

BETTER WORLD

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY (PAST)

The room immaculate. A neatly made bed center of the room. An open suitcase.

A woman, NANCY (28), packs her clothes. She has a warm, cheery smile, curly hair that touches her shoulder, and an abundance of freckles.

She hums to herself. Places the suitcase on the ground walking to the door.

SCRAAATCH!

Nancy looks out the window.

A tree branch CASTS A SHADOW on Nancy's face.

She leaves the room.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

A large flatscreen TV hangs on the wall showing the news. A NEWSPERSON talking directly to the camera.

NEWSPERSON (V.O.)
Hundred's of thousands of people go
missing every year. A disturbing
reality...

The TV mutes.

Nancy sets the TV remote down on a cluttered stand with past due bills. Paper and dust bunnies collect on the floor along with take-out containers.

An OLDER WOMAN asleep, leaned horizontally on a chair. Donned in pajamas, she has nowhere to be.

Nancy picks up an opened bill. Balance due: \$30,000

Nancy sets the bill down. She kisses the sleeping woman and leaves.

A CHAIN RATTLES.

INT. BUS

Nancy sits alone. Headphones on blaring some type of music. She looks out the window as the beautiful scenery passes by.

A dark cloud covers the sun. The bus interior slightly darkens.

Nancy pulls a LETTER out of her pocket and reads to herself.

FOCUS ON:

- *Can help your mom*
- *Significant payment*
- *Become something better*

Nancy folds the letter up and stuffs it back in her pocket. She leans her head on the window and closes her eyes.

EXT. WELCOME CENTER

Indistinct chatter from the other bus riders. Nancy exits, last...she looks at her surroundings - a very remote, dense forest.

The bus departs.

INT. CLINIC ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Nancy sits in a doctor-like chair, smiling, her knees swinging. Various instruments and computers around her.

A DOCTOR chats to Nancy.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
Well, Nancy, are you ready for your first treatment?

Nancy nods her head enthusiastically.

NANCY
Yes. Nervous. If this doesn't work, do I still...with my mom and all...

DOCTOR (O.S.)
We will ensure she's taken care of, as promised, okay?

Nancy nods again.

The Doctor holds a syringe. A BLACK LIQUID inside.

DOCTOR (O.S.)
You'll feel a pinch.

The Doctor depresses the plunger. Nancy winces.

NANCY
Never liked needles.

The Doctor discards the syringe.

DOCTOR
All done. Thank you, Nancy. We'll
do another round tomorrow.

NANCY
Is Darren here?

Nancy twitches, immediate side effect.

INT. OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

The space claustrophobically small. A desk, computer, and printer are in view. Blank walls. A CLERK types on the computer.

FOCUS ON:

- *Sorry about Nancy*
- *She sadly passed*
- *Her compensation is enclosed.*

The Clerk prints the paper and folds it, placing it in an envelope, along with a check. She licks it closed. She puts a STAMP ON THE UPPER CORNER THAT HAS THE IMAGE OF LARGE TREE.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - FRONT DOOR

The door has a mail slot, brass, faded. The slot opens and a few pieces of mail fall through. On top is the letter with the TREE-PICTURED STAMP.

We CLOSE in on the stamp...

CLOSER...

And CLOSER...

The sound of an alarm is faint but becomes louder.

Right on top of the stamp...

The alarm is piercing our ears, almost unbearable!

CUT TO BLACK.

A cacophony of voices in peril. Screaming, shouting, absolute panic. The alarm still ongoing.

VOICE ONE (V.O.)

RUN!

VOICE TWO (V.O.)

THEY'RE COMING!

Squelching and ripping sounds. What is going on?

VOICE THREE (V.O.)

OH MY GOD! WHAT HAVE WE DONE?!

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - DORMITORY HALL (PRESENT DAY)

An alarm blares in an underground scientific facility. Long hallways. The area much like a hospital wing, but with an added touch of...

Blood sloshed from floor to ceiling. Random BODY PARTS scattered amongst the floor. Different hues of skin color.

A man, BILLY (28), appears from around a corner. Skinny, nerdy sort, short hair, donning an all white sweatsuit.

Whimpering from a nearby ajar door. Billy pushes open the door.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - STORAGE ROOM

Shelves and racks full of toiletry items, pillows, and bed sheets.

Billy enters.

A female scientist, Mary (40), cowers in the corner with a TOOTHED BLADE extending towards Billy. She's in a fragile state, visibly shaking, but composes herself, brushing her brunette colored hair behind her ear.

MARY

Billy.
(lowers blade)
What happened?

BILLY

I don't know.

The lights shut off with a CLUNK.

The emergency lights turn on with a reddish hue. The alarm stops.

MARY

Shit.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - DORMITORY HALL

Mary exits the room cautiously looking both ways, hunching. Billy hovers behind.

BILLY

I saw a nurturer...

MARY

(interrupting)
They escaped? All of them?

Moaning and gasping breaths from down the hall. Unpleasant and terrifying.

Mary bulldozes Billy back into the room.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - STORAGE ROOM

Mary presses her finger to her mouth.

A SHADOW passes the door continuing it's grotesque utterances. The sound fades.

BILLY

(whispers)
Let's go.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - PIT ROOM

We see nothing, but hear a STICKY MUCOUS in the blackness. The red, emergency light too dim.

The room circular. Long rods and a ladder hang on the wall.

A dark HOLE in the floor. Depth unknown.

A HAND COVERED IN A DARK LIQUID grabs onto the lip of the hole.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN HALL

The area wider than previous areas. Hallways branch out. An ELEVATOR at the back wall with a lit-up EXIT SIGN. Near the elevator is a main office. Opposite the office an orientation room. Hanging signs with arrows read: "DORMITORIES"
"ELEVATOR" "EXAM ROOMS"

Mary and Billy near the office. They enter.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN OFFICE

Multiple computers line a wall. A large desk littered with magazines and drink cups. Glass partitions on the right wall.

Billy and Mary enter the office.

By the computers is an emergency switch covered in plastic with the words: "FIRE SYSTEM. ACTIVATE ONLY IN EXTREME EMERGENCY"

Billy sits at the computer. Attempts to turn on the system. Nothing responds. Leans back in the chair.

BILLY

Nothing's working.
(spins around to Mary)
The plan is fucked.

MARY

No, we just need to restore power.
We can do this.

Billy looks at the fire system button. Mary's eyes follow his.

MARY

(scolds)
We don't dare. If we kill all of them, then what's the point of what we created?

BILLY

If the nurturer's get out, we don't know what damage they'll do.

Billy pulls out a KEY on a chain wrapped around his neck.
Sticks it in the fire system box.

From under the box, a small DRAWER extends with a hand print
SCANNER.

Mary and Billy are perplexed.

Billy puts his hand on the scanner - DENIED

BILLY

Fuck.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - PIT HALLWAY

A MAN covered in a GELATINOUS, BLACK PHLEGM walks limply. He
struggles to breath. A BLACK OOZE EJECTS FROM HIS MOUTH,
spattering the floor.

The Man collapses to his knees.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN OFFICE

MARY

We need this place intact to fix
what we did. Their lives matter.

BILLY

Wish I realized that five years
ago.

SLAM!

Mary and Billy look at the glass partition. On the other side
is an INJURED SCIENTIST. He wears a shredded lab coat,
bleeding.

INJURED SCIENTIST

You're both alive. We need to...

The Scientist barely gets those words out before he's DRAGGED
AWAY SCREAMING.

Billy and Mary gasp in terror.

INJURED SCIENTIST

Help me!

FLESH TEARS. The screaming stops.

A low, throaty growl.

MARY
(whispers)
We have the backup.

BILLY
(grabs onto a USB hanging
around his neck)
I'm terrified of what she'll think
of me.

MARY
It's temporary. Just don't drive
too fast when it activates. I'll
fix this place up. You know if both
of us die, nobody will find us and
we can't help them.

Billy exhales, nods in agreement. Crawls to the door.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN HALL

Billy exits the room. Still crouched. Looks down the hall
where the Scientist was.

CLAWS TAP on the floor. A WISPY SHAPE emerges from the dark.

Billy stands up and rushes the elevator. SMACKS the up
button. The doors open. He enters.

INT. ELEVATOR

Cramped space. Lights on. The walls metal.

Billy hits the up button.

A large GROWL.

The door closes.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN OFFICE

Mary crawls to the door. Reaches for the door...

The door SLAMS OPEN.

Mary falls on her back side. Crab walks to the desk and hides
underneath.

A GROWL. Clipping footsteps towards Mary's position. She
retrieves the blade from her waistband. Aims it forward.

HISS!

SMOKE BILLOWS OUT FROM SPIGOTS in the ceiling. Mary covers her mouth and nose.

The smoke dissipates.

Out of the smoke, the Man appears. The sludge has fallen off his face.

Mary's eyes widen - TERRIFIED.

MARY
Darren? You're..

DARREN (30) approaches Mary very upright, with finesse.

DARREN
Alive? You thought you could stop me, traitor?

MARY
(exasperated)
What we're doing...it's wrong.

VINE-LIKE GROWTHS MATERIALIZE FROM DARREN'S SKIN.

MARY
What is that?

The vines extend towards Mary - nowhere to escape.

MARY
Make it stop.

THE VINES SLITHER AND PENETRATE MARY'S SKIN IN A RAPID ATTACK.

Mary screams and thrashes at the vines.

MARY
DARREN!

Mary's movements cease.

The vines recoil back towards Darren, disappearing into his body.

An ethereal, alien voice, HIVE, echoes inside Darren's head.

HIVE (V.O.)
Must find other one. Find Billy.

INT. WELCOME CENTER

The interior is rather exquisite, modern, and professional. TV's, chairs, books, tables with magazines displayed. The ceiling is dome-shaped with an expensive chandelier hanging.

A bookshelf on the wall opens revealing an ELEVATOR.

INT. ELEVATOR

Billy looks at the buttons carefully. His hand hovers over them.

He presses what seem like random buttons, but there's an order. He pushes the last button.

The elevator CLUNKS. The lights shut off.

Billy exits.

EXT. WELCOME CENTER - NIGHT

The building is small. Nothing draws your attention.

A large patch of dirt surrounded by forest. The building a literal needle in a haystack.

Billy runs over to the tree line. Paces down. He stops.

Pulls out laid tree branches - acting as a camouflage barrier.

Behind the barrier is an OLD CAR. Billy gets in the driver's seat.

INT. OLD CAR (NOT DRIVING)

The interior a bit shoddy. Old. Leather seats.

Billy pulls the key from the visor. Starts the car on the THIRD ATTEMPT. Drives away.

INT. OLD CAR (DRIVING)

Billy's eyes leave the road. He opens the GLOVE COMPARTMENT.

Pulls out a CELL PHONE. Hits the number one. A dial tone rings.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A sliver of moon light shines through the window. The walls barely covered. Trash encompasses the floor.

A single photo frame hangs lopsided displaying a news article depicting a smiling woman holding an award. The wording on the photo reads: *"LOCAL WOMAN WINS BEST DOCUMENTARY AWARD"*

The TV is on showing an interaction between an INTERVIEWER and a WOMAN.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
How has life been since the
documentary release.

WOMAN (V.O.)
I'm getting recognized on the
street more.

Both laugh.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
Did you expect this sort of
response?

WOMAN (V.O.)
Not at all. When I discovered the
story, I never imagined.

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)
I'm sure your family is proud.

WOMAN (V.O.)
(beat)
It's only Billy. I, umm, he...

The TV volume fades.

We PAN to see the occupant of the apartment and the Woman from the TV, CLAIRE (27), short, disheveled wearing a stained, cami-top.

She lays in bed scrolling through PHOTOS of her and Billy in various locations. They appear happy.

She reaches for a bottle of liquor, drinking right from the bottle. The bottle slips and alcohol sloshes her face and bed sheets. It rolls onto the floor.

CLAIRE
Shit.

RING!

She doesn't recognize the number, answers anyways.

CLAIRE
What do you...
(burps)
...want?

BILLY (V.O.)
Claire? This still your number?

CLAIRE
Depends who's asking.

BILLY (V.O.)
It's Billy.

Claire chokes. Composes herself. Sits up in bed.

CLAIRE
Is this some sick joke? Who is
this?

BILLY (V.O.)
I need you to come to Miracle,
Montana.

Claire is incredibly confused. Her face squinting in a series of emotions.

CLAIRE
(babbles)
Bu-ba-wh-what?

INT. CAR (DRIVING)

Billy holds the phone with his shoulder

BILLY
Miracle, Montana. I need your help.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM

CLAIRE
Why are you in Montana? What the
fuck is happening?

BILLY (V.O.)
I'm your brother. Trust me.

The phone disconnects.

Claire flies out of bed. Bustles around the room kicking all sorts of cans, pizza boxes, clothes. She bumps into her dresser almost knocking over a PHOTO OF HERSELF AND BILLY.

She admires the photo.

Claire opens the dresser drawer. Grabs the top shirt and throws it on; one of her favorite quotes from one of her favorite movies: "EVEN THE SMALLEST PERSON CAN CHANGE THE COURSE OF THE FUTURE."

She stands at the bedroom door with a small duffel bag in hand. She looks back at the dropped liquor bottle laying in a puddle of its contents.

Shuts the door.

INT. CAR (DRIVING)

Billy closes his eyes briefly, inhales and exhales slowly. Takes foot off the accelerator.

