

ACTAEON

Written by

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Based On

Ovid's Book of the Third  
"Metamorphoses"  
*The Transformation of Actaeon into a Stag*

*and*

Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1850 Novel  
"The Scarlet Letter"

EST. RURAL ROAD/FARGO, GA - DAY - MID-2010'S

AERIAL SHOT

A LATE 90s FORD EXPLORER drives down the backroad. The surrounding woodlands are thick and lush. Fall approaches, and the tree's leaves have begun to change color.

EXT. HERD OF DEER/WOODLANDS - DAY

A LARGE BUCK runs with a herd of REDTAIL STAGS through the wilderness.

INT/EXT. FORD EXPLORER (MOVING) - DAY

PENELOPE "PENNY" WYLIE-CLARKE (27), beautiful. The former Prom Queen's auburn hair pulled into a disheveled ponytail, drives the SUV down the back road. Her green eyes are bloodshot. She fruitlessly fights back the tears.

INTERCUT - HERD/FORD EXPLORER

The Stags continue through the thick woodlands. They approach a clearing.

Back to Penny, she's distracted. Her attention divided between the road and the rearview mirror.

The Herd crosses the road at the edge of a blind curb. The Large Buck stops. He stands alone in the center of the road.

The SUV rounds the corner. Penny and the Large Buck lock eyes.

Close in on Penny's eyes.

Close in on The Large Buck. Strange. Those are not the eyes of a stag, but of a man, JACKSON "JACK" CLARKE, although; we do not recognize them yet.

CUT TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK

***"The only certainty is in what Aktaion suffered, his pathos, and what Artemis did: the hunter became the hunted; he was transformed into a stag, and his raging hounds, struck with a wolf's frenzy." ~ OVID, Ars amatoria, 2AD***

INT. WOUNDED STAG/UPSTAIRS/BEDROOM - DAY - TWO YEARS LATER

Jack Clarke (29), his hair a premature salt and pepper with a thick beard, awakens in a panic.

An army veteran, he grips his DOG TAGS so tight they leave an imprint in the palm of his hand. He's drenched in sweat.

His service dog APOLLO, a golden retriever, wakes and moves from the foot of the bed into his lap.

MACKENZIE "MAC" AWIAKTA-WYLIE (26), sleeps next to Jack. Edgy, wild at heart. Like Jack, Mac is a big fish in a small pond.

MAC

Still having nightmares? You really need to see someone about that.

JACK

I am seeing someone ain't I, girl?

Jack rubs Apollo behind her ears. She licks his face.

MAC

I'm talking about help from a person, a professional.

JACK

I think we might be offended by that.

Apollo continues to lick Jack's face.

MAC

A human therapist.

JACK

Humans are overrated.

MAC

That right?

Mac grabs Jack's wrist. She inspects his palm.

MAC (CONT'D)

What about a good night's sleep? That overrated too?

JACK

It was just a bad dream. Like you've never had one. I'm supposed to go to therapy every time I have a nightmare? Hell. I'd never leave.

Mac gets out of bed.

MAC

Kind of making my point for me...  
don't you think?

She grabs a shirt off the floor, a Classic Concert T from a Classic Band. She puts it on.

MAC (CONT'D)

Time to get up anyway. I need to get downstairs and prep for breakfast. Besides, you've got to be gone before Abbot gets here. He'll shit a brick if he finds out you've been sleeping over.

Jack takes a seat on the edge of the bed, massages his palm.

JACK

Oh yeah. And what brings him by?

Mac picks up Jack's jeans off the floor.

MAC

He's dropping off Zeke. You know that. So get up off your ass, and I'll make you some coffee. To go.

She tosses the jeans to Jack.

INT. WOUNDED STAG/DOWNSTAIRS/DINING ROOM - DAY

The room's decorated with animal skins, road signs, and local historical pictures. The restaurant's centerpiece, a MASSIVE BUCK HEAD, "HUBERT", is mounted high above the kitchen's short order window.

Mac works behind the counter. Jack is seated on an adjacent stool.

HOPER FERRY (30s), tall and lean with a five-o'clock shadow, your stereotypical greasy spoon cook, preps for breakfast.

Waitress EMMA JAMES (19), a pretty, fresh-faced girl next door, readies her station next to Mac.

LOTTIE BOUGHMONT (40s), short hair, dated glasses, stands behind them. She tops off salt and pepper shakers.

Mac fills a thermos full of coffee.

Lottie puts down the shakers. She stands next to Mac.

LOTTIE  
 (whispers)  
 Not that it's any of my business,  
 but should he still be here?

MAC  
 You're right. It's no one's  
 business.

Mac hands the thermos to Jack.

MAC (CONT'D)  
 You guys bout set?

EMMA  
 Yes ma'am.

HOPER(O.S.)  
 All set.

MAC  
 Alright then. Time to open up. Come  
 on, Jack. I'll walk you out.

Jack picks up his thermos.

JACK  
 Y'all don't let this one work you  
 too hard.

EMMA  
 See you 'round.

HOPER  
 We won't.

LOTTIE  
 Take care, sweetie.

JACK  
 Come on, girl.

Apollo hops up and follows Jack and Mac. They exit the diner.

LOTTIE  
 When her momma passed. Rest her  
 soul...

Lottie takes her cross necklace and kisses it.

LOTTIE (CONT'D)  
 And left her this place. I don't  
 think she aimed on her spending all  
 her days and nights here... Shame.

EMMA  
 If I had Jack sharing my bed I,  
 wouldn't leave either.

LOTTIE

It's that kind of thinking that got those two into trouble in the first place.

EMMA

I could use a little trouble.

Lottie playfully tosses a handtowel at Emma.

LOTTIE

You hush up.

EXT. WOUNDED STAG/PARKING LOT - DAY

Mac, Jack, and Apollo exit the Wounded Stag.

MAC

What time you headed out?

JACK

Couple hours. I've got some chores that need taken care of before we hit the road.

MAC

You be safe. I get worried thinking of you out there all alone.

JACK

I'm not alone. I've got Apollo.

MAC

Damn it, Jack. That's not what I mean, and you know it.

In the distance, a JEEP enters the parking lot.

INT. ABBOT'S JEEP (MOVING) - DAY

MORNING TALK RADIO plays on the stereo.

ABBOT WYLIE (29), over six feet tall, a few extra pounds with short hair, and a goatee, drives the Jeep. He's coarse, but a papa bear.

ZEKE (7), a wholesome boy with his mother's eyes, sits in the passenger's seat.

ABBOT

Hell no. Huh-uh. Not on my watch.

EXT. WOUNDED STAG/PARKING LOT - CONT'D

Jack pulls Mac in close.

JACK  
I'll be alright. Spent more than  
half my life in the woodlands. No  
need to worry your pretty little  
head.

He leans in to kiss Mac. She notices Abbot has pulled into  
the lot. Mac pushes Jack away.

MAC  
Shit.

The Jeep quickly makes its way to their position.

MAC (CONT'D)  
He's early.

Abbot jumps out of the vehicle. He walks toward Mac and Jack  
with purpose.

ABBOT  
What in Christ's name is that good  
for nothing doing here?

Jack is placid, eerily calm.

JACK  
Good to see you too, Abbot--

ABBOT  
You really wanna mouth off to me,  
boy?

Jack stares the giant down.

Mac steps between the two men.

MAC  
Alright. Settle down. Not in front  
of Zeke.

Zeke gets out of the SUV. He runs and hugs Mac.

ZEKE  
Mommy.

MAC  
Hey baby. Did you miss me as much  
as I missed you?

ZEKE

More.

MAC

More? That's a whole lot.

A PATROL CAR pulls into the lot.

Deputy WESLEY PRATT (20s), blond, handsome, and athletic, sits behind the patrol car's wheel.

The Sheriff, EARL FREEMAN (40s), African American, tall and lean, in the passenger's seat.

MAC (CONT'D)

Want to do mommy a favor? How about you run on inside? Tell Hoper I said to make you some pancakes.

ZEKE

Chocolate chip?

MAC

Anything you want, sweetie. You go on, and I'll see you in just a few minutes.

Mac kisses Zeke on the cheek. He leaves and enters the restaurant.

Abbot takes a step forward. Mac puts her hands on his chest, tries to push him back.

MAC (CONT'D)

Just calm down. You don't want to do anything you'll regret--

ABBOT

Me? You've got some nerve. And the balls on this son of a bitch.

Deputy Pratt parks next to Abbot's Jeep. Sheriff Freeman gets out of the patrol car.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

How's everyone doing this morning?

MAC

Morning Earl.

JACK

Sheriff--



ABBOT

You stay out of this. Ain't got  
nothing to do with you.

Deputy Pratt gets out of the patrol car. Backs up the  
Sheriff.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

That's where we differ in opinion  
and seeing as I'm the one with the  
badge, I can assure you my opinion  
is the only one that matters.  
Besides, Jack was just leaving.  
Weren't you Jack?

JACK

As a matter of fact, I was. See you  
later, Mac. Deputy.

Jack and Apollo head toward his FORD F150 truck.

Abbot watches with reckless anticipation.

ABBOT

I should be goin' too.

Abbot starts to get back into his Jeep.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

I'm thinking you should join me and  
Deputy Pratt for some coffee and  
eggs. My treat.

ABBOT

Nah. I really--

SHERIFF FREEMAN

I wasn't asking.

ABBOT

Let me move my Jeep, and I'll meet  
you inside. Can't leave it parked  
here. Wouldn't want to get a  
ticket.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Deputy Pratt can take care of that  
for you. Can't you?

DEPUTY PRATT

Yes sir.

Abbot looks over his shoulder. Jack and Apollo drive off.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Go on. Hand over those keys, and we'll head inside.

Abbot hesitates. His gaze lingers on Jack's truck.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Go on now.

Abbot hands Deputy Pratt his keys.

EXT. JACK'S HOME - DAY

Jack pulls into the driveway of his ranch-style home. The yard is unkempt, and the house's exterior could use some maintenance.

He opens the garage door with a remote. The interior is filled with tools, workstations, hunting gear, various trophies, photos, military memorabilia, and an ATV on a trailer.

Jack and Apollo exit the truck.

GARAGE

Jack and Apollo enter the garage. He takes his thermos of coffee and places it on a workbench at the front of the room.

On the wall is a framed photo of Jack with his Special Forces unit.

Next to the photo on a hook is a GREEN BERET and a second photo. Jack and Abbot. Their senior year in high school. The two young men stand together in their football uniforms. They celebrate their big win.

There are various framed military awards, including a PURPLE HEART.

Jack grabs a bag of dog food and pours it into a bowl for Apollo.

Jack grabs and inspects his BOW.

Next to his bow is a dusty case. It contains a YOUTH KIDS ARCHERY COMPOUND BOW KIT.

Jack starts to pack supplies and equipment on the tailgate of the ATV and trailer.

## INT. JACK'S HOME/BATHROOM - DAY

Jack has showered. He stands in front of the sink counter. He puts the toothbrush away in the medicine cabinet, next to several bottles of medication, ANTI-DEPRESSANTS.

He shuts the cabinet door, looks into its broken mirror. His shattered reflection stares back at him.

The scars on his knuckles linger.

## SERIES OF SHOTS - JACK'S HOME

-- The living room looks barely lived in, the furniture covered in dust. The family photos have been removed. The walls are haunted by the stained discoloration in the paint where they once hung.

-- The Master Bedroom is in disarray. Clothes piled up on the floor. The mattress has no bedding, just a large blanket and some sparsely placed pillows.

-- A young girl's room. It's dusty, and untouched except for several missing photos. The walls a shade of pink. Every item is in its proper place.

## KITCHEN

Jack sits at the kitchen table. He eats a light breakfast.

He shares a few bites with Apollo, who waits patiently by his side.

## EXT. JACK'S HOME/BACKYARD - DAY

The yard is not well maintained. The grass is overgrown in the few spots that haven't died.

There's a dead vegetable garden with a weathered scarecrow.

The one exception...

A beautiful, impeccable flower garden. Jack plucks an array of flowers and fashions them into a BOUQUET.

## DRIVEWAY

Jack inspects the ATV and trailer, now hitched to his truck. With flowers in hand, he and Apollo jump in the truck.

INT. WOUNDED STAG/DINING ROOM - DAY

Hoper rings the busy diner's call bell and places three breakfast plates on the short-order counter.

HOPER

Flop two on a log. Heart attack on a rack with Adam & Eve in the alley. Break a cowboy with one mystery in the alley, ready for pickup.

LOTTIE

Picking up table three. How long on my Adam & Eve, wrecked on a raft?

HOPER

Coming up.

Across the room, Emma serves breakfast at various tables and takes orders.

Four rugged men share a table.

JASPER WYLIE (20's), lean and going bald, a baseball cap to hide his receding hairline. HANK LEWIS (30's), with a potbelly and mullet.

