

NATURAL SELECTION

FEATURE FILM

Written by

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EXT. FAR NORTH FOREST - MORNING

As if on an eagle's wings we glide over a remote, densely packed forest which makes you believe the earth still has endless wilderness.

Swoop down to follow a long, winding, rocky stream that sings far north. Wisps of condensation sit over the stream waiting for the morning sun to chase them away.

Zero in on a rugged, tidy campsite tucked up against the forest, a stone's throw to the stream. The campsite includes a sitting log next to a small fire pit and a lean-to shelter built from thin trees and branches.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - MORNING

Settle on RACHEL CARSON, early 40's, a Microbiologist who is much better with animals than people, sitting cross-legged on the sitting log with her eyes shut.

Strong and lean, Rachel has a layer of forest dirt in all her skin crevices. Her flannel and quick-dry camping pants ride that fine line between worn in and worn out. A silver pendant with the message 'Be Yourself' hangs from her neck. Tears escape from her closed eyes, running down her cheeks.

Rachel opens her eyes, takes in a deep breath and exhales, wiping the tears from her cheeks.

She stretches and pulls on her hiking boots.

Sitting beside her on the log are a knife in a sheath, a satellite phone with a belt clip, a fire-starting round glass, a solar charger and a Go-Pro video camera.

She grabs the knife and notches a cross line over four straight lines. We see eight of these for a total of forty notches.

Rachel grabs the camera and holds it up to record her face, wiping her eyes again and over-smiling.

RACHEL

The sun is out and it's already warmer than yesterday. Really missing my dog, Herschel, today. She would just love it here. But I would have a hard time keeping her out of the stream. Heading down there now for some sustenance.

Rachel turns off the camera, stands, clips the satellite phone on her pants' waistband, and straps the knife around her thigh.

She carries the camera with her as she heads toward the stream.

EXT. STREAM - MORNING

Rachel makes her way down to the edge of a rocky stream singing softly as she goes, as if convincing herself of the lyrics.

RACHEL

"Blackbird singing in the dead of night. Take these broken wings and learn to fly. All your life, you were only waiting for this moment to arise."

Near the stream, she sets up the camera pointing towards the water and presses record, continuing to hum the song the whole time.

A mama deer feeds in a shallow bend of the stream on underwater plants and gazes up at Rachel as she sits to take off her boots. Unfazed, the doe continues feeding.

Rachel walks barefoot into the water, her feet rocking slightly on the stone base of the stream. As she nears the doe, she pulls the knife from the sheath strapped to her leg.

The doe looks at Rachel and chews.

Ten feet before she reaches the doe, Rachel reaches into the water and fishes around, her arm reaching deeper until her sleeve is also underwater. She slices some underwater plants with the knife, and yanks them out of the water.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Thanks for sharing, mama.

The doe's fawn appears behind her mama looking at Rachel. The mama makes a small noise and the fawn goes back to searching for food.

Rachel shakes the water off the plants and her arm and makes her way back to her boots.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - MORNING

Rachel lifts a cast iron pan from the fire and pours some cooked mushrooms into the plant leaves she collected in the stream. She folds the leaves over and takes a bite of her wilderness delicacy.

Her flannel shirt sits next to the fire, drying, while Rachel sits in her t-shirt.

Healed burn scars runs the full length of her right forearm and disappear up the sleeve of her t-shirt.

Rachel breaths deep and turns on the video camera which is now attached to the satellite phone. She waits a moment until a voice cuts through the silence.

MARIA

Hi Rachel, we're ready to upload yesterday's footage.

Rachel hits a key.

RACHEL

Sending now. I heard some gun shots yesterday. Any idea why?

MARIA

Did you? It's impossible to cordon off a whole forest. Could be campers or people from Armstrong.

RACHEL

Sure.

MARIA

We have an agreement with the Mayor to stay away from competitor zones. I'll get Gabriele to get in touch. You ready for today's summary vlog?

RACHEL

Ready, ready.

MARIA

Survival of the Fittest Competition, Day 40. Contestant Rachel Carson. Go ahead.

RACHEL

Beautiful day here today. I've seen the doe and her fawn again.

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's one of the most beautiful things to see a mama and their baby communicating. Deer can communicate through visual cues, vocal sounds or even through a scent they emit. Also extraordinary is their symbiotic relationship with bats...

INT. TV STUDIO - EVENING

Morph from the video diary recording to seeing it play on a screen on the sports inspired set of the reality TV show "Survival of the Fittest".

The HOST, wears a suit and a slick hair-doo and calls the TV show like he's a sports commentator doing a play-by-play analysis.

He watches the monitor next to him at the desk.

RACHEL

...where the bats know that deer attract large flies, and they can efficiently feed through finding a deer to follow. Most research focusses on predator-prey relationships, but we could learn more about how we should behave by focussing on mutually beneficial symbiotic relationships.

The Host fakes falling asleep and wakes himself with a snore.

HOST

Just kidding! I always learn something from Biologist Rachel Carson's vlogs. You come to be entertained, and you leave educated.

A graphic appears on the screen called 'Online poll results', showing three names. JAMES DOUGLAS in first place, SANTIAGO CAJAL in second and Rachel Carson in a distant third.

HOST (CONT'D)

A few recent tweets sum up certain of the audience's feelings towards our remaining competitors.

A tweet appears on the screen next to the Host.

HOST (CONT'D)

From BurgerBro: No way a vegan can win this. Check Rachel's backpack for beef jerky.

And another appears.

HOST (CONT'D)

From NFLAddict: My money is on James Douglas, literally. I have his rookie card from when he played for the Miami Dolphins.

And another.

HOST (CONT'D)

And finally from SoccerMomster: If Rachel's so into COOPERATION then why did she enter a COMPETITION??

The camera focuses on the host.

HOST (CONT'D)

As the first real-time survival show, we love your 'in the moment' reactions. Remember you can still follow our competitors on our social media accounts over the weekend. Let's end the week for Rachel with a lovely message from her army veteran husband, Alex Skene.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Rachel's husband, ALEX SKENE, 40's, weary as Atlas holding up the sky, stands on the front lawn of their house, microphone clipped to his collar.

ALEX

There's no one more capable than Rachel of making her way in the wilderness. She's the kind of person who runs towards things, not away from them. And once she decides to do something, she's all in.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Pull back from the show to see Alex sitting on his couch with his dog watching it on TV.

One hand is over the dog Herschel, and the other holds a beer.

ALEX

Except when it comes to me. Right, girl? Except when it comes to me.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - EVENING

The poll still displayed on the screen behind the Host: James first, Santiago second and Rachel third.

HOST

As we all know, the polls don't have any bearing on the outcome of this contest. The contestants themselves determine their own destiny. At Day 40, these three have already outlasted seven other competitors in the wilderness.

The Host looks to another camera.

HOST (CONT'D)

Let's hear the daily vlog from James Douglas. It's no surprise a former NFL player has made it to the final three spots given the competitiveness it takes to be a professional athlete.

EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - DAY

JAMES DOUGLAS, 30's, linebacker physique, who entered the contest as a PR move and not because he's comfortable roughing it, sits in his campsite nested in an enclave of tall trees.

His delivery is lively and upbeat.

JAMES

Today is one of the most glorious days I've had, because yesterday I found a rabbit warren and I'm set for days now.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm continuing my workout regime which is keeping me super strong. I sure miss my wife and my children, but otherwise I'm good out here don't see any reason why I won't outlast whoever is left. This is James Douglas, signing off. Talk at you again tomorrow.

James ends with a salute sign-off.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - EVENING

James is in the same place as his vlog except the light has changed from day to evening. It's as if he hasn't moved all day.

He's reading a book, looking very relaxed in a camping chair with a small tent behind him.

He's just a little too comfortable for forty days in the woods.

A prolonged flash in the sky catches James's attention.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - EVENING

The prolonged flash lights up the sky behind Rachel who pokes at the embers of her dying fire.

She twists quickly to see where the flash was and reacts to a loud thud.

RACHEL

Ooh, that's big one.

She adjusts the tarp over her lean-to to make sure it's covering everything.

Rachel stares into the fire embers, as she grasps her necklace in her hand and squeezes it tight.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Rachel enters the kitchen to see a dirty pan on the stove and dishes stacked in the sink.

Her daughter, JANE, 16, sits on a stool at the kitchen island, buried in her phone.

The pendant Rachel wears dangles from Jane's neck.

RACHEL
You are planning on cleaning up,
right?

JANE
I'll do it later.

RACHEL
Why not just do it now?

JANE
I don't feel like it.

Rachel reacts.

RACHEL
Look, I'm sorry, I won't let you
drive to New York City on your own.
You're still too young.

JANE
Mom, stop. I'm not a kid anymore.

RACHEL
Then stop acting like a kid. Get
off your phone and do something
with your time.

Jane gets up and walks past Rachel, while still looking at her phone. She walks through the basement door and slams it closed.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Don't stay down there all night!!

Rachel sinks, regretting all she's said.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - EVENING

Rachel buries her head in her hands, rocking gently on the log.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - MORNING

Rachel emerges from her lean-to with her knife and satellite phone in hand, and boots under her arm.

When she checks the tarp for moisture, it is completely dry. Odd.

She sits on the log to put on her boots and then etches another line in her day count.

She gets up, and straps the knife to her leg and the satellite phone to her belt.

She sets out down to the stream with her camera in hand.

EXT. STREAM - MORNING

A tin can floats down the stream towards Rachel as she washes her face in the water. Rachel darts towards it and grabs it. She looks upstream, shakes her head.

She makes her way back to her propped up camera and speaks directly in it.

RACHEL

This is about the twentieth piece of garbage I've pulled from the stream since I've been here. Out of sight, out of mind, is not a solution. We must take better care of the earth.

As she gets up, she throws the tin can on a pile of other items she has fished out of the stream and placed all together.

She grabs the camera, films the pile and we see it's mostly tins, even a metal garbage can lid.

As she walks back to her campsite Rachel sings softly to herself.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

"Don't it always seem to go, that you don't what you've got 'til it's gone. Pave paradise, put up a parking lot."

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - MORNING

Rachel looks into the camera attached the satellite phone and a voice speaks to her.

MARIA
Good morning Rachel!

RACHEL
Maria, when do you get a day off?

MARIA
You don't get one.

RACHEL
Yeah, but I signed up for this.

MARIA
So did I. Are you ready to record?

RACHEL
Sure.

MARIA
Survival of the Fittest
Competition, Day 41. Contestant
Rachel Carson. Go ahead.

