

NEWSHOUND

Written by

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FADE IN.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the cramped bathroom, CASSIDY "CASS" WINTERS, late-20's investigative reporter, dresses uncomfortably as a stripper, with a silver bracelet over a tan line. The TV's on in the background.

NEWSANCHOR

Breaking news: Senator Adler has announced his candidacy for president.

CASS

Adler, huh? Just another big fish in a dirty pond.

From the open door we can see a cork-board with newspaper articles, torn almanac pages, and red string connecting them--all leading to a name...

Hermaus Adler, with the headline underneath: WILL ADLER RUN FOR PRESIDENT?

...Connected to a headline: FROM RAGS TO RICHES

And further to an index card with sharpie scribbles: With what money?

INT. LAVISH HOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT

SENATOR ADLER, 60's, lounges next to Cass on a couch in a high-end hotel room. He's wearing an expensive robe and a silver ring with a wolf's head while she's in lingerie.

Undercover as an escort, she pretends to fawn over him. She still wears the silver bracelet.

Adler touches it and smiles.

ADLER

Don't you want to take that off?

CASS

I always wear it. What about that ring?

She playfully taps it. He lightly pushes her away.

Adler grabs her and she whispers in his ear in a playful tone.

CASS (CONT'D)
Don't you want to know my name?

He smiles and feels her up.

ADLER
There's no need for names in this
business.

It takes every bit of her willpower not to pull away. She
waits for him to get up. Eventually he does so.

ADLER (CONT'D)
(cooing)
Don't get too cold without me.

In veiled disgust, she watches him slip into the bathroom and
close the door. Cass stifles a gag and tiptoes into his
adjoining room, shutting the door behind her.

She rifles through his drawers and finds his laptop passcode
written on a post-it. She unlocks the laptop and navigates
through the folders.

She opens a folder with line items and amounts listed and her
eyes widen in horror as they scan the list.

CASS (V.O)
Every midsized local newspaper...
including the one I work at.

She prints the file out and folds it up, stuffing it into the
toe of her high heels.

She hears the bathroom door open from an unnaturally long
distance and manages to hide everything except herself before
Adler enters.

She freezes. He immediately blanches, suspicious.

ADLER
Who are you? Paparazzi? A PI?

Her demeanor shifts entirely to serious and self-assured as
she smiles. He finally recognizes her.

ADLER
I don't entertain the press. If
you're not here to entertain me...
get out!

She snatches her clothing and dresses as Adler's bodyguard
pushes her out holding an arm.

CASS
By the way, I'm Cass Winters of the
New York Daily.

Adler turns ashen.

ADLER
Get a restraining order on this
kid!

Cass wrestles to get one last question in.

CASS
So, using taxpayer money to bribe
news outlets is perfectly legal
now? Where's the justice?

Adler forces a smile.

ADLER
Justice only lies with who's
paying.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Cass rushes past coworkers' desks, getting unusually
interested stares.

She opens the Editor-in-Chief's door, pushing the record
button on her phone in her pocket, and slaps a newspaper on
the desk of CRAIG DAWSON, 50's, calculated.

He glares at her.

CASS
My piece was supposed to be front
page! Instead I'm relegated to...

She flips furiously back to the Opinion section and jabs a
finger at it.

CASS
...The grapevine with nothing but a
block to me!

Dawson gets up, slams the door, and closes the blinds,
retorting with fury.

DAWSON
Winters, you've been here long
enough to know politics, and when
to keep your nose out of them!

CASS

You're suggesting I pretend Senator
Adler isn't out there, greasing the
cogs of the machine while—

She opens the door. The whole office crowds around. She
points a finger at a coworker.

CASS

—Cavanaugh gets the headline?
Cavanaugh! He can barely spell!

DAWSON

Cavanaugh knows to keep his nose
clean AND FOLLOW ORDERS!

He slams the door in Cavanaugh's livid face.

DAWSON

Maybe you could learn a thing or
two from him. You've got a unique
perspective, but you don't get a
free pass!

CASS

But—

DAWSON

We're through discussing this,
unless you're interested in being
relegated to weddings and
engagements or the obits...

CASS

So what? We sweep it all under the
rug? What happened to real news?

Dawson's had it. He pounds his desk.

DAWSON

I gave you an out, and as usual,
you didn't take it. Do you know how
much hell you put me through with
the managers? There are a thousand
upstarts gunning for your square,
and none of them carry the risks.

She stares at him, horrified, then recovers.

CASS

I thought we were supposed to
report the truth, not what the
highest bidder's selling.

DAWSON

That "highest bidder" keeps the lights on. Whether we like it or not.

CASS

What? So you admit it!

DAWSON

That's it. You're done. Pack up your square, you're on an indefinite vacation... with no pay!

CASS

Maybe the Times will be interested!

She slams the door, picks up a box from her empty desk, hands it to a guard, and storms out of there. Her whispering coworkers watch her leave.

EXT. NEW YORK DAILY HQ - DAY

Dawson's guards escort her down and throw her box of stuff out on the sidewalk. The contents scatter across the curb. She hails a taxi, which stops to let her in.

TAXI DRIVER

Uh miss, don't you want to get your things?

CASS

580 East Blvd, please. Those aren't my things. They belong to the New York Daily.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Tiny, neglected apartment, walls are plastered with corkboards and newspapers about the Brooklyn Skinner, a serial killer.

One of the stories:

BROOKLYN SKINNER EVADES POLICE.

Another, with a childhood picture of Cass and her father, ironically happy:

MAN SUSPECTED OF KILLING WIFE, ABANDONS DAUGHTER, 7.

Her apartment's been ransacked. She's worked around the mess instead of cleaning it.

A table cluttered with drained coffee mugs.

Kitchen sink full of dishes. There's an open filing cabinet with files thrown on the floor.

Cass leans at the kitchen table over a newspaper. She checks her voice-mail. Nothing.

CASS

Two years of my life, my dignity,
gone. And nobody has the spine to
break the story while it still
matters.

She glares out the window at the skyline, then kicks her filing cabinet.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cass tosses and turns.

She starts awake, gasping, throws off the covers and glares at the clock. Her foot's bandaged. She sighs, gets up, and looks at her reflection in the mirror.

CASS

Leave me alone, dog-face.

She turns on a listening device, waiting a few moments before hearing sounds of activity. She cocks her head toward the speaker.

ADLER (O.S.)

No, mark my calendar busy and
forward my mail to 341 Meadow Lane,
Parity, New York...

Cass opens her laptop and types in the address, still listening. She records the conversation on her phone.

The longer she listens, the angrier she becomes.

ADLER (O.S)

You took care of that kid, right?

The muffled voice of another man on the call comes in.

ASSOCIATE (O.S)
She'll never work in this town
again. We got all she had on you.
Had to grease the rent-a-box, so
double my rate.

ADLER (O.S)
You get anything on her?

ASSOCIATE (O.S)
The one and only daughter of the
Brooklyn Skinner.

Adler cackles.

ADLER
Well, that explains her temper.

Cass mutes the device but keeps recording. She rubs her face,
deeply horrified.

CASS
Great. He owns the rags, too. I can
kiss my career goodbye.

Livid, she abruptly stands up, kicks her chair over, re-
injuring her foot, and slams her hand on the desk.

CASS
(determined)
No. I'm taking you with me, you pig-
faced crook.

Cass examines her cork-board. She tears off a yellowed
envelope addressed to "Cassie" and looks at the return label:

PARITY, New York.

CASS
Knew it sounded familiar.

The envelope is from LAURENCE WINTERS.

CASS
Guess I might as well see you too,
pop. If you're still alive.

EXT. PARITY - THE NEXT EVENING

A sleepy small town in upstate New York, surrounded by
forests and the occasional farm.

A lone car with rental plates drives along the winding, pothole-riddled road.

INT. CAR

Obeying a small painted sign that says "Parity", Cass turns onto a bumpy dirt road, deftly avoiding the potholes. She tunes the radio from one country station to the next.

CASS

Isn't there anything but country music?

She gets distracted by tuning – finally finding the local news – and hits a bump.

NEWS

–Hunting and Harvest festival, celebrated every year in Parity. The festival is open to outsiders until 7.

The words are suddenly garbled. Cass smacks the radio.

CASS

Piece of–

The news resumes as normal. She smirks.

CASS

Who's hunting who?

She passes a wolf crossing sign.

CASS

Guess it's the wolves' party. I'll get a shot of that in daylight.

A sign: Welcome to Parity, Population (scratched out) 115.

CASS

(bitterly)

Nothing like roughing it out in the great wilderness, eh Dad?

I/E. OLD HOTEL

The sign is old and half-hanging, with the word "LODGING" carved in a century-old font and having been repainted once or twice in that time.

Cass stands at the counter. The HOSTESS, 60's, grim and expressionless, dead-eyed, looks for the keys.

HOSTESS

You'd best be leaving, soon as you're done with business.

CASS

Why's that?

HOSTESS

Strangers don't fare well around here.

CASS

I'm here for the festival.

HOSTESS

Up the stairs to the right.

She hands Cass the keys. Cass slowly takes them and walks away quickly, glancing behind her.

Cass finds her door and sees two strong carbine hooks on either side of each door bolted into the wall.

She's unnerved but passes it off with humor.

CASS

Weird decor.

INT. ROOM - LATER

Cass tosses and turns, mumbling in her sleep.

She jolts upright and runs a hand over her face, feeling its contours.

She turns her attention to the window, gets up, and gazes out through threadbare curtains. The town's to her left, the woods her right.

She grabs a bottle of sleeping pills and takes a couple. Still, she slips into a nightmare-laden sleep of:

CUT TO:

A memory she's repressed.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A house with a U-Haul outside. LAURENCE, 30's, and DARLA, 30's, lead Cass, 6, into the house.

CASS
Why do we have to move again?

Both parents shift uncomfortably, nervous.

DARLA
Your father's got a new job here.

BACK TO:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

A loud CRACK like a gunshot, then a distant, mournful HOWL. Cass goes to the window and spreads the curtains, listening.

CASS
Dog-face.

She nervously shakes her head.