GRADY WALKER (30s), African American, with a pencil mustache and a Marine Corp service hat, and LESTER TANNER (20s), slightly overweight with questionable dental hygiene.

Jasper

(mild stutter)

I'm telling you, this year's the year.

Mac approaches the table.

MAC

You say that every year, Jasper.

JASPER

But this year's going to be different. I'm telling you. I can feel it in my bones.

HANK

He says that every year too.

JASPER

You boys saying I'm wrong?

LESTER

I'm with you Jasper. Been damn near fifty years since ole' man Wilbury nailed that Red Tail. Forty-two pointer.

JASPER

I'm telling you there's one out there just waitin'. I bet one of us gets a fifty-pointer--

HANK

Fifty-pointer? The world records forty-seven bud.

GRADY

Even if there is, the way, you shoot? I'll bet my daddy's Smith and Wesson it won't be you that gets it.

JASPER

Shit. I'll take that bet. I'm a hell of a lot better shot than you--

GRADY

(mocks stutter)  
In your dreams.

Mac tops off the men's coffee.

MAC

I'll tell you, fellas, what. One of you brings home a buck bigger than a forty-two pointer. I'll put his head on the wall. Right, where Hubert is.

GRADY

And what about Hubert?

MAC

Don't concern yourself with Hubert. We'll find him a home.

JASPER

You got yourself a deal, missy. And we'll do it too. Long as those Clinch County witches don't put no hex on us.

LESTER

Uh oh, here we go.

MAC  
Clinch County witches?

HANK  
Don't get him started, Mac--

JASPER  
Y'all think I'm full of beans, but I've seen em'. A whole mess of em' dancing naked out there in the woods under the light of a full moon. If that ain't witchy, then I don't know what is.

HANK  
Sure, Jasper. Sure--

JASPER  
I ain't no liar. And if you don't believe me, ask Abbot. He's seen em' too.

GRADY  
It is a full moon this weekend. Maybe we run into them?

HOPER  
Let's just hope they don't put no bad juju on us.

The men, except for Jasper, share a laugh.

JASPER  
Laugh it up, but there's been plenty of strange going's on out in the swamps and y'all can't tell me no otherwise.

MAC  
I believe you, Jasper. Oh, and while you're out there. Keep your eyes peeled for one of those... Wendigos? I hear they like to feed on superstitious locals. Better yet! You bring back a sasquatch, and you can eat here free... for life!

Mac makes her way back to the diner counter.

JASPER  
Ah hell. You might be teasing, but I'm telling you. I know what we saw.

Mac grabs a fresh pot of coffee. A look of concern washes over her face.

The Sheriff and Deputy sit at the countertop.

Mac approaches with the fresh coffee.

MAC

You two need a refill?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Think we can get em' to go? We need to get out there. Start earning that hard-spent taxpayer money.

MAC

I can handle that. On the house... For a small favor?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

You tryin' to bribe a public servant, miss?

MAC

Just offering a friend who happens to be the sheriff two free cups of coffee.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

For a favor?

MAC

Just a little one. Teeny tiny.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

What do you think, deputy?

DEPUTY PRATT

I could do a favor for a free cup.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Oh, you was planning on paying? That'd be a first... All right, Mac, what are these cups of Joe really gonna cost me?

MAC

I just need you to swing by and check in with Jack before he heads out.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

He's going out today? Starting the weekend a little early--

MAC

He won't admit it, but he wants to get out there before Abbot. Not taking any chances on crossing paths.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Shame about those two. Still. Probably for the best.

MAC

Could you please? Just make sure he's thinking right. Makes me nervous. Him all alone out there.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

He's not alone. He's got Apollo with him.

MAC

You sound just like em'. Like you don't know what I mean--

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Alright, alright. We'll look in on him.

Mac fills two Styrofoam cups with coffee, hands them to the Sheriff and Deputy.

MAC

He's not been himself, Earl. Not lately. Even less than usual, and the nightmares. They're getting worse.

Sheriff Freeman drops some cash, a tip, on the counter.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

He'll be alright. He's a survivor.

Deputy Pratt grabs some creamer and packs of sugar off the counter.

The two men stand.

DEPUTY PRATT

Y'all take care.

INT/EXT. JACK'S FORD F150 (MOVING) - DAY

The radio plays in the background. Something like JOHNNY CASH'S, *"Don't Take Your Guns To Town"...*



The bouquet of flowers Jack picked earlier lay on the dash.

He pulls off to the side of the road, grabs the bouquet, and he and Apollo get out of the truck.

EXT. PENNY AND CASSI'S MEMORIAL - DAY

The site of Jack's wife and daughter's fatal crash.

There's a BLACK MARBLE HEADSTONE surrounded by tattered stuffed animals and dying flowers. It reads, in gold etching, *"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit; Psalm 34:18. In Memoriam, PENELOPE and CASANDRA CLARKE."*

Jack stands in silence... lays down the bouquet.

INT/EXT. JACK'S FORD F150 (MOVING) - DAY

Jack drives the Ford F150 down the backroads.

He arrives at a small gravel parking lot outside the trail's entrance.

EXT. SOUTHERN WILDERNESS TRAIL/ENTRANCE - DAY

The Sheriff and Deputy Pratt have already arrived. They lean against the hood of their patrol car.

INT. JACK'S FORD F150 (MOVING) - CONT'D

Jack pulls his truck into the parking lot.

JACK

Wonder what these two want? Think Mac sent them out here to check on me? Nah, she wouldn't do that, would she, girl?

EXT. SOUTHERN WILDERNESS TRAIL/ENTRANCE - CONT'D

Jack parks the truck. He and Apollo get out.

JACK

Twice in one day?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Ah, well, we heard you might be going out for a hunt today. Thought we'd swing by. Check in on you.

JACK

Take it, you've been talking to Mac?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

She might have mentioned something.

JACK

That right? Well, since you two are here, might as well give me a hand?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

My sciatica's been acting up something fierce, but I'm sure Deputy Pratt wouldn't mind. Would you, Deputy?

Jack unloads his gear.

DEPUTY PRATT

Not at all, Sheriff.

Jack loosens one of the tie down straps that secure his ATV to the trailer.

JACK

Grab that other one for me?

Jack points to a second strap on the back of the ATV. Deputy Pratt begins to loosen the strap.

JACK (CONT'D)

You going to lecture me about the hazards of hunting alone?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Just looking in on a friend.

Jack hands a BACKPACK to the Deputy.

JACK

Friend? Are we friends, Sheriff?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

I'd like to think so.

Jack hops up on the trailer and mounts the ATV.

JACK

In that case, from one friend to another. I can tell you. I'll be just fine, and feel free to relay that back to any other curious parties.

Jack starts up the ATV.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

She just worries--

Jack revs the engine. He points to his ear.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)

(yells)

She's just worried about you, Jack. We all are.

Jack drives the ATV off the trailer. Signals Apollo. She jumps up onto the ATV between him and the handlebars.

Jack motions toward the Deputy, who hands him the pack.

JACK

All? Painting with a thick brush, don't you think?... In case you hadn't noticed. I'm safer in these woods than I am in town.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Either way. If you get into any kind of trouble--

JACK

I've got my comms... unless there's anything else, I'll be on my way.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

No, but you take care of yourself.

DEPUTY PRATT

And good luck on your hunt. Jasper says this is gonna be the year.

JACK

He says that every year.

EXT. SOUTHERN WILDERNESS - DAY

Jack and Apollo trek through the forest on the ATV.

AERIAL VIEW

Aerial point of view sweeps across the massive landscape.

INT. WOUNDED STAG/DINING AREA - DAY

Hoper works behind the counter in the kitchen.

Lottie stands at a waitress's prep station. She refills the condiments.

Emma wipes down tables and busses dishes.

MAC works behind the register.

The Sheriff and his Deputy return.

MAC

Wasn't expecting you back so soon.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

We needed a refill. Can't get enough of your coffee.

MAC

Think maybe because it's free?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Might have something to do with it.

Mac starts to get them some coffee. Lottie cuts her off.

LOTTIE

I got it, hun.

The Sheriff and Deputy take a seat at the counter.

MAC

Were you able to catch up with Jack?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

We did.

MAC

Well... how'd it go?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

About like you'd expect.

Lottie brings the two men their coffee.

LOTTIE  
Here you go, fellas.

DEPUTY PRATT  
Thanks, Lottie.

The Sheriff dips his hat.

Deputy Pratt grabs some sugar and cream.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
You know him... Probably better  
than anyone.

MAC  
That's what has me worried.

DEPUTY PRATT  
I wouldn't fret, Mac. If anyone can  
handle himself in Ole' Okie, it's  
Jack.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Jack unloads his gear from the ATV.

He puts up a ONE MAN tent, retools a firepit from a previous outing, and lays out various camping tools, i.e., lanterns, folding chairs, and a cot.

Jack preps his BOW.

SOUTHERN WILDERNESS

Jack searches for game.

Just out of sight, in the brush, the BARE FOOTPRINTS of a woman, several women, venture off into the forest.

Jack spots a pair of rabbits. He loads his bow and aims.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY - FLASHBACK - TWO YEARS

Penny stokes the campfire. CASANDRA "CASSI" (7), a cute redhead with chubby freckled cheeks, sits next to her mother, her BUBBIE in hand. A worn-out, dingy, stuffed teddy bear.

Jack pulls a case from inside their tent. It contains a youth kids archery compound bow kit. The same DUSTY KIT from his garage.

JACK  
Alright, sweetie. You've been practicing for months. It's finally time for the real thing.

Cassi sees the kit. She drops her Bubbie to the ground and runs to her father.

CASSI  
Is that my bow... Does this mean... Are you taking me with you?

Jack hands the case to Cassi.

PENNY  
Jack! You can't be serious?

CASSI  
I can do it, Mom.

Cassi places the case on the ground. She opens it.

JACK  
You sure can, honey. What? She's older than you were.

PENNY  
Didn't make it right then, and that don't make it right now.

CASSI  
Please, Mom? I'm ready.

JACK  
She's ready.

CASSI  
Please.

Penny kneels in front of Cassi.

PENNY  
My little girl's growing up. Maybe I'm not ready.

CASSI  
Ready for what, mama?

PENNY  
Nothing, baby, never mind. You be sure to pay attention to your daddy. Stay close and remember. You don't have to do anything you don't want to. Understand?

CASSI

Yes, mama.

Penny stands up, faces Jack.

PENNY

And you. You keep an eye on her and don't forget she's only seven. Don't push her.

JACK

Yes, mama.

Jack pulls Penny close. He kisses her.

CASSI

Does that mean I get to go?

PENNY

Yes, baby. You can go.

Cassi pumps her fists in the air.

JACK

Grab your gear, and let's get a move on. We're burning daylight.

Cassi grabs her things from the bow case, and the two prepare to leave.

PENNY

And try to make it back before dark with something good for me to cook up--

CASSI

Come on, Daddy.

Cassi tugs on Jack's sleeve.

PENNY

Bye baby. Be careful. Both of you.

Penny picks Cassi's Bubbie up off the ground. She dusts it off.

SOUTHERN WILDERNESS

A rabbit feeds on vegetation next to a tree.

JACK

(whispers)  
Get down, sweetie.

Cassi kneels next to Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Relax and take a deep breath...  
Load your bow.

Cassi pulls an arrow from her quiver. She Prepares to take the shot.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Just like I taught you.

She aims.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Whenever you're ready. Take your  
time.

Cassi has the rabbit in her sites. She pauses.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Whenever you're ready.

Cassi lowers the bow.

CASSI  
I can't-- I can't shoot it.

JACK  
That's okay, sweetie.

CASSI  
I'm sorry.

JACK  
It's okay. It's okay. You can get  
the next one.

Jack takes an arrow from his quiver, loads his bow. He aims.

Cassi looks away.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Jack cleans and skins a rabbit.

A second rabbit, skewered on a makeshift rotisserie, cooks over the fire. Apollo patiently watches.



INT. WOUNDED STAG/DINING AREA - NIGHT

Only a few customers remain. Hoper is in the kitchen. He flips over two burgers, adds some cheese.

Lottie approaches the pickup window and drops a ticket.

LOTTIE

Got one more. Burn one, add wax,  
take it through the garden and pin  
a rose on it. Frog sticks in the  
alley.

Hoper puts the patties on a prepped plate with fries and a bun.

Emma approaches the window.

EMMA

How's my order lookin'?

HOPER

Coming up.

Lottie stands by the window. Hoper hands the dish to Emma. She heads toward the dining room floor.

Mac sits at the counter. She finishes off a cup of coffee.

MAC

You think you can handle things  
from here?

LOTTIE

We got it covered, hun.

MAC

I'll be back down in a few.