BILLY

It's only temporary. It's only...

Billy's eyes ROLL BACK. His head twitches. Slinks over.

His foot presses on the accelerator.

A tall, WOODEN POLE approaches.

The car CRASHES into the pole. Billy, foolishly unbuckled, LAUNCHES through the windshield.

EXT. CAR - HIGHWAY

The front end completely smashed. Giant HOLE in the windshield.

Twenty feet from the car, Billy lays on his stomach, unmoved.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Claire sits in first class with papers scattered in her tiny space. A laptop open. Her finger gliding along the touch pad, clicking various web pages.

A small cup of alcohol on the tray next to a few empty packs of peanuts. She takes the last sip tipping the cup vertical.

INSERT - WEBPAGE HEADLINE

"GROUP WANTS TO PLANT MILLIONS OF TREES IN MIRACLE"

BACK TO SCENE

Claire types on the laptop with speed.

INSERT - WEBPAGE HEADLINE

"MISSING PERSON TRACKED TO MIRACLE"

BACK TO SCENE

Claire kinks her neck to each side. Scrolls rapidly. Her knee bouncing, hands jittery.

She gawks for the FLIGHT ATTENDANT who on cue walks down the aisle.

CLAIRE

Excuse me?

Claire taps the cup.

CLAIRE

Another one, thank you.

(pause)

And some coffee.

The Flight Attendant rolls her eyes.

Claire returns to the laptop screen.

INT. AIRPORT - BAGGAGE PICKUP - DAY

The airport small and mostly empty. A bear statue towers over the terminal. A small coffee stand serving customers. An older man smacking a vending machine that supposedly stole his snack.

Claire fidgets by the baggage conveyor belt.

She has her phone pressed to her ear.

CLAIRE (INTO PHONE)

I'm in Montana.

Her luggage passes. She rips the bag off the carousel and leaves.

INT. AIRPORT - CAR RENTAL

Claire stands in front of the counter of a local company. Her back is turned towards the attendant, a Hispanic male whose nametag reads CARLOS. Handsome, clean cut, plaid, button-up shirt.

CLAIRE (INTO PHONE)
I'm not drunk. I don't care if you
fire me. My brother is alive. Just
send me the stuff you want me to
look at.

Claire ends the call and slides the phone into her pocket.

CLAIRE
(to Carlos)
I'll take what you got.

INT. CAR (PARKED)

Claire sits in an older car, something far from flashy and expensive. She inputs data into the phone GPS.

INT. CAR (DRIVING)

Claire exits the airport property. Almost immediately sees a large multi-colored sign that reads: "LIQUOR"

She bites her lip and taps the steering wheel.

CLAIRE
I don't need it. Don't need it.

The parking lot entrance rapidly approaches.

CLAIRE
Maybe just one.

She pulls into the parking lot.

INT. CAR - HIGHWAY (DRIVING)

Claire taps the steering wheel. Wipes her brow. Looks to the passenger seat where a BOTTLE OF LIQUOR sits. It seems some has been drunk.

She looks back to the road. The car is riding the double yellow line. An oncoming car HORN HONKS. Yanks the wheel to the right, correcting herself on the road.

CLAIRE

Shit!

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - EVENING

The hospital small, a single story. An uninviting look. The emergency room lights dim, a bulb flashing on and off on the letter 'G.'

A handful of cars in the lot, most likely staff. Not particularly busy.

An OVER-ABUNDANCE OF TREES swarm the area.

Claire parks the car and exits. She stumbles.

CLAIRE

Whoa.

She inhales and exhales slowly. CHUGS a bottle of water. Tosses the empty bottle in the car. Shuts the door.

CACKLING TREE (O.S.)

Haha. Fresh face. He's awake. I can hear him. Haha. Can talk.

Claire veers her head.

CLAIRE

Someone there?

Nothing responds.

Claire rubs her temples.

CLAIRE

Must be going mad.

CACKLING TREE

(sing-songy)

Born under the dirt.

(normal tone)

Haha. Go mad.

Claire walks towards an UNNERVING TREE. Warped, twisted branches, something straight out of a horror movie.

She leaves.

The BARK CRACKS. A piece falls off revealing a HUMAN-LIKE EYE which moves.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM

The room has all the amenities a hospital would have. Lights are dimmed. Window shade closed.

On the bed is Billy, WIRES go from him to a machine that's keeping him alive.

A middle-aged nurse, wearing blue scrubs with the embroidered name VICTORIA (60), stands at the machine adjusting a fluid bag and taking notes. Short with a scowling type face.

Claire enters the room. She looks at the wires and machines, becomes panicked and frustrated.

CLAIRE

What the fuck happened to him?

VICTORIA

(turns)

And you are?

CLAIRE

I'm Claire, his sister.

Claire walks up to Billy's bed and grasps his hand.

Victoria walks to Claire. She winces at the alcohol smell on Claire's breath.

VICTORIA

Are you drunk?

CLAIRE

I'm not that kind of person. What happened to him?

VICTORIA

Car accident. Alive, but in a coma.

CLAIRE

(to self)

Coma?

VICTORIA

I suggest you get a motel room for the night and sober up. I know a drunk when I see one.

Victoria departs.

Claire squeezes Billy's hand.

CLAIRE
What did you get yourself into?

She notices a WALLET on a side table.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

The room small. Sorta clean. Obscene color sheets on a rickety bed. Small, boxed TV.

Claire sits on the bed with her laptop open. Next to the laptop is the wallet.

Pulls out a driver's license. Finds a folded photo. Opens to reveal a smiling Claire and Billy on a beach.

Peels back all of the wallet inserts. A FOLDED LETTER.

Unfolds the letter. Reads: "DAY 1, MET A NICE MAN, BILLY. ASKED HIM ON A DATE. HE SMILED AT ME BUT DIDN'T SAY YES. MAYBE I'M MEANT TO BE ALONE. NANCY. DAY 2, I'M STARTING TO HURT. SAW BILLY AGAIN. HE KISSED ME. I'VE NEVER BEEN HAPPIER MAMA. YOU'LL LIKE HIM. NANCY"

Claire looks up from the letter, slaps it in her hand, thinking.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The location the same spot as Billy's accident. Some DEBRIS left over.

A car stopped on the road. Hazard lights flashing. One side of the road has dense trees. The other a field.

A TRAVELING MAN (55) kneels by the driver's side tire using the jack to lift the car. He mumbles to himself, clearly irritated about the task.

Footsteps approach. The Man looks up to see Darren standing feet away.

TRAVELING MAN
Shit, man. Scared the crap out of me.

Darren remains silent, menacing.

TRAVELING MAN
Well, somethin' popped my tire.
Looks like someone crashed earlier.
(looks behind Darren,
suspicious)
How'd you get here?

Darren GLARES at the Man, initiates a step forward.

The Man stands, putting his hand behind his waistline.

TRAVELING MAN
Whoa now. I don't want to hurt you,
but best believe me, I will defend
myself.

Darren falls to his knees, hacking, as MORE BLACK LIQUID
SPLATTERS ON THE ROAD.

The Man stumbles backwards.

TRAVELING MAN
Shit.

Darren stands and stares intently at the Man.

TRAVELING MAN
You need a hospital.

Darren walks towards the Man.

The Man pulls out his gun, scared, and fires at Darren. A
MUZZLE FLASH OF LIGHT.

Darren halts. Touches his chest. The bullet casing falls from
the entry wound.

CLINK! CLINK!

A vine WHIPS from Darren, TOSSING the gun from the Man's
hand.

TRAVELING MAN
What the...

DARREN
Violence was always the downfall of
mankind.
(smiles)
But I can make you better.

HIVE (V.O.)
Yessss, better.

The Man turns and bolts.

TRAVELING MAN
Someone! Please help me!

Vines protrude from Darren's body.

HIVE (V.O.)
Let us fix you.

The Man screams.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Machines whir and beep. The sun illuminates the room.

Billy still laying flat on the bed.

Claire enters and walks over to Billy. She unzips a jacket pulling out a FLASK. Unscrews the lid, takes a SIP.

Victoria enters behind. Walks up to the machines.

VICTORIA
Sober up?

Claire quickly hides the flask.

CLAIRE
What? Can you tell me about Billy?

Victoria writes on a note sheet. Monitoring the machines.

VICTORIA
No change.

CLAIRE
Did you know him?

VICTORIA
I can tell you two are related.
Both have a knack for being
assholes.

CLAIRE
You don't know anything about us.

Victoria moves to stand in front of Claire.

VICTORIA

We're not in visiting hours, so
understand my accommodating you.

Claire's stomach rumbles.

VICTORIA

There's a burger place downtown.
Best in Miracle, trust me. Get
yourself something to eat. Maybe
it'll change your attitude.

CLAIRE

(quietly, rolls eyes)
Trust?

EXT. DOWNTOWN MIRACLE - LATER

The sidewalks, much like the whole town, empty besides a
handful of people who don't look too enthused.

SERIES OF SHOTS

- A woman enters a laundromat carrying a hamper.
- A young couple walk a small dog.
- A man smokes a cigarette in front of a bank.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

One thing that unites this area are CREEPY TREES of a similar
sort from in front of the hospital.

EXT. BURGER PLACE

Claire walks in front of a restaurant. A hamburger and fry
decal on the window. She stops as a SMELL draws her attention
to the restaurant.

CLAIRE

Best in town, huh?

An UNEASY MOAN from behind, not loud, subtle.

Claire turns, looking for the noise, no one around except a
TREE sprouting beautiful flowers attached to branches that
twist and fold.

She dismisses the noise and enters the restaurant.

We linger on the tree for a few moments.

INT. BURGER PLACE

Claire enters the restaurant. A few booths with ripped fabric are along the wall. A table with bar stools by the entryway window. A couple non-sturdy tables fill the floor. She is the only customer.

Claire walks up to the empty order point.

CLAIRE

Hello?

A BURGER EMPLOYEE (16) walks into view sniffing. He steps behind the cash register.

BURGER EMPLOYEE

Can I help you?

Claire looks at the lit up menu on the wall.

CLAIRE

Yeah, just give me a burger with all the fixins'. Side of fries as well. Oh, and a water.

BURGER EMPLOYEE

\$8.99.

CLAIRE

Pretty affordable.

Claire pulls a credit card out her wallet, passing it to the Employee.

BURGER EMPLOYEE

(wipes nose with arm)

Sure.

The Employee swipes the card and returns it with a receipt.

BURGER EMPLOYEE

Have a seat. I'll bring it out.

The door opens to the restaurant opens.

The Employee looks at the newcomer. He calls out to the kitchen.

BURGER EMPLOYEE

Colleen's here!

Claire steps to the side as COLLEEN (60) shuffles to the register. She has white, curly hair, crow's feet around her eyes, but a nice smile.

Claire sits in a booth. Pulls out the flask. Seeks the room before taking a SIP.

Colleen joins Claire. Shimmies into the booth.

COLLEEN

Never seen you 'fore. Your eyes.
Maybe a little too much to drink
last night?

Colleen EYES the flask. Claire hides it, embarrassed.

CLAIRE

I'm not that person. My brother,
Billy, went missing five years ago.
Now I'm here and he's, well...

COLLEEN

(snaps fingers)
Billy. Nerdy looking sort. You're
his sister? You two look alike.
Said you were some special
investigator.

CLAIRE

(surprised)
You know him?

COLLEEN

I own the shop 'cross the street.
Get our food to go.

INT. COLLEEN'S WORKSHOP

Colleen unlocks the door from outside and enters. BELLS RING.
Claire follows behind.

The interior cluttered. Books unevenly stacked in tall piles,
large paintings on the walls, household appliances, and God
knows what else. A winding path through the clutter towards
the back.

CLAIRE

What kind of business is this?

COLLEEN

I make ends meet. Keep up now.
Through the back.

COLLEEN'S OFFICE

Colleen enters her office and shuffles around to her desk which houses the worlds oldest computer. The desk cluttered as well with papers and a BOBBLEHEAD that looks like Colleen.

A lopsided picture hangs on the wall: "BEST TEACHER AWARD"

Claire enters the office.

COLLEEN

Sit.

Claire sits. She sees the bobblehead.

COLLEEN

My grandson found it on the
Facebook. The things people make.

CLAIRE

So, how do you know Billy?

COLLEEN

Firstly, eons ago a group of people
wanted to plant trees all
throughout Miracle and the
surrounding area. You see, this
area used to be nothing.

CLAIRE

Um, okay.

Colleen turns in her squeaky chair and digs through books and finds a photo album.

COLLEEN

I collected photos from all the
years of this town.

Claire looks at the displayed page.

INSERT - PHOTO

A barren grassland

BACK TO SCENE

COLLEEN

Miracle was born and bred from
these tree planters. Much like
towns are built around mining or
oil drilling.

Colleen turns pages of the album.

INSERT - PHOTO

A group of ten people standing around a small tree.

BACK TO SCENE

COLLEEN
(laughs)
I was so young.

Claire points to another member in the photo.

CLAIRE
This looks like the nurse at the
hospital.
(sarcastic)
Real sweetheart.

COLLEEN
About twenty years ago the doctors
showed up. One researcher...let me
find him...ah here. He moved into
town. Dr. D.

Claire looks at the photo.

INSERT - PHOTO

*A group of researchers with a smiling Dr. D in the middle. In
front of the doctor is a non-smiling young child.*

BACK TO SCENE

COLLEEN
The father passed about eight years
ago. Darren took over but he was
never right in my old opinion.

