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FADE IN

EXT. OUTSIDE, FOREST - EARLY EVENING

Eight people hike through a thick forest: MARLA and DAVID, a young twenties couple, SEAN and ANGIE, a thirty-ish couple, and FRANK and EMMA, both in their forties.

While the other women are very feminine, EMMA is more of a tomboy.

The leader of these couples in trouble is JOANNA the marriage counselor.

The guide for the trip is JOHN SINGINGWATERS, a stocky, long haired Native American.

Each of the hikers carries a backpack. All huff and puff, exhausted.

JOHN leads, with JOANNA close behind.

Marla walks through a large spider web. Disgusted, she pulls the web from her arms and face.

MARLA

God; are we almost there? I'm
starving to death. My feet are
killing me. My back is killing me.

DAVID

Nag, nag, bitch and gripe. But then
why should it be any different out
here?

Marla shoots David a look of hatred, and plops down on a large rock.

It takes a few moments before the others realize Marla has stopped.

Joanna calls back to Marla.

JOANNA

Get it in gear, Marla. We can't stop yet. It's getting dark, and we still have to set up camp.

David walks back toward Marla, and kneels down in front of her.

DAVID

Look, I know you're tired. We're all tired.

MARLA

Listen.

She looks around, listens for the sounds of the forest. It's eerily quiet.

DAVID

I don't hear anything.

MARLA

Exactly, Dave. Weird, huh? It should be teeming with wildlife this far in.

DAVID

Well, maybe there's a storm coming or something. Let's just go all right?

He grabs her by the arm and helps her up.

John calls back to the rest of the group.

JOHN

Less than a mile to the campsite.

Angie glares at his back with animosity as she huffs and puffs, exhausted.

ANGIE

John Singingwaters...
(scoffs)
What the hell kinda name is that...

SEAN
Cherokee, I think.

ANGIE
(grumbles)
John Slave-driver's more like it.

Sean eyeballs Marla, tilts his chin towards her.

SEAN
(to Angie)
Hey... I guess we know who's gonna
be the cry baby.

ANGIE
Ughhh... don't say baby. You're
making me think about Colby and
Kristen. I still can't believe you
made me leave them with your
mother.

SEAN
And you woulda done what - bring
'em out here?

ANGIE
No. I wouldn't have come. Why do we
really need this anyway, Sean?
Things aren't that bad.

Sean glances at the ground for a second, then stares into
Angie's eyes with a very serious look on his face.

SEAN
Maybe not for you.

He speeds up, and walks away from her. Angie adjusts her
heavy backpack, blows out a deep breath, and carries on with
the trek.

Frank stops for a moment, bent over, rests his hands on his
knees.

FRANK

Whewwww... I am not in the shape I
used to be.

Emma Walks past, not stopping to join him.

EMMA

Well gee Frank, maybe that's
because you only work out with one
arm.

She makes a gesture to indicate a slot machine.

EMMA

Cha-ching

FRANK

You always have to be such a bitch,
Emma? Jesus.

He rolls his eyes in aggravation and stalks away.

EXT. OUTSIDE, CAMPSITE - DUSK

The tents are pitched. An inviting fire burns, and the group
sits in a circle around it on the ground.

Marla swats at irritating bugs. Angie files her nails and
David smokes a cigarette while Sean pokes at the fire.

Emma and Frank chat among themselves. Joanna is just sitting
down. John is nowhere around.

JOANNA

Okay guys; now that we're all
settled in, I want to go over the
nuts and bolts. First off, I want
to stress that even though you're
all here for different problems,
you're all here for the same
reason; so, the first rule is don't
be ashamed to tell it all.
Anything said in this group stays
in this group. Got it?

Each person in the group either gives an unenthusiastic "uh huh" or nods.

JOANNA

Everybody left their cell phones
behind right?

They all nod again.

ANGIE

You know, I have something I want
to say about that, Joanna.

JOANNA

(mumbling, sarcastic)
Well, there's a surprise.

ANGIE

There shoulda been an exception - I
mean, at least for us. What if
something happened to the twins?
They could be buried by the time we
get home.

SEAN

Jesus Angie.

