARA GOMEZ

(reading Mena and Tweed's shared look of concern)

Don't worry Nathan darling, Our guide's packing.

LATER --

They're approaching the tunnel's end, marked by a LARGE ROUND WOODEN SLAB set into stone. carved into it a figure of wood, or perhaps a tree trunk with limbs.

SARA GOMEZ

What the fu...that's new.

MENA MILLS

It's a dead end!

NATHAN PHILIPS

It can't be!

SARA GOMEZ

What do we do?

Tweed checks around the slab edges.

TWEED TOMKINS

There's light behind. If I can prize this off...

He produces a CROWBAR from his rucksack and jams it between the wood and the stone.

TWEED TOMKINS

It's giving... Help me...

Nathan gets his fingers in the gap and pulls. Mena joins and the wood stone starts to give. A GRUNT from the three, and the wooden slab comes away and hits the stone floor with a BOOM!

Light floods in. Through the gap, at waist height, thick GRASS and MOSS obscure anything else. Before Tweed can protest, Mena deftly climbs through.

EXT. FOREST ENTRANCE - DAY

84

The first hit is the smell; impossibly lush! she drinks it in. The ground a mossy carpet. The canopy total. The colours vivid but the light diffused. There's no rain here. An ethereal, mystic feeling pervades. This is another world.

Mena closes her eyes and breathes. A weight visibly lifting from her shoulders.

INSERT-- a FLASH of the football from her dreams on a path!

Jolted back, Mena weals about, scanning.

SARA GOMEZ

Mena?

MENA MILLS

(still mid-flashback)

It was...it was on a path..a path.

SARA GOMEZ

What was? There are no paths here.

A veil lifted, Mena sees things for the first time.

SARA GOMEZ

See?

Slowly the flash-dream fades. Mena smiles.

MENA MILLS

We did it. We did it!

An embrace. Tweed's trying to hide his unease. Nathan produces his phone for a group selfie; Nathan and Mena pure excitement, Sara eying Mena, Tweed elsewhere.

SARA GOMEZ

Er... where's the wall?

TWEED TOMKINS

We surfaced well inside the forest.

Mena engages the satellite phone's GPS mode.

MENA MILLS

The fault line is east-north-east of here.

They wend between trees. Tweed clearing bramble with his MACHETE. Sara bothered by the heat. Nathan in awe. Utter silence, broken only by their footsteps. Without breaking stride, weed and Mena pick up on a distant WRENCH of wood.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

85

At a mossy bank, they break to take food and water.

TWEED TOMKINS

I'll scout ahead. Stay here till I return.

SARA GOMEZ

Dib-dib. Is it just me, or is it unbearably stifling?

Nathan heads into the trees.

LATER --

Nathan snapping on his phone, then a chopping sound nearby. Then another, and another, each time in a different place. He returns warily to the group.

SARA GOMEZ

Your enthusiasm is exhausting.

Off Nathan's look...

MENA MILLS

Nathan, are you OK?

Tweed bursts through the trees!

TWEED TOMKINS

There's a brook... Just up ahead.

Last to leave, Nathan peers anxiously back.

LATER --

Tweed leads, Nathan in back, Sara with Mena.

SARA GOMEZ

It's eerily silent, don't you think?
Like, no birdsong, nothing.

MENA MILLS

Silent.

SARA GOMEZ

Darling? Hello?

EXT. THE BROOK - DUSK

86

A beautiful trickling brook. The dappled light plays on the water. Sara dowses her head. Tweed sets about making camp.

SARA GOMEZ

It's so bloody revitalising.

Pulls off her top.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)

Skinny dip, Mena?

The girls strip to their underwear and dive in, laughing.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Like paradise. Unspoiled. We're the pollutants.

SARA GOMEZ

Speak for yourself.

TWEED TOMKINS

This is a delicately balanced natural environment. We need to leave as minimal a footprint as possible.

SARA GOMEZ

(to Mena)

Best not wee in the stream, then.

MENA MILLS

Too late!

NATHAN PHILIPS

What's that..?

He paddles through the stream and heads into the trees the other side.

SARA GOMEZ

What's Attenborough found?

EXT. INSIDE THE TREE LINE - FOLLOWING

87

Nathan is standing next to a large tree trunk, ten foot tall that has SPLIT in two at the bottom giving the appearance of having legs. added to the sense of pareidolia are two thick BRANCHES, like arms, on either side.

NATHAN PHILIPS

It's remarkable. I've never seen anything like it!

SARA GOMEZ

Is it carved?

TWEED TOMKINS

I've never seen a trunk split at the bottom.

NATHAN PHILIPS

It must be...but, it seems to be growing...

Mena regards it with suspicion.

MENA MILLS

It looks like the carving in the tunnel.

SARA GOMEZ

The burning question is- who made it?

NATHAN PHILIPS

And why is it here?

TWEED TOMKINS

It's some kind of primitive deity. A God of the forest, who knows.

SARA GOMEZ

I thought there was no-one here?

TWEED TOMKINS

There must have been, once.

EXT. THE BROOK - NIGHT

88

The rustle of the canopy, night animals calling, the brook gurgling. Four tents in a circle around the dying embers of a fire, the remains of FISH on PLATES.

Then, singular WRENCHING, and CHOPPING sounds, in the

distance. A light in one of the tents. Mena emerges. Tweed is standing in the dark, listening. He fetches a REVOLVER from a flap pocket.

TWEED TOMKINS

You remember what I told you?

Her vest reveals some cleavage.

MENA MILLS

Keep my stance stable and breathe.

TWEED TOMKINS

And a tight grip.

MENA MILLS

Tight grip... Ye-yes... But what am I looking for? What's out there?