Claire touches her lips and grabs her chin as if in thought.

CLAIRE
And Billy?

COLLEEN
Met him a few months back. Seemed
lost, trying to right a wrong. We
both knew Gertie, she's Nancy's
mother. Poor kid.

CLAIRE
Nancy?

Claire pulls the note from Billy's wallet. Gives it to
Colleen who reads the note.

CLAIRE
What happened to her?

She writes on a sticky note pad. Tears off the sheet and gives it to Claire.

COLLEEN
You should chat with Gertie.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A vast land of waving grasses. A small, poor-conditioned shack sits on the land. It looks like an outhouse.

INT. OUTHOUSE

Darren sits on the ground. Pale skin. THREE SCRATCHES ON HIS RIGHT CHEEK. BLACK BLOOD dribbles out. Short stubble. Sunken eyes. Naked.

Darren looks at his hands. He touches his face. His fingers run through the grooves of the scratches.

Sounds of machinery. Rumbling engines. Whispering voices.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Various construction vehicles sit in a barren area. Workers sit around eating lunch.

A YOUNG DARREN (12) sits on the step leading into a trailer. He looks out with curiosity.

The door to the trailer opens. Darren's FATHER (45) exits. He wears glasses much bigger than his eyes along with a tie that is crooked and short. He chews on a toothpick.

Father sits next to Young Darren.

FATHER
Weather's nice.

Young Darren looks up to his Father.

YOUNG DARREN
I miss mom.

FATHER
Me too. She'll always be with us.

YOUNG DARREN
She was murdered. She can never be here.

FATHER
Anxiety can make people sometimes do terrible things.

YOUNG DARREN
But why mom? She didn't do nothing. We should just get rid of everyone.

FATHER
You can't think like that, son. People make mistakes, it's human. You can't make a perfect person. All we can do is try to make a better world. Alleviate some tension.

YOUNG DARREN
I can make a perfect person. One day.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. outhouse - DAY

Darren peers out of the outhouse.

HIVE (V.O.)
You loved your mother.

Darren jolts from the voice in his head.

DARREN
I did. What are you?

HIVE (V.O.)
I'm part of you.

DARREN
You killed Mary.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN OFFICE

Mary's body appears dead until --

Her foot twitches. We move up her body and see vines begin to protrude from the body. We stop on her face.

HIVE (V.O.)
You killed her. Because you wanted to.

Mary's eye's open.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR (DRIVING)

Claire drives outside of town. She slows down as two police cars are gathered around a BROKEN DOWN CAR.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Two officers are musing to each other as Claire approaches.

The lead officer, OFFICER JIM (50), greets her. Heavier set fellow, clothes tight on his body. Personable and cheery, for a cop.

OFFICER JIM
Can I help you?

CLAIRE
I'm a reporter...

Officer Jim looks back at the other officer, OFFICER RANDY (40). Not personable, skinny sort, the exact opposite of his counterpart.

Officer Randy stomps back to his car.

OFFICER RANDY
You take care of this one.

OFFICER JIM
Sorry 'bout him. Attitude is why he don't get promoted.

Officer Randy grunts.

Claire, looking at the asphalt, sees a GLOB OF BLACK LIQUID.

CLAIRE
What's that?

OFFICER JIM

Disgusting.

(laughs)

Reporter you say? Never seen you
'fore.

CLAIRE

My brother is here in the hospital.
I'm here to help him.

OFFICER JIM

He the one in the coma?

CLAIRE

They think he'll pull through.

OFFICER JIM

Night shift found him right here
few feet from that pole. Lucky they
did. Lost a bit of blood. This
ain't his car. Thinking this car's
tire blew. You can never get all
the pieces. Cursed piece o' road,
it seems.

OFFICER RANDY

Jim, come 'ere.

OFFICER JIM

(to Randy)

Be right there.

(to Claire)

Duty calls.

Claire pulls a card from her pocket. Hands it to Jim.

CLAIRE

If you need anything. By the way,
you find the owner of this car?

OFFICER JIM

Nope. Gonna be a long day. Possible
something from the woods got him.
Wouldn't be the first animal
attack.

Officer Jim strolls back to his vehicle.

Claire struts to the edge of the trees. Looking down, BLACK
FOOTPRINTS matching the color of the liquid lead back into
the woods.

Claire peeks to the police car. Officer Randy glares back.

CLAIRE
Wonder if officer asshole noticed
these.

The Officers depart.

Claire reaches down and TOUCHES the black sludge. Acts like glue. Tries to rub off onto her pants.

CLAIRE
Shit.

She shakes it off. Stands and looks back at her car.

MOMENTS LATER

Returns with a clear CONTAINER. Scoops some of the black substance in.

Claire walks over to the pole. Sees debris scattered around. BLOOD on the pole along with a HANDPRINT OF BLACK SLUDGE.

She takes a photo using her phone.

Looks down. Finds a dirty, USB DRIVE. Picks it up. Swipes off the dirt.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM

Billy lays still in a coma. Machines beeping and whirring around. Close in on his eyes. Eyelids jitter.

EXT. OUTHOUSE

START VISION

Darren stretches outwards looking to the skies. He walks behind the outhouse.

The bloodied body of the Traveling Man lays in the tall grass.

Darren kneels next to him. Caresses the man's face. Looks up and gives a sly smile as if he can see through the vision.

HIVE (V.O.)
Billy.

DARREN
Yes, but we've got people to see.

END VISION

BACK TO SCENE

Billy's fingers JOLT slightly.

EXT. HOSPITAL

The eerie tree's leaves blow back and forth from the wind.
The EYE remains still until...

It shifts. BARK CRACKS beneath the eye revealing what look
like TEETH. The eye opens.

 CACKLING TREE

 Haha. He wake.

The teeth grind and open. Sappy substance sticks and
stretches.

 CACKLING TREE

 He make us...better.

EXT. GERTIE'S HOME - LATER

Exterior normal, although dirty. Patches of brown grass.

Claire parks the car. Exits. Looks around the property.

Walks up to the front door. Swigs some drink from the flask.
Knocks.

A heavier set Woman opens the door, bags under her eyes -
this is GERTIE. The door held by a chain.

 GERTIE

 Yes?

 CLAIRE

 Are you Nancy's mother?

Gertie SLAMS the door.

 CLAIRE

 Please. I think she knew my
 brother, Billy. He was missing
 but...

The door opens again.

 GERTIE

 Billy?

CLAIRE
Yes. I'm his sister.

Gertie unlocks the chain. Opens the door fully. Claire enters.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

Clutter strewn about but a cozy atmosphere. Rips on the furniture.

Gertie sits in her chair. Mutes the TV.

Pulls out a SYRINGE from a side table. Injects the contents into her stomach.

Claire slowly sits on a loveseat. Unsure of how to act.

Gertie looks at Claire. Honest sadness in her eyes.

GERTIE
I like Billy.

Claire retrieves the note from her pocket. Passes it on. Gertie reads it. Cries and covers her mouth.

CLAIRE
I found this in Billy's belongings.
You had a daughter, Nancy?

GERTIE
Have a daughter. They said she died. Gave me some money, but I never saw her body. No proper funeral. I don't believe 'em.

CLAIRE
I'm sorry to hear that. You may not want to hear this, but I'm an investigative reporter.

GERTIE
I know. Saw your Netflix documentary.
(laughs)
It was quite good. Billy talked highly of you.

Claire gives a quick smile, brushes her hair back.

CLAIRE
Thanks. Would you mind if I searched your daughter's room?
(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Maybe I can find a connection or something to Billy. Find out what's going on.

GERTIE

Just don't mess it up. Want the room as she left it for when she comes home.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - BEDROOM

The room just as immaculate as before.

Claire enters. Observes the room. Walks over to a DRESSER. Peruses the drawers lifting neatly folded clothing.

Nothing inside. A BASEBALL BAT propped up on the side of the dresser. Claire touches the bat.

On the dresser is a framed PHOTO. Teenage Nancy and a Young Boy who looks like...

QUICK FLASH

The photo of Dr. D and his son.

BACK TO SCENE

...Darren, but younger. Dressed in prom outfits. Nancy smiling giddily, Darren with a small, forced smirk.

CLAIRE

The son.

Claire walks to the closet. She looks around for anything of importance, but nothing is out of place. Hung clothes.

She turns around. Takes a few steps forward.

CREAK!

She looks down. The floor BENDS slightly.

Reaches down and moves a piece of the floor. Inside is an old SHOE BOX. Takes it.

She sits on the bed. Removes the lid.

Inside the box is a plethora of PHOTOS of Darren. Some from up close, some from a distance, obscured - like a stalker.

The bottom of the box has a black sack with a drawstring. Under the sack is some stained, orange SMEARS.

Claire opens the sack. Sticks her finger in and...recoils quickly.

CLAIRE

Ouch.

Her finger is BLEEDING. She sucks on the wound.

Dumps the contents out on the bed. Two full VIALS OF ORANGE LIQUID. Shattered glass follows from a third vial.

A small KEY wrapped in plastic. Old. Long.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

Gertie sits in a chair watching television.

Claire walks in carrying the shoe box. Sits next to Gertie.

GERTIE

Find anything?

Claire opens the box. Hands off photos to Gertie.

Gertie smiles.

GERTIE

Oh, Darren. He and Claire dated.
Was always nice to us.

CLAIRE

Heard his father passed.

GERTIE

Yes. They broke up, you see. Darren
was working on something...saw
Nancy as a distraction. She took it
hard.

Gertie holds a picture of Nancy. She rubs the face.

GERTIE

Billy would stop by for tea once a
week. He always seemed sad. When
Mary stopped talking to me, I felt
alone but Billy helped.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY, ROOM 2F

Faint emergency lighting pans the room.

The room is trashed with medical equipment thrown about. A large hospital bed with LARGE STRAPS on its side.

A large DOOR on metal hinges is open. Inches thick with locking bars across.

Mary enters the room. Flashlight in hand. She aims it at the locking door. Walks towards it.

THROUGH THE DOOR

No emergency lighting. Large room, padded, SCRATCH MARKS tear the padding.

She aims the flashlight down.

HEAVY, UNNATURAL BREATHING

Mary kneels down. Pulls a SERRATED BLADE from her waistline. It shakes in her hand.

MARY

I'm sorry.

She rams the blade into SOMETHING. It whimpers. Removes the blade. Stands up.

Pockets the blade. Removes some paper from the other pocket along with a pen.

The paper is titled: "NURTURERS"

Under the title are FIVE LINES. Two crossed off. Mary crosses off one more line.

A VINE CRAWLS FROM HER HAND.

CUT TO:

EXT. GERTIE'S HOME

Claire steps off the front porch. She looks to the sky before looking back to see Gertie sending her off.

GERTIE

Before you go, I don't know if this is important, but watching your show...the smallest details...anyways, I never saw Billy in a car. He always walked. And he walked...
(points down the road)
...that way.

CLAIRE

(looks down road)
How far down?

GERTIE

Not far. He would disappear into the tall grass.

CLAIRE

Thanks, Gertie. That's very helpful.

Gertie closes the door.

Claire begins walking down the road.

EXT. BRUSH LINE

A dense field of brush and trees. The area hidden as the dirt path has disappeared. A tall, BARBED WIRE FENCE extends far out of view.

A sign on the ground reads: "PRIVATE PROPERTY UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS WILL BE MET WITH DEADLY FORCE"

Claire meticulously looks for more footprints. Looks back to Nancy's house - unable to be seen.

She sees a HOLE in the fence. The brush appears DISTURBED. Broken branches.

Claire steps into the brush and through the fence hole. Pushes her way through organic obstacles until she finds a -

Small clearing. A STORM DOOR on the ground. Pristine condition.

Claire reaches down to the door. Swats away some foliage.

She searches for a handle. Nothing. Feels around the door. Nothing.

Brushes away dirt and foliage in direct proximity. A small METAL SLAB embedded in the ground. A KEY HOLE in the slab.

Claire procures the key from the plastic. She eyes it over. Sticks it in the hole and TWISTS.

CLICK!

A HANDLE juts upwards from the storm door.

BRAKES SQUEAK.

Claire veers around.

Car doors open and SLAM shut.

Claire twists the key back. The handle disappears. She pushes forward hiding in some thick brush.

Two SECURITY GUARDS approach the storm door. Both clean cut, possibly military.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
How did he survive?

SECURITY GUARD TWO
No idea.

Security Guard One looks around at the disturbed brush.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
Looks like someone walked through recently.

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Probably an animal.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
You been inside? I hear it's a bloodbath.

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Nope.

Security Guard Two inspects the door.

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Door looks secure.

Claire slips. A CRUNCH on the ground. She covers her mouth, remains absolutely still.

Both Security Guards look around.

A raccoon walks nearby.

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Fucking raccoons. Let's get out of
here. Send someone to sweep the
fence and fix the holes.

The Security Guards leave.

Claire crawls back towards the storm door. Looks around for
the Guards.

TIRES SQUEAL. The Guards have gone.

She takes the key out and reinserts in the keyhole. Twists
it. The door handle appears.

Lifts up on the handle. The door is heavy. She struggles to
lift it...but is successful.

She looks inside. A set of stairs down further accompanied by
DARKNESS.

CLAIRE
Hello?

A sustained silence, focused on the darkness until...

An unholy, choking GASP.