CASS
Just put it out of your mind. Find
him and get out of town.

I/E. GENERAL STORE - NEXT DAY

Cass pushes open the old wooden door of a tiny shop. Guns are lined on a wall to her left and fishing rods to her right.

A big, hairy man is sitting behind the counter, chewing on a stick of tobacco. BRENT HOWSER, 40's, full beard, flannel shirt worn threadbare under coveralls.

Cass sniffs then sees a wolf-pelt rug, about twice the size of the animal. She examines it.

BRENT
Can I help ya?

Keeping her distance, Cass walks a little closer to the counter.

CASS
I'm looking for some information on
the harvest festival.

BRENT

What do ya wanna know?

Cass wipes her forehead of sweat, no AC in the place. She presses the record button on her phone as she puts her hand in her pocket.

CASS

Do you have a brochure or some type of program I can look at?

BRENT

Sheriff would probably have that. He's 'cross the street there.

Brent points toward the door. Cass nods her head. She notices a recent poster and sneers at a small political ad facing inward—ADLER FOR PRESIDENT.

CASS

Thank you, uh...

BRENT

...Brent.

CASS

Say, aren't those supposed to face out toward the street?

BRENT

We support our own. 'jes most folks don't care bout 'tics.

Brent stares after her as she leaves. He calls Adler.

BRENT

She's here.

ADLER (O.C.)

What?! Where? I thought she was blacklisted.

BRENT

Well, she says she's doing a piece on the festival.

Silence, old phone lines BUZZING.

ADLER

The bar.

BRENT

Will do.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF GRANT HOGAN, 40's, intimidating and reserved, watches Cass walk in. He sniffs in her direction and seems to vaguely recognize her.

His eyes go to her silver bracelet.

HOGAN

Howdy, I'm Sheriff Hogan. What brings you 'round these parts?

CASS

Sheriff, I'm Cass Winters, journalist for the New York Daily. I've heard you're the one to talk to about the, uh...

HOGAN

Festival, yes'm. What would you like to know?

CASS

Do you mind if I record? It's for an article.

HOGAN

No, go ahead.

Cass pulls out her phone for recording.

HOGAN

Well, I can tell you that the festival hasn't changed much in the last hundred years.

CASS

How did it all start?

HOGAN

When this valley was being settled, there was a major problem with wolves in the area. The pesky critters stealin' livestock. It made it harder to establish the town. My grandfather organized the first hunt. There was enough success to bring in more residents.

CASS

Do you still hunt wolves today?

Hogan hesitates.

HOGAN

Well, no. It's more of a food and drink event, now. People love to get together and have a good time. We still reenact a hunt, just for morale and the few tourists.

He sees her sweat and offers her a water bottle. She takes it.

CASS

Thanks.

HOGAN

It's said when Parity folk pass on, they become wolves that protect their own.

Cass smiles, amused.

CASS

Trapping your own ancestors sounds rather inhumane.

Hogan grimaces.

HOGAN

Well uh, we don't use bear traps.

He hesitates.

HOGAN

Anyway, we like to catch a few, keep 'em in the traps for a while to warn the others, then release 'em. It's not as exciting as it sounds.

She drinks.

CASS

Anything else I should know?

HOGAN

Just one thing. The locals can get a bit... rowdy toward outsiders. Best to leave or head in before sunset. That's when most forget themselves, which is why we limit tourist participation.

CASS

Ok, thank you, Sheriff.

He watches her leave, then calls Brent.

HOGAN
Yeah, she's here.

BRENT
Hermaeus wants to meet in the
backroom of the bar.

Hogan takes a deep breath, then sighs.

EXT. PARITY - DAY

Cass goes from store to store. No one wants to talk. She checks with people setting up the festival.

All she gets are hostile stares and curt shut-downs. Every person wears some kind of silver jewelry.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

The air conditioning is off. Cass, frustrated and covered in sweat, types up the opening of the article, then deletes the first sentence and retypes it.

Cass splashes water on her face from the old, rusting bathroom sink. She peels off the bandage on her foot, surprised to see that it's healed.

She checks her phone. Spotty service.

A text from a contact named "Tave":

Heard you were fired. How're you doing?

CASS
Doesn't anything in this town work?

She goes to the window and tries to pull the curtains to the side, but they fall apart.

She looks out over the town, brow furrowed in suspicion.

Butchery's the largest building next to town hall. Farmland stretches beyond the residential area.

CASS
Looks like they have a freezer.

She texts Tave back:

Hey. I'm ok. Getting some R&R.

HOGAN

Think she's Laurence's kid.

Adler panics.

ADLER

WHAT?! I don't want her to know I'm here, understand?

Hogan and Brent nod their heads, more begrudging.

BRENT

We'll keep her distracted, don't worry about it.

ADLER

You both know I'm clearing out.

Brent scowls.

BRENT

How long will that take?

I/E. BAR - NIGHT

Walking up to the bar, Cass ducks into a shadow when she sees Brent and Adler walking out.

It's the liveliest place in town.

Cass enters and the whole vibe changes. Beers stop flowing, chatter dissipates, and drunk laughter is replaced by cold hard stares at her.

Cass spots Hogan in a booth alone, then sidles up to the bar next to an out-of-towner the locals are also giving a wide berth.

CASS

I'll have what he's having.

She looks at him and does a double-take. It's OCTAVIO "TAVE", 30s, Jamaican cryptid hunter and old friend.

He's laid out several blurry photographs on the bar, to which the tender casts a skeptical eye.

TAVE

Cassidy Winters? I never thought I'd see you here!

CASS

Tave! What... chasing a hairy lead here?

Tave looks at her, shocked, then recedes into disappointment.

TAVE

Oh, you must not have caught my last episode!

(at her confusion)

Of Cryptids Unveiled? There have been a lot of sightings here in the last hundred years.

CASS

Oh, gosh you're right!

TAVE

Sorry to hear about... The public's not always kind to truth-seekers like us.

CASS

I'll drink to that.

Hogan watches them.

CASS

Got anything on the festival?

Tave pulls out a small book: Local Myths and Legends of Upstate New York.

He opens to the chapter detailing a legend. An illustration of a monstrous wolf stealing livestock surrounded by five hunters is inked on the page.

TAVE

Not much. Local legend talks about this...

He taps the wolf and flips the page. The hunters kill the wolf but all get injured. Fur grows on the hunters' wounds.

The page after that is ripped out. Cass runs her finger over the tears, genuinely curious.

CASS

You think there's a conspiracy?

He smiles.

TAVE

This is the only copy of this book
I could find anywhere, and someone
ripped the page out. Yes, I do.

His smile broadens as he reads.

TAVE

According to this, the town was
founded by werewolves. At sunset on
the winter solstice, the whole town
turns.

Unconvinced, Cass smirks.

CASS

You want to be there when it
happens?

Tave grins, knowing.

TAVE

Don't you?

EXT. HOMESTEAD - EVENING

Hogan knocks. DOCTOR THOMAS "DOC" COOPER, 50's, opens the
door a crack. The chain lock's engaged.

DOC

You. You have no business here,
scarin' Em.

HOGAN

I have an outsider. Think she might
be Laurence's kid.

DOC

No. I won't let one of them in. Not
again.

He shuts the door. Hogan grabs it and pries it back open.

HOGAN

No. This time is different.

DOC

Don't recall you ever apologizing.
Not that it would have changed
much.

HOGAN

I am now! I'm sorry. I know it's not enough.

Doc opens the door.

INT. HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

They sit in the parlor. Doc has coffee.

DOC

Darla Winters, yes I remember her. Cute thing. Get alcohol in her and the next thing you know, she's making a shiv outta her wine glass. Her son's not much better. Whole family's trouble.

HOGAN

She abducted and killed fifteen young women. Including...

Doc looks at his old wedding picture. Not Em. Hogan sighs.

DOC

Abducted five more girls before someone put her down. Don't tell Em. Please. I don't want to worry her now.

Hogan nods, reluctant.

DOC

This Cassidy, you plan on putting her to work, don't you? Fixing up the town? You smell her?

HOGAN

She smells like him. As it happens, she's a journalist for the New York Daily.

DOC

You trust her?

HOGAN

The truth? I don't have a choice. She's going to find out, and I won't let it happen the wrong way.

Doc stares, horrified.

DOC
He's here?

EXT. HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Cass and Tave stake out a house in her car. Brent's house sits around the corner. Tave videos Adler as he carries files out to his car.

Cass eats popcorn.

CASS
(mouth full)
Looks like he's cleaning house.

Cass offers the bucket to Tave. Tave's amused.

CASS
Popcorn?

TAVE
Sure. I'll admit, this is interesting. Is he your "mark?"

She takes the camera from him and keeps rolling.

CASS
Pretty much. He ruined my career. I just want to return the favor.

Cass gives Tave the camera back and pulls out of the neighborhood.

EXT. PARITY - CONTINUOUS

A squad car flashes its lights behind them. Cass smacks the steering wheel, exasperated.

CASS
Figures.

She pulls off to the side. Brent, now wearing a deputy's uniform, gets out and walks up to them.

CASS
Brent? You're the deputy, too?

BRENT
(sighing)
That I am. I hope you're not causing any trouble, miss.

CASS
We're just looking at the
decorations.

Brent bites on a toothpick, unconvinced.

BRENT
Uh-huh. I see you loitering again,
you're spending the night in a cold
place.

EXT. PARITY WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON

Cass sits on an overturned log while Tave shows her the
documents.

TAVE
This is by far the strongest lead I
have ever had. You believe me?

CASS
About the town, yes. But I'll need
a bit more to go on for Bigfoot and
werewolves.

They laugh and walk closer to Parity. He looks at her,
serious and a bit pitying.

TAVE
I saw the headlines. "Local
Newshound's Ties to The Boston
Skinner." I understand why you'd be
angry.

Cass darkens, surprised. She looks away, embarrassed.

CASS
This isn't just revenge. How many
others has he blacklisted to get to
the top?

Cass nearly steps on a bloodied bear trap. Tave holds her
back.

CASS
Hogan mentioned they weren't using
bear traps, so who is?

They examine it.

TAVE
Blood's fresh.