RACHEL
Today is Day 41. Which is perfect
because it's my 41st birthday. A
champagne mushroom birthday of
sorts. I'm hoping to find some
morel mushrooms to celebrate.
Morels only exist in wooded areas,
and are loaded with iron, tons of
vitamins, protein and antioxidants.
And good fibre for your microbiome.
As perfect a food as there ever
was. Happy birthday to me.

Rachel smiles for a reasonable amount of time and then drops her face

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You've got it?

MARIA
Sure do.

RACHEL
Thanks.

Rachel clicks off the camera and sighs deeply. She detaches the phone from the camera and sets the phone on the log. She doesn't notice when it slips to the ground.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Rachel moves effortlessly through the forest wearing a small backpack, and stops at a cluster of mushrooms growing next to a log.

RACHEL

A-ha.

She pulls out her GoPro out of her pocket and focuses on the ground.

RACHEL (V.O.)

The best thing to do when you find a cluster of mushrooms is to harvest the mature ones and leave the smaller ones to grow for you to harvest next time.

Rachel turns off the camera and clips it back on her backpack.

She crouches down to harvest the larger mushrooms into a small cloth, when she hears a twig snap in front of her.

She looks up and straight into the eyes of a cougar, twenty feet away from her.

Rachel reaches her hand back towards the knife on her leg, and past it to a soda can in the side pocket of her backpack.

She yanks out the tin and starts shaking it madly. Full of small stones, the can rattles loudly and startles the cougar, who retreats back into the forest.

Rachel exhales her relief and turns around, bumping right into a lanky, Indigenous boy in his late teens, BILLY, whose huge smile rides the line between innocent and sinister.

BILLY

Hi.

Rachel stumbles backwards, surprised, her arm raising the can of stones reflexively.

RACHEL

Ahh. What are you doing here??

BILLY
 Sorry. I didn't mean to surprise
 you, I was tracking that mama
 cougar.

The Biologist in Rachel takes over.

RACHEL
 It's late for her to not have
 birthed her litter yet.

BILLY
 I guess her kittens are reluctant!

RACHEL
 How far have you tracked her?

BILLY
 About 20 kilometers. So far.

RACHEL
 I've seen her fresh prints every 7
 or 8 days, I'm thinking that makes
 her circle about...

BILLY
 80 kilometers.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 80 kilometers.

Rachel thrusts out her hand.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Hi. I'm...

Billy's hand meets Rachel's.

BILLY
 Rachel Carson. Biologist.

RACHEL
 How did you know that?

BILLY
 I've seen the show. I'm Billy.

RACHEL
 What are you doing out here in my
 zone?

Billy looks at Rachel, incredulous.

BILLY
 Your 'zone' is in Anishinabe
 Territory. As is everyone's.

RACHEL
Sorry, that was insensitive of me
to say.

Billy shrugs as if he's heard it before. He pulls two
chocolate bars out of his pocket and offers one to Rachel.

BILLY
You want this?

Rachel looks at him dumbfounded.

RACHEL
If you've seen the show, you know I
can't take that.

BILLY
Who would know?

RACHEL
I would.

He puts one chocolate bar back in his pocket, opens the other
and takes a bite.

BILLY
Are you not scared out here alone?

RACHEL
I love it. It's so peaceful.

BILLY
Did you know some hikers went
missing last year around this time?

RACHEL
What do you mean 'missing'?

BILLY
All their stuff was here but they
vanished. Poof!

RACHEL
Bear?

Billy shrugs.

BILLY
Nobody knows.

Billy studies Rachel's face for a moment.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Have you seen any deer?

Rachel eyes the large hunting knife strapped to his belt and shakes her head.

RACHEL
Not lately, no.

Billy nods and turns to go. As he's leaving, he turns back.

BILLY
No one thought you would last this long.

Billy disappears into the forest as quickly as he appeared.

RACHEL
I did!

Rachel waits for a reaction and gets none.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel continues foraging deeper into the forest when she comes upon a clearing where she spots a doe standing in a stream of sunlight, not moving. It seems to be looking straight at her.

Looking around for Billy, she tries to startle it away by waving her arms, but it doesn't move. At all.

Rachel moves closer, still waving her arms, encouraging the doe to escape into the cover of the forest.

RACHEL
What is wrong with you? Get moving!
There's a hunter nearby!

As Rachel approaches the deer, it's eyes dart from side to side but it's body is stiff, unmoving, like a taxidermy statue. So strange.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel is ten feet from the deer when she sees two raccoons next to the deer, standing, but immobile just like the deer.

Then, one lynx and two red squirrels.

They all have what looks like an IV tube hooked up to them, which runs behind them attached to a central tank the size of a generator.

Other tubes connected to the tank lay next to the animals. Orderly. Awaiting.

Rachel stops, stunned.

RACHEL
What the hell is this?

Rachel hears a loud mechanical clicking noise getting louder and louder coming from the forest.

And then she sees it.

A three foot tall white metal, SPIDER-LIKE ROBOT with eight multi-colored legs, crawls into the clearing at a steady, slow pace.

Click, click, click, a rhythmic, menacing sound.

Behind it, a net-like metal sac drags a fox along the ground. The fox yips, tumbles and bites at the net.

Rachel stands immobilized by fear. The beating of her heart thunders in her ears.

The Spider-Bot stops next to the paralyzed lynx, ten feet from her.

The yellow leg lifts, a small round protrusion comes out the end and the leg scans the fox from top to bottom. A screen on the side panel, shows an image of a square.

The blue leg lifts and a needle protrudes out the bottom. The flanges are flush to the metal needle encasement. The spider-bot jabs the spiked needle into the side of the fox which yelps in distress, then stops moving.

The green leg then touches the net which opens. Each leg moves up and down like a carefully choreographed dance routine, whirring as it does.

Rachel watches wide-eyed, her only movement is a bead of sweat running down her forehead, into her eye.

The Spider-Bot's blue leg attaches the tube that sits on the ground into the needle on the side of the fox.

Then it positions the fox next to the lynx, standing it on its feet. The fox remains still, except for its eyes which dart in all directions, just like the deer's.

As the Spider-Bot turns and walks steadily back towards the forest, the net that was dragging behind it, retreats back into the spider body through a small trap door.

Rachel takes the entire scene in. All the animals organized in ascending size. Standing next to the deer, Rachel looks like she could be next in line.

As it disappears, Rachel finally gulps for air. Once the sound has diminished to nothing, Rachel tip-toes softly to the edge of the clearing where she entered.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST CLEARING - DAY

The click, click of the Spider-Bot returning, sends a chill through Rachel. She ducks behind a tree, shielding herself from view, and from viewing what the Spider-Bot is doing.

As she presses her back against the tree, she hears the sound of an animal struggling in the net, growling. Then she hears the piercing sound of it in distress, much like the fox when the barbed needle was inserted.

Rachel winces when she hears it, her heart aching for the pain that has been inflicted.

She reaches down to her belt, searching for her satellite phone that is always there, but it's missing. WTF.

She turns to see the Spider-Bot leave the clearing once more, retracting the net that has towed in its latest captive.

Prepared to regret what she is about to do, but unable not to, Rachel peels herself off the tree and turns back to the clearing.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel tentatively approaches the menagerie that now includes a wolverine, and focusses on the mama deer. She tugs at the tube that is inserted into its side.

The flanges on the metal needle, have opened in the deer flesh, making it hard to pull out.

Rachel pulls a little more firmly and then with a swift move yanks the IV out, resulting in a huge gaping hole in the deer's side. The hole oozes blood.

RACHEL

No!

Rachel presses a hand against the wound unsuccessfully trying to stop the bleeding, which gushes out from under her hand. She's visibly gutted by the mess she has made of the rescue.

The canister the tubes are attached to starts to beep.

Rachel hears the click, click, click of the Spider-Bot getting louder and louder.

The Spider-Bot enters the clearing.

Rachel releases her hand from the doe's side and quietly retreats behind a tree. She wipes the blood onto her pant leg.

Reaching her pocket, she grabs the GoPro, raises it and turns it on. She leans out from behind the tree and presses record to capture the Spider-Bot returning to the clearing.

Rachel watches in complete horror, shaking as she tries to continue filming as the Spider-Bot once again uses its blue leg to insert a needle into the open wound of the doe and re-attach the IV tube to it.

As the Spider-Bot turns to leave, Rachel moves quickly around the outside of the clearing.

She stumbles on a small pile of rocks, trips and catches herself before she falls.

The Spider-Bot spins to face her.

A rear red leg raises up from the Spider-Bot and points in her direction, scanning. A piercing beeping increases in frequency as it lasers in on her, a green light marking the success of the laser.

Unable to risk keeping still, Rachel bolts, running as fast as she can.

As Rachel runs, the Spider-Bot's leg tracks her.

The beeping turns into steady tone, when it locks on her and then it emits a large electric pulse.

The pulse hits Rachel and she thuds to the ground, legs in mid-stride.

The side-panel of the Spider-Bot opens and the metal net shoots out in Rachel's direction, snagging on a branch in front of her, blocking it from landing over her.

Her breathing rapid, she stumbles up to her feet and continues running with difficulty, as she struggles to make her legs move properly.

As she disappears from view, the Spider-Bot clicks its way after her, retracting its net.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Rachel hobbles into her campsite. She frantically searches for the satellite phone.

She hears the methodical clinking march of the Spider-Bot marching out of the forest after her.

RACHEL
Shit. Shit. Shit.

Rachel spies the satellite phone next to the log on the ground. She lunges for it and picks it up.

The Spider-Bot lifts its red leg, green laser light landing on Rachel, and another electric pulse.

The satellite phone light goes out and Rachel collapses to the ground next to the big log. She frantically presses the SOS button; nothing happens.

The Spider-Bot advances at a steady, slow speed. Click, click, click.

Its orange leg periscopes up, scanning.

Suddenly her pan handles and cutlery turn and align towards the Spider-Bot. Rachel watches the metal objects start to slide out of her campsite, towards the Spider-Bot.

Rachel takes a deep breath, grabs her courage and limps as fast as she can towards the stream.

EXT. STREAM - DAY

Rachel forges full force into the stream, and the Spider-Bot gets to her campsite just as she reaches the neck-deep middle of the stream.

Rachel turns to look back and stays as still as possible.

The Spider-Bot marches down to the edge of the stream.

The red leg scans, but it scans past her. The leg settles back on the ground. It does not enter the water.

Rachel watches the Spider-Bot turn and makes its way back into the forest.

EXT. STREAM FAR SIDE - DAY

Rachel emerges from the other side of the stream and runs as fast as she can into the forest.

INT. STORE - DAY

Alex enters a small grocery store and nods at the STORE OWNER who stands behind the counter.

STORE OWNER

Hey, Alex, how's Rachel doing in the show?

ALEX

You must be the only one around here not watching it. She's doing great. One of the last three competitors.