TWEED TOMKINS

(scratching his neck)

If you want me to say it's an elk or a bear, I'll say it's an elk or a bear.

EXT. THE FOREST - NIGHT

89

In the dark, a DEER alone, nervous, waiting. A RUSTLE. The deer looks up. Heavy THUDS approaching. The deer drops its head in genuflection. Something moves quickly towards it. A YELP as it's violently snatched off the ground. As we grow accustomed to the dark we notice a PHALANX OF BOWING DEER in the shadows.

EXT. THE BROOK - DAY

90

Morning. They follow the brook. In back, Nathan takes a last look at the wooden deity- but it's gone. Did he get the spot wrong?

The going is tough and Tweed has to clear the way. The sun, suggested but never seen, moves through the sky. The dense forest creaks and groans, dark spaces all around the group. They round a bend in the stream and are met with a DWELLING.

It's built between two stout trees and against a small hill. Completely organic. No windows, doors or metalwork. Earth and bark with animal hide as an entrance. It looks pre- historic.

In a pile outside, several SMALL CIRCLE SHAPES made of bent wood, stripped of bark and held together with twine. All contain the familiar circled stick man. Nathan swallows.

SARA GOMEZ

Hey...

Above the entrance is another circle. Within it, words carved into a piece of bark. Nathan takes a picture.

NATHAN PHILIPS

The app's struggling, should have translated by now.

MENA MILLS

Maybe it's the carving?

NATHAN PHILIPS

It's... It's not Russian, that's for sure. The app is confused, the translation keeps morphing between early Lithuanian and... what... PIE?! That can't be!

TWEED TOMKINS

Nathan?

NATHAN PHILIPS

All modern European languages are based on PIE...

(off collective weird looks)

Proto-Indo-European. Basically, the words we speak came from the east... Over the centuries, the various languages evolved and split from their roots. Lithuanian being an odd exception, in that it hasn't changed much from its PIE origins.

MENA MILLS

And?

NATHAN PHILIPS

PIE and early Lithuanian are proper ancient dialects. You're talking three, three-and-a-half thousand years old. No one has spoken or written them in literally thousands of years.

They're gawping at him.

NATHAN PHILIPS CONT

I'm a botanist. Latin is a second language. Sparked an interest.

MENA MILLS

What does it say?

NATHAN PHILIPS

It can't settle on a specific dialect so it's approximating. Er... 'Give the tree silence, Stay forever'.

MENA MILLS

The tree deity.

The hide opens and a WOMAN steps out. Small with long silver hair, a soft yet weather-worn face. Her clothes match the dwelling - hide and natural resources.

She regards them with wonder, like an animal encountering humans for the first time. Then addresses the forest with her hands open, as though imploring the trees.

WOMAN

Kq turiu daryti? Pasakyk man?

What must I do? Tell me.

She prods the wheel-shape above the entrance.

SARA GOMEZ

What. The. Fuck...

The woman turns to Sara in shock and puts her fingers lightly on Sara's mouth. Nathan moves his phone in like a microphone. Eyes popping, Sara is rigid. The woman leans in close and speaks softly into Sara's mouth. Tweed stiffens.

WOMAN

*Tyla ud apie jusu os welmi cemjo,
uztikrinti jis jam welmi.*

Then backs slowly into the dwelling, throwing glances of fear and perhaps pity at each. A private look of deep knowing to Mena leaves an imprint. The hide drops.

SARA GOMEZ

Like that wasn't the single creepiest thing that's ever happened to me.

MENA MILLS

Did you catch what she said?

NATHAN PHILIPS

Yeah, but it doesn't make much sense.

MENA MILLS

And...

NATHAN PHILIPS

'Silence out of your mouth will come.
He will ensure it.'

SARA GOMEZ

I cannot be the only one officially
freaked out? You said there'd be no
one here.

MENA MILLS

(inward)

Silence...

NATHAN PHILIPS

Who is 'he'?

TWEED TOMKINS

A god. Primitive idol. Look at the
wheels. Offerings, I'd say.

SARA GOMEZ

Did we pass through a time-warp in
that tunnel? This whole thing is pre-
Christian.

MENA MILLS

It's possible she's never known
anything else. Any other way.

TWEED TOMKINS

Pagan.

MENA MILLS

Her belief system is rooted in her
immediate surroundings. She's
concerned only with the forest as it
gives her what she needs. And she
thanks it with offerings. It's what we
used to do.

SARA GOMEZ

Fascinating. I feel violated.

NATHAN PHILIPS

She looked like she'd never seen
another human before. Is she alone?

TWEED TOMKINS

There are no tracks here. No paths of any kind I can discern, other than down to the brook. When she travels, she's the only one and doesn't often.

NATHAN PHILIPS

So she is alone?

MENA MILLS

We don't know. The only imagery of the Okunevo shows trees, no dwellings. There really shouldn't be anyone here at all.

TWEED TOMKINS

We don't know anything about her. What we do know is we freaked her out.

MENA MILLS

We should leave.

SARA GOMEZ

Last chance to turn back, or face 'him'.

With that she walks away, haunted. They cross the stream, Nathan snapping the dwelling as it passes out of sight.

The forest sways around them, creaking and moaning but otherwise eerily quiet. Following the GPS, they leave the brook and the going gets tough. Rocks covered in thick moss give under and they slip and fall, the sounds ricocheting off the forest echo chamber. Exhausted, they stop. Tweed scouts ahead.

SARA GOMEZ

She fucking touched my lips. Where has she been?

MENA MILLS

Imagine if she really hasn't seen anyone else ever.

NATHAN PHILIPS

She must have thought us gods.

SARA GOMEZ

Or demons.

NATHAN PHILIPS

She seemed keen to keep you silent,
Sara.