A FIGURE, mangled, begins to emerge. It sways back and forth.

CLAIRE
(squinting)
Someone there.

The Figure stops.

CHOKING FIGURE (O.S.)
Yes, I need help.
(menacing laugh)
Why don't you come in here.

Claire SLAMS the door shut. Steps away.

A few moments pass until...the door LIFTS.

A disfigured FACE, rotting, STARES out from the door. It's
eyes search and find Claire.

The Figure's mouth sneers into an evil grin.

CHOKING FIGURE
They can make you like me.

Claire's eyes widen...fear.

CHOKING FIGURE
They can rearrange your fucking
guts.

The door LIFTS HIGHER. The Figure's body isn't normal, but like a ROOT SYSTEM - no visible organs, just twisted matter. It DROPS its head back...

SNAP!

Black sludge POURS from the neck area...

Claire rushes to the keyhole. Twists the key back. The handle disappears. She grabs the key and steps back. Eyes on the storm door.

A POUNDING THUD. Three times.

CHOKING FIGURE (O.S.)
Come back soon.

Claire rushes away.

EXT. NANCY'S HOME

Claire opens her car door. Gets inside. She's out of breath. Starts the car.

CLAIRE
What the fuck is in this town!?

PHONE BUZZES. Looks at phone: "POLICE NOTIFICATION: BODY FOUND NEAR ROAD"

Claire drives off.

EXT. ROAD

Claire returns to where she saw the broken down car. The car is gone but...

Emergency vehicles on the side of the road. LIGHTS FLASHING.

She parks.

EXT. outhouse

Claire stands in front of yellow tape. The outhouse is cordoned off as the body of the Traveling Man is found.

EMT Personnel wheel the body away in a stretcher covered with a blanket.

Officer Jim approaches Claire. He has a notepad and pen equipped.

CLAIRE
You find the owner?

OFFICER JIM
(nods)
Can't tell you anything else,
though...ya know, investigative
stuff.

Officer Jim closes the notepad, pockets the pen.

Claire watches Officer Jim depart. She gives a final look to the outhouse. Looks back to Jim.

CLAIRE
Officer, wait.

Officer Jim turns around.

CLAIRE
Have you...seen anything weird
lately?

OFFICER JIM
Weird how?

CLAIRE
(uneasy laugh)
I don't know...like weird creatures
or...

OFFICER JIM
We don't have Bigfoot in this town.

Officer Jim leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Claire sits on a bed with an open alcohol bottle. She takes two swigs, the second longer than the first.

The TV is on, LORD OF THE RINGS: FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING plays.

She takes the USB out. Inserts it into the laptop: "PASSWORD"

Finds the "hint" button. Clicks it, reads: "FOR CLAIRE"
She looks at the TV.

CUT TO:

INT. NANCY'S HOME, DOORWAY - LATER

A small light is on illuminating the doorway.

KNOCK!

LIVING ROOM

Gertie wakes from a nap. Sits upright in the chair.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

She mutes the TV and stands.

DOORWAY

KNOCK! KNOCK!

Gertie approaches the door.

GERTIE
Who is it?

She looks at a nearby clock: "7PM"

No answer.

She unlocks the door. Opens it. Flips a switch for the outside light.

EXT. NANCY'S HOME

Gertie stands on her porch. Holds her arms.

GERTIE
Someone there?

She looks out into the darkness. Sees nothing. Wind blows lightly.

Turns around.

DARREN (O.S.)
Hi Gertie.

Gertie turns back around.

From the darkness, Darren approaches the house.

GERTIE
(smiles)
Darren. Haven't seen you in ages.
Please come in.

Darren walks to the porch. Enters the home. Gertie follows.

LIVING ROOM

Gertie turns the lights on. She sits in her chair. Darren on the couch. He slyly looks at Gertie.

GERTIE
(beat)
Darren...you haven't seen Nancy
have you? They say she's dead,
but...I don't know.

DARREN
She's alive...in a sense.

Gertie's face brightens.

GERTIE
What?

DARREN
I always...appreciated your
daughter. Was a kind soul, but she
saw something...I was able to
convince her otherwise, but
still...always nagged me. What if
she spilled the beans.

GERTIE
I don't understand.

HIVE (V.O.)
Someone else was here.

DARREN
Someone was here earlier?

Gertie warily nods.

GERTIE
You're scaring me.

DARREN
There's nothing to be scared of.
I'm here to make you better.
Everyone better.

Vines protrude from Darren's skin. Gertie's eyes widen. Tries to get out of the chair but...

The vines hold her down. They PENETRATE her body. She SCREAMS in agony.

DARREN
Your screams sound just like your
daughters.

Silence.

Vines return to Darren. He stands over Gertie's body.

HIVE (V.O.)
(anger)
You didn't get any information.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - BEDROOM

Darren enters. Turns on the light. Looks around.

Sees the shoebox on the bed. Takes the lid off. Looks through the photos.

HIVE (V.O.)
What are you doing?

Darren sees the orange liquid smear.

HIVE (V.O.)
What is it?

DARREN
(worried)
I don't know.

Darren touches the smear. His finger BURNS. He thrashes his hand erratically.

HIVE (V.O.)
What did you touch?

DARREN
(studies his finger)
I don't...know.

Darren's nose BLEEDS BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Claire lays flat on her back. LORD OF THE RINGS still playing on the TV.

Laptop still on with the USB inserted.

CLAIRE
Fuck, Billy.

She smacks her head, frustrated.

CLAIRE
You didn't tell me anything. Just left. I needed you. I still need you.

PRE-LAP: RAIN PATTERS, FIRE CRACKLES

EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Garbage strewn about. A small, two-person tent. Rusted barrel with a fire burning. Rain spattering the ground.

INSIDE THE TENT

A TEENAGE CLAIRE and TEENAGE BILLY lay on their stomachs. A portable DVD player is showing THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING.

Claire is enthralled. Billy not so much.

TEEN BILLY
We always watch this.

TEEN CLAIRE
I love it. Plus its the only one we have.

TEEN BILLY
I have more from the library.

TEEN CLAIRE
You think I'm pretty like Galadriel?

TEEN BILLY
Sure. Are you hungry?

TEEN CLAIRE
Always.

Billy pulls out a candy bar from his pocket.

TEEN BILLY
Took this from the shelter.

TEEN CLAIRE
Why don't we just sleep in the
shelter? I'm tired of the bridge.

TEEN BILLY
(lying)
They, uh, don't have enough beds.
(reassuring)
I'm trying to get a job. No one
will hire me.

TEEN CLAIRE
Probably cause you smell like shit.

They laugh. Billy splits the candy bar.

TEEN BILLY
We'll get our own place one day
galadriclaire. Not in that shelter.
Trust me, that shelter is no good.

TEEN CLAIRE
(laughs)
You can think of a better nickname
than that.

TEEN BILLY
Maybe, but the cringiness of
it...perfect.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO SCENE

Claire jolts up in the bed. Slides her laptop towards her.
Looks at the TV and then her shirt.

CLAIRE
You cheeky bastard.

Types in the password box: "galadriclaire"

The USB unlocks. Claire smiles wide.

CLAIRE
Worst fucking nickname ever.

She opens a file: "I'M SORRY"

It's a video. Billy sits in front of a camera.

BILLY (ON VIDEO)(V.O)
 Hey Galadriclaire. Best nickname
 ever, no matter what you say.

Claire smiles, rolls eyes.

BILLY (ON VIDEO)(V.O)
 If you're seeing this, then this is
 Plan B. The coma is somewhat
 intentional, so I'll need your help
 to prepare things before I wake up.
 Darren put something in our heads.
 I don't think he knows we know
 about it, but it's his way of
 controlling us, but I..well, this
 is tough to talk about. I have a
 confession to make, and...I'm sorry
 (sighs, puts forehead in
 hand)
 I hurt people. The work I've been
 doing with Darren. I thought his
 goals were noble, but I now see
 that he doesn't want to help, but
 destroy everybody. A deadly restart
 to the planet, so the plan was to
 kill him, and undo as many mistakes
 as we could.

CLAIRE
 The fuck.

BILLY (ON VIDEO) (V.O)
 What I need you to do when you
 arrive is take the east road out of
 town. You'll come along a house
 where the pavement ends. Go in the
 house to an upstairs bedroom...

The feed goes FUZZY and ends.

Claire smacks the computer.

CLAIRE
 Come on!

Restarts the video. Scrolls to the end. Still fuzzy, but
 words can be heard.

Claire increases the volume.

BILLY (ON VIDEO)
 (scratchy)
 ...upstairs bedroom. Under the
 floor...

CLAIRE

Shit.

Claire adjusts settings on the computer to increase the volume.

CLAIRE

Come on.

Rewinds the video. Plays.

BILLY (ON VIDEO)

(scratchy)

...under the
floor...substance...cure.

The video goes black.

Claire relistens to the video. Writes down the words she hears: "SUBSTANCE. CURE."

She looks at a nearby night stand. Finds the vials and the container of black sludge. Curls her lip in thought.

CLAIRE

Guess I was one step ahead of you.

Gets off the bed. Grabs both items and walks into the bathroom.

INT. MOTEL - BATHROOM

Claire stands over the stained sink. A toilet and small shower accompany her.

She takes the lid off the container. Finds a Q-Tip. Dabs the sludge and puts it in the sink.

Takes the top off the vial. Finds another Q-Tip. Dabs the orange. Touches the sludge with the orange.

THE SLUDGE BURNS AND COOKS AWAY.

CLAIRE

That's...interesting.

INT. COLLEEN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Colleen sits in her office using her slow computer, creeping the mouse around a dirty, ripped pad. She begins to erratically move the mouse around, picking it up and slamming it down.

COLLEEN
Unfreeze!

She has no luck in this endeavor.

COLLEEN
Aaaagh, patooey. You win this time.

Colleen stands from the computer. She grabs a light jacket from the chair.

BELLS RING from the front door. Someone is inside. Colleen remains still.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Darren enters the shop. He flips a switch near the door. Lights turn on.

DARREN
You forgot to lock the door. I hope
you don't mind me. Been
visiting...old friends.

IN THE OFFICE

Colleen tucks away under desk silently.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Darren enthusiastically looks around at the junk piling up.

DARREN
I know you remember me. Had me
expelled, but didn't expel the ones
who disfigured my face.

HIVE (V.O.)
Kill her.

DARREN
She won't live much longer. I can
smell the cancer.

IN THE OFFICE

Colleen bites her nails, shivering in fear. She looks at the wall panel with the picture frame.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Darren sees a light under the office door. His smile is riddled with a chilling effect. He trapes towards the door.

IN THE OFFICE

The door opens. Darren enters.

HIVE (V.O.)
She was here.

DARREN
I just want to talk, Colleen.
Student to teacher. Did you have a
visitor earlier?

Darren looks at the desk and smiles. Vines protrude from his body.

He whips downwards staring directly under the desk. Empty.

His smile fades. He stands back up and sees a PHOTO ALBUM. He flips through the binder until he reaches a PHOTO OF HIM AND HIS FATHER. His finger whirls around his father's face.

He seethes under his breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVESITE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Young Darren (now a few years older) stands in front of a gravestone cross. It's the only one around. On the cross is some writing.

INSERT - GRAVESTONE WRITING

"A loving mother and wife. Her spirit carries on"

BACK TO SCENE

Young Darren kneels down in front of the cross. He prays to himself.

Young Darren stands back up

Father approaches Young Darren.

FATHER
You come visit this grave every
day.

Young Darren looks up to Father. Three fresh SCRATCHES on his face stitched together covered in cloth.

Father winces at the scars.

YOUNG DARREN
Why didn't you show up to the
hospital?

Young Darren angrily points to his face.

Father takes off his glasses and cleans the lens with his
shirt.

FATHER
I can't give you an answer that
would satisfy you.

Father places his glasses back on.

Young Darren remains silent. He turns around to face the
gravestone.

FATHER
What have I taught you over these
past few years?

YOUNG DARREN
They mocked me for having a dead
mom. I couldn't control it.

FATHER
You broke the kids nose. The school
has suspended both of you, so looks
like you'll be stuck with me for
the time being.

YOUNG DARREN
School sucks anyways.

FATHER
Darren, you need to start seeing
the positives in the world. People
aren't here to hurt you. What
happened to your mother was a
tragedy, but you can't think
everyone is like that.

YOUNG DARREN
You don't visit her grave anymore.
It's like you don't care. How could
you not want to hurt those
responsible?

FATHER
(loud)
I do, son.
(normal tone)
(MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)

I do. But we need to be better. You understand?

Young Darren says nothing. He continues to look straight ahead.

FATHER

(more oomph in voice)

Darren, I'm talking to you. Could you at least act like you care?

Young Darren veers around and sneers at his Father.

YOUNG DARREN

You need to care. I was in the hospital and you weren't there.

Father doesn't know how to react. He swings his arms and pushes up on his feet to his toes.

FATHER

Yes, well, umm...so, now since you'll be stuck with me, I'll show you exactly what we're doing. This whole project will be yours to continue one day. And who knows, maybe you'll think of your own project.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO SCENE

HIVE (V.O.)

Hate him.

DARREN

I don't. I hate he never got justice for mother. So, I had to.

Darren's nose BLEEDS BLACK again. He rubs it. Looks at the stain.

HIVE (V.O.)

Your insides have changed.