STORE OWNER

Are you worried about her out there?

ALEX

I try not to. Nothing I can do from here. Plus she looks good in the daily vlogs she does, so I think she's okay.

STORE OWNER

Well, maybe this is good for her. She's been through a lot. Let nature heal all wounds.

ALEX

Yeah. Maybe. Sure not the best thing for me though.

STORE OWNER

Of course! You too. I mean. Just thinking its always harder on the mother.

Alex cocks his head, looking at the Store Owner incredulously.

ALEX

Is that what people think? Really?

STORE OWNER

Sorry, Alex. I'm sorry.

Alex walks into one of the aisles leaving the Store Owner to watch him go.

EXT. DEEP FOREST - DAY

Rachel finally slows down in a deeply vegetated section of the forest.

As she paces to catch her breath, she repeatedly presses the button on the satellite phone, still clutched tightly in her hand. Nothing. It won't...

RACHEL

Come on!

She pulls the GoPro out of her pocket and presses the buttons. Nothing.

She stuffs everything in her backpack.

She pulls her journal out of the front pocket of her back pack along with a pencil and turns to the page with a hand-drawn map.

The map has ten circles all of them bordering a part of a wishbone stream. She orients the map to match where the stream is from her. Five of the circles have 'X's through them. Her circle has a double line around it. The others have question marks in them.

She places her finger in a circle with a question mark and looks off in that direction.

Then she picks herself up and heads off.

EXT. ABANDONED CAMPSITE - DAY

Rachel appears through the trees into a campsite with her map in hand.

The campsite is completely empty and cleaned up. They clearly pulled out of the competition.

RACHEL

Dammit!

She breathes deep, orients the map, pulls out her pencil and strikes the circle with an 'x'.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Rachel's hand drawn map morphs to a sophisticated graphics map on a computer monitor and it is surprisingly accurate.

Measurements on the side of the map indicate that each circle is ten kilometers across. The circle Rachel was just in, is filled in red.

Rachel's name is in the circle across the stream. James is across from Rachel's, further from the stream. Six other circles are red, and one other circle on the same side of the stream as Rachel has the name Santiago is in it.

Pull back to see the map is on the screen of Production Assistant, MARIA, 20's, clear-eyed and clear-headed.

They are clicking on an adjacent screen and see that Rachel's satellite phone signal has stopped transmitting.

Maria presses a reboot button and waits to see if the light comes on. It does not.

Maria jumps up from their desk and looks around the open concept office.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Maria approaches the desk of Producer, GABRIELE, 30's, the kind of guy who wears cargo shorts 365 days a year.

MARIA

Gabriele?

Gabriele doesn't look up from his computer.

GABRIELE

Can you *not* see I'm in the middle of something.

MARIA

Rachel's sat phone isn't sending a signal.

GABRIELE

Reboot it.

MARIA

I did.

GABRIELE

Do it again. I've had contestants turn their tracker off if they leave their zone.

MARIA

That doesn't seem like something she would do.

Gabriele glares at Maria.

GABRIELE

Look, I've been doing this for ten years, I've seen a lot of things you wouldn't expect to. So just go and reboot it. We'll send a new one tomorrow if it's not working then.

Maria rolls their eyes at the false suspicion and returns to their desk.

EXT. ABANDONED CAMPSITE #2 - EVENING

Rachel, wearing more sweat and fatigue, enters a small clearing full of anticipation.

No one is there.

RACHEL

Aww. C'mon.

Rachel sits with her back against a tree, exhausted, and absentmindedly clutching her pendant in her hand.

START FLASHBACK:

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Rachel paces while Alex stands sits on the couch, on trial.

RACHEL

Why didn't you look through the whole house? What were you thinking? That she had run away or something??

Alex struggles to defend himself.

ALEX

I don't know. I don't know. I looked in her bedroom.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I just grabbed you and ran. Next thing I know the two of us were outside. It's a blur.

RACHEL

But why didn't you go back in?

ALEX

They wouldn't let me back in.

RACHEL

Well, I didn't wait for permission. Did I?

Alex shakes his head.

ALEX

I'm sorry I saved you instead of Jane. Is that what you want me to say?

RACHEL

At least that would be honest.

Alex stares at Rachel in disbelief.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. ABANDONED CAMPSITE #2 - EVENING

Rachel's eyes stare vacantly into the forest as this memory washes over her.

She closes her eyes as she leans against the tree, but she shakes herself awake, gathers up her energy, gets up and soldiers on.

EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Rachel breaks through the edge of the forest and enters another campsite surrounded by trees.

She finds James sitting in a camping chair eating a chocolate bar in front of a fire. Behind him is a small tent.

She takes in this scene of relative luxury compared to her campsite.

RACHEL

You fit all this in your backpack??

James is so surprised to see her, he falls backwards out of his chair.

JAMES

What are you doing here? You'll get us both kicked out.

She looks at the chocolate bar, it's the same kind Billy offered her. No time for that now.

RACHEL

Did you see that big flash that looked like lightening last night?

JAMES

I guess, yes.

RACHEL

Something landed. It's a spider shaped alien robot that's tasering animals, trapping them in a net and then connecting them to some kind of paralytic fluid or something.

James stares at her, eyes blinking, trying to comprehend this cascade of crazy words.

JAMES

You're delirious because your brain is out of protein. Sit down.

Rachel holds in her reaction and speaks through gritted teeth.

RACHEL

Press your sat phone SOS and get the show to send in a rescue team.

JAMES

If I do that, I'm out and you'll probably disappear. What's wrong with yours?

RACHEL

The spider thing wrecked it.

JAMES

What?

RACHEL

It came after me and tasered me. Knocked me flat.

JAMES

This is crazy. Are you sure you didn't eat some mushrooms that you shouldn't have?

RACHEL

Morels don't have any psilocybin.

JAMES

Morels?

RACHEL

Call for help now!!

JAMES

I've got four kids. My family needs this prize money.

RACHEL

Aren't you a famous football player?

JAMES

Ex-player.

Rachel rifles through her backpack and pulls out her GoPro. She ejects the card.

RACHEL

Here, play this on your camera.

James takes it and puts it in his. He presses play. He stares and reacts.

JAMES

I see it!

Her turns the camera towards Rachel, her face drops when she sees the snow on the screen.

JAMES (CONT'D)

It's the abominable snowman!

Rachel steams.

RACHEL

(through gritted teeth)

Let me use your equipment to call out. It'll be on me.

JAMES

It's late. When they call for the morning check in, you can talk to them then.

Rachel stares daggers at James.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You need something to eat? I have some dried rabbit.

More daggers.

RACHEL

It's hare. Rabbits don't live this far north.

JAMES

Whatever.

RACHEL

I don't eat animals.

JAMES

I won't tell anyone.

RACHEL

Don't you have *any* principles?

JAMES

What do you mean?

She motions to the chocolate bar wrapper.

RACHEL

You've clearly met Billy. Did he bring you this chair, the tent?

JAMES

None of this is helping me in anyway. That matters.

RACHEL

So why do it?

JAMES

It's not hurting anyone.

Rachel looks around and sees James's hand darting for a cell phone sitting next to him.

RACHEL

Really?

JAMES

My mom went into the hospital right before I left. I just use it to check in with my brother to see how she's doing.

RACHEL

And not to see where you're at in the competition? Or call Billy for more chocolate bars?

James stares daggers back at Rachel.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Let me use it to call for help. I don't have to say we're from the show.

JAMES

It doesn't work here - you have to go up on the ridge. We'll tell the show in the morning when they call. Okay?

Rachel sighs deeply and nods. She's out of fight.

James turns away to tuck the cell phone in his backpack.

RACHEL

Do you have anything to eat besides hare?

JAMES

(smiling)

There she is, coming over to the dark side now.

He hands her the half-eaten chocolate bar which she reluctantly accepts.

RACHEL

Why did you sign up for this competition if you are so... uncomfortable in the woods?

JAMES

I need money and I'm not good at much.

RACHEL

That can't be true.

James shrugs.

JAMES

What about you?

RACHEL

I wanted some time alone.

JAMES
And you're not scared?

RACHEL
When you've got nothing, you've got
nothing to lose.

JAMES
Jesus. That's dark.

RACHEL
It's a long story.

James gets up to stoke the fire.

JAMES
We've got nothing but time out
here.

When he turns around Rachel is already asleep where she sits.
James shakes his head and watches Rachel sleeping.

EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE - MORNING

Rachel startles awake, wondering where she is.
She looks around the campsite; it's conspicuously empty.
James is gone, with the cell phone and all his equipment.

RACHEL
Motherfucker.

She finds a piece of paper next to her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
"I've gone to check on your alien.
Back soon."

Rachel rips the note in frustration.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Idiot!

EXT. RIDGE - MORNING

James has set up his camera and sat phone and waits for the
call.

He startles when he hears a voice.

MARIA

We're ready for you James.

JAMES

Hey Maria, I'm doing my vlog from the ridge this morning, I hope that's okay.

MARIA

Of course, anywhere in your zone is fine.

JAMES

Excellent.

MARIA

Can I ask you something before you start?

JAMES

Sure.

MARIA

I'm not supposed to tell you this but the satellite phone of one of our competitors isn't sending a signal and I'm concerned.

JAMES

Oh. Who is it?

MARIA

The site is across stream below where you are, due north.

JAMES

You know I saw campfire smoke from there this morning. I've noticed it from there before and it looks the same. I'm sure she's fine.

James reacts to his slip of saying 'she', like he's trying to pull it back into his mouth.

MARIA

That's a relief. Please don't mention to anyone that I asked. I'm sure I've violated some term of my employment with that.

James turns on the charm.

JAMES

It's between me and you, kid. Your heart is in the right place. Are we ready to record?

MARIA

Yes, pressing record now. Survival of the fittest, Day 42. Competitor James Douglas. Go ahead.

JAMES

Hi this is James Douglas, on day 42. The answer to Life, the Universe and Everything day. May we all get some answers today for whatever questions we may have!

James laughs, his infectious smile filling up the camera view.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Maria approaches Gabriele's desk.

MARIA

I have James and Santiago's daily vlog. Rachel didn't answer.

GABRIELE

What's the status of her sat phone?

Maria shakes their head.

MARIA

Still not sending a signal. It's been almost twenty hours. Are they waterproof?

GABRIELE

Bear proof, water proof. But not tamper proof. That's for sure.

MARIA

Why do you think she would tamper with it?

GABRIELE

I don't know. Her whole vegan animal lover thing is probably fake. She's slaughtered something and she doesn't want us to know.

Maria's head looks like it is about to spin.

MARIA
I'm confused.