UPSTAIRS/MAIN LOFT

Zeke sits at the kitchen table in the large open space. He reads a book. "*The Works of the Brothers Grimm*". The table is topped with empty plates, his dinner, except some broccoli he failed to finish.

Mac enters the room.

MAC

What's that in your hands? You're  
not supposed to be reading that  
before bed. Gives you nightmares.

ZEKE  
It's not scary, Momma.

MAC  
Then why the nightmares?

She picks up his plate.

MAC (CONT'D)  
And you didn't finish your  
vegetables.

ZEKE  
They got cold.

MAC  
Uh-huh. You are just all kinds of  
trouble tonight, aren't you,  
mister? I'll let you off the hook  
this time. Go brush your teeth and  
get ready for bed before I change  
my mind.

Zeke hops up from the table.

ZEKE'S BEDROOM

Zeke lies in bed. Mac comes to his room. She takes a seat  
next to him.

MAC  
You all set, buddy?

ZEKE  
Yup.

MAC  
And you brushed your teeth? Front  
and back?

ZEKE  
I know how to brush my teeth.

MAC  
Let me see.

ZEKE  
Mom--

MAC  
Let me see.

Zeke smiles wide.

MAC (CONT'D)  
I guess that'll do.

Zeke lies back down. Mac pulls up the covers. She brushes the hair away from his face, kisses him on the forehead.

ZEKE  
Read me a story?

MAC  
You've had enough stories tonight,  
bub.

Mac gets up and walks toward the bedroom door.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Mom's got to go back to work and  
close up, but I'm just downstairs  
if you need me.

ZEKE  
Momma?

She pauses.

MAC  
Yes, baby.

ZEKE  
How come Daddy hates Uncle Jack?

MAC  
Your daddy doesn't hate Jack.

ZEKE  
Sure seems like it to me.

MAC  
Sometimes things can get tricky  
between old friends, but that don't  
mean they hate each other. You--  
you don't need to worry about grown  
folks problem's. You get to sleep.  
Dream about kid's stuff.

Mac turns off the lights.

ZEKE  
Night Momma.

MAC  
Good night sweetie. Momma loves  
you.

ZEKE  
I love you too.

## MAIN LOFT

Mac walks through the room past a Ham Radio setup. A call from Jack comes through over the system.

JACK (V.O.)  
You there Wounded Stag? This is  
Lone Wolf.

Mac takes a seat at the radio set up. She picks up the hand mic.

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Wounded Stag?

MAC  
I'm here, Jack-- uh-- Lone Wolf?

## EXT. CAMPSITE - CONT'D

Jack, radio in hand, lies under the stars on a cot set up outside his small pup tent.

Apollo lies on the ground next to him by the fire.

MAC (V.O.)  
I didn't realize we were using call  
signs. So official.

## INTERCUT - RADIO CONVERSATION

JACK  
Call signs? You mean our pet names?

MAC  
We have pet names? And Wounded Stag  
is the best you've got? Not very  
original if you ask me. Lone Wolf?

JACK  
What can I say? Originality's never  
been my strong suit. Cassi's the  
one with the imagination.

MAC  
She sure didn't get it from you.

Jack is speechless. Stunned, he collects his thoughts. The silence is deafening.

Mac quickly changes the subject.

MAC (CONT'D)  
How are things out there? You doin' alright?

JACK  
Why don't you ask the Sheriff?

MAC  
I'm asking you.

JACK  
I'm doing great, in my element.  
I've got my second-best girl, the stars. No worries here.

MAC  
Second-best girl?

JACK  
Only to my Wounded Stag.

MAC  
Speaking of the stag... I need to get back downstairs. Close up but promise me you'll be safe out there. Take care of yourself and your second-best girl?

JACK  
You got my word.

MAC  
I'll talk to you soon Lone Wolf, and in the meantime, work on those pet names.

JACK  
Will do, Wounded Stag.

Mac shakes her head in disapproval.

MAC  
Goodnight Jack.

We stay on Mac's side of the scene.

She takes a deep breath, puts the handset down.

EXT. CAMPSITE - CONT'D

Jack drifts into a deep sleep.

A SUPERNATURAL LIGHTNING STORM moves through the area. There is no thunder, no rain. It's curiously quiet but a spectacular light show. With each flash of light, silhouetted humanoid forms are outlined through the clouds.

As the strange storm passes, Jack dreams, intrusive, subconscious thoughts.

SERIES OF SHOTS: JACK'S DREAM

-- The full Moon illuminates the night sky.

-- Deep within the forest, a GROUP of WOMEN dance nude around a large bonfire. They're in and out of focus, shapely blurs.

-- ANOTHER ANGLE, their movements primal. Ritualistic. They reach out to the heavens.

-- The rural road. The scene of Penny and Cassi's accident.

-- CLOSE IN, a majestic LONE RED TAIL. It stands in the middle of the road.

-- EXTREME CLOSE UP, the Stag's eyes. The eyes of a man. Jack's eyes.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - MAGIC HOUR - DAY

Jack wakes. He stares into the morning sky.

He gets up, packs a night's provisions.

He inspects his bow, takes inventory of his arrows.

Jack tries the radio, however; when he presses down on the call button, he only gets STATIC, followed by FEEDBACK.

Ready, with radio in hand, he and Apollo leave the campsite. Jack leaves the bulk of his equipment.

INT. WOUNDED STAG/DINING AREA - DAY

Sheriff Freeman and Deputy Pratt take a seat at the counter.



SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Good to see you too.

DEPUTY PRATT  
Morning Mac.

MAC  
Deputy. How's the coffee?

DEPUTY PRATT  
Best in town.

MAC  
Bit of an overstatement, but I'll  
take it.

Hoper rings the kitchen bell (heard off-screen).

HOPER (O.S.)  
Order up. Two usual's.

MAC  
I got it.

Mac leaves to grab their orders.

DEPUTY PRATT  
We really are predictable.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
You keep sayin' that like it's a  
bad thing.

Mac returns with their food and places it on the counter.

MAC  
Some strange weather last night.  
Quite a storm. Don't you think?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Not if I can help it.

DEPUTY PRATT  
Storm? What Storm?

MAC  
Last night. The storm.

DEPUTY PRATT  
Must have slept through it.

Deputy Pratt eats his breakfast.



SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Nothing special--

MAC  
Nothing special? Just lightning? No  
rain, thunder?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Just a little heat lightning,  
nothing to worry about. Probably  
all that climate change they keep  
goin' on about.

Sheriff Freeman tries to take a bite of his eggs.

MAC  
I'm serious, Earl. Jack's out there  
alone. And I couldn't reach him on  
the radio this morning. Not like  
him to not check-in.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
If you're about to ask me for  
another favor, you can forget it.  
I'm not going out in the swamps on  
some wild goose chase over a little  
light show.

Sheriff Freeman makes another attempt to eat his food.

Mac stands a scowl of disapproval across her brow.

The Sheriff drops his fork.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)  
Alright. I tell you what. When I'm  
done making the rounds, I'll swing  
by Abbot's. He and the fellas will  
be gettin' set to head out tomorrow  
morning--

MAC  
Abbot? You pulling my leg?

DEPUTY PRATT  
Gotta say, boss, I'm with Mac on  
that one.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Look. I don't expect those two to  
be as tight as they used to be.  
Even like each other but, Abbot's  
gotta move on. Get past the anger  
for his own good.

(MORE)

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)  
 End all this animosity. Town's too small for it. Besides can't vouch for Jasper, but Hank, Grady, Lester. They got no dog in this fight.

Mac relaxes her posture.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)  
 Now... if you don't mind, can I get a little peace? I'd like to eat my breakfast before it turns.

EXT. SOUTHERN WILDERNESS - DAY

Jack takes a bite of a granola bar. He and Apollo venture deeper and deeper into the wilderness.

STRANGE COLORFUL PLANTS are in bloom. They don't belong here. Curious, Jack takes a moment to inspect things. Game is scarce, and the forest is unnaturally quiet. Undeterred, he presses on.

INT/EXT. POLICE CAR (MOVING) - DAY

The patrol car drives down the back road, Deputy Pratt behind the wheel. Sheriff Freeman sips on his coffee.

DEPUTY PRATT  
 I'm assuming you got a plan, big speech, or something? Not to beat a dead horse, but I gotta tell you. Don't see this going our way.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
 Deputy. Let me give you a little advice. You got to come at these things with a positive attitude. Negativity won't get you very far in this line of work.

DEPUTY PRATT  
 No disrespect, Sheriff, but my attitude's not the one you should be worried about.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
 How bout you just focus on the road? Let me worry about who's attitude is what.

DEPUTY PRATT

Just sayin'. Besides. Can you blame the guy? What are those two thinking? Still sneaking around like that.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

The heart wants what the heart wants. Anyway, that's none of our business.

Sheriff Freeman points to Deputy Pratt's badge. The inscription, "PEACEKEEPER".

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Our business is this right here. See that? Peacekeeper. And that's what I aim on doin'. Keep the peace.

EXT. SOUTHERN WILDERNESS - CONT'D

Jack continues to search for large game. He comes across what appear to be the bare footprints of a woman, several women.

JACK

Huh. That's odd. Ain't it, girl?

(kneels)

What'd ya think? Probably just those weird hippie chicks. Wouldn't be the first time they've been caught out here.

(chuckles)

Dancing naked under the full moon... Odd they'd be out this far...

He continues his hunt.

JACK (CONT'D)

Come on, girl.

EXT. ABBOT'S HOME - DAY

Sheriff Freeman and Deputy Pratt pull into the driveway of Abbot's home. Abbot works on his truck.

Jasper, Hank, Grady, and Lester prepare for their hunt. They pack supplies, AMMUNITION, and work on their ATVs.

INT. POLICE CAR - CONT'D

Deputy Pratt shuts off the engine. He removes the keys from the ignition.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Here goes nothing.

EXT. ABBOT'S HOME - CONT'D

The Sheriff and the Deputy join The Men.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Morning fellas. How's everyone  
doing today?

HANK LEWIS  
Morning.  
LESTER TANNER  
Morning Sheriff.

GRADY  
Howdy Sheriff.

Jasper nods in acknowledgment. He takes a stance behind Abbot.

ABBOTT WYLIE  
What are you doing here?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Seems like no one is happy to see  
me these days. I'm starting to get  
a feeling that I'm not welcome  
'round these parts--

ABBOTT WYLIE  
Something you need?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Funny, you should ask. I was hoping  
we could have a word. In private.

Abbot puts down his TOOLS.

ABBOT  
You asking or telling?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
You don't have to do anything you  
don't want to. Still a free  
country. Last I checked.

HANK

The man did drive all the way out here. Ain't no harm in giving him a few minutes of your time--

ABBOT

That right? Alright then. Come on, Sheriff. Let's get this over with.

Abbot and the Sheriff walk into the garage.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

Y'all keep at it. No slacking off while I'm gone.

JASPER

Don't worry cousin. I'll keep em' busy.

Abbot and the Sherriff enter the home.

Jasper picks up Abbot's tools.

Hank pulls a pack of smokes out of his shirt pocket and takes out a CIGARETTE.

JASPER (CONT'D)

You heard him. Let's get back to it.

GRADY

Sure, Jasper. We'll do that.

Hank offers the Deputy a cigarette.

JASPER

(Mumbles to self)  
Errant bunch of S-O-B's.

INT. ABBOT'S HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

The Sheriff takes a seat at the kitchen table. Abbot opens the refrigerator. It's well stocked, the bulk of the food; juice, snacks, and meals for his son, Zeke.

ABBOT

Beer?

Abbot grabs a beer.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Little early for me.

Abbot takes a seat at the table. He opens his beer.

ABBOT  
So what's on your mind?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
I want to talk to you about Jack--

ABBOT  
What about him?

Abbot picks up a pack of cigarettes off the table. He lights a smoke.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
I understand you two ain't on the best of terms. Hell, I don't blame you, but he's out there alone, and I've got some concerns--

ABBOT  
What's that got to do with me?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Since you and the boys will be heading out in the morning, I was hoping you could keep an eye out. Check-in on him--

ABBOT  
And why in God's name would I do that?

Abbot takes a drink of his beer.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Because the two of you used to be close, you got history... you're angry, but--

ABBOT  
History? That's a gentle way to put it. Shit! He's no man. A snake, low-life murderer. Far as I'm concerned.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Accidents happen. Mistakes were made, sure, but he's no murderer, and neither--

ABBOT  
Mistakes, my ass. He may not have run my sister off the road...

(MORE)

ABBOT (CONT'D)  
my niece. If it weren't for Zeke,  
I'd happily put a bullet in him  
myself.

Abbot takes a deep drag off his cigarette, blows the smoke in  
the Sheriff's face.