Darren peruses the desk. Shuffles papers. Finds a recent one on top which reads at the top: "Billy"

Grabs the paper.

DARREN

Billy.

Looks towards the center of the paper to find other writings.

INSERT WRITINGS

- Claire, Billy's sister

- Billy in coma

BACK TO SCENE

Darren looks up.

DARREN
 Claire's here?
 (frowns)
 What does that bitch want.

HIVE (V.O.)
 Where is she?

DARREN
 Only one motel in town.

Darren runs out of the office.

The BELLS RING on the entry door.

A PANEL OF THE WALL SHUFFLES AND SLIDES. Colleen steps out from the wall.

Pulls out her cellphone. Searches contacts. Clicks on "CLAIRE."

Dial tone rings.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Cell phone rings: "COLLEEN CALLING."

Claire answers after taking a swig of alcohol.

CLAIRE
 Hey Colleen.

COLLEEN (V.O.)
 You need to get out now.

CLAIRE
 What?

COLLEEN (V.O.)
Darren is coming. He has
these...things on his body. You
need to leave. Come to the shop.
Hurry.

CLAIRE
I don't understand.

COLLEEN (V.O.)
Please, trust me. Come to the shop.

The call disconnects. Claire looks around the room, HER VIEW
HAZY AND BLURRING. Shakes her head. She gathers items.
Reaches for the car keys, SMACKS AROUND THE STAND. Finally
grabs them.

CLAIRE
(inhales loudly)
You'll be okay. Didn't have that
much.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

Billy continues to lay flat. Machines dinging and
transmitting data.

Victoria looks at the machines. Writes down numbers on a
clipboard. Finishes and leaves the room.

Close in on Billy's face - HIS EYES OPEN.

INT. MOTEL - LOBBY

Potted plants. Few chairs with brightly upholstery. Not
exquisite, but not terrible, just boring.

A desk with a BELL.

A MOTEL EMPLOYEE (25) nodding off in a chair.

The BELL RINGS.

The Employee looks up. Rubs his eyes.

MOTEL EMPLOYEE
Can I help you?

Darren stands at the desk.

DARREN
I'm looking for a person. Claire.
She have a room here?

MOTEL EMPLOYEE
That's private information. Come
back with a warrant.

Darren seethes.

DARREN
(forced smile)
I would appreciate it if you just
gave me the information.

MOTEL EMPLOYEE
And I'd appreciate a lady under the
desk. We can't always get what we
want. Now have a good night.

The Employee stands. He turns towards a room labeled:
"EMPLOYEES ONLY."

Vines extend from Darren and WRAP around the Employees neck.
He swings around.

MOTEL EMPLOYEE
The fuck?

The vines tighten.

A vine slithers towards the Employees crotch. The Employee
looks down. Winces.

MOTEL EMPLOYEE
(strained)
Please. Don't. I'll tell you.

BLOOD SPURTS upwards - the employees member seemingly ripped
off.

The Employee screams but choking at the same time.

Darren grabs a book detailing customer's names. He opens to
the most recent page. Slides finger to most recent customer:
"CLAIRE CONWAY"

Darren looks at the Employee.

DARREN
Thank you for the information.

Vines swirl towards the Employee and PENETRATE BOTH EYES. The
Employee yelps a more time before going limp.

Darren drops him. The vines retract.

INT. MOTEL ROOM

Darren enters the room. It's empty.

DARREN
(throws arms up)
We're too late.

CUT TO:

INT. SECURITY GUARD APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

A bit of a dump. Cramped space. Minor amenities.

The two Security Guards sit. One asleep on the couch. The other dosing off while the news plays on the TV.

A cell phone RINGS.

Security Guard One answers.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
Yes./Of course./We're on it.

He hangs up. Tosses the phone at Security Guard Two who's still asleep.

SLAP!

Security Guard Two awakens. Rubs his head.

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Ow!

SECURITY GUARD ONE
Darren called. Needs us to go to the door. Might be someone heading there.

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Fires us, rehires us...bullshit.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEEN'S WORKSHOP

BACK OFFICE

Colleen sits in a chair. A glass of whiskey shakes in her hand.

KNOCK!

She stands. Moves to the door. Peeks through. Sees Claire at the door.

AT THE DOOR

Colleen opens the door. Claire enters.

BACK OFFICE

Colleen sits back in her chair. Sips the whiskey.

Claire sits opposite Colleen. Pours her own glass of whiskey. Chugs it.

Colleen gives Claire a worried look.

CLAIRE

What's the emergency?

COLLEEN

Are you okay?

CLAIRE

I had one. Completely fine.

COLLEEN

Darren is after you.
He's...different. Has these things
that grow out of him.

CLAIRE

Things?

COLLEEN

Heard him talking to someone else,
but only his voice. I think he's
off the deep end, but he knows you
and Billy...

CLAIRE

(interrupting)

What about Billy?

Claire stands to leave, stumbles slightly.

COLLEEN
Don't go to Billy.

CLAIRE
He's my brother. You don't understand.

COLLEEN
I think we should see Gertie.
Something about what Darren said.
I'm worried about her. All alone
out there. The hospital has
security.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Darren strolls slowly through the parking lot, but determined. He looks around the environment.

HIVE (V.O.)
He's in there.

CACKLING TREE (O.S.)
Darren.

Darren halts. Walks towards the voice and approaches the Cackling Tree.

CACKLING TREE
You woke up. I woke up. Haha.

DARREN
I know you.

CACKLING TREE
Knew you for long time.

Darren strokes the tree as if admiring it.

HIVE (V.O.)
Leave it.

CACKLING TREE
No. Don't leave.

DARREN
You can hear us?

CACKLING TREE
Yes. We're all one. Haha.

HIVE (V.O.)
 You have me. We don't need them
 anymore. We're better than those
 rejects.

Darren walks away from the tree and towards the hospital.

CACKLING TREE
 No.

Darren doesn't acknowledge.

CACKLING TREE
 K-kill me, please.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM

Victoria checks in on Billy. Adjust the machines. Takes notes.

Billy is asleep but then...

Violently WAKES UP. Sucks in air as he sits up.

Victoria shouts in terror. Throws the clipboard.

Billy grabs his chest. Looks at Victoria.

VICTORIA
 Jesus Christ, Billy!

Billy begins ripping off wires.

BILLY
 I'm sorry. I need to leave. Have to
 get back to the facility. Mary.

VICTORIA
 You're not going anywhere. By the
 way, your sister arrived, drunk.
 Didn't think you were talking.

BILLY
 You always fixate on this shit.

VICTORIA
 You're the one who left her because
 of her "problems."

BILLY
 We have other problems like the
 nurturer's escaping.

VICTORIA
(loud, serious)
Outside?

BILLY
No, gaahhh, I need to see if Mary
is okay. You just stay here and
wait for Claire. She should be
retrieving things I need.
(feels his neck for the
USB)
Assuming she has the video.

Distant, agonized screams from elsewhere in the hospital.

BILLY
What is that?

The screams approach LOUDER AND CLOSER accompanied by
squelching. A NURSE runs passed the door looking back,
terrified.

VICTORIA
I don't know.

Victoria starts walking to the door.

DARREN (V.O.)
Billy?

Victoria scowls at Billy.

VICTORIA
You said he was dead?

BILLY
He was. You need to hide. Bathroom.

Victoria hides in the bathroom.

Billy hides under the bed.

Darren enters the room. He flips the light switch. Blood
drips from his body.

He walks to the bed and sits. Wipes his brow. Breathes heavy.

DARREN
Probably wondering why you were in
a coma. Implanted a fun, little
chip in all your heads. You leave
too far...

(MORE)

DARREN (CONT'D)
(snaps fingers)
Shuts you down.

Darren kneels down from the bed. He looks under. His face bloody.

DARREN
Give me your hand.

CUT TO:

EXT. WELCOME CENTER - DAY - FLASHBACK (FIVE YEARS AGO)

The building sits in a clearing off the main road, roughly a quarter mile. The area sunny, as multiple participants get off a bus, Billy included. He carries a large duffle bag along with other PARTICIPANTS.

Mary approaches the group.

MARY
Hello everyone and welcome. We've got a lot to cover. Let's not waste anytime.

Mary, Billy, and the Participants follow.

Billy lags behind. Mary walks with him.

MARY
I'm super thrilled you're able to be with us Mr. Conway.

BILLY
(professional)
Billy is fine. We'll keep the formalities to a minimum since we'll be living together.

MARY
Sorry, Billy. I've read your papers and find them fascinating. A little fan-girling here.

BILLY
I hear he's working on something special. A legitimate way to take climate action.

MARY
We believe so. He remodeled an entire area to accommodate this work.

BILLY

I revered his father's work. To use
your turn of phrase - fan-girling.

MARY

Let's just say there's a solid
departure from daddy's way of
thinking. We take direct action
here. The fringes are not fringe
anymore.

INT. WELCOME CENTER

Mary stands next to a RECEPTIONIST who sits at a table.

The Receptionist has a signage book opened.

MARY

I need you all to check in.

Billy approaches the Receptionist.

BILLY

Hi.

RECEPTIONIST

ID please.

BILLY

Of course.

Billy retrieves his ID and hands it to the Receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST

I'll hold onto this for now.

LATER

The Participants gaggle together.

Lo and behold, Nancy approaches and nudges Billy's shoulder.
She gives a small smile, clearly taken aback at Billy's
handsomeness. She talks softly, nervous to engage
conversation.

NANCY

This place is just, wow, don't you
think?

Billy is taken aback by her beauty. Loses his professional
speak.

BILLY

It's definitely something,
and...wow, you're pretty.

(beat)

I'm sorry. That was a bit forward.
What's your name?

NANCY

(blushes)

That's okay. I'm Nancy. I've never
seen something this fancy.

BILLY

You here to volunteer or work?

NANCY

Oh, I'm volunteering. Darren asked
me too, and my mom has bills, so.

BILLY

Oh, you know Darren?

NANCY

I dated him.

Mary notices Nancy. Confused by her presence.

MARY

(quiet, to herself)

Nancy?

Mary blinks and shakes away her question. Addresses the
group.

MARY

My name is Mary. In a moment,
you'll go through orientation. I
hope nobody is claustrophobic.

The Receptionist pushes a button under the desk. The bookcase
opens revealing the elevator.

Nancy is in awe.

NANCY

Wow!

MARY

We can only fit a few on at a time.

Half of the Participants enter. The elevator closes and
descends.

BILLY
(to Mary)
This is quite secretive. Never seen
anything like this before.

MARY
We need the privacy.

BILLY
What's protocol for elevator
malfunctions?

MARY
This elevator has multiple power
sources.

The elevator returns and the rest of the group to include
Mary and Billy enter.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN HALL

Mary exits the elevator first.

MARY
Follow me.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - ORIENTATION ROOM

The group sits in a room. Nancy scoots near Billy. They smile
at each other.

Darren walks through the door and stands in front of the
group well-groomed, donning a white lab coat.

DARREN
Welcome. My name is Darren. I hope
you're ready to be involved in
something that will change the
world for the better.

Darren and Billy lock eyes.

Mary whispers into Darren's ear. Darren looks at Nancy and
smirks with evil intent.

Billy follows Darren's gaze to Nancy.

Nancy waves at Darren.

END FLASHBACK

BACK TO SCENE

Billy crawls out from under the bed. He stands and stares at Darren.

DARREN

I know about your plot to destroy what I built. You're only alive because I need you. We're going to rebuild. You'll help me because your sister is here, and if you refuse, I'll slice her to pieces.

INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE BILLY'S ROOM

The ceiling lights shine down on a hospital attendant full of puncture marks. Blood pools around the body.

We move down the hallway as pools of blood grow larger. More bodies, some dismembered, litter the floor.

A nurse, still alive on the ground, pulls herself forward. Unfortunately her lower half stays behinds as ENTRAILS UNFOLD. She drags ahead a few inches before stopping.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR (DRIVING)

Claire in the driver seat. Colleen in the passenger. The car SPEEDING along.

Claire grips the steering wheel tight. Colleen grips the "oh shit" bar.

COLLEEN

You should let me drive.

CLAIRE

Do you have any clue as to what Billy was working on?

COLLEEN

You seem frightened. Did you see something?

CLAIRE

Is it possible that they were...creating monsters?

Colleen looks at Claire for a beat, stunned look on her face.

COLLEEN
You should really let me drive.
Please, Claire.

Claire looks straight ahead. Her VISION BLURS. She shakes her head. Vision corrects.

EXT. HOSPITAL

Flashing lights as multiple police vehicles, fire trucks and other EMS personnel are there. The area cordoned off. In the distance some survivors are wrapped in blankets as they talk to police.

EXT. HOSPITAL - CORDON AREA

A DETECTIVE is talking to a gaggle of JOURNALISTS on the edge of the cordon area.

IN THE AMBULANCE

Victoria sits wrapped in a blanket. Shaking.

Officer Jim approaches with a notepad and pen.

OFFICER JIM
Hey Vickie.

Victoria looks up at Jim. Stays quiet.

OFFICER JIM
I know ain't the best time, but
what happened? I've never seen
anything this violent.

VICTORIA
D-D-Darren.

Officer Jim writes down the name.

OFFICER JIM
You know him?

Victoria remains still. Officer Jim writes some more. Gnaws on the pen.

OFFICER JIM
It seems one patient is unaccounted
for. Billy. Now wasn't he the one
in the coma? Have that sister?