JOANNA

Negativity is a killer. Think of
this as a vacation - a chance to
get away from the kids and have
some time for yourselves. Now,
we'll be out here for 3 nights.
During this time, we're gonna air
all our dirty laundry. You can
yell, scream, cuss, tell each
other's secrets. Do whatever it is
you need to do to get past the
hostility. After that, we're going
to begin what I like to call the
reconstruction process. We're
tearing down all the barriers in a
no holds barred truth match.

(MORE)

JOANNA(cont'd)

Then we can start rebuilding the life you want together.

DAVID

I still don't see why we had to do this as a group. Maybe I don't want a bunch of strangers knowing all about my life.

JOANNA

Good point. There are two reasons why. One - 'cause the hike is a real bitch, and I'm not coming out here with each couple one at a time. Two - because couples often grow closer when they see that others have the same, or even worse problems. This way, some of you might find acceptance and understanding from another in the group - a sympathetic shoulder to cry on or whatever the case may be.

ANGIE

Look out ladies. Sean prefers a soft shoulder.

Sean springs to his feet, pointing his finger angrily at Angie.

SEAN

You see! You see the shit I have to put up with? It was one time I screwed up - three years ago, and I'm still paying for it everyday.

He turns to Joanna, seeking her approval.

SEAN

She needs to get over it, or she can learn to get over me.

JOANNA

Whoa....Let's just take a breath here. The first session is tomorrow. We're all too worn out to think straight tonight. So let's just calm down and hit the hay. Okay?

The group disperses and heads for their tents.

INT. DAVID AND MARLA'S TENT

DAVID

You know, I was thinking about what you said.

MARLA

What?

DAVID

When I was kid I did a lot of camping... Boy Scouts and almost ever summer with my folks, but I can't remember a patch of woods this quiet.

Marla begins to run her hands along his cheek, and then touches his lips with her finger. They start to kiss, and the kiss becomes heated and passionate.

Marla runs her hand down the front of David's pants, and giggles at his erection.

MARLA

See baby; I told you this was just what we needed.

David laughs low and hoarse.

DAVID

Yeah, but I gotta go.

He stands up, hunched over in the small tent.

MARLA

Go? Go where?

DAVID

Gotta go take a piss.

MARLA

Oh great. Perfect timing as usual.

She groans and covers her head with the sleeping bag as David exits the tent.

EXT. OUTSIDE, FOREST - NIGHT

David walks clumsily through the woods. A branch smacks him in the face

DAVID

Shit.

Eventually he finds a spot far enough from the campsite as not to be seen by any others in the group.

He unzips his pants, and begins to relieve himself, when suddenly an owl's shadow swoops overhead.

It SCREECHES, very loud. He gets urine on his pant leg.

DAVID

Ahhh... Dammit.

A loud RUSTLE through the branches.

He squints through the darkness. Loud BREATHING, SNARLING.

The rustling and snarling grow closer.

He can't see clearly, but clear enough to tell that something very big, very aggressive, and very not human is coming after him.

He turns to look over his shoulder, stumbles, falls to the ground.

The dark shadow closes in, growls like a wolf.

He crosses his arms in front of his face, and just as he opens his mouth to scream -- bones CRACK. Flesh RIPS.

Blood splatters on the trees around him.

EXT. OUTSIDE, CAMPSITE - LATER

Marla steps out of her tent, eyes scan the area for David.

John Singingwaters sits by the campfire, polishes a silver arrowhead pendant with a cloth.

When he looks up at Marla, he drops it on the ground.

She picks it up, studies it for a moment.

MARLA

It's pretty. Is it old?

JOHN

Very. My grandfather gave it to me when he passed. And it was his grandfather's before him.

He takes the arrowhead from her, carefully slips it back onto his necklace, then around his neck.

An uncomfortable silence, John glances at her, raises an eyebrow. She plops down next to him.

MARLA

So what do you do Mr. Singing waters? I mean, when you're not stuck in the middle of nowhere.

JOHN

I take it you don't like it out here.

MARLA

Well... I could think of better places to be.

(mumbles)

About a million of 'em.

A slight grin escapes John.

JOHN
I work at the casino - the craps
table.

MARLA
Mmm...

She purses her lips, furrows her brows a bit.

MARLA
Somehow I can't picture you there.

JOHN
Yeah, me either.

Marla glances out into the forest, chews on a fingernail.