ABBOT (CONT'D)  
Besides. If I run into him out  
there. Well... People go missing in  
the woodlands all the time. If  
something were to happen to Jack. I  
guess that'd just be his own damn  
bad luck.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
You don't mean that, Abbot. That's  
just the anger talking--

ABBOT  
The hell, I don't. You gonna try  
and tell me he didn't mean to  
betray me, my sister. He made his  
bed. He can lie in it.

Abbot pounds his beer. Crushes the can, tosses it in the  
trash. The two men sit in confrontational silence.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
So I guess that's that, then?

ABBOT  
You got anything else for me? If  
not, I think it's time for you to  
be moving on.

Abbot stands up.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Someday you're going to have to  
move past all this. Not just for  
you but for, Zeke. It's too small a  
town.

The Sheriff stands.

ABBOT  
Or maybe this town ain't big enough  
for the two of us.

Another long drag... Abbot exhales.

ABBOT (CONT'D)  
Are we finished?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
I've said my peace.

EXT. ABBOT'S HOME - CONT'D

The Sheriff and Abbot join the rest of the men in the driveway.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Smoke breaks over Deputy.

Deputy Pratt tosses his cigarette on the ground. He pulls the car keys out of his pocket.

DEPUTY PRATT  
See you, fellas, later.

The Deputy gets in the patrol car.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
You gentlemen be safe out there...  
Abbot, I hope you'll reconsider--

ABBOT  
I won't.

The Sheriff gets in the car, and the two men drive off.

JASPER  
What was that all about?

ABBOT  
Nothing of consequence. Just Earl  
being Earl. Enough chit-chat. Let's  
get back to it.

INT. POLICE CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Deputy Pratt drives the patrol car.

DEPUTY PRATT  
I take it that went about as well  
as expected?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
You might say that.

DEPUTY PRATT  
I hate to say I told you so--



SHERIFF FREEMAN

Then don't.

EXT. SOUTHERN WILDERNESS - CONT'D

Jack tracks the footprints. Ghostly, INAUDIBLE WHISPERS echo through the forest.

Jack pauses. He takes note of his surroundings. The deeper he goes, the less familiar things seem.

The day, abnormally short.

JACK

I'm not one for superstitions, but I'd be lying if I said this don't have me a little spooked. Think maybe it's time we head back to base. Sound good to you, pup?

Apollo barks in approval. The two companions reverse their path back toward the campsite.

The trees discreetly move. They rearrange themselves. The familiar trails are no longer in their natural spaces.

Jack finds himself caught in a loop. Each path leads back to the start.

Frustrated, confused, a temperate look of panic on his face. Trapped in the labyrinth, darkness sets.

The Moon bright, large.

Lost, Jack sets up a makeshift camp.

He uses some matches and flint to build a fire, cooks some canned provisions.

Some salmon jerky for Apollo.

A protein bar for dessert.

He calls Mac on the radio, but... no luck.

Jack preps his sleeping bag. He and Apollo bunk down for the night.

INT. WOUNDED STAG/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Mac is alone. She counts money at the register, closes up.

## UPSTAIRS/ZEKE'S ROOM

Zeke is in bed. He holds his book, "*The Works of the Brothers Grimm*".

Mac, a look of love in her eyes, watches the young boy sleep from the doorway. She notices the book.

MAC  
(whispers)  
I told him not before bed. This  
boy's as hardheaded as his father.

She carefully takes the book, pulls the covers over him, and kisses him on the forehead.

MAC (CONT'D)  
Goodnight, sweet little prince.

## MAIN LOFT

Mac sits by the ham radio. She picks up the transmitter.

MAC  
You out there, Jack?

She pauses, waits for a response...

MAC (CONT'D)  
Jack? If you're out there and you  
can hear me, I want you to know  
we're all thinking about you. We're  
worried-- I'm worried. Be safe and  
remember that I'm here waiting for  
you. Come home, Lone Wolf, come  
home.

## EXT. SOUTHERN WILDERNESS - CONTINUOUS

Jack is awakened by a LOUD SQUELCH from his radio. The battery has died.

The noise has attracted something, someone. A suspicious figure lingers in the shadows. Its eyes bright, it steps out into the light. A lone COYOTE.

JACK  
What in the hell you doin' alone  
out here?

The Coyote quickly disappears back into the darkness.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Do I even want to know?

Jack packs up his gear and readies his bow.

He and Apollo track the Coyote deeper into the woods.

The moon is full. It hovers over the forest. Its focal point centered over an area in the distance.

Jack comes across more footprints. They create a path.

He and Apollo follow the trail. The whispers grow louder. Distinct. The sounds of women as they LAUGH, SING.

#### NEREHVURESSE'S GROTTTO

Jack comes upon an oasis. The full moon shines down upon it like a giant spotlight. The spring is beautiful. A waterfall reigns down from the cliffs above. The falls shimmer and glisten. The Coyote waits on the banks.

The scene like a JOHN WILLIAM WATERHOUSE painting come to life. "*Hylas and the Nymphs*" (1896). LOUIS-JEAN-FRANCOIS's, "*Venus and Nymphs Bathing*" (1776). There are over sixty women who take refuge in the grotto.

They're exceptionally beautiful. They bathe and clean one another in the waters.

NEREHVURESSE, the MUSCOGEE GODDESS of the Moon, emerges from the falls. The personification of the male gaze, she's the most beautiful among the tribe. A vision of perfection. Her hair a dark black. Long, it hangs down to the center of her back.

Her skin a smooth shade of honey, eyes a light brown with a gaze that could pierce through the soul of the mightiest man.

A group of her CLOSEST CONFIDANTS comes to her side. They bathe her with a sponge, finish, and swim to shore. They dry her, the Coyote by their side.

Jack is hypnotized. He cannot look away. He moves in for a closer look.

The Coyote alerts the DEER WOMEN to Jack's presence with an unnerving howl.

Described in lore as fae, fairy-like. Similar to the siren, succubae, and nymphs of Greek mythology. They CAW out in displeasure.

A HUNTRESS grabs a SPEAR and lunges it at Jack, narrowly missing his head as it lodges into a tree trunk.

Jack falls back into the brush. He leaps to his feet. He and Apollo quickly retreat into the wilderness.

Nerehvuressse gives a signal.

A group of SEVEN DEER WOMEN, led by the Huntress, dressed in furs and tanned leather armor, give chase. WAR CLUBS, carved from the hip bones of various large animals, and spears in hand.

INTERCUT - DEER WOMEN/JACK AND APOLLO

Lost and confused, Jack attempts to hide in the thick brush, a desperate attempt to evade the strange and beautiful creatures that hunt him.

The Deer Women close in.

Apollo breaks her silence. She attracts their attention, draws them away from Jack. They follow her, all but one.

Suspicious, the LONE DEER WOMAN stays behind to investigate further.

Apollo runs through the tree lines. She barks to keep the Deer Women's focus. They follow, but the dog is quick, evasive, a hard target.

Back to Jack as he makes his way behind the Lone Deer Woman. She searches through the brush.

Jack, bow in hand, aims. Steady. Patient. He puts an arrow through her shoulder.

Gravely wounded, the Lone Deer Woman collapses.

Jack apprehensively makes his way to her body. He kneels and pulls her hair back.

She cries out, the horrific sound reverberates through the forest. Jack withdraws back into the dense brush.

Back to the Deer Women as they chase Apollo. The screams of their sister resonate in the distance. They reverse paths to find her.

Back to Jack, trapped in the supernatural labyrinth, he desperately searches for Apollo.

We stay on The Deer Women's side of the scene. They find their sister injured. She's in excruciating pain. Collectively, they shout out in anger, a chilling sound.

They remove the arrow and tend to her wound. Carefully, ceremoniously, the Deer Women pick her up.

#### NEREHVURESSE'S GROTTTO

The Deer Women return to the oasis with their wounded sister. MEDICINE WOMEN quickly come to her aid, take her away.

The Huntress collapses at Nerehvuresse's feet. Subserviently. Her head down, arms extended.

Enraged, Nerehvuresse turns her back on her.

The Huntress retreats into the group of Deer Women.

Nerehvuresse signals her HAND MAIDENS.

They paint her bare skin using the mud from the grotto's banks. Streaks of shades of grey, charcoal, and red clay.

They dress her. A BREASTPLATE, made of brass, trimmed in gold, accented with turquoise stones. LEATHER GAUNTLETS and LEG GUARDS.

Her TOMAHAWK strapped to her hip with a tanned skin pelt. a quiver filled with ARROWS across her back, BOW in hand.

The Deer Women adorn Nerehvuresse with a CROWN carved from elk horn and jawbone accented with a beautiful arrangement of feathers and beads.

An iconic delineation. The Coyote by her side.

#### INTERCUT - HUNTING PARTY/JACK AND APOLLO

Jack searches through the forest for Apollo.

JACK  
(whispers)  
Apollo? Apollo? Where are you,  
girl?

Apollo emerges from the brush, excited to be reunited with her master.

JACK (CONT'D)  
There's my girl. Yes, good girl,  
good girl.

Jack pets Apollo.

JACK (CONT'D)

What next? Something tells me these  
bitches aren't planning on giving  
up. And I'm tired of running.  
Hiding. Time to fight fire with  
fire.

Back to the Hunting Party. Nerehvuresse and her Deer Women  
search for Jack. They roam the forest.

Vastly outnumbered, Jack tracks them from the shadows.

Jack takes some matches and a spool of tie rope from his  
pocket. He designs a makeshift flare, positions it in the  
thick brush, just out of sight.

A YOUNG DEER WOMAN lingers slightly behind her sisters.

Senses heightened, Jack's pupils dilate.

His ears twitch in tune with the Young Deer Woman's every  
step.

Jack targets her from the thick brush, circles back, and  
flanks the creature.

He removes an arrow from his quiver... some flint and string  
from his pocket. He uses the string to attach the flint to  
the arrow.

Jack aims. Carefully. Patiently. He takes his shot.

The arrow strikes its target. The matches ignite, the fire, a  
momentary distraction.

Jack seizes the opportunity. He grabs the Young Deer Woman  
from behind, pulls her into the brush. With his hand over her  
mouth, she's unable to call for help as he chokes her  
unconscious.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SMALL WOODLAND RAVINE - NIGHT

Jack's pack sits on the ground behind him. Isolated, he's  
alone with the Young Deer Woman.

Her hands and feet bound with torn pieces of cloth from his  
shirt, rags used as a gag. He kneels in front of her.

Apollo watches.

JACK

What do you want? Why-- why me? I  
just want to get home. We can just--  
just let-- let me go home.

Jack grabs her head and inspects her inhuman features, ears  
pointy like a creature from a fairytale. Her olive-toned skin  
is smooth like porcelain. Eyes, fiery... wild. Feral.

She stares. Head tilted.

JACK (CONT'D)

What are you? What are you!

Curious, she leans forward, breaths in Jack's scent.

Jack grabs her face, stars back at her. The pair dead locked.

JACK (CONT'D)

You understand. Don't you? Don't  
you? Yeah, you get it. What do you  
want-- What do you want from me?

Nothing... Jack pulls a HUNTING KNIFE from his belt.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm going to take out your gag, but  
if you make a sound-- If you  
scream... I don't want to hurt you,  
but I will.

Jack pulls the gag from her mouth.

Apollo lets out a LOW GROWL.

JACK (CONT'D)

Tell me! What are you? Why are you  
chasing me?

Nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

Talk!

YOUNG DEER WOMAN

(native Muscogee)

You are already dead.

JACK

What-- What does that mean?

YOUNG DEER WOMAN

(native Muscogee)

Dead. You are already dead.

JACK  
I don't understand.

YOUNG DEER WOMAN  
(loud, aggressive)  
Dead. Dead. Dead--

Jack puts the knife to her throat.

JACK  
Quiet -- Stay fucking quiet.

The Young Deer Woman begins to laugh. Jack puts the gag back in her mouth, takes a few steps back.

JACK (CONT'D)  
You're losing it, man. You've really lost it this time.

Jack begins to hear faint whispers coming from the forest. Familiar voices. They grow louder. Closer.

PENNY (O.S)  
This way Jack. This is the way home.

CASSI (O.S.)  
Follow me, Daddy.

Sweat drips down Jack's dirty face. A look of fear in his bloodshot eyes.

JACK  
Penny? Cassi? Is that you? No-- none of this-- this isn't real.

The whispers continue, accompanied by images of his dead wife and daughter. Like vapor, they drift in and out of the tree line.

PENNY (O.S)  
Come to me, Jack. Come home with us.

CASSI (O.S.)  
Come home, Daddy.

Jack drops his knife, grabs his bow, and aims it point-blank at the Young Deer Woman.

JACK  
This is-- is this you? Get out of my fucking head!...  
(MORE)



JACK (CONT'D)  
 What's wrong with you, Jack? What's  
 wrong with you?