MENA MILLS

She's become attuned to the sound of
the trees. The rhythm of the forest as
her company. The sound of voices
probably grated.

SARA GOMEZ

None taken.

NATHAN PHILIPS

How did she get here? Through the
tunnel?

MENA MILLS

No. No I don't think so. It seems
she's always been here.

SARA GOMEZ

She's the fucking caretaker now? She
pushed those fucking words into my
mouth like an incantation. Gave me the
heebie-jeebies.

MENA MILLS

We're frightened of and threatened by
that which we don't understand.

SARA GOMEZ

Don't patronise me.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Well, she has to have come from
somewhere. From someone.

The light is dying. The wind picks up. Twigs cracking...They
tense as Tweed emerges again.

MENA MILLS

You have got to stop doing that.

TWEED TOMKINS

What? I've found the river.

EXT. THE RIVER - NIGHT

91

The moon casts long shadows in the swaying canopy. The river
fifteen foot wide and fairly shallow. exhausted, they

disappear into their tents without a fire.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

92

Overcast, wind swirls through the canopy. Sara emerges from her tent first.

SARA GOMEZ

Jesus, what the fucking fuck?

Right outside Sara's tent, a LARGE WOODEN CIRCLE with a life-size stick man tied within by its limbs, with a noose round its neck.

SARA GOMEZ

This isn't funny. Seriously, this is not fucking funny.

The others emerge.

MENA MILLS

What... Oh, God...

NATHAN PHILIPS

Oh, my. That's... That's...

MENA MILLS

Big.

SARA GOMEZ

That bitch put it here! She followed us and fucking--

TWEED TOMKINS

No, it's too far. She didn't follow us.

He lifts the wooden circle.

TWEED TOMKINS

And this is too heavy.

SARA GOMEZ

Was it you?

NATHAN PHILIPS

Wh-what?

SARA GOMEZ

You were way too interested in those fucking things.

TWEED TOMKINS

Sara.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Why would I?

SARA GOMEZ

Because you're a nerdy freak! Did you do it?!

NATHAN PHILIPS

Sara, how could I have done this? I mean, look at the craftsmanship...

SARA GOMEZ

Oh, FUCK OFF.

MENA MILLS

Sara.

SARA GOMEZ

What? What, Mena? Do you have anything to add?

MENA MILLS

Like what?

TWEED TOMKINS

This isn't helping.

SARA GOMEZ

I saw the look you gave action man. You've seen this before.

TWEED TOMKINS

We've all seen it before- outside the wa-

SARA GOMEZ

NO! NO! Before. This is familiar to you...isn't it..?!

MENA MILLS

I saw it at the petrol station.

Nathan's been fighting with the urge to speak.

NATHAN PHILIPS

I've seen it. In Cambridge.

SARA GOMEZ
I fucking knew it! You basta-

TWEED TOMKINS
Nathan didn't make this!

MENA MILLS
Nathan?

NATHAN PHILIPS
It's carved on a tree in the botanical
gardens. An oak. As it happens.

TWEED TOMKINS
Coincidence surely.

MENA MILLS
Nathan?

NATHAN PHILIPS
The Oak came from here.

SARA GOMEZ
Well then that's it. It was carved
here before the tree was moved.

Nathan shakes his head.

NATHAN PHILIPS
The oak was a sapling when it was
planted. There are records.

SARA GOMEZ
Then what the fuck is going on?!

MENA MILLS
We don't know what they mean.

SARA GOMEZ
But you know it can't be good! He's
got a fucking noose round his neck!

MENA MILLS
It's pagan imagery. Nothing more.

SARA GOMEZ
Easy to say when you've not woken to a
life-size one outside your tent.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Why your tent?

SARA GOMEZ
Do you need me to draw you a picture?
The Green Man's granny. She chose me!

TWEED TOMKINS
You spoke.

A beat, while this sinks in.

NATHAN PHILIPS
No one else said anything.

SARA GOMEZ
(becoming distraught)
I had to open my mouth! And she told
me I'd be silenced... And now this...

Sara spurns Mena's hug, then accepts. Sara lights up.

MENA MILLS
Vitruvian Man.

TWEED TOMKINS
What?

MENA MILLS
It reminds me of the Vitruvian Man.

SARA GOMEZ
With no head.

NATHAN PHILIPS
But if it wasn't the woman, then...

Tweed scans the ground.

SARA GOMEZ
Hey, Kemosabe. You're actually looking
for tracks?

TWEED TOMKINS
What do you want me to do? I don't
know how this got here. I know it
wasn't one of us.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Do you think... Do you think we're
being followed?

Instinctively, they look into the trees.

SARA GOMEZ
I'm gonna bury this place on Trip
Advisor.

Tweed tosses the wheel onto the ashes of the fire.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

93

The group has become split in two. Up front; Sara, deeply troubled, and Mena, following the GPS. Then a gap to Nathan, with Tweed, increasingly distracted.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Incredible. Just incredible. Tweed?

TWEED TOMKINS
Hmm?

NATHAN PHILIPS
How many firs have you seen inside the
wall?
(off Tweed's confusion)
Fir trees. How many fir trees have you
seen?

TWEED TOMKINS
Er... Well, I guess...

NATHAN PHILIPS
None, Tweed! None! We've been in dense
continuous forest since we got
inside... just as we were for many
miles outside... The only difference
is the wall that separates the two.
Yet, inside... there are no firs. At
all! Incredible! It really makes no
sense.

TWEED TOMKINS
I guess.

Nathan warming to his theme.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Have you heard of the Tiaga?

TWEED TOMKINS
The ring of trees around the neck of
the world.

NATHAN PHILIPS

An almost unbroken ring, around
Russia, China, North America and
Northern Europe. Made up pretty much
exclusively of spruce, pine and larch.