Both take pictures of it.

CASS

Human footprints leading to it.
Maybe someone's trapping outsiders.
Could they be warning us off?

TAVE

You're not here just for the
festival or Adler, are you?

Cass grimaces and looks at another set of prints. Large wolf prints, but clearly bipedal.

CASS

Look at these.

They follow the prints. The human prints lead to the trap, while the wolf prints lead around it. Some are splattered with blood.

TAVE

...I don't think they're hunting
wolves.

As the sun drops below the horizon, the woods darken.

A flashlight beam startles them. Sheriff Hogan, hidden behind the light beam. His voice has a growling undertone.

HOGAN

Thought I warned you two to be
careful 'round sundown. Darn near
caught in one of those traps.

CASS

I thought you said bear traps
weren't used?

Hogan flicks the beam at Tave, who raises his hands to block the light.

TAVE

Just doing some cryptid hunting.
Bigfoot was sighted here, you know?

A growl. Hogan lowers the beam and sighs.

HOGAN

Consider this a friendly warning.
You're close to Fitz's land. He
really don't take too kindly to
anyone trespassing.

(MORE)

HOGAN (CONT'D)

Perhaps you both should leave now –
if you value *your* foot.

He steps away. Tave waits for him to leave before shining a flashlight at the ground, searching it. He picks up a clump of fur.

TAVE

Coarse hairs.

He shows them to Cass. She looks closer and wrinkles her nose.

CASS

Stinks of blood and dog. Maybe they
are trapping wolves after all.
Guess we should be heading back.
Festival's tomorrow, so we'll touch
base before then.

Tave watches her walk for a moment, sniffing the fur. He shakes his head and pockets the clump.

TAVE

It doesn't smell like that to me.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Cass pores over papers on werewolf, Bigfoot, and other cryptid sightings, along with the book.

CASS

Tave might be onto something here.

She opens a phone book with addresses and looks for Laurence Winters.

No address. Most families have more than three separate instances of their last name across different addresses.

CASS

Huh. Guess the town's tighter-knit
than I thought.

She grabs her satchel and tries to open the door. It won't budge. She tries again. No dice.

CASS

What the—?

It's padlocked and chained shut around the hooks from the outside. The Hostess stares at Cass's door.

CASS
Hey! This is illegal!
(lower)
...I think.

She GROWLS in frustration and looks at the window. The lock's broken. She slams it with her palm. It's firmly stuck in place, leaving a red laceration on her hand.

CASS
Like that would stop me.

She opens her satchel and pulls out a pocket knife. She eventually brute-forces the window lock open and pulls up the window. Outside, the festival's just starting.

Cass notices that Brent's patrol car is next to hers... and her car has locks on the wheels.

CASS
Of course. They're in his pocket,
too.

EXT. PARITY SQUARE - EVENING

The entire town is celebrating. Cass hides behind an empty storage shed - now a ring toss stand - to watch, waiting for Tave.

TAVE
I knew you'd come.

She sniffs and wipes her nose, looking in his direction.

CASS
They lock you in too?

He nods, grinning from ear to ear. She can't help but smile.

The sun sets.

Hogan fires his gun into the air, startling them. The townspeople raise their heads to the sky...

And HOWL, morphing into bipedal WEREWOLVES.

Tave, speechless, mouth open, stares at them. Cass stares, grimly horrified.

CASS
Um... that's not my imagination, is
it. They aren't wearing masks.

TAVE
No, they're not.

He begins videoing them from around the corner.

CASS
This can't be real. I'm getting
closer.

TAVE
Cass—

She's already gone. He sighs and puts the camera on auto.

Cass sneaks past some werewolves into the square and ducks
under a table. Bare paws and tails are visible under the edge
of the tablecloth. She videos the event.

Several conversations:

WIFWOLF #1
Hey Em, I hear you're expecting!

EM
Yes'm, five—
(falters)
Five pups!

WIFWOLF #1
You must be thrilled!

The HUNTERS come by, including Brent.

BRENT
Did ya hear 'bout that big ol' buck
Rodney shot?

HUNTER #1
Yeah, shame a hunter landed him in
the clinic. He's missing all the
fun now.

HUNTER #2
Ah, Brent, can't say you're not a
bit happy 'bout that!

Howls of laughter.

BRENT
Wonder what happened to that
reporter.

HUNTER #1

Sounds like she'd make a good wife
for you, Brent.

BRENT

Heh, maybe. Well, easy come, easy
go.

More chatter. Sheriff Hogan ambles by.

HUNTER #1

Hey, Sheriff! You wanna hear bout
that buck Rodney shot?

Hogan has a growling undertone. He's larger than the rest.

HOGAN

Sure do. Wait...

A snout penetrates the tablecloth, sniffing. It's huge. Cass
backs up a few inches.

HOGAN

I smell human.

HUNTER #3

Oh, it's probably Gordon's stew.
Nothin' like fresh boar meat.
'Sides, only Crazy Fitz would go
for a human.

The others draw back at the mention of the name. Hogan sticks
his head fully under the table and his eyes meet hers for a
long moment. Then he puts a finger to his mouth for a second
and pulls his nose out of the tablecloth.

ADLER

(suspicious)

What've you got under there?

A massive clawed hand plucks Cass from behind. Adler stares
at her. The festivities pause as Adler holds her up in front
of all the townsfolk encircling them.

Hogan stares at Adler from the crowd as the werewolves glance
questioningly at him.

Tave watches in horror from the shadows behind a stall.

ADLER

We have a problem. A big problem.
What happens when an outsider
decides to stay longer than they're
welcome?

Cass doesn't recognize him in his werewolf form, but his voice is familiar. She tries to place it.

Adler ambles through the crowd, parading Cass like a piñata at a party. No one answers.

ADLER

Do we kill them as the beasts of the forest we are? Or do we turn them with the same curse delivered to our forefathers? What do we do... with... outsiders?

The crowd murmurs. Brent nudges Hogan, who shakes his head.

HOGAN

(under his breath)

If we didn't need the funds to keep this town going... it'd be *him*.

ADLER

No one knows?

He looks at Cass.

ADLER

Reckon' you'll pardon the wait, miss, as I educate them.

Cass opens her mouth but no words come out. Adler addresses the crowd again.

ADLER

Depends on the circumstances, of course, but this one's a journalist, a reporter. She writes articles that people read. Now, correct me if I'm wrong but wouldn't it be bad for us if our secret got out?

BARKS from the crowd grow louder. Cass struggles to get out of his grasp. Adler leans in close to her face.

ADLER

Now, listen here, miss. You'd best not try to escape again, else we just might have to kill you.

Cass narrows her eyes at him and slashes his arm with the pocket knife. Adler drops her, YELPING.

She hits the ground running, then ducks and rolls, dodging claws as the werewolves chase her.

EXT. WOODS SURROUNDING PARITY

They're gaining on her quick. Several wolves get caught in bear traps, HOLLERING in pain. Some peel back to help them.

They approach a large metal fence. Adler smiles and leaves the chase.

EXT. FITZ'S HOUSE

The werewolves slowly peel off one by one, watching the house with wary eyes. Cass climbs over the side of the fence.

CASS
They've stopped-

A shotgun blast throws up dirt at her feet. She jumps.

CONNER "FITZ" FITZGERALD, 80's, unsettling and human, cocks a shotgun and juts it against her chest. He's wearing plaid, a ball cap, a silver necklace, and a belt with extra shotgun ammo.

FITZ
One twitch and you're next.

CASS
You... They...

FITZ
Come on in, speechless. They won't try nothin' with me.

He lowers the shotgun halfway, glaring at the werewolves. Hogan keeps them back, noticing Adler's not with them.

INT. FITZ'S HOUSE

It's an old house with trophy kills mounted on the walls. Most notably, wolves. The decor is subtly grotesque and unsettling.

FITZ
Here, have some beer. Takes the edge off. You're not from around here, are you?

CASS
No thanks, I-I really should be going.

FITZ

You could take your chances out there, but I reckon you wouldn't last until dawn. I've got a spare bed.

She's visibly uncomfortable.

CASS

All right, um, do you have a phone? Preferably one that's working?

FITZ

Yeah, it's just in the kitchen.

She turns her back on him to make the call.

Fitz takes off the necklace and morphs into a werewolf, casually dropping the shotgun between them as a challenge. She jumps at the sound of the gun hitting the floor and whirls.

He grins at her as she recoils and brandishes her pocket knife. He knocks the knife away. She lunges for and grabs the shotgun.

Before she can aim it, he pounces on her and pins her to the ground. He bites into her shoulder, then rips the chunk of flesh off, enjoying the snack.

He sees the bracelet and CHUCKLES, grinning as he pries it open and tears it off her arm, tossing it into the shadows, where a pair of eyes watch them. A paw takes the mangled bracelet.

Cass tries to aim the shotgun.

FITZ

Just what're you gonna do with that, pup?

The words spark determination in her. She twists, slamming the shotgun into his chest.

Fitz reels and scrambles up. Just as he's about to tear into her chest—

She blows his head off with the shotgun. Cass doubles over with pain from the recoil.

She staggers, recovers, and tries not to look too hard at the remains. She waits a moment to see if he's still moving, then hobbles out the front door.

EXT. FITZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The hunting party has dispersed.

One pair of eyes flickers in the light in front of her. She unsteadily aims at them. Sheriff Hogan raises his paws.

Tave watches them from a distance.

INT. SHERIFF'S TRUCK

The ride is long and mostly silent. The windows are down.

HOGAN

Not many folk crazy enough to shoot him. Did us all a favor.

Despite her serious facade, she's terrified, trembling hands white-knuckling the shotgun.

CASS

Why should I trust you?

HOGAN

You're the one with the shotgun. Look, us wolfkin ain't liked by yer folk. It's been a hundred years since the last man's been hunted by one of us, save Fitz.

CASS

So you're not eating people?

HOGAN

No. Common misconception. We breed our own cattle.

CASS

Who's the leader then? He was ready to kill me.

HOGAN

He was warning you. I would've taken you aside, talked with you bout things in private. But no, you took the hard way. Guess you needed to face a real killer to know the difference.