PENNY (V.O.)  
 (repeating)  
 What's wrong with you, Jack? What's  
 wrong with you, Jack?

INT. JACK'S HOME/GARAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK - TWO YEARS

Jack sits alone at his workbench. He preps his bow for a hunt.

The radio plays in the background. Something like CHARLIE RICH's, *"Behind Closed Doors"*.

Penny stands in the doorway. Arms crossed, her brow crumpled.

PENNY  
 Jack? Jack! Answer me, Jack! What  
 is wrong with you?

JACK  
 What-- what do you need--

PENNY  
 I need you to stop hiding out in  
 this garage. I need you to spend  
 time with your family, your  
 daughter.

Jack drops his bow on the workbench. He turns to Penny.

JACK  
 Spend time with-- what's that  
 supposed to mean? I spend time with  
 the two of you every day. I've been  
 teaching Cassi how to use a bow,  
 haven't I? I'm not allowed to have  
 a little time to myself? Time to  
 prep for this weekend is all--

PENNY  
 You spend time with us? Everyday?  
 How you figure? Ever since you've  
 been back, all you've done is run  
 off to the woods for your little  
 hunts, and when you're not hunting,  
 you're either locked out here  
 avoiding us or off doing god knows  
 what with god knows who. And when  
 are you are with us.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

You're just plopped down in front of the T.V., staring off into space like some kind of zombie--

JACK

Zombie? Quit being so dramatic. You always blow things out of proportion.

Penny stands in silence.

PENNY

Dramatic? God damn you! You've stopped trying. The yard looks like a jungle. Hell. We've already gotten two citations from the city, and when's the last time you've touched me... It's like you don't care about anything anymore. You don't care about us. You need help. We need help.

JACK

I'm here now ain't I--

PENNY

Are you?

Jack picks his bow up, continues his work.

Penny fights back the tears. She waits for a response.

PENNY (CONT'D)

So that's it then. That's all you have to say? Just remember we love you. Your daughter loves you. She misses you. Misses her daddy.

Jack sits still. Silent.

Dejected, Penny starts to leave.

JACK

Wait.

She pauses.

JACK (CONT'D)

How bout we all go out together this weekend? The three of us? Cassi's been bugging me to take her out for a real hunt. We'll go. We'll go as a family.

Penny lowers her guard. It's something.

PENNY  
Okay... Okay.

JACK  
Okay?

PENNY  
Yes, okay. I'll let Cassi know.  
She'll be so excited, but I swear.  
Don't let her down. She needs her  
father.

EXT. SMALL WOODLAND RAVINE - NIGHT - PRESENT

Tears run down Jack's face.

He grips his bow tight, still aimed at the Young Deer Woman.

Apollo rubs and paws at Jack's leg.

CASSI (O.S.)  
Come home, Daddy. Come home.

Jack lowers his bow.

The moonlight breaks through the tree line, illuminates a path for him to follow.

JACK  
I'm coming... Daddy's coming, baby.

Her mind game is effective. Jack follows the intermittent voices of his dead wife and child down the path.

ILLUMINATED PATH

Apollo, by his side Jack follows the ghost of his wife and daughter through the forest.

SMALL WOODLAND RAVINE

Nerehvuresse and her Hunting Party free their young sister. Their plot in motion, they follow Jack down the moonlit path.

ILLUMINATED PATH - CONT'D

Jack follows the ghosts of his wife and daughter, sporadic visions of the pair.

They lead him closer to the edge of the forest. The path becomes more and more familiar. The woodlands he remembers.

He can see the lake's edge. His daughter's Bubbie lays on the path just ahead.

Excited, he irresponsibly drops his bow and runs to the stuffed animal. He bends down. It's partially burnt, charred. He starts to pick it up.

An illusion. His hands filled with dirt. Bewildered, he pounds his fist on the ground.

The deception broken, a squad of Deer Women, silhouetted by the moonlight, block his exit. Panicked, Jack surveys the tree line. He's flanked on both sides. There's nowhere to run.

The Goddess, Nerehvuresse, emerges from the shadows.

Apollo tries to defend her master, but Nerehvuresse lulls the dog to sleep with a hypnotic look.

She grabs Jack by the throat and pins him against a large oak.

His head bounces violently off the tree.

She stares at him... drops him to the ground.

Concussed and tired, he lies there helpless, beaten.

Nerehvuresse stands over Jack. Her Deer Women surround her.

She kneels and inspects her prey.

JACK

Go-- Go ahead! Get it over with,  
you fuck--

Nerehvuresse places her palm over his mouth, grabs him by the back of the head, a large chunk of his hair in her grasp. She pulls his head to the side, whispers in his ear.

NEREHVURESSE

(native Muscogee)

What spy is this? A hunter? Hero?  
No. A thief. Stealing glances of  
that of which you are not worthy. I  
find you guilty. My judgment  
indisputable. Tell, if thou can,  
the wonderous sight disclosed. A  
Goddess naked to thy view exposed.

She reaches into a POUCH on her pelt and removes her hand, now filled with a strange YELLOW POWDER. She blows the powder into Jack's face.

Nerehvuresse curses him just as ARTEMIS cursed ACTEON centuries before.

Blood trickles down Jack's face. He struggles to hold his head up. His vision blurs...

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. JACK AND PENNY'S HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK - TWO YEARS

Jack pulls into the driveway of his ranch-style home. Penny's Ford Explorer is parked just outside of the garage.

Jack exits his truck and inspects the interior of the Explorer. Penny has already loaded several suitcases and some personal items in the SUV.

The front door of the home is ajar.

INT. JACK AND PENNY'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack enters the home.

JACK

Penny?

She doesn't answer...

JACK (CONT'D)

Penny!

Again, no answer. He can hear her upstairs.

UPSTAIRS/CASSI'S ROOM

Penny helps Cassi pack a child's suitcase. She holds her Bubbie under her arm.

PENNY

Don't you think you're getting a little old to be carrying that thing around with you everywhere you go?

CASSI

But daddy gave it to me... before--

Jack storms into the room.

JACK  
What the hell's going on? Why are  
there suitcases in your car? Where  
do you think you're going?

Cassi shuts her suitcase. She attempts to hug her father.

CASSI  
Daddy!

Penny steps between them.

PENNY  
Keep packing, honey.

JACK  
Packing? For what?

CASSI  
We're going to Grandma's Daddy.

JACK  
Grandma's?

PENNY  
That's right, sweetie. We're going  
to Grandma's.

JACK  
The hell you are--

PENNY  
The hell we're not... I know Jack.  
I know everything.

Cassi stands still. A befuddled look on her face.

Penny grabs Jack by the arm.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
Let's go downstairs. Talk--

JACK  
We can talk right here.

PENNY  
Not in front of our daughter.

Penny pulls Jack out of the room.

PENNY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Keep packing, baby. Mommy will be  
right back.

DOWNSTAIRS/LIVING ROOM

Jack and Penny enter the room. Penny, with tears in her eyes.

PENNY  
I know... everything.

JACK  
What do you know?

PENNY  
Enough Jack-- Enough! You just  
gonna stand there and lie to me.  
Lie straight to my face. Be a man.  
Admit it.

Jack stands quiet. An ill-timed silence.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
Say something, damn it. Explain  
yourself.

JACK  
What do you want me to say?

PENNY  
I want you to tell me the truth.

JACK  
It's not what you think. Things  
just-- just sort of happened--

PENNY  
You just happened to fuck your  
sister-in-law. Your sister-in-law!

JACK  
It wasn't like that. Things have  
been complicated-- For me-- Between  
us.

PENNY  
Then tell me. What's it like? Do  
you love her? Is she worth it?  
Worth your family? Your best  
friend?

JACK

I'm sorry. Sorry about everything.  
I wish I could take it back--

PENNY

You wish you could take it back, or  
you wish I hadn't found out?

JACK

Just calm down. Take a seat. We can  
talk--

PENNY

You had your chance. I begged you  
for weeks... months. Therapy,  
couples therapy. Anything. But no.  
We're not good enough for you  
anymore.

JACK

Okay. If that's what you want. I'll  
do it. I'll get-- We'll get  
therapy.

PENNY

Too little. Too late.

Jack tries to embrace Penny. She pushes him away.

PENNY (CONT'D)

No... Don't.

He tries again.

PENNY (CONT'D)

NO! Just stop. We're leaving.

Penny walks to the edge of the staircase.

UPSTAIRS/CASSI'S ROOM

Cassi, suitcase packed, sits on the edge of her bed.

PENNY (O.S.)

Sweetie. Come on. It's time to go  
to Grandma's.

CASSI

Coming, Momma.

Cassi holds her Bubbie tight.



## LIVING ROOM

Cassi comes down the stairs. Her small suitcase and Bubbie in hand.

Jack sits on the couch.

PENNY  
Let's go, baby.

CASSI  
Is Daddy coming?

PENNY  
No baby. Daddy's staying here.

CASSI  
But--

Jack stands up.

PENNY  
Just go to the car, sweetie.

Cassi walks toward her father. Penny cuts her off.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
Go to the car, sweetie.

JACK  
Penny! At least let me say goodbye  
to my daughter.

Penny hesitates... lets Cassi pass.

Cassi and Jack embrace.

JACK (CONT'D)  
You behave while you're at your  
grandma's. Be a good girl... Okay?

CASSI  
Okay, Daddy. I will.

JACK  
You promise?

CASSI  
I promise.

JACK  
Cross your heart?

CASSI  
Cross my heart.

Cassi makes a cross-motion across her chest.

Penny takes Cassi by the arm.

PENNY  
Okay, baby. Time to go.

Penny and Cassi walk to the living room door.

JACK  
Daddy will see you soon. I love  
you. Both of you.

CASSI  
I love you too.

Cassi exits the home.

Penny stops... looks back at Jack.

PENNY  
Damn you for doing this. God damn  
you.

Jack sits back down on the couch, his head between his legs. He can hear the engine of the Ford Explorer start. His wife and daughter drive away. He can't sit still. He stands up.

Jack savagely runs his hands through his hair. He leaves the room.

GARAGE

Angry, Jack slides his arm across his workbench.

Its contents fall to the floor. He kicks at the equipment, throws his tools.

Jack slams his hands on the workbench.

His daughter's small bow case catches his attention. The case opened and its contents scattered across the ground.

Jack pulls his keys from his pocket.

He pushes the garage door's remote. Impatient, he doesn't wait for the door to completely open. He crawls under the small gap between the door and driveway.

EXT. JACK AND PENNY'S HOME/DRIVEWAY - CONT'D

Jack jumps in his truck. He quickly pulls out of the driveway.

INT/EXT. PENNY'S FORD EXPLORER/JACK'S FORD F150 (MOVING) - DAY

Penny drives down the back road.

Jack quickly catches up. He honks the horn frantically.

Penny, terrified, looks in the rearview mirror.

CASSI

Look, Mommy. Daddy's coming.

PENNY

I see him, baby.

Penny speeds up, but Jack matches her pace.

He continues to honk the horn.

JACK

Come on, damn it. Pullover...  
Pullover!

Jack pounds his fist on the steering wheel.

Penny continues to alternate her focus from the road to Jack.

Cassi holds tightly onto her Bubbie.

Jack gets closer... closer... to close.

PENNY

(talking to self)  
Please, Jack. Just stop.

Her cheeks covered in tears, eyes puffy and red, Penny continues to accelerate.

She creates space between the two vehicles.

Cassi tugs on her mother's sleeve.

CASSI

What's Daddy doing Mommy?

PENNY

Nothing baby, nothing... It's fine.

Penny takes her eyes off the road.

A HERD OF DEER crosses the road in front of her. There's no time to avoid them. She hits one.

The deer shatters the windshield. Penny loses control as it crashes into the cab of the vehicle.

It's a violent crash. The Ford Explorer rolls over several times before it lands in the grass just shy of the tree line.

Jack slams on his breaks.

He sits in his truck, frozen. Jack stares out the windshield in disbelief.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Smoke begins to billow from the engine.

Jack, in a panic, leaps from the truck and runs to the SUV just as...

The vehicle burst into flames.

Jack tries to reach his wife and daughter, but the heat from the fire overwhelms him.

He drops to his knees, cries out. Helpless, he can only watch as the SUV burns.

EXT. RURAL ROAD/SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT - NIGHT

The POLICE, FIRE DEPARTMENT, and MEDICAL FIRST RESPONDERS have arrived.

A group of FIREMEN spray down the charred vehicle.

Sheriff Freeman and Deputy Pratt are on the scene. They work with STATE TROOPERS to investigate the circumstances of the accident.

The blue and red lights of the emergency vehicles illuminate the night sky.

Devastated and in shock, Jack sits alone on the side of the road.