VICTORIA
He woke up.

OFFICER JIM
From a coma? And just wandered off?

Victoria looks at Jim. Scared. Her shaking increases.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR (DRIVING)

The car speeds down the road.

Claire focused straight ahead. The alcohol gaining strength over her. Her eyelids droopy. Her head drops slowly.

Colleen looks at her, scared and worried.

COLLEEN
Claire, I think you've had too much to drink.

CLAIRE
(slams the wheel)
I'm not that person. I'm not.

The car drifts to the side of the road.

Claire wakes up. The car halfway into the brush, bouncing on the rocks and uneven earth.

CLAIRE
Shit!

COLLEEN
GAHHH!

Claire YANKS THE WHEEL correcting her position. She violently shakes her head and SLAPS HER FACE.

CLAIRE
I'm okay.

Her vision becomes smaller, forming a tunnel focused directly ahead.

COLLEEN
Please, Claire pull over. I don't want to die tonight.

Claire's head nods again. The engine continues to accelerate faster and faster to dangerous levels.

The car drifts again and rumbles as it veers off the road.

EXT. CAR (DRIVING)

The car hits a hole. The right two wheels on the car LIFT OFF THE GROUND.

CRASH!

EXT. UNDER BRIDGE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Rain pours from the sky. Litter covers the ground. A green, pitched tent wobbles from the wind. A small fire near the tent, controlled.

Teen Claire and Billy sit in disheveled clothing close to each other warming their hands.

TEEN CLAIRE

It's cold out. Can we please go to the shelter?

TEEN BILLY

We can't. I'm sorry.

TEEN CLAIRE

Why not? And don't lie to me. We're family. You don't lie to family.

TEEN BILLY

Trust me. Just trust me.

Claire glares at Billy. Billy's eyes soften.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Glass shattered. Lights flashing. Car upside down.

Clair crawls from the car. Bleeding. She grabs her head. Looks back to the car.

CLAIRE

Colleen?

Some groans from in the car. Claire stumbles to the other side of the car. Leans down.

Colleen is buckled. Blood drips down her face.

COLLEEN
What happened?

Colleen moans and groans.

CLAIRE
We have to get you out. How much
pain are you in?

COLLEEN
I don't think anything's broken.

Claire reaches into the car. Unbuckles the belt. Colleen braces herself and falls. Shifts around.

Claire pulls Colleen out of the car. They both stand.

COLLEEN
We should call an ambulance.

Colleen pulls up her shirt revealing GLASS EMBEDDED IN HER BELLY.

Claire panics.

CLAIRE
Shit, Colleen, I'm sorry.
(slams her head)
Shit, you were right.

She looks around. A ways down the road is Gertie's house.

CLAIRE
That's Gertie's house. Can you
walk? She has to have a phone.

COLLEEN
I can walk.

Claire walks back to the driver's side. She peruses the damage. Finds the bag with the orange liquid. Opens it up, nothing damaged.

EXT. GERTIE'S HOME

The front door is ripped off the hinges. The rocking chair is upended. Darkness in the house.

COLLEEN
What happened here?

Claire cautiously approaches the house.

CLAIRE
Gertie? You okay? We were in an
accident. Need to call an
ambulance.

Nothing from inside the house.

Claire gives Colleen the bag of orange liquid.

CLAIRE
I'm going in. Keep an eye on these.
Don't let them break.

Claire enters the house.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - KITCHEN

Nothing appears disturbed.

Claire turns on the light. Reveals...

Blood and the black substance SMEARED on the floor.

CLAIRE
Oh shit.

THUD!

Claire looks into the living room. Sees nothing.

Searches for a phone. Finds nothing.

CLAIRE
Gertie it's Claire, from earlier. I
need to call an ambulance.

On the kitchen table are SYRINGES along with diabetes
medication. Thrown about.

Claire picks up a syringe. Sets it back down.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

Claire turns on the light. Eyes the room. More blood and
black substance on the floor. Smear marks to the back wall
where...

Gertie stands, CONTORTED, looking down. Her body covered in
PUNCTURE WOUNDS dripping with the stuff from the floor.

Claire jumps backwards. Spooked.

CLAIRE

Gertie?

Gertie looks up. Her NECK POPS AND CRACKS with each movement. She looks at Claire.

GERTIE

She's alive.

Colleen enters behind. Stands next to Claire.

COLLEEN

Oh, Gertie, what happened to you?

GERTIE

I can hear her. In my head. My Nancy.

Gertie smiles. Blood drips from the mouth corners.

CLAIRE

(whispers to Colleen)

Keep her talking.

Claire takes the bag of orange liquid. Leaves for the kitchen.

Colleen reinspects the wound. The blood flow isn't slowing much. Winces.

COLLEEN

Did Darren do this?

GERTIE

I feel stronger. My pain is gone.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - KITCHEN

Claire takes a syringe. Empties the contents.

Pulls out a vial of orange liquid. Pulls some into the syringe.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

Claire returns next to Colleen. HIDES the syringe behind her back.

CLAIRE

Where's your phone, Gertie? I think
you need a hospital.

Gertie's smiles disappears.

GERTIE

And make my pain come back?

VINES PROTRUDE from Gertie's skin.

The vines reach the ceiling and floor. Dig in and hold Gertie
in place.

Gertie begins to STRETCH lengthwise. Her upper half towards
the ceiling. Lower half towards the floor.

The skin breaks. BLACK BLOOD oozes out.

GERTIE

I like the way I feel.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - ORIENTATION ROOM

The power and lights are partially back on. A small generator
runs, no vibrations. Chairs toppled. A few bodies piled in
the corner.

Billy is TIED to a chair. Darren stands in front of him. Arms
crossed.

DARREN

You forget I set the elevator code
to malfunction it?

Billy says nothing.

DARREN

I brought you into my world. But
you and that bitch, Mary, thought
you could ruin everything.

BILLY

Where is she?

DARREN

Dead.

BILLY

I don't believe you. Where's
Claire?

DARREN
Soon to be dead.
(beat)
What changed? You were on board
with everything. We did some truly
nasty work together, but it would
give us that reset.

Billy juts his head up. Eyes water.

DARREN
(insulting)
Oh, don't tell me it was Nancy? She
was just another volunteer. Nothing
special.

BILLY
You never even told Mary what you
did with her.

DARREN
The less she knew, the better since
she was friends with Gertie. I
don't recall you telling her either
once you found out.
(beat)
Now onto other important things.
What is the orange liquid you snuck
into Nancy's bedroom?

CUT TO:

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

Vines WHIP AND TWIST from Gertie's torso like arms ready to
drag in a meal.

COLLEEN
I think we should leave.

Colleen and Claire veer around. Claire runs. Colleen hobbles,
squinting a pained face.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - KITCHEN

Colleen and Claire run but screech to a halt.

Security Guard One and Two walk into the home. Both have GUNS
pointed at Claire and Colleen.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
Well, well, you must be Claire.
Fancy seeing you here.

CLAIRE
We need to leave now.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
No one is leaving.

Claire looks at Colleen. Gives a nod to run. Colleen nods back.

They turn and run back into the living room.

Both Security Guards SHOOT the guns. Dust from the wall flies as bullets ram through.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

Claire and Colleen run towards the side of the room towards the stairs.

Gertie, LIFTED IN THE AIR, is carried by the vines towards the kitchen.

Security Guard Two enters the room first, gun raised. He looks towards Claire and Colleen. Doesn't notice Gertie.

The vines ENSNARE Security Guard Two who screams as he falls to the floor. He's dragged towards Gertie's torso which acts like a mouth.

He drops the gun. Tries to reach. Fails.

SECURITY GUARD TWO
HELP!

Security Guard One enters the room. Sees the carnage.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
What the fuck?!

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Shoot the fucking thing!!

Security Guard One shoots at Gertie. The bullets do no damage.

Security Guard Two is dragged closer. He squirms, continuing to scream.

Security Guard One notices Claire and Colleen on the stairs, watching the horror show. He looks back at Security Guard Two.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
I'll tell Darren you died with
honor.

SECURITY GUARD TWO
Fuck you!
(choking)
Fuck you!

Gertie's vines wrap around Security Guard Two's throat. His body lifted into the chomping torso.

Security Guard Two lets out one final gasp as the vines act like an anaconda. They SQUEEZE. BLOOD EXPLODES from Security Guard Two as his body disappears into Gertie's body.

INT. NANCY'S HOME - BEDROOM

Claire and Colleen quickly enter. Shut the door. A small nightstand is dragged as a barricade. Colleen is barely hanging on, showing extreme weakness.

CLAIRE
In the closet, go.

Colleen breathes heavy. Pushes on the wound. The shirt soaked in blood towards the bottom. Enters the closet.

Claire GRABS the baseball bat and enters the closet.

BANG!

The door jolts from pressure on the other side. A few more hits and the nightstand is pushed away.

Security Guard One enters the room. His gun aimed ahead. He looks around the room. Sees the closet.

Walks towards the closet.

SECURITY GUARD ONE
Come out. Come out...

Claire jumps from the closet like a rabid dog. She SWINGS the bat down over Security Guard One's head.

Security Guard One falls down but is able to fire one round off.

Claire takes the gun from him.

CLAIRE
(to Colleen)
We need to go, now.

Claire looks out the door. Gertie stands looking normal except the blood and black ooze.

Claire looks at the window.

CLAIRE
We have to jump.

Colleen shakes her head.

COLLEEN
I can't.
(slides down)
I can't

Colleen lifts her shirt - the GLASS GONE. Barely breathing. Weak...

Blood POURING from the wound.

Claire STOMPS AND YELLS, furious with herself. Kneels down to Colleen.

CLAIRE
I should've fucking listened to
you. I'm so fucking sorry.

Claire buries her head in Colleen's shoulder.

COLLEEN
(intermittently coughs)
I guess you were right about them
making monsters.

Claire pulls the syringe filled with orange liquid from her pocket. Hands it to Colleen.

CLAIRE
This should...make her better.

Gertie still remains unmoved. Looking dead ahead.

Claire opens the window. Gives a final look to Colleen and Gertie.

Claire disappears from the window.

Colleen looks at Gertie with all her remaining strength.

COLLEEN
Whatever you have, Gertie. I could
use it. In some pain myself.

Gertie stumbles over to Colleen. Her head like a lizard.

COLLEEN
Your daughter's alive?

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The Cackling Tree shifts its eyes and mouth around.

GERTIE (V.O.)
I always knew she was alive. Never
gave up

CAKCLING TREE
Mom.

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - BEDROOM

COLLEEN
(out of breath)
This doesn't sound like a good way
to live, Gertie. You hurt people.

The vines slowly emerge like snakes. Gertie's head looks up
and away.

GERTIE
I can hear you, Nancy. I'm coming
to you.
(looks at Colleen)
Just have to help someone.

Colleen touches the wound, sucks air through teeth.

COLLEEN
(coughing)
I have to help someone too.

Colleen takes the syringe and JAMS it into Gertie.

Gertie THRASHES about. Screams helplessly and monstrosly.
The vines curl in the air and FREEZE.

Gertie gives a final look to Colleen.

GERTIE
Thank you.

Gertie falls to the floor. PIECES DISINTEGRATE.

EXT. HOSPITAL

The Cackling Tree, now known to be Nancy, cries out loud.

NANCY
MOMMMMMM!

INT. GERTIE'S HOME - BEDROOM

Colleen droops her head. Falls to the side, DEAD.

EXT. GERTIE'S HOME

Claire stands outside looking up into the window. No sounds. She holds the bag of orange liquid. Grips it tight. Gun in the other hand. Leaves.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - ORIENTATION ROOM

Darren has a hold of Billy's hand. One finger is BROKEN. Darren holds another finger.

DARREN
Tell me what I want to know.

Billy seethes. Inhales deeply, but raspy.

HIVE (V.O.)
Stop. We need him.

DARREN
You need him. This traitor killed me once.

BILLY
You killed yourself. It may have been us to pull the lever, but you've been tightening your own noose. The snap was eventual.

Darren goes to break Billy's other finger. Billy winces in preparation.

Darren stops. Looks up.

DARREN
Gertie. I don't hear her anymore.

HIVE (V.O.)
What happened?

Darren glares at Billy.

DARREN
That orange shit. What is it?

Billy smirks.

MARY (O.S.)
Wouldn't you like to know?

Darren and Billy look at Mary who holds a HARPOON-TYPE WEAPON. It's aimed at Darren's head.

DARREN
A coup d'etat

MARY
Pretty much.

Mary shoots the harpoon.

A PROJECTILE launches and IMPALES Darren's head sticking into the wall behind. Darren slunks.

Mary lowers the harpoon. Unties Billy.

BILLY
Darren said you were dead.

MARY
Not quite yet.

Billy stands. Massages his wrists.

BILLY
I got a back door key out with the precursor. Claire is here and if she got my drive, she's done what I asked.

MARY
Fucking family reunions. She wouldn't have figured out where that key goes?

BILLY
I fucking hope not. If she listened to the video, I say not to mess with the key. Was only for dire emergencies so we had a way back in if needed.

Mary walks up to Darren. She pulls the BLOODY KNIFE from her back pocket and CUTS OFF DARREN'S HAND.

Black blood falls out.

BILLY
I thought you didn't want to burn
this place?

MARY
Let's say I've had a perspective
change.