GABRIELE
Listen, I have to go upstairs with this now. It's protocol. We'll send out a new equipment by drone. But in the meantime, get the editors to put together pieces we haven't used before in her vlog.

MARIA
Are we creating a... fake vlog?

GABRIELE
It's just a back up. We'll hear from her today. She's fine.

Maria nods and returns to their desk.

EXT. RIDGE - DAY

Rachel runs up onto the ridge, wearing her backpack, to find James gone, but his backpack resting there.

She paces, angry, kicks the backpack.

RACHEL
Ahh! Why is he so stupid!

She looks down over the stream, thinking.

Then she takes off again.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Maria works on their computer calling up vlog clips that reside in a folder called "Rachel Carson Boneyard".

Maria clicks on a clip called 'Animal testing'.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Rachel speaks to the camera.

RACHEL
We need to rethink lab testing on animals. Over ninety per cent of drugs tested to be safe and effective in animals, fail in human clinical trials.
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

And it's not just the drugs that fail, but the drugs that never made it to human clinical trials because they had some irrelevant side effects in animals. So we've likely missed out on many life saving, history altering medications. And damaged a lot of animals along the way.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Maria shakes their head.

MARIA

Is this true? How can we not know this?

Searches for another clip called "Horses".

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Rachel speaks to the camera.

RACHEL

Studies show that horses predominantly live in a state of calm and peaceful heart coherence. Not only that, but because our heart's electromagnetic fields are so much bigger than our bodies, we can actually be brought into synch with the horse's coherence just by being around them. That's why we feel so good around them.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Maria sighs.

MARIA

Rachel for President.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Rachel arrives at her campsite and sees a candy bar wrapper left next to her log.

RACHEL

Thanks, Hansel.

She looks toward the forest. Unsure of what awaits.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rachel follows the path she knows to the clearing.

She walks carefully, looking around her everywhere and stopping to listen along the way.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel sees James hiding out behind a tree. She shakes her head.

She approaches silently, folding in beside him.

RACHEL
So you believed me after all.

James startles.

JAMES
Jesus! I was coming back, you could have waited.

RACHEL
Have you seen it?

JAMES
I see the animals. Are you sure it's not just some crazy guy?

RACHEL
Some three foot tall guy in a spider-robot suit?

James shrugs.

JAMES
A robot sounds like government. I'm sure that's all it is. Some weird experiment.

Rachel hears a faint clicking.

RACHEL
Shh. Do you hear that?

James shakes his head.

JAMES
No.

The clicking loudens. Rachel puts her finger to her lips.

James listens and shakes his head again.

RACHEL
Seriously?

JAMES
I had a couple of concussions, my
hearing isn't one hundred per cent.

RACHEL
How did you survive out here so
long?

James rolls his eyes and looks at Rachel.

The Spider-Bot clicks into the clearing.

Rachel watches intently.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
It's back.

James's turns to see what Rachel sees and his eyes widen as he watches the Spider-Bot enter the clearing.

JAMES
(whispering)
What the hell?

RACHEL
(whispering)
I know.

He pulls the Go-Pro out of his pocket and starts filming.

A fox yips in the net dragging behind it.

Rachel and James watch as the yellow spider leg scans the fox in the net.

JAMES
(whispering)
What's it doing?

RACHEL
(whispering)
It inserts a needle which stuns the
animal and then connects it to the
IV tube. No idea what's in the
tube, but it paralyzes and stiffens
them. It's bizarre.

As they watch, the yellow leg scans the fox, a screen on the side of the spider bot shows an image of a square. Then the square starts flashing.

The green leg lifts and touches the net releasing the seam that holds it closed.

Then the indigo leg lifts up, and a blade slides out of it.

Like a guillotine falling, the Spider-Bot slices the head off the fox and tosses it to the side of the clearing, like garbage.

The Spider-Bot retreats back into the forest.

James recoils behind the tree.

JAMES

Jesus.

Rachel's hand covers her mouth.

RACHEL

Oh my god. That's brutal.

She heaves and throws up.

JAMES

Okay, let's go.

Rachel's torn.

RACHEL

We can't leave all these animals like this.

JAMES

They'll be fine.

RACHEL

You know they won't.

JAMES

Well...

RACHEL

I can't leave the doe, her fawn is out there somewhere, I've seen it.

JAMES

There are tons of deer in this forest.

RACHEL

I don't understand what it's doing.
Why it would keep some and not
others?

JAMES

We don't need to understand it, we
just need to go.

RACHEL

If you release them with me, I'll
forfeit and you'll have a better
chance of winning.

JAMES

You would do that for me?

RACHEL

I'm doing it for the animals.

James sighs deeply.

JAMES

What's your plan?

RACHEL

We'll cut the tubes, and once
whatever paralytic that's being
pumped into them stops, they'll be
able to leave. Unfortunately, with
the needle in their side, but at
least they have a chance.

JAMES

What if it comes back?

RACHEL

If it comes back while we're there,
freeze. I was ten feet from it and
it didn't come after me when I
froze. It was only when I ran that
it honed in on me.

JAMES

Maybe it's only after animals.

RACHEL

Don't kid yourself, we're just
another animal.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Gabriele stops by Maria's desk.

GABRIELE
Any contact from Rachel's phone?

Maria shakes their head.

MARIA
No.

GABRIELE
What about James and Santiago?

MARIA
Theirs are both working, but here's
the weird thing, James seems to be
in Rachel's zone.

Maria points to a signal on her computer.

GABRIELE
What? That makes no sense.

MARIA
Does this disqualify him?

Gabriele sighs.

GABRIELE
If he went to help, we might be
able to allow it.

MARIA
It's my fault.

Gabriele reacts.

GABRIELE
How is it *your* fault??

MARIA
I told him Rachel's phone wasn't
working. He probably went to see if
she was okay.

GABRIELE
I knew Rachel would cost us. She's
been a pain since the start.

Maria tolerates this comment, barely.

MARIA
What do we do now?

GABRIELE

Well, we know she's okay because James would have called it in if she's not.

Maria nods.

GABRIELE (CONT'D)

The replacement equipment should be on its way by drone way any minute. They can reset, we'll forget about it and we'll keep this contest going. Do you have the vlog ready?

MARIA

I do. Do you want to see it?

GABRIELE

No. Just release it.

Maria presses a button on her monitor.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Rachel speaks to the camera. She's wearing a red bandana around her neck.

RACHEL

Before organized religion, communities worshipped the earth. This beautiful planet that gives us so much and which we constantly abuse. What if instead of money driving all our decisions, what if it was our health? Our planet's health? We would choose different food, we would choose to create energy differently. That one shift in our frame of reference, would make an incredible difference to us, to everyone.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Alex sits on the couch and watches Rachel's vlog on his phone.

As he watches, his face contorts.

ALEX

What the fuck?

He jumps up and opens a drawer in the desk and grabs an envelope with the show logo on it and pulls out the papers inside.

He rifles through them until he finds one entitled "Contacts".

Alex dials.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel and James walk as swiftly and softly as possible to all the animals.

They use their knives to slice through each of the IV tubes as close to the animal as possible.

James cuts the tube connected to the lynx.

JAMES

This thing better not bite me.

RACHEL

It would be good if it did.

JAMES

What?

RACHEL

It means the paralytic wears off pretty fast so we don't have to wait too long for them all to run off.

JAMES

We are not waiting.

Rachel encourages the deer she has just freed to go, rubbing its side and trying to push it to the forest.

RACHEL

Go mama.

The alarm beeps on the canister.

James walks out into the clearing after finishing the last animal. He motions to Rachel.

JAMES

C'mon!

The Spider-Bot clicks its way back into the clearing.

Rachel freezes.

RACHEL
(whispering)
James! Stay still.

JAMES
Screw it.

James drops his knife, reaches behind his back as he turns to face the Spider-Bot head on. He pulls out a gun that was tucked in the back of his pants.

Rachel stares in disbelief.

James takes a shot. The orange legs flies off and lands a few feet from the spider.

James looks at Rachel smugly. He raises the gun again to take aim again.

Suddenly the orange leg, flies back into place, raises itself, and sends a magnetic wave that pulls the gun from James's hand.

Both James's knife and Rachel's knife are caught up in the magnetic pull and they fly towards the Spider-Bot.

A panel opens on top of the spider body and the weapons are deposited inside, rattling as they hit the edges.

The Spider-Bot advances on James.

RACHEL
(whispering)
Don't move!

This time James stays completely still.

When the Spider-Bot is within a foot of him, it spins and heads towards Rachel and the animals.

A panel opens, a violet leg pulls out IV tubing.

The Spider-Bot uses its legs to reposition the animals to their spots and replaces the IV tube.

Rachel hides behind the deer as the Spider-Bot repairs its tube. Finally the Spider-Bot crawls out of the clearing.

James looks at Rachel and nods for them to go.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST CLEARING - DAY

They make it to the edge without the Spider-Bot returning.
Rachel makes sure its gone before turning to James.

RACHEL
A gun?? What the fuck?

JAMES
Now we go.

RACHEL
Call for help. Please.

James reaches down to his satellite phone.

He presses the SOS button and nothing happens.

He pulls the satellite phone off his belt and looks at it.
The light is out.

JAMES
It's dead.

RACHEL
That's what happened to mine.
Please tell me you left the cell
phone in your backpack on the
ridge.

James pulls the cell phone out of his pocket.

JAMES
Dead.

RACHEL
Shit.

Rachel is lost in thought.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
There's one competitor left right?

JAMES
Yes, Santiago.

James's face drops.

RACHEL
So your mother isn't in the
hospital is she?

James shakes his head.

JAMES

Well, how do you know there's only one competitor left?

RACHEL

I counted the helicopters.

JAMES

Do you know how far we are from any civilization?

RACHEL

We're at least twenty-five kilometers to a town.

JAMES

If we go for help, they'll send in rescue.

RACHEL

Santiago's closer. He can call for help.

James sighs heavily, resigned to this mission.

JAMES

Any idea which way to go?

Rachel pulls out her journal and turns to the page of maps. She orients the maps and turns a quarter turn.

RACHEL

This way, probably fifteen kilometers.

JAMES

Lead the way.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Maria approaches Gabriele.

GABRIELE

Is this good news?

Maria shakes their head.

MARIA

James's sat phone isn't responding now either.

GABRIELE

What? What is going on in there? We need eyes on that forest.

MARIA

Also, I got a call from Alex Skene, Rachel's husband. Umm. He noticed that she was wearing her red bandana in today's vlog.

GABRIELE

So?

MARIA

She shredded that bandana into ties on Day 35 to strengthen her shelter.

GABRIELE

Jesus. What's he saying?

MARIA

I'm pretty sure he's coming up here.

GABRIELE

Great.