INT. JACK'S HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Penny and Cassi's wake has begun. A large crowd of friends and townsfolk are there, including; Mac, the Sheriff and Deputy, Hank, Grady, Lester, Hoper, and Lottie.

Abbot arrives with Jasper. Abbot storms through the room like a hurricane. With violent intent, he confronts Jack.

ABBOT

You dirty, rotten, son of a bitch!

Abbot grabs Jack by the lapel of his black suit jacket. Jack stands defenseless with his hands to his side.

The Sheriff, Deputy, and the other men try to restrain Abbot. Furious and inconsolable, he easily knocks Hank aside. He pushes Grady to the ground.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

Get the hell off me!

Hank quickly recovers and grabs Abbot from behind.

Grady springs to his feet. Helps Hank and Deputy Pratt rein in Abbot. Mac jumps between Abbot and Jack.

MAC

Please, Abbot. Please-- Just calm down.

Her presence only escalates the situation. Abbot, again, tries to break free from the men's grip. This time they're prepared and hold on tight.

ABBOT

Your ass can go straight to hell.  
The both of you.

The Sheriff takes a more forward approach. Grabs Abbot's face. Palms in hand.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Enough!

Abbot stares at The Sheriff. He's speechless. Hate in his eyes.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Today is not the time. Not the place.

Jasper, with a cooler head, takes a stance next to The Sheriff. He puts his hand on Abbot's shoulder.

JASPER

All in good time cousin.

Abbot looks toward Jasper.

The Sheriff takes a step back, gives Abbot some space.

Abbot's temperament shifts. Still angry, yet controlled. He turns his attention back to Jack. He pulls an arm free and points at Jack.

ABBOT

Your day's coming, boy. Sooner or  
later, I'm gonna put you down.  
That's a promise.

The Sheriff's patience worn thin, he puts his finger in Abbot's chest.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

I said enough!  
(points at Jasper)  
You take him home. Help him cool  
off.

Jasper takes Abbot by his free arm.

JASPER

Come on cousin.

Abbot looks around the room.

All the guests are frozen in place. They stare at him with disbelief.

ABBOT

What's everybody staring at me for?  
I'm not the asshole here. Am I  
Jack? You tell em'. Tell em' why my  
sister and niece are in closed  
caskets. Why don't you tell em'--  
tell em' what you did?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Abbot. I won't say it again. You  
can go home, or you can go to jail.

Abbot spits on the floor.

ABBOT

Town fucking hero...

The Sheriff places his hand on his hip, next to his cuffs.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

My ass.

Jasper, Deputy Pratt, Hank, Lester, and Grady escort Abbot to the door.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

This ain't over. Not by a long shot.

Abbot and Jasper leave.

Mac attempts to console Jack. Dismissive, he gently pushes his way past her and leaves the room.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

All right, y'all. Shows over. Let's simmer down. Remember why we're here.

EXT. PENNY AND CASSI'S FUNERAL/MIXON CEMETERY - DAY

The Sheriff, Deputy Pratt, Hank, Grady, Lester, Hoper, Lottie, Jasper, and Abbot are all in attendance with various friends, family members, and townsfolk. Mac is conspicuously absent.

Jack stands alone in front of the crowd.

The LOCAL PASTOR stands next to the open graves, bible in hand.

THE PASTOR

Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?

CUT TO:

The coffins' of Penny and Cassi are lowered into the depths of their dark graves.

THE PASTOR (V.O.)

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK

THE PASTOR (V.O.)  
For the Lord is close to the  
brokenhearted and saves those who  
are crushed in spirit.

EXT. OKEFENOKEE SWAMP/AERIAL VIEW - MAGIC HOUR - PRESENT DAY

Aerial point of view sweeps across the massive landscape as  
the sun rises.

EXT. WOODLAND PATH - DAY

Jack awakens. He grips his dog tags tight.

Apollo licks and paws at his face. His nightmare is over.  
Perhaps that's all it was.

He finds the forest around him has returned to normal.

Jack stands up. He's off-balance.

He steadies himself on a tree, regains his bearings.

Jack and Apollo make their way down the path to the edge of  
the wood line.

LAKE'S EDGE

Jack drops to his knees. Grabs a hand full of water, rinses  
the blood and powder off his face. For a brief moment, he  
catches his reflection in the water.

As the water ripples, the reflection shifts from him to a  
STAG.

Frightened, he lets out a faint scream. Jack falls backward  
into the mud... He laughs at himself, gets back to his feet.

JACK  
I think that bump on the head might  
have broke something, girl?

Jack bends down and pets Apollo, who promptly returns his  
affection.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Huh, girl. Who's a good girl? You  
are yes--



Jack feels a tight burst of pain throughout his entire body.

JACK (CONT'D)

Yes...

He stands in agony, takes a few steps. The pain intensifies.

Apollo, confused and unable to help her master, can only  
BARK.

JACK (CONT'D)

God-- God, please!

He sweats profusely. His hands cling to the sides of his  
head. He trembles violently.

JACK (CONT'D)

God help me!

Soaked in sweat, he rips at his shirt and tears it off.

A new spasm of pain wracks his body. He tries to cry out, but  
he can't speak. His dog tags tighten as his neck expands, the  
chain snaps. They fall into the mud.

New bolts of pain wrack through his body. He twist, contorts.

Jack grabs at his legs. He grabs at his pants, pulls them off  
as if they were on fire.

Jack stands naked at the edge of the lake. He Gasps for air.  
He falls to his knees, forward onto his hands. A thick coat  
of fur grows through his skin.

On all fours, he gives in and embraces his fate as he slowly  
begins to change. The metamorphosis from man into beast is no  
simple task.

Bone and muscle bend and reform themselves, the body suffers  
as it breaks apart and rebuilds. We can see Jack's flesh move  
as his tissue rearranges itself.

The antlers of a great stag emerge from the sides of his  
head.

His whole face distorts as his jaw extends, his skull changes  
shape before our eyes.

His hands and feet gnarl. His fingers and toes curl back as  
they're replaced by hooves.

The transformation complete, the man no longer exists,  
replaced by the brilliant profile of a majestic STAG. Its  
reflection stares back from the lake.

Apollo is not fooled. Still able to recognize her master.

The Stag's new, animalistic instincts kick in. He runs back into the forest.

Apollo follows.

EXT. ABBOT'S CAMPSITE/OKEFENOKEE SWAMP - DAY

Abbot and his buddies Jasper, Hank, Grady, and Lester have arrived at their base of operations.

Abbot cleans and inspects his RIFLE.

JASPER

I'm telling you, boys. I've got a good feeling. A good, good feeling.

LESTER

Anyone ever accuse you of being an optimist?

JASPER

You can joke all you want, but I'm tellin' you. Something special's in the air.

GRADY

You've just been sittin' downwind from Hank too long.

HANK

I take offense to that.

GRADY

You're meant to.

Hank and Grady tussle around.

JASPER

Yeah, well will see who's laughing when I'm on the cover of "Deer & Deer Hunting" magazine. Ain't that right, Abbot?

ABBOT

Sure thing Jasper. Sure thing... If you ladies are done flapping your gums, we can get this show on the road before Jasper loses that good, good feeling.

Abbot gets off the ATV, pulls a bag of CHEW from his pocket, and takes a healthy portion.

JASPER  
Sounds alright by me.

Abbot offers Jasper some chew. He accepts.

LESTER  
Me too.

HANK LEWIS  
Who rah.

GRADY WALKER  
Who rah.

EXT. WOODLAND PATH - DAY

The Stag runs at one with the forest. He loses himself. The sun follows him as the wind seems to blow, inspired by his speed.

Apollo follows, though, barely able to keep up.

The Stag stops. Its hot breath forms a cloud as it hits the cool morning air. He waits.

Apollo catches up.

EXT. SOUTHERN WILDERNESS - DAY

Abbot leads the group, Jasper, Hank, Grady, and Lester, through the wilderness. Hank and Lester joke and fool about with Grady.

Abbot comes across the large tracks of a deer, The Stag.

He raises his hand, a clenched fist.

The men acknowledge and quiet down.

Jasper quickly makes his way to Abbot's side.

JASPER  
What is it, Abbot? What ya' got?

ABBOT  
Take a look and see.

Jasper kneels. Places his hand on a large hoof print.

JASPER  
Well, well, well. Who's laughing now? Look at the size of those.

Hank, Grady, and Lester join Abbot and Jasper. They investigate the tracks.

HANK

I'll be damned. Looks like Jasper might be on to something.

LESTER

Even a broke clock is right twice a day.

EXT. HILLTOP CLEARING - DAY

The Stag emerges from the tree line and stops on a ridge that crest a clearing in the forest.

He breathes deeply. A fantastic creature, he casts a large silhouette as he bathes in the light of the sun.

EXT. P.O.V./ABBOT'S RIFLESCOPE - DAY

The scope settles on the silhouette of The Stag.

EXT. WOODLAND TREE LINE - DAY

Abbot slides his finger over the trigger of his rifle.

He takes a deep breath.

Gently squeezes.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/SOUTHERN WILDERNESS - DAY

The loud sound of the rifle CRACKLES through the otherwise quiet wilderness. Bird's scatter, frightened by the THUNDEROUS NOISE.

HILLTOP CLEARING

Startled, The Stag runs. An apt attempt to find sanctuary in the tree line.

The Stag weakens with every step. Abbot's shot has hit its target. The Stag's pace slows to a crawl.

He collapses in a tall patch of grass, each breath more belabored. He's dying.

Apollo stays by her master's side as he draws his final breath.

WOODLAND PATH

Abbot and his Hunting Buddies discover a trail of blood.

JASPER

Hot damn, Abbot. Hot damn. I think  
you got em'.

ABBOT

You bet your ass.

The men follow the trail when they come to the grassy clearing.

Apollo guards his fallen master's body. She barks aggressively as the men approach.

LESTER

Apollo? What's she doing here?

HANK

Where's Jack?

GRADY

Can't be too far away.

Abbot raises his rifle and points it at the dog.

Hank grabs for the rifle. He knocks Abbot off balance, causes him to misfire.

Frighten, the dog leaves her master's side.

ABBOTT WYLIE

Damn it, Hank. What in the hell?

HANK

Not gonna to stand here and watch  
you shoot Jack's dog.

ABBOTT WYLIE

I wasn't gonna shoot that dog.

HANK

Sure as hell looked like it.

Jasper runs ahead to discover The Stag lying in the grass.

JASPER

You got em' Abbot. You got him good.

Abbot, Hank, Grady, and Lester approach. The five men stand over The Stag.

LESTER

Holy shit, he's big.

ABBOT

That's one for the record books, boys.

GRADY

Guess Abbot's gonna be the one on the cover of "Deer & Deer Hunting".

JASPER

Fine by me.

Abbot kneels. Inspects his prize kill.

HANK

Am I the only one that thinks it's weird that Apollo's out here all alone?

LESTER

Thought crossed my mind.

GRADY

Something off about it. That's for damn sure.

ABBOT

I swear to the heavens. Y'all are just hell-bent on spoiling my mood.

JASPER

Couple of killjoys if you ask me.

LESTER

Good thing no one's asking.

Abbot places his hand on the Stag, just above its shoulder.

The Stag suddenly kicks and jerks, a death rattle. Its massive antlers barely miss Abbot's face.

Startled, Abbot springs to his feet.

ABBOT

God damn it.

Jasper puts his hand on Abbot's shoulder. The other men discreetly chuckle behind his back.

JASPER  
You all right cousin?

Embarrassed, Abbot shrugs Jasper's hand off his shoulder.

HANK  
Y'all done foolin' around? Can we get back to Jack?

JASPER  
What about him?

HANK  
Something's going on. Apollo wouldn't be out here without him.

GRADY  
We should split up. Take a look around.

Abbot takes a confrontational posture.

ABBOT  
Trust me when I tell you, and I'm serious as a heart attack. I could care less, but if you're so concerned, why don't you head back to camp? Radio the Sheriff?  
(sarcastic)  
If that'll make you feel better.

HANK  
(mocking)  
I'll just do that.

ABBOT  
And you can take Lester and Grady with you. Matter of fact. You go with em' Jasper.

JASPER  
Why me?

ABBOT  
Fetch an ATV and a trailer. Bring it back so we can haul this monster outta here. Maybe Grady would be kind enough to give you a hand? Don't take three men to call the Sheriff.

GRADY

I can do that. By the looks of it, it's gonna take more than the two of you to get this giant out of here anyway.

JASPER

Alright. Now we're talkin'. Can do. Can do. What about you?

ABBOT

I'll wait here. Stake my claim. And hurry your asses up. I'm not trying to sit out here all day watching the flies taint my meat.

The men take one last look at Abbot's impressive kill.

HANK

Maybe keep an eye out for Jack?

Abbot spits a hefty portion of dip juice on the ground near Hank's boots.

ABBOT

Y'all go on.