EXT. BRUSH LINE

Claire pushes her way to the underground door. She searches her surroundings, but it's dark; the moon helps light a bit. She steps quietly.

She approaches the door. She pulls the key from her pocket. Walks to the metal slab. Inserts the key. The door opens.

CLAIRE
Please let that fucking thing be
gone.

She removes the key and walks inside. The door shuts behind her.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - SECRET EMERGENCY EXIT

Red emergency lights form a path.

Claire looks on the wall. An older sign, engraved. Reads: "2 MILES"

CLAIRE
Fuck me.

She aims the gun forward. A mini-flashlight attached to the bottom turns on.

Shines the light to the floor.

Filthy, wet FOOTPRINTS meander with no direction.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - STAIRWELL

Billy and Mary enter. Mary quietly shuts the door. They descend the stairs slowly.

BILLY
Are the Nurturer's still around?

MARY
Two.

FLOOR 2

MARY
You think Claire ever got better?

BILLY
I can only hope. It was my fault in
the end, but she...

Mary finishes Billy's sentence.

MARY
Was successful. Netflix and all.

FLOOR 3

They stop.

MARY
Generator.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - SECRET EMERGENCY EXIT

Claire continues jogging. She stops, out of breath. Hacks a
bit.

A distant CACKLE echoes through the hall.

Claire lifts the gun quick. She spins back and forth.

She pulls out another syringe and the orange liquid. Sucks up
some of the liquid. Pockets the rest.

INT. POLICE CAR - DRIVING

Officer Jim in the driver seat. Victoria in the passenger
seat.

Victoria rubs sweaty palms on her pants.

Jim notices.

OFFICER JIM
So, where abouts we going?

VICTORIA
Few miles out.

OFFICER JIM
You seem nervous.

VICTORIA
I just don't know what we'll be
walking into.

Victoria looks out the window.

EXT. POLICE CAR - DRIVING

The police car goes the speed limit. No lights flashing.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - GENERATOR ROOM

A big, hulking MACHINE full of buttons and knobs that would
stump a professional.

Billy and Mary walk up to the generator.

BILLY
Need light.

Mary turns around. On a TABLE is a FLASHLIGHT amongst
scattered documents and tools.

BILLY
You ever learn how to turn this on?

MARY
Nope.

BILLY
Is there a schematic?

Mary returns to the table. She throws papers around until she
finds the one she needs.

MARY
Got it.

Mary opens the schematic. Peruses the pages.

MARY
It have gas?

Billy checks some DIALS. Finds one labeled "FUEL." The arrow
roughly three quarters full.

BILLY
We got enough.

MARY
(reads the schematic)
Isn't it ironic this takes gas?

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - NIGHT

Multiple stretchers and body bags fill the room, overcrowding the space.

One BODY BAG is on a shelf. It rustles.

ZIP!

Vines come out of the rustling bag. The Traveling Man pulls himself out the bag.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - FLOOR FOUR

A door is pushed open. Emerging from the door is an out of breath Claire. She puts her hands over her head. Inhales deep and exhales.

She looks up at the door that reads: *"AUTHORIZED PERSONS ONLY. FAILURE TO ADHERE WILL RESULT IN MEMORY LOSS"*

Some accompanied writing is scrawled IN RED on the door: *"HELL"*

Claire walks to the door. Pushes on the door which opens. She walks inside.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - TREE FARM HALLWAY

Two long, GLASS WINDOWS on both sides of the hallway EXTENDING AT LEAST 20 FEET UPWARDS. The windows are covered from the floor up about two feet.

Claire slowly walks forward approaching the window. She cups her hand against her face. Beyond the glass is difficult to see between grime and darkness.

She backs from the window and continues on the path.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - GENERATOR ROOM

Billy stands up. Pats his knees. Claps his hands.

BILLY
Okay, next step.

Mary turns the page on the schematic.

MARY
Last step. Lift the three handles.

Billy steps to the first handle. Lifts.

Lifts the second handle.

BILLY
Feels like Jurassic Park.

MARY
Don't electrocute any children.

Billy lifts the final handle. Steps back.

Nothing.

Mary looks back at the schematic.

BILLY
We did it right, right?

THE LIGHTS TURN ON.

They both shield their eyes.

BILLY
That worked. Let's go find Claire.

Mary is staring at an out of sight wall. She shakes. Bites her lip.

Billy looks onward confused.

BILLY
Mary, what is it?

Mary lifts her hand, pointing her finger.

Billy walks to where Mary is. Looks at the wall.

A LARGE HOLE. Pieces of drywall are broken, laying on the ground. Inside the hole is darkness.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - TREE FARM OFFICE

The interior looks as any office would - computers, desks, filing cabinets. A window out into the tree farm is shattered.

Claire opens the door and enters. She stops at a shredder that has a papers lodged in. Like the power turned off mid shred...

The overhead lights TURN ON. Highly dim. They BUZZ.

Claire looks at the lights before returning to the shredder. Pulls off the top PAPER which is detailed with NAMES and ADDRESSES.

She looks at other papers which have multiple names accompanied with TIME STAMPS and the headline: "DURATION UNTIL FIRST SYMPTOM"

One paper is titled "NANCY" with black lines of redacted material. Claire leaves the shredder.

She sits at the desk and rummages through papers and folders.

Attempts to open a locked drawer. Doesn't budge. Searches the desk and finds a RING OF KEYS. Finds the correct key and opens the drawer.

In the drawer, she finds a folder labeled: "DIAGRAMS"

In it are DISTURBING PHOTOS OF PEOPLE TRANSFORMING INTO PLANT LIFE.

She searches through more papers, and bumps the computer which exits the screensaver. The screen displays a password entry.

She briefly searches the desk, and finds the password on a STICKY NOTE under the keyboard. She scoffs and types it in.

On the computer screen a multitude of folders, one titled: "NANCY"

She opens the folder and clicks on a link which opens a video labeled: "DAY 5".

INSERT - VIDEO

Darren stands next to Nancy with ROOTS coming out of her feet.

DARREN (V.O.)
See the roots. We have figured out
how to anchor them to the ground.
Just like your normal flora, once
the roots are long enough, the
subject will be able to stand
without assistance.

BACK TO SCENE

CLAIRE
(gagging)
Fuck.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - GENERATOR ROOM

Mary and Billy approach the hole in the wall. The exchange
disturbing glances. Billy puts his ear up. Eyes widen.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - TREE FARM OFFICE

Claire exits out of the video. She opens another video
labeled: "DAY 10"

INSERT - VIDEO

Nancy stands in a large pot.

DARREN (V.O.)
The roots have taken hold. She's
standing without assistance. Now
we're going to be giving her an
injection.

Darren takes a SYRINGE injecting the contents into Nancy.

DARREN (V.O.)
These injections should continue
the growth process. We'll check
back in a few days. If the growth
continues, we'll move her to the
farm.

BACK TO SCENE

CLAIRE
Sick bastards.

Claire clicks on another video labeled: "DAY 13"

INSERT - VIDEO

Nancy has BRANCH-LIKE GROWTHS extending from her body.

DARREN (V.O.)

As you can see, the growth process so far is successful. And it's much more rapid than we thought. We'll be able to expand the farm with ease. We should move the body to the farm before the growths get too large for us to transport.

The video screen goes black for a moment before returning.

Two ASSISTANTS put Nancy in the farm area, which resembles a large-sized WAREHOUSE with a large pane of glass, and then depart off-screen. There are other "tree-like" persons further along the evolution scattered around.

Darren moves in front of the camera.

DARREN (V.O.)

With this area, and the other side, we can accommodate a hundred test subjects. This will give them everything they need for plant growth. Artificial sunlight, water, food. Once they've grown up, we'll move them anywhere in the world.

NANCY (V.O.)

(groggily)

Why are you doing this, Darren? I trusted you. I loved you.

Darren strokes Nancy's hair.

DARREN (V.O.)

We'll always have prom night. When I stared into your eyes while we made love, I felt something. For the first time since my mother was alive, I felt...better.

NANCY (V.O.)

(crying)

I want my mommy. It hurts so bad.

DARREN (V.O.)

I wanted my mother too. Love hurts sometimes, and pain...helps us see more clear.

BACK TO SCENE

Claire leans back in the chair. Shock and disgust fill her face.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - ORIENTATION ROOM

Darren stands lifeless with the PROJECTILE rammed through his face. Blood drips.

His hand moves. It moves up to the projectile. Both hands GRIP AND YANK. The body tissue squelches as the projectile is removed.

Darren doesn't make a sound. His face with a gnarly WOUND dead center. His mouth untouched.

HIVE (V.O.)
You're pathetic, Darren.

TENDRILS in Darren's face appear and wriggle over each other acting like a suture, PULLING his face together.

Darren's face looks like nothing happened at all.

HIVE (V.O.)
Get them. NOW!

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - GENERATOR ROOM

Billy takes the flashlight and shines it in the hole. His mouth becomes agape.

DARREN
Oh. My. God.

Mary peeks inside and her face mimics Billy's.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - HOLE IN WALL

Grunting. Moaning. Clicking.

The flashlight emittance lights up a NURTURER followed by another followed by another - more than originally thought. They appear to be sleeping.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - GENERATOR ROOM

Billy and Mary turn away from the hole. Billy turns off the flashlight.

They both tip-toe out of the room

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - STAIRWELL

Billy and Mary stand outside the door. They relax and breathe.

MARY

How did this happen? I had a precise count.

BILLY

It would seem Darren was pulling overtime.

(beat)

Okay, how about you check the hall, see if Claire accidentally got here. I'm going to the farm to get the ax.

MARY

(pulls out her blade)

I've got my own protection. Stay...

(looks up, hears something we don't)

Darren's awake.

BILLY

How could you know that?

MARY

Stay quiet.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - TREE FARM OFFICE

A switch labeled "LIGHTS" above the computer.

Claire flips the switch. The lights in the tree farm turn on partially.

Looking through the shattered glass, Claire sees multiple TREE-LIKE BODIES erect and in rows - some just in the initial PHASES with more human elements in jagged positioning.

CLAIRE

Jesus Christ.

Claire opens another video labeled: "DAY 20"

INSERT - VIDEO

Nancy is mostly covered in bark growth.

DARREN (V.O.)

As you can see, the transformation is almost complete. In another few days, she'll look no different than a growing tree in your own backyard. I think we'll put her in the hospital parking lot. We must keep this secret from everything else we're doing. Can you do that, Billy?

BACK TO SCENE

Claire pauses the video.

CLAIRE

Billy?

BILLY (O.S.)

Claire?

Claire jolts in the seat. Billy is standing by the door. Claire quickly stands up from the chair.

CLAIRE

(angry)

Don't come near me.

BILLY

We can talk about this later, trust me, we need to go.

CLAIRE

That's all you fucking say is trust you. How long have you been hurting people.

Claire looks behind Billy. Her eyes widen.

BILLY

Please, let's go. We have to destroy this place.

Behind Billy, the Choking Figure enters the room. It stands, WRITHING.

Claire slowly pulls the syringe from her pocket. Billy sees it.

BILLY

Don't use that on me.

CLAIRE

It's not for you.

Claire tosses the syringe. Billy catches it.

CHOKING FIGURE
Billy, did you miss me?

Billy turns around slowly, recognizing the voice.

BILLY
Claire, back wall, there's an ax.

Claire glances to the wall, sees a CASE. Hurries towards it.

BILLY
You weren't my fault.

The Choking Figure SLAMS its hand down on the shredder. Pure strength crushes it inwards.

CHOKING FIGURE
I didn't want this! You didn't stop him either!

The Figure steps towards Billy.

CHOKING FIGURE
You'll soon be inside me...digesting.

The Choking Figure THROWS its head back. The black sludge PUMPS through it's body PULSATING UP.

Claire emerges SWINGING the ax at the Choking Figure. It doesn't drop, but Claire keeps swinging, yelling with each blow.

Black sludge ERUPTS from the neck pouring everywhere.

CLAIRE
Do it, Billy!

Billy rushes forward and injects the syringe into the Choking Figure, depressing the plunger.

The Choking Figure thrashes around knocking over computers and desks before slamming against a wall and collapsing. It looks at Billy.

CHOKING FIGURE
I trusted you, Billy.

The Choking Figure falls apart into chunks.

Billy falls on his backside. Breathes heavy.

Claire stands.

BILLY
I didn't realize it was that
powerful. I'll have to tweak it.

CLAIRE
Oh, will you, Mr. Science?

Claire glares at Billy.

CLAIRE
What the fuck were you doing here?
The brother I grew up with would
never stoop to hurting people.

Billy collapses in a chair, puts his chin in his hands.

BILLY
I've been hurting people for a long
time.

CLAIRE
What are you talking about?

BILLY
You remember that first shelter we
stayed at?

Claire nods, eyes piercing.

BILLY
(chokes up, tears fall)
Well, we went a few times, and I
knew what he was doing to you, but
I knew you wanted a warm bed. It
was so cold out, so I never said
anything.
(wipes tears)
And one night, I couldn't watch it
happen anymore, so I...killed him.
They never found out it was me, and
I could never go back.

Claire softens her gaze. Billy doesn't look at her, angry
with himself.

BILLY
I never got over what I did, and it
took a toll on you. Even though you
never knew, it's like you felt
wrong in your body, and you were
abusing it.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

If I just told you from the start,
maybe we could've been fine, but...

Billy looks up at Claire.