JOHN
You know, not that I don't like the
small talk... But is there
something else that you...

MARLA
It's David... he left to take a pee
a while ago, and he hasn't come
back. I'm worried he lost his
bearings.

JOHN
Could be. These woods are mighty
thick, and tricky in the dark, even
with a bright moon like this.

He looks to the night sky at a full moon.

JOHN
Don't worry. I'll go take a look for
him. I'm sure he's not far.

John stands, grabs a flashlight and a rifle. Marla looks a
bit surprised.

MARLA
Wait...

John pauses, turns back to her.

MARLA
What do you need that for?

JOHN
You never know.

INT. FOREST - NIGHT

John walks through the woods, pushes aside the overgrowth. He pauses, rests his hand on a nearby tree. Then he feels something wet on his palm.

He shines his flashlight on it, and sees that it's blood, dark red and dripping off his hand. He shines his flashlight around the area.

A few yards away he sees a mangled body lying on the ground in a heap. He approaches and turns the body over.

The clothes are shredded, deep wounds here and there, and covered in blood.

A loud RUSTLING and GROWLING emanates from a nearby patch of bushes.

A large dark figure, moves very fast. It's close, then farther away, then closer again. John struggles to get a bead on it with his rifle.

All he can see clearly are piercing yellow eyes that dart rapidly from one spot to the next.

He fires a couple of rounds, and begins to quickly back out, the same way he came.

EXT. OUTSIDE, CAMPSITE - NIGHT

John runs out of the edge of the forest. He's out of breath.

Marla runs up to him, as the other campers come out of their tents to see what the gun shot was all about.

MARLA

What is it? Where's David?

JOHN

He's gone. I'm sorry.

Marla is confused. She can't believe - refuses to believe what John is saying.

MARLA

Gone? What do you mean gone? Where is my husband?

John looks away, somber. Marla tries to grab the flashlight from him.

MARLA

Fine. I'll go look myself.

John holds the flashlight tight, staring straight into her eyes.

JOHN

You don't want to do that.

Marla begins to cry, a weak pitiful cry.

ANGIE

What's going on?

SEAN

I heard gun shots.

EMMA

What's wrong?

MARLA

Please just let me go and look for him.

Marla gives up, seeing that she can't pry the light from John's grasp. She steps to the very edge of the woods and begins to scream.

MARLA

David! David! You answer me now
David!

John is very near the point of yelling to push his point home.

JOHN

He's gone! Dead. Torn to pieces out there. By something... I don't know.. It was... was fast I couldn't really see it...

Marla runs at him like a football player. She beats on his chest, screaming and crying.

MARLA

No! No! No! He was just here!

The other women take a weak and nearly collapsing Marla by the arms, and help her to her tent.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

They help Marla lie down, practically holding her down as she cries and fights uncontrollably.

Finally she stops squirming and emotionally collapses, sobbing pitifully.

EMMA

You stay with her. I'll go get something to help her sleep.

Angie nods and strokes Marla's hair.

INT. EMMA'S TENT - NIGHT

Emma searches through a back pack. After a few moments, she withdraws a bottle of pills marked "VALIUM".

She heads for the tent next to hers which is Marla's.

ANGIE

Here honey, take this.

Angie opens the bottle of pills, and reaches over for a canteen on the floor of the tent.

Marla takes the pill wearily, as if she couldn't care less if it were cyanide.

EMMA

Sleep now. It's gonna be okay.

Angie and Emma sit for a few moments, watching over Marla. One strokes her head, and the other holds her hand. They glance at each other as if to say, "What if it were us?".

Marla drifts off to sleep, and Angie and Emma join the rest of the group at fireside.

EXT. OUTSIDE CAMPSITE, FIRESIDE - MOMENTS LATER

The remaining campers, except Joanna sit around the fire.

JOHN

I'll tell you; it was nothing I ever saw before.

ANGIE

But is had to be a bear or a mountain lion - something big if it did what you're saying.

JOHN

Oh, this was no bear.

SEAN

Okay. Then what do you think it was?

Uneasy, John glances down at the ground, then over to the edge of the forest.

JOHN

I've heard talk of it... since I was a small boy. The old ones at the reservation, smoking their pipes... and trying to hold onto the old ways. They told us stories... stories of a half human, half beast creature. And that's what we all thought they were... just stories.