CASS

People need to know—

HOGAN

And what would that do for us?
Likely burn our houses and
slaughter our children. Force us to
work as soldiers. Exploit us for
the way our bodies change and heal.

He sighs and pulls over, looking at her.

HOGAN

It don't matter how many "nice
people" there are, for every one
you'll find a hundred fearful. We
may have gotten off on the wrong
foot, but if you're that good of a
journalist, you should understand
why.

Cass averts her eyes.

HOGAN

Not everything's worth reporting
on, kid.

Cass thinks, silent for a moment.

CASS

Let me interview you and the
others. I'm writing the article no
matter what you say. I could send
it at any time. What's stopping you
from killing me right here?

HOGAN

I'm not that kind of man. And I
heard you were unemployed.

He sighs and flicks his ear.

HOGAN

Why are you here, really?

She reluctantly pulls out the envelope and opens it.

CASS

Guess if I'd played my hand sooner,
I wouldn't be in this deep. I'm...
looking for my father. It's the
only thing I have left of him,
besides my bracelet.

She fidgets her wrist. He eyes her warily.

HOGAN
Got a feeling yer not that
sentimental, but...

Hogan scratches his chin, sniffing the letter.

HOGAN
Hmm. Could be...

He chuckles wryly.

HOGAN
We'll deal with him in the morning,
after we get the wound looked at.

CASS
I never really knew him. Not the
real him.

HOGAN
Well, I reckon you may find out
more than you wanted.

Now she's terrified.

CASS
What... what do you mean by that?

HOGAN
Where's yer silver bracelet, miss?

She takes a deep breath, staring at him expectantly.

CASS
...Why? I think it's back at the
house.

HOGAN
Guess we'll see tonight if yer
really blooded. Despite what Herm
said back there, we can't turn
folk.

She looks at him, still very shaken.

CASS
Herm? You mean ADLER?

He grimaces.

HOGAN
I-If yer an outsider, no amount of
injuries will turn you.
(MORE)

HOGAN (CONT'D)

It's 'jes something my predecessor
used to say to warn folk who
wandered too close to the truth.

He sighs.

HOGAN

Then again, that was the 1900s.

She takes another shaky breath and taps the shotgun.

CASS

So you're not going to kill me? Or
Tave?

HOGAN

No one wants to go like Fitz. I do
hope you'll stow the shotgun for Em
Cooper. Doctor's wife. Expecting.

CASS

I need to get back to my room.

HOGAN

Not with yer shoulder looking like
that. *Stay inside.*

They pull up to a homestead. It's eerily quiet. Cass grips
the shotgun tightly as she gets out. He starts to pull away.

HOGAN

Soon you'll find even animals like
us can be kind.

I/E. FITZ'S HOUSE

A black SUV pulls up to the side of the house and parks next
to unkempt vines attached to the house, spreading out to
bushes nearby, out of sight from the entrance.

Adler exits the SUV and sneaks in the back door of the house.
He recoils at seeing bloody drag marks where Fitz's body lay
before hurriedly searching the house for papers with his
name. He pulls the few hung pictures off the walls.

Then his eye catches the mangled silver bracelet.

He picks up the bracelet, looks at it in disgust, and sticks
it in his pocket.

Faint WHINES cause him to hurry away.

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

EM, 30's, a werewolf, heavily pregnant yet hospitable, guides Cass to the dining table. Cass shivers. Em drapes a blanket over her good shoulder.

EM
You must be starvin'. 'Specially
before you turn.

Cass keeps the shotgun in her lap, eyes following Em as she serves her.

CASS
I'm not on the menu?

Em laughs, then sees Cass's serious expression and sits down next to her, putting a paw on her hand.

EM
You've got nothing to fear, dear.
Not after the night you've had.
Sheriff told me all about you.

CASS
So, you knew my father?

EM
Everyone knows each other 'round
here. My husband knew him better.

She struggles to stand and puts a plate of roast chicken in front of Cass.

Cass leans back from it until she's sure.

EM
It's just chicken, sweet.

Cass lets out a held breath but still doesn't eat.

EM
Doc'll be along in the morning.
He's helping out the Ashbys down
the road. Cattle birthing and such.
But first, let's get you cleaned
up.

Em wipes off Cass's wound with a damp washcloth, then wraps it up. Cass winces.

CASS
Ow!

EM
Don't worry, it'll be healed by the
morn.

INT. HOMESTEAD - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cass locks the door behind her and paces, considering her options. She texts Tave:

"RUN."

Then she drags the dresser in front of the door.

Tave answers:

"Why?"

She stares at the phone.

CASS
They got to him.

She hears footsteps coming down the hall and her eyes settle on the window. She pries it open and slips out, holding the shotgun close to her chest.

EXT. HOMESTEAD

She breaks into a run.

EXT. PARITY WOODS

Cass gets spotted by the Hunters, who chase her.

HUNTER #1
Bounty'll look nice mounted on my
wall!

EXT. FARM

She slips into a barn. Her bandages are soaked with blood. The animals all back away in fear. She jumps at the COCKING of a shotgun outside.

A cow BELLOWS in protest as she hides behind it.

A human FARMER, 30's, female, enters wielding a shotgun.

FARMER

All right, which one of you
animals're dumb enough to come here
again?

Cass lets out a breath and slowly stands up.

CASS

Wait! Wait! You're not a wolf?

The Farmer narrows her eyes.

FARMER

You see silver anywhere, dog?

CASS

"Dog?"

FARMER

You ain't fooling me.

The Farmer pins her to the stall with her shotgun and disarms
her.

CASS

I'm a journalist. They're after me.

Her captor stares hard at her.

FARMER

No. They're getting craftier. I
know an animal when I see one.

She cocks the shotgun.

CASS

I'm Cassidy Winters. I worked for
the New York Daily.

FARMER

Then why're you out here, eyeshine?

Cass blinks.

CASS

Eyeshine?

The Farmer examines her.

FARMER

Where's yer silver? Yer too old for
yer first night.

CASS

I was bitten. Please, where's the
closest town that's not... them?

The Farmer looks her in the eyes, long and hard.

FARMER

Bites don't turn. And Wolves don't
leave.

Cass takes a breath and puts on an air of cowardice.

CASS

My parents left here after I was
born. I was chased out. Please just
let me go.

The Farmer stares and finally relents, pulling up the barrel
of the shotgun.

FARMER

Town's that way. Get yer things and
leave. If I see you again, yer
dead.

Cass scrambles to pick up the shotgun and runs.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

Cass catches her breath against a decaying fence. It's clear
the Farmer was lying.

Then her flashlight reveals a group of three human HUNTERS
encircling her. They grin at her.

HUNTER

Heard there was a dog that wandered
too far from home.

HUNTER #2

Been so long since we hunted a
Wolf.

HUNTER #3

Let's put it out of its misery.

She dodges between two of them and RUNS.

EXT. PARITY WOODS - LATER

Cass keeps running. The hunters shoot at her. She tries to
hide behind a tree.

CASS

Never... ran... so long...

She notices fur growing up her arm and panics. The Hunters fan out and search for her.

HUNTER

Can't have roamed far. I smell wet dog.

Hogan comes up behind him, human-wearing silver. He's holding a shotgun, muzzle up.

HOGAN

Just what are you boys doing out here?

The Hunters turn to face him.

HUNTER

One of yer dogs got loose again.

Hogan immediately identifies the leader and steps toward him. The Hunters step back.

HOGAN

Is that so? Or were one of you itching to kill again?

Hogan taps his shotgun.

HOGAN

I see you boys hunting in these woods... and it won't be deer we'll eat.

There's a silent standoff. Then the Hunters run. Hogan glances toward Cass' hiding spot.

HOGAN

Winters, you can come out now. Think that's enough of a lesson fer ya.

EXT. HOMESTEAD - LATER

Hogan parks and walks Cass up to the front door. Em answers, clearly relieved.

Cass trembles, watching her fingernails turn black.

EM
Sheriff! Oh dear, I scared her too
much, didn't I?

HOGAN
She won't be any trouble to you
now.

He pushes Cass inside.

INT. HOMESTEAD - LATER

Cass sits in a chair propped up against the bedroom door,
gripping the un-cocked shotgun. Her bandage has been changed.

She examines her hands, then closes her eyes, sighing. She
nods off and slips into repressed memories:

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Another night. Laurence sees Cass's light still on in her
bedroom and investigates. He finds her curled up under tented
sheets with a flashlight.

He crawls under there with her, amused.

LAURENCE
How come you're still up?

CASS
I don't want dog-face to get me.

He forces a smile to cover his worried expression.

I/E. HOUSE - NIGHT

Yet another house with another U-Haul in front of it. Cass, 6
now, hides in the bathroom while her parents fight.

DARLA
We can't hide this from her
forever. She already has nightmares
about it.

LAURENCE
I want to give her what we didn't
have! A normal childhood. Don't you
want that?

DARLA

She has a right to know! The other kids already can tell she's not like them! We can't keep moving to hide it!

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - EVENING

Cass, 7, comes home from school. She finds the basement door unlocked and cracked open, so she wanders in to see...

Blood and bones leaking out of old padlocked bins.

Her father slitting a werewolf's throat with a shaky, clawed hand. Tears spill from his eyes.

BACK TO:

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

Cass starts awake, covered in sweat. She grabs for her bracelet. It's not there.

Cass stares at her hand. The fingers elongate and fatten, hair begins to grow into clumps of fur... and climb down the hand to the wrist...

She runs to the bathroom mirror. She's morphing into a werewolf...

...uncomfortable enough to wince and brace herself against the wall on the way. She rubs her jaw as it elongates and YIPS as the tail rips out.

She makes it to the mirror and...

CASS

(dead serious)

Dog-face.

INT. HOMESTEAD - MORNING

Cass jolts awake, slumped against the mirror. She checks herself and unintentionally smacks her snout with her hand. She's a werewolf.

She looks at her pupils. They reflect the light from the window. Her canine teeth are longer and sharper. She feels the back of her jeans. There's a ripped area for her tail.

Cass averts her eyes in disgust.