He walks away, leaving Maria standing alone.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rachel and James trek quietly through the trees.

They hear a wolf howl somewhere up ahead.

RACHEL

That used to be the eeriest sound.

JAMES

They seem like the least of our problems now.

RACHEL

That why you had the gun?

James shrugs.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Didn't give you any advantage then?

James shakes his head. Rachel continues to look at him.

JAMES

I uh, I can't kill something with my hands. I don't have it in me.

RACHEL

Neither do I. That's why I stopped eating them.

JAMES

Yeah...

Then Rachel stops in her tracks and swings her arm to stop James from walking.

Her POV: a spacecraft. The design reflects the shape of the spider in its flattened oval body and stands on eight retractable legs.

She exhales loudly.

RACHEL

Look.

JAMES

Jesus!

The side contains a door that is four feet tall and opens like a hatch.

RACHEL

That must be what that thing rode in on.

JAMES

I can't believe it.

RACHEL

You know Billy said some hikers disappeared last year.

JAMES

You're just telling me this now?

RACHEL

Maybe it makes an annual trip.

JAMES

Yeah, vacation on Earth. Bring home some souvenirs.

RACHEL

Let's see if we can disable the thing from inside its ship.

Rachel leads as they approach it.

She pokes her head in and motions to James to follow.

JAMES

I have a bad feeling about this.

Rachel shakes her head.

RACHEL

We can't just let it come to earth
and take whatever it wants.

JAMES

Wouldn't we do the same on its
planet?

Rachel looks at James, a little surprised by his revelation.

RACHEL

This might be the way to stop it.

INT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

Rachel and James crawl through the small door into the ship.

There's barely enough room for them to stand as they look at the console with a small digital screen counting numbers in reverse.

There's a section with pairs of vials, one with a circle etched in it and one with a square. One pair has liquid, some kind of substance in it and both are capped.

Mounted on the wall, a large needle. Rachel looks at the vials closely.

James looks around.

JAMES

There is no way it can fit all the
animals in here. Unless they are
sending a bigger ship.

Rachel examines the vials.

RACHEL

It's collecting haploid cells. Must
be getting them from every species.

JAMES

What?

RACHEL
Sex cells, sperm, eggs.

She touches the vials.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
They're warm.

She eyes the wires attached to these two vials with a little monitor with the number 340.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
If this number is Kelvin, then it's tailored the vial temperature to mimic the body temperature of a small mammal. Fox or raccoon maybe.

James looks at Rachel, taking this in.

James touches one of the dials on the console. A screen lights up.

It seems to show the earth with a circle indicating the geographical area they are in.

JAMES
Look at this.

RACHEL
It certainly knew where it was headed, or where it was when it got here.

JAMES
When is it going to stop?

RACHEL
It's been sent through space on a mission based on some incredible research. So it will go once it's done its mission or...

JAMES
Or what?

RACHEL
Or we interrupt its mission.

JAMES
How?

A sonic shudder rocks the spacecraft.

They both have to steady themselves not to fall.

JAMES (CONT'D)
What was that?

RACHEL
Could be an alarm.

JAMES
Shit.

RACHEL
Let's go.

EXT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

Rachel and James tumble out of the spacecraft looking around.

Next to the spacecraft Rachel sees the carcasses of two raccoons. It's clear the extraction is not done with concern for life.

Rachel and James listen for a moment, before continuing on.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

POV of Drone: approaching Rachel's campsite.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Gabriele and Maria watch over the shoulder of the DRONE OPERATOR guiding the drone under Gabriele's instructions.

GABRIELE
Okay, release the equipment.

The Drone Operator pushes a button.

DRONE OPERATOR
Done.

GABRIELE
Where are they?

MARIA
The last transmittal was north of her campsite.

Gabriele nods to the Drone Operator who redirects the drone.

POV of Drone: Flying over the forest approaching a slight clearing when suddenly the view goes black.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Gabriele stands hands on hips while the Drone Operator presses keys on the controller trying to get the camera back online.

Maria holds their breath, watching and willing for things to be alright.

GABRIELE

Explain! Explain what is happening.

DRONE OPERATOR

I don't know. Trying to reboot.

MARIA

Could it have been shot down?

DRONE OPERATOR

We would have seen it falling. It's like it stopped working mid-flight.

GABRIELE

Is this a malfunction?

DRONE OPERATOR

Could be. I don't know for sure.

Gabriele turns to Maria.

GABRIELE

Get another one out there. Now!

Maria turns and hustles out of there.

EXT. FOREST STREAM SHORELINE - DAY

James and Rachel emerge out of the forest on the stream shore and continue walking alongside the stream.

James falls back and pulls an asthma puffer out of his pocket and takes a hit. Rachel glances back but he doesn't see her. He skips a little to catch up.

JAMES

So what do you know about Santiago?

RACHEL

He's Spanish. He was in the army there for a while. By day, an ER doctor and by weekend, an ironman competitor.

JAMES

He's got everything covered doesn't he?

RACHEL

Yeah. If I was going to need help from anyone, I think he'd be the guy to ask. No offense.

JAMES

None taken, I feel the same.

Rachel spots a run-off crevice and points.

RACHEL

Looks like a path. We're in the right place.

They turn back into the forest, following it.

JAMES

Thank God.

Rachel and James disappear into the forest.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rachel and James follow a rough path.

Up ahead Rachel sees what looks like a shelter.

She opens her mouth to shout... when she detects the click, click, click of the Spider-Bot.

Rachel grabs James's arm.

They see the Spider-Bot at the campsite, and the net has captured a large animal that it is dragging behind it.

They hold their breath as it clicks past them, and as they see the prey that has been captured, their eyes widen. It's Santiago. He is limp, eyes closed and blood running down his forehead from a gash on top of his head.

James goes to react, but catches himself.

Once the Spider-Bot is out of view, they sprint up the path to the campsite.

EXT. FOREST CAMPSITE #2 - DAY

James runs into the campsite and sees the drag marks from Santiago in the net.

JAMES

How did it get over here without us hearing it? Or it hearing us.

RACHEL

I don't know.

Rachel rummages through Santiago's campsite, throwing whatever she finds into her backpack.

James uncovers two rocket flares. He takes one of the flares, bangs it on the ground to ignite it and sends it up into the sky. They watch it until the flare burns out.

He jams the other in his pocket.

Rachel holds up a small medical kit for James to see.

Rachel nods to where Santiago was dragged.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Let's go.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rachel stops, looks up at the sun and points the way. She takes off her flannel and ties it around her waist.

James looks at Rachel's arm.

JAMES

What's the scar on your arm from?
Looks like a burn.

RACHEL

House caught on fire in the middle
of the night.

JAMES

That's awful. How?

RACHEL

We don't know exactly.

JAMES

After I retired from football, I wanted to be a fire-fighter but I couldn't pass the station's pulmonary test - they had too many applicants so they didn't need a reject like me.

RACHEL

Asthma? How did you play football with that?

JAMES

Adult onset. Probably ended my career, to be honest.

Changing the subject, James tries to half-full it.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Well, at least you got out right?

Rachel stares off into the forest, shielding her face from James.

START FLASHBACK:

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING

Rachel, soot covered, and breathing heavy, with burns on her pajama pants, sits on the back lawn.

FIREFIGHTERS run behind her.

Rachel looks at the faces of two PARAMEDICS attending to her daughter, Jane, who lies face up, eyes closed with an oxygen mask on her face.

The Paramedics look at each other and one shakes her head very subtly.

Rachel knows what it means, and pounds the ground with her fists.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Rachel nods.

RACHEL

I did.

JAMES
Everyone else?

RACHEL
My daughter did not.

James reacts. Gut punch.

JAMES
Oh god. I'm so sorry.

Rachel shrugs.

JAMES (CONT'D)
My brother tried to kill himself with drugs and alcohol after my dad died. Like he was trying to prove that my dad dying meant something to a world that just moved on.

RACHEL
My husband just carries on like it didn't happen. One foot in front of the next. One speed, steady Eddy.

JAMES
I'm sorry.

RACHEL
That's what I get for marrying someone in the military. Their feelings are beaten out of them.

JAMES
People express themselves in very different ways.

RACHEL
You know that saying that life doesn't give you more than you can handle?

James's face brightens to accept Rachel's optimism.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
It's bullshit.

They continue on in silence.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Maria runs up to Gabriele who has returned to his desk.

MARIA

The next drone is being prepped.

Gabriele nods but doesn't look up. Maria waits.

GABRIELE

I heard you.

MARIA

There's more.

GABRIELE

Now what?

MARIA

Santiago's sat phone also stopped transmitting.

GABRIELE

What the...? We need to send in rescue. Now.

Maria's face says 'finally'.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST CLEARING - DAY

James and Rachel approach the clearing edge, treading lightly.

They see Santiago hooked up to the IV. He stands stiffly, more awkward than the four legged captives.

Rachel opens the medical kit and pulls out a small knife.

RACHEL

(whispering)

Let's go.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

As they reach Santiago, James looks at Santiago's forehead slightly confused.

JAMES

That huge gash on his forehead is gone.

RACHEL

What?

JAMES

You saw it didn't you?

Santiago's eyes fly back and forth between them.

RACHEL

We got you Santiago. I'm going to cut the line and then we have very little time before the thing comes back.

Rachel slices the line and James catches Santiago as he stumbles.

They pull Santiago back to the behind the rock outcropping.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Santiago's breathing quickens.

RACHEL

Slow breaths Santiago.
(to James)
Do you have that puffer?

James pulls it from his pocket and hands it to Rachel. She puts it in Santiago's mouth. He draws on it.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

There you go.

Santiago rubs his throat.

SANTIAGO

Thank you.

JAMES

We have to go now.

RACHEL

To the stream past my campsite.
We'll cross it.

Rachel and James support Santiago as they go.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

As Rachel, James and Santiago approach Rachel's campsite, Santiago is able to walk a little more freely, the injection wearing off gradually.

SANTIAGO

How did you know where to find me?

JAMES

We saw it dragging you in the net.
We were on our way to your campsite
to get you.

RACHEL

It came after me, too.

SANTIAGO

What is it?

RACHEL

It's extraterrestrial. I saw a
flash and I heard a crash two
nights ago. I think that's when it
landed.

SANTIAGO

I thought it was a storm coming.

RACHEL

Me too.

Santiago rotates his wrist.

SANTIAGO

This was broken before it captured
me.

JAMES

Seriously?

Santiago gives him a look.

SANTIAGO

Whatever it pumped into me, it
healed it.

JAMES

Your forehead too.

Rachel sees a package on the log at her campsite.

RACHEL

Look!

SANTIAGO

What is it?

RACHEL

The show sent new equipment. We can
call them now!