SEAN

Oh come on. A man is dead here! We don't need to hear some ridiculous Indian folklore...

JOHN

A creature... with teeth like a lion and devil eyes.

EMMA

So you're telling us it was a... a what? Some kind of monster?

A little giggle escapes her, before she realizes John is dead serious.

JOHN

I've never seen such things, but I've heard the elders talk of them - demons from the spirit world.

FRANK

Horse shit. It was dark. Maybe you couldn't see well, or you were confused.

John narrows his eyes, just stares Frank down.

ANGIE

We need to get out of here - just pack up and get to the van now.

SEAN

No way. There could be some sort of rabid crazed animal out there waiting for us to get separated. Or maybe there's more than one.

FRANK

Look, whatever it or they are, I say we stay here until daylight. We stick close together.

EMMA

What about Joanna? Anybody check
her tent?

John heads for her tent, flashlight and gun in hand. He shines the light on the ground. Huge foot prints surround the entrance. He slowly opens the flap to the tent.

INT. JOANNA'S TENT

It's empty. He notices that everything in the tent is horribly disheveled. The sleeping bag and the floor of the tent is ripped to shreds.

He picks up the clothes Joanna was wearing, and they too are frayed and torn.

He steps out apprehensively, shines the light on the ground again, and kneels down to get a closer look at the paw prints.

EXT. OUTSIDE, FIRESIDE - MOMENTS LATER

JOHN

Joanna's gone.

SEAN

Oh God... that's two of us. This
thing's already gotten two of us.

JOHN

Maybe... maybe not.

Angie stands and begins to pace. She's nervous, scared.

ANGIE

And what does that mean? What are
you saying?

(to her husband, Sean)

We have to leave. I want to go now!

She heads for their tent, but Sean grabs her from behind.

ANGIE

Let go of me. What is wrong with you?! Can't you see we're not safe here?

She breaks away from him, and goes into the tent. Sean rubs his face hard with his hands, and in a few moments, Angie exits the tent with her back pack.

ANGIE

I am leaving, Sean. Now you can either go with me, or you can hang around here and wait to be mauled.

Angie pulls a canister of mace from her back pack, and holds it up for all to see.

ANGIE

You see this? It's mace. I hear it can stop a thousand pound grizzly in its tracks.

Sean drops his head and sighs.

She heads off toward the woods, but John steps in her path.

JOHN

If you go out there, you will die.

Angie stares into his eyes for a moment, contemplating. She pushes past him, and then trots off into the woods the same direction they came in.

SEAN

Angie! Come on... don't be stupid!

John leans against a tree, his eyes darting around as he looks for any unusual movement.

Sean sits for a moment, rubs his knuckles, unsure what he should do about his wife.

He goes to their tent, reaches in and grabs his pack.

Then he stops at the other campers, lights a cigarette, and breathes the smoke out slowly.

SEAN

I have to go after her. If I don't
I'll never hear the end of it.

He takes no more than ten steps or so, before a blood curdling scream resonates through the forest (O.S.).

SEAN

Angie! Shit... Angie!

He takes off running, John and Frank are close behind him. Emma has jumped to her feet, and starts off after the men.

John halts mid-stride, holds out a hand to stop her.

JOHN

No. It's better if you stay here.

He hands Emma a huge knife from a sheath on his belt. Also on his belt is a small slingshot. He trots off, and catches up with the other two men.

Emma nervously eyes her surroundings.

INT. THICK WOODS

The three men scan the area. John's flashlight emits a fairly broad ray of light. It only takes a few moments before one of them spots food lying on the ground.

John picks up a short trail of beef jerky and a barely wrapped sandwich. The food appears untouched.

JOHN

(mumbling)
She was trying to feed it - trying
to buy herself some time.

Sean searches frantically - no Angie in sight.

SEAN

Ang...

John swings his rifle around, shoving the barrel of it into Sean's chin.

JOHN

You make another sound, and I will
drop you where you stand.

Sean's eyes start to well up with tears, his face sad and anxious at the same time.

FRANK

Hey... What's that?

Frank points at an object a bit further into the woods. As John concentrates the center of the light's beam on the object, it's clear it's Angie's backpack.