INT. WOUNDED STAG/UPSTAIRS/MAIN LOFT - DAY

Mac sits at her kitchen table. She sips on a cup of coffee while she reads the paper.

Hank's voice is heard over her ham radio.

Mac eavesdrops on the call, the radio set to monitor the local emergency channel.

HANK (V.O.)

Dispatch? Come in dispatch. This is Hank over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)

This is dispatch. Go ahead, Hank. Over.

HANK (V.O.)

Yeah, uh, me and the boys. We're out here in the Southlands doing a little hunting. Is the sheriff around? Over.



DISPATCH (V.O.)  
 He's out on patrol. What can I do  
 for you? Over.

Mac listens intently.

HANK (V.O.)  
 Might be something. Might be  
 nothing. Could you call him? Have  
 him meet me and Lester at the South  
 Woodland Trails entrance. Over

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
 Roger that. South Woodland trail.  
 Over.

Mac grabs her KEYS.

ZEKE'S BEDROOM

Zeke sits at an old school desk with his crayons and coloring  
 book.

Mac enters the room.

MAC  
 Hey sweetie. Mommy's got to run  
 some errands. Grab your stuff, and  
 let's take it downstairs. Miss  
 Lottie's gonna keep an eye on you  
 for a little while.

ZEKE  
 Can't I stay here? I'm old enough,  
 Momma.

MAC  
 You are, but mommy will feel better  
 with you downstairs. Besides, Miss  
 Lottie could probably use your  
 help. Come on. Hop up. Let's get  
 going.

Zeke grabs his crayons and book and puts them in a SACHEL  
 that hangs on the back of his chair.

DOWNSTAIRS/DINING AREA

Lottie works behind the counter. The rest of the wait staff  
 clears off tables.

MAC  
Take a seat, sweetie. You mind  
watching Zeke for me?

LOTTIE  
Sure thing, doll. Where you headed  
off too?

Zeke takes a seat at the counter. He takes out his book and  
crayons and starts to color.

MAC  
Just have something I need to take  
care of. Should be back by the  
dinner rush.

LOTTIE  
Take all the time you need, boss.  
We've got things covered here.  
Don't we, Zeke?

ZEKE  
Yes ma'am.

MAC  
Thanks, Lottie.

Mac kisses Zeke on the cheek.

ZEKE  
Can I have some pie?

MAC  
Just one slice. I don't want you  
ruining your appetite. Bye baby.

ZEKE  
Bye Momma.

INT/EXT. POLICE CAR (MOVING) - DAY

A call comes in over the radio.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Sheriff, this is dispatch. Over.

The Sheriff picks up the radio transmitter.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Go for Earl. Over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
 Sheriff, I just got a call over the  
 emergency frequency from Hank  
 Lewis. Says he needs you to meet up  
 with him at the South Woodland  
 Trail entrance. Over.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
 Hank? What do you think he wants?

DEPUTY PRATT  
 You asking me?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
 Dispatch, did he happen to say what  
 the emergency was? Over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
 Might be something. Might be  
 nothing. Over.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
 Which is it? Over.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
 Don't know, Sheriff. You'll have to  
 ask him yourself. Over.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
 Alright. We're on our way. Earl,  
 over and out. Lot of help that was.  
 Sometimes I don't know why I even  
 bother. Well. You heard the box,  
 Deputy. Pedal to the metal.

The Deputy turns on the sirens.

INT. MACKENZIE'S JEEP (MOVING) - DAY

Mac arrives at the trail entrance. The Sheriff and Deputy are  
 already there. They speak with Hank and Lester.

EXT. TRAIL ENTRANCE/PARKING LOT - DAY

Mac pulls into the small lot. The Sheriff, Deputy, Hank, and  
 Lester watch as she parks.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
 What's she doing here? One of you  
 call her?



SHERIFF FREEMAN

Alright. Let's all keep a cool head.

MAC

Where's Abbot, Jasper? Please tell me he didn't do something stupid?

HANK

Abbot's been with us the whole time. Except when we left to call the Sheriff.

LESTER

He got him a real proper buck. Real proper.

HANK

He wouldn't leave that buck, though. Him, Grady, Jasper, they're bringing it back as we speak--

MAC

I could care less about red tails, bucks. I just want to find Jack. What are we waiting for?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

We? Hold on a minute--

MAC

Hold on a minute, my ass. I'm coming with you. Besides, you'll never find Jack's camp on your own. You need me.

DEPUTY PRATT

She's got a point, Sheriff.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

You're not helping things.

MAC

I'm coming, Earl. Like it or not.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

That right?

MAC

That's right.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Guess that settles that then. You two mind loaning us those ATVs?

HANK

Sure thing. Whatever you need.  
We'll hang back. In case he turns  
up.

LESTER

Keep an eye out for Abbot. Jasper  
and Grady too. Maybe they found  
something.

The Sheriff hops on Hank's ATV.

The Deputy on Lester's.

Mac jumps on the ATV behind the Sheriff.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

You two keep your radios close.  
Call us if you hear anything.

EXT. JACK'S CAMPSITE - DAY

The Sheriff and Deputy park the ATVs.

They search the camp. Things seem to be in order, but no  
evidence of foul play. Mac calls out for Jack.

MAC

(yelling)

Jack. Jack? You out there?

Apollo begins to bark from the thick brush of the tree line.

MAC (CONT'D)

Apollo? Apollo! Come here, girl.  
Come girl, come.

Apollo runs from the safety of the brush into Mac's arms.  
She's dirty and a little shaken up but no worse for wear.

MAC (CONT'D)

This isn't right, Sheriff.  
Somethings off. Apollo. She  
wouldn't be out here by herself. It  
ain't right.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Something's going on, that's for  
sure, but no reason to jump to any  
conclusions.

MAC

Jack's bow. His gear. It's missing.  
This ain't right, Sheriff--

SHERIFF FREEMAN

I need you to take a deep breath.

Mac gathers herself.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Here's how this is gonna go, and  
mind you, I ain't asking. You take  
Apollo and Jack's ATV. Head home.  
Get her cleaned up--

MAC

No way. No way I'm leaving--

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Do you trust me?

Mac doesn't answer.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Do you trust me?

MAC

(reluctant)

I trust you.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Then do what I'm telling you. Me  
and the Deputy. We'll take a look  
around. We'll find Jack. You stay  
close to your radio. I'll call you  
as soon as we find him. Can you do  
that for me? For Jack?

MAC

I can do that.

Mac picks up Apollo, puts her on the ATV.

MAC (CONT'D)

You find him, Sheriff. Bring him  
home.

Mac gets on the ATV.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

That's what we're here to do.

EXT. WOODLAND PATH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff Freeman and Deputy Pratt search the vast landscape. Outside of Jack's camp, there is little evidence he'd ever been there. The tracks of the Deer Women are gone.

SMALL WOODLAND RAVINE

The Sheriff discovers Jack's pack and radio, the battery long dead.

DEPUTY PRATT  
That what I think it is?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Yes. It is.

The Sheriff searches the pack. Buried in the dirt, he notices Jack's knife.

He picks it up and studies it.

DEPUTY PRATT  
Not a good sign.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
No. It's not. No blood. Nothing's damaged. Bow's not here... Let's keep searching. He could be close.

The two men find themselves on the same path Nerehvuresse used to lead Jack into her trap.

The Sheriff finds Jack's discarded bow.

DEPUTY PRATT  
I don't know about you, but I'm starting to worry.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Not liking this. Not one bit.

LAKE'S EDGE

The shore is a muddy mess. Hoofprints splattered everywhere.

DEPUTY PRATT  
Looks like than a couple herds ran through here.

The two men scan and search the area when a faint glimmer catches the Deputy's attention.



He pulls Jack's dog tags, partially submerged, from the mud.

DEPUTY PRATT (CONT'D)  
Sheriff. You're gonna want to take  
a look at this.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
What do you have there?

The Deputy hands the tags to The Sheriff.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)  
Damn. Things keep going from bad to  
worse.

DEPUTY PRATT  
You don't think those women from  
the commune had anything to do with  
any of this? Some type of prank?  
They've been known to raise a  
little Cain with the local hunters.  
Some folks even say they've even  
seen em' practicing witchcraft out  
here.

The Sheriff takes a handkerchief out of his pocket and cleans  
off the tags.

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
You been talking to Jasper, but you  
know better. This ain't Salem, and  
it sure as hell ain't the sixteenth  
century. Best keep those thoughts  
to yourself. We don't want any town  
folks overreacting to silly rumors.  
Doing something stupid. We've  
already got more trouble than I  
care to handle.

The Deputy and Sheriff continue to search the area.

DEPUTY PRATT  
No way Abbot had anything to do  
with this?

SHERIFF FREEMAN  
Nah. He may be angry at Jack and a  
loudmouth, but he's no murderer.  
Anyways. He's been with the boys.  
That's what we, in the business,  
call an airtight alibi.

The Sheriff wraps the dog tags in his handkerchief. He puts  
them in his pocket.

The Deputy stops. Something else has caught his attention.

DEPUTY PRATT

Am I crazy, or are those Jack's  
clothes?

Jack's clothes are partially buried in the mud. They're almost completely covered.

Sheriff Freeman reaches down, pulls Jack's tattered shirt from the mud. He inspects the clothes for blood, holes, any sign of tomfoolery.

DEPUTY PRATT (CONT'D)

What in God's name happened here?

SHERIFF FREEMAN

I don't know, Deputy, but it looks like it's time to call in the Calvary. It's gonna take more than the two of us to figure out this mystery.

DEPUTY PRATT

It's like he's vanished. Don't make no sense at all.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

I'm as stumped as you are, partner, but I know one thing. A man like Jack. With his skills. His knowledge of these woods. If He wants to disappear, doesn't want to be found. Well. We've got our work cut out for us. That's for sure.

DEPUTY PRATT

What about Mac? He wouldn't just-- just-- up an' leave. His dog? He wouldn't leave that dog.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

We need to get back to the roadway. I'll call in the Staties. Get some divers out here. Drag the lake. Get to the bottom of all this. Before we lose the light.

EXT. TRAIL PARKING LOT/SEARCH BASE COMMAND - DUSK

A team of STATE TROOPERS, K-9 UNITS, and FIRST RESPONDERS have gathered to search for Jack, along with; DEPUTY Pratt, Hank, Grady, Lester, and Hoper.

A large map of the area sits on an easel in front of the group. Key locations on the map are marked with red pushpins and yarn.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BOB MASTERS of the State Patrol addresses the crowd.

LT. COLONEL MASTERS

I'd like to thank everyone for coming out to assist in tonight's search. I know it's late, and we'd all rather be at home in bed curled up and cozy, but Sheriff Freeman needs our help, and he can be damn sure he's going to get it. Every resource we can provide. Every nook and cranny we can search. Since the Sherriff knows the area better than anyone, from here on out, we'll be taking our orders from him. They're all yours, Earl.

The Sherriff steps to the forefront of the search party.

SHERIFF FREEMAN

Thanks Bob. And thank you all. As you see here behind me, we've marked a map of the area with our missing person's, Jack's, last known locations.

The search teams gather around the map.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Earlier this evening my, Deputy and I did a preliminary search and we believe Jack disappeared somewhere around here.

The Sheriff points out the east shore of the lake on the map.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (CONT'D)

This is where we found some of his clothes and other personal effects. And while, at this point, we don't want to make any assumptions, and there's no evidence of foul play, we still need to take extra precautions to ensure we don't compromise any potential evidence as to his whereabouts.

INTERCUT. BASE COMMAND/SERIES OF SHOTS - THE SEARCH FOR JACK

-- Above the wilderness, a helicopter scans the area with a large spotlight.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (V.O.)  
Leave no stone unturned.

-- Inside the forest, TEAMS search the woods with flashlights and bloodhounds.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (V.O.)  
Report anything you think seems out  
of the ordinary.

-- A boat drags the bottom of the lake with the assistance of a group of SCUBA DIVERS.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (V.O.)  
And don't forget. Keep an eye out  
for each other.

-- Night transitions to day, back to night again. The SEARCH TEAMS grow increasingly smaller.

SHERIFF FREEMAN (V.O.)  
The swamps can be a dangerous  
place, especially at night.

-- The helicopter continues to fly over the woodlands. Its spotlight pierces through the tree line.

INT. WOUNDED STAG/UPSTAIRS/LOFT - NIGHT

Mac and Lottie sit at the kitchen table. Mac monitors her radio as the two-women drink coffee.

A deck of playing cards is scattered across the table.

Zeke sleeps on the couch. Apollo at his feet. His book, "**The Brothers Grimm**", lays across his chest.

Stressed, Mac runs her fingers through her hair. She takes a deep breath... exhales.