As they are a few feet from the campsite, the Spider-Bot rolls out of Rachel's lean-to, crashing it to the ground.

Rachel holds her arms up against both Santiago and James.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

My god. It's hiding now.

The Spider-Bot climbs up and over the log approaching the three of them directly.

James pulls the flare out of his pocket. He bangs the bottom, steadies his aim and sends it. Contact. The Spider-Bot flips over onto its back.

JAMES

Yes!

Just as quickly as it turns upside down, it rights itself and having detected James's location, the net shoots out and lands on James.

The spider then click, clicks its way past the three of them, pulling James behind it.

James struggles, trying to stand up.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Rachel! Help!

Rachel runs after the Spider-Bot, grabbing a hold of the net, trying to stop it.

Santiago joins her, both of them pulling back, struggling with the Spider-Bot as it tugs harder.

They manage to stop it, then it raises it's red leg and tasers a wave of electricity through both Rachel and Santiago. They fall to the ground.

The Spider-Bot continues on, dragging James in his net.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Rachel and Santiago slowly move their limbs before sitting up.

SANTIAGO

You okay?

RACHEL

Feels like bees are crawling
through my skin. That was way worse
than the first time.

SANTIAGO

You've been hit more than once?

RACHEL

It was further away last time,
knocked me down but I could keep
running.

Santiago shakes his head, incredulous.

Rachel uses the knife from the medical kit to open up the
package from the show. She presses the satellite messenger
button several times.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's dead.

SANTIAGO

Incredible.

RACHEL

We have to rescue James.

SANTIAGO

Should we go for help instead? I
mean, I think he'll be okay, I am.

RACHEL

It's harvesting cells and
discarding the bodies. I saw some
raccoons...

Santiago reacts. He stashes the medical kit in his pocket.

SANTIAGO

I was lucky then, let's go.

RACHEL

Are you sure?

SANTIAGO

I'm feeling fine now. Better.

Rachel looks at Santiago, unsure of whether he's ready, but
then turns to go.

Santiago follows.

EXT. AIR FIELD - DAY

A MEDIC and a SECURITY OFFICER, armed with a rifle jump into a helicopter starting up. A CAMERA OPERATOR with camera equipment stands next to Gabriele and Maria on the tarmac.

GABRIELE

Film everything. We'll edit out anything problematic.

The Camera Operator runs and jumps onto the helicopter.

MARIA

Are you sure you should be sending him? It could be dangerous.

GABRIELE

They'll be fine in the air and they won't land unless they think it's safe.

MARIA

The show must go on.

Gabriele glares at Maria.

GABRIELE

The show that pays your salary? Yes, it will.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel and Santiago reach the clearing just as the Spider-Bot stops with James.

The yellow leg raises and scans James, a screen on the outside of the spider bot pops up with a square image, the green leg loosens the net and the blue leg with the needle, jabs James, leaving him limp.

As the Spider-Bot props James up and attaches him to the IV tube, Rachel exhales.

RACHEL

(whispering)

I guess he's been deemed a worthy specimen.

SANTIAGO

(whispering)

I couldn't fight it with my broken wrist, but now, I'm 100%.

RACHEL
(whispering)
No, Santiago. We don't fight it.

SANTIAGO
(whispering)
I'll distract it, while you release
James. Don't worry.

The two of them move closer to James. The Spider-Bot clicks out of the clearing.

RACHEL
(whispering)
Santiago! Stay close to me.

They move closer to James.

It's too soon, the Spider-Bot's not entirely out of the clearing. It stops and spins.

Santiago moves away from Rachel creating space to lure the Spider-Bot.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Santiago, I need the knife!

He reaches into his back pocket and throws the kit.

The orange leg on the Spider-Bot flies up and magnetically snags the kit.

Santiago walks into the clearing.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Santiago, no!

SANTIAGO
It's okay Rachel. I will be okay.
Just get James free and go for
help.

The Spider-Bot spins and starts marching his way.

Rachel sees the net land over Santiago as he's been dragged over towards the menagerie.

The Spider-Bot yellow leg scans Santiago and a square image comes up on the screen. Then it starts flashing.

The indigo leg lifts up, the knife shoots out of it and the knife comes down on Santiago, just like the fox.

It all happens so fast, Rachel barely has time to turn her head.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)

Ahhh!

Rachel covers her mouth, to keep the scream in.

EXT. STREAM - DAY

Rachel rushes to the garbage pile she fished from the stream. She vomits next to it.

She's sobbing loud sobs as she roots through it all and finds the tin can. She tears at the can, splitting it to create a jagged edge.

She picks up the metal garbage can lid and runs back toward the forest.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel returns with the torn can hidden behind the metal lid.

Rachel approaches James.

His eyes are open with tears streaming down. He watches Rachel.

RACHEL

Don't worry. I've got you.

James's eyes move to where Santiago's body lies.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Don't look.

Rachel tries to use the jagged can to cut the tubing that is attached to James.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Look, it's not going to do that to you. Santiago was a duplicate male once you were captured. Just like the fox. And it won't harvest until it has a female.

James's eyes plead with Rachel to be careful.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I know, I know.

As Rachel continues to saw away with the jagged tin can, she hears the spider alarm system from the canister, increasing in intensity.

Rachel covers her hand around the partial cut on the tube to block the leak and stops breathing.

The alarm continues. The clicking in the forest gets louder.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Shit.

The Spider-Bot clicks into the clearing.

The red leg raises and scans. Rachel holds her breath. The leg drops to the ground.

The orange leg raises and scans its magnetic draw.

The can in Rachel's hand starts to twist toward the spider.

Rachel picks up the garbage can lid and shields the torn can. The garbage lid gets sucked out of Rachel's hand.

As soon as the lid has landed on the end of the magnetic leg, Rachel uses this borrowed time to frantically saw at the tube again.

She watches as the Spider-Bot tries to drop the lid into an open panel on the side but the lid is too big and it bounces to the ground.

She continues to saw at the IV tube but the Spider-Bot lifts its leg again and pulls the can away from her as well.

Rachel's shoulders slump in defeat.

The Spider-Bot proceeds to disconnect the IV of a pair of partridges and then puts them in the net, then it leaves the clearing.

Once it leaves, Rachel points to where it left.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

It's harvesting the partridges now.
I'm not giving up, but I have to
figure something else out. Move
your eyes to the left if you
understand.

James slowly moves his eyes to the left.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I will be back. I promise.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Back at her campsite, Rachel rifles through whatever she had that remained there.

She finds the concave glass she used for starting fires and places it on the log.

Billy ambles toward the campsite and waves.

BILLY
Hey Rachel!

RACHEL
Billy!

BILLY
I saw the flare. Is everything
okay?

Rachel stands up.

RACHEL
No, no, it's not. Do you have a
cell phone?

Billy shakes his head.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Your knife?

BILLY
No. What's happened?

RACHEL
I need you to go back home and call
for help. There's a... I don't know
what, an alien spider robot.

Billy stares at Rachel in disbelief.

BILLY
What did you say?

RACHEL
It's an alien.

BILLY
A what?

RACHEL
An alien spider robot.

Billy studies Rachel, trying to figure out if this is a joke. He decides it is.

BILLY

C'mon.

RACHEL

I know it sounds crazy but I don't have time to prove it to you.

BILLY

Where is it?

RACHEL

It's in the forest clearing, near where I met you the first time. It's got James trapped.

BILLY

I'll help.

RACHEL

No! No! Billy, it killed Santiago. Go for help.

Billy looks at Rachel, frantically searching the ground.

BILLY

What are you doing?

She finds a rock and raises it up bringing it down on the glass, breaking it in two.

RACHEL

I'm going back in for James. Billy go!

She starts running back towards the forest.

BILLY

We have a word for what happens to your brain when you've been alone too long!

Rachel stops, and turns to look at Billy.

RACHEL

Do you have a word for an alien spider robot that is collecting specimens from this planet like it's Noah, building a DNA ark to take back to its home planet?

She turns back and keeps going.

Billy watches her go.

BILLY
(muttering)
It's the same word.

EXT. CLEARING EDGE - DAY

Rachel creeps back towards the clearing.

She hears a branch snap behind her and freezes.

She turns slowly.

Billy is behind her.

RACHEL
Billy! No.

BILLY
I can help.

RACHEL
What I need you to do, is go and
get someone to send a helicopter.

She points to the animals and James.

Santiago's body lies in a pile with other discarded animals.

BILLY
Oh god...

Billy reacts.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Let me help with James and then
I'll go for help. You can't do this
alone.

Rachel struggles with it for a moment and then waves for him to come but puts a finger on her lip to indicate quiet.

RACHEL
(whispering)
It detects vibrations, so walk as
softly as you can.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

As Rachel and Billy get up close to the animals, Billy freezes, taking it all in.

Rachel hands Billy half the piece of glass she has split.

RACHEL
Cut the tube with your glass. Slice
it all the way through.

Rachel elbows him. He takes the glass.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
You do James. I'll do as many of
the animals as possible.

Rachel starts cutting the animal IV tubes as swiftly as possible.

She looks up to see Billy struggling with the James's tube he's cutting.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Just a quick movement with the
glass if you can. Don't try to saw.

BILLY
I'm trying.

Finally Billy makes it through the tube.

Rachel looks to all the animals that are making small movements and then back to James who is moving sloth like.

RACHEL
The paralysis is easing. We'll need
to catch him once he can move a
bit.

BILLY
Is it going to come back?

RACHEL
Yes. We have to drag James out of
here before it does. Now.

One on each arm, they drag James out of the clearing.

Beep, beep, beep go the sensors on the canister.

Rachel grabs Billy's shoulders.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
It comes when the sensors go.

Billy nods.

Rachel looks around, but can't see what direction the Spider-Bot is coming from. Suddenly she hears a noise above her.

Rachel looks up, just as the Spider-Bot repels down it's own wire, into the forest clearing in front of the animals.

Billy stumbles and Rachel steadies him.

The Spider-Bot hones in on the scattering collection of animals. It lifts the red leg and sends a taser stun shower at the animals. They all fall over, incapacitated.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Oh shit.

BILLY
(whispering)
Rachel...

Rachel snaps out of it.

RACHEL
(whispering)
Pull, Billy!

They pull James behind a rock outcropping.

EXT. ROCK OUTCROP - DAY

Billy looks at Rachel.

BILLY
What now?

RACHEL
We cross the stream. It didn't
chase me across last time.

BILLY
You saw this thing, got away and
came back?

RACHEL
C'mon. Less talk. More walk.

They start to pull James, it's hard work and they struggle.

Every ten steps or so they take a break.

Rachel looks back, making sure they haven't been followed.