She walks into the bedroom and stops. The room is completely trashed, yet there's a fresh change of clothes on the bed.

INT. HOMESTEAD - DAY

Cass, in the new clothes, stumbles out of the bedroom.

There are trails of colors - smells - drifting like smoke into different rooms. Most come from the kitchen. She sniffs and the colors become more vibrant.

She closes her eyes and can still visualize them. She follows her nose to the kitchen.

Em, still a wolf, cooks breakfast. Doc, human, sits at the dining table reading a newspaper. He wears a silver wedding ring, yet his wife doesn't. He frowns down at Cass as she enters.

The sounds are too loud.

DOC

So you're the troublemaker.

His frown turns into a forced, distrusting smile. Cass grimaces at the sound of his voice.

DOC

Sheriff's cleaning up Fitzgerald's bear traps now that he legally can.

He waits for her to respond, then CLEARS his throat.

DOC

Hopefully I won't have to sew any limbs back on for a while.

The scent-colors intensify. The room seems to spin and she grips the chair.

EM

You might want to talk softer, dear. She's unaccustomed.

DOC

Ah. You'll probably be down all day, since your center of balance is shifting.

Em puts a plate of food in front of her. Cass's tail wags uncontrollably. She grabs it, pushes the plate away, and wipes drool from her mouth.

Em gives her a pitying look. Cass breaks down. Em hugs her.

Their ears all perk up as Hogan's truck rumbles outside.

INT. SHERIFF'S TRUCK - DAY

Hogan watches her get in with curiosity.

HOGAN
Still at it?

CASS
Better to distract me from all...

She gestures to herself.

CASS
This.

He smiles.

HOGAN
We get something of a prey drive,
even as people.

He looks directly at her.

HOGAN
'Course, you already knew that.

She frowns, then shakes her head as Hogan drives.

CASS
I'm still a wolf. Is it silver that
keeps them - us human?

He taps his silver ring.

HOGAN
First time's rough on ya like that.

CASS
It's not my...

He watches her go silent.

CASS
And Adler?

HOGAN

Gone. Though I wouldn't be surprised if he showed up again just to make sure you were dead.

CASS

Great. You don't even have control of your own town?

HOGAN

(annoyed)

I don't have the funds.

CASS

So that's why you're chaperoning me?

Hogan shakes his head in disbelief.

HOGAN

I understand you lost something at Fitz's house?

CASS

Yes, a...

She begins to realize something.

CASS

My bracelet. He pried it off.

Determination fills her voice.

CASS

Drop me off at my dad's old house. I need to look at something.

Hogan smiles to himself.

HOGAN

As you wish, pup.

I/E. ABANDONED LAKESIDE CABIN - DAY

It's ancient. Cold dead wood stands neglected and rotting against the shore.

Cass grips the shotgun Hogan gives her as he drops her off.

Mosquitoes buzz outside. Cass shivers and walks up the broken steps to the door. She runs her claw over it.

CASS

I remember this smell.

It's unlocked. The door opens partway and gets stuck. She slips inside.

Old family photos of Laurence standing next to Darla, with the Fitzgerald look in her eye, holding two pups. Cass looks closer at the photo.

CASS

He had a family before mom? Or is that my...

She looks at a single photo of Darla as a human and recoils, dropping it. The glass SHATTERS.

Claws SCRATCH the old wood as the shadows in the room shift. LAURENCE, or at least a shadow of him, stirs from the dark corner.

Cass feels the chill in the air and looks around, paranoid. Her ears twist and search for more noises. She aims the shotgun and grits her teeth.

CASS

Who's there? I don't want to shoot you!

The voice is twisted, wrong. Cass pants, eyes scanning the room.

CASS

Dad?

LAURENCE

More than one pup. Replaceable. Your mother was. You are. Don't you realize where she came from?

CASS

Fitz. He was her...

The phantom sneers at her.

LAURENCE

Born rotten, bearing rotten. You couldn't even read my letter.

Her eyes harden in realization. It's just a phantom, nothing more.

CASS

You've been haunting me all my life. I'm not going to take it anymore. I'm not a monster like you! Like him! Like any of them!

She shoots and the phantom dissipates, CHUCKLING.

LAURENCE

So you say...

Cass grips the table for support, unbidden memories welling up tears in her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

An elementary-school-aged Cass drags her feet getting ready. Laurence notices this and kneels down to talk with her.

LAURENCE

You've been sad for a long time. You don't talk to your friends or want to go to school anymore. Are the other kids being mean to you?

Fearful, Cass shakes her head.

LAURENCE

You don't have to be afraid to tell me, Cassie.

Little Cass twists her face as she tries to put it into words.

CASS

They're calling me dog-face.

Laurence's face goes white.

LAURENCE

Dog-face? Are you reading scary books again?

CASS

No. I see him in the mirror sometimes. I think he wants to eat me.

Laurence doesn't respond for a while. Cass pulls on his sleeve.

CASS

Dad?

LAURENCE

Y-yeah. Uh, honey... Listen.

He gets up and grabs a gift box from the highest corner of her closet, turning it over in his hands.

Then he sits down next to her.

CASS

What's that?

LAURENCE

I was going to give it to you when you were older, but I think you might like it now.

He opens it. It's the silver bracelet.

CASS

A bracelet?

LAURENCE

It's a magic bracelet. It will keep dog-face away if you wear it.

BACK TO PRESENT:

INT. HOMESTEAD - MORNING

Cass wakes up and runs to the mirror, running her hands over her human face.

CASS

Like daily medication, isn't it?

She follows her nose to the kitchen, where Em cooks at the stove.

EM

Mornin'! Have a sit and I'll find you some eggs n' bacon.

Cass attempts a smile and sits at the table. Doc's there with his newspaper. She moves the silverware to receive the plate, then notices a silver ring next to her fork.

CASS

You like cooking?

Em beams and serves her.

EM
My granpappy's diner's all mine
now.

Cass digs in.

DOC
Delicious meal--as always, Em.

He rustles the paper and glances over at Cass.

DOC
You like the ring?

Cass examines it and nods.

CASS
Thanks. Less likely to get caught
on things.

She sighs.

CASS
I'd still like to get my bracelet
back. It's from my dad.

Silence. Em and Doc exchange a look.

CASS
So, what does silver have to do
with turning? I... I thought it was
an old wives' tale.

DOC
Everything starts with a speck of
truth. Need high purity silver to
stop a turn. Think my ancestor
found out when they started putting
bullets in him.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Cass sidles up on a stool next to Tave, who's relieved to see her. Hogan watches them from his usual booth.

TAVE
You're alive. Sheriff over there
let me know, but...

Cass sighs in relief.

CASS
You had me worried, too.

He notices the silver ring. She passes him a note:

DON'T MENTION WEREWOLVES

TAVE
(whispers)
He took the footage.

Cass glances in Hogan's direction. He frowns but shrugs.

CASS
It's complicated.

Tave grins, shaking his head.

TAVE
We have a lot to catch up on.

CASS
How's the Bigfoot hunt coming?

Tave shakes his head.

TAVE
Looks like you're winning the bet.
You don't want to stick around and
watch me film the other discovery
of a lifetime?

CASS
(grinning)
Heh. I dunno yet. Really, you're
checking up on me, Octavio?

He grins.

TAVE
Hey, now. It's Tave.

CASS
While you're checking into the
festival, gimme a shout if you hear
anything about Bigfoot.

Tave feigns concern.

TAVE
You're finally coming around to my
theory? Are you feeling alright?

She nods to him, keeping an eye on Hogan.

CASS
Yeah, just... dog-tired.

Tave nods and taps her ring.

TAVE
Don't push yourself too hard. It's
the country. Knock back a couple of
beers and they'll open up to you.

CASS
Any sign of Adler?

TAVE
I saw him leave as soon as the
wolves started chasing you.

INT. DINER - LATER

Cass helps Em work in the kitchen. She glances out at the
wolves chatting and eating.

CASS
I wanted to say thanks. For helping
with...

She makes a head motion. Em smiles.

EM
Guess we can call that practice.

Cass notices her smile fade.

CASS
...Are you nervous?

EM
Well, there's five of them, and
it's my first time. So yes.

CASS
Looks like they'll have a lot of
space to run around in, and the
community seems close-knit.

EM
Heh. I suppose. Sometimes you can
get so caught up in your own head
you can't see what's around you.

CASS
Now I wish I'd grown up here.
Could've used the company.

Em bark-laughes.

EM

Never too late till you're under.
That's what my Pa always said.

EXT. PARITY SQUARE - DAY

Cass helps Brent take down decorations.

BRENT

You want some help wit' that?

CASS

If you're offering, sure.

BRENT

Heard yer pa was from here.
Laurence, right? The town pastor.

CASS

Pastor? You mean the church and
services aren't just for show?

BRENT

We may be animals, but we're God-
fearing folk. Yer welcome to join
our Sunday potluck. Miss Em brings
the best pies.

CASS

What about you?

He finishes taking down a string of lights.

BRENT

Pardon?

CASS

Handyman, deputy, general store
owner... I just want to get a sense
of how you see yourself.

Brent blushes and rubs his beard.

BRENT

'jes what you said.

CASS

"Animals"?

Brent COUGHS, uncomfortable.

CASS
So, Adler? Where does he fit in?

BRENT
Hermaeus?

Cass nods.

BRENT
Used to be best friends. He didn't
come from the best stock, but he
made something of himself out
there.

CASS
"Used to?"

BRENT
I didn't know why he left until,
well... his sister got... had pups.

CASS
That she and Laurence left behind?

BRENT
I'm not sure what happened to them.
Old man Fitz got... protective of
his family. Started using traps.
Rumor has it, Darla had a litter
early on.

BRENT
I suppose Darla had enough. A week
before she left, pups got out, and
the traps got 'em.

He COUGHS, uncomfortable.

BRENT
It's said Adler had a hand in that.

CASS
So Adler came back, and you
supported him after what he did?

BRENT
It's... it's not like that. Money's
drying up since Fitz got a
reputation for huntin' humans in
the county. Made us all out to be
killers.

INT. HOMESTEAD - EVENING

Cass watches Em peel her bandage off. The wound's red but healed. Em's dressed in her Sunday best. She lays out a dress too large for Cass.