LOTTIE  
He'll be alright, darling. I'm sure  
of it. Jack's been through hell and  
back. Whatever's going on. He'll  
find his way home.

MAC

Thing is, I'm not sure he ever came home. Least not all of him. That part of him that's trapped in his own hell. The part that scares me. That he's gone off and done-- done something stupid.

Lottie takes Mac's hands.

LOTTIE

Everyone has their demons, hun'. The Lord. He forgives and forgets. That's the easy part. The hard part. That's forgiving ourselves.

MAC

Doesn't help that half this town looks at me like I've got a giant "A" tattooed on my forehead. The both of us. Sure. They come to the diner. They're polite but, behind their smiles. I can feel it. Feel their judgment.

Mac fights back the tears.

MAC (CONT'D)

Jack and me. We-- what we did. Things between us should have never happened. Shouldn't still be happening. I know that and I hate myself for it, but I love him. Despite what it's cost us. That scares me even more.

Mac looks to Zeke.

Lottie takes her finger and wipes away a teardrop from Mac's face. The headlight beams from a car spill into the room through an open window. Mac gets up. Peaks out the curtains.

The Sheriff's patrol car pulls into the diner's parking lot.

Mac looks to Lottie.

LOTTIE

You go on, sweetie.

Mac nods, a look of concern in her eyes.

EXT. WOUNDED STAG/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mac exits The Wounded Stag. A shawl draped over her shoulders.

Sheriff Freeman stands on the curve next to the restaurant's entrance. There's no need for words. The Sheriff's body language speaks for him.

He removes the dog tags from his pocket. He Hands them to Mac. Her hand shakes as she takes them.

Her shawl falls off of her shoulders.

Her legs get weak, quiver. Distraught, she collapses into The Sheriff's arms.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE/FARGO, GA. - ONE WEEK LATER - NIGHT

A large group of townsfolk has gathered in the town square; a memorial held in Jack's honor, including; THE MAYOR, local Pastor, Mac, Sheriff Freeman, Deputy Pratt, Hank, Lester, Grady, Jasper, Hoper, Emma, and Lottie. Even Abbot is in attendance. Zeke and Apollo by his side.

Almost everyone holds lit candles.

There's a stage and podium set up in the center of the square. A row of chairs in line next to the stage.

Mac, The Sheriff, and The Pastor take a seat.

The Mayor takes the stage.

THE MAYOR

Ladies and Gentlemen. I just want to take this opportunity to thank you for coming out to celebrate the life of Jackson Clarke. Jack grew up here, in our beautiful town. A star athlete, quarterback, taking our Panthers to two state championships--

RANDOM CROWD MEMBER

Go Panthers!

The outburst gets an ill-timed chuckle from the crowd.

The Mayor pauses.

## THE MAYOR

But Jack was more than that. He was a friend, a father, a husband, a decorated war hero. In his honor, I'd like to invite to the stage those that knew him the best.

The Mayor takes a few steps back. The Sheriff approaches the podium.

## SHERIFF FREEMAN

The last week and a half have been tough for me. Tough for all of us. I feel like I've failed you. Failed Jack. As your sheriff, it's my job to protect you, and I wasn't able to do that. We've seen more than our fair share of tragedy over the last few years. Lost too many good people and Jack. Well. The man had his demons, but I chose to remember the good times. The jokes, the laughter, and yes, even the tears. The mystery of his disappearance will haunt me till the end of my days, but that's my burden. My cross to bear... May God bless him. May God bless you all.

The Sheriff steps back from the podium, walks back to his seat.

Mac gets up and takes her position at the podium. She stands silent. She adjust the microphone.

## MAC

I spent a lot of time trying to think of the right words. The right thing to say, but what is the right thing? What can I say that most of you don't already know? Our time together was complicated.

Mac's words are for Abbot. An indirect message. A public apology.

## MAC (CONT'D)

Jack was complicated. We may not have always done the right thing, but, like the good book says, "Let he who is without sin, cast the first stone." I could tell you that the war changed him, that he was sorry, that I'm sorry.

(MORE)

MAC (CONT'D)

Maybe that means something, or maybe it falls on deaf ears, but what I know deep inside my heart is that I'll miss him. This town will miss him. His friends will miss him. Jack, wherever you are. Wherever you've gone, I'm sure you're out there somewhere watching down on us.

Mac backs away from the podium. She takes a breath, walks back and takes her seat.

The Pastor takes his place at the podium.

THE PASTOR

Please allow me to lead us all in a word of prayer. Bow your heads.

LATER

The ceremony complete, people linger in conversation as others leave to go home.

Mac, Abbot, Zeke, and Apollo meet at the edge of the town square near the parking lot.

ZEKE

Momma!

Zeke and Apollo run to Mac's side.

MAC

Hi baby.

Zeke hugs her.

MAC (CONT'D)

Good to see you. I wasn't sure you'd make it.

ABBOT

Yeah. Me neither, but it seemed like the Christian thing to do.

MAC

Sweetie. Why don't you take Apollo over next to the swings and play? Mommy and daddy need a moment.

ZEKE

Okay.



Zeke and Apollo run toward the swings.

MAC

And stay where I can see you.

ZEKE (O.S.)

Yes, Momma.

MAC

So. This is awkward.

ABBOT

I'd say so, but. I won't lie. I've been wishing-- hoping for this ever since. Now that he's. It-- it just seems weird without em'.

MAC

We never have talked about things. Not really. What happened between us--

ABBOT

What's there to say? Ain't no takebacks.

MAC

I guess, but I-- I don't know. I never knew what to say. It wasn't all Jack, you know. It takes two to tango. I just hope someday you can find it in your heart to forgive me. Forgive us both.

ABBOT

I never blamed you, and believe me. I wanted to. I tried so hard to hate you, but every time I look at our boy. I see a part of you. He's a gift, and I got nothing but love for him in my heart. Which means I've got nothing but love for you, as for Jack. He carried the burden for the both of you. The debt's paid. Far as I'm concerned. Like Earl said. We've already lost enough. Time to heal. Not just for you and me but for our boy.

Mac and Abbot look toward the swings. They watch as their son plays with Apollo.

MAC

I'm glad to hear you say that. It means a lot. I can't imagine how much we must have hurt you. How much I hurt you. When all I ever really wanted was for you to be happy. I still want that for you.

ABBOT

That's what I want for you too.

Mac and Abbot hug.

ABBOT (CONT'D)

Okay then.

MAC

Okay then.

The two share an awkward laugh.

MAC (CONT'D)

You and Zeke got big plans for this weekend?

ABBOT

Oh. He's been bugging me to take him out riding on the ATV. I'm thinking he's big enough. Maybe we'll do that.

MAC

Sounds like fun, but you two, be careful. Don't get too crazy.

ABBOT

We won't. Don't you worry.

MAC

I'm a mom. Worrying comes with the job.

ABBOT

Yeah. I believe it does. Anyway. We should probably get going but. I'm glad we got to talk for a change. Maybe we can do it again sometime. Zeke! Come on, son. Time to head home. Bout' your bedtime.

Zeke and Apollo run back to Mac and Abbot.

MAC  
Bye baby. You have fun with your  
daddy this weekend.

Zeke hugs Mac.

ZEKE  
Can Apollo come with us?

ABBOT  
No. Apollo needs to stay with your  
momma.

ZEKE  
Please?

Abbot and Zeke walk toward his Jeep. Mac watches, Apollo by  
her side.

ABBOT  
She'll be waiting for you come  
Monday.

Abbot put his arm around Zeke.

ABBOT (CONT'D)  
We'll be seeing you.

MAC  
Bye baby. Mommy loves you.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW/OKEFENOKEE SWAMP - MAGIC HOUR - CONTINUOUS

The sun rises over the woodlands of the Okefenokee Swamp.

WOODLAND PATHS

The Stag runs through the thick brush of the forest. He loses  
himself. The sun follows him through the tree line. He's  
fast. Powerful.

HILLTOP CLEARING

The Stag emerges from the tree line, stops on a ridge that  
crest a clearing in the forest. He breathes deeply. The  
Stag's hot breath turns to steam as it hits the cold air.

An incredible sight. He casts a large silhouette as he bathes  
in the light of the sun.

His eyes, strange, they're the eyes of a man. Jack's eyes.

CUT TO BLACK.

A single shot from a rifle CRACKLES in the darkness.

INT. JACK'S HOME/BEDROOM - FIVE A.M. - ONE YEAR LATER

The sound of Mac's alarm clock resounds through the room. She abruptly wakes from her dream.

Mac slams her hand down on the clock and shuts it off.

She lives in Jack's house. Her home now. Apollo, asleep at the foot of the bed, is awakened. She moves to greet her new master. She licks Mac's face as Mac attempts to lay back down.

MAC

Okay, girl. I'm up. I'm up. Geez.

Mac has changed her hair. It's shorter, and she's added highlights. She wears Jack's dog tags.

Mac playfully rubs Apollo behind the ears.

The bedroom has been remodeled. Pictures of Mac, Zeke, and Apollo, accompanied by other family photos, decorate the walls.

Mac hops out of bed. She grabs a shirt off the floor. A CLASSIC CONCERT T from a classic band, some things never change.

SERIES OF SHOTS - MAC'S NEW HOME

-- The living room has recently been painted. The furniture is new, contemporary. It's cozy.

-- Cassi's room, now Zeke's, has been painted a light blue. His desk and artwork station are in the corner of the well-maintained room, adjacent to a set of bunk beds.

-- Mac has showered and stands in front of the sink counter. She puts away her toothbrush and shuts the medicine cabinet's door. She looks into the mirror, no longer shattered.

-- Mac sits at the table of the newly remodeled kitchen. She eats a light breakfast and drinks coffee. She shares a few bites with Apollo, who waits patiently by her side.

EXT. JACK'S HOME/BACKYARD - DAY

The yard has been cleared of junk. Fresh grass-grown, the vegetable garden is in bloom with ripe tomatoes, corn, and watermelon on the vine. There's even a CHICKEN COOP.

The flower garden is still perfectly maintained. Mac cuts an array of beautifully colored flowers. She fashions them into a bouquet.

FRONT YARD/DRIVEWAY

The yard is mowed. The exterior of the house has had some repairs done. It's painted, the windows clean, and newly planted shrubs decorate the façade.

Jack's F150 is parked in the driveway of the ranch-style home. Mac, with flowers in hand, opens the door to the truck. Apollo jumps in and takes her seat on the passenger's side.

INT. JACK'S FORD F150/DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mac places the flowers in the center of the bench seats. She stares out the window.

INT/EXT. JACK'S FORD F150 (MOVING) - DAY

Mac drives the Ford F150 down the backroads, Apollo next to her. The bouquet still between them. The radio plays in the background. Something like SOUND GARDEN'S, "***Burden In My Hand***"...

EXT. PENNY AND CASSI'S MEMORIAL - DAY

Mac exits the truck with the bouquet... Apollo follows. The small black marble memorial has been cleared, decorated with a few, newer mementos.

Mac bows her head and recites an inaudible prayer. She lays down the bouquet next to the memorial.

INT. WOUNDED STAG/DINING ROOM - DAY

Hoper rings the call bell. He places two breakfast plates on the short-order counter. Two fried eggs over easy on toast, Biscuits, and gravy with fried eggs on the side.

HOPER

Two heart attacks over easy on a raft, biscuits, and gravy with a heart attack on the side. Ready for pickup.

EMMA

Picking up table two.

Lottie's dressed in a white polo and khaki pants. Her name tag reads, "*Lottie Boughmont, Assistant Manager*".

Mac and Apollo arrive.

LOTTIE

I thought you were taking the weekend off? Heading down to Atlanta?

Mac grabs an apron from behind the counter. She puts it on. Apollo takes her spot in a custom cubby behind the counter.

MAC

I am.

LOTTIE

Then what are you doing here?

MAC

Figured I'd check in before I head out. Guess I can't get enough of this place.

Hoper rings the call bell, another order up.

HOPER (O.S.)

Flop two on a log. Break a cowboy with one mystery in the alley. Ready for pickup.

MAC

I got this one.

LOTTIE

You sure, sweetie--

MAC

I got it.

Lottie throws up her hands.

LOTTIE

It's too early to fight over eggs.

MAC  
You finally figure out who's boss  
around here?

The two women share a laugh. Mac grabs the plates and makes her way to the dining room floor.

On the wall above the kitchen counter, "Hubert's" Stag head has been replaced with THE HEAD of Abbot's record-breaking trophy kill.

Next to the head is a framed copy of "**Deer & Deer Hunter Magazine**", Abbot on the cover. He poses with The Stag.

A second series of photos underneath. A Memoriam to Jack, Penny, and Cassi.

The photo of Jack and Abbot from Jack's garage hangs at the bottom of the series. Their senior year. The night they won the big game.

CUT TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK

TITLE: "ACTAEON"