BILLY

I couldn't stand you anymore. The
shit you were doing to yourself, I
had to get away, and I blame
myself, and maybe that's why I'm
here. I wanted to become better,
but instead I becoming something
worse.

Billy continues to sob in his hands.

Claire looks regretfully at Billy, but not fully sure why.

CLAIRE

I always loved you, Billy. After
you left, everything became worse
for awhile until I found what I
loved. I was able to pull myself
from the trenches, but I always
tried to figure out what I did to
push you away. I stare at our
pictures every night to sleep,
because you were always there for
me when it was cold outside and I
needed an extra blanket. You were
my big brother. I would have
forgiven you for anything.

Billy looks at Claire. Half smile.

BILLY

I wish I could go back and fix
everything.

CLAIRE

You can start by fixing what you've
done here.

DARREN (O.S.)

Great family moment.

Claire and Billy look at the doorway. Darren towers in the
frame.

Darren pulls a syringe out of his pocket. Before Claire can
react, he rushes forward and injects the syringe contents
into her neck.

Claire goes limp.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - PIT

Claire is hanging with her hands tied above her head. She is above the pit, feet resting on a plank of wood.

Billy stands near the edge. Darren stands next to a pulley system that has the rope attached. A swift release would send Claire down to the depths.

Claire slowly opens her eyes.

DARREN
Wakey wakey, eggs and bac-ey.

CLAIRE
(groggy)
Where am I?

Darren holds his hand up like a circus performer introducing an act.

DARREN
Welcome to the pit.

Claire looks down and sees a SWIRLING, SQUELCHING MASS OF BLACK SUBSTANCE. She struggles in the restraint.

DARREN
I wouldn't struggle that much or you'll end up down there faster than you'd like. It's not a very fun place. I crawled out of it.

CLAIRE
Shame you didn't stay dead.

DARREN
Ha! There's some comic relief.

CLAIRE
All those people.

Darren nods.

DARREN
Yes, the tree farm. Not part of the original plan, but when institutions pump you with money and want certain things, well, you deliver. Word got out, and then all of a sudden, people blew us up with requests to dispose of bodies. The government of U, S, Fucking A.
(MORE)

DARREN (CONT'D)

These rich people wanting us to take care of their problems. Finding homes for the bodies was surprisingly easy when planting trees was a goal of the town.

CLAIRE

You're a monster.

DARREN

I admit it. But so's your brother. He's helped me do some truly awful things, Claire.

Billy tries to speak but is unable.

DARREN

Billy, why don't you head back up.

Billy turns around slowly and departs.

CLAIRE

Remember what we talked about and fixing everything.

DARREN

Billy thinks like me, Claire. He may have had a momentary lapse of judgement, but he'll come crawling back. The work is too precious and the money...succulent.

Billy stops walking. He turns to face Claire.

BILLY

Trust me.

Claire smiles and nods.

DARREN

How sweet, anyways, goodbye, Claire.

Darren smiles and RELEASES THE ROPE.

All of a sudden, Billy SLAMS A ROD against Darren's head, knocking him over.

Claire drops and hits the wood SNAPPING IT IN HALF.

CLAIRE

Billy!

Billy pushes on the pulley handle stopping Claire's descent.

BILLY
Swing yourself.

Claire kicks her legs and swings herself. Her legs reach the pit edge.

Billy grabs her legs and puts them on the solid ground.

BILLY
Hold still.

Claire hyperventilates.

Billy pulls a knife out of his pocket. He cuts the rope holding Claire. He holds onto Claire and falls backwards.

BILLY
Are you okay?

CLAIRE
No.

BILLY
Let's go. We need to find Mary.
There's an emergency button in the
main office. It'll set fire to this
place.

Claire and Billy stand and head for the exit.

CLAIRE
What about him?

BILLY
Leave him. He'll burn.

Claire disregards. Pulls the gun from the back of her pants.
BLOWS A HOLE in Darren's head. KICKS HIM INTO THE PIT.

Billy covers his ears due to the gun blast. Claire doesn't react.

BILLY
That works, but hopefully nobody
heard it.

They bolt out of the room.

INT. UNKNOWN FACILITY - SECRET EMERGENCY EXIT

GUNSHOT BLAST

Mary turns around, runs back.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - HOLE IN WALL

GUNSHOT BLAST

Nurturer's stir and awaken.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - TREE FARM HALLWAY

With the power back on, the hallway and the interior of the tree farm are lit up.

Claire and Billy both sprint towards the door. They're going to make it out, but...

A NURTURER STOMPS THROUGH THE DOOR. It walks on all four feet, which have sharp, protruding claws. It opens its mouth revealing teeth and a DISFIGURED HUMAN HEAD inside. The human's eyes dart back and forth.

Claire and Billy skid to a stop.

Claire looks at Billy, and nudges her head to a door in the glass leading into the farm. Billy nods. They both walk through.

The nurturer creeps down the hall. ITS CLAWS TAPPING THE GROUND. It stops at the door in the glass. It sniffs...

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - TREE FARM

...And steps through the door. It opens its mouth as the human head inside is pushed out. Resting on a fleshy stem, the head lifts in the air like a periscope.

The farm full of roughly twenty subjects in DIFFERENT STAGES OF TREE GROWTH.

Claire has taken position behind a TREE PERSON. She peeks around noticing Billy hiding behind another tree person. She motions her hand to get back to the door.

Billy nods his head. He sneaks forward.

The tree person behind Claire OPENS ITS EYES. It begins to moan.

Claire turns quickly to see its sad eyes staring at her. She backs away hiding in another spot STEPPING ON A BRANCH WHICH CRACKS. She quickly hides behind the next tree person.

The nurturer approaches the moaning tree person, and retracts its head. The nurturer RUBS its face against the tree person in a SOOTHING WAY WHICH STOPS THE MOANS.

Billy is at the door waving at Claire. She nods and takes a step. The GROUND CRUNCHES. She moves back to her position.

The nurturer abruptly looks up.

CLAIRE
 (mouths)
 Fuck.
 (mouths to Billy)
 Lights.

Claire points upwards. Billy nods and leaves.

The nurturer opens its mouth, protruding the human head inside. THE HEAD MOVES FORWARD until it's next to Claire, although it doesn't see her.

From behind Claire, another nurturer enters through the door. The first nurturer notices.

The LIGHTS CLUNK off.

Under cover of darkness, Claire sneaks away. She reaches the door and exits unnoticed.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - TREE FARM HALLWAY

Claire and Billy crawl next to the wall. They reach the entry door and stand.

DARREN (O.S.)
 Where do you think you're both
 going?

Darren is trampling forward, HALF-COVERED IN THE BLACK SLUDGE. His eyes meet Claire and Billy.

HIVE (V.O.)
 You should've killed them. What
 would your mother think?

DARREN
 I won't let either of you leave.
 The work here is too important.
 It's...

Darren crosses in front of the glass door and is KNOCKED OVER when one of the nurturers bursts from the tree farm and swipes at him. The second nurturer joins them.

Darren shimmies backwards. He hides his face, clearly petrified of the nurturers.

DARREN
(forceful, yet vulnerable)
You can't hurt me! I created you!

Both nurturers flank Darren's right and left side. He cowers like the coward he is.

DARREN
Don't! I was making you better!

HIVE (V.O.)
Stop this. Listen to me.

The first nurturer STOMPS ITS FOOT ON DARREN'S LEG.

CRUNCH!

Darren cries out. Vines rapidly protrude from his skin stabbing the nurturers. Both nurturers RIP them off.

DARREN
(panicked)
I CAN FIX YOU! IF YOU STOP I CAN
FIX YOU!

The first nurturer grabs Darren's head. Its claw enter his mouth, SPIKING UP AND OUT OF DARREN'S HEAD AND EYE SOCKETS.

HIVE (V.O.)
You failed us Darren!

Darren let's out a shrill scream.

The first nurturer lifts Darren up, placing him square against the glass.

The second nurturer grabs Darren's shoulders and BEGINS TO PULL

Darren lets out on final screech before his HEAD IS DISMANTLED FROM HIS BODY. Black ooze erupts everywhere.

The first nurturer EATS DARREN'S HEAD in chilling fashion with sloppy crunches.

BILLY
(whispers)
We need to go.

Claire and Billy both enter the stairwell.

CLAIRE
(holds back barf)
That was...

BILLY
Enough for the day.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN HALL

Claire and Billy are in full sprint.

BILLY
In the main office is the button to
set this place on fire. You need to
leave. Ride the elevator up. I'll
meet you topside.

CLAIRE
I can just wait for you.

BILLY
No. If something goes wrong, we
both can't die in here. I need you
to report on what's happened here.
That thumb drive. It has everything
you need.

Claire and Billy both stop at the main office. Billy nudges
her to the elevator.

BILLY
Go Claire. Now. I'll be right up.

CLAIRE
I love you.

BILLY
I love you too. Now go. Take these
keys. It's a busted oldie but'll
get you back to town. Wait five
minutes before you go.

Claire hugs Billy, long and tight. Billy reciprocates.

Claire lets go of Billy. Billy hands off a set of keys which
Claire accepts.

Claire enters the elevator. The doors close.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN OFFICE

Billy enters the main office. Mary is sitting at the computer holding DARREN'S HAND.

MARY
What files did you give her?

BILLY
Everything.

MARY
We're not going to look the best.

BILLY
I know, but it's part of the plan.

Mary takes Darren's SEVERED HAND and puts it on the scanner. It reads GREEN.

On the computer a message pops up: "INITIATE FIRE PROTOCOL?"

A tear SPLASHES on the keyboard.

BILLY
What changed in you? Now you're ready to burn this place instead of fix it.

Another message: "ARE YOU SURE? THIS IS NON-REVERSIBLE"

MARY
Go to Claire.

BILLY
You're coming too, right? I can't fix them out there without you.

MARY
I can't.

Mary clicks yes. A vine emerges from her fingernail. Billy looks in awe.

A timer counts down from 60...59...58...

EXT. WELCOME CENTER

Claire is standing outside near the car. She paces erratically.

CLAIRE
Come on Billy. Make it out.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN OFFICE

...47...46...45...

Mary looks at the computer. Closes her eyes and begins to PRAY.

...44...43...

BILLY

Mary, what Darren did to you
doesn't matter.

Mary wheels around in the chair.

MARY

We don't know what will happen to
me. If I'll go the way of Gertie or
the others.

35...34...

MARY

We need to keep it contained. So
go. Claire needs you.

27...26...25...

BILLY

I'm sorry, Mary.

MARY

I'm sorry too. Maybe God will be
forgiving.

Billy smirks and rushes out of the room. Mary spins back
around. Looks at the timer.

5...4...3...2...

Mary closes her eyes.

1...

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - TREE FARM

FLAMES ERUPT on both sides of the glass quickly.

Moans pierce the area as everything burns.

EXT. WELCOME CENTER

SMOKE WAFTS AND FLAMES ENGULF THE BUILDING.

Claire falls to her knees.

INT. UNDERGROUND FACILITY - MAIN OFFICE

Mary disappear into the flames.

EXT. WELCOME CENTER

Claire slowly stands back up. The building falls apart. Crashes from inside as items and decor topple over.

She eyes the building in a last hope that Billy walks out, but no one does.

She turns around slowly...

FLASHING LIGHTS approach. A police car parks next to Claire. The window rolls down.

Victoria and Officer Jim look out the window.

OFFICER JIM
What happened 'ere?

CLAIRE
I need a ride.

VICTORIA
What about Darren?

CLAIRE
He's dead this time.

VICTORIA
And Billy? Mary?

Claire looks down. Shakes her head slowly.

BILLY (O.S.)
Alive and well.

Claire quickly lifts her head up to see Billy walking towards her. She wears the biggest smile.

CLAIRE
I thought you...

BILLY

Me dying was never part of the plan. How else would we work on the cure? Plenty of lives to save around town.

Billy and Claire get in the back of the police car. The car drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Claire, Billy, Victoria, and Officer Jim enter the room. They stand awkwardly.

Billy notices bottles of alcohol around. Claire notices where Billy is glancing.

She rushes over and gathers the bottles.

CLAIRE

Sorry about this.

She enters the bathroom. The toilet flushes. Returns with empty bottles.

CLAIRE

Trust me, I'm not that person.

BILLY

I know you're not.

Billy and Claire smile at each other unaware what is happening just down the road...

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL

The night sky offers no stars. A heavy and disturbing airy feeling rides the wind which curls the tree leaves.

The hospital empty despite the chaotic scene earlier. Police tape ripped and waving in the wind.

Distant screams.

We approach Nancy.

NANCY
Darren dead. Fire. Cleanse.

INT. HOSPITAL MORGUE

A slew of body bags are torn open.

NANCY (V.O.)
More coming. Make a better world.
Darren gone but voice still here.
Haha.

EXT. HOSPITAL

We dolly away from Nancy. BODIES OF VARIOUS DEAD PEOPLE LAY ON THE GROUND. SOME BEGIN WRITHING.

We pan over the bodies as we see vines protrude from the skin and twist in the air.

Multiple eerie laughs presumably from other tree people that have awoken.

The Traveling Man stands in front of the hospital doors looking at the bodies. The bodies begin standing, and they face the Traveling Man - whatever Darren infected himself with has spread to everyone.

Vines start protruding from the body of Traveling Man as he smiles.

HIVE (V.O.)
Begin our migration to site two.

FADE OUT.