TWEED TOMKINS

It's something.

NATHAN PHILIPS

It's coniferous. It's the largest
biome on the earth's land mass and
it's pretty much all fir and we're
deep inside. But Look! Birch, elm,
beech... oak! Broad-leafed trees.
These aren't supposed to be here...
And look how mature and virile they
are. Magnificent specimens. Providing
perfect canopy.

Tweed is starting to distrust the perfect canopy.

UP AHEAD --

SARA GOMEZ

You know those holidays where you
excursion the shit out of yourself to
the point of exhaustion and need
another holiday to get over it?

MENA MILLS

I sense a proposition.

SARA GOMEZ

Nothing so...contractual darling. Do
you remember me mentioning I have an
apartment on Capri?

MENA MILLS

When you say 'I', you mean your
consultant-

SARA GOMEZ

That's not important! I can fly us
straight there from Perm. Well, we'll
need to go via Moscow or possibly
Charles de Gaulle, but we could be in
the Med in no time!

MENA MILLS

And Tweed and Nathan...?

SARA GOMEZ
Will have extra room on their flight
to Heathrow. It's a win win!

Mena chews this a while.

MENA MILLS
Will he be there?

Sara pushes all her chips on red.

SARA GOMEZ
He's asked me to marry him.

Mena searches her friend's face- she's not lying.

MENA MILLS
What are you gonna do?

SARA GOMEZ
He's rich. Rich like he doesn't buy
his own furniture rich.

MENA MILLS
Have you got vodka in that flask?

SARA GOMEZ
Yes, but that's not the point. If I
marry him, we'll never see one another
again.

MENA MILLS
Don't say that, Sara. Why say that?
Won't I even get an invite to your
wedding?

SARA GOMEZ
No. I won't marry a *man* in public.

MENA MILLS
Why ever not?

SARA GOMEZ
I don't conform. You should know this.
We'll do it somewhere tacky. A beach.

MENA MILLS
Who would be your witness?

SARA GOMEZ
The pool barman. You won't ever get to

see me marry.

Sara is scratching her weals which are BLEEDING. Before she can cover up, Mena is dabbing the blood with tissues. Sara is horribly exposed and Mena's kindness wounds her more. Tears stream from her eyes. A dull thud brings them back. Mena follows the sound.

MENA MILLS

What the...

Just visible through the trees another thick trunk with limbs. The boys arrive.

NATHAN PHILIPS

How many of these are there?

SARA GOMEZ

(to Tweed)

Was that noise you?

Tweed notices a flattened imprint, just behind the trunk. Then another and another moving further away.

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY

94

They're going uphill, the terrain rockier, the river flow increasing.

MENA MILLS

Can you hear that?

SARA GOMEZ

It sounds like...

MENA MILLS

A waterfall!

A FORTY FOOT WATERFALL over a fault line stretching away; entirely hidden beneath trees that climb up the cliff.

NATHAN PHILIPS

The trees!

MENA MILLS

That's why satellite can't see it.

SARA GOMEZ

Can we climb up?

TWEED TOMKINS

Use the trunks as support.

They climb staying close to the waterfall.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Mena?

He gives her his phone and strikes a pose. At the top the view is a sea of trees to the horizon.

MENA MILLS

Incredible.

TWEED TOMKINS

(pointing)

Look.

In the distance, a line running through the trees. The wall.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Who built it? Why?

MENA MILLS

No one knows who or why, or when.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Why didn't the owners tell you where the tunnel was?

(off her blank look)

Seems a bit odd to grant you permission to visit, but not tell you how to get in.

Mena's face betrays her.

SARA GOMEZ

I'm gonna take a wild stab in the dark - we're not supposed to be here. In fact, we're trespassing. That about right Mena?

The others are suitably dumbfounded.

MENA MILLS

I contacted the Molchat family lawyer in... in Ulaanbaatar, but-

NATHAN PHILIPS

'Ulaanbaatar'? That's Mongolia. That's like thousands of miles from here.

MENA MILLS

Three thousand, but they never-

NATHAN PHILIPS

Why would they be so far away?

That name sparks a connection just out of Tweed's grasp.

TWEED TOMKINS

(inward)

'Ulaanbaatar'?

SARA GOMEZ

Ulaanbaatar, Timbuktu, fucking
Sunderland. I think the salient point
is *someone* didn't get permission for
this field trip.

MENA MILLS

They never responded to my email and
there's no phone number. I figured
they didn't think anyone would ever
want to come here. They've probably
never heard of the place.

That seems to have the opposite effect to reassurance.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Well, that explains why we weren't
told where the entrance is.

Everyone knows they were NEVER going to be told where the
entrance is. Suppressing brooding anger, Tweed draws a line..

TWEED TOMKINS

We're here now. We found the fault
line. We're gone tomorrow.

Mena notices Tweed *and* Nathan scratching their necks.

LATER --

Nathan foraging for cuttings. The SOUND of the forest builds
as he leans in with his knife, as he draws the blade and
cuts... SILENCE. He hears his own breathing.

LATER --

A brilliant sunset sends orange shards darting through the
canopy. By the waterfall, Mena lifts a moss-covered ROCK and
makes a shallow HOLE. She removes her football necklace,

kisses and places it in the small Russian doll and puts it in the hole, its face expectant.

MENA MILLS

I never knew who you were. Why did you never tell me anything? Why... I'm sorry Mama. I love you.

Through tears she crosses herself and replaces the rock.

EXT. THE WATERFALL - NIGHT

95

A raging campfire. The group is eating field supplies. Mena takes Nathan's phone and takes a playful snap of him gagging.

NATHAN PHILIPS

There are better things to eat. The forest can sustain you.