EM

Sorry, dear. It's all I have. We'll need a belt.

She helps Cass put it on.

CASS

Does silver work at night here?

EM

Not as well as outside the county. Doc thinks it reacts to the moonlight. Sleep's bad as is.

Cass looks away.

CASS

I'll turn again, won't I?

EM

Maybe you're still catching up. You were raised outside, right?

CASS

Apparently. Does Fitz have anyone else living there?

EM

That's a... good question. Nobody wanted to go 'round there to find out.

Cass sighs and scratches behind her ear.

CASS

More questions than answers. Why are you still a wolf?

EM

It's easier on the pups if I stay in one form, 'specially nearing the birth.

She tousles Cass's hair. Cass flinches but allows it.

EM

Dearie, you'd have had some symptom if you were born local. Even if you moved far away.

CASS

I...

Em gently places a clawed hand on hers.

EM

...Might not want to remember them?

Cass pulls away, quickly spitting out a practiced response.

CASS

I don't remember much of my childhood.

Em rubs her belly, shifting her weight.

EM

It's the gift, dear. My pups get restless when someone's...

She holds her belly.

EM

...not exactly truthful.

Cass stands and grips the table, trying to stop the flow of memories. Her hand shifts into a monstrous half-paw. Em grabs it with hers.

Cass turns away, trembling.

CASS

I-I don't remember much of my...

EM

Ooh! Dear, they're all worked up.

Cass pants for air, watching the fur grow up her arm. She can't catch her breath.

She falls to her knees, having a full-blown panic attack. She can't breathe.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

Recess, middle school. A bully pushes her to the dirt while his cronies watch.

BULLY

What're you gonna do, murder spawn?

She gets up and runs away. He throws a rock at her, hitting her back. One of his cronies snatches her silver bracelet.

Cass tries to take it back. The kid holds it too high for her to reach.

Her fingernails turn black. She ROARS and tackles him, then pins him down like Fitz did her. To the horror of the other bullies, she beats him up, turning into a werewolf as she does so.

Then she sees her reflection in the window. She grabs her bracelet back and RUNS. Vaulting over the chain link fence, she hides behind a tree and breaks down.

BACK TO:

INT. HOMESTEAD - EVENING

Cass can't get air. She's fully turned. Em hugs her.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Cass sits in a pew next to Em and Doc. The whole town has turned out, all werewolves.

To her surprise, it's a normal service. The PASTOR is a fiery, passionate 30-something. He looks like a younger Laurence.

PASTOR

And though we don't often entertain those outside our circle, we must always remember Our Lord's kindness to the outsiders of His time.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

The potluck. Cass spies Tave looking around the crowd as he munches on a slice of pumpkin pie. He doesn't recognize her but catches her staring at him. She smiles to herself.

CASS
Always on the job.

She grabs a plate of food and approaches the Pastor.

CASS
You probably know everything that goes on in Parity.

PASTOR
Ah, you're the reporter. Trying to dig up your past? I heard what you did for the community. Thanks for sending that son of the devil to hell.

Cass raises her eyebrows.

CASS
I'd think you would wish he were saved?

He grimaces and drinks a bit of wine, to her amusement.

PASTOR
He was long past that point. That family was just...

CASS
...Cursed?

Pastor shrugs.

PASTOR
Hogan said you were Laurence's kid. He tried his best to keep you out of that.

CASS
So he wasn't a Winters?

He takes another swig, amused.

PASTOR
No. That would be your mother. He took the name to redeem it.

He glances around, choosing his words carefully.

PASTOR
I heard things were problematic at home for her. Maybe it never truly left.

Uncomfortable, Cass clears her throat.

CASS

Uh, what do you make of the "people becoming guardian wolves when they die" thing?

He smiles, amused.

PASTOR

You've been talking to Hogan. I believe it is sort of a purgatory, perhaps related to the town's curse.

CASS

I see.

She sets the plate down, untouched, and begins to walk to the door.

PASTOR

Oh, and Cassie?

Cass stops, stunned.

PASTOR

I think you got more of him than your mother. And that's a good thing.

Confused, she looks back toward him, but he slips into the crowd.

EXT. GARAGE - LATER

Cass walks up to the garage and rolls her eyes when she sees Hogan with her impounded car.

HOGAN

Ready to leave?

CASS

Not for lack of trying.

He CHUCKLES.

HOGAN

Give it another day.

Cass walks back to Doc's truck, shaking her head.

EXT. PARITY - NIGHT

Doc and Em drive back to the homestead in their truck, with Cass in the truck's bed. Cass firmly grips the sides, troubled.

Em watches her, holding her belly as the truck bumps over pot-holes. Doc's watching Cass warily, leading them to hit rougher terrain.

Cass has to shout over the RUMBLE and SPUTTER of the diesel engine.

CASS

Is it normal to have more than one kid-er, pup?

Em shouts back.

EM

Rare to have just one. Most of the town's related and it ain't by choice.

CASS

(low)
...Fitz.

Cass takes a deep breath.

CASS

Could you drop me off closer to town? I have to meet someone.

EXT. PARITY SQUARE

Cass hops off the truck.

CASS

Thanks.

Em sighs, watching her.

DOC

She's going to get herself killed.

Em shakes her head.

EM

Can't choose our family, but we can choose who we love.

EXT. FITZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cass holds the shotgun up to the door.

CASS
I really hope this isn't a bad
idea.

She takes a deep breath and enters.

INT. FITZ'S HOUSE

Cass looks around the house. A single bulb lights the stairway. Everything's in disarray, with fresh claw marks everywhere.

She looks at small, gashed and smashed family photos on the walls. Her mother, Hogan, and Adler are in the same photo. Laurence is not in any of them.

Cass turns it over. It has their names on the back. She slips it in her satchel.

A low, female MOAN and the scrabbling of claws on wood from upstairs perk her ears up.

She takes a few shallow breaths and closes her eyes, sniffing.

CASS
(whispering)
Adler?

There are many scent trails, and she can't pinpoint the ones leading upstairs.

She opens her eyes and glares in that direction, frustrated.

CASS
I know you're in here, and if I'm
correct, I'm one of you!

No reply, but her ears perk again as she hears a small CLATTER from upstairs, then a deliberate attempt to silence it.

CASS
I'm family!

A werewolf jumps from the rafters and lands behind her. It's TREVOR WINTERS, 30's. She jumps and drops the shotgun. He puts a claw to her throat.

TREVOR
Are you? *Really?*

Cass pulls her pocket knife from her jeans and stabs him in the thigh. Trevor grins and slams her against the wall, pulling the knife out and putting it to her throat.

TREVOR
Nice try, sis.

He forces her up to the top bedroom, pushes her in, and locks the door behind her.

Cass looks around, trying to adjust her sight to the moon-lit room. There are three rotted beds with stained linens. Two of them are empty.

Shallow BREATHING comes from...

The rightmost bed. LILY WINTERS, 30's, twin of Trevor, also a wolf, emaciated, bruised, and pregnant, is chained to the headboard. She sees Cass and WHIMPERS, clearly scared.

LILY
He's not going to kill you. You'll
be just like me.

I/E. BAR - NIGHT

Tave drinks. It's clear he's been there a while. He checks his watch. Hogan ambles towards him.

HOGAN
Waiting for someone?

TAVE
My friend. She's never late for
anything. But she does know how to
get herself in trouble.

Hogan calls Doc.

DOC (O.C.)
No, haven't seen her. Dropped her
off after the potluck near Fitz's.

Hogan's clearly worried.

HOGAN
Not the Fitz house.

He runs to his truck. Tave begins to follow.

HOGAN
No, you stay here. Don't need two
civilians on my mind.

Hogan tips his hat to Tave.

HOGAN
I'll come back with her. I...

He remembers the picture of Doc's murdered wife.

HOGAN
...I'll do my best.

INT. FITZ'S HOUSE

Cass pulls on Lily's chains. Lily groans.

LILY
Hurry. I think he's coming back.

CASS
Did Fitz do this to you?

Lily nods, biting her lip.

LILY
He got to Trevor when he was young.
Taught him to kill and enjoy it.
Told him to pass on the family
legacy in any way possible.

CASS
All of the abducted women...?

Lily nods. Cass tries to break the dry-rotted backboard. It gives but doesn't break.

Downstairs, Trevor lops off Fitz's frozen arm ant the elbow and places it on a platter. He ascends the staircase, nails CLICKING on the steps as they CREAK.

Cass's ear perks towards the door. She works at the wood, prying the chain off bit by bit.

Trevor's halfway to the top.

EXT. FITZ'S HOUSE

Hogan arrives. Doc pulls up next to him in his truck. He hops out and pumps a shotgun.

DOC

I'm not letting another one of the
devil spawn stalk our town.

Hogan radios Brent.

HOGAN

Need ya to look after the outsider
and check on Em. I'm going into
Fitz's. If I don't call you in ten
minutes...

He trails off, then swings his legs onto the ground and slams
the door shut.

INT. BAR

Tave watches Brent walk out to his truck and follows him.

I/E. HOMESTEAD

Brent pulls up outside the house. He walks up to the door and
KNOCKS as Tave parks. Em SCREAMS, prompting Brent to ram the
door in.

Em's on the floor, in labor. Tave stands in the doorway,
stunned.

Brent GROWLS back at Tave.

BRENT

Don't just stand there - get some
towels.

INT. FITZ'S HOUSE

Trevor's almost up the stairs now. Cass finishes prying the
chain loose with her pocket knife.

The SCRATCHING gets louder. Then it stops. Cass sees his
shadow under the door. Lily SOBS. Cass silently slips the
knife into Lily's hand and hides.

Trevor opens the door, sniffing and looking around. He looks
under Lily's bed, then begins searching the room.

Meanwhile, Hogan and Doc search the decaying house. They find
Fitz's picture surrounded by a makeshift shrine of candles
and viscera.

DOC
Those sick...

Doc accidentally knocks an empty cup over. It CLATTERS to the floor.

The noise from downstairs distracts Trevor.