INT. TV STUDIO OFFICE - DAY

Maria looks up to see Alex asking someone on the floor something and sees them point at her.

Startled, she stands up. Alex approaches her at a fast clip.

Maria holds out their hand.

MARIA
You must be Alex.

ALEX
What's going on?

MARIA
A rescue helicopter is on the way
to get her. I'll take you to meet
Gabriele.

Alex nods, impatient.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Billy, Rachel and James take a moment to catch their breath at the campsite.

James moves more freely, although he's still groggy. His hand is on the spot where the tube end is still inserted in him below his ribs.

JAMES
Thank you.

RACHEL
We have to get across the stream.

BILLY
You said it didn't cross the stream
last time?

RACHEL
Yeah. Maybe water is its
kryptonite.

JAMES
We should just get as far away as
we can.

Billy nods.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE - DAY

Rachel and Billy prop James up as he gingerly puts more and more weight on his feet as they approach the edge of the stream.

Dreading what they are about to see, they turn as they hear the Spider-Bot making its way out of the forest towards the campsite.

RACHEL
Everyone stay still.

BILLY
What if I lure it into the water,
then I can dump it and it's done-
zo.

RACHEL
It's too dangerous and
unpredictable.

Billy rolls his eyes.

BILLY
It moves really slow.

RACHEL
Look Billy, we've been okay every
time we've stayed still.

BILLY
But then it keeps coming back. We
need to destroy it.

RACHEL
We don't know enough about it. I
don't want you getting hurt.

BILLY
I can do it. I'm not a kid.

Rachel looks at Billy.

START FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rachel and Jane stand in the kitchen, while Jane looks at her phone.

RACHEL

Look, I'm sorry, I won't let you
drive to New York City on your own.
You're still too young.

JANE

Mom, stop. I'm not a kid anymore.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE - DAY

Rachel looks at Billy. Heart aching for what could have been
with Jane.

BILLY

Let me try.

RACHEL

Okay.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE - DAY

Billy teeters on the stream's edge, as Rachel and James cross
the stream, Rachel still propping James up.

Billy marches emphatically in place to get the Spider-Bot's
attention.

The Spider-Bot walks towards him.

Billy turns to Rachel.

BILLY

See! If I don't run, it won't taser
me.

Rachel pulls James up on the opposite shore and watches
Billy.

Just as the Spider-Bot reaches him, Billy backs slowly into
the stream. He slips slightly on the unstable stream bed, but
steadies himself.

The Spider-Bot hovers a leg over the stream.

BILLY (CONT'D)

C'mon. C'mon. Come to Billy.

The Spider-Bot lets the leg drop into the stream. It
advances, no problem.

Billy scoops as much water as he can in his hands and throws it on the Spider-Bot. Nothing happens. He kicks water, scoops water. Water, water, water. It keeps coming.

Billy panics, turns and runs, stumbling on the rock base of the stream.

The Spider-Bot's net ejects, captures him and methodically pulls him out of the stream.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Help!

EXT. STREAM'S OTHER EDGE - DAY

Rachel moves to run after Billy but James grabs her arm.

JAMES

Rachel! No.

Rachel looks down at James's arm on hers.

START FLASHBACK:

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Rachel, unconscious, flat out on the lawn of her house with Alex sitting on the ground near her.

Smoke and fire fighters streaming all around.

Rachel coughs and comes to, holding her impossibly raw throat.

RACHEL

Where's Jane???

Alex shrugs.

ALEX

I checked her room, she's not there.

RACHEL

Did you check the basement?

ALEX

The basement??

Rachel jumps up from the ground. Alex grabs her arm.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Rachel! No!!

Rachel breaks free from Alex and barrels back into the house before the fire fighters can stop her.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE - DAY

James still has his hand on Rachel's arm.

JAMES

I thought you said it couldn't cross the water.

RACHEL

I didn't think it could.

James looks at her.

JAMES

We have to go for help. It's too much.

The sound of a helicopter in the distance captures their attention.

James looks in the direction they hear it coming from.

JAMES (CONT'D)

They sent someone.

RACHEL

Thank god.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

The Security Guard points in the direction of Rachel's campsite.

They look down and see James and Rachel waving.

Then Rachel stretches her arms in the direction of the clearing.

EXT. STREAM'S OTHER EDGE - DAY

Rachel points to the clearing with both her arms.

James follows suit.

They look up to see the Security Officer with his thumb up and the helicopter turns toward the clearing.

RACHEL
They got it!

She sits next to James and hugs him.

Rachel starts to sob watching the rescue mission that has finally arrived.

They watch the helicopter. It's stopping over the right spot.

The sound of the wings whirring begins to slow.

Rachel and James watch, confused by the odd sound.

Then it suddenly drops from the sky, and into the tree canopy.

A burst of flames rises up over the trees.

Rachel covers her mouth.

JAMES
No!!!

Rachel jumps up and paces back and forth.

RACHEL
I have to go back for Billy.

JAMES
But you said he'll be okay, as long as that thing doesn't catch a female.

RACHEL
Who knows what it might do now that it's under attack.

JAMES
Oh Rachel.

RACHEL
Billy was so brave and now he's captured because I was wrong. I can't live with that.

JAMES
I'm coming, then.

RACHEL
No. Not now that it has Billy.

With that, she takes off back into the stream.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

Alex and Maria are speechless as they see the footage from the helicopter has disappeared from the monitor.

Gabriele slams the phone down.

GABRIELE

They've got a helicopter but I
can't get another rescue team for
at least an hour.

ALEX

We can't wait that long. I'll go.

GABRIELE

You?

ALEX

I'm ex-military. I can do this.

GABRIELE

Can you sign a waiver?

Both Maria and Alex are dumbfounded by this comment.

ALEX

If you were more concerned about
the people in the show than the
show itself this wouldn't have
happened.

MARIA

I'm coming with you. I have some
basic first aid. It's better than
nothing.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel returns to the clearing, moving swiftly and quietly.

The helicopter still burns at the edge of the clearing.

As she scans the menagerie, she sees that Billy is now hooked
up to the apparatus with all the remaining animals.

The Spider-Bot is no where to be seen.

She makes her way to Billy.

RACHEL
I'm here Billy. It's going to be
okay.

Billy follows her with his eyes.

Rachel traces the tube that attaches to the canister with a clip.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Every time I've cut a tube, it
comes back.

Rachel then detaches the tube from the canister and waits. No beeping.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Yes!

Rachel checks on Billy. He can move slightly, the paralytic effect diminishing.

She pulls Billy behind the rock outcrop.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Alex carries a rifle and Maria a medical kit as they enter a helicopter sitting on a landing pad at the airport.

Once they are strapped in, Alex gives a thumbs up to the pilot.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel looks at Billy who lays in her arms. She strokes his forehead gently.

RACHEL
(whispering)
We have to go now.

BILLY
(whispering)
I can't feel my legs fully yet.

RACHEL
(whispering)
You are going to wrap your arms
around my neck. Do you think you
can hold on?

Billy nods and wraps his hands around her neck.

She clasps her hands on Billy's wrists and runs as best she can carrying him on her back.

She doesn't listen or stop the whole way.

START FLASHBACK:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Rachel runs out of burning house with her daughter, Jane, on her back.

She's crippled by the exhaustion, the smoke in her lungs.

She puts Jane on the ground.

The paramedics swarm.

As Rachel watches, the paramedic shakes her head when they check for vitals.

Rachel falls apart.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE - DAY

Rachel runs out of the forest with Billy on her back.

The Spider-Bot follows behind.

Rachel collapses at the stream's edge. She rolls Billy off of her and drags him into the stream.

James is on the other side.

RACHEL

It's not too deep. You can walk across. Go!

BILLY

I can't feel my feet!

RACHEL

Then swim. Dog paddle! Go! Go! Go!

James wades in towards Billy.

JAMES

I've got you.

Rachel picks up rocks and throws rocks at the Spider-Bot, hitting it. Nothing slows it's steady, methodical pace heading directly at Rachel.

Billy crawls until it's deep enough to use his arms to pull him along.

Just as the Spider-Bot reaches ten feet of Rachel, it spins around and the door that the net ejects from, opens.

The net launches, catches Rachel, who looks back to see James reach Billy and pull him in.

The Spider-Bot pulls Rachel in close. It scans her. A new symbol appears on the screen. It's a circle within a circle.

Rachel watches in horror to see if the next leg that raises is the indigo one with the knife. Instead, it's the green one.

The net releases. The Spider-Bot turns and Rachel is able to get out of the net as it drags behind the Spider-Bot and into the trap-door.

It continues away from her as she sits stunned on the ground, then picks herself up and runs into the stream.

EXT. STREAM'S OTHER EDGE - DAY

Rachel swims across the stream to meet Billy and James.

JAMES

What happened? Why did it leave?

RACHEL

It scanned and rejected me.

BILLY

Burn.

RACHEL

Best burn ever.

Rachel cocks her head as she hears something.

BILLY

What is it? Is it coming back?

RACHEL

I think I hear another helicopter.

They look up and see the helicopter cresting over the ridge.

EXT. STREAM'S OTHER EDGE - DAY

The helicopter touches down and Alex and Maria run out towards Rachel, James and Billy.

Rachel looks up and sees Alex.

RACHEL

Alex!

Alex runs to her and envelops her in a huge hug.

ALEX

Oh babe. I was so worried.

Rachel hugs him as if her life depends on it, then pulls back to look at him.

RACHEL

But what are you doing here?
Where's the rescue team?

ALEX

They went down. Did you see them?

Rachel nods.

RACHEL

But how are you the back up?

Alex shrugs.

ALEX

Right place, right time.

RACHEL

These two need to get some medical attention. They've been injected with a paralytic. It seems to be wearing off but its extra terrestrial and they need to be looked at.

ALEX

Extra-terrestrial?

RACHEL

Let's get these guys going then I'll explain.

EXT. STREAM'S OTHER EDGE - DAY

Maria helps Billy buckle himself into one of the helicopter's two backseats.

James approaches Alex.

JAMES
She saved both Billy and me.

ALEX
That's my Rachel.

JAMES
Santiago... he didn't listen to her
and ummm...

Alex pats James on the shoulder.

ALEX
Thanks man.

JAMES
Take care of her. I mean, if she'll
let you.

ALEX
I know.

James gets in and sits beside Billy.

Maria turns to Alex.

MARIA
I'll send this back as soon as we
land.

ALEX
Sounds good.

Maria climbs in the front seat, Alex closes the door and waves good-bye to them all.

EXT. STREAM'S OTHER EDGE - DAY

Alex returns to sit beside Rachel staring over at her campsite.

ALEX
They'll be back soon. Are we safe
here?

RACHEL

It doesn't want me. I don't know about you.