TWEED TOMKINS

Foraging can sustain you, and is sustainable. There's a balance. There's something about this forest... It's protective. It's as though it doesn't want us to touch a single leaf.

SARA GOMEZ

Since the forest isn't benevolent enough to provide pine-needle hooch, Sara to the rescue.

And she produces another vodka bottle.

MENA MILLS

How many did you bring?

SARA GOMEZ

Priorities, darling. Am I not the appointed medical officer? This stuff has multiple uses.

MENA MILLS

Don't you think, as the medical officer, you should remain sober?

SARA GOMEZ

Oh, darling, don't be a grouch. Booze is vital to our survival. If we have a cold snap, you'll be thanking me.

Mena ignores the proffered bottle.

SARA GOMEZ
Suit yourself. Tweed?

He takes a slug. Both Sara and Mena are surprised.

SARA GOMEZ
Nathan?

NATHAN PHILIPS
I'm good.

SARA GOMEZ
Chin-chin.

Mena takes out the satellite phone and walks off.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

96

The sky is starless. Mena dials but only gets white noise.

MENA MILLS
Dad? Dad, can you hear me... It's
Mena. Dad? Dad?

Nothing. She looks for higher ground. In the distance, on the lower plain, we can just make out treetops bending aside as something very powerful moves towards the waterfall at pace.

EXT. THE WATERFALL - NIGHT

97

Sara is pretty loose now.

SARA GOMEZ
Don't you get lonely doing... What is
it you do?

TWEED TOMKINS
Geo-surveying and mapping. Mostly
subterranean. It takes me all over the
world. I don't have time to be lonely.

SARA GOMEZ
How very worthy. A strapping virile
man like you... You have needs.

TWEED TOMKINS
I'm far too busy for a relationship.
Besides, I--

SARA GOMEZ
Nonsense! Mena pines for you, you
know, when you're away kaplunking.

TWEED TOMKINS
Spelunking. That's not what I do. Mena
and I are friends, nothing more.

SARA GOMEZ
I'm cold.

She sidles up to him and rests her head against his chest.

SARA GOMEZ
I was scared by that woman. And then
the thing outside my tent.

TWEED TOMKINS
We'll be out of here tomorrow, Sara.

SARA GOMEZ
I'm lonely, Tweed.

TWEED TOMKINS
Look, Sara, I'm not--

SARA GOMEZ
I'm lonely. You're lonely. We ought to
help each other, don't you think?

TWEED TOMKINS
You're Mena's friend.

SARA GOMEZ
What's she got to do with it? You're
'just friends', right?

TWEED TOMKINS
Well, yes.

SARA GOMEZ
So...

Mena times her entrance perfectly.

MENA MILLS
You finally run out of drink, Sara?
It's late. Perhaps you should go to
bed?

TWEED TOMKINS

Mena...

SARA GOMEZ

I'm feeling vulnerable. You didn't have a deranged crone curse you and leave a fucking hex, fucking whatever that thing was outside your tent. So don't judge me, Mena.

MENA MILLS

I'm sorry, I don't know what--

SARA GOMEZ

No, no one knows what that thing is. Your apologies are a bit thin. A bit late.

MENA MILLS

What does that mean?

SARA GOMEZ

'A bit late'. A bit slow on the uptake? You always have been.

TWEED TOMKINS

Let's keep this civil.

SARA GOMEZ

And you wouldn't know emotion if it spaffed in your face.

MENA MILLS

Sara, go to bed. Please.

SARA GOMEZ

Not tired. Just getting started.

She takes a long pull on the bottle.

MENA MILLS

Well, I'll go to bed, then!

She turns, but Sara grabs her leg.

SARA GOMEZ

Don't go, darling!

MENA MILLS

Sara, get off!

Mena kicks out. Sara falls back, and the bottle flies away,
SMASHING.

SARA GOMEZ

Not much of a minimal eco footprint
now, eh, Twid?

MENA MILLS

I'll clear it up. Please go to bed.

SARA GOMEZ

Why, when we've soooo much to talk
about? Past loves, future re... ray-
shionships... hmmm?

An uncomfortable silence.

SARA GOMEZ (CONT)

You know... You and him, me and you...
The three of--

MENA MILLS

That's enough!!

SARA GOMEZ

What does it fucking matter anyway? '*I
will not return*'.

Nathan, dozing by the fire sits bolt upright.

MENA MILLS

What did you say?

SARA GOMEZ

This place is obviously cursed.
Captain Off-The-Grid had it right when
he said we never ver..neverever should
have come.

NATHAN PHILIPS

Sara, where did you hear that?

Off Sara's confused look. Mena shoots him a surprised glance.

NATHAN PHILIPS CONT

You said '*I will not return*'. Where
did you hear that?

MENA MILLS

Nathan...?

NATHAN PHILIPS

I've heard it too. On a note pinned to the tree in Cambridge. A Russian woman left it for me.

MENA MILLS

What?! How can you be-

NATHAN PHILIPS

(agitated)

I know! I just *know*, OK?

SARA GOMEZ

In..in...in *Cambridge*??!

MENA MILLS

Where have you heard this Sara?

SARA GOMEZ

(Through hysterical laughter)

We're all doomed! Doomed!! How could they know? Who the fuck are they?!!

MENA MILLS

Sara..WHERE?

SARA GOMEZ

In Addenbrookes. My hospital. Where else would you expect to hear that?!

Mena looks shell-shocked.

NATHAN PHILIPS

You've heard it too, haven't you.

Tweed screws shut his eyes tightly. In the treeline, another trunk with limbs. Was it always there..?

NATHAN PHILIPS CONT

Fuck!

SARA GOMEZ

(sobering right up)

How the fuck did they know? Is there a link between them?