Cass jumps from the rafters and clamps her arms around his neck. He tries to throw her off, gnawing at her arms, but her grip's iron.

Trevor slams Cass into the walls, then succeeds in throwing her off after bashing her into a wardrobe.

TREVOR
You little runt.

Lily silently frees herself and stumbles toward him, emaciated limbs barely propelling her forward. Trevor pins Cass, sadistic fury prying his lips into a grin.

TREVOR
This is for Pa.

LILY
So is this.

Lily stabs him in the nape of his neck with the knife. Cass scrambles out of the way as he seizes up and falls forward, claws outstretched in one last attempt to kill her.

The two catch their breath as Hogan and Doc enter. Cass helps Lily stand. Hogan scratches his chin, placing a hand on Doc's shoulder to hold him back.

DOC
Guess I misjudged the family.

Cass recovers, putting an arm around Lily, who leans on her for support.

CASS
You're not the only one.

INT. SHERIFF'S TRUCK - DAY

Hogan idles outside the Cooper homestead. Cass sweats in the passenger seat, leaning into the air vents at full blast.

CASS
Is Tave alright?

HOGAN

Yeah. He's watching Em's pups with Doc and Brent.

Cass relaxes and sniffs.

CASS

There's something I still don't understand. I didn't turn until I got here.

Her ears perk downwards.

CASS

Except once... that I remember.

HOGAN

It's the curse. Go too long without coming back here, you might lose that part of you forever. Some say it drives you crazy.

Cass taps her snout.

CASS

Guess that explains Pop.

HOGAN

Are you sure he was the one abducting them?

CASS

Fitz and his son – my brother were psychopaths. He was grooming specifically male heirs.

HOGAN

And whose son was he? I knew old Fitzgerald Senior. Always at the bar, drinking cause of his... wife. I responded to more than a few domestics there.

Cass mulls it over.

CASS

Where does my mom come in?

HOGAN

You don't want to dredge through the family history. None of it is pretty.

CASS

I think it's more of a need than a
want for me. Sheriff, I...

Determination flares up in her eyes.

CASS

(softly)

Sheriff, I saw my dad kill my mom.

Hogan stares, silent, horrified. Then he attempts to regain
his composure.

HOGAN

(low)

Laurence tried to outrun the
horrors of the legacy. He didn't
realize he took part of it with
him.

Cass looks up at him, eyes wet.

CASS

My mom?

HOGAN

By the time she had you, she
already had a dead litter and two
pups.

CASS

My dad? Or Fitz?

HOGAN

Oh, no. No. The ones that survived
were with Hermaeus.

CASS

(horrified)

Adler?

INT. HOMESTEAD - MORNING

Cass, human, sees Lily resting on their couch. Doc bandages
her wrists where the chains dug in.

DOC

Poor girl's been through the
wringer. I don't think anyone would
have found her if you hadn't...

He takes a deep breath.

DOC

What I mean is this: I'm sorry I was hostile to you. I couldn't bear to lose another...

Cass forces a smile.

CASS

I'm used to it. You knew my dad?

DOC

We grew up together. I know what you're really asking. No, he wasn't from that family. He and Fitz Senior's girl ran off and eloped. She was... the troubled sort.

CASS

So I've heard.

Doc fingers his chin.

DOC

How good are you with a hammer?

EXT. HOMESTEAD - EVENING

Cass, human now, fixes up an old shed. Hogan ambles up next to her.

HOGAN

Still thinking about that article?

CASS

...There's really not much to report on. Half the time I'm still a wolf, even in daylight.

She straightens up.

CASS

I have to go back eventually. At least to get my stuff from the apartment.

Hogan sighs, scratching his chin.

HOGAN

But yer still a wolf. Can't report on us without outing yerself. 'Sides, you've met everyone. What do you think's the right call?

She opens her mouth to answer.

HOGAN

-Not what I think's the right call.
I'm asking for yer opinion.

He steps back and waits for her response.

CASS

I think it's obvious. Though what
good am I if I can't chase any
leads?

Hogan looks her over, cocking his head.

HOGAN

You sure about that?

She gives him a pleading look.

HOGAN

Alright. I'll take you at first
light.

I/E. ABANDONED LAKESIDE CABIN - SUNRISE

Cass, human, runs a hand across the old wooden table. She
picks up the broken picture of her mother.

CASS

Guess Fitz still got you in the
end.

She carefully sits on a broken chair and pulls out her
father's envelope. She takes a deep breath and opens it.

CASS

(reading)

Dear Cassidy, I know you won't
understand this now. If you come to
Parity, I will tell you everything.
It may be a few years down the road
when you read this, but I want you
to know I had to do what I did. I
want you to know why, but you won't
understand unless you come. Please.
All my love, Dad.

Her face darkens. She flips it over, scouring it for a hidden
message. Anything.

CASS

That's it? Hoping I'd come back soon enough?

She sniffs the letter and... the same colored scent trail wafts from the back door. She pries it open and walks out onto the lakeside pier.

There's a small island with a large sycamore in the middle of the lake. She sees what looks like a grave marker.

The bridge over to it is broken in half, dilapidated.

CASS

I guess no one loved you. Or cared enough. Now you know what it feels like.

She balances on the posts to make it across. The post she steps on slips into the water, sending her into the drink.

She sputters and makes it to the other side.

CASS

Guess I deserve that.

There's a grave with Laurence's name on it, dated five years back. She smiles sadly.

CASS

Missed you, Pop.

PASTOR

You sure about that?

Cass jumps, startled. Pastor's around the other side of the tree, reading a book. Not the Bible.

CASS

You realize I've had to physically fight off two members of my own family?

PASTOR

Sorry. I forgot you'd probably come here. It's a nice spot away from town. I like to read to him. Makes me feel better knowing somebody cares.

Cass blushes, looking away in embarrassment.

PASTOR

It's alright to feel angry at those we perceive have harmed us. He went on the run and left you behind. You felt abandoned.

Cass shifts on her feet, thoroughly uncomfortable.

CASS

You're not like any pastor I've met.

PASTOR

Well, I try to look at it from a practical point of view. I could say that you should forgive him. But honestly, that's your God-given right to choose. I think, though, bitterness fits you about as well as that dress did.

Cass looks mortified. She looks at her reflection, then back toward him...

CASS

...Who... who exactly are you?

...but he's gone. She looks around the tree, then the bridge, then everywhere else.

CASS

The-

She finds his book open to a page:

An illustration of the same massive wolf, recovering from its wounds in a den far underneath the five turning hunters.

Behind it is the missing torn page, detailing a general map of the area on the next page with a particular grove near the outskirts circled.

INT. OLD HOTEL - EVENING

Tave KNOCKS at the door. Cass watches her fingers begin to change as the sun goes down.

CASS

Tave? Come in.

She grimaces as Tave enters and she begins to change. Tave sees the fur growing and looks a little apprehensive.

TAVE

I, er... I figured that was you.

Cass smiles wearily.

CASS

Of course you did. I wouldn't expect anything less from a truth-seeker.

She grits her teeth as the tail grows out. She undoes the button flap sewn on the back of her jeans.

Cass begins to pant from the heat.

CASS

Need something more comfortable...

She stumbles into the bathroom and shuts the door.

TAVE

At any rate, I am very glad you are not dog food.

Cass LAUGHS, though it comes out more as a bark.

CASS (O.S.)

You and me both. Gosh, what an awful pedigree.

Tave smiles at her pun.

CASS (O.S.)

Find anything out on... on them?

Tave looks at the news reports she's laid out on the table.

TAVE

What the sheriff said was true - there haven't been any reported killings beside...

He bites off the ending.

CASS (O.S.)

...from Fitz's son. I figured.

She reenters wearing unaltered shorts, her tail sticking up over the waistband. She scratches behind her ear.

CASS

We can't choose where we come from, but we can choose where we're going.

Tave LAUGHS, amused. He relaxes.

TAVE

That does not sound like you.

Cass sniffs, smiling a little.

CASS

Mindfulness app. Sheriff's got me reading.

She notices her tail's wagging.

CASS

How can I ever get used to this?

TAVE

You're a reporter. You will.

CASS

Heh. Gotta clean out the apartment. Can't exactly go to any black ties looking like I came from The Howling.

Tave LAUGHS, grinning.

TAVE

At least you look *better*. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that nothing can stop Cass Winters.

Cass gives him the missing page. His face becomes serious for a moment.

CASS

Looks like somewhere we both know?

TAVE

Yes, it does. I have a proposition.

She tilts her head. He LAUGHS again.

INT. DINER - DAY

Cass, human, slips into the booth opposite Hogan as he eats. He looks at her, incredulous, but puts a smile up on his face.

HOGAN

You got something, don't you?

Cass smiles, silent. Hogan shrugs and gestures to her.

HOGAN
Well? Let's hear it.

CASS
Where did my father come from?

Hogan scratches his chin, eyes widening a touch.

HOGAN
Doc found him as a pup. Don't know
where he came from, but... it's not
rare for families to... get
overwhelmed here.

Cass drums her fingers on the table.

CASS
And you?

He blinks a few times, knowing.

HOGAN
S'cuse me?

CASS
You're a Winters, too. That's why
you've been looking out for me.

She waits a moment for his response, but it doesn't come.
Impatient, she huffs and leaves.

When she's gone, he hangs his head, grimacing.

HOGAN
I've spent so many years trying to
atone for that awful family.

CUT TO:

I/E. FITZ'S HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A teenage Hogan watches from the window as Laurence and Darla
escape into the night.

Another boy, Adler, glares in their direction from the upper
window.

BACK TO PRESENT.

EXT. PARITY - EVENING

Cass, now a wolf, pulls up near the welcome sign. The formation of trees matches the map. Tave's truck, with floodlights, off-road tires, a tow hitch, and an armored bumper, is parked nearby.

EXT. PARITY WOODS

A faint HOWL perks her ears up. She stares out into the woods.

On her second pass, she glimpses the wolf from earlier.

CASS

Dad?

He runs away, clearly leading her somewhere. She chases him, half running as a human and half on all fours as a wolf.

She pursues him into a grove. Fog descends, muffling both her vision and hearing.