They approach to find that it's torn to shreds. A small distance away, a body lies on the ground.

It's Angie, with only one arm, the other one missing. A long wound runs from pelvis to chest.

FRANK

Holy Mother of God.

He turns his face away in disgust and horror.

Sean begins to cry and vomits.

SEAN

Oh Angie. Oh Jesus Angie.... our
babies!

He loses control over his legs, nearly faints.

John and Frank each take an arm to help him.

EXT. OUTSIDE, CAMPSITE FIRE - MOMENTS LATER

Emma straddles a log, scans the area. She jumps at a RUSTLE in the distance (O.S.).

EMMA

Frank? Frank?

Eerie silence.

A sudden RUSTLE taht grows closer and faster.

Emma screams.

EXT. OUTSIDE, FOREST - NIGHT

John grabs Sean by the shoulders, somewhat holding him up. They hear Emma's scream.

JOHN

Sean you gotta walk.

He lets go of Sean, who manages to stand and walk wearily through the woods.

FRANK

Emma. Oh God... it's after Emma.

He takes off in a full run toward the sound of his wife's voice.

FRANK

Emma! Hold on Emma! We're almost there!

EXT. OUTSIDE, CAMPSITE

At just that moment, there's a POUNDING of FEET, ANIMALISTIC GROWLS.

Emma's face clouds over with fear. She screams as a huge dark shadow draws closer.

She stands, shaking with fear, and in shock.

She clinches the knife with both hands. She points it at the beast, and begins to back away cautiously.

Emma waves the knife wildly in front of her with one hand. A fur covered arm with long claws swipes at her.

She screams once more and shoves the knife forward.

A loud WOUNDED HOWL.

At the other side of the camp, John, Sean and Frank exit the woods.

John fires several rounds into the tree-line.

Another HOWL of agony, but the beast has disappeared into the forest.

John steps to the edge, peers in to see if the beast is still around.

Sean was a bit behind the other two men, but manages to stagger over to the log and sit.

FRANK

Emma? You're all right, Emma. You got him.

She cries uncontrollably.

Frank tries to take her into his arms, but she pulls away. She's frantic, confused. She can't comprehend what has just happened. She stammers.

EMMA

What the fuck was that? It was like a.. a.... a man or a wolf.

Frank manages to get his arms around her, and holds her tight until she calms down a bit. Sean sits on the log, with his head in his hands.

A few moments of uncomfortable silence as the three men stare at each other - disbelief and fear etched on their faces.

Sean stares longest at John.

JOHN

What? I'm just a crazy old
Indian... telling folktales,
remember?

Sean clenches his jaw at John, glares at him with animosity.

SEAN

It's a bad science experiment, or
some kind of... species we didn't
know existed.

He rubs his face hard, eyes welled up with tears, and rests
his head in his hands.

SEAN

(mumbles to himself)
Oh God... What am I gonna tell my
kids?

John reloads his gun, talks over to the entrance of Joanna's
tent.

Frank watches curiously, as John kneels down to study the
footprints there.

John shines his light onto the paw prints. Frank appears at
his side.

FRANK

Joanna... it got her too, didn't
it? Just like the others and...

JOHN

I don't think so.
(shines light on the path
of the prints)
These tracks lead out of the tent,
not inside it.

FRANK

What? I don't underst...

JOHN

It didn't attack Joanna. It is
Joanna.

There's a loud GROWL and the sound of heavy animal BREATHING.

They turn around just in time to see Sean dragged rapidly into the woods. He screams and fights, as his feet enter the tree-line.

Emma, still frantic from her encounter earlier, raises her hands to her face, lets out a muffled, defeated scream and runs to Frank's side.

John fires his gun, but the creature is too fast. Branches crack and leaves rustle (O.S.) as it rushes deeper into the forest with Sean.

The sound of bones CRACKING and a muffled whimper (O.S.).

FRANK

Oh God! That's why we're so far in!
She brought us out here to kill
every damned one of us!

EMMA

She? What? Frank what the fuck is
going on?!

Frank takes the knife from Emma's hand.

JOHN

He saying this thing - this
werewolf... it's Joanna.

FRANK

It's impossible... I know.

EMMA

No, Frank. It's insane! Are you
listening to yourself?!

John just stares at her, a dead serious look on his face.