NATHAN PHILIPS

Never mind that! *WHAT* do they know?

MENA MILLS

Huh?

NATHAN PHILIPS

This place; the signs, the stick man motif, the fire drawing in the tunnel, the 'you will not return' warnings- let's face it, that's what they are- the wood deity on the door in the tunnel.. all of-

TWEED TOMKINS

It wasn't a door. It was a seal.

SARA GOMEZ

To stop people from getting in right?

With chilling realisation...

MENA MILLS

It's the opposite.

SARA GOMEZ

Huh?

MENA MILLS

Stairs leading down from the outside, but sealed on the inside. And the collapsing struts. As a last line of defence... The tunnel was built to...

SARA GOMEZ

Keep something in.

Tweed shuts his eyes.

EXT. WATERFALL - NIGHT

98

Dead of night. CLOSE in on a random VODKA BOTTLE and a small mess of clothes; Sara's tent. We PULL back and up, the sound of the waterfall increases.

EXT. WATERFALL - NIGHT

99

A glow plays upon Mena's tent. She emerges, bleary-eyed. In the distance, on the lower plane below the fault line, something orange appears above the tree line.

MENA MILLS

Tweed.

He emerges.

TWEED TOMKINS
Did the fire not die?

MENA MILLS
Look.

TWEED TOMKINS
What's that?

Their eyes focus. A wheel, identical to the one outside Sara's tent, is floating clear of the tree line. It's on fire.

TWEED TOMKINS
What the...

Nathan joins them.

NATHAN PHILIPS
Oh, my God.

The wheel abruptly DISAPPEARS below the tree line. Muffled SHOUTS, then SCREAMS.

MENA MILLS
Sara! Where's Sara?

She runs to her tent, is opening the flap...the wheel rises again, with a figure strapped within. WILD SCREAMS ring out, as it catches fire! Nathan retches.

MENA MILLS
SARA... SARA! SARA!

TWEED TOMKINS
Mena! There's nothing we can do.

MENA MILLS
We need to go to her.

TWEED TOMKINS
No! It's too far.

Sara's screams stop. The burning figure limp.

NATHAN PHILIPS
What do we do?

MENA MILLS
We've got to get out of here. NOW.

TWEED TOMKINS

It's too dark. We won't find our way.

MENA MILLS

GPS! The satellite phone. I'll use the coordinates to get back to the tunnel. We have to go.

She runs to her tent.

MENA MILLS

Where is... It's not here. It's not here!

TWEED TOMKINS

You had it last night! You took it to your tent. I saw you.

MENA MILLS

It's not here... It's not fucking here!

The wheel slowly rotates.

MENA MILLS

Oh, fuck.

FOLLOWING --

They push frantically down the side of the waterfall, tripping and nearly falling to their deaths in the blackness. Then they follow the river the way they came, running at first, then jogging as fatigue sets in. Directionless CHOPPING and WRENCHING sounds, disorientating them. They stumble but eventually the sounds recede.

MENA MILLS

I can't... I can't... Stop, please... I need to stop...

TWEED.

Where's Nathan? Did we lose him?

MENA MILLS

He was... He was right behind me. Right there! Fuck-fuck-fuck-

TWEED TOMKINS

Mena, we need to focus. When did you last see him?

MENA MILLS

It was just back... Back there, I think. I... I don't know.

TWEED TOMKINS

I'll go and check. You need to stay...

He ducks back into the darkness.

MENA MILLS

Silent.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

100

Tweed flails about in the trees.

TWEED TOMKINS

(urgent whisper)

Nathan... Can you hear me? Nathan!

Some way off, TWIGS BREAK.

TWEED TOMKINS

Nathan? Are you OK? Nathan... Nathan, is that you?

Ahead, he sees Nathan- prone. The trees are so thick here it's almost pitch black, but for a little lighter section just beyond Nathan. Suddenly that light is extinguished by another large trunk with limbs. There is zero doubt it wasn't there literally a second before.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

101

TWEED TOMKINS

Mena! Mena!

He flies right into her!

MENA MILLS

Oh my God, Tweed! Are you OK? Where's Nathan?

TWEED TOMKINS

We have to go, now!

MENA MILLS

But--

Tweed GRABS her hand, and they fly through the forest, no thought given to direction.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

102

Morning. Quite, quite silent.

EXT. THE WATERFALL - DAY

103

The flow of the waterfall is ever present. Beyond, on the horizon, a thin COLUMN OF SMOKE rises. The rock Mena placed has been kicked away in the panicked descent. The doll's face visible in the dirt, but cracked, a piece stove in.

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

104

Mena's face is buried in bark and mud. Everything aches. She reaches automatically for her charm. Realisation hits her.

MENA MILLS

Fuck! Tweed? Tweed??

He's ten feet away, lying on his back. Is he dead?

MENA MILLS

Tweed? Oh, Tweed, wake up... Please...

TWEED TOMKINS

Wh-what? Where... What.. Nathan!?

MENA MILLS

Shh! Quiet.

TWEED TOMKINS

Where--

MENA MILLS

I don't know. What happened? You went to look for Nathan.

TWEED TOMKINS

I...I found him.

MENA MILLS

You found him?!

TWEED TOMKINS

He was, I think he was already dead.

MENA MILLS

Oh fuck, oh fuck!

TWEED TOMKINS
There was something else.

Mena's too terrified to want to know.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT
The statues we've seen.

MENA MILLS
You saw another?

TWEED TOMKINS
It...moved.

MENA MILLS
What?!

TWEED TOMKINS
We need to get out of here, Mena.

MENA MILLS
What do you mean 'it moved'?

TWEED TOMKINS
One second there was nothing there,
and then it was there! Like it had
always been there.