ALEX

That's good.

RACHEL

You know, it's not trying to destroy us, it's taking DNA to recreate the animals on its planet. It's a biologist of sorts. Or sent by a biologist.

ALEX

I guess we're not the only ones who destroy what we don't understand.

RACHEL

We also destroy things we are trying to understand. All in the name of science.

ALEX

How else would you do it?

RACHEL

If we had to figure it out we would. When you are top of the food chain, you don't tend to factor that in.

ALEX

Maybe you just met the interplanetary top of the food chain.

RACHEL

And it rejected me.

ALEX

I'm glad it did.

RACHEL

Me too, but why?

ALEX

Maybe we should ask a biologist.

Rachel elbows Alex fondly.

RACHEL

When I was a kid I used to cry at the zoo.

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

All those magnificent animals all locked up. And now, some species only exist because of being saved by zoos.

ALEX

What are you saying?

Rachel shrugs.

RACHEL

Humans are going to keep searching for life on other planets. But maybe it will actually be there and it will be *our* life, because the biologists from that planet took it from here.

Rachel leans in and Alex envelops her in his arms.

ALEX

Sounds thinky.

Rachel lifts her head up and looks at Alex.

RACHEL

Did you bring any food? I'm really hungry.

Alex shakes his head. Then thinks. He reaches his hand into his pocket.

ALEX

I have gum.

He hands it to Rachel.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Happy birthday.

RACHEL

You always know exactly what to get me.

ALEX

Because you tell me.

RACHEL

True. My breath is probably atrocious.

Alex shrugs his shoulders as if to say "Little bit."

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Will you help me with something?

ALEX
Anything.

RACHEL
If I can get the thing to leave
rather than be destroyed, then
there's a chance that utopia could
be out there for some future
generation to find.

ALEX
I should have asked 'what' first.

Rachel shrugs her shoulders as if to say "Little bit".

EXT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

Rachel and Alex assess the spacecraft area, partially
obscured behind a tree. Alex carries the rifle.

The hatch is open.

ALEX
What's the plan?

RACHEL
You keep watch.

ALEX
What do I do if I see it?

RACHEL
Whistle like you do for Herschel.

Rachel squeezes Alex's hand and gingerly approaches the
spacecraft.

INT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

Rachel looks around at everything inside the spacecraft.

She looks at all the test tubes with the DNA floating in them
There are more than before. It hurts.

Rachel clocks the circles and squares on the matching dials.
She flashes to the circle within the circle that was on the
Spider-Bot when it scanned her. She thinks for a moment.

She sees the clock, watches it.

It's counting down.

She gets closer to it and finds a dial next to it. When she cranks the dial one way, the numbers increase, another way they decrease.

She hears Alex's whistle.

RACHEL

Shit.

Rachel jumps out the small door.

EXT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

Rachel hears the clicking before she sees the Spider-Bot.

She's in its path to the spacecraft, unsure if it has detected her.

Alex's heart explodes in his chest as he sees the Spider-Bot for the first time.

ALEX

Rachel!!

Alex opens fire on the Spider-Bot but all the bullets bounce right off of it.

The red leg lifts and the magnet pulls the rifle out of Alex's hands.

Alex bursts out from behind the tree, running straight toward the Spider-Bot and leaps on top of it.

RACHEL

Alex! No!!

Surprisingly, the Spider-Bot seems stunned by the physical interaction.

Alex stands up and quickly grabs a leg and flips it over.

Rachel looks back at the spacecraft and runs inside.

INT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

Rachel goes right for the dial she was about to spin before she fled.

She spins and spins the dial so the number decreases to 10. It starts counting down from there.

She runs back outside.

EXT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

The Spider-Bot has righted itself and shoots its net which captures Alex in it.

RACHEL

No!

It begins to drag Alex who loses his footing and falls inside the net.

ALEX

Ahhh!

Rachel follows behind, trying to grab the net to pull back. The Spider-Bot stops and Rachel lays flat on the ground.

Its scans with the red leg, and emits the pulse but aims too high.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

The Spider-Bot drags Alex in the net into the clearing. Rachel follows closely behind.

It raises the leg that reaches into the compartment and comes back out with the needle.

Rachel's heart sinks as she sees this happening. She looks around for a rock, finds one and sails it at the leg. She misses.

She grabs a small piece of wood and throws that.

Determination on her face as she approaches, throwing whatever she can to stop the injection from happening.

RACHEL

NOOOOO!!!

She races right up to the Spider-Bot and grabs the arm with the needle, struggling as it tries to turn the needle on her.

The Spider-Bot is winning, spinning its arm to loosen Rachel's grip, the needle is inches from her face when a beeping starts, increasing in frequency.

Suddenly the arm retreats, the net releases and the Spider-Bot marches out of the clearing, the net disappearing into the panel as it goes.

Alex stands up and pulls Rachel up.

ALEX
What's it doing?

RACHEL
I found what I think was a mission
countdown clock and turned it to
just a few seconds.

The ground begins to vibrate, and a sonic blast knocks them
both to the ground, a flash of light nearly blinding them.

Above them they see a streak of light zip across the sky.

Alex reaches for Rachel's hand.

ALEX
You did it.

RACHEL
Couldn't have done it without you.
Also, I think I figured out why it
rejected me.

Alex reacts.

ALEX
Why?

RACHEL
When it scanned me it had a circle
in a circle. I didn't figure out
what that was until I saw the
vials. Pretty sure it means I'm
pregnant.

ALEX
What??

RACHEL
Crazy right?

ALEX
But you didn't feel anything?

RACHEL
I thought I skipped my period
because I was stressed and the
vomiting, well I saw a lot of
really awful stuff.

Alex envelops Rachel.

ALEX
Can we go home now?

RACHEL
Almost.

Rachel nods, a smile growing on her face.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Rachel and Alex approach the doe still tethered to the paralytic delivery system.

RACHEL
Oh mama.

Rachel goes over to the large canister and opens up the top of the container. She grabs a large leaf off of a nearby tree. She reaches inside the container and comes out with the liquid cupped in her hand inside the leaf.

She motions to Alex.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Hold her tight.

Alex puts his arms around the deer to hold her.

Rachel pulls at the needle the same way she did the first time she freed the deer. Blood spurts out of the gash where the needle was. She takes the substance in the leaf and presses it over the gash.

The doe starts to move, shaking her head, her ears moving around while Alex and Rachel hold their positions.

ALEX
I can't hold her much longer.

Rachel pulls her hand off of the side and the gash is entirely healed.

RACHEL
Let her go.

ALEX
What is that stuff?

RACHEL
There are going to be a lot of people trying to figure that out.

Rachel motions to the remaining animals in the line.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Let's do the rest of them.

Alex nods.

EXT. STREAM'S EDGE CAMPSITE - DAY

Alex sits on the log, tracing his finger on the notches that Rachel put in the log. She sits down beside him.

ALEX
It was hard having you away.

Rachel holds the pendant in her hand, looking at it and then tucking it in her shirt.

RACHEL
We both know I was gone longer than that.

Alex nods.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

ALEX
For what, exactly?

RACHEL
I was blaming you for not looking hard enough for Jane.

Alex shrugs. It's true. He knows it.

Rachel's holds back her tears.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I knew she was in the basement because we had a fight. It was my fault. All of it was my fault.

Rachel grabs Alex and holds him tight.

ALEX
Shhhh.

Rachel suddenly pulls away and vomits over the edge of the log.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Oh Sweetie. You okay?

Rachel wipes her mouth, and gets lost in thought.

RACHEL

Yeah.

INT. TV STUDIO BOARDROOM - DAY

Maria, Alex and Rachel sit in a boardroom.

Gabriele enters with some papers and he slides them across the table to Rachel.

GABRIELE

So this just says that you pulled out of the competition because you found out you were expecting and as we discussed, you'll split the prize money with James but he'll be declared the winner.

Rachel shakes her head. Gabriele reacts, disappointed.

RACHEL

Just give it all to James. What are you doing for Santiago's family?

GABRIELE

The show has insurance. To compensate them. Apparently he had terminal bone cancer, so I don't even know how he lasted as long as he did.

RACHEL

What about the rescue team?

GABRIELE

Their families will be compensated.

Gabriele hands her another form.

GABRIELE (CONT'D)

And this one is the NDA.

RACHEL

All the feels.

Rachel signs the forms and sends them back to Gabriele who exits quickly.

ALEX

That guy. He's unbelievable.

MARIA

Rachel, why didn't you tell anyone you were grieving the loss of your daughter?

Rachel shrugs.

RACHEL

It had nothing to do with the show.

MARIA

And yet everything to do with why you were out there.

RACHEL

No one needed to know why I was in the competition. Turns out though, that you can't run away from your life. It follows you.

Rachel looks straight at Alex.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Thank god.

Alex grabs Rachel's hand.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rachel joins Alex on the couch with the dog at their feet. Rachel looks directly into Alex's eyes.

RACHEL

Thank you for saving me from losing you.

ALEX

I knew it was grief talking.

RACHEL

Your grief was so quiet.

ALEX

Mine went in and yours went out.

RACHEL

I think I was angry you weren't more angry.

ALEX

You had enough for both of us.

RACHEL

I did.

ALEX

I hoped you would come back and we could begin again.

RACHEL

How did I get so lucky?

ALEX

Beats me.

Rachel's phone rings and she picks up.

RACHEL

Hello?

(pause)

It is.

(pause)

Really?

(pause)

I'd love to. Thank you. Send me the details.

She hangs up and looks at Alex with a smile building on her face.

ALEX

Spill.

RACHEL

I've been asked to do a TED talk about my theories of cooperation over competition.

ALEX

Well, well. The world's not tone-deaf after all.

RACHEL

It's been so hard talking when it seems like no one is listening.

ALEX

I've been listening.

RACHEL

You always have. Sorry.

ALEX

Less sorry's, more thank you's.

RACHEL
You got it.

ALEX
Do I?

RACHEL
Sure?

Alex puts a hand up to his ear.

ALEX
I'm having trouble...

RACHEL
Are you? Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you.

ALEX
That's better.

EXT. CAMPING GROUND - MORNING

A small tent sits in the middle a beautiful campground. The morning is just dawning, dew on the tent walls.

The flap opens and Rachel slips out. The dog follows her out of the tent and they walk down to the nearby lake.

EXT. LAKE - MORNING

Rachel crouches down next to the lake edge and splashes water on her face.

The dog runs past her into the lake for a drink.

Alex walks and sits down beside her, embracing her. Rachel puts Alex's hand on her belly.

RACHEL
"Blackbird singing in the dead of
night. Take these broken wings and
learn to fly. All your life, you
were only waiting for this moment
to arise."

This time she really means it.

THE END