She stops, still, ears twisting, nose twitching.

CASS

Okay. Where are you...?

Cass closes her eyes and sniffs, slowly closing in on one scent trail. She picks her way toward it.

EXT. SECRET GROVE

The sound of ROARING WATER pushes over the fog. Cass opens her eyes.

A waterfall pours into a rocky oasis, leading into the stream that eventually winds through town.

A massive wolf skeleton is imbedded in a small cove behind the waterfall. The Pastor's cross is laid on the rock.

CASS

The source?

LAURENCE (O.C.)

Of a curse... or a blessing?

She glimpses Laurence out of the corner of her eye and turns to face him.

It's still the wolf. Cass approaches, hesitant.

CASS
Are you...?

He gazes at her lovingly.

CASS
Dad, what... was it really her
that...?

He nods and smiles sadly at her.

LAURENCE
I've never seen you lost for words,
Cassie.

She throws her arms around him, tears dripping down her face.

For a moment, they're both human.

LAURENCE
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry I couldn't
be there for-

The sun sets.

Her arms fall, holding the air in front of her. He's gone.
She stares at them for a long moment. They begin to tremble.

CASS
No. No.

Fur sprouts over her arms. She becomes a wolf again.

Cass looks around frantically for him.

CASS
No. Don't leave me again!

She takes a deep breath.

Cass raises her head to the sky and HOWLS.

INT. DINER

Hogan hears the faint howl and perks up, smiling a little.

INT. HOMESTEAD

Doc, Em, and the pups all perk their ears up.

EXT. PARITY WOODS

Tave looks in the direction of the howl.

TAVE

Cassidy?

I/E. FITZ'S HOUSE

Adler's black SUV sits outside Fitz's house. Adler winces at the howl as he hurriedly destroys documents in the fireplace. Tave's tripod camera on auto videos him from outside the window.

Adler sets the place ablaze and leaves.

EXT. PARITY WOODS

Cass, still a wolf, waits for Tave on the overturned log. She looks sad, pensive. He arrives and takes an extra moment to look her over. Her tail thumps the log as she watches him, amused.

CASS

Heh. I finally fit in with everyone else.

TAVE

(laughing)

I'd recognize that look anywhere.

She scoffs, patting the seat next to her. He takes it.

CASS

What look? Exhausted, depressed, and dog-faced?

TAVE

Yes, but also determined. You saved a life. Shouldn't that count for something?

He pulls out his camera and shows her the video of Adler destroying the incriminating documents. The resolution's just decent enough to make out the financial ledgers.

Cass perks up, grinning.

CASS

You're the lifesaver, Tave.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Hogan guzzles coffee across from Cass, still a wolf. He notices her tail's wagging as she tears into a plate of Em's pumpkin pie.

HOGAN

I reckon you found what you're looking for?

Cass sighs, conflicted. She pulls out the photo and puts it on the table. Hogan stiffens.

HOGAN

You got that from Fitz's?

CASS

Why is Adler in this picture, holding the pups?

Hogan grimaces, scratching his chin.

HOGAN

He was... is my brother. Left when he was a teen. Him and Fitz didn't get along. Got his sister... you know... and ran off.

Cass stares, aghast.

CASS

You mean... he's my real...

HOGAN

(shaking his head)

No, no, no. The twins are his. Your mom and dad were dating at the time.

Cass looks somewhat relieved.

HOGAN

Your dad stepped up and took your mom away after the twins were born.

Cass searches his expression.

CASS

Why not take them?

HOGAN

Fitz forced them out and threatened to kill the pups.

(MORE)

HOGAN (CONT'D)

Adler said he'd look after them.
But he scarpered right after they
left.

He sighs.

HOGAN

Darla always looked for Fitz's
approval, but he only ever saw her
as a breeder.

Cass gets up.

CASS

(sadly)

Thanks.

INT. HOMESTEAD - CONTINUOUS

Cass runs in, covered in sweat. Em's pups run over to her,
curious. Em watches them, surprised to see her.

EM

You look like you've seen a ghost.

Cass catches her breath and tries to regain her composure.

CASS

Is... is Tave here?

Tave gets up from the couch as Lily, face caught mid-giggle,
turns to look over the back. Cass's face blanches.

TAVE

Cass?

Cass looks embarrassed.

CASS

Er... I'll... come back later.

EM

Wait-

Cass runs out.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE

Cass, still a wolf, stares at the grave out on the island.
Tave runs after her.

TAVE

Hey.

Cass looks at his reflection as he stops next to her. Tears slip down her cheeks. He stands in silence, watching her as she breaks down.

CASS

You don't know what I did to get that scoop on him.

Tave hugs her.

CASS

God, I'm no better than Fitz.

TAVE

You didn't know.

She leans into his shoulder, crying.

INT. DINER - THE NEXT DAY

Cass, human, enters and sits down across from Hogan, whose files and paperwork are spread over the table next to an empty plate.

Hogan sighs, annoyed but also proud, and slides a photo away from her.

CASS

I hear you found Fitz's body.

HOGAN

Yeah. Piled in the basement freezer along with... others.

She grimaces.

HOGAN

No article? Not even Adler?

Cass forces a smile at him.

CASS

No, Adler would bring too much attention to Parity. I can always get him on misappropriation of campaign funds.

HOGAN

Heh. Should call you a newshound.

He GUFFAWS. She smiles, less enthused.

HOGAN

If yer ever drifting by, just
remember yer welcome here.

Hogan gets up.

HOGAN

I should be going anyway. Gotta
file a missing persons. Apparently,
Pastor just... disappeared.

INT. NEW YORK DAILY HQ - DAY

Ex-coworkers stare as Cass, human, walks past to the Editor's
office.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE

Dawson's digging in his file cabinet. Financial papers are
scattered on his desk. It's a mess.

DAWSON

Come in.

Cass slaps a paper down. The Times, with her article as the
headline story: NEWSPAPER CORRUPTION EXPOSED.

She smirks and leaves. Dawson stammers.

DAWSON

Winters!

Cass sports a wide smile as she walks out.

EXT. ELECTION RALLY - DAY

Adler ascends the stage to many BOOS. The reporters smell
blood in the water.

REPORTER

Is it true you funded the New York
Daily in exchange for good press?

He sweats... then notices fur sprout from his fingers. He
hurries out of there and hides them in his pockets, running
out on his sponsors.

EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - DAY

Cass brings one last box out to Tave's truck. Tave grins at her.

TAVE

Are you sure that's the last one?

Cass loads it in the back and gets in.

CASS

Yep.

She smiles at him as they drive off.

TAVE

National Geographic called you?

CASS

Us. They want both of us. Moth-man sighting in Virginia. They want us to figure out if it's for real.

He looks at her, stunned. She grins.

CASS

We start Monday. Remote.

Tave cocks his head at her expression.

TAVE

Wait... what did you send them?

She smiles at him.

EXT. PARITY SQUARE - AFTERNOON

Cass and Tave arrive as a wedding reception is in full swing.

They see Brent and Lily formally dressed as groom and bride, chatting. A small pup runs around their feet, LAUGHING. Tave grins and peels off to congratulate them.

INT. DINER - EVENING

Cass spies Doc and Em and sidles into a seat next to them.

DOC

Cassidy. I reckon everything's turned out for you?

She smiles and notices Em rubbing her belly.

CASS

Nat Geo. We start tomorrow. How are the pups?

EM

Running us ragged. With the hotel shut down, thankfully Ms. Blanc started a babysitting service.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. HOMESTEAD

The six pups CHANTING and circling an unamused, tied-up Hostess. She gives each one a death glare.

EXT. PARITY WOODS - NIGHT

There's a tent set up in the woods.

INT. TENT

Through Tave's tripod camera, we see:

Tave adjusts the camera to face him.

TAVE

Parity has long been said to be home to all manner of creatures: Bigfoot, moth-men, mole-men-

He smiles at the camera. Cass lingers just off-frame, human, but wearing multiple silver rings - and nervous.

TAVE

-and wolf-men. Feeding into this mythos is the yearly harvest festival, a celebration of fertile land and plentiful livestock.

He opens the small book to the first page of the werewolf myth.

TAVE

Local legend suggests that on the eve of the winter solstice, the population transforms into lupine form for a wild night.

Cass ducks her head into the tent.

CASS

Unfortunately, there's no evidence to support that. Rather, this is Parity... a small town in upstate New York, with a fascinating secret: the population is entirely composed of wolf-loving furies. At any given time, folk will be out and about their business in very convincing fur-suits.

She winks at him. Tave smiles up at Cass.

TAVE

Sadly, these "werewolves" are one myth we may consider to be "busted".

(lower)

Maybe we should cut that one out, we might get sued.

Cass genuinely LAUGHS. Tave continues rolling.

TAVE

Today I have someone for you to meet. She is a dear friend who helped me grow my channel, and I'd like to do something for her.

Cass looks genuinely surprised – and a bit confused.

TAVE

Cassidy?

Cass fully enters in frame. Her pupils shine back the light from the lantern like a wolf's.

CASS

Um... Tave, this isn't what we practiced...

He grins broadly. She's catching on.

TAVE

I know. You have done a few shorts with me. The channel's doing well, and I think it's time to bring you on-board.

Cass blinks, not entirely surprised. Then she smiles.

EXT. PARITY SQUARE - NIGHT

Cass walks through the bustling square. Tourists mingle with the werewolves, regarding them as an interesting spectacle rather than monsters...

Hogan smiles and pats Cass on the shoulder as he passes. She sighs but smiles.

CASS

Is there anything you don't know?

He smiles at the tourists taking photos with transformed townsfolk, as if with mascot characters.

HOGAN

Not likely, miss. 'preciate yer efforts to bring in the tourists. It helps.

He takes her hand and places the silver bracelet in her palm. She's stunned.

The sun sets. Hogan fires the gun. The Parity folk raise their heads to the sky and HOWL. Several duck indoors to transform.

Tave mimics the howl as a human, much to Cass' and Lily's amusement. The tourists eat it all up.

Cass glimpses Laurence in the woods. He raises his head and joins the howl.

Cass puts the silver bracelet on.

FADE OUT.