Off Mena's incredulous look.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT
I..I don't know.
(mumbling)
It's south-east. I can use the sun...
if I can find it.

He spies an overcast sky through the canopy.

TWEED TOMKINS
It's this way.

They travel cautiously, stopping at any sound. A bramble-
encrusted branch snaps into Tweed's face.

TWEED TOMKINS
God damn!

MENA MILLS
SSHH! We need to be--

TWEED TOMKINS

Silent!

MENA MILLS

Wh... what...?

TWEED TOMKINS

What does 'silence' mean to you,
Mena??

MENA MILLS

I... I don't know--

TWEED TOMKINS

Stop lying to me, Mena! Why did you
come here? Why is this place so
fucking... si--

MENA MILLS

The contract! For you to survey the
wall. I saw it at the cabin.

TWEED TOMKINS

What were you doing-

MENA MILLS

The regional government's law firm,
Tweed.

TWEED TOMKINS

Ganzorig. They drew the contract...?

MENA MILLS

They represent the Molchat family who
own this place!

TWEED TOMKINS

Wh... What the fuck?!

MENA MILLS

'Molchat'. It translates as 'be
silent'.

TWEED TOMKINS

Why didn't you tell me?!

MENA MILLS

I... I discovered the connection in
the cabin. I... I didn't know what to
do.

TWEED TOMKINS

(realisation hits like an anvil)
 Ulaanbaatar! Ganzorig are based in...
 It was on the contract! Why, why
 didn't you tell me?!

MENA MILLS

It was weird, but I figured it was
 coincidence.

TWEED TOMKINS

'Coincidence'?! Seriously?! You knew
 about Ganzorig Law and the Molchat
 family before you... you...

MENA MILLS

Tweed?

TWEED TOMKINS

Oh my God.

MENA MILLS

Tweed....tell me.

TWEED TOMKINS

They knew I was in country.

MENA MILLS

Who?

TWEED TOMKINS

They knew I was already in country
 when they sent me the contract.
 750,000!! I couldn't refuse... FUCK!
 FUCK THEM! They knew!!!

MENA MILLS

TWEED!

TWEED TOMKINS

You don't... You haven't worked it
 out?

MENA MILLS

Worked what-- Who... Who are you
 talking about?

TWEED TOMKINS

(points arbitrarily)
 Them! Ganzorig... Or Molchat... I
 don't fucking know who! But they knew

I was here already, and they made damn sure I'd want to come to the wall! And they knew I'd ask...

His scattergun gaze lands on-

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

You.

She backs away.

MENA MILLS

How? They don't know who-

TWEED TOMKINS

Who did you contact to get permission to come?

MENA MILLS

Ganzorig. But they never replied.

INSERT --

Mena's laptop screen as the email she sent to Ganzorig Law is marked...**READ**

TWEED TOMKINS

When did you email them Mena?!

MENA MILLS

I don't-

TWEED TOMKINS

WHEN?!!!

MENA MILLS

It was just before you told me about the UNESCO bid.

TWEED TOMKINS

(so quiet he screams it)
Mena. They know who you are.

MENA MILLS

I don't understand. I've no-

TWEED TOMKINS

What the...

Mena's backed into a CLEARING beneath the tree cover, within which is a large DWELLING: FOUR HUGE TREES in a line, the

broad low structure built around and behind them, like classical columns before a Greek Pantheon. Two broad steps lead to a wooden platform.

MENA MILLS

It looks like a ceremonial building.

INT. CEREMONIAL BUILDING - FOLLOWING

105

Dotted about are neat piles of Vitruvian wheels, mud bowls and pots, bracelets, and charms of grass and twig, ornaments fashioned from acorns and pine cones.

TWEED TOMKINS

There are more people in this forest.

MENA MILLS

Offerings. For who?

TWEED TOMKINS

Look...

On the back wall, carved into a huge tree trunk is the most detailed depiction of the *TREE MAN*. There's no head, no face. Just trunk.

TWEED TOMKINS CONT

That's what I saw. Last night.

MENA MILLS

It... It was dark. Tweed, you can't-

TWEED TOMKINS

I know what I saw!

MENA MILLS

But, Tweed, it doesn't make any sense.

TWEED TOMKINS

Look around you, Mena. Has anything made sense since we got here?

MENA MILLS

It's a deity! We've seen them. They're carved.

INSERT --

Tweed seeing the imprints on the ground leading to the first tree statue they encountered.

TWEED TOMKINS

This place. It's messing with my-

A SNAP OF TWIGS. They crouch and scan the tree line.

MENA MILLS

Wait... HUH?!

Partially hidden in the tree line across the mossy sward, another trunk with limbs. Tweed is paralysed.

MENA MILLS

You saw one of those last night,
didn't you.

TWEED TOMKINS

But it, it moved I tell you!

Tweed is transfixed. Mena gently kisses him. Her bosom is heaving. They kiss again, hard, becoming harder. She pulls at his shirt, he bites her nipples through her top. Through the corner of her eye, Mena notices the statue now has two life-size wheels hooked over each 'arm', like hula-hoops. She gasps.

TWEED TOMKINS

G-get up!

She's frozen.

TWEED TOMKINS

Mena- GET UP!

Dumbstruck, Mena has to be dragged across the clearing. He throws a frantic glance back; the *Wood Man* is standing in the middle of the sward. Surely it's *always* been in that spot! And yet it's unmistakably *watching* them.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

106

Panic running, Mena steals a look behind, trips and falls.

MENA MILLS

Argh!

TWEED TOMKINS

Mena!

Breathless, he helps her up.

MENA MILLS

Wh-what do we do?

TWEED TOMKINS

We get to the tunnel. We get to the tunnel and collapse it... Lock that thing in. Lock it in.