EMMA
(to Frank and John)
Oh my God! You've both lost it!

She plops down on the log again, sobbing.

Frank goes to her side, wraps an arm around her shoulder. She buries her face in his chest.

AT THE CAMPFIRE - LATER

JOHN
In legend, the werewolf hunts by
the full moon... can kill it with a
silver bullet. Problem is, I'm
fresh out of silver bullets.

He pauses for a minute, his eyes narrowed, and deep in thought.

JOHN
How long since you started going to
see her?

Emma sniffs, rubs her teary eyes hard.

EMMA
Couple of weeks.

John sighs, nods.

JOHN
And the last full moon was 26 days
ago.

Emma sighs with aggravation.

EMMA
Yeah, and?

JOHN
It's... she's hungry, and we're on
the menu.

Emma swallows hard, stares into the fire.

Frank takes a deep breath and lets out a slow shaky sigh.

FRANK

So what are we gonna do? We can't just sit here and let it pick us off one by one.

JOHN

No... but that's exactly what it wants.

MONTAGE

Yellow eyes stalk at the edge of the campsite.

Frank, Emma and John gather wood.

Marla stumbles out of her tent, still groggy.

Hairy claws swipe at the van's tires.

A large circular fire is built. The flames reach high enough to keep the beast at bay.

The remaining four sit in the middle of the fire Indian style, with a small pile of sticks next to each one.

Once in a while, one of the group tosses another branch onto the fire.

Marla is in the circle with them, but she's groggy, and leaning on Emma's shoulder.

John's head bobs down to his chest. He wrenches upright, fights to stay awake.

Finally he succumbs to his weariness and falls asleep.

The fire dwindles as they all grow more and more sleepy.

END MONTAGE

EXT. CAMPFIRE - LATER

Frank reaches over, rubs Emma's shoulder. She touches his hand and smiles weakly.

FRANK

Our problems seem so small now,
don't they?

Emma nods.

EMMA

I can remember when we didn't have
problems - not real problems ones
anyway. Back before...

She pats his hand once more, then her expression hardens.

FRANK

It's all over, Emma. I Mean it this
time. Whatever it takes, I'm
through with the gambling.

Emma tilts her head sideways at him, seems to be searching
his face for sincerity.

EMMA

You know what... I think I believe
you.

Suddenly they hear the beast GROWL nearby.

It draws closer. Yellow eyes hover at the tree-line. It
Snorts and sniffs, claws at the ground.

Eyelids heavy, John wakes, lunges for his gun.

All eyes fall on the pitiful fire, not much more than
smoldering ash now.

MARLA

No! Oh God... it's back!

The group slowly start to spread out a bit, each one turning
in all directions, looking around.

There are low GROWLS and the sound of four feet rapidly
POUNDING toward them.

John rips the silver pendant from around his neck, and shoves
it into the slingshot.

A wide shadow flies over Frank.

John pulls back the band of the slingshot, and with expert aim, hits his target.

A THUD. A dog-like WHIMPERING.

Emma buries her face in Frank's chest.

John spits at the ground in anger.

Marla drops to her knees, cries uncontrollably.

EXT. AT THE VAN - MORNING

John changes a tire on the van. It's shredded like paper.

Marla sits inside, her head against the window and a far away, somber look on her face.

Emma and Frank load backpacks and other supplies into the back of the van.

EXT. CAMPSITE - SAME

Wind blows hard. A few pieces of paper and food wrappers float about the old campsite.

Off to itself is a sleeping bag - lumpy with something underneath.

The wind tugs at the edges of the sleeping bag and then blows it off.

Joanna lies there, dead and naked, with a knife wound to her neck, a gunshot wound through her chest, and the silver pendant dangling from her open mouth.

EXT. AT THE VAN - CONTINUOUS

The last of the supplies are loaded.

Emma rubs her arm, lifts her shirt sleeve. Unseen by the others, is a cut with dark coarse hair at the edges.

Frank appears at her side and she jumps, quickly hides the wound.

FRANK

Ready?

Emma nods.

EMMA

Yeah.

They all hop in the van, but Emma stares longingly into the forest for a moment.

The engine cranks. With her back turned to the others, Emma's eyes flash with the piercing yellow color of a werewolf's eyes.

FADE OUT