SUDDENLY -- WRENCHING sounds from behind.

TWEED TOMKINS

GO! GO! GO!

EXT. THE FOREST - DAY

107

They fly through the trees, their direction dictated by the wrenching sounds. Sweat pouring, limbs hurting, lungs stinging. Falling behind, Tweed face plants the dirt.

TWEED TOMKINS

Argh!

MENA MILLS

TWEED!

TWEED TOMKINS

Don't stop. Run!

She starts back, but a FULL-SIZED WHEEL rolls out of the trees between them, falls to the floor, encircling Tweed. Immediately, his arms, legs and neck are pulled to the wheel and tied by living TWINE. The wheel erects itself; Tweed stands before Mena like the *Vitruvian man*.

MENA MILLS

Tweed...

He can barely speak for the tightness of the noose...

TWEED TOMKINS

Mena... run...

The wheel violently rolls back into the trees.

MENA MILLS

TWEED! TWEED! Oh... Oh...

A sickening silence.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

108

MENA'S POV -- brushing against branches, navigating rocks. A dip ahead. She instinctively jumps, hitting her head on a low branch, knocked clean out.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

109

Dream Sequence. Bright sunlight plays through the canopy. Birdsong. Mena standing in the dip. SOUND of a BOUNCING BALL. She follows the sound. Away in the distance, the ball.

Arriving where the ball should be, it's gone. SOUND of bouncing. It's further off. Without question, she walks to it. Other fainter SOUNDS... VOICES... calling her, for help. Confused, she looks about. The voices getting louder. She touches her FOREHEAD... BLOOD. A loud SCREAM! She turns as...

EXT. FOREST - DAY

110

Coming round, she feels her forehead.

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)
(distant)
Help... Mena, help me...

Groggily, she stands.

MENA MILLS
Nathan! NATHAN! Where are you?

NATHAN PHILIPS (O.S.)
Arghhh! AARRGGHHH!!

She follows Nathan's screams, picking up speed.

TWEED TOMKINS (O.S.)
MENA... Please help me... Please...

Flying recklessly now.

MENA MILLS
Oh, fuck... TWEED! Tell me whe--

TWEED TOMKINS (O.S.)
FUCK, arghhh! ARGHHH! AAARRGGHHH...

Tweed's scream-crescendo abruptly STOPS, as Mena arrives at..

EXT. THE WALL - DUSK 111

More imposing than ever. Stretching away. Unimpeachable. Mena's bewildered.

The THUD of a heavy step. The WOOD MAN! Twenty foot away. Its 'neck' has split in two, on which are stuck Nathan's and Tweed's HEADS. It shifts position slightly, as though to better get a footing. By instinct, she reaches for the REVOLVER. FIRES again and again; like punching a whale. She runs wildly, expecting the inevitable.

EXT. DWELLING - DUSK 112

She stumbles into a brook; drinks hard. She drags herself to the bank, and there's the old woman's dwelling. She musters the energy to run inside, failing to notice BLOODY STREAKS on the outside of the hide.

INT. THE DWELLING - DUSK 113

The deserted dwelling has a dried mud floor. A simple CHAIR and TABLE carved from wood. A FIRE PIT in centre. She scans the bare room, searching for anything that might help.

MENA MILLS

Tunnel... tunnel... Gotta get back to the tunnel... Think-think-think. The brook! Follow the brook!

EXT. FOREST - DUSK 114

Splashing through the water, stealing looks behind, She recognises a fall and rise in the terrain, excitedly sprints to the top... and arrives back at the old woman's dwelling!

MENA MILLS

No no no NO! How? How... Oh, fuck
FUCK!

Scans the darkening sky, steels herself and is swallowed by the trees. Scratched and slapped by brambles and branches, tripping on roots, desperation driving her beyond the pain barrier. Another corner and...the dwelling again.

MENA MILLS

Please, NO! Argh, NO NO NO!! HELP
ME!!!!

A WOODEN WHEEL just outside the hide wasn't there before. Held within by twine is a piece of flat bark carved with

words. She recoils at BLOODED SILVER HAIR woven into the twine.

MENA MILLS

Argh, oh, no, no...

Defeat drains her and she falls to the floor. Something in her pocket. She pulls out NATHAN'S PHONE!

CLOSE ON -- 2% battery life.

She holds it high. The group selfie now a screen saver.

MENA MILLS

Come on, come on, come on... FUCK!

No signal. The carved words draw her. *The app!* She snaps the carving and runs it through the app. 1% battery.

A lifetime...then: 'BEEP'. The screen loads:

CLOSE ON -- '**To your home for ever welcome. Silence you will obey.**'

The phone dies in her hands. A tear runs down her cheek. A single WRENCH sends her backing into the dwelling.

INT. DWELLING - DUSK

115

She recoils in utter horror: Just discernible in the back corner is... **THE BALL**. On the table- caught in a SHAFT OF LIGHT something else she recognises- a necklace of leather with a wooden pendant. Mena's eyes widen as...

MONTAGE INSERT --

- YOUNG MENA slowly approaches her dead mother. Her hand is screwed tight. There's something clasped within.

- THE WOMAN lands in the fir tree- glances back as the branch she jumped from disappears with a deafening WRENCH. CLOSE ON her feet touching the ground. We pan up- THE FLAME-RED HAIR reveals this is MENA'S MUM. Round her neck we glimpse the top of a wooden pendant tied to a LEATHER cord.

- YOUNG MENA, tears welling, unclasps her dead mum's hand, the contents falls to the floor. There, in a shallow pool of water, is a neatly carved wooden pendant of

THE DISMEMBERED VITRUVIAN MAN.

EXT. THE DWELLING - DUSK

116

We slowly PULL BACK.

THE END.